

**Livingston family papers, 1719-1929, bulk dates 1736-1810
3 boxes (1.3 linear feet)**



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Prepared by Jeremy Zoref, archival intern, under the supervision of
Lindsay Turley, Manuscripts and Reference Archivist
December 2012
Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Livingston family members and descendants.

Title: Livingston family papers

Dates: 1719-1929, bulk dates 1736-1810

Abstract: A combination of seven gifts from Livingston family descendents, the collection contains correspondences to and from various Livingston family members, and is strong in national politics of the Revolutionary Era/Early Republic.

Extent: 3 boxes (1.3 linear feet)

MCNY numbers: PRO2012.11; accessions 44.144.14-16, 44, 97-98, 100-101; 47.173.1-280, 282-314, 316-320, 322-326; 97.41.262-271; 57.96.3-4; 56.70

Language: English

Biographical Note

The Livingston family was one of the most powerful families in both Colonial New York, and New York State during the early republic through the end of the market revolution. Though their power and influence declined in the second half of the nineteenth-century, the Livingston family remained within the circle of New York's elite through both wealth as well as a modicum of social capital based on extensive family connections.

Robert Livingston (1654-1728) was the first to come to British North America. When he was a boy, his family fled to Holland after his father had been exiled from Scotland for trying to Anglicize the Presbyterian Church. His Dutch education was useful when he immigrated to the recently acquired colony of New York in the early 1670s, where he set up a prosperous trading business in Dutch-dominated Albany. He secured his position when he married Alida Schuyler (1656-?), sister to Albany's first mayor and one-time New York colonial governor Pieter Schuyler (1657-1724) and widow to Nicholas van Rensselaer (1636-1678), son of Kiliaen van Rensselaer (1586-1643), founder of the Dutch West India Company and New Netherland Patroon. By the time Robert had consolidated Alida's former holdings and his own, the Livingston family held a 160,000 acre manor on the Hudson River. In 1715, King George I (1660-1727) patented the estate and created the Manor of Livingston, and Robert became the first Lord of Livingston Manor. According to the principle of primogeniture, he was succeeded by his eldest son Philip Livingston (1686-1749), and then Col. Robert Livingston (1708-1790). After the American Revolution, primogeniture was no longer the law of the land, and the estate was divided upon his death.

The family's historical significance grew in the late colonial period. Robert Livingston's grandsons Philip (1716-1778) and Peter (1710-1792) (sons of the Second Lord of the Manor, Philip Livingston) both participated in colonial politics during the various conflicts with the French at mid-century, as well as the American Revolution. His great grandsons, Robert R. Livingston (1746-1813) and Edward Livingston (1764-1836), (brothers who descended from Robert Livingston Jr., brother to Second Lord of the Manor, Philip) participated in the American Revolution and the politics of the early republic. Philip Livingston (1716-1778) was a member of the Continental Congress delegate from New York, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Overall, the family's significance revolves around colony-wide (afterwards, state-wide) politics centered in Albany. Robert R. Livingston, in partnership with Robert Fulton (1765-1815), entered into the steamship business, first in Paris, then later building the first commercial steamboat, original known as the North River Steamboat (and later known as the Clermont, named for the Livingston family home, Clermont Manor in Clermont, New York, which was its home port). It made its trips between New York City and Albany, New York.

Scope and Content

The majority of the Livingston Family Papers are correspondence, both sent and received by various members of the Livingston family, the bulk containing correspondence by Edward Livingston, Edward P. Livingston, Peter R. Livingston, Philip Livingston, Robert Livingston, Robert Livingston, Jr., and Robert R. Livingston, Jr. Other documents include newspaper clippings, recipes, and receipts. Materials span from 1719 to 1929, with the majority of the materials falling within 1736 to 1810.

Series I: Gift 47.173, of Mr. Goodhue Livingston

- Sub-Series I:1: Livingston, E.P.
- Sub-Series I:2: Livingston, Edward
- Sub-Series I:3: Livingston, Edward
- Sub-Series I:4: Livingston, Henry
- Sub-Series I:5: Livingston, John
- Sub-Series I:6: Livingston, Peter R.
- Sub-Series I:7: Livingston, Peter Van Brugh
- Sub-Series I:8: Livingston, Philip
- Sub-Series I:9: Livingston, R.L.
- Sub-Series I:10: Livingston, Robert
- Sub-Series I:11: Livingston, Robert (1654-1728)
- Sub-Series I:12: Livingston, Robert Jr. (1688-1775?)
- Sub-Series I:13: Livingston, Robert B.
- Sub-Series I:14: Livingston, Robert E.
- Sub-Series I:15: Livingston, Robert R. Jr. (1746-1813)
- Sub-Series I:16: Livingston & Alexander
- Sub-Series I:17: J? Livingston's Case

