Witherill Collection
Mystic Seaport

A sampling of exhibit items

Michelle I. Turner
1. TITANIC
Ticket to TITANIC launch at Belfast May 31, 1911

2020.39.7208 An admission ticket to the May 31, 1911 launch of the RMS TITANIC at Belfast in Northern Ireland. The ship was constructed by Harland & Wolff at their Belfast shipyard starting in 1909. Over 100,000 people witnessed the launch in the spring of 1911. At the time of its launch, TITANIC was the largest man-made object ever to be moved.
“The iceberg which sank the TITANIC”

2020.39.7279.1 A photograph allegedly of the iceberg that sank the TITANIC, accompanied by a note explaining how it came into the possession of Coast Guard Admiral Ed H. Smith. This photograph was taken by Captain DeCarteret of the MINIA, a Western Union cable ship which was one of several vessels sent out to recover human remains.

The MINIA arrived on the scene on April 26, eleven days after the sinking. Captain Carteret indicated that this was the only iceberg he saw in the vicinity of where the ship sank. There is another known photograph of the iceberg, taken the day after the TITANIC’s sinking. A steward on a passing ship, the PRINZ ADELBERT, had not yet heard about the TITANIC but noticed a streak of red paint at the base of the iceberg. That iceberg and this one do not look identical, but icebergs are constantly changing and this may be the same iceberg several days later.

The note accompanying our photograph contains several factual errors, as Captain Decarteret was captain of the MINIA rather than the MACKAY-BENNITT, and the MINIA recovered only a small number of bodies.
TITANIC postal facing slip

2020.39.7334 A facing slip recovered from the body of Oscar S. Woody, a postal clerk aboard the R.M.S. TITANIC who died in the disaster. The R.M.S. stands for Royal Mail Ship, and this ship was charged with delivering transatlantic mail. There were seven postal clerks aboard, and there were 3,364 mail bags, each containing 2,000 or more pieces of mail. American postal clerk Oscar Woody was celebrating his 41st birthday when the TITANIC hit the iceberg. He and the other postal clerks worked frantically to move bags of mail to upper decks, wading in waist-deep water the last time they were seen alive.

These facing slips were attached to bundles of mail to indicate their destination, and each was stamped with the name of the postal clerk who had sorted them. It appears that, as Woody realized the ship was sinking, he collected as many of his facing slips as he could, in hopes of accounting for the mail that was lost. All of the postal clerks died.

Woody's body was found by the ship sent out to recover remains, the MACKAY-BENNETT. He was buried at sea and his personal effects, including the facing slips, were bagged up and given to his widow. This slip is also stamped with the name of the ship and a "Transatlantic Post Office" postmark dated April 10, 1912, the date of departure from Southampton. It is labeled "Sealed Distributions Customs/Second Div. N.Y.P.O." and a 7 is handwritten on it.
Postcard of a lifeboat, captioned "Titanic" lifeboat under sail. J.W. Barker, Copyright. CARPATHIA's Assistant Storekeeper James W. Barker took a number of photographs of the lifeboats from the CARPATHIA during the rescue.

This is Lifeboat 14, commanded by Fifth Officer Harold Lowe who is at the tiller. He was the only crew member to use the mast and sail that were in each boat. Lowe met up with several other boats and transferred passengers out of his boat to clear it to go back for survivors in the water. Lowe's boat was one of only two boats to go back, but by that time most people in the water had died and only four survivors were found (one of whom later died). Lowe later met up with Collapsible A, which was slowly sinking because the sides had not been properly raised before launch, and he transferred its passengers.
Watercolor of CARPATHIA with TITANIC lifeboats

2020.39.7385 A watercolor and gouache painting on paper by artist Colin Campbell Cooper, who was a passenger on the CARPATHIA when it rescued the survivors of the TITANIC sinking. Cooper was a renowned American impressionist painter best known for his architectural paintings of New York skyscrapers.

