

Collection #
M 0493
OM 0312
F 1361

**DANIEL FRENCH
PAPERS, CA. 1796–1816**

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Processed by

Paul Brockman
2 March 1994

Collection guide revised
by Glenn McMullen
5 June 2001, 2 August 2001
Updated 2 April 2, 2004

Manuscripts and Visual Collections Department
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Indiana Historical Society
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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 1 oversize folder , 1 microfilm reel

COLLECTION
DATES: ca. 1796–1816

PROVENANCE: Daniel Denman, 39 Woodcrest Blvd., Stroudsburg, PA 18360
and Alfred R. Maass, RR 2 Box 50, New Milford, PA 18835, 23
November 1993 and 25 January 1994

RESTRICTIONS: None

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REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection
must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: Microfilm (F 1361)

RELATED HOLDINGS: Charles Preston Fishbaugh, *From Paddle Wheels to Propellers*
(VM 301 .H6/F5 1970); U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on
Roads and Canals [1840] (pam HE 396 .L6 I5 1840); Louis C.
Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers* (HE 627 .H8 1949);
Alfred R. Maass, "Daniel French and the Western Steamboat
Engine," *The American Neptune: Maritime History & Arts*,
Winter 1996 (vol. 56, no. 1), 29-44 (photocopy in collection
guide folder with collection).

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1994.0087, 1994.0370

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Daniel French (fl. 1770–ca. 1860) was born in Berlin, Connecticut, and later moved to New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio before settling in Jeffersonville, Indiana, around 1829. A mechanic and an inventor, French patented a steam engine with an oscillating cylinder in 1809. He built two steamboats in New York around the same time, a steam ferry in Philadelphia, and about six steamboats in Brownsville, Pennsylvania. The Brownsville steamboats included the 75-ton *Enterprize*, the first of its kind to make a round trip voyage from Louisville to New Orleans, in 1815. French and his sons William, George, and Henry built about 20 steamboats in Jeffersonville, Indiana.

Sources: Information in collection; Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers* (HE 627 .H8 1949); Alfred R. Maass, "Daniel French and the Western Steamboat Engine," *The American Neptune: Maritime History & Arts*, Winter 1996 (vol. 56, no. 1), 29-44.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection is comprised of French's records primarily concerned with his steamship-building ventures, ca. 1796–1816. Included are patent applications and related items regarding French's ship building and other business interests in New York City; Hartford, Connecticut; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Also included are descriptions of French's vessels, endorsements as to their worth, and estimated costs for production. The records also contain information regarding French's shingle- and tile-making machine, including patent-related items and authorization for its use in North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

French's papers also contain his financial records, both business and personal, correspondence, and general private

materials. Financial records include ledgers, indentures, employee work records, and a general letter to his creditors stating he was unable to pay his debts on 30 August 1806. There is also some personal correspondence including an undated letter to his wife, some recipes, and newspaper clippings.

The materials in this collection arrived in a hand-sewn, tipped-in packet, in poor condition. The Indiana Historical Society Conservation Department removed the binding, placed the items in mylar sleeves, and performed other appropriate conservationally necessary measures to insure preservation. The original items in the collection (not including the transcripts) in box 1, folders 1–9 and OM 0312, are in their original packet order.

Also included are transcripts of most of the original materials in the papers as well as an annotated calendar of some Daniel French papers held by other institutions, transcribed and compiled by Alfred R. Maass.

COLLECTION CONTENTS

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (1 of 10)	Box 1, folder 1
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (2 of 10)	Box 1, folder 2
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (3 of 10)	Box 1, folder 3
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (4 of 10)	Box 1, folder 4
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (5 of 10)	Box 1, folder 5
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (6 of 10)	Box 1, folder 6
"WE THE SUBSCRIBERS HAVE EXAMINED THE STEAM BOAT CONSTRUCTED BY DANIEL FRENCH OF THIS CITY" [Coopers Ferry, New Jersey]. Printed broadside with 10 signatures, n.d. (7 of 10)	OM 0312
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (8 of 10)	Box 1, folder 7
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (9 of 10)	Box 1, folder 8
Papers, ca. 1796–1816 (10 of 10)	Box 1, folder 9
Transcripts of papers (1 of 3)	Box 1, folder 10
Transcripts of papers (2 of 3)	Box 1, folder 11
Transcripts of papers (3 of 3)	Box 1, folder 12
Microfilm of entire collection	F 1361

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0493).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.