

A Guide to the Nathaniel Parker Willis Collection

Nathaniel Parker Willis Collection 1835-1863

1835-1863

A Collection in the Clifton Waller Barrett Library of American Literature 6991-f

Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

1997

History

Processed by: Margret Groschel
Date Completed: 1997
Encoded by: Courtney Boissonnault

Title Statement

A Guide to the Nathaniel Parker Willis Collection

Subtitle: Willis, Nathaniel Parker.

Collection: 6991-f

Author: Processed by Margret Groschel; machine-readable finding aid created by Courtney Boissonnault

Sponsor: Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Publication Statement

File size: 40 Kilobytes

Date: © 1997 By the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia. All rights reserved.

Publisher: University of Virginia Library

[Conditions of Use](#)

Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from WordPerfect. [Date of source: 1997.]

Language Usage: Description is in English.

Revision Description

Feb 17, 2004 PUBLIC "-//University of Virginia::Library::Special Collections Dept.//TEXT (US::ViU::00545::Nathaniel Parker Willis Collection)//EN" "ViU00545.sgm" converted from EAD 1.0 to 2002 by v1to02.xsl (sy2003-10-15).

Feb 27, 2004 converted to conform to eadVIVA.dtd by vivastrict.xsl

Descriptive Summary

Collection Number

6991-f

Language

English

Extent

71 items

Repository

University of Virginia. Library. Special Collections Dept.

Alderman Library
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
USA

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Collection is open to research.

Use Restrictions

See the [University of Virginia Library's use policy](#).

Acquisition Information

Deposit [1963 Dec 17] 1966 Sep 12

Funding Note

Funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities

Preferred Citation

Nathaniel Parker Willis Collection, Accession 6991-f, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library

Item Listing

Manuscripts

"Yours very truly, N. P. Willis"

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

Autograph

Quotation beginning, "If there is a feature of the human soul . . ."

Unit Date 1849

Extent

AMsS,
1 p.

Poem, " Impromptu"

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

AMsS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Tipped to paper with engraving of Ashland; marked Page 5.]

Essay, "Jottings-down about the time of the Queen's Marriage"

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

AMs,
10 p.

Poem beginning, "My Mother! in thy prayer tonight . . ."

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

AMs,
2 p.

Poem beginning, "Now I have seen a kadji . . ."

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

AMs,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Includes ANS on verso to "Dear Sir" stating that the three verses he sent him are from his poem " The Lady Jane. "]

Poem, " Thou Hereafter"

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

AMs,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Includes attached autograph; page is marked 3.]

Poem, " Toujours Perdrix"

Unit Date 1864 Mar 21

Extent

AMsS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[From " Lady Jane. "]

Poem beginning, "We met like rain-drops in the air . . ."

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

AMsS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Includes attached magazine drawing.]

Letters

Nathaniel Parker Willis, England, to Mrs. Skinner

Unit Date [1835]

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he is pleased and flattered that she will present him at Lady Arundel's hall; recalls meeting her and her celebrated friend [Jane] Porter, a writer.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, London, to Messrs. Harper, New York

Unit Date [1836] Nov 2

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Gives the Harper Co. instructions for the republishing of Pencillings; says the volumes will be dedicated to John B. Van Schaick.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, to [Benjamin Franklin] Butler, Washington

Unit Date 1838 Nov 2

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he is writing a book on American scenery to be published in England; asks for his help in getting the duty reduced; makes an argument why the whole book should not be subject to duty.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Old Charlton, Kent, to Mary Russell Mitford, Reading, England

Unit Date 1839 Aug 6

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he has dedicated " Tortesa the Usurer" to her without her permission; says that this play and " Bianca Visconti Or The Heart Overtasked" have been so successful in America that he could buy a beautiful farm on the Susquehanna; sends book by Miss Sedgwick; talks about a book on travel in the making; encourages her to give up all other writing in favor of play writing where she is so very successful; talks about a planned trip to the south of Europe; urges her to join him and his wife.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Dublin, Ireland, to James Henry Hackett, Dublin

