

Benjamin Henry Latrobe Papers

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Washington, D.C.
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Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Collection Summary

Title: Benjamin Henry Latrobe Papers

Span Dates: 1803-1817

ID No.: MSS48330

Creator: Latrobe, Benjamin Henry, 1764-1820

Extent: 400 items ; 3 containers ; .6 linear feet ; 1 microfilm reel

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Architect and engineer. Principally letters from Latrobe to John Lenthall, clerk of the works of the U.S. Capitol, concerning the construction of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C.

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

Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826.

Latrobe, Benjamin Henry, 1764-1820.

Lenthall, John, 1807-1882.

Marshall, John, 1755-1835.

Organizations

United States Capitol (Washington, D.C.)

Subjects

Architecture--Washington (D.C.)

Occupations

Architects.

Engineers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architect and engineer, were obtained through purchase and from various sources between 1904-1944.

Processing History

The Benjamin Henry Latrobe Papers were processed between 1904 and 1960 and revised in 2006. One volume in the collection was microfilmed in 1995. The finding aid was created in 2016.

Related Material

Related collections in the Manuscript Division include the papers of Benjamin Latrobe's son, John H. B. Latrobe. Also available is microfilm of an original diary held by the Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio, describing Latrobe's July 16, 1796, visit to Mount Vernon, Va.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 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

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on one reel. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Benjamin Henry Latrobe Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1764, May 1	Born, Fulneck, near Leeds, Yorkshire, England
1784	Returned to England after study and travel in Saxony, France, and Italy; studied later with architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell
1790	Began his own architectural practice
1795	Immigrated to the United States
1796	Collaborated with Thomas Jefferson on the construction of the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, Va.
1797-1798	Designed the Virginia state penitentiary, Richmond, Va.
1798	Moved to Philadelphia, Pa.
1803	Appointed surveyor of the public buildings of the United States by Thomas Jefferson, including the task of completing the U.S. Capitol
1805	Work begun on Latrobe's design of the Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore, Md.
1820, Sept. 3	Died, New Orleans, La.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Benjamin H. Latrobe (1764-1820), spanning the years 1803-1817, consist principally of letters from Latrobe to John Lenthall, clerk of the works of the United States Capitol, concerning the construction of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Illustrated with sketches and plans, the letters were written in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Newcastle and Wilmington, Delaware, or Ironhill, Maryland, conveying Latrobe's instructions on details of the construction. Included are several notes and memoranda to Lenthall from Thomas Jefferson concerning the construction, a few of Lenthall's letters to Latrobe, and two volumes of copies of some of the above correspondence plus other documents concerning the Capitol building. A majority of the copies are Latrobe's letters to Lenthall, but there are copies of several letters to Thomas

Jefferson and John Marshall. Also in the collection are typed transcripts of Latrobe's letters to Lenthall and a photocopy of an extract of a diary giving an account of his visit to Mount Vernon, Virginia, on July 16, 1796.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged by type of material or volume and therein chronologically.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Unbound material
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1798, 1801
BOX 1	Photocopy of extract of diary giving account of visit to Mount Vernon, Va., July 16, 1796
BOX 1	Typed transcripts of letters to John Lenthall, 1803-1804
BOX 1	Index of correspondence, 1803-1807
BOX 2	Bound material
BOX 2	Letters, 1803-1808
BOX 3	Correspondence relating to the Capitol
BOX 3	Vol. 1, 1803, Sept. 24-1807, Apr. 29 <i>Available on microfilm, shelf no. 21,148</i>
BOX 3	Vol. 2, 1807, Sept. 29-1817, Nov. 20