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Wainwright Family Papers
1792-1850
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Summary

- Main entry:** Wainwright family
- Title:** Wainwright family papers, 1792-1850
- Size:** 2.5 linear feet (5 boxes)
- Source:** Gift of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright III, 1941; Gift of Fonrose Wainwright Condict, 1945; Purchase from De Forest Book Shop of New Orleans, 1942
- Abstract:** The papers contain the correspondence of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright (1792-1854), bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and letters of two generations of the Wainwright family of Boston and New York City. Family members represented include prominent tobacco merchant Peter Wainwright of Liverpool, England and his wife Elizabeth Mayhew (1759-1829), daughter of Rev. Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766); their children Bishop Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright and his wife Amelia Phelps; Peter Wainwright, Jr., treasurer of the Provident Loan and Trust Company of Boston and his wife Charlotte Lambert, and Elizabeth Wainwright, wife of noted obstetrician Walter Channing.
- Access:** Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.
- Preferred citation:** Wainwright Family Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Provenance note

The Wainwright Family Papers were acquired in three accessions. Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright III donated the bulk of the correspondence of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright in 1941. A 1942 purchase from De Forest Book Shop, New Orleans included letters to Peter Wainwright, Sr., Eliza (Mayhew) Wainwright, J. M. Wainwright's daughter and sons. In 1945, Fonrose Wainwright Condict donated correspondence of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, Eliza (Mayhew) Wainwright, Peter, Sr., Peter, Jr.,; also a small number of letters of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright, naval officer.

Related materials note

Peter Wainwright Papers for correspondence of Peter Wainwright Jr. and other family members. Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C..

Benjamin Eaton Letter Book, for letters to his employer Peter Wainwright, Sr.. Rare Book, Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C..

Elizabeth Howard Wainwright Letters Received. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass..

Additional papers of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright are found in the Bishops' Papers Collection. General Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y. and in the New York University, Office of the Chancellor, Administrative Records. New York University, New York, N.Y..

Biographical note

Elizabeth (Mayhew) Wainwright (1759-1829), was the daughter of Rev. Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766), the radical divine of the West Church and Elizabeth (Breame) Clarke (1733-1777) of Boston. Her mother's marriage to Mayhew in 1756 lasted until his death in 1766. In 1771 she married Mayhew's successor, the Rev. Simeon Howard (1733-1804). Elizabeth Mayhew married Peter Wainwright in 1790. Wainwright was a prosperous English tobacco merchant who had come to Boston before the American Revolution. Peter and Elizabeth returned to Liverpool, England in 1791 where their children Jonathan Mayhew, Peter Jr., and Elizabeth were born. She returned to America in 1803 and lived with her family in Boston, Hartford and New York; she died in Liverpool in 1829.

Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright (1792-1854), the son of Peter and Elizabeth Wainwright and a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was born in Liverpool, England. He attended academy at Sandwich, Massachusetts, 1804-1808, graduated from Harvard in 1812 with honors, and was soon afterward appointed proctor of the university and instructor of rhetoric. Deciding not to pursue a career in law, Wainwright devoted his life to the ministry. The Rev. John S. J. Gardiner D.D. directed his theological course at a time when there were very few Episcopal clergymen in Massachusetts. In 1814, Wainwright was invited to St. John's, New Brunswick, to take charge of the academy and the parish. Having finished preparatory courses, he was admitted to the order of Deacon, by Bishop Griswold, in St. John's Church, Providence, RI, 1816. The following year he was ordained as a priest at Christ Church, Hartford, Connecticut. In August 1818, he married Amelia Maria Phelps. He was an assistant minister at Trinity Church in New York City from 1819 before he assumed the rectorship of Grace Church, New York in 1821, a post he held until 1834. The corporation of Trinity Parish of New York City consecrated Grace Church in 1809 to supply the increasing demand for church accommodation Trinity was unable to meet. During his years at Grace Church, Wainwright also served as Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the General Theological Seminary, received an honorary degree from Columbia College, and promoted the religious instruction of youth. His interest in education led to the advancement of Sunday school and to the establishment of a charity school designed to educate 150 boys and 150 girls. He was one of the founders of the original council of the University of the City of New York, later New York University, in 1829.

Sacred music was also dear to the minister and he collected, arranged and published a collection of church music. In 1834, Wainwright was called to take on the rectorship of Trinity Church, Boston, which had been split in controversy and was without a pastor. Showing the high value he placed on music in worship, he visited England to acquire a better organ for the Boston church. He returned to Trinity Parish, New York as assistant in charge of St. John's Chapel in 1838. In addition to his visit to England in 1836, Wainwright toured Jerusalem in 1848 and in 1852, returned to England as a delegate to the third jubilee anniversary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts at Westminster Abbey. Upon his return to New York in 1852, he was elected provisional bishop of the Diocese of New York. This occasion marked the first time in the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church that an English bishop, from Montreal, united with American bishops in consecrating an American prelate.

