Guide to the Dwight Family Papers

MS 187



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan and William E. Brown, Jr.

April 1986

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Last exported at 2:11 a.m. on Tuesday, March 18th, 2025

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY:	Manuscripts and Archives Yale University Library
	P.O. Box 208240
	New Haven, CT 06520-8240
	(203) 432-1735
	(203) 432-7441
	beinecke.library@yale.edu
	http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/

CALL NUMBER: MS 187

CREATOR: Dwight family

TITLE: Dwight family papers

DATES: 1713-1937

BULK DATES: 1800-1899

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 5.5 linear feet

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The papers consist of correspondence, financial records, addresses, sermons, writings, photographs, and other memorabilia of Yale President Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) and his family. Relatives in the Edwards, Hooker, Lyman, Strong, Woodbridge, and Woolsey families are represented. The largest quantity of correspondence documents the family life of John William Dwight, a fertilizer manufacturer. Papers of Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) and Timothy Dwight (1828-1916) concern Yale University. The travels of various family members are highlighted.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <u>https://</u><u>hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0187</u>

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.0187.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to <u>http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/</u> <u>ifr_copy_order.html</u>. 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

Gifts and purchases, 1932-1989. Gift of Eunice Trowbridge, 2005.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright for unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the Dwight Family has been transferred to Yale University. These materials may be used for non-commercial purposes without seeking permission from Yale University as the copyright holder. For other uses of these materials, please contact beinecke.library@yale.edu.

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Preferred Citation

Dwight Family Papers (MS 187). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Processing Information

This finding aid was revised in 2024 to reflect research done by the Yale and Slavery Research Project. During that revision, description was added to the scope and contents and biographical notes and subject headings were added. Previous versions of this finding aid may be available. Please contact the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library for details. If you have questions or comments about these revisions, please contact the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. For more information on reparative archival description at Yale, see <u>Yale's Statement on Harmful Language in Archival</u> <u>Description</u>.

Related Materials

Additional Dwight family material is housed in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Other Finding Aids

A paper index to selected correspondents is available at the repository.

Biographical / Historical

Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) was born on May 14, 1752 in Northampton, Massachusetts. He graduated from Yale College in 1769 (B.A.) and 1772 (M.A.). He served Yale as tutor (1771-1777), Livingston Professor of Divinity (1795-1817), and President (1795-1817). He died on January 11, 1817 in New Haven, Connecticut. He also served as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War.

Dwight was a deeply conservative leader at Yale and beyond. He was a Federalist and a leader of New England's "Standing Order," an elite group of Congregationalist intellectuals, politicians, and religious leaders espousing the value of conservative New England politics, including Federalism, opposition to the separation of church and state, and a focus on political stability. A grandson of the theologian Jonathan Edwards, Dwight was related by blood and marriage to other leading families of Yale and New England; his nephew, Theodore Dwight Woolsey (1801-1889), served as president of Yale, as did his grandson and namesake, Timothy Dwight V (1828-1916). Dwight helped lead the evangelical and religious revivals that swept over Yale in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Dwight's conservatism intersected with his belief in the socially disruptive potential of an antislavery movement. He expressed opposition to slavery as enacted in the West Indies but supported and participated in the enslavement of Black people in New England and was sympathetic to the practice of slavery in the American South. In March 1788, he bought Naomi, a Black woman previously enslaved by Deacon Daniel Andrews of Norfield (Weston), Connecticut. Although Dwight claimed that she would be allowed to pay for her freedom, Naomi's fate is unknown as of 2024. Dwight enslaved three other people: "a negro Maria b. Oct. 14, 1789; York b. May 31, 1794; next youngest born June 1, 1797" (as recorded in vital records from Fairfield, Connecticut). Historian David Blight, writing with the Yale and Slavery Research Project, has suggested that Maria, York, and the person listed but not named in the vital records were Naomi's children.

Dwight engaged in political and religious activities throughout his life, which are documented in his letters, writings, sermons, and addresses, many of which demonstrate his conservative and authoritarian worldview. He expressed anti-Francophone views, was openly critical of the French Revolution, was a sharp critic of Thomas Jefferson, and was a millennialist. Dwight was a published poet and writer. In 1799, Dwight helped found the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences and served as president of the organization. As president of Yale, he fostered the introduction and teaching of new scientific subjects at the college and supported faculty member Benjamin Silliman in his efforts to build up the sciences at Yale.

