

Acquisitions Committee Highlights: 2012-2013 by Matthew Hofstedt, Associate Curator, Supreme Court of the U.S.

The Society's Acquisitions Committee works in close cooperation with the staff of the Curator's Office at the Supreme Court to review potential donations and other acquisitions with the goal of adding objects of historical significance and interest to the collection. These objects are used in exhibitions at the Court, to illustrate publications, and as part of the decorative arts program in the Court building. To kick off 2016, this two part feature will review some of the interesting or rare objects added to the collection over the past few years. As always, please let us know if you are aware of any Supreme Court-related objects.

Louis D. Brandeis was donated by Martin Jefferson Davis and his wife, Barbara Ruth Lane Davis. "A beautiful end of a consecrated and triumphant life!" Justice Roberts wrote. "Death cannot take away the greater and the enduring part you in such great measure, and I in lesser degree, have been privileged to share, his great and noble spirit. For what he generously gave me, I can never be sufficiently grateful." The gift was made in memory of James Mercer Davis, Jr., who argued two cases before the Court.



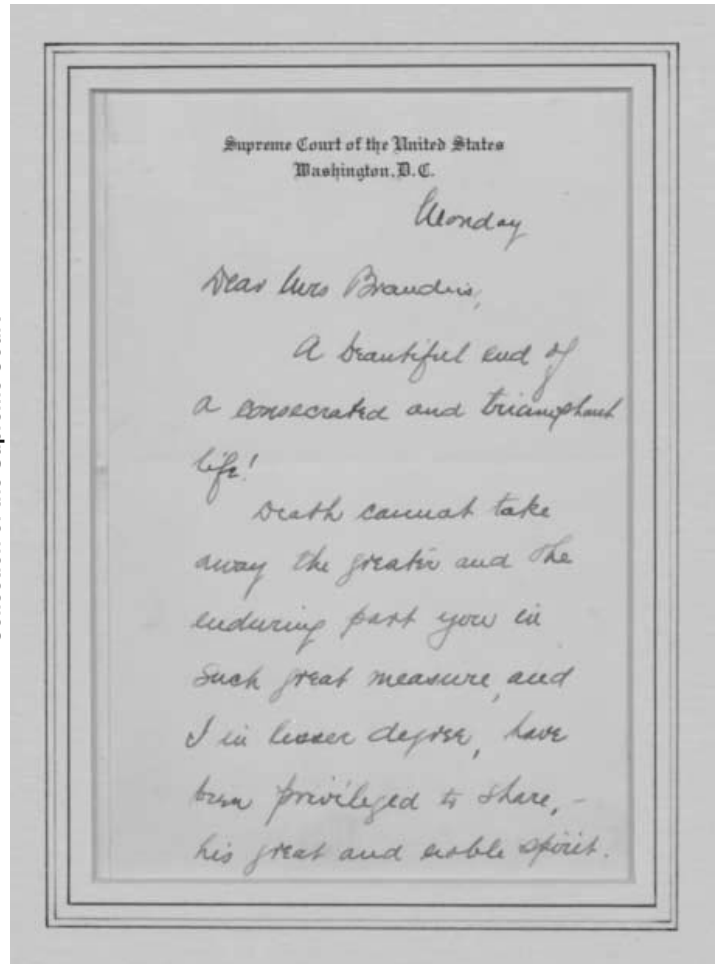
A collectible plate depicting the steamboat Chief Justice John Marshall.

From 2012:

A blue transferware plate attributed to Enoch Woods & Sons depicting the steamboat *Chief Justice Marshall*, 1830s. Following the landmark decision in *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824) which opened steamboat competition on the Hudson River, the new Troy Line named its flagship in honor of Marshall. The ship became known as the "Race Horse of the North River" after a record 14-½ hour trip from New York City to Albany. The 105-passenger ship had a barber shop and new safety features like a net to prevent children from falling overboard! After a boiler explosion in 1830 (a common occurrence in the early days of steam power), the ship was moved to the Connecticut River. In April 1835, the *Marshall* ran aground in a storm near New Haven but thankfully all of its passengers and crew were saved.

A condolence letter written by Justice Owen J. Roberts to Mrs. Alice Brandeis upon the news of the passing of Justice

Collection of the Supreme Court



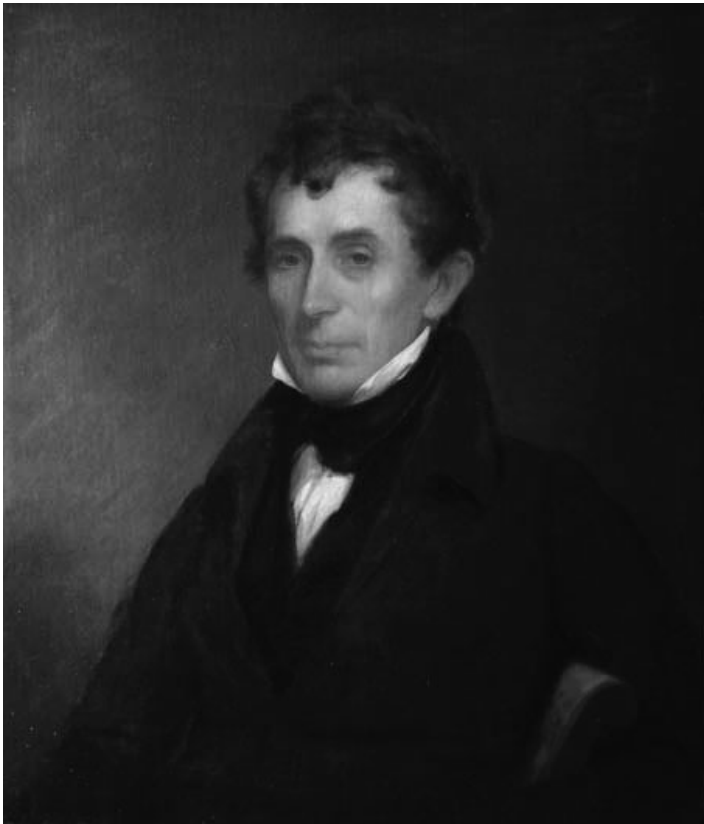
Letter written by Justice Owen J. Roberts on the occasion of the death of Justice Louis Brandeis.

