

Guide to the Williams Family Papers

GEN MSS 1180



by Beinecke Staff

2014

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
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CALL NUMBER: GEN MSS 1180

CREATOR: Williams family

TITLE: Williams family papers

DATES: 1711-1930

BULK DATES: 1724-1800

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.96 linear feet (3 boxes)

LANGUAGE: In English.

SUMMARY: The Williams Family Papers consists of correspondence, writings, documents, and financial records kept by descendants of William Williams who lived in and near Wethersfield, Connecticut, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The papers are those of Elisha Williams, his second wife Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith, and his nephew Ezekiel Williams, merchant and sheriff of Hartford County. The correspondence is with family members and associates; the writings consist of sermons and essays by family members; documents are primarily related to the settlement of Elizabeth Smith's estate in the United States and England. Other papers include an engraved circular letter from London publisher James Rivington advertising a new edition of a work by Philip Doddridge.

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

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Francis Parsons (Yale BA 1893, LLB 1897, MA (Hon) 1925), 1937. Other additions are noted at the folder level.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

The Williams Family Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Williams Family Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection includes materials previously identified by the following call number: Uncat MS Vault 12:1

Williams Family of Connecticut and Massachusetts

The papers in this collection were largely donated by Francis Parsons of Hartford, Connecticut, and document his ancestors from five generations above him, all descendants of Robert Williams (1608-1693) and his wife Elizabeth Stalham (1595-1674), who emigrated from England to Roxbury, Massachusetts, in the seventeenth century. Their son Isaac Williams (1638-1709) had a son William Williams (1665-1741), and it is the two sons of William Williams, Elisha (1694-1755) and Solomon (1701-1776), and their descendants, whose papers are present here. These families were prominent citizens and religious leaders in and around Wethersfield, a town south of Hartford. Much of the information about the family was taken from *The Ancestors and Descendants of Ezekiel Williams of Wethersfield, 1608-1907*, by Mary Dyer Williams McLean (Privately printed, 1907). The principals in the papers are the following family members:

Elisha Williams (1694-1755), fourth child born to William Williams and his first wife Elizabeth Cotton Williams (1665-1698), was a Congregational minister, legislator, militia soldier, jurist, and the fourth rector of Yale College (1726-1739). He married twice, first in 1714 to Eunice Chester (died 1750), with whom he had six children, and second to Elizabeth Scott in 1751.

Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith (1708-1776) was the daughter of Thomas Scott (1680-1746), independent minister at Norwich, England. A poet and hymnist, she married Elisha Williams in 1751 and moved with him to Connecticut. In 1761 she married a prominent New York jurist, William Smith (1697-1769) and lived in

New York City. After his death she returned to Wethersfield to reside at the home of Ezekiel Williams, the nephew of her first husband, until her death there on June 13, 1776.

Ezekiel Williams (1729-1818), son of Reverend Solomon Williams (1701-1776) and Mary Porter Williams (1703-1787), was a merchant in Wethersfield and sheriff of Hartford County from 1767 to 1789. He was married to Prudence Stoddard (1734-1822), with whom he had eleven children.

Francis Parsons (1871-1937), the donor of the papers, was the son of John Caldwell Parsons (1832-1898) and Mary McClellan (1844-1871). He was a banker, lawyer, and author in Hartford. and the great-great-grandson of Ezekiel Williams (1729-1818).

Williams Family Tree

Family members appearing in the papers are underlined.

Robert Williams (1608-1693) m Elizabeth Stalham (1595-1674); 7 children, including

--2 Isaac Williams (1638-1709) m1 1660 Martha Park (1641-1674), m2 Judith Cooper; 12 children including

----3 **WILLIAM WILLIAMS (1665-1741)** m1 1686 Elizabeth Cotton (1665-1698); m2 1699 Christian Stoddard (1676-1764)

-----4 William Williams (1687-1687)

-----4 William Williams (1688-1760)

-----4 Martha Williams (1690-1766) m Edward Partridge

-----4 **ELISHA WILLIAMS (1694-1755)** m1 1714 Eunice Chester (died 1750), m2 1751 **ELIZABETH SCOTT (1708-1776)**

