

**Guide to The John C. Beaumont Journal
MS0409**

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

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: John C. Beaumont Journal

Catalog number: MS0409

Physical Characteristics:

Language: English

Creator: John Colt Beaumont and others

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Journal records the activities and events of Commander Beaumont from the time he reported to Admiral Paulding on 15 October 1862 for passage on the Steamer *Massachusetts* to Port Royal to take command of the U.S.S. *Sebago* on blockade duty with the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and continues with his service on the *Passaic* class monitor, *Nantucket*, through 18 November 1863.

The activities of the ship's commander common to the post are carefully recorded including ship movements, weather and changes of personnel and their duties. All the names of personnel assigned aboard or departing for other duty are recorded as well as all punishments and courts martial of individuals are also included detailing their crimes and rules infractions.

The names of all other vessels contacted or observed are included. These include those supplying provisions, bringing prisoners, exchanging crew, etc. as well as those exchanging signals. Every signal given or received is recorded by code number.

The portion of the Journal which records Commander Beaumont's service on the *Nantucket* gives important information about the blockade of Charleston, SC and the shelling of Fort Wagner in July 1863. The number and type of shells fired was carefully recorded. The *Nantucket* was hit twice, wounding two sailors.

The September 1863 capture of a prize, the English Steamer *Jupiter* headed for Savannah by the U.S.S. *Cimarron* is detailed.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number

n/a

Accession date

2008

Restrictions

Collection is open to all researchers. Due to the fragile nature of the

journal, there is a restriction on photocopying. No photocopies are allowed. Digital copies can be obtained through the Photography and Licensing Department at the user's cost.

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Preferred Citation

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Note to Users:

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the Journal, researchers are requested to handle the volume with caution and in accordance with prescribed archival practices.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Colt Beaumont was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania from where he was appointed as a midshipman, 1 March 1838, aboard the sloop *Ontario* of the West India Squadron. He sailed on the frigate *Constellation* on a long cruise to the East Indies and around the world, 1842-4. In the Mexican War he served on the *Ohio* at the fall of Vera Cruz, and later in the Pacific. Sea service was varied by tours of duty at the Naval Observatory, Washington, in 1848 and 1852-54. As a passed midshipman (promoted May 20, 1844) Beaumont toured Mediterranean ports on the *Independence*, 1849-52. At the opening of the Civil War, he was on the *Hartford* in the East Indies and moved to command ships on the Virginia rivers and the Atlantic coast including the gunboat *Aroostook* in attacks on Confederate batteries in the James River and at Fort Darling in May 1862.

This Journal records Beaumont's service as Commander of the *Sebago* beginning 15 October 1862 and includes his transfer to the *Passaic* class coastal monitor, *Nantucket* on 3 May 1863 where he took a leading part in the capture of Fort Wagner in July 1863. The journal ends in November 1863.

Reassigned to command of the monitor *Mackinaw*, he took part in the December 1864 bombardment of Fort Fisher, during which the *Mackinaw's* boiler was pierced by an enemy shell and ten of the crew were wounded.

Although not recorded in this Journal, Beaumont was selected to command the new monitor, *Miantonomoh*, in the squadron which took Assistant Secretary of the Navy Fox to tour Europe in April 1866. *Miantonomoh*, the first monitor to cross the Atlantic Ocean visited numerous European ports during this tour, before departing for the United States in May 1867.

In July 1867 Beaumont was promoted to the rank of Captain. He later served as Chief Signal Officer of the Navy (1874-79), and was commandant of the Portsmouth Navy Yard when he retired at the rank of Rear Admiral in February 1882. He died in

August 1882, and was buried in the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia.

Other vessels named in the Journal: *Admiral DuPont, Aries, Arkansas, A.S. Cannon, Augusta Dinsmore, Ben De Ford, Bibb, Blackstone, B.W. Tull, Canandigua, Catskill, Chas. H. Frost, Chippewa, Cimarron, City of Bath, Columbia, Conemaugh, Cosmopolitan, Daffodil, Dandelion, Delaware, Dirigo, Ellen, Fairhaven, Flambeau, Harriet A. Weed, Hope, Ironsides, James Adger, James F. Freeborn, Jupiter, Keystone State, Lightning, LoDona, Lotus, Marblehead, Margaret Reinhart, Maria, Mary Benton, Mary Boardman, M. A. Shindler, Massachusetts, Mattand, Montauk, Mont Bank, Monticello Nahaut, Nelly Baker, Norfolk Packet, Norwich, Oleander, Ottawa, Para, Patapsco, Paul Jones, Pawnee, Pettit, Philadelphia, Possaic, Powhatan, Prometheus, Rhode Island, Sallie B. Samuel L. Adams, Secor, Seneca, South Carolina, Stag, Thorn, Tillie, Trade Wind, Treaty, Unadilla, Valparaiso, Vapor, Vermont, Wabash, Wamsutta, Water Witch, Weehawken, Wissahiccan, Wyoming* and an unnamed Rebel steamer flying a white flag.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This collection is organized into a single series.

MATERIALS REMOVED

None

SOURCES CONSULTED

Dictionary of American Biography, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1929.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vols. IV, V, VI.

Randolph, Lewis. *The Records of Living Officers of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps*

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SUBJECTS

Beaumont, John C., d. 1882

Sebago (Gunboat : 1862)

Nantucket (Ironclad : 1863)

United States. Navy. South Atlantic Blockading Squadron (1861-1865)

Fort Wagner (S.C.)

Charleston (S.C.)