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

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Library Company of Philadelphia
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Summary Information

Repository
Library Company of Philadelphia

Creator
Wilkey, Thomas

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

Date
1798

Extent
1.0 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. Delaware. During the course of the Quasi-War, the U.S.S. Delaware 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. Delaware’s voyages in 1798, including weather conditions, courses set, latitude and longitude, daily activities, and encounters with other ships, including privateers.

Preferred Citation note
[Description and date of item], Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. Delaware, 1798, Library Company of Philadelphia.
Biographical/Historical note

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:


Scope and Contents note

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

Publication Information
Library Company of Philadelphia 2012 March 10

Conditions Governing Access note
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.

Conditions Governing Use note
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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).
Genre(s)

- Journals (accounts)

Personal Name(s)

- Decatur, Stephen, 1752-1808

Subject(s)

- Privateering
- Sailors
- United States--History--1797-1801
## Collection Inventory

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