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## Post (Isaac and Amy) family papers

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Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation
<b>Creator:</b>	Post (Family : Rochester, N.Y.)
<b>Creator:</b>	Post, Isaac, 1798-1872
<b>Creator:</b>	Post, Amy Kirby, 1802-1889
<b>Title:</b>	Isaac and Amy Post family papers
<b>ID:</b>	D.93
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<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1817-1918
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 box(es)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .

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[Item title, item date], Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester

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## Biographical / Historical note

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Isaac Post was born on Feb. 26, 1798, in Westbury, Long Island, N.Y., the son of Edmund and Catherine Willets Post. Isaac was a descendant of Richard Post who came to Southampton, Long Island from Lynn, Mass., around the middle of the 17th century, and the Willets, a Quaker family which emigrated from Wiltshire, England, landing at Oyster Bay, Long Island in 1676.

Around 1822 Isaac married Hannah Kirby, one of eight children of Jacob and Mary R. Seaman Kirby who lived in Jericho, Long Island. On February 20, 1823, Hannah bore a daughter, Mary H. Post, in Westbury, Long Island. Both the Posts and Kirbys were farming families and Isaac

followed this livelihood when he moved Hannah and Mary in May of 1823 to the township of Scipio in southern Cayuga Co., N.Y.

In March 1825, Isaac & Hannah had another child, a son named Edmund. Soon after Edmund's birth, Hannah became seriously ill and died in April 1827. Hannah's last illness was tended by Amy Kirby (born December 20, 1802), her sister, who had helped Isaac and Hannah establish themselves in Scipio in 1823. On September 18, 1828, a little more than a year and a half after Hannah's death, Amy Kirby married Isaac, becoming stepmother to Isaac and Hannah's children, Mary and Edmund.

Isaac and Amy Post's first son, Jacob Kirby Post, was born on November 11, 1829. In September 1830, Hannah's son Edmund died at age 5. A second son was born to Isaac and Amy in 1832 and named Joseph W. Post. A third son, Henry, was born in March 1834 in Ledyard, another town in Cayuga County. In 1836, not satisfied with farming in that region, Isaac moved his family to a house in Rochester, New York, at 36 Sophia Street. Amy's sister Sarah L. Kirby (b. January 16, 1818) moved to Rochester with the Posts. In July 1837, Isaac and Amy's third son, Henry, died at age 3. In 1838, Sarah married Jeffries Hallowell (ca. 1810 - 1844). The couple moved to Aurora, Cayuga County, for one year, returning to Rochester in 1839. That same year, Isaac established the drug firm of Post, Coleman and Willis at 4 Exchange Street, in the Smith Arcade.

Isaac's drug firm expanded readily over the next several decades, providing a comfortable source of income and a place of employment for Jacob, Joseph, and another son, Willet E. Post, born on March 14, 1847. In 1844, at the age of fifteen, Jacob became a clerk in his father's firm and in the early 1850s was admitted into partnership. He worked steadily in the drug business for the rest of his life, and assumed sole control of his father's business in 1877. Jacob incorporated the firm in 1906, a decade before his own death. Joseph went to work at first for the Motive Power Department of the New York Central Railroad, coming back to Rochester later in life to enter his father's firm. An original member of the American Drug Syndicate, Joseph moved in 1887 to Charlotte, (part of Rochester since the first quarter of the 20th century), and continued in the drug business until his death in 1915. In 1840, however, Isaac's firm was not expanding nearly as fast as the Posts' other activities. In addition to the birth of a daughter, Matilda, who died as a child in 1845, the year 1840 marked the start of a decade which proved decisive in shaping the character of the Posts' lives for the next 30 years.

Both Amy and Isaac had grown up in Quaker families holding views on the liberal end of the pre-Hicksite Separation Quaker discipline. When the Hicksite Separation occurred in 1827, both families followed their concerns with the social reform issues of the day and became Hicksite Quakers. In the early 1840's Isaac and Amy transformed their concerns into social action and became deeply involved in the abolitionist movement. Amy joined the Rochester Ladies Anti-Slavery Society and helped organize fairs and lectures given in Corinthian Hall and elsewhere. The Posts' home frequently received Frederick Douglass and Wendell Phillips, as well as other guests involved in the anti-slavery cause such as William Lloyd Garrison, Parker Pillsbury, George Thompson, Cassius M. Clay, Susan B. Anthony, and Sojourner Truth.

By 1845 the Posts' abolitionist activities brought them squarely into opposition with the rule of non-involvement contained in Quaker discipline, and after being visited by a committee of the Friends the Posts decided to leave the Society rather than give up their fight against slavery.

Other members of the Post family, meanwhile, were initiating their own contributions to the family and the anti-slavery cause.

In 1844, at the age of 15, Jacob became a clerk in his father's firm and in 1852 (?) was admitted into partnership. He worked steadily in the drug business the rest of his life, in 1877 assuming sole control of his father's business and in 1906 incorporating the firm a decade before his own death in 1916. Around 1847 when Frederick Douglass started his anti-slavery paper the North Star in Rochester, Joseph helped Douglass to turn out the newspaper. Joseph went to work at first for the Motive Power Dept. of the New York Central Railroad, coming back to Rochester later in life to enter his father's firm. An original member of the American Drug Syndicate, Joseph moved in 1887 to Charlotte, (part of Rochester since the first quarter of the 20th century), and continued in the drug business until his death in 1915.

In January of 1843 Mary H. Post, Isaac and Hannah Kirby's daughter, married William R. Hallowell (1816 - 1882) and settled on Jones St., in Rochester. The second half of the 1840's and the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law at the start of the 1850's saw an increasing number of escaping slaves seeking shelter on their northern journey to freedom in Canada. Both Mary's and Amy's houses were prominent Rochester stations on the Underground Railroad. Isaac and Amy's house sometimes provided shelter for 12 to 15 fugitive slaves in one night. The Posts were also very active supporters of Frederick Douglass, both in his publishing and lecturing activities, and in his attempts to open up the public schools and similar civic institutions in the Rochester area to participation by black citizens.

