

# Phillips Library Finding Aids

Manuscript collections consist of unpublished materials, which often involve handwritten documents but can also include typed, drawn, or photographic material. A finding aid describes the contents of a particular collection. The catalog record will state if the manuscript collection has a finding aid and if it is available online or only in the library. If a finding aid is connected to a record online, a link to the digital collection of [Manuscript Finding Aids](#) will be at the bottom of the record. You will need to search for the finding aid using the collection title, call number, or keywords. Please note that search results do not sort by relevance.

The screenshot shows the PHILCAT catalog record for 'Salem Lyceum Records, 1829-1898'. The record includes fields for Title, Author, Physical Description, Scope, Finding Aids, Preferred Citation, Format, Subjects, Other Author(s), and Links. A 'Holdings Information' section at the bottom shows the location as 'Vault', call number as 'MSS 269', and one item available. Annotations on the left side of the image point to the title, preferred citation, information about the collection, and call number. Annotations on the right side point to the finding aid information and link.

**Title of the Collection** → Salem Lyceum Records,

**Preferred citation of collection** → Salem Lyceum Records, MSS 269, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.

**Information about the collection** → Finding aid available in the library. A link to the finding aid can be found at the end of this record.

**Call number of collection** → MSS 269

**Finding aid information and link** → [Click here to access the Finding Aid to the collection.](#)

Manuscript collection record in PHILCAT

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## Derby Family Papers

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### DERBY FAMILY PAPERS, 1716-1925

**Sponsor:**  
Processing and conservation for this collection was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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**Collection Summary**

**Repository:** The Phillips Library at the Peabody Essex Museum 132 Essex Street Salem, MA 01970 Phone: 978-745-9500 Fax: 978-531-1516

**Creator:** Derby family

**Title:** Derby Family Papers

**Dates:** 1716/1925

**Quantity:** 17.5 linear feet (25 boxes, 23 volumes)

**Abstract:** The Derby Family Papers include changing local business and personal papers of Richard Derby.

**Object Description**

Call Number	MSS 37
Title	Derby Family Papers
Creator	Derby family

Derby Family Papers

[Derby Family Papers](#)

[Contents List](#)

Finding aid in the Digital Collections

Open the finding aid as one full screen document here

Digital Collections breaks up the finding aid into two sections (collection information and Contents List). Use this sidebar to open each one

Object Description includes information such as call number, title, creator, date, publisher, subjects, and provenance. All this information can be found in the finding aid itself

A finding aid will include logistical information about the collection (call number, number of boxes and volumes, where the collection came from, etc.); historical or biographical information about the organization or person who created the material; and a scope note explaining the way that the collection is organized, and highlighting some of the most important components.

**DERBY FAMILY**

**PAPERS, 1716-1925**

<b>MSS 37</b>	<b>Processed by:</b> Prudence K. Backman December 1981
	<b>Updated by:</b> Jane E. Ward December 2000 Hilary Streifer October 2014
<b>Volume:</b>	25 boxes, 23 volumes 17.5 linear feet
<b>Provenance:</b>	This material is a reorganization and integration of 34 scrapbooks, three boxes, eighteen account books, and several miscellaneous folders. While the bulk of the collection is from an unknown source, many items were either donated or purchased. Richard Derby's account book from 1761-1763 (volume 15), was a gift from John Felt in 1894. Many of the ships' papers were donated by Senator George Peabody Wetmore in 1915. Several receipts were a gift from the estate of Alfred P. Goodell in 1957. Paul L. Veeder and Francis Veeder donated documents from the Derby, Pickman, and Toppan families. Mrs. Richard Derby donated one box of Derby and Alden papers. Lucy Ann Derby's composition books were donated by Helen Hagar in 1964. Two letter books (volumes 11 and 12), and two account books (volumes 17 and 18), in addition to several other items, were donated in 1980 by Roger A. Derby Jr. All loose manuscripts have their original location written on the back.
<b>Conservation:</b>	The material was placed in acid-free folders. Acid free paper was placed, when necessary, between acidic bindings, and the inner pages of account books and pamphlets. In 1981, the majority of the Derby Family Papers were dismounted from scrapbook volumes, washed, de-acidified, mended, and flattened. Documents in Volume 34 were simply dismounted from the scrapbook. Manuscripts donated, and items from miscellaneous folders have not received additional conservation.

Example finding aid, showing Provenance and Conservation information

**Copyright:** Requests for permission to publish material from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Manuscript Librarian in the Phillips Library at the Peabody Essex Museum.

