

Fitz-John Porter Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2004

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78036590>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms005015>

Prepared by David Mathisen
Revised and expanded by Melinda K. Friend and Chanté Wilson

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2005
Revised 2010 April

Collection Summary

Title: Fitz-John Porter Papers

Span Dates: 1830-1949

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1861-1898)

ID No.: MSS36590

Creator: Porter, Fitz-John, 1822-1901

Extent: 13,000 items

Extent: 67 containers plus 10 oversize

Extent: 26.8 linear feet

Extent: 31 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78036590>

Summary: Army officer and public official in New York, N.Y., and New Jersey. Correspondence, telegrams, reports, memoranda, writings, autobiographical and biographical material, maps, scrapbooks, printed matter, and miscellany largely concerning Porter's court-martial and cashiering out of military service during the Civil War and his later reinstatement and presidential pardon.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Bullitt, John C. (John Christian), 1824-1902--Correspondence.

Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885--Correspondence.

Hoar, George Frisbie, 1826-1904--Correspondence.

Johnson, Reverdy, 1796-1876--Correspondence.

Lord, Theodore Akerly, 1844-1914.

Mangold, Ferdinand Franz, 1832-1903.

McClellan, Carswell, 1835-1892.

McClellan, George B. (George Brinton), 1826-1885--Correspondence.

McDowell, Irvin, 1818-1885.

Patterson, Robert, 1792-1881.

Pope, John, 1822-1892.

Porter, Fitz-John, 1822-1901.

Ruggles, George D. (George David), -1904--Correspondence.

Sewell, William Joyce, 1835-1901--Correspondence.

Weld, Stephen Minot, 1842- --Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Army. Corps, 5th (1862-1865)

Subjects

Antietam, Battle of, Md., 1862.

Bull Run, 2nd Battle of, Va., 1862.

Courts-martial and courts of inquiry.

Malvern Hill, Battle of, Va., 1862.

Mexican War, 1846-1848.

Peninsular Campaign, 1862.

Shenandoah Valley Campaign, 1861.

Places

Manassas (Va.)--History.

Maryland--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.
Texas--Discovery and exploration.
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Campaigns.
Utah--Discovery and exploration.
Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Occupations

Army officers.
Public officials--New Jersey.
Public officials--New York (State)--New York.

Provenance

The papers of Fitz-John Porter, army officer and public official in New York, N.Y., and New Jersey, were deposited in the Library of Congress between 1911 and 1951 by Holbrook Fitz-John Porter and other members of the Porter family. The deposit was converted to a gift in 1952.

Processing History

The papers of Fitz-John Porter were processed in 1963 and prepared for microfilming in 1988. The finding aid was revised and part of the collection rehoused in 2003 and 2004.

Additional Guides

A brief description of the Porter Papers appears in *Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: 1918), p. 339.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Fitz-John Porter is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Fitz-John Porter 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 thirty-one reels. 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, Fitz-John Porter Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1822, Aug. 31	Born, Portsmouth, N.H.
1841-1845	Cadet, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1846-1849	Promoted to second lieutenant and served with Generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott during Mexican War, advancing to ranks of captain and major for gallantry in action
1849-1855	Instructor, United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.
1856	Transferred to Adjutant General's Department
1857	Married Harriet Pierson Cook
1857-1860	Attached to Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston's Utah Expedition as assistant adjutant general and chief of staff until ordered back to the East
1860-1861	Inspected defenses of Charleston, S.C., harbor, supervised withdrawal of troops from Texas, and in charge of restoration and protection of railroads between Washington, D.C., and the North
1861, Feb.	Special duty in the Gulf of Mexico
1861, May 14	Appointed colonel
1861, May 17	Appointed brigadier general, volunteers
1862, July 4	Appointed major general, volunteers
1862	Commanded 5th Army Corps under General George Brinton McClellan
1862-1863	Court-martialed for disobedience of orders and misconduct in the face of the enemy at the 2nd Battle of Manassas and cashiered
1865-1871	Merchant in New York and appointed commissioner of public works, police commissioner and fire commissioner of New York, N.Y., and cashier of the New York Post Office
1879	Vindicated of court-martial charges by military review
1886, Aug. 5	Recommissioned in the army by special act of Congress
1901, May 21	Died, Morristown, N.J.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Fitz-John Porter (1822-1901) span the years from 1830 to 1949, with the bulk of the material dated between 1861 and 1898. The collection includes correspondence; telegrams; reports; memoranda; articles prepared by Porter and others; autobiographical, biographical, and genealogical material; maps; a few photographs; financial and legal papers; annotated printed matter; and scrapbooks.

