

# **Philadelphia Maritime Exchange Records**

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Independence Seaport Museum, J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Independence Seaport Museum, J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library
<b>Title</b>	Philadelphia Maritime Exchange Records
<b>Call number</b>	2
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1870-1967
<b>Extent</b>	100 linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English

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## Biography/History

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The Philadelphia Maritime Exchange was organized in 1875 and incorporated in 1882 as a not-for-profit corporation with the stated mission of enhancing the commercial viability of the Port of Philadelphia. Its membership throughout its existence has encompassed the wide variety of individuals and business involved with trade via the Delaware River. From its inception, one of the main functions of the Exchange has been to decrease turnaround times on ships in the port through the monitoring and documenting of ship movements on the lower Delaware. Through the use of its various reporting stations along the eighty-eight nautical miles from the Delaware Breakwater to the city of Philadelphia, the organization has tracked ship movements and cargoes during its entire existence. This information, in turn, has then been relayed to the central office in Philadelphia in order to be made available to the organization's membership. From its inception, the Exchange has also been involved in the physical enhancement of the port, including lobbying for government assistance with improvements at both the state and national levels.

## Scope and Contents

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This collection consists of over 300 volumes containing handwritten entries recording information deemed to be essential to commercial trade on the river by the Philadelphia Maritime Exchange (PME). This includes documentation of ship arrivals and departures, ship cargoes, ship movements on the river, and required government documentation.

The volumes are separated into subgroups according to the titles given on the volumes. Each of these subgroups are arranged into larger groups according to the primary information contained within. For instance, the "Arrival" volumes make up one subgroup within the "VOLUMES CONTAINING INFORMATION ON ARRIVALS AND CLEARANCES" group. More information on each group can be found in the scope and content note for the respective groups.

This collection offers a number of challenges for usage in that the volumes are all chronologically based and there is only rarely an alphabetical index according to ship name (except for 1921-1955). In addition, there are occasional gaps in coverage for most of the subgroups. However, in the first group containing information on arrivals and clearances, the volumes listed under the names "Arrivals--Foreign and Coastwise," and "Clearances" are nearly complete from the beginnings of PME in 1875 to 1967. Thus, in many cases, the most efficient entry into the collection is to consult one of these two volumes for the date range of interest (particularly if one is searching for a specific ship and has an approximate date that the ship came or went from Philadelphia). Once the particular ship is found, the date of arrival or clearance can often be used to access supplementary information in other volumes, such as cargoes or ship movements along the river.

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## Administrative Information

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Independence Seaport Museum, J. Welles Henderson Archives and Library

### Use Restrictions

The collection consists in large part of oversize volumes (approx. 14x18x2.5 inches), and a lesser amount of smaller sized volumes. The volumes are in reasonably good condition, although some of the leather bindings are beginning to degrade to a fine red powder (red rot) and have loose spines. Repository staff will assist researchers in handling these volumes.

## Related Materials

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### Related Collections

Hagley Museum and Library Philadelphia Maritime Exchange Records, 1875-1957 Call Number: Manuscripts and Archives, 1380 5.5 Linear Ft.

Information on ship arrivals and clearances can also be found in back issues of the Philadelphia Inquirer, in the "Marine News" or "Shipping News" section.

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## Published Sources on the Philadelphia Maritime Exchange

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--Philadelphia Maritime Exchange, Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Maritime Exchange (Philadelphia: Dando Printing and Publishing Company). Note: These yearly reports were put out by the Philadelphia Maritime Exchange from its inception and contain a plethora of information such as updates on their reporting stations, governmental lobbying activities of the Exchange, monthly and yearly cumulative totals of the port's shipping activity, rules and regulations of the both the Exchange and the Port of Philadelphia.

