

Gamaliel Bradford VI Papers
Wellesley Historical Society

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Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society
229 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
(781) 235-6690
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Title

Gamaliel Bradford VI Papers

Date

1797 – 1969, bulk 1911 – 1932

Extent

1.5 linear feet, 3 boxes

Name of Creator

Bradford, Gamaliel VI, 1863 – 1932

Biographical Note

Gamaliel Bradford VI was an internationally acclaimed biographer and author; he wrote poetry, fiction, drama, literary criticism, as well as non-fiction. Bradford was generally considered “one of the leading biographical writers ever produced in America,” (Warren, 9) and was often called the “Dean of American biographers” (Warren, 9). While he saw himself as a dramatist, poet and novelist, he acknowledged that his blossoming as a biographer seemed almost an accident (Warren, 9).

Bradford was a direct descendent of Plymouth Colony Governor William Bradford. Born in Boston on October 9, 1863, he was the son of noted banker Gamaliel Bradford V and Clara Crowninshield (Kinsman) Bradford. The family moved to 493 Worcester Street in Wellesley Hills two years later; his mother died soon after the move. Bradford lived at 493 Worcester Street until his death On April 11, 1932. He married Helen Hubbard Ford in 1886; they had two children, Gamaliel Bradford VII, who died young, and Sarah Rice Bradford.

Bradford suffered from ill health his entire life, with a variety of symptoms including sensitivity to light, vertigo, headaches, and general fatigue. Because of his lifelong illness, he attended Wellesley schools sporadically, and was educated predominantly by private tutors; as a young man he often travelled in Europe with his father. He noted, “I educated myself by vast, vague, utterly erratic reading. As I used to put it, not unfairly, I was educated by ill health and a vagrant imagination” (Warren, 10). Bradford attended Harvard University with the class of 1886, but did

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not take a degree. Much of his early life growing up in Wellesley is recounted in *Early Days in Wellesley*, published in 1928.

Though he wrote voluminously in many genres, Bradford is best known for over 100 biographies, many of which are still in print. His approach to biography was unconventional for the time, and he was a pioneer in trying to understand the psychology and motivations of his subjects, rather than just their actions. He called his biographies “psychographs,” and discussed his method in *Naturalist of Souls: Studies in Psychography*. “His preoccupation with the souls of human beings and his aim to dissect them with the scientific precision of a surgeon,” one writer has noted, allowed readers to “learn more of the essential qualities” of character (Warren, 14).

Some of his notable psychographs include *Lee the American*, *Darwin*, *Dwight L. Moody*, and *The Soul of Samuel Pepys*. Many of his collections of short psychographs were published together, and included *Union Portraits*; *Confederate Portraits*; *Portraits of Women*; *American Portraits, 1875-1900*; *Damaged Souls*; and *The Quick and the Dead*.

In his civic life, Bradford took a keen interest in Wellesley, and served several terms on the school board; he was interested in both Wellesley academics as well as school sports. The high school on Rice Street, prior to the current building, was known as the Gamaliel Bradford Senior High School. It was built in 1938 and was replaced by the current facilities. He was also first president of the Maugus Club (Bolton, 6).

Despite often debilitating illness, Bradford was known as a genial and generous man, often hosting young authors and artists in his home. “There was a poise and self-control that invited confidences,” one observer wrote, noting that “his personal philosophy is expressed all throughout his works. He was ever trying to answer the great riddles of life” (Bolton, 11).

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains a variety of materials pertaining to the life of Gamaliel Bradford VI and members of his family. Printed materials include writings published by Bradford in various literary journals, several of his books, as well as biographies and memorials written about Bradford following his death in 1932; additionally, the collection contains reviews of Bradford’s writings by his contemporaries.

In addition to literary works, the collection contains scrapbooks with photographs, journals, a small collection of correspondence.

The collection contains two journals in which Bradford tracked his daily reading, including books and periodicals. The two journals cover the period roughly 1900 – 1924.

Also of interest are two scrapbooks, both containing photographs and newspaper clippings. The first was assembled by Gamaliel Bradford VI commemorating the death of his father in 1911. The second was created as a memorial by Harriet Crouch, and documents elements of Bradford’s life and career. The latter contains nine photographs of Bradford’s home, personal library, and workspace.

