

Oliver Seymour Phelps Papers
Mss Coll. 143
2 linear feet

Biographical Note:

Oliver Seymour Phelps (1816-1902) was the son of Oliver Phelps (1779-1851) who was a leader in the Welland and Erie Canal Projects. Oliver S. married Hester Anne Dexter (1816) of Lockport who died in 1848. Later he married Eliza Rebecca Lawton (1831-1888) also of Lockport, New York. Phelps then relocated with his family to St Catharines, Ontario where he had a brief political career. Later, he returned to the United States where he controlled a large part of the shipments of grain along the Erie Canal. In 1869, he moved to Portland, Oregon with his family, where he became a Justice of the peace for two terms. Oliver was also the primary family genealogist, co-authoring with son-in-law Andrew T. Servin, *Phelps Family of America* Pittsfield, MA: Eagle Publishing Co 1899 2 volumes.

Scope & Content Note: This collection contains personal family papers (some originals and some photocopies) from the Oliver Seymour Phelps family dating from ca.1790-1890. The content includes but is not limited to deeds, personal letters between family members, and records of Oliver S. Phelps' father overseeing building the Welland Canal in Upper Canada as well as the Erie Canal in New York State.

Provenance: This collection was donated by Mark MacWilliams and family. Boxes 4 and 5 contain photocopies of additional Phelps family material donated by Patrice LeClerc.

Organization of Collection: Boxes 1-3 have been placed in date order beginning with 1817 and ending in 1890. Boxes 4 and 5 have been placed in date order beginning in 1791 and ending in 1867. Most documents in the collection have been transcribed

Documents:

<u>Box</u>	<u>Date</u>	
1	1812, June 29:	Fragment receipt: sale of house: Fabio
	1819:	Phelps: Genealogy
	1819, Nov. 25:	Waybill from Newburgh to Canandaigua
	1821, May 23:	To Oliver from Heouck, New York?) Accounts
	1823, Nov. 20:	To Oliver from S. Clarke: friendship and house building
	1823, Sept. 6:	Dear Sir: From Enterprise re: Business transport
	1824, Mar. 29:	To Oliver from Thaddeus Joy: re: Erie Canal transport company
	1824, Mar. 31:	To Oliver from Merritt in Troy: wheat sales
	1824, April 2:	To Oliver from G. Thompson in Black Rock: doesn't want to buy stock now
	1824, April 2:	To Oliver in Ludlowville from JP Morehouse in Lockport: business, religion, and relationships
	1826, Sept. 6:	To Dr. Sir (Oliver) from M. Childs: Economic problems in Canada
	1827, Aug. 1:	Estimates on earth in Welland Canal: Oliver
	1828:	Receipt book for Oliver, Welland Canal
	1828, Nov. 24	Ludlowville? To Oliver from Shaw: Mill building
	1828, June 22:	To Abigail from Oliver: Family news
	1828, July 12:	To Affectionate Companion from Oliver in Deep Cut
	1828, July 27:	To Beloved Companion from Oliver: Deep Cut: missing her
	1828, Aug. 9:	Mill Bio – property, move to Canada – Shaw
	1828, Nov. 28:	To Hopburn from Eurgin?: Marine news
	1829, Mar. 2:	To Oliver from A.W. Shaw: business

