



Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives  
Guide to the Kathryn Steiner and Frank Lackey papers  
1897-1982  
MC/54

Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives  
63 Flushing Avenue  
BLDG 292, Unit 300  
Brooklyn, NY 11205  
718-907-5982  
<http://bldg92.org/resource-center>  
[archives@bnydc.org](mailto:archives@bnydc.org)

Finding aid produced on: 2018-02-07  
Description is in English.

---

## Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Kathryn Steiner and Frank Lackey papers

**Creator:** Steiner, Kathryn J., 1908-1992; Lackey, Frank R., ca. 1880-1944

**Date(s):** 1897-1982

**Quantity:** 8 boxes

**Language of Materials:** English

**Call Number:** MC/54

---

## Administrative/Biographical History

This collection consists of material related to Kathryn Jane Steiner (nee Lackey) and her father Frank Ross Lackey and their involvement in naval affairs in Brooklyn. Kathryn was sponsor of the USS Brooklyn (CL-40) who christened the cruiser in 1936 at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, while her father served in the New York Naval Militia and the U.S. Naval Reserves for over 40 years. He was appointed commander of the Naval Militia by Governor Franklin Roosevelt in 1932 and died at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital in 1944. Materials include scrapbooks, photos, and artifacts documenting the christening and launching of the USS Brooklyn, as well as Frank Lackey's many years of naval service in Brooklyn and throughout New York State.

Born November 26, 1908, Kathryn Jane Steiner (nee Lackey) was the daughter of Hazel (nee Bassett) and Frank Lackey and grew up at 1223 Union Street in Brooklyn. She attended Erasmus Hall High School, graduated from Adelphi College in 1931, and later graduated from Brooklyn Law School of St.

Lawrence University in 1935. Steiner was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1937 and afterwards worked for the Equitable Life Insurance Company. In 1936, Steiner was chosen to be the sponsor of the USS Brooklyn (CL-40). As sponsor, on November 30, 1936, she swung the bottle christening the new cruiser, and participated in other launching ceremony activities, including a reception at the Commandant's House, a luncheon, and dinner. She married Sebastian Steiner on October 12, 1940. Steiner died on February 11, 1992 and was buried at Green-Wood Cemetery.

Frank Ross Lackey was born circa 1880 and attended Boys High School in Brooklyn. Prior to his naval career, he worked at the New York Dock Company and for the Studebaker Corporation. He lived at 1223 Union Street in Brooklyn where he raised his daughter Kathryn. On July 19, 1899, he joined the New York Naval Militia as a seaman in the 2nd Battalion which was based at the 52nd Street Armory in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Commissioned an ensign in 1908, he was promoted to commander of the 2nd Battalion in 1926. Promoted again to captain in the militia in 1929, Lackey was elevated to rear admiral and commander of the Naval Militia by Governor Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. Called to active duty during World War I with the rank of lieutenant commander, Lackey was made the commanding officer of the Naval Air Base at Bay Shore Long Island in April 1917. Later serving as the executive officer of the Naval Reserve Training Station at Pelham Bay in the Bronx, Lackey was released from active service in 1919 with the rank of commander. In March 1932, Lackey resumed service in the Naval Reserve as assistant to the director of the Third Naval District and was promoted to captain in the reserves in 1933. In September 1942, he was assigned as the commanding officer of the receiving barracks at Lido Beach, Long Island, retiring from this post on August 31, 1944. Lackey died on September 15, 1944 at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital and was buried at Green-Wood Cemetery.

---

## **Scope and Content**

Materials related to Kathryn Steiner consist of two scrapbooks – one on the launching and christening of the USS Brooklyn and one consisting of newspaper clippings on her engagement to Sebastian Steiner and her role as sponsor of the USS Brooklyn. Artifacts include the champagne bottle used to christen the USS Brooklyn, Steiner's sponsor pin, and a small commemorative paperweight. There are also some loose news clippings related to the USS Brooklyn's service during World War II, a launching program, and material related to the USS Brooklyn Association.

Materials related to Frank Lackey consist of one scrapbook which documents his naval career in both the New York Naval Militia and the U.S. Naval Reserve, his full dress uniform and ceremonial sword, as well as medals and documents associated with his service. Photographs include two oversized official portraits, and a series of four photographs of Lackey's funeral at Greenwood Cemetery.

---

## **System of Arrangement**

This collection is arranged into three series as follows:

- Series I: Kathryn J. Steiner Materials
- Series II: Frank R. Lackey Materials
- Series III: Benji Hammer Materials

Each series (with the exception of series III) is further arranged into four subseries:

- Subseries A: Scrapbooks
- Subseries B: Artifacts
- Subseries C: Documents
- Subseries D: Photographs

---

## Related Materials

**Location of Copies:** Items in this collection may have been digitized and if so, are featured in [BNY Collections](#), the BNYDC Archives' digital library. Only those items that have digital reproductions contain an Object ID listed in the Container List below. Use the Object ID or title of the item when searching BNY Collections.

