

Maritime Museum of San Diego

MAINS'L HAUL

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A Journal of Pacific Maritime History



“For All the Tea in China”
America, Australia, and the China Trade

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MAINS'L HAUL

is published quarterly,
wind and weather permitting, aboard
the ferryboat *Berkeley*.

"Mains'l Haul"—An order in tacking
ship bidding 'Swing the main yards.'
To loot, steal, or 'acquire'."

—John Masefield

A Japanese painter captured three generations of American China trade craft—from the tea clipper in the distance to the Dollar Line's *President Coolidge* and the Pan Am "China Clipper" soaring above.

Cover:

An American drug runner?

This nimble armed schooner flying the Chilean flag is typical of vessels that smuggled opium into isolated spots like Lintin Island, shown in the background.

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CLIPPERS OF THE CHINA TRADE
1850—1955

DID YOU KNOW?

- that sea cucumbers, elephant teeth, and concretions from cow stomachs were all commodities of the China trade? (pages 15-16)
- that tea was packed in crates for shipment by barefoot Chinese men stomping on it? (page 35)
- that Britain fought two wars to permit English merchants to import opium into China, where it was illegal? (page 28)
- that some of America's earliest fortunes were made in the drug trade, thanks to opium smuggling? (page 26)
- that the British government tried to establish opium as an Australian crop, for export to China? (page 53)

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Vol. 39, No. 2 Spring 2003

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Our mission is to engage members and the public in the study of maritime history, while promoting scholarly research. We welcome submissions on all aspects of the Pacific's past, and encourage a wide variety of perspectives on this rich heritage. Articles are indexed for researchers worldwide in *America: History & Life* and *Historical Abstracts*.
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Mark Allen Editor

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Press Plus Printer

This issue of *Mains'l Haul*, devoted to the theme of trans-Pacific trade with China in the age of sail, coincides with our major exhibit on the same subject, "Mariners & Mandarins: Seafaring and the Arts of the China Trade." The exhibit itself is spread across galleries on board *Star of India* and a few blocks away at the downtown site of the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art. Dividing a narrative exhibit in such a way represents a first for the San Diego Maritime Museum, and one of the first such instances of this practice in San Diego. It is important to note that this exhibit would not have been possible for us without partnerships with the San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, and particularly with The Kelton Foundation. Not only were the substantial holdings of The Kelton Foundation made available to us, but the vision encompassed in "Mariners & Mandarins" owes a tremendous debt to Richard Kelton, whose scholarship has informed the thesis of this exhibit just as it has informed the growth of one of the world's most extraordinary private collections of maritime art and artifacts.

FROM THE HELM

by Ray Ashley
Director
Maritime Museum of San Diego

Aside from inherent limitations of the exhibit space in *Star of India*, there were important reasons to attempt to tell this story in two locations. The story of the China trade is the tale of the connection between two cultures separated by an immense gulf of geography and history. In their race to trade with the world's most ancient living civilization, Americans for the first time projected their young nation onto the world economic stage. Every one of the small ships which sailed for China from dozens of American ports embodied a newfound American sovereignty sent across vast distances at high risk

in an effort to penetrate an established economic system, dominated for centuries by European mercantilism. Especially in the early days of the trade, some of these American ships were barely bigger than the ship's boats carried by contemporary European "Indiamen." They sailed without the protections or infrastructure of national charter companies or powerful navies. In the world of these traders, risk could not be managed through specialized channels of instant communications, air travel, automated inventory, or predictable mechanized transport. For the assembly



of cargoes and vital trading information, they depended instead upon the establishment of an international network of communication in which ships themselves constituted the only conveyance of materials, people, and information, all moving together at the speed of the wind.

Sailing to China was not simply an exercise in navigation and seamanship; it entailed the construction of a technological system that linked the ports, forests, and shipyards of the American eastern seaboard with the ports of the Americas and Europe, India, California, the Pacific Northwest, and Australia and the myriad islands of the South Seas. To descend into the hold of the *Star of India* is to enter the world of these intrepid traders, and come to terms with the kinds of visions and risks inherent to a worldwide technological system constructed of wood and canvas, in which fortunes (the very first fortunes built in the new United States) rose and fell on the good faith of promissory notes between individuals from radically different cultures, languages, and political systems on opposite sides of the earth. As a museum visitor, to sense what drove these traders to such efforts and such risks, it is imperative that one travel to that other world, if only metaphorically, by traveling to the other exhibit location. There, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, one can imagine how the Chinese themselves saw these “foreign

devils”: as a market for not only such comparatively mundane goods as silks and tea, but for the kinds of spectacular art and artifacts that now awe our visitors.

These treasures of Chinese Export Art will soon return to their home in The Kelton Foundation collections, but this issue of *Mains'l Haul* is intended to leave behind both visual highlights from the exhibit and an array of new international scholarship on the China Trade. We are pleased to present within these pages a series of fascinating passages through the world of the Mariners and Mandarins, as they negotiate for long-ago cargoes on the shores of the Celestial Kingdom.

Macao was the first sight of China for seamen bound for Canton, and headquarters for many American and Australian traders. (Western women were not permitted in Canton, and lived here instead.) This view was painted about 1850 by a Chinese artist for a Western buyer, as were the other paintings from The Kelton Foundation reproduced on the following pages.

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The Fateful Case of Francis Terranova

An Incident of the China Trade

Jacques M. Downs

The scene of the crime: Whampoa anchorage, about 1810. The victim's home was a junk or sampan, perhaps one of those in the foreground. Behind them at far right, American ships ride at anchor along with British, Dutch and Danish vessels awaiting the riches upriver at Canton.

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At dawn on a late October morning in 1821, several Chinese soldiers marched a bound American seaman to a small plot of ground just outside the city walls of Canton. An executioner then tied the unhappy sailor, Francis Terranova, to a short wooden cross brought there for the purpose, and strangled him.¹

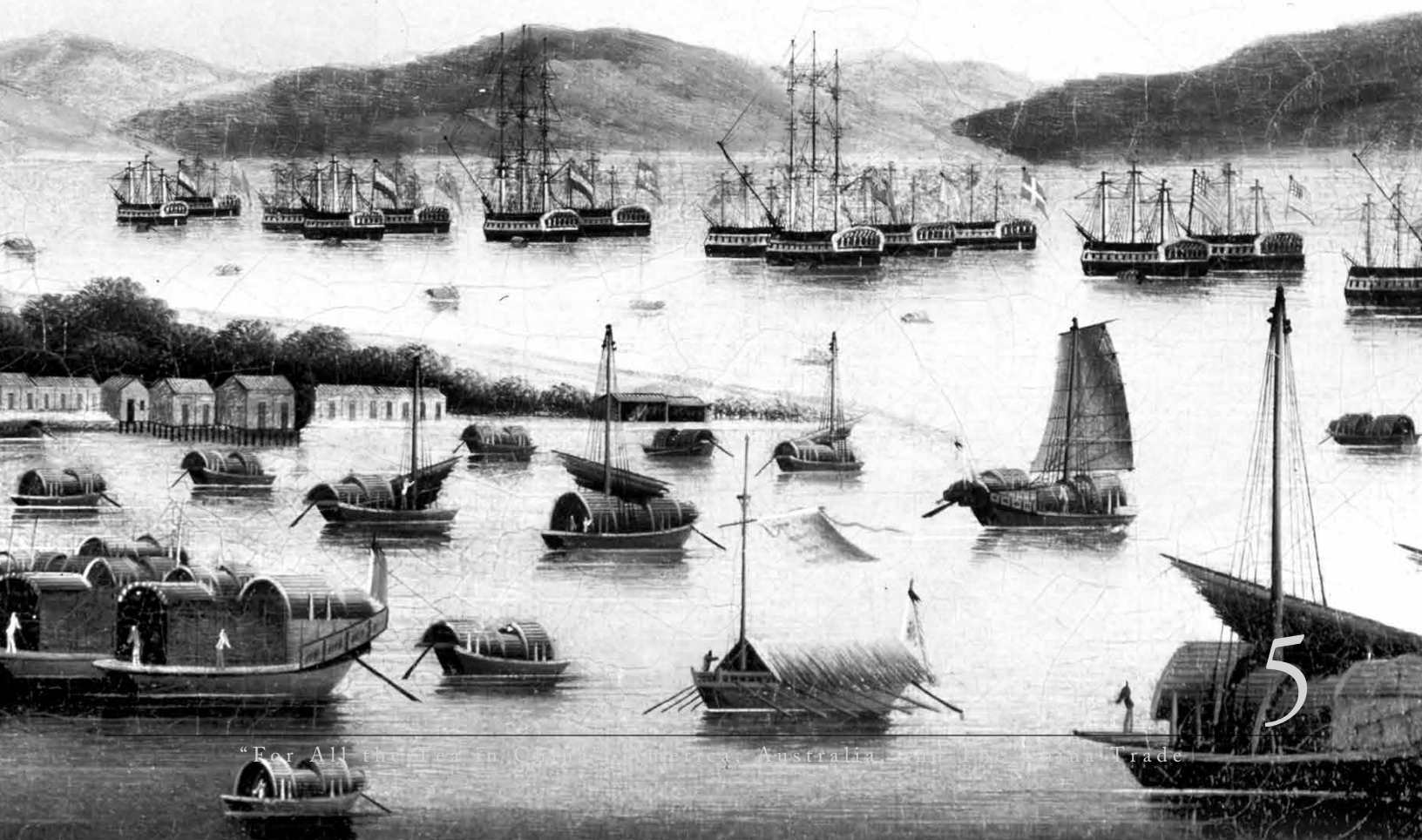
This shocking incident was the conclusion of a seamless fabric of human action in which a single foolish decision by Terranova's captain led inexorably to tragedy. English newspapers criticized the Americans in Canton for failing to offer determined resistance. The Americans blamed the Chinese merchants for duplicity, and all foreigners damned Chinese law and judicial procedure. Lingering bad memories of the incident would help shape the first U.S. treaty with China. At this historical distance, it is hard to see how anyone involved in the case could have acted differently. Each action occurred as if predetermined by what had gone before.

It had all begun a month earlier, while Captain William S. Cowpland's 284-ton ship *Emily*, of Baltimore, was anchored peacefully in Whampoa Reach, barely a dozen miles below the city, gradually selling off its cargo of



opium. The *Emily* had arrived in mid May, after months of leaden monotony on the long voyage from home, broken only by a stop at Batavia.² Common sailors like Terranova were now as close as they could usually come to Canton—the only Chinese port open to foreign trade between 1720 and 1842. Seamen were required by Chinese law to remain aboard ship, except for an occasional drunken day-visit to the shops in the neighborhood of the foreign “factories,” or hong. Captains and supercargoes were rowed upstream to stay in the factories, thirteen substantial two- and three-story buildings containing residential and office quarters, a go-down (warehouse), and recreational facilities, which stood on a narrow strip of shore in one of the suburbs outside Canton’s walls. At first, the misty hills in the blue distance, the bright green rice paddies and the colorful life on the Pearl River must have seemed refreshing to the young Sicilian sailor. By September, however, a hot, soggy South China summer and confinement aboard ship had undoubtedly eroded those first impressions.

Jacques Downs, of Kennebunkport, Maine, is the author of the 1997 book *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy*, and several articles on the China trade. He received his doctorate from Georgetown University, has also written on New England history, and somehow found time to host a Kennebunkport bed & breakfast for nineteen years.





This riverside strip in Canton was China's only official zone of trade with the outside world. The American factory stands at center in this painting by the Chinese artist Spoilum from about the time of Terranova's trial. The East India Company's handsomer edifice is two doors down. Between them lies the Swedish factory, where many Americans lived.

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On deck that September day, Terranova dickered with a woman fruit vendor whose sampan was moored alongside. Exactly what happened then is not wholly clear, although there were several different versions of the incident. According to the records of the British East India Company, Francis (probably Francesco) Terranova became involved in an argument with the boat woman and then "... incautiously threw an olive jar at her, which striking her on the head, she fell overboard and was drowned."³ Most American records describe the jar as a "stone" or "pottery" jar, and they often omit the argument, reporting instead that the woman fell overboard as she was poling her craft along.⁴ In any case, the woman's husband then appeared and accused the sailor of murder.

In those days the one law in the Chinese criminal code which applied to foreigners was that on homicide. An infraction of any other statute would have been ignored, but for murder, Chinese law was swift and terrible for the sons of Han and *fan kwae* ("foreign devils") alike. Consequently, foreigners had evolved an easy and efficient method of handling such matters. Before word of the killing had reached the ears of Chinese officials, known as mandarins, the family of the deceased would receive a handsome bribe for its silence. Generally, this payment was sufficient to insure that there would be no official inquiry. Occasionally, it was also necessary to bribe a greedy mandarin. But Francis Terranova was the victim of highly peculiar circumstances.

U.S. Consul Benjamin C. Wilcocks had been worried for some time about the multiplying portents that the Chinese government would soon take vigorous action against the profitable (and illicit) opium trade. The new Taokwang Emperor had apparently mounted the Dragon throne determined to put an end to this insidious commerce. Little mercy could be expected from incorruptible, reforming officials, and both Consul Wilcocks and Captain Cowpland were deep in the trade. Indeed, the *Emily's* inward cargo consisted entirely of opium. Consequently, Wilcocks acted fast when the news of the killing reached him.

He summoned Pacqua, the Chinese merchant with whom the *Emily* did business, and Houqua, the chief of the Cohong, the merchants' guild that controlled all of the Celestial Empire's foreign trade. Both urged an

immediate settlement; Wilcocks agreed and pledged his own credit up to \$15,000.⁵ But this sensible arrangement was not to be. Captain Cowpland, convinced that the killing was accidental, refused to pay a penny. In fact, he welcomed the public investigation that was sure to follow. Cowpland's high moral tone has never been fully explained.⁶ Certainly it stood in sharp contrast to the casual virtues involved in the opium trade. Under the circumstances, it was also extremely dangerous for Francis Terranova.

Wilcocks soon received an order from the Whampoa District Magistrate to appear at Whampoa to view the corpse. In the company of several Chinese officials, he saw the body, the jar, and the other incriminating evidence. After the inspection, the Chinese magistrate demanded that Terranova be surrendered.⁷ Now Wilcocks was in a most delicate position. He was only a merchant-consul, dealing in teas, silks, opium and the other stuffs of the China trade. He had not the haziest claim to any political or judicial authority. The young United States government, unwilling to become involved in political matters at such a distance, had granted him a commission to perform commercial duties only.

Wilcocks, however, called together the American community and had Cowpland select a fifteen-member committee of his countrymen to handle negotiations with the Chinese. Cowpland then chose an equal number of representatives from each of the three commercial professions in the little colony: five captains, five supercargoes, and five resident merchants.⁸ Perhaps it was significant that all three groups had one interest in common: they were primarily merchants and completely dependent on the China trade. They had come thousands of miles to do business. To abandon the trade would mean ruin for themselves and for their business associates at home. Wilcocks' method was characteristically American in its democratic approach, but he was a merchant from mercantile Philadelphia, and had a merchant's interests at heart. Unfortunately for Terranova, there would be no sailors on this committee.

At first the committee was immovable. Terranova would never be given up to the barbarous justice of the Chinese. Although Chinese law recognized a difference between willful murder and accidental death, most foreigners were not aware of that fact. Additionally, a decision for accidental death required the cooperation of officials who could shape the charges properly. If Terranova were lucky, an amenable mandarin could get him off with a small fine and the equivalent of house arrest. But Terranova was not lucky.

The committee opened negotiations with the Cohong, the small guild of Chinese merchants who alone were permitted to trade with foreigners—and which the Imperial Government held responsible for the conduct of all foreigners in the empire. There was no foreign office, as China recognized no other government. Consequently, the Cohong was often compelled to act like a foreign office, although it had neither the power nor the sanction of the Emperor. Besides being the unofficial instrument of Canton officialdom, the Cohong was also the principal source of revenue for the local government. Every disturbance in the foreign community thus became an excuse for official extortion from the guild's rich merchants.⁹ Therefore, the Cohong was always eager to settle all difficulties as swiftly and quietly as possible. Indeed, it appears that they promised too much, or so it later seemed to the Americans.

The victim belonged to a community of people who spent their entire lives on the water, and formed a distinct ethnic group. "Tanka boat girls" lived on sampans at Whampoa, Macao and Hong Kong. Romanticized images like this—copied from a work by expatriate British painter George Chinnery by an artist from Lamqua's studio about 1840—were popular with Westerners. *Tanka* (egg) refers to the rounded shape of their sampans, which delivered food and served as water taxis for seamen.

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After days of negotiation, the committee and the Cohong reached an agreement. The local Chinese magistrate would try Terranova at one of the foreign factories that lined the waterfront just outside the city wall. Defense witnesses and evidence would be heard. Wilcocks would be granted a seat on the court, and the British East India Company's interpreter (Dr. Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary in China and something of a sinologist) would be allowed to translate the testimony. But they had not consulted with the Viceroy, a Manchu who was the highest authority in Canton, and the representative of the Son of Heaven himself on his throne in Peking (Beijing). As it happened, the Viceroy demurred. He ruled that the magistrate would indeed hold the trial, but aboard the *Emily*. Wilcocks might be present but only in a private capacity, and there would be no foreign interpreter. Perhaps because the committee feared the consequences of opposing the Chinese authorities, or perhaps because it was intrigued by the prospect of holding the tribunal in the friendlier atmosphere aboard the ship, or perhaps just because it was tired of bickering, the committee promptly agreed¹⁰ and advised Captain Cowpland to do the same. In any case, there was no alternative.¹¹

Fukien junks anchor near one of the Pearl River "folly forts" within a few years of the trial, in a painting attributed to Tinqu.

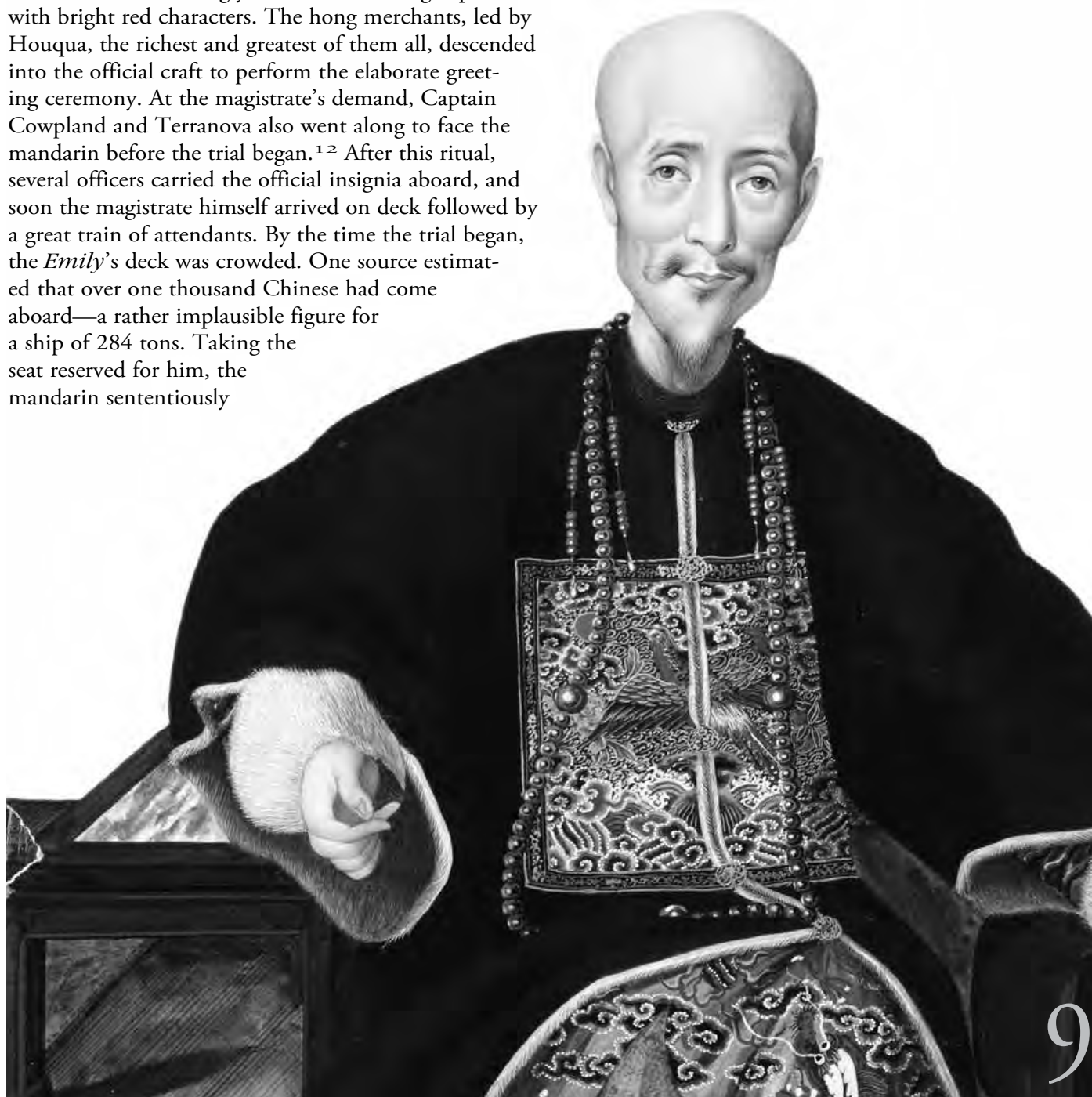
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On the morning of October 6, Canton's American community rose early. By the time the news that the magistrate was on his way reached the *Emily* twelve miles downriver, forty Americans and eight hong merchants were aboard. On deck, several chairs were set up to accommodate the magistrate and his court. At eight o'clock sharp, a red, white, and blue mandarin junk propelled by a double bank of long, white oars drew alongside. The accompanying host of man-of-war junks immediately encircled the *Emily*. On a mat in the stern of the mandarin boat, surrounded by his retinue, sat the magistrate, dressed in a gorgeously embroidered silk robe. A number of colored balls and banners floated overhead, most strikingly his white silk ensign splashed with bright red characters. The hong merchants, led by Houqua, the richest and greatest of them all, descended into the official craft to perform the elaborate greeting ceremony. At the magistrate's demand, Captain Cowpland and Terranova also went along to face the mandarin before the trial began.¹² After this ritual, several officers carried the official insignia aboard, and soon the magistrate himself arrived on deck followed by a great train of attendants. By the time the trial began, the *Emily's* deck was crowded. One source estimated that over one thousand Chinese had come aboard—a rather implausible figure for a ship of 284 tons. Taking the seat reserved for him, the mandarin sententiously

Wu Bingjian, known to Westerners as Houqua, probably held the world's largest commercial fortune when he was painted by Tinqu around 1840. For thirty years he was the most respected member of the Cohong, or merchants' guild. Maintaining especially close relationships with his American customers, he invested in U.S. railroads and real estate.

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announced that the ship and its company were now under his protection and called upon Heaven to judge him as he would judge the accused.¹³

What followed may have been deliberately planned. Or, it may have been the result of the double game played by the hong merchants to save themselves from official wrath. It certainly was a clash between two very different judicial systems, probably complicated by the confusion generated by the lack of a common language. Since the Americans were not allowed to have their own interpreter, all communication had to pass through the linguist, whose title was purely formal. He was licensed to perform a number of functions for foreigners, the least important of which was interpreting. Like most linguists, he spoke only Chinese and pidgin.¹⁴ Wilcocks had objected very strongly to relying on the linguist. He wrote the hong merchants that they knew very well their “perfect ignorance of the English language” was inadequate to the task, and that the linguist “was acknowledged on all hands to be a most consummate villain.”¹⁵

Accordingly, all English-language accounts of the proceedings are hazy on the most vital points of the testimony. We do not even have Consul Wilcocks’ usually trustworthy record. Having been denied a seat on the court, he refused to attend. It appears that the Americans were permitted only to state what they were prepared to prove. Terranova was brought forth and asked to identify the jar. He did so with complete composure. His attempt to show how the incident occurred, however, was angrily dismissed by the magistrate.

The government’s terrified witnesses then came forward—a boat-woman and two small children—all of whom testified on their knees with their heads touching the deck. The magistrate heard their testimony at length and questioned them closely. After some difficulty and with considerable help from the linguist, the woman was able to identify Terranova.¹⁶ This should not have been overwhelmingly difficult, as all the rest of the crew were confined to the forecabin during the trial. At this point, the Americans managed to include enough of their evidence to prove that the chief witness had previously told a strikingly different version of the killing to the captains of several ships then in the harbor. Moreover, it appeared that the children were not present when the incident occurred.¹⁷ This sort of evidence, however, seems to have been in bad taste. With a wave of his aristocratic hand, the magistrate dismissed all testimony that conflicted with the government version. When a barbarian witness appeared, the magistrate was uninterested, and refused to allow the linguist to translate.¹⁸ Nothing so trivial as fact, evidently, could be permitted to obstruct the measured process of justice.

Of course, the Americans protested that the delicately-negotiated agreement was being violated, and their evidence ignored. Yet with every word they uttered, the magistrate became visibly more annoyed. Finally, the furious mandarin stopped the proceedings, declaring his conviction that Terranova was guilty and must be surrendered for sentencing. He himself had seen the woman and the jar. He believed the man guilty. “If he had judged wrongly, God would punish him. . . .”¹⁹

To their credit, the committee members unanimously opposed surrendering the now badly-confused sailor. They declared that the trial had been a mockery. Terranova had been prejudged. The magistrate’s scandalously partisan behavior had robbed the trial of its judicial nature. Moreover, the Americans complained, the hong merchants were guilty

of a breach of faith. They had promised a fair trial, but the proceeding had proved to be a cheap device to get custody of the prisoner. Thus, the Americans flatly refused to give up *Terranova* voluntarily. However, they noted,

We are bound to submit to your laws while we are in your waters, be they ever so unjust. We will not resist them . . . It is no disgrace to submit to your power, surrounded as we are by an overwhelming force, backed by that of a great empire. You have the power to compel us.²⁰

The worst that the Americans threatened to do was to strike their colors in protest, hardly enough to frighten a Chinese official. The magistrate's course of action seemed clear, but he was unwilling to take the prisoner by force. After three hours of unsuccessful negotiating, he finally gave the command to return to the city, taking poor Pacqua and the linguist with him in chains, and vowing to lay the case before the Viceroy.²¹

The following day, all American trade stopped. The Viceroy had cut off all intercourse with the disobedient barbarians. The *Emily* was even denied rations. The embargo, of course, was the decisive weapon. It hurt both the Americans and the Cohong, and both were anxious to resume their commerce. During the next three weeks, the committee and the hong merchants met frequently. The Americans appeared to be adamant, but in reality they had already submitted. They repeatedly stated their resolution not to resist Chinese authority. It remained for the hong merchants to act. On their part, the hong merchants were frozen with fear that the Americans would do something violent, despite their protestations. Any bloodshed would of course anger the Viceroy, and an angry Viceroy meant punishment and more extortion. Therefore, the desperate Cohong members pledged that *Terranova* would get a fair trial once he was in Chinese hands, and foreigners would be permitted to attend the trial. Meanwhile, both Americans and hong merchants were losing money.²²

Terranova was buried on the island in the foreground, with a view across the river toward Whampoa's famed seven-story pagoda. In this detail from a painting of about 1845, a military junk, or one belonging to a high official, is anchored at right, downstream from French, American and British ships. The events of the "Terranova incident" offer a glimpse, in microcosm, of the workings of the China Trade.

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FROM
The Times.
LONDON, MONDAY, MAY 6, 1822.

It may be recollected that a short time ago a rumour was current that some disturbance had taken place between the Americans and the Chinese.... We have seen several accounts of the transaction, but we believe the following to be the most correct account of the affair: —

“A seaman, a native of Italy, then acting second officer on board the American vessel, observing a woman hand some samsoo (spirits) into one of the ports of the ship, threw a small stone jar at her, which struck her on one of the temples. The woman, either stunned by the blow, fell overboard and immediately sunk, or fell overboard in consequence of the pin, on which the oar was fastened, breaking on her pulling away from the ships: both accounts are given. She was found next morning at some distance from the ship, with a small wound, as the Chinese asserted, on one of the temples, but stated by the Americans to have been made by the Chinese after she was found drowned, but without any injury of the skull. The family to which the woman belonged threatened, next morning, to represent the alleged murder to the Chinese authorities, and to demand the murderer to be given up for trial, but at the same time gave them to understand, that all would be hushed over if the Americans would give them three or four hundred dollars. This was refused, and, on some of the inferior Mandarins getting notice of it, the demand was increased to as many thousand dollars. The Americans still refusing to pay this douceur or bribe, (as the unfortunate man had no money,) ...the Mandarins of Canton were informed of it, who immediately demanded the man for trial.”

↓ ↓ ↓

Finally, on October 23, some twenty government boats bearing soldiers and hong merchants boarded the *Emily* and led away the hapless prisoner. Terranova went along voluntarily, as if he had been persuaded to accept the hong merchants' promises at face value. For a few days, he was held incommunicado at the guild (Consoo) house in Canton. According to the “Hong merchants and other Chinese,” he could receive a fair trial and, in case he was convicted, the case would be forwarded to the Emperor, as “no foreigner could be executed without his order.” On the 26th and 27th a second trial took place behind doors which were closed to Americans and all other foreigners. During the proceedings, Terranova is supposed to have confessed, according to the report made to the Emperor by the Viceroy.²³ Although such Chinese sources are often unreliable, there is none other.

The evening after the execution on October 28, the Chinese delivered seaman Francis Terranova's body to Captain Cowpland. The embargo was lifted the following day, since, in one British assessment, the Americans had “shewed a respectful submission to and dread of the laws.”²⁴ In their reports, however, the supercargoes of the East India Company expressed themselves rather more strongly:

As for the Americans who have thus barbarously abandoned a man serving under their Flag to the sanguinary Laws of this Empire without an endeavour to obtain common justice for him, their conduct deserves to be held in eternal execration by every Moral, honorable and feeling Mind.²⁵

In the aftermath, the American merchants took up a collection for the widow and five children. Virtually everyone involved in the trial wrote something in the way of an account of this dismal incident. Moreover, the *Chinese Repository* (the only missionary journal on the China coast), the *Canton Register* and other English-language newspapers in China regularly reminded their subscribers of the draconian nature of the Chinese criminal justice system. The same was true, albeit not so frequently, with American commercial magazines and other publications over the next two decades. Thus, by 1843, when Caleb Cushing arrived to negotiate the first U.S. treaty with China, the American commercial community, especially in Canton, was well aware of the fate of Francis Terranova. Considering the notoriety of the case, Cushing and the American government undoubtedly knew of it too. One of the principal clauses in the treaty would establish for Americans the right of extraterritoriality—the right to be tried by their own courts when accused of a felony in China. For China, of course, this was one of the first “concessions” which steadily drained her of sovereignty over the next century.

N O T E S

- 1 This description is based on Sir George T. Staunton, *Miscellaneous Notices Relating to China* . . . (London: J. Murray, 1822; 2nd. ed.), 429–432, which reprints an account from Canton that appeared in the *London Times* of 6 May 1822, though Staunton remarks that this account is “considerably overdrawn.” There are several important Western sources of information on the Terranova affair, which apparently made a deep impression on foreign residents of Canton. Many witnesses, observers of the trial, and others who happened to be in Canton at the time left written records of the matter. The official record is the despatch dated 1 November 1821 of Consul Benjamin Cleve Wilcocks. He was present at the meetings of the committee; all documents were delivered to him, and, other than his involvement in opium smuggling, he had little reason to falsify evidence. He left a very complete record, shrewd observations, many depositions, and enclosures, including translated Chinese documents. Other accounts generally bear him out, and no one later contradicted him.

While he was not present at the trial, he spoke with participants and the account he gives “was drawn up and handed to me by a gentleman who was present.” His account of the subsequent surrender, second trial, and execution of Terranova is probably the most authoritative source available. See Wilcocks to Secretary John Quincy Adams, 1 November 1821, U.S. Department of State: Canton Consular Letters I, National Archives, later reported to Congress *in extenso* in House Executive Documents, 26:2, #71. Another well-known narrative of the trial, a part of which seems to be taken from Wilcocks’ despatch as well as the records of the East India Company, is to be found in Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1926-1929), IV: Appendix X, 11-13 and 23-27, and Appendix Y, 28 and 35. Robert Morrison, who was present at Canton, commented on the trial in his *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison* (London, 1849), esp. II: Appendix, 12-17. A fairly recently discovered extensive account is to be found in the log of the *Panther*, Captain James Esdall, in the Carrington Collection, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence. This version, dated 6 October 1821, seems to have been the account on which Edward Everett drew for his article “The Execution of an Italian at Canton,” *North American Review* 40 (January 1835), as also the journal *Chinese Repository* V (September 1836). All three differ in only a few material circumstances, and are often word-for-word. The *Repository* piece is reprinted in G. W. Keeton, *The Development of Extraterritoriality in China*, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969), II: 183-189. Another distinctive account is that of Sir George T. Staunton mentioned above, which quotes the *Times* account and also contains another version which he received from “friends in China at the time,” presumably members of the East India Company’s factory. Finally, in his appendix are Chinese documents translated by Dr. Morrison, 416-428. Most of this material also appears in Keeton, II: 189-201. Staunton adds minor information, especially on the second trial at the Consoo House, but in general his stories corroborate those of Wilcocks-Morse and the *Panther*/*North American Review*/*Chinese Repository* versions. Finally, there are many sketchier accounts by various members of the committee that negotiated on Terranova’s behalf. Except for a few minor details and a major disagreement between the British and American accounts on the wisdom and morality of the committee’s decisions, the main lines of the story according to all English language accounts are clear.

2 Morse, *Chronicles* IV: 4-12.

3 Ibid., 12. The records spell the sailor’s name as “Terranovia,” but “Terranova” is probably the correct spelling, and Francesco probably his first name.

4 See e.g. Wilcocks’ statement, 1 November 1821, Canton Consular Letters (hereinafter “CCL”) I, and also enclosure #1 which gives depositions, and Captain Cowpland’s letter to Wilcocks of 25 September 1821. See also the Log of the *Panther*, and the *Chinese Repository*, September 1836.

5 Wilcocks to John Quincy Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, I.

6 Ibid. See also Cowpland’s letter to Wilcocks, 25 September 1821.

7 Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, enclosure 30.

8 Ibid.

9 Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1997), 77-80.

10 Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, I, document #32.

11 Ibid., enclosure #36, Committee to Wm. S. Cowpland, 5 October 1821.

12 *Panther* Log and *Chinese Repository*.

13 Wilcocks to Adams, 21 November 1821, CCL, I.

14 Downs, *Golden Ghetto*, 22-24.

15 Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, I.

16 *Panther* Log and *Chinese Repository*.

17 Ibid.

18 Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, I, enclosure #37.

19 *Panther* Log and *Chinese Repository*.

20 Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, I, enclosure #37.

21 Ibid., enclosure #36.

22 *Panther* Log and *Chinese Repository*; Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, I, enclosures #32 and #37.

23 Wilcocks to Adams, 11 November 1821, CCL, I.

24 Wilcocks to Adams, 1 November 1821, CCL, document #18 and enclosure #46, “Statement to the Emperor...”

25 Appendix X, “Statement of Proceedings in the Matter of the American Ship *Emily* and the Seaman Francis Terranova,” Morse, *Chronicles* IV: 28 October, p. 27.

“It is understood from some of the Chinese who were present, that...they produced a paper, which they advised him to sign by imprinting the mark of his open hand upon it, with red ink. They represented to him that it was merely a statement of the trial...”

The unfortunate man, surrounded with strangers, without any other advice, and put off his guard by the fair promises of a security merchant of high rank, and two China street merchants who acted as interpreters, and who pretended to be his friends, imprinted his hand on the paper.... It was a confession of his guilt...The poor man, in high hopes of being soon liberated...was taken into the heart of the city in a sedan-chair, attended by the merchants, and put into a room, where he was told he must remain a short time. Soon after, some Chinese soldiers entered and took him out another door; and the first intimation he had of his cruel fate, was the executioner and implements of death before him, and the heads of decapitated Chinese hung round a kind of square surrounded with spectators. He uttered a yell of despair, raised his hands to Heaven, and was understood to protest his innocence...

The executioner paid no attention to his cries...Ropes were first tied round his ankles and wrists, and then gradually round the more vital and sensible parts; and finally round the neck, until he expired by a languishing and cruel death.

His body was next day given up to the Americans, who buried him on Dane’s Island.

The something worse than indifferent conduct of the American Consul and captains of the 30 ships then in the river, was considered highly blamable throughout the whole proceedings, in leaving the man to his fate in that manner, and the affair was concluded with an act of glaring inconsistency on their part. It was ordered that the remains of the unfortunate man, whom they had neglected to see justice done to, should be buried with all the honours of an officer, and the funeral was accordingly very numerously attended. This amounted to a confession that he had suffered innocently; for they could never think of showing such attention to the funeral of a murderer.”

Re-Viewing Early American Trade with China

1784-1833

Rhys Richards

Rhys Richards, of Wellington, New Zealand, is a retired diplomat who has published over a dozen books and fifty articles primarily about Pacific maritime history. His first book, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands* led him to examine those trades throughout the Pacific before 1850, and particularly to study the role of American maritime activities in that period. His current interests lie strongly in studying the Pacific art and artifacts brought home by American whalers.

It has long been known that the opening of trade with China by daring American merchants in tiny ships was crucial to the economic growth of the young United States. New research reveals, however, that this trade was more than twice the size previously estimated.¹ This startling conclusion has emerged through combining the scattered and fragmentary American sources with the meticulous records kept at Canton by the supercargoes and scribes of the British "Honourable East India Company" and their Dutch counterparts, the *Verenighden Oost-Indische Compagnie*, or VOC.² Because the British and Dutch were intensely suspicious of American "interlopers," they reported home as much as they could about their new competitors.

A preliminary report published in 1994 brought the total number of known American trading voyages to China between 1784 and 1814 up to 618; this article extends the same study from 1815 to 1833, when the British closed their warehouses and residences at Canton. Thus we have learned that there were at least 1,352 officially acknowledged visits by American ships to China between 1784 and 1833.³

The Empress of China, the first American ship to trade with Asia, sails from New York in February 1784. She was dwarfed by British "East Indiamen" like *Sir David Scott*, at right.

A contemporary artist's impression © 2003 by Gordon Miller, courtesy of the artist; at right, courtesy The Kelton Foundation



Maritime Museum of San Diego



THE H.C.S. SIR DAVID SCOTT. CAPT. D.I. WARD.

at the Entrance of the Straits of Amoy, Feb. 1830.

The early American China trade had three main branches: voyages made to China directly from the United States; fur trading voyages made by way of the northwest coast of America; and voyages made in the Pacific Ocean for furs, seal skins, aromatic sandalwood, *bêche-de-mer* (dried sea cucumbers—a Chinese delicacy), and other Pacific products that could be sold at and around Canton.

This trade's growth in its first two decades, from 1784 to 1804, was extraordinary. The first American merchant ship arrived alone in 1784, and none followed in 1785, yet within a decade American vessels were soon often as numerous as the English Company's ships or their intra-regional "Country" traders from India and the East. In one year, 1803, American vessels outnumbered those of the British and all other nations combined, and over the first two decades they averaged over twenty percent of the total number of ships visiting China.

Almost all the American vessels, however, were quite small; most were about one quarter the size of the stately East Indiamen sent from Europe. In 1802 and 1803 some fifty-nine U.S. vessels averaged just under three hundred tons apiece, while those of the British each averaged almost 1,200 tons. In July 1787, after cruising alone halfway round the globe, the crewmen of one of the first American ships to arrive, the little 120-ton *Columbia*, were much amused when haughty Company officials mistook them for a mere tender to some larger vessel like their own.

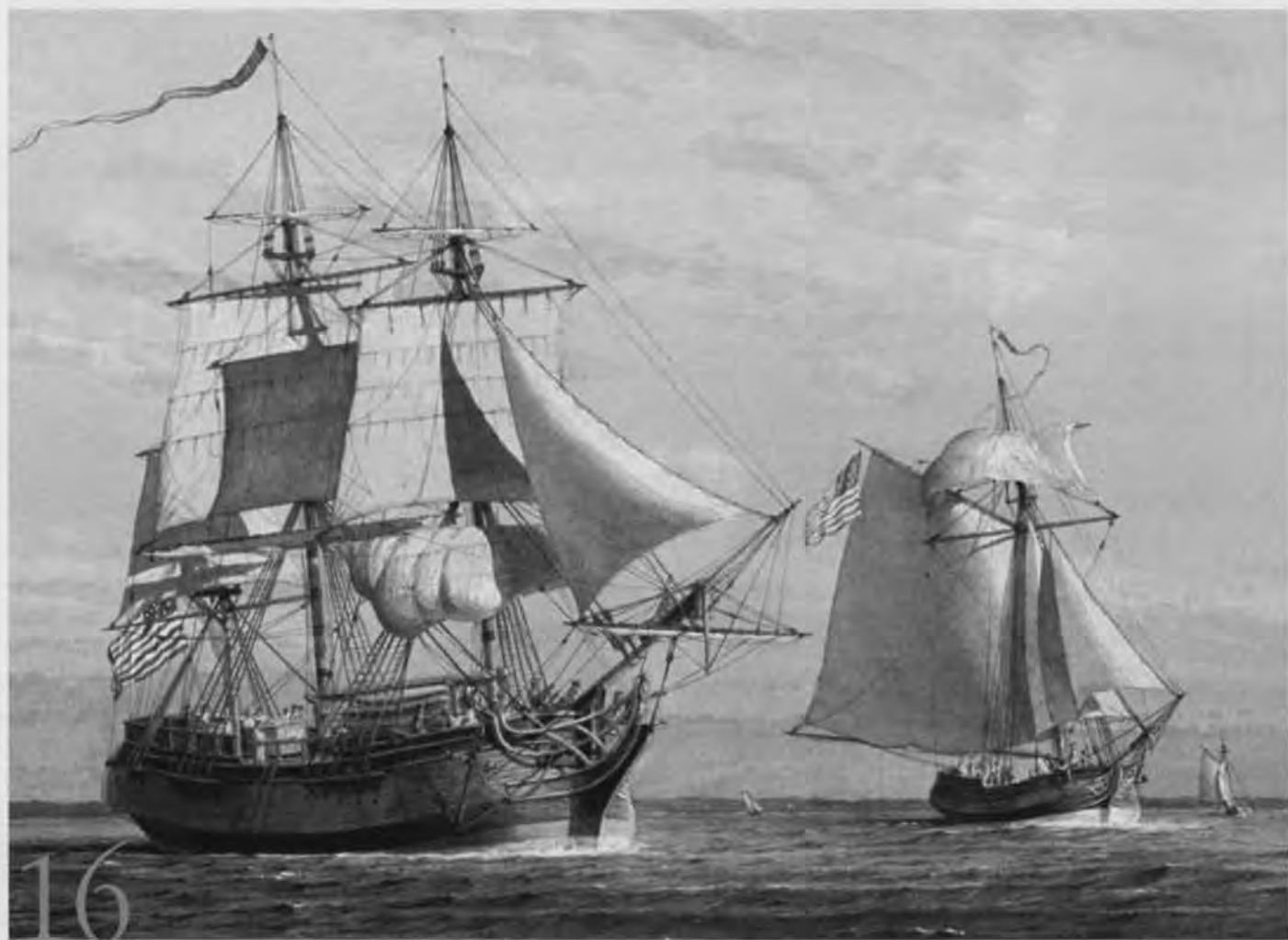
The outstanding feature of the Americans' trade at Canton was that they bought three times as much as they brought. This persistent deficit between imports and exports required that generally two-thirds of American purchases had to be paid for with silver coin—an especially scarce commodity in the infant U.S.

Sea otter pelts were the prize sought in 1787 by the first American vessels in the Pacific Northwest, the little *Columbia* and *Lady Washington*. The discovery of the Columbia River by the former was an accidental by-product of the China trade.

A contemporary artist's impression, © 2003 by Gordon Miller, courtesy of the artist

Consequently, in order to obtain teas, silks and other wares for American and European markets, American traders put every effort into finding alternatives. When they could, they sold New England goods en route, purchasing raw cotton, for example, at the Île de France (now Mauritius) or in India, which when sold at Canton sometimes paid for as much as a third of their own purchases. But here too the small size of the American vessels told against them, and between 1784 and 1804 U.S. vessels accounted for only three percent of the raw cotton that foreigners delivered to Canton.

The canny Americans therefore sought out specialty or novelty trades to provide whatever the Chinese would buy. Ginseng roots, which grew wild in the Hudson Valley, were usually worth almost their weight in silver to the Chinese, who prized their medicinal properties. Their price, however, proved unreliable. Lead from home was another significant item, but a wide range of odd products were collected en route. A list of items sold to the Chinese in 1799 included sandalwood, camphor, furs, mother of pearl, elephant teeth, dragon's blood (a resinous substance used to make varnishes), mother of pearl, mocha stones (moss agates), delicacies including cloves, nutmegs, birds' nests, fishmaws, shark fins, bêche de mer, and products coveted for their real or imagined medicinal properties, such as cow bezoars—concretions from bovine stomachs supposed to neutralize poisons—ginseng, and rhinoceros horn.⁴ Americans did little trade in opium until after the price per chest soared from \$580 in 1802 to \$1,350 in 1804.



The Americans developed the previously modest fur trade, and soon dominated it. An enormous growth in the fur trade is apparent in British Company records, even though many American captains preferred to smuggle their furs through the back doors of the Celestial Kingdom. In 1792 the English sold 77,330 "fine furs" such as sea and river otter, beaver, fox, marten, and fur seal, while the Americans sold only 7,579, or one tenth as many. These roles soon reversed. From 1800 to 1804, the English annually sold an average of 26,776 fine furs, while the Americans' annual average was no less than 324,264 sold. Of the latter total, ninety percent were fur seal skins, worth altogether about a quarter of a million dollars each year. Sea otter pelts, though far fewer in number, were much more valuable, and the 42,527 sold by Americans officially in Canton in 1802 probably fetched close to a million dollars. Moreover, almost all of that was profit, since the expenses incurred in sealing or in trading on the Northwest Coast were very small indeed.

American purchases were much less varied, with black teas generally well over half the total in value. In 1792, for example, teas accounted for half the total American cargoes by value, wrought silks for twenty percent, and quicksilver (mercury) for fifteen percent. Comparatively small shipments of raw silk, sugar, durable "nankeen" cloth, porcelain, lacquered goods and other "China wares" made up the remainder. But here again the small size of the American vessels is evident, for although over these two decades American vessels numbered twenty percent of the total, they carried on average only ten percent of the tea exported, and under four percent of the silk.

Initially, the long-established European merchants were amazed that the American cockleshell adventurers could survive and prosper in such competitive, speculative trades. Ultimately, however, it was the restrictive chartered monopolies like the British and Dutch East India Companies that could not survive against the freer competition of the small, individually-owned vessels of the Americans.



Sea otter fur was worn by high mandarins in coat linings or collars, esteemed for its lushness—otters have about 650,000 hairs per square inch, while the entire scalp of an average human has only 100,000. Yankees, Britons, Russians, Aleuts, and even California Indians hunted them. Pelts fetched \$30 apiece on Canton's streets in 1830, where the fur seller below was painted around 1805. Only opium, smoked by addicts in "dens" like the one engraved in 1843 at left, proved more lucrative.

Above, John James Audubon, below, © 2003 The Kelton Foundation



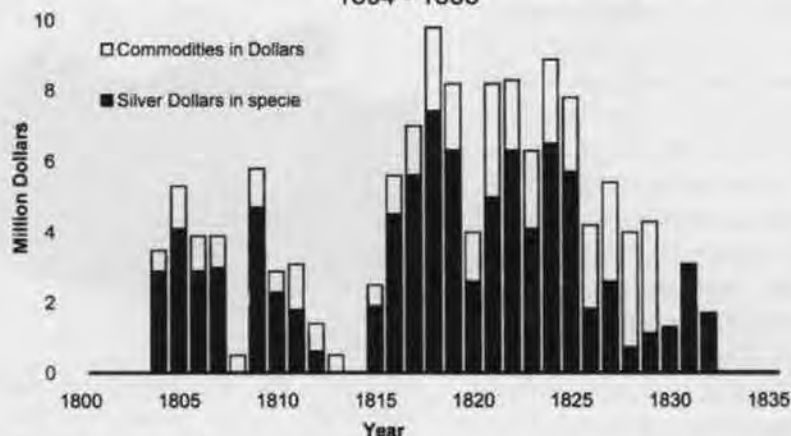
Chinese Opium Smokers

Remond & Son, Paris

Remond & Son, Paris



Total Value of Imports by US Vessels into Canton 1804 - 1833



The standard currency was the Spanish 8-real "piece of eight," stamped by Chinese officials with "chop marks" certifying correct purity and weight. Silver reached China aboard ships like the *Vancover* of New York, at right, flying the house flag of David Ogden's Red Cross Line. The Chinese artist who painted her in Chinese waters around 1850 was probably commissioned by her captain or owner.

