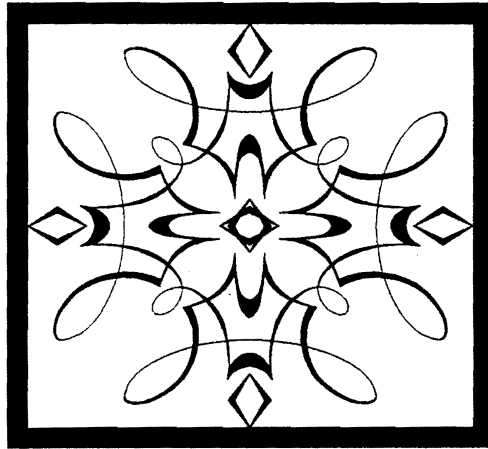


PAPERS OF DR. WILLIAM TURK, FLEET SURGEON, USN



C H E C K L I S T

Prepared by Judith W. Short, Archivist

Naval Historical Center  
Operational Archives Branch

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## **DR. WILLIAM TURK PAPERS, 1744-1854**

### **Introduction.**

The Papers of Dr. William Turk, Fleet Surgeon, USN, were donated to the Naval Historical Center's Operational Archives Branch by Ms. Barbara H. Bell, Watkins Glen, New York. Ms. Bell, who had acquired the collection from a local family, held the papers for twenty-five years during which time she prepared a preliminary index and transcribed various documents in the collection. She also removed several documents relating to Dr. Turk's ancestors for inclusion in the archival collections of the New York City Historical Society. On 10 June 1995, she transferred the materials still in her possession to the Naval Historical Center.

Many of the papers were in small bundles and were unfolded and placed into acid free folders and boxes to insure their preservation and integrity. Because this initial examination of the papers indicated that the collection contained an abundance of historical information on nineteenth century Navy medicine which would be very useful to maritime scholars, the collection was processed immediately and made available to researchers.

The collection is quite comprehensive in chronicling Dr. William Turk's naval career from his appointment to his various ship and shore assignments as a surgeon. The medical reports submitted by Dr. Turk are a strong research asset because they document the "state of the health" of the U.S. Navy during the mid-1830s and provide details of the 1834 cholera outbreak on U.S. Ship DELAWARE. Dr. Turk's correspondence is also a research asset because the letters provide an insight into the life of a fleet surgeon and the difficulties he encountered with the Department of the Navy's bureaucracy.

The collection has no restrictions on its use and is open to all researchers. A computer finding aid for this collection is available for researcher use in the Operational Archives Branch. The Paradox for Windows format allows a researcher to view the entire checklist or conduct a search by subject.

## **Biographical Sketch of Dr. William Turk, Fleet Surgeon, USN.**

- 1796 May 4** Received Baccalaureate from Columbia College.
- 1799 Jun 19** Received License to Practice Physic and Surgery in the state of New York.
- 1800 Jan 17** Appointed a surgeon's mate in the U.S. Navy. Served on U.S. Brig RICHMOND until 3 June 1801.
- 1801 Oct 30** Received Certificate to Practice in the Sate of New Jersey as a Physician and Surgeon.
- 1807 Apr 6** Appointed a surgeon of the First Regiment of Militia in the City and County of New York.
- 1812 Jul 16** Appointed a surgeon in the U.S. Navy and ordered to report to U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION.
- Jul 21** Accepted the appointment and orders to report to U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION.
- 1813 Jul 24** Confirmation of appointment as surgeon by the Senate.
- Aug 18** Ordered from U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION at Norfolk to U.S. Frigate CONSTITUTION at Boston.
- Oct 9** Ordered to U.S. Frigate PRESIDENT at Providence.
- 1815 Apr 10** Permitted to leave U.S. Frigate GUERRIERE, Navy Yard, Boston, and remain ashore until further orders.
- Nov 29** Ordered to U.S. Frigate GUERRIERE at New York, provided a surgeon is needed for that vessel.
- 1816 Sep 7** Ordered from New York to White Hall, Lake Champlain, on duty.
- 1820 Jul 24** Captain of U.S. Ship-of-the-Line DELAWARE endorsed a three month leave of absence.
- 1823 Nov 20** Ordered from White Hall to Washington.
- Dec 27** Ordered to return to White Hall and "hold yourself in readiness for active service at sea."

