

Hamilton Fish Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2012

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78020602>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms012133>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2012
Revised 2023 February

Collection Summary

Title: Hamilton Fish Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1732-1914

Bulk Dates: 1840-1890

ID No.: MSS20602

Creator: Fish, Hamilton, 1808-1893

Extent: 61,000 items

Extent: 328 containers plus 6 oversize

Extent: 85 linear feet

Extent: 24 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78020602>

Summary: Congressman, senator, governor, and secretary of state. Correspondence, journals, diaries, subject files, scrapbooks, printed matter, and other papers relating chiefly to Fish's service as secretary of state under Ulysses S. Grant, as a member of Congress, and governor of New York.

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

Adams, Charles Francis, 1807-1886--Correspondence.
Akerman, Amos Tappan, 1821-1880--Correspondence.
Anthony, Henry B. (Henry Bowen), 1815-1884--Correspondence.
Arthur, Chester Alan, 1829-1886--Correspondence.
Ashton, J. Hubley (Joseph Hubley), 1836-1907--Correspondence.
Babcock, Orville Elias, 1835-1884--Correspondence.
Badeau, Adam, 1831-1895--Correspondence.
Bancroft, George, 1800-1891--Correspondence.
Barrien, James M.--Correspondence.
Belknap, William W. (William Worth), 1829-1890--Correspondence.
Bingham, John Armor, 1815-1900--Correspondence.
Blaine, James Gillespie, 1830-1893--Correspondence.
Blunt, G. W. (George William), 1802-1878--Correspondence.
Boutwell, George S. (George Sewall), 1818-1905--Correspondence.
Bristow, Benjamin Helm, 1832-1896--Correspondence.
Butler, Benjamin F. (Benjamin Franklin), 1795-1858--Correspondence.
Cadwalader, John L. (John Lambert), 1836-1914--Correspondence.
Cameron, Simon, 1799-1889--Correspondence.
Chandler, Zachariah, 1813-1879--Correspondence.
Chase, Salmon P. (Salmon Portland), 1808-1873--Correspondence.
Chew, Robert S., 1811-1873--Correspondence.
Childs, George William, 1829-1894--Correspondence.
Conkling, Roscoe, 1829-1888--Correspondence.
Creswell, John A. J., 1828-1891--Correspondence.
Crosby, Wm. Henry (William Henry), 1808-1892--Correspondence.
Curtin, Andrew Gregg, 1815-1894--Correspondence.
Cushing, Caleb, 1800-1879--Correspondence.
Davis, J. C. Bancroft (John Chandler Bancroft), 1822-1907--Correspondence.
Delano, Columbus, 1809-1896--Correspondence.
Dibblee, Thomas B.--Correspondence.

Dix, John A. (John Adams), 1798-1879--Correspondence.
Edmunds, George F. (George Franklin), 1828-1919--Correspondence.
Evarts, William Maxwell, 1818-1901--Correspondence.
Fillmore, Millard, 1800-1874--Correspondence.
Fish, Hamilton, 1808-1893.
Frelinghuysen, Frederick T. (Frederick Theodore), 1817-1885--Correspondence.
Gardiner, Asa Bird, 1839-1919--Correspondence.
Garfield, James A. (James Abram), 1831-1881--Correspondence.
Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885--Correspondence.
Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885.
Greeley, Horace, 1811-1872--Correspondence.
Grinnell, Moses Hicks, 1803-1877--Correspondence.
Hamilton, Alexander, 1786-1875--Correspondence.
Hayes, Rutherford B., 1822-1893--Correspondence.
Hoar, E. R. (Ebenezer Rockwood), 1816-1895--Correspondence.
Hunt, Washington, 1811-1867--Correspondence.
Jay, John, 1817-1894--Correspondence.
Jewell, Marshall, 1825-1883--Correspondence.
Lieber, Francis, 1800-1872--Correspondence.
Marcy, William L. (William Learned), 1786-1857--Correspondence.
Maury, Matthew Fontaine, 1806-1873--Correspondence.
Moore, John Bassett, 1860-1947. John Bassett Moore file. 1732-1914.
Moran, Benjamin, 1820-1886--Correspondence.
Morgan, Edwin D. (Edwin Denison), 1811-1883--Correspondence.
Morris, Robert H. (Robert Hunter), 1802-1855--Correspondence.
Morton, Oliver P. (Oliver Perry), 1823-1877--Correspondence.
Motley, John Lothrop, 1814-1877--Correspondence.
Pierrepoint, Edwards, 1817-1892--Correspondence.
Read, John M. (John Meredith), 1797-1874--Correspondence.
Richardson, William A. (William Adams), 1821-1896--Correspondence.
Robeson, George M. (George Maxwell), 1829-1897--Correspondence.
Schenck, Robert Cumming, 1809-1890--Correspondence.
Schuyler, John, 1829-1895--Correspondence.
Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866--Correspondence.
Seward, William H. (William Henry), 1801-1872--Correspondence.
Sherman, John, 1823-1900--Correspondence.
Sickles, Daniel Edgar, 1819-1914--Correspondence.
Sumner, Charles, 1811-1874--Correspondence.
Taylor, Zachary, 1784-1850--Correspondence.
Van Rensselaer, J. R.--Correspondence.
Washburne, E. B. (Elihu Benjamin), 1816-1887--Correspondence.
Weed, Thurlow, 1797-1882--Correspondence.
Williams, George H. (George Henry), 1823-1910--Correspondence.
Winthrop, Robert C. (Robert Charles), 1809-1894--Correspondence.

