

Albany Institute of History and Art
Library Finding Aid Form

A Guide to the George H. Thacher Family Papers

Collection Summary

Title: George H. Thacher Family Papers

Call Number: MG 177

Creator: Thacher Family

Inclusive Dates: 1830-1884

Bulk Dates: 1850-1870

Abstract: A collection of family papers from George Hornell and Ursula Jane (Boyd) Thacher and their three children, Margaret Euphemia, John Boyd and George Hornell. The bulk of the collection is correspondence to and from various family members between the 1830's to the 1880's. The collection has a limited amount of the children's schoolwork and grades; financial papers concerning day-to-day living and educational expenses including numerous bill heads of Albany business from that period; and a limited amount of unidentified photographs. Lastly, the collection includes financial materials from the Albany Army Relief Bazaar in 1864. A list of who donated money and other items is included.

Quantity: 3 Boxes, 1.25 linear foot.

Administrative Information

Custodial History: The Thacher Family Papers were purchased on April 19th, 2006 from Steenburgh Auctioneers & Appraisers in Pike, New Hampshire.

Preferred Citation: Thacher Family Papers, MS 177, Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

Accession #: LIB 2006.062

Accession Date: 06/13/2006

Processing Information:

Processed by David D. Doughan; Final Processing and Finding Aid completed on 12/9/2009

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: Permission to publish material must be obtained in writing prior to publication from the Chief Librarian & Archivist, Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12208.

Index Term

Persons

Boyd, David, 1770-1834
Morgan, Edwin Denison, 1811 - 1883
Thacher, John Boyd, 1847-1909
Thacher, George Hornell, 1818-1887
Thacher, George Hornell, 1851-?
Thacher, Margaret Euphemia, 1845-1858
Thacher, Ursula Jane, 1811 - 1874
Strong, Anthony M.

Organizations

Albany Wheel Works
Albany Academy
Union College (Schenectady, N.Y.)
Albany Female Academy
State Street High School
Western Reserve College (1826-1882)
Geneva Lyceum

Subjects

Army Relief Bazaar (1864 : Albany, N.Y.)
Bills of exchange
Bills of sale
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States Sanitary Commission

Places

New York State Capitol (Albany, N.Y.)
New York (State)
Massachusetts – Williamstown

Colorado - Leadville
New York - Schenectady
New York – Hornesville
New York - Geneva

Document Types

Correspondence
Financial Records
Photographs

Biography of

The following is a brief biography of the members of the Thacher family.

George Hornell Thacher (born 6/4/1818 – died 11/21/1887).

George Hornell Thacher, son of Samuel Olney and Martha (Hornell) Thacher, was born in Hornellsville, New York on June 4, 1818. He attended the Geneva Lyceum (Geneva, N.Y.), a secondary school especially for those preparing for education for the Christian ministry, in the 1830's. Soon after he attended Union College (Schenectady, N.Y.) and graduated with the class of 1843. . Mr. Thacher married Ursula Jane Boyd of Schenectady on June 15th, 1843. They had one daughter, Margaret Euphemia, and two sons, John Boyd and George Hornell, Jr.

The Thachers settled permanently in Albany in 1849. George engaged extensively in manufacturing pursuits, and for many years was head of the Thacher Car Wheel Works. He first became a factor in Albany politics in 1859, when he was elected member of the board of aldermen. He was elected mayor of the city four times between 1860 and 1874. He served as President of the Albany Army Relief Association.

He died in St. Augustine, Florida on February 15, 1887.

Ursula Jane Boyd Thacher (born 9/24/1811 - died 4/13/1874)

Ursula Jane Boyd, was the daughter of David Boyd and Margaret Maxwell, and it appears was named for her elder sister, Ursula Jane Boyd, who was born in 1808 and died in 1811. Ursula was involved in charitable organizations throughout the greater capital region.

She served as one of the Treasurers of the Albany Army Relief Association. The organization managed an ambitious public fair (the Albany Army Relief Bazaar) to raise money for the sick and wounded soldiers of the Union Army. The fair was organized around the needs of a federally sanctioned civilian-run organization, the United States Sanitary Commission, whose purpose was to look after the medical and health-related concerns of a large volunteer army. The Albany Relief Bazaar opened February 22, 1864. Altogether there were 30 booths in the Bazaar building,

representing local communities and foreign countries. When all was settled, the Albany Bazaar raised \$81,908.50-the fourth highest total raised by any Sanitary Fair in the country.

