

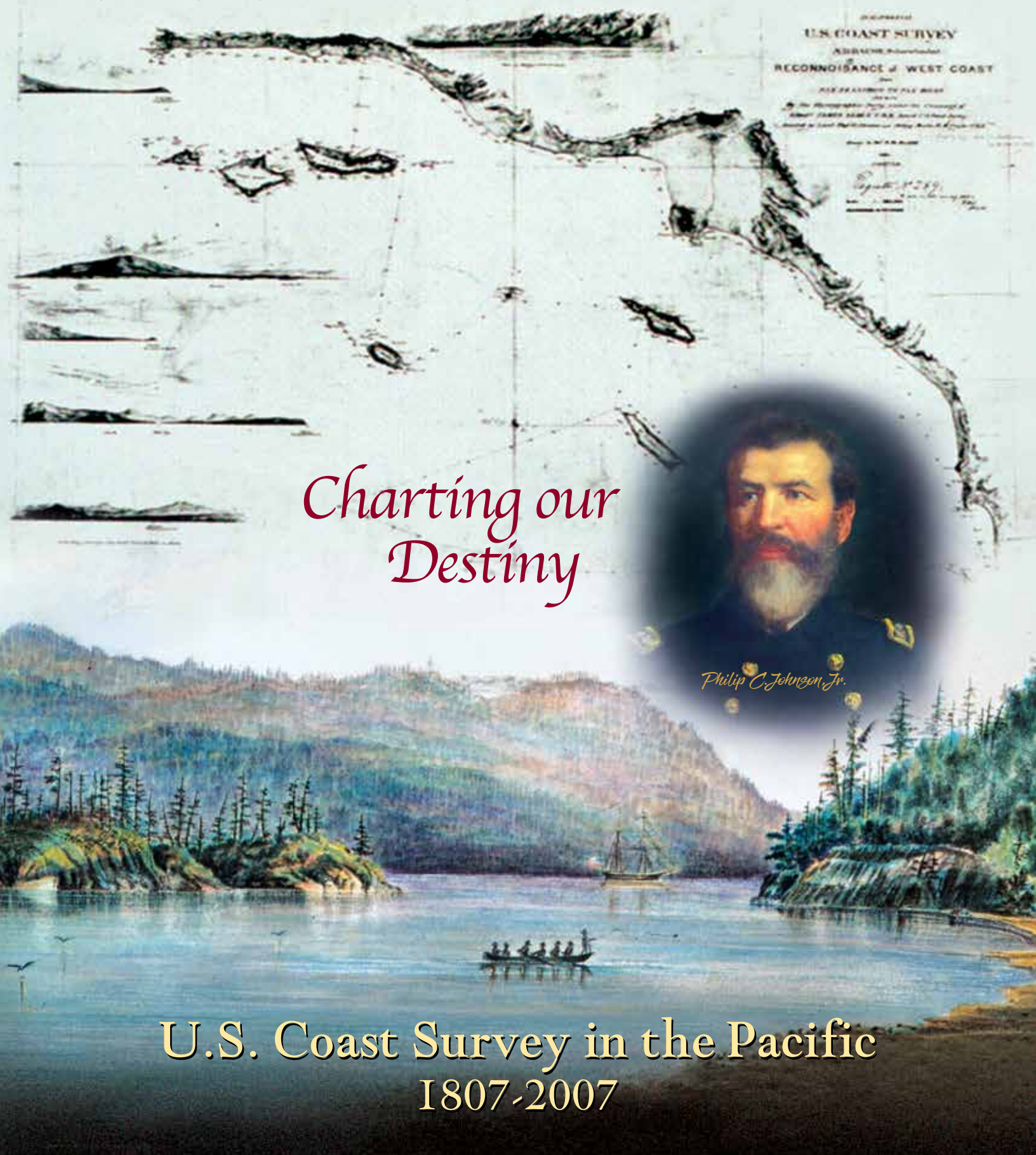
Maritime Museum of San Diego

MAINS'L HAUL

Spring/Summer 2006
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A Journal of Pacific Maritime History



*Charting our
Destiny*

Philip C. Johnson Jr.

U.S. Coast Survey in the Pacific
1807-2007



U.S. Exploring Expedition 1838-1842



Above: The first evidence that man was measuring the depths is found in tomb paintings of ancient Egypt dating from 1800 B.C. The bas-relief carvings of Deir al-Bahri were ordered by Queen Hatshepsut to commemorate a voyage to the land of Punt in approximately 1500 B.C. One of these carvings shows a man using a long slender pole as a sounding pole on the bow of a large vessel under oar and sail (Soule, 1976).

— Captain Albert E. Theberge, NOAA Corps (ret.), "Sounding Pole to Sea Beam," Technical Papers 1989, ASPRS/ACSM Annual Convention, Surveying and Cartography Volume 5, 1989, 334-346.

Left: Captain Charles Wilkes led the U.S. Exploring Expedition aboard the *Vincennes* 1838-1842. On the Antarctic shelf, Wilkes sounded with copper wire in 400 fathoms and was the first to use wire instead of hemp for soundings. Passed Midshipman James Alden, hydrographer on the Wilkes Expedition, would later become Lieutenant Commander of the U.S. Coast Survey Steamer *Active* with hydrographer Lt. Philip C. Johnson, author of the *Private Notes* (Front Cover).

On the Cover

1857 watercolor by James Madison Alden depicts the Coast Survey ship *Fauntleroy* with men sounding in Strawberry Harbor, Rosario Straits, Washington.



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MAINSAIL HAUL—An order
in tacking ship bidding,
"Swing the main yards."

Maritime Museum of San Diego

MAINS'L HAUL

Vol. 42: Nos. 2 & 3 Spring/Summer 2006

A Journal of Pacific Maritime History

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We welcome submissions on all aspects of the Pacific's past, and encourage a wide variety of perspectives on this rich heritage.

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Managing Editor / Neva Sullaway

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Most of us who use nautical charts think of them simply as navigational tools. Their predictive value depends upon accuracy and objectivity in rendering the geography we experience into a rational depiction of precise data: soundings, shorelines, dangers, landforms, marks, characteristics, ranges, magnetic values, distance, and direction, all fixed in absolute terms within the grid of latitude and longitude. To first impression there seems nothing relative about a new chart, nothing subjective or personal. There is seldom individual authorship cited on charts, only the organizations and agencies which publish them. To all appearances they come without narrative. That occurs later, as we project the stories of our own voyages across their surface in the form of courses, bearings, fixes, and tracks. The sea erases all evidence of our passing, but not so the chart. The record of our travels across its symbolic geography remains so long as we choose to leave it, the progression of fixes reminding us that we were once there, in-filling the imper-sonal grid with human

content.

That however, is not the entire picture. In the history of their creation, charts too have soundings beneath their surface and in that realm they shift and change in relation to politics, agendas, careers and world views. On one level they emerge as projections of philosophy and empire and, as you will soon see in these pages, on another level as the consequence of petty jealousies, personal irritations, boredom, fears, hostilities, affections and ambition.

Charts are not just the tools on which we record our own stories as they come to us, they are stories in themselves.

Some of them depict vast expanses of historical space in sweeping scale. For instance, in the days of the early republic, science was not a school or university subject; it was not considered a producer of useful knowledge, technological advances, or an aspect of statehood. Science was less of a professional establishment defined by principals, methodology, learning, and a population of practitioners, than it was an

FROM THE HELM

by Ray Ashley

Executive Director,
Maritime Museum of San Diego



affectation or hobby followed by the well to do. With the exception of Joseph Henry, first secretary of the Smithsonian, there were no professional scientists nor were there any formal ongoing programs in scientific investigation until the establishment of the U.S. Coast Survey, first under Ferdinand Hassler and then under Alexander Dallas Bache. For the first half of the nineteenth century, the Coast Survey was not only the principal governmental scientific agency in the United States, for a portion of that time, it was the only one. Furthermore, because the U.S. Navy had no academic counterpart to the Army's West Point until 1845 (and arguably for many years thereafter), the most effective formal instruction in systematic observation and application of the scientific method for U.S. Naval officers was through service with the Coast Survey. Ultimately, establishment "big science" became an inextricable component of American government, education, and the military, but its fledgling insertion into those institutions came with the ongoing production of charts.

In contrast, some charts depict small historical spaces in larger scale to greater detail. The *Notes* of Lieutenant Philip C. Johnson, Jr. contained within this issue of *Mains'l Haul*, constitute such a chart. Every position, every sounding represents a story: altercations with

a pompous Captain and his mad wife, wearisome preparations for ongoing native attacks, personal animosities between principal officers, leaking decks, suicidal shipmates, endless games of chess, social engagements ashore, groundings, storms and, so it would seem from the narrative, the occasional data gathering just to break the tedium. It is sometimes said of the way our abstractions tend to define our reality that "the map becomes the territory." If so, then it's a fascinating exercise to encounter in these pages the odd ways in which the territory becomes the map. As with all good charts and good stories, the track of our own passage simply becomes the projection of the tracks that came before.

The 1876 "bird's eye view" of San Diego Bay was done by E. S. Glover for the A. L. Bancroft Company's series of California city views. This seaward aspect illustrates the contributions of the U.S. Coast Survey's charting of the Pacific Coast in encouraging population growth, developing coastal economies and trade along the western seaboard.

Courtesy The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley



Acknowledgements

The origin of this issue goes back to the summer of 2003, when the Maritime Museum of San Diego and Point Loma Nazarene University explored the viability of teaching a California history course aboard the schooner *Californian*. Part of the objective was to emphasize Southern California maritime history. From this perspective, discussion of charting the West Coast became an opportunity to emphasize the work of pioneer surveyors.

The history of the Coast Survey along the West Coast is a tribute to the collaborative efforts of both U.S. military and civilian science communities. Meager resources to accomplish a huge job were given to a small group of underpaid men, who had traveled far from their eastern shores, but by the end of the decade after their arrival in 1850; California's bays, currents, tides, islands, and hazards were well-charted for public benefit.

The maritime history class onboard the *Californian* proved to be a success. When anchored at

Cuyler Harbor, San Miguel Island, and at several other Channel Island anchorages, the class continued discussions of the people who had first mapped the offshore islands and Pacific Coast, cognizant of the challenges the surveyors had faced more than 150 years earlier.

Our inquiries and research led us back to the Maritime Museum to former librarian and editor of *Mains'l Haul*, Mark Allen, who uncovered the *Private Notes* of Philip C. Johnson, which were housed in the Museum archives. An exciting opportunity presented itself, to retrace the journey detailed in Philip Johnson's *Private Notes*, and overlay it against the history of the Coast Survey.

To that end, our debt of gratitude goes to **Captain Albert E. Theberge, Jr.**, NOAA Corps (ret.), historian of the Coast Survey, who has written its comprehensive history, as well as cataloguing the voluminous collection of historic images. Thanks also to **Teresa Christopher**, Office of the Coast Survey, who acted as coordinator for this issue of *Mains'l Haul*, creat-

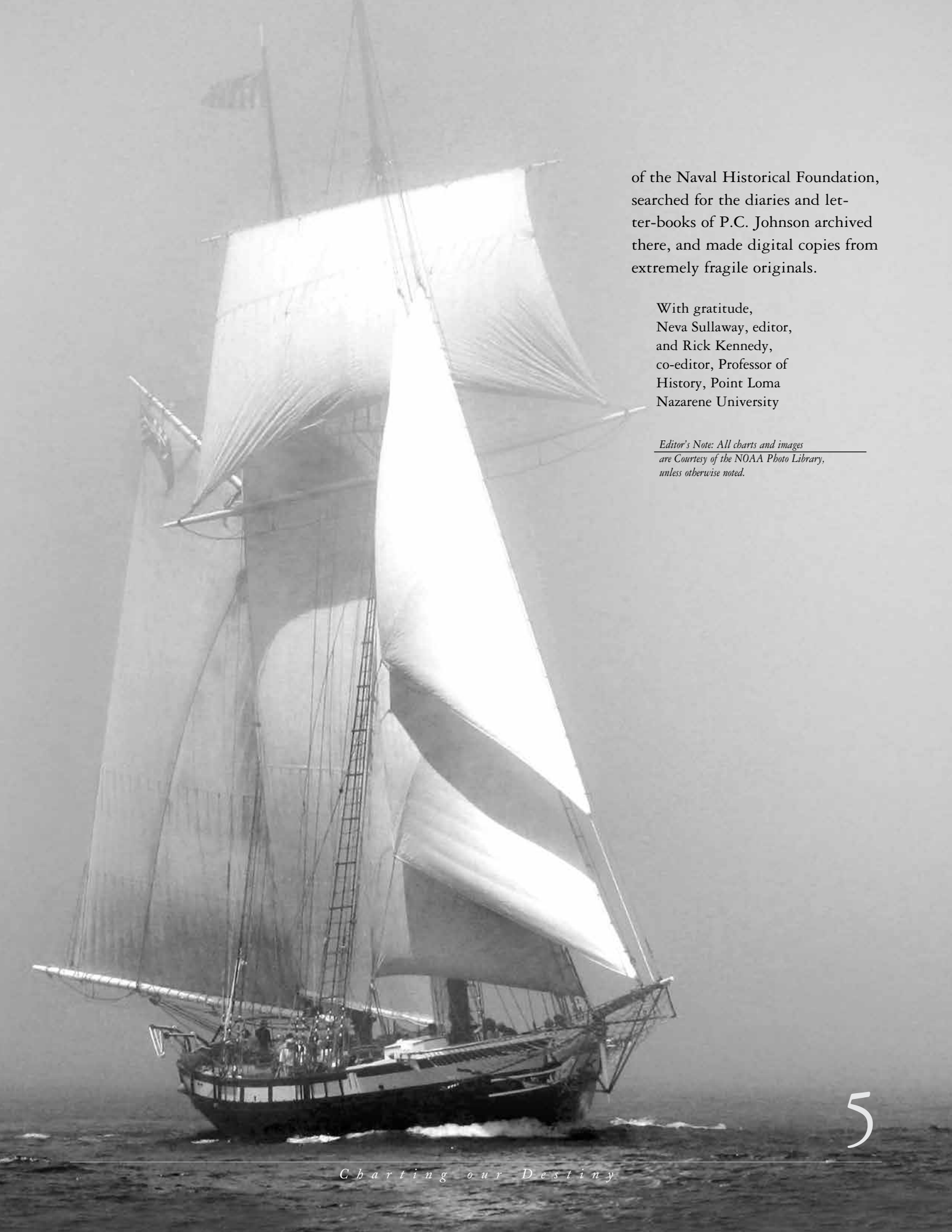
ing the 1807-2007 Timeline.

A research methods class at Point Loma Nazarene University was drawn into the project in 2005, and students began transcribing the *Private Notes* and researching information about the author and diary, and its historical references. **Derek Whaley** found the descendents of Johnson, which led to the crucial support of Johnson's great granddaughter **Valerie Elbrick Hanlon**. **Mrs. Hanlon** graciously supplied digital images of family portraits as well as the narrative history. Research student **Stephanie Lehman** helped organize images and researched women onboard naval ships. **Luke Reilly**, **Scott McGowan** and **Elizabeth Brown** helped research names through indexes and other sources.

The Coast Survey draftsman/artist, William Birch McMurtrie required extensive research. The existence of an MA thesis on McMurtrie resulted in a visit to UC Davis and a search for the misfiled thesis by **Lois Tuttle Morris**. After contacting Lois Morris, she generously sent her research materials to the museum for our reference. **Connie Strickland**, Curator

The Maritime Museum of San Diego's sailing classroom, *Californian*, recalls our maritime heritage, keeping it vibrant and alive.

MMSD collections: photo by Ray Ashley



of the Naval Historical Foundation,
searched for the diaries and let-
ter-books of P.C. Johnson archived
there, and made digital copies from
extremely fragile originals.

With gratitude,
Neva Sullaway, editor,
and Rick Kennedy,
co-editor, Professor of
History, Point Loma
Nazarene University

*Editor's Note: All charts and images
are Courtesy of the NOAA Photo Library,
unless otherwise noted.*

Uncovering the *Private Notes* of Philip C. Johnson, Jr.



Rear Admiral Alfred W. Johnson
1918-1967
(son of Rear Admiral Philip
C. Johnson, Jr.)

*Presented by:
Rear Admiral
A.W. Johnson
CO, Base Force Aircraft,
1953
Son of the Author.*

It is not clear, but interesting to speculate, how the *Private Notes* might have come into the hands of the Maritime Museum of San Diego, barely a functional museum in the 1930s, when the *Notes* were transcribed from the original diary which Philip C. Johnson left behind. Though five diaries and four letter-books dated 1846-1917, are now in the archives of the National Historical Center's Library, Washington Navy Yard, D.C., one diary titled: *Private Notes of Philip C.*

UNITED STATES FLEET
AIRCRAFT, BASE FORCE
U.S.S. WRIGHT, Flagship



Vancouver, B. C., Canada
28 August 1934.

Mr. W. W. Conner,
Seattle,
Washington.

My dear Mr. Conner:

Admiral Johnson has asked me to send you two copies of the notes made by Admiral Johnson's father (the late Rear Admiral Philip C. Johnson, U. S. Navy) while serving on the U. S. S. ACTIVE as a young officer during 1855-56.

Admiral Johnson told me that he had promised you once copy and another copy to a gentleman whose name and address I do not now recall, but whom I understand you know. As Admiral Johnson explained the matter to you and as I understand you know who this gentleman is, I would appreciate it if you would give him a copy so that Admiral Johnson might keep his promise made while in Seattle.

We have had a splendid cruise in Alaskan Waters and will leave tomorrow for San Francisco. I hope that we will return next year and can visit Seattle.

Sincerely,

J. Perry
Flag Secretary

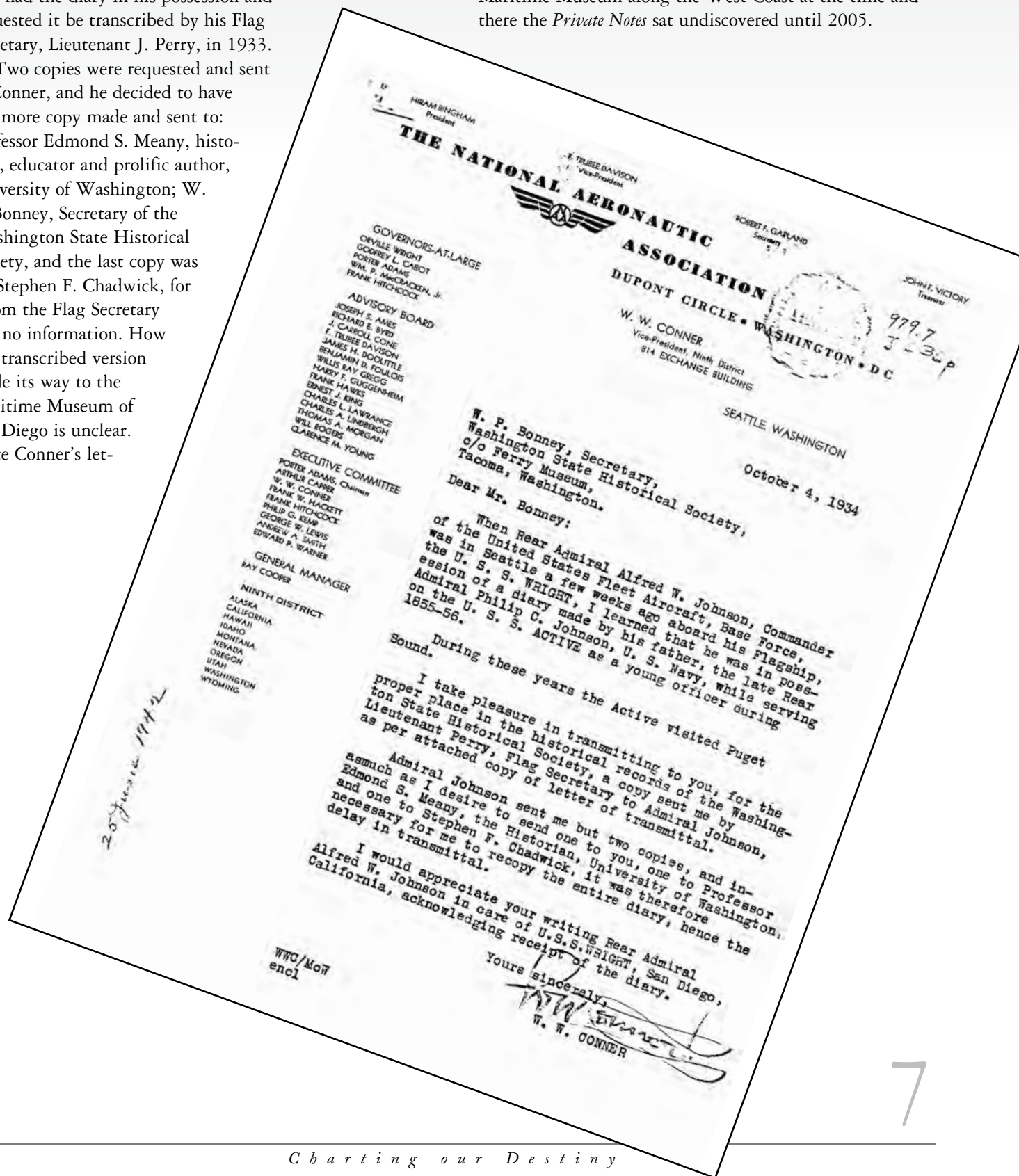
(copy)

Johnson, Jr. onboard U.S.S. Active 1855-1856, has not been located.

As noted in the letter from W.W. Conner, Vice President of the Ninth District of the National Aeronautic Association, Rear Admiral Alfred W. Johnson, a highly decorated naval officer and Philip Johnson's son, had the diary in his possession and requested it be transcribed by his Flag Secretary, Lieutenant J. Perry, in 1933.

Two copies were requested and sent to Conner, and he decided to have one more copy made and sent to: Professor Edmond S. Meany, historian, educator and prolific author, University of Washington; W. P. Bonney, Secretary of the Washington State Historical Society, and the last copy was for Stephen F. Chadwick, for whom the Flag Secretary had no information. How one transcribed version made its way to the Maritime Museum of San Diego is unclear. Since Conner's let-

ter suggests Rear Admiral Alfred W. Johnson was based on the U.S.S. *Wright* in San Diego at the time (he commanded the Fleet Patrol plane squadrons with bases in Panama, San Diego and Pearl Harbor from 1932 -1935); Rear Admiral Alfred Johnson's signed copy was presented (possibly by Stephen Chadwick) to the only functioning Maritime Museum along the West Coast at the time and there the *Private Notes* sat undiscovered until 2005.



Coast Surveyors on the Pioneer Coast

By Captain Albert E. Theberge, Jr. NOAA Corps (ret.)



S. Westerly view from Harrow.



From Prince's Bay Light

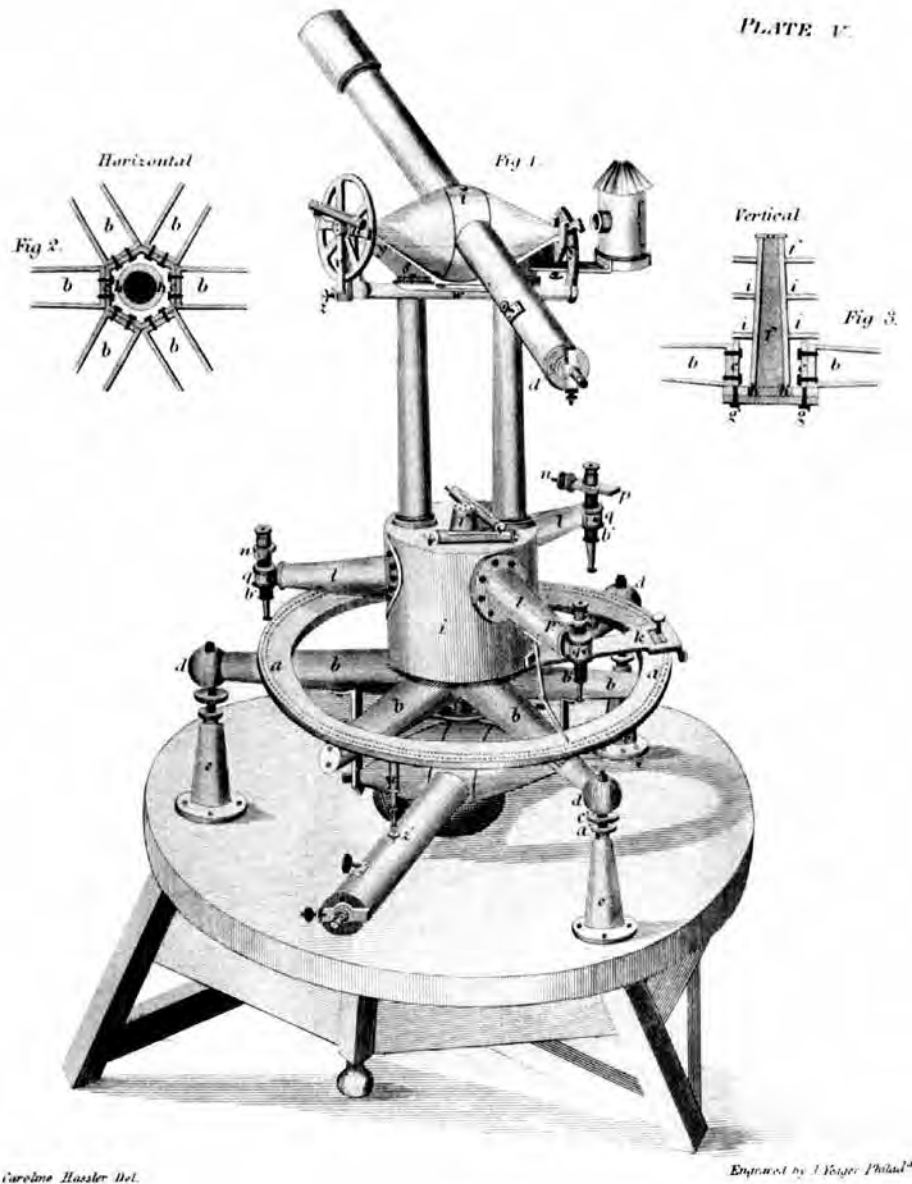
OBSERVING PARTY OF UNITED STATES COAST SURVEY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO
TWO SKETCHES BY JOHN FARLEY MADE BETWEEN 1817-1841 SHOWING HASSLER'S FAMOUS CARRIAGE IN THE FIELD. THE LARGE THEODOLITE IS IN THE CARRIAGE
STATION HARROW WAS ON NORTH SHORE OF LONG ISLAND AT HEAD OF HEMPSTEAD HARBOR. PRINCE'S BAY WAS APPARENTLY WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS PRINCESS BAY, STATEN ISLAND

Two sketches by John Farley between 1817-1841, show Ferdinand Hassler's carriage transporting the large theodolite used in surveying. "Harrow" was on the north shore of Long Island, at the head of Hempstead Harbor. "Prince's Bay" was apparently what is now known as Princess Bay, Staten Island. These sketches illustrate early surveying attempts along the eastern seaboard

In general the American people have been presented with an American West of wagon trains, trackless deserts, fierce Indian warriors riding painted steeds, mesas and mountains, and vast herds of buffalo rumbling across an endless prairie. This view has glorified the sodbusters, the cattle ranchers, the U.S. Cavalry, the noble savage, the railroaders, the miners, the peace keepers, and the gunslingers. But there was another frontier—a frontier of uncharted waterways, bold and precipitous mountains doing perpetual battle with the on-rushing swells of the North Pacific, wild and tumultuous storms that could drive the unwary sailor upon an iron-bound shore, relentless fogs blocking the path of all but the bold or foolish, desert shores to the south and rain-forest to the north, majestic redwood and fir forests growing to the very

Captain Albert E. Theberge is retired from NOAA Corps, the commissioned service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. NOAA Corps is a descendant of the United States Coast Survey, known also as the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. Captain Theberge was raised on the California coast on the north shore of Monterey Bay, and subsequently had tours of duty in both Monterey at the Naval Postgraduate School, and at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, San Diego. He served on four NOAA ships during his career and served also on mobile geodetic and hydrographic survey crews. Theberge directed the NOAA multi-beam surveys of the central California coast including surveys of Monterey Canyon and Davidson Seamount (named for George Davidson of the Coast Survey). He retired from NOAA Corps in 1995, after 27 years of service and has since been affiliated with the NOAA Central Library as historian of the Coast Survey and as a technical information specialist.

Theberge is the primary content provider for the NOAA History website at: <http://www.history.noaa.gov/> and the NOAA Photo Library at: <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/>.



The Troughton 24-inch theodolite drawn by Caroline Hassler, from the: "Papers on various subjects connected with the survey of the coast of the United States," by Ferdinand Hassler, 3 March 1820. Treasures of the NOAA Library Collection, Call Number QB281.2 .H28 1825. (NOAA Citation)

edge of the sea, and sea-going Native Americans who were as fierce and brave as their storied counterparts of the plains and deserts. This was the Pacific frontier, the western-most frontier that faced the first Coast Surveyors who made the arduous trip from the East Coast of the United States to the western margin of North America. More than any other organization, it was the United States Coast Survey that helped tame this frontier coast. A small group of dedicated surveyors helped make this coast as safe for commerce and travel as any in the world in the short space of a few years beginning in 1849.

The Coast Survey was the first physical science agency in the United States Federal Government and served as the model for all subsequent



The chart of Great South Bay, Long Island 1834, is one of the earliest mapping efforts by the U.S. Coast Survey involving a hydrographic corps composed of naval officers.

science agencies. It was authorized in 1807, during the administration of President Thomas Jefferson. Ferdinand Hassler, a Swiss immigrant who was an accomplished mathematician, surveyor, and scientist, was selected to head this embryonic science agency. Hassler's vision for the Survey of the Coast involved developing an interlocking geodetic survey network that would tie all surveys together and serve as the basis for a national mapping effort. An interlocking geodetic survey accomplished by the method of triangulation, which precisely determined the latitude and longitude of points on the surface of the Earth, was to be followed by topographic surveys which used the points determined geodetically as reference points from which to delineate the shoreline and near shore features. The geodetic and topographic surveys were accomplished prior to offshore hydrographic surveys which would measure depths positioned relative to the geodetic framework and the established shoreline. Other parameters such as tides and current, geomagnetism, and a variety of other ancillary observations necessary for construction of a nautical chart rounded out the suite of observations made by the Coast Survey. Thus, it became the first Federal agency to acquire massive amounts of geographic information including not only the core sciences of geodesy, topography, and hydrography, but also such areas as geophysics, marine geology, and physical oceanography. In short, it became a geographic information factory.

For its first 25 years the Coast Survey accomplished little because of animosity in the military services engendered by a civilian-headed science agency, a perception that little was accomplished for money spent, and the general lack of scientific knowledge of Congressional leaders who had little or no conception of either the nature of the work, or what it took to accomplish an undertaking as far-reaching as the survey of the coast of a large maritime nation. In fact, Hassler was removed as head of the Survey in 1818,

when a law was passed removing all civilians from the Survey. By 1828, this situation led to the then Secretary of the Navy declaring charts produced in the intervening years as “useless and pernicious” and made “by incompetent men, with incompetent means”. Such comments, and a rising ground swell of opinion, led to the reinstatement of Hassler as head of the Survey of the Coast in 1832, a position he held until his death in 1843. By the mid-1830s, the name **Survey of the Coast** had been supplanted by **United States Coast Survey**, a name which survived until 1878, when the organization was renamed the **United States Coast and Geodetic Survey**.

Under Hassler, the Coast Survey began to develop into the premier science agency in the United States. Because of the lack of technical education in the United States at that time and the paucity of technically competent individuals, Hassler engaged in a program to use and train civilians and Army and Navy officers for the work. He also imported skilled Europeans for various facets of the work including topographic surveying, engraving, computing of results, etc. In general, Navy officers worked on hydrographic survey ships, while Army officers were assigned to triangulation and topographic crews, as well as a number of administrative positions in the Coast Survey offices. The first work by Navy officers was a hydrographic survey of Great South Bay, Long Island, conducted in 1834. Over the next nine years, Hassler built an organization of geodesists, topographers, hydrographers, technical draftsmen, engravers, mathematicians and instrument-makers. Although not all was smooth politically, during this period Hassler succeeded in building a strong foundation for the future. Triangulation had worked outward from New York to Massachusetts in the northeast and down to the head of the Chesapeake to the south. A few small harbor charts had been published and engraved, more importantly the first Coast Survey chart of New York Harbor and approaches was nearing completion. This chart would set the tone for the distinctive style which characterized Coast Survey charts for many years to come.

Ferdinand Hassler died on 20 November 1843. Hassler left a thriving organization imbued with principles of accuracy, scientific standards, and integrity as his gift to the American people. Even before his death, Alexander Dallas Bache and his good friend Joseph Henry were lobbying for Bache to be appointed the next Superintendent. Bache was a great-grandson of Benjamin Franklin and inherited both Franklin’s scientific abilities and political acumen. He was appointed Superintendent in December of 1843, and acted immediately to consolidate his position by expanding the operating area of the Survey throughout the Southeast and as far north as Maine. By doing so, he increased both the rate at which work was being accomplished and built political support for increased appropriations. By the 1850s, the budget of the Coast Survey was five times what it had been during Hassler’s tenure and it was operating in every United States maritime state and territory. The amount of information acquired was commensurate with the increased budget as well as the number of personnel. Thus, Hassler laid the foundation, but it was Bache who built the house.



Ferdinand Rudolph Hassler was the 1st Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 1770-1843.

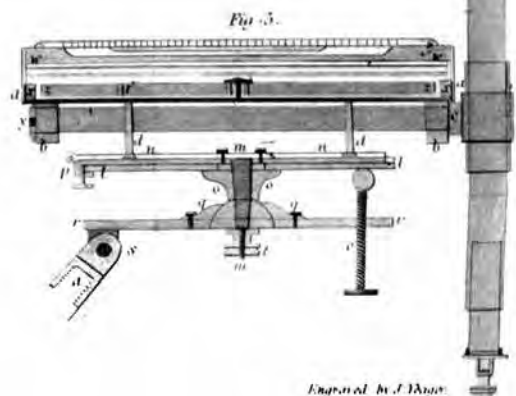
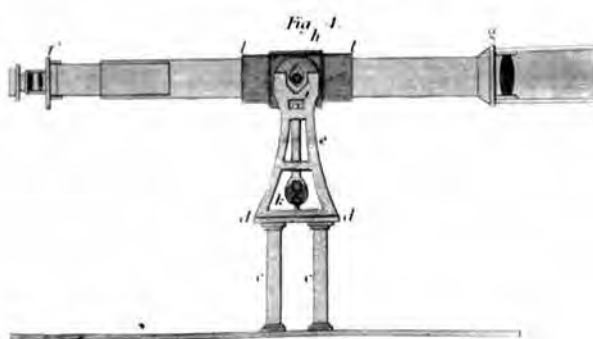
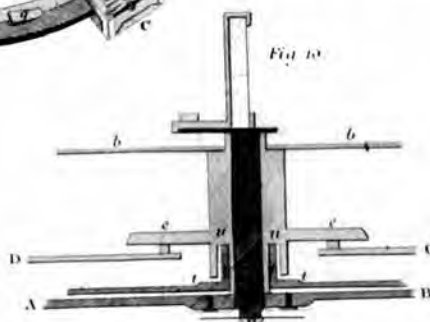
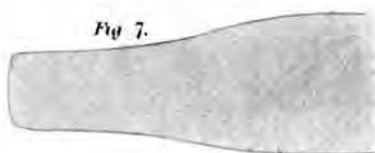
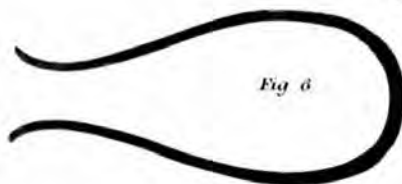
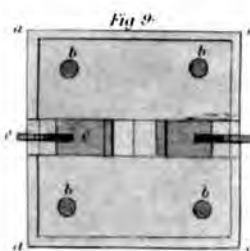
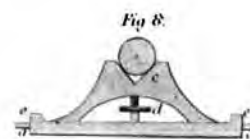
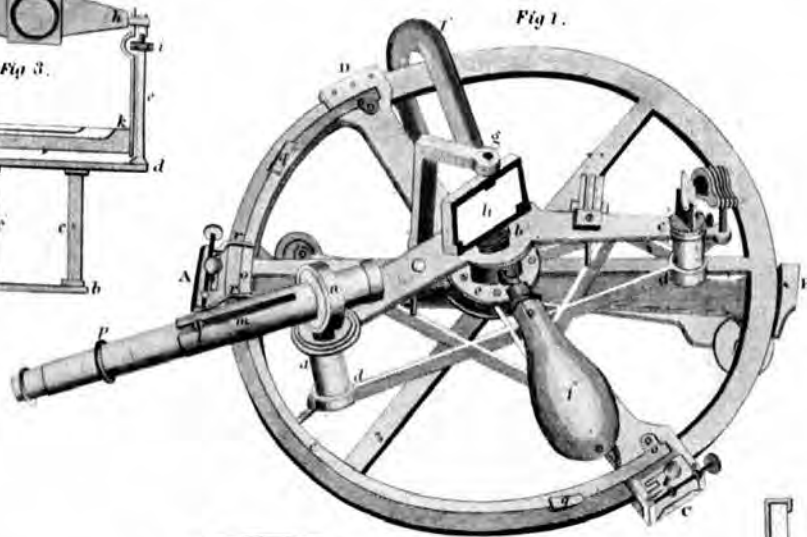
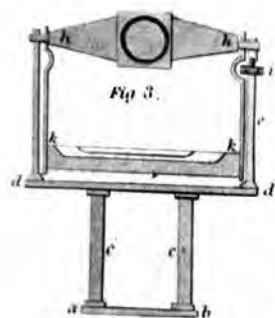
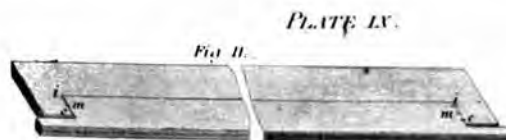
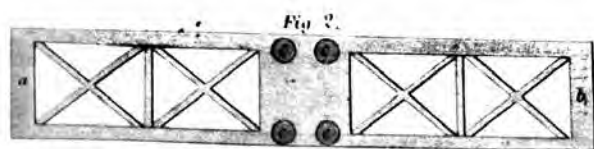
WANTED:

**Young men with
record to make
willing for
one year to do
any duty,
however hard
or manual,
incident to the
survey on the
western coast.**

Such was the call in 1850, of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey in response to the need to survey the new territory and rugged western coast of the United States. George Davidson answered the call and stayed for over six decades. His name became synonymous with science on the Western rim of North America as he surveyed the coast, wrote the great Coast Pilots of our Western states and Alaska, and carried the geodetic network of the Coast and Geodetic Survey into the interior of California observing some of the most accurate classical triangulation work ever accomplished with classical instruments. George Davidson also served the science community and citizens of California as President of the California Academy of Sciences for 17 years, a Regent of the University of California, one of three commissioners of Irrigation of the state of California, and first President of the Pacific Seismological Society, forerunner of the Seismological Society of America. Davidson also led the first American science expedition to Alaska in 1867, and wrote the report that was influential in swaying Congress to authorize funding for what has become one of the best real estate deals of all time—the purchase of Alaska. George Davidson is commemorated by the naming of a mountain range in Alaska, a mountain in Nevada,

Pictured is George Davidson (1825-1911), pioneer Coast surveyor, in his later years onboard the steamer *Spokane* in 1907.





Drawn by Caroline Hassler

Engraved by J. Mayne

a seamount off California, the highest point in San Francisco, and a major offshore fishing bank south of the Alaska Peninsula. The decommissioned NOAA Ship *Davidson*, which had an illustrious career on the West Coast and Alaska, was also named for George Davidson.

Because of immigration to the Oregon country, the Coast Survey had been making plans to survey the coast of Oregon Territory as early as 1846. In 1848, Congress authorized this work and the Coast Survey sent its first crews to the West Coast in 1849. Unfortunately, the gold rush was on: labor, transportation, and costs of supplies skyrocketed with an accompanying stoppage of field operations. One crew, under

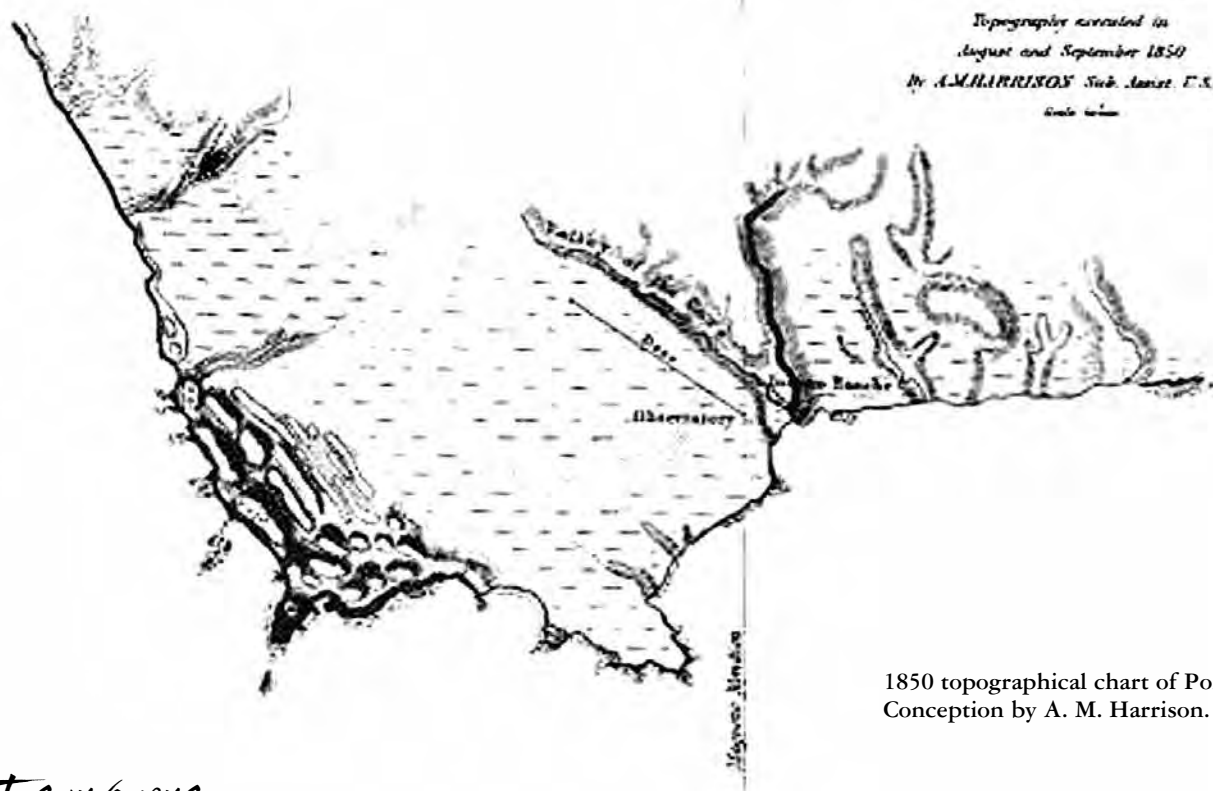
Displayed are various surveying and measuring instruments from the: "Papers on various subjects connected with the survey of the coast of the United States," by Ferdinand Hassler, 3 March 1820. Treasures of the NOAA Library Collection, Library Call Number QB281.2 .H28 1825. (NOAA Citation)

POINT CONCEPTION

*Coast of California*Topography surveyed in
August and September 1850

By A.M. HARRISON Sub. Assist. U.S.N.

Scale 10 miles



1850 topographical chart of Point Conception by A. M. Harrison.

*Coast surveyors
George Davidson,
A. M. Harrison,
John Rockwell and
James Lawson set sail
in 1850 onboard the
steamer Philadelphia
with a "reputation
to make and a
desire to overcome
all hardships..."*

Assistant James Williams was sent for the land operations and another crew, under Lieutenant William P. McArthur, USN, was sent for the offshore hydrographic surveying operations. The Coast Survey Schooner *Ewing* arrived in San Francisco on 1 August 1849, after a seven-month trip fighting its way around Cape Horn. The *Ewing* was a topsail schooner 91 feet in length. For a variety of reasons including desertions and a mutiny, the *Ewing* was stymied in 1849, and retired with the land crew to the Hawaiian Islands for the winter of 1849-50, to obtain new crewmembers and to resupply at cheaper rates.

Because of the above frustrations, Alexander Dallas Bache, Superintendent of the Coast Survey, decided that a crew of young energetic men with "reputation to make" and a desire to overcome all hardships should be sent to the West Coast in 1850. This group of four men was led by George Davidson, who would become the leader of the West Coast scientific community over the next half century. James Lawson, A. M. Harrison and John Rockwell comprised the remainder. Davidson, Lawson, and Rockwell sailed from the East Coast on 5 May 1850, on the steamer *Philadelphia* for Panama. They landed at Chagres, hired native Indians for traveling by canoe to the head of the Chagres River, and then joined a mule train to go the rest of the way to the city of Panama. On 30 May, they embarked on the Pacific Mail Steamship *Tennessee* and arrived in San Francisco on 20 June. After a few weeks spent establishing a base of operations, they proceeded to Point Conception, landing at El Coxo in mid-July.

In Lawson's words: "Pt. Conception is one of the most notable points on

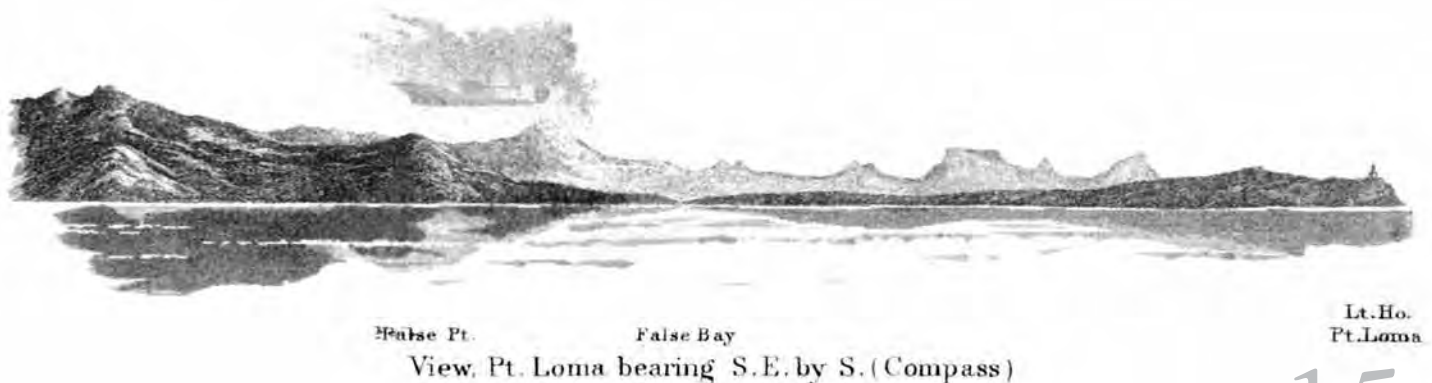
the California coast, and its accurate position was particularly desirable, as it marked, in fact is the key to, the Northern entrance to the Santa Barbara Channel.” Harrison, the chief topographer of this group, joined them during the Point Conception work. By the end of September 1850, an accurate latitude and longitude of Point Conception had been obtained by precise astronomic means, its magnetic declination determined, a site for a lighthouse selected, and a topographic survey of the area about the selected location conducted. The labor involved with this was quite difficult involving the carrying of large heavy instruments from El Coto to Point Conception and a 300-pound instrument stand.

Relative to the wages of the times, each of the young Coast Surveyors was paid \$30.00 per month. A cook they hired in San Francisco was paid \$125.00 per month, making more than this whole group of skilled engineers. Lawson suggested the weather was better than the storied “Italian skies” for this sojourn at Point Conception, but noted the continual offshore fog hid the Channel Islands from view for the first six weeks of their stay. The work was finally finished in early October and the crew hired a pack train and headed into Santa Barbara to await transportation to San Francisco. They “did the town” while there and met the famous otter hunters George Nidever and Isaac Sparks. They had earlier made friends with Don Luis Carillo, son of Don Anastasio Carillo, the owner of the Point Conception area. They stayed at Don Anastasio’s home while awaiting transportation and had many conversations with Don Luis. He felt they were near to transgressing the truth when they described the multi-story buildings of the East Coast and the railways, but “morally certain they lied” when they described the wonders of the telegraph.

Little was accomplished in Southern California the following year as the Coast Survey concentrated its efforts to the north of San Francisco. Although a source of supplies, Southern California was still considered a relative backwater at this time. However, an astronomic position, magnetic declination, and site for a lighthouse were determined at San Diego and a triangulation scheme and topography were carried southward to the Mexican border from San Diego. The *Ewing* proceeded north in a first reconnaissance survey from San Francisco to the Columbia River entrance and conducted a few surveys at the river entrance as well.

In 1852, the Coast Survey Steamer *Active*, under the command of Navy

A view of Point Loma (San Diego) from the entrance of False Bay (Mission Bay) with the Point Loma Lighthouse seen to the right, from: “Pacific Coast, Coast Pilot of California, Oregon and Washington Territory,” by George Davidson, 1869. P. 22. NOAA Central Library, Library Call Number VK947.D4 1869.





This is the only known photograph of the U.S. Steamer Active. Formerly named the Goldhunter, she was 172.5 feet in length. Active was purchased in 1852 for the West Coast survey and conducted the first reconnaissance from San Francisco to San Diego in 1852. Lieutenant James Alden was the commanding officer for most of its period with the Coast Survey. Active was also used as troop transport and as a dispatch boat during the various Indian wars and during the San Juan Islands Pig War. In the early stages of the Civil War, Active rushed Union troops to Los Angeles to be deployed. She was sold in 1862.

Lieutenant James Alden (one of approximately 800 Navy officers who served with the Coast Survey in the Nineteenth Century), made a first reconnaissance hydrographic survey from San Francisco to San Diego. On this trip George Davidson was put ashore with his equipment and acquired astronomic positions at San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Prisoner's Harbor on Santa Cruz Island, San Pedro, Santa Catalina Island, San Clemente Island, San Nicolas Island, and Cuyler's Harbor on San Miguel Island. This marked the first time that these islands had been adequately located. By the end of 1852, most of the major headlands and points of interest for mariners between the California-Mexico border and Cape Flattery, Oregon Territory, had been accurately determined by George Davidson and his assistant John Rockwell. Rudimentary charts of many of the observed harbors and islands of Southern California were produced by the end of 1852.

During these first three years of Coast Survey operations on the western coast, a rela-

tively accurate general outline of the coast was sketched in and many dangerous errors corrected, the geographic positions of the major headlands and landmarks determined, magnetic declinations at strategic points observed, and locations for lighthouses recommended. The detail work of connecting the various independent astronomically determined locations by triangulation (much more rigid positioning than attainable through astronomic means), and conducting topographic mapping of the shoreline and offshore hydrographic surveying that would be controlled by the triangulation network, was ready to begin.

A fourth major component of Coast Survey operations was the observation of tides, initially only done to establish a local datum during hydrographic survey operations such that water depths could be reduced to a plane of reference. To obtain readings, either a sailor attached to the survey party or a local citizen was hired to read the water level on a temporary tide staff either every hour or some fraction of an hour never less than every 15 minutes. This situation changed radically in 1854 with the introduction of self-registering tide gauges that were able to continually trace a near-sinusoidal tidal record on a drum-mounted sheet of paper. Tidal height was read from these tracings and correlated with time, which ultimately led to the development of tide prediction tables.

