

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

Shaw-Webb Family, Papers, 1756-1936

**LOCATION:**

Mss. boxes "S"

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**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

10 manuscript boxes

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**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:**

For biographical notes re: Peabody Family, see S. Hobart Peabody, Peabody Genealogy (Boston: Charles H. Pope, 1909), pp. 72, 153; for biography of John Holmes, see DAB, vol. 9, pp. 166-67.

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**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

Gifts of Mrs. Anna Leonard Webb Sinclair, 1943-1955; Richard Buck Stover Estate, 1935

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

Five generations of the family of Anna Leonard Stetson Smith Shaw (1766-1847) of Dighton, Massachusetts are represented in this collection. Her five daughters were Nancy Leonard Smith Peabody (1785-1856), Harriet Smith Goodnow (1787-1869), Maria B. Smith Noyes (1790-1875), Emma Augusta Shaw Hobbs (1792?-1875), and Hannah King Shaw Webb (1800-1875). Eventually the family settled in Bucksport and Bangor, Maine and Atkinson, New Hampshire and corresponded extensively among themselves, their children, grandchildren, and friends. In 1846, Hannah Webb's daughter Anna Leonard Webb (1821-1868) married Thomas C. Farris of Bangor who later joined with her brother Jahaziah Shaw Webb (1824-1890) in the Farris-Webb Produce Company. Maria Noyes' daughter Augusta Maria Noyes (1817-1871) married Captain Joseph G. Stover ( - ) in 1842 and frequently accompanied him on sea voyages. Several cousins from the Stephen Peabody (1773-1851) branch of the family became merchants, traveled to California during the gold rush, actively participated in Maine politics, and fought in the Civil War.

The collection includes family and business correspondence, and a miscellany of poems, recipes, and printed material, 1756 to 1936. Although the greatest emphasis in the correspondence is on family concerns (i.e., births, marriages, the intemperance of several relatives, and other illnesses), there are also references to Whig politics in Maine, student unrest at Bowdoin College, presidential elections, the "evils of Van Burenism," the "promise" of William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), and general economic problems during the early 1800s, including bank failures and unemployment.

During the War of 1812, Anna Shaw described the British march up the Penobscot River not far from her home, while her grandson William Smith Shaw Peabody (1818-1877) described his life in San Francisco, California in 1850 and his search for wealth. His cousin Maria Stover wrote extensively on her travels with her sea captain husband, describing in detail sightseeing trips to Malaga, Gibraltar, Liverpool, London, Washington, D.C., and a trip around Cape Horn. Cousin Ann Mary Hobbs ( - ) referred to abolitionist lectures, the lectures of William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) on the "Four Georges," and her visit to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, whose pavilions and exhibits she described in detail. The copious correspondence of Anna Farris concerns her courtship by Thomas C. Farris and

provides much information relative to her suffering with consumption and her search for a variety of "cures" including a water-cure institution in Wernersville, Pennsylvania.

Several family friends are also represented in the collection, including Mary H. Silsby ( ) who wrote of her life in Chico, Cal. during the 1850s, Henrietta [S. White?] who was extensively involved in Universalism in Chicago, Illinois, and Margaret Tinkham Peabody ( ) who commented on the "glorious evil" of the Civil War and the need for emancipation.

Three correspondents are of special interest: John Holmes (1773-1843), Maine's first U.S. senator; Dr. Maria Antoinette Meservey ( ) of Bridgeville, Delaware [her home residence was Bangor, and she graduated from New England Female Medical College in Boston in 1863]; and Nancy Colburn Hartford ( -1864) of Pike's Peak, Colorado Territory. Holmes' letters include political references to the U.S. Congress as well as to his controversial courtship of Caroline F[lucker?] Knox Swan (1783-1851), the daughter of Gen. Henry Knox (1750-1806). Dr. Meservey's letters constitute a fascinating account of a woman doctor's struggle to gain acceptance in a Southern town in 1867 and include references to the "excesses" of black freedmen, details of her own medical methods as contrasted with the "barbarous" obstetrical practices of Southern black women, and her dealings with puerperal fever and the dangers of tobacco.

