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://lccn.loc.gov/mm75014522

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

Prepared by Mary Wolfskill
Revised and expanded by Emily Zehmer

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2001
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

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

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 Croswell, 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.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1 REEL 1</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819-1842</td>
<td>(9 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 2 REEL 2</td>
<td>1843-1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 3 REEL 2-3</td>
<td>1847-1894, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>(13 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 4 REEL 3</td>
<td>Letterbook, 1836-1844</td>
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<tr>
<td>Typescript, 1825-1892, 1901</td>
<td>(8 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5 REEL 4</td>
<td>Miscellany</td>
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<tr>
<td>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 <em>Chicago Herald</em>, 1893</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recollections and biographical notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps of Indiana, 1846-1847, 1856-1857, 1873</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper clippings, circa 1846-1905</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed matter, circa 1830-1890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence, 1854-1929, undated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts</td>
<td></td>
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</table>