

Guide to the Delano / Magoun Records

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: Various

Title: Delano / Magoun Records

Dates: 1835-1859 (bulk 1835-1844)

Quantity: 1 linear foot

Abstract: Correspondence, receipts, and lists of accounts from ship captains to Benjamin Delano and Son, and Magoun and Son shipbuilders.

Accession: 94-09-307 ; 307-1994

Biographical Note:

The namesakes of Benjamin Delano and Son were shipbuilders who operated out of Kingston, Massachusetts. Thatcher Magoun (1775-ca. 1856), owner of Magoun and Son and one of the United States' most famous shipbuilders, was a native of Massachusetts. His family emigrated from Scotland in the mid-17th century. Magoun began working in the shipbuilding industry at a young age and would work for several companies before opening his own business in 1802. During his career he constructed eighty-four vessels, fifteen of which were built exclusively for him and which he used to begin his company. Delano's ancestors emigrated to America from France in 1621. Delano (1809-1882) was born in Massachusetts. Shipbuilding was in his blood as he was the grandson of a prominent shipbuilding also named Benjamin Delano, and he himself was known as a preeminent builder.

Scope and Contents:

Consists of twenty-four letters written by the captains of various ships to either Delano or Magoun. With the exception of one that was written by a captain from New Orleans, the letters were written from Mobile by captains seeking to either sell cargo or purchase cargo in Mobile, particularly cotton. The letters are almost entirely business related, with

discussions of the economic conditions in Mobile at the time, the trials of selling and purchasing, and sailing conditions during their voyages to Mobile. In addition to the correspondence, there are eight lists of accounts between the captains and the ship owners, and thirteen receipts for various items.

Access Restrictions:

This material is open to research.

Preferred Citation:

The Delano / Magoun Records, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama, Mobile, AL.

Content List:

Box Inventory

1. Dawson Lincoln, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano, Kingston, Mass., Nov. 12, 1840. Letter describes Lincoln's voyage from Boston to Mobile, beginning at some unknown date in October and ending November 8. Lincoln describes harsh weather on his trip, as well as the loss of his anchor. He mentions that his "freight amounted to one Hundred & fourteen Dollers" reached Mobile "in good order," though he does not mention what that freight was.
2. O. B. Oliver, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Kingston, Mass., March 30, 1843. Oliver mentions that he arrived in Mobile from "Old Harber Jimmaker" (possibly Jamaica), and that he sold his cargo (appears to be staves) for enough money to pay for freight charges.
3. O. B. Oliver, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Boston, April 26, 1843. The captain writes that he has taken on board 111 bales of cotton. He also writes that he has 4,500 staves that he is trying to sell at \$10 per 1,000, but business has been very slow.
4. Alonzo Cole, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano, Esq., Kingston, Mass., January 16, 1846. Cole writes in apparent complaint to Delano that his ship held only small amounts of sugar and molasses, and that he had trouble selling the cod he had on hand as well.
5. Charles Penfield, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Kingston, Mass., May 5, 1839. Penfield writes that he has sold potatoes, acquired specie, plans to return to Boston by June

2, and that he will use some of the profits made on his voyage to pay his crew. There is a postscript that mentions a Capt. Rhoads leaving a ship.

6. Charles Penfield, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Kingston, Mass., November 24, 1839. Penfield writes that he will be making voyages between Mobile and Franklin, Louisiana, during the season and intends to acquire both sugar and molasses. He writes that Mobile at the time seems very "poor" and that his produce "paid nothing as usual."

7. Charles Penfield, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Kingston, Mass., March 12, 1840. Penfield writes that it is taking him longer than expected to load his ship, but now has nineteen bales of cotton on board at \$40 per bale.

8. Charles Penfield, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Kingston, Mass., November 10, 1840. Penfield writes that he has been on the water for twenty-seven days and that head winds had caused problems for three of them. He mentions taking on lumber, and will in the near future run coffee from Havana.

9. James Fuller, Mobile, to Benjamin Delano and Son, Kingston, Mass., March 17, 1840. Fuller writes that he would be leaving port the following morning with 193 bales of cotton worth \$1,153.18.

10. Ebenezer Howes, Mobile, to Thatcher Magoun, Boston, May 11, 1838. Howes writes Magoun that he had the opportunity to make good money from a Mr. Sears by taking freight to Liverpool (?). He expects to be back in Boston by September, and that since he agreed to only one voyage on his current ship he would be pleased to take charge of a ship being built by Magoun.

