

Thomas A. Jenckes Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm78027755>

Prepared by Elizabeth G. McPherson

Collection Summary

Title: Thomas A. Jenckes Papers

Span Dates: 1838-1878

ID No.: MSS27755

Creator: Jenckes, Thomas A. (Thomas Allen), 1818-1875

Extent: 42,000 items ; 73 containers plus 1 oversize ; 29.2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Jurist, state legislator and adjutant general, and U.S. representative from Rhode Island. Correspondence, journals, ledgers, diaries, account books, patent papers, legal briefs and related papers, law library catalog, and photographs pertaining to Jenckes's political and legal career in Rhode Island and the U.S. House of Representatives.

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

Abbott, Benjamin Vaughan, 1830-1890--Correspondence.
Adams, Charles, 1845-1895--Correspondence.
Anthony, Henry B. (Henry Bowen), 1815-1884--Correspondence.
Burgess, Hugh--Correspondence.
Caswell, Alexis, 1799-1877--Correspondence.
Day, Horace H., 1813-1878--Correspondence.
Fogg, Ezra D.--Correspondence.
Gifford, George, 1811-1883--Correspondence.
Hammond, B. Benton--Correspondence.
Hay, Alexander--Correspondence.
Hilgard, J. E. (Julius Erasmus), 1825-1891--Correspondence.
Ingersoll, Charles R.--Correspondence.
Jenckes, Thomas A. (Thomas Allen), 1818-1875.
Lyman, David--Correspondence.
Murphy, Dennis F.--Correspondence.
Nye, Francis C.--Correspondence.
Parsons, James H.--Correspondence.
Sprague, William, 1830-1915--Correspondence.
Van Zandt, Charles C. (Charles Collins), 1830-1894--Correspondence.
Wallace, Henry E. (Henry Edward), 1814-1879--Correspondence.
Woodbury, Augustus, 1825-1895--Correspondence.

Organizations

Brown University.
Corliss Steam Engine Company.
Credit Mobilier of America.
Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.
Rhode Island. Constitutional Convention (1842)

Subjects

Bankruptcy.
Civil service reform.
Copyright.
Fraud.
Patent laws and legislation.
Practice of law--Rhode Island.

Refrigeration and refrigerating machinery.
Universities and colleges--Rhode Island.

Places

Rhode Island--Politics and government.

Occupations

Jurists.

Public officials--Rhode Island.

Representatives, U.S. Congress--Rhode Island.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Thomas A. Jenckes, jurist, state legislator and adjutant general, and U.S. representative from Rhode Island, were given to the Library of Congress by his grandson, Thomas A. Jenckes, in 1949.

Processing History

The Jenckes Papers were arranged and described in 1949. The finding aid was revised in 2012.

Additional Guides

A brief description of the Jenckes Papers appeared in the *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Acquisitions* 8 (May 1990): 27.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Thomas A. Jenckes is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Thomas A. Jenckes 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, Thomas A. Jenckes Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date

Event

1818, Nov. 2

Born, Cumberland, R.I.

1834-1838

Student, Brown University, Providence, R.I.

1839

Tutor, Brown University, Providence, R.I.

1840

Admitted to bar; formed a partnership with Edward H. Hazard, Providence, R.I., specializing in patent law

1840-1844

Clerk, Rhode Island state legislature

1841

Secretary, "Landholders Convention" in Rhode Island

1842	Secretary, Rhode Island constitutional convention
1845-1855	Adjutant general, Rhode Island
1854-1857	Member, Rhode Island state house of representatives
1863-1871	Member, U.S. House of Representatives from 1st District of Rhode Island; assigned to Patents and Judiciary Committees
1865	Defeat of Jenckes's bill on the selection of public employees by competitive examinations
1866	Member, House of Representatives Joint Committee for Retrenchment
1872-1873	Selected to aid prosecution of Credit Mobilier
1875, Nov. 4	Died, Providence, R.I.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Thomas Allen Jenckes (1818-1875) span the years 1836-1878 and consist of diaries, journals, correspondence, letterbooks, ledgers, account books, patent papers, legal briefs, photographs, and other material. The collection relates to Jenckes's life from his student days at Brown University, but is concerned principally with his legal and political career. Featured in addition to his pursuits in patent law are his services to Rhode Island as legislator, adjutant general, secretary to the state's 1842 constitutional convention and to the governor's council, and his four terms in the United States House of Representatives. Jenckes was a pioneer in civil service reform and a leader in the revision of bankruptcy, patent, and copyright laws. Some papers deal specifically with the prosecution of the Credit Mobilier fraud and with patent cases involving the Corliss steam engine, Goodyear rubber, and ventilation and refrigeration patents. The collection is organized into six series: [General Correspondence](#); [Diaries, Journals, and Letterbooks](#); [Account Books](#); [Patent Papers](#); [Miscellany](#); and [Oversize](#).

