

Table of Contents

- [Collection Summary](#)
- [Biographical Note](#)
- [Scope and Content Note](#)
- [Subject Headings](#)
- [Administrative Information](#)
- [Access and Use](#)
- [Encoding Information](#)
- [Series List](#)
- [Container List](#)

Collection Summary

Repository: Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries

Creator: Davis, Paulina W. (Paulina Wright), 1813-1876

Title: Paulina Wright Davis Papers

Dates: 1843-1890

Quantity: 0.6 cubic feet (3 boxes)

Abstract: 61 letters, mainly incoming (with typewritten copies), 17 manuscripts, 2 travel diaries (attributed to Davis' niece) and miscellaneous papers.

[Top](#)

Biographical Note

Paulina Wright Davis was born in Bloomfield, NY., on August 7, 1813. After an unsettled childhood, she married Frances Wright, a wealthy merchant from Utica, NY., in 1883; both of them were involved in various reform movements -- antislavery, temperance, women's rights. She became acquainted with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and other reformers during this period. Interested also in health reform, she studied anatomy; and after her husband's death, gave lectures on this subject (see Manuscripts, folders 1.6-1.8). In 1849 she married Thomas Davis, a prominent merchant and politician from Providence, RI. Four years later, Mrs. Davis founded the periodical UNA, one of the first devoted to the struggle for women's rights. In 1871 she wrote A History of the National Women's Rights Movement for Twenty Years... Her personal charm, wealth and position were valuable assets for the cause of women's rights in the years from 1850 until her death in 1876.

[Top](#)

Scope and Content Note

Correspondence includes letters concerning the women's movement in the United States and Europe and the organization of the 1870 Women's Rights Convention, 1866-1876, from Barbara Leigh Bodichon, Mary Booth, Frances Power Cobbe, Kate Newell Doggett, Emily Faithfull, Josephine S. Griffing, Carolina Hildreth, Andre Leo, John Neal, Mary Sargeant Gove Nichols, Elizabeth Proby, Robert Purvis, Vinnie Ream, Gerrit Smith, Sharon Tyndale, Victoria Claflin Woodhull, Catharine Bullard Yale, and Lizzie Avery Merrieweather. Personal letters about family matters, including one by Davis on her approaching death, and condolences on her death, 1853-1878; and two letters to Robert Purvis from others, 1843 and 1890. Other items include her travel diaries from a trip to Europe, 1871-1873; her manuscripts on anatomy, health, women's rights, the sculptor Vickie Ream, John Neal, and women's condition under despotism and democracy, ca. 1840-1871; manuscripts of her book A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT...; and miscellaneous poems and autographs.

[Top](#)

Access and Use

Access

This collection is open for research according to the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#) without any additional restrictions.

Restrictions on Use

Permission to quote (publish) from unpublished or previously published material must be obtained as described in the [regulations of the Vassar College Archives and Special Collections Library](#).

[Top](#)

Subject Headings

Names:

- Bodichon, Barbara Leigh Smith, 1827-1891
- Booth, Mary Louise, 1831-1889
- Cobbe, Frances Power, 1822-1904
- Doggett, Kate Newell, 1828-1884
- Faithfull, Emily, 1835-1895
- Griffing, Josephine Sophia White, 1814-1872
- Hamilton, Elizabeth Emma Proby, Lady, 1821-1900
- Hildreth, Carolina
- Léo, André, 1824-1900
- Merrieweather, Lizzie Avery
- Neal, John, 1793-1876
- Nichols, Mary Sargeant Gove, 1810-1884
- Purvis, Robert
- Ream, Vickie
- Ream, Vinnie, 1847-1914
- Smith, Gerrit, 1797-1874
- Tyndale, Sharon
- Woodhull, Victoria C. (Victoria Claflin), 1838-1927
- Yale, Catharine Bullard

Subjects:

- Slavery--Anti-slavery movements
- Temperance
- Women sculptors
- Women's rights--Europe
- Women's rights--United States
- Women--Diaries
- Women--Health and hygiene
- Women--Social conditions
- Women--Suffrage

Places:

- Europe--Description and travel
- United States--Social conditions
- United States--Social life and customs--19th century

Document Types:

- Diaries
- Poems

VCL Categories:

- Slavery and Antislavery
- Travel
- Women's History

[Top](#)**Encoding Information**

Encoded by Elizabeth Clarke, December 2006.

[Top](#)**Administrative Information****Preferred Citation**

Paulina Wright Davis Papers, Archives and Special Collections Library, Vassar College Libraries.

Processing Information

Original processing date unknown.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Alma Lutz (VC 1912).

[Top](#)**Series List**

[Series I.](#) Correspondence (Box 1)

[Series II.](#) Manuscripts (Boxes 2-3)

[Series III. Works and Correspondence By Others \(Box 3\)](#)

Container List

SERIES I. CORRESPONDENCE

Letters to Paulina Wright Davis

- Folders 1.1-1.3 Relating to women's movement in US. and organization of Women's Rights Convention in 1870, 1866-1876 (51 items)
- Folder 1.4 Condolences upon the death of Paulina Wright Davis, and other family affairs, 1853-1878 (7 items)
- Folder 1.6 Miscellaneous, circa 1870-1875 (6 items)

Letters from Paulina Wright Davis

- Folder 1.5 Letter to one of her children on the coming of death, 1876 (1 item)

SERIES II. MANUSCRIPTS

- Folders 1.7-1.8 Lectures on anatomy - including "Mental Development," 1840s (4 items)
- Folders 2.1-2.5 Women's rights - including "On the Renting of a Hall for Woman's Rights Meetings in Providence, RI." and "Social Rights and Wrongs," 1852-1870s (6 items)
- Folders 2.6-2.7 History of the women's rights movement - early draft and manuscript of her 1871 book, A History of the National Woman's Rights Movement, circa 1869, 1871 (2 items)
- Folders 3.1-3.4 Miscellaneous manuscripts. Includes 2 versions of "Despotism and Democracy" and "Letter to an Editor re: Vickie Ream, the Sculptor," 1850s, undated (4 items)
- Folder 3.5 "Biography of John Neal 1793-1876," with the note "possibly written by Paulina Wright Davis," undated

SERIES III. WORKS and CORRESPONDENCE by OTHERS

- Folder 3.6 Letters to Robert Purvis, not written by Paulina Wright Davis, 1843, 1890 (2 items)
- Folder 3.7 Poems, including one read at the Decade Convention of 1870 and one dedicated to Paulina Wright Davis, 1870, undated (3 items)
- Folder 3.8 Collection of autographs, undated (1 item)
- Folder 3.9 Travel diaries of a trip to Europe, purported to have been written by Davis' niece, who accompanied Davis and her daughter to Europe, 1871-1873 (2 items)

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)