

Sagadahoc History & Genealogy Room

MAINE MC 008

Guide to the George F. Duncan collection of *Quaker City* materials, 1861-1867

Processed by:

Jill Piekut Roy, 2020

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Descriptive Summary

Collection Number: MC 008

Title: George F. Duncan collection of Quaker City material

Dates: 1861-1867, bulk 1867

Creator: Duncan, George F. (George Fuller), 1852-1917

Additional Creators:

Duncan, Charles C.

Beach, Moses Sperry, 1822-1892 Giles, J. L. (John Lawrence)

Extent: 0.25 linear feet (1 box)

Materials are in English.

Collection may be stored offsite. Please contact Archives staff for more information.

Biographical Note Abstract: George Fuller Duncan was born in Bath, Maine, the fourth child of Charles Crooker and Hannah Tibbetts Duncan. At the age of 14, he was a passenger on the *Quaker City*. As a young man, he worked for his father as a Deputy Shipping Commissioner for the port of New York. He moved to Portland, Maine in 1884, where he became a stockbroker and investor. His father, Captain Charles Crooker Duncan, was a sea captain, ship broker, and shipping commissioner originally of Bath, Maine. He is credited with inventing the luxury cruise when he organized a voyage aboard the steamship *Quaker City* in 1867. He was a friend of Henry Ward Beecher and an active member of the Plymouth Church community in Brooklyn, New York. From 1872 to 1884, Duncan served as the first Shipping Commissioner for the Port of New York.

Scope and Content Abstract: This collection includes three items: a journal kept by Captain Charles C. Duncan aboard the steamship *Quaker City* in 1867, an 1861 portrait of Captain Duncan, and a 1860s lithograph of the steamship *Quaker City*. The journal covers nearly the entirety of the voyage made famous in Mark Twain's first book, *The Innocents Abroad*. Captain Duncan worked with Henry Ward Beecher and other members of Plymouth Church to develop "the voyage to the Holy Land," known as the first luxury cruise. The journal includes information typical of a logbook, however, the content is chiefly concerned with the daily experiences of the passengers. Captain Duncan described shipboard activities, including daily devotions and weekly sermons, music, dancing, games, lectures and readings by passengers like photographer Henry E. James and the poet Bloodgood Cutter. Duncan recounted visits to several Mediterranean destinations including Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Constantinople, Sevastopol, Yalta, Smyrna, Beirut, Algiers, Malaga, Cadiz, and Madeira, with side trips to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and other inland cities. Most notable are visits to General Giuseppe Garibaldi and the court of Emperor Alexander II of Russia. Garibaldi and others were interested in passengers who served in the Civil War, especially Col. Peter Kinney. The Quaker City was quarantined in several cities due to cholera epidemics, including Naples, Athens, and Malaga. The journal concludes after the Quaker City has reached Bermuda, a few days before returning to New York. Clippings of articles about the voyage, probably written by Moses S. Beach for the New York Sun, are pasted in to the back of the journal.

Online Catalog Headings:

These materials and related materials may be found under the following headings in online catalogs.

Alexander II, Emperor of Russia, 1818-1881

Beach, Moses Sperry, 1822-1892

Beecher, Henry Ward, 1813-1887

Cutter, Bloodgood H. (Bloodgood Havilland), 1817-1906--Poetry

Duncan, Charles C.

Duncan, George F. (George Fuller), 1852-1917

Duncan, Hannah Jane Tibbetts

Duncan, Henry E., 1855-1935

Kinney, Peter, 1805-1877

Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 1807-1882

Giles, J. L. (John Lawrence)

James, W. E. (William E.), 1835-1887

Twain, Mark, 1835-1910--Innocents abroad

Quaker City (Ship)

Plymouth Church (Brooklyn, N.Y.)--History--19th century

The sun (New York, N.Y.: 1833-1916)