Margaret Euphemia Thacher (born 1845 – died 6/29/1858)

Margaret is the oldest child of George and Ursula. She attended Albany Female Academy. She died in the summer of 1858.

John Boyd Thacher (born 9/11/1847 – died 2/25/1909).

John Boyd Thacher was born in Ballston Springs, New York on September 11, 1847. He is the eldest son of George and Ursula. His early education was acquired under the instruction of private tutors, and in 1865 he entered Williams College, graduating in 1869. After leaving college he took a course in bookkeeping at Folsom's Business College in Albany. He gained a practical knowledge of his father's business by entering the molding department of the foundry. Upon the death of his father, he and his younger brother, George, succeeded to the proprietorship of the family business.

His active interest in political affairs dated from the year 1883, when he was elected as a State Senator from Albany county. Twice he was elected mayor of the city of Albany, and served in that capacity from May 4, 1886, to April 20, 1888, and again from January 1, 1896, until December 31, 1897.

Besides his political career he was a prominent author. Among his most prominent contributions to literature is *Christopher Columbus, His Life, His Works, His Remains, The Continent of America its Discovery and its Baptism*. On September 11, 1872, John Boyd Thacher married Emma, daughter of George Treadwell, of Albany.

George Hornell (born 11/20/1851 – died ?)

George is the youngest son of George and Ursula. He was born in the city of Albany, November 20, 1851. He was educated in Professor Whitbeck's private school in Albany and at the age of thirteen years was placed under the tuition of Professor Griffin, of Williamstown, by whom he was prepared for college. At the age of sixteen he entered Williams College, from which he graduated with the class of 1872. He later attended Bryant and Stratton's Commercial College, taking some business courses. Subsequently, he entered his father's car wheel works as clerk and apprentice, and still later became foreman of the establishment.

In 1880 he went to the mining regions of Colorado and served as the representative of a group of Eastern stockholders interested in Colorado mines. He remained there until the latter part of 1883, then returned to Albany. Upon his return he became a business partner with his father under the firm of George H. Thacher & Company. After the death of his father in 1887, George, in company with his brother, John, continued the business as before, and still retained the old firm name.

In 1887 Mr. Thacher succeeded his father as member of the board of directors of the Old Albany City National Bank, became its vice-president in 1889, and was its third and last president. He also served as vice-president of the Albany City Savings Institution, a director of the Union Trust Company and of the National Commercial Bank of Albany. He was appointed a member of the city board of water commissioners in May, 1892, and resigned that office December 1, 1894. He was married on January 1, 1880 to Emma Louise Bennet, of Albany. They had seven children.

Scope and Contents of the Records

A collection of family papers from George Hornell and Ursula Jane (Boyd) Thacher and their three children, Margaret Euphemia, John Boyd and George Hornell.

The Thacher Family Papers are arranged into six series.

Series I. Correspondence, 1830-1883. (18 folders).

Arranged chronologically. Letters mostly to and from Thacher family members. .

Series II. Education, 1839-1868. (10 folders)

Subseries I. Grades and Compositions

Arranged chronologically. School papers from George Sr, John Boyd, Margaret and George Jr. 1839-1868

Subseries II. Tuition payments, 1857-1864

Arranged chronologically. Tuition payments for George Jr, John Boyd and Margaret.

Series III. Family receipts, 1838-1884. (6 folders)

Arranged chronologically. Family receipts. Bill heads from numerous Albany business can be found in this series.

Series IV. Albany Army Relief Association, 1861-1864. (7 folders)

This series contains information on the formation and mission of the Albany Army Relief Association. The first folder contains organizational information about the Association. Subsequent folders are arranged in original order; check books and receipts are placed in a folder as found in the box that the Albany Institute received. There are six folders containing detailed financial information from the Albany Army Relief Association.

Series V. Photographs, Undated. (2 folders)

Arranged by material type. Five *unidentified* photos and one daguerreotype are included in this series. Photos are from Albany and Leadville, Colorado.

