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Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
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**George Bancroft Papers**  
1823-1890  
MssCol 196

**Richard Salvato**  
February 1984  
rev. 2008

## Biographical Note

The American historian, diplomat, and public official, George Bancroft, was born in 1800 in Worcester, Mass. and died in Washington, D.C. in 1891. He graduated from Harvard College and did post-graduate work at the University of Göttingen. During his long career, Bancroft was a teacher at the Round Hill School in Northampton, Mass., Collector of the port of Boston, Secretary of the Navy under President James K. Polk, Minister to Great Britain, 1846-1849, and to Germany, 1867-1874. He is best remembered for his ten-volume *History of the United States, From the Discovery of the Continent*. In 1876 he published a six-volume version called the *Centenary Edition*, and in 1882 he published *The History of the Formation of the Constitution of the United States of America*. And in 1883-1885 he brought out his last revision of the *History of the United States*.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers consist of general correspondence for the period 1823-1890; correspondence, 1847-1849, of Bancroft as U.S. Minister to Great Britain with Cave Johnson, the Postmaster General of the U.S., concerning postal communications and postal treaties with Great Britain; correspondence, 1863-1889, of Bancroft and J. Dickinson Logan, with the librarian and historian, George Moore, on historiographical matters; and correspondence, 1887, with J.G. Harris relating to the presidency of James K. Polk.

Included in the general correspondence are letters by John Meredith Read, Austin Allibone, Winfield Scott, Silas Wright, Charles Henry Hart, and Samuel Tilden. There are also dispatches of the U.S. Legation at London, 1847-1849, and at Berlin, 1867-1870, during Bancroft's tenure as U.S. Minister.

The bulk of the rest of the papers concerns Bancroft's writings and includes some poetry; articles, addresses, and notes, drafts, proofs, and various printed editions of the *History of the United States*; drafts of *The People Demand Independence*; and rough drafts and emended typescripts of *The Life of Martin Van Buren*. There are also a few photographs, clippings, book catalogues, lists of books, lists of primary source material in European archives, some legal papers and accounts, notes taken at Göttingen, transcriptions of rare books, some papers relating to diplomatic duties, and material relating to the decision in favor of the U.S. made by Wilhelm I of Germany in the dispute between the U.S. and Great Britain over the water boundary between the State of Washington and British Columbia.

## Container List

Box No.	Contents
1	General correspondence 1823-1858
2	1859-1890, n.d.  Correspondence with Cave Johnson, 1847-1849 (includes letters to Johnson regarding the postal communication between the United States and Great Britain)  George Moore, 1863, 1879-1886, [1889]  Letter from Charles Gayarre, undated  Dispatches  U. S. Legation, London
3	1847-1848 May
4	1848 Jun-1849 May
5	1849 Jun-Aug  U. S. Legation, Berlin  From Bancroft to the Dept. of State, 1867, 1870  From the Dept. of State to Bancroft, 1868-1870  Miscellaneous, including Bancroft's notes, written copies of documents ranging from citizenship laws to his own notes on American history, and documents in German concerning Prussia and the North German Union, {1867-1870}  Notes and jottings of Bancroft's life in Berlin and sketch of the characters of Bismarck and Moltke, etc., 1867-1869  Treaty between the United States and Württemberg regulating the citizenship of those persons who emigrate from the U.S. to Württemberg and vice versa, 1868
6	<i>The Democratic Review</i> , Vol. XI, Nos. L, LIII (1842)  Photographs of Bancroft, 1856, n.d.  Personalia  Accounts  List of the faculty of the school at Round Hill, Northampton, Mass. and notes on the courses of study offered, [1824?]

