

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
RARE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION
ACCESSION SHEET

Accession # 40 M 6; 43 M 117, 136, 145; Location Above case 10
60 M 19, 94; 68 M 54; Ford Coll.

Title Joseph G. Swift. Papers.

Approximate inclusive dates 1809-1862 Bulk dates 1820s-1850s

Date of receipt Mar. 12, 1940

Received from Mrs. Grace Bigelow Patten
(and by purchase, 1943-68)

Volume on arrival

Number of boxes (after reboxing) 1 FB

Condition good. Possible future damage from acidic ink. Several letters encapsulated.

Restrictions ~~none~~. *MICROFILM AVAILABLE FOR USE*

Description Joseph Gardner Swift (1783-1865), often considered the father of American civil engineering, was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts. He entered the army as a 16-year-old cadet in the Artillerists & Engineers stationed in Newport, R.I. When the U.S. Military Academy at West Point opened in 1801 he was sent there and became a member of its first graduating class of two students the following year. His military advancement was so rapid that by the age of 28 he attained the rank of Colonel and Chief Engineer of the army. His projects included the completion of Fort Clinton (New York City) and, during the War of 1812, the fortifications of western Long Island harbors and of New York City. However, Swift's military career ended in frustration when the government installed the Frenchman, Simon Bernard as the director of the army's fortification projects. He resigned his commission in 1818 and turned to a variety of civilian activities. He served as Surveyor of the Port of New York until 1826 and as chief engineer for several railroads for the next three years. In 1829 he directed harbor improvements on the Great Lakes. In addition to his engineering projects, Swift was involved in a variety of business activities including insurance, real estate speculation, and, with Gouveneur Kemble, the creation of an iron foundry in Cold Spring, New York. Swift exerted great influence as friend and mentor to the younger generation of engineers, most notably, two West Point graduates, George Washington Whistler and William Gibbs McNeill. In fact, the three form a "first family" of American engineers. Whistler married Swift's sister Mary in 1821. After her death in 1827 he went on to marry McNeill's sister Anna in 1831.

The Swift Papers consists entirely of chronologically arranged correspondence. The vast majority of the letters are written to Swift from his brother, William Henry Swift, 1825-57, and from his brother-in-law, George Washington Whistler, 1828-49. Whistler's letters include several written from Russia while he was working on the construction of the Moscow/St. Peters-

Special Formats Photographs Maps Audio Tapes Films Graphics
 Artifacts Machine-readable records
 Other (list) _____

Temporary catalog card added entries

Whistler, George Washington

Whistler, Anna McNeill

Kemble, Gouveneur

Swift, William Henry

Russia

Engineering

Railroads

Engineers

Accessioned by MY

Date January 1985

burg railroad. Also included are 15 letters of Swift to various correspondents, 1809-62; 9 letters from Gouvenuer Kemble to Swift, 1830-58; 4 letters from G.W. Whistler to his son, George, his wife, Anna, and brother-in-law, William G. McNeill; 1 letter to Swift from Anna McNeill Whistler; and several letters exchanged among members of the Swift and McNeill families.

126 126-122A

AAA
R611 N26
neg. x
pos. x
NYPL
7-30-56

1821 - 1828

1821, Feb.25, Wm. H. Swift
1825, Aug. 9, " " "
1827, Feb.20, Martha McNeill
May 30, " "
July 1, William H. Swift
Aug.13, Martha McNeill
Sep.25, William H. Swift
1828, Feb.20, G. W. Whistler
May 21, " " "
Jun.17, Margaret McDonald
Sep. 2, W. H. Swift
Sep. 5, G. W. Whistler
Oct. 5, W. H. Swift
Oct.31, G. H. Whistler
--- --- " " "

1829- 1830

1829, Feb.16, G. W. Whistler
Oct.24, " " "
Nov.13, [Cousin M.]
Dec.17, W. H. Swift

1830? --- --- G. W. Whistler

1830, Feb.1, M. McNeill
Feb.?28, " "
[Apr.]--, G. W. Whistler
Sep.28, " " "
Sep. -- Gouv. Kemble
[n.y.]Oct.5, G. W. Whistler
Oct. 29, Gouv. Kemble
Oct. 13, " "
[n.y.]Nov. 4, W. H. Swift
Nov.13, " " "

1831 - 1832

1831, Jan. 7, W. H. Swift
Jan. 9, G. W. Whistler
[undated] drawing
Jan.28, M. McNeill
Feb. 8, G. W. Whistler
Mar. 21, W. H. Swift
Apr. 4, Gouv. Kemble
Apr.25, Martha McNeill → Jun.5, W. H. Swift
Jun.21, W. H. Swift
July 12, G. W. Whistler
Dec. 2, ~~183~~ " " "
Dec.13, W. H. Swift

1832, Mar. 4, " " "
Mar.26, " " "
May 22, " " "

AAA
 Roll N26
 reg. x
 pos. x
 NYPL
 7-30-56

NYPL, MS Div.,
 NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION
 J. G. Swift Papers - p.2

226 (cont.)

