

Daniel Webster Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1997

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78044925>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms000013>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff
Expanded and revised by John McDonough and Nan Thompson Ernst
Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2000
Revised 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Daniel Webster Papers

Span Dates: 1800-1900

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1824-1852)

ID No.: MSS44925

Creator: Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852

Extent: 2,500 items

Extent: 16 containers

Extent: 4 linear feet

Extent: 8 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78044925>

Summary: Lawyer, statesman, and diplomat; United States representative from New Hampshire and United States senator from Massachusetts. Correspondence, memoranda, notes and drafts for speeches, legal papers, invitations, printed matter, newspaper clippings, and other papers, chiefly dating from 1824 to 1852. Topics include Webster's law practices and cases heard before the United States Supreme Court, the Bank of the United States, diplomacy, national and state politics, slavery, and the Compromise of 1850.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Adams, John Quincy, 1767-1848.

Archer, Charles--Correspondence.

Ashburton, Alexander Baring, Baron, 1774-1848--Correspondence.

Badger, George E., 1795-1866--Correspondence.

Barnard, Daniel D. (Daniel Dewey), 1797-1861--Correspondence.

Biddle, Nicholas, 1786-1844--Correspondence.

Cass, Lewis, 1782-1866--Correspondence.

Choate, Rufus, 1799-1859--Correspondence.

Clay, Henry, 1777-1852--Correspondence.

Curtis, Charles Pelham, 1792-1864--Correspondence.

Davis, John, 1787-1854--Correspondence.

Everett, Edward, 1794-1865--Correspondence.

Fillmore, Millard, 1800-1874.

Hopkinson, Joseph, 1770-1842--Correspondence.

Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845.

Kent, James, 1763-1847--Correspondence.

Lawrence, Abbott, 1792-1855--Correspondence.

Mills, James K.--Correspondence.

Ossington, John Evelyn Denison, Viscount, 1800-1873--Correspondence.

Parker, Isaac, 1768-1830--Correspondence.

Quincy, Josiah, 1772-1864--Correspondence.

Rush, Richard, 1780-1859--Correspondence.

Sparks, Jared, 1789-1866--Correspondence.

Spencer, Ambrose, 1765-1848--Correspondence.

Stevenson, Andrew, 1784-1857--Correspondence.

Tyler, John, 1790-1862.

Webb, J. Watson (James Watson), 1802-1884--Correspondence.

Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852.

Webster, Fletcher, 1813-1862--Correspondence.
Webster, Noah, 1758-1843--Correspondence.
Wheaton, Henry, 1785-1848--Correspondence.

Organizations

Bank of the United States (1816-1836)
United States. Supreme Court.

Subjects

Compromise of 1850.
Diplomacy.
Freemasonry.
Mexican War, 1846-1848--Public opinion.
Practice of law--Massachusetts.
Practice of law--New Hampshire.
Presidential candidates--United States--19th century.
Slavery--United States.
Tariff--United States.

Places

Canada--Boundaries--United States.
Latin America--Foreign relations--United States.
Massachusetts--Politics and government--19th century.
New Hampshire--Politics and government--19th century.
United States--Boundaries--Canada.
United States--Foreign relations--Latin America.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.

Occupations

Diplomats.
Lawyers.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--New Hampshire.
Senators, U.S. Congress--Massachusetts.
Senators, U.S. Congress--New Hampshire.
Statesmen.

Provenance

The papers of Daniel Webster, lawyer, orator, congressman, senator, and secretary of state, were assembled through gift and purchase, 1901-1984, the largest group coming from Charles P. Greenough in 1903.

Processing History

The papers of Daniel Webster were arranged and described in 1975. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1978 and in 1997, when this register was expanded and revised.

