



# **Guide to the James Rogers Papers, 1768-1794 and undated**

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## Summary

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**Collection Title:**

James Rogers papers, 1768-1794 and undated

**Creator:**

Rogers, James, d. 1799

**Abstract:**

Collection consists almost entirely of photocopies of documents held in the Public Records Office (London) originally belonging to James Rogers, Bristol, England, a merchant, ship owner, and slave trader who engaged in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The material, dating from 1768-1794, largely consists of incoming correspondence, bills of sale, receipts, and other items related to ships' voyages and trading activities. Many of these voyages were for the purpose of acquiring and trading enslaved laborers from Africa. A paper guide to the collection created by the donor of the collection and available to researchers includes descriptions of most of the ships' voyages.

**Extent:**

10 Linear Feet

Approximately 20,000 items (mostly photocopies)

**Language:**

Material in English

**Collection ID:**

RL.01104

**Permalink:**

<https://idn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/m14d3s>

**Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], James Rogers Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

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## Background

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### Scope and Content

Collection consists of photocopies of documents originally belonging to James Rogers, Bristol, England, a merchant and ship owner active in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The material, dating from 1768 to 1794, largely consists of incoming correspondence, bills of sale, receipts, and other items related to ships' voyages and trading activities. The papers are arranged into three series: **Ships' Voyages; Bills;** and **Business Papers and Letters**. Much of the material in the collection concerns the African slave trade, but there is also information on the cotton, sugar, and fishing markets and trade. Documentation includes accounts for materials supplied to ships in which Rogers had an interest; accounts of ships, cargoes, and insurance; receipts for advances of wages to ships' crews; bills of exchange; petitions from Rogers' creditors; statements of shares in cargoes and ships; letters from ships' captains in Africa relating to purchases; comments on the state of the market; price information; letters from agents overseas; and other materials. One set of documents about the Mermaid contains commentary about an uprising of enslaved persons on board.

The collection also includes the same documents on twenty reels of microfilm, but the arrangement of the paper copies by topic and by date renders them easier to use. The original documents became the property of the Public Record Office, London, as exhibits in litigation that followed Rogers' declaration of bankruptcy in 1793, and are currently held in the Court of Bankruptcy records, indexed as B 3/4177 and B 3/4185, in the National Archives in Kew, England.

The folders in the Ships' Voyages Series are organized alphabetically by ship name, then within chronologically, with correspondence regarding the voyage first, followed by bills and other related items. The items in the Bills Series are arranged chronologically. The Business Papers and Letters are organized into two main subgroupings: by country of trade, and by name of correspondent; there are also smaller groups of miscellaneous correspondence, including Rogers' bankruptcy papers, which contain information on how the slave trade was organized, and speculations in the cotton market.

Place-names mentioned in these papers include: Green Island, N.Y.; Kennebec, Maine; many coastal towns in Newfoundland; Cove Island, Ontario; Belize; many locations in the Caribbean Islands; and coastal cities in England, Ireland, Portugal (including the Azores Islands), and Spain (including the Canary and Balearic Islands).

A ninety-page paper guide to the collection created by donor of the collection (Duke Economics Professor Simon Rottenberg) and available to the researcher includes descriptions of most of the ships' voyages.

## **Biographical/Historical**

James Rogers was a merchant from Bristol, England, a ship owner, and a slave trader who engaged in various types of trade in Newfoundland, the American colonies, the West Indies, Ireland, Africa, Spain, Portugal, and elsewhere.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Statement**

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

411 Chapel Drive

Duke University

Durham 27708

[askRL@duke.edu](mailto:askRL@duke.edu)

URL: <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/>

### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

### **Use Restrictions**

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

### **Acquisition Information**

The James Rogers Papers were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a gift from Duke Economics Professor Simon Rottenberg in 1967.

## **Processing Information**

Processed by Rubenstein Library staff, 1967

Encoded by Paula Jeannet, February 2010

Accession 1967-0187 is described in this finding aid.

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Material**

Court of Bankruptcy Records, B 3/4177 and B 3/4185 National Archives, Kew, England

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## **Names and Subjects**

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- Slave traders -- England
- Slave trade -- Great Britain -- History
- Slave trade -- Caribbean Area -- History
- Slave trade -- Africa -- History
- Slave trade -- Atlantic Ocean Region -- History
- Microfilms
- Shipping -- Great Britain
- Great Britain -- Commerce -- History
- Merchants -- England -- Bristol -- Correspondence
- Bankruptcy -- Great Britain
- Great Britain -- Colonies -- History
- Rogers, James, d. 1799
- Rogers, Joseph

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## **Collection Inventory**

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### **Ships' Voyages Series, 1760s-1790s**

**Physical Description:** 18 boxes

**Scope and Contents note**

Arranged by destination, then within by subcategories of major voyages, minor voyages, and miscellaneous or multiple voyages. Documents arranged alphabetically by name of ship, then chronologically, with correspondence first, then bills and other papers following.

**Voyage to Africa/West Indies**

**Scope and Contents note**

Arranged by major, minor, and multiple voyages, and within alphabetically by ship's name. Documents pertaining to the voyages include bills, cargo accounts, receipts, and correspondence from ships' captains. A ninety-page document researched and created by the donor of the Rogers Papers, and available in the library, briefly describes the voyage (route, cargo, and other details) of almost all the ships.

