

**A GUIDE TO EARLY AMERICAN HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES**  
**(1763-1824)**  
**IN THE**  
**FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is the nation's first presidential library. It preserves over 18,000 cubic feet of manuscript materials, printed materials, audio-visual collections, and ephemeras as well as nearly 30,000 museum objects related to Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and the Roosevelt-era. Finding aids and other information on research at the library can be accessed through the library's website at [www.fdrlibrary.org](http://www.fdrlibrary.org)

The FDR library primarily holds personal papers, not Federal records. The library's manuscript collections document the interactions of President Roosevelt, Eleanor Roosevelt and various administration officials with each other, with the American people, and with the various agencies and departments of government. Official records of government agencies and departments are located at the National Archives, in College Park, Maryland.

This guide attempts to summarize the variety of resources available at the Roosevelt Library for the study of the American Revolution and early nationhood for the United States of America or covering a period spanning 1763 to 1824. The manuscript collections featured here have been summarized for easy reference purposes.

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### **Historical Manuscript Collection**

This collection contains material on almost every phase of political, social, mercantile, and military life in the United States, during the period 1636-1936.

Among the collection's late 18th century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century documents there are business correspondence and records; military related correspondence; last wills and testaments; patents; deeds and grants for land; apprenticeship papers; papers concerning construction of ships; receipts for enslaved persons; and many other documentary examples dating from the early American period.

Of note are papers of prominent people from the American Revolution and the early United States, including George Washington; Benjamin Franklin; John Adams; Thomas Jefferson; John Jay; the Marquis de Lafayette; Major General Charles Lee; Lord Cornwallis; Dr. Benjamin Rush; Benjamin Stoddert; Toussaint L'Ouverture; Aaron Burr; James Madison; Dolly Madison; James Monroe; and Andrew Jackson.

## **Naval and Marine Manuscript Collection**

This collection consists of correspondence, diaries, journals, logbooks, and indexes to books and articles concerning, largely, United States naval history from 1730 to 1942. The papers include material on the periods of the Revolutionary War, war with France, war with Tripoli, Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I.

This collection's core strength lies in its source material on the history of the early American Navy during the age of sailing ships. Much of the collection consists of letters and other papers from, to, and about iconic naval officers and vessels of the Continental Navy and the early U.S. Navy, including John Barry, John Paul Jones, and Thomas Macdonough, as well as notable Americans such as George Washington, John Adams, James Madison, James Monroe, John Hancock, Silas Deane, Robert Morris, and Henry Knox. Other items of note include ship's logs and sea journals from distinguished American Naval vessels such as the *USS Constitution*, *USS Essex*, *USS Philadelphia*, *USS Enterprise*, and the *Andrew Doria*.

## **Hudson Valley and Dutchess County Manuscript Collection**

The Hudson River Valley and Dutchess County Manuscript Collection contains materials collected by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and others, that pertain to the local history of these regions. The documents showcase the personal lives, professional pursuits, religious activities, and pastimes of area residents in the history of the Hudson Valley circa 1540-1952.

This collection contains materials from the colonial and early American periods, and these include business and personal correspondence, account books, diaries, property records, genealogical records, copies of government records, records of enslaved persons, and others, related to subject matter such as agriculture, commerce, Indian affairs, the manorial system, religion, and the Revolutionary War. Notable items include a town record from Coxsackie, New York listing free born slaves, and documents related to the Livingston and Schuyler families and Governor George Clinton of New York.

## **Roosevelt Family Papers**

This collection contains correspondence, letter books, diaries, and real estate and business papers of many Roosevelt family members – direct ancestors and other relatives of both Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt. Scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, maps, pamphlets and other printed materials pertaining to family members are also included. The papers of the Roosevelt line found in this collection date from 1679 but the earliest papers in any quantity are those of Jacobus Roosevelt, the President's great-great-great grandfather. Also present in this collection are papers of the Delano family, who were

the President's maternal lineage, dating from 1469, and were in his possession. The collection also includes other family papers, including the Hall family, of Eleanor Roosevelt's maternal lineage.

