

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

U.S. Bark "Fernandina" Jan. 29, 1862.

We are anchored in 7 ½ fathoms of water at New Inlet, N.C. This day most beautiful and summer like. And though it is today three months since I first reported for duty to Com. H. Paulding at the Navy Yard, N.Y. I commence to write a few notes upon the cruise of our bark; trusting to the Log Book for dates and places that may have escaped my memory. Such notes may afford some little amusement for myself or friends at home when peace shall have returned to our country. My miserable penmanship has thus far deterred me from writing a journal of our fortunes and misfortunes. It is easier to commence than to continue and complete such an undertaking – trifling though it may seem. I hope Government will not need our services long enough to allow me time to fill this small book with notes; but to subdue the greatest rebellion the world has ever seen is no small task.

Sometime in September last I met Dr. Fox of the Naval Hospital Chelsea Ms. at the Mass. G. Hospital, Boston. He told me there was a scarcity of surgeons in the Vol. Navy, and that I could secure the situation by filing some papers and making the application. He volunteered to write for me if I would leave my credentials with him. I gladly accepted his very kind offer and the application was made.

Sept. 28th. I met him again and he told me that he had received notice that the communication was received by the Department, and that my appointment would be along soon. I made my visits very hastily and prepared to go home and see the folks and return on Monday the 31st. Doctor Damon was very glad to get my Dispensary District, and I was equally well pleased to be freed from it. I went home Sat. and returned Monday, expecting my appointment

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

soon. I commenced reviewing my studies with the intention of passing examination for the “regular” Navy in case I did not get an appointment in the Vol. Navy. Thus in anxious suspense I waited and studied till 26th Oct. when I received my appointment. It was dated Oct. 21, 1861. But by a blunder of the post office clerks it was sent to the Navy Yard Charlestown, where it lay for 2 or 3 days. I got it at evening Saturday night. On Monday I started for N.Y. via Fall River. I slept well onboard the Metropolis arriving in N.Y. in the morning. I proceeded to the Navy Yard and reported to Com. Paulding. I was ordered to report at the Lyceum every day till further ordered. In the afternoon I went to N.Y. and drew my travelling allowance - \$21.60 from the Navy agent. I secured board at 125 Sands St. Brooklyn with Mr. Shackerly. I spent my time till Nov. 8th in seeing what was to be seen in and out of the Navy Yard.

Nov. 7. I got orders to report to Acting Vol. Lieut. Geo. W. Browne, in Command of U.S. Bark “*Fernandina*”. I reported to him on the next day. He endorsed my orders and told me to be around.

From Nov. 8 till Nov. 16, when we went in commission, I spent in “posting up” as to my duties and necessities; examining guns and ships etc. I made an application for more medicines than were allowed in the outfit. The Department referred the matter to Doctor Bache of the Laboratory, who said there was a disposition to “adhere to the outfit.” I spent all of my travelling allowance and two months advance pay—\$208 – in my outfit. My sword cost \$21.50. Cap \$9.00. Three suits of clothes, costing respectively \$37, \$18, \$6 ½. My part of the ward room outfit was \$72. Board at Mr. S.’s about \$17. Flannels etc exhausted the rest of my money. Meantime I was introduced to Lieut. J.R. Dickinson, executive officer, William D. Hempstead, Paymaster, Henry

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

S. Heath, Master's Mate. Other officers I did not see till after the ship went in commission. The "Fernandina" formerly the "Florida" was brought over to the yard on the 7th of Nov. After which she received her battery, six 32 pounders of 42 hundred weight, and stores etc. She had been promised heavier guns as also a Parrott gun for the Forecastle deck. Her hull is 16 ½ inches solid oak, in thickness. She is said to be about 2 and ½ years old and was built in Philadelphia. I hoped to have a larger vessel and thought I was sure of the steamer De Soto at one time. We went into commission on the sixteenth of Nov. As we received less than 24 hours notice of our going into commission, Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Hempstead had not their uniforms on. Capt. Browne and the Dr. were the only ones fortunate enough to have their blue and bright on that occasion. I felt rather silly, strutting around for the first time in my life with a sword hung at my side. Capt. B. had some lady friends there. We received sixty five men from the receiving ship North Carolina. Capt. Almy came to put us in commission in place of Com. Paulding. The muster roll was presented and Capt. A. said: "Capt. Browne, your ship is in commission." Capt. B. attempted a short reply, but not succeeding very well, Capt. A. said: "Capt. B. can fight better than talk." So we were in commission. My steward, Russel D. Adams, was permitted to be off but I slept onboard. The next day was Sunday. In the absence of officers the Dr. was requested to stand watch a part of the day. The cook brought up the men's dinner for me to taste and pronounce upon before it was dealt out. I then found out that such was the duty of the officer of deck. The cook laughed to himself and some of the old "man-of-war's men" saw at once that I was green. I wanted to go and hear Beecher in the morning but could not; so I decided to go in the evening. In the evening I found he had changed with someone else and after waiting an hour went to the ship in disgust. On entering the yard the sentinel demanded the "password." I had not got it from the Capt. – he was absent – but the corporal let me in on finding out my name and name of the bark

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

and that I knew what the password for the evening before. The weather was clear and cold. Everything was new to me, and I had not shrewdness enough to conceal the fact. On Monday afternoon at 5 o'clock we were towed by a tug boat around to North River, opposite the battery. The men on board of the North Carolina manned her rigging and gave us three hearty cheers as we moved out the Navy Yard. And Capt. B. ordered our men to return the compliment. There was one man sick already and I thought him playing sick at first. But he refused his food and grog. Upon closer examination I call it acute bronchitis and decided upon the request of the Capt. to send him to the Hospital. He had somewhat of the look of a Typhoid fever patient. There was so much noise on board I found it very difficult to make an examination. I saw J.C. Robinson, another of the Master's Mates today for the first time; and I think Robert Rhods also the other Master's Mate.

Tuesday Nov. 19, 1861. Acting Master Samuel B. Clarke reported for duty today. The "De Soto" steamed out of the harbour today. I wished myself on board her.

Wednesday Nov. 20. Clear and cold weather. Boat sent to yard and to shore often for necessaries. Sent my sick patient John Smith to the hospital. A French Frigate came in and anchored above us in North river. She was a fine looking steam ship. Soon she fired a salute of 21 guns, which was answered by the battery on Governer's Island. We took more Ward Room stores.

Nov. 21. Weather clear. Ther. 33°.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Nov. 22. Ther. 53°. Clear weather. Another French Frigate came in and anchored near the other. Fires all put out and powder taken onboard. The Bienville came from the yard and anchored off the battery. Acting Master John M. Skillings reported for duty today.

Sat. Nov. 23. 1861. Rainy day. Steamer Bienville(?) went away today. Many of the men are troubled with coughs and colds. Ship is washed down every morning early and remains wet for some time. I suggested postponing the holystoning and washing till a later hour when the decks would dry sooner. But learned that it was the custom to do such, cold or hot, early in the morning. The date of this conversation I have forgotten. We were delayed there much beyond our expectation in consequence of a Mr. Harris, Act. Master, failing to report in season; also we found a deficiency of clothing and other things.

Sunday Nov. 24, 1861. At a late hour last night I volunteered to act as Chaplain. Capt. Browne was glad of the suggestion and said he once belonged to the church himself; but was now a backslider. In two hours I had roughed out a short appeal which was afterwards called a sermon. We had quarters this morning and I was ready to read my essay but we had no "church". A U.S. Sloop of war Vandalia passed up to the Navy Yard. Ther. 36°. Clear weather.

Nov. 25th. Working day for all hands. Clear weather. Ther. 34°.

Nov. 26th. G.W. Adams fell from gallows upon the crossbar of the after hatch, injuring him so severely that I in great haste made out his Hospital ticket and sent him to the Hospital. I went to the Navy Yard for the last time till we should be in port again. Weather clear. Ther. 36°.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Nov. 27. Pilot came on board, and we start for Sandy Hook at 8.30 A.M. This was all new to me, and I had many questions to ask. We passed Ft. Hamilton and Ft. Scott (?) at the Narrows. The weather fine and we all seemed to enjoyed it much. We came to anchor in 5 fath. of water, Sandy Hook bearing E. by S. 2 miles. All hands busy in getting ship ready for sea. Capt. Britain, the pilot remains on board all night. Men were stationed at their guns this afternoon. I gave up my bed to the Pilot and I slept on the floor. This is my first day out and I enjoy it.

Nov. 28. At 5.30 A.M. weighed anchor and started for Hampton Roads. Direction South, Ther. 47°. dist. per log 77 miles. Lat. observed 40°. Observations at noon. The pilot left at 7.20 A.M. in a Pilot Boat. Our course was S x S by E etc. Cloudy weather a part of the time. Men at work on chafing gear. There was some seasickness seen today, I think I was sick but am not sure whether I was sick on 28th or 29th.

29th Nov. It is now a month since I first reported to Com. Paulding. I saw many new things during this time; and exposed my ignorance by asking many foolish questions. The day commenced with a strong wind. Soon there were squalls and the sea began to get rough. I was sick as a man who had taken a dose of Ipecac and could not vomit enough to suit him. I thought I should throw up my toenails. Capt. Browne, the Paymaster Mr. Hempstead and others were sick. So I was not alone. Capt. B. said the bark was a "lively little bitch". She took on water in great quantities, and leaked through the dead lights, bulls eyes etc. Dist. 143 m. Lat. 38, Long 74. Course W. then SE etc.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Nov. 30. Rougher than yesterday. I found it difficult to hold on anywhere. You have not got your “sea-legs” yet Dr. was the remark often made to me. As for the poor landmen of the crew, they were lying around on the berth deck which was floating them in water almost. Water came in through the dead lights, down hatches etc. Distance for log is 91 miles, and this with storm sails mostly-the others were furled. Course S.S.E. at 4 A.M. wore ship C.W.N.W. at 10 A.M. wore ship C.S.W. etc. during the day. I kept my bed most of the time. At one time there was a cry “Boy’s leg broke, Dr.” I turned out, had him carried to the “sick bay”. “Only out, Sir” said one. Thank fortune it was neither. I could not eat, yet they said, you must eat Dr. They told me that it was “no touch” to what I should see, but I observed that when they spoke to each other they called a “gale”. Weather was more mild at midnight—set the courses.

Dec. 1. Sunday. I think this was the day I read an essay written one Sat. night in N.Y. harbour – not sure. The officers patted me on the back and said “Good thing that, Dr.” I was not so well pleased with it. Course W. by S. & W. by N. At 9 A.M. sail seen, bound E. At 10 o’clock beat to quarters for exercise. Saw another sail – squared yards and stood away for her – but gave up the chase. We get disgusted with the slowness of our bark. Ther. 51°. Obs. Lat. 37°, Long 73°. Begin to get over my seasickness in some measure.

Dec. 2. C.N.W. by N. & W. by N. etc. We arrived at Hampton Roads and let go anchor at 12.30 P.M. At 7 A.M. spoke brig “Julia Parker” bound for N.Y. At 9.30 A.M. Smith’s Island light bore W. by N. Several sails in sight. Steamer James Adyer steamed up and anchored. We are under the guns of Ft. Monroe and of the Flag ship “Minnesota,” Com. Goldsborough. On one side is the famous Rip Raps – beyond is Sewells Point. This is on historic waters and it gives me

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

pleasure to look around. The fort is more extensive than I had imagined. We went to quarters, after which Capt. B. went on board the flag ship and Com. G. scolded him for not coming immediately—five minutes were enough he said, for B. to report in. He sent Capt. B. back to get his instructions from Com. Paulding. He seems to be a gruff old fellow and I should judge not much of a gentleman – especially toward volunteer officers. Ther. 35°. Strong wind. Our Bark rolls very much while the two frigates here are quite still. The Roanoke hailed us as we passed her – she had lowered away a boat to board us, but when we made our number, 249, the boat was recalled. As we came by the stern of the flag ship we were ordered to drop anchor and report.

Dec. 3. Ther. 39°. Cloudy, some rain. Capt. & I went on shore in the afternoon and returned at sundown. We got some letters, saw some large guns etc. Capt. B. saw an acquaintance, Quarter Master Noyes of N.Y. I went to a store and bought a cap etc. We visited the Floyd and Union guns on the shore by the fort. The “Floyd” is 15 in and weighs 49,990 lbs – if my memory serves me – while the “Union” gun – 12 in – rifled – loaded and pointed on Sewells Point – weighs near 52,000 lbs. The “Floyd” is not mounted. I took a specimen of the “sacred soil” and enclosed some of it when I wrote home. All hands were employed in setting up rigging and fitting the ship for sea.

Dec. 4. Clear weather Ther. 30°. Capt. went on board the flag ship and on shore. I do not remember what I was about. In the evening Lieut. Dickinson, Purser Hempstead and I went on board the flag ship. I found the Fleet Surgeon, Dr. Dillard, busily engaged in playing chess with the Chaplain. He seemed to be a very pleasant old man. He answered my queries and wished me success. He spoke of his faith in “vis medicatrix naturae” [guiding principle of Hippocratic

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

medicine that organisms contain “healing powers of nature”]. He said he had many requisitions for medicines that he thought unnecessary. We naturally compared our little bark with the frigate. Perhaps we take as much comfort here as we should there.

Dec. 5. Leave Hampton Roads for Wilmington N.C. to report to Capt. Glisson of the steamer “Mt. Vernon.” Com. Goldsborough orders were to be off early in the morning. At 8 A.M. he sent another order to “proceed at once to sea.” We had a fine day for a start. At noon Cape Henry bore S.W. by W. dist 3 miles. We heard firing in the direction of Newport News. At 5 P.M. fell in with a large ship that refused to show colors. Fired a gun and brought him to. He proved to be from Bremen, last from Liverpool & Baltimore. His colors went up very quick when he heard the gun. Poor fellow he need not have been so frightened if he had shown his colors. Exercised at the guns today. Charles Burton, sea. has “phlegmasia dolens” [deep vein thrombosis] in right leg. He is likewise scrofulous [tuberculous infection of lymph nodes in the neck]. On Sick List. C.S.S.E etc E. by S. Fine evening.

Dec. 6. 1861. Fine day – gentle wind forenoon – died away to a calm at night. Saw a sail at 11 A.M. Fired a gun at 4 P.M. and brought her to, Dickinson and the purser with 6 men in the 3^d Cutter boarded her and found her to be the sch. Peerless from Baltimore to Fort Pierce. The sch. thought us “privateers’ and were much frightened. There is a great dread of privateers these times. C.E. by S. & S. by W.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Dec 7. Course S.S.W., SW. by W. etc. Ther. 63° to 72°. Chased a schooner nearly all day – gave up the chase. Saw a steamer at noon having a great number of men on board – probably going to Port Royal. Not much wind. Lat. 36° Long. 74°. Dist. by log 37 miles. Pleasant weather.

