

The Gay Family Papers, 1730-1924

Repository: Hingham Public Library

Manuscript Number: MSC # 12

Creator: Gay Family

Quantity: 1 half document box

Processed By: Stephanie McBain

Related Materials: The Bicentennial Collection contains town records that relate to the Gay family.

Provenance

These papers were created by various members of the Gay family while living in Hingham, Boston, and New York. They were donated to the library by Joseph Richardson in 1976 and 1980 as part of the Bicentennial Collection.

Biographical Note

Ebenezer Gay was born in Dedham on August 15, 1696 to Nathaniel Gay and Lydia Luscher. He graduated from Harvard College in 1714 and was ordained as pastor of First Parish in Hingham in 1718. In 1719 he married Jerusha Bradford of Duxbury, and they had eleven children. Ebenezer was minister of First Parish for 69 years. He resided on North Street in Hingham near Magoon's Bridge, and died on March 18, 1787.

Martin Gay was born in Hingham on December 29, 1726 to Ebenezer Gay and Jerusha Bradford. He first married Mary Pinckney in 1750, and they had seven children. After Mary's decease he married Ruth Atkins around 1770, and they had two children. Martin was a "brass-founder" on Union Street in Boston. He was a deacon of the West Church and captain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. He addressed Hutchinson in 1774, Gage in 1775, and was proscribed and banished in 1778. He remained in Boston while the British were in possession of the city, and left with them in 1776, moving to Nova Scotia and then England. He returned to Boston in 1792, and died there on February 13, 1809.

Sidney Howard Gay was born in Hingham on May 22, 1814 to Ebenezer Gay and Mary Allyne Otis. He married Elizabeth Neal of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and lived in Staten Island, New York. Sydney was an abolitionist, lecturing for the American Anti-Slavery Society and editing its newspaper. He also edited other newspapers in New York and Chicago, as well as co-authoring "History of the United States" with William Cullen Bryant. He died in 1888.

Ebenezer Gay was born in Hingham on March 27, 1818 to Ebenezer Gay and Mary Allyne Otis. In 1852 he married Ellen Blake Blood of Worcester, and they had five children. Ebenezer graduated from the law school at Harvard University and became an attorney at law. He was also a member of the Massachusetts Senate in 1862. He moved to Boston with his family in 1862, and died on April 29, 1899.

Winckworth Allan Gay was born in Hingham on August 31, 1819 to Ebenezer Gay and Mary Allyne Otis. He was a fairly well-known landscape artist whose paintings, among other things, depicted Hingham and his family farm. While he traveled around the world to paint, his main studio was in Boston. His artwork has been displayed in cities including Boston, New York, and Washington. He resided on the family farm in Hingham and died in 1910.

Scope and Content Note

The collection contains the correspondence, manuscripts, and various records created by or relating to members of the Gay family from the 18th century through the 20th century. It also contains genealogical materials relating to the Gay family. Records include money orders, a receipt, and an obituary. Manuscripts include sermons and discourses by Ebenezer Gay, a collection of letters of Martin Gay, and several notebooks from the Allan Gay House.

Arrangement

- Series I. Correspondence, 1890-1924
- Series II. Genealogy, ca. 1861
- Series III. General Family Records, 1763-1924
- Series IV. Manuscripts, 1730-1898
 - Subseries 1, Allan Gay House, 1846-1855
 - Subseries 2, Ebenezer Gay Manuscripts, 1730-1781
 - Subseries 3, Martin Gay Letters, 1898

Series I. Correspondence, 1890-1924

Box 1, folder 1

This series consists of several letters written by members of the Gay family, including three letters dated 1890 from S.M. Gay to Solomon Lincoln regarding a portrait of Ebenezer Gay that he thinks is a bad copy, and also going into some detail about his father, Sidney Howard, and his grandfather Ebenezer. Also included is a 1924 letter from Martin Gay regarding an inventory of articles from the family's barn loft that the public may wish to look at or purchase before they are distributed among family members.

Series II. Genealogy, ca. 1861

Box 1, folder 2

This series contains materials relating to the Gay family genealogy. There are several letters from Gay family members to Solomon Lincoln regarding their genealogy, including an 1861 letter from Sidney Howard Gay, which included a list of the children of Ebenezer and Jerusha Gay (also in this folder); an undated letter from Ebenezer Gay, which also includes a copy of a letter from Sidney Howard; and an undated note from Winckworth Allan Gay. Also included are several pages of miscellaneous notes by unidentified authors, including a handwritten copy of the 1842 obituary notice of Ebenezer Gay and notes on Winckworth Allan Gay.

Series III. General Family Records, 1763-1924

Box 1, folder 3

This series includes various records of the Gay family, such as 1763 and 1766 money orders to Col. John Thaxter signed by Ebenezer Gay; a newspaper clipping of the 1899 obituary of Ebenezer Gay; and a 1924 receipt from Martin Gay, the trustee of Winckworth Allan Gay's estate.

Series IV. Manuscripts, 1730-1898

Subseries 1, Allan Gay House, 1846-1855

Box 1, folders 4 and 5

This subseries consists of manuscript notebooks relating to the family farm of Winckworth Allan Gay on South Street in Hingham. Included in Folder 4 are an 1846 family expense book (which was later saved from a fire in the barn in 1950) and an 1850 farm account book listing expenditures and payments throughout the year. Folder 5 contains three journals kept of activities on the family farm; one was kept from 1847-1848, one in 1849, and one from 1854-1855.

Subseries 2, Ebenezer Gay Manuscripts, 1730-1781

Box 1, folder 6

This subseries is made up of manuscript copies of sermons given by Ebenezer Gay during his time as pastor of First Parish. These include the 1730 sermon "The duty of the people to pray for and praise their rulers," given for the arrival of Jonathan Belcher as governor of Massachusetts; two copies of the 1745 sermon "The character and work of a good ruler, and the duty of an obliged people," given before the colonial administrator William Shirley in 1745; and two copies of "The Old Man's Calendar," a 1781 discourse delivered in First Parish on the occasion of Ebenezer's 85th birthday. Also included is a lecture book kept from 1772 to 1781 recording themes in the lectures of Ebenezer Gay.

Subseries 3, Martin Gay Letters, 1898

Box 1, folder 7

This subseries contains a manuscript compiled in 1898 by Edward Wheelwright entitled "Martin Gay: Three Letters Written by an American Loyalist and His Wife, 1775-1788." Martin was a loyalist who fled Boston with the British, living in Nova Scotia and England for over a decade. The manuscript contains a 1775 letter from Martin to his brother Jotham, a 1786 letter to Martin from his wife Ruth, and a 1788 letter from Martin to Mr. E. James of Cambridge. The manuscript also includes analysis of the letters, as well as biographical information on Martin and some illustrations.