---

## Access Points

### Subject Names:

Balbo, Italo, 1896-1940  
Byrd, Richard Evelyn, 1860-1925  
Earhart, Amelia, 1897-1937  
La Guardia, Fiorello Henry, 1882-1947  
Lackey, Frank Ross, c.1880-1944  
Laning, Harris, 1873-1941  
Lehman, Herbert Henry, 1878-1963  
O'Brien, John Patrick, 1873-1951  
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 1882-1945  
Steiner, Kathryn Jane, 1908-1992  
Swanson, Claude Augustus, 1862-1939  
Walker, James John, 1881-1946

### Subject Organizations:

New York Naval Shipyard  
New York (State). Naval Militia  
Society of Sponsors of the United States Navy

### Subject Topics:

Brooklyn (Cruiser)  
Green-Wood Cemetery (New York, N.Y.)  
Ships--Launchings  
United States. Navy--Officers  
United States. Navy--Reserve fleets  
Warships--United States

### Document Type:

Artifacts  
Ephemera  
Newspaper clippings  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks

---

## Administrative Information

**Accession Number(s):** N/A

**Acquisition Notes:** The materials were collected and maintained by Kathryn J. Steiner (nee Lackey), and donated to the BNYDC Archives by her daughter, Kathryn Julianne (Juli) Jackson, in June 2015. This collection has a collection documentation file.

**Processing Notes:** This collection was first processed by Dennis Riley in June 2015 and reprocessed by Chelsea Reil, Archives Assistant, in January 2018. One item has been removed from the collection, an American flag that was deemed unrelated to the collection. See collection documentation for further

information. 7 items have been digitized: four of the medals belonging to Frank R. Lackey, the launching bottle with ribbon, official portraits of Rear Admiral Lackey from the New York Naval Militia, and photographs of Mr. Lackey's funeral at Green-Wood Cemetery.

---

## Access and Use

**Access Restrictions:** This collection is open for research.

**Use Restrictions:** Material in this collection is made available for use in research, teaching, and private study, pursuant to U.S. Copyright law. The use must assume full responsibility for any use of the material, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced material. Please see the BNYDC Archives' Policy on Access and Use for more information about reproductions and permissions to publish. Any material used for academic research or otherwise should be credited using the citation below.

**Preferred Citation:** Published citations should take the following form: Identification of item, date (if known); Kathryn Steiner and Frank Lackey Papers; MC/54; Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation Archives, Brooklyn, NY.

**Related Material at the BNYDC Archives:** Third Naval District Photograph collection.

---

## Container List

### Series 1: Kathryn J. Steiner Materials

*Arrangement Note:* This series is arranged chronologically.

#### Subseries A: Scrapbooks

*Scope and Contents Note:* The first scrapbook in this subseries consists of newspaper clippings, photographs, and ephemera such as invitations, menus, programs, pins, and ribbons related to Kathryn Steiner's (nee Lackey) role as sponsor at the christening and launching the USS Brooklyn (CL-40), as well as arrangements and associated activities including ceremonial dinners and lunches. There are additional materials related to the Society of Sponsors, including an invitation to the White House, as well as material concerning the commissioning of the USS Brooklyn in 1937. Correspondence includes communications with Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, Rear Admiral Harris Laning, Commandant of the Navy Yard, and Claude Swanson, Secretary of the Navy, along with other well-wishers and organization such as the 1939 World's Fair organizing committee. The photographs depict the christening and launching ceremonies. The second scrapbook contains newspaper clippings related to her engagement to Sebastian Steiner, as well as clippings related to the USS Brooklyn.

Box # 1 3-A-2-8	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 2	Scrapbook - USS Brooklyn launching	1936	

Box # 2 3-A-1-18	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 1	Scrapbook - Kathryn Lackey engagement and USS Brooklyn	1940	

#### Subseries B: Artifacts

*Scope and Contents Note:* The artifacts in this subseries relate to the christening and launching of the USS Brooklyn (CL-40) and consist of the champagne bottle used to christen the ship (in a wooden box

along with the rope and ribbon the bottle swung from), Steiner's sponsor pin, and a commemorative paperweight.

Box # 4 3-A-2-9	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 1	Launching bottle with ribbon	1936	14963

Box # 3 3-A-1-20	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 3	USS Brooklyn sponsor's pin	1936	
Item 4	USS Brooklyn launching paperweight	1936	

### Subseries C: Documents

*Scope and Contents Note:* This subseries consists of newspaper clippings about the USS Brooklyn's service during World War II, material related to the USS Brooklyn Association including a program for its 7th annual reunion, and an original launch program.

