



## Guide to the John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers

Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island

Last update on 2012 February 21

### Descriptive Summary

Repository	Newport Historical Society, Newport, Rhode Island
Location	Newport Historical Society, 82 Touro Street, Newport, RI 02840
Call No.	MS.43.2.1
Creators	Stevens, John Austin, 1827-1910
Title	John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers
Date(s)	approximately 1777-1941, undated (bulk 1863-1907)
Abstract	The personal papers of the John Austin Stevens, Jr. Family of New York and Newport, including correspondence, historical research, published articles and poetry and other papers by various family members.
Extent	1.668 linear feet (4 boxes)
Accession Info	The Steven family papers were a gift of Mary Morris Stevens, 1942-1944, as published in Newport Historical Society Bulletin, Number 103.

### Historical Note

John Austin Stevens, Sr. (1795-1874) was a New York businessman and banker. His father was Ebenezer Stevens, a lieutenant-colonel in the 2d Continental Artillery during the American Revolution. He graduated from Yale College in 1813 and was secretary of the New York Chamber of commerce, first president of the Merchants' Exchange Company and first president of the Bank of Commerce, 1839-1866. In his role as President of the Bank of Commerce, he was in part responsible for loaning the United States government \$50,000,000.00 at the outbreak of the Civil War. He married Abigail Weld Perkins and is the father of John Austin Stevens, Jr.

John Austin Stevens, Jr. (1827-1910) was born in New York, but retired to Newport, Rhode Island later in life. He graduated from Harvard College in 1846 and was a businessman, banker, writer and historian. He is best remembered as the founder of the Society of the Sons of the Revolution in 1876, a patriotic organization which allowed any male descendant of men who either in military naval or civil service participated in the American Revolution. Throughout his life Stevens wrote and published articles on finance and history, largely in connection with the American Revolution. He was elected librarian of the New York Historical Society in 1876 and he founded the Magazine of American History in 1877. He married Mary Antoinette Morris in 1885 and had one son, John Austin Stevens, Jr. and two daughters, Mary Morris and Abby Weld Stevens.

**Scope and Content**

The bulk of this collection consists of the correspondence, research notes, published and unpublished writings of John Austin Stevens, Jr. and the correspondence of his father, John Austin Stevens, Sr. Papers from Mary Morris Stevens are also included, as well as the published and unpublished poetry of Mary Morris Stevens. Also included are unattributed and undated writings, letters and personal papers of other family members and unknown persons.

The correspondence series consists of the correspondence of John Austin Stevens Sr., John Austin Stevens, Jr. and Mary Morris Stevens, in addition to the correspondence of other miscellaneous persons.

The research series consists of the historical research of John Austin Stevens on topics of colonial American history, the bulk is undated and unsigned. This series includes a map of the battlefield at Valley Forge, which is suspected to be drawn by Louis Lebègue Duportail.

Also included in this series is genealogical research of the Stevens family. The writings series is dominantly made up of the published and unpublished writings of John Austin Stevens, Jr. in the form of newspaper clippings, typescripts and manuscripts largely on topics related to the study of colonial American history. Also included in the writings series is the published and unpublished poetry and poetry fragments of Mary Morris Stevens and miscellaneous writings from unknown individuals.

The professional papers series consists of the Harvard College diploma of John Austin Stevens, Jr. from 1846, and documents and newspaper clippings related to the Sons of the Revolution, Society of the Cincinnati and other organizations John Austin Stevens Jr. was involved with during his life. Also included in this series is a box of ribbons and a program from various functions associated with these organizations.

The textile instruction series consists of various written and printed instructions for crochet and other forms of needlework.

**Organization**

The John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers are organized into five series:  
Series 1. Correspondence  
Series 2. Writings  
Series 3. Research  
Series 4. Professional papers  
Series 5. Textile instruction

**Restrictions**

There are no restrictions on physical access to this material. This collection is housed onsite at the Newport Historical Society. Researchers can be seen by appointment during operating hours at the Newport Historical Society, call to make an appointment.

