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An Inventory of the
EDWARD SPALDING PAPERS

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS

The Edward Spalding Papers, 1792-1851, document the commercial and personal activities of Edward Spalding, a shipping agent who worked in Cuba during the early nineteenth century. The papers include correspondence, receipts, bills, and other documents. The majority of documents are written in English, although a few letters are written in Spanish. Correspondence, arranged chronologically, documents Spalding's efforts on behalf of New England merchants and ship owners.

Selected letters instruct Spalding to make arrangements for shipping freight, or to secure freight for vessels sailing from the Cuban cities of Havana or Matanzas to European ports or cities in the northeastern United States. These letters also detail such topics as trade routes, the cargo shipped as imports and exports to the United States, Cuba, South America, Russia, Africa and European countries, and the prevailing market conditions and other circumstances that influenced international trade. Correspondents noted such events as wars and piracy among major concerns. Additional correspondence concerns the transport of coffee from plantations in Cuba to ships waiting in Matanzas or Havana, the condition of the sugar and coffee crops and the production of sugar. Other personal letters pertain to the activities of Spalding family members.

Early correspondence, 1800-1817, concerns family matters, an accident involving Edward Spalding's father, and a "calamitous storm" that damaged Spalding's brig. Letters also deal with the arrival of a shipment of molasses in Bristol (1814) and a shipment of "sundry articles" to Antigua (1800). A contract between the "Master Seamen and Mariners" specifies "wages and duties while aboard the Schooner Concord bound from the port of Bristol to Africa." A document states that the Master of the ship, Benjamin Bosworth, "entered and cleared his vessel according to law " with the navy agent at Havana Cuba in 1808. An insurance policy for ship and cargo is also included with these documents.

Financial records, 1816-1817, pertain to business relations between Edward Spalding, Benjamin Bosworth, and James D'Wolf. These businessmen were actively engaged in trade in Havana during this period. These records document the shipment of Molasses to New York, the outfitting of two brigs, and the decision to give Edward Spalding power of attorney to act for Zachariah French, James Dooley and other merchants who conducted business in Cuba. Various receipts from 1817-19 involve a shipment of goods from Trinidad to Africa and a shipment of molasses from Trinidad to Boston.

Cash Record Books, 1813-21, and documents for financial transactions with Edward Spalding, Jacob Babbitt, Benjamin Bosworth and members of the D'Wolf family provide an interesting insight to the fiscal operations of Edward Spalding. A cash record book for 1819-20 documents "cash on hand"- for Spalding's arrival in Trinidad and his expenses and receipts from the sales of cargo in Cuba. Invoices of molasses and sugar shipped from Trinidad to Boston are also included.

Spalding reported the sale of flour, rice, chairs,. potatoes, soap, candles, onions, beans and codfish in Cuba during May, 1820. An almanac dated 1822 contains financial records, and documents Spalding's trips to Matanzas and his activities upon arrival, including the sale of cargo.

The papers also reveal circumstances governing the experience of early ship masters and crews. A document containing "Privateers Bi-laws" documents regulations governing mutiny, theft, compensation for injuries incurred during the voyage, and other rules. Owners of vessels were required to "fit the vessel for sea, and provide ...Warlike Stores ,...medicines, ...provisions, ..for all ...ll Spalding's correspondence of January, 1822 provides an account of his trip aboard the brig, Mount Pleasant. Sighting a ship that appeared to be a '-piratical cruiser-' the Captain of the vessel "ordered all the harpoons and grains out upon their staff and the axes and hatchets at hands..." Spalding also noted difficulties faced by the crew of the General Jackson while he was aboard. A heavy freight grounded the ship and forced the crew to contract a Swedish merchant ship to carry half of the freight so that the ship would be "lighted" and able to sail to New York.

Correspondence from 1815-16 describes the arrival of ships and the sale of cargo in Cuba and instructs Spalding to receive and sell shipments of molasses and sugar in Bristol, Rhode Island. New York business associates wrote Spalding in Rhode Island, to report sales of cigars, tobacco and cocoa. One letter of December, 1818, explains the delay of a ship caused by an outbreak of small pox among the crew.

