

# Connecticut Historical Society

## museum & library

G & C Merriam Co. records and correspondence

### A Guide to the collection at the Connecticut Historical Society

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#### Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut
<b>Creator :</b>	G. & C. Merriam Company
<b>Title :</b>	G & C Merriam Co. Records and Correspondence
<b>Dates :</b>	1833-1879
<b>Extent :</b>	2.75 linear feet (6 boxes)
<b>Location:</b>	Ms 62433
<b>Language:</b>	English

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#### Biographical Sketch

George and Charles Merriam (born 1803 and 1806, respectively) established a publishing company called G & C Merriam, Co. in Springfield, Massachusetts, about 1831 (some sources cite 1833). Following the death of Noah Webster in 1843, they acquired the rights to Webster's An American Dictionary of the English Language and proceeded to release revised and updated versions (as well as quarto and university editions) throughout the next four decades. Merriam's younger brother Homer would later join them. George died in 1880 and Charles in 1887.

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#### Scope and Content

The vast majority of this collection consists of letters written to George and Charles Merriam by those involved in updating and revising the various editions of Webster's dictionary. There are a few family letters, copies of letters written by the brothers, and financial and legal documents. It appears that G & C Merriam, Co. was involved in several disputes over the publishing rights to Noah Webster's dictionaries. The collection also includes proof sheets and papers relating specifically to revisions of the dictionaries (definitions of words, lists of words to exclude, etc.).

The letters are organized chronologically and in cases where many letters from the same author are available they have been separated. A lengthy general correspondence section is included. Among the individual letter writers whose

letters are arranged separately are Chauncey Allen Goodrich, William Webster and Noah Porter.

Chauncey Allen Goodrich (born 1790) married Frances Juliana "Julia" Webster, the daughter of Noah Webster, in 1816. In addition to his own religious and scholarly writings, Chauncey Allen help edit his father-in-law's quarto American Dictionary and, following Noah Webster's death, was retained by G & C Merriam, Co. to revise both the abridged and unabridged editions. Included in the collection are letters from 1844 through 1859 (his death).

Chauncey Allen's son, Chauncey Goodrich (born 1817), was also involved in editing and revising Webster's dictionaries for G & C Merriam, Co. and letters of his from 1839 to 1869 are included. There are also a handful of letters from Chauncey Allen's daughter, Julia Webster Goodrich, written in 1867. Chauncey Goodrich died in 1868; Julia Webster Goodrich in 1851.

Noah Webster's son William (born 1801) helped his father with the dictionary in the 1840s and then worked alongside Chauncey Allen Goodrich in 1847 with the revision for G & C Merriam, Co. William's letters from 1846 through the 1870s are included in the collection. He died in 1869.

Noah Webster's daughter Emily (born 1790) married William Wolcott Ellsworth (born 1791) in 1813. Ellsworth would be named executor of Webster's estate. He also served as governor of Connecticut and later judge of the state Supreme Court. Included are letters dating from the 1840s through the 1860s. Ellsworth died in 1868; Emily Webster in 1861.

G & C Merriam, Co. also looked for outside help in revising Webster's dictionaries. Letters from Noah Porter (1819-1892), Chester Smith Lyman (1814-1890) and William A. Wheeler are included. Porter's letters date from 1833 to 1879 while Lyman's and Wheeler's are restricted primarily to the 1860s.

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## **Restrictions**

### **Access Restrictions**

There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

### **Use Restrictions**

Use of the material requires compliance with the Connecticut Historical Society's Research Center regulations.

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## **Subject Headings**

## Personal Names

Ellsworth, William Wolcott, 1791-1868.  
Goodrich, Chauncey Allen, 1790-1859.  
Goodrich, Chauncey, 1817-1868.  
Lyman, Chester Smith, 1814-1890.  
Porter, Noah, 1819-1892.  
Webster, Noah, 1758-1843.  
Webster, William, 1801-1869.  
Wheeler, William A.

## Corporate Names

G. & C. Merriam Company.

## Subjects

Encyclopedias and dictionaries.  
Publishers and publishing--Massachusetts--Springfield.

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## Administrative Information

### Preferred Citation

Item, Collection Title, Collection number (Box #, Folder #). Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

### Processing Details

Collection was processed by Robert Johnston in 2009.  
EAD Finding Aid created October 2014.

### Accruals

The collection is closed.

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## Contents:

### Series I. G & C Merriam Co. records

Box	Folder	
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1	1	Merriam Family Letters
1	2	Letters from G & C Merriam, 1851-1861
1	3	George Merriam Memo Booklet, November 1846

1	4	George Merriam Memo Booklet, August 1847, #1
1	5	George Merriam Memo Booklet, August 1847, #2
1	6	George Merriam Memo Booklet, August 1847, #3
1	7-8	Dictionary Revisions
1	9	General Legal Documents, 1833-1863
1	10	Publishing Dispute Papers, 1847
1	11	Publishing Dispute Papers, 1852-1853
1	12	Publishing Dispute Papers, 1856
1	13	Proof Sheets
1	14	Financial Papers, 1830s-1840s
1	15	Financial Papers, 1850s-1870s, undated
1	16	General Correspondence, 1830s
1	17	General Correspondence, 1840-1841, 1843
1	18	General Correspondence, 1844
1	19	General Correspondence, 1845-1846
1	20	General Correspondence, 1847-1849