Dec. 8, 1861. Sunday. Course S.W. Dist. 75 mi. Lat. 30°, Long. 74°. Ther. 67°. Good weather. At light one ship and 3 schooners in site. Stood away to speak them and at 7.45 spoke brig “Time” from N.S. Found all right, though she showed no colors. She was boarded by Mr. Dickinson & the Purser, Mr. Hempstead. Soon there were 10 sail in sight, and we wished for a steamer, for we thought some of them might be prizes, but the fact was we were in the road from N.Y. and other northern ports to the West Indies. The gulf water was dark and warm. I used to set upon the poop and enjoy the sight of waves, sails, porpoises & sharks. At 9.50 we brought to the Brig J.W. Allen, from Portorico [Puerto Rico] to N.Y. by firing a gun. It was not a little amusing to see how quickly they put up colors when compelled to do so. We spoke several vessels during the day all of which served to give excitement. What time church exercise was I do not remember. Log says we were at quarters at 4 P.M.

Dec. 9. C.S.W. Dist. 66. Lat. 75. Long. 35. Air 70°. Water 74°. Much of this day was spent in gun exercise and furling sails. There 38 landsmen in the crew, besides some of the ordinary seamen and able seamen are not better than landsmen and the officers get out of patience with them. There are some fine men among them. At midnight spoke the schooner Messenger from Rochelle France to N.Y. The night was bright and clear. I see nothing in the log worth copying.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Dec. 10. C.W. by S. Dist 143 m. Lat. $34\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Long. $75\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Ther. Air 65° . Water 72° clear. We have to contend against a strong current. Log says saw a steamer, spoke Brig and heard many firing West. I have no recollection of either or of anything else worthy of remark.

Dec. 11. C.S.by W. 61 m. Lat. 34° , Long. $75\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Ther. air 68° , Water 75° . Brought to a Brig bound from Meatanzas [Cuba] to Portland by tossing a shot out in the water near him. More practice today. Dead lights let in great quantities of water.

Dec. 12. C.W. by S. & S.E. D. 189 m. Lat. $33\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, Long. 78° . Air 68° to 40° , Water 70° - 58° . Here we are on the side of the Gulf Stream. There is sometimes dark indigo blue water then the color changes a few shades and the breezes likewise change from warm to cool and bracing. Land seen at 5.30 P.M. 1 point on starboard bow. There was some anxiety as to what land.

Dec. 13. C. various. Dist. 105 m. Lat. $33\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$, Long. $78\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$. Air 57° ., Water 55° . Clear. It seemed that we had shot by our place of destination and misled by currents so were too far to the south, so we tacked off and on up the shore to find Capt. Glisson. The only thing worth speaking of today is the bombardment of a rebel encampment at New River Inlet. In the evening as we were going up the coast we saw a great number of lights on the shore. Passed them once and then Capt. B. thought it his duty to find out what the lights were – whether of friend or foe. So we went back within $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of them and burned signals preparatory to communicate with them if friends. They made no reply – so we concluded to give them a few broad sides and draw their fire if they had guns there. We gave them 8 rounds from starboard battery, wore ship and delivered a round from the port battery. By this time the lights were nearly all out and the men

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

were scattering in all directions upon the shore. We felt ashamed to fire any more upon them who could make no response and went on our way. We have since learned that our shots were most excellent though no one was killed. The contrabands say that it took two hours to dig one man out we buried him so deep. I was obliged to remain at my quarters in the Sick Bay and could not see them scatter. I had some fear they were our friends who had made a landing there. This seemed new work to me. There was much enthusiasm displayed, both by men and officers. It made good exercise for the men if nothing more. We proceeded slowly on our course up the shore.

Dec. 14. After our bombarding last night we stood off the shore – for fear of running on Frying Pan Shoals as we were going N.W. In the morning land was in sight. We found 12 fathoms of water. At 9 called to quarters and exercised for an hour or two. At 11:15 the steamer “Connecticut” came in and spoke us as she passed, and proceeded on to the Mt. Vernon, that was anchored near the southern outlet of the river, Cape Fear River. She left for north ere we got in. The Mt. Vernon made her numbers and we made ours in return. At 4.55 we let go anchor near the Mr. Vernon and Capt. Browne reported at once to Capt. Glisson; who came on board and examined the bark. He was a very gentlemanly man. Men were called to quarters and he seemed pleased with their behavior. Cape Fear light was in sight and bald head also. Ft. Caswell was about 4 miles from our anchorage. “Connecticut” us as he went in.

Dec. 15. Sent a boat to Mt. Vernon with letters, etc. I went and had a short chat with the Dr. whose name I have not. Capt. G. sends us around the shoals to New Inlet, in place of the “Amanda,” which needed to go to Hampton Roads for water. We started at 9.30 and soon met

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

the Bark "Amanda" coming to take the mail, etc. of Mt. Vernon before proceeding to H.R. C.E.S.E., etc., and up to noon we had made only 15 miles, air 49°, water 52° - 73° at midnight. Brought to and boarded one of the stone fleet, Bark "Bogota" from N.Y. to Port Royal. We seemed to have no Sunday in the Navy when the men need exercise and the ship needs work to make her seaworthy.

Dec. 16. Monday. Today we sail S.S.E. till we can turn the "tail" of the shoals, then W.N.W. The water is 64°, Air 58°. Clear. Today we spoke the "Amanda". Dist. per log at noon 163 m. Lat. 33° 19', Long. 77° 44'. I have 5 men now on the list. At noon two sail in sight. At 2 P.M. boarded the sloop "Havelock" in charge of a midshipman Tyson, she being the prize of "Jamestown" and bound to Philadelphia. After this we chased a suspicious looking schooner. She kept away and we got within 2 ½ miles and fired blank charge, to which she hoisted American colors. We fired another charge and then a shot which fell short. Lowered away the 3d Cutter. Lieut. D. and Hempstead boarded her the crew being well armed. After long pulling they came up to her and she tried to run over them, they got out of the way and soon boarded her. She proved to be a schooner loaded with coal for Port Royal. And the Capt. thought us privateers – hence she kept away. We now proceeded to our station. We hoped that we should have a prize.

Dec. 17. C.N.E. by E. & W. by S., etc. Dist. 131 m. Lat. 34°, Long. 77°+. Air 55°, water 66° - 55°. Today we are once in sight of Federal point lighthouse. This is our station. We fished with "good luck". Fish are all of one kind called by some a kind of perch – bass – rockfish, etc. We get all we want. At night stood off the shore and sounded every 15 min. in 11-12 fath of water. There was a calm much of the time. At 5 o'clock in the morning heard 2 heavy guns S.E. I was

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

glad to get upon our station; though I confess I did not like the look of the rebel fort with the red flag over it. We saw men upon the shore. I have no doubt they would give us a warm reception, should we try to land. The fort is by the side of the lighthouse. We are pleased to know that we are on good fishing ground. I asked for a "fishing tackle" and they told me to ask Mr. Skillings. I asked him for it and then I found out that the machine for raising the anchor upon the bows is called "fish tackle" so I got the joke upon me.

Dec. 18. Not much wind and we beat around a little. Air and water 54°. We ran in within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the battery and expected them to fire upon us but for some reason or other they reserved their fire. Soldiers manned their guns and others came down to the shore. Saw tents near the fort. There were flags all along the shore at intervals of 3 or 4 miles. We heard heavy guns off the shoals. There are two lighthouses to be seen from our deck.

Dec. 19. Dist. 66 miles. We beat on and off. Come to anchor at 2.30 in a calm. At 4.15 P.M. saw a steamer coming toward us. "All hands to quarters". Visions of the "Sumpter", etc. But the steamer proves to be the "Monticello", Capt. Brain, coming to help us blockade. We are pleased. The company of a steamer is very acceptable. Capt. Brown goes onboard the "Monte" and soon Capt. Brain returns with him.

Dec. 20. When I went on deck the first thing I looked for was the little "Monte". She was gone. I found that she left at 5 o'clock A.M. (She went around the shoals to report to Capt. Glisson). We had but little wind when we saw a sloop going down the shore as we supposed to "run" the blockade. Spread all sail and made for her as fast as we could. We saw two steamers and some

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

schooners also – but they all proved to be inside the bar. We were very sorry the steamer had left us; but when we got near the shore we saw that they were all inside the bar. We saw other batteries on the shore, and as we tacked ship and stood off shore one of them threw two shots after us, but they fell short and we took no notice of them. We have long exercise at guns today. The men handle them very well. There is exercise also with the “single sticks”. In the afternoon we thought we had got a prize. We brought her to after firing a gun and having chased her for some time. It proved to be a Bark loaded with stone for Port Royal. Stood in again.

Dec. 21. At 1 o'clock this morning we call to quarters. A little, long, dark looking, steamer was acting very curiously around, occasionally flashing a light. Visions of the “Sumter, etc.” It proved to be the “Monticello” returning from the south side of the shoals. Capt. Browne had neglected to inform his officers that the signal arranged between him and Capt. Brain was a “flashed light”. She came near as soon as we answered her signals. We soon had a rough sea that continued for a day or two.

Dec. 22. Ran out and exchanged signals with an “American ship.” “Heavy sea”, “sharp lightening, etc.”

Dec. 23. “Rough sea” “Shipped much water”, etc. Dist. per log 77m. Nothing of note occurred.

Dec. 24. Dist. 90m. Lat. $33\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$, Long. $76\frac{3}{4}^{\circ}$. Course various. The current seems [to] carry us away N.E. Some of the ord. sea. were found ignorant of the roaps and disrated and some of the

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

landsmen rated. But as this was not in exact accordance with the law they were afterwards tried by Court Martial, and then disgraced. One or two sails reported.

Dec. 25. Christmas. C. various, Dist. 66 m. Lat. 33° 45'. Long. 77° 30'. Calm, nearly. Air 52°, Water 70° showing that we are in the Gulf stream. At 7.30 the schooner Wm. H. Northrup was boarded and found to be a prize. She hailed from Nassau N.P. but really from Wilmington N.C. where he wanted to return. Had there been any wind he would have left us very quick but as fortune would have it he could not get away from us. The schooner was once used as a pilot boat, and was a good sailor. She had run the Blockade twice from Wilmington to W.I. There were only 3 men besides the rough looking captain. He came on board, and we all pitied him – he looked so down cast. He said we had drawn down the British flag and if he was a prize any ship with that flag was one. One of the crew John Westendorf, a German, volunteered in the service of U.S. and proves to be a good man. The other two preferred to go to N.Y. in irons. She was loaded with coffee and medicines – to the amount of \$1100 only. She had some fruit, etc., also. Master's Mate Robert Rhoades was selected as "prize master". He was furnished with 5 men. We were sorry to loose him, he was so fine a fellow. We expected him back again; but he did not return, as he was made "Acting Master" on his arrival to N.Y. and appointed Ex. Of. of steamer "Clifton." The men were all armed and he was ordered to proceed to N.Y. – where he arrived in safety in 12 days of rough, cold weather. We have not yet heard the amount of our prize money – though we hear she has been sold, by the Prize Commissioners. The crew of the schooner say he tore up the U.S. flag and there were pieces of bunting lying around. This C.S.A. flag was thrown overboard it was supposed. This was our Christmas present – small to be sure. We saw other sails and chased some of them, but night separated us from them. We performed the operation of

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

“splicing the main brace” in the afternoon, which consists in simply giving the crew an extra tott of whiskey. I took occasion to send quite a lot of letters by friend Rhoades, who, by the way, is an honest Rhode Island boy. This is our only prize— (Feb. 19) so far and we fear the only we shall claim.

Dec. 26. Lat. 33°, 24'. Long. 77°, 43'. Air 60° - 68°, water 70° - 73°. We chased two schooners a few hours to day, but gave it up as night would separate us. We spoke an Am Brig, for Port Royal. We are all assured that many of the sail we see are vessels going with stone and coal, etc., for Port Royal. Saw steamer “Empire” bound North in P.M. Spoke a schooner from Phil. To P. Royal – with coal. But little wind.

Dec. 27. Dist 99. C.N. by W., etc. Lat. 34° 23'. Long. 77° 26'. We are near Cape Look Out. And a little black steamer comes out and very impudently orders us back to our station, with threats of reporting Capt. Brown. We all felt mad at the fellow – and concluded he was provoked at our getting a prize – as he said he knew all about it. We run down the shore, seeing men at times on the beach – and cast anchor on our station at 6 P.M. We spoke the Monticello, in pursuit of a schooner, which did not prove to be a prize. She came in and anchored near us at night. I went on board her with Lieut. Dickinson in the evening and made the acquaintance of Dr. Potter, who hails from N.H. We burn a light all night and M. patrols all around to guard the entrance of the harbour – occasionally running near and making a signal to be sure who we are. We are about 3 miles from Federal Point light and 7 from Bald-head light.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Dec. 28. At anchor all day. Men at work upon ship. I caught a pail full of fish in less than ½ hour this morning. I have no recollection of what I was meditating upon.

Dec. 29. At anchor all day. Sunday. Capt. Brain of Monticello and Dr. P. and some others came on board, to church. The weather was rather chilly. Capt. Brown to day introduced the Episcopal service – himself officiating. The service was new to me and seemed rather long. After this the Capt. invited me to read my “essay” – but I told him I thought it best to postpone it, which was agreed to – and it has remained postponed these seven weeks – likewise any sunday service— Capt. Brown and Paymaster, Mr. Hempstead and the Dr. went onboard the Monticello. She steamed off on the shoals and fired her big gun – 10 inch – to bring a steamer to. The steamer proved to be a U.S. steamer and in coming to got aground. She soon got off however and after exchanging signals with Capt. Brain went on her way. She fired several guns in token of distress. She was crossing the tail of the shoals. We came back and remained onboard till 10 P.M. We had a good visit, and a good pleasure excursion. I liked the officers very much. Capt. Brain messes with his officers and seems to be a very fine man. I had a good chat with the Dr.

Dec. 30. At anchor. Air 47°, water 54°. Good weather. Saw a sail, signalized the “Monticello” who went out and spoke her – she proved to be the “Amanda” with our mail, etc. – going around to relieve the Mt. Vernon.

Dec. 31. At anchor. At 3:30 this morning two cannon were heard. “Monticello” stood away for a steamer, then came in and commenced throwing shell at a rebel steamer or two in the Inlet. The Rebel gradually hauled off and was not hit. The Monticello could not get near enough to her.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Capt. B. and Dr. and H. went on board the “M” and went off fishing. We had no very good luck. The Contrabands say they have gone off in deeper water – 10 fathoms. So ends the year. Since I left Boston I have seen many things worthy of note; but not noting them at the time it is impossible to do so now with accuracy. I make this skeleton from the Log and memory.

1862

Jan. 1. At anchor. Monticello patrolled last night – comes up astern and makes fast to our bark. Spliced the main brace. Each officer was carried around deck on a chair, covered with our ensign. Capt. made a short speech to the men. All seem to be in good cheer. We compared the condition of the country then and one year before, and hope that it ere another year all would be well again. A large fire was seen – it might have been the light of the light-ship burned by the crew of the Mt. Vernon under the guns of the Ft. Caswell. Air 52°, water 59°.

