THE SHIP'S LIBRARY:
A SEAFARING SPECIAL LIBRARY

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Life on board ship is rigorous, often tedious and is lacking in individual privacy. Scientists and ship's crew use the recreational reading materials to while away off-duty hours, to escape the constriction of close quarters and to develop skills in their hobbies. The scientific section of the library provides the scientist with reference books and the student with a study collection. The non-scientific reference materials contain sources for settling after-dinner arguments, organizing group discussions and pursuing self-education projects. Shelf space is limited. Therefore, selection of books for the collection is based on expressed needs and requires continuing communication between crew, sea-going staff and the librarian.

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution operates three major research vessels and one submersible. These ships are:


R/V Atlantis II (Mother ship for DSRV ALVIN) - Length, 210 feet. Complement: 25 officers and crew, 15 scientists, 10 ALVIN crew.

R/V Oceanus - Length, 177 feet. Complement: 12 officers and 12 scientists.

Each of these ships contains, as a separate unit, a library maintained by the Institution Research Librarian. The research vessel's mission is to increase man's knowledge of the oceans of the world. The ship's library contributes to that mission by providing on-site information to scientists, technicians, ships' officers and crews. It serves a small group
of people who are isolated from the sources of information that are taken for granted in the home institution. The librarian needs to understand the requirements of shipboard life in order to achieve the objective of providing the maximum amount of information in a minimum amount of space.

Oceanographic research vessels are ships designed to accommodate a wide range of oceanographic tasks. The duration of a cruise varies from one month to two years. Each leg of a cruise may serve a different set of scientific investigations carried out by a separate scientific and technical group. The ship's crew remains approximately the same throughout a cruise. The ship's library has two main components: the scientific section and the general reference/recreation section. The contents of the scientific/technical portion of the ship's library will vary according to scheduled scientific projects, the geographic area of the cruise, and the specialized capabilities of the ship. Ship equipment, mechanical and electronic, must be repaired and maintained at sea. Scientific instrumentation is often modified at sea. The library collection is expected to provide certain basic handbooks to assist in these processes. The reference/recreation portion of the library can be tailored to the individual interests of the officers and crew, and the general interests of the scientists and technicians. Interviews with the ship's officers and crews, and with regular sea-going scientific and technical staffs are essential to the development of a meaningful library collection.

All shipboard activities are directed toward oceanographic research. The deployment and retrieval of scientific equipment place rigorous demands on personnel and ship. There is
no time for questions or explanations when the ship is on-station. Between stations, the scientific/technical personnel are heavily involved in laboratory work. The ship's crew frequently request library materials that will explain oceanography in general or specific research projects. In order to do their jobs better, the crew members like to understand why a certain piece of equipment must be deposited at a specific location, in a certain manner and also the value of the data or specimens being collected. Many members of the ship's officers and crew are career seamen and may be studying to meet license or certificate requirements.

Life on board ship is restricted in space and variety. For the officers and crew the ship is home; for the scientific/technical staff the ship is a temporary laboratory that may represent an adventure, or an endurance test if they are afflicted with seasickness. There may be long periods of inactivity while the ship is steaming to the research site. The close contact between diverse shipboard personnel puts a strain on human relationships. Reading provides the individual with an escape from the physical constraints and gives him a personal inner space in which to expand his internal horizons. The recreational portion of the library collection includes both fiction and non-fiction. No distinction can be made between the reading interests of crew and scientific staff. Their mutual love of the sea is apparent in the popularity of any book about the oceans - maritime history, classic tales, modern sea stories and factual accounts of ocean exploration.

A basic ship's library list is appended here, arranged by categories, with some recommended titles. For a specific ship, additions
or changes to the basic list should be made in response to needs imposed by the geographic areas of the cruises.

SHIP'S LIBRARY - BASIC

Encyclopedias

GENERAL

Encyclopedia Britannica (see also: Treatises)

SCIENCE

Example:
McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology.
Reinhold. 1966.

Dictionaries

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

SCIENCE

Example:
Glossary of Oceanographic Terms. 2nd edition. U.S.
Naval Oceanographic Office. 1966.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

General - choice based on ports of call
Science

Thesaurus

Record of Institution Work (for ships which visit foreign ports)

Atlases - Political and Oceanographic

Example:
Times Atlas of the Oceans
National Geographic Atlas of the World
Oceanographic atlases for the cruise area
Handbooks

DATA COMPILATIONS

Example:
CRC Handbook of Chemistry and Physics
Handbook of Mathematical Functions with Formulas, Graphs and Mathematical Tables. M. Abramowitz and I.A. Stegun. GPO. 1978. (7th printing)

Health (see also: Toxic Animals under Identification Manuals)

Example:
Ship's Medicine Chest. GPO (latest edition)
NOAA Diving Manual

Seamanship/Navigation

Example:
Piloting, Seamanship and Small Boat Handling. C.F.
Chapman. 1945.

Meteorology/Weather

Example:
Smithsonian Meteorological Tables. 6th revised edition. 1958.

Treatises

Example:
The Sea. 8 vol. Wiley. 1962-
Chemical Oceanography. J.P. Riley and G. Skirrow. 2nd edition. 8 vol. Academic. 1975-
Ocean Basins and Margins. A.E.M. Nairn and F.G. Stehli. 4 vol. Plenum. 1973-

Monographs/Textbooks

Example:

Identification Manuals
Specialized manuals are provided by the scientists for use in the laboratory only. The library collection emphasizes those animals encountered at sea by all shipboard personnel: seabirds, whales, fish and large invertebrates. Additional manuals are selected by geographic area of the cruises.

Example:
Recreational Book Collection

NONFICTION

TRAVEL GUIDES - selected by port of call

GENERAL INFORMATION
Example:
World Almanac
Book of Lists
Guinness Book of World Records
Sports encyclopedias/compendia

ROPES AND KNOTS
Example:

OCEANS (see also: Monographs and Textbooks)
Example:
Oceanic Quest. The International Decade of Ocean Exploration. NAS-NRC. 1969.
1984.

HOBBIES
Most popular areas of interest are macrame, woodcarving and scrimshaw.

MUSIC
Belknap. 1978.

NAVAL AND MARITIME HISTORY

RELIGION-BIBLES

FICTION
The most frequently requested recreational reading materials fall into the following categories:

CLASSIC TALES OF THE SEA
Example:
Moby Dick. H. Melville
Two Years Before the Mast
The works of Joseph Conrad

OTHER SEA STORIES
Example:
The Captain Hornblower series

MYSTERIES fast-paced, adventure-packed type

SCIENCE FICTION

SPY STORIES

WESTERNS

BIBLIOGRAPHY
NTIS. AD 776 629/8GA 29 p.

Inboard Profile

R/V Knorr