

# Causten-Pickett Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Library of Congress

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff  
Revised and expanded by Melinda K. Friend



Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2011

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

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# Collection Summary

Title: Causten-Pickett Papers

Span Dates: 1765-1916

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1797-1900)

ID No.: MSS15420

Extent: 33,000 items; 113 containers; 45 linear feet; 2 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English with French, Italian, and Spanish

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

Abstract: James H. Causten, businessman of Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., who worked to settle French spoliation claims; John T. Pickett, United States and Confederate diplomat and army officer, and lawyer of Washington, D.C.; and Pickett's son, Theodore John Pickett, lawyer of Washington, D.C., who succeeded to Causten's interest in the claims cases. Correspondence, insurance policies, powers of attorney, promissory notes, bills of exchange, American and French court records, ship case files, other financial and legal papers, printed matter, and other papers relating chiefly to French spoliation claims.

## 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, 1807-1886--Correspondence.

Adams, John, 1735-1826--Correspondence.

Brooks, Peter Chardon, 1767-1849. Peter Chardon Brooks papers.

Causten, James H., 1788-1874. James H. Causten papers.

Curtis, William T. S. William T.S. Curtis papers.

Dunant, Edward. Edward Dunant papers.

Earle, William E. (William Edward), 1841-1894. William E. Earle papers.

Gilpin, Joshua, 1765-1840. Joshua Gilpin papers.

Hollins, John. John Hollins papers.

Hollins, Robert. Robert Hollins papers.

Hollins, Thomas. Thomas Hollins papers.

Livingston, Robert R., 1746-1813--Correspondence.

Madison, James, 1751-1836--Correspondence.

Mason, John, 1766-1849--Correspondence.

McKim, Alexander, 1748-1832. Alexander McKim papers.

Monroe, James, 1758-1831--Correspondence.

Myers, Leonard, 1827-1905. Leonard Myers papers.

Pickering, Timothy, 1745-1829--Correspondence.

Pickett, John T. (John Thomas), 1822-1884. John T. Pickett papers.

Pickett, Theodore John. Theodore John Pickett papers.

Pike, Luther H. Luther H. Pike papers.

Seward, William Henry, 1801-1872--Correspondence.

Skipwith, Fulwar, 1765-1839. Fulwar Skipwith papers.

Stewart, David, 1800-1858. David Stewart papers.

Stewart, John, d. 1820. John Stewart papers.

Sumner, Charles, 1811-1874--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Baltimore Insurance Company. Baltimore Insurance Company records.

Maryland Insurance Company. Maryland Insurance Company records.

Peter Chardon Brooks Insurance Agency. Peter Chardon Brooks Insurance Agency records.

Subjects  
Claims.  
French spoliation claims.  
Insurance companies.

## Administrative Information

### Provenance

The Causten-Pickett Papers were given to the Library of Congress in 1954 by Beverley Humphreys Harris, Hetty Vawter Tebbs and Edwin Vawter Harris. Later gifts were made by Beverley Humphreys Harris in 1955, Henry Bartholomew Cox in 1969, and Hannah Cox in 2007.

### Processing History

The Causten-Pickett Papers were arranged and described in 1956. The finding aid was expanded and revised in 2011.

### Additional Guides

A press release on the Causten-Pickett Papers was issued by the Library of Congress, 24 October 1955, and a news story appeared in the *Alexandria (Va.) Journal-Tribune* on 5 January 1956. An acquisition note was printed in the Library's *Information Bulletin*, 14, no. 42 (17 October 1955): 2-3; and the material was described in the Library of Congress *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*, 13, no. 3 (May 1956): 163.

### Other Repositories

Other papers of Fulwar Skipwith can be found in the G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport - The Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, Conn.

### Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the papers of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Henry Bartholomew Cox, Henry Mason Morfit, the Lovering-Taylor Family Papers, John T. Pickett Papers and the U.S. Claims Commission Records.

### Copyright Status

Copyright in the unpublished writings in the Causten-Pickett Papers in the custody of the Library of Congress has been dedicated to the public.

### Access and Restrictions

The Causten-Pickett Papers 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.

