

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY TO CONVERT FAMOUS OLD BARK INTO AQUARIUM FOR SAN DIEGO

Star of India to Be Brought
Here Through Generosity
Of James W. Coffroth.

Plans to bring the famous old bark, Star of India, to San Diego, where she will be used as a museum of marine life and nautical curiosities, are soon to be completed, as a result of the generosity of James W. Coffroth, prominent sportsman.

This statement was made yesterday by officials of the Zoological society of San Diego, who expect to complete negotiations for the purchase of the vessel some time this week. An offer of Mr. Coffroth to supply the funds was necessary to purchase the vessel, which received a few days ago, after hope of securing the ship had almost vanished.

PLAN CONCEIVED YEAR AGO

The plan to bring a clipper ship to San Diego, as part of the proposed aquarium and marine museum, was first conceived over a year ago. Since that time the aquarium committee of the zoological society have been at work, trying to raise funds, and to locate a vessel which would be suitable. During the summer, the quest narrowed down to three ships—the Santa Clara, Star of Chile and Star of India. The first one was sold to a motion picture concern in Los Angeles, before more than a casual inspection of her could be made. The Star of Chile went last week, and the Star of India, last of the famous Alaska Packers' fleet to be sold, was about to be taken over, when the owners gave the zoological society an extension of time. Mr. Coffroth's offer was then received, and all that now remains, it is said, is to complete the final arrangements in San Francisco, where the vessel is moored.

For several years there have been plans for an aquarium on the waterfront. Lack of funds has prevented any action, but now that the old ship which is to form the outstanding exhibit has been secured, it is believed that the completion of the project is not far away.

UNWILLING TO BREAK UP SHIP

Love of the sea, and their unwillingness to have the proud old vessel go to the electric torch and be broken up, led A. K. Tichenor, superintendent of the Alaska Packers' association, and Attorney Walter J. Seaborn, who is handling the ships, to extend the time to the local zoological society. As a result, the ship has been saved, and will come to San Diego as a permanent exhibit, representing the days when sailing ships carried the ocean commerce. It is planned to use for 'tween decks space of the hold for small exhibits of marine life and of navigational and fishing equipment. The lower hold will be fitted up as a replica of the ocean's floor, with specimens of the forms of life found there. The Alaska Packers' exhibit, consisting of working models showing all canner operations, is to be loaned to the ship, and Mr. Tichenor and Mr. Seaborn are reported to be gathering, around the San Francisco and Oakland waterfront, a collection of relics from other famous ships.

BUILT IN 1863

The Star of India is a bark rigged, three-masted iron vessel, 205 feet long. She was built by Gibson and company of Ramsey, England, in 1863, and was designed for general passenger and freight service. It is of exceptionally heavy construction, exceeding even Lloyd's requirements, and should last indefinitely. The ship was originally known as the Buter

and was used for many years as a convict ship, taking prisoners from England to the penal settlements. While she will be eventually an integral part of the aquarium, it is planned, for the time being, to moor her at some place along the waterfront where she will be accessible to the general public.

