



Maine Historical Society

Coll. 1872

Henry Goddard Thomas correspondence  
1867-1932

**Accession number:** 1994.29

**Processed:** August 2017 by Nancy Noble, MHS archivist

**Access:** Unrestricted

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**Size:** .5 linear ft.

**Biographical Note:** Brigadier General and Brevet Major General Henry Goddard Thomas (April 5, 1837 – January 23, 1897) was a Union general in the American Civil War. A native of Portland, Maine, and son of William Widgery Thomas and Elizabeth White Goddard, Thomas graduated from Amherst College in 1858 and was admitted to the bar shortly thereafter. He enlisted as a private in the 5th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Promoted to captain in June 1861, Thomas was present at the First Battle of Bull Run and the Peninsula Campaign among other battles. In February 1863, Thomas was appointed colonel of the 2nd United States Colored Infantry. In December 1863, Thomas was appointed colonel of the 19th United States Colored Infantry. On November 30, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Thomas a brigadier general of volunteers to rank from his appointment date. The President nominated Thomas for the appointment on December 12, 1864 and the U.S. Senate confirmed the promotion on February 23, 1865. Thomas was mustered out of the volunteers on January 15, 1866. On March 29, 1867, President Andrew Johnson nominated Thomas for appointment to the grade of brevet major general of volunteers for his service during the war, to rank from March 13, 1865, and the U.S. Senate confirmed the award on April 5, 1867.

Henry Goddard Thomas was married to Ellen R. Webster. Thomas' brother was William Widgery Thomas Jr., the diplomat to Sweden and politician. Henry Goddard Thomas died in January 23, 1897 in Oklahoma City Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and is interred at Evergreen Cemetery in Portland, Maine.

*(from Wikipedia, etc.)*

**Scope and content note:** Correspondence of over 300 letters, mostly to General Thomas from his mother and father and other relatives, but also includes a few letters from him. Also includes some documents and business records.

**Related collection:** Thomas family letters, 1868-1889, at the Maine Women Writers Collection at the University of New England, Westbrook College campus of over 200 letters sent to U.S.

Army pay master Major Henry Goddard Thomas by his mother Elizabeth Goddard Thomas, sister Eliza, wife Nell, daughters Mary (Molly) and Louise, and son Harry. The collection also has one letter from father William Widgery Thomas. Notes, believed to be made by Henry, on the top of the letters indicate who sent them, the date received and the fort at which he was stationed. (these letters are made note of in this collection)

**Processing note:** This collection was possibly originally processed by Myron Hager, MHS volunteer, who also did some genealogical research on the collection. In 2017 the collection was rehoused and a finding aid created. Some of the worksheets were transferred to the source file. If warranted, this collection could be broken down further by year, and each letter separated by archival paper.

**Provenance:** purchased from Charles Apfelbaum in 1992

### **Inventory:**

#### **Box 1 of 1:**

**Folder 1:** Thomas family genealogy

**Folder 2:** Summary of letters in both MHS collection and Maine Women Writers collection

**Folder 3:** Thomas family information (originals and photocopies), including photographs, newspaper clippings, manuscript notes

**Folder 4:** Thomas family records, 1869-1936, including documents, deed, business records and correspondence, postcards

**Folder 5:** Correspondence, 1867 (Aug.) – 1870 (Nov.), including from Henry's parents William and Elizabeth, brother Elias, uncle George, aunt Charlotte, brother Bill

**Folder 6:** Correspondence, 1871 (Jan.) – 1879 (Dec.), including Henry's parents William and Elizabeth written from Fort Snelling (Minnesota)

**Folder 7:** Correspondence, 1880 (Jan.) – 1882 (Nov.), including from Henry's parents William and Elizabeth

**Folder 8:** Correspondence, 1883 (Jan.) – 1889 (March), including from Henry's parents William and Elizabeth, brother Elias; also includes a letter from Henry to his father (March 31, 1889)

**Folder 9:** Correspondence, n.d., including from Henry's parents William and Elizabeth, his wife "Nell" – includes a letter from Henry to his mother