Much of the collection relates to Porter's court-martial and cashiering out of military service in 1863 following criticism of his conduct on August 29, 1862, during the battle of 2nd Manassas, or 2nd Bull Run, and his attempt to obtain reinstatement and honorable retirement. In 1879 Porter secured a review of his case by a board of general officers which reported in his favor. There is also considerable material relating to congressional action and a presidential pardon in Porter's case. There are many personal letters from fellow officers supporting Porter's allegations against Generals John Pope and Irvin McDowell, whom Porter charged with incompetence and slander. There is also considerable material concerning the conduct of the 5th Army Corps under Porter's leadership in the Peninsular Campaign and the Battles of Malvern Hill, 2nd Manassas, and Antietam.

Material concerning Porter's early military career, particularly in the war with Mexico and the Utah Expedition (1857-1860), is largely in the form of autobiographical and biographical studies. There is more material concerning Porter's Texas Expedition (1861), the Harrisburg Campaign (1861), and the first Shenandoah Valley Campaign under General Robert Patterson.

Included with the Porter Papers are drafts of two unpublished biographical works and correspondence of their authors. The first, by Theodore Akerly Lord, covers Porter's military career from the Mexican War to the Shenandoah Campaign. The second, "Animus," by Carswell McClellan, is concerned primarily with Porter's court-martial. There are also extracts and transcripts by Sara M. Day in English of the German publication *Der Feldzug in Nord-Virginien im August 1862* (1881) by Ferdinand Franz Mangold.

Prominent correspondents include John C. Bullitt, Ulysses S. Grant, George Frisbie Hoar, Reverdy Johnson, George Brinton McClellan (1826-1885), George D. Ruggles, William Joyce Sewell, and Stephen Minot Weld. Span dates of correspondence noted in the original container list for the [General Correspondence and Other Papers](#) series have been altered in this revised finding aid to include enclosures and related material added at a later date. The altered dates are indicated in brackets.

Organization of the Papers

The collection is arranged in nine series:

- [General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1830-1947.](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1860-1888](#)
- [Subject File, 1792-1914](#)
- [Articles, 1861-1862](#)
- [Autobiographical, Biographical, and Genealogical Material, undated](#)
- [Miscellany, 1866-1941](#)
- [Printed matter, 1862-1914](#)
- [Biographical File, 1861-1949.](#)
- [Oversize, 1857-1891](#)

Description of Series

Container	Series
BOX 1-49 REEL 1-21	<p><u>General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1830-1947</u> Correspondence and related material in bound volumes. Arranged chronologically. Span dates of the correspondence have been revised to include enclosures and related material added at a later date. The altered dates are indicated in brackets following the dates noted in the original finding aid.</p>
BOX 50 REEL 22-23	<p><u>Letterbooks, 1860-1888</u> Bound volumes of copies of outgoing letters and loose sheets in folders. Arranged chronologically.</p>
BOX 51-53 REEL 23-25	<p><u>Subject File, 1792-1914</u> Letters, memoranda, transcripts, printed matter, clippings, and other items. Arranged alphabetically by subject.</p>
BOX 53 REEL 25	<p><u>Articles, 1861-1862</u> Handwritten and typed copies. Arranged alphabetically by title.</p>
BOX 53 REEL 25	<p><u>Autobiographical, Biographical, and Genealogical Material, undated</u> Autobiographical writings, biographical sketches, genealogical charts, lists, and related items. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 53-55 REEL 25-28	<p><u>Miscellany, 1866-1941</u> Printed copies of Porter's letters, writings by others, maps, photographs, financial and legal papers, and other miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.</p>
BOX 55-65 REEL 28-30	<p><u>Printed matter, 1862-1914</u> Pamphlets, broadsides, government and published documents, congressional reports, speeches, maps, newspaper clippings, and other material. Arranged by type or topic and therein chronologically. Containers 57-65 have not been microfilmed.</p>
BOX 66-67 REEL 30-31	<p><u>Biographical File, 1861-1949</u> Writings, notes, collected material, correspondence, and related documents of Theodore Akerly Lord, Eva Porter Doggett, and Carswell McClellan concerning Porter's military career and court-martial. Arranged by name of biographer and thereunder by type of material.</p>
BOX OV 1-10	<p><u>Oversize, 1857-1891</u></p>
BOX OV 1-8	<p><u>Scrapbooks, 1857-1891, undated</u> Newspaper clippings. Arranged chronologically by volume.</p>