-----5 Eunice Williams (1716-1741)

-----5 Elisha Williams (1717-1784) m1 1742 Prudence Robbins, m2 1749 Mehitabel Burnham; 7 children

-----5 Samuel Williams (1720-1740)

-----5 William Williams (1722-1741)

-----5 Anne Williams (1731-1750)

-----5 Mary Williams (1735-1776) m Eliphalet Williams (1726-1803); 5 children

-----4 John Williams (1697-1697)

-----4 **SOLOMON WILLIAMS (1701-1776)** m 1723 Mary Porter (1703-1787)

-----5 Solomon Williams (1723-1723)

-----5 Solomon Williams (1725-1743)

-----5 Eliphalet Williams (1726-1803) m Mary Williams (1735-1776); 5 children

-----5 **EZEKIEL WILLIAMS (1729-1818)** m 1760 Prudence Stoddard (1734-1822)

-----6 Emily Williams (1761-1850) m 1785 Samuel William Williams (died 1812); 11 children

-----6 John Williams (1762-1840) m1 Sophia Worthington (1765-1813), m2 Mary Dyer Silliman; 9 children

-----6 **HARRIET WILLIAMS (1764-1850)** m David Parsons (1748-1823); 11 children including

-----7 Francis Parsons (1795-1861) m Clarissa Brown; 4 children including

-----8 John Caldwell Parsons (1832-1898) m 1870 Mary McClellan (1844-1871)

-----9 **FRANCIS PARSONS (1871-1937)** m 1897 Elizabeth Alden Hutchins (1872-)
-----6 Ezekiel Williams (1765-1843) m Abigail Ellsworth (1774-1860); 1 child
-----6 Prudence Williams (1767-1853) m Bezaleel Howard (1753-1837); 4 children
-----6 Mary Williams (1769-1850) m John Salter (1769-1831); 12 children
-----6 Esther Williams (1771-1820); unmarried
-----6 Solomon Stoddard Williams (1773-1840); unmarried
-----6 Christian Williams (1775-1803); unmarried
-----6 Thomas Scott Williams (1777-1861) m1 1812 Delia Ellsworth (1789-1840), m2 Martha Coit (d. 1867); no children
-----6 Samuel Porter Williams (1779-1826); m1 Mary H. Webb (d. 1815), m2 Sarah P. Tyler; 13 children
-----5 William Williams (1731-1811) m Mary Trumbull (1745-1831)
-----5 Mary Williams (1733-1794) m Richard Salter
-----5 Thomas Williams (1735-1819) m Rebecca Welles
-----5 Christiana Williams (1738-) m John Salter
-----5 Moses Williams (1740-1750)
-----5 Samuel Williams (1741-1742)
-----5 Eunice Williams (1745-1836) m Timothy Stone
-----4 Elizabeth Williams (1707-1753) m Samuel Barnard
-----4 Israel Williams (1709-1788)
-----5 William Williams (1734-1808)
-----4 Dorothy Williams (1713-1808) m Jonathan Ashley

Scope and Contents

The Williams Family Papers consists of correspondence, documents, and financial records kept by descendants of William Williams who lived in and near Wethersfield, Connecticut, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The papers include those of Elisha Williams, his second wife Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith, and his nephew Ezekiel Williams, merchant and sheriff of Hartford County.

Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Elisha Williams Papers, 1711-1759. II. Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith Papers, 1735-1775. III. Ezekiel Williams Papers, 1751-1812. IV. Other Papers, 1724-1930.

Collection Contents

Series I: Elisha Williams Papers, 1711-1759

18 Folders

The series contains letters to and from Elisha Williams, notably twenty-six letters from Williams to his cousin Stephen Williams (1693-1782), while the latter was a student at Harvard College and afterward a resident at Hadley, Massachusetts; Stephen was the son of Reverend John Williams of Deerfield, Massachusetts, and was held captive by the Abenakis Indians in Canada for more than a year as a child. Also present are several sermons written by Elisha Williams.

Series I is organized into four subseries: Incoming Letters, Outgoing Letters, Other Letters, Other Papers.

