

Biography of a Sea Captain's Life, Written by Himself is the annotated diary of W.C. Flanders (1811-1891) relating the events and adventures of his life at sea. A valuable resource for a neglected period of maritime history.

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**BIOGRAPHY OF  
A SEA CAPTAIN'S  
LIFE:**

**WRITTEN BY HIMSELF**

**W. C. Flanders**

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ISBN 978-1-60145-877-3

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Printed in the United States of America.

Booklocker.com, Inc.  
2009

The original manuscript of the autobiography of Captain  
Wardwell Clement Flanders was donated to:

The Historic New Orleans Collection  
533 Royal Street  
New Orleans, LA

And

The Williams Research Center  
410 Chartres Street  
New Orleans, LA

By Dr. Robert L. Seegers, great, great, great grandson

And Dr. Sidney A. Seegers, great, great grandson

## Chapter One

I was born in the town of Landaff, State of New Hampshire, on 16 Feb. 1811. My father Joseph Flanders was a Captain in the Volunteer service in the war with Great Britain in 1812 and 1813. While absent in the service, his property was destroyed by fire during the night by the Indians, consuming the products of the farm, and the stock that were snugly housed. My mother fled with me in her arms, and hiding in an orchard nearby, remained among the drifts of snow until morning. At the close of the war, my father moved to Bristol, N.H. I was then about two years old. When five years of age, I went to Hopkinton, N.H., remaining with some friends [for] three years.

I then returned home, and was sent to New Market, N.H. and attended the Wesleyan Academy one year when it broken up, and the scholars returned home. My landlord having purchased an old horse for a friend near my home, I was persuaded to ride him on my returning home. I was put upon his back with saddlebags well stuffed with doughnuts and cheese and started on my journey home in Bristol, a distance of about one hundred miles. I soon found out the horse trotted so hard that I was compelled to walk or canter him, so I adopted and carried out the plan of thrashing him into a canter for

*W. C. FLANDERS*

about one mile, then allowing him to walk for another mile, so in the distance of one hundred miles, he moved by fits and starts galloping fifty miles, and walking an equal distance. Home was reached in about five days and I was tired, sore, and well shaken.

For several months I remained at home when father concluded to break up and move to Boston, Mass, which was done in the following order: The family with the exception of myself, were to move direct while I was to go upon a double team sleigh, laded with dressed hogs for market. The team started at a brisk gait, the village of Bristol lost to view, behind the hills and to this day has never more been seen by me. It seems like a dream of my life.

The hog sleigh I left at Concord after a thirty-mile drive, and I paid a short visit to some relatives in the vicinity, then with a niece of father's, we left in a stage for Boston, and after two days of terrible jolting we reached Boston, and were received by my parents who had preceded us.

For a year I drifted around with the boys, going to school and engaged in all manner of mischief, when I obtained a position in the newspaper office [of] the *Marine Telegraph*. Among other duties I was required to carry the papers in the morning to subscribers in a certain part of the city for one year, having to start long before daylight. The remainder of the day, and part of the night employed at a case setting and distributing

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type, for all of which services, a liberal salary of ten dollars per month was promptly paid.

The second year I was employed solely in the office all day, and about half the night at a case, upon same pay until the paper suspended, and I was again unemployed. I then obtained a position in the Marine Telegraph Observatory signaling by flags the arrival of vessels from sea. After operating one year with flags in this office, I was sent to Quarantine Station upon Rainsford Island in the outer harbor to transmit to the main office in the city the arrival of vessels, etc. At the raising of Quarantine (three months) I returned to the city and found I had been badly treated, my position in the main office having been permanently filled during my absence. It was then I *decided upon going to sea.*

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