

Lambert Cadwalader Papers
1779-1798
Mss.B.C625.1

American Philosophical Society
2002
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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	4
Scope & content	5
Administrative Information	6
Indexing Terms	6
Other Descriptive Information	7
Collection Inventory	8
Correspondence.....	8

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Cadwalader, Lambert
Title	Lambert Cadwalader Papers
Date [inclusive]	1779-1798
Call number	Mss.B.C625.1
Extent	0.25 Linear feet 7 items
Location	LH-MV-C-3
Language	English
Container	1
Abstract	<p>This collection of letters, while tiny, is actually quite rich in content. Cadwalader wrote to Samuel Meredith, a politician and fellow Revolutionary War soldier, concerning the war, his real estate holdings in Philadelphia, and the local political climate. The seven items are dated from October 5, 1779 to March 9, 1798, during which Cadwalader served in the military, reentered politics, got married, and then retired from public service.</p>
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Background note

Lambert Cadwalader (1741?-1823, APS 1768) was a merchant, Revolutionary War soldier and member of the Continental Congress, who worked on committees calling for a federal convention to rewrite the Articles of Confederation. He also served two terms (1789-1791; 1793-1795) as a Federalist member of the House of Representatives. Cadwalader was born in Trenton, New Jersey, probably in 1741, the son of Thomas Cadwalader, a physician and his wife Hannah Lambert. The family moved to Philadelphia in 1750 where Cadwalader attended Dr. Allison's Adademy and then the City College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania). He received an excellent classical education there; but instead of finishing college, he entered into business with his brother John Cadwalader as a merchant in Philadelphia. The business flourished, and Lambert and his brother John soon became prominent citizens of the province of Pennsylvania. As tensions arose between Great Britain and her American colonies after the French and Indian War, Cadwalader sympathized with the sentiments of his American neighbors. Cadwalader became interested in politics; a vocal supporter of independence, he opposed the Stamp Act in 1765 by joining with others to boycott English merchants. In 1774, he was appointed a member of the Philadelphia Committee of Superintendence and Correspondence; and in 1775, he was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly. Finally in 1776, he attended the Pennsylvania State constitutional convention. In addition to his political involvement, Cadwalader served in the military. He served as captain to one of four Philadelphia companies called "the Greens," and he received a promotion to lieutenant colonel of the Third Pennsylvania Battalion in January of 1776. Six months later he assisted in the construction of Fort Mifflin, a fortress intended to inhibit enemy shipping. Later that summer, he and his men gamely committed to assisting George Washington at the battle of Red Bank, but arrived to find the British victorious. They provided reinforcement in Red Bank until Cadwalader and his men were moved south of Fort Mifflin. In September of 1776, Cadwalader took command of the Third Pennsylvania Battalion where he was soon promoted to colonel. Cadwalader and his men defended Fort Mifflin until November of 1776, when he was captured by General Howe and his British troops. After his release in early 1777, he was appointed commander of the newly formed Fourth Pennsylvania Regiment. However, Cadwalader refused to accept the appointment because he had been paroled rather than exchanged for an officer of equal rank. After struggling with the decision, he consulted George Washington, who issued a general order that no enemy officers of field grade were to be released. In response, Cadwalader decided to leave the military. He resigned his commission on January 29, 1779, and re-entered politics. Cadwalader worked unsuccessfully with other Pennsylvanians to try to amend the state constitution of 1776, which they considered too radical. In 1784, he was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress, an office he held for two years. He subsequently served two terms as a Federalist in the House of Representatives, 1789-1791 and 1793-1795.

In 1793 Cadwalader married Mary McCall, and the couple had two children. Two years after his marriage, when his second term in the House of Representatives concluded, he retired from public service and spent the remainder of his life at "Greenwood," an estate near Trenton, New Jersey. Lambert Cadwalader died in September, 1823.

Scope & content

This collection of seven letters consists solely of exchanges between Lambert Cadwalader and Samuel Meredith, a fellow revolutionary soldier. Dated from 1779 to 1798, the first letter was written the same year that Cadwalader had resigned from the military, and the last one was written after he'd retired from politics.