Jan. 2. At anchor. Air 58° - 41°, water 54°. Clear. We received two “contrabands” from the “Monticello,” who had come off to her from the shore, and we shipped them as boys, and made cooks of them, for the messes. Called to quarters for firing at target. The Dr. came very near getting his ribs knocked in. The covering of the fore hatch was placed over while the trap under it leading to the fore hole was left open; and the “Medico” was running in the dark across and pitched in untill his ribs came in contact with the crossbar of the hatch, and there lay till the yeoman and others pulled him out. He was then unable to stand having his “breath knocked out of him”. The firing at target was very good. Dist. 950 yards. Fired 21 rounds, four of them being shells one of which exploded as soon as discharged from the gun. The firing was very good –

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

most of the shot would have [hit] the hull of a ship. The Rebels man their guns at hearing us fire. Contrabands say they have a regiment of N.C. Volunteers there. We left the target there, and as we had to get under weigh in the night and did not return for some time we did not get it on returning, and thus lost the studding sail hallyards. "Monti" saw "them going to sea".

Jan.3. Got under weigh at 2 o'clock A.M. and stood out to sea E.N.E., & N. by E., etc. At 11 A.M. exchanged signal with the "Monticello" who ran out to see where or who we were. Ran in and spoke her in afternoon, then stood out again. The sky was cloudy most of the day. Air 46°. Water 56°. We did not like to drag anchor when the wind was trying so hard to blow us under that "red flag."

Jan. 4. We beat around here and there today. At 5 P.M. there was nearly a calm and we saw just at dusk a sail ahead. Dickinson went away in the third Cutter to board her – and not returning another boat was sent after him. We mean time drawing near heard the anchor go and supposing the "Monticello" near, which proved true, and Mr. D. had been having a good talk with Capt. Brain while we were in suspense as to where he was. Weather cloudy all day. Air 55°. Water 58°. We let go anchor in 8 fathoms of water – near the dear little "Monticello".

Jan. 5. The wind sprang up fresh as Midnight; and we got under weigh at 1 A.M. and stood off. At 8 A.M. we had 13 fathoms of water; at 4 P.M. 20 fathoms and at 6 P.M. no bottom. Air 45° - 60. Water 58° - 72 - showing that we are in the Gulf Stream. Cloudy all day. Got no observations; Lat. D.R. 33° 39'. Long. D.R. 77° 33'. Sea rough – bark ships much water. Wet and dismal day.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Jan. 6. Squally & cloudy most of the day. Got observations which placed the ship in Lat. 33° 58 N. and Long. 77, 2'. Dead Reckoning gave Lat. 34° 18 and Long. 77° 16'. Course W. by W.N.W. Air 60 to 46. Water 72° - 60°. We run into 13 ½ fathoms, etc.

Jan. 7. At 6.45 A.M. saw land on both bows, also a number of red flags at half mast. It seems that the rebels have a system of communication by which they inform each other when a vessel approaches the shore. We came to anchor in 6 fathoms of water at 10 A.M. We had made since yesterday noon 116 miles per log. At 3 P.M. saw Monticello coming into us. She patrolled as usual in the evening. We had not water enough to make it profitable to fish – for they have gone into deeper water – 10-12 fathoms. My memory does not serve me as to anything worthy of note.

Jan. 8. At anchor. Air 40° - 50°. Water 48° - 58°. I am at a loss to know why the temperature of the water should change thus – the wind remaining the same. The tides do not usually make so much difference. The crew are busy scraping the ship outside. The Monticello has not made her appearance today.

Jan. 9. At anchor. Air 50° - 57°. Water 58. Today there seems to have been no change in the temperature “per marking of log”. Wind South – clear weather. At 9 P.M. we saw the “Monticello” coming in with the Bark “Amanda” in tow. The “Amanda” let go anchor not far off. The “M” came up astern and Capt. Brain requested Capt. Brown to go on board; which he did; on returning brought off another “contraband”. We are glad to have the company of the M again.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Jan. 10. At Anchor. Air 58°. Water 58°. Weather clear. The “M” gave us 500 water, took ours and the Amanda’s mail and went around to the other outlet to relieve the “Mt. Vernon” – leaving the “A” in her place with us. We are sorry of our exchange – although we know nothing to the detriment of the “Amanda”. One of her boats came along side – with the Purser and a Master’s Mate. They were unfortunate in swamping their boat. Their purser is a New Yorker like ours, but does not seem to understand his business so well. It seems he got married but an hour or so before he left N.Y. so he has yet in store the first taste of domestic bliss, or woe. What I found to do I do not now remember. One thing I did though, that caused some commotion in the Cabin; viz to enter a written protest against wetting the berth deck while holystoning it. The Capt. thought me meddling with that I had nothing to do with. I had not many on my sick list to be sure; but there were many complaining of rheumatic pains, etc. The deck had not been dry for a long time.

Jan. 11. At anchor. The berth deck was wet holystoned – as also the spar deck. Air 52°. Water 58°. Today the Court Martial was held and sundry persons were tried for various offenses – such as sleeping in their watch, etc., - and punished in diverse manners – as “extra police duties for two weeks,” “dis-rating”, etc. Weather foggy. No fish here.

Jan. 12. Sunday. Air 52° - 60°. Water 58°. Hazy, cloudy, etc. Mustered on the berth deck today. Articles of War read – report of Court Martial – church postponed. At 1:40 P.M. signaled a steamer which proved to be the “Mt. Vernon” bound to Hampton Roads. Capt. Glisson requested Capt. B to come on board. Capt. of “Amanda” Goodwin – also went on board. The rebels

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

manned their guns in great haste – supposing us to be about to attack them. The Mt. Vernon spread her canvas as she started off. We often look upon a steamer and long to exchange our old “wash tub” for one. Our petty officers visited the Amanda and returned much pleased with their home as compared with the Amanda. She is dirty they say. Today John Westendorf was attacked with pleuritis, of which he was cured in 10 days without mercury or bleeding.

Jan. 13. At anchor till 3 P.M. when we and the Amanda got under weigh. The wind sprang up in haste and we were in haste to get away. The Amanda lost her anchor and 30 fathoms of chain. We expected her to out sail us from what the officers said. But she was out-sailed and, I think out-sailored. We both stood out to sea and soon she was lost in darkness and fog. Wind E.N.E. and in sail S.E., etc. The sea soon became rough and we ship much water – although our little craft is so quick she succeeded in getting out of the way of most of the seas. Water 58° to 70°. Air 58° - 63°. Our Barometer does not seem to be of much use – it is no prophet nor profit. We got into the G. Stream ere midnight as the temperature of the water indicates.

Jan. 14. We had a very rough night of it. One would think a school of whales had attacked us and were bumping us on all sides. We were becalmed once but the waves ran mountain high, sweeping over the hause with fury. I could not sleep a minute. Such a bumping I do not wish to see again very soon. Sea high all day. Rain poured down sometimes in torrents. We had a very disagreeable day – this is all I can say. At noon Dist. per log 91m. Lat. D.R. 32° 46'. Long. D.R. 77° 15'. Air 67°. Water 72°. We were knocking around in the Gulf Stream and that is all we know. The current carries us along we know not how fast.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Jan. 15. Sea not so rough as yesterday. Got observations that placed us at noon in Lat. $32^{\circ} 58'$. Long. $77^{\circ} 43'$. Dist. per log 75m. Squally, rainy, etc. Saw a steamer bearing down to us with no flag set. We thought her the "Baltic" as she proved to be. We sent a shot ahead of her to make her put up her colors or heave too she did neither. Sent a shot across her bow – she did both. Dickinson boarded her – found she had a load of soldiers, etc., for Port Royal – left N.Y. two days ago. We got some late papers which were very agreeable. I have seen from the papers since got that the officers did not like to be thus brought to by a little Bark. If she had shown her colors all would have been right – only we should not have got late papers. Soon the "Empire City" came along – on the same errand as the Baltic. She gave us three cheers and our men manned the rigging and returned them. Capt. Browne formerly commanded her. Air $72^{\circ} - 64^{\circ}$. Water $71^{\circ} - 64^{\circ}$.

Jan. 16. D.R. placed us at noon in Lat. $33^{\circ} 31'$ and Long. $77^{\circ} 39'$. Dist. 71 miles. C. various. Air $60^{\circ} - 50^{\circ}$. Water $64^{\circ} - 60^{\circ}$. Spoke the "Amanda" after exchanging signals with her. Dickinson boarded her. Got in sight of land, at 2.30 P.M. and stood down the shore to our station. Some rain today.

Jan. 17. Air $57^{\circ} - 63^{\circ}$, Water $60^{\circ} - 56^{\circ}$. D.R. placed us where we were yesterday. Rain and Clouds. Dist. per log 90 m. from Federal Point, 63 m. This is as I find it in the log. It does not seem to me that we are 20 miles away from our station. I can think of nothing worth recording.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Jan. 18. Foggy. C. W.N.W. by S.W., etc. Dist. 72 m. D.R. placed us as noon in Lat. 33° 59'. Long. 77° 13'. Air 53° - 50°. Water 56° - 48°. Made land at 3 P.M. Hove to – stood off and on, etc.

Jan. 19. Sunday. Foggy most of the time. Air 53°. Water 45°. Cleared up in afternoon – saw Federal Point light. Came to anchor at 2 P.M. F. Point bearing W.S.W. 6 miles.

Jan. 20. Got under weigh at 5 A.M. and stood off and on till 1 P.M. making 42 miles and let go anchor in 9 ½ fathoms of water – Federal Pt 4 ½ miles W.N.W. We now hear of firing from the Ft at Fed. Pt. They must have some heavy guns there for their shell burst full 3 miles from the gun on the beach. Some of them came towards us but fell short. They must have got some ammunition while we have been out. The jar of their heavy gun made the glass shake in our windows. I think we found some good fishing here – in 9 ½ fathoms.

Jan. 21. At anchor till 10 P.M. – when we got under weigh and stood E. by S. Air 56°. Water 48°. Fresh breeze.

Jan. 22. Rain, etc. Course E. by S., etc. Dist. at noon 50 m. Air 51° - 57°. Water 45° - 65°. At 11 A.M. F. Pt. 12 miles N.N.W. See the Amanda. Chase a sail or two – can not catch them. Fresh wind at night. Ship much water.

Jan. 23. Rain and squalls. C. E. by S. D 81 m. D.R. Lat. 32° 58'. Long. 76° 30'. Rough sea. Vessel laboring heavily. Worst night of all this. Seas came over the hause with a rush. I could not

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

sleep neither could any in the Ward Room. Air 57° - 68°. Water 65° - 72°. This was a rougher night than that of the 14 inst. If our bark had not been very strong she would have gone to ruins. I felt safe – for I knew not the danger – Waves knocked against us like so many ice bergs. We had not wind enough to enable us to keep her out of the troughs.

Jan. 24. Squally. Obs. put us at noon in Lat. 32° 40'. Long. 77° 35'. Dist. 43 m. Air°. Water 72°. Spoke Brigantine “Geo. Harris” from Meatanzas to N.Y. with sugar; a three-masted schooner “Only Daughter,” from Key West to N.Y. in ballast, and schooner “David Townsend” from Key West to Phil. in ballast. We hoped some of these would prove prizes – and we had much excitement during the day in chasing them. We had every variety of wind – from a calm at midnight to severe squalls during the day.

Jan. 25. Clouds and squalls. Course N. by N. by W., etc. Dist. 82 m. Air 64° - 53°. Water 69° - 62°. Obs. Lat. 33° 1', Long. 77° 12'. At 11 P.M. 16 fathoms of water. Nothing more.

Jan. 26. Sunday. Came to anchor at 7.45 in 9 fath. at our old place. Weather Clear. Air 53° - 40°. Water 62° - 48°. Fired port guns. They had been much under water and had not been fired for a long time. Neither missed fire though. The “Mt. Vernon” hearing our guns sent around the new gun-boat “Chippewa” to see what the matter was. She did not get here until in the night – then her signal light was mistaken for a light on shore and not responded to – so she had to cast anchor and wait till morning when she came up and spoke us.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Jan. 27. At anchor. The “Chippewa” left us at 8 A.M. – Capt. Browne having returned from her. Bark “Amanda” signaled at 10 A.M. She came in and sends a boat to us. Soon she goes off. We are painting, etc. Air 40° - 49°. W. 48°. Cloudy blue sky. Few fish. Nothing else.

Jan. 28. At anchor. Clear blue sky. Air 50°. Water 48°. The “Amanda” came in and anchored. Two of her acting masters came on board and dined with us. Capt. B., the purser and doctor went on board the Amanda in the afternoon. I had a long chat with the “Medico”, who was a married man born in Ireland, educated in Eng. and for some time a practitioner in Brooklyn, N.Y. They offered us plenty of wine but no supper though we stayed longer than we expected, and later than their supper hour. I was glad to get home again, for I did not fancy the looks of a strange ship so well as my own – roll as bad as she may.

Jan. 29. At anchor. Weather clear. Air 48° - 62°. Water 48° - 58°. Painting ship, which improves her looks very much. My memory adds nothing more.

Jan. 30. At Anchor. Clear with strong wind blowing from S.W. Saw a sail in the offing and signaled to the “Amanda” who went out to see who she was. We have not yet – Feb. 27 – found out who she was as the “Amanda” did not return, and we have not yet seen her – and are surprised to hear that she has not been seen since by the Mt. Vernon. We expected to find her here on our return – as we have her mail. The sail proved to be a schooner who beat nearly up to us once and then went off again. We could not see whether or not she was boarded by the Amanda. We still think she was a prize from her singular actions. Our paint was rather green or we should have given her chase. The wind came up hard and we payed out chain and decided to

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

ride it out – and we did very well, though the shank of the anchor was somewhat crooked when we took it up – from the strain it had had. There were 45 fathoms chain out.

Jan. 31. At anchor. Cloudy and rainy. Wind N.E. and stronger than yesterday. We commenced to drag as the chain had been brought short to 30 fathoms. Paid out six fathoms and she brought up. In the afternoon paid out to 60 fathoms and prepared another anchor with 75 fath. of chain. But the port anchor held us through a strong gale without dragging.

Feb. 1, 1862. Cloudy. At anchor until 12.50 when we got underway and started for Hampton Roads – having only 10 days' water onboard. We saw nothing of the *Amanda* today. She may not get back for 2 or 3 days – then I think she will be afraid to anchor here alone. If we had water we would prefer to stay here rather than go north.

Feb. 2. Sunday. I expected to be called on for my essay today – why I was not I cannot say. Dist. 146 m. Lat. by Obs. 34° 17'. Long. 75° 8'. C.E ½ N. Cloudy and squally. Air 48° - 56°. Water 58° - 71° - showing that we are in the gulf stream. Saw a large side wheel steamer – supposed to be the “*Baltic*,” also two sails.

