

John Holker Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2009

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78026260>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms010087>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Glenn R. Gardner, 2010

Collection Summary

Title: John Holker Papers

Span Dates: 1777-1822

ID No.: MSS26260

Creator: Holker, John, 1745-1822

Extent: 4,500 items

Extent: 41 containers

Extent: 9.4 linear feet

Extent: 20 microfilm reels

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm78026260>

Summary: Merchant and French consul general in the United States. Correspondence, invoice book of Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont, depositions taken before Benjamin Franklin, and navigational exercise booklets of George W. Stillman, relating to French military and economic assistance to the United States and American commerce during and after the Revolutionary War.

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

Bancroft, Edward, 1744-1821--Correspondence.

Bell, Daniel, merchant, of Boston, Mass.--Correspondence.

Chastellux, François Jean, marquis de, 1734-1788--Correspondence.

Chaumont, Jacques-Donatien Leray de, 1725-1803--Correspondence.

Chaumont, Jacques-Donatien Leray de, 1725-1803. Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont invoice book. 1777-1779.

Clonard, Lieutenant de--Correspondence.

Deane, Simeon, 1750-1787--Correspondence.

Duer, William, 1747-1799--Correspondence.

FitzSimons, Thomas, 1741-1811--Correspondence.

Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790.

Grand, Henry--Correspondence.

Gérard, Conrad Alexandre, 1729-1790--Correspondence.

Harrison, Benjamin, approximately 1726-1791--Correspondence.

Holker, John, 1745-1822.

Huntington, Samuel, 1731-1796--Correspondence.

La Luzerne, Anne-César, chevalier de, 1741-1791--Correspondence.

La Rouërie, Charles Armand Tuffin, marquis de, 1751-1793--Correspondence.

LeGriffon, A. D., merchant--Correspondence.

Mease, James, 1771-1846--Correspondence.

Morris, Gouverneur, 1752-1816--Correspondence.

Morris, Robert, 1734-1806--Correspondence.

Parker, Daniel, merchant--Correspondence.

Peters, Richard, 1744-1828--Correspondence.

Reed, Joseph, 1741-1785--Correspondence.

Ridley, Matthew, 1749-1789--Correspondence.

Ross, John, merchant--Correspondence.

Rutledge, John, 1739-1800--Correspondence.

Sartine, Antoine de, comte d'Alby, 1729-1801--Correspondence.

Smith, William, merchant--Correspondence.

Stillman, George W.

Turnbull, William--Correspondence.

Organizations

Roulhac & Company (Edenton, N.C.)--Correspondence.

Turnbull, Marmie & Company (Philadelphia, Pa.)--Correspondence.

United States. Continental Congress. Committee of Commerce--Correspondence.

Subjects

Merchants--France.

Merchants--Maryland--Baltimore.

Merchants--Massachusetts--Boston.

Merchants--New York (State)--New York.

Merchants--North Carolina--Edenton.

Merchants--Pennsylvania--Philadelphia.

Places

France--Commerce--United States.

United States--Commerce--France.

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

Occupations

Diplomats.

Merchants.

Provenance

The papers of John Holker, merchant and French consul general in the United States, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1919.

Processing History

The papers of John Holker were arranged and described for microfilming in 1969. The finding aid was revised in 2009.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Holker 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 these papers is available on twenty reels. 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 or reel number, John Holker Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Date	Event
1745	Born near Manchester, England
1767-1768	Married Julia Quessnel in France
1770	Partner with father in a textile mill in Rouen, France
1778	Sailed from France to America
1778	Arrived in Philadelphia, Pa. Commissioned as French consul and agent for the Royal Marine in North America
1781	Entered into business partnership with Robert Morris
1783	Dismissed, by Dormesson, comptroller-general of French Finances, as consul general of France in America and as agent for the French Royal Marine Set up peacetime business partnerships with Turnbull, Marmie & Co., Philadelphia, Pa., and with Parker, Duer & Co., New York, N.Y.
1784	Terminated partnership with Robert Morris over settlement of their accounts
1806	Married Hannah Hay Cooper
1815	Married Ann Davis Stillman
1822	Died