**Box Folder**

2	1	General Correspondence, 1850-1852
2	2	General Correspondence, 1853-1855
2	3	General Correspondence, 1856
2	4	General Correspondence, 1857-1859
2	5	General Correspondence, 1860
2	6	General Correspondence, 1861
2	7	General Correspondence, 1862-1863
2	8	General Correspondence, 1864
2	9	General Correspondence, 1865-1869
2	10	General Correspondence, 1870s, undated

**Series II. Chauncey A. Goodrich Correspondence**

**Box Folder**

2	11	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1844-1846
2	12	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1847
2	13	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1848
2	14	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1849
2	15	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1850
2	16	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1851-1853
2	17	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, Jan. – May 1854

**Box Folder**

3	1	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, June – Dec. 1854
3	2	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1855
3	3	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, Jan. – Jul. 1856

3	4	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, Aug. – Dec. 1856
3	5	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1857
3	6	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1858
3	7	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters, 1859, undated
3	8	Chauncey A. Goodrich Letters to B.H. Smart, Esq. 1855

### **Series III. Chauncey Goodrich Correspondence**

#### **Box Folder**

3	9	Chauncey Goodrich Letters, 1839-1852
3	10	Chauncey Goodrich Letters, 1857-Apr. 1860
3	11	Chauncey Goodrich Letters, May – Dec. 1860
3	12	Chauncey Goodrich Letters, Jan. – Jun. 1861
3	13	Chauncey Goodrich Letters, 1863-1865
3	14	Chauncey Goodrich Letters, 1866-1869
3	15	Julia Webster Goodrich Letters, 1867

### **Series IV. William Webster Correspondence**

#### **Box Folder**

3	16	William Webster Letters, 1846
3	17	William Webster Letters, 1847
3	18	William Webster Letters, 1848-1849
3	19	William Webster Letters, 1850-1851
3	20	William Webster Letters, 1852
3	21	William Webster Letters, 1853
3	22	William Webster Letters, 1854
3	23	William Webster Letters, 1855
3	24	William Webster Letters, Jan. – Mar. 1856
3	25	William Webster Letters, Apr. – May 1856

#### **Box Folder**

4	1	William Webster Letters, Jun. – Jul. 1856
4	2	William Webster Letters, William Webster Letters, Aug. – Sep. 1856
4	3	William Webster Letters, Oct. – Dec. 1856
4	4	William Webster Letters, Jan. – Feb. 1857
4	5	William Webster Letters, Mar. – Jul. 1857
4	6	William Webster Letters, Aug. – Dec. 1857
4	7	William Webster Letters, 1858-1859
4	8	William Webster Letters, Jan. – Sep. 1860
4	9	William Webster Letters, Oct. – Dec. 1860
4	10	William Webster Letters, 1861
4	11	William Webster Letters, 1864
4	12	William Webster Letters, 1865-1867
4	13	William Webster Letters, 1870s

### **Series V. William Ellsworth Correspondence**

#### **Box Folder**

4	14	Ellsworth Letters, 1840s
4	15	Ellsworth Letters, 1850-1853
4	16	Ellsworth Letters, 1854-1855
4	17	Ellsworth Letters, July 1856
4	18	Ellsworth Letters, Nov. 1856
4	19	Ellsworth Letters, 1857

#### **Box Folder**

5	1	Ellsworth Letters, 1858-1859
5	2	Ellsworth Letters, 1860s

### **Series VI. Noah Porter Correspondence**

#### **Box Folder**

5	3	Noah Porter Letters, 1833-1847
5	4	Noah Porter Letters, 1848
5	5	Noah Porter Letters, 1849
5	6	Noah Porter Letters, 1850
5	7	Noah Porter Letters, 1851
5	8	Noah Porter Letters, 1852
5	9	Noah Porter Letters, 1853-1854
5	10	Noah Porter Letters, 1855
5	11	Noah Porter Letters, 1856
5	12	Noah Porter Letters, 1857
5	13	Noah Porter Letters, 1858-1859
5	14	Noah Porter Letters, 1860
5	15	Noah Porter Letters, 1861-1862
5	16	Noah Porter Letters, 1864
5	17	Noah Porter Letters, 1866-1879, undated

### **Series VII. William A. Wheeler Correspondence**

#### **Box Folder**

5	18	William A. Wheeler Letters, 1860-1863
5	19	William A. Wheeler Letters, Jan. – Mar. 1864

#### **Box Folder**

6	1	William A. Wheeler Letters, Apr. – Jul. 1864
6	2	William A. Wheeler Letters, Aug. – Dec. 1864
6	3	William A. Wheeler Letters, 1865-1866
6	4	William A. Wheeler Letters, 1867-1879

### **Series VIII. Chester S. Lyman Correspondence and assorted documents**

#### **Box Folder**

6	5	Chester S. Lyman Letters, 1860-1867
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