

Rodgers Family Papers

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

Prepared by Ruth S. Nicholson



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Washington, D.C.

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Collection Summary

Title: Rodgers Family Papers

Span Dates: 1788-1944

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1820-1930)

ID No.: MSS011168

Creator: Rodgers family

Extent: 15,500 items ; 60 containers plus 1 oversize ; 20 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Rodgers (Rogers) family. Correspondence, journals, drafts of writings and speeches, transcripts of radio broadcasts, book reviews, notes and notebooks, biographical material, and other papers relating chiefly to the naval careers of John Rodgers (1773-1838), John Rodgers (1812-1882), William Ledyard Rodgers (1860-1944), John Augustus Rodgers (1848-1933), and John Rodgers (1881-1926). Includes correspondence of the Hodge family, Matthew Calbraith Perry, Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819), and other relatives of the Rodgers family.

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

Agassiz, Louis, 1807-1873.

Ammen, Daniel, 1820-1898.

Bainbridge, William, 1774-1833.

Benson, William Shepherd, 1855-1932.

Brooke, John M. (John Mercer), 1826-1906.

Buchanan, James, 1791-1868.

Daniels, Josephus, 1862-1948.

Davis, Charles Henry, 1807-1877.

Decatur, Stephen, 1779-1820.

Du Pont, Sophie.

Farragut, David Glasgow, 1801-1870.

Garfield, Harry Augustus, 1863-1942.

Harrison, William Henry, 1773-1841.

Hodges family.

Hughes, Charles Evans, 1862-1948.

Knox, Dudley Wright, 1877-1960.

Mackenzie, Alexander Slidell, 1803-1848.

McLaughlin, John T. (John Thomas), 1812-1847.

Moore, John Bassett, 1860-1947.

Perry, Matthew Calbraith, 1794-1858. Matthew Calbraith Perry papers.

Perry, Oliver Hazard, 1785-1819. Oliver Hazard Perry papers.

Rodgers, John Augustus, 1848-1933. John Augustus Rodgers papers.

Rodgers, John, 1773-1838. John Rodgers papers.

Rodgers, John, 1812-1882. John Rodgers papers.

Rodgers, John, 1881-1926. John Rodgers papers.

Rodgers, William Ledyard, 1860-1944. William Ledyard Rodgers papers.

Rogers family.

Scott, Winfield, 1786-1866.

Sims, William Sowden, 1858-1936.

Southard, Samuel L. (Samuel Lewis), 1787-1842.

Sumner, Charles, 1811-1874.

Welles, Gideon, 1802-1878.

Wilson, George Grafton, 1863-1951.

Occupations

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of the Rodgers family were deposited in the Library of Congress by the Naval Historical Foundation in 1950. Additional deposits were made 1964-1969, and the collection was converted to a gift in 1998.

Processing History

The Rodgers Family Papers were processed in 1971. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Additional Guides

1972 the Library published *The Rodgers Family, a Register of Their Papers in the Library of Congress*.

Copyright Status

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

Access and Restrictions

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

Biographical Note

John Rodgers (1773-1838)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1773	Born, Harford County, Md.
1786-1797	In merchant marine
1798	Appointed lieutenant, U.S. Navy
1799-1801	Duty in USF <i>Constellation</i>
1802-1803	Commanded USF <i>John Adams</i> , Mediterranean Squadron
1804	Commanded USF <i>Congress</i> , Mediterranean Squadron
1805-1806	Commander in chief, Mediterranean Squadron
1806	Married Minerva Denison
1807	Commander in chief, New York flotilla and New York Naval Station

1810	Appointed commander in chief, North Atlantic Squadron
1812-1814	Commanded USF <i>President</i>
1813	Promoted to commodore
1815-1824	President, Board of Navy Commissioners
1821-1838	Senior officer, U.S. Navy
1823	Secretary of the navy ad interim
1824-1827	Commander in chief, Mediterranean Squadron
1827-1837	President, Board of Navy Commissioners
1838, Aug. 1	Died, Philadelphia, Pa.

