

Guide to the Merrimac & Monitor Post Card Company
“Virginia in Dry Dock” Postcard, 1906
MS0429

The Mariners' Museum Library
at
Christopher Newport University

Contact Information:
The Mariners' Museum Library
100 Museum Drive
Newport News, VA 23606
Phone: (757) 591-7782
Fax: (757) 591-7310
Email: library@MarinersMuseum.org
URL: www.MarinersMuseum.org/library

Processed by Jay E. Moore, 2012

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Repository: The Mariners' Museum Library

Title: Merrimac & Monitor Post Card Company “*Virginia* in Dry Dock” Postcard

Inclusive Dates: 1906

Catalog number: MS0429

Physical Characteristics: 1 picture postcard

Language: English

Creator: Merrimac & Monitor Post Card Company (Firm); Richardson, Benjamin A. (Benjamin Adworth)

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Merrimac & Monitor Post Card Company was formed in 1906 with the immediate purpose of issuing commemorative postcards to be sold during the Jamestown Tercentenary celebration in 1907. The company produced postcards commemorating the events of Mar.8 and 9, 1862 during the Battle of Hampton Roads. It also created postcards pertaining to the life of CSS *Virginia*. They range from the April 19, 1861 destruction at the Gosport Navy Yard of the US steam frigate *Merrimack*, from whose hulk *Virginia* was built, to the destruction of the ironclad on the shores of Craney Island, Virginia, on May 10-11, 1862 at the hands of its own crew.

The paintings on the postcards were taken from a series of original works by Benjamin A. Richardson (1833-1909). Richardson, born in Portsmouth, was a self-taught, amateur artist. Early in life, he earned a living as a house and sign painter. During the Civil War, Richardson enlisted in Norfolk as a private in the Confederate States Army in the United Artillery under Captain Thomas Kevill. He manned a broadside gun during the Battle of Hampton Roads on both days of the battle. Richardson also fought at the Battle of the Crater in Petersburg, VA, which he also documented on a very large canvas. He was hospitalized afterwards with fever in Richmond’s Chimborazo Hospital from early August until mid-October 1864. After the war, Richardson owned and operated a paint, lamp oil, glass and artist’s supply store on Roanoke Avenue in downtown Norfolk. He had 3 children by his first wife Elizabeth, who died in 1859, and 8 children by his second wife Lavinia Pool Smith.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection consists of a color halftone postcard reproduction, copyrighted by G.S. Richardson, 1906, of a painting by his father Benjamin A. Richardson. The painting, entitled “Merrimac in Dry Dock Being Converted into the Iron Battery Virginia,” depicts the ship dry docked at the Gosport Navy Yard, in Portsmouth, Virginia, around February 1862. The vessel is shown as nearing completion after conversion from the hulk of US steam frigate *Merrimack*. This postcard is number 2 in the series.

The postcard was sent to Miss Mary Rose of Elsberry, MO, by Marjorie McHugh, one of her pupils, on Dec. 5, 1910. The card was sent with get-well wishes.

The postcard is organized into 1 folder.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Accession Number

Ms429

Accession Date

2008

Restrictions

The collection is open to all researchers.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Merrimac & Monitor Post Card Company "*Virginia* in Dry Dock" Postcard, 1906, MS0429, The Mariners' Museum Library

Other Finding Aids

A full record and electronic reproduction of the postcard in this collection can be found in Museum's photograph database.

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.

RELATED MATERIALS

Photographs of 4 of the 5 other paintings contributing to the Merrimac & Monitor Post Card Company's postcards can be found in the Photograph Collection with accession numbers PNC95 through 98.

The 6 original paintings for the series are located at the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia.

FILE GUIDE

BOX 1

Folder 1

Postcard, 1906

"Merrimac in Dry Dock Being Converted into the Iron Battery Virginia"

[MS0429.01]

SOURCES CONSULTED

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- “Victory on the Seas.” *South Bend Tribune*, June 15, 2006. http://articles.southbendtribune.com/2006-06-15/news/26988153_1_army-officer-css-virginia-merrimack (accessed Apr. 30, 2012).
- “His Painting Accurately Shows *Merrimack*’s Final Moments.” *South Bend Tribune*, June 16, 2006. http://articles.southbendtribune.com/2006-06-16/news/26952728_1_gun-turret-uss-minnesota-navy-ship (accessed Apr. 30, 2012).
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SUBJECTS

Virginia (Ironclad : 1862)-Pictorial works
Jamestown Ter-centennial Exposition (1907)