Feb. 3. C.N. by W. Dist. 128 m. Cloudy and squally. At noon went in chase of one of two sails in sight. Fired one gun and it had the effect to cause one of the schrs to show Eng. colors and heave too. We bore down to her and Dickinson boarded her and soon hauled down the Eng. colors as a token that she was a prize. Of course we were highly pleased though we thought it not a slight thing to haul down the Eng. ensign. The Capt. came on board with his papers. He was a N.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Carolinian and the schr. hailed from Beaufort, N.C. The crew were Eng. He had once been taken as a prize and his papers detained in Philadelphia – the owner paying down \$1,200 her appraised value. He had an Eng. consul’s certificate to the effect that his papers were detained. He had also a clearance though no manifesto. Was loaded with pork, flour & butter. Name was Fanny Lee – bound to Kingston Ja. Now what was to be done? It was decided to let him go, and he was sent on board his schr. Dickinson remained onboard all this time and when he returned the boat’s crew said that the crew of the schr were suspicious that the Capt. intended to run the blockade, and that he had salt in the hold. A gun was fired and D. went back to him and got permission to examine. He found nothing that would condemn her and came back. This was a queer case. Many thought she should have been seized – some and the Dr. among them, thought that she could not be condemned if taken into port. But we might as well have taken her after we had hauled down her colors, and I wish we had taken her to Hampton Roads. The Capt. had a fine looking woman he called his wife on board. He was so cool and calm he must have been a great rogue or an honest man. The pulling down of the Eng. Colors caused the commanding officer at Hampton Roads, Capt. Marston – to write to Washington at once – sending Capt. Brown’s account of the affair. I hope no trouble will come from it. The Capt. of schr. may not report the insult to the Eng. flag. I should have stated that while D. was on board the schooner Fanny Lee, we brought to schr. J. Maxwell two days from Phil. bound to Meatanzas with shock, etc. We did not board him but took his word for it. He might have been a rogue after all. We were very much “down in the mouth” when we found no prize of either.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Feb. 4. Dist. 76 m. Lat. 36° 28'. Long. 74° 22'. Air 45° - 40°. Water 45°. Cloudy and squally. Exchanged colors with the U.S. transport steamer "Atlantic". Sounded in 17 fathoms of water. Out of the G. Stream as the temperature of the water shows. Nothing more.

Feb. 5. Dist. 124 m. Lat. 36° 30'. Long. 75° 36'. Air 40° - 35°. Water 45° - 35°. Clear. Land in sight on port bow at 6.30 – Cape Henry. Two steamers ahead, and one sail. At 5.30 P.M. saluted a French war steamer with our colors which salute she returned then it being just sunset the colors were hauled down. At midnight made the light at the "tail of the horse shoe". We are glad to be so near Ft. Monroe where we are expecting to get letters from home and hear good news from the war.

Feb. 6. At 2 A.M. were hailed by the steamer "Cambridge" which is the guard boat here. Willoughby lightship W. by N ½ N. 10 m. We came to at 3.30 A.M. in 8 fathoms of water. Here we were until 3.45 P.M. when we got under weigh and tried to warp into the flagship that was in plain sight. We soon got aground near the lightship – and there we thumped and thumped a while and then were still as the tide was running out. Capt. Marston of the Roanoke – which is flagship now while Com. Goldsborough is with the Burnside expedition – sent a boat crew and pilot to assist us. Capt. B. at first told the pilot that he understood his business and did not want a pilot. But upon finding who sent him Capt. B. consented to accept his assistance. We waited till the tide turned and then got out the kedge anchor in the boat and carried it back a little way – let it go and then our crew pulled upon the hawser and so drew us off the bank and we were afloat again.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Feb. 7. Came to anchor near the Fortress at 2 A.M. Clear Weather. (I neglected to say in yesterday's report that we saw the great steamer "Constitution" going out loaded with soldiers as we were beating up yesterday afternoon). At 7 A.M. Capt. Browne goes onboard the "Roanoke." Soon returns with few letters. I was disappointed in not getting more letters. I went on shore a while or at least the log says so.

Feb. 8. I was on shore much of the day – examining prices, etc., as we had many things to purchase for our ward room mess. Capt. & Purser were busy in getting requisitions signed for their stores. I bought some provisions and took along with me. Our steward had got a little liquor somehow and was too tipsy to manage well and Dickinson pitched in and gave him a slapping in the face till his nose bled and till I pulled him off. D. had no right to strike any man on board ship and would lose his commission were the thing reported. Not content with whipping him the poor fellow had to be put in irons till he was sober. I cannot decide which needed the punishment most, the Lieut. or steward. I had got my requisitions for medicines signed by the Fleet Surgeon – Wood – of the "Minnesota" in the morning; had to get the medicines from the "Ben Morgan", hospital ship. One of the officers who went on shore got some liquor and was too boosy to stand out his watch and was confined to his room during our stay at H.R. In the afternoon we got up anchor and went up by the "Brandywine", store ship, where we had to get many of our stores. So ends the day – I am sorry for the officer who was so foolish as to degrade himself in the eyes of all. I was very blue for many reasons. We all got wet in going on board at 2 P.M. as it rained quite hard.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Feb. 9. Sunday. At anchor near the Brandywine. Air 38° - 35°. Articles of War read – muster, etc. No Sunday in time of war – so boats were back and forth – water boat came alongside and gave us some water – not all we needed. A boat came along side with a request that we would move a little as we were in range of the guns from the fort in case the Merrimack tried to run out.

Feb. 10. We move along side of the “Brandywine” to get provisions. D. and Dr. on shore nearly all day to buy provisions for ward room mess. Take them onboard and find 3 men in irons – two for fighting – one for drunkenness.

Feb. 11. I was very fortunate today in getting Burton, who has been on the sick list for 2 months and more, into the H.S. [Hospital Ship] “Ben Morgan”. I made out his Hospital ticket and took it to Dr. Wood of the “Minnesota” for approval, then took my patient to the H.S. There had been a case of small pox there so that I could not get him in before. I had a good chat with Dr.

McCumbre. We dropped along side the “Badger” and got more stores. In afternoon the Capt. and Purser of the Bark “Gemsbock” came on board and remained till 9 P.M. Our Capt. had smiled so many times that he was quite happy by the time they went home. We were called to quarters at 8 P.M. and remained there an hour. Capt. B. wished to show Capt. of “G.” how his men could work the guns. But he showed every one that he had “smiled” very much during the day. He treated us all to oysters till midnight and wine still flowed – though Dr. tasted it not – but eat oysters enough to make up. Memorable occasion! We devoured nearly ½ barrel of the bivalves. “Good night my hearties”.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Feb. 12. At anchor at H.R. Water Boat gives us our fill of water today. We see the exchange of prisoners almost every day. The rebels at Sewell's Point discharge a gun occasionally. Their shots fall far short, say our men. News of the Burnside expedition came every day. We all are pleased at the success. We have seen one steamer loaded with prisoners, of which they say there are nearly 3,000, in all, taken. The papers are very acceptable now-a-days. I hope the rebellion will slump in less than 3 months. I entered today upon the duties of caterer of the Ward Room Mess, a situation to which there are more cares than honors attached.

Feb. 13. Clear. There are three French men-of-war lying here now. One of them made the very modest request to be permitted to go up to Norfolk, which Capt. Marston, of course, refused. What does Johnny Crappeau want here? Expected to go to sea ere this, but there is some delay in getting articles needed for ships use.

Feb. 14. Pilot onboard. We got up anchor and tried to run out but the tide and wind did not favor us so we cast anchor again nearer the Rip Raps. I was on shore again today. Rain in afternoon.

Feb. 15. Rainy. Wind adverse. Purser goes to Flagship for more mail matter, of which there must be some for us somewhere. Paymaster gets letters for other vessels of our station.

Feb. 16. At anchor still. Snowy this morning. I had the pleasure of making one snowball. Cold and chilly. At noon we got under weigh and beat out by the flagship – reporting as we passed – and went down past the Willoughby light ship with the tide in our favor. But the return tide forbad our weathering the Cape below; so we went back to five fathoms and anchored, for the

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

present. The pilot boat came along and saw that we had one of their pilots onboard, but seeing that we could not get out the boat went up to the Fort and returned in time again.

Feb. 17. At anchor in a rainy day. Wind adverse. We all hope the pilot boat will bring us some later papers tomorrow, for we want to hear whether or not Ft. Donaldson [Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River; battle fought 11-16 February 1862] is taken.

Feb. 18. Pilot boat came along at 10 ½ A.M. and we discharged the pilot and filled away. In afternoon we spoke "Wm. Smith" schr. with water for Hatteras. Weather clear. Wind light. We were very anxious to make a quick passage down.

Feb. 19. Cloudy and rainy. At noon we had made only 53 miles. Direction S.E. In afternoon we had head winds and were obliged to beat. Many sails in sight. I think of nothing worth note.

Feb. 20. Lat. 36° 5'. Long. 74° 30'. Blue sky with clouds. Air 54° - 60°. Water 54° - 70° -- showing that we are in the Gulf St. After 11 o'clock A.M. we got a good wind and made nine knots an hour till 5 P.M. Everyone seems pleased at the speed.

Feb. 21. At noon Lat. 34° 24'. Long. 76° 36'. Dist. 197 miles per log. Air 52°. Water 70° - 54°. Fine wind all day. At 11 A.M. saw two sail supposed to be of the blockade squadron. Land seen from aloft. In the evening saw fires upon the shore all along. We know not whether friends or foe, so we burn a signal light which is not answered. We conclude that the rebels signalize by means of fires when a vessel is seen approaching the shore. We thought ourselves near the

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

station and hove to at 10 P.M. So now we see nothing of the “Amanda”. Has she got ashore? The probabilities are that she has feared to come in here since we left. We must go around the island (Smiths) and report to Capt. Glisson of the “Mt. Vernon” and leave her mail.

Feb. 22. Came to anchor at 4 A.M. Rainy, foggy, etc. Weigh anchor at 10 and stand S.E., etc. But it is so foggy we can take no sight nor see land so we do but very little today. Come to anchor in 9 fathoms at 5 P.M. Here we are on the shoals and can neither go ahead with safety nor blockade at our station. Washington’s birthday not celebrated.

Feb. 23. Sunday. Cloudy, etc. “Clear’d off” early and we saw Federal Point 9 miles away. Up anchor and start. No church today. Sail in sight. Keep away – fire a shot and bring her to. Board her. Schr. “Aid”, Gt. Egg Harbor, from Port Royal to Phil. in ballast. The Dr. was permitted to fire the gun – the shot striking the water a long way off. We saw a woman on board – Capt’s wife. No news from Port Royal. There was an auction held onboard today for the sail of old clothes etc. that were not claimed from the “Lucky bag”.

Feb. 24. Blue sky with clouds. We turn the shoals and start in on the south side for Capt. G. Head wind little at that and we come to anchor at Noon. I was busy in assisting to pickle some of our onions and trice up the others under one of the inverted boats. Thermometer broken and I take the responsibility though I am sure I did not touch it when it fell; but I was up over it, so I thought I might have been the cause of it. I felt blue at evening. I had got mad with Dickinson for giving up one of our store rooms for a sail room and then not providing a place for storing our provisions. He said the Capt. would let me have a chance to store some things in his room if I

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

would ask him. This was D's. business as he had given up our room on his own responsibility. I would ask no favors of the Capt., but persisted very foolishly in "blowing him up" while he would grin like a fool. This added to the broken thermometer made me feel very blue; and I resolved, perhaps for the fiftieth time, to keep in my room and keep my own counsels.

Feb. 25. Started at 4 A.M. and at 11.30 saw the "Mt. Vernon". Her colors were hoisted and we hoisted our number in reply, but making some mistake in them she got up anchor and steam and ran down and spoke us, then returned; and we beat against a headwind untill 3 P.M. when we let go anchor by the side of the Mt. Vernon. We soon found that there was fishing – where we caught large quantities of a small shiny fish – pretty to look upon, but poor to eat. Capt. Browne went on board the "Mt. V." and brought off somewhat of a mail for us, very acceptable though quite venerable. We can hear nothing of our sister bark "Amanda". She has not been seen in our station since we left. The "Jamestown" was ordered around to our station, but where is she? I sent a file of papers to the Medico of the Mt. V. who sent back a note thanking me for my favor. His name is S.B. Hoppin.

Feb. 26. Blue sky with clouds, squally and rainy in the afternoon. We are ordered to our old station to the delight of all – for we do not like this side of the island so well. We started at 10.30 A.M. and made a good run down the reefs.

Feb. 27. Today we get around to our old station and anchor within 3 miles of Federal Point light in 8 fathoms of water. No fish, I am sorry to say.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Feb. 28. Last day of winter, short and mild. Saw a large steamer in the offing – standing S.S.W. Busily employed in making a target in the morning, which was anchored or buoyed off about ½ mile from ship. It was made of 3 barrels, mounting a flag. In afternoon we had target practice. The purser and Dr. climbed upon the main top gallant yard to see how the shots struck. We got under weigh and I noticed that at first no allowance was made for the motion of the vessel. Firing was very good, most of the shots would have hit a vessel. Some of them ricocheted 8, and one or two four times. The shells were better aimed than the shot. Two of them exploded within 100 yds of ship, two sopped and then exploded near the target – some of them did not explode at all. There were 23 shot and 13 shell fired. There was muddy water on the surface and as we sailed around the target there was left a trail of blue water in our wake – looking like a giant snake. Two sail were seen in the offing. Ran down to them. They were on the shoals – on the other side. We about ship and go afishing in 12 fathoms of water. I caught 27 in all. But unfortunately when we get under weigh the chain broke and we lost our port anchor and 12 fathoms of chain. Sorry job – though we may get it as it is buoyed. We go into our station and attempt to let go of the starboard anchor, but the shackles would not go through the hawse, so we heave to and wait till morning. It is well we have found out the trouble of the chain – as otherwise we might have trusted to it and lost our bark, also of the other chain.

Mar. 1. At 3 A.M. saw two rockets toward N.W. We answered by sending up one. At day light saw a boat approaching. It proved to be the “State of Georgia’s” boat with Pilot, coxson, and 5 men. He reported that the “Nashville” run in at Beaufort, N. C. on 28th of Feb. – day before – and that the “State of G.” ran down to within 18 miles and made signals – seeing no answer, was obliged to go back in night to prevent the N. from coming out – while the pilot volunteered to

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

find us in an open boat as he did. "St. of G." saw at daylight a steamer at anchor which she supposed to be the "Keystone State". The "N." steamed in flying American flag and correct. When he got by the "St. of G." she fired a gun at her and soon as she got under guns of the fort she hoisted British and Confederate flags. St. of G. fired 7 or 8 guns to no effect. We hoisted in the boat – which being old and worthless was soon thrown over board – and proceeded around to report to flag officer Glisson of "Mt. Vernon". But when off the shoals we were becalmed. How tormenting! There were three sail in sight and we cannot get at them. Soon – 1 P.M. – saw a steamer in the offing. Fired three guns and called her up to us. She proved to be the U.S. transport "Matanzas" – Capt. Lersgang with soldiers. She consented to take the boat's crew and pilot into Capt. G's station, which she did; and took in tow the "Mississippi" which the Mt. V had hauled off the shoals. "Matanzas" was bound to Port Royal. We got late papers and learned the capture of Ft. Donelson and "Nashville"? Ten. Dickinson then boarded one of the schooners in sight and found her all right – from N.Y. to Port Royal with "Medical Stores".

