

Joseph Hodges Choate Papers

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Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

Collection Summary

Title: Joseph Hodges Choate Papers

Span Dates: 1745-1929

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1852-1917)

ID No.: MSS15768

Creator: Choate, Joseph Hodges, 1832-1917

Extent: 11,000 items ; 40 containers plus 1 oversize ; 16 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Lawyer, author, and diplomat. Correspondence, letterbooks, addresses, lectures, legal memoranda, memorabilia, scrapbooks, printed matter, and other papers relating primarily to Choate's student days at Harvard University, his law practice in New York, his charitable work, and his diplomatic career.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Adams, Charles Francis, 1835-1915--Correspondence.

Balfour, Arthur James, 1848-1930--Correspondence.

Balfour, Arthur James, 1848-1930.

Beck, James M. (James Montgomery), 1861-1936--Correspondence.

Bryce, James Bryce, Viscount, 1838-1922--Correspondence.

Carter, John R. (John Ridgely), 1862-1944--Correspondence.

Choate family.

Choate, Caroline Sterling--Correspondence.

Choate, Caroline, 1834-1889--Correspondence.

Choate, George F. (George Francis), 1822-1888--Correspondence.

Choate, Joseph Hodges, 1832-1917.

Choate, Mabel, 1870-1958--Correspondence.

Choate, Margaret Manning--Correspondence.

Choate, William Gardner, 1830-1920--Correspondence.

Cleveland, Grover, 1837-1908--Correspondence.

Curzon of Kedleston, George Nathaniel Curzon, Marquess, 1859-1925.

Eliot, Charles William, 1834-1926--Correspondence.

Evarts, William Maxwell, 1818-1901--Correspondence.

Foster, John Watson, 1836-1917--Correspondence.

Greene, F. V. (Francis Vinton), 1850-1921--Correspondence.

Hay, John, 1838-1905--Correspondence.

Hay, John, 1838-1905.

Joffre, Joseph Jacques Césaire, 1852-1931.

Lansdowne, Henry Charles Keith Petty-FitzMaurice, Marquess of, 1845-1927--Correspondence.

Morgan, Edwin T.--Correspondence.

Oliver, Henry K. (Henry Kemble), 1800-1885--Correspondence.

Pauncefote, Julian, 1828-1902.

Phillips, William, 1878-1968--Correspondence.

Rantoul, Robert S. (Robert Samuel), 1832-1922--Correspondence.

Reid, Whitelaw, 1837-1912--Correspondence.

Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919--Correspondence.

Root, Elihu, 1845-1937--Correspondence.

Rowe, William V.--Correspondence.

Sanderson, Thomas Henry Sanderson, Baron, 1841-1923--Correspondence.

Taft, William H. (William Howard), 1857-1930--Correspondence.
Trevelyan, George Otto, 1838-1928--Correspondence.
Viviani, René, 1863-1925.
White, Henry, 1850-1927--Correspondence.
Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924--Correspondence.
Withington, Lothrop, 1856-1915--Correspondence.

Organizations

Algeciras Conference (1906 : Algeciras, Spain)
American Bar Association.
American Museum of Natural History.
Great Britain. Treaties, etc. United States, 1900 February 5.
Great Britain. Treaties, etc. United States, 1901 November 18.
Harvard University--Students.
International Peace Conference.
Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.)
New York (State). Constitutional Convention (1894)
Union League of America.

Subjects

Canals, Interoceanic.
Canals--Central America.
Charities--New York (State)
Diplomatic and consular service, American--Great Britain.
Eastern question (Far East)
Practice of law--New York (State)--New York.
World War, 1914-1918.

Places

Alaska--Boundaries--Canada.
Canada--Boundaries--Alaska.
China--Foreign relations--United States.
China--History--Boxer Rebellion, 1899-1901.
France--Foreign relations--Morocco.
France--Foreign relations--United States.
Great Britain--Foreign relations--United States.
Morocco--Foreign relations--France.
Morocco--History--20th century.
New York (State)--Politics and government.
United States--Foreign relations--China.
United States--Foreign relations--France.
United States--Foreign relations--Great Britain.

Occupations

Authors.
Diplomats.
Lawyers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Joseph Hodges Choate, lawyer, author, and diplomat, were deposited in the Library of Congress in 1930 and 1931 by his daughter, Mabel Choate. In 1946 the deposit was converted to a gift. An additional letter was purchased in 1981 to add to the collection.

Processing History

The papers of Joseph Hodges Choate were arranged and described in 1962. A letter was added to the collection in 1984, and the finding aid was revised in 2011.

Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings of Joseph Hodges Choate in these papers and in other collections of papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Joseph Hodges Choate are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Joseph Hodges Choate Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1832, Jan. 24	Born, Salem, Mass.
1852	A.B., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1854	LL.B., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
1855-1917	Practiced law with the firm of Butler, Evarts and Southmayd (later Evarts, Choate, Sherman and Leon), New York, N.Y.
1860	A.M., Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass
1861	Married Caroline Dutcher Sterling
1869-1917	Founder and trustee, American Museum of Natural History, New York, N.Y.
1870-1917	Incorporator, trustee, and at times vice president, chairman of the law committee and member of the executive committee, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N.Y.
1890	Member, commission to revise the judicial system of New York
1894	President, New York Constitutional Convention
1897	Candidate for the United States Senate
1899-1905	United States ambassador to Great Britain
1907	United States ambassador and first delegate, International Peace Conference at the Hague, Netherlands
1917, May 14	Died, New York, N.Y.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Joseph Hodges Choate (1832-1917) span the years 1745-1929, with the bulk of the material dating from 1852-1917. The papers are in English and are arranged into the following series: [Family Correspondence](#), [General Correspondence](#), [Letterbooks](#), [Subject File](#), [Legal File](#), [Addresses](#), [Miscellany](#), [Scrapbooks and Albums](#), and [Oversize](#).

The papers relate primarily to Choate's family, 1745-1925; his attendance at Harvard University, 1848-1855; his law practice in New York, 1855-1917; his association with the American Museum of Natural History, 1869-1917, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1870-1917; his service as president of the New York Constitutional Convention, 1894; his work with New York charities, 1895-1917; his service as United States ambassador to Great Britain, 1899-1905; First Delegate to the International Peace Conference at the Hague, Netherlands, 1907; and his chairmanship of the New York committee for the 1917 reception of British and French commissions headed by Arthur James Balfour, Earl of Balfour, René Viviani, and Joseph Jacques Césaire Joffre.

In the [Family Correspondence](#) series, Choate's wife, Caroline Sterling Choate, received and sent correspondence under the name of "Carrie." Choate also had a sister who received and sent correspondence under the name of "Carrie." Letters sent and received by Mabel Choate, daughter of the Choates, are filed with Caroline Sterling Choate's correspondence. Other correspondents included in the Family Correspondence are Choate's parents, George F. Choate and Margaret Manning Choate, and his brother, William Gardner Choate.

The papers pertaining to Choate's service as ambassador to Great Britain, especially the correspondence between him and John Hay and with President Theodore Roosevelt, indicate the diplomatic inter workings connected with the two Hay-Pauncefote treaties, the Open Door policy of the United States in the Far East, and the final settlement of the Alaskan boundary dispute. The papers include correspondence between Choate and President Roosevelt about the Algeciras Conference in Spain in 1906, concerning France's relationship to the government of Morocco. Other topics featured in the collection are the Union League of America, the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, the American Bar Association, and Choate's work with Harvard University alumni.

Correspondents include Charles Francis Adams; Arthur James Balfour, earl of Balfour; James M. Beck; James Bryce, viscount Bryce; John R. Carter; Grover Cleveland; George Nathaniel Curzon, marquis of Curzon; Charles William Eliot; William Maxwell Evarts; John Watson Foster; F. V. Greene; John Hay; Henry Charles Keith Petty-FitzMaurice, marquess of Lansdowne; Edwin T. Morgan; Henry K. Oliver; William Phillips; Robert S. Rantoul; Whitelaw Reid; Theodore Roosevelt; Elihu Root; William V. Rowe; Thomas Henry Sanderson, baron Sanderson; William H. Taft; Sir George Otta Trevelyan; Henry White; Woodrow Wilson; and Lothrop Withington.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in nine series:

