

A HUDSON VALLEY FAMILY:
POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

An Exhibition

7 May 1989 - 17 September 1989

Stacy Flora Roth
Archivist

Title Case

**A Hudson Valley Family:
Politics and Society in the New Republic**

"A HUDSON VALLEY FAMILY: POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN THE NEW REPUBLIC" celebrates the arrival of two new research collections: The Edward Livingston Papers and the Delafield Family Papers. The papers were a 1986 gift to the University by the Delafields, a family with close ties to Princeton.

This exhibition will focus on some of the people whose papers are prominent in the collections -- Edward Livingston, Janet and Richard Montgomery, Joseph Delafield, John Ross Delafield, Margaret Beekman Livingston, and Robert R. "the Chancellor" Livingston -- and on their family seat, Montgomery Place.

". . . they seemed one great cousinry, all having a serene confidence in the invulnerability of their social position, which left them free to be jovial, hospitable, good-humoured, and withal public spirited to an unusual degree."

-- Harold Eberlein, The Manors and Historic
Homes of the Hudson Valley

Poem, "On a Bust of the Late Honorable Edward Livingston,"
August 6, 1837

A bit of solemn contemplation on the Hughes bust. The handwriting appears to be that of Livingston's son-in-law, Thomas Pennant Barton.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 91 Folder 3)
(Framed on wall)

Ball Hughes, plaster bust of Edward Livingston, ca. 1836

Louise Livingston commissioned a marble bust of her late husband shortly after his death. This is one of several casts made from the original.

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)

Case # 1 (upright case)

**The Livingston-Delafield Connection:
Two Families, One House, and a Historic Collection**

Janet Livingston Montgomery built Montgomery Place on a newly acquired northern Dutchess County farm between 1802 and 1805. After her death, the house and its contents passed from generation to generation of Livingston descendants, and over the years the family saved, collected, catalogued and recorded the history of the house and its inhabitants.

The most avid guardian of the family legacy was John Ross Delafield (1875-1964), an army reserve officer and national defense advocate with a passion for genealogy and local history. He published a number of works on both subjects, including the two-volume Delafield: The Family History, in 1945.

Photograph of John Ross Delafield on "Captain" in front of Montgomery Place, ca. 1930

"The house is unusually interesting to me as it contains, so far as I know, almost all the surviving effects of my great-granduncle Edward Livingston and of my great-grandaunt, Mrs. Richard Montgomery, and of several other relatives..."

--John Ross Delafield to Frank H. Chase, January 10, 1928

Delafield Family Papers

Photograph of John Ross Delafield, Colonel, 9th Coast Artillery, ca. 1917

Delafield Family Papers

Draft of "Montgomery Place," by John Ross Delafield, New York, 1938

Delafield wrote several articles about his famous home. This one appeared the following year in New York History.

Delafield Family Papers

Garden Club of America, Menu for High Tea at Montgomery Place, May 20, 1936

John Ross Delafield and his wife, Violetta, an expert gardener, took great pride in the house and grounds at Montgomery Place. The Garden Club planned a side trip to the estate as one of the activities of their 1936 annual meeting.

Delafield Family Papers

OWNERSHIP OF MONTGOMERY PLACE

The house was built between 1802 and 1805 by...

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 1802-1828 | JANET LIVINGSTON MONTGOMERY (1743-1828) who left it to her youngest brother... |
| 1828-1836 | EDWARD LIVINGSTON (1764-1836) who left it to his wife... |
| 1836-1860 | LOUISE DAVEZAC LIVINGSTON (1781-1860) who left it to her daughter... |
| 1860-1873 | CORALIE LIVINGSTON BARTON (1806-1873) who left it to cousins, for life tenancy only... |
| 1873-1921 | LOUISE LIVINGSTON HUNT (1835-1915) and CARLETON HUNT (1836-1921) until it reverted back to the nearest Livingston relative... MATURIN LIVINGSTON DELAFIELD (1836-1917) who died before he could live there, but left it to his son... |
| 1921-1964 | JOHN ROSS DELAFIELD (1875-1964) who left it (for life) to his son... |
| 1964-1985 | JOHN WHITE DELAFIELD (1905-1985) and when he died, controlling interest passed to his son... |
| 1985-1986 | J. DENNIS DELAFIELD (1936-) and his cousins, who, through a gift/purchase, transferred the house and its contents to... |
| 1986- | HISTORIC HUDSON VALLEY and donated the historic papers to... |
| 1986- | PRINCETON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY |

Wall banner and label

Edward Livingston: 1764-1836

Edward Livingston is perhaps best remembered for his progressive legal code and his advocacy of the abolition of capital punishment. He also led a varied career as a lawyer, public official, diplomat, and statesman. Though often beset with adversity and personal suffering, he was public spirited and devoted to improving the human condition.

Case #2 (flat case)

Early Life / College of New Jersey, Class of 1781

Edward Livingston was born at Clermont, Columbia County, New York on May 26th, 1764, the youngest of ten surviving children of Robert R. Livingston and Margaret Beekman. The Livingstons were a close-knit and loving family.

Too young to serve in the Revolution, Edward, at age 13, watched from a distance as the British burned Clermont. Two years later, in 1779, he entered the College of New Jersey (Princeton) as a junior, graduating in 1781 with four other students. He became a member of the American Whig Society, and at commencement delivered an oration on "the love of glory."

Diploma, granted to Edward Livingston, College of New Jersey, October 6, 1781

Signed by President Jonathan Witherspoon and trustees William Peartree Smith, William Shippen, George Duffield, Nathaniel Scudder, Elihu Spencer, Azel Roe, Joseph Reed, and John Bayard.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 1)

J. Fisher, "A North West Prospect of Nassau Hall with a Front View of the President's House in New Jersey," 1807

A nostalgic view of the College of New Jersey after a 1764 engraving by Henry Dawkins.

Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University Library
(Hung on wall)

Engraving of Edward Livingston by J. Rogers, 19th century

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from the American Whig Society to Edward Livingston,
February 21, 1828

A request to lecture at pre-commencement activities.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 33)

Benson Lossing, The Hudson, [1866]

Illustration of Edward Livingston's birthplace, Clermont.
On the far right, coincidentally, is his last residence,
Montgomery Place.

Sinclair Hamilton Collection, Graphic Arts Department,
Princeton University Library

Case #3 (upright case)

New York Lawyer and Politician

After graduation from Princeton, Livingston devoted a year to learning French and German under private tutors, then studied law at the office of John Lansing in Albany. He was admitted to the bar in 1786, and began practicing as a solicitor and council in the Court of Chancery.

