

**AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Davis, Isaac, Correspondence, 1816-1869
"D"
boxes "D"

LOCATION(S):

Octavo vols.
Misc. mss.

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

38 octavo volumes; 1 folder (14 items)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

See accompanying sheet(s) for additional information.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gift of Joseph E. Davis, 1884 (37 volumes brought in 13 August; 1 volume brought in 6 December)

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

Isaac Davis (1799-1883), son of Phineas and Martha Eager Davis, was born in Northborough, Mass. He prepared for college at Leicester and Lancaster academies and graduated from Brown University in 1822. He studied law in the office of Lincoln & Davis in Worcester, Mass., and was admitted to the bar in 1825. He established his own law practice in Worcester and quickly became a very successful lawyer. In 1829 he married Mary Holman Estabrook (1807-1875).

Davis involved himself in various business and financial concerns. He was president of the Quinsigamond Bank, 1836 to 1842 and 1854 to 1878; president of the State Mutual Life Insurance Company, 1854 to 1882; and of the Merchants Savings Bank, 1851 to 1855; and was director of the Providence & Worcester Railroad, 1857 to 1878; and director of the Worcester & Nashua Railroad, 1848 to 1853 and 1874 to 1879. For several years he was president of the Worcester Agricultural Society and the Worcester County Horticultural Society.

Davis took an interest in military matters. He was colonel of the 6th Regiment, Massachusetts Militia, 1828 to 1831. He was appointed in 1832 by Andrew Jackson's Secretary of War as one of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and was president of the Board in 1854.

In his connection with numerous religious organizations, Davis was president of the Massachusetts Baptist state convention in 1838, 1839, and 1840, and was for over forty years life director of that body. He was president of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, from 1848 to 1855, and president of the Sabbath schoolteachers' convention of the Worcester County Baptist Association for twelve years between 1835 and 1852. He was a member of the Sabbath school connected with the First Baptist Church of Worcester, 1823 to 1875, and was a member of the church from 1823 until his death.

In politics Davis was a Democrat of the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian school. After several attempts to win a seat in Congress or the state legislature, he finally was elected to the state senate in 1843 where he served a total of eleven years. In 1851 he was elected to the Massachusetts executive council, and in 1852 he was elected to the state house of representatives. He was a delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1853 and a member of the state Board of Education, 1852 to 1860. From 1828 until 1860 he was a delegate to all the national Democratic conventions. He was mayor of Worcester in 1856, 1858, and 1861. Among the other local offices that he filled were those of assessor, selectman, and chairman of the board of selectman, overseer of the poor, and alderman.

Davis was connected with various educational institutions. He was one of the founders of Worcester Academy and was for forty years president of its Board of Trustees. He served as a trustee of Brown University, 1838 to 1851, of Columbian College, 1845 to 1870, of Waterville (Colby) College, 1853 to 1857, and of Norwich University, 1847 to 1850. He was a fellow of Brown University, 1851 to 1879, and a member of the American Antiquarian Society from 1841, and for twenty years a member of its council. He received the degree of A.B. upon graduating from Brown and that of A.M. from Brown three years later. The degree of LL.D. was conferred by Columbian College in 1846 and by Brown in 1860.

Isaac Davis died in Worcester on 1 April 1883.

This collection of correspondence consists of letters relating to Davis' business and financial interests (largely banking, insurance, and real estate matters). The collection also contains letters relating to Davis' involvement in politics, legal, and educational matters, as well as religious affairs. The political correspondence, while including commentary on national politics, emphasizes local and state-level politics. The legal correspondence concerns the execution of wills, the ownership of property, requests for legal advice, and court cases. The educational correspondence mostly concerns the Worcester County Manual Labor High School (Worcester Academy), the Female Classical Seminary in West Brookfield, Mass., and Brown University.

The religious correspondence is either personal in nature or concerns various Baptist organizations. The collection includes much family correspondence and correspondence relating to college life at Brown University. The collection also includes correspondence that reveals Davis' involvement in postal matters (especially in the 1830s), military affairs, and cattle shows.

There is a folder of miscellaneous documents including correspondence and receipts, as well as other documents. The material in this folder has not been cataloged.

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American Antiquarian Society
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

ISAAC DAVIS, PAPERS, 1816-1869
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