



DOCUMENT INFORMATION AND VERSION HISTORY

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Plan of the Craigie Estate in Cambridge, 1850 (3002/3-#14)
Architectural Drawings and Blueprints Collection (LONG 16172)
Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

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PREFACE

This document, the *Finding Aid for the Craigie Estate Papers, 1792-1855*, describes financial records of Andrew Craigie (1754-1819), Elizabeth Craigie (1772-1841), and their estates. The collection was originally held by History Cambridge. In July 2026, the materials were transferred to Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters NHS. This finding aid was created in 2026 based on the finding aid originally written by Bruce Vencill for History Cambridge in 2011.

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INTRODUCTION

This document, the *Finding Aid for the Craigie Estate Papers, 1792-1855*, describes financial records of Andrew Craigie (1754-1819), Elizabeth Craigie (1772-1841), and their estates.

Andrew Craigie's account book was donated to the Cambridge Historical Society (now History Cambridge) by Miss Alice M. Longfellow on May 10, 1917. Alice Mary Longfellow (1850-1928) lived her entire life in the Craigies' former home on Brattle Street.

The remainder of the records were donated to the Cambridge Historical Society by Miss Josephine M. Shaw on April 1, 1918, and July 15, 1919. Josephine MacClellan Shaw (1848-1933) was a granddaughter of Lemuel Shaw (1781-1861), a cousin of Elizabeth Craigie and executor of her will.

In July 2026, the collection was transferred from History Cambridge to the Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site (LONG) as part of accession LONG-213.

This finding aid was created in 2026 based on the finding aid originally written by Bruce Vencill for History Cambridge in 2011.

PART 1:

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Craigie Estate Papers, 1792-1855

Accession Number: LONG-213

Catalog Numbers: LONG 37904

Quantity: 2.42 linear feet.

Storage: 1 legal size archives box, 1 20" x 24" flat oversize box, 1 36" x 48" map folder

Location: Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, 105 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138-3407, (617) 876-4491.

Description: The records of the Craigie Estate document the years 1792-1855. The bulk of the collection consists of financial records and estate records of Andrew Craigie (1754-1819) and Elizabeth (Shaw) Craigie (1772-1841), including account books, cancelled notes, receipts, estate inventories, legal documents, and a map.

Andrew Craigie's account book contains financial records of the Craigie estate from 1792-1794. Postdating these financial records, an unidentified writer appended written notes within the volume about the life of Andrew Craigie and pasted in a newspaper clipping regarding Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's connection to the Craigie Mansion.

Also included are inventories of Andrew Craigie's estate completed following his death and papers documenting the division of the estate produced by Elizabeth Craigie as Administratrix and her lawyer Asahel Stearns. Papers documenting the estate under the ownership of Elizabeth Craigie include her account book for the years 1829-1835 and a deed for the purchase of her burial plot in Mount Auburn Cemetery. Papers from Lemuel Shaw concern the settlement of the estate (1841-1855) following the death of Elizabeth Craigie, including a copy of her will and inventories of the Craigie Estate.

Arrangement: Materials have been arranged chronologically at the collection level.

Language: English

Conditions of Access: The collection is open for research use.

Preferred Citation: [Identification of item], in the Craigie Estate Papers, 1792-1855 (LONG 37904), Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site.

- Related Material:* Frederick Haven Pratt & Stephen D. Pratt Research Papers (LONG 21809)
Papers generated as a result of research conducted by Frederick Haven Pratt, M.D. to publish *The Craigies* in 1942 and by his son, Stephen D. Pratt, to publish a new edition, *The Craigies: A Footnote to the Medical History of the Revolution*, in 1996.
- Architectural Drawings Collection (LONG 16172)
This collection includes a Plan of the Craigie Estate in Cambridge by Alexander Wadsworth, Surveyor, 1850. (3002/3-#14)
- Mary Allen (1779-1849) -Andrew Craigie (1754-1819) Correspondence, 1797-ca. 1941 (LONG 35823)
This collection is primarily made up of letters to Andrew Craigie from his illegitimate daughter, Mary Allen.
- Andrew Craigie Papers, 1717-1834, American Antiquarian Society
This collection consists mostly of records and correspondence generated by Andrew Craigie's land speculation and other financial and legal activities.
- Middlesex. Probate Records 1648–1871. Massachusetts State Archives. Probate Papers 5303. Andrew Craigie, 1819-1845; Probate Papers 29928. Elizabeth Craigie, 1841-1842
- Access Terms:* Craigie, Andrew, 1744-1819
Craigie, Elizabeth Nancy Shaw, d. 1841
Shaw, Lemuel, 1781-1861
Stearns, Asahel, 1774-1839
Longfellow House (Cambridge, Mass.)

PART 2: HISTORY

Andrew Craigie Jr. (1754-1819) was a prominent Cambridge landowner in the early Federal period. Trained as a pharmacist, he served as Apothecary General of the Continental Army in the American Revolutionary War.¹ During and after the Revolutionary War, Craigie amassed a large fortune through speculation in land and United States certificates.

