

PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 60

Frank Swift Papers

1938-1975

4 boxes
2.5 linear feet
Accession No. LB2015.13

Stephen Phillips Memorial Library

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PMM 60

Frank Swift Papers

Swift, Frank, 1902-1978

Papers, 1938-1975

4 boxes (2.5 linear feet)

Founder of the Maine windjamming industry; owner of Maine Windjammer Cruises.

Catalogs, advertisements, ephemera, and tax documents from Frank Swift's windjammer businesses. Though not a complete record of the beginnings of windjamming industry, this collection documents the material and financial world of Maine's passenger schooners during the industry's formative years. Some personal papers from Frank Swift, primarily financial, are here as well.

In English.

Rod Swift; Gift; 2019; LB2015.13

Organized into 3 series: Series I. Windjamming Business; Series II: Frank Swift Personal Papers; Series III: Rod Swift.

Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:

Swift, Frank, 1902-1978

MATTIE (schooner)

MERCANTILE (schooner)

Maine Windjammer Cruises (Camden, Me.)

Business enterprises—Maine—Camden

Finance, personal

Investments

Schooners

Ships—equipment and supplies

Tourism

Local Subject Headings:

Windjammers

Acquisition:

This collection was given to the Penobscot Marine Museum by Frank Swift's son, Rod Swift.

Restrictions

Access to all personal and employee tax material in this collection is restricted for 75 years after date of creation. The remainder of the collection is open for research, with no restrictions except where original copyright may be in effect.

Condition:

This collection has a slight moldy smell, though no active mold is visible, and minor damage from rusty fasteners or degraded rubber bands. It is otherwise in good condition.

Metal fasteners are still in place, and these, as well as unstable papers, may continue to degrade.

Related Materials:

The Swift family also donated a substantial collection of photographs from Frank Swift (LB2015.13; the Frank Swift Collection), as well as a number of artifacts from schooners that Swift operated as part of Maine Windjammer Cruises (2015.5).

Historical Note:

Frank Swift (1902-1978) was a sailor, artist and businessman who founded the Maine windjamming industry. He was born in Poughkeepsie, New York. His early career is a bit obscure: he is said to have been a jeweler and a silversmith; to have worked briefly aboard the Barber line of steamships; to have sailed on some of the last coasting schooners; and to have worked as a set designer and summer camp director in Maine summer camps. In 1935 or 1936, Swift decided to enter the passenger cruise business, carrying paying guests on sailing trips around Penobscot Bay. To this end, he chartered the coasting schooner MABEL for a season. Two years later, he had a fleet of three vessels and a steady stream of passengers, and the business grew from there.

Swift purchased or chartered schooners that had been active in the coasting trade, outfitted them with passenger cabins with few amenities, and took guests for week-long trips around the Penobscot Bay. By the late 1940s, he had a fleet of nine passenger schooners, including the MATTIE, MABEL, LOIS M. CANDAGE, MERCANTILE, and CLINTON, and another schooner that he used to carry cargo. He operated his fleet from Camden, Maine. In the late 1940s, he experimented with running a passenger canal boat on Southern rivers in the wintertime. He also operated the schooner MABEL from Freeport for a few years under the corporate name Vacations Under Sail, Inc., but soon returned her to Camden.

Swift's concept of overnight passenger cruises under sail proved popular, and, by the 1960s, had developed into a small industry with several operators based in Camden. Swift sold the business to Jim Nisbet in 1961. By that time, many of his old coasting schooners had aged out of utility, and the fleet consisted of the MATTIE (later renamed GRACE BAILEY) and MERCANTILE. In 1969, the two vessels were sold to Les Bex, and in 1982 sold again to Ray Williamson. They are still operating under the name Maine Windjammer Cruises today.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains business and personal records from Frank Swift and his schooner fleet from the 1940s through the 1960s, a time of growth and solidification for the windjammer industry.

Series I contains material related to Swift's fleet of passenger schooners. The first part of the series is made up of equipment catalogs, advertisements, order forms, and correspondence between Frank Swift and firms that designed and supplied mechanical and electrical equipment, paint and rigging material, food and galley supplies, and similar equipment in the 1950s and 60s. While not a complete record of maintenance or operations, this does illustrate the changing regulatory and material conditions as Swift modernized his fleet. There are also copies of advertisements and promotional articles about Swift's schooners that ran in national publications. The second part of the series is financial, primarily composed of corporate tax forms for the Schooner Hattie, Inc., and Vacations Under Sail, Inc., providing an annual summary of the profits of Swift's business.

Series II contains personal material from Frank Swift. A majority of this is financial, consisting of a book listing all Swift's investments and 35 years of personal tax returns, which, together, form a detailed account of personal and business finances. Access to the tax returns is restricted until 2050. There is also a scrapbook and folder of newspaper clippings, both about topics in maritime history, and letters between Swift and his long-time friend, artist Carroll Thayer Berry.

Series III contains research notes and news clippings from Frank Swift's son, Rod Swift, regarding his father's career and the vessels of Maine Windjammer Cruises.

Box and Folder List:

Series I. Windjammer Business

Box	Folder	
1	1	Equipment and supplies: stationary (see also: oversize material, box 4)
	2	Postcards
	3	Rigging and sails
	4	Charts
	5	Paints
	6	Heads and bilge pumps
	7	Engines (yawlboats)
	8	Batteries
	9	Radios and electronic equipment
	10	Food service
	11	Miscellaneous systems and supplies
	12	General marine catalogs
	13	Advertisements and magazine articles, 1938-1957 (see also: oversize, box 4)
	O.S.	Scrapbook with promotional material (oversize: in box 4)
2	1	Vessel Operation Report Forms, Army Corps of Engineers
	2	Schooner Mattie, Inc., blank checks
	3	Investment book, 1961-1973
	4	Papers stored in investment book, 1961-1973
	5	Corporate income tax returns, 1943-1949
	6	1950-1959
	7	1960-1965
	8	1966-1973
3	1	Excise tax returns, 1954-1965
	O.S.	Employee income tax withholding forms, 1955-1961 (Access restricted until 2036. In box 4.)
	2	Vacations Under Sail, Inc., corporate income tax returns, 1949-1953
	3	State of Maine, "Laws Relating to Corporations," 1972

Series II. Frank Swift, Personal Material

3	4	Letters from Janet Berry and Carroll Thayer Berry, 1953-1983
	5	Scrapbook, maritime history and pleasure craft
	6	Newspaper clippings, mostly articles by Fred Humiston
	7	Investment book, 1954-1966
	8	Papers stored with investment book, 1954-1966
	O.S.	Income tax returns, 1940-1975 (Access restricted until 2050. In box 4.)

Series III: Rod Swift

- 9 Research into Frank Swift and Maine Windjammer Cruises
- 10 Newspaper clippings about Frank Swift, c. 1970-2004
- 11 Advertisements and articles about Maine Windjammer Cruises, 1976-2011

Oversize:

- 4 1 Equipment and supplies: stationary
- 2 Advertisements and promotional articles, 1948-1957
- 3 Scrapbook with advertisements and promotional material

ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING IS RESTRICTED FOR 75 YEARS AFTER DATE PRODUCED

- 4 Schooner Mattie, Inc., employee income tax withholding forms, 1955-1961
- 5 Frank Swift, Maine individual income tax returns, 1970-73
- 6 Instructions for filing federal income tax, 1961-75
- 7 Frank Swift, Federal income tax returns, 1940-1954, 1956-1975 (bundled)