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Special Collections
008-02-01
R. Lee figurehead pattern book
circa 1840

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Number: Collection 008-02-01

Title: R. Lee figurehead pattern book

Creator: Lee, R.

Dates: circa 1840

Quantity: 1 volume (.4 linear feet)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition: Gift of Alfred Smith Brownell, 1962.

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Item was acquired by Alfred Smith Brownell and donated to Providence Public Library in 1962.

Processed by: The collection was processed by Kate Wells in 2019.

Conservation: Not applicable.

Language: Materials are in English.

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Special Collections department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format:
R.Lee figurehead pattern book, Special Collections, Providence Public Library

Property Rights: Property rights are owned by Providence Public Library.

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Separated material Not applicable.

Published description Not applicable.

Location of originals	Not applicable.
Location of copies	Not applicable.
Publication note	The Manuscript pattern-book of R. Lee, ship figurehead carver of Liverpool & Jersey, ca. 1840. <i>Occasional Nuggets from the Providence Public Library Rare & Special Collections</i> . (Providence Public Library, Autumn 2010).
Subject headings	Figureheads of ships. Wood-carving

SEE ALSO

008-01-01, Brownell Maritime Collection

HISTORICAL NOTE

This pattern-book was created by R. Lee, a wood carver of figureheads for ships from Liverpool who was working in Jersey, Channel Islands in St. Helier opposite the Weighbridge pier. While thus far it has been impossible to definitively identify R. Lee, records show a Richard Lee, born in Liverpool in 1815 and living there in 1851, a woodcarver by trade. He was married to Mary Lee (nee Venn) whose brother was also a woodcarver. Given that records of the family show that they moved frequently to various port cities, it's likely that the family lived in Jersey in the early 1840s.

The use of figureheads on the bow of ships is evident back to ancient history, but they were most common from the 16th century until the 20th century when ships began to be constructed in metal. Figureheads were the a carved representation of the spirit of the vessel which contributed to the safety and success of the ship. They were often historical or allegorical and represented mythological creatures, patriotic heroes or religious emblems.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The pattern-book includes over 150 drawings of figureheads and stern carvings for ships. The original drawings and some clippings are pasted into the book.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

The collection is comprised of a single bound volume.