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VOL. 32, NO. 1 WINTER 1996

MAINS'L HAUL

A JOURNAL OF MARITIME HISTORY



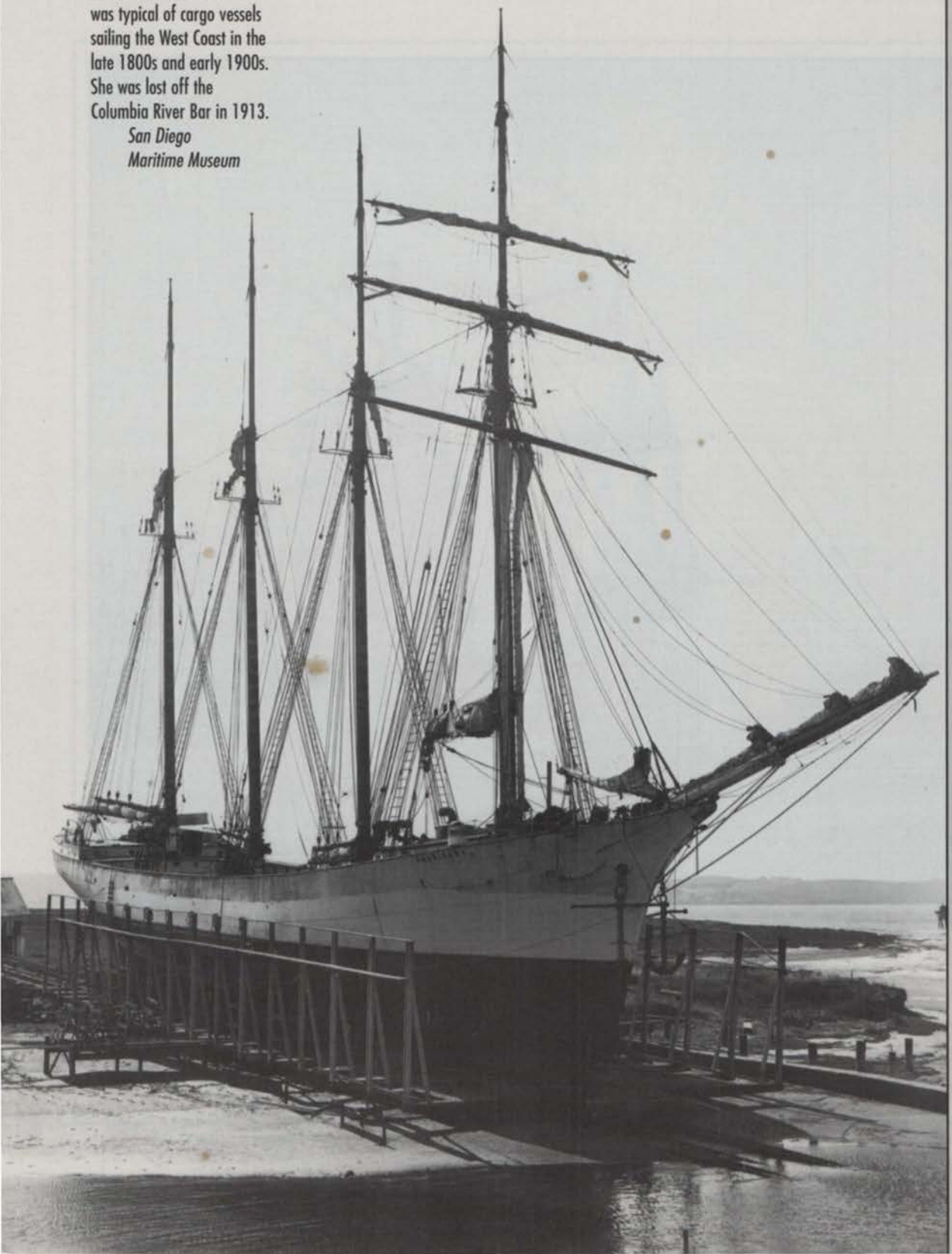
"EMPRESS OF CHINA"
Arrival in Whampoa in 1784
by Raymond Massey, A.S.M.A.

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The four-masted topsail schooner AMERICANA was typical of cargo vessels sailing the West Coast in the late 1800s and early 1900s. She was lost off the Columbia River Bar in 1913.
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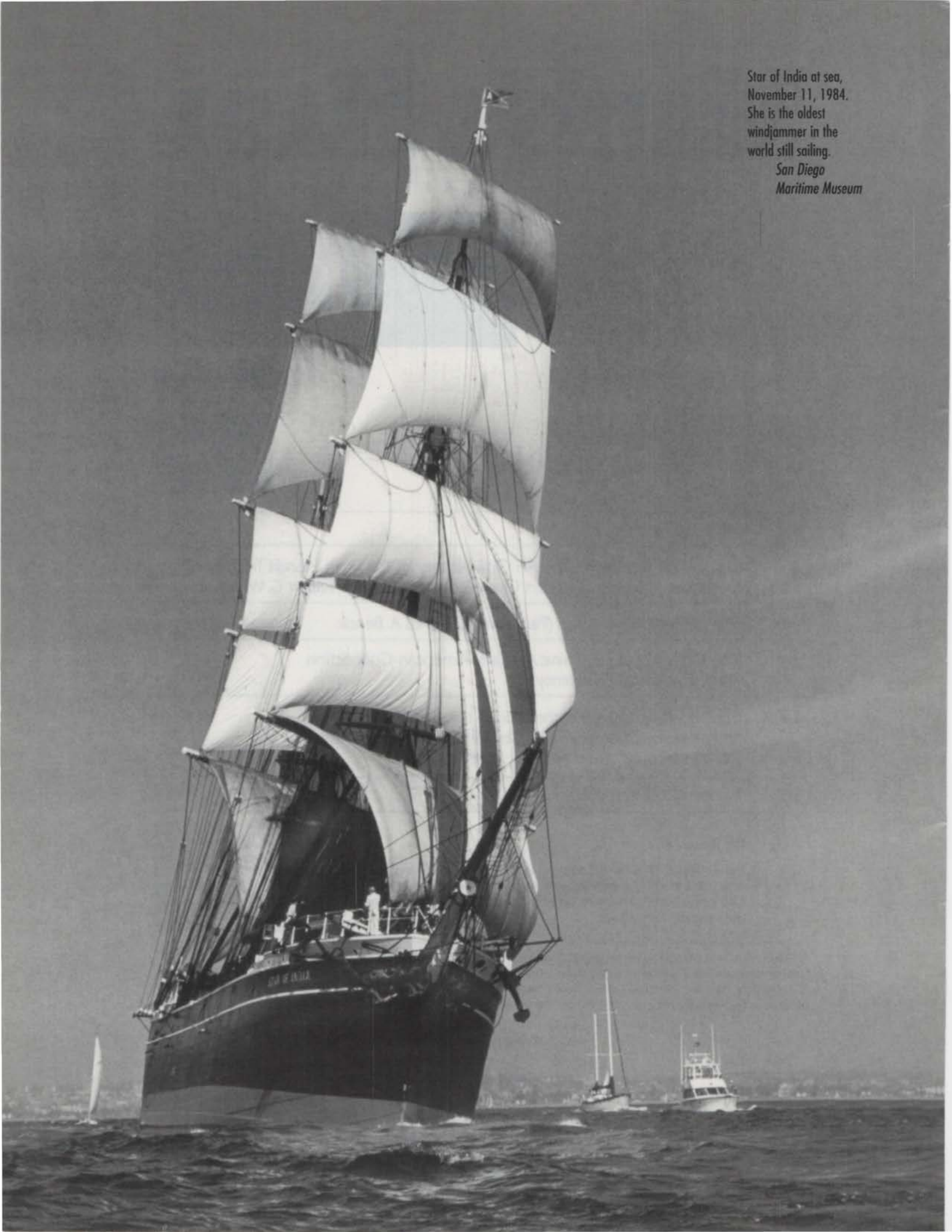
The EMPRESS OF CHINA arriving at Whampoa to open American trade with China in 1784, as depicted by Raymond Massey. She is seen receiving an honorary escort down the harbor at Whampoa, while East Indiamen at either hand thunder forth salutes.



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Craig Arnold, Editor

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



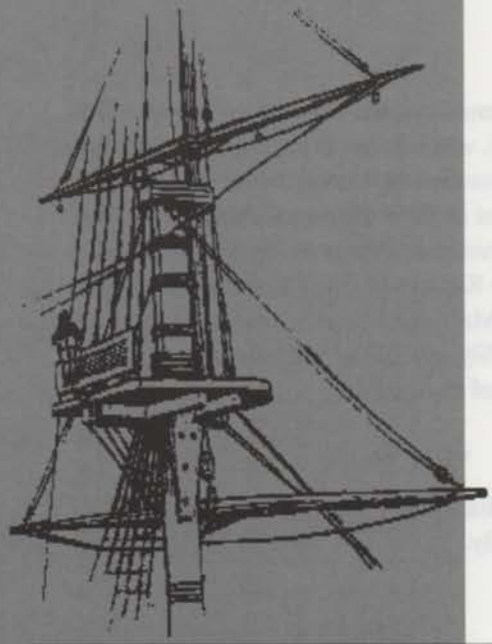
Star of India at sea, November 11, 1984. She is the oldest windjammer in the world still sailing.
San Diego Maritime Museum

FROM THE HELM



The beginning of a new year always seems an appropriate time for taking stock, no less for institutions than for individuals. The year just passed, my first as your Executive Director, has seemed to go by with the breathtaking speed of new and constant challenges, so the exercise of reviewing the course we have run enforces a useful dose of perspective. In looking back on this year I think that you, the membership, have much to be proud of in your support of the museum and your belief in its mission.

Though a mission for the museum has always been implicit, our Board of Trustees began the last year by adopting a formal one: to engage our audience in consideration of the decisive role of maritime endeavor in our culture, both regional and beyond. We are, in short, giving ourselves the responsibility for accounting for circumstance. When Europeans first came to San Diego by sea in 1542, this region stood on their far periphery of knowledge and importance. For about three centuries this situation changed hardly at all, so that to Richard Henry Dana's audience, the chief feature of coastal California was its exotic isolation and remoteness. Yet since that time, our community has served as the home port for the nation's largest tuna fleet, the cradle of naval aviation, the focus of world attention in the America's Cup, a center for coastal and oceanic trade, a world center for oceanographic research, and what has now become the base for the largest concentration of conventional naval power on earth. Our rise as a community is an obvious consequence of world shaping forces intellectually abstruse but intuitively clear: the sea has made us.

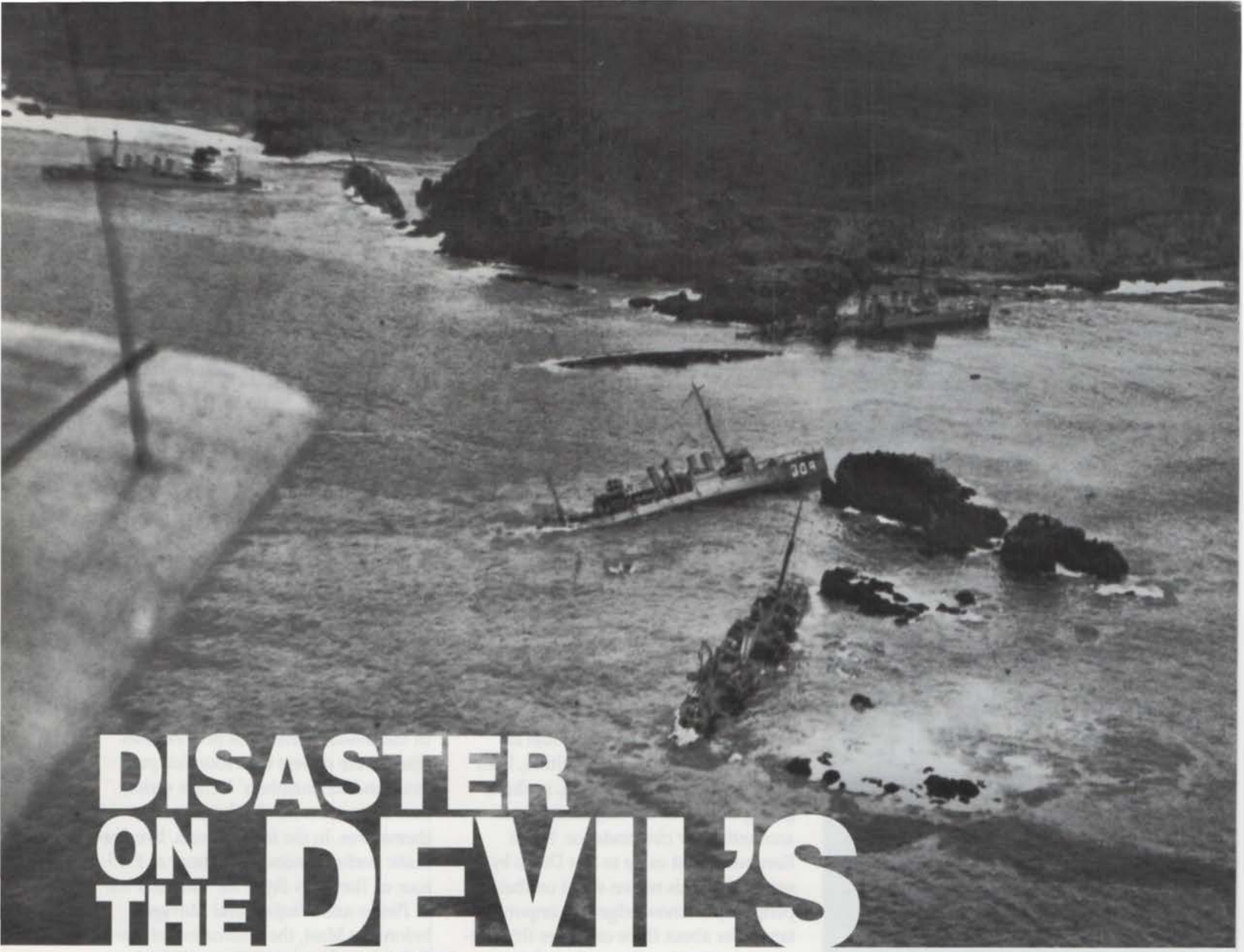


Our thesis is nothing if not sweeping: that building ships and going to sea in them for whatever purpose is not just an incidental byproduct of larger historical forces, but a central, perhaps defining, element of our history and identity.

This message gets packaged by our museum in a variety of ways. In the traditional manner of museums, a visitor encounters the thesis in the course of a trip through our ships, but even before looking in the first display case or reading the first label, he or she has assimilated several subtle layers of evidence: the panorama of the bay itself with its vitality and traffic and way of drawing people, the *Star of India's* towering domination over her surroundings, even the assorted inventory in the museum store (every item for sale containing both information and a message). The message is packaged in our educational programs, ranging from docent training to the overnight living history experiences. In the constant stream of new exhibits (there were no less than four this past year) and the members' lecture series, new arguments for the thesis present themselves. In the folk festivals, live dramatic performances (in summer of 1995 four of *Two Years Before the Mast* and ten of *Pirates* and *Pinafore*) and Movies before the Mast, the insinuation of seafaring into the weave of popular culture is everywhere evident. The thesis is reinforced further by what has now become a ritual performance for our community: the preparations under way once again to send the *Star of India* to sea. Most of all, perhaps, there has been your own response. In the past year membership has grown, museum events have been attended in record numbers, the pool of active volunteers has grown even more. Your direct support for the museum and its programs through contributions has given the museum the best financial year in its recent history and enabled us to set a course to a more secure future for the museum through a sizable increase in the endowment.

Joseph Conrad called the sea a mirror. You have every right to feel proud of your own reflection in it.

Raymond Ashley
Executive Director



DISASTER ON THE DEVIL'S JAW

Part I

An Oral History of the Point Honda Tragedy of Destroyer Squadron 11

By Richard G. Sly with Robert G. Wright

Ed. Note: One of the worst peacetime disasters ever suffered by the U.S. Navy occurred on September 8, 1923, when seven destroyers en route from San Francisco to San Diego made a premature course change and drove ashore, one by one, on the rocky coast of Point Honda, California. All the ships were lost, but loss of life was minimal, due in no small part to the discipline and heroism of sailors like Richard G. Sly, a fireman on board USS YOUNG (DD-312). Back in 1970, Maritime Museum oral historian Robert Wright interviewed former Fireman Sly, one of the last survivors of the disaster. This is his story, in the first of two parts:

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Robert Wright (RW): What's your full name?
Richard Sly (RS): Richard Gerald Sly.
RW: Where were you born?

I took great pride and there was great spirit in being a member of a destroyer.

Disaster on the Devil's Jaw: the ships of Destroyer Squadron 11 aground and breaking up at Honda, September 1923. The view is toward the east—the direction in which the doomed destroyers were steaming when they hit the rocks. From left to right along the shore are NICHOLAS (above plane wing), S.P. LEE, DELPHY (broken in two and capsized, her stern section barely visible), YOUNG (capsized) and CHAUNCEY. On the rocks offshore are WOODBURY (listing to port) and FULLER (nearest camera).

Admiral William V. Pratt Collection, Naval Historical Center

RS: I was born in Spokane, Washington, on April 3, 1904.

RW: When did you join the Navy?

RS: October 1, 1922. I was enlisted as an Apprentice Seaman. Three months after I went aboard ship my rating was advanced to Seaman Second Class; six months later I was promoted to Seaman First Class. Then I got into the engineer force where my rate was changed to Fireman Third Class.

RW: What kind of ship was [USS YOUNG], exactly?

RS: It was a World War I destroyer, launched in early 1919. It was an old flush-deck, four-stack destroyer. I liked it very much. It was very exciting. I took great pride and there was great spirit in being a member of a destroyer. You knew everyone in the crew, first, middle, and last names. You knew them better than you knew your own family and often you were more fond of them than you were of your own family.

RW: What was the skipper's name?

RS: The first skipper on the YOUNG was Lieutenant Commander Lewis. . . . He was relieved by Commander William Lounders Calhoun . . .

RW: At the time, was the ship in pretty good condition? She was fairly new, wasn't she?

RS: Yes, she was in good condition compared to other destroyers built at the same time. . . .

RW: What was your job, exactly, aboard the YOUNG?

RS: I did one month in the fire room but, because of my having a trade as a machinist, I was quickly put into the engine room which has more equipment, more machinery, and more need for the talents of a machinist. . . .

RW: How old were you at the time?

RS: Eighteen.

RW: Did you start having cruises?

RS: Yes.

RW: You left San Diego?

RS: I left San Diego in February of 1923 and went to Panama. I think our total cruise was seven weeks. . . . When we returned to San Diego we had fleet maneuvers all the way to San Francisco. From San Francisco on north we had fleet maneuvers. Puget Sound was big enough that you had ample room for fleet maneuvers with what was then the battle fleet. . . .

RW: Did you have the same squadron commander during this period of time from leaving San Diego to Puget Sound and back down?

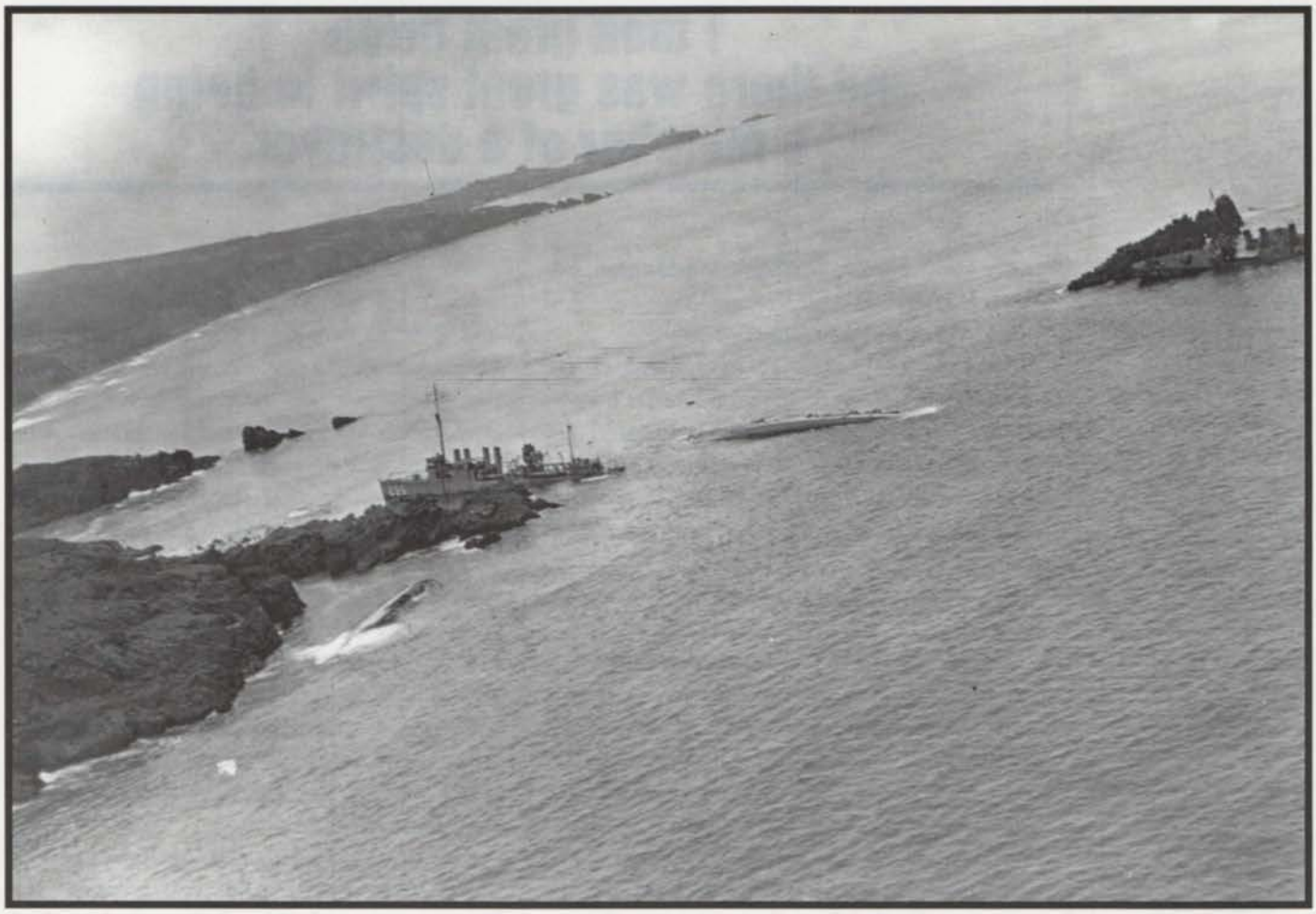
RS: Yes, Captain [Edward H.] Watson. He, then, was one of the senior captains in the Navy and was under consideration for promotion to admiral.

RW: In other words, during the period of about seven months that you were on the YOUNG, you and the whole squadron had opportunity to be trained as a unit in order to function.

RS: Yes. The training was continuous and by that I mean you were either training or you were in port. . . . Usually, except for the extended visit in San Francisco, we would go out every Monday morning and return Friday afternoon or Friday night. We had the weekends in port. The training was intensive and continuous.

RW: What I am leading up to is that when the ships went on the rocks, it appears that almost everyone followed Captain Watson without question. In other words, because of your training, it was automatic to work as a unit.

RS: Yes. I think the response to the signal to make that turn was made maybe with some misgiving but I don't think with any doubt. I think all ships executed the signal with maybe some wondering. I can't tell you how it felt on the bridge because I wasn't on



Another aerial photo of the wreck area, this time looking southward toward Point Arguello Light, visible on the point at upper center. In the foreground, from left to right, are DELPHY (stern section only), CHAUNCEY, YOUNG (capsized), and WOODBURY.

Admiral William V. Pratt Collection, Naval Historical Center

the bridge but I don't believe there was any hesitation.

RW: We've been talking about these destroyers that went onto the California coast. Exactly where was it? I marked Point Arguello but it's another name, isn't it?

RS: Yes. It was and is Point Honda. It's very near Point Arguello. Point Arguello is the most prominent point. The exact part that we hit was a very small point of land very near Point Arguello. The lighthouse is above Point Arguello—it's higher. . . .

I had the eight to twelve [p.m.] watch the night [September 8] when we hit. I had just finished putting the nine o'clock readings in the engineering log and went up topside to go to the scuttlebutt drinking fountain to get a drink of water. I could see stars all over. There could have been fog but it wasn't noticeable.

RW: I know you're going ahead here a little bit but let's go back to San Francisco. According to my reading, the squadron had orders to leave for San Diego and cruise at twenty knots which was pretty fast for those ships, wasn't it?

RS: That's correct. It was pretty fast but it was an easy speed for them. We were all thrilled with the idea of making a prolonged run at twenty knots. We hadn't done it before because of the necessity of fuel economy. We were very pleased with it. We felt sure that we could and we wanted to prove it.

RW: Was the YOUNG a rather thin-skinned ship?

RS: They all were. The hull plating of all those destroyers was 1/4 inch thick. . . . They had nicknames—tinclad, tin pans, tin cans.

RW: That's virtually what they were, weren't they?

RS: Yes. They were big tin cans.

RW: Were they usually high-powered, too?

RS: Yes. We had 30,000 h.p. on that little ship.

RW: Were they diesel driven?

We were very happy about it and we were excited about what would have been a twenty-four hour run between San Francisco and San Diego. No ships had done it. We would have been the first to do it on a twenty-knot run.

RS: No. They were steam turbine, reduction gear. They had four express-type boilers, two turbine-driven propellers, two reduction gears, and they also had cruising turbines. We could cruise at twenty knots. We were on our cruising turbines at the time of the Point Honda disaster.

RW: What does the armament consist of?

RS: Four 4-inch guns and four triple-mount, 21-inch torpedo tubes, and one 3-inch anti-aircraft gun.

RW: What was the complement of men?

RS: At that time we had 103 men and 7 officers.

RW: I assume that after this fleet week [in San Francisco], everyone was feeling pretty good so that you wouldn't have any feeling of pending disaster or anything like that when the squadron left San Francisco.

RS: None at all. . . . The morale of small ships, generally, is very high, especially after something like fleet week in San Francisco. The small ships had no motion pictures, no amusement, no room for anything on the deck, so fleet week in San Francisco was a big event. We felt very good and we felt that the love we had for San Francisco was shared—that they loved us, too. We were very happy about it and we were excited about what would have been a twenty-four hour run between San Francisco and San Diego. No ships had done it. We would have been the first to do it on a twenty-knot run.

RW: What time did you leave San Francisco?

RS: Eight o'clock in the morning. [September 8, 1923]

RW: So, you figured you'd be in San Diego at eight o'clock the next morning?

RS: Yes.

RW: Did the squadron go in column formation?

RS: Yes. There were two squadrons. Each formed in parallel columns. The 11th Squadron was nearest the coast, and the 12th Squadron was outboard.

My squadron was the 11th Squadron.



S. P. Lee (foreground) and Nicholas are battered by the ceaseless incoming swells at Point Honda. All seven destroyers were total losses, and on November 20, 1923, they were struck from the Navy List. Private salvage efforts, including those of wreck divers, later recovered some of their equipment.
San Diego Maritime Museum

The noise was one of a great crash, immediately followed by a loud, staccato noise like an enormous machine gun and it was the ribs of the ship being parted as the rocks tore through the ship.

RW: How close did you follow the coast?

RS: Until we got near the entrance of the Santa Barbara Channel, we were out of sight of land. I can't tell you the distance, but you could not see land. The first land that was sighted, I think, was as we neared the approach to the Santa Barbara Channel. I'm not certain that they sighted land. It's my belief that they did. I think they saw the Point Arguello Lighthouse.

RW: Were you on deck more than once during the day in this period?

RS: I was on deck often.

RW: Did you see any overcast weather, or fog, or anything like that?

RS: No fog but high overcast. There was no blue sky evident. There was very little wind with a moderate sea running. . . .

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

RW: Let's get closer to the time of the tragedy, which is exactly what it was, I guess.

RS: A disaster.

RW: You had a good run. You left [San Francisco] at eight o'clock [0800 hours]. . . . What time did you go on watch?

RS: Eight o'clock [2000 hours] but you're usually fifteen or twenty minutes early to get the details from the one you were relieving so that he could get out on time.

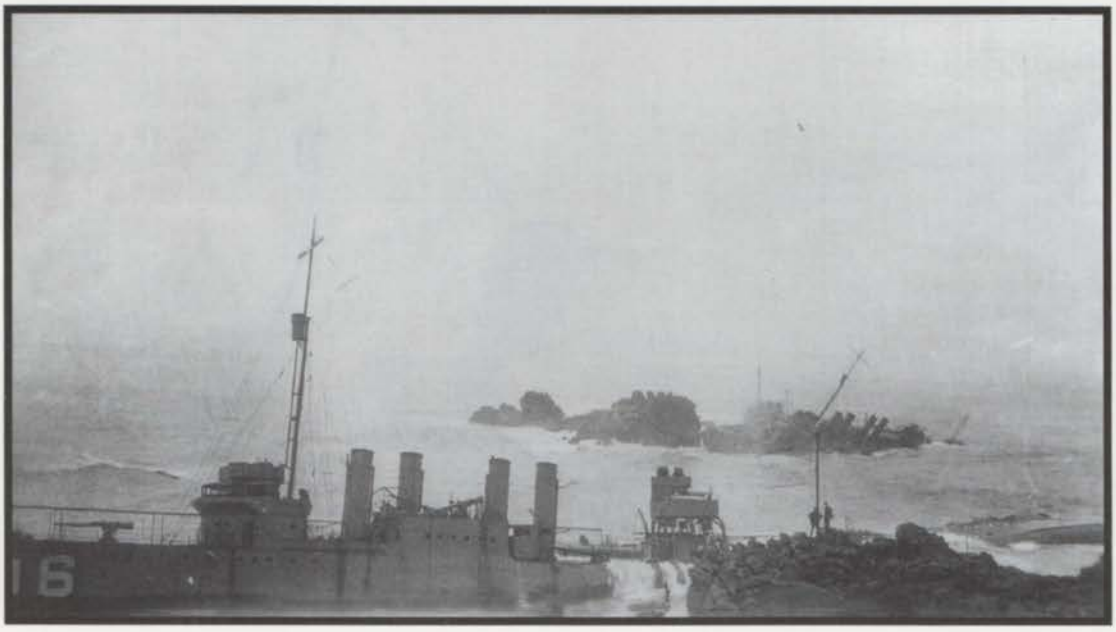
RW: Around six or seven o'clock, then, before you went on watch, you were on deck and you still had fairly good visibility except for the overcast?

RS: Yes. I could see the lights of all the ships in both squadrons. It was when you could see this long column of lights that you realized you were part of a big organization.

RW: Were you aware of the tragedy of the CUBA that went on the beach?

[*Ed. Note:* S.S. CUBA, a merchant vessel, was aground on San Miguel Island at this time.]

RS: Yes. Our radio shack was picking up some of the traffic and passing it along. Sometimes it was a handwritten note passed out or sometimes they would type out a little



Chief Boatswain's Mate Arthur Peterson, a hero of the Honda disaster, swam from the overturned hull of YOUNG (lower right) to CHAUNCEY (left) to attach a line that permitted most of the former ship's crew to escape to shore.

San Diego Maritime Museum

bit of it. We were aware that the CUBA was aground and, also, that there was heavy traffic relative to the CUBA.

RW: She hit Point Bennett on San Miguel Island. I'm not sure where Point Bennett is but it's in the channel area. Anyway, everyone was still feeling good and you went on watch at eight o'clock [2000].

RS: By 'feeling good,' I don't want any connotation that we were in a holiday mood. We were feeling good because we were successfully making a long sustained run at high speed and we were anticipating a trip to Japan.

RW: You went below about 7:45 p.m.?

RS: Yes.

RW: What was your station at that time?

RS: The evaporating plant in the after engine room. . . .

RW: So, you were about two-thirds of the way aft?

RS: Yes.

RW: Could you feel the ship's motion where you were at?

RS: Yes. In a destroyer, any change in speed or rudder, the whole ship feels it.

RW: When you went on watch, you went about your duties. What were your duties at that particular time?

RS: Operating the evaporating plant that converts salt water to fresh, drinkable water. . . .

RW: From the time you went on duty, when did the ship hit the beach?

RS: Approximately one hour and a half after I went into the engine room at 7:45 p.m. In my estimation, we hit the beach about 9:15 p.m. I had completed the 9:00 p.m. entries in the log, had gone topside to get a drink of water, and returned, I would think, about 9:15 p.m.

RW: When you went up to get this drink of water, you called it the scuttlebutt before.

RS: Yes. It's a common term in the Navy.

RW: Can you remember the weather at that time?

RS: It was dark. I could still see the ships' lights. There were thirty of them. All seamen, all mariners look around at the weather—the visibility especially. I could see two long columns of lights behind us. We were in the lead division and most of our squadron was behind us and the lead division of the 12th Squadron was abreast of us, and the other two divisions were astern of us.

RW: How many ships were in front of you?

RS: I think three.

RW: Can you remember the names of them?

RS: The DELPHY was the flagship, and I think the S.P. LEE and the NICHOLAS were in front of us but I'm not sure.