Letters from the years 1819-20, mainly from Jacob Babbitt, concern market prices of sugar and molasses and delays of ships travelling to Cuba due to gales and storms. From Havana, Jose Garcia Alvarez wrote to Spalding, then in Trinidad, with concern for the market prices of sugar and coffee, and the arrival of a Spanish ship carrying "negroes" from Africa. An 1821 letter from Alvarez delivers "the unfortunate news of many failures of the most reputable houses in London..." Alvarez predicts that "this undoubtably will abase the prices of our produces thus that they will render better for European markets." Other letters dated 1821 include several from Babbitt in Bristol, Rhode Island, to Bosworth and Spalding in Cuba. Correspondence from the Brothers Cramer in St. Petersburg, Russia, informs Bosworth that his sugar could not be sold by the firm due to its quality and to the glutted St. Petersburg markets.

Correspondence from 1822 concerns the Baltic trade, the shipment of Cuban sugar, cigars and coffee to St. Petersburg and the loading of ships with hemp, iron and duck for the return trips to the United States. Daniel Morice and Jacob Babbitt agreed to ship sugar from Matanzas to St. Petersburg and the Brothers Cramer handled the sale of goods in Russia. Jacob Babbitt, Morice and Benjamin Bosworth conducted business under the name, Jacob Babbitt and Company, although this partnership was later dissolved. Babbitt subsequently resumed business

under his own name. A letter from Bosworth to Spalding, prior to his first Russian shipment, warns Spalding of unstable conditions including the danger of having ships plundered and the high duties extorted by the guardship and other officials. Numerous letters from Charles Collins, Bosworth, and others relate to shipments to Russia.

A letter from Spalding's cousin Joseph Torrey, also dated 1822, describes Jacob Babbitt's petition to the U.S. Congress. Torrey also discusses "the great orator William Pinckney" and the intention to use Spalding's deposition in a case against former United States post master "W.B.-I Letters from Jacob Babbitt and others concern Babbitt's petition, the "Bill for the Relief of Duties." After a number of readings, the bill passed both houses of the U.S. Congress and became law.

Correspondence from 1823 concerns trade in the Baltic, a report that a "serious revolution had commenced in Havana," piracies on the coast of Cuba, and the transport of coffee from Matanzas to Havana. A February, 1823 report from the Brothers Cramer informed Spalding and the New England merchants that -"there is again a pause in the demand (for sugar), which is partly to be attributed to the Refined Article... and partly likewise to the uncertainty, ...respecting peace or war."

A letter from James D'Wolfe, dated March 24, 1823, warns that war may have begun between France and Spain and that "Should you have taken any freight for Belligerents, you know that it would jeopardize the whole cargo, the ship would be captured and there is no knowing the consequences." D'Wolfe also informs Spalding that "Premiums for insurance have risen considerably under our own flag, France and Spain risks entirely refused or an enormous premium demanded." Additional 1823 letters from Mark Anthony D'Wolfe and John Smith concern the coffee trade, which had become more profitable than sugar.

Letters from members of the D'Wolfe family and Charles Collins instruct Spalding regarding the management of their coffee plantation, An April 20, 1823 letter reads, "We are much concerned that there had been some irregularities with the negroes which required the intervention of the legal authority. we hope you have assisted to settle that business and restored order. If the business remains unsettled we wish you to take hold of it and get it out of the hands of the law at all events -- such acts as are complained of can easily be commuted with the complaining party if taken in time. It is very expensive attending to these things in I Havana." D'Wolfe and Collins request that Spalding devote as much time as possible to managing the estate and supervising the present overseer in the handling of "negroes" and the planting of coffee.

Other letters of 1823 deal with the shipment of sugar and coffee to Europe, the possibility of a war in Europe and the need to watch "the movement in the market." A letter from Everhard Delius at Bremen, July 16, 1823, provides an encouraging report of the market, "We much hope that the present adventure may be a preface to others and the

result be such as may induce our mutual American friends to continue to look to Bremen for a market for Cuba produce... Our port charges are less than in any European port and we can make as good sales as in the Hamberg or Dutch markets...there is no appearance of England departing from the system of neutrality she has adopted, and without she may be engaged in the war, we may in vain look for amelioration of trade from the differences between France and Spain." Subsequent letters concern coffee plantations in Cuba and shipping of coffee from Cuba to Bremen by several New England merchants.