Organizations

Geneva Arbitration Tribunal.
Society of the Cincinnati.
United States. Congress. House.
United States. Congress. Senate.
United States. Department of State.

Subjects

Alabama claims.
Fisheries.

Reciprocity (Commerce)

Places

Canada--Commerce--United States.
Cuba--Foreign relations--United States.
Dominican Republic--Foreign relations--United States.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
Haiti--Foreign relations--United States.
New York (State)--Politics and government.
Spain--Foreign relations--United States.
Texas--Annexation to the United States.
United States--Commerce--Canada.
United States--Foreign relations--Cuba.
United States--Foreign relations--Dominican Republic.
United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.
United States--Foreign relations--Haiti.
United States--Foreign relations--Spain.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Claims.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.

Titles

Treaty of Washington (1871 May 8)

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Governors--New York (State)
Representatives, U.S. Congress--New York (State)
Senators, U.S. Congress--New York (State)

Acquisition Information

The papers of Hamilton Fish, congressman, senator, governor, and secretary of state, were deposited in the Library of Congress by Fish in 1938 and converted to gift in 1943. Additions to the papers were contributed by other members of the Fish family and purchased, 1963-1974.

Processing History

The papers of Hamilton Fish were arranged and described in 1967 by Lloyd A. Dunlap. An addition was processed in 1978 by Michael McElderry, and the finding aid was revised following rehousing of part of the collection in 2002. The finding aid was revised again in 2012. Although the finding aid and container list were changed to indicate the current housing, the container numbers noted in the microfilm edition reflect the original housing.

Additional Guides

A card index to the General Correspondence series in the collection is available in the Manuscript Division Reading Room.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Hamilton Fish 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 part of these papers is available on twenty-four reels. Consult a reference librarian 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, Hamilton Fish Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1808, Aug. 3	Born, New York, N.Y.
1827	Graduated, Columbia College, New York, N.Y.
1830	Admitted to the bar, New York, N.Y.
1836	Married Julia Kean
1843-1845	United States representative
1846	Unsuccessful Whig candidate for lieutenant governor of New York
1847-1849	Lieutenant governor of New York
1849-1851	Governor of New York
1851-1857	United States senator
1854-1893	President general, Society of the Cincinnati
1859-1893	Member, Board of Trustees, Columbia College, New York, N.Y.
1861-1865	Served on Union Defense Committee
1869-1877	Secretary of state
1893, Sept. 6	Died, Garrison-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Hamilton Fish (1808-1893) span the years 1732-1914, with the bulk of the collection in the period 1840-1890. The collection consists of ten series: [General Correspondence](#), [Department of State](#), [Governor of New York](#), [Journals and Diaries](#), [Subject File](#), [Scrapbooks](#), [John Bassett Moore File](#), [Miscellany](#), [Addition](#), and [Oversize](#).

Much of the collection relates to Fish's career as secretary of state in the two administrations of Ulysses S. Grant. The [Department of State](#) series includes bound volumes of diplomatic and domestic drafts and is complemented by drafts, transcripts, accounts, memoranda, and reports related to the conduct of foreign affairs. There is considerable material relating to the *Alabama* claims and the Treaty of Washington. Other subjects include Canadian reciprocity, fisheries, Cuba, Spain, Santo Domingo, and Haiti.

The detailed diary kept by Fish during his tenure as secretary of state is represented by a typed copy, prepared by John Bassett Moore, as well as the seven volumes of the original. The diary has also been reproduced on microfilm.

The [General Correspondence](#) series reflects the wide range of Fish's interests and career. There is much political correspondence, both state and national; letters written in his capacities as governor of New York and secretary of state are included as well as many business and family letters and correspondence relating to the Society of the Cincinnati.

The [Governor of New York](#) series contains Fish's annual messages and a few of his veto messages, but the bulk of the file consists of applications for office and pardons.