Here he has painted the CARPATHIA with five lifeboats heading towards it. One boat seems to be tied up to the ship, and a gangway in the side of the ship seems to be open. All around is ice, including the double spired iceberg on the right that CARPATHIA passengers saw and believed to have been the one that damaged the TITANIC.

This small painting is a very impressionistic study for the more detailed painting that Cooper later painted, but it provides a vivid picture of that early morning rescue, when the CARPATHIA's crew was expecting to find a damaged ocean liner and instead encountered fewer than 20 lifeboats.
April 16, 1912 Daily Mirror newspaper

The April 16, 1912 edition of The Daily Mirror, with the TITANIC on the front page and the headline "Disaster to the TITANIC: World's largest ship collides with an iceberg in the Atlantic during her maiden voyage. Inside, on page 3, the headlines are "Everyone Safe/Morning of suspense ends in message of relief/Passengers taken off/ Helpless giant being towed to port."

There is extensive reporting, continuing for three pages, about the disaster, but all of it assumes that the TITANIC was saved after "TITANIC's wireless signal brings vessels to scene."

The truth, of course, was much grimmer-- the ship was on the bottom of the ocean by the time this newspaper was printed, and rescuers did not arrive until long after the TITANIC had sunk. The Morse code signals that night were confusing and incomplete, and there was indeed a message saying "The ship is being towed to Halifax and everyone is OK"-- but that message was about a completely different ship.

The Daily Mirror was not the only newspaper to get the story wrong. American newspapers had an advantage because of their time zones, but the news of TITANIC's distress came in just before morning news deadlines, and many of them printed stories like this. The New York Times was one exception; its editor Carr Van Anda listened to the signals, noted that the TITANIC had gone silent, and became convinced that the ship was sunk, and that was the headline he ran.

In some cities like Indianapolis, one newspaper ran the "TITANIC safe" story while the other local newspaper was more cautious.

The White Star Line, also still in the dark, insisted at 8 am New York time that the ship was unsinkable. It was not until 7 pm on April 15 that the New York office of White Star finally shared with the press gathered there that the ship was sunk, and not until 8:45 that "great loss of life" was mentioned. By the time that news made it to England, it seems, the Daily Mirror had already printed this April 16 edition.
Telegram from TITANIC survivor: “Don’t worry all saved”

2020.39.7383 A telegram sent by Marconi wireless from the CARPATHIA on April 18, 1912 by TITANIC survivor Elisabeth Walton Allen saying, "Don't worry all saved." She was an American by birth and was travelling home to collect her things before marrying in England. She was travelling with a cousin, an aunt, and the aunt’s maid. The four women made it into a lifeboat and were all rescued.

Elisabeth was the first TITANIC survivor to make it onto the CARPATHIA and as she reached the top of the ladder, she was asked "Where is the TITANIC?" The CARPATHIA crew did not yet know with certainty that the ship had completely sunk.

This form includes, under "By whom sent" the initials of CARPATHIA wireless operator Harold Cottam, who played an important role in the CARPATHIA's dash to the rescue and afterwards in notifying the families of survivors. The telegram was sent to the Thomas Cook office in Piccadilly, London.

2020.39.7384 photo of Elizabeth Walton Allen
Check from the TITANIC Relief Fund

2020.39.7281 A January 1917 check for 1 pound from the TITANIC Relief Fund to John Berriman, the father of William J. Berriman who died in the TITANIC disaster. William Berriman was 23 years old and emigrating with his friend, William Carbines, from near St. Ives in Cornwall to Michigan, where they hoped to find work as miners. They were travelling in second class.

Before leaving, William lived with his parents, and he helped to support them. Hundreds of families in England were left without support after a husband or son died in the sinking, and the country lacked a social safety net system to care for so many people affected by the disaster. However, there was also an outpouring of charitable donations. The British TITANIC Relief Fund had over 414,000 pounds in donations, well over 30 million pounds in today’s money. Although much of the money went to the widows and children of lost crew members, the families of some passengers who relied on their incomes were also able to receive funds, as this check demonstrates. The money was distributed in small amounts, on a weekly basis, rather than in lump sums, reflecting the perspective of the fund managers that poor people could not carefully manage larger sums of money.

