J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library of Independence Seaport Museum

Location:

Penn’s Landing
211 S. Columbus Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19106

Hours/Access Policy:
Museum: Open every day (except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day), 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Library: Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Reading room hours, appointment preferred: Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Link to Website:
Institutional: http://www.phillyseaport.org/
Library: http://www.phillyseaport.org/Museum_Library.shtml

Contact Information:
Institutional: 215-413-8655
Library: Megan Good, Director of Archives and Library; library@phillyseaport.org, 215-413-8640
Curatorial: Craig Bruns, Chief Curator; cbruns@phillyseaport.org, 215-413-8619

Overview:

Independence Seaport Museum’s J. Welles Henderson Archives & Library is one of the nation’s finest regional maritime research facilities, offering an impressive range of materials widely used by historians, authors, sailors, filmmakers, boat and model builders, students, and the merely curious from all over the world. The museum was founded in 1960 through the generosity of J. Welles Henderson, who was inspired throughout his life by maritime history and the importance of maritime industry to the Philadelphia region.

Civil War Collection:

Independence Seaport Museum holds records relating to maritime history during the Civil War that comprise a unique, interesting look into a part of the Civil War that is infrequently discussed. Materials include books, manuscripts, logbooks, journals, drawings, prints, sketches, ship models, photographs and artifacts. A significant portion of the collection deals with the various ships and ironclads that either fought during the war or were used by the U.S. Navy for military purposes. The collections are cared for by the J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library and Independence Seaport Museum’s Curatorial Department.
Collection highlights:

*Homefront/Civilians*

Manuscript records

1. Letter to Anna McGlure from Sophy (1861)
   a. Autograph letter signed by "Sophy," 1 November 1861, New Castle to Anna McGlure, Philadelphia. Sophy writes to her cousin, Anna McGlure, about her nephew's recent commission in the Navy and her concerns for his safety. Includes transmittal envelope.

2. Letter to Samuel P. Bates from unknown (1867)
   a. This letter, addressed to Samuel P. Bates, discusses the Union Volunteer Refreshment Saloon and its work in providing food and lodging to sick and wounded soldiers, freedmen, refugees, and deserters during the Civil War.

3. Letters to Elvira from George Wingate (1861-1862)
   a. Two letters from the Civil War period: Emily [?] writes to her friend Elvira about mutual friends and arranging a visit, and mentions that the family expect that her brother Edwin will be drafted soon. The letter from George Wingate, sent from Camp Brigham in Readville, Massachusetts, expresses a hope that Elivira will either visit or write to him.

Photograph

1. Union volunteer refreshment saloon [ISM 1968.13]

Drawings, sketches and portraits

1. Magazine correspondent sketches
   b. Drawing, “Rebel guerilla riflemen on the banks of the James River preparing to fire into the U.S. Mail Boat,” circa 1862 by F.H. Schell [ISM 1989.35.141]

2. Volunteer Refreshment Saloon at Federal Street Navy Yard, Philadelphia
   a. Painting, 1866 by Edward Moran [ISM 1967.291.1]
   b. Commemorative decorative tray, circa 1861 [ISM 1986.74.1]
   c. Various period prints

3. Portraits
   b. Rear-Admiral Samuel Francis du Pont, 1918 by Clawson Hammitt after Daniel Huntington [ISM 1982.62]
c. Various period prints depicting naval personalities

Books


Militaria and Diaries

Manuscript records

1. Henry A. Adams papers (1849-1877)
   a. Orders and appointments issued by the Navy Department to Henry A. Adams, Jr. and several letters of recommendation for his good conduct in service aboard ships such as *Jamestown* and *Brooklyn*.

2. Albert Family Papers (1859-1956)
   a. Materials include correspondence, journals, scrapbooks of John Seaman Albert and his brother Sidney Albert during their naval careers. These papers give insight into life aboard a U.S. naval vessel during the period just prior to the Civil War, political comments on world events and particularly events in the Orient, and events leading up to and during the Civil War.

3. George Assum prize money letter (1865)
   a. Letter from the Treasury Department awarding prize money to Marine Private George Assum for the capture of several ships by USS *Keystone State*.