Unit Date [1840]

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he has been to the theater in Dublin twice to see Hackett perform his Yankee characters; invites him to dine at the Rev. Dr. Wall's , where he will meet the Lord Mayor of Dublin and others.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, to Asa Hutchinson, New York

Unit Date 1844 Aug 12

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Writes on behalf of a committee; mentions plans to give a free concert in New York in honor of General Morris who has done so much for the country; asks him to participate; includes signatures of Dr. Alban Goldsmith and George Endicott.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, to Abraham Hart, Carey & Hart, Philadelphia

Unit Date 1846 Nov 19

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Explains why certain poems of his do not lend themselves to drawings; says they express feelings and are not of a descriptive nature, but that others are suitable for Mr. Lentze's pencil; mentions a book review.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Glenmary, England, to Rev. John Gorham Palfrey, Boston

Unit Date 1840 Jul 8

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses poetry that Willis promises to write for North American Review, sooner or later; mentions the high regard The North American Review enjoys in England.]

N. Willis, Cambridge, to "My Dear Sir"

Unit Date 1849 May 14

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Complains that his lectures and meetings at Cambridge take up all his time; mentions correspondent's work on a collection of Egyptian and Moorish plates belonging to Willis.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Highland Terrace, to Elizabeth Oakes Smith

Unit Date 1852 Oct 24

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[States that the Home Journal is always at her service.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Benson John Lossing, [New York]

Unit Date 1853 Sep 14

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses some of his verses and the imminent birth of a daughter or son.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis to George Pope Morris, [Philadelphia or New York]

Unit Date 1854 Mar

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses his recovery from illness, the publication of a piece in Morris' periodical, and painter [Lawrence] who "makes everybody look as they will look in Heaven."]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Epes Sargent, [Boston]

Unit Date 1854 Nov 26

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses " Lysteria, " a dramatic poem; asks him who the author is; finds fault with an engraving of himself; wants Mr. Smith, the engraver, to change the eye area, the under lip, thicken the hair, etc.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to [Catherine Ann Ware] Warfield, [Natchez]

Unit Date 1854 Dec 3

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses a book she wants to sell to publisher; says he is so disgusted with negotiating bargains with publishers that he has somebody else do it for him; sympathizes with her; says that The Home Journal will do its best to ensure the book's success once it is published.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to James T. Fields

Unit Date 1855 Jun 22

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Thanks him for a chronicle of his visit, which was glowingly written about by Mrs. Harry Otis; talks about his Dedication Hymn and a letter from Dr. [Beattie], London, regarding it; hopes that Fields will "insert" it somewhere; describes a June morning.] (tipped in book, The Bryant Festival at the Century)

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to the Rev. E. Peabody

Unit Date 1856 Jan 23

Extent

ALS,
4 p.

Scope and Content

[Praises [Ephraim?] Peabody's wonderful writing, which is worth collecting; talks about his "brain-troubles"; says he has been advised by his physician to stop writing for several years or risk sudden death; chooses to take the risk rather than endure intellectual idleness; speaks about The Home Journal; says that all entries do not meet his high standards; invites the Peabody family to visit his house.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild>, to George Pope Morris, [New York]

Unit Date 1856 Mar 23

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Thanks him for gossiping letter and asks for more of the same; reports on a novel in progress; mentions the frozen Susquehanna river.] (A portion of the letter has been cut out because it obtained an obscene sentence.)