Mar. 2. Sunday. As we expected the "Mt. Vernon" came out to us, and caught a prize – "British Queen" Schr. – and ordered us to keep by her. But she soon ran out of sight – it being dark – 2:45 A.M. She was not in sight in morning and we started for her station. But the current carried us so far south that we struck the shore long way south of "Mt. V's" station, and had a head wind to beat up against. At noon saw some houses on shore and fired a shot "to try the range of guns". The shot struck near the house and the frightened inmates scampered off for the woods in great haste. We were becalmed again and did not see the steamer at all. This being the first Sunday of the month the articles of war were read, but we had no church.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Mar. 3. At day light saw the steamer and made for her; coming up with her at 7:30 A.M., when Capt. B. went on board, with our mail. He soon returned and the Mt. Vernon started with her prize in tow for Beaufort – leaving us as the only blockading vessel on this station. We expected as much, but we are not fit to blockade this place, where there are 3 armed steamers and several vessels ready to run out when we are away. Where is the “Jamestown”? Where the “Amanda”. At evening came some of the sharpest squalls I ever saw. Log-book has it: “Tremendous heavy squalls & combing sea, which caused the ship to labor heavily & ship much water. We carried all possible sail and barely escaped the shoals by so doing, though we lost some of our gear by it.

Mar. 4. As soon as wind allows we tack ship and start for the station again – for we are bound to blockade it to the best of our abilities. We got back in sight of Bald head lighthouse at noon, finished the day by beating back and forth as usual. Cloudy and squally weather.

Mar. 5. Beating as usual, dare not come to anchor, and the S.W. wind strives to drive us on Frying Pan Shoals. Rainy and squally weather. At night were obliged to run out to avoid being driven on the shoals. We had to carry some canvas to help us weather the shoals. Parted some of the sheets, and got an awful rolling and pitching. We cleared the shoals again and felt quite thankful.

Mar. 6. At daylight the sea was as smooth as a mirror – not a ripple to be seen. A schooner was seen on the lee bow; and though a long way off we resolved to board her. So Dickinson, Dr. and five men (besides the coxswain) started. We thought we were sure of a prize. The crew were volunteers and pulled finely. We had revolvers and cutlasses each and 4 muskets in addition. We

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

made rapid way. Soon a cat's paw came along and disturbed the sleep of old ocean. We looked back and saw that our bark had wind enough to make headway and was pointed toward us. We neared the schooner slowly, for she had spread her wings on the passing "cat's paws". We "raised" her hull after an hour's pulling. But the wind sprang up and the bark kept up with us nearly and a cornet was raised at the "fore" as a signal for us to return; but in our anxiety to board the schooner we "could not see it", and still pulled away. But the wind increased and we turned back reluctantly toward our bark which had run up royals and out studding sails for a chase. The Captain had been in a frightful foam because we had not seen or obeyed his summons to return. Boat hoisted up – spread all sail for the chase. We neared her fast and one gun brought her to. I hastily wrote three letters and D., Dr. and Purser went onboard. It was a large schooner, George Harding, from Port Royal to N.Y. He had carried out a machine shop and machinery and hands, etc. He gave us some papers and we returned well pleased. He brought no news from South. We soon spoke another schooner, also from Port Royal to N.Y. We then ran in to the station and were soon admonished to run out again; for the S.W. wind blew strong and we were near the breakers. Again were in imminent danger. Capt. says that if we clear the shoals this time he will never come in so near again. Wind blew a perfect gale, but we must carry canvas or else blow to leeward on the shoals. Took in light sails, reefed topsails, main sail, foresail, furled main sail, close reefed topsail – then furled foresail. But in the midst of all this we parted a large chain the foretopsail sheet – all confusion for a moment – soon it was mended and replaced. The lead is kept going and we listed with anxiety for the Quartermaster to call out "By the deep sea lead, seven" or 12 as the case might be. So in rolling and tossing the day past off and the

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

7th came, more squally and tempestuous than its predecessor. But we were clear of the shoals, which we should have been run upon had the wind not hauled a point to West. Now we are going 2 knots ahead and 5 leeway. At 10 o'clock A.M. a large sea came over the lee gangway and filled the deck almost – rushing down the main hatch and filling that berth deck to 6 inches or more. Everything was afloat upon deck except the guns which had been doubly secured. The sea ran out of the port holes and made way for others which came very frequently. At noon the gale died away somewhat and the reefs were shook out of the topsails and foresail. We had quarters in afternoon. But the wind continued to blow strong from W. & N.W. and we kept our course – not knowing where we were as no observations could be taken – drift is uncertain where there are strong currents. Officers say that all that saved us was the hauling of the wind towards the W.; they express a seaman's hearty thanks for our deliverance.

Mar. 8. Saturday is holystoning day. And we did it thoroughly on both decks. By noon the sea, that ran mountain high one day ago, was calm quiet. We are in only 16 fathoms of water, this is why the sea calms so. Observations show that we are long way to the south. "Land Ho!" At noon – 25 miles off. Cape Romain. About ship and start for our station. But we are becalmed in the afternoon. We have boat races – Capt's gig comes in ahead. We made three knots an hour for the last part of night – or day – 12 at night.

Mar. 9. Sunday. We keep up our steady way and this morning at daylight Bald light house was seen from the foretopgallant yard. We heave to and have a most beautiful Sunday. Wind springs in afternoon and we move around a little. Then men seem to enjoy themselves very much. They are sitting around upon deck sewing and reading, talking and chumming, etc., etc., so on. Heave

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

to in the evening; the sky clear as crystal, with a bright moon overhead. The Paymaster and I promenaded the deck for more than an hour, stopping occasionally to see the men use “single sticks.” Foils might not have been allowed on Sunday, but these articles are of wood, which, perhaps, accounts for the permission to use them on Sunday. We talk of our disgust for such life as this; the Purser wishes he had stayed at home, where there would be skating and pretty girls. I tell him that I feel no disposition to complain of little pay or much work, but that there is nothing here to stimulate me to study or keep my ideas burnished. As I have known the worth of money it gives me some satisfaction to know that I am saving some of the needful as well trying to be of some service to our country in this hour of her severe trial. I hope to be out of this by 4th of July next. But it is uncertain.

Mar. 10. At day light a steamer was reported. Visions of the brave little Monticello at once flashed across my mind. But on going on deck I was informed that it was a rebel steamer which was either running in or that had been out to look at us and was returning. We made after her as fast as we could, but she was out of our reach. There was little wind in forenoon, and all hands were scrubbing hammocks and washing clothes; after which there was exercise at guns. We do not anchor now-a-days. During the after noon there was some rain and south wind. We beat out and in until we can carry the shoals – I mean weather them – which we are now doing – 9 P.M. – at the rate of seven knots. We are anxiously looking for a steamer to relieve us and furnish us with late papers, etc. I long to get back on our old station, where there is less danger of running on shoals.

Mar. 11. We have been beating all day against a headwind and have not reached our station. We have had almost every kind of weather today. “A Rainy Morning”, but a very pleasant evening.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

There seems to be but little variety of scenery along N.C. shore. We have seen it all the way from C. Romain S.C. to C. Lookout, NC. The paymaster and D. were much amused at seeing a little duckling just learning to fly. He could just manage to keep out of our way – flying only a few feet at a time – poor little orphan bird! How many of the human spheres are thus left to drift alone in a cold world, unable to resist the tides and waves of temptation! I have read some 60 pages of Gibbon's Rome today, in addition to some "professional" reading. I wish I could hear from my friends tonight. May God keep them in the hollow of his hand. Do they think of me tonight? Yes they not only think of me, but pray for me, etc. Good night.

Mar. 12. We ran off shore in the night and did not see land today till afternoon; when we thought ourselves not far from where we were yesterday. We saw three sails in forenoon, one of which we boarded and found her to be "N.E. Clark" from Philadelphia to Port Royal, with coal; and has been out ever since 27 ult. – having had head winds, and a heavy gale in the 7th Inst. Very like, we had a taste of it. We stand offshore at night again. Beautiful night.

Mar. 13. Possible! Am I 30 years old today? How much better off is the world for my having lived in it? Very little I trow. How many men have built enduring temples of fame ere they were as old as I. Alexander had conquered near all the world when at my age. How little I know? Such queries as these kept me disconsolate all day. I shall have occasion to remember this day as long as I live. I may as well go through with the events of the day as they occurred. The morning was foggy and calm; there was some rain during the day. We tried to catch fish in 12 fathoms; but there were none to be caught. We are drifting in some current we know not where, for we can get no observations. About noon a pretty little bird came flying around in the rigging. The dear little

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

wet thing seemed to be trying to find a dry resting place. It was about as large as a sparrow and had a yellow spot under its throat. The men and boys chased it around for a while and I went in the cabin, supposing the little visitor would be let alone. But I am sorry to say that one of the men threw something at it and killed it and threw it overboard. Perhaps he did not intend to kill it. I did a very foolish thing after supper. I procured a bottle of wine and with this and some cake sent me from Great Falls, 4 months ago, I made the fact known that I was thirty years old. All commissioned and warrent officers were invited. They wished me many happy birthdays, and took care to mention the same concerning a future Mrs. P. And two or three had the forethought to provide thus for the little ones, in like manner. All were apparently jolly, yet I was sad, and some others had gloomy appearances, I fancied. All went off well; but bump goes our bark on the shore, just as we are about retiring. Before we have time to say so – bump – drag – bump again. Now the confusion on board was just what one might expect. Orders and counter orders – sailors coming up half dressed – bump, bump – drag – bump again – square the yards – helm hard down – up the large hawser – up the kedge anchor – down the third cutter – call her crew – call away the fourth cutter – bump, bump – open the shot locker – up the hemp hawser – lower away anchor in boat – other run around ship and see where is deepest water – bump, bump, drag – how much water there Dickinson – 3 fathoms off 150 yards on port bow – good – pay away hawser – pull away fourth cutter with anchor – brace yards – helm down – let go anchor from boat – man hawser – pull away boys – bump, drag, bump – around she comes - keep the lead agoing – how much now – quarter less two – she deepens – good, bump, drag, bump again – pull away boys – we are over the anchor and she is clear – three cheers – up anchor – helm down – we are safe – thank God – make sail again – how much water now – four fathoms – good – now splice the main brace – (i.e. all take a drink of whiskey, except officers) – boats made fast first. I

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

omitted to say that we fired a gun for assistance, that the sails were hauled up, that some said we are lost, some cried, some had stout hearts – all worked well – water calm – wind slight – ship did not spring a leak – and so forth. The fact is we ran upon Cape Fear – for we could see it plainly with marine glasses after danger was passed – the land looked like a large snake stretched across behind us. As for myself, I was surprised to find myself so cool. I worked as best I could and encouraged others by example and word. Fortunate was it for us that we were going no more than two or three knots an hour, fortunate indeed that the sea was calm. An easy thing for the rebels to capture us had it been day time, for we were in sight of Fort Caswell, had it been day time. Did that little bird come to warn us of impending danger? It was the first time the thing ever happened but still I am not superstitious enough to think it had any connection with our getting aground. The lead had been cast only a few minutes before we struck in 9 fathoms showing that we shoaled water very fast. We are safe now and will try not to get aground again. I am sorry to say that Capt. B. disappointed everyone, almost, by his want of fortitude and exemplarily coolness. He wrung his hands and exclaimed “We are lost, we shall be taken prisoners” etc., etc. and complained of the officers. All this disgusted us – I was mad and could not help sputtering a little as I pulled away at the anchor or hawser. But I must take into consideration his temperament, and the fact that his reputation as well as life depended upon the work of a moment. If I had comprehended the danger as he did, and had my reputation likewise at stake I might have been more excited. I knew that I could swim and, by the help of a spar, I could get on shore and give myself up as prisoner, and live on peanuts at Raleigh a while. We all felt thankful for our deliverance, for but few thought we should get our bark off again. Capt. B. said they would sure hang him as soon as he was taken prisoner. It was a narrow escape. If our bark had not been very strong she would have gone to pieces. It staggered us when she struck so

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

heavy – an uneasy sensation – better understood from experience than description. When we first struck the sails were hauled up, and braced around and some of them hauled out again to stop her headway and if possible to back her off again. At one time she seemed to be poised and then it was that she came around so nicely. We could have thrown her guns over board, and shot, etc., and lightened her if needed. We were fortunate, and I feel that I should be more thankful for it.

Mar. 14. Fog was the only thing visible this morning; but it was not the only thing heard. About 9 o'clock A.M. we heard a fog bell ring – apparently only a short distance from us. We, of course, rung our bell, in return. We could hear their machinery, or rather paddle wheels, and their talking. We beat to quarters and cast loose the guns, ignorant whether friend or foe were near. But as the steamer came no nearer after she heard the roll of our drum we concluded that a secesh steamer, supposing some vessel was ashore came out to secure the prize, and not liking the sound of the drum retreated. No friendly steamer would have thus sneaked off. We were in a poor condition to fight for there was no wind and she could have taken her own position so that we could not bring our guns to bear upon her. We make but little head way today; whatever is made is away from the shoals. Our last evening's escape is the principal subject of talk. I "over hear" the men all over ship; and their chief subject of conversation is the disgusting behavior of a certain officer last night. They repeat his gestures and cowardly expressions. I told some of them, who were talking loudly, that they must be careful how they talked. They said: "O! He is a coward – he cried last night and called us 'My good lads' and all that; but before night he will be calling us sons-of-bitches," "damned liars", "thieves of hell" and "be d____d to us" and the like. He talked about praying last night, and this morning he came out swearing like a pirate. He had lost more than five points of the compass in our estimation. He is a coward and dirtied his shirt

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

last night.” Of course I had no business to listen to such conversation about an officer and turned away. We attribute our escape to fortune, not to our commander. He harps about inefficiency of officers. He has no occasion to jeopardize our lives in this manner by running so near the shoals for he says he knew we were near them. He is the only man aboard the ship that could act so timidly and not be hooted for it every day. He attempts an apology for it’s taking him so unawares – as if others had foreknowledge of what was to happen. But enough of this.