Coin courtesy Edward von der Porten, photographed by John Wright; painting © 2003 The Kelton Foundation

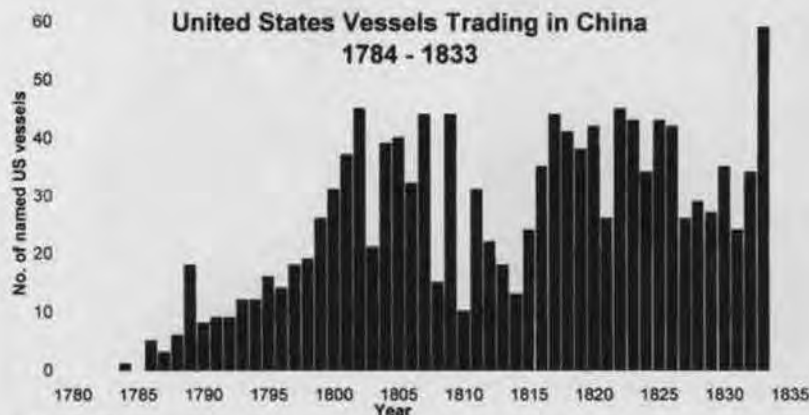
After the Peace of 1815, American reliance upon opportunistic cargoes gathered en route declined as trade developed in more enduring commodities and, later, in opium.

Meanwhile the American home market had grown, with more capital and more silver specie, so that the trade shifted away from individual investors and small partnerships to concentrate in the hands of a few large companies in larger ports like New York, Boston, Salem and Philadelphia. The trade grew to average \$6.3 million each year, but under forty percent was paid for by commodities, while bills of exchange and Spanish silver dollars accounted for over sixty percent of all American purchases. American trade with China after 1815 was marked by consolidation and growth, without the feverish expansion of preceding decades.

This American trade with China was very much larger than previous sources have suggested. In the five years from 1816 to 1820, for example, there were at least 196 American visits—or almost four times as many as the fifty-four known previously. An average of thirty-seven American merchant vessels called at Canton annually from 1815 to 1833.

Besides setting the record straight about the true scale of American trade with China, recent research lays to rest old rivalries over which ports sent the most vessels to China. Among the 1,077 declared homeports of American ships trading with China between 1784 and 1832, Boston and Salem accounted for one third of all American visits; Philadelphia and Baltimore together were over a quarter, while New York and "Rhode Island" made up twenty-four and twelve percent respectively.³ Of the other voyages from minor ports, eleven were from New Haven, while, rather surprisingly, nine hailed from New Bedford and six from Nantucket.

United States Vessels Trading in China 1784 - 1833



From these painstakingly assembled vessel-by-vessel lists, it can be seen more clearly that the early China trade was not a mere passing phase, but played an important role as the young United States developed its new export trades on a scale that was substantial, and truly global.

NOTES

- 1 The earliest significant assessment of the scale of trade was by Kenneth Scott Latourette, who in 1917 and 1927 listed 294 1784-1804 U.S. voyages to China. In 1926, Hosea Ballou Morse published summaries of British trade and included the number of U.S. vessels at Canton annually, but without details. In 1994 *The American Neptune* published a special supplement by this author listing, voyage-by-voyage, 618 vessels and citing data from U.S., British and Dutch sources. Latourette, "The History of Early Relations Between the United States and China," *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 22 (1917): 1-209; Latourette, "Voyages of American Ships to China, 1784-1844," *Ibid.*, 28 (1927): 237-71; Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926); Rhys Richards, "United States Trade With China 1784-1814," *The American Neptune* 54 (1994), Special Supplement.
- 2 Primary sources for this article include a table summarizing trade commodities and totals, 1804-1821, box 244, Carrington Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society Library, Providence, and a ledger at Mystic Seaport listing vessels and their captains, with extensive detail on cargoes, for the seasons 1819-20 to 1832-1833. (Untitled Ledger, George W. Lyman Invoices and Trade Papers 1812 to 1821, M.L. HFM 176, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Connecticut.) The remaining 1816-1819 gap was filled by analysis of "Records of the Directors and the

Select Committee of Supercargoes of the Honourable East India Company," East India Office, British Museum, CFR Canton Diaries and Consultations, series G/12 (cited hereinafter as "EIC Records"), vols. 204 to 257. These revealed names and captains for almost all U.S. vessels trading legally at Canton except the 1816-17 season. Data for 1816-17 was found in records of the Dutch Committee at Canton, VOC 1.04.20. 1742-1826, at the Dutch National Archives, The Hague. They also frequently provide details not recorded by the English.

- 3 The figure is probably still incomplete given the prevalence of smuggling. Because this overview is based upon statistics compiled from sources too numerous to cite here, please see the bibliography for the 1784-1815 period in Richards, "United States Trade." Apart from the sources mentioned therein, five additions are required. To the manuscript list may be added the aforementioned ledger at Mystic, and the 1804-1821 table and "Reminiscences of William C. Townsend" at the Rhode Island Historical Society. To published works may be added James Hunnewell, "Hawaii in the 1820s," *Papers of the Hawaiian Historical Society*, 1895, pp. 6-16; Mary Malloy, "Boston Men" on the Northwest Coast: *The American Maritime Fur Trade 1788-1844* (Fairbanks, AK: Limestone Press, 1998); Sandra Wagner-Wright, ed., *Ships, Furs and Sandalwood: A Yankee Trader in Hawaii 1823-1825: Charles H. Hammatt* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999). Copies of the work on which this article is based, "United States Trade with China: List of U.S. Vessels at China: An Extension from 1815 to 1820," are at the Phillips Library at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, in the G. W. Blunt White Library, and at the Rhode Island Historical Society.
- 4 EIC Records, book 127.
- 5 Between 1784 and 1832, Boston- and Salem-based ships accounted for 306 and 56 China visits respectively; at times, however, these ports seem to have been listed almost interchangeably. 260 others came from Philadelphia, 254 from New York, 124 from Rhode Island, and 32 from Baltimore. Data is unavailable for 1821 and 1826.



A China Trader Turns China Scholar:

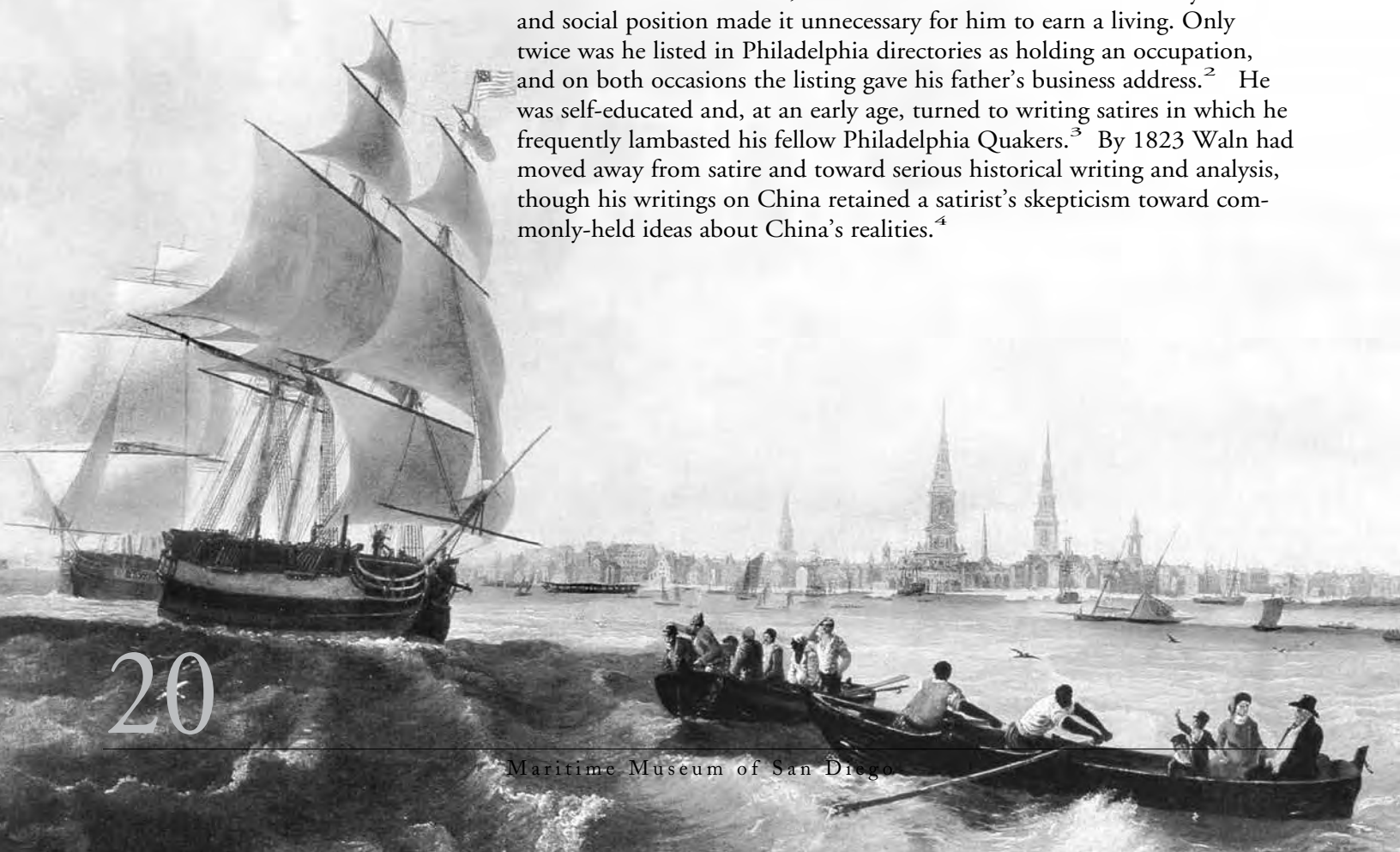
Robert Waln, Jr. as America's First Sinologist

Jonathan Goldstein

Jonathan Goldstein is Professor of East Asian History at the State University of West Georgia, and a Research Associate at Harvard. He is author of the 1978 *Philadelphia and the China Trade* and edited a 1988 special issue of *The American Neptune* devoted to Qing Dynasty maritime trade.

Early American trade with China piqued American curiosity about that far-off land. American merchants in China, however, generally stayed narrowly focused on their business. Robert Waln, Jr., was an exception and may be considered America's first sinologist, or scholar of China. Waln drew upon his personal experiences and observations as a China trader, but his interests ranged far beyond the norm. Delving into the literature about China, he publicly challenged aspects of how China was presented in many Western publications. Waln's objective was to offer unbiased information about China to an American audience in the tradition of providing "useful knowledge," like fellow Philadelphians Benjamin Franklin, David Rittenhouse, and others.¹ Thus, he also sought a commercial objective: to lay the groundwork for the first United States embassy to China. This goal was finally realized in 1844, nineteen years after his death.

Waln was born in Philadelphia on October 20, 1794, the son of the China trader Robert Waln, Sr. and Phebe Lewis Waln. The family's wealth and social position made it unnecessary for him to earn a living. Only twice was he listed in Philadelphia directories as holding an occupation, and on both occasions the listing gave his father's business address.² He was self-educated and, at an early age, turned to writing satires in which he frequently lambasted his fellow Philadelphia Quakers.³ By 1823 Waln had moved away from satire and toward serious historical writing and analysis, though his writings on China retained a satirist's skepticism toward commonly-held ideas about China's realities.⁴



A Brief Visit to China

The young author's interest in China developed simultaneously with his switch from satire to serious historical writing. His curiosity about China almost certainly was sparked by his father's extensive maritime trade and good relations with the Chinese. Waln Sr., an active participant in Philadelphia's China trade, repeatedly praised the character and integrity of his Chinese colleagues, noting especially the Hong merchant Houqua's "deservedly good reputation."⁵ The elder Waln prided himself in being prompt in paying remittances. Once, when a delay occurred, he wrote an apology to the Hong merchant Consequa affirming that the money would be sent "on the next vessel from here to Canton."⁶ In this respect, Waln Sr. stood above some of his colleagues like Peter Dobell, who repeatedly cheated Chinese merchants.⁷ On the other hand, the elder Waln participated extensively in the importation of opium to China—which was banned by Chinese law—and dealt extensively with smugglers at the same time he was praising "upright" Chinese merchants. Participation in the drug trade was then the norm for American and British merchants, although there were several who loudly condemned the traffic and refused to participate in it on moral grounds.

His father's commercial connections enabled Robert Jr. to sail to China in 1819 and 1820, and it was on this voyage that he began to write about China. Waln Jr. sailed from Philadelphia as supercargo aboard one of his father's vessels. Several days before sailing his fellow Quakers from the Arch Street Meeting disowned him for being part-owner of a vessel with guns.⁸ Apparently, this disownment had as little effect on Waln Jr. as it had on his father and cousin, who had been disowned twenty years earlier. In fact it appears to have prompted him, while at sea, to write another volume of satire about what he saw as the narrowmindedness of Philadelphia Quakers, this time specifically on the issue of military force. He clearly viewed arming a China trade vessel as a legitimate commercial precaution.⁹

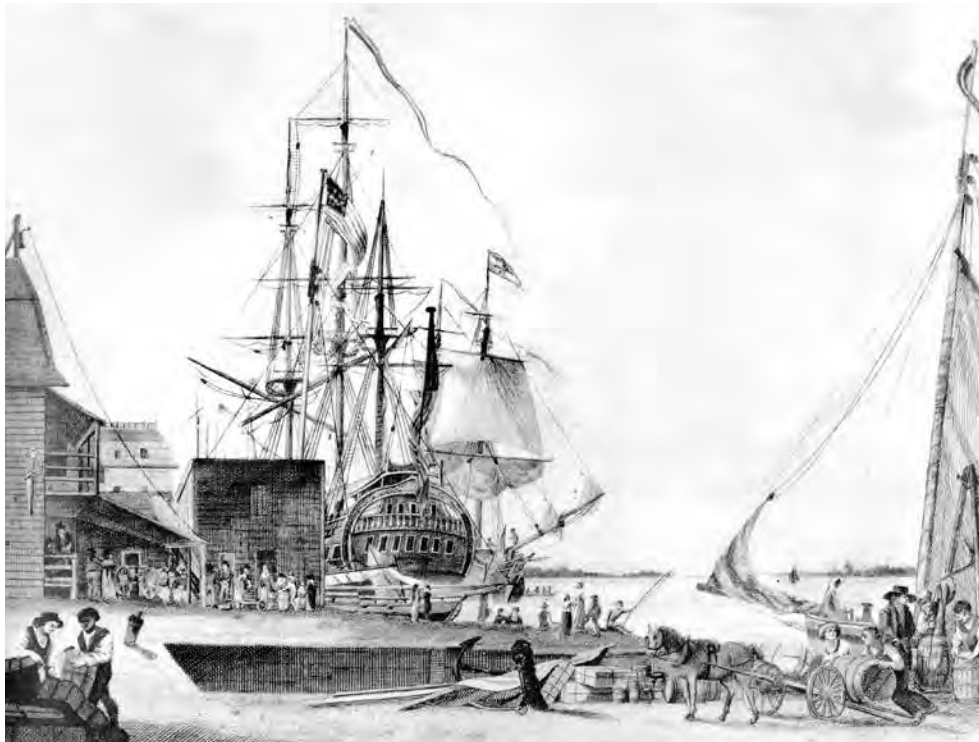
Waln stayed at Canton, the only port in China then open to foreign merchants, from September 10, 1819, to January 3, 1820.¹⁰ He sold a cargo that consisted mainly of cotton, but also some American-grown ginseng root, tobacco, and iron.¹¹ In purchasing a \$143,000 return cargo, Waln became familiar with produce of the Chinese mainland and with Chinese merchants themselves. The bulk of the homeward cargo consisted of \$50,000 worth of textiles (nankeen cotton cloth, scarves, crepes, and woven-straw floor matting), \$36,000 worth of tea and \$5,000 worth of Chinese ceramics, mostly dinner ware.¹² Like his father, Waln praised



Waln, Jr., above, was the son of eminent China trader Robert Waln, Sr. At left, a ship like one of the many his father owned returns to Philadelphia from Canton.

Painting at left, ca. 1812, private collection; above, courtesy Historical Society of Pennsylvania; below, courtesy The Ryerss Museum, Philadelphia





Ships crowd the docks at the foot of Arch Street in 1800, just blocks from the Quaker meeting which later “disowned” the Walns.

most of the Chinese merchants with whom he dealt. He rated ten of them “of good character.” In only one case, that of Fatqua, did he denigrate a Chinese merchant’s reputation.¹³

Waln’s Use and Critique of Earlier Writings about China

Waln took copious notes at Canton and began to write extensively about China on his homeward voyage. Upon his return to Philadelphia he published another book of satire, but with a Chinese twist. In the past, he took to task “the frivolous customs and amuse-

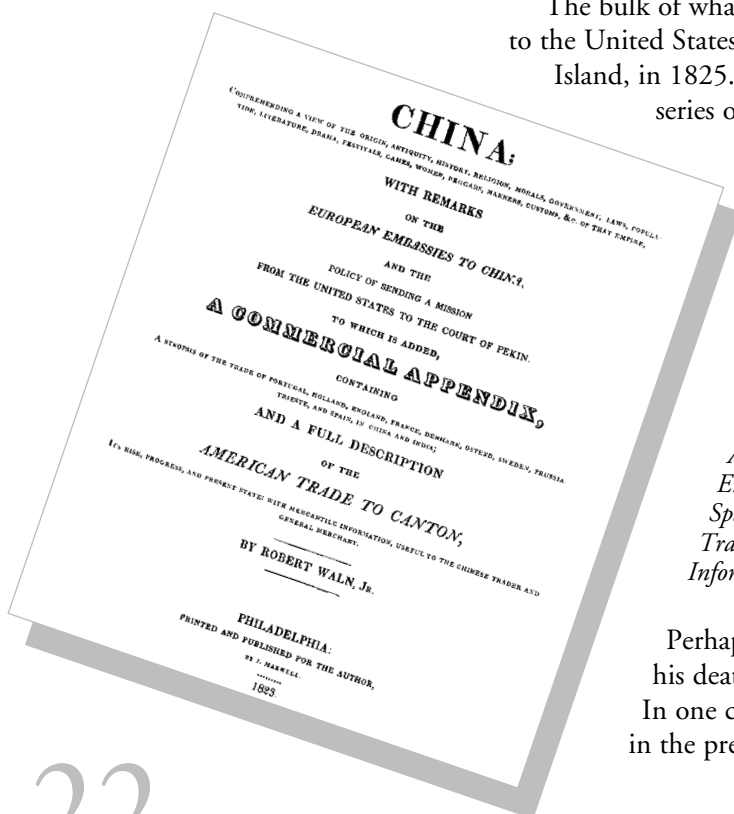
ments of our city.” This time he singled out for special criticism those who had succumbed to the distasteful spell of *chinoiserie* and *japonisme*—the roman-ticization of all things Asian—the very fads to which the Waln firm catered.¹⁴ As with his other criticisms of Philadelphia society, Waln did not hesitate to “bite the hand that fed him,” even when that might mean financial loss to his own family’s business.

The bulk of what Waln published about China appeared between his return to the United States in 1820 and his sudden death in Providence, Rhode

Island, in 1825.¹⁵ Several of these writings were published in 1821 in a series of articles in Philadelphia’s *National Gazette*.¹⁶ His *magnum opus*, however, was a privately printed 475-page tome published in 1823, which bore an impressive, if prolix, title:

China; Comprehending a View of the Origin, Antiquity, History, Religion, Morals, Government, Laws, Population, Literature, Drama, Festivals, Games, Women, Beggars, Manners, Customs, &c. of that Empire, With Remarks on the European Embassies to China; and the Policy of Sending a Mission from the United States to the Court of Peking. To Which is Added, a Commercial Appendix, Containing a Synopsis of the Trade of Portugal, Holland, England, France, Denmark, Ostend, Sweden, Prussia, Trieste, and Spain in China and India; and a Full Description of the American Trade to Canton, Its Rise, Progress, and Present State: With Mercantile Information, Useful to the Chinese Trader and General Merchant.

Perhaps because Waln set himself so ambitious a task, or due to his death at an early age, the entire volume was never completed. In one copy, a notice tells the subscriber that the “pages deficient in the present part will be added to part V.”¹⁷



According to Robert Walsh, his editor at the *National Gazette*, Waln's major historical contribution was the integration of personal observation with "the more popular and esteemed observations connected with China ... He joined a personal inquiry in cases susceptible of doubt."¹⁸

Few American authors before Waln had written about China, and these rare accounts were almost entirely commercial chronicles, excluding most other kinds of information.¹⁹ Many European accounts

were more comprehensive, especially those by travelers who had visited the Chinese interior and researched Chinese history in depth. Those were the histories that Waln sought to learn from and critique.

The first step in Waln's research process upon returning to Philadelphia therefore was to compile a bibliography of all available works about China. Waln listed thirty-three titles "to be procured for the purpose of consulting relative to China," and took notes from fourteen of them, mostly American editions of the reports of eighteenth-century embassies to China, the most accessible books on the list. He also took notes from twenty-two other works not included in his original bibliography.²⁰ Waln drew much of his narrative history of China from the writings of the Dutch China trader Andres van Braam Houckgeest and the important compilation of memoirs of travelers to China published by British geographer Hugh Murray.²¹

Utilizing and criticizing these resources, Waln produced Chinese history for an American audience. The most distinctive aspect of his research and writing is his denunciation of Christian missionary accounts, which he saw as impeding Sino-Western relations. Waln felt that these evangelists sent home reports that presented a grotesque and distorted picture of this "pagan" nation. In his words, missionary accounts of China were "so confused by the credulity and superstition of the narrators ... it would be almost impossible to obtain from them a proper insight into the character and condition of the Chinese nation."²²

Waln considered the greatest libel in missionary writings to be the assertion that infanticide was sponsored by the Chinese government as a means of eliminating orphans from society. This assertion was reproduced in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review* and caused anguish among the Christians of Philadelphia.

Waln argued that those who had written of the practice had not observed infanticide first hand, but had only been told of it by missionaries, who



A Canton street. Waln drew on writings by van Braam Houckgeest, below, a Dutch trader who became a fellow Philadelphian.

From the 1843 book *China: In A Series of Views*, courtesy David Dana; below, courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art





A Chinese artist painted men packing tea into boxes with their feet in a Canton warehouse, about 1820.

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boasted of the numbers of children they had salvaged from the “pit of death.”²³ His close reading of this evidence revealed contradictions.²⁴ While he did not deny that individual families may have practiced infanticide under conditions of severe hardship such as famine, the existence of government-sponsored foundling hospitals proved to Waln’s satisfaction that the charge of officially-sponsored infanticide was untrue. Waln concluded that blame for the circulation of the infanticide libel could be placed on the missionaries, who, frustrated in their attempts to convert recalcitrant Chinese, made no mention of the foundling hospitals, wishing to depict themselves as saviors of a “heathen” race.²⁵

National Gazette editor Robert Walsh came to the missionaries’ defense, arguing that it was through them that Europe had originally received the most “accurate, copious, and curious information” on China and that Waln treated them “harshly and uncharitably.” Walsh, however, made no attempt to contradict Waln on the issue of infanticide.²⁶

A Forceful Advocate for Diplomatic Relations with China

In his discussion of the importance of sending an American embassy to Peking (Beijing), Waln tried to be as scrupulous in separating myth from reality as he had been in his discussion of infanticide. His objective in this case was threefold: to estimate the size of Sino-American trade; to differentiate between real and superficial hardships that the Chinese imposed on American and other Western merchants; and to create a useful, operational definition

of Chinese pride, a factor that he saw as contributing to the failure of Sino-Western rapprochement in the past. As with his discussion of infanticide, Waln's major sources on Western trade and diplomacy in China were his notes taken in Canton in 1819 and 1820 plus two European accounts: William Milburn's two-volume statistical summary of oriental commerce and James Johnson's *Oriental Voyager*.²⁷

With regard to the extent of Sino-American trade, Waln estimated that from the time of the introduction of tea, porcelain, and textiles to British North America in the eighteenth century, the demand for these staples had expanded exponentially. The consumption of tea alone, he wrote, has

obtained in actual use an importance almost equivalent to that of bread. There are few families in our country which would not be greatly inconvenienced by a deprivation of this exhilarating beverage. Notwithstanding the enormous import duties, certain kinds are procurable at a low rate by the poorer classes of society.²⁸

The demand for porcelain had reached the point where few young girls in the 1820s "entered into marriage without contributing their respective china-ware tea sets to the general concern."²⁹

Waln describes how American merchants competed fiercely for Chinese goods, helping to force the Danes, Swedes, French, Spaniards, Austrians, and Dutch out of the trade. Sino-Western commerce devolved almost exclusively into American, British and Portuguese hands. He vigorously defends the commercial prowess of his countrymen, but is equally explicit about their hardships. Although many American merchants fared well in the China trade, their complaints abounded, and the most commonly mentioned one was the required performance of the *kowtow*. As a sign of homage, a Westerner was obliged to literally bump his head on the ground in front of a high-ranking Chinese mandarin, or official. Traders in Canton and European ambassadors who had gotten as far as Beijing both objected to the act, comparing it to the Roman yoke. Waln, however, maintained that the ceremony was actually "little more humiliating than saluting a king or other high officials." He insisted that momentary prostration was a small price to pay, especially if it could be performed before the Emperor himself and valuable trade and diplomatic concessions gained thereby.

He considered other complaints to be more substantial. Merchants were subject to "arbitrary and vexatious exactions" from local Chinese officials in Canton, and subject to heavy, irretrievable losses caused by Chinese merchants' defaults. In short, there were no fixed procedures for establishing jurisdiction or a regular system of commercial law. The American consulate at Canton

Blue-and-white porcelain from the Kelton Foundation collection.

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was largely a ceremonial office and American merchants could not sue in a Chinese court; some Westerners—like Francis Terranova in 1821—had been tried and convicted by Chinese courts, with their consuls forced to stand helplessly by.

The absence of commercial law affected a wide range of commercial activity, although the main grievance remained Western merchants' inability to retrieve debts from their Chinese counterparts in the absence of fixed procedures for suit, recovery, and forced sale of goods. Without commercial treaties, Americans could be charged duties at an arbitrary rate. In the event of shipwreck, there were no fixed laws on the ownership of the cargo or hulk or on the care of castaways. No laws provided for the apprehension of deserters or mutineers from American ships, or for the reclamation of stolen property.

Waln saw these grievances as resolvable through a commercial treaty between the United States and China. Carefully studying previous European diplomatic missions to China, he concluded that they had failed because of European insensitivity to the very delicate pride of the Chinese, a quality that he viewed as bordering on xenophobia. British and Dutch ambassadors had been merchants keen on demanding trading monopolies for their own nations, demands that had offended the Chinese. If and when an American embassy was sent, Waln pointedly noted, merchants should be excluded.

A second mistake made by the European embassies was the presentation of ostentatious gifts to the Emperor. The Emperor, according to Waln, disdained such excess as bribery. Waln wrote that “the splendid presents of the last British Embassy were all rejected, with trifling exceptions. A portrait of the American Cincinnatus [George Washington] would probably be as acceptable as the contents of our own treasury.”³⁰ Any American diplomatic mission should be kept low-key and avoid “all demands of favors.” And on a matter dear

to Waln's heart, men of learning should accompany the mission to “collect facts and information which the pride or policy of other travelers may have mutilated or concealed.”³¹

Though Waln had attempted to ground his suggestions on the fundamental principle of practicality, his remarks were perhaps twenty years ahead of his time. *National Gazette* editor Walsh praised Waln's proposals for being “valuable in the historical and diplomatic points of view,” but Waln's proposals went unheeded.³² A complicating factor that he failed to address was the widespread participation in the opium trade by merchants, including his own father. This major obstacle to Sino-American relations could not be removed just by sending a delicately-orchestrated goodwill mission. American merchants feared that if any mission was sent to Beijing to draft a treaty, the Chinese would use the occasion to insist on an end to the drug traffic. As late as 1842, an officer of the Boston firm of N. & W. Griswold wrote Secretary of State Daniel Webster not to restrain American citizens in the opium trade, which he maintained the Chinese “have always more or less been engaged in.”³³

Ultimately, American China traders got the best of both worlds. In 1844, the first United States mission to China at last signed a treaty under which Sino-American trade was stabilized through the granting of a “most favored nation” clause, extraterritoriality, and diplomatic equality. In 1858, after British victory in the Opium Wars, China was forced to legalize the opium trade.³⁴

The distinctive qualities of Waln's writings about China were his exposure of myth and his suggestions of ways to improve Sino-American relations. He presented his readers with an image of China bearing a “more authentic shape, having refined out the ‘chinomania’ of the Romish writers or the immoderate incredulity of more modern travelers.”³⁵ His scholarship, while amateurish, featured a distinctly American thrust, exposing what he saw as a grotesque European-created mythology about China, and advocating the practical objective of establishing treaty-based Sino-American relations. Waln's style is verbose, footnotes sometimes vague, and he never cites a Chinese text. However, seen in the context of his day, this China trader's scholarship was innovative. Robert Waln, Jr. offered his countrymen, and particularly his fellow merchants, some specialized and relatively advanced “useful knowledge” with which to build the economy of their young nation.

Money from the illegal opium trade helped build some of the first new fortunes in the young U.S.

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NOTES

- 1 Waln gravitated toward journals and institutions in the mainstream of Philadelphia's intellectual life and tradition of "useful knowledge." On this intellectual tendency, see Jonathan Goldstein, "Intellectual Attitudes Conducive to the China Trade" in Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade 1682-1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (University Park and London: Penn State University Press, 1978), 13-17.
- 2 John Paxton, *Paxton's Annual Philadelphia Directory, 1818*, 116: 1819, 113.; John N. Jordan, *Colonial Families of Philadelphia*, I (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1911), 224. Dumas Malone, ed., *Directory of American Biography*, XXX (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 387.
- 3 His first published work was probably "Horace in Philadelphia," a poem that appeared pseudonymously in Philadelphia's *Port Folio* in 1814 when Waln was nineteen. *Port Folio* 4, no. 1 (July, 1814): 124-125; John T. Queenan, "The *Port Folio*," PhD. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1955, p. 226. The first work that can definitely be ascribed to him is *The Hermit in Philadelphia*, modeled on the popular satire *The Hermit in London*. William S. Hastings, "Robert Waln, Jr.: Quaker Satirist and Historian," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 76 (January 1952): 72. (Robert Waln, Jr.), Peter Atall, ed., *The Hermit in America a visit to Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: M. Thomas, 1819), pp. 149-50. Waln, Jr., *Sisyphi Opus: or, Touches at the Times a Satire and Other Poems* (Philadelphia: Maxwell & Thomas, 1820); Waln, Jr., "The Dream," in *The Atlantic Souvenir: A Christmas and New Year's Offering* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and Lea Carey, 1826).
- 4 In addition to his publications on China, Waln edited a book on the signers of the Declaration of Independence and wrote a biography of Lafayette and an article praising Quaker work in the first American mental hospital. Waln, Jr., ed., *Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence*, vols. 3-6 (Philadelphia: R. W. Pomeroy, 1822-27), reproduced in John Sanderson, *Sanderson's Biography of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence* (Philadelphia: W. Brotherhead, 1865); Waln, Jr., *Life of Marquis de Lafayette* (Philadelphia: J. P. Ayres, 1825); Waln, Jr., "An Account of the Asylum for the Insane, established by the Society of Friends, near Frankford, in the Vicinity of Philadelphia," *Philadelphia Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences*, New Series, I, no. 2 (1825): 225-252.
- 5 Robert Waln, Sr., to William Chaloner and Robert Wells, 16 August 1816, Robert Waln, Sr., Letterbooks, n.p., Waln Manuscripts, Library Company of Philadelphia, hereinafter referred to as "LCP," on deposit with Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, hereinafter referred to as "HSP."
- 6 Waln, Sr., Charles Ross, and John Smith to Consequa, 24 May 1815, Robert Waln, Sr., Letterbooks, Waln Manuscripts, LCP, n.p.
- 7 Consequa to Peter Dobell, 3 April 1813, LCP, HSP; Waln, Sr., and John Smith to Wm. H. Smith and Richard Wells, *Ship Caledonia*, 26 May 1815, Waln Sr. Letterbooks, Waln Mss., LCP, n.p.; Goldstein, *Philadelphia*, 42. On abstention from the opium trade, see Goldstein's reviews of Jacques Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, in *Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 1 (February 1999): 159-61 and of Thomas Layton, *The Voyage of the Frolic*, in *Journal of American History* 85, no. 2 (September 1998): 663.
- 8 Philadelphia Southern District Meeting (Arch Street) Minutes 1817-1831, 15 April 1818, on microfilm in Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania.
- 9 Waln, Jr., *American Bards: A Satire* (Philadelphia: M. Thomas, 1820). It is subtitled: "written during a voyage beyond the Cape of Good Hope."
- 10 Waln, Jr., 10 September 1819, Memo Book #5; 3 January 1820, Memo Book #3, Waln Mss., LCP, n.p.
- 11 There is no evidence that opium was aboard.
- 12 Waln, Jr., Memo Book #11, Waln Mss., LCP, n.p.
- 13 Ibid., #4, Waln Mss., LCP, n.p.
- 14 (Peter Atall), *The Hermit in Philadelphia, Second Series* (Philadelphia: J. Maxwell and Moses Thomas, 1821), 146.
- 15 *Democratic Press; National Gazette* (hereinafter *Natl. Gazette*); *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* (both Philadelphia; both 9 July 1825); *United States Gazette* (Philadelphia), 11 July 1825; Malone, *Dictionary*, vol. 19, 387. Waln had apparently not been long in Providence, as he is not listed in the 1824 *Providence Directory*.
- 16 These articles were published as a series entitled "Extracts from the Port-Folio of a Canton Supra-Cargo," which included the three-part article "Infanticide in China," 15-17 January 1821; a four-part argument for an "Embassy from the United States to China," 5, 7, 20, and 27 February 1821; and "The Tea Plant," 21 April 1821.
- 17 Copy in New Hampshire Historical Society Library, Concord.
- 18 *Natl. Gazette*, 15 January 1821.
- 19 John Ledyard, *Journal of Captain Cook's Last Voyage* (Hartford: Nathaniel Patten, 1783); (Samuel Shaw), "Remarks on the Commerce of America With China," *American Museum* 7 (March 1790): 126-28; Amasa Delano, *A Narrative of Voyages* (Boston: E. G. House, 1817); "For the Port Folio on China," *Port Folio* 7, no. 2 (February 1819): 111.
- 20 These included a French translation of two Arabic travelogues, two books on the Hindus, and one on European manners, consulted for the purpose of historical analogy. Waln, Jr., Memo Book #4, Waln Mss, LCP, n.p.
- 21 Van Braam represented the Dutch East India Company in China for fifteen years before being sent in 1794 on an unsuccessful Dutch mission to Beijing. He later became a U.S. citizen. As such, he was the only American before 1844 actually to have seen the interior of China. *Voyage de L'ambassade de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales Hollandaises vers L'Empereur de la Chine en 1794 et 1795... tire du Journal d'André Everard van-Braam Houckgeest*, 2 vols. (Philadelphie: M. L. E. Moreau de St. Mery, 1797-98). Hugh Murray, *Historical Account of Discoveries and Travels in Asia from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time*. 3 vols. (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1820); Waln, Jr., Memo Book #4, Waln Mss., LCP.
- 22 Waln, Jr., *China* (Philadelphia: printed and published for the author by J. Maxwell, 1823), v, 473.

The British *Nemesis* pounds a fleet of war junks and the Bogue Forts at the Pearl River's mouth during the First Opium War of 1839-1842. The war began when Chinese official Lin Tse-Hsu ordered foreign traders to comply with Chinese law and surrender their opium for destruction, which infuriated British politicians. British victories in this war and its 1856-1860 successor not only forced China to continue to accept opium shipments, but also to open additional seaports to British trade and to cede the island of Hong Kong to Great Britain. Americans benefited greatly as well.

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- 23 *Natl. Gazette*, 15 January 1821. Tales of government-sponsored infanticide reached America in travelogues by John Barrow, George Staunton, and Cretien Louis Joseph De Guignes. Barrow, *Travels in China* (Philadelphia: W. F. M'Laughlin, 1805); Staunton, *An Authentic Account of an Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Printed for Robert Campbell by John Bioren, 1799); De Guignes, *Voyages à Pékin, Manille, et L'île de France faits dans... 1784-1801*, 3 vols. (Paris: L'imprimerie Imperiale, 1808).
- 24 Waln pointed out that Barrow was told of 9,000 infanticides a year in Beijing, while Staunton was told 2,000. At the same time that Staunton was told about infanticide, he was told (not by the missionaries) of the existence of government-sponsored foundling hospitals, where, according to Waln, a parent need only drop off an unwanted child and it would be raised by the state. While Barrow claimed to have seen a dead child floating down the river at Canton, another traveler, Pierre Sonnerat, said that all the drowned children he had seen had gourds or calabashes strapped to their backs, suggesting that they drowned while swimming, and were not infanticide victims. Sonnerat, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales et à la Chine faite par ordre du roi depuis 1774 jusqu'en 1781*, 3 vols. (Paris: published by the author, 1782).
- 25 *Natl. Gazette*, 15 January 1821.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 James Johnson, *The Oriental Voyager* (London: J. Asperne, 1807); William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, 2 vols. (London: Black, Parry & Co., 1813).
- 28 Waln, Jr., Memo Book #5, Waln Mss., LCP.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 *Natl. Gazette*, 5 and 7 February 1821.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid., 27 February 1821. Waln cautioned, however, that "little hope can be entertained of attention being given to it at this time, when propositions are before Congress which go to the extinction of all foreign trade, in their ultimate tendency." Ibid., 7 February 1821.
- 33 "Miscellaneous Letters, Dept. of State, N. & G. Griswold to Webster, 13 May 1843, in Tyler Dennett, *Americans in East Asia* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1941), 135.
- 34 John Fairbank, "Legalization of the Opium Trade Before the Treaties of 1858," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 17, no. 2 (July 1933): 215-263.
- 35 Waln, Jr., *China*, vi-viii.





*Selections from the
Kelton Foundation
featured in the
2003 Maritime
Museum of
San Diego exhibit*

MARINERS MANDARINS &

Dragons and warriors writhe on this ivory urn, carved around 1860. While the decoration is Chinese, its shape is European: like virtually all the art in this exhibit, it was created by Chinese artists specifically to appeal to Western visitors. Marcus de Chevreux was senior curator of the exhibit, a portion of which is shown at right.

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29

A Westerner purchased this view of Portugal's colony of Macao about 1810 from an unknown Chinese artist. At center is the church of São Paulo; the Chinese mainland rises in the distance. China initially permitted trade only on islands and via the Philippines, but in 1557, Portuguese aid in quelling piracy was rewarded with permission to lease the Macao Peninsula, which remained Portuguese until 1999.

Macao was the gateway to China, lying at the mouth of the Pearl River downstream from Canton. By the late 1700s, when all Chinese ports except Canton were closed to foreign trade, Macao was the only European jurisdiction permitted within the Celestial Empire.

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The ivory chessmen in this game cabinet, made about 1725, are reminders that China's relationship with the West was not always harmonious. The white pieces sport Western attire and prominent noses, while their opponents' dress and facial features are decidedly Asian.

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Canton burned in 1822. While Western merchants immediately started rebuilding the warehouses and residences shown, over 7,000 Chinese shopkeepers were burned out. Thanks to British negotiations, this limited trade area for Westerners had stood since 1720 on the riverbank outside the walls of this city, which was vastly larger than London at the time.

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Another Chinese artist painted Shanghai about 1860, including the red-trimmed Chinese customs house. Strategically located 750 miles north of Canton on a tributary of the Yangtze, China's great inland highway, it was a prize of the First Opium War. The 1842 Treaty of Nanking forced China to open trade at the "treaty ports" of Shanghai, Foochow, Amoy and Ningpo, soon followed by Hong Kong and Singapore.

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Shanghai

The population of the island of Hong Kong was already around 90,000 when an artist from Tingqua's Canton studio painted it about 1865. On the slopes of Victoria Peak at center, the Union Jack flies over Government House. A prize of the Opium Wars in 1842, Hong Kong returned to Chinese control in 1997.

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Views of the ports of Hong Kong, Canton and Macao grace this paper fan from 1850.

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Opposite, left: A traveling Chinese tea broker, followed by his servant, greets a plantation owner in Fujian Province. As scribes wait to record their transaction, a boy bearing tea emerges from a room filled with samples. In the background, junks wend their way downriver past tea trees, carrying crates like those in the foreground.

Above: As Western merchants inspect and purchase tea, laborers pack it into crates with their feet. At rear, others load a junk to ferry it out to Whampoa. This watercolor, and its mate on the facing page, is from a series of a dozen Chinese views of tea production painted around 1805.



This enameled copper teakettle with its stand and burner from about 1760 fuses European and Chinese design elements. It exemplifies *chinoiserie*—the Western enthusiasm for things Chinese. Chinese artists and artisans readily accommodated their output to suit the “foreign devils” peculiar tastes.

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The tea trade, which made opulence like this circa 1800 silver-gilt filigree basket possible, literally rose on the backs of laborers in a land where labor was, and remains, very cheap. Above, men empty baskets of tea onto a colossal pile in the gloom of a Canton warehouse about 1820.

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Richard Starr Dana typified China traders: The Celestial Kingdom interested him primarily as a place to make money. Dana's personal race for riches carried him upriver into the heart of China, where he was among the first Western residents.

—The Editor

“This Miserable Place”

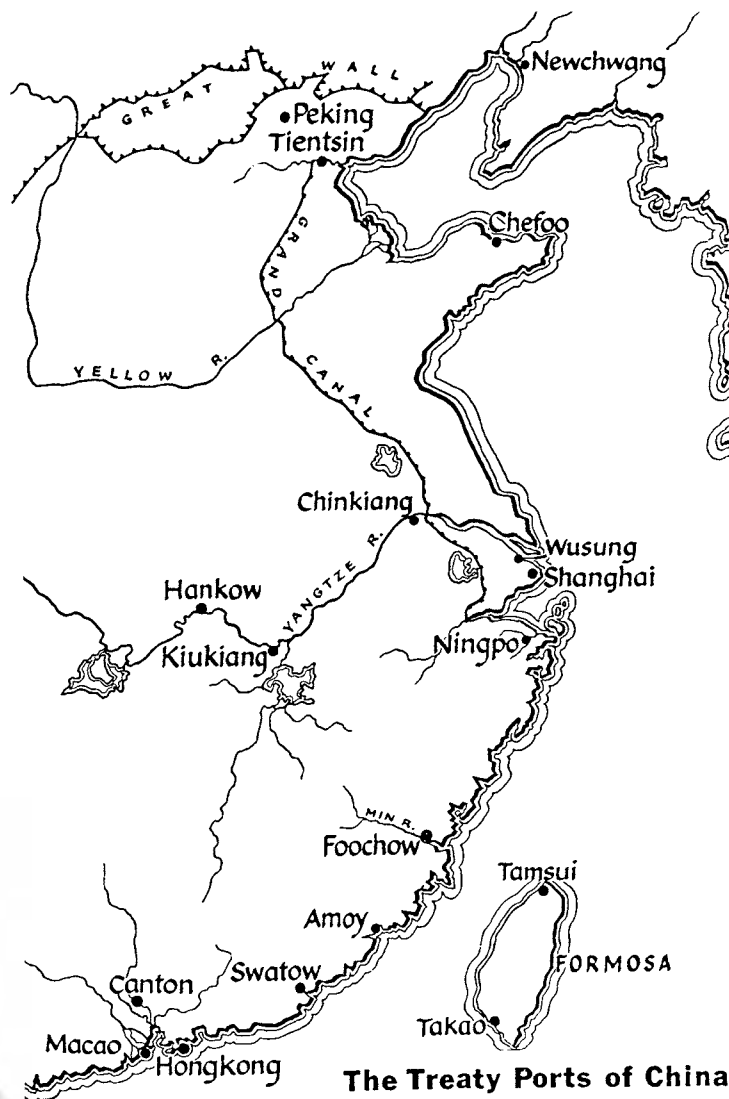
David T. Dana III

An American Trader in Inland China

The Opium Wars of 1839-1842 and 1856-1860 left China utterly humiliated. Under duress from the victorious British, the Xianfeng emperor signed treaties, which, among other things, opened river ports in the Chinese interior to foreign trade. Tea plants grew in central China, and, by buying tea at the source rather than at coastal ports, foreign merchants could cut out “squeeze” by Chinese middlemen. Aggressive traders saw riches in this and other vast resources in the Yangtze River valley and beyond, and envisioned customers in the millions along its tributaries. American and European traders raced each other to the new open treaty ports up the Yangtze (Chang Jiang) River to cash in on the anticipated new era of trade.

“[I] am starting with all my traps for the great city of Hankow, there to reside as Russell & Co’s agent,” wrote twenty-four-year-old Richard Starr Dana in the spring of 1861. “I am to find a house & establish myself in the best business locality....”¹ Hankow (Hankou) was over six hundred miles inland from the American and European settlements in Shanghai.

Dana, from an old Massachusetts family allied within the network of personal relationships among Boston China trade families, had been living in



**The Treaty Ports of China
1862 - 1874**

0 50 100 200 300 MILES

David Dana, of Carlsbad, is Richard Starr Dana’s great grandson, and this article is based on material for a forthcoming book. He has produced books and articles on several historical topics, including editing a soon-to-be-published 1852 journal of travel on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River entitled *A Fashionable Tour*. Mr. Dana enjoyed his career practicing and teaching law, during which he helped fledgling East European democracies review their proposed legal codes.



Dana's employer Russell & Co. occupied these imposing Shanghai buildings in 1875. Below, the riverboat *Scotland* may have resembled this steamboat, painted by a Chinese artist about 1850.

Above, courtesy The Peabody Essex Museum; below, detail from the 1850 view of Macao on pages 2-3, © 2003 The Kelton Foundation

Shanghai since September 1858, working as a clerk for Russell & Co.² This firm, the largest and most successful American trading company in China, had a house in several coastal treaty ports and now was rushing to be the first established in Hankow, "one of, if not the most important of the new ports." Packed off on short notice and "prepared for an indefinite absence,"³ Dana and a company *comprador*—a Chinese manager in charge of arranging relations with Chinese government officials—along with native clerks and servants, including a cook, boarded the iron-hulled steamboat *Scotland*.⁴

"Our steamer was the first large trading vessel to go up the river, and indeed was almost the first merchant man that attempted the passage up to this time, two only having been more prompt to avail themselves of the Treaty privilege," Dana noted.⁵ Large vessels were apt to ground in shallows fifty miles upstream from Shanghai. The *Scotland* drew fourteen feet, deep for river travel, but the river was high in this season, and Dana was confident that "there was plenty of water all the way to Hankow and beyond." Soon after steaming away from Woosong, however, "when fairly in the big river we ran plump into a mud bank."⁶ They remained in the mud a week.⁷



Finally freed, the paddlewheeler passed devastated, burned and looted cities along the river until anchoring at Nanking (Nanjing), roughly half-way to Hankow. The Taiping rebels who had made Nanking their capital followed a quasi-Christian Chinese peasant who believed himself called by God to rid China of the Manchu dynasty; millions had died in one of history's bloodiest civil wars. The Emperor's army, lately occupied with the British and French, tried with only partial success to quell them, but the rebels controlled stretches of the river below Nanking from which they could cut off river traffic and trade.

"We no sooner came to anchor than there came alongside an Imperial Mandarin boat, or light armed man of war, and on our other side appeared a rebel gunboat.... Many of the crew of each vessel came on board.... Our own crew, armed, comprised men of all nationalities. The ship was from Dundee; the sailors and firemen were Scotch, English and Irish—about thirty of them; and we had about 40 nondescripts. They had ... all that they could do to keep order on board. There was little or no discipline among the rebels. Apart from making faces and gestures at each other the rival crews attempted no violence.

