



Merchant Navy Service, Seamen 1835-1857, Officers 1835-1844

The crucial information needed for a search in the archives

The National Archives holds records which might contain the information you require and we can:

- Either search for it on payment of a fee and supply you with the information (if found)
- or
- Enable you to search for the information in other ways

Please send as much information as you can. The following details are particularly important:

- The full name of the person*.....
- The date (even if approximate) and place of birth of the person*
.....
- In what capacity did the person serve?*
.....
- Between which years (approximately) did the person serve?*
.....
- Names and dates of any ships on which the person was known to have served

If you have all of the information marked with an asterisk*, the standard charges for our searches will apply and these are shown on this leaflet. If you do not have this information, the standard charges will not apply, as the search time will increase by a large amount, and therefore the search will require a very high fee to be paid. Please contact us if you still want to proceed:

enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk

1. Register of Seamen, Series I (1835-1836).

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue reference: BT 120

This series does not have an index and is arranged by the first two letters of seamen's surnames then in a numerical sequence. Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the letter M. It is best to start with the Register

of Seamen Series II, Part 1 (see 2 below), to which there is an index for most letters. The reference numbers used there also apply to this series.

Information that this source should reveal:

These are the first service registers for merchant seamen, and they normally record:

- Surname and forename
- Age
- Place of birth
- Quality (for example: seaman, mate etc)
- Ship on which the individual served together with the date

Entries found here should be duplicated in the Register of Seamen, Series II Part 1 (see 2 below), but the entries found here may be easier to interpret.

Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates.

For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

2. Register of Seamen, Series II Part 1 (1835 to February 1840).

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue references: BT 112 and BT 119

This register overlaps with, and continues on from, the Register of Seamen, Series I (see 1 above). Arrangement is by the first two letters of seamen's surnames, then in a numerical sequence. There is an index for most letters. Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the letter M. The reference numbers used here also apply to the Register of Seamen, Series I (see 1 above).

Information that this source should reveal:

These registers normally record:

- Surname and forename
- Age

- Place of birth
 - Reference to voyages
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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates.

For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

3. Register of Seamen, Series II Part 2 (December 1841 to 1844).

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue references: BT 119 and BT 112

Arrangement is roughly alphabetical according to a seaman's surname. For common surnames the entries are further grouped according to forenames. Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the name following the Mc prefix (for example: McDonald under Donald).

Information that this source should reveal:

These registers normally record:

- Surname and forename
 - Age
 - Place of birth
 - Reference to voyages
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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates.

For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

4. Register of Seamen's Tickets (1845-1854).

Standard charge: £60

Catalogue references: BT 113 and BT 114

Entries are arranged numerically by the register ticket number. There is a roughly alphabetical name index.

Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the name following the Mc prefix (for example: McDonald under Donald).

Information that this source should reveal:

The index normally records:

- Surname and forename
- Birthplace
- Register ticket number

The registers normally record:

- Surname and forename
- Date and place of birth
- Physical description

- Details of previous sea service
 - Reference to voyages
 - Ships' names are not given
 - Voyages are not recorded for 1849, 1850 and 1854
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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates.

For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.

Not all entries found in the index have corresponding entries in the registers. No entries will be found for register tickets numbered above 546,000.

5. Register of Seamen, Series III (1853-1857).

Standard charge: £45

Catalogue reference: BT 116

Arrangement is by the first few letters of seaman's surname, with further subdivisions of common surnames according to forename, as well as a

category called 'various'. Names beginning with Mc are usually to be found under the name following the Mc prefix (for example: McDonald under Donald).

Information that this source should reveal:

These registers normally record:

- Surname and forename
 - Age (at the time of the first recorded voyage)
 - Place of birth
 - Voyages
 - Register Ticket number, if previously issued
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Factors affecting success of a search:

The first name and surname is essential to make a search feasible.

For anything except very uncommon names, it is essential to have age and place of birth to distinguish between possible candidates.

For very common names there may be several possibilities, and it may not be possible to distinguish between them.