Mar. 15. Somewhat foggy this morning. We have made but little head way during the night. Sea becomes rough and can get no good observations. Some thought they saw land during forenoon; and it would not be strange if they did for we have “stood in” a part of the night; but the Capt. thinks it cannot be land. Strong winds from South come and warn us to get out of the horseshoe. Barometer goes down past 29.62 and everything indicates a “blow”. We are uneasy, for the best we can do is to head E.S.E. and adding leeway gives us but little better than E. course. Whether this would clear the shoals depended upon how far to windward we were. The wind came in gales that made all ring again. Lead is kept agoing and we expect to hear of shoaling every minute; but it deepens gradually, and the wind hauls so that we can make it. sunset we go S.E. by S. The moon comes up full and beautiful and the sky is again clear. The waves are “combing” and awful; and the wind in no way disposed to sooth them. Our hearts are made glad by “by the deep sea (lead) sixteen.” But the next throw gives only 14 fathoms. Then I look away under the rising moon for breakers, but do not see them, thank fortune. 14 fathoms again; soon followed by 16, to our joy. We are crossing tail of shoals. Water deepens and we are safe, thanks to fortune and not foresight. I now turn in with thankful heart.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Mar. 16. Sunday. Wind has blown a “living gale” all night. As soon as we were passed the shoals, we took in all canvas except double-reefed topsails. (I omitted to say in yesterday’s report that it rained part of the day as fast as ever I saw it, - with an energy worthy of a tropical climate.) At light this morning three sail were seen, two before the wind, and one – we think the Bark “Amanda”—heading, as we do, N.W. close-hauled. We have been within 4 or 5 miles of her all day. It is too rough to think of exchanging mails with her today. We make about three knots an hour. Nothing occurs today of great moment. A topsail sheet parts, but fortunately the block hits no one. The sunset is beautiful; I climb up the rigging and get a second view of the glorious orb. He is no sooner down than up comes she – the moon – full and glistening; and the wind cuts sharp over the white-capped waves – beautiful and lively this evening. I cannot resist the thought that perhaps I am looking upon her fair face for the last time – for the shoals still haunt my dreams. It may be that some of the dear ones at home, or a brother abroad, look upon the moon and ask if I am not doing so too. And it may be that some of them have looked at the silver mirror for the last time with mortal eyes. Oh! That I could see them all tonight. “Light ho!” comes down from the fore-topsail yard. All rush out to see a very large steamer – (“Constitution?”) pass athwart our bows towards the N.E. with rapid speed. There is a peculiar “mackerel” appearance to the sky tonight – not so as to obscure the moon or the twinkling stars. Barometer rising very little – slowly.

Mar. 17. The bark we saw yesterday was nearer this morning and we ran down and spoke her – the “Gem of the Sea.” She is cruising off “Georgetown.” Soon a sail was reported, which the “Gem of the Sea” brought to with a gun and boarded. We ran close to her and hailed her. She proved to be the “Charter Oak” from Port Royal to N.Y. She had bad news from the North – the

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

sinking of the “Congress” and “Cumberland” at Newport News. This caused us to send a boat aboard which returned with a paper – giving particulars of the awful disaster. I am heartily disgusted with the conduct of some of our officials. This sad news makes all gloomy on board today. We came a N.W. course in a good wind and at sunset found ourselves at New Inlet instead of on the south side of the shoals – our present station. We are glad to stop here for one night – at our old home – and at anchor too, a luxury we have not enjoyed for two weeks. The Fort at Federal Point has been much enlarged since we were here before. We have all preparations for a night battle thinking that the secessionists are so emboldened by their recent victory as to dare to come out and attack us. Oh, when will this war cease? Come Peace and bring healing on thy wings. Capt. Browne attributes my coolness the other night to my ignorance of our danger, and says he was the only one in the ship that did appreciate our condition!!! I must confess that I “could not see”, when he quoted “where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise”. I am surprised the amount of disrespect a crew can show to an officer and he be ignorant of it. When he blusters, on deck, all the men below are repeating his expressions of fear, uttered upon the night of the thirteenth. I am “blue” tonight and feel disgusted with the whole concern.

Mar. 18. At anchor within three miles of Federal Point battery until 3 o’clock P.M., when we got under weigh to run out to a sail, which proved to be the sloop of war “Jamestown”, belonging to this station, though seen now for the first time, by us. Capt. Browne went on board and soon the “Jamestown” ordered, by signals, to follow; and we did so till sunset, when Capt. B. came on board. They had not heard of the disaster at Hampton Roads. Saw the Amanda 24th ult. We are now 9 ½ P.M. – under easy sail going S.E. by S. It is uncertain when we shall go around the other side of shoals.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Mar. 19. At 3 A.M. awaked by extra noise; and found they were just preparing to bring to a schooner with a shot. I went with Dickinson to board her; and we found her all right, a small schooner loaded with suttlers stores for Port Royal. We thought we had a prize, as she was tacking around somewhat – but she was sounding off the tail of the shoals. I now find that we are going around to the south of the Island. We have had a very severe thunder shower this evening – most magnificent. We saw land this afternoon and then stood out again – Bald Head Light bearing N.N.E. at 2.20, distance 12 miles. I saw the fireballs [St. Elmo’s fire] upon the tops of masts, yard arms and so forth for the first time in my life. I felt the safer since we have conductors at main and misen masts. A hawk came off from land and kept us company for a while until the Capt. shot at him a few times with a pistol. He lighted upon the Royal yards a few times. We had some very smart “rolling” at 10 or 11 P.M. Some say she went entirely over and came up all dry. Every heavy sea that strikes us, reminds me of bumping on shoals.

Mar. 20. The sea was somewhat smoother this morning. The man at the mast head called out “Land ho!”, but it was only a fog bank. We have had a cloudy, rainy, day; part of the time calm, and often squally. A sail was reported, and soon the fog shut it out. It cleared up just before sunset and the sail proved to be a brig. We fired two shots at him to bring him to; but he was out of reach, and so far to windward he did not hear our guns as we suppose. He hoisted his colors in a few minutes after we fired. I wrote a letter to send to Amasa in case we boarded her. We are in 14 fathoms of water – this is all we know of our position. “Dead Reckoning” placed us in Lat. 32° 50’. We had been discussing an old question again this evening. Mr. D. said that if I would draw up the questions he would write to Prof. Henry for discussion. I drew them up essenusely

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

as follow. 1st. Granted that there is water in the ocean so deep that lead will not sink to the bottom: then will a five-pound lead descend to the same level with a ten-pound lead? If not, and the ten-pound lead halved; will the halves ascend? When presented to him he found fault with them and wanted a general principle about all bodies sinking, etc., etc, decided; and in this he was joined by Capt. and Purser. I am alone in answering the first in the affirmative; every officer and many others disagreeing with me. They also say that when a large piece of lead is divided the parts will arise. There is little satisfaction in discussing a question with men who when they get worsted turn to ridicule and laughter to cover them while they sneak off. So when pinned to it, they recede under a cloud of their own kicking up. Clear set these New Yorkers are.

Mar. 21. The wind being favorable we run into the station. A sail was seen from aloft in the station. It soon was apparant that it was a steamer, and the quartermaster said she was standing for us. I climbed aloft and with glass saw to my satisfaction that it was a steamer at anchor with her sails unfurled to dry. Visions of the Nashville flashed across the minds of some. We went to Quarters and made every preparation for a fight. Capt. Browne made a speech to the men: "Now my lads we may have a hard fight. I want you to put implicit confidence in me. Obey every order given you. Fight as long as I do; and when I fail you fail." I was standing upon the Forecastle at the time with the paymaster. We could but notice the peculiar expression of contempt upon the countenances of the men who had their backs turned from the Commander. I paraded my instruments, gave tourniquets to the "Capts. of guns," and every preparation for a desperate slaughter; which I was convinced would not occur at once; for I concluded the steamer was – what we found her to be – the "Mt. Vernon". I "turned to" 3 of my sick men, who were not perilously ill – two being unable to leave their beds. The Capt. went on board the steamer and got

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

a large lot of papers for me, and others – though I had the greatest lot. Dr. Hopper amply repaid my “compliments” by sending a larger bundle of papers than I did to him. I learn from them more particulars of the H. Roads affair and encouraging news from all parts of the country. I am very sorry we got no letters. The news is very encouraging. We are ordered to remain here with Capt. Glisson. The weather not looking quite right we stand off again. We are all jubilant over the news from New Madrid, Potomac, etc.

Mar. 22. A cold morning, and no fire. Capt. Browne ordered down the stove yesterday so we have no fire. We come to the conclusion that he is meddling with our affairs too much and that we need the stove and therefore we will put it up again, without saying a word to him. We expect a row – but he does not take and is closer as a lamb – until towards night – when he is growing savage. We were standing in when I went out this morning – how long we had been on this tack, I am too lazy to ascertain. We saw the Mt. Vernon soon, and came along side her – say 9 o’clock – and spoke her. Capt. G. says: “What ship is that sir?” “The “*Fernandina*”, don’t you know me Capt. G?” “No sir. Why did you not hoist your Numbers, sir? Could not you see mine hoisted?” “Yes sir; but I hoisted my distinguishing pennant.” “Any ship might hoist that; always make your numbers, when you come in to me.” “Yes sir; I hoisted my numbers yesterday and you did not reply by hoisting your, so I did not hoist mine today.” “Please to remember always to hoist your numbers, sir, when you come in here. I hope you had a pleasant night Captain Browne.” “Thank you sir, I did. I hope you enjoyed the same.” “Come to anchor when you get a good N.W. wind – till then – lay off and on.” So we tacked ship and stood off S.E. by S. losing sight of the Mt Vernon ere noon. I found that it was a pleasure to many on board to hear Capt. B. slightly reprimanded – he is so fond of brow-beating everyone else. The wind hauled to south and Capt.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

B. decided to run around and get under the lee of the island – in case of a S.W. blow. We came up with the schooner “Haxall” from Port Royal to N.Y. with no news or cargo. We were then on the tail of the shoals, and after parting with the schooner we came directly into our old station, New Inlet. We let anchor go at 8.40 P.M. in 7 ½ fathoms – land being seen ahead. I hear that we are to start for H.R. – or Baltimore – on the first of next month.

Mar. 23. Sunday. Though it was cloudy today, and cold with all, yet it was pleasant to be at anchor; even near the shore of secessia. We are near Measonborough [Masonboro] Inlet; Federal Point bearing S.W. some 10 miles. We saw a man galloping down the shore this morning in haste. There are plenty of fires along the shore, both night and day. The wind continues to blow from shore.

Mar. 24. At anchor still, men all at work upon rigging and boats. The day is fair but the cold off shore wind is enough to dampen one’s lure for the shores of secessia. I am troubled about my patient R. Green, who has had an attack of subacute rheumatism and now phlegmonous erysipelas sets in – having the appearance of a monster carbuncle in the neck, over the “colar bone”. I fear he will not be able to go through with it, even with the assistance of wine, elixir of vitriol, quinine, carbonate of ammonia, etc., etc. The Capt. told Dickinson and Hempstead today that if the “Nashville” should come out and attack him, he should haul down his colors at once, as it would be of no profit to the “government for us to be half killed and the bark sunk.” Capt. B. has barked very loud and long, and we think when it comes to the scratch he will not bite.

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Mar. 25. At anchor still. The wind holds W. yet – right off the realms of slavonia and the hot bed of rebellion, and yet it is chilly as hatred itself. All hands at work upon rigging and painting ship. I opened Green's carbuncle, if such it may be called, this afternoon and it discharged a pint and a half of pus, leaving much behind.

Mar. 26. This was the first Spring-like morning we have seen. I thought of how I used to run to the maple trees with the sap-pails on such mornings. All hands, except six I have upon the "Sick List", are at work tarring down rigging. But they did not complete the job, for the reason that it rained. When we taking dinner the deck officer reported hearing firing of heavy guns – supposed to be at the Ft. We all rushed out just as they were wondering what strange noise followed, sounding like the wheels of a steamer. "Nashville" is out said Dickinson. "That is sure the sound of a steamer," said Capt. B. It was so foggy we could see but a short distance. Then the firing was heard again. This time two "Bull Run" soldiers declared it to be the discharge of musketry, intermingled with that of cannon. Capt. looked perplexed, for we had no wind, and he knew not what calamity might follow. But his face was radiant with joy when the happy thought occurred to him that Burnside might be attacking Wilmington. He thought of attacking the fort. All was still again. "Short battle" said some one. But soon we heard the sound nearer and still more near." "Musketry, sure." Just now the Dr. spied a "streak" of lightening and suggested whether it was not thunder that we heard. This raised a laugh, which only subsided when the report of the lightening arrived, convincing all that we had been listening to the artillery of Heaven. Soon we had a shower of rain worthy a more southern clime; intermixed with hailstones that would not be a disgrace to N.H. At 6 P.M. the wind was N.E. and we had to get under weigh, in which process the anchor was broken – both flukes gone – and a man got overboard. A boat soon picked him up

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

and the life buoy, which he did not get hold of. We started off in a S.S.E. course under easy sail. It is now past 10 o'clock, and already there is a heavy sea; of which our bark has shipped due amount. I am happy to say that Green is better today; but there is still a profuse and continuous discharge of puss, shreds of tissue, etc. I hope under tonics, stimulants, generous diet, etc., he will come up again. Good night.

Mar. 27. We had a very rough time of it last night. This morning we saw the "Jamestown", and soon exchanged signals with her. We are both bound in to see Capt. Glisson, and are near each other all day. Late in the afternoon she made signals for a boat to be sent on board her. Dickinson took some papers for her but brought back later ones, (22 inst), which contained very little news. We had been in a calm most of the time this afternoon. What wind there is is dead ahead. We are south of our station some ways – 30 miles or so. 12 men take medicine today.

Mar. 28. Never was the water of the ocean smoother than they were this morning. They looked glassy indeed; and were filled with a kind of jelly fish – as large when alone as a bean – generally in rows or pairs of rows rather. In the water we would see nothing but these little rows of dots, but on drawing them up we found them enclosed in transparent jelly, angular at the side. Our yeoman says it is the food of the whale. Capt. B says it is "squid"!! I do not know what to call it, I am sorry to say. Hands were at work upon the rigging again today. We had a nice 7 knot breeze this afternoon that brought us in here to the Mt. Vernon. The "Jamestown" has been in sight all day. We out sailed her when before the wind; though she whipped us completely when on the wind – close hauled. She did not get in in time to report tonight. Capt. G. said; "Why did you not heave to when you [saw] me coming out to you. I thought you were trying to

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

run the blockade.” He fired a musket to bring us to! He could not see our colors as it was a little dusky. He said we had not better come to tonight, but show a light, for he should patrol. So we keep under weigh. Good night.

Mar. 29. The “Jamestown” and “Mt. Vernon” were seen this morning in the offing together. Before noon the steamer came back and Capt. G. said we were to get what we wanted of her and then to come in here and report to him on the 1st or 2d of next month, and then go north. He went off and anchored and we beat out against a headwind, to the “J.” and got a few day’s fuel, and then keep of S.E. by S. under easy sail. This has been holystoning day, after which the men were mending and making clothes. We have had a beautiful day. I am sorry to know that Green is growing weaker in spite of me. How are my friends tonight? They of whom I think so much. I am hungry for a mail.

Mar. 30. Sunday. Cloudy most of the time. We ran off till midnight, then tacked and ran in to land; when we saw the Mt. Vernon in the distance; then ran off for a while, then in, and now, 10 P.M. are near the Mt. Vernon, in smooth water, under easy sail, with light breeze, from N.W. We shall not speak the Mt. Vernon tonight. We have had a very quiet day of it. It has seemed very much like Sunday. It seems to me that we ought to take some solid comfort here. But we are always finding fault, and bound to take no comfort. By we I mean the genus homo. I have tried to be contented today, but there is a continual anxiety to hear from Amasa, in particular. Of others I wish to hear; but I think him in greatest danger. Of Dudley I have not heard for a long time. “When shall we three meet again?”

