



New York State Archives

**New York State Governor George Clinton Gubernatorial and
Personal Records A0142**

New York State Archives
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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series reflects George Clinton's political, business, and personal life particularly during the Revolutionary War and early statehood period. Subjects include management of military troops; military engagements, fortifications, and maneuvers; handling of loyalists, spies, traitors, deserters, and prisoners; Indian relations and Indian military activities; gubernatorial elections; ratification of the Articles of Confederation and the U.S. Constitution; Vermont border controversy; evacuation of British troops from New York City; sales of forfeited land; and postwar British occupation of military posts.
Creator:	New York (State). Governor (1777-1795 : Clinton)
Title:	Governor George Clinton gubernatorial and personal records
Quantity:	35 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1725-1854
Bulk Date:	(bulk 1755-1817)
Series:	A0142

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Arrangement

Organized into 14 subseries: 1. Correspondence as Military Commander and Governor, 1763-1791; 2. Personal Correspondence, 1802-1812; 3. Correspondence Regarding Administration of Clinton's Estate, 1812-1817; 4. Miscellaneous Business Records, 1755-1804; 5. Governor's Messages to and other Correspondence with the Legislature, 1777-1795; 6. Miscellaneous Records Filed Separately, Some as Duplicates, 1725-1854; 7. Broadside, 1777-1787; 8. Circular Letters from the Secretary of Congress, 1786-1788; 9. Miscellaneous Court, Political and Personal Records, ca. 1779-1804; 10. Memorandum and Account Books, 1758-1806; 11. Ulster County Judicial and Legal Records, 1771-1784; 12. Miscellaneous Business and Personal Records, 1757-1813; 13. Accounts and Related Documentation Concerning Administration of Clinton's Estate, ca. 1812-1820; and 14. Lists of Clinton Papers, ca. 1729-1800.

Records are chronological within each subseries.

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Scope and Content Note

This series contains correspondence, accounts, and related records concerning George Clinton's political, business, and personal life during his years as a public figure. The series, still in the arrangement imposed upon it in the 1800s, is now divided into 14 subseries.

Subseries 1: Correspondence as Military Commander and Governor, 1763-1791. These records document Clinton's public service during the Revolutionary War and early statehood period. The correspondence, and occasional resolutions of the Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York or the Committee of Safety, concern: recruitment, supply, and compensation of military troops; military engagements, fortifications, and maneuvers; activities of and actions taken against loyalists and spies; treatment and exchanges of prisoners; relations with Indians and Indian military activities; Clinton's election as first state governor; courts martial and punishments of deserters and traitors; consideration and ratification of the Articles of Confederation; Vermont border controversy; finances and taxation; establishment of state and national offices (eg. U.S. Treasury, 1778); selections of a capital city for New York State; evacuation of British troops from New York City; land surveys, grants, and claims, including sales of land forfeited by loyalists; the U.S. Constitution; and continued British occupation of military posts after the war.

The correspondence is often from state or national officials and military officers including: George Washington; Alexander Hamilton; John Jay; James Monroe; Henry Knox; and Joseph Brant. Clinton, or his nephew and secretary DeWitt Clinton, drafted replies to some of the incoming correspondence, often writing on the original document.

This subseries also contains a few documents related to Clinton's private business or family matters such as: land transactions; family health and other news; payment of debts; and condition of Clinton's farm.

The Public Papers of George Clinton (10 volumes, Albany, 1899-1914) prints no documents for the period January-April 1782. Numerous documents from that time period survive, though fire-damaged, and are found in boxes 30-34 (old volume 15). Use is restricted because of fire damage.

Subseries 2: Personal Correspondence, 1802-1812. These letters concern mostly business, legal, and family matters such as: leases or sales of land; payment of bonds or debts; relations with tenants and payment of rents; health of Clinton and his relatives and friends; law suits and other legal matters; and establishment of banks. Some of the correspondence concerns official matters during Clinton's last term as governor and during and after his term as vice president under Jefferson. These matters include: appointments and resignations; French activities in Louisiana; presidential and vice presidential nominations; and trade embargoes prior to the War of 1812, and the foreign policy of the Jefferson administration. Correspondents include

DeWitt Clinton, John Jacob Astor, and Edmond Charles Genet (who married Clinton's daughter Cornelia Tappen Clinton).