From 2013:

A portrait of Roger B. Taney painted by an unknown artist in the early 1830s. This portrait had been shown to the Court's Marshal, Thomas E. Waggaman, in the late 1940s while he was actively seeking portraits for the Court's collection. Contact with the owner was lost after Waggaman retired, but in 2013 the portrait was rediscovered. In contrast to the Court's official portrait which shows Taney near the end of his career, this portrait depicts Taney during the years he rose to national prominence. It was likely painted around

WANTED

In the interest of preserving the valuable history of the highest court, The Supreme Court Historical Society would like to locate persons who might be able to assist the Society's Acquisitions Committee. The Society is endeavoring to acquire artifacts, memorabilia, literature and any other materials related to the history of the Court and its members. These items are often used in exhibits by the Court Curator's Office. If any of our members, or others, have anything they would care to share with us, please contact the Acquisitions Committee at the Society's headquarters, 224 East Capitol Street, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20003 or call (202)543-0400. Donations to the Acquisitions fund would be welcome. You may reach the Society through its website at www.supremecourthistory.org



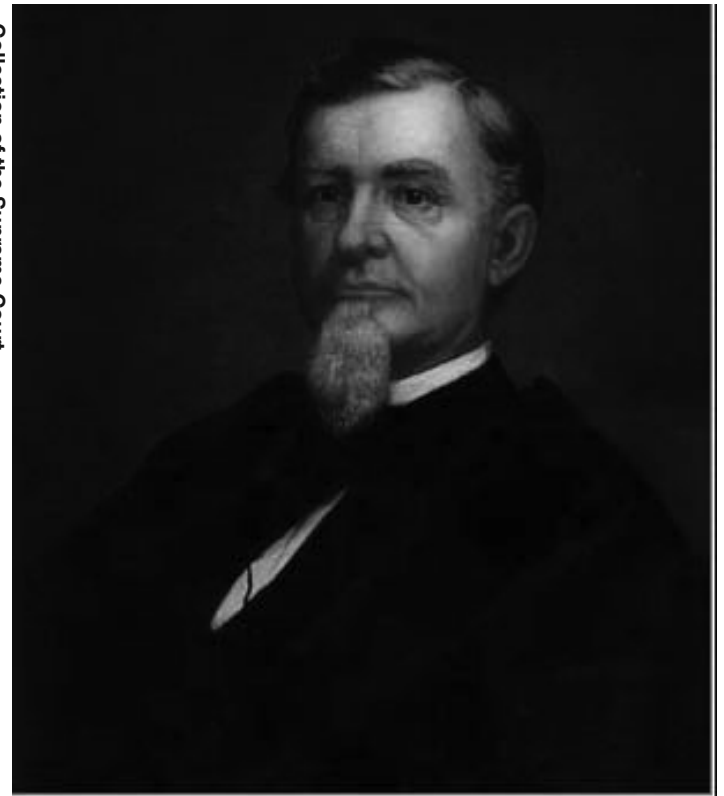
Oil portrait of Chief Justice Roger B. Taney painted in the early 1830's.

the time he was serving in President Andrew Jackson's cabinet as the Attorney General of the U.S. and then Secretary of the Treasury. In 1835, Jackson nominated Taney as an Associate Justice to replace Gabriel Duvall, but the nomination was postponed by the Senate. The following year, Jackson named Taney to take the place of the late John Marshall and Taney would preside as Chief Justice for over 28 years.

A collection of 83 letters, telegrams and other notes relating to Justice Howell E. Jackson's appointment to the Supreme Court was donated by Ms. Elizabeth Ragland Perkins, great granddaughter of Justice Howell E. Jackson. Two pieces were sent to Jackson by William H. Taft, who was serving with Jackson as a federal judge on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals. "One effect of your appointment," wrote Taft, "I sincerely hope, is that the fire eaters and the malignant enemies of the Federal judiciary will find themselves

without support in the Democratic party in the attack upon that institution of our government upon which depends its integrity--I mean the Supreme Court of the United States... Therefore, I rejoice for the country at your appointment, for even a wider reason than the intellectual and legal strength which is added to the tribunal by your accession to it." Taft's joy for Jackson would be short-lived; Jackson contracted tuberculosis shortly after joining the Court and died in 1845. Taft, of course, would one day join the Court himself as Chief Justice, from 1921 to 1930.

Collection of the Supreme Court



The collection recently obtained a group of letters, telegrams and notes relating to Justice Howell E. Jackson who served as an Associate Justice from 1835-1845.