Edward moved quickly into politics, establishing himself as a leader among the anti-federalists. An outspoken advocate of the French Revolution, he gained popular support among the mechanics of the uptown wards, and was elected to New York City's congressional seat in 1794.

In Congress, Livingston questioned the constitutionality of John Jay's treaty with Great Britain, and vigorously opposed the Alien and Sedition bills of the Adams administration...

Letter from William Hobrow to Edward Livingston, January 30, 1797

In flowery prose, this passionate New Jersey clergyman commends Livingston for his opposition to Jay's treaty. The Reverend calls Jay an "Apostate Camelion" and refers to the sovereigns of Britain as "Mad Nebucadenezer Rinka George Bull & Jezebel Charlotte."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 21 Folder 48)

Letter from Josiah Throop to Edward Livingston, September 20, 1798

A positive reaction in verse from an upstate supporter.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 40 Folder 5)

Edward Livingston's speech notes on the Alien and Sedition Bills, 1798

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 57 Folder 5)

Report of a speech by Edward Livingston on the Alien Bill, June 21, 1798, in Annals of the Congress of the United States (Washington, 1851)

General Collection, Princeton University Library

Certificate of Membership in Holland Lodge, New York City, 1795

An active Mason throughout his life, Livingston was installed, in 1830, as "General Grand High Priest of the General Royal Arch Chapter of the United States," the highest ranking position in the nation.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 6)
(Framed on wall)

Case #4 (upright case)

Mayor of New York City

Edward Livingston's support for Thomas Jefferson in the election of 1800 paid off in two political appointments. The new president awarded him the position of United States Attorney for New York District, and the Republican-dominated Council of Appointment selected him as Mayor of New York City.

He attacked his Mayoral duties with zeal, pursuing reforms in the legal system and promoting measures for prevention of crime and aid to the poor. During the yellow fever epidemic, he frequently accompanied physicians on their rounds.

Engraving of Edward Livingston, Mayor of New York, by Pierre Charles Coqueret, after a painting by John Vanderlyn, ca. 1810

In his younger days, Edward Livingston's flamboyance of dress earned him the nickname "Beau Ned." Traces of those old habits can certainly be seen in this romantic portrait!

On loan, courtesy of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Clermont State Historic Site.

Draft of a speech to the Mechanics Society by Edward Livingston, [New York], December 17, 1802

In this speech, the Mayor addresses the problems of the poor and the ex-criminal. He advocates industrial training workshops for the destitute, and urges employment and social reform as solutions to crime and poverty.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 29 Folder 45)

Two views of City Hall

Edward Livingston laid the cornerstone for City Hall on May 26, 1803. The building, completed in 1812, was a favorite subject of 19th century artists. In his book of illustrations, William Loring Andrews said that a collection of New York images without City Hall was akin to "the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out."

1. Francis Hopkinson Smith, Charcoals of Old New York (Garden City, New York, 1912)
2. William Loring Andrews, The Journey of the Iconophiles around New York in Search of the Historical and Picturesque (New York, 1897)

Rare Book Collections, Princeton University Library

Hints towards Promoting the Health and Cleanliness in the City of New York (New York, 1802)

This pamphlet, dedicated to the Mayor and other city officials, suggested improvements to the sewer system and recommended stricter health rules for boarding houses, burials, and the cleaning of streets.

Rare Book Collections, Princeton University Library

Case #5 (upright case)

**United States District Attorney:
The 1803 Customs House Funds Scandal**

The duties of a district attorney included: representing the Federal government in all cases arising in the New York District; trial of admiralty cases; and responsibility for the collection of revenue, much of which came from the payment of customs house bonds.

Unfortunately, this last responsibility was delegated to an untrustworthy subordinate whose work Livingston failed to supervise closely. When a routine audit in June of 1803 uncovered a shortage of \$44,000 (embezzled by the aforementioned clerk), Livingston bore the blame for the incident and resigned both of his offices in disgrace. The U.S. government fined him \$100,000 for the mishap.

Livingston's wife Mary had died in 1801, as did a son, Charles, in 1802. And so, leaving his two surviving children with his brother John, he sailed for New Orleans where he hoped to regain his fortune.

Financially and politically, the customs house scandal plagued Livingston for the rest of his life (and on into death), as the items in this case show.

**Transcript of an adjusted account between Edward Livingston
and the United States Treasury Department, October 17, 1831**

Although the debt was actually paid off in 1826, the account was not formally closed until 1829.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 81 Folder 21)

Letter from John Armstrong to Louise Livingston, ca. 1840

Edward Livingston never disclosed the name of the real culprit to the general public. This letter, undated, but probably written after Livingston's death, reveals the guilty party.

"The name of the person most suspected for an abuse of trust to Mr. Livingston in 1803, was a clerk of the name of Grenier -- who though poor when assuming his offices, became suddenly rich."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 95 Folder 2)

Newspaper clipping, ca. 1840

A fellow Louisianian defends Livingston's reputation against Clay's charges.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 81 Folder 21A)

Draft of "To the Public," by [John R. Livingston], September 1840

In 1840, Henry Clay attacked the late Mr. Livingston's conduct and method of paying off his debt. Incensed, John R. Livingston, Edward's only surviving brother, penned a rebuttal. . .

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 81 Folder 21A)

Boqueto de Woiseri, "Under My Wings Everything Prospers," 1803, in Alistair Cooke, Alistair Cooke's America (New York, 1977)

A fanciful and patriotic view of New Orleans. Newspapers of the day reported that the area was ripe with financial opportunities, a considerable draw for a man in need of money.

General Collection, Princeton University Library

Case #6 (upright case)

**Melodrama in New Orleans:
The Burr Conspiracy and General Wilkinson Matter**

With his refined manner and language skills, Livingston quickly found a place in New Orleans society. His legal practice flourished and he became involved in civic and political affairs. In 1805 he married again, this time to Louise D'Avezac, the young widow of a Jamaica planter. In 1806, their daughter Coralie was born.

That same year the bonus of the "Burr Conspiracy" (in which the former vice-president and Princeton alumnus clandestinely attempted to establish an empire in the western U.S.) threatened to blacken Livingston's name once again.

