

Virginia Research Facilities—Tidewater Region—Newport News

The Mariners' Museum Library

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Open Mon.-Fri., 1 p.m.-5 p.m.



Mariners' Museum Library

Repository

Since 2008, The Mariners' Museum Library has called the space within the Paul and Rosemary Triple Library home. Located on the campus of Christopher Newport University, the Museum Library now has the space and conditions in which to house and preserve over 2,000,000 items that focus on international maritime history and culture, or, more specifically, humankind's relationship with the sea and its tributaries.

Be Prepared

The Library is free and open to the public. While no appointments are necessary, we appreciate when patrons contact us ahead of time so we can prepare for your arrival and ensure that you can make the most of your time. Due to the rare and fragile nature of the Library collection, access to the stacks is not permitted. Staff members are available to assist you with your research and will bring requested materials out into the Reading Room, formally called The Herbert H. Bateman Maritime Research Center.

For the Library's online catalog, go to <http://www.marinersmuseum.org/catalogs/>. Directories on the Search our Catalogs page can be used to search for books, periodicals, and archival materials, while the Library's website (<http://www.marinersmuseum.org/library>) features archival finding aids and a list of popular plans and drawings. The Library Gallery (<http://librarygallery.marinersmuseum.org/>) highlights selected maps, manuscripts, and photographs as well as our online exhibits.

What to bring / What not to bring. Patrons are not permitted to bring scanners or cameras to capture images of Library resources. Staff members can provide photocopies for a fee, when it is safe for the materials. Alternatively, resources can be scanned and sent as low-resolution research files for a fee. Laptops are welcome and Wi-Fi is available through the University's network.

Long-distance research assistance. We do provide research assistance for patrons who are unable to conduct maritime research in person at the Library. Researchers can submit a request for research assistance through our website (<http://www.marinersmuseum.org/library/>) based on the depth of research required.

Resources of interest to genealogists:

Bibliography of passenger list resources at The Mariners' Museum Library:
http://www.marinersmuseum.org/sites/default/files/passenger_lists_bibliography.pdf

Port of Call blog about our passenger lists:
<http://www.marinersmuseum.org/blogs/library/?p=1638>

Holdings

The Library collections consist of books, magazines, rare books, manuscripts, maps and charts, vessel plans, newspaper clippings, photographs, Chris-Craft archives, and The Mariners' Museum's institutional records.

Although the Library does not carry extensive vital records for individual sailors or servicemen, we do hold numerous passenger lists, largely from pleasure cruises that took place between the late 1800s to the mid- to late-1900s. Several of these lists have been cataloged and scanned with OCR applied and soon will be accessible and word-searchable.

Collections

The Steamship Ephemera Collection. For genealogical purposes, the most interesting collection likely would be MS0015, the Steamship Ephemera Collection, which is best searched if you know the steamship company and vessel name. The content of this collection ranges from the end of the 1800s to the mid- to late-1900s and features passenger lists that were created and distributed by the steamship companies.

Ships' Papers and Logbook Collections. Searching for information regarding family history is always a bit tricky with our maritime collection, so it is not uncommon for us to find bits and pieces of answers in the most unexpected places. For instance, our collection of ships' papers can be useful for some as signatures of captains can often be found on bills of lading and other documents. Our logbook collection also features first-person accounts of life on board vessels, some of which are beautifully illustrated.

In general, when searching for your immigrant ancestor's vessel, knowing the port and date of departure, the port and date of arrival, and the ship captain's name will prove helpful. Just remember that our collection focuses primarily on vessels rather than on individuals, so we need as many clues as possible.

Contacts:

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