



**Maine Historical Society**

**Coll. 2780**  
**Thomas, William Widgery, 1839-1927**  
**Collection**  
**1785 – 1970**

**Accession #:**2014.180

**Processed:** Initial processing in 2015 by Laura Youngborg, with finally processing January 2016 – March 2016 by Tessa Surette, MHS volunteer

**Access:** Unrestricted

**Copyright:** Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the MHS Images Services Coordinator.

**Size:** 3.25 linear ft. + 2 oversized boxes + 5 lantern slide boxes + 22 volumes [one of which is housed in a .25 linear ft. archival box for preservation reasons]

**Bulk Dates:**1839-1927

**Biographical Note:** William Widgery Thomas Jr. (1839 – 1927) was born in Portland to William Widgery Thomas Sr. and Elizabeth White Goddard. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1860 and after completing his legal studies at Harvard he was admitted to the Maine bar in 1866. In 1862 he was appointed consul to Gothenburg, Sweden. It was this experience that sparked his idea for mass immigration of Swedes to Maine. In 1865 William's job as consul ended and he returned to Maine.

In 1870, while serving as Maine Commissioner of Immigration, William set in action his plan for Swedish immigration. He traveled to Sweden and brought 51 Swedes back to Maine where they founded the town of New Sweden in Aroostook County. Williams's "children in the woods" overcame early adversities and the town prospered, growing in population well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1872 William was elected to the Maine House of Representatives and became Speaker in 1874. In 1883 William was appointed United States Ambassador to Sweden and Norway (the countries were combined until 1905) by president Chester Arthur. William was served a second term from 1889-1894 after being appointed by Benjamin Harrison and he served a third term from 1898-1905 under presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

In 1887 William married young Swedish noble lady Dagmar Törnebladh (1869-1912). Following the death of Dagmar, William married Dagmar's younger sister Aina Törnebladh. William Widgery Thomas Jr. died in Portland on April 25, 1927. He is buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Portland.

**Scope and Content:** This collection includes the first draft of W.W. Thomas Jr.'s autobiography, correspondence (including a signed letter by President Benjamin Harrison), speeches, legal & financial papers, newspaper & magazine clippings, photographs, illustrations, lantern slides, passports, maps and various certificates/documents related to W.W. Thomas Jr.'s career as minister to Sweden and Norway. Some of the newspaper clippings contained in the volumes are in Swedish and/or other languages.

**Provenance:** Gift of Henry Thomas (W.W. Thomas Jr.'s grandson) 9/5/2014

**Related Collections:**

Coll. 2223 – New Sweden, publication materials

Coll. 2649 – Thomas family including William Widgery Thomas Sr. (all volumes)

Coll. 3069 – Abstract of address delivered by Hon. William Widgery Thomas before Maine State Board of Trade at Camden, September 21, 1916

**In Museum**

2014.180.001 Stereoptic Viewer – Richard Stereoptican viewer with label, “Stereoscope Brevete”

2014.180.002 Camera/Viewer – Diascope (holding Autochrome of a woman and a young boy)

**Series:**

I. Original Draft of Autobiography (Boxes 1-2)

II. Correspondence (Boxes 3 & 8 [contains v. 22] and v. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 14, 16 and 20-22) Volumes 20-22 are all correspondence, the other volumes only have a few pieces of correspondence each.

