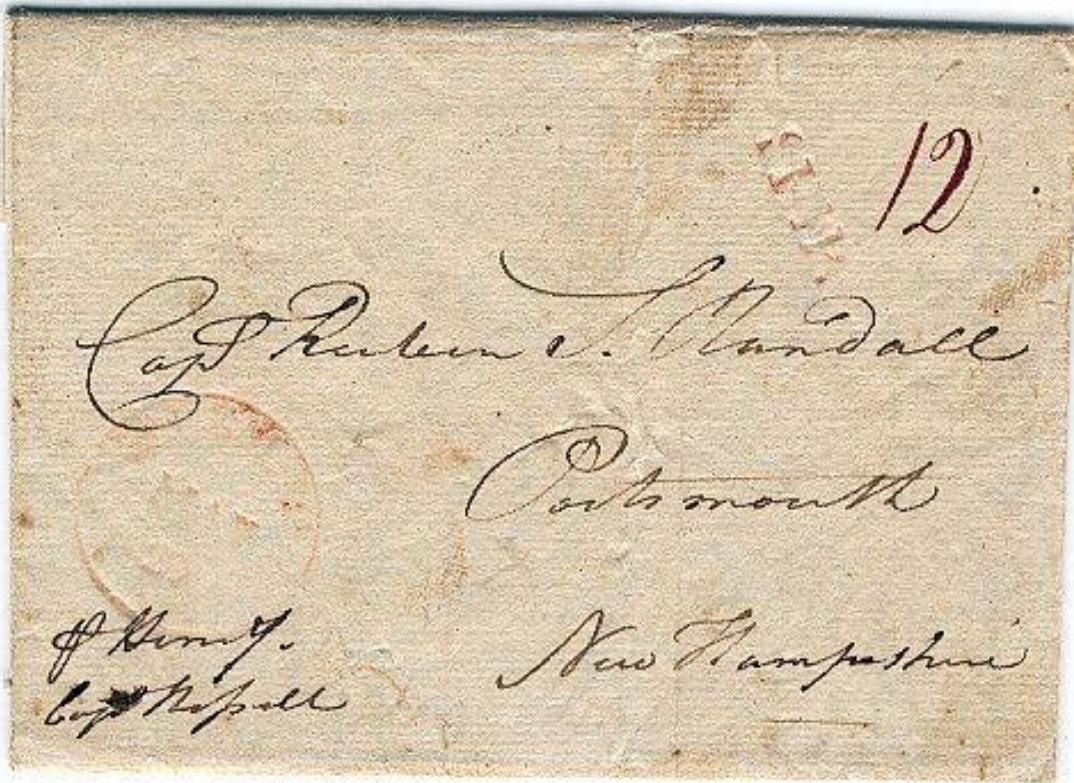


Reuben Shapley Randall
Research notes

ITEM: A letter from Capt. Ruben S Randall then at the Cape of Good Hope , addressed to himself at Portsmouth New Hampshire, sent by ships mail p(er the) *Henry*ⁱ and its Capt(ain) (Benjamin) Russell^{ii iii}, and written to his wife, Mrs D S Randall.



Randall was leaving Cape Town at the Cape of Good Hope for New York; whilst Capt. Russell was sailing to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The letter reads:

Cape of Good Hope
March 11th 1806

My Dear & loving wife
No doubt when you receive this you will WISH to know what has become of your Dear Husband. I have only to inform you my Dear that I arrived here on 17th Jany and have been embargoed ever since, till this Day when we got permission to sail. The reason of my coming in here was owing to bad cask and the confounded Rats eat the water cask so that I had only four cask of water left when I arrived. No doubt you and all my friends has been very anxious of my safety - but hope my Dear by the time you receive this, I shall be writing you one from New York - my time is so taken UP IN getting out at 4 o'Clock in the morning that I must write you short - am your loving and Dutiful husband

Ruben S Randall

Mrs. D.S. Randall

My dear & loving wife

Cape of Good Hope

March 11th 1806

No doubt when you receive
this you will wish to know what has
become of your Dear Husband, I have only
to inform you my Dear that I arrived
here on the 17th Inst and have been Embarras'd
ever since, till this Day when we got
permission to sail, the reason of my coming
in here was owing to bad Luck and the
confounded Rats eat the water Cask so that
I had only four Cask of water left when
I arriv'd, no doubt you and all my friends
has been very Anxious, for my safety -
but hope my Dear by the time you receive
this, I shall be writing you one from New
York - my time is so tedious up in getting out
that I must write you short. - am your
loving and Dutiful Husband
Ruben S. Randall

at 4 o'clock in the morning -

W. S. Randall -

REUBEN S(HAPLEY) RANDALL (RSR) was born circa 1775 in Portsmouth, Rockingham, New Hampshire and died ? 1856. He was married on 7th (or 8th) August 1802 to DOROTHY S(HERBURNE) WENDELL born 11th February 1780 Portsmouth, Rockingham, New Hampshire, daughter of John Wendell ^{iv} Dorothy Sherburne ^v .