Within six-months of the establishment of self-recording gauges at San Francisco and San Diego, a great earthquake and tsunami occurred on the coast of Japan. Remnants of the tsunami were recorded as super-imposed waves on the tide records. From these squiggles, Superintendent Bache was able to compute an average depth of the Pacific Ocean which was within 10% of modern values. This remarkable feat was done when only a handful of deep sea soundings had been obtained in the Pacific Ocean and even those were of dubious accuracy. The tidal observations begun at San Francisco in 1854 have continued through storm, earthquake, fire, changes of technology, and myriad opportunities for human error. Today they constitute the longest unbroken series of tidal observations in the Western Hemisphere and have served to record subsequent tsunamis including those from the eruption of Krakatoa, record the inexorable rise in sea level which has been noted over the past century, and served as a major factor in the ability to predict West Coast tides.

Such was the nature of the work of the Coast Survey on the West Coast in the early 1850s. On 20 July 1854, a young Navy Passed Midshipman, Philip C. Johnson, reported for duty on the Coast Survey Steamer *Active* under the command of Lieutenant Commanding James Alden, Jr. and remained associated with Alden's party until detached in 1859. During this period, Johnson wrote of his survey activities, personal observations of fellow naval officers and Coast Surveyors, and a description of naval activities during Indian uprisings in Seattle, in late 1855 through March 1856, in one of his diaries featured in this issue of *Mains'l Haul*.

Perhaps in anticipation of the coming Civil War, there had been a gradual drawdown of naval officers assigned to the Survey starting in 1858, and Johnson was part of that process. Following the Civil War, Johnson became one of the first naval officers to be

reassigned to the Coast Survey and served from 1871-1875 on the Survey as commanding officer of the Coast Survey Steamer *Hassler*, which came to the West Coast via the Straits of Magellan in 1872. Altogether, Johnson served over eight years on the Coast Survey most of it was in our western waters. He ultimately retired as a Commodore from the Navy and became a Rear Admiral in 1887.

The Coast Survey has continued to serve the people of the West Coast of the United States and Alaska. Although it has gone through name changes from **Survey of the Coast** to **Coast Survey**, then to **Coast and Geodetic Survey** (1878), and finally reorganized into a number of sister offices in the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** of today, much of the basic mission remains the same. Real-time tides, currents, and meteorological conditions are observed and passed to marine pilots and ship operators through the PORTS system of NOAA's Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services in many of our major harbors; modern electronic charts produced by NOAA's Office of Coast Survey guide mariners while transiting United States marine waterways; and NOAA's National Geodetic Survey helps support the Coast Guard's Differential Global Positioning System network, which provides pinpoint navigation information to mariners in our ports and coastal waters.

Editor's Note: All images and charts Courtesy of the NOAA Central Library.

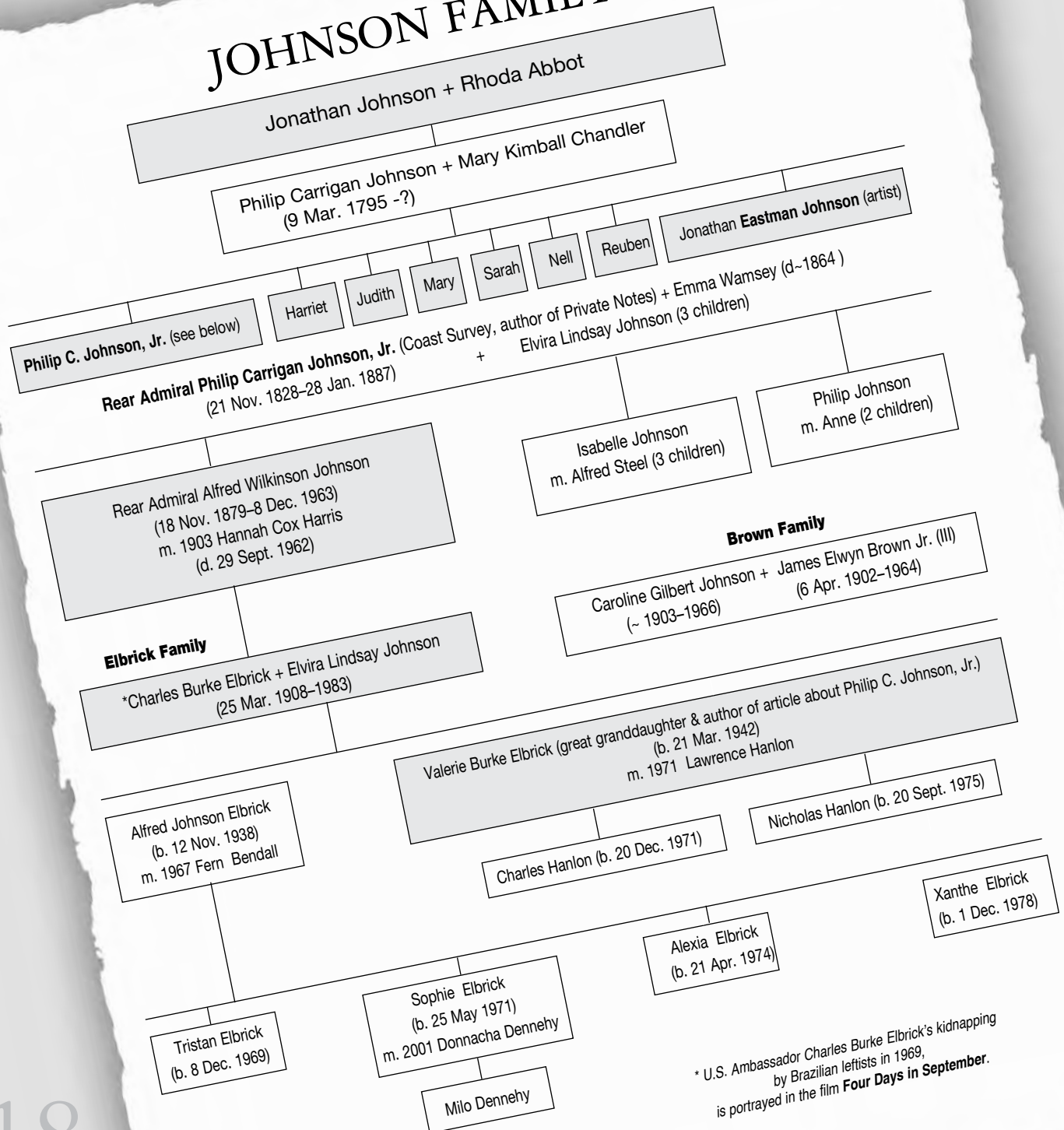


Although the frontier coast is gone, the spirit of the old Coast Survey lives on in the NOAA of today, providing accurate charts, forecasts, and other services that help save the lives of mariners and protect cargoes entering and leaving our ports.



Philip Carrigan Johnson, Jr. 1828-1887

JOHNSON FAMILY



* U.S. Ambassador Charles Burke Elbrick's kidnapping by Brazilian leftists in 1969, is portrayed in the film **Four Days in September**.

* Referenced in this issues of Mains'l Haul



Philip C. Johnson, Jr.

Left: Painted by Philip Johnson's brother Eastman, and photo-graphed by Anne Gohde, this portrait reflects the true character of the man and the officer.

EASTMAN JOHNSON

(1824-1906)

Long considered one of early America's foremost painters, Eastman Johnson was the older brother of Philip Johnson. From 1849-1855, Eastman studied painting in Europe. His best known works portray the dignity of common life, work, and domesticity.

Given the political connections of his prominent family in Maine, Eastman had the opportunity to draw portraits of prominent people of the 1840s, such as John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster and Dolly Madison. In 1857, he lived and painted among the Anishinabe (Ojibwe) natives of Wisconsin. Beginning in 1858, he painted ground-breaking depictions of African-American subjects. Eastman developed into a prominent New York painter of wide-ranging subjects including many portraits. After 1880, he devoted himself to formal portraits.

Editor's note: A debt of gratitude is owed to the author, Valerie Elbrick Hanlon, who contributed a great deal to this issue of *Mains'l Haul*. Mrs. Hanlon supplied numerous photos, letters and transcriptions, as well as this article about her great grandfather, Philip C. Johnson, Jr.

In the Victorian-era living room of my grandparents' house in Washington, D.C., there hung a large portrait of a man in uniform, in a heavy gilded frame. His cheeks were flushed, and the lower half of his face was obscured by a gray-touched beard. His gaze was direct and uncomplicated, and behind the fashionable beard he looked like someone who had nothing to conceal.

"That's your great grandfather," my grandfather told me, "Philip Carrigan Johnson. The painting was done by his brother, my Uncle Eastman."

A vague family protocol always placed me on my grandfather's left side at the dinner table, and it was there, during the years we lived together in that house on R Street, that I listened to his stories of his father's voyages, his accounts of his own years in the Navy, and to his nostalgia for a time when wooden ships were manned by "iron men".

Like his father, my grandfather, Alfred W. Johnson, chose to attend the Naval Academy (for financial as well as filial reasons,) and like his father, Alfred's academic career was interrupted by war. In my grandfather's case it was the Spanish-American war in 1898. For his father, Philip C. Johnson, it was the Mexican-American War, fought over a troublesome Texas boundary line.

Philip Johnson was nineteen years old in 1847, and there is little doubt that he was delighted to abandon the classroom after only one month at Annapolis, to join the fight.

Outside the city of Vera Cruz, off the coast of Mexico, he wrote home on April 8, 1847:

"Sent a party on shore tonight ...there was a great rush for the chance to go. The Captain told us we should all have a chance. A shell from the Mexicans fell at the battery yesterday - killed eight men and wounded a Lieut."

It was the stuff of fiction for a young man from Lovell, Maine, who was one of three boys and five girls, who until Annapolis, had traveled only as far as Fryeburg and Augusta, when his father had become Secretary of the State of Maine.

"I have just returned from the Navy Battery – that battery that took both the city of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa. I would not have missed seeing it on any account. I was just in time too – for I was the last officer that was sent."

He had a passion for it, and he felt at home on the USS *Ohio*, a battleship of 3,000 tons, 84 guns, 40 officers, 820 "men and boys", 16,270 yards – that is, two acres - of canvas sails, steerage "no bigger than mama's room," where he lived with 12 midshipmen.

From Vera Cruz he would take part in the assault on Tuxpan, securing the entrance to the river of the same name.

As the ship maneuvered up the west coast of Mexico and Baja California, a strange scene was unfolding behind the exploding bombs and fusillades along the coast. Men began to jump ship and tales of riches and handfuls of real gold nuggets came onboard in their wake. It was the rush for "The Mine," and the U.S. Navy and Philip Johnson found themselves unwilling participants. Sailors were going overboard at such a rate that two officers were required to accompany each boat going ashore; Philip was repeatedly pulled from the action to chase after deserters. He was transferred to the frigate *Congress*, a ship that would lose 27 men to the Gold Rush. When they reached the town of Monterey it was deserted except for women and children.

It would be two years before Philip returned to the Naval Academy, and when he did, it was to spend five years at his studies. In 1855, he graduated third in his class.

Philip was promoted to Lieutenant eighteen months after graduation, by that time he was on loan to the Coast Survey and engaged in a survey of the coast of California. Again he traveled down the coast of South America and rounded the Horn. He remained in California for five years.

Far from home and twenty-six years of age, Philip could not help noticing that his old sweethearts in Maine were moving slowly to the altar. As the steamer *Active* maneuvered off the coast of California, engaged in friendly and unfriendly Indian exchanges, Philip wrote in his journal, took part in the survey, and gently deflected the entreaties of in-laws to invest in land speculation, all the while wondering if there would be any girls left for him when he came home.

At the end of five years with the Coast Survey, Philip requested a transfer back to the Navy to an office in Washington. His request was granted, but after two months, in the summer of 1860, he received a new assignment onboard the USS

Constellation.

In the fall of 1861, the Navy ships were urgently recalled, the United States was in the throes of Civil War. Philip joined the sloop of war *Portsmouth* in New Hampshire as Executive Officer, but his first real command came in August of 1862, of the *Tennessee*. That summer he steamed up the Mississippi, reporting on the battle at Baton Rouge, later taking part in the capture of New Orleans. In July, he witnessed the assault on Vicksburg and

he wrote, "Until they get some army they are not going to take this city."

"My health is first rate," he said time and again to his family, responding to worries from home. In January of 1863, he took command of the gunboat *Katabdin*, remaining on the Gulf Coast, moving between Pensacola, New Orleans, and Galveston, blockade running up and down the Mississippi, "... this business of running blockades is very exciting but there is not much glory to be gained," he wrote.

The Naval Academy was moved from Annapolis to Newport for the duration of the Civil War, and it was to Newport that he took the one sweetheart who had waited for him to return, Emma Wamsey. Officers' wives were permitted to live onboard ship in those days, and although there is no ship's record of this specific period of time, my grandfather believed when Philip was in command of the *Constitution* that his young wife Emma died giving birth to their first child. The baby,

placed in the care of his sister, survived for one month. At the end of the war, the Academy was returned to Annapolis, and Philip came back with the *Constitution*.

In early 1868, Philip joined the South Pacific Squadron. As Chief of Staff on the flag ship *Powhatan*, he wrote to his sister Mollie on 11 October 1868:

"Tis a great source of gratification to me to think that thus far I have given entire satisfaction not only to the Adm'l., but to the other officers. It is somewhat a delicate position. All the commanding officers are senior to me and yet I am obliged to frame their orders, inspect their ships and report upon their condition...all of which requires delicate handling..."

Philip had a gift for diplomacy, as well as being charming.

At one of the Squadron's ports of call in Santiago, Chile, a royal ball was given at the palace, and Philip was invited. There he was introduced to the young Elvira Lindsay, a lady of Scottish and Spanish descent. Although Elvira spoke little English, it was love at first sight. They married in Santiago, and Elvira sailed with him to Mexico, crossing the United States on the transcontinental railroad to Washington DC, where they would live.

In the 1870s, Louis Agassiz was America's leading scientist. Of Swiss origin, he was a professor at Harvard, a regent at the



In the 1870s, Louis Agassiz was America's leading scientist.

Smithsonian, the author of publications on living and fossil fish and glaciers—an eminent ichthyologist, and familiarly known as “the Father of Glaciology”. Darwin had invoked the Agassiz doctrine of classifications of fish in his *Origin of the Species*.

In 1871, Agassiz was in his 80’s, and had with great effort raised the money for a grand, last scientific expedition. He had enlisted the support of students, fellow professors, financial backers (including his wife) to bring the project to fruition. A new steamer was designed and outfitted specifically for hydrographic service. Philip, again assigned to the Coast Survey, was placed in command of the *Hassler*, for what would become one of the nineteenth century’s important scientific efforts.

In December, 1871, when the steamer departed from Boston, Elvira was onboard. She had been invited especially to be a companion to Louis Agassiz’ wife, and so she made the cruise with them around the Horn, through the Galapagos Islands, to San Francisco. Philip was thrilled to have his young wife with him and excited to be part of the scientific research. He and Elvira became good friends with the Agassiz.

Philip remained with the *Hassler* for two more years. During this period the Coast Survey reports show an active hydrography team working from Panama to Oregon. In 1874, he was promoted to Captain and returned to the Pacific Squadron and took command of the *Omaha*.

From 1877-81, he was in San Francisco Bay at the Mare Island Navy Yard. My grandfather Alfred was born in 1879. A sister Isabelle and brother Philip followed. In 1881, Philip was assigned to the training ship *New Hampshire*, eventually becoming Chief Signal Officer of the Navy. He was promoted to Commodore in 1884, and became a Rear Admiral two days before he died in 1887.

“If you could imagine how much it cheers me and with what great delight your letters are read, I’m certain that no opportunity would pass without several letters from home.”

Philip wrote often and at length throughout his life to his five sisters in Maine: Hattie, Judith, Mary, Sarah, and “little Nell,” and to his brothers Reuben and Eastman. The letters show his intense affection for his family, his teasing nature, his wish to keep up with all facets of life “down east,” even when letters took months to reach him. He covers pages commenting on his sisters’ friends, their trips, their health, their passions and pastimes; and equally, he shares with them the details of his day, the personalities he encounters, and the joys and frustrations of his life at sea.

From Lovell, Maine, members of the Johnson family traveled far and wide. Philip’s brother, Eastman, studied in Düsseldorf and Paris and became a noted artist, settling in New York and Nantucket. His father moved to Washington to take the chief clerkship of the Bureau of Construction and Repair of the Navy Department; his sister Sarah married the son of one of first settlers of Superior and raised her family on Lake Superior.

Philip was not swept away by the quickening tide of the Gold Rush, by land speculation in the 1850s, or by young senoritas on the shore. He kept his head when his ship foundered on a reef in violent storms off the coast of India, and he held out to marry a sweetheart from home, mourning her for nine years after her death, before he married again.

Philip and Elvira are buried beneath a tall rugged stone at Arlington Cemetery near the Custis Lee Mansion in Washington. His son, my grandfather Alfred, and my grandmother lie beside him.

P.C. Johnson commanded the Coast Survey steamer *Hassler*.



William Birch McMurtrie

1816-1872

Artist/Draftsman of the Coast Survey

From a prominent Philadelphia family, William Birch McMurtrie was privy to the surge of scientific enlightenment that surrounded the exploration of the burgeoning West in the early 1800s. His father, Dr. Henry McMurtrie, was a respected author and later professor at the Central High School of Philadelphia, which served as the hub of intellectual and artistic pursuits, where scientific exploration, cartography and art were cultivated, producing high-minded young men anxious to serve their growing country.

Little is known of William's early artistic training, it has only been surmised that he was heavily influenced by his namesake and family friend, the English-born Philadelphia engraver and enamel painter, William Russell Birch, who he studied under, until Birch's death in 1834. Birch's son, Thomas, would also influence McMurtrie. Carrying on his father's legacy, Thomas Birch went on to become one of America's pioneer landscape and marine painters.

Home-schooled for the most part, McMurtrie continued his sketching and painting until, at the age of twenty, he applied to be an artist for the U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838 (also referred to as the Wilkes Expedition), led by Charles Wilkes. McMurtrie was accepted, but just before the expedition set sail, he was cut from the essential corps of scientific and technical personnel.

By 1839, Dr McMurtrie had been named head of Central High School's department of anatomy, physiology and natural history, which might have helped secure William's place there. At the age of twenty-seven, McMurtrie was in Central High's second graduating class of 1843.

After a series of art exhibitions in Philadelphia, New York and Washington, D.C., McMurtrie made the acquaintance of an assistant to the Coast Survey, H. L. Whiting, who at the time was supervising a topographical survey of Cape Cod.



Portrait of William B. McMurtrie, on the U.S. Steamer *Active*, 1858, was painted by James Madison Alden. Though not often directly referred to in Johnson's *Private Notes*, McMurtrie played a key role in drafting the western coastline.

This acquaintance, in addition to McMurtrie's association with Alexander Bache, Superintendent of the Coast Survey in 1847 (and former principal of Central High School), prompted McMurtrie to write a letter to Bache applying for a position with the Survey under Whiting's direction.

Bache reluctantly agreed to McMurtrie's apprenticeship in topographical drawing and in 1848, the thirty-two-year-old McMurtrie was selected to join the Survey of the Pacific Coast Expedition, led by William P. McArthur.

Perhaps inspired more by his accrued debt than a spirit of adventure, McMurtrie sailed onboard the *Ewing*, arriving in San Francisco at the height of Gold Rush fever in 1849.

No written diaries and very little correspondence were left by William McMurtrie. What does remain include a notebook of faded sketches and his hydrographic charts of the U.S. Pacific Coast Survey created over a career of more than twenty years. Each carefully drawn illustration not only depicts the hardships endured as an artist/draftsman with the Coast Survey, but they are testimonials to the lives of those who painstakingly mapped our uncharted regions.

For additional biographical information on William B. McMurtrie see: Lois Tuttle Morris's unpublished MA Thesis, "William Birch McMurtrie: West Coast Artist 1849-1858," (University of California, Davis, 1981). Morris builds upon the earlier work of Robert D. Monroe, "William Birch McMurtrie: A Painter Partially Restored," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, LX (1959): (352-374).

James Madison Alden

1834-1922

Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast



James Madison Alden served as Coast Survey artist with William B. McMurtrie onboard the U.S. steamer *Active* under his uncle, Lieutenant Commander James Alden.

Collection: Mrs. Henry Windsor Adams, Gallesville, Maryland.

James Madison Alden's entry into the U.S. Navy and subsequent service in the Coast Survey was carefully charted by his uncle Lieutenant James Alden, Jr.

After the death of Madison's father, Madison turned to his uncle for direction. Lt. James Alden had been a member of the U.S. Exploring Expedition under Wilkes and had participated in the Mexican-American War. The younger Alden was inspired by his uncle's adventurous stories and duty-bound service in the military. In 1853, Madison wrote to his uncle in San Francisco, expressing his interest in joining the Coast Survey.

Madison's introduction to the arts had begun at school in Boston where he excelled at literature. He soon began to sketch his environs and continued to do so until the time of his enlistment into the Navy where he undertook instruction in cartographic drawing.

Arriving in San Francisco five years after McMurtrie's arrival onboard the *Ewing*, Madison was just twenty years old.

The two artists met onboard the *Active* in 1854, with Lieutenant James Alden as captain and Lieutenant Philip C. Johnson as hydrographer.

Having two artists onboard was unusual, but not coincidental. The ambitious Lt. James Alden pursued surveying in the hopes of documenting his findings in several volumes which would make a Pacific Coast Directory similar to what had already been published from the transcontinental exploration. Congress had approved an impressive sum of money and the race was

on between notable military and civilian hydrographic and topographic corps to chart the Pacific Coast. George Davidson (see Captain Theberge's *Coast Surveyors on the Pioneer Coast*) shared Lt. Alden's goal of surveying the Pacific Coast, and it was Davidson who would eventually produce *The Directory for the Pacific Coast of the United States*, in 1858.

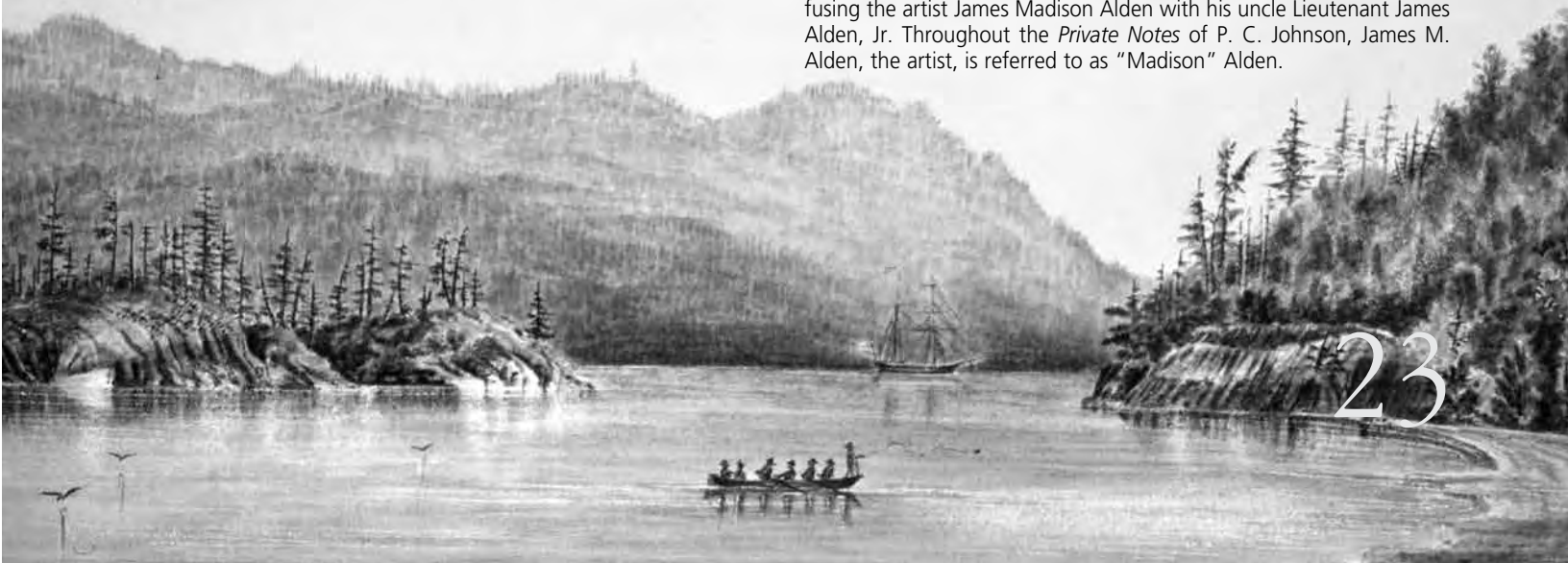
Lt. Alden appointed William B. McMurtrie to be the official artist of the Survey, while J. Madison Alden (eighteen years younger) learned his craft, adding artistic flair to McMurtrie's disciplined chart-making. McMurtrie shared his knowledge, teaching Madison how to sketch quickly from a moving ship. Such drawings were sectioned into three parts: the first sketch was drawn on the approach, then the middle section was sketched as the landform came into direct view, the last third was sketched as the vantage receded astern.

At times the two artists sketched side-by-side onboard the *Active*, at other times the naval officers were called away to defend against Indian uprisings, leaving their civilian counterparts to their chart-making.

Both William B. McMurtrie and James Madison Alden would leave indelible impressions of the Pacific Coast in the mid-1800s.

For additional biographical information see: Franz Stenzel, M.D., *James Madison Alden, Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast, 1854-1860*, (Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth, Texas, 1975).

Editor's Note: It is worth noting as Franz Stenzel does in his biography of James Madison Alden, that a legion of errors has been made confusing the artist James Madison Alden with his uncle Lieutenant James Alden, Jr. Throughout the *Private Notes* of P. C. Johnson, James M. Alden, the artist, is referred to as "Madison" Alden.



The Private Notes

of Philip C. Johnson, Jr.

onboard USS *Active* 1855-56

Editor's Note: As previously referenced, the following document was given to the Maritime Museum of San Diego and is one of three typescripts in existence. The location of the original log is not known, though five logs, dated 1847-1853, and four letter-books, dated 1846-1886, are in existence and stored at the Naval Historical Center's Library in Washington, D.C. The *Private Notes* appear as they were originally transcribed with the exception of ships' names, which have been italicized to avoid confusion with place names, which are capitalized. Handwritten corrections in the margin of the typescript have been noted and added for clarity.



Passed Midshipman Philip C. Johnson, Jr. served onboard the USCS steamer *Active* in 1854 (at 26 years old), until detached in 1859. The *Active*, under the command of Lieutenant James Alden, Jr., with its corps of hydrographers and 2 artists, William B. McMurtrie and James Madison Alden (nephew of Lt. Alden), made significant contributions to the mapping efforts of the U.S. Coast Survey along the Pacific Coast in the mid-1800s.

Courtesy of Valerie Elbrick Hanlon

List of Navy Officers on Coast Survey duty as of March 1, 1855.

From the Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey showing the Progress of the Survey during the year 1855.

San Francisco, California, July 5th, *1855*

At about 7 o'clock this morning Dr. Gwin, lady, three daughters and son, Miss Brown, (sister to Robert Brown), a Mr. Johnston, Major Bache (Supt. Light Houses) [William] Trowbridge, and one or two others came on board for a pleasant trip to the FARALONES, and a great old trip it was, too.¹ In blew a small gale of wind and of course all the land-lubbers were quite sick. We returned at sunset, and I'm certain they could not have been better pleased to get on shore than we were to have them out of the ship.

July 6th. We are getting every thing on board ready to start for the [North] tomorrow. Lieutenant Trowbridge and his tidal party go with us. What an immense deal of baggage he carries!

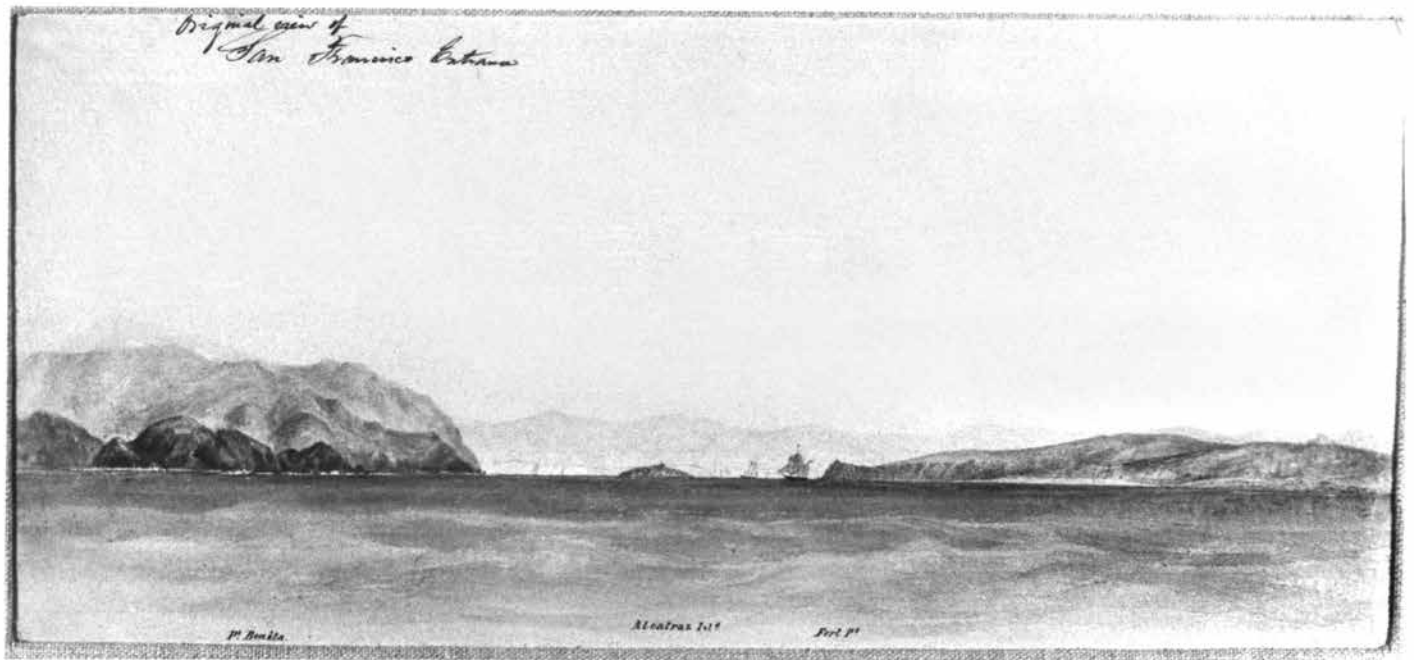
July 7th. We are finally off for the [North] and there is no saying when we shall arrive at the STRAIGHTS OF JUAN DE FUCA, for *on dit* we are going to examine some half dozen harbors on the coast.²

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REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

APPENDIX No. 3 bis—Continued.

Vessel.	Locality of service.	Officers.	Rank.	Date of attachment.	
Steamer <i>Active</i> and schooner <i>Ewing</i> .	Sections X and XI.	James Alden.....	Lieutenant commanding.	May	18, 1849
		Archibald MacLachlan.....	Lieutenant	January	30, 1855
		J. S. Kennard.....	do	May	6, 1852
		R. M. Cuyler.....	do	June	20, 1845
		J. M. Browne.....	Assistant surgeon.	May	10, 1855
		S. S. Bassett.....	Acting master.	March	17, 1849
		Edward E. Stone.....	do	March	29, 1854
		P. C. Johnson.....	Passed midshipman.	July	20, 1854
		E. J. De Haven.....	Lieutenant	November	12, 1853
		L. H. Lyne.....	Passed midshipman.	September	26, 1852
		S. D. Trenchard.....	Lieutenant	March	1, 1853
		J. Dorney Read.....	do	November	28, 1854
		R. C. Duvall.....	Passed midshipman.	November	17, 1852
		W. D. Whiting.....	Master	July	30, 1853
		A. G. Fendleton.....	Professor of mathematics.	May	8, 1848



July 9th. At 4:30 this morning we anchored at CRESCENT CITY. [Lt. Richard] Cuyler and myself, [Lt. Joel] Kennard and [Midshipman S. S.] Bassett have run perhaps a dozen lines of soundings each to look for some rocks which we were told were in the way, but no one knew exactly where.³ We found some three or four however.

The most sad sight that I have beheld for a long, long while is the burnt and charred wreck of the once beautiful steamer *America*. "Bully" Wright is here with *Goliath* and making an endeavor to take the wreck to SAN FRANCISCO. How he will succeed remains to be seen. Major [Henry] Prince is here with about 150 soldiers and very anxious that Captain Alden should take him and his command to STEILACOOM, which I think he will do, as he (the Major) is losing [sic] from six to eight by desertion every day.⁴

Went on shore this evening and beat Trowbridge two games of billiards.

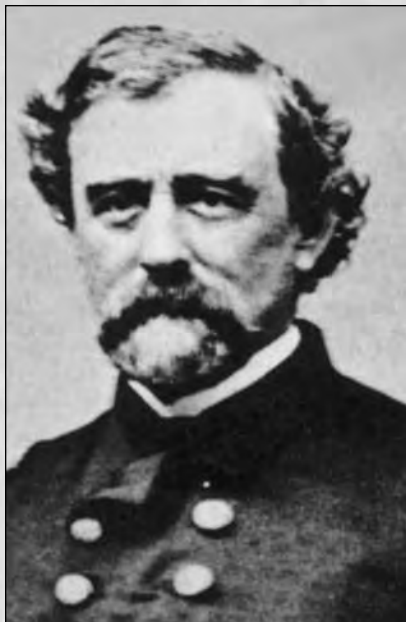
Above: The original view of the San Francisco entrance was drawn in 1849 by Coast Survey artist William B. Murtrie.

Courtesy California Historical Society

Below: In James Madison Alden's 1859 watercolor, there was no trace left of "the burnt and charred wreck of the once beautiful steamer *America*" on the beach in Crescent City, California. Johnson described the scene in 1855; Major Henry Prince was stranded with 150 of his men until rescued by the *Active*.

Courtesy California Historical Society



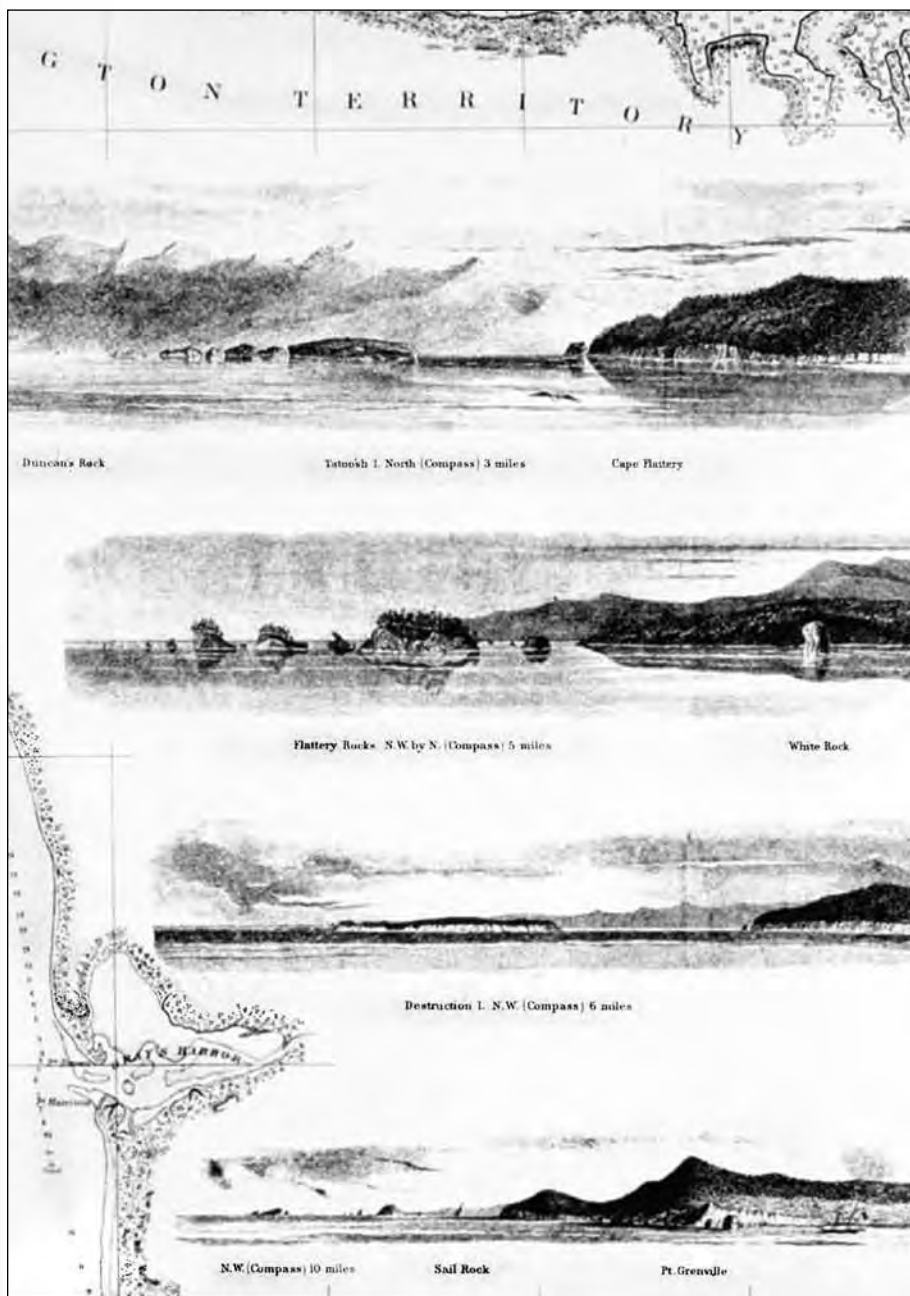


James Alden, Jr. was a direct descendant of John Alden of Plymouth colony, who arrived on the *Mayflower*. With a seafaring heritage, James Alden, Jr. entered the U.S. Navy in 1828, as an appointed midshipman. Alden developed the skills necessary for charting and surveying navigable waters, which led to his assignment to the U.S. Exploring Expedition of 1838-1844 (the Wilkes Expedition). Lt Alden then sailed aboard the USS *Constitution* for her around-the-world commission in 1844-1846. As a hydrographer, Lt. Alden was among those officers charged with correcting inaccuracies and revising earlier foreign-authored charts.

By the time Lieutenant Alden commanded the Survey steamer *Active*, he was a seasoned explorer and surveyor. In 1852, he was in charge of the hydrographic portion of the survey along the West Coast. This placed him in close proximity to George Davidson with whom he would vie for recognition in charting the Pacific coastline and outlying islands, until the Civil War intervened.

Quite a party of us got into a very bad humor because by an accident we were compelled to remain on the beach for two or three hours waiting for a boat. It turned out that the boat came, but was unable to find us because it was so dark.

This is a regular "one horse town" and the harbor to correspond. Probably it may turn out something one of these days.



July 10th. As I predicted, we took the soldiers, camp, and women, and their dunnage on board early this morning and started for STEILACOOM, intending to land Trowbridge and his party at CAPE FLATTERY on our way up.

No one seems to be at all sorry that we are not going into GRAY'S HARBOR and the other uninteresting ports along the coast, but on the contrary all are very much pleased at the idea of going to STEILACOOM where we can have a ride and amuse ourselves. Hope to meet Maloney and his lady.

July 13th. At 7 o'clock this evening landed Major Prince and the soldiers. Went on shore but was very much disappointed in not meeting Mrs. Maloney.

July 19th. We have made a survey of this port. Have engaged ourselves very much in riding about the country and visiting. Mrs. Potts who is quite a lively and pleasant lady, (native of BALTIMORE) and Mrs. Slaughter who is also a very pleasant lady, but quite different from the first in her style. The officers at the PORT were, Captain Maloney, Lieutenants Slaughter and Sergeant and Doctor Potts.⁵ All pleasant fellows. Major Prince, Doctor and his lady came on board this morning and at half past 9 o'clock we started for OLYMPIA where we arrived in a few hours.

July 23rd. Since we have been here we have made a good survey of the Capitol of WASHINGTON TERRITORY. Here I did my first plain table work, which turned out as well as I could wish. Made but few acquaintances. Mr. Tilton (brother to the Commander, Surveyor General of the Territory) I found to be a pleasant gent. Played a few games of billiards with Trowbridge and Major Prince. Came out about even with the Major but beat Trowbridge.

I like Mrs. Potts first rate. She is not particularly pretty nor is there anything remarkably brilliant or clever, yet I like her. Had several pleasant dances with her as did Mr. Jordan on one occasion. It surprised me to see her dancing with him, for I think she is somewhat inclined to be aristocratic.

Well this afternoon after having finished the surveying of OLYMPIA we ran down to STEILACOOM and anchored, but shall start again in the morning for PORT TOWNSEND. Mrs. Potts "pitched into me right strong" for permitting Mr. Jordan to dance with her the other evening. I laughed at her at the time she was dancing and she did not understand it. However, she found out before we returned that Mr. Jordan was not particularly interesting, had great deal of assurance, imprudence or ignorance. I am unable to say which, if not all; and what troubled her more than anything else, as I suspected, [was the fact that] he was an engineer. But I laughed at her a little and passed the evening quite pleasantly with

her and Mrs. Slaughter, at the house of the latter. Cuyler, Trowbridge, Major Prince, Slaughter and myself were the only ones there. Each endeavored and generally succeeded in amusing the others by some trick or story.

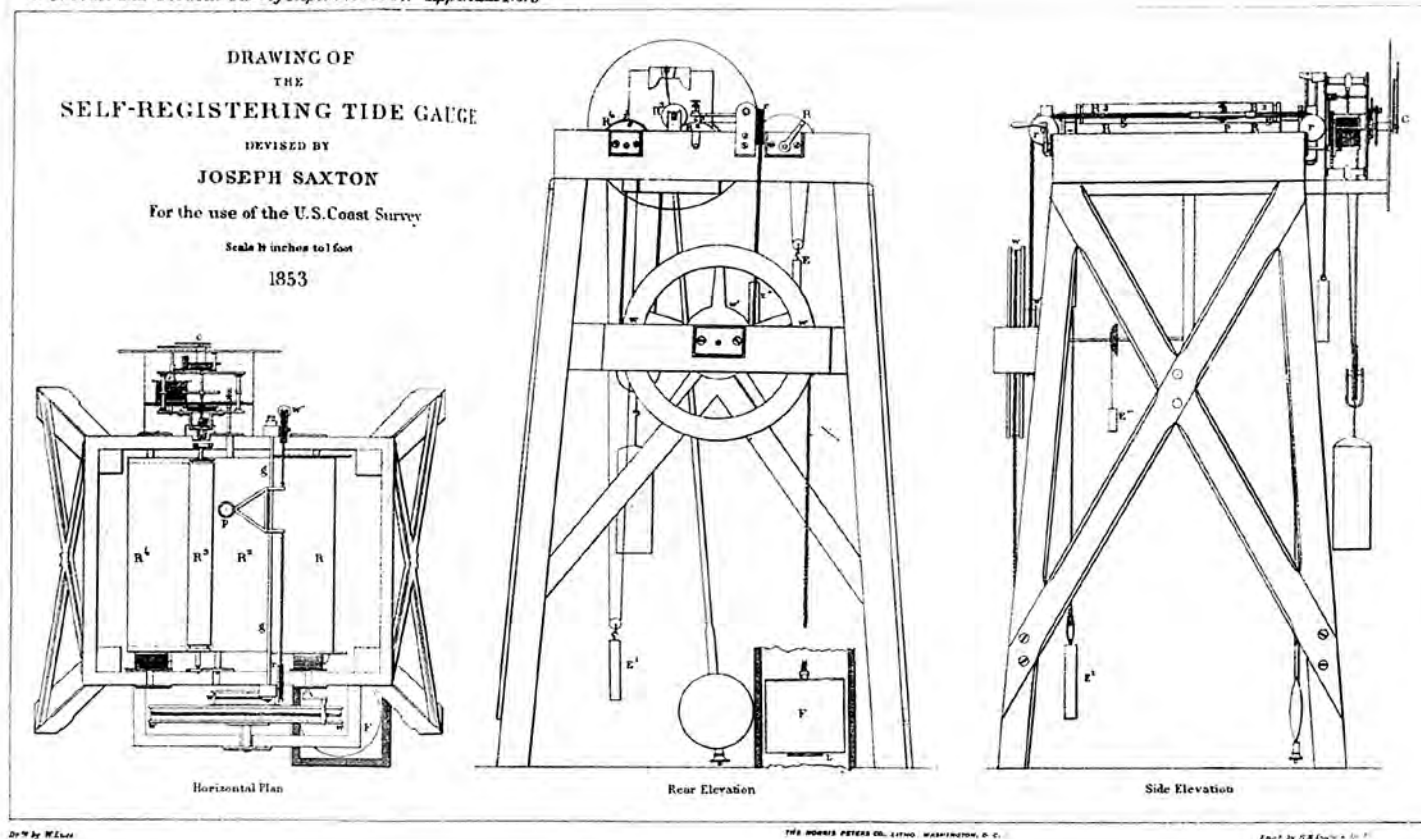
July 24th. Started quite early this morning for PORT TOWNSEND. Stopping at Seattle to leave some passengers that came on board last night. Dropped into PORT LUDLOW for an hour. Were much surprised to find the *Decatur* anchored at WHIDBEY'S ISLAND, (Davidson was at PORT LUDLOW).⁶ Geo. Morris came on board to see me, spent an hour or so.



Richard M. Cuyler is prominently featured in the *Notes* of Lt. Johnson as crewmate and fellow hydro-grapher. Born into a wealthy family in Savannah, Georgia, Cuyler joined the U.S. Navy in 1839. During the Mexican-American War he served in the siege of Vera Cruz (as did P. C. Johnson and Lt. Alden), then transferred to the Coast Survey in 1845. According to the *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 1852*, Cuyler served under Lt. James Alden as a naval hydrographer onboard the *Active*. Lt. Alden reported to Superintendent Bache that San Miguel Island had a "very good anchorage, which I have named 'Cuyler's Harbor' in honor of one of the officers attached to the party."

Left: The plane table was used by the Coast surveyors as a tool in mapping terrain.

DRAWING OF
THE
SELF-REGISTERING TIDE GAUGE
DEvised BY
JOSEPH SAXTON
For the use of the U.S.Coast Survey
Scale 1/2 inches to 1 foot
1853



Joseph Saxton (1799-1873), Superintendent in the Department of Treasury's office of Weights and Measures, invented the self-registering tide gauge in 1851. It was not the first of such instruments, but it was the most functional in the 1850s. Super-intendent of the Tides, Lieutenant William Trowbridge brought three of these gauges to the Pacific Coast in July of 1853. The first was set up on San Francisco Bay's North Beach, and began offering what has become the longest unbroken series of tidal information available to science. The second gauge was set up in San Diego and the third is referred to by Johnson in his *Notes*.

July 27th. Trowbridge has been putting up a self-registering tide gauge here which has detained us till now. Since we have been here, Mr. Petigrus gave a ball to the officers of the *Decatur* and the *Active*. Our steward supplied the table, the ships the music. There were four married ladies there, each of whom had about three babies.

It was a hard old party. Some of the officers of the *Decatur* were thoughtful enough to take something to drink with them or we should have suffered much. It has given us something to laugh and talk about for some time. We anchored this evening at about 10 o'clock at PILLAR POINT.

July 28th. At NEAH HARBOR. Landed Trowbridge and his party today.

July 30th. Saw Trowbridge all "nicely fixed", and started for VICTORIA after looking for the fishing bank about twenty miles from CAPE FLATTERY on which we got 45 fathoms water. We anchored at VICTORIA at about 5 o'clock this (Monday) evening.

August 2nd. We remained at VICTORIA longer, I think than was the intention of the Captain when we went into the harbor. Last evening the Governor (Douglass) [sic] gave a ball for *Dido* and *Brisk*, that are anchored at ESQUINATT [Esquimalt].⁷ The party was very much more pleasant than I expected to find it, for none of us had any idea that so many ladies could be found on the island. Some of them were quite pretty. The Miss Reeds for instance to one of whom Eldridge is engaged.⁸ The supper was very good. Everything that could be had in the eating or drinking line was on the table. Music by John one of our ward room boys. There were two or three

ladies however that played and sang quite well. The Governor looks all over and acts exactly what he is. He is quite tall and well made and Pomposity itself.

We promised last evening to go to ESQUINATT [Esquimalt] in the ship and we remained with steam up till after 8 o'clock this morning. I was called to go for him, but not feeling particularly anxious to wait upon "Old Pomposity" so early in the morning (8 o'clock) I did not hurry myself in dressing. Cuyler was next called, but begged to be excused. So in a "huffy" the Captain went for him himself, and came back mad as satan because the Governor discovered that his business would not permit him to leave. We brought, however, the Governor's sister and her husband, Mr. Cammeron. Cuyler in the mean

time had gone on shore for the Miss Reeds, under the impression that he had invited them and they accepted the invitation to go to PORT TOWNSEND. When the Captain told Kennard to get underway at once and was told that Cuyler was still on shore, his anger did not abate in the least, but he swore that he would not wait a moment even for his own grandfather. However, Cuyler got back before we got the anchor up, and without the Miss Reeds. We came out of the harbor without accident, but that is all that can be said for it was quite low water and Captain Mitchell was directly in the middle of the channel with his BRIG.⁹ We ran boldly into the channel of ESQUINATT [Esquimalt] and made a sweep around the *Dido* and *Brisk* running so near the shore as to make all hands stare and myself (if the truth

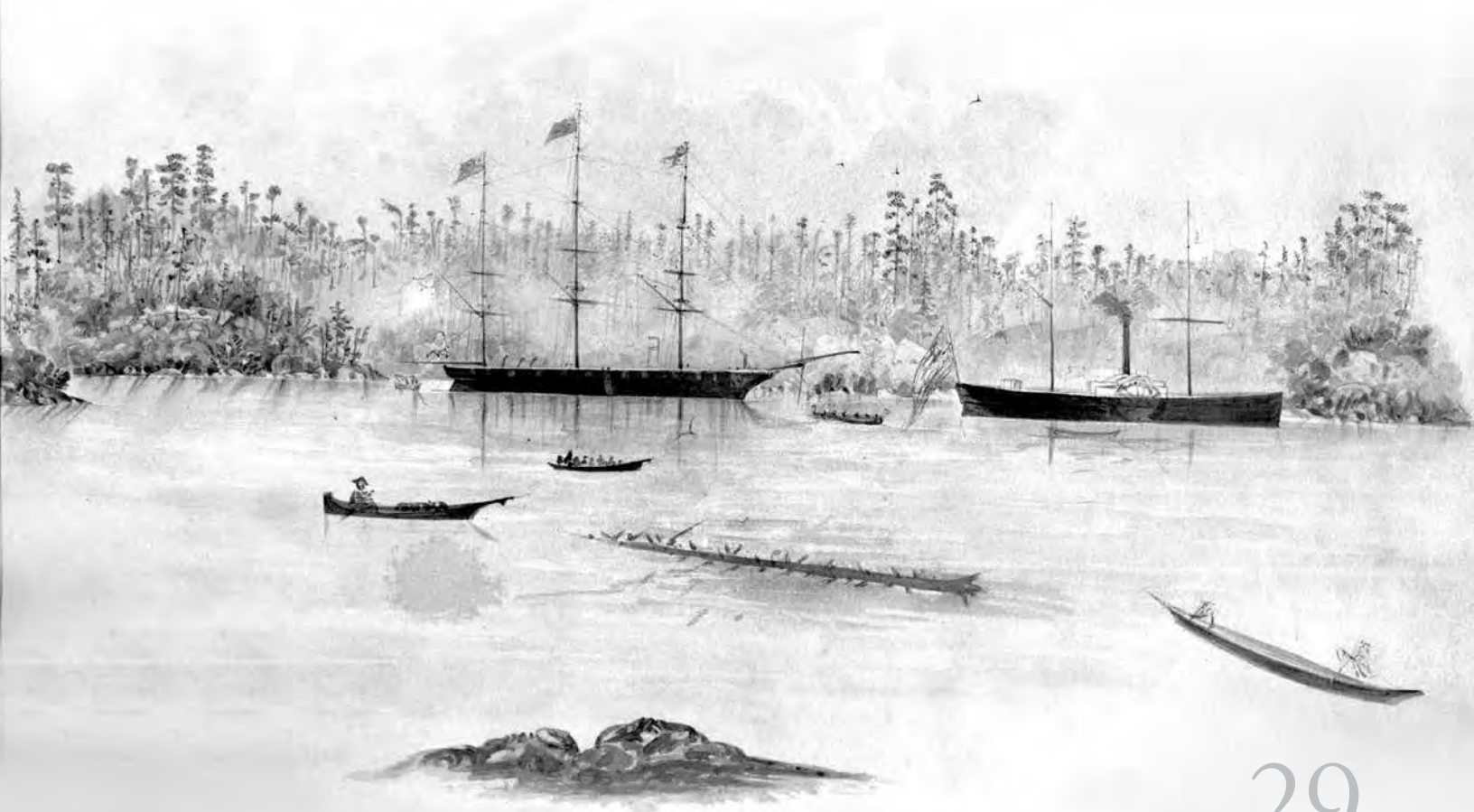
can be known, others too I think) feel weak.

