
II. The papers of Noah Webster and family deposited in the Library on a gift.

III. Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 5 inches. Approximate number of items: 85 (including 6 vols.)

IV. Restrictions:

V. Literary rights of the unpublished writings of in these papers, and in other collections of papers in the custody of the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, have been dedicated to the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

VI. Press release was issued on

VII. Biographical note:

See page b.

VIII. Analysis:

The collection is contained in two boxes. It consists of mss., notes for two letters of the quarto dictionary, mss., letters to a friend and to newspaper editors, mss., receipts signed by Webster, printed circulars, printed pamphlets by Webster, documents related to his estate, printed letters in 19th century newspapers by and about Webster, newspaper clippings and printed material celebrating anniversaries of the publication of the quarto dictionary. Related material in the NHCHS Library may be found in: The Noah Webster Collection 1785-1880 [imprints], Children's Books Collection 1777-1875, the Henry White Papers 1775-1915, School Records 1714-1977.

A presentation copy of John Warner Barber's Connecticut Historical Collections, 1836, is contained in the second box.

Processed by: Anne H. Willard.
Biographical Note: Noah Webster (1758-1843) was born in West Hartford. He was a direct descendent of John Webster, founder and Governor of the Connecticut Colony, and of William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth Colony. A graduate of Yale (B.A. 1778), Webster taught school to earn money for studying law. He saw the need for school books especially designed for American children and produced a grammatical work consisting of a speller, a grammar based on the study of the actual phenomena of English speech in America, and a reader of selections of American subjects. The works, especially the speller, were an immediate success, eventually exceeding 100,000,000 copies.

Webster's publications aroused his interest in an American copyright law, and his efforts to get one enacted brought him into politics as a staunch Federalist. His travels through the colonies lecturing and teaching on behalf of copyright led him to Philadelphia where he met his future wife, Rebecca Greenleaf of Boston. While there, a long friendship with Franklin began based on their mutual interest in spelling reform. After ten years of publishing Federalist newspapers in New York Webster worked on his dictionary in New Haven. He published the Compendious Dictionary of the English Language in 1806. Afterward, he immediately started the larger quarto work and he toiled on it until 1812, when he moved to Amherst, Mass. to reduce his living costs. While there, he helped found Amherst College and continued his lexicographical work. In 1822 he returned to New Haven and in 1828 An American Dictionary of the English Language appeared. Its initial public reception was mixed. Webster answered some critical reviews in letters to the press. His income from it was modest during his lifetime, although it earned substantial royalties later. Webster died in New Haven having led an active life to the end. [Sources: D.A.B. Vol. XIX, p. 594; Skeel, E.E.F. Comp. Bibliography of the Writings of Noah Webster; article by Henry Steele Commager, West Hartford News souvenir supplement, Oct. 16, 1958, Vol. XVI, No. 41. ]
MSS. 129. Webster, Noah, 1758-1843. Papers, 1786-1980

Table of Contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box I.</th>
<th>No. of items.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Folder A.</strong> MSS notes for quarto dictionary in Webster's hand.  A-... included discussion of letter &quot;A&quot;, 1807.  [bound. 34 p.]</td>
<td>(1) v.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Folder C.</strong> Photocopy of page for quarto dictionary in Folder A.  &quot;abct-abhor&quot;.</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Folder D.** Correspondence out. N.W. to:  
  1. Josiah Blakey from New York, Feb. 13, 1795.  [ALS] re political conditions in the U.S.  
  2. Editors. n.d.  [ALS]. response to criticism of dictionary.  
| **Folder E.** Letters found in folio dictionary.  
  2. on one sheet:  
    b. Charles Baldwin to Israel C. Wright, Bristol, Conn. 1848. | (2)           |
| **Folder F.** Receipts.  
  1. to Elizur Goodrich collected from Dr. E. Munson on account of Dr. D. Greenleaf of Boston. Signed by Noah Webster, attorney for Greenleaf. Feb. 13, 1790.  
  2. from C. Goodrich, Sept. 29, 1789. Signed by Noah Webster on verso. | (2)           |
| **Folder G.** Circulars.  
  1. A Syllabus of Mr. Webster's Lectures. New Haven.  
     June 15, 1786.  [1 p. torn.]  
  2. To the Clergymen......in Conn. New Haven. May 7, 1798.  
    [request for statistical information].  [l.p.]  
    [Skeel p.23.] |               |
Folder G. cont.

3. To the Friends of Literature in the United States. Febr. 25, 1807. [plan for dictionary] (Skeel, p. 343.)


Folder H. Pamphlets.


Folder I. Estate of Noah Webster.

1. List of taxable estate for 1823, 1832, 1834. [Photocopies from City and County Documents Collection.]

2. Probate Court Documents. [photocopies from State Library.]

3. Memorandum of Amounts received from estate of Dr. Noah Webster. [photocopies from Trowbridge Papers. Henry Trowbridge an Executor of Noah Webster's estate.]