Neither Amy Kirby Post's nor Mary H. Post Hallowell's activities were confined to the anti-slavery cause. Mary aided in the organization of the United Charities of Rochester, was a member of the Political Equality Club, and in 1848 attended the Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls as a delegate. In her work for the cause of women's rights Mary followed both her step-mother Amy and her aunt Sarah L. Kirby Hallowell who were close friends with Susan B. Anthony.

Amy Kirby Post was one of the early influences on Susan B. Anthony, encouraging and supporting her in entering the struggle for women's rights. Delegate to both the Seneca Falls and Rochester conventions in 1848, Amy helped organize both conventions and was an editor of the convention Proceedings published in 1870. Sarah's activities on behalf of women's rights were not curtailed at all by her second marriage, to Edmund P. Willis in 1853. Her interests extended beyond attending the Seneca Falls convention to local civic work, and along with her active influence at the Mechanics Institute her contribution in 1900 of \$2,000 of the remaining \$8,000 needed to make the University of Rochester a co-ordinate men's and women's institution was a significant effort on behalf of women's rights.

Despite their resignation from the Society of Friends in 1845, Isaac and Amy Kirby Post maintained the dignified and simple style of life and manners characteristic of the less socially involved Quaker orthodoxy. Along with their commitment to a Quaker style of life went a deep inner spirituality. The depth of the Posts' involvement in their own religious lives was demonstrated by their conversion to total belief in Spiritualism by Margaret Fox and her sisters Ann Leah and Catherine, in 1848.

Isaac and Amy, along with R. D. Jones, John E. Robinson and George Willets, were among the original group of five people who first met regularly at the Foxs' house to investigate the source of the "Rochester Rappings". The Posts were soon convinced that they were in direct communication with the deceased of all historical periods and countries. Isaac and Amy became the principal mentors of the Fox sisters during the early part of their public careers, giving them advice, encouragement, and protection during the time the first public investigations were held.

After a period of experimentation, Isaac became noted as a writing medium, publishing in 1852 a book entitled *Voices From The Spirit World, Being Communications From Many Spirits, By the Hand of Isaac Post, Medium*. By 1852, there were already thousands of writing mediums in the U.S., and many other kinds as well. *Voices* gained notoriety for its contents and the beliefs it supported. The book contained an introduction purporting to be from the spirit of Benjamin Franklin. Approximately forty other "communications" from spirits of noteworthy people such as Washington, Jefferson, Elias Hicks, Calhoun, Margaret Fuller, Swedenborg, Daniel O'Connell, Voltaire, William Penn, and George Fox made up the body of the text. Despite the howls of the popular press and vehement opposition from conservative clergy, Isaac and Amy Kirby Post continued unshaken in their beliefs and for decades ranked as the leading defenders of the Spiritualists in Rochester.

Isaac and Amy's son, Willet E. Post, who followed a career in his father's drug firm, became very interested in Spiritualism as a young man. He was an active worker in the earliest days of the Spiritualist Church of Rochester, serving it as a trustee, and also filling various offices in the lyceum. Except for four years of work on his own in the grocery business, Isaac and Amy's third son remained in the drug business until his retirement around 1912.

Both Isaac and Amy Kirby Post remained active in a wide range of social reform activities until the end of their lives. They often traveled in New York State to attend conventions of the various reform movements they took interest in. Isaac attended the Hartford Bible Convention at Hartford, Conn., in June, 1853. Amy often combined visits to her family on Long Island with New York City conventions, once making a round trip including New York City, Long Island, and Boston, in order to visit relatives and further the anti-slavery cause at the same time.

In 1882, on her 80th birthday, Rochester celebrated the contribution of Amy Kirby Post to the local community and the nation, establishing a precedent that was later followed in the case of Susan B. Anthony on her 70th birthday and in the case of Mrs. Mary T. Gannett on her 75th birthday. Old age, however, or even the absence of Isaac who had died in 1872, did not slow down the reform activities of Amy Kirby Post. In 1887, she attended the convention of the Friends of Human Progress at West Junius near Waterloo in Seneca Co., N.Y., to support an organization that she and Isaac had both been active in for many years. Less than a year before her death in 1889, Amy attended the International Council of woman Suffragists at Washington, still working for a cause which epitomized the human spirit of both Isaac and Amy Kirby Post, Hicksite Quakers, free thinkers, Spiritualists, and active reformers of 19th century Rochester.

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## Scope and Contents

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The Post family papers span the years from 1817 to 1918, with the bulk of the material falling into the period from 1823, the year Isaac and Hannah Kirby Post moved from Long Island to Scipio, in southern Cayuga Co., N.Y., to 1872, the year Isaac Post died. The papers include 7 boxes of correspondence containing 1,970 letters from 494 individual letter writers and one box of non-correspondence materials containing 119 items grouped into three general categories as follows: 38 items of non-correspondence manuscripts, 55 items of financial and legal material, and 26 items of printed ephemera. The correspondence includes 369 undated letters, arranged alphabetically by surname of the letter writer, and 1,601 dated letters, arranged chronologically and subgrouped alphabetically by surname of the letter writer. The correspondence is indexed item-by-item for a total of 22 different subjects. The subject index information appears alongside the listing for each letter in the separately bound Chronological, Letter Writer, and Letter Recipient correspondence indexes located in the Department. The reader should consult the introductions to the respective indexes for a detailed discussion of the format and symbols used in the indexes. The scope of each subject indexing term is discussed below. For more information on the indexes themselves (which are not included here due to their size), please contact the [Department of Rare Books and Special Collections](#), University of Rochester Library, Rochester NY 14627. Phone: (585) 275-4477 The bulk of the correspondence consists of family letters, with the remainder consisting largely of letters between the Posts and members of the anti-slavery, spiritualist, and women's rights movements. Other topics for which there is significant, but not necessarily extensive material include: agriculture, the anti-tobacco movement, childbirth, Chinese immigrants, the Civil War, dogmatic servants, education, the Friends of Human Progress, freed slaves (the freedmen), Indians, medicine, Quakers, the Reconstruction Era, slavery, and the temperance movement. The strengths and weaknesses in the correspondence for each of these Subjects are discussed in the rest of this section.

