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Guide to

**Transcendentalist Circle Papers
1849-1856**

FM.MS.11

**by
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Date: May 2019

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Folder	Item	Contents	Date
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Extent: 1 folder (4 items)

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

PROVENANCE

Transcendental manuscript materials were first acquired by Clara Endicott Sears beginning in 1914 for her Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Massachusetts. Sears became interested in the Transcendentalists after acquiring land in Harvard and restoring the Fruitlands Farmhouse.

Materials continued to be collected by the museum throughout the 20th century. In 2016, Fruitlands Museum became The Trustees' 116th reservation, and these manuscript materials were relocated to the Archives & Research Center in Sharon, Massachusetts.

In Harvard, the Fruitlands Museum site continues to display the objects that Sears collected. The museum features four separate collections of significant Shaker, Native American, Transcendentalist, and American art and artifacts. The property features a late 18th century farmhouse that was once home to the writer Louisa May Alcott and her family. Today it is a National Historic Landmark.

The following is known about this collection's materials:

- The William Ellery Channing Papers were acquired for the Fruitlands Museum by Clara Endicott Sears.
- The Elizabeth Barrett Browning Letter was purchased by Fruitlands Museum prior to 1960.
- The origin of the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow photograph is unknown.
- The origin of the Franklin B. Sanborn photographs is unknown.

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CITE AS

Transcendentalist Circle Papers, Fruitlands Museum. The Trustees of Reservations, Archives & Research Center.

Folder	Item	Contents	Date
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RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS

This collection is open for research. Restricted Fragile Material may only be consulted with permission of the archivist.

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1818-1901)

William Ellery Channing (1818-1901) was an American Transcendentalist poet and the nephew of Unitarian preacher William Ellery Channing (1780-1842). In 1841, he married Ellen Fuller, sister of Margaret Fuller, but in 1852, after four children, they separated. She was persuaded to return and bore another son but died of tuberculosis soon after. Channing lived in Concord, Mass., and knew Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, and Amos Bronson Alcott. He was Thoreau's first biographer, publishing a biography in 1873. He lived the last ten years of his life in the house of Franklin B. Sanborn and died in 1901 in Concord.

[Sources: <http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu/authors/channing/>
<https://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/cambridge-harvard/william-ellery-channing-ii/>]

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) was an English poet, very popular in England and America. At the age of 15, however, she fell seriously ill, probably as the result of a spinal injury, and her health was permanently affected. In 1846 she married the English poet and playwright Robert Browning; they each influenced the other in their writings. The Brownings would live in Italy. During the last years of her life, Browning developed an interest in spiritualism and the occult, but her energy and attention were chiefly taken up by an obsession with Italian politics. She died in 1861.

[Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Elizabeth-Barrett-Browning>]

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was an American poet, who also taught at Bowdoin College in Maine (his alma mater) and at Harvard College for many years. Longfellow began publishing his poems in 1839 and he also did translations of works over the course of his career. He began renting rooms at the Craigie House in Cambridge, Mass., at the beginning of his professorship at Harvard (1837); the father of his second wife, Frances (Fanny) Appleton, bought the Craigie House as a wedding present for the couple in 1843 and Longfellow lived there the rest of his life. Longfellow knew Nathaniel Hawthorne and other writers of his time. He retired from Harvard in 1854 to devote the rest of his life to writing. He died in 1882.

Folder Item	Contents	Date
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[Sources: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-Wadsworth-Longfellow>;
<https://www.biography.com/writer/henry-wadsworth-longfellow>]

FRANKLIN BENJAMIN SANBORN (1831-1917)

Franklin B. Sanborn (1831-1917) was an American journalist, author, and reformer. He memorialized the Transcendentalists, writing early biographies of many of the movement’s main figures, including Amos Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau. Sanborn was born in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, and attended Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard College, graduating from Harvard. Upon graduation in 1855, Sanborn settled in Concord, Massachusetts, then an intellectual center. Sanborn was active in politics, supported the militant abolitionist John Brown, lectured widely, and was an editor of several newspapers and periodicals. He was one of the founders of the American Social Science Association and was active in prison and charity reforms. He died in 1917 in New Jersey and was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord, near Emerson, Alcott, Ellery Channing, and Thoreau. There are letters to Sanborn and/or lectures and essays by Sanborn in the Brook Farm Papers and the Alcott Family Papers.