General James Wilkinson, then governor of Louisiana Territory, was an accomplice of Burr's. He abandoned Burr at the 11th hour, exposed the scheme, and then -- to hide his own guilt -- declared martial law in New Orleans (which he claimed Burr's forces were about to attack). He next arrested several citizens, including Dr. Errick Bollmann, on trumped up charges of treason. Livingston was enlisted by Bollmann's lawyer to defend him, and the General sought revenge by accusing Livingston himself of being party to the intrigue. These charges he based on an old unrelated financial transaction between Burr and Livingston. Livingston was subsequently able to clear his name in court, and became a hero for standing up to General Wilkinson.

Letter from Aaron Burr to Edward Livingston, July 26, 1806

This letter and the attached legal judgement against Livingston by David Dunham and Matthew L. Davis almost caused Livingston a public disaster. Livingston owed money to Dunham and Davis, who owed money to Burr. Burr, in turn, was indebted to Bollmann, to whom he requested Livingston to pay the money directly.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 82 Folder 4)

National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser, September 7, 1807

Coverage of the proceedings of September 1, in which Burr was judged "not guilty."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 93 Folder 1)

Letter from Daniel Clark to Edward Livingston, March 31, 1809

In this 44-page confession, Daniel Clark recounts former confederate Wilkinson's role in the Burr conspiracy.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 87 Folder 28)

Daniel Clark, Proofs of the Corruption of General Wilkinson (Philadelphia, 1809)

A short time after Clark's letter of disclosure was sent to Livingston, this expose appeared under his name. It was used as the principal, if untrustworthy, source of evidence in a congressional investigation of Wilkinson. The verdict? Not guilty!

Rare Book Collections, Princeton University Library

Engraving of Aaron and Theodosia Burr by H. Wright Smith, 19th century

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from James Alexander to Edward Livingston, February 20, 1807

Livingston was drawn into the Burr whirlpool when James Alexander, a young attorney, sought his assistance in obtaining a writ of habeus corpus for Errick Bollman, one of the accused "conspirators" arrested by Wilkinson.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 1 Folder 9)

Case #7 (upright case)

Livingston vs. Jefferson: The Batture Controversy

It wasn't long before Livingston found himself at the center of another squabble. This one concerned his acquisition and subsequent commercial exploitation of the New Orleans Batture, a piece of property formed by alluvial deposits that had been customarily used by the public.

President Jefferson intervened by confiscating the tract as federal property. Litigation over the title went on for decades. Livingston eventually won his case and used proceeds from the sale of lots to pay off his lingering debt to the government.

Copy of a map of New Orleans and environs, originally drawn by Charles Trudeau, ca. 1796-98. New Orleans, 1831

The Batture is on the lower left, below the Fabourg Sainte Marie.

Edward Livingston Papers (Dulles Vault Drawer B)

Edward Livingston, draft of An Answer to Mr. Jefferson's Conduct in the Case of the New Orleans Batture, 1813

The controversy ignited an all-out pamphlet war. In this weighty work, Livingston accused Jefferson of acting illegally. Incidentally, there were several other owners of Batture lots besides Livingston, but only Livingston's portion was seized.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 62 folder 5)

Broadside. "To the Public," November 16, 1810

The local citizenry violently protested Livingston's claim, and on more than one occasion drove laborers off his property. In a formal statement, Livingston consented to the public's traditional wharfage rights, but warned against trespassers.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 62 Folder 4)

Case #8 (flat case)

A Close-Knit Family

"The domestic virtues, the sweetness of temper, the charm of untroubled cheerfulness combined with high ability and culture, endeared Edward Livingston to his family and friends. . ."

--George Bancroft

Livingston married twice in his lifetime. First, in 1788, to Mary McEvers, by whom he had three children: Charles, Julia, and Lewis. She died of scarlet fever in 1801. Four years later, he married Louise D'Avezac, a beautiful young widow who recently emigrated to New Orleans. They had one daughter, Coralie, the only one of Livingston's children to survive him.

Letter from Mary McEvers Livingston to Edward Livingston, July 21, 1800

Edward's first wife, Mary, writes a loving note full of family news to her husband. Prior to closing off, she requests him to recover his recently shorn hair from "Mr. Shake Locke," the barber, before the tresses are transformed into something else.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 54 Folder 3)

Letter from Julia Livingston to Lewis Livingston, March 1, ca. 1810-12

Julia Livingston chided older brother Lewis for teasing her about finding a husband. "I am determined you shall endure the mortification of an old maid sister," she warned. Ironically, Julia died of consumption before her 20th year.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 102 Folder 3)

School Notebook of Lewis Livingston, 1816.

Lewis Livingston was a studious and promising young man whose frail constitution succumbed to an early death at age 23. His father supervised his education very closely, recommending the careful study of a wide variety of subjects, including modern and ancient languages, mathematics, science, history, and geography.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 102 Folder 6)

Letter from Louise Livingston to Edward Livingston, April 21, 1829.

To Mrs. Livingston, reason evokes the sweetest sentiment.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 53 Folder 14)

Images of Coralie Livingston Barton and Louise Livingston, in Jaquetta M. Haley, Pleasure Grounds (Tarrytown, New York, 1988)

Gift of Historic Hudson Valley

All of Edward Livingston's children possessed a degree of artistic talent; they frequently sent him their latest creations through the mail.

1. [Coralie Livingston Barton], drawing of Edward Livingston, ca. 1825
2. [Julia Livingston], "The Universal Power of Love," ca. 1807-13
3. [Coralie Livingston Barton?], self portrait?, ca. 1825

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 100 Folder 9; Box 102 Folder 3; Box 100 Folder 9)
(Framed on wall)

Case #9 (Upright case)

Louisiana Representative and Senator

In 1820, after several initial defeats, Livingston secured an elective office -- as representative to the State Legislature of Louisiana from Plaquemines Parish. He soon moved on to national politics, winning a seat in Congress for three terms beginning in 1822, and securing a place in the Senate in 1829.

He threw his energies into judicial and social reforms. While in the Legislature, he was selected to revise several of the State's commercial, civil, and penal codes; in Congress, he was active on the floor of the House, supporting internal improvements and opposing the tariff bills of 1824, 1827 and 1828. He proposed a constitutional amendment for the direct election of the President by the people. In the Senate, he continued his support for internal improvements, opposed John C. Calhoun and the "Nullifiers," and tried unsuccessfully to urge the adoption of his system of penal codes at the national level.

