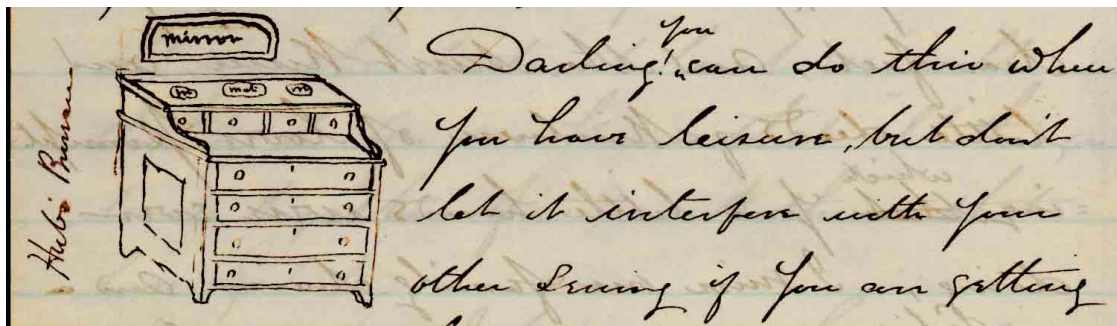


Guide to the Hiram Parker Jr. Letters



Gettysburg College, Musselman Library
Special Collections & College Archives

Rachel Hammer '15
July 2014

MS – 167: Hiram Parker Jr. Letters

(1 box, .25 cubic feet)

Inclusive Dates: 1862-1874

Bulk Dates: August 23, 1862- June 29, 1874

Processed by: Rachel Hammer

July 2014

Provenance

Purchased from

Denning House

Salisbury Mills, NY 12577

Biography

Hiram Parker, Jr. was born on October 4, 1841 in Pottsville, PA, where he was educated until he took an apprenticeship as a machinist for the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad shops. In 1861, he enlisted in the Navy as an assistant engineer. For a year, he was assigned to the West Gulf Squadron on the gunboat Kanawha then reassigned to the North Atlantic Squadron on the gunboat Louisiana. He completed his Civil War service on the gunboat Tacony, which helped with both Union attacks on Fort Fisher in December 1864 and again in January 1865. After the Civil War ended he spent three years with the South Pacific Squadron and traveled along the coast of South America. There he was first assistant engineer on the Lancaster, but then moved to chief engineer on the Powhattan. During his time on the South Pacific Squadron he saw the Cuban filibustering issues that arose after the Civil War and in his last year of service, spent some time on shore duty in South America. His total service time spanned 13 years (1861-1874) and when he returned to Pottsville, he came to own one of first businesses to manufacture the steam boiler, Sparks and Parker. In 1873, he married the daughter, Mary E. Sparks, of his business partner. They had three children Jabes, Emily, and Jessie before Mary passed away in 1883. Hiram remarried in 1885 to Mary's sister Julia Sparks, they did not have any children. Hiram Parker Jr died on February 17th, 1918 at the age of 76 from lobar pneumonia and was buried in Charles Baber cemetery in Pottsville, PA.

Scope and Content Notes

There are 52 letters total in the collection spanning from 1862-1874. The bulk of the letters are written by Hiram most of which are to his father, mother Mary Sparks. However, there are a couple to another member of the Sparks family and a few other friends. Six are letters written to Hiram from his friends and the collection also includes 12 handwritten and printed reports on the construction of the gunboat Tacony. Hiram's letters are very detailed (some of his letters are over a dozen pages), and he wrote to people very often even adding on to some letters after he originally finished writing them. Many of the letters still have their original envelopes with them.

During his Civil War service Hiram recounts rebel activity in North Carolina including the evacuation and burning of Washington, NC by the Union soldiers in April 1864 after Confederate forces attacked, however most of his letters are post war and he

goes into detail of his travels with the South Pacific Squadron on the South American coast. He gives accounts of life on the boats, the cities he visits (including Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; the Falkland Islands; Valparaiso, Chile; and Montevideo, Uruguay), and observations on the culture, among other things the Russian Grand Duke Alexei arriving in Brazil with his fleet in 1872, the Patagonian Indians, and a Chilean Penal Settlement.

