

Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm79041202>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010150>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2010
Revised 2023 August

Collection Summary

Title: Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1818-1921

Bulk Dates: 1862-1870

ID No.: MSS41202

Creator: Stanton, Edwin McMasters, 1814-1869

Extent: 7,650 items

Extent: 46 containers plus 1 oversize

Extent: 8.4 linear feet

Extent: 14 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm79041202>

Summary: Lawyer, United States attorney general, and United States secretary of war. Correspondence, letterbooks, reports, maps, printed material, and memorabilia relating chiefly to Stanton's role as secretary of war under Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson and to his role in the politics of Reconstruction. Other topics include the Civil War, the radical wing of the Republican Party, and Lincoln's assassination.

Online Content: The papers of Edwin McMasters Stanton are available on the Library of Congress Web site at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000033>. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the online edition as available.

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.
Beecher, Henry Ward, 1813-1887--Correspondence.
Buchanan, James, 1791-1868--Correspondence.
Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1818-1893--Correspondence.
Cameron, Simon, 1799-1889--Correspondence.
Chase, Salmon P. (Salmon Portland), 1808-1873--Correspondence.
Conkling, Roscoe, 1829-1888--Correspondence.
Dana, Charles A. (Charles Anderson), 1819-1897--Correspondence.
Ewing, Thomas, 1789-1871--Correspondence.
Fessenden, William Pitt, 1806-1869--Correspondence.
Garrison, William Lloyd, 1805-1879--Correspondence.
Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885--Correspondence.
Hay, John, 1838-1905--Correspondence.
Johnson, Andrew, 1808-1875--Correspondence.
Johnson, Andrew, 1808-1875.
Johnson, Reverdy, 1796-1876--Correspondence.
Lieber, Francis, 1800-1872--Correspondence.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865--Assassination.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865--Correspondence.
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865.
McClellan, George B. (George Brinton), 1826-1885--Correspondence.
Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866--Correspondence.
Seward, William H. (William Henry), 1801-1872--Correspondence.
Sheridan, Philip Henry, 1831-1888--Correspondence.
Sherman, William T. (William Tecumseh), 1820-1891--Correspondence.
Stanton family--Correspondence.

Stanton, Edwin M. (Edwin McMasters), 1814-1869.
Stevens, Thaddeus, 1792-1868--Correspondence.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 1811-1896--Correspondence.
Sumner, Charles, 1811-1874--Correspondence.
Tappan, Benjamin, 1773-1857--Correspondence.
Trumbull, Lyman, 1813-1896--Correspondence.
Welles, Gideon, 1802-1878--Correspondence.

Organizations

Republican Party (U.S. : 1854-)
United States. War Department.

Subjects

Generals--United States.
Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877)

Places

United States--Armed Forces--Officers.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--Politics and government--1861-1865.
United States--Politics and government--1865-1877.

Titles

Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers at the Library of Congress

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Lawyers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Edwin McMasters Stanton, lawyer, United States attorney general, and United States secretary of war, were given to the Library by Lewis H. Stanton in 1911. Other items were acquired by gift and purchase, 1910-1983.

Processing History

The papers of Edwin McMasters Stanton were arranged and described by Allan Teichroew in 1979. The finding aid was revised and materials that had previously been cataloged separately were added to the collection by Patrick Kerwin in 2003. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Additional Guides

A partial index to the papers is available in the Manuscript Division reading room.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Edwin McMasters Stanton 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 fourteen 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

Online Content

The papers of Edward McMasters Stanton are available on the Library of Congress Web site at <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/collmss.ms000033>. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the online edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1814, Dec. 19	Born, Steubenville, Ohio
1831-1834	Attended Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio
1836	Admitted to the bar, Cadiz, Ohio
	Married Mary Ann Lamson (died 1844)
1837-1839	Prosecuting attorney, Harrison County, Ohio
1839	Moved to Steubenville, Ohio; became law partner of Benjamin Tappan
1847	Moved to Pittsburgh, Pa.
1849-1856	Counsel for the state of Pennsylvania
1856	Married Ellen M. Hutchison
	Moved to Washington, D.C.
1858	Special counsel to United States in California land grant cases
1860-1861	United States attorney general
1861	Confidential adviser to General George B. McClellan; legal adviser to Secretary of War Simon Cameron
1862-1868	United States secretary of war
1869	Nomination confirmed to the United States Supreme Court; never served
1869, Dec. 24	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edwin McMasters Stanton (1814-1869) span the years 1818-1921, with the bulk of the material originating between 1862 and 1870. The collections consists of [correspondence](#), [letterbooks](#), a draft of the annual report of the secretary of war for 1863, and the March 1862 proceedings of the War Board. Interspersed among the bound

[correspondence](#), which makes up most of the collection, are battle maps, reports, charts, and printed matter. There is also a [miscellany](#) file and a few [oversize](#) items.

