

1966-11

FRENCH, BENJAMIN B. and  
FRENCH, HENRY F.  
PAPERS, 1826-1870

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES:

Benjamin B. French was born in Chester, Nh in 1800, son of Daniel French (1769-1840) and Mercy Brown (1778-1802) He studied law under his father and started practice Sutton, NH in 1825. After serving as a clerk of the courts in Sullivan County, assistant clerk for the NH Senate and representative for Newport in the NH House, he moved to Washington, DC in 1833. He worked from 1833-1845 in the clerks office of the U.S. House of Representatives and served as clerk of that body from 1845-47. He was President of the Magnetic Telegraph Company; Grand Master of the Knights Templar of the U.S.; and from 1835-55 and 1861-67 was Commissioner of Public buildings in Washington, DC.

He married Elizabeth Richardson in 1825 and they had two sons, Francis and Benjamin. Elizabeth died in 1861 and he married Mary Ellen Brady in 1862. He died in Washington, DC in 1870.

Henry Flagg French was born in Chester in 1813, son of Daniel French and his third wife Sarah Flagg Bell (sister of his second wife Betsy Flagg) He studied law and practiced with his father until Daniel French died in 1840. He lived in Portsmouth and Exeter while working as a solicitor for Rockingham County, 1838-1848, NH Bank Commissioner, 1848-1852, and Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, 1855-1859.

In 1860 he relocated to Cambridge, MA and set up private practice in Boston. In 1862 he was appointed Assistant District Attorney of Suffolk County where he remained until 1865 when he accepted the Presidency of the Massachusetts Agricultural College (now the University of Massachusetts, Amherst) This position lasted only a year and he returned to Boston to practice law. During this time he bought and ran a farm in Concord, MA. In 1876 he was appointed Assistant Secretary to the U.S. Treasury and moved to Washington, DC. He held that position until he died in 1885.

He married Anne Richardson, sister of his brother's first wife, in 1838. They had four children, the youngest being Daniel Chester French, sculptor of the Lincoln Memorial. Anne died in 1858 and he remarried Pamela Prentiss of Keene, NH in 1859.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

typewritten copies

This collection of letters spans the period between 1826 and 1870. At least ninety percent of the correspondence

is between the half-brothers Benjamin B. and Henry F. French, with occasional letters to other family members. Family matters are the primary topic but there is considerable political commentary, factual, gossipy and speculative in nature. A vivid picture of life in the 1800's is revealed as the brothers discuss career paths, farming, house building, physical ailments, social life, etc. Both men wrote poetry several examples of which are also included in their correspondence.

In the box and folder inventory following, letters from and to family members are highlighted. For further subject and name access see the index at the back of this register.

- Box 1, fld 1 Feb, 1826 - Mar, 1833 incl: to father and sisters
- fld 2 Aug, 1833 Mar, 1834 incl: to sister Harriet
- fld 3 Mar, 1834 - May, 1834 incl: to father & sisters
- fld 4 June 1834 - Dec, 1834 incl: to father & sisters
- fld 5 Jan, 1835 - May, 1835 incl: to father & Harriet
- fld 6 July, 1835 - Dec, 1835 incl: to father & Harriet
- fld 7 Jan, 1836 - Mar, 1836 incl: to Harriet
- fld 8 Apr, 1826 - June, 1836 incl: to father & Harriet
- fld 9 Sept, 1836 - Dec, 1836 incl: to sisters
- fld 10 Jan, 1837 - Dec, 1837 incl: to father
- fld 11 Jan, 1838 - Mar, 1838 incl: to Harriet
- fld 12 Apr - June, 1838 incl: to Harriet
- fld 13 July - Dec, 1838 incl: to sisters
- fld 14 Jan - Apr, 1839 incl: to sisters
- fld 15 May - Dec, 1839 incl: to Harriet, poem by BBF
- fld 16 Jan - Mar, 1840 incl: to Harriet
- fld 17 Apr - Sept, 1840 incl: to sisters
- fld 18 Oct - Dec, 1840
- fld 19 Jan - Feb, 1841
- fld 20 Mar - Apr, 1841
- fld 21 May - July, 1841
- fld 22 Aug - Sept, 1841
- fld 23 Oct, 1841
- fld 24 Nov - Dec, 1841
- Box 2, fld 25 Jan - Feb, 1842
- fld 26 Mar - May, 1842 incl: to sister
- fld 27 June, 1842
- fld 28 July - Aug, 1842
- fld 29 Sept - Dec, 1842
- fld 30 Jan - Mar, 1843
- fld 31 Apr - July, 1843