Of particular interest to researchers of the early American period, would be records concerning Isaac Roosevelt, known as "the Patriot" by the family, and great-great grandfather to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. A New York sugar refiner and financial supporter of the Revolution, he was a member of the Constitutional Convention held in Poughkeepsie in 1788 for the purpose of ratifying the Federal Constitution. He also served as the first President of the Bank of New York.

### **Roosevelt Family Papers Donated by the Children of Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt**

This collection contains family papers and correspondence, political files, writings, and other materials related to Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and their families, dated 1686-1959.

Among the materials in this collection are some of the oldest indentures, deeds and estate papers of the Roosevelt family. Chiefly, these are the papers of Elbert Roosevelt, 1767-1817, who was a New York City merchant and ancestor of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

### **Rosedale Estate Papers**

The Rosedale Estate Papers contain historical manuscript materials, ranging from the 18th to the 20th Century, and span several generations of the Roosevelt, Aspinwall, Clark, and Crosby families that trace their lineage to and through the Rosedale Estate, in Hyde Park, NY. This branch of the Roosevelt family is descended from John Aspinwall Roosevelt, uncle of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and brother of James Roosevelt (FDR's father).

Among the most notable materials from this collection concern Isaac Roosevelt, FDR's great-great grandfather. A prominent figure from New York at the time of the Revolution, he was a supporter of independence for the American colonies and for this reason, he was known as "the Patriot" by the family. This collection contains letters from Isaac to his son-in-law, Richard Varick, while Roosevelt was a delegate at New York State's convention to ratify the U.S. Constitution, in 1788, which was being held in Poughkeepsie, NY.

### **Roosevelt Family - Material donated by Jerry Granat**

This collection consists of miscellaneous documents signed by members of the Roosevelt family, donated by Jerry Granat. Included in this collection are documents created by Isaac Roosevelt, great-great grandfather to the President, and who was a participant in the American Revolution.

## **Roosevelt Family - Material Accumulated by George Roach for an Editorial Project**

This collection consists of materials accumulated by George Roach, a member of the editorial department of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, for an editorial project.

Included within are copies of correspondence of Isaac Roosevelt, great-great grandfather to the President, and who was a participant in the American Revolution.

## **FDR's Book Collection**

The personal library of President Roosevelt numbered approximately 22,000 volumes. FDR began collecting books as a boy, and his personal library reflects his varied interests in the United States Navy, the Hudson Valley, literature, history, economics, politics, legal studies, science and technology, biography, and many other subjects. He also enjoyed reading fiction, particularly mystery novels. To this unique collection, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum has added, and continues to add, major works about Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and the Roosevelt era. The result is a highly specialized research collection totaling over 50,000 volumes.

The President's personal collection included numerous volumes dating from the historical period of early America – as well as publications and printings that spanned up to his contemporary period – on subjects that included naval history, the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, biographies of significant individuals, as well as the U.S. Constitution and foundation of the Federal Government.

## **Museum Collection**

Franklin Roosevelt was a great collector. From an early age he gathered large collections of stamps, ship models, rare books, prints, coins, and drawings. By the time of his election as President, he had amassed one of the nation's finest collections of naval art and impressive collections of Hudson River Valley art and historical prints.

FDR placed his personal collections in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, which he created in 1941. These materials became the core of a museum collection that now numbers over 34,000 items. In the years after 1941, the collection expanded to include clothing, personal items, furniture, and other materials connected to the President and First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt, as well as their family, friends, political associates and the United States at large during the 1930s and 1940s.

The museum collection includes early American artifacts collected by President Roosevelt, including a watch key belonging to Oliver Hazard Perry (c. 1812-1819), examples of colonial era and early United

States currency, and a Dutch-American commemorative goblet engraved in 1782 – commemorating Dutch support of the independence of the American colonies. Military artifacts such as musket balls from the American Revolutionary War, and a powder horn from the War of 1812, as well as artwork of the same periods, including naval vessels such as the *USS Constitution*, *USS Chesapeake*, and *USS Philadelphia*. There is also artwork depicting the famous action between the *HMS Serapis* & the Continental Navy's *Bonhomme Richard* (captained by John Paul Jones) in 1779. There are also silhouettes, paintings, and engravings from the Revolutionary War period depicting George Washington, John Paul Jones, and Commodore Esek Hopkins, who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Navy in the early days of the Revolutionary War.