RW: According to this article ["Course Zero Nine Five," by Lt. Cmdr. Richard B. Hadaway, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, January 1957]:



Rolling seas sweep past FULLER, WOODBURY and drowned YOUNG to break over the stern of squadron flagship DELPHY. The tragedy of Destroyer Squadron 11 was one shared by many other vessels in the "Graveyard of the Pacific," as the Honda-Arguello-Point Conception area is known.
San Diego Maritime Museum

"The Delphy was still steaming at 20 knots when, at 2105, followed by the S.P. Lee, Young, Woodbury, Nicholas, Fuller, Chauncey, Somers, and Farragut, she ran aground." [*Ed. Note :* The first seven vessels went fully aground. SOMERS and FARRAGUT, in the rear of the column, struck bottom but were able to back off.]

RS: I wouldn't quarrel with it. There may have been only the two ships ahead of us.

RW: You went below at that time, before this happened.

RS: Yes.

RW: What exactly happened? I think you told me one time before that you felt the ship making a turn.

RS: Yes. I realized we were changing course because the destroyer has a very narrow beam and they heel over, greatly, at twenty knots with any rudder at all. The ship will respond by heeling over at the outside of the turn. Our turn was to port and we heeled to starboard. I was aware that we had turned.

RW: Exactly what happened at Point Honda? You remember. You were at your duty station.

RS: Yes. Evaporators are on the starboard side of that type of destroyer, just above the turn of the bilge. We straightened out from the turn. We came back to an even keel. We had a gentle roll. Then, all of a sudden, there was a great noise and a great shock, and we nearly lost our footing. In those destroyers there were handrails all over the engine room because in heavy weather they roll heavily and you must have something to hold on to. Out of habit, you lean with your back against them and hold them with both hands. It is customary. Had I not had hold of them, I'm sure the shock would have knocked me off my feet. The noise was one of a great crash, immediately followed by a loud, staccato noise like an enormous machine gun and it was the ribs of the ship being parted as the rocks tore through the ship. Water immediately came in and the whole turn of the bilge was opened up—nearly the length of the ship.

RW: Which side of the ship?

RS: The starboard side. The evaporators and the main air pump, which was immediatley adjacent, had their underpinnings torn out from under them. They started disappearing down into the water. The main air pump, the twin beam pump, was still functioning. The steam pipes—or exhaust pipes—didn't rupture but the weight of them pulled them loose from the overhead, and the last I saw them, they were going down underwater, still working.

The captain, Commander Calhoun, was very cool, very deliberate, and he just cautioned all hands to squat as low as they could and hold onto everybody else. Those who did, survived.

Almost immediately, the lights went out. I'm stretching it out in telling the story but all this happened in a very short time. I tried to get the watertight bulkhead door between the forward engine room and the aft engine room closed, but couldn't because the water going through it made it impossible to push the door shut. While I was trying to close the door, the lights went out. The water was then up to the generators which were up under the main deck in the forward engine room. The water was that high. The water was over the watertight doorsill. I couldn't hear anyone.

I heard no voices. I shouted but got no response. I climbed over the exhaust pump to one of the escape ladders from the after engine room and climbed out.

We, then, had about a sixty degree list to starboard. We were rolling over. We were sinking. We rolled over and as the port side came up, we would climb down the port side to keep up with the roll of the ship. Finally, the survivors were on the bottom of the ship. Our port rail was under us due to the roll to starboard. There was a considerable sea running, near the shore, and we had to cluster and hold together to keep from being washed overboard. The few individuals who left the group to look and to stand up, were washed over-

board. The captain, Commander Calhoun, was very cool, very deliberate, and he just cautioned all hands to squat as low as they could and hold onto everybody else. Those who did, survived.

As we were rolling over, the CHAUNCEY came in with its lights on. We didn't know it was in trouble. We thought they were coming in to rescue us. They were very surprised to hear us shouting up at them. They didn't know where we were. Someone shined a signal searchlight down and saw us as we were telling them, "Go back, go back!" She couldn't. We learned later that she'd already hit and had torn loose. As she came drifting alongside us, our port propeller was coming up out of the water and gashed her side with a succession of great big tears because our propeller was still spinning at 220 revolutions a minute. This is a heavy mass of metal.

RW: It was just momentum, then?

RS: Like a big meat slicer. She, in turn, then, went on ahead of us toward the beach. She was drifting. We didn't know, then, that she was truly [in dire straits]. She hit again. She dropped both anchors to keep from drifting back out into deep water and sinking. The CHAUNCEY's crew then abandoned ship. They were very close to the shore. Our emergency battle lanterns were still on. The generators were secure.

Our Chief Boatswain's Mate, Arthur Peterson, dived down under the water [and] cut loose a boat fall [the block and tackle that hoists the boat]. . . . He tied it around his waist, dove into the sea, and swam over to the CHAUNCEY. He climbed aboard her sea ladder, cut one of the CHAUNCEY's boat falls, bent the two together, and we pulled it back. Then we had a line from the CHAUNCEY to the pump. "Pete" would pull four men over. They'd hold onto the line and he'd pull them over to the CHAUNCEY. We would pull it back and, by that time, we could put six or eight men on it. We pulled it back and forth like a ferry.

I must tell you that the fuel tanks of most of the ships had big ruptures in them and the fuel was about a foot thick on the surface of the water. Most of the men who jumped overboard—or who were thrown overboard—drowned in the fuel oil. They could float in the water but they couldn't get their heads up out of the fuel oil. We were all immersed in fuel oil going from the YOUNG to the CHAUNCEY. Most of the YOUNG's crew only had their underwear on. Sailors slept in their underwear. The people who were on watch had shoes and socks and dungarees. We were lucky.

Most of the men who jumped overboard—or who were thrown overboard—drowned in the fuel oil. They could float in the water but they couldn't get their heads up out of the fuel oil.

We got a lot of life preservers from the CHAUNCEY's life jacket lockers and we put them on. Using some of the lines . . . we went hand over hand to the rock that the CHAUNCEY's bow had hit—the underwater part of it. We climbed up the face of that cliff. By the time I got to it, it was all oil soaked and very difficult to climb. There were lots of people with badly marked shins and ankles from climbing those oil-drenched rocks. A few of the more hardy of us weren't at all frightened after we got over to the CHAUNCEY. We thought it was nice and safe and warm, so we helped ourselves to clothes or anything we could find because the ship was abandoned. An amusing thing was that someone said, "Let's open a sick bay locker and get the alcohol." We opened it with great difficulty and that compartment was flooded. [The water] immediately knocked us down and we got out of there.

Ed. Note: The second and final part of this article will appear in the spring 1996 issue of *Mains'l Haul*.

Part 3

The MAORI KING Affair

By Charles A. Bencik

Ed. Note: Parts 1 and 2 of Mr. Bencik's story, which appeared in the Summer and Fall 1995 issues of *Mains'l Haul*, told of how the British tramp freighter MAORI KING steamed into San Diego from the Far East in 1907, loaded with Russian and Chinese railway workers bound for Mexico. Severe fighting between the two nationalities had broken out during the voyage, leaving one man dead and many injured. Captain J. W. Duncan put the ship into San Diego on May 7, desperately seeking help from local authorities. He got it. Twenty armed guards partly drawn from a local company of the California Naval Militia, under the command of Lt. Don Stewart, boarded the violence-torn ship. The MAORI KING left San Diego late on the 8th, bound for Guaymas, Mexico, where the workers were to be put ashore and go to work on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Mr. Bencik's story resumes at this point, in the concluding installment.

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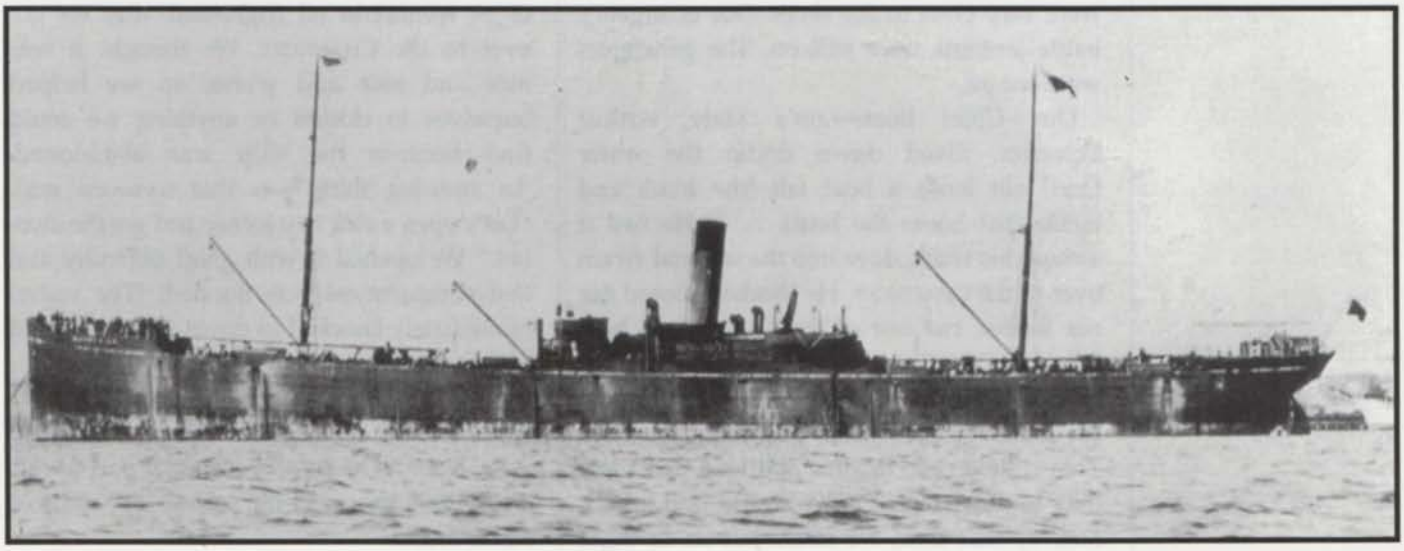
Even as the MAORI KING proceeded out the channel on the evening of May 8th, the whistle on the power house of the San Diego Gas and Electric Light Company blew an emergency signal to recall the Naval Militia and National Guard. Ensign John Parrish [of the Naval Militia] had received a telegram intended for Lt. Stewart, now aboard the departing tramp:

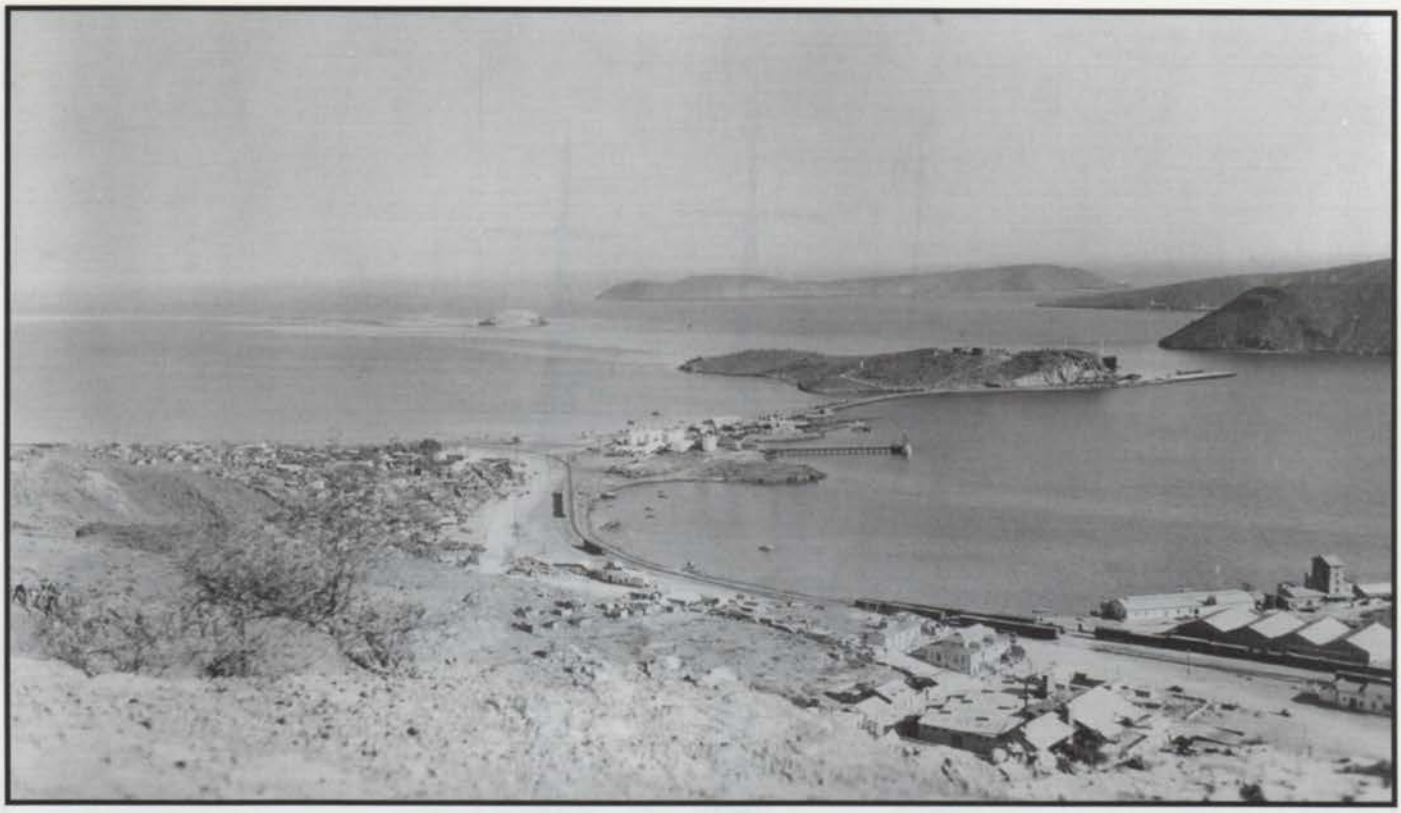
"Be prepared to move to San Francisco at a moment's notice if requested."[1]

The telegram was signed by Captain Bauer, the Naval Militia battalion commander at San Francisco.

The MAORI KING was typical of tramp freighters roving the world in 1907 and for many decades later. In May of that year, after crossing the Pacific from Vladivostok, she pulled into San Diego Bay with a cargo of chaos—hundreds of Russian and Chinese laborers fighting a bloody running battle on her decks. Into this melee stepped the men of San Diego's Naval Militia company, hired as armed guards to ride the ship to the Mexican port of Guaymas.

Frontier Port, by Don M. Stewart





The sleepy port of Guaymas, on the eastern shore of the Sea of Cortez, was the destination for the riot-torn MAORI KING.
California State Railroad Museum

The San Diego newspapers speculated that Company B and the Third Division, Naval Militia, would take the train in the morning for San Francisco, to assist in quelling a streetcar operators' strike. Others remembered how things had gone during the San Francisco Earthquake call-up in 1906, and expected to see things done later rather than sooner. No one was sure what Lt. Stewart's standing would be in the meantime, as he had sailed in MAORI KING not in his status as a Naval Militia officer, but as a private contractor.

Washington and other cities were reportedly abuzz over the international implications of the MAORI KING incident, and speculation was rife about the possible return of the ship to Vladivostok, should the Mexican government yield to Chinese diplomatic pressure.[2] The twenty American guards aboard would be in peril of their lives, with no government to take up their cause, should the worst happen.[3]

Three days after the ship left, the *Tribune* found a Mr. E. H. Lamne, recently returned from Shanghai, where he had been with a legal firm representing the labor contracting agents. (Lamne also represented several California railroads.) He claimed to have written the original contract for the Shanghai workers, and denied the "shanghaiing" claim made by the Chinese consul in San Diego, Lun Hing. Lamne insisted that all the laborers had received a Chinese-language translation of the contract and stressed the famine conditions prevailing in China and the good that might have come to the starving Chinese workers. Furthermore, he blamed the Chinese government for its ill will toward U.S. immigration policies.[4]

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Meanwhile, aboard the MAORI KING under way for Guaymas, Stewart had the two Chinese labor contractors brought up into the superstructure, for their own safety. He drilled the guard on their weapons, primarily 12-gauge shotguns, in full view of the Chinese. He set up a three-section watch organization with himself, Louis Almgren, and Henry Buckle as section leaders. In his memoir, *Frontier Port*, published years later, Stewart says it was a "pleasant, uneventful trip" with windy, cool weather.[5] They



The Mexican gunboat DEMOCRATA played a role in the MAORI KING story, sending over armed sailors to the freighter at Guaymas. DEMOCRATA was an occasional visitor to San Diego.
San Diego Historical Society, Photograph Collection

passed USS PRINCETON, a gunboat, at anchor in Magdalena Bay. As they rounded Cabo San Lucas, some persons ashore waved a Mexican flag at the ship. The weather changed suddenly: temperatures rose, the sea quieted down, clouds and breezes disappeared. Soon a steady discharge of furs and heavy garments overboard marked the wake of the ship as millions of lice drowned.

The transit was not all that pleasant. Guard Frank Whitmore, on returning, called the twenty-seven days "a terrible experience."[6] A fight broke out between Russians and Chinese just as the ship was leaving San Diego Bay. According to Louis Almgren's account:

"The first night the fight started when we left at 5:00 o'clock . . . at the Coronado Island [sic] . . . and the mutiny kept up until very near 12:00 o'clock the first night out before we got them quieted down and got them separated. A number of Russians and Chinamen were badly injured by pounding each other and kicking each other and clubing [sic] each other with whatever they had handy."[7]

Some Chinese kept trying to trip up Russians, hoping to rile one of them enough to start a row. Stewart's guard tried to calm things down by restricting the warring factions to their quarters, at opposite ends of the ship. Almgren recalled:

"We were on the superstructure in the center of the ship and they had the Russians in [one] end of the ship and the Chinamen in [the other] and they had to get over the superstructure—they [the Chinese] couldn't get. . . after the Russians without coming through over the top of the superstructure—there is where we had the mess-up, but we fought them back there one night until we had the hot water and the steam hose and everything else going."[8]

Almgren may have been referring to a climactic confrontation that happened toward the end of the quarantine period. His recollections in 1957 differed in several details from Stewart's memories and the information in the contemporary newspapers.

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The ship arrived in Guaymas on a morning between the 12th and the 16th of May (reports vary).[9] The Mexican gov-

The Chinese passed the time with gambling. Eight deaths from sickness occurred. To hide this from the Mexicans, the bodies were sneaked ashore at night and buried, then later burned with Mexican permission.

ernment at first didn't want to let MAORI KING enter port, but relented and ordered her into thirty days' quarantine. The guards were pleased, as they were assured of an easy four dollars a day, sitting for four hours out of twelve with guns across their laps, watching the laborers. ("It skins real estate a mile," wrote Rufus Payne, in a letter home on the 20th.)[10]

The Chinese passed the time with gambling. Eight deaths from sickness occurred. To hide this from the Mexicans, the bodies were sneaked ashore at night and buried, then later burned with Mexican permission. The Chinese body in the coffin, which had been aboard since May 2, began reacting to the tropical heat, and the crew devised another coffin weighted down with coal, while they sneaked the ripe corpse ashore for burial.[11] The oppressive heat made the Manchurians surly, and word came to the captain, through the Cantonese crew, that the laborers planned a takeover. On the fateful night, the conspirators gathered around their leader. At eight in the evening, the sound of splintering wood told of weapons being prepared.

The guards were stationed on the bridge, facing the Chinese.[12] Stewart told them: "This is life and death. You have to stand firm and not quail. If you do, that will be it. Keep your face to the front and don't one of you look back this way. I am back here with these six-shooters." He ordered one of the ladders leading to the bridge cast loose, with Almgren at the top of it. The first two Chinese climbed up; Almgren slugged them with his fist, and they fell below. Then Stewart ordered his twenty guards to load their guns. The noise sent the rest of the Chinese scrambling for cover.[13]

The MAORI KING lay at anchor a mile offshore. Nearby was the Mexican gunboat DEMOCRATA. The MAORI KING fired the prearranged distress signal, a blue rocket, and gave four blasts on the whistle. DEMOCRATA put a boat in the water with eight riflemen and a lieutenant. Almgren remembered:

" . . . they came aboard the ship and they took one look at that mad-man crowd and the Mexican lieutenant got so excited he dropped his sword down on the deck. Goodness, we had the hardest time keeping [them] from shooting these Chinamen. . . . We had to run before them and hold up our hands not to shoot. It was just an awful predicament . . . we were afraid that they would start shooting again and the fight would start again. They went away, and that finished the fighting for that night."[14]

Around the 23rd of May, the Russians were landed from the ship and sent by train to Navojoa to begin working on the railroad.[15]

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The British owners of the MAORI KING had the vessel consigned to the Weir and Co. Agency of San Pedro. Besides the $90,000 cost of operation of the ship, the two Chinese labor contractors aboard wanted fifty dollars for each Chinese laborer. The Chinese themselves began agitating for a payment of twenty-five dollars per man, before they would go ashore, or else be returned to China. (If that occurred, Captain Duncan was determined to have the guards ride back to Vladivostok with him.) Then there was the four dollars a day to be paid to each of the guards hired in San Diego, plus hotel costs and train fare. Money demands were pressed on the Southern Pacific, with Weir and Co. determined to be paid first of all.

The Chinese still had to clear the medical inspectors. Those who passed were marked on their chests with a cork dipped in ink. When they came to the gangway, if they could show the mark, they were allowed to disembark.

Dissatisfied with the apparent efforts of the Chinese labor contractors to cheat them, the Southern Pacific settled directly with the laborers. They gave them "new suits of clothes," and promised them twenty-six dollars per month wages, with one month's pay for the trip across the ocean. On agreeing to these terms, the Chinese were allowed to go ashore. The laborers received $2.50 in American money.[16] The ship's owners made a clear $85,000 profit.[17] After two weeks, the Mexicans lifted the quarantine.

The Chinese still had to clear the medical inspectors. Those who passed were marked on their chests with a cork dipped in ink. When they came to the gangway, if they could show the mark, they were allowed to disembark. Soon the guards at the gangway noticed that more seemed to have the "passing mark" than the doctors could have examined: apparently the Chinese had begun doing their own "examinations" below decks! Realizing how many had gone ashore unexamined, the process stopped, and all were allowed ashore.[18]

Apparently each man, including the guards, still had to go through a foul-smelling delousing bath before they were permitted their liberty. As Frank Whitmore later reported:

"They compelled every soul on board the MAORI KING to go through the quarantine requirements at Guaymas. That means simply that the[y] herded all of us under giant sprays and shower baths, and almost drowned us in a heavy solution of sickening disinfectants. My clothes were ruined."[19]

Stewart released the guard, who had to leave by train May 31 without any pay. He remained aboard, and got a Mexican attorney to put a "libel" on the ship, to prevent her from leaving port until the Southern Pacific had paid for their services. Almgren and some companions took the Southern Pacific train to Tucson, then the Sunset Limited to Los Angeles, where they got Santa Fe "scalper's ticket tailends" for $1.50 each, and managed to get back to San Diego by Monday, June 3. Stewart remained aboard, waited for their wage money, and shipped the weapons back to the San Diego custom house, in bond.[20]

On June 9, Stewart returned to San Diego with the money, and paid all the guards the grand sum of $113 each plus $63 for seven days spent in hotels. (A tidy sum then, but several were fired from jobs for going on this duty.) Meanwhile, the governor had decided not to mobilize the Naval Militia for the San Francisco streetcar operators' strike. No action was taken against any of the militiamen involved in the MAORI KING incident, for being absent when called up. The Adjutant General's reports for the 1907 operations of the State Guard and Militia is totally devoid of any reference to the matter.

Don Stewart left his chief clerk position with Pacific Coast Steamship Company later that year, and became City Treasurer and Tax Collector. He became a member of the City Council, and served honorably with the Navy during World War I, aboard USS SAN DIEGO (Armored Cruiser No. 6), and at the Balboa Park Naval Training School. He remained a San Diegan for the rest of his life, active in local politics and business, until his passing in 1969.

As for the MAORI KING, she passed to Russian owners. Her name was changed to ESPERANCE, and she disappeared in 1915, presumably lost on the coast of Formosa (now Taiwan).[21]



Happy guardsmen finally leave the hell ship at Guaymas. They are bound for San Diego—and doubtless much relieved.
Frontier Port, Don M. Stewart

NOTES

1 *San Diego Union*, May 9, 1907, p. 5.
2 *The Evening Tribune*, May 10, 1907, p. 3.
3 *San Diego Union*, May 10, 1907, p. 6.
4 *The Evening Tribune*, May 11, 1907, p. 8.
5 Don M. Stewart, *Frontier Port* (Los Angeles, CA: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1966), p. 159.
6 *San Diego Union*, June 4, 1907, p. 14.
7 Oral history interview with Louis Almgren, April 17, 1957. San Diego Historical Society, San Diego, CA. Transcript p. 6 ff.
8 Ibid.
9 The *Union* of May 17, 1907 reported that the ship reached Guaymas "yesterday" (i.e., on the 16th), based on receipt of a telegram from guard Walter Golay to Mrs. Stewart. Calculations using Stewart's time of transit has the ship at Guaymas as early as the 12th.
10 *San Diegan Sun*, May 28, 1907, p. 2.
11 *San Diegan Sun*, June 10, 1907, p. 2.
12 *The Evening Tribune*, June 3, 1907. Almgren, oral history interview, pp. 7-8.
13 Stewart, *Frontier Port*, chapter XIII.
14 Almgren, oral history interview, p. 6. Almgren's description of the confrontation, judging by Walter Golay's narrative in the *San Diegan Sun* of June 3, 1907, is fairly accurate, though he seemed to disagree with Stewart on the locations of the Russian and Chinese quarters in the ship.
15 M. F. Morse, "a mining man," who knew the Guaymas port warden, and had business on MAORI KING when she arrived, is quoted in the *San Diegan Sun* of May 29, 1907 regarding the debarking of the Russians on the 23rd, and the Chinese demands for the $25 settlement.
16 *San Diegan Sun*, June 10, 1907, p. 2. *The San Diego Union* , June 4, 1907, p. 14, has Walter Golay's confirming description of the climactic battle for the ship's bridge, and details of the payments to the Chinese and the ship's agents.
17 *San Diego Union*, June 7, 1907, p. 5.
18 Stewart, *Frontier Port*, chapter XIII.
19 *San Diego Union*, June 4, 1907, p. 14.
20 *San Diegan Sun*, June 10, 1907, p. 2. The 1905 schedule of the Sonora Railway section of the Sunset Route shows the trip from Guaymas to Tucson as lasting four days.
21 *The San Diego Sun*, April 19, 1933, section 2, p. 1.

PART I

THE OPIUM TRADE IN CHINA:

An Early American Connection

By Paul E. Fontenoy

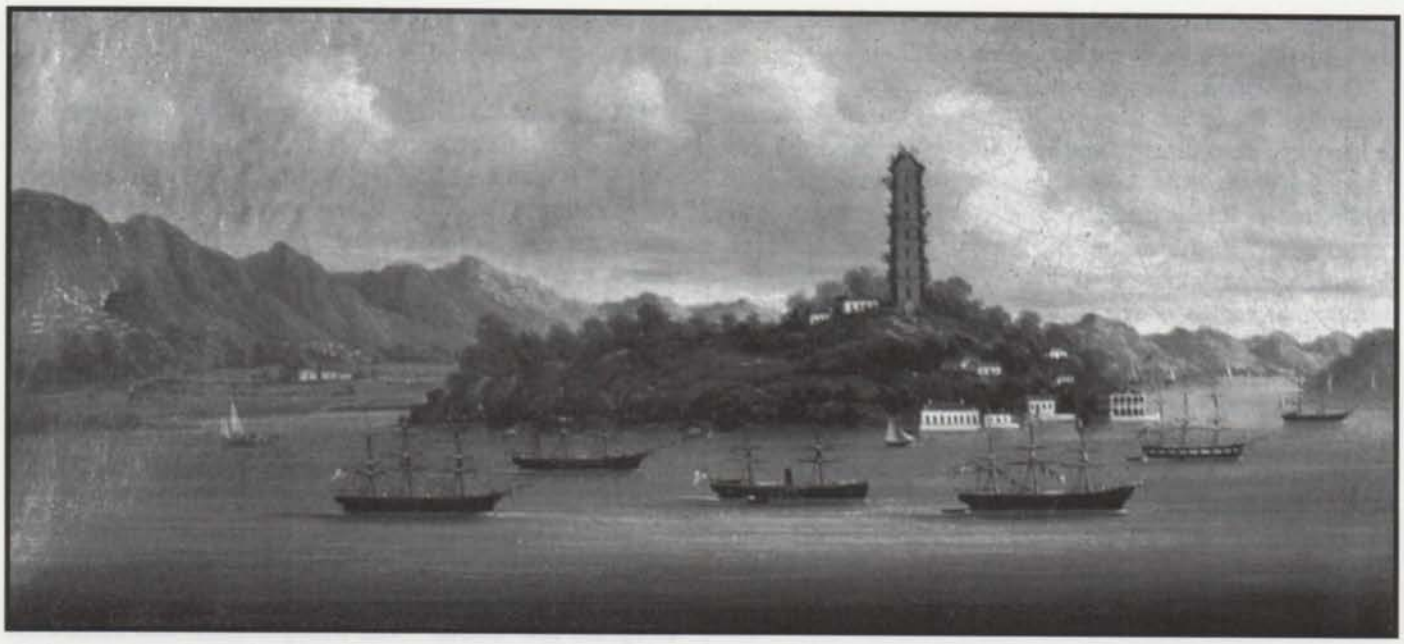
American trade with China was a relatively mature business by 1805. Participants were thoroughly acquainted with its two most significant problems. They faced great difficulties in providing commodities for the self-satisfied and fickle Chinese market that were both readily salable and highly profitable. In consequence, they also incurred the constant requirement of exporting a steady flow of specie, itself in short supply in the United States, in order to purchase Chinese goods for American domestic consumption. Expanding American trade with China increased the urgency of their discovering a solution for their commercial problems.



Thomas Handasyd Perkins in his 60s. From a portrait in the author's collection.
Photograph: Elijah Cobb

American merchants needed to find a highly profitable product of wide general acceptability to the Chinese that would retain its hold on the market and offer the prospect of long-term expansion. During the first twenty years of their participation in the China trade, Americans single-mindedly had pursued the glittering prospects offered successively by ginseng from the Hudson Valley and the Appalachian Mountains, the Pacific Northwest's fine furs, and sandalwood from the islands of the South Seas. Each had attained substantial yet momentary popularity in Canton, but all had failed to generate consistent sales and arrest the trade imbalance in China's favor. American traders urgently required some alternative product that would succeed in seizing a solid market for itself.

The rapid growth of American trade with China added to the urgency of the search for such a commodity, since it exacerbated the drain of silver from the United States to China. No reliable information is available on the amount of specie shipped to China from the United States before 1804, although an English merchant reported that, during this period, "[t]o Bengal the Americans may be computed to send about half a million sterling [approximately $1,250,000] annually in Spanish dollars, and about the same sum to China, which is certainly much more than is sent from Great Britain."[1] In 1804 American merchants carried $2,902,000 in silver coin to Canton, while their merchandise exports were valued at a total of $2,653,818. Specie thus represented 52 percent of all American exports. During the period leading up to the outbreak of war with England in 1812, this situation became more unfavorable, with silver dollars making up at least 75 percent of total exports each year from 1805 to 1807, and again in 1810. In 1809 and



The anchorage at Whampoa, ca. 1850. Foreign vessels were not permitted at Canton itself so the ships and their crews spent the season anchored off Whampoa while their captains and supercargoes took up residence in the factories. This is an anonymous Chinese export painting in a private collection in Washington, D.C.

Photograph courtesy of the author

1811 silver exports accounted for a slightly smaller proportion of all goods shipped: 58 percent in 1809 and 60 percent in 1811. Only in 1808 was more merchandise than bullion shipped to China, but that year, together with the period of the War of 1812, marked the nadir of American trade to China, with total exports below $500,000.[2]

American merchants labored under a further competitive disadvantage until well after the War of 1812 since, generally, they were unable to substitute bills of exchange drawn on London firms for specie.[3] Such bills, which were readily accepted by the Chinese Hong merchants (those merchants authorized by the imperial government to trade with westerners) in Canton, enabled their competitors from England and India to reduce the quantity of coin they had to ship to China, since the East India Company's treasury would redeem those the Hong merchants presented for silver. In part, the provisions of the British Orders in Council prevented Americans from using bills of exchange but the restrictions of the various Embrago Acts compounded the problem. Some limited use of drafts by U.S. traders was recorded in 1810, but it did not become a regular feature of their dealings until well after 1815 with the resumption of peaceful relations with Britain, and then only in the face of reluctantly yielded opposition from the East India Company. The Company noted in 1812 that

> [i]n the Season 1810-11 the American Traders first brought Drafts to any considerable amount to Canton on Mercantile Houses in London, with the Proceeds of which they had to provide their returning Cargoes. If the Americans were annually provided with an extensive Credit on Houses of respectability in England, we are not aware of any Circumstances to deter the Indian Capitalist from remitting the proceeds of his Speculations in the China Market by means of the Bills which might be purchased in Canton in preference to returning his Property to Calcutta and from thence transmitting it thro' the Company's Treasury to England . . .[4]

By the mid-1830s bills of exchange drawn on London virtually replaced the export of silver coin. This greatly eased the trading situation for American merchants, particularly as the imbalance between merchandise and currency carried to China persisted, with goods making up only about 48 percent of exports.[5] American merchants were not unique in facing the problem of large annual trade imbalances with the consequent obligation to export large amounts of bullion: all Europeans trading with China, including the British East India Company, had long confronted this same difficulty. The British in particular, who had by far the largest stake in the China trade by the end of the eighteenth century, had a pressing interest in finding an effective method for rectifying this unfavorable balance in their commerce. By the time the first

American traders reached Canton, opium already was showing the promise of providing the solution.

