

**James Sever Papers**  
**A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress**



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**2010**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm82039503>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010077>

Prepared by Thomas J. Bigley

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2010

## Collection Summary

**Title:** James Sever Papers

**Span Dates:** 1764-1959

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1794-1801)

**ID No.:** MSS1794-1801

**Creator:** Sever, James, d. 1845

**Extent:** 310 items

**Extent:** 2 containers

**Extent:** .4 linear feet

**Extent:** 1 microfilm reel

**Language:** Collection material in English

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

**LC Catalog record:** <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm82039503>

**Summary:** Naval officer. Chiefly correspondence between Sever as captain of the frigate *Congress* and various government officials. Also includes Sever (Sievers) family papers.

## 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

Knox, Henry, 1750-1806--Correspondence.

Saunders, Joseph--Correspondence.

Sever family.

Sever, James, -1845.

Stoddert, Benjamin, 1751-1813--Correspondence.

Truxtun, Thomas, 1755-1822--Correspondence.

Wolcott, Oliver, 1760-1833--Correspondence.

### Organizations

Congress (Frigate: 1794-1834)

### Occupations

Naval officers.

## Provenance

The papers of James Sever, naval officer, consist of reproductions of original material in private hands made by the Library of Congress with the permission of George Sever in 1936. Additional material from other sources was reproduced in 1959.

## Processing History

The papers of James Sever were arranged and described circa 1960. The finding aid was created in 2010.

## Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of James Sever is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

## Access and Restrictions

The papers of James Sever 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 part of these papers 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, James Sever Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## Biographical Note

James Sever (died 1845) was captain of the Congress, one of six frigates whose construction was authorized by the Naval Act of 1794. He was appointed by George Washington to serve as superintendent of the construction of the Congress in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and commanded the ship from its launch in 1799 until 1801. He also christened the Constitution upon its launch in 1797.

## Scope and Content Note

The papers of James Sever (died 1845) span the years 1764-1959, with the bulk from 1794 to 1801. The collection consists chiefly of correspondence between Sever as captain of the United States frigate Congress and various government officials including Henry Knox, Joseph Saunders, Benjamin Stoddert, Thomas Truxtun, and Oliver Wolcott. Also included are Sever (Sievers) family papers and miscellaneous material relating to James Sever.

The collection contains reproductions of correspondence and related matter in bound and unbound formats. The bound material is comprised of negative photostatic copies of correspondence and related matter arranged chronologically. The unbound material is comprised of positive photocopies of correspondence and related matter arranged according to letter groupings shown in a list at the front of the file.

## Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged as bound material, arranged chronologically, and as unbound material, arranged according to letter groupings shown in a list at the front of the file.

# Container List

<b>Container</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>BOX 1</b>	Correspondence and related matter
<b>BOX 1</b>	Bound, negative photostatic copies, 1794-1801
<b>BOX 2</b>	Unbound, photocopies, 1764, 1781, 1788, 1795-1801, 1909, 1917, 1959 (3 folders) Available on microfilm. Shelf no.11,815