

**Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2008**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm94082983>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms008082>

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## Collection Summary

**Title:** Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft Papers

**Span Dates:** 1750-1926

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1776-1790)

**ID No.:** MSS82983

**Creator:** Krafft, Johann Carl Philipp von, 1752-1804

**Extent:** 90 items

**Extent:** 1 container plus 1 oversize

**Extent:** .4 linear feet

**Language:** Collection material in German, English, French, Latin, Russian, and Dutch.

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm94082983>

**Summary:** Hessian army officer and surveyor. Correspondence, a journal, military records, travel notes, and writings chiefly relating to Krafft's career as a mercenary soldier, including his service for the British during the American Revolution.

## 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

Krafft, Johann Carl Philipp von, 1752-1804.

### Subjects

Astronomy.

Geometry.

Language and languages.

Literature.

Mathematics.

Perpetual calendars.

Philosophy.

### Places

Netherlands--Description and travel.

Québec--Description and travel.

Russia--Description and travel.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Participation, German.

### Occupations

Army officers, Hessian.

Surveyors.

## Provenance

The papers of Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft, Hessian army officer and surveyor, were given to the Library of Congress by Carroll B. Cox, Elizabeth Jane Cox Reed, and the Cox family in 1994.

## Processing History

The papers of Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft were arranged and described in 1996. The finding aid was revised in 2008.

## Transfers

Maps have been transferred to the Geography and Map Division where they are identified as part of the Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft Collection.

## Related Materials

The Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress contains several maps drawn and annotated by Krafft.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft 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.

## Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of Johann Carl Philipp von Krafft (1752-1804) span the years 1750-1926, with the bulk of the items concentrated in the period between 1776 and 1790. The collection focuses on Krafft's career as a military officer, surveyor, and draughtsman in Prussia and the British American colonies during the Revolutionary War. The papers include correspondence, a journal, military records, travel notes, and writings. The bulk of the material is written in German with English and French appearing as well. A small number of writings are in Latin, Russian, and Dutch.

The papers contain correspondence between Krafft and various family members, friends, and military figures dealing with subjects ranging from affairs of the heart to promotion of his career. The most significant part of the collection, however, is Krafft's journal which covers the years 1770-1791, with the largest portion chronicling Krafft's years as a mercenary soldier from 1776 to 1784. Entries for seven of these years are preceded by a table of service, which presents month-by-month Krafft's rank, regiment, company, and names of commanding officers. There is also an abstract of the journal which provides additional information regarding Krafft's military service for the British during the American Revolutionary War. A photocopy of an English translation of the journal, published by the New-York Historical Society, is included in the papers.

Krafft's career as a soldier of fortune is further revealed by his military records, including pay accounts, orders, broadsides concerning billeting and public drunkenness, and commissions, two of which were signed by Frederick the Great. Krafft's wanderings in Russia, the Netherlands, and Quebec in pursuit of a satisfactory military commission between 1776 and 1777 are recorded in his travel notes of this period. He evidently received an excellent education and was fluent in German, French, and English, writing both prose and verse in all three languages as well as poems in Latin. His intellectual interests ranged from literature to astronomy and proverbs to riddles. As a trained surveyor, his knowledge of geometry, mathematics, and astronomy contributed to his creation of a perpetual calendar. His interest in philosophy is revealed in his 1779 treatise in Socratic dialogue on the nature of reality.

An Oversize section is composed of military records as well as material from Krafft's journal and a perpetual calendar.

## **Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is arranged alphabetically by type of material.

## Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1774-1787, undated
BOX 1	Genealogical material, undated
BOX 1	Journal
BOX 1	Abstract, 1776-1779
BOX 1	Original, 1770-1791 <i>See also Oversize</i> (11 folders)
BOX 1	Photocopy of published English translation, 1883
BOX 1	Related correspondence, 1884, 1926
BOX 1	Military records, 1773-1783, undated <i>See also Oversize</i> (3 folders)
BOX 1	Perpetual calendar, 1750, 1790, undated <i>See Oversize</i>
BOX 1	Travel notes
BOX 1	Amsterdam, Netherlands, undated
BOX 1	Quebec, Canada, 1777, undated
BOX 1	St. Petersburg, Russia, 1776, undated
BOX 1	Writings, 1775-1787, undated
BOX OV 1	Oversize
BOX OV 1	Journal
BOX OV 1	Original, 1773-1775 (Container 1)
BOX OV 1	Military records, 1776, undated (Container 1)
BOX OV 1	Perpetual calendar, 1750, 1790, undated (Container 1)