Related Material

Also available for consultation in the Manuscript Division Reading Room is a comprehensive microfilm edition reproducing about seventeen thousand Webster and Webster related manuscripts copied from collections in scores of repositories in the United States and abroad. The microfilm has four components: correspondence, business papers, congressional documents, and State Department records. It is the product of a collaboration between the Dartmouth College Library and University Microfilms. An accompanying *Guide and Index to the Microfilm* (1971) was edited by Charles M. Wiltse.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Daniel Webster is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on eight reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Daniel Webster Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1782, Jan. 18	Born, Salisbury, N.H.
1796	Pupil, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N.H.
1797	College preparatory study with Samuel Wood, Boscawen, N.H.
1800	Delivered Independence Day address, Hanover, N.H.
1801	Graduated, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
1802	Teacher, Fryeburg Academy, Fryeburg, Maine
1804	Read law with attorney Christopher Gore, Boston, Mass.
1805	Published anonymously <i>An Appeal to the Old Whigs of New Hampshire</i> Admitted to practice law, Court of Common Pleas, Boston, Mass. Established private law office, Boscawen, N.H.
1807	Admitted as counselor, Superior Court, N.H. Established private law office, Portsmouth, N.H.
1808	Married Grace Fletcher (died 1828)
1813-1817	Member U.S. House of Representatives from New Hampshire
1814	Admitted to practice law, Supreme Court of the United States
1816	Moved to Boston, Mass. Resumed law practice
1818	Argued Dartmouth College case before Supreme Court of the United States
1821	Delegate, Massachusetts Constitutional Convention
1823-1827	Member U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts
1827-1841	Member U.S. Senate from Massachusetts; elected initially as a Federalist, then as a Whig
1829	Married Caroline Bayard Le Roy
1830	Webster-Hayne debate
1832	Led National Republican effort to recharter the Second Bank of the United States Purchased Marshfield, Mass., estate
1835	Nominated for president by Massachusetts legislature
1841-1843	Secretary of state
1842	Negotiated Treaty of Washington with Great Britain (Webster-Ashburton Treaty)
1843	Instructed U.S. minister to China, Caleb Cushing, on Treaty of Wanghia Resigned from cabinet over Texas annexation issue
1845-1850	Member U.S. Senate from Massachusetts

1846	Denounced war with Mexico in Philadelphia, Pa., speech
1850, Mar. 7	Speech in support of Henry Clay's Compromise resolution
1850-1852	Secretary of state
1851	Negotiated treaties of friendship, commerce, and navigation with Costa Rica and Peru
1852	Unsuccessful candidate, Whig party presidential nomination
	Died, Marshfield, Mass.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Daniel Webster (1782-1852) span the years from 1800 to 1900 with the bulk concentrated in the period 1824-1852. They include correspondence, memoranda, notes and drafts of speeches, legal papers, invitations, typewritten transcripts of letters, and a few newspaper clippings and other types of printed matter. [Correspondence](#) constitutes the bulk of the collection. Letters received predominate, but there are more than one hundred and fifty items in the hand of Webster including letters, retained drafts, memoranda, and notes. Invitations and typewritten transcripts of selected letters follow the general correspondence. Webster's correspondence principally documents his legal and political career. Although he was the most famous orator of his time, only a few speeches and notes are included in this collection.

Among the numerous subjects documented in the Webster Papers are cabinet affairs of John Tyler's and Millard Fillmore's administrations, national and state politics, controversies during John Quincy Adams's and Andrew Jackson's administrations, tariff legislation, the Bank of the United States, negotiations related to the Northeast Boundary Dispute, Latin American relations, opposition to the war with Mexico, the slavery question, the Compromise of 1850, the practice of law and cases argued before the Supreme Court, and presidential aspirations. Webster's early years are described in handwritten copies of fifteen lengthy letters (about one hundred pages) written by Charles Archer to James Watson Webb, editor of the New York *Courier and Enquirer*. They are filed among the correspondence dated from August to September 1849.

