

**Wilmington Historical Society**  
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## **Finding Aid for the Captain Black Family Collection, 1889-1966**

### **Collection Overview**

**Title:** Captain Black Family Collection

**Dates:** 1889-1966

**ID:** BFC

**Primary Creator:** Martin Louis Black, Sr. Family

**Extent:** 0.85 linear feet

**Arrangement:** Arranged at the collection level, alphabetically by subject.

**Forms of Material:** Books, documents, ephemera, photographic materials, scrapbooks

**Language of materials:** English

### **Abstract**

The Captain Black Family Collection documents the daily lives of family members, their activities, associations, occupations, and interests in and around the Wilmington and San Pedro, California areas, between 1889 and 1966. The collection includes World War II related materials, family and individual photographs, personal records, household receipts, invitations to events, books, and registers related to seafaring. The collection is arranged alphabetically by subject.

### **Biographical History**

Martin Louis Black was born on January 13, 1866 in Vilna, Russia and emigrated to the United States at the age of thirteen. Black began his seafaring career in 1883 as a cabin boy aboard the *Cyrus Wakefield*. He married Mary Agnes Noonan in 1894. The couple settled in Berkeley, Alameda County, California and had three children: Martin Louis Jr., Elizabeth A., and Arthur Joseph. Between 1903 and 1906, the family relocated to San Pedro, California. Black had a long career as a steamship pilot and tugboat captain for the Wilmington Transportation Company, founded by Phineas Banning, and later owned by William Wrigley, Jr., who bought the company in 1919. Black was a charter member of the Bilge Club and the San Pedro Benevolent and

Protective Order of Elks, Lodge No. 966. Captain Black, as he was fondly referred to, passed away on January 29, 1936 and is buried in the Historic Wilmington Cemetery.

Martin Louis Black Jr. was born on November 23, 1895 in Berkeley, California. In June of 1917, he registered for the draft and served in the United States Army from June 1918 to January 1919. Following World War I, Martin Louis Black, Jr. worked as a shipyard machinist, and in the early 1920s, became a firefighter with the Los Angeles City Fire Department. He married Catherine Martha Blumer on April 20, 1925, in Santa Ana, California. The couple settled in Wilmington, California and had three children: Martin Louis III, Elizabeth A., and Arthur Raymond. Martin Louis Black, Jr. retired as a Captain from the Los Angeles City Fire Department. He passed away on March 10, 1977 and is buried in the Historic Wilmington Cemetery.

Elizabeth A. Black was born on August 27, 1898 in Berkeley, California and attended public primary and secondary schools in San Pedro, California. Elizabeth passed away on December 19, 1920 at the age of twenty-two due to a heart condition. Memorial services were held at Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church and burial took place at the Historic Wilmington Cemetery.

Arthur Joseph Black was born on December 8, 1901 in Berkeley, California and attended public primary and secondary schools in San Pedro, California. After two years of high school, he began working as a fisherman for a local fish market. In 1919, he became a sailor on the Shipping Board steamer, West Cayote, and within a year rose to the position of quartermaster. In 1921, he joined the S.S. Yale as quartermaster and was soon promoted to chief officer. Arthur J. Black married Pauline Meyers on May 23, 1924 in San Pedro, California and the couple settled in Wilmington. In 1926, while working as first officer on the S. S. Calawaii, he passed his master's examination, qualifying to become a sea captain. Arthur enlisted in the United States Naval Reserve in January, 1942, serving as Lieutenant Port Director at Terminal Island, San Pedro for the duration of World War II. Following military service, he became a foreman for the Metropolitan Stevedore Company. Arthur Joseph Black passed away on June 2, 1980. He is buried at Green Hills Memorial Park, Rancho Palos Verdes, Los Angeles County, California.

## **Scope and Contents**

The Captain Black Family Collection documents the daily lives of family members, their activities, associations, occupations, and interests in and around the Wilmington and San Pedro, California areas, between 1889 and 1966. The collection consists of World War II related materials, family and individual photographs, personal records, household receipts, invitations to events, and other papers. It also includes a small collection of books belonging to Louis Martin Black Sr. and Martin Louis Black Jr., most notably *Six Horses*, written by William Banning and George H. Banning. Collection highlights include a speech by Captain Louis Black Sr. commemorating the naming of the tugboat "Captain Louis Black," Fireman's Fund Registers documenting vessels on the Pacific Coast of the US and Hawaiian Islands (1928, 1930), and a scrapbook belonging to Arthur Joseph Black (photocopies), which includes early photographs of

ships and crew members and newspaper clippings related to the first ship to shore airmail delivery between Honolulu and San Pedro. The collection is arranged alphabetically by subject.

