



USS Constitution
Museum

Finding Aid For

George Ipsara Sirian Collection

USS Constitution Museum Collection [2445.1]

Finding Aid

George Ipsara Sirian Collection, 1809-1929

Summary Information

Title: George Ipsara Sirian Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1809-1929

Bulk Dates: 1840-1884

Extent: 0.42 linear foot

Catalog Number: 2445.1

Language of Materials: English

Repository: USS Constitution Museum

Processed by: Kate Monea, August 2019. Updated May 2021.

Access and Use

Access Restrictions

Unrestricted.

Credit Line: USS Constitution Museum Collection. Gift of the estate of George Sirian's great-grandson, James Edward Eller, Jr., and his wife, Teresa Jones Eller.

Copyright

Copyright status is unknown.

Acquisition and Provenance

This collection was donated to the USS Constitution Museum on March 5, 2019 by descendants of George Sirian. The documents were passed down through the family and came to the donors by way of George Sirian, son of Constantine Sirian and grandson of George Sirian, before his death in 1948. Two items (folders 7 and 8) were on loan to the USS Constitution Museum since March 28, 1994.

Biographical Sketch

George Ipsara Sirian was born in 1818 on the Aegean island of Psara, Greece. He was orphaned in 1824 during the Greek War for Independence when his mother placed him in a boat to escape a massacre in his homeland. He was rescued, but little is known about his life until he joined USS *Constitution*'s crew in May 1827.

Sirian served aboard *Constitution*, first with the rank of boy and then ordinary seaman, until the ship reached Boston Harbor on July 4, 1828. While on *Constitution*, Sirian was aided by Lieutenant Robert Randolph, who took the young refugee under his wing and sponsored his education. Randolph also commissioned a portrait of the boy (catalog # 2326.1) by the prominent New York artist C. C. Ingham.

Sirian later was taken by Randolph to Gunner **George Marshall**. Marshall, born in 1782 on the Aegean island of Rhodes in Greece, received his warrant as gunner in the United States Navy in 1807. He was first assigned to the Washington Navy Yard, and went on to serve aboard many warships. In 1822, he authored the first practical military gunnery manual for the U.S. Navy, titled *Marshall's Practical Marine Gunnery: Containing a View of the Magnitude, Weight, Description & Use, of Every Article Used in the Sea Gunner's Department, in the Navy of the United States.* Despite being disabled while serving on USS *Hornet* at Gosport, Virginia in 1824, Marshall continued his naval service. From 1824 to 1826, he served as second gunner aboard USS *North Carolina* in the Mediterranean. His naval career continued into the early 1850s, totaling more than 46 years. Marshall died in Portsmouth, Virginia in 1855.

On April 20, 1837, Sirian was appointed as gunner at Gosport. During his ensuing naval career, he served in 37 successive tours on 20 different ships and seven shore stations, including on USS *Constitution's* World Cruise, as a gunnery instructor at the Naval Academy during the American Civil War, and in the Asiatic Station in Japan and Hong Kong. Sirian is the only sailor to serve on *Constitution* on three separate tours of duty.

Sirian married George Marshall's daughter, Eleanor Marshall, in 1840. Of the couple's seven children, four survived to adulthood. His oldest surviving son, **Constantine Ambrose Sirian**, became a U.S. Navy chief. One of Constantine's two sons, also named George Sirian, worked as a machinist's mate in the Norfolk Navy Yard in the early 20th century.

Sirian retired in 1880 after one of the longest active duty service careers in U.S. Naval history. He died in Portsmouth, Virginia, on December 21, 1891. Sirian received a posthumous induction into the Surface Navy Hall of Fame in 2007. The George Sirian Meritorious Service Award is given annually aboard USS *Constitution* to an outstanding Chief Petty Officer selected from the worldwide fleet.

Scope and Content

The documents included in this collection primarily follow the naval career of George Sirian from the 1840s to the 1880s. Correspondence pertaining to his detachments, orders, and commendations make up the bulk of the records. Also included is a warrant appointing George Marshall as gunner in 1809, and a service record booklet for George Sirian, a grandson, from 1899 to 1929.

