

Albany Institute of History & Art
Library

MG 3

Lansing/Townsend/Spencer Family Papers

1717-1903

.83 lin. ft., 2 boxes

- Series I. Lansing Family Material, 1787-1889
- Series II. Townsend/Spencer Family Material, 1796-1854
- Series III. Miscellaneous Material, 1717-1854

January 2000

Biographical Note

The Lansing/Townsend/Spencer Family Papers contain the records of twenty individuals from more than three families connected by marriage. The bulk of the papers in the collection are the products of the Lansing family, and in particular, Gerrit Yates Lansing (1783-1862). Gerrit Yates Lansing - politician, lawyer, and banker - was born in Albany, NY. and educated at Union College in Schenectady, NY. Admitted to the New York State Bar in 1804, Lansing served as a clerk in the New York State Assembly, a judge in the court of probates, regent and chancellor of the State University of New York, and president of the Albany Savings Bank. Additionally, Lansing was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for New York State.

Also included is material from Ambrose Spencer (1765-1848) and John Townsend (1783-1854), the grandfather and father, respectively, of Abby Townsend, the wife of Charles B. Lansing, a grandson of Gerrit Yates Lansing. Ambrose Spencer held many important Albany, New York State and Government positions including Mayor of Albany (1824-1826), State Attorney General (1802-1804), Justice of the Supreme Court (1804) and Chief Justice (1819-1823). John Townsend, Albany Mayor 1829-1833, was a prominent Albany manufacturer and businessman, whose many ventures included I & J Townsend, an iron works, the Albany Insurance Company, the Commercial Bank of Albany, the Albany Savings Bank. Lansing also served as an adviser to the Erie Canal project.

A brief family chart, which includes and places most of the correspondents in this collection, can be found on page 4 of this finding aid.

Scope and Content Note

The Lansing/Townsend/Spencer Family Papers span the period from 1717-1889 and contain correspondence, diaries, financial documents, and photographs relating to family life. The collection is divided into three series, with further divisions into subseries: I. Lansing Family Material; II. Townsend/Spencer Family; III. Miscellaneous Material. In 1991 John Townsend Lansing, a grandson of Charles A. Lansing, presented the papers to the Library.

The papers were formerly housed in two acidic scrapbooks and removed during processing in 1997. The empty scrapbooks were discarded.

Additionally, during processing a book was removed. The volume was inscribed to Charles A. Lansing from his grandfather Gerrit Yates Lansing and is entitled, *Votes and proceedings of the Assembly of the State of New-York; at the first meeting of the fourth session, begun and holden at Poughkeepsie, in Dutchess County, on Thursday, September 7th, 1780.* / New York (State) Legislature Assembly. Albany: reprinted by Munsell & Rowland, 1859. The book can be found in the AIHA library's book collection.

Readers should also be aware of the Gerrit Lansing Papers, 1783-1843, held by the New York State Library's Manuscript and Special Collections division. This archive (collection number KT 13324) contains personal, family and business papers of Lansing and his wife Helen Ten Eyck, in addition to items such as land patents, assessment rolls and Revolutionary War payrolls. A finding aid for this collection is available from the New York State Library.

Series I. LANSING FAMILY MATERIALS (1 box) is divided into three subseries which contain Lansing family correspondence, personal papers and financial papers from 1787-1903.

Family Correspondence primarily contains the letters of Lansing family members from other family members. The largest portion of the correspondence consists of letters written to Gerrit Yates Lansing from his brother Christopher Yates Lansing during 1831 to 1832 while the former served in the House of Representatives. Besides detailing personal and business concerns these items detail the July 1832 cholera outbreak in Albany. This subseries also contains a letter from John Townsend Lansing to his brother Sanders Lansing requesting that he forward legal documents to Aaron Burr.

Personal Papers includes Gerrit Yates Lansing's diaries for 1853-1854 in which he notes daily events and weather. Additionally, within this subseries are three school compositions by Charles A. Lansing and a school commencement oration composed by Charles B Lansing. Also included is a photograph album kept by Charles A. Lansing containing fifty-three oval prints.

Financial Papers is primarily represented by agreements, deeds and indentures relating to Abraham Ten Eyck's estate in Watervliet, N.Y. Also present is correspondence from the New York State Bank to Gerrit Yates Lansing during 1831-1832.

Series II. TOWNSEND/SPENCER FAMILY MATERIALS (18 folders), divided into three subseries, contains family correspondence and personal papers spanning the period 1796-1854.

Family Correspondence, representing letters exchanged between Townsend and Spencer family members, encompasses 1796-1854. The bulk of the material in this subseries is comprised of letters exchanged between Abby Spencer Townsend (mother of Abby Townsend Lansing, the wife of Charles B. Lansing) and her parents Ambrose and Laura Spencer composed while Abby was a student in Philadelphia.

