

WORCESTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

30 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts

ARCHIVES

John B. Gough
Collection

2000.FIA.06

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Collection Information

Abstract : John B. Gough, born in England in 1817, emigrated to United States in 1829, was bookbinder, farmer, itinerant singer/actor, chronic drunkard until signing total abstinence pledge in 1842. Thereafter farmed in Boylston, internationally known temperance crusader, died in 1886 near Philadelphia while on lecture circuit.

Finding Aid : Finding Aid in print form is available in the Repository.

Preferred Citation : Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Provenance : Found in archives; provenance unknown.

MARC Access : Collection is cataloged in MARC under the following subject headings (lcs, aat, tgm, gmgcp)

Gough, John B. (John Bartholomew), 1817-1886.

Temperance – United States.

Boylston (Mass.) – Biography.

Photomechanical prints. aat

Photographic postcards. aat

Orators – United States – 19th century.

Florilegus, Junius. The odious, despicable, and dreadful condition of a drunkard ...

Boston, Thomas. Memoirs of the life, times, and writings of the Rev. Thomas Boston, of Ettrick.

Historical/Biographical Notes

Born in Kent, England, in 1817, John B. Gough emigrated to United States, alone, at the age of 12. He learned the bookbinder's trade, and later took to the stage. Neither career was very successful.

He married in 1838 and sired two children. The first died in infancy; the second, with his wife, died in childbirth.

By his 25th birthday, Gough was unemployed, homeless, and a confirmed drunkard.

In 1842 he attended a temperance lecture in Worcester, where he signed the pledge of total abstinence. He embarked upon a new career, the temperance lecture circuit, and soon became one of the most sought-after orators in United States.

During his career, Gough delivered some 9,600 lectures to more than 9 million people in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, Scotland, and Switzerland.

He married a second time in 1843, this time to Mary Whitcomb of Boylston. Gough then moved his base to Boylston and built "Hillside", reputed to be one of the most elegant mansions in New England at the time. Notables from all over the English-speaking world – including Ralph Waldo Emerson and Franklin Pierce – would come to visit "Hillside".

Included in his Morningdale estate was Gough's expansive library, which contained more than 3,000 volumes (after his death, many of these found their way into the Boylston Public Library).

Seldom at a loss for words, Gough authored four books – all of them autobiographies.

When he died in 1866, the New York Times wrote that he was "probably better known in this country and Great Britain than any other public speaker". This at a time when his contemporaries included Thoreau, Emerson, and Dickens. John B. Gough, of Boylston.

(From Boylston Historical Society)

Scope and Content

The collection is comprised of clippings relating to Gough's lectures and to his death (1870s-1880s) and biographical articles ca. 1960s. Included are lists of eggs for hatching and poultry to raise available from Gough's Boylston farm, as well as a list of subscriptions to a commemorative memorial to Gough, a "coffee tavern" in Sandgate, England, Gough's birthplace.

Publications in the collection include Memoirs of the life, times, and writings, of the Rev. Thomas Boston, of Ettrick, written by himself. Published by George and Robert King, Aberdeen, 1852, and presented to John Gough in 1854 by the Committee of the Dunse Total Abstinence Society; a 1649 pamphlet by Junius Florilegus (Richard Younge), The odious, despicable, and dreadfull condition of a drunkard ..., published in London, given to Gough in 1864. Other publications include a catalog of Gough's library issued for auction sale in 1892, and a 1990s publication by the Boylston Historical Society relating to their John Gough collection.

Other items include halftone prints of Gough, a postcard photograph of Gough's Boylston residence; cancelled check received by Gough for a lecture, bearing his signature; and documents relating to Gough's silver wedding anniversary in 1868; letter of appreciation to Gough from National Temperance League (Great Britain), presented 1879.

Miscellaneous items include a letter, 1942, noting errors in biographical article on Gough, and an empty envelope.

Series Description

Series 1: Lists. Includes lists of fowl and eggs for sale by John Gough's farm, Old Boylston, Mass.; also list of subscribers to "Coffee Tavern" in Sandgate, England, 1879. (3 items)

Series 2: Publications. Includes pamphlets (1649-1990s) and bound volume, 1850s. (4 items)

Series 3: Clippings. 1870s-1960s. (5 items)

Series 4: Photographs and prints. Includes halftone print of John B. Gough and photographic postcard of Gough's residence in Boylston. (3 items)

Series 5: Miscellaneous. Includes cancelled check, letter relating to article about Gough, envelope, etc. (5 items)

