

Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2001

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm80051862>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007091>

Prepared by Patrick Kerwin and Marianne Riley

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2007
Revised 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton Papers

Span Dates: 1793-1861

ID No.: MSS51862

Creator: Thornton, Anna Maria Brodeau, 1775?-1865

Extent: 7 items

Extent: 7 containers

Extent: 1.3 linear feet

Extent: 2 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm80051862>

Summary: Wife of architect William Thornton. Diaries and notebooks primarily describing social life in Washington, D.C., with extensive detail about housekeeping and expense matters. Also contained in the diaries are memorandum books, poems, sketches, and silhouettes of unidentified people.

Online Content: The papers of Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton are available on the Library of Congress Web site at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000054>.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Clay, Henry, 1777-1852.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Correspondence.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826--Homes and haunts--Virginia--Monticello.

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826.

Madison, James, 1751-1836--Homes and haunts--Virginia--Orange County.

Madison, James, 1751-1836.

Polk, James K. (James Knox), 1795-1849--Inaugurations.

Thornton, Anna Maria Brodeau, 1775?-1865.

Thornton, William, 1759-1828.

Van Ness, John Peter, 1770-1846.

Organizations

Princeton (Steamship)

United States Capitol (Washington, D.C.)

Subjects

Smallpox.

Places

Massachusetts--Description and travel.

Monticello (Va.)

Newburyport (Mass.)--Description and travel.

North Carolina--Description and travel.

Pennsylvania Avenue (Washington, D.C.)

Tortola (British Virgin Islands)--Social life and customs.

United States--History--War of 1812--Campaigns.

Virgin Islands--Social life and customs.

Virginia--Boundaries--Washington (D.C.)

Virginia--Description and travel.

Washington (D.C.)--Boundaries--Virginia.

Washington (D.C.)--History--Capture by the British, 1814.

Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

Titles

Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton Papers at the Library of Congress

Provenance

The papers of Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton were acquired with the William Thornton Papers as a gift from J. Henley Smith in 1904.

Related Material

Additional Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton material may be found in the Baldwin Papers at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, and in the collection of Jesse Brown Papers at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C., Washington, D.C.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of these papers is available on two reels from the Library's Photoduplication Service for purchase subject to the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.). This microfilm edition may also be requested on interlibrary loan through the Library's Loan Division.

Online Content

The papers of Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton are available on the Library of Congress Web site at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000054>.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Anna Maria Brodeau Thornton (1775?-1865) span the years 1793-1861 and consist of seven bound volumes containing diaries, journals, essays, silhouettes, and household accounts relating largely to life in Washington, D.C.

The first volume contains pocket almanacs with handwritten notes for the years 1793-1794 and 1798. It also contains historical essays in French and English, booklists, recipes, shopping lists, travel notes, and household expense information. Thornton also created several entries relating to her previous years spent in Tortola, Virgin Islands. There is a log of household visitors from 1794 to 1798 and a daily log of activities in 1803.

In the second volume beginning in 1800, Thornton discussed the schedule and work of her husband, William Thornton, on the east elevation of the United States Capitol, correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, and visits to Jefferson's home. She also wrote of a smallpox outbreak and the paving of Pennsylvania Avenue. Additionally, the second volume contains travel journals from 1805 and 1806 detailing trips through Virginia into North Carolina and daily journals from 1842 and 1844-1846. The later journals include more abbreviated entries and references to national historical events. Items mentioned include the gun explosion on the steamer-frigate *Princeton* that killed the secretary of state and the secretary of the navy in 1844, the inauguration of President James K. Polk in 1845, and the return of land to Virginia from Washington, D.C., in 1846.

Volumes three, four, five and seven continue with daily household entries for 1807-1815, 1828-1835, 1836-1843 and 1850-1861. Entries also contain information on the British invasion of Washington, D.C., in 1814, including an account of the saving of the Patent Office by William Thornton from destruction by the British, and comments by Dolley Madison regarding the invasion. Anna Thornton also wrote of the death of her mother in 1836, the death of her husband in 1828, and the disposition of their estates.

Volume six contains a journal of a trip to Newburyport, Massachusetts, in 1849, as well as a commonplace book of French and English essays, quotations, epitaphs and poems, two small photographs of unknown children, and several unidentified silhouettes. There is also a collection of autographs, including signatures of Henry Clay, James Madison, and John P. Van Ness.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged chronologically.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 13,818

Container	Contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	Diaries and journals
BOX 1 REEL 1	1793-1804 Digital content available
BOX 2 REEL 1	1800, 1805-1806, 1842-1846 Digital content available
BOX 3 REEL 1	1807-1815 Digital content available
BOX 4 REEL 1	1828-1835 Digital content available
BOX 5 REEL 2	1836-1843 Digital content available
BOX 6 REEL 2	1848-1850 Digital content available
BOX 7 REEL 2	1850-1861 Digital content available