

# PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

Inventory for  
Manuscript Collection

**PMM 63**

**Lincoln Gilkey Family Papers**

1854-1947

2 boxes and 4 volumes  
2.5 linear feet  
Accession No. LB1997.39

**Stephen Phillips Memorial Library**

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# PMM 63

## Lincoln Gilkey Family Papers

**Gilkey, Lincoln, 1825-1895**

**P.L. Gilkey & Son**

Papers, 1854-1947

2 boxes and 4 volumes; 2.5 linear feet

Sea captains, grocers and tailors from Searsport, Maine.

Shipping, business, and limited personal papers from three generations of the Lincoln Gilkey family of Searsport, Maine. The bulk of the collection consists of bills, accounts, and other shipping records from Captain Lincoln Gilkey, dating from the 1850s to the 1880s, documenting his vessels' business in the transatlantic sugar trade. There are also four account books from P.L. Gilkey & Co., a grocery store in Searsport, Maine, owned by Lincoln Gilkey's son, Piam L. Gilkey, and a small amount of personal and family material.

In English.

Museum purchase; 1997; LB1997.39

This collection is organized in two series: Series I. Lincoln Gilkey; Series II. Piam L. Gilkey and children.

Finding aid available; folder level control

**Subject Headings:**

Gilkey, Lincoln, 1825-1895

P.L. Gilkey & Son

Searsport (Me.)

Business enterprises—Maine—Searsport

Coastwise shipping

Fruit trade

Grocers

Merchant mariners

Ship captains

Ships—equipment & supplies

Sugar trade

**Local Subject Headings:**

China trade

Transatlantic trade

West Indies trade

**Acquisition:**

This collection was purchased in 1997.

**Restrictions**

This collection is open for research. There are no special restrictions.

**Condition:**

The collection is mostly in good condition. Some papers show discoloration and mouse damage, as well as minor tears and bent edges. The ledger has mouse damage to the cover, dirt on the pages, and some dormant mold.

**Processing Note:**

This collection arrived secured in bundles and envelopes, presumably original to the Gilkey family. Where possible, the organization of these bundles has been preserved, leading to occasional inconsistencies in the chronological organization of the collection.

**Related Materials:**

More documents from Lincoln Gilkey's command of the bark DESIAH and brig MANSON are filed in PMM 32, the Vessel File Collection. There is also material in PMM 3, the Family Papers Collection.

**Historical Note:**

Lincoln Gilkey (1825-1895), son of Philip and Deborah Gilkey, was one of a family of sea captains from Searsport, Maine. Lincoln got his first command in the 1850s and sailed almost continuously until the 1880s. He specialized in the sugar trade for most of his career, sailing from Cuba and other Caribbean islands to ports in the coastal United States and to Europe. His commands in this business included, chronologically, the bark WILLIAM LARRABEE, brig B.K. EATON, bark DESIAH, brig MANSON, and bark CARRIE WYMAN. By the 1880s, he had transitioned to more global routes, calling at ports like San Francisco, Hiogo, and Surabaya, Java in the bark MARY GOODELL and ship CHARTER OAK. Almost all of Lincoln Gilkey's vessels were built or owned in Searsport, many of them by William McGilvery.

Lincoln Gilkey married Elsie Sawyer. They had six children: Frederick L. (1855-1937), Nathan F. (1857-1928), Eben S. (b. 1860), Piam L. (1864-1947), Philip R. (1863-1901), and Mary E. (1868-1947). Both Nathan and Philip R. Gilkey had long careers as sea captains. Piam L. Gilkey became a "clothing cutter" specializing in leather goods. He worked in Searsport most of his life, but occasionally went to Boston for employment.

In 1911, Piam and his son Clarence L. Gilkey (1888-1974) formed P.L. Gilkey & Son, a grocery business in Searsport. They were retailers, selling a range of dry goods and produce to customers in town. The business only lasted a few years. Clarence L. Gilkey served in World War I and settled in Bangor afterwards. Piam and his wife, Jennie M. Gilkey, had two other children: Ryan (1894-1918), who died in World War I, and Elsie (1890-1958), who lived in Searsport.