<b>Box</b>	<b>Contents</b>
6	<p>Copy of will of Jamys Bancrofte, 1557</p> <p>Copy of will of John Bancroft, 1625</p> <p>Copy of will of George Bancroft, 1885</p> <p>Genealogical chart of the Bancroft family</p> <p>A bill to amend the laws in force for the encouragement of British shipping and navigation, 1849</p> <p>Convention between the U.S.A. and Her Majesty, the Queen of ... Great Britain ... for the improvement of the communication by post between their respective territories. Concluded and signed ... on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Dec., 1848</p>
7	<p>Clippings</p> <p>Memoranda for Bancroft from George Moore re: slavery and New England, undated</p> <p>Memorandum of papers to be obtained at The Hague, undated</p> <p>Catalogue of books, or "Boston catalogue", gives brief descriptions of books from 1800s</p> <p>Book lists, catalogues of books bought by Bancroft, to be bought, and to be enquired after, undated</p> <p>The Harrisburg Conference of 1788, 1879</p> <p>Lists of papers relating to America in European archives, undated</p> <p><i>The Federalist</i>, from the <i>New York Times</i>, 1864, and <i>The Federalist</i> (Washington, 1818), transcript</p> <p>Virginia coupon cases, 1884</p> <p>Anniversary dinner at the Mercantile Club, from the "St. Petersburg Folio", undated</p> <p>Miscellaneous, including character sketch of Lord Cornwallis, memos to Bancroft, various scraps of notes, messages, etc.</p>
8	<p>Four notebooks, only first few pages of each contain notes, undated</p> <p>For New Volume, notebook, undated</p> <p>Notes on MS index of Vol. i. Bancroft's Hist. U.S.</p> <p>Memorandum of papers in Bancroft's collection</p> <p>Notes, five folders</p>
9	<p>Notes on the burning of Schenectady, Feb. 8, 1690</p> <p>Notes, four folders</p>

**Box      Contents**

9

Notes: "List of Sources and Auxiliary Works"

Packets of notes and clippings

Rives (W. C.)

Ward (A. H.) History of Shrewsbury, Mass. 1847. Ba.

From a volume of: Goethe's Sammtliche Werke, 36 vols. In 43.  
(Green cloth) Berlin. Ba.

Lamore (Ward H.) Life of Abraham Lincoln. Bost., 1872

Letters etc. from Bancroft set of Force's Archives

Browning (Robt.) Selections from works of, 2 vols. 1880. 80. Ba.

Browning, Robert Aristophanes apology. London, 1875

Auerbach (B.) Spinoza, ein Denkerleben. Stuttgart. 1850.  
Ba.441.B.

Notes of G. Bancroft from Bancroft set of Force's Archives

Sheridan, Richard Brinsley. Works, 2 vol., Lond., 1873

Cronan (Rudolf) Die ersten deutschen Flugblätter über Amerika.  
(Illus.) (N.Y. Staats-Zeitung, 28 Nov. 1897)

Marsh (Geo. P.) Lectures on the English Language. New York.  
1860

Draper (John William) History of the Civil War. 3 vols. New  
York. 1867-70. 8 vo. Ba.410.F

Knowles. Memoir of Roger Williams. Boston. 1834. Ba.

Sainsbury (W. Noel) Calendar of State Papers, Colonial  
Series...Vol. I., London. 1860. Ba.

Ruchert, Friedrich Gedichte. Fr. Am Main.

Grayson (A.) Memoirs of his own times. Phila. 1846

Allibone, J. Austin

Winthrop. History of New England. With notes by James Savage.  
Boston. 1853. 2 vols. Ba.

Dean (J. W.) Memoir of the rev. Nathaniel Ward. Du. Copy

Froude (J. A.) The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century.  
3 vols. London. 1872. 8 vo. Ba.