[See MSS 62 C Henry White Papers, Box VII, Folders C and D Letters from Wm. G. Webster to Noah Webster re publishing of Dictionary and other works. Dealings with publishers in various parts of country. May 1843. Letter from Chauncey Goodrich to "Brother".]

Folder J. Newspaper articles by Noah Webster in 19th century newspapers.


4. See reverse of this page.

Folder K. Newspaper clippings re Noah Webster.

2. **Boston Evening Transcript, Nov. 6, 1935. re portrait of W.**
4. **New Haven Register, July 6, 1947. [photos of W's house moved to Greenfield, Mich. 2 copies.]**
6. **New Haven Register Nov. 12, 1978. 150th anniversary Webster's quarto dictionary Beineke Library.**
7. " " July 6, 1980 re Webster's New Haven House (7)
9. See reverse of this page.

Folder L. Lists of works by Noah Webster in NHCHS.

1. Register of Noah Webster Collection. *PE 64,W5 A3.*
2. Original list of works in bookcase and photocopy of list. (30)

Folder M. Miscellaneous material re Noah Webster.

1. Copy of engraving by J.A.J. Wilcox, Boston from painting by S.F.B. Morse. Also photograph of engraving and negative from scrapbook v,v,pp.90-91.
4. Invitation to lecture by Homer D. Babbidge, Nov.16, 1978, on 150th anniversary publication Webser's dictionary. (4)

Folder N. Papers re the collection. (4)

Box II. John Warner Barber. Connecticut Historical Collections. 1836. Presentation copy to Noah Webster.
MSS 129. Webster, Noah. Papers.

Box I. Cont.

Folder 0. Photographs

1. Silhouette of Mrs. Noah Webster
2. Silhouette of Mr. Noah Webster
3 & 4. Noah Webster's book and bookcase
5. Noah Webster's book and table
I. Title  Webster, Noah Collection 1785-1880

II. The papers of deposited in the Library on , by In converted the deposit to a gift.

III. Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 5 3/4 feet Approximate number of items: 110 volumes

IV. Restrictions:

V. Literary rights of the unpublished writings of in these papers, and in other collections of papers in the custody of the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library, have been dedicated to the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

VI. Press release was issued on

VII. Biographical note: Noah Webster (1758-1843) was born in West Hartford. His parents, Noah and Mercy, were descended directly from John Webster, founder and Governor of the Connecticut Colony and William Bradford, Governor of Plymouth Colony. His father mortgaged his farm to put Noah through Yale (B.A. 1778) and in 1781 he was admitted to the bar in Hartford. As a school teacher earning money for legal studies, Webster felt the need of American books for American children. He produced a grammatical work consisting of a speller, a grammar, based on the study of the actual phenomena of English speech in America, and a reader of selections of American subjects. The works, especially the speller, were an immediate success, eventually exceeding 100,000,000 copies. Webster's publications aroused his interest in an American copyright law, and his efforts to get one enacted brought him into politics as a staunch Federalist. His travels through the colonies lecturing and teaching on behalf of copyright

VIII. Analysis:

The collection of early imprints, 30 titles and 110 volumes, is stored in 14 boxes. The collection is a library compilation of printed books bearing the number *PE 64.W5A* A table of contents lists the individual works in alphabetical order by title. Within the title category the different editions are listed chronologically. The card catalog of the NHCHS Library has a main entry card for the whole collection and title cards for each title. Subject entry cards have been made for: 1. New Haven-Imprints. 2. Printers-New Haven. 3. Publishers and Publishing-New Haven. [source of bibliographical information: A Bibliography of the Writings of Noah Webster, comp. by E.E.F. Skeel, N.Y., New York Public Library. 1953]
led to Philadelphia where he met his future wife, Rebecca Greenleaf of Boston. While there, a long friendship with Franklin began based on their mutual interest in spelling reform. After ten years of publishing Federalist newspapers in New York, Webster worked on his dictionary in New Haven. His many interests and wide experience prepared him admirably for lexicography. Seeking a quieter life, Webster moved to Amherst in 1812 where he helped found Amherst College. His last twenty-one years were spent in New Haven continuing his lexicographical work, writing, and working for a revised copyright law. [Sources: D.A.B. Vol.XIX, p.594; Skeel, E.E. E., Comp. Bibliography of the Writings of Noah Webster.]
# Table of Contents

**Box I v.I** An American Dictionary of the English Language... by Noah Webster, in two volumes. [First edition] New York. S. Converse. Printed by Hezekiah Howe, New Haven. 1828. (1)

