

Daniel Webster

A Register of His Papers in the Library of Congress

**Prepared by Manuscript Division staff
Expanded and revised by John McDonough and Nan
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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

1997

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

**Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress
Manuscript Division, 2000**

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms000013>

Latest revision: 2004-11-17

Collection Summary

Title: Papers of Daniel Webster

Span Dates: 1800-1900

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1824-1852)

ID No.: MSS44925

Creator: Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852

Extent: 2,500 items; 16 containers; 4 linear feet; 8 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Lawyer, statesman, and diplomat; U.S. representative from New Hampshire and U.S. senator from Massachusetts. Correspondence, memoranda, notes and drafts for speeches, legal papers, invitations, printed matter, newspaper clippings, and other papers, chiefly dating from 1824 to 1852. Topics include Webster's law practices and cases heard before the U.S. Supreme Court, the Bank of the United States, diplomacy, national and state politics, slavery, and the Compromise of 1850.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Names:

Webster, Daniel, 1782-1852

Adams, John Quincy, 1767-1848

Archer, Charles--Correspondence

Ashburton, Alexander Baring, Baron, 1774-1848--Correspondence

Badger, George Edmund, 1795-1866--Correspondence

Barnard, Daniel D. (Daniel Dewey), 1797-1861--Correspondence

Biddle, Nicholas, 1786-1844--Correspondence

Dalling and Bulwer, Henry Lytton Bulwer, Baron, 1801-1872--Correspondence

Cass, Lewis, 1782-1866--Correspondence

Choate, Rufus, 1799-1859--Correspondence

Clay, Henry, 1777-1852--Correspondence

Curtis, Charles Pelham, 1792-1864--Correspondence

Davis, John, 1787-1854--Correspondence

Everett, Edward, 1794-1865--Correspondence

Fillmore, Millard, 1800-1874

Hopkinson, Joseph, 1770-1842--Correspondence

Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845

Kent, James, 1763-1847--Correspondence

Lawrence, Abbott, 1792-1855--Correspondence

Mills, James K.--Correspondence

Ossington, John Evelyn Denison, Viscount, 1800-1873--Correspondence

Parker, Isaac, 1768-1830--Correspondence

Quincy, Josiah, 1772-1864--Correspondence

Rush, Richard, 1780-1859--Correspondence

Sparks, Jared, 1789-1866--Correspondence

Spencer, Ambrose, 1765-1848--Correspondence

Stevenson, Andrew, 1784-1857--Correspondence

Tyler, John, 1790-1862

Webb, J. Watson (James Watson), 1802-1884--Correspondence

Webster, Fletcher, 1813-1862--Correspondence

Webster, Noah, 1758-1843--Correspondence

Wheaton, Henry, 1785-1848--Correspondence

Bank of the United States (1816-1836)

United States. Supreme Court

Subjects:

Compromise of 1850
Diplomacy
Freemasonry
Mexican War, 1846-1848--Public opinion
Practice of law--New Hampshire
Practice of law--Massachusetts
Presidential candidates--United States--19th century
Slavery--United States
Tariff--United States
Canada--Boundaries--United States
Latin America--Foreign relations--United States
Massachusetts--Politics and government--19th century
New Hampshire--Politics and government--19th century
United States--Boundaries--Canada
United States--Foreign relations--Latin America
United States--Politics and government--19th century

Occupations:

Diplomats
Lawyers
Representatives, U.S. Congress--New Hampshire
Senators, U.S. Congress--New Hampshire
Senators, U.S. Congress--Massachusetts
Statesmen

Administrative Information

Provenance:

The papers of Daniel Webster, lawyer, orator, congressman, senator, and secretary of state, were assembled through gift and purchase, 1901-1984, the largest group coming from Charles P. Greenough in 1903.

Processing History:

The papers of Daniel Webster were arranged and described in 1975. Additional material was incorporated into the collection in 1978 and in 1997, when this register was expanded and revised.

