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Witness Depositions in Support of Seamen's Protection Certificates

Newly digitized and now available in the National Archives Catalog: [Newport, Rhode Island Witness Depositions in Support of Seamen's Protection Certificates.](#)

The National Archives at Boston holds many records of historical and genealogical interest, including U.S. Customs Service Records, which contain documentation of American seamen from New England.

In July 2016, the Newport Historical Society transferred a group of [Witness Depositions](#) to the National Archives at Boston. These depositions, filed in 1832 for the port of Newport, Rhode Island, were identified within a collection of Customs District records and were digitized directly after accessioning. The group is regarded as an accretion to an existing series of the Newport customs district, and are now available to view, download, and transcribe in the Catalog!

I John Fanning of Newport in the State of New York
do solemnly swear that Edward Clemons ^{maunier and Jean Pirece}
was born in Philadelphia in the State of Pennsylvania on or about the
first day of May, 1790. — *So help me God.*
witness *John Fanning*
Newport Co. Newport
Jan'y. 9. 1832 sworn before me. *John Fanning*
John Fanning Sub. Noty

No 4
41. years, 5 feet, 5 inches, yellow-
ish complexion, black eyes,
black woolly hair, scar on
left eye brow, and a crooked
little finger Jan. 9. 1832. -

Witness Deposition of John Fanning in Support of Seamen's Protection Certificate for Edward
Clemons, 1/9/1832. (National Archives Identifier [85968799](#))

Witness Depositions were created to establish a seaman's American citizenship and
provided the basis for issuance of a Seamen's Protection Certificate.

Cat. No. 1436

**SEAMAN'S PROTECTION
CERTIFICATE**

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF NAVIGATION
U. S. 1930

No. 7

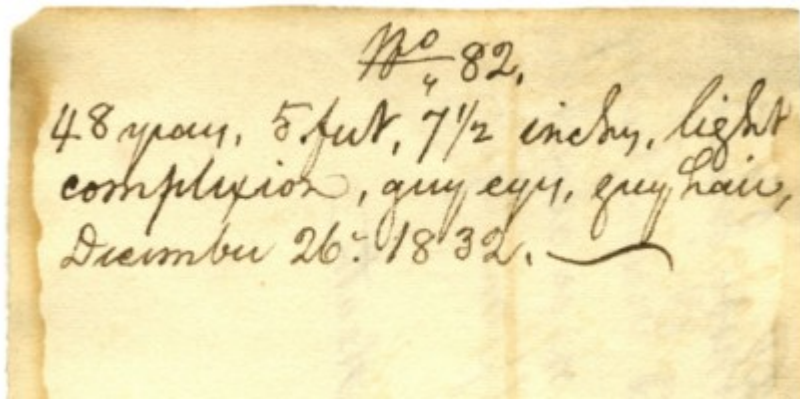
I, W. C. Herrick Dep, Collector of the Customs for
the District of Mass., Port of Fall River, do hereby certify that
Manuel Capeto, an AMERICAN SEAMAN,
aged 20 years, or thereabouts, of the height of 5 feet, 9 inches,
W. Brown hair, Fair complexion, Blue eyes, and a native
of Fall River, Mass., has this day produced
to me proof, in the manner directed by law; and I do hereby certify that
the said Manuel Capeto is a
CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and Seal of Office
this 19th day of August, 1930.
W. C. Herrick Dep. Collector of Customs.

LEFT THUMB PRINT SEAL PHOTOGRAPH




Seaman's Protection Certificate for Manuel R. Capeto Jr., 8/19/1930. (National Archives Identifier [7385110](#)). From the series: [Applications for Seamen's Protection Certificates](#) or [Certificates of American Citizenship, 1/1930 - 6/1937](#).

While the certificates themselves are not part of the records of this customs district, each deposition is an affidavit made by an individual to a justice of the peace or the collector of customs attesting to the American citizenship of a particular seaman. The earlier affidavits are handwritten, and the later ones are on printed forms.



Witness Deposition of Charles C. Heath in Support of Seamen's Protection Certificate for Simon Davis, 12/26/1832 (National Archives Identifier [85969095](#))

The affidavits usually include the number assigned by the collector; name and signature of the witness; name of the seaman; the seaman's age, height, hair color, eye color, complexion; his place of birth; his residence at the time the declaration was signed; the port and date of the affidavit; and the signature of the justice of the peace or the collector. This series also contains additional witness depositions, as well as registers of seamen's certificates issued, which are slated for future digitization.

Learn more about these records and more from the [National Archives at Boston](#).

Are you up for a challenge? How well can you read 19th century handwriting? Help us transcribe these handwritten witness depositions, filed in 1832.

Get Started Tagging and Transcribing!

Citizen Archivist Road Trip Update

Thanks for taking a ride with us on our Citizen Archivist Road Trip! After twelve weeks and twelve virtual stops, we've visited all of our regional archives. We hoped you discovered new records and learned a little more about each of our locations.



Historic Route 66: It's More than a Road; It's Her People (National Archives Identifier [7719420](#))

Many thanks to all who joined us: more than 160 Citizen Archivists helped to enhance a whopping 5,577 pages from more than 1,200 records in the Catalog!

Become a Wiki Scholar!

Wiki Education, in collaboration with the National Archives, is offering a [virtual professional development course](#) that trains individuals with a research interest in political science, women's rights, history, and related fields to successfully contribute to Wikipedia.



Photograph of Suffrage Parade, 1913 (National Archives Identifier [593561](#))

Participants in this new course will learn how to improve Wikipedia's coverage of the history of women's voting rights in the United States in honor of an upcoming exhibit hosted at the National Archives Museum, [Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote](#). Take an active role in ensuring that the world's most popular reference source is more representative, accurate, and complete. Apply to be a part of this unique initiative today!

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