

# Guide to the Mason Fitch Cogswell Papers

GEN MSS 920



by Sandra Markham

2013

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New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
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**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 920

**CREATOR:** Cogswell, Mason Fitch, 1761-1830

**TITLE:** Mason Fitch Cogswell papers

**DATES:** 1772–1853

**BULK DATES:** 1790–1830

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 1.59 linear feet (5 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers primarily consist of correspondence received by Mason Fitch Cogswell from family, friends, and professional colleagues. Prominent among the correspondents are Cogswell's brother Samuel Cogswell, his nephew James Lloyd Cogswell of Long Island, New York, his friend Theodore Dwight, the Caribbean planter Charles Joseph Sibert, Vicomte de Cornillon, and deaf education pioneers Laurent Clerc and T. H. Gallaudet. Other colleagues in the papers are the Reverend Ebenezer Fitch, Connecticut congressman John Davenport, inventor Apollos Kinsley, and a number of American physicians including Oliver Fisk of Worcester, Henry Fish and E. H. Smith of New York, and Joseph Strong of Philadelphia. Notably, there are several letters from Cogswell's many female friends such as Nancy Roy Fox and Delia Dwight Porter. Also in the correspondence is a fair copy of a letter to Cogswell's father James Cogswell from British author William Cowper. Other papers include two diaries kept by Cogswell in 1788 and 1791, financial and legal papers, and a group of manuscript medical remedies and treatments.

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

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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 Grace Cogswell Root, 1925 and 1926. One diary was the gift of the Misses Tully, 1896.

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### Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

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### Preferred Citation

Mason Fitch Cogswell Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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### Processing Information

Former call number: Z36.009

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### Existence and Location of Copies

Mason Fitch Cogswell's 1788 diary is available on microfilm (MS Vault film 1713)

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## Cogswell Family Tree

Family members whose letters are prominent in the collection are underlined.

Rev. James Cogswell (1720-1807)

m1 1745 Alice Fitch (1725-1772)

m2 Martha Lothrop Devotion (1715?-1795)

m3 Irene Ripley Hibbard (d. 1804)

- -1 James Cogswell (1746-1792) m 1776 Elizabeth Davenport (1756-1779); m 1783 Abigail Lloyd (1751-1830)

- - -2 Alice Cogswell (1777-1850) m. 1805 Samuel Fisher (1777-1856)

- - -2 James Lloyd Cogswell (1784-1831) m 1819 Sarah Burr Sherwood (1788-1830)

- - - -3 Sarah B. Cogswell (1820-1875)

- - - -3 James A. Cogswell (1822-1837)

- - - -3 Mary Ledyard Cogswell (1824-1841)

- - -2 John Lloyd Cogswell (1789-1831) m 1821 Love B. Coffin (1795-1857)

- - - -3 John T. (1823-1866),

- - - -3 Charlotte Broome Cogswell (b. 1825),

- - - -3 Samuel F. Cogswell (1827-1858)

- - - -3 Alice Fisher Cogswell (b. 1829)

- - - -3 Mason Fitch Cogswell (1830-1832)

- - -2 Sarah Lloyd Cogswell (1786-1848)

- - -2 Harriet Broome Cogswell (1790-1843) m 1819 Robert Willis Mott (1796-1846)

- - - -3 Harriet Stella Mott (1820-1902?) m 1843 William Handy Onderdonk (1820-1882)
- -1 Alice Cogswell (1749-1772)
- -1 Samuel Cogswell (1754-1790) m 1785 Maria Backus (1767-1834); she m 1792 Ebenezer Fitch (1756-1833)
- - -2 Mason Backus Cogswell (1787-1790)
- - -2 James Fitch Cogswell (1789-1862)
- - -2 Maria Cogswell (1790-1870) m 1810 Douglas W. Sloane
- -1 MASON FITCH COGSWELL (1761-1830) m. Mary Austin Ledyard
- - -2 Mary Austin Cogswell (1801-1868) m 1828 Lewis Weld (1796-1858)
- - - -3 Mason Cogswell Weld (1829-1887) m 1866 Martha M. Coles
- - - -3 Charles Theodore Weld (1831-1863)
- - - -3 Lewis Ledyard Weld (1833-1865)
- - - -3 Mary Elizabeth Weld (b. 1835)
- - - -3 Alice Cogswell Weld (b. 1837) m 1871 William H. Hodge
- - -2 Elizabeth Cogswell (1803-1856) m 1831 John Treadwell Norton (1795-1869)
- - -2 Alice Cogswell (1805-1830)
- - -2 Mason Fitch Cogswell (1809-1865) m 1847 Lydia Bradford
- - -2 Catharine Ledyard Cogswell (1811-1882) m. 1836 Cortlandt Van Rensselaer
- -1 Septimus Cogswell (1769-1773)

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## Mason Fitch Cogswell (1761-1830)

Mason Fitch Cogswell, an American physician and surgeon, was born on September 28, 1761, in Canterbury, Connecticut, the third son of the Reverend James and Alice Fitch Cogswell. An 1780 graduate of Yale College, he studied medicine with his brother James Cogswell, first in Stamford, Connecticut, and later in New York City. In 1789, Cogswell established a medical office in Hartford, where he practiced until his death in 1830.

