

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://lcn.loc.gov/mm78029702>

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

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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

Date	Event
1762, Sept. 19	Born, Portsmouth, N.H.
1783	Graduated, Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass.
1786-1793	Secretary to George Washington
1790	Married Mary Long
1793-1795	Promoted business interests in Europe
1795	President of the Potomac Co. Married Frances Bassett
1798	Military secretary to George Washington with the rank of colonel
1802	Appointed United States consul to Santo Domingo
1803	Married Frances Henley
1803-1812	United States consul to Algiers

1816, Oct. 11

Died, Washington, D.C.

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

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Account books, 1803-1805, 1815-1816 (2 folders)
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1790-1816 <i>See also Oversize</i> (11 folders)
BOX 1	Miscellany, 1793, 1812
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Correspondence, 1801 (Container 1)