

Edmund Ross Colhoun Papers

A Finding Aid to the Papers in the Naval Historical Foundation Collection in the Library of Congress



**Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2023**

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

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm70021303>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011092>

Prepared by Manuscript Division staff

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Revised 2023 November

Collection Summary

Title: Edmund Ross Colhoun Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1821-1918

Bulk Dates: 1839-1874

ID No.: MSS21303

Creator: Colhoun, Edmund Ross, 1821-1897

Extent: 1,200 items

Extent: 9 containers

Extent: 3.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm70021303>

Summary: Naval officer. Correspondence, journals, notebooks, official records, printed matter, and miscellaneous material relating to Colhoun's service with the Mediterranean and Brazil squadrons before the Civil War, his command of ships of blockade squadrons during the Civil War, and his command of the Asiatic Squadron.

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

Colhoun, Edmund Ross, 1821-1897.

Organizations

Albany (Sloop of war)

Congress (Frigate : 1841-1862)

Hartford (Ship)

Ladona (Steamer)

St. Lawrence (Frigate)

United States. Navy--Foreign service--East Asia.

United States. Navy--Foreign service--Mediterranean Sea.

United States. Navy--Foreign service--South Atlantic Ocean.

United States. Navy. Asiatic Squadron.

United States. Navy. Mediterranean Squadron.

United States. Navy. Naval Force, Asiatic Station.

United States. Navy. South Atlantic Squadron.

Places

East Asia--Foreign relations--United States.

United States--Foreign relations--East Asia.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Blockades.

United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Naval operations, American.

Occupations

Naval officers.

Acquisition Information

The papers of Edmund Ross Colhoun, naval officer, were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1950 and converted to a gift in 1998.

Processing History

The papers of Edmund Ross Colhoun were arranged and described in 1967 by John P. Butler. The finding aid was revised in 2011 by Joseph K. Brooks. The finding aid was updated in 2023 by Maria Farmer as part of a division-wide remediation project by the Inclusive Description Working Group.

Additional Guides

In 1967 the Library published *Edmund Ross Colhoun, Charles O'Neil: A Register of Their Papers in the Library of Congress*.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Edmund Ross Colhoun 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, Edmund Ross Colhoun, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

| Date | Event |
|-------------|--|
| 1821, May 6 | Born, Chambersburg, Pa. |
| 1839 | Appointed midshipman, United States Navy |
| 1839-1941 | Duty aboard the <i>Marion</i> (sloop), Brazil Squadron |
| 1842-1844 | Duty aboard <i>Congress</i> (frigate), Mediterranean and Brazil Squadrons |
| 1845 | Attended Naval School, Philadelphia, Pa. and promoted to passed midshipman Married Mary Ann Hays |
| 1846-1847 | Served aboard <i>Cumberland</i> (frigate), Home Squadron |
| 1847-1848 | Served in Mexican War aboard the <i>Albany</i> (sloop of war) |
| 1851-1853 | Served on <i>St. Lawrence</i> (frigate), Pacific Squadron |
| 1853 | Resigned from the navy |
| 1861 | Rejoined the navy as an acting lieutenant |
| 1861-1862 | Commanded <i>Shawsheen</i> (steam tugboat), and <i>Hunchback</i> (steam gunboat), North Atlantic Blockade Squadron In command of <i>Hunchback</i> took part in the battle of Roanoke Island, N. C., and engagements on the Blackwater River in Virginia |
| 1862 | Promoted to commander |
| 1863 | Commanded <i>Ladona</i> (steamer), North Atlantic Blockade Squadron; and <i>Weehawken</i> (monitor), South Atlantic Blockade Squadron |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 1864-1865 | Commanded <i>Saugus</i> (monitor), North Atlantic Blockade Squadron, and participated in operations on the James River in Virginia and in operations against Fort Fisher in North Carolina. |
| 1866-1867 | Fleet captain, South Pacific Squadron |
| 1869 | Promoted to captain |
| 1869-1870 | Commanded <i>Dictator</i> (monitor), North Atlantic Fleet |
| 1874 | Commanded <i>Hartford</i> (sloop of war), flagship of Asiatic Squadron |
| 1874-1875 | Commanded <i>Richmond</i> (sloop of war), flagship of South Pacific Squadron |
| 1876 | Promoted to commodore |
| 1877-1881 | Commander, Mare Island Navy Yard, Calif. |
| 1882 | Promoted to rear admiral |
| 1883 | Retired from the navy |
| 1897, Feb. 17 | Died, Washington, D. C. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Edmund Ross Colhoun (1821-1897), spanning the years from his appointment as a midshipman in 1839 to 1888, are organized into four series: [Journals, Letterbooks, Letterpress Books, and Notebooks](#); [Correspondence](#); [Asiatic Station Official Records](#); and [Miscellany](#).

The bulk of the [Journals](#) series relates to when Colhoun was stationed in the Pacific as commander of the Asiatic Squadron. Journals, notebooks, and letterpress books from his flagship *Hartford* account for most of the material from this period. Also part of the series are journals, logbooks, and rosters relating to Colhoun's service on the *Congress*, *Albany*, and *St. Lawrence* before the Civil War and his command of the *Ladona* and *Saugus* during the war.