1829, Mar. 30: To Oliver from H.B. Lathrop, from Buffalo: working
 1829, June 20: To Oliver from A.W. Shaw: land, business
 1830, Feb. 18: To Brother (Warren) from Oliver: business and family misfortunes
 1831, Dec. 19: To Brother (Oliver) from Warren: Great Awakening
 1832, April 19: To Oliver Seymour from C (Calvin?): wheat,
 1832, Oct.10: To Oliver at Yale from William MacLaren: advice
 1833: Announcement of Troy and Oswego line
 1833, Jan. 3: To Mother from Oliver Seymour at Geneva Lyceum: school news
 1833, Feb. 12: To AH Shaw from Oliver Seymour: property
 1833, May 24: To Oliver from Shaw:
 1833, Nov. 8: To Mother from Oliver in Covington
 1833, Nov. 16: To Father from Oliver in Geneva, school, sonly things
 1834, May 12: To Mr. And Mrs. Layton from Seymour and Lizzie: move to Lockport
 1834, Aug. 30: To uncle from S.H. Slocum: Banking
 1834, Oct. 22: To Father (Oliver) from Charlotte:
 1834, Nov. 3: To Orson from A.W. Shaw: about family and Cleveland
 1834, Nov. 20: To Oliver from William Anderson: (minister)
 1835, Feb. 20: To Father from Oliver, Calvin: in Ithaca: business
 1835. March 7: To Orson from M. Clark: great awakening
 1835, June 6: To Oliver from A.W. Shaw in Milan: business
 1835, July 27: To Oliver in St. Catharines from H.M. Abergh in Montreal: banking
 1835, Sept.: To Father from Oliver, New Haven: trip
 1835, Oct.31: To Seymour from A.P. Phelps at Union College: college news
 1836, Mar. 24: To Oliver from E. Beadle: moving to St. C
 1836, June 14: Newspaper article: re: Van Buren presidency and Phelps survey (controversial)
 1836, Nov. 3: To Orson from AW Shaw in Cleveland: travel, business
 1837, Dec. 27: To Oliver from Farbox and Yale: school news, faculty/student problems
 1838, Jan. 12: 3 acts of Parliament re: treason
 1838, Jan. 16: To (brother) Oliver from Mary Ann: war, family
 1838, Jan. 28: To brother (Warren) from Oliver: health, debt, crossing borders
 1838, July 26: Engineering drawings, Meelans Valley
 1839, Mar. 18: To Seymour from Oliver: debts, advice
 1839, Sept. 8: To Abigail from Oliver in Canandaigua: business, family
 1839, Dec. 14: To Mother from Seymour in Lewiston: religion, debts of family
 1840, July 26: To Dear Sir from Chauncey Goodrich in Cournlandville, coming out to Canada,
 drinking problem

Box Date

2

1841, Dec. 25: To Seymour from Oliver in St. C
 1842, Feb. 1: To Abigail from Oliver: (in Michigan): Family and Religion
 1842, June: Shipping records (Oliver)
 1842, June 21: Dear Father (Oliver) from Maryann and Elijah? St. Catharines
 1842 Aug. 11: From St. C; dear Father Phelps from?? "Home news"
 1844, Feb. 14: To Orson from Oliver: business
 1844, June 17: To Father (Oliver) from Orson: land purchase in Buffalo
 1844, July: Cortland Belle
 1845, Feb. 4: To "Beloved Uncle" from O.P. Brown, claiming relationship
 1845, Feb. 17: To Orson from Oliver: St. Catharines
 1845, Mar. 31: To Orson from Oliver: money and land
 1846, May 5: To Orson from Oliver, St. Cath. Business, canal
 1846, July 5: To Orson from Oliver: condolence on Elijah
 1846, Sept. 28: Oliver as JP: man struck another's wife

