

Sturgis Library Archives

MS. 174

Mercy Otis Warren and James Otis Memorial Committee Records, 1940-2019

Extent: 4 boxes

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists of records pertaining to the creation, installation and dedication of memorial statues depicting James Otis, Jr. and his sister Mercy Otis Warren, which are located in front of the Barnstable County Courthouse in Barnstable Village. Included are records administrative records, correspondence, meeting minutes, drawings of the statues by sculptor David Lewis, press releases, research materials, photographs, and more. Also included are documents related to the Mercy Otis Warren Woman of the Year award and award winners.

Historical and biographical information: Two committees were formed to plan for the creation of memorial statue depicting James Otis, Jr. and his sister Mercy Otis Warren. The statue of James Otis, who was a recognized Revolutionary War patriot, was erected on July 4, 1991. A committee was later formed to fundraise for a statue of Mercy Otis Warren, and it was dedicated on July 4th, 2001. Both statues were designed and sculpted by Cape Cod artist David Lewis.

James Otis, Jr. was a lawyer, a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Assembly, and an early advocate for separation from the British Crown. His views on taxation led to the American Revolution. His assertion that "taxation without representation is tyranny" became a rallying cry for the Patriot movement in America.

Mercy Otis Warren was a poet, playwright, historian, political writer, and advocate for the American Revolution. She was born in Barnstable, MA in 1728, married James Warren, moved to Plymouth, MA and had five sons. Leading up to the American Revolution, she had correspondence with Abigail Adams, Martha Washington, Hannah Winthrop, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and John Adams, who became her literary mentor. With her writings, she became the poet and a historian of the Revolutionary era. Her works were published anonymously until 1790. She wrote several plays. The Adulator (1772) was directed against Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts and foretold the American Revolutionary War.

Access: Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library Archives for publication purposes.

Acquisition: Donated by the Mercy Otis Warren Memorial Committee, May, 2020.

Related collections: MS. 146 – Lou Cataldo collection

Processed by: Lucy Loomis, September 2020.

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