Series II: Gift 97.41, of an unknown donor

- Sub-Series II:1: Livingston, Edward
- Sub-Series II:2: Livingston, Edward (Uncategorized)
- Sub-Series II:3: Livingston, Edward P. (Uncategorized)
- Sub-Series II:4: Livingston, Robert E.
- Sub-Series II:5: Robert R.
- Sub-Series II:6: Livingston Family (General)

Series III: Gift 44.144, of Miss Kathryn de B. Parsons

- Sub-Series III:1: Livingston, Margaret
- Sub-Series III:2: Livingston, Robert L.
- Sub-Series III:3: Livingston, Robert R.
- Sub-Series III:4: Livingston, S.
- Sub-Series III:5: Livingston, Schuyler

Series IV: Gift 57.96, of Mr. Bayard U. Livingston, Jr.

- Sub-Series IV:1: Livingston, Peter R.
- Sub-Series IV:2: Livingston, Robert Jr.

Series V: Gift 41.35, of The Pierrepont Family of Brooklyn: Livingston, Philip (1929)

Series VI: Gift 49.48, of Mrs. Frederick S. Wombwell: Livingston, W.

Series VII: Gift 56.70, of Miss Elizabeth Remsen: Livingston, Robert Cambridge

Series VIII: Non-Accessioned: Livingston, Robert

Arrangement

The collection consists of eight series, four of which also have sub-series. The collection is arranged according to gift (accession number) into series, beginning with the most voluminous, and then

organized alphabetically by correspondent within each series into sub-series, and chronologically for each correspondent within each sub-series. The original order of each gift is not known.

Refer to “Processing information,” below for more information on arrangement prior to re-processing in summer – fall 2012.

Series and Sub-series Descriptions

Note: Due to the fact this collection had been assembled by Museum staff by combining multiple gifts of papers related to the Livingston Family, the physical arrangement reflects the original provenance of the collection. The term “Series and Sub-Series Descriptions,” above, is uncharacteristic of most archival collections, as the intellectual organizational units described in the section below in fact refer to multiple series and sub-series spread across the collection. By describing the series and sub-series in this manner, the Museum is seeking to consolidate access points across multiple gifts, while still maintaining provenance.

Edward Livingston (1764-1836) - Sub-Series I:1, I:3, II:1

Edward Livingston, the youngest son of Robert Livingston, was a lawyer who originally began practicing in New York City. He was a representative to Congress, and later was appointed United States Attorney for New York, and was also the mayor of New York. He later moved to New Orleans, Louisiana and served as both a Representative and then a Senator from Louisiana. He then served as the Secretary of State under Andrew Jackson. His last official title, prior to his death, was as the United States Minister to France.

Edward P. Livingston (1779-1843) - Sub-Series II:3

Edward Philip Livingston, the son of Philip Livingston, was a politician that served in the New York State Senate between 1823 and 1824, and then again between 1838 and 1839. He was elected as Lieutenant Governor of New York and served in that position from 1831 to 1832.

Peter R. Livingston (1710-1792) - Sub-Series I:6 and IV:1

The son of Robert James Livingston, Peter served in the New York State Senate for many terms. He was also elected Speaker in the New York State Assembly.

Philip Livingston (1716-1778) - Sub-Series I:8 and Series V

The fourth son of Philip Livingston, Second Lord of the Manor, was a merchant who was elected Alderman. He became active in the quest for America’s independence from Great Britain, participating in the Stamp Act Congress in 1765 in protestation of British taxation. In 1775, Philip was elected President of the New York Provincial Congress, and as a delegate to the Continental Congress. Philip Livingston was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. In addition to correspondence in Sub-Series I:8, Series V holds an address delivered by Bayard Livingston Peck at the unveiling of a tablet marking the site of his mansion.

Robert Livingston (1654-1728) - Sub-Series I:10, I:11, and Series VIII

Also known as Robert Livingston the Elder, he was the First Lord of Livingston Manor, having been born in Scotland. His father, Reverend John Livingston, was sent into exile in 1663 to Rotterdam in the Dutch Republic, due to religious prosecution. Robert the Elder immigrated to the United States

in 1673 where he became a successful fur trader. From 1695 until his death, he served as Secretary of Indian Affairs. He also served as Speaker of the New York Provincial Assembly.

