

William Pitt Fessenden Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2005

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79020446>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007018>

Prepared by Frank Bourdon
Revised by Michael Spangler

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Revised 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: William Pitt Fessenden Papers

Span Dates: 1832-1878

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1861-1867)

ID No.: MSS20446

Creator: Fessenden, William Pitt, 1806-1869

Extent: 1,000 items

Extent: 8 containers

Extent: 1.5 linear feet

Extent: 5 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79020446>

Summary: United States. secretary of the treasury, United States representative and senator from Maine, and lawyer. Correspondence pertaining chiefly to Fessenden's service on the Senate Finance Committee and as secretary of the treasury under Abraham Lincoln.

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

Allen, Elisha Hunt, 1804-1883--Correspondence.
Birney, John--Correspondence.
Bradford, Gamaliel, 1831-1911--Correspondence.
Cisco, John J.--Correspondence.
Dale, Nathaniel--Correspondence.
Davis, Timothy, 1821-1888--Correspondence.
Fessenden family.
Fessenden, William Pitt, 1806-1869.
Fish, Hamilton, 1808-1893--Correspondence.
Galt, A. T. (Alexander Tilloch), Sir, 1817-1893--Correspondence.
Griffin, R. M.--Correspondence.
Johnson, Andrew, 1808-1875--Impeachment.
Ketchum, Morris, active 1864--Correspondence.
Maxwell, Robert A.--Correspondence.
McCulloch, Hugh, 1808-1895--Correspondence.
Morse, Freeman H. (Freeman Harlow), 1807-1891--Correspondence.
Porter, Wm. D. (William Dennison), 1810-1883--Correspondence.
Stewart, John Aikman, 1822-1926--Correspondence.
Towle, George M. (George Makepeace), 1841-1893--Correspondence.
Ware, Joseph A.--Correspondence.
Williams, J. E.--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Finance.
United States. Department of the Treasury. Office of the Secretary.

Subjects

Antislavery movements--United States.
Financial crises--United States--History--19th century.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)
Slavery.

Places

Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
Maine--Politics and government.
Northeast boundary of the United States.
United States--Economic policy--To 1933.
United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Finance.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Lawyers.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Maine.
Senators, U.S. Congress--Maine.

Provenance

The papers of William Pitt Fessenden, lawyer, United States representative and senator, and secretary of the treasury, were purchased between the years 1910 and 1958.

Processing History

The papers of William Pitt Fessenden were processed for microfilming by Frank Bourdon in 1968. The finding aid was revised in 2005.

Additional Guides

A card index arranged by correspondent is located in the Manuscript Division Reading Room.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Pitt Fessenden 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 these papers is available on five 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, William Pitt Fessenden Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1806, Oct. 16	Born, Boscawen, N.H.
1823	Graduated, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine
1827	Admitted to the Maine bar
1829	Entered into law partnership with his father, Portland, Maine
1832	Member, Maine House of Representatives Married Ellen Maria Deering
1835-1855	Practiced law in partnership with William Willis, Portland, Maine
1837	Accompanied Daniel Webster on a tour of the western states
1841-1843	United States representative from Maine
1854-1864	United States senator from Maine
1864-1865	Secretary of the treasury
1865-1869	United States senator from Maine
1869, Sept. 9	Died, Portland, Maine

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Pitt Fessenden (1806-1869) span the years 1832-1878, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1861-1867. Correspondence with related clippings and printed matter primarily document primarily Fessenden's service on the United States Senate Finance Committee and as secretary of the treasury under Abraham Lincoln. The material is organized chronologically in volumes of letters received and copies of letters sent. Letters received comprise the majority of the items in the first seven volumes, while the eighth volume is a copybook of letters sent by Fessenden while serving as secretary of the treasury.

The collection documents Maine and national politics, abolitionism, operations of the Treasury Department in 1864-1865, financing of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. Letters and legislative notes by Fessenden in 1832 concern disputed territorial claims in Maine during his first term in the state legislature. Correspondence from 1863 to 1867 relates to major financial crises in America at that time. Family and personal correspondence is also contained in the collection.

Correspondents include Elisha Hunt Allen, John Birney, Gamaliel Bradford, John J. Cisco, Nathaniel Dale, Timothy Davis, Hamilton Fish, Alexander T. Galt, R. M. Griffin, Morris Ketchum, Hugh McCulloch, Robert A. Maxwell, Freeman H. Morse, William D. Porter, John A. Stewart, George M. Towle, Joseph A. Ware, and J. E. Williams.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is organized chronologically in volumes of letters received and copies of letters sent.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 14,133

Container	Contents
BOX 1 REEL 1	Letters received
BOX 1 REEL 1	1832, Feb. 15-1861, Mar. 16
BOX 2 REEL 2	1861, Mar. 17-1863, Nov. 2
BOX 3 REEL 2	1863, Nov. 3-1864, July 29
BOX 4 REEL 3	1864, Aug. 1-Oct. 29
BOX 5 REEL 3	1864, Nov. 1-1865, Apr. 27
BOX 6 REEL 4	1865, May 12-1867, Sept. 10
BOX 7 REEL 4	1867, Sept. 20-1878, Aug. 15
BOX 8 REEL 5	Letters sent, 1864, July 4-1865, Mar. 3