Cogswell and his wife Mary Austin Ledyard Cogswell had five children including their daughter Alice, who became deaf as a child. In an effort to educate her and other deaf residents of the state, Cogswell enlisted the aid of Laurent Clerc and Thomas H. Gallaudet to establish in 1817 in Hartford the Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, now the American School for the Deaf, the country's first permanent school for the deaf.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers primarily consist of correspondence received by Mason Fitch Cogswell from family, friends, and professional colleagues. Prominent among the correspondents are Cogswell's brother Samuel Cogswell, his nephew James Lloyd Cogswell of Long Island, New York, his friend Theodore Dwight, the Caribbean planter Charles Joseph Sibert, Vicomte de Cornillon, and deaf education pioneers Laurent Clerc and T. H. Gallaudet. Other colleagues in the papers are Reverend Ebenezer Fitch, Connecticut congressman John Davenport, inventor Apollos Kinsley, and a number of American physicians including Oliver Fisk of Worcester, Henry Fish and E. H. Smith of New York, and Joseph Strong of Philadelphia. Notably, there are several letters from Cogswell's many female friends such as Nancy Roy Fox and Delia Dwight Porter. Also in the correspondence is a fair copy of a letter to Cogswell's father James Cogswell from British author William Cowper. Other papers include two diaries kept by Cogswell in 1788 and 1791, financial and legal papers, and a group of manuscript medical remedies and treatments. Accompanying the papers are a group of printed items.

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## Arrangement

Organized into three series: I. Correspondence, 1772-1830. II. Writings, 1788-1853. III. Other Papers, 1783-1830.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1772-1830

1.25 linear feet (3 boxes)

Series I primarily contains letters sent to Cogswell by his family, medical colleagues in several cities and towns, and a variety of friends. The first subseries, family correspondence, holds more than thirty letters from Cogswell to his father James, and over fifty letters from Cogswell's younger brother Samuel, who died tragically at age 36; also in the subseries are letters from the Reverend Ebenezer Fitch, a cousin who married Samuel's widow Maria and raised their three children. Also in the subseries is a fair copy of a letter to James Cogswell from the British author William Cowper.

The second subseries holds letters from Cogswell's friends and peers. Notable among them is his friend Theodore Dwight, a lawyer and publisher, who signed his letters "Orlando," and Charles Joseph Sibert, Vicomte de Cornillon, a planter from Santo Domingo. When letters from Cogswell are present, they are noted at the folder level; at the end of the series is a folder holding copies of other outgoing letters.

Organized into two subseries: Family, and Colleagues and Friends.

Family		
b. 1, f. 1	Cogswell, Abigail Lloyd	1792-1812
	Cogswell, James (father)	
b. 1, f. 2	Letters from and to Mason Fitch Cogswell	1781-1795
b. 1, f. 3	Letter to James Cogswell from William Cowper (fair copy)	1791 June 15
b. 1, f. 4	Letter to James Cogswell from J. Huntington	1772, undated
b. 1, f. 5	Cogswell, James (brother)	1791-1792
b. 1, f. 6	Cogswell, James Fitch	1815-1816
b. 1, f. 7	Cogswell, James Lloyd	1810-1830
b. 1, f. 8	Cogswell, John Lloyd	1811, 1816
	Cogswell, Mary Austin Ledyard	
b. 1, f. 9	Letters to and from Mason Fitch Cogswell (husband)	1809-1816
b. 1, f. 10	Letter from Mason Fitch Cogswell (son)	undated
	Cogswell, Samuel	
b. 1, f. 11-13	Letters to Mason Fitch Cogswell	1780-1790
b. 1, f. 14	Letter to James and Martha Cogswell Concerning the death of his son Mason Backus Cogswell	1790 May 13
b. 1, f. 15	Fisher, Alice	1809, 1811
b. 1, f. 16	Fisher, Samuel	1816-1820
b. 1, f. 17	Fitch, Ebenezer	1798-1816