Arrangement

Folders are arranged chronologically. Oversized material (folder 68) is stored separately from the rest of the collection.

Folder List

| Box | Folder | |
|-----|--------|---|
| 1 | 1 | Warrant appointing George Marshall as gunner in U.S. Navy, July 15, 1809 |
| | 2 | Contemporary copies of 4 letters: 1) James Renshaw to George Sirian, April 11, 1840 2) James Renshaw to George Sirian, March 4, 1841 3) Lewis Warrington to George Sirian, April 20, 1837 4) James K. Pauling to George Sirian, December 31, 1840 |
| | 3 | Front: Letter from George E. Badger to George Sirian re: appointment as acting gunner on USS <i>Brandywine</i> , June 21, 1841 Back: Letter from Matthew C. Perry to George Sirian re: reporting to USS <i>Brandywine</i> , June 21, 1841 |
| | 4 | Letter from Abel P. Upshur to George Sirian re: leave of absence from USS <i>Brandywine</i> , July 18, 1842 |
| | 5 | Letter from Abel P. Upshur to George Sirian re: reporting to Captain Beverly Kennon, August 10, 1842 |
| | 6 | Letter from Abel P. Upshur to George Sirian re: appointment as gunner, January 14, 1843 |
| | 7 | Letter from Daniel Henshaw to George Sirian re: orders to USS <i>Constitution</i> , November 18, 1843 |
| | 8 | Letter from John Y. Mason to George Sirian re: detachment from USS <i>Constitution</i> , October 1, 1846 |
| | 9 | Letter from John Y. Mason to George Sirian re: reporting to USS <i>Hecla</i> , March 1, 1847 |
| | 10 | Letter from Matthew C. Perry to George Sirian re: dispatch as supernumerary to USS <i>Cumberland</i> , February 9, 1848 |
| | 11 | Letter from George Sirian re: family leave, March [13], 1848 |
| | 12 | Letter from Thorton A. Jenkins to George Sirian re: commendation, March 14, 1848 |
| | 13 | Letter from John Y. Mason to George Sirian re: reporting to Gosport, July 6, 1848 |
| | 14 | Letter from William Ballard Preston to George Sirian re: reporting to USS <i>John Adams</i> , June 15, 1849 |
| | 15 | Letter from Francis H. Gregory to George Sirian re: reporting to USS <i>Portsmouth</i> , October 11, 1850 |
| | 16 | Letter from Robert B. Pegrin to George Sirian re: commendation, October 11, 1850 |
| | 17 | Letter from Levin M. Powell to George Sirian re: commendation, October 15, 1850 |
| | 18 | Letter from Francis H. Gregory to George Sirian re: commendation, May 4, 1851 |
| | 19 | Letter from Francis H. Gregory to George Sirian re: reporting to USS <i>Dale</i> , May 5, 1851 |
| | 20 | Letter from Elisha Peck to George Sirian re: commendation, May 5, 1851 |
| | 21 | Letter from William Pearson to George Sirian re: commendation, December 30, 1851 |
| | 22 | Contemporary copy of letter from John P. Kennedy to John G. Butler re: dress regulations, July 27, 1852 |
| | 23 | Letter from Elie A. F. Lavallette to George Sirian re: denied request, January 24, 1853 |
| | 24 | Letter from James L. Lardner re: commendation of George Sirian, March 12, 1853 |
| | 25 | Letter from James C. Dobbin to George Sirian re: detachment from USS <i>Dale</i> , April 9, 1853 |
| | 26 | Letter from James C. Dobbin to George Sirian re: ordnance duty at Norfolk, May 16, 1853 |
| | 27 | Letter from A. O. Dayton to George Sirian re: pay, May 27, 1853 |
| | 28 | Letter from James C. Dobbin to George Sirian re: warrant for appointment as gunner, June 29, 1853 |
| | 29 | Letter from Albert Greenleaf to George Sirian re: prize money, June 9, 1854 |