BOX OV 9-10

Miscellany, 1862, undated

Maps arranged and described according to the series, folder, and containers from which they were removed. Only OV 9 is contained on Reel 27.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 19,858

Container	Contents
BOX 1-49 REEL 1-21	General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1830-1947 Correspondence and related material in bound volumes. Arranged chronologically. Span dates of the correspondence have been revised to include enclosures and related material added at a later date. The altered dates are indicated in brackets following the dates noted in the original finding aid.
BOX 1 REEL 1	1830, May 29-1862, July 1 [1830-1896, undated]
BOX 2 REEL 1	1861, Apr. 18-May 7 [1861-1881, undated]
BOX 3 REEL 1	1861, Apr. 21-1863, Jan. 22 [1861-1893, undated]
BOX 4 REEL 2	1862, Aug. 6-1863, Feb. 28 [1862-1889, undated]
BOX 5 REEL 2	1862, Sept. 3-1863, June 14 [1862-1892, undated]
BOX 6 REEL 2	1862, June 3-1863, Jan. 22 [1862-1878, undated]
BOX 7 REEL 3	1862, June 27-1863, Oct. 23 [1862-1879, undated]
BOX 8 REEL 3	1863, Jan. 8-1866, Aug. 24 [1863-1882, undated]
BOX 9 REEL 3	1866, Aug. 26-1870, Feb. 24 [1862-1883, undated]
BOX 10 REEL 4	1868, Apr. 6-1871, Dec. 19 [1868-1871, undated]
BOX 11 REEL 4	1869, Dec. 13-1874, May 13 [1863-1947, undated]
BOX 12 REEL 4	1874, May 14-1876, Jan. 19 [1863-1907, undated]
BOX 13 REEL 5	1876, Jan. 20-1877, Dec. 31 [1876-1880, undated]
BOX 14 REEL 5	1878, Jan. 1-1879, Jan. 31 [1862-1882, undated]
BOX 15 REEL 6	1878, Mar. 28-May 8 [1862-1879, undated]
BOX 16 REEL 6	1878, Apr. 12-Oct. 22 [1878-1885, undated]
BOX 17 REEL 7	1878, July 2-Aug. 27 [1878-1879, undated]
BOX 18 REEL 7	1878, Aug. 28-Sept. 30 [1862-1878, undated]
BOX 19 REEL 8	1878, Oct. 1-Dec. 30 [1862-1879, undated]
BOX 20 REEL 8	1878, Dec. 31-1879, Mar. 31 [1878-1884, undated]
BOX 21 REEL 9	1879, Apr. 1-June 23 [1879, undated]
BOX 22 REEL 9	1879, June 24-1880, Jan. 21 [1878-1890, n.d]
BOX 23 REEL 10	1880, Jan. 22-May 22 [1880-1881, undated]
BOX 24 REEL 10	1880, May 12-Sept. 12 [1880, undated]
BOX 25 REEL 10	1880, Sept. 15-Dec. 23 [1880, undated]
BOX 26 REEL 11	1880, Dec. 24-1881, Feb. 15 [1879-1882, undated]
BOX 27 REEL 11	1881, Feb. 16-Sept. 29 [1862-1883, undated]
BOX 28 REEL 12	1881, Sept. 30-Dec. 28 [1862-1883, undated]
BOX 29 REEL 12	1881, Dec. 27-1882, Feb. 2 [1880-1882, undated]
BOX 30 REEL 12	1882, Feb. 4-May 20 [1880-1886, undated]
BOX 31 REEL 13	1882, May 22-Oct. 2 [1882, undated]
BOX 32 REEL 13	1882, Oct. 2-Dec. 29 [1882-1883, undated]
BOX 33 REEL 14	1882, Dec. 30-1883, Mar. 14 [1882-1883, undated]
BOX 34 REEL 14	1883, Mar. 2-1884, Feb. 6 [1861-1892, undated]
BOX 35 REEL 15	1884, Feb. 8-1886, Mar. 1 [1862-1884, undated]

