



# The New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

## **Henry Dearborn letters and documents**

1801-1823

MssCol 3753

Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

### **Summary**

**Creator:** Dearborn, Henry, 1751-1829

**Title:** Henry Dearborn letters and documents

**Date:** 1801-1823

**Size:** .1 linear feet (1 folder)

**Source:** Donated by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1899, as part of the Ford collection, with additional gifts and purchases.

**Abstract:** Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) of New Hampshire was an American army officer and statesman. He fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, attaining the rank of senior Major General in the U.S. Army. Dearborn was U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1793-1797; U.S. Secretary of War, 1801-1809; and U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824. The collection, dating from 1801 to 1823, consists of letters written by Henry Dearborn to public officials and others, two personal letters to his son Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn, a brief note, and miscellaneous documents with his signature. Also present is a letter written by Henry Dearborn's wife Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn to H.A.S. Dearborn's wife, 1822, describing their life in Lisbon.

**Preferred citation:** Henry Dearborn letters and documents, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

**Processing note:** Compiled by Susan P. Waide, 2015

### **Creator History**

Henry Dearborn (1751-1829) of New Hampshire was an American army officer and statesman. He fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, attaining the rank of senior Major General in the U.S. Army. Dearborn was U.S. Congressman from Massachusetts, 1793-1797; U.S. Secretary of War, 1801-1809; and U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Henry Dearborn was a practicing physician and captain of a New Hampshire militia company. He fought with the First and Third New Hampshire Regiments of the Continental Army, rising from captain to lieutenant colonel. In July 1781 he was appointed Deputy

Quartermaster General and served on Washington's staff in Virginia. Notable events in his military service included the battle of Bunker Hill with the First New Hampshire Regiment, 1775; the expedition to Quebec, 1775, resulting in his capture, imprisonment and exchange; the battles of Saratoga, 1777, and Monmouth, 1778; and Major General John Sullivan's campaign against the Six Nations, 1779. He was with the main army in New York and New Jersey in 1780 and participated in the Yorktown Campaign in 1781. Upon his exchange in 1777, Dearborn served as major and then lieutenant colonel in the Third New Hampshire Regiment, transferring to the First New Hampshire Regiment in early 1781. He commanded the regiment upon the death of Colonel Alexander Scammell at Yorktown in October. Dearborn served at the garrison at Saratoga in the summer and fall of 1782, and received his discharge in June 1783.

In 1784 Dearborn moved to the District of Maine, then part of Massachusetts, settling in Pittston, now Gardiner, in Kennebec County. He became Major General of the Maine militia, was appointed U.S. Marshal for Maine in 1789, and served in the U.S. House of Representatives from the District, 1793 to 1797. After serving as Secretary of War during the Jefferson administration, he held the federal appointment of Collector of Customs for the port of Boston from 1809 until he was appointed senior Major General of the U.S. Army in January 1812. Although Dearborn's forces captured York (Toronto) and Fort George in the spring of 1813 during operations against Upper Canada, Dearborn's weakness as a strategic commander and severe illness led to his recall by Secretary of War John Armstrong in July of that year. Dearborn was re-assigned to command the military district of New York City and was honorably discharged in 1815. In 1817 he ran unsuccessfully as the Democratic-Republican candidate for governor of Massachusetts, and in 1818 his work *An account of the battle of Bunker Hill* was published. His final public office was U.S. minister to Portugal, 1822-1824.

Henry Dearborn was married three times: to Mary Bartlett in 1771, to Dorcas Osgood Marble in 1780, and to Sarah Bowdoin in 1813. Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn (1783-1851) was his son by his second wife. Henry Dearborn died in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The collection, dating from 1801 to 1823, consists of letters written by Henry Dearborn to public officials and others, two personal letters to his son Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn, a brief note, and miscellaneous documents with his signature. Also present is a letter written by Henry Dearborn's wife Sarah Bowdoin Dearborn to H.A.S. Dearborn's wife, 1822, describing their life in Lisbon.

Letters written by Henry Dearborn to officials as U.S. Secretary of War chiefly pertain to state militia quotas and payment of invalid pensions. Other items include an 1807 letter to Judge Davis concerning a rumor that Aaron Burr's expedition to the west had Dearborn's approval, and a letter to David L. Child seeking his service as private secretary at Lisbon, 1822. A letter to his son Henry, 1805, concerns the choice of a wife, and a letter written to him from Lisbon, 1823, discusses international politics and family activities.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

Burr Conspiracy, 1805-1807

### **Occupations**

Diplomats  
Politicians  
Soldiers  
Statesmen

**Geographic Names**

Portugal -- Foreign relations -- United States  
United States -- Foreign relations -- Portugal  
United States -- History -- 1783-1865

**Names**

Child, David Lee, 1794-1874  
Dearborn, H. A. S. (Henry Alexander Scammell), 1783-1851  
Dearborn, Sarah Bowdoin, 1762-1826  
Dearborn family  
United States. War Department