

# A Guide to the General Correspondence of the Virginia Navy Board, 1775-1787

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia 51711  
Library of Virginia  
2016

## History

**Processed by:** Patrick Gallagher

## Title Statement

A Guide to the General Correspondence of the Virginia Navy Board, 1775-1787

**Subtitle:** Navy Board, Virginia, General correspondence

**Collection:** 51711

**Author:** Patrick Gallagher

## Publication Statement

**Date:** © 2016 By The Library of Virginia. All Rights Reserved.

**Publisher:** Library of Virginia

## Profile Description

**Creation:** Machine-readable finding aid created in EAD by Paige Neal, 29 April 2016

**Language Usage:** Description is in English

## Descriptive Summary

### Accession Number

51711

### Language

English

### Creator

Navy Board

### Extent

1.6 cubic feet (4 boxes)

### Repository

The Library of Virginia

## Administrative Information

### Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

### Use Restrictions

There are no use restrictions.

## Acquisition Information

No acquisition information available.

## Preferred Citation

General Correspondence of the Virginia Navy Board, 1775-1787. Accession 51711, State government records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

## Biographical Information

Prior to the establishing the Navy Board, the Committee of Safety handled all naval matters in their jurisdiction. Because the administrative duties of the Committee of Safety continued to broaden throughout the Revolutionary War, a new government body was established to handle naval matters. The fifth revolutionary convention passed an ordinance at its May 1776 session establishing the Board of Commissioners to Superintend and Direct the Naval Affairs of this Colony, also known as the Navy Board. The board had responsibility for all matters concerning the State Navy, which included building and maintaining warships, purchasing small vessels to sustain trade within the Chesapeake Bay, providing food and clothing to their personnel, opposing the enemy in the bay, organizing the transportation of troops, purchasing or obtaining munitions and arms to send to warships, recruiting seamen, and contracting workmen for the repair of ships at port. These duties fell to the five newly appointed commissioners of the Navy Board: Thomas Whiting, John Hutchings, Campion Travis, Thomas Newton, Jr., and George Webb. Only Thomas Whiting would serve in this position throughout the war. When the Navy Board was created the four different river defense forces (the James, York, Rappahannock and Potomac) were combined into one united Virginia State Navy.

## Scope and Content

These records contain general correspondence regarding the supply of ships and shipyards, problems with privateers, filling naval crews, hiring temporary free and enslaved labor, provisions, tobacco shipments outside the United States, personal correspondence regarding wages, commissioning the construction of flat-bottom boats, prisoner exchanges, and the sale of state vessels. These records also include ship's payroll records, disbursement receipts relating to the cost of provisions, contracts, council orders, journal entries, and accounts, including those related to tobacco shipments outside of the United States. Records are separated by general correspondence related to specific vessels and other general correspondence.

Correspondents include Carter Braxton, Rawleigh Colston, Francis Fauquier, William Frazer, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, John Webb (Paymaster) the Marquis de Lafayette and vessel captains.

Vessel captains include: John Archer [Liberty (Sloop) and Molly (Schooner)]; William Aylett [Speedwell (Schooner)]; Commodore James Barron [Liberty (Boat)]; Richard Barron [Patriot (Schooner)]; George Chamberlain [Fly (Boat)]; Thomas Chamberlayne [Tartar (Ship)]; Benjamin Day [Northampton (Brig)]; Pharoah Fitzpatrick [Peace and Plenty (Schooner)]; Thomas Grant [Jefferson (Brig)]; James Grey [Liberty (Brig)]; John Harris [Accomac (Galley) and Oliver Cromwell (Ship)]; Thomas Herbert [Liberty (Brig)]; James Hobb [Hornet (Schooner)]; Francis Kirby [Eastern Shore Betsey (Schooner)]; Paul Loyal [Harrison (Schooner) and Patriot (Boat)]; Nathaniel Mason [Industry (Ship)]; James Maxwell [Cormorant (Ship)]; Henry Mitchell [Favourite (Ship)]; Thomas Mitchell [Jefferson (Brig)]; Andrew Monroe [Jefferson (Brig)]; William Morris [Northampton (Brig)]; George Nicholson [Jefferson (Brig)]; Thomas Place [Relief (Schooner)]; Joseph Sanders [Dragon (Ship)]; William Skinner [Congress (Sloop)]; Thomas Smith [Hornet (Schooner)]; Robert Sully [Congress (Sloop)]; John Teackel [Diligence (Galley)]; Richard Timberland [Jefferson (Brig)]; John Webb [Lewis (Galley)]; William Webb [Jane (Ship)]; Wright Wescott [Henry (Galley)]; Joseph Wrenn [Defiance (Schooner), Dolly Henry (Sloop) and Liberty (Sloop)]; and John Young [Betsey (Schooner), Liberty (Sloop) and Mayflower (Schooner)].

## Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

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### **Series I. General Correspondence of the Virginia Navy Board, 1775-1787.**

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**Betsey (Schooner), 1778-1779.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 2**

**Congress (Sloop), 1776-1779.**

**Box 1**

**Folder 3**

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**Folder 1**

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**Folder 2**

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**Liberty (Brig), 1776-1779.**

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**Patriot and Liberty - payrolls (Schooners), 1785-1787.**

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**Folder 1**

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**Box 4**

**Folder 2**

**Accounts - Miscellaneous (majority with William Frazer / Roane and pertaining to no particular vessel), 1776-1783.**

**Box 4**

**Folder 3**

**Boat Yards: Mouth of Georges Creek, Decker's Creek and Pidgeon Cree - receipts for supplies and services, 1781.**

**Box 4**

**Folder 4**

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**Box 4**

**Folder 5**

**Contracts for building vessels (including for George Rogers Clark in the west), 1776-1777.**

**Box 4**

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**Folder 7**

**Flat Bottom Boats (Lafayette), 1778-1782.**

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**Folder 9**

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**Journal of State Agent relating primarily to the Navy, 1777 December 19-1778 April 15.**

**Box 4**  
**Folder 11**

**Letters - Navy Board to Frazer and Roan, 1776-1782.**

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**Folder 12**

**List of officers and seamen, 1776-1780, 1783-1784, undated.**

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**Folder 13**

**McClurg, Walter, Dr. (Surgeon), 1778-1780, 1783.**

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**Prisoner exchange from Bermuda, 1781-1783.**

**Box 4**  
**Folder 15**

**Report of sale of galleys Accomac and Diligence, 1781-1782.**

**Box 4**  
**Folder 16**

**Row galleys, 1776-1777.**

**Box 4**  
**Folder 17**

**Webb, John (Paymaster and Clothier General) - Accounts primarily with individuals, 1780-1782.**

**Box 4**  
**Folder 18**

**Webb, John (Paymaster and Clothier General) - Accounts primarily of department, 1776-1783.**

**Box 4**  
**Folder 19**