

Thomas Oliver Selfridge 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.

2011

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Congress Manuscript Division, 2012

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Collection Summary

Title: Thomas Oliver Selfridge Papers

Span Dates: 1809-1927

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1809-1870)

ID No.: MSS52712

Creator: Selfridge, Thomas Oliver, 1804-1902

Extent: 750 items ; 10 containers ; 3 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

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

Abstract: Naval officer. Correspondence, journals, logbooks, and notebooks relating to Selfridge's naval career. Includes material relating to the side-wheel steamer *Mississippi* and the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, which were commanded by Selfridge, and to the Naval Examining Board over which he presided.

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

Ballard, Henry E.--Correspondence.

Belknap, George E. (George Eugene), 1832-1903--Correspondence.

Crossman, A. F., d. 1872--Correspondence.

Grice, Francis E., b. 1829--Correspondence.

Porter, David D. (David Dixon), 1813-1891--Correspondence.

Selfridge, T. O. (Thomas Oliver), 1836-1924--Correspondence.

Selfridge, Thomas Oliver, 1804-1902.

Organizations

Mare Island Naval Shipyard.

Mississippi (Side-wheel steamer)

United States. Naval Examining Board (Line)

United States. Navy--Officers.

Subjects

Navy-yards and naval stations--California.

Occupations

Naval officers.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The papers of Thomas Oliver Selfridge, naval officer, were deposited in the Library of Congress in 1949 by the Naval Historical Foundation and converted to a gift in 1998.

Processing History

The papers of Thomas Oliver Selfridge were arranged and described in 1969. The finding aid was revised in 2011.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Thomas Oliver Selfridge is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The papers of Thomas Oliver Selfridge 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, Thomas Oliver Selfridge Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
1804, Apr. 24	Born, Boston, Mass.
1818	Appointed midshipman
1820-1824	Duty in USS <i>Columbus</i>
1825-1829	Duty in USS <i>North Carolina</i>
1827	Commissioned lieutenant
1830	Duty in USS <i>Natchez</i> , West India Squadron
1834	Duty in USS <i>Delaware</i> , Mediterranean Squadron Married Louisa Cary Soley
1837-1839	Duty in USS <i>North Carolina</i> Pacific Squadron
1840	Duty in Boston Naval Rendezvous
1842-1845	Duty in the Portsmouth Navy Yard
1845-1847	Duty in USS <i>Columbus</i> , East India Squadron
1847-1848	Commanded USS <i>Dale</i> , Pacific Squadron
1851-1852	Commanded the Boston Naval Rendezvous
1852-1855	Duty in the Boston Navy Yard
1861-1862	Commanded USS <i>Mississippi</i> , Gulf Blockade Squadron
1862-1864	Commanded Mare Island Naval Shipyard
1866	Promoted to rear admiral

1867-1869	Commanded Philadelphia Navy Yard
1869-1871	President, Naval Examining Board
1872	Commanded Mare Island Naval Shipyard
1902, Oct. 15	Died

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Thomas Oliver Selfridge (1804-1902) span the years 1809-1927, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1809-1870. The collection is composed primarily of journals, logbooks, notebooks, letterbooks, and correspondence organized into four series: [Journals, Logbooks, Notebooks, and Order Books](#); [Letterbooks](#); [Correspondence](#); and [Miscellany](#).

The [correspondence](#) is principally official and is lengthy for the periods when Selfridge commanded the USS *Mississippi*, presided over the Naval Examining Board, and commanded the Mare Island Naval Shipyard. Major topics in the correspondence include petitions for back pay, his interest in naval architectural innovations, and the vessels he inspected while president of the Naval Examining Board. Correspondents include Henry E. Ballard, George E. Belknap, A. F. Crossman, Francis E. Grice, David D. Porter, and his son, T. O. Selfridge (1836-1924). The [Miscellany](#) contains a review by the senior Selfridge of Herman Melville's *White Jacket* (New York, Harper, 1850)

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in four series:

- [Journals, Logbooks, Notebooks, and Order Books, 1809-1868](#)
- [Letterbooks, 1847-1868](#)
- [Correspondence, 1836-1892](#)
- [Miscellany, 1821-1927](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-6	<u>Journals, Logbooks, Notebooks, and Order Books, 1809-1868</u> Accounts, logs, journals, and a variety of titled notebooks. Some of the notebooks are condensations of published works. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7-8	<u>Letterbooks, 1847-1868</u> Copies of letters sent and a few copies of letters received by Selfridge as commander of ships. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 9	<u>Correspondence, 1836-1892</u> Chiefly official letters received and a few drafts of letters sent, with few items after 1874. Includes orders to duty. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 10	<u>Miscellany, 1821-1927</u> Printed matter, a critique of Herman Melville's <i>White Jacket</i> , commissions, legal documents, proceedings of the naval board, ship specifications, and notes. Arranged by topic or type of material.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-6	Journals, Logbooks, Notebooks, and Order Books, 1809-1868 Accounts, logs, journals, and a variety of titled notebooks. Some of the notebooks are condensations of published works. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	Notebook, 1809-1821
BOX 1	Logbook and notebook, USS <i>Eagle</i> , 1816-1820
BOX 1	Journals
BOX 1	USS <i>Columbus</i> , 1820-1824
BOX 1	Of a voyage from Boston to Calcutta, India, 1822-1823
BOX 2	USS <i>North Carolina</i> , 1825-1829
BOX 2	Notebook
BOX 2	Poems, 1828
BOX 2	Notes from Domenico Alberto Azuni's <i>The Maritime Law of Europe</i> (1806)
BOX 2	Logbook, USS <i>North Carolina</i> , 1837-1839
BOX 2	General station book, USS <i>North Carolina</i> 1837
BOX 3	Gunnery report book, 1840
BOX 3	Notebook, 1843
BOX 3	Specification books
BOX 3	USS <i>Saratoga</i> , 1843
BOX 3	USS <i>Saratoga</i> , 1843
BOX 3	Notebooks
BOX 3	Sloops of war, 1843
BOX 3	Frigates, 1843
BOX 3	Naval gunnery, 1843
BOX 4	Watch and quarter bill book, USS <i>Columbus</i> , 1845-1847
BOX 4	Journal, USS <i>Columbus</i> , 1846-1847
BOX 4	Night order book, USS <i>Dale</i> , 1847
BOX 4	Journal, USS <i>Dale</i> , 1847-1848
BOX 4	Logbook, USS <i>Mississippi</i> , 1861-1862
BOX 5	General order book, USS <i>Mississippi</i> , 1861-1862
BOX 5	Account book, 1865
BOX 5	General order book, 1865-1868
BOX 5	Notebooks
BOX 5	Field tactics, undated
BOX 5	Inventories of naval ships, undated
BOX 5	Naval gunnery, undated
BOX 5	Naval tactics, undated
	(1 vol.)
BOX 6	(2 vols.)

Journals, Logbooks, Notebooks, and Order Books, 1809-1868

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 6	Notes from Washington Irving's <i>A History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus</i> (1828), undated
BOX 6	Notes from John McArthur's <i>A Treatise of the Principles and Practice of Naval Courts-Martial</i> (1792) undated
BOX 6	Steam engines, undated
BOX 6	Steamship, undated
BOX 7-8	Letterbooks, 1847-1868 Copies of letters sent and a few copies of letters received by Selfridge as commander of ships. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 7	1847-1862
BOX 8	1862-1864
BOX 8	1866-1868
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BOX 10	Critique of Herman Melville's <i>White Jacket</i> , 1851
BOX 10	Commissions, 1855-1870
BOX 10	Legal documents, 1855-1902
BOX 10	Rules and policy regulations of the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, 1863
BOX 10	Proceedings of the naval board in the case of Selfridge, 1864
BOX 10	Ship specifications, 1870
BOX 10	Notes, charts, and tables, mostly undated
BOX 10	Notes on steamship, undated
BOX 10	Printed matter, 1821-1927, undated