

**Los Angeles Maritime Museum**  
**Collection #58: Manuscript Collection Registers**

Papers of Harry Pidgeon  
 Processed by Liz Ruth, January 2014.

**Title:** Papers of Harry Pidgeon  
**Date(s):** 1869-1954; bulk dates: 1921-1937  
**Extent:** .5 cu. ft.

**Scope and Content Notes:**

*Donated to the Cabrillo Beach Museum in 1980, this collection of objects was later transferred to the Los Angeles Maritime Museum. The collection is from Harry Pidgeon's voyages around the world beginning in 1921. Pidgeon made two of these, one between 1921 and 1925 and the second between 1932 and 1937. One of his achievements prior to making the voyages was to build his own vessel which he named "Islander". The Museum's collection of his 80 objects and tools reflects his woodworking skills, the skills he gained by building the yawl himself with hand tools. Although a National Geographic feature story of the circumnavigation ran in the February 1928 issue, his book entitled "Around the World Single-handed" was published in 1932, with later reprints. The article in National Geographic remains the better artifact of his photographs, which printed in the books suffer a bit in quality: the National Geographic images show fine detail from a large-format camera. The archives has received several of his papers and has made these available to researchers who wish to know more about the life of this circumnavigator. Two collections of Pidgeon's glass plate negatives are found at local repositories: the University of California Riverside, California Museum of Photography holds 1550 glass plate negatives taken between 1888 and 1936. At California State University, Fresno are 634 glass plate negatives detailing the lumbering operations in California Sierras.*

**Creator:** Harry Pidgeon, 1869-1954  
**Access:** Collection closed for processing, January through April 2014.

**Usage:** Copyright restrictions may apply.

**Catalog Record:** Papers of Harry Pidgeon

**Provenance:** family of Harry Pidgeon

**Processing History:** A collection of 81 objects is cataloged in the Museum's objects catalog. Letters and documents are arranged, cataloged and finding aid finalized by Liz Ruth-Abramian in April 2014.

**Abstract:** This collection contains an original manuscript item, correspondence and copies of publications in which Mr. Pidgeon's journal of his voyage appeared. The Museum's collection contains photographic prints and artifacts from the creator.

**Biography:** Harry Pidgeon was born in Salem, Iowa on a farm in 1869. He emigrated to the West Coast as a young man eager to learn woodworking trades and found work in lumber mills of California and Alaska. He died in San Pedro at the age of 85 in 1954.

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Mr. Pidgeon's passion for seafaring is matched only by his achievements as a photographer. While he began a circumnavigation when he was aged 52, until then a supplement to his career had involved exploring and photographing the territory of Alaska and the forested areas of California.

**Arrangement and description:** Arranged in two series: Series 1, correspondence; Series 2, publications. Series 3, noted here but not inventoried here contains the 81 artifacts in the Museum's collections.

**Introduction to preservation and re-housing.**

A clean copy of the National Geographic magazine in which the journal of his first voyage appeared supplements the collection copy, which cover is soiled.

**Subject and index terms:** Pidgeon, Harry; boatbuilders; sailing, seamen; San Pedro Bay (Calif. : Bay); yawls, yachtsmen.

**Contents, box and folder lists:**

**Box 1 of 1: Series 1, Correspondence**

- Letter, pages 2 and 3 only, describing a visit to Le Conte Bay and glacier, Alaska.  
No date, pages missing.
- Letter of recommendation for Harry Pidgeon from Annie E. Packer,  
Superintendent of Schools, Henry County, Iowa Feb 5, 1903.
- Letter to Harry Pidgeon from H.P. Corser, Wrangell, Alaska, March 24, 1903

**Box 1 of 1: Series 2, Publications**

- First edition publication of Around the World Single-Handed, 1932 and the same book published in 1942, signed by the author.

Photographic prints

- Four photographic prints (portraits of Pidgeon, his wife and the yawl, ISLANDER), are found in the Museum's collections.

**Museum storage: Series 3, Objects and artifacts**

- 81 objects related to Pidgeon's circumnavigations including tools, a painting, marine animal teeth.