

Richard Cooper journal on the ship Henry Dundas

Ms. Coll. 1109

Finding aid prepared by Donna Brandolisio.

Last updated on November 30, 2015.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

November 2015

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Richard, Cooper
Title	Richard Cooper journal on the ship Henry Dundas
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1109
Date [inclusive]	1801-1802
Extent	1 volume
Language	English
Abstract	A parchment covered volume containing the journal of midshipman Richard Cooper on board the Henry Dundas dating from February 1801 to August 1802.

Cite as:

Richard Cooper journal on the ship Henry Dundas, 1801-1802, Ms. Coll. 1109, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Scope and Contents

A parchment covered volume containing the journal of midshipman Richard Cooper dating from February 1801 to August 1802. Cooper sailed from England to Bengal, India on board the East India Company ship Henry Dundas. On the verso of the first leaf Cooper listed the Commander, Walter Carruthers, six officers, and seven midshipmen. The pages in the journal are numbered 1 to 172. The first twenty-six pages consist of preparations prior to the voyage and entries while the Henry Dundas was moored at the Isle of Wight, Madeira, Madagascar, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The remainder of the volume consists of leaves with preprinted forms designed for the purpose of recording the daily movements and measurements of the ship by the hour. At the top of each page is printed Ship, from, and towards with spaces to fill in the information. Below the header the page is divided into two days. For each day column headings from left to right are labeled hour (hours are preprinted), knots, fathoms, courses, winds, and remarks. Cooper filled in the hourly statistics. In the remarks section he recorded the weather, the daily operation of the ship, and the activities of the crewmen. Some of the daily tasks Cooper noted are measuring fathoms called "dropping ground," positioning of the sails, and the activities of crewmen. The various functions of the crewmen were noted: carpentry, caulking, cleaning the gun, picking oakum, and repairing sails. Cooper mentioned sightings of and interactions with other ships. In one instance Commander Carruthers provided a compass to the crew of a French ship who lost their's overboard. When the ship was at port Cooper wrote of receiving passenger's baggage and supplies for the ship and crewmen. Sailing from England to Bengal the ship stopped at the Isle of Wight where Cooper met his brother on another East India ship named the Earl Howe and dined at the Crown Tavern. Leaving the Isle of Wight the ship stops at Medeira where two crew steal a cutter and are punished for the crime. In August 1801 the Henry Dundas makes an unscheduled stop in Madagascar because many of the crew and soldiers on board are sick. Letters from Commander Carruthers with East India Company personnel regarding the sick crew were copied into the volume by Cooper disclosing the seriousness of the situation on board. While in Madagascar the ship received water, two bulls, and provisions. The Henry Dundas reached Ceylon (Sri Lanka) on September 10, 1801 staying until October 2 where Cooper noted they chiefly delivered the King's stores and private trade and received coffee. The ship anchored at Bengal on October 19. Curiously, Cooper recorded little information during the four months spent at Bengal and wrote in the preprinted form portion of the journal. He mentioned a visit with his brother, receiving and delivering provisions and merchandise. The ship remained at Bengal until February 14, 1802. On the return journey to England the ship made one stop at St. Helena island on June 1, 1802. The last entry is dated August 7, 1802 and signed by Cooper upon their arrival in England. Cooper wrote a few observations about the sea including a meteor sighting, observing dolphins, and catching sharks. There are imprints of seaweed between several leaves in the beginning of the volume. On the last leaf of the journal Cooper has provided the arrival and departure date for each stop made by the Henry Dundas. At the end of the volume is "An index to the particular path of the journal" that includes the page number for each seaman who died on the voyage.

Administrative Information

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Finding aid prepared by Donna Brandolisio.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research.

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Custodial History note

Label pasted on inside front cover: William Heather & Co. Chart and Map Sellers at the Navigation Warehouse, London.

Source of Acquisition

Sold by Ten Pound Island Book Company (Lanesville, Massachusetts), 2015.

Controlled Access Headings

Form/Genre(s)

- Blank forms
- Diaries
- Manuscripts, English--19th century
- Ships' logs

Geographic Name(s)

- Atlantic Ocean--Description and travel--19th century
- Indian Ocean--Description and travel--19th century

Subject(s)

- English diaries--19th century--Specimens
- English diaries--Male authors--19th century
- Sailors--England--Diaries--19th century

Collection Inventory

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