"Tiring of the noise, our visitors were ordered off. The Imperialists promptly obeyed; not so the rebels, some of them requiring rough handling by our men. Jack⁸ is always delighted on any occasion of this kind. His manner of handling Chinamen is by taking two or three of their pigtails and tying them together. Their being soldiers did not on this occasion exempt them from such indignities."⁹

From the 1843 book China: In A Series of Views, courtesy of David Dana



The City of Nanking.

Dana relied on his servants for security while walking streets like this one.

Above and facing page: details from a circa 1840 streetscape in an unnamed city, © 2003 The Kelton Foundation



Above Nanking the *Scotland* chugged on, “tho’ in danger of running aground at any time,” Dana recalled. “3 American men of war which went up this river a month ago were very fortunate, not one having got aground once all the way ” he wrote. “[T]ho’ we have the same pilot we do not seem to get on as well. I fancy that they did not let him have as much to do with the navigation.”¹⁰ On June 19, about 2:00 in the afternoon, the *Scotland* safely arrived at Hankow, and its first resident foreign merchant gazed upon his new home.

This ancient city, once home to several million, hugged the shore at the junction of the Han and Yangtze Rivers, making it a center of river trade. Dana wrote his mother that “this miserable place” looked like any other Chinese city, and informed her that he was “now in the middle of this god-forsaken country . . . People hear of the luxurious living in China . . . But any such impression as to life in Hankow will for a long time be most erroneous.”¹¹

Dana lived on the *Scotland* while the *comprador* Apun bought property and began building a house that “faced on a narrow and dirty street that ran parallel with the river, about one hundred yards from it. . . . It was built of brick in a compound or a courtyard enclosed by high and strong walls, there being a stout gate in the front. The gate was not as high or as stout as I afterwards made it. The space occupied by the house was about 50 feet by 100. It was two stories high and fairly well lighted by small panes of semi-transparent mica, beautifully mounted. . . . There are no easy chairs or sofas. . . .” The Chinese furniture, Dana thought, “lacks every essential to comfort. . . . The floor is bare . . . the woodwork was painted in bright colors, and taken altogether I was much better lodged than I had thought it possible to be in any Chinese house.”¹²

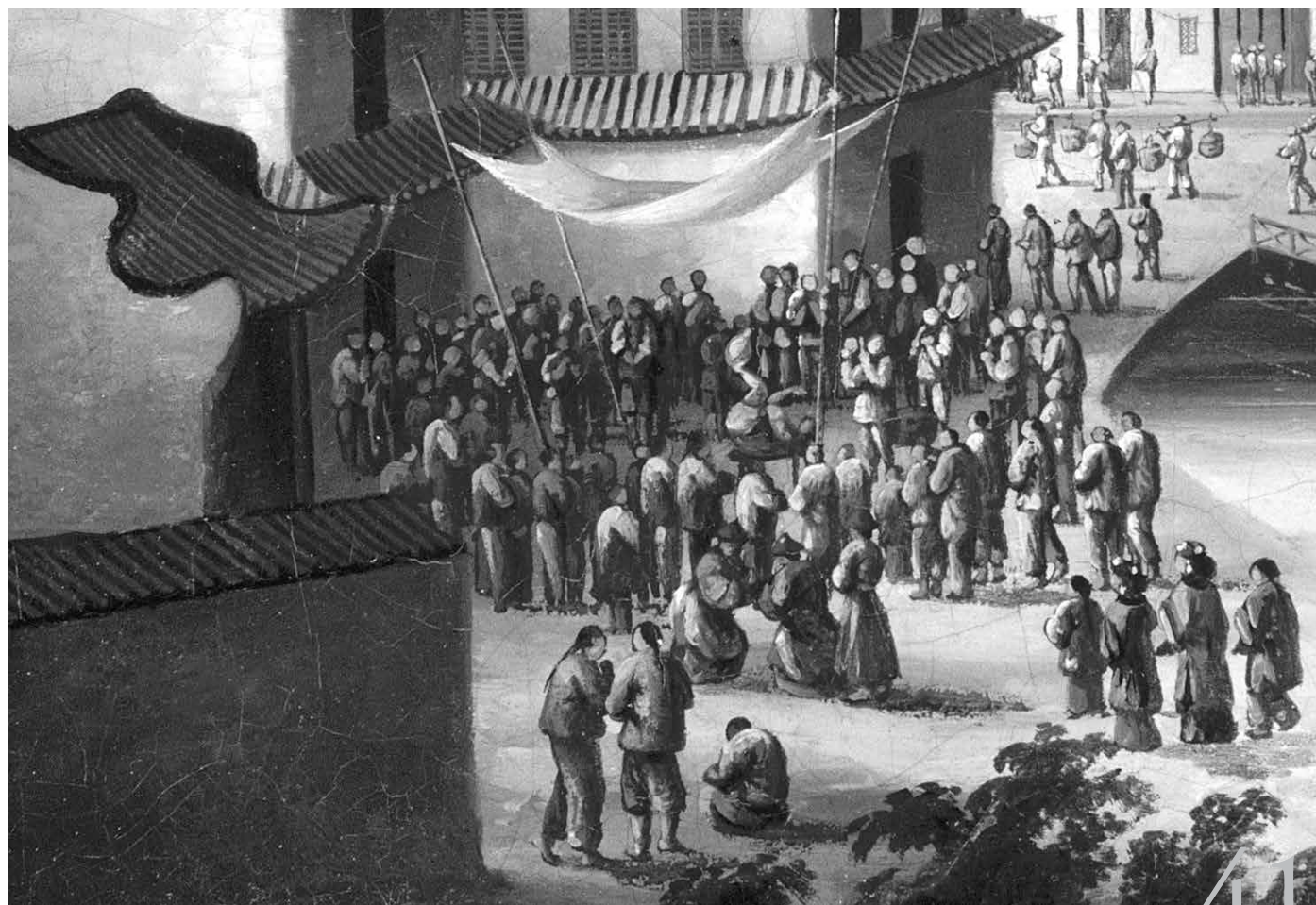
Within a few weeks, more Westerners arrived: merchants, diplomatic consuls (who often were merchants), missionaries and steamboat captains. Even so, Dana was “living all by myself & have no one to see & to talk to without going out, or unless they come & see me.”¹³ He was the youngest in the foreign community and was its only American, save the acting U.S. consul. There were only two Western women, “. . . so curiously English & odd in their ways & ideas that I do not go near them often.”¹⁴ A few months later, in August, Dana would write: “Hankow is certainly a most undesirable place as a residence. As yet, foreigners are not together, but live scattered all over the city. This is much to be regretted in my opinion, as by keeping together they are far more secure in the case of riot. One cannot walk (without crossing the river) save through the crowded streets, where a foreigner is still a *rara avis* [rare bird] & is followed & sometimes hooted at in a most disagreeable manner.”¹⁵

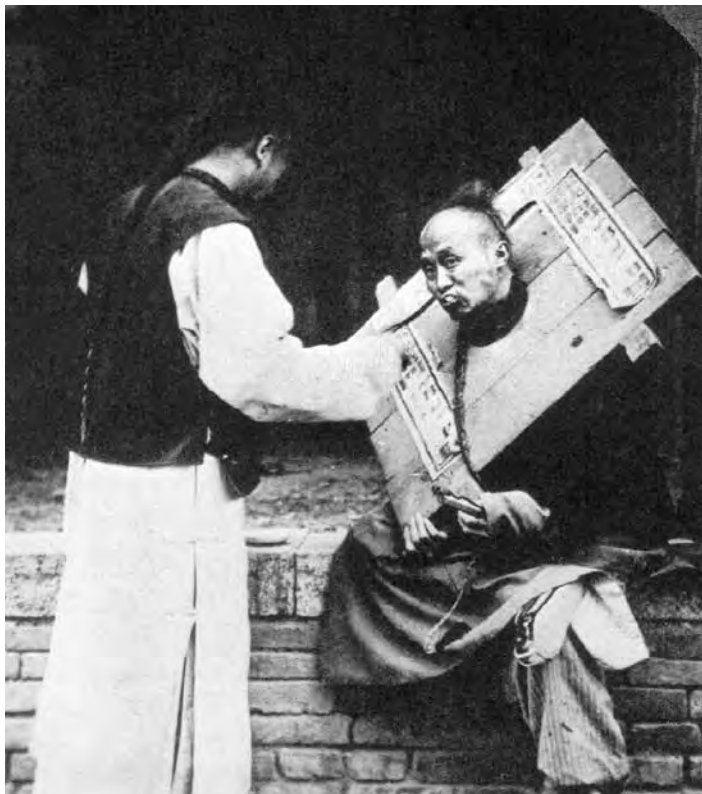
Personal security was a great concern. Rumors arose from time to time that the rebels might menace Hankow. The “beastly” local population was not accustomed to the hairy, white-skinned foreigners, and the disparity between Chinese squalor and foreign wealth was virtually guaranteed to breed trouble. Dana believed that “I owed my safety, or immunity from immediate attack, to the fact of my being expected, and that the foreign question was still fresh in celestial minds.”¹⁶ The hated “Fanqui” (foreign devil) had arrived, but interfering with him would bring severe punishment, for the Emperor had proclaimed that foreigners were not to be molested. Dana assured his mother that “any ‘Brave’ who is caught troubling a foreigner has his head taken off ‘sans ceremony.’”¹⁷

Dana owed his safety, as well, to his Chinese servants, his own boldness and a little luck. “My servants were threatened and sometimes beaten and I myself one day... was set upon by the dirty crowd who seemed inclined to rob me of my clothes. I always carried a stout stick, and with it I made such play as I could.” An old woman “attacked my assailants with her tongue” and they let him go on. His Chinese *comprador* did not help because, he said, “too muchee fear.”

The authorities charged with enforcing the Imperial edict against interfering with foreigners might have helped. While the *teepo*, mayor of Hankow, promised that he would have culprits “tried and placed in front of my house with their heads in the canque”—a heavy wooden board worn around the neck—Dana did not want that. A few soldiers might have served as guards

A crowd gathers on a Chinese street to watch a contortionist's act.





Above, the *canque* or *cangue* in use. Below, a mandarin of the military order.

Above, courtesy The Peabody Essex Museum, below © 2003 The Kelton Foundation



if given food and lodging, but “they would be an intolerable nuisance, and certain to fail us when most needed.”

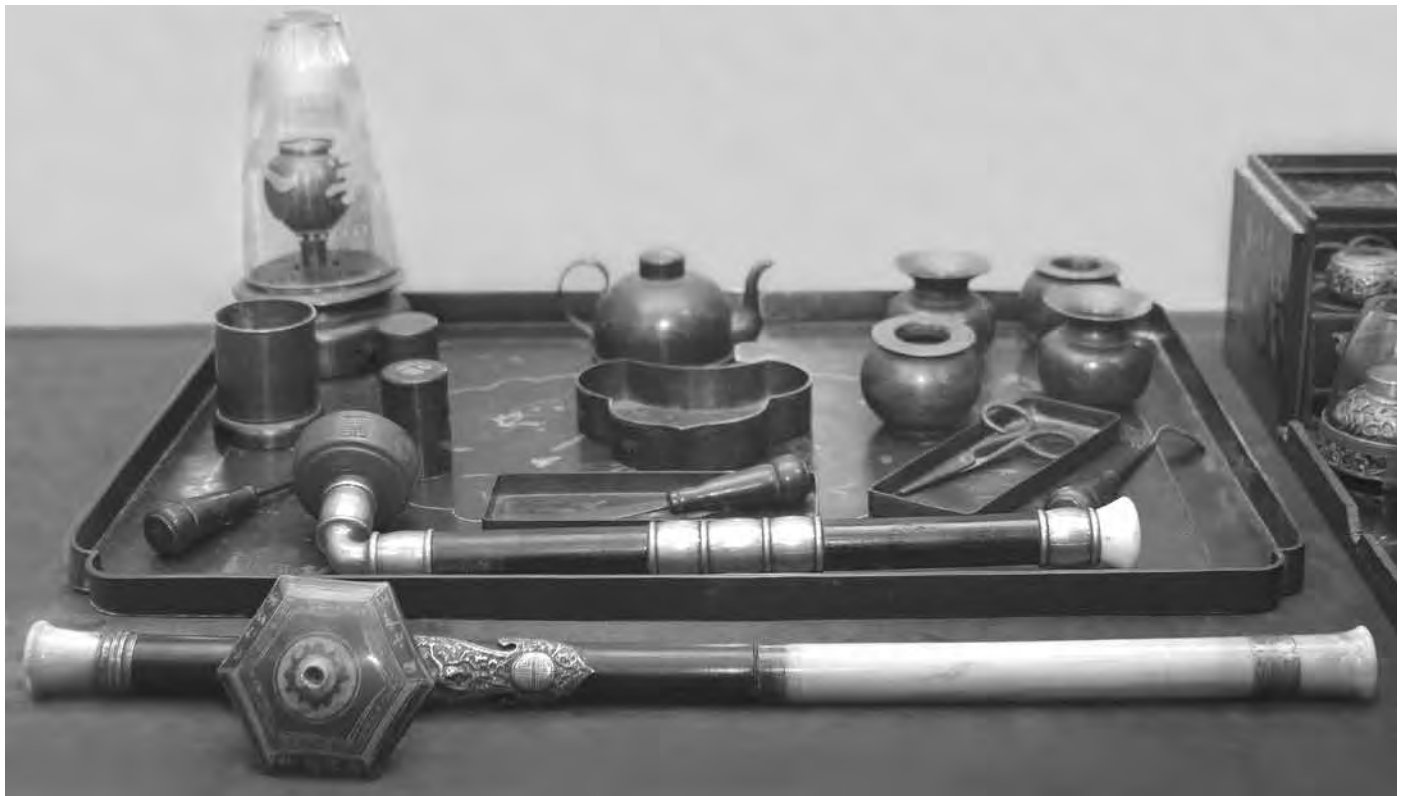
Dana determined to rely on his own people. They had been brought from Canton selected for “strength and steadiness.” “I noticed with some surprise that my servants, although Chinamen, did not readily communicate with the natives, being puzzled by the dialect.”¹⁸ His servants spoke Cantonese, distinct from the local dialect of Mandarin. Dana described how they maintained friendly relations: “Having no sympathy with the Hankow rabble they took to their staves with slight provocation and many a battle was fought in the street between my house and godown [warehouse], in which my men always came off the best. My appearance always ended the row . . . the mob feared that I would use a revolver, which was always carried in plain sight.”¹⁹ “The foreigner,” Dana asserted, “is and always will be feared by the Chinese.”

Local mobs were only part of the security problem for foreign merchants. Imperial troops trained at a barracks across the Yangtze in Wuchang, and “when not on duty, they would come over to Hankow ‘to see the town’ . . . they would wander about in batches, inclined to ‘paint the town

red.’ It was not safe for a foreigner to meet with them in the streets, as they were apt to be inquisitive and insulting. ‘Fresh’ young recruits . . . would sometimes stop and with offensive curiosity, insist upon entering and seeing the ‘Fanqui’ to know how he lived, and what he had that they might fancy. . . . My custom was to let a few enter . . . as many as (judging from their appearance) we thought we could handle in the event (very probable) of any misunderstanding. . . . My coolies were as tough as their staves . . . In seeing two Fanqui, two such dogs as they had never seen before, ten or twelve stout coolies, well armed with clubs and showing no fear in them, they generally became as mild mannered men as ever cut throats.”²⁰ The dogs were a pair of “invaluable” English bulldogs who “had no great liking for any of the natives,” and the second *fan kwae* was a clerk, sent by Russell & Co. in October to help with business.

The traders needed landing and storage facilities on the waterfront. “To buy out the occupants of the river front was difficult, owing to the ill will of the greedy owners as to the exorbitant price named,” so the *comprador* and the *teepo* [mayor] “made some bargain . . . the particulars of which I thought it best not to inquire into too closely, the result being that I obtained the frontage.”²¹ But boats could not unload there. The bank shelved at a forty-five-degree angle and the water rose and fell thirty feet. “I thought that in mid summer when the river was low, piles could be driven into the bank, and steps made; that the steps could be faced with planks in such a manner that steamers could be safely moved alongside the bank at any time of year.”²² Dana also devised a floating dock and had it built.

“There was no difficulty in obtaining masons and carpenters, such as they were, and I at once commenced the building of a large warehouse or ‘godown’. . . . It had no cellar, was built upon piles which, . . . the Chinese having no regular pile drivers . . . were fairly well driven into the ground.”



He pronounced the result “a sightly and very commodious building.”²³

The godown finished and “my people being treated with a little more respect,” life became more regular. Dana now settled into the business of making money on every step of each transaction, exacting commissions for selling and for buying, fees for wharfage and storage, interest on credit advanced to merchants, and charging for shipping freight. The costs included payments to the *comprador* and coolies, repayments to investors financing the construction, and the expenses of maintaining facilities.

There were no Chinese brokers in Hankow who spoke “pigeon” English, so business was transacted through the *comprador*. As Dana explained it, the *comprador* paid and received all monies, always “secured” by some wealthy Chinese, and in turn he “secured” or vouched for the character of all Chinese who desired to do business. If goods had been delivered, the *comprador* was responsible for payment of the money.²⁴

Negotiations might feature cheating, misleading and blustering, but once a deal was struck, Chinese and foreign merchants each typically relied on the other’s word. Dana recalled one deal, which he apparently found remarkable as an exception to the rule. He had sold some \$10,000 of American cotton goods. The Chinese buyer, a large, heavy opium smoker, spoke English well, so Dana had not made the sale through Apun, the *comprador*. Apun delivered the goods as Dana ordered, but when the deadline for payment passed Apun “came to me in much alarm” saying that he feared that the security papers were not good and that the buyer had told him that he “would pay when he was ready and not before, or words to that effect.”

The next morning Dana took his revolver, a stout stick and an interpreter and blustered into the buyer’s home. Seizing the man’s “boy” Dana confronted the buyer in his bed. “I then told him briefly and frankly my position; . . . I told him what he had already guessed, which was that I should detain him until the money he owed me was paid. . . . that I had come,

In one of Dana’s business transactions he learned that the profitable trade in opium also exacted a cost: Chinese addicts made unreliable trading partners.

*Opium pipes and accessories, circa 1890,
© 2003 The Kelton Foundation, photograph by John Wright*

armed and determined to take him to my house ‘*volens volens*’ [willing or unwilling], that if he sent or called for assistance; in the row that would ensue I would certainly shoot him, as in self defense. . . . He was well treated and well guarded, also, while in my house, and at the end of five or six days his indebtedness was settled to my satisfaction.” Dana never heard of him again.²⁵

Dana repeatedly called Hankow “this miserable place” or “this miserable hole,” sweltering in summer and blustery in winter, when “my stove smokes, & the wind comes through the walls & blows my paper away.” It was a “heathen town indeed.” He was, he wrote, “never more anxious to see home.” “I shall try to make the best of it however,” he assured his mother, “in the hope that my remuneration will be in proportion to the hardship of living in such a place.”²⁶ He persevered because “Hankow is fast improving as an important place.”

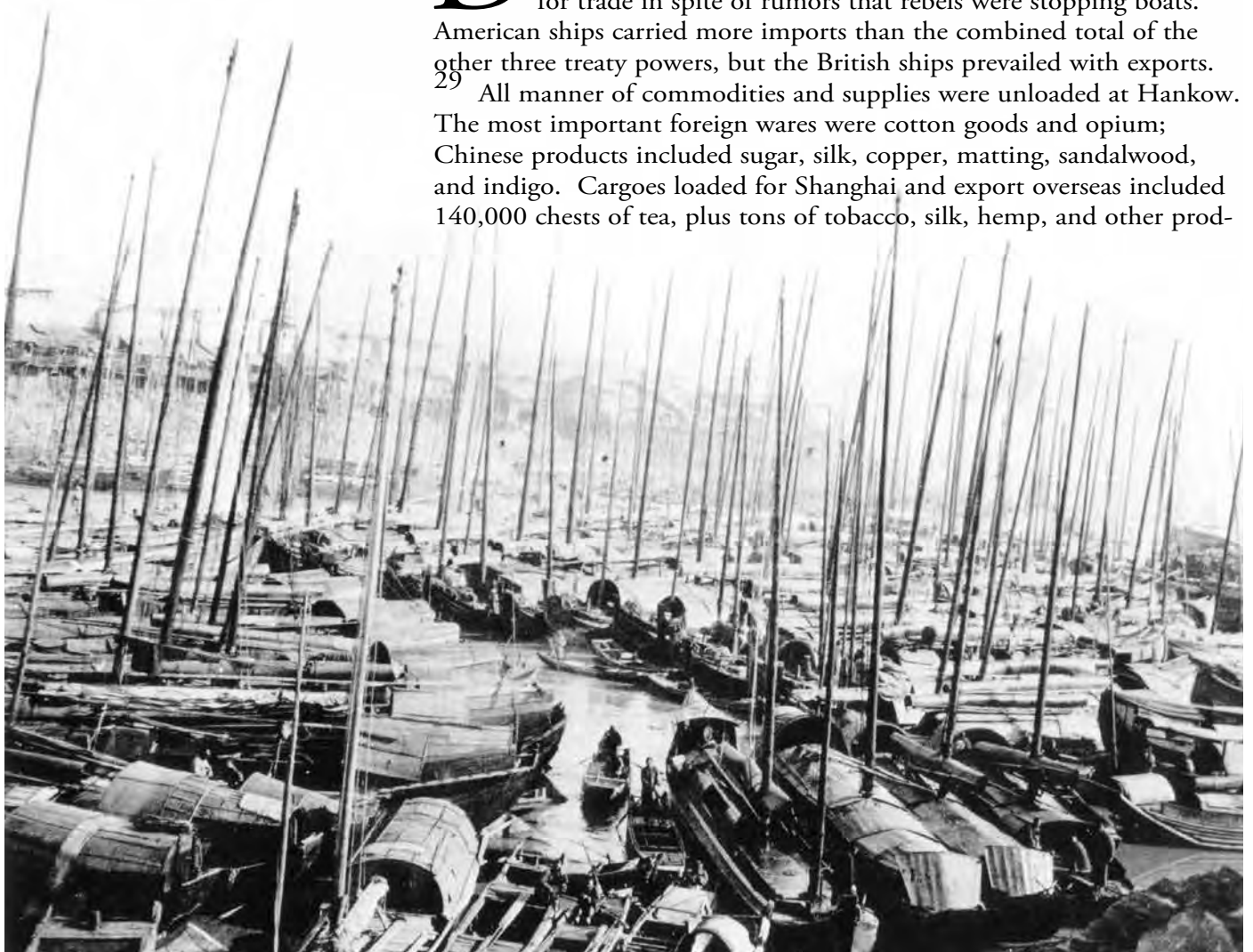
Sharp competition among the foreign firms in Hankow developed quickly. By year’s end, thirteen British firms had established themselves, and Dana’s employer was joined by another American firm, Augustine Heard & Company.²⁷ “The agents, like myself, were young men, anxious to attain and, or, maintain the reputation of being capable and efficient. They were most anxious to report sales.”²⁸

During this first year “152 foreign vessels and 170 junks in foreign employ,” including up to fifty steamers, came to Hankow for trade in spite of rumors that rebels were stopping boats. American ships carried more imports than the combined total of the other three treaty powers, but the British ships prevailed with exports.²⁹

All manner of commodities and supplies were unloaded at Hankow. The most important foreign wares were cotton goods and opium; Chinese products included sugar, silk, copper, matting, sandalwood, and indigo. Cargoes loaded for Shanghai and export overseas included 140,000 chests of tea, plus tons of tobacco, silk, hemp, and other prod-

Shipping crowds the Yangtze about 1870.

Courtesy Library of Congress



ucts.

As the second year in Hankow progressed, business on the river grew and life settled down. Shallow-draft American paddlewheel steamboats operated by Russell & Co. and others came to dominate shipping on the river.³⁰ By April, 1862, Dana could write, “we have now quite a number of American steamboats running on the Yangtze River and as you may suppose, English & other steamers cannot compete with them.”³¹ The young trader was no longer “anxious and nervous least things not go so well.”³² He relaxed, ate well, got to know other Americans and Europeans, and enjoyed horseback rides into the countryside. Some personal business ventures had been successful. The Yangtze business he started helped Russell & Co. weather difficult times during the American Civil War years, which lasted much longer than anyone expected. “Business of American houses, owing to the home difficulty, is very dull at present,” he reported in 1863, “dull comparatively speaking, for the local native & steamboat business of this house is large.”³³

In December, as 1862 drew to a close, Dana unexpectedly learned that he “had the privilege of entering the house as a partner on the first of the year.”³⁴ The firm appointed his successor in Hankow and assigned Dana to Canton to take charge of the branch there. As soon as possible, without lingering over leave taking, Richard Starr Dana left the “miserable hole” of Hankow, actually feeling, he recalled, “some regrets.”³⁵

N O T E S

- 1 Richard Starr Dana to Juliette Starr Dana, 26 May 1861, author’s collection. All letters from Dana to his mother are hereafter cited as “RSD to JSD.” Hankow is now the modern city of Wuhan.
- 2 On the personal relationships among Boston China-trade families, see Jacques Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1997), 155.
- 3 Richard Starr Dana, “Recollections and Reminiscences,” n.d. (ca. 1890-1903), typescript in author’s collection, p. 15.
- 4 Dana, “Recollections,” p. 17. Russell & Co. operated the ship as agents for its owner. The company, which previously had conducted business only on a commission basis (a much less risky proposition than buying goods and attempting to resell them at a profit), revised its partnership agreement to permit it to operate “one or more vessels in the Indian and Coast of China Trade and ...[the firm] may ship Treasure, Opium or General Merchandise from one China Port to another.” This allowed the company to take advantage of the treaty’s provision that imported goods, once entered and taxed, could be shipped from one Chinese port to another without paying further duties. For example, a shipment of opium, imported to Canton, could be shipped from there to Shanghai, then to Hankow, without paying the government again. This undercut Chinese efforts to discourage trade. Indenture [Partnership agreement effective January 1, 1861], Folder: Russell & Co., General Correspondence 1830-1891, Papers of Warren Delano II, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.
- 5 Dana, “Recollections,” p. 15. British and American gunboats and the antiquated paddle-wheel steamer *Governor General* had previously scouted the river to Hankow. The first merchant steamers to call were *Yangtze*, of a British house, and *Lan-Hwa* (Water Lily), a 60-foot wooden steamer built in Shanghai. E. K. Haviland, “Early Steam Navigation in China: The Yangtze River, 1861-1867,” *The American Neptune* 16, no. 3 (July 1956).
- 6 Dana, “Recollections,” p. 15.
- 7 RSD to JSD, 8 June 1861.
- 8 A jacktar, or common sailor.
- 9 Dana, “Recollections,” pp. 16-17.
- 10 RSD to JSD, 8 June 1861.
- 11 Ibid., 29 June 1861.
- 12 Dana, “Recollections,” pp. 18-19.
- 13 RSD to JSD, 19 August 1861.

Surrounded by tea boxes, a merchant signs an agreement with a mandarin. Dana, after two short business trips to San Francisco and a visit home, worked primarily in Hong Kong until 1869. "I am living at a rate that I had far rather not live," he fussed that year. "We have too many dinner parties, dancing parties, servants & equipages." This lifestyle led some Americans to desire to remain in China, but Dana wrote his mother on November 30, 1865 that "My experience is that the longer I live here, the more I want to go home." He returned to the U.S. in 1869, lived primarily in New York, and died in 1904.

Detail from the watercolor on page 35, © 2003 The Kelton Foundation

- 14 Ibid., 30 October 1861.
- 15 Ibid., 7 August 1861.
- 16 Dana, "Recollections," p. 18.
- 17 RSD to JSD, 6 June 1862.
- 18 Dana, "Recollections," p. 18.
- 19 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
- 20 Ibid., pp. 22-23.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
- 22 Ibid., p. 20.
- 23 Dana, "Recollections," pp. 20, 24.
- 24 This paraphrase briefly describes Dana's description of the *comprador's* difficult position. The Chinese government had long controlled foreign trade through the Cohong in Canton, but this system had collapsed. Since the government could not enforce rules directly against foreigners, it continued to pressure Chinese subjects who were indispensable to the foreigners.
- 25 Dana, "Recollections," pp. 38-40.
- 26 RSD to JSD, 7 August 1861.
- 27 George E. Paulsen, "Opening the Yangtze Door," *The American Neptune* 34, no. 2 (April 1974): 121.
- 28 Dana, "Recollections," p. 38.
- 29 Paulsen, "Opening the Yangtze Door," 121.
- 30 Russell & Co.'s managing partner in Shanghai (and Dana's boss), Edward Cunningham, persuaded his partners to allow him to acquire the *Scotland* and two other river steamers, *Surprise* and *Willamette*, with Chinese and foreign investors. In summer 1861 these steamers began more-or-less regular trips from Shanghai to Hankow, each making a run about every three weeks. In March 1862, Cunningham and others formed the Shanghai Steam Navigation Co., to which they transferred the three vessels, and acquired others.
- 31 RSD to JSD, 22 April 1862.
- 32 Ibid., 19 August 1861.
- 33 Ibid., 3 May 1863.
- 34 Dana, "Recollections," p. 46.
- 35 Ibid., p.46.



Unlike the United States, Australia's role in the China Trade was limited, but commerce with the Celestial Kingdom played a significant part in Australia's early history. The trade was one of the reasons behind Britain's decision to found the colony; it generated profits for the first colonial entrepreneurs; and most importantly, it provided an incentive for Australians to search the Pacific for products to tempt Chinese consumers, planting the new colony firmly in the Asian trading sphere instead of as merely a distant satellite of the Mother Country.

—The Editor

Australia and the China Trade

In January 1788, the eleven British ships of the First Fleet arrived in Sydney Harbour to establish the colony of New South Wales. A number of these ships were contracted to the Government by the English East India Company. Having unloaded their cargo of 717 convicts, in early May three transports, the *Charlotte*, *Scarborough*, and *Lady Penrhyn*, sailed in ballast for Canton, where they joined the East India Company in the Pearl River at Whampoa to load a cargo of tea, before sailing for England with the rest of the fleet. Thus, within months of the establishment of a colony in New South Wales, Australia was linked, however indirectly, to the China tea trade.

Colonial Australia was based on an anomaly. From the first establishment of a settlement at Sydney Cove, the British government explicitly instructed successive governors to discourage all trade with Asia. “[I]t is our royal intention,” Governor Phillip was told in 1787,

that every sort of intercourse between the intended settlement...or other place which may be hereinafter established on the coast of New South Wales and its dependencies, and the settlements of our East India Company, as well as the coast of China, and the islands situated in that part of the world, to which any intercourse had been established by any European nation, should be prevented by every possible means.¹

Trade was proscribed because of the East India Company's monopoly on all British trade between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, which continued on general trade until 1813, and, in the case of the China tea trade, did not finally cease until 1834. Because of the monopoly, colonists in Australia, like other British merchants, were legally excluded from this trade. Enterprising traders, however, could find ways around this obstacle.

Marion Diamond



Governor Arthur Phillip.

Courtesy State Library of New South Wales

Marion Diamond is Professor of History at the University of Queensland, Australia.

The American schooner *Pride of the Sea* lies at Circular Quay in Sydney, about 1845.

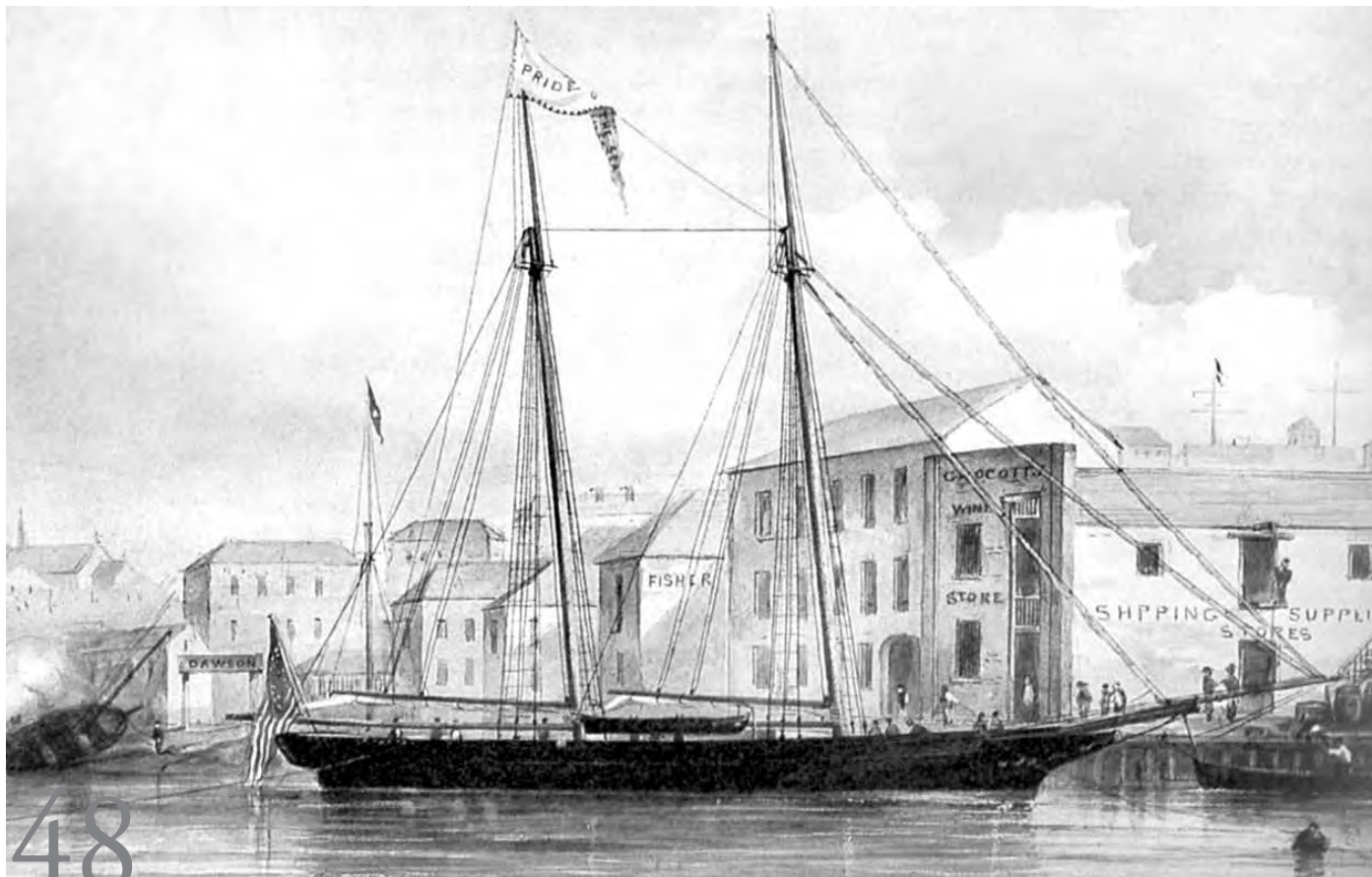
Courtesy State Library of New South Wales

One was to operate through a foreigner, and Australian traders used a number of American front men, or American-registered shipping. As in the whaling industry, a close association formed between American and Australian traders in the early nineteenth century.²

Americans had been involved in the China trade since the end of the American War of Independence freed them from the constraints of the monopoly. In 1784, the *Empress of China* set sail for Canton from New York. Her British-born captain, Robert Morrison, had been a veteran of the tea trade, but now as an American he was no longer obliged to travel via Britain, as required by the Navigation Acts. Instead he pioneered an entirely new route, sailing westwards from Cape Horn, turning north to sail along the east coast of Australia, passing to the east of New Guinea then on to the Philippines and Canton.

This new “southern route” became the preferred route to China from America. English shipping also began to use a new southerly route, sailing eastwards in the “roaring forties” from the Cape of Good Hope, then round the south of Tasmania, before turning north for China. The new settlement on the east coast of Australia stood to benefit from these new routes, so much so that some historians have argued that the settlement was established in part to service the China trade.³ Certainly, within a few years Sydney, and later Hobart, became important refreshment ports on the route to China.

Australia’s first associations with the China trade were passive: the convict ships had sailed in ballast from Sydney, for the new colony had, as yet, no goods to trade with China. This was a problem that all European trad-



ers faced. In the famous words of the Emperor Chien Lung to Lord Macartney in 1793, “your Ambassador can see for yourself that we possess all things.”⁴ As a result silver coinage leaked away from Europe to pay for the growing consumption of tea. Eventually the English and Americans found a suitable export product in opium. In the meantime, however, innovative Australian traders were also looking for suitable trade goods, and found them, generally, in the Pacific. As early as 1804, for instance, the *Sydney Gazette* advertised:



Wanted, a Quantity of SHARKS FINS properly dried and preserved. Any Person willing to enter into a Contract for procuring the same for two years will meet with liberal Encouragement. Application to be made to Mr. Lord.⁵

Hobart in 1825 was a way station en route to China.

Simeon Lord, an ex-convict who became a successful businessman in New South Wales, undoubtedly wanted to establish a supply of shark fins to sell in China in return for tea. The Australian traders tried various marine products but the most successful of these exotic Pacific articles of trade proved to be sandalwood. In 1804, Lord discovered sandalwood in Fiji, and landed his first cargo in Sydney in April 1805. Later that year he went into partnership with an American, Peter Chase. Chase gathered another cargo of sandalwood in Fiji, sold it profitably in Canton, and returned to Sydney with a cargo of Chinese goods. In this instance, however, even the involvement of an American failed to persuade Governor King that the enterprise was outside the constraints of the East India Company’s monopoly. He refused to let Chase land his cargo in Sydney, and Chase eventually sold it in America.⁶

Thus, inauspiciously, began a triangular trade in which Australian ships sailed to the Pacific Islands with trade goods such as iron nails and tobacco, which were exchanged there for sandalwood, which then could be sold at Canton in return for tea. Lord made US \$30,000 on his speculation with Chase, but in subsequent years, the trade was erratic, for Chinese demand for sandalwood was inelastic, and sometimes the price collapsed. Gradually, however, Australian traders learned to adapt to the rhythm of the China market, particularly with the end of the East India Company monopoly in 1834.

Other Pacific products also made their way to the Canton market, including sea cucumber, pearl- and tortoiseshell from the Pacific, and seal skins from Bass Strait, New Zealand and the sub-Antarctic islands. The search for exports for the trade drove Australian traders to try many options, if their letters to the agents Jardine, Matheson & Co. are any indication: John Bell of Hobart stocked an island with “Silver haired Rabbits” for the China trade as well as offering opossum skins and wool;⁷ Tom Larkins offered “a full cargo of cedar;”⁸ while John Thacker in Sydney offered “‘Grass Tree Gum’ the produce of this Colony. It emits a fragrant odour on being burned and has been used in the Roman Catholic Churches here in lieu of Incense.”⁹

Sandalwood, however, remained the cargo of choice. The sandalwood trade developed in particular through the efforts of the Sydney trader Robert Towns, and his associate James Paddon, who gathered sandalwood in Aneityum in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu). Under Towns and Paddon, the triangular trade became more stable and less speculative. As historian Dorothy Shineberg has observed, “Traders sold tobacco for Pacific islanders to smoke in order that the Chinese might burn sandalwood in order that Australians might drink tea, proving that human frailty knows no race.”¹⁰

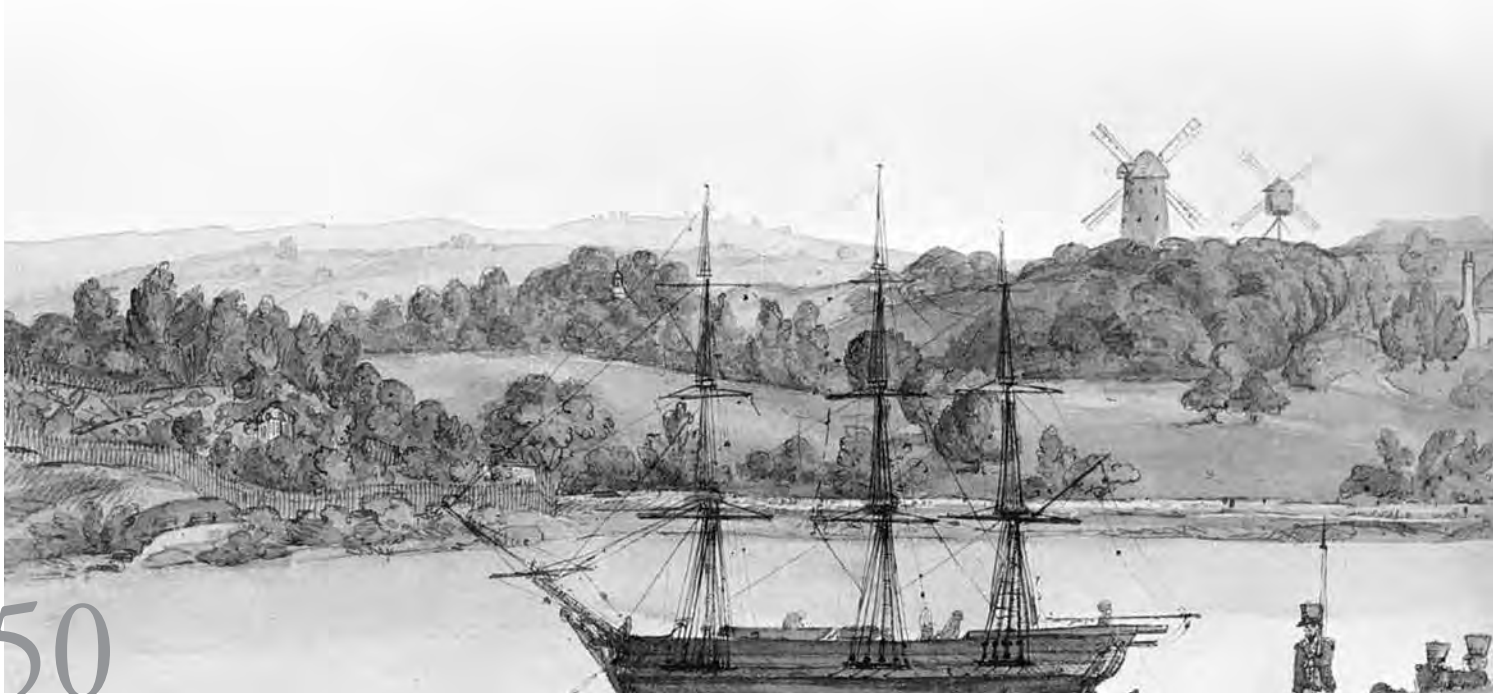
The major item imported from China was tea. “It is drunk by all Classes of people—Convicts, and all, who cannot do without large quantities of it,” wrote a Hobart merchant in 1831, but he added that “fine and good Black, or green Tea—must on no account be sent as an article of lading—as the good folks here, do not like paying the prime Cost of good Tea.”¹¹ The greatest consumers of tea were the convicts. By the first years of the nineteenth century, tea and sugar had become special items in the convicts’ rations, to be given or withheld as a bribe for good behavior.¹²

Tea only began to be a common middle- and working-class drink in Britain after 1785, when the British government dropped its excise from 119% to 12%. It grew in popularity rapidly after that, but it is probably true that tea was familiar to the Australian convicts long before it became a common beverage amongst their peers at home. In the early 1820s, John Macarthur gave his convict servants tea and sugar twice a day, “a luxury,” noted his biographer, “they never would have enjoyed in England.”¹³ At the same time that William Cobbett was railing against tea as a newfangled item in the English workingman’s diet, it was already common in Australia, a necessary element in maintaining the checks and balances of power in the convict society.¹⁴

At first, supplies of tea arrived with speculative traders. In 1798 Robert Campbell of the Calcutta firm of Campbell, Clarke & Co. brought in a cargo including “Rum, tea, sugar etc from Bengal.”¹⁵ The market in Australia, though regular and profitable, was not large, and merchants filled up the spaces in the ships with whatever else they thought might sell for a profit. So in the first place, the tea trade brought other Chinese items—silks, parasols,

“Sydney in All its Glory,” 1817.

Courtesy Australian National Library



spices, furniture, ceramics, crystallized ginger—into Australia as secondary cargoes. Only strong-smelling items, such as camphor wood, were excluded from the tea ships, and breakables such as ceramics were sometimes packed within the tea chests themselves. The demand for tea thus led to other products arriving in Australia from China. Thus within a generation or so of the first settlement, Australian colonists developed a distinctive taste for oriental furnishings and ceramics.

An earlier venture by Campbell and Clarke was the voyage of the *Sydney Cove*, a trading vessel in the “country trade” out of Calcutta that was wrecked on Preservation Island in the Furneaux Group in Bass Strait in 1797. Her cargo included “quantities of Chinese porcelain and tea.” Since the wreck of the *Sydney Cove* was discovered in the 1970s, some 250 kilograms of porcelain fragments have been recovered by archaeologists, of which the largest component was at least 182 dinner or soup plates. Also found were specifically European items, such as chamber pots, which must have been manufactured specifically for export. All these ceramics were probably brought to Australia for general sale, rather than to meet specific orders.¹⁶

Higher-quality Chinese goods were ordered directly from Canton, including full dinner services, sometimes decorated with specifically Australian designs. One such example is the dinner service ordered by John Macarthur, a settler and ex-officer in the New South Wales Corps.¹⁷

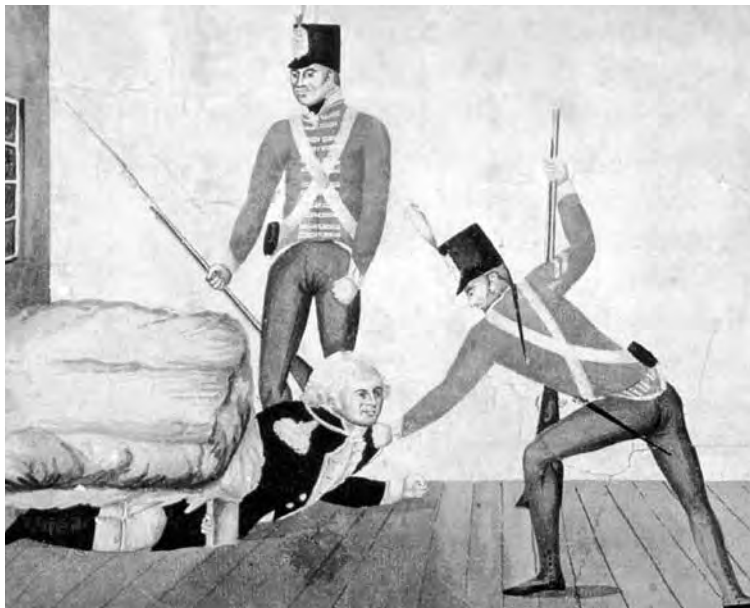
As the Australian colonies developed, traders dealt directly with the British agents in the China export trade. Negotiating many of these purchases were agents in Macao, and after 1842 in Hong Kong or Shanghai, who had particular associations with Australia. One of the earliest of these agents was Walter Stevenson Davidson, a friend of John Macarthur. Davidson first came



A diver raises Chinese porcelain water flasks from the wreck of the *Sydney Cove*.

Courtesy Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service





While the story that Governor William Bligh hid from rebels under his bed may be apocryphal, it is certainly appealing.

Courtesy State Library of New South Wales

to Australia with Macarthur in 1805. In 1807, he sailed as supercargo on Macarthur's ship, the *Harrington*, first to gather sandalwood at Fiji, then on to Macao to purchase tea and other goods. In April 1808, *Harrington* returned to Sydney to find the colony in uproar after a successful mutiny by the New South Wales Corps, who imprisoned the Governor—none other than William Bligh, whose difficult personality had already led to mutiny once before. John Macarthur, one of the leaders of the rebellion, was installed as Secretary of the Colony. Although Davidson had been out of the colony during the rebellion, Bligh judged him guilty by association, and Davidson left the colony with the other rebels in March 1809, never to return.¹⁸

On his return to England, Davidson used his political connections to become a naturalized Portuguese citizen.¹⁹ This gave him the right to live and work in Macao, unaffected by the East India

Company's monopoly. In 1812 he returned there and formed a partnership with an old school friend, John Molony, whom he had met in Macao during his first visit. Davidson & Co. (which became Dent & Co. in 1822) became the main agent for tea traders such as Richard Jones and Alexander Riley of Sydney. Others, such as Charles Swanston of Hobart and John Thacker of Sydney dealt with the rival agency, Jardine Matheson & Co.