Opium was not always contraband in China. The Arabs introduced the opium poppy into China in the late seventh or early eighth centuries, and they may have imported the drug itself as early as the fourth century.[6] The government considered opium a medicine and, from the late sixteenth century, levied duties on its import.[7] As the scale of European imports increased it provoked concern over the detrimental effects of the drug's use on both individuals and society. In 1729 the entry of some two hundred chests caused the Emperor Yung Chang to issue an edict proscribing the domestic sale and use of opium throughout the empire.[8] Around 1700 the East India Company had started carrying opium for sale in the East Indies but there is no evidence of British sales of the drug this early in China.[9] Nevertheless, the Chinese proscription caused the Company's officers at Canton to issue their own prohibition:

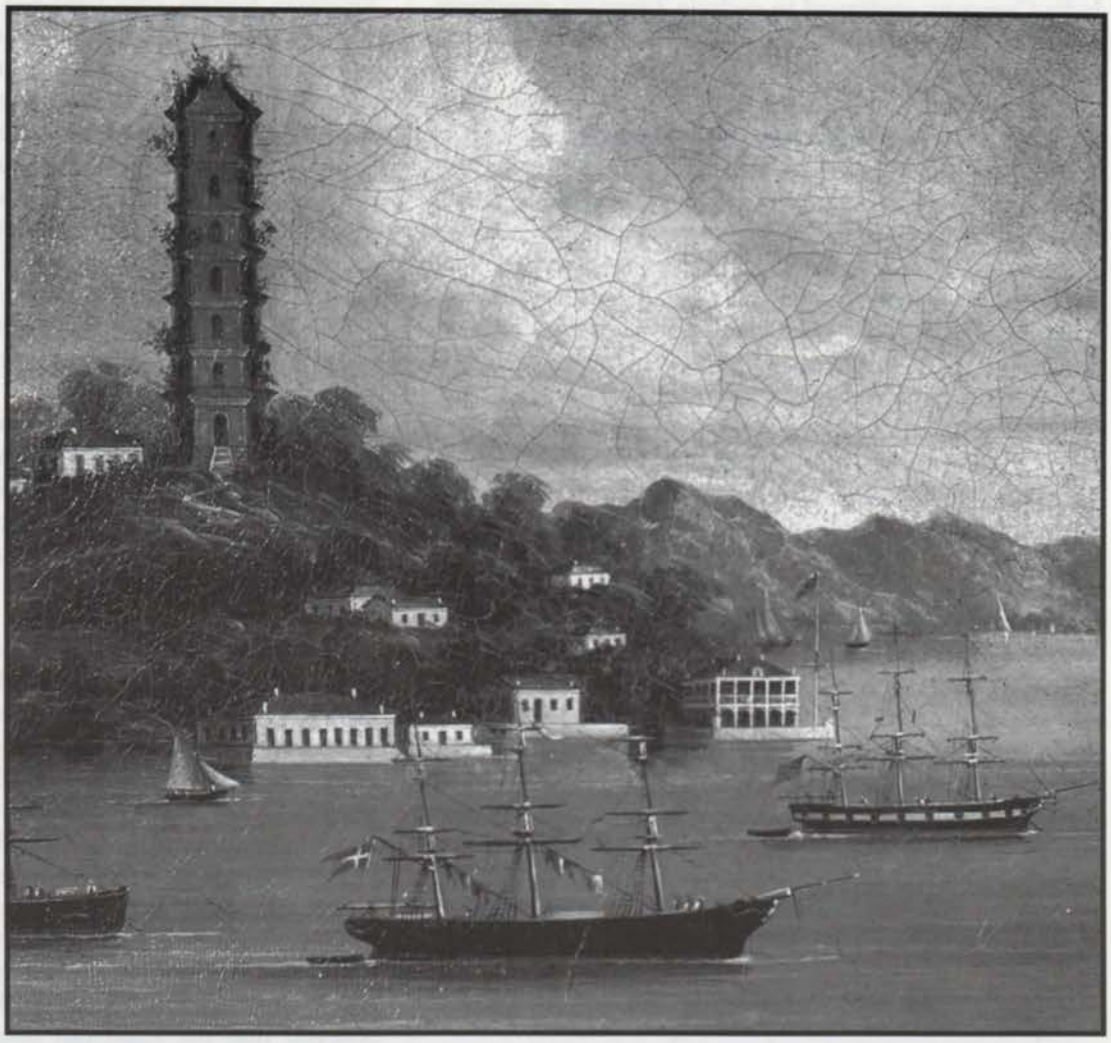
> Taking into Consideration that . . . The profitt made on Ophium to China might induce the Commanders or Officers to purchase some for that markett, not being sensible of the dangerous consequences that would attend their so doing. . . .
>
> It having been a usual thing heretofere, for shipps bound from Fort St. George [Madras], to carry ophium with them for sale to China . . . we think it our Duty (lest you should be a stranger to itt) to acquaint you with the late severe laws enacted by the Emperour of China for ye prohibition of Ophium, the penalty, should any be seiz'd on board your Ship, being no less than ye confiscation of Ship & Cargoes to the Emperour, as well as death to the person who should dare to offer to buy it of you; upon these considerations therefore, & the more effectually to prevent any such like misfortune attending of us, you are hereby required to take the best measures you possibly can, by a strict enquiry and search in your ship, to be well informed whether there be any such thing on board or not . . . since upon no consideration what sover, you are neither to carry, nor suffer any of it to be carry'd in your Ship to China, as you will answer the contrary to the Hon'ble Company at your peril.[10]

During the middle years of the eighteenth century the East India Company's officers gained a private and unofficial monopoly over the production of opium in the Ganges Valley. In 1773, Warren Hastings converted this into a public monopoly, and the East India Company thenceforth maintained legal control over opium production and marketing in India and a substantial unofficial influence over the sale of the drug in China. It advanced native growers the necessary capital to assure planting of the poppies, oversaw the harvest's conversion into opium, and conducted sales of the drug in India.[11]

The East India Company generally maintained its deliberate policy of not transporting the opium itself. From about 1775 English and "country" vessels (specially licensed ships privately owned by European and native residents of the East India Company's Indian possessions) started to carry Bengal opium to Canton. The Company itself very briefly participated in this carrying trade with two vessels in 1781 when the exigencies of war cut off its normal supply of bullion. A French privateer captured one ship whose captain was able to escape with the $59,600 realized from sales of some of his opium in Sumatra. The other vessel's cargo sold for more than $80,000 less than its purchase and freight costs: a loss of almost 19 percent. The unhappy experiences of this excursion rapidly induced the Company to revert to its previous policy of remaining aloof from the actual transportation of opium into China.[12] The transportation was carried on by so-called "country ships," private traders, while Company ships continued to be banned from importing the drug to China. The Company, of course, did sell opium to the private traders.

During the late eighteenth century the volume of the drug shipped from India was insufficient to eliminate China's positive trade balance with the East India Company, but opium made a noticeable contribution to reducing its size. In 1800 the Company's drug exports to Canton were valued at approximately $4,500,000, compared with other merchandise that realized $3,550,000, specie shipments of $2,265,000, and bills on London and Calcutta totaling $4,550,000.[13]

The profitability of the business encouraged the growth of the opium market despite the efforts of the imperial government. Although opium once again became a dutiable import in China by 1753, the emperor re-issued the earlier edict proscribing its sale and consumption in 1780.[14] A more stringent imperial edict of 1796 prohibited the importation of opium "as a drug pernicious to the Health and Morals of the Chinese."[15] The domestic market, however, was so lucrative that the Cantonese Hong merchants were eager to purchase the drug at high prices and willing to bribe as many officials as necessary to maintain the flow of this trade. Furthermore, an East India Company report observed, "as it produced great fees to the Hoppo [the western traders' term for the superintendent of maritime customs at Canton] who clandestinely encourages this contraband Trade, effectual means [of interdiction] are not intended." It did note, however, that since the "Viceroy of this Province is said to have taken a very active part in this business [the issuance of the imperial edict] and may perhaps find some favorable opportunity to renew the Subject," it was essential that the ban on the Company's vessels carrying opium between India and China be re-issued and rigorously enforced.[16]



This detail of the preceding picture shows the famous multi-tiered pagoda on Whampoa Island.

Photograph courtesy of the author

During the decade following the entry of U.S. ships into the China trade in 1784 there is no evidence of American traders participating in the opium traffic, even though they quickly appreciated its potential for profits. Samuel Shaw, the EMPRESS OF CHINA'S supercargo, observed in 1785 that a "good market" existed for opium in China that would provide a "handsome profit," and that it could be "smuggled with the utmost security."[17] The East India Company granted American vessels relatively unrestricted access to both the India coastal trade and the "country" traffic between its territories and China. Nevertheless, the Company rigorously excluded them from the opium business, and maintained this exclusion, despite the Americans' well-documented propensity for smuggling and evading regulations, due to its monopoly of the drug's supply and its authority over the "country" trade.[18]

The United States, through Jay's Treaty in 1794, formally assented to British conditions for access to its Indian market:

> It is expressly agreed, that the Vessels of the United States shall not carry any of the articles exported by them from the said British Territories to any Port or Place, except to some Port or Place in America, where the same shall be unladen . . . It is also understood that the permission granted by this article is not to extend to allow the Vessels of the United States to carry on any part of the Coasting Trade of the said British territories. . . .[19]

The treaty was to remain in force for the next ten years and its rigid enforcement would have barred American traders from carrying goods from British territories to any place other than a U.S. port, thus excluding them from trades to which they had had access since 1784. In real-

ity, its provisions were not enforced rigorously, but the East India Company continued to exclude American merchants from participation in the opium traffic between Bengal and Canton during the period to 1804.[20]

The earliest American ventures into the opium trade thus did not occur until about 1804, although one Yankee vessel, the JOHN JAY, had carried a single chest into Providence, presumably for medicinal purposes, in 1794.[21] As the expiry date for the commercial clauses of Jay's Treaty drew near, U.S. merchants chafed at their restrictions. J. & T. H. Perkins of Boston asserted to their Canton agent that, when the articles that "proscribed our Intercourse in India and restricted us in the coasting trade" expired, then "we sh'd have a right to prosecute [undertake] voyages from Brit. Settlements in India to Canton and elsewhere."[22] They followed up this assertion by dispatching several vessels to engage in the "country" trade between India and China and also initiated the firm's dealings in the opium trade (in which it was to become the pre-eminent American player) with a series of ventures from India to the East Indies.[23]

Meanwhile, as Americans increased their trade with the Mediterranean and the Levant they discovered in Turkey a source for the supply of opium in which they could traffic without restrictions.[24] The East India Company's monopoly prohibited all privately owned English vessels from the direct trade between any part of Europe and China. Moreover, the Company, as already noted, absolutely proscribed its ships from carrying opium. Its officials reiterated both policies in no uncertain terms on October 22, 1799 and January 3, 1800. Sailing orders issued to commanders of Indiamen departing from Bombay warned:

> You must take the most particular care that no Opium is laden on board your ship by yourself Officers or any other Persons as the importation of that Article at China is positively forbid and very serious consequences may attend your neglect of this injunction.

The Canton supercargoes, in their annual report to the Court of Directors, observed that:

> Being desirous to guard against every accident by which the Hon'ble Company could in any manner be implicated in the charge of illicit trade [we] requested a peremptory order might be issued at the Presidencies [the East India Company's administrative centers] to forbid any Opium in future being taken on board Company's Ships bound to China. . . . We have therefore repeated our desire to the Governments in India respecting the interdiction to the Commanders and Officers of the Hon'ble Company's Ships and we submit to the Hon'ble Court whether it may not be proper to attach some Penalty to the Importation of Turkey Opium which has sometimes found its way (tho' in small quantities) directly from England to this Quarter.[25]

The impact of this combination of policies was to free American traders who ventured into the Turkish opium market from any effective competition. The brig PENNSYLVANIA departed Smyrna in March 1805 for Batavia in the Dutch East Indies with a cargo including fifty chests of opium.[26] In June and July 1806 the first direct American opium shipments from Smyrna arrived at Canton aboard the brigs EUTAN of Baltimore and SYLPH of Philadelphia, consisting of some 130 chests in total. This event occasioned some alarm among the officers of the East India Company, although, to some degree, Britain's prohibitions against its nationals' participation in the traffic fostered American exploitation of this trade from Smyrna.

The speculations of the Americans in the Trade of Opium from Smyrna to China have not failed to attract our attention and are probable, if carried to any extent, to prove injurious to the Hon'ble Company, we should have endeavoured to check the importation had the measure appeared practicable.[27]

Turkish opium, which the Chinese considered to be of lesser quality than the Indian drug, still found a ready market in Canton, albeit at a lower price of about $500 per chest. Initial American exports to China were small and valued at about $50,000 in 1805, $100,000 in 1806, and $75,000 in 1807. These quantities represented between 5 and 10 percent of the value of all merchandise shipped to Canton by American merchants in these years. During this period the drug itself was not only transported directly from Turkey to China but also shipped from Smyrna to American ports, where merchants incorporated the opium into their cargoes for Canton.[28] The East India Company believed that the American entry into the opium trade posed little threat to its own dominant position in China. Because of

> the very inferior estimation in which the Turkey Opium is held by the Chinese, comparatively with the produce of Bengal, we do not conceive the speculations of the Americans are likely permanently to interfere with the Interests of the Hon'ble company, altho' from the advantageous sale of the Article at the close of the last Season [1806], it is probable they may for a time be extended and produce some temporary injurious effect on the Market. The Turkey Opium is we believe used entirely for the purpose of adulterating the produce of Bengal, and for this purpose a small quantity, perhaps 100 peculs [13,333 pounds], will find a ready sale, but a considerable importation will be unsaleable, nor will such prices be given as will repay the Speculators, except when the Opium from Bengal is selling on very favorable terms.[29]

Ed. Note: Mr. Fontenoy's article will conclude in our next issue.

NOTES

1 Alexander Baring, *An Inquiry into the Causes and Consequences of the Order in Council and an Examination of the Conduct of Great Britain Towards the Neutral Commerce of America* (London: J. M. Richardson & J. Ridgeway, 1808), p. 99.

2 Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1835), p. 303.

3 Bills of exchange functioned in similar fashion to modern checks, since they were issued by individuals or businesses in payment for their purchases. They differed, however, in that they were also negotiable instruments that changed hands frequently between the time of their issue and their redemption. Furthermore, bills of exchange invariably could not be redeemed before their due date, which usually varied between thirty days and six months into the future.

4 Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926-29), 3:179.

5 Pitkin, *Statistical View*, p. 303.

6 Wen-Tsao Wu, *The Chinese Opium Question in British Opinion and Action* (New York: Academy Press, 1928), p. 7. Michael Greenberg, *British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), p. 108.

7 Hsin-pao Chang, *Commissioner Lin and the Opium War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 17.

8 John Phipps, *A Practical Treatise on the China and Eastern Trade: Comprising the Commerce of Great Britain and India, Particularly Bengal and Singapore, with China and the Eastern Islands* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1835), p. 208. David Edward Owen, *British Opium Policy in China and India* (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1934), p. 51. The penalty for dealers was one month in the cangue (a heavy wooden yoke about the neck) and compulsory frontier military service; for opium den proprietors, it was strangulation. See Chang, *Commissioner Lin*, p. 219.

9 Morse, *Chronicles*, 1:136.

10 Ibid., 1:215

11 Owen, *British Opium Policy*, pp. 20-28.

12 Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:75-79. Owen, *British Opium Policy*, p. 54.

13 Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:321-327. Owen, *British Opium Policy*, p. 62.

14 Friedrich Hirth, "The Hoppo-book of 1753," *Journal of the North-China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* New Series
17 (1882), 1:225. Chang, *Commissioner Lin*, p. 219.

15 Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:316. Chang, *Commissioner Lin*, p. 219.

16 Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:316-317.

17 Josiah Quincy, *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw, the First American Consul at Canton, with a Life of the Author* (Boston: Wm. Crosby & H. P. Nichols, 1847), pp. 265, 238.

18 Charles Clarkson Stelle, "Americans and the China Opium Trade in the Nineteenth Century," Ph.D diss., University of Chicago, 1938, pp. 7-10.

19 David Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States*, 8 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931-48), 2:255-256.

20 Stelle, "Americans and the China Opium Trade," p. 11.

21 Gertrude Selwyn Kimball, "The East-India Trade of Providence from 1787 to 1807," *Papers from the Historical Seminary of Brown University*, no. 6 (1896), pp. 13-17.

22 J. & T.H. Perkins to Ephraim Bumstead, 12 Dec. 1803, "Extracts from Letter-Books of J. & T.H. Perkins et Al, 1786-1838," compiled by James E. Cabot, Perkins Manuscripts Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

23 See letters from J. & T.H. Perkins to Bumstead, 24 Feb. 1804, and to Sam'l Williams, 24 Sept. 1805, and from Charles Cabot (one of their captains) to the firm, 7 Dec. 1804, in L. Vernon Briggs, *History and Genealogy of the Cabot Family, 1475-1927*, 2 vols. (Boston: for the Author, 1927), 2:515, 527, 1:403. J. & T.H. Perkins to Cabot, Jan. 1804, "Extracts from Letter-Books of J. & T.H. Perkins."

24 Thomas Handasyd Perkins wrote on 16 June 1805 to John Perkins Cushing, his nephew, at Canton requesting "information respecting the article of Turkey opium." He followed this up on 23 Sept., advising Cushing that it was available at Smyrna for $2 per pound (about $270 per case) which indicated that "if as much in repute in China as the Opium of India, great profit may be made on it," and asked him "Is it to be got on shore with little risk? What is the price pr. Chest to the Mandarins for getting it on shore?" "Extracts from Letter-Books of J. & T.H. Perkins."

25 Morse, *Chronicles*, 2:326-327.

26 A chest contained 135 pounds of opium.

27 Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:72-73. Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," *Pacific Historical Review*, no. 9 (1940), pp. 430-431.

28 Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," pp. 432-433. Morse, *Chronicles*, 4:384.

29 Select Committee of the East India Company at Canton to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors at Calcutta, 24 June 1807, published in Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:72-73. John P. Cushing, J. & T.H. Perkins's agent at Canton, noted that, in his long experience, the Turkish and Indian varieties of opium "do not interfere with each other except in a very trifling degree, The former is consumed almost wholly in the Northern provinces where they require a stronger description than the Bengal or Malwa." Perkins & Co. Letterbooks, Baker Memorial Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA.

BOOK REVIEW

Peter Booth Wiley, with Korogi Ichiro, *Yankees in the Land of the Gods: Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1990). 578 pages.

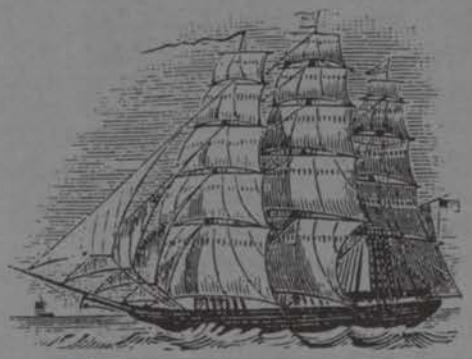
Reviewed by Barry Alan Joyce

Yankees in the Land of the Gods is a well-crafted, relevant and insightful narrative of the most challenging diplomatic mission ever undertaken by the United States Navy: Commodore Matthew Perry's quest to open Japan to western trade and influence in the early 1850s. Author Peter Booth Wiley has approached this event from new and more revealing angles than previous studies of the Perry Expedition, most notably Arthur Walworth's post-World War II *Black Ships off Japan*, and the venerable Samuel Eliot Morison's biographical paean *"Old Bruin": The Life of Commodore Matthew C. Perry, 1794-1858*. Unlike these accounts, Wiley clearly strives for balance and perspective. With the indispensable assistance of Korogi Ichiro, he has delved into Japanese documents in order to produce a binocular view of the arrival of Perry's fleet in Japanese waters in 1853.

Without this perspective, Perry's "opening" of Japan rates little more than the captioned illustration accorded it in school textbooks, or worse yet, the oblique inspiration for a Puccini opera. As seen from both sides, a focused scene emerges that bears great significance for both American and Japanese history.

Wiley places the expedition within three spheres that come to a junction with Perry's visit to Japan. The first is that of the post-Mexican War United States, a nation puffed up by unprecedented military and economic success, a solvent and aggressive government with a $5 million *surplus* out of a fiscal budget of $48 million! Its racially tinged nationalism was seemingly being continually and providentially confirmed by developments in the west and southwest; at the same time many were seeking ways to vent the internal percolation caused by the question of slavery in newly acquired territories. The second sphere is Asia—in particular the tragic maelstrom in China brought on by European and American political and economic machination culminating in the Opium War of the 1840s. The third sphere—and the most eye-opening—encompasses the internal political maneuverings in Japan during the years leading up to Perry's visit. Wiley portrays Japan as a culturally opulent but repressively feudal society, led by a fading warrior class of shoguns who had not faced off against a foreign foe in over two centuries. Above all, Wiley's Japan is burdened by a bewildering bureaucracy (*Bakufu*) that quickly achieves gridlock when confronted with the major crisis of Perry's arrival and subsequent demands.

It is Wiley's contention that the real motive behind the American attempt to pry open the gates of the Japanese empire was at once economic and nationalistic. Perry him-



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BOOKREVIEW

self had ties to a proposed American steamship line that would traverse the Pacific from California to China along a "Great Circle Route" which would cut through the Japanese islands and require coaling stations along the way. A closer examination reveals the kind of jingoism more commonly associated with a later era of American thought, but which aptly expresses United States overseas policy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Samuel Wells Williams, an American missionary who served as interpreter on the expedition, articulated it thusly: "Free trade begets a free interchange of thought; with the goods, the civilization and Christianity of foreign nations will extend." Perry himself felt called "to bring a singular and half-barbarous people [the Japanese] into the family of civilized nations."

Japan's reluctance and obstinance in the face of Western intrusion was whisked aside by the sweep of racial democracy so effective in America's westward thrust in the 1830s and 1840s: "The few," Perry stated, "must give way to the many."

Wiley's description of Perry reveals a shrewd, forceful, talented and highly intelligent individual with interests in science and technology—a cut above the average naval officer of the period. He consistently strove to further American interests in East Asia, often going beyond his specific instructions in order to do so. His strategy of "masquerading as an American version of an Asian potentate"—to "out-Herod Herod" as he put it—when dealing with the Japanese, while successful in the short term, was not well received in Washington. Indeed, like Douglas MacArthur nearly a century later, Perry seemed to let this masquerade merge with his personality. His attitude toward the people of Okinawa and his brazen treatment of them show this clearly. On three separate visits he managed to browbeat the Okinawans into accepting trade and a permanent American presence on their soil, all the while proclaiming himself the "liberator of Lew Chew." These actions, and the seizing of the Bonin Islands, brought censure from Washington.

Perry got his treaty from the Japanese, thereby opening Japan to the West. However, the treaty was diplomatic and not the commercial document originally sought by Perry. Japanese officials eventually rallied as best they could from a weak position by adopting a policy of *burakashi seisaku*: "keep them hanging on," avoiding giving definitive answers to Perry's demands. In the long term, once the black ships had left Japan, this meant buying time to industrialize and remilitarize under modern guidelines. The goal, however, was not to "enter the family of civilized nations," but eventually to repel the invader.

Yankees in the Land of the Gods provides a balanced historical perspective for understanding subsequent U.S.-Japanese relations, not only during the 1930s and 1940s, but also in respect to present attempts to "reopen" Japan to American trade: only this time the strength and sense of purpose seem to be on the side of the defenders. Wiley considers it significant that, particularly for the Japanese, "Perry and his squadron of black ships . . . still is today the central metaphor that describes their long and convoluted relationship" with the United States.



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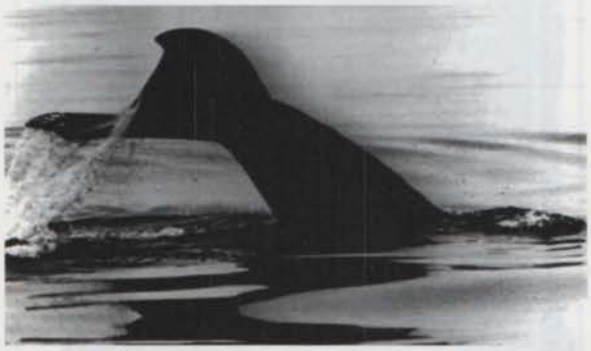
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NOTES & COMMENT

The journal of any educational institution must perform a number of tasks. These tasks are closely tied to the discipline which the institution represents. In our case, the discipline is maritime history—an enormously complex and ancient subject, as old as man's first trip on a river clinging to a log.

Maritime history is often viewed in terms of vessels, and vessels are indeed a central topic. But the discipline takes in far more area than that. Regional economic patterns are determining factors in the ebb and flow of voyages, and have been since the pharaohs dispatched ships to Syria to trade for cedar, in the twenty-ninth century B.C.

An excellent illustration of such a pattern is presented in "The Opium Trade in China: An Early American Connection," by Paul E. Fontenoy. Mr. Fontenoy traces how American entry into the trade grew from appraisal of the enormous profits reaped by "The Honourable Company"—also known as "John Company" or the British East India Company. Part 2 of his article, in our spring issue, will explore this pattern further.

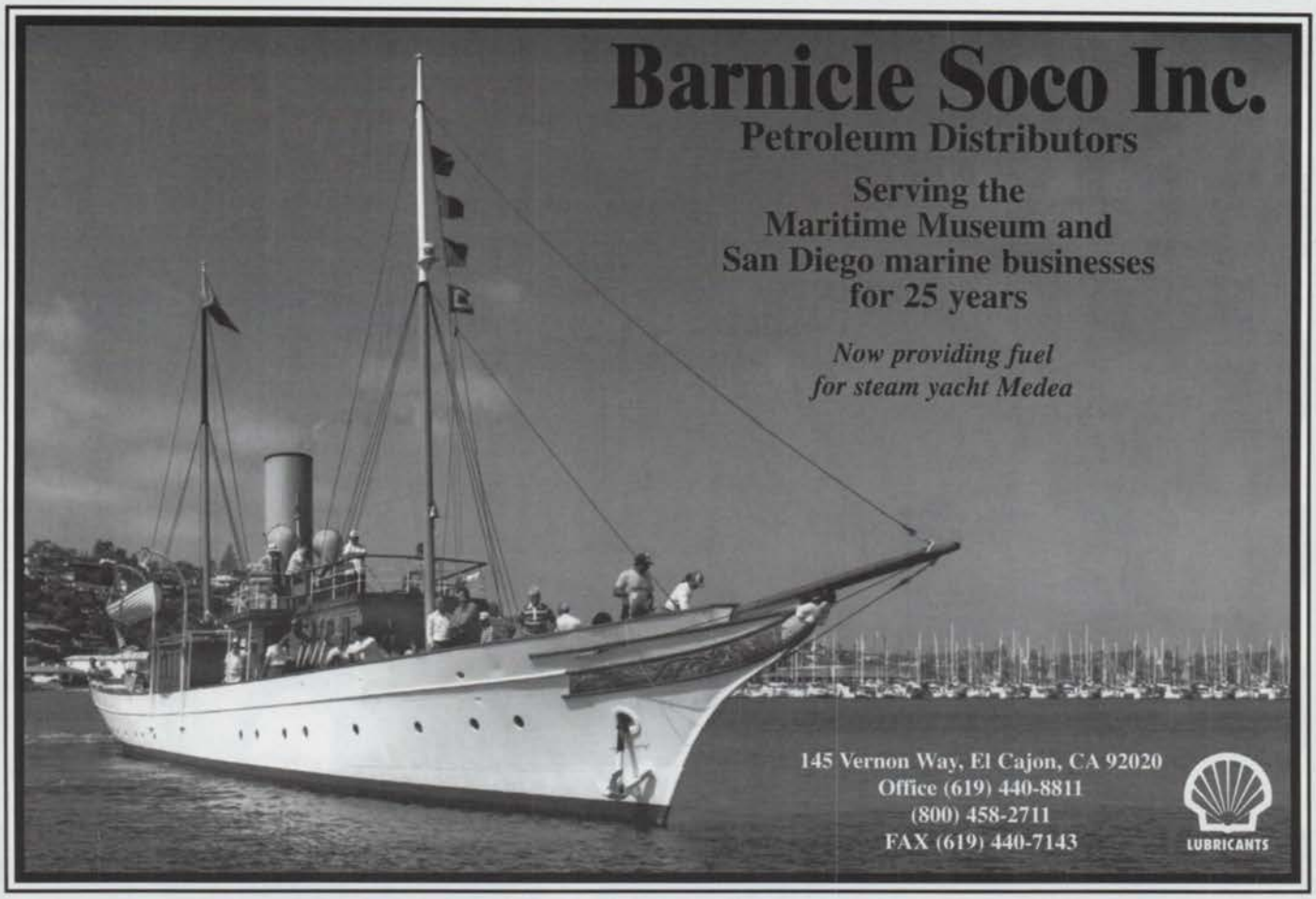
Navies remain crucial to the projection of economic patterns by sea. When the American colossus came of age as a world power in the early 1900s, it rapidly built a great navy. By this time, destroyers were the greyhounds of a modern battle fleet—swift, lean and lethally armed with torpedoes.

The most shocking disaster ever to befall these ships happened to Destroyer Squadron 11 of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, most of which ran aground at Point Honda, California, in 1923. Seven destroyers—the "cavalry of the sea," as their crews liked to call them— blindly followed their leader's navigational error, and piled up one by one on the rocks of a treacherous coast. This fearsome drama is recalled for us by Richard G. Sly, a survivor interviewed by Robert Wright.

Trade patterns, naval power, and the witchery of vessels themselves are all part of our discipline. But in the final analysis, maritime history is about people. A ship is beloved by her people, or hated by them, and in her they live and die. In 1907 one of the strangest odysseys of a ship ever recorded came to its climax in San Diego and nearby Mexican waters. The British tramp steamer MAORI KING, loaded with a teeming mass of Chinese and Russian railway workers, dropped anchor in our harbor. A pitched battle raged across her decks, and only the armed intervention of our local Naval Militia managed to restore order. This bizarre tale—like something out of Conrad or Somerset Maugham—is completed in this issue by Charles A. Bencik.

We wish to thank all our contributing writers, as well as the others who make *Mains'l Haul* possible: the members and management of the San Diego Maritime Museum; printer Art Hill; designer Tony Enyedy; and advertising salesperson Lin Ann Dresser. We also express our appreciation to all our advertisers. With the support of such people, we'll continue to publish maritime history.

Craig Arnold, Editor



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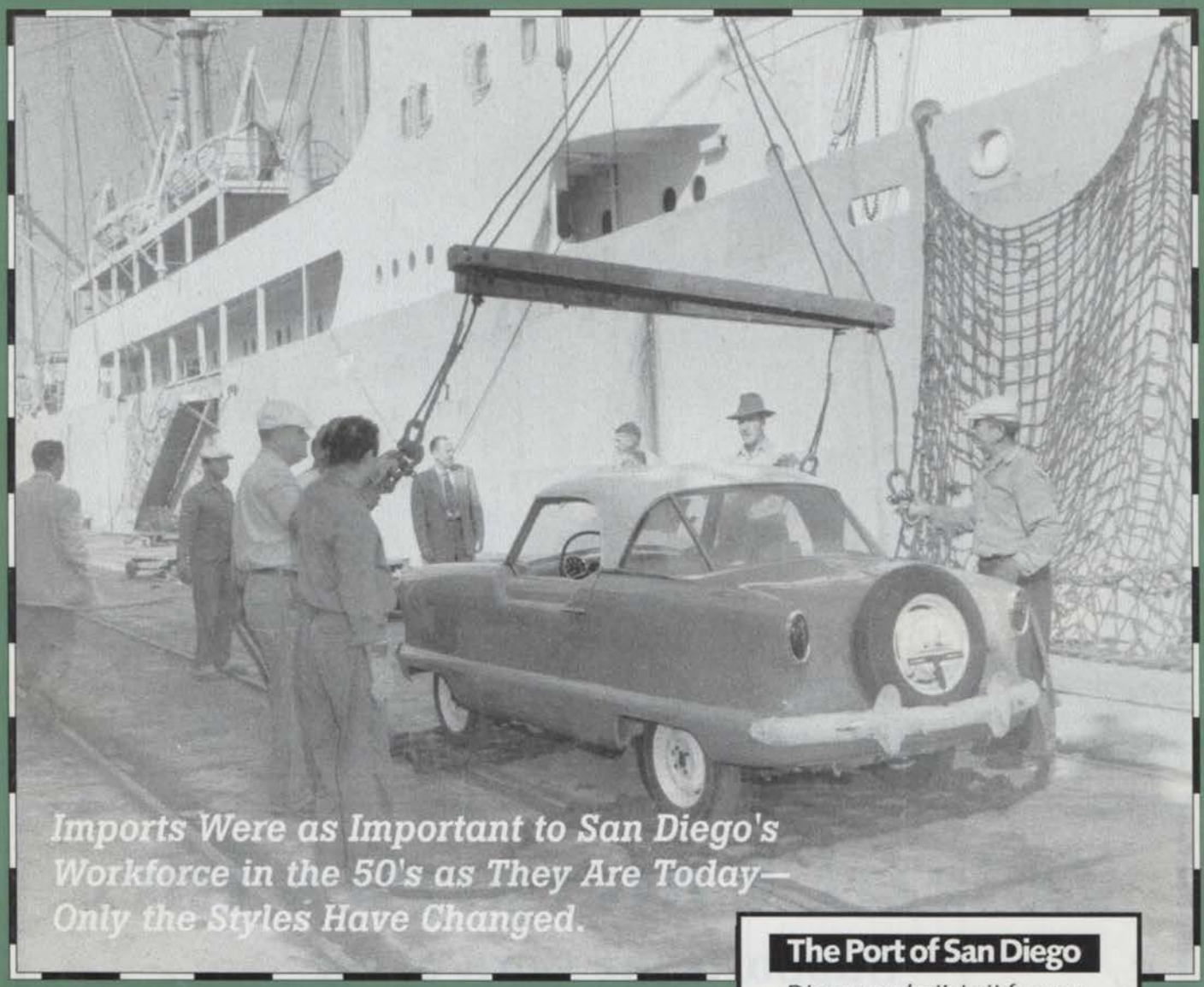
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VOL. 32, NO. 2 SPRING 1996

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On the cover . . .

