

Nathan Appleton Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2009

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm80057067>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010048>

Prepared by Robert Storm

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2010

Collection Summary

Title: Nathan Appleton Papers

Span Dates: 1850-1904

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1876-1902)

ID No.: MSS57067

Creator: Appleton, Nathan, 1843-1906

Extent: 400 items

Extent: 4 containers

Extent: 1.4 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm80057067>

Summary: Army officer and merchant. Correspondence, notes, autobiography, speeches and writings, clippings, printed matter, and miscellany relating primarily to Appleton's connection with Ferdinand de Lesseps and to his work as American agent for Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique de Panama, a French company attempting to build a canal across Panama.

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

Appleton family.

Appleton, Nathan, 1843-1906.

Bacon, Edwin M. (Edwin Munroe), 1844-1916--Correspondence.

Belknap, George E. (George Eugene), 1832-1903--Correspondence.

Bellamy, Edward, 1850-1898--Correspondence.

Bergh, Henry, 1811-1888--Correspondence.

Cortelyou, George B. (George Bruce), 1862-1940--Correspondence.

Curtin, Andrew Gregg, 1817-1894--Correspondence.

Draper, John William, 1811-1882--Correspondence.

Forney, John W. (John Wien), 1817-1881--Correspondence.

Hanna, Marcus Alonzo, 1837-1904--Correspondence.

Hoar, George Frisbie, 1826-1904--Correspondence.

Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 1805-1894.

Long, John Davis, 1838-1915--Correspondence.

Norton, Charles Eliot, 1827-1908--Correspondence.

Spooner, John C. (John Coit), 1843-1919--Correspondence.

Whitney, Anne, 1821-1915--Correspondence.

Organizations

Compagnie universelle du canal interocéanique de Panama.

National Board of Trade (U.S.)

Subjects

Canals--Panama.

Free trade.

Tariff--United States.

Voyages and travels.

Places

Boston (Mass.)--Social life and customs.

Panama Canal (Panama)

Occupations

Army officers.
Merchants.

Provenance

The papers of Nathan Appleton, army officer and merchant, were given to the Library of Congress in 1976 by his great-niece, Dorothy Weld Coxe.

Processing History

The papers of Nathan Appleton were processed in 1981. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Nathan Appleton 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.

Preferred Citation

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

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1843, Feb. 2	Born, Boston, Mass.
1863	Graduated, Harvard College, Cambridge Mass. Commissioned junior second lieutenant of the Fifth Massachusetts Battery, Light Artillery, United States Volunteers
1864	Severely wounded in battle on the North Anna River in Virginia Resignation from army accepted; discharged for wounds
1864-1865	Visited Europe
1865	Became volunteer aide-de-camp to Brigadier General C. S. Wainwright, commander of the Artillery Brigade of the Fifth Army Corps Brevetted captain to rank for gallantry
1869	Toured northern Europe, western Russia, and Turkey with General Nathaniel Prentiss Banks As delegate of the Boston Board of Trade to the opening of the Suez canal, first met Count Ferdinand de Lesseps
1872	Bowles Brothers and Co., of which Appleton was a member, collapsed with serious injury to his personal fortune
1875	Delegate, conference of the association for the codification and reform of the law of nations, Hague, Netherlands

1877	Published <i>Centennial Movement, 1876: A comedy in Five Acts</i> . Boston: Lockwood, Brooks President, Free Trade Conference, Saratoga, N.Y.
1878	Delegate, International Congress for the Unification of Weights, Measures, and Coinage, Paris, France
1879	Delegate, Interfic Canal Congress, Paris, France Elected president, United States Board of Trade
1880	Interpreter for Count Ferdinand de Lesseps on his tour of the United States
1881-1888	American agent, Panama Canal Co.
1895	Traveled throughout Latin America
1887	Married Jeannette Ovington (separated 1889; divorced 1906)
1896	Visited Hawaii
1899	Member, Board of Overseers, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass.
1904	Published <i>Russian Life and Society as Seen in 1866-'67 by Appleton and Longfellow</i> . Boston: [Press of Murray and Emery]
1905	Assisted at the peace conference culminating in the Treaty of Portsmouth, Portsmouth, N.H.
1906, Aug. 25	Died, Boston, Mass.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Nathan Appleton (1843-1906) span the period 1850-1904, with the bulk concentrated in the years 1876-1902. The collection consists largely of an autobiography, letters, newspaper articles, and other printed matter mostly relating to Appleton's connections with French attempts to construct a Panamanian canal and to his support of free trade.