1846, Sept. 28: Completion
 1846, July 5: To Orson from Oliver: condolence on Elijah
 1847, Sept. 20: To Oliver from various brothers in Ohio: family news
 1848, Jan. 5: To Abigail Phelps from Oliver in Ithaca: religion
 1848, Jan. 21: To Calvin from Oliver in Ithaca
 1848, Mar. 6: to Family from Oliver: (2 pieces): God, religion
 1848, Mar. 8: To Mother Phelps from A.H. Shaw In Phelpsville: family and religion
 1848, Dec. 27: To Seymour from L. Winchester: family health
 1849, Feb. 17: To Seymour from Oliver: jobs, debts
 1849, Mar. 12: To A.C. Hitchcock from Orson in Chicago: business
 1849, July 13: Invitation reply from Calvin to Orson
 1849, Dec. 24: To Abigail from Mary Anne in Albion: domestic matters
 1850, April 26: To Seymour from Oliver from York Grandriver: family, depression, business
 1850, May 19: MA to OSP re: "lease"
 1850, Sept. 13: To Parents from Oliver, St. Catharines: Family news
 1850, Dec. 27: To Eliza from husband in Louisville: travel, slavery
 1851, Feb. 24: To Son Oliver from Father: Judgments against him and health
 1852, Mar. 18: To brothers and sisters from Alphonsus: sick brother
 1852, April 26: To O. Phelps from Charles Hannah, Cayuga: navigation, shipping
 1853, June 19: To Brother from Orson at Phelps House, Buffalo: Job
 1854, Nov. 29: To Abigail (mother) from Seymour in Iowa City: travel
 1855, Oct. 7: To Child from Mother: domestic issues
 1855, Dec. 27: To Home from Oliver Seymour Phelps – KY, slavery observations
 1855, Dec. 27: To family from Oliver Seymour in Louisville: slavery
 1857, April 3: To Sister Eliza and Brother Seymour from Mary Phelps
 1857, April 9: To Eliza from Oliver: family, business
 1857, April 4: To Elizabeth from Oliver: He is in Chicago seeking work
 1857, May 12: To Parents (Mr. and Mrs. Layton) from Lizzie: Moving to Woolverton
 1859, April 9: To Mrs. O.S. Phelps, from a family member in Wataga: Genealogy
 1859, May 25: To Seymour and Eliza from Mary and Alphonsus: Victoria Day, family travel
 1859, July 14: Memento Mori re: reciprocity law, Canada and US
 1860, April 20: To Mrs. Phelps in St. Catharines, from Oliver Seymour Phelps: re: genealogy project
 1861, Sept. 4: To wife from Seymour in Buffalo: family and money problems
 1861, Sept. 20: To Family from Oliver in Lockport: family and business news
 1863, Aug. 18: To Family (St. Catharines) From Oliver: family news, moving
 1864, Nov. 28: To Frank from Oliver: family news
 1865, Jan. 23: To Family from Oliver: (2 pieces) religion and war
 1865, Feb. 5: (Fragment) from Oliver to Family: religion, funeral
 1865, Mar. 20: to the Daily Gazette from Seymour: re: Phelps as borderless and America/Canada
 1865, June 28: To Cousin Oliver from Lizzie Phelps in Plymouth: season, war
 1865, Dec. 5: To family from Oliver from home: money problems, passport: system, elected Councilor
 1866, Mar. 10: To family from Oliver, in Oil City: discouraged
 1883, Feb. 2: Certificate of election for Orson to the Leg. Assembly of Ontario, Co. of Simcoe
 1883, Mar. 19: Postcard from Orson in Portland, OR to family: congratulations
 1884, Feb. 18: To Cousin from Oliver Seymour in Portland, OR: Religion, genealogy, congrats. on election
 1885, Feb. 13: Sherry with Lt. Governor
 1886, Oct. 29: To Orson from Oliver from Buffalo: Marietta's death
 1887, Jan. 3: To J. Phelps in Phelpsston from Wm. Dawson: congratulations on election
 1888, Dec. 23: Memorial program for Eliza: with genealogy

Box Date

3

- ND: To Eliza from Oliver: begging her to come
ND: Ad for guide to the Niagara and the West
ND: Newspaper clipping about railroad house
ND: Miscellaneous envelopes: Dry Goods, Hotel, personal correspondence
ND: To Oliver from Inhabitants of Spring Post: about a complaint of his.
ND: To Calvin and Seymour from Oliver: family and debts (plan)
ND: Notes about Oliver from Conn. Historical Collection: genealogy
ND: Newspaper clipping: Supper given after wedding rehearsal: Margaret Clark and Robert MacWilliams
ND: 19 March: to Family from Oliver in Milan: trips
ND: 17 Nov: to Father from Calvin in Ithaca: business, family, church
ND: To Liza from Elizabeth: in Cincinnati: marriage troubles with "Mr. Phelps
ND: 21 March, King's Ferry: To Mrs. Phelps from D. Gravis: religious
ND: 12 May: Most Esteemed friend from Lucinda: Love, marriage, poetry
ND: To Abigail from Oliver in Albion 29 March: family problems, decision to leave, religion
ND: To Seymour from Lizzie: domestic, business 30 August
ND: "Chapter 1": Building of the Canal
ND: Erie Canal Receipts
ND: 2 page genealogy
ND: To Mark MacWilliams from Nana: family history
ND: Genealogy: Elijah Phelps by Lewis Pound