The Berriman family suffered a second loss in 1916, when William’s brother Samuel was killed in action in WWI.
Fragment of carved wood debris from TITANIC

2020.39.7418 A fragment of beautifully carved English oak from the TITANIC, probably from the grand staircase in the first class entrance hall.

It was picked up by someone from the cable ship MINIA, which sailed out of Halifax, Nova Scotia to the wreck site soon after the sinking to recover human remains. They were the second recovery ship to reach the site, and they found few bodies, but there was considerable debris and many pieces of TITANIC wood were collected, some of which have made their way into various museums. The tradition of keeping and reusing "wreckwood" as a reminder of lost ships was an old and common one in coastal communities.

There are no surviving photographs of the TITANIC's grand staircase, but OLYMPIC's staircase had the same design and the leaf and berry design seen here appears on it. We do not know exactly where it came from, but it might have been located just below the handrail and above the wrought iron baluster.

When the wreck of the TITANIC was located in 1985, the grand staircase was just an empty well; the staircase seems to have broken up and parts of it floated out.

One edge of this has a dado that would have fit under another piece of wood, while the other edge has decorative bead molding. The back of this piece has a deep 1/8" slot underneath the bead molding, and there is a vertical gash as well. There are two screwholes, one in the cut end so the threading is visible. The wood appears to have been stained and waxed.
April 1912 TITANIC postcard with baseball message

2020.39.7355 A postcard of the TITANIC printed soon after the April 15 disaster and postmarked in New York on April 23, 1912.

The front of the card has a drawing of the ship with a caption detailing its size and the number of dead. The back of the card has a message about baseball: "Saw the Red Sox play Yanks and you can bet your shoes on the Red Sox this year for the pennant." The Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees (then called the Highlanders but already referred to as the Yanks) played a game on April 20, 1912, the first official game at the brand new Fenway Park, and it is likely that this is the game the writer saw.

As Red Sox fans know, the stadium opened just days after the TITANIC disaster, and was overshadowed by it, and that connection to the TITANIC disaster has been seen as part of the lore of the Red Sox curse. However, in 1912, the Red Sox won that game against the "Yanks," as well as the pennant and the World Series.
Decorated divot from the BRITANNIC, a sister ship of the TITANIC

2020.39.7455 A silver-plated steel divot from the hull of the BRITANNIC, highly decorated with a White Star Line flag, a band of shamrocks, the name "S.S. GIGANTIC" and the year 1912, mounted on a wood base.

At the time of the TITANIC disaster in 1912, a third sister ship to TITANIC and OLYMPIC was under construction in Belfast, Northern Ireland. A handful of newspaper articles and other documents referred to the third ship as the GIGANTIC, and there has long been speculation that that intended name was changed to BRITANNIC after the disaster and the perception that the company had emphasized size and speed over safety.

The White Star Line, however, denied the name change, with its chairman Bruce Ismay telling the New York Sun in May 1912, "the company never has intended and certainly will not name the new ship the Gigantic." This artifact, with its White Star Line flag and its Irish shamrocks, suggests that, at least in the mind of one talented engraver, the ship had in fact been named GIGANTIC.

A divot is the scrap formed when a hole is sunk in the hull of a ship for a rivet, and these scraps would have been common at the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast during the construction of this ship in 1912. It is likely that someone took it home and had it engraved and plated, perhaps prompted by the TITANIC disaster or perhaps just as a souvenir of working on the new ship. Divots like this have sometimes been made into walking stick heads, and there are a number of known divots from the TITANIC with very similar decorations to this.
2. Golden Age of Ocean Liners
The nature of drinking on ocean liners evolved over time, as cocktails became popular and technological issues like icemaking were solved. Prohibition in the U.S. also played an important part, since being able to drink on board was part of the excitement of an ocean voyage.