1832, June?, 19, M. McNeill
 Aug. 26, W. H. Swift
 Nov. 29, G. W. Whistler
 [1832] Dec. 2, " " "

1833 - 1837

1833, Aug. 4, W. H. Swift
 1834, Jan. 6, " " "
 Feb. 12, G. W. Whistler
 Mar. 3, G. W. Whistler

1835, Jan. 27, W. H. Swift
 Apr. 21, Gouv. Kemble
 May 12, L. A. Wright
 [1835, Aug. 18] W/H. Swift, ~~W/H. Swift~~

Sen. 12, ~~W. H. Swift~~ Mary A. [Wright]
 1836, May 24, W. H. Swift
 [Aug. 4, 1836], " " "
 Sep. 29, M. McNeill

1837, Jan. 4, Gouv. Kemble
 Mar. 25, G. W. Whistler
 May 30, " " "
 Jun. 27, " " "
 Sept. 4, " " "
 Sept. 28, " " "

1838 - 1839

1838, Jun. 9, " " "
 July 22, Martha McNeill
 Oct. 10, G. W. Whistler
 Nov. 8, " " "
 Dec. 25, " " "

1839, May 22, " " "
 Aug. 30, " " "
 Oct. 7, " " "
 Oct. 23, " " "
 [Nov. 1.], " " "
 Nov. 15, " " "
 Nov. 24, W. H. Swift

1840 - 1842

1840, Jan. 31, G. W. Whistler
 May 8, " " "
 Dec. 24, " " " to Maj. Wm. G. McNeill
 Dec. 5, A-- J. Swift to
 Miss Sally D. Swift

NYPL, MS Div.,

NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION

J. G. Swift Papers - p.3

N26 (cont.)

AAA
Roll N26
pp. x
pp. x
NYPL
30-56

1841

[1841, Jan.17], G. W. Whistler
Dec.12, W. H. Swift

1842, Jan.18,

" " "

Feb. 6, G. W. Whistler

Feb.15, " " "

[1842, Apr.19], " " " , letter damaged

Apr.24, W. H. Swift

Apr. 30, " " "

~~xxx~~

~~[1842, May 29]~~

May, -- G. W. Whistler

May 29, G. W. Whistler

Jul.10, W. H. Swift

Jul.15, G. W. Whistler to

Maj. Gen. Gibbs McNeill

Sep. 4, W. H. Swift

Oct. 4, " " "

Nov. 4, " " "

1843 - 1844

1843, Apr.19, W. H. Swift

May 1, " " "

May 13, " " "

Aug. 4, " " "

Oct. 6, Deborah D. Whistler

Oct.20, W. H. Swift

Nov. 3, [G. W. Whistler]

letter damaged

Dec.24, W. H. Swift

1844, Jan.18, G. W. Whistler

Mar.20, W. H. Swift

Apr. 4, G. W. Whistler

Apr. 6, W. H. Swift

Apr.13, " " "

Apr.20?, " " "

Oct.23, G. W. Whistler

Dec.10, W. H. Swift

1845 - 1846

1845, Jan. 4, W. H. Swift

Apr.26, G. W. Whistler

Aug.23, W. H. Swift

Oct. 4, " " "

Oct.21, " " "

Dec. 1, " " "

Dec.19, G. W. Whistler

NYPL, MS Div.,
NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT PERMISSION
J. G. Swift Papers - p.4 ~~N26 (copy)~~

1846, Feb. 14, W. H. Swift
 Feb. 28, " " "
 May 23, Polycarpus von Schneidau
 Apr. 26, W. H. Swift
 May 20, G. W. Whistler
 Jul. 21, " " "
 May 26, W. H. Swift
 [May 28], " " "
 June 9, J. G. Swift to W. H. Swift
 June 12, W. H. Swift
 June 15, " " "
 [July 16], G. Bender to W. H. Swift
 July 17, S. Cross (?), to W. H. Swift
 Sept. 3, W. H. Swift
 Sept. 10, " " "
 Oct. 2, [Wm. St. Clair]? Clarke
 Sept. 24, Anna E. W[histler]
 [Oct. 5], W. H. Swift
 [Nov. 19], " " "

1847 - 1862

1847, Mar. 1, G. W. Whistler
 Feb. 5, W. H. Swift
 Feb. 20, " " "
 Apr. 8/20, G. W. Whistler
 June 6, W. H. Swift
 July 12, Gouv. Kemble
 Sept. 17, copy of a letter
 [G. W. Whistler to his wife]
 Sept. 17 original letter

1848, Dec. 5, G. W. Whistler

1849, Feb. 12, G. W. Whistler
~~Aug. 13, Gouv. Kemble~~
 Aug. 21, W. H. Swift
 Sept. 5, " " "

1851, Aug. 13, Gouv. Kemble
 1852?, May 31, W. H. Swift

1857?, Oct. 17, W. H. Swift

1858, 12, Apr., Gouv. Kemble

1862, Oct. 20, J.G. Swift to Samuel B. Ruggles

~~end of roll N26-1222~~
END OF COLLECTION