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CAPTAIN CHESTER LIONEL MORRISSEY COLLECTION

Creator:	Chester Lionel Morrissey; various
Dates:	1950-1977
Quantity:	0.5 linear feet (1 manuscript box)
Acquisition:	Accession #: 2016.065 ; Donated by: Wayne Soini
Identification:	A83 ; Archive Collection #83
Citation:	[Document Title]. The Captain Chester Lionel Morrissey Collection, [Box #, Folder #, Item #], Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.
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Language:	English
Finding Aid:	Processed 2017 by Stephanie Buck, Librarian/Archivist. Updated by Karla Kaneb, June 2020.

Biographical Note

Captain Chester Lionel Morrissey was born on September 12, 1887 in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, the eldest son of an American citizen, Captain David Clarence Morrissey, and his wife, Clara May Croucher, both of Irish descent. Capt. David C. Morrissey had become an American citizen in Salem, MA, in 1877 under a Federal law of the 1840s that made ship captains eligible to apply for naturalization but was domiciled in Pubnico, Nova Scotia, until 1905 when the whole family (Capt. David, his wife Clara, with Chester and his siblings Charles, Frank, Meta, Olga and Albert H.) moved to Boston.

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Prior to this move, when Chester was almost fifteen his mother took him to Boston to his uncle James Croucher where he got a job as an errand boy for the R. Woodman Manufacturing & Supply Co. He returned to Pubnico a year later and hired on with his cousin Captain Clayton Morrissey fishing for cod off Newfoundland. He then joined his family in Boston and sailed out of that port for several years until, feeling dissatisfied with fishing, which he said had become “more business than a way of life,” quit and took a job as a Boston street-car conductor. However, a year later he was back fishing until early 1919 when the Fishermen’s Union called a strike. Chester used his time to take a navigation class at M.I.T. which included qualification for a Mate’s license. With this in hand he signed on as Third Mate in the Merchant Marine before returning to fishing once more.

In 1919 he married Ellen Shea, a Canadian born on a P.E.I. dairy farm in 1899, who had come to America in 1915. Chester and Ellen had three sons and a daughter: Francis C., James R., Charles A., and Florence M.

From 1923 to 1929 he was a crewman on the *Commonwealth*, a Boston high-liner, and in 1931 he became captain of the lobster smack *Satellite* owned by the Consolidated Lobster Co. of Boston and began transporting live lobsters from Nova Scotia to the Boston fish market. In 1932 the company moved to Bay View, Gloucester, and Chester relocated his family from Malden, MA, to Gloucester. He retired in 1957 and spent time writing poems and his memoirs, which comprise this collection.

He was a lifelong passionate Republican having been impressed by Theodore Roosevelt, whom he shook hands with at the dedication of the Provincetown Monument in 1908. He was also an avid photographer using a Kodak “Brownie” camera to take photographs while at sea. These photographs were donated to the Cape Ann Museum in 2007 by his daughter, Florence Morrissey.

Captain Chester L. Morrissey died of heart failure in Gloucester on January 23, 1978. He was predeceased by his wife Ellen who died January 8, 1958.

Acquisition Note

Gift of Wayne Soini, grandson of Capt. C.L. Morrissey.

Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection consists of Capt. Chester L. Morrissey’s notes and rough drafts of a proposed book of his memoirs. It contains snapshots of life onboard certain vessels: the *Caroline*, the *Natalie J. Nelson*, the *Oranato*, the *Satellite*, the *Commonwealth*, the *Volant*, the *Francis C. Gruby*, the *Arabia*, the *White Cap*, the *S.S. Lake Freed*, and the *Billow*.

Series V includes a two-page write up of Captain Chester L. Morrissey’s life supplied by the donor. This includes several “family myths,” discrepancies with the facts as cited in the Biographical Note above. Most notably (the donor’s text is in italics):

According to his death certificate, *Captain David Chadsey Morrissey's* middle name was Clarence.

Capt. David C. Morrissey died at sea during a hurricane when Chester was about twelve and, as the bodies washed ashore, he was designated by his mother to identify his father's body. [His father died from 'accidental drowning' in 1910 in Cohasset when Chester was 23, but as Chester was the witness on the death certificate, it is probable that he identified his father's body at that time.]

Captain Morrissey fished in the 1920s until a serious injury (his left hand was caught and crushed in a metal winch line) forced him out of fishing. [It has been difficult to date this event exactly but his occupation was given as a "seaman fishing vessel" in the 1930 census; he was the cook on a crew list for the schooner Fannie in 1932 and was listed as fisherman or mariner in the Gloucester City Directories from 1936 to 1944.]

Series Description

- Series I. Drafts of his memoir *Atlantis: Lost New England*.
- Series II. Misc. notes and chapter drafts for his memoir.
- Series III. Poems
- Series IV. Misc. notes
- Series V. Newspaper clippings and copies of articles.

