



NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
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November 3, 2020

Mr. Maurice King
Department of Defense
Department of the Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon, 5E170
Washington, DC 22350
maurice.king@navy.mil

Dear Mr. King:

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has identified a potential unauthorized disposition of permanent records at the Department of the Navy's Portsmouth (New Hampshire) Naval Shipyard. On November 24, 2013, NARA archivists visited the shipyard to conduct a site visit and inventory. They located original Preble Papers in the office of Mr. James Dolph, the Navy's previous historian, along with other historical correspondence. These records are covered by NAVSEA Schedule: 5000-7 Records of Unusual Importance or Exceptional Historical Interest, Disposition Authority Number DAA-NU-2015-0005-0007. They are permanent records for which immediate transfer is appropriate. The records date from 1800-1828, had the name Preble on them and were contained in a box with a grouping of documents about ½ inch in thickness. The records were smaller than 8x10 and very fragile.

Since the visit, NAVSEA has worked with NARA to retire millions of historical records to NARA and the Federal Records Centers. However, NARA's recent search and review of Navy's transfers and NARA's holdings has revealed that the Preble Papers have not been transferred and accessioned by NARA. Based on our review and subsequent discussions with NAVSEA, NARA has determined that a further investigation into the status of these historically valuable records is necessary.

NARA requests that the Navy investigate this matter to determine if the Preble Papers can be located and obtained for transfer to the National Archives. Please note that per 36 CFR 1230.14, if the records have been removed or destroyed without NARA's proper authorization, agencies must report these incidents promptly to NARA. In addition, per 36 CFR 1226.26, permanent records cannot be donated. Agencies may donate only temporary records, eligible for disposal, to individuals, institutions, and other government agencies with NARA's written approval.

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16, NARA also requests that you provide a response within 30 days regarding the findings of your investigation, including, if appropriate, any details on the disposition of the records, recovery efforts, and a statement of the safeguards that have been or will be implemented to prevent future unauthorized disposition of historical records.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence R. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

LAURENCE BREWER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government

cc:

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