

Robert Garrett Family Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff



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Collection Summary

Title: Robert Garrett Family Papers

Span Dates: 1778-1925

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1830-1863)

ID No.: MSS21980

Creator: Garrett, Robert, 1783-1857

Extent: 29,000 items ; 88 containers ; 38 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Garrett family of Baltimore, Md. Family members represented include Robert Garrett, railroad official, financier, and merchant, and his son John W. Garrett, railroad official and financier. Correspondence, business documents, and other papers relating to mercantile affairs in Baltimore, Maryland, and to Robert Garrett & Sons and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

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

Atkinson, J. J. (Joshua J.)--Correspondence.

Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889.

Davis, Varina, 1826-1906--Correspondence.

Garrett family.

Garrett, Henry S. (Henry Stouffer), 1818-1867. Henry S. Garrett papers.

Garrett, John W. (John Work), 1820-1884. John W. Garrett papers.

Garrett, Robert, 1783-1857.

Latrobe, John H. B. (John Hazlehurst Boneval), 1803-1891--Correspondence.

McHenry, James, 1817-1891--Correspondence.

Morgan, J. Pierpont (John Pierpont), 1837-1913--Correspondence.

Parker, William, 1807-1868--Correspondence.

Peabody, George, 1795-1869--Correspondence.

Peto, S. Morton (Samuel Morton), Sir, 1809-1889--Correspondence.

Thomas, Philip E. (Philip Evan), 1776-1861--Correspondence.

Organizations

Baltimore and Ohio Employes Relief Association.

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company.

George Peabody & Co.

Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Johns Hopkins University.

Johns Hopkins University. Peabody Institute.

Lafayette College (Easton, Pa.)

Mount Holyoke Female Seminary.

Princeton University.

Robert Benson and Company--Correspondence.

Robert Garrett & Sons.

United States. Army--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Young Men's Christian Associations of North America.

Subjects

Art museums.

Banks and banking--Maryland--Baltimore.

Brokers--Maryland--Baltimore.

Charities--Maryland--Baltimore.
Commission merchants--Maryland--Baltimore.
Farm produce--Maryland.
Financial crises--United States--19th century.
Grocery trade--Maryland--Baltimore.
Harbors--Maryland--Baltimore.
Martial law--United States.
Merchants--Maryland--Baltimore.
Mexican War, 1846-1848.
Railroads--United States.
Summer resorts--Maryland--Garrett County.
Telecommunication--United States.
Telegraph--United States.
Transportation--United States.
Wagon trains--Maryland.
Wagon trains--Pennsylvania.

Places

Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce--California--San Francisco.
Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce--England--London.
Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce--Europe.
Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce--Louisiana--New Orleans.
Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce--South America.
Baltimore (Md.)--Commerce.
Europe--Commerce--Maryland--Baltimore.
London (England)--Commerce--South America.
Maryland--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
New Orleans (La.)--Commerce--Maryland--Baltimore.
San Francisco (Calif.)--Commerce--Maryland--Baltimore.
South America--Commerce--Maryland--Baltimore.
United States--Economic conditions--To 1865.
United States--Economic policy--To 1933.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Finance.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
United States--Politics and government--19th century.

Occupations

Financiers.
Merchants.
Railroad officials.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of the Robert Garrett family were deposited in the Library of Congress by Robert Garrett from 1922 to 1953 and by John W. Garrett in 1943.

Processing History

The Garrett family papers were arranged and described in 1953. The collection was reprocessed in 2001 and the finding aid revised in 2008.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

Restrictions apply governing the use, photoduplication, or publication of items in this collection. Consult a reference librarian in the Manuscript Division for information concerning these restrictions.