**Major voyages**

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| African Queen | Box 1 |
| Bristol       | Box 1 |
| Commerce      | Box 1 |
| Commerce      | Box 2 |
| Crescent      | Box 2 |
| Daniel        | Box 3 |
| Diana         | Box 3 |
| Dragon        | Box 4 |
| Fame          | Box 4 |
| Fanny         | Box 5 |
| Flora         | Box 5 |
| Fly           | Box 6 |
| Friendship    | Box 6 |
| James         | Box 7 |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Jupiter                                      | Box 7  |
| Lyon   | Box 7  |
| Martin                                       | Box 7  |
| Martin                                       | Box 8  |
| Minerva                                      | Box 8  |
| Monmouth                                     | Box 9  |
| Morning Star                                 | Box 9  |
| Pearle                                       | Box 9  |
| Pearle                                       | Box 10 |
| Rodney                                       | Box 10 |
| Rodney                                       | Box 11 |
| Ruby (online item available)                 | Box 11 |
| <b>Digital Object:</b> <a href="#">Ruby</a>  |        |
| Sarah (online item available)                | Box 11 |
| <b>Digital Object:</b> <a href="#">Sarah</a> |        |
| <b>Digital Object:</b> <a href="#">Sarah</a> |        |
| Sarah  | Box 12 |
| William and Mary                             | Box 12 |
| <b>Minor voyages</b>                         |        |
| Cape Coast                                   | Box 12 |
| Experiment                                   | Box 12 |
| Harmony                                      | Box 12 |
| Gibson                                       | Box 12 |
| Jamaica Planter                              | Box 13 |
| Langrishe                                    | Box 13 |

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Mervin         | Box 13 |
| Nancy          | Box 13 |
| Princess       | Box 13 |
| Recovery       | Box 13 |
| Swit           | Box 13 |
| Thetis         | Box 13 |
| Trelawney      | Box 13 |
| Trelawney      | Box 14 |
| Triton         | Box 14 |
| Tuba           | Box 14 |
| Young Crescent | Box 14 |

### **Miscellaneous voyages**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

Arranged alphabetically, and then chronologically if enough material is present.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Albion-Britannica   | Box 14 |
| Brothers-Caplin   | Box 14 |
| Chance-Hope   | Box 15 |
| Hornet-Lydia  | Box 15 |
| M-Mercury   | Box 15 |
| Mermaid folders: includes documents describing an uprising of enslaved persons on board the Mermaid (online item available) | Box 15 |
| <b>Digital Object:</b> <a href="#">Mermaid folders</a>  |        |
| Milford-Pilot   | Box 15 |
| Plato-Roman Eagle   | Box 15 |

Russia-York

Box 15

### **Multiple voyages**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

Groups of papers which concern more than one ship's voyage to Africa, and or the West Indies. Arranged alphabetically by name on top of photocopy page.

Multiple voyages

Box 16

### **Voyages to Newfoundland**

#### **Scope and Contents note**

Contains material documenting ships' trading activities in Newfoundland. Arranged in three groupings: major, minor, and other various voyages.

Major, minor, and miscellaneous voyages to Newfoundland

Box 17-18

#### **Scope and Contents note**

Major voyages: Betsey, Centurion, Industry, and Richard. Minor voyages: Chepstow, Denizen, Elizabeth, Sacra Famiglia, and the Swallow.

Miscellaneous voyages arranged alphabetically, and then chronologically if enough material is present.

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### **Bills Series, 1774-1793**

**Physical Description:** 2 boxes

#### **Scope and Contents note**

Arranged in chronological order, followed by several groupings of bills related to specific firms, then bills related to Newfoundland trade.

1774-1789

Box 18

**Physical Description:** 3 folders

1790-1793 and undated

Box 19

**Physical Description:** 4 folders

Cox and Hallett; Willaim Cross; James Cross;  
George Alexander Clibborn

Box 19

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Robinson and Heywood; C. Jones; James Rogers,<br>Parry and Ludlam | Box 19 |
| Newfoundland bills, 1774-1792                                     | Box 19 |

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### **Business and Trading Letters, 1768-1794 and undated**

**Physical Description:** 5 boxes

#### **Scope and Contents note**

Arranged in two major subgroupings: by country of origin and by individual correspondents. These are followed by sections for other various letters and papers, including four folders related to Rogers' bankruptcy in March 1793.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Trading firm letters, African trade, 1777-1794<br>and undated | Box 20 |
|---|--------|

**Physical Description:** 3 folders

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Trading firm letters, Newfoundland trade,<br>1782-1792 | Box 20 |
|--|--------|

### **Newfoundland trade business letters**

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Stephen Hunt, 1784 July-1788 Dec. (on fish<br>trade and prices) | Box 20 |
|---|--------|

|                                   |        |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Thomas Lewis, 1783 Nov.-1790 June | Box 20 |
|-----------------------------------|--------|

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Joseph Rogers, 1777 Sept.-1778 Dec. (brother<br>of James) | Box 20 |
|---|--------|

### **Other business letters and papers**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Richard Fydell, 1778 Oct.-1792 May (from<br>Bath and Chepstow) | Box 20 |
|--|--------|

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| William Grumly, 1785 Dec.-1793 June (from<br>Tortola on the sugar market) | Box 21 |
|---|--------|

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Joseph Rogers, 1781 May-1790 June (from<br>St. Croix and Tortola, on islands and on sugar<br>market) | Box 21 |
|--|--------|

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Joseph Daltera, 1781 July-1790 Sept. (on<br>sugar, rum, and other markets in Liverpool) | Box 21 |
|---|--------|

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|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Other business letters, 1777 May-1792 Feb.  | Box 21 |
| Other business letters, 1777 May-1792 Feb.  | Box 22 |
| Clibborn's Underwriting Books, 1768-1775    | Box 22 |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> 2 folders      |        |
| Rogers' bankruptcy papers                   | Box 22 |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> 2 folders      |        |
| Rogers' bankruptcy papers                   | Box 23 |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> 2 folders      |        |
| Miscellaneous unarranged letters and papers | Box 23 |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> 3 folders      |        |
| Miscellaneous unarranged letters and papers | Box 24 |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> 3 folders      |        |

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