Received visits from the SLOOP and STEAMO. We remained here perhaps an hour or so. 'Tis a very pretty and excellent harbor not many houses. Two fine hospitals (fine for the country I mean) for the wounded of PETROPOLOSKI!¹⁰

We anchored this afternoon here at PORT TOWNSEND, but got no mail. Found that the tide gauge had been giving and was still causing much trouble. Made it all right however. I made the application for the superintendence of the tides on this coast, and sent it from VICTORIA.¹¹

Below: In 1857, J. Madison Alden sketched the HBM Ship Satellite and USCS Str. Active in Esquimalt Bay, Vancouver Island.

Courtesy Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington



August 3rd. I wonder if this is to be nothing but a pleasure trip all the season, or are we going to do some work? Here we are at BELLINGHAM BAY, and what for no one seems to know. The Captain himself, is undecided whether to survey it or not and if he does 'twill be only to pass the time.

August 13th. After mature deliberation and manifesting much indecision, the Captain concluded to make a survey of BELLINGHAM BAY. I was not sorry for I had a very pleasant part of the duty to perform – that is, in my opinion, *viz* have table work, if it can be called so when done with the sextant. I like it for the reason that one can see his work progress. But 'tis quite tiresome or fatiguing notwithstanding.

The survey has kept us all quite busy since this day [last] week. We left that bay early this morning for this port, NANAIMO. There is nothing particularly interesting in this place, more than its being an English port, and its coal mines, which are much superior to those of BELLINGHAM BAY. I went down into the mines, a descent of seventy odd feet, by means of the steam engine, and was much surprised to find in what a small place the workmen have to swing their picks and shovels.^{1,2}

May I be delivered from every being a miner. The climate is very pleasant, perhaps a trifle too warm for while writing this (in bed) I'm stripped to a gantline.^{1,3} Got beat two games of chess by Cuyler, which annoys me considerably for I feel quite certain that I can beat him.

Major Davis amused us this evening by one of his "periodical bursting forths," (as the doctor calls them) giving a specimen of the speech of Flattery Jack.^{1,4} We went on to the

beach to take a bath this evening. Found the water at a very comfortable temperature and enjoyed it much. Just as I had finished dressing and had lit my pipe, it fell out of my mouth and, of course, broke (for the fourth time). Where upon I exhibited, what I felt, much annoyance and foolishly threw it overboard. It would not sink, however, and Tom Park, who knew I should be sorry for it, picked it up and brought it on board, for which now I feel thankful for tomorrow I'll repair it.

Attempted to wash and bleach a white wool hat, that Geo. Morris gave me, and a bad job I made of it, for it looks worse now than before anything was done to it. This must answer for one day's record for 'tis necessary to mend as well as write and I have to sew a sleeve onto one of my \$9.00 shirts before going to sleep or expend and sew one tomorrow.

August 16th. Took a bath this morning and evening. Mended my pipe. Beat Cuyler and Kennard one game of chess.^{1,5} Wrote off [sic] the Chenook language.^{1,6} Drank punch in the cabin and turned in.

*W.D. Johnson to P.C. Johnson
(Nanaimo B.C.) Victoria
July 31st 1855*

Sir, I have been with him of late while putting up the gauges on the northern part of this coast, and feel that I understand them sufficiently to take charge to your satisfaction, should you feel disposed to order me to relieve him. On the 29th ult I made an application for a leave of absence, which application I respectfully withdraw, and request that I may be ordered to relieve Mr. Trowbridge.

*Very respectfully,
W.D. Johnson*

*Prof. J. D. Bache
Capt. W. D. Boast to Mr.
Washington. etc.*

In a letter dated July 31st 1855, P.C. Johnson requested to "be ordered to relieve Lt. [William] Trowbridge," who was Superintendent of the Tides. Johnson wrote: "I have been with him [Trowbridge] of late while putting up the gauges on the northern part of this coast, and feel that I understand them sufficiently to take charge to your satisfaction...." Johnson's application, however, was denied by Superintendent of the Coast Survey Alexander Bache.



W. Alexander del. (from a Sketch taken on the Spot by J. Schuch)

J. Heath Sculp.

FOUR remarkable, supported POLES, in PORT TOWNSEND, GULPH of GEORGIA.

August 20th. Just as I had seated myself to work out a set of time sights last Saturday (18th) the Captain told me he wished me to go in search of the *Fauntleroy* for data to work upon.¹⁷ So I dropped my time sights and got the boat ready for two day's journey as I might not find her where she was expected to be, and it might be necessary to camp out for one night. However, at about six o'clock in the evening I boarded her at NEW DUNGENESS about 15 miles from PORT TOWNSEND. [George] Davidson was the only one that I found on board and was quite unwell. Poor fellow! I think he is not long for this world, for his heart is affected with rheumatism. [James] Lawson and [Lt.] Alden returned soon and after dinner we passed the evening in playing "Old Sledge." Davidson and myself loosing [sic] four games out of six.

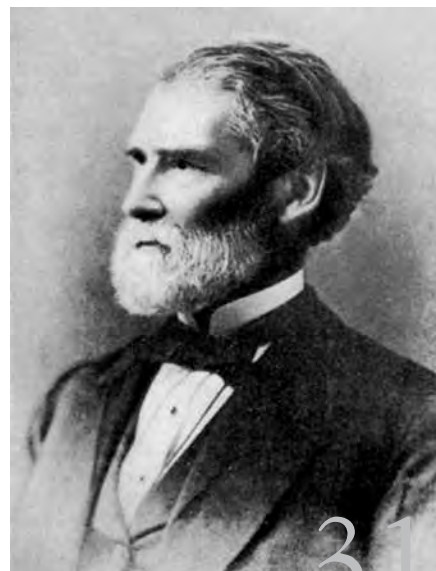
Above: This sketch is drawn from Captain George Vancouver's, "A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World," 8 May 1792. While the vantage is from a much earlier expedition than Johnson's onboard the *Active*, it suggests the native headlands of Port Townsend, which the surveyors would have encountered.

George Davidson (1825 – 1911)

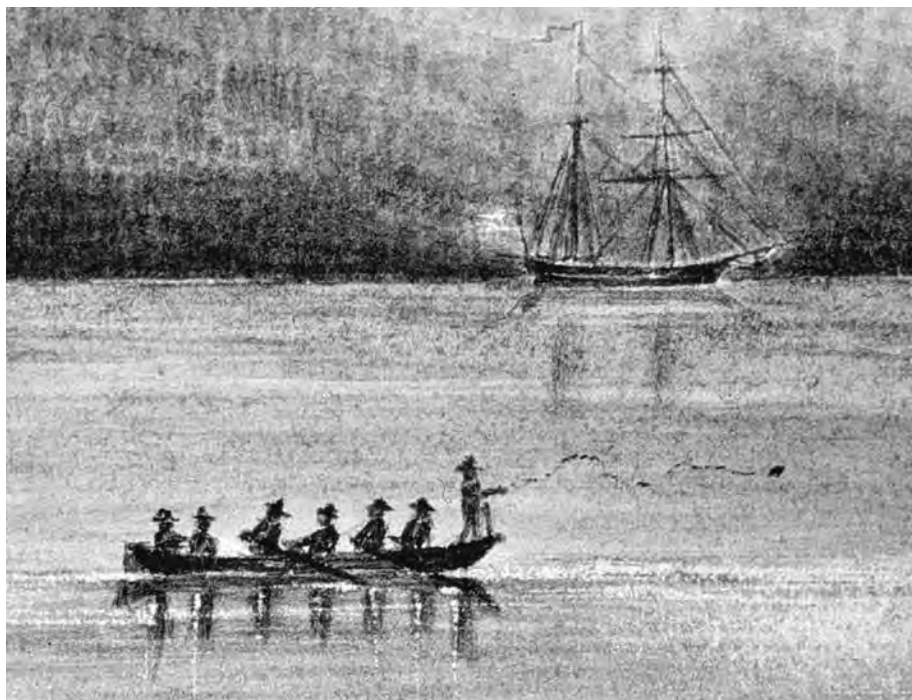
George Davidson and James Lawson, A. M. Harrison and John Rockwell were sent by the Coast Survey to begin mapping the West Coast in 1850.

By 1858, Davidson had completed the first comprehensive guide to navigating safely in and out of bays and anchorages from Mexico to the Canadian border. Written in the tradition developed by *The English Pilot* and *The American Coast Pilot*, Davidson first called his "pilot" the *Directory for the Pacific Coast of the United States*. After expansion and revision in 1862, he changed the name of the *Directory* to *Coast Pilot* beginning with the 1869 edition. His fourth and final edition was published in 1889.

Davidson's *Directory* was published as an appendix to the yearly Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey 1858. Information for the books was often derived from the sailing directions, views, and charts produced by colleagues in the Coast Survey including Lt. Alden's hydrography team and Lt. William Trowbridge's tide studies. This created a longstanding rift between Davidson and Lt. Alden, who had hoped to publish his own compendium of surveying data along with the charts of William B. McMurtrie and the artwork of his nephew, James Madison Alden.

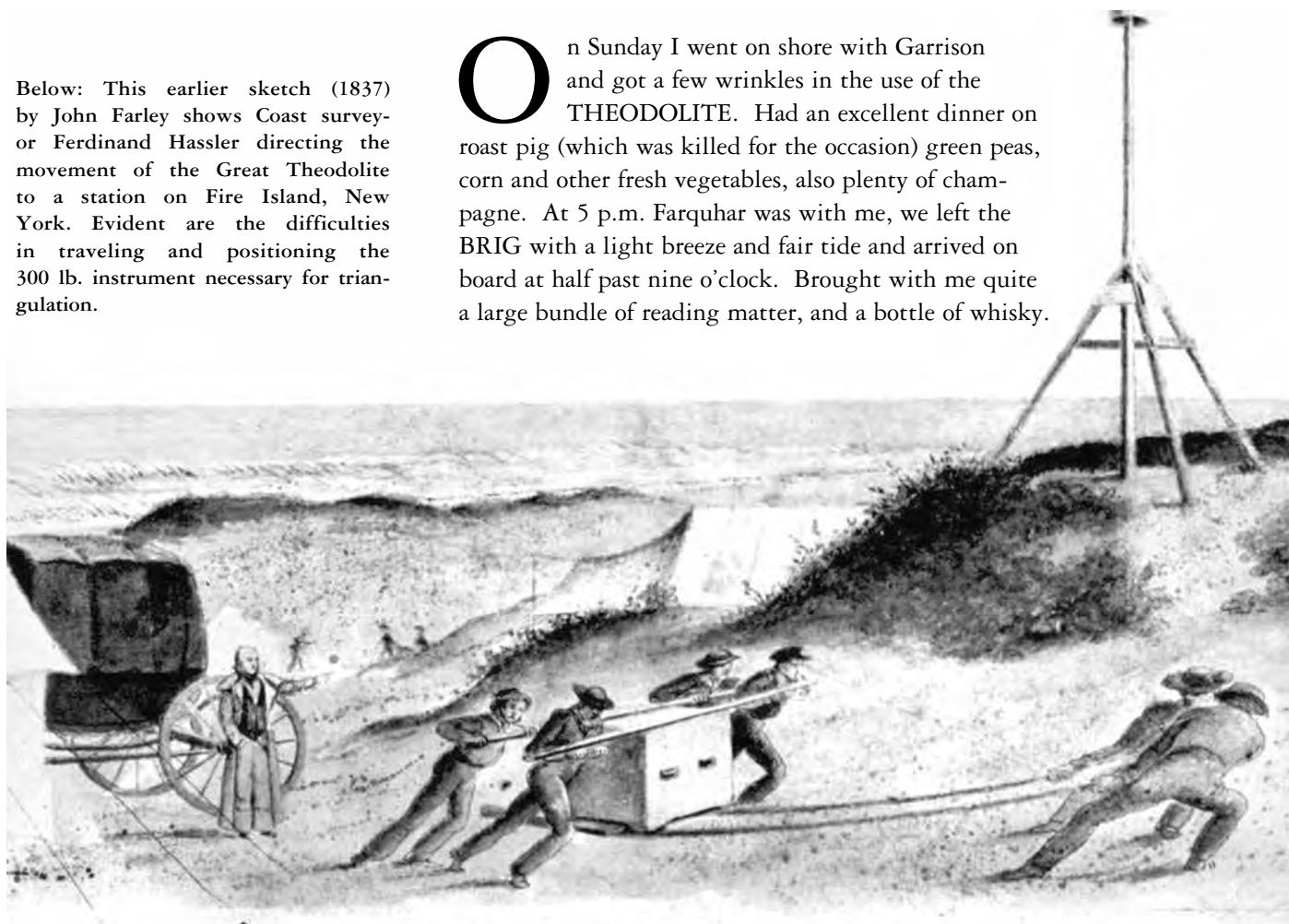


The earliest picture of the Coast Survey's sounding operations, painted in watercolor by James Madison Alden, nephew of Lieutenant Commanding James Alden, depicts the sounding party off the USCS Brig *Fauntleroy*, 1857.



Below: This earlier sketch (1837) by John Farley shows Coast surveyor Ferdinand Hassler directing the movement of the Great Theodolite to a station on Fire Island, New York. Evident are the difficulties in traveling and positioning the 300 lb. instrument necessary for triangulation.

On Sunday I went on shore with Garrison and got a few wrinkles in the use of the THEODOLITE. Had an excellent dinner on roast pig (which was killed for the occasion) green peas, corn and other fresh vegetables, also plenty of champagne. At 5 p.m. Farquhar was with me, we left the BRIG with a light breeze and fair tide and arrived on board at half past nine o'clock. Brought with me quite a large bundle of reading matter, and a bottle of whisky.



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*Rough Sketch showing the mode in which
Mr. Hassler carried the Great Theodolite up to the station
by sliding it over the Land.*

The only incident, worth mentioning on the trip was the breaking of my pipe, while going down and after mending it breaking again on my return. In as much as it had given me much trouble as well as pleasure in smoking it, and it being the sixth time that it had been broken, I just tossed it to old "Neptune," and shall endeavor [sic] to knock off smoking.

August 21st. We are still at PORT TOWNSEND waiting for good weather. Why we don't go to PORT LUDLOW and do the hydrography of that port I'm unable to say. The mail, I think is the thing that detains us now.

The indians for the last few days have been raising the very devil on shore. They are in a great fear of the northern indians coming down to attack them, so they have been invoking the evil spirit to do very naughty things to their enemies, and the good spirit to watch and protect them. The whole arrangement is more like one of our revivals or tent meetings than anything I can compare it to, but that gives one a very faint idea of the excitement to which they work themselves up—going so far as to cut and lacerate their own bodies.

Played two games of chess with Kennard both of which he beat me. Am much interested in a book entitled "Purple Tints of Paris" which I bought from the brig.¹⁸ I think it gives one a very good idea of the French and speaks in plain terms of his own countrymen, the English.

August 23rd. The ship has made quite a cruise today from PORT TOWNSEND to WIDBEY'S [Whidbey] ISLAND about five miles.

I have smoked very little since my pipe is gone, not more than one pipe a day, and can't convince myself if I feel any better for it, but on the contrary, am of the opinion that I don't feel so well. Colonel [Isaac] Ebby, the collector of PORT TOWNSEND, who is the dirtiest (except Governor [Isaac] Stevens) man I have ever met and who stutters most painfully came over with us.¹⁹ He is a very good hearted man, however, and invited us all to his house, offering to furnish us with horses if we wished to ride.

Mr. and Mrs. [Sarah] Alden went on shore this afternoon and took a ride. Cuyler was very much annoyed because Mrs. Alden has so much fear of riding horse back. He is of the opinion that 'tis all affectation. I beat Cuyler two games of chess this afternoon, where upon he became very much disgusted.

August 25th. Yesterday Basset and myself ran a few lines of soundings. Kennard heard that the mail had arrived at PORT TOWNSEND and immediately made a break for it. But "twas no good" there was no mail there. It is amusing to see Mrs. Alden rush on deck to take exercise after dinner. She will rush up and down on the deck evidently with the firm determination of taking a long walk every day. It is as my smoking resolve will turn out I expect, to last a few days and then the old habit will return. How in the world she exists is more than I can say, for she never goes on shore and rarely does any sewing. People can get accustomed to any thing I believe; (I believe I've done wrong in saying she rarely does any sewing for she has just told me that she has made three "jumpers" lately).

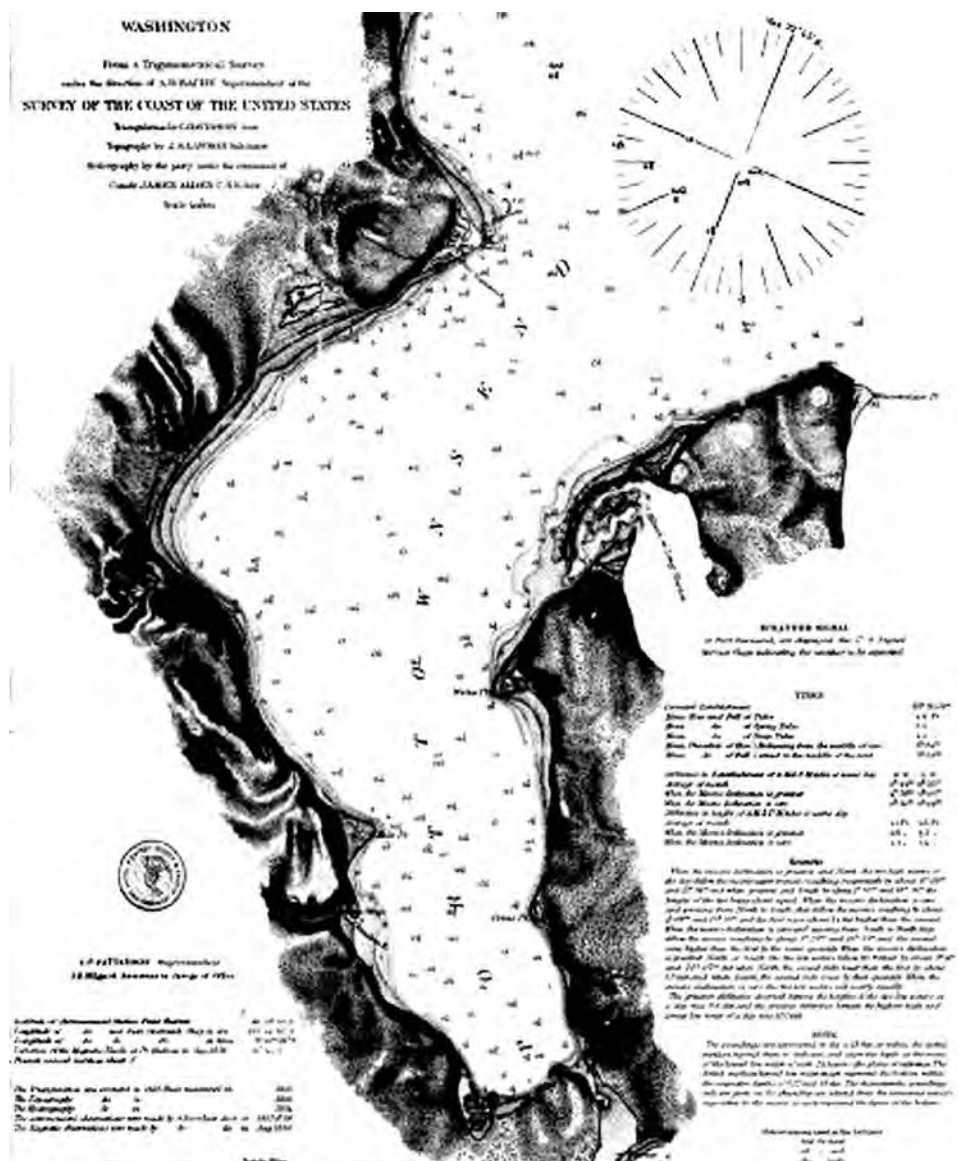
August 27th. As we were getting up steam this morning, a canoe arrived from PORT TOWNSEND with the mail which made Kennard all right. I did not receive any but was not disappointed for I told Ira Alexander to keep mine until our return, as it was uncertain about receiving them while I was in the

Little can be found regarding the relationship and married life of James and Sarah Ann Alden. What can be pulled together from naval records, correspondence, and journals paints a sad picture of a couple first separated by the demands of the husband circumnavigating the globe and later by the wife's descent into mental illness.

James Alden and Sarah Ann Thompson were married in 1838; however theirs was not destined to be a marriage of constant companionship. While her husband pursued his naval career, gone for years at a time, Mrs. Alden was left at home. During the first twenty-five years of their marriage, the Alden's were only in physical proximity to each other for a total of five years.

It was once considered bad luck to have a woman onboard a ship; years later, it was simply considered a nuisance (which Lt. Johnson concurs within the pages of his journal). Naval regulations of the day stated: "Women are not to be taken to sea from the United States in any vessel of the Navy without permission from the Secretary of the Navy...and then only to make a passage from one port to another." However women, particularly the wives of officers, could often be found aboard ships. Their presence was strictly in an unofficial capacity—they were not paid for any duties performed aboard ship nor were they given an allotment of food (they either had to share their husband's daily allotment or pay with their own funds). Whether Alden received special permission, or if regulations were not as strict aboard the Coast Survey vessels is not clear, in either case, Mrs. Alden had joined her husband aboard the USS Active in 1855.

Mrs. Alden was institutionalized from 1858, until her death in 1889. Between July 1857 and 1863, Lt. Alden took two leaves-of-absence from his duties to attend to his wife. The specifics regarding her mental illness remain sealed in the asylum's records.²⁰



sounds. We are now anchored in a very snug little harbor PORT LUDLOW, which we are going to do hydrography of. If all our work was like this, there would be no trouble in getting officers on the coast survey. It is the prettiest harbor on the coast, I think. The Captain, on his return from shore, rushed about the deck for a fishing party, which soon made up, and after treating (the Captain treated of course) to brandy and cigars, we were pulled to the fishing grounds where "twas only necessary to put over the line and haul in the cod," and after holding the line over about an hour very patiently we returned, not [having] had even a bite. Although, the Captain wishes to kill time and have the appearance of working, I'll make a bet he starts the boat out tomorrow morning at daylight and consequently do all there is to be done in two days and then remain idle.

Beat Kennard at chess again. Put a patch on my sleeve today of one of my English flannel shirts. I'm right sorry to see that they are nearly used up for fear it will be difficult to replace them. I'm reading a first rate book now "Potiphar Papers".²¹ I think they are hard to beat.

The 1856 Trigonometrical Survey Chart of Port Townsend, Washington, shows the coordinated efforts of a civilian topography corps led by George Davidson, while the naval hydrographic survey was conducted under Lt. Commander James Alden.

Note the engraver of the charts tended to be credited rather than draughtsman William B. McMurtrie, who drew many of the original West Coast hydrographic charts during this period

August 30th. Here we are still at PORT LUDLOW, have made a good survey of the harbor. The Captain says he shall leave these waters on or before the 10th, prox. I should not be sorry to remain up here one or two months longer—for then I might be out of debt.

Today I've been amusing myself by making a new wash stand, the old one having got split through the carelessness of my boy. Have made a good job of it—having the carpenter's bench all to myself he being at work making a foreyard on shore. This evening Mr. Hayward and lady paid visit to Mrs. Alden.

September 2nd. On the 31st ulto, we arrived here at PORT GAMBEL [Gamble] and commenced the survey of the harbor by sending me out to put up signals.²² Yesterday it commenced to rain and it has been unpleasant weather since. Today I painted my new wash stand, and it looks first rate. I amused myself by making a plan of my room. Beat Kennard two games of chess. Caught about eight small fish.

The Captain (I'm told) objects to card playing on Sunday, but I notice that he has no hesitancy in putting Farquhar [George Farquhar, civilian hydrogra-

pher] at work in computing and making a chart, even though there is an order from the office to the contrary. Took a bath in my room this evening and turned in early for we shall commence early tomorrow morning with the boats if the weather will permit.

September 4th. All hands were broke out this morning at six o'clock and four boats, including myself and a white handkerchief with the plain table, sent out to work. With the exception of about an hour yesterday, the boats were unable to work on account of the rain.

My room, I find, leaks quite badly, so much so that I have been obliged to take up the carpet and bore a hole in the deck and let the water run out. I'm afraid it will never be water proof. Today has been very pleasant, and at twelve o'clock we had every thing finished, and the steamer underway for PORT TOWNSEND where we are at present. Have run several lines of sounding from the ship today, and expect the work of the steamer tomorrow.

PORT GAMBLE has the finest saw mill in these waters. The mill is worked by a fine steam engine which drives the machinery of two plaining [sic] one shingle and lathe machine and also one saw. With the assistance of another small engine a frame of 14 saws is driven very rapidly. A French ship the *St. Joseph* was taking on lumber for AUSTRALIA. An American BRIG came in last night. We found it quite difficult to get milk and eggs, indeed we got none until we were heaving up the anchor.

Eldridge came down here with us; he brought on board SAN FRANCISCO papers up to August 4th giving an account of another attack upon Sabastol [Sebastopol] and of the loss of 5000 of the allies, also the death of Raglan.²³

All the letter expecters are disappointed at not finding the mail here. We were too late to send over the boat to WHIDBEY'S ISLAND this evening, so all hands are obliged to turn in with the hope of getting something tomorrow morning; that being the case, I will turn in and endeavor to convince myself that it is even possible for me to receive one also. There is one very important one that I must make notice of before turning in, and that is no less than this—I have actually and truly knocked off smoking certainly until I return to SAN FRANCISCO and I hope for good. Now isn't that worth getting this book out for?

September 5th. Today the ship has been running lines, while Basset and myself have been doing the same in the gig [small boat]. It seems to me that it is very ridiculous and it certainly is decidedly to do work in the manner we are now. In the gig, in particular, we had nothing to observe upon and no way of fixing our position in order to put down the soundings. Consequently it is all guess work. The ship picked us up at the WHIDBEY'S ISLAND opposite FOUL WEATHER BLUFF at 7 o'clock and then run into PORT LUDLOW where we are now anchored. Kennard thinks he and Cuyler had the harder time on the bridge. I very willfully offered him the boat tomorrow and will take his place myself at bell pulling, which he acceded to. I'll bet he will back out when the time comes. Captain Hunt and Eldridge came along with us, on their way to PORT GAMBLE.²⁴

September 6th. It is quite foggy this morning and not much work today. Eldridge and Captain Hunt took the WHITE HANDKERCHIEF this morning for PORT GAMBLE and got back about one o'clock. We have lighted the [boiler] fires (one o'clock) as there is a possibility of its clearing off. As I

“Shore line”
 refers to a map of the
 shoreline derived
 from either
 traverse work
 or plane table work.
 It was desirable
 to have the shore
 line placed on
 a hydrographic
 survey sheet
 prior to conducting
 the survey, both
 for aid in positioning
 the vessel and
 as a safety measure.

H. B. Company's Fort with
 Cape Flattery canoe in
 the foreground was sketched by J.
 M. Alden in Victoria, Vancouver
 Island, 1854.

Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of B.C.,
 Victoria, B.C.

expected Kennard backed out of the boat business when the time came to start. Bassett and myself must go again today.

Singularly to relate, Captain allowed Bassett to go by himself in the boat. At about 3 o'clock the fog lifted sufficiently to work and we started out, but was so late in the afternoon that we did not do much sounding. Run in to PORT TOWNSEND in the evening. Found the *Fauntleroy*, anchored here. Went on board and passed the evening. I had been there but a few moments when Cuyler came into the cabin sent by the Captain for **shore line**—it was not ready and Davidson told him (perhaps not in words) that when he was not more pleasantly occupied that he would give him such work as he had. He told him that it would be ready between 8 and 9 o'clock tomorrow morning. It is amusing to see how they treated Cuyler. Captain Alden would not notice him at all. Davidson told he had heard from Washington lately—no news.²⁵

September 7th. It was quite foggy till noon. I went on board the *Fauntleroy* to return some books and borrow others. The Captain was very angry because Davidson did not send the shore line. The Captain sent for me to inquire when it would probably be ready. I brought it on board with me and upon telling him that Davidson was waiting for him (the Captain) to send for it, wasn't he mad! He wanted to curse him. Swore that he would report him to the department for detaining the ship several hours. Davidson was wrong I think but they hate each other so that they strive to annoy each other as much as possible.

I borrowed *Cosmos* by Humbolt, from Davidson. It is said to be an extraordinary work, one which he was a life time preparing. Took the ships watch to pieces today, for the purpose of repairing it but that was too much for me. Put it together again, which troubled me a great deal, and laid it aside until we arrive at SAN FRANCISCO. After running a few lines of soundings we stopped half an hour or so at WHIDBEY'S ISLAND opposite Colonel Eby's house and sent on shore for some beef, butter and buttermilk. Had a grand blow out on buttermilk. Eat part of water mellon from the SANDWICH ISLANDS. Beat Kennard a game of chess. Arrived here at NEW DUNGENESS at about dark.



September 8th. Breakfast this morning at 7 o'clock. Bassett and myself putting up signals. After Bassett returned (12 o'clock) he and Cuyler took the two boats and commenced work. I did a little after my return but was very unsatisfactory as there was not sufficient signals to fix the ends of the lines.

As this is Saturday evening, the Captain treated [us] to brandy and punch and we drank [sic] to sweethearts and wives. Kennard tried to tease the doctor but it was no use. My desire was very great to smoke this evening. But I am determined to hold off. Certainly until our arrival in SAN FRANCISCO, although, I do not feel so well for it. Am troubled somewhat with dispepsia now.

September 9th. Took a set of sights today and found that the chronometer was eight minutes too fast. Tom Park went with me and took my gun along. Between us we bagged 139 birds. Tom picked up 36 after one shot. The most that I killed at a single shot 13. They were quite small, Sand Peeps I call them. They will make a nice pie for tomorrow. All this forenoon has been quite foggy. Bassett has just told me that we are to turn out at 5 o'clock in the morning and breakfast at six. In as much as that is the case, I'm off.

September 10. We were all turned out at half past 5 o'clock and took breakfast at six. Did not get to work till about seven however with three boats, we did a "right smart" of work. Which will require tomorrow to "fill in" of course. The Captain has told me that I am to go to PORT TOWNSEND tomorrow for the tide gauge and as I shall have to make an early start, I'm going to turn in.

September 11th. I just finished my dinner and a right good one it was too, a nice fat duck, two eggs, fresh milk with all the ecters [extras]. I was "roused out" at half past four this morning and after taking a little breakfast at five and a half o'clock was on my way to PORT TOWNSEND. I was about five hours going up; took down and packed the gauge, attended to considerable business, looked at several drunken Indians, and at half past two o'clock was on my way back. Met with no accident.

Discovered, when about half way down, that the tide-gauge man had left a musket and his discharge from the army both of which I put down as expended. Found that the chart of DUNGENESS was finished, as I expected, when we are off in the morning for CAPE FLATTERY.

September 12th. We made a good run for DUNGENESS to this place (NEAH BAY) of about six hours. Found Trowbridge and "Bull" about as we had left them. Captain Russell is over to NUTCA [Nootka] SOUND but expected every moment in the *Potter*. Before dark everything belonging to Trowbridge and the party including four curious esquimoux [carvings] (one of which is mine).

Fanny and Bull were on board. Trowbridge has collected quite a quantity of curiosities since he has been here, and made a beautiful little model of one of the Flattery canoes. Cuyler beat me two games of chess this evening, which, I am ashamed to say, annoyed me very much. I have been putting cross hairs into a spy glass today and am going to try to make a plain table, for if we go into GRAY'S HARBOR it will be useful.

Bassett and myself took sights today in order to rate the chronometer as

Johnson was right about Cosmos:

A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe

by Alexander von Humboldt, it was "an extraordinary work" and the culmination of a lifetime's research.

By 1855, only three of five volumes had been published and translated.

Cosmos is a compendium of mid-nineteenth century natural science while also being a history and manifesto for the search for the unity of all knowledge. The book promotes: "the history of the contemplation of nature, the progressive idea of the Cosmos, considered with reference to the historical and geographical facts that have led to the discovery of the connection of phenomena."

Humboldt (1769-1859) has a penguin named after him, as well as six plants, a bird, a skunk, a current, a river and a range, at least three counties, a lunar sea, an asteroid, and a town on the California coast. Humboldt's life as an explorer and thinker was an inspiration to young men like Philip Johnson and George Davidson - young men of the early nineteenth century who explored the frontier with science rather than wealth in mind.

the Captain intends to determine the position of that harbor. Mrs. Alden got herself into a fever heat today because Davidson would not tell the Captain about a bank supposed to be off here. It is very funny to see the pleasant feeling existing between the BRIG and this ship. Mrs. Alden is fearful. I expect she [will] explode one of these days on account of Davidson. Both parties are wrong I think. It doesn't trouble me however.

September 13th.

As the Captain was anxious to get Captain Russell on board to take the ship into SHOAL WATER BAY and GRAY'S HARBOR, he concluded the best way to pass the time would be to look for the fishing bank and at the same time we might fall in with the *Potter*.

Jackson one of the "Ty-yees" came on board for passage to SAN FRANCISCO, for the purpose of finding his cousin, (who is to be a Tyoyee or Chief) who went to CALIFORNIA some two or three months since in a schooner *San Diego* and was expected back in "one moon." At 8 o'clock we got underway and at about 1 o'clock fell in with the schooner *San Diego* with the lost boy on board. Jackson was very happy and said "Nika wake clatawa copa CALIFORNIA" (I shall not go to CALIFORNIA). The boy's father, who is a great chief here, will probably have a great rejoicing upon his return for he, the father, had heard that the "Boston Men" had put his son a young Tyee on an island without food and then left him to starve. The old chief said, "when I heard that the Boston People whom I have taken care of when they came to my land, and watched that my people did not harm or rob them, had done this to of the young chief my heart was sick and I hung down my head with shame indeed as I was ashamed of the Boston People."

His former confidence will be restored now I hope. We sent Jackson on board of the schooner to return with his cousin. In about an hour after, we fell in with the *Potter* and received on board Captain Russell. After spending the time until four

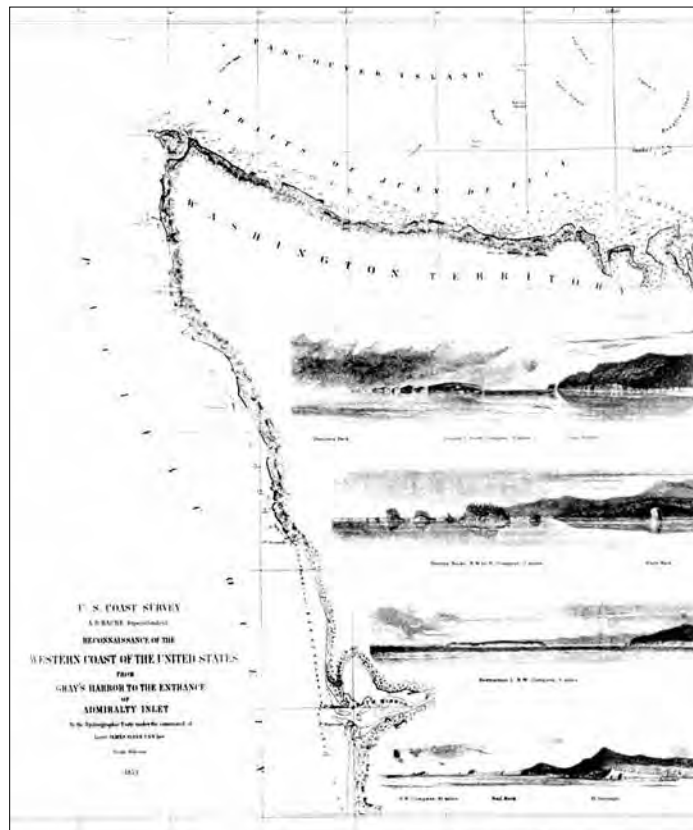
o'clock looking for the bank and catching several dog fish and two red fish, we shaped our course to GRAY'S HARBOR, where we expect to be about daylight tomorrow morning. As I have the mid watch, I'm going to bed and leave Trowbridge reading in my room. (Bassett relieved).

September 14th.

At 12 o'clock today we anchored in SHOAL WATER BAY and right glad are we that the ship is anchored, for it is very ugly weather outside, so much so that we could not go into GRAY'S HARBOR, as was the intention yesterday. Last night during the mid watch I was startled with

our close proximity to the shore which was supposed to have been ten miles off. The Captain, too, was decidedly frightened when I called him. It seems that the land has been in sight for two or three hours but was not reported to me owing to the stupidity of the quartermaster and the first thing I knew we were close aboard of it—got a cast in fourteen fathoms water. The Captain broke the quartermaster for his negligence. I don't know how the rest may feel about it, but as for myself, I had much rather be where I am than outside tonight for it is anything but a perfect night. My room is one of the most pleasant at times that one sees onboard ship. But it must be in the dry season to appreciate it, for this evening, and indeed since 9 o'clock last evening, the room has been all afloat. Now while I am writing I am sitting with my rubbers on.

I have just made a plan of a CAPE FLATTERY canoe and intend to make a miniature boat one of these days. Trowbridge has made quite a pretty one which convinces me that I can build one also. Speaking of boats reminds me that I'm going to turn in.



September 15th. Went "to town" today for the purpose of purchasing a pair of thick boots, but could find none that would fit me. There are perhaps a dozen houses, only two of which appeared to be occupied—one as a store, where nearly everything that is required in such a place, can be had—the other, a log hut, where the oyster men congregate. We have any quantity of oysters now, and cooked in every shape. It takes about two bushels for one meal at one mess. It has been raining so much that I've been obliged to put gratings in my room, to walk and stand upon, for I've been all afloat for two or three days. Played a rub [round of] chess with Trowbridge and got beat by allowing him to take a move over, and one that I had planned for him to make, which would have meritably given me the game.

Sunday September 16th. Took a bath in my room this morning, and I think was near freezing to death. The Captain went on shores to look for old signals, Kennard and myself took guns, and Trowbridge went as company. We did not see a bird to shoot at till we were nearly back to the ship, when flock after flock of Curlews passed and seemed to light directly where we had been. Captain has been giving us some few incidences connecting with the Exploring Expedition under Wilkes, who he hates most Heartily, and I think, with good reason. During the Expedition he was six months in an open boat. For weeks at a time, day and night. They must have had a hard time and got no credit for it.

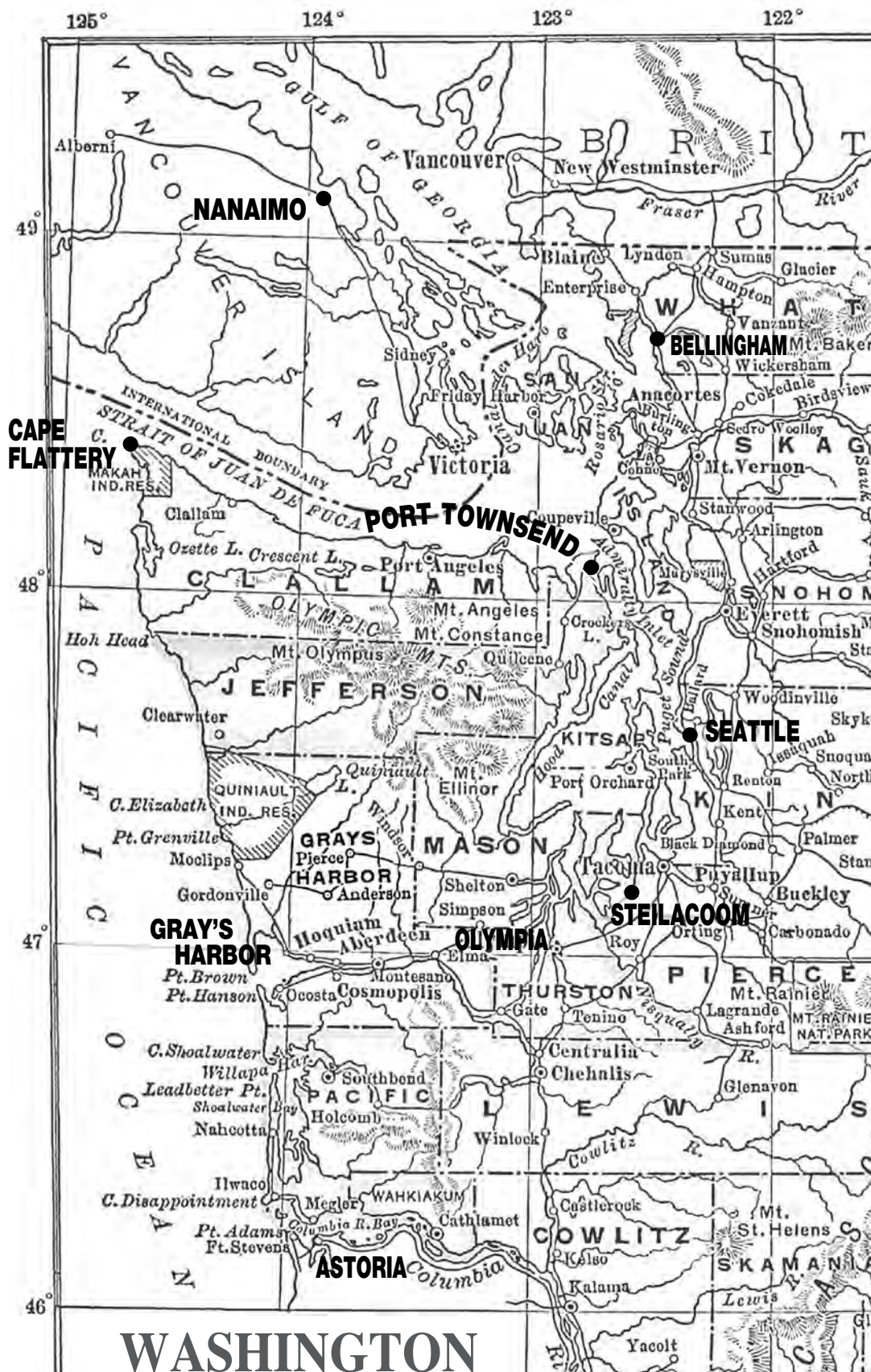
September 17th. On the last of the ebb (about 9 o'clock) we got underway from the SHOAL BAY, where our work is. This bay is certainly well named, for 'tis the largest sheet of shoal water that I've ever seen. The ship got around and off about half a dozen times, and finally found a hole large enough for the ship to swing in about 4 fathoms water. Russell and myself went off about six or seven miles to put up signals and had more trouble than I ever had before. While putting up the last one the tide fell so much that we had to wade out about half a mile over a muddy bottom that was full of holes about three feet deep. However at 9:30 o'clock we sat down to a first rate dinner of duck and oysters which we did justice to.

September 18th. Not much has been done today I've been putting up signals; one of which gave me a great deal of trouble on account of the difficulty in getting to the place. Yesterday I put up "BLUFF" and "TALL"—today- "COTTON" and "ISLAND NORTH." Cuyler put one ("SHOAL") up in the middle of the bay which will be very useful. The Captain and Kennard have done a little triangulating. Russell has gone to ASTORIA and I'm going to bed.

September 19th. I suggested to the Captain that I might go out with Trowbridge and Theodolite and triangulate, which he readily consented to, but when he saw the instrument, he gave another evidence of his character by taking it himself and giving me one that was not worth "Corn Shucks." But that's not all—he has weathered Trowbridge out of the instrument. It is blowing and raining very heavy this evening and I think will be a stormy night. Beat Trowbridge two games of chess this evening.

The four-year United States Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842 (also referred to as the Wilkes Expedition), was designed to be America's entry into the European tradition of Pacific exploration. Six ships under the command of Lt. Charles Wilkes carried promising young scientists, who sailed with the charge to map and study the Pacific. Passed Midshipman James Alden was among them.

In his Private Notes, Lt. Johnson refers to Lt. Alden's recounting of many of his harrowing experiences which took place during that time. While Alden survived the course of the expedition, its success was marred by the capricious and unstable Charles Wilkes. Dissention and dissatisfaction with Wilkes' leadership resulted in Wilkes' court-martial with his lieutenants offering evidence against him. While diplomatically the expedition faltered, the scientific progress made by Alden's extensive survey of the Pacific was lauded. As a result James Alden received his commission as Lieutenant in 1841.



September 20th. All hands have been at work today. Tried to send out four boats, but Trowbridge's men upon being told to go out, declined; whereupon three of them were immediately "paid off" and sent on shore.

Mrs. Alden is a little crazy I believe—indeed! All hands are of the same opinion. She has worked her self up so about Davidson that she can think or talk of nothing else but him—Poor thing!

Russell returned from BAKERS BAY—left there about noon and arrived about 7 o'clock this evening.

September 21st. All hands have been at work today. Shifted our anchor nearer the ISLAND. Trowbridge, Russell, and Dr. Cooper went out on a shooting expedition today. They took tent and fixings to spend the night.

I have been putting in shore line nearly all day.

September 22nd. All hands at work again today I started off at 8 o'clock to explore the "MAHOO" and "NEEMA" rivers. Returned to the ship quite tired and hungry at 7 o'clock this evening. Took no lunch with me because Tom Park took the one that I had in my boat and I was too much annoyed to get another. Trowbridge and party returned without killing anything. Cuyler and Kennard have been triangulating C on the E. side—Basset [sic] watering ship.²⁶ Shifted the

anchorage about two miles to the South and got aground for ten minutes or so. I'm going to take a bath and turn in.

Sunday September 23rd. This has been a very stormy and rainy day, commencing at about midnight and has continued all day. Several signals are blown down. I have plotted my yesterdays work and to my entire satisfaction. Whittled a little on my small canoe, but have the most difficult part to do in digging her out. Was somewhat disappointed in not going shooting today. Next Sunday I hope will be better weather.

September 24th. We found the ship aground this morning and so soon as the tide rose sufficiently got underway and shifted our berth more to the South. Trowbridge and Captain Russell have gone to ASTORIA for papers and news. Cuyler and Kennard are triangulating, I putting up signals today.

Had quite an unpleasant time with my boat this evening. Owing to the tide for being a little to fast for me, which give another example of the old adage, "Time and Tide waits for no man." The Major and Captain had a little "spat" this morning because Mr. Howell and Mr. Jordan and also some firemen were required for the boats.

September 25th. Bassett and myself were sent out sounding at 6 o'clock this morning and expected to return at 9 o'clock. Bassett got back at 10 and I returned at 11 o'clock. Found that he and the captain had left for the purpose of **chaining** access to the Peninsula, a job that I wished and the Captain last evening promised me. He had left word for me to go back and put up four signals. After the men had their dinner and breakfast in one, I started with Tom Park as a companion and two double barreled guns which we had no opportunity of using. With considerable trouble I returned to the ship at 6 o'clock, having put up two signals. Cuyler and Kennard are triangulating. Doctor and Trowbridge returned bringing a N.Y. *Tribune* of August 20. Speaks of the Yellow Fever in NORFOLK and tells us that the "Dillon Difficulty" is at least settled in a novel way.

We are to salute the first French men o' war which enters the bay of SAN FRANCISCO. That being the case I'm going to bed.

September 26th. Today we have shifted the anchorage for the last time I believe. Indeed, she can't go up any higher. Our "All Knowing" Captain got the steamer aground again this morning. The tide was flowing and she was soon afloat. I went ahead in a boat and sounded the channel and we were soon in 7 and 8 fathoms water. All the boats went out at nearly high water to put up signals. It's necessary to go at high water on account of extent of mud flats. Tom Park and myself were the only ones that did not get wet to the skin. We were wise enough to take Pea Jackets, which kept out the heavy rain. I skinned my shin quite badly in putting up a signal on the southern end of LONG ISLAND. My pup is crying very piteously. She has had a dose of Castor Oil, but without the desired effect. Laudnum [sic] does not relieve her either. Beat Trowbridge a game of chess this evening.

September 27th. At low water ran a few lines of soundings; but the rain commencing, were obliged to stop. The afternoon cleared up sufficiently to allow Bassett and myself to put up a few signals.

September 28th. This has been a stormy day, so much so that no work has been done. The surf on the weather beach has been roaring very heavily during the last 24 hours. I'm quite interested in a novel entitled "Frank Fairleigh"²⁷

*Chaining
refers to
measuring
distances with
a surveyor's
chain. It could
be used in the
context of
either measuring
a baseline for
a triangulation
network, or
running traverse
surveys (compass
and distance
surveys).*

and have four candles burning in my small room, which makes it quite comfortable. I stop reading to write up my todays [sic] remarks.

September 29th. This day too, has been too foggy and misty to do any work. A few hours this afternoon have been so that Kennard and Cuyler could occupy a few signals. Kennard seems to be very unhappy or angry because he roused all hands up by calling the lookout at 3 o'clock this morning, and I told him of it. He did not seem to think that it was of any matter if he did wake us up, but singular to say, no one would agree with him in his opinion.

Sunday, September 30th. Another months pay due me today. I am much disappointed that the weather is such that I can't go over to the weather beach today as was the intention of Trowbridge and myself. 'Tis a splendid beach of a quarter mile in width and 22 miles long. As it turned out I might have gone, for it cleared off very pleasant. Kennard, who is very anxious to get back to SAN FRANCISCO, that he may hear from that dear wife, passed the afternoon in triangulating. Russell returned on board from the NORTH BAY bringing papers, but no news. I'm too sleepy to read or write and will therefore turn in at 8 o'clock.

October 1st. All hands were roused out this morning at a very early hour and sent out to work. I spent the whole day in making a survey of BEAR RIVER, and putting in shore line. I had some of the hardest walking that I ever had to do, not that the ground was particular hard, for on the contrary, it was so soft that unless one was very particular, he was over his knees in mud. I had the pleasure of Mr. Jordon's company, who bored me most to death with an account of his family, from his great-grandmother to his 40th Virginia cousin. Kennard and Cuyler are triangulating. Bassett sounding.

October 2nd. I was called at half past five this morning to chain across to BAKERS BAY. At about half past six I started, taking three men (Harry, Frank and Anderson) two to chain and one to carry the eatables and Captain Russell to pilot. I met with no accident or incident worth mentioning, and arrived at Holman's house at about 6:30 o'clock. I have not worked out the traverse and can't say how far it is across. The ship shifted her anchorage down off the town.

October 3rd. This morning I turned out at half past 5 and did a little chaining before breakfast, after which, I chained across the trail to the weather beach, where I found Mr. Briscoe waiting with his team to take us into the trail opposite the ship. Went into a cave at the southern end of the beach. Had a right pleasant ride and got on board at about 4 o'clock. Trowbridge shot a Pelican coming off. All hands are buying oysters to take down to SAN FRANCISCO. I'm tired.

October 4th. Was sent out with Mr. Russell this morning to examine the channel of the Palux River, after which went on shore for his and Dr. Cooper's (passenger to SAN FRANCISCO) baggage. At 2:50, having finished everything got underway and ran out of the North Channel. Mrs. Alden was very

much frightened at the sea and shoal water on the bar—2 1/2 fathoms. Indeed she (the ship, not Mrs. Alden) did not have much to spare under her bottom. Kennard lost his hat overboard. Tom Park was quite seasick. Russell amused all hands in the Wardroom with his accordion during the evening.

Sunday October 7th. At about 2 o'clock we anchored near our old anchorage off California Street Wharf. Moored ship. Here we are probably for the winter.

