

PENNSSTATE



Inventory of the James Buchanan Papers, 1811-1865

Accession number: 1988-0015H
University Libraries
The Pennsylvania State University
Special Collections Library
Historical Collections and Labor Archives

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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Buchanan, James
Title: James Buchanan Papers, 1811-1865
Accession number: 1988-0015H
Extent: .39 cubic feet
Repository: Pennsylvania State University, University Libraries, Special Collections Library

Administrative Information

Access

Unrestricted access.

Preferred Citation

James Buchanan Papers, 1811-1865, Accession 1988-0015H, Historical Collections and Labor Archives, Special Collections Library, University Libraries, Pennsylvania State University.

Arrangement

The James Buchanan Papers are organized into four series: Presidential Documents, Financial Records, Letters, and Portraits.

The items are arranged chronologically within their series.

Biographical Note

James Buchanan was the fifteenth president of the United States (1857-1861), and a moderate Democrat whose efforts to find a compromise in the conflict between the North and the South failed to avert the Civil War (1861-1865).

James Buchanan was born 23 April 1791, near Mercersburg, Pa., the son of James Buchanan and Elizabeth Speer, both of Scottish Presbyterian stock from the north of Ireland. His father had immigrated to the United States in 1783 and worked as a storekeeper. Buchanan was educated at Dickinson College, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, graduating in 1809, and studied law in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He was admitted to the bar in 1812 and soon established a successful law practice. His gift for oratory led him to politics.

A Federalist, Buchanan served in the Pennsylvania legislature (1814-1816) and in the U.S. House of Representatives (1821-1831). When his party disintegrated in the 1820s, Buchanan associated himself with the emerging Democratic Party. He served as U.S. minister to St. Petersburg (1831-1833) for the Andrew Jackson administration, U.S. senator (1834-1845), and secretary of state (1845-1849) in the cabinet of President James K. Polk. The annexation of Texas and subsequent Mexican War took place during Buchanan's tenure as secretary of state.

Failing to receive the presidential nomination in 1844 and 1848, Buchanan retired from public service until 1853, when he was appointed minister to Britain by President Franklin Pierce. In Congress, Buchanan tended to side with the South, and, although he felt that slavery was morally wrong, he did not want the country to eliminate the institution by the "introduction of evils infinitely greater." Having consolidated his position in the South, Buchanan was nominated for president in 1856 and was elected. Upon leaving office (4 March 1861), Buchanan retired to Wheatland, his home near Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He died there on 1 June 1868.

Scope and Content

The James Buchanan Papers cover the entire span of his political career. They consists of a check payable to Joseph Ogelby, 1834; twenty-four letters and one envelope from Buchanan, 1811-1865; five engraved portraits of Buchanan at various stages of his life; an 1859 patent for land in Michigan to the widow of John Crocker for his service in the War of 1812; and the appointment of Friedrich Kuhne as Vice-Consul of the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg, 1859.

Index Terms

These materials are indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Pennsylvania State University. Researchers wishing to find related materials should search the catalog under these index terms.

Personal Name Subjects

Buchanan, James, 1791-1868 -- Correspondence

Buchanan, James, 1791-1868 -- Portraits

Crocker, John

Kuhne, Friedrich

Ogelby, Joseph

Corporate Subject

United States. President (1857-1861 : Buchanan)

Geographic Subjects

Pennsylvania -- History -- 19th century

United States -- History -- 19th century

Form/Genre Terms

Engravings

Land grants -- Michigan

Letters (correspondence)

Correspondents

Poinsett, Joel Roberts, 1779-1851

Container List

Presidential Documents Series

Presidential documents, 1859.

Box 1

Folder 4

Land patent, Warrant no. 71552 for 120 acres in Michigan, to Cynthia E. Crocker, widow of John Crocker, private, Captain Merrian's Company, New Hampshire Militia, War of 1812, 1 October 1859

Box 1

Letters patent, appointing Friedrich Kuhne as vice-consul of the Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg, 29 September 1859

Financial Records Series

Financial records, 1834.

Box 1

Folder 1

Bank draft for \$200 payable to Joseph Ogelby, on Bank of Pennsylvania, 23 April 1834

Letters Series

Letters, 1811-1865.

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Denmore, to Jacob Hibshman, 15 April 1811 [photostat]

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Lancaster, to Thomas Elder, 14 April 1819 [with typed transcript]

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Harrisburg, to James Kellog, Jr., Lewistown, Pa., 11 February 1828

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Lancaster, to J.L. Dunn, Reading, Pa., 12 June 1829

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Lancaster, to George Wolf, 2 November 1829 [photostat; original in Ellis P. Grove Collection, Penn State]

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, St. Petersburg, Russia, to Nathaniel Niles, 7 April 1833

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Washington, to George M. Dallas, Michael W. Ash, Samuel Badger and William Duane, 7 January 1835 [photostat]

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Lancaster, to Benjamin W. Leigh, Richmond, Va., 30 March 1835 [with typed transcript]

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Lancaster, to Messrs. Stockton and Stokes, Baltimore, [Md.], 18 November 1835

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Washington, to Benjamin S. Bonsall, 24 December 1835

Box 1

Folder 2

James Buchanan, Bedford Springs, to Henry A. Muhlenberg, Reading, Pa., 28 July 1836

Box 1
Folder 2
J.R. Poinsett, War Department, to James Buchanan, Senate, 4 February 1839 , with Buchanan's reply addressed to V.E. Piolett, Harrisburg, Pa., 6 February 1839

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Washington, to William L. Marcy, 16 January 1846

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Department of State, Washington, to William Taggard, New York, 3 October 1846

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Washington, to William Mathiot, Lancaster, 20 April 1847 [photocopy; original in Ellis P. Grove Collection, Penn State]

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Washington, to James Sturgis Gillan, Tampico, Mexico, 30 October 1847 [with envelope]

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, to A. Boyd Hamilton, Office of the Pennsylvanian, Philadelphia, 19 December 1849

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, to A. Boyd Hamilton, 30 December 1949 [with typed transcript]

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, near Lancaster, to Thomas Carson, 10 February 1853 [with typed transcript]

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, near Lancaster, to David Lynch, 14 July 1853 [with typed transcript]

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Washington, to A.J. Groff, Pres., and J.V. Martin, Cor. Sec., 28 June 1859 [removed from Washington Agricultural Society letter file book, 1859-1871/72, Penn State]

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, near Lancaster, to Miss Maria B. Weaver, 11 April 1862

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, to Joseph C.G. Kennedy, 2 January 1865

Box 1
Folder 2
James Buchanan, Wheatland, to James Buchanan Henry, 25 May 1865

Portraits Series

Portraits, 1857 and undated.

Box 1

Folder 3

James Buchanan, daguerreotype by [Mathew] Brady, engraved by J.C. Buttre (published by J.C. Buttre, 48 Franklin St., New York), with printed autograph

Box 1

Folder 3

James Buchanan, engraving by H.B. Hall Jr., with printed autograph

Box 1

Folder 3

James Buchanan, likeness from life, engraved by J.C. Buttre (Johnson, Fry and Co. Publishers, New York), with printed autograph, 1857

Box 1

Folder 3

James Buchanan, engraved by H.B. Hall and Sons, New York, with printed autograph

Box 1

Folder 3

James Buchanan, engraved by John Sartain, Philadelphia, with printed autograph