Nancy Colburn Hartford traveled to Pike's Peak to join her husband Miles F. Hartford ( ) in his search for wealth. (Their daughter Evelyn Treat Hartford (1862-1943) was to marry Jahaziah Shaw Webb in 1881.) Nancy's letters to her mother Sophia Colburn ( ) of Winterport, Me., 1860 to 1864, contain descriptions of her trip through New York City on her way to Colorado, the Colorado scenery, her life in a log cabin and pioneer life in Russell's Gulch. There are frequent references to the Civil War and its effect of preventing the Hartfords from attempting to return home.

The collection also includes business correspondence, especially that of the Farris-Webb Produce Company, printed produce reports, and accounts, bills, and receipts of Hannah Webb, her son Jahaziah, and his company.

There are also miscellaneous letters from various friends, newspaper articles, 1787 to 1936, concerning family deaths and items of family interest, advertisements and other printed items (e.g., medical "cures"), a miniature water color done by Maria Stover as a child, and many recipes (e.g., infants' food, whitewash, etc.), physicians' prescriptions, photographs, and sketches, such as a blueprint for a house. Included also are poems, essays, compositions, and religious extracts written by various family members, invitations and acceptances, Nathaniel Ames' Almanack for 1767 (which apparently belonged to a member of the family) with a brief interleaved diary concerning the weather and daily events. There is also a diary-record book of Evelyn Treat Hartford Webb, 1927 to 1936, containing entries on family events and problems, and a brief resume of most of the letters in the collection.

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Contents List

Shaw-Webb Family, Papers, 1756-1936

Manuscript Box

**1 Genealogical Information and Family Correspondence: Chipman - Farris**

Folder

- 1 Genealogical material
- 2 Diary/record book of Evelyn Treat Hartford Webb, containing resumes of the letters in this collection, 1927-1936
- 3 Chipman Family letters, 1871-1879
- 4 Letters of Hannah B. Peirce Clapp ( - ), 1824-1837
- 5 Letters of Anna Leonard Webb Farris, 1825-1846
- 6 Letters of Anna Leonard Webb Farris, 1848-1853

**2 Family Correspondence: Anna Leonard Webb Farris - Thomas C. Farris**

Folder

- 1 Letters of Anna Leonard Webb Farris, 1854-1860
- 2 Letters of Anna Leonard Webb Farris, 1861-1868
- 3 Letters written to Anna Leonard Webb Farris (largely from friends), 1835-1846
- 4 Letters written to Anna Leonard Webb Farris (largely from friends), 1847-1868
- 5 Letters of Thomas C. Farris, 1838-1878
- 6 Letters written to Thomas C. Farris (largely from friends), 1838-1869

**3 Family Correspondence: Giles - Hobbs**

Folder

- 1 Letters of Louise Lord Giles, Mrs. Henry, ( - ), 1838-1874
- 2 Letters of Harriet Stetson Smith Goodnow, Mrs. Asa, 1814-1845
- 3 Letters of Nancy Colburn Hartford, 1860-1864
- 4 Letters of Ann Mary Hobbs, 1847-1890
- 5 Letters of Emma Augusta Shaw Hobbs, Mrs. Isaac, 1814-1834
- 6 Letters of Emma Augusta Shaw Hobbs, Mrs. Isaac, 1836-1869

**4 Family Correspondence: Holmes - Noyes**

Folder

- 1 Letters of Sen. John Holmes, his daughter, Sarah Anne Holmes(1805-1840), and Caroline F. Knox Swan Holmes, Mrs. John, 1819-1838
- 2 Letters of Emma Augusta Hobbs Merrill, Mrs. Elias, (1820-1891), 1839-1880
- 3 Letters of Dr. Maria A. Meservey and S. A. Meservey ( - ), 1866-1880
- 4 Letters of Abigail P. H. Morgan ( - ), 1843-1879
- 5 Letters of Maria B. Smith Noyes, Mrs. Ebenezer, 1806-1873
- 6 Letters written to Maria B. Smith Noyes (from friends), 1813-1822