October 9th. The *Fenimore Cooper* arrived with "Billy" Gibson and Ben Kennon on board.

October 12th. Am going down to join the *Ewing* tomorrow.

October 13th. The "*Vincennes*" and about November 12 the "*Ewing*" arrived at SAN FRANCISCO. I went down in the "*Republic*" to SANTA BARBARA and from there took a horse and rode to SAN BUENA VENTURA, where I found the schooner. My trunk did not arrive till late on the following day. On the morning after it did arrive the "*Ewing*" sailed for SAN PEDRO, where we remained several days. I went to LOS ANGELES and had a feast upon grapes and figs. The schooner afterwards went to CORTEZ BANK and found a rock with 6 fathoms water on it. We left a spar buoy on it.

William B. McMurtrie captured this easterly view from Clay Street hill, San Francisco.

Courtesy the California Historical Society





J. Madison Alden sketched the San Pedro Post in pencil, 1855.

*Courtesy The Bancroft Library,
University of California, Berkeley*

On our return to SANTA BARBARA, [artist James] Madison Alden gave me an invitation to take a ride with him to the hot sulphur springs, about six miles from the town. I accepted the invitation and took a bath in water at about 80°F.

November 18th. Lieutenant [Archibald] MacRae committed suicide by blowing his brains out in the cabin of the "*Ewing*."²⁸ He was buried in the cemetery on the 19th.

November 20th. Stone and myself took the schooner to MARE ISLAND. I went on to SACRAMENTO. Kennard went home on leave in the "*Sonora*."

December 1st. Corbin departed for duty on board this ship, much to the disgust of Bassett. Captain Alden transferred the services of the steamer and officers to Commander [William] Mervine for the purpose of going to PUGET SOUND to assist in fighting the Indians.²⁹

December 10th. We left for the SOUND, taking Lieutenant White (U.S.A.) and a Mr. Pemberton (the surveyor of the H. B. Company at Vancouver) as passengers, and leaving Cuyler (in command) and Stone also [James] Madison [Alden] and [William] McMurtrie attached to the *Ewing*. Mrs. Alden also remained behind.³⁰

December 15th. At daylight this morning discovered ourselves close under WHIDBEYS ISLAND. At 7:30 anchored at PORT TOWNSEND. Repaired the wheels, which had lost several buckets, and went on to SEATTLE. Mr. Eldridge came on board for a passage to that place. He has started the ball and I suppose we shall have passengers every time we get underway.

At SEATTLE we found the “*Jeff Davis*” at anchor and the “*Decatur*” hauled up alongside the wharf with her guns out and yards down repairing her hull. She had struck upon a ledge of rocks on the other side of the bay and made quite a hole in her – broke several (five I believe) ribs and a number of stringers, planks, etc.

December 17th. Went to STEILACOOM with Captain Sterett, son and Mr. Huger as passengers.³¹ Mr. Eldridge made the discovery that he had important business there—took him along also. Remained here about two hours and went to OLYMPIA.

December 20th. Left for STEILACOOM with acting Governor Mason and General Tilton as passengers.³² At this place (STEILACOOM) took in captain Keyes, Dr. Potts (U.S.A.) and Lieutenant Dallas (U.S.N.) as passengers for SEATTLE.

December 21st. Went to STEILACOOM. Snowing hard. Captain Keyes and Dr. Potts went back with us. Went to OLYMPIA. Governor Mason and Tilton returned with us.

December 23rd. Left for the INDIAN RESERVATIONS with four passengers.

December 24th. At STEILACOOM.

December 25th. At SEATTLE.

December 26th. At PORT TOWNSEND. Two passengers.

December 27th. At VICTORIA. Attended a party given by Governor Douglas. Bought several pair of gloves, two under flannels, a neckerchief, some soap, etc.

Watercolor depiction of
Bellingham Bay, Washington, by
William B. McMurtrie

*Courtesy The Bancroft Library, University of
California, Berkeley*



December 29th. At NANAIMO. Broke the ice for three quarters of a mile that we might haul in nearer the coal. Took a pilot at VICTORIA for the purpose of taking us through the narrows, but not knowing the passage himself I went ahead in a boat and found it, which was about 100 yards wide.

1856 **January 1st.**
Taking in coal at NANAIMO.

January 2nd. Finished taking in coal—115 1/2 tons.

January 3rd. At Bellingham Bay.

January 5th. At PORT TOWNSEND.

January 6th. At PORT LUDLOW and at SEATTLE.

January 6th. At STEILACOOM. Received the intelligence that “Lashie” and some of his “tilacums” (people) were across the bay among the friendly Indians. Sent

Captain Maloney over in the “*Beaver*” to watch them while we went back to SEATTLE to get the “DECATUR’s” boats to lie in ambush for them at the mouth of the PUYALUP RIVER [sic] in case they should escape. On our arrival there Captain Ganseworth [Gainesworth] peremptorily refused to let his boats go. Much to our mortification and as we were supposed, on our return to STEILACOOM we learned that the Indians had escaped in the manner and at the time expected.

January 7th. At the STEILACOOM and OLYMPIA RESERVATIONS and OLYMPIA.

January 8th. At STEILACOOM.

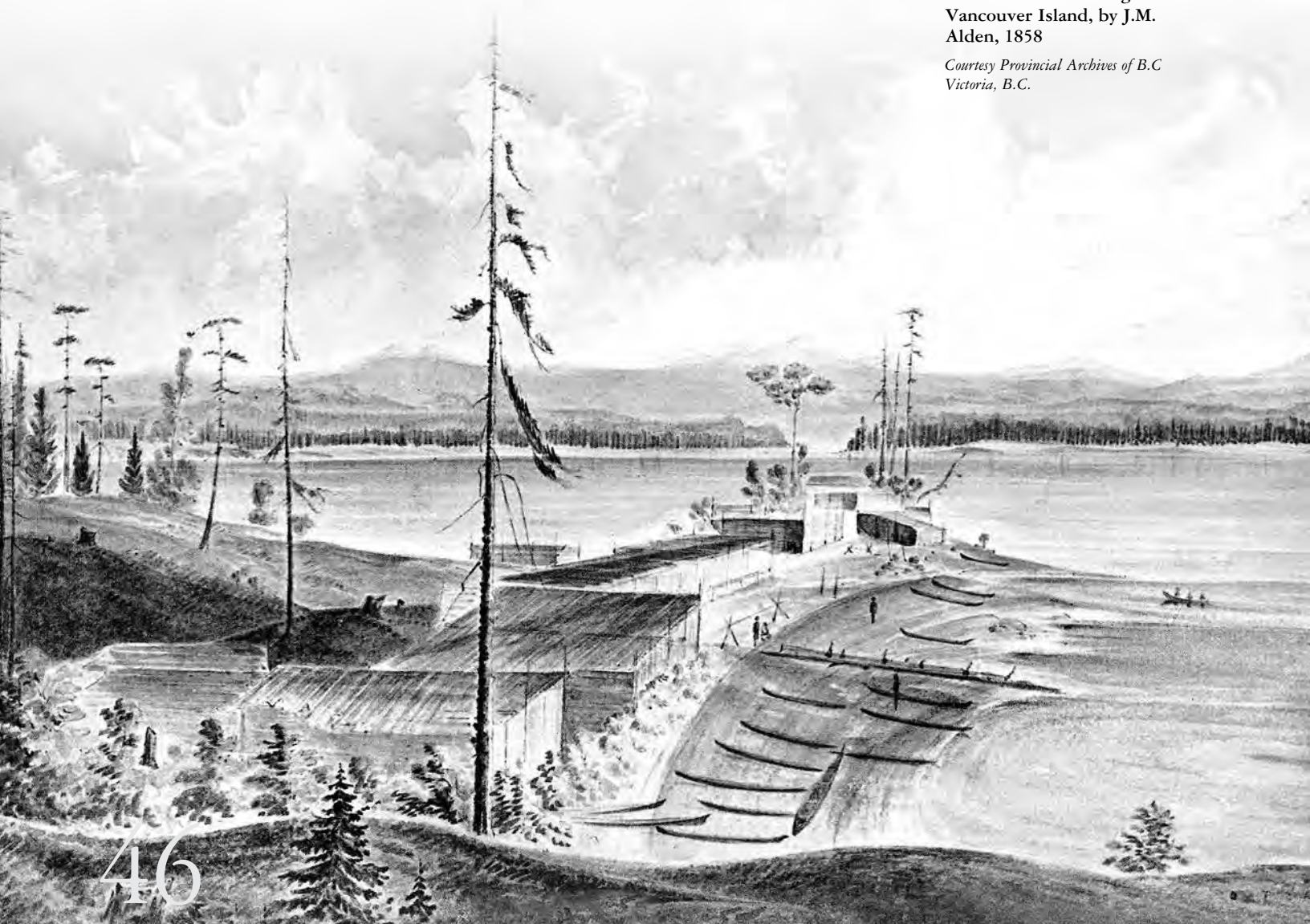
January 9th. At SEATTLE.

January 12th. At STEILACOOM and OLYMPIA.

January 14th. Left OLYMPIA with Acting Governor Mason and Colonel [Michael] Simmons (Indian Agent) as passengers to visit the Indian Reservations.³³ Stopped at STEILACOOM.

Nanaimo Indian Village
Vancouver Island, by J.M.
Alden, 1858

*Courtesy Provincial Archives of B.C
Victoria, B.C.*



January 15th. At SEATTLE and PORT MADISON.
 January 16th. HOLMS HARBOR.
 January 17th. PENNS COVE and PORT MADISON.
 January 18th. At SEATTLE and STEILACOOM.

January 19th. INDIAN RESERVATION and OLYMPIA.

January 23rd. STEILACOOM, With Governor Stevens and lady, Secretary Mason, Colonel Simmons, Judge Lauder and others as passengers. (Governor Simmons arrived at Olympia on the 19th inst.)³⁴

January 24th. At SEATTLE.

January 25th. At PORT HUDSON

January 25th. At HOLMES HARBOR, PENNS COVE and BELLINGHAM BAY. Passed through DECEPTION PASS and came so near thumping the ship that the Captain turned pale.

January 27th. At PORT TOWNSEND and PORT GAMBLE also at SEATTLE. On our return to this place we learned that it had been attacked on the day previous by the Indians and that two whites had been killed. Of the number of Indians no correct idea can be formed. The accounts vary from fifty to seven hundred and thirty (730). Whether any Indians were killed is not known I went on board the *Decatur* to report the steamer, and found her cabin and Wardroom crowded

Born in 1853, Emily Inez Denny drew and painted many scenes of Seattle's early history. Even though she was only three year's old in 1856, Denny would later paint the "Battle of Seattle," which took place on 26 January 1856, as Johnson notes in his log.

In this painting by Denny, Seattle's white settlers run to the safety of the city's blockhouse. The ship *Decatur* sits offshore in Elliot Bay, helping to protect the settlers from a threatened Indian attack. Coast Survey ships such as the *Decatur* and *Active* were often called in from their duties of mapping and charting the coast to help defend the local populace against Indian skirmishes.

Courtesy Museum of History and Industry,
 Seattle, Washington





Northwest coastal Indians deep-six a bottle used as a survey marker. The bottle was originally set by George Davidson's Coast surveyors in 1852. Small pox came after the surveyors left, consequently the Indians felt the bottle held evil spirits, so they dug it up and threw it overboard.

with women and children. The excitement was so intense that Captain Ganseworth [Gainesworth] would not consent to this ship leaving the *Decatur* alone. (Altho' she was repaired and anchored off the wharf, with her broad side sprung on the town.)

January 29th. Excitement subsiding a little. "The big Indian" [Gainesworth] has given his consent to allow us to take Governor Stevens and party home, but with orders to return immediately.

January 30th. Bound from OLYMPIA to SEATTLE via STEILACOOM. Off POINT ALKI met the "*Republic*" bound to STEILACOOM with U.S. troops. I went on board as pilot. Arrived there at about 5 PM. Landed the troops the next day and took in the ladies for SAN FRANCISCO. At about 11 o'clock PM we (the *Republic*) arrived at SEATTLE and left me, keeping on herself. I found that SEATTLE was not yet taken, but Bassett was on shore with a party from the ship and the field piece. Corbin was there the night previous. Tomorrow is my turn. The "*Decatur*" has five of her officers and 98 men with her Boat Horwitzer [sic] on shore every night.

February 1st. As I expected, and much to my disgust for being obliged to enter into such a farcical [proceeding], I went on shore with 12 men to assist the *Decatur's* 100 men together with about as many more citizen volunteers in defending the important city(!) of SEATTLE against the threatened attack of about 50 miserable Indians.

February 2nd. I have survived the night and SEATTLE "n'est pass [sic] pris".³⁵

Altho' some frightened man cried out Indians as I was coming on board and the *Decatur's* had returned to their ship. The consequence was that all hands returned to their posts with a rush and are still occupying them.

I slept on the floor of a miserable little 7 x 9 room with three others, and was much annoyed by the constant entrance and departure of a crowd of dirty and noisy "Pikes."³⁶

Captain Alden is very anxious to get away from this “Big Indian” (Captain Ganseworth) and is just selfish enough to sacrifice the comfort of all those under him if it will tend to augment his any. The only conditions upon which he can leave this place is to send on shore one of our carronades with men, officer, and ammunition. The first intimation we (Bassett and myself) had of the proceeding was that one of the guns was to go on shore and that one of the officers was to be left with it while the ship went to STEILACOOM ostensibly for troops but really (as it was quite certain that they could not be had) for Captain Alden’s gratification and pleasure.

Corbin, who volunteered to come up here, and thereby superseded Bassett as Executive Officer, said, very correctly, that none of us were anxious to go as there was no probability of an attack, and that probably none of us would volunteer to remain. I suggested to him the propriety of his volunteering inasmuch as he volunteered to make the trip and was anxious to distinguish himself. My remark touched the right cord [sic] and he immediately offered his services. But to my surprise I found that another officer was obliged to remain also and of course, I being the youngest, was the chosen one. I immediately went on shore and pitched a tent determined to make myself as comfortable as possible, as it was uncertain how long I should be obliged to remain.

My tent was very comfortable with a little stove in it, and I took the precaution to take a box well stowed with little niceties for the inner man. I have made a mistake. The first night on shore was with the field piece, and my bed with George Morris, the next night was with the ship’s gun (Corbin, of course taking the more pleasant station) and in another part of the town. My new quarters were very pleasant. All hands laughed at me when they saw me at work in the rain pitching the tent and wondering if I expected to live in such a damp place. But when they saw the nice clean floor down with piece of canvas for a carpet, and a snug little stove with a good fire in it together with the table, chair, bed, toilet stand, etc., the laugh was on the other side.

When the ship returned, which she did after a days absence, the “*Decatur*” brought the captain up to see my quarters—when he remarked after admiring my ingenuity that Johnson would always “light on his feet.” But my dreams did not last long, for the gun was sent back to the ship the next day. Captain Ganseworth came to me and desired me to let the tent and fixtures remain for his officers. But I recollected that our field piece was still on shore and that I should have to take my turn at that, so I respectfully declined and told him that I intended to move it to the field piece. But he got another for me and I took the fixtures such as stove, etc. and pitched it alongside of our piece. As only one officer is required on shore at a time it makes it very convenient for us. Tonight I’m to go on shore again for twenty-four hours.

February 6th. (Wednesday) I have just returned from the shore, where I have passed the last twenty-four hours in assisting to defend the important town of SEATTLE. The “*Decatur*” have been at work for several days in putting up breast works, leveling the streets, or rather street, and building block houses. Everybody travels about with some arms strapped to their bodies. Some have revolvers cutlasses and rifles. George Morris is a perfect brigand in appearance I was amused to see one of the men go for a bucket of water and another one to accompany him for the purpose of protection.

The only ones who are doing anything are the “*Decaturs*.” The citizens take no part in the defenses. We are all anxious for the arrival of the “*Massachusetts*” hoping that we may start the next day for SAN FRANCISCO via NANAIMO for coal.

February 7th. Scrubbed paint work today, and it was high time this evening it is raining and the Big Indian expects an attack upon the town and shipping. But he and the “*Decaturs*” are the only ones who expect it. He has sent an order on board for us to be ready to get up steam at any moment, and stand by to take any position that is necessary. Bassett has the watch on shore tonight. I’ve just been reading the accounts of the excitement in New York caused by the detention of the Nicaragua steamer “*Northern Light*,” the non-reception of Parker H. French as minister from that Republic, the discovery of the remains of Sir John Franklin, etc. tonight I shall commence a letter to DM.³⁷

February 11th. Bassett brought off the new[s] this morning that Pat Kanainain [sic] had sent in the heads of two hostile Indians, and that he had fifteen prisoners. The report was also brought in that he was to have had a fight last night we have somewhat turned the laugh upon the *Decaturs* and their man Curley. Pat went out with 55 men to fight their (the *Decaturs*) 700 Indians they had no confidence in Pat, nor did they know anything about his having gone out. Captain Gansevoort has given the order for all hands to come on board ship on account of the men getting drunk. If the inhabitants insist upon selling the liquor he says they may take care of their own property. Many of the best citizens are leaving the place too. The steamer “*Traveller*” arrived yesterday from OLYMPIA. She brought the mail, but nothing for this ship.

The STEILACOOM paper pitches into the *Decatur*, and us too, for it says we were here at the fight, for conducting the fight in such a manner on the 26th *ultro*. It says it was only surpassed by allowing Lashie and his party to escape from the reservation. I notice that no one feels very bad because was have to go on shore no more.

Latest Bulletin – Mr. Collins has been on board with the heads of the two Indians, and reports that Pat Kanainan surrounded a camp in which he found fifteen of his own men and three “Klicatacs.”³⁸ The latter he took prisoners, two of whom he hung and cut their heads off, the other begged for his life and was let off on condition that he would act as a guide to the camp of the other hostile Indians. The fifteen of his own men joined his company.

The report has just arrived that seven canoes had landed on this side of the Lake near SEATTLE and are going to make an attack upon the town tonight. ‘Tis my turn on shore, but yet I have no doubt but I shall sleep as comfortably in my tent as usual. Captain Gansevoort has sent the order on board for all the men that can be spared from the ship to be sent on shore tonight. Great excitement prevails among the “*Decaturs*.” So the report goes.

February 12th. Have just returned from the shore for dinner. Last evening a report came in that hostile indians has been seen in numbers near the town, and it was expected that they would make an attack. So Corbin and myself were sent on shore with an addition of fourteen men, making twenty-three in all. However, no Indians came nor are there any signs of them. I was obliged to move my tent again today in order to allow the “*Decaturs*” to burn a stump near it. I sincerely hope that the next time it is moved, it will be for full due. Farquhar suggested that this report of the attack was got up by some

of the townspeople in order to detain the men on shore for sometime longer.

At my tent, February 15th.

A request came from the Governor, at OLYMPIA, by Judge Lauder last evening at about 9 o'clock, that Captain Alden would go to PORT TOWNSEND for volunteers and take them to the mouth of the Puyalup [sic] River as a reserve for Pat Kainan to fall back upon.

The news brought is that Swan had returned from his interview with "LASHIE," and that he, Lashie, is anxious for peace—"Kitsap" does not care whether he has peace or not.³⁹ "Lashie" was not at the attack upon SEATTLE. "Kitsap" and "Nelson" were and the latter was killed. All the Indians are "down on" "Pat" for taking the field and fears are entertained that he may be taken. Carl Cassey is to take "the field" in a week or two. Gov. Stevens will take the field as soon as he can. He has but about 150 volunteers as yet. Captain Malooney is in the field with one company of Shanghais and one (or two) company of infantry. No other news of importance.

Captain Alden came on shore at about half past ten and after having a talk with the "Big Indian" it was arranged that twelve men, the field piece (the Musachu slut) and myself were to remain; the others to go on board the steamer to start at daylight for PORT TOWNSEND; so here I am.

This evening Captain Gansevoort has taken all of his forces, except the marines, Drake and Philips, with the horwitzer [sic] and field piece on board and ordered me to go. But by request he has permitted me to remain with my men, but has taken the gun.

...February 15th

Yesterday the Captain called me into the cabin and called my attention to one of my remarks on the log book, which had been written several weeks before. This is it, "The milk for the coast survey was stopped by order of Captain Alden." He says "do you think that is a proper remark to put into the log?" I replied, "I do or I should not have written it." "You do?" "Certainly sir," I replied.

"You know that was a mistake, and that I explained it a short time after, when it was spoken of, and it was only to avoid sending a long distance on a rainy morning."

I acknowledged that "I had done wrong in not making the connection at the time and would do so at once."

He said "You know that we are paying our own mess bill now?" "That," I replied "was the 'understanding' when we left SAN FRANCISCO."

As the opportunity was a good one, I again gave him my views of the manner in which he interfered with the mess and assumed the control without consulting at all the wishes of the other members, all of whom were on an equality with him there.

He said that he had requested me to take the catership some time ago and that he would allow me a certain amount according to my suggestion.

I told him that he was mistaken about the "allowance"—that there was nothing said of that, but that I supposed he wished me to merely step into Tompson's shoes, which I had no idea of doing. He said that it was very singular that I, the youngest member in the mess and the last one to join it, should attempt to make suggestions and alterations in a mess that had gone on for years, and no one finding fault.

I told him that "he was wrong—that others did find fault and expressed them disapprobatingly at the time the subject was brought up." He replied, "no one else joined up, and indeed others expressed their surprise, to me, that you, the youngest, should thus express yourself." "Indeed I'm positive that Mr. Cuyler did confide with me

to express himself at the time." He said that he should suggest me as Caterer in the morning—which he did, so I believe I'm now Caterer of the *Active's* mess.

Today he surprised us by saying that he should be unable to pay the mess bill out of the coast survey funds as we had done nothing to show for it. His remark called forth remarks and suggestions from Bassett, Doctor and myself. He said that he had been unable to get away from the *Decatur* for even a day to survey

a rock on the other side of the bay. We recommended that he should stop after getting permission to return to SAN FRANCISCO. What will be the result remains to be seen.

Bassett told him that he should not pay it.

The town looks deserted. Nearly all of the women have gone on board and everybody else are [sic] in the block houses. It was with difficulty that I could prevail upon him to allow me to sleep in my tent. "The men," he said "must sleep in the block house." It's very funny! Last night there were about fifty (33 without the officers of the watch) sentries on guard, and tonight, there are but three sentries and no howitzer or field piece.

The "Big Indian," I consider to be a d—d fool, and the citizens a set of good-for-nothing and cowardly rascals. Phelps is with me to night. I have no fears that the indians will take the town tonight. There are three sentries here in the tent talking so my remarks must be somewhat unintelligible. The only ones (strangers, not remarks) who are good for anything are strangers and owning no property here. But more tomorrow.

February 17th. I am thankful that at last I have a few moments to myself. Certainly this must be very inviting or fascinating quarters for it seems that I'm never to be alone, some one is here all the time. Mr. Pashota (I don't know how he spells his name, but that's the way 'tis pronounced) a young man from NEW YORK, who came up here for his health, and has been serving as 1st Lieut. of the volunteers, but left in disgust, spends nearly all of his time in my tent.⁴⁰ He is pleasant and seems to be a very correct man, but here are times when any ones company is not preferable to his room. Here he is again.

Yesterday I spent the day in burning an old stump near the block house.

A little excitement was got up last evening at about 10 1/2 o'clock, caused by Phelps hearing a man whooping [in] the woods and hailing Drake (who has charge of the "Northern end" of the defenses.) I was fast asleep at the time, but had my boots and arms on in a very short time (for those are the only things I take off when I go to sleep) and was on hand for the indians. After keeping a "classe naninitche" for an hour or so, and seeing or hearing nothing more, we, Phelps and myself, turned in and were not disturbed again.⁴¹

Indeed I wish the *Active* would return, for the living will not compare favorably with hers. Probably she will not return till tomorrow evening, if then.

If old Gansevoort would let me have the field piece or boat howitzer on shore, I should feel very much more contented. His officers attempt to defend him by saying that he expects an attack from the northern indians and

wishes the piece and howitzer to defend himself. I actually believe that nothing but fear actuates him in all of his actions. It's no use—there is too much talking for me to write.

February 18th. It seems strange, but nevertheless 'tis true, I am again on board ship, and am actually, now, while writing this, in my bed with nothing but an undershirt on, and have every prospect of sleeping comfortably till morning, for I have just had a wash from head to foot and do really feel comfortable. But lest I should not get my proper amount of rest, am going to sleep ('tis after 11 o'clock) and write my remarks in the morning.

February 19th. Much to my surprise and disgust I was roused out this morning to keep the morning watch. I had hoped to have a quiet night's rest. We left SEATTLE at half past 5 this morning for PORT TOWNSEND. Captain Gansevoort called at my tent last evening at about 10 o'clock and told me to get ready with my men to go on board, and order which I readily obeyed.

If ever a disgusted party was seen, it is this on board the *Active*. It does seem that the "Big Indian" is always drunk or has drank so much as to have lost all common sense.

When the report came out that the northern indians were in the Sound, Geo. Morris asked to take the launch with the gun and go in search of them. Of course, Captain Gansevoort refused the request and ordered both the howitzer [sic] and field piece to be hoisted in board lest the indians should come and cut out the lighters which they were in, and also gave as an excuse that he wanted them in board to defend the ship. He even gave an order to Phelps to have a rat-tail file handy to spike the guns in case he was obliged to retreat from the block house.

Oh! He's a precious d—d fool! He sent on board at about 11 1/2 o'clock for two or three belts which some of the officers, myself among the number, had borrowed to carry our pistols on. I only regret that I ever asked him for anything. We are now at PORT GAMBLE, soon to leave for PORT LUDLOW for wood, after which we are to look for the northern indians supposed to be in the SOUND. That accounts for me being on board with the men.

I do wish that we could find them. We received the President's message and Secretary's report yesterday.

February 21st. BELLINGHAM BAY – arrived here yesterday at 2 o'clock, via PORT GAMBLE, PORT

LUDLOW and PORT TOWNSEND. At the latter place we heard that "Pat Kainan" had surrounded a camp, killed 30 and brought in the heads of eight. The chief of the party barely made his escape by leaving his musket and blanket. Pat lost but one man and returned to the Fort on SNOHOMISH RIVER. We are taking in about 50 tons of coal preparatory to going to VICTORIA (what for?).

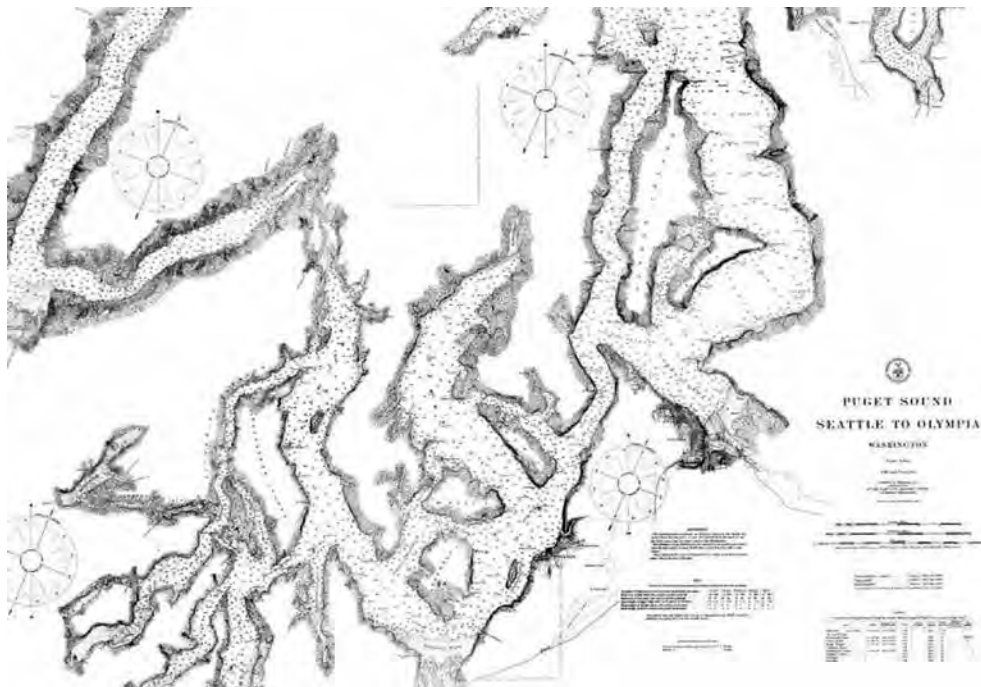
February 22nd. Washington's birthday, and we are bound to VICTORIA. Left BELLINGHAM BAY this morning at about 6 o'clock. My morning watch. Shot with rifles at a target yesterday. I beat, as I did also at PORT LUDLOW.

February 23rd. We left VICTORIA this morning at 8 1/2 o'clock. I bought a pair of shoes, eight tooth brushes and boxes of odonto. Tried my hand with the rifle at 100 yards with Mr. McKay, who had a minie rifle. We each of us put one ball in the paper. We afterwards tried mine at 50 yards and he only hit the target once.

On our way from VICTORIA, received letters and papers from the BRIG, "Jos. Emery." Got up quite an excitement off DUNGENESS. Saw a canoe with Indians (women and children included) in it, under sail and pulling towards VICTORIA. Steered for her and finding that she could not go as fast as this ship, one of the Indians was discovered putting his ammunition and hauling off the covers of the muskets; whereupon our men got out their muskets and the officers their rifles and pistols. After coming up with the canoe and endeavoring to get

In this watercolor by James Madison Alden, surveyors rest along the banks of the Fraser River, British Columbia.





the Indians on board (one of whom was standing up with his musket in his hands and a spare one along side of him) by coaxing and threatening if they did not come that we would shoot them, they started off as fast as they could paddle, while we were lying still and before the ship could get headway, were quite a distance away. The captain gave Bassett the order to run them down, but he, not understanding the order, run the ship close along side of them. After about half hours coaxing and threatening we succeeded in inducing them to come on board. But for the women and children, Captain

would not have exercised so much patience. I was glad that we did not kill them, but must say that I did wish to drop the man that was standing up with the gun. We stopped in at DUNGENESS to see "Lord Jim" and endeavor to get some information about them. His actions and answers were very suspicious, so we brought the whole party here, at PORT TOWNSEND.

Here we learned that the man (with the musket) was a "King George Indian" and was bound to VICTORIA.⁴² Not feeling satisfied with the excuse (fear), for getting his musket out, and also taking into account the fact that all the interpreters did not give the same version, concluded to take him and one other to SEATTLE or OLYMPIA for further examination and the rest we sent on shore.

February 24th. Left PORT TOWNSEND this morning, arrived at SEATTLE, where we took in Purser Jones and Judge Lander for OLYMPIA. Stop tonight at STEILACOOM. Sent to the fort the two indians.

February 25th. Went to OLYMPIA.

February 26th. Left OLYMPIA this morning for SEATTLE, but were obliged to anchor for a few hours at STEILACOOM on account of the fog, which was too thick to run.

For the last two days I have been amusing myself by fitting a gun stock to one of Colt's Revolvers. On our arrival here (SEATTLE) we were all delighted to find the *Massachusetts* at anchor. I received letters from Molly, Sarah, and Hattie, also from Wells who asks me about the \$35.00 for the gun and which I supposed had been paid by father a long time since.⁴³

On my arrival in SAN FRANCISCO it shall be attended to. Barry and Patten sent a Demijohn of Cock-tails to the *Massachusetts*. There is a probability now of our returning soon. Before we anchored the *Massachusetts* sent a boat to us to tell us to keep up steam, as we were to return to STEILACOOM immediately. That does not look like going home. She sent on board a quantity of munitions of war, and at 4 o'clock this ship was off again and at 1 o'clock that

night we had delivered the munitions and were at anchor at SEATTLE.

February 27th. Went to PORT TOWNSEND this evening for the purpose of taking volunteers to the mouth of SNOHOMISH. This does not look like leaving the sound.

February 28th. Returned to SEATTLE today, the volunteers not being ready. My new arrangement for the pistol works to a charm.

February 29th. A survey has been order[ed] upon the *Decatur* today to see if she is able to go to SAN FRANCISCO, and also upon this ship! to see if she has the capacity for fuel sufficient to convoy her down. We shall probably leave her in less than six months. The surveyors are to come on board soon and then I hope to hear something definite.

March 2nd, Last evening Dallas, Mr. Fendel (Capt. Swatmont's clk) [Capt. Swatwout, clerk] and Fairfax were on board.⁴⁴ Corbin entertained us with anecdotes and reminiscences of the early cruising days of himself and Fairfax. Dallas disgusted the party generally with his affection, silly and idi-otical [sic] laughing and pawing of Lieutenant Tom Corbin. After they left at about 11 o'clock, we had a grand explanation of clearing up of fog and mist that had hung over us, particularly Corbin, Bassett, and myself, during the whole of this short cruise. Naturally Bassett was sore at Corbin coming on board in the first place, and that sore has been very tender and easily inflamed all the time since leaving SAN FRANCISCO.

Corbin has of course seen it all, and felt that he was the cause, but at the same time suspected that there was some part enacted in the "Green Room" that he was not cognizant of and was anxious to understand the whole plot and to know when his part came on. The conversation created considerable excitement on the part both of Corbin and Bassett, but was finally cleared candidly and satisfactorily explained. So at about 3 o'clock this morning we all took a drink to a better understanding in future and with the exception of Corbin and myself turned in.

At about half past 4 we took to the bed, he in the mean time having given me a full account of his trip out here and escorting Mrs. McKay.

Breakfasted on board at about 11 o'clock. Took a walk on shore a la citoyen [civilian dress], with a tall hat on, which created some surprise among those on shore. Heard that we were to leave on the return of the *Massachusetts* which is to go on a cruise about the Sound for five days, and also that we were not to take the *Decatur's* guns. The report is, too, that we are to return in May to convoy the *Decatur* down.

There is a report from Dr. Williams that the town is to be attacked by a large force within three days. Captain Swatout [sic] sent on board for an officer and all the men that could be spared. As he directed that an officer junior to Young should be sent, I had to go.

March 3rd. At about 11 o'clock I found a very small room in the Elliot Hotel through which the pipe of the stove passed, making an excellent room for smoking hams. Of course it was anything but comfortable. Mr. Tendel (Capt's clerk of the "Mass") shared the room with me from 4 o'clock. Up to that hour he had been keeping post with a sentry, for which piece of generosity on his part, he took a violent cold and was layed up for some days after.

Today I have changed my quarters to Mrs. Plummer's kitchen and very comfortably situated. However my disgust at the whole arrangement does not abate in the least. The order has come out that the officers shall keep watch at night, my turn came on from 12 to 2 and went to bed again and slept comfortably for the two hours when I was relieved.

Smith came down from OLYMPIA today for ammunition for the Volunteers—was unable to raise more than 15 lbs. which the “*Active*” gave him. Am amusing myself with a book entitled “Wild Oats.”⁴⁵

March 4th. Another change has been made today. The *Massachusetts* has gone to OLYMPIA and is to visit other ports on these waters, and upon her return ‘tis said we are to go down to San Frisco. I am ordered to take the gun of the *Massachusetts* with my men to the middle gate.

Must of course change my quarters, the idea of which I dislike much, for I’m very comfortably situated now. However, I can build a splendid tent. Our gun from the ship has been ordered on shore, and Young is to have charge of it at the South end. A singular arrangement it seems to me. But as ‘tis to last but a few days, I shall say nothing about it, for I’m so much pleased at the prospect of soon leaving “SEATTLEPOL,” that I will submit to any arrangement without a murmur. Another singular arrangement is that in the division of my men by Captain Swatout—12 are to remain with Young, he has also 20 of his own, and the remaining 10 are to be with me at the “*Massachusetts*” gun. Lieutenant Drake of the “*Decatur*” is the commanding officer on shore—we give the title of General. The “*Active*” is to go across the bay at daylight to make a survey of the point where the “*Decatur*” struck. I have put a splendid tent, the largest of any, but shall not occupy it unless ordered.

March 5th. The ship left this morning, at daylight, taking all but 10 men. Captain Gansevoort has directed another change today. I am to have charge of our own gun and at its original place. This arrangement I am much pleased with, for it gives me charge of the South end, and he has also sent George Morris and his division to me. Some little excitement this evening caused by firing at a light seen or imagined in the woods. I looked out of the door, but seeing nothing—there goes another musket—shall not give myself any uneasiness. The “*Traveller*” arrived this evening bringing the news that there had been a fight on the White River between the Shanghais and Indians. We lost one man and several wounded. Enemy loss unknown. The Shanghais routed the Indians three times and finally dispersed them—another light tonight.

March 6th. The “*Active*” returned this evening and six men to my command. Have orders to extend the breastworks to low water mark. Have put a stock to one of Colt’s pistols so as to use it to shoot from the shoulder. The officer’s here urge me to send a drawing of it to Colt. Don’t think I will but Captain Gansevoort thinks I ought to take measures to benefit myself by it. Breakfasted and dined at Madam Conklin’s. Mrs. Plummer comes over twice a day to feed the chickens and I take pleasure in assisting the little woman. Phelps comes in every night to take some of my coffee which I always have on my stove.

March 8th. Was much amused at the anxiety of an old hen about her eggs while taking her meals. Heard that the “*John Hancock*” was on shore at Sandy Point. Suspect ‘tis the “*Massachusetts*.” The “*Active*” has gone to her assistance.

Left me in charge of eight men with George Morris and several of the “*Decatur*’s” men.

March 9th. As I expected, twas the “*Massachusetts*” that was aground. She came in this morning uninjured. The “*Active*” has gone to OLYMPIA to return this evening. I was roused out at 11 o’clock and was kept on the wharf until 5 o’clock in the morning getting off wood. At 3 1/2 started for Nanaimo, not regretting being kept up all night if by so doing we could get clear of SEATTLE. Gansevoort urged Capt. Alden to order me to remain. But ‘twas of no avail.

March 10th. Arrived at Nanaimo at 10 1/2 o’clock p.m.

March 11th. Coaling ship.

March 12th. Left Nanaimo – called at 2 o’clock to attend to the case of a clootchman [?], per orders of the captain.

March 13th. Arrived at Neah Bay at 9 o’clock. 11 o’clock great excitement – arrival of “*Columbia*.” Loose [sic] a box of cigars to Capt. A. Go Back for Gen. Wool.

March 15th. At STEILACOOM and SEATTLE. Salute to Wool.

March 19th. Arrived at SAN FRANCISCO at 10 p.m.

April 1st. Just returned from SACRAMENTO. A week’s trip—a pleasant time.

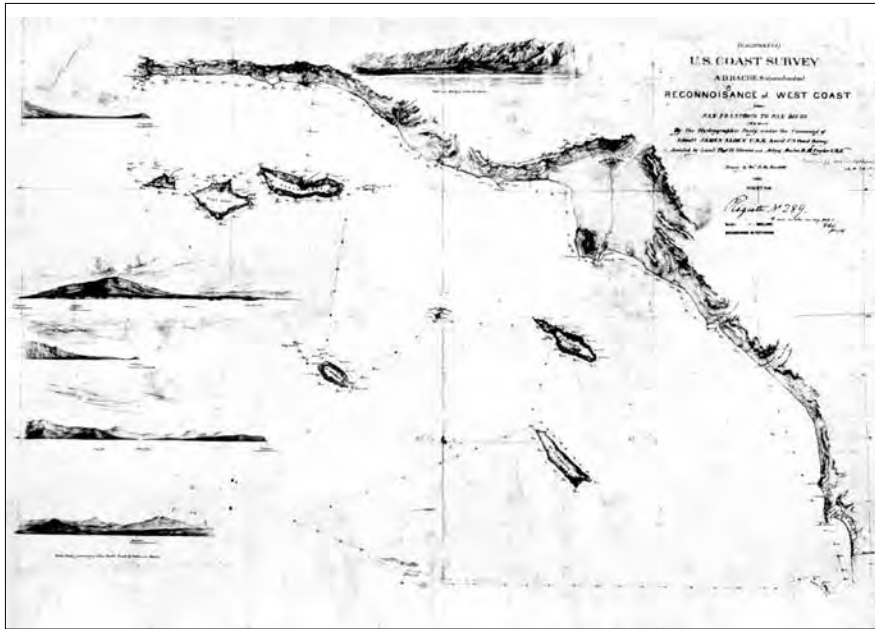
April 7th. The ship went to MARE ISLAND. Corbin left and took command of the “*Warren*.”

May 12th. The ship left the Navy Yard (with Mr. Turner, wife and daughter, and returned to SAN FRANCISCO. I went to BENECIA to get arms from the Army to replace those turned over to the “*Massachusetts*.” I succeeded in getting “Hall’s Carbines” a poor substitute. During our stay at MARE ISLAND the ship was thoroughly overhauled and painted. “Sickle’s Cut-offs” were put on the engines. Made a survey of the straits. I run a line of soundings through it. Hard work, and returned via SAN PABLO BAY. Miss Reyton was up there nearly all

Below: William McMurtrie captured this serene setting of a small boat in the waters off of Sausalito, San Francisco, with Mt. Tamalpais in the background. J. Madison Alden sketched a similar scene but from a closer perspective, adding significant detail to the landscape.

*Courtesy Bancroft Library,
University of California, Berkeley*





This 1851 Coast Survey chart: *Reconnaissance of West Coast, San Francisco to San Diego*, by the Hydrographic party under the command of Lient. James Alden, U.S.N, Assistant to the Coast Survey, Assisted by Lient. Th. H. Stevens and Acting Master R. M. Cuyler, U.S.N. is drawn by draughtsman William B. McMurtrie.

the time and it was “touch and go” between Rogers and Cuyler to see which should out-do the other in attention to her. I amused myself in beating Captain Farragut at Chess frequently. He beat me one game. The Cabin was fitted up with much taste. My room was freshly painted and a water tank put in which added much to its convenience.

May 22nd. The “*John Adams*” came in. When we went to the ISLAND Downes too the place of Tom Parke. Started for the South but returned on account of the weather. James King of Wm. was shot by James P. Cassey. Cassey and Cora (who killed Richardson) were taken from the jail by the Vigilance Committee, numbering 2,600.⁴⁶

May 23rd Cassey and Cora were executed by the Vigilance Committee. Mr. King was buried. The *Golden Age* arrived. Accident on the Isthmus, cars run off the track. 200 killed and wounded.

May 24th. Cora was buried

May 25th. Cassey was buried

May 26th. Took the “*Ewing*” in tow and went to sea. Cast her off on the bar. Anchored at MONTEREY at 5 p.m. While in San Francisco spent much time and money foolishly. At MONTEREY took a ride to STILL WATER BAY. Captain and Mrs. Alden, Dr. Ord and sister went into carriage.

May 27th. At 5 p.m. left MONTEREY.

May 28th. At 5 p.m. anchored at SANTA BARBARA.

May 29th. At 4:40 a.m. left port. At 3 p.m. anchored at SAN PEDRO.

May 30th. “*Ewing*” came in.

May 31st. “*Ewing*” left for the shoal.

June 1st. Ship left SAN PEDRO for the shoal

June 2nd. Anchored at the Northwest end of CLEMENTE, swell too heavy to run. At 11:40 tried it again but too much swell. Run into the anchorage at Southeast end of CLEMENTE.

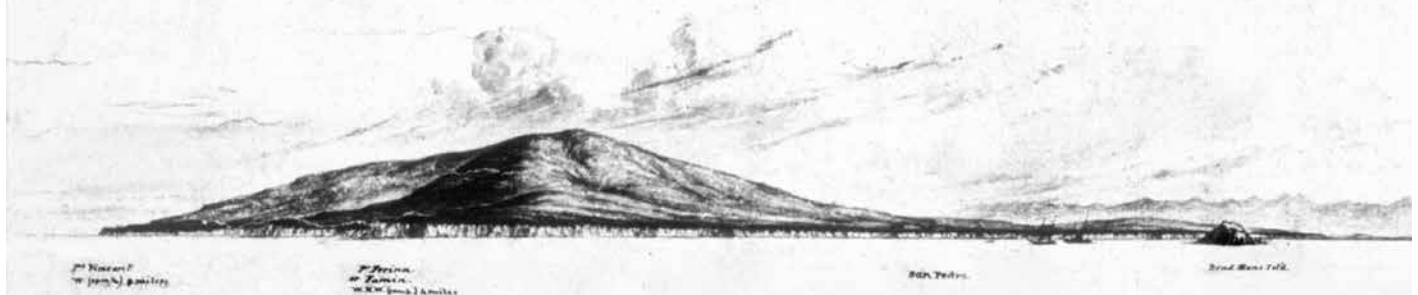
June 3rd. At mid-night started for the shoal. Found the “*Ewing*” at daylight. Swell too heavy to work. Both of us came into Southeast CLEMENTE.

June 4th. *Sierra Nevada* passed to the North.

June 8th. Turned out at 6 this morning and went out and finished the surveying. Measured the height of the hills and got the Lat. Marked my clothes. Dressed in white dined with Cuyler (also Captain and Mrs. Alden), played with and beat Cuyler two games of chess. Talked of Corbin, Dr. Mitchell and Suddards. Resolved to write Corbin, Tom Park, Stone and Suddards. Returned on board and wrote up these remarks from April 7 and am now smoking a cigar. So much for the Buck of Dakingham.

June 11th. “*Ewing*” left this afternoon for the shoal.

June 12th. At about midnight started for the shoal. Spent the day in sounding about and on the shoal and



William McMurtrie offers a view of San Pedro Harbor with the *Active* and *Ewing* at anchor in the far distance.

in looking for the “*Ewing*.” The weather or rather the sea was such that we could have surveyed the shoal if we could have found the “*Ewing*.” Did not get an observation of the sun and consequently did not know exactly where we were, which Mrs. A heard and became frightened and induced the Captain to run into San Diego. This is not the first time that her comfort and pleasure has been consulted in preference to the interest of surveying. We arrived here (SAN DIEGO) at about 8 o'clock this morning.

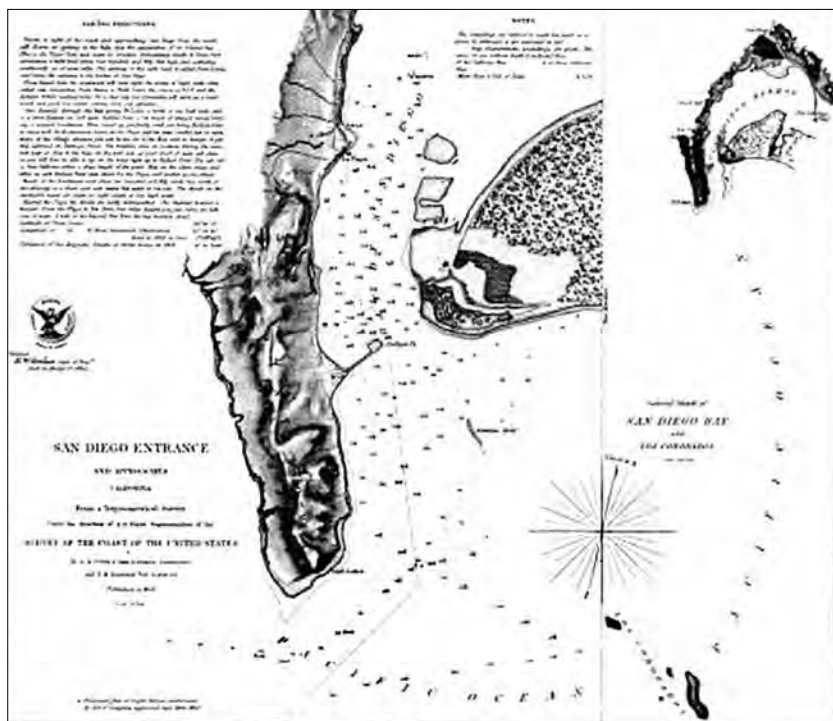
June 14th. Moved up to New Town.⁴⁷

June 18th. Steamer “*Senator*” arrived from “SAN FRANCISCO” and brought me two letters. She sailed the same afternoon.

June 21st. Employed till today in putting up signals. Commenced work.

June 27th. Shifted own anchorage further up the Bay, off SWEET WATER RIVER. A ball on the night of the 26th. and also on the 25th. I attended the latter and enjoyed it much—Mr. Jordan was the only eye sore. Spent the night, with Kellog [sic], at Mr. Eugene Pendleton.⁴⁸

June 29th. Visited the ladies at the Punta—Rode up on a horse with Kellog and chafed my stern sheets. Stopped there all night. The fleas and mocking bird did not permit me to sleep much. There were present Don Santiago (the old man of all) and his wife. “Don Santiagitto,” the father of the ladies we were visiting, and wife, “Blue Eyes” Pendleton, Eugene, and Miss. Charta Bandinnie, Mr. Brinley, of the Salt Mines, Miss. Marie Antonia, Miss. Tula, Miss Refugio and some others—Had



1853

a pleasant time—Met the boat the next morning near the house. Major Davis came in here to visit the ladies.⁴⁹

July 2nd. Having finished the upper part of the bay moved down to NEW TOWN. The Captain and myself went over to FALSE BAY to take a look.

Eve of July 3rd. Had a pleasant party at Kellog's.

Below: Sketched in 1859 by Major Hartman Bache (uncle of Alexander D. Bache, 2nd Supt. of the Coast Survey), this view of the Pt. Loma Lighthouse which began construction in 1854, was familiar to Johnson in 1856.

Courtesy Cabrillo Historical Association.



59

The Ball onboard the Active must have been quite a success, a few days later the San Diego Herald (26 July 1856) reported:

"If there are not some flutterings among the young female hearts in this burg when the Active weighs anchor to depart these shores, we will relinquish our claim to prophecy. O Major Davis! You know not what havoc you have wrought."

An unsubstantiated description of McMurtrie's drawing suggests the possibility of Johnson and Downes surveying, while McMurtrie sketched the marshlands of False Bay (Mission Bay) in 1856.

July 4th. Dressed ship. The ladies gave a Picnic, in the Eve. the gents a ball. Nearly all hands went to the Picnic. I kept ship. Mr. Jordan of course was in season for both Picnic and ball. Major McMurtie and myself went on shore in the evening expecting to find a conveyance to take us down, but after waiting till half past nine, and no waggon [sic] arriving Pendleton had the "Water Team," four mules put into a government waggon and we started.⁵⁰ About a quarter of a mile from the house we met the carriage coming back for us. We found the hall draped very neatly with flags and evergreens, and a host of ladies ready to dance. The music was rather indifferent it being a violin and guitar. Supper was good and plenty of it. Soon after it was served the ball broke [up], which tended to convince me that the saying was true "The Californians come only for supper." However I enjoyed it much.

Turned in with Rhiner at 3 o'clock and he brought me back to the ship at 9 the next morning.⁵¹ Found the *Sea Bird* at the Wharf—Received letters from Hattie, Tom Park and Corbin. Captain and Mr. Burton called upon the Captain and lady.⁵²

The ladies from the Punta came in to the ball and stopped at

Kellogg's house until the excitement was over. Had a little dance there on the eve. of the 3rd.

Sunday, July 6th. Captain and Mrs. Alden, Bassett and myself went out to the Mission to dine with Captain and Mrs. Burton. Had a pleasant time.

Monday, July 7th. Went to FALSE BAY to take over the tents and put up signals. Tuesday went to OLD TOWN with Kellogg and Pendleton to call upon the ladies. Visited Rhiner's gardens with them. Received bouquets and brought one (a vegetable one) to Mr. Jordan and Russell. Slept at Kellogg's. Was tuned out at 5 o'clock to go outside in the steamer. Kellogg also went. Did about 60 miles of sounding. Anchored in the evening at the PLAYA.⁵³



July 10th. Today put up a signal on the bluff to the north of the entrance. Had much difficulty in finding it. Kellogg and Pendleton dined with us today and went to NEW TOWN after. Tomorrow we work with the steamer outside to the north and leave me at FALSE BAY to do that and the bar. I have tents there and shall make arrangements for remaining three days. Downes goes with me.

July 24th. After one week's sojourn at FALSE BAY we returned working from above the entrance to POINT LOMA. I was very pleasantly situated out there and sorry to leave. Had visitors to see nearly every day and on one occasion some ladies. I kept a horse, too, and nearly every evening was spent in town.

