

**Masters-Wilbur Family  
Papers, 1801-1844****SC21300**

**QUANTITY:** 1 box (0.25 cubic ft.)  
**ACCESS:** Open to research  
**ACQUISITION:** Information available upon request  
**PROCESSED BY:** Suzanne Soden, Student Intern, College of Saint Rose, January 1997

**Biographical Note:**

Thomas Masters was born in England, but had settled in Philadelphia by the early 1800s. He moved to New York to engage in commerce in partnership with his brother-in-law, Francis Markoe. Masters had at least two daughters: Sarah and Martha. Sarah married Jeremiah Wilbur, who was a commission merchant who did considerable business with Markoe & Masters. Martha married Henry W. Taylor, who eventually moved to Michigan to engage in business.

**Scope and Content Note:**

These papers consist chiefly of correspondence, accounts, invoices, and legal documents relating to the intertwined personal and business affairs of prominent New York City merchants: Divie Bethune, Thomas Masters, Francis Markoe, Henry W. Taylor, and Jeremiah Wilbur. Most of these merchants and their families, just as their businesses, were closely interrelated both at home and in international commerce. They bought and sold a variety of goods, especially wine, rum, sugar, produce, and dry goods, trading mostly in the West Indies and Great Britain.

Most were Presbyterians and some, such as Divie Bethune who was treasurer of the United Foreign Missionary Society and active in the Humane Society (for debtors), were involved in religious and secular organizations. An interesting series of copies of letters (with some bleed-through) written in 1835 by Jeremiah Wilbur relate how he was approached by an "old black man" and asked for assistance in redeeming the last two children in his family from bondage near Washington, D.C. Involved was an eleven-year-old girl and five-year-old boy, whose mistress sought \$225.00 and \$150.00, respectively. Wilbur enlisted the advice and aid of his colleague, Frank Markoe, Jr., in Washington to bring this matter to a happy ending for the old man.

The collection also contains numerous manuscripts and some partially printed documents relating to maritime commerce, especially with Europe and the West Indies. Included are items relating to "adventures" (shares in ships), invoices of merchandise and cargoes, and drafts for payment. One lengthy document relates to claims and payments of salvage on fourteen pipes of wine from a Spanish brig. Included is a broadsheet announcing the death of Divie Bethune and the continuation of his business under the management of his wife, Joanna.

**Folder List:**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	1	Accounts, invoices, insurance papers, drafts for payments, and records of bills receivable and bills payable, etc. relative to business interests of Thomas Masters, October 23, 1801-September 20, 1821 (20 items)
1	2	Notes, bills, and receipts, Markoe & Masters, 1813-1820 (26 items)
1	3	Business and personal letters to and from Jeremiah Wilbur. Also includes Divie Bethune death notice. January 16, 1832-February 25, 1835 (22 items)
1	4	Business and personal letters to and from Divie Bethune. May 1, 1818-October 13, 1824 (8 items)
1	5	Business letters to and from Francis Markoe and/or Thomas Masters. March 26, 1810-February 19, 1828 (5 items)
1	6	Correspondence of Henry W. Taylor and Martha M. Taylor, March 27, 1819-May 11, 1844 (8 items)

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