Collection Summary
Title: Edward Preble Papers
Span Dates: 1680-1912
Bulk Dates: (bulk 1799-1809)
ID No.: MSS36814
Creator: Preble, Edward, 1761-1807
Extent: 5,000 items
Extent: 58 containers
Extent: 8.6 linear feet
Extent: 1 microfilm reel
Language: Collection material in English, Arabic, French, and Italian.
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78036814
Summary: United States naval officer. Correspondence, diary, journals, account books, ships' papers and logbooks, muster rolls, signal books, family papers, and other material relating primarily to Preble's naval service.

Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People
Acton, John Francis Edward, 1736-1811--Correspondence.
Bainbridge, William, 1774-1833--Correspondence.
Barron, James, 1769-1851--Correspondence.
Cathcart, James L. (James Leander), 1767-1843--Correspondence.
Chauncey, Isaac, 1772-1840--Correspondence.
Chauncey, Isaac, 1772-1840. Isaac Chauncey journal. 1804.
Crowninshield, Jacob, 1770-1808--Correspondence.
Davis, George--Correspondence.
Decatur, Stephen, 1779-1820--Correspondence.
Eaton, William, 1764-1811--Correspondence.
Goldsborough, Charles W. (Charles Washington), 1779-1843--Correspondence.
Higges, William--Correspondence.
Hull, Isaac, 1773-1843--Correspondence.
Izard, Ralph 1785-1824--Correspondence.
Jones, Jacob, 1768-1850--Correspondence.
Lear, Tobias, 1762-1816--Correspondence.
Preble family.
Preble, Ebenezer, 1757-1817--Correspondence.
Preble, Edward, 1761-1807.
Preble, Henry, 1770-1825--Correspondence.
Preble, Mary--Correspondence.
Prince, James, active 1806--Correspondence.
Rodgers, John, 1773-1838--Correspondence.
Smith, Robert, 1757-1842--Correspondence.
Stoddert, Benjamin, 1751-1813--Correspondence.
Yūsuf Bāshā al-Qaramānlī, Ruler of Tripoli, -1838--Correspondence.

Organizations
Argus (Brig)
Constitution (Frigate)
Essex (Frigate)
John Adams (Ship)
Philadelphia (Frigate)
Pickering (Brig)
Ranger (Sloop)
Traveller (Smack)

**Subjects**
Ship's papers--18th century.
Ship's papers--19th century.

**Places**
Tripoli (Libya)--History.
United States--History--Tripolitan War, 1801-1805.

**Occupations**
Naval officers.

**Provenance**
The papers of Edward Preble, United States naval officer, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1902 from Dodd Mead and Co. of New York. Additions were received as gifts from Dundas Preble Tucker and others between 1929 and 1979.

**Processing History**
The papers of Edward Preble were arranged and described in 1963. The collection was expanded and revised in 1985 and the finding aid revised in 2007.

**Additional Guides**
The acquisition of the Edward Preble Papers is noted and very briefly described in the *Library of Congress Annual Report for 1903* on page 21. The *1905 Annual Report* (p. 53) mentioned that a first calendar of the Preble collection was ready for printing that year. The calendar was never published and remains in card index form in the Manuscript Division. A more complete and definitive published description of the Preble Papers is contained in the *Library of Congress Handbook* (1918), pp. 340, 341; on page 485, mention is made of the *Constitution* logbook in the collection.

**Additional Guides**
A calendar of the Preble collection in card index form is available in the Manuscript Reading Room

**Copyright Status**
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Edward Preble is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

**Access and Restrictions**
The papers of Edward Preble are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.
Microfilm

A microfilm edition of the log-book (1803-1804) of the frigate Constitution is available on one reel. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Edward Preble Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1761, Aug. 15</td>
<td>Born, Portland, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>Appointed midshipman on board the Protector of the Massachusetts Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783-1798</td>
<td>Served fifteen years in the merchant service after the Revolutionary War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Appointed lieutenant in the United States Navy in Commodore John Barry's Squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Commissioned captain in the navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commanded the frigate Essex escorting convoy to East Indies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>Married Mary Deering of Portland, Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Commander of the Third Naval Squadron ordered to the Mediterranean in whose fleet the frigate Philadelphia was captured by Tripolitans and later blown up by Stephen Decatur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Assaulted but failed to capture Tripoli and returned home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Became a shipbuilder for the navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807, Aug. 25</td>
<td>Died, Portland, Maine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edward Preble (1761-1807) consist of fifty-seven volumes and include correspondence, journals and accounts, early signal books, ships' papers and logs, as well as contemporary transcripts of logbooks and account books. The papers span the years 1680-1809, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period 1799-1809. Some of the ships' papers and logs relate to such United States vessels as the Argus (Brig), Constitution (Frigate), Essex (Frigate), John Adams (Ship), Pickering (Brig), Ranger (Sloop), and Traveller (Smack). The papers are in English, Arabic, French, and Italian and are organized into the following series: Letters Received, Letterbooks, Diary, Logbooks, Miscellany, and an Addition.

