

**Guide to the Robert Weir Papers, 1862-1864, 1898
MS0007**

The Mariners' Museum Library

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: Robert Weir Papers

Inclusive Dates: 1862-1864, 1898

Bulk Dates: 1862-1864

Catalog number: MS0007

Physical Characteristics: 91 items, including correspondence, cartoons (humorous images), photographs, drawings (visual works), sketches, orders (military records), and discharges

Language: English

Creator: Weir, Robert, 1836-1905

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Weir (1836-1905) was the son of Robert Walter Weir, a professional painter and a professor of drawing at West Point. The younger Robert Weir ran away to sea at a young age and sailed on several whaling cruises, including the *Clarabell* from 1855-1858. He enlisted in the Union Navy in 1862 and served as third assistant engineer and second assistant engineer on the USS *Richmond*. *Richmond* was part of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron, serving under the command of David G. Farragut. Weir was commended for his role in the attack of the batteries along Port Hudson, LA in March 1863 and painted a watercolor of the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864.

Throughout this time at sea, Weir continued to sketch images and scenes from everyday life on board a ship. He also kept a journal and wrote short stories, some of which have survived today. In addition to these personal outlets, Weir also illustrated a book, titled "Uncle Samuel's Whistle and What it Costs". Privately published, the book's text is largely attributed to Weir as well as the illustrations.

Weir's illustrations appeared in *Harper's Weekly* during and after the war. Weir died at his home in Montclair, New Jersey on January 17, 1905.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection is comprised of drawings by Robert Weir and four photographs, three letters, two orders (military records), and one military discharge. Except for one letter dated 1898, the entire collection dates between 1862 and 1864. One watercolor, in black and white, shows an exceptional three mile scene along the Mississippi River riverbank at Port Hudson.

This collection contains sketches made when Weir was on board the U.S. sloop-of-war *Richmond*. Subjects are fleets of sailing vessels and steamships, men on board ship working, a map of Mobile Bay, and cartoons with satires of Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and navy life in general. Black-and-white photos are unidentified except a signed photo of Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. There are also two letters to Weir, one from Farragut, October 1864, aboard the U.S. flagship *Hartford*, West Gulf Squadron in Mobile Bay, and one from Colby M. Chester, April 1898, aboard the U.S.S. *Cincinnati* in Key West, Florida. The collection also contains a letter from Farragut to Captain Thornton Alexander Jenkins, dated May 1864.

The collection is organized into three boxes, arranged by size and material type, then chronologically. Box 3 contains one specially housed oversize item which is stored with Collections Management.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession number

CK52

Accession date

1945

Restrictions

Collection is open to all researchers.

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Preferred Citation

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Note to Users

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.

RELATED MATERIAL

Some of Robert Weir's writings, including a journal, war recollections, and drafts of stories, as well as some pencil sketches, can be found at Mystic Seaport: The Museum of America and the Sea. The Robert Weir papers are located in Collection 245.

The New Bedford Whaling Museum has four paintings, a print, and an unbound book illustrated by Weir.

The Pearce Museum at Navarro College has thirty letters from Weir to his wife dating between 1862 and 1865. These letters are a part of the Pearce Civil War Collection and are cataloged as 2005.186.00.

BOX 1

Folder 1 Finding Aid

Folder 2 Background Information

Folder 3 Correspondence, 1864
May 22, 1864: USS *Hartford*, Mobile Bay

D. Farragut to Capt. Jenkins, USS *Richmond*. 1 page. Requests that Jenkin send Weir aboard to discuss Weir's torpedo plan. "Altho I look upon the whole torpedo business as a cowardly and unmanly way of making war, still we must fight the devil with fire, that is my doctrine." [MS 0007.01.03.01]

August 30, 1864: USS *Hartford*, Mobile Bay

D. G. Farragut to Robert Weir. 2 sides. Envelope also. Farragut thanks Weir for his sketch and encloses a photograph of himself in appreciation.
[MS 0007.01.03.02]

Folder 4

Correspondence, 1898

April 18, 1898: USS *Cincinnati*, Key West, FL

C. M. Chester to Robert Weir. 2 sides in blue ink. Reminisces about the war.
[MS0007.01.04.01]

Folder 5

Drawings: Mobile Bay: 1863

Fleet scene (recto), Cannon sketch (verso). Pencil on bond paper, 14.5 x 8 cm
[MS 0007.01.05.01]

Monitor-type vessel. Pencil on yellow paper, 14.5 x 6.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.05.02]

Map sketch. Ink on bond paper, 10.5 x 17 cm
[MS 0007.01.05.03]

Fleet scene. Ink on bond paper, 20 x 12.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.05.04]

Folder 6

Drawings: Preliminary Sketches [1863-1864]

