

BENJAMIN GERRISH, JR. PAPERS 1859-1868

1/2 Box 60 Items

Biographical information: Benjamin Gerrish, Jr., of Dover was probably the son of Benjamin (1798-1879) and Mary Howard (1800-1863) Gerrish of Dover. His journal (see Folder 1) indicates that he may have been a storekeeper. Little is known of him except that he served as Deputy Secretary of State for New Hampshire from 1862 to 1865; as Assistant Clerk of the New Hampshire House in 1862 and 1863, and Clerk in 1864 and as Secretary of State in 1865. He was Representative from Dover to the State Legislature in 1866 and 1867, where he was a member of the standing committee on finance. He served as secretary of the Republican State Committee in the late 1860's when Edward H. Rollins was chairman.<sup>1</sup> Most of the correspondence in these papers relates to this latter post. One letter indicates that he probably went abroad in 1869. This is confirmed by a letter from Gerrish to William E. Chandler written in 1881 from the U.S. Consulate in Bordeaux. (A copy of that letter is in the inventory folder of this collection).

The papers consist entirely of political correspondence except for the journal in Folder 1 and some documents in Folder 5. Most of the letters were written to Gerrish by political figures of the time, varying in eminence, including U.S. Senators and Representatives, New Hampshire Governors, State Representatives, Senators, and other officers. A few letters in Folder 3 are drafts of form letters signed by E. H. Rollins as chairman of the Republican State Committee, but may have been written by Gerrish. The correspondence is arranged alphabetically.

Folder 1. Journal. January 1 to March 29, 1859; ascent of Mt. Belknap, July 26, 1861: miscellaneous bits of quoted poetry and prose. The journal, entitled "Scraps, Observations and Personal Adventures," reflects a lively sense of humor in its commentary on people and political affairs surrounding the elections of 1859, as well as social events and other local doings. It is the only item in the collection certainly written by Gerrish himself, save for a letter on election statistics in Folder 5. (see note, p. 3.)

Folder 2. 21 items. 1863-1868. Correspondence A - P. Letters on political matters. Correspondents include:  
Bell, Charles H. (1823-1893). Senator, 1879; Governor 1881-83; State Representative 1858-60; State Senator 1863-64; President of the New Hampshire Historical Society 1868-1887.  
Benton, Josiah H., Jr. of Lancaster. Clerk of the House, 1870 and 1872.  
Berry, Nathaniel S. Governor, 1861-63.  
Blair, Henry William (1834-1920). State Legislator 1866-68; Congressman 1875-79; Senator 1879-91.  
Chase, Leonard of Milford. State Senator 1861-63; Councilor 1864.  
Cornings, U. L. (?)  
Cragin, Aaron H. (1821-1898). Representative 1855-59; Senator 1865-77 (U.S.)

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1. Information gleaned from Gerrish's journal, legislative manuals, and Dover town records in the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Doe, Charles. Judge (see also Journal, p. 19)  
 Ela, Jacob H. (1820-1884) of Rochester. U.S. Representative 1867-71.  
 Hubbard, Nathaniel of Tamworth. State Representative 1864.  
 Kent, Henry O. of Lancaster. Clerk of the House 1857; State Representative 1868-69.  
 Lyman, John D. of Farmington. State Senator 1859-61.  
 Patterson, James Willis (1823-1893). U.S. Representative 1863-67; Senator 1867-73.  
 Peavey, George C. (1815-1876). State Senator 1869-71.  
 Pike, Austin F. (1819-1886). State Representative, Senator, Speaker, President of the Senate 1850's and 1860's; U.S. Representative 1873-75; Senator 1883-86.  
 Pillsbury, Oliver. Councilor, 1862.

Folder 3. 17 items. 1868.

Correspondence from Edward Henry Rollins (1824-1887), then Chairman, to Gerrish as Secretary of the Republican State Committee. It includes correspondence and form letters signed by Rollins who was active in business and politics in New Hampshire from 1855 when he first went to the Legislature. He was chairman of the New Hampshire delegation to the Republican National Convention of 1860, served in Congress 1861-1867 and in the U.S. Senate 1877-83.

Folder 4. 15 items. 1864-1868. Correspondence S-Z. Correspondents include:

Sawyer, Charles  
 Sawyer, Edward (Charles' brother). Banker; Clerk of the House, 1860.  
 Stearns, Onslow. Governor 1869-71.  
 Tenny, Allen (1833- ). Deputy Secretary and Secretary of State 1860-64. (See also documents in Folder 5.)  
 Wyatt, Oliver of Dover. Councilor 1862; Railroad Commissioner 1863; State Representative 1869-70.

Folder 5. 6 items. 1859-1868. Documents and letters relating to Gerrish's appointment as Justice of the Peace, Notary, Deputy Secretary and Secretary of State; letter enumerating a canvas and actual vote for governor, 1868; certificate for shares in the Langdon Bank, Dover, 1859.

Other material relating to Benjamin Gerrish Jr. may be found in the William E. Chandler Collection:

Four telegrams to Chandler from Gerrish re speakers. October 19, 20, and 21, 1868 (Box 14).

One letter to Chandler from Gerrish at the U.S. Consulate in Bordeaux, France, April 27, 1881 (See copy in this folder). (Box 19).

Cards have been made for the following names:

Bell, Charles H.  
Benton, Josiah H., Jr.  
Berry, Nathaniel S.  
Blair, William Henry  
Chase, Leonard  
Cragin, Aaron H.  
Doe, Charles  
Ela, Jacob H.  
Hubbard, Nathaniel  
Kent, Henry O.  
Lyman, John D.  
Patterson, James Willis  
Peavey, George C.  
Pike, Austin F.  
Pillsbury, Oliver  
Rollins, Edward H.  
Sawyer, Edward  
Stearns, Onslow  
Tenny, Allen  
Wyatt, Oliver

Gerrish, Benjamin Jr.

Subjects:

Democratic Party  
Elections  
New Hampshire Legislature  
Politics  
Republican Party  
Republican State Committee

Towns:

Dover  
Strafford

Prepared by Carolyn Baldwin  
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*For a description of the election of March 1859, with which  
much of the journal is concerned, see Chief Justice The  
Judicial World of Charles Doe, by John Phillip Reid,  
(Harvard University Press, 1967) pp. 61-74.*