Box # 1 3-A-2-8	Title	Date	Object ID
Folder 2	USS Brooklyn launch program	1936	
Folder 4	Newspaper clippings	circa 1944-1945, 1981	
Folder 5	USS Brooklyn Association	1982	

### Subseries D: Photographs

*Scope and Contents Note:* Two photographs of Kathryn and Sebastian Steiner, their daughter Juli, and Benji Hammer. Benji Hammer was a USS Brooklyn enthusiast who attempted to salvage the ship and turn her into a museum.

Box # 2 3-A-1-18	Title	Date	Object ID
Folder 1	Photographs	Undated	

### Series 2: Frank R. Lackey Materials

*Arrangement Note:* This series is arranged chronologically.

#### Subseries A: Scrapbooks

*Scope and Contents Note:* The scrapbook in this subseries contains photos, correspondence, ceremonial programs, invitations, ephemera, pins and medals, and newspaper clippings which document Lackey's service in the New York Naval Militia and the U.S. Naval Reserves. Material documents activities throughout New York State, including at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Pelham in the Bronx, White Stone in Queens, Bay Shore on Long Island, New Rochelle, Albany, and Buffalo. Material also relates to his participation in various commemorative events including the sesquicentennial anniversary of the British surrender at Yorktown, the George Washington Bicentennial, and the reception committees for aviators Amelia Earhart and Italian Minister of Aeronautics Italo Balbo. Correspondence includes letters from President Franklin Roosevelt, Governor Herbert Lehman, and Mayor Jimmy Walker. Photographs include various naval officers, as well as New York City Mayor John P. O'Brien and Governor Lehman. Ships documented in this scrap book include the USS Eagle boat 55 (PE-55), USS Fox (DD-234), USS Illinois (BB-7) (later renamed the USS Prairie State), and the USS Cole (DD-155), as well as the launching of the USS New Orleans (CA-32).

Box # 1 3-A-2-8	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 1	Scrapbook - Frank R. Lackey Naval Militia	1917-1933	

### Subseries B: Artifacts

*Scope and Contents Note: Artifacts in this subseries consist of Lackey's full dress uniform from the New York Naval Militia, including a ceremonial sword, two cigarette cases, and 16 assorted medals related to his track accomplishments and naval service.*

Box # 5, 6, 7 3-B-2	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 1	NY State Naval Militia full dress uniform	undated	

Box # 3 3-A-1-20	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 1	Cigarette cases (2)	1932, 1943	

Box # 8 3-A-1-19	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 1	Medals (16) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New York Naval Militia Memorial Day Reviewing Officer Medal</li> <li>• 10 Year Service Award, New York Naval Militia</li> <li>• 15 Year Service Award, New York Naval Militia</li> <li>• 20 Year Service Award, New York Naval Militia</li> </ul>	1897-1936, Undated	15323  15300  15301  15302

### Subseries C: Documents

*Scope and Contents Note: This subseries consists of two framed documents both signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt which relate to Lackey's naval career. The first is the certificate of appointment as rear admiral in the New York Naval Militia and the second is a certificate in memoriam indicated he died at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital.*

Box # 3 3-A-1-20	Title	Date	Object ID
Item 2	Appointment as Rear Admiral	1932	
Item 5	Memorial Certificate	1944	

### Subseries D: Photographs

*Scope and Contents Note: This subseries contains two oversized formal portraits of Lackey in his New York Naval Militia uniform and a series of four 8"x10" black and white photos of his funeral at Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn.*

Box # 1 3-A-2-8	Title	Date	Object ID
Folder 1	Portraits of Rear Admiral Frank R. Lackey	Circa 1932	14880

Folder 3	Funeral of Frank Lackey, Green-Wood Cemetery	1944	14879
----------	---	------	-------

**Series 3: Benji Hammer Materials**

*Arrangement Note:* This series is arranged chronologically.

*Scope and Contents Note:* Benji Hammer was Brooklyn resident and admirer of the USS Brooklyn. He became a friend of the Steiner family. According to Juli Jackson, his dream was to raise enough money to buy the ship back from the Chilean Navy (to which it had been sold) and turn it into a floating museum in Brooklyn. The USS Brooklyn was renamed the Bernardo O'Higgins by the Chilean Navy and was ultimately scrapped. The materials in this series were donated by Ms. Jackson and were originally given to her by Mr. Hammer. They include two USS Brooklyn patches, as well as a packet of materials relating to the USS Brooklyn and its history.

<b>Box # 2 3-A-1-19</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Object ID</b>
Folder 2	U.S.S. Brooklyn patches (2)	Undated	
Folder 3	U.S.S. Brooklyn	undated	