Election results from 1820

These election results for Edward Livingston's bid for Congress in 1820 are misleading, since they are returns from only one precinct where Livingston was popular. Josiah S. Johnston, his opponent, actually won the race. Several months later, Livingston vied for a seat in the Louisiana Legislature and won.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 22 Folder 32)

Galley copy and draft of "An Act to Preserve the Trial by Jury"

Livingston's efforts to establish the practice of trial by jury in the Louisiana Supreme Court were unsuccessful, as was his attempt to pass an act for settling divorces in the district courts (rather than in the legislature).

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 75 Folder 5 and 6)

Letter from H. S. Thibodaux to Edward Livingston, March 16, 1824

"All in a congressman's day." This chatty letter mentions a number of current topics under debate on the house floor: the tariff, the encouragement of home manufactures, internal improvements, a bill for creating another bank, Livingston's work on the civil code, and of course -- thoughts on the outcome of the next election.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 39 Folder 62)

Letter of Nicholas Biddle to Edward Livingston, February 27, 1831

In this letter, Nicholas Biddle, president of the Bank of the United States, expresses concern over the presence of counterfeiters on the Canadian border.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 3 Folder 31)

Calling Card, early to mid-19th century

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 90 Folder 2)

Case #10 (upright case)

Secretary of State

On May 24th, 1831, Edward Livingston was sworn in as Secretary of State. The tariff; the Maine boundary dispute; trade relations with Russia; and spoilation negotiations with France, Portugal, Spain, and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were among the issues he would have to address.

At first, Livingston was reluctant to take the position. He remarked to Governor Roman of Louisiana that he thought the job "one of greater labor, more responsibility, and greater exposure to obloquy and misrepresentation" than his role as winter senator/summer gardener at Montgomery Place.

Letter of George M. Dallas to Edward Livingston, November 21, 1831

Senator Dallas (Princeton, Class of 1810) expresses a few passionate thoughts on current affairs in Europe.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 11 Folder 3)

Letter of Martin Van Buren to Edward Livingston, April 23, 1831

Secretary of State Van Buren, acting as spokesman for President Jackson, offers Livingston the prized post in the "kitchen cabinet," as Jackson's top advisors were called.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 41 Folder 3)

Draft of a circular from Edward Livingston to Diplomatic Agents, March 28, 1833

A letter of introduction for a Princeton professor who is visiting Europe.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 66 Folder 25)

Certificate of appointment to Secretary of State, January 12, 1832

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89A Tin Tube)

Case #11 (upright case)

Minister to France

President Jackson offered Livingston the position of Minister to France in 1833. He possessed all of the right qualities for the job -- a knowledge of French law, language, and culture -- and his work on penal law was already well-known and admired in France and the rest of Europe.

The principal purpose of his mission was to persuade the French government to make a settlement of decades-old spoiliations claims, as promised in the Franco-American Convention of 1831.

Due to evasive tactics on the part of the French government and a lack of instructions from Congress, Livingston was unable to bring negotiations to a successful conclusion. Dejectedly, he returned home. When he disembarked at New York, appreciative citizens thronged the streets, clamored for speeches, and honored him with a grand dinner.

". . . the names of few men are recorded in our history whose lives have been of more real service to the republic than Mr. Livingston. Identified from his youth upward with the party which professes the political principles of Jefferson, the whole tenor of his public conduct has been to illustrate and advance those principles."

-- New York Evening Post, June 23, 1835

"Regular Toasts," [1835]

Letter from John R. Livingston, Jr., to Coralie Livingston Barton, [1835]

These healths were toasted at a dinner given in honor of the recently returned minister to France. John R. Livingston, Jr., who was present at the fete, sent the item along with his description of the event to cousin Cora Livingston Barton.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 99 Folder 34)

Letter of Peter Du Ponceau to Edward Livingston, December 24, 1834.

Du Ponceau, once a French immigrant who came to America as a secretary to Baron Von Steuben, commiserates with his old friend Livingston on the vicissitudes of Paris weather. He adds "By fixing my fortunes here, I escaped the Paris rains & the guillotine...Two most excellent escapes."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 14 Folder 11)

Invitation to dine at the Palace de St. Cloud, October 11, 1833.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 70 Folder 24)

Certificate of Membership in the Institute Historique, Paris, May 25, 1834.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 40)
(Framed on wall)

Address of the Citizens of New York, June 23, 1835

Fellow New Yorkers applauded Livingston's conduct with the French, and recognized him with a public statement. Over 100 prominent Knickerbockers signed the tribute, including James Fenimore Cooper, Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., and former governor Enos Thompson Throop.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 40)

Map of France, ca. 1825

Historic Map Collection, Princeton University Library

Case 12 (upright case)

Retirement to Montgomery Place

After five decades of public service, Edward Livingston retired to Montgomery Place, the beautiful Hudson River seat bequeathed to him by his older sister Janet Montgomery in 1828.

It was to be a short retirement. Livingston spent the winter of 1835-36 in New York City, returning to the country in early spring. On the eve of an expected fishing trip, he was suddenly taken ill, and died two days later on May 23, 1836.

Andrew Jackson Downing, "A Visit to Montgomery Place," in The Horticulturist, and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste, Vol. II, No. 4 (October, 1847)

Downing, America's first great landscape gardener, claimed that the grand view of the Hudson and enchanting natural landscape made Montgomery Place second to no other country seat.

Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University Library

[A.J. Davis], East Elevation of Montgomery Place, ink and watercolor, ca. 1863

When Alexander Jackson Davis designed the portico for the east entry of Montgomery Place in 1863, he based his ideas on the classical Temple of Vesta.

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)

Letter of Edward Livingston to G. M. Dallas, November 1, 1835

Discounting the possibility of returning to public office, Livingston commented: "I shall most probably remain where I am, watching the hues of the revolving year; as reasonable an occupation, & probably as profitable a one, as any that political life would afford."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 11 Folder 4)

View of the North Pavillion of Montgomery Place by Alexander Jackson Davis, in Jaquetta M. Haley, Pleasure Grounds, Andrew Jackson Downing and Montgomery Place (Tarrytown, New York, 1988)

Architect A. J. Davis (1803-1892) designed this "room in the open air" in the early 1840's for Louise Livingston.