### ***Abolitionism (AB)***

The correspondence includes letters from a large number and variety of abolitionists. The bulk of the anti-slavery correspondence is from Frederick Douglass and William Cooper Nell. Other noteworthy correspondents include, (B following a name indicates a black correspondent): Susan Brownell Anthony, Antoinette Louisa Brown Blackwell, William Wells Brown (B), Lydia Maria Francis Child, Lucy Newhall Danforth Colman, Betsey Mix Cowles, Julia Griffiths Crofts, Paulina Kellogg Wright Davis, Frederick Douglass Jr. (B), Abigail Kelley Foster, James Sloan Gibbons, Louisa Nell Gray (the sister of William Cooper Nell / B), Josephine Sophie White Griffing, Richard Price Hallowell, Laura Smith Haviland, Sallie Holley, James Caleb Jackson, Harriet Brent Jacobs (B), Oliver Johnson, Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock Jones, Elizabeth Annie Kingsbury, Thomas McClintock, Samuel Joseph May, James Mott, Lucretia Coffin Mott, Lydia Mott, Abigail Jemima Hutchinson Patton, Aaron M. Powell, Charles Lenox Remond (B), Lizzie

M. Remond (B), Sarah Parker Remond (B), David Ruggles (B), Jeremiah Burke Sanderson (B), Lewla C. Smith, William Still (B), George Thompson, Sojourner Truth (B), Jonathan Walker (B), and Henry Clarke Wright. Several topics for which material may be found in the correspondence are: the American Anti-Slavery Society, the debate over disunion vs. union, mention of anti-slavery newspapers such as the *Liberator*, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, the *North Star* and the *Freeman*, and the free goods movement. Notable items include an underground railroad pass signed by Frederick Douglass (n.d. #44), a letter to Isaac Post from an unidentified slave he helped escape to Canada (dated May 29, 1850), and a prospectus of the *North Star* with speech notes on the back which may relate to the Rochester Women's Rights Convention of 1848 (Aug. 2, 1848).

The subject term Abolitionism is used to index all material relating to the anti-slavery movement, including any letter mentioning an identifiable fact, idea, or sentiment about the anti-slavery cause, its proponents or opponents and its development and progress before and during the Civil War. For letters post-dating the Civil War the term is used to designate letters mentioning something about the movement from an historical perspective.

**Agriculture (AG)** The correspondence includes many letters from members of the Post and Kirby families who were farmers. Some of these letters include details about crop and livestock prices, farming practices, and weather variations as they affected farming. The great bulk of these letters are from Isaac Post's brother and sister-in-law, Joseph and Mary Robbins Post, who lived in Westbury, Long Island.

The subject term Agriculture is used to index all material in the correspondence connected with crop or livestock agriculture.

**Anti-Tobacco Movement (AT)** The correspondence contains one letter, dated Jan. 5, 1868, from George Trask (1798 - 1875), a clergyman until 1850 and then a temperance agent in Fitchburg, Mass. Trask was a prolific author of tracts and lectured throughout the U.S. against the use of tobacco. There are several other mentions of the anti-tobacco movement in the correspondence. The subject term Anti-Tobacco is used to index all material in the correspondence related to the movement against the use of tobacco.

### **Child-Birth (BI)**

The correspondence contains numerous mentions of births among the various branches of the Post and Kirby families. Beyond this, there are five letters, dated Sept. 8, 1849, Dec. 20, 1855, Nov. 8, 1861 (?), Oct. 28, 1868, and Sept. 22, 1869, which discuss occurrences of childbirth in more detail. These five letters are indexed under the term Births, and contain details such as the number of hours of labor and the type of medical assistance, if any, that were used.

### **Business (BU)**

The early part of the family letters contains almost no mention of dealings with businesses or banks, except for the purchase or sale of agriculturally related goods. After the beginning of the 1850's however, there is a slowly increasing incidence of detail about the Post family's contacts with business and their financial history. The letters which contain some information of this nature are indexed under the subject term Business.

### ***Chinese Immigrants (CI)***

The correspondence contains a few letters which mention the topic of Chinese emigration. These letters are indexed under the term Chinese Immigrants.

### ***Civil War (CW)***

The correspondence contains a significant but not large number of letters referring to the causes, onset, progress, and immediate aftermath of the Civil War. Most of these letters contain either sentiments about the war or factual details about its progress. These letters are indexed under the term Civil war.

### ***Domestic Servants (DO)***

The correspondence includes about 105 letters which mention the use, procurement, condition, activities of, and/or feelings about domestic servants. Some of these letters mention the names of domestic servants in a way that they are indistinguishable from other people mentioned in the same letters without an intimate knowledge of the correspondence.

The term Domestic Servants is used to index all letters which contain any information about servants used in the household for domestic duties. Farmhands and other types of agricultural labor are not indexed under the term Domestic Servants.

### ***Education (ED)***

The correspondence contains a few letters from two noted educators, John Van Schaick Lansing Pruyn (1811-1877), lawyer, official and general counsel of the New York Central Railroad, post 1853, and Chancellor of the University of the State of New York, 1862 - 1867, and Emily James Smith Putnam, author, teacher, and first dean of Barnard College in 1894.

The bulk of the material on education is found in letters from Isaac Post's sons, Jacob Kirby Post, Joseph W. Post, and Willet E. Post, sent to their parents while they were going to school away from home. The correspondence also contains some material on Quaker views of education. All material relating to education is indexed under the latter term.

### ***Family (FA)***

The term Family is used to designate letters which contain details about the families of the letter writers and, in addition, any material relating to the history of the family such as attitudes towards family life and/or children, domestic practices, and child raising practices.

The correspondence contains a significant but not large amount of material relating to Quaker attitudes and practices in family life and child raising,

### ***Friends of Human Progress (FP)***

The correspondence contains a significant number of letters from three members of the Friends of Human Progress - Phebe B. Dean, Mary S. Doty, and Charles D. B. Mills. All such

correspondence and any other material relating to this organization is indexed under the organization's name.

Even though Amy and Isaac Post are indicated in secondary sources to have been active members of the Friends of Human Progress, the correspondence does not give such detail about the nature of their support or activities in this organization.

