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Kingsbury Family Papers

1862-2006 (*Bulk:* 1881-1902)

10 boxes (6 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 504

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Read collection overview

The family of Roxana Kingsbury Gould (nee Weed) farmed the rocky soils of western New England during the late nineteenth century. Roxana's first husband Ambrose died of dysentery shortly after the Civil War, leaving her to care for their two infant sons, and after marrying her second husband, Lyman Gould, she relocated from southwestern Vermont to Cooleyville and then (ten years later) to Shelburne, Massachusetts. The Goulds added a third son to their family in 1869.

A rich collection of letters and photographs recording the history of the Kingsbury-Gould families of Shelburne, Massachusetts. The bulk of the letters are addressed to Roxana Kingsbury Gould, the strong-willed matriarch at the center of the family, and to her granddaughter, May Kingsbury Phillips, the family's first historian. In addition to documenting the complicated dynamics of a close-knit family, this collection is a rich source for the study of local history, rural New England, and the social and cultural practices at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

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Background on Creator:

Roxana Kingsbury Gould

Roxana Orvilla Weed Kingsbury Gould (1838-1904) was the matriarch of the Kingsbury family during the late nineteenth century, a family of middle class New Englanders. A native of Winhall, Vermont, Roxana married Ambrose Kingsbury in 1859 after he divorced her older sister Lura. During their relatively brief marriage, the couple had two boys, Arnold O. Kingsbury (1861-1901) and Oscar B. Kingsbury (1863-1943), both born in Jamaica, Vermont. Ambrose survived the Civil War with the 5th Vermont Infantry, but shortly after his return home, he succumbed to dysentery.

Three years later, in 1868, Roxana married Lyman G. Gould and moved her children to his home in Cooleyville, Massachusetts (now New Salem), where she had another son, David Oris Gould (1869-1953). After ten years, the family moved to a farm in Shelburne. When the question of who would inherit the family's farm arose, the decision seems to have been determined by the process of elimination. Roxana and Lyman's only son together, David, showed no interest, and Roxana's oldest son, Arnold, proved to be unreliable. As a result, the farm was settled on Oscar, the middle son, who took up the work in late 1888. Married a year earlier to Lillian M. Davis (1868-1937), Oscar failed in his first efforts at assuming responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the farm, and over the next few years Oscar sought work elsewhere. When he finally returned to the farm in 1895, Roxana and Lyman were ready to let it go, this time formally transferring the farm and its movable assets to Oscar.

In the next generation of Kingsburys, May O. Kingsbury, the second of Oscar and Lillian's four children, took a keen interest in the family's history. A teacher in Shelburne before her marriage to R. Ernest Phillips in 1923, May kept up an active correspondence with family members, especially during her single years, and she preserved most of the family's papers and genealogical materials. During

the 1960s, she wrote a series of essays detailing the life of her grandmother Roxana, which were saved by her daughter, Marilyn, and eventually passed on to her nephew, Conrad Totman.

Scope of collection

This collection contains a wide variety of personal papers belonging to the members of the Kingsbury, Gould, and Totman families, long-time residents of the Western Massachusetts and Southern Vermont area. Dated between 1862 and 2006, the papers were collected by family members during the twentieth century.

The family of Ambrose and Roxana Kingsbury and their two sons Arnold and Oscar maintained an active correspondence throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. The bulk of this correspondence details the family relationships and local events as experienced by Roxana by her female relatives after her second marriage and subsequent removal to rural western Massachusetts. There are also various items of personal interest from extended family members, including children's books, autograph albums, stereocards, picture postcards collected in albums, a few legal documents, graphic business cards from local western Massachusetts businesses, and a large sample of calling cards.

May Kingsbury Phillips collected her grandmother's letters and later compiled a family genealogy, which is included here. After May's death, her nephew Conrad Totman became the repository for the family's history. Both May and Conrad compiled narrative histories of the family, mostly focusing on Roxana's correspondence and the photographs contained in this collection. Their notes, identifications, and interpretations can be found throughout the collection.

The collection is rounded out by a series of family photography, dating from a formal portrait in 1862 to photocopies of photographs for genealogical research made in 2005. There are gem tintypes, formal portraits, snapshots, and photograph albums, preserved in a variety of frames, matted presentations, lockets, and albums. Some are professional photographs and others are candid photographs taken by members of the family.