--Hugh N. Emerson, Eighty-eight Nautical Miles on the Delaware: The Philadelphia Maritime Exchange, 1875-1950 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Maritime Exchange, 1950)

--Frank H. Taylor, The Handbook of the Lower Delaware: Ports, Tides, Pilots, Quarantine Stations, Light-House Service, Life-Saving and Maritime Reporting Stations (Philadelphia: George S. Harris & Sons, Printers, 1895)

**Volumes containing information on Arrivals and Clearances**

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**Collection Inventory**

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**Volumes containing information on Arrivals and Clearances, 1875-1967.****Group Scope and Content note**

This group consists of those volumes that are primarily related to the documentation of ship arrivals and clearances. Along with the ship names and the date of sail, these volumes also often include the name of the ship's captain, the port sailing from or to, and occasionally, information on the ship's cargo and the owner.

The most complete set of records in terms of chronological coverage are contained in the two subgroup volumes entitled "Arrivals" and "Clearances." Both of these subgroups host nearly complete chronological coverage from 1875 to 1967. This group also contains an extensive run of indexes that provide an alphabetical guide according to ship name, running from 1921 to 1955, with only the few years missing that are listed.

**Arrivals--Foreign and Coastwise, April 1, 1875-September 30, 1967. 38 Volumes.****Missing date ranges**

August 5, 1963-September 13, 1966

**Existence and Location of Copies**

The first 15 volumes of the "Arrivals--Foreign and Coastwise" were microfilmed onto five reels. These span the date range from April 1, 1875-August 5, 1902.

## Clearances

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**Clearances, April 1, 1875-September 30, 1967. 35 Volumes.**

**Export Cargo--Clearance Book, 1922-1935. 1 Volume (smaller).**

**Philadelphia Clearances--Vessels in Foreign Trade, July 3, 1940-July 17, 1942. 2 Volumes (smaller).**

**Clearances--Foreign and Coastwise, 1917-1918. 1 Volume (smaller).**

**Philadelphia Arrivals and Clearances/Arrivals [alphabetical index], 1921-1955. 33 Volumes (smaller).**

**Missing date ranges**

Missing 1925-26, 1942

**Philadelphia Arrivals--"Vessels not to be published on a/c War in Europe", September 13, 1939-August 22, 1940. 1 Booklet.**

**Philadelphia Clearances--"Vessels not to be published on a/c War in Europe", September 12, 1939-July 3, 1940. 2 Booklets.**

**Arrivals and Clearances--Cunard Line, 1939-1940. 1 Booklet.**

**Miscellaneous Volumes, 1877-1945.**

**Scope and Content note**

This final group contains the numerous subgroup volumes that have short chronological runs. The volumes in the various subgroups document events such as ship disasters; ship traffic and contents in the

**Disasters--Index**

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New York port; lists of captains, ships arriving in Philadelphia from Britain; and a record of those ships trading coastwise.

**Disasters--Index, 1923-1927. 1 Volume (small).**

**Marine Casualties--Delaware Bay and River & Atlantic Coast between Sandy Hook and Cape Charles, January 4, 1896-January 21, 1928. 5 Volumes (small) Volume 4 missing.**

**Missing date ranges**

July 1, 1913-May 8, 1919

**Exports from New York for Europe**

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**Exports from New York for Europe, December 4, 1897-December 30, 1899. 1 Volume (small).**

**New York--[indexes] Arrivals and Clearances, 1924-1929. 2 Volumes (small).**

**No title [mail], 1900-1911. 1 Volume (small).**

**No title [newspaper clippings of market conditions], 1877-1884. 1 Volume (small).**

**Captains Book [also list agents], 1942. 1 Volume (small).**

**Record of American Vessels Trading Coastwise with Philadelphia, 1901-1920. 2 Volumes (small).**

**Philadelphia Arrivals of British Vessels, June 12, 1941-June 19, 1945. 1 Volume (small).**

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**Volumes containing information on Ship Cargoes, 1875-1942.**

**Group Scope and Content note**

The volumes in this group contain more in-depth information on the cargoes of the various ships--both for individual ships, and the cumulative ship totals for a given time period. The date range coverage for this group as a whole is not as complete as for the "Arrivals and Clearances" group. For individual ship cargoes, there are no outward coastwise manifests for 1875-1909, however, after this time period, outward manifest information can be found in the "Freights and Charters" volumes within this group. The most extensive cumulative documentation of ship cargoes can be found in the "Exports from Philadelphia" volumes that include coverage for much of the first two decades of the twentieth century.