Subseries 3: Correspondence Regarding Administration of Clinton's Estate 1812-1817. This is correspondence of Matthias B. Tallmadge, executor of Clinton's estate. Most of the records concern settlement of the estate, but some deal with other Clinton and Tallmadge family and business matters. The letters discuss: partition of the estate and distribution of assets; surveys and sales of land from the estate; payment of debts to or by the estate; disagreements between Tallmadge and Edmond C. Genet over the share of the estate due to Genet's children; plans for Clinton's headstone and biography; general economic conditions and prices of goods; and division of the state's judicial districts and other political matters. Correspondents include Edmond C. Genet, John Jacob Astor, and George Clinton Genet (E.C. Genet's son and Clinton's grandson).

Subseries 4: Miscellaneous Business Records, 1755-1804. Accounts, bonds, receipts, correspondence, and related records document many of Clinton's financial dealings. The records include: bonds executed by Clinton or by others to Clinton; orders to pay; accounts of Clinton with others and accounts of others with Clinton; receipts for money received from Clinton for goods or services; accounts of travel expenses; and inventory of household items.

Subseries 5: Governor's Messages to and Other Correspondence With the Legislature, 1777-1795. This subseries consists of official communications between Clinton and the legislature. It includes copies or drafts of: Clinton's addresses at the opening of various legislative sessions; the legislature's responses to Clinton's messages; Clinton's replies to Senate and Assembly addresses; Congressional resolutions, letters from individuals, and other items submitted for the legislature's consideration; petitions and memorials to the legislature; and reports of legislative committees. The records concern: conduct of the Revolutionary War and relief for those affected by it; taxes, expenditures, and other financial matters; regulations on trade, commerce; compensation for war veterans or their families; state boundary settlements; relations with Indians; and violations of U.S.-claimed neutrality rights by Britain and France.

Subseries 6: Miscellaneous Records Filed Separately, Some as Duplicates, 1725-1854. These are accounts, bonds, correspondence, and other records which were not filed with records in previous subseries. Some are copies or drafts of documents in previous subseries, but many are not duplicates and thus fill some gaps in those subseries. The records concern: personal financial transactions and settlement of accounts; progress of the Revolutionary War effort; petitions for pardon of convicts or exchange of prisoners of war; law suits against or involving Clinton; Vermont border controversy; and speeches and notes concerning ratification of the Constitution of the United States at the New York State Convention held at Poughkeepsie, 1788.

Subseries 7: Broadside, 1777-1787. These consist mainly of printed resolves or reports of Congress. Topics include: treatment of prisoners of war; Vermont border controversy; the public debt and budget matters; and disposal of lands in the Western Territory.

Subseries 8: Circular Letters from the Secretary of Congress, 1786-1788. These are transmitted letters from Charles Thompson, Secretary of Congress, to Governor Clinton

enclosing Congressional acts or other information (enclosures not included). Items mentioned in the transmittal letters include: acts of Congress concerning the military, commerce, etc. and the "state of the representation in Congress" for various months.

Subseries 9: Miscellaneous Court, Political, and Personal Records, ca. 1779-1804. Fragments of court records include writs, depositions, and judgments. Other records concern official or personal business matters; some pertain to the State Legislature and bear the signature of Abraham Bancker, Clerk of the Senate. These records concern business matters, land transactions, and political appointments.

Subseries 10: Memorandum and Account Books, 1758-1806. Five small notebooks contain notes and accounts of receipts and expenditures, including rents from tenants on leased lands.

Subseries 11: Ulster County Judicial and Legal Records, 1771-1784. Five registers list cases in the Ulster County Court of Common Pleas, including names of litigants, dates, and other information varying between and within the volumes. (Clinton served as attorney in some cases heard by this court.) Also included is a list of accounts of the Sheriff of Ulster County against Clinton.

Subseries 12: Miscellaneous Business and Personal Records, 1757-1813. Accounts, bonds, receipts, and correspondence document business and other activities of Clinton. The records concern: various court cases with Clinton involved as attorney or litigant; land transactions; payments for goods or services; and accounts with individuals.

Subseries 13: Accounts and Related Documentation Concerning Administration of Clinton's Estate, ca. 1812-1820. These are apparently records of Matthias B. Tallmadge as administrator of Clinton's estate. They include accounts, deeds, contracts, and other records relevant to the settlements of the estate. The severe damage suffered in the 1911 fire makes it impossible to identify these documents fully.

Subseries 14: Lists of Clinton Papers, ca. 1729-1800. These are lists of some of the Clinton papers before they were reorganized into their current manuscript volume arrangement. They include: a large list (over 400 pages) of George Clinton's correspondence as military leader and governor of New York from about 1773 to the 1790s; unarranged; a 19-page list of mostly official George Clinton correspondence from 1790-1800; chronological; a list of 36 documents purchased by the State Library in 1882; most are correspondence of Charles Clinton, George's father, dating from 1729-1779; also, correspondence of James and Charles Clinton, George's brothers; and a list of the George Washington letters contained in Public Papers of George Clinton (10 volumes, 1899-1914).