John B. Gough Collection
2000.FIA.06
Series 1, Lists

| <u>Box #</u> | <u>Folder #</u> | <u>Accession #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | 1 | 2000.FIA.06.1.1 | <i>Price list of eggs for sale, from the following variety of fowls / S.J. McIntosh, Worcester, Mass. N.d. In manuscript "John B. Gough's farm, Old Boylston."</i> |
| 1 | 1 | 2000.FIA.06.1.2 | <i>Catalogue and price list, pure bred imported and premium fowls / S.J. McIntosh, Worcester, Mass. N.d. In manuscript "John B. Gough's farm, Old Boylston."</i> |
| 1 | 1 | 2000.FIA.06.1.3 | List of subscriptions to "Coffee Tavern" in Sandgate, England, to be established as a memorial to Gough on the 50 th anniversary of his emigration from England, 1879. |

John B. Gough Collection
2000.FIA.06
Series 2, Publications

| <u>Box #</u> | <u>Folder #</u> | <u>Accession #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 2000.FIA.06.2.1 | <i>The odious, despicable, and dreadfull condition of a drunkard ...</i> / Junius Florilegus (Robert Younge). London, England : R. Cotes, 1649. 41 p. |
| 1 | 3 | 2000.FIA.06.2.2 | Catalogue of the private library of the late John B. Gough, Esq. Auction sale Tuesday March 22, 1892 / C.F. Libbie & Co., Auctioneers, Boston, Mass. 53 p. |
| 1 | 4 | 2000.FIA.06.2.3 | The John B. Gough Collection / Boylston Historical Society, Boylston, Massachusetts. N.d. [8] p. |
| 1 | BV | 2000.FIA.06.2.4 | <i>Memoirs of the life, times, and writings, of the Rev. Thomas Boston, of Ettrick</i> / written by himself. Aberdeen, Scotland : King, 1852. 503 p. With manuscript presentation note to John B. Gough by the Committee of the Dunse Total Abstinence Society, 1854. |

John B. Gough Collection
2000.FIA.06
Series 3, Clippings

| <u>Box #</u> | <u>Folder #</u> | <u>Accession #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | 5 | 2000.FIA.06.3.1 | Fragment, including Gough's death, drawing of Gough. S.l., s.n., ca.1886. Aqp |
| 1 | 5 | 2000.FIA.06.3.2a | <i>Temperance lecturer had stormy life</i> / Astrid Lindvig. S.l. (Probably Worcester), s.n., n.d. (Probably 1967) Encapsulated. |
| | | .2b | Aqp |
| 1 | 5 | 2000.FIA.06.3.3 | <i>John B. Gough, leader of a great crusade</i> / Astrid Lindvig. S.l. (Probably Worcester), s.n., n.d. (Probably 1967) Aqp |
| 1 | 5 | 2000.FIA.06.3.4a | Extracts from the London press upon the work of the "Blue Ribbon Army" Gospel Temperance Movement. "The Times", Oct. 6, 1879 article relating to John Gough speech at Hoxton Temperance Music-hall. |
| | | .4b | Aqp |
| 1 | 5 | 2000.FIA.06.3.5 | <i>Temperance leader John Gough</i> , in, Worcester Sunday Telegram, Worcester, Mass., November 12, 1967 / by Pierrina Rohde. 2 p. Aqp |

John B. Gough Collection
2000.FIA.06
Series 4, Photographs/prints

| <u>Box #</u> | <u>Folder #</u> | <u>Accession #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | 6 | 2000.FIA.06.4.1 | Home of John B. Gough, Boylston, Mass. : photographic postcard / ca. 1920. |
| 1 | 6 | 2000.FIA.06.4.2a-b | John B. Gough : Photomechanical print / n.d. |



John B. Gough Collection
2000.FIA.06
Series 5, Miscellaneous

| <u>Box #</u> | <u>Folder #</u> | <u>Accession #</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|
| 1 | 7 | 2000.FIA.06.5.1 | Envelope, unused, addressed to Chas. F. Libbie & Co., 13 Hayward Place, Boston, Mass. P.O. Box 3236. |
| 1 | 7 | 2000.FIA.06.5.2 | Letter to Zelotes W. Coombs, Worcester, from “one of Boylston’s inhabitants”, regarding errors in a biographical sketch of John B. Gough, July 18, 1942. |

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|---|---|-----------------|---|
| 1 | 7 | 2000.FIA.06.5.3 | Formal thank you letter to John B. Gough from [Great Britain] National Temperance League on the occasion of Gough's third trip in England, presented at Liverpool October 11, 1879. |
| 1 | 7 | 2000.FIA.06.5.4 | Cancelled check drawn on City National Bank of Worcester, payable to John B. Gough, Esq., \$200.00 (fee for speech) by Charles A. Chase (Committee), November 9, 1876. |
| 1 | 7 | 2000.FIA.06.5.5 | Epithalamium, on the occasion of the silver wedding of John B. Gough and Mary Whitcomb; November 24, 1868. |