Preferred Citation

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

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the family of Robert Garrett (1783-1857) span the years 1778-1925, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1830-1863. The collection documents the business policies of Robert Garrett & Sons in connection with its mercantile trade, banking house founded in 1839, and ventures in transportation and communication that won for it the position of the leading firm in Baltimore for the period. Reflected are the competition and contributions made by the company in the development of its wholesale grocery, produce, forwarding, and commission business in Baltimore. Robert Garrett's vision to channel the western trade of farmers through the port of Baltimore is richly documented. The papers provide glimpses of the establishment of wagon trains moving over the turnpikes across the Allegheny Mountains connecting with Pennsylvania canals and rivers, as well as the penetration of the area by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, chartered in 1827. To meet rapidly developing demands made on trade by the increasing population of the Ohio Valley, Robert Garrett established commercial communications with New Orleans, San Francisco, South America, and Europe. Robert Garrett & Sons not only promoted improved overland transportation, but helped to establish shipping lines from Baltimore to other ports. The entrance of Robert Garrett's sons, John W. and Henry S. Garrett, into his business brought added vigor to the organization; they pursued the policies formulated by their father. To facilitate business operations, they established their own banking house and became the American correspondent of George Peabody and Company of London and of other well-known firms. These operations gradually overshadowed their mercantile and shipping interests.

Documented in the collection are the major changes that resulted in the administration of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad with the election of John W. Garrett as president in 1858. During the Civil War, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was a large factor in the movement of Union troops and supplies. Under John W. Garrett's administration, summer resorts were established at Deer Park and Oakland in Garrett County, Maryland. By 1871, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had entered the Pittsburgh area and three years later established through service between Baltimore and Chicago. Under the administration of Robert Garrett as president from 1884 to 1887, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad experienced greater expansion and activities.

Before the Civil War, John W. Garrett emerged as a national figure, and in 1872 he was prominently mentioned as a candidate for president. His correspondence with Robert Benson and Company, George Peabody, J. Pierpont Morgan, James McHenry (1817-1891), Sir S. Morton Peto, and others relates to the financing of the Civil War and the construction afterward of railroads. There is material on the establishment of cable and telegraph lines. Among the correspondents connected with railroads were Philip E. Thomas, Wm. G. Harrison, William Parker, J. J. Atkinson, and John H. B. Latrobe.

Other business correspondence relates to the financial panics of 1837 and 1857, subtreasury measures, stay laws, and the Mexican War. Civil War topics include John W. Garrett's support of Lincoln and interaction with cabinet members, as well as his influence in procuring the release of citizens of Maryland who were under military arrest. Correspondence with Varina Davis, wife of Jefferson Davis, documents his role in her efforts to free the Confederate president from Fortress Monroe after his capture.

The papers also contain data on the education of members of the family, including at Mt. Holyoke and Lafayette colleges, Princeton and Johns Hopkins universities, and other institutions. Among the philanthropic interests represented are the

Baltimore and Ohio Employees Relief Association, the YMCA, Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Peabody Institute, art galleries, and other local charities.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is organized by type of material with the largest portion arranged in a chronological file. An [appendix](#) to this finding aid lists additional correspondents according to their profession, association, or office.

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BOX 4	Oct. 1832-Apr. 1832
BOX 5	May 1833-Oct. 1833
BOX 6	Nov. 1833-Feb. 1834
BOX 7	Mar. 1834-Sept. 1834
BOX 8	Oct. 1834-Mar. 1835
BOX 9	Apr. 1835-Dec. 1835
BOX 10	Jan. 1836-July 1836
BOX 11	Aug. 1836-Dec. 1836
BOX 12	Jan. 1837-May 1837
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BOX 28	Sept. 1842-Dec. 1842
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BOX 84	1885-1894, 1900-1925, undated
BOX 84	Miscellany
BOX 84	Addresses and speeches

Container List

Container

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BOX 85	Bills and receipts, 1895-1899
BOX 85	Broadsides
BOX 85	Concert
BOX 85	Menus
BOX 85	Soups
BOX 85	Cards and invitations
BOX 85	Correspondence, 1897
BOX 85	Genealogical and family history, 1893-1894
BOX 85	Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
BOX 85	1864-1882
BOX 86	1883, undated
BOX 86	Life of John W. Garrett and Robert Garrett
BOX 86	Maps and diagrams
BOX 86	Peabody Donation Fund
BOX 86	Poetry
BOX 86	<i>Prices Current of American Products</i> , 1831-1884
BOX 87	Printed matter
BOX 87	Maryland and Baltimore
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BOX 87	Miscellany
BOX 87	Newspapers and clippings
BOX 87	Reports, bulletins, sermons, and miscellaneous periodicals
BOX 88	Reports and periodicals, including
BOX 88	<i>Godey's Lady Book</i> , 1841-1854
BOX 88	<i>Christian World</i> , 1843-1844