**Processing:** Processing and conservation for this collection was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Richard Derby, the founder of the Derby shipping empire, was born in 1712 to Richard (1679-1715) and Martha (Hasket) Derby. Before establishing himself as a merchant, Richard mastered the sloop *Ranger* from 1736 until 1738, the schooner *Volant* from 1741 until 1742, the sloop *Jolly Bachus* in 1743, and the schooner *Exeter* in 1745. He was also part owner of the *Volant* and *Exeter*. By 1746, Richard had begun importing cargo to Salem from London. He appears to have retired from the sea soon after, leaving his sons Richard Jr. (1736-1781), John (1741-1812), and son-in-law George Crowninshield to captain his vessels. From 1750 until 1775, Richard owned at least twenty vessels and carried cargo on numerous other ships. His ships traveled to the West Indies, the Spanish peninsula, Canada, and South Carolina. They carried cargoes of fish, rum, timber, grains, sugar, cocoa, wine, coffee, and salt. At least five of Richard's ships engaged in fishing voyages, especially in the early years of his merchant business. While Richard's shipping business prospered greatly, he also experienced financial setbacks through the capture of his ships during the French and Indian War. By 1775, Richard appears to have completely relinquished control of the shipping business to his son Elias Hasket Derby (1739-1799).

Richard's life did not solely revolve around his prosperous business. From 1756 until 1763, he served as a collector of excise taxes. He operated a distillery from 1760 until 1781. He served on the Massachusetts General Court from 1769 until 1773, was a member of the Governor's Council in 1774, 1776, and 1777, and was an ardent supporter of the Revolution. Richard married twice. His first wife, Mary Hodge (1713-1770), had six children: Richard Jr., Mary, Elias Hasket, John, Martha, and Sarah. In 1771, he married his second wife, Sarah (Langley) Hersey, the widow of Dr. Ezekiel Hersey. Richard died in 1783.

Elias Hasket Derby was born in 1739 to Richard (1712-1783) and Mary (Hodge) Derby. He was the founder of the East India shipping trade and America's first millionaire. Instead of becoming a sea captain like his brothers, Elias assisted his father in the management of their expanding shipping business. As early as 1760, he had begun to assist his father with this mercantile business, gradually assuming the entire control and management of the shipping affairs.

Copyright, Processing, and Biographical Sketch information in the Derby Papers

Biographical information is broken up by main people in the collection

The Scope and Content gives an overview of what type of material the collection includes. The collection is broken down intellectually into ‘Series’ for different types of documents (e.g. Shipping Papers, Financial Papers), which is then further broken down into ‘Subseries.’ A condensed, bulleted version of the Scope and Content, called a Series List provides a quick view of the collection break-down.

### SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Overview of collection as a whole

→ **The Derby Family Papers** include shipping, legal, business, and personal papers of Richard Derby (1712-1783), his sons Elias Hasket Derby (1739-1799) and John Derby (1741-1812), and grandsons Elias Hasket Derby Jr. (1766-1826), John Derby (1767-1831), Ezekiel Hersey Derby (1772-1852), and Richard Crowninshield Derby (1777-1854). The bulk of the collection contains the shipping papers for the shipping business begun by Richard (1712-1783) Derby, John (1767-1831), and Ezekiel Hersey (1772-1852) Derby. These papers reflect the growth and diversification of a mercantile business that traded with the Orient, India, the East Indies, Russia, Europe, Africa, Canada, the West Indies, and coastwise America. Derby ships were involved in activities such as privateering, fishing, and East and West India trading.

The remainder of the collection concerns the personal and business papers of Richard (1712-1783), Elias Hasket (1739-1799), John (1741-1812), Elias Hasket Jr. (1766-1826), John (1767-1831), Ezekiel Hersey (1772-1852), and Richard Crowninshield (1777-1854) Derby. In addition, there are businesses and personal papers for Derby relatives and in-laws. The collection has been arranged into six series.

→ **Series I. Derby Shipping Papers** covers the years 1717 to 1827, and incorporates ships owned by, mastered by, or which carried cargo for Richard Derby (1712-1783), his son Elias Hasket Derby (1793-1799), and grandsons Elias Hasket Derby Jr. (1766-1826), John Derby (1767-1831), and Ezekiel Hersey Derby (1772-1852). The shipping papers have been arranged into three subseries.

→ **Subseries A. Ships’ Papers** are arranged alphabetically, and contain ships’ orders, accounts of sales, disbursements, invoices, merchant house correspondence, port ledge bills, and crew lists. In addition, there is some captains’ correspondence, mostly from Derby family members, bills of lading, and miscellaneous accounts and receipts while in foreign ports. This subseries includes papers of the *Ranger* and *Volant*, both ships that were mastered by Richard (1712-1783), the *Grand Turk*, *Astrea*, *Henry*, *John*, and *Peggy*, as well as other less documented vessels (see Appendix I). Several Derby ships were captured during the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, and before the War of 1812. The correspondence or documents related to these captures are located with the ship’s papers, or with the folder of spoliation claims (box 9, folder 9). Papers of vessels captured by Derby ships are located with the Derby privateer or letter of marque. Included in this series are papers of the sloop *Union*, mastered by Richard’s uncle Samuel Derby (1673-1728), and the *Mary* and *Restitution*, both mastered by John Derby (1767-1831).