Above: 2020.39.7476 A 1905 drinks menu from the Cunard ship PANNONIA. It is notably full of spirits and wines, but with no cocktails on offer.

Below: 2020.39.7477 A 1933 Cunard Line cocktail and liqueur menu. It list extensive cocktails options as well as liqueurs. 1933 was the last year of Prohibition in the United States, and the abundance of cocktails compared to earlier shipboard drinks menus speaks to significant social changes.

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<tr>
<th>Cocktails (Long)</th>
<th>Cocktails (Short)</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Plummers Punch</em></td>
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<td><em>Sherry Cobler</em></td>
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<td><em>Morning Glory</em></td>
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<td><em>Milk Punch</em></td>
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<td><em>Golden Fizz</em></td>
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<td><em>Creme de Menthe</em></td>
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<td><em>Gin Rickey</em></td>
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<td><em>John Collins</em></td>
<td><em>Creme de Cacao</em></td>
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<td><em>Clever Club</em></td>
<td><em>Peach Brandy</em></td>
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<td><em>Gin sling</em></td>
<td><em>Apricot Brandy</em></td>
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<td><em>Egg Nogg, Port or Sherry</em></td>
<td><em>Slivovitz</em></td>
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<td><em>Egg Nogg, Whisky</em></td>
<td><em>Lemon Squash</em></td>
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<td><em>Egg Nogg, Brandy</em></td>
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Deck Games on the CARPATHIA, 1908

Two images from an album capturing a 1908 voyage to the Mediterranean.

2020.39.41.49 Women "potato racing" on the deck of the CARPATHIA. Players collected potatoes from the deck one at a time and brought them back to the buckets visible behind one of them. There is a crowd of people watching. The women are identified as C.P. and H.M.P.

2020.39.41.45 "Spar boxing" on the CARPATHIA, with two passengers sitting on a spar. It was a deck game involving hitting each other with stuffed bags or pillowcases. They are watched by passengers and several crewman, including one who may be a deck steward. The caption says "Mr. Downs vanquished by Miles."
The QUEEN MARY under construction

2020.39.4 A photograph of the QUEEN MARY during its fitting out at John Brown & Co. shipyards in Clydebank, Scotland. This was taken sometime between the ship's launch in September 1934 and its maiden voyage in March 1936. The ship has all three funnels at this point, as well as its fore and aft masts. It has not yet been painted, but crews have just begun painting the ship's name in white on a black patch on the stern. An embossed stamp in the lower left indicates that the photo was taken by the shipbuilder's photo department.
1931 menu from the HAKUSAN MARU

2020.39.50 Dinner menu for July 17, 1931 aboard the HAKUSAN MARU. This ocean liner owned by Japan's NYK line sailed routes from Japan to Europe. The menu background is a print of Japanese woodblock artist Ohara Koson's "Japanese Waxwings on Branch with Berries."

The food options on the menu are Western dishes and many seem to be rather British. Interestingly, there are no Japanese options. At the bottom, there is a note that "clocks will be put back 30 minutes tonight." The back of the menu is designed to fold up as a mailer, with a map of the NYK Line's worldwide routes and a print of NYK Line's two stripe flag.

Like many Japanese ships, the HAKUSAN MARU was requisitioned by the Imperial Japanese Navy in 1942, and it was torpedoed and sunk by a United States submarine, the USS FLIER, on June 4, 1944.
Third class ticket for OLYMPIC's April 4, 1912 voyage to New York

2020.39.7243 A third class passenger ticket for the OLYMPIC's voyage of April 4, 1912, for 18 year old George Tracy who was immigrating to the United States from Cappamore, Ireland. He paid $33.75 for his ticket and arrived in New York on April 11, and he surely thanked his lucky stars a few days later when he heard about the TITANIC sinking with hundreds of immigrants aboard.