Box 2, fld 32	Aug - Oct, 1843
fld 33	Nov - Dec, 1843
fld 34	Jan - June, 1844
fld 35	July - Sept, 1844
fld 36	Oct - Dec, 1844
fld 37	Jan - Feb, 1845
fld 38	Mar - May, 1845
fld 39	June - Sept, 1845
fld 40	Oct - Dec, 1845
fld 41	Jan - May, 1846 incl: to sister
fld 42	June - Sept, 1846 incl: to sister
fld 43	Oct - Dec, 1846
fld 44	Jan - July, 1847 incl: poem by BBF
fld 45	Aug - Dec, 1847 incl: poem by BBF
fld 46	Jan - June, 1848
fld 47	July - Dec, 1848 incl: to sister and Edmund French
fld 48	Jan - June, 1849 incl: minutes of Rockingham Farmer's Club
fld 49	July - Dec, 1849
Box 3, fld 50	Jan - June, 1850 incl: to Edmund French
fld 51	July - Dec, 1850 incl: to Edmund F.
fld 52	Jan - Apr, 1851 incl: draft of circular Assoc. of Inventors & Patentees
fld 53	May - June, 1851
fld 54	July - Aug, 1851
fld 55	Sept - Dec, 1851 incl: to Bess
fld 56	Jan - June, 1852
fld 57	July - Dec, 1852 incl: poem by BBF
fld 58	Jan - Apr, 1853
fld 59	May - July, 1853 incl: to Anne
fld 60	Aug - Dec, 1853
fld 61	Feb - May, 1854
fld 62	June - Aug, 1854
fld 63	Sept - Nov, 1854
fld 64	Jan - Apr, 1855 incl: to Hattie & one to HFF from his wife
fld 65	May - June, 1855 incl: to Anna
fld 66	July - Sept, 1855 incl: to Mrs. H F French, from Anna
fld 67	Oct - Dec, 1855 incl: from Harriet V V.M. French, to Anne
fld 68	Jan - Feb, 1856
fld 69	Mar - May, 1856 incl: from Harriet V.M., to Anne
fld 70	June - Aug, 1856
fld 71	Sept - Dec, 1856
fld 72	Jan - May, 1857 incl: to sisters. poem by BBF
fld 73	June - Sept, 1857 incl: poem by BBF, to Bess
fld 74	Oct - Dec, 1857 incl: to Bess, minutes of Rockingham Agricultural Soc.

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Box 4, fld 75 Jan - May, 1858 incl: to Bess  
 fld 76 June - Dec, 1858 incl: poem by BBF  
 fld 77 Jan - May, 1859 incl: poem by BBF  
 fld 78 June - Aug, 1859 incl: poem by BBF  
 fld 79 Sept - Dec, 1859 incl: to sister, from  
 Pamela Prentiss F., poems by BBF  
 fld 80 Jan - May, 1860 incl: to Helen A. F.,  
 poem by BBF  
 fld 81 June - Nov, 1860 incl: poem by BBF, to  
 Simon & Ann Brown  
 fld 82 Jan - Apr, 1861  
 fld 83 May - Sept, 1861 incl: to Pamela & to  
 sister  
 fld 84 Oct - Dec, 1861 incl: to Pamela F. to  
 Helen  
 fld 85 Feb - Sept, 1862 incl: to Pamela F. to  
 Frank F.  
 fld 86 Oct - Dec, 1862 incl: to Pamela F.  
 fld 87 Jan - Oct, 1863 incl: to Pamela  
 fld 88 Jan - July, 1864 incl:  
 fld 89 Aug - Dec, 1867 incl: from Harriet V.  
 fld 90 Feb - Dec, 1865 incl: poems by BBF  
 fld 91 Jan - Dec, 1866 incl: poems by BBF  
 to Rev. of Pinkerton Academy  
 fld 92 Feb - Aug, 1867 incl: poems by BBF, to  
 Pamela  
 fld 93 Sept - Dec, 1867 incl: from William  
 M.R.F., to Pamela F.  
 fld 94 Jan - Sept, 1868 incl: to son William  
 M.R.F.  
 fld 95 Jan - Dec, 1868 incl: from Mary E. F.  
 fld 96 Jan, 1870 - Jan, 1885 incl: re death of  
 BBF, copy of "Officia Luctus"

fld 97

MISCELLANEOUS

Copies of handwritten and xeroxed  
 letters:

1821 BBF deposition re writ on  
 delinquent account of Josiah B. Libbee

1856, Aug 29 Hattie to Aunt Katy

1856, Aug 29 mss copy of letter from  
 HFF to BBF

1856, Sept 5 BBF to P.P. Wells (sister)

1861, May 8 BBF to HFF

1861, May 6 BBF to Mrs. C.J. Wells  
 (sister)

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CARDS MADE FOR CATALOG:

Anti-slavery  
Civil War  
Politics -Democratic Party, NH  
Politics - Know nothings  
Magnetic Telegraph  
Politics - Whigs

*Occ - lawyer*