One notable Clinton document is a letter written by George Washington to Clinton in 1783 congratulating him on the achievement of peace at the end of the war. A draft of Clinton's reply returning the compliment is on the verso.

A0142-00: This accretion consists of a single letter of Edward Livingston to Governor George Clinton, dated at New York, Sept. 24, 1803, regarding the appointment of a health officer in New York City.

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Related Information

Related Material

A3189Series A3189, Letterbook of Official Correspondence and Proclamations, contains a small amount of additional George Clinton records

A4681Series A4681, Papers Found on British Spy Major Andre ("Andre Papers"), was originally filed with this series. Letter to Governor George Clinton from Richard Morris, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Judicature, June 15, 1785, is published in Catherine S. Crary, ed., *The Price of Loyalty: Tory Writings from the Revolutionary Era* (New York: 1973), pp. 444-46. Letter concerns conviction of John Griffin for homicide committed in Westchester County in 1781, when a Patriot was hanged by members of DeLancey's Brigade.

Related Publications

Letter to Governor George Clinton from Richard Morris, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Judicature, June 15, 1785, is published in Catherine S. Crary, ed., *"The Price of Loyalty: Tory Writings from the Revolutionary Era"* (New York: 1973), pages 444-46. Letter concerns conviction of John Griffin for homicide committed in Westchester County in 1781, when a Patriot was hanged by members of DeLancey's Brigade.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Public Papers of George Clinton (10 volumes, Albany, 1899-1914) contains an alphabetical name and subject index to records in old manuscript volumes 1-18 (1775-1785, Subseries 1).

Calendar available in electronic format upon request.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Restricted: Because of severe burn damage to the records, researchers should first consult published sources (especially Public Papers of George Clinton) and the descriptive calendar available at the Archives.

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Records in old manuscript volumes 1-18 (Subseries 1, 1775-1785) are published in Public Papers of George Clinton (10 volumes, Albany, 1899-1914), with the exception of documents dated January-April 1782; available at the New York State Library, Albany, N.Y.

Many documents in Subseries 5, Governor's Messages, are published in New York State Messages From the Governors, Volume 2, ed. Charles Z. Lincoln, or in the Senate and Assembly Journals, available at the New York State Library, Albany, N.Y.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The state first acquired papers of George Clinton in 1853. An appropriations bill passed that year (Ch. 615) allotted \$2,500 to the secretary of state to purchase George Clinton correspondence and other papers. The papers, which had been on deposit with the secretary of state, were to be purchased for permanent deposit in the State Library. An additional \$500 was appropriated for "arranging, indexing, binding and lettering" of the papers. Orville L. Holley arranged the papers chronologically and bound them into 23 volumes. The state purchased additional Clinton papers in 1882. Clinton's grandson, George Washington Clinton, calendared, numbered in chronological order, and bound volumes 24-38 of the George Clinton papers. Volumes 39-48 were bound later. The records suffered extensive burn damage in the State Capitol Fire of 1911 and were subsequently disbound.

Resolution of Congress Transmitting the Proposed Federal Constitution to the New York State Legislature for Ratification, 1787. This item was removed from the series as part of the Freedom Train exhibit which traveled the state from January 1949 to February 1950 (L. 1948, Ch. 659).

New York State's First Governor George Clinton Honored, 1783. This item was removed from the series as part of the Freedom Train exhibit.

A0142-00: This accretion was received as a gift from the Fairfield Historical Society in 1996 but not accessioned until December 2000.

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Access Terms

- Vermont--Boundaries
- Correspondence
- New York (State)--Politics and government
- United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783
- Monitoring
- Governors
- New York (State)--History--Revolution, 1775-1783
- Governors--New York (State)--Powers and duties
- Legislating
- New York (State)--Boundaries
- Genet, Edmond Charles, 1763-1834
- New York (State). Executive Department
- Astor, John Jacob, 1763-1848.
- Washington, George, 1732-1799.
- Genet, George Clinton, 1791.
- New York (Colony). Provincial Congress
- Monroe, James, 1758-1831.
- Jay, John, 1745-1829.
- Brant, Joseph, 1742-1807.
- Clinton, George, 1739-1812
- New York (State). Governor (1801-1804 : Clinton)
- Tallmadge, Matthias B.
- Knox, Henry, 1750-1806
- Hamilton, Alexander, 1757-1804.