George Tracy became a U.S. citizen in 1932. He and his wife and children lived in Brooklyn at that time, and he worked as a motorman, the driver of a streetcar.
1930s Hungarian postcard

2020.39.0859 A postcard of the OLYMPIC from the 1930s, probably written in Cherbourg, France by a passenger emigrating to the U.S. She writes (with grammatic difficulty) in Hungarian to an address in Romania, where there is a significant Hungarian-speaking minority. The name she signs, Zsuzsika, is a diminutive of the Hungarian form of Susan, like Susie.

19 July 193_ [last numeral is missing]
Somes County
Dear sweet mother

With my few lines I am letting you know that with great difficulty, I arrived at the safe seaport and how are you [illegible], the dear miss, everybody. For me the separation was very hard because I wept a lot even on the train, because until I got here I couldn’t even find a Hungarian. If there will be time I’ll write a letter and write everything. Till then I kiss all of you. God with you.

Your Zsuzsika
Dinner menu from the MORRO CASTLE

2020.39.33 1931 Dinner menu from the MORRO CASTLE for Saturday, December 26, 1931, the day after Christmas. The menu is lavish, with many choices of appetizers, soups, fish, entrees and vegetables, dessert, fruit and cheese courses.

Most of the entrees would be familiar to American passengers, but there are some interesting exceptions. The first entree listed is French Toast with Currant Jelly. In much of Latin America, fried bread treats like torrijos or rabanadas are popular at Christmastime. Another entree option is Macaroni a la Caruso, which is pasta with a creamy, meaty sauce. It comes from Uruguay and was named for the early 20th century Italian tenor Enrico Caruso; some sources say the dish was developed in the 1950s but clearly it was already popular long before that.

The menu cover has a painting of the MORRO CASTLE with both the Ward Line and New York and Cuba Mail Steamship Company names, while the back has a painting of Havana’s Capitolio Nacional, which was completed just two years earlier in 1929.
Cunard Line luggage tag

2020.39.7491 Small Cunard Line luggage tag with a leather strap and steel buckle. The paper tag, with a place to enter an address, is inside a plastic cover held by a small brass rivet.

The front of the tag has an image of the AQUITANIA, with its four funnels, and the Cunard Line name below. Above the ship is written "World Renowned Services/ America/ Europe."

On the back, the handwritten name "Mrs. M.R. Gay" is clearly visible, and the address "453 Ominica St. E, Moose Jaw, SASK" is only faintly visible. Marwood R. Gay, a railway engineer, and his wife Lillian lived at that address between at least 1922 and 1940. Lillian Gay, who was born in Exeter, England, seems to have gone back to visit several times, a long journey by rail from rural Saskatchewan before boarding a ship to England.
3. The Changing Face of Tourism
A first class passenger list for the April 20, 1892 voyage of the BRITANNIC from New York to Liverpool. This was an early single-screw steamship built in 1874, with two funnels but also sails, which sailed for 30 years from Liverpool to New York, mostly carrying immigrants. The captain of the ship on this voyage was Edward J. Smith, who would later be captain of the TITANIC and die in its sinking.

A notable passenger on this voyage was Florence Balgarnie, a well-known British suffragist and radical anti-lynching activist who made an 1892 trip to the United States. In February, she was a speaker at an interstate women's suffrage convention in Kansas City. She also visited Salt Lake City, where she met with suffragist Emmeline B. Wells on April 13, 1892. Emmeline Wells recorded in her diary that she saw Miss Balgarnie onto a train in Salt Lake City that day.

Also aboard were several prominent American and British businessmen, including Alfred Bigland, William Julien Courtauld and Jefferson Borden Harriman.
A postcard sent to Miss Harriet J. Mansfield of New Haven in 1925, during unrest in China.

In the Yang-zte River- Jan. 27 1925

Here we are anchored in the river, about 13 miles from Shanghai, with an American gun boat on one side & a British on the other! We are just going up to Shanghai itself, where things are a bit ticklish. Japan was very wonderful but the ship got an epidemic of Japanese flu, and we have all been miserable. Japan was very wonderful however and this really is the trip of a life-time.

