

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Pamphlet Accompanying
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LETTERS SENT BY THE SECRETARY OF WAR
RELATING TO MILITARY AFFAIRS
1800 - 1889



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On the 110 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced 139 bound volumes of record copies of letters sent by the Secretary of War during the period 1800-1889. For the 1800-1870 period the volumes are entitled "Military Books"; for the 1871-89 period they are entitled "Letters Sent."

The Department of War was created by an act of Congress of August 7, 1789, which made the Secretary of War responsible for all matters relating to military and naval affairs, including supervision of Indian affairs, military pensions, and the granting of bounty lands for military service. Naval affairs were removed from his jurisdiction when the Department of the Navy was created on April 30, 1798; and the responsibility for Indian affairs, pensions, and bounty lands passed to the Department of the Interior when it was established in 1849.

As the responsibilities of the Secretary became too great for direct administration by one office, various subordinate units were established to handle specific functions. Among those established before the Civil War were the following offices and departments: Quartermaster's, Ordnance, Adjutant General's, Medical, Inspector General's, Engineer's, Pay, and Subsistence. Offices (or Bureaus) of Bounty Lands, Pensions, and Indian Affairs had been established within the Department by 1824. But in 1849 these were transferred with their functions and most of their records to the Department of the Interior. During the Civil War several new offices were established, including the Office of the Chief Signal Officer; the Bureau of Military Justice (later the Judge Advocate General's Department); the Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners; the Provost Marshal General's Bureau; and the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. Thus the concern of the Secretary's office became more and more restricted to matters of broad policy and general administration.

The records of the Secretary of War for the period before November 8, 1800, were destroyed in a fire that swept his office on that date. The series here reproduced, which was begun a few days after the fire, is the longest continuous series of letters sent by the Secretary; but a number of shorter series, especially for the period before 1870, were maintained at various times concurrently with it. These are not included in the present publication, although some have been separately published as shown below.

Originally there were six series of bound volumes with the following titles and dates: "Letters to the President," 1800-1863; "Letters to the Secretary of the Treasury," 1800-67; "Letters Sent, Indian Affairs," 1800-1824; "Military Pensions," 1800-ca. 1866; "Miscellaneous Letters Sent," 1800-1809; and "Military Books," 1800-1889 (designated "Letters Sent" from 1870 to 1889). A seventh series entitled "Reports to Congress" was begun in 1803 and continued to 1870. Another series, not strictly letters sent, was maintained from 1846 to 1870. It contains orders and endorsements sent by the Secretary of War to bureaus of the War Department, with digests of the letters received to which these orders and endorsements related. Letters sent to the President, other departments, and bureaus of the War Department, 1863-70, were kept in separate volumes labeled "Military Books, Executive." In addition there were a few other minor series of letters sent, generally for relatively short periods of time.

According to the recordkeeping practice of the time, all letters sent were copied into books. Those in the volumes here reproduced deal with such topics as Indian affairs, fortifications, acquisition and abandonment of military reservations, construction of military roads, organization and activities of military personnel, subsistence for armies in the field, settlement of claims for services and property, and funds to carry out the programs of the Department. The letters were sent to officers of subordinate bureaus of the Department, officials of other executive departments, the President, Members of Congress, Army officers in the field, Governors of States and Territories, and private persons and business firms.

Because of the increased load of correspondence, from April 1, 1862, to May 13, 1865, and again beginning in 1871, two sets of volumes were kept concurrently. During the Civil War period the two sets were generally labeled "A" and "B."

The intended arrangement of the letters within each volume was chronological, but the clerks were not always able to copy them precisely in that order. Particularly during times of stress and increased activity some of the copying work was delayed. In the early days of the Civil War, for example, the clerks sometimes did not receive press copies (hurriedly made before the letters were dispatched) for transcription until days or weeks had elapsed. The last several pages of many of the volumes contain letters that should have been entered earlier.

In the margin beside many of the letters appear two numbers, one above the other, separated by a line. The lower number is that of the next subsequent page in the same volume on which a letter to

the same correspondent is recorded, and the upper number is that of the next preceding page on which such a letter appears. Beginning about 1867, and increasingly thereafter, there sometimes are file references to related incoming communications.

