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Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

George Gibbs collection of Oliver Wolcott correspondence

1789-1848

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Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

Summary

Collector: Gibbs, George, 1815-1873

Title: George Gibbs collection of Oliver Wolcott correspondence

Date: 1789-1848

Size: .9 linear feet (1 box, 4 volumes)

Source: Deposited by Nicholas Roosevelt, 1942; donated by Nicholas Roosevelt, 1960.

Abstract: Oliver Wolcott, Sr. (1726-1797) and Oliver Wolcott, Jr. (1760-1833) were American statesmen from Litchfield, Connecticut. George Gibbs (1815-1873), grandson of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., was a lawyer, historian, and ethnologist. The collection consists of correspondence of Oliver Wolcott, Sr. and Oliver Wolcott, Jr. as collected by George Gibbs during the writing of his work *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams*, edited from the papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury (New York, 1846), with letters about the work received by Gibbs after its publication. The documents, many written or signed by prominent Americans, comprise extra-illustrated items removed from Gibbs' personal copy of his two-volume work, bound in four parts. Most are unpublished. Wolcott correspondence, 1789-1803, concerns political as well as business and personal matters, largely reflecting the Treasury Department career of Oliver Wolcott, Jr. (1789-1800). Correspondence of George Gibbs, 1846 and 1848, consists of letters from prominent persons and friends thanking him for copies of his book, some adding further comments. An unrelated 1820 letter from General Andrew Jackson to Colonel Charles Gibson concerns Jackson's retirement from the Army.

Access: Advance notice required.

Alternative Form Available: Entire collection (excluding Gibbs' printed work) available on microfilm, *ZL-481, filmed in original binding order. The printed work is available full-text at www.hathitrust.org.

Preferred citation: George Gibbs collection of Oliver Wolcott correspondence, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015 Documents, now disbound, were originally arranged in their binding order, complementing the topical or chronological narrative of George Gibbs' printed work. They are now arranged chronologically under the main correspondents, Oliver Wolcott,

Sr., Oliver Wolcott, Jr., and George Gibbs.

Creator History

Oliver Wolcott, Sr. (1726-1797) and Oliver Wolcott, Jr. (1760-1833) were American statesmen from Litchfield, Connecticut. George Gibbs (1815-1873), grandson of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., was a lawyer, historian, and ethnologist. Oliver Wolcott, Sr. was lieutenant governor of Connecticut, 1786-1796, and governor, 1796-1797. He was major general of the Connecticut militia during the Revolutionary War and served in the Continental Congress. His son Oliver Wolcott, Jr. was United States Secretary of the Treasury, 1795-1800; United States Circuit Court judge for the Second Circuit, 1801-1802; and governor of Connecticut, 1817-1827. Wolcott graduated from Yale College in 1778, served in the military during the Revolution, and was admitted to the bar in 1781. In 1785 he married Elizabeth Stoughton (1767-1805). Oliver Wolcott was state comptroller of Connecticut before joining the United States Treasury Department in 1789, and presided over the Connecticut constitutional convention in 1818. He was deeply involved in mercantile and banking affairs in New York City during his hiatus from public service, returning to Connecticut in 1815. Oliver Wolcott died in New York City in 1833, where he resided with his daughter Laura Wolcott Gibbs and her husband George Gibbs.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of correspondence of Oliver Wolcott, Sr. and Oliver Wolcott, Jr. as collected by George Gibbs during the writing of his work *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams, edited from the papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury* (New York, 1846), with letters about the work received by Gibbs after its publication. The documents, many written or signed by prominent Americans, comprise extra-illustrated items removed from Gibbs' personal copy of his two-volume work, bound in four parts. Most are unpublished. Wolcott correspondence, 1789-1803, concerns political as well as business and personal matters, largely reflecting the Treasury Department career of Oliver Wolcott, Jr. (1789-1800). Correspondence of George Gibbs, 1846 and 1848, consists of letters from prominent persons and friends thanking him for copies of his book, some adding further comments. An unrelated 1820 letter from General Andrew Jackson to Colonel Charles Gibson concerns Jackson's retirement from the Army.

Oliver Wolcott, Sr. correspondence, 1789-1796, consists of his letter to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering thanking him for a copy of recent treaty, 1796; a letter to him from Senator Oliver Ellsworth asking his opinion on an enclosed bill, 1789; a letter from his son Oliver Wolcott, Jr. enclosing Alexander Hamilton's final report, 1795; and a letter from John Jay, governor of New York, enclosing a copy of a criminal indictment, 1796. Enclosures are not present.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. correspondence, 1789-1803, concerns political as well as business and personal matters. Most items are letters received by Wolcott from prominent political associates and others during the period of his service in the Treasury Department (1789-1800) under Presidents George Washington and John Adams. During this time the Federal capital moved from New York to Philadelphia, and finally to Washington, D.C. Letters to Wolcott concern Federalist party politics and political appointments, introductions, social events, and personal and business matters. Wolcott's appointments as Auditor (1789), Comptroller (1791) and Secretary of the Treasury (1795), as well as his Circuit Court appointment resulting from the Judiciary Act of 1801, are represented by letters from Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Edmund Randolph, and John Marshall, as well as Wolcott's signed oath as Secretary. Notable political associates include George Cabot, Samuel W. Dana, Elbridge Gerry, James Hillhouse, Charles Lee, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, James Ross, Uriah Tracy, Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., and brother-in-law Chauncey Goodrich, among others. A few letters congratulate him on his appointment as judge, and mention a testimonial dinner to be held in his honor