The [Correspondence](#) is almost all official and includes Colhoun's orders to duty and reports on battles and operations during the Civil War. Letters in the [Correspondence](#) and in the [Asiatic Station Official Records](#) document Colhoun's interest in maintaining American prestige in China and Japan. The fleet records of the [Asiatic Station Official Records](#) also provide insight into the everyday needs, requirements, and activities of the Asiatic Squadron. With the [Correspondence](#), they document diplomatic and consular activities reflecting the interest of the American navy in the territorial and diplomatic affairs of the American community in Asia.

The [Miscellany](#) series includes copies of the general orders originated and issued by Colhoun as commander of the Asiatic fleet, his commissions and appointments, mathematical problems on which he worked, and a few items of printed matter mainly concerned with the Civil War years.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [Journals, Letterbooks, Letterpress Books, and Notebooks, 1842-1874](#)
- [Correspondence, 1839-1888](#)
- [Asiatic Station Official Records, 1873-1874](#)
- [Miscellany, 1845-1918](#)

Description of Series

| Container | Series |
|-----------|--|
| BOX 1-3 | <p><u>Journals, Letterbooks, Letterpress Books, and Notebooks, 1842-1874</u></p> <p>Copies of letters sent, journals, log abstracts, navigational data, crew listings, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically.</p> |
| BOX 4-7 | <p><u>Correspondence, 1839-1888</u></p> <p>Letters, orders to duty, official correspondence received, and a few copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically.</p> |
| BOX 8 | <p><u>Asiatic Station Official Records, 1873-1874</u></p> <p>Reports, requisitions, punishment lists, appropriations, inventories, and miscellaneous papers. Arranged by subject.</p> |
| BOX 9 | <p><u>Miscellany, 1845-1918</u></p> <p>Printed matter, general orders, memoranda, mathematical calculations, commissions and awards, photographs, and newspaper clippings. Arranged by type of material.</p> |

Container List

| Container | Contents |
|-----------|---|
| BOX 1-3 | Journals, Letterbooks, Letterpress Books, and Notebooks, 1842-1874 Copies of letters sent, journals, log abstracts, navigational data, crew listings, and miscellaneous items. Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 1 | <i>Congress</i> (frigate), Mediterranean Station, journal, 1842-1844 |
| BOX 1 | Chronometer rate book, <i>Albany</i> (sloop of war), South Atlantic Squadron, 1849-1850 |
| BOX 1 | Journal, <i>Albany</i> (sloop of war), South Atlantic Squadron and <i>St. Lawrence</i> (frigate), Pacific Squadron, 1849-1852 |
| BOX 1 | Celestial navigation book, <i>St. Lawrence</i> (frigate), Pacific Squadron, 1851-1853 |
| BOX 1 | Notebook and logbook, <i>Ladona</i> (steamer), North Atlantic Blockade Squadron, 1863-1864 |
| BOX 1 | Roster book, <i>Saugus</i> (monitor), North Atlantic blockade Squadron, 1865 |
| BOX 1 | Notebooks, 1866-1874 (2 vols.) |
| BOX 2 | <i>Hartford</i> , flagship of the Asiatic Squadron, letterpress books |
| BOX 2 | To commanding officers, 1873-1874 |
| BOX 2 | To Navy Department bureaus, 1873-1874 |
| BOX 2 | To George M. Robeson, secretary of the navy, 1873-1874 |
| BOX 2 | Orders to the fleet, 1873-1874 |
| BOX 2 | <i>Hartford</i> , flagship of the Asiatic Squadron, letter record book, to the secretary of the navy and Navy Department bureaus, 1873-1874 |
| BOX 3 | Letterbook, <i>Hartford</i> , Asiatic Station, and <i>Richmond</i> , Pacific Station, 1873-1875 |
| BOX 3 | Journal, <i>Hartford</i> , Asiatic Station, and <i>Richmond</i> , Pacific Station, 1873-1875 |
| BOX 4-7 | Correspondence, 1839-1888 Letters, orders to duty, official correspondence received, and a few copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically. |
| BOX 4 | 1839-1863 (12 folders) |
| BOX 5 | 1864-1869 (10 folders) |
| BOX 6 | 1870-1873 (9 folders) |
| BOX 7 | 1874-1888 (10 folders) |
| BOX 8 | Asiatic Station Official Records, 1873-1874 Reports, requisitions, punishment lists, appropriations, inventories, and miscellaneous papers. Arranged by subject. |
| BOX 8 | Inventories |
| BOX 8 | Punishment records |

Asiatic Station Official Records, 1873-1874

| Container | Contents |
|------------------|--|
| BOX 8 | Requisitions |
| BOX 8 | Miscellany |
| BOX 9 | Miscellany, 1845-1918 Printed matter, general orders, memoranda, mathematical calculations, commissions and awards, photographs, and newspaper clippings. Arranged by type of material. |
| BOX 9 | Commissions, 1845-1869 |
| BOX 9 | Memoranda and notes, 1845-1863 |
| BOX 9 | Printed matter, 1860-1881 |
| BOX 9 | Newspaper clippings, 1862-1882 |
| BOX 9 | Photographs, 1883, 1918 |