Thompson Family Papers, 1751-1876

Ms. Coll. 855
ca. 75 items (1 box)

Table of Contents
- Biographical background
- Links to images
- Summary of collection
- Arrangement and description of collection

Biographical background
Jonah Thompson (1702-1780) was the son of Isaac and Hannah (Lawson) Thompson. He was a schoolmaster and established a Quaker school at Compton, Dorsetshire (England) ca. 1735. He was a minister and made a religious visit to America in 1750-51.

Jonah married Mary Beaton in 1735. Their children included John, sent to the U.S. at age 26, and Thomas (1746-1826), who married Ann Gregory and succeeded his father at his school at Compton. Thomas and Ann's children included John (d. 1877), who was in business at Hitchin (England).

Jonah's son John (ca. 1744-1819) came to America in 1770, taught in Anthony Benezet's Phila. school and was afterwards a merchant. He married Rebecca Chalkley James in 1782. Their son, James B. Thompson (b. 1785), merchant, married Lydia Poulteny in 1809.

James and Lydia's children included Rebecca, who married Isaac P. Morris (1803-1869); and John James Thompson to his cousin John Thompson (at Hitchin, England) discuss family news, national and political questions, slavery, business and financial conditions, tariffs and settlement of N.E. boundary of U.S. (1840-1874).

(Sources for biographical information: DQB, Thompson family papers and The Thompsons of Compton in "Friends Quarterly Examiner," 1878, p.104-122, 272-295)

Links to images
The following are all of the image links found within this finding aid.

Page 1 of ALS of George Thompson, Glasgow, February 10, 1849 to cousin, John Thompson. Letter mentions President Roberts and Liberia, successful purchase of ship and establishment of packet service to Liberia, with ship manned by black crew and owned by black stockholders. Page 2 | Page 3 | Page 4 | Page 5 | Page 6 (each approx. 78k)

Summary of collection
Includes correspondence, genealogy, silhouette, printed material, certificate, testimony, accounts.

Papers include letters from Jonah Thompson (1756-1758), accounts of his expenses in attempting to gain possession of land left him in America by Nathaniel Tilley (1753-1755) and his certificate of travel issued by New Port R.I. Yearly Meeting in 1751.


In addition there are letters from James B. Thompson (1876), George Thompson (1849), Louis Street (1868), John Jay Smith (1874), John Pleasants, Jr. (1751), John T. Lewis (1867-1869), Henry G. Landgraf (18__)?, Elizabeth Coggeshall (1851) and Edward Armstrong (1868). Most of these additional letters are addressed to John Thompson at Hitchin. The collection also contains miscellaneous manuscripts, including genealogical notes on the Thompson family.

Arrangement and description of collection
The collection is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Many letters have been photocopied.

1. Genealogical notes
   misc. notes on Thompson family genealogy
2. Armstrong, Edward
   2 ALS Sept. 23, 1868 and Dec. 9, 1868, addressed to John Thompson [Hitchin?]
   topics:
   - EA editing Penn-Logan correspondence to be published by Historical Society of Pa.
   - wishes to secure picture of William Penn
   - inquires about Place portrait and its authenticity
   - re: crayon drawing of Wm. Penn in "Penns and Penningtons," apparently the Place portrait, discusses its authenticity
3. Coggeshall, Elizabeth H.
1.ALS 7 mo. 17, 1815, addressed to A[nn]T[ompson] at Compton
   also a silhouette of EHC
   topics:
   - family matters and health
   - met "thy dear daughter Whittell when in Chester"
   - expects to go soon to U.S.

4. Landgraff, Henricus G.
   ALS undated [18--?], addressed to "Mr. Thompson at Compton near Sherborne"
   topics:
   - in Latin (signed "Henricus Goodfredus Landgrafius")

5. Lewis, John T.
   4 ALS March 22, 1867 to April 13, 186[9?], addressed to John Thompson, Hitchin
   topics:
   - family matters
   - family gathering at which family heirlooms displayed
   - JTL has joined the Episcopal Church and is warden of St. James Church
   - inquires about Wm. Lewis, ancestor
   - Pa. Hospital for the Insane
   - Liberia

6. Pleasants, John, Jr.
   ALS 2 mo. 13, 1751, addressed to "Jonah Tomson"
   topics:
   - re: to the purchase of land on which he has secured an option
   - religious discussion

7. Smith, John Jay
   2 ALS Aug. 3 and 14, 1874, addressed to John Thompson, Hitchin
   topics:
   - declines invitation to Hitchin
   - high price obtained for S. Smith's History of N.J.
   - Darlington Conference
   - JJS going to see Mr. Allen re: copying portraits of Wm. Penn and wife
   - promises photos of Wm. Penn painting

8. Street, Louis
   ALS 1 mo. 2, [18]68, addressed to William Ransom
   topics:
   - letter from Madagascar asks for clothing for hot weather to be sent, suggests John Thompson be asked to make clothing

9. Thompson, George
   ALS Glasgow Feb. 7-10, 1849, addressed to John Thompson, [Hitchin?] (see image below)
   topics:
   - re: President Roberts and Liberia
   - describes purchase of a ship and of a packet service to Liberia (in U.S.)
   - ship has black crew, most stockholders black
   - suggests the establishment of a similar service from "here" as in U.S.
   - reports progress on a new method of making soda