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Holker (1745-1822) date from 1777 to 1822. Holker was agent of marine for the French fleet in America as well as consul general and was closely associated with the business of supplying the French Army. He was the partner of Robert Morris, William Turnbull, and William Duer; and his private ventures in trade, coupled with his official activities, present a picture of the commerce of the United States during the Revolutionary War and provide source materials for the history of a considerable portion of the French assistance, military and economic, to the struggling colonies. The papers also contain material relating to the commerce of the United States from the close of the Revolution to the adoption of the Constitution

Holker was a silent partner in the firm of Parker, Duer & Company, contractors for supplying provisions to the Continental Army. Parker was one of the commissioners for superintending the embarkation of the British at the evacuation of New York City in 1783. Parker afterwards fled to Paris, and many of the later papers in this collection relate to Duer's and Holker's efforts to obtain redress from him through the courts. Also in the papers are accounts and correspondence relating to the purchase of horses for the French cavalry in 1780, in which the names of the owners and the price and description of each animal is given; the expenditures for the French fleet at Boston, 1778-1780; the report, attested by Tarle, of the expense of the French expeditionary force at Newport, Rhode Island, dated 28 October 1780; accounts of the proceeds of the sale of prizes taken by D'Estaing's fleet, 1778-1781; returns of clothing issued to the light infantry under Lafayette, 26 September 1780; sundry returns of French prisoners on board the ill-famed British prison ships *Jersey*, *Scorpion*, and others, August and September 1780; an account of the loss of the ship *Soucy*, which contains Simeon Deane's description of the capture and burning of Portsmouth, Virginia, by the British in May 1779; John Mitchell's account of expenditures for the French fleet, 1780-1781; and bills of exchange negotiated by Holker, 1780-1781, for the expenses of the French Navy in America.

The papers also contain material relating to the affairs of the Continental Navy Board and to Robert Morris's management of army subsistence affairs, as developed in the suit instituted by Holker against Morris for alleged mishandling of contracts. There is also a small but interesting correspondence between Holker, John Edgar, and Louis Tournier at Kaskaskia and New Orleans, 1785-1787, relating to the fur and ginseng trades.

Letters of more than ordinary interest among the Holker Papers include correspondence from the Commercial Committee of the Continental Congress; from Benjamin Harrison, Robert Morris, William Duer, Richard Peters, Henry Grand, James Wilson, Joseph Reed, John Rutledge, Thomas FitzSimons, James Mease, Matthew Ridley, Benjamin Franklin (various depositions taken before him), Edward Bancroft, Simeon Deane, William Turnbull, Gouverneur Morris, and Samuel Huntington; from the Frenchmen Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont, Marquis de François Jean Chastellux, Conrad Alexandre Gérard, Chevalier de Anne-César La Luzerne, Lieutenant de Clonard, Marquis de Charles Armand Tuffin La Rouërie, Jean-Marie-André de Capriol de Saint Hilaire, and Comte d'Alby Antoine de Sartine; drafts of Holker's letters to La Luzerne, 1780; and his letterbook of Robert Morris's letters, 1778-1779.

Business letters include correspondence with A. D. Le Griffon of Baltimore; Roulhac & Company, Edenton, North Carolina; Daniel Bell, Boston; Daniel Parker, New York; William Smith, Baltimore; and John Ross and Turnbull, Marmie & Company, Philadelphia.

The last items in the collection are two navigational exercise booklets kept by George W. Stillman. Included with the exercises is a journal of a voyage from Boston to Madeira, March 25 to April 11, 1805.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in two series:

- [General Correspondence, 1777-1822](#)
- [Miscellany, 1777-1805](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOX 1-38 REEL 1-19

Series

General Correspondence, 1777-1822

Letters received, copies of letters sent, memoranda, and tabulations.
Arranged chronologically.

