

# Cora Chase Family Papers

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1910-1997

## Collection Summary

<b>Reference Code:</b>	MRQ, US.
<b>Repository:</b>	Special Collections Department, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
<b>Call Number:</b>	MSS 106
<b>Creator:</b>	Cora Chase Family
<b>Title:</b>	Cora Chase Family Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1910-1997
<b>Size &amp; Extent:</b>	1 box, 3 volumes, 1 flat file (1.25 linear feet)
<b>Languages:</b>	Collection materials are mostly in English. Some materials are in Italian.
<b>Abstract:</b>	<i>This collection covers the family of Metropolitan Opera soprano singer Cora Chase and her husband, Samuel Thurston Williamson.</i>

## Biographical Sketch

Cora Mancina Chase was born on May 6, 1892, to Mary Mancina and Lucius Wilder Chase, a partner at the shoe manufacturer Chase & Chamberlain. In 1910, she left the United States with her mother to study in Italy, where they stayed during World War I to continue Cora's vocal studies. She made her operatic debut in Busetto, Italy, on September 4, 1919, as Gilda in *Rigoletto*. The niece of composer Giuseppe Verdi was in the audience, and gave Chase a page of his original manuscript of *La Traviata*.

Chase performed throughout Italy and Spain, making headlines in Madrid when she refused to meet with King Alfonso XIII without her mother present. She made her American debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City on February 4, 1921, again as Gilda in *Rigoletto*.

Cora Chase married Samuel Thurston Williamson on May 5, 1923, and retired. She died on February 29, 1984.

Samuel Thurston Williamson was born on November 9, 1891, to Maria Thurston and James Scollay Williamson, who served as the pastor at Bradford's North Church from 1899 to 1910. He graduated from Harvard College in 1916, and began working as a correspondent for the *New York Times*.

During World War I, he attended Officers' Training at Camp Upton in 1918. He held the rank of Second Lieutenant in the 9th Infantry (Regular Army), Second Division, A.E.F. During his service, he participated in the Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, and Champagne (Blanc Mont) campaigns.

After being discharged from the army, he returned to the *New York Times*, covering Warren G. Harding during his presidential campaign and presidency. In 1933, he co-founded and served as the first editor-in-chief of *Newsweek* magazine. In 1948, he published *Imprint of a Publisher: The Story of Frank Gannett and His Independent Newspapers*. Williamson died in 1962.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection contains opera ephemera, correspondence, photographs, and scrapbooks of Cora Chase's family.

### Administrative Information

<b>Preferred Citation:</b>	[Item Identification], Cora Chase Family Papers, MSS 106, Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
<b>Acquisition Information:</b>	Unknown.
<b>Custodial History:</b>	Unknown; found in collection. Scrapbook in Box 1, Folder 8 is on permanent loan from the Haverhill Historical Society.
<b>Access Rights:</b>	Collection is open for research.
<b>Conservation Notes:</b>	Photographs were rehoused in protective enclosures. Paper clips and staples were removed. Newspaper clippings were separated from other materials.
<b>Phys. Access Restrictions:</b>	None.
<b>Tech. Access Restrictions:</b>	None.
<b>Copyright:</b>	Copyright has not been assigned to the Haverhill Public Library. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Haverhill Public Library as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the researcher.
<b>Processing Information:</b>	Processed by Elizabeth Smith, 2025.
<b>Separated Material:</b>	None.
<b>Related Collections:</b>	None.
<b>Subjects:</b>	Chase, Cora. Williamson, S. T. (Samuel Thurston), 1891- Metropolitan Opera (New York, N.Y.). Sopranos (Singers)--United States. Operas--Performances--20th century. Chase Family Williamson Family

## Collection Inventory

<b><u>Folder Title</u></b>	<b><u>Container Number</u></b>	<b><u>Folder Number</u></b>
Opera Papers, 1919-1922	1	1
Correspondence, 1978-1982, undated	1	2
Samuel Thurston Williamson Family Papers, 1802-1922, undated	1	3
Newspaper clippings, 1910-1997, undated	1	4
Samuel Thurston Williamson Photographs	1	5
Cora Chase Photographs, undated	1	6
Pet Photographs, 1937	1	7
Scrapbook, 1921-1922	1	8
Scrapbook, 1916	2	Volume
Scrapbook, 1919-1921	3	Volume
Scrapbook, 1921	4	Volume
Metropolitan Opera House handbills, 1921-1922 (oversized)	FFC 5	Drawer 2