Collection Summary

Title: John Fairfield Correspondence
Inclusive Dates: 1828-1876
Bulk Dates: 1835-1847
ID No.: MSS20255
Creator: Fairfield, John, 1797-1847
Extent: 900 items
Extent: 6 containers
Extent: 1.8 linear feet
Extent: 3 microfilm reels
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mms80020255
Summary: U.S. senator and representative and governor of Maine. Principally letters from Fairfield to members of his family in Saco, Maine, while he was serving in Congress and as governor relating to personal and family affairs, politics, and life and society in Washington, D.C., and Augusta, Maine.

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
Anderson, Hugh Johnston, 1801-1881--Correspondence.
Clifford, Nathan, 1803-1881--Correspondence.
Emery, Stephen A. (Stephen Albert), 1841-1891--Correspondence.
Fairfield family.
Fairfield, John, 1797-1847.
Nourse, Amos, 1794-1877--Correspondence.
Polk, James K. (James Knox), 1795-1849.
Shepley, Ether, 1789-1877--Correspondence.
Williams, C. R. (Catherine Read), 1790-1872--Correspondence.
Williams, Reuel, 1783-1862--Correspondence.

Organizations
United States. Congress.

Subjects
Aroostook War, 1839.
Dueling--United States.

Places
Augusta (Me.)--Social life and customs.
Canada--Boundaries--Maine.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
Maine--Boundaries--Canada.
Maine--Politics and government.
Maine--Social life and customs.
Northeast boundary of the United States.
Saco (Me.)--History.
United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.
United States--Politics and government--1815-1861.
Washington (D.C.)--Social life and customs.

Titles

John Fairfield Correspondence
Occupations
Governors--Maine.
Representatives, U.S. Congress--Maine.
Senators, U.S. Congress--Maine.

Acquisition Information
The correspondence of John Fairfield, United States senator and representative and governor of Maine, was given to the Library of Congress by Martha W. Fairfield in 1913. Additional material was purchased in 1943.

Processing History
The correspondence of John Fairfield was processed by Walter Albano in 1980 and prepared for microfilming in 1985. The finding aid was revised in 2003 by Patrick Kerwin. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Other Repositories
Other Fairfield papers are in the possession of the Maine Historical Society in Portland, Maine.

Related Material
The Manuscript Division also holds John Fairfield correspondence in the papers of James K. Polk and Martin Van Buren.

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

Access and Restrictions
The correspondence of John Fairfield is 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 this correspondence is available on three 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.

Preferred Citation
Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, John Fairfield Correspondence, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1797, Jan. 30</td>
<td>Born, Saco, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>Married Anna Paine Thornton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Admitted to the Maine bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Appointed reporter, Supreme Judicial Court of Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1838</td>
<td>Member, United States House of Representatives from Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839-1843</td>
<td>Governor of Maine; resigned to become United States senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843-1847</td>
<td>United States senator from Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847, Dec. 24</td>
<td>Died, Washington, D.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Scope and Content Note

The correspondence of John Fairfield (1797-1847) spans the years 1828 to 1876, with the bulk of the material extending over the period 1835 to 1847. The collection consists chiefly of letters from Fairfield to his wife, Anna Paine Thornton Fairfield, and their children during Fairfield's service away from home and correspondence to Fairfield in his official capacities.

A Democrat, John Fairfield served the state of Maine as a representative in Congress, governor, and senator. During these periods Fairfield maintained a faithful correspondence with his family in Saco, Maine, and discussed personal and family affairs, described his colleagues and other prominent personages, commented on political developments, depicted social functions, and reported news of the day.

Following the death in a duel in 1838 of Jonathan Cilley, a fellow congressman from Maine, Fairfield called for an investigation of the affair. His stand in this matter precipitated the demise of dueling in Congress and brought Fairfield widespread popularity.

In 1839, while Fairfield was governor, hostilities erupted between Maine and the Canadian province of New Brunswick over the northeastern boundary, resulting in the "Aroostook War." As belligerency subsided, Fairfield played a leading role in arriving at a negotiated settlement of the dispute between the United States and Great Britain which was ultimately resolved by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842.

As his career progressed, Fairfield became increasingly involved in party politics. When President James K. Polk's cabinet was being formed, Fairfield was an unsuccessful contender for the post of secretary of the navy. Fairfield was influential in many political appointments and served as chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs.

Prominent correspondents in the collection include Hugh J. Anderson, Nathan Clifford, Stephen A. Emery, Amos Nourse, Ether Shepley, Catharine Read Williams, and Reuel Williams. Approximately half of the personal correspondence has been published in The Letters of John Fairfield (1922), edited by Arthur G. Staples. The letters in this volume do not often comprise the full text of the originals.
## Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 19,264

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1 REEL 1</td>
<td>Personal correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1 REEL 1</td>
<td>1835, Dec. 4-1836, June 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 2 REEL 1</td>
<td>1836, June 5-1838, June 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 3 REEL 2</td>
<td>1838, June 27-1844, Dec. 22 <a href="#">See also Container 6, Miscellaneous correspondence</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 4 REEL 2</td>
<td>1844, Dec. 23-1847, Dec. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5 REEL 3</td>
<td>Official and business correspondence</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 5 REEL 3</td>
<td>1828, Dec. 10-1840, Dec. 29</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(13 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6 REEL 3</td>
<td>1841, Jan. 13-1847, Dec. 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(11 folders)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 6 REEL 3</td>
<td>Miscellaneous correspondence, including fragments, 1876, undated, and typed copies of personal correspondence from Container 2, 1837, Jan. 1-Mar. 2</td>
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