Spencer, Herbert The principles of psychology. London, 1855

<b>Box</b>	<b>Contents</b>
9	<p>Joh. Lederer, Der erste deutsche Forschungsreisende in Nordamerika. Von Rudolf Cronan. (a translation into German of Lederer) (N.Y. Staats-Zeitung, Nov. 21, 1897)</p> <p>Notes taken out of Bancroft copy of "Decouverts et etablissement des Francais" sent to the binder</p> <p>Mr. Bancroft's notes to Vol. XVIII of Martin's Histoire de France, 4me Edn. Paris, 1863</p> <p>Loose clippings</p>
10	<p>Notebooks</p> <p>History, undated</p> <p>Souvenir, Louis Bancroft's notes in French and English, 1849</p> <p>Garden and Orchard book, 1828</p> <p>History, 1835</p> <p>History, undated</p> <p>[General notes], 1867</p> <p>History, undated</p> <p>Citations, undated</p> <p>Cahier d'Algebre, Louisa Bancroft, undated</p> <p>[List of 18<sup>th</sup> c. correspondence between American patriots, sent by Bancroft to ?], 1881</p> <p>History, 1836</p> <p>History, undated</p>
11	<p>Writings by Bancroft</p> <p>Biography of James K. Polk published in Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography. (Galley proof), 1888</p> <p>"Of the Liberal Education of Boys" A.D., [1820?]</p> <p>Poems, undated</p> <p>Unidentified article, undated</p> <p>"A pleasing narrative of G. Niccolo Machiavelli", undated</p> <p>[On the meaning of the seventh petition of the Lord's Prayer], undated</p>

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- 11            Address on the German troops in the Revolutionary War. (Transcript), undated
- "On the Fall of the Achean League", undated
- Biographical sketches of John and Sebastian Cabot, undated
- Various fragments of notes, articles, etc., undated
- "Martin van Buren to the End of his Public Career", Chapters 4-6. (Proof), 1889
- "An Incident in the Life of John Adams" (Typewritten with ms. emendations). Published in Century Magazine, July, 1887
- Mr. Bancroft's address on "Popular Government" delivered at the third meeting of the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C. (Newspaper clipping with typewritten additions), 1886
- "Holmes's Life of Emerson" (Page proof from the North American Review, vol. 140, (PP. 129-143), Feb. 1885
- Memorial Address on the life and character of Abraham Lincoln, delivered at the request of both Houses of the Congress of America before them, in the House of Representatives at Washington. Transcript, 1866
- Oration delivered by George Bancroft at the obsequies of Abraham Lincoln in Union Square, New York. (Printed), 1865
- 12            Notes and proofs of Bancroft's *Martin van Buren to the End of his Public Career*
- 13            Writings by Bancroft
- Lecture on "The Idea of a Universal History" (A.N. and newspaper clipping), 1840
- "Literary and Historical Miscellanies" (New York, 1855) p. 206-246. "Translations, 1818-1824" (Page proof and some original manuscripts), 1855
- "Literary and Historical Miscellanies" (Printer's copy), 1855
- Poems (transcripts?), undated
- "Sketch of the Character of Bismarck", 65 1, undated
- Review of "The Greek Lexicon of Schrevelius translated into English with many additions" (Boston, 1826) (In North American Review, vol.24, Jan. 1827, pp. 142-156) Incomplete, 1827
- Excerpt re: Goethe from review of "Travels in the North of Germany, in the years 1825 and 1826" by Henry E. Dwight (New York, 1829). In American Quarterly Review, vol. 6, (Sept, 1829), pp. 200-201, 1829

