

## Joshua Humphreys

- Shipbuilder. Built six frigates which became the United States Navy.
- His designs were so well done that one of his ships, the *Constitution* is still around today.

### Primary Sources

#### *Joshua Humphreys papers*

The collection consists of three series. The first series is a collection of Humphreys' daybooks, ledger books, and letter books. Though most of the volumes are financial records, there are some instructions on how to build ships that occasionally include hand-drawn diagrams. One notable volume is Volume 1, a book on how to draw designs for ships. The volume also contains dimensions for new ships built after the war, including the *Constitution*, or "Old Ironsides." The

second series is correspondence, much of it to Humphreys. The third series consists of miscellaneous documents, comprised of family members' papers and legal documents as well as items from unrelated individuals, such as William Penn.

Collection #0306

<http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/h/Humphreys306.html>



(The Old U.S. Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 23, 1875, watercolor by David J. Kennedy, from the David J. Kennedy Watercolors collection #V61, Box II/52-137, Call number: K: II-114, Digital Archive item #1637)

#### *Andrew Atkinson Humphreys papers 1708-1930, undated 1850 - 1879*

Andrew Atkinson Humphreys was born in Philadelphia in 1810, and went on to attend the military academy at West Point. Andrew was the son of Samuel Humphreys, who was the chief constructor for the United States Navy, and the grandson of Joshua Humphreys, who is often called the "Father of the American Navy."

Collection #304

Specifically boxes 12-15. The majority of the material in this series documents the lives of Joshua Humphreys and Henry Humphreys, who were A.A. Humphreys's grandfather and son, respectively. Documenting the life of Joshua Humphreys are a small group of accounts, legal papers, shipping insurance policies, and a membership certificate for the American Philosophical Society. There is also a reprint of "Who Built the First United States Navy?"

<http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/h/humphreys304.html>

*Jones and Clarke papers, 1784-1816*

Letters, accounts, and other business records on the commercial enterprises of William Jones and Samuel Clarke of Philadelphia and Charleston, South Carolina, who were engaged in trade with the West Indies and European countries, shipping sugar, coffee, turpentine, brandy, and other commodities. The correspondence includes letters of Commodore Thomas Truxtun, Captain Hugh G. Campbell, Thomas Willing, Joshua Humphreys, John Binns.  
Collection #331

*Uselma Clarke Smith collection, 1688-1899*

Uselma Clarke Smith was a Philadelphia lawyer and collector of deeds, wills, commissions, estate papers, family letters, genealogies, and other materials. Smith was particularly interested in his great-uncle William Jones, an army and naval officer during the Revolution, about whom Smith planned to write a biography. He joined Joshua and Samuel Humphreys in a company to build steamships and served as collector for the Port of Philadelphia. These papers reflect Jones's activities, his descendants, and other related families.  
Collection #1378A

*Uselma Clarke Smith collection, 1791-1888*

This collection includes additional William Jones material, incoming correspondence, 1791-1827, mainly addressed to Jones in his capacities as secretary of the navy, acting secretary of the treasury, and Second Bank of the United States president. It includes a small group of letters, a few letters from family or merchants including Joshua and Samuel Humphreys.  
Collection #1378D

### **Secondary Sources**

*"... defended by an adequate power", Joshua Humphreys and the 74-gun ships of 1799*  
The American neptune. Vol. 51, no. 3 (summer 1991). p. 173-194  
by Richard Eddy  
Call number: VM 23.E33 1991a

*Who built the first United States Navy?*

Pennsylvania magazine of history and biography. v. 40, (1916), p. 385-411  
by Henry H. Humphreys  
Call number: Va .6 v.40