**Inward Manifest--Coastwise**

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**Inward Manifest--Coastwise, April 7, 1875-February 7, 1883. 1 Volume.**

**Inward Manifest--Foreign, April 1, 1875-January 30, 1909. 13 Volumes.**

**Outward Manifest--Foreign, April 2, 1875-January 25, 1908. 13 Volumes.**

**Freights and Charters--Inward and Outward Bound, November 1, 1909-January 24, 1942. 7 Volumes.**

**Exports from Philadelphia--Foreign, January 4, 1902-December 17, 1921. 3 Volumes.**

**Commercial Statistics--Port of Philadelphia, January 8, 1887-1934 (Bulk, 1887-1900) . 2 Volumes.**

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**Volumes pertaining to Ship Movements along the Lower Delaware River, 1875-1967.**

**Scope and Content note**

The volumes within this group contain documentation of vessel sighting, as observed from the stations of the Philadelphia Maritime Exchange, along the Delaware Bay and River. Through the years of PME's existence, reporting stations occupied a number of different locations along the course of the river. For instance, a station was always present near the mouth of the river, but the location of that station moved over time, from a perch on the Delaware Breakwater, to a reporting station in Lewes, and finally to the position it occupies today at Cape Henlopen. At various times, other reporting station sites included Thurlow, Reedy Island, New Castle, Marcus Hook, Chester, and Delaware City.

In addition to ship sightings, other information can be found in at least some of these volumes, ranging from weather conditions, to vessel destination or port of origin, to the name of the vessel's master. Entries also typically include whether the vessel was inbound or outbound.

The most complete information in this group is provided by the three subgroups that consist of oversized volumes. These three subgroups, under the names of "Delaware Breakwater," "Delaware Bay and River

**Delaware Breakwater**

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News," and "Inward and Outward Bound--Delaware Bay," all contain the same basic information and are chronologically contiguous, thus providing nearly complete coverage for the years 1875-1967.

**Delaware Breakwater, October 15, 1875-February 15, 1881. 8 Volumes.**

**Delaware Bay and River News, February 16, 1881-October 2, 1887. 16 Volumes.**

**Inward and Outward Bound--Delaware Bay and River, October 2, 1887-September 17, 1967. 128 Volumes.**

**Missing date ranges**

November 28, 1914-June 22, 1915 November 12, 1947-September 21, 1948 April 4, 1963-May 17, 1965

**Delaware Bay and River, August 27, 1917-May 15, 1918. 1 Volume (small).**

**Delaware Bay and River--"Vessels not to be published on a/c War in Europe", September 13, 1939-August 22, 1940. 1 Booklet.**

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**Volumes pertaining to Vessel Licensing, Measurement, and Ownership, 1870-1953.**

**Scope and Content note**

This group consists of those volumes pertaining to governmental regulation of the vessels. Found in this group are forty-nine years of records of the inside measurements of ships (admeasurement), necessary for computing the carrying volume of each vessel. The group also includes a relatively short record of licenses for ships under twenty tons that covers a four year period. Lastly, the group contains volumes that hold affidavits swearing to the captain's citizenship and a pledge that he will not defraud the government of revenue due it.

**Tonnage Admeasurement**

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**Tonnage Admeasurement, March 26, 1870-December 22, 1919 . 46 Volumes.**

**Record of License of Vessels Under 20 Ton, July 5, 1911- October 26, 1915. 5 Volumes.**

**Record of Oath or Affirmation of New Master, December 11, 1915-January 19, 1953. 2 Volumes.**