A ship and its crew represented an enormous capital investment. To keep a ship idle for long periods was costly, so it helped to have a factor and a factory on shore to gather the cargo ahead of the predicted arrival of the tea fleet. Sailing ships were also governed by the weather. So ships arrived in the Pearl River after the northeast monsoon in October, and left before the southwest monsoon, in March. Australian shippers timed their return to Australia to catch these southwest winds, but to avoid cyclones in the Coral Sea, arriving off Sydney about May. The price they paid for their cargoes varied from year to year, but was usually similar for all traders, so their profits came not from driving a better deal than their competitors, but by racing home to the market faster than anyone else. With the arrival of the new season's teas, the price of old stock remaining in the warehouses fell. It was a cut-throat business, and William Duncan, the editor of the *Australasian Chronicle*, claimed that at least one tea merchant in the early 1840s tried to get him to suppress notice of the arrival of the first tea ship in the Shipping Lists, so as to manipulate the price of tea in Sydney.²⁰ In the British tea trade, this race to bring back the season's first tea led to the creation of *Cutty Sark* and other tea clippers, the most spectacular, and fastest, of all sailing ships.

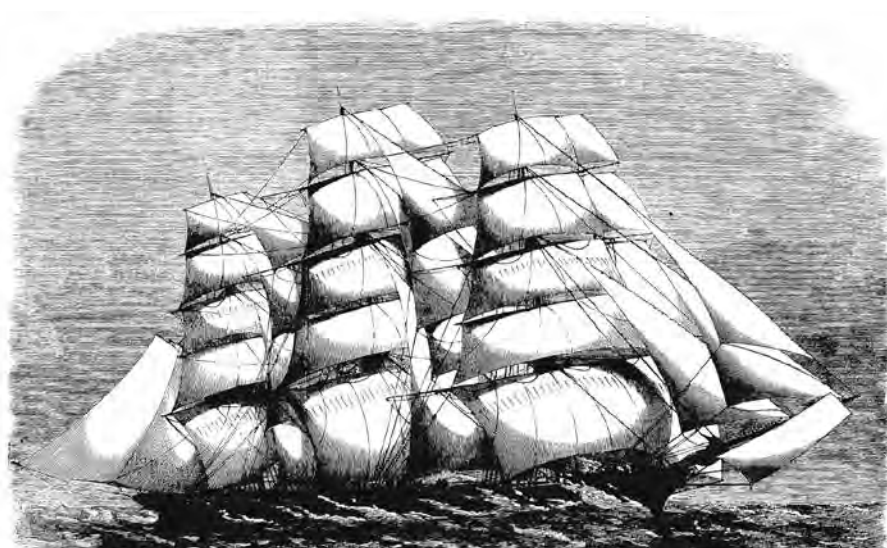
In 1824, Walter Davidson became a prime mover, with the Macarthur family, in the formation of the Australian Agricultural Company, Australia's oldest chartered company. Davidson was deeply involved in the opium trade with China.²¹ Most of the opium traded into Canton by British interests came from India, while the Americans brought their opium from Turkey, but through the Australian Agricultural Company, Davidson tried to develop a new source, by encouraging opium growing in Australia.

The company's prospectus lists, amongst its objectives, the production "of Wine, Olive-Oil, Hemp, Flax, Silk, Opium, &c. as articles of export to Great Britain."²² In 1828, a local manager reported that he thought that "if the labour of the Blacks can be procured for the operative part the culture of [opium] would likely prove profitable to the Company."²³ In 1833, the Australian manager of the company sent the London Board a sample of the first opium grown on company lands in the Hunter River area. The board had it evaluated by a pharmacist, who reported that it was "of fair, merchantable quality, about equal to Egyptian Opium.—It contains two thirds of the quantity of Morphia usually found in the best Turkey Opium. In this market, when Turkey Opium is worth 15s./ p lb., we have no doubt that such Opium as your Sample would sell for 14s/ p lb."²⁴ Discouraged by such faint praise, the Australian Agricultural Company abandoned opium growing.

After 1834, the East India Company's monopoly on trade with China finally ended, and China increasingly dealt with other British and Australian traders. During the conflict between Britain and China that led to the First Opium War in 1839, Australian traders found themselves at odds with other shippers trading under the British flag. They were not involved in opium smuggling, their goods were legitimate items of trade, and they had little interest in joining the British merchants in their blockade of the Pearl River. In 1839, the Sydney trader Robert Towns attempted to break the blockade, sailing his ship, *Royal Saxon*, past the Bogue Forts.²⁵ He was unsuccessful, and fiercely criticized by the British for doing so—but his action reflects an early instance of the divergence of Australian and British foreign interests.

When the war ended, Australian traders moved the focus of their activity to the new British colony in Hong Kong. They were also interested in the other treaty ports, in particular Shanghai and Amoy, which became a major exit port for Chinese emigrants during the Australian gold rush of the 1850s. The growth of the European population in these ports benefited Australian trade, because Australian merchants could supply European goods for a growing market of wealthy expatriates. Against this, however, must be placed the decline in the demand for Chinese tea, which had generated Australia's trade with China in the first place.

The First Opium War marked the decline of China's political and trading power, and from the 1840s onwards, Australia's relationship with China began to change. The tea trade with China became less important with the development of tea plantations in Assam and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), which were within British control and therefore favored by Australian traders. Tea remained the drink of choice throughout Australia, but the end of convict transportation to New South Wales in 1840 and to Tasmania in 1852, meant that the huge market for very low quality teas declined. There also seems to have been a change in taste, from the green teas of China to black Indian teas, perhaps associated with the growth of the dairying industry.



The crack British clipper *Ariel*, above, was among the unprecedented sixteen clippers assembled at Foochow in 1866 to race to London with the first of the season's tea. A bonus of ten shillings per pound of tea was offered to the winning crew. Only *Taiping* proved *Ariel's* equal: they raced for ninety-nine days across 15,000 miles of ocean, each carrying more than a million pounds of tea. The two arrived off the mouth of the Thames eight minutes apart, with *Taiping* a cable's-length behind *Ariel*. *Taiping*, however, picked up the faster tug and landed the first bale of tea. In celebration of one of history's greatest races, both crews agreed to split the bonus.

From the London Illustrated Daily News

Meanwhile from the 1840s, Chinese began to emigrate through the new Treaty Ports, mostly as indentured labor. In the late 1840s, Chinese laborers were imported into New South Wales by traders like Robert Towns, now transporting another sort of cargo. Then in 1851, gold was discovered in New South Wales and Victoria, and a new pattern of migration developed, parallel to that which brought Chinese to American shores in the California Gold Rush.

With a growing Chinese population in Australia from the late 1850s, Australian trade with China shifted in character. Instead of a single trade in which various exotic items were sold in exchange for tea, two separate and distinct trades emerged. On the one side, consumers in European enclaves in the various treaty ports of China turned to Australia as the nearest supplier of European-style products: foodstuffs such as butter and cheese, racehorses for the Shanghai and Hong Kong Jockey Clubs, and above all, coal for European steamships. On the other side, Chinese imports into Australia increasingly served the needs of Australia's Chinese population: high quality green teas, herbal medicines and spices, manufactured foods such as soy sauce, and opium. Apart from opium, these were relatively minor imports.²⁶ Thus, by the last third of the nineteenth century, the pattern of Australian trade with China had changed completely, and the balance of trade had moved from deficit to surplus.

In the larger picture of Chinese trade with the outside world, the Australian colonies were minor players. Yet within the history of Australia, the China trade is significant: it was one of the reasons for the original decision to found a colony in New South Wales; it generated profits for the first generation of colonial entrepreneurs; and most important of all, it acted as an incentive for Australians to explore the Pacific in search of products to tempt Chinese consumers. The impact of such Australian predation on the environment and people of the Pacific islands in consequence of this triangular trade was, of course, greater still.²⁷

Since the nineteenth century, Australia's trade and foreign policy has always involved a tension between links with other parts of the Anglo-American world and with the Asia-Pacific region—essentially a balancing act between Australia's history and geography. Yet it should not be forgotten that, even in the first years of European settlement, Australia had close links with Asia and the Pacific.

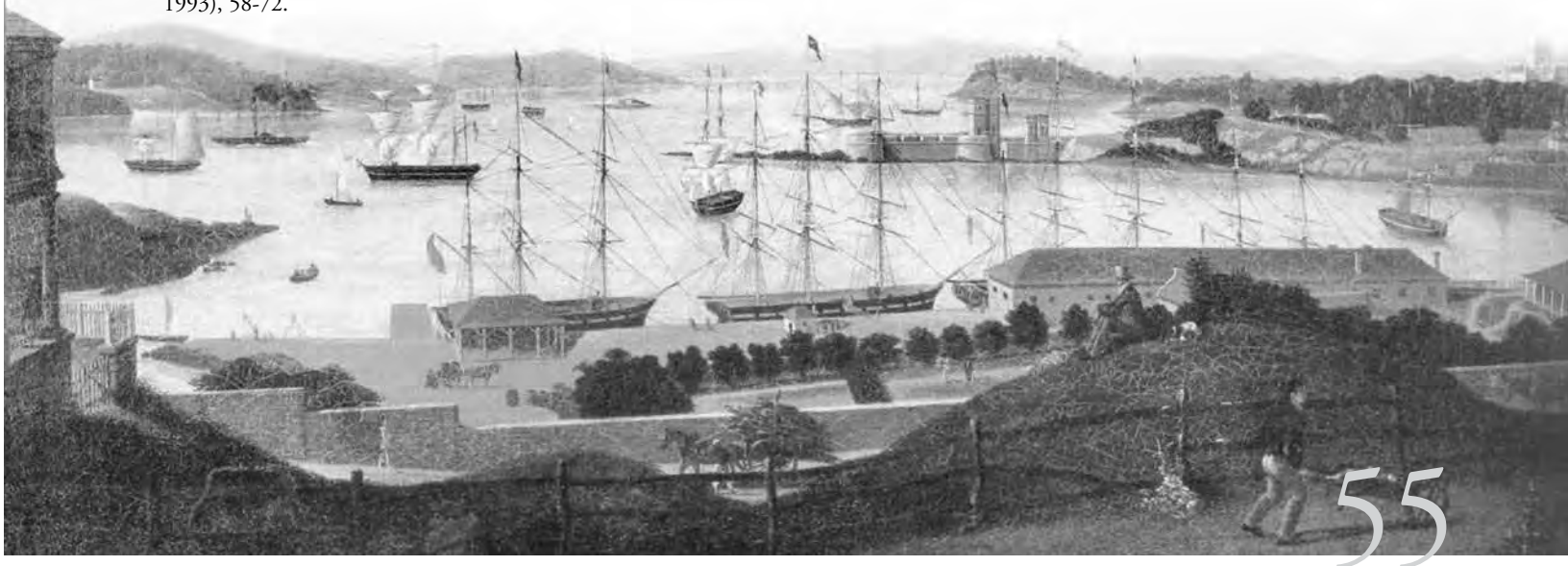
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- 13 M. H. Ellis, *John Macarthur* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, Famous Lives Edition, 1978), 475.
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Merchant ships wait in
Sydney Cove, 1842.

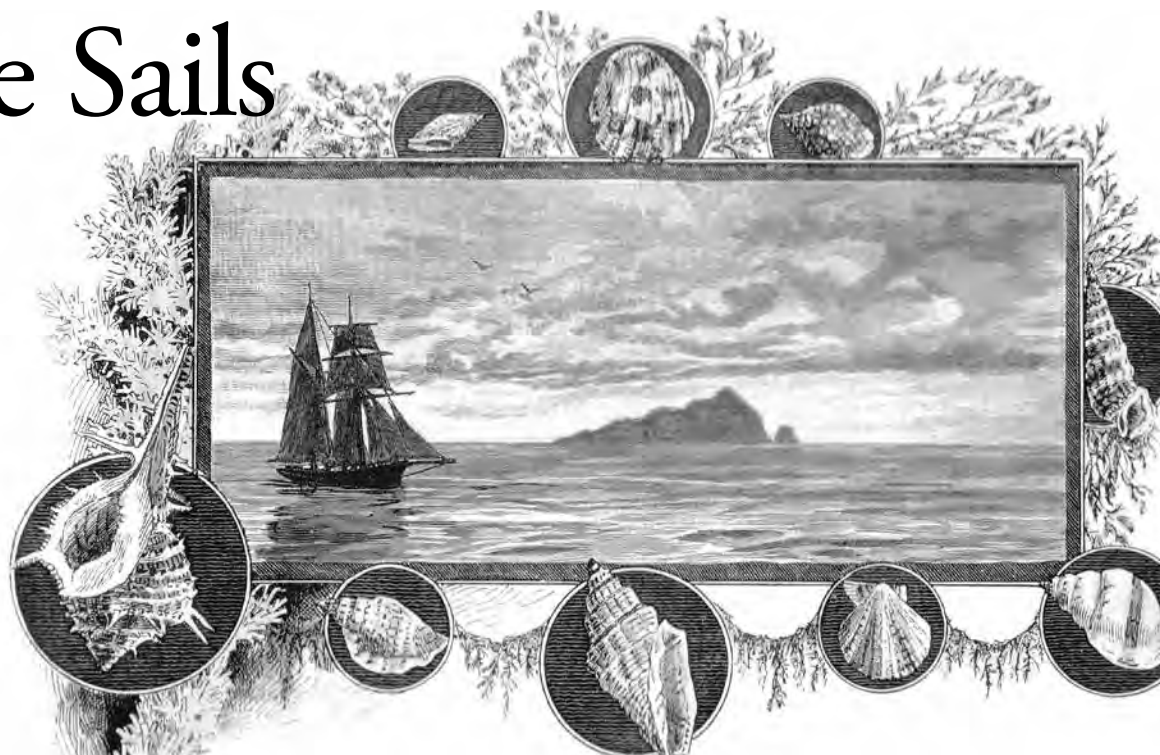
*Courtesy Tasmanian Museum and
Art Gallery, Hobart*



With *Julia Percy* to Torres Strait:

The Pacific *Bêche-de-Mer* Trade Sails West

Steve Mullins



A trading vessel off the Queensland coast.

From the 1887 book Cassell's Picturesque Australasia

On July 16, 1860 the brig *Julia Percy* set sail from Dillion's Bay, Eromanga, New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), on a 1,400-mile voyage. On board was the naturalist John MacGillivray, who described the scene:

The reader must image, in the first place, an ancient bluff-bowed brig of 100 tons, which had long borne away the palm as the dullest sailer in these seas. Besides a couple of whaleboats at the davits, and a dingy lashed to two spars projecting astern, there was a large lifeboat overhead diagonally between the masts, and two others on deck; and what with the galley, harness cask, coops crammed with turkeys, peafowl, and other poultry, chests without regard to number or dimensions, and about sixty pigs, besides sundry dogs, there was hardly room to move about on deck among such of the seventy-six human beings on board as were not stowed away on the slave deck laid on the cargo for their accommodation.¹

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What made this typical southwest Pacific trading vessel unusual was the cargo that her captain was seeking, and where he was sailing to get it. For centuries China has had a huge appetite for dried sea cucumber, a signature ingredient in its cuisine, usually served stir-fried or in soups. In the Indian Ocean it is known as *trepang*, in the Pacific, *bêche-de-mer*. The Chinese call it *Hai Shen* (sea ginseng), a name that suggests its reputed medicinal qualities. These elongated creatures are large, sedentary and easy to collect in shallow, warm water, like that in the azure waters of the Torres Strait, which separates Australia and Papua New Guinea. The *bêche-de-mer* industry would have a profound impact on the scattered villages of the Torres Strait's Melanesian people. Indeed, colonialism arrived there aboard *bêche-de-mer* vessels, and its

harbinger was the brig *Julia Percy*.

James Paddon, an Englishman who had commenced his trading career on the China coast in the 1830s, owned the brig. In 1844, with the backing of a Cantonese merchant, Paddon established a sandalwood station at Aneityum in the New Hebrides, shipping the scented wood direct to China. He became one of the most successful traders in the southwest Pacific, with stations at Aneityum, Tanna, Eromanga, the Isle of Pines, and Port de France (now Noumea), but by the late 1850s most of the accessible stands of sandalwood had been cut, and Paddon was having to rely increasingly on *bêche-de-mer* to make up his cargos.² In 1858 he hit on a plan to relocate his entire operation to Torres Strait, where he knew from John MacGillivray that *bêche-de-mer* was abundant.

MacGillivray was the scientific authority on Torres Strait, having been there for three months while naturalist on HMS *Rattlesnake*'s 1846-1850 hydrographical survey of the Australian coast. He also had been assistant naturalist on HMS *Fly*'s 1842-1846 survey, which had examined the Strait earlier.³ In 1852, in the next step on what was shaping as a stellar scientific career, he joined HMS *Herald* on its southwest Pacific survey. However, problems with drink and debt saw him dismissed from the hydrographical service on 26 April 1855, when HMS *Herald* was in Sydney. MacGillivray spent a few hard years in the

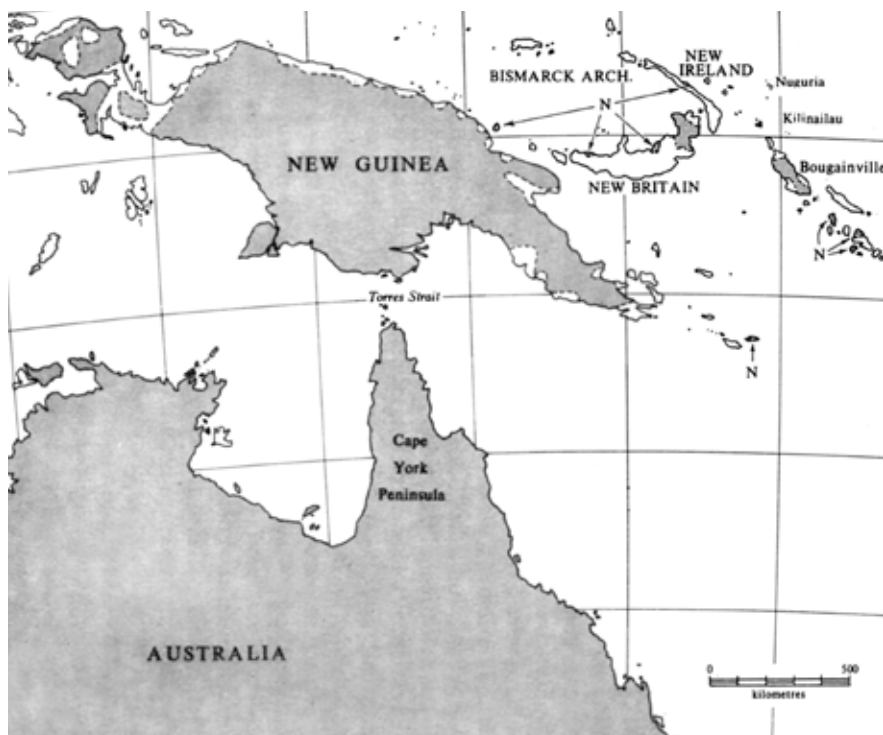


A. OUTER BARRIER REEF, WITH SUBMERGED BÊCHE-DE-MER.



John MacGillivray.

Top, from the 1893 book *The Great Barrier Reef of Australia: Its Products and Potentialities*; bottom, from *Good Words*, July 1868.



Australian colonies eking out a living as a professional collector, before returning to the Pacific to join Paddon at Port de France in February 1858.⁴ Given MacGillivray's knowledge of Torres Strait, which was 1000 miles from the nearest Australian settlement, Rockhampton, and his undoubted skill as a naturalist, he could play a valuable part in Paddon's plan. Indeed, the plan may have been his.

Since at least the seventeenth century, Chinese junks had traded for sea cucumber, primarily at Manila in the Philippines and Macassar (now Unjung Pandang) in south Sulawesi. From Macassar, fishermen set out each year on the northerly monsoon to scour the Indonesian archipelago for sea cucumber and other marine products, returning four or five months later on the south-easterly trade winds. They reached the north Australian coast some seventy years before James Cook, and by the end of the eighteenth century had established seasonal trepang camps as far to the east as the Gulf of Carpentaria. They did not venture into Torres Strait, however. Perhaps the Gulf was the limit of one season's sailing, or they may have been too cautious to enter the Strait, with its labyrinthine reef systems and strong tides. Whatever the case, the first strangers to raise their beach camps in Torres Strait were not Malay trepangers from the Arafura Sea, but bêche-de-mer fishermen who crossed the Coral Sea on the *Julia Percy*.

Matthew Flinders of HMS *Investigator* first alerted Sydney traders to the commercial potential of bêche-de-mer when he reported encountering six Macassarese *praus* on the north Australian coast in 1803. James Aicken was probably the first from Sydney to enter the trade: in 1804 he collected and cured several barrels on Wreck Reef in the Coral Sea.⁵ It is uncertain where Aicken acquired the expertise to process the sea cucumber, but later Sydney traders began by employing Malays to do the work. Proper drying was critical, both to the price of the end product, and to maintain its condition while being transported to market. Well-dried sea cucumber loses eighty to ninety percent of its weight. Sufficiently cured, and stacked in the hold of a trading vessel,



MacGillivray was dismissed from HMS *Herald*, above. At right, the *praus* of Malay trepangers off the northern Australian coast in 1839.

Above, from sheet music "Feejee Waltzes;" both images courtesy National Library of Australia





bêche-de-mer could dissolve into “a tenacious, glue-like, mass of the most repulsive aspect and abominable odour.” First class bêche-de-mer should rattle “like walnuts in their bags.”⁶ The distinguished English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace memorably described the finished product as looking like “sausages which have been rolled in mud and then thrown up the chimney.”⁷

Collecting and curing bêche-de-mer was labor intensive. It takes about 8,000 of the sea cucumber known as teatfish, for example, to make a ton of bêche-de-mer, and many of the other twenty or so nineteenth-century commercial species are much smaller. From Paddon’s beach camps, his workers sailed to the reefs each day to walk and wade after sea cucumber on the low tides. His whaleboats were fitted with two bulkheads and a partition running lengthways to prevent the load shifting to the lee side when the boat heeled over under sail. With careful management in fine weather, each boat could carry about 1,300 sea cucumbers. The catch was unloaded and boiled in shallow iron try pots set up at the camp, usually behind the beach out of the wind. If the shore party could not keep up, holding ponds were scooped out of the sand and enclosed with loose stones. The sea cucumbers expelled their viscera when they hit the pot, and were stewed in their own juices for about fifteen minutes, or until the experienced eye of the stirrer reckoned they were ready. They were then scooped out, slit open, and prepared for curing. This was done in temporary smoking sheds, or if there was little chance of rain, on open batters: long multi-tiered wooden stages about five feet high. Fires were kept going day and night beneath the batters, and the bêche-de-mer were turned every twelve hours or so. Gradually they were shifted to a higher tier, and then laid more thickly at the edge of the heat and smoke. Finally, they were spread out in the sun to thoroughly dry. Depending on the weather, the quality of the fire, and the expertise of those managing the batters, bêche-de-mer could be sorted and bagged in four days to a week after being pulled from the water.⁸

While the southwest Pacific bêche-de-mer industry was first prosecuted in vessels sailing from Sydney, Sydney merchants initially were hamstrung by imperial restrictions on colonial trade, particularly the English East India Company’s monopoly on trade with China. Thus, it was left to the enterprising traders of Salem, Massachusetts, to inaugurate the first intensive phase of the Pacific industry, collecting in Fiji mainly for sale in Manila, and making substantial profits.⁹ Between 1830 and 1841 J. H. Eagleson of Salem made five voyages to Fiji, and for a total outfitting cost of \$10,397 he collected bêche-de-mer that fetched \$80,241.¹⁰ Between 1828 and 1835 six hundred tons of cured bêche-de-mer was taken from Fijian



These three varieties of sea cucumber were exported to China. The example at bottom is a teat fish.

From the 1893 book The Great Barrier Reef of Australia



W. Saville-Kent, Photo.

London Stereoscopic Co. Rep.

NATIVES OF WARRIOR ISLAND, TORRES STRAIT, PREPARING BÊCHE-DE-MER FOR THE CHINESE MARKET.

waters, which depleted stocks and eroded profitability. The trade revived in the 1840s, but went into decline again in the 1850s. Nevertheless, good profits could still be made. In 1862 the Sydney press reported that a cargo collected and cured in Fiji at a cost of \$1,200 had sold for \$12,000, and another costing \$3,300 for \$27,000.¹¹ In 1860 bêche-de-mer was fetching between £40 and £120 per ton, depending on quality and type, and even if newspaper reports like those above were exaggerated, they were probably enough to persuade desperate sandalwood traders that there was a future in bêche-de-mer, and that the China trade was still worth pursuing.

Julia Percy sailed under the command of James Paddon's most experienced captain, William Banner. The bulk of the crew was made up of fifty Pacific Islanders from New Caledonia, the Loyalty Islands, New Hebrides and the Solomons, some of whom had been newly engaged for the voyage. This was not unusual. By 1860 most southwest Pacific sandalwood and bêche-de-mer crews were composed of Pacific Islanders, with a mixture of old and "green" hands.¹² That there were seventeen Europeans aboard was, however, more telling. Ship's officers invariably were European, and a few white leading hands might be required to run a station. But a complement of seventeen surely indicates a significant restructuring of Paddon's activities to focus on the unexploited fishery of Torres Strait. There were ten Islander women

aboard as well, "belonging to" seven white men, a New Caledonian and two Chinese, and two "half-caste" children. This touch of domesticity also indicates a permanent relocation, but women, even "boat wives," were expected to work for the enterprise, whether paid or not. They remained a feature of the industry in Torres Strait until the end of the century, despite the introduction of colonial legislation in 1884 to prohibit their employment.¹³ Seven Chinese was a few more than usual, but given Paddon's links with the South China coast, and the large number of Chinese in the New South Wales and Victorian gold fields at the time, the number is perhaps not surprising. They certainly would have given *Julia Percy* an edge when it came to curing expertise and product knowledge.

Apart from Captain Banner, who had a financial stake in *Julia Percy*, the Europeans were paid by the lay, that is, a share of the profit divided up at season's end, a practice introduced to the southwest Pacific by whalers.¹⁴ Banner's white foremast hands earned one-sixtieth of the proceeds apiece, which may have applied to the Chinese and Pacific Islander leading hands as well.¹⁵ The rest of the crew were paid between ten shillings and one pound per month, depending on experience, and payment usually came in the form of trade goods. Until the Imperial Kidnapping Act of 1872 was passed in Britain, no law governed labor agreements made with islanders in the southwest Pacific, and green hands especially were vulnerable to extreme exploitation.¹⁶

Sydney-based bêche-de-mer fishermen were notorious for their drunkenness, depravity and brutality,

and for using deception and force to recruit Pacific Islander crews. But unrelenting violence was a poor method of extracting work, especially when there were other effective methods of management. One common practice was to use the issuing of rations as a system of punishment and reward. The normal ration for Pacific Islanders consisted of *sharps* (coarsely ground wheat flour), cornmeal, molasses, various condiments, sometimes preserved meat, native vegetables, and whatever fish, turtle and dugong that could be caught. If shipping agreements were made, it was common for sailing masters, rather than provide details about the scale of rations, to enter "Sufficient Without Waste as in the South Seas Trade" in the rations column, a practice that obviously left sailors open to abuse. Green hands sometimes were only given two corn porridge meals a day, the second being withheld if they failed to bring sufficient bêche-de-mer from the reef.¹⁷ But kidnapping and arbitrary brutality were not Banner's style. On his vessels, violence did not go beyond what both master and men deemed acceptable, and he encouraged camaraderie and friendly rivalry among his crews. He chose to legally marry the Loyalty Island woman who was his "boat wife," and sent their son to school in Sydney.¹⁸ The two "half-caste" children on *Julia Percy's* voyage to Torres Strait probably were theirs.

Sailing with favorable winds, the brig reached the edge of the Great Barrier Reef in twelve days, negotiated a passage through, and anchored at Lizard Island, fifteen miles off the far North Queensland coast.¹⁹ Although the island is small and rather barren, it provided a safe anchorage, permanent water, adequate firewood, and the surrounding seas abounded in high quality bêche-de-mer. John MacGillivray knew it well, having spent a month there during the cruise of HMS *Rattlesnake*, and William Banner decided to establish the main station on the western side. In a few days, grass huts had been erected, and work had commenced on a large storehouse and manager's residence. Banner then sailed north to search for more good patches of bêche-de-mer, and perhaps sandalwood, leaving thirty-two men to commence fishing and ready the station for owner James Paddon's arrival in his 140-ton schooner *Black Dog*.²⁰

Banner sailed north as far as Night Island, and although there was sandalwood on the coast it was of

a small, stunted variety not worth cutting. Bêche-de-mer was everywhere, but nowhere was it as prolific as in the vicinity of Lizard Island, so he decided to return, arriving on September 17 after a cruise of more than five weeks. During the trip, there had been some tense but bloodless encounters with Aborigines on the coast, and at Night Island a curing shed had burned down, destroying a ton of bêche-de-mer that was bagged and ready to ship. Though the Lizard Island station was taking shape, progress on its garden beds and paths came at the cost of bagging bêche-de-mer.

Paddon had not arrived, so Banner decided to reconnoitre the coast south, setting off a few days later. On October 16 he reached the Endeavour River, where Cook had repaired the damaged HMS *Endeavour* ninety years before, and where, a decade later, Cooktown would spring up as port to the Palmer River gold rush and the Great Barrier Reef bêche-de-mer industry. Banner, however, did not find bêche-de-mer especially prolific on the adjacent reefs, and after more stressful encounters with Aborigines, he decided to return to Lizard Island. While he had been away Paddon's 160 ton brig *Spec* had called to land provisions and take off bagged bêche-de-mer. It also brought the news that Paddon was delaying his departure until the following May. This did not help morale, which was already low; while *Julia Percy* had been away a European, two Chinese, and a Loyalty Islander had died of fever.



A Torres Strait village in 1845.

Above, courtesy National Library of Australia; left, from The Great Barrier Reef of Australia, 1893.

Lizard Island.



Discontent was seething among the crew, who, with the loss of the Night Island load and the slow fishing at Lizard Island, now faced the prospect of a woefully inadequate lay. Anxious to bolster profits, Banner decided to push north again, this time to Torres Strait itself, to trade for tortoise shell and curiosities with the Melanesian Islanders.

Julia Percy weighed anchor on November 7, but unsettled weather and the old brig's poor sailing qualities extended the voyage over more than three months. When Banner arrived back at Lizard Island on February 10, 1861 the situation there was desperate. Six more had died, and as many were severely debilitated by fever. A heavy gale in January had unroofed the store, swamped the garden, and damaged two whaleboats, which had been out of commission ever since. *Bêche-de-mer* had ceased altogether. Despite these setbacks, Banner resolutely held the Europeans to their articles, and fishing was resumed. Another Paddon vessel arrived to take off produce, but James Paddon did not come in May. *Julia Percy*, which MacGillivray had deemed a "miserable old tub" to begin with, was now barely seaworthy, and in early June, Banner abandoned the station and sailed for Rockhampton.²¹ He arrived there in early December 1861, to learn that James Paddon had died at Port de France on February 17.²²

In the untangling of Paddon's complicated financial affairs, the Torres Strait "speculation" collapsed. Nevertheless, sixty tons of *bêche-de-mer* had been sent to China, and Banner was impressed by what he saw in Torres Strait proper. Although the Islanders were headhunters, with a fearsome reputation for attacking castaways, they were friendly and honest in their dealings with *Julia Percy*, and keen to barter for tobacco, tomahawks and butcher's knives. He was well pleased with the four hundred pounds of tortoise shell he had obtained, and with some valuable curiosities, including decorated human skulls. The islands were fertile, and unlike Lizard Island, capable of producing abundant vegetables. Those in the northeast were situated on the terminus of the Great Barrier Reef, and the waters teemed with marine life.

Two years later, in 1864, Paddon's ex-partner, Charles Edwards of the schooner *Blue Bell*, established the first *bêche-de-mer* station in Torres Strait, at Erub. William Banner returned aboard *Pakeha* in 1866, and established his first station at nearby Ugar. He then relocated to Tutu, about 30 miles to the southwest, where in 1869 his crew collected the first commercial quantities of pearl shell, more than fifty tons, worth some £7500. This represented a spectacular profit, made in a few months, and caused a rush of Sydney vessels to the Strait. It was the beginning of an industry that would shape colonialism in the region for a hundred years, and irrevocably change the society of Torres Strait Islanders.

The harvesting of mother-of-pearl would dominate the commercial life of Torres Strait until the advent of high quality plastics caused the trade's final demise in the 1960s. But Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef remained

sources of high quality bêche-de-mer for the Chinese market, and Thursday Island (Torres Strait) and Cooktown became the principal centers of the trade in the southwest Pacific. For the rest of the nineteenth century they exported between two hundred and 250 tons of bêche-de-mer a year.²³ After World War II, however, with severe social dislocation in Southeast Asia and the Communist Revolution in China, the market shrank and prices tumbled. The Torres Strait bêche-de-mer fishery virtually ceased to exist in the 1950s, but revived in the 1980s, stimulated by higher prices. Demand for sea cucumber in China and from the sprawling Chinese diaspora has grown so dramatically since the early 1980s that new fisheries are rapidly being developed in Southeast Asia, Australia and the western Pacific, less-valuable species are being increasingly exploited, and the most desirable commercial species are under serious threat from overfishing. In recent years approximately 80,000 tons of raw sea cucumber have been harvested annually.²⁴

The Australian government reserves the industry for indigenous fishers, and in 1995 Torres Strait Islanders harvested about 1,000 tons of wet sea cucumber. The catch has steadily decreased since then, and the most valuable variety, sandfish, has been almost fished out.²⁵ Bêche-de-mer stocks are especially vulnerable to harvesting pressure, and once a population falls below a certain density it takes decades to recover. Nevertheless, in the southwest Pacific well-managed bêche-de-mer fisheries are valuable revenue earners for resource-strapped small island nations, and in some remote indigenous maritime communities like those in Torres Strait, bêche-de-mer has significant potential today in the struggle for economic self-sufficiency. It will require cautious resource management to ensure that the modern Torres Strait bêche-de-mer fishery does not go the way of the Fiji industry in the nineteenth century, or worse still, the destructive sandalwood trade. Maritime trade with China remains the powerful economic engine it was on the day in 1784 when the *Empress of China* set sail from America, or when the *Julia Percy* set sail for the Torres Strait. The China Trade retains the power to build up, or consume, entire communities and their resources. Perhaps that is the most enduring lesson that can be drawn from the voyage of *Julia Percy*.

Torres Strait people hail Western vessels in 1845.

Courtesy National Library of Australia





Sea cucumbers dry along the street at Dobo, Aru Islands, Maluku, Indonesia, in 1996.

Courtesy of the author

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- 14 Shineberg, *They Came for Sandalwood*, 85-86. In the bêche-de-mer trade the lay was calculated on the profit of the voyage, and not, as in whaling, as a percentage of the value of the catch. Calculating the profit was left to owners and masters, and there was considerable scope for deception.
- 15 MacGillivray, "Wanderings in Tropical Australia, No. 5," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 January 1862.
- 16 Pacific Islanders Protection Acts, 1872, 1875. 35 & 36 Vic., c.19.
- 17 Port Master, Brisbane to Queensland Treasurer, 19 March 1873, COL/A262, letter 2810/1878, Queensland State Archives.
- 18 Evidence of Henry Burns to Royal Commission into Certain Alleged Cases of Kidnapping of Natives of the Loyalty Islands (NSW 1869) *RNAS*, Kidnapping 1869-1875, Reel G698/20, p.21. The Royal Commission was convened in response to French allegations that British traders sailing from Sydney had kidnapped men from French territory to work in bêche-de-mer and sandalwood vessels. The Commission concluded that the allegations were unfounded.
- 19 Lizard Island lies about 350 miles to the south of Torres Strait proper, but in the 1860s mariners regarded themselves in the approaches to the Strait once inside the Great Barrier Reef. Steve Mullins, "The Torres Strait Bêche-de-mer Fishery: A Matter of Timing," *The Great Circle* 14, no. 1 (1992): 24-25.
- 20 MacGillivray, "Wanderings in Tropical Australia No. 6," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 February 1862.
- 21 MacGillivray, "Wanderings" No. 6.
- 22 *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 14 December 1861.
- 23 R. Sumner, "A Noisome Business: the Trepang Trade and Queensland," *Journal of Australian Studies* 9 (1981): 69.
- 24 Andrew Morgan and Jell Archer, "Overview: Aspects of Sea Cucumber Industry Research and Development in the South Pacific," Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Bêche-de-mer Information Bulletin 12, 1999.
- 25 Dallas D'Silva, "The Torres Strait Beche-de-mer (Sea Cucumber) Fishery," SPC Bêche-de-mer Information Bulletin 15, 2001.

Ships wait at Whampoa, the anchorage for the port of Canton.

In this watercolor painted by Tinquá about 1845, the little Western cutter at center sails upriver for Canton, around the bend at left. Seamen were forced to spend six months at Whampoa waiting aboard ships like these French, American, and British vessels while their supercargoes and captains conducted business in the relative comfort of Canton.

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America's multi-billion-dollar trade with China began here, in Canton.

From left, the Danish, Spanish, American, Swedish, British and Dutch factories, or *hongs*, line the Pearl River in this view painted around 1815 by Spoilum. Drawn up against the bank beneath the Stars and Stripes is a pair of shop boats, whose enterprising Chinese vendors dispense goods. Next to them a small British yacht threads its way among the sampans, past the ornate mandarin's junk at right.

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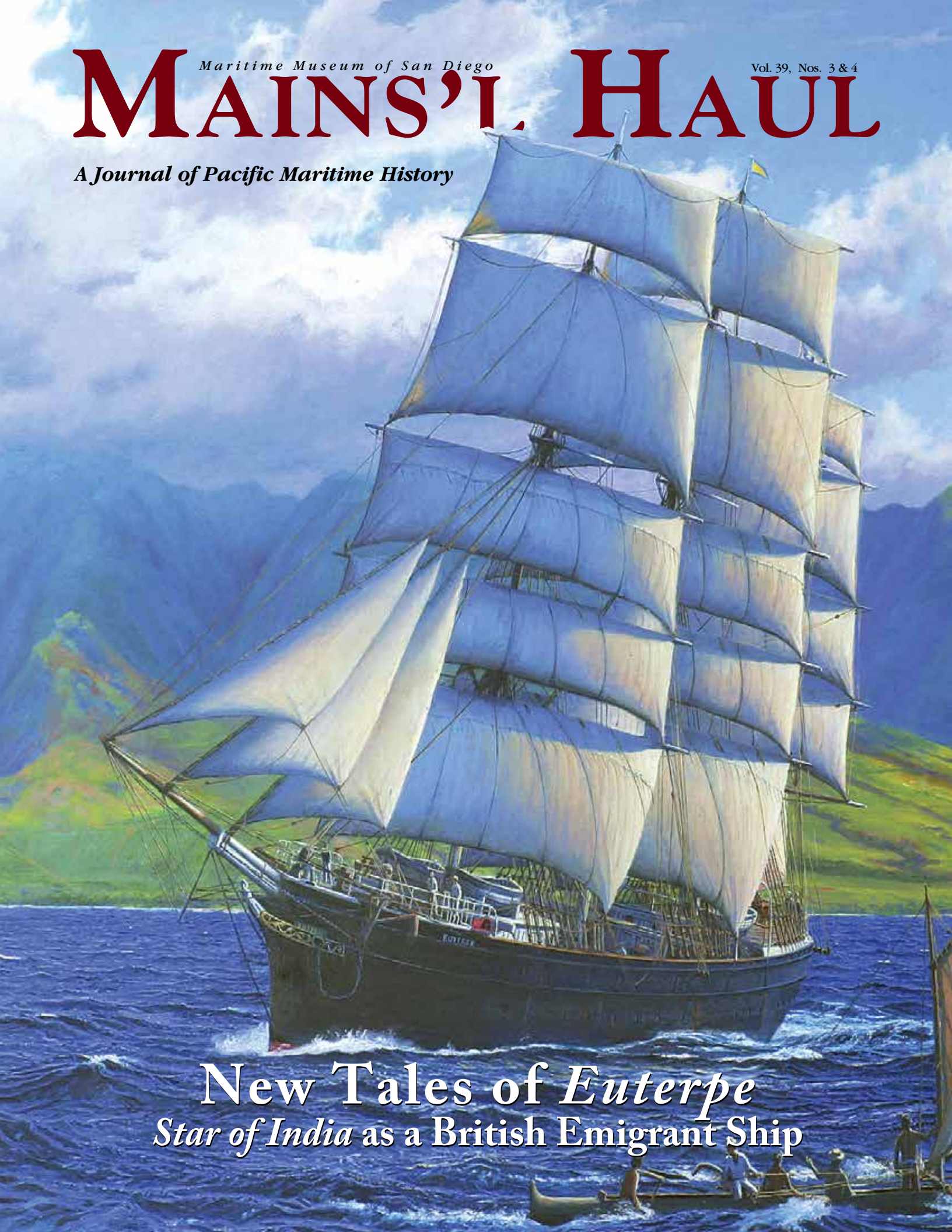
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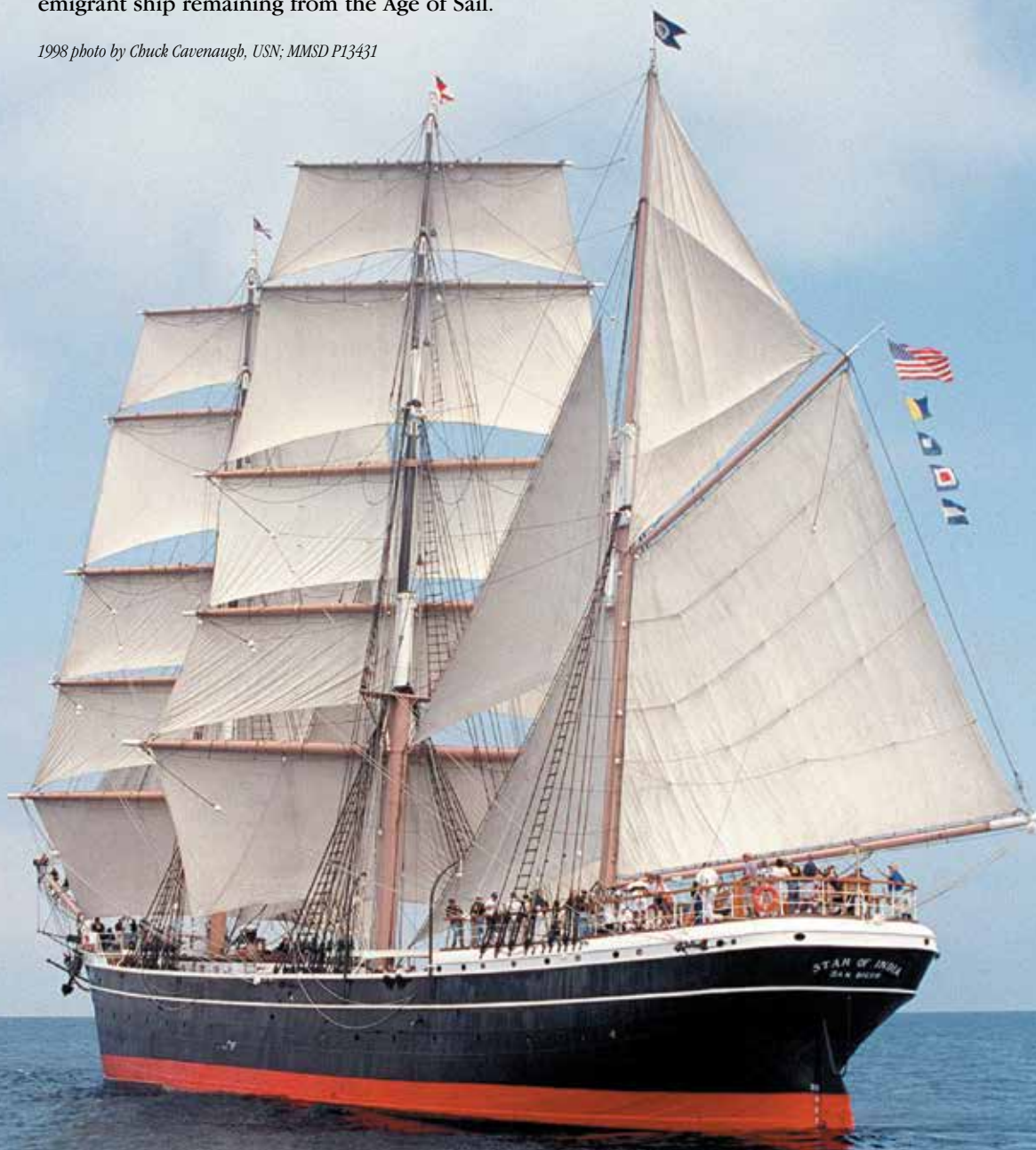
A Journal of Pacific Maritime History



New Tales of *Euterpe*
Star of India as a British Emigrant Ship

Star of India is famed today as the world's oldest ship that regularly goes to sea. Her greatest historical significance, however, lies in the decades she spent carrying emigrants: she is the oldest and most intact emigrant ship remaining from the Age of Sail.

1998 photo by Chuck Cavanaugh, USN; MMSD P13431



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DID YOU KNOW?

- that the names of three ironworks that forged *Star of India's* iron are hidden on beams and plates throughout the ship? (pages 4-11)
- that emigrants amused themselves with footraces on deck, races "up and over" the rigging, tug-o-war contests with sailors, raffles, dances, concerts, and a handwritten newspaper? (page 50)
- that only ship's officers and first-class passengers were permitted on the poop deck? (page 34)
- that "rat pie" was once served on board? (page 45)

MAINS'L HAUL

is published quarterly,
wind and weather permitting,
aboard the ferryboat *Berkeley*.

"*Mains'l Haul*—An order in tacking
ship bidding 'Swing the main yards.'
To loot, steal, or 'acquire'."

—John Masefield

New Tales of *Euterpe*: *Star of India* as a British Emigrant Ship

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William Hope Hodgson,
Sailor
Jane Frank



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Star on Ice

Subscriptions to *Mains'l Haul* are USD \$40. Subscribers also receive a quarterly newsletter and benefits of membership in the Maritime Museum of San Diego. To subscribe, comment, or submit articles to this peer-reviewed quarterly, visit the *Mains'l Haul* pages at www.sdmaritime.org, email editor@sdmaritime.org, or write to *Mains'l Haul*, Maritime Museum of San Diego, 1492 N. Harbor Dr., San Diego, CA 92101.

Our mission is to engage members and the public in the study of maritime history, while promoting scholarly research. We welcome submissions on all aspects of the Pacific's past, and encourage a wide variety of perspectives on this rich heritage. Articles are indexed for researchers worldwide in *America: History & Life* and *Historical Abstracts*. ISSN# 1540-3386

Because she has been on San Diego's waterfront for so long, and is so much a visual centerpiece of our identity, it is difficult not to take *Star of India* for granted. Seventy-six years has given us ample time to take her for granted in a variety of ways: as a piece of waterfront sculpture, a monument, a curiosity, an aging derelict, a photogenic backdrop, a community preservation project, a home to exhibits, a classroom, a ceremonial stage, an oceangoing ship, an outdoor theater, and so on. Indeed, through all her ups and downs, a casual acceptance has ever been her hallmark. A typical nineteenth-century ship, *Star of India* was not a revolutionary waypoint of technology, was never connected with famous people, never held any records for swift passages, and was never present at any of history's great or decisive moments. She was built with care by ordinary people for other ordinary people to use and ended up

moored on an ordinary working waterfront. For most of her life she slipped by unnoticed, and on more than a few occasions nearly slipped quietly away forever. She

is important, or so we have told ourselves, mainly for having outlived her contemporaries and for becoming ours to love so comfortably.

In this issue we ask you to look at her from a different perspective. Literally. If you pick your time, for instance, you might catch the view of her while coming down Ash Street on one of those brilliant San Diego afternoons

as the sun is nearing the horizon and the light is streaming through twelve thousand square feet of her canvas. At such a moment it might well seem as though you had torn right through the living fabric of our world and opened a view beyond to something majestic, inspirational, and mysterious. It's a stunning

FROM THE HELM

by Ray Ashley

Director

Maritime Museum of San Diego

Already an American bark but not yet renamed *Star of India*, *Euterpe* rides at anchor in Commencement Bay, Washington, in late September 1899. Upon her arrival from Hawaii on September 9, the customs inspector registered her as a bark: the square sails on her mizzen mast (see cover) had been replaced by the rig shown here. Almost seven years later, after spending several years carrying lumber, salmon fishermen, and cannery workers, she would be renamed *Star of India* and sail into the final phase of her working life.

P656; previously unpublished



view, a breathtaking view, and not just because of her beauty.