Gift of Historic Hudson Valley
(Not used)

Three views of Montgomery Place and environs in the mid-19th century, in Alexander Jackson Davis and Jaquetta M. Haley, Sketches of Montgomery Place [portfolio], (Tarrytown, New York, 1988)

Gift of Historic Hudson Valley

Case #13 (bay case)

Livingston and Jackson: An Unlikely Duo

Based on the image we have of fiery Andrew Jackson and on the image of Edward Livingston as an aristocratic man of refinement, friendship between the two would seem odd indeed, but from their very first meeting in Congress a bond was formed; they became life-long allies.

During the War of 1812, Livingston aided Jackson by gaining the support of the Creoles in New Orleans. He served as one of his advisors and aides-de-camp during the British siege, and staunchly defended the General's declaration of martial law in the city (even though this contradicted his actions against James Wilkinson seven years earlier).

Livingston went on to support "Old Hickory" in the presidential elections of 1824 and 1828 by campaigning vigorously. Victorious in the second contest, Jackson rewarded his friend with key appointments in his administration.

Jackson frequently consulted with Livingston on foreign and domestic issues. In 1832, Livingston drafted the "Nullification Proclamation" issued by Jackson against the rebellious South Carolinians, who argued that individual states should have the power to disregard federal laws.

Letter from Andrew Jackson to Edward Livingston, October 23, 1814

Jackson discussed defense preparations with Livingston, who was the chairman of the Committee for Public Defense at New Orleans.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 23 Folder 21)

Announcement of Edward Livingston's aide-de-camp status, New Orleans, December 17, 1814

Incidentally, Edward's son Lewis, all of 16 years old, was given a commission to serve with Major Latour, principal engineer.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 15)

Petition of the Volontaire Officers of Colour of the Battalion of Santo Domingo, March 16, 1815

With good reason, these black veterans of the War of 1812 are fearful that they will be enslaved; they seek protective documentation from General Jackson.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 23 Folder 43)

Engraving of the Battle of New Orleans, after a painting by D.M. Carter, Albany, New York, 1861, in History of the United States of America, Vol. II (Albany, New York, 1896)

General Collection, Princeton University Library

Letter of Andrew Jackson to Edward Livingston, December 4, 1832

Although Livingston was at liberty to word the Proclamation as he saw fit, the President offered his suggestions.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 23 Folder 38)

Letter of Timothy Pickering to Edward Livingston

Despairing over the choice of candidates (Adams and Jackson) in the upcoming election, Pickering questioned Livingston about Jackson's character. Livingston quickly assured him that his friend was a man of "firmness, courage, and moderation."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 32 Folder 68)

"Nullification Proclamation," printed on silk

Partisans on both sides of the Nullification question were surprized by the sharp tone of the Proclamation, which contained sentiments far stronger than those expressed by the President a short time before.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 68 Folder 26)
(Framed on wall)

"Speech of the Hon. Edwd. Livingston," printed in Pennsylvania Reporter. Extra, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, September 27, 1828

In this speech to the Friends of Andrew Jackson, Livingston said that he favored direct election of the president by the people. Voting by the electoral college, he claimed, was an "original sin against the principles of the Constitution."

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 89 Folder 45)
(Framed on wall)

François de Valleé, Miniature of Andrew Jackson, ca. 1815

The earliest known portrait of Andrew Jackson. Dedicated to Edward Livingston by Jackson as "a token of my private friendship and esteem."

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)

[Anson Dickinson], Miniature of Edward Livingston, watercolor on paper, ca. 1827

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)

In accepting Livingston's resignation as Minister to France in May, 1833, Jackson wrote:

"It gives me pleasure to add on this occasion that, throughout our long acquaintance, in military as well as civil life, I have found your eminent talents employed in advancing the good of your country; and that whenever we have co-operated in the public service you have left the evidence of exalted patriotism and unshaken integrity."

Case #14 (bay case)

**Edward Livingston the Codifier:
A Man Ahead of his Time**

Edward Livingston's career-long concern was the prevention of crime. His greatest work -- and the basis for his enduring reputation as a legal philosopher and social reformer -- was his *System of Penal Law*, commissioned by the State of Louisiana in 1821 and completed in 1825.

The system was comprised of four sets of codes and a book of definitions. The codes consisted of:

1. Crimes and punishments
2. Procedures
3. Evidence
4. Reform and prison discipline

This last code was truly innovative for its day. It substituted imprisonment and rehabilitation for the death penalty and proposed an infrastructure of support institutions such as reform schools and workshops that would transform the criminal into a productive member of society.

Livingston's codes were rejected by both the State of Louisiana (in 1825) and the U.S. Senate (in 1828). While too advanced for American legislators, the system was hailed on both sides of the Atlantic as a progressive masterpiece.

"Livingston's object was to ameliorate punishment and not to avenge society; to reform the criminal and to prevent crime; and to clarify existing laws and write them in a language comprehensible to all people."

-- William B. Hatcher, Edward Livingston: Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democrat

Edward Livingston, draft and galley proofs of the "Introductory Report to the Code of Procedure," ca. 1825

In the passages on display, Livingston takes into consideration the apprehensions of certain religious sects to swear on the Bible in court, and suggests an alternative.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 75 Folder 5 and 6)

Draft of a letter from Edward Livingston to Mordecai Manuel Noah, ca. 1825

Livingston posed his question about Jewish procedures for taking oaths in court to M. M. Noah, a noted journalist and playwright. In 1825, Noah attempted to establish a colony for oppressed Jews of all nations at Grand Island on the Niagara River.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 73 Folder 32)

Letter of François de Barbé-Marbois to Edward Livingston, May 23, 1830

The Codes were praised by the politician Marbois and other French liberals. The Marquis assured Livingston that should he visit France, he would have many friends and supporters.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 73 Folder 15)

Seth Lewis, Strictures on Dr. Livingston's System of Penal Laws, Prepared for the State of Louisiana (New Orleans, 1825)

Livingston's Codes placed many new limitations on the powers of judges. It comes as no surprise that those in the forefront of opposition to his plan, such as Mr. Lewis, were men of that office.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 78 Folder 3)

[Henry Dilworth Gilpin], draft of a review of "A System of Penal Law," ca. 1833

Gilpin, an ardent Jacksonian and close friend of Livingston, penned this favorable critique of the Penal Code.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 78 Folder 12)

Tables of Crimes in New York and Massachusetts, 1784-1826

Livingston collected statistics on crime and punishment in several states. These are two examples from a group of several dozen in the collection.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 74 Folder 47)
(Not used)

Case #15 (Audubon case)

The World of Edward Livingston

Livingston's career brought him national and world-wide prominence. A list of correspondents in the Edward Livingston Papers reads like a "Who's Who" of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This selection is only a sampling.