Dwight's travel and statistical writings are valuable both for the empirical information they provide about early America and for the worldviews they embody. His four volume Travels in New-England and New-York encompass his observations recorded over a ten-year period. His 1811 Statistical Account of the City of New-Haven, among other topics, includes observations about the city's Black population; for example, he counted the number of free Black people in New Haven as 150 and along with his views of their habits, capacities, and appearance.

In 1809, Edwin W. Dwight, a distant relative of Timothy Dwight and then a Yale College senior, found Henry Obookiah (Opukaha'ia), a young Hawaiian boy, crying on the steps of a Yale building. Obookiah had come to New Haven on a trade ship from China, which had passed through Hawaii on its way to the United States. Edwin brought Obookiah to Timothy Dwight, who tutored Obookiah in Christianity and secular subjects. Obookiah later studied to become a missionary at other New England schools but died of typhus in 1818. Likely influenced by his connection with Obookiah, Timothy Dwight helped establish the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. He was also a projector of the Andover Theological Seminary and the Missionary Society of Connecticut. Information in this biographical note was drawn in part from David Blight and the Yale and Slavery Research Project, *Yale and Slavery: A History* (Yale University Press, 2024).

Scope and Contents

The Dwight Family Papers consist of correspondence, financial records, writings, and other material documenting the life and work of Yale College president Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), his ancestors, descendants, and other relations. Relatives in the Edwards, Hooker, Strong, Woodbridge, and Woolsey families are represented. The largest quantity of correspondence documents the family life of John Williams Dwight (President Dwight's grandson), his wife Sophia Dwight Dwight, and children Mary Clarissa, Edward Strong, and Emily Cecilia Dwight. The papers also include courtship letters of Mary Alsop Dwight Patrick and professional papers of President Dwight and his grandson, President Timothy Dwight (1828-1916). Series I: Correspondence and Papers, 1713-1937 includes letters, financial and legal papers, and

memorabilia arranged in chronological order, while Series II: Family Papers, 1788-1929 consists of other types of material arranged by individual.

Series I begins with legal and financial documents of the Dwight family in eighteenth century Northampton, Massachusetts, including deeds, accounts, and probate records (folder 1). Folder 1 also contains a March 1788 bond for Dwight's purchase of Naomi, a Black woman who was previously enslaved by Deacon Daniel Andrews of Norfield (Weston), Connecticut; that bond was signed before Maurice W. Dwight and A. Burr. There is also a 1748 account of W. B. Dwight's death and letters for Timothy Dwight (1694-1771) to the Rev. Dr. Thomas Foxcroft describing religious activities in the Northampton area. A 1795 letter invites Timothy Dwight to assume the presidency of Yale College, and several letters in folders 1-3 concern Yale matters. Other letters in these folders focus on family affairs and include exchanges between parents and children and husband and wife.

Folder 3 includes medical advice to Timothy Dwight (1816 Dec. 7) on treating a stricture of the urethra and a copy of the original minutes recorded by Benjamin Silliman at Dwight's bedside on January 10, 1817, the day before his death. These minutes concern directions for the publication of Dwight's writings. Folder 3 also contains remarks by Dwight on the "comparative value" of his sermons and correspondence of his son Timothy Dwight (1778-1844) concerning the posthumous publication of his father's "System of Divinity." The folder also includes correspondence of Benjamin Dwight, Sereno Dwight, Mary Woolsey Dwight, and Theodore Dwight.

The majority of the correspondence in folders 4 and 5 relates to the courtship of Mary Alsop Dwight by Matthew A. Patrick, a career army officer serving in 1832 in South Carolina. His letters include comments on the nullification crisis, which delayed his wedding furlough. A few letters from Mary Alsop (Dwight) Patrick to her father Theodore Dwight describe her life as an officer's wife. Folder 5 also contains correspondence of Theodore Dwight, Jr., concerning the publication of his textbooks, and of Timothy Dwight's (1752-1817) heirs, concerning their claim for a Revolutionary War veteran's pension.

Correspondence between John W. Dwight and his future wife Sophia Dwight of Clinton, New York, begins in folder 5. There are numerous letters to "Sophy" in folders 6 and 7, and folders 8-12 are almost exclusively concerned with this branch of the Dwight family. For a period of a year and a half (1862-1863) John Dwight lived in New Haven, working at a saltpeter business, while his wife and family lived in Clinton, near her family. The almost daily letters between husband and wife concern family finances, weather, the eating habits and behavior of the children (Mary, "Minnie" or "Molly"; Edward, "Ned"; and Emily, "Cecily"), the death of son Louis, John's draft status, and the deteriorating nature of Sophia's health. Following Sophia's death in 1863 there are far fewer letters, but the correspondence through folder 25 is predominantly that of Mary and Edward with their father, now the president of the New Haven Fertilizer Company, uncle Benjamin W. Dwight, and other relations and school friends. Edward graduated from the Yale Medical School in 1886, and several letters concern attempts to establish his medical practice. From folder 17 on there are occasional letters from Timothy Dwight (1828-1916) to non-family members. The majority of these letters are dated after 1888 and concern Yale University business.

