NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL

MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

INFORMATION SHEET 22

LIVERPOOL AND CANADA'S MARITIME LINKS

Timber and Shipbuilding

The links between Liverpool and Canada go back to at least 1772, when Charles Dixon sailed from Liverpool in the *Duke of York*, to found a family dynasty in Nova Scotia. The plentiful timber available along the Canadian coast was a prime attraction - hence the port of Liverpool's Canada Dock. Records show that by 1808 Liverpool merchants were acquiring land in Prince Edward Island for timber and fisheries. In 1852, 34 million cubic feet of Canadian planks came into Liverpool, along with 10 million cubic feet of pine, in some 373 ships.

The Maritime Provinces developed an outstanding reputation for shipbuilding using their own timber. Our port's namesake, Liverpool, Nova Scotia, shared with our Liverpool in a trade that brought quick fortunes to many, namely privateering, with both ports building ships simultaneously. Donald MacKay, the builder of many ships which sailed from Liverpool, was also born and bred in Nova Scotia, while the yard of James Smith produced the *Marco Polo* of the Black Ball Line, which was the fastest ship in the world (recorded on her passage to Australia in 1852). In 1838, the timber firm of Rankin Gilmour established itself in the city with the Rankin family becoming heavily involved in local life, especially with Liverpool University.

Fisheries and Wheat

Several significant commercial names stand out in Liverpool/Canadian commercial history. The name of Bowring is written large in Liverpool's political history. The family firm of C.T. Bowring came here in the 1820s bringing cod liver oil and seal products. The seal fishing firm of Bulley and Job of Newfoundland had also set itself up here in 1809 as leading providers of fishery stores. These firms were also leaders in the import of British goods to Canada.

From 1900, a major import into Liverpool was Canadian wheat (and still is). Liverpool imported 5.7 million quarters of wheat out of a total of 24.7 for the UK. A good proportion of this was Canadian.

Emigration

Emigration to Canada via Liverpool continued throughout the 19th century and was second only to the US in popularity. Indeed, from 1818-1826, 1830-1832, and in 1834 it was more popular than the US. From then on it was usually a close second.

In 1847, emigration peaked owing to the Irish famine. The US took 142,1543 emigrants while Canada received 109,680, a figure never exceeded by Canada until the 20th century, when 115,678 passengers travelled to Canada from Liverpool in the peak year of 1907 (218,686 went to the US).

Throughout the 19th century the household name in emigrant shipping was the Allan Line, supplemented by the Cunard Line (originally foundered in Nova Scotia) with the Dominion and Beaver Lines among others, which were later taken over by Canadian Pacific. In 1906, Archie Belaney, the famous *Grey Owl*, left Liverpool for Halifax on the SS *Canada*. He became an international figure in the study of the indigenous North American Indian. The last scheduled passenger service from Liverpool to Canada was the *Empress of Canada*, which sailed for Montreal on 7 November 1971.

Maritime Archives & Library

The Maritime Archives & Library holds the Earle collection (D/EARLE). It also holds the records of the Canadian Atlantic Freight Secretariat (CAF) and the Liverpool Corn Trade Association (D/CORN) (both available by appointment only). The Allan Line archives are held in Canada (Canadian Pacific Archives) but some interesting posters and shipping line ephemera survive here (DX and SAS collections) including a considerable quantity of Canadian Pacific Line voyage and cruise ephemera (D/SPI). The ships of both companies are well represented in our photographic collections. We also hold cruise ephemera of the Cunard Line's Canadian services.

Canadian Archives

Memorial University of Newfoundland
Maritime History Archive
St. John's
Newfoundland A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 737 8428/9
Fax: 709 737 3123
Email: mha@mun.ca
Website: www.mun.ca/mha

(Major holdings include Crew Lists, Log Books, Certificates of Vessel Registry, Shipping Lists, Captains' Registers and Voyage information.)

Canadian Pacific Archives
Canadian Pacific Railway, Corporate Archives
Room 506, Windsor Station
PO Box 6042
Station A
Montreal
Quebec N3C 3E4
Email: info@cprheritage.com

Bibliography

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RANKIN, J. *A History of Our Firm*. Liverpool: Henry Young & Sons, 1921.

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