GIOVANNI ALDINI (1762-1834), Italian physicist

Prof. Aldini conducted many experiments in firefighting, and sent Edward Livingston these fascinating accounts and illustrations of his work.

1. Art de se Préserver de L'Action de la Flamme (Paris, 1830)
2. Instruction Populaire sur les Appareils Preservateurs du Feu (manuscript copy, ca. 1832)

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 1 Folder 8)

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1789-1851), American novelist

While travelling abroad (serving nominally as United States consul at Lyons), Cooper regales Livingston with some of his early "gleanings in Europe." His wanderings supplied fodder for some of his later works.

1. Letter to Edward Livingston, July 17, 1831

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 8 Folder 37)

2. Gleanings in Europe by an American, Vol. II (Philadelphia, 1837)

Rare Book Collections, Princeton University Library

ROBERT FULTON (1765-1815), American artist, civil engineer,
and inventor

Edward Livingston, like his brother Robert, had an interest in
the development of steam navigation. In 1808, Fulton married
into the Livingston family, wedding Walter Livingston's daughter
Harriet.

1. Letter to Edward Livingston, June 15, 1812

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 17 Folder 36)

2. Sketches, 1793 & ca. 1793

Delafield Family Papers

VICTOR HUGO (1802-1885), French writer

It is no wonder that Livingston, who opposed capital punishment,
was interested in Hugo's "Le Dernier Jour d'un Condamné," which
verbalized the anguished thoughts of a condemned prisoner."
Hugo, in turn, was an admirer of Livingston's writings on penal
reform.

1. Letter from Edward Livingston to Victor Hugo, September 20,
1829

2. Letter from Victor Hugo to Edward Livingston, March 27,
1834

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 72 Folder 64)

LEMUEL SAWYER (1777-1852), American lawyer, author, and congressman

Lemuel Sawyer may not be a household name, but this letter about the exploits of his new ram is too amusing to leave out of the exhibition. Sawyer, a prolific author on a variety of subjects, wrote the first (known) play set in North Carolina. Entitled "Blackbeard," it was a comedy about treasure hunting and political skullduggery in Currituck County.

1. Letter to Edward Livingston, July 21, 1811

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 36 Folder 56)

2. Lemuel Sawyer's Blackbeard (facsimile of the 1824 edition)
(Raleigh, North Carolina, 1952)

General Collection, Princeton University Library
(Not used)

MARIE JOSEPH LAFAYETTE (1757-1834), French statesman and soldier

The friendship between Livingston and Lafayette began when the latter was a frequent visitor to the Livingston home during the Revolution, and continued for a lifetime. The letter on display was written about a year before Lafayette's epochal tour of the United States, which included a visit to Montgomery Place.

1. Letter to Edward Livingston, October 26, 1823

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 25 Folder 45)

2. Engraving of Lafayette by J. De Mare after a drawing by A. Chappel, 19th century

Delafield Family Papers

EDWARD EVERETT (1794-1865), American statesman, educator, orator, and Unitarian clergyman

Fellow statesman Everett recommends another famous citizen, John James Audubon, artist and ornithologist.

1. Letter to Edward Livingston, September 9, 1831

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 16 Folder 18)

Wall banner and label:

Janet Livingston Montgomery: 1743-1828

Edward Livingston's sister Janet spent much of her youth with her maternal grandparents, the Beekmans. In 1773 she married Richard Montgomery, a former British officer. Their domestic tranquility was tragically ended in June of 1775, when Montgomery accepted a commission as a brigadier general in the American forces. Shortly after, he led an expedition to Canada and was killed at the siege of Quebec on December 31. Janet never remarried.

Case #16 (flat case)

She Carried the Torch for her "Darling Soldier"

The widow Montgomery remained forever true to the memory of her departed husband, recalling him frequently in her letters and memoirs. In 1818, with the help of nephew Lewis Livingston, she negotiated with the Canadian government for the return of Montgomery's remains. They were brought down the Hudson by boat accompanied by much pomp and ceremony in July of that year, and placed in St. Paul's Church, New York City. Legend has it that Janet, alone on the portico of Montgomery Place, fell into a swoon as the vessel bearing her husband's remains passed by.

Letter from Janet Montgomery to Coralie Livingston Barton, [1818]

Janet describes her feelings upon viewing the return of Richard Montgomery's remains to New York -- "however gratifying to my heart...every pangue I once felt was again renewed..." -- and continues with a verse that can also be found on her mourning locket. . .

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 107 Folder 7)

Mourning locket belonging to Janet Montgomery, gold, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and paper, American, late 18th or early 19th century

The following poem appears on the other side of this locket. Perhaps it was composed by Janet Montgomery, who included the same words in a letter to her niece Coralie, prefacing it with: "I could join in the sentiment address'd to him on Hudson's banks--"

Sweet ivy,
twin'd with myrtle
form a shade, around
the tomb where brave
MONTGOMERY'S laid!
Beneath your boughs,
shut from the beams of day,
My ceaseless tears
shall bathe the warrior's clay,
And injur'd "Freedom
shall a while repair,
to dwell with me,
weeping hermit
there."

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)

Pocket watch, case, chain, key, and seal belonging to Richard Montgomery, English, mid-18th century

According to the information on page 31 of Biographical Notes Concerning General Richard Montgomery, the watch and seal were found on Montgomery at Quebec and sent to his widow by order of General Carleton.

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)

Letter from Richard Montgomery to Janet Montgomery, Holland House, near Quebec, December 5, [1775]

This is the last known letter written by General Montgomery to his wife Janet. On December 31st, he was killed in the attempt to storm Quebec. In his letters home during the march, he spoke of disorderly troops, loss of ambition, and a desire to be back home -- yet he remained steadfast in his sense of duty, and often let his sense of humor shine through even the gloomiest of reports.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 106 Folder 21)

Letter from Mercy Otis Warren to Janet Montgomery, January 23, 1776

Patriot, dramatist, and historian Mercy Otis Warren (1728-1814), extended her sympathies to Mrs. Montgomery, at the time a stranger. It was to be the beginning of a life-long friendship.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 107 Folder 41)

Marriage Licence of Richard Montgomery and Jennet [Janet] Livingston, New York, August 4, 1773

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 114 Folder 9)
(Framed on wall)

Engraving of "The Death of General Montgomery" by J. Rogers after a painting by John Trumbull, 19th century

Delafield Family Papers

Newspaper clipping describing the procession that bore Montgomery's remains through New York City, in the New York Spectator, July 10, 1818

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 113 Folder 11)
(Framed on wall)

Account Book/Copybook kept by Janet Montgomery, 1773-87

This is truly an all-purpose book, typical of many other 18th century ledgers. In it, Janet recorded parts of a diary, financial accounts, letters of her father and husband, and memorial poetry dedicated to her fallen hero.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 111)

Richard Montgomery's coat of arms, 19th century?

