

William Maxwell Evarts Papers

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Prepared by David Mathisen
Revised by Patrick Kerwin

Collection Summary

Title: William Maxwell Evarts Papers

Span Dates: 1667-1918

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1877-1891)

ID No.: MSS20032

Creator: Evarts, William Maxwell, 1818-1901

Extent: 12,500 items ; 61 containers plus 1 oversize ; 12.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Lawyer, United States senator from New York, and United States secretary of state and attorney general. Correspondence, diary, journal, account books, minute book, printed material, drafts of memoranda, and a journal of college reading relating mainly to New York state, national, and international politics from the Civil War to the 1890s.

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.

People

Angell, James Burrill, 1829-1916--Correspondence.
Astor, John Jacob, 1822-1890--Correspondence.
Bates, Edward, 1793-1869--Correspondence.
Blaine, James Gillespie, 1830-1893--Correspondence.
Choate, Joseph Hodges, 1832-1917--Correspondence.
Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889--Trials, litigation, etc.
Evarts, William Maxwell, 1818-1901.
Field, Cyrus W. (Cyrus West), 1819-1892--Correspondence.
Garfield, James A. (James Abram), 1831-1881--Correspondence.
Hay, John, 1838-1905--Correspondence.
Hoar, E. R. (Ebenezer Rockwood), 1816-1895--Correspondence.
Johnson, Andrew, 1808-1875--Impeachment.
Morton, Levi P. (Levi Parsons), 1824-1920--Correspondence.
Phelps, Edward John, 1822-1900--Correspondence.
Seward, William H. (William Henry), 1801-1872--Correspondence.
Tilden, Samuel J. (Samuel Jones), 1814-1886.
Trescot, William Henry, 1822-1898--Correspondence.
Tyler, Julia Gardiner, 1820-1889--Correspondence.
Winthrop, Robert C. (Robert Charles), 1809-1894--Correspondence.

Organizations

Geneva Arbitration Tribunal.
International Monetary Conference (1878 : Paris, France)
Peabody Education Fund.
United States. Department of Justice. Office of the Attorney General.
United States. Department of State.

Subjects

Bimetallism.
Diplomatic and consular service, American.
Emigration and immigration law--United States.
Patronage, Political--United States.
Pensions--United States.
Practice of law--New York (State)
Presidents--United States--Election--1876.

Presidents--United States--Election--1880.
Statue of Liberty (New York, N.Y.)
Statues--New York (State)--New York.
Suffrage--United States.
Tariff--United States.

Places

China--Emigration and immigration.
New York (State)--Politics and government--1865-1950.
United States--Emigration and immigration.
United States--Foreign relations--1865-1898.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Claims.
United States--Politics and government--1865-1900.

Occupations

Cabinet officers.
Lawyers.
Senators, U.S. Congress--New York (State)

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of William Maxwell Evarts, lawyer, United States senator from New York, and United States secretary of state and attorney general, were deposited in the Library of Congress, 1939-1942, by Effingham Evarts, and converted to a gift in 1943. Additions were purchased in 1965 and 1986.

Processing History

The papers of William Maxwell Evarts were arranged and described in 1965. The collection was expanded and revised in 1987. The finding aid was revised in 2004 and 2010.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Maxwell Evarts are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William Maxwell Evarts Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|--------------|--|
| 1818, Feb. 6 | Born, Boston, Mass. |
| 1833-1837 | Attended Yale University, New Haven, Conn. |
| 1836 | Cofounder of <i>Yale Literary Magazine</i> |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 1837 | Read law, office of Horace Everett, Windsor, Vt. |
| 1841 | Admitted to the bar in New York Began law practice |
| 1843 | Married Helen Minerva Wardner |
| 1849-1853 | Assistant district attorney, Southern District of New York |
| 1860 | Delegate to Republican national convention, Chicago, Ill. |
| 1863 | Sent to England by United States to help prevent equipping of the Confederate navy by the British |
| 1868 | Counsel for the defense, impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson |
| 1868-1869 | Attorney general |
| 1872 | Represented the United States in <i>Alabama</i> claims case, Geneva, Switzerland |
| 1877 | Chief counsel for Republican Party, Hayes-Tilden presidential election dispute |
| 1877-1881 | Secretary of state |
| 1881 | Delegate, International Monetary Conference, Paris, France |
| 1885-1891 | United States senator from New York |
| 1901, Feb. 28 | Died, New York, N.Y. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Maxwell Evarts (1818-1901) span the years 1667-1918 with the bulk of the material dated 1877-1891. They consist of correspondence, a diary, certificates, genealogical material, indexes, a notebook, docket, memoranda, letterbooks, account books, minute book, printed matter, financial material, and a journal. The bulk of the collection relates to Evarts's tenure as secretary of state, 1877-1881, and United States senator, 1885-1891.