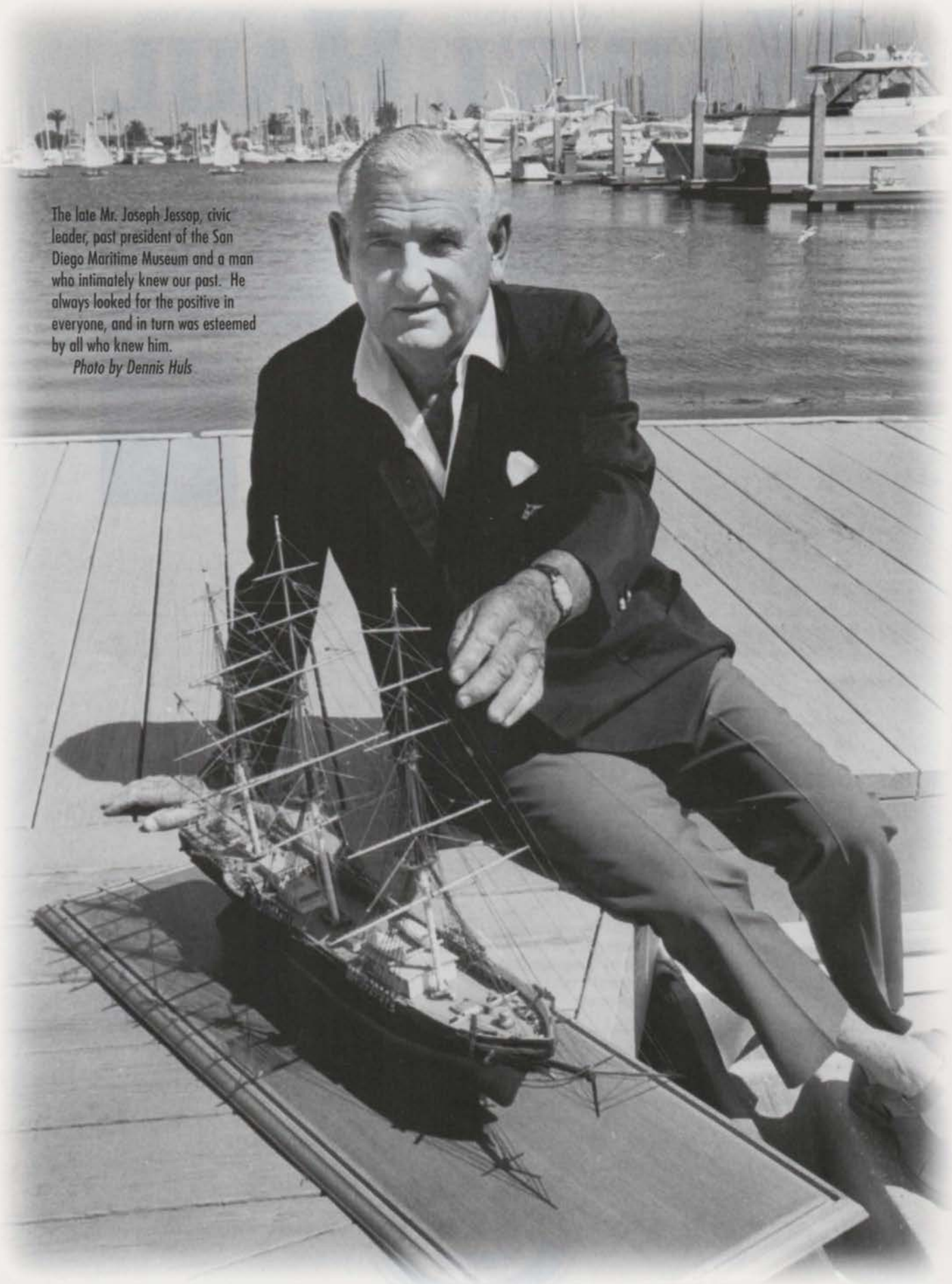
A Spanish galleon sailing on the west coast of New Spain is suddenly attacked at dawn by a large pirogue filled with pirates. The scene recalls the daring raids on this coast by Cavendish, Dampier, Sharp and others during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The painting is by San Diego marine artist Richard DeRosset.



MAINS'L HAUL is the historical journal of the San Diego Maritime Museum, 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego, CA 92101. Send all submissions and queries to Editor, *Mains'l Haul*, at the above address. Contributors' guidelines are available on request. For advertising rates and information, please contact the Editor at (619) 234-9153. No portion of this journal may be reproduced or stored in any electronic retrieval system without the written permission of the Editor.

Craig Arnold, Editor

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—John Masefield

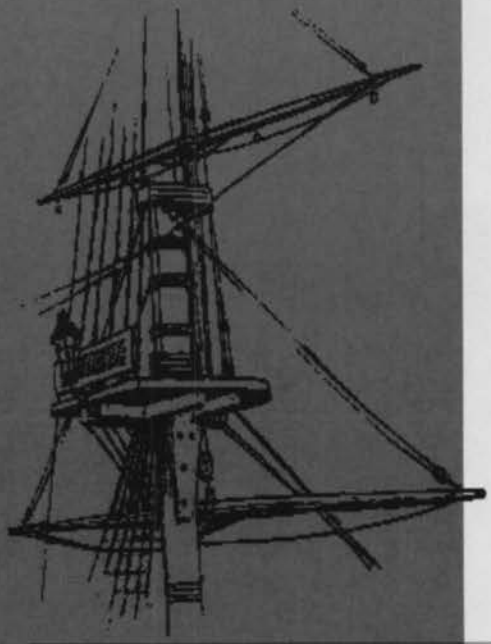


The late Mr. Joseph Jessop, civic leader, past president of the San Diego Maritime Museum and a man who intimately knew our past. He always looked for the positive in everyone, and in turn was esteemed by all who knew him.
Photo by Dennis Huls

FROM THE HELM



In the English University town of Oxford, street addresses are not numbered sequentially, as we are used to finding in modern cities, but chronologically, according to the year in which the particular building was first constructed. In order to find your way around Oxford efficiently, you have to know what happened, and when. This merging of geography and time is perhaps partially a feature of all places but it is especially strong in those that first established their identities in a time of oral traditions or in living memory of great events. Preliterate cultures often mapped their geography entirely by their history, and we encounter much the same thing in our country when we visit historic battlefield sites. Because the authenticity and stature of a place grows with the significance of the experience attributed by such maps, they become a critical feature of community identity, hence the crucial role of the storyteller and the historian as geographer. While in most cases the maps to our own distant chronological landscapes are written down, occasionally we have the rare opportunity to hear them constructed in their original narrative form—from living memory. Until he passed on a few weeks ago, for instance, Joe Jessop could "give you directions" to the *real* San Diego.



I got to know Mr. Jessop only recently, and in the course of a single afternoon. His beautiful home provided a sweeping overview of the Bay on one of those perfect San Diego days: the consummate outline for an equally sweeping overview of almost a century's history. In his generous and eloquent way of drawing the chart, Mr. Jessop described what it was like the day the BENNINGTON blew up, how you could tack a handy vessel all the way up Spanish Bight, and the conversation he had with Sir Thomas Lipton over the design merits of an impromptu sailboat assembled from materials scavenged off the beach. He described the Chinese fishermen anchored in their junks off the Stingaree district, and how he shuttled fuel in his rowboat out to Glenn Curtiss's seaplane in order to watch the pioneer aviator complete the first water take-off and landing in history (though his mind was more on the apple pie Curtiss promised him as a reward for his efforts). With photographic memory for detail and proportion, Mr. Jessop demonstrated a great historian's feel for the way *place* is embedded in time. In our conversation, he was gravely concerned about a place for our museum.

Mr. Jessop, of course, played a crucial role in the history of our museum both as a trustee and as a historical guide. Recognizing the vulnerability of the museum's lack of a permanent home, Mr. Jessop was instrumental in the 1973 acquisition of the BERKELEY, a historic and mobile repository for exhibits, artifacts, and archives that would allow the museum to survive the vacillations and dislocations of a rapidly changing waterfront. As we know, the BERKELEY has been the great success Mr. Jessop visualized, buying for the museum the time necessary to consolidate and establish itself as one of the great maritime museums of the world until the issue of place could be decided once and for all. With the increasing pace of waterfront development, however, time for a good decision may be running out. The Maritime Museum needs a home to call its own while a viable place remains a possibility, a place worthy of the byproducts of living memory: the ships, the artifacts, and the words. Collectively, they form our chart as a maritime community, allowing us to plot with some confidence both our position and the measure of our significance.

Raymond Ashley
Executive Director

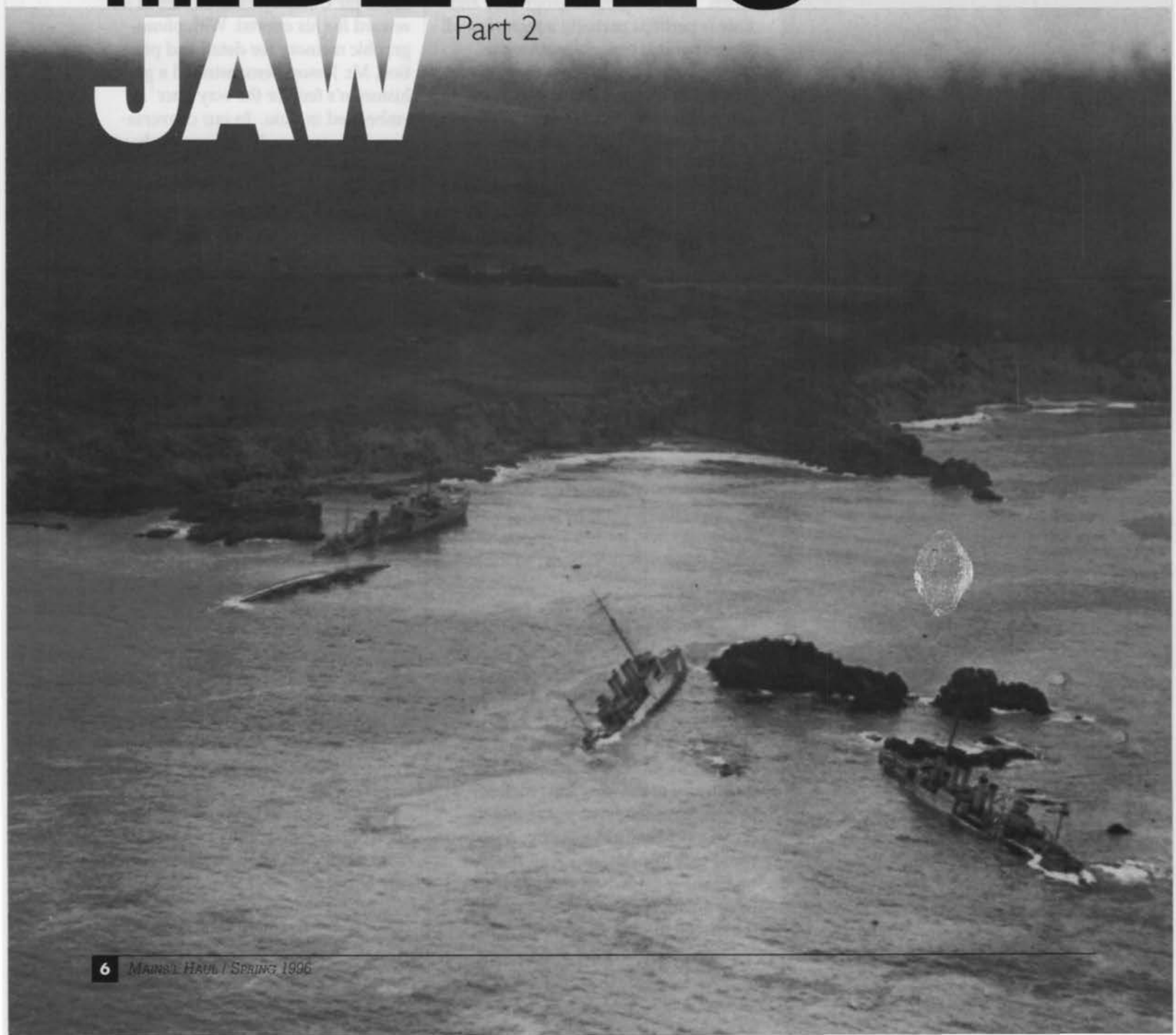
An Oral History of the Point Honda Tragedy of Destroyer Squadron 11

By Richard G. Sly with Robert G. Wright

DISASTER ON THE DEVIL'S JAW

Part 2

Ed. Note: One of the worst peacetime disasters ever suffered by the U.S. Navy occurred on September 8, 1923, when a destroyer squadron en route from San Francisco to San Diego made a premature course change and seven ships ran aground, one by one, on the rocky coast of Point Honda, California. All the ships were lost, but loss of life was minimal, due in no small part to the discipline of sailors like Richard G. Sly, a fireman in USS YOUNG (DD-312). In 1970, Maritime



We had no idea that seven ships had hit. At first we thought it was us, and then the Chauncey, and we thought, "Well, two of us"—and then we started seeing rockets going up from other ships and we realized how bad it was. . . .

Museum oral historian Robert G. Wright interviewed Sly, one of the last survivors of the disaster. In Part 1 of his account, published in our winter issue, Mr. Sly described how Desron 11 crashed onto the rocks, and the men began to abandon ship. Part 2, the final installment, takes up the story at that point.

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

Richard Sly (RS): I haven't told you about the pandemonium that reigned all over. There were whistles and sirens from ships that either had hit or were close to hitting, pyrotechnic warnings, searchlights coming on, shouts from all directions, the noise of the ships themselves grinding and pounding on the rocks, and the noise of the surf. . . .
Robert Wright (RW): Was the situation under control or was it a situation of total panic?
RS: Generally, there was no panic. A few individuals panicked. I don't know whether it was fright or if they thought they might have a better chance of saving themselves, but for whatever reason two or three screamed as they jumped over [i.e., overboard from USS YOUNG, Mr. Sly's destroyer, which had capsized].

Usually when they would jump over, we wouldn't see them anymore. Maybe an arm would flash up because the light was intermittent from other ships' searchlights. I believe some had turned their searchlights on to try to illuminate the scene to see what it was, and others had turned them on to try to give us help. I don't know why but we were grateful that there were a lot of searchlights on because we could see quite well to shore.

We had no idea that seven ships had hit. At first we thought it was us, and then the CHAUNCEY, and we thought, "Well, two of us"—and then we started seeing rockets going up from other ships and we realized how bad it was. . . .
RW: You say that everything was so oil-covered that the men who did get into the water usually drowned.
RS: Yes.
RW: This article ["Course Zero Nine Five," by Richard B. Hadaway, U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, January 1957] also points out one man who was lashed to a mast. Did you see him?
RS: No. We heard him screaming. We went down and some of the ship's company from the DELPHY were on the cliff immediately adjacent to the DELPHY. They told us that this man had worn glasses and the glasses were broken in the melee. He was in terrible pain and lost his head. He started screaming and had no control. They didn't know what to do with

Point Honda after the grounding of Desron 11. From left to right along the shoreline are destroyers DELPHY (broken in two and capsized), YOUNG (capsized), CHAUNCEY, WOODBURY and FULLER.
Admiral William V. Pratt Collection, Naval Historical Center



Aerial view looking northward along the coastline near Point Honda. Five of the seven wrecked destroyers are visible.
Admiral William V. Pratt Collection, Naval Historical Center

him so they lashed him to the searchlight tower. They were going to come back and get him when it was daylight. The immediate thing was to save as many of the crew as they could. They knew he was there but just before daybreak the next morning, the DELPHY broke in two, and the part that he was in rolled over and took him with it. That was the last of him. I think his body was recovered later. . . .

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RW: I'd like to back down just a bit here. Were you the only one in that compartment [i.e., the after engine room] at the time [of going aground]?
RS: No. There were two others—the throttle man and the oiler.
RW: Do you remember their names?
RS: Harrison was the throttle man. I think the oiler was Edward William Grady but I'm not sure. . . . We were in the same watch section.
RW: Did you say how you were able to get out of this compartment? When the ship hit the rocks and was taking the ribs out, did it get back as far as where you were at?
RS: Yes, past where I was.
RW: Could you actually see the ribs [i.e., the ship's frames] being broken?
RS: No. I could feel them and feel the support under me giving way. I knew what it was. There was nothing else to make that tremendously loud popping sound and at that rate, 20 knots—I think the ribs were at three-foot intervals—it got very rapid. I couldn't see them because there

I never was submerged but the water was coming up the ladder nearly as fast as I could go up. The exhaust trunk, by the way, goes up in a big slope, and as I went up, the water was going right up with me.

were floor plates between myself and the turn of the bilge. The cut was the length of the ship. . . .

RW: How was it possible that you knew you were on a rock?

RS: I didn't know, then, that it was a rock. I didn't know what it was. It was just a terrible shock with rapid deceleration. Your own inertia carries you. If I hadn't been holding the hand rails I would have been thrown forward.

RW: Did the water start coming into your compartment through the hatchway?

RS: No, through the hole in the ship.

RW: How did you actually get out—through the hole in the ship?

RS: No, no. The hole in the ship was under water. We were rolling to starboard and the hole in the ship was in the turn of the bilge on the starboard side. I crawled over the exhaust trunk to the ladder, and climbed up the ladder. I was in water all the way up. That's how fast the water was coming in.

RW: Was your head under water?

RS: At no time. I got out ahead of that. I never was submerged but the water was coming up the ladder nearly as fast as I could go up. The exhaust trunk, by the way, goes up in a big slope, and as I went up, the water was going right up with me.

RW: So, the ship was rolling at that time and you were just moving fast enough to get out while the angle was still such that you could go out through the deck hatches.

RS: Later the engine room hatches were under water. I got out before that.

RW: Did the other two men get out too?

RS: Yes.

RW: Did they follow you out?

RS: No. They went up the other ladder. I don't know who got out first. There are two ladders in each engine room.

RW: Did you have to go between decks or were you on deck?

RS: No. There are no decks in a destroyer engine room. There's a topside which is the main deck, and between that and the bottom of the bilges there are only levels of floor plates and no decks.

RW: So, all you had to do, really, was to get out of the compartment where you were at in order to be on deck and out in the open?

RS: Yes. I came out on the main deck.

RW: In the meantime, the ship was still rolling.

RS: Yes, and the slant was such that you had to crawl. You couldn't walk on it.

RW: Was she rolling over fast?

RS: I would guess that it went over in less than a minute. It went over very quickly.

RW: But you were lucky enough to be able to move along and follow the ship around, actually.

RS: Yes.

RW: Are there any hand holds on the bottom of the ship?

RS: No.

RW: So, there's no way of really hanging on.

RS: No, and the bottom was very slippery partly because, when we were in Puget Sound, we went up to Lake Washington and the fresh water killed the barnacles and they all dropped off. So, the bottom was very smooth and slick. . . .

RW: You say that the men didn't panic, that they just did the best they could.

RS: I think with a lesser man in command than Captain Calhoun, they may well have panicked although it was a well-disciplined crew. He told everyone to squat down as low as they could and for everyone to hold

There was an enormous amount of sound—whistles, sirens, shouts through megaphones, minor boiler ruptures rather than explosions, pyrotechnics, searchlights on and off—it was a remarkable scene. It had a sense of unreality about it.

on to everyone else. He told us to get as low to the bottom as we could. He was an inspiring commanding officer. . . .

RW: You said there was pandemonium with all the other ships around you and you were able to get to shore by transferring to the CHAUNCEY. After that, were you able to help any of the other crew members on other ships?

RS: No, except for help some climb up the cliff. Pandemonium in part, because the ships would lose their lighting, restore it, lose it, restore it, and there were some minor boiler explosions. Express-type boilers do not explode. The tubes carry away. Ours made a horrible death rattle as the water came down our stack. There was also the hissing of steam and the tubes of the boilers carrying away, gurgling up through the incoming water. There was an enormous amount of sound—whistles, sirens, shouts through megaphones, minor boiler ruptures rather than explosions, pyrotechnics, searchlights on and off—it was a remarkable scene. It had a sense of unreality about it.

RW: Looking back on it, do you panic thinking about it now?

RS: No. I didn't panic then—actually, you didn't have time. If it was all in slow motion, I'm sure I would have been very much afraid but it happened so fast. The next day I couldn't have stood for a firecracker blowing off. Human beings under duress are remarkably cool.

RW: Were you impressed with the vastness of this destruction?

RS: More and more as time went on. We didn't realize in the beginning. At first we thought we were the only ship. You see, your ship is your world and the disaster happened to your ship. Then you started realizing that there were other ships in similar circumstances, and you couldn't believe the enormity of it—how many, how many! And then, after you got ashore, and you were seeing somebody from this ship, and this ship, and this ship, and you realize that ten had hit altogether. Seven stayed there and three got off and made it to San Diego under their own power. Yes, I was quite impressed by the enormity of this disaster. I was also even more impressed that of the twenty-three men lost, we lost twenty-two of them. . . . I was prepared to hear eight hundred. Instead of that, we had eight hundred survivors.

RW: The twenty-two that were lost off the YOUNG, were they washed off the ship, or did they jump off the ship? I'm surprised that more men weren't in a compartment.

RS: Most of the people who lost their lives were members of the engineers' force. The entrance to the engineers' compartment is on the starboard side. There is only the one entrance. That side rolled under. I imagine they were sound asleep, presumably, and they were awakened by this shock and crash and noise. They were confused and by the time they got to realizing that they should be getting out, that entrance was already under water. . . . There were three men on the deck. One was a radioman, one was the coxswain, and the other one was a deckhand. They got a life raft loose and pushed off by themselves. We knew who they were. We saw them and we tried to admonish them, "Don't go. You don't

know where you are going." They went and that was the last we saw of them. And the coxswain was an experienced seaman and they had paddles.

RW: The thing I was curious about too, was that you said the propeller of the YOUNG was still turning over. Was that just momentum?

RS: Yes, inertia.

RW: The engines were gone, weren't they?

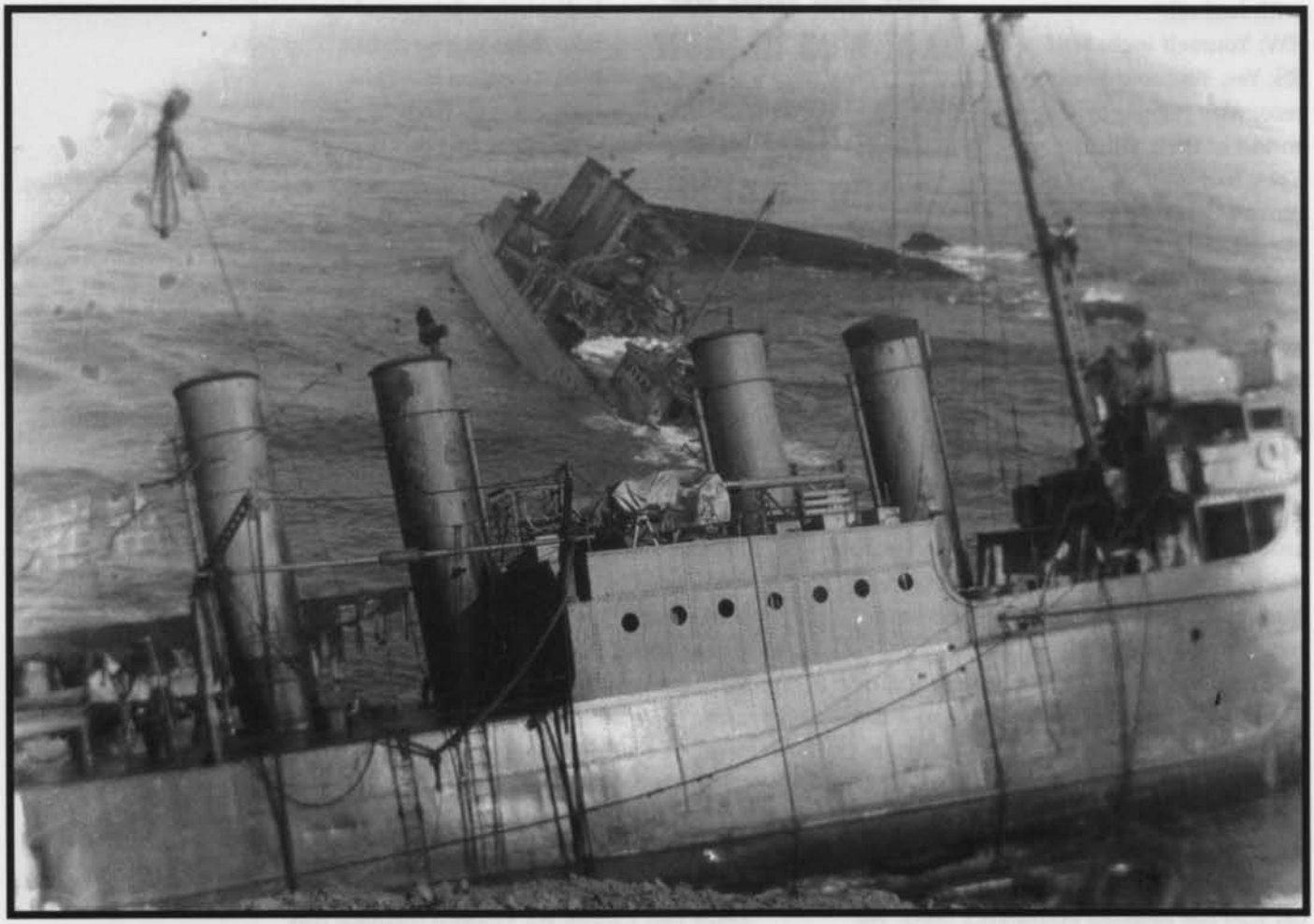
RS: No, we had steam. But, you must remember, there is a great rotating mass of turbines and there are enormous reduction gears and the length of the shaft and propeller represents a great weight. It takes quite a lot to bring it to a stop. At the rate it was turning, 220 turns a minute, that revolving mass will spin for some time. There was no water resistance because it was up in the air.

RW: Could you see the props turning over when you got on deck?

RS: No. We couldn't see because there were no lights until the CHAUNCEY drifted alongside of us and she had her lights on. We started hearing this and we guessed what it was. The CHAUNCEY was wondering what it was too so they put on their signal light and saw it. They were shouting, "My God, it's the propeller, it's the propeller!" CHAUNCEY didn't know we were there until the propeller started chewing her up. We were already low in the water and had practically disappeared.

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RW: This article ["Course Zero Nine Five"] mentions a Mrs. James Thompson who lived near Point Honda and came over to help with blankets and coffee. Did you see her?



The "tin cans" NICHOLAS (background) and S. P. LEE are seen aground just north of the main wrecks area. Note that wave action has broken the former vessel in two, just forward of her stacks, slewing the bow around at a sharp angle and tumbling that section onto its starboard side. Note also rope ladders and lines used by sailors to abandon S. P. LEE.

San Diego Maritime Museum

RS: Yes, but this is the first time I've known her name. She came over. She was a real angel. About three or four hundred yards from the the actual shoreline itself, the Southern Pacific Railroad runs along the coast and there was a section gang station bunkhouse/cookhouse with about eight or ten railroad employees—section hands. She took over the kitchen. I didn't see her until daylight the next morning. She was cooking anything they asked for in the way of edibles. She was making hot cakes, coffee—she brought over a lot of things. It was like something out of Dante's Inferno. All the sailors were completely black with fuel oil.

RW: Yourself included?

RS: Yes. You could only recognize people by the sound of their voice. They had gouged out the fuel oil that was in their eyes. They looked like they had white domino masks on. Many of the sailors had life preservers which they would cut up to make foot protection. They latched them around their feet. Most of them were in their underwear which was also black and, then, they had these bulky kapok life jackets latched around their feet as foot protection because it was very rocky out there. They were all hungry, in a state of wonderment—how much worse could it get?

You could only recognize people by the sound of their voice. They had gouged out the fuel oil that was in their eyes. They looked like they had white domino masks on.

They had plans for stopping any railroad train that came along. We had a few people that were hurt but none of them seriously. We took a pile of railroad ties, which were there for repair to the railroad track, and set them on the track. We got a lot of gasoline out of the gasoline service car that the railroad employees used. We were going to make a signal to stop the train, and we did. I forget which train it was but I think it was the "Lark" which runs between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

RW: Was she going southbound?

RS: Yes. . . . Well, the train stopped for us and the conductor was very, very put out. He didn't know what it was. He couldn't believe his eyes when he saw these strange-looking creatures and he didn't appreciate our demand that so many of them be taken aboard his train to get into Santa Barbara. Then he saw how many. There were eight or nine hundred, I guess. He thought prudence was indicated so he agreed to take them but he didn't want them on his train because they were filthy with black fuel oil—but he took them.

Then he said that he would tell the dispatcher at Santa Barbara about the wreck. I guess he did because very shortly after that a special train with one coach and a locomotive came up with a lot of newspaper men on it. They climbed up the telephone poles that run along the track and started putting out stories about the Point Honda disaster. That evening a relief train came up. This is getting on to twenty-some hours after the wreck which means it was about seven or eight o'clock the following night by the time the relief train came up with about ten coaches. It took all of us on down to San Diego. . . .



RW: What was the weather like when the ships hit? I think we've been through this

"Woodbury Rock," as it is known today, was the last resting place for two ships, WOODBURY (foreground) and FULLER, the last two destroyers to go aground. The view is toward the west, whence came Desron 11 to dash itself against Honda.

Admiral William V. Pratt Collection, Naval Historical Center



a couple of times but they made such a big deal out of the fact that there was a fog bank. When you got on the beach, was there fog? Because sometimes fog can hang off the ocean, off the shore, just by a few feet.

RS: I saw no fog. I went up just before the shipwreck and shortly after nine o'clock. I saw no fog. I could see the ships' lights of the two squadrons. When we hit I could still see the lights of ships. I observed no fog. When we got up on the beach, climbed up the cliffs, there was no fog. When the searchlights would hit them, we could see them distinctly. There was a train that came by shortly after we got to the top of the cliff. It was miles away. We heard its whistle and we could see it.

RW: Was it hazy but not foggy?

RS: It was overcast.

RW: But you could see laterally?

RS: Yes. I've heard many stories about the fog. None of the people I know that were in the Point Honda disaster recall seeing any fog.

RW: According to this article ["Course Zero Nine Five"], the [Chief] Boatswain's Mate on your ship, Arthur Peterson, said, "Our engines had been reversed but only for a second. The lights went out and everything was black. With the fog swirling about us and the water roaring over the rocks under us, the others piled up rapidly behind us."

RS: Peterson said that?

RW: Yes.

RS: I don't believe it. Peterson doesn't have the word "swirling" in his vocabulary. He was an outstanding mariner but he was very illiterate.
RW: He was illiterate?
RS: And our engines were not reversed.
RW: That was another thing I was going to ask you. It quotes Peterson as saying "but only for a second."
RS: No. It's not true. The engine order telegraph never rang. It didn't even ring "stop." . . .
RW: There was quite an investigation afterwards with a Court of Inquiry and so forth. Were you asked to testify?
RS: No. I was called over to North Island, day after day, for several weeks. I never testified. . . .

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RW: Let's get back to where we were. You say you were on the train, heading for San Diego. Where did you land in San Diego?
RS: The train went out to what was then the Destroyer Base at the foot of 32nd Street [now the Naval Station, San Diego]. We were given two hot dogs, a slice of bread, a cup of hot coffee, and a blanket. We drank the coffee, ate the hot dogs and, wrapped up in the blankets, we flaked out on the deck of the BUFFALO which was a station ship. At reveille, at 5:30 a.m., the boatswain's mate on watch came around to try to rouse us out. . . . We wouldn't get up. He insisted on trying to make us get up, and we threw him overboard but we pulled him out right away. Then the officer on deck came around and said, "Let them sleep. They are tired."

We had to wait for the whole ship's company at the Destroyer Base to finish eating breakfast before we could go over to get breakfast. But when we got over there the ship's cooks and the Master at Arms wouldn't let us in because we were still covered with fuel oil. So, we threw the ship's cooks out and put our own cooks in. They cooked everything that was in the lockers—ham and eggs, bacon, everything you could think of. Later that day, the Red Cross came out and gave us all a bar of soap and a razor but they forgot the razor blades. That afternoon of the same day, the Navy issued each survivor a pair of shoes, socks, underwear, a suit of dungarees, and a white hat.