Appendix: Selected Correspondents

Members of Congress:

- Oakes Ames
- Thomas Hart Benton
- William E. Chandler
- John G. Chapman
- Samuel S. Cox
- Garrett Davis
- John L. Dawson
- Stephen A. Douglas
- Stephen B. Elkins
- Edward Everett
- Charles J. Faulkner
- William P. Fessenden
- Meredith P. Gentry
- Nathan Goff
- William Gwinn
- Benjamin C. Howard
- Charles J. Ingersoll
- Robert M. McLane
- Thomas M. T. McKenna
- Charles M. Reed
- Robert R. Reed
- William Schley
- Thaddeus Stevens
- Thomas Swann
- Benjamin Tappan
- Allen G. Thurman
- Lyman Trumbull
- Robert C. Winthrop, Jr.
- Henry Wise

Cabinet Officers

- George Bancroft
- Montgomery Blair
- George S. Boutwell
- Salmon P. Chase
- Henry Clay
- John M. Clayton
- Simon Cameron
- Howell Cobb
- John A. J. Creswell
- William M. Evarts
- Hamilton Fish
- Nathan Goff, Jr.
- James Guthrie
- Joseph Holt
- John P. Kennedy
- Robert Todd Lincoln
- Louis McLane
- George M. Robeson
- William H. Seward
- John Sherman

- Edwin M. Stanton
- Roger B. Taney
- Daniel Webster
- Gideon Welles

Diplomats:

- Reverdy Johnson
- Robert C. Schenck

Vice Presidents:

- Schuyler Colfax
- Thomas A. Hendricks
- Levi P. Morton

Presidents:

- James A. Garfield
- Ulysses S. Grant
- Rutherford B. Hayes
- Andrew Johnson
- Abraham Lincoln (copy)

Army and Navy Officers:

- Leslie Combs
- John A. Dix
- Robert E. Lee
- Alfred Mordecai
- David D. Porter
- John M. Schofield
- William T. Sherman
- Lew Wallace
- William H. Wiegel
- John E. Wool

Journalists:

- Francis P. Blair
- Charles A. Dana
- J. D. B. DeBow
- Horace Greeley
- Horace Porter
- Henry J. Raymond
- William W. Seaton
- J. Watson Sebb

Teachers and Ministers:

- William C. Cattell
- James, Cardinal Gibbons
- Daniel Coit Gilman
- G. K. Kane

Scientists:

- Spencer F. Baird
- James C. Booth
- Cyrus W. Fields
- Matthew F. Maury

Artists:

- Albert Bierstadt

- William W. Story

Railroad Executives:

- J. T. A. Atkinson
- Erastus Corning
- William G. Harrison
- John H. B. Latrobe
- William Parker
- Philip E. Thomas

Philanthropists and Capitalists:

- August Belmont
- George W. Child
- William W. Corcoran
- J. Pierpont Morgan
- George Peabody
- Enoch Pratt

Business Firms: Brazil Merchants:

- Maxwell & Wright
- Kuster Myers & Co.
- Rostron Dutton & Co.
- Z. Le Brenton & Co.

Business Firms: San Francisco:

- Hussy Bond & Hale
- Cassard & Lamb
- Ogden & Haynes
- Dickenson Buckler & Co.

Business Firms: British Merchants and Bankers:

- George Peabody and Company
- Hugh Cassement & Son
- Boyd & Brown
- Allen & Anderson
- James McHenry
- Richardson Bros. & Co.
- Anson Hardy
- Overend Gurney & Co.
- J. & E. Cordevry