Copyright Status:

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

Microfilm:

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on eight reels. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

Preferred Citation:

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Daniel Webster Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|--|
| 1782, Jan. 18 | Born, Salisbury, N.H. |
| 1796 | Pupil, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, N.H. |
| 1797 | College preparatory study with Samuel Wood, Boscawen, N.H. |
| 1800 | Delivered Independence Day address, Hanover, N.H. |
| 1801 | Graduated, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. |
| 1802 | Teacher, Fryeburg Academy, Fryeburg, Maine |
| 1804 | Read law with attorney Christopher Gore, Boston, Mass. |
| 1805 | Published anonymously <i>An Appeal to the Old Whigs of New Hampshire</i> Admitted to practice law, Court of Common Pleas, Boston, Mass. Established private law office, Boscawen, N.H. |
| 1807 | Admitted as counselor, Superior Court, N.H. Established private law office, Portsmouth, N.H. |
| 1808 | Married Grace Fletcher (died 1828) |
| 1813-1817 | Member U.S. House of Representatives from New Hampshire |
| 1814 | Admitted to practice law, Supreme Court of the United States |
| 1816 | Moved to Boston, Mass. Resumed law practice |
| 1818 | Argued Dartmouth College case before Supreme Court of the United States |
| 1821 | Delegate, Massachusetts Constitutional Convention |
| 1823-1827 | Member U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts |
| 1827-1841 | Member U.S. Senate from Massachusetts; elected initially as a Federalist, then as a Whig |
| 1829 | Married Caroline Bayard Le Roy |
| 1830 | Webster-Hayne debate |
| 1832 | Led National Republican effort to recharter the Second Bank of the United States Purchased Marshfield, Mass., estate |
| 1835 | Nominated for president by Massachusetts legislature |
| 1841-1843 | Secretary of state |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 1842 | Negotiated Treaty of Washington with Great Britain (Webster-Ashburton Treaty) |
| 1843 | Instructed U.S. minister to China, Caleb Cushing, on Treaty of Wanghia Resigned from cabinet over Texas annexation issue |
| 1845-1850 | Member U.S. Senate from Massachusetts |
| 1846 | Denounced war with Mexico in Philadelphia, Pa., speech |
| 1850, Mar. 7 | Speech in support of Henry Clay's Compromise resolution |
| 1850-1852 | Secretary of state |
| 1851 | Negotiated treaties of friendship, commerce, and navigation with Costa Rica and Peru |
| 1852 | Unsuccessful candidate, Whig party presidential nomination Died, Marshfield, Mass. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Daniel Webster (1782-1852) span the years from 1800 to 1900 with the bulk concentrated in the period 1824-1852. They include correspondence, memoranda, notes and drafts of speeches, legal papers, invitations, typewritten transcripts of letters, and a few newspaper clippings and other types of printed matter. [Correspondence](#) constitutes the bulk of the collection. Letters received predominate, but there are more than one hundred and fifty items in the hand of Webster including letters, retained drafts, memoranda, and notes. Invitations and typewritten transcripts of selected letters follow the general correspondence. Webster's correspondence principally documents his legal and political career. Although he was the most famous orator of his time, only a few speeches and notes are included in this collection.

Among the numerous subjects documented in the Webster Papers are cabinet affairs of John Tyler's and Millard Fillmore's administrations, national and state politics, controversies during John Quincy Adams's and Andrew Jackson's administrations, tariff legislation, the Bank of the United States, negotiations related to the Northeast Boundary Dispute, Latin American relations, opposition to the war with Mexico, the slavery question, the Compromise of 1850, the practice of law and cases argued before the Supreme Court, and presidential aspirations. Webster's early years are described in handwritten copies of fifteen lengthy letters (about one hundred pages) written by Charles Archer to James Watson Webb, editor of the New York *Courier and Enquirer*. They are filed among the correspondence dated from August to September 1849.

Correspondents represented in the Webster Papers include Lord Ashburton (Alexander Baring), George Edmund Badger, Daniel D. Barnard, Nicholas Biddle, Lewis Cass, Rufus Choate, Henry Clay, Charles Pelham Curtis, Lord Dalling and Bulwer (Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer), John Davis, Edward Everett, Millard Fillmore, Joseph Hopkinson, James Kent, Abbott Lawrence, James K. Mills, Viscount Ossington (John Evelyn Denison), Isaac Parker, Josiah Quincy, Richard Rush, Jared Sparks, Ambrose Spencer, Andrew Stevenson, John Tyler, James Watson Webb, Fletcher Webster, Noah Webster, and Henry Wheaton.

