A guide to the Christy Family papers, 1846-1938

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A Guide to the Christy Family papers

HDC0004

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**Title:** Christy Family papers

**Date:** 1846-1938

**Date (bulk):** 1846-1865

**Identifier/Call Number:** HDC0004 (SAFR 14021)

**Creator/Collector:** Robertson, William; Salman, John Washington; Christy, Robert F.; Christy, James

**Physical Description:** 30 items

**Repository:** San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Historic Documents Department

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**Abstract:** The Christy Family papers (SAFR 14021, HDC 4) consists of a family history, legal records and correspondence; the log of the schooner GENERAL GEORGE CADWALADER; assorted inventories, manifests and other business records pertaining to John Washington Salman; and correspondence of Captain William Robertson.

**Physical Location:** San Francisco Maritime NHP, Historic Documents Department

**Language(s):** In English.

**Access**

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**Preferred Citation**

[Item description], [Location within collection organization identified by Collection Number/Series Number/File Unit Number/Item Number], HDC0004 (SAFR 14021), Christy Family papers, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

**Acquisition Information**

SAFR-00001

Golden Gate National Recreation Area transferred these materials to San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

**Historical or Biographical Note**

Biography. The following Christy family biographies refer to James Christy, Robert F. Christy, John Washington Salman and William Robertson.

Biographies: James Christy was born on May 4, 1827 at Baltimore, Maryland. He apprenticed as a blacksmith to Mr. John Washington Salman of Philadelphia, Pa. In 1846. At the beginning of the California Gold Rush, Mr. Salman bought the fifty-foot schooner GENERAL GEORGE CADWALADER, and he, Mr. Christy, and four other men sailed from Philadelphia to San Francisco though the Straits of Magellan in 1849. They arrived in San Francisco on March 24, 1850. Christy married Elizabeth Hipple of Philadelphia in San Francisco on September 11, 1851. They lived in San Francisco, and by 1871 they had four children: Samuel Benedict (b. August 8, 1853), Sarah Elizabeth (b. September 21, 1856) Hattie (d.o.b. unknown), and James Robert (b. March 7, 1865). The journal makes a reference to "five children," one of which apparently died at a very young age. James Christy set up shop as a blacksmith and shipsmith in 1850. He is listed in Langley’s San Francisco Directory of 1868 as a "shipsmith, cor. Napa and Michigan" living on "Mississippi nr. Mariposa." In 1879 he is in the same
trade at an different location, "Berry, Bet. Third and Fourth." James Christy is listed as a smith, shipsmith, or blacksmith as late as 1901, when his residence changes to 1226 18th. He died in 1902.

Robert F. Christy. Little is known of the life of Robert F. Christy, beyond the fact that he too was a shipsmith. He is listed in Langley's San Francisco Directory of 1868 as a blacksmith at Vulcan Iron Works. He tried his hand at gold mining. He was a member of Knickerbocker Fire Company #5; and a founding member of San Francisco Masonic Lodge #1.

John Washington Salman was a shipsmith in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When news reached the East Coast of the discovery of gold in California, he purchased a small schooner, the GENERAL GEORGE CADWALADER, and engaged the services of a competent master, William Robertson, for the voyage to California. The voyage to San Francisco via the Straits of Magellan lasted from September 20, 1849 to March 24, 1850. After arrival, Salman engaged the CADWALADER in the coastal and river trade under Robertson's command. He died on August 22, 1850, after a long illness, and before many of his California plans became reality.

William Robertson was the first mate on the British bark MAGNET in 1845-1846. He was in command of the small schooner GENERAL GEORGE CADWALADER on her voyage from Philadelphia to San Francisco. Subsequently, he took CADWALADER up the coast on voyages to the Trinity River, and up the Sacramento River to Sacramento City.

**Collection Scope and Content**

The Christy Family papers (SAFR 14021, HDC 4) consists of a family history, legal records and correspondence; the log of the schooner GENERAL GEORGE CADWALADER; assorted inventories, manifests and other business records pertaining to John Washington Salman; and correspondence of Captain William Robertson.

The log records the events of a Gold Rush voyage to San Francisco including daily position, weather, sea conditions and shipboard work. Correspondence refers mostly to personal events and business enterprise in Gold Rush San Francisco. This collection is available for use without restrictions.

**Collection Arrangement**

The contents of this collection are arranged into five folders.

**Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Gold Rush--California--1840-1850

The Christy Family

General George Cadwalader (schooner)

Logbooks

Genealogy

Shipsmith