There is a separate index to each volume for the period 1800-1870. These indexes are principally to names, but they include some subject entries. With the exception of volume 1 they are at the beginning of the volume and all, including that for volume 1, have been filmed before the letters. For the period 1871-89 there are name and subject indexes bound in a separate series, which have been reproduced in Microcopy 420.

The volumes reproduced are part of Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War.

Five of the other series of letters sent by the Secretary of War (in the same record group) have already been published on microfilm. They are Letters Sent to the President, 1800-1863 (Microcopy 127); Reports to Congress, 1803-70 (Microcopy 220); Miscellaneous Letters Sent, 1800-1809 (Microcopy 370); Letters Sent to the President and Executive Departments, 1863-70 (Microcopy 421); and Confidential and Unofficial Letters Sent, 1814-47 (Microcopy 7). The Indexes to Letters Sent Relating to Military Affairs, 1871-89, are reproduced in Microcopy 420. Published from the same record group, also, are Registers of Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War, 1800-1870 (Microcopy 22); Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, 1801-70 (Microcopy 221); and Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Unregistered Series, 1789-1861 (Microcopy 222).

Four of the series of letters sent, begun under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of War, are now in other record groups as shown below.

In Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, are the "Military Pension" volumes.

In Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, are the Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1824 (Microcopy 15) and Letters Sent by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81 (Microcopy 21). Among other related series in this record group are the Registers of Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-80 (Microcopy 18); Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81 (Microcopy 234); and Letters Received by the Office of the Secretary of War Relating to Indian Affairs, 1800-1823 (Microcopy 271).

In Record Group 203, Records of the Office of the Chief of Finance (Army), are the "Letters to the Secretary of the Treasury."

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<u>Roll</u>	<u>Volume</u>	<u>Inclusive Dates</u>	<u>Price</u>
1	1	Nov. 12, 1800 - June 21, 1803	\$ 3
2	2	June 21, 1803 - Apr. 30, 1806	3
3	3	May 1, 1806 - Dec. 31, 1808	3
4	4	Dec. 15, 1808 - Nov. 12, 1810	3
5	5	Nov. 13, 1810 - June 30, 1812	3
6	6	July 1, 1812 - June 29, 1813	3
7	7	July 1, 1813 - Dec. 20, 1814	3
8	8	Dec. 22, 1814 - Apr. 29, 1816	3
9	9	May 2, 1816 - Jan. 31, 1818	3
10	10	Feb. 2, 1818 - Feb. 19, 1820	3
11	11	Feb. 21, 1820 - Oct. 9, 1823	3
12	12	Oct. 13, 1823 - Aug. 10, 1830	3
13	13	Aug. 7, 1830 - Dec. 31, 1833	3
14	14	Jan. 2, 1834 - Jan. 18, 1836	3
15	15	Jan. 19-May 25, 1836	3
16	16	May 25-Dec. 14, 1836	3
17	17	Dec. 15, 1836 - Sept. 30, 1837	3
18	18	Oct. 2, 1837 - Mar. 21, 1838	3
19	19	Mar. 20-Nov. 30, 1838	3
20	20	Dec. 1, 1838 - May 31, 1839	3
21	21	June 1, 1839 - Feb. 29, 1840	3
22	22	Mar. 2-Sept. 26, 1840	3
23	23	Sept. 28, 1840 - June 30, 1841	3
24	24	July 1, 1841 - Sept. 30, 1842	4
25	25	Oct. 3, 1842 - Apr. 29, 1845	3
26	26	May 1, 1845 - Oct. 7, 1846	3
27	27	Oct. 8, 1846 - Aug. 13, 1847	4
28	28	Aug. 17, 1847 - Dec. 29, 1848	3
29	29	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1849	3
30	30	Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1850	3
31	31	Jan. 1-Sept. 29, 1851	3
32	32	Oct. 1, 1851 - Apr. 30, 1852	3
33	33	May 1-Nov. 30, 1852	3
34	34	Dec. 1, 1852 - Sept. 30, 1853	3
35	35	Oct. 1, 1853 - June 30, 1854	2
36	36	July 1, 1854 - Apr. 28, 1855	3
37	37	May 1, 1855 - Mar. 31, 1856	3
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39	39	Mar. 3-Dec. 30, 1857	2
40	40	Jan. 4-Oct. 30, 1858	3
41	41	Nov. 1, 1858 - Sept. 30, 1859	3