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- 13                      Article on Russia. (Incomplete), circa 1830
- Unidentified article. [Oration delivered before the Athenian and Alexandrian Societies of Amherst College, Amherst, Mass, Aug 21, 1832]
- "Visit to Madison's." In clerical hand with ms. emendations by Bancroft, [1836?]
- Review of books containing orations delivered by Edward Everett, in 1824-1825. Published in the New York Review, Oct. 1825. (Vol. 1, pp. 333-341). Not signed, 1825
- Poem: "Different Destiny". (Translation), [1818-1824]
- "Genius: the Expression of the Spirit of the Age." A.D., [1842?]
- Reports of George Bancroft, Linus Child, and George Morey to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College relative to the reduction of the cost of instruction at Harvard College, 1844-45
- Address delivered at the New York State Agricultural Fair, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. A.D. and newspaper clipping, 1844
- Article on his relationship with James Grahame. (Page proof), 1846
- A Plea for freedom of mind in an oration delivered at Providence before the Philermenian Society in Brown University. (Original and copy), 1839
- History of the United States, from the Discovery of the Continent*
- 14-38                      Notes, transcripts of letters and other material, and chapters of Bancroft's *History*. These items are in no particular order.
- 39                      Calendars created by Jaroslav Goll, who was assistant to Bancroft in Berlin
- Material in French archives re: the United States, 1776-1789
- Certain Lansdowne House and Strachey Mss re: peace negotiations between the United States and Great Britain, 1781-1783
- Correspondence in the Prussian archives between Thulheimer, Prussian minister to Holland, with Frederick II, 1778-1782, on the affairs of Holland as affected by the American war.
- Material in European archives re: relations between Holland, America, and Great Britain, 1775-1788  
                            Relating to the formation of "The Armed Neutrality"
- Material in European archives re: Russia and Prussia, 1780-1782



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- 39            Translations of extracts from "Holland und United States"  
Notes on various countries  
              [Switzerland?]  
              Prussia and England, 1777-1783  
              Prussia and France, 1777-1783  
              Miscellaneous  
              Spain  
              Europe and America
- 40            List of books (2 volumes)  
Church and State in the United States or The American Idea of Religious Liberty and its Practical Effects with Official Documents, by Philip Schaff, 1888. Ms notes by Bancroft.  
Catalogue of Books (3 volumes)  
Catalogue of books left in America, No. 2  
Books received from 1859  
American Constitutions by Horace Davis. Ms notes by Bancroft.  
Loose pages from various books  
Transcripts  
              Blake & Davis on the constitutionality of the Embargo Laws  
              Trial of the Rev. Jacob Gruber, Minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church by David Martin  
              Public Good without Private Interest by Lionel Gattford  
              Remarks on a Late Publication with a Short Address to the People of Pennsylvania by Joseph Reed  
The Predications of Hamilton and De Tocqueville by James Bryce  
Fragment of paper with Bancroft's signature  
Rose Catalogue Washington, 1886  
List of books purchased, 1829-1858
- 41            Memoranda books, 1834, 1888, n.d.  
Loose notes, undated

<b>Box</b>	<b>Contents</b>
41	<p>Duplicates of laws affecting contracts, undated</p> <p>Keen, Gregory B. "Note on New Albion" (In "Winsor's Narrative and Critical History of America") Page proof, undated</p> <p>Contents of George Ticknor Curtis, "History of the Origin, Formation, and Adoption of the Constitution of the United States" (1855-1858) 2 vols.</p> <p>Sophocles. "Oedipus Tyrannus", pages from printed book (?) in Greek</p>
42	Bancroft's papers on N. W. Boundary Arbitration, 1871-1872, containing letters, clippings, maps, and notes
43	<p>Additions</p> <p>Biographical notes / Eulogy of Jackson by GB / Letter re: public policy of Jackson by F.P. Blair</p> <p>Oration delivered by GB at the commemoration in Washington of the death of Andrew Jackson, 1845 June 27</p> <p>Biographical sketch of James K. Polk, with notes by George Bancroft. 86 pp. typewritten.</p> <p>Sebastian Ferris Streeter (1810-1864) letter to GB, undated</p> <p>Notes taken from volume of Bancroft Transcripts - Maryland Papers. Correspondence of Gov. Sharpe.</p>

## **Volumes**

154	Life of Van Buren
155	Administration of John Adams. Memoranda and copies
156	Papers relating to the administration of Washington
157	Correspondence with J.G. Harris re administration of James Polk, 1887
391	Personal account book, 1839 Jan 1-1848 Aug 9
392	Memoranda concerning library, 1874
393-396	Notes taken while a student at Göttingen, 1818-1819
397	The People Demand Independence
398-399	Inventory of Bancroft's library
401-423	History of the United States. Calendars, notes, drafts.
423	History of the American Revolution and Overthrow of the European Colonial System