III. Speeches (Box 3)

IV. Legal/Financial (Box 3 and v. 1)

V. Newspaper/Magazine clippings (Boxes 3-4 and v. 1-19)

VI. Publications (Box 4)

VII. Photographs (Boxes 5, 6 & 9) photo albums #1 (in Box 5) #2 and #3 and O.S. Folder Box 7

VIII. Illustrations (Box 6)

IX. Miscellaneous (Boxes 7, 10 & 11)

X. Lantern Slides (housed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor compact storage) (Boxes 12-16)

**Inventory:****Box 1 – W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography**

**Folder 1:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Introduction – Chapter 2

**Folder 2:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 3 - 7

**Folder 3:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 8 - 13

**Folder 4:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 14 - 17

**Folder 5:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 18 - 20

**Folder 6:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 21 - 24

**Folder 7:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 25 – 29

**Folder 8:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 30 - 31

**Folder 9:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 32 – 34

**Box 2 – W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography**

**Folder 1:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 35 - 37

**Folder 2:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 38 - 46

**Folder 3:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Chapters 47 - 64

**Folder 4:** W.W. Thomas Jr. Original Draft of Autobiography – Notes

**Box 3 – Correspondence, Speeches, Legal/Financial Documents & Newspaper/Magazine Clippings**

**Folder 1:** Correspondence between W.W. Thomas Jr. and John Hay, 1905

**Folder 2:** Correspondence between W.W. Thomas Jr. and S.G. Hägglund, 1921

- Folder 3:** Correspondence – W.W. Thomas Jr. 1862 – 1921 and n.d.  
**Folder 4:** Correspondence – Mrs. W.W. Thomas Jr., 1927-1928  
**Folder 5:** Address to the Pomological Society, n.d.  
**Folder 6:** *Sweden and the Swedes* Lecture, 1886  
**Folder 7:** Speeches – W.W. Thomas Jr., 1901-1920 and n.d.  
**Folder 8:** W.W. Thomas Jr.'s Passport, 1863  
**Folder 9:** Legal and Financial documents, 1831-1905 and n.d. contains tax information, certificate of stock, deeds, W.W. Thomas Jr.'s salary authorization documents from the Department of State signed by James G. Blaine and John Sherman (Secretaries of State), a copy of an act for Aroostook County to purchase lands for settlement and a lease agreement (in French).  
**Folder 10:** Cutouts from magazines about Sweden, n.d.  
**Folder 11:** "New Sweden" by Mrs. John O. Widber (newspaper), 1915  
**Folder 12:** Newspaper clippings from clipping service regarding the return of John Ericsson's body to Sweden, 1890

#### **Box 4 – Newspaper Clippings and Publications**

- Folder 1:** Newspaper clippings, 1916-1970 and n.d.  
**Folder 2:** *Traité d' Amitié et de Commerce* (1783), 1785  
**Folder 3:** Report of the Commissioners on the Settlement of the Public Lands of Maine (New Sweden-related), 1874  
**Folder 4:** The *Cosmopolitan Magazine* with "The Göta Canal" by W.W. Thomas Jr., 1889  
**Folder 5:** *The Story of New Sweden* (draft), n.d.  
**Folder 6:** *Swedish Colonization in Maine and New England* by W.W. Thomas Jr. from *The Story of New Sweden* (draft), circa 1895  
**Folder 7:** *Swedish Colonization in Maine and New England* by W.W. Thomas Jr. from *The Story of New Sweden* (2<sup>nd</sup> draft), circa 1895  
**Folder 8:** *The Story of New Sweden* (published version), 1896  
**Folder 9:** Henry Goddard Thomas Memorial Book, 1898  
**Folder 10:** Biographical Sketch - W.W. Thomas Jr. (autographed), 1916  
**Folder 11:** Presque Isle Centennial Program 1820-1920, 1920  
**Folder 12:** New Sweden Decennial 1870-1880, 1931  
**Folder 13:** *One Hundred Years in New Sweden* (pamphlet), 1970  
**Folder 14:** *Father Thomas and his "Children in the Woods"*, 1970

#### **Box 5 - Photographs**

- Photo Album #1:** Photographs of the Thomas family (mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century), n.d.  
**Photo Album #2:** (on shelf) W.W. Thomas Jr. in Africa and other travels, n.d.  
**Photo Album #3:** (on shelf) W.W. Thomas Jr. at John Ericsson Monument Dedication, 1901

#### **Box 6– Photographs and Illustrations**

- Folder 1:** Photographs and Illustrations of William Widgery Thomas and the Thomas family, 1894-1907 and n.d.  
**Folder 2:** Photographs – Göteborg, n.d.  
**Folder 3:** Photographs – Göta Kanal, n.d.  
**Folder 4:** Photographs – Trollhättan, n.d.  
**Folder 5:** Photographs – Stockholm, n.d.

