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Accession # *87 M 6

Location D 2-H-3

Title. GIDEON WELLES. Papers.

Approximate inclusive date 1825-1878, bulk dates 1840-1864

Date of receipt 1924

Received from Purchase, Stan. V. Henkels

Volume on arrival

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 7 FB

1.75 lf

Condition good

Restrictions ~~none~~ POSITIVE MICROFILM MUST BE USED.

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 sheet

Accessioned by CRK

Date 1-14-87

Gideon Welles

Biography

Gideon Welles (1802-1878) was a public servant, editor, and Secretary of the Navy from 1861-1869 under Presidents Lincoln and Johnson. Born in Connecticut, and educated there and in Vermont, Welles studied law, but became in 1826 part owner and editor of the Hartford Times. A staunch Jeffersonian Democrat, and an early supporter of Andrew Jackson in New England, Welles served in the Connecticut Legislature from 1827-1835, as Connecticut State Comptroller in 1835, and again from 1841-1843, and as the Postmaster in Hartford from 1835-1841. He was also Chief of the Navy Bureau of Provisions and Clothing from 1841-1843.

Welles left the Democratic Party over the slavery question, and in 1856 helped to found the Republican Hartford Evening Press, for which he served as a political writer in the years before the Civil War. He also became a Republican national committee member. After Lincoln's election, Welles was designated the "New England" member ^{of the Cabinet}, as Secretary of the Navy, where his task was to build an effective force from a widely scattered Navy, which had lost great numbers of officers, and amounts of material to the rebellious states. Welles was an early supporter of ironclad ships in the face of political opposition, and though he was a very active and influential Republican, the Navy Department was remarkably free of political favoritism.

Welles also contributed to general government and war policies, including foreign policy, currency questions, and the abolition of slavery. He opposed the suspension Habeas Corpus, and the suppression of the Chicago Times. After the war he favored Lincoln's moderate policy toward the South, against the prevailing Republican policy, and was an ardent supporter of Johnson in the ^P impeachment proceedings. Welles returned to the Democratic Party in 1868, and then again to the Republicans in 1872. From his retirement until his death in 1878, he wrote political commentary for the Galaxy.

Gideon Welles Papers

Contents

The Gideon Welles Papers are comprised of three principal series: Correspondence, Official Papers, and Writings. The bulk of the papers is correspondence, most of which is related to Welles' public life and duties. The fortunes of the Connecticut and national Democratic parties are the subjects of many of the letters, with issues ranging from local election results to the admission of Texas to the United States. Also discussed is the business of the Hartford Post Office, and the Navy Bureau of Clothing and Provisions, both headed by Welles. The Civil War and the operations of the Navy Department also figure prominently in the correspondence. Subjects include: patronage requests, ship specifications, contracts, War and Navy Department policies, and charges of corruption and mismanagement in the Navy Department. The post-war correspondence refers to the re-employment of rebel personnel in Naval and Naval shipyard positions, as well as Welles' personal political and literary endeavors and interests. There is also a small amount of family correspondence. Correspondents include: W.C. Church, Charles Ingersoll, George D. Mason, J.M. Niles, and William Seward.

The official papers consist of memoranda, charters, contracts, and lists of ships and officers relating to Welles' government positions as Postmaster, Chief of the Navy Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, and Secretary of the Navy.

Finally, the writings are drafts of articles, congressional reports and notes on politics and Civil War issues.

Gideon Welles Papers

Container Listing

Contents

Correspondence

Letters from Welles, 1839-1875
Letters to Welles, 1825-1839
" " " 1840-1846
" " " 1847-1864
" " " 1865-1878, N.D.

Family correspondence

Official Papers

An Act in addition to an Act "Authorizing the employment of the land and naval forces of the United States in cases insurrection". Approved, March 3, 1807.

Amistad case.

Amounts of money paid under contract for additional work on naval vessels.

Canvass of votes for Hartford, Connecticut, 1838.

Contract between the U.S. and the American and Atlantic Screw Steamship Company for the purchase of the steamships, Huntsville, Montgomery, and, R.R. Cuyler, 1861.