### ***Freed Slaves (FS)***

The correspondence includes letters from three notable people connected with the freedmen issue--General Oliver Otis Howard, head of the Freedmen's Bureau, Emily Rowland, and Sojourner Truth.

There is a significant but not large amount of material containing details about the efforts to help the freed slaves and the conditions they suffered under during and after the Civil War. In particular, there is a significant amount of correspondence to Sojourner Truth during 1867 in which people from northwestern New York State request her help in obtaining freed slaves, both male and female, to work as farm hands and domestic servants, respectively, at their homesteads.

All material relating in any way to the freedmen is indexed under the term Freed Slaves.

### ***Indians (IN)***

The correspondence contains a small number of letters from Asher Wright, an agent on Cattaraugus Reservation in Chautauqua and Erie Counties, N.Y., a few letters from John Joe, (written by Asher Wright), an indigent Indian whom the Posts helped for nearly 40 years, and a letter from the Indian women of Tonawanda Reservation to President John Tyler, dated March 14, 1842. There is also some mention of Quaker attitudes and actions relating to the Indians. All material of this nature is indexed under the term Indians.

### ***Medicine (ME)***

The correspondence includes approximately 238 letters which contain some identifiable information relating to the history and practice of 19th century medicine. The bulk of these letters mention or discuss various forms of treatment, both folk medicine and "professional", opinions about certain doctors and/or the efficacy of certain schools of 19th century medicine, and details about recipes for folk medicines or the methods used in applying a certain form of treatment.

There are letters from three notable physicians: James Caleb Jackson (1811 - 1895), a hydropathic physician and abolitionist, Clemence Sophia Harned Lozier (1813 - 1888) a homeopathic physician and feminist, and Sarah Parker Remond (1826 - post 1887?), a black physician in Italy post 1865 and an abolitionist.

The bulk of the letters mentioning medicine are among the Post family correspondence. All material mentioning any aspect of medicine is indexed under this term

### ***Personal (PE)***

The term Personal is used to index any letter that contains significant material relating to personal information about the letter writer, as distinguished from or in addition to, information about the letter writer's immediate family or other relatives. Letters which discuss the writer's activities within a family context are indexed under the term Family.

### ***Quakers (QU)***

The correspondence includes many letters from the Post and Kirby families which shed light on Quaker attitudes and activities in such areas as agriculture, amusements, education (including libraries, teachers, and schools), family life (including child raising), Indians, and medicine. There is a significant but not large amount of material on Elias Hicks, his activities on Long Island at Quaker meetings, and the Hicksite Separation of 1827. In addition there is material showing the contrast of Hicksite versus Orthodox Quaker attitudes towards, and activities in, the arena of preaching, religious meetings, marriages, tolerance of the variations among Quaker sects and of other Christian sects, and contemporary social movements including abolitionism, spiritualism, temperance, and women's rights.

There are letters in the collection from the following members of the noteworthy Mott family: Abigail Mott (abolitionist), Arthur Mott, Elizabeth Kirby Mott, James Mott (1788 - 1868, abolitionist), Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793 - 1880, feminist and abolitionist), and Lydia Mott (abolitionist). In addition there is material in the correspondence discussing the activities of Rachel Hicks, who had a ministry on Long Island, and Priscilla Hunt, who had a traveling ministry, originally from Illinois.

All topics for which there are specific subject index terms, such as abolition or education, have been indexed under both the specific term and the term Quakers in cases where the subject occurs in a Quaker context. All other topics which occur in a Quaker context are indexed under the term Quakers.

### ***Reconstruction Era (RC)***

The correspondence includes a small number of letters mentioning some aspect of the history of the Reconstruction Era. All such letters are indexed under the term Reconstruction.

***Slavery (SL)*** The correspondence includes a small number of letters which discuss aspects of slavery such as living and working conditions, treatment by owners, and family life. There are also approximately 33 letters from Harriet Brent Jacobs, dated in the 1850's and 1860's, some of which mention aspects of slavery. The bulk of the Jacobs letters deal with her family and the progress of her book *Incidents In The Life of a Slave Girl*, published in 1861. The correspondence between Jacobs and Lydia Maria Francis child indicates that Jacobs' book was a true narrative of her own experiences. All material relating directly to slavery is indexed under this term.

***Spiritualism (SP) and SPIRIT WRITING (SW)*** The correspondence includes a small number of letters from the Fox sisters, Catherine Fox, Margaret Fox Kane, and Ann Leah Fox Fish Brown Underhill. Other noteworthy correspondents include: Eliab Wilkinson Capron, Ira

Erastus Davenport, Andrew Jackson Davis, Mary Fenn Davis, Lizzie Fish (a daughter of Ann Leah Fox Fish Brown Underhill), Abigail Jemima Hutchinson Patton, Samuel Post, Nathaniel Potter Jr., Rebecca Moses Sanford, Lewla C. Smith, and Henry Clarke Wright. The correspondence includes a large number of letters which mention or discuss Spiritualism, the movement's progress and/or obstacles, its proponents and opponents, its reception in the popular press, the details of séances, spiritual communications of various forms, and the ability of the spirits to accurately describe private family histories and predict future individual and social events. Mention is also made of spiritualist newspapers such as the *Spirit Telegraph* and the *Banner of Light*. There is an example, dated 1851(?), of a prospectus of *The Illuminati* sent by A.V. Valentine to Isaac Post. There does not seem to be any manuscript evidence of the original spirit communications which Isaac Post put together to publish in his book *Voices From the Spirit World....*, (1852), but a significant number of examples of spirit writing are present. Two spirit writing examples are "signed", one by a Charles Frost, the other by Charles Hammond (1779 - 1840), member of the Ohio bar, editor of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, 1825-1840, and an Ohio legislator. Many of the spirit writing examples are scribbled on the backs of other letters, these are separately indexed to ensure easy access to their contents. The correspondence also includes letters from a Benjamin Fish and a Sarah D. Bills Fish. Evidence from the content of these letters indicates that Benjamin and Sarah D. Bills Fish were married, living in the Rochester area c.1848, and were involved in the original events surrounding the rise of Spiritualism. The possibility seems strong that Benjamin Fish was in some way related to the man named Fish that Ann Leah Fox was married to in the 1840's and who either died or deserted her and their three children pamphlet authored by Samuel Post, notable anti-spiritualist, entitled *An Exposition of Modern Spiritualism, Showing Its Tendency to a Total Annihilation of Christianity....*, (86p.; published 1861), is in the Seward Pamphlet collection (179AA) located in the Department of Rare Books. All examples of spirit writing are indexed under this term. The term Spiritualism is used to index all other material relating to the spiritualist movement.

