

PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 94

John H. Lane Papers

1858 – 1882

4 volumes
.75 linear feet
Accession no. LB2021.3

Stephen Phillips Memorial Library

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PMM 94

John H. Lane Papers

Lane, J.H. (John H.), 1829-1899

Papers, 1858-1882

4 volumes (.75 linear feet)

Merchant and shipbuilder in Searsport, Maine

Three ledgers and a daybook containing financial records of J. H. Lane's activities as a grocer, ship chandler, ship owner, and ship builder in Searsport the mid-nineteenth century. Entries are usually detailed, describing items sold, money lent or paid for various vessels, and materials purchased and wages paid for ships built in Searsport. At least two firms, the J.H. Lane & Co. store and Carver & Lane, shipbuilders, are represented.

In English

Elizabeth Nickels; Gift; LB2021.3

Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:

Lane, J.H. (John H.), 1829-1899

Carver & Lane (Searsport, Me.)

Searsport (Me.)

Business enterprises—Maine—Searsport

General stores

Grocers

Ship chandlers

Shipbuilding

Shipowners

Ships—equipment & supplies

Ships—maintenance & repair

Acquisition:

Much of this collection was donated by Miss Elizabeth Nickels.

Restrictions

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

Condition:

This collection is mostly in good condition. The covers are worn, but otherwise stable.

Related Materials:

Papers from one of John H. Lane's vessels, the brig J.H. LANE, are in PMM 51.

Historical Note:

John H. Lane (1829-1899) was a merchant and shipbuilder in Searsport, Maine who was deeply involved with many aspects of the town's maritime business. He started his career as a clerk, likely for shipbuilder and merchant William McGilvery, with whom he was boarding in 1850 and with whom he maintained a business relationship into the 1870s. Lane was in business on his own account by 1858, when he was running a grocery, general store, and ship outfitting business known as J.H. Lane & Co. Lane became more involved with maritime business over time, shifting his focus from grocery to ship chandlery and becoming the managing owner of

several Searsport-built ships. He entered the shipbuilding business in the 1870s as part of the firm Carver & Lane, often working with master ship builder Josiah Dutch. Lane also began selling coal in the 1870s; this became his primary business for the last two decades of his career.

J.H. Lane married Mary E. Carver in 1855. They had one daughter, Lizzie C. Lane, for whom Lane named a schooner built in 1874.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains three ledgers and a daybook from J.H. Lane & Co., covering nearly three decades of Lane's business activities in Searsport. Lane kept his retail, shipbuilding, and ship management accounts in the same ledgers, often combined if an individual was involved in more than one type of business.

Retail sales make up the bulk of the entries in the earliest ledger, dating to 1858 and 1859. Most of these are for groceries and domestic items, with a few entries for provisioning and outfitting ships. Shipbuilding, ship chandlery, and ship management are much more prominent in the ledgers from the 1860s. Accounts for individual vessels are extensive when Lane was directly involved in the building process, listing materials and tools, wages worked by individual shipwrights, and money paid by shareholders in the vessel. Entries for retail sales of ship chandlery and groceries are likewise detailed. Sums lent or paid for ship management are listed, but often without explanation. The latest volume, a daybook dating from 1874 to 1882, likewise contains substantial entries related to shipbuilding and ship management, as well as sales of coal to Searsport residents.

Box and Folder List:

MS 59	Ledger, J.H. Lane & Co., 1858-1859
MS 124	Ledger, J.H. Lane & Co., 1862-1865
MS 119	Ledger, J.H. Lane & Co., 1868-1873
MS 220	Daybook, J.H. Lane & Co., 1874-1882