Robert Livingston, Jr. (1688-1775?) - Sub-Series I:12 and IV:2

Also known as Robert of Clermont, was a fur trader. Like his father, Robert the Elder, Robert of Clermont was a member of the New York Colonial Assembly. He inherited the southwest corner of Livingston Manor after his father's death, and named it Clermont.

Robert R. Livingston, Jr. (1746-1813) – Sub-Series I:15

Also known as “The Chancellor,” Robert Livingston, Jr. was the eldest son of Judge Robert Livingston. While a member of the Committee Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence, he was recalled by New York and never got to sign it. However, he did become the first Chancellor of New York, a position he held for nearly 25 years, earning his nickname. From 1781 to 1783, he was the U.S. Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the Articles of Confederation. In 1789 he administered the presidential oath of office to George Washington. As the U.S. Minister to France from 1801 to 1803, he negotiated the Louisiana Purchase. This sub-series contains notable correspondence with Thomas Jefferson. While in France, he met Robert Fulton and entered the steamship business with him. Back in New York, they created the first commercial steamboat, the North River Steamboat, later known as the Clermont, that carried passengers between New York City and Albany.

Henry Livingston (1714-1799) – Sub-Series I:4

Settling in Poughkeepsie, New York, he was granted a life term clerkship for Dutchess County and was a member of the Provincial Assembly.

Peter Van Brugh Livingston (1710-1792) Sub-Series I:7

The son of Philip Livingston, he became successful in the shipping business. He was one of the original trustees of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. He was a delegate, and later President, to the New York Provincial Congress. With the establishment of the State Government of New York, he was elected Treasurer.

Language of Materials

Materials are in English

Access and Use

The Museum of the City of New York collections must be examined on site. Appointments to examine materials must be made in advance by contacting the Archivist through e-mail at research@mcny.org.

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Administrative information

Custodial information

The majority of the papers were donated by various descendents of the Livingston Family as noted in Acquisition history. It is believed that these materials descended through the family to the donors. The materials have been in the care of the Museum since their donation.

Acquisition history

Gift 41.35 was donated by The Pierrepont Family of Brooklyn, 1945

Gift 44.144 was donated by Miss Kathryn de B. Parsons, 1944. Her paternal grandmother, Eliza Glass (Livingston) Parson, was a descendent of Robert Livingston, Jr., Third Lord of the Manor.

Gift 47.173 was donated by Mr. Goodhue Livingston, 1947. He was a descendent of Robert R. Livingston and Edward Livingston.

Gift 49.48 was donated by Mrs. Frederick S. Wombwell. 1949.

Gift 56.70 was donated by Miss Elizabeth Remsen, 1956, a descendent of Robert Livingston, Jr., Third Lord of the Manor.

Gift 57.96 was donated by Mr. Bayard U. Livingston, Jr., 1957, a descendent of Robert Livingston, Jr., Third Lord of the Manor.

Gift 97.41 was donated by a currently unknown individual, 1997; gift paperwork is not locatable at this time.

Preferred citation

Title, date. Livingston Family Papers. Museum of the City of New York. Accession #.

Processing information

For several decades, this collection was arranged chronologically by correspondent without regard for provenance. Each of the seven gifts was intermingled. This situation was remedied with the present arrangement (see "Arrangement," above).

The Livingston Papers were reprocessed by Museum Collections Access interns under the supervision of Lindsay Turley, Manuscripts and Reference Archivist. Clare O'Dowd began restoring provenance to the collection by rearranging the objects according to their accession during summer 2012; and Jeremy Zoref continued this work, as well as created the container list and drafted the initial version of the finding aid. Objects were re-housed as part of reprocessing.

Related material

The Museum's other collections include costumes and jewelry worn and owned by Livingston family members, decorative arts objects that belonged to the Livingston family, paintings and prints of Livingstons, and pamphlets and books about the Livingstons. The collection includes hundred of objects related to the Livingston family, which are best accessed via ARGUS, the Museum's collections management system. For details, email research@mcny.org.

Related Collections in Other Repositories

New-York Historical Society:

- Robert R. Livingston papers (21.5 linear feet), 1707-1862: Contains material relating to negotiations in Paris for the Louisiana Purchase and his business relations with Robert Fulton in the steamboat navigation of the Hudson River
- Philip Livingston papers (2 linear feet), 1709-1821: Contains material related to Livingston property in New York State.