Incoming letters		
b. 1, f. 1	Doddridge, Philip	1751 Apr 4
b. 1, f. 2	Dwight, Joseph	1752 Jun 10
b. 1, f. 3	Smith, Elizabeth Scott Williams	1754, undated
b. 1, f. 4	Williams, Israel	1752 May 4
b. 1, f. 5	Williams, Solomon	1740-1750
Outgoing letters		
b. 1, f. 6	Ingersoll, Jared	1753 Feb 23
b. 1, f. 7	Williams, Solomon	1735 Dec 30
b. 1, f. 8	Williams, Stephen Letters of 1711-1714 gift of Lemuel Welles, 1939; letter of 1724 gift of Anson P. Stokes, 1937.	1711-1714, 1724
Other letters		
b. 1, f. 9	William Williams (1665-1741) to his grandsons Elisha, Solomon, and Eliphalet Williams	1739, 1741
Other papers		
b. 1, f. 10	Deed for sale of land in Wethersfield from Nathaniel Burnham to Elisha Williams (1717-1784)	1759 Apr 30
b. 1, f. 11	Drafts of letters, notes about army problems, draft of codicil to will (4 pages)	1749, undated
b. 1, f. 12	Essay, "The Doctrine of the Publick Covenant between God and his People" Gift of Lemuel A. Welles, 1939.	1713
	Last will and testament Stored in: Oversize, Box 3, folder 81	1755
b. 1, f. 13	Letter of recommendation	undated
b. 1, f. 14	Report of sermons preached in New Haven, 1729-1730 Anonymous gift.	undated

Other papers (continued)

b. 1, f. 15	Sermons and fragments (14) Gift of Grace Treadwell, 1930	circa 1721-1725
b. 1, f. 16	Sermons (7) Gift of Lemuel A. Welles, 1939.	1722-1743, undated
b. 1, f. 17	Sermon Given to Alexander Joseph Sessions (Yale BA 1831, MA 1845) by John Stoddard Williams (Yale 1827) and then to Benjamin Osgood Peirce; gift of Isabella Landreth Peirce, 1922.	1724 Sep 27
b. 1, f. 18	Sermon	1745

Series II: Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith Papers, 1735-1775*20 Folders*

The series contains correspondence and other papers of Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith. The correspondence is primarily incoming from both the Scotts, her family in England, and the Williams family in Connecticut, the brothers and other relations of her first husband Elisha Williams. Notable are fourteen letters from her brother-in-law Rev. Solomon Williams, and four from her brother Thomas Scott, poet, hymnist, and minister at Ipswich; third-party correspondence includes a letter from Smith's father Thomas Scott to another Nonconformist preacher, Rev. Philip Doddridge (1702-1751) of Northampton, England. Also present are three of Smith's autograph manuscript poems.

Papers related to the settlement of Elizabeth Smith's estates in England and the United States are filed in Series III.

Series II is organized into four subseries: Incoming Letters, Outgoing Letters, Third-party Letters, and Other Papers.

Incoming letters		
b. 1, f. 19	Baker, Rebeckah	1753 Feb 22
b. 1, f. 20	Dwight, Joseph	1755 Aug 2
b. 1, f. 21	Hague, Elizabeth Scott	1769-1774
b. 1, f. 22	Scott, Daniel (1694-1759, uncle) 19th-century manuscript copy of two letters dated 1750 and 1755.	undated
b. 1, f. 23	Scott, John (brother) Also stored in: Oversize, Box 3, folder 82	1752-1767
b. 1, f. 24	Scott, Mary (step-grandmother, second wife of Daniel Scott Sr.)	1743-1747
b. 1, f. 25	Scott, Thomas (1680-1746, father)	1735, undated
b. 1, f. 26	Scott, Thomas (1705-1775, brother)	1750-1771
b. 1, f. 27	Williams, Elisha	1753-1754
b. 1, f. 28	Williams, Ezekiel	1761, 1768
b. 1, f. 29	Williams, Israel	1755 Jul 26
b. 1, f. 30	Williams, Solomon Also stored in: Oversize, Box 3, folder 83	1757-1774
Outgoing letters		
b. 1, f. 31	Harper, Mrs.	undated
b. 1, f. 32	Scott, Thomas (1680-1746, father)	undated
Third-party letters		
b. 1, f. 33	Church of Christ, Norwich, England, to James Lockwood, Church of Christ, Wethersfield Regarding Elizabeth Scott Williams's move from one congregation to the other.	1751 May 31

