

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## A Guide to the Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland Records

### Collection Summary

**Collection Title:** Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland

**Call Number:** CD 528

**Creator:** Unknown

**Inclusive Dates:** February 1847- July 1848

**Bulk Dates:** March-September 1847

**Abstract:** Records and correspondence of this charitable organization aimed at providing relief to Ireland, and to a lesser extent the highlands of Scotland, during the Irish Potato Famine, 1845-1850.

**Quantity:** 1 Box, 2.5 linear inches, 77 items.

### Administrative Information

#### Custodial History:

**Preferred Citation:** Committee for the Relief of Ireland, CD 528. Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

#### Acquisition Information:

Accession #: Unknown

Accession Date: Unknown

#### Processing Information:

Processed by Rachel Dworkin; completed on November 10, 2004.

### Restrictions

**Restrictions on Access:** None

**Restrictions on Use:** Permission to publish material must be obtained in writing prior to publication from the Chief Librarian & Archivist, Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

<b>Index Term</b>
-------------------

**Persons:** Joseph Bewley  
Alfred Clarke  
Commodore George DeKay  
Edward C. Delavan  
J. Dexter  
Richard Irvin  
Charles M. Jenkins  
Reverend Theobald Mathew  
Robert B. Minturn  
Archbishop Daniel Murray  
J.T. Norton  
Thomas W. Olcott  
Mayor William Parmelee  
Jonathan Rice  
M. Van Schaick  
J.A. Schueller

**Organizations:** Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland; Irish Relief Committee;  
Society of Friends of Dublin

**Subjects:** Albany, New York – History, local; Charities; Grain; Ireland – History –  
Famine, 1845-1852; Shipping

**Places:** Albany, New York  
Cork, Ireland  
Dublin, Ireland  
Geneva, New York  
Little Falls, New York  
New York, New York

**Document Types:** Committee minutes; correspondence; press clippings; account books.

<b>History of the Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland</b>
--

The Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland was founded in February of 1847 in response to the suffering caused by the Irish Potato Famine, which lasted from 1845 to 1850. The Albany Committee was one of the many subsidiaries of the New York City based Irish Relief Committee located throughout New York, Ohio, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The central committee was chaired by M. Van Schaick with Robert Minturn, on the Committee on Provision and Clothing, being the primary organizer of in coming donations as well as the chief liaison with the Albany Committee. The goal of the

organization was to collect both cash donations and gifts of food, clothing and other necessities. The heads of the American organization worked in close concert with Joseph Bewley and Jonathan Rice, the heads of the Society of Friends of Dublin, Ireland.

Within Albany, the Committee was chaired by Charles Jenkins, a successful Albany lawyer. Also on the executive committee were Edward Delavan, wealthy wine merchant and temperance advocate, bank presidents Thomas Olcott and John Norton, and attorney James Dexter. John Ford, a leading Albany attorney, served as the committee's secretary and Theodore Olcott, head cashier and director of the Canal Bank, as treasurer. A four person sub-committee headed by Thomas James, a prosperous flour merchant, was set up to coordinate the collection, storage and shipping of goods from Albany and its outlying areas. An official collector was assigned to each ward within the city and every town in the state was mailed a circular asking for donations and giving specific delivery instructions. The committee worked closely with the local newspapers to publicize their efforts and to list the names of individuals who contributed over five dollars to the cause.

The Committee tried various ploys to raise money. They set up benefit performances at local theaters, sponsored lectures by famous temperance leaders, and had local papers publish various articles intending to inspire guilt and pity. The three Roman Catholic Churches in Albany together donated \$5,329 after the Committee initiated a "benevolent race" between the three churches. By September of 1847, a total of \$25,354.82 had been collected for Ireland from Albany and its outlying areas. An additional \$411.12 had been raised for the less well publicized poor of Scotland. In addition to money, the Committee also accepted many donations of clothing, nearly \$81.23 worth, as well as barrels of grain and flour from various farming communities. The majority of these foodstuffs, approximately \$12,200.77 worth, arrived in Dublin, via the ship *Malabar*, in June 1847. The last shipment sent by the Albany Committee left for Ireland in the later part of December, 1847 on the ship *Ashburton*. It consisted of 715 barrels of corn meal purchased with Albany funds and \$212.78 in cash. After that the organization was dissolved.