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Mar. 31. We ran out 10 or 12 miles and were there becalmed. It was foggy this morning, and we could not make a knot advance. Went to quarters this forenoon, for exercise. At noon we had a little breeze and came in here to the Mt. Vernon, where we arrived at 3 o'clock or thereabouts. Executive Officer Simmons of Mt. Vernon came on board. Soon Mr. Dickinson went on board the Mt. V. and got some coal. Capt. B. and the Dr. went on board at sundown and remained until 9 o'clock. I was very glad to hear them talk of the fight at Hampton Roads. We see several steamers around Ft. Caswell tonight and they are exchanging lights. We go to quarters and cast loose the guns and make ready for a fight tonight.

Apr. 1. At anchor. All hands busy in making "April fools." We have had a fine day. The wind has blown strongly from the N.W. but we are under the lee of the land and ride it out nicely. I have made out my quarterly reports today, and done little else. We expected to have a visit from the officers of the Mt. Vernon today, but I suppose they wanted a smoother time to come. My patients are getting along well, but others come as soon as one goes. I have had 36 different individuals sick this quarter; the daily average upon the sick list is $2 \frac{2}{90}$. I find there is less sickness on board the Mt. Vernon. It seems a short three months since I was bothering about how to make out my other report. Time flies very swiftly; and yet it sometimes drags heavily. I am now hungering for news from home – and aboard too.

Apr. 2. I heard of a schooner on shore down the coast before I got up to see for myself. When I went on deck I could see the schooner and the Mt. Vernon, that had ran down to her, nearby, and firing a gun occasionally. They were about 12 miles off, and the morning was somewhat hazy. Our Capt. did not see fit to get under weigh until a sail was seen in the offing. We then got under

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

weigh and ran out to meet her, uncertain whether she was friend or foe. She proved to be the “Cambridge”, and when we made her numbers out and she hauled hers down she next made signals for us to come and get a mail, which we did; and she went down to the Mt. Vernon, we following. We dropped anchor near them and commenced shelling some men on the shore near the schooner aground, after sending an armed boat to the Mt. Vernon. Our shells set a shanty on fire and scattered the rebels very quickly. Capt. G. made signals for the firing to cease, and the boat third cutter, returned for our largest hawser and first cutter, which had to be got off the gallows – this taking some time. Capt. G. made signals for the boats, which went away with the hawser, etc. Capt. B. saw more men and what looked like a small fort just up the inlet and sent the fourth cutter to Capt. G., for permission to get up anchor and move in nearer the shore to shell them. Capt G. said “reserve your shell” and ordered the boat to return and get dinner and hold themselves in readiness. Meantime the Cambridge had come up to us and returned to Mt. Vernon; and a fleet of boats were on their way to the schooner. Mt. Vernon had boarded her earlier in the morning and extinguished the fire which the rebels had set and left a crew on board, having parted a hawser in trying to pull her off the shore. They now used our hawser, new and strong, but the tide fell so fast that the schooner was left almost out of the water. She was loaded with salt which the men commenced throwing overboard, and it laid in piles alongside. The inlet is called “Lockwood’s folley inlet” and the channel is so narrow the schooner could not keep in it in the night, as she took this time to run in. Capt. G. thought best to burn her; so they took some things out of her and set her on fire. Meantime the rebels had collected behind the sandbanks and were throwing musket shot at our men around the schr. The men brought off some meat, blocks, ropes, a sail etc., also a piece of a rebel flag. The Mt. Vernon got much more than we did. As soon as the men were returned to their respective ships, the Cambridge

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

commenced shelling the rebels on the shore with her Parrott gun, the Mt. Vernon joined in, likewise the *Fernandina*, who they say made some complete shots in the morning. I did not think we could throw a shell so far. The *Cambridge* sent some shots through the schooner, and one shell exploded in her. She burned finely. I was sorry to see so much property destroyed, which we might have got off at the next high tide, I think. There was some good shooting done by each of the ships. We wish for a rifled cannon and are glad to know that there is one awaiting us at Hampton Roads. We are prepared to return to our anchorage. I took a boat and went on board the *Cambridge* to get the remainder of our mail, and to see Dr. Richardson, with whom I was acquainted. The letters had been sent onboard the Mt. Vernon; so the *Cambridge* took me in tow and brought me alongside the *Fernandina*, the Mt. Vernon having gone ahead. We got under weigh and the wind being ahead we had to stand off shore, and it became foggy so we did not get out to our anchorage, but are keeping off for the night. We have had a busy day. Noise and anxiety all day. I have looked so much that my eyes and head ached very much. We sometimes long for excitement to release the monotony of this station, we have had it today. The *Cambridge* will remain here during our absence or a month or so. She brings us news of a battle at Winchester, Va. and of the running out of the Nashville, as of the capture of Beaufort by Burnside. Large bodies of troops are at Ft. Monroe, etc., etc. I am sorry I got no letters from home.

Apr. 3. We ran off into the gulf last night and got up to the steamers about noon and let go anchor. We saw the remains of the old schooner not yet all burned, as we came up by the place. The rebels have fired some very heavy guns here at the fort today, not at us though. We sent a boat on board the Mt. Vernon and got the neglected letters; of which two were mine; one of

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

which was mailed Dec. 28 the other 14th ultime. Glad to get them though one of them was rather old. This only stimulates my appetite for more. Some of the officers of the Mt. Vernon were on board today, and some of ours returned the compliment. Fine day.

Apr. 4. At anchor still. Water as smooth as glass all the fore part of the day. We had quarters in the morning, at which time some of the officers of the Mt. Vernon came on board, among whom was Dr. Hopper. I should have said we had general exercises; wherein Capt. B. made an ass of himself, as usual, in trying to drill the men in small arms, of which he knows so little. He vented his spleen by threatening to run a man through with his sword. Our officer visitors were not a little disgusted. This afternoon we took the mail of our consorts and were prepared to go to sea when we had wind which came at dusk; when we got under weigh and stood out. This proved only a cat's paw with a shower in which there was some of the sharpest lightening I ever saw. I lie down in my birth and went to reading about 7 ½ o'clock; and fell asleep over my book, and slept till between 10 and 11 when someone rapped on my door and said "Dr. get up – Capt. has killed a man." I put on my boots and went on deck to see what was the matter. I there saw some men binding Michael Heeney, who, they said, had made a villanous attack upon Capt. Brown, who stood by with sword and pistol. I heard a noise forward and went there and saw the Hilman brothers having a tussle, the older one trying to hold the younger one who was boisterous. I tried to quiet them, the younger of whom had been my patient not long ago. The older one, John, said "Let him alone I can manage him." One of the boys came forward and called me to the cabin, where the officers were arming themselves. Dickinson said "Dr., get your revolver," to which I said "I have none". He said the crew were in a state of mutiny. I did not even think of getting my sword for I saw nothing like mutiny. I stepped out on deck and was met by my steward who said, "The men are drunk." This confirmed my belief. I now found out that Capt. B. had been stabbed

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

in the leg; and sent Adams, my steward, for bandages etc. D. said to purser, Hempsted, "arm yourself". The purser who had been writing, said "there is no need of it." D. turned to Capt. B. and said "Hempsted refuses to arm himself." B. said: "Do you refuse to arm yourself." H. said: "No I don't refuse to arm myself, but I be G_d d_____d if I see the need of it". H. then proceeded to arm and I went forward where the Hilmans were scuffling about. Capt. B came forward, sword and pistol in hand and declared the crew in an "open mutiny". I stepped up to him and in a low voice said: "these men are drunk and not mutinous." B. said: "You must be drunk not to see there is a mutiny on board my ship." I was surprised at his remark and stepped back. Just then Wm. Hilman was arrested; and the purser came along armed. J. Hilman was noisy and Capt. B. told him to go aft. He said: "I want to ask you one question Capt. B. What have I done?" Capt. B. ordered him to be arrested, as he refused to obey. Just then he seized the purser's arms and came near getting them away from him, when F. M'Guire, capt. of forecastle, threw his strong arms around him and carried him away, the purser's pistol having fallen upon the deck. When about 3 yards off Hilman attempted to get away from M'Guire when Capt. B. stepped up and shot him, when M'Guire called out "don't shoot me." The ball, from one Colt's large revolver, entered low down in the abdomen and was found under the skin of his back, which had pushed out so hard that M'Guire, whose thigh was against H.'s back thought himself shot also. H. was carried to the cabin where I examined his wounds. While doing so Capt. B. was raving about mutiny and said I had connived at it, also the purser. I was mad and repeated what I had said about drunkenness and told him if he wanted to report it to the Commodore (as he said he should) to report it. This I should not have said. Then the purser said harder things than I, in being accused of mutinous conduct. While a bed was being prepared for H, upon the wardroom table, I dressed the Capt's stab in the left calf, which was about 7/8 of an inch long and 1/2 inch deep. He at first said it was

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

done with his own sword. I removed the ball from under the skin on the back of Hilman, where I found the bones (hip) badly splintered. There was no bleeding to speak of externally; but he passed large quantities of blood mingled with feces. He soon fell into a delirious stupor, calling on foretopmen, third cutters, etc. He vomited up his supper, which smelled very strong of liquor – the cause of all this trouble. The Capt. ordered the ship about and made signals for assistance from the Cambridge and Mt. Vernon. Heeney was cursing and raving in a frightful manner, rattling his chains like a confined lion. I omitted sewing up his neck till he got more quiet. He and the younger Hilman are in chains, the former of which is the drunker of the two.

Apr. 5. After much signalizing and firing guns the Cambridge came down to us little after midnight. Capt. B. in answering the call from the C. said he had had a mutiny on board in which he and two men had been wounded, and that the surgeon of the C. was needed, and a boat would be sent for him. I had previously told Capt. B. that I needed no assistance – and such a statement as this disgraced me, as I thought. Dr. Richardson came on board, and said nothing more could be done for him. We are in a calm. Cambridge waits till morning, at B's suggestion. Hilman grows more restless and we give him large quantities of morphia. I found the bladder uninjured. At day light we moved him to a cot bed below. The influence of the liquor began to leave him and he was sensible. The Mt. Vernon and Cambridge came along side. Capt. B. asked for the Dr. of the Mt. Vernon and Capt. Glisson stating that he was too much wounded to go on board the Mt. V. I again felt disgraced at his calling for the Dr. Capt. G. would not come on board, and asked why he did not proceed on his way. Dr. Hopper came on board and said no more could be done and that the man would die. The Capt. had a long talk with him – probably accusing me and Hempsted of mutiny. No one can tell the feelings I had at such treatment. The petty officers

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

came to the mast and protested against calling a drunken row a mutiny, whereby all were so much disgraced. Dr. H. returned and we soon had a good wind for Hampton Roads, which we used to the best advantage, 9 knots. The purser was under arrest, and Capt. B. had threatened to have me “court martialed.” I paid more attention to the wounded man than to him though, conscious that I had done nothing to merit such an accusation. He withdrew his accusation before night though. He forgave the purser who had written a letter of apology. I sewed up the wounds in Heeney’s neck – made by Capt. B’s sword – with three sutures. They are not dangerous – though in the vicinity of large arteries. He is now sober, but refused to tell where he got his liquor. Capt. B. is making it out that he shot Hilman when he was struggling with the purser – Dickinson says “Yes sir O, yes sir.” Capt. B. knows better than to ask me, for I will not lie to cover his cowardly act towards a drunken man who was in strong arms. D. is trying to convince himself that the men were not very drunk, if any. He is a lying courtier and sycophant. The fact is Capt. B. has needlessly shot a good man, (and guilty only of drunkenness and the results), and now is trying to make a mutinous cloak large enough to cover all his sins. The thing will be sifted. Before midnight the wind changes. We are off Hatteras; and I hoped the wind would continue good so that I could get my patient into the Hospital ship before he dies; but we have the wind dead ahead, and the sea is mountain high. I control the sick man’s pulse with tr. (tincture) of *Veratrum Viride* and his pains with morphia, his wounds being kept covered with cold water dressing – often changed. I got no sleep last night and stand no chance to get any to night. But 12 is the clock, and an unhappy day is ended. Had we lost men in fighting the enemy the case would have been different. O! Disgusting!

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

Apr. 6. We have had such rough weather that I have not written up my journal for two days, (now 8th). I have not had 6 hours sleep for 4 days. I am in poor condition for writing up now; for between anxiety, headaches, and rough seas, lies the charge of making the time seem very long. Day before yesterday was rough, though there was little wind. My patient Hilman is (6th) worse than yesterday (5th). Peritonitis sets in with its usual symptoms. This I expected. I have no hope of him, still I try the best I can. He thinks he shall soon be well again; poor fellow. I do not know when I felt so much for a sick man. There is a sorry look upon every one's countenance. The men show more feeling for him than I supposed many of them capable of. Should he die may God sanctify his death, to the good of us all, especially his brother whom he loved so much, and whom he was trying to keep quiet. The "Master at Arms" stole the liquor from the "spirit room" and gave it to the men. Little thought he of the results of his transgression.

Apr. 7. Hilman is very sick, though his courage is good. When I told him that I thought he would not live, he was surprised; and it was not without much talk that I got him to make his will. He, of course, gave all he had to his brother. It grieves me to see his brother in chains. The brother shed tears when I told him that John could not live long. He does not seem to have a very sensitive heart. I have used warm whiskey and water fermentations on his bowels today. There is a great swelling, but, what is unfavorable, there is no pain in the lower part of the abdomen on pressure; he vomits dark green matter, has hiccough, looks "sunken" around the eyes, etc. Capt. B. took Heeney's testimony as to his previous life. He tells a good story, and admits that he has been locked up in _____ for the night three times, for drunkenness. He is a hard boy; but I think it was B's own sword and not Heeney's blunt knife that stabbed the Capt's leg. I think Capt. B. cut his own coat and vest, to make the case the more frightful. And then talks of his

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

“charmed life.” I cannot forget his threatening to report me to Commodore. Cowardly villain and murderer. But what if this book should fall into his hands! He will see no lies if it does. We fired a gun today and brought to a Bremen bark, from N.Y. to Havana. Capt. informed us that Charleston was taken. Now I am anxious to hear from Amasa, for I suppose he was in the fight. “Dodo” was the name of the Bark. He sent us some potatoes and carrots. Good fellow. Observation placed us, at noon, in Lat. 34°, 24’ & Long. 73°, 47’. I saw, today, for the first time a large whale in the ocean. He left a wake behind him almost as large as that from our bark. The “master-at-arms” denies that he ever gave any liquor to the men, but the sick man says so, and several others say so too. He is arrested. We have had a calm most all day. At night there is a little breeze. I hope we may get in tomorrow.