**Related material**

Many more archival collections relating to the Steven family exist at other institutions. Ebenezer Stevens papers, MS 592, New York Historical Society;

John Austin Stevens copy books, Uncat MSS 244, Yale University Library;  
John Austin Stevens papers, Mss Collection, New York Historical Society.

To learn more about the Valley Forge map, visit Public Broadcasting Systems' program, History Detectives. An investigation of the plan was done in Summer 2012: <http://video.pbs.org/video/2285050331/>

## Subject Access

### Personal Name Subject

Biddle, Nicholas, 1786-1844  
Curtis, George, 1796-1856  
Duportail, Antoine-Jean-Louis Le Be`gue de Presle, 1743-1802  
Gallatin, Albert, 1761-1849  
Gardiner, Asa Bird, 1839-1919  
Harrison, Benjamin, 1833-1901  
Kelby, Robert Hendre, 1847-1927  
Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919  
Stevens, Margaret  
Stevens, Abby Weld  
Stevens, John Austin, 1795-1874  
Stevens, Mary Morris

### Subject Headings

American drama--19th century  
Bank of Commerce in New-York  
Economics--United States--History--19th century  
Harvard College (1636-1780)  
Newport (R.I.)—History  
Newport (R.I.)--Social life and customs  
Society of the Cincinnati  
Sons of the Revolution  
United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783

### Form/Genre

battlefield maps  
clippings  
correspondence  
crocheting  
decorations (honor)  
research notes  
scripts (documents)

## Administrative Information

Processor Finding aid prepared by Stacie M. Parillo and Finding aid prepared by Elise Petraca.

Descriptive Rules Finding aid based on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACs)

Citation            John Austin Stevens, Jr. family papers, MS.43.2.1, Newport Historical Society. Newport, Rhode Island

**Inventory**

<b>Series 1.</b>	<b>Correspondence</b>	<b>1825-1941, undated</b>
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Series is arranged by author, then chronologically with undated correspondence at the end of the folder.

Box 1, Folder 1	Stevens, John Austin, Sr. correspondence	1825-1863
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Correspondence written and received by John Austin Stevens Sr. The correspondence is reflective of his business work, including information about the Merchants' Exchange Company, the Bank of Commerce and the Bank of the United States. Correspondents include fellow bankers, businessmen and statesmen, such as Albert Gallatin, Nicholas Biddle, George Curtis and Henry Clay.

Box 1, Folder 2	Stevens, John Austin, Jr. correspondence	1863-1898
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Correspondence written and received by John Austin Stevens, Jr. This correspondence series primarily consists of letters regarding his business interests as well as his historical and genealogical research and his involvement with the New York Historical Society, the New York and Rhode Island chapters of the Sons of the Revolution and the Society of the Cincinnati. Also included are letters from his time spent abroad in France. The collection is dominantly in English with some French. Correspondents include Robert H. Kelby, Benjamin Harrison, Asa Bird Gardiner, Henry Turner and unidentified correspondents.

Box 1, Folder 3	Stevens, John Austin, Jr. correspondence	1900-1907, undated
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Correspondence written and received by John Austin Stevens, Jr.. The bulk of this series concerns his historical and genealogical research and was written and received while he was in residence in Newport. Correspondents include Robert H. Kelby, William Leslie Stevens and Edith B. D. Mason. Folder also contains two photographs of an unidentified man.

Box 1, Folder 4	Stevens, Mary Morris correspondence	1911-1941
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Correspondence written and received by Mary Morris Stevens while she was in residence in Newport. The majority of the items in this series are related to her father's historical work or her own poetry. Correspondents include Emil E. Jemail of the Newport Daily

