

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

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Because the collection is so rich in materials for the study of family relationships, and because those relationships are my own prime research interest, it is organized to make this study as easy as possible. The line of descent starting with James Murray and his daughter Elizabeth Murray Robbins and running down four more generations to Elizabeth Ames Jackson through the female side is the primary focus of organization. The correspondence of Elizabeth and Norris Jackson with their children adds still another generation to the collection.

I developed the scheme of organization based on a system used by the University of North Carolina sent to me by Dr. Sydney Nathans of Duke University.

First, the papers of each generation have been put in one series. The series includes all correspondence of wife and husband with each other, their siblings, in laws, children, grandchildren and friends. Each relationship has its own folder, or folders. The folders in each relationship are interleaved by date. The series also includes business papers, financial papers, writings and other miscellaneous papers.

Since the matriarchal line is dominant here, I have usually used the woman's name first in each series designation unless the male in the designation is the one in direct line of descent and most of the papers in the series are his. For instance, Peter Lesley III comes first in the designation because his first wife Elizabeth Oswald Allen, mother of J. Peter, died when the children were young and her papers form only a small portion of the series. In the same vane, the first wife of Charles Gordon Ames, Sarah Jane Daniels, died when their son Charles Wilberforce Ames was six and her correspondence in the collection is minimal. The series are set up in roughly chronological order.

The correspondence of Margaret Lesley Bush-Brown and her husband with her sister and brother-in-law, Mary Lesley Ames and Charles Wilberforce Ames, is in the Mary Lesley Ames & Charles Wilberforce Ames series. The Bush-Brown papers that are not related either to Margaret's parents, Susan Lyman Lesley and J. Peter Lesley, or to her sister, Mary Lesley Ames and brother-in law, Charles Wilberforce Ames and their family, are in a separate Series, Number 9.

The correspondence of Susan Lyman Lesley and J. Peter Lesley with Susan's maternal aunt, Catharine Robbins, is in the Lesley Series 6. Catharine's correspondence with her grandnieces, Mary Lesley Ames and Margaret Lesley Bush-Brown and their families is in Series 8 and 9 respectively.

Unless there are substantial materials from ancillary relatives, they are included under miscellaneous papers in one of the central series. Because of the large number of papers involved, an exception to this rule is Series 4 created for the siblings of Anne Jean Robbins Lyman including her sister Catharine Robbins. This series includes only papers that are not related to correspondence with the principals in other series.

Because of the prolific correspondence among the six children of Mary Lesley and Charles Wilberforce Ames, those papers are arranged in their own Series 16.