**Folder 6:** Photographs – Stockholm, n.d.

**Folder 7:** Photographs – *Sweden and the Swedes* (book) – Chapters 42, 44, 47 & 48 (original order), n.d.

**Folder 8:** Photographs – Miscellaneous, 1894 and n.d.

**Folder 9:** Reproduced images from *Sweden and the Swedes* (book), 1893

**Folder 10:** W.W. Thomas Jr.'s Sketchbook, 1848-1851

**Folder 11:** Illustrations, 1885 and n.d.

### **Box 7 - Miscellaneous**

**Folder 1:** Sailing Log of the George S. Hunt, 1864

**Folder 2:** Portland Debating Club/Portland Sporting Club Ledger, 1854

**Folder 3:** List of people given *Sweden and the Swedes* and other gifts, 1898-1920

**Folder 4:** Diary of Nicholas E. Boyd (friend of W.W. Thomas Jr.) – Bowdoin College, 1857-1858

**Folder 5:** Miscellaneous, 1862-1920 and n.d. contains document regarding W.W. Thomas Jr.'s appointment to Vice Consul (1862), a document regarding W.W. Thomas Jr.'s appointment to Vice Consul in Galatz in Moldavia (1862), a summary of appointment of W.W. Thomas Jr. as Minister to Sweden and Norway (1898), remarks by Senator Burleigh in the Maine Senate (1915), a document in Swedish? (1920), list of W.W. Thomas Jr.'s accomplishments while he was minister to Sweden and Norway (n.d.), memorandum regarding W.W. Thomas Jr.'s three appointments as minister to Sweden and Norway (n.d.), document of thanks from the Swedish Invention Society (n.d.), a postcard without correspondence (n.d.), a notebook with various notes (n.d.), an envelope with notes (n.d.) and a list of officers attached to the U.S.S. "Baltimore" (n.d.)

### **Box 8 (housed with volumes) - Correspondence**

**Volume 22:** Correspondence to family, 1862-1867

### **Box 9 - Photographs**

**Folder 1:** Photographs – Thomas family home, n.d.

**Folder 2:** Photograph – Maine House of Representatives, 1874

**Folder 3:** Reproduced images from books, n.d.

**Folder 4:** Photographs – Sweden and Norway, n.d.

Box 9 also contains two daguerreotypes, a glass plate and photo negatives of the lantern slides (possibly some that do not have matching lantern slides).

### **Box 10 (oversized) – Miscellaneous documents**

Contains passports (1862-1889), a newspaper page containing an article about W.W. Thomas Jr. (1914), outline map of Maine (n.d.), plan of property of Willis heirs (1873), Bowdoin College diploma in Latin (1913), "The Experiment and Northern Light" (n.d.), Printing in newspaper form with column about New Sweden (n.d.), document of appointment of W.W. Thomas Jr. as Minister to Sweden and Norway possibly signed by William McKinley (1897), document of appointment of W.W. Thomas Jr. as Minister to Sweden and Norway possibly signed by Benjamin Harrison (1889), two documents of appointment of W.W. Thomas Jr. as Minister to Sweden and Norway possibly signed by Chester Arthur (1883), Bethany University (Kansas) diploma for W.W. Thomas Jr. (1901), document in Arabic? (n.d.), two maps of northern Maine (1943-1944) and a large map of Témiscouata in Quebec (n.d.), commission signed by Joshua Chamberlain appointing W. W. Thomas Jr. as Commissioner of Immigration (1870)

Contains photograph of "Banquet given by the Swedish Club of San Francisco in honor of Hon. W.W. Thomas and Mrs. W.W. Thomas, Palace Hotel, May 9, 1917"

Photos (one of a house, one of sailboats, and one of a villa)

**Box 11 (oversized) – Maps of U.S. Diplomatic and Consular Offices**

Contains “Maps Showing the Location of the Diplomatic and Consular Offices of the United States of America”, 1888

**Box 12 – Lantern Slides (housed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor compact storage)**

Contains lantern slides of Portland houses & buildings, Bowdoin College, Farmington School and the town of Bethel

**Box 13– Lantern Slides (housed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor compact storage)**

Contains lantern slides of Poland Spring (town), the Spurwink School, a Buffalo Bill show (1916), a parade in Portland and Portland buildings and houses

**Box 14 – Lantern Slides (housed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor compact storage)**

Contains lantern slides of Poland Spring (town) and a group of people (including W.W. Thomas Jr.) outside in the winter

**Box 15 – Lantern Slides (housed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor compact storage)**

Contains lantern slides of the coast including homes, ships, sailboats, lobster boats, harbors, a baseball game and people watching boats.