Series descriptions

[Series 1: Correspondence and Subject Files](#)

1862-1942

Since most of the correspondents in this series were related by birth or marriage, the letters contained are often about family members and mutual acquaintances. The letters also refer extensively to life in Shelburne, Cooleyville (New Salem), Greenfield and surrounding towns in Massachusetts, and the area near Jamaica, Vermont.

The bulk of this series consists of letters addressed to Roxana Kingsbury Gould, mostly from members of the Kingsbury, Gleason, and Gould families, including her sons and grandchildren. These letters discuss local events, births, marriages, and deaths, and were intended to keep Roxana up-to-date with family news.

May Kingsbury Phillips received a substantial series of letters during her younger years as a student and a teacher. They are mostly family letters, informing her about local news.

[Series 2: Genealogy](#)

1958-2005

In the second half of the twentieth century, May Kingsbury Phillips and, later, her nephew Conrad Totman compiled genealogical histories of the Kingsbury and Davis families. This collection contains copies of their correspondence with other family members and historical societies, miscellaneous newspaper clippings, notes, sketches of family trees, and compiled narrative histories. Conrad transcribed many of the letters from the collection in his "Kingsburyana" bound volume.

[Series 3: Photographs](#)

1862-2005

Photographs in the Kingsbury Family Papers consist of a variety of photographic methods, including portraits, gem tintypes, photocopies, and snapshots. Most photographs were taken locally in Hartford, Greenfield, Shelburne, Deerfield, and Conway, Massachusetts. Many of the photographs are undated but are from the second half of the nineteenth century.

Inventory

Series 1: Correspondence and Subject Files

1862-1942

Arms Academy: Phillips, May Kingsbury

1909-1913

Box 1: 1

Art Books: Kingsbury, Lillian Davis

1913

Box 1: 1

Art Papers: Kingsbury, Lillian Davis

ca. 1895-1915

Box 1: 3

Autograph Album: Kingsbury, Joseph L.

1880-1902

Box 1: 4

Autograph Album: Kingsbury, Lillian Davis

1883-1889

Box 1: 5

Autograph Album: Kingsbury, Oscar

1879-1903

Box 1: 6

Calendar: Kingsbury, Lillian Davis

1905

Box 1: 7

Calling Cards: Baldwin Family

ca. 1870-1890

Box 1: 8

Calling Cards: Davis Family

ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 9
Calling Cards: Davis, Lillian
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 10
Calling Cards: Gleason Family
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 11
Calling Cards: Gould, David
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 12
Calling Cards: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 13
Calling Cards: Kingsbury Family
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 14
Calling Cards: Kingsbury, Oscar
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 15
Calling Cards: Other Family Members
ca. 1870-1890
Box 1: 16
Children's Books: Kingsbury, Oscar
1869
Box 2: 1
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury
1868-1899
Box 2: 2
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Arnold & Eliza Kingsbury
1881-1901
Box 2: 3
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from David & Cora Gould
1887-1902
Box 2: 4
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Gleason Family
1880-1901
Box 2: 5
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Julia Baldwin Gleason
1868-1888
Box 2: 6
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Julia Baldwin Gleason
1888-1896
Box 2: 7
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Libbie Gleason Eaton
1879-1891
Box 2: 8
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Lillie Gleason Gadoret
1885-1895
Box 2: 9
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Nancy Weed Gleason
1863-1885
Box 3: 1
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Olive Kingsbury Williams
1881-1902
Box 3: 2
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Oscar Kingsbury
1885-1890
Box 3: 3
Correspondence: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury from Selima & Susan Weed
1882-1901
Box 3: 4
Correspondence: Kingsbury, Lillian Postcards
1925-1929
Box 3: 5
Correspondence: Kingsbury, Oscar
1887-1890
Box 3: 6
Correspondence: Kingsbury, Oscar
1893-1942
Box 3: 7
Correspondence: Kingsbury Postcards
1906-1928
Box 3: 8
Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1908-1914
Box 3: 9
Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1915
Box 3: 10
Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1916
Box 3: 11
Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1917
Box 3: 12

Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1918
Box 3: 13
Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1919
Box 4: 1
Correspondence: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1920-1923
Box 4: 2
Correspondence: Totman, Mildred Kingsbury
1922-1923
Box 4: 3
Correspondence: Totman, Mildred Kingsbury
1929
Box 4: 4
Correspondence: Totman, Mildred Kingsbury
1930
Box 4: 5
Graphic Business Cards
undated
Box 4: 6
Legal Papers: Kingsbury Family
1865-1923
Box 4: 7
Personal Materials: Totman, Mildred Kingsbury
1862-1983
Box 4: 8
Personal Materials: Kingsbury, Oscar
1888-1895
Box 4: 9
Picture Postcards: Kingsbury, Oscar
1924-1925
Box 4: 10
Poems: Newsclippings & Reprints
ca. 1881-1890
Box 4: 11
Postcard Album: Davis, Mary Elizabeth Maxam
ca. 1908-1912
Box 9

Bound album of postcards given to Mary Elizabeth Maxam Davis. Of particular local interest (includes postcards from Greenfield, Fitchburg, Shelburne Falls, Hudson, Holyoke, Framington, Northfield, Massachusetts).

Sample images:



Postcard Album: Kingsbury, Lillian Davis
1908-1916
Box 4: 12
Stereocards: Around the World Religious Series
1910
Box 5: 1
Stereocards: DeLameter Hartford Series
1880
Box 5: 2
Stereocards: Genre Cards
1865-1890
Box 5: 3
Stereocards: Scenic Views
1885
Box 5: 4
Stereocards: White Mountains
1885
Box 5: 5
Series 2: Genealogy
1958-2005
Phillips, May Kingsbury: Genealogical Research
1958-1970
Box 5: 6
Phillips, May Kingsbury: Genealogical Research Notebooks
1960-1970
Box 5: 7
Phillips, May Kingsbury: Genealogical Research Notes
1958
Box 5: 8
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Barbara Cutko
2004-2006

Box 5: 9
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Betty Finnell Guinan
2005-2006
Box 5: 10
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Harold Gould
2005-2006
Box 5: 11
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Historical Societies
2006
Box 5: 12
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Marilyn Phillips Hubbard
2005-2006
Box 5: 13
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Rae Kingsbury Capen
2003-2006
Box 5: 14
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Richard Kingsbury
2005
Box 5: 15
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with Sylvia Kingsbury Rice
2005-2006
Box 5: 16
Totman, Conrad: Correspondence with William Kingsbury
2005-2006
Box 5: 17
Totman, Conrad: Family Trees
2005-2006
Box 6: 1
Totman, Conrad: Genealogical Correspondence
2005-2006
Box 6: 2
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Introduction
2006
Box 6: 3
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Part One
2006
Box 6: 4
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Parts Two, Three-A, & Three-B
2006
Box 6: 5
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Parts Four and Five
2006
Box 6: 6
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Introduction (copy)
2006
Box 6: 7
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Part One (copy)
2006
Box 6: 8
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Part One (copy)
2006
Box 7: 1
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Parts Two & Three-A (copy)
2006
Box 7: 2
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Part Three-B (copy)
2006
Box 7: 3
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Part Four (copy)
2006
Box 7: 4
Totman, Conrad: Kingsburyana Part Five (copy)
2006
Box 7: 5
Series 3: Photographs
1862-2005
Photograph Album: J.L. King
1883-1911
Box 9

Bound leather carte de visite (and tintype) album with an inscription: "Presented to J. L. King by his friend O. B. Kingsbury. Shelburne Center, Mass., August 3rd, 1883." Contains three stamps posted on the last page. Some photographs are identified by notes from Conrad Totman.

The album includes 12 cartes de visite of circus performers (listed separately below), one of which is labeled on verso: Nelli M. Petty, With G[eorge] B. Bunnell's Museum Co." Bunnell operated a slightly upscale dime museum in New York City (1876-1883), Brooklyn, and Jersey City.

