

COLLECTIONS OF CORRESPONDENCE AND MANUSCRIPT DOCUMENTS

NAME OF COLLECTION: Gouverneur Morris OGDEN CorrespondenceSOURCE: Transferred from Columbiana, 1955; Letterbook: 293-5/9/84SUBJECT: Columbia college business and finance from 1866 to 1877.DATES COVERED: ca. 1866-1877NUMBER OF ITEMS: 1010

STATUS: (check appropriate description)

Cataloged: Listed: Arranged: Not organized:

CONDITION: (give number of vols., boxes, or shelves)

Bound: 7 vol Boxed: 1 vol Stored: LOCATION: (Library) Rare Book and Manuscript Library CALL-NUMBER Ms Coll/OgdenRESTRICTIONS ON USE None

DESCRIPTION: Gouverneur M. Ogden (1806?-1884) was the treasurer of Columbia College from 1866 to 1874. The collection consists of his official correspondence for this period and deals chiefly with routine matters of college business and finance. The letters are tipped and mounted onto the blank pages of 7 volumes. There are 3 volumes of letters from Frederick Barnard, president of the college, 1 volume of letters from trustees and members of the faculty, and 3 volumes of miscellaneous business letters. A letterbook of outgoing correspondence was added in 1984. See over for description.

11. (Columbia University)

Letter-copy book of G. M. Ogden, Treasurer of Columbia College, 1868-1877.

This thick volume contains about 700 letters written by Ogden as Treasurer of the College, Dec. 15, 1868-May 16, 1877. They provide a fascinating insight into the workings of this important institution. About one-third of the letters are addressed to F. A. P. Barnard, President, and give a fine picture both in overview and in detail of most aspects of the college. Numerous letters are to professors like Charles F. Chandler, Henry Drisler, Thomas Egleston, Charles A. Joy, and Ogden N. Rood, with a few to Theodore W. Dwight, Asa Gray, and Jay Gould.

Subjects mentioned include financial affairs of the college, actions of college committees, suits and other legal matters, college leases, payment of expenses and taxes, repair work to the president's home, banking and insurance matters, student fees, affairs of the library and the School of Mines, plans for expansion, the observatory, office space, and departmental expenses and budgets.

Treasurer Ogden was no mere clerk, but as financial officer was (as is often the case at universities) a power center himself. Respectful to Barnard, he nevertheless played counsellor and advisor, once urging the president to "look into the merits" of a proposed expense rather than "approving it merely because the professor wants it." Ogden also moderated personality clashes, as seen in an 1871 letter to Barnard concerning Wm. Y. Peck, the astronomy professor. "He has mentioned to me with concern that his relations with you are unpleasant," Ogden writes, "but as to any hostile measure against yourself, he vouched no such idea & I am sure contemplated no such thing. I apprehend he may resign - a course which I should regret as most calamitous to the Institution - We all know the Professor's peculiarities - he is sensitive and impulsive, but of a genuine character, devoted to his work, a great ability, and as an instructor, successful & efficient in the highest degree."

Bound volume (30x25cm) with partial index (letters B-Z). 876pp. on tissue sheets. Dampstaining at ft. has made several dozen letters difficult to read and ten-or-so impossible. Very acceptable condition overall, however.