### **Scope and Contents of the Records**

The vast majority of the records of the Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland are letters to and from various committee members organizing the procurement, shipping and distribution of money, foodstuffs and other goods. As such, the papers cover topics such as fund raising, grain markets and shipping concerns.

### **Organization of the Records**

The papers are mostly arranged chronologically.

### **Related Material**

- VF (Subject) Irish – New York – Albany. Contains a research paper on the Albany Committee for the Relief of Ireland as well as brief mention of the American relief effort in the Irish Heritage Museum Newsletter.

## Other Finding Aids

The original finding aid for the collection can be found at the front of the box.

## Detailed Description of the Records

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
1	1	1. Organizing minutes of the Committee from February 15, 1847
1	1	2. Letter dated February 19, 1847 relating to offer from J.B. Rice to host a fundraiser at the museum.
1	1	2a. Note discussing merits of accepting Rice's offer
1	1	3. Letter dated February 25, 1847 accompanying donation from E.C. Croswell.
1	1	4. Letter dated March 8, 1847 accompanying a donation from the committee.
1	1	5. Letter dated March 10, 1847 in which George DeKay volunteers his ship to carry relief supplies.
1	1	6. Letter dated March 14, 1847 from DeKay to mayor of Albany informing him of the plan to use the Macedonian.
1	1	7. Letter from DeKay to Jenkins saying he is ready to take on cargo.
1	1	8. Letter dated March 17, 1847 from Alexander Wilson to Committee regarding the failure of his potato crop.
1	1	9. Letter date March 19, 1847 from T. Mathew to Delavan regarding distribution of donations.
1	1	10. Letter dated March 20, 1847 from Jenkins to DeKay regarding readiness of corn to ship.
1	1	11. Letter dated March 24, 1847 from DeKay to Parmelee regarding relief supplies.
1	1	12. Letter dated March 25, 1847 from Jenkins to DeKay regarding preparation of the corn for shipping.
1	1	13. Letter dated March 30, 1847 from J.A. Schueller to E. Thomas ordering flour on behalf of Committee.
1	1	14. Letter dated March 31, 1847 from Clarke to Olcott regarding the committee's decision to not ship on the Macedonian
1	1	15. Letter dated April 2, 1847 from Clarke to Jenkins relative to DeKay's expenses.
1	1	16. Letter dated April 3, 1847 to M. Van Schaick relative to supplies on hand.
1	1	17. Letter dated April 5, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relative to the shipping of relief supplies.
1	1	18. Letter dated April 10, 1847 from Van Schaick to Jenkins relative to the distribution of donations in Ireland.
1	1	19. Letter dated April 12, 1847 to R.B. Minturn relative to a donation of grain and cash.

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | 20. Letter dated April 14, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins N relative to the purchase of grain by the New York Committee with Albany Committee funds. |
| 1 | 1 | 21. Letter dated April 15, 1847 from Thomas to Schueller relative to the shipping of relief supplies via canal.                                    |
| 1 | 1 | 22. Letter dated April 7, 1847 from Minturn, receipt for \$ 16000 of relief money.   |
| 1 | 1 | 23. Letter dated April 17, 1847 from Irvin to Jenkins thanking for donations.  |
| 1 | 1 | 24. Letter dated April 20, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relative to the purchase and shipping of grain for Ireland.                                |
| 1 | 1 | 25. Letter dated April 23, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins sending along the thanks of Society of Friends, Dublin.                                    |
| 1 | 1 | 26. Letter dated April 23, 1847 from Olcott to Jenkins relative to cutting down extra business.  |
| 1 | 2 | 27. Letter dated April 23, 1847 A.L. Linn concerning supplies held by Schenectady Committee.   |
| 1 | 2 | 28. Letter dated April 26, 1847 from C.L. Austin giving the names of Archbishops in Ireland.   |
| 1 | 2 | 29. Letter dated April 27, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins concerning shipping of relief supplies.  |
| 1 | 2 | 30. Letter dated April 27, 1847 from Albany Committee to Archbishop Daniel Murray concerning supplies sent to Dublin.                              |
| 1 | 2 | 31. Letter dated April 28, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins concerning chartering of a ship to carry relief to Cork.                                   |
| 1 | 2 | 32. Letter dated April 28, 1847 from Committee to Rice and Bewly stating supplies have been sent to Society of Friends, Dublin.                    |
| 1 | 2 | 33. Letter dated April 29, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins will send receipt for supplies sent to New York.   |
| 1 | 2 | 34. Letter dated May 1, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins advising an investment in meal.   |
| 1 | 2 | 35. Letter dated May 4, 1847 from Charles Folger to J.W. Ford concerning the shipping of local relief supplies.                                    |
| 1 | 2 | 36. Collection of relief supply receipts   |
| 1 | 2 | 37. Letter dated May 8, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relative to the loading of brig Minerva.  |
| 1 | 2 | 38. Letter dated May 11, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relative to goods shipped thus far and several press clippings.                              |
| 1 | 2 | 39. Letter dated May 13, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relative to the chartering of ship Malabar.  |
| 1 | 2 | 40. Letter dated May 13, 1847 from Charles Crary to Ford regarding the donations of the town of Salem.   |
| 1 | 2 | 41. Letter dated May 14, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relating to recent donations from Albany.  |
| 1 | 2 | 42. Letter dated May 18, 1847 from Bewley to Jenkins   |