4. John Bendernagle journal (1862-1863)
   a. Journal kept while serving aboard U.S. Steamer *Mohican*, beginning with the transfer of the ship to Captain Oliver G. Glisson, Oct. 17, 1862. The *Mohican* was charged with searching for Confederate privateers, especially the *Florida* and the *Alabama*, in the waters off South America. The entries record incidents aboard ship, including the rescue of a sailor who fell overboard, punishments of the crew, a court martial, and engagements with other vessels.

5. Gridley family collection (1860-1960s)
   a. Correspondence, photographs, newspapers, and newspaper clippings owned by the Gridley family, relating to Charles Gridley’s life, death, funeral, and memorialization. A letterbook contains commissions, orders, and appointments received by Gridley from his entrance into the Naval Academy in 1860 to his assignment as captain of the cruiser *Olympia* in 1897. Photographs show Gridley as a midshipman in the early 1860s, at Pompeii, Italy, in 1881, and at Fuzhou, China, in the early 1890s.

6. Andrew J. Hough papers (1859-1864)
   a. This collection consists of travel orders and assignments for Andrew J. Hough, acting carpenter, and later carpenter, of the U.S. Steamship
Lancaster; most papers are signed by Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles and retained copies of Hough's replies.

7. Letter to John Dahlgren from David Farragut (1862)
   a. Letter from David Gleason Farragut, dated 1862 January 12, Willard's Hotel, to John A. Dahlgren, Navy Yard, Washington. Reads in part: "Will you please to let me know the result of your experiments with the musket or rifle against the Boiler Iron at the different distances ...."

8. John Lenthall Collection of The Franklin Institute at Independence Seaport Museum
   a. The second and third group in this collection contains plans, drawings and diagrams relating to ships active in the Civil War. Almost all of the plans are the only known copies of the ships’ designs.

9. John Lenthall Papers (1794-1865)
   a. The collection consists of papers created by or retained by the shipbuilding firm of John Lenthall and Company of Philadelphia. Approximately two-thirds of the collection consists of lists of materials and bills of costs for the construction of specific ships. The remainder of the collection consists of lists of materials and bills of costs, and in some cases specifications, for many different types of vessels. Other types of material found in the collection are correspondence, usually letters of transmittal of technical documents, drawings of specific subassemblies of vessels, and written descriptions of vessels or subassemblies. A number of the ships served in the Civil War.

10. Letter to Mrs. Phoebe Le Count from Charles Le Count (1863)
    a. Letter, dated 1863 July 23, Ft. McHenry, to Phoebe Le Count, New Rochelle, New York. In the letter, LeCount relates news of his health and activities to his mother, and reads in part: "I have been to Fort Delaware as one of a guard over some Rebel Prisoners ..."

11. James P. Lindsay papers (1861-1945)
    a. This is a collection of orders, certificates, correspondence, and ship papers covering the period 1861 to 1908; the material documents his service as a ship's captain during the Civil War and his appointment as Harbor Master of the Port of Philadelphia. Correspondence discusses the seizure of the barque Fanny Laurie in 1862 and his orders to Lindsay as captain of the Welles, 1865.

    a. Loper patented a design for a rotary inclined propeller, used on ships in the Civil War.

13. William McKean papers (1831-1870)
    a. Correspondence from the Navy department to McKean and a memorandum by McKean describing his service with the U.S. Navy.

14. Midnight (USS) orders (1862-1864)
    a. Records of orders given when stationed in Gulf Blockade and the South Atlantic Blockade.

15. Francis H. Munroe purser’s logbook (1863)
a. Munroe was purser on the steamship Thomas A. Scott and the barque Floresta. Thomas A. Scott was a 19th century blockade runner.

16. Saranac and Lancaster logbooks (1862-1863)
a. Logbook of sloop of war Saranac (1862) and sloop of war Lancaster (1863). Volume comprises the ship's log for the U.S. steamer Saranac in the first 60 pages, and the ship's log for the U.S. flagship Lancaster in the last 132 pages. Entries range in content; all include daily weather conditions, others report latitude & longitude, distance traveled, crew activities, provisions received, or misconduct among the crew and subsequent punishments.

17. Henry S. Stellwagen papers (1820-1921)
a. Collection of papers documenting Stellwagen's service in the United States Navy. Materials include orders and appointments for Stellwagen; copies of general Navy orders related to uniforms; letter from Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles informing Stellwagen of his placement on the list of retired officers; letters related to Stellwagen's naval service; an 1848 report from the Franklin Institute of Science on a patent for a sounding apparatus invented by Lt. Stellwagen; and a patent certificate, 1842, including an illustration of the device. Cartes de visite of naval officers, including: Captain Percival Drayton (flagship Hartford), Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, Colonel William L. Long, Commander George Henry Preble, Rear Admiral S.P. Lee, Commodore A.S. Glisson, and others. The collection also includes a photograph of the steam and sail powered ships California and Unadilla, and photographs of a trophy and a plaque awarded in 1912 to the Colorado.