Folders 24 and 25 contain additional undated letters of John W. Dwight's family, while folders 26-29 include memorabilia, writings, and financial and legal papers of this same branch of the Dwight family. Folder 28 includes photographs of the Dwight family ancestral property in Dudley, Massachusetts.

Series II includes papers of Margaret Dwight Bell, Benjamin W. Dwight, Henry Dwight, Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), Susan Edwards Daggett Dwight, and Timothy Dwight (1828-1916). The largest quantity of material relates to Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) and includes sermons and other writings, as well as notes of his sermons and discourses recorded by his son Benjamin W. Dwight, Alexander Phoenix, and an unidentified student in the Yale College seniors' recitation room. Folders 43 and 44 contain Dwight's journals of travels to Cape Cod, Newport, Portsmouth, and Vermont. These were later edited and form a small portion of the published version of Dwight's Travels in New England and New York. (A few additional journals are found in the Humphreys-Marvin-Olmsted Papers, MS 857.) The series includes both printed and manuscript sermons, many of which were delivered at Yale College, and Dwight's poetry.

Benjamin Dwight is represented through biographical writings on his father, some travel observations, and his account of a storm in the Catskills, which he copied and sent to Benjamin Silliman in 1820. Margaret

Dwight Bell's papers relate to her 1810 journey from New England to Warren, Ohio. The handwritten copy of her original journal describes the bad roads, inns, and traveling companions she encountered. For Henry Dwight there is a notebook, in German, from studies abroad and a book of hand colored flower engravings. Susan Dwight's papers consist of an autograph album, and for Timothy Dwight (1828-1916) there is a copy of his address at the dedication of Osborn Hall and inscriptions from books presented by him to Battell Chapel. The series concludes with a box containing six pairs of eyeglasses which belonged to Dwight Family relatives.

Arrangement

Arranged in two series: I. Correspondence and Papers, 1713-1937. II. Family Papers, 1788-1929.

Collection Contents Series I: Correspondence and Papers, 1713-1937

1.25 linear feet (4 boxes)

This series contains material arranged in chronological order.

b. 1, f. 1-11	1713-1862 Folder 1 includes a document related to Naomi, a woman enslaved by Timothy Dwight. A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <u>beinecke.library@yale.edu</u> to request access	1713-1862
b. 2, f. 12-23	to the digital copy. 1863-1937 February	1863-1937
b. 3, f. 24-26	undated	February undated
b. 4, f. 27-28	undated	undated
b. 4, f. 29	Financial and legal papers	1875-1897

Series II: Family Papers, 1788-1929

1.25 linear feet (4 boxes)

This series contains material arranged alphabetically by the name of the individual. Items for each individual are arranged alphabetically by record type.

b. 5, f. 30	Bell, Margaret Van Horn Dwight: journal	[ca. 1810]
	Dwight, Benjamin W.	
b. 5, f. 31	"Biographical Hints & facts respecting the late Revd. Timothy Dwight," English	1817
b. 5, f. 32	"Observations on the City of New York," English	1811
b. 5	"An account of a remarkable storm," English	1819
	Dwight, Henry	
b. 5, f. 33	German notebook A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <u>beinecke.library@yale.edu</u> to request access to the digital copy.	undated
b. 5, f. 34	Flower book	undated
	Dwight, Timothy (1752-1817)	
b. 5, f. 35	"Discourse On the character of George Washington, Esq.," English	1800
b. 5, f. 36	Notebook	1798-1801
b. 6, f. 37-38	Poetry	1792-1817
b. 6, f. 39-42	Sermons Folder 40 (1799-1804?) was reported missing in 2006.	Circa 1788-1815
b. 6, f. 43-44	Travel journals	1800, 1807, undated
b. 7, f. 45	Writings	undated
b. 7, f. 46	Notes by others	1806–1807, 1826, undated
b. 7 , f. 47	Dwight, Susan Edwards Daggett: autograph album	1825-1836
b. 7, f. 48	Dwight, Timothy (1828-1916): address; book inscriptions	1881-1904
b. 7, f. 49	Family coat of arms	undated
b. 7, f. 50	Family history See also: <u>CF12</u>	[ca. 1929]
b. 8	Eyeglasses	undated

