

Laura (Schooner) sea letter

Descriptive Summary

Repository:	Georgia Historical Society
Creator:	United States. President.
Title:	<i>Laura</i> (Schooner) sea letter
Dates:	1804
Extent:	0.05 cubic feet (1 folder)
Identification:	MS 0482

Biographical/Historical Note

The United States, in similar practice to many other countries during the 18th and 19th centuries, required all neutral ships with proof of ownership by a U.S. citizen, to carry a "sea letter" signed by the President of the United States, Secretary of State, and local collector. Any government document issued from that government to a merchant vessel is considered a sea letter. This document had to remain with the vessel during the entirety of its voyage; it served as proof of nationality and guaranteed national protection of the vessel and her cargo.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains the leave for the schooner *Laura* of Charleston, South Carolina, to depart for St. Augustine, 1804. The text is in parallel columns of English, French, Spanish, and Dutch. The document names Asa Belnap as master and lists the cargo of provisions and porter. It is signed by James Simmons, Collector, Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, James Madison, Secretary of State, and William Couch, Notary Republic.

Index Terms

Intercoastal shipping.
Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826.
Laura (Schooner)
Madison, James, 1751-1836.
Maritime law.
Sea letters.
Ships--Nationality.
United States. President.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Unknown.

Preferred Citation

[item identification], *Laura* (Schooner) sea letter, MS 482, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Acquisition Information

Unknown.

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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Sponsorship

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Container List

Item 1: Sea letter. Leave for schooner *Laura* of Charleston, to depart for St. Augustine, 1804
March 3 (1.0 p.)

Sent from Charleston. Text in parallel columns in French, Spanish, English and Dutch. Names Asa Belnap as master; lists cargo of provisions and porter. Signed by James Simmons, Collector; Thomas Jefferson, President of U.S.; James Madison, Secretary of State; William Couch, Notary Republic.