John Rodgers (1812-1882)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1812, Aug. 8	Born, Havre de Grace, Md.
1828	Appointed midshipman, U.S. Navy Duty in USF <i>Constellation</i> , Mediterranean Squadron
1831-1832	Duty in USS <i>Concord</i>
1836-1839	Duty in USS <i>Dolphin</i> , Brazil Squadron
1839-1841	Commanded USS <i>Wave</i> , Florida Squadron
1840	Promoted to lieutenant
1841-1842	Commanded USS <i>Jefferson</i> , Florida Squadron
1842-1844	Duty in USS <i>Boxer</i> , Home Squadron
1846-1849	Duty in USF <i>United States</i> and USS <i>Marion</i> , Africa Squadron, and later Mediterranean Squadron
1849-1852	Commanded USS <i>Petrel</i> , USS <i>Hetzel</i> , and USS <i>Legaré</i> , Coast Survey
1852-1854	Commanded USS <i>John Hancock</i> , North Pacific Surveying Expedition
1855	Commanding officer, North Pacific Surveying Expedition Promoted to commander
1857	Married Ann E. Hodge
1861	Special duty, establishment of a "Naval Armament on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers," Cincinnati, Ohio Commanded USS <i>Flag</i> , South Atlantic Blockading Squadron

1862-1863	Commanded USS <i>Galena</i> , USS <i>Weehawken</i> , and USS <i>Canonicus</i>
1863	Commanded USS <i>Dictator</i>
1865-1866	Commander, Special Service Squadron
1866-1869	Commandant, Boston Navy Yard
1869	Promoted to rear admiral
1869-1872	Commanded Asiatic Fleet
1872	President, Examining and Retiring Boards
1873-1877	Commandant, Mare Island Navy Yard, Calif.
1877-1882	Superintendent, U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C.
1879	President, U.S. Naval Institute
1882, May 5	Died, Washington, D.C.

William Ledyard Rodgers

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1860, Feb. 4	Born, Washington, D.C.
1878	Graduated, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.
1878-1879	Duty in USS <i>Pensacola</i>
1880-1881	Duty at U.S. Naval Observatory
1881-1884	Duty in USS <i>Quinneburg</i> , European Station
1898	Duty in USS <i>Foote</i> , South Atlantic Station
1900	Duty in USS <i>Kentucky</i>
1906	Commanded USS <i>Wilmington</i> , Asiatic Fleet
1907-1908	Duty at Army War College
1909-1911	Commanded USS <i>Georgia</i>
1911-1913	President, U.S. Naval War College
1915-1916	Member, General Board of the U.S. Navy
1916	Promoted to rear admiral

1916-1918	Commander of the train, Atlantic Fleet
1919	Promoted to vice admiral Commander in chief, Asiatic Fleet
1921-1922	Member, advisory committee, Conference on Limitation of Armament, Washington, D.C.
1923	Technical adviser, Committee of Jurists on the Laws of War, the Hague
1924	Retired, U.S. Navy
1933-1943	President, Naval Historical Foundation
1937	Published <i>Greek and Roman Naval Warfare</i> . Annapolis, Md.: United States Naval Institute
1939	Published <i>Naval Warfare Under Oars, 4th to 16th Centuries</i> . Annapolis, Md.: United States Naval Institute
1944, May 7	Died, Bethesda, Md.

John Augustus Rodgers

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1848, July 26	Born, Harve de Grace, Md.
1864	Duty in USS <i>Marion</i>
1868	Graduated, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. Duty in USS <i>Lackawanna</i> , North Pacific Squadron
1872	Duty in USS <i>Hartford</i>
1880	Married Elizabeth B. Chambers Duty at U.S. Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.
1883	Duty at Midvale Steel Works, Philadelphia, Pa.
1890	Duty in USS <i>Pensacola</i>
1892	Student, U.S. Naval War College
1897	Executive officer, USS <i>Indiana</i>
1902	Commanded USS <i>Marietta</i>
1904	Commanded USS <i>Illinois</i>
1906	Inspector, Third Lighthouse District, Tompkinsville, N.Y.
1908	Commandant, U.S. Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Wash.
1910	Retired, U.S. Navy

- 1918 Commandant, U.S. Naval Unit, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass.; Boston University, Boston, Mass.; and Tufts College, Medford, Mass.
- 1933, Mar. 2 Died, Harve de Grace, Md.