Cholera--Italy--Naples--History--19th century

Cholera--Greece--Athens--History--19th century

Cholera--Spain--Malaga--History--19th century

Congregationalists--Sermons

Culture and tourism--Mediterranean region

Ocean travel--History--19th century

Quarantine--Mediterranean region--History--19th century

Steamship passengers

United States History Civil War, 1861-1865--Veterans

Voyages and travels--19th century

Algiers (Algeria)--Description and travel--19th century

Beirut (Lebanon)--Description and travel--19th century

Bermuda Islands--Description and travel--19th century

Bethlehem--Description and travel--19th century

Cadiz (Spain)--Description and travel--19th century

Genoa (Italy)--Description and travel--19th century

IAIta (Ukraine)--Description and travel--19th century

Istanbul (Turkey)--Description and travel--19th century

Izmir (Turkey)--Description and travel--19th century

Jerusalem--Description and travel--19th century

Livorno (Italy)--Description and travel--19th century

Madeira (Madeira Islands)--Description and travel--19th century

Marseille (France)--Description and travel--19th century

Sevastopol' (Ukraine)--Description and travel--19th century

Journal

Logbook

Access Restrictions: This collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation: [Identification of item: description and date] in the George F. Duncan collection of *Quaker City* materials, 1861-1867, 1005.1, Sagadahoc History & Genealogy Room, Pattern Free Library, Bath, ME, USA.

Acquisitions Information: This collection, accession number 1005.1, was given to the Patten Free Library by James Henry McLellan in 1951.

Custodial History: James Henry McLellan received the collection from the estate of his sister, Mrs. Jennie McLellan Duncan, wife of George F. Duncan. George F. Duncan inherited the journal from his father, Charles Crooker Duncan. He was given the portrait of Captain Duncan by a family friend, Captain Benjamin Webster, who had received the portrait as a gift at the time it was taken. It is not known how George F. Duncan acquired the lithograph of the *Quaker City*.

Processing Information: Processed and encoded by Jill Piekut Roy, February 2020.

Provenance information has been reconstructed from a newspaper article about the gift of the collection to Patten Free Library from J. Henry McLellan of Portland, Maine, as well as a card affixed to the portrait of Captain Duncan. The article appeared on the first page of the Bath Independent on August 2, 1951 under the title "Interesting Gift Made Library by Former Bath Man."

Later research material, correspondence, and a transcription of the *Quaker City* journal were stored with the collection until 2020. Charles Shain's 1983 talk and the 2019 transcription have been cataloged separately. Other supplementary material has been removed to the collection processing folder.

Biographical Note:

George F. Duncan

George Fuller Duncan (1852-1917) was born to Charles Crooker and Hannah Tibbets Duncan in Bath, Maine on July 27, 1852. At the age of 14, George was a passenger on the famous voyage of the *Quaker City*. He was a Deputy Shipping Commissioner of the port of New York from 1872 to 1884. After being dismissed from the role, Duncan moved to Portland, Maine, where he became a stockbroker and investor. Some of Duncan's investments included railroad and utility companies in Illinois with associates such as his brother, Henry E. Duncan, and President William McKinley. George F. Duncan married Jennie McClellan (1858-1951), daughter of Charles H. and Louisa Maria Kendrick McLellan, in Bath, Maine on October 18, 1888. They had one child, George G. McLellan Duncan, who was born in 1902 and died in infancy.

Charles Crooker Duncan

Captain Charles Crooker Duncan (1821-1898) was a sea captain, ship broker, and shipping commissioner originally of Bath, Maine. He is credited with inventing the luxury cruise when he organized a voyage aboard the steamship *Quaker City* in 1867, a voyage which Mark Twain satirized in *The Innocents Abroad*. Duncan later achieved notoriety as the port of New York's first Shipping Commissioner; his removal from that office was in part the result of a public feud with Mark Twain and the *New York Times*.

Charles C. Duncan was the youngest child of Samuel Eaton and Sarah Webb Duncan, born in Bath, Maine in 1821. His early life was affected by Samuel's alcoholism and absence from home; to support the family, Sarah took in boarders and the children worked in Bath shops and shipyards. The family was very religious and attended church at the Methodist Meeting House in Bath. Duncan worked part-time in the shipyards and attended school until the age of 14, when he became an apprentice to the blacksmith William Dunnell. He worked as a blacksmith until 1837, when he went to sea. From 1844 to 1853, Duncan was a merchant sea captain carrying cargos of tobacco, marble, and cotton. During one return trip from Le Havre to New Orleans, aboard the ship *Swanton*, a cholera epidemic broke out among 250 immigrant passengers. Duncan brought the *Swanton* into New Orleans quietly to avoid quarantine, and the illness spread as far as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was one of the last significant outbreaks of cholera in the United States.