	News.	
Box 1, Folder 5	Miscellaneous Stevens family correspondence	1854-1924, undated
	Correspondence written and received by various individuals. Individuals include Abby Geld Stevens, Charles C. Torrey and Theodore Roosevelt.	
<b>Series 2.</b>	<b>Writings</b>	<b>1846-1940, undated</b>
	Arranged alphabetically by title of work when possible, with untitled material at the end of the folder. The works are largely undated.	1866 July 4
Box 1, Folder 6	Stevens, Abby Weld: Album	approximately 1870
	Bound book belonging to Abby Weld Stevens, which was a gift from her sister, Mary Stevens.	
Box 2, Folder 1	Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: B-E	1890-1923, undated
	This folder includes works written by John Austin Stevens, Jr. published and unpublished, including "The Battle of Rhode Island," "Coaches in Colonial New York," "Colonel Beverly: A Drama in Five Acts" "Colonial Letters," "The Commerce of Rhode Island," and "Evolutions of American Finance."	
Box 2, Folder 2	Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: F-L	1901, undated
	This folder includes works written by John Austin Stevens, Jr. published and unpublished, including. The Finances of the United States in a Century, 1800-1900," "Le Francais en Rhode-Island," "Heine's Intermezzo," and "The Legend of Petersfield."	
Box 2, Folder 3	Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: The Mayor's Quest	undated
	This folder contains one work by Stevens Jr., "The Mayor's Quest."	
Box 2, Folder 4	Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: The Margins, or Men of the Period	undated
	This folder contains one work by Stevens Jr., a play entitled, "The Margins, or Men of the Period."	
Box 3, Folder 1	Stevens, John Austin, Jr.: Mo-T	1875-1907
	This folder includes works written by John Austin Stevens, Jr. published and unpublished, including, "Money and Investment," "The Presidential Election of 1868," "Une Respose Heureau," and	

"The Two Dominoes"

Box 3, Folder 2	Stevens, Margaret: Composition book	1844 October 1-1846 February 19
	A bound composition book of Ms. Stevens' writings. Includes remarks from her instructors.	
Box 3, Folder 3	Stevens, Mary Morris	1932-1940, undated
	Majority are works of poetry, both unpublished and published which often contain political themes.	
Box 3, Folder 4	Stevens family or unknown author: A-L	undated
	Published and unpublished manuscripts from various individuals both connected and unconnected to the Stevens family or works here no author could be accurately determined. These include works, "Apotheosis of the Dutchman," "The Ballad of Sir Olaf," "An Hour with Alphonse Daudet," "Juanito's Five Franc Piece," and "The Lassies."	
Box 3, Folder 5	Stevens family or unknown author: A-Y, untitled	1878-1895, undated
	Published and unpublished manuscripts from various individuals both connected and unconnected to the Stevens family or works here no author could be accurately determined. These include works, "Naval War College," "The Physician's Obligation," and "Rules and Maxims for Young Musicians."	
<b>Series 3.</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>1777-1910, undated</b>
	Includes genealogical and academic research. Arranged by subject and then chronologically.	
Box 3, Folder 6	Map of Valley Forge	probably 1777
	This folder contains a hand-drawn map of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The map is unsigned and undated but has tentatively been dated to 1777-1778. The creator of the map is unknown but speculated to be Louis Lebègue Duportail.	
Box 3, Folder 7	Research notes	1893-1894, undated
	This folder contains the research notes of John Austin Stevens, Jr. written largely in connection to his work in the field of American history. It includes sections copied from books used in the course of his research as well as original research. Some of the topics covered include coaches in colonial America and the Duke of Lauzun and	

Marie Antoinette.

Box 4, Folder 1 Genealogy research 1818-1910, undated

This folder contains biographical and genealogical information on John Austin Stevens, Jr. and the extended Stevens family. It includes a genealogy of the Stevens family (male line).

**Series 4. Professional papers 1846-1926, undated**

Arranged chronologically by date with undated materials at the end of the folder.

Box 4, Folder 2 Academic record 1846

This folder contains the Harvard College diploma of John Austin Stevens, Jr.

Box 4, Folder 3 Stevens, John Austin, Jr. business records 1889-1926, undated

This folder contains letters, pamphlets and other ephemera relating to fraternal organizations such as the Sons of the Revolution and the Society of the Cincinnati. Also included in this series is a separate box of ribbons made for functions held in connection with these fraternal organizations.

Box 4, Folder 4 Ribbon and badges undated

This folder contains a small box of identifying badges and other insignia from many organizations including the New York Chamber of Commerce and the New York Historical Society, as well as events such as the Celebration of Evacuation of New York by the British.

Box 4, Folder 5 Patterns undated

Written and typed instructions/diagrams for textile work, dominantly crochet.