Series IV. Miscellaneous, 1856-1882. (5 folders)

Arranged chronologically. This series some newspaper clippings, a missionary packet, two obituaries for Margaret Euphemia Thacher, shares and a report from the Board from the Albany & Boston Mining Company, and a flyer on a Young Men's Christian Association charity project for wounded Union soldiers called "The Little Housewives".

Organization of the Records

The first folder in the collection contains an old inventory. The inventory suggests that the collection was once place into books. However, the described ordering was not apparent upon inspection the collection. Instead items were placed into legal size folders labeled by year. Each folder contained numerous plastic sleeves with items in each sleeve. Upon inspection it was discovered that almost half of the collection were misfiled in the wrong year. It was subsequently decided that the entire collection needed to be re-arranged. The old inventory has some dates and names that sent and received the correspondence.

All staples, pins and fasteners have been removed from the documents. Items were removed from plastic sleeves and re-housed in acid free folders and boxes. Envelopes have attached to the letters when possible.

Related Material

There are numerous books found in the library from John Boyd Thacher including:

Catalogue of the John Boyd Thacher collection of incunabula.

Charlecote: or, The trial of William Shakespeare

Christopher Columbus: his life, his works, his remains.

The continent of America : its discovery and its baptism

Little speeches by John Boyd Thacher : being a collection of a dozen short addresses on various topics.

The library also has two vertical files on different members of the Thacher family.

Other Finding Aids

An older inventory of the entire collection can be found in Box 1 Folder 1. The inventory lists the recipient and sender of a majority of the letters. See the notes in the Organization of the Records section for additional information.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
1	1	Lists

Series I. Correspondence, 1830-1883.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
1	2	Correspondence, 1830-1839
	3	Correspondence, 1840-1846
	4	Correspondence, 1854-1858
	5	Correspondence, 1860
	6	Correspondence, 1861
	7	Correspondence, 1862
	8	Correspondence, 1863
	9	Correspondence, 1864
	10	Correspondence, 1865
	11	Correspondence, 1866
	12	Correspondence, 1867
	2	13
14		Correspondence, 1869
15		Correspondence, 1870 -1877
16		Correspondence, 1880- 1883, Colorado
17		Correspondence, Undated
18		Correspondence, Undated

Series II. Grades, Compositions, Tuition Receipts, 1839-1868.

Subseries A. Grades and Compositions

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
2	19	Union College – George H. Thacher, 1839-1842, 1847.
	20	Compositions - Maggie E. Thacher, 6/5/1857, Undated.
	21	Albany Female Academy - Maggie E. Thacher, 1857
	22	School Schedule - Maggie E. Thacher, Undated.
	23	Sand Lake Collegiate Institute – Grade, John Boyd, 1/1861, 5/1861.
	24	Compositions – George, 3/16/1867, Undated.

25 William College Materials, 1868

Subseries B. Tuition payments, 1857-1864

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
2	26	Misc. Education Payments, 1857-58.
	27	Albany Academy, 1858-1860.
	28	State Street High School, 1862-1864.

Series III. Family receipts, 1838-1884.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
2	29	Family Receipts, 8/7/1838
	30	Family Receipts, 1854-1859
	31	Family Receipts, 1860's
	32	Family Receipts, 1870-1872
	33	Family Receipts, 1883-1884
	34	Family Receipts, Undated

Series IV. Albany Army Relief Association, 1861-1864.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
3	35	Organization Papers, 1863, undated.
	36	A.M. Strong - Checkbook, 1861.
	37	Treasurer's Memoranda, 1861.
	38	Mrs. E. D. Morgan's Vouchers, 1861-62.
	39	Bank Account Books, 1861-63
	40	Financials, 1861-64

Series V. Photographs, Undated.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
3	41	Daguerreotype, Undated
	42	Photographs, Undated

Series IV. Miscellaneous, 1856-1882.

Box #	Folder #	Title / Description
3	43	Newspaper Clippings, 1855, 1861, 1866, 1876, Undated.
	44	Missionary Packet – Morning Star, 1856
	45	Obituaries – Maggie E. Thacher, 1858.
	46	Albany and Boston Mining Company, 1862-1865, 1877, 1882.
	47	YMCA – “Little Housewives”, 4/12/1863