

Captain Ben Pine Papers

Archives Collection A08

Cape Ann Museum
27 Pleasant Street
Gloucester, MA 01930

3.5 linear feet
7 manuscript containers
1 scrapbook
1 logbook
1 motion picture reel
23 glass plate negatives
Photographs

Accession No. 200.2
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By: Howard Thomas
Supervising Archivist: Ellen Nelson

Acquisition: The Ben Pine papers were originally given to the Gloucester Fisherman's Institute by an anonymous donor. When the Institute was dissolved, Julian Hatch gave the papers to the Cape Ann Historical Association courtesy of Martha Oaks.

Copyright: Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Cape Ann Museum archivist.

Historical/Biographical Background Note

Captain Ben Pine was born at Belloram, Newfoundland on September 10, 1883, the son of Owen and Sarah (Cluett) Pine. He came to Gloucester at the age of ten and shortly thereafter started working around the wharves. For many years he went fishing out of Gloucester in the dory haddocking business and winter fishing on the Banks of the North Atlantic. In 1922, along with several other Gloucester business men, he formed the Atlantic Supply company at 33 Rogers Street opposite Porter Street. The Atlantic Supply Company outfitted fishing vessels including mackerel seiners, dory haddockers, halibuters, swordfishermen and, in later years, the modern diesel-powered draggers. Captain Pine also owned and invested in many of the fishing schooners including the famed *Columbia* and *Gertrude L. Thebaud* and the more modern draggers *Puritan* and *Pilgrim*.

It was the International Fisherman's Races that focused nation-wide attention on Captain Pine and thrust him into international prominence. In 1923, he skippered the *Columbia* in its victory over the *Nova*

Scotia *Bluenose* Skipped by Captain Angus Walters. In 1930, Captain Pine skippered the *Gertrude L. Thebaud*, the last racing fisherman ever built, in a win over *Bluenose* but this race ended in bitter dispute. In 1931 and 1938, the *Thebaud* and *Bluenose* met in further series of races that also wound up in dispute rather than a clear-cut victory.

When Gloucester and the fishing industry was in the throes of the depression, Captain Pine, in April 1933, sailed the *Thebaud* to Washington D.C. On board with him was a delegation composed of business leaders and schooner captains to plead the cause of the Gloucester fisheries to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The *Thebaud* was met at the dock by President Roosevelt and Captain Pine was hosted at the White House. Later President Roosevelt sailed into Gloucester Harbor in the sailing yacht *Amberjack* and Captain Pine was invited aboard the craft as a guest. He presented the President with an oil painting of the *Thebaud* painted by Gloucester artist Emile Gruppe, which later hung in the White House.

In August 1933, Captain Pine arranged for the *Thebaud* to sail to the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago as the official exhibition of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The purpose of the *Thebaud* exhibit was to promote the interests of the fishing industry.

Throughout his life, Captain Pine was a major influence to the City of Gloucester and its fishing industry. He was always interested in youth and provided the funds for the beautiful marine room at the local YMCA. The paintings were done by artist Larry O'Toole. Captain Pine helped many young fishermen get started on the path to commanding a fishing vessel. His humanitarianism is best illustrated by his organizing the *Columbia/Avalon* fund to provide assistance to the widows, children and other dependents of the lost crewmen of the two ill-fated schooners.

Captain Pine suffered from a heart condition in his later years and had to curtail his commercial activities but he never lost his keen interest and dedication to Gloucester and the fishing industry. He died at his home, 24 Wonson Street, Rocky Neck, on February 23, 1953.

Scope and Content Note

This collection provides a unique insight into the business world of Captain Ben Pine, renown Gloucester fisherman and internationally know racing skipper. He was a real Gloucesterman famed for his sailing ability and participation in the International Fishermen's Races.