### Microfilm

Microfilm on two reels was received as part of the Causten-Pickett Papers and is listed and described in this finding aid. This microfilm is not available for purchase and may not be borrowed on interlibrary loan.

### Preferred Citation

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

## Biographical Note

Fulwar Skipwith

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1765, Feb. 21	Born, Dinwiddie County, Va.
1790	Appointed consul general of Martinique, West Indies, by President George Washington
1795	Appointed consul general to France
1796-1800	Sole commercial and diplomatic agent of the United States in France
1800-1808	Official commercial agent of the United States in France
1802	Married Evelina Louisa Barlié van den Clooster, a Flemish countess
1803	Instrumental in negotiating the Louisiana Purchase
1808	Resigned and returned to the United States, settling on the plantation Monte Sano, near Baton Rouge, La. (then West Florida)
1810	Helped lead revolt to free West Florida from Spain Governor, Republic of West Florida
circa 1812	After annexation of West Florida to the United States became registrar of the land office
circa 1814-circa 1827	Served in Louisiana state senate
1839, Jan. 7	Died, Monte Sano plantation, Baton Rouge, La.

Peter Chardon Brooks

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1767, Jan. 6 or 11	Born, North Yarmouth, Me.
1781	Apprenticed to merchant in Boston, Mass.
1789	Established marine insurance brokerage at Bunch of Grapes Tavern, Boston
1792	Married Nancy Gorham
1803	Retired from business
1806	Returned to business as president of New England Marine Insurance Co.
1806-1814	Served as Federalist in Massachusetts state senate Served on Governor's Council of Massachusetts

1819-1823 Served alternately in Massachusetts house of representatives and senate  
1849, Jan. 1 Died, Boston, Mass.

James H. Causten

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1788, Sept. 26	Born, Baltimore, Md., son of Isaac Causten
1813	Married Eliza Myer (died 1856)
circa 1817	Shipping agent, Baltimore, Md.
circa 1825	Moved to Washington, D.C., to work on French spoliation claims Consul in Washington, D.C., for Ecuador and Chile
1825-1874	Worked actively to settle French spoliation and Spanish claims
1874, Oct. 28	Died, Washington, D.C.

John T. Pickett

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1822, Oct. 9	Born, Maysville, Ky.
1841	Appointed to United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
circa 1842-1844	Studied law, Lexington Law School, Lexington, Va.
1845	Consul, Turk's Island, Bahamas
1850	Joined Narciso López's expedition against Cuba
1852	Fought as a general under Lajos Kossuth in Hungarian revolution
1853, Oct. 18	Married Catherine ("Kate") Keyworth (died 1888)
1853-1860	American consul, Vera Cruz, Mexico
1862	Appointed minister to Mexico by Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America
circa 1863-circa 1865	Chief of staff under General John Breckenridge
circa 1865-1884	Law practice in Washington, D.C.; became associated with James H. Causten
1873	Intermediary in sale of Confederate documents to United States government
1884, Oct. 18	Died, Washington, D.C.

Theodore John Pickett

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1859, Aug. 3	Born, Charleston or Charles Town, Va.
1884	Inherited his father's interest in Causten Agency
1887	LL.B. Georgetown University Law School, Washington, D.C.
1888	LL.M. Georgetown University Law School, Washington, D.C.
circa 1906-circa 1910	Married Sallie Beverly Vawter Harris (died 1939)
1918, Jan. 8	Died, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The Causten-Pickett Papers span the years 1765-1916, with the bulk of the material dating from 1797 to 1900. The papers are organized into ten series: [History and Settlement of French Spoliation Claims](#), [Fulwar Skipwith Papers](#), [Joshua Gilpin and Edward Dunant Papers](#), [Records of Insurance Companies](#), [Case Files on Ships](#), [James H. Causten Papers](#), [John T. Pickett and Causten Agency Papers](#), [Theodore John Pickett and Causten Agency Papers](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Addition](#).