Accession 1990-M-033: Additional Material, 1726-1948, undated

3.75 linear feet (9 boxes)

Addition inventory by Carol King and Randall Law, 1993 Aug

Received from: Elizabeth Cole Hamill and Katharine Cole Esty, 1989 Dec 20

	[Anthony], Elizabeth Dwight	
b. 1, f. 1	Correspondence	undated
	Buckingham, William A.	
b. 1, f. 2	Correspondence	1871
	Cole, Bertha Woolsey Dwight	
b. 1, f. 3	Correspondence	1881–1905, 1923, 1938, undated
b. 1, f. 4	Photographs	1870, 1872, 1891, undated
	Cole, Charles Buckingham	
b. 1, f. 5	Correspondence	1885, 1887, 1901– 1906, 1925, undated
b. 1, f. 6	Photograph	1900
	Writings	
b. 1, f. 7	"The Legend of the Holy Grail," <i>The Fort Orange Monthly</i> English	1886 September
	A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <u>beinecke.library@yale.edu</u> to request access to the digital copy.	
b. 1, f. 8	"Twenty Years After": letter English	1907
	A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <u>beinecke.library@yale.edu</u> to request access to the digital copy.	
b. 1, f. 9	"Fifty Years After": biography English	1937
	A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <u>beinecke.library@yale.edu</u> to request access to the digital copy.	
	Cole, Charles Wadsworth	
b. 1, f. 10	Bound book of copies of typed letters	1890s-1900s
	Cole, Charles Woolsey	

Cole, Charles Woolsey (continued)

b. 1, f. 11	Memorabilia	1922-1927, 1946, 1948
b. 1, f. 12	Photograph	undated
	Cole, Edward H.	
b. 1, f. 13	Stock shares	1902
	Dewey, Lillian (Eliza) Dwight	
	Correspondence	
b. 1, f. 14	1869 English	1869
b. 1, f. 15	1878-1880	1878-1880
b. 1 , f. 16	Photograph	undated
	Dewey, Richard S.	
b. 1, f. 17	Correspondence	1874-1879
b. 1, f. 18	Photograph	undated
	Dwight, Benjamin Woodbridge	
	Contracts and documents	
b. 2, f. 19	1845-1856	1845-1856
b. 2, f. 20	1857-1872	1857-1872
b. 2, f. 21	1881-1896	1881-1896
b. 2, f. 22	Copy books	1825, 1829
	Correspondence	
b. 2, f. 23	1828-1829	1828-1829
b. 2, f. 24	1830-1836	1830-1836
b. 2, f. 25	1837-1839	1837-1839
b. 2, f. 26	1840-1842	1840-1842
b. 2, f. 27	1843-1844	1843-1844
b. 2, f. 28	1845-1847	1845-1847
b. 2, f. 29	1848-1851	1848-1851
b. 2, f. 30	1861-1869	1861-1869
b. 2, f. 31	1872-1878	1872-1878
b. 2, f. 32	1880-1881	1880-1881

Dwight, Benjamin Woodbridge > Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 33	1882 English	1882
b. 2, f. 34	1883 English	1883
b. 2, f. 35	1884-1887	1884-1887
b. 2, f. 36-37	undated	undated
	Dewey family genealogy: material	
b. 3, f. 38	1867-1880	1867-1880
b. 3, f. 39	1882-1883, undated	1882-1883, undated
b. 3, f. 40	Diary	1835-1836
b. 3, f. 41	Engravings	undated
b. 3, f. 42	"Ingham University Synopsis," English	1858
b. 3, f. 43	Memorials	1889
b. 3, f. 44	Photographs	1866, undated
b. 3, f. 45	School catalogs	1847, 1850, 1861-1863, 1866
	Writings	
	Sermons and manuscripts	
b. 3, f. 46	1830-1836	1830-1836
b. 3, f. 47	1837-1838	1837-1838
b. 3, f. 48	Bound book	1838-1841
b. 4, f. 49	1839 January 20	1839 January 20
b. 4, f. 50	1839 April-May	1839 April-May
b. 4, f. 51	1840-1841	1840-1841
b. 4, f. 52	1842, 1845	1842, 1845
b. 4, f. 53	Bound book	1870
b. 4, f. 54-55	undated	undated
	The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record	
	"Descendants of Rev. Benjamin Woolsey"	
b. 4, f. 56	1873 July	1873 July
b. 4, f. 57	1874 April	1874 April

