

# Squier, Ephraim, George letters to Charles Eliot Norton

Ephraim George Squier letters to Charles Eliot Norton

April 26 and May 16, 1855

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## Title Statement

Squier, Ephraim, George letters to Charles Eliot Norton  
Guide to the Ephraim George Squier letters to Charles Eliot Norton MSS 16503

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## Profile Description

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## Descriptive Summary

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**Unit Date**

April 26 and May 16, 1855

**Mixed Materials**

BW 28 (box)

**Container**

1 [X032669069] (folder)

**Language**

English

**Creator**

Squier, E. G. (Ephraim George ), 1821-1888

**Extent**

0.03 Cubic Feet 1 letter sized folder

**Repository**

Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library

## Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Access**

This collection is minimally processed and open for research.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

This collection was a purchase from Robert H. Rubin Books by the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia Library on September 17, 2019

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## Biographical / Historical

Ephraim George Squier (1821-1888) famed author of works on the archaeology and ethnology of the Americas, was an early and powerful influence on the intellectual development of Charles Eliot Norton (1827-1908). Best remembered for his illustrious friendships with Carlyle, Ruskin, and Longfellow, Norton's earlier relationship with Squier has been eclipsed until recently. It now receives due recognition in the scholarly literature. Norton developed an enthusiasm for American archaeology following his graduation from Harvard in 1846, and was introduced to Squier by Francis Parkman. At the time Norton had been writing a review of Squier's "Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley" for the "North American Review". Norton and Squier struck up an immediate and lasting friendship.

The concept of the evolution of Western Civilization which informed Norton's prolific writings rested on the "historicist principle that specifics of time and place shaped ideas and institutions. Squier showed him concretely how archaeology provides tools for deeper understanding of the slow evolution of civilization. Archaeology, as an ethnological or cultural science, could become the great revealer of humanity's upward path.

## Content Description

This collection contains two letters from Ephraim George Squier to Charles Eliot Norton discussing his book "Waikna; or, "Adventures on the Mosquito Shore" as well as other works in progress. These two letters were removed from the printed book, which has been cataloged separately.

The first letter, dated April 26, 1855, Squier describes how many pages that he has written of "foolscap" and how many pages of proof that he has to read before his passage to Europe. He mentions his work "Waikna" and his hopes for selling it. He also mentions a book on the geography, topography of Honduras and San Salvador.

In the second letter, dated May 16, 1855, he writes that there is "no dialogue in "Waikna", few principles and less brag but that it is a true and faithful book about the country". It has a "good deal of description, is amusing in places and stupid as a whole". There is much teasing of Norton in the letter as he describes his work including future publications of his books in Germany, France, and Spain. He also writes about his dread of "Society" and that he is traveling with Governor Henry B. Anthony of Rhode Island. Source: James Turner, "The Liberal Education of Charles Eliot Norton"; Terry A. Barnhart, "Ephraim George Squier and the Development of American Anthropology"

## **Keywords**

authors

Norton, Charles Eliot, 1827-1908