

**The New York Public Library
Humanities And Social Sciences Library
Manuscripts & Archives Division**

**Theodore Winthrop, 1828-1861
Papers, 1844-1860**

**Nick Tucker
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Main Entry: Winthrop, Theodore, 1828-1861.

Title: Theodore Winthrop Papers, 1844-1860

Size: 2.6 lin. ft. (8 archival boxes, 1 bound volume)

Source: Gift of Elizabeth Winthrop Johnson, Laura Winthrop Johnson, and Caroline Sophia Johnson, 1908.
Gift of William Templeton Johnson, 1938. Transcripts, gift of Willard E. Martin, Jr. 1939.

Description: American author, adventurer and Civil War soldier. The papers consist largely of outgoing personal correspondence to Winthrop's mother, describing his adventures as he traveled through Europe, Panama, California, Oregon, and British Columbia. Also included are diaries that cover the same periods; academic papers from his years at Yale; and holographic manuscripts of his published and unpublished works. The collection is augmented by a typewritten transcript of most of the papers and diaries.

Related collections in the Manuscripts & Archives Division:
Laura Winthrop Johnson Papers, 1862-1889.

Related collections in other institutions:
Theodore Winthrop Papers, 1856-1877, in the Clifton Waller Barrett Library, #8551, Special Collections Dept.,
University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Va.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Theodore Winthrop (1828-1861) born in New Haven, CT, was the third son of Francis Bayard Winthrop by his second wife, Elizabeth Woolsey. His childhood consisted of reading from his father's large personal book collection, contemplation, wandering in the countryside and listening to stories. Having received his education at a dame school under Silas French, he entered Yale in 1843. He was dismissed from Yale in 1844 for breaking windows. He reapplied himself at Yale and in 1849 graduated.

He planned to study law at Harvard but was unable to because of ill health. Instead he began the first of his many travels. He spent the next year and a half in Europe traveling to many countries, detailing his experiences in lengthy correspondence and diary writing. In 1851 he worked in the New York office of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. He visited Europe again, and in 1853 sold tickets on the Panama Railroad. Taking a ship from Panama, he then explored California, Oregon, and Victoria B.C.

On return from his travels in the northwest, he decided to go back to Panama, this time with Lieutenant Isaac G. Strain on an expedition to the Darien Isthmus to survey the site as a possible place to dig a canal. Mr. Winthrop and some others got separated from the Lieutenant's party. Back in New York, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1855. He traveled the Adirondack and Maine woods with the painter Frederick E. Church, started a law partnership in St. Louis, and returned to New York in 1857 to pursue his literary career.

His first published work was a description of a painting by his friend Church. The work was entitled *A Companion to the Heart of Andes* (1859). Living in Staten Island, he spent most of his time writing until 1861 when he enlisted in the 7th New York Regiment, which guarded Washington for a month. He then went to Fortress Monroe and was shot dead in an engagement at Great Bethel on June 10, 1861.

He had sent James Russell Lowell wartime anecdotes, which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* (June, July 1861). His family offered his unpublished manuscripts to Ticknor and Fields, who published *Cecil Dreeme* (1861); *John Brent* (1862); and *Edwin Brothertoft* (1862). Two works of non-fiction, *The Canoe and the Saddle* (1863) and *Life in the open air* (1863), were also published by Ticknor and Fields. Forty-nine years after he wrote it, *Mr. Waddy's Return* (1904), his first novel, was published by Henry Holt and Company. Three other works lay unpublished: *Brothertoft Manor*; *Ice, A Winter Sketch*; and *Katahdin and the Penobscot*.

Scope and Content

The Theodore Winthrop Papers (1844-1860) consist of family correspondence, primarily letters to his mother in New Haven, CT. Other persons he wrote to were his sister Laura, her husband Templeton, and his other sister Sarah. This correspondence describes his adventures as he traveled through Europe, Panama, California, Oregon, and British Columbia. The collection also includes his academic papers while he was a student at Yale (1844-1849), his college thesis, and two lectures. Winthrop's diaries, 1848-1856, are primarily concerned with his travels. The last half of one diary, Mar. 1850-Sep. 1850, is filled with original poetry dated 1856. Eight holograph manuscripts of his published and unpublished works, including a fragment of another work, are included. Transcripts of most of the correspondence, school papers, and diaries were made by Willard E. Martin, Jr. and augment the collection, as does a bound collection of photostats of Winthrop's obituaries and other miscellany.

Note on Provenance

The manuscripts of Theodore Winthrop's works were donated to the library by Elizabeth Winthrop Johnson, Laura Winthrop Johnson, and Caroline Sophia Johnson in 1908. Winthrop's correspondence, Yale papers, lectures, and diaries were donated to the Library by William Templeton Johnson in 1938. Transcripts were donated by Willard E. Martin, Jr. on 10 Feb. 1939.

Arrangement Note

The collection is arranged in five series:

- I. Correspondence
- II. Yale Papers
- III. Diaries
- IV. Manuscripts of works
- V. Transcripts.