Page 1 of ALS of George Thompson, Glasgow, February 10, 1849 to cousin, John Thompson. Letter mentions President Roberts and Liberia, successful purchase of ship and establishment of packet service to Liberia, with ship manned by black crew and owned by black stockholders. Page 2 | Page 3 | Page 4 | Page 5 | Page 6 (each approx. 78k)

10. Thompson, James B.
    ALS 9 mo. 19, [1876], addressed to "Cousin John" [Thompson, Hitchin?]
    topics:
    - re: Centennial in Philadelphia and large crowds, hotels packed and RRs busy
    - family matters and hot weather

11. Thompson, John
    4 ALS July 5, 1773 to 7 mo. 25, 1805, addressed to sister Nancy and brother Thomas (in England)
    topics:
    - little likelihood of his returning to England
    - death of one of his best friends, Dr. Evans (1773)
    - describes visit to S. Emlen, who "spoke much in favour of matrimony"
    - asks for pocketbooks to be sent for young ladies he knows
    - deeds for land
    - sending a "packet" by Morris Birkbeck and other Friend returning home [England] after religious visit
    - "packet" contains book with names of original purchasers and map of Liberties
    - start of Rev. War
    - acknowledges receipt of turnip seed
    - refers to recent epidemic [yellow fever?]
    - his own poor health
    - sympathy for death of brother's wife
    - JT has store with oldest son, next son 18 years old and apprentice
    - weather
11/24/2014

Thompson Family Papers, 1751-1876 - Ms. Coll. 855 - Haverford College Libraries - Special Collections

- mistaken idea that it's cheaper to live in America
- evils of cheap liquor
- sends message to D. Roberts and family
- refers to visit from William Crotch

12. Thompson, John J.
7 ALS Oct. 30, 1840 to 11 mo. 27, 1874, addressed to John Thompson, Hitchin

Topics:
- re: their common ancestor, Thomas Lawson
- work of cousin Mary Roberts
- family news
- visit of cousin Thompson Neave in Phila.
- penny postage system
- slavery question, says "misunderstood in your country" and in this section "we are all decided abolitionists"
- early legal efforts to abolish slavery in U.S. thwarted by English government
- attitude of Southerners on slavery
- comparison of slaves conditions to that of miners and laborers in England
- business conditions
- financial crisis in U.S.
- desirability of having N.E. boundary settled
- Uncle George accepting appointment as warden of Eastern Penitentiary
- European trip of Charles Neave
- inability to find letters of ancestor Jonah Thompson
- evils of British opium war
- death of Jonah Thompson on "9th ult." (1861)
- acknowledges receipt of Friends papers and photos of portraits of Wm. and Hannah Penn
- William Tallack and his writings
- expresses approval at Parliaments action in regard to Established Irish Church
- reconstruction difficulties in the South
- disappointment in President and failure to impeach
- probability that Friends will support Grant in next election
- Smith's Catalogue deficient in names of American Friends, a list of names omitted being prepared
- changes in firm due to death of Isaac P. Morris
- orders books
- President Grant's plan to use Friends in managing Indians
- Pacific RR and possibility of its bringing large numbers of Chinese to east, Chinese labor better than Irish or German
- regrets can't get daguerreotypes of Hannah and Wm. Penn for Penn-Logan correspondence being edited by Edward Armstrong
- death of William Allinson, Dr. Henry Hartshorne (Haverford College) appointed in his place as editor of Friends Review
- ill health of James Morris
- re: prohibition movement
- visit of Yardley Warner
- R. Pearsall Smith left Society of Friends
- death of James T. Morris (nephew) on 9 mo. 23, 1874
- visit of Robert P. and Hannah Smith to England
- mention of John Jay Smith
- folder also includes:
  - typed genealogy of JT (1 p.)
  - travel certificate of JT dated 4 mo. 17, 1751 from New Port, R.I. Yearly Meeting to Quarterly Meeting in "Bridport" in Great Britain
  - list of meetings in America visited by JT
  - "Joseph Ball's draft of a Testimony for Jonah Thompson"
  - "account of expenses of Jonah Thompson in attempting to get possession of the land in America bequested him by Nathaniel Tilly of Thomford (1753)" [accounts 1753-1755]

13. Thompson, Jonah
2 ALS 2 mo. 9, 1756 and 8 mo. 5, 1758, addressed to John Pemberton and William Logan

Topics:
- re: finding two servants willing to leave England and go to America and work for John Pemberton
- sending medicines requested by mother of John Pemberton
- JT's affairs a mess due to his absence in U.S.
- JT may go to Bristol to better support his family
- proposes Joseph Beck instead of R. Champion to be joined with Jonah in the letter to attorney
- JT gone to Wm. Logan's uncle's place to take an catalog of his books
- Samuel Emlen to set sail for "Charlestown"
- mentions "Mordeca Yarnald"
- folder also includes:
  - circulars of May Collection of anti-slavery material at Cornell University (1874) and of Port Richmond Iron Works (I.P. Morris & Co.)
  - acknowledgment of a contribution to May Collection at Cornell of anti-slavery material from John Thompson, giving list of books presented (1875)
  - newspaper clipping of obit. of JJT (May 26, 1875)

Return to: Table of contents

Contact Diana Franzusoff Peterson (dfpeterson@haverford.edu) or 610-896-1284 for more information about this collection. Please include the manuscript date and call number.