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Volume</u>	<u>Inclusive Dates</u>	<u>Price</u>
42	42	Oct. 1, 1859 - Oct. 30, 1860	\$ 3
43	43	Nov. 1, 1860 - June 29, 1861	2
44	44	Apr. 10-June 30, 1861	3
45	45	July 1-Aug. 31, 1861	3
46	46	Sept. 2-Oct. 31, 1861	3
47	47-48	Nov. 1, 1861 - Apr. 5, 1862	5
48	49A-49B	Apr. 3-June 22, 1862	6
49	50A-50B	June 23-Sept. 20, 1862	6
50	51A-51B	Sept. 20, 1862 - Mar. 7, 1863	6
51	52-52A	Mar. 9-Aug. 17, 1863	6
52	53A-53B	Aug. 15, 1863 - Jan. 14, 1864	6
53	54A-54B	Jan. 5-Mar. 12, 1864	6
54	55A-55B	Mar. 3-May 15, 1864	6
55	56A-56B	May 12-Aug. 20, 1864	6
56	57A-57B	Aug. 22-Dec. 15, 1864	5
57	58A-58B	Dec. 16, 1864 - May 13, 1865	6
58	59-60	May 13, 1865 - Apr. 25, 1867	6
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60	63-64	July 31, 1869 - Dec. 16, 1870	6
61	65-66	Jan. 3-July 11, 1871	6
62	67	July 11-Dec. 30, 1871	3
63	68-69	Jan. 2-July 1, 1872	6
64	70-71	Apr. 29-Dec. 31, 1872	6
65	72	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1873	6
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72	79	Jan. 1-Dec. 30, 1876	6
73	80	Jan. 5-Dec. 30, 1876	6
74	81	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1877	5
75	82	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1877	4
76	83	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1878	6
77	84	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1878	6
78	85	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1879	5
79	86	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1879	5
80	87-88	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1880	5
81	89-90	Jan. 2-Dec. 31, 1880	5
82	91-92	Jan. 3-Sept. 7, 1881	6
83	93-94	Sept. 8-Dec. 31, 1881	3
84	95-96	Jan. 3-May 19, 1882	6
85	97-98	Apr. 21-Oct. 20, 1882	6

<u>Roll</u>	<u>Volume</u>	<u>Inclusive Dates</u>	<u>Price</u>
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87	101-102	Jan. 2-May 26, 1883	6
88	103-104	May 14-Dec. 31, 1883	6
89	105	Jan. 2-May 31, 1884	4
90	106	Jan. 2-May 28, 1884	4
91	107 and 107(Cont.)	May 28-Dec. 31, 1884	4
92	108	May 28-Dec. 30, 1884	4
93	109	Jan. 2-July 13, 1885	4
94	110	Jan. 2-July 15, 1885	4
95	111-112	July 13-Dec. 31, 1885	4
96	113	Jan. 2-June 2, 1886	4
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98	115	June 1-Dec. 31, 1886	4
99	116	June 3-Dec. 31, 1886	4
100	117	Jan. 3-July 9, 1887	4
101	118	Jan. 3-July 8, 1887	4
102	119	July 9-Dec. 31, 1887	3
103	120	July 8-Dec. 31, 1887	3
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105	122	Jan. 3-May 4, 1888	4
106	123	May 3-Dec. 31, 1888	4
107	124	May 5-Dec. 31, 1888	4
108	125	Jan. 2-Sept. 2, 1889	4
109	126	Jan. 2-Sept. 30, 1889	4
110	127-128	Sept. 16-Dec. 31, 1889	2

Total \$448