

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Dewey Family Papers, 1779-1939

**LOCATION:**

MSS Boxes "D"

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**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

1 box

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**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:**

Dewey, Henry B. *Daniel Dewey: Berkshire Federalist, 1766-1815*. Worcester, Mass: Henry B. Dewey, 2004.

Durfee, Calvin. *A History of Williams College*. Boston: A. Williams and Company, 1860.

Durfee, Calvin. *Williams Biographical Annals*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1871.

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**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

Gift of Mrs. Edith Murphy, 2008 and Joseph E. Dewey, 2009.

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

Daniel Dewey (1766-1815), born in Sheffield, Mass., studied at Yale College before moving to Williamstown, Mass. to practice law in 1787. Dewey was an involved member of the Williams College community serving as the College's Treasurer (1798-1814), Professor of Law and Civil Polity (1812-15) and a Trustee (1803-15). Recently widowed, he traveled to Washington D.C. in 1813 to serve as a Federalist Congressman from Berkshire County. Months after his arrival in Washington, he resigned to accept an appointment to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts where he served as a justice until his death on May 26, 1815. His son, Daniel Noble Dewey (1800-1859) was born in Williamstown and studied at Williams in 1819 before following in his father's footsteps, first as a student at Yale and then as a lawyer in Williamstown active with the College. Dewey served as a representative to the Massachusetts General Court, a member of the Governor's Council, and finally in 1848 as a Judge of Probate in Berkshire County until his death. Dewey married Eliza Hubell (1806-1887) in 1827, becoming a brother-in-law to the renowned Williams' president, Mark Hopkins (1802-1887). Their son Daniel Dewey (1834-1907) was born on March 3, 1834 in Williamstown. He graduated from Williams and then studied law at Harvard before becoming a wool merchant in Boston, first with the firm Harding & Gray and later as a partner of Dewey, Gould & Co. He married Mary A. Adams, of North Chelmsford on April 29, 1864. Their daughter, Sarah Bradstreet Dewey (referred to as "Dot" and "Daisy") married her second cousin, John C. Dewey (1857-1932), son of Francis Henshaw Dewey I (1821-1887) and Sarah Barker Tufts Dewey.

9 March 2010

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Dewey Family Papers, 1779-1939

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION (cont.):**

The Dewey Family collection consists of one box of letters written almost exclusively by the three generations of Daniel Deweys, family papers, and a diary written by Daniel Noble Dewey in 1822. Daniel Dewey (1766-1815) wrote six letters to his children in Massachusetts during his time in Congress. Writing from Washington, Dewey described his journey and commented that although some roads seemed impossible he did not upset once (Dec. 2, 1813). He mentioned his satisfactory boarding arrangements, but expressed displeasure with the prosecution of the War of 1812—"There is some prospect of peace but it is very uncertain, the war party do not like to give up the project of conquering Canada" (Jan. 20, 1814). The letters closed with the usual parental admonitions to improve time usefully and to live morally.

His son, Daniel Noble Dewey (1800-1859), wrote 51 letters spanning the years 1832 to 1856 from his lifelong home in Williamstown to his children at school or to his family while he was in Boston serving on the Governor's Council or in the General Court. His letters from Williamstown concern matters of "town and gown" as well as family affairs. In Boston he was often accompanied by his wife and younger children. Writing to his eldest son, Daniel Noble noted the secret proceedings of the Governor's Council, which published only the results (Jan. 18, 1847). He describes entertainingly his five year old son Edward's adjustment to life in the Hotel Marlboro—" [he] has learned the way from 327 to the dining room & this is no trifling affair—he eats fried pudding for breakfast & thinks nuts and figs make a good dinner" (Jan. 14, 1848).

The 33 letters from his son, Daniel Dewey (1834-1907) were written to his family first from the Western United States, in the late 1870s, and later in the 1880s and 1890s from Japan, Europe, Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, and Jerusalem. Most of these letters, written during both business and pleasure trips, were to his wife in Newton, Mass. In the spring of 1879 he traveled by train and stage coach to Wyoming, Utah, and the Montana Territory. He was enthralled by the scenery and exhausted by the distances he had to cover—"I never will ride in a stage again...people I wish to see...are so far apart" (April 18, 1879). His powers of observation combined with his independent spirit of adventure account for the careful preservation of his travel letters.

In addition to the family correspondence the collection notably includes: 18th-century legal documents relating to the estate of Abigail Dewey (1731-1798), an undated Fourth of July oration delivered by Daniel Noble Dewey in Williamstown, a number of themes written by Sarah Barker Tufts (later Mrs. Francis H. Dewey I) in 1841 and 1842 when she was a student at Mt. Holyoke, a temperance pledge signed by the Dewey children, Naval Records of Daniel Dewey (b. 1899), two unattributed journals of religious reflection, and a quantity of printed material concerning Williams College. The diary of Daniel Dewey from July and August 1822 details his travels to Niagara Falls through the Erie Canal, and through Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence to Montreal and Canada, before returning to Williamstown via Lake Champlain.

See also the Dewey-Bliss Family Papers.

**Subjects**

Dewey, Daniel, 1766-1815  
Dewey, Daniel Noble, 1800-1859  
Dewey, Daniel, 1834-1907

Dewey, Sarah Barker Tufts, 1825-1906  
Alpine Club of Williamstown, Massachusetts  
Mount Holyoke College  
Williams College

Death  
Families  
Lawyers  
Religion  
Students  
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Voyages and Travels

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Egypt - Description and Travel  
Europe - Description and Travel  
Illinois - Description and Travel  
Japan - Description and Travel  
Jerusalem - Description and Travel  
Massachusetts - Politics and Government  
Michigan - Description and Travel  
Montana - Description and Travel  
New York - Description and Travel  
South Hadley (Mass.)  
Turkey - Description and Travel  
United States - History - War of 1812  
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Utah - Description and Travel  
Williamstown (Mass.)  
Wyoming - Description and Travel

Genre(s):  
Academic Exercises  
Correspondence - 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
Diaries - 19th Century  
Essays  
Speeches  
Fourth of July addresses

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**American Antiquarian Society**  
**MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT**

Daniel Noble Dewey Family Papers, [1779-1939]  
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