General Correspondence and Other Papers, 1830-1947

Container	Contents
BOX 36 REEL 15	1886, Mar. 3-June 26 [1886, undated]
BOX 37 REEL 16	1886, June 27-July 2 [1886, undated]
BOX 38 REEL 16	1886, July 3-26 [1879-1886, undated]
BOX 39 REEL 17	1886, July 27-1888, May 22 [1862-1891, undated]
BOX 40 REEL 17	1888, May 1-Dec. 27 [1887-1891, undated]
BOX 41 REEL 17	1889, "Granger's Review"
BOX 42 REEL 18	1889, Jan. 11-Nov. 30 [1862-1889, undated]
BOX 43 REEL 18	1889, Dec. 3-1891, Mar. 27 [1862-1891, undated]
BOX 44 REEL 19	1891, Mar. 28-1892, Nov. 3 [1890-1892, undated]
BOX 45 REEL 19	1892, Nov. 7-1895, May 6 [1863-1895, undated]
BOX 46 REEL 20	1895, May 7-1897, Sept. 9 [1862-1897, undated]
BOX 47 REEL 20	1897, Sept. 10-1898, Aug. 16 [1862-1898, undated]
BOX 48 REEL 21	1898, Aug. 17-1899, Dec. 27 [1897-1899, undated]
BOX 49 REEL 21	1899, Dec. 22-1904, Jan. 30 [1849-1904, undated]
BOX 50 REEL 22-23	Letterbooks, 1860-1888 Bound volumes of copies of outgoing letters and loose sheets in folders. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 50 REEL 22-23	1860, Nov. 1 - 1861, Mar. 30 (loose sheets) 1862, Aug. 26 - 1863, Feb. 2; 1876, Oct. 24 1862, Oct. 8 (single sheet) 1864, Aug. 26 - 1871, Apr. 22; 1887, July 25 - Nov. 7 1869, Dec. 11 - 1871, Dec. 15 (loose sheets) 1878, May 10 - 1879, June 11 (loose sheets) 1880, May 24 - 1883, Mar. 21 1883, Mar. 30 - 1888, July 29 1884, Mar. 23 - Nov. 16 (loose sheets) Undated fragments (loose sheets)
BOX 51-53 REEL 23-25	Subject File, 1792-1914 Letters, memoranda, transcripts, printed matter, clippings, and other items. Arranged alphabetically by subject.
BOX 51 REEL 23-25	Ascent in balloon at Yorktown, Va., 1862 Battles of 1st and 2nd Bull Run, 1861-1862 (2 folders) Court-martial and trial Proceedings of the court, 1862-1863 Retrial, undated Memoranda regarding members of the court, undated Cox, Jacob D., 1880, undated Garfield, James A., undated Grant, Ulysses S., undated Holt, Joseph, undated Johnston, Albert S., 1861, undated Logan, John A., 1872, 1881-1883, undated

Subject File, 1792-1914

Container	Contents
BOX 52 REEL 24-25	McClellan, George Brinton (1826-1885), 1862, 1885, undated McDowell, Irvin, 1862-1863, undated Pope, John, 1862, 1869, undated Sherman, William T., undated Wallace, Lew, undated House and Senate debates, 1880, 1886-1890, undated (2 folders) Relief of Porter by Congress, undated Petitions and memorials to Congress, 1874, undated Presidential pardon, undated List and bibliographies, 1863-1878, 1895, undated
BOX 53 REEL 25	Equestrian statue of Porter, 1903 Fifth Army Corps, 1861-1862 Patterson, Robert, 1792-1881 Pension for Harriet Pierson Porter, 1902-1914
BOX 53 REEL 25	Articles, 1861-1862 Handwritten and typed copies. Arranged alphabetically by title.
BOX 53 REEL 25	"An incident of Army Life among the Mormons during the Utah troubles of 1859 to 1860," including extracts from diary, undated "Texas Expedition," 1861 "Harrisburg Campaign," 1861 "Balloon Services," 1861-1862 Miscellany relating to Porter's court-martial, undated
BOX 53 REEL 25	Autobiographical, Biographical, and Genealogical Material, undated Autobiographical writings, biographical sketches, genealogical charts, lists, and related items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 53 REEL 25	"A Cursory (but truthful) Narrative of my Recollections and Connections with the Rebellion," undated General, undated
BOX 53-55 REEL 25-28	Miscellany, 1866-1941 Printed copies of Porter's letters, writings by others, maps, photographs, financial and legal papers, and other miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.
BOX 53 REEL 25	Copies of Porter letters in the <i>Collector</i> , 1866-1889, 1941 Meade, George, account of Battle of Gettysburg, undated General, 1874-1884, undated
BOX 54 REEL 25-26	"Campaign in Northern Virginia in August 1882," translation from German by Sara M. Day of <i>Der Feldzug in Nord-Virginien im August 1862</i> (1881) by Ferdinand Franz Mangold, undated Typewritten extracts Handwritten transcripts (8 folders)