## **Subjects/Access Terms**

### **Creators**

#### **Personal Names:**

Black, Arthur Joseph, 1901-1980  
Black, Martin Louis, III, 1926-2001  
Black, Martin Louis, Jr., 1895-1977  
Black, Martin Louis, Sr., 1866-1936

### **Subject Headings**

#### **Topical Terms:**

Fraternal organizations  
Tugboats  
World War II

#### **Organization name**

Los Angeles (Calif.). Fire Department

#### **Geographical locations:**

Los Angeles County (Calif.)  
San Pedro (Los Angeles, Calif.)  
Wilmington (Los Angeles, Calif.)

#### **Documentary forms:**

Books  
Documents  
Ephemera  
Photographic materials  
Scrapbooks

## **Administrative Information**

### **Processing Information:** Holli Teltoe, 2023-2024

Processing of this collection is made possible by generous donations from Marathon Petroleum Corporation, Wilmington Neighborhood Council, Fast Lane Transportation, I.L.W.U. Credit Union, Russell and Laura Mohberg, and Lendistry.

**Conditions Governing Use:** Copyright for unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creators of this collection has not been transferred to the Wilmington Historical Society. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

**Conditions Governing Access:** The collection is open for research use.

**Preferred Citation:** Black Family Collection. Wilmington Historical Society.

**Acquisition:** The source and date of acquisition are unknown.

## **Collection Contents**

### **Box 1**

**Folder 1:** Black, Arthur Joseph, Scrapbook (copies), Mementoes, 1931

**Folder 2:** Black Family, Cabinet Photographs

**Folder 3:** Black Family, Carte de Visite Photographs

**Folder 4:** Black Family, Snapshot

**Folder 5:** Black Family, Color Transparencies, 1955

**Folder 6:** Black, Martin Louis, Jr. and Catherine, 1935, 1948-1965

**Folder 7:** Black, Martin Louis, Jr. and Catherine, World War II Ration Books, 1942-1945

**Folder 8:** Black, Martin Louis, Jr., Fireman's Fund Register, 1928

**Folder 9:** Black, Martin Louis, Jr., Fireman's Fund Register, 1930

**Folder 10:** Black, Martin Louis, Sr. and Mary, 1889, 1907, 1920-1931, 1944

**Folder 11:** Black, Martin Louis, III, 1946, 1949

**Folder 12:** Notes, 1929-1933, 1966

### **Box 2**

**Item 1:** Banning, William, and George H. Banning. 1930. *Six Horses*. 3rd ed. New York, London: The Century Company. Note: handwritten inscription from William Banning to Captain Louis Black, March 1930.

**Item 2:** Hammond, Harold. 1910. *West Point, Its Glamour and Its Grind*. 1st ed. New York: New York Herald Company. Note: Louis Black, Jr.

**Item 3:** Los Angeles Firefighters Association, Catalina 1955, C.S.F.A Drinking Glass

**Item 4:** Los Angeles County Fire Department, C.S.F.A. Drinking Glass

**Item 5:** Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union Pencils

**Item 6:** United States Naval Institute, United States Navy Department Bureau of Navigation, and United States Navy Department. 1918. *Landing-Force Manual: United States Navy 1918*. 1st ed. Annapolis: Naval Institute. Note: L. Black, Jr.

**Item 7:** Washington Government Printing Office. 1917. *Manual for Noncommissioned Officers and Privates of Infantry of the Army of the United States*. Document No. 574. Note: L. Black, Jr., 899483, U.S. Army.

**Item 8:** Wilmot, Frank. 1918. *Oregon Boys in the War*. 1st ed. Portland: Glass & Prudhomme Co. Note: L. Black, Jr., 658 7<sup>th</sup> St., San Pedro, California, 1919.

**Map Case 6**

**Flat File 1:** Bilge Club 6th Annual Dinner, Bilge Club with Louis Black, Black, Arthur, U.S.F Constitution, Funeral Viewing, ca. 1926-1934

**Flat File 2:** Bilge Club, Certificate of Classification, Lithograph Depicting Terminal Island, Notes, Pillsbury & Curtis Line Graph, R.C. Jones Ship Repairs Estimate, 1902, 1927-1929

**Flat File 3:** Black, Arthur, World War II Military Aircraft Posters, Douglas Aircraft Company, Inc.

**[end of box list]**