**Box III**

Folder A. An American Dictionary of the English Language... by Noah Webster, in two volumes. New Haven. Published by the author. Printed by B.L. Hamlen. 1841. [inscribed Chauncey A. Goodrich to Chauncey Goodrich] (2)

**Box IV**

Folder A. An American Dictionary of the English Language... by Noah Webster, in two volumes. Amherst, Mass. J.S. and C. Adams. 1844. (2)

**Box V**


2. An American Dictionary of the English Language... [title page missing] Rev. ed. (2)

**Box VI**


2. A Pronouncing and Defining Dictionary of the English Language... abridged from Webster's American Dictionary... by Chauncey A. Goodrich. Philadelphia. Lippincott. 1856 (2)

Folder B. Holy Bible. New Haven. Durrie and Peck. 1833. 2 copies. (2)

**Box VII**

Folder A. An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking.... [Originally appeared as Elements of Useful Knowledge, Part III].


Folder B. An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking...

Webster Collection (1785-1880)

Box VII cont.

Folder C. An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking...

Folder D. The American Spelling Book. [Originally appeared as Grammatical Institute, Part I.]

Folder E. The American Spelling Book.

Folder F. The American Spelling Book.

Box VIII.

Folder A.
1. Biography for the Use of Schools. by N. Webster. [First edition]
   New Haven, MezekiahHowes 1830.
Box VIII cont.

Folder B.


Folder C. A Dictionary for Primary Schools...
1. New York. Huntington and Savage. [1845?]

Folder D. A Dictionary for Primary Schools...
1. New York. F.J. Huntington and Co. 1838
2. New York. F.J. Huntington and Co. 1841

Box IX

Folder A. A Dictionary of the English Language Compiled for the Use of Common Schools in the United States. [First edition]
1. New Haven. Sidney's Press. 1807. 3 copies.

Folder B.

2. Title page missing. [1832].

Folder C. A Dictionary of the English Language abridged from the American Dictionary for the Use of Primary Schools and the Counting House.
2. Title page missing.

Box X

Folder A. A Dictionary of the English Language... Academic edition.
1. New York. Huntington and Savage; Mason and Law. 1851
Webster Collection (1785-1880)

Box X cont.
1. New York. F.J. Huntington, Mason and Law. 1853. 2 copies. (2)

3. The elementary spelling book... Wells River, Vermont. Ira White. 1835. (3)

Folder D. The elementary spelling book...
1. Middletown, Conn. 1836.
2. New Haven. S. Babcock. 1840
3. Louisville, Ky. Morton and Griswold. [After 1843]

Box XI.
Folder A. The elementary spelling book...

Folder B. Elements of Useful Knowledge.

Folder C. Elements of Useful Knowledge.
3. Vol. II [title page missing]. (3)

Folder D. Elements of Useful Knowledge.
   Vol.I. Hartford, O.D. Cooke. 1806

Folder E. A Grammatical Institute of the English Language....

Folder F. A Grammatical Institute of the English Language...
2. Part Three. [title page missing]. (2)
Webster Collection (1785-1880)

Box XII
Folder A. A High School Pronouncing Dictionary...

1. New York. Huntington and Savage. 1848.

Folder B. History of Animals being the Fourth Volume of Elements of Useful Knowledge.

1. New Haven. Howe and Deforest and Walter and Steele. 1812. 3 copies. (originally Vol. IV of Elements of Useful Knowledge) (3)

Folder C. History of the United States.

3. New Haven. Durrie and Peck. 1835 (3)


Folder D. An Improved Grammar of the English Language.

3. New Haven. Sidney Babcock. 1839. (3)

Box XIII
Folder A.

3. Letters to a Young Gentleman... [First edition] New Haven, S. Converse, Printer, Sold by Howe and Spalding, 1823. (3)

Folder B.


Folder C.

1. A Philosophical and Practical Grammar of the English Language. [First edition] New Haven, Oliver Steele. 1807. 2 copies
Webster Collection (1785-1880)

Box XIII cont.
Folder D. A Primary School Pronouncing Dictionary...

1. New York, F.J. Huntington and Mason and Law, 1852.

Folder E.
1. A Primary School Pronouncing Dictionary....New York, Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor, 1874

See Box VI, Folder A, No.2. A Pronouncing and Defining Dictionary....

Box XIV
Folder A. A Sequel to Webster’s Elementary Spelling Book; a Speller and Definer....New York, George F. Cooledge, 1845. 3 copies.

Folder B.
1. A Sequel to Webster’s Elementary Spelling Book: A Speller and Definer...New York, George F. Cooledge, 1845.

In MSS No. 102: Children's Books Collection.


2. The Elementary Primer or First Lessons for Children; being an Introduction to the Elementary Spelling Book, by Noah Webster, New Haven, S. Babcock. 1841

Several titles listed in the public catalog of the New Haven Colony Historical Society Library.