

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:

Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves (Worcester, Mass.), Records, 1795-1976

Location:

Octavo volumes "W"
Misc. mss. boxes "W"

Size of collection:

3 octavo volumes
2 folders (55 items)

N.U.C.M.C. number:

RLIN id:

Sources of information on collection:

For further information, see Nathaniel Paine, Societies, Associations, and Clubs of Worcester (Worcester: n.p., 1889), p. 7

For other material of the Association see also the Institutions Collection of the AAS.

For post-1976 records of the Association see also the archives of the AAS.

Source of collection:

The majority of the items in the folders are the gift of Norman S. Wood, 1962 Octavo volumes and some items in the folders the gift of Glendon M. Pomeroy, 1976

Collection description:

The Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves was founded in Worcester, Mass., in 1795 by a group of "well-disposed" property owners for the purpose of deterring horse thefts and other robberies. The members established a fund to be used to pay the expenses of those members annually appointed to a Pursuing Committee, should they be called upon to ride after a thief, recover the stolen property, and bring the culprit to justice. There was also a Standing Committee (later called the Directors) who were always on duty to despatch the Pursuers. The original founders included Ephraim Mower (1748-) and Benjamin Heywood (1746-1816). Membership had fallen drastically by 1894, and the Association was not revived until 1905, when Eben Francis Thompson (1859-ca. 1939) guided it toward a different goal, namely that of "preserving memorials of Worcester and its early history." Incorporated largely as a social organization in that year, the Association held dinners and appointed officers until 1976, when the remaining assets were transferred to the American Antiquarian Society, under whose auspices the club was reorganized as a friends group supporting the goals and objectives of the Society.

The records of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves, 1795-1976, consist of three volumes containing minutes of meetings, and two folders of miscellaneous material. The minutes span the period 1795-1938 and detail the annual gathering of members for the purposes of electing members to the Standing and Pursuing Committees and attending to the Treasurer's Reports.

Included are the constitution and bylaws, directories of members, continually revised rules of admission to the organization. The volumes are largely concerned with financial matters, and contain only infrequent mention of the actual pursuit of thieves and recovery of property. The later meetings were held

(cont.)

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Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting
Thieves, Records, 1795-1976

Collection description (continued):

for social purposes at the Worcester Club.

The miscellaneous papers, 1795-1976, include copies of the constitution, both mss. and printed; several membership lists; five bank deposit books; the Act of Incorporation of 1905; printed dinner menus; and a lengthy typescript poem, 1920, by Samuel Bayard Woodward (1855-1946) concerning the leadership of Eben Francis Thompson. There is also an address delivered by Nathaniel Paine (1832-1917) in 1906 containing brief biographies of early members and a history of the organization; a group of letters written by several members, 1940-1941, in answer to a questionnaire (also included) pertaining to a proposed disbandment of the Association; and a document officially transferring funds to the American Antiquarian Society in 1976.

See Contents List.

May 18, 1978
contents list added April 30, 1991
revised September 4, 1998

**Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves,
Records, 1795-1976**

Contents List

Octavo Volumes

- Vol. 1: Records of Meetings, includes a statement of purpose, a list of members, etc., November 2, 1795-January 13, 1835.
- Vol. 2: Records of Meetings, includes a printed, revised constitution, a directory of members, etc., 1835-1905.
- Vol. 3: Records of Meetings, includes written constitution, etc., 1905-1938.

Miscellaneous Manuscripts Boxes "Worcester"

- Folder 1: mss. copy of constitution, dated Nov. 2, 1795
mss. copy of constitution, ca. 1816
Constitution of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves . . . (Worcester: Printed by Chas. Hamilton, Palladium Office. 1862.)
form letter, concerning dues, addressed to Mercutio Hayward, Esq., dated Dec. 6, 1869
mss. notes on members, ca. 1900
Agreement of Association, dated Nov. 13, 1905
act of incorporation, dated Nov. 16, 1905
mss. entitled "The Worcester Society of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves. Founded 1795. By Nathaniel Paine. Worcester 1905."
mss. (and transcript) entitled "Remarks of Nathaniel Paine at the 111th annual meeting of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves, Nov 16, 1906"
typescript poem entitled "Poem Read at the 125th. Anniversary of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves. By Samuel B. Woodward. November 1920."
photocopy of a broadside concerning the election of officers, dated Jan. 12, 1932
typescript list entitled "Members of the Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves," ca. 1936
- Folder 2: letter from George F. Booth to Eben Francis Thompson, Esq. concerning membership, dated Nov. 8, 1938
correspondence from its members concerning the future of the Association, dated from Feb. 5, 1940 to Jan. 14, 1941
two letters concerning the record books of the Association, dated Mar. 25, 1941 and Apr. 7, 1941, respectively
letter (and roster) to Clifford S. Anderson, concerning the membership of the Association, dated Aug. 28, 1946
typescript list entitled "Worcester Association of Mutual Aid in Detecting Thieves - Sun., Aug. 23, '53"
original (and photocopy) of a document transferring the funds of the Association to the American Antiquarian Society, signed by Glendon M. Pomeroy, dated Nov. 22, 1976
business card of Norman S. Wood of Commonwealth Press
five bank deposit books, dating from July 18, 1933 to Nov. 23, 1976
six printed menus, dating from Nov. 16, 1908 to Nov. 5, 1936 (one being undated)