Box Date

4

- 1790 From Nath Gorham. Information from New York Papers on road conditions
1791 Letter to Mother from Leicester Phelps
Jan. 20 Chiefs of Five Nations
Onondaga speech tells natives to avoid white men
1792 January—Letter to Phelps from R. Hyde on land purchase
June 16, Canandaigua—Letter to his wife "I am safe and in good health"
June 23, Canandaigua—Letter to wife discussing business matters. "Indians are friendly"
1794 Dec. 1st, New Haven—Letter to his mother "Dear Madam"
1795/96 Jan. 15 letter from Sam Lloyd about a woman
Feb. 18 letter from Isaac Lewis. Discusses reason for lack of correspondence. Says "sickness is prevalent in NH at present"
Jul. 3 from Nath Gorham concerning lands to be acquired
Dec. 12 from O.S.P. to Parents. "Mrs. Phelps has been very sick..."
Oliver Phelps' dealings with DeWitt Clinton & others relating to Macombs land
Extracts from N. Gorhams letters to O.P. on the Macombs purchase
O.P. bond to the state of Conn. for \$80,000, Aug. 13, 1795
June 1796. Letter from unknown person update on the family
Jan./June 1798 Jan. 4 To O.S.P. from Thos. Burbank concerns a desire to make an appointment to see O.S.P.
June 4 to O.S.P. from Burbank concerning an outstanding bill

June 1798 June to O.S.P. from T. Seymour concerning the account of the wine
 June 11 To O.S.P. from Tr. Seymour concerning a bill
 June 11 to O.S.P. from ____ Jackson concerning cotton and peach brandy
 June/July 1798 June 3. O.S.P. to ____ Coffin, Esq. concerning the collection of money owed
 July 9. From A. Jackson to Leicester Phelps concerning business dealings
 Aug/Nov. 1798 Aug. 1 to O.S.P. from F. Bloodgood concerns a copy of two letters from July of 1798
 Feb. 1799 Feb. 27. Noah Phelps to O.S.P. Discussing a land sale
 Aug.- Dec. 1799 Aug. 8. O.S.P. to David Thompson. Concerning handling of beef cows
 Sept. 13 Oliver L. Phelps to John Henry. Discussing land O.S.P. has for sale
 Dec. 11 Isaac Bronson to O.S.P. regarding money matters
 1800 March 3. Geo. (Tod) to O.S. P. concerning a land purchase
 1801 Feb. 10. O.S.P. is asked to run for Lt. Gov. of New York
 March 28. A. Jackson to O.S.P. Jackson proposes to sell land for 25 cents an acre &
 congratulates O.S.P. on the election of Jefferson
 April 8. L. Seymour to O.S.P. discussing business and politics
 Nov. 18. Concerning a bond
 1802 April 17 Ben Barton to Augustus Porter. Discusses the possibility of Phelps losing
 the election
 Dec. 30. R. Lee to O.S.P. Discussing beef cattle, soap and other provisions
 Jan.-Mar. 1803 Jan. 28. Oliver L. Phelps to O.S.P. Discussing difficulty with a hired man
 March 2. R. Lee to Mr. Seymour. Discussing provisions for Fort Niagara.
 April-Nov. 1803 April 24. partially transcribed.
 July 19. G. Granger to O.S.P. Discusses money to be made by supplying French
 troops
 Aug. 12. To O.S.P. from Oliver L. Phelps. Discusses how pressing business is
 Oct. 2. Nath Gorham to O.S.L. Gorham irritated there is no letter from Phelps.
 Nov. 13. O.L.P. to O.S.P. Some alterations are made to a contract for land
 Feb 1804 Feb. 8 R.Lee to ____ Will be accepting the appointments of Collector and Inspector.
 Feb. 12 Chipman to Oliver Phelps. Discussing the Governors and Senators.
 Feb.-May 1804 Feb. 17 A. Burr to Oliver Phelps. Discussing travel.
 March 3 Chipman to Oliver Phelps. Negotiating loans.
 May 20 Black Chief to ____ Trying to set up a council meeting with the government.
 May 25 Oliver Phelps to Ralph Brown. Informing him that he must follow orders.
 Mar.-May 1805 March 24 Seymour to O.L.P. Discusses a land deed and the local gossip.
 May 13 ____ to ____ About the High wines.
 May 17 John Jones to ____ A bill of High wines.
 July-Oct. 1805 July 4 O.L.P. to Erastus Granger Informs him that the treaty is closed.
 July 29 Horatio Stark to ____ Has orders to leave Canadaigua.
 October 10 Roswell Hotchkiss to Oliver Phelps Discussing the selling of land and
 deeds.

