



BHC-MSS 0149

Guide to the William Kolvig collection of Lake Torpedo Boat Company  
Material  
By Meg Rinn

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Lake Torpedo Boat Company

**Title:** William Kolvig collection of Lake Torpedo Boat Company

**Dates:** 1922, undated

**Quantity:** ½ manuscript box

**Abstract:** This small collection contains samples of the work that the Lake Torpedo Boat Company completed around 1922. This includes a patent for a hydroplane mechanism, made by William Kolvig, along with some sample data.

**Language:** English

**Repository:** Bridgeport History Center

**Biographical History:**

Biographical research is still being conducted on William Kolvig, but he seems to have lived the bulk of his life in Fairfield County, mostly in Fairfield and Southport. His occupation is frequently listed as a draftsman or engineer in various city directories.

These same records list his place of birth as Japan. If this is indeed the case, then he is likely the son of Frederick Kolvig, who was appointed the first superintendent of the first submarine base in Nagasaki. This was a part of a larger contract with the Great Northern Telegraph Company in order to open submarine cables and establish a national telegraph service. The Danish Kolvig family remained in Japan until 1883.

Simon Lake founded the Lake Torpedo Boat Company in 1912. The bulk of the company's submarines were built between 1918 and 1922, making a small but mighty impact on Bridgeport and submarine research as a whole. As Bridgeport was a major manufacturing hub at the time with steel and iron works, it was easy to get material for submarine construction, and the city's harbors provided a fertile testing ground.

The United States Navy bought a number of boats from the company, with 26 completed designs. Unfortunately, the company went under in 1924 due to financial difficulties.

**Bibliography**

K. Meiji Portraits. Accessed 2021, May 28. [http://meiji-portraits.de/meiji\\_portraits\\_k.html](http://meiji-portraits.de/meiji_portraits_k.html)

**Scope and Content note:**

This small collection contains samples of the work that the Lake Torpedo Boat Company completed around 1922. The patent placed at the start of the collection for a hydroplane operating mechanism, along with the scientific section, help to demonstrate the research focus of the firm.

**Arrangement Note:**

Patent has been placed first, followed by more specific information relating to submarines, then followed by other material.

**Administrative information:**

**Provenance:** 2007.23

**Preferred Citation:**

William Kolvig collection of Lake Torpedo Boat Company (BHC-MSS 0149), Bridgeport History Center, Bridgeport Public Library.

**Names and Subject Tracings***Personal names*

Kolvig, William

*Corporate names*

Lake Torpedo Boat Company

*Subject tracings*

Patents

Submarines

**Detailed box and folder listing**

## Box 1

1. Patent #1428335, September 5, 1922 – Hydroplane operating mechanism for submarine boats by Kolvig
2. Design no. 30-A, undated
3. Scientific section, undated
4. Interoffice mailing envelope, undated
5. Photograph, the submarine *Salmon*, undated
6. Photo album, including submarines and photos of maritime paintings, undated