→ **Subseries B. General Shipping Papers** include all documents that either could not be identified, or that are related to more than one ship. These general shipping papers include financial papers, invoice books, account books, and Customhouse bonds. Accounts of Derby family members with each other or with their captains are included in the folders of miscellaneous shipping accounts (box 8, folders 7 and 8). Elias Hasket’s (1739-1799) outbound invoice books, volumes 2 and 3, contain invoices of cargoes on ships sailing from Salem while the inbound invoice book, volume 4, records cargoes on ships sailing from foreign ports. Volumes 2 and 4 contain detailed indexes that list ship, master, and destination for all entries. Within the folder of miscellaneous account books are two account books with entries for privateers, and one pamphlet that records fishing voyages in the 1750s. The folders of outfitting accounts (box 9, folders 2-5) include all accounts, receipts, and contracts made for the building, altering, or outfitting of ships.

Overview of first Series in collection

Overview of Subseries within Series I

Scope and Content overview of the Derby Papers

SERIES LIST

- Series I and its Subseries →
- Sometimes a Subseries can be broken down into additional subseries →
- SERIES I. Derby Shipping Papers**
    - A. Ships' Papers
    - B. General Shipping Papers
    - C. Shipping and Merchant House Correspondence
      - 1. Richard Derby Merchant House Correspondence
      - 2. Elias Hasket Derby Merchant House Correspondence
      - 3. John Derby, Elias Hasket Derby Jr., Ezekiel Hersey Derby Merchant House Correspondence
      - 4. Miscellaneous Shipping and Merchant House Correspondence
  - SERIES II. First Generation Business and Personal Papers: Richard Derby (1712-1783)**
  - SERIES III. Second Generation Business and Personal Papers**
    - A. Elias Hasket Derby (1739-1799) Papers
    - B. John Derby (1741-1812) Papers
  - SERIES IV. Third Generation Business and Personal Papers**
    - A. Elias Hasket Derby Jr. (1766-1826) Papers
    - B. John Derby (1767-1831) Papers
    - C. Ezekiel Hersey Derby (1772-1852) Papers
    - D. Richard Crowninshield Derby (1777-1854) Papers
  - SERIES V. Derby Relatives and In-Laws**
  - SERIES VI. Miscellaneous Papers**

Series List of the Derby Papers

The Contents List is where the intellectual breakdown of the collection is linked with its physical breakdown by boxes and folders. The Contents List will follow the order of the Series List (e.g. Series I first), but the box and folder numbers are not always in order. The Contents List is also where the contents and date ranges of each folder are shown.

The following folders are a part of Series I Subseries A of the collection

CONTENTS LIST

**SERIES I. Derby Shipping Papers**  
**A. Ships' Papers**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	<i>Abigail</i> (Sloop)	1761, 1766
		<i>Active</i> (Brig)	1783-1784
		<i>Adventure</i> (Sloop)	1787
		<i>Alice</i> (Sloop)	1791
		<i>Alonzo</i> (Brig)	1816
	2	<i>America</i> (Ship)	1783-1784
24(OS)	1	<i>America</i> (Ship)	1784
1	3	<i>Antelope</i> (Ship)	1762-1771
	4	<i>Antelope</i> (Brig)	1799-1802
	5	<i>Arab</i> (Ship)	1806-1807
		<i>Argilla</i> (Schooner)	1766
		<i>Astrea</i> (Ship)	1783-1784
	6	<i>Astrea</i> (Ship)	1785-1786
	7	<i>Astrea</i> (Ship)	1787-1788
	8	<i>Astrea</i> (Ship)	1789-1790
	9	<i>Astrea</i> (Ship)	1791-1794, 1799
	10	<i>Atlantic</i> (Ship)	1788-1790
		<i>Aurora</i> (Ship)	1802
		<i>Aurora</i> (Schooner)	1823-1825
2	1	<i>Benjamin</i> (Ship)	1762, 1791-1798
24(OS)	1	<i>Benjamin</i> (Ship)	1778

This indented number indicates that it is Folder 2 of Box 1

The date ranges from each folder, if known, are shown here

(OS) stands for oversize. This folder is part of Series I Subseries A, even though the box is out of order

Contents List of a collection

Material in manuscript collections, found through Philcat or the Digital Collections, is available for research, unless otherwise noted in the finding aid. When calling material from a librarian, only the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) are necessary, as these will help the librarian locate the papers you wish to view.