Guide to the William Woolsey Johnson Papers

MS 954

compiled by Susan Grigg and Thomas J. Connors

September 1984

Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
mssa.assist@yale.edu
http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/
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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
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http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/

CALL NUMBER: MS 954

CREATOR: Johnson, William Woolsey, 1841-1927

TITLE: William Woolsey Johnson papers

DATES: 1783–1903

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.25 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist almost entirely of family correspondence among Johnson, his wife, children, and parents, including letters from Johnson as a student at Yale University. Among the family correspondents is Theodore Dwight Woolsey, an uncle of Johnson’s. Also in the papers are account books (1877-1894) and a small amount of correspondence with friends and professional associates.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0954

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 http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0954.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to 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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Biographical / Historical

WILLIAM WOOLSEY JOHNSON

Born at Owego, Tioga County, New York, June 23, 1841. Entered college from Owego.


Prepared for college under a private tutor; first prize in mathematics Freshomore year, prize for mathematical solutions Sophomore year, first and second prizes Senior year; oration appointments Junior and Senior years; member Phi Beta Kappa; graduate member Wolf’s Head. He receieved his B.A. in 1862.

After two years in the Nautical Almanac office at Cambridge; six as Assistant Professor in the Naval Academy at (Newport but soon removed to) Annapolis; two as Professor of Mathematics in Kenyon College; and nine in like office in St. John’s College, Annapolis, Johnson again (1881) entered the Naval Academy, this time as full Professor. He was a professor at U. S. Naval Academy from 1881 until his retirement in 1921; in 1913 was given a commissioned rank in the Navy by a special act of Congress and upon his retirement held the rank of Commodor. There he remained. He went abroad several times in the summer; and once for a year’s leave of absence, including in his stay both summer vacations. At that time (1886-1887) all his family were with him, keeping house for the most part in Cambridge, England. He was busied meanwhile on his book on Differential Equations. He was a member of the Council of the American Mathematical Society; a member of the London Mathematical Society; a Corresponding member of the
British Association for the Advancement of Science; and a member of the American Association. — A list of his books follows, and then part of a private letter to Morse.


A Treatise on the Differential Calculus. Wiley. 1879. (In this work, Johnson was associated with one of his colleagues.)


A Treatise on Differential Equations. 1889. Also the chapter on this subject in Higher Mathematics, published by Wiley, in 1896.


Many of Johnson’s papers have been printed in the (English) Messenger of Mathematics and Quarterly Journal of Mathematics; in the Analyst, the American Journal of Mathematics, the Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society; and in the Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute and of the London Mathematical Society.

He was one of the founders of New York Mathematical Society, which later became American Mathematical Society, and of whose council he was a member; member London Mathematical Society; corresponding member British Association for the Advancement of Science; former Fellow of American Association for the Advancement of Science; member Protestant Episcopal Church.


Death due to bronchopneumonia and the infirmities of age. Buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, Baltimore. Survived by two sons, four grandchildren, one great-granddaughter, and a brother, Charles F. Johnson, ’55. Married, August 12, 1869, to SUSANNAH LEVERETT BACCHELLER, of Annapolis.

Scope and Contents

The William W. Johnson Papers consist of ten inches of correspondence, personal financial records, and miscellaneous items spanning from 1858 to 1903. Most of the letters were exchanged among members of the family principally William W. Johnson, his wife and children, and his parents, brother, and sisters. The largest groups of letters were sent to his parents from Yale (1858-1862) and to his future wife from the U.S. Naval Academy (1867-1869). There are also many notes and postcards from family members in Europe in the 1880s and 1890s. The non-family correspondence consists mainly of a sprinkling of letters to William W. Johnson from friends and professional associates, including Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1866 May 22) and Albert Francis Judd. The financial records include household accounts kept by Johnson’s wife, Susannah Leverett (Batcheller) Johnson.

The William W. Johnson Papers were purchased from F.H. Sweet and William Sanders in 1955; gift of Charles Fredrick Johnson, 1999.
## Collection Contents

### Inventory

.75 linear feet (2 boxes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnson, William Woolsey (1841-1927; Y 1862)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to his parents, his sister Katherine, and his brother Charles</td>
<td>1858–1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>to his sister and his future wife</td>
<td>1867–1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>to his wife</td>
<td>1879–1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>to his wife and sons</td>
<td>1883–1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>to various persons named above</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>from friends and professional associates</td>
<td>1863–1901, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnson, Susannah Leverett Batcheller (wife of WWJ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>to her sons</td>
<td>1883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>from friends</td>
<td>1869, 1882–1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Johnson, Charles William Leverett (1870-; son of WWJ)</td>
<td>1881–1887, 1894–1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to his parents</td>
<td>1881–1886, 1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Johnson, Charles Frederick (1804-1870; father of WWJ)</td>
<td>1864–1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to WWJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Johnson, Sarah Dwight (Woolsey) (1805-1870; mother of WWJ)</td>
<td>1862–1869, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to WWJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Johnson, Charles Frederick (1836-1931; brother of WWJ)</td>
<td>1864–1865, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to WWJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Johnson, Anna Muirson (1840-; sister of WWJ)</td>
<td>1863–1867, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to WWJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Johnson, Katherine B. (sister of WWJ)</td>
<td>1862–1866, 1878, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to WWJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Batcheller, Sarah Miller (Leverett) (mother-in-law of WWJ)</td>
<td>1882–1886, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to her daughter Susannah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Batcheller, Charles G. (brother-in-law of WWJ)</td>
<td>1872–1877, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to his sister Susannah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Brewer, Hattie C., and family</td>
<td>1886–1887, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to Susannah Leverett (Batcheller) Johnson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Carmalt, Laura Woolsey (Johnson) (1837-1923; cousin of WWJ)</td>
<td>1863, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>to WWJ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Woolsey, Theodore Dwight (1801-1889; uncle of WWJ)</td>
<td>1862, 1868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correspondence (continued)

b. 2  Unidentified and miscellaneous  1866–1887, undated

Other Papers
Johnson, William Woolsey
b. 2  Cash account book  1877–1884
b. 2  Bank book  1886–1887

Johnson, Susannah Leverett (Batcheller)
b. 2  Dance bids  1866–1867
b. 2  Household account book  1892–1894
b. 2  Johnson, Charles William Leverett/ Certificates of good conduct  1886
b. 2  Calling cards  undated
### Accession 1999-M-088. Additional Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 1</td>
<td>Correspondence of Charles Frederick Johnson, Jr. (1836-1931, Yale B.A. 1855) to his parents</td>
<td>Circa 1850–1868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1, f. 2</td>
<td>Photocopy of Yale B.A. degree awarded to Robert Charles Johnson</td>
<td>1783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Educators
Science

Geographic Names
Europe -- Description and travel

Genres / Formats
Account books

Occupations
Mathematicians

Names
Brewer, Hattie C.
Higginson, Thomas Wentworth, 1823-1911
Johnson, Anna Muirson, 1840-
Johnson, Charles Frederick, 1804-1882
Johnson, Charles Frederick, 1836-1931
Johnson, Charles William Leverett
Johnson, Katherine B.
Johnson, Sarah Dwight, 1805-1870
Johnson, Susannah Leverett Batcheller
Johnson, William Woolsey, 1841-1927
Judd, Albert Francis, 1838-1900
Woolsey, Theodore Dwight, 1801-1889

Families
Johnson family

Corporate Body
Yale University -- Students