Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of handbills, broadsides, leaflets, books, business cards, advertisements, insurance forms, wreck reports, passenger lists, baggage tags, freight manifests, rate cards, correspondence on letterhead stationery, booklets, newspaper clippings, postcards, menus, periodicals, manuals, photographs, engravings, woodcuts, sketches, bills of landing, receipts, catalogues, ledgers, journals, blueprints, purchase orders, broadsides, brochures, custom forms, rate cards, schedules, shipping and receiving documents, early steam guide, timetables, lithographs, announcements, etc.

Maritime pamphlets include French shipping bounties, British Empire fleets, Netherlands ship model.

Materials trace the history and development of steamships, particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Thus, to speak roughly, the 1850s saw the iron screw replacing the wooden paddle steamer; the later 1860s brought the compound engine, which effected so great an economy in fuel that the steamship, previously the conveyance of mails and passengers, began to compete with the sailing vessel in the carriage of cargo for long voyages; the 1870s brought better accommodation for the passenger, with the midship saloon, improved state-rooms, and covered access to smoke rooms and ladies cabins.

Series 1: Shipping Companies

Contains information relating to the following shipping companies: American Steamship Company; British and American Steam Navigation Company; Bush Philadelphia and Wilmington; Champion Transportation Company; Clyde Steamship Company; Cunard Line; Empire Line for Savanah; Erie and Western Transportation Line; Fall River Line; Grace Line; Great Western Steamship Company; Hamburg American; Harpswell Steamboat Company; Holland-America; Hudson Navigation Company; Inman and International Steamship; Liverpool, Melbourne and Oriental Steam Navigation Company Limited; Lorillard Steamship Company; Luckenbach Shipping Company; Mallory Steamship Company; Merchants Transportation Company; Metropolitan Steamship; Mississippi and Dominion Steamship Company; Ottawa Navigation; Philadelphia and New York Delaware and Raritan; Philadelphia, Richmond and Norfolk; Philadelphia and Southern Mail Steamship; Red Star Line; State Steamship; Steam Propeller Company; Swift Sure Lines; and White Star Line.
Series 2: Ship Builders

Series 3: Related Materials

Series 4: Publications

For more information contact the Archives Center at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270