BOX 39-41 REEL 19-20

Miscellany, 1777-1805

An invoice book of Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont, correspondence between Holker and Robert Morris, and navigational exercise booklets and a journal of a voyage of George W. Stillman
Arranged by type of material.

Container List

Available on microfilm. Shelf no. 14,488

Container	Contents
BOX 1-38 REEL 1-19	General Correspondence, 1777-1822 Letters received, copies of letters sent, memoranda, and tabulations. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1 REEL 1	25 June 1777-10 Dec. 1778
BOX 2 REEL 1	12 Dec. 1778-26 Feb. 1779
BOX 3 REEL 2	27 Feb.-26 May 1779
BOX 4 REEL 2	27 May-26 July 1779
BOX 5 REEL 3	27 July-18 Sept. 1779
BOX 6 REEL 3	20 Sept.-25 Nov. 1779
BOX 7 REEL 4	26 Nov. 1779-3 Jan. 1780
BOX 8 REEL 4	4 Jan.-29 Feb. 1780
BOX 9 REEL 5	1 Mar.-30 Apr. 1780
BOX 10 REEL 5	2 May-30 June 1780
BOX 11 REEL 6	1 July-5 Aug. 1780
BOX 12 REEL 6	7 Aug.-28 Sept. 1780
BOX 13 REEL 7	29 Sept.-31 Dec. 1780
BOX 14 REEL 7	3 Jan.-30 Apr. 1781
BOX 15 REEL 8	1 May-29 Oct. 1781
BOX 16 REEL 8	3 Nov.-31 Dec. 1781
BOX 17 REEL 8	1 Jan.-30 May 1782
BOX 18 REEL 9	1 June-20 Dec. 1782
BOX 19 REEL 9	21 Dec. 1782-28 Feb. 1783
BOX 20 REEL 10	1 Mar.-20 May 1783
BOX 21 REEL 10	22 May-31 Aug. 1783
BOX 22 REEL 11	1 Sept.-21 Nov. 1783
BOX 23 REEL 11	21 Nov.-31 Dec. 1783
BOX 24 REEL 12	1 Jan.-14 Mar. 1784
BOX 25> REEL 12	15 Mar.-14 May 1784
BOX 26 REEL 13	15 May-10 July 1784
BOX 27 REEL 13	12 July-30 Nov. 1784
BOX 28 REEL 14	1 Dec. 1784-28 Feb. 1785
BOX 29 REEL 14	1 Mar.-12 Oct. 1785
BOX 30 REEL 15	13 Oct. 1785-28 June 1786
BOX 31 REEL 15	3 July 1786-28 Dec. 1787
BOX 32 REEL 16	1 Jan. 1788-31 Aug. 1789
BOX 33 REEL 16	10 Sept. 1789-28 Sept. 1790
BOX 34 REEL 17	29 Sept. 1790-21 Apr. 1798
BOX 35 REEL 17	23 Apr. 1798-13 Oct. 1802
BOX 36 REEL 18	28 Oct. 1802-10 Apr. 1810
BOX 37 REEL 18	12 Apr. 1810-31 May 1817

General Correspondence, 1777-1822

Container	Contents
BOX 38 REEL 19	1 June 1817-4 Mar. 1822
BOX 39-41 REEL 19-20	Miscellany, 1777-1805 An invoice book of Jacques-Donatien Leray de Chaumont, correspondence between Holker and Robert Morris, and navigational exercise booklets and a journal of a voyage of George W. Stillman Arranged by type of material.
BOX 39 REEL 19	Chaumont, Jacques-Donatien Leray de, invoice book, 1777-1779
BOX 40 REEL 20	Morris, Robert, correspondence with Holker, 1778-1779
BOX 41 REEL 20	Stillman, George W., navigational exercise booklets and journal of a voyage from Boston, Mass., to Madeira, Spain, 25 Mar.-11 Apr. 1805 (2 vols.)