Dwight, Benjamin Woodbridge > Writings > The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record > "Descendants of Rev. Benjamin Woolsey" (continued)

b. 4, f. 58	1874 July	1874 July
b. 5, f. 59	"Last Additions to the History of the Woolsey Family," English	1875 January
b. 5, f. 60	"Notes on the History of the Dewey Family in America," English	1875 July
b. 5, f. 61	"Further Additions to Dewey Family History," English	1877 July- October
	"Rogers' Lineage"	
b. 5, f. 62	1885 January	1885 January
b. 5, f. 63	1885 Apr, October	1885 Apr, October
b. 5, f. 64	"Traces of the Dwight Family in Early English History," English	1886 January
Asso	orted writings	
	ume also contains "Reminiscences of the Life and Character of Mrs. hia Woodbridge Dwight" by Rev. E. Y. Swift	
b. 5, f. 65	A Book of Original Poetry English	1837
b. 5, f. 66	"Notes of My Life," English	1842
b. 5, f. 67	"Reminiscences of the Life and Character of Benjamin Woolsey Dwight, M.D.," English	1862
b. 5, f. 68	"The Doctrine of God's Providence," English	1869 April
b. 6, f. 69	The Descendants of John Dwight of Dedham, Mass.	1874
b. 6, f. 70	"Intercollegiate College Regattas, Hurdle-Races, and Prize Contests," <i>The New Englander</i> English	1876 April
b. 6, f. 71	"Woman's Right to Public Forms of Usefulness in the Church," English	1877 April
b. 6, f. 72	"Address Before the Rural Art Association of Clinton N. Y.," English	1881 June 28
b. 6, f. 73	"American Genealogies," English	undated
b. 6, f. 74	"Autobiography," English	undated

Dwight, Benjamin Woolsey

Contracts and documents

Dwight, Benjamin Woolsey > Contracts and documents (continued)

b. 7, f. 76 1831-1835, 1850, 1858-1859 1831-1835, 1850, 1858-1859 Correspondence 1804, 1823-1828 1804, 1823-1828 b. 7, f. 77 1804, 1823-1828 1804, 1823-1828 b. 7, f. 79 1835-1836 1835-1836 b. 7, f. 80 1837-1838 1837-1838 b. 7, f. 81 1841-1844 1841-1844 b. 7, f. 82 1845 1845 English 1846 1847 b. 7, f. 83 1846 1847 b. 7, f. 84 1847 1847 b. 7, f. 85 1848 1847 b. 7, f. 85 1848 1847 b. 7, f. 85 1848 1847 b. 7, f. 85 1849 1847 b. 7, f. 85 1848 1847 b. 7, f. 86 1849 February-June 1849 b. 7, f. 87 1849 July-1850 1849 b. 7, f. 88 undated undated United to the Stomach," Memoirs of the Connacch of the Stomach," Memoirs of the Stomach," Memoirs of the English b. 8, f. 90 "Supplementary Observations on Chronic Debility of the Stomach," Memoirs of the English	b. 7 , f. 75	1812-1830	1812-1830
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Most of the correspondence is addressed to Benjamin W. and Timothy Dwight, sons of Mary Dwight.

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Names

Anthony, Elizabeth Dwight, 1831-1870 Anthony, Mary Dwight, 1824-1864 Boudinot, Elias, 1740-1821 Dwight, Agnes Lucy, 1855-Dwight, Annie Waterman, 1851-Dwight, Benjamin W. (Benjamin Woodbridge), 1816-1889 Dwight, Benjamin Woolsey, 1780-1850 Dwight, Clarissa Strong, 1783-1855 Dwight, Edward S., 1853-1940 Dwight, Emily Cecilia, 1859-Dwight, Henry E. (Henry Edwin), 1832-1908 Dwight, John William, 1817-1887 Dwight, Mary Clarissa, 1849-Dwight, Sophia Dwight, 1818-1863 Dwight, Theodore, 1764-1846 Dwight, Theodore, 1796-1866 Dwight, Timothy, 1694-1771 Dwight, Timothy, 1752-1817 Dwight, Timothy, 1778-1844 Dwight, Timothy, 1811-1842 Dwight, Timothy, 1828-1916 Foxcroft, Thomas, 1697-1769

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Families

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Corporate Bodies

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