Nathan Appleton was born the son of a more noted Nathan (1779-1861), a merchant and congressman from Boston. After education at Harvard College, the younger Nathan served as an officer of volunteer artillerists in the federal armies. His wartime experiences impressed him deeply, forming a favorite subject for the speeches he was frequently asked to deliver throughout the rest of his life.

After touring Europe, Appleton met Count Ferdinand de Lesseps at the opening of the Suez canal in 1869. From that time, Appleton became devoted to both the count and his projects. The two parts of the manuscript "Recollections of Brevet Captain Nathan Appleton, U.S.V." ("Action and Counteraction" and "Dramatis Personae") among the writings in this collection tell of Appleton's acquaintance with Count de Lesseps over thirty years, centering on his eight years of service as American agent for the French company that attempted to construct a sea-level canal across Panama. Also in the collection is a notebook in which Appleton memorialized his friend: "Souvenirs of Ferdinand de Lesseps, 1898-99."

Appleton's interest in the promotion of peaceful commerce between nations showed itself also in his action to establish free trade, culminating in his election in 1879 to the presidency of the United States Board of Trade. Letters and notes in the correspondence in this collection, addresses by Appleton and others among the writings, and printed matter among the miscellany treat the reduction or abolition of tariffs between nations.

Appleton's activities on behalf of the Panamanian canal and free trade, his frequent and worldwide travels, and his position as a member of a prominent Bostonian family are reflected in the printed matter and correspondence. Among the many correspondents represented in the collection are Edwin M. Bacon, George E. Belknap, Edward Bellamy, Henry Bergh, George B. Cortelyou, Andrew Gregg Curtin, John William Draper, John W. Forney, Marcus Alonzo Hanna, George Frisbie Hoar, John Davis Long, Charles Eliot Norton, John C. Spooner, and Anne Whitney.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	General, circa 1850-1902, undated
BOX 1	Letters and notes relating to free trade, 1877, undated
BOX 1	United States Board of Trade, 1878-1881
BOX 1	Published letters, 1884-1904
BOX 1	Writings
BOX 1	Note and notebooks, circa 1870-1904
BOX 1	Autobiographical notes, 1875-1890
BOX 1	"Recollections of Brevet Captain Nathan Appleton, U.S.V.: 'Action and Counteraction,'" circa 1902
BOX 1	pages I-VI, a-e, unnumbered, and 1-173
BOX 1	pages 174-331
BOX 2	pages 332-501
BOX 2	pages 502-689
BOX 2	pages 690-893
BOX 2	"Recollections of Brevet Captain Nathan Appleton, U.S.V.: 'Dramatis Personae,'" circa 1902
BOX 2	pages 894-1082
BOX 2	pages 1083-1262
BOX 3	pages 1263-1471
BOX 3	pages 1472-1689
BOX 3	pages 1690-1894
BOX 3	Petition, 1876
BOX 3	Addresses and tributes, 1876-circa 1904
BOX 3	Appleton, William Sumner (cousin), compositions, 1854-1856
BOX 3	Writings by others, 1876-circa 1877
BOX 4	Miscellany
BOX 4	Annotated photographs, circa 1870-1885
BOX 4	Invitations, notices, and cards, 1877-1904, undated
BOX 4	Printed matter
BOX 4	Free trade, circa 1876-1877
BOX 4	Panamanian canal, 1879-1904
BOX 4	Newspaper and magazine articles, circa 1884-1891
BOX 4	Passport and other printed matter, circa 1867-1899