

Letters of John Wesley and the Wesley Family

The [Methodist Center](#) at Drew University houses the largest collection of letters written by John Wesley and the Wesley family outside of England. Accompanied by a number of Wesley-and Methodist-related manuscript items, these nearly 300 letters attest to the high priority that the university has placed, from its earliest days, on the development of an outstanding theological library. In addition to the letters that the university has bought, a number have been acquired as gifts, notably those from the Wesleyana collection of Frederick E. Maser.

The letters are divided into two collections: those from John Wesley, and those from other Wesley family members. There are approximately 225 letters of John Wesley, dated from December 18, 1724 to February 24, 1791, just a week before his death. They are organized chronologically, as are the accompanying related materials, with undated items listed first. Recipients of the letters include Ebenezer Blackwell, Elizabeth Bennis, Samuel Bradburn, George Merryweather, Rev. Mellon, Henry Moore, and Thomas Rankin.

Correspondence from other members of the Wesley family dates from May 11, 1719 to December 6, 1887. These 70 letters were written by Charles Wesley, Charles Wesley, Jr., Charlotte Wesley, Emelia Wesley, Martha Wesley, Mary Wesley, Samuel Wesley, Samuel Wesley, Jr., Samuel Sebastian Wesley, Sarah Wesley, Sarah Gwynne Wesley, or Susannah Wesley. They are arranged alphabetically by first name, and by birth year when the same first name occurs, and are accompanied by a note briefly describing the writer's place in the family. Recipients include John Wesley and Adam Clarke.

Though owned by Drew University and housed in its Methodist Center, the John Wesley and Wesley family letters are administered by the [General Commission on Archives and History](#) (<http://www.gcah.org>). Many of the letters have been published. Given the accessibility of the texts, as well as the fragility of the originals, both collections are closed to the general public. However, digital images of the entire collection, as well as a sizable portion of Southern Methodist University's Wesleyana collection, are available through the [Cooperative Digital Resources Initiative](#) database (<http://www.atla.com/digitalresources/>) sponsored by the American Theological Library Association.