Third-party letters (continued)

b. 1, f. 34	Daniel Scott to Thomas Scott	1740 Apr 22
b. 1, f. 35	Philip Doddridge to Thomas Scott	1740 May 26
b. 1, f. 36	Thomas Scott to Philip Doddridge Purchased on the Azariah Eldridge Memorial Fund, 1916.	1745 Apr 17

Other papers

b. 1, f. 37	Poems Contains: "The Christian Hero," "Family Religion," and "Seeking a New Habitation."	undated
b. 1, f. 38	Business papers, including notes, bills, agreements	1760-1775

Series III: Ezekiel Williams Papers, 1751-1812*26 Folders*

The series contains correspondence and other material related to Ezekiel Williams's family and his career as sheriff of Hartford County. Also present are some papers of his son Thomas Scott Williams (1777-1861), including letters from Williams to Thomas when he was a student at Yale College, and two of his school essays.

Notable in this series are three files documenting the estate of William's uncle's second wife, Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith (see Series II), which include her wills, correspondence related to bequests, and financial records for settling the estate in England and the United States.

Series III is organized into four subseries: Incoming Letters, Outgoing Letters, Third-party Letters, and Other Papers.

Incoming letters

b. 2, f. 39	Barnard, Samuel	1755 Sep 3
b. 2, f. 40	Bronson, Isaac	1791 Sep 7
b. 2, f. 41	Chauncey, Charles	1789 May 9
b. 2, f. 42	Goodrich, Chauncey	1812 Nov 19
b. 2, f. 43	Hancock, Margaret Governess for Ezekiel Williams's children; includes three proposed epitaphs for her tombstone, one in the hand of Ezekiel Williams.	undated
b. 2, f. 44	Howard, Bezaleel	1795, 1805
b. 2, f. 45	Lake, Mary	1789 Sep 15
b. 2, f. 46	Salter, Richard	1786 Sep 20
b. 2, f. 47	Tuthill, Jane Hancock	undated
b. 2, f. 48	Williams, Elisha With undated autograph note at bottom by Mary D. McLean.	1755 Apr 4
b. 2, f. 49	Williams, William (1731-1811, brother)	1776 Feb 12
b. 2, f. 50	Williams, William (1734-1808, cousin)	1759, 1791
Outgoing letters		
b. 2, f. 51	Dwight, Elijah	1774 Jan 4
b. 2, f. 52	Williams, Thomas Scott	1791-1794
b. 2, f. 53	Wolcott, Oliver	1788 Aug 6
Third-party correspondence		
b. 2, f. 54	Samuel M. Hopkins to Thomas Scott Williams	1800 Jan 2
b. 2, f. 55	Harriet Williams Parsons to Thomas Scott Williams	1797 Sep

Other papers

b. 2, f. 56	<i>Astronomical Diary and Almanack</i> (Boston: J. Draper, 1751) Includes Williams' autograph manuscript diary annotations.	1751
b. 2, f. 57-59	Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith estate papers Ezekiel Williams served as executor for his aunt's estate; the files contain her autograph will, manuscript copies of and a codicil to the will, an excerpt from William Smith's will, correspondence, invoices, and receipts.	1773-1796
b. 2, f. 60	Gravestone inscription for Solomon Williams	circa 1776
b. 2, f. 61	Legal and other documents related to personal and professional business	1753-1805
b. 2, f. 62	Mary Hooker estate papers Related to sale of land to Ezekiel Williams.	1783
b. 2, f. 63	Release note from John Chester to Van Horne Lott Requesting that Chester's decanters and wine glasses be delivered to Ezekiel Williams.	1785 Jul 12
b. 2, f. 64	Thomas Scott Williams essays on Homer and Milton	1796

Series IV: Other Papers, 1724-1930*14 Folders*

The series contains papers that could not be directly attached to the people in Series I-III, but were found with the collection, including an engraved circular letter from James Rivington & Co. dated 1759. The fourth subseries, Francis Parsons Papers, contains letters to the donor of the collection regarding the family and their papers.

