

Guide to the Thew Family Letters, 1848-1914

61.1

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901

Original Author Unknown

Revised by **Debra Kimok**
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Introduction

The Daniel Thew family, Peru, was a large family whose members became scattered over northern New York and a number of western states and territories. Four members served in the Union army in the Civil War.

Betsey Thew was Daniel's third wife. By his first wife he had eleven children; by his second he had none, but she had a daughter from a previous marriage (Helen M. Smith), who became a member of Daniel's household; he had two children with Betsey: Kate Thew, who never married, and Darius, who used his mother's maiden name (Lobdell) throughout his life. Betsey Thew's mother, Betsey (Signor) Lobdell, was also a member of the household. Many of the letters are from family members in Vermont, where Betsey and her mother were born.

Contents

Almost all of the 349 letters in this collection were written by members of the family, and, with very few exceptions, were addressed to Daniel and/or Betsey Thew, his wife, or to their unmarried daughter, Kate, all three of whom remained on the Peru homestead.

The letters describe family activities, sickness, etc., 19th-century life in northern New York and Vermont, frontier life in the West, and the Civil War as experienced by four Union Army soldiers.

The collection is arranged in four archival boxes.

The Extended Guide to this collection, kept in Special Collections, includes several Thew family genealogical charts (handwritten).

Background Sources in Special Collections

Lobdell, Julia Ardelia (Harrison). *Simon Lobdell—1646 of Millford, Conn. and His Descendants. Comp. and Published by Julia Harrison Lobdell. Nicholas Lobden (Lobdell)—1635 of Hingham, Mass. And Some of His Descendants.* Chicago: The Windermere Press, 1907, 306-307, 317-321.

Contents of the Thew Family Letters, 1848-1914

Letters to Daniel and/or Betsey (Lobdell) Thew, from

Box/Folder

1/1	Bethuel Thew, son	1856-1857 (4 items)
1/2	James Thew, son	1856-1863 (6 items)
1/3	Josephus Thew, son	1861-1862 (8 items)
1/4	Gilbert and Jane Thew, son and daughter-in-law	1855-1869 (15 items)
1/5	Garret and Marietta Thew, son and daughter-in-law	1857-1872 (10 items)
1/6	Eleazar and Mary Thew, son and daughter-in-law	1855-1871 (6 items)
1/7	Darius and Roxanna Lobdell, son and daughter-in-law	1854-1885 (60 items)
2/1	Thomas H. Kirby, nephew	1862-1865 (7 items)
2/2	Thomas E. Huston, nephew	1856-1864 (7 items)
2/3	Bettie Huston, niece	1857-1864 (5 items)
2/4	John S. Parris, nephew	1865-1867 (4 items)
2/5	Olive Lawson, niece	1879-1884 (6 items)
2/6	Hannah P. Cook niece	1851-1886 (15 items)
2/7	Mary Rodee, niece	1851-1883 (10 items)
2/8	Eunice (Lobdell) Jones, sister of Betsey Thew	1853-1859 (16 items)
3/1	Caleb and/or Cata Parris, brother-in-law and sister of Betsey Thew	1851-1865 (34 items)
3/2	Miscellaneous relatives and friends	1848-1899 (37 items)

3/3 Letter to Darius Lobdell from Cata Parris, his aunt 1856 (1 item)

Letters to Helen M. Smith, from

3/4 Bettie Huston, cousin 1885 (1 item)

3/5 Katie Thew, half-sister 1877 (1 item)

3/6 Letter to Hulda (Parris) Lobdell from Caleb Parris Lobdell, son 1870 (1 item)

3/7 Letter to Cata Parris from Caleb Parris, her husband 1854 (1 item)

Letters to Kate Thew, from

4/1 Edwin Thew, nephew 1878-1901 (4 items)

4/2 Martha (Thew) White, niece 1885 (11 items)

4/3 Ella Hammond, cousin 1873-1901 (11 items)

4/4 Thomas E. Huston, cousin 1865-1875 (15 items)

4/5 Bettie (Huston) Lyon, cousin 1864-1901 (6 items)

4/6 Olive Lawson, cousin 1881-1897 (17 items)

4/7 Miscellaneous relatives and friends 1869-1914 (30 items)

Total Items: 349

Box 1:

Bethuel Thew, son, 1878=1901 (4 items)

Folder/Item

1/1: June 1, 1856, Minneapolis, MN. Just arrived in Minnesota. Enthusiastic about life there. Minneapolis is a small village. Earns \$2 a day.

1/2: Jan. 17, 1857, Minneapolis. Plans to start a blacksmith shop in the spring.

1/3: Oct. 7, 1857, Minneapolis. Business is poor. May go to Wisconsin or Illinois in the spring.

1/4: Nov. 25, 1867, Minneapolis. Business is poor. May go to California next spring. Wants Robert to send him his rifle.

Folder 2: James Thew, son, 1856-1863 (6 items)

- 2/1: Apr. 30, 1856, Hebron, WI. Is working in a wagon shop. Lives six miles from brother Gilbert's place. Is thinking of going to Kansas.
- 2/2: Feb. 8, 1858, Germantown, WI. Working in a shop, making cutters. Plans to have his own shop. Will stay here but does not like Wisconsin. "If Bethuel comes here, I will try to get him to go to Kansas with me."
- 2/3: Apr. 16, 1863, Fort Lyon, CT. Now in the Union Army. Reports that his brother Bethuel is dead.
- 2/4: Apr. 27, 1863, Fort Lyon. All is quiet at Fort Lyon.
- 2/5: June 1, 1863, Fort Lyon. Is lonesome. Expects to remain at Fort Lyon.
- 2/6: Sep. 28, 1863, Fort Larend, KS. Was thrown from his horse. Broke his leg. Houses in this part of the country are made from mud.

Folder 3: Josephus Thew, son, 1861-1862 (8 items)

- 3/1: Aug. 26, 1861, Baltimore, MD. Has enlisted in the army for three years. Very depressed. Does not expect to live through the war.
- 3/2: Oct. 8, 1861, Annapolis, MD. "Tell Harry to try to get Mary from her wicked mother and be a father to her." Wants Henry to have his possessions if he is killed.
- 3/3: Nov. 26, 1861, Annapolis. Has not yet been in any general engagement, only skirmishes.
- 3/4: Feb. 13, 1862, Roanoke, VA. Describes a battle on Feb. 8th.
- 3/5: Feb. 18, 1862, Roanoke. Describes again the battle of Feb. 8th.
- 3/6: March 17, 1862, Fort Thompson, NC. Describes a battle on March 14th.
- 3/7: March 24, 1862, Camp Reno, NC. Describes another battle and general conditions in North Carolina.
- 3/8: July 25, 1862, Newport News, VA. Complains of the treatment of the common soldier. Thinks he will be killed but is willing to give his life for his country.

Folder 4: Gilbert and Jane Thew, son and daughter-in-law, 1855-1869 (15 items)