**Temperance Movement (TE)** The correspondence includes a small amount of material on the temperance movement. The bulk of the material consists of just brief expressions of support or opposition to temperance. Some small amount of material on temperance occurs within the context of Quaker beliefs and activities. Despite secondary sources stating that Amy Kirby Post was a strong supporter of temperance, no firm evidence exists in the correspondence, except the character of her other activities and beliefs, to shed light on any possible activities or support she may have engaged in related to the temperance movement. The term Temperance is used to index all material relating to the movement and its practice.

**Women's Rights (WO)** The correspondence includes a significant number of letters which mention the women's rights cause. Notable correspondents include: Susan Brownell Anthony, Antoinette Louisa Brown Blackwell, Henry Brown Blackwell, Sarah Anthony Burtis, Abigail Bush, Lydia Maria Francis Child, Emma R. Coe, Lucy Newhall Colman, Betsey Mix Cowles, Caroline Wells Healey Dall, Mary Fenn Davis, Paulina Kellogg Wright Davis, Rhoda De Garmo, Joseph A. Dugdale, Ruth Dugdale, Abigail Kelley Foster, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Josephine Sophie White Griffing, Laura Smith Haviland, Emily Howland, Harriet Brent Jacobs, Oliver Johnson, Jane Elizabeth Hitchcock Jones, Elizabeth Annie Kingsbury, Clemence Sophia Harned Lozier, Thomas McClintock, Samuel Joseph May, Charles D.B. Mills, Lucretia Coffin Mott, Sarah C. Owen, Abigail Jemima Hutchinson Patton, Aaron M. Powell, Rebecca Moses Sanford,

Azaliah Schooley, Lewia C. Smith, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Henry Clarke Wright, and Martha Coffin Pelham Wright. The letters include mention of the activities of various feminists such as Catherine Beecher, Lydia Ann Jenkins, and Lucy Stone. Feminist publications including *The Revolution*, the *Una*, the *Women's Advocate* and the *Women's Journal* are also mentioned or discussed. The correspondence also includes some notices for various women's rights conventions. One noteworthy item is a set of scribbled notes for a speech which may have been given at the Rochester Women's Rights Convention of Aug. 2, 1848. The speech was given in support of the resolution before the convention that women are entitled to ownership of the earnings from their own labor. The notes, filed in the correspondence by the convention date, are written on the back of a prospectus for Frederick Douglass' paper the *North Star* which he started publishing in Rochester in 1847. Despite the fact that Douglass was present at the convention and supported the resolution, examination of a copy of the speech notes by the editors of the Douglass papers project has led to their conclusion that the speech notes were probably not written by Douglass. The bulk of the correspondence mentioning women's rights does not contain a large amount of material on the history of the movement, but rather usually expresses an opinion or relates a few facts about a convention or other feminist activities. The term Women's Rights is used to index all material on the women's rights movement. In addition, it is used to index any discussion relating to domestic, social, and political conditions of women.

***Miscellaneous Noteworthy Correspondents*** The correspondence includes letters from the following notable writers not mentioned above: 1) Elizabeth Fries Lummis Ellet (1812? - 1877), author and historian, published many books including, *The Women of the American Revolution* (vol. 1-2, 1848; vol. 3, 1850), and *Domestic History of the American Revolution* (1850) 2) Rev. Freeborn Garrettson Hibbard (1811 - 1895), Pastor of Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, Rochester, N.Y. 3) Daniel Craig McCallum (1815 - 1878), emigrated to Rochester as a boy; engineer, originated and patented an inflexible arched truss bridge (1851) and specialized in bridge building thereafter; military director of railroads from 1862 to the close of the Civil War.

***Copies of Correspondence from William Clements Library at the University of Michigan (housed in Box 1)*** Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, March 9, 1824 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, April 3, 1824 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, October 26, 1824 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, January 30, 1825 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, March 7, 1825 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, April 5, 1825 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, May 16, 1825 Post, Amy Kirby to Charles Willet, June 28, 1825

***Non-Correspondence Materials*** The 38 items of non-correspondence manuscripts are arranged by general subject area and include material in the following areas: Criminal Justice, the Post Family and Memorials, Medicine, Poetry, Religion, Spiritualism, Slavery (and abolitionism), Women's Rights, and Unidentified Manuscript Ephemera. The 55 items of financial and legal material are arranged chronologically, n.d. - 1915, and include such items relating to the Post family as inventories of personal property, death notices, court records, indentures, bonds, mortgages, sales receipts, insurance policies, bills, balance sheets, deeds and contracts. The 26 items of printed ephemera are arranged by type of material and include a death notice of Anna Murray Douglass, dated Aug. 4, 1882; tickets, passes and cards; newspaper clippings; and miscellaneous items.