- 1824 Sep 26** Ordered from White Hall to New York for duty on U.S. Frigate CONSTITUTION.
- 1825 Dec 14** Granted leave for two months.
- 1826 May 8** Ordered to report to Receiving Ship at New York.
- Nov 29** Reported to Boston Hospital from New York.
- 1828 Apr 1** Received Certificate in Medicine and Surgery from Geneva College.
- 1830 Apr 21** Ordered to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to report for duty on Sloop of War CONCORD.
- 1831 May 13** Granted leave for three months.
- Oct 26** Ordered to "hold yourself in readiness for orders to proceed to the Mediterranean as Fleet Surgeon of the Squadron."
- 1832 Jan 30** Appointed Fleet Surgeon of the Mediterranean Squadron and ordered to report to U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION.
- Feb 20** Directed to go as passenger in U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION.
- 1836 Feb 20** Granted leave for three months.
- Jun 2** Granted leave for three months.
- Oct 13** Ordered to the New York Naval Hospital.
- 1837 Oct 19** Detached from New York Naval Hospital and granted leave for three months beginning November 1.
- 1838 Feb 6** Granted leave for three months.  
From this date to date of his death he was carried in the Navy Registers at "waiting orders." He sometimes gave his residence as Waterford, New York.
- 1854 Nov 20** Died at Newark, New Jersey.

\* Information for this biography compiled from biographical data held in the ZB Files and in the Papers of Dr. William Turk.

## **Scope and Content Note.**

The papers relating to the naval service of Dr. William Turk date from 1744 to 1854 and comprise approximately 1 foot of materials. The collection consists of biographical data, his appointments and orders, correspondence, medical data, financial data, legal data, printed material, and miscellany. The bulk of the materials spans the years 1820 through 1854.

Some of the earliest documents relate to Dr. Turk's education, his certification and licensing as a physician and surgeon, and his religious affiliations. There is also biographical data on his father, Ahasuerus Turk, and his son, John William Turk, who changed his surname to Livingston in 1843.

Dr. Turk's appointment notices, his orders from the Department of the Navy, and the official correspondence document his naval service as a surgeon. His career with the U.S. Navy, beginning with the acceptance of his appointment on 21 July 1812 through the 1830s, provides an excellent insight into the administrative workings of the nineteenth century Navy. An excellent summation of Dr. Turk's naval service appears in his 6 June 1831 letter to the Secretary of the Navy.

The personal correspondence is also valuable because it places Dr. Turk's naval career in the context of life in the nineteenth century. In addition to his responsibilities as a U.S. Navy surgeon, he also had obligations as a son, husband and father. His relationship with his sons, John and James, and his financial responsibility for his daughter, Maria, who was confined to the Bloomingdale Asylum, add a personal dimension to his official naval career.

An extensive chronicle of Navy medicine for the 1832-1836 period is contained in Dr. Turk's medical reports to the Department of the Navy. The names and diseases of crew members on sick lists is available for U.S. Ship BRANDYWINE, U.S. Ship DELAWARE, U.S. Ship JOHN ADAMS, U.S. Frigate POTOMAC, and U.S. Schooner SHARK. These reports also provide information on the cholera outbreak in 1834-1835 and the "state of health" of the U.S. Squadron in the Mediterranean for the period 1 July-30 September 1836.

The financial documents contained in the collection supply information not only on Dr. Turk's official accounts with the Department of the Navy, U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION, U.S. Frigate UNITED STATES, and U.S. Ship DELAWARE, but also on his personal finances. There is also a small number of legal documents which are personal in nature and include the last will and testament of Johannes Van Zeys, the great-grandfather of Dr. Turk.

The remainder of the collection is comprised of printed material and miscellany. Notable in these categories is a Bureau of Surgery and Medicine Booklet, "Instructions for the Government of the Medical Officers of the Navy of the U.S.," 1853, and an undated inventory for U.S. Ship UNITED STATES which includes medical provisions.

## **Series Description.**

The Papers of Dr. William Turk are arranged by type of materials (series) . The series titles include Biographical Data, Appointments, Orders, Correspondence, Medical Data, Financial Data, Legal Data, Printed Material, and Miscellaneous. Because six of the items are oversize, the original documents were removed from the standard size archival storage box and placed into an oversize archival storage box for preservation purposes. A folded photocopy of the document marks its original location in the arrangement sequence.