F. Adams and other New York businessmen shipped sugar to St. Petersburg, Bremen and Hamburg, with the cooperation of Spalding in Cuba. John Mansony's letter to Spalding, dated November 14, 1823, discusses markets and duties in the cities of Trieste, Marseilles and others. Russian trade opportunities led Babbitt and Morice to purchase a ship, the Leonidas, intended for trade only with St. Petersburg. An 1824 letter from Morice in Bristol, Rhode Island, to Spalding in Matanzas relates conditions in Cuba, "I see that the change of government has been made without disturbance and to the satisfaction of the majority of the inhabitants of the Island. How this change will operate respecting our commerce with that island, time will only determine." Correspondence from John Smith, then in Cuba, and writing to Spalding reveals that "there is an embargo on all vessels here until the sailing of the Spanish fleet for Spain".

Correspondence also documents market conditions in Bremen in 1824. A printed list of current market prices and a letter from "Imports by Frederick and Everhard Delius," a Bremen firm, provide this information: "...we are not sanguine of seeing high prices in Europe in the next year as supplies from your quarter, and more particularly from the Brazils may be expected to be abundant." John Smith writing from Havana January 1824 explains that the Spanish are purchasing sugars for their vessels to sail for convoy and that older stores of sugars are being sent to Hamburg and Bremen, in addition to coffee and molasses.

A list of "Foreign Vessels in the Port of Matanzas, February 7, 1824," includes the names of many ships Spalding used to secure freights and the list also provides a record of consignees. The firm of Latting, Adams, and Stewart, a frequent business associate of Spalding, was engaged in the shipping of Cuban sugar, molasses and coffee to Bremen, St. Petersburg and Bamberg. Records prepared by Latting, Adams, and Stewart provide a "concise view of the commerce of this place" with estimates of imports from America including "lumber, provisions, agricultural implements, American manufactured hats, shoes, nails, cordage, furniture, and etc." as well as estimates of the value of imports from other countries, and exports.

Letters of 1824 also reveal declining conditions in the Russian trade. A letter from Morice informs Spalding that Russia has imposed a new tariff "by which the duties on imports are considerably increased particularly on sugar and coffee." He fears that "Smuggling ...will be carried on at a great rate," creating unfair and unbeatable

competition for, "fair importers. Adams, writing from New York, states that the unfavorable Russian expeditions will prevent further Baltic trade in the immediate future. Correspondence dated 1825 concerns a flood in Russia which damaged the stores of numerous merchants and ruined several boxes of sugar.

Additional correspondence of 1825 includes descriptions of various markets and conditions affecting trade. F.M. Dimono writes from Havana discussing the importation of beef from Europe and South America and market conditions for the sale of New England goods in Cuba. He predicted a rise in demand for coffee as a number of vessels then prepared to leave for Spain. At this time D'Wolf contracts with merchants in order to ship sugar to Trieste. A letter from John Morland, dated March 12, 1825, reveals that "There is talk of war in the U.S. ...you and I perhaps may only see a show of power to intimidate Spain and more particularly the authority of this Island, growing out of the piracies committed here." The business of Latting, Adams and Stewart fails, affecting the affairs of a number of merchants. Correspondence from William Savage confirms that sugar continues to be exported to St. Petersburg and Trieste, and discusses the importation of salt from Genoa to Cuba. D'Wolfe's letter of March 22, 1825, concerns the shipment of sugar to Marseilles and the importation of beef from Buenos Aires.

Remaining papers include documents giving Spalding power of attorney to manage affairs of various businessmen, bills of exchange, mainly from Matanzas, dated 1818-25, and records of purchases and sales Spalding made for the accounts of various individuals. Duties, insurance and other costs are recorded. Quantities of coffee and sugar shipped to Russia in 1822 and invoices from shipments of coffee and sugar in 1823 also appear in the files. Invoices and accounts dated 1824 relate to the ship Leonidas, to accounts with various investors and to the personal expenses incurred by Spalding while in Cuba. Records also include miscellaneous invoices, bills of lading and accounts with individuals and the firms of Frias Morland and Co., the partnership of Babbitt and D'Wolf, and Latting, Adams, and Stewart (8).

Bills and receipts pertaining to the business of Jacob Babbitt, dated 1795-1818, also appear in the files. Poems from Edward Spalding to a relative, Julia, an "Epigram" and "Crocker's Birthday Odell and receipts for wine, cigars and other goods shipped to Bristol are also included.

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