I think this was sheer incompetence. I think that any naval officer who will put a force under his command under that maneuver, under those circumstances, doesn't know his business. . . .

RW: Were you able to get cleaned up from the fuel oil?
RS: Yes. Ordinary soap will not take off fuel oil but they made two drums of kerosene available and some shredded cotton fiber. With that, and then two or three repeated showers and lava soap which somebody made available, we got cleaned up. Later that evening I walked into town with new shoes which didn't fit. I wanted to send a telegram to my folks. The Western Union telegram office would not send a telegram collect unless I had the money to pay a deposit which would pay for the cost of the

telegram in case they couldn't collect. I then went to the Postal Telegraph Company and they sent it collect. I walked back with blisters on both my feet. Many sailors had the same experience. . . .

RW: Have you ever been back up to Point Honda?

RS: No. I've been by it in a train, twice, and could see parts of some of the hulls still there. I couldn't identify them. We weren't close enough to it. The last time I was by, one mast was still visible.

RW: Were there any repercussions from it for you, personally?

RS: Not for me, no. The squadron commander and the division commander were both close to being considered for promotion to rear admiral. Neither of them made it. Captain Watson was almost sure he had the seniority. He had a very remarkable record but with this in his record as squadron commander, he was not selected for promotion.

RW: Do you feel that he really didn't do his job? Do you feel any animosity toward him?

RS: No animosity. I think he was an incompetent naval officer.

RW: But you said he had a remarkable record. Was he incompetent before this?

RS: Not to my knowledge, no. I don't know of his record. He was reported as having a notable naval record. I think this was sheer incompetence. I think that any naval officer who will put a force under his command under that maneuver, under those circumstances, doesn't know his business. . . .

RW: Thank you very much.

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Ed. Note : Almost immediately after the grounding, a court of inquiry was convened. On October 31, 1923, the court recommended that the squadron commander, two division commanders, seven ships' commanding officers and the squadron navigator be tried by General Court Martial for negligence and, in the cases of the squadron commander, his flag captain and navigator, culpable inefficiency. The results were three convictions and eight acquittals. The squadron commander, Captain Edward H. Watson, was found guilty and was sentenced to the loss of 150 numbers on the list of captains. Lieutenant Commander Donald T. Hunter, Watson's flag captain in USS DELPHY, was found guilty of the same charges, and sentenced to the loss of 100 numbers. This meant that neither of them would ever reach eligibility for promotion. They were not, however, deprived of the right to command a naval vessel again. Lieutenant Commander Herbert Roesch, the skipper of USS NICHOLAS, also was convicted, but this was later set aside. (Captain Watson retired from the Navy in 1929 and died in 1942.)

The remaining officers were exonerated and returned to duty; however, Secretary of the Navy Denby, apparently responding to public indignation over the small number of convictions, officially disapproved the findings of acquittal for these officers. His action had no legal bearing, but was noted in their service records.

A total of twenty-three sailors died in the Point Honda Disaster, twenty from USS YOUNG and three from USS DELPHY.

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Robert G. Wright is a member of the San Diego Maritime Research Society and a frequent contributor to MAINS'L HAUL. He is also the head of the San Diego Maritime Museum's Oral History Project.

PART 2

THE OPIUM TRADE IN CHINA:

An Early American Connection

By Paul E. Fontenoy

Ed. Note: In our last issue, Mr. Fontenoy discussed the beginnings of the American opium trade with China during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Part 2, the concluding installment, he resumes his account of this risky but highly lucrative trade.

Jefferson's Embargo Act in 1807, greater concern in Calcutta about the success of American competition that found expression in tighter regulations sanctioned by Parliament, and the war with England that started in 1812 all combined to eliminate American merchants from participation in the opium trade until 1815, although they landed opium valued at about $100,000 in 1811 and $50,000 the following year.[1] The treaty of Ghent, which ended the war, and the 1818 Anglo-American Convention both formally re-imposed the ban on American participation in the trade between India and China.[2] This exclusion thus encouraged Yankee merchants to return to the Smyrna opium business in force. American shipments of opium to Canton increased dramatically from about 500 chests in 1816, worth approximately $250,000 in China, to about 1,900 chests in both 1817 and 1818, which were valued at almost $1,000,000. Opium thus represented an average of 66 percent of the value of merchandise shipped to China by American merchants in this period. It is important to note that bullion shipments still greatly exceeded the value of all goods landed at Canton; silver coin exports to China rose from $1,922,000 to $5,601,000 during the same period and accounted for about 80 percent of all American exports to China.[3]

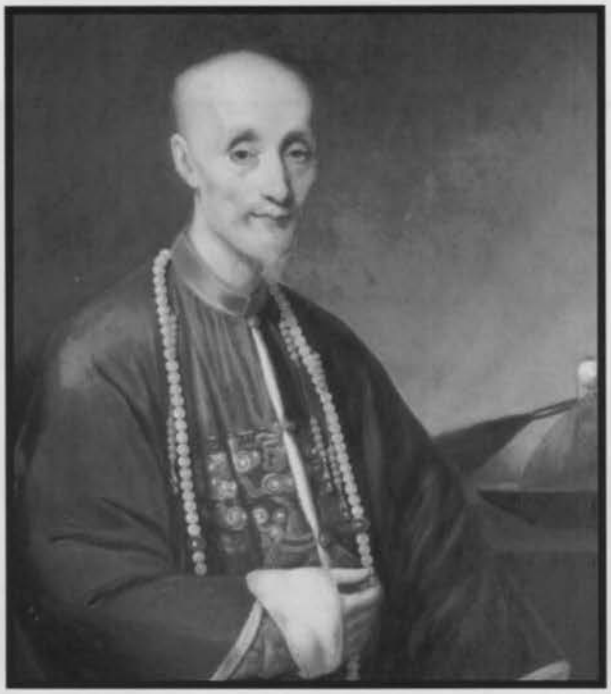
The growth in American opium importations into China paralleled a similar expansion in British shipments, the increase arising from the arrival of greater quantities of Malwa opium from western India.[4] This provoked two reactions from the Chinese: periodic official crackdowns on opium smuggling, and simultaneous unofficial demands for larger bribes to overlook the practice. The viceroy started to order regular searches of



The Thomas Hunt Fleet of receiving ships at Whampoa Reach, an oil by an unidentified Chinese artist.
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.

foreign vessels at Whampoa to check for the presence of the drug. The Cohong, which the authorities held liable for all such infractions and subjected to penalties including fines of up to $1,000,000, determined to demand a bond from every ship commander "engaging that he will not smuggle Opium. . . . It is their intention to demand the same of the Commanders of the H.C. Ships, asserting that this Measure has received the Sanction of the Viceory." In general, foreign vessels resisted these official measures at this time, but bribery became ever more necessary; the Portuguese at Macao went so far as to levy a $40 per chest assessment to create a fund that could be distributed among the local Chinese officials to ensure they turned a blind eye to the opium traffic.[5]

Chinese interference with what was already a highly speculative trade tended to reduce its attraction for smaller operators, leading to the American trade becoming concentrated in the hands of larger, better-financed firms that were more able to tolerate periodic disruptions of their business and to wait out fluctuations in the market. Before the 1820s the largest firms in the trade were J. & T.H. Perkins of Boston and the New Yorker, John Jacob Astor. The Boston house was one of the American pioneers in the opium business and was in a particularly strong position to dominate the trade. It was very well financed, had established agencies in Turkey and China with first-class staff and excellent connections, especially at Canton, and had intimate connections with both other Boston firms, particularly Bryant & Sturgis, and important English financiers, most notably the Barings.[6] Astor's investment in the opium trade to China after 1816 was so great that J. & T.H. Perkins declared in 1818 that "we know of no one but Astor we fear." By 1821 Astor had withdrawn from this business, apparently due to the renewed opposition to the trade displayed by the Chinese central government that year and the inconvenience and marketing delays prevalent before the initiation of the receiving ships, to concentrate on his other



The Cantonese merchant Houqua, a valuable contact to American traders at Canton.
Captain Robert Bennet Forbes House

interests in the United States, particularly shipping and ferries in the New York area.[7]

Not all the opium carried to China by American merchants at this time originated in Turkey; new sources for the drug were uncovered and exploited in the Persian Gulf. Astor seems to have pioneered this trade, sending a ship there in 1817 whose cargo subsequently proved unsaleable at Canton, due to its poor quality. J. & T.H. Perkins sent one of their own vessels on a far more successful venture to the gulf the following year. They purchased eighty thousand pounds of the local drug at a lower cost than was then prevalent at Smyrna, and sold it at Canton for a price per chest almost 25 percent higher than that fetched by Turkish opium.[8]

The combined British, American, and other foreign shipments of opium into China during the 1817 and 1818 seasons proved to be temporarily too great for the market to absorb. In 1818, Canton and Macao received 3,178 cases of the Bengal drug, 1,800 cases of Malwa, and almost 2,000 cases of Turkish and Persian opium.[9] Total shipments in the 1819 season diminished substantially to 2,400 cases of Bengal opium, 1,200 Malwa, and about 180 cases from Smyrna.[10] John P. Cushing, J. & T.H. Perkins's agent at Canton, shipped $300,000 in silver to Calcutta, "where he sold the dollars and exchanged the proceeds with his correspondents in Bengal for Bills on mercantile Houses in Canton . . . to meet which drafts a quantity of [Bengal] Opium has been consigned to China in the ['country'] Ship HASTINGS and a cargo of Cotton in another Vessel," thus both evading British prohibitions against American participation in the "country" trade and gaining access to a supply of the far more valuable Bengal opium.[11] [*Ed. Note:* A "country" ship was one built in India, especially for trade in eastern seas. They were often fine vessels made of stout Malabar teak, with gold-colored Bombay canvas sails.]

In 1820 total shipment rose again, largely due to much greater imports by the Portuguese at Macao, but American firms did not participate in that season's trade, probably due to a combination of fears of increased Indian production by the Company, leading to a consequent drop in opium prices at Canton, and a general slump in U.S. trade, particularly with China.[12] The 1820 season witnessed a dramatic decline in overall American trade to Canton; the total value of U.S. imports at Canton fell from $8,185,000 in the previous season to $5,392,795.[13]

A surge in Chinese governmental concern at the general impact of the opium trade on the country distinguished the early 1820s. The central authorities already viewed American vessels with considerable suspicion as a result of the WABASH incident in 1817. Pirates pillaged this Baltimore opium ship on May 26 while it was anchored in Macao Road, killing five of the



Robert Bennett Forbes, an important American in the opium trade.
Captain Robert Bennet Forbes House

crew.[14] The American consul at Canton, Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, supported by the English Committee, prevailed upon the viceroy to offer a reward of $3,000 for the apprehension of the perpetrators. The Canton magistrate held a trial of several suspects, to which he invited Wilcocks and Christopher L. Gantt, the WABASH'S commander.

> It appears that eleven men have been apprehended; one of the Ringleaders, it is said, is to be cut into 24 pieces, and four others to be decapitated. The Viceroy . . . gave from his private purse 4,000 Dollars, and returned to the American Captain 824 1/2 Dollars which were recovered from the Criminals. Puiqua [the Hong merchant who had stood surety for the WABASH] likewise presented him with 2,000 Dollars.[15]

Two of the linguists[16] who dealt with American traders gave a written declaration to the viceroy "that, to their knowledge, the American ships commonly brought opium."[17] The viceroy, therefore, refused to provide any further compensation for the pillaged goods because

> It is ascertained that it all arose from the said foreign Merchants bring [*sic*] Opium, which is a prohibited commodity. Gant brought the Calamity upon himself; if any other vessels do not bring Opium they can have nothing to apprehend.[18]

As a result of this episode, the viceroy fined the Hong merchants almost $1,000,000, leading them to inform the foreign merchants that they had determined "not to secure any Ship whose Commander has not signed a Bond, engaging that he will not smuggle Opium."[19] Wilcocks himself was advised directly that

> foreign opium is not allowed to come to Canton; if it is presumptuously brought, the moment it is discovered, it will immediately involve the security merchants; and the cause of the said vessel bringing the dirt for smoking to Canton will also assuredly be examined into; and a prosecution begun which will impede her departure.[20]

The authorities also attempted to institute thorough searches of all foreign ships in Chinese waters but were dissuaded by the foreigners' determined refusal to permit this operation, the summoning of the British frigate ORLANDO to Canton by East India Company officials, and also, it would seem, some $100,000 in bribes.[21]

In 1821, a second episode involving an American vessel was a significant element in precipitating an escalation of Chinese efforts to halt the illegal shipments of opium. An American seaman, Francis Terranovia, was

accused of throwing an olive jar at a Chinese woman, striking her on the head and knocking her overboard from her bumboat, so that she drowned. On October 6, the Canton magistrate held an inquiry aboard the Baltimore ship EMILY, on which Terranovia was serving, found that he was indeed guilty of the crime, and demanded that he be handed over for trial. Eventually, he was handed over to the Chinese authorities on October 24, tried two days later, and executed by strangulation on the morning of October 28.[22]

The Terranovia incident focused Chinese attention on the EMILY, leading to the discovery that

> it contained merely about 1,000 Catties [approximately 1,350 pounds] of foreign tin worth scarcely anything, and it paid for the Port charges, upwards of 1,400 Taels [$1,950], from which it appears the said vessel came for no purpose, but to sell Opium. Infinitely detestable! Rightly did Heaven send down punishment, and cause Francis Terranovia to commit a crime for which he was strangled. This Ship should be punished most severely.[23]

The viceroy of Kwangtung and Kwangsi provinces re-issued the imperial mandate of 1796 to both the local government administrators and the Cohong and emphasized that

> if one vessel brought Opium that vessel and her whole cargo should be rejected, and her trading interdicted; if all the vessels brought Opium, then, they must all have the whole of their cargoes rejected, and their trading interdicted, and the Ships expelled from the Port. . . . As to all those Merchants who carelessly secure every Ship that has Opium, by rights they should be broken [on the rack], and their crime punished . . .[24]

As a result of these incidents, the EMILY and three other vessels were expelled from Canton after forfeiting half their cargoes, and the Hong merchants, under threat from the Chinese authorities but also for form's sake, adamantly refused to continue their involvement in the trade.

During the 1821 season, before the Chinese started to enforce their prohibition of its import, British merchants landed opium to the value of $4,166,250 at Canton. Much of this was brought in through Macao, but it still represented almost 30 percent of British trade with China for the season.[25] Clearly, the threat posed by China's stepped-up mesures against the illegal trade in Canton could not be accepted with equanimity by the English mercantile community at Canton. As a result, the British introduced "receiving ships" which were vessels maintained, usually at anchor, off the coast at Lintin, near the mouth of the Pearl River. Opium cargoes were transported to these receiving ships from India for sale to Chinese dealers. The British gained two great benefits from this new arrangement: the sites were completely under their own control, unlike the situation at the Canton factories; and their risks dropped immensely, since final sales were made at the counting house in Canton for deliveries of opium to purchasers that were made at the receiving ships themselves. The Chinese dealers undertook responsibility for smuggling the drug ashore at a more opportune moment, bribing all necessary officials to ensure its passage, and became the parties at risk in the event of complications.[26]

American trading companies, particularly Perkins & Co., quickly appreciated the advantages of this system. In 1823, John P. Cushing, by then both the United States Consul at Canton and the head of Perkins & Co., stationed the brig CADET at Lintin to act as a receiving ship for American opium consignments.[27] Chinese merchants and local officials connived in this new situation.

American opium traders also were able to use the new situation further to strengthen

their hold on the market for the Turkish drug. Cushing noted that "the English Country vessels would be liable to seizure if found with Turkish Opium on board by their own ships of war & would of course object to receiving it."[28] During the mid-1820s there was a substantial increase in the volume of opium shipped from Smyrna, to a minimum of 1,000 chests each year until the expiry of the East India Company monopoly in 1834, with shipments rising to over 1,700 chests in the 1824 season alone, and possibly exceeding that figure in 1829.[29] The trade also became virtually completely concentrated in the hands of Boston merchants, notably J. & T.H. Perkins and Bryant & Sturgis, who were closely related by business and marriage ties, and succeeded in driving most of their American competitors out of the business.[30]

The use of receiving ships served also as a means for American merchants to circumvent the British ban on American participation in the trade from Bengal. Initially, they encouraged "country" traders to sell them their opium by outbidding the East India Company or taking up small quantities that the Company was unwilling to purchase. As this development proved successful, aggressive firms started to send representatives directly to Indian traders and encouraged them to consign their cargoes to the American receiving ships. The Philadelphia merchant Benjamin Chew Wilcocks again seems to have been the pioneer in this effort. In 1824 he brought John R. Latimer from Philadelphia to run his operation in China, so that he could go over to India to expand his sources of supply.[31]

Although Latimer developed his firm into a substantial operator in the Indian opium trade, the major American player in this field was Russell &. Co., founded at the end of 1824. With the active assistance of Perkins & Co., the firm immediately embarked on the aggressive exploitation of the Indian market. Soon after John P. Cushing left for the United States in 1828, Thomas T. Forbes, who succeeded him as head of Perkins & Co., drowned in a typhoon, leading to the company's dissolution in 1830. It was arranged for their business to be taken over by Russell & Co., and the deal was cemented when John Forbes, one of Thomas Handasyd Perkins's nephews, became a partner, and Robert Bennet Forbes, yet another nephew, was sent out to China to command the receiving ship LINTIN. Under the capable guidance of Robert B. Forbes and his fellow partners, Augustine Heard and William Low, the firm soon dominated American trade at Canton, with the partners "picking up 30 m dolls [$30,000] pr annum" apiece in personal income.[32]

By the early 1830s British imports of opium into China had risen in value to $11 to $12 million annually. Direct American imports from Smyrna were no more than $1,000,000 during the same period. American traders, however, were now able to access the market in bills of exchange drawn on London because of the volume of their commissions from transactions in Indian opium. The volume of these bills was so great by the early 1830s that Jacques M. Downs estimates that this American opium business alone may have been as much as one-sixth of British sales ($2,000,000) in addition to their profits from the Smyrna drug.[33]

In 1834 the East India Company's monopoly expired, which presented American traders with the entirely new challenge of unrestricted private British competition. The American monopoly over the trade in opium from Turkey terminated with that of the East India Company over British trade between Europe and China, since English merchants no longer faced any Parliamentary restrictions on their ventures into Oriental markets. The uncertainty this engendered slashed American capital investment in this branch of the opium business. Some of this capital transferred into the traffic in Indian opium, but the great Boston houses generally moved out of the China trade entirely, transferring their inter-



ests to American firms based in China itself.

The expiry of the East India Company's monopoly marked the end of the first phase of American involvement in the opium trade. Two features characterized this era: American merchants relied for their success on exploiting fields rendered secure against competition from other traders by the Company's monopoly itself, such as the Smyrna-Canton trade, and they followed, often cautiously, the innovations of private British traders in the face of Chinese intransigence. The collapse of their position in 1834 dramatically illustrated to what extent the success of American traders depended on their ability to take opportunistic advantage of British policy, a pattern which also characterized their subsequent recovery through the exploitation of British responses to stiffening Chinese resistance to the importation of opium during the following decade.

NOTES

1 The East India Company prohibited American vessels from the carriage of goods from India "to the territory of any Indian or Chinese potentate or power," and required them to take out bonds in India against their evading these restrictions that could be canceled only by a British consul at their port of final destination in the United States. Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1835), 208-210. Charles Gutzlaff, *A Sketch of Chinese History*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1834), 2:Appendix.

2 David Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States*, 8 vols. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931-48), 2: 597,660.

3 Pitkin, *Statistical View*, 303.

4 Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635-1834*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926-29), 3:339-340.

5 Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:318-324.

6 The firm's Canton agent, Perkins & Co., was headed by John P. Cushing who developed extremely close connections with Houqua, the most important member of the Cohong between 1790 and 1830. For details of the firm's business operations see "Extracts from Letter-Books of J. & T.H. Perkins," Perkins Manuscripts Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA; Perkins & Co. Letterbooks and Bryant & Sturgis Letter Books, Baker Memorial Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA; and Part III of Carl Seaburg and Stanley Paterson, *Merchant Prince of Boston: Colonel T.H. Perkins, 1764-1854* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

7 J. & T.H. Perkins to Frederick W. Paine, their agent at Leghorn, March 24, 1818. "Extracts from Letter-Books of J. & T.H. Perkins." Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *John Jacob Astor, Business Man*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 2:599-600, 613-614, 666.

8 J. & T.H. Perkins to Paine, March 24, 1818; and to Woodmas & Offley, June 16, 1819, "Extracts from Letter-Books of J. & T.H. Perkins."

9 Morse, *Chronicles*, 339-340, 344-345.

10 Cushing to J. & T.H. Perkins, January 23, 1820 and to Paine, March 23, 1820, Perkins & Co. Letterbooks. Morse, *Chronicles*, 365. Gutzlaff, *Sketch*, 2:Appendix.

11 Morse, *Chronicles*, 359, 365. Bengal opium sold for $1,260 per case at Canton, Turkish for $1,000.

12 Charles Clarkson Stelle, "Americans and the China Opium Trade in the Nineteenth Century," Ph.D diss., University of Chicago, 1938, 34-35.

13 Pitkin, *Statistical View*, 303.

14 Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:318.

15 Ibid., 3:319.

16 Linguists were not only officially appointed interpreters (although they actually spoke only Chinese and "pidgin English") but also had considerable administrative responsibility within the Chinese bureaucracy for ensuring that all documentation for foreign ships was in order. See William C. Hunter, *The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton Before Treaty Days, 1825-1844* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., 1882), 50-53.

17 Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:319.

18 Mandate issued by the viceroy to the Hong merchants July 24, 1817, cited in Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:320.

19 Ibid.

20 Memorandum cited in Jonathan Greenberg, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 59.

21 Morse, *Chronicles*, 3:321-323.

22 Ibid., 4:11-13, 23-27.

23 Edict issued by the viceroy to the Hong merchants on Dec. 2, 1821, in Morse, *Chronicles*, 4:46-49.

24 Morse, *Chronicles*, 4:44-49.

25 Ibid., 4:20.

26 James Matheson was the initiator of this system, stationing his ship HOOGHLY off Lintin for five months from October 1821, when all the opium ships were forced to quit Canton after the Terranovia incident, until the end of the following March. Morse, *Chronicles*, 4:15,61. See also, Jacques M. Downs, "American Merchants and the Opium Trade, 1800-1840," *Business History Review*, 42 (1968), 428-429.

27 Morse, *Chronicles*, 4:107.

28 Perkins & Co. to J. & T.H. Perkins, June 25, 1823, Perkins & Co. Letterbooks, Baker Memorial Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA.

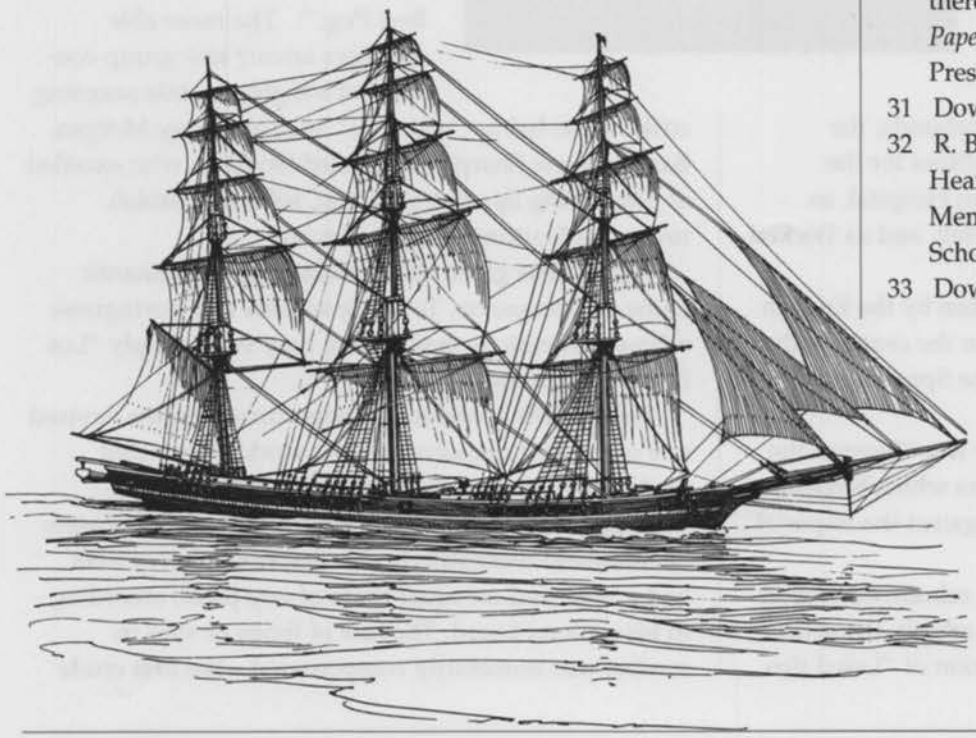
29 Downs, "American Merchants," 431-433. Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, 1821-39," *Pacific Historical Review*, 10 (1941), 63-68.

30 Downs, "American Merchants," 429-431. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, 1821-39," 63-65. Magniac & Co. reported to a Parliamentary Committee in 1830 that "the Turkish Drug is almost entirely in the hands of one American house, who have nearly a monopoly of it in China. By holding such large quantities, they have great command of the market there." Great Britain, Parliament, *Sessional Papers: 1830* (Dublin: Irish University Press Area Studies, 1971), 6:421.

31 Downs, "American Merchants," 434-435.

32 R. B. Forbes to A. Heard, Apr. 30, 1831, Heard Manuscript Collection, Baker Memorial Library, Harvard Business School, Boston, MA.

33 Downs, "American Merchants," 433-434.



PIRATES
ON THE PACIFIC COAST OF NEW SPAIN

By Craig Arnold

"Sea men are . . . to be numbred neither with the living nor the dead."
English cleric, c. 1700[1]



In its heyday, the port was called "the wickedest city in the west," full of "a most disturbed Ungodly debauched people."[2] One English visitor described it as the "Receptacle of Vagabonds, the Sanctuary of Bankrupts, and a Close-Stool for the Purges of our Prisons. As Sickly as an Hospital, as Dangerous as the Plague, as Hot as Hell, and as Wicked as the Devil."[3]

This was Port Royal, Jamaica. Taken by the English in 1655, the island lay like a dagger in the center of the Caribbean, pointing at the heart of the Spanish empire in the New World.

Port Royal was the focal point for war "beyond the line"—a conflict of two hundred years which English, French and Dutch mariners waged against the imperial might of Spain.

Destroyed by earthquake in 1692, rebuilt, destroyed again by fire in 1701, and once more rebuilt, the town boasted a constantly shifting population of "Lewd dissolute fellows" and "swearing, obscene" women such as "Salt Beef Peg."[4] The more able mariners among this group constituted a highly mobile seagoing strike force, led by "admirals" such as Henry Morgan, Bartholomew Sharp and Richard Sawkins, who excelled at plundering Spanish shipping, robbing Spanish towns, and cutting Spanish throats.

History has given these freebooters the romantic name of Buccaneers. To the Spaniards and Portuguese whose possessions they looted, they were simply "Los Piratas" or pirates.

For all their anarchic behavior, these seamen devised one of the first democracies in a world dominated by "divine right" of kings and "infallible" popes. They elected and deposed their leaders, whose powers of command were strictly circumscribed. Every man had a vote, and an equal share of any prize, according to his rank on board. The loss of limbs or eyes in combat was monetarily compensated—the first crude



Buccaneers, taken from a chart in a Dutch sea atlas of 1682. The figure at left wears a typical seaman's cap and baggy breeches. He holds a pair of dividers, used in navigation.
Photo by John Wright

Opposite Left: A Spanish piece of eight in the author's collection, salvaged from the 1622 wreck of NUESTRA SEÑORA DE ATOCHA. These coins were crudely cut from a bar of pure silver at Potosi in Peru, clipped to the right weight, and stamped with the Spanish royal arms. The shield of the House of Hapsburg, rulers of Spain from 1504 to 1700, is visible.
Photo by John Wright

company insurance plan—and rules made for the common seamen applied to everyone aboard. As Professor Marcus Rediker has pointed out in his brilliant work, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, the highest authority in a pirate ship rested not with the captain, but with a hallowed decision-making group called the Council, which included everyone in the crew. The captain, indeed, could not prevent the crew from using his cabin, his silver or his supply of food and drink. His authority was only absolute in battle, in pursuit of a prize, or in flight from a foe. Also noticeably absent were the savage naval and merchant marine punishments: flogging and keelhauling. Pirates settled their quarrels in duels ashore, and offenders such as thieves were marooned.[5]

The danger and discomfort to be found aboard vessels sailing under the "Jamaica discipline" would be more than compensated if a rich prize were taken. Every buccaneer's dream was a Spanish town or galleon loaded with gold ingots and crucifixes, Ecuadoran emeralds and Panamanian pearls, and chest after chest of silver pieces of eight—crudely cut coins from Peru or Mexico, stamped with the Hapsburg arms and valued at eight reals, which were the basic currency of the Spanish empire.

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If ever there was an illustration of the doctrine of overextension—that fatal disease of empires—Hapsburg Spain filled the bill. Sprawling over disparate landscapes from Austria to Patagonia, its domain took in Iberia, Naples and Sicily, Franche-Comte and the Spanish Netherlands, various German lands,



Henry Morgan of Jamaica. A fine tactician and an accomplished torturer (if Exquemelin is to be believed), he led his buccaneers to the shores of the Great South Sea in 1671. After being knighted by Charles II, he served as lieutenant governor of Jamaica, dying there in 1688.

Photo by John Wright

enclaves clinging to the coastline of North Africa, the Philippines, and an enormous region extending from lower California to Cape Horn. In their greed for gold, for El Dorados and Quiviras without end, the Spanish hidalgos cut an empire out of the Americas at point of sword.

Alas for them, it was an empire too large to defend. It had a thousand weak points.

From Madrid, the line of authority went to Seville, whence it crossed to the New World in an annual convoy of galleons, coming into the Americas by way of Trinidad, sailing west to the Spanish fortress city of Cartagena. At that port, the Spanish armada stayed but sixty days. They dispatched a detachment, called La Flota, towards the sleepy Mexican port of Vera Cruz. There the detachment picked up tons of Mexican silver—plus the wealth of the Manila Galleon.

Meanwhile, the Terra Firma fleet, or main body, went over to Portobelo on the Isthmus of Panama, there to load silver bullion from Peru, along with emeralds and gold. The Terra Firma fleet then sailed back to Cartagena to pick up goods from northern South America. Finally, it went to Havana to meet La Flota, and the entire fleet sailed by way of the Straits of Florida for home.

As early as the first decades of the sixteenth century, the seafaring powers of northwest Europe—especially England and France—cast covetous eyes on the riches flowing back to Spain. To conflicts already driven by religious and political enmities now was added the lash of greed. When the first privateers and buccaneers began to raid in the Caribbean, Spain protested bitterly. But England and France refused to acknowledge Spanish hegemony over the New World and its wealth. "The sun shines for me as for the Spaniard!" snapped Francois I of France.

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The Isthmus of Panama was the central lynchpin of the Spanish empire. The riches of Peru and Chile were shipped up the west coast of South America to be unloaded at the city of Panama, then carried across the isthmus by mule train to Nombre de Dios and Portobelo, there to be sent home in the Terra Firma fleet. English privateers and pirates such as Francis Drake and Henry Morgan therefore made the Isthmus a favorite target for raids.

After Morgan made his attack on Panama in 1671, many of his followers from Port Royal broke into the Mar del Sur, or South Sea, and began to harry the Spaniards there. It is beyond the scope of



A portrait of the mature William Dampier. He holds a book entitled *Dampier's Voyages.* Dampier's many adventures made him a famous man in England, long after he went pirating in the Pacific. He was fascinated by the fauna and flora of the exotic lands he visited, and recorded them in his literary works.
Photo by John Wright

this article to examine the numerous piratical raids on the coasts of Panama and South America, for we are mainly concerned with pirates operating on the west coast of New Spain, a viceroyalty which included the northern portion of Central America, Mexico, and the semi-mythical "island" of California.

For these lands were rich as well, and formed the connection between Spain and the Caribbean, on the one hand, and the far-off Philippines on the other. And their rugged coastlines, too, would see their share of piracy.

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In 1571, the Spaniards sent the first Manila Galleon across the Pacific from Manila to Acapulco. The vessel was filled with the treasures of the Orient: gold, precious stones, silks, musk, ivory, amber, perfumes, lacquer work, carpets, beads, velvets, muslin, porcelain, cinnamon, nutmegs, cloves, ginger, pepper.

The cycle of the Manila Galleon began in March of each year. Chinese junks and other native craft sailed to Manila to trade, bartering with the Spaniards for products paid as taxes by Filipinos. The tentacles of trade stretched from Manila to Persia, India, Siam, China, Japan, the Moluccas and elsewhere. When the reach of this trade and influence is coupled with the lands held by the Spaniards and the seas they dominated, from the late sixteenth century to the early eighteenth, then it can be seen that Hapsburg Spain was the first truly global empire.

