

## Corliss Family Papers, 1796-1875, 1897

### Collection Summary

<b>Reference Code:</b>	MRQ, US.
<b>Repository:</b>	Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
<b>Call Number:</b>	MSS 54
<b>Creator:</b>	Corliss family
<b>Title:</b>	Corliss Family Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1796-1875, 1897
<b>Size:</b>	1 box (.209 linear feet)
<b>Language(s):</b>	Collection materials are in English.
<b>Abstract:</b>	This collection contains mostly legal documents (deeds and wills) for the Ephraim Corliss family of Haverhill, Massachusetts, but also includes a plot plan, a letter, a manuscript, and genealogy.

### Biographical Sketches

**Ephraim Corliss** was born on 13 August 1751 in Haverhill, Massachusetts, to Joseph Corliss (1724-1762) and Mary Emerson (1728-1815). At the age of 21, he inherited half of his father's farm. Soon after, he purchased the rest of the farm from his brother, Joseph, and built a house. On 12 December 1776, he married Lydia Ayer (1757-1805) and they had five children: Joseph (1778-1859); Ephraim (1782-1858); Lydia (1792-1836); Polly (1794-1798); and Phineas (1801-1838). Twelve days after his marriage, he joined a company of militia commanded by Capt. Marsh (Moore?) and served three months as a private. They traveled that winter more than 900 miles. They served for a short time at Kingsbridge near Fort Washington, New York, then crossed the North River and went to a place called Round Brook near Trenton, New Jersey. The second time he returned home, he was appointed captain of a company in Haverhill. After seven years, he resigned his command and was honorably discharged. He was appointed Justice of the Peace and served for seven years. He died on 25 October 1824.

**Ephraim Corliss** was born on 13 March 1782, in Haverhill, Massachusetts, to Ephraim Corliss (1751-1824) and Lydia Ayer (1757-1805). He was a farmer and also settled estates. He was a town selectman and served in the state legislature. On 21 February 1826, he married Nancy Carleton Robinson (1790-1862), a widow, and they had three children together: Charles (1827-1897); Caroline (1829-1914); and Mary (1832-1913). He died on 5 July 1858.

**Charles Corliss** was born on 5 April, 1827, in Haverhill, Massachusetts, the first child of Ephraim Corliss (1782-1858) and Nancy (Carleton) Robinson (1791-1862). Charles Corliss inherited the

family estate, Poplar Lawn, after the death of his father in 1858 and lived there, taking care for the farm, containing about 50 acres, until his death in 1897. Charles Corliss owned rare breeds of sheep and was fond of carpentry. He built a new house at 33 Highland Avenue, Haverhill, and moved to it in 1881.

Charles had plans for cheaper transportation and was a president of the Haverhill and Lawrence Railroad, a company which had a project to build a railroad in the Merrimack Valley, Massachusetts. In 1890, Corliss announced in the local newspaper that he laid out in his land in Bradford (Ward Hill) and would give, free of expense, twenty-five lots of land if the railway was built within two years, to subscribers for the capital stock of Haverhill and Lawrence Railroad. Corliss planned to give the land free to purchasers who bought several shares. The state government had another plan, to build a trolley line in the valley. Corliss journeyed to Boston to speak before a legislative committee which was considering a proposal that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts spend \$400,000 to establish the new railway. His words however were ignored and the trolley line became a reality. The great Haverhill and Lawrence Railroad finally went out of business.

Corliss and his associates also had plans to make Merrimack River navigable above Haverhill, building a lock and dam, and to establish a new city (called Buena Vista) on a hill near the river. They planned to use Mitchell Falls near Haverhill to provide power for Buena Vista and to build a brand new hotel, reasoned to attract tourists. The tourists, in turn, would fall in love with the great beauty of the place and rush out to buy land there. Houses, schools and civic buildings would spring up. And industries would begin moving into the area which already had shoe factory. In no time at all, a thriving city would burst forth where once there had been only dense woodlands.

The beginning was promising. The Buena Vista Hotel was built, but just before the opening, in April 1891, a spring "storm of no mean proportions," a real cyclone, destroyed the brand new hotel. Later the hotel was rebuilt and open until 1910, but the stockholders and future investors lost interest and the project for Buena Vista city failed.

On 6 October 1875 he married to Celia Davis Hatch Bird of Boston. They did not have any children. Charles died on 18 February, 1897, in his residence, and was buried in Linwood Cemetery, Haverhill.

## **Arrangement**

Series 1. Corliss Family Papers, 1796-1897, undated

## Scope and Content Note

This collection contains mostly legal documents (deeds, wills, and estate records) for the Ephraim Corliss family of Haverhill, Massachusetts, but also includes a plot plan, a letter, a manuscript, and genealogy. Other family members, e.g. John Corliss and Abigail Corliss, are also represented here.

## Administrative Information

<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	[Item Identification], Corliss Family Papers, MSS 54, Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
<b>Custodial History:</b>	Unknown.
<b>Acquisition Information:</b>	Unknown.
<b>Processing Information:</b>	Processed by Tamara Gaydos, 2021. Revised by Elizabeth Smith, 2025
<b>Access Rights:</b>	Collection is open for research.
<b>Phys. Access Restrictions:</b>	None.
<b>Tech. Access Restrictions:</b>	None.
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<b>Related Collections:</b>	None.
<b>Separated Material:</b>	None.
<b>Conservation Notes:</b>	Newspaper clippings were photocopied onto archival quality paper. Paperclips and staples were removed.
<b>Subjects:</b>	Corliss, Abigail, 1720- Corliss, Charles, 1827-1897 Corliss, Ephraim, 1751-1824 Corliss, Ephraim, 1782-1858 Corliss, George Henry, 1828- Corliss, Joseph, 1724-1762 Corliss, Mary, 1832-1913 Corliss, Mary Emerson, 1728-1815 Corliss, Sophia Carter, 1806-1870 Deeds Genealogy Haverhill (Mass.) -- History Wills

## Collection Inventory

### Series 1: Corliss Family Papers, 1796-1875, 1897, undated

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<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Joseph Corliss, will dated 1762 [copy], undated	1	1
Agreement with Smith to finish house, 1796	1	2
James Corliss, will dated 1800 [copy], undated	1	3
John Corliss, deed for Salem, NH land to Ephraim, 1801	1	4
Ephraim Corliss, will, 1824; probate, 1858	1	5
Mary Corliss, will estate accounts, inventory of estate, 1815-1816	1	6
Ephraim Corliss, deed for land in Haverhill, 1820	1	7
Sophia Corliss, receipt from Phineas Corliss' estate, 1839	1	8
George Henry Corliss, appointment of guardian, 1839	1	9
Joseph, Ephraim, and Sophia Corliss, railroad settlement, 1841	1	10
"The Religious Experience of Abigail Corliss, 1735-1746" copied from the original manuscript by Betty Ayer Corliss, 1854	1	11
Lucy C. Corliss, letter to her grandmother, 1865	1	12
Charles Corliss, plan of Poplar Lawn, copied 1875; obituary, 1897	1	13
"Remarks at the Service for Miss Mary Corliss," undated [1913]	1	14
Corliss family genealogy, undated	1	15
Page family genealogy, undated	1	16
Corliss family Genealogy, undated	1	17