



The New York Public Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

**William H. Meyers diary**

1838-1839

MssCol 1986

## Summary

**Creator:** Meyers, William H., 1815-

**Title:** William H. Meyers diary

**Date:** 1838-1839

**Size:** 1 v. (36 tipped-in leaves), 32 ill. (watercolor drawings), 36 cm; 1 v. (36 tipped-in leaves), 32 ill. (watercolor drawings), 36 cm

**Source:** Gift of, Worthington C. Ford and Paul Leicester Ford as part of the Ford Collection

**Abstract:** William H. Meyers (b. 1815), a native of Philadelphia, sailed on merchant vessels, worked at the U.S. Naval Laboratory in Washington, D.C., and served as a gunner in the U.S. Navy. Meyers' illustrated diary (17 Oct. 1838-4 Mar. 1839) records his voyages from: Philadelphia to Baltimore and Cuba (with visits to Xibara and Santiago de Cuba) on the schooner Ajax; Santiago de Cuba to Nassau, Bahamas, as master of the brig Lucy; and Nassau to New York as a passenger on the brig Victress, noting his later return to Philadelphia. The diary, which functions as a ship's log for the Lucy, includes accounts of his visit to a Cuban plantation and his illness from yellow fever, and poetic tributes to women encountered in his travels. Watercolor drawings (one in ink wash) illustrate ships at sea, localities visited, entertainments, shipboard activities and illness at sea.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Alternative Form Available:** Available on microfilm; New York Public Library; \*ZL-219 Illustrations also available as digital images

**Preferred citation:** William H. Meyers diary, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

## Creator History

William H. Meyers (b. 1815), a native of Philadelphia, sailed on merchant vessels, worked at the U.S. Naval Laboratory in Washington, D.C., and served as a gunner in the U.S. Navy.

## **Scope and Content Note**

Meyers' illustrated diary (17 Oct. 1838-4 Mar. 1839) records his voyages from: Philadelphia to Baltimore and Cuba (with visits to Xibara and Santiago de Cuba) on the schooner Ajax; Santiago de Cuba to Nassau, Bahamas, as master of the brig Lucy; and Nassau to New York as a passenger on the brig Victress, noting his later return to Philadelphia. The diary, which functions as a ship's log for the Lucy, includes accounts of his visit to a Cuban plantation and his illness from yellow fever, and poetic tributes to women encountered in his travels. Watercolor drawings (one in ink wash) illustrate ships at sea, localities visited, entertainments, shipboard activities and illness at sea.

## **Key Terms**

### **Geographic Names**

Baltimore (Md.) -- Description and travel -- 19th century

Cuba -- Description and travel -- 19th century

Nassau (Bahamas) -- Description and travel -- 19th century

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Diaries

Ships' logs

Watercolors

### **Occupations**

Merchant mariners -- United States

Ship captains -- United States

### **Subjects**

Plantations -- Cuba -- 19th century

Slavery -- Cuba -- 19th century

Yellow fever

### **Names**

Meyers, William H., 1815-

Ajax (Schooner)

Lucy (Brig)

Victress (Brig)