For forty thousand years humanity developed on disparate parallel tracks in regions separated by mostly impassible oceanic barriers. Then, about five centuries ago, cultures across the earth came suddenly, shockingly, and often catastrophically into contact. What followed

was the age of oceanic migrations: the most expansive exchange of human populations, material culture, economic and belief systems, plant and animal species, and disease ever to occur. Much of this story is inspiring, for it is certainly characterized by a heroic quest for knowledge and the search for a better life. But the story also frames a vast tragedy that includes the slave trade, the dispossession of native peoples from their lands, and the depopulation of vast areas through disease. Heroic or tragic, what we can say is that the oceanic migrations were collectively the most radical thing human beings have ever experienced, establishing the necessary preconditions for the scientific revolution,

the industrial revolution, the enlightenment, and the rise of modern nation states. Of these large-scale global revolutions, all materialized during the age of sail, when the oceanic sailing ship emerged as the first world-encompassing, large-scale technological system. Against the backdrop of human experience the seaborne migrations, carried on the wings of the sailing ship, unfolded in the blink of an eye as one discrete event: the most important such event ever to befall humanity.

This is why the view of the ship *should* take your breath away. Of all the tens of thousands of sailing ships which conducted the mass oceanic migrations, to my knowledge there remains only one that is pure of form, original in construction, and still able to put to sea. She is at this moment lying quietly at the foot of Ash Street, a solitary and irreplaceable piece of the world's heritage. Our time and that of our children and grandchildren will be spent bathed in the gradually waning sunlight of the great oceanic migrations. To catch that distant light and hold it within living memory we have available to us only one true lens. The very last one. We'd best never take it for granted.



Evidence In English Iron Stamp Marks on *Euterpe*

Olaf T. Engvig

While the gross tonnage marked inside *Star of India*'s greahatch is a familiar sight, few have noticed the half-observed "CONSETT" mark directly above it.

Photo by John Wright



Editor's note:

While much has been written on the history of the ship preserved today as the *Star of India*, until now almost nothing has been known of the basic material that composes the ship herself. Where were her iron plates and frame members wrought, and by whom? Researcher Olaf Engvig recently conducted his own survey of the former *Euterpe*, and made several interesting discoveries.

The main objective of my investigation was to search for the manufacturers' stamps on *Euterpe*'s iron components, which would enable me to identify both the foundry that poured them, and the quality of the iron. Identification of these markings helps determine where and how these products were made, shipped, and used. Furthermore, markings serve to identify a ship. They give proof of how much of the surviving ship is original, indicate the quality of materials used in her construction, and give us knowledge about service and maintenance over a lifetime in an environment hostile to iron. Most sailing ships last fewer than thirty years. Did the quality of *Euterpe*'s ironwork contribute to her survival for one hundred forty years? ¹

Iron shipbuilding became common in the mid-nineteenth century, but was abandoned by the century's end as new types of rolled steel captured the world market. Ships have been built of steel ever since. Of the thousands of iron ships built between 1840 and 1890, very few seaworthy original intact iron hulls are left. *Euterpe* belongs to the classic period of iron shipbuilding and has survived very well. Except for a steel girdle around her waterline added in 1959, my investigations demonstrate that her hull has remained practically untouched since she was constructed in 1863. Other existing iron ships from the same period have been damaged, repaired, and later restored with modern steel, particularly over the last decades, to keep them afloat and to meet today's safety standards, leaving only a handful of ships with most of their original iron structural fabric intact. *Euterpe/Star of India* may well be the most "original" iron merchant ship in existence.

Olaf Engvig grew up in Rissa, Norway. In addition to his graduate degree in maritime history from the University of Oslo, he holds a deck officer's license and is an experienced sailer of square riggers. Mr. Engvig has written books and articles on maritime topics, and has received awards including the Saint Olaf's Medal from King Olav V and the Gold Medal of Merit from Harald V for his work in saving and restoring the ship *Hansteen*. He and his family live in Burbank, California.

My survey of the inside of the ship focused on an inspection of all her frames looking for stamps, marks or impressions, the same survey of all her beams in her two original decks, and her inside plating, particularly the two bulkheads that can be inspected on both sides.²

Stamps on Frames

I started my work in the hold, as frames there tend to have fewer coats of paint on them. On frame twenty-five, between the forward bulkhead and the foremast, I registered fragments of letters just underneath the deck, some not readable, others obscured by rivets. The letters are convex, that is, raised slightly above the surrounding iron. I found these letters repeated lower on the same frame, all the way down to the cemented bottom of the ship. The same pattern appears on several frames aft of this first one. On the “between-frames,” or ribs (common in the bow section of most ships, but which continue all the way aft on this vessel), are the same markings as the frames. On the frames accessible to my inspection, markings are visible on the inside of the angle iron (the frame) on its step, or angle, ninety degrees from the ship’s hull. To strengthen the frames, another contra-angle was riveted onto them. The markings all appear approximately in the center of the angle. All angles or ribs are marked with the same letters, each about twenty millimeters (mm) in height and protruding approximately one mm. The interval on each frame between these repeated sets of letters is about one meter. I found well-preserved marks in the forward part of the ship on both sides, and, though amidships most frames are obscured by wooden bulkheads, cabins, and exhibits, the same markings appear on frame 64 all the way aft.

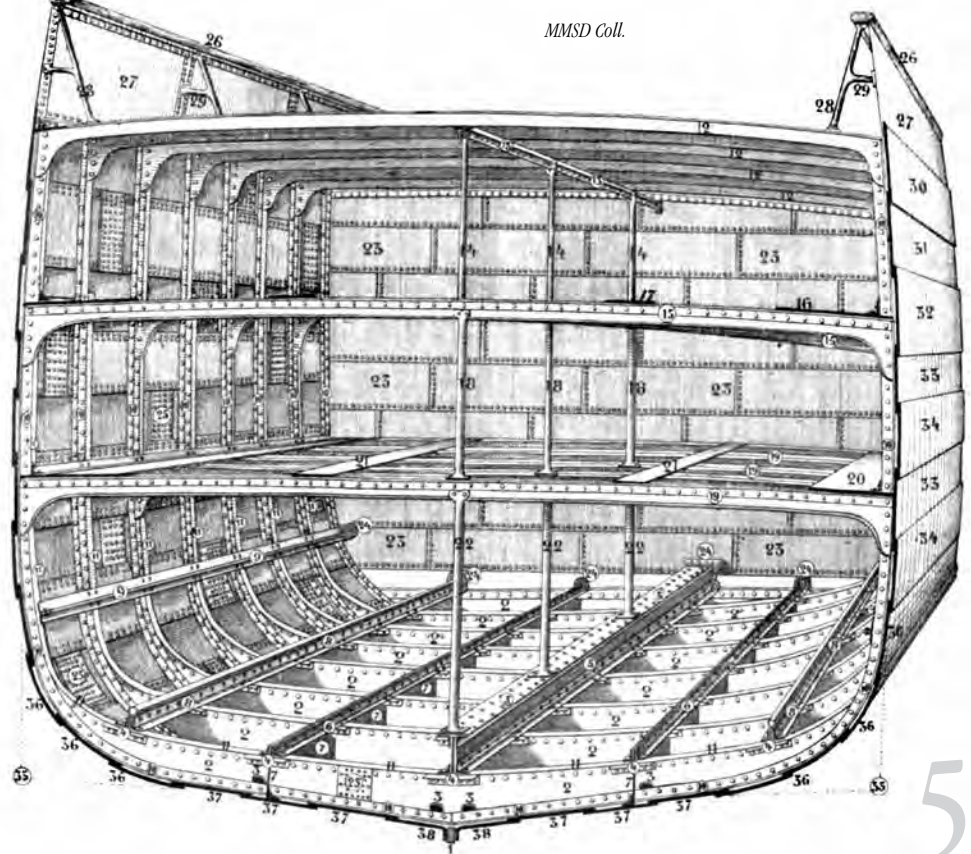
Some of the stamps in the hold and on the ‘tweendeck are in excellent condition and not too obscured by rivets or work marks from the ship’s construction, or later disturbance due to use, repairs or maintenance. I recorded the letters L, W, S, A, and L, and at one point, WAL. By comparing partial stamps I was able to combine the markings into a sequence that made sense: L W & WALKER. (The S I had recorded was actually an ampersand.) All frames seemed to bear the same name. Clearly, these stamps were made by the producer of the ship’s original iron.

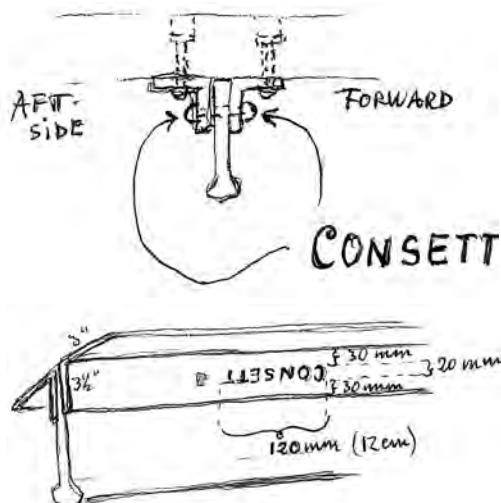
Stamps on the ‘Tweendeck Beams

I went on to investigate the beams, each a sturdy flat iron with a bulb, and once again I started by surveying the hold below the ‘tweendeck. Along the first beam I examined was a clear stamp with the name CONSETT. The stamp marks are not actually on the beams, but on the vertical sides of the long angle irons rivet-

Euterpe’s structure closely resembles this cutaway in Captain Otto Pasch’s 1901 *From Keel to Truck*. Unlike the drawing, *Euterpe*’s hull also features “between frames” for greater strength.

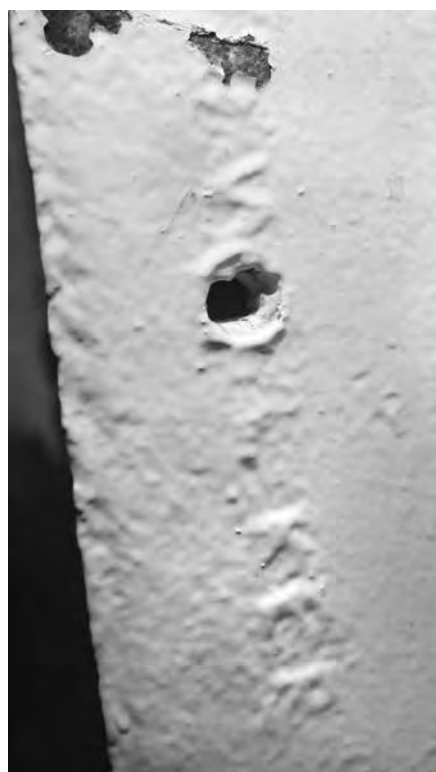
MMSD Coll.





This “WALKER” stamp is on star-board-side frame 30 1/2.

Drawings of ‘tweendeck beams courtesy of the author; photo by John Wright; previously unpublished



ed onto either side of the beam, which in cross-section form the “T” atop which the deck rests and to which the deck is fastened. In 1863, because production processes for hammered wrought iron made it difficult to shape a “T” profile on a bulb-iron shape, the procedure was to rivet a pair of angle irons along the beam’s entire length.

The letters forming the word **CONSETT** are 18 mm high, on angle irons whose vertical surface is about 80 mm tall, and read upside down; the entire word is 120 mm long. These stamp marks are repeated seven times across the 35-foot beam of the ship, approximately 1,530 mm apart. This stamping appears on all the angles of the deck beams I was able to inspect in the lower part of the ship. Many of the stamps are in excellent condition and wore few layers of paint. Clearly, the iron of the ship’s ‘tweendeck is entirely original, and has never been altered, replaced or repaired with later iron or steel.

Main Deck Beams

When I started investigating the beams supporting the main deck, unlike the ‘tweendeck beams I found no marks on the angle irons riveted alongside each beam, which puzzled me. Also, the shape of the beams themselves was surprising. The makers had produced every beam and its knee—the triangular iron plate at each end—in a single piece, rather than following typical practice and affixing the end of each deck beam to the frame below it by joining the two with a simple knee, as in ships of wood and most later ships of iron or steel. In other words, all these beams (which like those on the ‘tweendeck are bulb iron with two angle irons riveted alongside to form a “T” profile) seem to have been carefully produced to *individual* specifications, to fit the beam of the ship herself as she narrows towards bow and stern. Was this part of *Euterpe*’s construction done at the ironworks, or did they forge the knee-part of the beam at the yard? On the ship *Hansteen*, built in Norway three years later, this work was all done at the yard from standard iron plates, formed into triangular knee plates.

I began by surveying the beams beneath the main deck all the way aft, and found no stamps. Each beam was covered with several thick layers of paint. Irregularities, however, that initially appeared to be drip marks from successive coats of paint, seemed to be spaced remarkably regularly. Close investigation revealed these “drip marks” as the lower third of a stamped name, protruding from beneath the bottom rim of the riveted-on angle irons. Moving forward, it became clear that underneath the main deck, the beams themselves had been stamped **CONSETT**, before being obscured by the angle irons riveted on later. The main deck beams are marked in this manner all along the ship; I found stamps on almost every beam I inspected. I counted six repetitions of the stamps along some beams, repeated at intervals of about 1600 mm, with the word **CONSETT** itself about 140 mm long. Often about ten mm of the lower part of the word is visible on the beam below the edge of the angle iron, while in some places aft only about one-third of the letter height shows. In a few places I found the greater part of the name exposed, as on beam 63. Some of these **CONSETT** stamps are in excellent condition and not too much obscured by work marks, rivets or later disturbance due to use and maintenance.

Unlike beneath the ‘tweendeck where **CONSETT** appears upside down on the angle irons, the letters stamped on the main deck beams usually (though not always) appear right side up. The name itself occasionally appears with the **N** upside down or the **S** backwards—and one beam even has both the **N** and the **S** the wrong way, but the other letters correct. Perhaps some of Consett’s craftsmen were illiterate, or merely careless in this task. Clearly, however, all the main deck beams were laid down during the ship’s construction, and are all still in their original locations.

Bulkhead and Hull Plates

This part of my investigation was the least productive, with the notable exception of a discovery in the Maritime Museum of San Diego's archives. While the large collision bulkhead forward, which divides the hold from the chain locker, looked promising, I was not able to register one impression on either side. I also examined the inside hull on the 'tweendeck and hold where the ship's sides were accessible, but there were no signs of impressions or factory marks. I believed, however, that I was looking at the *back side* of the plates, and so I inspected the small portion of the outside of the hull's port side visible above the waterline. The ship's side, however, suffered from typical wrought iron pitting that would probably have done away with any marks years ago.³ The concave impressions that mark the positions where load line symbols were to be painted, however, all remain, although these had obviously been "freshened up" during the ship's career. Nowhere on the plates that I inspected did I notice any sign of riveted repairs, which typically are easily spotted. I could find no significant repairs, in fact, in any area of the ship open to my inspection.

After I finished my inspection on the ship, the Museum's Librarian, Chuck Bencik, showed me a photo of a concave impression in the outside plating, found during dry-docking and cleaning of the ship's hull in 1976. Apparently located forward on the starboard side below the waterline, where the plates are seldom exposed to the corrosive action present above, this stamp clearly reads **BRUNSWICK BEST**.⁴ This imprint is probably a plate quality mark; similar markings appear on the 1866 Norwegian ship *Hansteen*.⁵

The library also holds a copy of the report on the ship's survey of January 5, 1864, in which the surveyor recommends to Lloyd's of London that the new vessel should obtain the highest ranking for insurance purposes, for "she far exceeds the requirement of the Rule for the tonnage." The report states that the iron used for angles and plates in building this vessel came from Consett Ironworks, and that the plates were of Brunswick Best. The angle iron that I discovered from L W & Walker, interestingly, is never mentioned.

Who Made the Stamp Marks?

With my physical survey of the ship herself complete, the task of researching the names Consett, Walker, and Brunswick remained.

CONSETT was the biggest producer of iron hull plates in Great Britain, producing up to 1,300 tons a week at the time *Euterpe*'s beams were delivered by sea to the Gibson, McDonald & Arnold shipyard at Ramsey. The little village of Conside in County Durham along the river Derwent was an insignificant place until 1840 when the Derwent Iron Company started wrought iron production there. By 1860, the Derwent & Consett Iron Company was the main producer of plate iron for shipbuilders at Clydeside as well as at Jarrow, where the famous shipbuilder Charles Mark Palmer stated that there were no better plates than those from the Consett mills. After a major financial crisis, in 1864 the firm was reorganized as the Consett Iron Company.

The company successfully made the transition into steel production while most old ironworks shut down after 1880, as ship owners, builders, and insurers recognized that ships built of steel could run aground with far less damage than could iron ships, and the price of steel had fallen to a competitive level. Steel production continued at Consett until 1980.⁶

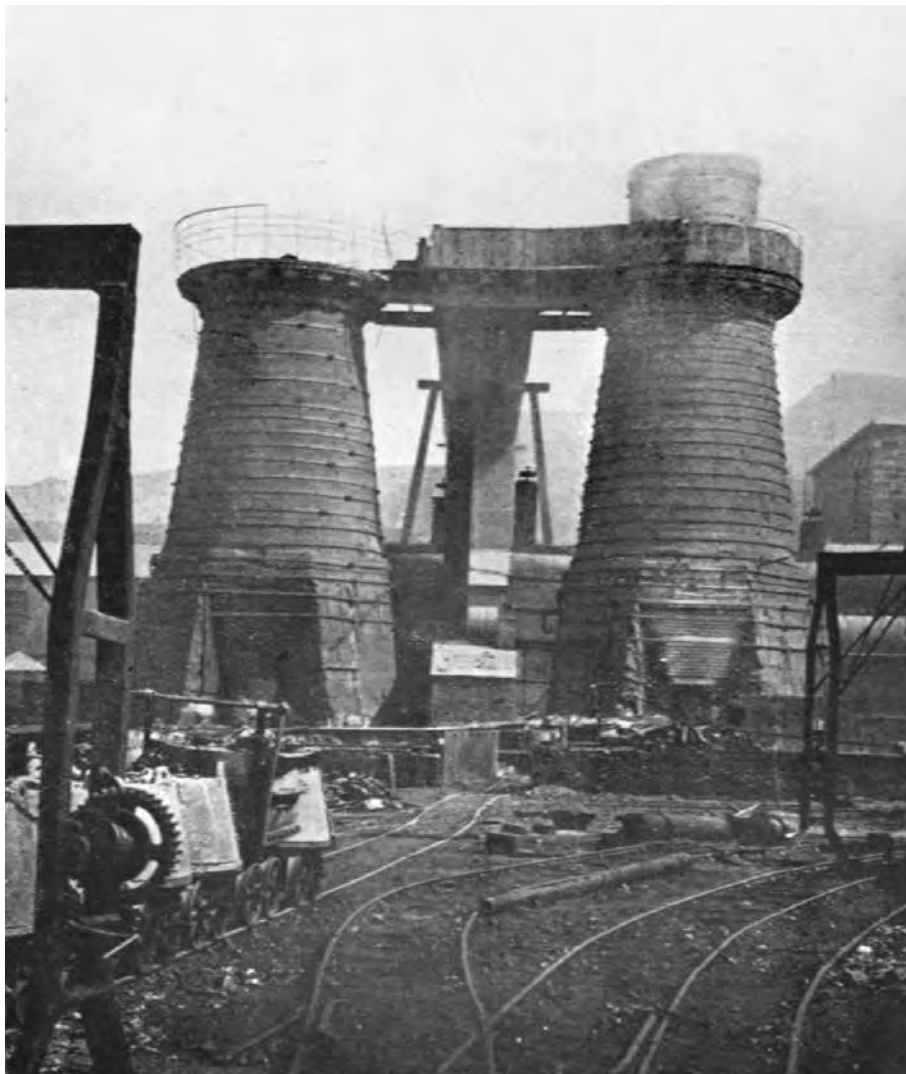
L W & WALKER stamps on *Euterpe*'s frames were made at the Walker Iron-works on the north bank of the river Tyne, just to the northeast of Consett. This works was founded by William Losh and two young friends, Thomas Wilson and Thomas Bell, next to Losh's alkali factory at Walker. The stamped **L W** presumably refers to Losh and Wilson. Losh was a col-



This "CONSETT" mark appears beneath the 'tweendeck on frame 23.

Photo above by John Wright; below, P7471





These blast furnaces at Consett were photographed about the time they made the iron for *Euterpe*'s beams. The furnaces were loaded from the top by workmen who pushed their loads in wheelbarrows up the ramp at center.

Courtesy Ken Postle; previously published in the 1893 book Consett Iron Company Limited

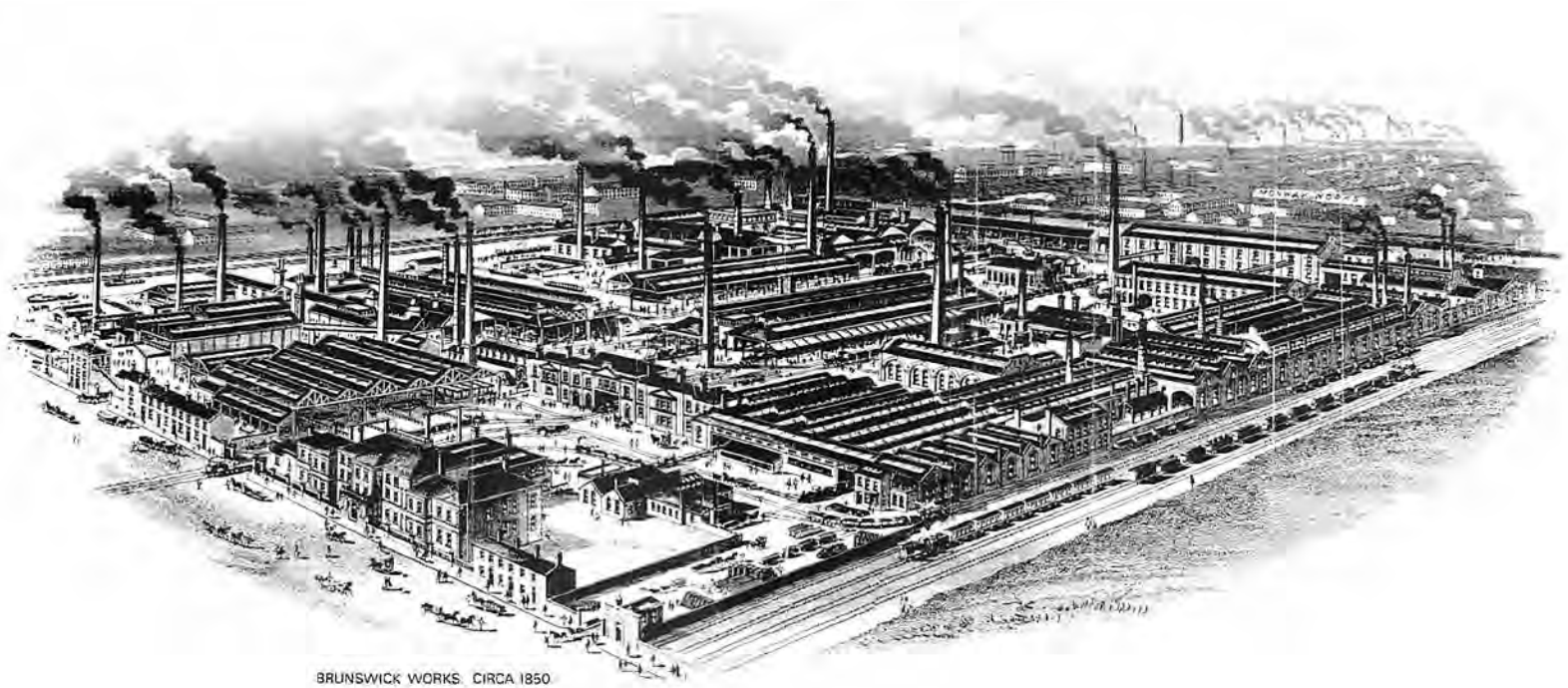
orful and prosperous man who went abroad and engaged in many enterprises, from introducing new methods of soda production to inventing locomotives together with pioneering inventor George Stephenson. The manager of the Walker Iron-works at the time was Henry Lawrence, who had a rather colorful past himself: while returning to England from California in the 1850s, he was shipwrecked on a small waterless Pacific island, where he put his engineering skills to use and improvised a condensing plant to distill seawater.⁷ While Consett's iron products were praised for very good quality, the Walker Ironworks did not leave a particularly favorable impression on the supervisor inspecting the different works in the Midlands and the Northeast in 1859. The works, located three miles east of Newcastle, closed down prior to 1910, and the site was developed into a shipyard.⁸

BRUNSWICK BEST, stamped on the outside hull plating, tells us that this plate was delivered from the famous Brunswick Works, a few miles north of Birmingham. Brunswick was two hundred miles south of Consett and Walker, but a shorter distance from Liverpool and the Isle of Man. Brunswick Ironworks was part of the Patent Shaft and Axel Tree Company at Wednesbury in the Black Country

District. In the early 1870s it was described as "one of the most prosperous and paying concerns in England." The company was one of the last in the United Kingdom to make steel by the open hearth steel-making process and was closed down at the same time as Consett.⁹ The **BEST** mark commonly denoted iron refined twice; that is, the plate had been processed more than once and thus was of superior quality.

To move the material from these three ironworks to the shipyard, the most likely scenario is that from Consett and Wednesbury the iron was shipped by rail to Liverpool and by ship to the Isle of Man. The Walker Iron Works on the Tyne could have shipped its angle iron directly by sea, or by rail. Inland ironworks like Brunswick also benefited from England's extensive canal system.

In conclusion, the results of my investigation demonstrate that *Star of India*, formerly *Euterpe*, is not only the oldest merchant vessel left in the world licensed for trade on all oceans, but that most importantly, she is very close to one hundred percent original. Her wrought iron hull has seen few repairs or alterations. This makes her unique among the world's historic ships—not only among those built of iron, but among all large historic vessels made of *any* material.



BRUNSWICK WORKS. CIRCA 1850

Brunswick Iron Works produced *Euterpe*'s plates.

Courtesy the author and Tom Round

NOTES

- 1 The goal of my 2001 survey of *Star of India*'s iron was to try to find impressions similar to the ones I found aboard the Norwegian wrought iron ship *Hansteen*, built at Nyland, Oslo in 1866 of iron from England and Scandinavia, and likewise still a seaworthy vessel. This would contribute to my yet-unpublished comparative analysis of ship-quality iron from ironworks in Great Britain, Norway and Sweden. (Olaf T. Engvig, "Hammer Iron and Quality Marks in Preserved 19th Century Ships," unpublished two-volume manuscript, 2001, in author's possession.) Scandinavia and Great Britain used iron ore that varied regionally by quality, and differed as well in iron production processes themselves. These countries share a shipbuilding tradition of using iron that dates back to the Viking Age and before, when the combination of good wood and excellent iron enabled them to produce high-quality longboats.
- 2 My survey did not include the ship's foremast and mainmast, which are also iron, while the topmasts above them are wood. Certain areas, blocked by cabins and exhibit components, were unavailable for inspection.
- 3 My personal experience is that it is much more difficult to find marks on plates than on angles and beams. All plate impressions I have seen are concave, and rather shallow, pressed or stamped into the front side of the plate during production. Each plate may have been given only one or a few quality stamps, and these imprints might have already been lost in the process of building the vessel. If not, they may later have been erased by surface corrosion, often leaving us today with laboratory research as the sole option to determine the iron's composition and production methods, and thus determine the time and the place where it was manufactured. Aboard *Star of India*, however, a gentle cleaning of the forward side of the forward collision bulkhead, and of the remaining portion of the aft collision bulkhead, might well reveal Brunswick marks—or perhaps stamps from other ironworks.
- 4 While only one **BRUNSWICK BEST** mark was photographed on the hull, many were



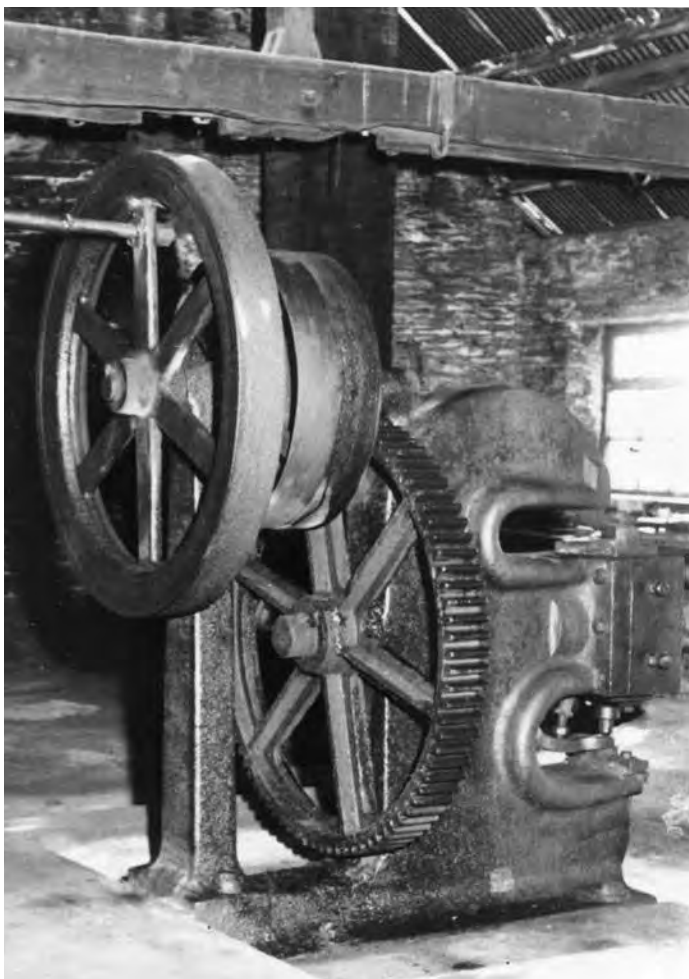
This plate punch and shear in the Gibson, McDonald & Arnold shipyard in Ramsey, Isle of Man, may date from *Euterpe's* day. The view below, looking up the River Sulby at low tide, shows Ramsey about the time that *Euterpe* floated past this quay after her launching. The shipyard was upstream in the distance at the far right.

MMSD P1057 and P1058, previously unpublished; below, MMSD P574, courtesy Manx National Heritage



found; see *Mains'l Haul* 12 no. 4 (June 1976): 1. It is therefore the museum's firm belief, supported by my observations during the examination of her interior, that the hull plating is still almost entirely Brunswick iron. Beams, angles and plates in a new ship are a unity. Riveting repairs performed on plates and frames, and any other repairs on an old iron ship, usually leave distinct repair-marks or visible modifications to the inside hull. Those in most cases are easily spotted as we learned restoring *Hansteen* and other iron ships. I found no such repairs on *Star of India*. I therefore believe that her plates today still are the original iron plates delivered from Brunswick Ironworks in England to the Isle of Man for the ship's construction in 1863.

- 5 The stamps **BBH BLOOMFIELD** and **BBH.BEST** in *Hansteen's* iron show that it was delivered from the Bloomfield Ironworks in Staffordshire.
- 6 Kenneth Warren, *Consett Iron 1840-1980: A Study in Industrial Location* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); William Jenkins, *Consett Iron Company Limited, Description of the Works, Newcastle-on-Tyne* (Tyne: Mawson, Swan & Morgan, 1893).
- 7 *Transactions of the Institute of Mining Engineers* (c. 1908), quoted at www.dmm.org.uk/whoswho/1907.htm.
- 8 R. Welford, *Men of Mark 'twixt Tyne and Tweed*, Vol. III, (Newcastle: Walter Scott Ltd. 1895), 92-97. Courtesy of Newcastle City Council.
- 9 The author is indebted to Tom Round of Wolverhampton for providing primary source materials on the Brunswick Ironworks.



The photo below, formerly thought to represent the launching of *Euterpe's* sister ship *Erato*, actually may show *Euterpe* herself in 1863.

Courtesy Manx National Heritage



The Stead Ellis Diary: *Euterpe*'s Greatest Document

Edited by Mark Allen and Charles A. Bencik

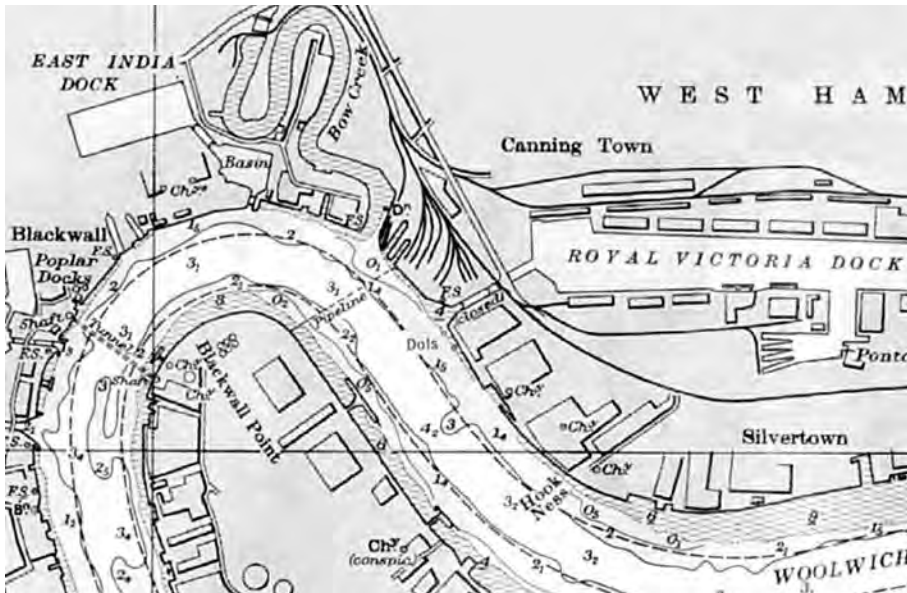
A few years after their voyage, Stead Ellis and family pose in a studio near their Nelson, New Zealand, home. From left are Oscar, Percy, Claude, Harold, and Stead, who is flanked by little "Ning" and Maud. To the left of her mother Elizabeth ("Lizzie") sits Mabel; the three girls were born in New Zealand. Guy is at center, and Rowland lies at his feet.

MMSD P13689; courtesy Nelson Provincial Museum, Tyree Studio Coll., New Zealand; previously unpublished

While *Star of India*'s fame rests today on being the oldest ship that still regularly goes to sea, the greatest distinction of this otherwise unexceptional merchant ship lies in the decades she sailed under the name *Euterpe*, bound for New Zealand and Australia carrying British emigrants. For four centuries, sailing ships like her carried anxious and hopeful passengers to new homes across the sea, rearranging the population of the globe. *Euterpe*, like New York's Ellis Island, is one of the few remaining major artifacts of this crucial phenomenon of modern human history.

The longest, liveliest, and most vividly detailed account of emigrant life aboard *Euterpe* is unquestionably a previously unpublished 1879 diary kept by a forty-year-old architect. ¹





The family departed from London's East India Dock, at upper left. 19th century emigrants are depicted in the engraving below and those on the following pages.

MMSD Coll.

It chronicles the exceptionally long voyage of nearly five months by Yorkshire-born Stead Ellis² and his wife and six sons from London to Port Lyttelton, New Zealand. Food soon ran short, and by journey's end the dignified diarist was reduced to stealing potatoes, while less-squeamish passengers were dining on "rat pie."³

His diary offers insights into the physical aspects of the voyage, the role of the emigration company that owned the ship, the weather, the operation of the vessel, and daily life for the author and the approximately 158 other emigrants on board.⁴ His attention to the experiences of emigrant children is especially noteworthy, as are his observations on the rigid social structure among the classes of passengers (the Ellises were traveling second class) and crew.

Stead Ellis's account begins on August 1, 1879, as his family struggles to reach the London docks:.

. . . the tram proved to be crowded and Guy [The author's 2-year-old son] began to complain saying "I want to go home" my wife told him that he had no home but this poor Guy did not understand. An old man of ebony countenance and who was evidently a Native of "Africa's Sunny Clime" talked quite kindly to him and told him it was quite bad enough for an old man like himself to be without home, but that it was something dreadful for such to be the case with a little fellow like him. Guy did not like his looks, though he was a good looking & gentlemanlike old fellow, so I had to comfort him myself and told him we should soon be on a big ship & that would be his home and he was soon pacified. . . . I had begun to be rather anxious as I had no definite information as to the time the ship would leave the Dock, but we found her then all right, and all our fellow passengers and their friends getting their luggage aboard. I got Lizzie [the author's 36-year-old² wife Elizabeth] & the little ones on board at once and having fixed them safely over the stairway to our cabin I left them to look out for the luggage which had been sent from Batley before and also for the boys with the luggage cart. . . . Harold [his oldest son, age 14] & the party with cart now turned up and for a good half hour we were as busy as bees. . . . The scene on board was about as busy as one can well imagine. We could not get into our cabin for a couple of hours after we got on board as the companion ladder was up and the floor of our Dining Room opened to permit of the passengers luggage "wanted on the voyage" being



About two years before emigrating, Percy, Harold and Claude Ellis pose in a photographer's studio in Leeds.

Courtesy Siobhan Stead-Ellis; previously unpublished



got down into the hold below us.

The same was the case with the main hatchway so that most of the passengers with their friends and a great quantity of luggage cumbered the decks and what with the seamen working at the ropes, people coming & going & one thing & another, it was a perfect pandemonium. However all things come to an end in time & so it was with all the hurry & bustle of our embarkation, things after a while got quietly settled down. . . . We have a pretty roomy berth which contains two bunks each 6 ft 6 ins; by 3 ft 6 ins wide, the biggest I believe on the ship, special large mattresses having to be ordered for them. We also got a small bunk fixed in which to put baby [six-month-old Rowland] during the day so as not to upset the beds – it is

also useful to contain considerable number of miscellaneous articles as reading books, rugs, the few tools most wanted, corkscrew [sic] &c. On the top bunk we fix Claude [age 9] & Guy at one end and Percy & Oscar [ages 8 and 5] at the other end, feet towards feet as we should call it at home, fore & aft they seem to call it here. While my wife & I with baby [6-month-old Rowland] occupy the low bunk. Harold is in the next Cabin with 3 other young gentlemen & very nice lot they seem to be. Got to bed at I do not know what hour, but after tea which was served very late, we went on deck until the ship had been towed out of Dock, and to us landsmen this was a very

*We that were below could
not tell what was to do as
she seemed
to be full of Smoke.
We got on deck as sharp
as we could and that was
not very sharp as one pulled
another back while trying to
get up first.*

*When we got on deck
the watchman was laying
and severely hurt and
another of the sailors had
his head cut*

*. . . they thought she was
sinking and we were
up to the knees
in water on deck;
some run up the masts.*

Steerage passenger
George Lister's diary,
Aug. 2, 1879

*It is a wonder & a mercy how he escaped
being smashed to atoms.*

interesting sight.

August 2nd Saturday.

All up early and found ourselves at Anchor in the Thames . . . I noticed our Captain [Thomas Eddes Phillips] running in a very excited manner up on to the poop. I at once ran after him and found a large ship,⁷ quite as large if not larger than our own, was drifting broadside on right into us. Everything was at once all excitement, people rushing about and shouting to the strange ship & she of course was doing all she could to get clear of us; this she did eventually, or nearly so, for our bowsprit reached right into some of her rigging and snapped her ropes, so we were all right again having suffered nothing more than a great alarm. . . . a few of us therefore decided to go on shore for an hour and touch Old England once more – we bargained with a boatman and set out shortly before 8 PM . . . Our shore party had divided on landing and had agreed to meet on the pier at 9 PM. and by 5 minutes past we were all there and Mr [Jesse] Davis (one of our 2nd Cabin) told us that the *Euterpe* had been in Collision with a large steamer, – he was in great excitement & said he had seen it from the shore and had heard it too, and also the shouting & screaming of the passengers, of course my feelings were much excited when I heard this and we were all anxious to get on board at once & see & hear the actual state of the case. We were soon there & found

that it was only too true. My dear wife was in a terrible fright and as soon as I had pacified her I went to see what the damage was which we had sustained. It appears that a large steamer Talfour [sic]⁸ coming up stream toward London and somehow got out of the regular course and finding herself inside The Buoys tried to cut through between our ship and another one to cross into her proper channel, the wind was almost a Gale by this time and she was unable to do it exactly for she cut into our bows & made a large hole big enough for a couple of men to creep through together & cut our cable so that we were at once adrift. The Captain ordered another anchor down at once but before that could be let go or before it got hold our ship bumped stern foremost into the same ship we had been foul of during the aft'noon . . . The result of this bump to us was that our wheel gearing & the back rail of the poop deck was all smashed away. It was now quite evident to us that there was every excuse for the excited state of Lizzie & the other Ladies, though I thought I saw that there was really no danger of our sinking & even if there had been every assistance was at hand in the shape of steam tugs and rowing boats. . . . The hole in the bows is altogether above the deck level, but underneath the forecastle deck, in fact it is in the Foc'sle as the Forecastle is called. Two of the seamen's bunks were fixed just inside where the hole is and one man was in bed. It is a wonder & a mercy how he escaped being smashed to atoms. Altogether it was a very wild & uncomfortable night & lots of the passengers never went to bed at all & lots of others laid down in their clothes – we seemed to feel we were lying in a very dangerous place & never knew what might happen – for myself I thought we had surely had as many accidents as we could reasonably expect for one day, so I stripped in regular fashion & went to bed & to sleep for I was very tired. I was doomed not to sleep for long, for Davis who had never turned in came running down the steps calling M^r Ellis, M^r Ellis, up quick, don't alarm the children, but we are in real danger this time, be quick, come on deck, here's a big ship coming right down on us amidships she'll sink us in a few minutes if she strikes us &c &c &c. We were up & dressed in a very few minutes, we were never very slow at dressing, neither of us, but this time there was no delay. Well, when we got on deck we found that the ship which was going to run us down was lying quietly 100 yards off. The Thames Pilot who was on board & at his post explained to us that it was only the turning of the tide, and all ships lying with a single anchor down, swung round so that the chain and ship were with the tide. . . . It was only this which had so excited friend Davis; really unless the ship had broken from her moorings we could not have been run into by her at all – I forgot to say that old M^r [R.] Duff had come & asked me to assist him in getting up a prayer meeting in the main hatch cabin in thankfulness for what was really almost a miraculous escape – We had a very earnest meeting & a very good attendance – it was held at about 10 P M soon after all fear had subsided. Lizzie & I turned in again at 4 to 5 AM and had a couple of hours refreshing sleep. The children looked lovely in their bunk, with their

*Alarm of ship in sight at
12 o'clock last night by one
of the
timid passengers.
he had all the fellows
for[w]ard out of bed when
lo', it was only the Lizard
Lights
[lighthouses].
He had . . . thought we
were in danger,
so he yelled down the
hatchway with all his
might, Ship in sight, close
too, when up came the
whole of the folks below.
They gave the fellow a
good hiding afterwards.*

Second-class passenger
Joshua Charlesworth's diary,
Aug. 24, 1879



*The Doctor was
a jolly man
And well did love
good cheer
Perhaps he did not
like the sea
I vow he liked
good beer.*

from a poem by "Euterpean" (steer-
age passenger Walter Peck),
Euterpe Times No. 3,
Sept. 27, 1879

Mary Jane Tichbon was one of the
three Hallam sisters on board.
Her sister Catherine posed with
husband Jesse Davis shortly before
the voyage in Weston Super-Mare,
England.

MMSD P10094 and P10091



16

legs all mixed up together, a bit of bum peeping out here & there and all still so warm
& cosey [sic]. I straightened and sorted their legs & covered them up comfortably . . .

↓ ↓ ↓

Monday Aug 4th

. . . About noon our Doctor arrived he is a very gentlemanly man & was apparently
only about half recovered from a prolonged drunken bout. He is very seedily clad.
Towards evening saw him again, he looked somewhat better but was in a grumbling
humour, as the Capⁿ had forbidden him to leave the ship & no drink can be had
aboard while in Dock. I took him over the ship & showed him the damages & he
seemed very intelligent – however when I happened to say I was going ashore to get
a glass of beer, he begged like a cripple for me to bring him some whisky or brandy.
He said he had been suffering from an attack of English cholera & wanted a stimulant.
I pressed what his cholera had been but as I wished to be on the right side of the old
fellow I promised him – when I returned with a small flask of whiskey he was talking
to the officer in charge & to see the way he pocketed the flask when I slipped it into
his hand behind him was a caution. He enquired if the medicine was all right & was
the youngster better &c &c when the officer left us he expressed the most intense
gratitude, he would do anything he could for any of us. I was to fetch him at any
time & he would come, even in the middle of the night &c &c. I thought perhaps the
sixpence was not so badly spent as there is no knowing what one may require during
the Voyage.

↓ ↓ ↓

I never want to see sober in my life

Wednesday Aug 6th



. . . In the 2nd cabin besides my own fam-
ily we have a M^r & M^{rs} [Jesse and Catherine]
Davis & a first baby [Arthur], a M^r & M^{rs}
[Thomas and Mary Jane] Tichbon and Miss
Nelly Hallam (the 3 ladies are sisters) all
these have gone to see their friends in
London during the repairs. We have also a
M^r Frank Williams, the General we call him,
from Gloucestershire he is or has been a
Cattle dealer & has travelled a great deal &
whom we are inclined to think is a "dead
beat" he comes on board without either
knife, fork or spoon, no plate or basin, tin
can or water bottle, nor even a brush or
comb – all which articles he uses every day
not mine. In his cabin are two very nice
young gentlemen from Bangor, brothers
named [Teddie and R. C.] Rathbourne & also
a young fellow from Manchester. Next berth
to mine are Harold, Joss: (my pupil) [Joshua
Charlesworth, the author's apprentice in

his architectural firm] a young architect or Builders Clerk named [F. C.] Johnson
and another young fellow whose name I do not yet know. This completes the
roll of our company and I expect I shall have more to say of them during our long
Journey. The General is a rum one, he says he never went to sea sober in his life &
by all accounts he certainly did not do so last Friday. I was asleep when he turned
in, but I suppose his language was something awful. Lizzie was awake & heard him
& so did the other Ladies. M^r Davis on Saturday morning took him to task for it &

the General apologized & said he was sorry if he had said anything wrong but said he "I never went to sea sober in my life and I have been a [sic] many voyages. I do not remember what I may have said, but if I have been half as bad as you say I apologise to the Ladies for it" M^r Davis seemed inclined to keep the subject up & I saw the General was getting riled, so I had to interpose to restore harmony. I said I thought he had apologised very handsomely & that the subject had best drop. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Friday Aug 8th

Last night I turned out for a stroll on deck after the cards & M^r Franz Romer [Frederic Roemer] the 3rd Mate invited me into his cabin for a drink of beer. He is a Dutchman [i.e., German] & stands about 6ft 2ins. He shewed me a good silver watch which he had had presented to him by the parents of a boy whose life he saved by jumping overboard in the open sea his last voyage. He also got the Gold Medal of the Royal Humane Society for the same gallant deed. . . . Men are hammering away at repairs. We begin to find a difficulty in getting enough to eat & our Steward seems to think we get really more than our share. [Harry] Leake & I went into the City & called on Shaw Savill & C^{os} and grumbled considerably that we did not get provisions as agreed. They promised amendment. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Sunday Aug 10th

Another glorious summer morning. Up early & washed & dressed Oscar & Guy. This seems now to have got to be my regular job. M^r & M^{rs} Davis, M^r & M^{rs} Tichbon and M^{iss} Nelly have returned to their quarters, and the extra cabin is finished & M^r & M^{rs} [William] Young from the intermediate have taken possession of it. They seem very quiet and shy. We are now quite through [sic] and I think the cabin is far too small for the N^o of occupants – it was at the first a very dark hole, but I asked the Captain to let us have a couple of extra deck lights (small glasses 9 x 3 let into the planking of the decks) which he has now got done for us & the light is improved very much. Had some Sanky Moody hymns* while waiting for breakfast. M^r Tichbon playing violin. After breakfast everybody brushed up for Church & Chapel. . . .



Ellen "Nelly" Hallam, eighteen years old on the voyage, married the author's assistant Joshua Charlesworth two years afterwards. Thirty-two-year-old Thomas Tichbon, below, played the violin and often appears in the diary.

MMSD P10096 and P10097

*American evangelist Dwight Moody and song leader Ira Sankey preached and sang to great crowds in York and London in 1873. Booklets of hymns compiled by Sankey, including "Rock of Ages," "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "Whiter Than Snow," "It is Well With My Soul," "Jesus Loves Me," "Blessed Assurance" and others were very popular. Sankey made the gospel hymn a popular form.



