

# Guide to the William Williams Family Papers

MS 558



compiled by Staff of Manuscripts and Archives

February 1980

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P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
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**CALL NUMBER:** MS 558

**CREATOR:** Williams, William, 1731-1811

**TITLE:** William Williams family papers

**DATES:** 1754-1938

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 0.5 linear feet (1 box, 1 folio)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** Correspondence, papers, and genealogical notes pertaining to the Williams family of Connecticut. The major figures represented in the collection are William Williams (1731-1811), Thomas Wheeler Williams (1789-1874), and William Williams (1862-1947). The collection also contains letters of four presidents.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0558>

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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.0558>.

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 Frederick Sheffield and William Williams, 1946.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown, though much of the material in this collection is likely in the public domain. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

William Williams Family Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

WILLIAM WILLIAMS (1731-1811)

Signer of the Declaration of Independence, delegate to Continental Congress; held many local political offices in Lebanon, Connecticut, and in Connecticut State government. Thomas Wheeler Williams (1789-1874): engaged in shipping business and whaling in New London, Connecticut; member of Congress, 1839-1843; member of the Connecticut State legislature, 1846-1847; president of New London, Willimantic & Palmer Railroad. William Williams (1862-1947): admitted to Massachusetts bar, 1888; practiced law in New York City, 1888-1947; U.S. Commissioner of Ellis Island, 1902-1905, 1909-1913; active on other city boards and commissions.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS (1862-1947) (B.A. 1884).

Born June 2, 1862, in New London, Conn. Died February 8, 1947, in New York City.

Father, Charles Augustus Williams of New London 1886-88; son of Thomas Wheeler and Lucretia Shaw (Perkins) Williams. Mother, Elizabeth (Hoyt) Williams; daughter of Jonathan Edwards Hoyt and descendant of Elisha Williams, president of Yale 1726-38. Yale relatives include: Jonathan Edwards (B.A. 1720) (great-great-great-grandfather); and Hon. Elias Perkins (B.A. 1786) (great-grandfather).

Graduated from Real Gymnasium, Wiesbaden, Germany, 1882. Entered Yale College in Junior year; oration appointment Senior year; member Delta Kappa Epsilon.

Traveled in Europe 1884-85; attended Harvard Law School 1885-88 (LL.B. 1888; contributed to *Harvard Law Review*); admitted to the bar 1888; associated with Simpson, Thacher [Thomas, '71] and Barnum [William M., '77], lawyers, New York City, 1888-92; associate counsel U.S. Government in Bering Sea arbitration with Great Britain, in Washington and Paris, 1892-93; lawyer in New York City 1893-1902, 1905-9, 1919-47; U.S. Commissioner of Immigration, Ellis Island, 1902-05 and 1909-13; commissioner department of water supply, gas, and electricity, New York City, 1913-18; trustee Presbyterian Hospital 1913-47 (voting member 1913-46, honorary member 1946-47); on board Seamen's Church Institute of New York 1927-47; M.A. Hon. Yale 1906; enlisted Troop A, New York Volunteer Cavalry, June, 1898; promoted commissary of subsistence (rank of Major) July, 1898, and in charge transport U.S.S. *Chester* which sailed to Puerto Rico in August; because of illness on return voyage was mustered out March 12, 1899; commissioned Lieutenant Colonel, Procurement Division, Ordnance Department, Washington, February 8, 1918, and served until January 31, 1919; interested in mountain climbing he had scaled several Alpine peaks and Swiss Alps and contributed articles on his experiences to magazines; author: "Reminiscences of the Bering Sea Arbitration" ( *American Journal of International Law*, October, 1943); one of the four oldest active tennis players in the world; member

American Bar Association, Association of the City of New York, and American and English Alpine clubs; vestryman St. Bartholomew's Church (Episcopal), New York City, 1916-47.

Unmarried.

Buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New London. Survived by a sister, Mrs. William Crozier of Washington.

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## Scope and Contents

The William Williams family collection comprises less than 100 letters, the correspondence covering the years 1754 to 1937. The members of the Williams family included are: William Williams (1731-1811) a signer of the Declaration of Independence; Thomas Wheeler Williams (1789-1874); and William Williams (1862-1947) Commissioner of Immigration for the Port of New York.

Approximately half of the correspondence comes within the period 1754 to 1867 and the remainder covers 1892 to 1937. Among the correspondents in the earlier period are George Washington and William Williams. In the later period there are letters from Franklin Delano Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt.

Among the persons referred to in this collection are the following:

Adams, John Quincy, Pres. U.S., 1767-1848

Albion, Robert Greenhalgh, 1896

Blackledge, William, -1828

Bloom, Sol, 1870-1949

Cahoone, William

Clap, Thomas, 1703-1767

Clark, John

Fitzpatrick, John Clement, 1876-1940

Gray, Samuel

Hamilton, Alexander, 1786-1875

Huntington, Jedidiah, 1743-1818

Learned, Ebenezer, 1780-1858

Mitchel, John Purroy, 1879-1918

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, Pres. U.S., 1882-1943

Roosevelt, Theodore, Pres. U.S., 1858-1919

Sherman, Roger, 1721-1793

Taft, William Howard, Pres. U.S., 1857-1930

Washington, George, Pres. U.S., 1732-1799

Williams, Thomas Wheeler, 1789-1874

Williams, William, 1731-1811

Williams, William, 1765-1838

Williams, William, 1862-1947

Wilson, William Bauchop, 1862-1934

Wilson, Woodrow, Pres. U.S., 1856-1924

Wharton, William Fisher, 1847-1919

The William Williams Family papers were given to Yale University Library by William Williams and Frederick Sheffield.

## Collection Contents

### Correspondence and papers

b. 1, f. 1	1754, 1761, 1774-1778	
b. 1, f. 2	1780-1799	
b. 1, f. 3	1806-1810	
b. 1, f. 4	1812-1816	
b. 1, f. 5	1817-1827	
b. 1, f. 6	1836, 1851-1852, 1867	
b. 1, f. 7	1889-1909	
b. 1, f. 8	1910 English	
b. 1, f. 9	1911-1913	
b. 1, f. 10	1914-1938	
Thomas Wheeler Williams (1789-1874)		
b. 1, f. 11	Letterbook from Archangel, St. Petersburg, London, New London	1811-1813
b. 1, f. 12	Autograph book of members of the 26th Congress and others	1840
b. 1, f. 13	Loose items removed from autograph book	
b. 1, f. 14	Genealogical notes	
b. 1, f. 15	Unidentified note	
b. 2	Oversize	

## **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**

Business  
Businessmen  
Emigration and immigration  
Families  
Lawyers

### **Geographic Names**

Connecticut -- History  
Connecticut -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783  
United States -- History -- Colonial period, ca.  
1600-1775

### **Occupations**

Legislators  
Politicians

### **Names**

Roosevelt, Franklin D. (Franklin Delano),  
1882-1945  
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919  
Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930  
Washington, George, 1732-1799  
Williams, Thomas Wheeler, 1789-1874  
Williams, William, 1731-1811  
Williams, William, 1862-1947

### **Families**

Williams family