

**Guide to the H. A. Richardson Letter, 1862 March 27
MS0317**

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

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library
Title: H. A. Richardson Letter
Inclusive Dates: 1862 March 27
Catalog number: MS0317
Physical Characteristics: 1 4-page letter
Language: English
Creator: Richardson, H. A. (Henry A.), d. 1863

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry A. Richardson was born circa 1836 to George C. and Susan G. Richardson of Boston, MA. H. A. Richardson was the Acting Assistant Surgeon on board USS *Cambridge* (Screw steamer : 1861) in 1861-1862. He was a signatory to a November letter from the officers of the *Cambridge* to Flag Officer Louis M. Goldsborough, testifying to the good treatment of prisoners of the British schooner *Luisa Agnes*, taken as a prize on Sept. 9, 1861. His service in the Navy dates from Aug. 7, 1861, according to the Naval Historical Center. Navy records show that he mustered out of the service on June 5, 1862. Massachusetts death records indicate that he died at age 27, on July 1, 1863, of consumption. No other information is available.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This letter to Richardson's friend Kittie is rich in observations about the war and specifically about US Steam Battery *Monitor*, which he visited on March 26, 1862. Richardson expresses confidence in General McClellan and is pleased that official censorship is keeping Union Army and Navy movements secret from the enemy. He notes that newspaper accounts lead him to believe that all women in the North knit "mittens with one finger" and stockings. He writes to Kittie that he hopes "that the Eastern part of your state may not be invaded at present!!"

Richardson devotes nearly half of his letter to describing *Monitor*. He notes that one cannot get an idea of her from the newspaper illustrations. He talks about her general appearance as a "cheese box on a raft," which he attributes to the Confederates. He gives measurements of her freeboard and the rate of her turret's revolutions per minute. He talks about the iron pendulums, which resemble the cover over a key-hole, and notes that the apartments are splendid and the air below decks "as cool as out doors." He notes that the crew has every confidence in her.

The letter is organized into 1 folder.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number
unknown

Accession Date

2003

Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers.

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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.

FILE GUIDE**BOX 1****Folder 1**

Letter

March 27, 1862: USS Cambridge, Fort Monroe, VA

Letter from H.A. Richardson to his friend Kittie.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Register of the Commissioned, Warrant and Volunteer Officers of the Navy of the United States ... to January 1, 1863. Washington, DC: GPO, 1863.

"Officers of the Continental and U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, 1775-1900." Naval Historical Center. <http://www.history.navy.mil/books/callahan/reg-usn-r.htm>.

United States War Dept. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.* 2nd ser., 2. Washington, DC: GPO, 1880-1901. P. 161.

Massachusetts State Archives. "Deaths, 1841-1971". Massachusetts Division of Vital Statistics, State House, Boston, Massachusetts. Also available online at <https://familysearch.org>.

SUBJECTS

Monitor (Ironclad : 1862)

United States-History-Civil War, 1861-1865-Personal narratives

Peninsular Campaign, 1862

Richardson, H. A. (Henry A.), d. 1863