

**AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Washington, George, Papers, 1754-1958

LOCATION(S):

Mss. boxes "W"
Folio vols. "W"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

one manuscript box (ca. 50 items); two folio volumes

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For a biography of Washington, see *DAB*, vol. 19, pp. 509-526.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

Gifts of William C. Arthur; Nathaniel Paine, 1880; Edward R. Warren, 1934; Edward L. Store, 1934; Charles Henry Taylor, 1935; Jesse Merritt, 1943; Albert S. Osborn, 1943; Ruth H. Frost, 1953; Dorothy Winslow Lowery, 1954; Wilbur C. Searle, 1969; Thomas R. Mountain, 2004

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

George Washington (1732-1799) was a planter, soldier, and first president of the United States.

This collection of papers contains original materials, copies (photostats and handwritten) and facsimiles of a wide variety of material for the period 1754 to 1830. The original documents include receipts; certificates of discharge from the Continental Army; Washington's letter to Thomas Paine (1737-1809) thanking him for an oration delivered in his honor in 1779; his letter to General Artemas Ward (1727-1800), 17 November 1775, with orders for the erection of fortifications against an expected British march from Boston; his letter to the Second Continental Congress, 12 August 1775, respecting the payment of soldiers and proposed expeditions; and a letter to the Chief Justice of the United States, John Jay (1745-1829), 17 March 1791, in regard to some papers (these "papers" concerned the prosecution of a gang of counterfeiters).

The photostat copies, handwritten copies, and facsimiles include an honorary degree given to President Washington by Washington College, Chestertown, Md.; Washington's letter to the Hebrew congregation in Newport, R.I., thanking them for their reception of him, c. 1790; facsimiles and analyses of his signature from the ages of 10 to 67; a memorandum to the will of his brother Lawrence Washington (1718-1752) providing for the division of his slaves among specific relatives, 1754; and Washington's letter to Governor Robert Dinwiddie (1693-1770) of Virginia, with a report of his losses during the

British expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1755 and blaming the "cowardice" of the British soldiers for the rout.

There are also copies of letters to General Artemas Ward in which Washington ordered him to send troops to Dorchester Heights, Mass., and to take command of the Continental forces remaining in Massachusetts, with a list of specific orders and instructions, 1776; Washington's answer to a bill of complaint filed against him concerning his executorship of a friend's estate, 1789; a letter written by a member of his entourage containing a description of the journey by water to New York for his inauguration in 1789; letters from Martha Washington (1731-1802) concerning family news; and material relating to the executorship of his estate to 1830.

The collection contains a manuscript and transcript copy of an address, dated 17 July 1795, prepared by "The Com^{tee} appointed to prepare a suitable address to the President of the United States." These two items, along with a title page, were bound into a folio volume. The title page reads: Original Manuscript Address / of / the Citizens of Portsmouth, New Hampshire / to / George Washington / President of the United States / stating their disapproval of the Treaty of 1783 with Great Britain, and asking / him to withhold his ratification until some of the articles / were modified, more especially those / in regard to / Trade, Commerce and Navigation / as it was the unanimous feeling of the inhabitants that the Treaty / favored Great Britain / Drawn up in the hand of / George Wentworth / Town Clerk / The Committee, whose original signatures are appended, are: / Jonathan Warner (Moderator) Richd. Champney / Richard Cutts Shannon Elip Ladd / Supply Clapp Thos. Manning / John Goddard / Portsmouth, N. H. / 1795.

There is also a letterbook, containing letters of Washington, for the period 1781 to 1786, as copied by Edward Everett (1794-1865) in 1846. The letters were written from Mt. Vernon, Va., primarily to Lt. Col. David Humphreys (1752-1818), soldier and statesman who had served as aide-de-camp to General Washington and remained a close friend. Included are Washington's recommendations of Humphreys to a federal post in 1781, accompanied by letters of introduction to notable people, and many letters written to Humphreys in France. These include the President's summary of the latest news in America (e.g., the Northwest Ordinance, increased Indian hostilities, the extension of inland navigation of rivers, various acts of Congress, his tour of the South in 1791, and the general well-being of the American government).

Several letters contain Washington's assessment of Shays' Rebellion, the importance of revising the Articles of Confederation together with his unwillingness to attend the Philadelphia Convention until it was sanctioned by the Confederation Congress, and, later, the importance of avoiding political entanglements with Europe. The volume also contains much information concerning the detention and proposed execution of British Captain Charles Asgill (1762-1823) in 1782 in retaliation for British "brutalities." The letters clarify Washington's role in this matter and contain his answers to subsequent allegations of cruelty.

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American Antiquarian Society
MANUSCRIPTS DEPARTMENT

GEORGE WASHINGTON, PAPERS, 1754-1958
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4	Release, 1773 August 9	negative photostat
5	Receipt, 1773 August 12	original w/explanatory material
6	Commission, 1775 June 19	positive photostat of mss. copy; facsimile (exact size) reproduced from the original on file in the Library of Congress
7	Letter, to his troops, 1775 June 20	positive photostat and mss. copy
8	Letter, to the 2 nd Continental Congress, 1775 August 12	original and negative photostat
9	Letter, to Gen. Artemas Ward, 1775 November 17	original; photocopy; negative photostat
10	Letter, to Gen. Artemas Ward, 1776 February 27	positive photostat
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