

Connecticut Historical Society
museum & library

John Trumbull Papers

A Guide to the John Trumbull Papers at the Connecticut
Historical Society

Collection Overview

Repository :	Connecticut Historical Society
Creator :	Trumbull, John, 1756-1843.
Title :	John Trumbull Papers
Dates :	1769-1843
Extent :	1 linear foot (1 box, 2 volumes, 1 oversize item)
Abstract :	Collection consists predominantly of correspondence to and from John Trumbull; also included are some letters to Benjamin Silliman.
Location:	Ms Trumj1843
Language:	English

Biographical Sketch

John Trumbull was born on June 6, 1756 in Lebanon, Connecticut, the youngest son of Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut, and Faith Robinson of Duxbury, Massachusetts. Trumbull graduated from Harvard College in 1773, and upon returning to Lebanon was asked by the State Governor, his father, to prepare maps for adjusting land claims in the town of Westmoreland (now in Pennsylvania). This experience in land surveying was of importance in his brief duty as second aide-de-camp under George Washington in Pennsylvania.

In 1775 Trumbull began his military career as adjutant to the First Regiment of Connecticut under General Joseph Spencer; he was appointed major of the brigade in Roxbury later that year, a position he held until promoted to deputy adjutant-general (with rank of colonel) in General Philip Schuyler's Northern Department. At Ticonderoga Trumbull played a significant role in strengthening defenses of the "Gibraltar of America." Trumbull left the Continental Army in 1777 after a dispute over the date of his commission.

Trumbull returned again to Lebanon to paint; and in 1780 he traveled to London, England to study art under Benjamin West. Shortly after his arrival

he was arrested and placed in jail on charges of treason. He was subsequently released and deported from England.

In 1794 Trumbull returned to England as an American commissioner under the Jay Treaty between Great Britain and the United States, and in 1800 Trumbull was married to Sarah Hope Harvey. He lived in New Haven from 1804 until 1808, and in England until 1815, when he came finally to settle in New York City.

In 1817 Trumbull was commissioned to paint larger versions of his Revolutionary War paintings for the Capitol, which work he completed in 1824. In 1831 he donated his art collection to Yale College; his donation formed the basis of the nascent Yale University Art Gallery.

John Trumbull died in New York City on November 10, 1843

Brief list of Trumbull's significant paintings

- The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill (1786)
 - The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack of Quebec (1786)
 - The Declaration of Independence (1786-1794)
 - The Resignation of George Washington (1824)
 - The Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga (1821-1831)
 - The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown (1787)
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Scope and Content

Collection consists predominantly of correspondence with family members and other individuals. The letters are largely of a personal nature, particularly those to his family, but many are concerned with his work as an artist. In the correspondence series are two volumes of letters. The first volume and a half relate to John Trumbull: his work as an artist, requests for prints, and family correspondence. The second half of volume two contains letters written to Benjamin Silliman: there are letters introducing students who wish to study with Silliman; notification of an honorary Doctor of Medicine degree from Bowdoin College; correspondence from chemical societies; and discussion of Silliman's publications. None of the Silliman letters concern any member of the Trumbull family. The collection also includes financial records, containing a receipt book for prints of The Declaration of Independence and his accounts with Hartford Bank. An interesting piece is a genealogy given to Trumbull by Uncas showing Uncas' ancestry from Tamaquashad, Chief Sachem of the Pequots. Additional items include fragments cut from letters and other manuscripts bearing Trumbull's signature.

Arrangement

Materials are organized into one series.

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's regulations.

Subject Headings

Personal Names

Gorton, William.
Hopkins, Samuel Miles, 1772-1837.
Sigourney, Lydia Howard Huntley, 1791-1865.
Trumbull, David, 1752-1822.
Trumbull, Jonathan, 1710-1785.
Wadsworth, Catherine, 1744- .
Wadsworth, Harriet, 1769-1793.

Geographic Names

United States History Revolution, 1775-1783 Pictorial works.

Genre Forms

Holographs; holographs, signed; printed forms completed in manuscript.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

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

Processing Details

Collection was processed by Ruth Blair and Marilyn Paul-Lewis under an NHPRC grant (#89-003) in September and October 1998. Further re-

arrangement was completed by Stephen Yearl and Marilyn Paul-Lewis. Original EAD instance compiled by Stephen Yearl in October 1998. Updated to EAD 2002 in December 2010.

Accruals

The collection is open, and material may be added at a later time.

Related Material

An index of catalog cards is available for item level access to Trumbull related material in other CHS collections. Access is through writer, recipient and date. The card catalog is located in the Research Center reading room.

Contents:

I. John Trumbull Papers

Volume

- I Correspondence: includes requests for prints of Trumbull's art work; accounts for paintings and prints; family letters; and letters from such men as William Read, John Murray, and Edward Rutledge. 1781 - 1824 (1 volume; 117 items)

Volume

- II Correspondence: includes requests for prints of Trumbull's art work; accounts for paintings and prints; family letters; and letters from such individuals as Chauncey Goodrich, Charles Robinson, and Elizabeth Mifflin. Folios 136 ff. consist of letters written to Benjamin Silliman from Elihu Chauncey, Charles Stewart, Samuel Woodward, and Jonathan Pickering; none of these letters relates to John or to any other Trumbull. 1824 - 1843; 1804 - 1865 (1 volume; 87 items)

Box Folder

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|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Letters to Jonathan Trumbull (John's father). 1777-1785 (21 items) |
| 1 | 2 | Correspondence of John Trumbull with David Trumbull (John's brother). 1775 (19 items) |
| 1 | 3 | Correspondence of John Trumbull with David Trumbull (John's brother). 1776-1777 (12 items) |
| 1 | 4 | Correspondence of John Trumbull with David Trumbull (John's brother). 1778 (13 items) |
| 1 | 5 | Correspondence of John Trumbull with David Trumbull (John's |

		brother). 1779 (15 items)
1	6	Correspondence of John Trumbull with David Trumbull (John's brother). 1780-1800 (15 items)
1	7	Letters from John Trumbull to his family. 1775-1830 (6 items) Conservation work required
1	8	Letter from John Trumbull to Lydia Sigourney. 1838 (1 item)
1	9	Letters from John Trumbull to Catherine Wadsworth. 1794-1795 (2 items)
1	10	Letters from John Trumbull to Harriet Wadsworth. 1790-1791 (3 items)
1	11	Letters from John Trumbull. 1782-1837 (23 items)
1	12	Letters to John Trumbull from William Gorton. 1799-1805 (3 items)
1	13	Letters to John Trumbull from Samuel Hopkins. 1807-1819 (4 items)
1	14	Letters to John Trumbull. 1772-1823 (15 items)
1	15	Correspondence regarding Trumbull's military resignation. 1777 (1 item; 12 ff.)
1	17	Receipt book for prints of <i>Declaration of Independence</i> . 1818-1822 (1 item)
1	18	Explanation of his prints of <i>Battle of Bunker Hill</i> and <i>Attack of Quebec</i> . Undated (1 item)
1	19	Accounts with Hartford Bank. 1792-1825 (3 items)
1	20	Fragments of letters and other manuscripts. Undated
1	21	Selected photocopies of Trumbull manuscripts in the Northamptonshire Record Office, England. 1781 (3 items)
Box	Folder	
OV	16	Sketch of the genealogy of Uncas 1769