

James S. and Frances M. Bradford Collection
1749-1898
Mss.B.F85.bra

American Philosophical Society
4/2003
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Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790
Title	James S. and Frances M. Bradford Collection
Date [inclusive]	1749-1898
Call number	Mss.B.F85.bra
Extent	0.5 Linear feet
Location	LH-MV-C-9; LH-SB-Black Case-27 (No. 79); LH-SB-XOS Case 1-5 (No. 56)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The James S. and Frances M. Bradford Collection contains a wealth of letters to and from Polly Stevenson Hewson, intimate friend of Benjamin Franklin. At the heart of the collection are approximately 40 letters from Mary Stevenson to Franklin with a smaller number in return. Friendly, increasingly intimate, these provide a glimpse of the domestic life of Franklin and his warm personal relations with the Stevensons and Hewsons. Among the noteworthy individual items is the manuscript "Craven Street Gazette" (Sept. 22-26, 1770), the mock newspaper Franklin produced while in London. The collection also contains a series of unrelated miscellaneous manuscripts that includes correspondence from William Bradford, Patrick Henry, and George Washington.</p>

Preferred Citation

Cite as: James S. and Frances M. Bradford Collection, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

During the 17 years he served as colonial agent for Pennsylvania in London, Benjamin Franklin developed a strong attachment to the family of his landlady at 36 Craven Street, Margaret Stevenson. Margaret's daughter, Mary (usually called Polly) became a particular intimate, so much so that Franklin connived to marry her off to his son, William. Although nothing came of these efforts, Franklin's intentions did little to impair the friendship with the Stevensons, and Franklin's domestic circle at Craven Street eventually grew to include his grandson William Temple Franklin and Sarah Franklin, daughter of an English cousin.

In 1770, Polly married the distinguished surgeon and anatomist William Hewson in what was to be a tragically short pairing. Hewson died in 1774 after contracting septicaemia from a cut he received while dissecting a cadaver in his basement, leaving Polly to care for their daughter and two sons to raise, one of whom was Franklin's godson. Recognizing the difficulty of her situation, Franklin stepped in to assist his old friend, further strengthening their bond. After Franklin left England on the eve of the Revolution, he and Polly continued in regular correspondence, and after the Revolution ended, Polly arranged to renew their friendship face to face, visiting Franklin at Passy in 1785. In the following year, she followed him when he returned to Philadelphia, and was at Franklin's beside when he died in 1790. In his will, Franklin recognized Polly with a silver tankard he had "marked for her use during her life," acknowledging her daughter Eliza as well, and leaving books to her sons William and Thomas.

Scope & content

The James S. and Frances M. Bradford Collection contains a wealth of letters to and from Polly Stevenson Hewson, intimate friend of Benjamin Franklin. At the heart of the collection are approximately 40 letters from Mary Stevenson to Franklin with a smaller number in return. Friendly, increasingly intimate, these provide a glimpse of the domestic life of Franklin and his warm personal relations with the Stevensons and Hewsons. Among the noteworthy individual items are the manuscript "Craven Street Gazette" (Sept. 22-26, 1770), the mock newspaper Franklin produced while in London, Franklin's "Scheme for a new alphabet" (1768), and his parable on brotherly love (1774).

The Bradford Collection also includes a number of interesting letters between Hewson and Dr. John Hawkesworth, as well as a few miscellaneous letters from important Americans owned by the Bradford family, including two from George Washington and two from Patrick Henry. A self-educated miscellaneous writer, Hawkesworth was associated with Samuel Johnson (until a falling out in about 1756) and was a contributor to the "Gentleman's Magazine," the "Adventurer," which he edited with Johnson), and other publications, and edited a volume describing Captain Cook's voyage to the South Seas. He and his wife were close friends of Hewson and of Franklin.

The collection also contains a series of typescripts of letters written between Hewson and Franklin, several of which appear in the original in the collection.

Frances Margaret Bradford presented a third series of papers in 1960. In addition to further correspondence and estate material concerning Margaret Stevenson and Mary Hewson, this series also contains some miscellaneous, and unrelated, correspondence from William Bradford, Patrick Henry, and George Washington.

Arrangement

Series I. is physically arranged in order of correspondent, but is presented here in chronological order.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 4/2003

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift of James S. and Frances M. Bradford, 1956 and 1960.

Processing Information

Recatalogued rsc, 2003.

Related Materials

Related Material

Polly Hewson appears as a correspondent in several other collections at the APS, including: Benjamin Franklin Papers (B F85); Benjamin Franklin Miscellaneous Collections (B F85x); Bache Family Papers (B B121); Sarah Franklin Bache (B B1245); Hewson Family Papers (B H492).

