

# **Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894)**

## **A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress**

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Revised by Patrick Kerwin**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

**Washington, D.C.**

**2007**

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress  
Manuscript Division, 2007**

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms007047>

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Papers of Oliver Wendell Holmes

**Span Dates:** 1837-1931

**ID No.:** MSS26377

**Creator:** Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894

**Extent:** 700 items; 11 containers plus 1 oversize; 2.5 linear feet; 3 microfilm reels

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Repository:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Abstract:** Poet, essayist, physician, and educator. Correspondence and literary manuscripts in bound volumes.

## 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.

### Personal Names

Agassiz, Louis, 1807-1873--Correspondence.  
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 1836-1907--Correspondence.  
Browning, Robert, 1812-1889--Correspondence.  
Collins, Wilkie, 1824-1889--Correspondence.  
Curtis, George William, 1824-1892--Correspondence.  
Dana, Richard Henry, 1815-1882--Correspondence.  
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-1882.  
Gosse, Edmund, 1849-1928--Correspondence.  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894.  
Howe, Julia Ward, 1819-1910--Correspondence.  
Howells, William Dean, 1837-1920--Correspondence.  
Lowell, James Russell, 1819-1891--Correspondence.  
Motley, John Lothrop, 1814-1877.  
O'Reilly, John Boyle, 1844-1890--Correspondence.  
Phillips, Wendell, 1811-1884--Correspondence.  
Stedman, Edmund Clarence, 1833-1908--Correspondence.  
Whittier, John Greenleaf, 1807-1892--Correspondence.

### Subjects

American literature.

### Related Names

Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894. A moral antipathy.  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894. John Lothrop Motley: A memoir (1879)  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894. Over the teacups (1891)  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1885)  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 1809-1894. The poet at the breakfast-table: His talks with his fellow-boarders and the reader (1874)  
Holmes, Oliver Wendell. 1809-1894. Our hundred days in Europe (1887)

### Occupations

Authors.  
Educators.  
Physicians.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance:

The papers of Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894), poet, essayist, physician, educator, and dean of the Harvard Medical School, were given to the Library of Congress in 1921 by his son, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. The Library has supplemented the collection with periodic gifts and purchases, 1915-1974.

### Processing History:

The papers of Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) were arranged and described in 1975. The collection was revised in 1994 and the finding aid updated in 2007.

### Copyright Status:

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

### Microfilm:

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on three reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

### Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1809, Aug. 29	Born, Cambridge, Mass.
1829	Graduated, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1830	Wrote poem "Old Ironsides," generating interest in the preservation of the <i>Constitution</i> (Ship)
1836	M.D. degree, Harvard Medical School, Cambridge, Mass. Published first volume of verse, <i>Poems</i> (Boston: Otis, Broaders and Co.)
1839-1840	Professor of anatomy and physiology, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
1840	Married Amelia Lee Jackson
1843	Read and published medical paper, <i>Contagiousness of Puerperal Fever</i> (republished in 1936, [Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins])
1847-1853	Dean, Harvard Medical School, Cambridge, Mass.
1847-1882	Professor of anatomy and physiology, Harvard Medical School, Cambridge, Mass.; professor emeritus, 1882-1894
1857	Helped establish the <i>Atlantic Monthly</i>
1858	Published <i>The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table</i> (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Co.)

1894, Oct. 7

Died, Boston, Mass.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894), 1837-1931, consist largely of bound volumes of correspondence and literary manuscripts. Much of the correspondence contained in the bound volumes consists of incoming letters alphabetically arranged with an incomplete index provided at the beginning of volume one. Approximately six hundred letters, largely written between 1869 to 1894, are contained in these volumes, and, although the letters are occasional, they provide insight into Holmes's interests. Correspondents include Louis Agassiz, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Robert Browning, Wilkie Collins, George William Curtis, Richard Henry Dana, Edmund Gosse, Julia Ward Howe, William Dean Howells, James Russell Lowell, John Boyle O'Reilly, Wendell Phillips, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and John Greenleaf Whittier. A folder of unbound correspondence includes letters written by Holmes, some expressing his views on the topics of the day such as capital punishment (6 Feb. 1868).

Six bound volumes contain manuscripts and published works, and one volume includes notes related to Ralph Waldo Emerson. Several short poems are among the Miscellany, including autographed manuscripts of "My Aunt" and "Corinna."

## Related Materials

The main group of papers of Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894) is in the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Additional collections are in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, the Boston Medical Library, and the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material

# Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 15,671

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	General correspondence, 1837-1894
REEL 1	
BOX 1	A-G
REEL 1	
BOX 2	H-O
REEL 2	
BOX 3	P-Y
REEL 3	
BOX 4	Literary manuscripts
not filmed	
BOX 4	"The Chambered Nautilus," 1892
BOX 5	<i>Ralph Waldo Emerson</i> , 1885
BOX 6	"Emerson Notes," n.d.
BOX 7	<i>A Moral Antipathy</i> , 1885
BOX 7	<i>Our Hundred Days in Europe</i> , 1887
BOX 8	<i>John Lothrop Motley</i> , 1879
BOX 8	Poems, 1861-1893
BOX 9	<i>The Poet at the Breakfast Table</i> , 1872
BOX 10	<i>Over the Teacups</i> , 1891
BOX 11	Two mounted poems, "A Birthday Tribute," and "The Darkened Skies Alas..." <a href="#"><i>See Oversize</i></a>
BOX 11	Addition
BOX 11	Correspondence, 1852-1891, n.d.
BOX 11	Miscellany
BOX 11	Articles on the great international walking match, 29 Feb. 1868 <a href="#"><i>See Oversize</i></a>
BOX 11	Autograph, n.d.
BOX 11	Engravings, n.d.
BOX 11	Envelopes, 1888, n.d.
BOX 11	Invitations, 1879
BOX 11	Poems, 1862-1886, 1931, n.d.
BOX 11	Subscribers list for charity fund of Edward W. Kinsley, 1892
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Literary manuscripts
BOX OV 1	Two mounted poems, "A Birthday Tribute," and "The Darkened Skies Alas..."
BOX OV 1	Addition
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	Articles on the great international walking match, 29 Feb. 1868