Series I, Biographical Data, 1765-1854, ca. 1/4 inch, chronological order. This series includes: biographies of Surgeon William Turk and his son, John William [Turk] Livingston; the Freeman Certificate of Dr. Turk's father, Ahasuerus Turk; Dr. Turk's Baccalaureate Degree and Medical Diploma; Dr. Turk's License and Certificate to practice as a physician and surgeon; his Russian passport; and miscellaneous documents relating to his religious affiliations.

Series II, Appointments, 1807-1813, ca. 1/4 inch, chronological order. This series includes: Dr. Turk's appointment as surgeon of the First Regiment of Militia in New York City and County; his appointment as surgeon in the U.S. Navy; and notice of the U.S. Senate confirmation of his commission.

Series III, Orders, 1810-1837 (1823-1837), ca. 1/4 inch, chronological order. This series includes an incomplete set of Dr. Turk's orders. This series does not include the documents relating to his leaves of absence. The documents granting those leaves are held in Series IV, Correspondence.

Series IV, Correspondence, undated and 1800-1853, ca. 5 inches, official correspondence arranged in chronological order/personal correspondence arranged by correspondent in chronological order. This series includes official correspondence with the Department of the Navy and personal correspondence with family members.

Series V, Medical Data, undated and 1832-1836, ca. 2 inches, arranged by name of ship or squadron in chronological order. This series includes sick lists with names and diseases (including number of cholera cases). Also includes a list of antidotes.

Series VI, Financial Data, 1806-1854, ca. 4 inches, official and personal accounts arranged in chronological order. This series includes: an account book (leather bound) which covers the period 1806-1839; accounts with various ships and the Department of the Navy; and personal bills and receipts.

Series VII, Legal Data, 1744-1853 (1834-1847), ca. 1/4 inch, chronological order. This series includes personal documents such as an indenture, a will, legal correspondence, and a fire insurance policy.

Series VIII, Printed Material, 1839 and 1853, ca. 1/4 inch, chronological order. This series is comprised of two items: an announcement of an art exhibition of Mr. Anelli's paintings and portraits and a Bureau of Surgery and Medicine booklet, "Instructions for the Government of The Medical Officers of the Navy of the U.S."

Series IX, Miscellaneous, undated, ca. 1/4 inch, chronological order. This series includes an inventory for U.S. Ship UNITED STATES and miscellaneous calling cards, notes, and envelopes.

## **Box List.**

### **Box 1**

#### **SERIES I: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA, 1765-1854**

1. Biographies of Surgeon William Turk, USN. (Also includes a biography of his son, Rear Admiral John William Livingston, USN, late Lieutenant John William Turk, USN, until he changed his name to his mother's maiden name.)
2. Freeman Certificate of Ahasuerus Turk, Junior, Instrument maker, 1 October 1765. (Ahasuerus Turk is the father of William Turk.)
3. Baccalaureate Degree of William Turk from Columbia College, 4 May 1796. [The original document is in Box 4 OVERSIZE.]
4. License granted to William Turk to Practice Physic and Surgery in the State of New York, 19 June 1799.
5. Certificate awarded to William Turk to Practice in the State of New Jersey as a Physician and Surgeon, 30 October 1801. [The original document is in Box 4 OVERSIZE.]
6. Medical Diploma of William Turk from Geneva College, 1 April 1828. [The original document is in Box 4 OVERSIZE.]
7. Russian Passport of William Turk, 1830.
8. Papers relating to William Turk's Religious Affiliations, 1818, 1840, 1852, 1854.
9. List of William Turk's Ancestors from Albany Annals (Covers period 1695-1735)

#### **SERIES II: APPOINTMENTS, 1807-1813**

10. Appointment of William Turk as Surgeon of the First Regiment of Militia in the City and County of New York, 6 April 1807.
11. Appointment of William Turk as Surgeon in the Navy, 10 March 1813. [The original document is in Box 4 OVERSIZE.]
12. Appointment of William Turk as Surgeon in the Navy, 24 July 1813. [The original document is in Box 4 OVERSIZE.]
13. Notice of William Turk's Confirmation of his Commission as a Surgeon in the Navy by the Senate on 24 July 1813, 3 August 1813.



**Box 1 (continued)**

**SERIES III: ORDERS, 1810-1837**

14. Orders of William Turk. (This is not a complete set of his orders and does not include the documents relating to his leaves of absence. The documents granting those leaves are held in SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE.)

**SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE, undated and 1800-1853**

15. Official Correspondence, undated.
16. Official Correspondence (William Turk's acceptance of his appointment), 21 July 1812.
17. Official Correspondence, 1813 and 1 April 1814.
18. Official Correspondence, 1815.
19. Official Correspondence, 1816.
20. Official Correspondence, 1819.
21. Official Correspondence, 1820.
22. Official Correspondence, 31 January 1821.
23. Official Correspondence, 1822.
24. Official Correspondence, 1823.
25. Official Correspondence, 1824.
26. Official Correspondence, 1825.
27. Official Correspondence, 1826.
28. Official Correspondence, 20 January 1829.
29. Official Correspondence, 1831.
30. Official Correspondence, 1832.
31. Official Correspondence, 1833.
32. Official Correspondence, February-October 1834.

**Box 1 (continued)**

**SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE (continued)**

33. Official Correspondence, November 1834.
34. Official Correspondence, December 1834.
35. Official Correspondence, January-July 1835.
36. Official Correspondence, August-December 1835.
37. Official Correspondence, 1836.
38. Official Correspondence, 1838.
39. Official Correspondence, 14 January 1839.
40. Official Correspondence, 9 July 1842.
41. Official Correspondence, 23 June 1847.
42. Official Correspondence, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Circulars (handwritten), 1848.
43. Personal Correspondence, Letter to William Turk's father, Ahasuerus Turk, 16 July 1800.
44. Personal Correspondence, Letters from William Turk's father, Ahasuerus Turk, 1803-1804.
45. Personal Correspondence, Letters from William Turk's son, John William, 1840-1841, 1843, 1845, 1850. (Includes the petition of John William Turk to change his name to John William Livingston, 27 December 1843.)
46. Personal Correspondence, Letter of William Turk's son, John William, to the Registrar of the Navy, 30 January 1854.
47. Personal Correspondence, Letters from William Turk's son, James H. Irving, 1847 and 1849. (Includes the document in which his son, James H., consents to assume the name of Irving instead of his former name of Turk, 2 July 1847.)
48. Personal Correspondence, Letters between William Turk and Reverend Daniel L. Carroll, D.D., 1840.
49. Personal Correspondence, Letters from Annie T. Carroll (William Turk's niece) and J. H. Carroll, 1853-1854.

**Box 1 (continued)**

**SERIES IV: CORRESPONDENCE (continued)**

50. Personal Correspondence, Letters from William Turk's nephew, C. Stockton Halsted, 1848-1851.

51. Personal Correspondence, Letters (Miscellaneous), 1843, 1849 and 1853.

**Box 2**

**SERIES V: MEDICAL DATA, undated and 1832-1836**

1. Medical Report for U.S. Ship BRANDYWINE, October-December 1832. (Includes names and diseases of persons admitted on the sick list of the ship.)
2. Medical Report for U.S. Ship BRANDYWINE, October-December 1832. (Includes names and diseases of persons admitted on the sick list of the ship.)
3. Medical Report for U.S. Ship BRANDYWINE, 3 January 1833. (Daily sick list on the ship.)
4. Medical Report of Men Who Died with Cholera in the ship DELAWARE and on HOSPITAL ISLAND, October-November 1834.
5. Medical Report on Cholera Cases in the ship DELAWARE and on MAHON ISLAND, ca. 1835.
6. Medical Report for U.S. Ship DELAWARE, 1 January-31 March 1835. (Includes sick list admissions.)
7. Medical Report for U.S. Ship DELAWARE, 1 April-30 June 1835. (Includes an alphabetical list of diseases entered in the medical journal of the ship.)
8. Medical Report for U.S. Ship JOHN ADAMS, 15 October 1834. (Includes a list of the number of sick and their cases.)
9. Medical Report for U.S. Ship JOHN ADAMS, 15 October-31 December 1834. (Includes an alphabetical list of diseases on board the ship.)
10. Medical Report for U.S. Ship JOHN ADAMS, 31 December 1834-31 March 1835. (Includes an alphabetical list of diseases on board the ship.)
11. Medical Report for U.S. Ship JOHN ADAMS, 31 March-30 June 1835. (Includes an alphabetical list of diseases on board the ship.)

