

Porter Family Papers

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



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

2005

Revised 2010 April

Contact information:

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

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<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms007026>

LC Online Catalog record:

<http://lcn.loc.gov/mm70053041>

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Revised by Michael Spangler

Collection Summary

Title: Porter Family Papers

Span Dates: 1811-1881

ID No.: MSS53041

Creator: Porter family

Extent: 100 items ; 2 containers ; .6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Summary: Naval officers and authors. Papers of David Porter (1780-1843) and his son, David Dixon Porter (1813-1891) relating to their naval careers and families.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Goff, Nathan, 1843-1920--Correspondence.

Hambleton, Samuel, 1777-1851--Correspondence.

Hunt, William H. (William Henry), 1823-1883--Correspondence.

McCorkle, James P.--Correspondence.

Porter family.

Porter, David D. (David Dixon), 1813-1891. David D. Porter papers. 1861-1881.

Porter, David, 1780-1843. David Porter papers. 1811-1841.

Porter, Evelina Anderson, 1790-1871--Correspondence.

Porter, George Ann Patterson--Correspondence.

Seward, William Henry, 1801-1872--Correspondence.

Thompson, Richard W. (Richard Wigginton), 1809-1900--Correspondence.

Walker, George W.--Correspondence.

Organizations

Essex (Frigate)

Mexico. Armada.

Places

Minorca (Spain)--Social life and customs.

New Orleans (La.)--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

Occupations

Authors.

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Porter Family Papers were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1949. The deposit was converted to a gift by the foundation in 1998.

Processing History

The Porter Family Papers were arranged and described in 1974. The finding aid was revised in 2005.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the Porter family is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Porter family 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, Porter Family Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

David Porter

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1780, Feb. 1	Born, Boston, Mass.
1798	Appointed midshipman, United States Navy Duty on <i>Constellation</i> (frigate)
1799	Duty on <i>Experiment</i> (schooner), West India Squadron
1801	Duty on <i>Enterprize</i> (schooner), Tripolitan War
1803	Duty on <i>Philadelphia</i> (frigate), Tripolitan War
1803-1805	Prisoner of war, Tripoli
1808	Married Evelina Anderson
1808-1810	Commandant, New Orleans Naval Station
1811-1814	Commanded <i>Essex</i> (frigate)
1812	Promoted to captain
1815	Published <i>Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean</i> . Philadelphia: Bradford & Inskeep
1815-1823	Commissioner, Navy Board
1823-1825	Commander in chief, West India Squadron
1825	Published <i>An Exposition of the Facts and Circumstances Which Justified the Expedition to Foxardo</i> . Washington: Printed by Davis & Force
1826	Resigned from United States Navy
1826-1829	Commander in chief, Mexican Navy

1830 Appointed United States consul general, Algiers

1831 Appointed United States chargé d'affaires, Turkey

1835 Published *Constantinople and Its Environs*. New York: Harper. 2 vols.

1839 Appointed United States Minister, Turkey

1843, Mar. 3 Died, Pera, Constantinople

David Dixon Porter

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1813, June 8	Born, Chester, Pa.
1827	Appointed midshipman, Mexican Navy
1829	Appointed midshipman, United States Navy Duty on <i>Constellation</i> (frigate), Mediterranean Station
1839	Married George Ann Patterson
1842	Duty on <i>Congress</i> (frigate)
1847	Duty on <i>Spitfire</i> (side-wheel gunboat)
1849	Commanded <i>Panama</i> (steamer)
1850-1853	Commanded <i>Georgia</i> (steamer)
1855	Commanded <i>Supply</i> (ship)
1857	Duty at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Va.
1861	Commanded <i>Powhatan</i> (side-wheel steamer)
1863	Commander, Mississippi Squadron Promoted to rear admiral
1864	Commander, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron
1865-1869	Superintendent, United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1866	Promoted to vice admiral
1866-1867	Diplomatic mission to Santo Domingo
1870	Promoted to admiral
1875	Published <i>Memoir of Commodore David Porter</i> . Albany, N.Y.: J. Munsell

1877-1891	Chairman, Naval Board of Inspection
1885	Published <i>The Adventures of Harry Marline</i> . New York: D. Appleton Published <i>Allan Dare and Robert le Diable</i> . New York: D. Appleton. 2 vols. Published <i>Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War</i> . New York: D. Appleton
1886	Published <i>The Naval History of the Civil War</i> . New York: Sherman Publishing Co.
1889	Published <i>Arthur Merton</i> . New York: D. Appleton
1891, Feb. 13	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Porter family document the careers of naval officers David Porter (1780-1843) and his son, David Dixon Porter (1813-1891). The collection spans the years 1811-1881 and consists primarily of correspondence and letterbooks. The material is organized as the papers of each man and arranged alphabetically thereunder by type of material or name of person.

Letters from David Porter to his friend Samuel Hambleton in 1811-1812 describe his command of the frigate *Essex* charged with protecting Atlantic coast merchantmen. In a letter dated October 19, 1812, Porter related to Hambleton that "In two or three days I sail on a long, a very long cruize [sic], our destinations and intended movements I am not at liberty to divulge, perhaps a more important cruize was never undertaken by the vessels of any nation and I have the vanity to believe that my plans for the 'first campaign' produced it." Soon thereafter in early 1813, Porter took the *Essex* around Cape Horn to safeguard American whalers and in so doing commanded the first United States naval vessel to sail into the Pacific Ocean. Letters to his wife Evelina Anderson Porter relate details of his service as commander in chief of the Mexican Navy in 1826-1829 and of domestic affairs while living in Port Mahón on the Mediterranean island of Minorca in 1830. Other recipients of letters in the file include James P. McCorkle and George W. Walker. Also included is a draft of Porter's resignation as commander in chief of the Mexican Navy and his will dictated in San Stefano, Turkey.

Official letterbooks of David Dixon Porter from the periods 1867-1869 and 1878-1881 comprise the bulk of the collection and contain copies of letters to three secretaries of the navy, Richard W. Thompson, Nathan Goff, and William H. Hunt. A letter from Porter while in New Orleans in 1862 to his wife George Ann Porter recounted the bitterness of their southern relatives under Union occupation of that city. Other items include printed naval general orders and circulars.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is organized as the papers of each man and arranged alphabetically thereunder by type of material or name of person.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1	Porter, David
BOX 1	Correspondence
BOX 1	Hambleton, Samuel, 1811-1814
BOX 1	McCorkle, James P., 1830
BOX 1	Porter, Evelina Anderson, 1826-1830
BOX 1	Walker, George W., circa 1823
BOX 1	Draft of resignation from Mexican navy, circa 1829
BOX 1	Will, 1841
BOX 1	Porter, David Dixon
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1861-1862
BOX 1	General orders and circulars, North Atlantic Squadron and European Fleet, 1864-1873
BOX 1	Letterbooks
BOX 1	1867-1869
BOX 2	1878-1881 (2 vols.)