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In addition to the Gamaliel Bradford VI materials, the collection contains a series of family-related papers and documents, from Gamaliel Bradford III (1763 – 1824); Gamaliel Bradford IV (1795 – 1839); Bradford's wife Helen Ford Bradford, and their daughter Sara Bradford Ross. Included with these materials are published memorials about Gamaliel Bradford V (1831 – 1911).

Many of the journal, newspaper, and periodical articles in *Series I: Printed Materials: Literary works by Gamaliel Bradford VI* and *Series VII: Printed Materials: Works about Gamaliel Bradford VI, by other authors*, are archival photocopies of the published originals.

Index Terms

Biographers—United States—20th Century
Biographers—Wellesley (Mass.)
Bradford, Gamaliel, 1863-1932
Bradford, Gamaliel, 1831-1911
Bradford, Gamaliel, 1795-1839
Bradford, Gamaliel, 1763-1824
Wellesley (Mass.)—History

System of Arrangement

The collection is organized into eight series, organized by type. Within each series, materials are arranged topically or chronologically.

- I. Printed Materials: Literary works by Gamaliel Bradford VI
- II. Manuscripts: *Liber Amoris*, unpublished bound typescript: Gamaliel Bradford VI, author
- III. Correspondence
- IV. Journals: Personal journals of Gamaliel Bradford VI listing his daily reading, 1900-1924
- V. Printed Materials: Biography and Writings about Bradford by Other Authors
- VI. Scrapbooks
- VII. Printed Materials: *Index to Publications of Gamaliel Bradford VI*, by Helen Bradford
- VIII. Printed Materials: Reviews and articles about Bradford, by other authors
- IX. Papers: Bradford Family, 1797-1969
- X. Photographs: Portrait

Conditions Governing Access

The Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.
info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org
(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

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Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

English

Immediate Source of Acquisition

B.2

G.2

W.24.1

1995.2.6

2004.14.42

Accruals

The Historical Society may add materials to this collection in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

Related Materials

1970.46, portrait painting of Gamaliel Bradford VI by Mary Brewster Hazelton, 1936.

Wellesley Historical Society Photograph Collection: People: Bradford.

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in March 2017 by Alden Ludlow. Processing of this collection was made possible through a grant from the Wellesley Community Preservation Committee.

Bibliography

Bolton, Charles Knowlton. *Gamaliel Bradford: A Memoir*. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1932.

Bradford VI, Gamaliel. *Early Days in Wellesley: Being Casual Recollections of Boyhood and Later Years, 1867-1881*. Wellesley: The Wellesley Historical Society, 1928.

Bradford, Helen F. *Index to Publications of Gamaliel Bradford VI, 1863-1932*. Wellesley: The Wellesley Press, 1942.

Warren, Dale. "Gamaliel Bradford: A Personal Sketch." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (1933).

Richards, Gertrude R. B. "The Life and 'Lives' of Gamaliel Bradford." *New York Herald Tribune Books*. April 24, 1932.

"Gamaliel Bradford." *Harvard Crimson*, April 13, 1932. Retrieved from URL

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/1932/4/13/gamaliel-bradford-phalf-a-century-ago>

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Container List

I. Printed Materials: Literary works by Gamaliel Bradford VI

This series contains published works, including books, newspaper and periodical articles. The periodical works have been reproduced as photocopies, and include poetry, fiction, and non-fiction published by many of the leading literary journals of the early to mid-twentieth century.