before departing Washington. Other correspondents include physician Benjamin Rush, reporting on the health of a patient in the Wolcott household in Philadelphia, 1793, and authors Noah Webster, Jr. and Jedidiah Morse, writing to Wolcott about their own works. A letter from Benjamin Goodhue of Salem to Oliver Wolcott in New York, 1803, introduces his son, seeking funds for an Indian voyage. Family correspondents include his wife Elizabeth (called Betsy or Betsey but signing herself as Eliza), his sister Mary Ann, wife of Chauncey Goodrich, and his brother Frederick Wolcott. There is some reference to his wife's poor health.

George Gibbs correspondence, 1846 and 1848, consists of letters from prominent persons and friends thanking him for copies of his book and praising his work, especially its defense of Federalist policies and personages. Some writers were contemporaries of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., such as Josiah Quincy and New York lawyer James Kent. Gibbs' reply to Kent is included.

An unrelated letter written by General Andrew Jackson at the Hermitage to Colonel Charles Gibson, 1820, advises that he will postpone his retirement from the Army at the request of President James Monroe.

Key Terms

Geographic Names

Connecticut -- Politics and government -- 1775-1865
United States -- History -- 1783-1865
United States -- History -- Constitutional period, 1789-1809
United States -- Politics and government -- 1783-1865

Subjects

Governors -- Connecticut

Occupations

Historians
Politicians
Statesmen

Names

Gibbs, George, 1815-1873
Hamilton, Alexander, 1757-1804
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826
Marshall, John, 1755-1835
Randolph, Edmund, 1753-1813
Wolcott, Oliver, 1726-1797
Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833
Wolcott family
United States. Department of the Treasury. Office of the Secretary

Container List

Oliver Wolcott, Sr. correspondence

Oliver Ellsworth to Oliver Wolcott Sr., New York 1789 June 15
Ellsworth, Oliver, 1745-1807 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1726-1797 (Recipient)

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Philadelphia 1795 January 29
Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1726-1797 (Recipient)

Oliver Wolcott Sr. to Timothy Pickering, Litchfield 1796 February 8
Wolcott, Oliver, 1726-1797 (Creator)Pickering, Timothy, 1745-1829 (Recipient)

John Jay to Oliver Wolcott, Sr 1796 November 20
Jay, John, 1745-1829 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1726-1797 (Recipient)

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. correspondence

Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, New York 1789 September 13
Hamilton, Alexander, 1757-1804 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)
Informs Wolcott of his appointment as Auditor, Department of the Treasury.

President of the United States [George Washington] to Oliver Wolcott 1789
September 23
Washington, George, 1732-1799 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)
Dinner invitation

Mary Ann Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Hartford 1789 December 26
Goodrich, Mary Ann Wolcott, 1765-1805 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Thomas FitzSimons to Oliver Wolcott, New York 1790 January 25
FitzSimons, Thomas, 1741-1811 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Thomas Jefferson to Oliver Wolcott, Philadelphia 1791 November 10
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)
Encloses Wolcott's commission (not present) as Comptroller, Department of the Treasury.

Jedidiah Morse to Oliver Wolcott, Charlestown 1793 June 13
Morse, Jedidiah, 1761-1826 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Benjamin Rush to Oliver Wolcott, Philadelphia 1793 October 4
Rush, Benjamin, 1746-1813 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Jonathan Trumbull to Oliver Wolcott, London 1794 July 11
Trumbull, Jonathan, 1740-1809 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Joel Barlow to John Vaughan, merchant at Philadelphia, Hamburg 1794
September 2
Barlow, Joel, 1754-1812 (Creator)Vaughan, John, 1756-1841 (Recipient)

Edmund Randolph to Oliver Wolcott, Department of State 1795 February 3
Randolph, Edmund, 1753-1813 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)
Encloses Wolcott's commission (not present) as Secretary of the Treasury.

Oliver Wolcott oath as Secretary of the Treasury 1795 February 4
Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Creator)
Attested by James Wilson (Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court).

Edmund Randolph to Oliver Wolcott 1795 May 21
Randolph, Edmund, 1753-1813 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

William Vans Murray to Oliver Wolcott 1795 September 12
Murray, William Vans, 1760-1803 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. correspondence (cont.)