**5 Family Correspondence: Peabody - Shaw**Folder

- 1 Letters of Charlotte Catherine Crosby Peabody, Mrs. William Smith Shaw (1822-1844), 1843-1844
- 2 Letters of Clara Leonard Peabody (1853- ), 1873-1880
- 3 Letters of George Augustus Peabody (1812-1891), 1828-1844
- 4 Letters of George Augustus Peabody, 1845-1890
- 5 Letters of Leonard Peabody (1822-1886) and Mary Todd Peabody, Mrs. Leonard, ( - ), 1825-1880
- 6 Letters of Margaret Tinkham Peabody, Mrs. George Augustus, 1853-1867
- 7 Letters of Nancy Leonard Smith Peabody, 1822-1845
- 8 Letters of the Hon. Stephen Peabody, 1816-1847
- 9 Letters of William Smith Shaw Peabody, 1825-1876
- 10 Letters of Anna (Nancy) Leonard Stetson Smith Shaw, Mrs. Jahaziah, 1817-1847

**6 Family Correspondence: Shaw - Stover**Folder

- 1 Letters written to Anna (Nancy) Leonard Stetson Smith Shaw (largely from friends), 1756-1825
- 2 Letters written to Anna (Nancy) Leonard Stetson Smith Shaw (largely from friends), 1826-1847
- 3 Letters of Mary H. Silsby and Mary S. Silsby Warner ( - ), 1842-1867
- 4 Letters of Augusta Maria Noyes Stover, 1829-1856
- 5 Letters of Augusta Maria Noyes Stover, 1857-1870
- 6 Letters of Adeline Weatherbee ( - ) and John Weatherbee, Jr. ( - ), 1836-1845

**7 Family Correspondence: Hannah K. S. Webb - Jahaziah S. Webb**Folder

- 1 Letters of Hannah King Shaw Webb, Mrs. James, 1804-1874
- 2: Letters written to Hannah King Shaw Webb (largely from friends), 1804-1874
- 3 Letters of Jahaziah Shaw Webb, 1811-1868
- 4 Letters of Jahaziah Shaw Webb, 1870-1871
- 5 Letters of Jahaziah Shaw Webb, 1872-1881
- 6 Letters written to Jahaziah Shaw Webb and Evelyn Treat Hartford Webb, Mrs. Jahaziah Shaw, 1855-1889
- 7 Letters of Henrietta [S. White?] regarding Universalism in Chicago, Illinois, 1861-1868

**8 Business Correspondence, Miscellaneous Letters, and Printed Items**Folder

- 1 Business correspondence and documents, mostly pertaining to the Farris-Webb Produce Company, 1813-1912
- 2 Miscellaneous letters, 1786-1869
- 3 Newspaper articles, 1787-1936
- 4 Advertisements and other printed items (e.g., Civil War song), 1860-1936
- 5: Photostat copies of newsclippings on marriage and death of Jahaziah Shaw Webb, 1881 and 1890

**9 Personal and Business Accounts, Bills, and Receipts of Family Members and of the Farris-Webb Produce Company, 1814-1888 (4 folders)**

10 **Miscellaneous Items**

Folder

- 1 Almanac, 1767 (Nathaniel Ames's Almanack)
- 2 Small watercolor by Augusta Maria Noyes Stover as a child  
(transferred to Graphic Arts before 1990)
- 3 Religious extracts, copied mainly by Anna Leonard Webb Farris
- 4 Recipes, prescriptions, sketches
- 5 Poems, essays, compositions written by family members, 1789-  
1861
- 6 Invitations, acceptances
- 7 Letter covers, envelopes; miscellaneous items