**Scope and Content:**

This collection contains material from three generations of the Lincoln Gilkey family of Searsport, Maine, primarily shipping records from vessels commanded by Captain Lincoln Gilkey and account books for P.L. Gilkey & Son, a grocery store in Searsport.

Series I contains material from Lincoln Gilkey's seafaring career, starting with his command of the bark WILLIAM LARRABEE in 1854 and ending with his time on the ship CHARTER OAK in the early 1880s. Gilkey sailed continuously through the Civil War, and this collection documents the developments and disruptions of the American merchant marine through the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

The bulk of Series I consists of accounts, charter parties, customs clearances, provisioning and supply bills, towing receipts, seamen's wage and slop accounts, and other documents from routine ship's business in port. Most of the voyages recorded were part of the West Indies sugar trade, both to Europe and the United States. Some voyages were solely coastal, with cargoes like ship timber, and others wholly transatlantic ventures carrying cargoes like petroleum and oranges. Gilkey's later voyages to the Pacific ports of Hiogo and Surabaya are more scantily documented. There is limited correspondence, mostly with family.

Series II contains material from Lincoln Gilkey's son, Piam L. Gilkey, and his family. The bulk of this is four account books from the P.L. Gilkey & Son grocery in Searsport. Three of these are daybooks, with an item-by-item record of foodstuffs purchased by Searsport

residents, and the fourth is a ledger. Series II also has two folders of family material collected by Piam's daughter, Elsie.

**Box and Folder List:**

Series I: Lincoln Gilkey

Box	Folder	
1	1	Shipping papers, bark WILLIAM LARRABEE, 1854-1855 (see also: oversize)
	2	Shipping papers, brig B.K. EATON, 1858-1861
	3	Shipping papers, brig B.K. EATON, 1857-1861 (bound as a packet)
	4	Shipping papers, brig B.K. EATON, 1857-1861 (see also: oversize)
	5	Shipping papers, bark JOHN WESLEY, 1861
	6	Shipping papers, bark DESIAH, 1863-1867 (see also: oversize)
	7	Shipping papers, brig MANSON, 1873-1874
	8	Shipping papers, bark CARRIE WYMAN, 1875-1876 (bound as a packet)
	9	Shipping papers, bark CARRIE WYMAN, 1877 (see also: oversize)
	10	Shipping papers, bark MARY GOODELL, 1880 (see also: oversize)
	11	Shipping papers, ship CHARTER OAK, 1882-1883 (see also: oversize)
	12	Shipping papers, other vessels or no vessel identified
	13	Seamen's protection certificates, 1862-1863
	14	Family correspondence and personal material
	15	Envelopes and bindings

Series II: Piam L. Gilkey & Children

Volume 1		P.L. Gilkey & Son, daybook, June – December 1911
	2	P.L. Gilkey & Son, daybook, January – July 1912
	3	P.L. Gilkey & Son, daybook, July – September 1912
	4	P.L. Gilkey & Son, ledger, June – August 1911; daily tallies, 1914-1915
Box	Folder	
1	16	Death certificate for Ralph L. Gilkey, 1918; genealogical notes
	17	Correspondence re: <i>Searsport Sea Captains</i> ; funeral notice for Lincoln Colcord, 1947

Oversize

2	1	Shipping papers, bark WILLIAM LARRABEE, 1854-1859
	2	Shipping papers, brig B.K. EATON, 1858-1860
	3	Shipping papers, brig B.K. EATON: notice of construction of Shell Keys Lighthouse, Louisiana, 1859
	4	Shipping papers, bark DESIAH, 1865-1866
	5	Shipping papers, bark CARRIE WYMAN, 1877
	5	Shipping papers, bark MARY GOODELL, 1880
	6	Shipping papers, ship CHARTER OAK, 1882-1883