La Petite Julia (acrobat)
ca.1885
Carte de visite



Acrobat troupe, photograph by J. Wood
ca.1885

Carte de visite



"John Jennings, Modern Sampson. Weight 168 lbs. Lifts 1,000 lbs with his Teeth"
ca.1885

Carte de visite



Unidentified "African" wild man

ca.1885

Carte de visite



"The Murray Midgets. Triplet Brothers. Age 23 years," photo by Charles Eisenmann

ca.1885

Carte de visite



Unidentified female acrobat, photograph by Charles Eisenmann

ca.1885

Carte de visite



"Nelly M. Petty, with G. B. Bunnell's Museum Co.," photograph by Charles Eisenmann [caption written on verso]

ca.1885

Carte de visite



Zoe Meleke ["Circassian woman"], photograph by Charles Eisenmann

ca.1885

Carte de visite



Adah Briggs (?), photograph by Charles Eisenmann

ca.1885

Carte de visite



Amelia Hill (?), photograph by Charles Eisenmann

ca.1885

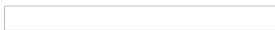
Carte de visite



"The Bicycle used by Harriet Martell Made and Presented by John Wood, Jr., Beverly, Mass." [caption stamped on verso]

ca.1885

Carte de visite



"Wueen Midget -- The German Rose," [Rosie Wolff], photograph by Charles Eisenmann

ca.1885

Carte de visite



La Petite Julia (acrobat)

ca.1885

Carte de visite



Photographs: Arms Academy

1912

Box 9

Matted photograph of the junior and senior classes of the Arms Academy in Shelburne, MA, in 1912. May Kingsbury Phillips (Arms class of 1913) is pictured in the front row, fourth from the left.

Photographs: Arms Academy "Student Board"

1919

Box 9

Matted photograph of the "student board" at the Arms Academy. Mildred Kingsbury Totman is the girl on the right in the second row.

Photographs: Davis, Dorothy

1913

Box 7: 6

Mounted school photograph.

Photographs: Davis, Edwin
undated
Box 7: 7

Mounted photograph from Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Davis, Edwin
undated
Box 7: 8

Mounted tintype, labeled "Salesmen for Grand Union." Edwin Davis with "McFarlane."

Photographs: Davis, Edwin and Nettie Goldthorite
undated
Box 7: 9

Tintype with Charles Cogswell and Emma Davis in front.

Photographs: Davis Family Reunion
1896

Mounted photograph

Box 7: 10

Photographs: Davis Family Reunion
1897

Mounted photograph

Box 7: 11

Photographs: Davis Family Reunion
1991

Box 7: 12

Two small books of snapshots from reunion at the Totman farm in Conway, Massachusetts

Photographs: Davis Family Reunion
1992

Box 7: 13

Two small books of snapshots from reunion at the Totman farm in Conway, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Davis Family Reunion
1993

Box 8: 1

Two small books of snapshots from reunion at the Totman farm in Conway, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Davis, Hardy
1865

Tintype

Box 8: 2

Photographs: Davis, Mary Elizabeth
undated

Box 9

Oval metal framed photograph with mating and glass of Mary Elizabeth (Maxam) Davis.

Photographs: Davis, Will
1865

Box 8: 3

Tintype depicting Will Davis (seated).

Photographs: Davis, Will
1865

Tintype

Box 8: 4

Photographs: Davis, William S. P.
undated

Box 8: 5

Mounted photograph from Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Doyl, Maggie
undated

Box 8: 6

Mounted photograph from Hartford, Connecticut.

Photographs: Fiske House, Shelburne, MA
undated

Box 8: 7

Mounted photo with Harriet.

Photographs: Fiske House, Shelburne MA
undated

Mounted photograph

Box 8: 8

Photographs: Gould, Roxana Kingsbury
1890

Box 8: 9

Photographs: Kingsbury, Ambrose and Roxana Kingsbury Gould
1863
Framed tintypes
Box 8: 10
Photographs: Kingsbury, Arnold and Eliza
1893
Mounted photograph
Box 8: 11
Photographs: Kingsbury, Bessie E.
1895
Mounted photograph
Box 8: 12
Photographs: Kingsbury, Family Copies
2000-2005
Box 8: 13

Photocopies and reproductions of family photography made by Conrad Totman; contains notes and identification.