There is also a printed broadside with the services, including ship maintenance and supplies such as food, at Stanley Harbor in the Falkland Islands and a hand drawn floor plan of part of a ship with a manuscript note on the back.

Series Description

This collection is divided into three Series.

Series 1: Correspondence from Hiram, in chronological order

Series 2: Correspondence to Hiram, in chronological order

Series 3: Reports and Miscellaneous Papers, reports are in chronological order followed by the broadside and the hand drawn ship floor plan.

Box 1

1-1 Finding Aid and Biographical Information

Series 1: Correspondence from Hiram

1-2 August 23, 1862-July 21, 1866

- August 23, 1862, to his father
- 1863 Envelope-No letter, addressed to his father
- February 1864, to his father
- March 15, 1864, to his father
- March 25, 1864, to his mother
- May 1864, to his mother
- April 26, 1866, to his mother
- April 27, 1866, continuation of previous letter, to his mother
- June 25, 1866, to his mother
- July 21, 1866, to his mother

1-3 October 12, 1866- September 9, 1869

- October 12, 1866, to ? Charles
- October 12, 1866, to Le
- October 14, 1866, to Lee
- November 27, 1866, to his mother
- July (?) 12, 1867, to his father
- July 31, 1867, to his father
- February 13, 1868, to his mother
- April 3, 1868, to his father
- September 2, 1869, to Mary Sparks
- September 9, 1869, to Mary Sparks

1-4 September 16, 1869- October 25, 1870

- September 16, 1869, to his father
 - September 17, 1869, to Mary Sparks
 - September 20, 1869, to Mary Sparks
 - September 20, 1869, continuation of previous letter, to Mary Sparks
 - June 14, 1870, to his mother
 - October 18, 1870, to Mary Sparks
 - October 20, 1870, to Mary Sparks
- 1-5 March 6, 1871- January 10, 1872
- March 6, 1871, to Mary Sparks
 - March 16, 1871, to Mary Sparks
 - April 11, 1871, to his mother
 - April 26, 1871, to Mr. F. Collow, Esq
 - November 2, 1871, to Mary Sparks
 - November 5, 1871, to Mary Sparks
 - November 12, 1871, to Mary Sparks
 - January 10, 1872, to his mother
- 1-6 Jan 25, 1872- February 26, 1872
- Jan 25, 1872, to Lizzy?
 - Feb 13, 1872, to Lizzy?
 - February 15, 1872, to his mother
 - February 25, 1872, to Mary Sparks
 - February 26, 1872, to Mary Sparks
- 1-7 March 3, 1872- June 29, 1874
- March 3, 1872, to Mary Sparks
 - March 31, 1872, to Lizzy?
 - May 1, 1872, to his mother
 - April 7, 1874, to his mother
 - June 21, 1874, to Mary Sparks “Wifey”
 - June 28, 1874, to Mary Sparks “Wifey”
 - June 29, 1874, to Mary Sparks “Wifey”

Series 2: Correspondence to Hiram

- 1-8 Correspondence to Hiram, December 3, 1865- June 5, 1872
- December 3, 1865, from C.E. ?
 - December 13, 1868, from Frank J. Symmes
 - March 13, 1869, from Frank J. Symmes
 - March 14, 1869, from Frank J. Symmes
 - March 14, 1869, from Frank J. Symmes (includes a sheet of notes)
 - June 5, 1872, from Wesley O. Hileroy

Series 3: Reports and Miscellaneous Papers

- 1-9 Manuscript and Printed Tacony Reports, February 27, 1864-May 13, 1865
- 1-10 Broadside handout and the hand drawn ship floor plan

For more information about MS – 167: Hiram Parker Jr. Letters

History of Schuylkill County, PA. New York: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1881. Pp.272-273