

James Vanuxem (1746-1824) was a French-born Philadelphia merchant active in the shipping trade. He was a director of the Bank of Pennsylvania and of two Philadelphia insurance companies. Edward Livingston (1764-1836), was a lawyer and politician, and member of a prominent Hudson Valley family. He represented New York City in Congress for three terms, and served as mayor of the city. After relocating to New Orleans in 1804, he sat in both the House of Representatives and the Senate before being appointed secretary of state by President Andrew Jackson. Livingston also served as minister to France from 1830 to 1835.

In an October 7, 1861, letter to his friend Benson J. Lossing, John A. McAllister wrote "My wife's grand father, Godfrey Weber Esq, of this city has several letters of Lafayettes, lately given to him by Miss Garesche, a granddaughter of the later Peter S Duponceau, with whom Lafayette had an extensive correspondence" (Lossing Papers (Coll. 1807), Historical Society of Pennsylvania). McAllister most likely received these letters from Mr. Weber.

Collection Overview

The Peter Stephen Du Ponceau Papers span the years 1787 to 1844. They are divided into two series: Correspondence and Documents.

Series I, Correspondence (1787-1834) includes letters in both French and English to and from friends and business associates. It is arranged in two subseries: Letters from Du Ponceau; and Letters to Du Ponceau. The first subseries holds three letters written by Du Ponceau to his daughter Louisa in Bristol, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and four others written to associates in Paris and Philadelphia. His letter to Isaac Cox Barnet (d. 1833), a professional diplomat who served as U.S. Consul in Belgium and France for many years, concerns a financial matter and includes the bank draft discussed in the letter. With James Vanuxem, he discusses an ongoing legal case at Bordeaux. In a short letter to Quaker reformer Roberts Vaux, Du Ponceau requests access to a 1683 Indian treaty for his research.

Most of the letters in the collection, however, are in the second subseries: twenty-six letters written to Du Ponceau by the Marquis de Lafayette, and two by his secretary Auguste Levasseur. They range in date from January 1825, during their tour of America, until just prior to Lafayette's death in 1834. Lafayette's correspondence deals partly with personal and family topics, but also raises contemporary political issues, particularly that of European revolutions, such as in Poland, occurring at the time. The letters are in French; a précis of each follows the box and folder list in this finding aid.

Among the Lafayette letters is one written in March 1831 as an introduction for Alexis de Tocqueville (1802-1866) and Gustave de Beaumont (1805-1859), who were preparing to leave for the United States to research their book *Du Système Pénitentiaire aux Etats-Unis, et de son application en France* (*On the Penitentiary System in the United States, and its application in France*)