**Introduction** The family papers of Isaac and Amy Kirby Post span the years from 1817 to 1918, with the bulk of the collection falling into the near fifty year period from 1823 to 1872. The papers include 8 boxes containing a total of 2,089 items, of which 1,970 items are letters from 494 individuals and 119 items are non-correspondence materials including 38 manuscripts, 55 items of financial and legal material, and 26 items of printed ephemera. The collection contains a large amount of subject material related to the Post's activities in the abolitionist, spiritualist, and women's rights movement. Isaac Post, born in Westbury, Long Island, N.Y., in 1798, and Amy Kirby Post, born in Jericho, Long Island in 1802, were both Hicksite Quakers after the Separation of 1827, and as 19th century "free thinkers" were concerned with most of the important social movements of their day. Isaac Post was first married (c.1822) to a sister of Amy Kirby Post, named Hannah. The couple moved in 1823 from Long Island to a farm in the township of Scipio, southern Cayuga County, N.Y. Hannah Kirby Post died in 1827, and Isaac married Amy Kirby on Sept. 18 of the following year. In 1836 Isaac and Amy moved to Rochester, N.Y., where in 1839 Isaac Post established a drug firm in the Smith Arcade on Exchange St. In the early 1840's the Posts became deeply involved in the anti-slavery movement, using their house at 36 Sophia St., now N. Plymouth Ave., as a very active station on the Underground Railroad. The Posts' activities brought them into conflict with the rules against social involvement in contemporary Quaker discipline, and they chose to leave the Society of Friends in 1845 rather than give up their involvement in the abolitionist cause. The abolition of slavery, however, was just one area of the Posts' reform activities. Both Isaac and Amy Kirby Post supported, were active alongside, and knew well, leaders of the anti-slavery movement such as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth; the original practitioners of the spiritualist movement the "Rochester Rappings", Ann Leah, Catherine, and Margaret Fox; and such leaders of the women's rights movement as Susan Brownell Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In addition to the subjects just mentioned the collection contains significant but not necessarily large amounts of material on the following subjects: agriculture, the anti-tobacco cause, child-birth, the Post family financial history, Chinese immigrants, the Civil War, domestic servants, education, the Posts' family life, the Friends of Human Progress, freed slaves (the freedmen), Indians, medicine, Quakers, the Reconstruction Era, slavery, and the temperance movement. Each individual letter in the correspondence is subject indexed for all 22 subjects mentioned above. The subject index information appears alongside the listing for each letter in the separately bound computer-sorted Chronological, Letter Writer, and Letter Recipient correspondence indexes which are located in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. The reader should consult the introductions to the respective indexes for an explanation of the format and subject code symbols used in the indexes. The scope of each subject indexing term is discussed below, in the Scope and Content Note section of the register. The reader may also consult the content notes in this section for a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the papers in each of the indexed subject area. Further information about the Post family may be found in the Biographical Chronology, which provides a brief list of significant dates. The Biographical Sketch draws on both the family papers and secondary sources to provide a concise narrative biography of Isaac and Amy Kirby Post's lives and significant details in the lives of their children and other relatives who lived with the Posts in Rochester. The Genealogical Charts section provides as accurate a view of the Post family as can be established through checking the published genealogy contained in Marie Caroline de Trobriand Post's *The Post Family* (1905), against the contents of the family papers. A precise description of the box by box

contents of the collection, including an item-by-item listing of all non-correspondence materials, may be found in the Series Description and Container Listing sections of the register. The Post family papers were the gift of Mrs. Nellie Farmen Post in memory of her husband, Ruden Wheeler Post, in December 1975. Ruden Wheeler Post (1879 - 1955), was a grandson of Isaac and Amy Kirby Post.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation

Rush Rhees Library

Second Floor, Room 225

Rochester, NY 14627-0055

[rarebks@library.rochester.edu](mailto:rarebks@library.rochester.edu)

URL: <https://www.library.rochester.edu/spaces/rbscp>

### Revision Description

Minor edits made to correct formatting display error. May 26, 2022

### Access

The Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers is open for research use. Researchers are advised to contact the Rare Books Special Collections & Preservation Department prior to visiting. Upon arrival, researchers will also be asked to fill out a registration form and provide photo identification.

### Use

In consultation with a curator, reproductions may be made upon request. Permission to publish materials from the collection must be requested from a curator. Researchers are responsible for determining any copyright questions.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Antislavery movements
- Women's rights
- Women--Suffrage
- Spiritualism
- Quakers
- Correspondence
- New York (State)--Rochester
- Post, Isaac, 1798-1872
- Post, Amy Kirby, 1802-1889

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## Collection Inventory

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### Box 1

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, No date, 36 Folders; Letters #1 - 369, arranged alphabetically by letter writer.	

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### Box 2

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, Dec. 1817 - Aug. 1845, 25 Folders; 272 letters, (nos. 370 - 641).	

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### Box 3

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, Sept. 1845 - Nov. 1851, 25 Folders; 262 letters, (nos. 642 - 903).	

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### Box 4

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, Dec. 1851 - June 1857, 24 Folders; 263 letters, (nos. 904 - 1,166).	

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## Box 5

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, July 1857 - Dec. 1864, 27 Folders; 298 letters, (nos. 1,167 - 1,464).	

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## Box 6

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, Jan. 1865 - June 1869, 30 Folders; 325 letters, (nos. 1,465 - 1,789).	

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## Box 7

Title/Description	Instances
Correspondence, July 1869 - Dec. 1918, 17 Folders; 181 letters, (nos. 1,790 - 1,970).	

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## Box 8

### Non-Correspondence Materials, 38 Folders; 120 Items

Title/Description	Instances
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	
1. Draft Petition to Revoke the Death Penalty for Commission of Crimes, n.d. (2 leaves)	
<b>Post Family and Memorials</b>	
2. Diary Entry of Amy Kirby Post, May 4 - May 24, 1823 (1 leaf)	
3. Diary Entry - no name, Dec. 31, 1868 (1 leaf)	

---

4. Essay On Learning and Science (fragment) by Amy Kirby Post (?), n.d. (2 leaves)

---

5. Invitations and other Family Ephemera, n.d. (7 items, 1 leaf each)

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6. List of Addresses, n.d. (1 leaf)

---

7. Memorial Biography of Mary Slocum (died, Jan. 15, 1824), 182- (2 leaves)

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8. Memorial Tribute for Mrs. Mary Fish Curtis by Lucy Newhall Danforth Colman (?), n.d. (2 leaves)

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### **Medicine**

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9. Recipes for Medicines, n.d. (2 items, 1 leaf each)

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### **Poetry**

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10. Miscellaneous poems - no name, n.d. (4 items, 6 leaves)

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### **Religion**

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1. Religious Resolution on the Presence of God in One's Soul, n.d. (1 leaf)

---

2. Essay on the State of the Society of Friends Since Appointment of Elders and Setting Up of Selective Meetings (fragment), n.d. (1 leaf)

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3. Minutes of the Jericho Preparative Meeting, Society of Friends, May 12, 1831 (1 leaf)