- [Family Correspondence, 1745-1926](#)
- [General Correspondence, 1847-1919](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1899-1905](#)
- [Subject File, 1852-1918](#)
- [Legal File, 1853-1916](#)
- [Addresses, 1852-1917](#)
- [Miscellany, 1848-1917](#)
- [Scrapbooks and Albums, 1864-1929](#)
- [Oversize, 1848-1917](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-11	<p><u>Family Correspondence, 1745-1926</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received. Arranged into two groups: Caroline Sterling Choate and Joseph Hodges Choate. Correspondence to and from Caroline Choate is arranged chronologically. Correspondence to and from Joseph Hodges Choate is arranged alphabetically.</p>
BOX 11-16	<p><u>General Correspondence, 1847-1919</u></p> <p>Letters sent and received. Arranged alphabetically.</p>
BOX 17-19	<p><u>Letterbooks, 1899-1905</u></p> <p>Three volumes of letterpress and letter copy books of letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically and indexed.</p>
BOX 20-22	<p><u>Subject File, 1852-1918</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, reports and clippings. Arranged alphabetically by topic and therein chronologically.</p>
BOX 23-24	<p><u>Legal File, 1853-1916</u></p> <p>Correspondence, memoranda, and printed matter. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 25-31	<p><u>Addresses, 1852-1917</u></p> <p>Manuscript, typescript, and printed copies of addresses delivered by Choate. There is considerable correspondence filed with his more important speeches, particularly those delivered in England while serving as ambassador to Great Britain. Arranged alphabetically by title or subject.</p>
BOX 32	<p><u>Miscellany, 1848-1917</u></p> <p>Printed matter and memorials to Choate. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 33-40	<p><u>Scrapbooks and Albums, 1864-1929</u></p> <p>Scrapbooks, containing newspaper clippings and printed matter, and albums, containing autographs of friends in London, England, and memorial volumes of newspaper clippings and citations. Arranged by type of material and the scrapbooks are further arranged chronologically within each volume.</p>
BOX OV 1	<p><u>Oversize, 1848-1917</u></p> <p>Diplomas and citations. Arranged chronologically.</p>

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-11	Family Correspondence, 1745-1926 Letters sent and received. Arranged into two groups: Caroline Sterling Choate and Joseph Hodges Choate. Correspondence to and from Caroline Choate is arranged chronologically. Correspondence to and from Joseph Hodges Choate is arranged alphabetically.
BOX 1	Choate, Caroline Sterling (wife)
BOX 1	Letters received
BOX 1	1860-1876
BOX 2	1877-1890
BOX 3	1891-1900
BOX 4	1900-1918
BOX 5	1917-1919
BOX 5	Letters sent
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BOX 6	1861-1883
BOX 7	1884-1921
BOX 7	Choate, Joseph Hodges, family and friends
BOX 7	A-D, 1745-1917
BOX 8	E-J, 1822-1917
BOX 9	L-M, 1855-1919
BOX 10	M-P, 1848-1926
BOX 11	P-W, 1851-1919
BOX 11-16	General Correspondence, 1847-1919 Letters sent and received. Arranged alphabetically.
BOX 11	A-B, 1887-1919
BOX 12	C, 1850-1917
BOX 13	C-H, 1847-1917
BOX 14	Hay, John, 1899-1905
BOX 15	I-Q, 1875-1917
BOX 16	R-Y, 1879-1917
BOX 17-19	Letterbooks, 1899-1905 Three volumes of letterpress and letter copy books of letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically and indexed.
BOX 17	1899-1902
BOX 18	1902-1904

Letterbooks, 1899-1905

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 19	1904-1905
BOX 20-22	Subject File, 1852-1918 Correspondence, memoranda, reports and clippings. Arranged alphabetically by topic and therein chronologically.
BOX 20	A-C, 1898-1918
BOX 21	C-H, 1852-1917
BOX 22	H-W, 1852-1917
BOX 23-24	Legal File, 1853-1916 Correspondence, memoranda, and printed matter. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 23	Cases, 1878-1916
BOX 23	Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., lectures, 1853
BOX 24	Cases, 1896
BOX 24	References on Petit Jury, undated
BOX 25-31	Addresses, 1852-1917 Manuscript, typescript, and printed copies of addresses delivered by Choate. There is considerable correspondence filed with his more important speeches, particularly those delivered in England while serving as ambassador to Great Britain. Arranged alphabetically by title or subject.
BOX 25	A-C, 1869-1917
BOX 26	C-E, 1871-1916
BOX 27	E-F, 1878-1917
BOX 28	F-H, 1852-1916
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BOX 30	N-S, 1855-1917
BOX 31	S-W, 1874-1917
BOX 32	Miscellany, 1848-1917 Printed matter and memorials to Choate. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 32	Diplomas and certificates, 1848-1917 <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 32	Printed matter, 1833, 1897
BOX 32	Memorials, 1917
BOX 33-40	Scrapbooks and Albums, 1864-1929 Scrapbooks, containing newspaper clippings and printed matter, and albums, containing autographs of friends in London, England, and memorial volumes of newspaper clippings and citations. Arranged by type of material and the scrapbooks are further arranged chronologically within each volume.
BOX 33	1864-1897

Scrapbooks and Albums, 1864-1929

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX OV 1	Oversize, 1848-1917 Diplomas and citations. Arranged chronologically.
BOX OV 1	Miscellany
BOX OV 1	Diplomas and certificates, 1848-1917 (Container 32)