

Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. Delaware

Wilkey

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Library Company of Philadelphia

2012 March 10

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Summary Information

Repository	Library Company of Philadelphia
Creator	Wilkey, Thomas
Title	Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. <i>Delaware</i>
Call number	Wilkey
Date	1798
Extent	1 volume
Language	English
Abstract	Thomas Wilkey served under Stephen Decatur (1752-1808) in the United States Navy during the Quasi-War with France aboard the U.S.S. <i>Delaware</i> . During the course of the Quasi-War, the U.S.S. <i>Delaware</i> sailed between New York and the West Indies, protecting American ships from the French privateers. Wilkey's journal contains daily records of the U.S.S. <i>Delaware</i> 's voyages in 1798, including weather conditions, courses set, latitude and longitude, daily activities, and encounters with other ships, including privateers.

Cite as:

[Description and date of item], Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. *Delaware*, 1798, Library Company of Philadelphia.

Biography/History

Stephen Decatur (1752-1808) served in the United States Navy during the Quasi-War with France and commanded the U.S.S. *Delaware*. Originally a merchant shipper, Decatur served as a captain in the navy during the Revolutionary War. Following peace with Great Britain, Decatur returned to work with Gurney and Smith of Philadelphia and raised his family, including son, Stephen Decatur, Jr. (1779-1820) who would become a commodore of the United States Navy during the War of 1812. According to Parsons, “at the close of hostilities, when the officers, men and vessels of the navy were greatly reduced under the Peace Establishment Act, October 22nd, 1801, he was honorably discharged and retired to property he owned at Frankford, near Philadelphia.”

The U.S.S. *Delaware* was purchased by the United States Navy on May 5, 1798 and sold in June 1801. According to the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, the U.S.S. *Delaware* “cruised to protect American merchant shipping from French privateers; guarded convoys during their approach to Philadelphia and New York; patrolled the West Indies; and escorted convoys into Havana,” (Naval Historical Center). During the course of the Quasi-War, the U.S.S. *Delaware* captured the French privateer *La Croyable* on July 7, 1798 as well as several other privateering ships, including *Le Sans Pareil* and *Le Marsuin*, and with the U.S.S. *United States*, the *la Jaloux*.

Little is known about Thomas Wilkey who sailed on the U.S.S. *Delaware* under Decatur during 1798. However, it appears that he also served under Decatur on the U.S.S. *Philadelphia* and kept a log dating from May 28, 1800 to January 25, 1801 (log available at the Naval Historical Center).

Bibliography:

Naval Historical Center. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/d3/delaware-ii.htm> (accessed March 8, 2012)

Parsons, William Decatur. *The Decatur Genealogy*. New York, 1921. http://www.archive.org/stream/decaturgeneal00pars/decaturgeneal00pars_djvu.txt (accessed March 8, 2012)

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of a single journal, written by Thomas Wilkey, that contains daily records of the U.S.S. *Delaware*'s voyages in 1798, including weather conditions, courses set, latitude and longitude, daily activities, and encounters with other ships including privateers.

Administrative Information

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Sponsor

The creation of the collection level record was made possible through generous funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, administered through the Council on Library and Information Resources' "Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives" Project.

Access Restrictions

This collection is open for research use, on deposit at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107. For access, please contact the Historical Society at 215-732-6200 or visit <http://www.hsp.org>.

Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may apply. Please contact the Library Company of Philadelphia with requests for copying and for authorization to publish, quote or reproduce the material.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Naval Historical Center:

Inventory of the Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, R.G. 45.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Delaware (Ship).
- United States. Navy.

Form/Genre(s)

- Journals (accounts)

Personal Name(s)

- Decatur, Stephen, 1752-1808

Subject(s)

- Privateering
- Sailors
- United States--History--1797-1801

Collection Inventory

	Volume
Journal, 1798.	1