



New Jersey Historic Preservation Office

Vendor Questions and Answers

(as of May 10, 2016)

New York Shipbuilding Corporation Archives Processing Project
 Located at Camden County Historical Society
 Camden, New Jersey

<p>Question #01</p>	<p>“Thanks for sending me the package. I am not sure that I will be eligible to participate as I do not presently have ACA certification-- I have only registered to do the exam on August 3 this summer.</p> <p>I do not know if there is any leeway in this respect; if there is I would be happy to examine a sample of the collection on Friday May 20 and put in a bid to process the collection between mid-August and the end of the year.”</p>
<p>Answer #01</p>	<p><i>The stated minimum qualifications in the RFP include ACA certification. Only persons possessing ACA certification on or before the due-date for receipt of proposals (Friday, May 27, 2016) are eligible to be considered for this contract.</i></p>
<p>Question #02</p>	<p>"Is there a description of the collection and an assessment of its current condition and state of arrangement?"</p>
<p>Answer #02</p>	<p><i>The Historic Preservation Office conducted a brief needs assessment of the New York Shipbuilding Corporation archives in April 2015. It describes the collection’s volume, condition, and state of arrangement; its relationship to known collections in other repositories; and the type of processing needed to improve preservation and access. The NJHPO needs assessment appears at the end of this document for reference purposes.</i></p>



New Jersey Historic Preservation Office

Assessment of Needs for Improved Preservation, Processing and Access

New York Shipbuilding Corporation Archives Processing Project
Located at Camden County Historical Society
Camden, New Jersey

Date of assessment: April 2015

CCHS possesses 32 containers of records relating to NYS, comprising:

- 25 half-c.f. legal-size archival clamshell-type boxes, numbered 1 to 25; and
- 7 oversize archival boxes of varying sizes, numbered 1 to 7.

CCHS has one untitled box contents listing for the entire numerical box series that appears to be complete and accurate based on the sampling done. However, the description only goes to the file folder level, with minimal information about the contents of the file. There is a second listing entitled "New York Shipbuilding Corporations Manuscripts, Camden City Industry Section, New York Shipbuilding Shelf," which provides more descriptive information about the records, but it appears to relate to an earlier container (transfile boxes?) and shelving arrangement that no longer exists, and there is no sure way of mapping the descriptions to the current box contents listing previously mentioned.

The NYS holdings of CCHS appear to be the most extensive of any known repository. After CCHS, the next largest collection is at Independence Seaport Museum (ISM) in Philadelphia, comprised of about 1.5 linear feet of various records. Hagley Museum and Library has a very small amount of NYS material in the John Farrell Metten collection (Acc. #1969.029), and the South Jersey Port Corporation has an indeterminate amount. It is unclear how the materials came to be placed in these repositories. However, there is correspondence and an itemized listing of photographs and ship models donated by NYS to the Philadelphia Maritime Museum (now ISM) in 1967. This donation makes it appear that a conscious decision was made at the time of NYS's demise to divide the collection, with perhaps the bulk of the photographic materials going to ISM, and most of the rest going to CCHS.

From a researcher's perspective, the split of NYS collections among four (4) known repositories makes it difficult to access and use them efficiently. ISM has minimally processed its holdings and has published a guide to them (2012), but at least researchers can be confident of what they have. There is virtually no intellectual control over the CCHS holdings beyond the box contents listing previously mentioned, necessitating time-consuming review of the records by researchers, a box at a time, to find relevant materials. This requires repetitive handling of boxes, files, bound records and oversize materials, which in many cases subjects them to

damage (brittle, acidic paper, loose or broken bindings, weakened folds, fragments, fragile photographs).

CCHS's NYS holdings appear to be about 50-60% organic archival records of the corporation dating mainly from the 1940s-60s; the balance appears to be an artificial collection of memorabilia (ship launch/commissioning invitations and programs, photos, news clippings, ephemera, etc.). The archival materials include contract books, launch reports, orders and related correspondence, plans and engineering drawings, employee and union records, annual reports, etc. It should be noted that the ISM guide to NYS records appears to include some similar records; this will not be clear until a detailed inventory of CCHS's records is completed and a comparison with ISM's records can occur.

An experienced archivist familiar with corporate records would be able to restore some semblance of original order to the organic archival materials and describe their scope and content in series. The remaining materials would have to be organized and described by subject according to an artificial schema (e.g., name of ship, person, company, photographs, publications, memorabilia, etc.).

Although the CCHS collection is not large in volume, it is complex in terms of subject breadth, and about half will require careful, painstaking review to determine whether files or items properly belong in NYS corporate archival series or in the subject files. Detailed arrangement and description of the collection should be documented in a searchable database such as Microsoft Access. The database should be designed to identify and prioritize series and items in need of conservation treatment and/or reformatting (e.g., scanning, photographic reproduction), and to facilitate easy generation of hardcopy and web-based finding aids. The taxonomy for classification and description of the collection should reflect that used by other major archival repositories for similar kinds of records dealing with the shipbuilding industry.

During the review, most records should be refolded or sleeved in archival paper and photographic storage media of appropriate dimensions. Numerous bound and oversize items will require rehousing in flat storage containers. The number of containers and shelving space required to store the collection after intensive processing will increase by approximately one-third.

An experienced archivist should be contracted to perform intensive processing of the CCHS NYS collection, including arrangement and description, physical rehousing of materials in archival storage media, creation of a searchable database and generation of hardcopy and web-based finding aids. The archivist's scope of work should include visiting all known repositories of NYS records to determine and document how they relate to CCHS's holdings.