Personal Papers, ranging from 1825 to 1829, contains newspaper obituaries, poems, and notably, Abby Spencer Townsend's account book.

Series III MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS (17 folders) is a heterogeneous grouping of items divided into three subseries and spanning 1717-1840. Included among this series are various papers of the Dull family and other material related to Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. This material was not identified during processing and its connection to the Lansing, Townsend or Spencer families is unclear.

Correspondence includes letters written to Harmanus Bleecker by Lansing Family members and J.R. Brodhead during Bleecker's service as charge de affairs in the Netherlands for Martin Van Buren. Correspondence to Caspar and Jane Dull completes the subseries.

Financial Papers contains indentures for unidentified properties in Albany, Caspar Dull's business documents, items relating to land in Mifflin County, PA and a letter from Rutger Bleecker to Faconier & Wilson.

Miscellaneous Items is comprised of two early newspapers found among the Lansing Family material, a memorial poem in manuscript written by Robert Hewson Pruyn, an invitation to Abraham Yates Jr. from the President of the Continental Congress and an unidentified valentine.

This finding aid was prepared by Caleb Derven.

Lansing Family Chart

Abraham G. Lansing (1756-1844) m. 1779 Susanna Bratt (1766-1840) (13 children)
Christopher Yates Lansing (1796-1872)
Gerrit Yates Lansing (1783-1862) m. 1808 Helen Ten Eyck (d. 1838)
 Jane Ann Lansing (b. 1812) m. 1841 Robert H. Pruyn (1815-1882) 4 children
 Susan Yates Lansing (b. 1816)
 Abraham Gerrit Lansing (b. 1814)
 Edward Lansing (b. 1824)
Charles Brigden Lansing (b. 1809) m. 1842 Catherine Clinton Townsend (d. 1845)
 J. Townsend Lansing m. 1870 Helen F. Douw
Charles A. Lansing (d. 1889) m. (n.d.) Sarah M. Macklin
 Abby Lansing
 Charles Brigden Lansing (remarries after death of first wife, her sister) Abby Townsend
 Abby Spencer Lansing m. (n.d.) Frank E. Kernochan
 Edward Yates Lansing
 Gerrit Yates Lansing

Spencer /Townsend Family Chart

Ambrose Spencer (1765-1848) m. (n.d.) Laura Canfield Spencer (6 children)
Abby Spencer m. 1810 John Townsend (1753-1854) (13 children)
 Catherine Clinton Townsend (d. 1845) m. Charles B. Lansing
 Abby Townsend m. Charles B. Lansing

Box Folder

Series I. Lansing Family Material

The series is arranged in three subseries: Family Correspondence; Family Papers; and Financial Papers. Within each, the material is arranged alphabetically by family member.

Family Correspondence

Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by the recipient's name. Life span dates are provided to aid in identification of family members

LANSING, ABBY (n.d.)

1	1	Lansing ,Charles A.	1870 Oct. 2
	2	Lansing, Charles B.	n.d.

LANSING, ABBY SPENCER (b. ca. 1845)

	3	Lansing, Charles A.	1884-1888
	4	Kernochen, Frank	1870 Aug 2

LANSING, ABBY TOWNSEND (b. ca. 1814)

	5	Lansing, Charles A.	1884-1886
	6	Lansing, Susan Yates	1865
	7	Polly	1843 March 5
	8	Pruyn, Robert C.	1863 Aug 8
	9	Townsend, Abby Spencer	1846-1848
	10	Townsend, John	1832-1853

LANSING, CATHERINE CLINTON TOWNSEND (1821-1845)

	11	Lansing, Charles B.	n.d.
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Box Folder

Series I. Lansing Family Material, con't.

Family Correspondence, con't.

LANSING, CHARLES A. (1844-1889)

[1]	12	Jackson, Helen	n.d.
	13	Lansing, Abby Townsend	1886
	14	Telegraph from Colorado Midland Railway Co.	1886 Feb 8

LANSING, CHARLES B. (b. 1809)

	15	Humboldt, Charles	1865 Aug 31
	16	Lansing, Gerrit Yates	1845
	17	Peltz., J.	1889 Dec 9
	18	Empty envelope	1865

LANSING, GERRIT YATES (1783-1862)

	19	De Witt, Anna	1832 June 19
	20	Lansing, Abraham G.	1813 Dec 13
	21	Lansing, Barent Bleecker	1832
	22	Lansing,, Charles B.	1832, 1843
	23-24	Lansing, Christopher Yates	1831-1832
	25	Lansing, Helen Ten Eyck	1832, 1834
	26	Lansing, Jane and Susan	1832 Feb 24
	27	Lansing, Sarah and Susan	1832 April 8

LANSING, GERRIT YATES (b. ca. 1849)

	28	"Sister Helen"	1873 July 29
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Box Folder

Series I. Lansing Family Material, con't.