- 30 Letter from James C. Dobbin to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Congress*, May 24, 1855
- 31 Contemporary copy of a letter from Isaac McKeever to George Sirian re: transfer to New York, June 4, 1855
- 32 Letter from Thomas A. Dorin to George Sirian re: gratitude for a gift of marble shot from the Island of Rhodes, February 20, 1858
- 33 Letter from Isaac Toucey to George Sirian re: ordnance duty at Norfolk, February 13, 1858
- 34 Letter from Duncan Nathaniel Ingraham to George Sirian re: ordnance duty at Norfolk, February 19, 1858
- 35 Letter from Isaac Toucey to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Lancaster*, April 7, 1859
- 36 Letter from Gideon Welles to George Sirian re: reporting for ordnance duty at New York Navy Yard, November 14, 1861
- 37 Letter from Andrew A. Harwood to George Sirian re: services at quarters in New York Navy Yard, March 24, 1862
- 38 Letter from Hiram Paulding to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Sabine*, April 24, 1862
- 39 Letter from Gideon Welles to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Sabine*, April 25, 1862
- 40 Letter from Gideon Welles to George Sirian re: reporting to the Naval Academy, September 29, 1862
- 41 Letter from George S. Blake to George Sirian re: reporting to Philadelphia Navy Yard with 8 landsmen, April 23, 1863
- 42 Letter from Thorton A. Jenkins to George Sirian re: instructions for form from Bureau of Navigation and Office of Detail, September 26, 1863
- 43 Letter from Gideon Welles to George Sirian re: denied request to detach from Naval Academy, November 25, 1863
- 44 Letter from George S. Blake to George Sirian re: transfer of a detachment of men to New York, June 16, 1864
- 45 Letter from Gideon Welles to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Vanderbilt*, August 12, 1864
- 46 Letter from Percival Drayton to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Constellation*, June 23, 1865
- 47 Letter from Stephen J. W. Tabor to George Sirian re: travel to USS *Constellation*, July 13, 1865
- 48 Letter from Thorton A Jenkins to George Sirian re: reporting to Naval Magazine, September 22, 1865
- 49 Letter from Philip W. Woodside to William F. Taylor re: estate of George Marshall, December 27, 1865
- 50 Letter from James Alden to George Sirian re: detachment from USS *Delaware* to home, November 26, 1870
- 51 Letter from James Alden to George Sirian re: reporting to Norfolk Navy Yard, December 14, 1870
- 52 Letter from Daniel Ammen to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Yantie*, July 30, 1872
- 53 Contemporary copy of letter from Thorton A. Jenkins to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Idaho*, April 22, 1873
- 54 Letter from Enoch G. Parrott to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Ashuelot*, December 24, 1873
- 55 Letter from C. J. McDougal to George Sirian re: reporting to USS *Ashuelot*, December 30, 1873
- 56 Letter from Alexander M. Pennock to George Sirian re: ordnance, August 13, 1874
- 57 Letter from William Reynolds to George Sirian re: detachment from Asiatic Squadron, September 22, 1874

- 58 Letter from Daniel Ammen to George Sirian re: waiting orders, December 31, 1874
- 59 Letter from Daniel Ammen to George Sirian re: ordnance duty at Norfolk Navy Yard, January 4, 1875
- 60 Letter from Stephen J. W. Tabor to George Sirian re: extra pay, August 6, 1875
- 61 Letter from Daniel Ammen to George Sirian re: reporting to magazine, Craney Island, August 17, 1875
- 62 Letter from Daniel Ammen to George Sirian re: reporting to Norfolk Navy Yard, April 17, 1878
- 63 Letter from Stephen J. W. Tabor to George Sirian re: claim for extra pay, March 13, 1879
- 64 Letter from Stephen J. W. Tabor to George Sirian re: pay, March 22, 1879
- 65 Letter from Charles Beardsley to George Sirian re: extra pay not granted, August 19, 1879
- 66 Letter from Charles Beardsley to George Sirian re: extra pay, May 13, 1884
- 67 Service record of George Sirian, 1899 - 1929

Oversized

- 68 Warrant appointing George Sirian as gunner in U.S. Navy, April 20, 1837