

**Guide to the Franklin Buchanan Papers, 1861-1873  
MS0081**

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

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## **DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY**

**Repository:** The Mariners' Museum Library

**Title:** Franklin Buchanan Papers

**Inclusive Dates:** 1861-1873

**Catalog number:** MS0081

**Physical Characteristics:** 3 items: 1 military record; 2 photographs

**Language:** English

**Creator:** Buchanan, Franklin, 1800-1874

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Franklin Buchanan was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on September 17, 1800, into a prominent family. At the age of fifteen, he joined the United States Navy as a Midshipman, where he served under Oliver Hazard Perry. After subsequent promotions, Buchanan was, in 1845, chosen to be the first superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

Buchanan commanded a vessel during the Mexican War and later went on to command Commodore Mathew Perry's flagship during the famed 1852 expedition to Japan. Following his return, Buchanan was, in 1855, awarded command of the Washington Navy Yard.

At the onset of the Civil War, Buchanan resigned his post. He joined the Confederate States Navy where he initially acted as the chief of the Office of Orders and Detail in the Navy Department. Eventually he was assigned command of the ironclad *Virginia*. Wounded while attacking the federal ships *Cumberland* and *Congress*, he was not present for the famed 1862 battle between the ironclads *Virginia* and *Monitor* at Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Buchanan later commanded the ironclad *Tennessee*. During an attack on Admiral David Farragut's Federal fleet in the waters off New Orleans, Louisiana, Buchanan was wounded and taken prisoner.

Following the war, Buchanan returned to Maryland, where he briefly served as president of Maryland Agricultural College (University of Maryland). He soon retired to his home in Easton, Maryland, where he died on May 11, 1874.

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT**

This collection of four items relates primarily to Franklin Buchanan and his service in the Confederate States Navy during the Civil War. Included in the collection are two studio photographs in which Buchanan is the subject: the first, presumably taken during the Civil War depicts him in a Confederate States Navy uniform; the second, dated 1873, shows him in civilian attire.

The collection is organized into 3 files and is arranged by material type.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

### **Accession Number**

CK 215

### **Accession Date**

unknown

### **Restrictions**

The collection is open to all researchers.

### **Publication Rights**

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### **Preferred Citation**

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### **Other Finding Aids**

Full records and electronic reproductions of the photographs in this collection can be found in Museum's photograph database.

### **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.

## **FILE GUIDE**

### **BOX 1**

**Folder 1** Finding aid

**Folder 2** Documents

One (1) document from the Confederate States Navy Department, dated December 26, 1861. Bearing the signature of Franklin Buchanan, said document is a formal approval for the allocation of \$79.20; this money was apparently spent on a renovation project as some of the items listed are as follows: an oil cloth, curtains, a brass hook, carpet, and cushions.

**Folder 3** Photographs, 1873

Albumen print, measuring 5 ¾"x7 ½" and dated 1873, featuring Buchanan in a studio setting in Confederate States Navy uniform trousers and greatcoat.

**Folder 4** Photographs, undated

Carte de visite, measuring 3"x3 ½" and bearing no date, presumably taken during the Civil War as it shows Buchanan in a Confederate States Navy uniform. This particular item is enclosed in a small folding case,

which—on the inside of the cover—holds a miniature ornamental anchor bearing the words Merrimac and Virginia as well as the year 1862. It is not known whether either of these items—the case or the anchor—is from that era or ever belonged to Buchanan.

#### **SOURCES CONSULTED**

Naval Historical Center. “Online Library of Selected Images: –People –United States –.”  
<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/pers-us/uspers-b/f-buchan.htm>.

#### **SUBJECTS**

Confederate States of America-History, Naval.

Confederate States of America. Navy-Officers.

Confederate States of America. Navy-Supplies and stores.