Henry and Elizabeth Drinker Letters, 1777-1778
MC.854
Finding aid prepared by Emily Kingsley

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit
October 07, 2015
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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# Summary Information

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository</th>
<th>Haverford College Quaker &amp; Special Collections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Drinker, Elizabeth Sandwith, 1734-1807</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Drinker, Henry, 1734-1809</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Henry and Elizabeth Drinker letters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date [inclusive]</td>
<td>1777-1778</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>0.5 Linear feet (1 box)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
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## Preferred Citation

Henry and Elizabeth Drinker Letters (MC 854). Special Collections, Haverford College, Haverford, PA.
Biographical note

Henry Drinker was born on April 21, 1734 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His wife, Elizabeth (Sandwith) Drinker, was born in Philadelphia the following year. The pair were married on January 13, 1761 and had nine children. Drinker was a member of the shipping and importing firm, James and Drinker. He was also a landowner—at one point holding 500,000 acres in his name. Drinker was a Quaker and an active member of the Philadelphia community. He served as the clerk of the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and was also involved with other local boards and committees. In 1777, Henry Drinker—along with 18 other Quakers—was arrested and banished to Winchester, Virginia when their pacifist stance to the American Revolution was construed as an unwillingness to support the new nation. Elizabeth remained in Philadelphia during her husband’s exile, caring for her family in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Elizabeth Drinker is well-known for the diary that she kept from 1758 to 1807, in which she chronicled her experiences in Revolutionary America. In April 1778, Elizabeth travelled to Lancaster, Pennsylvania with a group of wives whose husbands had also been exiled to Winchester. They planned to petition the Pennsylvania Council for the release of their husbands, and although they were denied this opportunity, their spouses were released later that month. After the war, Elizabeth maintained her journal writing—even during the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793. Henry continued to fill leadership roles in Philadelphia; he served as the president of the Abolition Society and a member of both the Common Council and Philosophical Society. Elizabeth Drinker died on November 24, 1807, while Henry followed two years later, in 1809.

Scope and Contents note

This collection contains letters exchanged between Henry and Elizabeth Drinker during Henry’s 1777-1778 exile to Winchester, Virginia. The correspondence spans fairly consistently over this nearly year-long imprisonment, and each letter is accompanied by a typed transcript. The letters discuss Drinker’s imprisonment, including information about his fellow prisoners, his heath and mental wellbeing, and the politics of his imprisonment. Drinker also makes repeated appeals to be kept updated about the goings on in Philadelphia and with his family and friends. He writes often of his wife and children, sometimes to express his wishes for them or to make direct requests of them. In certain letters, he asks his wife to send additional items, like clothing, to him in exile. In Elizabeth Drinker’s letters, she speaks primarily about updates concerning her family, friends, and the Philadelphia community. She sends well-wishes to her husband and expresses continual concern over his health and mental state. In some of the later letters, both Elizabeth and Henry make reference to a British solider, Major Crammond, who was being quartered in the Drinkers’ home at the time. Near the end of the collection are letters written by Elizabeth documenting her journey to Lancaster, Pennsylvania in an attempt to meet with the Pennsylvania Council.
Arrangement

The collection is broken into two sections: The first contains letters written by Henry Drinker along with their typed transcripts. The second section contains the letters and transcripts of Elizabeth Drinker written in response to her husband. Within each section, letters are arranged chronologically and undated letters are placed at the end.

Administrative Information

Publication Information
Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections September, 2015

Use Restrictions
Brief excerpts of letters may be quoted and reproduced, however, full letters may not. Standard Federal Copyright Laws Apply (U.S. Title 17).

Acquisition
The Henry and Elizabeth Drinker Letters were donated to Special Collections, Haverford College, in 1930 by Henry S. Drinker, Jr.

Processing Information
Processed by Emily Kingsley; completed September 2015.

Related Materials

Related materials
• MC 950 Correspondence of Henry Drinker
• MC 995R Plan of Lands Late of Henry Drinker, Dec’d
• MC 975 James and Drinker accounts
Controlled Access Headings

Subject(s)

- Pacifism
- Quakers – Family relationships
- United States -- History -- Revolution, 1775-1783
## Collection Inventory

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Henry Drinker Materials</th>
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