Peter Wainwright, Jr. (1794-1878), Jonathan's brother, born in Liverpool, England, was employed at the Boston Savings Bank and later served as treasurer of the Provident Loan and Trust Company of Boston, MA. His wife was Charlotte Lambert.

Their sister, Elizabeth, also born in Liverpool, in 1794, lived with her brother Jonathan and her mother. After her mother's death, she married Dr. Walter Channing, a prominent obstetrician, in 1831. She died in 1834.

Scope and content note

Col. Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright III, who donated the bulk of the letters of his grandfather Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright in 1941, wrote of the collection, "There can be no more satisfactory or authentic record of manners, customs and family life of by gone days than is revealed in the intimate family correspondence of those who here trod life's stage. Particularly is this true of those who by stature, environment and education are competent witnesses." The Wainwright family papers reflect the lives and concerns of a family for whom the early American Republic was an inheritance. The papers show the peculiar evolution of family history during America's adolescence in which the grandson of a minister known for powerful pre-Revolutionary sermons against the establishment of bishops became one of the noted bishops of the Diocese of New York of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the antebellum era.

The Wainwright family letters document Elizabeth (Mayhew) Wainwright's family life, from her time in Liverpool, through her return to America in 1803, to her death in 1829. The collection includes letters she received from her half-brother, John C. Howard, the son of Elizabeth Clarke Mayhew and Simeon Howard. John C. Howard was member of American Temperance Society, a proprietor of the Boston Athenaeum and original member of the Boston Medical Association. He delivered the public discourse at the 1804 meeting of the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Peter Wainwright continued to travel between England and America in the early nineteenth century. The papers provide evidence of tensions in the Atlantic world at the close of the eighteenth century and in the first decades of the nineteenth.

The largest numbers of letters are those of Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright to his family. The files also contain letters from his wife, Amelia, to her family. In a letter composed in 1814, the future bishop of the Episcopal church warns his brother what to do in case he is drafted. "By all means I would recommend to you to call yourself an American and to act as one and it is your duty as you are naturalized and have the protection of the country." The correspondence offers a glimpse into the character of a man of erudition, and self-awareness. In a letter of March 29 1808, he penned, "Dear mother- Since I wrote my last letter, old Titus has died. I believe he has done his duty in the world. He sprang from nothing, and died possessed of fifteen hundred dollars, from which (by his will) there is to be a clock put on the meeting-house steeple, a monument to be erected over his tomb, and the remainder to be given to the parish. We see that worth is not confined to color. Titus was once a slave."

The collection also documents the rise of early American arts and letters. Wainwright's interest in the promotion of education and music is evidenced in a letter to Daniel Wadsworth of December, 1825 in which he invites the patron of the fine arts to join him for a performance of Italian Opera at the Philharmonic Society intended to be the best ever given on this side of the Atlantic by an Italian troupe. A trustee of the General Theological Seminary, Wainwright was committed to the promotion education for all Americans. The origins of New York University are seen in a letter of March 4th 1830, to his brother Peter, "I have indeed been very much occupied and among other things with this proposed University in our city. Perhaps you have seen or heard something about, all the public documents I have written, I send them to you a pamphlet and communications...From my having written these documents and being otherwise active it has been supposed that I was connected with the University as President - but I have no such intention, nor would I in my present mind on any account leave my Parish for any literary institution. I have been acting solely for what I thought the city requires."

Letters to and from wives, sisters, and daughters of the Wainwright circle offer insight into women's lives including the later years of Elizabeth (Mayhew) Wainwright and her daughter Elizabeth. In addition to letters between mother and daughter, are letters to and from sister-in-laws, Charlotte Lambert and Amelia Phelps. A large portion of the Elizabeth (Mayhew) Wainwright's correspondence is addressed to Mrs. Hartwell of Holyhead, England, a confidant and godmother to the Wainwright

children. An interesting letter may be found in the correspondence to Elizabeth Wainwright, composed by the wife of John C. Howard while the Howards were living in Havana. Describing daily life in a letter written in February of 1810, Mrs. Howard complains “The conversation in most companies consists of the going price of slaves, such a day a fine cargo of negroes arrived from the coast of Guinea, have you been to see them, they are fine looking fellows [*sic*], what will they sell for, this is the conversation with which I am frequently entertained.”

The collection also includes financial records of the Treasurer of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Boston, and of the Wainwright and Howard families.

Arrangement note

The Wainwright Family Papers are organized in the following series:

- Series I. Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright papers, 1802-1850
- Series II. Peter Wainwright, Jr. correspondence, 1801-1852
- Series III. Charlotte (Lambert) Wainwright letters received, 1818-1841
- Series IV. Elizabeth (Wainwright) Channing correspondence, 1804-1834
- Series V. Peter Wainwright, Sr. correspondence, 1792-1840
- Series VI. Elizabeth (Mayhew) Wainwright correspondence, 1782-1828
- Series VII. Financial documents, 1802-1837, n.d.

