

# Guide to the Curtis Family Papers

MS 864



compiled by Bruce P. Stark

November 1982

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
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P.O. Box 208240  
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 864

**CREATOR:** Curtis family

**TITLE:** Curtis family papers

**DATES:** 1695-1912

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.75 linear feet

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, deeds, account books, diaries and miscellaneous papers of the Curtis family of Connecticut and allied families Adams, Hallam, Poole and Pygan. In the correspondence is a Benedict Arnold letter (1768), drafts of letters by Jonathan Trumbull (1774), and a number of letters relating to military activities during the American Revolution. The papers of Benjamin Trumbull included here contain letters from Samuel A. Peters and William Winthrop, as well as notes probably collected for his history of Connecticut. Also an account by Elizabeth Adams Poole of her visit in 1782 to her husband in New York who was being held prisoner by the British. The deeds (1743-1837) chiefly record land transfers in New Haven County, Connecticut. Included also is the will of Alexander Pygan (1700), the inventory of the estate of Benjamin Curtis, and autographs collected by George M. Curtis.

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0864>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Mrs. William B. Church, 1948 and separated from the Lewis Perry Curtis Papers, 1982.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

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### Preferred Citation

Curtis Family Papers (MS 864). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Scope and Contents

The Curtis family papers are contained in two boxes (18 folders) and span the dates 1695-1912. The largest amount of material concerns the Curtis and allied families of Adams, Hallam, Poole, and Pygan. Additional material of an autograph nature was collected by George H. Curtis (1857-) and the collection also includes several letters to George M. Curtis in 1905-1906, most concerning the hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of Meriden. The Curtis family papers were donated to Yale University in 1948 by Mrs. William B. Church, formerly Agnes M. Curtis, the daughter of George M. Curtis.

Correspondence and other papers, arranged chronologically, folders 1-4, contain items of autograph and historical value. The collection includes, for example, two documents signed by Andrew Belcher (1648-1717) and two by his son Jonathan Belcher (1681-1757), governor of Massachusetts. It also contains the August 1700 will of Alexander Pygan of New London, the inventory and distribution of the estate of Benjamin Curtis (1703-1754), of Wallingford, a 1759 list of Wallingford men who received arms from James Wadsworth (1730-1817), a 1768 Benedict Arnold letter, and six letters, five of them drafts, of Governor Jonathan Trumbull (1710-1785). The five Trumbull drafts, all dated December 1774, discuss his financial problems, western lands, Samuel Peters, and family matters. Among the other important items are a February 1776 letter from Thomas Seymour (1735-1829) and others to General Charles Lee concerning activities of a group of some twenty volunteers and a November 1776 letter from Dr. Phillip Turner asking for the discharge of seventy-five named invalids from the American army.

Perhaps the most interesting items relate to the Reverend Benjamin Trumbull (1735-1820). The Curtis family papers include a 1790 letter to Samuel Peters concerning Episcopal ordination, an 1806 letter from William Winthrop discussing Trumbull's history of Connecticut, and Trumbull's notes on Connecticut history and copies of letters on Anglicanism, undoubtedly intended for his history of Connecticut. Among the other items of interest are an 1819 commission signed by Governor Oliver Wolcott (1760-1833), an 1862 letter from Robert A. Hallam concerning Episcopal history, genealogical notes on the Adams and Christopher families of New London, and a variety of autograph items. The collection has autograph letters and documents signed by Lyman Abbott, Charles W. Fairbanks, Edward A. Freeman, Ebenezer

Huntington, Samuel Farmar Jarvis, William Travers Jerome, William Ledyard, Thomas R. Lounsbury, Edward Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873), General George G. Meade, Orville H. Platt, Christopher R. P. Rodgers, and Daniel Webster.

The collection also includes two diaries written by Elizabeth Adams Poole (1752-1845), one from 1782 concerning an exchange of prisoners; a series of Curtis family Wallingford-Meriden deeds, of at least two Benjamin Curtises, Elisha Curtis, Amasa Curtis, and Asahel Curtis (1786-); diaries of William Adams (1650-1685) of Dedham, Massachusetts and Eliphelet Adams (1677-1753) of New London; and account books of Joseph Allen, Thomas Berry (1670-1728), Thomas Berry (1734-1812), Thomas Hubbard (1788-1871), and Asahel Curtis.

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## Collection Contents

### Correspondence and other papers

b. 1, f. 1	1695-1768	
b. 1, f. 2	1774-1806	
b. 1, f. 3	1807-1859	
b. 1, f. 4	1862-1906, n.d.	
b. 1, f. 5	Poole, Elizabeth Adams: diaries	1782, 1825-1831
b. 1, f. 6	Trumbull, Benjamin: writings	1775-1786, undated

### Deeds

b. 1, f. 7	1743-1779	
b. 1, f. 8	1780-1799	
b. 1, f. 9	1800-1807	
b. 1, f. 10	1808-1817	
b. 1, f. 11	1818-1824	
b. 1, f. 12	1825-1837	
b. 1, f. 13	Account book: Adams, William; Adams, Eliphalet; court dockets 1793-1796; cash accounts 1799	1675-1799
b. 1, f. 13	Account book: Allen, Joseph; Atwater, Jane Hubbard; Russell, Daniel; genealogy deaths	1745-1869
b. 1, f. 14	Account book: Berry, Thomas (1670-1728)	1711-1728
b. 1, f. 14	Account book: Berry, Thomas (1734-1812)	1764-1800
b. 1, f. 15	Account book: Hubbard, Thomas	1811-1854
b. 1, f. 16	Account books: unidentified	1838-1839
b. 2, f. 17	Account book: Curtis, Asahel	1836-1841
b. 2, f. 18	Library accessions book	1905-1912

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## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Pygan family

### Subjects

Agriculture  
Business  
Families  
General stores  
Law

### Geographic Names

Connecticut -- History  
Newport (R.I.) -- Commerce  
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca.  
1600-1775  
United States -- History -- Revolution,  
1775-1783

### Genres / Formats

Account books  
Autographs  
Deeds  
Diaries

### Names

Adams, Eliphalet, 1677-1753  
Adams, William, 1650-1685  
Arnold, Benedict, 1741-1801  
Berry, Thomas, 1670-1728  
Berry, Thomas, 1734-1812  
Curtis, Asahel  
Curtis, George Munson, 1857-  
Hubbard, Thomas, 1788-1871  
Peters, Samuel, 1735-1826  
Poole, Elizabeth Adams, 1752-1845  
Pygan, Alexander, d. 1701  
Trumbull, Benjamin, 1735-1820  
Trumbull, Jonathan, 1710-1785  
Winthrop, William, d. 1825

### Families

Adams family  
Curtis family  
Hallam family  
Poole family