## Family (continued)

b. 1, f. 18	Lloyd, Henry	1789-1818
b. 1, f. 19	Lloyd, John	1789-1792
b. 1, f. 20	Mott, Robert W., and Harriet B. Cogswell	1808-1820
b. 1, f. 21	Weld, Lewis, and Mary Austin Cogswell Includes letters from Mason Fitch Cogswell	1812-1830

## Colleagues and Friends

b. 2, f. 22	A general	1792-1823
b. 2, f. 23	B general	1784-1826
b. 2, f. 24	Barker, Jonathan	1793-1794
b. 2, f. 25	Boardman, Timothy	1822
b. 2, f. 26	Breed, Betsey	1793-1794
b. 2, f. 27	Breed, Shub	1784-1787
b. 2, f. 28	Broome	1784-1790
b. 2, f. 29	Brown	1793-1823
b. 2, f. 30	Butler	1820-1822
b. 2, f. 31	C general	1785-1827
b. 2, f. 32	Capers	1787-1795
b. 2, f. 33	Clark, Thaddeus	1797-1822
b. 2, f. 34	<a href="#">Clerc, Laurent</a>	1817, 1818
b. 2, f. 35	Cotton, James Watson	1816-1820
b. 2, f. 36	D general	1790-1821
b. 2, f. 37	Davenport, John	1800-1816
b. 2, f. 38	Doolittle, Mark	1819-1821
b. 2, f. 39	Dwight, Nathaniel	1792-1824
b. 2, f. 40-41	Dwight, Theodore Includes one letter from Lewis Burr Sturges to Dwight	1785-1830
b. 2, f. 42	E general	1799-1817
b. 2, f. 43	F general	1790-1828
b. 2, f. 44	Farrell, Nicholas	1789, undated
b. 2, f. 45	Field, Simeon	1814-1818
b. 2, f. 46	Finley, James Edward Burr	1784-1787

## Colleagues and Friends (continued)

b. 2, f. 47	Finley, Samuel	1785-1788
b. 2, f. 48	Fish, Henry	1811-1815
b. 2, f. 49	Fisk, Oliver Includes a letter from Mason Fitch Cogswell	1810-1811
b. 2, f. 50	Fitch	1784-1830
b. 2, f. 51	Fox, Nancy Roy	1782-1790, undated
b. 2, f. 52	G general	1790-1829
b. 2, f. 53	<a href="#">Gallaudet, T. H. (Thomas Hopkins)</a> Includes two letters to Lewis Weld	1816-1830
b. 2, f. 54	Goddard, Calvin	1812-1827
b. 3, f. 55	H general	1785-1830
b. 3, f. 56	Howe	1813-1822
b. 3, f. 57	Hubbard, Thomas	1811-1818
b. 3, f. 58	Hunt	1796-1810
b. 3, f. 59	J general	1799-1819
b. 3, f. 60	K general	1812-1822
b. 3, f. 61	Kinsley, Apollos	1791-1800
b. 3, f. 62	L general	1792-1822
b. 3, f. 63	Lee	1792-1824
b. 3, f. 64	M general	1789-1825
b. 3, f. 65	Mead	1793-1821
b. 3, f. 66	Morgan, Titus	1803-1806
b. 3, f. 67	Moore, Eliza	1787-1788, undated
b. 3, f. 68	Moore, Mary Ann	1787-1788
b. 3, f. 69	N general	1816
b. 3, f. 70	Osborn, John	1795 Oct 14
b. 3, f. 71	P general	1789-1821
b. 3, f. 72	Pattin, William	1782
b. 3, f. 73	Porter, Delia Dwight	1785-1791, undated



## Colleagues and Friends (continued)

b. 3, f. 74	R general	1807-1829
b. 3, f. 75	Rhodes, Dudley W.	1814-1818
b. 3, f. 76	S general	1792-1822
b. 3, f. 77	Sanford, Clark	1810-1811
b. 3, f. 78	Seymour, James S.	1821-1828
b. 3, f. 79	Sibert Cornillon, Charles Joseph, vicomte de	1792-1794
b. 3, f. 80	Silliman, Benjamin	1812
b. 3, f. 81	Smith	1789-1815
b. 3, f. 82	Smith, E. H. (Elihu Hubbard)	1790-1798
b. 3, f. 83	Storrs, Seth	1785-1788
b. 3, f. 84	<a href="#">Strong, Joseph</a>	1792-1801
b. 3, f. 85	T general	1795-1830
b. 3, f. 86	Utley, Vine	1817 Sep 26
b. 3, f. 87	V general	1797-1816
b. 3, f. 88	Vandevoort, Deborah	1792-1794, undated
b. 3, f. 89	W general	1793-1830
b. 3, f. 90	Welles, Benjamin	1784-1788
b. 3, f. 91	Welles, Rebecca	1783-1786
b. 3, f. 92	Wetmore, Prosper	1790
b. 3, f. 93	Wilcox, Samuel	1787-1788
b. 3, f. 94	Woolsey	1788-1790
b. 3, f. 95	Yale College	1828, 1830
b. 3, f. 96	Unidentified	1786-1790, undated
b. 3, f. 97	Copies of outgoing letters	1795-1821