Series Description

SERIES I. CORRESPONDENCE (BOX 1)

The correspondence is family related, 1847-1857, arranged chronologically. This series contains letters from Winthrop mainly to his mother Elizabeth Woolsey Winthrop in New Haven, CT, as well as some correspondence with his two sisters Laura and Sarah, and his brother-in-law Templeton. Letters, 1847-1848, concern family and his life in Oswego, NY on a farm with his Uncle Charles. Letters dated after 1848 focus on Winthrop's travels and adventures. His European travels are documented in letters from 1849 through 1850. Due to ink bleeding, these particular letters are difficult to read. Letters dated from March to August 1853 concern his travels in California and northwestern United States. From December 1853 through January 1854, Winthrop describes the Darien Expedition, an excursion to survey a canal site in Panama. Some of the letters dated 1855 concern the failed Darien Expedition and problems that ensued when Winthrop's party separated from Lieutenant Strain. The last year of correspondence, 1857, shows Winthrop working in St. Louis as a lawyer.

The writings are arranged into three series.

SERIES II. WRITINGS: PAPERS AT YALE (BOX 1)

Arranged into two subseries: A. Papers written by Winthrop while he was a student at Yale; B. Miscellaneous lectures.

A. Yale Papers: These papers reflect the academic output of Winthrop's years at Yale. They date from his freshman year (1844) to his senior year (1849). Also included is his "College Thesis," which is undated but was most probably written his senior year (1849). Note: *The Dictionary of American Biography* reports Winthrop graduated in 1848, however, papers indicate he was at Yale in 1849.

B. Miscellaneous Lectures: This subseries includes two lectures "Fine Arts in America" (1856, Feb. 6) and "Adventure" (1856, Mar. 14).

SERIES III. WRITINGS: DIARIES & NOTEBOOKS (1 BOX) ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY

Five diaries make up the series. The first (1848-1853) begins in New Haven and ends in Oregon. This diary Winthrop lost for a year (1850-1851). The second diary appears to be the one Winthrop used while his original diary was lost. It covers the period from March 1850 in Malta to Paris, September 1850. The back half of the notebook contains original poems by Winthrop. The third diary begins in Victoria B.C. in 1853. It consists of short daily accounts. Two pocket

notepads end the series: one beginning in Panama Dec. 5, 1852(?), the other is primarily financial jottings.

**SERIES IV. HOLOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS
(9 VOLUMES)**

This series consists of eight holograph manuscripts in nine volumes. They are the published and unpublished literary works of Theodore Winthrop.

**SERIES V. TRANSCRIPTS AND BIOGRAPHIES
(2 BOXES)**

This series is comprised of typewritten transcripts of most of Winthrop's correspondence and diaries, prepared by Willard E. Martin, Jr. A bound book of photostats contains obituaries of Winthrop and miscellany. Three biographies of Winthrop follow: A holograph manuscript of the biographical sketch of Theodore Winthrop by G.W. Curtis that was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1861, and was also included as a preface in Winthrop's novel *Cecil Dreeme* (1861); a biography contained in *Yale Alumni Week* (1920) written by Elbridge Colby; and Theodore Winthrop by Ellsworth Eliot, Jr. (1938), printed.

Container List

I. Correspondence

Box 1 FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE

-1847-1857; ND

II. Writings: College Papers

-Papers at Yale 1844-49; ND

-College Thesis (circa 1849)

III. Writings: Diaries & Notebooks

Box 2 DIARIES & NOTEBOOKS

-1848, July 16 (New Haven)

-1850 (Malta)

-1853, Aug. 4 (Victoria Vancouver Is.)

-1852(?) (Panama)

-ND

-*Heart of the Andes* Mss. fragment

IV. Writings: Literary Works

Box 3 -*Brothertoft Manor* (In III Parts) pts. 2 & 3.

392 l. 4to. Half red morocco. Holograph.

Possible early version of *Edwin Brothertoft* published in Boston by Ticknor and Fields in 1862.

-*The Canoe and the Saddle: Adventures Among the Northwestern Rivers and Forests: and Isthmiana.*

313 l. 4to. Half morocco. Holograph.

Published in Boston by Ticknor and Fields in 1863.

Box 4 -*Cecil Dreeme.*

380 l. 4to. Half morocco. Holograph.

Holograph printers copy of the novel published by Ticknor and Fields in 1861.

-*Ice, a Winter Sketch*

260 l. (2 vols.) Half red morocco. Holograph.

Box 5 -*John Brent*

230 l. 4to. Half red morocco. Holograph.

Holograph printer's copy of the novel printed at Boston by Ticknor and Fields, 1862.

-*Katahdin and the Penobscot*, ND.

44 l.; 50 l. 4to. Unbound. Holograph.

Box 6 -*Life in the Open Air*.

107 l. 4to. Half red morocco. Holograph.

-*Mr. Waddy's Return*

270 l. 4to. Half red morocco. Holograph

Published by Henry Holt & Co. 1904.

V. Transcripts**Box 7** Typewritten transcripts of Winthrop's correspondence and diaries prepared by Willard E. Martin, Jr.

-Correspondence

-College Papers

-Diaries circa 1849-1852

Box 8 Diaries 1848-1853

-Sketch of Theodore Winthrop (circa 1861)

-*Yale Alumni Weekly* (1920)

-Theodore Winthrop by Elsworth Eliot, Jr. 1938 (blue cover) printed

Bound

-Photostats of Winthrop's obituaries and misc.