18. Tipton family papers (1862-1868)
a. The papers consist principally of the letters William Tipton sent home to his wife and sister in Philadelphia during his service as an engineer in the United States Navy aboard the ships Circassian and Sacramento during the Civil War. Twelve cartes de visite of William Tipton, his wife, his son, his second wife and his sister are also included in the collection.

19. James Whitaker papers (1862-1875)
a. Materials include: papers related to the invention of an underwater gunport, including descriptions, correspondence, clippings, and a photograph of a prototype; a copy of Naval Engineers Regulations for USS Pembina; letters and other papers related to Whitaker's naval service; and cartes de visite of naval officers, many labeled on the reverse with names, vessels, and location; and a group photograph taken at Valparaiso, Chile, 1869.

20. Wyoming logbook and journal (1861-1864)

Photographs

1. Fort Sumter [69.58.10-12]
2. Various Civil War ships and gunboats
Artifacts

1. **USS New Ironsides**, ironclad
   a. Builder’s half model, designed by William Cramp [ISM 1979.16]
   b. Ship model, USS *New Ironsides* with sail rigging [ISM 1998.4]
   c. Selection of period prints featuring the ironclad

2. **Ironclads**
   b. Selection of period prints

3. Salvage submarine, seized on the Delaware River in May 1861, thought then to be a Confederate vessel. This vessel then led the U.S. Navy to commission the construction of the USS *Alligator*, the navy’s first submarine.
   a. Ship model, Brutus de Villeroi’s 1859 Salvage Submarine, by Timothy M. Smalley [ISM 2004.29]

4. **USS Hartford**
   a. Ship model [ISM 1982.31]
   b. Various relics, fragment of ship fabric

5. **USS Wyoming**
   a. Gangway board with commemorative additions

6. **USS Keystone State**
   a. Sofa from the parlor of the 1853 side wheel steamer.

Books


**Reference Resources:**

Our holdings are cataloged on the Online Computer Library Center (*OCLC*) which is widely available in public libraries across the United States. More records for archival collections, such as manuscripts and photographs, are being added to *OCLC* all the time, but finding aids for some of these materials are only available on-site. To search *OCLC*, please visit [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org).

In addition to on-site finding aids, there are a number of finding aids that are available online:


Lenthall Papers: [http://www.phillyseaport.org/Lenthall_Papers-PhillySeaport.pdf](http://www.phillyseaport.org/Lenthall_Papers-PhillySeaport.pdf)

There are also a number of books, published after the Civil War, that may be of interest to researchers. The J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library holds approximately 130 books, ranging from items printed during the war to post-war and more modern resources. For the purpose of this guide, the books are divided into groupings based on date. The list below is divided into three sections: Reconstruction Era, Pre-20th Century and Selected Books from 1900-Present. Again, these items can also be found in *OCLC* along with many other books that relate to the Civil War.

1. Reconstruction Era
   a. U.S. Navy Department. *Prize Vessels: Letter from the Secretary of the Navy, in answer to a resolution of the House of April 30, relative to prize vessels*. [s.i.]: [s.n.], 1868.
   b. Barnes, John S. *Submarine warfare, offensive and defensive, including a discussion of the offensive torpedo system, its effects upon iron-clad ship systems and influence upon future naval wars...* New York: Van Nostrand, 1869.
   c. Walker, Jeanie M. *Life of Capt. Joseph Fry, the Cuban martyr; Being a faithful records of his remarkable career from childhood to the time of his heroic death at the hands of Spanish executioners; Recounting his experience as an officer in the U.S. and Confederate navies and revealing

2. Pre-20th century
   g. Our national hero: his life and achievements and battles in the Philippines: Containing a complete and glowing account of the grand achievements of the hero of Manila, his ancestry and early life, his brilliant career in the great Civil War, his famous victory in the harbor of Manila, etc... Chicago: National Publishing, 1899.

3. Selected books from 1900-present
   h. National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. American war songs... Philadelphia: [s.n.], 1925.