Although Cadwalader ostensibly wrote to Meredith to discuss real estate, the letters also communicated news about the war and current political situation and also a little bit about life in eighteenth century Philadelphia. A letter written on October 5, 1779, for example, requests information about military operations in Georgia, shares news about blocked British fleets in Torbay and the activities of the Marquis of Fayette, and asks for reports about "the Assembly with Respect to the Encouragement of Trade and Navigation" In the same letter, Cadwalader expressed optimism for resolution: "I cannot help entertaining very sanguine hopes of a peace this winter-nothing can in my opinion prevent it..."

In a letter dated later that month, Cadwalader wrote to Meredith concerning his father's property in Philadelphia and the new crippling tax "on real estates in Pennsylvania"; he also speculates about "D'Estaing's Movement," and the rumors surrounding his plan of action.

Almost a decade later in a letter dated September 10, 1788, Cadwalader commented on recent political news including troops marshaled in the Southern States and the future of the "Ordinance," a "most serious consideration and requires the particular attention of Congress." Cadwalader also wrote about government proceedings.

The letter dated March 9, 1798, is not signed, and possibly not by Cadwalader. The subject matter is an appeal to Peggy to procure a smallpox inoculation for "Tom" from "Dr. Rush" as none is available in Trenton. The writer of the letter asks about the "hostile Intentions of the French Government towards this Country" and goes on to lament the "mournful Reverse of Fortune" that Louis 14th lived to witness.

The remaining letter, undated, is about financial matters--the rent of a meadow--and reports that the health of his daughter Margaret is much improved. Again, although the collection is very small, it has value for one interested in a small glimpse into everyday life and politics in 18th century Philadelphia.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 2002

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Accessioned, 1947.

Processing Information

Recatalogued by Anne Harney, 2002.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- General Correspondence
- Political Correspondence

Geographic Name(s)

- Pennsylvania--History--Revolution, 1775-1783
- Pennsylvania. Militia
- United States--Politics and government--18th century

Personal Name(s)

- d'Estaing, Charles Henri, comte, 1729-1794
- Rush, Benjamin, 1746-1813

Subject(s)

- American Revolution
- Business and Skilled Trades
- Inoculation
- Land and Speculation
- Philadelphia History
- Smallpox
- Taxation--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia

Other Descriptive Information

This collection of letters, while tiny, is actually quite rich in content. Cadwalader wrote to Samuel Meredith, a politician and fellow Revolutionary War soldier, concerning the war, his real estate holdings in Philadelphia, and the local political climate. The seven items are dated from October 5, 1779 to March 9, 1798, during which Cadwalader served in the military, reentered politics, got married, and then retired from public service.

Correspondence

Collection Inventory

Correspondence	1779-1798	Box 1
Cadwalader, Lambert ALS to Samuel Meredith Trenton, A.L.S. with initials. 3p.and add. Rumors of the war. Concerning stories of deeds of D'Estaing and Lafayette.	1779 October 5	3p.
Cadwalader, Lambert ALS to Samuel Meredith Trenton, A.L. 3p.and add. Taxes in Philadelphia. List of his father's lots. Concerning the war.	1779 October 23	3p.
Cadwalader, Lambert ALS to Samuel Meredith Trenton, A.L.S. with initials. 2p. Wishes a stable removed from his property in Philadelphia. War.	1780 May 4	2p.
Cadwalader, Lambert ALS to Samuel Meredith A.L.S. with initials. 2p. Concerning the sale of land.	1782 September 13	2p.
Cadwalader, Lambert ALS to Samuel Meredith Trenton, A.L.S. with initials. 2p. Politics and "the Constitution."	1788 September 10	2p.
Unidentified author ALS to "Dear Peggy" [Margaret Cadwalader Meredith] Trenton, L. 2p. Incomplete. Regarding vaccination for smallpox. Refers to Drs. Kuhn and Rush. Foreign affairs. "Republican despots" in France.	1798 March 9	3p.
Cadwalader, Lambert	n.d. (Saturday evening)	2p.

Correspondence

ALS to Samuel Meredith

A.L.S. with initials. 2p. Business. Regarding lack of rain.