Container List

Box 1

Series I

- FF1 Draft of memoir *Atlantis: Lost New England*
 - Chapter 1 – Pubnico, Nova Scotia
 - Chapter 2 – The Gold Mines of George's Banks
 - Chapter 3 – My First Trip, 1904
 - Chapter 4 – Fish Pirates
 - Chapter 5 – Rescue at Sea
 - Chapter 6 – T-Wharf Days
 - Chapter 7 – The Death of Martin Hubbard
 - Chapter 8 – "Big Bat" Deals with Trouble
 - Chapter 9 – M.I.T and Me
 - Chapter 10 – A Dutch Stow-Away
 - Chapter 11 – The Loss of the *Francis C. Gruby*
 - Chapter 12 – A Trip on *The Commonwealth*

Chapter 13 – We Vote to Gamble
Chapter 14 – “We’re Bound for Central Square!”
Proposed but not included:
Chapter 15 – The Gold Mines, Inc.
Chapter 16 – Revolution and the Consolidated
Chapter 17 – Lobster Run
Chapter 18 – Atlantis: Lost New England
Not proposed but included here:
The Caroline Affair
A Winter Day’s Catch on Browns Bank.

FF2 Rough draft & layout of book.
Chapter 1 – Pubnico, Nova Scotia, 1900
Chapter 2 – The Gold Mines of George’s Banks, 1903
Chapter 3 – My First Trip, 1904
Chapter 4 – Fish Pirates, 1906
Chapter 5 – Rescue at Sea, 1906
Chapter 6 – T-Wharf Days, 1907-09
Chapter 7 – The Death of Martin Hubbard, 1912
Chapter 8 – “Big Bat” Deals with Trouble, 1914
Chapter 9 – M.I.T and Me, 1919
Chapter 10 – A Dutch Stow-Away, 1919
Chapter 11 – *The Gruby’s Last Trip*, 1921
Proposed but not included:
Chapter 12 – A Trip on *The Commonwealth*, 1933
Chapter 13 – We Vote to Gamble, 1928
Chapter 14 – “We’re Bound for Central Square!” 1929
Chapter 15 – The Gold Mines, Inc., 1929-30
Chapter 16 – Revolution and the Consolidated, 1931
Chapter 17 – Lobster Run, 1934
Tentative chapter headings:
Chapter 18 – Fishermen’s Races, 1936, 1938
Chapter 19 – The War, 1940-45
Chapter 20 – Just Another Industry, 1945-50
Chapter 21 – Port of Boston, 1950
Chapter 22 – Atlantis: Lost New England, 1900-1950
2 photos: Lower East Pubnico & the crew of the *Onato*
2 Letters from Wayne Soini (grandson) critiquing and discussing publishing options.

Series II

FF3 Chapter roughs & notes
Notes for 1902, 1931, 1919, 1906, 1904, 1905, 1912, 1906
Mate of the *Billow*

When the Captain got sick
T-Wharf Days
The First \$100 Share on a Boston Haddock
Beam Trawling from the Bay State Fish Co., 1928
Beam Trawling on the *White Cap*
A Trip on the *S.S. Youngstown*
A Trip on the *S.S. Covalt*
We Struck the Northeast Bar of Sable Island
Blizzard Fishing on the *Commonwealth*, offered to a magazine for publication.
Chapter 4 – Fish Pirates
Bay View
Revolution & the Consolidated

FF4 Chapter roughs & notes
A: "This old time cook ..."
B: T-Wharf Days
C: "Pubnico is a little village ..."
D: "Here on the east side ..."
F: "They tell this story ..."
G: Lobster Run
H: Loss of the *Frances C. Gruby*
I: "After getting some herring for bait ..."
J: A Trip on the *Commonwealth*
K: West – the North East Bar
L: Pubnico, NS
M "So in 1931 ..."
N: "When we arrived at Asphatagan ..."
O: Third Mate on S.S. Bay View
P: *Arabia*
Chapter 13: We Vote to Gamble
To Rotterdam on the *S.S. Lake Freed*
A Fishing Trip on the *White Cap*.
Mate of the *Billow*.
The Lanesville Renidez-vous
Days Fishing on Browns Bank

Series III

FF5 Poems:
Remember the Girl You Left Behind
Prohibition Days
Some of my Adventures on the *S.S. Lake Freed*
Offered a Position by the Shipping Board
My Little English Girl

Adventures in 1919
The Second Mate's Yarn
The Office Romance
A Trip on the Schooner *Volant*
Looking Back Forty Years
A Trip on the *Commonwealth*
A Product of the Lakes (S Scovalt)
Untitled, first line: Twas on the good ship *Convalt*
Untitled, first line: Now we've got a man in Washington
Untitled, first line: Then Old Danny Wilson

Series IV

FF6 Misc. notes
FF7 Misc. notes
FF8 Misc. notes

Series V

FF9 Clippings & articles
The Gloucester Fisherman
The Romance of Gloucester, Lawrence J. Hart
Newspaper clipping: Dual Role for Schooner, (*Ernestina/Effie M. Morrissey*) GDT 1977
Newspaper clipping: Save the *Morrissey*, GDT 1974
Newspaper clipping: *Longlining Lives On In Gloucester* (photo of Capt. Chester Morrissey)
National Fisherman, 1977
Master Mariner: Memoirs of a Gloucesterman, *Boston Sunday Globe*, 1972
Sorting Shorts, *Boston Sunday Globe*, 1950
4 obituaries for Chester L. Morrissey.
Letter from Florence Soini to Nantucket re: death of her paternal grandfather Capt. David C. Morrissey in 1901 or 1907 storm [see Scope and Content] and response.
2 page write up of Capt. C.L. Morrissey's life, supplied by the donor [see Scope and Content].