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Accession # * 88M81

Location D2-H-6

Title James B. Butler Papers

Approximate inclusive dates 1880-1884

Date of receipt November 9, 1927

Received from Henry A. Forster
Executor of the Estate of
James B. Butler

Volume on arrival Unknown

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 4 AB, 1 ½AB; 1.9 l.f.

Condition Good

Restrictions None

Description See attached sheets

Special Formats Photographs Maps Audio Tapes Films Graphics
 Artifacts Machine-readable records
 Other (list) _____

Temporary catalog card added entries

See attached sheets

Accessioned by ST

Date 11/21/88

JAMES B. BUTLER PAPERS

Biographical Note

James B. Butler of New York (?-1927) was a noted lawyer, federal and local government official, and campaign manager. Butler began his political career as a United States district attorney for the territory of Idaho (1880-1881). He became particularly well-known for the services he performed as chief of the appointment division of the Treasury Department from December 3, 1881 until his resignation on March 16, 1884. During his years at the Treasury, Butler worked under the supervision of his longtime friend and colleague Treasury Secretary Charles J. Folger. He faithfully headed Folger's campaign in the decisive 1882 New York State gubernatorial race against the Democratic opponent Grover Cleveland. Butler once again acted as a campaign manager for Chester A. Arthur in the Republican Presidential Convention of 1884. After he resigned from his post at the Treasury, Butler held a number of important local offices under the New York State Judiciary Department.

Charles James Folger of Geneva, New York (1818-1884) was a prominent attorney, jurist, and secretary of the treasury. He assumed his first important public office in 1844 when he was appointed judge of the court of common pleas of Ontario County. One year later he was made master and examiner in chancery. Folger served as a county judge of Ontario County from 1851 to 1855. He then was elected a member of the state Senate for

Biographical Note (contd.)

four consecutive terms(1860-1868). In 1867 Folger also served as a member of the Judiciary Committee to the Constitutional Convention. In 1869 he accepted a one year appointment as a United States assistant treasurer in New York City. From 1870 to 1879 Folger was an associate justice of the court of appeals, and in the two years that followed he acted as chief judge. Folger was well-respected during his years as the United States secretary of the treasury (1881-1884). Consequently in September 1882, he was given the Republican nomination for governor of New York. Despite his campaign's loss, Folger continued to serve loyally as treasury secretary until his death in 1884.

JAMES B. BUTLER PAPERS

Scope and Content

The James B. Butler Collection (1880-1884) may be divided into two main sections: the first (Boxes I-IV) relates directly to Butler and his position as chief of the appointment division at the United States Treasury; the second (Box V) refers to Butler in the context of his business associations with Treasury Secretary Charles J. Folger.

Section I

The papers in this section include correspondence and three accompanying letterbooks. The correspondence (Boxes I-III) consists primarily of Butler's incoming letters, telegrams, and assorted memoranda received at the Treasury Department, 1882-1883. These items are arranged alphabetically and comprise: demands from persons desiring a position at the Treasury; letters of recommendation; requests from Treasury employees for pay increases, promotions, leaves of absence, and other such business-related matters to be handled by Butler; etc. Also included are unique items such as a list of presidential appointees to the Treasury, a list of members and their wages at the Virginia State Treasury Department, a partial list of so-called "nepotist" relatives all employed at the United States Treasury, and a copy of a Treasury Department examination. The three letterbooks (Box IV) are Butler's private records of his written responses to the correspondence received at the Treasury. All the letters in the copybooks are organized by an index and are distributed more or less chronologically (May 1882-March 1884).

Scope and Content (contd.)

Both the correspondence and the letterbooks are of particular significance in the manner in which they reveal the spoils system of patronage prevalent during President Chester A. Arthur's administration (1881-1885) before the introduction of the Civil Service Reform Act.

Section II

The papers in this section include the unofficial correspondence of Charles J. Folger with James Butler, records of campaign funds and expenses, newspaper clippings, and assorted reports from local Republican party leaders. The correspondence (1881-1884) gives important details about the 1882 New York State gubernatorial elections as told by the letters written between the candidate Folger and his campaign manager Butler. They describe Folger's eventual defeat by his opponent Grover Cleveland. The small collection of campaign funds and expenses (1882) include hotel and transportation fees, bills for the printing of posters, and notations for other expenses accrued during the 1882 New York gubernatorial campaign. The newspaper clippings (1881-1884) contain news items regarding the United States Treasury, and in particular some articles describing the positions held by Butler and Folger within the department. Included is an obituary page from the Geneva Courier written at the death of Charles Folger. The reports of local Republican leaders (1882) consist of two series of letters. The first includes accounts by party members who accurately determined that the Republican factional fight would lead to the defeat of Folger by Cleveland. Also included here are impossible demands for campaign funds that could not be met. The second is a series of letters written by those Republican leaders who complacently assumed Folger's victory of the New York State governorship.

JAMES B. BUTLER PAPERS

<u>Box</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	James B. Butler Correspondence: A-F
2	James B. Butler Correspondence: G-O
3	James B. Butler Correspondence: P-Z
4	James B. Butler Letterbooks : I-III
5	Charles J. Folger-James B. Butler Correspondence 1882 New York State Republican Gubernatorial Campaign Funds and Expenses Newspaper Clippings Reports by Local Republican Leaders

Index of

Secretary of Treasury Folger's unofficial correspondence with James B. Butler, Chief of Appointment Division U.S. Treasury Department December 2nd, 1881 to March 16, 1884.

- I. Genesis of the defeat of Secretary of Treasury Charles J. Folger by Grover Cleveland for Governor of New York in 1882; of the defeat of Arthur by Blaine for Republican Presidential nomination in 1884; also of the defeat of Blaine by Cleveland for President in 1884, as told by the papers of the late James B. Butler, campaign manager for Charles J. Folger.
- II. Details and incidents of Secretary of Treasury Folger's campaign for Governor of New York in 1882.
 - (a) microscopic campaign funds.
 - (b) reports of local republican leaders who sized up accurately that the factional fight would defeat Folger.

Frequently accompanied by impossible demands for campaign funds that could not be met.
 - (c) other local republican leaders complacently assumed everything was all right in this the best of worlds when it was not.
- III. Details and incidents of spoils system of patronage in U. S. Treasury Department at the time of the introduction of civil service reform therein under the Arthur administration. Begin with letter book 1, 2 & 3; then go alphabetically through the bundles of letters. These are arranged alphabetically; the groups in salmon covered binders were arranged by Mr. Butler; the flat filed groups fastened with brass clamps was arranged by his Executor.

During Folger's incumbancy as Secretary of U. S. Treasury 1881 to September 4, 1884, civil service reform was introduced into Treasury Department. Mr. James B. Butler, whose papers in this package No. III are alphabetically arranged under each letter principally by himself, was the Chief of Appointment Division of the Treasury Department from December 2nd, 1881 until his resignation was accepted as of March 16, 1884. He was Folger's campaign manager in the New York State Gubernatorial Campaign of 1882; after he resigned he was one of the campaign managers for Arthur in the Republican Presidential convention of 1884. (James B. Butler died January 15, 1927.)

Before Secretary Folger's death Folger had planned on leaving office to enter into a law partnership with Mr. Butler.

Their confidence and friendship remained unbroken:

throughout Mr. Butler's last years he regarded the dead Secretary Folger as his ideal of a statesman, a patriot and a friend.

In 1880-1881 Mr. Butler had been United States District Attorney for the territory of Idaho; after Judge Folger's death he held important local offices under the New York State Judiciary Department, but after Judge Folger's death Mr. Butler held no other Federal office.