

Edward Preble Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2007

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78036814>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms007087>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff
Revised and expanded by David Mathison

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2007
Revised 2010 April

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://lcn.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.

Goldsbrough, Charles W. (Charles Washington), 1779-1843--Correspondence.

Higgins, 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-Qaramānī, Ruler of Tripoli, -1838--Correspondence.

Organizations

Argus (Brig)

Constitution (Frigate)

Essex (Frigate)

John Adams (Ship)

Philadelphia (Frigate)
Pickering (Brig)
Ranger (Sloop)
Traveller (Smack)
United States. Navy. Mediterranean Squadron.

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

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

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-Qaramānī.

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.

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

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

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1-20	Letters Received, 1680-1809 Letters received, financial and legal records, diplomatic papers, accounts, testimony, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.
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 Copies of letters sent, accounts, financial records, and miscellaneous items. 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 Diary. Arranged chronologically.

Diary, 1803-1804

Container	Contents
BOX 28	1803, Mar. 19-1804, Aug. 21
BOX 29-33	Logbooks, 1799-1805 Ships' logbooks. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 29	<i>Pickering</i> (Brig), 1799, Jan. 31-June 15
BOX 30	<i>Argus</i> (Brig), transcript copy, 1803, Apr. 15-1804, Sept. 25
BOX 31	<i>John Adams</i> (Ship)
BOX 31	1803, May 4-1804, June 4, transcript copy in French
BOX 32	1804, Oct. 30-1805, Feb. 25
BOX 33	<i>Constitution</i> (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	<i>Essex</i> (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	<i>Argus</i> (Brig), muster book, 1803-1804
BOX 42	<i>Constitution</i> (Frigate)
BOX 42	Accounts
BOX 42	1803-1804
BOX 43	1803-1805
BOX 44	Clothing stores, 1803-1804
BOX 45	Muster tables, 1803-1804
BOX 46	<i>John Adams</i> (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

Miscellany, 1798-1808

Container	Contents
BOX 55	1804
BOX 56	Marine telegraph signals, 1798-1801, undated
BOX 57	Book of bank shares, Portland, Maine, 1800-1808
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, <i>John Adams</i> (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