In 1853, Duncan moved his family to Brooklyn, New York to start a ship brokerage, where he became a friend of Henry Ward Beecher, a nationally-admired Congregational clergyman and brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe. Beecher made Duncan a deacon of Plymouth Church and superintendent of the Sunday school. In 1858, Duncan moved to Liverpool, England to set up a branch office of the newly formed partnership of Duncan & Kendall; G. W. Kendall, a fellow Bath man, managed the New York office. The family remained in Liverpool through the Civil War, where they faced the difficulties of running a brokerage during wartime. In 1866, the family returned to Brooklyn and the partnership of Duncan & Kendall dissolved when Kendall fled to Canada with the business funds.

Down on his luck, Duncan worked with Henry Ward Beecher and other Plymouth Church members to organize a voyage to the Holy Land aboard the steamship *Quaker City*. Duncan assumed the role of Captain when the *Quaker City* left New York in June 1867, carrying about 75 passengers to several Mediterranean cities on the first luxury cruise. Duncan's wife, Hannah, and their two younger sons, George and Henry, were also on board. The journalist Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, was another notable passenger. Duncan and Twain famously did not get along.

After the ship returned to New York in November, Duncan gave lectures about the "Great Excursion" in several American cities, which featured stories of intemperance among some passengers, including Twain. Twain's rebuttals were printed in several newspapers, and in 1869, the publication of *The Innocents Abroad* offered an alternative narrative of the journey and painted an unfavorable portrait of Captain Duncan. Duncan continued to lecture on the subject of temperance and resumed his roles in the Plymouth Church community.

In 1872, shortly after Congress approved the Shipping Commissioner Act, Duncan was appointed to the newly created post of Shipping Commissioner for the port of New York. He immediately made deputies of two sons—Charles D. and George—and later added deputy positions for his other sons, Fred and Henry. All were paid large salaries. The *New York Times* routinely covered Duncan's lavish budget, with colorful input from Duncan's old adversary, Mark Twain. In 1883, Duncan sued the *New York Times* for libel and won damages of twelve cents. Duncan was removed from his office the following year after appearing in court on charges of nepotism and misuse of public funds.²

Following his retirement, Duncan and his family relocated to "Brigham Castle" in Northfield, Massachusetts, where he died on March 26, 1898 at the age of 77. He is buried next to his first wife in

¹ John E. Duncan, Sea Chain (Scotia, N.Y.: Americana Review, 1986), 152-154.

² For a more detailed account of this episode, see John E. Duncan, "The Commissioner vs. Twain and the 'Times'", *Sea Chain* (Scotia, N.Y.: Americana Review, 1986), 199-221.

Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York. Charles Crooker Duncan married Hannah Jane Tibbetts (1822-1869) of Rockland, Maine in September 1841. They had ten children, five surviving infancy: Emma Jane (1843-1887), Charles Davenport (1845-1891), Frederick Chandler (1847-1931), George Fuller (1852-1917), and Henry E. (1855-1935). He married second, Hannah B. Leach (1845-1930) of Brooklyn, New York in 1872. They had six children, including Elsa (1873-1956), Lindsay (1875?-), Frances (1877-1972), Helmer (1881?-1926?), and Jessie (1899?-).

Biographies of George F. Duncan and Charles Crooker Duncan are adapted from:

Duncan, John E. Sea Chain. Scotia, N.Y.: Americana Review, 1986. Shain, Charles. "Remarks Concerning the Coincident Careers of Mark Twain and Captain Charles C. Duncan." Transcript of talk, Patten Free Library, Bath, ME, June 1983.

