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Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. Delaware (MSS00117)

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English Library Company of Philadelphia

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Philadelphia, PA 19107

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Summary Information

Repository:	Library Company of Philadelphia
Creator:	Wilkey, Thomas
Title:	Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. Delaware
ID:	MSS00117
ID [aspace_uri]:	/repositories/3/resources/40
Date:	1798
Physical Description:	1.0 volume
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Thomas Wilkey served under Stephen Decatur (1752-1808) in the United States Navy during the Quasi-War with France aboard the U.S.S. <i>Delaware</i> . During the course of the Quasi-War, the U.S.S. <i>Delaware</i> sailed between New York and the West Indies, protecting American ships from the French privateers. Wilkey's journal contains daily records of the U.S.S. <i>Delaware's</i> voyages in 1798, including weather conditions, courses set, latitude and longitude, daily activities, and encounters with other ships, including privateers.

Preferred Citation note

[Description and date of item], Thomas Wilkey journal on board the U.S.S. *Delaware* (MSS00117), 1798, Library Company of Philadelphia.

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Biographical/Historical note

Stephen Decatur (1752-1808) served in the United States Navy during the Quasi-War with France and commanded the U.S.S. *Delaware*. Originally a merchant shipper, Decatur served as a captain in the navy during the Revolutionary War. Following peace with Great Britain, Decatur returned to work with Gurney and Smith of Philadelphia and raised his family, including son, Stephen Decatur, Jr. (1779-1820) who would become a commodore

of the United States Navy during the War of 1812. According to Parsons, "at the close of hostilities, when the officers, men and vessels of the navy were greatly reduced under the Peace Establishment Act, October 22nd, 1801, he was honorably discharged and retired to property he owned at Frankford, near Philadelphia."

The U.S.S. *Delaware* was purchased by the United States Navy on May 5, 1798 and sold in June 1801. According to the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, the U.S.S. *Delaware* "cruised to protect American merchant shipping from French privateers; guarded convoys during their approach to Philadelphia and New York; patrolled the West Indies; and escorted convoys into Havana," (Naval Historical Center). During the course of the Quasi-War, the U.S.S. *Delaware* captured the French privateer *La Croyable* on July 7, 1798 as well as several other privateering ships, including *Le Sans Pareil* and *Le Marsuin*, and with the U.S.S. *United States*, the *la Jaloux*.

Little is known about Thomas Wilkey who sailed on the U.S.S. *Delaware* under Decatur during 1798. However, it appears that he also served under Decatur on the U.S.S. *Philadelphia* and kept a log dating from May 28, 1800 to January 25, 1801 (log available at the Naval Historical Center).

Bibliography:

Naval Historical Center. Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. <http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/d3/delaware-ii.htm> (accessed March 8, 2012)

Parsons, William Decatur. *The Decatur Genealogy*. New York, 1921. http://www.archive.org/stream/decaturgeneal00pars/decaturgeneal00pars_djvu.txt (accessed March 8, 2012)

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Scope and Contents note

This collection consists of a single journal, written by Thomas Wilkey, that contains daily records of the U.S.S. *Delaware's* voyages in 1798, including weather conditions, courses set, latitude and longitude, daily activities, and encounters with other ships including privateers.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Library Company of Philadelphia

1314 Locust St.

Philadelphia, PA 19107

URL: <https://librarycompany.org>

Revision Description

Finding aid prepared 3/10/2012. EAD encoding of finding aid updated by Dana Dorman, Library Company Archivist, after the Library Company took over management of LCP.in.HSP materials. 2/24/2026

Conditions Governing Access note

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Conditions Governing Use note

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Naval Historical Center:

Inventory of the Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, R.G. 45.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Journals (accounts)
- Privateering
- Sailors
- United States--History--1797-1801
- Decatur, Stephen, 1752-1808
- Delaware (Ship).
- United States. Navy.

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Journal, 1798	Volume 1