Correspondents include Benjamin Vaughan Abbott, Charles Adams, Henry B. Anthony, Hugh Burgess, Alexis Caswell, Horace H. Day, Ezra D. Fogg, George Gifford, B. Benton Hammond, Alexander Hay, J. E. Hilgard, Charles R. Ingersoll, David Lyman, Dennis F. Murphy, Francis C. Nye, James H. Parsons, William Sprague, Charles C. Van Zandt, Henry E. Wallace, and Augustus Woodbury.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- [General Correspondence, 1836-1878](#)
- [Diaries, Journals, and Letterbooks](#)
- [Account Books, 1840-1863](#)
- [Patent Papers](#)
- [Miscellany](#)
- [Oversize](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-49	<u>General Correspondence, 1836-1878</u> Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically with some overlapping of dates.
BOX 50-54	<u>Diaries, Journals, and Letterbooks</u> Diaries, journals, and letterbooks. Arranged chronologically within type of material.
BOX 55-57	<u>Account Books, 1840-1863</u> Account books and financial matter relating to Jenckes's law practice. Arranged by type of material. <u>Patent Papers</u> Patent applications, drawings, and related material. Unarranged
BOX 66-73	<u>Miscellany</u> Credit Mobilier papers, legal briefs, reports and arguments, court opinions, and photographs. Arranged by type of material.
BOX OV 1	<u>Oversize</u> Patent certificate and patent drawings. Described according to the series from which the material was removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-49	General Correspondence, 1836-1878 Letters sent and received. Arranged chronologically with some overlapping of dates.
BOX 1	1836-1853
BOX 2	1853-1860
BOX 3	1860-1865
BOX 4	1854
BOX 5	1854-1855
BOX 6	1855
BOX 7	Jan.-Sept. 1855
BOX 8	1856
BOX 9	1857
BOX 10	1857-1859
BOX 11	1857-1858
BOX 12	1858
BOX 13	Aug. 1858-Feb. 1859
BOX 14	Jan.-July 1859
BOX 15	Aug.-Dec. 1859
BOX 16	July 1859-Feb. 1860
BOX 17	Apr. 1860-Jan. 1861
BOX 18	1860-1861
BOX 19	Dec. 1860-June 1861
BOX 20	June-Dec. 1861
BOX 21	Dec. 1861-Apr. 1862
BOX 22	June 1862-May 1863
BOX 23	June 1862-May 1863
BOX 24	June-Nov. 1863
BOX 25	Jan.-Apr. 1864
BOX 26	1864
BOX 27	May 1864-Apr. 1865
BOX 28	Dec. 1864-Apr. 1865
BOX 29	Mar.-Nov. 1865
BOX 30	Dec. 1865-Jan. 1866
BOX 31	Jan.-Mar. 1866
BOX 32	Jan.-June 1866
BOX 33	July 1866-16 Apr. 1867
BOX 34	17 Apr. 1867-31 Dec. 1867
BOX 35	Jan.-Mar. 1868
BOX 36	Apr.-June 1868
BOX 37	July-Dec. 1868
BOX 38	Jan.-31 Mar. 1869
BOX 39	1 Apr-31 Dec. 1869

General Correspondence, 1836-1878

Container

Contents

BOX 40	1 Jan.-18 Apr. 1870
BOX 41	19 Apr.-30 June 1870
BOX 42	1 July-31 Dec. 1870
BOX 43	Jan.-Sept. 1871
BOX 44	Oct. 1871-Nov. 1872
BOX 45	Dec. 1872-Dec. 1873
BOX 46	Jan. 1874-Mar. 1878
BOX 47	Undated
BOX 48	Undated
BOX 49	Undated
BOX 50-54	Diaries, Journals, and Letterbooks Diaries, journals, and letterbooks. Arranged chronologically within type of material.
BOX 50	Letterbooks, 1856-1859
BOX 51	Diaries and journals
BOX 51	1846-1855
BOX 52	1856-1858
BOX 53	1861-1863
BOX 54	Journals and ledgers
BOX 55-57	Account Books, 1840-1863 Account books and financial matter relating to Jenckes's law practice. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 55	Legal, 1851-1863
BOX 56	Hazard & Jenckes, 1840-1850
BOX 57	Miscellaneous
	Patent Papers Patent applications, drawings, and related material. Unarranged
BOX 58-65	Unarranged <i>See also Oversize</i>
BOX 66-73	Miscellany Credit Mobilier papers, legal briefs, reports and arguments, court opinions, and photographs. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 66	Court opinions and miscellany, 1850-1860
BOX 67	Photographs of cross sections of trees, etc.
BOX 68	Jenckes's law library catalogue and school volumes
BOX 69	Refrigeration and ventilation patents
BOX 70	Credit Mobilier papers
BOX 71	Credit Mobilier papers
BOX 72	Legal briefs, reports, and arguments
BOX 72	1849-1871
BOX 73	1849-1870
BOX OV 1	Oversize Patent certificate and patent drawings.

Oversize

Container

Contents

	Described according to the series from which the material was removed.
BOX OV 1	Patents papers
BOX OV 1	Patent certificates and patent drawings (Container 58)