

**Guide to the Rezin H. Gist Letters, 1813
MS0292**

The Mariners' Museum Library

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library
Title: Rezin H. Gist Letters
Inclusive Dates: 1813
Catalog number: MS0292
Physical Characteristics: 4 letters (correspondence)
Language: English
Creator: Gist, Rezin H.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rezin Hammond Gist was born on August 25, 1787 in Baltimore County, Maryland. At some point he migrated to Bourbon County, Kentucky where he married Rachel Dawson on May 7, 1812. Rezin and Rachel had four children: Anna Rachel (b.1817), Susan Rebecca (b. 1824), Rachel E. (b.1826), and Henrietta Clay (b. 1828).

During the War of 1812, he served as 1st Lieutenant in the 28th United States Infantry. Rezin Gist died on June 11, 1834 in Olympia Spring, Bath County, Kentucky and is buried in Montgomery County, Kentucky.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection consists of four letters written by Rezin H. Gist during his service in the War of 1812. All four letters were written in 1813. Two were written to his wife, Rachel, and the other two to a friend, Major Asa K. Lewis, who served with the 1st Brigade (Clay's) Kentucky Volunteers.

In his letters, Gist described his participation in two key moments in the campaigns in the northwest. Most interestingly, he was involved in the defeat of American forces under Col. William Dudley in defense of Fort Meigs, Ohio, in May of 1813. General William Henry Harrison, in command of the fort, had directed Dudley to retire, but he pursued the British soldiers into an ambush in contravention of his orders and 630 of 800 men were killed or captured. Gist continued serving under Harrison and was present when the British abandoned Detroit and crossed into Canada. Harrison's pursuit of the British into Canada resulted in the Battle of the Thames, an American victory that permanently secured the Great Lakes for the United States. Gist also wrote his wife and Asa Lewis that he was to bring the baggage of the American Army from Put-In-Bay to Detroit in support of the campaign. However, his vessel, the schooner *Chippewa*, was caught in a 3-day storm and was blown across the length of Lake Erie; she was driven ashore at Black Rock, N.Y. Only heroic efforts by those aboard kept the schooner from sinking. Gist's final letters reassure his wife that he is still alive and discusses the movement of Harrison's forces from Detroit across Lake Erie to join forces with Gen. McClure's New York militia.

This collection is organized into 1 folder and is arranged chronologically. There are typed transcriptions of all four letters available for study.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number

CA119

Accession Date

Unknown

Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers.

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Preferred Citation

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RELATED MATERIALS

The Maryland State Archives has other correspondence of Rezin H. Gist in their collection MSA SC 130.

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

Folder 1 Correspondence, 1813

SOURCES CONSULTED

Beirne, Francis F. *The War of 1812*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1949.

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. <http://www.history.navy.mil/DANFS/>

Dorsey, Jean Muir and Maxwell Jay Dorsey. *Christopher Gist of Maryland and Some of His Descendants, 1679-1957*. Chicago: John S. Swift Company, Inc., 1958.

Heidler, David S. and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds. *Encyclopedia of the War of 1812*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1997.

Lossing, Benson J. *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1868.

SUBJECTS

Gist, Rezin H.

Gist, Rachel.

Lewis, Asa K.

Dudley, William,-1813.

United States-History-War of 1812-Personal narratives.

Chippewa (Schooner : 1813).

Shipwrecks-Erie, Lake.

Dudley's Defeat, 1813.

Thames, Battle of the, Ont., 1813.