

*Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library*

**Guide to the  
Thomas Lawrason Riggs Papers**

**Manuscript Group 704**

compiled by Janet Elaine Gertz

New Haven, Connecticut  
July 1983

*Copyright © 2006, Yale University Library*

---

# Contents

Overview	1
Biographical sketch	
Description of the papers	3
Inventory	5

---

## Overview

<b>CREATOR</b>	Riggs, Thomas Lawrason, 1888-1943
<b>TITLE</b>	Thomas Lawrason Riggs papers, 1828-1941 (inclusive).
<b>PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION</b>	.5 linear ft. (2 boxes)
<b>BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY</b>	T. Lawrason Riggs taught at Yale University, 1916-1917; served with Mobile Hospital Units in World War I; ordained a Roman Catholic priest, 1922; chaplain Catholic Club at Yale, 1922-1938, and the More Club, 1938-1943; founded St. Thomas More Chapel; instructor at Albertus Magnus College, 1925-1938; administrator, Church of Our Lady of Pompeii, East Haven, 1922-1938; author and active on many boards.
<b>SUMMARY</b>	The principal figures in the papers are T. Lawrason Riggs and his grandfather, George Washington Riggs. The papers of T. Lawrason Riggs, a Catholic priest, consist of correspondence, research materials and manuscripts for two works: "Joan of Arc and the Church" and "Readings in Church Latin." Also included are a notebook, photographs and memorabilia. His principal correspondents are Clarence J. McCabe and Alfred Purcell who wrote on Joan of Arc. Also letters from John LaFarge, Hamilton Holt and others. The papers of George Washington Riggs consist of three bound volumes: an autograph album and commonplace book from his Yale College days (1828-1829) and a catalogue of the books in his library.
<b>PROVENANCE</b>	Gift of the estate of T. Lawrason Riggs in 1944 and from St. Thomas More House in 1961.
<b>PREFERRED CITATION</b>	Thomas Lawrason Riggs Papers. Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.
<b>FOR FURTHER INFORMATION</b>	Manuscripts and Archives Yale University Library P.O. Box 208240 New Haven, CT 06520-8240 tel.: +1 (203) 432-1744 fax.: +1 (203) 432-7441 email: <a href="mailto:mssa.assist@yale.edu">mssa.assist@yale.edu</a>

---

## Biographical Sketch

Thomas Lawrason Riggs, B.A. 1910

Born June 28, 1888, in New London, Conn.; Died April 26, 1943, in New Haven, Conn.

Father, Elisha Francis Riggs (St. Mary's Coll., Oscott, Warwickshire, England), president Riggs & Company (later Riggs National Bank), Washington, D.C.; son of George Washington Riggs (ex-1833) and Janet Madeleine Cecelia (Shedden) Riggs of Washington. Mother, Medora (Thayer) Riggs; daughter of James Smith Thayer (B.A. Amherst 1838) and Medora (Cheatham) Thayer of New York City. Yale relatives include a brother, E. Francis Riggs, '09.

University School, Washington, and Westminster School, Simsbury, Conn. Honors in English composition Junior year; philosophical oration appointment Junior and Senior years; an editor *Yale Literary Magazine* ; secretary Yale University Dramatic Association Junior year, president Senior year; on Class Book Committee; member Yale Corinthian Yacht Club, University Club, Psi Upsilon, Scroll and Key, Chi Delta Theta, and Phi Beta Kappa.

