

John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren Papers

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by Michael Spangler



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2007

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Latest revision: 2010 July

Collection Summary

Title: John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren Papers

Span Dates: 1794-1889

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1826-1870)

ID No.: MSS17624

Creator: Dahlgren, John Adolphus Bernard, 1809-1870

Extent: 10,000 items; 38 containers plus 3 oversize; 15.6 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: United States naval officer, inventor, and author. Correspondence, letterbooks, journals, reports, logbooks, orders, notebooks, nautical charts and calculations, scrapbooks, and design drawings related to Dahlgren's activities in the development of ordnance for the United States Navy and as chief of the Bureau of Ordnance.

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

Dahlgren, John Adolphus Bernard, 1809-1870.

Dahlgren, Ulric, 1842-1864--Correspondence.

Du Pont, Samuel Francis, 1803-1865--Correspondence.

Foote, Andrew H. (Andrew Hull), 1806-1863--Correspondence.

Fox, Gustavus Vasa, 1821-1883--Correspondence.

Welles, Gideon, 1802-1878--Correspondence.

Organizations

United States. Navy Dept. Bureau of Ordnance.

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

United States. Navy--Ordnance and ordnance stores.

Subjects

Ordnance--Design and construction.

Places

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

Occupations

Authors.

Inventors.

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren, United States naval officer, inventor, and author, were purchased by the Library of Congress in 1931 and 1939.

Processing History

The papers of John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren were arranged and described in 1962. The finding aid was revised in 1998 and 2010, and the collection was partially reorganized in 2007.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren 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, John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1809, Nov. 13	Born, Philadelphia, Pa.
1826	Appointed acting midshipman, United States Navy
1833	Assigned to naval station, Philadelphia, Pa.
1834	Ordered to duty, United States Coast Survey
1839	Married Mary C. Bunker
1847	Ordered to Washington, D.C., for ordnance duty, United States Navy
1861	Took command of the Washington Navy Yard
1862	Appointed chief, Bureau of Ordnance, United States Navy
1863	Relieved Samuel Francis Du Pont in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron
1866	Assigned command of the South Pacific Squadron
1869	Returned as chief of the Bureau of Ordnance
1870, July 12	Died, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren (1809-1870) span the years 1794-1889, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1826-1870. The collection includes correspondence, letterbooks, journals, ordnance records, reports, official memoranda, notebooks, nautical charts and calculations, design drawings, logbooks, scrapbooks, and printed matter and is organized in the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Letterbooks](#), [Naval Ordnance Records](#), [Miscellany](#), and [Oversize](#). The papers document chiefly Dahlgren's pioneering career in the development of

ordnance for the United States Navy and as chief of the Bureau of Ordnance. Notable in the collection is correspondence between Dahlgren and his son, Ulric, journals kept by Dahlgren on early cruises as a midshipman, and ships' logs recording his activities in the South Atlantic during the Civil War. Correspondents include Samuel Francis Du Pont, Andrew H. Foote, Gustavus Vasa Fox, and Gideon Welles.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in five series:

- [General Correspondence, 1824-1889](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1859-1870](#)
- [Naval Ordnance Records, 1826-1870](#)
- [Miscellany, 1794-1889](#)
- [Oversize, 1846-1868](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-7	<u>General Correspondence, 1824-1889</u> Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 8-18	<u>Letterbooks, 1859-1870</u> Primarily copies of letters sent. Organized alphabetically by type of file or subject and therein chronologically.
BOX 19-30	<u>Naval Ordnance Records, 1826-1870</u> Reports, memoranda, notes and calculations. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 31-38	<u>Miscellany, 1794-1889</u> Journals, notebooks, logbooks, orders, reports, charts, designs, drawings, scrapbooks, clippings, receipts, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.
BOX OV 1-OV 3	<u>Oversize, 1846-1868</u> Letterbook, letter, charts, designs, and drawings. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which they were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-7	General Correspondence, 1824-1889 Letters received and copies of letters sent. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1824-1849 (25 folders)
BOX 2	1850-1855 (7 folders)
BOX 3	1856-1858, June (4 folders)
BOX 4	1858, July-1861, Aug. (6 folders)
BOX 5	1861, Sept.-1863, July (7 folders)
BOX 6	1863, Aug.-1867 (5 folders)
BOX 7	1868-1889, undated (9 folders)
BOX 8-18	Letterbooks, 1859-1870 Primarily copies of letters sent. Organized alphabetically by type of file or subject and therein chronologically.
BOX 8	Chronological file
BOX 8	1863, June-Nov. (4 vols.)
BOX 9	1863, Nov.-1864, Apr. (3 vols.)
BOX 10	1864, Apr.-June (2 vols.)
BOX 11	1864, June-Sept. (2 vols.)
BOX 12	1864, Sept.-Dec. (3 vols.)
BOX 13	1864, Dec.-1865, Mar. (3 vols.)
BOX 14	1865, Mar.-June (2 vols.)
BOX 14	Dahlgren, Ulric (1842-1864) (son), 1859, Mar.-1864, Feb. <i><u>See Oversize</u></i>
BOX 15	Extracts from consular dispatches, 1864, Mar.-1867, Jan.
BOX 15	Ironclad reports, 1863, July-1864, Feb. (2 vols.)