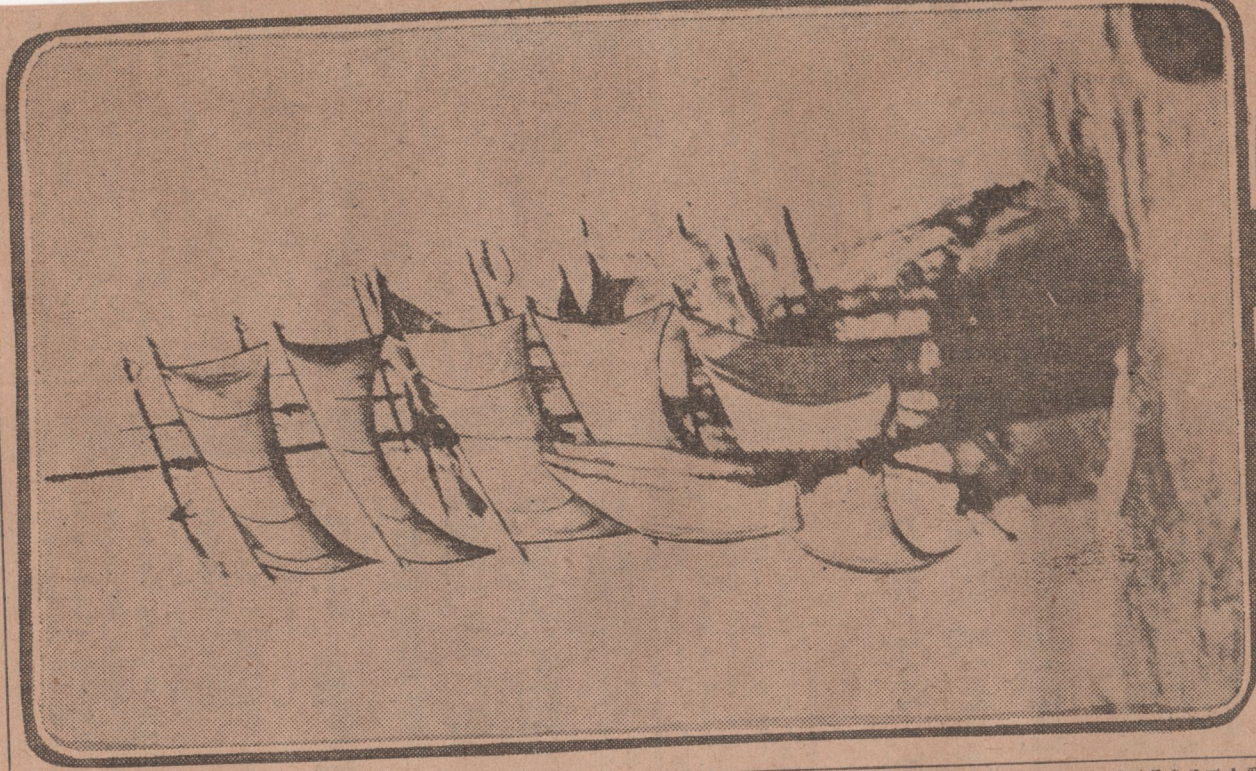
According to present plans, the Star of India will be loaded with lumber or general cargo, and will be brought to San Diego under her own canvas. Then the work of placing the exhibits and fitting her up for public inspection will start.

The other nautical museum in the world is said to be the Prince of Wales, by the Prince of Wales, Charles W. served at the San Diego will comb

tures with an aquarium.

Application for a tract of the city tide lands for use as an aquarium site was made several years ago, but was held in abeyance pending the development of the city plan then being offered by John Nolen. The city planner, acting in accordance with the request, located the aquarium site at the battery, and approximately five acres was set aside for the aquarium and surrounding parked grounds. It is there that the Star of India will be moored permanently in a bed of concrete as the central exhibit of the unique aquarium.

The aquarium site is now under water, and the ship will be towed in and put in place before the dredges fill in the site. A firm foundation of concrete will be built around the hull to preserve it and make it



Famous old sailing ship, Star of India, which is to be brought to San Diego and converted into a floating aquarium and nautical museum. The vessel was bought by James Coffroth and presented to the San Diego Zoological society.



Zoological Society To Convert Famous Old Bark Into Aquarium For San Diego



Then a moat will be left around it so that the ship will appear to be floating. The moat will be used as a pool for deep sea animals such as seals and porpoises. The vessel will be boarded by way of a gang-plank, and present plans contemplate putting awnings over the deck, which will be fitted with benches and chairs so that visitors to the museum may sit on deck and watch the shipping and other interesting activities of the harbor and waterfront.

WILL BE UNIQUE

The aquarium itself will be unique in that it will be entirely out of doors. As far as possible the exhibits will be located in pools to be built in the grounds as are the seal pools at the zoo. The tanks of glass will be placed under long arcades to protect them from storms while leaving them open to the air. Nowhere else in the country could such a plan be followed. The arcades will be built in the mission style, and the grounds and pools are to be laid out by Kenneth Gardner, executive secretary of the city planning commission and landscape architect for the zoological society.

The whole scheme for the aquarium has been worked out by a special committee of the zoological society, including A. T. Merter, G. A. Davidson, W. V. Ambrose, Gerald A. MacMullen, Mrs. Letta Clertey, and W. C. Crandall, aquarium director. The committee has announced that the Star of India will be the first exhibit and the nucleus for the new aquarium and park, and that the rest of the plans will be developed a part at a time, as fast as funds are available. Development will depend, they say, upon public subscriptions, as the zoo has been built, and Mr. Cottroth has started the ball rolling with his generous gift.