Monday Aug 11th

Out of bed the first & after seeing the youngsters dressed & assisting the younger ones went on deck & found a lovely day again. After breakfast wrote a lot of letters and Lizzie beautified the cabin by fixing wall & window hangings &c. Feather bed arrived from Grandma's. Repairs are in such a forward state that they have taken us out of the dock into the outer basin close to the river to be ready to catch first tide. Have had another discussion with [F. G.] Rosen re America and England. I have expressed my contempt for the American form of government as exemplified in its statesmen of this generation in very strong language – possibly too strong considering Rosen's education has been in America & his Father though an Austrian nobleman by birth is a Naturalized American and a gov^t official. Had a good dinner, the river cook intends leaving us today or tomorrow & in view of possible tips sent us a magnificent piece of sirloin. Assisted Lizzie in the Cabin & did a lot more letter writing. Lizzie was so busy in the cabin that she actually never got on deck until after tea at about 7 PM. She washed floor & got everything ship shape as she thought. At last I persuaded her to put her cloak on & go for a walk. Met Harry Box & his wife who it seems are going to Dunedin [New Zealand] in the *Hermione*. . . .

Tuesday Aug 12th

Up very early to see ship towed out of dock & up the river, the others all following me in quick succession. It is a glorious morning & the tug *Renown* takes us in tow and we have a very pleasant sail up the river so long as tide lasts. We come to anchor off Greenhythe & wait for the next tide. I write a few more letters. All the passengers are mustered on the Poop & paraded before the Doctor. I arrange & with my tribe am one of the first to pass down, he stops Lizzie & baby & takes baby's cheeks between his hands and the young one smiles at him. He compliments her & tells her he saw that baby when he was aboard before at the time our own Doctor failed to shew up. The new Doctor [William Davies] is a young fellow of 24 or 25 yrs old. Most of the passengers would have preferred an older man, some even the other Doctor if he could have been kept sober, which is very doubtful for from what I saw of him he would go through fire & water for his liquor – poor fellow, he seemed a perfect wreck – though quite a gentleman – I understand the Board of Trade have



North is to the right in this 1913 British chart of the Thames.

MMSD Coll.; right, from the 1924 book *White Wings*



THE HERMIONE.

refused permission for him to go with us. It was after dinner, lying off Gravesend that we had to go through the above ceremony and also for the official inspection of the vessel by the ship's Husband who has to certify that she leaves Port sound & fit in every respect. While we were coming down the river the workmen were putting the finishing touches to the repairs – We are again taken in tow by the *Renown* and keep going until I turn in at about 10.30 PM.

Wednesday Aug 13th

Claude is sick & I am going to be so if no breakfast be forthcoming soon. A nice swaying rolling is all that is perceptible but I am fetched for breakfast. Down below found my wife sick in bed also Percy, Guy & Claude all sick in the Cabin, while baby was on the floor in the midst of it, & it was a mercy I did not tread on him for I had no idea he was there and strode right over him to Lizzie's side. Going below out of the sunshine, the Cabin appears pitch dark, or nearly so, & its some time before ones eyes become accustomed to the change of light & one can see clearly. Oscar had gone up on deck to seek me & soon returned crying & as sick as a dog. Here was a pretty mess. Harold was feeding the fishes up stairs, with what he could spare of his last night's supper and all the rest of my family except baby was sick in the Cabin. I commenced to try & render what assistance I could when my stomach rose and I rushed upstairs to help Harold. Joss: [Charlesworth] took & nursed baby for a while & when I again went below I brought him up stairs into the open air and some kind hearted souls in the Steerage took pity on me and took & nursed him for me. Guy was very ill so I fetched him up & nursed him. He very soon covered both himself & me & after I had got a cloth & cleaned our selves up a little, I took him again on my knees & he fell asleep so I took him to bed. Oscar had gone to bed & was fast asleep. Lizzie had been got upstairs & was very ill, after staying on deck an hour or so she complained of cold & shivering & is now in bed, asleep I hope. I do not like to go & see for fear of waking or disturbing her. I got Claude & Percy on deck & wrapped them in their great coats & they now appear all right. None of us have had a particle of breakfast and some of us would like dinner to come soon before we get into the Straits of Dover. Thames Pilot left us at Deal and the old Channel pilot is now in charge of the ship. Steward has just enquired if I would take soup for dinner. I suppose he does not want to get more than will be required as he had a great quantity of coffee to throw away this morning. We have all turned up for dinner except my wife & M^{rs} Tichbon, who have had a cup of tea each. Have passed Dover and see the White Cliffs of old England on our Starboard. The crew are spreading all sail, the tug still in front & we have very little wind. Nearly all the male passengers are helping the crew hauling at the ropes and they do it to a kind of song – one of the crew doing a short solo & then altogether pulling for dear life to a jolly chorus. Before tea the tug left us & now we are entirely on our own hook. Soon after the tug got clear away from us a calm came on and for 2 or 3 hours the sails flapped idly against the masts. About 7 PM a light breeze sprang up dead against us & so we are tacking against it & consequently making only little progress. Lizzie had her tea on deck, I have had a bad headache since noon, wanting a nap & not caring or daring to go below. Am better since tea but not clear of headache – think I ought to take some medicine [sic], purgative, but dare not do so because of the usually disgraceful state of the WC^s.¹⁰ All the passengers on deck & only one or two shewing themselves any worse for their sickness. . . .



“Joss,” Joshua Charleworth, was Ellis’s nineteen-year-old assistant and faithful scribe of the passengers’ newspaper. He became a prominent New Zealand architect.

MMSD P10095



*The Dunikins [toilets]
are atrocious contrivances,
and it is only by constant
attention they have received
from those
in charge of them that
they have not become pesti-
lential spots
on board ship.*

*Euterpe Times No. 13,
Dec. 6, 1879*



Three Cheers for Mr. Ellis

Thursday Aug 14th

... We have a great quantity of sail spread but no progress making and scarcely a perceptible motion of the vessel. Had our fresh water served out to us this morning and the 3 quarts per day which we were to have supplied to us has suddenly dwindled down into a quart & a half each as the other 1 1/2 quarts has to be given to the cook; if this is not a swindle or at least mis-representation on the part of Shaw, Saville & Co it is at least sailing very near the wind. I suppose we are now divided into messes, me & my family being one, the seven single men another & the 3 married couples and the single lady another. The breakfast this morning was the usual bread & butter & coffee, & Lizzie to get a cup of tea had to send the same quantity of cold water to the cook as she required of tea, she also sent water to exchange for hot to wash up with, as she does not fancy our Stewards washing up nor the look of his dishcloth. ... At tea a beastly lot of common ship biscuits were served out to us & our Steward informed us we could not have any bread. I refused to have any tea at all & went out & down into the 3rd class cabin & found there that all had a quantity of bread – loaves the full length of the table from end to end – only one or two having sea biscuits to make out

with. I went straight to the Skipper & complained, telling him all about it. He called the 3rd Mate, who acts as purser & distributes all stores & our Steward before him, & told them they ought to have shared the bread out, and certainly not to have the 2nd passengers minus while the 3rd had plenty. ... When the Steward came down into our cabin with his arms full of bread, all the company rose & gave three cheers for Mr Ellis. I fancy the Capⁿ heard it & would no doubt take the row as a comp^t to himself. We dealt it out sparingly about a round each, so as to make out with biscuit, which are as hard as nails. It took me from 6 to 9 PM to eat one and a good part of it I had to spit out as I have great difficulty in swallowing the stuff when it is masticated because of my sore throat I suppose. Poor Guy cried for more bread & butter & said he could not eat the 'bickel' it was "ba ba". The fog continued & we turned out to assist in the look out. The Captain & pilot were on the poop, and the "lookout" was on the foc'sle with his fog horn – the horn bleating baa baa baa every few seconds, or rather minutes.

... I turned in at 12.30 after having a "wee drap whiskey" to comfort me.

*It seems as if we were being
swindled at every point*

Friday Aug 15th

... Brought all our bed clothing on deck this morning to give them a good shaking. Shook them on the lee side of the ship which was opposite the sheep & poultry pens, but all the dirt & fluff went straight into the Saloon as the Steward came out & ordered us away. Lizzie was very indignant & would hardly go with one to windward, where however we did go to finish. Have been talking to

the Pilot & this the 4th day out of London, we have not reached the Isle of Wight. Morning cleaned up & had a fine day after all, with an almost unruffled sea, slight wind nearly dead ahead, so now we are tacking & have only made 30 miles since tug left us 2 days ago. Boiled fat salt port & potatoes & pea soup to dinner, I enjoyed the lot, but Lizzie could not touch either one or the other. We have had a pleasant afternoon, reading, nursing & lounging about. My Missus made a few raisin pasties which have turned out a success. We were threatened with nothing but ship biscuits for tea, so I said I would go without tea & wait for tomorrow's dinner sooner than eat em. However, it turned out the Steward was able to get some bread for us so I have had a good tea. I suppose it is to be the last good tea for 4 months; though we are all getting somewhat rebellious at the idea of not getting cabin biscuits served out to us. I have declared I won't eat the ship biscuits under any circumstances, at least while cabin biscuits are on board, nor do I intend to; I will have porridge or anything they like, but unless the biscuits can be got into some more palatable shape I won't eat them. They stick in my throat just as a nut does & unless I am drinking I cannot get them down. It seems as if we were being swindled at every point. The little flour we get we cannot get baked unless we submit to an extortion by the cook . . . If I could advise my friends in England who meditate coming out, I would say, under no circumstances come out under the auspices of Shaw, Savill & Co.



Monday, Aug 18th

. . . we had a very pleasant evening on deck on Friday, there are some good voices aboard and they congregated round our gangway and we had some nice singing – the chief steward (M^r [J.] Chapman) and M^r Tichbon essayed some music on the violin, a duet which was not quite so successful as it might have been, perhaps want of practice together may account for this. However it was very well received. Saturday morning came with a bright clear sky, the sea somewhat 'choppy', we had breakfast and shortly afterwards retired to our respective bunks, seats & utensils; and we remained there & kept as quiet as we could all day. During Saturday night the vessel pitched & rolled terribly & it was evident a violent gale was blowing & the mischief of it was it was right dead against us so that tacking & doing all we could we could barely hold our own & prevent ourselves being driven back. On Sunday the storm continued & some of my family except myself turned out of bed. I sat up in the Easy chair with the long back to rest the head, which Uncle & Aunt Charlie bought for Lizzie & which turned out very useful. As it was I relieved Lizzie just by taking Guy & then Baby, first one & then the other all the day. Towards evening some of our singing friends came and sheltering themselves around the cover of our Cabin stairs sang several hymns for us. They asked permission to come down into our Cabin & sing for us, if the Ladies would like to hear them, the Ladies all said they should be glad; and it really sounded very nice, the 4 or 5 voices singing hymns within and the ship lurching & rolling and the storm howling without. Towards evening the sailors said that night would bring the end of the storm & sure enough, this morning the wind has gone down . . . We are mostly of opinion we should have spent our money better by going Steerage on board a good steamer than by doing as we have in coming 2nd in a Sailer. We are within a few hours of a whole week out of London and still we are only some 12 hours journey from Leeds. On Friday evening The general (M^r Williams) M^r Tichbon & myself waited on the Captain to ask for Cabin biscuits or that ship biscuits should be exchanged for flour, he promised to consider the matter, but we have been so ill since that we have not seen him again on the subject. Towards evening M^r Tichbon & I went on the poop & asked his decision as to the biscuits, he was evidently 'bothered' he would like to oblige us & change the biscuits for us, but is afraid of running short. He said we were doing so badly now 8 days out & still in the English Channel & pos-

The cabin we live in I've
heard [illegible] say
Is stuffy by night-time
and ugly by day
That its dirty and dark &
too closely packed.
But stories like these are
perversions of fact.
For the sizes below I know
to be right.
Eight feet wide, by nine long,
& seven in height.

As the crib is so large I share
it with five
And the bracing fresh air makes
all of us thrive
There's a glass in the deck,
twelve inches by two
So of course by its light we might
anything do
In fact its so light that when
we we go in
There's imminent danger of
breaking a shin.

↓ ↓ ↓

The agent describing this
fast sailing ship
Told me the voyage was a holiday trip
I'd sit on the deck in an easy arm chair
With a book and my pipe
until I got there
And need only get up to eat or to sleep
Or p'r'aps to examine some
spoils of the deep.

from a poem by "Euterpean"
(Walter Peck), *Euterpe Times*
No. 8, Nov. 1, 1879

Certainly there was a slight haze, but the ships could see each other at a considerable distance.

We were on the Starboard tack, as close to the wind as we possibly could get, the *Hurunui* was on the port tack . . . Our Captain, Officers, and Crew did all that could be thought of, in slacking some sheets and hauling others, and tried to get what slight breeze there was to drive us back . . . it now appeared we should run into her, then the people of the *Hurunui* awoke to the situation. they ported their helm and trimming about passed us close to the port bow, very much closer than was pleasant. . . .

We of course cannot say that the New Zealand Shipping Comp^y wished to run Shaw, Savill & Comp^y down, but it looked awfully like it—

Enterpe Times No. 1,
Sept. 13, 1879

* Cockle's Pills were a popular cure-all, manufactured in Australia.

sibly might be here another 8 days. He asked us how long we could make a cask . . . of the biscuits last, & we replied we thought a month; but he was afraid a fortnight would see the end of them however he was favorably inclined & would let us know tomorrow & he would see if he could arrange a cask for us. I told him plain out I thought the ship biscuits execrable & not fit for human food at all. He was surprised, when he was apprentice he never had anything else from beginning to end of a voyage & his children at home were very fond of them. In the evening we had more singing on deck, a dead calm having come on, I got Lizzie up on deck, but she was still very poorly, what with sickness & what with baby pulling at her all day & all night. Turned in again (after writing post cards to sister Ann & Grandma) at 11 PM, taking 2 of Cockles pills * by way of nightcap.

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She is bound to run into us

Wednesday Aug 20th

. . . This afternoon we have had a great fright. Our Steward had been to the Galley for the tea & on coming back told us there was "a fine ship on our lee bow" – several went up to look at her, but I was nursing baby and Lizzie was reclining in the large chair. However there was such a noise overhead, that I gave the baby to Lizzie & ran up the companion ladder to see what was the matter – & there sure enough was the large ship coming along slowly, drifting as it were, right into us. Our Pilot, Captain & Officer were all alert & giving orders trying their best to avoid what appeared to be inevitable, viz = A Collision, while in the other ship (which proved to be the *Hurunui*, belonging to the New Zealand Shipping Co^y lim^d) they did not appear to be doing anything. I heard our Pilot say "She is bound to run into us, nothing in the world can prevent it". You may imagine what a fright we were all in, she came eventually right across our bows & then we expected we should run into her, however they did manage to wake up to the position at last & then got clear, though within a very few yards of our prow. Our ship had done all that possibly could be done & if we were both going to London instead of to Canterbury [in New Zealand] there w^d have been trouble for the Capⁿ of the *Hurunui*. After both ships were clear, the passengers gave each other a hearty cheer. . . .

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Thursday Aug 21st

Had a good nights rest, all of us, my dear wife is much better & ate the bit of duck to breakfast. Had a big dish of oatmeal porridge made and the children relished them very much, with molasses & sugar. I had some with some of the condensed milk mixed with cold water & it was delicious. It ought to soothe our wounded innards. The wind appears to be still dead against us what little there is of it & it is very trying to all of us to be beating about in this channel 10 days when we ought to be, or at least we think we ought to be at Madeira by this time. This afternoon the Tug *Cambria* came alongside and its Captain came aboard, and after visit to our Captain he returned to the *Cambria* taking our Pilot with him, we gave the old chap a hearty cheer as he left us which seemed to please him as he took off his hat and waving it cheered us in return. While the Captain of the Tug was on board we found we were almost amidst a large fleet of fishing smaks [sic] and there was great excitement, everybody shouting to them to bring us some fish; two or three of them came alongside in small boats and a very pretty penny they made. . . . I also got a splendid crah a good large fellow . . . it is now being boiled & we expect a treat when we go into it. Harold suggests that it is not very much to the credit of Shaw, Savill & Co that some 150 of their passengers should be clambering over the ships side in order to get something to eat & only 11 days out of Dock. He forgets it is the fact of the fish being fresh which makes it so tempting. . . .

Friday Aug 22nd

After a very rough night we find a splendid bright morning with a very strong wind blowing & a confused sea. Lizzie, Claude & Oscar were all sick soon after awaking, but Guy came up to breakfast like a little man, before he could be served however he was sick & I sent him into the Cabin again, as soon as he had got it over, he returned to the table again & insisted upon having his breakfast and a good one he had too & he has been all right ever since. Claude & Oscar have been in bed awhile but have now come on deck & are evidently getting better fast, a little bit squeamish but not a great deal. Lizzie is now on deck & has had no dinner, this sickness is very hard on her what with suckling baby & one thing & another. There are a lot of disagreeable jobs to do where there is a baby & she is little able to do them & I help as much as I can, had baby's bum to wash after a mess this morning & have had him to dress, so I'm sure I try my best.

Saturday Aug 23rd

Ship rolled very much last night & most of us turned in early. This morning when we awoke & turned out we found we were only a mile or so off Start Point in Devonshire, could distinguish fields, hedges & buildings quite distinctly. We bout ship and are now steering S.E. by S going, I hope, quite away & into the Bay of Biscay, anywhere in fact, out of this horrible English Channel. . . . Everybody seems to get low spirited to wake up every morning & still find ourselves in the Channel & sighting the English Coast every tack. Guy repeated his performance of yesterday at breakfast today, he had had one plateful of porridge & just attacked another when he was sick on to his plate. I again sent him into the cabin and in a minute or two he was back begging for some jam & bread & tea. . . . During this forenoon the Engineer (the man who has charge of the water condenser) got the forefinger of his right hand into the cog wheels connected with the Donkey Engine and it was nipped off below the 2nd joint before he found it out. " The Doctor attended to him at once and we all hope he will soon be better. I understand he bore it very well when the Dr dressed his finger. It is now 10.30 PM & Lizzie is first rate, the weather has settled down & we can scarcely feel the rocking of the ship.

Sunday Aug 24th

. . . Lounging & reading seem to be rule. The Captain has held a service in the Saloon, but only the Ladies of the 2nd Cabin were asked to attend, a few of us men were to be admitted if there had been room . . . Lizzie took Percy, Oscar & Guy with her, so I considered my lot were very fairly represented. I am told that Guy fell asleep & fairly snored for which we chaffed him, but he neither understands nor cares. The feminine element in the 3rd Cabin did not appear to relish its exclusion from the service in the Saloon and the women sang a number of Moody Sankeys at their end of the ship. . . .

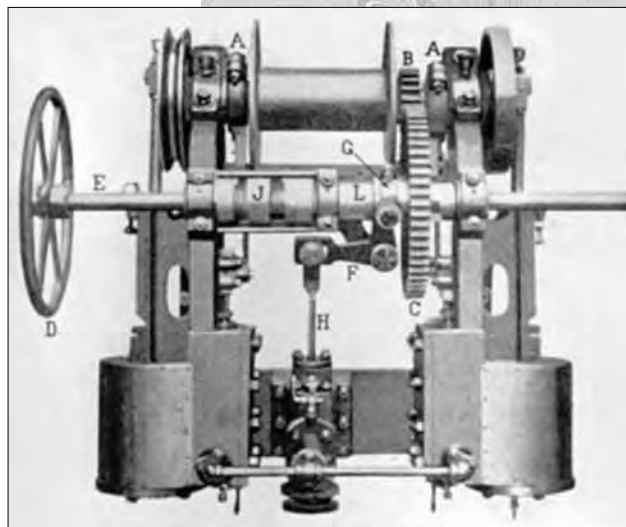
Monday Aug 25th

A fine breezy day with the wind as dead against us as could be wished by our deadliest enemies, if any of us have such. We are all heartily sick of sighting Old England. When I turned out this morning we appeared to be close in shore could see fields & hedges quite clearly & 13 days out of London still only 4 or 5 hours distant from there. They say we have rather lost than gained ground since yesterday. This afternoon we see the Cornish coast again and now we are just going to bout ship again. They have just lowered the staysail in preparation for that event & did so without warning the passengers, the consequence was the big heavy sail came down with a run on to a group of men women & children to their great alarm. The captain saw the circumstance & blew up [at] the man who let the sail go. . . . There was a sort of prayer meeting in the Intermediate cabin last night. I was not able to go, as baby required all my atten-

After the narrow escape with the Hurunui there was one night it was very rough, and the sailors were calling aloud and an Old Man named Duff thought we were coming in collision and he run up on deck naked and shouted, and a good many followed in their shirts.

This sort of thing was done a few times untill [sic] every one got tired of it.

George Lister's diary,
Sept. 13, 1879



Engineer Charles Brown's finger was nipped off by a hoist mechanism like this one. It was connected to a donkey engine and probably lifted ash from the steam-powered condenser in the hold that produced fresh water for passengers.

MMSD Coll.

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Tho now
 She's really
 off to sea
 The breezes are
 contrary;
 The only merit
 they possess
 Is that of being airy.

from a poem by
 "Euterpean" (Walter Peck),
Euterpe Times No. 3,
 Sept. 27, 1879

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tion. Afterwards we had about an hours singing in our cabin, the steward leading with his violin. This morning we all got up pretty well, but this evening Lizzie is in bed sick & I feel much like it, we are rolling about as if the ship would turn bottom up. . . . During tea all the things were pitched on the floor, it was well they were mostly metal or they would have been smashed to smithereens.

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Wednesday Aug 27th

A beastly rough day, with the waves coming right over the bulwarks. Claude went on deck & got drenched. I have only been on deck once all day. I have been sick again, one tremendous big roll (just as I was finishing a very meagre dinner) upset my stomach completely . . .

Thursday Aug 28th

The sea has gone down again but it is a fearful wet morning. We are all beginning to look lean & hungry. We have got now fairly into our sea stores, and the more we see of them, the less we all seem to like them. The provisions of the best quality turn out to be of the commonest kind, they may be the best, but if so, the kind must be something awful. You should see the way we tuck into our porridge. This morning we had no bread, the rolling had prevented the cook from baking & so porridge was a Godsend. This afternoon my poor wife is taken ill again, has had a sort of fainting fit, she is extremely weak what with the poor living on board & baby pulling at her all night, she is very poor & thin. . . . The wind has got up and the Sailors say we are to have a gale tonight.

Friday Aug 29th

The sailors prophecy of last night has been fulfilled. We have had a rough-un. I went on Deck at about 11.30 PM – the moon was shining brightly, almost (or altogether) at the full, but the waves, if they were not like mountains, they were at all events like very considerable hills & every now & again a huge one swept right over the high bulwarks of the ship and flooded the deck. M^r Davis took M^{rs} D on deck (I think escorting her to the W.C. but of course this is in confidence.) I suppose M^{rs} D was safely housed, but he was caught in the wash of a wave right up to his knees. . . the rolling of the ship was something awful, the feather bed which Lizzie's Mother sent her & on which my wife was lying was rocked right up the side of the vessel & when I got to bed I had to serve as packing for Lizzie who was seesawed almost out of her very life. This morning I am up early and get our steward up, he & M^r [E. W.] Bowring (a young fellow from Manchester, a butcher & cattle youth) were lying side by side in the sweet arms of Morpheus on the floor of the cabin, on the lee side. I soon had the Steward off to the Galley & had a cup of tea ready for my wife. She got up just before dinner & is now on deck. The sea has gone down a good deal but we appear to lurch almost as much as ever. . . . It appears to me that all the people who have written books on emigration to N.Z. must be in the pay of the shipping C^{os} or they never would recommend these miserable tubs in preference to a first class steamer, independent of both wind & tide, while we appear to be absolutely at the mercy of both. . . .

Sunday Sep 1st

We have had a lovely day, the sails all set square & the wind right astern, making all day some 5 or 6 Knots an hour. Lizzie & I have had our mattresses on deck & turned our cabin almost inside out. We find mice (or rats) have been in one of our boxes the lid of which had not been quite closed. Just after tea we saw & spoke an English gun-boat *The Tenedos*,¹² 12 guns – of course we do not know what was said, but M^r Davis says our Capⁿ asked what they had for dinner & they replied Turkey – we all think we could polish one. A splendid moonlight night & M^r Rosen keeps



Five years later, HMS *Tenedos* is drydocked in St. John's, Newfoundland.

Courtesy Center for Newfoundland Studies Archives, Memorial University; previously unpublished

the deck alive with his discussions on the decadence of England & America being the leading nation on the earth. I disgust him by conceding the fine country, but maintaining that the inherent rascality of the people will for centuries prevent her becoming the leading Nation.

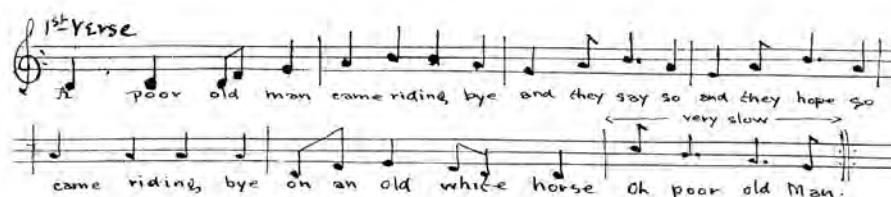
We'll dig him a grave with a silver spade.

Tuesday Sep^r 2nd

. . . This evening the Sailors have hung the Dead Horse. It appears they get one months pay when the[y] engage & so at the end of the first month they have [likely] earned nothing, i.e have nothing due – this they call working for the dead horse – this month they are working for wages & so they hang & bury the dead horse. The sailors paraded round the ship, one man riding an imitation horse (something like a pantomime horse, the man standing inside) & the others following & singing a mournful ditty of course with a chorus. When the procession arrived at the Saloon door, the man leading the horse made a speech and offered the old horse by auction. 3 half crowns being the best offer he would not sell him for that & so made a collection in aid of the purchase. . . . They then pulled the horse & rider up a rope to the yardarm & when near the end of the yard the man slipped out of the horse & let him drop in the sea, another man at the end of the yard shewing a blue light amidst the applause of all the spectators.



The following is the funeral hymn – The Dead Horse



- 2nd And as he passed unto him I said – & they say &c
 Oh poor old Man your horse will die – oh poor &c
- 3rd If he dies we'll dig him a grave – & they say &c
 We'll dig him a grave with a silver spade – oh poor &c
- 4th And if he dies we'll tan his hide – & they say &c
 And if he lives you shall him ride – oh poor &c
- 5th I saw two crows sitting on a tree – & they say so &c
 They were as black as crows could be – oh poor &c
- 6th One crow said unto his mate – & they say &c
 What shall we do for something to 'ate' – oh poor &c
- 7th Yonder, yonder, across the plain – & they say so &c
 I see a horse just three days slain – oh poor &c
- 8th We'll fly & alight on his back bone – & they say so &c
 And pick his eyes out one by one – oh poor &c
- 9th Old horse, old horse, what do you here – & they say so &c
 You've carried turf for many a year – oh poor &c
- 10th Many's the days' work you have done – & they say &c
 Many's the race that you have won – oh poor &c
- 11th Now you are old they you abuse – & they say so &c
 They'll salt you down for sailors use – oh poor &c
- 12th They'll take you up & you despise – & they say so &c
 They'll throw you down & — your eyes – oh poor &c
- 13th They'll take you up & pick your bones – & they say &c
 And throw you away to Davy Jones – oh poor old man



Thursday Sep^r 4th

. . . To breakfast this morning we had a couple of spoonfuls of boiled rice with sugar or molasses & coffee & bread & butter afterwards. To dinner we have tinned meat, beef or mutton, preserved potatoes & once or twice a week pickles. We can have boiled salt pork or beef 3 or 4 times a week if we like, but our stomachs have scarcely come down to that yet. For tea we have tea & bread or biscuit & butter. Generally we have enough such as it is, but occasionally we run short. My little round paunch is gone & I can cross my legs in comfort so I suppose that is something gained. If any of my friends should follow me, I would advise them to come enclosed steerage & spend the £8 or £9 difference in flour & nice preserved fruits & meats, so as to be somewhat independent of the execrable stuff Mess^{rs} Shaw Saville & Co in their generosity supply their passengers with. Yester morning we had a talk of publishing a newspaper on board & I & another gent^l saw the Capⁿ & got leave to post a notice calling a meeting of passengers for today to take the matter into consideration, & if agreeable to the meeting to elect an Editor, reporter &c. We are not sure yet whether it will be printed or published in manuscript only.

Friday Sep^r 5th

. . . The sailors this morning have brought up all the spare sail out of the sail room. I am told they are going to take down all the sails which have brought us so far & put up lighter ones for the warmer climes.

Saturday Sep^r 6th

The second entertainment¹³ came off last night. We had it in two parts – 6 to 7 and 7.30 to near 9 P M. It was in the open air, on the Quarter Deck, i.e over the 2nd Cabins and just in front of Saloon doors. . . . While the concert was on, Oscar, who was in the top bunk, by some means fell out of bed on to the floor & hurt his head. I am afraid seriously. He was comforted & put back, but shortly afterwards he was sick and vomited a great deal, making a mess on his bed. I cannot make it out how he came to fall, he won't confess anything but our raisins & biscuits are in baby's bunk alongside & there was a biscuit on the floor where he fell, so we suppose he had been helping himself & creeping back on the narrow ledge, had thus fallen on the floor. He cannot eat his breakfast this morning, so shall keep him in bed for awhile & ask the Doctor to see him. Poor little chap, he has never been like himself since he came aboard, he seems wan & sickly as if his seasickness had never fairly left him. Though he runs about & climbs the ropes like the other boys, still we see a difference in him. . . . The ship goes along as steady as a top, what motion there is we are accustomed to & we have a difficulty in realizing that we are going at all. We did not see a ship all day yesterday – nothing but a circle of water with the good ship *Euterpe* for its center. In fact we appear to be at the top of the world, the circle of water is so perfect that I cannot understand how any one could see it as we see it & not believe the world is round. . . .

Sunday Sep^r 7th

This morning we had service on the quarter deck. We had got baby safely to bed before it commenced, but as soon as the first hymn was finished I heard him tuning up to top pitch. Of course I had to go down & fetch him upstairs. Not so warm today as yesterday. Yesterday numbers of the passengers came out without shoes & stockings & this morning white & light suits are the prevailing wear. It has come in colder again & shoes are being put on. . . . There has been rather more motion on the ship today & Lizzie has been sick again, though I think partly with the unpleasant smell in the Cabin.

. . . to-day when we went to the Galley for our meat there was not one

ounce for each.

So all went and stormed the Galley, and searched everything but the Cooks said it was all they got from the Mate. .

. .

It is not often we can eat the Meat as it stinks so, we just throw it over into the sea . . .

Steerage passenger
George Lister's diary,
Sept. 8, 1879

Facing page, from Harper's Weekly, November 11, 1882; photo below by Laura Allen



Wednesday. Sep^r 10th

Another fine day. Awoke very early with the men washing the deck overhead & the young gentlemen going out to bathe, i.e. they stand naked & the sailors throw buckets of water over them. Percy went up & had a go & then nothing would do but Guy must go, he would have a bathe – so I stripped him & sent him up. You should have heard the shout of laughter from all the sailors when he appeared. Mr Davis took him in his arms & they gave him 3 buckets full, of course he screamed, but he was so proud as a peacock when it was over & one of the men gave him a drink of coffee. And as soon as he was dressed & on deck again a sailor took him & gave him a biscuit with butter & sugar on the top . . .

The Euterpe Times.
SATURDAY SEP^r 13th No 1.

*The *Euterpe Times* was a handwritten newspaper created by passengers on the 1879 voyage, featuring commentary, poetry, sporting news, pertinent information on topics of natural history and geography, and “Local News.” Not surprisingly, Ellis was its primary creator, and edited the fourteen issues that appeared by the voyage’s end.

Thursday Sep^r 11

Weather fine & genial – tropical dress is becoming quite the fashion on the *Euterpe*. I do not feel any inconvenience from the heat yet. . . . I got the draft of the first No of the *Euterpe Times* * ready yesterday & Joss: [Joshua Charlesworth] has been busy ever since writing out a fair copy. He is up in one of the boats writing as it is too hot in the Cabin – & he finds it somewhat difficult writing decently in a rolling ship . . .

Friday Sep^r 12th

. . . Was up at six & had half a dozen buckets of water thrown over me. Lizzie has been washing our Cabin out & she wishes me to notice that the gent^l opposite (Mr Tichbon) has washed theirs out for his wife, while I have allowed my wife to do ours. I tell her he is hen pecked . . . We have got one fair copy of the *Euterpe Times* No 1 ready. Though I have several conundrums & two original poems in I am afraid it will be considered rather prosy. One poem is entitled a Tragic poem (a long way) after Tennyson, is by a friend of my wives – a Mr Stead Ellis – There is a notice out, for a race round the ship – old Mr Duff against all comers. I don’t know whether it is serious or a Joak [sic].

the young fellows shouted There we live & rejoiced

Saturday Sep^r 13th

The race, between Mr Duff and an Irishman nicknamed ‘Whiskey’ [William O’Hanlon] came off last night – the course was 5 times round the deck – of course Whiskey, a young fellow of 5 or 6 & 20 beat old Duff a man nearly 60 easily even tho= the latter was a teetotaler. . . . Several of our 2nd passengers have been cutting each others hair today. Teddie Rathbourne’s head is like a bladder of lard with a beard sprouting on it. I was up early this morning & all the boys except baby had a bath with me. Returning I slipped with my bare feet on the wet decks and came a cropper on my “latter end.” Of course I was in full dress, i.e I had on bathing drawers & nothing else. Have been busy with my newspaper, it was nearly 5 PM before all was ready for issue. We have one copy for Saloon, one for 2nd Cabin, one for Intermediate, one for single men besides one for the Sailors. Lizzie put on covers out of old *London Newses* and stitched them neatly together. Have had a banquet

today, viz – Cold Chicago beef, preserved potatoes & onion sauce and Gooseberry pie also currant pasty – Think of that & weep. I don't know where the gooseberries came from, but the young fellows shouted "Now we live" & rejoiced exceedingly. We have a large sail fixed as an awning every day now & we find it a welcome shade.

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Thursday Sep^r 18th

Had a birthday party in our cabin last night – 32nd Anniversary of Mr Tichbons birth. The Chief Steward [J. Chapman] assisted the host by the gift of some tinned salmon & raisins & nuts, two of the apprentices (Miss De La Taste & Vivian) were amongst the guests & we had quite a middling sort of a tea which under the circumstances was appreciated quite as much as banquet would have been ashore. The 3 Mates came down to drink the toast of the evening, but at once returned to their duties. After tea whe [sic] had singing & joking & perspiring until 10 PM when we sang God Save the Queen & then came on deck for a Cool. It was a lovely starlight night, but lightning flashed every few seconds. We now lie in bed entirely uncovered & are bathed in perspiration the night through, so much so that our night dresses might almost be wrung out. I suppose if it gets much hotter night dresses will have to be dispensed with. This morning is hotter than any day we have yet had. Harolds friend Aleck (the Capⁿ son) says that his Father considers this to be the beginning of the hot weather. I am just informed by a passenger that he & a few others saw a Dolphin yesterday – Harold saw a seamans chest with the lid open float by. Lat 14.56. Long 28.7 & dist= 151 knots. It turns out the Dolphin was an Albatross. Some folks notions of Natural history are rather vague.

Friday Sep^r 19th

. . . We sleep one at each end of the bed, lying side by side is just out of the question at all events in these latitudes [sic]. What with the narrow bed, 3'-6" wide for 3 of us, self, wife & baby & the last, tho= least, takes up most room of any of us; & what with the stinking, close, confined cabins we are nearly suffocated. Certainly if any of my friends come out to N.Z^d I would advise them to fight shy of Shaw, Saville Cos. I am quite of opinion that some one is to blame for allowing a ship like this *Euterpe* to go to sea with such a few really necessary sanitary appliances. I have before taken exception to the WC^s which are disgracefully constructed, then we have no baths, the men turn out early & throw buckets of water over each other, & this past 3 days the Capⁿ has had a space on the Q^r deck screened off with a spare sail as a bathing place for Ladies – from say 5.30 to 6.30 AM no convenience of any kind. My wife had a bath yesterday morning. Then we have only one force pump [deck-mounted hand pump] on board & for more than a week that one was broken & if a fire had then occurred we should have been entirely dependant upon hand buckets – it would have been broken yet but a passenger Mr Wagstaff took & repaired it; the remuneration offered him for doing so was so munificent that he told me himself he should not have done it had there been another pump on the ship. Then the hose pipe for the pump is so bad or poor, or perhaps rotten, that they dare not use it for swilling the decks or giving baths, or even drawing

*Birth of a female child about
12 oclock by
Mrs. Fairhurst, just on
entering the tropics.
She is to be christened
"Euterpe."*

Second-class passenger
Joshua Charlesworth's diary,
Sept. 15, 1879

Bilge pump.

Photo by Laura Allen



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Several of the passengers are very dubious about this 'Crossing the Line,' not on account of any shaving by Father Neptune, or other pranks or practices of the Sailors but as to the consequences of the Ship and themselves.

Will it cause the Euterpe to bump violently? Some have expressed their determination not to sleep until it is safely passed for fear it should be crossed in the night and they should be pitched out of bed, others there are who expect to see the line, something of the nature of a clothes line we presume.

As we have never crossed the Line ourselves, we cannot pretend to say with authority what the Line or process of crossing it may be like, and should be almost sorry to disabuse innocent minds like these of their fears unless we have been actually over it, we therefore can only recommend them to be careful and circumspect and keep their eyes and ears open, so as to be able to look well after their own safety while we all "Cross the Line."

Euterpe Times No. 3,
Sept. 27, 1879

the fresh water for passengers use, for fear it should be absolutely useless in a short time & then if required in an emergency we should be without. The fresh water is drawn by a small hand pump & it is such a rickety machine that it takes 2 or 2 1/2 hours to get the necessary supply, which with the force pump (if we dared to use it) could be got in half an hour, besides the labour is four times as great with the hand pump we use. Then in our cabin we have no proper ventilation, we have put a wind-sail down, but the only place we have to put it is down the hatchway (our stairway) so that we can hardly get down, or down the foul air shaft which is close to the stairs, in fact on the hatch cover. We have the windsail down the latter & try to make the stairs act as extractor, but it's a farce. The windsail ought to drive the air in at one end of the cabin & the ventilator take the vitiated air out at the other end, so that we might have a chance of a change of air. I suppose some official has inspected the ship & found matters all right. I only wish he was forced for the rest of his days to sleep in my cabin with six others in the Tropics & only have a broken or rotten pump on board & a couple of hundred reckless passengers, a lot of whom persist in sleeping Tween decks on the sly. Just had dinner – A cup of pea soup & a little, very little sago pudding. Too hot in the middle of the day for meat, especially when you cannot get it, & Lizzie has been too poorly to get anything ready. Cold salt pork was ready, but that was not tempting.

Almost before we could get down stairs the squall was upon us

Saturday Sep^r 20th

. . . Had a tropical squall last night. It was quite a fine evening, we were all lounging on deck & with only a couple of minutes warning, a regular guster came up. Fortunately a fair wind & we were flying along at a terrific rate, directly a little darkness first shews in the horizon, all the sailors are told to their posts, apparently to every main rope a man, so that if the squall should prove a hurricane every sail can be at once let down so that the masts may not go by the board. Almost before we could get downstairs the squall was upon us & the rain came down in torrents. I suppose this region of the Doldrums, or variables, is peculiarly apt to have these very sudden & violent storms. Also for changes of very light winds one can scarcely tell from which quarter it is coming & the sailors have to shift the yards & sails from port to starboard, then set square, then back to port every few minutes to catch every wind that blows. . . . Have been sickly all day – just had a glass of beer & feel much better in consequence.

↓ ↓ ↓

Wednesday Sep^r 24th

A splendid hot morning. Last evening we had another birthday party in honor of Mr Chapman's birthday (the Steward) he provided the extras, tinned lobster, salmon, & a plum cake. Toasts, singing, fiddling up to 10 PM when we had our usual God Save the Queen – Mr Rosen the half & half Yankee refusing to rise while it was sung – confirming our opinion we are all forming that he is a conceited & disagreeable young puppy . . .

↓ ↓ ↓

Saturday Sep^r 27th

Fine morning. *Euterpe* still going E SE instead of S W. Got 'Times' ready early this week – only going to have 2 or perhaps an extra one for Saloon if they copy their own. Down the main hatch (married peoples steerage quarters) they cannot afford to give me paper to write their copy on & so are going to leave them without one

in future. They are a mighty jealous lot, say it is a class paper because it is got up in the 2nd Cabin, while really my principal contributor is a young fellow in the steerage. . . .¹⁴

Sunday - Sep^r 28th

. . . I did not get up till near 12 noon as there was nothing to breakfast to tempt me & I was feeling awfully disgusted with the ship & all its belongings. I felt as if I should like to remain in bed the rest of the voyage – of course I did not get to the Cap^{ns} service, which I hear was very well attended. On Friday night one of the bobstays carried away and yesterday morning the other one gave way, so that we were in danger of losing the jib-boom, the jib sails were at once taken in & temporary repairs made, new chains & ropes fixed to take the place of those broken – on dit, [sic] if it had been rough weather, the jib-boom & also the foremast would have gone by the board. I am afraid the jib got damaged in the Thames in one of the two collisions we had there. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

crossing the line

Wednesday Oct^r 1st

We have passed the line since yesterday; at least we suppose we have. The Sailors signed Articles not to make any disturbances at crossing the line & so the passengers took the matter in hand – several have been sailors & arranged to do a little shaving¹⁵ on their own account. One of the men who was spotted for shaving turned up rusty & threatened to Knife the first one who touched him – so that there was nothing of that kind done. It resolved itself into a sort of dowsing or sowsing match. It commenced by some fellows getting buckets up into the boats on the quiet & at about 1/2 past 10 (the boats are kept half full of water to prevent the wood drying) they began throwing water on to those below, who of course returned the compliment & until after midnight the deck was a regular deluge & screams & shouts of laughter were constant. Some few slipped below & stripped & putting on drawers returned on deck ready for anything. Others after stripping put on Macintoshes & looked quite surprised when they were sowed, as if they did not expect it, while the fellows thinking they were drenching their clothes redoubled their efforts. Harold very early in the spree took off his clothes (except his knickers) & so of course he got thoroughly wetted.



About nine Oclock Old Neptune shouted from under the Bowsprit.

(It was one of the passengers who acted Neptune. He was dressed with an old coat and long wiskers [sic] made of towed flax.)

A good number of the passengers went on the forecastle to see him, and some of the sailors and passengers had the boats full of water, unknown to most of the passengers,

and when Neptune had spoken awhile from below the bowsprit, he called for water and those in the boats throw water on the passengers . . . none escaped not even the Captain, only the women that was below escaped.

Steerage passenger
George Lister's diary,
Sept. 30, 1879

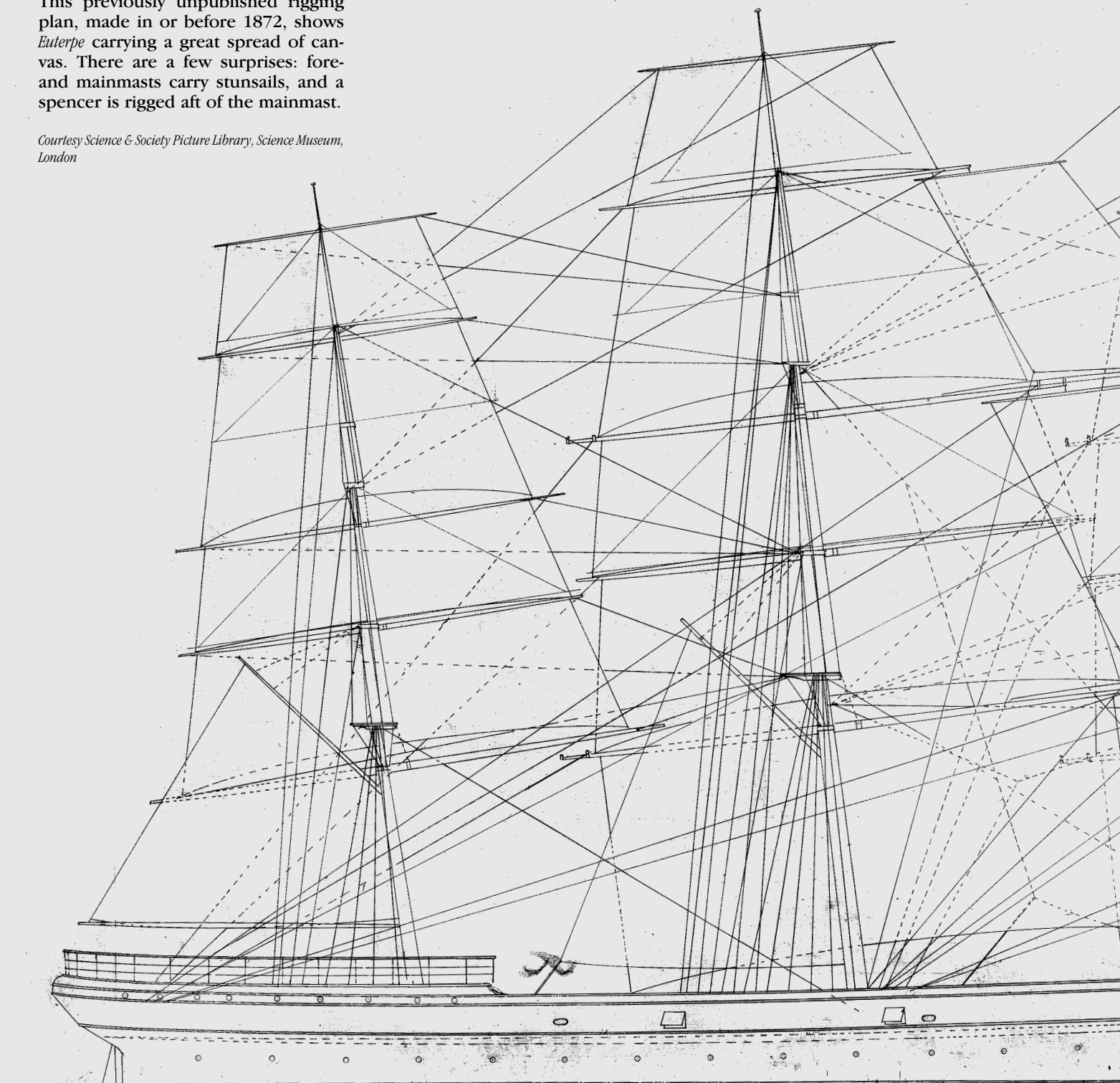
King Neptune watches the shaving aboard an American ship, 1899.

From The USS Albatross in the South Seas, Japan and Alaska. MMSD Coll.