Apr. 8. It is now five months since I reported to Capt. B. for duty on board this unfortunate bark; and few are the happy hours I have spent in her. I doubt if I ever come out in her again. I hope she will go out of Commission. I hoped to get some sleep last night, but was disappointed. We had the roughest night I ever saw. There was a general smashing of all things breakable. Our house creaked and screeched as if much hurt. The wind would blow hard from one direction for a while, then shift and make a combing sea. Though she shipped less water than last night in a calm, when it came over the hawse and near filled my room – no not so bad – it wet it badly, by coming into the partly opened window. Poor Hilman is much the same, though I think he is failing. He had a very strong constitution, or he would have sunk ere this. He tells me that he has not seen his father and mother for 8 years. They moved to New Zealand last year, where his father prints a newspaper. He still thinks he shall get over it. Oh! that he might. His brother is with him all the time by day and it makes him sad to see his brother in such a condition, and asks

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

why he is in chains. We are having another awful rough day. A schooner comes up to us just at dusk and wanted to know where Cape Henry “bore” and how far. Capt. B. said N.W. 25 miles. Her name was Mary from Hallifax to Baltimore. We kept in a while and then (7 P.M.) stood off there for the night. What a dismal cruise we are having! I would ask for a discharge from service rather than come on another such time. Capt. B. has a peculiar faculty of making everyone unhappy that is obliged to be near him. If he sees anyone taking comfort, he seems to dislike it, and gives an order that may tend to break up a jolly talk in the ward room. He is anything but an agreeable man, that he is. No wonder his wife should wish to get a divorce from him. I pity Miss Stewart, of whom he talks so much, if she ever marries such a man as he is. Poor Hilman asks to see Capt. Brown. But Capt. B. says: “I should like very much to see him; but would it be policy for me to go down and see him?” I said: “I know of no harm that could come from it.” The fact is he is too much of a coward to look in the face of the man he cowardly shot. He talks of courage – how he would not run from the “Merrimac” etc., but shows his spunk in curious ways, such as punishing his black boy by cuffing his ears, calling his steward d____d liar, etc., etc. But enough.

Apr. 9. Stormy, rough and dismal. We have been beating off and on all day. Not safe to go near enough to see land in such a dark storm. We are again disappointed in not getting in. We do not know where we are. We saw the schooner this morning. Poor Hilman is about the same. He has good courage still, and even laughs sometimes. There is not as much swelling of the bowels, pulse 104; and seems in some respects better than yesterday. I dare not hope, and yet I cannot help it. He has passed more blood today by stool. This is not strange. He again asks about seeing Capt. Browne. I give him hardly any medicine. He takes a little wine and eggs, and a very little arrow root pudding. I can do nothing better now than to keep up his strength and trust to nature,

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

who knows her resources. The storm rages this evening as hard as ever. I go to bed sad and dreary.

Apr. 10. Stormy, still stormy, rough and still rougher. The sun comes out at noon so they get an observation which showed that we a long way to south of destined harbour. This is almost discouraging; and a head wind too. I cannot write with any ease it is so rough. Another little bird paid us a visit today, I hope it is not another indication that we are to get in the shoals. My patient is better I think. He has passed no blood with stools today. He takes much wine and eggs. I must confess to a hope in his recovery. He has good courage. He still enquires for Capt. Browne, who has not seen him since he was injured. There are several sails in sight, apparently bound in as we are. One gunboat has gone in. So another gloomy day has passed; though we have some hope for the sun set clear, and the barometer goes up very fast; though the wind blows more freshly if possible. So to all – Good night.

Apr. 11. How pleasant to see the sunshine this morning. We have still a headwind to beat against, and a rough sea. All look cheerful nevertheless. 12 o'clock observation showed that we were still a long way to leeward of our Cape (Henry). Thirteen sail in sight at one time, all bound in. We have a strong southerly current here and are unable to make much northing. The wind dies away and here we are about where we were four days ago – yes five. We saw land this forenoon from deck. We hope to get in tomorrow; but may be again disappointed. I have worked some on my quarterly reports today – finished it I hope. My patient (of patients) is improving in every respect but strength. I now hope the intestine is knit together, if so there is more hope of him. I never felt more interest in a patient. Capt. B. says he would rather give a year's pay -

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

\$1,500 – than have Hilman in such a condition!! He probably still thinks it is not “policy” to go down to see a sick man. I wish he and H. could change situations. He may talk of what a regular navy officer would have done and all that. But a regular navy officer would have “beat to quarters” and sent the “master-at-arms” to secure the drunken men, instead of attacking a drunken man with his sword and then because he got the worst of it cry “mutiny.” A regular officer would not have shot a drunken man under arrest as he did and then lie about it and say he shot him when he was trying to get the purser’s sword. I have no words to express my suppressed contempt of that lying, deceitful, cowardly, licentious, bombastic, disagreeable blower. God may forgive him; I never will – unless I alter my mind.

Apr. 8. – 12. We are almost up to the flagship Minnesota – now 11 o’clock P.M. We have had a very favorable breeze today, though not a very strong one. We had to anchor a while to await the tide. So we are going by moonshine. While coming in today we met the Rhode Island going out. She hoisted her numbers which we answered by hoisting ours: when she came back and gave us our mail – saying the “Merrimac” was down yesterday, and that there had been a great battle, West. I was fortunate enough to get a letter from home and one from Amasa. How glad I was to hear from them. My patient is losing strength I fear. The diarrhea continues. Capt. B. “dained” [deigned] to go and see him this afternoon. I hope to get him into the Hospital tomorrow. Browne is around on deck blowing as usual and threatening to give the men “particular hell.” Oh! For a lodge in some vast Wilderness.

Apr. 13. Fine morning. We got nearly up to Willoughby’s Spit light boat, say 3 or 4 miles from Ft. Monroe. There are hundreds of sail in sight. They seem to have changed their situation since

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

we were here before – on account of the Merrimac. Capt. B. was out at 3 or 4 this morning and was blowing up the petty officers and telling them what they must come to when we went out to sea again. So he lies in his bed till 8 or 9 this morning, when the tide would carry us right up. We see many schooners getting out of the Roads while the tide turns. At about 10 ½ A.M. we get up anchor and sail gaily up past the light boat and several vessels and come to anchor near the Flagship. We see several large steamers here – “Vanderbilt,” “Arago”, “Ericson”, etc. With, it is said, the intention of running down the Merrimac. The Vanderbilt being filled with solid oak for 30 feet and cased with iron out side. It seems a pity to sacrifice such noble steamers, but better to do that than have her sink more frigates. In the distance is the “Monitor” and a small “Stevens Battery” with one gun only – a 100 pound parrot which shoots only in one direction – that is ahead. The gun lowers down to be loaded. There are more than 20 war vessels here now. The big guns, Lincoln and Union are surrounded with sand breastworks. We came to anchor at about 1 P.M. and after dinner we went – Capt. B. & the Dr. – on board the “Minnesota.” I was sorry to find that we could not get Hilman into the Hospital ship as it was full of the men wounded by the Merrimac. We are at once ordered to Baltimore. Com. Goldsborough had no time to attend to reports or requisitions or what B. styles mutiny. We hailed a pilot boat and took a pilot for Baltimore. Went on shore where we waited till near dark when we had the tide against us as also the wind. We were obliged to get a brig to take us up to our bark. Capt. B. had passed the word as we went by our ship to the Ft. to be in readiness when we returned – accordingly sails were loosed. But we shall now wait till morning for a rifled gun there is here for us. Capt. B. had so much blowing to do that my patience was exhausted ere we get started to come off today. We took the pilot with us. We have a fine wind for Baltimore and we could have made use of it if Capt. B. had been so disposed – but he cares nothing for the interests of his employers – this

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

country. I mean to try to get out of this thing, I do not wish to go to sea with that man again. He made me wear my sword today, because he did. I enquired on board the Minnesota if it was customary for surgeons going to see the Fleet Surgeon to wear side arms and was told that I was the first surgeon that had ever worn his side arm on board the Minnesota. So much for obeying old B's wishes. This is like him. I wish he and H. could exchange situations, for the latter is much the best man. But I fear he cannot live long.

Apr. 14. Morning clear and beautiful. We want to get over to get our rifled 20-pounder and then we shall be off. A drove of schooners is going out to get away from the "Merrimac" in case she comes down. We have heard the steam blowing off from the large steamers all night. They are expecting to go down this forenoon at high tide. The brig that brought us up yesterday from the Ft. came alongside with the schooner that had our gun. Soon the Commodore sent a tug with orders to tug us out anyway. We got up anchor and started down, the tug on one side and the schooner on the other with a tug also. In a few minutes we had got the gun and gun carriage on board and then the schooner was tugged back while the other tug took us down by the light ship and we spread sails and she left us. We looked back for the "Merrimac" but she had not made her appearance when we went out of sight. We have had a fine sail up the Chesapeake today. We started at 10 A.M. and at 5 or 6 P.M. were passing the mouth of the Potomac river – where we are now at 10 P.M. I cannot say. There are some 20 or more schooners coming up with us or rather a few miles behind us. We sail well today, being before the wind, and having passed several sail during the day. Whole fleets of oyster boats were seen away off to the left as we were coming up. And we have heard very heavy and continued firing in the direction of Yorktown, where Gen. McClellan is. There must have been some heavy guns there. We have had a fine day

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

today. It is Dickinson's birth day and he has treated us all on a large cake, sent from his home in N.Y., and preserved ginger and champagne. Capt. B. and the Dr. had another spat of a discussion to enliven the scene. He mentioned that no line could be perpendicular except it was perpendicular to the horizon. While I say a line or surface is perpendicular to another line or surface when it meets it at right angles (Webster). He waxed hot and contradicted me short and blunt and I followed the examples and in a way he is not accustomed to on board this ship – for he has every thing his way and will not allow anyone to have an opinion contrary to his. He says: “Now I be G_d d_____d if it is not so and so”. I said: “You may be damned for all I care, but it is not so.” I am ashamed of myself that I ever showed that man any respect. He is very jolly over his Parrot gun, while the man he shot while under liquor and arrest is dying as it were. For the discharges from the bowels, instead of coming out the natural way come, in part from the wound in the back, causing a bad smell below deck. I have now upon the “sick list” this Hilman, his brother, and 3 cases of erysipelas, one of inflammation of knee, one of smashed hand, one of severe cut on the arm, one of spitting blood and some others. I think we will call this the hospital ship. Capt. B. tells what he will do when he gets back to Wilmington, as if he was sure of going there. Good night.

Tuesday. Nice day we have had – though it has been overcast a part of the time; and we have not had much wind. We anchored when the tide was against us. We got a little wind this afternoon and at sunset were opposite Annapolis. We have heard firing off on the Potomac today, where it was impossible to tell. The bay is studded with sails today – some get a breeze on one side of it and go ahead of us – then we get one and go ahead of them – a fitful thing is the wind. There are aplenty of oyster boats along shore and D. took a boat and went off and bought 5 bushels of fine

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

ones; from which we had a good supper. The steeple of the State House at Annapolis looms up beautifully. There are some fine looking places on the shores of the Chesapeake – the green undulating fields look inviting. I wish Uncle Sam would give me a farm along here, I would turn farmer again and let pills and bandages alone. But U.S. would say go west. Poor Hilman is growing weaker and I think he may not last long. Browne is moody and unhappy today – at least I hope he is – he takes so much delight in making others so. He accuses me of sympathy with what he calls mutineers, because I saw fit to have William Hilman put in the sick bay – his irons being off. The man was very sick and the chains were troublesome to him. B. thought I should keep his foot irons on. He will learn that a Dr. in the navy has some say about some things. I have eight persons upon the list today. We shall be nearly up to Baltimore in the morning, for we are going 4 or 5 knots and yet it is so smooth it seems as if the bark was asleep – as I shall soon be. If all sailing were like this there would be few good sailors – or rather any one would be a sailor. We look with anxiety for the news from Yorktown. O! That this war might cease, then I would go home and settle down and have a home to call my own if I could pay for it – there is the rub.

Apr. 16. We came to anchor here in the beautiful harbour of Baltimore at 2 o'clock this morning, when the pilot went on shore to his house, and the boat brought back the intelligence that Ft. Pulaski is taken. A telegram from Washington says: "Send us a list of your officers immediately and do not go from port till ordered from here." Whether this means a change is uncertain. The carpenters had been onboard to see what we need to have done. I went onboard the Receiving ship "Alleghany" and found that I could send Hilman to the Infirmary, which I did. We carried him in a boat some ways when four of the men carried him on his cot to the Hospital. He was

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

glad to be there, and we are glad to have him there. My best wishes go with him. I walked all the way back and found it a long walk; I got here just too late to see a nice large bark launched. I shall send one of my patients to the Alleghany and three more I shall try to get discharged from service. I shall then have only 4 or 5 left. We have a decidedly ____ crew. I like the looks of Baltimore, what I have seen of it. But my eyes ache and I will stop here.

Apr. 17. One of the finest days I ever saw. The carpenters are at work lengthening out our Forecastle for the Parrott gun. Poor Hilman died this morning and will be buried tomorrow. His brother feels very bad, yet he does not lay it to heart as I should think he would. He said as I turned away from him that he hoped "Jack" would haunt Capt. Browne. I sent Green on board the Receiving ship, one other has got his discharge, four have turned to so that my sick list is very small today. Many of the officers have been on shore today and Capt. B. is there still – now near midnight. We officers have drawn up a petition to the Secretary of Navy for a transfer to other vessels or to have a new Commander appointed for us. All 5 signed it.

Apr. 18. Capt. B. was arrested yesterday at the instance of the Carpenter, who had got his discharge from ship, and did not get on board till late. The case must be tried by the Navy. Capt. B. took all his officers, except one or two, on shore to clear him. But as the carpenter did not appear, and as the Commissioner said he properly had nothing to do with it, and as only Dickinson and Robinson, masters mate, both being courtiers, were called to testify, the Com. honorably acquitted Browne, who feels that he has made a pig. He has not seen the end of it yet. He came on board tonight so drunk that an officer had to help him on board. After the court I went around a little and then returned to ship at noon, other officers came one at a time during

Transcript of Journal of Acting Assistant Surgeon Ezra Pray
US Bark *Fernandina*: September 1861-April 1862

the day, except Robinson, who, perhaps, was prevented by the severe shower we had at sundown. On account of court we could not bury Hilman today, and had him put in a vault till we have a better opportunity. Browne does not seem inclined to allow any decent funeral at all. We have had noise and dirt enough today – as the carpenters and caulkers are busy at work upon our ship. No orders as to the mutiny have yet arrived from Washington. We intend to ask Capt. B. to forward our petition for our or his removal from this vessel. He may refuse to forward it, all right, we can so state in the letter and then forward it ourselves. But I am getting to the end of my book again, and I will not extend it as before by adding more paper, but rather send it home by express for my friends to read, who I trust will not lend it around to those outside of two certain families, one my own and the other in Gt. Falls. I have not the patience to correct my blunders – and they are legion – and therefore hope those who read would pardon such and correct some of them perhaps. It is a poor scrap book and does not deserve notice – yet my friends will like to read it, I dare say. I hope the next book of notes will be better worth reading. Now then to all, Good night.