Timothy Pickering to Oliver Wolcott, Department of State 1795 October 5
Pickering, Timothy, 1745-1829 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

President of the United States [George Washington] to Oliver Wolcott [?]
1796 June 27 (Endorsement sheet only)

Washington, George, 1732-1799 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Oliver Wolcott, Delaware Bay 1796 September
26

Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth, 1746-1825 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Elbridge Gerry to Oliver Wolcott, New York 1797 May 22

Gerry, Elbridge, 1744-1814 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Jeremiah Wadsworth to Oliver Wolcott, Hartford 1797 May 28

Wadsworth, Jeremiah, 1743-1804 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Charles Lee to Oliver Wolcott, Alexandria 1797 September 23

Lee, Charles, 1758-1815 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Frederick Wolcott to Oliver Wolcott, Litchfield 1798 August 6

Wolcott, Frederick, 1767-1837 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Eliza Wolcott to Oliver Wolcott, Litchfield 1798 August 6

Wolcott, Elizabeth Stoughton, 1767-1805 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Noah Webster, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, New Haven 1799 May 14

Webster, Noah, 1758-1843 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Hartford 1799 August 5

Goodrich, Chauncey, 1759-1815 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Theodore Sedgwick to Oliver Wolcott, Philadelphia 1800 August 11

Sedgwick, Theodore, 1746-1813 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

George Cabot to Oliver Wolcott 1800 September 8

Cabot, George, 1752-1823 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

William Bingham to Oliver Wolcott, Philadelphia 1800 September 9

Bingham, William, 1752-1804 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Oliver Wolcott to "Dear Betsy" [Elizabeth Wolcott], Washington 1800 November
20

Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Creator)Wolcott, Elizabeth Stoughton, 1767-1805 (Recipient)

[Samuel W. Dana] to Elizabeth Wolcott 1800 November 22

Dana, Samuel Whittelsey, 1760-1830 (Creator)Wolcott, Elizabeth Stoughton, 1767-1805
(Recipient)

John Eager Howard to Oliver Wolcott, Senate Chamber 1800 December 15

Howard, John Eager, 1752-1827 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

James Ross to Oliver Wolcott, Washington 1801 January 24

Ross, James, 1762-1847 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Mr. Dana [Samuel W. Dana?] to Elizabeth Wolcott, Washington 1801 January
24

Dana, Samuel Whittelsey, 1760-1830 (Creator)Wolcott, Elizabeth Stoughton, 1767-1805
(Recipient)

Unsigned letter

Thomas Law to Oliver Wolcott [1801 January ?]

Law, Thomas, 1756-1834 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

James Hillhouse to Oliver Wolcott, Washington 1801 February 18

Hillhouse, James, 1754-1832 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Uriah Tracy to Oliver Wolcott, Washington 1801 February 20

Tracy, Uriah, 1755-1807 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

Oliver Wolcott, Jr. correspondence (cont.)

John Marshall to Oliver Wolcott, Department of State 1801 February 21
Marshall, John, 1755-1835 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)
Encloses Wolcott's commission (not present) as judge of the United States Circuit Court,
Second Circuit.

Benjamin Goodhue to Oliver Wolcott, Salem 1803 November 17
Goodhue, Benjamin, 1748-1814 (Creator)Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833 (Recipient)

George Gibbs correspondence

Josiah Quincy to George Gibbs, Boston 1846 May 2
Quincy, Josiah, 1772-1864 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

James Kent to George Gibbs, New York 1846 June 10
Kent, James, 1763-1847 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

George Gibbs to James Kent, New York 1846 June 11
Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Creator)Kent, James, 1763-1847 (Recipient)

Josiah Quincy to George Gibbs, Boston 1846 June 12
Quincy, Josiah, 1772-1864 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Daniel Webster to George Gibbs, Washington 1846 June 20
Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Winfield Scott to George Gibbs, "Office" 1846 June 22
Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Edward T. Channing to George Gibbs, Cambridge 1846 July 6
Channing, Edward Tyrrel, 1790-1856 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

William B. Reed to George Gibbs, Philadelphia 1846 July 6
Reed, William B. (William Bradford), 1806-1876 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873
(Recipient)

William A. Duer to George Gibbs, Morristown, New Jersey 1846 July 11
Duer, William Alexander, 1780-1858 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

W. Channing to George Gibbs, Boston 1846 July 13
Channing, W. (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

David B. Ogden to George Gibbs, New York 1846 August 15
Ogden, David Bayard, 1775-1849 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Thomas B. Macaulay to George Gibbs, London 1846 October 30
Macaulay, Thomas Babington Macaulay, Baron, 1800-1859 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-
1873 (Recipient)

Henry Clay to George Gibbs, Washington 1848 January 22
Clay, Henry, 1777-1852 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Orville Davey to George Gibbs, New York [1848?] Thursday May 4
Davey, Orville (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Edmund Kirby to George Gibbs, Brownville, New York 1848 May 14
Kirby, Edmund, 1794-1849 (Creator)Gibbs, George, 1815-1873 (Recipient)

Andrew Jackson letter to George Gibson 1820 July 10
Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845 (Creator)Gibson, George, 1783-1861 (Recipient)