

# Henry and Elizabeth Drinker Letters, 1777-1778 MC.854

Finding aid prepared by Emily Kingsley

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections

September, 2015

370 Lancaster Ave

Haverford, PA, 19041

610-896-1161

[hc-special@haverford.edu](mailto:hc-special@haverford.edu)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections
<b>Creator</b>	Drinker, Elizabeth Sandwith, 1734-1807
<b>Creator</b>	Drinker, Henry, 1734-1809
<b>Title</b>	Henry and Elizabeth Drinker letters
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1777-1778
<b>Extent</b>	0.5 Linear feet (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English

### Preferred Citation

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

## Biographical note

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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.

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## Scope and Contents note

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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 health 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 soldier, 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

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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.

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## Administrative Information

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### 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.

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## Related Materials

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### 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

- MC 975.01.018 Elizabeth Drinker diaries (Typed transcriptions of diaries; originals at Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Collection 1760)
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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Subject(s)

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

## Henry Drinker Materials

**Collection Inventory**

<b>Henry Drinker Materials</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Henry Drinker Letters, 9/9/1777- 11/20/1777	1	1
Henry Drinker Letters, 12/13/1777- 4/16/1778	1	2
Henry Drinker Letter Transcripts, 9/9/1777- 4/16/1778	1	3
<b>Elizabeth Drinker Materials</b>		
	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Elizabeth Drinker Letters, 9/16/1777- 1/25/1778	1	4
Elizabeth Drinker Letters, 1/28/1778- 4/22/1778	1	5
Elizabeth Drinker Letter Transcripts, 9/16/1777- 4/22/1778	1	6