Series IV is organized into four subseries: Documents, Letters by Others, Writings by Others, Francis Parsons Papers.

Documents		
b. 2, f. 65	Contract for the sale of sloop <i>Olive</i> to Thomas by William Laight and Frederick Rhineland	1773
b. 2, f. 66	Circular letter from James Rivington Co. regarding a new edition of Philip Doddridge's <i>Family Expositor</i>	1759 Oct 13
b. 2, f. 67	Letter of recommendation for James Lockwood for license to preach the gospel	1736 Dec 22
b. 2, f. 68	William Williams (1731-1811) clipped autographs (2)	undated
Letters by others		
b. 2, f. 69	Andrew Adams to Stephen Mitchell	1789 Jul 22
b. 2, f. 70	Samuel Davies to Joseph Forfitt, August 26, 1758; manuscript copy	undated
b. 2, f. 71	Samuel Johnson to John Beach	1724 Apr 3
b. 2, f. 72	Solomon Williams to Thomas Clap Gift of Elizabeth Cutler Woodward, 1951.	1752 Feb 13
Writings by others		
b. 2, f. 73	"An Essay on Original Sin" by John Arthur	1766 Feb
b. 2, f. 74	Minutes of the General Meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts Manuscript copy by David Humphreys; minutes refer to William Williams.	1735 May 16
b. 2, f. 75	Two sermons, author unidentified, England Dated Aylsham, 1734, and Lowestoft, June 1735; likely related to Thomas Scott or his son.	1734-1735
b. 2, f. 76	Three sermons by Solomon Williams	1764, 1772
Francis Parsons papers		
Correspondence		
b. 2, f. 77	Giffard, Hardinge F.	1890
b. 2, f. 78	McLean, Mary Dyer Williams, to Francis and John Caldwell Parsons Contains a transcript of a letter from Philip Doddridge to Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith, March 21, 1745.	1890-1903

Francis Parsons papers > Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 79	Williams, Edward H.	1903 Jan 27
b. 2, f. 80	Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith material Includes typed transcripts of her published obituary (1776), a letter from her to Eliphalet Williams (1765), and photographs of a mirror and portrait she owned.	circa 1930

Oversize*3 Folders*

b. 3 (Oversize), f. In Series I: Last will and testament 81	1755
b. 3 (Oversize), f. In Series II: John Scott to Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith 82	1752
b. 3 (Oversize), f. In Series II: Solomon Williams to Elizabeth Scott Williams Smith 83	1762

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.

Subjects

Clergy -- Connecticut
Women -- Connecticut

Geographic Names

Connecticut -- History -- 1775-1865
Connecticut -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783
Connecticut -- Politics and government --
1775-1865
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca.
1600-1775

Genres / Formats

Almanacs -- United States -- 18th century
Circular letters -- England -- London -- 18th
century
Estate records -- United States -- 18th century
Sermons -- United States -- 18th century
Wills -- United States -- 18th century

Occupations

Clergy -- Connecticut -- 18th century

Names

Bronson, Isaac, 1760-1838
Clap, Thomas, 1703-1767
Doddridge, Philip, 1702-1751
Keteltas, Abraham, 1732-1798
Lockwood, James, 1714-1772
Parsons, Francis, 1871-1937
Rivington, James, 1724-1802
Scott, Thomas, 1680-1746
Smith, Elizabeth Scott Williams, 1708-1776
Williams, Elisha, 1694-1755
Williams, Ezekiel, 1729-1818
Williams, Solomon, 1700-1776
Williams, Stephen, 1693-1782
Williams, Thomas Scott, 1777-1861

Families

Williams family

Contributors

Williams family
Parsons, Francis, 1871-1937
Smith, Elizabeth Scott Williams, 1708-1776
Williams, Elisha, 1694-1755
Williams, Ezekiel, 1729-1818
Williams, Solomon, 1700-1776
Williams, Thomas Scott, 1777-1861