Love

Mary Soriss
2020.39.7454 The 1927 diary of John O. Levinson, a 14 year old boy from Chicago on a visit to Europe. He traveled with his father and mother on the LEVIATHAN to England, detailing his shipboard fun, including playing baseball on deck. The day after arrival in London, he writes, "I awoke with the measles and was taken to a nursing home for 12 days."

After his recovery, he visited museums and other sights in London, Paris and Geneva, and he is especially detailed about the art he saw. John’s father was Salmon Levinson, a Chicago attorney. Salmon Levinson was at the forefront of the international legal effort to officially outlaw war, and this 1927 visit included negotiations of what would become the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact. John does not mention his father in any detail, except for a note that they "were called back to Paris because of Pop’s international affairs." However, their trip included a visit to the League of Nations in Geneva, guided by League officials, as well as interactions with many noteworthy people on shipboard and in London and Paris.

Most exciting is John’s description of being in Paris at the time that Charles Lindbergh completed his transatlantic flight. On May 28, John climbed to the top of the Arc de Triomphe to watch as Lindbergh flew over Paris on his way to Belgium, “doing a few stunts around the Eiffel Tower.

John and his family sailed back to New York on the OLYMPIC, and their arrival is noted in a passenger manifest from June 8, 1927.
1930 Passenger list from MORRO CASTLE

2020.39.31 A passenger list from the October 14-17, 1930 voyage of the MORRO CASTLE from Havana to New York.

Among the passengers are at least 10 American major league baseball players, including Clyde Sukeforth of the Cincinnati Reds, Pie Traynor of the Pittsburgh Pirates, Heinie Manush of the Washington Senators, Rabbit Maranville of the Boston Braves, Thomas Oliver of the Red Sox, Donald Hurst and Chuck Klein of the Philadelphia Phillies, and Glenn Wright and Wally Gilbert of the Brooklyn Robins. These players were all returning from a series of exhibition games played in Havana that month. The major league players were divided into two teams, one managed by Jewel Ens, manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and the other by David Bancroft, who played for the New York Giants, and the two of them are also on this passenger list.

Also on the passenger list is Julio Blanco Herrera, the president of Cuba's La Tropical brewery, who had just built Havana's new La Tropical baseball stadium and organized the exhibition series to inaugurate it.

In 1930, Prohibition was still in effect in the US, and MORRO CASTLE's trips to Havana were popular in large part because of the drinking that went on aboard. This might have been an especially rambunctious trip with so many young baseball players (and a suspiciously high proportion of unmarried women aboard as well). However, there were also plenty of other passengers, including Connecticut Congressman Hart Fenn, who had recently announced he would not run for office again on the advice of his doctors.
1961 cabin class passenger list from the QUEEN MARY

2020.39.16 A cabin class passenger list from the QUEEN MARY’s voyage of May 17, 1961 from New York to Southampton. Cabin class was a more affordable way to experience the luxuries of sea travel to Europe, and this list presents a fascinating cross-section of people.

Romare Bearden was a well-known African-American artist from New York. The year 1961 was a successful one for him; he sold a painting to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, along with several other pieces at a major show. He had previously studied art in Paris, and he and his wife Nanette were using the proceeds to travel to Europe for the months of May to June to visit Paris, Italy, and Switzerland. Nanette was a dancer, model and artist who later founded and directed the Nanette Bearden Contemporary Dance Theater.

Other passengers on this list are Dr. John E. Bordley, head of otolaryngology at Johns Hopkins; Noble J. Puffer, the longtime superintendent of schools for Chicago; Dr. Cora L. Handwork, a school superintendent from Pennsylvania, and her sister Edna, who were world travelers; and Léon Zitrone, a well-known French television journalist, traveling with his wife Jacqueline.