

Henry Beaumont Journal of a Voyage to North America, 1817-1819

Henry F. Beaumont Journal of a Voyage to North America, 1817-1818
1817-1818

Title Statement

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Unit Date

1817-1818

Language

English

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Extent

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Biographical / Historical

Henry Francisco Beaumont was born in Halifax, Yorkshire, England on December 31, 1800. He traveled to the United States in 1818, where he settled in Lynchburg, Virginia and later Clarksville, Tennessee. He married Sarah Gibson Anderson in 1819, and they had several children together. Beaumont was active in the tobacco industry and in 1829 he built a stemmery warehouse, where tobacco leaves are stripped from their stems; he was allegedly the first person to ship a hogshead of tobacco down the Cumberland River. He was also a founding member of the Methodist congregation in Clarksville, where he also served on the Board of Trustees for the Clarksville Female and Male Academies. Beaumont was also an insurance agent with Clarksville Marine, Insurance & Life Trust Company in addition to other business endeavors. He died in December 1864 and was buried in Clarksville.

Scope and Contents

Beaumont's journal details his transatlantic voyage from England to the United States, with stops in New York and finally Richmond, Virginia. Accompanied by his brother William, Beaumont gives a detailed account of his journey. He describes extreme seasickness (pg. 2-3); surviving through an Atlantic Ocean hurricane (pg. 3); the abundant marine life, including whales, sharks, cod, and other large fish; information sharing with other passing ships; confusion about their ship's exact location (pg. 5-6); as well as a detailed narrative of his journey up the James River (pg. 13-21).

In this latter section, Beaumont describes arriving at the Cape Henry Light House and witnessing a ship wreck (pg. 13); taking a small boat to explore the James with 4 fellow passengers, including his brother William (pg. 14-17); exploring the abandoned Jamestown Island site and encountering horses and birds (pg. 14-15); and rowing across the James to visit a farmer's home (pg. 16). This expedition incurred the wrath of the ship's captain, who thought Beaumont and his party were lost in the river. Beaumont also describes meeting a group of enslaved persons living along the James River "55 miles" from Richmond (pg. 18-19) before arriving in the city. Upon his landing in Richmond, Beaumont recounts his attempt to secure work in the tobacco industry and connect with his family members. He moved to Lynchburg, Virginia but travelled back to Richmond when his sister Harriet's family was killed in an accident on the James River. His sister Maria also died while in Richmond.

The final 8-pages detail Beaumont's accounting: his ship passage, his room and board, clothing purchased, funds lent, and other miscellaneous costs.

Keywords

Voyages and travels--Personal narratives

James River (Va.)--Navigation.

Transatlantic voyages

Slavery

Jamestown (Va.)--History

Tobacco industry--Virginia--Richmond

Description of Subordinate Components

Journal

Unit ID /repositories/2/archival_objects/448742

Unit Date 1817-1818

Mixed Materials Small Collections Box 115 (Box)

Container 1 (Folder)

Language English

Scope and Contents

A typed copy of Beaumont's travel journal, including numeric accounting of trip cost