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to James T. Fields, New York or Boston

Unit Date 1857 Aug 4

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Pleads with him to "give the world your likeness," namely, allow bearer of letter, [Mathew] Brady, to take his picture.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild>, to Nathaniel Ingersoll Bowditch

Unit Date 1857 Aug 6

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he is pleased to have received Bowditch's book Suffolk Surnames; states that excerpts from it have already appeared in The Home Journal, but he will speak of it again.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Thomas Raynesford Lounsbury, [Yale University]

Unit Date 1858 Mar 20

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he cannot help him with inquiries; offers "boyish" compositions he wrote in 1825, his Sophomore year; hopes they might be of help.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to [Theodore Sedgwick] Fay, [New York]

Unit Date 1858 May 27

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says that letter will be presented to Fay by New York lawyer James [B.] Thayer, who is to sail to Europe; states that Thayer would like to introduce George Green to Fay.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New Bedford, to H. Prescott, Boston

Unit Date 1859 Jan 27

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Regrets not to have met Prescott, a person of "sovereign genius," during his stay in Boston.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to [John Williamson] Palmer, Baltimore

Unit Date 1859 Feb 6

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses piece by Mrs. Palmer on Shakespeare; regrets not being able to use it in The Home Journal.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Almont Barnes, Carthage, New York

Unit Date 1859 Mar 11

Extent ALS, 2 p.w/env

Scope and Content

[Discusses Barnes' poem [" The Eagle's Feather"] which Willis will probably publish.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to [John Williamson] Palmer, [Baltimore]

Unit Date 1859 Apr 24

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Requests autograph; sends one of the stanzas Palmer speaks of.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to [John Williamson] Palmer, [Baltimore]

Unit Date 1859 Jun 9

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Sends autograph of poem " Saturday afternoon"; acknowledges receipt of two books.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Osmond Tiffany, [Baltimore]

Unit Date 1859 Jun 11

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Acknowledges the receipt of a [book]; says he will look for Tiffany's name in review articles.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, [Washington], to James T. Fields, Paris, France

Unit Date 1859 Sep 24

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he would like Fields to go to the English Embassy and ask for the address of Lady Jenkins, one of the world's most charming women, widow of Sir Richard Jenkins, formerly president of the East India Company.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Anne Lynch Botta

Unit Date 1860 Apr 21

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Says that his household has been overwhelmed with company, "all up-hillers," and his wife is now sick in bed; says he cannot comply with Botta's request to write his own obituary; sends her some scraps which he has gathered over the years, which seem to him discriminating or noteworthy; speaks of his wife's great affection for Botta.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to John Williamson Palmer, [Baltimore]

Unit Date 1860 Jul 9

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he is not able to help him with his inquiry; suggests approaching Henry Tuckerman with the matter.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Miss Faulkner

Unit Date 1860 Sep 12

Extent

LS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Printed form-letter; tells her in a very polite way that he does not feel like writing her a personal letter.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Frank W. Ballard

Unit Date 1860 Oct 5

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Thanks him for a flattering letter.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to George Pope Morris, [New York]

Unit Date 1860 Dec 18

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Sends him what he believes is his best "Scripture Poem" ever; asks him to take it to Bonner.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, [Washington], to Mrs. Charles Eames, [Washington]

Unit Date 1862 Jan 5

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Responds to her claim that he lives in a halo and that she does not know what his face looks like anymore by sending his "likeness"; walks past her home 6 times a day on his way to and from Willard's for his meals; looks up to her window for a smile, in vain.]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto one of his children

Unit Date 1863 Oct 13

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he is not feeling well and waits for "Mamma"; sends a letter from young Stace; signs letter, "your affectionate papa."]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to George Pope Morris

Unit Date 1863 Oct 27

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses Morris' health, Willis' family matters, The Home Journal, increase in advertising; mentions Epes Sargent.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, [New York], to Teresa Viele, [New York]

Unit Date 1866 Feb 26

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Says that an attack of vertigo kept him from writing her; sends early copies from [Home Journal]; encourages her to write more; mentions visitors to his home, including Mrs. Henry Hills, Mrs. Henry Grinnell, and Anne Lynch Botta.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Woolrich, England, to Sir Charles

Unit Date [1836] Mar 22

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses difficulties with Captain Frederick Marryat and an avoided duel, the serious illness of his wife, and his tentative plans to return to America, depending on the recovery of his wife; mentions Jane Porter's presence and his indebtedness to Sir Charles.]

