



Independence  
Seaport Museum

*Exploring America's Maritime Heritage*

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## Guide to the Theresa B. Nirdlinger Papers

**Creator:** Theresa B. Nirdlinger

**Dates:** 1898-1899

**Quantity:** 1 box (116 items)

**Call Phrase:** Nirdlinger Papers

**Provenance:** Donated by Eugene Okamoto. ISM number: 2007.7

**Processed by:** Megan Hahn Fraser, 2007

**Biographical note:** Theresa B. Nirdlinger was the wife of Frederick G. Nirdlinger, owner of the People's Theater in the Kensington section of Philadelphia. In the late 1890s she sent letters to commanders, paymasters and other naval personnel in an attempt to collect hat band ribbons from all U. S. Navy ships, especially those involved in the war with Spain.

**Scope and content:** Some letters indicate that a hatband was transmitted with them, but the ribbons are not extant. Many correspondents apologize for not having ribbons available to send; some suggest alternate methods of acquiring them.

A few correspondents indicate that Mrs. Nirdlinger is not alone in her quest for acquiring these souvenirs. J. A. Smith at the League Island Navy Yard tells her, "I learn today that Mrs. Admiral Howison is a collector of cap ribbons and I am sure is but an amateur as compared with you" (December 14, 1898). J. E. Cann of the USS *Adams* elaborates in his letter of December 22, 1898, "In conclusion beg leave to say I am constantly burdened with letters from people all over the country asking for ribbons to comply with them all would exhaust the stock & require an extra clerk to attend to the correspondence." Although the letters are not extant in the collection, the responses show that she often sent more than one request to certain people. C. H. Grant is finally able to send a hat ribbon with his letter of January 24, 1899 and remarks that Mrs. Nirdlinger's "unparalleled perseverance and patience is at last rewarded."