Letterbooks, 1859-1870

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 15	Letters and general orders, 1866, Sept.-1867, Mar.
BOX 15	Miscellaneous correspondence, 1864, Dec.-1870, July (3 vols.)
BOX 16	Naval correspondence
BOX 16	1863, June-1864, Aug. (4 vols.)
BOX 17	1864, Aug.-1865, June (3 vols.)
BOX 18	South Pacific Squadron, 1866, Sept.-1868, Apr.
BOX 19-30	Naval Ordnance Records, 1826-1870 Reports, memoranda, notes and calculations. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 19	1826-1848 (2 folders)
BOX 20	1849-1851 (5 folders)
BOX 21	1852-1854 (5 folders)
BOX 22	1855-1856 (3 folders)
BOX 23	1856-1857 (3 folders)
BOX 24	1858-1860 (5 folders)
BOX 25	1860-1861 (4 folders)
BOX 26	1862-1864 (4 folders)
BOX 27	1865-1866 (3 folders)
BOX 28	1867-1870, undated (5 folders)
BOX 29	Undated (3 folders)
BOX 30	(3 folders)
BOX 31-38	Miscellany, 1794-1889 Journals, notebooks, logbooks, orders, reports, charts, designs, drawings, scrapbooks, clippings, receipts, and printed matter. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.
BOX 31	Admiral's logs, 1863-1865, undated (6 vols.)
BOX 32	Charts, designs, and drawings, 1846-1868, undated <i><u>See also Oversize</u></i> (3 folders)
BOX 33	Clippings, 1834, 1854-1870, undated
BOX 33	Journals

Miscellany, 1794-1889

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 33	Dahlgren, John Adolphus Bernard, 1826-1828, 1847, 1861 (2 folders)
BOX 33	Dahlgren, Ulric, 1863-1864
BOX 34	Navy registers, 1826-1834, 1865-1869
BOX 34	Notebooks, 1865-1867, undated
BOX 34	Notes on seamanship, celestial navigation, and government, 1826-1833 (2 folders)
BOX 34	Orders, 1844, 1864-1868 (3 vols.)
BOX 35	Printed matter
BOX 35	1820-1889, undated (2 folders)
BOX 36	(1 folder)
BOX 36	Prizes taken, 1863-1865 (2 vols.)
BOX 36	Range practice and other ordnance reports
BOX 36	1848-1849 (1 vol.)
BOX 37	(1 vol.)
BOX 37	1857-1858
BOX 37	Receipts, 1830s-1850s
BOX 37	Register of documents received and forwarded, 1865-1868
BOX 37	Scrapbooks
BOX 37	Dahlgren, John Adolphus Bernard, 1863-1870
BOX 38	Dahlgren, Ulric, 1861-1865
BOX 38	Staff logs, 1863-1864 (3 vols.)
BOX 38	Unidentified fragments, 1794, 1863, undated
BOX OV 1-OV 3	Oversize, 1846-1868 Letterbook, letter, charts, designs, and drawings. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which they were removed.
BOX OV 1	Letterbooks
BOX OV 1	Dahlgren, Ulric
BOX OV 1	Letter, lithograph, 1864 (Container 14)
BOX OV 2	Volume, 1859, Mar.-1864, Feb. (Container 14)
BOX OV 3	Miscellany
BOX OV 3	Charts, designs, and drawings, 1846-1868, undated (Container 33)