[Source: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Franklin-Benjamin-Sanborn>]

DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS

The papers of William Ellery Channing and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the photographs of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Franklin B. Sanborn have been brought together here because individually, each is too small for its own collection. While not Transcendentalists themselves, these people traveled in the same literary circles as Hawthorne and Thoreau; Channing was married to Margaret Fuller’s sister; Margaret Fuller mentions the Brownings in one of her letters; Sanborn wrote biographies of Alcott, Emerson, and Thoreau; etc. Each item is described below. An earlier version of this finding aid was made up of individual collections and was found within “The Guide to the Transcendentalist Manuscript Collection.” At the time of the Fruitlands Museum acquisition, this guide was shared with The Trustees, and has been used as a resource.

Extent: 2 folders

Dates: 1849-ca. 1905

Folder	Item	Contents	Date
1	1-2	William Ellery Channing - Poem "To Carrie" and scrap of letter indicating poem was written in 1849. 2 pp. Original and typed transcription. Said to be about Caroline Sturgis Tappan, who would have been 30 in 1849. Letter fragment states "I enclose a few verses, written to your daughter Caroline," which would suggest this was not written about Channing's own daughter Caroline Sturgis Channing.	1849
1	3	Elizabeth Barrett Browning - Letter to George William Curtis. 4 pp. Original. Written from Paris, Browning thanks Curtis for the books and letters he has sent in the past and sends regrets for not replying in the past. Also congratulates Curtis on his engagement to Miss [Anna] Shaw. (See Brook Farm Papers and George Willis Cooke Papers for letters by/about George William Curtis.)	1856 Apr 21
1	4	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow - Cabinet card photograph. Issued by Sarony, 680 Broadway, [New York]. Image shows Longfellow wearing a dark suit and vest; he has white hair and a full beard. 3 7/8" x 5 3/8", mounted on cardboard 4 1/4" x 6 1/2" [Napoleon Sarony's photographic studio is listed at 680 Broadway in the 1869/70 through the 1876/77 New York city directories.]	[1869-77]
2	1	Franklin B. Sanborn - Cabinet card photograph. Image shows Sanborn in profile, from the right side, seated in a chair with his arms crossed in front of him. He wears a light-colored suit and vest, a white shirt and thin tie. 2 1/4" x 3 1/2", mounted on cardboard 2 1/2" x 4"	[ca. 1865?]
2	2	Franklin B. Sanborn – Cabinet card photograph. Image shows Sanborn in a frontal view, wearing a light-colored jacket, white shirt, and dark bow tie. Issued by Whipple, 297 Washington St., Boston. 2 1/4" x 3 1/2", mounted on cardboard 2 1/2" x 4 1/8" [John A. Whipple first operated at 297 Washington St. in 1865.]	[1865-70]
2	3	Franklin B. Sanborn – Photograph. Image shows Sanborn standing outside a clapboard house (location unknown). He wears a suit and vest with a white tie. He has white hair and a white mustache, and appears to be leaning on a cane in his left hand. 3 3/8" x 3 3/8"	[ca. 1905]
2	4	Franklin B. Sanborn – Photograph. Image shows Sanborn	1904 May 25

Folder	Item	Contents	Date
		seated in a chair in an outdoor setting. He wears a dark suit jacket, lighter vest and pants, and a white shirt. He has white hair and a white mustache. Written on reverse: "F. B. Sanborn at the Atlantic University May 25, 1904." 2 ¼" x 3 ¼", mounted on cardboard 4" x 5"	
2	5	Franklin B. Sanborn – Photograph. Image shows Sanborn standing outside a clapboard house (location unknown) along with Hon. E. O. Randall. Sanborn is wearing a dark overcoat over a lighter-colored suit, white shirt, and dark bow tie. He wears a hat and carries another coat over his left arm. Randall is dressed in a dark suit and vest, wearing a dark bowler hat. 4 3/8" x 2 5/8", mounted on cardboard 6" x 4 ¼"	[1895-1900]