

Discover!

GRADES 5–8

On The Water: Stories from Maritime America

Find these objects.

They have stories to tell about maritime America.



Slave Ship Model ▶ *Forced Crossings*

Demand for labor on plantations in the New World fueled the transatlantic slave trade. Look at this model of a typical 1700s slave ship. Could enslaved people below decks stand up? How did they get fresh air? Or food and water? ▶ **Go to the “Life at Sea” audio station across the way and listen to the selection by Olaudah Equiano.**

Francis Life-Car ▶ *Shipwrecks*

In the 1830s and 1840s, crossing the ocean by ship was risky. People immigrating to the United States sometimes died in shipwrecks. Inventors like Joseph Francis designed new devices for saving people. ▶ **How many different models of life-saving inventions can you find in the case? How were they used?**



To learn more about the life-car, visit the WebQuest at americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/info/resources.html



Gold Nugget from Sutter's Mill ▶ *To California by Sea*

The discovery of this little piece of gold started the California gold rush. What happened when thousands of people emigrated to California? ▶ **Find the “A Gold Rush Journal” panel and read entries from the journal Alexander Van Valen kept as he sailed to California to look for gold!**

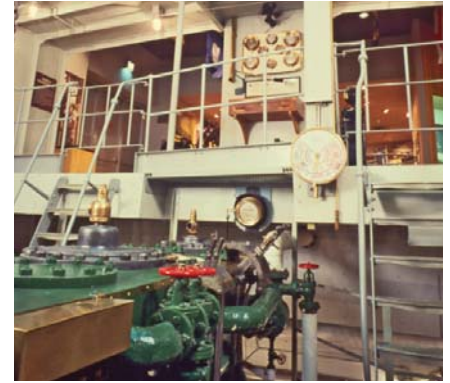
Whaleboat ▶ *Commercial Fishers*

Crews on large whale ships used small boats like this one to hunt and kill whales. On voyages that lasted up to four years, the men sometimes had to “work like horses.” Other times, they were bored while searching for whales. ▶ **Listen to the songs and look at the objects. What four things can you learn about life aboard a whale ship?**



Oak Engine Room ▶ *Waterway Perils*

Look down into the engine room and find the round object labeled with the words full, half, and slow. The engineer used this engine order telegraph after receiving orders from the captain about how fast the ship should go. What other directions are listed? ▶ **Watch the video of crews working aboard ships like the *Oak*. What was the job of the *Oak*?**



Titanic Camera ▶ *“Comfort, Courtesy, Safety, Speed”*

When the 705 people who survived the sinking of the *Titanic* were rescued by the *Carpathia*, the only person on board who had a camera was eighteen-year old Bernice Palmer. This is her camera and a few of the photographs she took. ▶ **Name some of the different ways that you could capture a historical moment today.**

Learn more about Bernice Palmer’s camera and her place in history at objectofhistory.org/guide/moments/

Liberty Ship Model ▶ *Merchant Seamen*

Look at this model of a Liberty Ship. What did the crew use to unload cargo from the hold of the vessel? ▶ **Look up your birthday on the “Liberty Ships” interactive. How many ships were launched that day? Look at the next six days and add up the number of ships that were built.**



Containership ▶ *Global Connections*

This massive ship carries 11,000 twenty-foot long containers filled with products. In port, containers are offloaded onto trucks or railcars for transport inland.

▶ **Look at the tag on your shirt. If it says it was made in a country other than the United States, it probably arrived on a containership.**

Learn more: americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater

Real Stories. Real Stuff.



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
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