Princeton University:

- Edward Livingston Papers, 1683-1877 (75.5 cubic linear feet): Very large collection focusing on Edward Livingston, with some Robert R. Livingston correspondence.
 - o <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/collections/C0280>

NYPL:

- Livingston Family Papers (1.2 Linear Feet)
 - o <http://www.nypl.org/archives/1574>
- Van Rensselaer-Fort Papers, 1708-1885 (1.5 linear feet.)
 - o <http://www.nypl.org/archives/1996>

Columbia University:

Livingston Family Papers (2 boxes)

http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/archival/collections/ldpd_4079038/

Access Points

Personal names:

Fulton, Robert, 1765-1815
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826
Livingston, Edward, 1764-1836
Livingston, Edward, 1796-1840
Livingston, Edward P. (Edward Philip), 1779-1843
Livingston, Henry, 1748-1828
Livingston, John, 1750-1822,
Livingston, John, 1774-ca. 1848
Livingston, Peter Van Brugh, 1710-1792
Livingston, Philip, 1716-1778
Robert 1654-1728
Livingston, Robert L., 1775-1843

Livingston, Robert R., 1718-1775
Livingston, Robert R., 1746-1813
Madison, James, 1751-1836
United States. President (1801-1809 : Jefferson)
United States. President (1809-1817 : Madison)

Corporate names:

Topical subjects:

Albany Congress (1754 : Albany, N.Y.)
Louisiana Purchase
United States--History--French and Indian War, 1754-1763
United States--History--King George's War, 1744-1748

Geographic subjects:

Livingston Manor (N.Y.)
New Orleans (La.)
New York (N.Y.)

Container List

Box 115

Series I: Gift 47.173, of Mr. Goodhue Livingston

- Sub-Series I:1: Livingston, E.P.
 - Folder 1 (1827, April)
- Sub-Series I:2: Livingston, Edward
 - Folder 1 (1810, February)
- Sub-Series I:3: Livingston, Edward
 - Folder 1 (1829, June – 1831, September)
 - Folder 2 (1833, January – February)
- Sub-Series I:4: Livingston, Henry
 - Folder 1 (1748, April – 1752, June)
- Sub-Series I:5: Livingston, John
 - Folder 1 (1769, April)
- Sub-Series I:6: Livingston, Peter R.
 - Folder 1 (1755, September – November)
 - Folder 2 (1756, January – April)
 - Folder 3 (1756, May – October)
 - Folder 4 (1758, November – 1759, November)
 - Folder 5 (1760, January – 1761, September)
 - Folder 6 (1762, May – November)
 - Folder 7 (1763, March – October)
 - Folder 8 (1764, June – October)
 - Folder 9 (1765, September – December)
 - Folder 10 (1767, January – December)
 - Folder 11 (1769, January – April)
 - Folder 12 (1769, May – December)
 - Folder 13 (1770, January – February)

- Folder 14 (1770, March – November)
 - Folder 15 (1772, January – October)
- Sub-Series I:7: Livingston, Peter Van Brugh
 - Folder 1 (1757, June)
- Sub-Series I:8: Livingston, Philip
 - Folder 1 (1739, April)
 - Folder 2 (1736, May – 1738, March)
 - Folder 3 (1738, April – November)
 - Folder 4 (1738, November – 1739, January)
 - Folder 5 (1739, March – April)
 - Folder 6 (1739, April)
 - Folder 7 (1739, May – June)
 - Folder 8 (1739, July – October)
 - Folder 9 (1740, February – July)
 - Folder 10 (1740, August – December)
 - Folder 11 (1741, January – June)
 - Folder 12 (1741, June – 1742, March)
 - Folder 13 (1742, May – 1745, April)
 - Folder 14 (1746, January – June)
 - Folder 15 (1746, June – September)
 - Folder 16 (1746, October – December)
 - Folder 17 (1746, December – 1747, February)
 - Folder 18 (1747, February – March)
 - Folder 19 (1747, March)
 - Folder 20 (1747, April – May)
 - Folder 21 (1747, June – July)
 - Folder 22 (1747, August – September)
 - Folder 23 (1747, September)
 - Folder 24 (1747, October – November)
 - Folder 25 (1747, December – 1748, January)
 - Folder 26 (1751, July – 1755, March)
 - Folder 27 (1770, May)