Related Material

Other Benjamin Franklin Collections

Benjamin Franklin Papers

[View Collection](#)

Franklin-Bache

[View Collection](#)

Miscellaneous Benjamin Franklin Collections

[View Collection](#)

Separated Material

The Bradford Family Collection included several items that have been transferred to the Curatorial Department or Department of Printed Materials. These include: Miniature chess set and board used by Mary Stevenson Hewson, Memorial ring "John Hawkesworth,LLD ob 17 Nov. 1773 art 58" formerly owned by Hewson, Pluche, Noel Antoine, "Spectacle de la nature...," 8th ed. (London, 1753-1757). Presentation copy from Franklin to Hewson, 500 P72s.8 v.1-7.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Family Correspondence
- General Correspondence

Personal Name(s)

- Bradford, William, 1719-1791
- Cadwalader, John, 1742-1786
- Hawkesworth, John, 1715?-1773
- Henry, Patrick, 1736-1799
- Hewson, Mary Stevenson, 1734-1795
- Lafayette, Marie Joseph Paul Yves, marquis de, 1757-1834
- Washington, George, 1732-1799

Subject(s)

- American Revolution
- Colonial Politics
- Craven Street Gazette
- Great Britain--Social life and customs--18th century
- International Affairs
- Marriage and Family Life
- Social Life and Custom

Other Descriptive Information

The Bradford Collection contains a significant portion of Franklin correspondence. It includes a miscellany of Franklin writings that includes things like vocabularies and a mock newspaper he composed

in 1774. The bulk of the collection contains correspondence Franklin had with the Stevenson and Hewson families, especially with Polly Stevenson Hewson.

Collection Inventory

B F85.bra Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers	1749-1794	81 items
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Opinion and conjectures...	1749	Folder 6
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1760 January 14	Folder 10
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1760 June 6	Folder 11
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1760 June 23	Folder 12
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1760 [September]	Folder 13
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1760 September 16	Folder 14
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1761 January 13	Folder 15
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1761 April 27	Folder 16
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1761 May 19	Folder 17
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1761 July 8	Folder 18
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson)	1761 July 30	Folder 19

Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers

to Benjamin Franklin		
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1761 September 10	Folder 20
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1761 November 9	Folder 21
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	1761 December 16	Folder 60
Stevenson, Mary to "dear cousin"	1761 December 17	Folder 67
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1762 March 10	Folder 22
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1762 June 11	Folder 23
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Polly Stevenson Hewson	1762 June 21	Folder 1
Hawkesworth, Mrs. to Mary Stevenson	1762 July 25	Folder 68
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1762 August 5	Folder 24
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1763 March 11	Folder 25
Hawkesworth, Mrs. to Mary Stevenson	1763 August 28	Folder 69
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1763 August 30	Folder 26
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson)	1763 November 25	Folder 27

Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers

to Benjamin Franklin		
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1764 May 24	Folder 28
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1765 January 17	Folder 29
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1765 February 8	Folder 30
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1765 July 28	Folder 31
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Polly Stevenson Hewson	[1765?] December 31	Folder 3
Sun Fire-Office, Cornhill Proposals...	1766 January 16	Folder 79
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1766 March 9	Folder 32
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1766 September 26	Folder 33
Stevenson, Mrs. to Benjamin Franklin	1766 November 22	Folder 51
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Polly Stevenson Hewson	1767 June 15	Folder 2
Stevenson, Mrs. to Deborah Franklin	1767 September 18	Folder 55
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Polly Stevenson Hewson to Polly Stevenson Hewson	1768 July 20	Folder 4

Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers

[\[http://cdm.amphilsoc.org/u/?franklin,170\]](http://cdm.amphilsoc.org/u/?franklin,170)

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 [Scheme for a new alphabet...] Remarks [Scheme for a new alphabet...] Remarks	[1768]	Folder 7
[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:4623]		
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1769 December	Folder 34
Hawkesworth, John, 1715?-1773 to Mary Stevenson	1770 February 28	Folder 72
Marriage settlement of Mary Stevenson and William Hewson	1770 July 9	Folder 56
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Craven Street Gazette Craven Street Gazette, September 22, 1770.	1770 Sept. 22-26	Folder 8
[http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/fedora/repository/graphics:4624]		
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1771 October 31	Folder 35
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1771 November 2	Folder 36
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1772 July 6	Folder 37
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1772 October 22	Folder 38
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Parable on brotherly love	[1774]	Folder 9
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson)	1779 January 11	Folder 39

Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers

to Benjamin Franklin		
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1779 May 30	Folder 40
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1781 December 23	Folder 41
Briscoe, A. to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1782 March 27	Folder 76
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	ca. 1782	Folder 41a
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1783 September 28	Folder 42
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1784 April 2	Folder 43
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin (also letter from J. Williams to BF)	1785 April 26	Folder 44
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1785 May 8	Folder 45
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1786 October 17	Folder 46
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	1789 August 14	Folder 47
Hewson, Mary Will	1794 June 7	Folder 57
Fortin, John Notes on Matthew 13,30	n.d.	Folder 77

Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Polly Stevenson Hewson	n.d.	Folder 5
Hawkesworth, John, 1715?-1773 to Mary Stevenson	n.d.	Folder 73
Hawkesworth, John, 1715?-1773 to Mary Stevenson	n.d.	Folder 74
Hawkesworth, John, 1715?-1773 Miscellaneous notes - 5 pieces. Explanation of Proverbs 27, 14.	n.d.	Folder 75
Hewson, Mary to Mrs. Lynn	n.d. (Friday night)	Folder 59
Hewson, Mary Miscellaneous notes - 3 pieces	n.d.	Folder 78
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	n.d. (Friday night)	Folder 48
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	n.d.	Folder 49
Hewson, M. S., (Mary Stevenson) to Benjamin Franklin	n.d.	Folder 50
Hawkesworth, Mrs. to Mary Stevenson	n.d.	Folder 70
Hawkesworth, Mrs. to Mary Stevenson	n.d.	Folder 71
Stevenson, Mrs. to Benjamin Franklin	n.d. (August 4 Tuesday evening)	Folder 52
Stevenson, Mrs.	n.d. (August 5 Thursday)	Folder 53

Franklin - Stevenson - Hewson Papers

to Benjamin Franklin		
Stevenson, Mrs. to Benjamin Franklin	n.d.	Folder 54
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	n.d.	Folder 61
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	n.d.	Folder 62
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	n.d.	Folder 63
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	n.d.	Folder 64
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	n.d.	Folder 65
Stevenson, Mary to Dr. John Hawkesworth	n.d.	Folder 66
Stevenson, Mary to Mrs. Margaret Stevenson	n.d. (Sunday evening)	Folder 58

Transcripts of Hewson-Franklin Correspondence

B F85.bra1 Transcripts of Hewson-Franklin 1758-1898		38 items
Correspondence		
Ford, Paul L. to Charles [S.] Bradford	1898 March 30	Folder 1
Ford, Paul L. to Charles [S.] Bradford	1898 July 15	Folder 2
Hewson, William. Introduction . .George Gulliver	n.d.	Folder 3
Correspondence		Folder 4
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1758 Aug. 20	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1760 Feb. 14	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1761 July 7	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1762 May 10	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1762 May 24	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1762 June 21	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1763 June 27	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1764 May 4	
Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790	[1764 Dec.]	

Transcripts of Hewson-Franklin Correspondence

to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1765 Jan. 9
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 [1765? Dec. 31
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1767 March 26
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 [1767?] May 16
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1767 May 16
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1768 Oct. 20
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1770 July 18
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1772 July 8
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1780 Jan. 10
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1780 Dec. 7
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1782 May 13
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 [1782?]
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1783 Jan. 8

Transcripts of Hewson-Franklin Correspondence

to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1783 July 12
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1784 Jan. 1
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1784 April 29
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 June 15
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Wednesday morning
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Wednesday P.M
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Friday morning
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 Friday 2 P.M
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 n.d.
to Mary Stevenson Hewson

Hewson, Mary. 1770
Marriage settlement

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1780 Jan. 10
to Brown, Collinson, etc

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 1780 Jan. 10
to Woodmason

Hewson, Mary. 1784 May 10

Transcripts of Hewson-Franklin Correspondence

to Mr. Viny

Miscellaneous Manuscripts

B F85.bra2 Miscellaneous Manuscripts	1777-1896	10 items
Washington, George, 1732-1799 to [Philemon] Dickinson	1777 August 27	Folder 1
Bradford, William, Jr. to Thomas [Bradford]	1779 May 4	Folder 2
Robert, bishop of London. Letter of administration of Margaret Stevenson's estate to Mary Stevenson Hewson	1783 January 16	Folder 3
Washington, George, 1732-1799 to [John] Cadwallader [sic]	1784 December 11	Folder 4
Hewson, Mary to [Mrs. Sarah Franklin Ba]che	1785 April 13	Folder 5
Blunt, James. Declaration of trust of estate of Mary Hewson	1796 November 2	Folder 6
Bradford, William, 1719-1791 La Fayette - a song	1824 September 6	Folder 7
Hart, Charles Henry to Charles S. Bradford	1896 September 21	Folder 8
Henry, Patrick, 1736-1799 to [John] Cadwalader	n.d.	Folder 9
Henry, Patrick, 1736-1799 to [John] Cadwalader	n.d. (Thursday morning)	Folder 10