---

### **Spiritualism**

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14. List of "Spiritual Works" for Sale, W. F. Norton's, 21 South St., Rochester (?), N.Y., n.d. (1 leaf)

---

### **Slavery and Abolitionism**

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15. Announcement of a Lecture Given by Sojourner Truth, n.d. (1 leaf)

---

16. List of People Who Desire to Employ Freed Slaves With Preferences for Sex and Age, n.d. (2 leaves)

---

17. Minutes of an "Anti-Fugitive Slave Law Meeting of the Colored Citizens of Rochester," William Cooper Nell, Secretary, Oct. 15, 1851 (5 leaves)

---

18. Motion to the Friends of the Anti-Slavery Annual Meeting to Extend Sympathies to Frederick Douglass Because of His Being Mobbed, and to Publish an Account of the Present Meeting in the *North Star*, c.1847 - 1851 (?) (1 leaf)

---

19. Notes Referring to William Lloyd Garrison and the *Liberator*, n.d. (1 leaf)

---

20. Report of the Rochester Anti-Slavery Fair, c.1850 (1 leaf)

---

21. Rules and Regulations for the Fair (Rochester Anti-slavery ?), 185- (1 leaf)

---

22. Schedule for February Travel (Anti-Slavery Lectures ?), n.d. (2 leaves)

---

23. Text on Anti-Slavery, n.d. (5 leaves)

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24. Ticket to a Meeting of the Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, (Rochester ?), n.d. (1 leaf)

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### **Women's Rights**

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25. Notice of Free Meeting for Women Only, Sojourner Truth to Speak, n.d. (2 copies, 1 leaf each)

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### **Unidentified Manuscript Ephemera**

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26. Miscellaneous unidentified manuscripts, n.d. (2 items, 1 leaf each)

---

### **Financial and Legal Material**

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27. n.d. - 1852 (11 items)

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A. Request for Permission from Common Council to build a Carriage Manufacturing Establishment on Exchange St., Rochester, N.Y., n.d, (1 leaf)

---

B. Manuscript fragment offering \$2.50 in payment for a favor, from Norman Durkie (?) to ?, n.d, (1 leaf)

---

C. Rhetorical questions and answers on the existence of God, penciled on blank Land Contract Forms, n.d. (2 leaves)

---

D. Certification or the record of a complaint upheld by the Court of the State of West Virginia in the case of S. S. Coe vs. J. C. Thompson, n.d. (1 leaf)

---

E. Printed sheet from Staple and Fancy Groceries, 54 Main St., Rochester, N.Y., with handwritten inquiry about the cost of transporting emigrant movables including horses from Parkersburg, Wood co., West Virginia to Rochester, N.Y., n.d. (1891 ?) (1 leaf)

---

F. Draft of a notice for the deaths of Sarah Pitkin (Sept, 15, 1869) and Mary Ann Pitkin (Oct. 21, 1869), along with personal financial notes from an unidentified source, n.d. (1 leaf)

---

G. Inventory of the personal property of Hannah Staples, n.d. (2 leaves)

---

H. Unidentified balance sheet, n.d. (4 leaves)

I. Receipt for \$97.67 to Amy Kirby Post from E. P. Willis, Jr., for credit to the Western N.Y. Anti-Slavery Society, Sept. 11, 1849 (1 leaf)

---

J. Copyright certificate from the District Clerk of Northern N.Y. to Isaac Post for his book, *Voices From the Spirit World...*, April 8, 1852 (1 leaf)

---

K. Receipt to Amy Kirby Post from William Cooper Nell for payment, May 31, 1852 (1 leaf)

---

L. Isaac Post Court Case. Post vs The Mayor & Common Council of the City of Rochester. Summons to court over a property dispute , July 3, 1844

---

28. 1855 - May 30, 1871 (10 items)

---

A. Summons to Mathew Finley, et al., to appear in Supreme Court of the State of N.Y. as defendants in a suit of foreclosure by Stephen Saxton, May 19, 1855 (1 leaf)

---

B. Insurance Policy from the Springfield Fire and Marine Insurance Co., to Isaac Post and William W. Bruff against fire loss on their drug firm at No. 4 Exchange St., Rochester, N.Y., June 24, 1858 (2 leaves)

---

C. Insurance Policy from the Indemnity Fire Insurance Co., to Isaac Post and William W. Bruff against fire loss on their drug firm, June 24, 1862 (3 leaves)

---

D. Receipt for payment on a trunk and valise from Thomas H. Pritchard, 94 State St., Rochester, N.Y., Oct. 17, 1863 (1 leaf)

---

E. Insurance Policy to Jacob Kirby Post Co., against fire loss on his drug firm, July 15, 1868 (2 leaves)

---

F. Receipt for purchase of mattress materials from J. A. Remargus (?) to Isaac Post, Nov. 6, 18-68 (1 leaf)

---

G. Receipt for purchase of a horse, sleigh, and harness from Thomas Slattery to Willet E. Post, Dec. 29, 1868 (1 leaf)

---

H. Bill for goods from Powers Co., to Isaac Post, June 14, 1869 (1 leaf)

---

I. I.O.U. for \$100.00 from John S. Patric (?) to Amy Kirby Post, March 11, 1871 (1 leaf)

---

J. Abstract of Mortgage dated Oct. 20, 1866 from Reedy Creek Oil Co., to James Barber, and Abstract of Mortgage dated Nov. 27, 1866 from Reedy Creek Oil Co., to Nathan Hilles (?), May 30, 1871 (2 leaves)

---

29. June 1, 1871 - Dec. 31, 1871 (6 items)

a. Agreement between James Barber and James M. Stradling giving Stradling title to the Petty Farm, Wirt County, on the Little Kanawha River, West Virginia, June 14, 1871 (2 leaves)

---

b. Agreement between Nathan Hilles (?) and James M. Stradling giving Stradling the rights to the Petty Farm, June 14, 1871 (2 leaves)

---

c. Mortgage from James M. Stradling to James Barber for \$3000.00 with interest for a farm in Wirt County, West Virginia, July 8, 1871 (2 leaves)

---

d. Insurance extension from the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Co., to Jacob Kirby Post Co., for stock drugs during the period July 13, 1871 to July 13, 1872, dated July 12, 1871 (1 leaf)