But yesterday was the day for all hands. The ship was dressed with flags and invitations had been issued to about forty people (including a few that were not particularly agreeable but necessary incumbrances [sic] and fortunately did not come) for an afternoon "bailicita." At about one o'clock they came on board expecting to leave before dark, but were so much pleased that 'twas after 1 o'clock at night when they broke up. I was floor manager and while waltzing with Miss Charta Bandini the deck became too slippery for me and I came down bringing her with me to the great amusement of all hands.

After the ball, I rode to OLD TOWN with Kellogg to take some of the ladies down and had "the best time yet." I was between two ladies, one of whom had on my talina [cape] and as I was dressed very thinly, she shared it with me. In order to keep us both warm, it was necessary for me to put my arm around her and hold her hand in mine and to rest my cheek against hers.

Several took offence at not being invited and got up an opposition ball which was a hard old affair and broke up in a fight.

July 28th. Went to SAN CLEMENTE

July 30th. "*Ewing*" arrived. At 11 pm took her in tow and started for CORTEZ SHOAL, where we both anchored on the following day about three miles apart in 11 fathoms of water.

August 3rd. Still on the SHOAL. The *Cortez* passed us bound to SAN FRANCISCO. Boarded her but got no news. A slight shower this evening.

August 4th. Having finished the SHOAL (the least water found 3 1/2 fathoms) at 4 p.m. started for SAN PEDRO, where we anchored on the following morning at daylight.

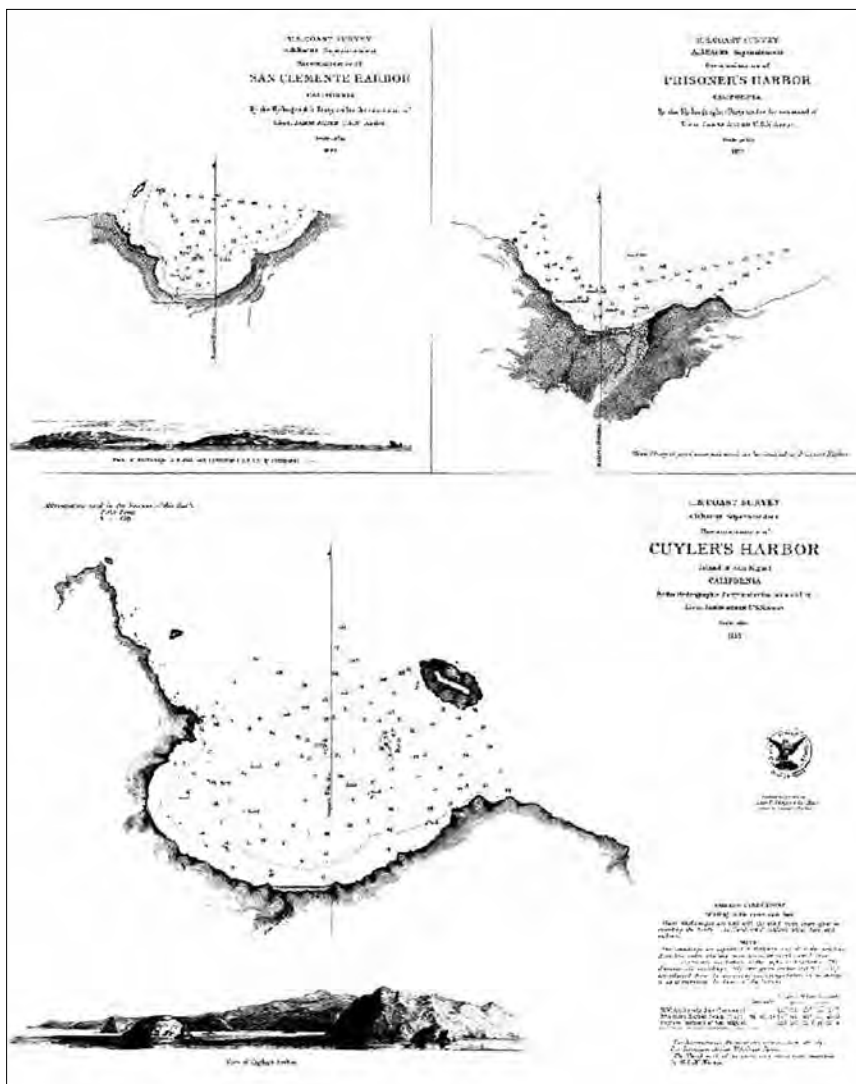
August 6th. The *Sea Bird* arrived from the south bringing letters and papers. The *Ewing* anchored August 3rd. Bassett was taken delirious.

August 7th. Captain, Mrs. Alden, Mac., Downes, Farquhar, Cuyler and Madison [Alden] went to LOS ANGELES.

August 9th. The party except Cuyler returned from LOS ANGELES. Bassett continues delirious. He jumped over board on the 7th. Russell lost his wig in rescuing Bassett with Sidney.

Still another marine range is indicated by the bank known as the Cortez shoal, about forty-five miles beyond San Clemente, and probably twenty-five miles beyond the San Nicolas range, if this be found to extend in the direction of the trend of the island. This shoal is of peculiar interest, from its supposed volcanic origin. It was found by Captain Cropper, of the steamer Cortez, in March, 1853, who says the water around it was in violent commotion, and thrown up suddenly into columns, at regular intervals of four or five minutes. He at first thought he saw breakers, and, at times, the water broke as if on a reef. The recent observations of Lieutenant McRae have shown that there is a ledge of rocks at this place....

*Bache, A. D.
1855. Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, Showing the Progress of the Survey during the Year 1855.*



August 12th. Left SAN PEDRO this morning and anchored at SANTA BARBARA at 4:45 p.m. Bassett cut his throat last night, but did not succeed in killing himself. The Doctor recommended the Captain to take him (Bassett) up to SAN FRANCISCO as he would probably die if kept on board. The captain declined to do so, as it was necessary to do some work at once and he could not spare the coal. Now the captain could spare the time and coal to run down to SAN PEDRO for the purpose of giving Mrs. Alden the opportunity to visit LOS ANGELES.

He himself told me that 'twas the only reason that took him there. He has come in here for wood and I wish that he could not get it; for one occasion he called in here and engaged some (about 30 cords, I'm told) to be ready for him on his return from the south, and after the man had gone to the expense and trouble of cutting and hauling it to the beach, his officers reminded him of it. I believe him to be perfectly devoid of honorable principles. If his wife were sick, I'm quite certain that he would find time to go to SAN FRANCISCO at short notice. I say, d—m him!

August 17th. We are still at SANTA BARBARA, but leave in the morning for PRISONER'S HARBOR (SANTA CRUZ IS.?) for water. Here we've been five days and Bassett no better. 'Tis a shame. Five days here and only eight cords of wood. I proposed to go over for water last evening and finish today. "What on Sunday," asked the Captain. It does seem that he is anxious that Bassett should die and that he is remaining here for that purpose.

If it should be my misfortune to remain Executive Officer, I fear that my sweet [word not clear] disposition will be spoiled by the Captain's interference. Yesterday I gave permission to Mr. Russell to take the *Blue Bird* to go on board the *Laura Bevan* about a ship's length astern of us. The Captain came on deck and seeing the boat laying alongside the SCHOONER ordered me to call her on board, saying that Mr. Russell could not have a boat to keep in that way. Today Mr. Russell asked for the boat to go on board a FRENCH WHALER, near us. I directed him to send her back and make a signal when he was ready to come on board. He returned in the Frenchman's boat and the Captain seeing, asked me why he did not keep our boat. Now what is to do with such a man? One can't tell how to please him. Today one thing—tomorrow directly opposite.

The Frenchman sent Mrs. Alden two goats. Downes, Russell and the Count (Mr. Jordan) have gone on shore to a *bailicita*.

August 18th. Went over to PRISONER'S HARBOR for water. Captain, Mrs. Alden, McMurtrie, Downes, and myself went up the valley and dined with Dr. Shaw the gent who has charge of the ISLAND.⁵⁴

August 19th. Went to SANTA BARBARA and from there to SAN BUENAVENTURA where we were at anchor near the STORE SHIP.

August 23rd. Having finished the sounding near SAN BUENAVENTURA, got underway and went to SANTA BARBARA. Found the *Ewing* here.

August 25th. Started for SAN FRANCISCO with Dr. Shaw.

August 27th. Anchored at SAN FRANCISCO.

October 11th. Left SAN FRANCISCO and anchored at PIGEON POINT.

October 13th. Cuyler and myself putting up signals. I had about twelve miles to go and over a very difficult part of the country which detained me over night and had the pleasure of sleeping with a teamster in a bed full of fleas.

October 15th. Too much wind to work, went to MONTEREY. I was employed three days in putting up signals.

October 21st. Went to POINT A—O NUEVO.

October 22nd. Sounding.

October 23rd. Sounding with boat and steamer.

October 24th. Commenced with *Gig* and *Kate* but discontinued on account of weather. Went to SANTA CRUZ.

October 25th. Went to PIGEON POINT but not being able to work, returned.

October 27th & 28th. Sounding with boats and steamer. 28th having finished to the north of A—O NUEVO returned to SANTA CRUZ.

October 29th.

October 31st. Went to MONTEREY.

November 1st. Sounding with the boats and steamer in the bay.

McMurtrie sketched the desolate "Pajaro landing," Monterey Bay, October 1856, with the steamer *Active* in the bay.



- 1 For Alexander Bache, see introductory essay on the history of the Coast Survey, "Coast Surveyors on the Pioneer Coast," Captain Albert E. Theberge, Jr., pages 11-14. For William Trowbridge see sidebar on the self-registering tide gauge, *Private Notes*, page 28.
- 2 The French expression "*on dit*" means "it is said" and is considered slightly sarcastic.
- 3 See sidebar on Richard Cuyler, *Private Notes* page 27. Lt Joel S. Kennard joined the Coast Survey in May of 1852; he joined the Confederate navy in 1862, and commanded several ships during the Civil War. Acting Master S. S. Bassett joined the Survey in March 1849.
- 4 Major Henry Prince graduated from West Point in 1831, and served with the Coast Survey in 1844-1846, and again from 1850-1855. A detachment of recruits under his command had been stranded when their transport vessel, the steamship *America*, caught fire at Crescent City, California, in June of 1855.
- 5 Captain Maurice Maloney was involved in the Indian conflicts in the Yakima area. Lt W. A. Slaughter commanded troops in the Indian war of 1855. He was killed by the Indians; a town was named after him, although it was later renamed Auburn.
- 6 For George Davidson, see introductory essay on the history of the Coast Survey, "Coast Surveyors on the Pioneer Coast," Captain Albert E. Theberge, Jr., pages 12-16.
- 7 James Douglas was the governor of Vancouver Island; he had founded its capital, "Fort Victoria" in 1843, and was appointed Vancouver Island's second governor in 1851. The *Dido* and *Brisk* were British vessels.
- 8 Edward Eldridge was one of the early settlers in the Puget Sound area.
- 9 Captain Mitchell: possibly Captain H. Mitchell of the Coast Survey involved with "tidal operations". His daughter Maria was an astronomer hired by Bache for the Survey; she was one of the few women at the time employed in science.
- 10 Petropoloski [Petropavlovsk] was the site of an 1854 battle against the Turks during the Crimean War.
- 11 Johnson's request to Bache was denied.
- 12 A coal reloading run from Bellingham Bay to Nanaimo, Vancouver Island, took a steamer between Mayne and Galliano Islands. Lt James Alden named the passage after the *Active*.
- 13 "Stripped to a gantline" is a maritime expression referring to a sailing ship with all of its rigging removed but the barest minimum.
- 14 Major Davis: N. C. Davis is listed as 1st assistant engineer onboard the *Active* in the *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey*, 1856. In a letter written by Lieutenant Commander J. Alden to Superintendent Bache 19 November 1856, Lt. Philip Johnson and engineer Davis were detached from the *Active* to return to the Atlantic states.
- 15 Lieutenant J. S. Kennard joined the Coast Survey in 1852. He served onboard the *Active* with Johnson in 1855.
- 16 By "Chenook," Johnson undoubtedly meant the Chinook Indians, who, in the 1850s, lived in the Columbia River Cascades area. They were involved in the Indian Wars of 1855-56, and their chief Chenowith was executed by the U. S. Army. They were soon decimated by disease.
- 17 George Davidson named the Coast Survey steamer *Fauntleroy* after his mentor and father-in-law. The *Fauntleroy* served the topography team and was never manned by naval officers. James Lawson, who had attended Philadelphia's Central High School, was an Assistant with the Coast Survey. He went to the West Coast with George Davidson in 1850. Lawson wrote an extensive journal of his experiences with the Coast Survey, beginning in 1848. His autobiography is available at the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Central Library in Washington, DC.
- 18 Bayle St. John, *Purple Tints of Paris: Character and Manners in the New Empire* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1854)
- 19 Colonel Isaac Ebey was the first permanent United States settler on Whidbey Island, arriving in October 1850. He was beheaded by the Indians on 11 August 1857, the only white casualty of the 1856-57 Indian Wars. Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens was Second Assistant-in-Charge of the Coast Survey office in Washington, D.C., before serving as first governor of Washington territory 1853-1857.
- 20 For additional reference see: Alma Lawrence, "History of Women on Navy Ships in the Nineteenth Century; Memorandum from Alma R. Lawrence, Operational Archives Branch, for Lt. Morton, R-2511a, Main Navy. 23 Feb. 1951," *Women in the U.S. Navy: Historic Documents*.
- 21 George William Curtis, *The Potiphar Papers* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1853)
- 22 While doing soundings, signals were used to keep the boats working in a straight line.
- 23 The Crimean War raged during 1853-56 between Russia on the one side, and England, France, Turkey and Sardegna [Sardinia] on the other. Ostensibly about control of the Holy Land, it was really about preventing Russian expansion into the Mediterranean. Sebastopol was a major Russian stronghold; the fighting over it was brutal. The British commander Lord Ragland was killed there; the battle also spawned Lord Alfred Tennyson's famous poem, "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and Florence Nightingale's work in nursing.
- 24 Captain Edward B. Hunt worked for Bache on the Coast Survey during most of the 1850s.
- 25 The news Johnson was hoping to hear was the result of his application to replace Lt. Trowbridge as Superintendent of the Tides. His application was denied and Johnson made no other reference to it in his notes.
- 26 Lieutenant Simeon S. Bassett signed on with the Coast Survey in 1849, serving with Johnson onboard the *Active* in 1855-1856. Tom Parks (sometimes spelled "Parkes" by Johnson) is not listed among the naval officers in the Coast

- Survey Report of the Superintendent 1855 or 1856, therefore he may have been a civilian hydrographer.
- 27 Francis Edward Smedley, *Frank Fairleigh; or Scenes from the Life of a Private Pupil*, first published in *Sharpe's London Magazine*, 1846-1848, and then in book form in 1850.
- 28 Lt. Archibald MacRae had joined the Survey on 30 January 1855, after a significant role in the acquisition of California in the Mexican War.
- 29 Commodore William Mervine was commander of the United States Pacific Squadron.
- 30 Passed Midshipman Edward E. Stone joined the Survey in 1854.
- 31 Captain Isaac S. Sterrett, captain of the sloop *Decatur* was dismissed from his command in 1855, but was later reinstated.
- 32 Charles H. Mason was the first secretary of the Washington Territory, who served briefly as acting governor in 1854.
- 33 Michael T. Simmons was an early settler who had led Americans overland in 1845 to found the first American community north of the Columbia River.
- 34 Edward Lauder was chief justice of the Territory.
- 35 The French expression means "it was not taken," which refers to the fact that Seattle was not taken in the Indian war.
- 36 John Pike was a prominent Seattle pioneer, who built the first building of the University of Washington, in Seattle in 1861, and has a street in Seattle named after him. "Pikes" could be a slang term for the settlers who lived in Seattle at the time.
- 37 American adventurer William Walker had briefly conquered Nicaragua in 1855, but the United States refused to recognize his government. Sir John Franklin was a British Arctic explorer whose 1845 expedition had been given up for lost after more than forty search efforts.
- 38 "Klicatacs" refers to the Klikitat Indians, who once controlled the Willamette valley, but by the 1850s were reduced to a small area on the White Salmon drainage, near The Dalles. They were involved in the Indian War 1855-56; the Klikitat's killed Lt. W. A. Slaughter on 4 December 1855.
- 39 Kitsap was an Indian chief who had a county named after him in 1857.
- 40 A note in the margin of the typescript states "Peixotto" is the proper way of spelling the name.
- 41 A penciled note in the margin of the typescript states: "Spoke [to] the barque *Equator* also."
- 42 By "King George Indian" Johnson clearly meant Indians allied with the British. It is a slight misuse of the phrase in the area referred to the British white men as "King George Men."
- 43 Molly, Sarah and Hattie were Johnson's sisters; Wells was likely a friend.
- 44 Captain Samuel Swatwout, commander of the United States steamer *Massachusetts*, was involved in the conflict with the Indians at Port Gamble in 1856.
- 45 There were several books titled *Wild Oats* published in this period.
- 46 In Gold Rush California, citizen vigilantism often arose in the absence of effective government, or in reflection of internal social and cultural strife. San Francisco experienced major vigilantism from 1849 through the late 1850s. In the situation referred to by Johnson, Charles Cora shot a U. S. Marshall, William Richardson; James Casey shot James King, editor of a newspaper. The Vigilance Committee seized the two accused men from prison and they were tried by a popular tribunal, after which they were hanged.
- 47 The little town of San Diego first emerged around the San Diego Presido, inland from the Bay. To put the town closer to the Bay and to make commerce and development more feasible, William Heath Davis established "New Town" on the site of present-day downtown San Diego. Although not terribly successful, it did contain, at the time of Johnson's visit, the U.S. Army Barracks, as well as a wharf and a few other buildings.
- 48 John Kellogg was commander of the army base in New Town. Eugene B. Pendleton was a merchant, land developer and civic leader in San Diego in the 1850s.
- 49 "Punta" was the rancho of Don Santiago E. Arguello, located at the mouth of the Tijuana River. The road south from San Diego was called the "Punta Road." Arguello had been commander of the San Diego Presidio, Alcalde of San Diego, and had also been granted, in addition to the Ti Juana Rancho (now the city of Tijuana), the Rancho Mission San Diego de Alcalá as payment of his public services. "Don Santiagitto" refers to Don Santiago's son, Santiago Emilio Arguello; Marie Antonio and Miss Refugio [Refugia] were daughters of Santiago Emilio; Miss "Tula" was most likely a nickname for one of the other daughters, or a relative (Emilio had 21 siblings).
- Charles Brinley was associated with the salt mines (extraction of salt from the sea has been an industry in San Diego from mid-19th century to the present); Charta Bandinnue [Bandini] was Victoria Bandini, one of the daughters of Juan Bandini, a major figure in San Diego, who had received rancho grants, and served on the American side in the Mexican War. He had a house in Old Town, and his daughters all married significant figures.
- 50 Draughtsman and artist William B. McMurtrie was not in the military. Johnson was most likely using the term "Major" with sarcasm.
- 51 "Rhiner" was most likely Joseph Reiner, proprietor of Reiner's Vineyard and Garden.
- 52 Captain Henry S. Burton was post commander of the United States Army garrison at the San Diego mission, and a major leader of the social life of San Diego at the time.
- 53 La Playa was the beach on the Bay side of Point Loma, and the site of some settlement in that period.
- 54 Dr. James Barron Shaw was manager of Santa Cruz Island from 1853-1869.

Improvements to the Sextant

Philip C. Johnson, Jr.

Editor's Note:

During his time at sea, Lt. P. C. Johnson constructed various improvements which would later be recognized by the Coast Survey. While he was urged to send a drawing of improvements made to his pistol: "...fitting a gun stock to one of the Colt's revolvers," it was his sextant adjustment which the Coast Survey re-recognized as a significant contribution in assisting sur-vey work.

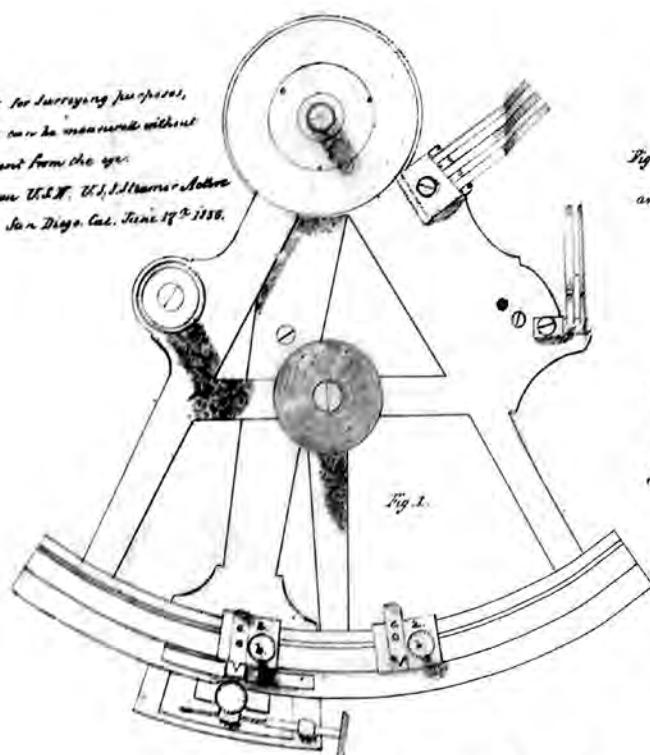
Note the Sextant diagram below was drawn by William B. McMurtrie.

From the history of sextant improvements in the Coast Survey's Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, Showing the Progress of the Survey during the year 1874:

"Of the various instruments for measuring angles, the sextant finds the most extensive use in the Coast Survey; each hydrographic party requiring at least two observers with the sextant now in use in order to secure simultaneous determinations of the two angles which are indispensable for determining the position of the sounding vessel. This necessity has induced search for an expedient by which the two angles can be taken by one observer.

The first step in this direction was made by Lieutenant (now Commander) P.C. Johnson, United States Navy, when in Coast Survey service on the steamer Active. He added a sliding stop, which could be clamped to the graduated arc in contact with the index-arm. By merely securing thus the position of the vernier for the first angle observed, the loss of time between the two observations occasioned by the reading of the first angle can be avoided, as the vernier can be set back, and the reading taken after the second observation has been completed."

Improved Sextant for surveying purposes,
by which two angles can be measured without
taking the instrument from the eye.
By Lieut. P.C. Johnson U.S.N. U.S.S. Steamer Active
San Diego, Cal. June 19th 1874.



a. Independent clamps. b. clamp screw. c. latch.

Fig. 2. represents the sextant with the clamp attached to and detached from the arm (there being but one, of course)



The first angle is observed with the clamp attached - when the two signals are in contact the clamp is secured by the clamp screw, and the latch, or drawn back (as shown to the right) the second angle is then measured and read, after which, the arm is brought back to the clamp, and the latch pushed into the notch, (as shown to the left) and the first angle read.

Fig. 2. is an end view of the arm, and shows the manner in which the clamp is attached to the instrument.

Drawn by Wm B. McMurtrie 1874

U.S. Steamer Active
San Diego, June 17th 1856

Sir,

At the suggestion of Capts. Alden and Cuyler I send you a plan of an improvement on the sextant for facilitating the measuring of angles in a boat while sounding, particularly in a wide way. I put this additional clamp on soon after joining the "Active" and have been constantly using it since. It certainly is of great convenience, saves time, and must necessarily give a more accurate position with one observer. With the use of this independent or additional clamp, one observer can

take both angles without taking the instrument from the eye, which is of great importance, For, with the ordinary sextant, of course 'tis necessary to read the first angle before the second one can be observed. Whereas with this the clamp marks

the first angle, and one has the second object in his eye, ready to carry to the third, thereby losing no time in searching for the objects or reading the sextant; during which the boat very frequently drifts considerably off the line, and consequently when the second angle is observed, she is not where she was when the first was taken; which of course gives an incorrect position. The more I use

it the better am I pleased with it, and think it will be found very useful, particularly where the party is short of officers and one observer only can be sent in a boat.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant
(signed) P. C. Johnson Jr.
Lt. U.S.N.

Prof. A. D. Bache
Supt. U.S.C.S.
Washington D.C.

U. S. Steamer Active
San Diego, June 17th 1856

At the suggestion of Capts. Alden & Cuyler I send you a plan of an improvement on the sextant for facilitating the measuring of angles in a boat while sounding particularly in a wide way. I put this additional clamp on soon after joining the "Active" and have been constantly using it since. It certainly is of great convenience, saves time, and must necessarily give a more accurate position with one observer. With the use of this independent or additional clamp, one observer can take both angles without taking the instrument from the eye, which is of great importance. For, with the ordinary sextant, of course 'tis necessary to read the first angle before the second one can be observed. Whereas with this the clamp marks the first angle, and one has the second object in his eye, ready to carry to the third, thereby losing no time in searching for the objects or reading the sextant; during which the boat very frequently drifts considerably off the line, and consequently when the second angle is observed, she is not where she was when the first was taken; which of course gives an incorrect position. The more I use it the better am I pleased with it, and think it will be found very useful, particularly where the party is short of officers and one observer only can be sent in a boat.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant
(signed) P. C. Johnson Jr.
Lt. U. S. N.

Prof. A. D. Bache
Supt. U. S. C. S.
Washington
D. C.

Timeline



Ferdinand Rudolph Hassler was the 1st Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 1770-1843.

1807 – The Survey of the Coast established by President Thomas Jefferson. This was to become America's first physical science agency. Ferdinand Hassler's plan, based on scientific principles, was selected by the Government as the best of many presented. Hassler, later selected to be Superintendent of the Survey of the Coast, imbued the organization with standards of accuracy, precision, and integrity.

1811-1815 - Ferdinand Hassler procured books and instruments for the United States Survey of the Coast.

1816 - First field work accomplished by the United States Survey of the Coast.

1832 - An Office of Weights and Measures, the forerunner of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, is formed under the U.S. Survey of the Coast.

1836 - Survey of the Coast renamed U.S. Coast Survey.

1839 - While conducting survey operations, the Coast Survey Brig USS *Washington* seized the *Amistad*, a schooner commandeered by the slaves seeking their freedom, in New York Harbor and escorts it to New London, CT.

1843 - Ferdinand Hassler, Superintendent of the Coast Survey, and America's first professional full-time scientist, passed away. Alexander Dallas Bache, a great grandson of Benjamin Franklin, is appointed second Superintendent of the Coast Survey

1845 - U.S. Coast Survey begins systematic studies of Gulf Stream, first systematic oceanographic project for studying a specific phenomenon commenced by any government or organization. Physical oceanography, geological oceanography, biological oceanography, and chemical oceanography of the Gulf Stream and its environs were covered in the initial orders serving as a model for all subsequent integrated oceanographic cruises.

1847 - Naturalist Louis Agassiz sails on Coast Survey Steamer *Bibb* to study fish and fauna of off-shore New England area.

1849 – U.S. Coast Survey soundings in support of Gulf Stream investigations result in the discovery of the widespread nature of the continental shelf break and the continental slope.

1851 - U. S. Coast Survey commissions Louis Agassiz to conduct the first scientific study of the Florida Reef system.

1853 - First Tide Prediction Tables published. Louis F. de Pourtales, of the U.S. Coast Survey, questions Forbes' theory based on Coast Survey sounding operations that find indications of life in depths over 1,000 fathoms. At the same time, irregularities are discovered in the topography off Charleston, South Carolina, leading to a theory that topography can influence the course and characteristics of the Gulf Stream.

1854 - United States Coast Survey begins using self-recording tide gauges. One installed at San Francisco has begun the longest continuous series of tide observations in the Western Hemisphere.

1854-1855 - James McNeill Whistler employed by the U.S. Coast Survey as an engraver.



Monterey Canyon was first noted in 1857 by Lt. Commander James Alden of the C&GS ship *Active*. Alden termed the canyon a "submarine gulch".

1857 – Lieutenant James Alden, commanding officer of the Coast Survey Steamer *Active*, discovers a deep submarine valley, or "gulch," in the center of Monterey Bay. Alden had discovered the first known sea-floor canyon, now called Monterey Canyon.

1861-65 - United States Coast Survey serves with Union Army and Navy in all theaters of the Civil War and with all major commanders. Coast Surveyors served as hydrographers, topographers, and scouts often times in advance of the front lines.



John Ross Key, grandson of Francis Scott Key, described in "Recollections of Whistler," (Century Magazine, April, 1908), the creation of James McNeill Whistler's first practice copper plate engraving made during his apprenticeship with the Coast Survey. Along with a precise description of the engraving process, John Key admired Whistler's artistic genius. Key purchased the extraordinary practice copper engraving for the price of the copper.



In the Army, Coast Surveyors were given assimilated military rank while attached to a specific command.

1867- First Tide Tables published by U. S. Coast Survey.

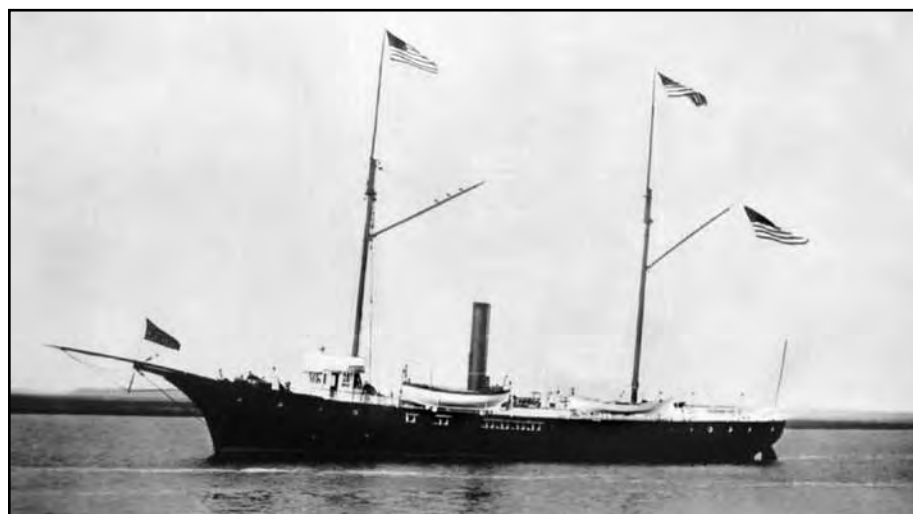
1867-1868 - Louis F. de Pourtales conducts dredging operations from the Coast Survey Steamers *Corwin* and *Bibb* off southern Florida in water depths to 517 fathoms, and finds prolific life extending below 300 fathoms.

1871 - President Ulysses S. Grant signs a bill authorizing the Coast Survey to carry geodetic surveys into the interior of the United States and begins the continent-spanning survey of the 39th Parallel.

1872 - Sir William Thomson invents an operational wireline sounding machine. Modifications of this machine ultimately replace hemp-rope sounding methods. The wireline machines are faster to operate



The Sigsbee Sounding Machine rigged for paying out.



C&GS Survey Steamer A.D. Bache, in service 1871-1900.

and significantly more accurate.

1872 – Commander Philip C. Johnson and the Coast Survey Steamer *Hassler* proceed from the East to the West Coast via the Straits of Magellan and attempt deep-ocean dredging and other deep-sea operations along the way. The expedition is led by the famous naturalist Louis Agassiz, accompanied by Louis F. de Pourtales. Unfortunately, the hemp dredge line is defective and breaks on every deep dredging attempt. Although deep dredging operations fail, the cruise is generally successful; Louis Agassiz collects more than 30,000 specimens of sea life.

1873 - The Commission of Fish and Fisheries utilizes the Coast Survey steamer *Bache* for the first deep water sampling and dredging cruises. This cooperative relationship continued for many years until the Fisheries Service obtained its own deep water steamers.

1874-1877 - The great naturalist John Muir employed as guide and artist by Coast Survey on the Survey of the 39th Parallel across the Great Basin of Nevada and Utah.

1874-1878 - Commander Charles D. Sigsbee commands the Coast Survey Steamer *Blake*. Sigsbee modifies the Thomson Sounding Machine and designs an instrument termed the Sigsbee Sounding Machine. This becomes the basic model for wireline sounding in the deep sea for the next 50 years. Accurate, high-density soundings taken by the Coast Survey Steamer *Blake* in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea lead to the first modern bathymetric map. The *Blake* also pioneered deep-ocean anchoring during Gulf Stream studies and was perhaps the most innovative oceanographic vessel of the Nineteenth Century.

1878 - U.S. Coast Survey name changed to U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to reflect the role of

geodesy and earlier authorization to conduct geodetic surveys in the interior of the United States.

1885 - The Coast and Geodetic Survey Steamer *Blake*, under Commander John Elliott Pillsbury, pioneers deep-ocean anchoring techniques during Gulf Stream studies. The *Blake* is reported to have anchored in 2,200 fathoms. The first tide-predicting machine used in the United States was designed by William Ferrel, of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

1899 - Coast and Geodetic Survey opens a field office in Seattle, WA., to support ships and survey field expeditions, site of future Pacific Marine Center.

1901 - National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology) established from U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Office of Weights and Measures.

1903 - Coast and Geodetic Survey transferred from Treasury Department to Commerce and Labor Department. Commission of Fish & Fisheries transferred to Bureau of Fisheries (USBF) in Commerce and Labor Dept.

1912 - 15 April, the White Star Liner *Titanic* sinks with horrendous loss of life after striking an iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean. This leads to a concerted effort to devise an acoustic means of discovering objects in the water forward of the bow of a moving vessel. US Coast & Geodetic Survey No. 2 Tide Predicting Machine introduced. Designed by Harris and Fischer, this was the first machine made to compute simultaneously the height of the tide and the times of high and low waters.

1914 - On 27 April, Reginald Fessenden, of Submarine Signal Corporation, sails on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Miami*. He uses a Fessenden Oscillator to reflect a signal off an iceberg and simultaneously reflect an acoustic signal off the sea bottom. This test marks the beginning of the acoustic exploration of the sea.

1916 - President Woodrow Wilson is keynote speaker at 100th anniversary of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey.

1917 - U.S. enters WWI. Commissioned Officers Corps created from field corps of the Coast and Geodetic Survey. That organization is the forerunner of NOAA Corps. Half of commissioned officer service transferred to Armed Services, ships *Surveyor* and *Bache* transferred to Navy.

1917-1919 - World War I accelerates oceanic acoustic research as both the U.S. Navy and the Army Coast Artillery develop research programs to devise means to detect enemy submarines.

Timeline



The U.S. Revenue Cutter *Miami* tests the Fessenden Oscillator close to an iceberg similar to that which destroyed the *Titanic*.

1919 - French scientists succeed in running the first line of soundings obtained from an acoustic echo sounder.

1923-24 - U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey begins use of acoustic sounding systems; the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey conducts and develops the first RAR (radio acoustic ranging) navigation operations on the West Coast. This is the first navigation system capable of round-the-clock operation in all weather conditions, and does not require a navigator to see either some recognizable landmark or celestial object to position a vessel. It is a major step on the road to modern electronic navigation systems, oceanic seismic refraction and reflection profiling, and the development of telemetering oceanographic

instruments.

1926 - The Air Commerce Act directs the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to begin charting the Nation's airways and directs the Weather Bureau to provide weather services to civilian aviation. The fire weather service was formally inaugurated when Congress provided funds for seven fire weather districts.

1925-1939 - The Coast and Geodetic Survey conducts systematic tracklines across the Gulf of Alaska, discovering numerous seamounts, including the flat-topped variety that Dr. Harry Hess later terms "guyots". Systematic C&GS surveys of the continental shelf and slope lead to the discovery of the

Mendocino Escarpment, which H.W. Menard later shows to be part of a great system of Pacific fracture zones; delineation of the basin and range topography of Southern California's continental borderlands; the discovery of California seamounts such as Davidson, Pioneer and Guide; and the discovery of many East Coast canyons, particularly in the Georges Bank and Mid-Atlantic areas.

1933 - Coast and Geodetic Survey opens a ship base in Norfolk, Virginia.

1934-1937 - During height of the Depression, Coast and Geodetic Survey organizes surveying parties and field offices that employ over 10,000 including many out-of-work engineers.

1935 - Researchers at the Coast and Geodetic Survey invent an automatic telemetering radio sono-buoy. This instrument eliminates the need for manned station ships during RAR (radio acoustic ranging) navigation operations. This is, perhaps, the first offshore moored telemetering instrument.

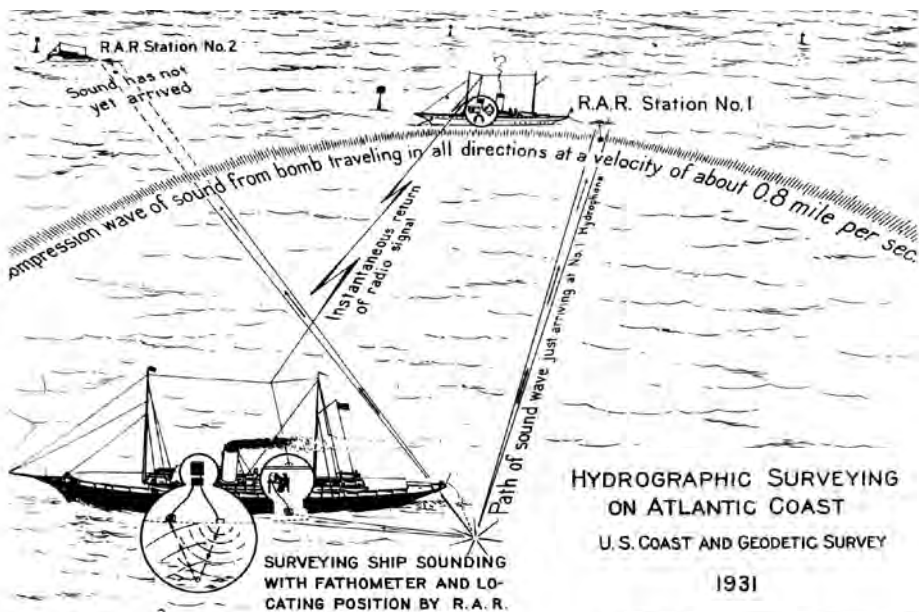
1938 - Lieutenant Elliott B. Roberts, of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, develops the Roberts Radio Current Meter. This instrument is possibly the first automatic moored telemetering instrument to measure a physical oceanographic parameter.

1939 - The American Geophysical Union establishes the Bowie Medal, its highest honor, named for Captain William Bowie of the Coast and Geodetic Survey for his "spirit of helpfulness and friendliness in unselfish cooperative research." Bowie was the first president of AGU (1920-1922) and served again from 1929-1933, the only person to hold this position twice. He was the first recipient of the medal.

1941-1945 - World War II - Technical capabilities of the Coast and Geodetic Survey are devoted completely to the war effort.

1942-1945 - The Coast and Geodetic Survey sends over 1000 civilian members and over 1/2 of its commissioned officers to the military services. Coast Surveyors serve as hydrographers, artillery surveyors, cartographers, army engineers, intelligence officers, and geophysicists in all theaters of the war. Civilians on the homefront produced over 100 million maps and charts for the Allied forces. Eleven members of the U.S. C&GS give their lives during WWII.

1945 - U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey adapts "Gee" aerial bombardment electronic navigation system to hydrographic surveying, renaming it "Shoran" and helping to usher in the era of marine electronic navigation. In 1945, the C&GS conducts its first hydrographic surveys using Shoran.



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Above: Radio Acoustic Ranging (RAR) was developed in 1923, and was the first non-visual navigation system. RAR combined the velocity of sound in water with radio to obtain a fix.





The April, 1946, photograph shows the devastation of a tsunami hitting Hilo, Hawaii. This disaster provided impetus for the C&GS to establish a tsunami warning system.

1948 – U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey established Pacific Tsunami Warning System.

1955 - The Coast and Geodetic Survey Ship *Pioneer*, in a joint project with the U.S. Navy and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, tows the first marine magnetometer and discovers magnetic striping on the seafloor off the West Coast of the United States. Called the PIONEER Survey, this survey was called one of the most significant geophysical surveys ever conducted as it provided a key element to the Theory of Plate Tectonics.

1957 – U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey celebrates 150 years since President Thomas Jefferson signed a law authorizing the Survey of the Coast. President Dwight D. Eisenhower addresses Secretary of Commerce and distinguished guests as the keynote speaker at the 150th anniversary gala.

1963 - The first operational multi-beam sounding system was installed on the USS *Compass* Island. This system, and other multi-beam sounding systems that have evolved since, observe a number of soundings to the left and right of a ship's head, as well as vertically, allowing the development of a relatively accurate map of the seafloor as the ship proceeds on a survey line.

1965 - Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA) created consolidating the Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Weather Bureau, a major step on the road to NOAA.

1967 - Eleven ESSA research centers established including Atlantic Oceanographic Laboratory, Pacific Oceanographic Laboratory, National Severe Storms Laboratory, and National Hurricane Research Laboratory. National Council for Marine Research, Resources and Engineering Development endorses the formation of the National Data Buoy Development Program within the U.S. Coast Guard - forerunner of NOAA's National Data Buoy Center.

1969 - Stratton Commission report "Our Nation and the Sea," recommends a new oceanic and atmospheric agency. Barbados Oceanographic and

Meteorological Experiment (BOMEX), the first project of the Global Atmospheric Research Program (GARP), is conducted off Barbados during May-July; ESSA Ship and aircraft partake in this milestone experiment.

1970 - 3 October, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) created within Department of Commerce combining Coast and Geodetic Survey, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Weather Bureau, Environmental Data Service, National Oceanographic Data Center, National Satellite Center, Research Libraries, and other components. The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey became the National Ocean Survey under the newly established agency NOAA.

1972 - NOAA Corps becomes the first uniformed service to recruit women on the same basis as men.

1973 - Sea Level Service begins. National Ocean Survey establishes National Tidal Datum Epoch.

1977-NOAA Ship *Davidson* first uses multi-beam sonar for mapping the U.S. Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), rapidly improving quantitative means of collecting bathymetric data.

1981-Although first employed aboard the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Ship *Surveyor* in the mid-1960s, side-scan sonar technology was routinely used for the first time aboard the NOAA Ships *Rude* and *Heck* as a qualitative means of obtaining hydrographic data. The sonar images greatly improved the hydrographers' ability to detect and analyze objects on the seafloor and paved the way for the crisp photograph-like images produced by side-scan sonars of today.

1982-National Ocean Survey renamed the National Ocean Service (NOS). The Office of Charting and Geodetic Services was created within the new National Ocean Service to better focus on charting and geodetic activities, re-establishing the former C&GS acronym.

1983 - President Ronald Reagan declares a United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extending out 200 nautical miles from our shores. NOAA embarks on a program of multi-beam surveying of the EEZ, leading to many discoveries including numerous economically important salt domes in the Gulf of Mexico. The Office of Charting and Geodetic Services starts using new position technology called "Global Positioning System," revolutionizing geodetic surveying.

1989 - North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83) approved for federal surveying and mapping activities; first official horizontal reference point established.

1991- The Office of Charting and Geodetic Services was renamed to its former 1878 name of Coast and Geodetic Survey. Tampa Bay is the 1st U.S. waterway to install a Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System (PORTS®). PORTS® is designed to support safe, cost-efficient marine transportation

by providing accurate real-time oceanographic and meteorological data.

1993- North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD88) approved for geodesy.

1994- Under the U.S. Government's streamlining process, C&GS was disestablished, but its former subordinate divisions were elevated to the status of Office under the National Ocean Service. Thus the former Nautical Charting Division became the present Office of Coast Survey (OCS), while the geodetic functions became the National Geodetic Survey, and the tides and currents division became the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services. Production and distribution of first official Raster Nautical Charts. Office of Coast Survey deploys first computer-assisted cartographic production system, establishing it as one of the first hydrographic offices in the world to deploy this type of system in full production.

1996-NOAA Ship *Rude* completes first hydro-graphic survey using shallow-water multi-beam sonar in support of NOAA's Nautical Charting mission. The application of shallow water, multi-beam sonar technology revolutionized hydrographic surveying.

1999- Office of Coast Survey starts to produce and distribute Print-On-Demand Charts allowing mariners to get updated navigation information weekly. Office of Coast Survey established Navigation Response Teams to provide rapid response capabilities in support of safe navigation.

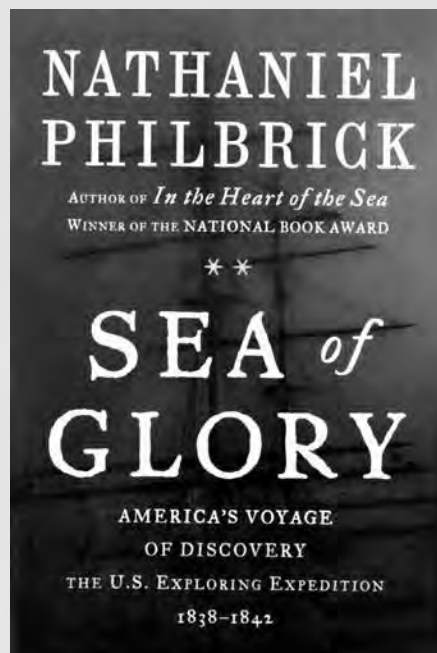
2001- Office of Coast Survey Navigation Managers established as regional liaisons in the field.

2004- Air Gap sensor goes operational, allowing larger vessels to transit waterways by taking the measurement of the distance between the low steel of bridges and water's surface.



2007- U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey celebrates its 200th anniversary and the 200 year legacy of science, service, and stewardship it has provided to the Nation.

Further Readings related to this issue of Mains'l Haul:



Bruce, Robert V. *The Launching of Modern American Science 1846-1876*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988.

Dupree, Hunter A. *Science in the Federal Government*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986

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Ponko, Vincent Jr. *Ships, Seas and Scientists: U.S. Naval Exploration and Discovery in the Nineteenth Century*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1974.

Stenzel, Franz M.D. *James Madison Alden, Yankee Artist of the Pacific Coast, 1854-1860*. Fort Worth, Texas: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1975.

Theberge, Albert E. Jr. "The Coast Survey 1807-1867." NOAA Central Library website.

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The editor of Mains'l Haul welcomes submissions on the following upcoming topics:

Shipwrecks and Castaways deadline August 1, 2006

Aircraft Carriers – Historical Perspectives deadline October 1, 2006

Please email a brief outline of your proposed article and biographical information to: editor@sdmaritime.org



*On our return to Santa Barbara [Montecito],
Madison Alden gave me an invitation to take a ride with
him to the hot sulphur springs, about six miles from town...*

—Lt. P.C. Johnson, 13 Oct. 1855.



James Madison Alden's 1855 (above) and 1856 watercolors of the U.S. Steamer *Active* and Schooner *Ewing* in the Santa Barbara Channel illustrate the *Private Notes* of P.C. Johnson, Jr. onboard the *Active* 1855-1856.

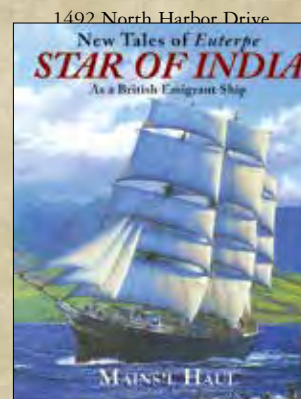


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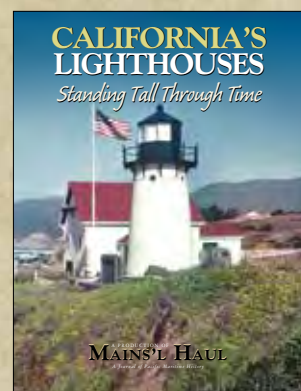
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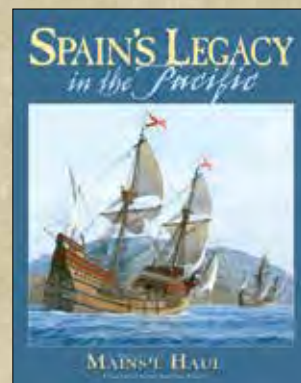
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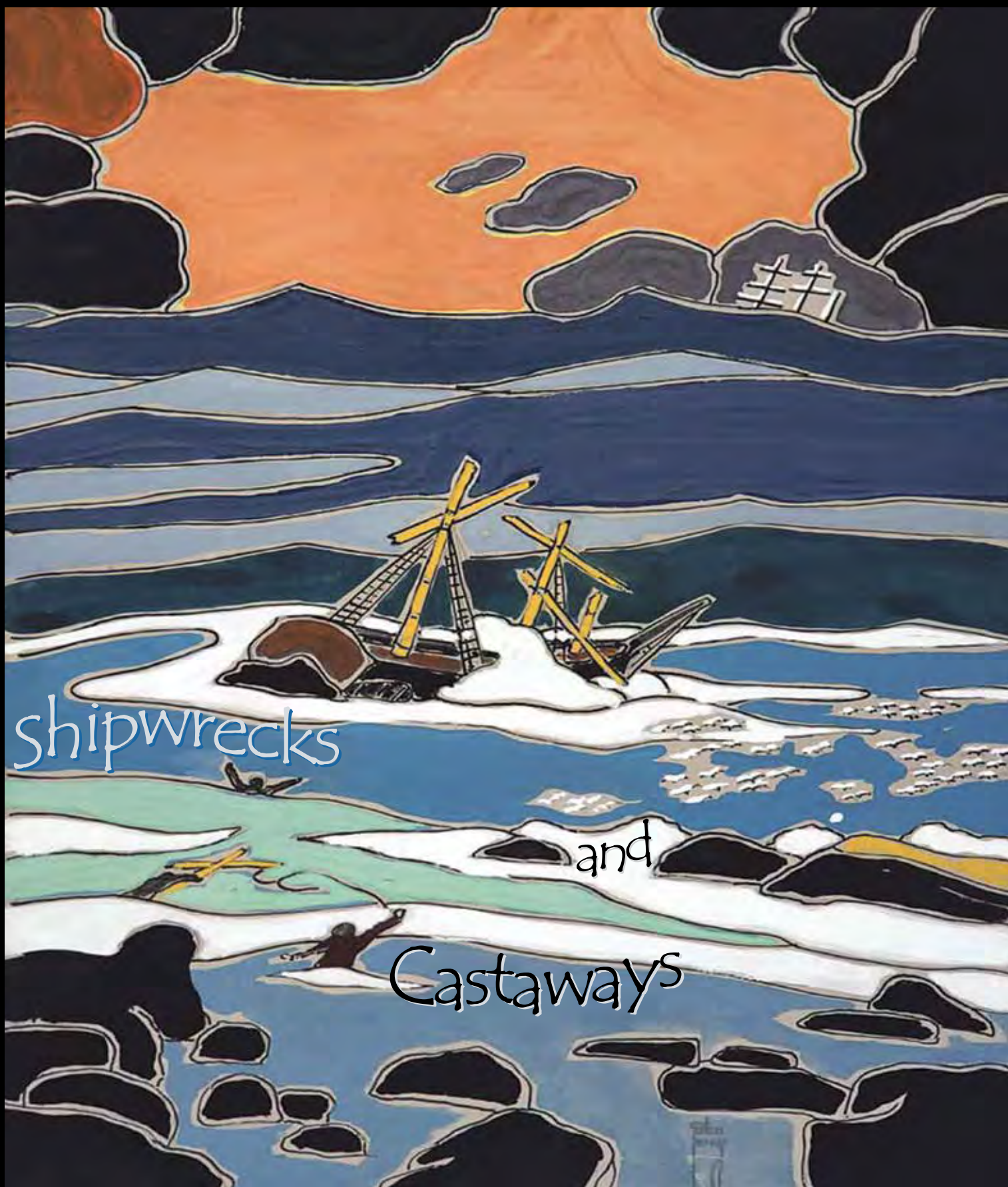
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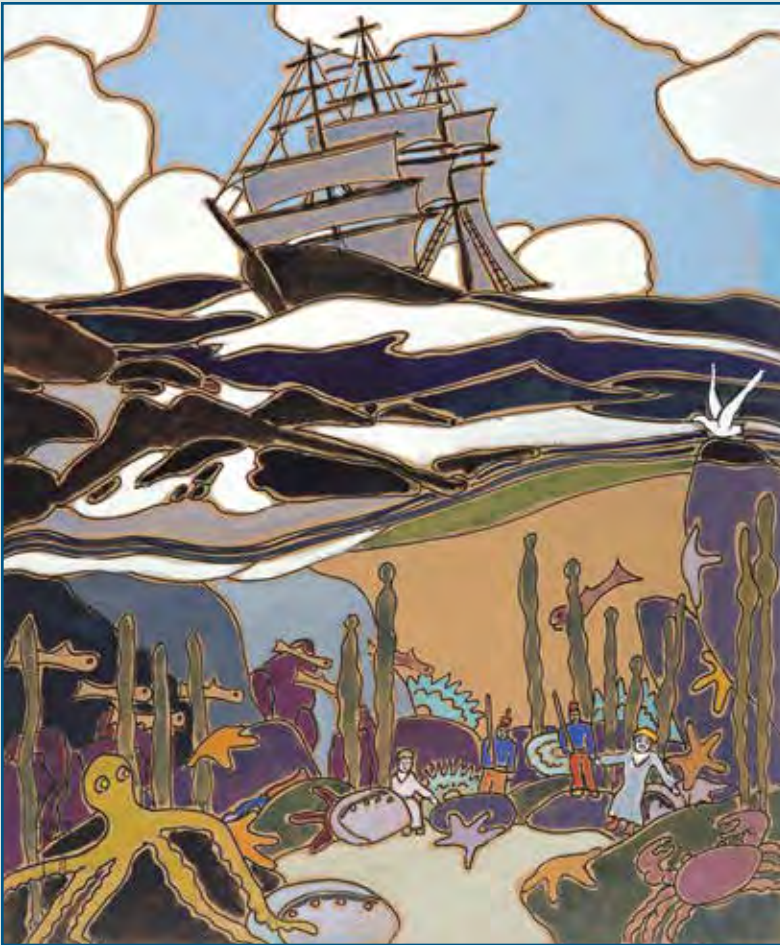
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shipwrecks

and

Castaways



Left: In the previously unpublished *Legends of the Coastland* illustrated by unique watercolor mosaics, Northern Californian artist Galen Wolf recalls the stories of shipwreck tragedies that filled his youthful memories. In his poignant rendering titled: "The Toy ship," Wolf recounts the shipwreck of the *Aculeo* fully laden with a cargo of grain, pig iron, coal and Christmas toys – one twist of fate would hold particular significance for Wolf (see JoAnn Semones, *The Shipwreck Legends of Galen Wolf*).