CREDIT DUE TO

GERALD MACMULLEN

The committee has stated that credit for the idea of the ship and nautical museum in connection with the aquarium, as well as much of the preliminary work that has made the plan practicable, belongs to Gerald MacMullen, whose nautical is well known and demonstrated by his activity in local yachting circles and his having served as commodore of the San Diego Yacht club.

In order that the aquarium may be of practical value as well as of ornamental and recreational value, efforts will be made to have a federal and state fish hatchery located within the aquarium grounds. Such an establishment would be of great educational and entertainment interest as well as of commercial value.

Former Convict Ship Will Become Aquarium

By Leon Adams

A nobler fate than most of the disappearing sailing vessels are finding has been decreed for the famous British convict ship Euterpe, now the Alaska Packers Association iron bark Star of India, laid up at Alameda.

Advices from the south today indicated that the Star of India has been sold to the Zoological Society of San Diego to become a floating aquarium and marine museum on that city's waterfront.

Instead of dismantling or destruction, as has been the lot of other old windjammers, the proposal is to convert the bark into

a full-rigged ship, as it was originally built 63 years ago, to carry prisoners from England to New Caledonia. Then it will be set in an artificial lake in the center of a proposed five-acre zoological garden, of which it will be the principal attraction.

The ship will remain afloat in its natural element, although surrounded by land, and will preserve in tangible form the fading memories of days when sailing vessels carried all of the world's commerce. It will even have company, for it is planned to populate the pool with fish and sea lions.

Ship Strongest Built

Old gear and rigging, whose handling and use are fast becoming a forgotten art, will be kept on exhibit inside the hull and cabins. Aquarium tanks will be set opposite the portholes.

Dr. Harry M. Wegeforth, president of the zoological society, was in San Francisco Sunday completing negotiations for the purchase. The plan has been in formation between him and Gerald MacMullen, secretary of the organization's aquarium committee, for several months.

The Star of India is renowned as one of the strongest sailing ships ever built. It is commonly said that the vessel could continue efficient service for 150 years.

Its logbooks, still intact aboard the vessel, tell a story of famous voyages to every part of the world, and include the narrative of a shipwreck in which the vessel proved its strength by escaping undamaged.

Gibson & Co. of Ramsey, Scotland, built the Star of India in 1863 for the England-Australia passenger trade and also as a convict transport. Evidences of this use are still to be found in the old hull. In 1901 the Alaska Packers' Association purchased the ship, and it operated with the San Francisco Alaska salmon fleet until it was laid up in 1923.

Capt. A. T. Hunter Returns

After nearly four years spent as operating manager of the United States Lines in New York, where he was in charge of all physical operations of the Leviathan, George

Washington, and 14 other giant liners, Captain A. T. Hunter returned today to his old post with the General Steamship Corporation of San Francisco. Hunter resigned from the government service together with General Manager Rossbottom of the United States Lines. Referring to the national merchant marine, he said:

"I earnestly believe that the government should adopt and carry out a system based on loyalty, efficiency and full service on the part of every member of its operating organization, in the manner that is followed by successful private operators."

"If these essential points of successful organizations were borne in mind—and unfortunately they are not—there would be far more progress made by the government in attaining its objective in building up our national shipping."

Captain Hunter succeeds Captain H. H. Birkholm, who has been appointed manager of the General Corporation's San Pedro office following the resignation of Captain W. J. Stofen. The firm's facilities are being enlarged to take care of its business, which has doubled in the past four years.

Three Ships Purchased

The Williams Line has purchased three former Shipping Board steamers to augment its intercoastal service and to take the places of the chartered steamers Eagle and Tiger, which it expects to relinquish in December, it was reported in dispatches from the north today.

One of the ships is said to be the Eastern Mariner, a coal-burner, which was purchased from the government by unnamed eastern parties at private terms on November 6. It has been laid up at Seattle and is to be converted to an oil-burner. Al Zipf, Pacific coast manager of the company, is at Portland this week, apparently in connection with the purchase.

Strike Settlement Result

First local echo of the reported settlement of the British coal strike, which has caused an unprecedented boom in American shipping, was the report from New York that the Transmarine Line will put enough ships in its intercoastal service next year to establish a weekly schedule. Twelve of the company's 31 vessels, formerly idle, are at present in the coal trade and will be available about January 1, it was reported.

Former Convict Ship Will Become Aquarium by
Leon Adams, San Francisco, 16 November 1926