Mar.-April 1806 March 13 Nathaniel Gotham to Oliver Phelps. Discussing the debt Phelps is in.
 March 22 Oliver Phelps to ___ Discusses the case of Christie and Williams.
 April 8 P.D. Phelps to his Mother. Discusses the family.

May-Dec. 1806 May 10 P.D. Phelps to his Mother. Discusses the family.
 May 22 Gorham to O.L.P. Discusses buying land in Connecticut.
 Dec. 18 Oliver Phelps to ___ Agreement made between the government and the
 Indians.

1807 Nov. 28 Jonathan Allen to Oliver Phelps Discuss the purchase of land.

1808 July 31 Oliver Phelps to ___ Discusses money and the family.
 Sept. 1 Ben Huntington to Oliver Phelps Informs him of his plans to travel to
 Suffield.
 Sept. 15 Oliver Phelps to ___ Advises him to sell the land in Vermont.
 Oct. 2? Oliver Phelps to ___ Discuss issues with money and family.

1809 April 2 Julia G Phelps to Oliver Phelps Discusses issues with family and coming
 home.

1810 Jan. 16 James Harper to Oliver Phelps Concerning the mortgage.
 Aug. 29 Bronson to Oliver Phelps Concerning Jonathan Barlow.
 Sept. 12 W.E. to Oliver Phelps Discussing the estate of Phelps' late father.
 Sept. 27 Sally Leavenworth to Betsy Phelps Discussing Leavenworth coming to
 America and Phelps' children.

1811 Oct. 25 Oliver Phelps to Asahel Hathaway Discusses money.

Feb. 1812 Feb. 9 Oliver Phelps to ___ Either they need to raise money or sell their land.

March 1812 March 16 Oliver Phelps to Mary Phelps Discussing way to complete his title.

Nov. 1812 Nove. 14 Sherman to Oliver Phelps Talk about sending Phelps' sons to law school.
 Nov. 15 Granger to Oliver Phelps Concerning sending the troops to Canada for the
 winter.

March 1813 March 3 Granger to Elizabeth Phelps Sending his regrets about Phelps' illness.

April 1813 April 9 Granger to Elizabeth Phelps Promises to wrap up Phelps' affairs for her.

May 1813 May 9 Mary Phelps to Betsey Phelps List of Oliver's furniture.

Dec. 1813 Dec. 19th Grangers to Oliver Phelps Promises to figure out the affairs of his father and
 grandfather.

1815 List of damages.

1818-1822 Nov. 14 1818 Oliver Phelps to F._M. Phelps Only partially transcribed.
 Dec. 18 1818 Francis M. Phelps to Oliver Phelps Account of expenses from the
 season.
 June 25 1819 F.M. Phelps to Oliver Phelps Asking for money.
 April 13 1822 Leicester Phelps to Oliver Phelps Discussing business deals.