**Box 16 – Lantern Slides (housed 2<sup>nd</sup> floor compact storage)**

Contains lantern slides of the Thomas family (circa 1905)

**Volume 1:** School, College, Lawyer, Consul, Last Athenian, New Sweden (1839-1871) contains newspaper clippings, school invoices/receipts, report card, rewards of merit, certificate of admittance to Bowdoin, Bowdoin class graduation certificates, correspondence and invitations.

**Volume 2:** New Sweden, Lectures, Legislature, Speaker (1871-1878) contains newspaper clippings, invitations, correspondence, the Fraternity Club Constitution, Report of the Land Agent of the State of Maine, Eliza Payson Thomas Jordan memorial pamphlet and Mary Pickering Goddard memorial pamphlet.

**Volume 3:** Senator, New Sweden Decennial (1879-1881) contains newspaper clippings and an invitation.

**Volume 4:** Garfield Obsequies, Cleaves Oration, Appointed Minister (1881-1883) contains newspaper clippings, James A. Garfield Obsequies program and correspondence (telegram).

**Volume 5:** Minister 1<sup>st</sup> Term, Marriage (1883-1888) contains newspaper clippings

**Volume 6:** Stump, Minister 2<sup>nd</sup> Term (1888-1891) contains newspaper clippings, a program from a Harrison and Morton meeting and a letter (signed) from Benjamin Harrison in which Harrison thanks W.W. Thomas Jr. for his help during his successful run for president.

**Volume 7:** New Sweden, Ericssons Likfard (funeral?) (1888-1891) contains newspaper clippings and correspondence

**Volume 8:** Slott till Koja (1891-1892) contains newspaper clippings (all in Swedish and/or other languages) and reviews of the book (all in Swedish and/or other languages). Slott till Koja was a book written by William W. Thomas Jr.

**Volume 9:** Sweden and the Swedes, Diverse (1892-1893) contains newspaper clippings. The newspaper clippings range in dates from 1891 to 1895.

**Volume 10:** Hunneberg, Homecoming (1893-1896) contains newspaper clippings (many in Swedish and/or other languages)

**Volume 11:** Lectures, New Sweden Quarter-Centennial (1894-1896) contains newspaper clippings

**Volume 12:** Lectures (1895-1896) contains newspaper clippings

**Volume 13:** Stump, Minister 3<sup>rd</sup> Term (1896-1898) contains newspaper clippings

**Volume 14:** Diverse, New Sweden Thirty Years' Jubilee (1898-1901) contains newspaper clippings, a program from the Thomas Contest in Oratory, correspondence and a possibly original letter from King Oscar II of Sweden

**Volume 15:** Ericsson Monument (1901) contains newspaper clippings (all in Swedish and/or other languages), a biography of John Ericsson (in Swedish), a program from the dedication of the monument and photographs (reproduced images) of the dedication

**Volume 16:** Ericsson Monument, L.L.D. (1901-1902) contains newspaper clippings (many in Swedish and/or other language), photographs (reproduced images), a program from the monument dedication, a telegram and an announcement of the recipients of the Nobel Prize from William W. Thomas Jr.

**Volume 17:** Newspaper Clippings Scrapbook (1901-1907) contains newspaper clippings

**Volume 18:** Newspaper Clippings Scrapbook (1904-1911) contains newspaper clippings, The Youth's Companion Announcement, Program of Entertainment on the Cunard R.M.S. "Mauretania", and William W. Thomas Jr.'s hunting records

**Volume 19:** Newspaper Clippings Scrapbook (1903-1919) contains newspaper clippings

**Volume 20:** Correspondence to mother and father (1883-1887)

**Volume 21:** Correspondence home (1862-1863) contains letters from W.W. Thomas Jr. to his mother, father and brothers John and Elias

**Volume 22:** Correspondence to family (1862-1867) contains letters from W.W. Thomas Jr. to his mother and father [this volume is in an archival box because it is not sturdy enough to be housed alone on the shelf]