**Box 2 (continued)**

**SERIES V: MEDICAL DATA (continued)**

12. Medical Report for U.S. Frigate POTOMAC, 2 November 1834. (Includes the Morning Report of the sick on board the frigate.)
13. Medical Report for U.S. Frigate POTOMAC, 13 November-31 December 1834. (Includes a list of the diseases which have been under medical treatment on board the frigate.)
14. Medical Report for U.S. Ship POTOMAC, 1 January-1 April 1835. (Includes a list of diseases which have been under medical treatment on ship.)
15. Medical Report for U.S. Ship POTOMAC, 1 April-30 June 1835. (Includes an alphabetical list of diseases treated on board the ship.)
16. Medical Report for U.S. Schooner SHARK, January-March 1835. (Includes a list of cases entered in the medical journal of the schooner.)
17. Medical Report for U.S. Schooner SHARK, 1 July 1835. (Includes a list of cases entered in the medical journal of the schooner.)
18. Quarterly Report of the State of Health of U.S. Squadron in the Mediterranean, 1 July-30 September 1836. (Includes a handwritten transcript of the report.)
19. Antidotes List, undated.
20. Prescription written by Dr. William Turk, undated.

**SERIES VI: FINANCIAL DATA, 1806-1854**

21. Account Book, 1806-1839 (leather bound book).
22. Account with the U.S. Frigate CONSTELLATION, 21 July 1812-7 September 1813.
23. Account with the Department of the Navy, 1816.
24. Account Book with the U.S. Frigate UNITED STATES and U.S. Ship DELAWARE, May 1833-November 1834.
25. Account with U.S. Ship DELAWARE, 14 February 1834-2 March 1835.
26. Accounts/Receipts, undated.
27. Accounts/Receipts, 1802, 1806 and 1817.

**Box 2 (continued)**

**SERIES VI: FINANCIAL DATA (continued)**

28. Accounts/Receipts, 1820-1821 and 1824-1825.
29. Accounts/Receipts, 1830, 1832-1833 and 1835.
30. Accounts/Receipts, 1836-1839.
31. Accounts/Receipts, 1840.
32. Accounts/Receipts, 1841.
33. Accounts/Receipts, 1844.
34. Accounts/Receipts, 1845.
35. Accounts/Receipts, 1846.
36. Accounts/Receipts, 1847.
37. Accounts/Receipts, January-June 1848.
38. Accounts/Receipts, July-December 1848.
39. Accounts/Receipts, January-June 1849.
40. Accounts/Receipts, July-December 1849.
41. Accounts/Receipts, January-June 1850.
42. Accounts/Receipts, July-December 1850.
43. Accounts/Receipts, January-June 1851.
44. Accounts/Receipts, July-December 1851.

**Box 3**

**SERIES VI: FINANCIAL DATA (continued)**

1. Accounts/Receipts, January-June 1852.
2. Accounts/Receipts, July-December 1852.

**Box 3 (continued)**

**SERIES VI: FINANCIAL DATA (continued)**

3. Accounts/Receipts, 1853.
4. Account/Receipts, 1854.
5. Account of Sales at Auction of Household Furniture, 5 October 1852.
6. Newark City Bank Checks, 1854-1854.

**SERIES VII: LEGAL DATA, 1744, 1799, 1834-1847 and 1853**

7. Indenture, 16 July 1744. [The original document is in Box 4 OVERSIZE.]
8. Last Will and Testament of Johannes Van Zeys (John Van Sice) [ great-grandfather of William Turk], 1799.
9. Legal Correspondence (relating to Estates and Judgments), undated and 1834-1847.
10. Mortgage Foreclosure Letter, 18 August 1853.
11. Fire Insurance Policy issued to John A. Hughes, 15 April 1845.

**SERIES VIII: PRINTED MATERIAL, 1839 and 1853**

12. Announcement of an Exhibition of Historical Paintings and Portraits by Mr. Anelli on 20 April 1839. (One of the "Portraits of a Lady" listed in the announcement is the property of Dr. Turk.)
13. Bureau of Surgery and Medicine Booklet, "Instructions for the Government of The Medical Officers of the Navy of the U.S.," 1853.

**SERIES IX: MISCELLANEOUS**

14. Inventory for U.S. Ship UNITED STATES, undated. (Includes spices and medical provisions.)
15. Calling Cards, Notes, Envelopes (empty), undated.

**Box 4 OVERSIZE**

1. Baccalaureate Degree of William Turk from Columbia College, 4 May 1796.
2. Certificate awarded to William Turk to Practice in the State of New Jersey as a Physician and Surgeon, 30 October 1801.
3. Medical Diploma of William Turk from Geneva College, 1 April 1828.
4. Appointment of William Turk as Surgeon in the Navy, 10 March 1813.
5. Appointment of William Turk as Surgeon in the Navy, 24 July 1813.
6. Indenture, 16 July 1744.