

# **Guide to the Frank J. Trezza Seatrain Shipbuilding Collection 1988.016**

**Finding aid prepared by Matthew Gorham**

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Brooklyn Historical Society  
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128 Pierrepont Street  
Brooklyn, NY, 11201  
718-222-4111  
[library@brooklynhistory.org](mailto:library@brooklynhistory.org)

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	Brooklyn Historical Society
<b>Title</b>	Guide to the Frank J. Trezza Seatrains Shipbuilding Collection
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	Bulk, 1973-1978
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1861-1988
<b>Extent</b>	0.25 Linear feet in one document box and two slide storage boxes.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Language of Materials</b>	Materials in English

### Preferred Citation

Identification of item, date (if known); Frank J. Trezza Brooklyn Navy Yard Collection, ArMs 1988.016, Box and Folder number; Brooklyn Historical Society.

## Biographical and Historical Note

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The origins of the Brooklyn Navy Yard (officially known as the New York Naval Shipyard) date back to 1801, when the United States Navy acquired what had previously been a small, privately owned shipyard in order to construct naval vessels. By the time the Defense Department ceased shipbuilding activities at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1966, 88 vessels had been manufactured at the facility. In 1967, the Brooklyn Navy Yard was acquired by the City of New York and was converted for private commercial use.

Seatrain Shipbuilding, a subsidiary of Seatrain Lines, was founded in 1968 and commenced shipbuilding activities at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1969 with the help of significant federal subsidies. During its tenure at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Seatrain built four VLCC (Very Large Carrying Capacity) oil tankers, eight barges, and one ice breaker barge. The company employed around 3100 union workers (represented by the Industrial Workers of North America) through the mid-1970s. However, Seatrain suffered economic troubles throughout its existence, and by the time the company declared bankruptcy and shut down its operations in Brooklyn in 1981, its workforce had shrunk to 550. (1)

Frank J. Trezza was hired by Seatrain Shipbuilding as a Mechanic Helper at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1973 and eventually worked his way up to the position of First Class Marine Electrician. He worked at the Navy Yard until 1978 when he was injured on the job and told by doctors that he would never work in the shipbuilding profession again. Following rehabilitation from his injuries, Mr. Trezza relocated to Maine where he resumed working as a First Class Marine Electrician at Bath Iron Works, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in New Hampshire, and in South America for a European defense contractor. In 1999, Mr. Trezza earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from the University of Southern Maine, and in 2007, he published the book, *Brooklyn: Steel-Blood Tenacity*, a memoir of the years he spent working at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

### Bibliography

1. *On the Rocks*. Time Magazine. February 23, 1981.
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## Scope and Contents Note

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The Frank J. Trezza Seatrain Shipbuilding Collection documents shipbuilding activities at the Brooklyn Navy Yard from its closing by the Department of Defense in the mid-1960s through its rebirth and eventual demise under the management of the Seatrain Shipbuilding Corp. Though the dates of the collection span from 1861 to 1988, the bulk of the records span the period 1973-1978, when Frank J. Trezza was an employee of Seatrain Shipbuilding. Included in the collection are newspaper clippings, union publications, pamphlets and newspapers published by Seatrain, a Seatrain employee orientation

kit, black & white photographs, color photographs, color slides, and black & white negatives. All of the documents in the collection were either collected or created by Frank J. Trezza.

The majority of newspaper clippings in the collection document two subjects: the closing of the Brooklyn Navy Yard by the Department of Defense in 1966, and the final years of shipbuilding there under the Seatrain Shipbuilding Corp. during the 1970s. Also included is a slim file with clippings on the overall history of the Navy Yard dating back to the 19th century. The company and union pamphlets and publications all date from the 1970s, and they document many of the immediate aspects of working life at Seatrain.

Of particular interest are several hundred color photographs, black & white photographs, color negatives, and black & white negatives, all photographed by Mr. Trezza during his tenure at Seatrain Shipbuilding. The images span the years 1977-1978, and offer an inside view of the Navy Yard during the final years of shipbuilding there. Included are landscapes of the Navy Yard and its surrounding area, portraits of fellow Seatrain employees on the job, and images of the ships that were built or repaired at the Navy Yard during this time. There are also a few black & white photographs obtained from the National Archives that depict ships built at the Navy Yard from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century.

The photographs in the collection have been digitally scanned (though not to archival standards), are cataloged to the item level, and are available for viewing in the PastPerfect image database.

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## **Administrative Information**

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### **Publication Information**

Brooklyn Historical Society June 2009

### **Conditions Governing Access**

Open to researchers without restriction.

### **Conditions Governing Use**

Copyright held by the Brooklyn Historical Society. Permission to publish or reproduce must be secured from the repository.

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Donated by Frank J. Trezza in 1988.

### **Processing Information**

The collection was processed by Brooklyn Historical Society staff members in 1988, and further processed by Matthew Gorham in June 2009. The finding aid was written and entered into Archivist's Toolkit by Matthew Gorham in June 2009.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- International Union, United Industrial Workers of America.
- New York Naval Shipyard.
- Seatrain Shipbuilding Corp.
- United States. Navy.

### Genre(s)

- Photographs

### Geographic Name(s)

- Brooklyn (New York, N.Y.)

### Personal Name(s)

- Trezza, Frank J.

### Subject(s)

- Shipbuilding--New York (State)--New York

**Series 1 - Clippings, Pamphlets, Publications, Seatrain Employee Orientati...****Collection Inventory****Series 1 - Clippings, Pamphlets, Publications, Seatrain Employee Orientation Kit 1923-1988**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Clippings - Brooklyn Navy Yard Closing 1923-1967	1	1
Clippings - Brooklyn Navy Yard History 1951-1970	1	2
Clippings - Miscellaneous 1962-1988	1	3
Clippings - Special Supplement - Williamsburg News 1978	1	4
Pamphlets, Union Publications, Seatrain Company Publications 1973-1975	1	5
Seatrain Shipbuilding Corp. Employee Orientation Kit 1971-1973	1	6

**Series 2 - Color Slides, Color Photographs, Black & White Photographs, Black & White Negatives circa 1800s-1978 (Bulk, 1977-1978) Materials in this series are identified as V1988.21.1-465**

	<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>
Color Photographs 1977-78	1	7
Black & White Photographs 1861-1977	1	8
Black & White Negatives 1977	1	9

Series 2 - Color Slides, Color Photographs, Black & White Photographs, Bla...

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**Box**

Color Slides 1977-1978

Slide  
Box 1

Color Slides 1977-1978

Slide  
Box 2