

**Guide to the J. W. Tynan Papers, 1889-1890
MS0077**

**The Mariners' Museum Library
at
Christopher Newport University**

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: J. W. Tynan Papers, 1889-1890

Catalog number: MS0077

Physical Characteristics: 6 letters, 1 photograph

Language(s): English

Creator(s): J. W. Tynan

SCOPE AND CONTENT

J. W. Tynan served as 1st Assistant Engineer aboard the *C.S.S. Virginia* at the time of its engagement with the *U.S.S. Monitor* during the Battle of Hampton Roads in 1862. In 1889 he contacted all five of his fellow mechanics aboard at that time, Acting Chief Engineer Ramsay, Campbell, Herring, Jack, and White, in order to collect photographs of them from wartime and the present time so he could arrange a photograph collage of the ship and its engineers. Tynan provides information in his letters to Campbell about his post-war career. Also, he is able to give Campbell short updates about Ramsay, White, Jack and Herring in these letters.

This collection comprises of six letters to Loudon Campbell and a copy of the photograph.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession number

CA 43

Accession date

1955

Restrictions

Open to all researchers.

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Preferred Citation

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Note to Users

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the collection, researchers are requested to handle the materials with caution and in accordance with prescribed archival practices. When using these materials, please preserve the original order of the collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL SKETCH

John W. Tynan served in the USN as a 3rd and 2nd assistant engineer before he resigned in April 1861 and joined the CSN. He served on the *St. Nicholas*, the *Virginia*, the *Chattahoochee*, and the *Tallahassee*. He was serving in the engine room as 1st assistant engineer during the Battle of Hampton Roads in 1862. Around 1870 he started his own business, his letterhead stating “J. W. Tynan Engineer and Machinist, Machinery and Boilers Built and Repaired. Dealer in steam engines, steam pumps” etc. He experienced a setback when a fire in 1883 destroyed his property and wrote that “am now just about getting steady on my feet again.” He married in 1864 and his daughter gave him his first grandchild in 1889.

Henry Ramsay became a consulting engineer in Baltimore after his military service ended in 1865. He was not a financial success “caused a good deal by ‘Strikes’” wrote Tynan. Ben Herring became a farmer of pears and Japanese plums in Florida after working in railroads. E. A. Jack worked for the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service. E. V. White had success in Norfolk “in the ship chandler and general steam furnishing business.” Loudon Campbell’s post war career is unclear from Tynan’s letters except that he resided in Pittsburg, PA.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

The Tynan Papers are in two series. The material is arranged in ascending chronological order.

Series I: Correspondence. Comprised of letters from J. W. Tynan to Loudon Campbell written in 1889 and 1890.

Series II: Photograph. One photograph containing a collage of photos: six engineers and photos of the battle of Hampton Roads.

FILE GUIDE

BOX 1

Folder 1 Finding Aid /Background Information

Folder 2 Correspondence

September 16, 1889.

One paragraph letter on letterhead asking whether Campbell is his wartime friend and associate.

September 25, 1889.

Three page letter on letterhead. Tells about his idea for a combination picture with the *Merrimac* in the middle surrounded by pictures of the engineers as they appeared then and at the present time. Asks for two pictures of Campbell. Explains that the intent of photograph is for passing on to grandchildren and not for publication. Gives Campbell a brief personal update.

Folder 3 Correspondence

November 10, 1889.

Three page letter on letterhead. Gives Campbell an update on fellow ship engineers: Ramsay, Herring, Jack, White and himself. Mentions Charles Schroeder, a partner in business with White, and A. N. Miller, a former employer of Tynan and Campbell.

Folder 4

Correspondence

January 26, 1890.

Two page letter. Describes present day Savannah, Georgia. Illness at home and birth of a grandson slowed work on his “hobby the Picture” and he only has to arrange all the pictures and have it photographed.

Folder 5

Correspondence

March 5, 1890.

Two page letter on Suwanee Sulpher Springs letterhead. His bad health impeded progress on the picture. Planned to be at the Springs for up to five weeks. Described idea for photo arrangement. Mentions that he has a wife, daughter and grandson.

Folder 6

Correspondence

May 7, 1890.

Two page letter on letterhead. Has sent picture *Merrimac and her Engineers* to Campbell by express. He is not as pleased with it as he expected to be.

Folder 7

Photograph [1890]

Cabinet card type photo size 8.5 cm by 6.5 cm. The bottom left corner is torn away. Rectangle shaped photographs are in the upper left and right corners and bottom right corner and the center. Twelve oval shaped portraits of the engineers surround the center photograph. Extensive fading and small size makes the images nearly impossible to see. Most of the text is illegible.

MATERIALS REMOVED

None

SOURCES CONSULTED

Quarstein, John V. *C.S.S. Virginia Mistress of Hampton Roads*, Appomattox, VA: H. E Howard Inc., 2000.

SUBJECTS

Campbell, Loudon

Herring, Benjamin Simms

Jack, Eugenius Alexander

Ramsay, Henry Ashton

Savannah (Ga.)

Tynan, John W.

White, Elsberry Valentine

Merrimack (Frigate : 1856-1860)

Virginia (Ironclad : 1862)

United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865-Personal narratives