Scope and Content:

This collection includes three items: a journal kept by Captain Charles C. Duncan aboard the steamship *Quaker City* in 1867, a portrait of Captain Duncan, and a lithograph of the steamship *Quaker City*. The journal, which includes elements of a logbook, covers nearly the entirety of the voyage made famous in Mark Twain's first book, *The Innocents Abroad*. It begins on June 8, 1867 in New York and concludes November 13, 1867 in Bermuda; the voyage would end with the ship's arrival in New York on November 19. Clippings of articles about the voyage, probably written by Moses S. Beach for the *New York Sun*, are pasted in to the back of the journal.

The "Voyage to the Holy Land," known as the first luxury cruise, was conceived by Captain Charles C. Duncan in 1867. After living in Liverpool during the Civil War, Captain Duncan returned to New York to find that his partner, G. W. Kendall, had run away to Canada with the money from their ship brokerage business. In order to make a living, Captain Duncan proposed a novel idea to his friend Henry Ward Beecher: he would lead a cruise to the Holy Land. Americans were eager to travel after years of war, and the Paris Exhibition of 1867 was such an unprecedented draw that even cargo ships had begun offering passenger service to Europe. Duncan worked with Beecher and other Plymouth Church members to develop an itinerary and drum up interest in the cruise. They secured the use of the *Quaker City*, a steamship that had served in the Civil War. Duncan advertised the voyage in April 1867. Hopeful passengers were required to apply to a selection committee. If selected, passengers would pay \$1,250 for a fare. By contrast, a first-class, round-trip fare to Paris on a regular passenger steamer cost only \$200. Passengers were encouraged to bring an additional \$500 in spending money.

By May, the passenger list was nearly complete and included General Sherman, actress Maggie Mitchell, Henry Ward Beecher, and many of Beecher's followers. Within a few weeks, all three celebrities had decided against the journey, and another 45 of Beecher's followers dropped out. Consequently, Captain Duncan scrambled to fill the passenger list even after the planned departure date, and set off from New York with only 75 fares claimed of the 110 available. Samuel Clemens, a journalist who had only recently taken on the pseudonym Mark Twain, was among the passengers. The *Daily Alta California* had paid his fare in exchange for an ongoing account of the cruise. Twain would use the experience to write *The Innocents Abroad*, which would lampoon Captain Duncan and many of his travelling companions.

Captain Duncan's journal offers an alternative view of the *Quaker City*'s five-month voyage around the Mediterranean Sea. The journal records information typical of a logbook: daily latitude and longitude, wind direction and strength, the work of the crew, the comings and goings of pilots, vessels met and hailed, coal loaded, bills of health issued and quarantines enforced. However, the journal is chiefly concerned with the daily experience of the passengers, for the benefit of investors back in New York as

well as Duncan's own curiosity. Duncan had expressed his interest in human behavior in his 1853 autobiography: "There is no end to the interest to be had in watching the movements of passengers when first launched out of port on to the great ocean," he wrote.

The captain noted when passengers suffered from seasickness and how often they appeared at meals. He recorded unforeseen problems, such as almost forgetting to bring guns and ammunition (page 3), the over-frequency of meals (page 4), rust on the printing press (page 9), and the necessity of explaining that the sound of a running pump did not indicate that the ship was leaking—it was used to produce drinking water (page 19). He described the weather, but also the vistas, as when the *Quaker City* was "meeting and passing vessels in large numbers in sight the Mountain of Sierra Nevada capped with snow" (page 25).

Shipboard events included dances, music, games, lectures, demonstrations, and poetry readings. Photographer William E. James gave a demonstration of his stereographic photography equipment. "The Long Island poet" Bloodgood Cutter gave frequent readings of his poetry; excerpts and sometimes entire poems are transcribed in the journal. Early in the voyage, the passengers celebrated the birthday of Hannah Duncan, the captain's wife. Passengers formed committees and elected officers. Early in the voyage, a mock trial was staged in which Mark Twain accused the purser of stealing his coat. Captain Duncan recorded the verdict: "after lengthy proceedings prisoner was found guilty and sentenced to 10 Minutes Solitary Confinement in room No 10" (page 13).