Correspondents represented in the Webster Papers include Lord Ashburton (Alexander Baring), George Edmund Badger, Daniel D. Barnard, Nicholas Biddle, Lewis Cass, Rufus Choate, Henry Clay, Charles Pelham Curtis, Lord Dalling and Bulwer (Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer), John Davis, Edward Everett, Millard Fillmore, Joseph Hopkinson, James Kent, Abbott Lawrence, James K. Mills, Viscount Ossington (John Evelyn Denison), Isaac Parker, Josiah Quincy, Richard Rush, Jared Sparks, Ambrose Spencer, Andrew Stevenson, John Tyler, James Watson Webb, Fletcher Webster, Noah Webster, and Henry Wheaton.

A card index of correspondents among the general correspondence and invitations is available for consultation in the Manuscript Division Reading Room. It is also included in the Library's microfilm edition of the papers.

Approximately seven hundred typewritten transcripts, primarily of Webster's correspondence held by the New Hampshire Historical Society, are placed at the end of the Correspondence series. They were the gift of Charles Halstead Van Tyne who published *The Letters of Daniel Webster* in 1902. A card index of this transcribed correspondence is available in the Manuscript Division Reading Room. The transcripts and index have not been microfilmed.

An [Addition](#) series of the Webster Papers was created in 1978 and expanded in 1997. It consists of original material acquired by the Library since 1968 and miscellaneous items which were not included in the Library's microfilm edition of 1967, such as facsimiles, copies of letters, an engraving, and printed matter. The original material consists of approximately fifteen items of correspondence, principally by Webster, and notes for his speech of March 7, 1850, on the Compromise of 1850.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Correspondence, 1800-1874](#)
- [Addition, 1812-1900](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-16 REEL 1-8

Series

Correspondence, 1800-1874

Letters to Webster and letters by and about him.

Arranged in groups as general correspondence, invitations, and selected transcripts and chronologically therein. A card index is available on reel 8 and in the Manuscript Division Reading Room.

Microfilm edition available. Shelf no. 13,857.

BOX 16 not filmed

Addition, 1812-1900

Correspondence, notes for a speech, and miscellaneous facsimiles and copies of letters, speeches, printed matter, and engraved portraits.

Organized alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-16 REEL 1-8	Correspondence, 1800-1874 Letters to Webster and letters by and about him. Arranged in groups as general correspondence, invitations, and selected transcripts and chronologically therein. A card index is available on reel 8 and in the Manuscript Division Reading Room. Microfilm edition available. Shelf no. 13,857.
BOX 1 REEL 1	General 18 Mar. 1804-13 June 1825
BOX 2 REEL 1	17 July 1825-28 Dec. 1829
BOX 3 REEL 2	2 Jan. 1830-27 Mar. 1833
BOX 4 REEL 2	1 Apr. 1833-6 June 1836
BOX 5 REEL 3	11 June 1836-12 Mar. 1841
BOX 6 REEL 3	15 Mar. 1841-6 June 1842
BOX 7 REEL 4	9 June 1842-13 Sept. 1845
BOX 8 REEL 4	16 Sept. 1845-5 June 1849
BOX 9 REEL 5	27 June 1849-25 Sept. 1850
BOX 10 REEL 5	27 Sept. 1850-6 Aug. 1851
BOX 11 REEL 6	17 Aug. 1851-19 July 1852
BOX 12 REEL 6	24 July 1852-28 July 1874 Undated
BOX 13 REEL 7	Undated
BOX 14 REEL 7	Invitations, 1830-1852
BOX 14 REEL 8	Card index to Containers 1-14 Originals available in Manuscript Division Reading Room.
BOX 15 not filmed	Typewritten transcripts of selected letters 1800-1860 (7 folders)
BOX 16	Undated
BOX 16 not filmed	Addition, 1812-1900 Correspondence, notes for a speech, and miscellaneous facsimiles and copies of letters, speeches, printed matter, and engraved portraits. Organized alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 16	Correspondence, 1812-1852 Miscellany, 1826-1883, undated Notes for speech on Compromise of 1850, 7 Mar. 1850, with cover letter, 1900