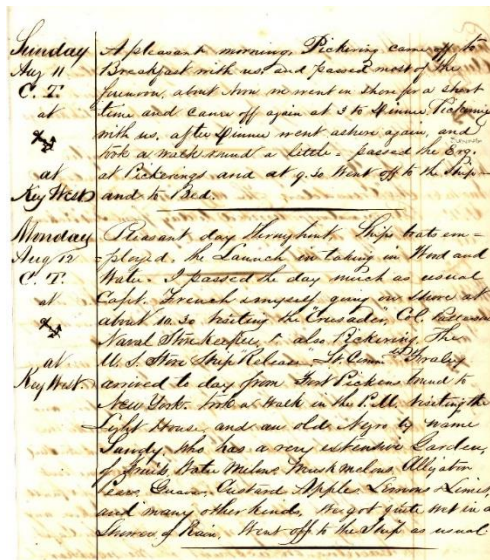


Gettysburg College
Musselman
Library
special collections

Guide to MS-225:

Joshua Blake Civil War Naval Journal



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections and College Archives

Laurel Wilson, Class of 2019, Pohanka Intern
June 2018

MS-225: Joshua Blake Civil War Naval Journal

Process by Laurel Wilson, Class of 2019, Pohanka Intern
June 2018

Size

1 boxes, 0.18 cubic feet

Location

Special Collections

Dates

Inclusive: 1861-1869

Bulk: 1861-1862, 1866-1867

Provenance

Purchase – 03/27/2017, Ten Pound Island Book Company.

Biographical Note

Joshua Blake (1827-1902) was the Captain's Clerk aboard the USS *Preble* from July of 1861 to January of 1862. He also spent two months (Jan – Feb 1862) aboard the USS *Connecticut*, caring for the *Preble's* former commander, Capt. Henry French, who had been relieved of command after contracting a brain disease. Blake would later re-join Navy after the war, serving aboard the USS *Augusta* from May 1866 to July 1867. He married Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Kallock in 1868, and her photo is pasted inside the front cover of the journal. According to ship passenger and crew registers from both before and after the war (can be found on ancestry.com), Blake seems to have traveled to many far off places over the course of his life as a seaman; including Genoa, Italy; Liverpool, England; and Calcutta, India. He died in April of 1902 at the age of 75.

Historical Note

The Civil War was a period of technological transition for the US Navy. The advent of steamships meant that the older sailing ships in the Navy's fleet were quickly becoming obsolete, as steam powered ships were able to move much faster and were much more maneuverable than sailing ships. Blake's ship, The USS *Preble*, is a sailing vessel, which puts it at a clear disadvantage during its time on blockading duty; a fact which Blake remarks upon in his journal. The naval blockade was meant to put a stranglehold on the southern economy during the Civil War by preventing goods from entering or leaving southern ports. Blake's account of his service during the naval blockade provides a glimpse into the sometimes exciting, but often incredibly dull daily lives of the sailors aboard the blockading ships.

Scope and Content Note

In this journal, Blake details his experiences aboard the USS *Preble*, which was one of the ships that were deployed to the Gulf Coast as part of the Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron. His time on the USS *Preble* is detailed in the first 41 pages of the journal. On page 46, Blake switches to detailing his time aboard the USS *Augusta* from 1866-67, and also details his 1869 passage to Genoa aboard a ship called the *Magdalene*. On page 132, Blake switches back to 1862, detailing his two months aboard the USS *Connecticut*. A possible explanation for this pattern of date jumps may be that Blake stopped using this journal at the end of his time on the USS *Preble* and began using a different journal to document his experiences in 1862. He eventually resumed using this journal to document later voyages, and may have decided to re-copy the contents of his 1862 journal into this journal in order to consolidate the two. Blake includes small drawings of anchors in the margins next to some of his entries. He has also pasted newspaper clippings into the journal, as well as a photo of his wife Lizzie inside the front cover. Also included are Blake's orders to report aboard the USS *Preble* as Captain's Clerk and his orders from the *Preble*'s surgeon sending him north with Capt. French.

Series Description

This collection is comprised of one series. **Series I:** Journal.

Box List

Box 1

Series 1: Journal

1-0 Finding Aid and Bibliographical Information

1-1 Transcription

- pages 11-12 (July 28, 1861)
- pages 14-15 (August 3, 1861)
- pages 132-135 (January 29, 1862)

1-2 Bound Journal, 160 pages

Contact Information

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