Series descriptions and container list

Series I. Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright papers, 1802-1850

Includes letters from Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright to his parents, brother, and sister. There are letters addressed to Daniel Wadsworth, the founder of the Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT, from 1825, 1826, 1831. Incoming letters in Box 2, folders 13-14 include miscellaneous letters, 1804-1815, and letters from his son Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright II, 1829-1844.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>		
1	1	1802	
	2	1804	
	3	1806	
	4	1807	
	5	1808	
	6	1812-1813	
	7	1814	
	8	1815	
	9	1817	
	10	1818	
	11	1819	
	12	1820	
	13	1822-1824	
	14	1825	
	15	1826	
	16	1827	
	17	1828	
	18-	1829	
	20		
	21-	1830	
	23		
	24	1831	
	25	1832	
	26-	1833	
	27		
	2	1	1835-1836
		2	1838
3		1839	
4		1840	
5		1841	
6		1842	
7		1843	
8		1844	
9		1845	
10		1846	
11		1848-1850	
12		n.d.	
13		Letters, received, 1804-1815 (Incoming letters and miscellaneous notes.)	
14		Letters from Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright II, 1829-1844 Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright II, naval officer, served in the East Indies, Mediterranean and died at Galveston in 1863.	
15		Miscellaneous writings Includes notes, poetry, recipes, and fragments of sermons.	

Series II. Peter Wainwright, Jr. correspondence, 1801-1852

Includes letters from friends and family in Massachusetts and Liverpool, England. Family correspondence from his wife, Charlotte, and sister-in-law Amelia Wainwright. Other correspondents include William Clark, Elizabeth Howard, and Charles L. Thayer. All outgoing letters, 1829-1852, are addressed to his brother Jonathan M. Wainwright.

		Incoming correspondence
16		1801-1829
17		1830-1845
18		undated
		Outgoing correspondence
		Peter Wainwright, Jr.'s outgoing correspondence include letters 1817-1828. All correspondence from 1829-1852 are addressed to Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright.
19		1817-1828
20		1829
21		1833
22		1845
23		1850-1852
24		undated

Series III. Charlotte (Lambert) Wainwright letters received, 1818-1841

Charlotte (Lambert) Wainwright's correspondence includes letters addressed to her from her cousin Charles L. Thayer, sister-in-law Amelia Wainwright, and other friends in Boston, London, and New York.

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
2	25	1818-1828
	26	1829-1841
	27	undated

Series IV. Elizabeth (Wainwright) Channing correspondence, 1804-1834

Elizabeth Wainwright's correspondence dates mostly from the period of her life before her marriage to Dr. Walter Channing. She lived in Boston, Hartford, and New York with her mother and clergyman brother. The incoming correspondence includes letters from family and friends in England and America. Correspondents include Mrs. Hartwell, the Howard family, and Amelia Wainwright. The outgoing correspondence is addressed to her brother Peter and his wife Charlotte in Boston

		Incoming correspondence
3	1	1804
	2	1815
	3	1817-1818
	4	1819
	5	1820-1821
	6	1822-1825
	7	1826-1834
	8-9	undated
		Outgoing correspondence
	10	1819-1930
	11	1831, n.d.

Series V. Peter Wainwright, Sr. correspondence, 1792-1840

Peter Wainwright's correspondence includes letters received from John C. Howard, as well as his regular letters to his sons and daughters composed from Boston and Liverpool, England.

	Incoming correspondence
13	1792-1828, n.d.
	Outgoing correspondence
14	1805-1820
15	1824-1825
16	1826-1828
17	1829
18	1830
19	1831
20	1832
21	1836
22	1837-1840

Series VI. Elizabeth (Mayhew) Wainwright correspondence, 1782-1828

Elizabeth Wainwright's correspondence dates from the years before she left America until the last years of her life. The incoming correspondence includes letters from her half-brother, John C. Howard, and his family. The outgoing correspondence includes letters to Mrs. Hartwell of Holyhead, England, 1796-1825 and to her family 1817-1822.

	Incoming correspondence	
4	1	1782-1800
	2	1801
	3	1802
	4	1803-1811
	5	1812-1823
	6	1824-1828
	7	undated
	Outgoing correspondence	
	8	1796-1802
	9	1803-1805
	10	1806-1825
	11	1817-1819
	12	1820-1822

Series VII. Financial documents, 1802-1837, n.d.

Protestant Episcopal Church, 1825-1837

Accounts and correspondence of James Bowdoin and Jonathan Mayhew Wainwright as Treasurers of the Protestant Episcopal Church, Boston.

5	1	1825-1827
	2	1828-1833
	3	1835-1837
	Wainwright family, 1802-1837, n.d.	
	4	1802-1805
	5	1806-1817
	6	1820-1831
	7	1832-1837
	8	undated

	Howard family, 1824-1828, n.d.
9	1824-1828, n.d.
10	Account books, n.d.
11	Bills of Rockland house, n.d.