Feb. 1823	Feb. 4 Terhune to Oliver Phelps Discuss the farm.
March 1823	March 7 A. Jackson to Oliver Phelps Ignorant of a land deed.
1824-1829	Dec. 30 1824 G.L. Rose to Charles Discussing the family. April 1829 Not transcribed. May 25 1827 Seneca Chiefs and the amounts they were paid.
Feb. 1928	Feb. 1 Jasper Parrish to Jacob Jemeson Appointing Jemeson the Secretary of War of the United States interpreter to the Six Nations of Indians.
July-Aug. 1830	Aug. 12 J. Buell Sheriff to Oliver Phelps Discussing the general election. Aug. 23 A. Kingsbury to Oliver Phelps Discussing their day-to-day lives.
Sept. 1830	Sept. 25 Joseph Colt to Francis Granger and O.L. Phelps Discusses the possibility of fraudulent land transaction.
Sept.-Nov. 1832	Sept. 22 Silas Wright Jr. to Oliver Phelps Asking him about the Republican State Convention. Nov. 15 A.C. Flagg to Oliver Phelps Informing him that he has been chosen as an Elector of President and Vice-President. Nov. 22 Herman J. Redfield to Oliver Phelps Informing him of the reporter attending the Republican elector vote.
Oct. 1832	Oct. 23 Jer. Wallis to Leister Phelps Ordering Phelps to come to the City and collect his disgraced brother Henry.
July 1833	July 14 Oliver Heartwell to Oliver Phelps Asking for help obtaining the Post Master position.
Nov. 1833	Nov. 10 G.I. Grosvenor to Oliver Phelps Proposing Phillip Reynolds Jr. for the Clerk of the Assembly. Nov. 12 F.W. Haight to Oliver Phelps Proposing Samuel Campbell for the doorkeep to the House of Assembly. Nov. 29 G.I. Grosvenor to Oliver Phelps Discusses politics.
Dec. 1833	Dec. 4 Olmsted to Oliver Phelps Discusses the stock market.
<u>Box</u>	<u>Date</u>
5	
July 1842	July 30 Whitehouse & Co. to Oliver Phelps Discusses the stock market.
Aug. 1842	Aug. 1 Messers Cammann Whitehouse to Oliver Phelps Discusses the stock market. Aug. 14 Oliver Phelps to Mary Phelps Day-to-day life account.
1844	May 15 Eliza Phelps to Oliver Phelps Thanking him for the present and telling him about day-to-day life. June 17 Oliver Phelps to Oliver Phelps Junior Tells him about his travels. Dec. 11 Seymour Phelps to Oliver Phelps Asking for money.
Feb. 1846	Feb. 20 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Tells his father about his travels and work.

April 1846	April 9 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Tells his father about his travels and work.
May 1846	May 16 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Tells his father about his travels to Washington.
Oct. 1846	Oct. 3 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Tells his father about his time in Richmond.
1853	March 25 M.H. Clark to Oliver Phelps Tells him about a bill the passed in both Houses.
1864	Jan. 28 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Discusses a family death and other family news. June 30 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Informs his father about his work. July 5 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Tells his father about his travels.
Feb.-Oct. 1867	Feb. 7 D.F. Pratt to Oliver Phelps Asks about a report his father was involved with. Feb. 15 F.F. Thompson to Oliver Phelps Informs him of his daughter's safe arrival. April 14 Legrand Marvin to Oliver Phelps Offering condolences. Oct. 28 Jeanette Norton to Oliver Phelps Thanking her father for apples.
April 1867	April 24 Oliver Phelps Junior to Oliver Phelps Wishing him and Julia a speedy recovery.

Transcriber's Notes

Additional Material

Box Date

6 OVERSIZE + Box

1824, Oct. 1:	Amount of earth chart for Welland Canal
1834, Jan.18:	Geneva Lyceum: To Father from Oliver, AP
1834, Feb.:	Dear Father from Geneva Lyceum
1845, July 8:	Indenture: Sale of Land in St Catherine's to Eugene and Abigail Phelps
1847, Sept. 22:	Indenture made at St Catherine's to Oliver Seymour Phelps
1859, Aug. 18:	Cash for Wheat poster
1883, Aug. 14:	Crown Sale Deed, Simcoe County, to Orson
1890, Nov. 26:	Commission appointing Orson as Sheriff in Simcoe

Box Date

7 OVERSIZE + + Folder

1798, Dec. 31:	Deed from George III
1837, March 23:	Deed: Oliver to Ellen Adams, Lincoln County

1883, Mar. 12:
ND:

Poll results from Simcoe Election: Phelps wins
Phelps Genealogy