Contract between the U.S. and the New York and Virginia Screw Company for the purchase of the steamships, Mount Vernon, and Monticello, 1861

Copy of letter dated July 17, 1864, from Lt. Rochelle to Dr. Conrad, found on captured Confederate Ram, Tennessee.

Copies of two letters written by Confederate officers describing the mutiny of Confederate troops at Fort Jackson, Louisiana, 1862.

David Porter's plan to take New Orleans, submitted to David Farragut, April 1862.

Drafts of statement relative to rental by Welles of a house in Washington, D.C.

Extracts from a Report of a Board of Engineers on sea coast fortifications, 1820.

Eviction notices, 1843.

Executive order to re-establish the authority of the U.S. and execute the laws within (the geographical limits known as) the State of Virginia.

Investigation of the activities of Commander Charles H. Poor, captain of the U.S.S. Brooklyn, which resulted in the escape of the Confederate steamer, Sumter, 1861.

Inventory of furniture belonging to the Post Office Department at Hartford, Connecticut, 1841.

List of iron-clads.

List of naval officers, n.d.

List of vessels under construction at [Philadelphia?], 1865.

Memoranda, 1866, n.d.

Memorandum concerning construction of the turret vessels, Puritan and Dictator.

Miscellany.

Newspaper clippings.

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Gideon Welles Papers

Container Listing - Continued

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Official Papers - Continued

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Papers relative to the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing,
U.S. Navy, 1846-1855.
Papers relative to the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing,
U.S. Navy, 1846-1855.
Personal accounts.
Petitions to President Johnson
De Martini, Seraphina, 1865
Morrill, Tom, 1867
Post Office accounts, Hartford, Connecticut, 1840.
Sailing orders.
Scale of offers to construct steam gun-boats, 1861.
Statements, recommendations, and charges relative to
fraudulent activities at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, 1864.
Suggestions and interrogations from a Loyalist to the North, 1861.
Trial of Franklin K. Smith for fraud, 1865?

Writings

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Comment upon the autobiographical sketch of Thurlow Weed
relating to the formation of Lincoln's cabinet.
Comment upon the election of Zachary Taylor as marking the
close of the second democratic dynasty in the U.S.
Criticism of the report of Secretary Robeson of the Navy,
with special reference to the recommendations of Admiral
David D. Porter. [1870?]
Draft of a report recommending the establishment of the Naval
Academy at Hampton Roads, Virginia.
Draft of a report to the Senate relating to ships purchased
by the Navy Department.
Editorial on the election held in Kansas, March 30, 1855.
Events leading to the nomination of Polk and Dallas, 1844.
History of the expedition to relieve Fort Sumter with
special reference to the activities of William H. Seward,
who opposed the expedition.
Memoranda submitted for the consideration of President
Lincoln relating to the proposed instructions to Navy
Officer. [1863?]
Notes on the navy forces of the U.S. becoming involved
with England and France in a controversy with Japan in July, 186

Gideon Welles Papers

Container Listing - Continued

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Writings - Continued

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Objections to the establishment of a Board of Admiralty in the U.S. Navy.
Recollections of President Andrew Johnson and his Cabinet.
Remarks on the proposed "circular" respecting capture.
Remarks relative to the "doctrines" embodied in the Resolutions of the late State Democratic Convention [of Connecticut?] n.d.
Reply to a statement of General Richard Taylor published in the North American Review and relating to Lincoln and Grant and the campaign before Richmond.
Review of President Lincoln's administration.
Review of the activities of William M. Seward as Secretary of State.
Review of the events at the outbreak of the Civil War.
Slave trade treaty between the U.S. and Great Britain and its relation to the Navy Department.
Testimony before a committee of Congress relative to abuses of the franking privilege. 1840. Draft of reply to report of the Committee.
Tyler's break with the Whig party; Polk's nomination and election.

GIDEON WELLES PAPERS

Microfilm Reel List

<u>Reel</u>	<u>Contents</u>
1	Letters from Welles, 1839-1875 Letters to Welles and others 1825 - 1840 Nov. 15
2	1840 Nov. 18 - 1861 March
3	1861 June - 1865, n.d.
4	Family Papers, documents, accounts, memoranda, miscellany Writings of Gideon Welles