The papers focus chiefly on Stanton's tenure as secretary of war under presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson and stress his role in the Union victory over the Confederacy and the first phase of Reconstruction. As revealed by his extensive [correspondence](#), both the small and large tasks of winning the war came frequently within Stanton's purview. In addition to information on the reorganization of the [War Department](#) immediately after his arrival, there are logistic reports from various state and departmental command posts, communications about army morale and discipline, and orders concerning the exchange of prisoners, the use of formerly enslaved people as soldiers, and the policies to be employed in occupied territories. The papers also shed light on Stanton's relationship with Lincoln, Johnson, and the radical wing of the Republican Party. Other topics include Lincoln's assassination and Stanton's evaluation of the various generals under the national government's command. The major portion of the collection ends with letters of condolence to Stanton's wife on his death in 1869.

The [Addition](#) consists of correspondence, chiefly with Stanton's mother and sister, Lucy Norman Stanton and Oella Stanton Tappan Wright, and a diary of Stanton's niece, Nancy Tappan.

Correspondents in these papers include George Bancroft, Henry Ward Beecher, James Buchanan, Benjamin F. Butler, Simon Cameron, Salmon P. Chase, Roscoe Conkling, Charles A. Dana, Thomas Ewing, William Pitt Fessenden, William Lloyd Garrison, Ulysses S. Grant, John Hay, Andrew Johnson, Reverdy Johnson, Francis Lieber, Abraham Lincoln, George Brinton McClellan, Winfield Scott, William Henry Seward, Philip Henry Sheridan, William T. Sherman, Thaddeus Stevens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Sumner, Benjamin Tappan, Lyman Trumbull, and Gideon Welles.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [Correspondence, 1831-1870](#)
- [War Department, 1862-1863](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1863-1865](#)
- [Miscellany, 1818-1921](#)
- [Addition, 1856-1869](#)
- [Oversize, 1818-1869](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-36 REEL 1-13	<p><u>Correspondence, 1831-1870</u></p> <p>Letters received and copies of letters sent with enclosed material including maps, reports, and printed matter.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically in bound volumes.</p>
BOX 37-38 REEL 13	<p><u>War Department, 1862-1863</u></p> <p>Proceedings of the War Board for March 1862 and a draft of the annual report of the War Department for 1863.</p> <p>In bound volumes.</p>
BOX 39-45 REEL 13-14	<p><u>Letterbooks, 1863-1865</u></p> <p>Copies of letters sent.</p> <p>Arranged chronologically in bound volumes.</p>
BOX 46 REEL 14	<p><u>Miscellany, 1818-1921</u></p> <p>Biographical material.</p>
BOX 46 not filmed	<p><u>Addition, 1856-1869</u></p> <p>Correspondence and a diary of Stanton's niece, Nancy Tappan.</p> <p>Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.</p>
BOX OV 1 REEL 14	<p><u>Oversize, 1818-1869</u></p> <p>Oversize commissions, certificates, and other materials of David and Edwin M. Stanton.</p> <p>Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.</p>

Container List

Microfilm available. Shelf no. 17,814

Container	Contents
BOX 1-36 REEL 1-13	Correspondence, 1831-1870 Letters received and copies of letters sent with enclosed material including maps, reports, and printed matter. Arranged chronologically in bound volumes.
BOX 1 REEL 1	1831, July 19-1862, Jan. 13 Digital content available
BOX 2 REEL 1	1862
BOX 2 REEL 1	1862, Jan. 14-Feb. 2 Digital content available
BOX 3 REEL 2	1862, Feb. 3-17 Digital content available
BOX 4 REEL 2	1862, Feb. 19-Mar. 29 Digital content available
BOX 5 REEL 2	1862, Mar. 30-May 4 Digital content available
BOX 6 REEL 3	1862, May 5-20 Digital content available
BOX 7 REEL 3	1862, May 21-June 18 Digital content available
BOX 8 REEL 3	1862, June 19-Aug. 28 Digital content available
BOX 9 REEL 4	1862, Aug. 29-Dec. 19 Digital content available
BOX 10 REEL 4	1862, Dec. 20-1863, Feb. 11 Digital content available
BOX 11 REEL 4	1863
BOX 11 REEL 4	1863, Feb. 12-May 4 Digital content available
BOX 12 REEL 5	1863, May 5-June 15 Digital content available
BOX 13 REEL 5	1863, June 16-Aug. 6 Digital content available
BOX 14 REEL 5	1863, Aug. 7-Sept. 19 Digital content available
BOX 15 REEL 6	1863, Sept. 20-25 Digital content available
BOX 16 REEL 6	1863, Sept. 26-Oct. 2 Digital content available
BOX 17 REEL 6	1863, Oct. 3-11 Digital content available