"I do not know who painted the arms I send you -- It may have come from Ireland & been sent to Mrs. Montgomery by Genl Montgomery's sister Lady Ranelagh -- but this is only a surmise."

--note of Julia Barton Hunt to John Ross Delafield,
November 19, 1913

Delafield Family Papers

Biographical Notes Concerning General Richard Montgomery,
Together with Hitherto Unpublished Letters, 1876

This little booklet, probably edited by the Delafields and/or the Hunts at Montgomery Place, contains transcripts of several important manuscripts relating to the Montgomerys. This is fortunate, because some of the items are now too fragile to read or handle.

Delafield Family Papers
(Not used)

Letter from De Witt Clinton, to Janet Montgomery, March 4, 1818, enclosing "An Act of Honor to the Memory of General Richard Montgomery,"

This act, passed by the State of New York, set in motion the plans to recover Montgomery's remains.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 101 Folder 14)

Case #17 (flat case)

A Woman of Means and Power in the Hudson Valley

Janet inherited vast tracts of land in Dutchess County and the Hardenburgh Patent (Delaware County). She also purchased part of the estate confiscated from Loyalist James Delancey in New York City.

View of the Lower Falls near the residence of Mrs. Montgomery, in Jacques Gerard Milbert (1766-1840), Itinéraire Pittoresque du fleuve Hudson (Paris, 1828-29)

Graphic Arts Collection, Princeton University Library

Letter from Horatio Gates to Janet Montgomery, June 23, 1784

General Gates, who assumed command of the slain Montgomery's troops after the broken invasion of Canada, made an ardent proposal of marriage to widow Montgomery in 1784. She politely refused; they remained friends.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 104 Folder 4)

John Cox, Jr. (1756-1825), "Map of a Tract of Land between the Delaware River and the Pacatacans Kill," 1792

John Cox, Jr. was a self-made man who started a surveying career in the early 1770's, then worked his way up to land agent for Janet Montgomery and other members of the family. Later, he went on to become a local official in Rhinebeck, and a member of the New York Assembly.

Edward Livingston Papers (Dulles Vault Drawer A)
(Framed on wall)

John Cox, Jr., "A Map of Janet Montgomery's Farm in the Town of Red Hook, surveyed October 8th & 9th, 1802"

This illustration is one of the first pages in a field book (ca. 1818-22) of Janet Montgomery's Delaware County property. (The Red Hook farm is in Dutchess County.) If the drawing actually dates from 1802, the house in the picture is that of the former owners, John and Catherine Van Benthuisen.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 153 Folder 11)

Copy of a sketch of Janet Montgomery, photoreproduction,
mid-20th century

The original of this item was drawn by Janet's niece Coralie
Livingston Barton.

On loan, courtesy of Historic Hudson Valley (Montgomery Place)
(On Wall)

Receipts and other financial records, 1804-1823

Edward Livingston Papers (Boxes 108-110 filed by year)

Case #18 (upright case)

Robert R. Livingston: 1746-1813

Because he was influential in some of the more dramatic events
in American history, (i.e. the drafting of the Declaration of
Independence, ratifying the Constitution, orchestrating the
Louisiana purchase) the career of Robert R. Livingston often
overshadows that of his younger brother Edward.

Robert R. Livingston also played a major role in the advancement
of steam navigation. He provided inventors such as Robert Fulton
and John Stevens with technical and financial assistance for the
construction of steam engines. In 1807, Fulton's steamboat
CLERMONT (named after Livingston's Hudson River residence) made
its first successful voyage from New York City to Albany.

Engraving of Robert R. Livingston by H. B. Hall, probably after a painting by John Vanderlyn, 19th century

This unusual engraving of "the Chancellor," a title used to identify him among other Robert Livingstons, includes an image of George Washington. Livingston issued the oath of office to the first president in April of 1789.

Delafield Family Papers

Broadside, "Petition and Act of Robert R. Livingston and Robert Fulton," ca. 1810

Livingston was successful at securing several monopolies for his steamboat enterprizes. Here, he and Fulton attempt and succeed at procuring one on the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 17 Folder 36)

Joseph Livingston Delafield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, and his Family, (1911)

John Ross Delafield was not the only one of his siblings to engage in genealogical research. Here, his brother Joseph traces the line of his great-great-grandfather, with a biographical introduction.

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from Robert R. Livingston to Thomas Tillotson, December 14, 1780

A witty letter in verse to brother-in-law Thomas Tillotson, husband of his sister Margaret.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 132 Folder 18)

"Cato," [Robert R. Livingston], Examination of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, Between the United States and Great Britain (1795)

Livingston, like his brother Edward, was one of the leading opponents of John Jay's treaty with Great Britain. He published this attack pseudonymously.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 132 Folder 20)

Case #19 (upright case)

Margaret Beekman Livingston: 1724-1800

Edward Livingston's mother, Margaret Beekman Livingston, was the only child of Col. Henry Beekman and the granddaughter of the founder of yet another branch of the Livingston family: Robert "The Nephew" Livingston. Upon the deaths of her husband in 1775 and father in 1776, she became one of the largest landholders in the Hudson Valley.

Illustration of a portrait of Margaret Beekman Livingston, attributed to Gilbert Stuart, ca. 1794, in Ruth Piwonka, A Portrait of Livingston Manor, 1686-1850 (Germantown, New York, 1986)

In 1755, during an absence from home, husband Robert penned the following words to his wife Margaret:

"You are the cordial drop with which Heaven has graciously thought fit to sweeten my cup. This makes me taste happiness in the midst of disappointments. . .

-- C. H. Hunt, Life of Edward Livingston

Princeton University Library

"An Inventory of the Personal Property of Mrs. Margaret Livingston deceased," ca. 1801

After the death of her husband in 1775, Mrs. Livingston assumed the management of Clermont. Upon her death in 1800, she left a sizeable estate.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 121 Folder 17)

Daybook, 1772-1809

A daybook is a chronological listing of finances. This one primarily contains records kept by Margaret Livingston. The hand of her husband Robert, during the early years, is also evident.