- concerning recent shipping of supplies.
- 1        2        43. Letter dated May 19, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins concerning cargo of the Minerva.
- 1        2        44. Letter dated May 26, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins relating that latest Albany donations have sent on ship Malabar.
- 1        2        45. Letter dated May 26, 1847 from W.G. Alexander to Jenkins concerning \$178 dollars raised for Scotland.
- 1        2        46. Letter dated May 28, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins listing items received from Albany.
- 1        2        47. Letter dated May 31, 1847 from Jenkins to Reverend Mathew about relief items sent on Malabar.
- 1        2        48. Letter dated June 2, 1847 from John Armagh to Committee concerning the distribution of relief supplies.
- 1        2        49. Letter dated June 2, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins promising to relay his instructions to Dublin committee.
- 1        2        50. Letter dated June 5, 1847 from Holdredge to Jenkins regarding donations sent from Utica.
- 1        2        51. Letter dated June 18, 1847 from Bewley and Rice to Jenkins regarding distribution of supplies to Cork.
- 1        3        52. Letter dated June 29, 1847 from Green entrusting Little Falls' donation to Albany Committee.
- 1        3        53. Letter dated July 5, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins upon receiving check for \$2,000.
- 1        3        54. Letter dated July 1847 from Green requesting a receipt for supplies sent.
- 1        3        55. List of money and provisions received in various Irish cities between December 1846 and July 1847.
- 1        3        56. Letter dated July 17, 1847 from Dublin Society of Friends to Jenkins regarding distribution of donations.
- 1        3        57. Letter dated July 22, 1847 from Rev. Mathew to Bewley concerning goods received in Cork.
- 1        3        58. Letter dated July 24, 1847 from Rev. Mathew concerning goods received.
- 1        3        59. Letter dated July 27, 1847 from Thomas Symott concerning distribution of donations within Dublin.
- 1        3        60. Letter dated August 6, 1847 from Reyburn to Jenkins concerning progress report of relief effort.
- 1        3        61. Letter dated August 18, 1847 from Dublin Society of Friends to Jenkins cover letter for letter from Rev. Mathews
- 1        3        62. List of total contributions to Ireland and Scotland
- 1        3        63. Letter dated September 10, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins promising a full statement of supplies shipped.
- 1        3        64. Letter dated September 16, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins saying unable to send statement of spending of funds.
- 1        3        65. Invoice dated September 16, 1847 from Irving to Jenkins for meal shipped on the Eagle for Glasgow.

1	3	66. Letter dated September 27, 1847 from Minturn to Jenkins cover letter for a statement of investment for \$20,000.
1	3	67. Letter dated October 4, 1847 from Irving to Jenkins concerning how #282 was spent in Scotland.
1	3	68. Letter dated December 11, 1847 Minturn to Jenkins concerning costs of shipping and meal.
1	3	69. Letter dated July 3, 1848 from Minturn to Jenkins stating that \$282 has been given to the treasurer.
1	3	70. Long report from Relief Committee.
1	3	71. List of articles of old new clothing.
1	3	72. List of foodstuffs on the Brig Minerva bound for Cork.
1	3	73. List of contributors.
1	3	74. Long list of supplies collected.
1	3	75. Letter dated April 27, 1847 from Albany Committee to Michael Slatterly informing him of the first shipment of relief supplies.
1	4	Albany Irish Relief Committee's bank account books from February to September 1847.
1	4	Handwritten papers concerning the famine and the relief attempt.