Correspondents include Charles Francis Adam, Amos Tappan Akerman, Henry B. Anthony, Chester Alan Arthur, J. Hubley Ashton, Orville Elias Babcock, Adam Badeau, George Bancroft, James M. Barrien, William W. Belknap, John Armor Bingham, James Gillespie Blaine, G. W. Blunt, George S. Boutwell, Benjamin Helm Bristow, Benjamin F. Butler, John L. Cadwalader, Simon Cameron, Zachariah Chandler, Salmon P. Chase, Robert S. Chew, George William Childs, Roscoe Conkling, John A. Creswell, William H. Crosby, Andrew Gregg Curtin, Caleb Cushing, J.C. Bancroft Davis, Columbus Delano, John A. Dix, George F. Edmunds, William Maxwell Evarts, Millard Fillmore, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, Asa Bird Gardiner, James A. Garfield, Ulysses S. Grant, Horace Greeley, Moses Hicks Grinnell, Alexander Hamilton (1786-1875), Rutherford Birchard Hayes, E. R. Hoar, Washington Hunt, John Jay (1817-1894), Marshall Jewell, Francis Lieber, William L. Marcy, Matthew Fontaine Maury, Benjamin Moran, Edwin D. Morgan, Robert Hunter Morris, Oliver P. Morton, John Lothrop Motley, Edwards Pierrepont, John M. Read, William A. Richardson, George M. Robeson, Robert Cumming Schenck, John Schuyler, Winfield Scott, William Henry Seward, John Sherman, Daniel Edgar Sickles, Charles Sumner, Zachary Taylor, E. B. Washburne, Thurlow Weed, George H. Williams, and Robert C. Winthrop.

The [Addition](#) is composed mostly of constituent correspondence to Congressman Fish, chiefly 1844-1845, and includes requests for favors and governmental publications as well as reflecting concern for national issues such as the annexation of Texas. There is also personal correspondence between Fish and Thomas B. Dibblee, J. R. Van Rensselaer, and others. The remainder of the [Addition](#) is composed largely of bills and receipts held by Nicholas Fish.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in ten series:

- [General Correspondence, 1804-1894](#)
- [Department of State, 1776-1893](#)
- [Governor of New York, 1836-1850](#)
- [Journals and Diaries, 1849-1877](#)
- [Subject File, 1845-1888](#)
- [Scrapbooks, circa 1836-1899](#)
- [John Bassett Moore File, 1732-1914](#)
- [Miscellany, 1818-1891](#)
- [Addition, 1785-1892](#)
- [Oversize, circa 1836-1888](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-197	<u>General Correspondence, 1804-1894</u>
BOX 1-181	<u>Letters Received, 1804-1894</u> Bound volumes of letter received. Arranged chronologically, with partial index.
BOX 181-197	<u>Letters Sent, 1831-1893</u> Letterpress copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically, with volumes individually indexed.
BOX 198-255	<u>Department of State, 1776-1893</u> Drafts, instructions, notes, reports, memoranda, correspondence, and printed matter, relating to Fish's career as secretary of state. Arranged chronologically in part.
BOX 256-275	<u>Governor of New York, 1836-1850</u> Correspondence, messages, petitions, and reports, relating to Fish's term as governor of New York. Largely petitions for pardon and application for offices. Arranged by subject. <i>Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 18,746.</i>
BOX 276-287	<u>Journals and Diaries, 1849-1877</u> Dairy journal, diaries, and copies of diaries. Organized chronologically within the three categories. <i>The diaries and copies of diaries are available on microfilm. Shelf no. 17,634.</i>
BOX 288-292	<u>Subject File, 1845-1888</u> Largely printed matter and legal papers. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 293-301	<u>Scrapbooks, circa 1836-1899</u> Newspaper clippings on a variety of subjects. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 302-320	<u>John Bassett Moore File, 1732-1914</u> Typed copies of Fish correspondence selected and prepared by John Bassett Moore, principally from the Correspondence and Letter Copybook series, with Moore's notes, memoranda, and related correspondence. Arranged chronologically with miscellaneous notes and Charles Sumner material filed at the end.
BOX 321-325	<u>Miscellany, 1818-1891</u> Miscellaneous unbound letters sent and received, dinner books, printed matter, and other material. Arranged by type of material.

BOX 326-328

Addition, 1785-1892

Constituent correspondence to Congressman Fish, account books, and receipts of Nicholas Fish.

Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

BOX OV 1-OV 6

Oversize, circa 1836-1888

Oversize memoranda of references in letterbooks, department of state files, and scrapbooks.

Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the material was removed.

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BOX 3	9 Mar.-18 July 1844
BOX 4	21 July 1844-3 Apr. 1845
BOX 5	4 Apr. 1845-16 May 1846
BOX 6	18 May 1846-30 Mar. 1847
BOX 7	1 Apr. 1847-8 Feb. 1848
BOX 8	9 Feb.-15 Sept. 1848
BOX 9	18 Sept.-31 Dec. 1848
BOX 10	1-18 Jan. 1849
BOX 11	19 Jan.-22 Mar. 1849
BOX 12	23 Mar.-28 Apr. 1849
BOX 13	29 Apr.-18 June 1849
BOX 14	19 June-20 Aug. 1849
BOX 15	21 Aug.-24 Oct. 1849
BOX 16	25 Oct.-14 Dec. 1849
BOX 17	14 Dec. 1849-22 Jan. 1850
BOX 18	24 Jan.-28 Feb. 1850
BOX 19	1 Mar.-7 Apr. 1850
BOX 20	8 Apr.-23 May 1850
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BOX 22	19 July-24 Sept. 1850
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General Correspondence, 1804-1894

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General Correspondence, 1804-1894

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