

Burnham, John

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on May 24, 2017.

English

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama

Box 870266

Tuscaloosa 35487-0266

archives@ua.edu

URL: <http://www.lib.ua.edu/>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical/Historical note	3
Scope and Contents note	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	5
General	5
Collection Inventory	5
Government Papers and a Memorandum Concerning Burnham, etc.	5
Correspondence	6
Genealogical Materials and Related Items	6

Summary Information

Repository:	University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama
Creator:	Burnham, John
Title:	John Burnham papers
ID:	MSS.0233
Date [inclusive]:	1792-1832/1943?
Physical Description:	0.4 Linear Feet 105 items
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	Correspondence and other material relating to the captivity of Captain John Burnham in Algiers, 1793-94, his attempts to buy his freedom and subsequent efforts to secure reimbursement from Congress.

Preferred Citation

John Burnham papers, W.S. Hoole Special Collections Library, The University of Alabama.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical/Historical note

John Burnham was probably born in Wethersfield, Connecticut on October 15, 1758. At age fifteen he volunteered for service in the Revolutionary Army and served for two years in this capacity. In 1777, Congress called him to service and he enlisted for a three year period. Also, in 1777, he was taken prisoner by the British and held on the British ship Good Intent which was lying off of the coast of New York. After his release from the ship, he served out the duration of his term of enlistment. His time of service consisted of 5 years in all.

After peace with Great Britain, Burnham became a sailor. He served as master of the ship Camilla for a period of time and accumulated a small fortune. In April of 1792, he took command of the ship Hope. On October 6, 1793, while transporting cargo to Malaga, he was taken prisoner near the straits of Gibraltar by an Algerian corsair, stripped of all his possessions, and made a slave.

While in captivity, Burnham wrote the British consul in Cadiz, Spain, James Duff (a personal friend), to ask that Duff attempt to secure his release. Eventually, Duff went to Algiers with the sum of \$4,400

which he gave to the Swedish consul. The Swedish consul then secured Burnham's release in April 1794, after six months of imprisonment. After his release, Burnham may have suffered from a form of paralysis caused by his ill-treatment during his captivity. From 1794 until at least 1832 Burnham sought reimbursement from Congress for the ransom paid to secure his release.

On his return from Algiers, Burnham went to Philadelphia and interceded with the government to arrange the release of other Americans remaining in Algiers. He was given an audience with President Washington for this purpose. Burnham married Barbara McCarthy, daughter of Judge McCarthy and Mrs. McCarthy (Caroline Lanford), all of Wethersfield, Connecticut, on October 15, 1798. Burnham and his wife had at least one daughter- Caroline Duff Burnham. In later life Burnham lived in Auburn, New York. He died on October 7, 1837.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents note

These papers consist of correspondence, congressional reports, and other materials. The majority deal with Burnham's capture by an Algerian corsair off Gibraltar, his captivity in Algiers, 1793-1794, his attempts to secure his release, and his subsequent efforts to receive reimbursement from the U.S. Congress for the amount of the ransom paid. Some of the papers; however, deal with other matters, including Burnham's voyages, and family matters.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

University Libraries Division of Special Collections, The University of Alabama

Box 870266

Tuscaloosa 35487-0266

archives@ua.edu

URL: <http://www.lib.ua.edu/>

Provenance

gift of W. H. Mitchell, 1969

Processed by

Lloyd W. Bardell

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Reports
- Correspondence
- Financial records
- Government, Law and Politics
- Travel and Tourism
- War and Military
- Daily Life and Family
- Genealogies
- Burnham, John
- Burnham, John

General

To provide faster access to our materials, this finding aid was published without formal and final review. Email us at archives@ua.edu if you find mistakes or have suggestions to make this finding aid more useful for your research.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Government Papers and a Memorandum Concerning Burnham, etc.

Scope and Contents

Papers, reports and a memorandum concerning Burnham.

Title/Description	Instances
Paper commissioning John Burnham (June, 1793), June 1793	box 125 folder 1

Date [inclusive]: June 1793

Congressional reports on Burnham (1829-1831), 1829-1831 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1829-1831	box 125	folder 2
Memorandum concerning Burnham [1831?-1832?]	box 125	folder 3
Ship's Invoice (July, 1793), July 1793 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> July 1793	box 125	folder 4

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Correspondence

Scope and Contents

The incoming and outgoing correspondence of John Burnham, 1792-1796

Title/Description	Instances	
Outgoing correspondence, 1792-1796, 1792-1796 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1792-1796	box 125	folder 5
Incoming correspondence, 1793-1795, 1793-1795 <u>Date [inclusive]:</u> 1793-1795	box 125	folder 6

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Miscellaneous items	box 125	folder 7
---------------------	---------	----------

Geneological Materials and Related Items

Scope and Contents

Materials relating to the genealogy of the Caswell, Chest, Ford, Hood, Johnes, McCarthy, Swoopes, Talcott, Thompson, et al. families

Title/Description	Instances	
General geneological materials	box 125	folder 8
Caswell geneological papers	box 125	folder 9
Correspondence and pamphlets on the Ford family of Morristown, N.J.	box 125	folder 10
Correspondence and other materials to Mrs. John Hood	box 125	folder 11
Papers concerning the disposition of the property of Mrs. John Hood	box 125	folder 12
Book of genealogy the Johnes family	box 125	folder 13
Correspondence and geneological papers on the Swoopes family	box 125	folder 14

Miscellaneous items - general

box 125

folder 15

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)