

Charles Butler Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
1995

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm75014522>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms001038>

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Revised 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Charles Butler Papers

Span Dates: 1819-1929

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1825-1894)

ID No.: MSS14522

Creator: Butler, Charles, 1802-1897

Extent: 2,172 items

Extent: 5 containers

Extent: 3 linear feet

Extent: 4 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm75014522>

Summary: Entrepreneur, lawyer, and philanthropist. Correspondence, travel diaries, legal, financial, and business papers, and maps, newspaper clippings, and other papers documenting Butler's involvement in New York politics and his interest in such matters as anti-Masonry, public debts in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, loans to farmers by the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, legal cases (particularly the William Morgan kidnapping), and improvements in transportation, especially in roads, canals, and railroads.

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

Bancroft, George, 1800-1891--Correspondence.
Bard, William, 1778-1853--Correspondence.
Bigelow, John, 1817-1911--Correspondence.
Bissell, Edward C.--Correspondence.
Bronson, Arthur--Correspondence.
Bronson, Isaac, 1760-1838--Correspondence.
Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1795-1858--Correspondence.
Butler, Charles, 1802-1897.
Butler, Eliza A. Ogden--Correspondence.
Croswell, Edwin, 1797-1871--Correspondence.
Curtis, George William, 1824-1892--Correspondence.
Farnsworth, Elon, 1799-1877--Correspondence.
Fiske, John, 1842-1901--Correspondence.
Hopkins, Mark, 1813-1878--Correspondence.
Lyon, Lucius, 1800-1851--Correspondence.
Marcy, William L. (William Learned), 1786-1857--Correspondence.
Morgan, William, 1774-approximately 1826.
Ogden, William B. (William Butler), 1805-1877--Correspondence.
Olcott, Thomas W. (Thomas Worth), 1795-1880--Correspondence.
Van Buren, Martin, 1782-1862--Correspondence.
Whiting, Bowen--Correspondence.

Organizations

Antimasonic Party.
New York Life Insurance and Trust Company.

Subjects

Agricultural credit.
Canals.

Debts, Public--Illinois.
Debts, Public--Indiana.
Debts, Public--Michigan.
Freemasonry.
Maps.
Railroads.
Transportation.

Places

Illinois--Description and travel.
Indiana--Description and travel.
Michigan--Description and travel.
New York (State)--Politics and government--1775-1865.

Occupations

Businessmen.
Lawyers.
Philanthropists.

Provenance

The papers of Charles Butler, lawyer, philanthropist, and entrepreneur, were given to the Library of Congress by his daughter, Emily O. Butler, in 1925. A small group of letters was purchased in 1991.

Processing History

The papers of Charles Butler were arranged and described in 1976. Additional material received in 1991 was incorporated into the collection in 1995.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Charles Butler are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on four 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, Charles Butler Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1802, Jan. 15	Born, Kinderhook Landing, N.Y.
1819	Clerk, law office of Martin Van Buren, Albany, N.Y.
1822	Appointed deputy clerk, New York State Senate
1824	Admitted to New York bar
1825	Married Eliza A. Ogden
1826-1827	Prosecuted the kidnapers of William Morgan, a Freemason
1829	Appointed postmaster, Geneva, N.Y.
1830	Agent, New York Life Insurance and Trust Co.
1833	Traveled in Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois
1834	Moved to New York, N.Y.
1836	One of twenty-four founders of Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y., and a member of its first board of directors Member, Council of the University of the City of New York, N.Y.
1862, circa	President, St. Louis, Alton, and Terre Haute Railroad Co.
1870-1897	President, Board of Directors, Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y.
1897, Dec. 13	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Charles Butler (1802-1897) span the years 1819-1929 but are most numerous for the period 1825-1894. They include correspondence, diaries, notes, maps, newspaper clippings, and printed matter and document both Butler's public and private life.

The collection, consisting chiefly of correspondence dating from 1819 to 1901, includes letters sent as well as letters received, a large number of typed copies, a letterbook for the years 1836-1844, and legal, financial, and business papers. This material documents Butler's involvement in New York politics, his interest in internal improvements including roads, canals, and railroads, and such matters as anti-Masonry, public debts in Indiana and Michigan, loans to farmers by the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company and legal cases, particularly the William Morgan kidnapping. The papers also include a large number of family letters, especially between Butler and his wife, Eliza Ogden Butler, his brother, Benjamin Franklin Butler, and his brother-in-law, William B. Ogden. Other correspondents include William Bard, Edward Bissell, Arthur Bronson, Isaac Bronson, Edwin Crosswell, Elon Farnsworth, Lucius Lyon, William L. Marcy, Thomas W. Olcott, Martin Van Buren, and Bowen Whiting.

Several diaries cover Butler's travels in the Midwest in 1833 and include accounts of the people whom he met and descriptions of places visited, especially in Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. Also of interest are recollections and notes that highlight Butler's life and a description of a meeting with Martin Harris, a Mormon who sought financial support for publishing the *Book of Mormon*.

Maps of Indiana for the period 1846-1847 and 1856-1857 delineate railroads, canals, and county seats. An 1873 map depicts a proposed canal route from Toledo to St. Louis and Chicago. Newspaper clippings relate principally to the settlement of the suit of the St. Louis, Alton, and Terre Haute Railroad Company against Charles Butler and Samuel J. Tilden.

Printed matter, 1830-1890, includes such items as pamphlets, reports, advertisements, and legislative bills. There are also circulars of the New York Life Insurance and Trust Company, the St. Louis, Alton and Terre Haute Railroad Company and the Wabash and Erie Canal Company and items relating to internal improvements and public debts in Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana.

Additional items acquired in 1991 include thirty-six letters, 1854-1929, to Charles Butler and other family members, together with typewritten transcripts of the letters. Correspondents includes George Bancroft, John Bigelow, William Curtis, John Fiske, and Mark Hopkins.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	Correspondence Originals 1819-1842 (9 folders)
BOX 2 REEL 2	1843-1846 (8 folders)
BOX 3 REEL 2-3	1847-1894, undated (13 folders)
BOX 4 REEL 3	Letterbook, 1836-1844 Typescript, 1825-1892, 1901 (8 folders)
BOX 5 REEL 4	Miscellany Diary, material concerning a trip through the Midwest, 1833, including a diary, partial typescript of a diary, an account written in 1881, and a copy of a letter written to the <i>Chicago Herald</i> , 1893 Recollections and biographical notes Maps of Indiana, 1846-1847, 1856-1857, 1873 Newspaper clippings, circa 1846-1905 Printed matter, circa 1830-1890 Addition Correspondence, 1854-1929, undated Transcripts