



## CSC at Independence Seaport Museum

### **Women & the Sea**

**Opening November 10, 2006**

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A new exhibit at Independence Seaport Museum focuses on the unusual roles women have played – and continue to play – in maritime history.

Women & the Sea is a comprehensive exhibit that explores the contributions women mariners have made in peace and war, as well as the plight of women left ashore by seafaring husbands. In addition, visitors will discover mermaids, sea nymphs, goddesses, and women who raced for victory.

For centuries, the quest to sail the world's waters was depicted as a conflict between man and the sea. Explorers, sailors, and maritime merchants were assumed to be male. When it came to affairs of the sea, a woman's place was safe at home.

Or so we thought.

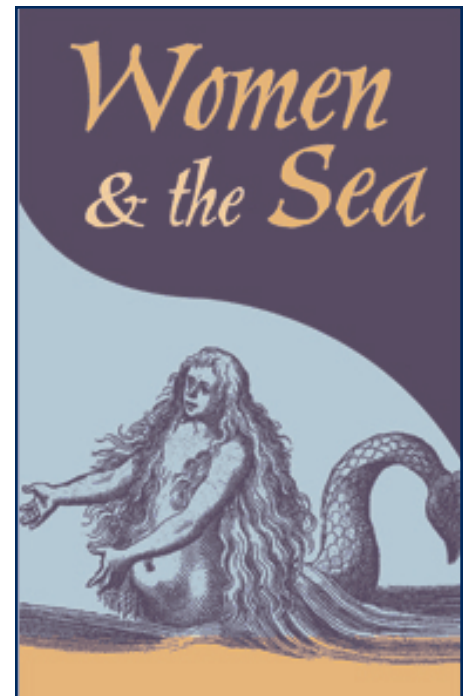
Women's experiences reveal that they have long played an active role in maritime affairs. Through their work in port towns, and their skilled help as merchant and whaling wives, women contributed greatly to the Age of Sail. In the last century, women served with pride in the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, and continue to this day to make significant contributions.

Among the stories told are those of Mary Patten, a young captain's wife who piloted a clipper ship through the perilous seas around Cape Horn in 1856. Visitors will also learn about Charlotte Church, the wife of a captain who served as the assistant navigator aboard a 1909-1911 voyage of the Charles W. Morgan, the last wooden whaling ship in the world. She kept the ship's log, which is on display in the exhibit.

A companion exhibit will be Ladies Who Launch: Ship Christening Photographs from Delaware Valley Shipyards, a collection of images from launching ceremonies at local shipbuilding companies, including candid photos and portraits of the women who sponsored the ships built by New York Shipbuilding Corporation in Camden, N.J., and Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation in Wilmington, Del. Dating from 1905 to 1960, the photos show the scale of the launching parties in relation to the enormity of the ships, the effervescent crash of champagne bottles, and fabulous fashions of the day. During your visit to the Museum, please visit the Library exhibit case located on the second floor, or visit our expanded online exhibit anytime!

Women & the Sea is presented in cooperation with The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA, and Mystic Seaport: The Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, CT. The corporate sponsor is PECO Energy, An Exelon Company. Additional support was provided by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

In conjunction with new exhibit, the Seaport Museum will launch a three-part lecture series, as well as a book club, to bring to life the stories and experiences of real women. The lecture series includes Betsy Alison, Coach of the U.S. Disabled Sailing Team, Colleen Moran, the first woman Delaware River Pilot, and Beverlyn Grissom, the first minority woman to own an ocean transportation company, Camden Shipping Corporation. The lecture series begins December 12, 2006, with Betsy Alison. Please check the Museum's Adult Programs page for more information on the speakers.



Tickets are \$10 per lecture or \$25 for the series.

The book club will encourage participants to read and discuss *Women in the Wheelhouse* by Nancy Taylor Robson; *Women Sailors and Sailors'* *Women* by David Cordingly; and *She Captains: Heroines and Hellions of the Sea* by Joan Druett. The first discussion will take place January 17 with author Nancy Taylor Robson. The fee is \$75 for all three sessions and includes the cost of all books.

For more information or to sign up for either the lecture series or book club, please contact Whitney Jeffers at the Seaport Museum at 215.413.8630.