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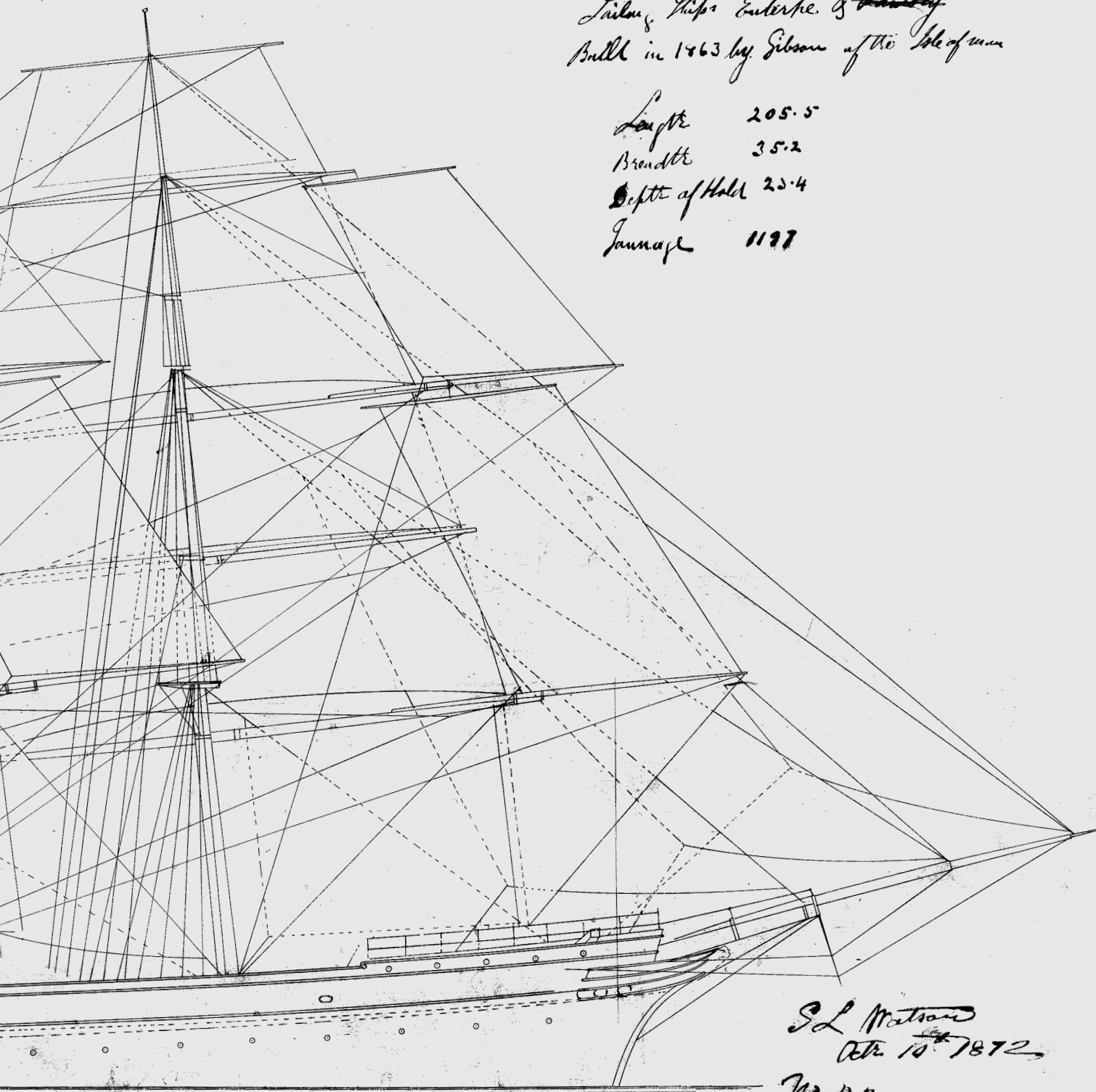
This previously unpublished rigging plan, made in or before 1872, shows *Euterpe* carrying a great spread of canvas. There are a few surprises: fore- and mainmasts carry stunsails, and a spencer is rigged aft of the mainmast.

Courtesy Science & Society Picture Library, Science Museum, London



Rigging Plan of
Sailing Ship "Euterpe" & "Star of India"
Built in 1863 by Gibson of the Isle of Man

Length 205.5
Breadth 35.2
Depth of Hold 25.4
Tonnage 1197



S. L. Watson
Oct 10th 1872
No 52

c/4/21

33

*If the Second Class
Passengers are allowed to
use the poop
as a promenade,
[despite the rules]
cannot that privilege
be extended to us.
... Yours Respectfully,
"A Steerage Passenger"*

Letter to the Editor,
Euterpe Times No. 11,
Nov. 22, 1879

Photo by Laura Allen

*When first he came
on board this ship
He had an open berth.
But being with
a noisy crew
He did not like
their mirth.
He, and all his mates
did all agree
To change their
place of living
And thro' some gold
and jugglery
Have now
an enclosed cabin.*

from a poem by "Euterpean"
(steerage passenger Walter
Peck), *Euterpe Times* No. 12,
Nov. 29, 1879

He has no other knickers to put on, as his spare ones are down in the hold so he has to remain in bed until they are dried at the Galley. . . . This afternoon we have had some sports, in which as usual I was put in the front as referee, time keeper, umpire &c. We had races, 5 times round the deck. 3 legged races, races carrying pail full of water on the head. Tug of War &c &c In the race for boys under 13 Claude came in an easy winner by half the length of the ship – it was twice round the ship. He ran beautifully. Percy beat his opponent, tho: he himself looked finished when he came in. 10 passengers beat 10 Sailors in the Tug of War – but the passengers were far & away the heavier men.



Thursday Oct-2nd

. . . Yester evening I tin whistled for a party of Gent^m to dance, Sir Roger, (I danced myself the evening before when we had a fiddle) after dancing a while they began playing leap frog &c and while at these games 3 men with faces blacked & dressed in oil skins came behind Mr [Walter] Peck & suddenly seized & threw him down crying 'a shave a shave' & immediately covered his face with tar treacle &c and then drenched him with water; it was done so quickly & quietly that he had no chance of resisting. He was awfully wild as it was he who threatened 2 inches of cold steel to the first man who attempted to shave him. Of course that was taken as a challenge quite as much as a threat & I was not at all surprised when he was seized. It was too bad, but while he was washing himself near the Galley some fellows got on the cookhouse & threw a pailful of tar right on to his head, nearly suffocating him. We had previously had a lot of quiet shaving the same evening, our own steward being amongst the number operated on & we had thought it was all over when Peck was seized. He publicly challenged any one of the men who did it to single fisticuffs. He wants to have some revenge. . . . Have had a Tug of War between 2 crowds of sailors this aft'noon, watch against watch, the starboard watch being Victors. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Saturday Oct-4th

Up early & got Lizzie out & she had a bath – got her an early cup of tea, so she is quite lively in the midst of her cleaning down, Saturday being usually devoted to getting matters to rights in our Cabin & washing the floor. Rosen (the Yankee) won a silver watch in a raffle on Wednesday & so last night we had another Party in our cabin; grog, nuts & raisins being the fare & songs & chaff

[good-natured ridicule or teasing] the amusements. Soon after I turned out this morning I saw [J. B.] McMillan our 2nd Mate fighting one of the Swedish seamen [Johan Adams].¹⁶ Mac had the man's head under his arm In Chancery & gave his face a sad mauling. I'm afraid the officer was scarcely justified in striking the man & he will be retaliated upon if he does not take care – this is the 2nd Swede he has quarrelled [sic] and in both cases he was rusty for very little. I suppose he considers himself a good hand with his fists & that will make him cheeky & ready to fight & ready to fight on little provocation. . . .

Sunday Oct^r 5th

A fine day with good breeze blowing – attended Cap^{ns} service on the poop & had a pleasant service. Just had dinner – Australian meat & preserved potatoes made into a pie and a tart afterwards. This is quite a grand Sunday dinner. The food being provided by the owners for us poor Emigrants is of such a quality, even in 2nd Cabin, that my round paunch, which all my friends in England so well remember, has turned about & is going in towards my back bone. Before I land I shall be able to cross my legs same as Uncle Willie did when he returned from America. . . . According to chart we are no great distance from Pernambuco¹⁷ in S. America. Guy is a little better now, in fact he is Knocking about, but he is very fretful. It is very hot in the sun today, but we have plenty of shade with the awnings & sails and the breeze makes it quite pleasant. Saw a homeward bound vessel, directly after service this morning & run our signal up, but we were apparently too far off for them to distinguish it or reply to it & we very soon lost sight of each other. The evening service took place as usual.

Sunday Oct^r 6th

A fine breezy day, warm & having sudden squalls every hour or two. . . . We have all sail set (except stay sails) though it is so squally; but every time we see a squall coming, the officer on duty gives the command "Stand by the Royal Halyards" I suppose to let the sails run free for fear of their being torn away or the ship capsizing, which latter is an event I have no desire to be a witness of. Another homeward bound ship was in sight directly after dinner, making five today as we have been a week or ten days together & not seen a ship of any kind. I suppose we are in the track of the Homeward bounds which we cross in a day or two & then we may possibly not see another ship until we get to our Journeys end, which we are talking about reaching by the end of Nov^r, though I give us up to the 7th Dec^r and shall be all the better please if we are there earlier. We hope to have our Christmas dinner in a shanty of our own. A large fish been seen today, some say a whale, tho: I am afraid nobody knows exactly what it is. We see hundreds of flying fish every day, some seem to take quite long flights, 100 yards even sometimes, tho always very little above the surface of the water, only a few feet above it in fact. We now & then see a benito make a dash among them when a whole shoal will dart out of the water like a lot of swallows.

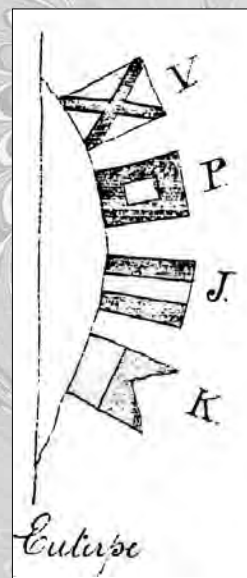
Tuesday Oct^r 7

Today is ditto to yesterday, fine, squally & breezy. The inner jib sail has been torn away this morning & the bowsprit keeps dipping its head into the waves and half drowning the people near. Have been getting up a raffle for a revolver . . .

he struck him & knocked him down

Wednesday Oct^r 8th

Today we have had boxes up again to put away warm weather clothing & to get out what we shall require. Lizzie has lost or misplaced all our keys so I borrowed keys all round until I got one to fit, and unfortunately in opening our box, the key broke in the lock. I got the bit out & one of the passengers is going to join it to



From Joshua Charlesworth's diary

*There is a lively sort
of chap,
Who's down our
for'ard hatch;
I guess for sea-antipathy,
On board he has
no match.*

*For him a sea-life
has no charm,
He'd sooner be on land;
He cried "To be on
shore once more,
A Five pound note
I'll stand."*

from a poem by "Euterpean"
(Walter Peck), *Euterpe Times* No.
1, Sept. 13, 1879

*In the evening
a concert was held
in the Main Hatch . . .
You will think that the time
passes away dull on board
ship, but it is not on board the
Euterpe,
for at nights there are
Concertinas, Tin Plates,
Bone Natters,
Fiddles, & Fifes. . . .
So there are playing, singing
and drumming [sic] going on
until
about twelve O'clock.
I am sure if we were on land
they would think we were all
heathens.*

George Lister's diary,
Nov. 28, 1879

the key again. We got out Harold's knickers, a dress for Lizzie, nightdress for Guy & two extra blankets & now I think we are prepared for cold weather. I wish to goodness we were off this ship. While I have been writing this a Greek sailor called Antonio & Mr Romer a German who is 3rd Mate, have been fighting. I don't know what for, or about, & the mate has just passed with his face covered with blood. I am told the Greek has got badly punished & I do not doubt it for Romer is a big & very powerful man. . . .

Thursday Oct^r 9th

The fight yesterday was caused by Romer's short temper, he told the man to do something & the man did not understand, so he struck him & knocked him down on a cask & held & pummeled him without giving him a chance of returning it, however when he got his liberty he challenged Romer to come up & fight him & they then had another tussle & he would possibly have punished the officer but was pulled off. He was put in irons by the Captain because he would not promise to be quiet & go to his work & let bygones be bygones. He was released at 4 o'clock this morning so I suppose some sort of terms will have been made with him. The Skipper severely reprimanded the mate for his temper. Almost unanimously the passengers take the side of the seaman, & think Romer much to blame. . . .

Friday Oct^r 10

We have another beautiful day. They have been busy today fixing stays to the stanchions [sic] in front of Saloon, this looks as if rough weather was expected. Have got 'Euterpe Times' ready for this week and two gent^m are busy making fair copies from my rough draft. Pea soup thickened with preserved potatoes was my dinner today, could not touch boiled salt pork – would have been content with bread but have none to spare or should go without at teatime & we have no flour until it is served out, perhaps this aft'noon. As for the sea biscuits with which they have the impudence to supply us, I do not intend to try one of them again unless I am reduced to the last extremity of starvation. I should like to put in my paper what I think of the owners & provisioning of the ship, but if I did of course the paper would be at once shut up by the powers that be. . . .

Saturday Oct^r 11

Have had a dead calm nearly all day today. I understand the S.E. trades are done with and we are now in a region of variables, wind may come from anywhere. Last night we had another concert (after two weeks rest) my wife sang 'Welcome my bonny lad' it was quite a success. For this evening there is a programme of dances posted to commence at 7.30. After tea yesterday, the childrens races came off & Claude beat all comers 3 times; and twice round the deck – ages 8 to 13. He runs like a hare. A man offered to back him against any man in the ship with 6 yds start. This same man's son was walked right away from by Claude easily & he is 13 or 14 years old. I was quite surprised. Harold this afternoon has been right up to the top of the mainmast, he had to get there to pull himself up a rope above the top of the topmost rattlings (or rope ladders). In fact all the youngsters from Oscar upward can go up the ropes very well indeed & walk on a horizontal ladder hanging by their hands like good ones. Lizzie saw Harold & she was quite frightened until he was safe down again. I suppose he would be over 150 feet above the deck. Our appetites are now returning to us and as we won't eat the sea biscuits we are generally on rather short commons for bread. I wish they would give us more flour, but they won't. . . .



DANCING BETWEEN DECKS.

The sea was like a sheet of yellowish gold

Sunday Oct 12.

The calm has continued all day, I should hardly think we have gone a mile. We all attended Captains service on the poop this morning; and this aft'noon there has been great excitement about some sharks which are about. One 8 or 9 ft long old fellow has been round & round the ship all the aft'noon. The sailors have baited hooks with pork which he has come & taken and then when he has been pulled half way up (clean out of the water) the hooks have slipped & down he has flopped again taking the meat with him. . . . We are very short of bread again, 1 small round each for the boys & 1-1/2 for adults is all we have had for tea. We do not get any more until Tuesday & have only about 3 lbs for 10 of us for all day tomorrow. Since tea Johnson [Martin Johnsson] a Swedish sailor has caught one of the sharks from off the Foc'sle top, every body rushes to see it and there was such excitement, it lay on the deck wriggling about & striking & everybody's legs were in danger until its tail was chopped off. They have since thrown it overboard, because, as I am told, the passengers crowded on them that they could not dissect [sic] it properly & besides its flesh would have been dreadfully offensive by morning. We have had the

*This week we have been
blessed with two
very miserable days,
Wednesday and Thursday,
when a cold, raw, damp,
foggy and generally disagree-
able atmosphere prevailed
rendering life on the Euterpe
anything
but pleasant.
- We should like to suggest
to the owners, that a good
large smoking room well
warmed by steam pipes
& efficiently ventilated,
would be an Welcome addi-
tion [to] the many attrac-
tions?*

*of the Euterpe.
Euterpe Times No. 12,
Nov. 29, 1879*

most beautiful sunset tonight I every [sic] saw, or saw depicted by artist. The sea was like a sheet of yellowish gold with shades of purple and one bright line of glorious fire right from your eye along to the setting sun, the sky having corresponding lines. I sat entranced on the bulwarks of the ship until the sun sank clean into the water and the cold grey of evening replaced the sunset tints. It was a glorious sight.

Monday Oct^r 13th

. . . The shark caught yesterday had a sucker fish attached to it, a most singular fish about 9 ins long, it has been given to Harold & we have it in a pickle jar & we ought to have it filled with spirits of wine or gin. I cannot get the former & I cannot spare the latter. Have been busy all morning cutting bits of cloth for a door mat. . . . The wind has got up a little this evening & now we seem to be going 4 or 5 knots an hour. Chapman the Steward has been busy today cutting out a piece of ornament with a fret saw, the pattern of which I have designed for him. It is to put up in the corner over his bunk & will look very pretty. This evening is beautifully fine & I have been drilling the young ones, they enjoy it very much and the older ones think it great fun.

Tuesday Oct^r 14th

. . . I have had the young ones drilling again and now Harold is busy making wooden guns to arm them with. I have a squad of about 12. A dolphin has been seen playing about the bows of the ship this evening, it was hooked but it got away again. People say it was a beautifully coloured fish.

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Thursday Oct^r 16th

Last night the wind got up nicely and this morning there is quite a messy sea, we appear to be sailing S by E and the wind is blowing E so that we are not going quite our course. Still we are doing 7 or 8 knots. The apprentices who have been on the ship several years tell us that we may expect the sea on the decks several feet deep occasionally during the next few weeks & we shall have to hold on to the stanchions & other permanent fixtures when we move about the deck, and not to seize hold of the hatch covers or horse or sheep pens¹⁸ when a sea is shipped as these may be washed away. . . .

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Sat. Oct^r 18th

Yesterday aft'noon about 3.30 we were going along merrily when all at once the sails filled backwards, the wind having changed entirely, coming from exactly opposite direction, by the time the sailors had got all yards turned & sails trimmed to fit the fresh direction of the wind it suddenly ceased & we had a dead calm, the sea going down very rapidly. I understand it freshened a little during the night and now we are doing about 24 miles a day, just moving. Lat 28.15 Long 27.58 dist 60 is just posted [on the blackboard, by the Captain], so we must have done a couple of miles an hour, or more, since the change of wind, besides the 8 or 9 an hour previously - Lizzie has been busy all the morning preparing Guy's birthday cakes & tarts &c. It is the little man's third birthday tomorrow; he is out of sorts again, ——'d the bed again last night (clean blanket put on yesterday) & was up again by daylight at the same old game. I took him to the Dr this morning and he has given him some powders to take. I hope they will cure him for he is very tiresome. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Wednesday Oct^r 22nd

A fine bright cold morning, just as we like to have it in May at Home, the sea sparkling in the sun with a white crest on every wave. Last night we had a very small do in our cabin in honor of Guy's birthday. On Sunday I was ill & on Monday my wife was ill so it came off last night. . . . It seems as if fate were determined we should not get to NZ^d this year. I should like to go to bed & sleep until we sight it. Lizzie is poorly again, been sick I believe. She says it is working by candlelight & the ship pitching. . . .

Thursday Oct^r 23rd

Another fine May sort of morning, the wind still against us. sometime in the night the main top gallant yard (the cross spar) fell down & was caught & stopped in its downward careen by the yard next below it. I was fast asleep – heard nothing of it, but am told it made a great noise & caused a great fright. All hands are busy this morning getting it down & repairing the damage to rigging. Baby is very poorly yet, dirtying half a dozen napkins a night – Guy is rather better. I have forgotten to note the fact but for the past week or two, we have had quite a number of Albatrosses about the ship – this morning they are swooping round & round, with their great wings gracefully flapping in the air. I suppose they measure 12 to 18 or even 20 ft across from tip to tip of wing – they certainly look beautiful, their breasts make beautiful muffs, there are a few on board made in England from birds caught last voyage or so back. We have caught none yet. They are caught from the poop, where we poor beggars are not allowed to go. . . .

A wet & wild day

Friday Oct^r 24th

A wet & wild day, nearly all sails close reefed and upper yards lowered. One staysail is blown away & torn to ribbons and some rope or stay belonging to the Mizzen [sic] mast rigging has broken away. I don't know its name. I think the wind is getting higher & higher, anyhow our officers appear to be preparing for the worst weather that can come. Lat 33.00 Long 20.47 Dist 128 is today's notice. I expect we shall run down to 40 South in about 2 days if this wind holds and then we shall commence to run our Easting down. Baby was very ill during the night, the Dr is without suitable medicine for Infantile Diarrhoea, so we are doing what we can – Arrowroot, cornflower with a drop of brandy in it is our present remedy, he seems to want nothing but 'the titty'. Harold is out of temper again because I won't allow him to go on deck in the storm – in fact he is out of temper continually and I am half inclined to turn him out of house & home directly I set foot on land. I know nothing and as he is so much wiser & cleverer than I, he may as well do for himself.

Saturday Oct^r 25th

The storm or gale continued with great strength & fury all night – the seas came right over the ship – we rolled tremendously & soon after getting to bed, the boards forming our bed bottom came away & we were in danger of falling through bodily on to the youngsters below – of course we got up & re-fixed the boards & tried again, but it was no use, the boards were too short or the bed was too wide. Here was a go, looking out of our cabin I saw the Steward & Mr Tichbon & Mr Young busy swabbing up the water which was coming down the hatchway in bucketfuls every

These plum-duffs that
we've made, by Jove,
they are fine

A sweet reminiscence
wherever I dine

We make them with
biscuits crushed up
into crumbs

We make them with
treacle, we make them
with plums

We make them with sugar,
raw, sandy & hard

A spoonful of limejuice,
a little chopped lard.

With some fat off the pork,
cut up very small

With a handful of
flour – I think that
was all

Except some potatoes to
make it boil light

Then washed out a
dishcloth & rolled
it up tight

Let land lubbers think
they know how to cook
Just wait for a nautical
cookery book.

from a poem by "Euterpian"
(Walter Peck), *Euterpe Times*
No. 13, Dec. 6, 1879



2nd-class passenger “Lizzie” Ellis and her sick baby were invited into the 1st-class saloon by Mr. Crossley. There, the muse Euterpe gazed absently from her skylight, as she does today.

1930s photo; MMSD P8579

roll giving you the upward shake & the return roll the downward. We got up early & fortunately the water had not reached us, though it had been in every other cabin in the place. The night was so rough that they expected something would have gone wrong for the Carpenter was sent round to see what was required in the way of repairs. He found our bedboards an inch too short so he put an extra lath under & nailed all fast. I hope they are right now. Remained below all morning & after dinner went on deck & sat on our hatch cover with Guy astride my knees where he fell fast asleep. Lizzie was sat on the poop steps with the other Ladies but would come & sit with me awhile – after a bit the ship gave an extra deep roll on one side & she slipped off her seat on to the deck & as there was 8” or a foot of water on the deck she slid right across into the scupples [sic] (as the gutter along the ships side is called) here she got drenched with the wave which carried her & which of course collected there, she seized hold of a rope here, but was too stunned or surprised to hold on & on the return roll she was carried right across the ship to the opposite scupple & banged with great force against the bulwarks – here she was unable to get a hold of anything & consequently she was again carried right back to the other scupples and again smashed against the bulwarks and very likely might have repeated the performance again but that the General & the 3rd Mate ran & seized her and landed her safe & dripping wet on the top of our cabin steps. I was quite unable to help or try to help her, for Guy was fast asleep sat across my knees & it took me all my time to hold on to my seat by clasping the ventilator which I was leaning against. Very fortunately she was not seriously hurt & took her involuntary swim all in good part. She sobbed when the water came over her at first, but of course she and everybody else laughed when it was all over. A lot of the women folk in the steerage fell at the same instant as Lizzie, one a very nice Lady named M^{rs} Owen having her leg (small bone) broken as she went to change her clothes after her wetting. . . .

prospect of all the cabins being shortly ankle deep in water. However Lizzie was spent & I was bound to make her a bed somehow so I took a stool, all our boots, old paper soap box & all odds & ends in the place & strewed them on the floor of our Cabin, on these I placed our mattres [sic] & on that the bed & then I lay down & rolled myself in the clothes. I had first of all got Lizzie & baby into the low bunk with the boys – six of them in one bed 3 ft 6 ins wide. However Lizzie thought I looked so comfortable that she turned out & joined me – so that we lay there & did as well as we could – we certainly did get snatches of sleep, but nothing to call rest – we were now lying across the ship & consequently experiencing a motion we were not used to – it felt like all ones interior being shaken from bottom to top of ones body & vice versa – one



Monday Oct-27.

9 PM. This morning came in cold, wet & miserable, it was so cold down in our cabin that I could not sit to nurse without my overcoat & hat on. Came on fine in the afternoon & has continued so since. Ship rolls considerably, but nothing like what we have been having lately. Baby is much better tho: his diarrhoea is not quite stayed – he is quite lively & good tempered. Mr [C. Dampier] Crossley asked Lizzie to go into the saloon to see Mrs Crossley about him, she has been very kind enquiring after him & sent him her medicines . . . We are now going bravely with all sail set square before the wind. Carpenter is busy preparing a new yard for main top gallant, which has been delayed by the bad weather.

Tuesday Oct-28

A fine morning, the wind strong & dead aft so that we are going along famously, we expect to round the Cape of Good Hope in about a weeks time. We are “running our Eastings down” we were yesterday noon 12.11 degrees W of Greenwich and we have to run to some 176 degrees east of ditto, some 8000 [miles] and we are all talking as if we were already there, pretty sanguine, eh! This morning had one spoonful of burgoo (porridge) to breakfast & when we were all expecting to begin our coffee &c, we were told by our Steward that there was no bread for us, it was only just put in the oven; so those who could ate a ship biscuit and those who could not (Lizzie, I & one or two of the young ones) had to go without. This kind of work makes me feel very sore. There is no doubt our cook has to work very hard & Shaw, Savill & Co ought to have provided a separate Galley as the cooking places are called for a baker & both would have plenty to do to keep things in decent order for 200 people. . . .

Wednesday Oct-29th

Baby looks a little thin old man, but still he is a little better & quite merry. A splendid day, but top coat weather & in the evenings it is bitter. The new yard has been fixed today, carpenter has made a very good job of it; it is the top one but one on the main mast & though it appears so little is 50 ft 4 ins long, in fact rather shorter than the old one which was found to be rotten. While it was being fixed a halyard broke & let a sailor fall a few yards, but he lighted on his feet & is no worse for his jump. . . . Have been busy making a thyble (a porridge stirrer) Youngsters are all very fond of it now, we have it & boiled rice every alternate morning & Lizzie says we are to continue it ashore.

Thursday Oct-30th

. . . Last night from 6 to 10 we had a splendid breeze & were doing about 11 Knots with every sail set & full. About 9 the fore royal brace carried away, just as the breeze was at its best. In fact we never have a good breeze but something carries away, unless they at once take in sail. The ship appears to be fully equipped with rotten ropes & chains. Perhaps I am no fair judge, for the officers say that ropes breaking &c is to be expected. I don't care much if the old tub only floats us quickly to our journeys end. I forget to mention that Aleck caught a Patagonian hen on Tuesday, it is a very large dark brown bird & measures 6 ft tip to tip. Tichbon's line caught it as Aleck gave the bird to Mrs T. She is purposing having a tippet out of the wings and a muff out of the breast, that is, if the curing turns out satisfactorily. Lat 40.25 Long 0.11 E Dist 211 so that we are east of Greenwich for the first time since we left the Downs. Mr Young of our cabin is down with dysentery & has the Dr attending him. Miss [Ann] Jacobs, an old voyageur, who was very kind to all the Intermediate passengers when they were sick, is down seriously ill, some inward complications & yesterday it was said she was not likely to recover. She is easier today. I do not know whether I have mentioned the 'Cape pigeons'¹⁹ which we have had in great numbers about the ship this past 3 weeks. They are very pretty, black & white piebald like a butterfly – not

Upon one occasion very early in the morning, a person rushed up one of the hatchways in a sad state of dishabill [sic], and excitedly sanguine, there was the light on the Starboard bow; his fears were no doubt considerably relieved when he was informed that the light in question was only the Harvest Moon!

*Euterpe Times No. 1,
Sept. 13, 1879*



Harold and Stead Ellis, about ten years before emigrating to New Zealand.

Courtesy Siobhan Stead-Ellis; previously unpublished

mottled or streaked, but white birds with dabs of black across the wings & body, in size a large pigeon. These & Albatrosses, Mollyhawks²⁰ & Patagonian hens are constantly flying round in scores so that our sea-scape is quite lively.

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Sunday Nov^r 2nd

Nearly a calm this morning, & very cold and cloudy. Service in saloon, did not go as felt out of humour with things in general & the calm in particular. Lat 41.14 S. Long 10.45 east, distance 131. Came on to rain in afternoon. Middleton caught another Mollyhawk this morning & Mr Keisenbergh²¹ a German, saloon passenger also caught one. The birds are skinned and the skins make exquisite muffs & the wings 'tippets' for Ladies. The wing bones make lovely pipe stems, and a Mr Skinner a working jeweller on board mounts them, beating out a shilling for the mounts. Wind freshened after dinner & are now doing nine Knots an hour good. Had evening service in the married peoples 3rd Cabin. Mr Thompson a young fellow from Sheffield conducting the service.

Monday Nov^r 3rd

A fine cold morning, the sea looking like black ice & driving snow. S.W. wind, we are going something like 10 Knots an hour. Lizzie is very poorly today, cannot hold her head up – Baby pulls her down awfully & she never hardly gets a nights rest, he pulls at her all night through. It is so cold now we all three sleep at same end of the bunk & there is no room to put him off her arm, & still the bunk is too wide when the ship is rolling. Nothing beats a very narrow single bunk for comfort, you can pack yourself tight & you hardly feel the rolling if you have a fore & aft bunk. . . .

Tuesday Nov^r 4th

. . . Ship rolls frightfully today, takes us all our time to hold on to our seats especially at meal times. Lizzie is much better today & so I think & hope, is baby – only going 4 or 5 Knots now. Hope wind will get up soon. Had a fall on to one hand & knee this morning. Saw a shoal (about 5 or 6) grampuses²² at 10 AM and at 1.30 saw a large whale, a fearful big fellow. I only saw his back & tail & the piece of him I saw measured I should think 10 or 12 yards at the least. Had a bad fall this afternoon, was getting off a spar (a large beam of timber, lashed to the bulwarks, of which to make a mast if wanted) with Guy in my arms when the ship rolling I came down full length.

Wednesday Nov^r 5th

This morning found the ship going along at a good rate, wind got up about 11 last night – raining & a wild sea all day – seas coming at times right over the poop. . . .

Thursday Nov^r 6th

Wind & weather very changeable, very cold day, slight rain & sleet. The other day got a Mollyhawk wing bone given by chief mate, got it cleaned & polished, make a beautiful pipe stem – want to beg a pipe & will then get it mounted in silver & (perhaps) learn to smoke it. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Saturday Nov^r 8th

A fine morning – good wind on Starboard quarter going 9 or 10 Knots – wind changed last night & has been chopping & changing about ever since. Hope it will stick where it is for a week or two. Gave the Assistant cook who is very ill part of a bottle of Hollands last night, I fancy both he & the cook got drunk. This morning sent four rashers [slices] of bacon to be cooked, they have sent 3 back. We have no bread for breakfast as we ought to have had, so I am going without to be able to feel angry enough to write something edifying for Shaw Savill & Co in the last No of the *Euterpe* Times. . . .

Sunday Nov^r 9th

Leeds Fair Sunday. We have had a very quiet day. Sea too rough for us to go on deck – shipping water every few rolls & rolling constantly. Lizzie, baby, Guy & I were the only people in 2nd cabin the whole aft’noon – all the others go to their bunks & read or sleep the whole day, only getting up to meals. We are too crowded in ours or I’d like to do the same . . .

Monday Nov^r 10th

. . . All of us in good health & hungry, but always short of bread. Have to serve the boys 1 1/2 or two very small thin rounds when they could eat 6 or 8 of them. Cannot get any of the exchange made as mentioned in the prospectuses, so all our salt beef & pork [brought along to barter with] is wasted & we are short of bread. Had a row with cook on Saturday, he sent us less bread than we sent flour, so got other two loaves from him. Shall weigh flour out & bread in future.

“where did you get these potatoes”

Tuesday Nov^r 11th

Had a rough night again, wind fair & gone along splendidly. A week or two ago we in 2nd cabin nobbled [stole] a small quantity of fresh potatoes . . .

Wednesday Nov^r 12th

. . . The steerage passengers (single men) have published a Cartoon on “who stole the potatoes” – it represents Mr Tichbon getting potatoes out of a case & saying “I’d get enough to last the voyage this time” and another picture shewing Mr L at the Galley door and Ben the Cook saying “where did you get those potatoes” Mr T replying “I found them, never mind Ben; what will you have to drink.” It is causing quite an excitement. The run to day is the worst since we passed the Cape, Lat 42.27

In the prospectus of the Euterpe it distinctly states that in the case of children the allowance of salt meat may be exchanged for flour, oatmeal, rice, sago etc.

We should like to know how many heads of families on board have been able to make this exchange.

We know one who has not, and while on board the Euterpe for the first time in his life has had to send his children to bed hungry.

When they asked for bread [he] has been obliged to offer them a stone (sea biscuit)

Editor Ellis in *Euterpe* Times
No. 11, Nov. 22, 1879

Rat Catching.

Another exciting sport has suddenly sprung up on the ship . . . that of Rat hunting and has been followed with signal success.

On Friday the 19th inst there was an Exhibition on the quarter deck of the great catch of the preceeding [sic] night, and ribbons were attached to the biggest of the varmint.

Euterpe Times No. 13,
Dec. 6, 1879

Long 52.56 Dist 137. Greater excitement about the potatoes, another Cartoon is out & another promised for tomorrow. Our Cook brought word this noon that the Cook had received orders to open all pies from our Cabin, but, he said, as he took our pie & put it in the oven "it won't be any use opening this one as they won't think of sending any with potatoes in just yet." Our pie had the sliced potatoes in it all the time . . .

↓ ↓ ↓

a huge wave swept over amidships

Friday Nov = 14th

Last night a gale sprang up from the N W and has continued all night & up to this (11 AM) with great fury. We soon had "all hands" taking in sail and were scudding along before the wind with only one sail on each mast. Wind got aft during the night and had difficulty in sticking in the bunk & this morning the wind got further round & is now S.W. I wish it would go down, it is very unpleasant being fast below as we are, the waves coming right over the ship make it dangerous to go on deck. .

Saturday Nov = 15th

The storm continued all day & night yesterday, but at 4.30 p m I think it was at its highest. We were just talking of tea & Harry Leake had come in to see how we were getting on, when a huge wave swept over amidships carrying away the coverings of the main hatch entirely & flooding the intermediate cabin Knee deep, the ship fairly trembled with the blow. The water quickly spread & as we are on the same floor, we were soon entirely flooded, the water coming from their cabin to ours, passing thro: the sail & store room and bringing along with it preserved potatoes, flour, rice &c&c so that everything it touched was covered with slime, it was over the boot tops in our cabin directly, but not before I had got the carpet up & the workbasket & boxes & things on to the bed. The children cried but I took & pitched them all on to the top bunk & there we all set to work bailing out the water & in an hour & a half we got all cleared out, except in the General's cabin which is next to the sail room & that is scarcely clear of water yet (6.30 p.m) & they have been bailing out water all day. The wave beside carrying away the main hatch cover, went right over the ship & carried away part of the taffrail [sic] (the upper part of the bulwarks) on the opposite side. Of course Harry Leake, directly he saw the water coming in such a flood into our place & heard the people screaming (as we plainly could) ran off to look after his wife & children. On his way he was caught by another wave & nearly drowned (quite drenched I mean) the big wave had also carried away a skylight right over the intermediate cabin table (skylight was on the top of the deck house [built over the hatch]) & Harry's youngest boy was sitting at the table when the wave came down & covered him. I suppose the scene was something fearful, women & children screaming, men growling, boxes & bags &c floating about & no one knowing how high the water would get. The officers & men were all on duty & very soon had the main hatch flat cover on & caulked & bolted down, so that there had to be a road made from the intermediate through the single men's cabin for the married people to get out on deck. The sea & wind have moderated to day, a little, but it is still rather dangerous going out as waves every now & then come over the sides. We had our sewing machine in its box, packed with dust sheets & found it drenched & covered with 'burgoo', flour &c. Have been busy all day putting things to right & examining contents of boxes &c. The ship rolls uncomfortably, but we are getting along & that is a comfort. Lizzie was bumped backwards against our Cabin door & burst the panel in & carpenter is too busy to do anything for us & all my own nails are used, so we shall hang a shawl over the opening when we go to roost. . . . The big Dutch 3rd Mate got a good thrashing from a little seamen [sic] named [F. J.] Lowe,²³ whom he was bullying

yesterday afternoon, the man gave the officer (who was fresh, having been drinking 3 days) a lovely pair of black eyes which will take him a week or two to get rid of. This was just before the Hatch cover was carried away. Officers & men fighting in a storm, when everybody ought to have been doing their best for the safety of the ship & passengers.



Stead Ellis's diary concludes with *Euterpe* still at sea. Other accounts offer details of the closing days of this particularly grueling voyage. "There are thousands of rats," reported third-class passenger George Lister in early December.²⁴ "The rats ate part of my boots last night," complained Joshua Charlesworth in his second-class cabin; "we are swarmed out with them."²⁵ Some hungry emigrants even resorted to killing the multiplying vermin with belaying pins, and making rat pies. Years later, another passenger, a boy at the time, remembered "the excitement among the passengers when a rat pie was brought from the galley & the crowd of passengers who followed it from the cook house to the fore part of the ship where the single men bunked."²⁶

At 6:30 on the evening of December 12, 1879, Land ho! rang throughout the ship as the New Zealand coast hove in sight.²⁷ On Christmas Eve, *Euterpe* dropped anchor at Port Lyttelton, where "many who had friends on board were beginning to get somewhat anxious about her," as a Lyttelton Times reporter observed. "The passengers," the reporter continued, "seem to have had very pleasant times on board."²⁸ Diarist George Lister spent Christmas morning walking New Zealand streets at last, remarking that

Lyttelton is a pretty little place, [and] stands on the side of the hills. And nearly all are wooden houses built a little distance apart, and not built close together like they are at home . . . It seems rather queer to have Xmas in [the] middle of summer when fruit is ripe.

*"You shouldn't eat rats,
they're dirty unclean
And surely ain't meant
for our food"
And they say in a
whisper "Please
cut me mine lean
If my daintiness doesn't
seem rude."*

from a poem by "*Euterpean*"
[Walter Peck], *Euterpe Times* No.
14, Dec. 20, 1879

The port of Lyttelton around the turn of the 20th century. For a view closer in time to *Euterpe's* arrival, see the inside back cover.

MMSD Coll.



Lyttelton. Canterbury.

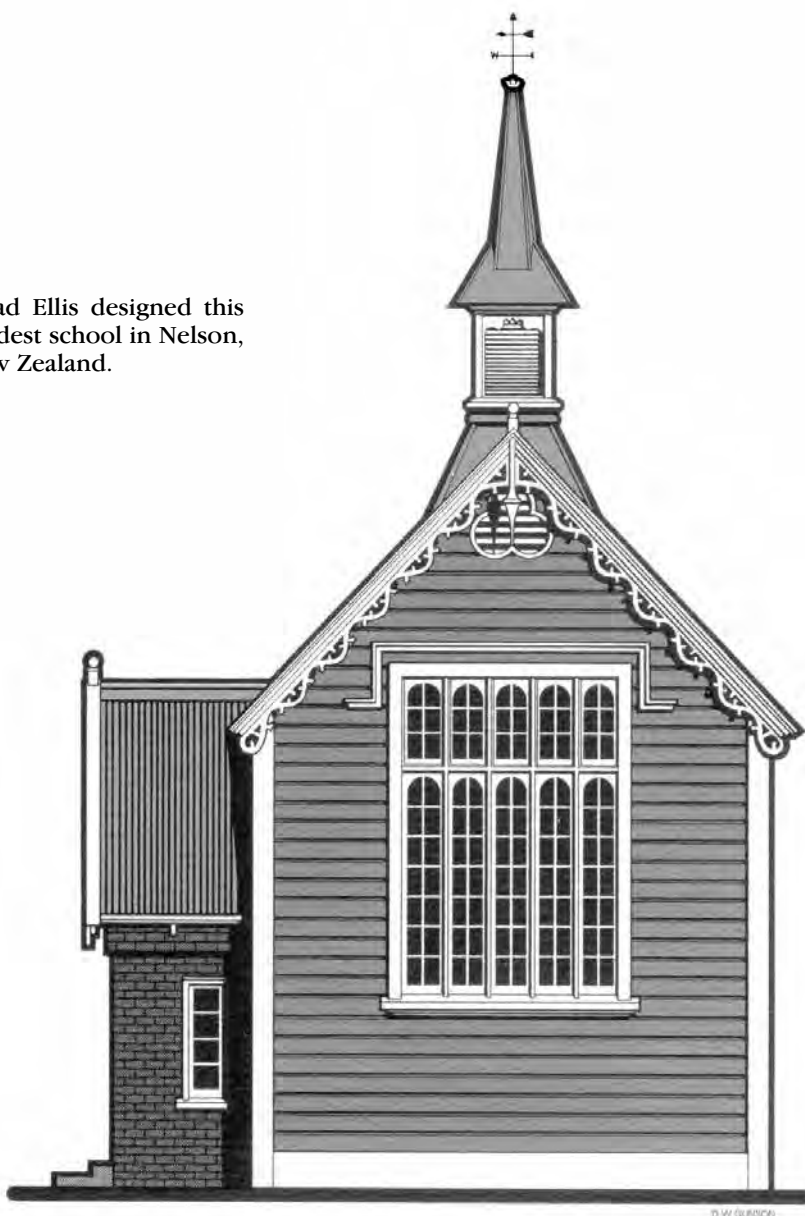
*About midnight on Thursday,
the nearest relation of the
Editor of this valuable paper,
was suddenly alarmed by a
large rat tumbling off the top of
her bunk (a top story one) on
to her head.*

*She shrieked in horror and
springing from her bunk seized
a shawl which she hurriedly
wrapped around and jumped
on the table in the center of the
Cabin – Here she sat perched
up like an Hindoo Goddess,
her eyes almost starting out
of her head with fright and
declared she would never go to
bed again in the Horrid Ship.
However a general illumi-
nation of the lanterns in the
Cabin re-assured her and she
was ultimately reduced [sic]
to return to rest again, but she
says – ‘Not to Sleep’*

*Euterpe Times No. 14,
Dec. 20, 1879*

Stead Ellis and his family settled in Nelson, where within a year he was made secretary and chief architect of the board of education. He was a prominent Freemason, and returned to his favorite sport of competitive shooting. "Lizzie" brought three more children into the world: Maud in 1881, Mabel the following year, and Elizabeth ("Ning") in 1885. On his death at age sixty-eight in 1908, their father was hailed as "an indefatigable worker in the cause of education."²⁹ His long-suffering "Lizzie" outlived him by nine years. Eldest son Harold, who frustrated his father as a sullen teenager on the voyage, became a farmer and lived until 1940. Claude, whose victories in races around Euterpe's decks made the diarist proud, became a schoolteacher. Another footrace winner, Percy, became a solicitor; ravaged by tuberculosis, he lived out his days as an invalid on his mother's farm. Oscar tried farming, but became a dentist and returned to England. Little Guy also became a farmer, while "baby" Rowland moved to Kuala Lumpur and rose to manage a major communications firm.³⁰ As befits a family of globe-girdling emigrants, their descendents today live scattered between New Zealand and Europe.

Stead Ellis designed this
modest school in Nelson,
New Zealand.





N O T E S

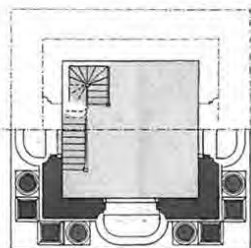
- 1 Stead Ellis, "My Diary," transcript by Joan Semmler and the late Barbara Sarda in MacMullen Library, Maritime Museum of San Diego (MMSD), transcribed from photocopied manuscript donated in 1999 by Harold Huycke; original in possession of Ellis descendent Robin Marriage of New Zealand. The extract published here is condensed to emphasize both distinctive aspects of this voyage and those features typical of emigrant voyages; a complete transcript is at MMSD. Anchor symbols indicate deletion of one or more days' entries. Spelling and punctuation follow the manuscript, but ship names have been italicized.
- 2 Ellis was born in Bradford, West Yorkshire, in 1839. Prior to emigrating he had an architectural practice in partnership with eldest brother William. (Siobhan Stead-Ellis to Mark Allen, 12 October 2003, MMSD.)
- 3 *Euterpe's* 1879 voyage is unusually well-documented; three of five known diaries kept aboard the ship date from 1879. Craig Arnold, ed., *Euterpe: Diaries, Letters & Logs of the "Star of India" as a British Emigrant Ship* (San Diego: Maritime Museum Association of San Diego, 1988) reprints several letters and most of "A Diary kept by George J. Lister On his passage from England to New Zealand in the Year 1879," 29 July 1879-25 December 1879; MS in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand, photocopy and transcript at MMSD. A photocopied set of *The Euterpe Times*, fourteen issues of a handwritten

The Ellis family relaxes at the edge of a tennis court in Nelson about twenty years after their voyage. From left are Guy, Oscar, Elizabeth with umbrella, Stead and Harold. In front are Mabel, Percy, Maud, Claude, "Ning" and Rowland.

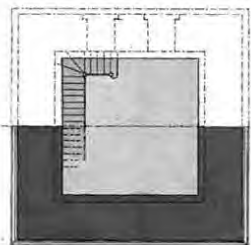
MMSD P13687; courtesy Stuart and Bridget (Ellis) Woodhead and Robin Marriage; previously unpublished

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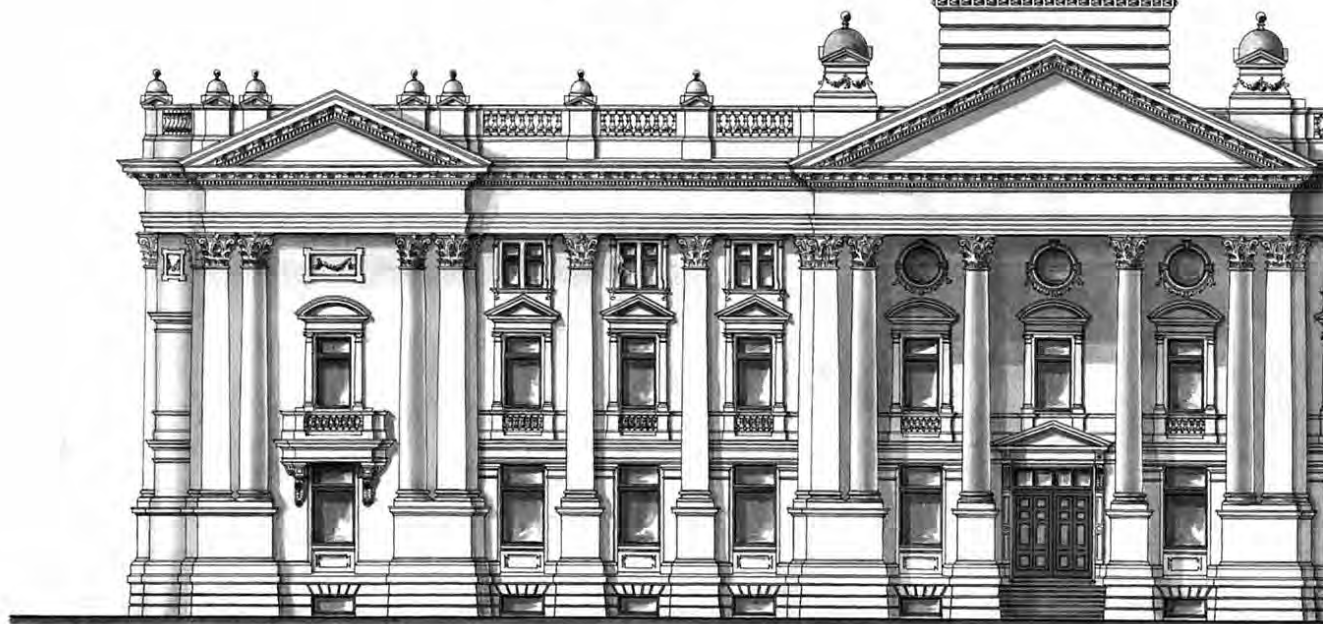
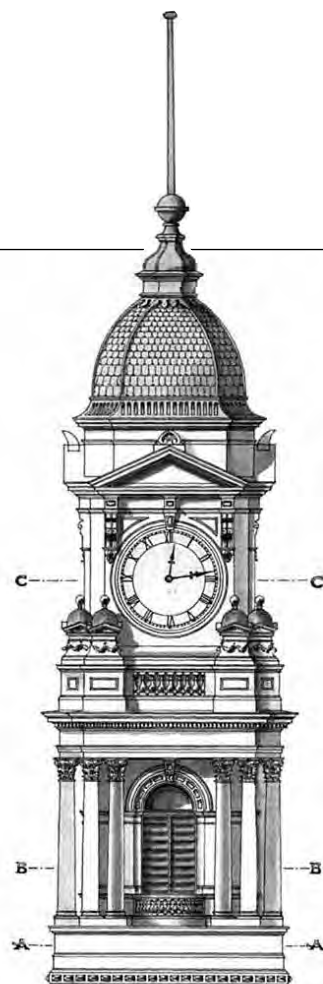
TOWN HALL AND MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS WELLINGTON. N.Z.



PLAN BB.



PLAN AA.

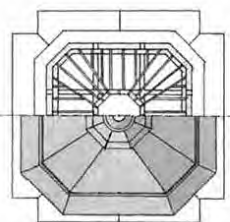


ELEVATION TO CUBA STREET EXTENDED

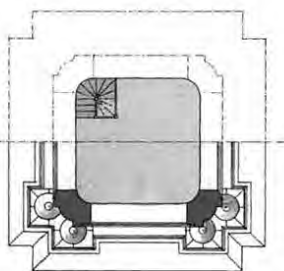
SCALE 8 FEET = ONE INCH.