Cornelia Grinnell Willis, Idlewild, to Fitz-Green Halleck

Unit Date May 24

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Writes for her husband who injured his hand in a fall; says they look forward to Halleck's visit to Idlewild.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Glenmary, to R. [Londen]

Unit Date Jun 20

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Expresses condolences after the death of Londen's wife; includes ALS, Londen to Willis, on verso, acknowledging condolence letter.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis to "My dear Haight"

Unit Date Jul [3]

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses a misplaced letter, and how hard Willis is working; comments on mutual acquaintances.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, to Charles S. Ogden, Philadelphia

Unit Date Jul 11

Extent

LS, w/ANS

1 p.

Scope and Content

[Says he is overburdened by work; decides to send him this preprinted letter; tells him in a autograph note that he does not have Poe's autograph.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Thomas Bailey Aldrich

Unit Date Aug 24

Extent

ALS,

1 p.

Scope and Content

[Sends requested letter having to do with publishing business.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Glenmary, to George Virtue, England

Unit Date Nov 11

Extent

ALS,

1 p.

Scope and Content

[Sends fifth portion of " Ireland"; says it should reach Englandby boat December 1; mentions [James] Grant.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to James Parton

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,

2 p.

Scope and Content

[Declines invitation due to overload of work; compliments him on his last two papers which were "exemplary good."]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, to George Pope Morris, New York

Unit Date Jul 31

Extent

ALS,

1 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses Home Journalcopies for Madame Calderon de la Barca, wife of Spanish minister; says copies are to be sent to an address on Long Island; reports on his improving health.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Idlewild, to Samuel Bulkley Ruggles

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
4 p.

Scope and Content

[Urges him to send forgotten other half of a poem by [Regis De Trobriand]; says he would love to publish it; declines trip to Nantucketas he has too many houseguests at the moment; urges him to visit again in the fall, to join Mrs. Hills and Mrs. Otis and have a "time."]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, Home Journal, to Abraham Hart, Carey & Hart, Publishers, Philadelphia

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses business; asks them to date and sign an enclosed document.]

Nathaniel Parker Willis, New York, to Abraham Hart, Carey & Hart, Philadelphia

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
3 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses business, a new edition of his poems; agrees to their terms, which are the same ones they give Longfellow, but wants to revise and refine his poems before publication; asks for \$300 advance; encloses drawing of one of his poems; says same young artist will do any number of such drawings, cheap.]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto [T. C. Hausard]

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Discusses printing of " Tortesa the Usurer" and "Bianca."]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto James T. Fields, Boston

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Introduces Patterson, who will deliver the letter by hand, to Fields; says Patterson is the editor of the [Anglo-American] and "one of our choicest spirits, as well as best critics."]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto Ph. H. Brown, Esq.

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Responds to request for autograph.]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto [R. Gilmor]

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
2 p.

Scope and Content

[Promises to visit him to renew their acquaintance; remembers his kindness in former years.]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto Anne Lynch Botta, [New York]

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Sends check for 3 tickets she sent him; compliments her on last night's dancing.]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto [Mrs. Butler]

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Sends her promised verses, possibly AMs poem beginning, "My Mother! in thy prayer tonight . . ."; says he will send lines on the President's grandchild at a better moment.]

Nathaniel Parker Willisto "Dear Sir"

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

ALS,
1 p.

Scope and Content

[Informs him that he is ready to receive him tonight between seven and eight.]

Photographs and prints

Nathaniel Parker Willis, standing, with hat and cane

Unit Date [1863]

Extent

Photo

Scope and Content

[Include AN on verso, Willis to one of his sons.]

Magazine photo, Nathaniel Parker Willis, head and shoulders

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

Drawing

Scope and Content

[Includes attached AMsS poem beginning, "We met like rain-drops . . ."]

Ashland [a house] tipped to sheet with AMsS poem, " Impromptu"

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

Engraving

Nathaniel Parker Willis, standing, with hat and cane

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

Engraving

Nathaniel Parker Willis, head and shoulders

Unit Date n. d.

Extent

Engraving