

**Guide to the Records of the Virginia Pilot Association,
1866-1984
MS0114**

**The Mariners' Museum Library
at
Christopher Newport University**

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DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library
Title: Records of the Virginia Pilot Association, 1866 - 1984
Catalog number: MS 0114
Physical Characteristics: 11 boxes
Language(s): English
Creator(s): Various

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection contains 11 boxes of material pertaining to the development and activities of the Virginia Pilot Association from 1866 to 1984. The collection contains both internal documents of the Association as well as research, correspondence, photographs and publications about the Association from individual and media sources. The logs and records in this collection cover accounting and expense records, bylaws and official documents as well as shipping documents. The publications included in this collection offer information about the history of the Pilots as well as first hand travel accounts by Virginia Pilots. The Board of Directors Minutes encompasses business proposals, reprimands to pilots and budget allocation from 1903 until 1966. The photographs include portraits of vessels, captains, official press photographs during WWII, and unidentified photographs that range from beach scenes and linotype woodblock prints to WWI soldiers. The correspondences contained in this collection incorporate a range of subjects from complaint letters of Pilot misconduct and reprimands in the early 1900s to research requests from individuals and institutions from the 1940s to the 1980s. This collection also contains newspaper and magazine articles pertaining to pilot activity and political affiliations from 1909 to 1984. There are also many miscellaneous research notes in this collection pertaining to the history of the Virginia Pilots that have been used for personal interest as well as drafts for published and unpublished articles about the Pilots' Association.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number

n/a

Accession Date

unknown

Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers but all documents must be handled with extreme care.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation Records of the Virginia Pilot Association, 1866-1984, MS0114, The Mariners' Museum Library

Note to Users

Due to the fragile and rare nature of the collection, researchers are requested to handle the materials with caution and in accordance with prescribed archival practices. When using these materials, please preserve the original order of the collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL SKETCH

With the English colonization of Virginia came the need for facilitated navigation of its waters. In 1660 the Pilots Commission sought to remedy unnecessary navigation errors and accidents by assigning a pilot "to every stream a vessel might enter". Local farmers and slaves soon took to the waters to fulfill the duties of becoming a pilot. Throughout the colonial period and well into the 19th century, Virginia Pilots served not only to aid in navigation of the constantly changing topography of the Chesapeake's waters but also to take on courageous responsibilities during war. It was not until after the American Civil War, however, that two former Confederate veterans, Capt. Samuel W. Wood and Capt. Oscar E. Edwards decided to take action in the protection of personal and civil rights of pilots by establishing the Virginia Pilot Association in 1866. There were 22 original members of the Association and Capt. Wood presided over them without official title. In 1868 Capt. Edwards became the first official president of the Virginia Pilots Association. Under Edwards, the Association saw a move to steam powered vessels and new rules that allowed more extensive pilot participation in executive decisions. In 1882, Edwards led a lobby against a federal push to establish law against compulsory pilotage, which until that time had been decided by individual states. "Bitter experience has taught the commercial world that compulsory pilotage systems are generally necessary" (Jones). States rights were upheld in the Virginia Supreme Court and due to the tireless efforts of Edwards and the Virginia Pilot Association, compulsory pilotage continued for the state of Virginia. In 1919, a series of Tug Boat strikes affected businesses, including the Pilots of the Hampton Roads area. Under Pilot Association President William R. Boutwell, the Virginia Pilots took over the duties of the Tug Boats and saved Hampton Roads around \$40,000 in losses. Testimonials were written by major shipping companies in praise of the pilots. Unfortunately the press remained relentless throughout the 1920s condemning the pilots on their seemingly harsh five year apprenticeship program, pilot fees and supposed nepotism. In 1924 the Norfolk and Portsmouth Chambers of Commerce required the Virginia Pilot Association to file extensive expense reports that were to be published in newspapers. The Pilots fought back at the discrimination shown to them, determined to demonstrate how diligent were the Pilots they employed and the honest system under which they worked. In WWII, the pilots heroically aided British and American ships into port to be repaired and maintained, sometimes in the cover of darkness and under the threat of U-boat attack. During the 1950s until the 1970s, major

pilot activity waned and it was during this time that a comprehensive history of pilotage in Virginia was compiled with the intention of publication. In the 1980s, enthusiastic local historians and former pilots sought to reacquaint the public with the necessity and assiduousness of the Virginia Pilots through public demonstrations and local media publication.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

This collection is organized into ten series to include Board Minutes, correspondence, photographs, newspaper clippings, articles published and unpublished, research notes, ledgers and accounting logs, certificates and official documents, publications and miscellaneous ephemera.

