



State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
403 Seventh Avenue North  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**DRIVER, WILLIAM**  
**(1803-1886)**  
**PAPERS**  
**1831-1937**

*Processed by:*

Harriet Chappell Owsley & Mary Washington Frazer  
Archival Technical Services

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(Log of "Charles Doggett" and William Driver journal)

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## INTRODUCTION

These are the papers of William Driver (1803-1886), Captain of the brig, "Charles Doggett," who named our flag "Old Glory."

The materials in this finding aid measure .42 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the William Driver Papers may be made for purposes of individual or scholarly research.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers of Captain William Driver for the dates, 1831-1937, are composed of biographical data; clippings; correspondence; a scrapbook; log of the "Charles Doggett," 1831-1832; and William Driver's journal, ca. 1865-1873.

The biographical data contain information about Driver's hometown, Salem, Massachusetts, where the ladies of the town, of whom his mother was one, made the United States flag and presented it to William Driver for the brig, "Charles Doggett." This was the flag which he named "Old Glory" when he saw it first unfurl on his ship in 1831 and thus originated this name for our national flag. It sailed twice around the world and once around the continent of Australia before coming to Nashville in 1837 on the retirement of its owner from the Navy.

The scrapbook is made from materials preserved by Mary Jane (Driver) Roland (1839-1927), daughter of the retired sea captain and Nashville resident William Driver. The clippings, pictures, and letters in the scrapbook give the history of "Old Glory". The correspondence deals with the gift of "Old Glory" to the Smithsonian Institution and the proof of its authenticity. Two letters were written by President Warren G. Harding thanking Mrs. Roland for her gift of the flag.

The log of the "Charles Doggett" for the years 1831-1832 lists ports of call, passing weather conditions, and items purchased such as hogs, coconuts, a few pearls and quantities of shell. A few observations are made by Captain Driver about the appearance and character of various natives whom he encountered at several Pacific Island ports and whom he referred to as "Indians." It was on this voyage that he transported from Tahiti to Pitcairn Island, their home, sixty or more descendants of the survivors of the mutiny aboard the famous "H.M.S. Bounty" in July 1832. In the form of a long letter written in 1873, in the second volume, Driver records for his children this incident in detail.

Other items in this latter volume are: essay by Captain Driver (incomplete) in which he deplored the political views of Andrew Johnson after the Civil War and the plight of the freedmen to whom he thought property should be given; copies of two letters (1873) and a petition to Bishop Charles Todd Quintard asking for permission to organize St. James Episcopal Church and requesting the retention of the Reverend William J. Ellis in Nashville; copy of a request for funds (1865) from the United States Government for damages to the Nashville schools which had been occupied by the United States Army during the Civil War; and a copy of an account of cash drawn on the estate of Mrs. Martha M. Forrest, 1865.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

### William Driver

- 1803 March 17, born in Salem, Massachusetts.  
Attended school until age 13; apprenticed to a blacksmith; released after one year
- 1817 Began sea career at 14 as a deckhand; worked up to become master of his own ship
- 1827 Married in Salem, Massachusetts, Martha Silsbee Babbage (d. 1837); three children
- 1831 Moved sixty or more of the descendants of survivors of the mutiny aboard "H.M.S. Bounty" from Tahiti to their old home on Pitcairn Island; flag constructed to honor him by women of Salem
- 1831-37 In 1831, as he was about to sail out of Salem, Massachusetts, harbor, said of flag as it was hoisted to the masthead of his ship, "Captain Charles Doggett," "There goes Old Glory!"; flag sailed twice around the world and once around the continent of Australia
- 1837 Wife, Silsbee, died; retired and moved to Nashville, where several brothers resided
- 1838 Married in Nashville Sarah Jane Parks (1823-1878); eight children.  
Was in business with two brothers, Henry and John; failed; brother Stephen opened a retail shoe store in Nashville. Worked as salesman and business agent in Nashville during Civil War; was a strong Unionist; was twice asked to surrender his flag to armed delegations of Nashvillians who called at his house; flew it twice over Capitol for short time
- 1862-64; 1864-64 Nashville city councilman  
Was unsuccessful candidate for mayor and Tennessee state legislature.  
Gave original "Old Glory" to his daughter, Mary Jane (Driver) Roland, who moved from Nashville to northeast Nevada in 1874 to be with her husband, a Union veteran; flag was given to Smithsonian Institution in 1922 by Mrs. Roland
- 1886 Died in Nashville, buried in City Cemetery. Historic marker placed at site of his former home, now 511 Fifth Avenue, South, Nashville

## CONTAINER LIST

### Box 1

1. Biographical sketches
2. Clippings
3. Correspondence
4. Scrapbook kept by Mary J. Roland, granddaughter of William Driver
5. Log (1831-1832) of the "Charles Doggett" (Mf. # 299)
6. Journal (ca. 1865-1873) of William Driver contains letters to Bishop Charles Todd Quintard and essay critical of Andrew Johnson (Mf. # 299)

## NAME INDEX

This is a name index of the correspondence only in the William Driver Papers . The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one.

Center, Mrs. George, 1937, granddaughter of William Driver

Christian, George B., 1937, Secretary to the President of United States, 1922

Cullom, Burr (3), 1937 re: "Old Glory"

Graf, J.E., 1937, re: "Old Glory"

Harding, Warren G., (2), 1922 re: thanking Mrs. Roland for gift of "Old Glory" to National Museum

Morris, Mrs. J.E., 1937, re: William Driver

Pittman, Key, 1922, United States Senator from Nevada re: gift of "Old Glory: to National Museum

Ravenel, W. de C., 1922, re: authenticity of "Old Glory"

Roland, Charles H., 1927, re: death of Mrs. Roland and authenticity of "Old Glory"