Traveled abroad 1910-11; attended Harvard Graduate School 1911-15 (M.A. 1912; assistant in English 1912-13); instructor in English at Yale University 1916-17; enlisted in Mobile Hospital No. 39 (Yale unit) June 27, 1917; overseas August 22, 1917-July 5, 1919; served at Limoges September 20, 1917-April 10, 1918 and Aulnois-sous-Vertuzey (Meuse) until transferred to Mobile Hospital No. 3, Paris, July 27, 1918; attached to American Mission, Bureau Interallié, Paris, August, 1918-May, 1919; commissioned Second Lieutenant, Infantry, as of September 8, 1918; assigned to 866th Company, Transportation Corps, Bordeaux; discharged July 15, 1919; attended Catholic University of America 1919-20, St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y., 1920-21, and St. Thomas' Seminary, Hartford, Conn., 1921-22; ordained priest in Roman Catholic church June 10, 1922; chaplain Catholic Club at Yale 1922-38 and its successor The More Club 1938-43; founded St. Thomas More Association for Catholic students at Yale 1937 and through the Association was instrumental in the building of St. Thomas More Chapel; author: *The Book of Kildare and Other Verses* (1911), *Mr. Goodenough on Christianity* (pamphlet, 1930), and *The Saving Angel* (1943); translator: *Social Principles of the Gospel* by Alphonse Lugan (1928) and the *The Last Night of Don Juan* by Edmond Rostand (1929); an editor The Christendom Series; contributed to *The Harvard Illustrated Magazine*, *Yale Alumni Magazine*, *Yale Scientific Monthly*, *The Catholic World*, *La Revue des Jeunes* (Paris), *Ecclesiastical Review*, *The Symposium*, and other publications; on editorial council and contributor to *The Commonweal*; member advisory council Albertus Magnus College 1925-43 and instructor in religion 1925-38; on executive committee National Conference of Christians and Jews 1928-43; administrator Church of Our Lady of Pompeii, East Haven, 1922-38; associate fellow Calhoun College 1933-43; trustee The Newman School, Lakewood, N.J.; director The Calvert Associates; governor Yale Publishing Association.

Death due to coronary occlusion. Buried in St. Lawrence Cemetery, New Haven. Survived by no immediate relatives.

Father Riggs left a bequest to St. Thomas More House, the income of which is to be used for the salary of the chaplain.

From *Yale University Obituary Record*

---

## Description of the Papers

The Thomas Lawrason Riggs Family Papers pertain to T. Lawrason Riggs and his grandfather, George Washington Riggs. The papers of the younger Riggs consist of correspondence, manuscript materials, and assorted other items. There are single letters from John LaFarge, Hamilton Holt, and others, while the bulk of the correspondence is with Clarence J. McCabe and Alfred A. Purcell, and concerns Joan of Arc and the book Riggs was writing about her. The manuscript of the book, manuscript notes and various research materials are also present. Other T. Lawrason Riggs papers include a manuscript of selections in Vulgate Latin prepared by Riggs for a course; a notebook containing a poem, a chronological table of Chinese, Indian, and Japanese history, and notes on medical care; a photograph possibly of Riggs, his father, and his brother; and an invitation from the White House for Riggs and his brother. Finally, there are a few miscellaneous printed items and other papers, including an invitation dating ca. 1792-1800 from John Pintard to James Murray to a masons' meeting.

Three bound volumes constitute the papers of George Washington Riggs. Included are his autograph album and commonplace book, both dating from his Yale College days, and a catalogue of the books in his library, made in 1860. These volumes are in somewhat fragile condition and should be handled with care.

The Thomas Lawrason Riggs Family papers were a gift to Yale University from the estate of T. Lawrason Riggs in 1944 and from St. Thomas More House in 1961.



---

## Inventory of the Papers

### Inventory

<u>Description</u>	<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>
Thomas Lawrason Riggs		
Correspondence		
Hamilton, Holt, 1935	1	1
LaFarge, Henry, 1940		
LaFarge, John, 1931		
McCabe, Clarence J., 1936-1938	1	2
Purcell, Alfred A., 1936-1941	1	3
Stevens, Henry N., 1900		
"Joan of Arc and the Church"		
Research materials, n.d.	1	4
Manuscript notes, n.d.	1	5
Manuscript, n.d.	1	6
"Readings in Church Latin", n.d.	1	7 - 8
Notebook, n.d.	1	9
Photograph [of Elisha Riggs and his sons, E. Francis and Thomas Lawrason Riggs?], [ca. 1900]	1	10
Invitation to the White House for E. Francis and Thomas Lawrason Riggs, [1903?]		
Miscellaneous papers, [ca. 1792-1800], n.d.	1	11
George Washington Riggs		
Autograph album, 1828-1829	2	12
Commonplace book, [1832?]	2	13

**Inventory**

**Description**

**Box**

**Folder**

Library catalogue, 1860

2

14