A considerable number of volumes in the collection include Preble's letters to and from superior or subordinate officers or with officials of the Navy Department. Also included is a letter from the officers of the ill-fated Philadelphia (Frigate), absolving Preble of any blame and describing the loss of that ship at Tripoli. In addition to these letters, there are Preble's own journals noting events of the years 1803 and 1804, the fitting out of the Constitution (Frigate) at Portsmouth, and an account of his naval squadron's maneuvers and actions in Mediterranean waters. There are also notes relating to various naval officers and others whom he met during his cruise.

Among Preble's correspondents were John Francis Edward Acton, William Bainbridge, James Barron, James L. Cathcart, Isaac Chauncey, Jacob Crowninshield, George Davis, Stephen Decatur, William Eaton, Charles W. Goldsborough, William Higgens, Isaac Hull, Ralph Izard, Jr., Jacob Jones, Tobias Lear, James Prince, John Rodgers, Robert Smith, and Benjamin Stoddert. A number of notes are from the representative of the Pasha of Tripoli, Yūsuf Bāshā al-Qaramānlī.

The Addition to the Edward Preble Papers spans the years 1779-1912 and contains correspondence, typescripts from a logbook Preble kept of his experiences on the John Adams (Ship), a memorandum book dated 1803-1806, and miscellaneous material relating to Preble's life and career. Principal correspondents include his wife Mary Preble and brothers Ebenezer Preble and Henry Preble.

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Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in six series:

- Letters Received, 1680-1809
- Letterbooks, 1793-1805
- Diary, 1803-1804
- Logbooks, 1799-1805
- Miscellany, 1798-1808
- Addition, 1779-1912
## Description of Series

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 1-20</td>
<td><strong>Letters Received, 1680-1809</strong></td>
<td>Letters received, financial and legal records, diplomatic papers, accounts, testimony, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 21-27</td>
<td><strong>Letterbooks, 1793-1805</strong></td>
<td>Copies of letters sent, accounts, financial records, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 28</td>
<td><strong>Diary, 1803-1804</strong></td>
<td>Diary. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 29-33</td>
<td><strong>Logbooks, 1799-1805</strong></td>
<td>Ships' logbooks. Arranged chronologically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 34-57</td>
<td><strong>Miscellany, 1798-1808</strong></td>
<td>Journals, accounts and receipts, ledgers, muster rolls, inventories, naval orders, financial records, marine signal instructions, and miscellaneous items. Arranged by type of material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 58</td>
<td><strong>Addition, 1779-1912</strong></td>
<td>Correspondence, logbook, and miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
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<tr>
<td>BOX 1-20</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| BOX 1     | 1680, Sept. 23-1799, June 20 |
| BOX 2     | 1799, June 22-1800, June 12  |
| BOX 3     | 1800, June 13-1801, Apr. 29   |
| BOX 4     | 1801, Apr. 30-1802, Apr. 12  |
| BOX 5     | 1802, Apr. 13-1803, June 25   |
| BOX 6     | 1803, July 2-Sept. 29         |
| BOX 7     | 1803, Sept. 30-Nov. 22        |
| BOX 8     | 1803, Nov. 23-1804, Jan. 7    |
| BOX 9     | 1804, Jan. 9-Feb. 16          |
| BOX 10    | 1804, Feb. 17-Apr. 16         |
| BOX 11    | 1804, Apr. 17-June 24         |
| BOX 12    | 1804, June 25-Aug. 21         |
| BOX 13    | 1804, Aug. 22-Dec. 15         |
| BOX 14    | 1804, Dec. 18-1805, June 13   |
| BOX 15    | 1805, June 14-Aug. 29         |
| BOX 16    | 1805, Aug. 30-1806, Jan. 13   |
| BOX 17    | 1806, Jan. 14-June 7          |
| BOX 18    | 1806, June 9-Nov. 8           |
| BOX 19    | 1806, Nov. 10-1807, Mar. 14   |
| BOX 20    | 1807, Mar. 15-1809, July 10, undated |