Photographs: Kingsbury, Olive
1862
Mounted photograph
Box 8: 14
Photographs: Kingsbury, Olive and Oliver
undated
Gem tintypes
Box 8: 15
Photographs: Kingsbury, Oscar and Lillian, Arnold and Eliza
1894
Mounted photograph
Box 8: 16
Photographs: Kingsbury, Oscar and Mildred
circa 1940
Snapshot
Box 8: 17
Photographs: Kingsbury, Raymond and May Kingsbury Phillips
1903
Mounted photograph
Box 8: 18
Photographs: Kingsbury Family, Unidentified
[ca. 1880]
Box 8: 19
Photographs: Kingsbury Family, Unidentified
1865
Gem tintypes
Box 8: 20
Photographs: Kingsbury Family, Unidentified
1890
Box 8: 21

Mounted photo cards from Manchester, Vermont.

Photographs: Lamb, John
1870
Mounted gem tintype
Box 8: 22
Photographs: Lamb, Margaret
undated
Box 8: 23

Tintype depicting daughter of Isaac and Mary.

Photographs: Lamb, Mrs. William (Anna)
undated
Tintype
Box 8: 24
Photographs: Lamb, William
1870
Gem tintype
Box 8: 25
Photographs: McPherson, Frank
1885
Box 8: 26

Mounted photograph from Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Mandell, Harriet
undated
Mounted photograph
Box 8: 27
Photographs: Mandell, Will
1870-1880
Box 8: 28

Two mounted photographs, one dated 1880 from Fitchberg, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Phillips, Ernest
1905

Box 8: 29

Mounted photograph of South Deerfield beehives.

Photographs: Phillips, May Kingsbury
circa 1904

Box 8: 30

Mounted class photograph.

Photographs: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1910

Box 8: 31

Mounted photograph with the children of William Davis.

Photographs: Phillips, May Kingsbury
1913

Box 8: 32

Photograph from Arms Academy.

Photographs: Miss Pratt
undated

Box 8: 33

Mounted photograph from Turners Falls, labeled "teacher."

Photographs: Scott, Henry
undated

Box 8: 34

Mounted photograph from Conway, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Shelburne Center
undated

Box 8: 35

Photographs: Shelburne Center School
undated

Box 8: 36

Mounted class portrait.

Photographs: Southworth, Elvira
undated

Glass covered photograph

Box 8: 37

Photographs: Southworth, Elvira
undated

Box 8: 38

Mounted photograph from Hartford, Connecticut.

Photographs: Southworth, Frank
undated

Box 8: 39

Mounted photograph from Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Thompson, A. L.
undated

Box 8: 40

Mounted photograph from Shelburne, Massachusetts.

Photographs: Thompson, Minnie
undated

Box 8: 41

Mounted photograph depicting daughter of George and Lucy.

Photographs: Totman, Mildred Kingsbury
1921

Box 9

Matted photograph of Mildred Kingsbury Totman's high school basketball team. Top row (left to right): E. Temple, Miss Lyman, Hilda Thompson. Second row: Selda Leonard, Elizabeth Loomis, Mildred Kingsbury Totman, Elsie Matson. Front row: Barbara Donelson, Viola Tyler, Sylvia Gould.

Photographs: Vincent, James
undated

Mounted photograph

Box 8: 42

Photographs: Williams, Olive Kingsbury
undated

Cardstock photograph

Box 8: 43

Relia: California State Capitol Metallic Tray
undated

Box 9

Unidentified small metallic tray with a photograph of the California state capitol building. "10 cents" written on the back.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Conrad and Michiko Totman, 2006.

Processing Information

Processed by Megan M. Kennedy, Summer 2008.

Related Material

For material related to the Kingsbury and Totman families, see:

- [Conrad Totman Papers \(MS 447\)](#)
- [Ruth J. Totman Papers \(FS 97\)](#)
- [Gertrude M. Lewis Papers \(FS 96\)](#)

For material related to the Kingsbury family at other repositories, see:

- [Raymond T. Drew \(AC1949\) Papers, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections](#)

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- Conway (Mass.)--Genealogy.
- Drew, Raymond Totman, 1923-1981.
- Lewis, Gertrude Minnie, 1896- .
- Shelburne(Mass.)--Genealogy.
- Totman, Conrad D.
- Totman, Ruth J.

Contributors

- Kingsbury Family [main entry]

Genres and formats

- Genealogies.
- Letters (Correspondence).
- Memoirs--Massachusetts.
- Photographs.
- Tintypes.

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