The collection was received from the Gloucester Fishermen's Institute where it had been stored in three cardboard boxes for some years. There was no organization of the material comprising the collection, each box contained a variety of newspaper clippings, correspondence, brochures and pamphlets, photographs, glass plate negatives and other items generally related to Ben Pine and his position of national prominence in the fishing industry. For example, some of the newspaper clippings were pasted in scrapbooks while others were loosely scattered throughout the material, many without date or publication data. While some of the photographs were in good condition, many others were creased, curled or in deteriorating condition.

The correspondence and telegrams have been arranged in subject series and, as appropriate, in an alphabetical and/or chronological arrangement within each series.

Series Listing

Series 1 Schooner Races

A. Correspondence, General 1920=1939

- B. Telegrams, 1921-1941
- C. Race Programs and other printed material, 1922-1938
- D. Crew List and Expenses of the *Gertrude L. Thebaud*
- E. Miscellaneous

Series 2 *Columbia/Avalon* Fund

- A. Correspondence to and from Recipients
- B. Contributions, Disbursements, and Miscellaneous

Series 3 Chicago Exposition

- A. General Correspondence, 1933- May, 1937
- B. Resolution, Work Notes and Miscellaneous
- C. Expenses and Employment Agreements
- D. Log of the *Thebaud*

Series 4 Washington D.C. Trip

Series 5 Personal Material

- A. Correspondence, General 1930-1942
- B. Ephemera

Series 6 Schooner *Gertrude L. Thebaud*

- A. Correspondence, Louis and Gertrude Thebaud
- B. Schooner *Gertrude L. Thebaud* Miscellaneous

Series 7 Schooner *Columbia*

Series 8 Draggers *Pilgrim* and *Puritan*

Series 9 Angus Walters/Schooner *Bluenose*

Series 10 Photographs

Series 11 Scrapbook

Container List

Series 1 Schooner Races

Box 1

- A. Correspondence, General
 - Folder 1 1920-1921
 - 2 1922
 - 3 1923-1937
 - 4 Feb. 15 – Sept. 16 1938
 - 5 Sept. 20 – Dec. 31 1938+1939

Box 2

- B. Telegrams, 1921 – 1941
 - Folder 1
 - C. Race Programs and other printed materiel, 1922-1938

Folder 2
D. Crew list and Expenses of the *Gertrude L. Thebaud*
Folder 3
E. Miscellaneous
Folder 4

Series 2 Columbia/Avalon Fund

Box 3

A. Correspondence
Folder 1 A-H
2 J-W
B. Contributions, Disbursements, and Misc.
Folder 2

Series 3 Chicago Exposition

A. General Correspondence
Folder 4 March- July 1933
5 Aug. 1933- May, 1937 plus telegrams

Box 4

B. Resolution, Work Notes and Miscellaneous
Folder 1
C. Expenses and Employment Agreements
Folder 2
D. Log of the *Thebaud*
Wrapped on Shelf

Series 4 Washington D.C. Trip

Folder 3
General Correspondence, List of Attendees , Souvenir of *Akron*

Series 5 Personal Correspondence and Personal Ephemera

A. Correspondence, general 1930-1942
Folder 4
B. Personal Ephemera
Folder 5 Personal Ephemera
6 Personal Ephemera

Box 5

Folder 1 Newspaper Clippings
2 Newspaper Clippings
3 Miscellaneous

Series 6 Schooner *Gertrude L. Thebaud*

Box 6

A. Correspondence, Louis and Gertrude Thebaud Letters 1929-1936 and Telegrams 1930-1939
Folder 1
B. Schooner *Gertrude L. Thebaud* Miscellaneous

Folder 2

Series 7 Schooner *Columbia*

Folder 3

Miscellaneous plus calendar

Series 8 Draggers *Pilgrim* and *Puritan*

Folder 4

Series 9 Angus Walters/Schooner *Bluenose*

Folder 5

Series 10 Photographs

Box 7

Glass plate negatives wrapped on shelf in separate storage

Series 11 Scrapbooks

Wrapped on shelf.

Reel of 16mm movie film in separate storage