Captain Duncan recorded daily devotions and Sunday sermons in detail, telling which prayers, hymns, psalms, and readings were delivered and by which passengers. The meeting of Sunday, June 16 was

"...viz singing – prayer by
Col Denny of Virginia – Another
Hymn – prayer by Mr Severance
of Ohio – again a hymn – Scriptures
read – after which addresses and
prayers by Mssrs Quereau – Church
Beckwith & Bullard – Closing prayer
By the Captain, Doxology – "Praise God
from whom all blessings flow" &
benediction by Mr Bullard – Meeting
lasted just one hour."
(page 15)

Captain Duncan's log also touches on tragedy. On August 18 at Constantinople, the captain recorded the death of one of the crew, a poor drunken fireman crazy for drink, who had jumped overboard and drowned in an attempt to swim to shore (page 47). The Captain later complained of sailors who stole the passengers' wine, got drunk, and started fighting (page 106). After the *Quaker City* reached Europe, shipboard events gave way to accounts of expeditions on dry land. Duncan recorded visits to dozens of coastal and inland cities including Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, Athens, Constantinople, Smyrna, Beirut, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Algiers, Malaga, Cadiz, and Madeira.

The Captain described the beauty of each destination as the *Quaker City* approached and often explored them himself. He recorded the activities of passengers in each city and the thoroughness of their explorations. He notes when passengers left for inland locations like Paris and Damascus, at which ports they intended to meet the vessel later on, and what souvenirs and foods they brought on board.

Passengers visited American consuls, attended church services, and made other notable excursions recorded by Captain Duncan. On July 28, a small party visited Giuseppe Garibaldi in Empoli, Italy, where the Italian general took an interest in the Civil War service of one passenger, Col. Peter Kinney. On August 20, the *Quaker City* visited Sevastopol, still in ruins after the 1854-55 Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. On August 26, Emperor Alexander II of Russia, Empress Maria Alexandrovna, Grand Duke Michael Nikolaevich, Grand Duchess Olga Feodorovna, and Prince Vladimir received a group of passengers at Yalta. Like Garibaldi, Grand Duke Michael was interested in Col. Kinney's service in the Union Army, and puzzled by his friendship with another passenger who served on the Confederate side (probably Col. W. R. Denny of Winchester, Virginia).

Upon arriving at Mount Carmel on September 15, the *Quaker City* reached the Holy Land. "We turn to our Bibles," Captain Duncan wrote, "to read up Carmel" (page 84). Thus begins a catalog of biblical sites and artifacts seen by the American pilgrims, who also visit mosques, hotels, and beaches, and collect local flora. Experiencing the Holy Land for the first time, Captain Duncan's writing takes on the unabashed excitement of a personal travel journal, as when he "Went into a Pomegranite orchard and stole a promegranite!" while hiking over the Judean mountains (page 87), or visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem:

"Passed nearly the entire forenoon at the Holy Sepulchre & returned to Hotel at 12 to breakfast! After which I returned alone to the Holy Sepulchre and remained there two hours alone" (page 88)

Leaving Jaffa on October 1, Captain Duncan took on an additional 41 passengers. According to Charles Shain, they were Americans from Washington County, Maine who had joined a religious colony only a few years before.³ In Alexandria, a passenger paid for them to return home. As the voyage drew to a close, Captain Duncan recorded both successful and unsuccessful attempts by passengers to add destinations to the itinerary. The plan had been adjusted throughout the voyage because many cities were under quarantine due to cholera; the *Quaker City* was quarantined for 7 days in Naples, 11 days in Piraeus, and 7 days in Malaga. Mark Twain claimed in *The Innocents Abroad* that he "ran the blockade," evading quarantine restrictions at Gibraltar,⁴ but Captain Duncan recorded that passengers were free to enter the city after the ship had been given *pratique*.

When the *Quaker City* returned to New York, Mark Twain wrote a letter to the *New York Herald* criticizing the voyage, and the other passengers inevitably learned that Twain had lampooned their adventure in frequent letters to the *Daily Alta California* throughout the trip. Twain later satirized the voyage in *The Innocents Abroad*, published in 1869. Some other passengers achieved success after the journey: William E. James published his stereoscopic views of the Holy Land, Samuel B. Parsons propagated Valencia orange trees in Florida after first seeing them on the voyage, and John Greenwood, Jr. exhibited artifacts at Barnum's Museum. Captain Duncan gave lectures about the journey and returned

³ Charles E. Shain, "Remarks Concerning the Coincident Careers of Mark Twain and Captain Charles C. Duncan," (transcript of talk, Patten Free Library, Bath, ME, June 1983).