Miscellany, 1866-1941

Container	Contents
BOX 55 REEL 27	Maps, undated <i>See also Oversize</i> (4 folders)
BOX 55 REEL 28	Photographs, undated Financial and legal papers, undated
BOX 55-65 REEL 28-30	Printed matter, 1862-1914 Pamphlets, broadsides, government and published documents, congressional reports, speeches, maps, newspaper clippings, and other material. Arranged by type or topic and therein chronologically. Containers 57-65 have not been microfilmed.
BOX 55 REEL 28	Miscellaneous 1862-1878, undated (7 folders)
BOX 56 REEL 28-30	1879-1905, undated (13 folders)
BOX 57 Not filmed	1880-1881, 1897, undated Newspaper clippings Court-martial, vindication, and related matters, 1861-1900, 1906, 1912-1914 (6 folders) Whitehead, John, articles by, 1883-1884
BOX 58	Porter court-martial <i>Court Martial Proceedings</i> , 1863 Copy 1 with tipped-in documents Copy 2
BOX 59	Documents Vol. 1, 1862-1878 Vol. 2, 1862-1874, 1882
BOX 60	Vol. 3, 1879-1886 Extracts from <i>Congressional Record</i> 1880-1883
BOX 61	1883-1886 <i>Pamphlets in Case of Gen. Fitz-John Porter</i> , 1862-1889 <i>Papers in the F. J. Porter Case</i> , 1880-1882
BOX 62	<i>Proceedings and Reports of a Board of Army Officers</i> , 1879 Accompanying maps Part I
BOX 63	Part I (different edition) Part II
BOX 64	Part III Speeches By John A. Logan, 1882-1883
BOX 65	In Congress, 1880-1886

Printed matter, 1862-1914

Container Contents

Sketch maps of 2nd Battle of Manassas with notations by Porter, 1862 *See also Oversize*

BOX 66-67 REEL 30-31 Biographical File, 1861-1949

Writings, notes, collected material, correspondence, and related documents of Theodore Akerly Lord, Eva Porter Doggett, and Carswell McClellan concerning Porter's military career and court-martial.

Arranged by name of biographer and thereunder by type of material.

BOX 66 REEL 30

Lord, Theodore Akerly

Draft of an unpublished biography, undated

"The Mexican War"

"The Utah Expedition"

"The Texas Expedition"

"The Mission to Harrisburg"

"General Patterson's Campaign"

Correspondence, 1889-1904

Doggett, Eva Porter, correspondence, 1934-1949

BOX 67

McClellan, Carswell

REEL 30-31

Draft of an unpublished biography entitled "Animus"

Holograph, undated

Typescripts and notes, undated

Collected material, 1880-1992

Correspondence, 1889-1992

Notes on "Abraham Lincoln, a History," undated

Miscellany, undated

BOX OV 1-10

Oversize, 1857-1891

BOX OV 1-8

Scrapbooks, 1857-1891, undated

Newspaper clippings.

Arranged chronologically by volume.

1857-1859

1862-1890

BOX OV 2

1862, 1866-1880

1863-1870, George Brinton McClellan (1826-1885)

BOX OV 3

1863-1866

1870-1879

1875-1879

BOX OV 4

1876-1878

1878

1878-1886

BOX OV 5

1879-1880

1879-1881

1879-1882

BOX OV 6

1879-1884

1880-1886

BOX OV 7

1880-1887, compiled by C. W. Moulton (d. 1888)

Oversize, 1857-1891

Container	Contents
BOX OV 8	1883-1884 1883-1886 1886-1887 1891, history of the Civil War
BOX OV 9-10	Miscellany, 1862, undated Maps arranged and described according to the series, folder, and containers from which they were removed. Only OV 9 is contained on Reel 27.
BOX OV 10	Maps, undated (<i>Container 55; Reel 27</i>) Sketch maps of 2nd Battle of Manassas, with notations by Porter, 1862 (<i>Container 65</i>)