

2011

Of Special Interest

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Recommended Citation

Lord, Carnes (2011) "Of Special Interest," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 64 : No. 4 , Article 22.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol64/iss4/22>

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OF SPECIAL INTEREST

CIVIL WAR MANUSCRIPTS IN THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE'S NAVAL HISTORICAL COLLECTION

The Civil War began on 12 April 1861, when Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. This was the start of four years of warfare on land and at sea. The Naval Historical Collection contains letters, journals, and accounts of Union sailors and soldiers who participated in battles or were on blockade duty in Southern waters. As this year marks the sesquicentennial anniversary of the beginning of the war, these manuscripts deserve recognition.

Timothy Murphy, a blacksmith from New Bedford, Massachusetts, joined a Massachusetts regiment in 1864 and then transferred to the U.S. Navy. His collection consists of letters to his wife written in 1864 and 1865. In them he describes camp and shipboard life, the battle of Mobile Bay, his concern for his family and friends back home, and his hope of receiving the bounty offered at recruitment. He also comments on the many deserters from his unit. John Seacote's letters to his father date from 1864 and 1865, when he served in USS *Savannah* and USS *Chenango* as a member of the New Hampshire infantry. Seacote writes about his duties on board ship, his illnesses, his need for money, and the prospective bounty. Admiral David Farragut wrote to his wife on 31 July 1864, several days before the battle of Mobile Bay. He confessed that he did not know when he was going to attack, as he was waiting for troops to arrive, but had faith in God and the outcome. Earlier, on 1 May 1862, he had sent a letter to General Benjamin F. Butler congratulating him on the capture of the city of New Orleans. He hoped that the army would "hold the city without further difficulty." Lieutenant Commander Stephen B. Luce was in USS *Pontiac* on 1 March 1865 when he wrote to Commander George S. Blake regarding the deplorable conditions in the South near the war's end. Luce found it sad that "families . . . have been reduced in one day from affluence to begging."

The Union navy maintained a strong blockade of Southern ports with the intention of preventing supplies from Europe reaching the military and the civilian population. Noteworthy among the Union captains was Commander John B. Marchand of USS *James Adger* in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron

and stationed off Charleston, South Carolina. He also served in the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron off Mobile, Alabama, and Galveston, Texas, 1862–64. His holograph diaries document the weather and the daily tedium of blockade duty. Despite the best efforts of the ships of the squadron, foreign goods and supplies got through. But patrolling was not always in vain, as a 1 August 1864 list of prizes indicates. James Curran was second assistant engineer in USS *Unadilla* during the final months of the war. His log records the visit of President Abraham Lincoln to Richmond on 5 April, General Lee's surrender, Lincoln's assassination, and mop-up blockade duty on the Chickahominy River.

While men were in battle at sea or on the rivers of the Confederacy, women faced their own hardships. Maria McGregor Campbell Smith of Richmond, Virginia, sought to escape the war in 1864 by traveling north to relatives in Cooperstown, New York. Her husband, Charles, was assistant surgeon general of the Confederate armies. Maria left home by wagon with her two children, knowing that she faced possible capture when she crossed Yankee lines. After she arrived in the North, she wrote an account of her travels that can be found in the Roy Campbell Smith Papers.

For information on the Naval Historical Collection and its holdings, contact the archivist, Dr. Evelyn M. Cherpak, at evelyn.cherpak@usnwc.edu or (401) 841-2435.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

A three-volume book set, *China and International Security: History, Strategy, and 21st Century Policy*, is in preparation. Its purpose is to provide in-depth views of China and its national security environment, including historical (volume 1) and domestic-cultural (volume 2) contexts as well as contemporary (volume 3) security issues. The set seeks cogent analyses of China's security strategies, regionally and internationally, as well as detailed examinations of the Communist Party of China and the People's Liberation Army and their roles in China's national security, in particular. Academics, researchers, and practitioners (civilian and military) are all invited to submit original, unpublished one-page proposals (for chapters of from five to seven thousand words) along with brief biographies (including full contact information) for consideration. First-draft deadline is 1 January 2012. Contact Donovan C. Chau, PhD, dchau@csusb.edu, Department of Political Science and MA Program in National Security Studies, California State University, San Bernardino.