

RECENT HISTORY

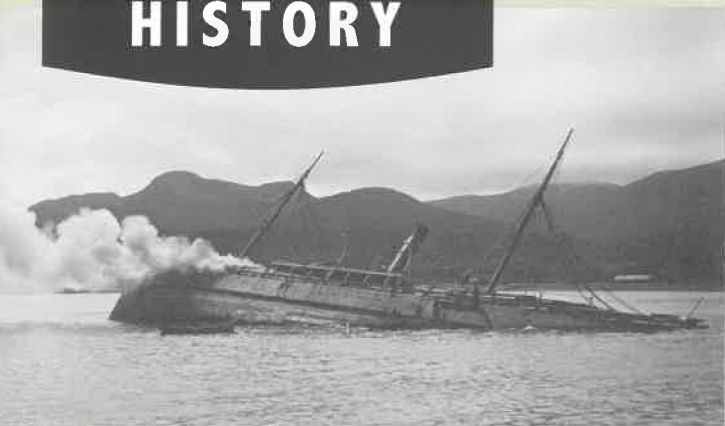


PHOTO FROM MOHAI COLLECTION: SS Bertha, Uyak Bay. July 19, 1915 (N.W.F.CO)

MOHAI Awarded Grant For The Niendorff Marine Disaster Scrapbooks

Thanks to a **Washington Preservation Initiative Award**, a rare scrapbook collection in the MOHAI archives will be preserved and made more accessible to scholars, researchers and the general public.

The **Niendorff Marine Disaster Scrapbook Collection** was given to MOHAI in 1989, and is in fairly good condition. Its pages are made of acidic paper and have begun to crumble in places—and there are numerous clippings that have become detached. Fortunately, this generous grant will make possible the creation of a microfiche version—preserving the information in the context of a collection of specialized materials, and making them readily viewable in a standard library microfiche reader. The work will be done by OCLC Digital Collection & Preservation Services at the branch facility in Lacey, Washington.

Mrs. Hazel (Woods) Niendorff (1898-1991) created an amazing scrapbook collection pertaining to marine casualties in the North Pacific Ocean. She began this gigantic project after conducting some research and discovering that there was no comprehensive and authentic record of maritime disasters. Undeterred, Mrs. Niendorff decided to create one herself. The territory she studied included the California coast north of San Francisco, reaching up into Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Alaska, as well as around to Siberia and adjacent waters. Her sources included 75 years of newspaper files from around the Pacific Northwest, extracts from rare old volumes in private and public libraries, general histories, government records, and correspondence. Mrs. Niendorff also undertook some personal visits along the coast by canoe and trail—along the “Graveyard of the Pacific”—for the purposes of obtaining photographs of places where unusually interesting wrecks had occurred.

Mrs. Niendorff collected newspaper clippings and she hand-typed narrative accounts of the witnesses and survivors of shipwrecks, or what the rescuers found. In addition to the newspaper clippings and transcriptions, there are whole and excerpted booklets, pamphlets, charts and tables listing a wealth of details, such as specific cargo shipments and items of value that were transported, arrival dates, departure dates, information about crew and passengers, and much more.

The collection, which was begun in 1926 and ended in the 1960s, comprises 76 volumes of various bindings. In addition to the subject of marine disasters, Mrs. Niendorff collected information about the development of the Pacific Northwest shipping industry, and such related topics as lumber, wheat, whaling, and fur trading. There are singular volumes pertaining to the San Juan Islands, Port Gamble, Port Blakeley, Port Ludlow, Port Madison, Port Discovery, Utsalady, Grays Harbor and Seabeck.

If you have materials among your personal belongings that may be more at home at a research facility such as MOHAI, please call 206-324-1126 or send email to information@seattlehistory.org. MOHAI's staff can recommend appropriate institutions, including MOHAI, where your treasured artifacts will be most appreciated, and where they will be of most appropriate use to historians and museum professionals.

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