FILE GUIDE

- BOX 1** Logs/Records
- Folder 1** Official and political documents predominantly from 1920s to include Virginia bylaws in a small booklet
- Folder 2** Various accounting and expense records
- Folder 3** Two accounting log books 1920-1926
- Folder 4** Miscellaneous shipping documents, dates ranging from 1920-1958
- BOX 2** Records/Publications
- Folder 1** History of Pilots, bound book circa 1920
- Folder 2** Undated articles and publications including magazines and bound travel accounts of pilots.
- Folder 3** Records of Pilot Commissioners, 1875-1950, in three journals
- BOX 3** Board of Directors Minutes
- Folder 1** Two microfilm boxes with minutes from 1908-1950 and printed copies of minutes from 1903-1907
- Folder 2** Minutes 1948
- Folder 3** Minutes 1950-1954
- Folder 4** Minutes 1955-1957
- Folder 5** Minutes 1958-1960
- Folder 6** Minutes 1961-1963
- Folder 7** Minutes 1964-1966
- BOX 4** Photographs
- Folder 1** Stationary including Christmas cards with various boats and ships
- Folder 2** Official documents with negatives
- Folder 3** Virginia Pilot Vessels
- Folder 4** Virginia Pilot Portraits and negatives
- Folder 5** Virginia Pilot activity during WWII
- Folder 6** "Pawnee", 1975
- Folder 7** 1982 Virginia Pilot Association Film Data
- Folder 8** 1983 Virginia Pilot Association Film Data

- Folder 9** Collection of unidentified photographs including people aboard Pilot Schooner "Virginia" (ca 1916), WWI soldiers and ships
- BOX 5** Correspondence
- Folder 1** April 1890- Feb 1891
Requests for leave of absence, complaint letter about certain Pilots giving misleading information to aid business
- Folder 2** Sept 1907- Jan 1909
Complaint letters about a Pilot refusing to take a steamer and response to the issue, complaint of Pilot Skinner being drunk and disorderly
- Folder 3** Feb-Aug 1910
Suspension of Pilot Skinner, visual requirements of VA Pilots, complaint letter of Pilot leading Ship Manhattan aground, hearing and minutes about Manhattan incident
- Folder 4** Dec 1910
Complaint of Pilot refusing to take S/S Dora Baltea out to sea, letters surrounding hearing of Dora Baltea incident
- Folder 5** Jan-Nov 1911
Resolution of SS Dora Baltea incident, complaint letter by S/S Grampian Range
- Folder 6** May 1912- Aug 1919
Complaint of ship running aground, felony charges against Pilot Carrol B. Foster, defense letters of Foster, request to give Pilot Skinner another chance at Piloting, request for improvement of a channel at Newport News shipyard
- Folder 7** Feb-March 1920
Poem and love note to Millie, testimonial for VA Pilots, petition in opposition to a Pilot Bill
- Folder 8** May 1937, Sep 1939, Nov 1942
Charge against C.B. Foster for excessive drinking, response to a research request, list of active Pilots in 1942
- Folder 9** Jan 1948- Dec 1949
Research for a history of VA Pilots by Capt. John E. Johnson
- Folder 10** Jan, Nov 1950
Request for information regarding Virginia Pilot Association history
- Folder 11** Jan 1960- Dec 1962
Response to a History of Pilots request, Sounding Trip
- Folder 12** Feb-March 1970, March-Aug 1975
History of Pilots by various researchers, Cape Henry research
- Folder 13** Feb-Aug 1982
Request and exchange of information regarding Virginia Pilot Association History
- Folder 14** Sept-Dec 1982
Request and exchange of information regarding Virginia Pilot Association History
- Folder 15** Jan-May 1983, Aug 1984

Request for information on Virginia Pilot History, proposal for program –
Hampton's Living History