| BOX 21-27 | **Letterbooks, 1793-1805**<br>Copies of letters sent, accounts, financial records, and miscellaneous items.<br>Arranged chronologically. |

| BOX 21    | 1793, Dec. 12-1795, Apr. 11 |
| BOX 22    | 1798, Apr. 12-1799, June 4  |
| BOX 23    | 1799, Dec. 20-1801, Jan. 16  |
| BOX 24    | 1803, May 14-Dec. 10         |
| BOX 25    | 1803, Dec. 10-1804, Apr. 18  |
| BOX 26    | 1804, Apr. 22-Nov. 27        |
| BOX 27    | 1804, Nov. 6-1805, Mar. 11   |

| BOX 28    | **Diary, 1803-1804**<br>Diary.<br>Arranged chronologically. |

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## Container Contents

**BOX 28**  
1803, Mar. 19-1804, Aug. 21

**BOX 29-33**  
**Logbooks, 1799-1805**  
Ships' logbooks.  
Arranged chronologically.

**BOX 29**  
*Pickering* (Brig), 1799, Jan. 31-June 15

**BOX 30**  
*Argus* (Brig), transcript copy, 1803, Apr. 15-1804, Sept. 25

**BOX 31**  
*John Adams* (Ship)

**BOX 31**  
1803, May 4-1804, June 4, transcript copy in French

**BOX 32**  
1804, Oct. 30-1805, Feb. 25

**BOX 33**  
*Constitution* (Frigate), 1803, May 21-1804, Oct. 27  
Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 18,525

**BOX 34-57**  
**Miscellany, 1798-1808**  
Journals, accounts and receipts, ledgers, muster rolls, inventories, naval orders, financial records, marine signal instructions, and miscellaneous items.  
Arranged by type of material.

**BOX 34**  
*Essex* (Frigate)

**BOX 34**  
Journal

**BOX 34**  
1799, Oct. 31-1800, May 4

**BOX 35**  
1799, Dec. 16-1800, Nov. 29

**BOX 36**  
Ledger, 1799, Nov.23-1800, Dec. 3

**BOX 37**  
Receipt book, 1799-1800

**BOX 38**  
Accounts, 1800

**BOX 39**  
Stores, 1799-1801

**BOX 40**  
Muster table, 1801, May

**BOX 41**  
*Argus* (Brig), muster book, 1803-1804

**BOX 42**  
*Constitution* (Frigate)

**BOX 42**  
Accounts

**BOX 42**  
1803-1804

**BOX 42**  
1803-1805

**BOX 44**  
Clothing stores, 1803-1804

**BOX 45**  
Muster tables, 1803-1804

**BOX 46**  
*John Adams* (Ship)

**BOX 46**  
Journal, 1804, June 25-Aug. 6

**BOX 47**  
Stores, undated

**BOX 48**  
Memorandum book, 1803, Mar. 7-1806, Feb. 20

**BOX 49**  
Order book, 1803, May 20-1805, June 8

**BOX 50**  
Accounts, gunboats and bomb ketches

**BOX 50**  
1805-1807

**BOX 51**  
1805-1807

**BOX 52**  
Signal books

**BOX 52**  
1800

**BOX 53**  
1803-1804

**BOX 54**  
1804
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOX 55</td>
<td>1804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 56</td>
<td>Marine telegraph signals, 1798-1801, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOX 57</td>
<td>Book of bank shares, Portland, Maine, 1800-1808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| BOX 58    | **Addition, 1779-1912**  
|           | Correspondence, logbook, and miscellaneous items.  
|           | Arranged alphabetically by type of material. |
| BOX 58    | Correspondence |
| BOX 58    | Original, 1779-1839  
|           | (2 folders) |
| BOX 58    | Transcripts, 1801-1807 |
| BOX 58    | Logbook, *John Adams* (Ship), typescript, 1803 May 4-Sept. 14 |
| BOX 58    | Memorandum book, photocopy, 1803-1806 |
| BOX 58    | Spanish language exercises, undated |
| BOX 58    | Miscellany, 1799-1912 |