The focus of the collection is on New York state and national politics and international affairs in which Evarts participated. Main topics include Evarts's early law practice, cases in which he represented the United States during the Civil War, the trial of Jefferson Davis, impeachment of Andrew Johnson, the Geneva Arbitration Tribunal of 1871-1872, the election of 1876, appointment of ambassadors, Chinese immigration, presidential campaign of 1880, International Monetary Conference of 1878, the Peabody education fund, dedication of the Statue of Liberty, patronage, suffrage, pensions, tariffs, and the Force Bill that provided for the collection of duties on imported goods.

Correspondents include James Burrill Angell, John Jacob Astor, Edward Bates, James Gillespie Blaine, Joseph Hodges Choate, Cyrus W. Field, James A. Garfield, John Hay, Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, Levi P. Morton, Edward John Phelps, William H. Seward, William Henry Trescot, Julia Gardiner Tyler, and Robert C. Winthrop.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Bound Correspondence and Other Documents, 1842-1908](#)

- Miscellany, 1667-1918
- Oversize, 1877-1879

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-54

Series

Bound Correspondence and Other Documents, 1842-1908

Correspondence and other documents.
Arranged chronologically in bound volumes.

BOX 55-62

Miscellany, 1667-1918

Correspondence, a diary, certificates, genealogical material, indexes, a notebook, docket, memoranda, letterbooks, account books, minute book, printed matter, financial material, and a journal.
Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein.

BOX OV 1

Oversize, 1877-1879

Certificates.
Arranged and described according to the series, folders, and containers from which the items were removed.

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1-54 | Bound Correspondence and Other Documents, 1842-1908 Correspondence and other documents. Arranged chronologically in bound volumes. |
| BOX 1 | 1842, Jan. 26-1872, June 20 |
| BOX 2 | 1872, June 22-Oct. 12 |
| BOX 3 | 1872, Oct. 14-1874, June 10 |
| BOX 4 | 1874, Dec. 16-1877, Mar. 11 |
| BOX 5 | 1877 |
| BOX 5 | Mar. 12-Apr. 5 |
| BOX 6 | Apr. 6-June 4 |
| BOX 7 | June 5-July 8 |
| BOX 8 | July 9-Sept. 6 |
| BOX 9 | Sept. 7-Oct. 20 |
| BOX 10 | Oct. 22-Dec. 7 |
| BOX 11 | 1877, Dec. 8-1878, Jan. 18 |
| BOX 12 | 1878 |
| BOX 12 | Jan. 19-Feb. 21 |
| BOX 13 | Feb. 22-Apr. 7 |
| BOX 14 | Apr. 8-May 24 |
| BOX 15 | May 25-June 27 |
| BOX 16 | 1878 |
| BOX 16 | June 28-Aug. 14 |
| BOX 17 | Aug. 15-Oct. 15 |
| BOX 18 | Oct. 17-Dec. 2 |
| BOX 19 | 1878, Dec. 3-1879, Jan. 24 |
| BOX 20 | 1879 |
| BOX 20 | Jan. 25-Mar. 11 |
| BOX 21 | Mar. 12-Apr. 30 |
| BOX 22 | May 1-June 17 |
| BOX 23 | June 19-Aug. 25 |
| BOX 24 | Aug. 2-Nov. 5 |
| BOX 25 | 1879, Nov. 6-1880, Jan. 3 |
| BOX 26 | 1880 |
| BOX 26 | Jan. 4-Feb. 19 |
| BOX 27 | Feb. 20-May 6 |
| BOX 28 | 1880, May 7-1881, Jan. 11 |
| BOX 29 | 1881, Jan. 17-1882, Jan. 28 |
| BOX 30 | 1882, Jan. 29-Nov. 25 |
| BOX 31 | 1882, Dec. 9-1884, Mar. 10 |
| BOX 32 | 1884, Mar. 13-1885, Jan. 17 |
| BOX 33 | 1885 |