Joshua Charlesworth—diarist, Ellis's apprentice, and *Euterpe Times* scribe—became a noted architect. His most impressive work is Wellington's 1904 Town Hall, which stands today.

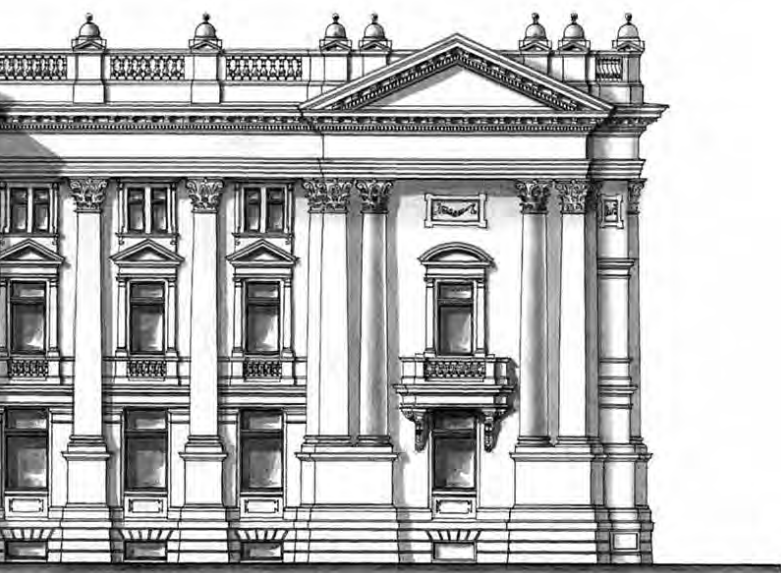
Courtesy Wellington City Archives; previously unpublished



ROOF PLAN.



Floor Plan.



SECTION.

Peterborough, New Zealand
Charlesworth
Architect
September 20th 1901

shipboard newspaper edited by Ellis (13 September-20 December 1879) is also at MMSD; brief sections are reprinted in *Mains'l Haul* (Winter 1989, 3; Spring 1990, 15; Summer 1990, 18; Fall 1990, 7; Winter 1991, 4; Spring 1991, 22; Summer 1991, 32; Fall 1991, 27; Winter 1992, 26; Spring 1992, 29; Winter 1993, 22-23; Spring 1993, 31; Summer 1993, 28). Copies of additional 1879-voyage-related documents at MMSD include Joshua Charlesworth, "Diary on board the *Euterpe* on her Voyage to Canterbury New Zealand" (1 August-24 December 1879), original MS in possession of Shirley Culy, New Zealand; Charlesworth, letter to parents, 10 January 1880; "Agreement and Account of Crew," *Euterpe*, #78441, 30 July 1879, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. No surviving logs for this or any other *Euterpe* voyage between 1871 and 1883 are known.

- 4 The count of passengers derives from "The *Euterpe*, From London," *Lyttelton* [New Zealand] *Times*, 26 December 1879, photocopy at MMSD.
- 5 Ages given throughout are derived from Ellis family tree donated by Bridget Woodhead in 2003, copy at MMSD, and Stead-Ellis to Allen. Bracketed first names or initials likewise derive from other documents of the 1879 voyage.
- 6 The Ellis cabin was evidently on the 'tween deck near the ladder from the quarterdeck, i.e., the present-day main companionway. (See entries for 6 and 7 September, which mention close proximity of Ellis cabin to quarterdeck). The second- and third-class dining area was forward, covering the main hatch; a skylight, ventilator, and companionway for passengers was built into the main hatch cover. Married steerage passengers

Diary on board the "EUTERPE" ON HER VOYAGE TO CANTON NEW ZEALAND.

Xmas 1879.

Joshua Harrison



Photo by Laura Allen

occupied this middle area, separated from second class by a wooden partition athwartships, with single men furthest forward separated by another partition. Cabins opening onto the saloon on the main deck housed thirteen first class passengers, as well as the captain and first mate.

- 7 The vessel involved was probably the 1,313 ton *Habnemann*, ex-*Brunswick*, built 1861. American Shipmasters Association *Record*, 1879, courtesy G. W. Blount Library, Mystic Seaport, Connecticut.
- 8 The steamship *Telford*. *The Times* (London), 4 August 1879.
- 9 Shaw, Savill & Co., of London, owned *Euterpe* from 1870 to 1898. The firm became Shaw, Savill & Albion in 1882.
- 10 Heads (toilets) for passengers in 1879 were evidently on the main (weather) deck, as the 29 August reference to Mrs. Davis being soaked by a wave while en route suggests. On 19 September, Ellis grumbles about "no convenience of any kind" whenever the quarterdeck was screened off to permit women to bathe, which could mean that the heads were located there, forward of the break in the poop.
- 11 Engineer Charles Brown lost his forefinger "in a cog wheel of the lifting gear connected to the engine," possibly an ash hoist used to raise spent fuel from a condenser in the hold. (*Euterpe Times* 1, 13 September 1879.) The condenser was a vital piece of equipment that produced fresh water for passengers' use through boiling seawater, then condensing the salt-free vapors.
- 12 HMS *Tenedos*, a 1,760 ton *Eclipse*-class wooden screw sloop built in 1870, was returning after her crew saw action in the Anglo-Zulu War.
- 13 There were seven organized evenings of entertainment and a children's singing contest put on by the passengers on the 1879 voyage. These evenings consisted primarily of solo and duet songs (Elizabeth Ellis was a frequent participant), poem recitals, and instrumental pieces on violin, piccolo, spoons, "bones," and improvised tambourines. Other diversionary events created primarily by and for passengers in 1879 included dances, auctions, sporting contests, birthday parties, and traditional ceremonies of the sea.
- 14 Steerage passenger Walter Peck composed all poems in the newspaper, signing himself "Euterpean." *Euterpe Times* 13, 6 December 1879. Class resentments among steerage passengers toward the *Times*, Editor Ellis, and others in first and second class cabins are evident in Lister, 10-12 October 1879; Ellis defends himself in *Euterpe Times* 4, 4 October 1879.



Photo by Laura Allen

- 15 Shaving was a common ritual humiliation foisted on passengers and crew who had not previously crossed the equator. Other diaries report three crew members, including the steward, were shaved “with tar and slush and scraped with a piece of hoop iron.” Lister and Charlesworth diaries, 30 September 1879.
- 16 Charlesworth diary, 4 October 1879.
- 17 Now Recife, Brazil.
- 18 The Crossley family, in first class, was transporting a horse on this voyage, and were possibly also bringing sheep for C. Dampier Crossley’s established sheep ranch at Canterbury. The family also brought a cat (lost overboard in an encounter with the captain’s dog) and a prize rooster, which expired and was eaten by the end of the voyage. Charlesworth diary, 21 October 1879; *Euterpe Times* 13.
- 19 Probably *Daption caipense*, the Southern Cape Pigeon.
- 20 Presumably mollymawks, birds of the genus *Thalassarche*.
- 21 The Von Keisenbergh brothers, Willy and Arthur, occupied cabin nine in the saloon. *Euterpe Times* No. 13.
- 22 *Grampus griesus* is a species of cetacean, related to dolphins.
- 23 Lowe was one of two men assigned to be second class stewards.
- 24 Lister diary, 10-11 December 1879.
- 25 Charlesworth diary, 13 December 1879.
- 26 Ernest F. Owen to Harold Huycke, 28 March 1948, in Arnold, *Euterpe*, 132.
- 27 Charlesworth diary, 12 December 1879.
- 28 *Lyttelton Times*, 26 December 1879.
- 29 *The Colonist* (Nelson), 29 February 1908, photocopy at MMSD.
- 30 Bridget Woodhead to Allen, 27 September 2003; Stead-Ellis to Allen, 12 October 2003. Rowland became manager of the Eastern Cable Extension Co.

Model by Dr. William Brown;
photo by John Wright



Euterpe's “Newest” Tale: The 1892 Diary of Reverend Henry Burnett

Edited by Charles A. Bencik and Mark Allen



REV. H. B. BURNETT

When he was photographed around 1890, Henry Burnett's health was beginning to deteriorate. He was ready for a voyage “home.”

Courtesy the Presbyterian Archives of Aotearoa, New Zealand

In October, 2003, a copy of a previously unknown diary kept aboard *Euterpe* arrived at the Maritime Museum of San Diego, home to the restored ship herself.¹ Its author, Reverend Henry Brown Burnett, apparently never intended his 1892 diary to be read by others, for it is filled with observations on his own disordered health—he suffers from asthma, sciatica, and digestive trouble—and lacks the literary polish of Stead Ellis's diary. Its significance lies instead in the fact that it is the only known personal narrative of a *Euterpe* voyage from New Zealand to Britain, and is the only known diary by a first-class passenger.

The fifty-four year old² Presbyterian minister occupied a cabin opening onto the ship's saloon, as did the officers. His diary offers the perspective of one sharing the captain's table—and not relishing the conversation there. Though he finds his interactions with Captain Streater and First Mate Smith consistently abrasive and depressing, a remarkable thing happens as *Euterpe* approaches England: the author's sagging spirits rise, and his health improves.

January 1 Friday

... I have had some talk with [Mr. Elliott, a friend] of late about undertaking the voyage Home i.e. to the land of my birth but I cannot as yet decide. Financial considerations deter me. I think I am begin-

ning to see that I must go wherever the providence of God leads me. Many of the things I have planned for myself evidently have turned out ill.

I am now getting a little better than I have been for the last seven months. What months of suffering those have been. Nights and days of suffering, choked at times with asthma and at others when coming out of those attacks panting for breath. Unable to eat ordinary food. Getting no relief from doctor's advice or remedies.

Saturday 2 January

This day is one to be remembered by me. Mr. Elliott and other friends have laid their hands together and are about to bring the passage money to send me Home. I went to his house by appointment about 10 a.m. From there we proceeded down town to Mr. Wilkens office but the door of Lovin and Cos office being open we went in. Saw Mr. Duncan the agent for Shaw Savill & Co and it was there decided (not finally) that I should go Home in the *Euterpe*, a wind ship making the passage round Cape Horn.³

Had only 7 p.m. to make ready for a run down to Westport that I might see me [sic] family. . . .

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Monday 4 January

Arriving home at 11.45. Saw a few friends at the wharf, but hur-

ried home. Maude [a daughter] saw me coming. She was in the garden in front & called and here is Papa. Ellen excited and breathless. Ruth calm but warm hearted. Bessie and Maude both joyful and cheering to me. Mother [the author's wife Annie] Calm, collected and wanting to know why I have come home. My story of why is soon told – that I must prepare, get much for the voyage to England.

Friday 13th Jany

Sailed from Wellington to day. The tug came alongside at 6 clock morning and with a fair wind we made good head way after the tug cast us off outside the heads [headlands]. Got sick, but trying to get things settled in my cabins. Only one passenger besides myself, a Mr. Griffith. Captain Streater has his wife with him. Twenty-seven souls on board all told. Feeling better in health and spirits and as if I were

now doing something towards recovering while previously when confined in my room in Wellington I was compelled to suffer and wait.. For the sake of my dear wife and children I am prepared to do all I can and suffer hardship that I may recover and be to them a helper and stay. May God provide for them in my absence. The last sight of Cape Talliken about 6.30.

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Saturday March 5th

. . . Am very uncomfortable on board ship when there is head sea; the vessel labours in and one has much to do to maintain his feet through the vessel lurching and sending one to the lee side. It is more difficult to retain one's equilibrium when there is a head wind and the vessel lying well over than with a fair wind, and the vessel heeling very much. . .

. Reading some French and Latin and would have fine opportunity on board for improvement if my health would permit.

Sabbath – March 6th

Had a difference today with the first mate over the subject of the Sabbath: He became rude and personal saying that I ought to have lived at the time of the Reformation. I replied by saying that the Reformation had been one of the greatest blessings to England and indeed to all Northern Europe. He replied, "So I said" That was my opinion. I answered that if he



Two years after Rev. Burnett's voyage and under a new captain, *Euterpe* again lies alongside Jervois Quay in Wellington, using her main and fore yards as cranes to load wool and tallow.

MMSD P188

talked as he was doing now among intelligent men with whom I was accustomed to associate they would think him an ass. He replied they would take me for a lunatic. So that ended the discussion. But this man Mr. [S. W.] Smith invariably ends by becoming personal. So I am resolved to hold no more discussions with him or indeed with any one on board.

Monday 14th.

Last week very hot and muggy. Barely any wind. Made little progress. Nights so warm that I felt uncomfortable in bed. Had little sleep, and about three and a half hours each night (had made up for loss during the day hours.) The Captain grumbling at the weather saying he must get into some cor-

ner and have a good swear. . . . But there is not a spark of genuine wit or humour in this man. The Mate reechos him. The former then Complains, finds faults – a thorough specimen of the sychophant [sic]. I have found out when it is rather late I can not get along with the rudeness of the mate, nor with the prejudices of the Captain. Let me be patient and silent.

↓ ↓ ↓

Monday [April] 11th

. . . How I miss our Sabbaths at Home. The Captain always cynical about religious matters. Sneers in a quiet way at Bible Stories & miracles, calls them “little fibs.” He amuses himself by misquoting the words of the 107th Psalm



Harsh words flowed around the saloon table between Burnett, Captain Streater, and First Mate Smith. Their voices rang off the overhead woodwork, now missing, which appears in this photo taken around 1940.

MMSD P8578, previously unpublished

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. . . in a monotonous preaching tone supposed by him to be an exact imitation of a clerical reader's tone. Then he has some small witticisms on Jonah and the whale, Paul's shipwreck at Melita, the four anchors cast out of the stern also amuses him. Noah and the flood, with Noah's drunkenness, and the inference he draws from the one instance given in Genesis of Noah being overcome with wine is that Noah was a drunkard. Balaam's ass comes in for some

comments, as well as the conduct of Moses when he refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's daughter. Captain Streater's version of the matter is that Moses saw his way to make more money in another direction.

Then this Captain Streater talks about the Queen – “The Old Queen,” having had “a long enough innings,” and “she should pass in her ‘checks’,” and “give another a chance.” N. Zealand comes in for severe animadversions. The people there are all rogues or Scoundrels – get their living by dishonest means. Most of them are in his estimation Convicts or runaways from the Old Country. The Colony has borrowed so much that Home Capitalists will lend it no more. Then the people pretend to know so much, but – it is all pretension. Another pet subject with him is the way the churches raise money – how they get it out of people for missionary purposes, but only a portion of it is appropriated to this end. He once met a missionary who got drunk & lay under the cabin table etc.

Saturday May 7th

. . . Both Monday and Tuesday the sea was very high & the gale strong. Monday night we lay to under single topsails. And when I tried to walk could not keep my feet on deck through the force of the wind. Wednesday the wind went down but the sea kept up. And since then we have had nothing but contrary winds. . . . I believe we are not much nearer land now than we were on Sunday evening last – and even now the wind blows fresh from the North East. Everybody down in the dumps and especially the Captain who gets very sarcastic . . . To-day at the breakfast table he talked about “Broken down parsons taking up Collections.” Then at times he launches out against all things & men in New Zealand. “There is not a single man in New Zealand who can tell the truth.” That was one of his judgments this week. “The greater part of the people of N. Zealand are ones who could do no good any where else & they [are] convicts.” All this and much more I have to listen to an[d]

I keep silent. Never speak to him and I trust I should not have to do so till we reach land. But it is dreadfully lonely here at times with not one to engage with in conversation, there is no sympathy between me and the others in the Cabin. I hear their talk and think it so much twaddle. . . .

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Saturday May 14th

Sighted land – the Lizards today at 4.45 p.m. This is the 120th day since we sailed from Wellington. There were 15 sailing vessels & 2 steamers in sight this morning at 7.30. We were then off the Scilly Islands. I saw the coast of Old England about 7 O’Clock this evening. Not since Decr 1874 have I seen the shores of the Old Land. How low and plain like it looks after N. Zealand. The Lizard lights are now in sight – and we

are going steadily with a good breeze up the English Channel. The air coming over the land from the North West feels quite chilly. And thank God I am much better though not well as yet.

Sabbath morning May 15th

This day four months since we left Wellington N. Zealand. Now we are off Start Point. . . . am much better Thank God this morning. . . . the weight lifting from my chest.

Henry Burnett evidently regained his health, for he returned to his family the following year. He served in three more churches in the Wellington area before retiring there in 1898, frustrated by long delays in paying his minister’s stipend. He lived over a dozen more years, and a New Zealand-born grandson, also named Henry, would follow in his footsteps and become a Presbyterian minister.⁴



REV. H. B. and MRS. BURNETT.

Henry and Annie Burnett posed around the time of their 1866 wedding. The minister was evidently not alone in disliking Streater; Apprentice Edward John Perry, at left, got the night watchman drunk and deserted with another apprentice on January 6, days before Burnett’s voyage. Another apprentice had deserted the previous week.

Above, Presbyterian Archives of Aotearoa; below, MMSD P12905, courtesy Belinda Delzell, previously unpublished



NOTES

- 1 Henry Burnett, “Diary of a Voyage From New Zealand to England by Sailing Ship, Jan [1]-May 15, 1892 Kept by Rev. Henry Burnett, Minister of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand,” Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand; photocopy at MacMullen Library, Maritime Museum of San Diego (MMSD). Anchors denote one or more entries excised for this publication; ship names have been italicized.
- 2 Burnett, born in 1838, grew up on a farm in Northern Ireland. He decided to become a minister, but lacked funds, so he joined gold rushes to Victoria, Australia and Otago, New Zealand. He made enough to put himself and his brother (Rev. Lawson Burnett) through Queen’s College, Belfast, and was married in 1866 in Philadelphia to Annie McKee, of Ireland. They sailed for Lyttelton aboard *Albambra* and, beginning in 1874, served at churches in Amuri, Ashburton, Halkett, and Westport, and in 1890 as Moderator of the Assembly. He fell into ill health in 1890 and retired 1891. “Register of New Zealand Presbyterian Ministers, Deaconesses & Missionaries,” Presbyterian Church Archives, Aotearoa, New Zealand. The editors wish to thank Rev. Hollis Allen for bringing this source of information to their attention.
- 3 Her cargo for England included wool, flax, tallow, and hides. Log of *Euterpe*, 12 January 1892, copy at MMSD.
- 4 “Register of New Zealand Presbyterian Ministers.”

A Sailor's-eye View of *Euterpe* in 1898

Edited by Mark Allen and Charles A. Bencik

Near the end of *Euterpe*'s final voyage from Britain to New Zealand, on March 28, 1898, Captain Hugh Longmuir wrote in her log that

In getting down a block from Fore Ryl. Masthead, Charles McAllear lost his hold and fell from aloft striking the rail and fell overboard. Hodgson Apprentice jumped overboard and swam to him with a Lifebuoy. Picked up them both and took injured man ashore and found he was only Bruised about the hips . . . ¹

This dramatic rescue of a nineteen-year-old seaman near Port Chalmers, New Zealand, earned William Hope Hodgson a lifesaving medal from the Royal Humane Society. ² The twenty-year-old rescuer was an ordinary seaman who otherwise plays no prominent role in *Euterpe*'s history, and soon exchanged the hard life of a mariner for a career as a writer. Several years later, however, he created a unique document about his former ship: an account of a voyage from a sailor's perspective—*Euterpe*'s own

William Hope Hodgson as a young apprentice, a few years before spending 4 1/2 months aboard *Euterpe*.

Courtesy Jane Frank

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Two Years Before the Mast. Like Richard Henry Dana's account of life on a trading brig, Hodgson's brief narrative, from a slide lecture entitled "Ten Months at Sea," provides insights into the harsh conditions often faced by sailors. It also details how they occupied themselves in their off hours, during which Hodgson's own amusements included photography, stamp collecting, boxing, body-building, and making rope mats aboard an aging ship that sailors were already, in 1898, calling "the old *Euterpe*." ³

William Hope Hodgson was born into a clergyman's large family in the village of Blackmore End, Essex, in 1877. He ran away to sea at thirteen, and soon entered a four-year seaman's apprenticeship—a life that he shortly discovered he thoroughly hated. ⁴ In a 1906 article, "Is the Mercantile Navy Worth Joining?," Hodgson dispatched the question in the first line: "CERTAINLY NOT."

Why am I not at sea? I am not at sea because I object to bad treatment, poor food, poor wages, and worse prospects. I am not at sea because very early I discovered that it is a comfortless, wearyful, and thankless life—a life compact of hardness and sordidness such as shore people can scarcely conceive. ⁵

He developed his muscles intensively, and after returning to England from New Zealand after *Euterpe* was sold, established "W. H. Hodgson's School of Physical Culture" in Blackburn, near

Liverpool. (There, in a locally famous incident, Hodgson kept master escape artist Harry Houdini manacled for two hours, thanks to his knowledge of muscle movement and restraints, though Houdini and many of his audience resented Hodgson's aggressive approach and near success.⁶) His literary career began in 1903 with a series of magazine articles on bodybuilding, and, while he published occasional non-fiction articles on seafaring,⁷ by 1905 Hodgson found his true calling writing stories in the emerging horror and fantasy genre—most frequently supernatural tales of the sea. Like so many of his generation, his life was cut short by the First World War, and he was killed at Ypres in 1918.

Hodgson probably delivered the following lecture sometime between 1912 and 1915, accompanied by lantern slides which are now lost.⁸

The *Euterpe* I had been told was loading up at Glasgow so when I arrived there early in the morning I went straight to the Docks, but saw no ship. On inquiry, I found she had moored out in the river . . .

The whole of my first day [November 25, 1897] I spent in getting settled on board. In order to use my camera to advantage I had to rig up some sort of a dark room where I could develop my plates as I took them. . . . many a time a flood of salt water, a sudden roll of the ship or a streak of light in the makeshift darkroom spoilt a promising picture.

Well, the following morning the tug towed the *Euterpe* down to Greenock . . .

Greenock was reached that night, and we dropped anchor here as we had some 25 tons of dynamite and other explosives to take in next day. ⁹ Quite early in the morning a tug came off and towed the dynamite along in a barge, and our crew now began to ship it. Great preparation had to be made before we began operations. All iron and steel articles had to be given up, not even a pocket knife was allowed. The men actually handling the explosive had to remove their boots in case the nails in them should strike a spark. It was altogether a lengthy and nervy job and we were all glad when it was finished, and we hove the anchor up and the man was sent to the wheel and we continued our way down to the sea.

. . . We reached Lamlash in the Island of Arran before midnight and hearing that the weather was too bad to cross the river, the Captain decided to anchor under the lee of Holy Isle. Here we stayed wind-bound for two days before we crossed the bar and stood down from the Channel. The wind being fair, we set sail and the tug dropped us.

We continued under all sail until off the coast of Ireland when we put the ship in irons and signaled for a boat to come off for the pilot. In about half an hour a boat rowed by three Irishmen came off, and all three started immediately to beg for sticks of hard tobacco from our Captain,



With Hodgson aboard, *Euterpe* descended the Clyde from Glasgow to Greenock, then anchored East of Arran Isle. (On this British chart from Hodgson's day, north is to the left.) The early 20th century postcard below looks toward the anchorage between Holy Isle and Lamlash.

1913 chart, MMSD Coll.



calling down blessings on his head when he good-naturedly tossed them some of his supply.

With the pilot went our last letters borne. He was the last link with the old country and perhaps only the very young man with the love of adventure in his heart and the wide world before him can watch the ship dropping the pilot without feeling a tightening of the throat and regret in his heart.

Work, however, there is to do in plenty, and few of us had time to watch the pilot boat becoming a speck in the distance.

As soon as we squared away again the men came after to muster and the Mates picked watches. . . . I must introduce you to our First Mate [here Hodgson apparently showed a slide of 31-year-old David Sloane, of Liverpool] and his watch, known as the Port Watch. Here they are and a fine lot of villains they look too! Most of them are foreigners, 10 but a hardworking and willing crew.

From now onwards our life was more or less monotonous, as I think you will agree with me after I have run through the routine of a typical day at sea.

The actual work begins at 6 A.M. by taking a pull on the braces, or in other words, the ropes which regulate the position of the sails. The pig-sty is then washed out, during which operation the pigs take their morning walk round the decks and get into all manner of scrapes as pigs will; nosing into corners where they've no business to be, upsetting buckets of water and barging into your legs as you try to keep a dignified and perpendicular position in a ship which often heaves and tosses about at an angle of 45°. It isn't always easy I can assure you. Then comes the general clean up. The decks are scrubbed down and all the paint work washed over. You know there is no place so clean as a sailing-ship out at sea. Most people get their idea of a ship from those they see in the docks when all the dirty work of loading and unloading is going on; but you want to see a windjammer just nearing her journey-end if you want to see spotless cleanliness. Every inch of her deck as white as snow. How could she be otherwise when each day her boards are treated to water, holystone and sand? Her brasses shine with all the vigour that elbow grease and oil can give them, the paintwork is spotless and her sails are like white wings, gleaming in the breeze. And you must remember that at sea there is no dirt—at least aboard a sailing-ship—no smoke, no soot—even the fogs you encounter are comparatively clean. 11

Well, as soon as the decks have dried, all the sails which need repairing are brought up from the sail-locker and stretched out upon the deck. The sail-maker [William Irons, 22, of Montrose] ropes in as many of the watch as can be spared and sets them to work. The rest of the crew will be painting the masts and spare spars, a somewhat risky and uncomfortable job . . .

Chips the carpenter [the 41-year-old Londoner N. Haden], who is a very important man on board, will probably be found on the fo'cas'le head caulking the decks, which is a process of filling in the spaces between shrinking boards with oakum and tarring it all over to prevent letting water through. Others may be up aloft bending sail, repairing the rigging and putting on chafing gear.

And so work goes on all day, one watch relieving the other every four hours till about 5:30 in the first dogwatch 12 when the order is given to clear decks. In the second dog-watch, you can do pretty much as you like and indulge in any particular hobby you have. If it is mat-making, you can find a quiet corner and start in. Some of you very likely have seen the kind of mats made by sailors. Quite elaborate designs are often carried out in rope and make effective and hard-wearing house mats. If you are a fighting man, you can put on the gloves and have a bout with someone you think you can lick [here Hodgson showed a slide of a boxing match on board] . .

. it affords a certain amount of amusement to the onlookers.

At 8:00 p.m. the roll is called and the night watches begin—four hours on and four hours off, so that you see it is never possible to get more than four hours sleep at a time, and then you have to be very smart about tumbling into your berth . . .

While on the subject of the day's work, I would like to give you a description of the food which was supplied in those days to the crew of a sailing vessel. . . . For breakfast, biscuits and maggots. If you are inclined to doubt the maggots, just wait till I show you . . . the portrait of a ship's biscuit brought to me by an indignant sailor who complained that the little fellow which you can see crawling in the middle of the biscuit was a jolly sight too familiar. He objected strongly, even for a sailor, but I forgave him his language and promised to take the little creature's picture for him. I sincerely hope conditions have changed since those times. However, biscuits and maggots were not the only food given to the crew. Coffee without milk accompanied them. For dinner there was pea-soup and salt pork if the ship had eaten all the little pigs . . . At tea there was what was left over from dinner with more biscuits and accompanied by the maggots; also milkless tea. For supper there was always what was left from tea. Butter and milk were unknown commodities among the crew, though the Captain and his mates generally fared on the best of everything.

. . . Formerly, as you all know, many of our merchant-vessels and men-of-wars [sic] carried an ornamental figurehead under the bow . . . Many of these emblems were of great beauty, and we on the old *Euterpe* were justly proud of our "old Lady," as we called her. I had been trying for a long time to photograph her, but when I explain that to obtain the picture I had to get right down onto the martingale or dolphin-striker before I could sight, you will understand that there was a certain amount of difficulty and danger. However, one day of moderately fine weather with just enough sea on to cause the "old Lady" to dip in and out of the water, I strapped my camera on to my back and scrambled over the bows. Down plunged the ship, burying the martingale far in the sea. The vessel steadied a moment, and screwing up my courage I clambered down to my watery perch feeling it was a case of now or never. Reaching the iron martingale, I braced myself against it, raised my camera, and glanced up at the overhanging bows above my head. Now, I thought, if she dips it's all up with me! Quickly I sighted and pulled the trigger, sighted again and snapped, and not a moment too soon for,



Apprentice Hodgson makes a mat, prior to his time aboard *Euterpe*. The photo of the "old lady" below was taken around 1927; Hodgson's slide does not survive.

Above, courtesy Jane M. Frank; below, MMSD P2788; previously unpublished



Though this storm-pounded ship resembles *Euterpe*, Hodgson may have taken this photo, and that of the mast at lower right, aboard *Canterbury*, which carried him home from New Zealand.

From Putnam's Monthly, November 1907; courtesy Jane Frank



even as I moved, the great bows of the ship began to rise preparatory to their downward swoop. Up I went, hand over fist, and down went the bows till, with a tremendous roar, the huge cutwater drove down into the ocean, the water bubbling and swirling over my knees and up to my neck. Desperately I grasped a stay, the froth of the sea foaming round my lips, the water plucking at my drenched clothes with the strength of a dozen hands. Another moment of suspense and I was free, and before the “old Lady” plunged again I was aboard . . .

The monotony of our life aboard was now broken by our first heavy gale.¹³ It had been a fine day—too fine, indeed, to suit the Captain, for there was not sufficient wind to fill our sails, and the sun was making things too hot to be comfortable.

“It can’t last,” said the First Mate; “the glass is falling rapidly.” And he was right. Very soon the order came: “All hands aloft shorten sail!” and away went the crew passing gaskets and lashing sails up for all they were worth. The wind was increasing steadily and a heavy sea was running so that it was not long before the ship began to roll and take water aboard. Before many hours had passed, it was blowing a gale, and water was breaking aboard in great quantities, washing everything away that wasn’t tightly lashed down. The Captain decided to heave her to—that is, bring the ship’s head towards the sea and trust to the storm subsiding soon. In doing so, a huge sea struck us amidships, and we thought at the time it had carried away the after-end of the little house where the galley and kitchen were situated, but luckily it just missed, or otherwise our poor old cook [Alfred Helie, 48, of Inverarie] would have been washed overboard, kitchen and all. The wind continued to rise, blowing great clouds of spray into the air and drenching us all to the skin, in spite of oilskins and sea-boots. Towards midnight, one of our boats and most of the starboard t’gallant bulwarks were washed away while the front of the fo’cas’le . . . was burst down and some of the men’s chests and their clothing carried overboard. Towards morning, however, the wind dropped and by mid-day the weather had moderated sufficiently to allow us to put the ship on her course again. . . .

A fair wind enabled us to get back on our course and lasted till we sighted the coast of New Zealand. We passed H.M.S. *Tauranga*¹⁴ off Otago Head, where

we anchored and waited two days for a pilot. I spent my time watching the dredges at work. We were all impatient to get ashore, as may be imagined, but we filled in the best we could by fishing. We had some grand sport, and had it not been for the sharks, we should have had more, for they spoiled many a fine bite. After weeks of salt meat, how we did appreciate having fresh fish for dinner, and with what disgust we discovered hanging at the end of our lines the mangled, bitten body of a fine fish. However, I got even with Mr. Shark by catching him too . . .

When at last the pilot boat came out, I learnt from the pilot, an Englishman, by the way, that we should have to go first to the powder ground below Port Chalmers to discharge the dynamite, proceeding later up to Dunedin to discharge the cargo. After unloading the explosives, this tug [*Plucky*] took us in and that night we reached Dunedin, the end of our outward journey.

On the way up the river from Port Chalmers [April 2, 1898] a curious thing happened to one of the ships lying alongside the wharf. She was a small barque called the *Laira*, loading wool for home, and just before our vessel arrived in her berth, a large steamer passing close to us was caught by the tide and driven right against the *Laira*, breaking a huge hole in her side and causing her to sink in ten minutes. . . . As the *Laira* was gradually sinking, one of her crew rushed to the fo'cas'tle, snatched up his concertina, and standing on the top of the little deck house he played "We Won't Go Home 'Till Morning" to the great amusement of the crowd who cheered him lustily.

As soon as it was possible, I set off to see as much of Dunedin as time would allow. As you all know, it is the capital of the Otago province and has a population of some 60,000, a large proportion of whom are Scots. In the course of my ramblings up country on the Saturday afternoon, I struck upon a little log house . . . A pressing invitation to tea followed and, as I was far too hungry to refuse, I went in. . . . We had homemade bread, scones, stewed rabbit, cold codfish, pickles, lettuces, smoked ham and a variety of cakes. Not liking to offer to pay for their hospitality, I went outside and chopped wood and carried water along with my host till dusk, for which small service they thanked me heartily and insisted that I stay to supper with them . . . [Dessert] was a good pudding, but rather too satisfying; nevertheless, I did full justice to the meal, cold pudding and all. I know I said to myself afterwards that housekeeping in Dunedin seemed to be an expensive item. It was a long walk back to the ship and, by the time I had reached the town, I began to wish I had had a second helping of that pudding. So as the shops were still open round the docks I bought two large loaves, one pound of butter and two Dutch cheeses, which I took aboard with me. After making



The *Laira*, rammed by the steamer *Wakatipu*, sinks with the *Canterbury* astern. While not the picture Hodgson took, *Euterpe* must have passed by not long before this photo was snapped.

From the 1924 book *White Wings*, MMSD Coll.





Leaving *Euterpe* behind, the author sailed from Port Chalmers. While the lecture reprinted here is Hodgson's only known writing about his old ship, the curiously-named *Euterpe* appears in one of his last stories.

MMSD P10587

some cocoa I invited two of the 'prentices [Ed Stanley A. Boddington, 18, and Herbert Charles Oliver, 16] to join me in a light meal before retiring to my bunk where I slept soundly till awakened on Sunday morning for service. That day we received the population who were very curious to see what a Sunday was like aboard a vessel.

Shortly after this, we learnt with regret that our old ship *Euterpe* was to be sold¹⁵ and that the return journey was to be made in the *Canterbury*. Seabags and chests were packed, goodbyes said to those who remained behind, and one evening by moonlight we entrained for Port Chalmers. The next few days were spent getting ready for sea, and when at last our orders came, we manned the capstan to the tune of "Rolling Home to Merry England." As soon as the anchor showed, we towed down the river and over the bar.

N O T E S

- 1 *Euterpe* Log (hereinafter cited as Log), 28 March 1898, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, microfiche copy in MacMullen Library, Maritime Museum of San Diego (MMSD). Hodgson was not in fact an apprentice as the log reports, but had passed his mate's exam, though he had taken an ordinary seaman's berth. On 1 April, the log notes able-bodied seaman McAllear, from Greenock, as "still unfit for work but drinking heavily..." The ages of men given in this article are approximations based on ages recorded before the voyage in "Agreement and Account of Crew, M21859, *Euterpe*, Glasgow to Tacoma, Washington, 25/11/97 to 3/11/98, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, copy at MMSD.
- 2 Samuel Moskowitz, "William Hope Hodgson," in *Out of the Storm: Uncollected Fantasies by William Hope Hodgson* (West Kingston, RI: Donald M. Grant, 1975), 35. Strangely, Hodgson does not mention the rescue in his illustrated lecture "Ten Months at Sea." The editors are indebted to Jane Frank, author of a forthcoming biography of Hodgson, for bringing Hodgson and his work to their attention.
- 3 Hodgson makes the reference in his diary entry for 13 April 1898, which is also revealing about his low pay and penchant for stamp collecting:

We joined the *Canterbury* about 11 o'clock last night as the old *Euterpe* we came out to Dunedin in was to be sold. . . . I spent my pay-day yesterday within half an hour of getting it, in the new issue of stamps. Tonight I bought another stamp (1/— Western Australia) now out of issue and gave 1/— for it. Got about 2 lbs of

cocoa for going home.

Hodgson log in possession of Jane Frank. While he may have also kept a diary aboard *Euterpe*, it does not survive.

- 4 For his hatred of the apprenticeship system, see Hodgson, "The Trade in Sea Apprentices," *Nautical Magazine* (September 1906): 233-237.
- 5 Hodgson, "Is the Mercantile Navy Worth Joining?," *Strand Magazine* (1905), reprinted in Sam Gafford, ed., *William Hope Hodgson: Demons of the Sea* (West Warwick, R.I.: Necronomicon Press, 1992).
- 6 Moskowitz, "William Hope Hodgson," 21-23.
- 7 See, for example, "Through the Vortex of a Cyclone," *Putnam's Monthly* (November 1907): 193-204.
- 8 Excerpted from "Ten Months at Sea," in Moskowitz, ed., *Terrors of the Sea: Unpublished Fantasies by William Hope Hodgson* (Hampton Falls, N.H.: Donald M. Grant, 1996). This is the partial text of a lantern slide presentation made by Hodgson to an English audience after 1912 (he references the *Titanic* disaster) and probably before 1915, when he entered the British army. It originally accompanied at least fourteen glass slides taken aboard *Euterpe*, hand-tinted by Hodgson's mother. The excerpt published here deletes most references to the images. Their subjects and sequence appear to have been as follows: view of *Euterpe*; vessels at Glasgow; merchantman under repair at a Greenock shipyard; *Euterpe* Port Watch; pigs on deck; boxing on deck; crew berth; biscuit with maggots; figurehead; Fernando Noronha Island; shark head; damaged barque *Laira* and ship *Canterbury* (three slides).
- 9 The S.S. *Lizzie* brought 760 cases of dynamite, fifteen cases of gelatin detonators, and two cases of carbonite to add to the already heavily-laden ship. Log, 26 November 1897, MMSD.
- 10 Hodgson's description of "foreigners" is odd; of the twenty-two men who signed ship's articles at Glasgow, approximately half were English and half Scottish.
- 11 Upon her arrival in Dunedin, a newspaper reporter complimented the Captain and First Mate "on the very trim appearance of the *Euterpe*." "Arrival of the *Euterpe*," photocopy from unidentified New Zealand newspaper, 28 March 1898, MMSD.
- 12 "Dogging the watch" splits the 1600 to 2000 watch into two two-hour shifts. This enables both watches to get an evening meal, and keeps the two from always being on the same watch hours day after day.
- 13 About sixty miles off the Portuguese coast, *Euterpe*'s log reports "heavy gale with heavy, confused seas." Log, 14-18 December 1897.
- 14 HMS *Tauranga*, a third-class cruiser, was launched as HMS *Phoenix* in 1890.
- 15 The log entry for 12 April 1898 states "ship sold." The date of sale, 6 May 1898, and the name of her purchaser, J. J. Moore of San Francisco, is recorded in "Agreement and Account of Crew," 14.



Hodgson may have taken the photo above aboard *Canterbury* or another ship, though details resemble *Euterpe*.

Above, *Putnam's Monthly*, November 1907; courtesy Jane Frank; below, from *White Wings*



THE CLIPPER *CANTERBURY*.

The Literature of William Hope Hodgson, Sailor

Jane Frank

William Hope Hodgson's poem "Storm" gives a sense of the mingled respect and horror toward the sea that characterized much of the writing of this former *Euterpe* sailor. Hodgson probably began writing poetry in childhood, but practically all of his short stories and novels were written between 1898, when the twenty-one-year-old left the sea, and 1914, when he returned from living in France to join the Royal Field Artillery. Despite little formal education, this former seaman produced a series of works that now are considered extraordinary examples of "dark fantasy" literature.

Hodgson's legacy is limited primarily to four novels (*The Boats of the 'Glen Carrig'*, *The Ghost Pirates*, *The House on the Borderland*, *The Night Land*), three volumes of short stories (*Men of Deep Waters*, *The Luck of the Strong*, *Captain Gault*), and two slim collections of poetry (*The Calling of the Sea*, *The Voice of the Ocean*), published shortly after his death.

Despite their flaws—and Hodgson has been accused of being hopelessly "Victorian" in sentiment and expression—many of his sea stories are masterpieces of their genre, featuring protagonists who repeatedly survive supernatural horrors and weird shipboard events. How a largely self-educated seaman, one of twelve children, could produce such dramatically strong stories is a mystery.

The man called "Hope" by all who knew him was by all accounts small, quick and feisty, possessed of wide-ranging interests and strong convictions. What he attempted, he pushed himself to master—an aspect of his personality that no doubt contributed to his successes as an author despite hundreds of rejections.

This pattern emerged early in his career. When mistreated as a young apprentice seaman by a cruel second mate, he learned judo to protect himself, and began bodybuilding. As a sailor, he took up photography and became skilled at capturing "never before seen" photographs of waterspouts, cyclonic storms, lightning and other natural phenomena. He read widely, and when he left the sea, these skills would help him gain success as a writer.

The school for "physical culture" he opened in Blackburn failed around 1902, but by then he was an emerging author, having discovered that articles and letters to the editor in local newspapers provided free publicity. He worked his photographs into magazine articles, sold pieces to newspapers, and gave slide lectures. His seafaring experiences quickly found their way into his fiction.

Many of Hodgson's stories and poems were inspired by his eight hard years at sea—exciting tales filled with fights, dangers, and piratical villains. They also reflected the ambivalence he felt towards the sea. He loved its power, beauty, and mystery, but hated the sailor's life, and this bitterness would shape nearly all his writings.

"Hope" was one of the earliest writers to straddle the genres of science fiction and horror. His second short story, "A Tropical Horror," appeared in *The Grand Magazine* in June 1905, and introduced him as a masterful writer of supernatural sea stories.

"Though this story, a terrible tale of the sea, may be too gruesome for some tastes," wrote his editor, it "rivets the attention of the reader." It offers a prototypical glimpse of Hodgson's work, as

his narrator, chatting with a young apprentice in the Pacific, is paralyzed by an unearthly sight:

Rising above the bulwarks, seen plainly in the bright moon light, is a vast slobbering mouth a fathom across. From the huge dripping lips hang great tentacles. As I look the Thing comes further over the rail. It is rising, rising, higher and higher. There are no eyes visible; only that fearful slobbering mouth set on the tremendous trunklike neck....curling inboard with the stealthy celerity of an enormous eel.

Hodgson's horrific vision was far in advance of the popular standards of his day, but the story netted him considerable respect among the writers and editors of the early twentieth century's emerging pulp magazines. His eeriest tales were set upon the sea: Hodgson's ghost ships, haunted voyages and cursed crews filled the pages of a dozen or more magazines. An important

milestone in his career was the American publication of "From the Tideless Sea" in the April 1906 issue of *The Monthly Story Magazine*. This adventure/horror masterpiece was the first of several stories that explored his personal seascape of horror, the Sargasso Sea. There, unfortunates aboard becalmed ships trapped "in a treacherous, silent vastitude of slime and hideousness" are beset by unimaginable horrors. His second Sargasso Sea tale, "The Mystery of the Derelict," was published in *The Story Teller*, England's first all-fiction pulp magazine, in March, 1907. Hodgson's biographer Samuel Moskowitz is not alone in regarding it as one of the greatest sea stories ever written.

After his death in 1918, Hodgson's work drifted into obscurity until a few dedicated enthusiasts and publishers brought his stories to a new public. Particularly important was H. C. Koenig, publisher of the American magazine *The Fantasy Fan*, which in the mid-1930s made Hodgson's accomplishments known to fantasy and horror writers including H. P. Lovecraft. Growing appreciation led to reprint editions, most importantly a huge omnibus collection of the four novels in 1946. Several collections of unpublished manuscripts, some with biographical essays, have since appeared. Today, scholars and enthusiasts are raising the work of this onetime *Euterpe* sailor from "cult" status to the critical attention it deserves—and gripping a new generation of readers, whose late-night lamplit reading may be troubled by the sensation that something unimaginably horrible, dripping with slime, waits just outside the door.



[Photo by]

W. HOPE HODGSON.

[F. Lawson Taylor.

STORM

By William Hope Hodgson

published posthumously in *The Calling of the Sea*, 1920

*At sea; the night,
Borne on a thunder-cloud,
Rushed vastly o'er the sky, and hid from sight
The sun, as in a shroud.*

*And loathsome gloom
Rolled o'er the fretful sea;
Rolled o'er, a curtain dark that hid the doom
That waited there for me.*

*The tempest's howl
I heard far o'er the deeps
Ring hollowly, a strange unearthly growl,
Among the watery steeps.*

*Anon the wide
Of that grim over-cast
Was cleft in twain and rent from side to side
With lightnings from the vast.*

*And muttered roars,
Of blasts that hoarsely bray,
Came from the void where the eternal shores
Uprear their desarray.*

*The twanging shrouds
Sang in that wintry breath.
The sea tossed up her belly to the clouds,
And roared, insane, for death.*

*The ship drove high
Upon a spumy swell;
Drove high, deep surging, 'neath that lonesome sky;
And diving – into silence fell.*

Jane Frank, of Virginia, is a dealer in fantasy art and the editor of the forthcoming book *The Wandering Soul: A Compendium of Rare and Unpublished Works by William Hope Hodgson*, due from PS Publishing in Spring, 2004.

Star on Ice:

The *Star of India* in Alaska, 1918

MMSD P13252-P13262



The final twenty-two years of *Euterpe's* working life were spent in the Alaska Packers Association's fleet of aging square-riggers, transporting salmon fishermen, cannery workers, wooden "box shook" and cans between San Francisco Bay and Alaska.

The tiny, previously unpublished snapshots on these two pages, mostly taken in Nushagak, include the only images known of the most dramatic incident in this period. In 1918, the bark—which had been named *Star of India* for twelve years—spent seventeen days frozen into Alaskan ice, being driven steadily toward the northwest shore of the Alaska Peninsula. The steamer *Nushagak* towed her clear just in time.

Stanley Olson, who donated these photos in 2002, tells their story:

"My father, Iver Olson, was a member of her crew, mostly Swedes, on that very eventful cruise. The 'Star' left San Francisco on April 10, 1918 bound for the Bering Strait and the Alaska Peninsula.

At least two of the wooden-hulled ships were crushed in the ice and went down. My Uncle, Andrew Olson, was on one of those ships. Survivors of these ships could see the masts of the other ships in the area and walked (for days) to reach these ships. My Dad was told that his brother had been lost when his ship went down, but several days later, my Uncle Andrew and five of his shipmates came across the ice and were 'saved!'





The life and working conditions on these ships was very hard. To get men to sail on these ships to Alaska, they were promised a share of the profit from the salmon catch. They were told that they would be bringing back twenty-five- to thirty-five thousand cases of salmon in only six weeks of fishing, and their share would be about \$1500 per man. Because they were iced in for three months—all the salmon they caught, they ate! When they arrived back in San Francisco on September 21st, when the cases were counted, each received only \$300 for their five-and-a-half month voyage!!!

When my father arrived home, he knocked on my mother's door. My mother looked at him and said, 'Who are you?' He said, 'I am your husband!' My mother said, 'No you're not!' and slammed the door in his face! My father had not shaved in months—and had gained sixty pounds! She would not let him in until he had shaved and taken a bath! She burned his clothes."

Iver Olson was killed on the job while working as a stevedore on the San Francisco waterfront on Valentine's Day, 1943.





Star of India and San Diego's Italian Community

San Diego's Little Italy was born when fishing families migrated south by boat from San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. Many kept close ties with family in the Bay Area, and one result was that several San Diegans migrated north for seasonal jobs with the Alaska Packers. San Diego resident Giuseppe Battaglia worked aboard *Star of Alaska* (the Alaska Packers renamed all their square-riggers as *Stars* for the publicity benefit). And according to his family, San Diegan Federico Marline, seated second from left alongside his fishing partner, San Diegan Tony Di Sante (with dog), traveled north for several seasons to sail on *Star of India*, returning to San Diego months later with fox furs for his wife to wear and carved ivory trinkets for his children.

This photograph of Federico Marline and his fellow fishermen, some showing off crafts they had made on their long voyage to and from Alaska, was probably taken aboard *Star of Holland* somewhere in the Pacific Northwest in 1923.

Donated by Joe Marline; P13676; previously unpublished

Opposite, top: *Euterpe's* paint was barely dry when her portrait was painted in 1863, with her royals sent down for heavy weather. Note details such as a second binnacle near the break of the poop, live-stock pen forward of the deckhouse, stunsail irons aloft, and the surprising green paint. 22-year-old artist Frederick Tudgay was the youngest of a family of five London ship portraitists, and considered the most talented.

MMSD P13681.tif; courtesy Manx National Heritage; previously unpublished in U.S.

Opposite, bottom: Lyttelton's expanding harbor was a frequent destination for *Euterpe*, and was painted five years after one group of famished emigrants stepped ashore to celebrate Christmas, 1879. In the new drydock at left is a sight they would have found chillingly familiar: the *Hurumui*, with which they nearly collided, undergoes repairs not long after she collided with (and sank) *Wiatara*.

Watercolor by G. W. White, courtesy The Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand; previously unpublished in U.S.



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