11. John Dreyer, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, April 23, 1843. Dreyer writes to apologize to Magoun for taking so long to arrive in Mobile, describing a voyage of 62 days which he says cost him at least part of his freight. He writes that he hopes to be able to take on a freight of tobacco at New Orleans.

12. Daniel Winsor, New Orleans and Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, January 25, 1844. Winsor seems to be describing preparations for shipping materials from New Orleans with the ship *Timoleon*. On the back of the letter is a freight list for the ship as it made its journey to Boston.

13. Daniel Winsor, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, February 7, 1844. Winsor presents the disbursement account for the ship *Talma* and mainly discusses the selling market in Mobile, mentioning cotton in particular.

14. Isaac Thayer, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, May 20, 1837. Appears to be a note that accompanied an account list from Thayer to Magoun.

15. Isaac Thayer, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, May 31, 1837. Thayer responds to a request from Magoun to go to Havana for an unspecified reason. He responds in the positive, writing that he is able to leave immediately.

16. Alex Winsor, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, March 25, 1840. Winsor announces his arrival in Mobile and that he is waiting on his cargo of cotton to be delivered. Once obtained, he will leave port. He mentions that freight in Mobile has declined by one-eighth recently.

17. Alex Winsor, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, April 17, 1840. Winsor writes that he is attempting to obtain a charter for the ship *Timoleon* to return to Mobile, but as yet has not been successful since he could find "no one that would offer more than 1/8." He writes that he is having difficulty getting 1,600 bales of cotton on board his ship due to the high number of ships attempting to load cargo at that time.

18. Alex Winsor, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, April 29, 1840. Winsor writes that the *Timoleon* is loaded with 1,785 bales of cotton and is ready to go to sea.

19. Gershom Winsor, Mobile, to Thatcher Magoun, Esq., Boston, March 24, 1835. Winsor writes that he arrived in Mobile on his way to New Orleans to check on the price of freight, learning that prices are low in both areas. He writes that Mobile has about 50,000 bales of cotton, more than New Orleans, but New Orleans also has tobacco and other produce.

20. Gershom Winsor, Mobile, to Thatcher Magoun, Esq., Boston, April 2, 1835. Winsor writes that he is discharging his crew and paying them, complaining that he has not any offers to carry freight at any price. He writes that business is so bad in Mobile that many ships are leaving for New Orleans and other ports. The season for freight ships will continue to be bad due to the high prices of cotton, he writes.

21. Gershom Winsor, Mobile, to Thatcher Magoun, Esq., Boston, April 11, 1835. Winsor continues to lament the lack of freight, despite there being cotton available to transport. This appears to be dedicated to a few ships, and due to the large amount of ships in Mobile at the time, Winsor writes that business is bad. He writes of holding out hope for a cargo within a short period of time.

22. Gershom Winsor, Mobile, to Thatcher Magoun, Esq., Boston, April 15, 1835. Winsor writes that he has taken a cargo of cotton and hopes to make the journey to Boston as soon as possible.

23. Gershom Winsor, Mobile, to Thatcher Magoun, Esq., Boston, April 29, 1835. Winsor writes that the ship *Archimedes* has taken on 392 bales of cotton worth \$3,107.50, and also lists instructions for the use of two accounts he had taken.

24. Letter, Alex Winsor, Mobile, to Magoun and Son, Boston, April 25, 1840. Winsor writes that he has acquired his entire cargo of 1,654 bales of cotton.

Accounts and Receipts

1. Account between Thatcher Magoun and Isaac Thayer, May 20, 1837
2. Disbursement account for ship *Deucalion* by Isaac Thayer, May 1837
3. Account between Thatcher Magoun and Alex Winsor, March 1840
4. Account between Magoun and Son and Isaac Winsor, February 1844
5. Sales account of Capt. Allen of ship *Deucalion*, December 23, 1841
6. Sales account of Capt. Allen of ship *Deucalion*, December 23, 1841
7. Sales account of Capt. Allen of ship *Deucalion*, May 31, 1842
8. Account between Thatcher Magoun and Alex Winsor, April 1840
9. Receipts to Isaac Thayer, April, May, and September 1837
10. Receipts for the schooner *King Phillip*, January 1859
11. Grocery receipts for schooner *King Phillip*, January 1859
12. Receipts for the schooner *King Phillip*, January 1859