Galen Wolf Watercolor Mosaics courtesy of Allen Bunes and Shannon Nottestad

On the Cover:

Titled simply "The Wreck," Galen Wolf depicts the shipwreck of *Alice Buck* in 1881, with striking sweeps of color and the portrayal of the desperate struggle of the doomed sailors.

Below: In this dramatic oil on canvas painting by Walter Wright, New Zealand, the *Burning of the Boyd* signifies much more than this one explosive incident between Maori and European sailors in 1809 (see Joan Druett's, *Lady Castaways*).

Courtesy of the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Gift of the Auckland Picture Purchase Fund, 1908





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MAINSAIL HAUL—An order
in tacking ship bidding,
"Swing the main yards."

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*"... this was certainly my situation, a stranger in strange country, among a race of people I could not converse with."*¹

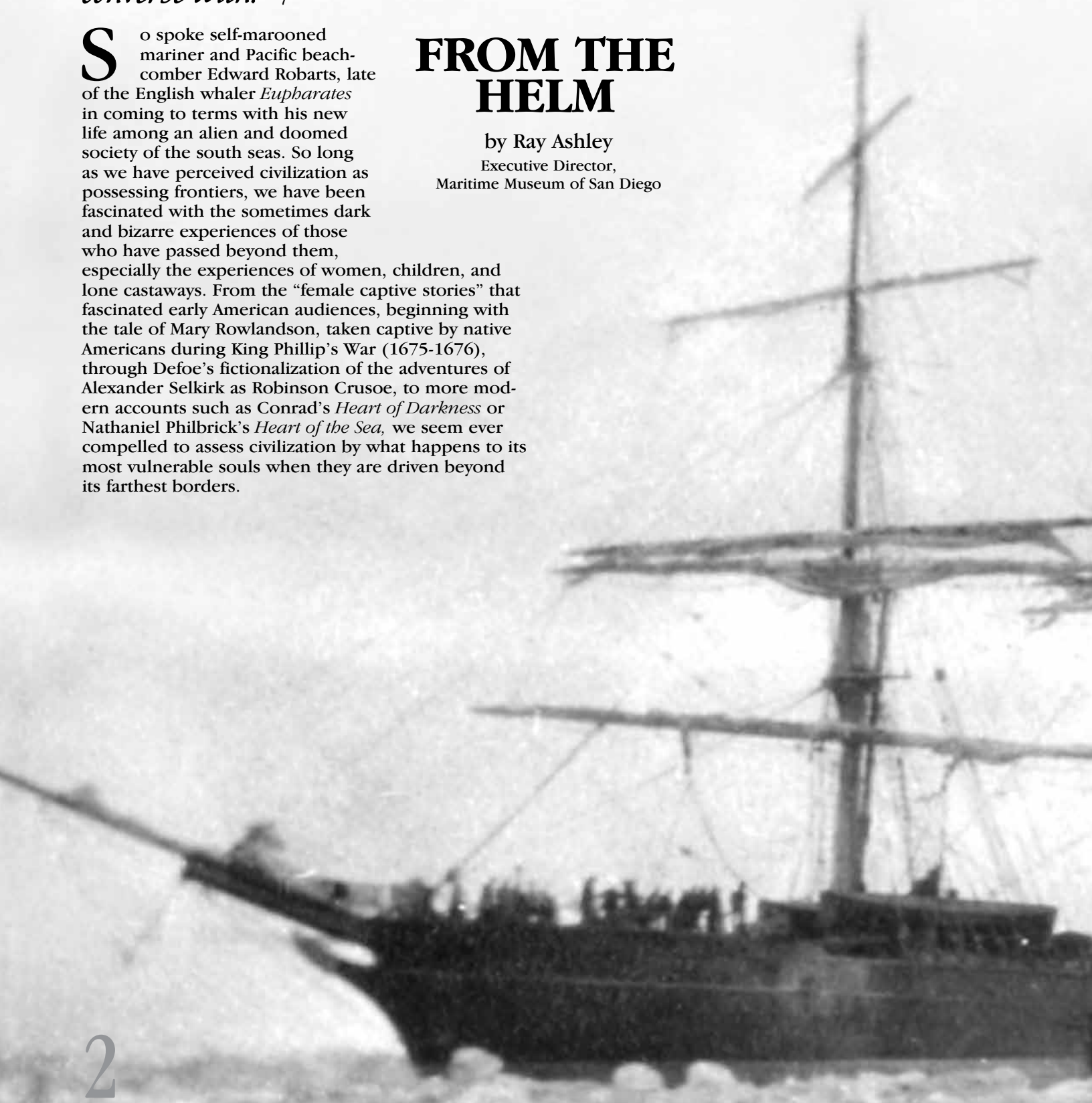
As a recurrent theme in history and literature one of the most popular methods of delivery to the heart of darkness is a ship, and just as often a ship forms the means of salvation and return to rational normalcy. The metaphor is no accident, for ships themselves are in symbol and in practice civilizations in microcosm purposefully projected into strange and threatening environments. Since the dawn

So spoke self-marooned mariner and Pacific beachcomber Edward Robarts, late of the English whaler *Eupharates* in coming to terms with his new life among an alien and doomed society of the south seas. So long as we have perceived civilization as possessing frontiers, we have been fascinated with the sometimes dark and bizarre experiences of those who have passed beyond them, especially the experiences of women, children, and lone castaways. From the "female captive stories" that fascinated early American audiences, beginning with the tale of Mary Rowlandson, taken captive by native Americans during King Phillip's War (1675-1676), through Defoe's fictionalization of the adventures of Alexander Selkirk as Robinson Crusoe, to more modern accounts such as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Nathaniel Philbrick's *Heart of the Sea*, we seem ever compelled to assess civilization by what happens to its most vulnerable souls when they are driven beyond its farthest borders.

FROM THE HELM

by Ray Ashley

Executive Director,
Maritime Museum of San Diego



of the early modern era, they have ever functioned as the archetypical embodiments of civilization and rationality. Captain Cook's *Endeavour*, for instance, is not famous because of new geographical discoveries that actually ensued while under his command, for there weren't terribly many. Her place in history, and Cook's, is luminous because she was one of the first ships to circumnavigate the world while rendering it thoroughly into rational terms.

This might explain why shipwreck or marooning is the most compelling delivery mechanism to catastrophe and darkness, or nobility and sacrifice. Millions of people live marooned in anonymous loneliness, but we all know of Robinson Crusoe who actually lived alone. The physical tragedy of *Titanic* is rather minor compared to contemporary

disasters such as great urban fires or earthquakes, or even the 50,000 men shot down in a matter of minutes during the first day of the battle of the Somme. But generations later *Titanic* continues to stand as the metaphor for the loss of civilization itself because her story subsumes the subsequent vast tragedy of her age.

This issue of *Mains'l Haul* approaches the metaphor of *Shipwrecks and Castaways* through the mosaic of art, literature and photography. Each perspective offers a unique interpretation of historical events with a tragic outcome, underscoring the fragility of existence and the constant presence of chaos lying in wait beneath the surface or close under the lee.

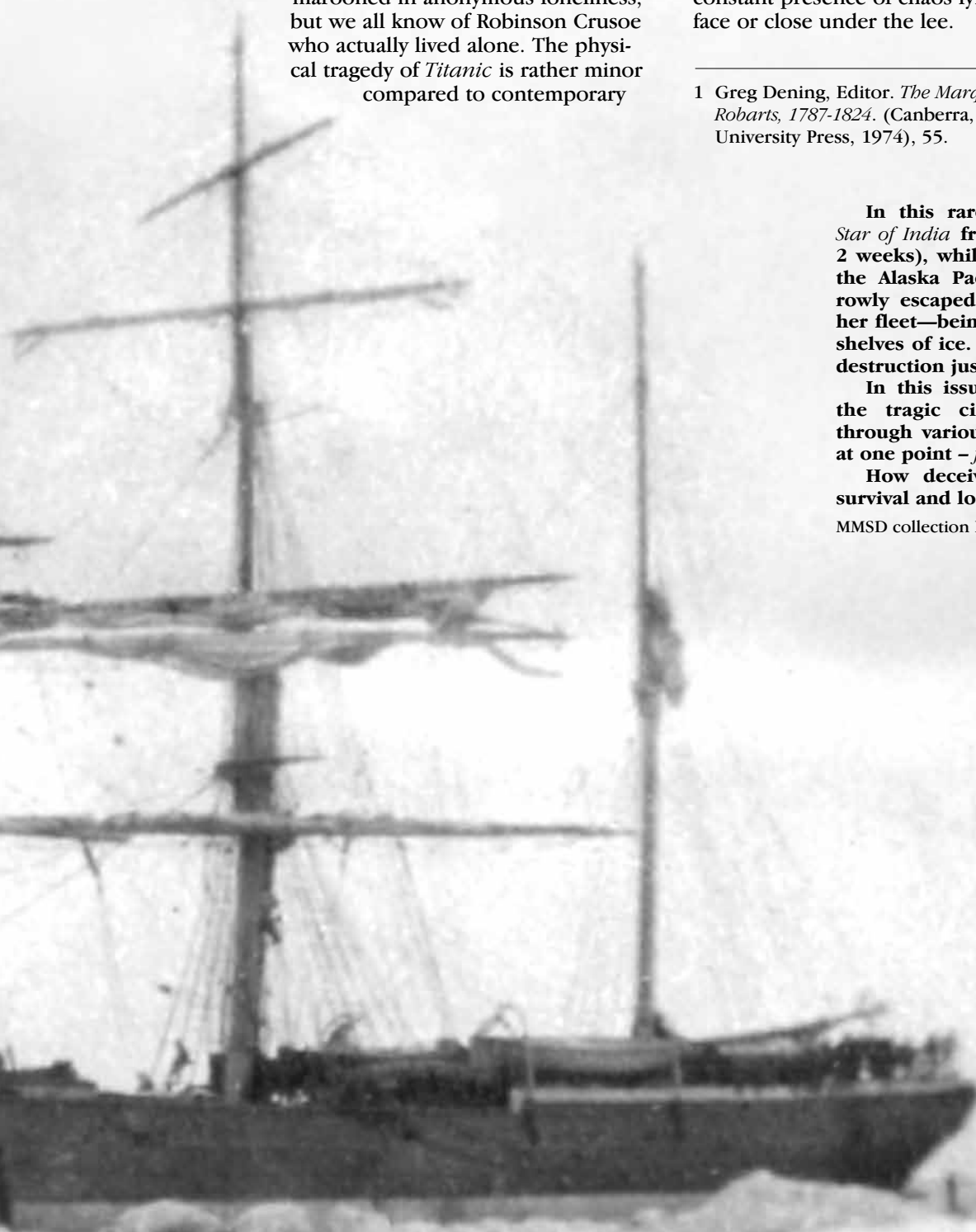
1 Greg Denning, Editor. *The Marquesan Journal of Edward Robarts, 1787-1824*. (Canberra, Australia: Australian National University Press, 1974), 55.

In this rare 1918 photograph of the *Star of India* frozen in ice (for more than 2 weeks), while in her working days with the Alaska Packers Association, she narrowly escaped the fate of other ships in her fleet—being crushed by the hardening shelves of ice. The *Star* was towed clear of destruction just in time.

In this issue of *Mains'l Haul*, we view the tragic circumstance of shipwreck through various motifs; they all converge at one point – frozen in time.

How deceiving the distance between survival and loss.

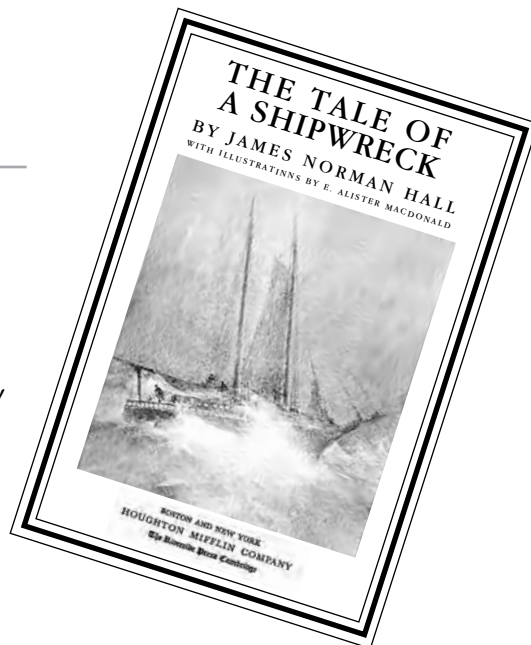
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Acknowledgements

Man has long been a sea-going animal, and I have no doubt that if all the recorded tales of his misadventures at sea were to be gathered into one place, the building to house them would cover an area larger than that occupied by the British Museum or the United States Congressional Library. As for the unrecorded tales, the air exhaled in vocal narratives by the shipwrecked must equal, in cubic content, the Earth's atmosphere as far as the stratosphere, or that, in violent motion, which has piled vessels on lee shores since the dawn of maritime adventure.

From *The Tale of A Shipwreck*, James Norman Hall (Boston & New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934) p. 1.



And so the editor of *Mains'l Haul* was faced with how to represent a modicum of shipwreck tales from the seemingly infinite accounts. Harvard Professor **John Stilgoe** posited the question: "How did women fair in shipwreck situations?" and so began a starting point. A debt of gratitude is owed to James Norman Hall's daughter, **Nancy Ella Hall Rutgers**, for entrusting the editor with a beautiful hardbound edition of her father's *The Tale of A Shipwreck*, and sharing treasured memories from the celebrated author's life.

Joan Druett, New Zealand author of several books regarding women on board sailing ships from *Petticoat Whalers* (wives of whaling captains), to *Hen Frigates* (wives of merchant captains) and *She Captains* (accounts of intrepid seafaring women and their pursuits), has penned the astonishing accounts of several women who survived shipwreck disasters. Her husband, maritime artist **Ron Druett**, graciously supplied many of the illustrations for *Lady Castaways*.

Internationally known maritime historian, researcher, author, photographer **Norman Brouwer**, also managed to break away from his work schedule to contribute a series of photographs, which were chosen not only for their historic significance, but also for the fatal impressions they bequeath to us.

Northern California historian

and author **JoAnn Semones**, Ph.D., brought the unpublished works of Galen Wolf to the foredeck, and so, enlivened our imaginations with the *Legends of the Coastland*, which might have otherwise gone by the lee.

In the flurry of searching for photographs and researching sources for *Mains'l Haul*, our Maritime Museum volunteer library staff remain as trusted a crew as any. Thanks to former editor **Chuck Bencik** and **Gordon Sheldon**, who tend steadfastly to every inquiry, regardless of how far afield it takes them.

With Gratitude,
Neva Sullaway, editor



Left: The most intact remains of a true clipper ship aside from the *Cutty Sark*, *Ambassador* was built in 1869 for the China tea trade, by William Walker at Rotherhithe, on the Thames near London. A full-rigged ship at 176 feet in length, she was built of composite construction (planked over iron frames). *Ambassador* went into gen-eral trading in the 1880s as steamers took over the China trade. She was sold to Norwegian owners in 1892. In April 1893, while sailing from Jacksonville, Florida, bound for Hawaii with a cargo of bagged phosphate, *Ambassador* began leaking in heavy seas off Cape Horn and put back to the Falklands. The ship was con-demned there and eventually sold for use as a wool storage hulk in the Straits of Magellan. She was towed there in January 1896. Eventually retired from that use and beached at her present location in Estancia San Gregorio, Chile (eastern straits of Magellan), nearly all her planking has been removed, while her framework survives nearly intact.

Ambassador, photographed by Norman Brouwer in 1978, Estancia San Gregorio, Chile



Major funding provided by the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture.

Vibrant Culture, Vibrant City

The *Star of India* as she sails today: "...There remains only one [sailing ship] that is pure of form, original in construction and still able to put to sea...a solitary and irreplaceable piece of the world's heritage..."
— Raymond Ashley

Photograph by Neva Sullaway





Women and
Children
first

Shipwreck, Women Castaways, and Cast-off Morals

John R. Stilgoe

In rain and a stiff breeze, at three in the morning the schooner *Pro Patria* ground over a coral reef and began to break up in heavy surf. Pulling on his pants, shirt, and sneakers and dashing on deck, James Norman Hall glanced about him, knew the vessel would last only a few minutes, and then ran below with a lifebuoy, thinking to comfort one of the two women passengers. What he found soothed him instead.

“Not a man had thought to pack anything; most of us were no more than half-dressed, not believing that our need for clothing would be of long duration,” but before him stood a woman “managing to stow things into her bag.” In his recollections of the 1933 incident, which first appeared as an *Atlantic Monthly* story, then as a book entitled *The Tale of a Shipwreck*, Hall stated that “it gave me a new conception, not only of a woman’s courage, but of her practical mind, and of the importance to women, no matter what the conditions, of things.”¹ Homeward bound from Pitcairn Island, which he had visited to further research the history of

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Opposite Left: Found at a New England church rummage sale, this old print shows a Royal Lifeboat Institution rescuing people from a stranded vessel.

Courtesy John R. Stilgoe Private Collection

the *Bounty* mutiny that he and Charles Nordhoff had begun writing, Hall blundered into shipwreck, cast-away life, then open-boat passage-making. His casual sexism and materialism may nowadays offend readers, but then again few readers know much about shipwreck, especially shipwreck in the South Seas.

And when contemporary readers encounter his book, or stand bored during lifeboat drill aboard a cruise ship, they take for granted that merchant-service officers still shout “**women and children first**” when ships founder, and that passengers can take along *things*, as Hall’s woman companion sought to do. Then as now, however, shipwreck casts passengers back to basics, and many of those basics swirl unremarked-upon by feminists, seafarers, and historians, especially when such experts deal with the Great South Sea. Perhaps they swirl in half-forgotten novels most of all.



It is commonplace knowledge that shipwreck brings out the best and worst in people, and all sorts of variations of good and bad. Within hours, the castaway *Pro Patria* crew and passengers had saved almost all their personal belongings, and almost everything portable from their beached, shattered schooner. Within a few more hours they had erected tents made from sails, and begun enjoying their experience. But after a few days one of the small boats, carefully prepared and provisioned, sailed off toward the nearest inhabited island, leaving behind some men and the two women passengers. One crewman explained that women fare

poorly in small-boat passages, simply because they lack privacy: men are easy about using a pail, but in mixed company women feel embarrassed. Hall only notes

that the “observation called for no confirmatory comment, and none was made,” but any contemporary reader must wonder, just a little. Are women more or less delicate about such matters now, three-fourths of a century (and much ideology) later? ²

Perhaps the answer is no. Perhaps, as Hall speculated in 1934, books and cinema, urban living and technical appliances conspire to make women, men and children alike less, and less able not only to endure shipwreck and other privation, but to prosper in difficult situations lacking

easy moral clarity. For decades after 1880, the circumstances of South Pacific shipwreck struck novelists and other expert observers as a laboratory for discerning the insidious timidity spawned by modern media. With the exception of the Polar regions, the South Seas remained the last, vast, frontier, and the last one to become increasingly visited by so-called “modern women.”

The more Europeans explored the South Pacific, the more complex the region became in their understanding, and in the understanding of those who experienced it indirectly, chiefly through reading, and less commonly through viewing paintings and other visual material. Seemingly Edenic landscapes proved thornier upon closer examination. Sumptuously gorgeous islands sheltered ferocious inhabitants; archipelagoes



Snipped from an old photograph album, this image shows composed women aboard a Pacific steamship, for them the lifeboat was a photographic backdrop. A few years after the image was taken, on 26 August 1914, the liner *Princess Victoria* rammed *Admiral Sampson* in fog off Point No Point near Seattle. The *Sampson* sank before all its passengers and crew reached safety.

Courtesy John R. Stilgoe Private Collection

equally gorgeous turned out to be the home of gentle people. What appeared a timeless region at first glance soon acquired a deep, unnerving history, especially after Cook touched Easter Island in 1774 and learned that the inhabitants could not recall who had erected the great statues. Brief but violent storms punctuated long idylls of gentle weather, often catching shipmasters by surprise and taxing the descriptive abilities of natural philosophers aboard. Painters vacillated between depicting newly discovered islands as landscapes that should be rendered in traditional styles or as scientific subjects requiring technical rendering. Many not only worried that dictates of history painting should also inform their work, but that indigenous artwork, especially the Polynesian wood carving so prominently expressed in canoes, must reward sustained attention by European artists, who might themselves change their own art as a result.³ Moreover, as historian Bernard Smith makes clear in *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, much analysis and visual depiction occurred in moments of nuanced interaction; one prudish artist depicted a young Tongan woman wearing a blanket obtained from the exploration ship. Then too, idiosyncrasy sometimes shaped group response; on his third voyage Cook may have been so ill that he responded aggressively in situations that had hitherto prompted much more gentle reaction.⁴

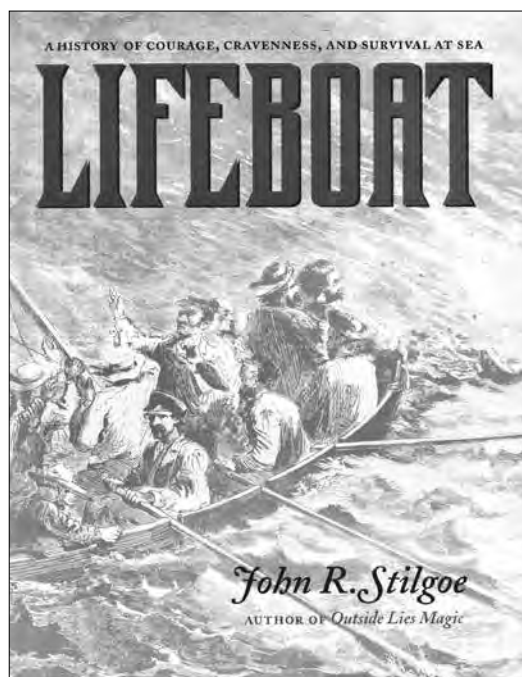
But navigation anywhere meant running the risk of shipwreck, usually via stranding on reefs, as two Royal Navy exploration vessels, *Porpoise* and *Cato*, did in 1803, with the loss of all live plants and preserved specimens.⁵ What Europeans and Americans learned from the Pacific became a divided lesson. Privileged readers moved ever more deeply towards grasping a vast, very complex region: this intellectual tradition endures as scholars struggle to make sense not only of what explorers found, described, and analyzed, but of how greater cultural contexts shaped such efforts, and contemporaneous effort to analyze them. But other readers—and often men who read little but listened much in waterfront inns, chandleries, and other loci of

oral information—eventually realized that exploration meant proceeding in uncharted, treacherous waters, often literally by hit-and-miss methods. The first group focused on nuanced difference analyzed deliberately by experts: the second group realized that any penetration in the South Pacific involved the possibility of shipwreck and subsequent direct contact. For decades blue-water shipmasters followed courses away from known and

suspected hazards, giving both dangerous reefs and rumored reefs the widest possible berth. As the period of sail gave way to the era of steam, many shipmasters gradually lost knowledge of the South Pacific, simply because steamships required wharves and other port facilities lacking in most shallow-water, reef-studded archipelagoes served by *Pro Patria* and other small sailing vessels.⁶ When the imperialist age of exploration ended, the ages of missionary activity, copra and sugar plantation operation, island annexation, mining, and tourism continued to deepen the world's interest in the South Pacific. Shipwrecks endured as an ongoing cost of conducting business in the region.⁷ These small-scale wrecks form the backbone of novels like *The*

Wrecker, a 1910 masterpiece by Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osborne, revolving around marine insurance, barratry (the deliberate theft of a vessel by its crew) and fraud, in archipelagoes still half-plotted.⁸ Shipwreck cast women into all the complexities of the South Pacific, and novelists swarmed around shipwreck as wreckers swarm around debris.

In any era and in any ocean, most women fare badly when ships founder. As I explain in detail in my book *Lifeboat*, sustained scrutiny of source material delineates certain patterns. Male passengers, and frequently crewmen too, abandon women, often shoving them aside in the confusion of lowering lifeboats, or sometimes simply ignoring them. Sexism is more than implicit in the wording of the old expression, “every man for himself”—in many narratives, especially those published to exonerate men, women and children scarcely exist. They enter the shipwreck moment as wraiths, then become invisible as men save themselves. In many castaway-boat narratives they huddle nearly unmentioned, almost as baggage, and in many post-landfall chronicles they disappear into rude tents, as James Norman Hall describes in his *Tale of a Shipwreck*. Lifeboats slung beneath davits



Right: John R. Stilgoe sails (and rows) a 1935 Newfoundland-built lapstrake lifeboat he rescued and restored himself.

Photo courtesy of John R. Stilgoe

do more than suggest the prospect of shipwreck. They provide vehicles for studying the behavior of women when chaos usurps male-dominated society, especially the hierarchical male society of the passenger-carrying merchant vessel. The best-known shipwreck tales and non-fiction lifeboat-passage narratives ignore women: no white women take passage aboard *Patna* in Conrad's *Lord Jim*, for example.⁹ But the continual foundering of very small sailing vessels in the South Pacific endured well into the twentieth century and literally shoved women into an awkward encounter with an otherness rare elsewhere.

Many women have survived shipwreck by sloughing off social mores that ordinarily restrict female activity, while later, after the end of misadventure, often eschewing any mention of such behavior. Most obviously, at least to male onlookers calm enough to notice behavior surrounding them, they discard their clothing when they leap overboard. But not all women remove their clothing for the plunge. Upper-class women do so. Middle- and lower-class women, however, not only struggle to get dressed—an operation which, in the late nineteenth-century, involved the lacing of corsets and other convoluted garments difficult to put on under regular conditions, let alone in pitch-black, heeling cabins—but do so even when they are urged to come up on deck.¹⁰ In many narratives, men dash from cabins nude or nearly so, and thus escape drowning as lower decks flood. Women, however, become invisible in many narratives, including those written by women survivors, when they stay below to dress and consequently drown. But women who



One crewman explained that women fare poorly in small-boat passages, simply because they lack privacy: men are easy about using a pail, but in mixed company women feel embarrassed.

Courtesy Ron Druett



John R. Stilgoe

is the Orchard Professor in the History of Landscape in the Department of Visual

& Environmental Studies at Harvard University, where he has taught for more than thirty years. A specialist in the history of built environments and acquiring information by looking around, for which he was profiled on the CBS show *Sixty Minutes*, he has written many books, among them *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene*, *Common Landscape of America, 1580 to 1845*, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb*, and *Outside Lies Magic*. For years he has written books about the seacoast, including an analytical survey, *Alongshore*, and a meditation, *Shallow-Water Dictionary*, about the salt marshes through which he rows his yacht tender. He recently published *Lifeboat: A History of Courage, Cravenness, and Survival at Sea*, which evolved from his years-long effort to restore a 1935 lapstreak Newfoundland-built ship's lifeboat he acquired as a derelict, using skills he learned from his late father, a professional boat builder. Building and restoring boats sometimes leads to discovery: *Lifeboat* began when he found a serial number masked by coats of paint on the stem of the lifeboat. His wife, Debra, is a scuba instructor, and together they sail the lifeboat to places he has identified as likely to hide jettisoned firearms: so far, his model proves successful. He has just begun restoring a 1903 ship's jollyboat, has a book in press about the future of the national landscape, and another in progress on cameras and photography.



ON BOARD AN EMIGRANT SHIP—THE LAST HOUR OFF GRAVESEND

In this 1800s sketch of an emigrant ship embarking from Gravesend, England, the cumbersome dress of the female passengers suggests the difficulty in surviving a plunge into the sea, if the call were to go up to abandon ship.

*Courtesy Maritime Museum of San Diego
(Accession # P-11262-c)*

reach topside fully clothed often drown when they leap overboard, even when equipped with lifebelts and life jackets. Until the 1930s, cork lifebelts often failed to float women wearing layers of underclothing beneath wool skirts. The 1915 torpedoing of *Lusitania* makes this ruthless class division clear: as clothed second- and third-class women jumped overboard and often immediately drowned, first-class women passengers stripped naked and went over the side clutching lifebelts. Such behavior must be teased from inquiry accounts and privately-published narratives, and from recorded comments by rescuers who found many women survivors stark naked.¹¹ American upper-class families had taught daughters to swim nude for generations, mostly as a life-saving technique, and aboard *Lusitania* and countless other foundering ships, the technique frequently worked.¹² But later, once castaways returned to civilization, social mores deterred most from mentioning this aspect of shipwreck behavior.

Prudery shaped not only the initial response of Europeans and Americans to their encounter with the mores of the South Pacific's island residents, but it also shaped the chronicling of their own behavior in the region — especially the troubling suggestion that whites *went native*. Expedition artists often failed to accurately depict Polynesian and other indigenous nude males, rendering genitals vaguely and sometimes offering their subjects bits of cloth to make g-strings. The blanketed Tongan woman may well have worn her blanket because her ease in her skin discomfited the male artist; the fact that artists experienced similar discomfort around naked men suggests that missionaries may be unfairly singled-out for subsequently forcing clothing upon South Pacific locals.¹³

While historians ponder the deeper reasons for missionary worry about nakedness (some see the emphasis on clothing as a way of developing a desire for manufactured goods that required locals to enter into a global cash economy), only a handful of observers wondered what might happen when European and American women—"white women" in the parlance of most writers—went native.¹⁴ Shipwreck seemed a perfect portal on native behavior, wantonness, and—despite the best efforts of moralists—survival itself. If women shed their clothing in order to survive, they might shed more.

"Woman, the greatest upholder, if not the actual originator, of that conventionality whereof she is the greatest victim," the novelist J. E. Patterson pontificated, "is drawn by the contemplation of romance rather than by the thing itself." While not a "defect in her nature," he continued reassuringly in his 1915 *Epistles From Deep Seas*, "the inherent outcome of her sex," her love of "small doings," confines her to "natural and well-defined latitudes." But even Patterson realized that times had begun to change: "I beg you to bear in mind, I am writing of *woman*, not of those freakish phases, strikingly insignificant when compared with the magnitude of the whole, which come and go, and are no more to after times than is a wanton puff of wind on a sail-less sea."¹⁵ Patterson clearly knew of moments or phases about which he refused to write—perhaps phases when teenage girls acted as teenage boys, or when women momentarily, often under duress, acted as men or girls, or creatures utterly alien. For him, and for other maritime authors flummoxed by fast-shifting mores in home and distant ports, the moments or phases might last longer than many landsmen realized, especially when women lived away from the reinforcement of other women "upholders."

For women, residence on South Pacific islands often meant life spent largely among men, and often out of touch with the wider world, especially the sphere of women, for months at a time.¹⁶ The vast scale of the Pacific region staggered or baffled writers; in the beginning some seemed to see the South Pacific

as essentially a larger Caribbean.¹⁷ The difference between fiction like James Otis's 1888 *The Castaways: Or, On the Florida Reefs* and the many shipwreck novels set in the South Pacific is simple: Otis assumed that some vessel would happen by the reefs quite quickly.¹⁸ Half a world away, being shipwrecked meant the potential for spending months or years on an out-of-the-way island. H. De Vere Stacpoole made memorable use of this circumstance in *Blue Lagoon*, a 1908 bestseller about two children growing up alone on a South Pacific atoll, which Hollywood filmed in 1980.¹⁹ Whatever castaway men might or might not do once whaleboat or lifeboat ground ashore on some tropical island, a castaway woman almost certainly had to abandon some of her traditional mores, perhaps more quickly if she had already abandoned most or all of her clothes. She might hold out against circumstances for a while, but eventually she would adapt to castaway life, especially if she encountered women who already had.



Non-fictional white women ventured into South Pacific archipelagoes as wives, usually of missionaries or traders, or as long-distance tourists, often on yachts. Until airliner travel revolutionized access in the 1960s, reaching most islands meant a long steamship passage, then passages in successively smaller engine-powered or sailing craft, and finally, sometimes landing through the surf in a small boat. Women who arrived on any coral strand consequently had the time, inclination, and funds to be in the South Pacific in the first place, and such women often came from upper economic levels of European and American society most willing to bend

In the style of Paul Gauguin, contemporary artist Pati Sofia captures the innocence and nudity of a Polynesian girl, in contrast to nineteenth century expedition artists who dressed their subjects in compliance with their social mores.

Courtesy Editor's collection, by artist Pati Sofia, La Jolla, California



*Mrs. Travers, a key character in Joseph Conrad's much-ignored **The Rescue**, reveals more than her breasts and legs in her castaway attire. Clothed in a filmy Malay jacket fastened with clasps and a blue sarong that irritates her husband, the yachtswoman grows alien to both the men who rescue her and to her husband, who charges her with always liking "extreme opinions, exotic costumes, lawless characters, romantic personalities," talking "like a pagan," and looking "simply heathenish in this costume." Mrs. Travers listens, then replies, "As long as I don't look like a guy." Her husband remarks on how rapidly she has slipped away from "the social sphere to which you belong."*

12

social mores. Many writers glimpsed the fracturing of the image of proper womanhood so stoutly asserted by Patterson. Women likely to venture into the South Pacific arrived, via gangplank or lifeboat, bearing innovative if untested mores. Novelist H. M. Tomlinson wrote in 1937 of one such woman about to go abroad from England: "No local woman would dare to go out in stuff so rare and scanty. Such a girl could afford the innocence of the immortals and perhaps she knew it," ²⁰ By 1937 such women had become a "type" in fiction, usually upper class, well educated, chafing under mores upheld by older women, and anxious for adventure. They pushed social limits at home and often enjoyed the loosened restrictions they discovered in the South Seas.

Only a handful of authors of Conrad's stature explored the drift of women from that sphere, but a far larger number of thriller writers did. Today, forgotten by all but a handful of scholars, their work forms the larger context in which *The Rescue* appeared.

"The two women, one half a child as yet, one in the full tide of her beauty and ripe youth, both dressed in man's clothing, and standing among a crowd of wild, black, naked savages, made a curious picture, had anyone been there to see it," wrote Beatrice Grimshaw in *Nobody's Island* in 1923.²² The older woman, perfectly comfortable wearing a pistol, and firing pistols and rifles, proves the sort of heroine Grimshaw made famous in a series of South Pacific adventure novels published over four decades. In most of her novels, women suffer shipwreck, then often find freedom in castaway life. Her 1940 *South Sea Sarah* turns on the sinking of the coastal steamship *Cape York*, the 1926 *Wreck of the Redwing* involves the foundering of a Pacific steamship, and her 1920 *The Terrible Island* opens with an amnesiac young woman washing ashore in full evening dress, human flotsam from a liner sunk so far offshore that at first her rescuers make no connection between it and their foundling.²³ By the mid-1920s, Grimshaw had worked out a formulaic juxtaposition of social propriety and shipwreck, and subsequent castaway life. One Grimshaw heroine found herself predictably stranded: "Della had come down from the house in a beach costume no scantier than any average costume seen on average seashores of the day, but it did not seem to please Mary Greene, and Della's carriage in the costume pleased Miss Greene less," the author explains in the 1940 *Murder in Paradise*. "I'd like to see you in my things," Della explodes. "I hate people of your sort, with no shape, getting sniffy at people who have." ²⁴ Della is more than the scantily-clad, upper-class young woman at whom H. M. Tomlinson looks askance. On the beach awaiting rescue, she becomes the very archetype of the European or American woman *gone native* in ways that transcend her own native mores and that make her willing to wear what she wants, not what other, more propriety-minded castaway women expect.

As early as 1908, Grimshaw experimented with this archetype in *Vaiti of the Islands*, a novel about a young woman who commands a schooner involved in nefarious enterprise. The woman is part English, part Tahitian, the daughter of a British nobleman and an island princess. She is lawless but educated, and wily enough to change into feminine attire in order to mislead French customs officials. She commands a crew of dangerous (and half-dressed) men, suffers and then prospers from misadventures in coral caves, finds herself tied up, and apparently swims nude, at least at night, to accomplish some missions.²⁵ Even in the present feminist era, it is difficult to read Grimshaw's thrillers, especially her first ones, without marveling at her willingness to create female characters that defy the social restrictions that governed her era, and — usually following shipwreck — relish life without civilized rules.

While nowadays almost wholly ignored by scholars, Beatrice Grimshaw merely reflected a period mood that produced *Adventure*, Jack London's infamous South Seas novel of 1911. His fever-stricken copra plantation owner, convinced he is hallucinating, sees a vision: "Not far out, and coming in across the *Jessie's* anchorage, he saw a whale-boat nose thrust skyward on a smoky crest and disappear naturally," London writes. "He knew that no whale-boat should be out there, and he was quite certain no men in the Solomons were mad enough to be abroad in such a storm." The boat freights castaways captained by a young woman, who soon takes charge of the plantation, and its recalcitrant, violent, g-string-wearing wage-serfs. Eventually, the planter rails at the woman: "You went your own willful way," he shouts, "wrecking schooners, recruiting on Malaita, and sailing schooners: one lone, unprotected girl in the company of some of the worst scoundrels in the Solomons." By the time he explodes in an anger nearly identical to that of Mr. Travers in Conrad's *The Rescue*, Joan has indeed been involved in excruciatingly dangerous but profitable adventure, including losing a schooner. "I have my own way to make in the world, and I came to the Solomons to do it, getting married is not making *my* way in the world," Joan exclaims in fury. "It may do for some women, but not for me, thank you." ²⁶ But just as Grimshaw glimpsed in *Vaiti*, then scrutinized in novel after novel, London realized that the loss of ship or schooner often freed a certain sort of woman from more than proper attire. It offered her freedom from conventional morality, especially the morality that circumscribed risk-taking, sexuality, and close-up interaction with those nearly naked and potentially rapaciously savage copra wage-slaves.

Going native involved more than discarding clothes and conventions, as Zane Grey makes clear in his powerful and disconcerting novel, *The Reef Girl*, which lay unpublished until 1977, almost forty years after his death. It involved accepting not merely a different lifestyle, but a willingness to reinterpret the remnants of European and American propriety forever. In the last pages of a novel that publishers refused to accept, fearing reaction to its scenes of miscegenation, Grey discards that propriety. Faaone leaps from the steamship, sheds her clothes, and swims for a reef—and her newlywed American husband leaps overboard too, almost drowns, and finally reaches her, the reef—and the realization that he cannot leave Tahiti. ²⁷ He cannot leave; the freedom of Tahiti gives his bride power. In delineating this power, Grey condenses the issues that prompted publishers to reject his manuscript in the 1930s.

James Norman Hall and Charles Bernard Nordhoff explore such issues at length—and more diplomatically—in their ostensibly non-fictional 1921 *Faery Lands*

of the South Seas. Sensible, mindful visitors to Tahiti come to "a realization that strange beliefs persist under a semblance of Christianity; of the lure of a race whose confidence the white man can never fully gain." In the South Pacific, modern industrial civilization becomes veneer only: "The mail steamers, the wireless, the traders, the scattering of French officials—these things are a mere play of shadows on the surface." ²⁸ The tourist glimpses what the castaway confronts; the passenger abandons more than ship, especially if the passenger is female.

Between *Faery Lands* and *The Reef Girl*, and bracketed by many of Beatrice Grimshaw's thrillers, appeared Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, which shattered American intellectual complacency in 1928. Whatever the long-term anthropological value of the book, it contrasted Samoan sexual life with that of modern urban America, drawing on the same currents of thought as her contemporaries. "Our children are faced with half a dozen standards of morality: a double sex standard for men and women, a single sex standard for men and women, and groups which advocate that the single standard should be freedom while others argue that the single standard should be absolute monogamy." But while all such concepts are "paraded before the growing children while the actual conditions in their own communities and the moving pictures and magazines inform them of mass violations of every code," the Samoan child "faces no such dilemma." Mead attempts to lay a foundation of a new educational superstructure for American children, especially teenagers, facing "the burden of choice." ²⁹ While part of a larger anthropological moment that produced other books useful to any modern scholar probing South Pacific shipwreck (especially Hilaire Hiler's *From Nudity to Raiment*), her book profoundly influenced American women, especially mothers, and in time made her a controversial but widely-respected woman's magazine columnist. ³⁰ But always underlying her reputation, and her effort to build a new foundation of sexuality, lay the possibility that well-reared American tourists might by misadventure find themselves castaways on some coral isle, nude or nearly so, and suddenly able to choose among many more options than they had known at home. No reader of *The Reef Girl* who knows *Coming of Age in Samoa* misses the courageous extrapolation of Zane Grey: contact with South Seas islands and people might make thoughtful tourists ponder, but intimacy would make them change, forever.

"The *Pro Patria* had left Tahiti in the middle of August, and November was now well along,"



Above: Pictured is James Norman Hall's home in Arue, Tahiti, now a museum under the auspices of the L'Association des Amis de la Maison de James Norman Hall. The library houses over 3000 of Hall's most beloved books.

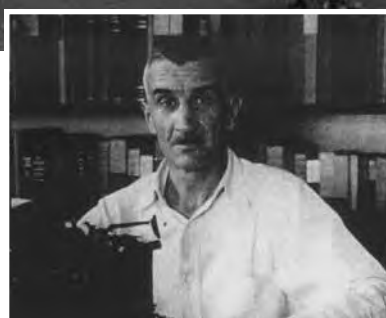
Courtesy Nancy Ella Hall Rutgers

Middle: James Norman Hall (1887-1851) wrote in his library at home in Arue, Tahiti. Of his 24 books, ten books were written in collaboration with Charles Nordhoff, the most well-known of which is *Mutiny on the Bounty*, 1932.

Having served in WWI, surviving the earliest of the trench warfare and shot down twice, then captured by the Germans; Hall had a wealth of experiences to draw from throughout his literary career. In 1919, Hall was assigned to work with Charles Nordhoff on the *History of the Lafayette Flying Corps*, 1920. Thus began a lifelong friendship and collaboration, which produced such maritime literature as:

Faery Lands of the South Seas, 1921; *Mutiny on the Bounty*, 1932; *Pitcairn's Island*, 1934; *The Hurricane*, 1936; and *Botany Bay*, 1941.

Courtesy Nancy Ella Hall Rutgers, daughter of James Norman Hall

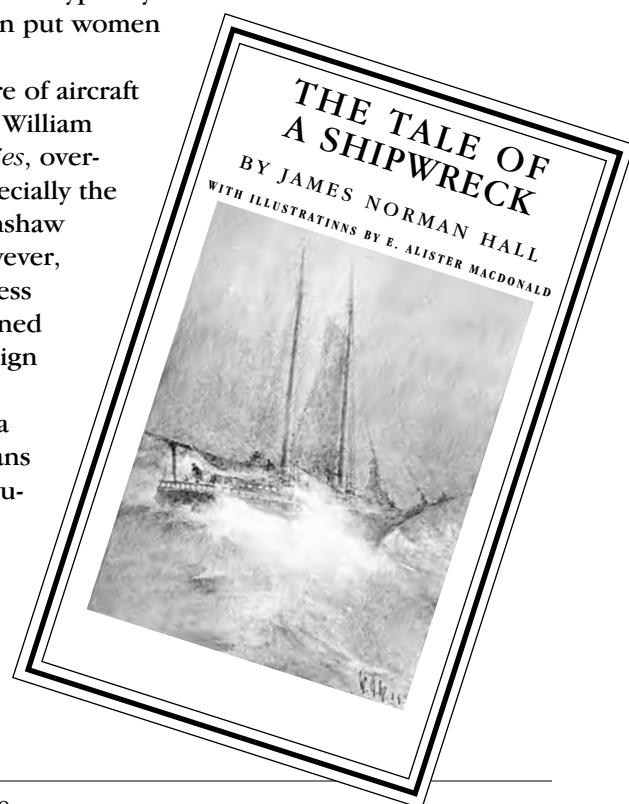


James Norman Hall muses near the close of his 1934 *Tale of a Shipwreck*. "One could go away for three months, six months, six years, and, coming back, find everything about as it had been upon leaving." As he nears the island, he muses on his inability to adapt to a different notion of time. "For all the fourteen years spent in Polynesia, I still suffer, occasionally, from my old high-latitude illusion that time has value."³¹ For about sixty years after

1880, some authors focused less on the archipelagoes and peoples of the South Seas than on the ways, often insidious, often unrecognized, that the region forever changed long-term sojourners. Novelists discovered in shipwreck the perfect way to wrench often complacent whites into another continuum that tore apart British and

American urban mores as instantly and ruthlessly as coral ripped apart timbers and planks. Women, especially, change—often in ways that contemporary women's studies experts still ignore. Perhaps the sheer physicality of shipwreck, small-boat passage-making, and castaway life still puts off scholars who see shipwreck stereotypically as a moment when strong men put women and children first.

Perhaps the parallel genre of aircraft crash novels, especially William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, overwhelms the earlier genre, especially the powerful books Beatrice Grimshaw produced.³² In the end, however, today's ideologies fail to address what traditional seafarers learned whenever they touched a foreign port or anchored just beyond some coral reef: how quickly a storm or navigation error means shipwreck, a sudden, often brutal struggle for survival, and then castaway life in a place, and among people, previously viewed chiefly as scenery.



Notes

- 1 James Norman Hall, *The Tale of a Shipwreck* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1934), 100-101, 103, 145.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 100-101, 103, 145.
- 3 Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 141, 194-195, 71, and *passim*.
- 4 Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 97, 96, 207.
- 5 Smith, *European Vision*, 194-196.
- 6 John R. Stilgoe, *Lifeboat: A History of Courage, Cravenness, and Survival at Sea* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), esp. pp. 20-99.
- 7 See, for example, Douglas L. Oliver, *The Pacific Island* (1951: rev. ed. New York: Doubleday, 1961) and Felix Riesenber, *The Pacific Ocean* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1940). Neither author mentions the insurance-industry efforts that skewed so much South Pacific business.
- 8 Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osborne, *The Wrecker* (New York: Scribner's, 1910), esp. pp. 482-485.
- 9 Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim* (1900: reprint Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1920). See also the non-fiction account, very popular in its day, by Cecil Foster: *1700 Miles in Open Boats: The Story of the Loss of the S. S. Trevesa in the Indian Ocean and the Voyage of Her Boats to Safety* (1924: reprint London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952).
- 10 Alexander McKee, *The Golden Wreck* (London: Souvenir, 1986), esp. pp. 100-104. Coroner records often describe the clothing worn by drowned women; the amount of clothing is often considerable.
- 11 Charles E. Lauriat, *The Lusitania's Last Voyage* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1915), offers a useful introduction to class-divided behavior in that disaster; see also Stilgoe, *Lifeboat*, 235-236.
- 12 On class division in women's swimming ability, see Stilgoe, *Alongshore* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 335-367.
- 13 Smith, *Imagining*, 96-97.
- 14 Oliver, *Pacific Islands*, 182.
- 15 J. E. Patterson, *Epistles From Deep Seas* (New York: Hubbell, 1915), 198-199.
- 16 On this see James Norman Hall and Charles Bernard Nordhoff, *Faery Lands of the South Seas* (New York: Harper, 1921), esp. p. 69. The mysterious Englishman, Tari, explains that being out of touch produces a profoundly different sense of time which itself produces a sort of detachment.
- 17 This attitude lingered until the middle of the twentieth century. See, for example, Wilfred G. Burchett, *Pacific Treasure Island: New Caledonia* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1941).
- 18 James Otis, *The Castaways: Or, On The Florida Reefs* (New York: Burt, 1888).
- 19 H. De Vere Stacpoole, *Blue Lagoon* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1908). See also his *Beach of Dreams* (New York: John Lane, 1919). *The Blue Lagoon* ran as a play in London, and as a 1980 film starring Brooke Shields.
- 20 *Pipe All Hands* (New York: Harper, 1937).
- 21 Joseph Conrad, *The Rescue* (1919, reprint; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1924), 264-276. As a portal to issues of class, gender, and Euro-centrism at the turn of the twentieth century, all in a marine setting, this novel has no peer.
- 22 Beatrice Grimshaw, *Nobody's Island* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1923), 139-141.
- 23 Grimshaw, *The Wreck of the Redwing* (New York: Holt, 1926); *South Sea Sarah* (Sydney: New Century, 1940); *The Terrible Island* (New York: Macmillan, 1920).
- 24 Grimshaw, *Murder in Paradise* (Sydney: New Century, 1940), 172.
- 25 Grimshaw, *Vaiti of the Islands* (New York: Wessels, 1908).
- 26 Jack London, *Adventure* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), 284-285. Undergraduate men routinely tell me that this is the finest "feminist" novel they have read, something that makes undergraduate women in the same seminar room extremely uncomfortable.
- 27 Zane Grey, *The Reef Girl* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), esp. pp. 204-209.
- 28 Hall and Charles Bernard Nordhoff, *Faery Lands of the South Seas* (New York: Harper, 1921), 277.
- 29 Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (New York: Blue Ribbon, 1928), 201, 247, and *passim*. It is difficult to underestimate the significance of this book, and Mead's later magazine efforts.
- 30 Hilaire Hiler, *From Nudity to Raiment* (New York: Weyhe, 1929). For an introduction to the relationship of swimming attire, nudity, and morality, see Stilgoe, *Alongshore*, 334-368.
- 31 Hall, *Tale of a Shipwreck*, 157-158.
- 32 William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (New York: Putnam, 1954). The film version of the novel appeared in 1963. It is useful to read John Keegan, *The Mask of Command* (New York: Viking, 1987) in any analysis of shipwreck: if the master loses command of crew and passengers during shipwreck, orderly evacuation and subsequent lifeboat progress often devolves into chaos. But underlying the command of the shipmaster is the command of society—if no order comes, some male passengers and crew may still put women and children first. On the other hand, they may not.