John Rodgers (1881-1926)

- | <i>Date</i> | <i>Event</i> |
|---------------|---|
| 1881, Jan. 15 | Born, Washington, D.C. |
| 1903 | Graduated, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. |
| 1904 | Duty in USS <i>Cincinnati</i> |
| 1909 | Duty in USS <i>St. Louis</i> |
| 1910 | Duty in USS <i>Pennsylvania</i> |
| 1911 | Qualified as a naval aviator
Duty, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., Naval Aviation Detachment |
| 1911-1912 | Assisted C. P. Rodgers in making the first transcontinental flight in the United States |
| 1912 | Commanded USS <i>Yankton</i> |
| 1916 | Duty in USS <i>Fulton</i> , submarine training
Commanded Division One, Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet |
| 1921 | Executive officer, USS <i>Nevada</i> |
| 1922 | Officer in charge, Navy Recruiting Station, Baltimore, Md. |
| 1922-1925 | Commanded Naval Air Station, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii |
| 1925 | Commanding officer, hydroaeroplane PN-9-1, West coast-Hawaii flight |
| 1926 | Assistant chief, Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington, D.C. |
| 1926, Aug. 27 | Died, Philadelphia, Pa. |

Scope and Content Note

The papers of the Rodgers family contain the papers of Commodore John Rodgers (1773-1838), who fought in the War of 1812 and who for many years was the senior officer in the American navy; his son, Rear Admiral John Rodgers ((1812-1882), who fought in the Civil War; his grandson, Vice Admiral William Ledyard Rodgers, who fought in World War I; and a great-grandson, naval aviator John Rodgers (1881-1926), who commanded a submarine division during World War I. The Rodgers collection also contains some papers of the latter John Rodgers's father, John Augustus Rodgers, who commanded the USS *Indiana* during the Spanish-American War. The collection is organized into four series by name of family member: [John Rodgers \(1773-1838\)](#), [John Rodgers \(1812-1882\)](#), [William Ledyard Rodgers \(1860-1944\)](#), and [John Rodgers \(1881-1926\)](#). Included are journals and notebooks; orders to duty; official, general, and family correspondence; a

speech, article, and book file; and miscellaneous material. The papers span the years 1788-1944, but are concentrated in the period 1820-1930.

The papers of [John Rodgers \(1773-1838\)](#), consist of a letterbook Rodgers kept on board the USS *North Carolina* (chiefly copies of letters to Henry Clay), notebooks, family and general correspondence, and biographical and autobiographical material. Among the principal correspondents are William Bainbridge, Stephen Decatur, James Madison, James Monroe, Mathew Calbraith Perry, Oliver Hazard Perry (1785-1819), David Porter, Thomas O. Selfridge, Samuel L. Southard, and Thomas Tingey. Items of prominence include letters to and from Tingey during the period Tingey was Rodgers "second" in a proposed duel with James Barron; Rodgers's letter to President Madison rejecting his offer of the post of secretary of the navy; and correspondence with the Perry family, related by marriage to Rodgers.

Also in the first series are the papers of Matthew C. Perry and Perry's and Rodgers's nephew, Christopher Raymond Perry Rodgers, as well as letters to and from other naval contemporaries. Significant topics within this material are the Battle of Lake Erie affair and the Somers Mutiny. There are letters from William Henry Harrison and others to Matthew Perry supporting Oliver H. Perry against Jesse D. Elliott in the argument over Elliott's actions during the crucial Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812, and a letter from Charles Sumner to Alexander Slidell Mackenzie (Matthew C. Perry's brother-in-law) supporting Mackenzie's action in hanging the son of the secretary of war for mutiny on the brig *Somers* in 1842. Further material on the mutiny and Mackenzie's resulting court-martial is the miscellany section of Commodore Rodgers's papers and in the papers of Rear [Admiral John Rodgers \(1812-1882\)](#).

The second series in the collection, the papers of [John Rodgers \(1812-1882\)](#) include official correspondence documenting his long and varied service in the navy and a large group of family letters. Rodgers wrote frequently to his wife, Ann H. Rodgers, and his father-in-law, William Ledyard Hodge. In his letters to his wife he wrote detailed accounts of his surroundings and activities, including during the Civil War period. There are also letters to his mother, Minerya D. Rodgers, to his brothers and sisters, and to his sister-in-law, Theodosia M. Hodge. Among the correspondents are Louis Agassiz, Daniel Ammen, John M. Brooke, James Buchanan, Oscar Bullus, Charles H. Davis, Mrs. Samuel Francis Du Pont, David Glasgow Farragut, Ernest R. Knorr, John K. Luttrell, Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, John T. McLaughlin, Matthew Fontaine Maury, Lewis Warrington, and Gideon Welles.