The captain and crew of the Galleon were allowed to ship some goods for their own profit. The bulk of the lading, however, was taken by the Consulado, a corporation of Spanish merchants. At first the total value of the annual shipment was limited to 250,000 Spanish dollars, but later this was raised to 750,000 dollars—on which the merchants were permitted to make a 100 percent profit.[6]

The Manila Galleon—or "State Ship" as it was sometimes called—left that port on or about June 20 of each year. An elaborate ceremony marked her departure, in which chanting Spanish friars mingled with Chinese colored lanterns and fireworks.

From 1584 on, the Galleon followed the Japan Current to Cape Sestos, then crossed the North Pacific to America, using the current. The voyage over could take as long as seven months. Scurvy, dysentery or beriberi might afflict the Galleon's crew and passengers en route, and some ships lost fifty percent of those aboard. After many weary weeks, the Spaniards still alive looked

hopefully for the *senales* (indications) of California.

The Galleon normally fell in with the coast a little below Cape Mendocino. When the Santa Lucia ranges hove into misty view below Monterey Bay, the Galleon set her course for Cabo San Lucas at the tip of Baja California, in line with her destination of Acapulco. In 1602, a decree of King Philip III ordered the Manila Galleon to put in at Monterey Bay, so that her crew could get some relief from scurvy and the rigors of the sea. (In that same year, Sebastian Vizcaino, sailing from New Spain, had landed at several points along the coast of Alta California, reaffirming the Spanish claim to the region.)

Sometimes the Galleon stood into sheltered anchorages in Baja California to obtain water, fresh meat and fruit. The Mission San Jose del Cabo helped one such ship in 1734, but a party of thirteen Spaniards landing the following year at Cabo San Lucas were slain by Indians.

When the Manila Galleon finally cast anchor into the azure waters off Acapulco, a great trading fair took place, where the merchants' travails were assuaged by profit margins ranging from 100 percent to an illicit 400 percent, especially on Chinese silks.[7]

The Galleon normally set sail from Acapulco on the homeward leg between March 1 and 20 of each year—about the time the gathering of goods for the next Galleon occurred in Manila. She carried dispatches, officials ordered to the Philippines, cargo from Spain, the money from sales in Mexico for the Consulado in Manila, and the *Real Situado*, or Royal Allowance from Madrid for the support of the Philippine government. The Philippines were at the very end of an imperial chain that ran two-thirds of the way around the globe—from Madrid to Mexico, thence across the Pacific.

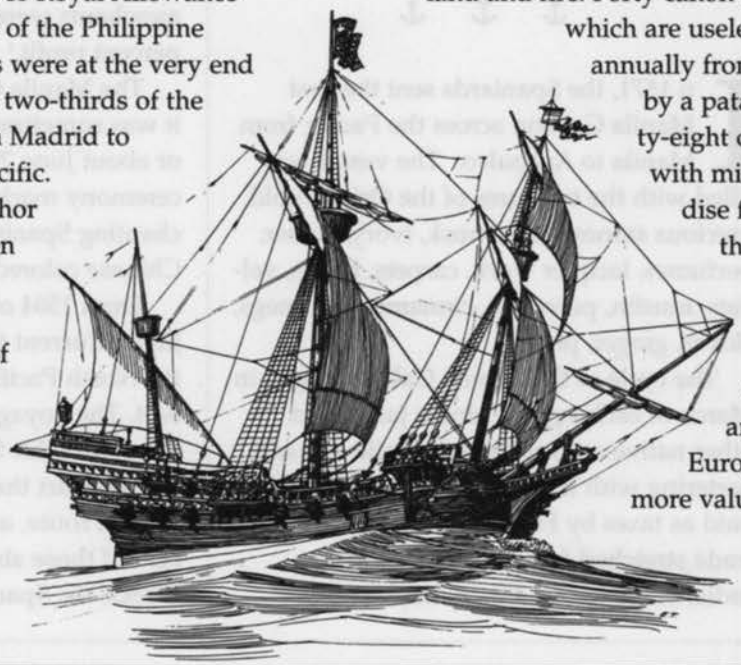
The Galleon weighed anchor in the roads of Acapulco, then steered southwest into the vastness of the Mar del Sur. Upon reaching the latitude of 14 degrees north, as roughly determined by astrolabe and cross-staff, she turned her bows west for the Ladrones—the Thieves' Islands, later known as the Marianas. At Guam, from 1668 on, the Galleon sighted a beacon station maintained by the Spaniards. From there she steered for the Strait of San Bernardino, and so to Manila.

Sometimes a Manila Galleon didn't sail for two or three years (once, for five years) because of a lack of suitable ships, pirates, or natural disasters. In 1589, for example, the only two available galleons were destroyed by typhoons.

Communications by sea between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries were extremely slow and beset by hazard. Ships frequently went missing, cargoes worth millions of dollars disappeared without a trace, and as easily preventable a disease as scurvy reduced crews to scarecrows unable to climb the shrouds. To give an idea of the difficulty besetting the Spaniards in their tenuous seaborne empire, it may be pointed out that they did not have direct trade between Spain and the Philippines, via the Cape of Good Hope, until 1763—over two hundred years after the Spanish colonized the archipelago!

It did not take long for the buccaneers based at Port Royal and Santo Domingo to perceive the tempting target offered by the Manila Galleon. Raveneau de Lussan, a French corsair who raided in the Mar del Sur in the late 1680s, had this to say of her:

> When this galleon returns from the Philippine islands, where the Spanish trade extensively, she carries one of the most valuable cargoes in the world. She is an enormous vessel and so staunchly built that she need fear only land and fire. Forty canon are carried, half of which are useless. This ship sails annually from Acapulco escorted by a patache carrying twenty-eight canon and loaded with miscellaneous merchandise for the inhabitants of these islands who give in exchange large quantities of the wares from Japan and China as fine as anything seen in Europe and, what is even more valuable, pearls, gold, bullion, and jewels. This ship has



one important advantage in making this voyage—it can select the most favorable time of year for going out and returning and makes the entire trip within twelve months, including their stop in that country [i.e., the Philippines], which thus eliminates the necessity of overhauling the vessel.

Thus it can invariably be found lying before the port of Acapulco at certain times of year which I shall not indicate here . . .

Yet I must not forget to remark that it could be far more readily captured at the time when it returns from these latitudes with its patache for then so many of its crew are dead or dying that out of four hundred only a fourth are fit to come to its defense, the malady known as scurvy being prevalent upon the return trip from the Philippines. Thus a ship leaving the North Sea [i.e., the Atlantic] with the intention of coming out to intercept this galleon can, in less than eighteen months, if the perils and fortune of the sea permit, return with riches beyond measure.[8]

(The Spaniards did not help themselves by circulating tales among their own people that los piratas were fiends resembling monkeys, who practiced cannibalism on their captives.)[9]

The first freebooter to exploit Spanish weakness in the Mar del Sur was Francis Drake. During his famous voyage around the world (1577-80), Drake took numerous Spanish vessels in the Pacific and sacked towns from Valparaiso to southern Mexico. After touching in Alta California and performing the customary rite of claiming the land for his sovereign, he sailed across the Pacific to the Moluccas and thence home.

Drake's remarkable luck inspired other English adventurers. Thomas Cavendish (1555-92), a native of Suffolk, first went to the New World in a colonizing enterprise of Sir Walter Raleigh's, returning in 1585. Hearing of Drake's exploits firsthand, Cavendish fitted out an expedition of his own to go in search of plunder on the Pacific coast of New Spain. His ships were the DESIRE, of 160 tons; the CONTENT, 60 tons; and the little HUGH GALLANT, of 40 tons. Filled with 123 officers and men, they sailed from Plymouth on July 21, 1586, and passed through the Strait of Magellan early in the following year.

Cavendish appeared off New Spain in 10 degrees North Latitude (off Costa Rica) on July 1, 1587. On July 9, he took a Spanish ship, whose pilot told him about the Manila Galleon, due soon from the Philippines. The English freebooter then sailed northwest and landed at Guatulco, in Oaxaca, Mexico, burning the town and custom house. On August 24, he entered the port of Navidad, burning two Spanish ships building on the stocks.

The Spaniards at this early date had left their possessions bordering the Mar del Sur virtually undefended. When a defense could be mounted, only local militia were available, and these often proved poor fighters against the ferocious attacks of buccaneers driven by greed and hunger. (The Spaniards did not help themselves by circulating tales among their own people that *los piratas* were fiends resembling monkeys, who practiced cannibalism on their captives.)[9]

In September the DESIRE and the CONTENT, Cavendish's two remaining ships, reached Mazatlan, short of water and seeking word of the Manila Galleon. Fresh water was obtained here, after which Cavendish sailed to Cabo San Lucas, raising it on October 9. The Englishman had learned from prisoners that the Galleon always stood in to the cape, then set a course for Acapulco. The freebooters marked time off the desolate headland for nearly a month, supplies running low, when at last Dame Fortune smiled:

> On November 4, 1587, "the *Desire* and the *Content* beating up and down [off] the headland of California, between seven and eight of the clock in the morning, one of the company of our Admiral, who was the trumpeter of the ship, going up into the top, espied a sail bearing in from the sea with the cape, whereupon he cried out with no small joy, to himself and the whole Company—'A Sail! A Sail!'"
>
> Divers others rushed up to the maintop, and there they saw the object of their long search

and tedious wait bearing in from seaward, before the northwest wind, toward the headland of the Cape. Straightway they ran and told Cavendish the joyous tidings, and he "was no less glad than the cause required, whereupon he gave in charge presently unto the whole company to put all things in readiness—which being performed, we gave them chase, some three or four hours, standing with out best advantage, and working for the wind."[10]

The Galleon was the SANTA ANNA of 700 tons, with 190 people aboard, mostly passengers and including many women. Don Tomas de Alzola was her commander.

After a long sea chase, the fight began in the afternoon. The DESIRE, which carried a crew of between fifty and sixty men, came up with the Galleon and gave her a broadside, then attempted to board. The first assault was beaten back by the Spaniards, fighting at close quarters with lances, javelins and rapiers, who hurled many stones down as well, and the English lost two men killed and four or five wounded. Cavendish then hauled off and gave the Spaniards another stiff broadside, killing and wounding a number of them.

"But, for all this, we new trimmed our sailes, and fitted every man his furniture [i.e., armor], and gave them a fresh encounter with our great ordnance and also with our small shot, raking them through and through, to the killing and maiming of many of their men. Their Captaine still, like a valiant man with his company, stood very stoutly unto his close fights, not yeelding as yet. Our General [Cavendish] encouraging his men afresh with the whole noise of trumpets, gave them the third encounter with our great ordnance and all our small shot, raking them through in divers places, and spoiling many of their men."[11]

After nearly six hours of this, the Spaniards struck. Cavendish and his men boarded the SANTA ANNA and were delighted to find a cargo of $122,000 in gold coin, pearls, silks, satins, brocades, damask in quantity, 562 pounds of musk, and much preserved fruit and wine. Two days later, Cavendish brought the Galleon into Porto Seguro on the eastern shore of Baja California; there he put the surviving Spaniards ashore with provisions.

On November 19, Cavendish set the SANTA ANNA afire. The DESIRE and the CONTENT then hoisted tops'ls and split tacks. The CONTENT sailed off to the northwest, leaving Cavendish. Her crew had nearly mutinied over what they took as an unfair division of the booty, and she sulked off in search of the mythical Strait of Anian, no doubt seeking a shortcut back to England. The CONTENT was never seen again.

One of the Spaniards left on the beach by Cavendish was Sebastian Vizcaino. When the SANTA ANNA was fired, Vizcaino and his comrades boarded her, put out the flames, and made some repairs. They then sailed with the rest of the survivors to Mexico, arriving safely.

Thomas Cavendish went home by way of the Philippines, using a captured Spanish pilot whom he later hanged. On September 9, 1588, just after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, he arrived back in England. There Cavendish attached himself to the royal court and quickly spent his newly acquired fortune. Seeking more, he fitted out another expedition to the Pacific in 1592, but it stalled in harsh weather at the Strait of Magellan. Deserting his comrades, Cavendish made sail for England but died on the way, aged 37. [12]

⚓ ⚓ ⚓

William Dampier (1652-1715) was not your run-of-the-mill buccaneer. Born in Somerset, he worked as a fisherman, plantation manager in Jamaica, and logger in the Bay of Campeachy before drifting into piracy. (Later he drifted out of it, had a brief and unhappy career as a captain in the British navy, and won renown as a writer of travel books. On his voyages he kept a journal rolled inside a bamboo joint sealed at the ends with wax.) [13]

In 1679, bored with life in Jamaica, Dampier joined an expedition of seven ships and 366 men fitting for the Spanish Main. The expedition was commanded by a group of captains, the most prominent of whom were Richard Sawkins and Bartholomew Sharp. These buccaneers formed themselves into a military organization of six companies. Every man carried a musket, pistol and hanger (short sword), two pounds of powder, a sufficient number of bullets, and half a pound of bread.

In April 1680, after plundering various towns in Panama, the expedition set out overland across the Isthmus for the Great South Sea. Dampier was serving as an ordinary ranker, along with adventurer Basil Ringrose and surgeon Lionel Wafer. All three published histories of the expedition, and one edition of Alexander Exquemelin's best-seller, *The Buccaneers of America*, included a chapter on their exploits.[14]

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Sailing along the Pacific coast in pirogues and two small captured Spanish vessels, the pirates split up to seek prey. One party of 68 buccaneers led by Richard Sawkins and Basil Ringrose encountered a Spanish squadron of five galleons and three barks, manned by 250 men led by Don Jacinto de Boronha.

Off the island of Perico, the buccaneers gained the weather gage and bore down to attack the Spaniards and mixed-bloods. One pirogue managed to get under the stern of the enemy flagship, where her crew jammed the vessel's rudder. The buccaneers were expert marksmen, and quickly picked off three Spanish helmsmen and set fire to the powder aboard their flagship. By the time the ship was taken, she had sixty-one dead, including Don Jacinto, out of eighty-six crew. The pirates suffered a loss of eighteen dead and twenty-two wounded.

The English captured a total of six Spanish ships in the Battle of Perico, the remaining two having fled. The victory was largely due to the leadership of Sawkins and Ringrose, but after all was over, the company was rejoined by Bartholomew Sharp and two hundred men. These worthies had been loitering at an island nearby, finding the rigors of piratical life much eased by the local wine and women.

As so often happened after a victory, the pirate band split up into smaller echelons. Captain Coxon left with his detachment to return to Jamaica, refusing to cooperate further with Sawkins. The rest of the men lay some weeks at Taboga Island, capturing stray enemy ships and sending insolent messages to the Spanish governor on the mainland. In his blustering response, the governor demanded to know who had signed the commissions under which the buccaneers sailed. Sawkins replied:

> "That as yet all his company were not come together, but that when they were come up, we would come and visit him at Panama, and bring our commissions on the muzzles of our guns, at which time he should read them as plain as the flame of gunpowder could make them."[15]

For the time being, the saucy buccaneers were doing well. One prize of Sharp's yielded 51,000 pieces of eight, giving each man 247 coins. (This in a period when a laborer had to work a month to earn a single piece of eight.)

Finding himself not strong enough to attack heavily fortified Panama, Sawkins made a thrust at Pueblo Nuevo instead, taking only forty-two men with him. The attack was repulsed, with five wounded and two killed —one of whom was Sawkins.

Bartholomew Sharp was now elected "admiral," but sixty-three malcontents declined to serve under him and set off back across the isthmus.

Sharp—with Dampier, Ringrose and Wafer still on board—cruised southward and attacked the Spanish settlements on the west coast of South America. The story of his raids and battles there is beyond the scope of this article, but in April of 1681, Dampier and forty-three others left him and set off by longboat and two canoes for the North Sea. On May 1 they began crossing the isthmus, making a march through one hundred miles of jungle in three weeks, losing only a pirate who drowned crossing a river with a bag of silver around his neck.

Dampier returned to the Pacific coast of New Spain a number of times in the years to follow. In Part 2 of this story, in the next issue of *Mains'l Haul*, we will sail with him again, along with Alexander Selkirk (the origi-



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nal "Robinson Crusoe"), Woodes Rogers, Shelvocke, Clipperton and other freebooters of this wild and remote coast.

NOTES

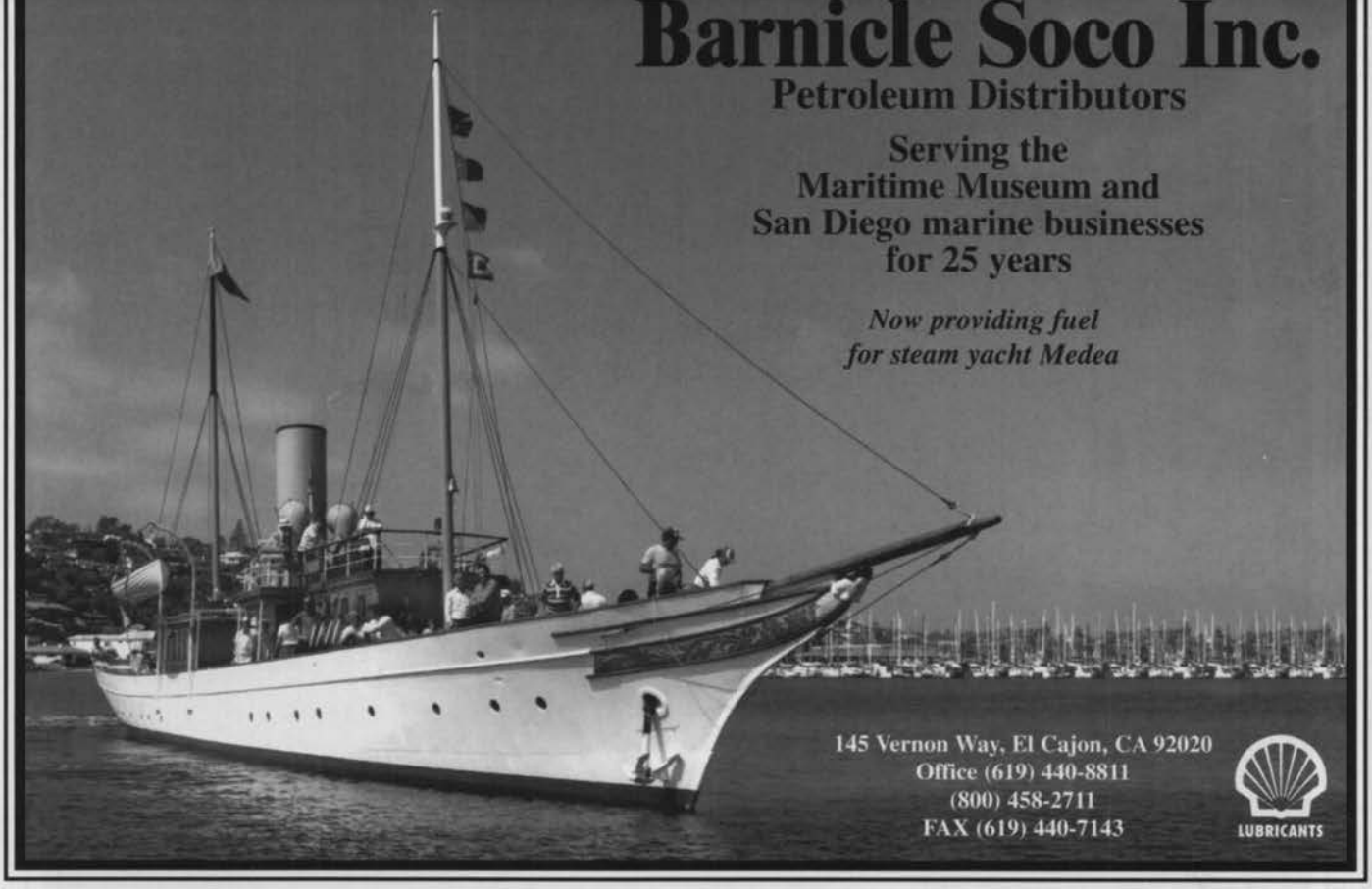
1 Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.
2 Ibid., 59.
3 Ibid. The old buccaneers' town of Port Royal, leveled in a catastrophic earthquake in 1692 with the loss of hundreds of lives, may be seen today near Kingston, Jamaica. Archaeologists have extracted many fascinating artifacts from the ruins.
4 Ibid., 60.
5 Ibid., 265. Duels were not always to the death. Usually the first man to draw his opponent's blood was declared the victor, and the quarrel settled. A man marooned was given a pistol, a small quantity of shot, and a bottle of water. If left on a remote sandspit, he stood little chance of survival, but islands with water and wildlife might keep a maroon alive for years.
6 George Wycherley, *Buccaneers of the Pacific* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928), 24-25.
7 Ibid., 27-28.
8 Raveneau de Lussan, *Journal of a Voyage into the South Seas in 1684 and the following years with the Filibusters* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1930), 241-242.
9 Ibid., 22.
10 Wycherley, 116.
11 Ibid., 118. "Great ordnance" would comprise the larger guns of a ship—cannon and culverins. "Small shot" would include muskets and swivel guns loaded with iron dice, hailshot, broken glass, etc. The English had a particularly vicious swivel weapon called a "square murderer," from the shape of its barrel. The effect on an enemy's packed decks was lethal. A number of cannon, culverins, square murderers and other ordnance have been raised from the wreck of the MARY ROSE (1545).
12 Peter Kemp, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Ships & the Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 147.
13 Ibid., 226. The bamboo joint and wax seals not only kept Dampier's manuscript dry, but also shielded it from prying eyes. Reportedly he always carried the joint with him.
14 Alexander Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America* (London: printed for William Crooke, at the Green Dragon without Templebar, 1684).
15 Wycherley, 170-171.

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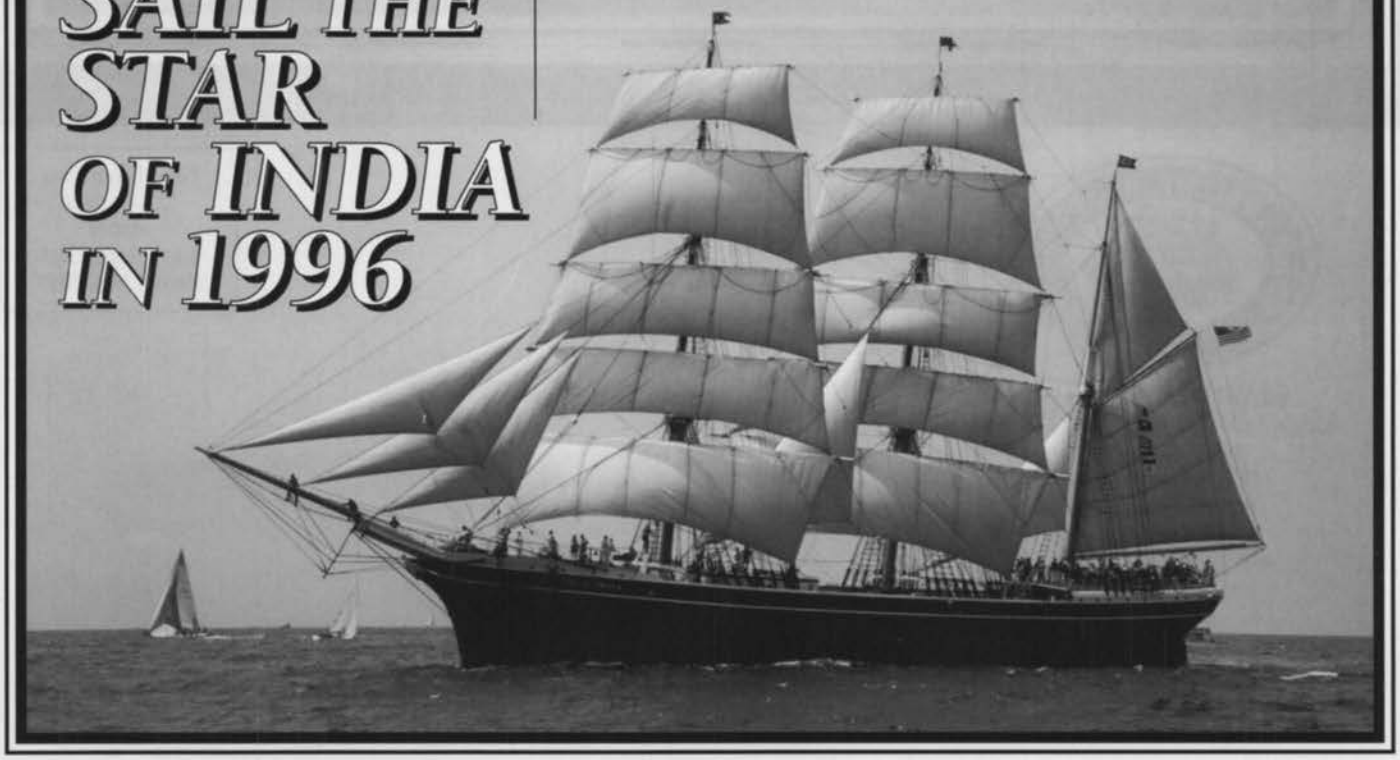


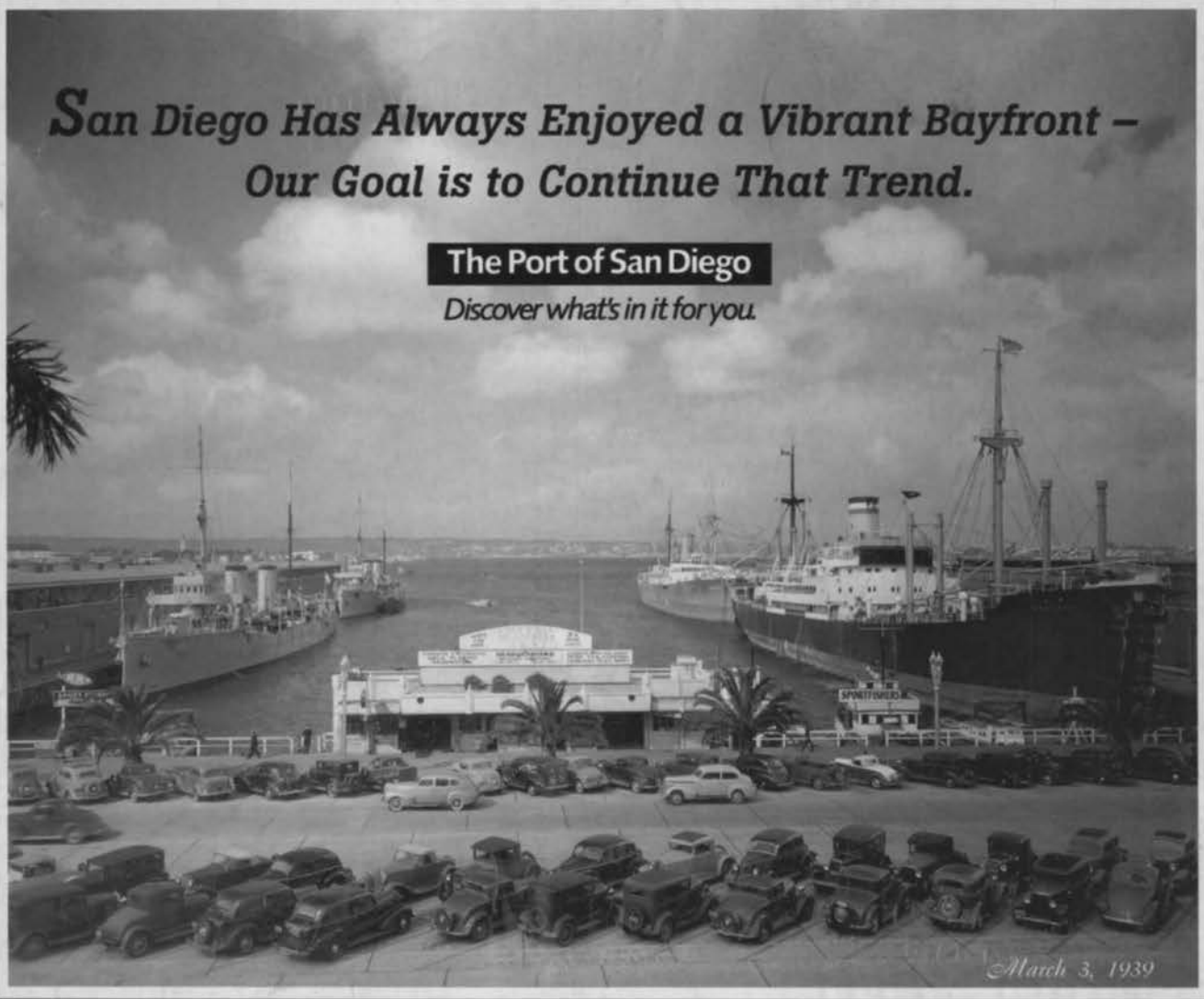
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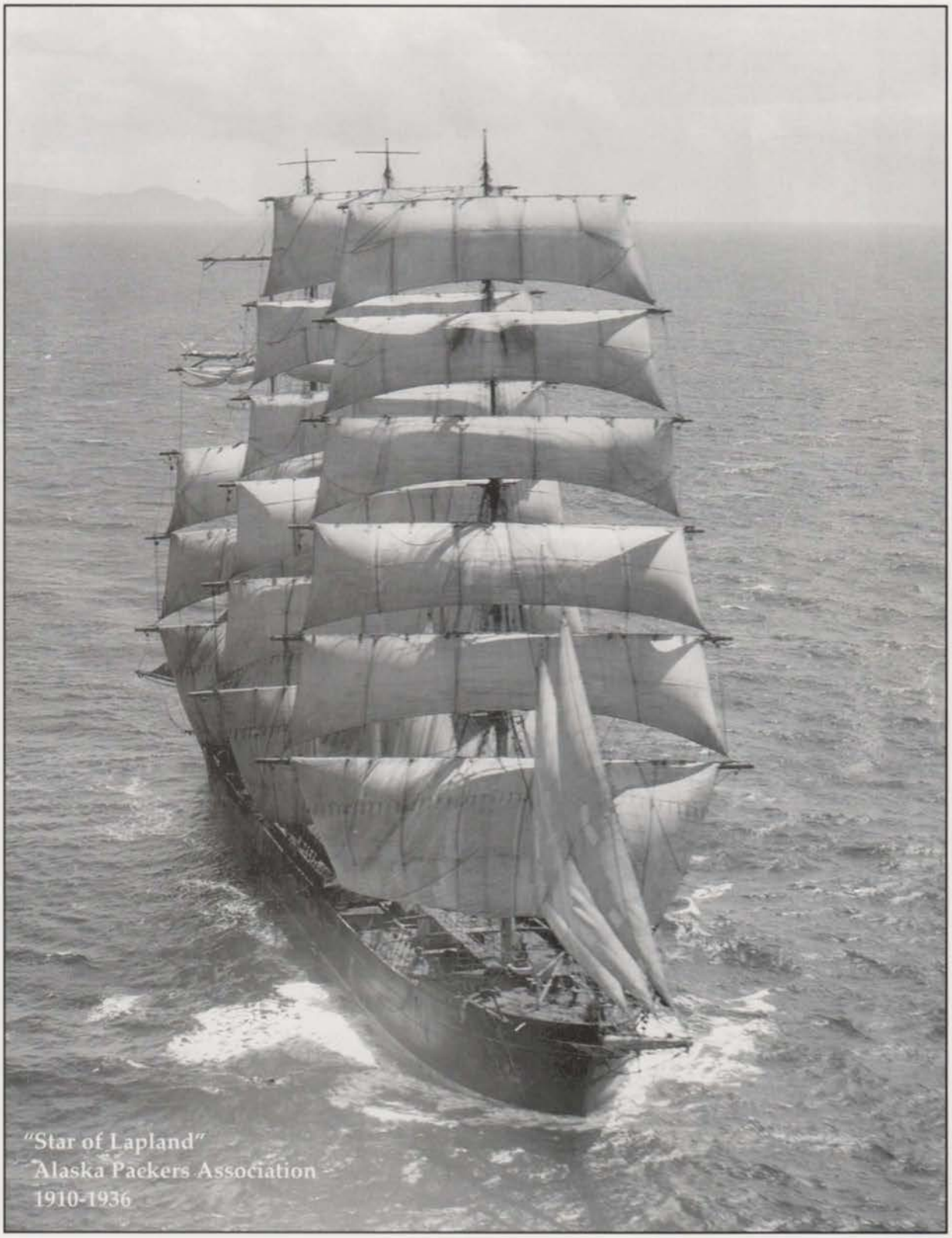
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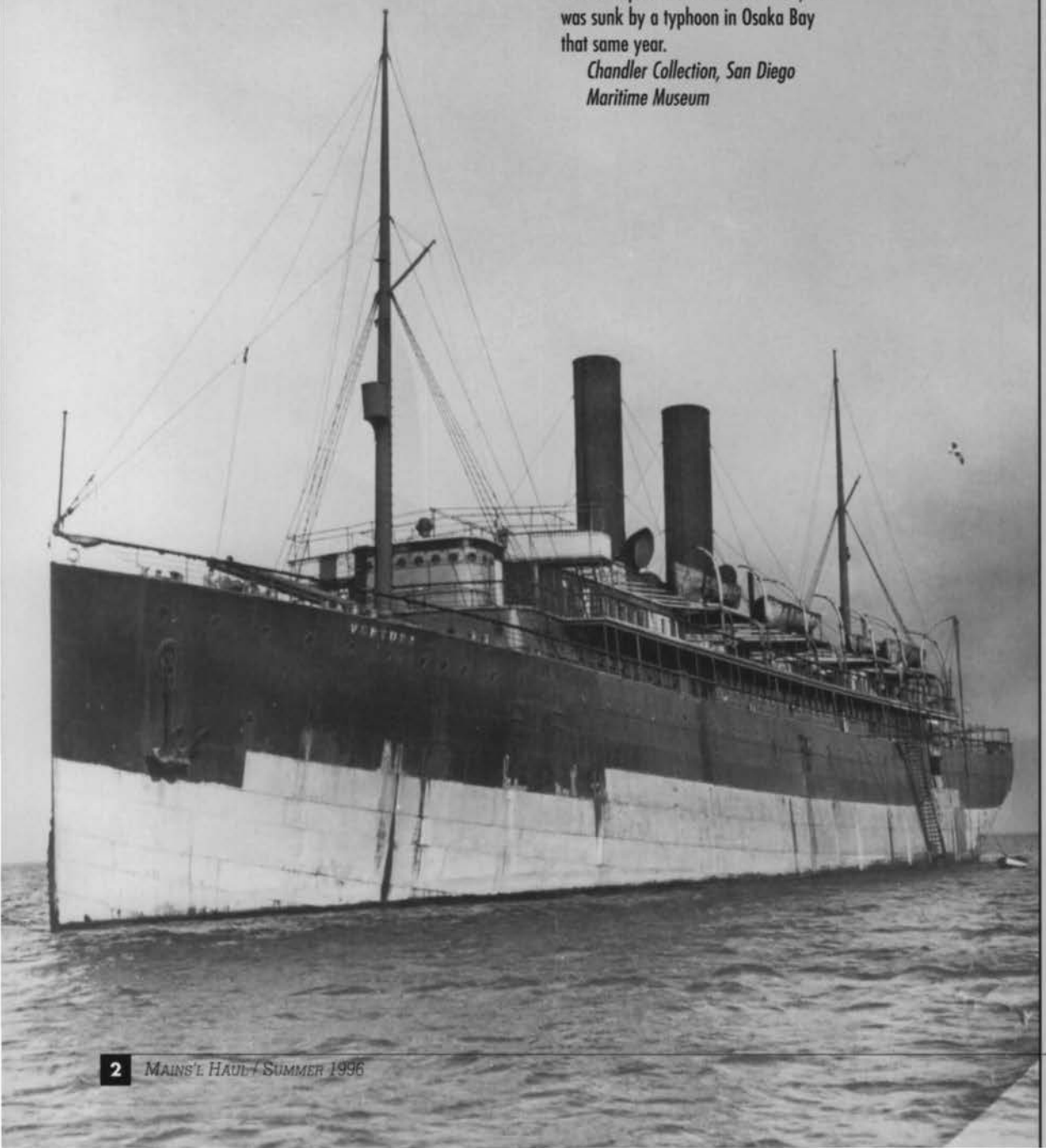


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On the cover . . .