⁴ Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, (Hartford, Conn. : American Pub. Co., 1869), 637.

to his duties at Plymouth Church. While the Captain may have felt that the voyage of the *Quaker City* was a success, he did not attempt another one.

The framed portrait of Captain Duncan shows the Captain as he was at the age of forty while living abroad in Liverpool. It is an unattributed, hand-painted glass-plate negative, 8x6 inches. The portrait matches the description on Duncan's 1867 passport: 5 ft. 7 in. tall, with a high forehead, dark eyes, ordinary nose and chin, dark complexion, oval face and large mouth. It was taken April 21, 1861 and was presented to Captain Benjamin Webster of Portland, Maine around the time it was created. Webster later gave the portrait to George F. Duncan.

The framed lithograph of the steamship *Quaker City* is attributed to John Lawrence Giles, a lithographer of New York. Most of Giles extant work is related to Civil War scenes, and the lithograph may have celebrated the *Quaker City*'s wartime service before her more famous voyage. The lithograph shows the *Quaker City* as a paddle-wheel steamer with auxiliary sails, fully-rigged masts fore and aft. It is unknown how the lithograph came to be in the possession of George F. Duncan.

Sources consulted:

Duncan, Charles C. "Autobiography of Charles C. Duncan." In *The Maine Reader: The Down East Experience 1614 to the Present*, ed. Charles Shain and Samuella Shain, 107-116. Boston: David R. Godine, 1997.

Duncan, John E. Sea Chain. Scotia, N.Y.: Americana Review, 1986.

Haynes, Robin A.S. 2012 Art Inventory. Bath, Me.: Patten Free Library, 2012.

Shain, Charles E. "Remarks Concerning the Coincident Careers of Mark Twain and Captain Charles C. Duncan." Transcript of talk, Patten Free Library, Bath, ME, June 1983.

Twain, Mark. The Innocents Abroad. Hartford, Conn.: American Pub. Co., 1869.

Separated Materials: The following materials have been stored separately from the bulk of the collection: Portrait of Captain Charles Duncan (1005.1.2); *Quaker City* Steamship lithograph (1005.1.3).

Alternate Formats Available: Transcription of the *Quaker City* journal available at repository.

The portrait of Captain Charles Duncan has been reproduced in:

Stebbins, Theodore E. *Lure of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience 1760-1914*. Boston, MA: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1992

Twain, Mark. The Innocents Abroad. New York: Reader's Digest, 1990.

Hill, Frederic B. *Ships, swindlers, and scalded hogs: the rise and fall of the Crooker Shipyard in Bath, Maine*. Lanham, Maryland: Down East Books, 2016.

The portrait is expected to be included in an annotated edition of *The Innocents Abroad* that will be published by the Bancroft Library.

The lithograph of the *Quaker City* has been reproduced in:

Hill, Frederic B. *Ships, swindlers, and scalded hogs: the rise and fall of the Crooker Shipyard in Bath, Maine*. Lanham, Maryland: Down East Books, 2016.

Publication Note: The Quaker City journal has been cited in:

Shain, Charles E. "The Journal of the *Quaker City* Captain." *The New England Quarterly* 28, no.3 (1955): 388-94.

Duncan, John. Sea Chain. Scotia, N.Y.: Americana Review, 1986.

Ganzel, Dewey. *Mark Twain Abroad: The Cruise of the* Quaker City. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Hirst, Robert H. and Brandt Rowles. "William E. James's Stereoscopic Views of the 'Quaker City' Excursion." Mark Twain Journal 22, no. 1 (1984): 15-33.

Inventory:

1005.1.1 *Quaker City* journal, June 8, 1867-November 13, 1867

1005.1.2/SC2.2 Portrait of Captain Charles Duncan

1005.1.3 *Quaker City* Steamship lithograph