**Series II: Writings, 1788-1791, 1853***4 Folders*

The series contains two autograph manuscript diaries kept by Mason Fitch Cogswell, including one written during a trip from Hartford to New York, returning to Stamford, Connecticut. Also present are a variety of writings in various hands, some likely by Cogswell. The latest item in the Cogswell papers is filed here, a transcript of a song sung at a Yale College event in 1853 by the Class of 1854; this item was owned by Cogswell's grandson Lewis Ledyard Weld. The donors of second diary were likely the daughters of Dr. William Tully, who had studied medicine under Cogswell.

b. 4, f. 98	<a href="#">Diary, November 14-December 20, 1788, with a later transcription by Mary Ledyard Cogswell</a> 1788, undated The provenance of this diary is discussed in <i>The Cogswells in America</i> , by E. O. Jameson (1884), pages 245-46.	
b. 4, f. 99	Diary, January 31-February 22, 1791 Gift of the Misses Tully, 1896.	1791
b. 4, f. 100	Poems	undated
b. 4, f. 101	Epitaphs and miscellaneous notes	1853, undated

**Series III: Other Papers, 1783-1830***5 Folders*

The series holds financial, legal, and medical papers, including remedies and treatments for cancer and other diseases collected by Cogswell. Two folders at the end of the series hold printed documents including two copies of a 1793 printed form issued by Norwich, Connecticut, publisher Bushnell & Hubbard, seeking subscribers for two proposed books by Michael Martel, *The French Scholar's Diversion*, and *Martel's Virgil*. The forms were signed by several residents of Hartford, New London, and other towns in Connecticut, but the volumes were never published.

b. 4, f. 102	Financial papers	1789-1830
b. 4, f. 103	Legal papers	1783-1829
b. 4, f. 104	Medical papers	1787, undated
	Printed material	
b. 4, f. 105	Forms, circular letters, and broadside Includes Constitution of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences (1800); membership letter from Academy of Medicine of Philadelphia, signed by Philip Syng Physick (1800); report of the Boston Medical Society (1810); and Scheme of the Exercises at the Exhibition of the Brothers' Society, Yale College (December 31, 1817)	1800-1817
b. 5 (Oversize), f. 106	Subscription forms for Michael Martel publications	1793

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## 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

Deaf -- Education -- Connecticut  
Medicine -- Practice -- United States  
Physicians -- Connecticut  
Physicians -- Connecticut -- Hartford  
Physicians -- New York (State)

### Genres / Formats

Diaries -- Connecticut -- 18th century  
Prescriptions -- United States -- 18th century  
Prescriptions -- United States -- 19th century  
Subscription lists (Publishing) -- Connecticut --  
Norwich -- 1793

### Occupations

Physicians -- Connecticut -- Hartford -- 18th  
century  
Physicians -- Connecticut -- Hartford -- 19th  
century

### Names

Breed, Shub. (Shubael), 1759-1840  
Clerc, Laurent, 1785-1869  
Cogswell, James, 1720-1807  
Cogswell, James, 1746-1792  
Cogswell, Mary Ledyard  
Cogswell, Mason Fitch, 1761-1830  
Cogswell, Samuel, 1754-1790  
Cowper, William, 1731-1800  
Davenport, John, 1752-1830  
Doolittle, Mark, 1781-1855  
Dwight, Nathaniel, 1770-1831  
Dwight, Theodore, 1764-1846  
Fish, Henry  
Fisk, Oliver  
Fitch, Ebenezer, 1756-1833  
Fox, Nancy Roy  
Gallaudet, T. H. (Thomas Hopkins), 1787-1851  
Goddard, Calvin, 1768-1842  
Kinsley, Apollos  
Martel, Michael  
Morgan, Titus, 1776-1811  
Porter, Fedelia Dwight, 1708-1847

Smith, E. H. (Elihu Hubbard), 1771-1798  
Storrs, Seth, 1756-1837  
Strong, Joseph, 1770-1812

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