Courtesy John R. Stilgoe
Private Collection

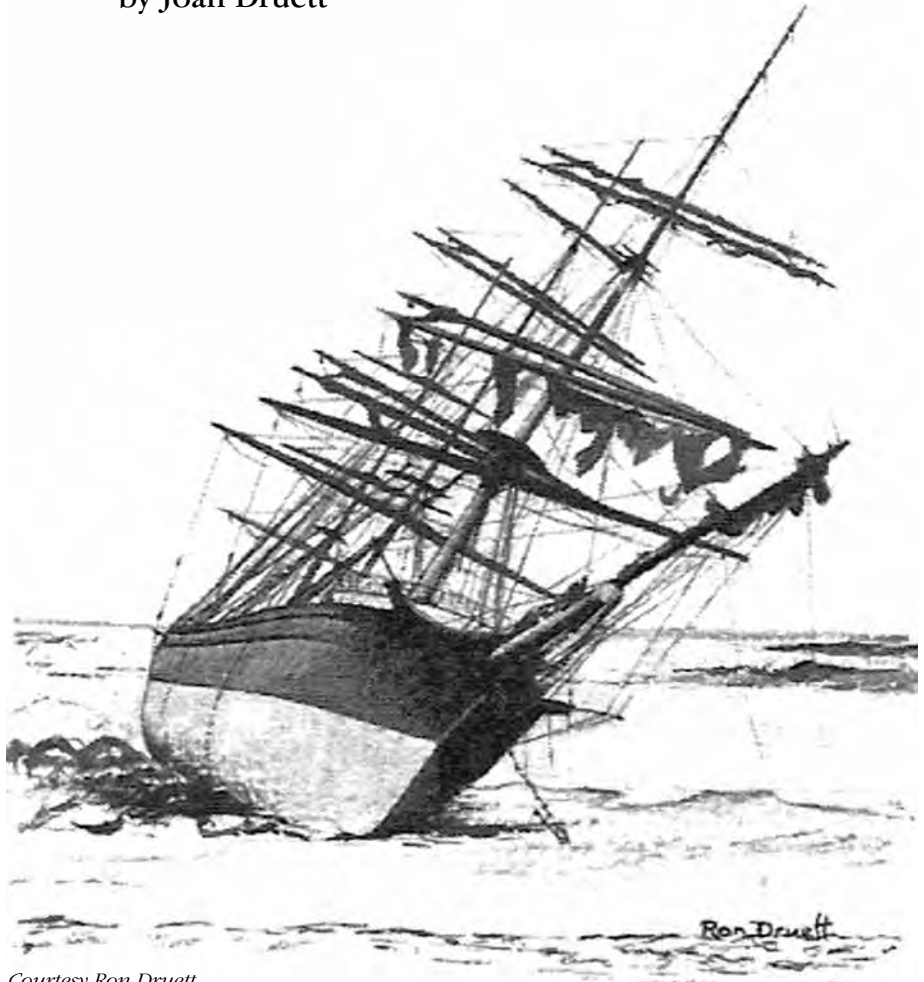
Lady Castaways

by Joan Druett



Joan Druett considers herself an accidental historian. Tumbling into a deep hole on the tropical island of Rarotonga, she found the long-lost grave of a whaling wife at the bottom, and a passion for researching the lives of men and women under sail was born. A Fulbright fellowship sent her to New England and Hawaii to research the logbooks and journals that provided the foundation for a stream of popular works of maritime history and seafaring novels. She lives in Wellington, New Zealand, with her husband, Ron Druett, a successful maritime artist. See her website at joan.druett.gen.nz

Photo courtesy of Robert Cross



Courtesy Ron Druett

Any woman who stepped aboard a ship bound to exotic Pacific destinations must have felt a number of qualms, shipwreck being one of the foremost. Death by drowning was dreaded by mariners of both sexes, but being cast away on a tropical island — where, as was popularly known, free love was practiced — held particularly dire implications for a decent Victorian lady. If shipwreck should indeed happen, the best she could hope for, perhaps, was that the island where she was cast up by the sea was uninhabited.

According to whaleman Roland F. Coffin, this last possibility is exactly what happened to one Nantucket seafaring woman in the mid-1800s. His story started in the whaleboat where he was one of the oarsmen, at the moment when everyone realized that they'd gotten lost after being towed off by a whale. After a day and a night of staying by the whale in the hope that the ship would find them, the six men were faint for lack of food and water, so the captain gave the order to abandon the corpse, set sail, and head for the nearest beach.

The island they raised seemed quite deserted, but then a solitary figure rushed out of the coconut palms in a state of wild excitement. To their amazement, they found a tattered and weather-beaten American female, who had been the only survivor when her husband's ship had wrecked on the reef. She was a resourceful soul. Just like the men in romantic sagas of the sea, she had scavenged the wreck for materials for a cabin, and then, having built it, she settled down to wait for rescue. She had been waiting, in fact, for five years, so was overcome with delight when Coffin and his shipmates waded ashore.

They were forced to confess that they couldn't rescue her, being in need of saving themselves. Not only had they mislaid their ship, but they were starving. Though naturally disappointed, she promised to make them a capital stew, which arrived smelling very savory indeed. The men fell upon the food, Coffin reminiscing, "The woman looked on quite delighted for to see us eat, and a-fillin' each chap's dish as fast as it was empty."

Finally, she couldn't persuade them to eat a scrap more. As she took the plates away, she observed, "I bet you don't any of you know what you've been eatin'."

Well, ma'am, prevaricated the skipper, he couldn't rightly guess, though it was certainly "a powerful good stew."

"Well," says she, "that there was a rat stew."

The ship rats had survived the wreck and bred on the island, and she had been living on those rats for the past five years.

Unfortunately for the men, they had to do the same. Being a creative chef, she gave them a varied menu of: "roast rat, broiled rat, fried rat, rat fricassee, and rat stew," but relief was general when their ship found them, and they sailed away, leaving the rats in full possession of the isle.¹

It is interesting that the narrator, Roland F. Coffin, did not name the heroine of this drama — out of tact, probably, because she wouldn't have had a chance of living it down if the gossip had gotten around that she had lived on rats for five years — Nantucket being a small community. This, however, raises an even more intriguing question. When women were shipwrecked, were they risking their reputations as well as their lives?



Courtesy Ron Druett

Courtesy Ron Druett

Ron Druett



Jeanne Baret

Sailor in Disguise

Shipmates had commented on her effeminate looks, and that she never shaved, relieved herself, or removed her shirt in public.

Captain de Bougainville, the commander of the first French circumnavigation of the world, on the ships *La Boudeuse* and *L'Étoile*, 1766-1769, certainly thought so. He expressed that opinion in Tahiti, where he had just found out that a woman was on board *L'Étoile*, disguised as a valet. Her name was Jeanne Baret, and her employer was the naturalist, Philibert Commerson, who was also her lover. It hadn't been easy to keep up the pretense of being a man. Shipmates had commented on her effeminate looks, and that she never shaved, relieved herself, or removed her shirt in public. The fact that she slept on the floor of Commerson's cabin caused a lot of chat, too. However, it wasn't until they arrived at Tahiti, where the natives judged gender by stance and shape, not dress, that the truth was revealed.

The first Tahitian who came on board exclaimed in surprise that she was a *vabiné*, and the next day, when she and Commerson were botanizing on shore, they were accosted by a group of men. Partly as a joke, and also because they were curious to know what a European woman was like, they requested from her the same favors that their women were so readily granting the sailors. Jeanne had to be rescued by a squad of marines, who were summoned by Commerson's panic-stricken shouts.

Hauled up in front of Bougainville, Baret confessed that she was a girl. She wasn't punished, as the gallant expedition officers admired her spirit of adventure. Her secret was kept, too, as Bougainville decided if her sex became commonly known it would be difficult "to prevent the sailors from alarming her modesty." Two months later, however, her shipmates took matters into their own hands. When the ships were at the island of New Ireland, they seized her when she was alone on shore, and forcibly stripped her naked. The bandages she wore to compress her breasts had given her a disfiguring rash, so she escaped rape, but, as Bougainville commented, "if the two ships had been wrecked on a desert island, what a singular fate would have befallen Baret!"²

Rose de Freycinet

Madame La Jolie Commandante

Neither ship was wrecked, so Jeanne Baret did not face that awful possibility, unlike another French female transvestite exactly a half century later. This was 22-year-old Rose de Freycinet, who just after midnight on 17 September 1817, dressed up in blue frockcoat and trousers, and sneaked on board the corvette *Uranie* to accompany her beloved husband, Captain Louis-Claude de Freycinet, on a discovery expedition to the Pacific.

She didn't keep up the deception long at all — once the ship was well out to sea she appeared in the cabin in a gown. The French officers were as impressed by her courage as their counterparts on the Bougainville expedition, and gallantly accepted her presence. *L'Uranie* sailed on to Tenerife, Rio de Janeiro, Cape Town, Mauritius, Bourbon Island, Timor, the Moluccas, the Marianas, Guam, Hawaii, and Australia, stopovers that were enhanced by the presence of *Madame La Jolie Commandante* (as the officers dubbed her). They departed from Sydney on Christmas Day, 1819. Just six weeks later the corvette struck a submerged rock off Cape Horn.

Sinking fast, *L'Uranie* was deliberately beached so that as much as possible of the scientific collection could be salvaged before the ship broke up. For the next two months Rose slept on a plank set on two chairs, wrapped only in a sarong, though there was ice



Rose de Freycinet

Courtesy Ron Druett

on the ground. Like the men, she lived on a diet of penguin flesh, seal meat stewed in water with biscuit crumbs for thickening, seabirds, and steaks of wild horses. A special treat was a loaf of bread baked out of flour that had been presented to the Abbé to powder his hair. The sailors did not disturb her (though they did sing obscene songs in her hearing), because Rose was very careful to take the Abbé with her on walks.

The uncouth captains of two American vessels, whaler *General Knox* and trader *Mercury*, displayed no courteous deference whatsoever, instead they demanded extortionate sums to carry the castaways to a South American port. Rose recorded that Louis was forced to make an expensive arrangement with Captain Galvin of the 280-ton *Mercury*, “a rogue who is trying to profit from our present predicament.” Galvin didn't even offer Rose a stateroom, instead he contemptuously allotted her a cupboard lit only by a small round of glass in the deck overhead, which went dark every time someone stepped onto it. Once the *Mercury* was at sea, the behavior of the captain and his passengers became even more insulting, a problem which was finally resolved by buying the *Mercury* and turning her into the *Physicienne*.³

Ann Morley

A Reputation Lost

Madame de Freycinet's reputation survived the dreadful experience. Not so that of Ann Morley, a convict in Australia, who had worked out her sentence, set up a tavern in Sydney with her husband, and finally on 8 November 1809, took passage on the ship *Boyd* to escape a broken marriage. Fatefully, the ship's master, John Thompson, decided to call at Whangaroa, in the north of New Zealand, to top up his lading with timber, and drop off several New Zealand Maori sailors, who were working their passage home.

During the passage across the Tasman Sea Thompson flogged one of them, a chief by the name of Te Ara. His so-called crime was laziness, which was a gross injustice, because Te Ara was ill. It was an injustice that demanded revenge.



The *Boyd* dropped anchor in the beautiful harbor early in December, and a Maori party, including Te Ara's brother, Te Puhi, came on board. Te Puhi learned about the flogging, but nothing was said. Thompson bargained for lumber, and three ship's boats were lowered with most of the company to go into the forest. Thompson went with them. Deep in the trees, they were all hacked to death.

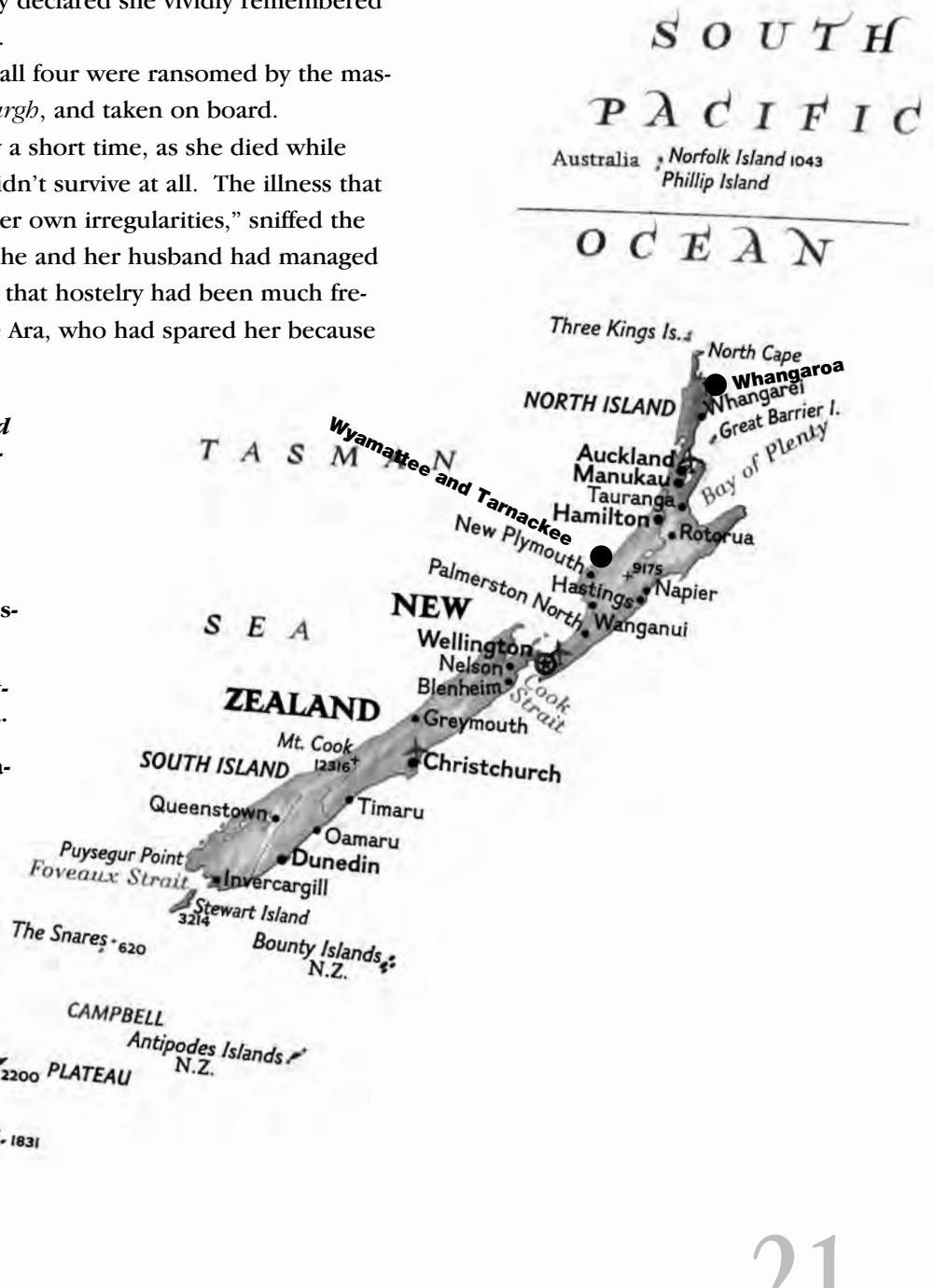
Dressing up in the dead men's clothes, the Maori warriors tricked their way onto the ship. A comprehensive massacre ensued. However, Ann Morley, her baby, ship's boy Thomas Davis (who had cared for Te Ara when he was sick), and Betsy Broughton, the little daughter of another passenger, were all spared. In later years, Betsy declared she vividly remembered watching her mother being slaughtered.

After about three weeks of captivity, all four were ransomed by the master and supercargo of the *City of Edinburgh*, and taken on board. Ann Morley outlived the rescue for only a short time, as she died while the ship was at Lima. Her reputation didn't survive at all. The illness that carried her off was "a consequence of her own irregularities," sniffed the supercargo, Alexander Berry. The inn she and her husband had managed was a brothel; the gossip ran on — and that hostelry had been much frequented by Maori seamen, including Te Ara, who had spared her because she was his mistress.⁴

Opposite Left: The *Burning of the Boyd* is captured in this stunning oil on canvas painting by Walter Wright (b. 1866, d. 1933), New Zealand.

En route to Cape Town from Sydney in 1809, the *Boyd* anchored in Whangaroa Harbour, North Island, to load kauri spars and allow Maori passengers to disembark. Contemporary accounts suggest that the flogging of a Rangatira (Maori Chief) during the voyage prompted the events that followed. The captain and crew were lured ashore and massacred, the ship was looted and an exploding barrel of gunpowder killed more people.

Courtesy Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, gift of the Auckland Picture Purchase Fund, 1908



The Deliverance of Betty Guard

A very similar ordeal was suffered by 20-year-old Betty Guard, wife of Jacky Guard, one of the earliest shore whalers in New Zealand. At dawn on 29 April 1834, the bark *Harriet*, 16 days out from Sydney for Cloudy Bay, ran aground on the shores of Taranaki, New Zealand, and was totally wrecked. Everyone on board, including Jacky Guard, Betty, and their two infant children, made it safely to shore, where they set up camp with tents made out of sails, and waited for rescue.

Ten days later they were attacked by a Maori war party, apparently in retaliation for a past incident where Guard had cheated them during trading. Twelve men were killed, and Betty and her two children were taken captive. She would have been felled by a blow to her head except for the large comb she wore in her hair, and was stripped naked in the fracas. Her husband managed to escape to the north with fourteen more men, but they were captured, too, by a different tribe.

This tribe agreed to organize the ransoming of Betty and the children, and let Guard and five members of the crew take a boat to Cloudy Bay, with three chiefs as an escort. There, Jack Guard collected a barrel of gunpowder to pay off Betty's captors, and he and the chiefs sailed to Port Nicholson (now Wellington), where the master of the schooner *Joseph Weller* consented to carry them back to the Maori village. However, heavy weather prevented a landing, so the *Joseph Weller* sailed to Sydney.



This unique silhouette portrait of Betty Guard (1814-1870) was created from cut paper silhouette with details painted in white pigment, framed and glazed.

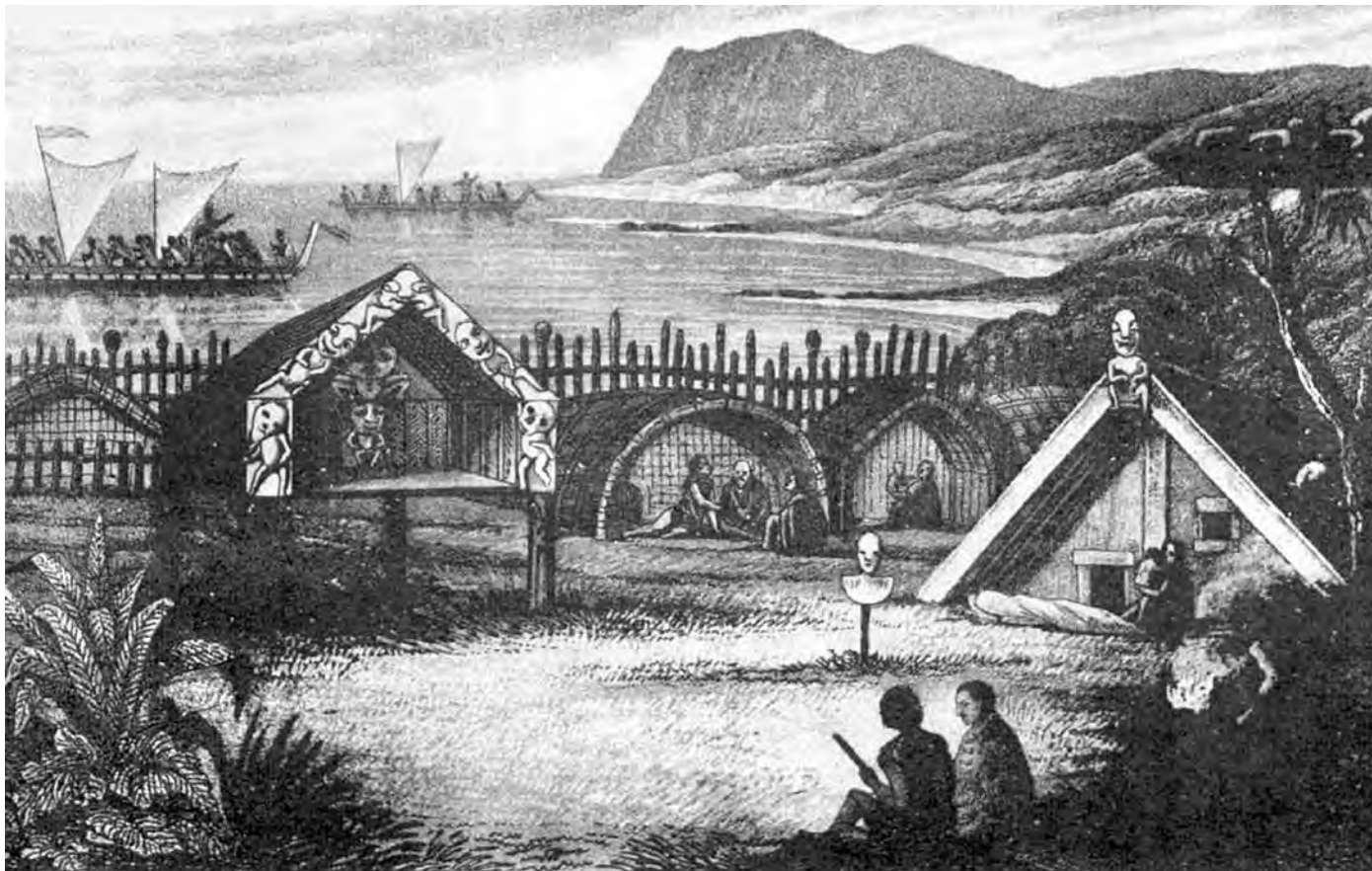
Courtesy Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

*Gift of the Guard Family, 1984
(Accession number: GH003416)*

Guard's report to the governor of New South Wales triggered public outrage. HMS *Alligator* was dispatched with three officers and 65 soldiers and marines on board, and on 12 September arrived off the Taranaki coast. Meantime,

Betty Guard had been a captive for almost four months, her life spared only because of the intercession of the chief, Oaoiti. Later, she revealed that her captors had treated her well, to the extent of procuring some soap — a rare commodity — when she asked for it. However, while she had been allowed to keep the baby, the two-year-old boy was taken away from her.

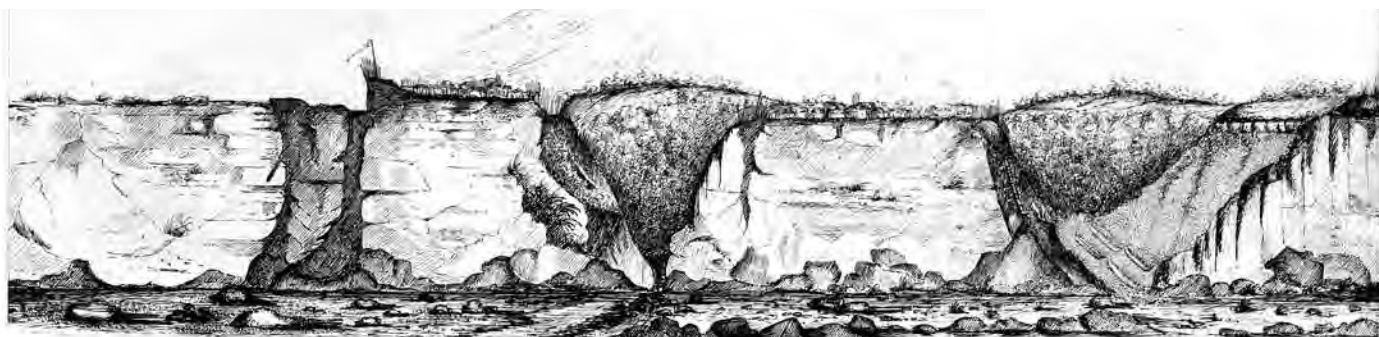
On 21 September, Oaoiti was kidnapped, insulted, and shot in the leg while trying to negotiate — the captain of the *Alligator* preferring treachery to paying a ransom. Four days later, Betty and the baby were exchanged for the wounded chieftain, and on 8 October, after an intense bombardment of the village, her son was also retrieved. A sailor cut the throat of the old chief who was carrying the little boy to the beach, and the tribe was then attacked. The controversial incident has gone down in history as the first use of British troops on New Zealand soil.



Maori Village, 1838.

— From J. S. Polack, *“New Zealand: Being a Narrative of Travels and Adventures.”*
London: Richard Bentley, 1838.

History also records that Betty’s reputation suffered badly. There had already been gossip that her favors were part of Jacky Guard’s “trade goods” when he dealt with Maori chiefs. Lieutenant Henry Gunton, one of the army officers, described her as if she’d “gone native,” remarking that Mrs. Guard came on board the man-of-war “dressed rather oddly, having a very handsome mat and blanket, her hair long and black, flowing about her neck.” A resident in the Bay of Islands at the time, Edward Markham, gossiped that she had been spared by a chief “throwing his mat over her; she becomes his Mistress; before I left Sydney, I heard that she was brought to bed of Twins & they were rather dark.” More than twenty years later Dr. John Shaw, a Fellow of the London Geological Society, stayed at the inn she kept in Cloudy Bay, and called her a “drunken, degraded, and most miserably fallen woman.”⁵



— NEW ZEALAND Stockades - WYAMATTEE and TARNACKEE. —

Courtesy Puke Ariki and District Libraries, *“New Zealand Stockades: Wyamattee and Tarnackee,”* 1834, by Thomas Woore, ink. (Accession No. A65.889)

Nellie Murray

and the Duplicity of Bully Hayes

An alternative was to make it publicly known that one had fought fiercely for one's virtue. An example of this is the bizarre story of a fifteen-year-old Irish girl, Nellie Murray, who in September 1859 had the remarkably bad judgment to take passage from the Hawaiian Islands for New Caledonia on a brig that was commanded by a pirate.

The vessel was the *Ellenita*, and the captain was the notorious Bully Hayes. He claimed to be the brig's owner, which was quite untrue — he had "bought" the vessel in San Francisco by paying a Mr. Morrison a deposit of five hundred dollars, and then sneaking off in the dark of a Sabbath night, when better citizens were in bed or at church. The debt he left behind was impressive, ranging from \$1,500 for provisions,

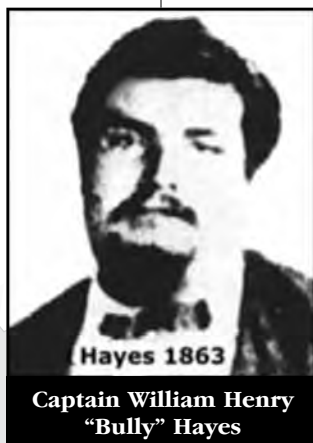
to fourteen dollars he had talked out of his lawyer, the total being about forty thousand dollars.

There were sixteen passengers, three of them women, including Nellie. In the holds were forty tons of dried beans, which shifted on the night of 15 October and blocked the pumps. The male passengers worked with the crew to free them, but to no avail. When the water was up to the decks and knocking at the planks, they gave up and set to building a raft, an ingenious affair made out of cabin doors and bulkheads, designed by Bully himself.

Most of the passengers and several of the crew were put on the raft, while six sailors manned the ship's boat. This lightened the brig so much that Bully, with his mate and a couple of crewmen, sailed on for a few hours, towing the raft. Next day, however, it was obvious that the ship was about to founder. Bully transferred the women to the boat then promptly vanished from sight, leaving the men on the overcrowded raft with just seventy gallons of water, one barrel of ship's bread, and no compass. Fifteen

appalling days later, having been reduced to drinking shark's blood and their own urine, the men made Wallis Island, and were rescued by the frigate *Elk*. Meantime, Bully, his six oarsmen, and the three women had safely made Samoa, at the end of a five-day sail. Boarding the brig *Antonio*, they dropped anchor at Sydney on New Year's Day, 1860—the same day that the *Elk* arrived with the very angry raft survivors.

The men went to the newspapers with their outraged tale. Bully Hayes, one of the few pirates in history to defend himself in print, retaliated by publishing a virtuous denial. Nellie Murray went to court to charge Captain Hayes with indecent assault. She lost the case from lack of evidence, according to the records, though the handsome American's reputation as an irresistible ladies' man must have played a part. Five years later, there was still confused gossip in the press about the fight Nellie had put up. According to one version, he had torn off her clothes in a rage when she had refused to share his bunk on one of the brigs, or refused to sail with him to China and join a theatrical troupe. At the time, she had, however, proven her grit. The law, too, was determined to punish the rogue, and Hayes was imprisoned for debt.⁶



Bully's virtuous and outraged reply was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 1860:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD SYDNEY, January 7th

SIR,

In your issue of the 6th instant you have inserted an article copied from the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, respecting myself, not inaptly termed a story. Much as I am pained by the perusal of this libel, I feel some pleasure in the reflection that I have living personages in this city who can, on oath, when necessary, contradict the gravest charges—which fact, coupled with my own conscious innocence, supports me in my trying adversities.

The bitter malice, and the unrelenting cruelty of the whole tenor of the article, is at once apparent from the very beginning. A lie in itself, and even if true, only serves to show the intense hatred of the writer, without affecting me. If the offences alleged against me were true, then Providence has been signally merciful in rescuing me from all the perils and privations of shipwreck. That I am not hung, which the kindly writer suggests I ought to be, is not from his clemency. One would have imagined that my great misfortune would have spared me in this last calamity, but I find that the mercy of man is more merciless than the raging sea, and that even the greatest misfortunes will not shield their victim from the unscrupulous, or the cruel stings of calumny...

Shipwrecks Spanning the Pacific and beyond...

Photo Essay by Norman Brouwer



Edwin Fox

Above: A full-rigged wooden ship built at Sukeali, Bengal, in 1853, *Edwin Fox* was 145 feet in length and 891 tons. Originally requisitioned by the East India Company, *Edwin Fox* was completed for other owners. She was a veteran of the Crimean War and carried immigrants to New Zealand. *Edwin Fox* was beached near Picton on the South Island of New Zealand when photographed in 1981, but she has now been moved to the town and is being preserved.

Below: The iron bark of 177.4 feet in length and 711 tons was built in 1876, at Sunderland, England, as the *Carmelo*. She was later renamed and placed in the inter-colonial trade. *Ethel* wrecked in 1904 on the Yorke Peninsula west of Adelaide. Lying on a very scenic beach in a natural amphitheatre of cliffs, most of her hull forward of the poop has collapsed and sunken into the sand.

Ethel was photographed in 1981, Yorke Peninsula, west of Adelaide, South Australia



Ethel

Farsund



Above: A steel bark built at Sunderland, England in 1891 as the *Caradog*, she was 233 feet in length and 1443 tons. Later sold to Scandinavian owners and renamed *Farsund*, she wrecked on a sandbar in southeastern Flinders Island in the Bass Strait between Tasmania and the Australian mainland in 1912. *Farsund* can only be reached by boat. Though heavily rusted, she was otherwise intact when visited in 1981.



Left: The steel bark of 1017 tons was built by Harland & Wolff at Belfast, Ireland, in 1885. Purchased by Captain Matson in 1894, she was converted to an oil barge in 1905. Used at San Francisco, Tacoma (1926), and Juneau, Alaska (1939), *Santiago* was then employed by the Navy during World War II. After the War, she was abandoned on a beach on Kodiak Island, Alaska.

Santiago photographed in 1985, Kodiak Island, Alaska

Lonsdale

Right: A steel full-rigged ship built at Londonderry, Ireland, in 1889, *Lonsdale* was 266 feet in length and 1756 tons. Enroute from Hamburg to Mazatlan, Mexico, in 1909, she put back from Cape Horn to the Falklands for water and medical assistance. There she dragged anchor and collided with the ship *Glengowan*. There were also two fires on board. Sold for use as a storage hulk at Punta Arenas, Chile, in the Straits of Magellan, she was later beached there and partially scrapped. The bow is the most intact portion.

Rockwell Kent describes fitting out a lifeboat on board this ship for an unsuccessful attempt to reach Cape Horn, in *Voyaging Southward from the Straits of Magellan* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1968).

Lonsdale, photographed in 1978, Punta Arenas, Chile





Sunbeam

Above: This iron bark of 442 tons was built by Brown Shipyard in Kirkaldy, Scotland, in 1857. Converted to a coaling hulk in Australia in 1892, *Sunbeam* was eventually abandoned in a mangrove swamp near Port Adelaide, Australia. Apparently used as a pier, her hull (except for the bow) had largely collapsed by 1981.

Below: *Santiago* was an iron full-rigged ship (455 tons) built by Balfour at Methil, Scotland, in 1856. She was converted to a hulk in Australia in 1901, and now lies in the mangrove swamp behind Port Adelaide, not far from *Sunbeam*. While what remained of *Sunbeam* appeared ready to collapse in 1981, the hull of *Santiago* was remarkably intact. She can only be reached by boat. Some of her iron spars can be seen through the clear water lying on the bottom beside her .



Santiago

Mary Ann Jewell

Governess of the Island

Lady seafarers had something else to dread – the attentions of fellow survivors. This is eloquently demonstrated by the story of 22-year-old newly wed Mary Ann Jewell, who accompanied her husband, Joseph, an able seaman with the *General Grant*, when the ship left Melbourne for London in May 1866.

On the night of the thirteenth, they raised the Auckland Islands, a desolate outpost of the sub-Antarctic. The wind dropped, and the doomed ship sagged helplessly onto the cliffs, finally drifting into a cavern where the masts, hitting repeatedly against the roof, were driven through the bottom. In the resulting chaos only fifteen survived; the captain went down with his ship. Mary Ann was the only woman survivor. Her husband lowered her into the water on a rope, and James Teer, a passenger in one of the ship's boats, tore her clothes off trying to drag her on board. Joseph Jewell jumped down to help and together they saved her. Then Mary Ann, with the others, helplessly watched as the ship went down and many men and women drowned.

Three terrible days later the survivors arrived at Port Ross where, at the start of a nineteen-month battle to survive, they lived in a derelict hut. Goats and pigs released earlier were running around, and they managed to kill and capture some of them. Their main food supply, however, was sea lion, which gave them shocking diarrhea. Scurvy soon made its appearance, too. There was a great deal of discord, so Mary Ann was elected “governess of the island” to help keep order. Sexual tensions persisted, however. Because her husband was there, the men left her alone — except for seaman Billy Scott who, according to another survivor, “showed an alarming



This memorial tablet, found during World War II, commemorates the names of the four brave members of the *General Grant* crew. It was scratched on an ordinary building slate.

— From C. W. N. Ingram, *New Zealand Shipwrecks 1795-1975*.
Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1936, reproduction 1977.

Mary Ann Jewell

Governess of the Island

interest in Mrs. Jewell.” Finally James Teer, a large powerful man, settled the problem by smashing Scott “to the ground with a powerful punch to the head,” while handing out a stern warning.

As the dreadful months went by, their numbers were decimated. In January 1867, having collected a good store of meat, the first officer, Bart Brown, set off for New Zealand with three other men in one of the ship’s boats, which had been decked over and loaded with skins of fresh water as well as the provisions. The boat was never seen or heard from again. On 3 September one of the older seamen,

62-year-old David McLellan, died. Mary Ann, her husband, and the eight others struggled on.

A sail was sighted on 6 October, but though fires were lit and the day was clear, there was no response. The castaways decided that they should move to an island that was closer to the open sea, and the whole party was ferried there in the remaining boat, only to see yet another ship pass without seeing their signals. Just two days after that, however, on 21 November 1867 the colonial whaling brig *Amberst* called by and Captain Paddy Gilroy carried them to New Zealand to relate their dreadful tale.⁷

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APRIL 14, 1866



WRECK OF THE GENERAL GRANT ON THE AUCKLAND ISLANDS

Mrs. Wordsworth

A Vision Bestowed

It was common for whalers to rescue castaways, partly because they poked their bows into remote, uncharted corners of the ocean, and also because they were systematically hunting the sea, instead of trying to make a record passage. A particularly dramatic example of this is the climax of the story of the English ship *Strathmore*, which on 1 July 1875 crashed onto a reef off one of the uninhabited Crozet Islands, also in the sub-Antarctic.

Only forty-nine of the crew and passengers survived the wreck, and just one, Mrs. Wordsworth, was a woman. From Edinburgh, she was a widow with a young adult son. She had intended to migrate to New Zealand, and was certainly not prepared for the eight-month ordeal that followed. Uninhabited and precipitous, lashed with ice-laden gales, the island was a desolate place to be marooned. Even going to a more promising island was impossible, because the boats were lost when the watchmen broached a cask of spirits and got drunk.

Tiny shanties were erected by building walls out of rocks cemented with bird dung, and roofing them with canvas from the wreck. The castaways' clothes and fuel came from penguins, and they ate whatever birds they could catch with their bare hands, or by bludgeoning them with cut-down oars. Though the men's coarse swearing offended Mrs. Wordsworth greatly, she was careful to say that they looked after her as well as the appalling conditions allowed. It is significant, however, that she and her son soon moved into a separate little hut.



Captain David & Eleanor Gifford

Courtesy Mystic Seaport, The Museum of America and the Sea, Mystic, CT.

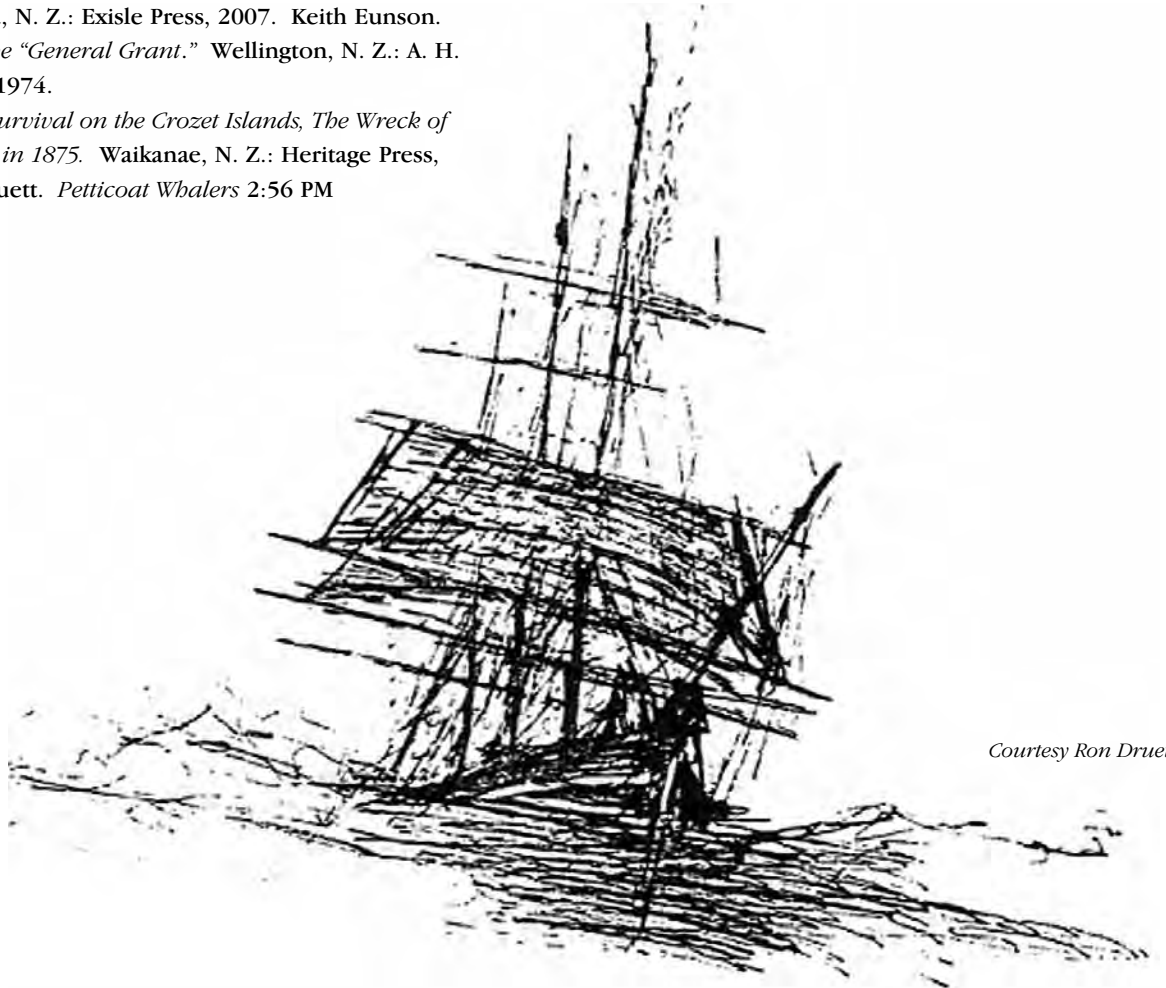
Men died, while others were crippled with scurvy and frostbite. Despite the castaways' frantic signals, two ships — the *Helen Denny* and the *White Eagle* — passed without pausing to lower a boat. As the weeks dragged by, vicious squabbles for food and space became obsessive, and men began to go mad. As a diversion from this, the castaways told each other their dreams. Most, unsurprisingly, were about being rescued, but occasionally a vision was revealed. One of the marooned men dreamed vividly about Mrs. Wordsworth's daughter — a girl he had never met — and described her with uncanny accuracy.

Mrs. Wordsworth had an eerie dream of her own, of a "white lady" whom she had pictured in detail, down to separate items of dress. Then, on 21 January 1876 a sail was raised, the whaler *Young Phoenix* of New Bedford, skippered by David L. Gifford, who saw the signals, ordered his men to haul aback, and lowered a boat. Mrs. Wordsworth was one of the first to be taken on board. When she arrived on deck she came face to face with the "white lady" of her dream, the captain's wife, Eleanor Gifford.

In recognition of the rescue, the New Zealand government presented Captain David Gifford with a gold watch. Even more touchingly, the first daughter born to Mrs. Wordsworth's son Charles was christened Eleanor Gifford Wordsworth, a fitting memorial to the act of charity that had saved a lady and her companions from a grueling castaway experience.⁸

Notes

- 1 Spears, J.R. *The Story of the New England Whaler*. New York: McMillan, 1908, pp. 265-272.
- 2 Dunmore, John. *Monsieur Baret, First Woman Around the World 1766-68*. Auckland, N. Z.: Heritage Press, 2002.
- 3 Rivière, Marc Serge (editor). *A Woman of Courage, The Journal of Rose de Freycinet on her Voyage around the World 1817-1820*. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1996.
- 4 Druett, Joan. *She Captains*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, pp. 145-149. Tony Simpson. *Art & Massacre, Documentary Racism in "The Burning of the Boyd."* New Zealand: Cultural Construction Co., 1993. Lydia Wevers. *Country of Writing*. Auckland, N. Z.: Auckland University Press, 2002, pp. 12-33.
- 5 Grady, Don. *Guards of the Sea*. Christchurch, N. Z.: Whitcoulls, 1978.
- 6 Lubbock, Basil. *Bully Hayes, South Sea Pirate*. London: Martin Hopkinson, 1931. A. T. Saunders. *Bully Hayes, Barrator, Bigamist, Buccaneer, Blackbirder: An Authentic Life of William Henry Hayes of Ohio or New York USA. Born 1829. Killed 1877*. Perth, WA: Sunday Times, 1915.
- 7 Scadden, Ken, with Madelene Allen. *General Grant's Gold*. Auckland, N. Z.: Exisle Press, 2007. Keith Eunson. *The Wreck of the "General Grant."* Wellington, N. Z.: A. H. & A. W. Reed, 1974.
- 8 Church, Ian. *Survival on the Crozet Islands, The Wreck of the Strathmore in 1875*. Waikanae, N. Z.: Heritage Press, 1985. Joan Druett. *Petticoat Whalers* 2:56 PM



Courtesy Ron Druett

Photo Essay

Norman Brouwer's *Historic Ships frozen in time...*

In his photographic study of shipwrecks, Norman Brouwer combines his skill as a photographer, years of researching historic ships, and his knowledge of maritime history, into a retrospective study of ships whose wreckage encourages closer scrutiny.

As a marine historian and former curator of ships at the South Street Seaport Museum, New York; Norman Brouwer has researched historic ships for more than 30 years. Among his publications are: *The International Register of Historic Ships* (1985, 1993 and 1999), *The Story of Sail* (Weldon Press, Australia), and *Historic*

Structure Report: Sailing Ship Balclutha of 1886 (U.S. National Park Service).

While these pages of *Mains'l Haul* confine the shipwrecks to a cursory view, they are presented to encourage further research into their working lives, to rebuild their broken frames into historical reconstructions, overlaying their past against the tragic perspective of their loss.

A steel four-masted bark built at Maryport, England, in 1890, *Peter Iredale* was 287.5 feet in length. Enroute from Salina Cruz, Mexico, to pick up a grain cargo in Portland, Oregon, bound for Great Britain, she went on the beach just south of the mouth of the Columbia River in poor visibility and in a rising gale in 25 October 1906.

Peter Iredale, photographed in 1975,
Columbia River, Oregon



Peter Iredale

Concordia



Left: Originally named *Aldebaran*, the iron bark was built by T. R. Oswald at Sunderland, England, in 1869. Sold to Auckland, New Zealand owners in 1907, *Concordia* was employed in inter-colonial trade. Five and a half years later she was sold for use as a coaling hulk at Hobart, Tasmania. After serving as a coaling hulk, *Concordia* was purchased by a farmer for use as a breakwater. The entire hull, except the bow, has disintegrated.

Concordia photographed in 1981, in a remote location in southeastern Tasmania, Australia.

Below: The steel four-masted bark of 3245 tons was built at Dunkerque, France, in 1902. She arrived off Newcastle laden with ballast 30 September 1904. Two tugs tried to bring her into port in foul weather. One towline parted and the remaining tug could not hold her. She went onto Oyster Bank north of the channel. The breakwater was later built past the wreck. Most of the hull aft of the bow has disintegrated.

Adolphe photographed in 1981, entrance to Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia

Adolphe



Galilee – Once a swift and reliable vessel...

A wooden brigantine (132.5 feet in length, 354 tons), *Galilee* was built in 1891, by Matthew Turner at Benicia, California. She quickly proved herself a swift and reliable vessel. After being employed by the Tahiti Packet Lines, in the trade between San Francisco and the South Seas, *Galilee* undertook three extensive voyages between 1905 and 1908, conducting magnetic surveys for the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington.

The magnetic surveys undertaken by the *Galilee* covered more than 35,000 nautical miles of Pacific Ocean and produced invaluable data with its magnetic information serving as a basis for more accurate maps and charts of the Pacific. *Galilee* also became the template for the design and construction of non-magnetic survey vessels.

After 1908 *Galilee* returned to commercial use and spent at least ten years of her career in the cod fishing industry.

Her illustrious career ended when she was abandoned in Sausalito, California, converted into a clubhouse in the 1930s and later into a residence. By the 1960s, she lay derelict on the mud flats

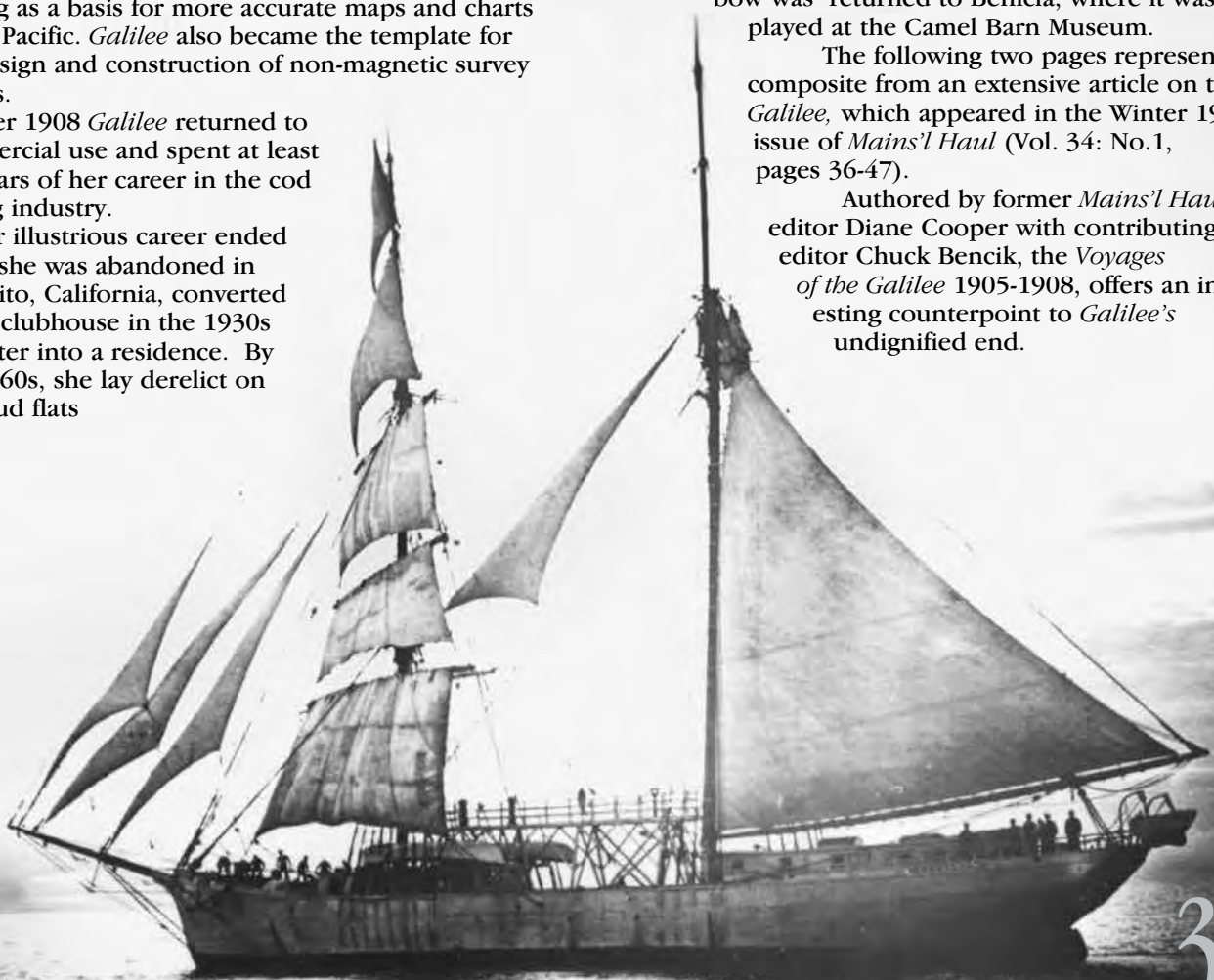


Galilee photographed by Norman Brouwer in 1985, Sausalito, California

in Sausalito. Eventually her remaining transom was rescued by the San Francisco Maritime Museum and her bow was returned to Benicia, where it was displayed at the Camel Barn Museum.

The following two pages represent a composite from an extensive article on the *Galilee*, which appeared in the Winter 1998 issue of *Mains'l Haul* (Vol. 34: No.1, pages 36-47).

Authored by former *Mains'l Haul* editor Diane Cooper with contributing editor Chuck Bencik, the *Voyages of the Galilee* 1905-1908, offers an interesting counterpoint to *Galilee's* undignified end.



Surveying the Pacific:

The Voyages of the GALILEE 1905-1908

By Diane Cooper

On December 9, 1905 the brigantine *Galilee* returned to San Diego at the completion of a four month, 10,000 nautical mile scientific survey. **The *San Diego Union*, (Dec. 10, 1905) described her arrival as “one of the prettiest sights ever seen on the bay...she came up under her own sail. As the wind was light she had every piece of canvas drawing, and when off the marine ways had her studding sails up with the rest of them.”** The *Galilee* dropped anchor in the stream and remained there until after dark when

she made her way to a berth alongside Commercial Wharf.

