

Chrysopolis

F172-7

16 July 1968

Dear Jerry,

In the October 1942 (II:4) AMERICAN NEPTUNE Jack Kemble had an article "CHRYSPOLIS: Queen of the Golden River", which on its final page cites my letter to him of 15 April 1941. I have just dug out my copy of this letter, which says in part:

The fire occurred on June 27, 1940, and illustrated accounts can be found in the OAKLAND TRIBUNE for that day and the day following. Perhaps some of the other Oakland and San Francisco papers also had accounts.

Just before the inauguration of bridge train service, the O. was relief boat for the PIEDMONT and SIERRA NEVADA on the Alameda Pier run. The O. was making runs for P. on the last day of service. With a large party of friends, I made the last roundtrip to Alameda Mole on it. . . . The boat was leased to the Key System, painted orange, and used for a few ~~days~~ weeks in the early days of the 39 Fair. It was subsequently repainted with a weak coat of white paint and returned to the SP. ~~shipyard~~ shipyard. The P. was ~~also~~ used by the Key System only a few days, repainted white, and later returned to the SP. Early in 1940 the two boats were sold to scrappers in Oakland. While workmen were cutting up metal and removing machinery at the slip at the foot of Broadway, sparks from an acety. torch touched off oil in the hold. I believe this started about 11 a.m. A friend called me about noon with the news, and I immediately set out for the scene. There was no open flame when I reached there, although the fire was going well inside, and great volumes of smoke were pouring forth. One of the two SF fireboats was on the job, and many pieces of the Oakland fire apparatus were on the job. Hose lines extended several blocks, holding up traffic on the SF First Street mainline for a few hours. Two trucks aboard for hauling away salvage were destroyed. The only other loss was the hull and cabin, as the accessories and usable machinery had previously been removed. The fireboat left the scene at 4 p.m., the hull then resting on the bottom. The hull was later pumped out, the rest of the metal removed, and the useless hulk taken over by the Alameda mudflats, where it was sold for firewood, and subsequently razed.

The picture in Harlan's book facing page 95 is mine. I hope you are not using this book for any kind of reference without thorough checking of facts. I believe I gave him a full account of the fire, and pictures, at the time, for we then carried on rather extensive correspondence.

Best regards,

Bob