Box 1

- Item 1: Bradford, Gamaliel. 1925. *Wives*. New York & London: Harper & Brothers. 1st edition.
- Item 2: Bradford, Gamaliel. 1932. *Saints and Sinners*. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1st edition.
- Item 3: Bradford, Gamaliel. 1928. *Early Days in Wellesley: Being Casual Recollections of Boyhood and Later Years, 1867-1881*. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley Historical Society. 1st collected edition [maroon cover].
- Item 4: Bradford, Gamaliel. 1929. *Early Days in Wellesley: Being Casual Recollections of Boyhood and Later Years, 1867-1881*. Wellesley, MA: Wellesley National Bank. Anniversary edition [green cover].
- Folder 1: Printed Materials: Literary works by Gamaliel Bradford VI

Box 2

- Folder 1: Printed Materials: Literary works by Gamaliel Bradford VI
- Folder 2: Printed Materials: Literary works by Gamaliel Bradford VI

Archives Oversize Box 4:

- Folder 3: Printed Materials: Literary Works by Gamliel Bradford VI

II. Manuscripts: *Liber Amoris*, unpublished bound typescript

Box 2

- Folder 3: *Liber Amoris*, unpublished bound typescript, Gamaliel Bradford VI, author

III. Correspondence

This series contains a small amount of correspondence, both to and from Bradford.

Box 2

- Folder 4: Correspondence

Archives Oversize Box 4

- Folder 2: Correspondence

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IV. Journals: Personal journals of Gamaliel Bradford VI listing his daily reading, 1900-1924

This series contains two journals in which Bradford recorded daily his book and periodical reading in detail. One of the journals he has called a “reading list,” the other an “accession list.”

Box 2

Folder 5: Journals

V. Printed Materials: Biographies and Writings about Bradford by Other Authors

This series contains biographical and memorial materials written about Bradford by other authors. It contains manuscripts, published pamphlets, and copies of newspaper clippings.

Box 2

Folder 6: Printed Materials: Biographical materials

Folder 7: Printed Materials: Published biographical materials

Folder 8: Printed Materials: Biographical Materials, Newspaper Clippings

Folder 9: Printed Materials: Typescript Biography of Bradford by Gertrude Richards

Folder 10: Printed Materials: Biographical Materials

VI. Scrapbooks

This series contains two scrapbooks. One was created by Gamaliel Bradford VI as a memorial to his father, who was killed in an accident in Wellesley in 1911. The second was created by Harriet Crouch as a memorial to Gamaliel Bradford VI upon his death in 1932. The Crouch scrapbook is notable in that it contains several photographs taken of Bradford’s home, study, and library.

Box 3

Folder 1: Scrapbook, 1912, created by Gamaliel Bradford VI as a memorial to his father

Archives Oversize Box 4

Folder 1: Scrapbook, 1932, created by Harriet Crouch as a memorial to Bradford

VII. Printed Materials: *Index to Publications of Gamaliel Bradford VI*, by Helen Bradford

Box 3

Folder 2: *Index to Publications of Gamaliel Bradford VI*

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VIII. Printed Materials: Reviews and articles about Bradford, by other authors

Box 3

Folder 3: Printed Materials: Reviews and articles

Archives Oversize Box 4

Folder 5: Printed Materials: Reviews & Articles

IX. Papers: Bradford Family, 1797-1969

This series contains various Bradford family materials, and includes publications, correspondence and manuscripts retained by Gamaliel Bradford VI written by his forebears. The series also includes materials related to Bradford's wife, Helen Ford Bradford, and their daughter Sara Bradford Ross.

Box 3

- Folder 4: Printed Materials, 1822-1836: Works by Gamaliel Bradford IV (*The Writer: A Series of Original Essays Moral and Amusing* and *An Address delivered before the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance*), and Henry W. Kinsman (maternal grandfather of Gamaliel Bradford VI, *An Oration pronounced before the Inhabitants of Boston, July the Fourth 1836, in commemoration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of American Independence*).
- Folder 5: Manuscripts, 1814 and 1822: Correspondence to Gamaliel Bradford III; Song written by Gamaliel Bradford IV
- Folder 6: Printed Materials relating to Bradford family
- Folder 7: Octopus Club Collection: Materials relating to Bradford's participation
- Folder 8: Helen Ford Bradford materials
- Folder 9: Sara Bradford Ross materials
- Oversize: Manuscript, 1797: Correspondence confirming Captain Gamaliel Bradford III's membership in the Massachusetts Historical Society, signed by one of the Society's founders, Jeremy Belknap

X. Photographs: Portrait

Archives Oversize Box 4

Folder 3: Portrait of Gamaliel Bradford VI, by J. E. Purdy and Co., Boston