Guide to the George Jacob Abbot Papers

MS 28

Adapted by Thomas J. Connors

May 1979

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Paging Instructions

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Overview

REPOSITORY: Manuscripts and Archives
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Fax: (203) 432-7441

CALL NUMBER: MS 28

CREATOR: Abbot, George Jacob, 1812-1879.

TITLE: George Jacob Abbot papers

DATES: 1811–1901

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1.5 Linear Feet (4 boxes, 1 folio)

LANGUAGE(S): The materials are in English.

SUMMARY: Minister and diplomat. Correspondence largely relating to Abbot's service as secretary to Daniel Webster and as an agent of the State Department in England and Canada. Included are 104 letters by Daniel Webster as well as copies of several of his speeches. State Department papers concerning controversies with England (1837-1852), newspaper clippings about Daniel Webster and miscellaneous receipts, inventories and photographs make up the remainder of the papers.

FINDING AID LINK: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, use the following address:
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Administrative Information

Provenance

Gift of Wilkie Bushby in 1955.
Information about Access

The materials are open for research.

Ownership & Copyright

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Cite As

George Jacob Abbot Papers (MS 28). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

Biographical / Historical

George Jacob Abbot, son of the Rev. Jacob Abbot, a Unitarian minister, was born in Windham, N.H. He graduated from Harvard College in 1835, after which he opened a boys' school in Washington, D.C. After a clerkship in the State Department, he became private secretary to Daniel Webster, this during Webster's second term as Secretary of State (1850-1852).

Abbot served as United States consul at Bradford and Sheffield, England, from 1864 to 1870 and, returning to the U.S., was for several years a professor at the Theological School at Meadville, P.A. In 1877 he took another diplomatic position at Goderich and Windsor, Canada, which he maintained until his death.

More information as to Abbot and family may be found in Leonard A. Morrison's History of Windham in New Hampshire, 1719-1883 (Boston: Cupples, Upham and Co., 1883).

Description of the Collection

The George Jacob Abbot Papers consist mainly of correspondence, drafts of speeches, unfinished drafts of U.S. State Department papers, newspaper clippings and other materials related to Abbot's employment as secretary to Daniel Webster and to his diplomatic service. There are some Abbot family materials among the papers as well.

The correspondence consists of approximately 700 letters, of which 104 (1811-1852) are by Webster and 74 are to him, and 247 (1842-1878) are by Abbot and 175 to him. Nearly half of Abbot's letters were written during his diplomatic service in England and Canada. Among the important correspondents are Thomas Stephenson, U.S. Consular Agent; Emory McClintock, Vice-consul at Sheffield; Prentiss Mellen, first Chief Justice of Maine; and judges Charles Jackson, James Kent, and Joseph Story. The correspondence is arranged chronologically, but the letters are individually catalogued in the Department's manuscript catalogue, and a list of correspondents follow the folder listing.

The speeches include copies of Webster's Fourth of July speech of 1851 and a speech delivered before the New York Historical Society in 1852. There are several copies of other speeches as well as notes and fragments pertaining to them. These are untitled and undated.

The State Department drafts relate to the British attack on the American steamer Caroline in 1837, to the fisheries dispute with England in 1851, and to the case of John S. Thrasher, and American being held in Cuba, 1851-1852.

The newspaper clippings are mainly reviews of Webster's speeches and reports of his political activities.
Other materials, presumably related to Abbot’s secretarial duties, include receipts, inventories, lists of names and photographs. A folio contains a certificate of appointment, signed by Millard Fillmore and Daniel Webster, of George King Rogers to the U.S. Consulate in France and a chart of the square mileage of each state and territory of the United States.

Not directly related to Abbot’s employment is a draft deposition (ca. 1776) by Peter Green concerning loyalist activities in the colonies.

Abbot’s family is represented by a manuscript sermon of his father, Rev. Jacob Abbot (1768-1834); "A Record of the Last Days of Daniel Webster," an unpublished manuscript by Mary J. C. Throop, Abbot’s daughter (b. 1842); and by school examination papers of Anna Abbot Throop, Abbot’s granddaughter (b. 1869). A printed sermon, Discourse Delivered in Windham, N.H., November 5, 1834, at the Internment of Rev. Jacob Abbot (Nashua, N.H.: Alfred Beard, 1835), has been transferred to the Yale Divinity Library.

The Daniel Webster materials were presumably gathered by Abbot for use in preparing the six volumes of the Works of Daniel Webster (Boston, 1851). Most of Edward Everett’s letters to Abbot refer to the editing and production of the Works. Apparently the Webster papers were also used by Mrs. Throop in preparing her manuscript.

The George Jacob Abbot Papers were given to Yale University Library by Wilkie Bushby in September 1955.

Arrangement

Arranged in five sections: Correspondence, Writings, Photographs, Printed Matter, and Newspaper Clippings.
### Collection Contents

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<td>Chart of the square mileage of each state and territory of the United States in 1793 and 1851</td>
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### Appendix

**List of Correspondents**

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U.S. Census Office [3], 1851
U.S. Department of the Interior [1] (folio), 1851
U.S. Department of State [18], 1850-1857
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Access Terms

Fisheries -- United States
Canada -- Foreign relations -- United States
Canada
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New England
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