A card index of correspondents among the general correspondence and invitations is available for consultation in the Manuscript Division Reading Room. It is also included in the Library's microfilm edition of the papers.

Approximately seven hundred typewritten transcripts, primarily of Webster's correspondence held by the New Hampshire Historical Society, are placed at the end of the Correspondence series. They were the gift of Charles Halstead Van Tyne who published *The Letters of Daniel Webster* in 1902. A card index of this transcribed correspondence is available in the Manuscript Division Reading Room. The transcripts and index have not been microfilmed.

An [Addition](#) series of the Webster Papers was created in 1978 and expanded in 1997. It consists of original material acquired by the Library since 1968 and miscellaneous items which were not included in the Library's microfilm edition of 1967, such as facsimiles, copies of letters, an engraving, and printed matter. The original material consists of approximately fifteen items of correspondence, principally by Webster, and notes for his speech of March 7, 1850, on the Compromise of 1850.

Related Material

Also available for consultation in the Manuscript Division Reading Room is a comprehensive microfilm edition reproducing about seventeen thousand Webster and Webster related manuscripts copied from collections in scores of repositories in the United States and abroad. The microfilm has four components: correspondence, business papers, congressional documents, and State Department records. It is the product of a collaboration between the Dartmouth College Library and University Microfilms. An accompanying *Guide and Index to the Microfilm* (1971) was edited by Charles M. Wiltse.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in two series:

- [Correspondence, 1800-1874, n.d.](#)
- [Addition, 1812-1900, n.d.](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-16

REEL 1-8

Series

Correspondence, 1800-1874, n.d.

Letters to Webster and letters by and about him.

Arranged in groups as general correspondence, invitations, and selected transcripts and chronologically therein. A card index is available on reel 8 and in the Manuscript Division Reading Room.

Microfilm edition available. Shelf no. 13,857.

BOX 16

not filmed

Addition, 1812-1900, n.d.

Correspondence, notes for a speech, and miscellaneous facsimiles and copies of letters, speeches, printed matter, and engraved portraits.

Organized alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|
| BOX 1-16 REEL 1-8 | Correspondence, 1800-1874, n.d. Letters to Webster and letters by and about him. Arranged in groups as general correspondence, invitations, and selected transcripts and chronologically therein. A card index is available on reel 8 and in the Manuscript Division Reading Room. Microfilm edition available. Shelf no. 13,857. |
| BOX 1 REEL 1 | General 18 Mar. 1804-13 June 1825 |
| BOX 2 REEL 1 | 17 July 1825-28 Dec. 1829 |
| BOX 3 REEL 2 | 2 Jan. 1830-27 Mar. 1833 |
| BOX 4 REEL 2 | 1 Apr. 1833-6 June 1836 |
| BOX 5 REEL 3 | 11 June 1836-12 Mar. 1841 |
| BOX 6 REEL 3 | 15 Mar. 1841-6 June 1842 |
| BOX 7 REEL 4 | 9 June 1842-13 Sept. 1845 |
| BOX 8 REEL 4 | 16 Sept. 1845-5 June 1849 |
| BOX 9 REEL 5 | 27 June 1849-25 Sept. 1850 |
| BOX 10 REEL 5 | 27 Sept. 1850-6 Aug. 1851 |
| BOX 11 REEL 6 | 17 Aug. 1851-19 July 1852 |
| BOX 12 REEL 6 | 24 July 1852-28 July 1874 |
| | Undated |
| BOX 13 REEL 7 | Undated |
| BOX 14 REEL 7 | Invitations, 1830-1852 |
| BOX 14 REEL 8 | Card index to Containers 1-14 Originals available in Manuscript Division Reading Room. Typewritten transcripts of selected letters |
| BOX 15 not filmed | 1800-1860 (7 folders) |

Correspondence, 1800-1874, n.d.

Container

Contents

BOX 16

Undated

BOX 16

Addition, 1812-1900, n.d.

not filmed

Correspondence, notes for a speech, and miscellaneous facsimiles and copies of letters, speeches, printed matter, and engraved portraits.

Organized alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

BOX 16

Correspondence, 1812-1852

Miscellany, 1826-1883, n.d.

Notes for speech on Compromise of 1850, 7 Mar. 1850, with cover letter, 1900