The steel shipentine STAR OF LAPLAND was built as the ATLAS at the Sewall yard in Bath, Maine, in 1902. Later acquired by the Alaska Packers Association, she was one of the vessels Frank Weidemann sailed in. Weidemann, the last commercial master of the STAR OF INDIA, is profiled in the article beginning on page 6.

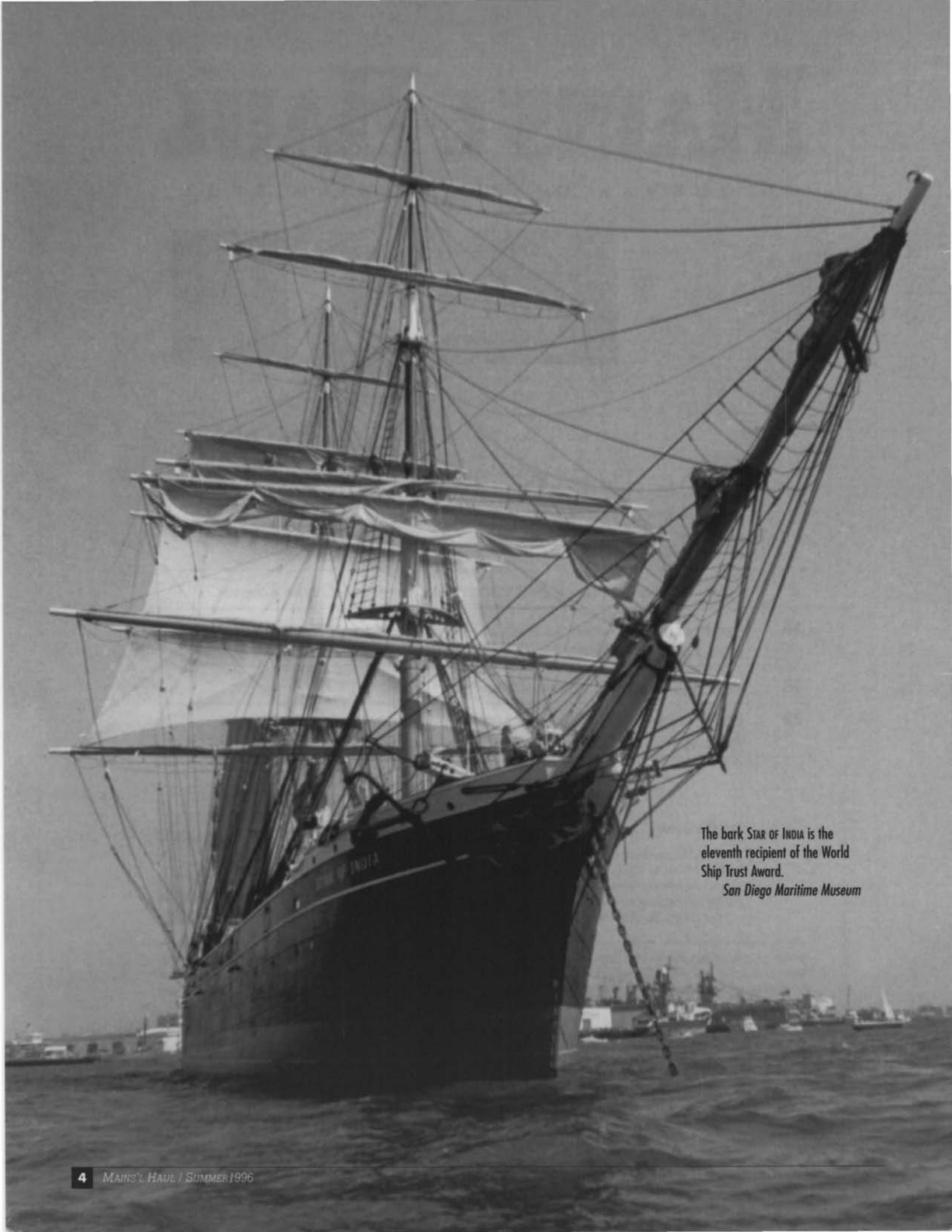
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Craig Arnold, Editor

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STAR OF INDIA 1863

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



The bark STAR OF INDIA is the eleventh recipient of the World Ship Trust Award.
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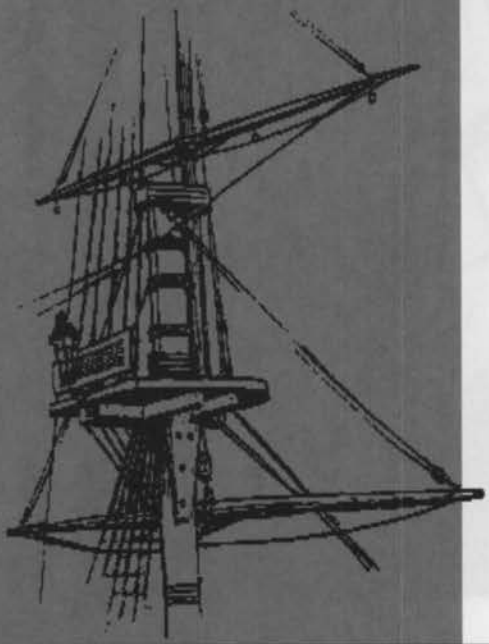
FROM THE HELM



While the STAR OF INDIA is often the focus of attention within our own community, occasionally we are reminded that the mission of the San Diego Maritime Museum is part of an enormous worldwide effort to preserve and interpret the collective nautical heritage of humanity. Like most regional museums, we have a good understanding of our place within our own community. Our view of where we fit into the larger enterprise is often a hazy one, excepting those instances where that view is illuminated by some outside source.

We have learned that the STAR OF INDIA has been named as the next recipient of both the American Ship Trust Award and the World Ship Trust Award for excellence in historic preservation. These are, respectively, the most prestigious national and international awards for the preservation of historic vessels, recognizing the significance of the vessel in question (through association with pivotal events or way points in technological development), the quality of the preservation effort, and the level of community commitment in sustaining the project. To provide some measure of what this means, it would be appropriate to review the list of past recipients and presenters of the World Ship Trust Award:

1982	Swedish galleon VASA, presented by HM King Carl Gustav XVI
1983	Tudor carrack MARY ROSE, presented by HM Queen Elizabeth II
1985	Danish frigate JYLLAND, presented by HM Queen Margarethe II
1987	Frigate USS CONSTITUTION, presented by President Ronald Reagan
1988	Ironclad HMS WARRIOR, presented by HRH Prince Philip
1988	Australian bark POLLY WOODSIDE, presented by Dr. Davis McCaughy, Governor of Victoria
1992	SUBANAHONGSA, royal barge of Thailand, presented by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej
1992	Battleship MIKASA, presented by Minister of State for Defense, Japan
1995	Ironclad BUFFEL, presented by Vice Admiral J A L Van Aalst, Inspector of the Royal Netherlands Armed Forces
1995	Ironclad HUASCAR, presented by the Minister of State for Defense, Chile
1996	Bark STAR OF INDIA, presentation to be by President of the United States or the President's representative



Signified by the stature of the presenters, it might noted that almost all the ships in this honor roll represent national scale preservation efforts and the ships themselves embody national character or the spirit of their age. Collectively they subsume a monument to achievement in the enterprise of seafaring, now more than five thousand years old, and a legacy of spirit that belongs to all of us. We've always known what the STAR OF INDIA represents. It's a very nice thing that the rest of the world knows as well.

Raymond Ashley
Executive Director

Part 1 of 2

A STAR SKIPPER: CAPTAIN FRANK WEIDEMANN

By Charles A. Bencik

The story of our bark STAR OF INDIA is also the story of her captains, crews and passengers. The San Diego Maritime Museum is fortunate to have maintained contact with many people related to those who sailed in her during her glory days. Thus we are able to tell you much about Frank Weidemann: he was the last master assigned to the STAR OF INDIA by the Alaska Packers Association before she ceased operation. He was an extremely capable mariner, and a very likable man.

In his prime, Frank Weidemann stood six feet, three inches,[1] a robust figure, sturdy enough that during the lean years of his youth, he could get work as a policeman or a prizefighter. Fortunately, neither job was to his liking.[2] In nearly all his surviving photos, he is hearty, confident, a big cheerful presence. Posing with his ship's crew, he seems a comrade with one and all.





Weidemann as a young sailor in 1905 sports a mustache and his usual grin. At six foot three, with a muscular build, Frank worked as a policeman and a prizefighter when other jobs were scarce. He preferred going to sea under sail, however.
Cliff Weidemann Collection

The STAR OF LAPLAND (left) and the "yachtlike" STAR OF FRANCE (right foreground) share winter quarters in Alameda, California in 1929. Frank Weidemann served in the LAPLAND on the salmon runs to Alaska.
MacMullen Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum

Captain Frank Weidemann was born Franz Wilhelm Weidemann on March 26, 1874 in Ratzeburg, Germany, a small garrison town near Lubeck, not far from the Baltic Sea.[3] Little is known of his early life. There were fifteen children in the Weidemann family. One of his brothers, Friedrich Weidemann, became a professional singer with the Vienna Hofoper, the Imperial Opera Company.[4] But for young Franz, the stage had no allure. With the Baltic coast only twenty miles north, with Hamburg and the North Sea to the west, another life beckoned to him.

In those times, the future held grim prospects for healthy German males. Universal compulsory army service applied to all able-bodied young men.[5] Rather than submit to the draft, Franz Weidemann decided to leave his home and country. He was fifteen at the time. Of his father's coming to America, Cliff Weidemann says:

> I believe he managed to ship out of Hamburg on a ship headed for Providence, Rhode Island. He left the ship in Providence, and being broke and hungry, boarded a small coastal sailing vessel. The ship was laid up at the time, with the owner and his wife aboard. They gave him something to eat and told him he could stay aboard as a watchman. Eventually, a cargo of lumber for Florida developed and he made several voyages until the ship was laid up again. Providence was not a major port at this time and Frank decided to go to New York.[6]

Weidemann took jobs aboard ocean traders out of New York, earning a third mate's license. He signed on the Down Easter BARING BROTHERS for a fateful voyage.[7] After the vessel sailed from New York for Yokohama in December 1897 with a load of case oil, Weidemann boarded her in California. After a six-month passage, she arrived at Kobe, Japan. While loading silk and other commodities there on August 12, 1898, some mutinous seamen, who had been put aboard her by the authorities, set her on fire, vowing never to return to New York.[8] According to Cliff Weidemann:

> The crew made it ashore in lifeboats. They had landed in an area in Japan

that was closed to foreigners and the natives were hostile! They started walking to Yokohama which was in the "Foreign Trade Zone." Arriving there, Frank got a job as a policeman because he was big and tough! Eventually he joined a ship headed for San Francisco. His next voyage was to Java, to Batavia, now Jakarta. He picked up a dose of malaria there that came back annually for the rest of his life.[9]

Frank Weidemann became a naturalized U.S. citizen on August 1, 1901. He took to using the American name "Frank William," and signed aboard the four-masted bark SUSQUEHANNA in New York as a quartermaster. Weidemann later told his son that her master, Captain Joseph E. Sewall, not wanting to offend his impressionable passengers, was very particular about his quartermasters' neatness and cleanliness when taking their trick at the wheel.

Eventually SUSQUEHANNA left New York, bound for San Francisco, where Weidemann was discharged while she was laid up awaiting the wheat harvest. He took up residence at a sailors' rooming house, and later shipped out on the R. C. SLADE, a new, four-masted coasting schooner of 673 gross tons. Built for S. E. Slade Lumber Company, she sailed to Santa Rosalia in the Gulf of California.[10]

In March 1906 the Alaska Packers Association hired Weidemann as a first mate.[11] He may have been attracted to this thriving organization through his friendship with a shipmate and fellow German-American, Adolph "Jack" Schulz. At this time the A.P.A. was a rapidly growing concern, busy with fishing and canning operations in Alaska and the Northwest, and using sailing ships to transport fishermen and equipment to Alaska every spring, and to return with the salmon pack each fall. They had a need for skilled and experienced sailing ship masters, mates and seamen. Weidemann's first duty with the salmon ships was on the chartered wooden ship SINTRAM, 1656 tons, the largest ship built by the Enos C. Soul yard of Freeport, Maine.[12]

SINTRAM had been chartered from Eschen & Minor on April 11, 1906.[13] Weidemann and Captain Charles Johnson, master of the SINTRAM, were in San Francisco, getting ready to head for Alaska, when the great earthquake struck on April 18. There were still fifteen A.P.A. ships in the Bay (but not STAR OF INDIA, which had sailed on the 14th). Cliff Weidemann heard from his father the following story about the great quake and fire:

> As I recall the ship had all of the cannery laborers aboard, a real mixture of jail birds and bums. The city police gave my father a huge and heavy revolver to maintain order on the ship, and to prevent looting ashore. Somewhere, I still have the gun and it doesn't have pearl handles! They also used the spare sails on board to make tents in Golden Gate Park for the homeless.[14]

SINTRAM finally loaded her supplies, plus eighty-eight whites and eighty-two Orientals. They sailed May 5 for the Chilkat Inlet, and the Pyramid Harbor Packing Cannery, one hundred miles east-southeast of Valdez, arriving on May 29. On October 21, they left with 43,705 cases of salmon, and arrived home on November 1 with all but six of their original crew.

In 1908 Weidemann was appointed first mate of the A.P.A. ship SANTA CLARA, a 1535-ton wooden Down Easter built in Maine in 1876.[15] He sailed only one year in her, but he would see her again years later, when she retired to a career in movies, after many years of sailing to the Kvichak cannery.

The A.P.A.'s file on Weidemann shows that in 1909 he was first mate on both STAR OF SCOTLAND and STAR OF ICELAND, two steel barks originally built in Scotland. On the former vessel, Weidemann must have first

Frank served in STAR OF ZEALAND as her first mate. She was one of Sewall's big steel shipentines, launched as ASTRAL in 1900. She joined the Packers in 1909, and was sold to the Japanese for scrap in 1935.

Chandler Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum





As Frank Weidemann's career with the Alaska Packers grew, so did his family. Here he is with wife Mimi, son Clifford, and daughter Frances, about 1918. By then, Frank was a captain on year-round employment with the Packers, and the family had won a measure of prosperity.
Cliff Weidemann Collection

worked under Captain P. C. Rasmussen, with whom he was to serve a number of years aboard several of the biggest and best ships of the A.P.A. Early in 1909, STAR OF SCOTLAND sailed to Ladysmith, near Vancouver, loaded 3664 tons of coal aboard, and returned to San Francisco. There she off-loaded the coal, took on cannery supplies and crew, and sailed to the Loring cannery, near Ketchikan, hidden among the islands of the Alexander Achipelago.[16] She returned November 11.

STAR OF ICELAND, Captain Olaf Hemming and First Mate Weidemann, left a detailed record in 1909.[17] She departed A.P.A.'s Alameda shipyard in tow to United Engineering Works, and was hauled out on the ways January 4, returning to the yard five days later. On March 2 she was towed to the flats, then to the Stewart Street wharf on the 22nd for crew and supplies. Her fishermen were nearly all Nordic. Waiting for fifty more Chinese cannery hands, she swung at anchor April 8 and 9, then sailed for Nushagak. She encountered ice off Port Moller, and was detained until May 15. A rivet in her hull was started, apparently due to the encounter with ice. She arrived at Nushagak on the 16th, and after a busy season, left with 60,588 cases, 137 whites and 200 Chinese, returning to San Francisco on September 15.

STAR OF ICELAND sailed to Nushagak in 1910 as well. Her fleet mates in Bristol Bay

included the square-riggers STAR OF INDIA and INDIANA, schooner PREMIER, and steamer NUSHAGAK. STAR OF INDIA'S white crew were Scandinavians. INDIANA'S and STAR OF ICELAND'S fishermen were Italians.

Nushagak, at the mouth of the river of the same name on Bristol Bay, was one of the most productive fishing grounds worked by the A.P.A. In 1906, the salmon pack at Nushagak was 245,156 cases. Alaska Packers Association records show 943 people employed at Nushagak in 1906, including 450 Chinese cannery hands and 216 fishermen/seamen.[18]

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After returning to San Francisco at the end of each season, Frank Weidemann spent the fall and winter months at odd jobs, and visiting with old friends. His fellow old shipmate Jack Schulz had written to his family in Germany, telling his sister Maria (known as "Mimi") to come live with him and his wife. Mimi and Jack were descended from seafaring stock: their father was an Elbe River pilot. There came a fateful day for Frank Weidemann when he went to the Schulz house for a visit, and first set eyes on Mimi, his future wife.[19]

In October 1909, Frank Weidemann and Mimi Schulz were married. He was then 35; she was 25. The Weidemanns settled in San Francisco on Montcalm Street, in the Mission District. In 1910 Frank came home to be greeted by his newborn daughter, Frances; and in 1911 by a son, Clifford.

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During 1911 and 1912 Frank Weidemann was first mate of the big Sewall-built four-masted bark STAR OF ZEALAND. The A.P.A. had consummated her purchase from Standard Oil in 1909 when she was still the case oil vessel ASTRAL.

As an Alaska Packers ship under



The Packers had a habit of using Frank Weidemann to help "break in" newly acquired sailing ships. Here he stands at far right while serving as first mate in STAR OF POLAND, in 1914.
Cliff Weidemann Collection

Captain P. C. Rasmussen, STAR OF ZEALAND headed north for a cargo of coal to Ladysmith, British Columbia, in January 1911. En route, a storm carried away her fore and mizzen topgallant masts. Upon returning to San Francisco, the A.P.A. replaced them with stump masts and her mizzen royal was cut down—a rig known a "stump topgallant."[20]

With most of her coal cargo off-loaded, and the crew and outfit aboard for the canning season, Rasmussen then sailed her to the A.P.A. cannery at Loring, where, in 1911, Weidemann met A.P.A. President Henry Fortmann, who was touring the Alaska canning plants.[21] A photo survives showing the two of them relaxing on the STAR OF ZEALAND after a hunting expedition.

In 1913, the A.P.A. assigned Weidemann and Captain Rasmussen to yet another big Sewall vessel, STAR OF LAPLAND, formerly the ATLAS. This big (3381 tons) four-masted bark was even bigger than STAR OF ZEALAND. She was fast; reportedly she made the trip from San Francisco to Bristol Bay in seven days, five hours in 1917.

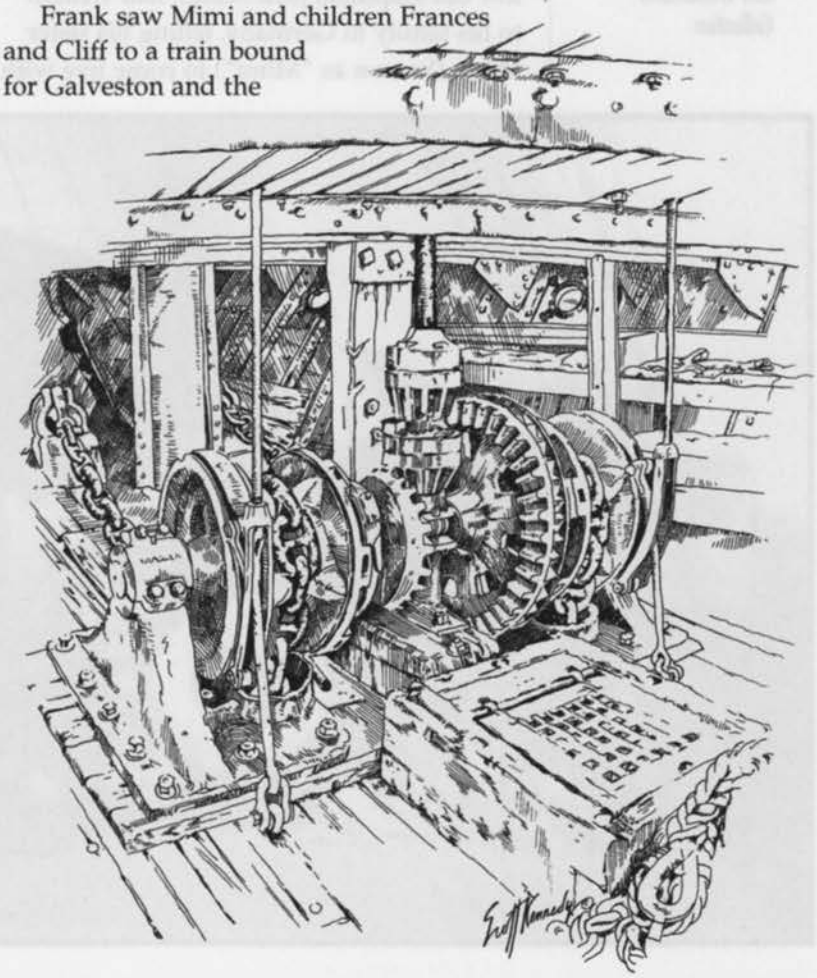
On November 4, 1913, the Alaska Packers appointed Frank Weidemann a "Permanent Mate." This meant that he could expect to have work in the A.P.A. shipyard with the rigging gang during the off season. The appointment signaled that the A.P.A. valued him highly, and didn't want to lose him to another outfit. In past years he had had to find other work during the winter, to help support his growing family. Cliff Weidemann says his father even entered the boxing ring:

> [This was] when things got tough . . . just about the time he married my mother. He wasn't on permanent salary with the Packers yet. He was chief mate during the summer months, but then in the wintertime he didn't have anything, no work. So sometimes he was a special policeman at Tanforan Race Track, and at one or two attempts to be a prize fighter. But he didn't like it. It was too rough.[22]

Before 1914, Weidemann moved his family a short ways to Florida Street, where they lived in a basement flat. Then for a short time they had a place on Treat Avenue, and later lived in a four-story apartment building on 26th and Army Street, on Harrison. The Weidemanns spoke German to each other at home, and expected their children to learn the language and use it.

Early in 1914, Mimi Weidemann decided to take the two young children to see her parents in Hamburg, and to southern Germany to visit Weidemann's sister. Meanwhile, the A.P.A. had bought still another Sewall four-masted bark from the Standard Oil Company. She was the former ACME, 3288 tons. And naturally, the A.P.A. thought, what better team to start their new shipentine STAR OF POLAND, than Captain Rasmussen and First Mate Frank Weidemann?

Frank saw Mimi and children Frances and Cliff to a train bound for Galveston and the



Kneeling in the center foreground, Frank Weidemann poses briefly aboard STAR OF POLAND before resuming his labors. The man in a suit to the left of Frank may be Captain P. C. Rasmussen, with whom Weidemann sailed in several A.P.A. ships.
Cliff Weidemann Collection



steamer WITTEKIND. On February 4, Captain Rasmussen and Frank took STAR OF POLAND to Nanaimo, British Columbia, loaded coal, and brought her back by the 19th, the tug HERCULES towing. [*Ed. Note:* HERCULES, by the way, often towed enormous log rafts to San Diego from the Pacific Northwest. Today she is still operational, preserved by the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.]

After off-loading the coal from Nanaimo back at San Francisco, and taking on her cannery crew, fishermen, and supplies for the season, STAR OF POLAND sailed for Loring, Alaska, arriving three weeks later.[23]

The cannery at Loring is in a spectacular, isolated area of mountains and pines, the site of an Indian village, fifteen miles from Ketchikan.

Meanwhile, in Europe, the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife precipitated the outbreak of the First World War. Mimi Weidemann and her children were caught right in the middle. They packed their trunks and took a train north for the seacoast, only to be peremptorily dumped in a field by the German army, which commandeered the train for war service. Mimi managed to get a farmer to bring them on a cart to another train, and finally they were able to sail to England, and at length return to California, much to the relief of an anxious Frank Weidemann.

As elsewhere in America, German immigrants, their loyalties in doubt, were looked down upon and regarded with considerable suspicion in San Francisco. Cliff Weidemann thinks the family wasn't

bothered much. The Weidemanns spent the war years at 26th and Army, in a building with six families.

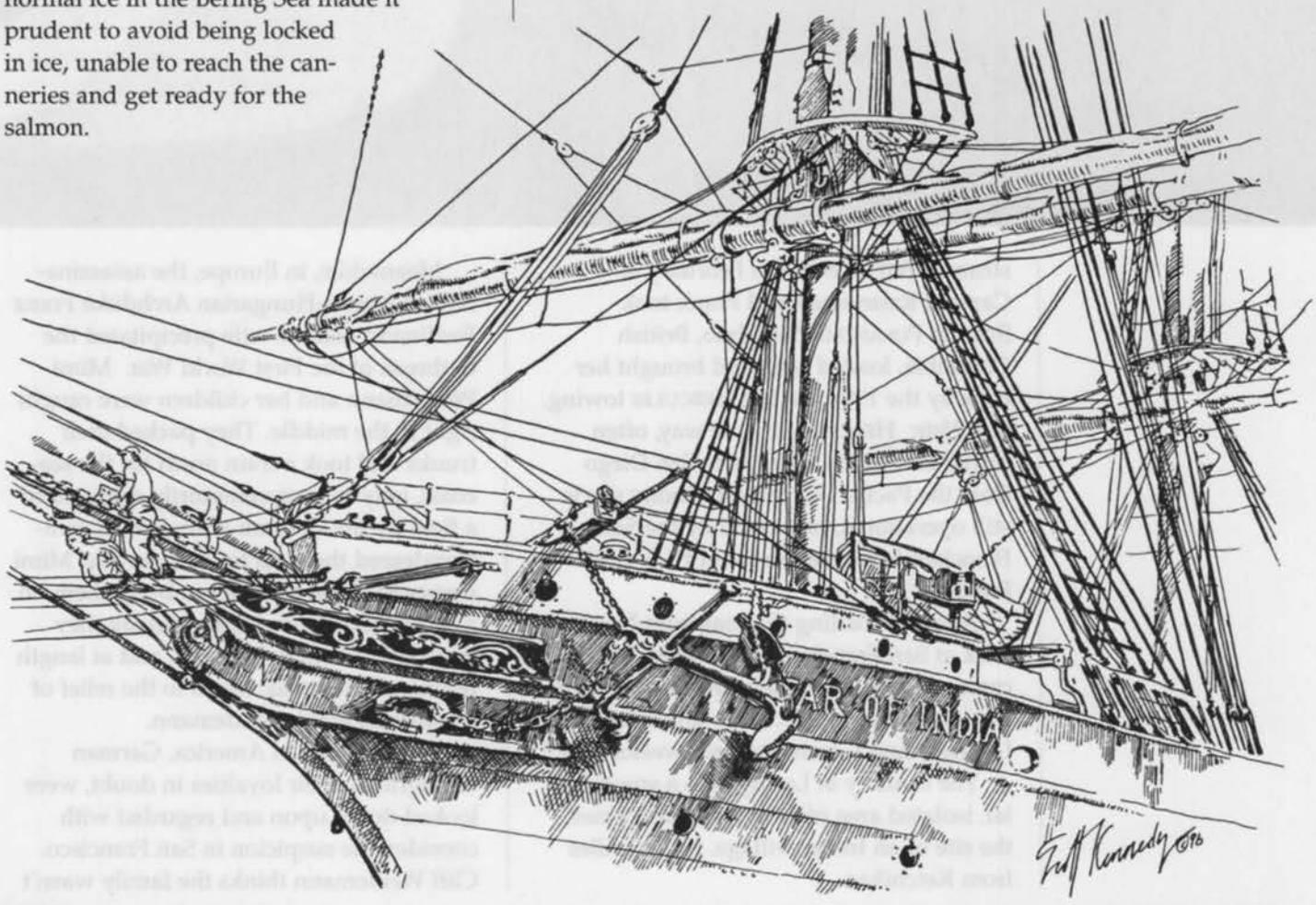
In 1915, STAR OF POLAND and her crew had a year similar to the one before: towed to Nanaimo for coal, then back to San Francisco, loading up and sailing to Loring. She brought her crew and pack back home on October 15. A quick off-loading, and—exciting news!—back to sea in three days to sail north for a charter out of Puget Sound. The war in Europe heightened the need for shipping bottoms and the A.P.A., pressured by the Shipping Board, had a profitable charter: first to Port Townsend, then to Port Ludlow to top off a cargo of lumber; and outbound in November for Melbourne, Australia. They probably spent Christmas at sea.

Though the war made it hard in 1916 to get ships into dry dock for survey, the A.P.A. were not in a rush to get to Alaska. Predictions of heavier than normal ice in the Bering Sea made it prudent to avoid being locked in ice, unable to reach the canneries and get ready for the salmon.

After returning later in 1916, Weidemann received his long-awaited license: he now qualified as an Unlimited Master, Sail.[24] How disappointed he must have felt, when in March he first saw his new command: the wooden three-masted schooner PREMIER, 308 tons, built in Port Blakely, WA, in 1876.

PREMIER was well suited as a lumber carrier. She left San Francisco on February 29, 1916 for Bellingham, Washington, for a load of lumber, where Weidemann probably first came aboard. Cliff Weidemann remembers those times:

> When his ship was up north here, loading lumber, my mother would pack us kids, and a suit box full of sandwiches. We'd get on a train and come north. My father would either [be] in Port Townsend, or Port Gamble, or Port Ludlow, loading. . . . It was during the war. . . .[25]



Weidemann sailed the schooner across the Pacific to Tientsin, China and back. (Two years later, under another master, PREMIER would be wrecked in Unimak Pass.) The author has no other data about her or Weidemann's command of her, although it seems probable he was master of PREMIER until sometime in 1918.

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About 1918, the Weidemanns moved to a plain two-story frame house with a garage under the porch, at 2160 Buena Vista in Alameda. (It is still there, across from McKinley Park, on one of the main thoroughfares three-fourths of a mile from the site of the Alaska Packers' shipyard.)

Alameda was connected to San Francisco by the ferryboats BERKELEY, OAKLAND, and PIEDMONT. Moving from San Francisco to Alameda meant no more daily ferryboat rides to the shipyard for Frank, although occasionally the family went to San Francisco aboard the BERKELEY. Mimi Weidemann took the ferry each month to see President Henry Fortmann, whose offices were in San Francisco, at 111 California Street. As Cliff recalled, "My mother used to get her paycheck from him, when my father was at sea. Every first of the month, she would go up and get $100 from Mr. Fortmann. That's why I remember the name."[26]

Alameda social life aligned itself according to Packer organization. In the shipyard, Cliff says:

> There were certain cliques there. There was the "Steel Ship Row." Those captains didn't associate with "Rotten Row." "Rotten Row" was all the old wooden ships . . . and some of them were pretty rotten. [In Alameda] I think there was the Red Salmon Packing Company. Of course, the big one was the Alaska Packers. And then there was one more outfit, I can't think of, that based their ships in Alameda . . . which is good support for the town. And where I lived, there were a lot of seafaring people on the north side of Alameda, on Buena Vista Avenue. And we were known as the "Codfish Aristocracy."[27]

Weidemann's next command in 1918 was a denizen of Rotten Row, the LLEWELLYN J. MORSE. The records are confusing.[28] One entry in the A.P.A. masters' service data notebook suggests he transferred to her in the fall of 1918, while the ship's operating record card shows the name "Weiderman" written in and "Pettersen" scratched out for 1916 through the end of 1919. A.P.A. historian Harold Huycke states that Captain C. E. Pettersen was her master in 1918, when she was at the Coffee Creek cannery on the Kvichak River, before being relieved by a Captain Thomsen.[29] Weidemann may have taken over after her arrival back home. The author knows of no complete ship's history for the LLEWELLYN J. MORSE, despite her long service. Her final whereabouts or disposition have been argued by Pacific Coast maritime historians since the 1930s.