The papers of [William Ledyard Rodgers](#), grandson of the first John Rodgers and son of the second, include official orders, a journal, family and general correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, and printed matter. The correspondence documents William's service as president of the United States Naval War College and in the Asiatic Fleet; his membership on the advisory council to the Conference on Limitation of Armament; his work as technical adviser to the Committee of Jurists on the Laws of War; and his participation in the Institute of Politics at Williams College. Also in the series are speeches, articles, radio broadcasts, and book reviews, as well as the notes, drafts, maps, and illustrations for his two published books. Significant correspondents include William Shepherd Benson, Josephus Daniels, William H. Gardiner, Harry A. Garfield, Charles E. Hughes, H. P. Huse, Dudley W. Knox, John Bassett Moore, William Snowden Sims, and George G. Wilson.

The last series consists mainly of the papers of aviator [John Rodgers \(1881-1926\)](#), but includes the orders to duty of his father, John Augustus Rodgers, from his enrollment at the United States Naval Academy in 1865 until his last order to muster out the naval units of several Boston area colleges in 1919. John Rodgers's papers include logbooks and correspondence relating to his service in naval aviation, in the submarine force, and as commanding officer of the Naval Air Station at Pearl Harbor, but most of the other material pertaining to him concerns an aborted flight to Hawaii from the West Coast of the United States in 1925 and his death in 1926 as a result of an airplane accident while en route from Anacostia, D.C., to Philadelphia. Among the correspondents are Paul M. Bates, Wallace R. Farrington, Stanford E. Moses, and James H. Strong.

Arrangement of the Papers

The collection is arranged in four series:

- [John Rodgers \(1773-1838\), 1788-1941](#)
- [John Rodgers \(1812-1882\), 1809-1897](#)
- [William Ledyard Rodgers \(1860-1944\), 1870-1944](#)
- [John Rodgers \(1881-1926\), 1865-1929](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
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BOX 1-3	<u>General Correspondence, 1803-1850</u> Letters to and from John Rodgers and letters between his contemporaries. Rodgers's letters arranged alphabetically by name of correspondent. Letters between contemporaries are arranged alphabetically by name of sender.
BOX 3-4	<u>Miscellany, 1788-1941</u> Biographical and autobiographical material, official documents, miscellany concerning Matthew Calbraith Perry, and other miscellaneous items. Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.
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- BOX 59** **Orders to Duty, Logbooks, and Correspondence, 1865-1929**
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Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

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BOX 1	Typewritten copies of letters Letters to Rodgers Babbit, William D., 1820, Feb. 8 Bainbridge, William, 1816, July 30; Jan. 16 and 22, Mar. 18, and 1820, Sept. 1 Barney, Joshua, 1828, Feb. 12 Binney, Amos, 1822, Jan. 10, undated Birchmore, William, 1821, Feb. 10 Blake, George, 1824, May 25 Blunt, Edmund M., 1819, Dec. 13 Bollez, Arrele, 1829, Mar. 30 Budd, Charles A., 1812, Sept. 8 Bullus, Charlotte I., 1819, Mar. 3 Cathcart, James L., 1823, Sept. 12 Cromwell, John, 1828, Feb. 26 Dana, Samuel H., 1828, Aug. 29 Davis, Samuel S., 1827, Aug. 23 Decatur, Stephen, undated (3 letters)
BOX 2	English, George B., 1827, Aug. 2 Gales, I., 1815, Apr. 10 Gillis, George, 1815, Apr. 13