Vessel (Sidewheel steamer). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15 cm
[MS 0007.01.06.01]

Vessel (recto); Sketch and MS markings (verso). Pencil on paper. 14.5 x 15.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.06.02]

Cannon (recto); Ft. Morgan (verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15.25 cm
[MS 0007.01.06.03]

Men in rowboat; vessel; ship's deck (recto); Vessel deck arrangements and outboard profile (verso). Pencil on lined notebook paper. 15.5 x 20.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.06.04]

monitor "Chickasaw" (recto); a "Blakely rifle" (verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.06.05]

Cannon; shore view (recto); "Lackawanna" (verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.06.06]

Vessel; names (recto); calculations (verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15.5 cm

[MS 0007.01.06.07]

Unidentified side wheel steamer (recto); calculations (verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.06.08]

Vessels; men (recto); list of engineer's day (verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.06.09]

Fleet (recto); three men (verso) [verso is a preliminary sketch for the ink drawing MS 0007.01.07.03]. Pencil on paper. 15 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.06.10]

Folder 7

Drawings: Satirical: [1863-1864] U.S. Navy

"The way mails are sorted for our squadron" Ink on yellow paper. 15 x 15.5 cm

[MS 0007.01.07.01]

"Splendid ships manned and commanded by women and boys" Ink on yellow paper. 23 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.07.02]

"...Let me ask what good have they [monitors] done in this war except to empty the treasury." Ink on lined paper. 14 x 18 cm

[MS 0007.01.07.03]

Three men and a huge cannon. Ink on lined paper. 18 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.07.04]

Folder 8

Drawings: Satirical: 1864 U.S. Elections

Abraham Lincoln and John C. Fremont. Ink on lined paper. 14.5 x 15 cm

[MS 0007.01.8.01]

Folder 9

Drawings: Satirical: [1865] Jefferson Davis

Jefferson Davis. Ink on paper. 11 x 14 cm

[MS 0007.01.9.01]

Folder 10

Drawings: Seven Inch Rifle: [1863] "Double Banded Brooks, C.S.A."

"7in Rifle double banded Brooks C.S.A." Ink on lined paper. 12.5 x 17 cm

[MS 0007.01.10.01]

Preliminary sketches of 7 inch Brooks Rifle. (recto and verso). Pencil on paper. 15 x 15.5 cm

[MS 0007.01.10.02]

- Folder 11** Drawings: “Turretted Monsters”: [1863]
Man straddled between two large cannons. Ink on paper. 20.5 x 13 cm
[MS 0007.01.11.01]
- Folder 12** Drawings: USS Bio Bio: [1864] New Orleans
Sidewheel steamer “USS Bio Bio”. Pencil on lined paper. 10.5 x 5 cm
[MS 0007.01.12.01]
- Folder 13** Drawings: USS Manhattan: [1863]
The monitor “Manhattan.” Ink on lined paper. 12.5 x 13 cm
[MS 0007.01.13.01]
- Folder 14** Drawings: USS Richmond: 1863
Vessel on heavy seas. Ink on lined paper. 15 x 10 cm
[MS 0007.01.14.01]
- Vessels in battle. Genesee, Richmond, Monongahela, Kineo, Mississippi, Mortar Boats, Essex, Albatross, Hartford. Ink on lined paper. 26 x 10 cm
[MS 0007.01.14.02]
- “Five rebel batteries. 6 mortar schooners, 10th May”. Ink on bond paper. 17.5 x 14.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.14.03]
- Fifteen men firing a cannon (recto); Seven names on verso. Ink on bond paper. 20.5 x 12.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.14.04]
- Folder 15** Drawings: USS Richmond: [1863] Crew
A battle on deck. “Pikemen Away/ Repelling Boarders”. Ink on bond paper. 17.5 x 14.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.15.01]
- A battle on deck. “Down Hammicks”. Ink on bond paper. 17.5 x 14.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.15.02]
- “Fire quarters.” Ink on yellow paper. 14 x 15 cm
[MS 0007.01.15.03]
- Folder 16** Drawings: USS Richmond: [1863] Crew

“Cleaning boilers.” Ink on lined paper. 17.5 x 12.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.16.01]

“Starting the machine.” Pencil on cardstock. 13 x 15 cm
[MS 0007.01.16.02]

Ten men react to explosion. Ink on bond paper. 20 x 12.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.16.03]

Folder 17 Drawings: USS Richmond: [1863] Crew
“Down oil creek,” four men in a small boat. Ink on bond paper. 18 x 11.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.17.01]

Two sailors. Ink on lined paper. 10.5 x 11 cm
[MS 0007.01.17.02]

“Broadsword Exercise.” Ink on bond paper. 8.5 x 13 cm
[MS 0007.01.17.03]