Two documents relating to RSR are housed in the State Archives Repository, Cape Town. The first reads as follows ^{vi} :

To his Excellency Sir Arthur Beard [sic]
Commander in chief of the Colony of the
Cape of Good Hope
Sir
Being on my pafsage to the
United States of America, from Calcutta
Put in here, for Refreshments, and now
Detained by Embargo. I Humbly Request
Your permifsion of the Liberty to
Sell three of four Bales of Goods to
Defray my Expenses and post Charges
Which Request if Granted, will greatly
Oblige Your Excellency's most [indecipherable]
& humb. Sert.
Reuben S Randall
Master of the American Ship Nonohanset

Annotation on reverse
The Particulars wished to be sold
To be stated _
By order of his
Excellency
J.C.Smith
A.C.

The second reads as follows ^{vii}:

To Captn. Smith acting Secretary at Cape Town
Sir I Benjamin Rufsell
Master of the American Ship Henry of
Salim [sic] _ Request Permiifsion for
Captn. John Hall late Master of the
American Ship Patapsco of Baltimore
And now Pafsenger on Board Ship Henry
For America to pafs and Repafs During
The said Henrys stay in this Port
Cape Town 10th Feby., 1806
Beny ^a Rufsell

Annotation on reverse
Granted by order of His Excellency

The above documents, together with a reinterpretation of the original letter, clearly identify the author of the illustrated letter, its recipient, the manner of its passage and its bearer. Co-incident material relating to family relationships and famed personalia of those times are fascinating co-incident findings.

1806 at the Cape of Good Hope was an interesting year with considerable disruption to normal functioning as the Batavian Republic handed over control from Governor Jan Willem Janssens to Sir David Baird, acting British governor. That may explain the reason for the good captain being "embargoed". The Dutch and the British authorities kept detailed notes on the passage of ships in-and-out of Cape Town, of the movement of goods and of people especially if they were bearing currency. We are the richer for it.

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ⁱ *Henry* was a British brigand, 400 tons burthen, coppered to the bends, mounting four twelve-pounders, six six-pounders; sunk on 3 August 1812 by Commodore Barney of the privateer-schooner *Rosie*

ⁱⁱ The convention was to write a double "s" as "fs", the Russell would be Rufsell

ⁱⁱⁱ BR mentioned *inter alia* in History and Genealogy of "Elder" John Whipple of Ipswich, Massachusetts: His English Ancestors and American Descendants.

^{iv} Barrett Wendell was a literary critic and professor of English at Harvard. His great-grandfather John Wendell (1731-1808) of Portsmouth, N.H. was engaged in land development in New Hampshire. His grandfather Jacob Wendell (1788-1865) was involved in shipping and manufacturing ventures. [see Wendell papers, Harvard University; see <http://www.chipstone.org/publications/1993/Ward93/index.html>]

Jacob Wendell was a merchant ship owner, and insurance agent who was active in Portsmouth's financial and civic life from 1810-1865. He also managed the financial offices of ship captains. Samuel Pray and Reuben S. Randall, and merchants Ichabod Goodwin and M.B. Trundy. Jacob's financial records are store ledgers, shipping data, insurance inventories, and estate settlements. His personal correspondence, especially letters to his sons and son in-law, offers frequent references to local maritime and civic events. [see <http://www.portsmouthathenaeum.org/findingaids/ms025.htm>]

^v Dorothy Wendell née Sherburne was a lady of eminent descend, being a daughter of The Hon. Henry Sherburne a citizen of great wealth and influence *inter alia* being Chief Justice of the Superior Court, New Hampshire. [see Waters, Henry Fritz-Gilbert]. After her husband's death, she ran a cattle farm and owned a great number of properties in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. In her will, she left the bulk of her estate to her daughters-in-law rather than to her sons because they had been ruined a few years earlier by the failure of the Great Falls Manufacturing Company. By leaving the estate to their wives, she hoped to assure that their creditors could not seize the property. [see Wendell papers, Harvard University]

^{vi} KAB CO 3856.21 Description: Memorials Received. Rueben S Randall. Application To Sell Three Of Four Bales Of Goods.1806

^{vii} KAB CO 3856.45 Description: Memorials Received. Benjamin Russell. Application For Captain John Hall [#], Passenger On Ship Henry, To Pass During The Ship's Stay In Port. 1806.

Captain John Hall was captain of the famous *Chesapeake* launched 2 December 1799 Gosport Navy Yard, one of six frigates destined for the US Navy. Whilst in Sicily in February 1805, he enlisted Gaetano Carusi, a local band leader, and 17 other musicians to the Marine Corps to add to the Marine Band, thereby creating what is now America's oldest professional musical organization. His name is associated with many vessels. He was destined for ignominy following a Grand Court martial for "negligently performing the duty assigned", the so-called "Chesapeake-Leopard affair, 1807."