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 125)

Insurance Policy issued to Margaret Livingston by the Mutual Assurance Company, New York City, September 2, 1797

Edward Livingston Papers (Box 121 Folder 11)
(Framed on wall)

Case #20 (flat case)

**Joseph Delafield: 1790-1875:
Man of Accomplishment**

Joseph Delafield, the grandfather of John Ross Delafield, was a Yale graduate whose wandering spirit led him from the law office to Canadian wilderness.

Delafield served as an officer in the War of 1812. Realizing how much he enjoyed an outdoor life, he welcomed the offer to serve on the commission that would be settling the Northwest Boundary from St. Regis on the St. Lawrence to Lake of the Woods. His summers were spent surveying; in his spare moments he indulged his passion for collecting minerals.

Avidly interested in science, he presided over the Lyceum of Natural History (later the New York Academy of Sciences) from 1827 to 1866. He was also a vestryman of Trinity Church and a trustee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Map of Lake of the Woods, ca. 1823

One of the surveys from the Canadian expedition. Among Major Delafield's party was George Washington Whistler, whose son would later become the famous American artist James Abbott McNeill Whistler.

Delafield Family Papers

Joseph Delafield, The Unfortified Boundary (New York, 1943)

From 1817 to 1823 Major Delafield kept a detailed record of his daily activities on the United States/Canada border. His jottings included weather and surveying details, scientific observations (especially concerning rock and mineral formations), and reports of encounters with the Indians. Professor Robert McElroy (Princeton, Class of 1896) edited the diaries and added a historical introduction.

General Collections, Princeton University Library

Broadside, "Exhibition of the Great Mastodon!!!," New York, ca. 1845

Joseph Delafield gave his stamp of approval to the authenticity of the "4000 year-old" specimen.

Delafield Family Papers
(On Wall)

Letter from Benjamin Silliman to Joseph Delafield, December 30, 1821

Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864), one of the most prominent scientists and educators of his day and the founder of the American Journal of Science and Arts, thanks Major Delafield for a gift of mineral specimens.

Delafield Family Papers

Resolution by the members of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York to Joseph Delafield, March 6, 1865

After a 37-year tenure as President of the organization, the membership formally expresses its appreciation.

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from John Quincy Adams to Joseph Delafield, May 19, 1820

Delafield Family Papers

Case #21 (bay case)

John Ross Delafield and the Class of 1896

The Livingston and Delafield families had (and continue to have) close ties to Princeton University, therefore it was no surprise to find bits of "Princetoniana," as well as numerous letters from distinguished alumni in the collections. This portion of the exhibition is devoted to John Ross Delafield and his classmates, who were the first class to graduate from the school under its new official name of "Princeton" (rather than the College of New Jersey), and the first class to adopt the honor system.

Photograph of members of an unidentified club, ca. 1896

Front row (left to right): John J. Moment, Edward S. Worcester, John Charles Sherriff, Edward B. Turner, Robert McNutt McElroy, Edward W. Hamilton, John Pinney Erdman

Back row: (left to right): H. Gordon Pierce, Francis Olcott Allen, William A. Mather, Ralph Barton Perry, John Ross Delafield, Jacob N. Beam, Frank Clifford Okey, Charles W. Wisner.

--from a note in the hand of John Ross Delafield

Delafield Family Papers

Program, "Princeton Class Day '96," June, 1896

John Ross Delafield served on the Class Day committee, as did noted bibliophile John Hinsdale Scheide, one of the founders of the Scheide Library (now housed in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University).

Delafield Family Papers

Photograph of a group of students, ca. 1896

John Ross Delafield is at bottom right.

Class of 1896 Archives, Princeton University Library

Photograph of the 50th Reunion Class, June, 1946

The Class of '96 posed for this photo in the quadrangle of the Graduate College, their headquarters for the weekend. John Ross Delafield is second from left; his buddy Robert McElroy is next to him on the far left.

--from a note in the hand of John Ross Delafield

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from Robert McElroy to John Ross Delafield, January 13, 1940

McElroy, a Class of '76 Prize debater who later went on to teach history at Princeton and Oxford, was a close friend of John Ross Delafield; the two corresponded regularly from the time they graduated. In this letter, McElroy writes from Washington, D. C., where he is working on a book about Delafield's grandfather Joseph. (The book is in the exhibition case on Joseph Delafield.)

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from Francis Olcott Allen to John Ross Delafield, December 18, 1929

Allen writes fondly of Princeton reunions: "There seem to be fewer old intimates on hand, but the place is always lovely."

Delafield Family Papers

Letter from Ralph Barton Perry to John Ross Delafield, June 1, 1936

The Bartons referred to in the letter are the family of Thomas Pennant Barton, Edward Livingston's son-in-law.

Delafield Family Papers

LOBBY CASE (on display May 7-June 7, 1989)

LIVINGSTON FAMILY ARMS

1. Bookplate of Robert R. Livingston (1718-1775), on marbled paper, 18th century

The founder of the American branch of the Livingston family, Robert Livingston (1654-1728), chose a disabled ship as a symbol after surviving a shipwreck off the coast of Portugal. His motto, "spero meliora" (I hope for better things), seems a fitting creed for many of his descendants.

Delafield Family Papers

DELAFIELD FAMILY ARMS

1. Wax seal of John Delafield (1748-1824), late 18th or early 19th century

2. Bookplate of John Ross Delafield (1875-1964), 20th century

The wax seal displays the basic insignia of the Delafield family: a dove holding an olive branch atop an escutcheon displaying a cross flory. (Incidentally, John Delafield came to New York in 1783 bearing the first copy of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the U.S.). Three generations later, John Ross Delafield employed the family arms in his bookplate, and embellished it with numerous personal symbols.

Delafield Family Papers

The curator of a "Hudson Valley Family" would like to thank the following people for their assistance with this exhibition:

John Delaney
Jaime Dominguez
Derick Dreher
Stephen Ferguson
Judith Golden
Charles Greene
Mary Ann Jensen
Kathleen E. Johnson
Tricia Marks
Simon Newman
Dale Roylance
Jane Snedeker
William Stoneman
Andros Thomson
Griselda Warr
Leslie Wilkinson

I would also like to thank William L. Joyce for offering me the opportunity to mount this exhibition.

-- Stacy Flora Roth