Title: Herman W. Spakler Collection
Date: 1852-1985
Collection Identifier: SFH 237
Creator: Spakler, Harmen Willem, 1837-1855
Physical Description: 6 folders in 1 box(0.5 cubic feet)
Contributing Institution: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 557-4567
info@sfpl.org

Abstract: Diary of a Dutch cabin boy working on the ship Isis, with entries written beginning somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean and ending in San Francisco. Accompanied by diary translations, along with transcriptions and translations of a small number of letters from the diarist to his parents, a monograph on his brother's foundation, and a few items about the Spakler family.

Physical Location: The collection is stored onsite.
Language of Materials: Diary and copies of letters in Dutch, with English translations.

Access
The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.

Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Herman W. Spakler Collection, 1852-1985 (SFH 237), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Provenance

Related Materials
Spakler’s letters to his parents 1851-1855 held by Susanna Elisabeth “Bep” Franssens-de Nies, the Hague, The Netherlands, 1983.

Transcriptions available
A page from the final diary entry was printed, with a translation, by Terry Horrigan of Protean Press, for Ship Press Chappel, 1982, and is held by the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Biography
Harmen Willem Spakler was born in Amsterdam in 1837. He attended boarding school in Barneveld, determined to join the merchant marine. For his first voyage he apprenticed on the ship Isis, leaving Amsterdam in late November 1852, stopping at San Francisco and Hong Kong, and returning by San Francisco, Valparaiso, Baltimore and Washington, D.C., arriving at Rotterdam in July 1855. His second voyage (September 1855) on the brigantine Livorno Packet took him to Livorno, Italy, and on his return in December 1855, he was thrown overboard in a storm and drowned off the Spanish coast.

Scope and Content
Thirty-page diary (December 14, 1852 - July 26, 1853) of Herman Spakler, detailing his voyage on the ship Isis. The fifteen-year-old begins writing from a point north of the equator on the Atlantic Ocean and ends the journal in San Francisco, on a voyage which began in Amsterdam and would continue on to Hong Kong before returning to Holland. Spakler works as a "slave" (cabin boy) for the ship's pilot, peeling potatoes, cleaning cabins and washing dishes; and later is promoted, working for the sailors, standing watch and doing ship repairs. His last entry describes San Francisco, with its buildings built on hills, ships and piers; a shoe-shine parlor; busy street traffic and untethered horses; suspicious-looking though well-dressed inhabitants; evidence of the new wealth coming from gold mines; he also mentions wages for various occupations in San Francisco. While keeping this diary, Spakler would separately post letters to his family, often with content very similar to the diary.

Accompanying the diary are: a typewritten diary translation by Tilly Maddux, and partial diary translation by Christina van der Goot Wilson; translations of letters Herman posted to his parents January 16, 1851 - November 14, 1855; three audio
cassettes of spoken diary translation by Mrs. Gordon Olson; Helpen Toen - Nu - Straks, a Dutch monograph (1969) detailing the work of a foundation begun by Herman’s brother Fredrik Johann, with a separate English translation; photocopies of Spakler family photographs and genealogical information; Terry Horrigan’s typescripts of translations of letters; and Brieven van Herman (1851-1855), a compilation of Bep Franssens-de Nies’ transcriptions of Herman's letters, edited by Franssens-de Nies.

Spakler's letters to his family are posted from Barneveld and Nieuwe Diep, The Netherlands; San Francisco; Hong Kong; Valparaiso and Rio Tongoi, Chile; Baltimore; Rotterdam; Livorno, Italy.

**Arrangement**

Materials are arranged by type.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

- Isis (Ship).
- Spakler family
- Cabin boys.
- Diaries-19th century.
- San Francisco (Calif.)-Description and travel.
- San Francisco (Calif.)-Social life and customs-19th century.
- Seafaring life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13, Folder 1</th>
<th>Herman Spakler Diary, December 14, 1852 - July 26, 1853</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>Language of Material: Dutch; Flemish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>Folder includes 30 page manuscript diary.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13, Folder 2</th>
<th>Diary Translations by Tilly Maddux and Christina van der Goot Wilson, circa 1982.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>Partial diary translation by Christina van der Goot Wilson is of the last two pages, which describe San Francisco.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Box 13, Folder 3</th>
<th>Herman - Tapes from Arizona translators, circa 1982.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Description</td>
<td>Folder includes Helpen Toen - Nu - Straks (1969), a Dutch monograph detailing the work of a foundation begun by Herman’s brother Fredrik Johann; a separate manuscript English translation of Helpen Toen - Nu - Straks by Bep Franssens-de Nies; photocopies of Spakler family photographs, artist's rendering of Herman, telegram, maps; Harman Spakler’s family chart (1 page ms., Franssens-de Nies); translation of Herman’s letter describing San Francisco (4 page ink ms., Franssens-de Nies); English summaries of Herman’s letters, 1851-1855 (ms. by Franssens-de Nies: the Introduction to Brieven van Herman) and photocopy.</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 13, Folder 5</th>
<th>Letters from Herman Spakler,(copied by his great-niece and bound), 1985.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>Folder includes Terry Horrigan's typescripts of translations of letters, with foreword by Bep Franssens-de Nies, and Horrigan’s 5.25” floppy disk of typescripts.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 13, Folder 6</th>
<th>Brieven van Herman (1851-1855), 1983.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents</td>
<td>Folder includes Brieven van Herman (1851-1855), a bound compilation of photocopies of Bep Franssens-de Nies’ transcriptions of Herman's letters edited by Franssens-de Nies.</td>
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