Correspondence, 1831-1870

Container	Contents
BOX 18 REEL 6	1863, Oct. 12-30 Digital content available
BOX 19 REEL 7	1863, Oct. 31-Nov. 27 Digital content available
BOX 20 REEL 7	1863, Nov. 28-1864, Feb. 27 Digital content available
BOX 21 REEL 7	1864
BOX 21 REEL 7	1864, Feb. 28-June 20 Digital content available
BOX 22 REEL 8	1864, June 21-Aug. 25 Digital content available
BOX 23 REEL 8	1864, Aug. 26-Oct. 31 Digital content available
BOX 24 REEL 8	1864, Nov. 1-1865, Feb. 21 Digital content available
BOX 25 REEL 9	1865
BOX 25 REEL 9	1865, Feb. 22-Apr. 17 Digital content available
BOX 26 REEL 9	1865, Apr. 18-May 8 Digital content available
BOX 27 REEL 10	1865, May 9-July 3 Digital content available
BOX 28 REEL 10	1865, July 5-Sept. 25 Digital content available
BOX 29 REEL 10	1865, Sept. 27-1866, Mar. 9 Digital content available
BOX 30 REEL 11	1866
BOX 30 REEL 11	1866, Mar. 10-Sept. 16 Digital content available
BOX 31 REEL 11	1866, Sept. 17-1867, Feb. 14 Digital content available
BOX 32 REEL 11	1867
BOX 32 REEL 11	1867, Feb. 15-June 8 Digital content available
BOX 33 REEL 12	1867, June 10-Aug. 9 Digital content available
BOX 34 REEL 12	1867, Aug. 10-1868, Feb. 25 Digital content available
BOX 35 REEL 12	1868, Feb. 25-1869, Dec. 20 Digital content available
BOX 36 REEL 13	1869, Dec. 21-1870, July 14, undated Digital content available
BOX 37-38 REEL 13	War Department, 1862-1863 Proceedings of the War Board for March 1862 and a draft of the annual report of the War Department for 1863. In bound volumes.

War Department, 1862-1863

Container	Contents
BOX 37 REEL 13	Proceedings of the War Board, 1862, Mar. 13-27 Digital content available
BOX 38 REEL 13	Annual report, 1863, Dec. 5 Digital content available
BOX 39-45 REEL 13-14	Letterbooks, 1863-1865 Copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically in bound volumes.
BOX 39 REEL 13	1863
BOX 39 REEL 13	1863, Mar. 19-June 4 Digital content available
BOX 40 REEL 14	1863, June 4-Sept. 9 Digital content available
BOX 41 REEL 14	1863, Sept. 10-1864, June 30 Digital content available
BOX 42 REEL 14	1863, Nov. 13-1864, June 17 Digital content available
BOX 43 REEL 14	1864, July 1-1865, June 30 Digital content available
BOX 44 REEL 14	1865, July 1-Dec. 1 Digital content available
BOX 45 REEL 14	1862-1865 Digital content available
BOX 46 REEL 14	Miscellany, 1818-1921 Biographical material.
BOX 46 REEL 14	"Facts and Opinions about Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War," by Willis Weaver, 1921 Digital content available
BOX 46 REEL 14	Memorabilia of David and Edwin M. Stanton, 1818-1869 <i>See Oversize</i> Digital content available
BOX 46 not filmed	Addition, 1856-1869 Correspondence and a diary of Stanton's niece, Nancy Tappan. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.
BOX 46 not filmed	Correspondence
BOX 46	1856-1859 Digital content available
BOX 46	1860-1861 Digital content available
BOX 46	1862-1869 Digital content available
BOX 46	Diary of Nancy Tappan (niece), 1861, Jan. 1-June 25, and typed transcript Digital content available
BOX OV 1 REEL 14	Oversize, 1818-1869 Oversize commissions, certificates, and other materials of David and Edwin M. Stanton.

Oversize, 1818-1869

Container

Contents

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.

BOX OV 1 REEL 14

Memorabilia of David and Edwin M. Stanton, 1818-1869 (Container 46)