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THE YACHTING PHOTOGRAPHY OF WILLARD B. JACKSON

May 20, 2006 – Jan. 21, 2007

Peabody Essex Museum

SALEM, Mass.—In a scene repeated thousands of times during the heyday of American yachting, photographer Willard Bramwell Jackson (1871–1940) could often be found motoring his sleek white powerboat, *Alison*, rapidly around a sailboat in the waters off Marblehead,

Massachusetts. In his work, Jackson captured the many dimensions of yachting with meticulous artistry—from graceful boat designs to a sporting life of outdoor exhilaration, to the intimate affinity sailors share with their vessels at sea. From May 20, 2006, to Jan. 21, 2007, the Peabody Essex Museum will feature over 50 works from the museum’s major collection of vintage photographs in the exhibition *The Yachting Photography of Willard B. Jackson*. Most of the photographs in the exhibition, some measuring 25 by 30 inches, were created from large-format glass-plate negatives, resulting in images of exceptional detail and richness.



“Jackson was a highly capable photographer who was also extremely knowledgeable about the boats he chose to shoot,” said Daniel Finamore, the Russell W. Knight Curator of Maritime Art and History at the Peabody Essex Museum. “As a result, his photographs have great depth and tonality, while also emphasizing the finest and most engaging attributes of his boats.”

Willard B. Jackson began working shortly after the introduction of dry-plate emulsion, which allowed photographic exposures to be measured in fractions of seconds instead of minutes—an essential development for a photographer of fast-moving yachts. He constructed most of his compositions from the platform of his own vessel, controlling the apparent motion of boat, water, and air. He adapted his photographic technique for the special requirements of the marine environment by manipulating reflections and contrasts, often backlighting sails to create the dynamic, rich photographs on view in the exhibition.

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Jackson worked from 1898 to 1937, the apex of competitive yachting and leisure boating in America. While he specialized in photographing great sailing yachts such as the famous designs of Edward Burgess, B. B. Crowninshield, and L. Francis Herreshoff, Jackson also trained his lens on motorized craft and speedboats, elegant pleasure cruisers, and the occasional working schooner. Additionally, Jackson's landscapes

capture the narrow streets and colonial homes of old Marblehead, with a harbor dominated by elegant Gilded Age yacht clubs.

The Yachting Photography of Willard B. Jackson will be accompanied by the publication of the first book on Jackson's work, featuring 100 prints with commentary by Matt Murphy and an introductory biography of Jackson by Daniel Finamore. The book will be released by Commonwealth Editions in May 2006.

About the Peabody Essex Museum

The recently transformed Peabody Essex Museum presents art and culture from New England and around the world. The museum's collections are among the finest of their kind, showcasing an unrivaled spectrum of American art and architecture (including four National Historic Landmark buildings) and outstanding Asian, Asian Export, Native American, African, Oceanic, Maritime, and Photography collections. In addition to its vast collections, the museum offers a vibrant schedule of changing exhibitions and a hands-on education center. The museum campus features numerous parks, period gardens, and 24 historic properties, including Yin Yu Tang, a 200-year-old house that is the only example of Chinese domestic architecture in the United States. The Peabody Essex Museum is open daily, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. General museum admission: Adults \$13; seniors \$11; students \$9. Additional admission to Yin Yu Tang: \$4. Members, youth 16 and under, and residents of Salem enjoy free general admission and free admission to Yin Yu Tang. Location: East India Square, Salem, MA 01970. Call 866-745-1876 or visit our Web site at www.pem.org.

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