Bound Correspondence and Other Documents, 1842-1908

Container

Contents

| | |
|-----------|---|
| BOX 33 | Jan. 21-Apr. 23 |
| BOX 34 | Apr. 25-Dec. 18 |
| BOX 35 | 1885, Dec. 21-1886, Jan. 22 |
| BOX 36 | 1886 |
| BOX 36 | Jan. 23-Mar. 1 |
| BOX 37 | Mar. 2-Apr. 20 |
| BOX 38 | Apr. 21-May 28 |
| BOX 39 | May 29-Aug. 13 |
| BOX 40 | Aug. 20-Dec. 30 |
| BOX 41 | 1886, Dec. 31-1887, Jan. 18 |
| BOX 42 | 1887 |
| BOX 42 | Jan. 19-Feb. 3 |
| BOX 43 | Feb. 4-Feb. 17 |
| BOX 44 | Feb. 18- Mar. 18 |
| BOX 45 | 1887, Mar. 23-1890, July 17 |
| BOX 46 | 1890, July 19-Nov. 23 |
| BOX 47 | 1890, Nov. 26-1891, Feb. 3 |
| BOX 48 | 1891 |
| BOX 48 | Feb. 4-Mar. 22 |
| BOX 49 | Mar. 23-May 14 |
| BOX 50 | May 15-July 13 |
| BOX 51 | July 15-Sept. 12 |
| BOX 52 | Sept. 14-Nov. 28 |
| BOX 53 | 1891, Nov. 29-1897, Feb. 5 |
| BOX 54 | 1897, Feb. 6-1908, Nov. 16 |
| BOX 55-62 | Miscellany, 1667-1918 Correspondence, a diary, certificates, genealogical material, indexes, a notebook, docketts, memoranda, letterbooks, account books, minute book, printed matter, financial material, and a journal. Arranged alphabetically by type of material and chronologically therein. |
| BOX 55 | Account books and checkbooks, 1872-1880, undated |
| BOX 55 | Certificates, 1877-1879 <i>See Oversize</i> |
| BOX 55 | Clippings, 1877-1891, undated |
| BOX 55 | Docketts, 1877-1891 (3 folders) |
| BOX 55 | Family correspondence, 1829, 1839 |
| BOX 55 | Genealogical material, 1893, undated |
| BOX 56 | General correspondence, 1852-1889, 1896 (?), 1918, undated (11 folders) |
| BOX 56 | Grant Monument Fund, account book, 1892-1900 |
| BOX 57 | Indexes, undated (4 folders) |
| BOX 57 | Journals |
| BOX 57 | 1834 |
| BOX 58 | 1863 |

Miscellany, 1667-1918

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 58 | Letterbooks |
| BOX 58 | 1877, May 22-1878, May 20 (2 folders) |
| BOX 59 | 1879, May 10-1881, Mar. 2 (2 folders) |
| BOX 59 | Leupp, Charles M., estate, 1859-1877 |
| BOX 59 | Minutes, first meeting of the Board of Trustees, New York and Northern Land and Improvement Co., Sherman Evarts, secretary, 1889 |
| BOX 60 | Miscellany, 1667, 1863-1891, undated (3 folders) |
| BOX 60 | Notebook, undated |
| BOX 60 | Printed matter |
| BOX 60 | 1835, 1861-1872 |
| BOX 61 | 1873-1892 (6 folders) |
| BOX 62 | Undated |
| BOX 62 | Register of documents sent, Forty-ninth Congress, 1886-1887 |
| BOX 62 | Republican Territorial Central Committee, 1872-1878 |
| BOX OV 1 | Oversize, 1877-1879 Certificates. Arranged and described according to the series, folders, and containers from which the items were removed. |
| BOX OV 1 | Miscellany |
| BOX OV 1 | Certificates, 1877-1879 (Container 55) |