- BOX 6** Clippings
Folder 1 Newspaper clippings of Pilot activity, 1909-1919
Folder 2 Political clippings, 1920, pertaining to a Pilot Bill
Folder 3 Various newspaper clippings, 1920, related to Pilot activity
Folder 4 Political Scrapbook, 1923
Folder 5 Newspaper clippings of Pilot activity, 1936, 1938
Folder 6 Newspaper clippings of Pilot activity, 1940- 1948
- BOX 7** Clippings
Folder 7 Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, 1951- 1958
Folder 8 Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, 1960-1969
Folder 9 Newspaper clippings of Pilot activity, 1971-1978
Folder 10 Newspaper clippings of Pilot activity, 1981-1982
Folder 11 Newspaper clippings and magazine articles, 1983-1984
- BOX 8** Misc. Research Notes
Folder 1 Lists of Pilots and Boats, 1600s – 1900s
Folder 2 Beacons, Lighthouses records and history, 1600-1850
Folder 3 Governors of Virginia and Colonial history
Folder 4 History of Pilots, 1600-1800
Folder 5 History of Pilots, 1801-1980
Folder 6 Originally in a research binder: Boats and Pilots 1650-1850
Folder 7 Originally in a research binder: Boats and Pilots 1851-1980
Folder 8 Originally in a research binder: Chronology of Pilot Association and History, 1906-1946
- BOX 9** Misc. Research Notes
Folder 9 Rules and Regulations
Folder 10 Pilot Commissioners
Folder 11 Originally in a research binder: Virginia Pilot Association 1865-1906
Folder 12 Photocopies of original material, photographs and notes
Folder 13 References and article drafts to include articles written by Laurence L. Jones and Alexander C. Brown
- BOX 10** Misc. Ephemera
Folder 1 Virginia Pilot business card, book publication request card, plans for a headstone, docking plan, Comanche (1982 renamed as the training vessel Virginia) tank capacity blueprints
- BOX 11** Woodblock Portraits
Folder 1 Five linotype portraits on woodblocks of Virginia Pilot Association Presidents. Left to Right: George Alvin Massenburg (1943-1968), William Row Boutwell (1905-1939), Oscar E. Edwards (1868-1905), Samuel

William Wood (1866-1868) and Milton B. Edmunds (1939-1943)

MATERIALS REMOVED

State Pilotage in America: Historical Outline with European Background First ed. (second printing). Published by American Pilots' Association, Washington DC, 1960 KF2566.A94, 1960. Incorporated into Library collection

SOURCES CONSULTED

- Brewington, Marion Vernon. "The Chesapeake Bay Pilots"
Maryland Historical Magazine, v. XI, 1953
- Brown, Alexander C. "The Virginia Pilots" Transcripts of articles appearing in the Daily Press Feb. 2 & 9, 1964 and Aug 15, 22, & 29, 1982.
- Bush, A. Judson. "Pilots of the Virginia Capes since 1865"
Virginia Pilots Association, 1995
- Flanders, Alan B. and Capt. Arthur C. Johnson, Jr. "Guardians of the Capes: a History of Pilots and Piloting in Virginia waters from 1611 to the present"
Virginia: Brandylane, 1991
- Jones, Laurence L. "The Virginia Pilot Association" 1963
- Stansbury, Charles Frederick. "The State Pilots and Maritime Virginia"
New York: Mab Press, 1910
- Webb, Jane Carter, ed. Alexander Crosby Brown. "Masters of the Bay: stories of the Virginia Pilots" Newport News, Va.: Sailing Association Press, Christopher Newport College, 1983.
- William B. Collier Virginia Pilot Collection, 1917-1949, MS 0241,
The Mariners' Museum Library

RELATED MATERIAL

Virginia Pilot Scrapbook, 1930. Located in Archives - C17:C2
Photographs of Virginia Pilots: PP2436 (1982), PP2488 (1984)
William B. Collier Virginia Pilot Collection, 1917-1949, MS0241

SUBJECTS

Brown, Alexander C.
Massenburg, George Alvin
Johnson, John E.
Edmunds, Milton B.
Edwards, Oscar E.
Wood, Samuel William
Manhattan (Screw : 1898)
Grampian Range (Screw : 1905)
Dora Baltea (Screw : 1910)
Pawnee (Screw : 1925)
Virginia Pilots Association
Pilot guides-Virginia
Pilots and pilotage-Virginia
Boutwell, William Row