Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 9
Robert B. Applebee Collection
Circa 1945 – 1979

52 volumes and 3 boxes
9 linear feet
Accession No. LB1972.1; LB1980. 220-46,
.248-55, .257, .281, .286-9, .291-2, .300, and .304-7;
LB2012.22; LB2013.31; and unaccessioned material

Stephen Phillips Memorial Library
Penobscot Marine Museum
11 Church St., Searsport, Maine 04974
penobscotmarinemuseum.org
207-548- 2529 ext. 212 │ libraryresearcher@pmm-maine.org
Copyright Restrictions

The material described herein is the physical property of the Penobscot Marine Museum. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors of the various items, or to their legal representatives, or to the Penobscot Marine Museum. For further information, consult the library staff.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research.” If a user later uses a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if fulfillment of the order is judged to be in violation of copyright law. It is the user’s responsibility to understand the copyright law concerning the use of the historical documents contained in this library.

Copyright © 2020 by Penobscot Marine Museum

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Stephen Phillips Memorial Library at the Penobscot Marine Museum.
Robert B. Applebee Papers

Applebee, Robert B., 1885-1979
Papers, c.1945 -1979
52 volumes plus 3 boxes (9 linear feet)
Customs officer, collector, researcher, and maritime historian.
Research materials, correspondence, scrapbooks, and other material from Robert B. Applebee, a customs official and maritime historian who focused on Maine-built ships. The bulk of the collection consists of unpublished volumes of Applebee’s encyclopedic research into ships built or registered in Maine customs districts. Correspondence and personal material are primarily related to Applebee’s research and the development of interest in American maritime history in the mid-nineteenth century.
In English
This collection is organized into 2 series: Series I. Compiled Research; and Series II. Correspondence and Personal Material.
Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:
Applebee, Robert B., 1885-1979
Penobscot Marine Museum
Navigation--history
Schooners
Shipbuilding
Ships
U.S. Customs Service

Acquisition:
The bulk collection was donated to the Penobscot Marine Museum by Mrs. Robert B. Applebee shortly after Applebee’s death. Some correspondence, mostly related to enquiries through the Penobscot Marine Museum, was donate by Robert B. Applebee in 1972. A small group of Applebee’s research notes were added to the collection by Joyce Kinney in 2013, and a postcard addressed to Applebee donated by Sturgis Haskins in 2012.

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

Condition:
Much of the unbound material in this collection is on cheap, acidic paper or carbon copy paper, and therefore fragile. Staples and other metal fasteners are common and require care in handling. Covers on Applebee’s scrapbooks and “Maritime Bits and Pieces” are fragile, and the covers on volume 2 of the scrapbook are completely detached.
Processing Note:
Applebee’s correspondence was organized by two different systems: one, chronological, for general correspondence, much of it related to queries addressed to the Penobscot Marine Museum; and a second, roughly topical and by sender. The former group was given directly to the Museum by Robert B. Applebee in 1972; the latter was likely donated by his widow in 1980. While likely original, the system is not perfect and there may be related correspondence in both groupings.

Related Materials:
When Mrs. Applebee donated this collection, she also donated many of Applebee’s reference books and his collection of WPA transcripts of customs registers and enrolments. These are available in the reading room in the Phillips Memorial Library. The library also has several thousand photographs collected by Applebee, accession nos. LB1980.41, 220-227, and .302-303.

PMM 13, the US Customhouse collection, contains material likely salvaged by Applebee from several Maine Customhouses, which may also have figured in his research.

Applebee’s compilations of information on vessels built in Maine, frequently used for reference, have been photocopied onto acid free paper. They have also been re-typed, with some additions, by Jon Johansen. These typescripts are available in the Library’s reading room.

Another collection of Applebee material is at the Peabody Essex Museum, in the Robert B. Applebee collection.

Historical Note:
Robert B. Applebee (1885-1979) was a maritime historian and researcher particularly interested in vessels built in Maine. He was born in New Brunswick, Canada, but immigrated with his family to Maine as a child. Applebee served in World War I, then joined the marine department of the U.S. Customs Service. In this capacity, he spent time in all of the Maine customhouses, surveying and compiling their information on vessels in his spare time. He was later transferred to the Washington, D.C. office and retired as the Deputy Collector in Charge.

After retirement, Applebee moved to Searsport, Maine, with his wife Amy Ernestine (Graham) Applebee. Already a well-known maritime historian, he continued to focus on shipbuilding and vessel data, compiling exhaustive lists of vessels built or registered in customs districts up and down the Maine coast, much of it drawn from customs records themselves. He also collected documents, photographs, artifacts, and books related to Maine’s maritime history, including an extensive collection of material salvaged from Maine customhouses. He served as a historian for the Penobscot Marine Museum for many years and maintained an active correspondence with other mid-twentieth century maritime historians, entertaining many in his Searsport home.

Scope and Content:
This collection contains research materials, correspondence, notes, scrapbooks, and other material from Robert B. Applebee. The bulk of the collection is in Series I, which consists of unpublished volumes of Applebee’s meticulous research into vessels built in Maine. These, primarily based on ship registers, enrolments, and other customs documents, are organized by vessel and include descriptive information like builder, dimensions, owners, and captains. Using similar sources, Applebee also created volumes of information on vessels registered in Castine, regardless of where they were built, and Maine-built vessels registered in Massachusetts ports. This series also includes binders of Applebee’s research into individual vessels, with photographs, as well as scrapbooks of postcards and clippings that reflect Applebee’s ongoing interest in the maritime world.
Series II contains correspondence, research notes, and other personal material from Robert B. Applebee. Most of this is directly related to Applebee’s research interests or his work as the historian for the Penobscot Marine Museum. This series also contains scripts for talks on maritime history that Applebee gave to a variety of groups in coastal Maine, and rough research notes that likely developed into the completed works of Series I. Though there is little directly personal material here, this series records Applebee’s role in the network of maritime historians, museum professionals, and enthusiasts during a period of burgeoning interest in the American maritime past.