Family Correspondence, con't.

LANSING, HELEN TEN EYCK (1787-1838)

[1]	29	Lansing, Gerrit Yates	1832-1837
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LANSING, SANDERS (1766-1850)

30	Lansing, John Townsend	1787 June 2
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LANSING, SARAH MACKLIN (n.d.)

31	Lansing, Charles A.	1883 Feb 11
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Personal Papers

LANSING, ABBY TOWNSEND (b. ca. 1814)

32	Copy of will	1903 Jan 20
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LANSING, CATHERINE CLINTON TOWNSEND (1821-1845)

33	Calling Cards	n.d.
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LANSING, CHARLES A. (1844-1889)

34	School compositions	1860-1861
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35	Photograph Album	1861 Jan 1
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36	Wedding invitation	n.d.
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LANSING, CHARLES B. (b. 1809)

37	Commencement oration	1830 Sep
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LANSING, J. TOWNSEND (b. ca. 1843)

38	Certificate from the Office of the Albany Mayor	1862 Aug 21
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Box Folder

Series I. Lansing Family Material, con't.

Family Papers, con't.

LANSING, GERRIT YATES (1783-1862)

[1]	39	Diaries	1853-1854
	40	Certificate for one share in the Albany Library	18??

Financial Papers

LANSING, GERRIT YATES (1783-1862)

	41	Papers relating to Abraham Ten Eyck's estate in Watervliet, N.Y.: Agreements, deeds, indentures	1823-1842
	42	Yates, Richard; New York State Bank	1831-1832

Box Folder

Series II Townsend Family Material

Family Correspondence

SPENCER, AMBROSE (1765-1848)

2	43	Townsend, Abby Spencer	1805 Jan 3
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SPENCER, LAURA (1768-1807)

	44	Spencer, Ambrose	1796 Feb 18
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	45	Townsend, Abby Spencer	1804, 1805, 1841
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TOWNSEND, ABBY SPENCER (b. ca. 1784)

	46	Norton, Catherine	1809 Jan 15
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	47	Spencer, Ambrose	1804, 1830, 1843
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	48	Spencer, Catherine	1814
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	49	Van Wagener, R.	1810 Aug 15
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	50	Pencil copies of correspondence	
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TOWNSEND, JOHN (1783-1854)

	51	Lansing, Gerrit Yates	1832 May 10
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	52	Townsend, Abby Spencer	1810 May 11
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	53	Van Rensselaer, Mr. and Mrs. P.S.	1854 Feb 15
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UNIDENTIFIED

	54-55	Townsend, Abby Spencer	n.d., 1808
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Personal Papers

GILCHRIST, LAURA I. (1803-1825)

	56	Obituary	1825
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Box Folder

Series I. Lansing Family Material, con't.

Personal Papers, con't.

SPENCER, LAURA (1768-1807)

[2]	57	Obituary	n.d.
		TOWNSEND, ABBY SPENCER (b. ca. 1784)	
	58	Account book	1849-1854
	59	Copies of poems	1828, n.d.
		TOWNSEND, ROBERT	
	60	Poem	1849

Box Folder

Series III Miscellaneous Material

Correspondence

BLEEKER, HARMANUS (1779-1849)

[2]	61	Brodhead, J.R.	1840
	62	Lansing, Charles B.	1840 Aug 21
	63	Lansing, Gerrirt Yates	1840 July 29

DULL, CASPAR

	64	Jenkins, Benjamin	1836
	65	Strickler, Jacob	1819, 1820

DULL, JANE

	66	Jenkins, John B.	1827 Dec 18
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Financial Papers

CLARKE, GEORGE

	67	Indenture from William Corry	n.d.
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DULL, CASPAR

	68	Financial papers	1814-1853
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FANCONIER & WILSON

	69	Copy of letter from Rutger Bleecker	1717 April 21
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JENKINS, JAMES

2	70	Appointment to Justice of the Peace (Mifflin Co., PA.)	1801 March 30
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MIFFLIN COUNTY, PA.

	71	Deeds and agreements	1776-1829
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Box Folder

Series III Miscellaneous Material, con't.

Financial Papers, con't.

THOMPSON, JOHN

72 Indenture for land in Albany

Miscellaneous Items

NEWSPAPERS

73 *The Continental Intelligencer* (on the death
of George Washington), Vol. V, no.6 1800 Jan 474 *New York Weekly Journal* 1735 Feb 23

PRUYN, ROBERT HEWSON (1815-1882)

75 Lines written on the death of Annie Van Allen n.d.

YATES, ABRAHAM, JR. (d. 1796)

76 Invitation from the President of Congress 1787 Feb 6

UNIDENTIFIED

77 Valentine n.d.