

San Diego, California
April 9, 1972.

Mr. Jerry MacMillen
San Diego, Calif.

Dear Sir:

You have mentioned the Norwegian collier "Thor" in one of your articles some time ago. If I recall correctly it was the largest ship to enter San Diego harbor up to that time, about 1907 or 1908. It tied up to the bunkers wharf. Also it had duplicate masts at the beams instead of at the center, something new at the time.

I was a radio operator at Koko Head, Oahu during the winter of 1917-1918 when the "Thor" loaded with coal from the coast to Hawaii, buckled and sank during a severe storm in the area. Some two or three weeks later one of the life boats drifted ashore near Kahuka Point, Oahu. It contained some 17 men barely alive. I saw some of these men at the Red Cross yard in Honolulu. They were merely skin and bones. They had had water from the frequent rain squalls but little or no food. As I recall also the other life boat was never seen again. I was told no distress call had been sent as it happened so quickly.

You have mentioned the "Pinta" from time to time in the past. Admiral Coontz in his biography "From The Mississippi to the Sea" describes his early naval days "Five Years on the Pinta". You may not have seen this.

Also in "One Mans Fight for a Better Navy" by Holden A. Evans, a Naval Constructor, he describes the complete story of the "Bennington" disaster under the chapter of "AN American Dreyfus Case". If you havent seen either one of these books I have them in my home library and would be pleased to lend them to you for a short period if you would care for them .

Sincerely
Jabez R. Palmer
Jabez R. Palmer