Gordon, Alexander G., 1824, Dec. 18
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Gray, Andrew, 1833, Oct. 7
Hamilton, Samuel, 1825, May 15
Hay, Charles, 1825, Dec. 30
Lawrence, James, 1811, Apr. 8
Ludlow, Charles, 1809, Jan. 2
Madison, James, 1818, Nov. 29
Miller, Thomas, 1828, Jan. 26
Monroe, James, 1916, Jan. 26 and 27
Nicholson, J. B., 1825, Sept. 6
Nicholson, Rebecca, 1804, Apr. 30
Nicholson, Samuel, 1807, Sept. 29
Perry, Matthew C., 1827, Nov. 22; Jan. 8, Feb. 4, and 1828, Feb. 6; Perry, Matthew C.,
from John Rodgers, 1831, Apr. 10, 1834, Dec. 17; and 1836, Dec. 2
Perry, Oliver H., 1811, May 8; 1816, Mar. 6; and 1817, July 17
Pinkney, A., 1803, Dec. 8
Porter, David, 1805, June 30
Selfridge, Thomas O., 1828, June 29
Stribling, C. R., 1825, Mar. 3
Shuburne, J. W., 1828, Nov. 11
Southard, Samuel L., July 6, Sept. 7, 8, and 12, and 1825, Dec. 28 and 29; 1825, Apr. 25;
and 1828, May 15
Spence, Robert T., undated
Spencer, R., 1825, Aug. 29
Stricker, John, 1807, Feb. 7
Thaler, William B., 1828, Apr. 20
Thomas, John, 1822, Nov. 15
Tingey, Thomas, 1807, Jan. 31; Tingey, Thomas from John Rodgers, 1806, Nov. 13, and
1807, Feb. 1

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Bainbridge, William, to David Porter, 1820, Mar. 28
Blake, George, to Smith Thompson, 1823, July 30
Bullus, Charlotte I., to Charles W. Goldsborough, 1823, Jan. 11 and Mar. 7
Du Val, E. W. to William Jones, 1814, Nov. 6
Epps, John W., to George Pearce, 1809, Mar. 4
Gregory, Francis H., to James Ramage, 1825, Nov. 10
Harrison, William Henry, to Matthew C. Perry, 1821, Apr. 16 and 1839, Sept. 5
Pettigrew, James Johnston, to Matthew F. Maury, 1850, Oct. 21
Jones, Thomas, to Matthew C. Perry, 1845, July 4
Langdon, John, to Samuel Nicholson, undated
Lewis, Morgan, to Oliver H. Perry, 1813, Apr. 20
Mason, John Young, to Matthew C. Perry, 1848, Nov. 14
Packett, John, to Daniel Turner, 1818, Aug. 10
Rush, Benjamin, to Matthew C. Perry, 1838, Oct. 9
Scott, Winfield, to Matthew C. Perry, 1847, Mar. 22
Sumner, Charles, to Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, 1843, Aug. 17

John Rodgers (1773-1838), 1788-1941

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Warrington, Lewis, to Smith Thompson, 1820, Nov. 20

BOX 3-4

Miscellany, 1788-1941

Biographical and autobiographical material, official documents, miscellany concerning Matthew Calbraith Perry, and other miscellaneous items.
Arranged alphabetically by topic or type of material.

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Biographical file, circa 1870s

Rodgers, John, family biography

Rodgers, Minerva, autobiographical sketch

Rodgers Nannie, autobiographical sketch

Circulars, 1825-1832

Correspondence, 1882-1886, and journal, kept on board the USS *Iroquois*, 1864, of nephew, Christopher Raymond Perry Rodgers

Correspondence of son-in-law, Montgomery C. Meigs, 1862-1867

Court-martial cases, 1825

Individual accounts, 1788-1825

Letter of grandson, Montgomery M. Macomb, 1916

Perry, Matthew C.

Commission from Millard Fillmore, 1852

Material concerning Perry's 1854 expedition to Japan, 1821-1824, and Battle of Lake Erie controversy, 1841

Statement of Samuel Horseley on Battle of Lake Erie, 1821

Statement of Santa Anna, 1847, Nov. 2

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Memoir of Rodgers concerning his imprisonment in Cape Francois, manuscript and typed copy, 1802

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Official documents

Appointment of U.S. vice consul at Paros, 1823

Frederick Rodgers's appointment as midshipman, 1823

Rodgers's disability certificate (War of 1812), 1837

Patent, 1822

Report of the Board of Navy Commissioners, typed copy, 1815

Scrapbook kept by Rodgers

Estimates for provisions, clothing, and money for ships in the Mediterranean, 1825

Newspaper clippings, 1804-1834

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Signal book, circa 1809

Somers mutiny case, 1843

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Verse and miscellaneous writings

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John Rodgers (1812-1882), 1809-1897

BOX 5-20

Notebooks and Official Correspondence, 1828-1881

Orders to duty, letters sent and memoranda received, and general orders on the Florida Expedition, the North Pacific Surveying Expedition, the Civil War and the Asiatic Fleet.
Arranged chronologically.

John Rodgers (1812-1882), 1809-1897

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John Rodgers (1812-1882), 1809-1897

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