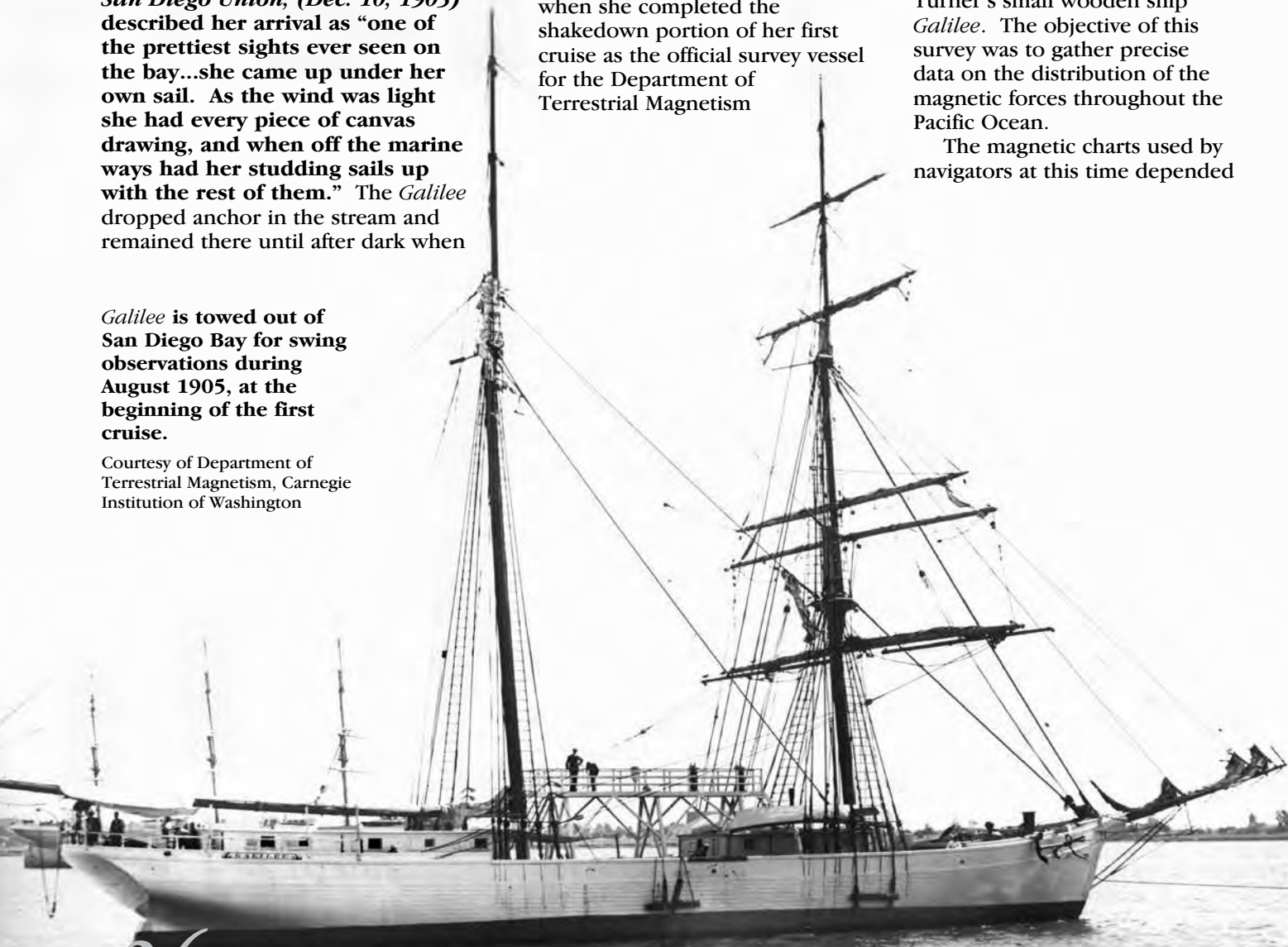
The *Galilee* first sailed into San Diego Bay on August 12, 1905, when she completed the shakedown portion of her first cruise as the official survey vessel for the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism

of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. For the next three years scientists conducted a magnetic survey of the Pacific Ocean from the decks of Matthew Turner’s small wooden ship *Galilee*. The objective of this survey was to gather precise data on the distribution of the magnetic forces throughout the Pacific Ocean.

The magnetic charts used by navigators at this time depended

Galilee is towed out of San Diego Bay for swing observations during August 1905, at the beginning of the first cruise.

Courtesy of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington



Right: View of the *Galilee* lying in the Yokohama harbor after being sunk by a typhoon in August 1906 (second cruise). Members of the crew appear to be inspecting the vessel and the scientific instruments in preparation for salvage efforts. Repairs were completed in ten days and *Galilee* set sail for San Diego.

(Courtesy of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington)



heavily upon observations from island and coastal magnetic stations supplemented by fragmentary data collected on previous expeditions. The accuracy of these existing charts was impossible to determine since observations from land-based stations were not capable of reporting or anticipating anomalies caused by prevalent local disturbances at sea.



Above: The scientific party during the third cruise (1907) enjoying dinner on the *Galilee*. Seated from left to right: P.H. Dike, D.C. Sowers, W.J. Peters (commander), and G. Peterson (surgeon).

(Courtesy of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington)

Right: J.C. Pearson (observer), H.E. Martyn (surgeon and recorder), and J.P. Ault (observer) on the observation bridge, second cruise, 1906. The instruments, from left to right, are standard compass and Negus compass with deflector. J. P. Ault is standing in front of the Kelvin compass.

(Courtesy of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington)



Above Left: View of the magnetic instruments (left to right: dip circle, standard compass, and Negus compass with deflector) on the observation bridge while under sail.

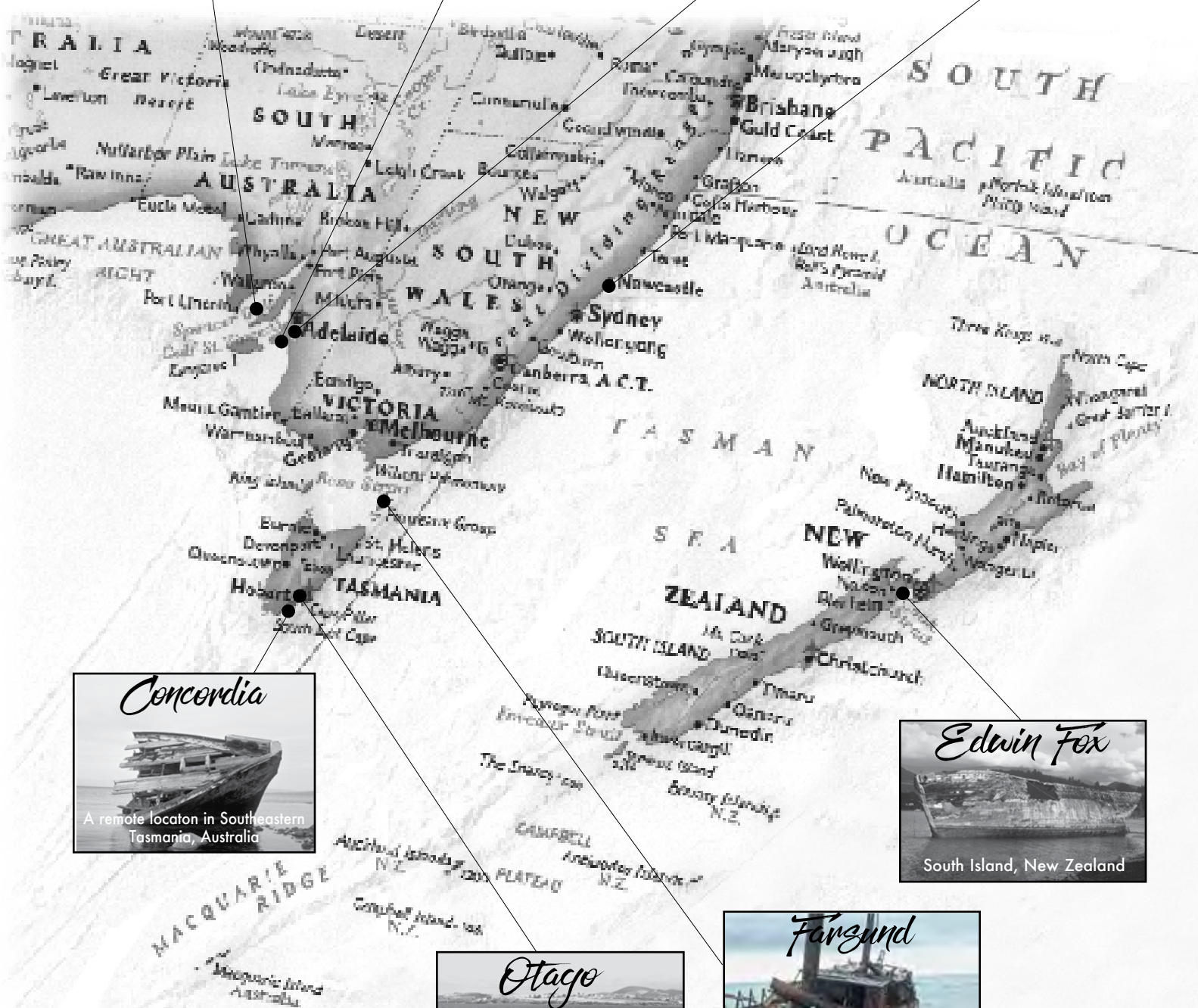
(Courtesy of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington)

Right: J.P. Ault using the Negus compass with the deflector mounted to observe the horizontal force during the shake-down cruise (San Francisco to San Diego), August 1905. The instrument behind him is a Kelvin compass.

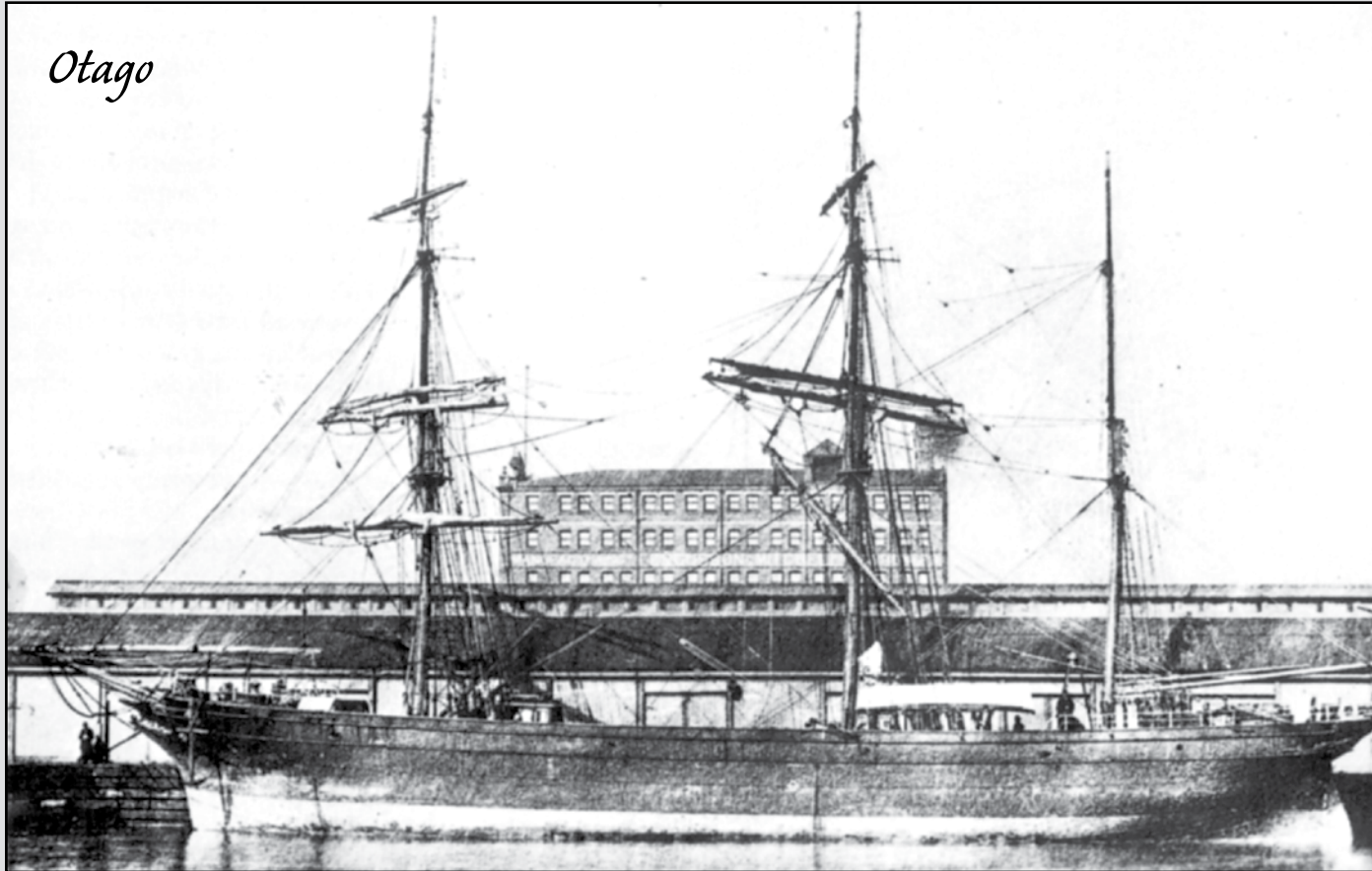
(Courtesy of Department of Terrestrial Magnetism, Carnegie Institution of Washington)



Shipwrecks of the Pacific Rim



Otago



Above: After her previous skipper died at sea, Joseph Conrad took command of the bark *Otago* at Bangkok, in 1888. This view shows her the following year at Princess Wharf, Melbourne, Australia. She played a role in Conrad's novel, *The Shadow Line*.

Courtesy A. D. Edwardes Collection

Below: An iron bark built at Glasgow, Scotland, in 1869, *Otago* was 147 feet in length and 367 tons. She spent many years as a coaling hulk at Hobart, Tasmania. Once commanded by Joseph Conrad, she was hauled ashore and scrapped down to the bilges. At one time a remote location, this area is now being overtaken by Hobart suburbs, and a new housing development overlooks the remains. There has been some talk of preserving what is left of the *Otago*. Her rudder and part of the stern were retrieved by the San Francisco Maritime Museum.

Otago photographed in 1981, near Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

Otago



Below: Grounded to form a breakwater for a log marshalling yard, the wooden five-masted barkentine *Forest Friend* has now been buried. *Riversdale* and *Comet* lost their decks when serving as log barges. Lack of structural strength caused their mid-sections to collapse soon after being placed in the breakwater. Some of the bows and sterns survive, along with similar remains of the iron ship *Melanope* (in the distance to the right of *Forest Friend*).

Forest Friend – The wooden five-masted barkentine of 1615 tons was built by the Grays Harbor Motorship Corp. in 1919. She was later converted into a log barge in the 1930s.

Comet – The steel four-masted bark, built by William Hamilton at Port Glasgow, Scotland, in 1901, was 3014 tons. Twice renamed, she became the German *Orotava*, then the American *James Dollar*, before being converted to a log barge in 1929.

Riversdale – This steel full-rigged ship was also built by William Hamilton, Port Glasgow, Scotland, in 1894. She had a tonnage of 2206. In 1910, she was sold to German owners and renamed *Harvestbude*. She became the Canadian log barge *Riversdale* in 1924, and was later renamed *Crown Zellerbach No. 3*. She was sunk as part of the Royston breakwater in November 1961.

Melanope – The iron full-rigged ship of 1686 tons was built at Liverpool, England, in 1876. Converted to a barge after dismasting in 1906, enroute from Manzanillo to Eureka, *Melanope* was placed on the breakwater at Royston.

Photographed in 1975, Royston, British Columbia

Forest Friend

Riversdale

Comet

Melanope

The Shipwreck Legends of GALEN WOLF

by JoAnn Semones

Few artists reflect the rampant seas, maritime tragedies, and colorful lore of the Pacific Coast as uniquely as Galen Wolf. Nowhere are these themes more vividly portrayed than in his noted series, *Legends of the Coastland*.

Depicted in watercolor mosaic, more than half of the 16 pieces focus explicitly on maritime subjects. Shipwrecks, whalers, fishermen, and even sea monsters appear. Wolf wrote stories to accompany the paintings. These *Legends*, especially the shipwreck renderings and tales, offer a rare portal into early California coastal history.

"The sea was a perfect muse for Galen," Shannon Nottestad, who is preparing the *Legends* for publication, remarked. "From boyhood, he was taken with its force and captivated by stories like *Treasure Island* and *The Sea-Wolf*."

Known as the "Dean of San Mateo coastal artists," Wolf was a prolific young watercolorist until 1906, when the San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed most of his works. Devastated by the loss, he didn't paint again for decades. When he returned to painting, Wolf created some of his best images. By then, he was nearly blind.

JoAnn Semones, Ph.D., boarded her first ship at age three and has loved sea sagas ever since. Her stories have appeared in national maritime history, health, and environmental publications. Currently, JoAnn is completing a book about shipwrecks at Pigeon Point. She lives in Half Moon Bay, in Northern California.

Galen Wolf at his easel. A prolific watercolorist until 1906, Wolf was devastated by the loss of his works from the fires of the San Francisco earthquake.

Courtesy of Marvin and Ressa Fairbanks

A Bit Of A Castaway

Born in San Francisco in 1889, Galen Russell Wolf grew up with three brothers in Victorian wealth. His father, an enterprising young businessman, built a booming import-export company trading with the Far East. The family home faced the harbor and sailing ships could be seen easily. "Galen remembered them arriving with broken spars and masts, loose rigging, and cracked hulls," Nottestad revealed. "Sea captains were often dinner guests at the Wolf mansion, and young Galen listened avidly as they spoke of the sea and foreign lands."



On weekends, the family traveled 35 miles south by wagon to visit relatives in the seaside village of Half Moon Bay. Wolf stayed happily absorbed in adventurous yarns spun by his grandfather, a veteran seaman who had journeyed around Cape Horn in a clipper ship. Wandering the beaches together, they watched eagerly for passing sailing vessels. "I became so in love with Half Moon Bay," Wolf mused, "that I came down every opportunity I had."

At the age of 14, Wolf entered the San Francisco studio of Gertrude Boyle, a free-spirited artist who introduced him to much more than art. "Into that studio came every important personality of that period in California," Wolf recalled. "I met all of the well-known literary or artistic figures."

Finding himself in the company of environmentalist John Muir, writer Jack London, landscape artist William Keith, and others, Wolf discovered a new creative universe. He was inspired further by French impressionists when he spent a year in Europe studying art. "It knocked me flat," he exclaimed.

Then, on the morning of 18 April 1906, two sharp tremors rattled San Francisco and its surrounding areas. The first struck at 5:12 A.M. and lasted a few seconds. Then came a 10-second gap. That was followed by another violent tremor lasting 45 to 60 seconds. The entire city was relentlessly shaken and twisted. Ships at dockside shuddered and shook. Untold numbers of lives, homes, and treasured items were lost, including most of Galen Wolf's paintings.

Thoroughly distraught, Wolf turned his interests to the outdoors. Awed by nature's wonders, he fished, hiked through the Sierras, and spent 20 years farming and raising a family in the Sacramento Delta. In 1932, feeling a bit of a castaway, he left his family to return to the simplicity and serenity of Half Moon Bay.

Roaming The Coastsides

"He had come to know by then that painting was what he wanted, the only thing he could be happy at," writer Gino Lea observed. "So at an age when most men are beginning to think about security, Galen ventured into a new world and a new life."

Wolf took up his brush again, selling his paintings for \$4 to \$5 apiece and conducting art classes on local

beaches. "He loved living on the coast," Wolf's daughter, Ressa Fairbanks admitted. "He roamed the coastside painting on anything he could get his hands on – canvas, paper, cardboard, plywood."

About 1950, Wolf began work on *Legends of the Coastland*. The series depicts local events within a highly stylized watercolor mosaic.

Wolf's fresh representational art gave the traditional watercolor medium a bold new look. Defined by large format, free broad brush strokes, and strong rich colors, the pieces are dramatic snapshots of coastal life in the 1800s. His paintings and accompanying narratives are filled with energy, poignancy, and mirth. Wolf's innovative approach was nothing short of amazing. By that time, cataracts had claimed most of his vision.

In the *Legends*, Wolf brings to life his grandfather's tales of sailing ships and voyages gone awry. With its rocky out-croppings, heavy surf, strong currents, and thick fog banks, California's coast was one of the most notoriously dangerous in the world. During the Great Age of Sail, many fine vessels were lost along Pacific shores. Three of those maritime tragedies are chronicled in Wolf's "Sir John Franklin," "The Toy Ship," and "The Wreck".

Ghosting through dense fog, the clipper ship *Sir John Franklin* drifted into heavy breakers near Pigeon Point. Captain John Despeau, believing he was 70 miles from land, had headed unwittingly too close to shore. Desperately, he fought to gain open water, but the treacherous surf proved overpowering.

*The mosaic composition
was his invention.*

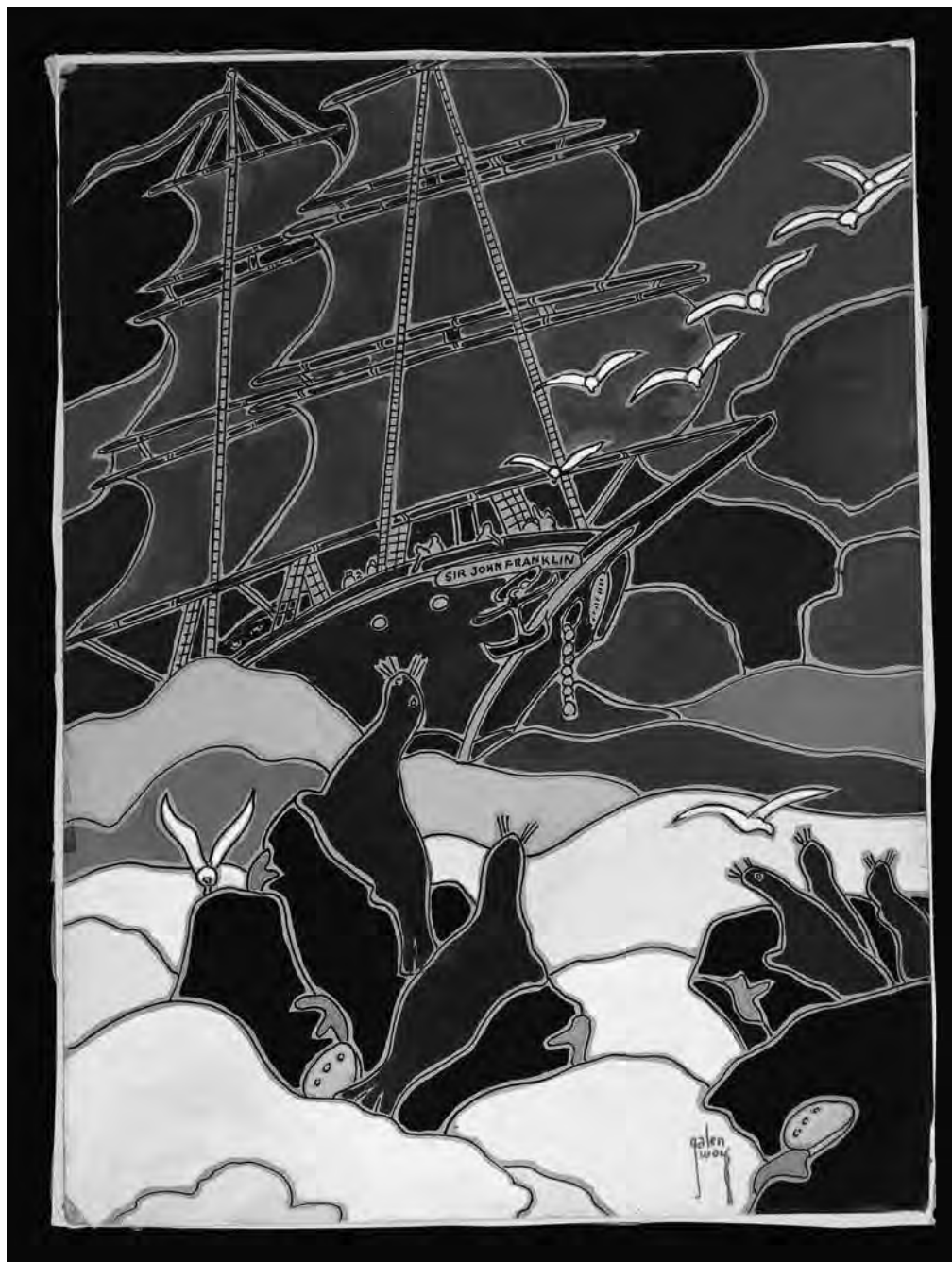
*"He was always looking
for the purest forms to
get to the design,"*

artist Pabby Bennett explained.

Before sinking on 17 January 1865, *Sir John Franklin* crashed against the rocks three times spilling cargo and crew into the sea. Thirteen of the 16 men aboard, including Captain Despeau, drowned. "This is the second ship lost at the same point," local newspapers announced, "and is by far the most disastrous shipwreck which has ever happened on our coast."

Both fact and fancy are incorporated into Wolf's portrait of the *Sir John Franklin*. While he assigns a British registry to the ship, the 1854 vessel was actually built in Baltimore, Maryland. Wolf also describes *Sir John Franklin* as destined for exploration in the Arctic. However, the ship was really designed as a Liverpool packet, ferrying emigrants and cargo across the Atlantic.

The Arctic connection, though misdirected, was true in the sense that *Sir John Franklin* was named for the famous, ill-fated British explorer. Wolf's story is true, too, in saying that "a turn of fate sent the ship elsewhere." Indeed, the vessel was pressed into Pacific Coast service to meet more promising commercial needs. Wolf and the facts also agree that disaster struck with little warning. In Wolf's *Legend*, "clamoring sea lions bark to alert the crew to unseen hazards." He leaves one wondering, had Captain Despeau listened closely enough, perhaps the voyage would not have ended in tragedy.



Sir John Franklin

Courtesy of Allen Bunes and Shannon Nottestad



Photo of the Pigeon Point Lighthouse by Captain Albert E. Theberge (ret.), courtesy the NOAA Photo Library

The wreck of *Sir John Franklin*, and two other ships in the 1860s, spurred a fervent public outcry. For years government officials were urged to place a fog signal and lighthouse at Pigeon Point. At the end of 1868, Congress appropriated \$90,000 for the purpose and two years later the site was purchased. In 1871, before the lighthouse became functional, the fog signal went into service. Pigeon Point Lighthouse was lit the following year.

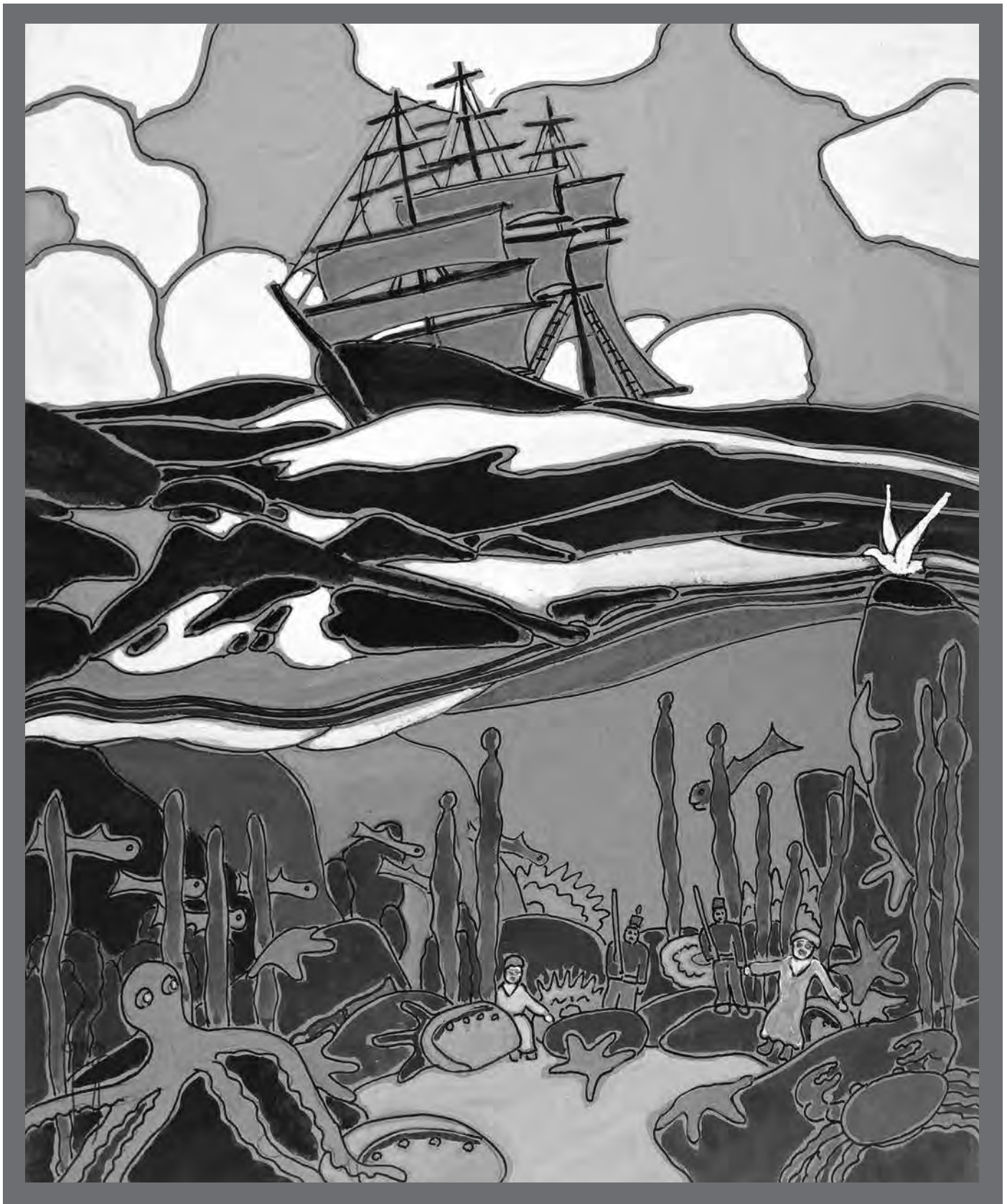
ACULEO

On 18 October 1872, the British iron sailing ship *Aculeo* lay impaled on a perilous rock formation known as Colorado Reef. The foggy coast off Point Montara had claimed another victim. As the ship cracked open and filled with water, Captain T. McKay and 20 crew escaped in lifeboats.

Built in 1868 by Duncan, Fox and Company, the 750 ton *Aculeo* was 200 days out of Liverpool when she foundered. A mere 20 miles from her port of destination in San Francisco, *Aculeo* carried a cargo of grain, pig iron, coal, and Christmas toys.

The vessel lay abandoned for nearly a week before a salvage crew arrived. Unluckily, a heavy gale broke upon the scene, shattering the ship and sweeping most of the cargo out to sea. Rigging, spars, and smashed boxes of toys littered the beach.

The wreck of *Aculeo* left a lasting impression on others, as well. In March of 1873, Congress appropriated \$15,000 for a fog signal at Point Montara. Two years later, a two-story Victorian duplex, which still stands, was constructed for keeper's quarters. A lighthouse was added in 1900.



Above: According to one account, “Captain McKay salvaged a china doll and slipped it into the arms of the first little girl he saw.” Wolf’s rendering of *Aculeo* as “The Toy Ship” depicts the doll floating underwater, awaiting rescue. He knew that her voyage was not over, that she would be saved, only to be lost in the San Francisco earthquake. The little girl Captain McKay had encountered was Wolf’s mother.

Courtesy of Allen Bunes and Shannon Nottestad



ALICE BUCK

Built at Belfast, Maine, in 1870 by Captain Henry McGilvery, *Alice Buck* lost her way in fog-shrouded waters near Half Moon Bay. At midnight on 26 September 1881, traveling with a leak sustained in a hurricane, the full-rigged ship struck a reef, bows on.

"She bumped five or six times and at last hit hard," one report asserted. "She held on forward but soon broke in two." The crew, exhausted from pumping to stay afloat, jumped overboard and struggled for shore.

Sadly, nine men died in the attempt. The ship and her cargo of iron rails bound for the Northern Pacific Railroad in Oregon were a total loss.

Named for a daughter of William Buck of Bucksport, one of Maine's earliest ship-building centers, *Alice Buck* first sailed in the transatlantic cotton trade. The 1,425 ton vessel spent most of her career shuttling goods to the Far East and to San Francisco. "While she has no fast voyages to her credit," one account declared, "she made good passages and was called a successful ship."

Often passing Half Moon Bay's harbor, *Alice Buck* was a familiar sight.

Wolf grew-up remembering the story of the vessel's unhappy end as his grandfather had told it. He recalled a tale of a disastrous voyage, of a ship overtaken by ferocious waves, and of a crew lost in despair.

His painting, "The Wreck," depicts a young boy's woeful discovery at the water's edge. It is the legendary *Alice Buck*. "It was forlorn," Wolf wrote, "and had the desperate appeal of the doomed and deserted." The once proud ship was now a broken, seaweed-covered hull. *Alice Buck* lay forgotten, remembered only by shrieking sea-birds.



Scent Of The Sea

After completing *Legends of the Coastland*, Wolf continued to paint at his studio in a remote canyon on Frenchman's Creek. He remained there until his death on 11 April 1976, just eight days before his 87th birthday. At that time, over 1,500 of his paintings remained in existence.

A year before he died, acquaintance Mary Bettencourt visited Wolf: "His studio was rustic and rather Spartan. It was almost barren, except for all the paintings scattered about," she remarked. "He proudly showed us his paintings and enjoyed telling us stories about creating them. He talked about his mosaics and the *Legends* that went with them. He was hoping to have them published someday."

In addition to the *Legends*, Wolf also painted a series of California missions as they appeared before restoration, and created illustrations for historic buildings in San Mateo County. A rare retrospective exhibit featuring more than 70 of his works was held in May of 1998.

Currently, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary is developing an Interpretive Center at Pigeon Point Lighthouse. Located 22 miles south of Half Moon Bay, the Center will focus on local maritime heritage, a heritage captured uniquely in Wolf's art. Examples of his *Legends of the Coastland* will be featured, including those depicting the shipwrecks of *Sir John Franklin*, *Aculeo*, and *Alice Buck*.

Given his love of the sea, Galen Wolf would be happy knowing that his greatest legacy is not only to California coastal art, but to maritime history.

“The pulse of life was slow, gentle, and rich,” Wolf wrote wistfully of his beloved coastside. “Suddenly, a breath of air comes cool to your face. The scent of the sea is on it – refreshing and exciting.”

Notes

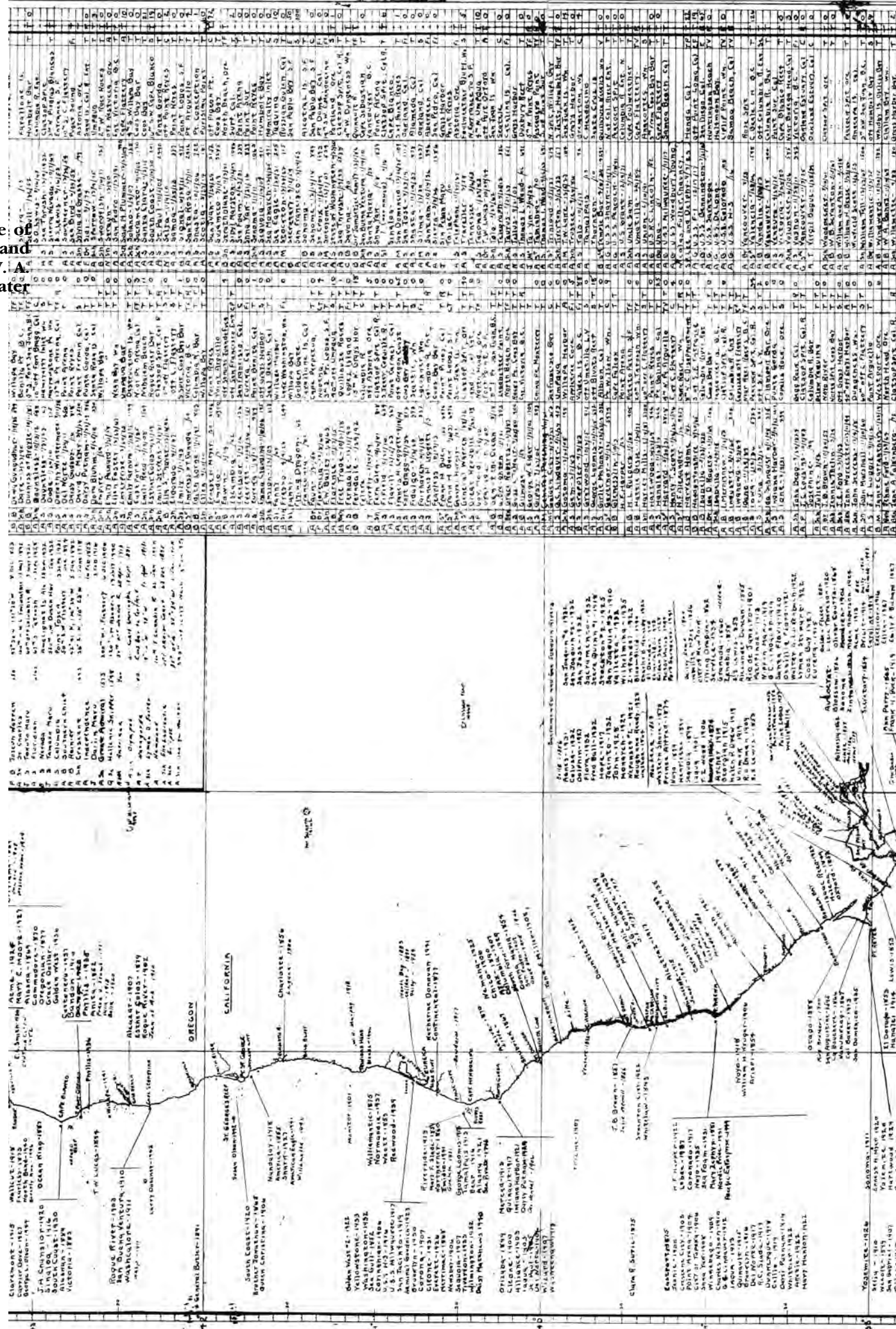
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- Shannon Nottestad, interview with the author, 20 October 2003.
- Galen Wolf, interview by Spanishtown Historical Society, 16 January 1970.
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- “This Is Your Coastside,” *Half Moon Bay Review*, 19 October 1950.
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- “The Toy Ship,” a story from Galen Wolf's unpublished *Legends of the Coastland*.
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- Mary Bettencourt, interview with the author, 1 November 2003.
- Galen Wolf, “The Town That Was,” (San Mateo: County Historical Society, 1972)



Galen Wolf's “The Wreck” recalls a young boy's woeful discovery at the water's edge—the shipwreck *Alice Buck*.

Courtesy of Allen Bunes and Shannon Nottestad

from its original size of
parted shipwrecks and
ant Commander W. A.
ured by light or water
edro, California.





Strandings and Wrecks of Vessels on the Coast of California

Recently discovered in the Maritime Museum Library archives, the above reproduction of a shipwreck chart is reduced from its original size of 28"x 58", allowing a defined portion of the chart to be reproduced in *Mains' Haul*. The exhaustive details of more than 700 charted shipwrecks and strandings along the coast of Washington (not shown), Oregon and California, span the 1800s-1900s. Recorded by Lieutenant Commander W. A. Mason, USN, it appears that several revisions were made during the years 1946-1955. Unfortunately, the date of origin is obscured by light or water damage, and little is known of Lieutenant Commander Mason except for his port of call, which appears on the chart as San Pedro, California.



Eighth Maritime Heritage Conference

October 9 – 12, 2007

Maritime Museum of San Diego, California

The Maritime Museum of San Diego, in conjunction with other leading maritime heritage organizations, is proud to announce the **Eighth Maritime Heritage Conference**, to be held in San Diego, California, October 9 – 12, 2007. The conference chair is Dr. Raymond E. Ashley, Executive Director of the Maritime Museum of San Diego. Participating organizations include: The San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum, The American Lighthouse Coordinating Committee, the Council of American Maritime Museums, the Historic Naval Ships Association, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Maritime Historical Society, the Museum Small Craft Association, the National Park Service, the Naval Historical Foundation, the North American Society for Oceanic History, the Nautical Research Guild, the U.S.

Life-Saving Service Heritage Association, and the U.S. Lighthouse Society.

The Conference Venue:

Through the seven preceding Maritime Heritage Conferences, leading researchers and participating organizations have established a vibrant contribution to the field of maritime history and the preservation of nautical heritage. The forth-coming San Diego conference will build on this, and also offer a unique experience for attendees. For the first time in the history of the Maritime Heritage Conference all sessions will be held afloat.

The Museum vessels forming the venue for the Maritime Heritage Conference have profound significance, not only for the maritime history of California and the United States, but also for global social and cultural history. The *Star of India*, flagship of the Museum's collection, once plied between ports in Britain, India, New Zealand, and

Australia in the last decades of the nineteenth century. **She is the world's oldest active sailing ship and a California and National Historic Landmark.** What better place to hold a conference session than on the decks of a vessel that circumnavigated the globe twenty-one times. The

Berkeley, a steam ferryboat built in 1898, now holds the Museum's exhibits relating to maritime history in the Pacific Ocean. In the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, she assisted in the rescue and evacuation of survivors. The upper deck of the *Berkeley* will be the venue for many of the conference sessions. Those attending the conference will also be welcome to view the Museum's other historic vessels, among them the *Surprise* – a replica of an 18th century Royal Navy frigate famous for its use in the award winning film "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World." Participants may also visit the *Californian* – the replica of an 1848 Revenue Cutter, the *Medea* – a 1904 steam yacht, and the *B-39* – a Russian Soviet-era "Foxtrot" submarine. Within a few minutes walk

of the Maritime Museum, the San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum's *USS Midway* will be the venue for a number of conference sessions.

The Conference Program:

The conference will officially commence with a welcome reception on the *Star of India* on the evening of Tuesday, October 9, 2007. For the next three days, October 10-12, conference participants will have the opportunity of selecting from more than 70 different break-out sessions. The proceedings will officially conclude with a twilight dinner cruise on San Diego Bay. Participating organizations will have the option of conducting their annual general meetings on Saturday, October 13. Arrangements for these meetings can be made through the **Conference Coordinator, Robyn Wilner**. Ph: (619) 234-9153, ext. 106. Fax: (619) 234-8345. Email: rwilner@sdmaritime.org



Photo by Bob Grieser



CALL FOR PAPERS

Final Acceptance Date: June 1, 2007

In line with the scope and content of previous Maritime Heritage Conferences, the San Diego conference will focus on a broad array of topics. Participating organizations and individuals are encouraged to submit papers and panels pertaining to Maritime and Naval History, the History of Hydrographic Surveys, Oceanic Trade and Communications, National Marine Sanctuaries, Marine Art, Shipbuilding, Ship Preservation, Small Craft, Lighthouses and Lifesaving Stations, Historic Ships, Underwater Archaeology, Maritime Libraries and Museums, and Maritime Heritage Education.

Abstracts should be typed and consist of no more than one single-spaced page. Each abstract must be accompanied by a CV of no more than three pages. Abstracts and CVs are due **no later than June 1, 2007**.



Photo by Maggie Piatt

Abstracts should clearly outline the paper's argumentation, its place within the broader themes in maritime history, the umbrella organization to which the presenter belongs (if applicable), as well as the paper's estimated time limit. Abstracts should be sent, preferably by email, to the **Conference Program Chair**, Kevin Sheehan, Ph: 619 234-9153, ext. 118.

Fax: (619) 234-8345.

Email: librarian@sdmaritime.org

The Conference Website:

Further information on the Conference may be accessed via the **Maritime Museum of San Diego's website**. Simply go to www.sdmaritime.org click on "Public Events" and scroll down to the **Maritime Heritage Conference**. This information will be updated on a regular basis.

***We look forward to seeing you in San Diego in 2007
for what promises to be a truly exciting and memorable event.***



Maritime Museum of San Diego

1492 North Harbor Drive, San Diego, California
92101

Ph: (619) 234-9153 Fax: (619) 234-8345.

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One Deserted Island

Two Shipwrecks – Two Dramatic Outcomes...

In 1864 two ships wreck on remote and uninhabited Auckland Island, some 300 miles from New Zealand. Five seamen in the far south survive, astonishingly, for nearly two years before building a vessel and setting off in what would become one of the most courageous voyages of the sea.

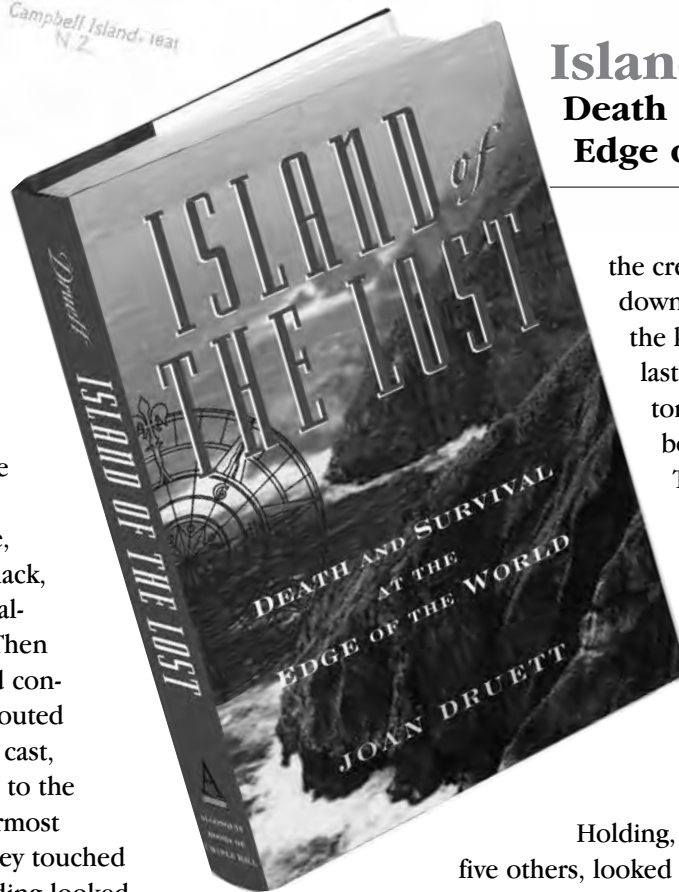
Twenty miles of impassable cliffs away on the same godforsaken island, nineteen other seamen succumb to utter chaos.

Only three will survive.

Island of the Lost Death and Survival at the Edge of the World

Robert Holding turned to stare with growing terror. They were just three hundred yards to the shore, a distance that was decreasing with every surge of the waves. Suddenly reefs, seething with phosphorescence, popped out of the sea, while black, streaming cliffs abruptly materialized from the rain and snow. Then they were in the surf. Panic and confusion reigned. The captain shouted out for the sounding line to be cast, yet the *Invercauld* was so close to the cliffs that the royals—the uppermost masts—were snapping off as they touched overhanging stone. When Holding looked around in desperation, it was to see that the mate had broken down in tears, while the second mate was meaninglessly screaming, “*Luff, luff, luff*” at the man at the helm. Then he heard the captain bawl out orders to drop the anchor. Surf boomed, while the storm shrieked in crescendo. The boats were still lashed to struts above the deck, and the captain Delgarno yelled at Holding to cut them free. However, what the captain later called “the fatal moment” arrived. With a series of dull crashes the *Invercauld* struck, and there were no more orders to be heard.

The jib-boom was whirled away. The ship lifted on

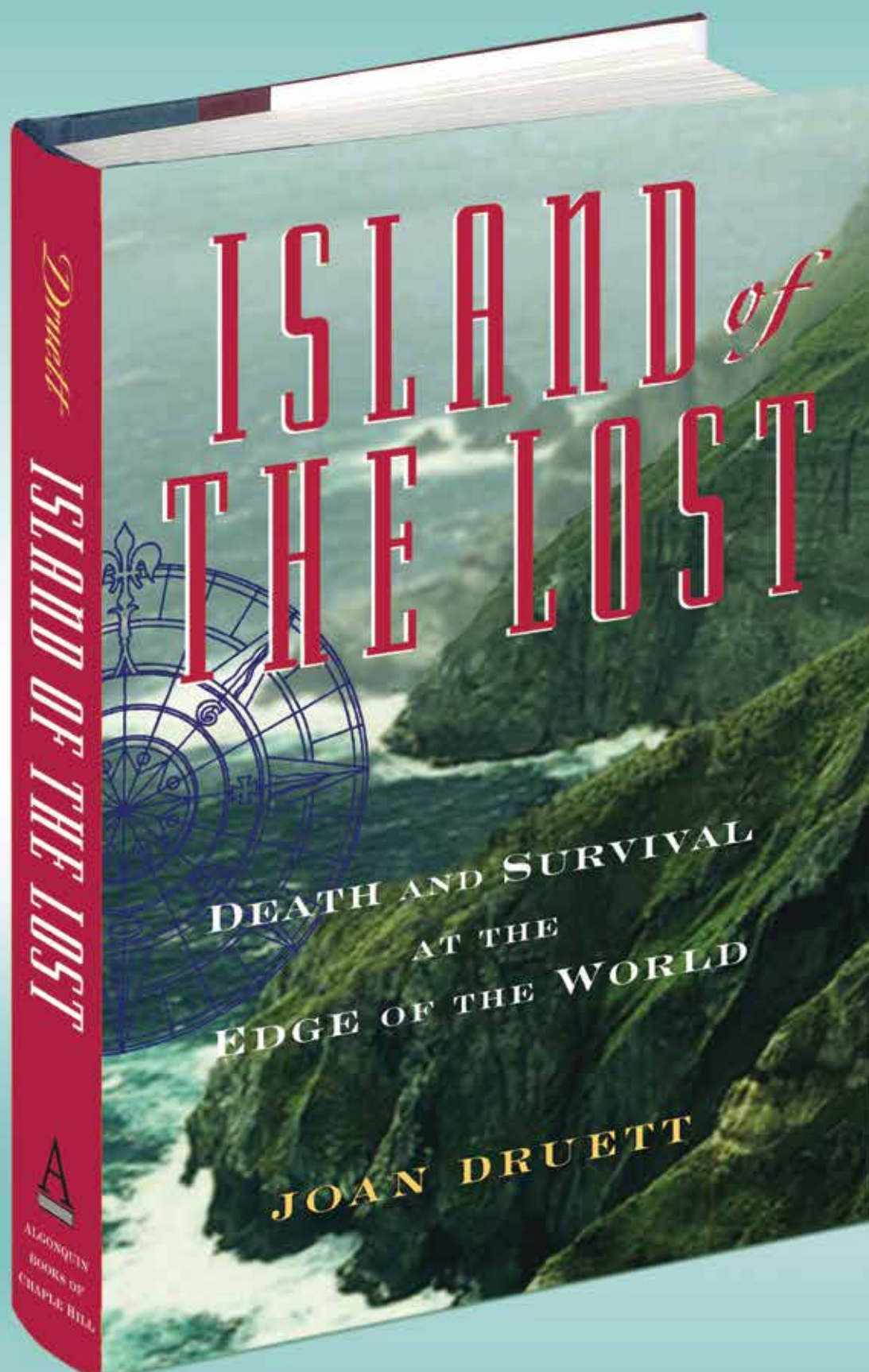


the crest of a wave, and slammed down. With a sickening crunch the keel caved in, and the ballast plunged through the bottom. What was left of the ship bounced and lurched sideways. The three iron masts and wire rigging followed the ballast to the depths, carrying with them every inch of the canvas and rope that could otherwise have been used for shelter on the beach.

The remainder of the *Invercauld* was breaking up fast. When

Holding, clinging to the poop with five others, looked over the stern, the wild water between the rocks and the beach was strewn with floating wreckage and struggling men. Another heavy sea struck the ship. He looked back and to his horror there were only two of his companions left. Then a third great wave overwhelmed what was left of the poop, and abruptly Holding was alone.

The following sea washed him completely off the wreck, carrying him with it as it surged up onto the beach. He staggered out of the water, calling out in desperation, terrified that he was the only one who had survived. Other voices answered from the icy blackness, and the small group huddled together through the rest of the dreadful night.



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