Folder 18 Drawings: USS Richmond: [1863] Crew
“Our two pets,” men firing a 100 pounder Parrott rifle. Ink on bond paper.
12.5 x 10 cm
[MS 0007.01.18.01]

Crewman kneeling behind cannon. Ink on bond paper. 11.5 x 7.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.18.02]

Cannon blasting on ship deck. “Skouce-Kettle”. Ink on bond paper. 12.5 x
10 cm
[MS 0007.01.18.03]

Folder 19 Drawings: USS Richmond: 1863 “Off Mobile Bay”
Vessel in choppy water (recto) Lighthouse and calculations (verso). Pencil on
lined paper. 15.5 x 20.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.19.01]

Vessel in choppy water. “Steam Sloop of War Richmond Off Mobile Bay
December 1863” in ink on verso. Ink on bond paper. 25 x 19.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.19.02]

Folder 20 Drawings: USS Richmond: [1863] Propeller
Study of a propeller. Pencil on card stock. 18 x 12.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.20.01]

Propeller. Pencil on card stock. 16 x 13 cm
[MS 0007.01.20.02]

Propeller. Pencil on card stock. 15.5 x 11.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.20.03]

Propeller. Pencil on card stock. 17 x 13.5 cm
[MS 0007.01.20.04]

Folder 21 Drawings: USS Richmond: 1864
United States flag on mast (recto); mechanical drawings (verso). Ink on paper.
10 x 12 cm
[MS 0007.01.21.01]

Folder 22 Drawings: USS Richmond: [1864] "At Anchor Off New Orleans"
Side view of USS Richmond. Pencil on bond paper. 20 x 13 cm
[MS 0007.01.22.01]

Folder 23 Drawings: USS Richmond: 1864 "Guard Boat On Picket Duty At Night"
"Sand Is. Breakers" "Ft. Morgan". Eleven men in a row boat. Ink on lined
paper. 19 x 9 cm
[MS 0007.01.23.01]

Folder 24 Military Documents: Orders: 1865
July 11, 1865: Orders detaching Robert Weir from the USS *Richmond*.
[MS 0007.01.24.01]

Folder 25 Photographs: Remsen Street, Cohoes, New York.
Street scene, written in pencil at bottom is "Remsen Street, Cohoes" 15 x
12.5 cm
[MS 0007.004]

Folder 26 Photographs:
Cannonball pyramid and tree-lined road on a military base. 24 x 19.5 cm
[MS 0007.003]

Unidentified Steamer at dock. 15.5 x 20.5 cm
[MS 0007.002]

David G. Farragut, Carte-de-Visite "with the compliments of Rear Admiral D.
G. Farragut U.S. Navy" written on verso
[MS 0007.0001]

BOX 2

Folder 1 Drawings: Preliminary Sketches: Pensacola Navy Yard: "From Woolsey
Ruins" Vessels at dock. Pencil on paper, 35.5 x 20 cm.
[MS 0007.02.01.01]

- Folder 2** Drawings: Vessels along shore. Ink on yellow paper, 51 x18 cm
[MS 0007.02.02.01]
- Folder 3** Military Documents: Certificates: 1862- 1864
August 25, 1862: Certificate granting Robert Weir warrant as Third Assistant
Engineer in the Navy. [MS 0007.02.03.01]
- Folder 4** May 2, 1864: Certificate granting Robert Weir warrant as Second Assistant
Engineer in the Navy. [MS 0007.02.04.01]

BOX 3 (stored in collections management, 0027/196/G)

Drawings: Port Hudson: 1864
Landscape. "3 Mile Line of Batteries of Port Hudson Miss." Ink on yellow
paper, 155 x 10.5 cm
[MS 0007.03.01.01]

SOURCES CONSULTED

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SUBJECTS

Weir, Robert, 1836-1905

Davis, Jefferson, 1808-1889—Caricatures and cartoons

Farragut, David Glasgow, 1801-1870—Portraits

Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865—Caricatures and cartoons

United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Caricatures and cartoons

Armored vessels—Drawings

Military sketching

Ships—Pictorial works

United States. Navy—Caricatures and cartoons

Mobile Bay (Ala.)—Maps

Albatross (Screw steamer : 1861)

Chickasaw (Ironclad : 1864)

Cincinnati (Cruiser : No. 7)

Essex (Ironclad steamer : 1856)

Genesee (Side wheel steamer : 1862)

Hartford (Screw sloop-of-war : 1859)

Kineo (Gunboat : 1862)

Lackawanna (Screw sloop-of-war : 1863)

Manhattan (Ironclad : 1864)

Mississippi (Side wheel steamer : 1841)

Monongahela (Screw sloop-of-war : 1863)

Richmond (Steam sloop : 1860)