Tobias Lear Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2011

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

Catalog Record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78029702

Additional search options available at: https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011047

Prepared by Bennett Heggestad, Julie Miller, and Connie L. Cartledge
Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2011
Collection Summary

Title: Tobias Lear Papers
Span Dates: 1790-1816
ID No.: MSS29702
Creator: Lear, Tobias, 1762-1816
Extent: 70 items
Extent: 1 container plus 1 oversize
Extent: 0.2 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78029702
Summary: Secretary to George Washington, businessman, and diplomat. Correspondence, account books, and other papers relating primarily to George Washington, Lear's diplomatic missions, and business affairs, and family matters.

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
Bainbridge, William, 1774-1833.
Barron, Samuel, -1810--Correspondence.
Bourne, Sylvanus, 1761-1817--Correspondence.
Coxe, Charles D.--Correspondence.
Gore, Christopher, 1758-1827--Correspondence.
Humphreys, David, 1752-1818--Correspondence.
Lear family.
Lear, Benjamin L. (Benjamin Lincoln), 1792-1832--Correspondence.
Lear, Tobias, 1762-1816.
Washington, George, 1732-1799--Correspondence.
Washington, George, 1732-1799.

Organizations
Philadelphia (Frigate)

Subjects
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Africa, North.
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Dominican Republic.

Places
Africa, North--Foreign relations--United States.
Africa, North--History--1517-1882.
Dominican Republic--Foreign relations--United States.
Dominican Republic--History--To 1844.
United States--Foreign relations--Africa, North.
United States--Foreign relations--Dominican Republic.
United States--History--Tripolitan War, 1801-1805.

Occupations
Businessmen.
Diplomats.
Secretaries.
Provenance
The papers of Tobias Lear were obtained by the Library of Congress through gift and purchase from various sources, 1901-2010, including the addition the latter year of two letters and five account books.

Processing History
The papers of Tobias Lear were arranged and described in 1968. A letter was added to the collection in 1975, and the papers were reprocessed with the incorporation of additional material in 2011.

Additional Guides
The addition to the Tobias Lear Papers is described in *The Library of Congress Gazette* (October 29, 2010): 3.

Other Repositories
Other papers of Tobias Lear can be found in the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.

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

Access and Restrictions
The papers of Tobias Lear 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, Tobias Lear 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>1762, Sept. 19</td>
<td>Born, Portsmouth, N.H.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786-1793</td>
<td>Secretary to George Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>Married Mary Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793-1795</td>
<td>Promoted business interests in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>President of the Potomac Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married Frances Bassett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Military secretary to George Washington with the rank of colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Appointed United States consul to Santo Domingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Married Frances Henley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803-1812</td>
<td>United States consul to Algiers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Scope and Content Note

The papers of Tobias Lear (1762-1816) span 1790-1816 and consist mainly of correspondence and account books. The correspondence, mainly outgoing, pertains to the private affairs of George Washington; Lear's diplomatic missions to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and the Barbary States; the Tripolitan War, 1801-1805; Lear's business affairs; and family matters. Correspondents include Sylvanus Bourne, Charles D. Coxe, Christopher Gore, David Humphreys, Benjamin L. Lear, and George Washington. Two letters added to the collection in 2011 are from Commodore Samuel Barron of Malta to Lear, dated May 18 and 22, 1805. They concern the captivity of the Philadelphia (frigate) and its captain, William Bainbridge, and Barron's resignation.

Also added to the papers in 2011 were five account books. Three of the volumes, 1803-1805, document the purchases of gold, jewels, fabric, and tea for distribution by the United States to officials of Tripoli, Algiers, and Tunis during the Tripolitan War, while Lear served as the United States consul in Algiers. The other account books, 1815-1816, pertain to improvements made to real estate in Washington, D.C.

Arrangement of the Papers

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Account books, 1803-1805, 1815-1816 (2 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1790-1816 <em>See also Oversize</em> (11 folders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1</td>
<td>Miscellany, 1793, 1812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1</td>
<td>Oversize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX OV 1</td>
<td>Correspondence, 1801 (Container 1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>