**Series Outline:**

Series I. Compiled Research:

- Vessels built in Maine Customs Districts
- Vessels recorded in Maine and other Customs Districts
- Individual vessel notes and photos

Series II. Correspondence and Personal Material:

- Correspondence—by correspondent or topic
- Correspondence—general (by date)
- Research Materials
- Speeches and talks
- Personal material

**Container List:**

**Series I: Compiled Research:**

Vessels built in Maine, by customs district:

Volume 1  

1  Vessels built in Addison, Maine
2  Vessels built in Belfast and Northport (photocopy)
3  Vessels built in Camden & Rockport
4  Vessels built in the towns of Cherryfield, Harrington, and Millbridge
5  Vessels built in Deer Isle
7  Vessels built in the Frenchman’s Bay District
8  Vessels built in the Kennebunk District
9  Vessels built in Lincolnville
10  Vessels built in Nobleboro, Newcastle, Damariscotta and Bristol
11  Vessels built in the Passamaquoddy Customs District
12  Vessels built in Penobscot River Towns
13  Vessels built in the Portland & Falmouth Customs District
14  200 Vessels Built in the Portland & Falmouth Customs District
15  Vessels built in Rockland
16  Vessels built in Saco & Biddeford
17 Vessels built in Thomaston
18 Vessels built in Vinalhaven
19 Vessels built in Waldoboro
20 Vessels built in Warren
21 Vessels built in Medford, MA
22 Vessels built in St. Andrews, N.B. and St. Stephens, N.B., and Strong’s Shipyards
23 Volume containing:
   Vessels built in Maine towns as shown by histories, documentation at other ports, and from other sources.
   Vessels built in Medford, MA, 1849-1873
   Vessels built as shown on sailing ship cards
   Vessels built in U.S. & under Norwegian flag
   Vessels built, miscellaneous items.
24 Vessels built in Maine towns, miscellaneous, v. 1
25 Vessels built in Maine towns, miscellaneous, v. 2

Vessels documented in Maine and other customs districts:
26 Vessels documented in the Castine Customs District, “Some Castine Vessels,” v. 1, A - Lark
27 Vessels documented in the Castine Customs District, “Some Castine Vessels,” v. 2, Laura - Z
28 Vessels documented in the Penobscot-Castine District
29 Vessels documented in the Wiscasset Customs District
30 Maine-built vessels documented in Boston, 1789-1795
31 Maine-built vessels documented in Boston, 1789-1800, 1841-1850
32 Maine-built vessels documented in Newburyport, MA
33 Maine-built vessels documented in Newburyport, Salem & Gloucester, MA
34 Index of vessels documented in the District of Bath
35a GFB Index
35b The Fleet of the J.S. Winslow & Company

Vessel research notes, with photographs:
36 Records #1-124
37 #125-250
38 #251-374
39 #375-500
40 #501-624
41 #625-750
42 #751-876
43 #877-1002
44 #1003-1126
45 #1127-1206
   Papers stored loose in these volumes (removed to box 3 folder 13)

Scrapbooks:
46 Scrapbook, postcards, v. 1
47 Scrapbook, postcards, v. 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence (from notebooks): Grace Nash Pierce, Harry D. Hamilton, Horace A. Hilton, James McLeod, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence, John Lyman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence with Peabody Essex Museum staff: Walter Muir Mitchell, Charles H.P. Copeland, Ernest Stanley Dodge, Marion V. Brewington, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence with Bath Marine Museum (Maine Maritime Museum) staff: Frederick E. Drake, Charles E. Burden, Harold Brown, Nancy C. Brown, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence with Ethel Ritchie; material about William A. Fairburn and <em>Merchant Sail</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Miscellaneous correspondence: information on vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Miscellaneous correspondence: Canadian museums, Lois C. Lynch, and others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Correspondence, general: 1953 – 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1966 – 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1968 – 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1971-1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research notes and materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Research notes and correspondence, Frenchman’s Bay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2   | 2      | Research notes and material: shipbuilding in Pembroke  
Oral history with Captain Stephen W. McDonough  
Map of telegraph lines, Central and South American Telegraph Co. |
<p>| 3   | 3      | Research notes and transcripts: history of Franklin, Ellsworth, and Bangor |
| 4   | 4      | Compiled notes: shipbuilding and shipping fleets |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Notes on coal barges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Notes and drafts on sea-going superstitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Miscellaneous research notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reports on the U.S. Customs service, several authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“An International Community on the St. Croix” by Harold A. Davis, taken from The Maine Bulletin Second Series no. 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>“The Troop Fleet in the Days of Sail,” Department of Canadian History, 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Manuscript on schooner WELCOME RETURN, John H. Wilterding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Archaeological report on the bark GRIFFON, compliments of Mrs. Walter Remick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>“Viking Ships and Viking Shipyards,” talk before the Steamship Society of America, speaker unidentified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Speeches and talks**

Vol. 51 Speeches by Robert B. Applebee, transcripts, v. 1 (loose volumes)

Vol. 52 Speeches by Robert B. Applebee, transcripts, v. 2 (loose volumes)

| 3 | 15 | “Talks and Comments,” transcripts, bound |
|   | 16 | Talks, transcripts |
|   | 17 | “Sailing Ship History,” a talk given by Robert B. Applebee for the Searsport Masonic Lodge, 1956 |

**Personal**

| 18 | Personal material |
| 19 | Receipts for gifts to the Peabody Essex Museum |
| 20 | Loose material from vessel image volumes |