In 1792, Craigie purchased the Vassall House and farm, comprising approximately 140 acres, which had served as General George Washington's headquarters during the war.² The house came to be known as the "Craigie Mansion," and served as a social center of Cambridge, with Craigie installing gardens, a greenhouse, and an icehouse, and holding numerous parties and dances. On January 10, 1793, Andrew Craigie married Elizabeth "Betsy" Nancy Shaw (1772-1841) of Nantucket.

Andrew Craigie continued to acquire and invest in property, eventually owning over 600 acres of land in Cambridge, Watertown, Charlestown, and Chelmsford, Massachusetts.³ His holdings in Hebron, Maine, included a 358-acre farm, sawmill, grist mill, and tavern, and thousands of acres of investment land.⁴

Craigie's financial speculation, extravagance and lavish spending, and losses have prompted hyperbolic accounts of his debts.⁵ Although some speculations and business ventures failed and some land investments were encumbered, Craigie's real estate and personal estate following his death were appraised at over \$140,000.⁶

Andrew Craigie died suddenly and without a will on September 18, 1819. The Craigie estate was divided between his widow and the children of his sisters: Andrew Foster (1780-1831), John Foster (1784-1836), Thomas Foster (1785-1831), and Elizabeth (Foster) Haven (1770-1851). One-third of the estate – the mansion house in Cambridge, the nearby Lee mansion, and 96.5 acres of adjoining land – was allocated to Elizabeth Craigie as her dower right for use during her life.⁷

While administering the estate, Elizabeth Craigie sold many of the personal effects of the mansion in Cambridge. She began taking in lodgers about 1821, renting rooms to law and theological students and to Harvard College professors, including Edward Everett (about 1822-

¹ Pratt, 5-8. Certification from Massachusetts records in 1844 confirmed, "the name of Andrew Craige is borne upon the Books of the Commissioned and Staff Officers of the Continental Army as Apothecary General from Jan 1. 1777 to December 31. 1780." Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application File W 14534.

² Evans, 15.

³ Evans, 25.

⁴ Probate Papers 5303. Andrew Craigie, 1819-1845, in Middlesex County Probate Records 1648-1871. Massachusetts State Archives.

⁵ Frederick Haven Pratt assigned blame in part to "John Holmes' entertaining but confessedly 'legendary' account of Craigie events" published in 1905; however, Pratt repeated Holmes' fanciful image of the "sheriff at last at [Craigie's] gate-post." Pratt, 5 n13 23 n56

⁶ Probate Papers 5303. Andrew Craigie, 1819-1845, in Middlesex County Probate Records 1648-1871. Massachusetts State Archives.

⁷ Evans, 25. Probate Papers 5303. Andrew Craigie, 1819-1845, in Middlesex County Probate Records 1648-1871. Massachusetts State Archives.

1825), Jared Sparks (about 1833), and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (beginning 1837).

Elizabeth Craigie died on May 5, 1841. Her cousin Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, was executor of her will.⁸ Following her death, the dower portion of the estate was partitioned into thirds among Andrew Craigie's Foster and Haven heirs.⁹ The Craigie House was purchased from the estate in 1843 for the newly married Henry and Fanny Longfellow.

Sources:

Evans, Catherine. *Cultural Landscape Report for Longfellow National Historic Site, Volume 1, Site History and Existing Conditions*. National Park Service, 1993.

Jones, Robert F. *"The King of the Alley": William Duer, Politician, Entrepreneur, and Speculator, 1768-1799*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1992.

Pratt, Frederick Haven. *The Craigies: A Footnote to the Medical History of the Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: The Cambridge Historical Society, 1996.

Probate Papers 5303. Andrew Craigie, 1819-1845. Middlesex County Probate Records 1648–1871. Massachusetts State Archives.

Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application File W 14534, Andrew Craigie, Continental (Mass.) <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/54323749>

⁸ Elizabeth (Shaw) Craigie and Lemuel Shaw (1781-1861) shared a common grandfather, Rev. John Shaw (1708-1791).

⁹ Evans, 29.

PART 3: COLLECTION LISTING

	Box	Folder
Andrew Craigie's account book, 1792-1794 and about 1882	1	1
Andrew Craigie cancelled notes, 1811-1819	1	2
Andrew Craigie estate financial records, about 1819-1826	1	3
Inventories of Andrew Craigie estate, 1820	1	4
Elizabeth Craigie financial records and records of Andrew Craigie estate, 1819-1835 ¹⁰	1	5
Bound volume of Elizabeth Craigie estate records, 1841-1853	1	6
Elizabeth Craigie estate papers, 1841-1855 ¹¹	1	7
Map of Craigie Estate, 1841	MC	

¹⁰ Oversize material in box 2, folders 1-4.

¹¹ Oversize material in box 2, folders 5-6.