

**Guide to the Walter Jacobs Family Papers, 1863-1960
MS0514**

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

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: Walter Jacobs Family Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1863-1960

Catalog number: MS0514

Physical Characteristics: 6 items, including one journal, 1 tracing (drawing), 1 transcript, 1 letter, 1 note, and 1 photocopied envelope.

Language: English

Creator: Walter Jacobs family; Jacobs, Walter, d. 1918; Stevens, Ellenore C. Jacobs; Daughenbaugh, Peter.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Walter Jacobs was born in New Haven, Connecticut. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on November 15, 1861 for a three-year term and was discharged on December 13, 1864. During his service, Jacobs served on USS *North Carolina*, USS *Flambeau*, USS *Nantucket*, and USS *Princeton*.

There is some discrepancy over Jacobs' date of birth. On a pension application in 1890, Jacobs reported his birthday as October 7, 1846, while on a later pension application in 1907 he listed his date of birth as October 7, 1844. In response to the discrepancy and at the request of the federal government, Jacobs provided a sworn affidavit on July 6, 1908 stating his date of birth as October 7, 1844.

On January 5, 1870, Jacobs married Helen Jane Shipman in New Haven. Helen died on March 5, 1909. Together they had nine children: Frank Walter (b. April 26, 1870), Eva Eralena (b. March 5, 1872), Alice Maude (b. September 13, 1873), Joseph Alfred (b. March 19, 1875), John Henry (b. December 5, 1876), Jessie May (b. June 20, 1878), Walter Edward (b. May 1, 1881), Ella (Ellenore) Clarrisa (b. April 24, 1883), and Florence Helen (b. April 17, 1887).

Walter Jacobs died on February 26, 1918 in New Haven, Connecticut.

Ellenore Jacobs married Benjamin Scott Stevens and had at least one daughter, Jane Stevens. Jane Stevens Daughenbaugh is the mother of Peter Daughenbaugh, the donor of the collection.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of items relating to the service of Walter Jacobs in the United States Navy during the Civil War. The most notable item is Jacobs' personal journal. The journal covers roughly the last year and a half of Jacobs' three-year enlistment, from August 23, 1863 to December 8, 1864. During the time that Jacobs kept this journal, he served aboard two vessels, the screw steamer *Flambeau* and the ironclad monitor *Nantucket*. While Jacobs does provide accounts of military action, the most significant aspect of his journal are the rich details and anecdotes he gives about life on board a Union navy vessel and ironclad. Jacobs also offers his opinion on Navy life, the Union war effort, the U.S. government, and African Americans' service in the Union army and navy, among other things. The names of most other vessels contacted or observed are also included. These include those supplying provisions and coal,

bringing mail, etc. Most entries begin with a brief description of the weather and direction of the wind.

Also included in this collection is a 14-page, loose-leaf transcript of a radio program “What Are You Reading?” that was broadcast by station WELI in New Haven, Connecticut on March 10, 1941. The host of the program was Elida B. Sterling, who was evidently a neighbor of Ella Jacobs Stevens. On her program, Sterling describes the journal and provides brief anecdotes from it. She also provides brief biographical information on Walter Jacobs.

Associated with the transcript are a hand-written note in ink and a typewritten letter. The note identifies “Ellenore Jacobs Stevens” both as “Nana” and “his daughter.” Ellenore is indeed Ella Clarissa Jacobs, Walter Jacob’s eighth child and the grandmother of the author. The author of the note, Peter Daughenbaugh, provides an anecdote of his great-grandfather Walter Jacobs in later life. The typewritten letter is addressed to Ella and is from Elida Sterling. The letter notes the inclusion of a copy of the typescript “for Jane” and concludes with personal content. “Jane” is Jane Daughenbaugh, the mother of Peter. Mother and grandmother gave Peter the Jacobs journal in 1956, and he kept it until donating it to The Mariners’ Museum in 2011.

The final item in this collection is pencil sketch of an ironclad monitor that appears to be in action. The artist and date of the drawing is unknown. This drawing is similar to a known steel engraving of the monitor *Montauk*’s destruction of the *Rattlesnake*, the ex-Confederate steamer *Nashville*, on 28 Feb. 1863. The engraving appeared in *Harper’s Weekly* in January-June 1863.

The collection is organized into 2 series: Journal; and Associated Materials.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number

MS0514

Accession Date

2011

Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers.

Publication Rights

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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.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series 1: Journal, 1863-1864.

Organized into one folder. The series is comprised of a single item, the journal kept by Walter Jacobs during his time in Union Navy service.

Series 2: Associated Materials, 1863(?) -1960

Organized into 2 folders. The series is comprised of items accompanying the journal that directly or indirectly refer to it.

FILE GUIDE

BOX 1

- Folder 1** Finding aid
- Folder 2** Journal, 1863-1864
- Folder 3** Associated Materials, 1941-undated
Transcript of 1941 radio broadcast
Undated letter addressed to Ella
Undated note pertaining to Walter Jacobs
Photocopy of envelope postmarked 1960 containing transcript and letter addressed to Ella.
- Folder 4** Associated Materials, undated –Sketch
Undated sketch of monitor-type vessel

MATERIALS REMOVED

Photocopies of portions of Jacobs' journal and photocopies of a map of Charleston from *Harper's Weekly* have been removed and placed in the donor file.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. <http://www.history.navy.mil/DANFS/>
The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922.
Konstam, Angus. *Union Monitor, 1861-65.* New Vanguard 45. Oxford: Osprey, 2002.

SUBJECTS

Jacobs, Walter
Flambeau (Screw steamer : 1861)
Nantucket (Ironclad : 1863)
United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865-Naval operations

United States. Navy-Sea life

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