The papers deal primarily with the history and settlement of French spoliation claims dating from 1793 to 1916. The greater part of the material consists of the correspondence and insurance records, 1765-1916, of James H. Causten and his associates John T. Pickett, Theodore John Pickett, Fulwar Skipwith, numerous lawyers including William T. S. Curtis, William E. Earle, Leonard Myers, Luther H. Pike, David Stewart, John Stewart, and officials of marine insurance companies such as Peter Chardon Brooks, John Hollins, Robert Hollins, Thomas Hollins, Alexander McKim and others. The insurance records include about 1,200 case files and consist of insurance policies, powers of attorney, promissory notes, bills of lading, bills for ship repairs, bills of exchange, American and French court records, admiralty registries, financial records, applications for insurance, and memorials to Congress. They include not only the French spoliation claims material but records relating to a wide variety of claims handled by the Baltimore Insurance Company, the Maryland Insurance Company, Peter Chardon Brooks Insurance Agency, and other agents and companies. Letters from many eminent men appear in the collection: Charles Francis Adams, John Adams, Robert R. Livingston, James Madison, John Mason, James Monroe, Timothy Pickering, William Henry Seward, Charles Sumner, and Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord.

The [Addition](#) consists of two microfilm reels of documents relating to French spoliation claims, most likely the additional Causten-Pickett papers filmed for possible sale by the Harris family heirs in 1960 that are not included in these papers.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in ten series:

- [History and Settlement of French Spoliation Claims, 1793-1916](#)
- [Fulwar Skipwith Papers, 1765-1872](#)
- [Joshua Gilpin and Edward Dunant Papers, 1793-1834](#)
- [Records of Insurance Companies, 1783-1842](#)
- [Case Files on Ships, circa 1789-1910](#)
- [James H. Causten Papers, 1816-1885](#)

- John T. Pickett and Causten Agency Papers, 1838-1874
- Theodore John Pickett and Causten Agency Papers, 1885-1916
- Miscellany, 1796-1903
- Addition, 1786-1899

## Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-4	<u>History and Settlement of French Spoliation Claims, 1793-1916</u> Manuscripts and printed matter. Arrangement is roughly by topic.
BOX 5-14	<u>Fulwar Skipwith Papers, 1765-1872</u> Personal and official correspondence and records. Arranged by type of material. Correspondence further arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and case files on ships alphabetically by name of ship.
BOX 15	<u>Joshua Gilpin and Edward Dunant Papers, 1793-1834</u> Letterbook, correspondence, and financial records. Arranged by type of material with correspondence arranged chronologically.
BOX 16-33	<u>Records of Insurance Companies, 1783-1842</u> Correspondence, applications for insurance, powers of attorney given to transfer stock and receive dividends, promissory notes, bills of lading, insurance policies, bills of exchange, and financial records. Arranged by name of company and therein by type of material with further arrangement of correspondence alphabetically by name of correspondent and applications chronologically.
BOX 34-77	<u>Case Files on Ships, circa 1789-1910</u> Correspondence, bills for ship repair, insurance policies, bills of lading, and captain's protests. Arranged alphabetically by name of ship with bound volumes of case books and lists of captures filed first.
BOX 78-99	<u>James H. Causten Papers, 1816-1885</u> Bound letterbooks and general correspondence consisting of personal and business correspondence and legal and financial records. Letterbooks arranged chronologically. General correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 100-101	<u>John T. Pickett and Causten Agency Papers, 1838-1874</u> Correspondence, speeches, and financial and legal records of Pickett and the Causten Agency. Arranged roughly in alphabetical order by subject.
BOX 102-110	<u>Theodore John Pickett and Causten Agency Papers, 1886-1916</u> Correspondence, notebook, and an account book of Pickett and the Causten Agency. Arranged by type of material with the correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.

BOX 111-113

Miscellany, 1796-1903

Manuscripts, account books, legal records, printed matter, and duplicates.  
Arranged as received.

REEL 1-2

Addition, 1786-1899

Two reels of positive microfilm of documents relating to French spoliation claims, but not included in these papers. Microfilm shelf no. 23,331.  
Arranged chronologically.

# Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-4	History and Settlement of French Spoliation Claims, 1793-1916 Manuscripts and printed matter. Arrangement is roughly by topic.
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BOX 1	Lists of claims and claimants
BOX 1	History of French spoliation claims prior to 1800
BOX 2	Congressional action on bills pertaining to claims
BOX 3	Congressional action on bills pertaining to claims
BOX 3	Memorials to Congress concerning claims
BOX 3	Records dealing with efforts to settle claims
BOX 4	Papers dealing with James H. Causten's efforts to settle claims
BOX 4	Awards
BOX 4	Clippings
BOX 5-14	Fulwar Skipwith Papers, 1765-1872 Personal and official correspondence and records. Arranged by type of material. Correspondence further arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent and case files on ships alphabetically by name of ship.
BOX 5	Personal correspondence
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BOX 14	Claims for financial help given to stranded American seamen
BOX 14	Miscellany
BOX 15	Joshua Gilpin and Edward Dunant Papers, 1793-1834 Letterbook, correspondence, and financial records. Arranged by type of material with correspondence arranged chronologically.

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BOX 16-33	Records of Insurance Companies, 1783-1842
	Correspondence, applications for insurance, powers of attorney given to transfer stock and receive dividends, promissory notes, bills of lading, insurance policies, bills of exchange, and financial records.
	Arranged by name of company and therein by type of material with further arrangement of correspondence alphabetically by name of correspondent and applications chronologically.
BOX 16	Baltimore Insurance Co.
BOX 16	Powers of attorney
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BOX 30	Miscellaneous applications for insurance
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BOX 31	Acts of insolvency
BOX 31	Foreign bills of exchange
BOX 31	Lists and index of claimants for French spoliation claims
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BOX 31	Bills of lading
BOX 31	Policies on money
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BOX 32	Maryland Insurance Co.
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## Records of Insurance Companies, 1783-1842

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 32	Correspondence of Robert Hollins, John Hollins, and Thomas Hollins with John Mason regarding Florida Treaty and Spanish claims, 1821-1823 (2 folders)
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BOX 33	Miscellaneous insurance companies
BOX 34-77	Case Files on Ships, circa 1789-1910 Correspondence, bills for ship repair, insurance policies, bills of lading, and captain's protests. Arranged alphabetically by name of ship with bound volumes of case books and lists of captures filed first.
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## Case Files on Ships, circa 1789-1910

*Container*                      *Contents*

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BOX 78-99                      James H. Causten Papers, 1816-1885  
    Bound letterbooks and general correspondence consisting of personal and  
    business correspondence and legal and financial records.  
    Letterbooks arranged chronologically. General correspondence arranged  
    alphabetically by name of correspondent.

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James H. Causten Papers, 1816-1885

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BOX 100	Appointments to office (2 folders)
BOX 100	Article
BOX 100	Biographical material and photographs
BOX 100	Confederate seal, history of
BOX 100	Correspondence and miscellaneous papers (3 folders)
BOX 101	Correspondence relating to French spoliation claims, 1875-1884 (2 folders)
BOX 101	Death of Pickett and estate, 1884
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BOX 101	López expedition to Cuba
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BOX 102-110	Theodore John Pickett and Causten Agency Papers, 1886-1916 Correspondence, notebook, and an account book of Pickett and the Causten Agency. Arranged by type of material with the correspondence arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent.
BOX 102	Correspondence
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BOX 110	Bound notebook, 1900-1906
BOX 110	Account book, 1888-1899
BOX 111-113	Miscellany, 1796-1903 Manuscripts, account books, legal records, printed matter, and duplicates. Arranged as received.

Miscellany, 1796-1903

*Container*                      *Contents*

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BOX 111	Desdoity, J. B., book of receipts, 1798-1799
BOX 111	Jeffrey & Russell's insurance accounts at Joseph Taylor's, account book, 1798-1800
BOX 111	Miscellaneous printed matter
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BOX 111	<i>Ship Master's Assistant and Owners Manual</i> , 1796
BOX 112	Miscellaneous legal papers, circa 1797-circa 1801
BOX 113	Duplicate manuscript and printed matter, circa 1831-1903
REEL 1-2	Addition, 1786-1899 Two reels of positive microfilm of documents relating to French spoliation claims, but not included in these papers. Microfilm shelf no. 23,331. Arranged chronologically.
REEL 1	1786-1833
REEL 2	1833-1899