Box 116

- Sub-Series I:9: Livingston, R.L.
 - Folder 1 (1834 / n.d.)
- Sub-Series I:10: Livingston, Robert
 - Folder 1 (1746, August – 1747, February)
 - Folder 2 (1747, March – 1751, September)
 - Folder 3 (ca. 1750)
 - Folder 4 (1753, January)
- Sub-Series I:11: Livingston, Robert (1654-1728)
 - Folder 1 (1719, March)
- Sub-Series I:12: Livingston, Robert Jr. (1688-1775?)
 - Folder 1 (1751, October – 1752, August)

- Folder 2 (1752, October – 1753, October)
- Folder 3 (1753, October – 1754, April)
- Folder 4 (1754, May – 1755, January)
- Folder 5 (1755, March – May)
- Folder 6 (1755, March – August)
- Folder 7 (1755, September)
- Folder 8 (1756, April – October)
- Folder 9 (1757, March)
- Sub-Series I:13: Livingston, Robert B.
 - Folder 1 (1799 – 1801, January / n.d.)
- Sub-Series I:14: Livingston, Robert E.
 - Folder 1 (1873, May)
- Sub-Series I:15: Livingston, Robert R. Jr. (1746-1813)
 - Folder 1 (1800, April – 1803, November)
 - Folder 2 (1801, July – 1803, January)
 - Folder 3 (1805, September – October)
 - Folder 4 (1805, December)
 - Folder 5 (1782, December)
 - Folder 6 (1783, November – 1792, August)
 - Folder 7 (1792, November)
 - Folder 8 (1799, January)
 - Folder 9 (1801, January)
 - Folder 10 (1801, March – May)
 - Folder 11 (1801, July)
 - Folder 12 (1801, August)
 - Folder 13 (1801, September)
 - Folder 14 (1801, August – October)
 - Folder 15 (1801, October)
 - Folder 16 (1801, October)
 - Folder 17 (1801, December)
 - Folder 18 (1802, May)
 - Folder 19 (1802, October)
 - Folder 20 (1803, April)
 - Folder 21 (1803, May)
 - Folder 22 (1803, May)
 - Folder 23 (1804, June)
 - Folder 24 (1805, May – August)
 - Folder 25 (n.d.)
- Sub-Series I:16: Livingston & Alexander
 - Folder 1 (1755, April – May)
- Sub-Series I:17: J? Livingston's Case
 - Folder 1 (n.d.)

Box 117

Series II: Gift 97.41, of an unknown donor

- Sub-Series II:1: Livingston, Edward
 - Folder 1 (1833, January)
- Sub-Series II:2: Livingston, Edward (Uncategorized)
 - Folder 1 (1800 – 1842)
- Sub-Series II:3: Livingston, Edward P. (Uncategorized)
 - Folder 1 (n.d.)
 - Folder 2 (1804 – 1830)
 - Folder 3 (1823 – 1834)
- Sub-Series II:4: Livingston, Robert E.
 - Folder 1 (1883, February)
- Sub-Series II:5: Robert R.
 - Folder 1 (1807, August / n.d.)
 - Folder 2 (1817?, July)
- Sub-Series II:6: Livingston Family (General)
 - Folder 1 (n.d.)

Series III: Gift 44.144, of Miss Kathryn de B. Parsons

- Sub-Series III:1: Livingston, Margaret
 - Folder 1 (1839, September – 1840, December / n.d.)
- Sub-Series III:2: Livingston, Robert L.
 - Folder 1 (1844, June)
- Sub-Series III:3: Livingston, Robert R.
 - Folder 1 (1790, October)
- Sub-Series III:4: Livingston, S.
 - Folder 1 (1840)
- Sub-Series III:5: Livingston, Schuyler
 - Folder 1 (1850, September)

Series IV: Gift 57.96, of Mr. Bayard U. Livingston, Jr.

- Sub-Series IV:1: Livingston, Peter R.
 - Folder 1 (1781, July)
- Sub-Series IV:2: Livingston, Robert Jr.
 - Folder 1 (1771)

Series V: Gift 41.35, of The Pierrepont Family of Brooklyn: Livingston, Philip (1929)

- Folder 1 (1929, October)

Series VI: Gift 49.48, of Mrs. Frederick S. Wombwell: Livingston, W.

- Folder 1 (n.d.)

Series VII: Gift 56.70, of Miss Elizabeth Remsen: Livingston, Robert Cambridge

- Folder 1 (1780, April)

Series VIII: Non-Accessioned: Livingston, Robert

- Folder 1 (1753, October)