

# When Did the Jones Act Become the “Jones Act”?

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Everyone knows what the “Jones Act” is even though it has two distinct meanings, right? It is either the law about merchant mariner recoveries or the law restricting U.S. domestic maritime commerce to U.S. flagged vessels. That may be the case today, but that was not the case in 1920 or in the immediate years after 1920 when the “Jones Act” was the term applied to the whole of the Merchant Marine Act, 1920 and those two contemporary “Jones Acts” were relatively obscure sections in that Act. The evolution of the nomenclature is murky but plainly at some point it became possible to say, “the Jones Act is hurting Puerto Rico,” and everyone knew which “Jones Act” was being referenced. Let’s try and trace how the Jones Act became that “Jones Act.”

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