---

e. Agreement between Amy Kirby Post, Isaac Post, George Willets, Ann Willets, and the Trustees of Silver Hill Mining Co., granting rights to all minerals on the Petty Farm for \$1.00 to Silver Hill Mining Co., August 9, 1871 (1 leaf)

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f. Deed from James M. Stradling to Amy Kirby Post and George Willets for the Petty Farm, August 9, 1871 (1 leaf)

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30. 1872 - 1875 (7 items, including one duplicate)

---

A. Receipt for purchase of the Petty Farm from James M, Stradling, made by George Willets to Isaac and Amy Kirby Post, May 23, 1872 (1 leaf)

---

B. Quit claim deed for the Petty Farm, from George Willets and Ann Willets to Amy Kirby Post, June 20, 1872 (2 leaves)

---

C. Agreement between James Barber of Philadelphia and Jacob Kirby Post for transfer of the bond and mortgage of the Petty Farm, June 28, 1872 (1 leaf)

---

D. Inventory of the personal belongings of Isaac Post, June 29, 1872 (2 leaves)

---

E. Receipt from James Barber to Jacob Kirby Post for payment of \$590.00 on the bond and mortgage of the Petty Farm, July 3, 1875 (1 leaf)

---

F. Draft of agreement between the Assoc. of Trustees of the Silver Hill Mining Assoc. and Amy Kirby Post to mine the Petty Farm, Oct. 23, 1875 (2 copies, 2 leaves each)

---

31. 1876 - May 31, 1885 (11 items)

---

A. Agreement between James Barber and Jacob Kirby Post for transfer of an interest in the bond and mortgage of the Petty Farm from Barber to Post, June 12, 1876 (1 leaf)

---

B. Receipt from Nellis Dyer (?) to Amy Kirby Post for payment of the cost of relaying a brick walk, August 10, 1877 (1 leaf)

---

C. Receipt from H. Parkhurst to William Post for work done on a house, Jan. 10, 1878 (1 leaf)

---

D. Document by James Barber releasing James M. Stradling from all obligation to Barber arising from the sale of the Petty Farm because of completion of payments by Stradling, Feb. 25, 1878 (1 leaf)

---

E. Bill from D. J. Chaffee, M.D. to Amy Kirby Post for services rendered from Sept. 14, 1878 to Oct. 6, 1878, dated Jan. 1, 1879 (1 leaf)

---

F. Notice from the Water Commissioners of Rochester, N.Y., to Amy Kirby Post concerning an unpaid water bill from Nov. 1, 1878 to May 1, 1879, dated April 4, 1879 (1 leaf)

---

G. Bill from W. N. Clark to Willet E. Post for groceries, June 1880 (2 leaves)

---

H. Bill from John Van Houte to Amy Kirby Post for repairs on the mansard roof of the house at 18 Sophie St., Rochester, N.Y., July 14, 1880 (3 leaves)

---

I. Receipt. John Van Houte to Amy Kirby Post (?) for payment for repairs on a house at Greenwood Place, Rochester, N.Y., July 31, 1880 (1 leaf)

---

J. Receipt from John Van Route to Jacob Kirby Post for payment for repairs on a house on Cankee (?) Ave., and a house on Evergreen Place, Rochester, N.Y., Aug. 8, 1881 (2 leaves)

---

K. Receipt from Battersons' Muldner Carpet Cleaning Works to William Post for payment of services rendered, May 4, 1885 (1 leaf)

---

32. June 1, 1888 - Dec. 31, 1890 (6 items)

---

A. Indenture between Amy Kirby Post and Willet E. Post for transfer of the title of the Petty Farm from Amy to Willet, July 27, 1885 (3 leaves)

---

B. Agreement between Willet E. Post, Josephine W. Post, and John Q. Dudley and Riley P. Wilson, giving Dudley and Wilson the right to mine the Petty Farm in return for \$15,000.00 plus interest within 2 years, upon which the deed will be transferred to Dudley, Wilson, et al., Nov. 13, 1885 (2 copies, one 4 leaves, one 5 leaves, both are fragments)

---

C. Receipt from the Delaware Hudson Canal Co. to Willet E. Post for services, Dec. 10, 1885 (1 leaf)

---

D. Receipt from Henry Walker, grocer, to Willet E. Post, Nov. 14, 1885 (1 leaf)

E. Legal correspondence from John Q. Dudley to Willet E. Post concerning mining of the Petty Farm, Dec. 31, 1885 (6 leaves)

F. Receipt from Henry Walker to Willet E. Post for transfer of Walker's share in the firm of Walker Post, 54 W. Main St., Rochester, N.Y., to Post, August 3, 1886 (1 leaf)

33. 1891 - May 11, 1915 (4 items)

A. Bill from Regular Burning Springs and Parkersburg Packet to Willet E. Post for transportation of 4 head horses and cows on the steamer Oneida, Dec. 8, 1891 (1 leaf)

B. Contract between Ohio R. R. Co., and Millet K. Post for transportation of livestock from Parkersburg, West Virginia to Rochester, N.Y., Dec. 9, 1891 (1 leaf)

C. Agreement between Elizabeth I. Wyatt, and C. Fred Farlin and Josie W. Post for transfer of title for Lot 6 fronting on the North side of Pearl St. from Wyatt to Farlin and Post, Sept. 29, 1892 (2 leaves)

D. Bill from the American Oil and Lubricant Works to Willet E. Post for 25 gallons of transmission grease, May 11, 1915 (1 leaf)

33a. Photograph of Isaac Post by Masterson & Wood, Rochester, photograph of Amy Post by Powelson, Rochester, and reproduction of a photo of the Post house on Long Island

#### Printed Ephemera

34. Death notice of Anna Murray Douglass, Aug. 4, 1882 (2 leaves and one envelope)

35. Tickets, Passes, and Cards (9 items, one leaf each, and one envelope)

36. Newspaper Clippings (9 items)

37. Miscellaneous (7 items)

38. Settlement of Mary H. Hallowell's Estate, June 21, 1915

Box 8

Folder 38

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## Box 9

Title/Description

Instances

Correspondence, ca. 1822-1925

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