Captain Weidemann must have had mixed feelings when he took over the LLEWELLYN J. MORSE. A 1393 gross ton ship of 212 feet overall, she had oak frames and pine planking, with iron fastenings. She was originally built for Louis Rosenfeld in Brewer, Maine, in 1877. The A.P.A. bought her from her original owners in 1895. By 1918, she was in poor condition, with a rightful place in Rotten Row. Cliff Weidemann recalls:

> When she got into a heavy gale, she'd take water. I remember my father mentioning that, talking to [Captain Woldemar] Marzan. They were pumping her day and night trying to keep . . . afloat. . . . My father said she rolled so badly the sand ballast on her would come up on both sides in behind the sweat battens![30]

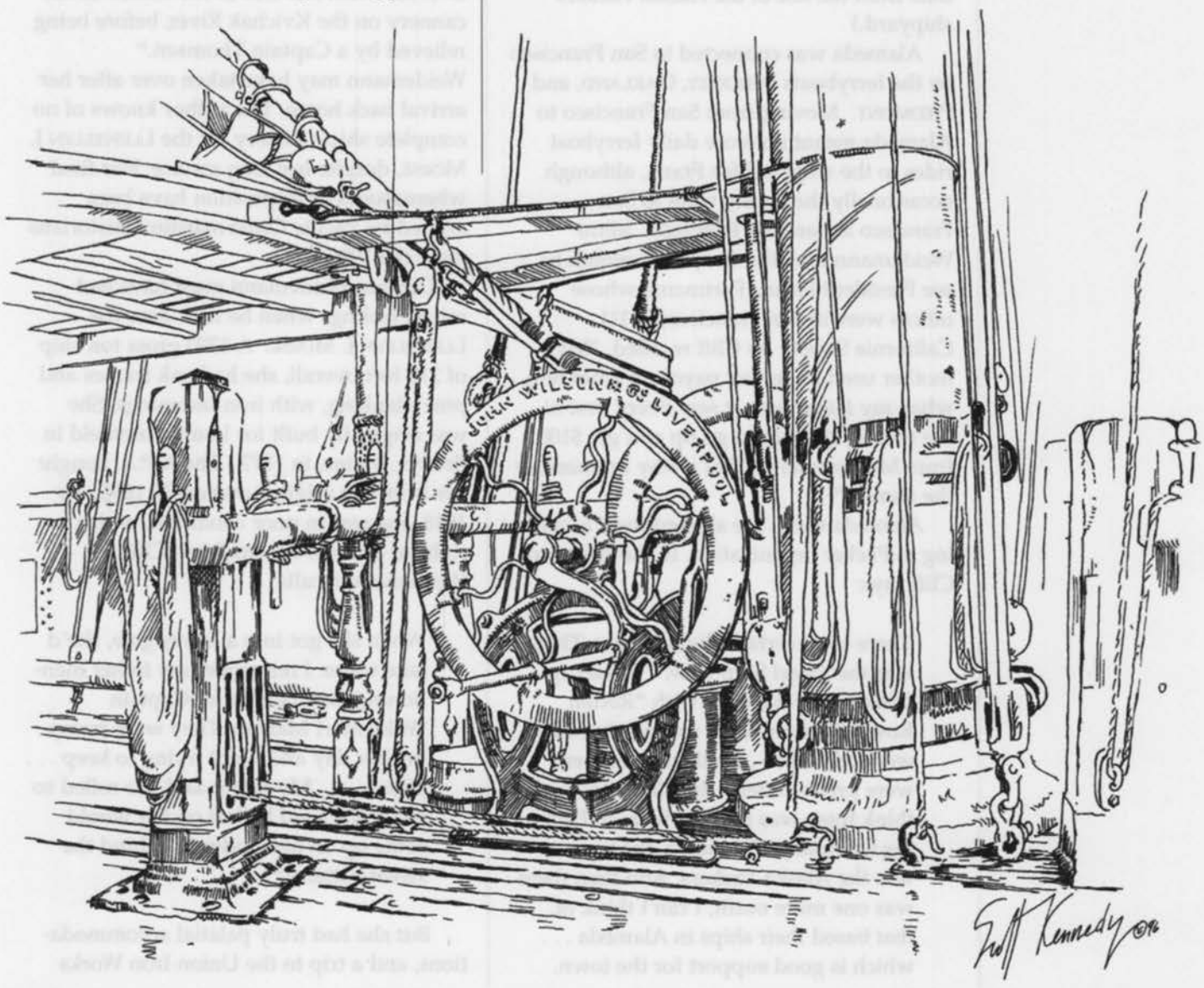
But she had truly palatial accommodations, and a trip to the Union Iron Works

dry dock showed that, with her high bow, square stern and heavy spars, she was still seaworthy.

The LLEWELLYN J. MORSE left San Francisco on April 19, 1918, for Kvichak in Bristol Bay. The weather up north was horrible, and Bristol Bay was jammed with pack ice. Kvichak was sixty-five miles north of Egegik, where STAR OF FRANCE, caught in the ice, was driven up on the flats. On Cape Greig, eighty-five miles south, TACOMA was crushed by the ice pack, and sunk. And twenty-five miles to the southwest of her, Captain Woldemar Marzan in STAR OF INDIA was battling the elements off Cape Menshikoff.

There were at least ten square-riggers caught in the ice that year. LLEWELLYN J. MORSE, it seems, was not one. Apparently Weidemann got her to Kvichak safely, left August 27, and arrived back home on September 22.

The next year, 1919, Weidemann sailed her from San Francisco on April 17, reaching the salmon grounds on May 23. At Naknek, fifteen miles south, an influenza epidemic was raging. The A.P.A. had their doctors busy all season. It was disastrous for the natives, who did not have immunity to this imported disease. Weidemann sailed August 20, and brought the ship home September 10.



Ed. Note: In Part 2 of his story, in our next issue, Mr. Bencik will discuss Frank Weidemann's commands of the STAR OF INDIA, CENTENNIAL and other famous ships, as well as the later years of his life. Mr. Bencik is a former naval officer and long-time student of the Alaska Packers, often traveling to the Pacific Northwest and Alaska to research their operations.



NOTES

1 Oral history interview with Clifford C. Weidemann in Vashon, WA, April 18 and 19, 1996. Details provided by Cliff Weidemann comprise the bulk of the data on his father contained in this article.
2 Ibid.
3 "Weidemann Family History," manuscript in Jerry MacMullen Library, San Diego Maritime Museum, 1984.
4 Ibid.
5 Carlton J.H. Hayes, *A Generation of Materialism, 1871-1900* (New York: Harper and Row, 1941), chapters 1 and 2.
6 Weidemann, oral history interview.
7 Ibid. Launched from the O'Brien yard at Thomaston, Maine in 1877, BARING BROTHERS was 243.7' x 42.3' x 21.7' and 2165 tons gross. She was considered a good carrier but too full-modeled for speed, although credited with a fifteen-day passage from Norfolk to Liverpool loaded with cotton.
8 William A. Fairburn, *Merchant Sail*, 6 vols. (Center Lovell, ME: Fairburn Marine Educational Foundation, Inc., 1945-55), 5:3392-3393.
9 Weidemann, oral history interview.
10 C.C. Weidemann letter to the author, March 15, 1996.
11 Masters' Memoranda, Box 86, A.P.A. 445-446, Alaska Historical Library, Juneau, AK.
12 Fairburn, *Merchant Sail*, 5:3168.
13 "A.P.A. Cannery Fleet, 1906," pp. 130-135. Microfiche A.P.A. 340, Alaska Historical Library.
14 Weidemann, oral history interview.
15 Masters' Memoranda, Box 86, A.P.A. 445-446.
16 San Francisco *Chronicle*, March 26, 1909.
17 "Ships: General Papers and Bills of Sale," A.P.A. Records, Box 90, Alaska Historical Library.
18 "Alaska Employees 1906," A.P.A. Records, Box 6, pp. 190-197, Alaska Historical Library.
19 Weidemann, oral history interview.
20 W. S. Stephenson, *Ships: A Chronicle of Marine Illustrations* (Seattle: Craftsman Press, 1947).
21 Cf. C. C. Weidemann photograph collection.
22 Weidemann, oral history interview.
23 Harold D. Huycke, "The American Four-Mast Bark STAR OF POLAND, ex-ACME," *The American Neptune* 8 (1948): p. 284.
24 Masters' Memoranda, Box 86, A.P.A. 445-446, Alaska Historical Library.
25 Weidemann, oral history interview.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 "LLEWELLYN J. MORSE Ship 1271 Tons," operating record cards, 1903-1926. Masters' Memoranda, Frank W. Weidemann, Alaska Historical Library.
29 Harold Huycke, "Case-oil and Canned Salmon: STAR OF LAPLAND, ex-ATLAS," *The American Neptune* 16 (1956): p.128.
30 Weidemann, oral history interview.

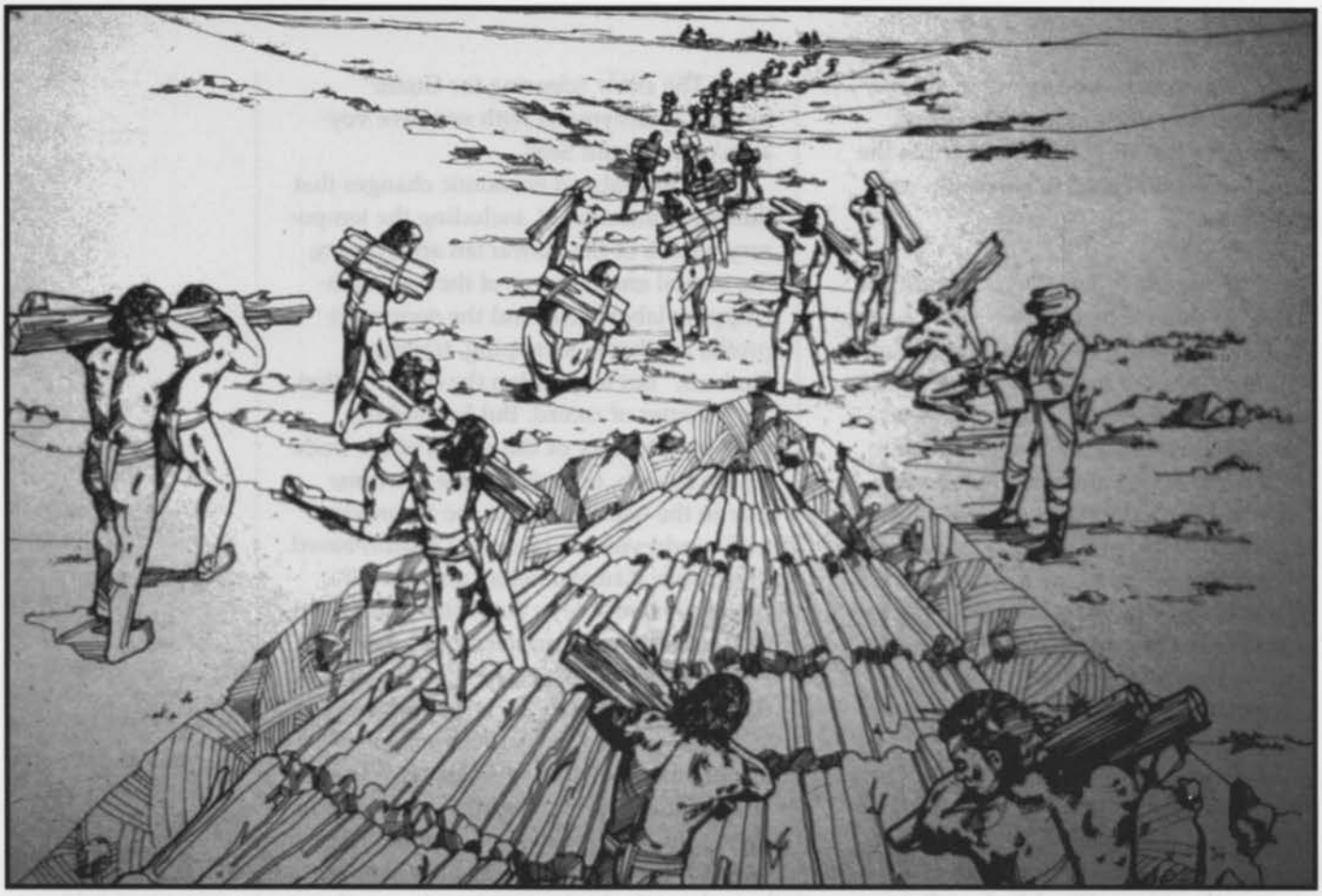
SANDALWOOD AND AMERICAN SHIPS IN HAWAI'I:

TRADITIONS OF PACIFIC TRADE

By Hans Konrad Van Tilburg

There are few places in the world where maritime history has played as important a role as in the islands of Hawai'i. And concerning what is commonly called the historic era, there is probably not a more crucial period in this history than the first handful of decades following European contact, mainly 1790 to 1830. What happened in Hawai'i during this time occurred elsewhere in a similar manner. Several areas were simultaneously undergoing dramatic change: the Northwest coast, Hawai'i, the islands of the South Pacific, and China. European and American ships and merchants with unfamiliar economic and military abilities made contact with Pacific cultures, and (to put it mildly) things haven't been quite the same since. Examining the sandalwood trade in the Pacific allows a better understanding of a specific part, the Island part, of these widespread changes.

Dorothy Shineberg, in her book on the sandalwood business, stresses the importance of tea drinking in England to the initiation of the Pacific trade.[1] This is true for not just tea but a host of trade items. Silks, cotton goods, ceramics, and crafted woods flowed from China as they had for centuries, while very few items were accepted in return. The race for resources in the Pacific was spurred by this basic deficit between China and the West. The English and American traders needed a commodity that the reluctant Chinese would accept in the exchange at Canton (Guangzhou). Tea had become, especially for the English, a necessity rather than a luxury item, while the official Chinese position regarded foreign trade as of little use. The Hong merchants at Canton, however, were more likely to reflect the attitudes of business-minded Southern Chinese living far from the northern capital. They eagerly accepted a certain few items: silver, furs, exotic woods, and (secretly) opium. After the number of sea otters in the Pacific Northwest began to decline, the thick pelts were somewhat augmented by shipments of sandalwood. The exchange of this latest cargo would under-



Measuring Hawai'ian sandalwood into a ship-sized pit.
Hawai'i Maritime Center

go a similar kind of boom and bust cycle as the sea otter trade did, as would whaling, as would the trade of many Pacific resources.

The slow-growing sandalwood tree of the Islands held out only for a short while. By 1816 Fiji had been commercially depleted, the Marquesas likewise a year later. Hawai'i's sandalwood period fell approximately between 1810 and 1830. Following that, there was a dramatic increase in the illegal opium trade with China, which soon led to open warfare.

It is important to emphasize that this boon of sandalwood trade was not something new to the Pacific, but developed from previous maritime traditions which date back to at least the tenth century. Basically, following the introduction of Buddhist texts from India to China, a pall of smoke hung over the Celestial Kingdom as a heavenly offering. A billet three feet long by five inches in diameter was considered the proper sacrificial amount for the well-to-do Chinese. It might also be added here that many of the mechanisms of early transpacific trade, such as the deficit situation between East and West, the importance of the Asian market, and even the ability of Pacific and Asian nations to supply cheaper labor for ships and colonies, continue into the present day. But to return to the topic at hand . . .

To supply this huge and pious market, sandalwood was imported to China on board Chinese, Southeast Asian, and Arabian ships. Zhao Rugua's trade report (Song Dynasty, 1225) records sandalwood sources from eastern Java through the Lesser Sunda Islands to Timor.[2] Arabian vessels shipped the wood from India's Malabar coast to entrepots along the Strait of Malacca. Several islands in Southeast Asia received Chinese names after the wood, as did Hawai'i itself at a later date ("Sandalwood or Fragrant Mountains"). Sandalwood fell into the category of *xiang yao*, or aromatics and drugs, the bulk of the Chinese overseas trade. While most of it

was destined to be burned up in smoke, the wood was also shaped into boxes, ornaments, furniture, and fans, while the extracted oil was used in cosmetics and medicines.

Modern archaeological investigations reveal sandalwood as cargo on board historic Chinese shipwrecks.[3] Some 2.3 tons of aromatic woods, including sandalwood, were recovered from the Quanzhou shipwreck, dated to 1277. An unstated amount of wood was recovered from the Sinan shipwreck site in Korea, dated by cargo tags to 1323. The incense woods, along with all the products of Southeast Asia, were shipped as a matter of rule to the trade superintendency at Canton, the same port to which the Europeans were bringing the commodity over five hundred years later.[4]

Sandalwood trade also probably existed within the Pacific Islands themselves. Western observers noted one particular voyage during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Kau Moala, a Tongan chief, was engaged in the sandalwood trade between Fiji and the Tongan island of Vava'u on board traditional voyaging craft.[5] It might be easier to ask: "Who wasn't involved in the sandalwood trade prior to European contact?" than the other way around. So western merchants, rather than initiating a new trade, began to engage in the already popular pattern of supplying the Chinese market with a traditional commodity.

They did so, however, on a previously unknown scale, and they introduced the trade to Hawai'i. The European scramble for this diminishing Pacific resource eventually took on some of the aspects of the feverish Pacific gold rushes of later years. During 1816-1817, ships in the sandalwood trade were arriving at Hawai'i at a rate of nearly four per month.[6] The South Pacific was also an important destination. Knowledge of previously undiscovered sandalwood islands could make men rich, so the captains and crews did their best to remain evasive about their true destinations. The entry "clearing for Guam" became synonymous with secretive voyages to the South Seas.

The cultural and economic changes that this trade introduced, including the temporary wealth of the Hawai'ian aristocracy, the virtual enslavement of the new cash-cropping labor force, and the enormous profits for those "swapping, trading Yankees," not to mention the deforestation, are a matter of record. But beyond the well-known story of the effects of the trade on the Islands, there is a more maritime side to the tale. Thanks to the "econocentric" world view of primarily Boston-based merchants, Kamehameha I and the Ali'i (royalty) were able to buy ships and guns.

George Samson, in his introduction to Walworth's *Black Ships Off Japan*, summarizes the response to western maritime contact (in this case the East Asian response) as one of either submitting to superior technology or one of turning that same technology against the invaders, a kind of adapt or perish confrontation.[7] "What we have to learn from the barbarians is only one thing, solid ships and effective guns," stated Feng Kuei-fen during the Opium Wars in China.[8] The lesson in China, at that time, was never completed. The impact of ships and guns on the Pacific as a whole obviously goes far beyond any single paper.

In the Pacific, Kamehameha faced these same opportunities. The sandalwood shipped to Canton provided the Hawai'ian aristocracy with the means for purchasing European-style ships, cannon, powder, and shot, the main products of the western "lesson." Between 1816 and 1818 at least six vessels were purchased by Kamehameha.[9] The Hawai'ian fleet grew soon after to include almost twenty western vessels. Kamehameha's initial purchases included the vessels FORESTER, COLUMBIA, ALBATROSS, LYDIA, BORDEAUX PACKET, and SANTA ROSA, all ships typical of the far-flung western venture of the period.[10]

The brig FORESTER, one of John Jacob Astor's British-registered ships engaged in the coastal trade (particularly with Russian

settlements), was sold by Captain Piggot sometime in 1816 and soon renamed KAAHUMANU. As a Hawai'ian vessel, she was soon fitted out for a sandalwood venture to China, and sailed on February 22, 1817 with a crew of ten Hawai'ans and ten whites, under the command of the ship's former navigator, Mr. Adams.

The COLUMBIA, an American-built schooner of 185 tons sailing under British registry, was sold to Kamehameha on May 2, 1818. A fine example of the sharp-built copper-sheathed clippers of the early nineteenth century, she was launched in Baltimore in 1812. Sandalwood was traded directly for ownership of the vessel, the amount equal to two full shiploads. After the purchase, Kamehameha turned the ship over to his heir Liholiho. It was rumored that the COLUMBIA was lost shortly afterwards somewhere around the Islands.

The American ship ALBATROSS, 165 tons, was one of the first three ships in the lucrative sandalwood monopoly secured by Nathan and Jonathan Winship and William Heath Davis. The log for the busy ALBATROSS lists voyages back and forth to California, Honolulu, China, the Columbia River, Marquesas Islands, and Russian settlements in Alaska. These trips may have been slower than those of other ships because the ALBATROSS was not copper-sheathed. She took six months going around the Horn when first entering the Pacific.

The LYDIA, a 90-ton single-decked American schooner in the China trade, had been the first merchant vessel to call at Guam. During her career she could usually be found anywhere between the Northwest coast, the South Pacific, and Macau. She was probably sold in 1816.

Of course, some confusion exists over the exact identity of the vessel in question. There's also the brig LYDIA, an American vessel in the coastal trade which was eventually sold to Georg Anton Schaffer and renamed the ILMEN. As the ILMEN, the ship may have then become property of the Hawai'ians during the Russian attempt to occupy Kauai. (During this same period, between 1805 and 1827, the Russian American Company purchased eight American vessels.)

Both the ALBATROSS and the LYDIA (schooner) had previously been involved in unspecified smuggling operations. This took place along the California coast of New Spain, where American ships put into Spanish



King Kamehameha I of Hawai'i, who purchased many European and American ships.
The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1778-1854

ports "under duress of extreme weather." There they sold goods to the missions and also procured hides and other supplies. The relatively unarmed LYDIA was seized off the Southern California coast and transported to Monterey, where she was eventually released due to lack of evidence. She was also later searched for contraband while in China. The cases of opium deep in the hold remained untouched, thanks to the efforts of the American consul (B. C. Wilcocks) in Canton, who also happened to be the ship's owner.[11]

The BORDEAUX PACKET, sold to Kamehameha sometime between September and December of 1817 by Captain Andrew Blanchard, was a large American brig of 225 tons. She operated from New York in the China trade, which included making calls in Fiji.

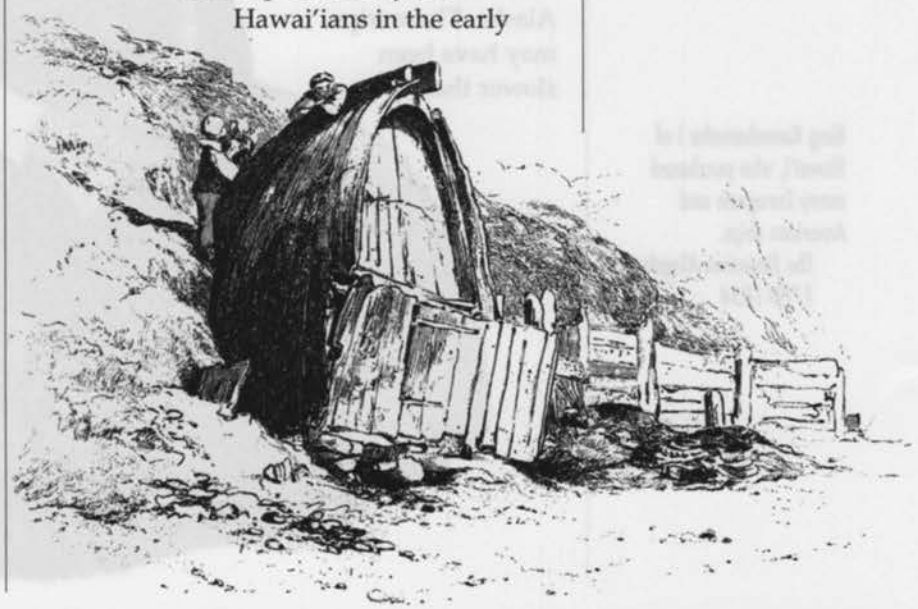
The 26-gun SANTA ROSA, also known as the LIBERTAD, an American-built ship of about 300 tons sailing under the Argentine flag, spent only a brief period in the Islands. Her crew had mutinied somewhere in Malaysia, then sold the vessel in Hawai'i for six hundred quintals of sandalwood and two casks of rum in May, 1818. She was renamed the LIHOLIHO. In September, Captain Bouchard on board the 44-gun frigate ARGENTINA arrived and seized the ship. No compensation was ever forthcoming.

These vessels are fairly representative of the ships adapted to the new China trade, what some authors have called the "Golden Round," or the "Triple Golden Round of Profits." Ships coming into the Pacific in the early nineteenth century were often on voyages around the world, obtaining profits in trade first on the Northwest Coast, then in China, and finally with the sale of Asian goods back home in Boston. They were usually much smaller than other ships in the Pacific trades, such as those used by the British East India Company.

American shipwrights in New England were quick to realize what type of ship was best for the dangerous currents and narrow channels of the Northwest coast, and were able to build them for much less than their English counterparts. One observer, Sullivan Dorr, noted: "Vessels from 200 to 250 tons of light draft, are most adapted to the business, provided they sail well and are copper'd . . ."[12] They would have been well-armed with cannon, swivel guns and muskets, the tools of trade negotiations on the increasingly hostile Northwest coast. Furthermore, as was clear from several different sources, the Yankee skippers of these ships would do almost anything to turn a buck. Another observer at the time noted that everything from Boston was for sale, even the ships.

Peter Corney, a sailor on the COLUMBIA, recorded the festivities surrounding the official transfer of the ship to Hawaiian ownership.[13] Both the ship and the armaments were closely inspected by the king and others. John Young, another European sailor from the ELEONORA, had previously become an important advisor to Kamehameha. He also took part in the inspection prior to the sale. Sources suggest that Liholiho, who purchased several vessels in subsequent years, was not as careful in regards to examining the goods, and that the Americans soon acquired the reputation of selling rotted ships to the Hawaiians.

These initial purchases were not the only vessels procured by the Hawai'ians in the early



decades of the nineteenth century. The FAIR AMERICAN, a small 33-foot tender to the brig ELEONORA, the British schooner PRINCE REGENT (built at Port Jackson, Australia), the American brig THADDEUS and the brig LELIA BYRD, the trade vessels EOS and NEO, and of course the yacht CLEOPATRA'S BARGE were some of the other ships in the Hawai'ian navy. The six ships previously mentioned, the FORESTER, LYDIA, ALBATROSS, etc., represent only a sample of Kamehameha's initial efforts to build a fleet of modern ships. All were purchased in the early days of the sandalwood trade, between 1816 and 1818.

Kamehameha I was also interested in ship construction. The first vessel had been built in 1794 by carpenters from Vancouver's sloop DISCOVERY.[14] By 1810, the king apparently had a considerable number of carpenters, blacksmiths, and artisans in his service. The shipyard probably included a mixture of Hawai'ian, British, American, and Chinese workers. The Chinese shipwrights first saw the Hawai'ian Islands in 1788 or 1789, arriving from Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. They had been transported to Friendly Cove, where they had constructed a primitive shipyard and a small schooner, the first European-style vessel built on the Northwest Coast.[15]

But whoever Kamehameha's shipwrights were, there is little question that they were hard at work. Morgan states that by 1821 over thirty sloops and schooners had been constructed, mainly for inter-island service.[16] Not only were they a popular form of passenger transportation, frequently carrying so many people between islands that the ships were in danger of becoming unstable, but they also carried a good deal of provisions and sandalwood to Oahu for eventual sale. One traveler in 1823 observed:

> The natives possess no inconsiderable share of maritime and commercial enterprise. The King and ali'i own fifteen or sixteen vessels, several of which . . . are brigs of ninety or a hundred tons burden. The greater part of them, however, are schooners of a smaller size . . . among the islands, they are manned and navigated by the natives . . . they find constant employ for them, particularly the small craft, which are continually plying from one island to another, while the larger ones are either chartered to foreign merchants, or make distant voyages on their own account.[17]

The sandalwood voyage of the KAAHUMANU, previously the FORESTER, mentioned earlier, took place in 1817. Not surprisingly, the trip was a financial disaster. The British and Americans had experience trading at Canton. They had made in-roads into the Chinese bureaucratic structure. They knew who to bribe and how, for the importance of "connections" (*guanxi)* influenced all transactions. The Americans in particular gained higher profits by bribing and trading with the Chinese shopmen, rather than the Hong monopoly merchants. And the officials of the Celestial Empire were not impressed by, what were to them, previously unheard-of barbarians (the Hawai'ians) attempting to initiate commerce. Any attempt by the Hawai'ians to do away with the western middlemen in the sandalwood trade could only meet the greatest resistance. As C. S. Stewart put it in 1839:

> It was not for the interest of foreigners that the voyage should prove successful; and by some means, fair or foul, when the ship made her appearance off the islands on her return—the broad pennant of her commander and the Hawai'ian flag floating as triumphantly in the breeze as if she bore the richest freight of damasks and crapes, nankeens and china—and the king in his gladness quickly boarded, all her cargo was found to be a bill of charges amounting to three thousand dollars! In the items of the bill were *pilotage and anchorage*, and custom-house fees to a large sum . . .[18]

Anchorage fees immediately made their

appearance at the port of Honolulu; forty dollars for a spot outside the reef, sixty dollars for the inner harbor.

This inauspicious beginning did not stop further plans for overseas ventures. Several Hawai'ian ships began to engage in voyages involving sandalwood, fur, or supply of provisions to areas such as the South Pacific islands, Asia, and the Russian settlements on both sides of the Pacific. The THADDEUS, under Hawai'ian ownership, sailed for Kamchatka loaded with salt, and returned with cordage, canvas, axes, and dried fish. Boki, governor of Oahu, fitted out brigs for Manila and Canton, and also sent trade goods to Tahiti. He vanished along with the brig KAMEHAMEHA in 1830, on a sandalwood quest to the South Pacific.[19]

At this same time, Hawai'ians also made their way on foreign-owned vessels to distant locations. Hawai'ian sailors worked in the sandalwood trade in all the regions of the Pacific where it was found. They sailed in a variety of trades and worked at the early commercial settlements on the Northwest coast and along California's shore to the south.[20] Pretty much any place there were merchant vessels in the Pacific, there were Hawai'ian (and other Pacific) sailors on the move. Kamehameha I, before the Russian intentions on Kauai materialized, had even offered Hawai'ian warriors to Baranov in order to retake the settlement at Sitka after it had been captured by Tlingit Indians. In short, in the early years of the nineteenth century, the Hawai'ians had the skills, inclination, and quickly obtained the transportation in order to become immediately involved, again, in long-distance Pacific voyaging.

Merchant vessels far from home, engaging in lucrative Pacific trade, often under foreign registry to escape international regulations (East India Company restrictions) or wartime destruction, with low-paid crews gathered from a number of Asian and Pacific places, allowing the captain or merchants to leave certain troublesome and expensive western sailors on the beach . . . these early conditions reflect certain modern conditions.

But what does all this information on early trade mean? The first main point is this: while there may have been a monopoly on certain trades for brief periods of time, the ships themselves became a part of several nations' histories in the Pacific. While it's generally acknowledged that western nations maintained an initial economic hegemony, maritime history in the early decades of the nineteenth century should not exclude non-western events. Many other trades, many other maritime histories existed, and continued to exist. The logs of vessels in the Pacific trade testify to this. The FORESTER, COLUMBIA, ALBATROSS, LYDIA, BORDEAUX PACKET, AND SANTA ROSA all have a certain significance for the Hawai'ian, South Pacific, British, American, Russian, and Chinese peoples. They represent a kind of flexible, plastic tool, traded, sold, bought, seized and wrecked by many nations. In order to understand the flexibility of Pacific trade, it might be best to look at these vesels in a Pacific context, rather than as possessions of any one given country.

The second point has to do with the pace of change in the Pacific. Modern ships and western sailors did not simply discover or create new trade routes and markets, they also accelerated existing connections into a boom and bust cycle during this period of extreme Pacific change. And they did so with the aid (and over the objections) of Pacific and Asian merchants and sailors ready for change.

These general thoughts have more particular significance for the nautical archaeologist, and it comes as a kind of warning. The practice of identifying individual wrecks by association with certain artifacts, especially those assumed to be the personal effects of crew members, may not be possible at all. In the anticipation and interpretation of artifacts associat-

ed with this period, be ready for almost anything. Imagine finding a Russian artifact among a load of Hawai'ian sandalwood on board an American-built brig in the South China Sea. What does that tell us? It's difficult to say.

Concerning the current whereabouts of the ships in the sandalwood trade, the same type of difficulties apply. Some are recorded as having been lost here in the Islands, some vanished in the New Hebrides, others disappeared in typhoons on the China coast. It's even possible that two sandalwood traders, one from the East and one from the West, rest atop one another, separated by more than five centuries of thick black mud. (Unlikely, but possible.) And that someday there will be an e-mail message from the staff archaeologist for the Underwater Project at the Chinese National Museum of History requesting information on the vessels of the Pacific sandalwood trade. Until then, happy sailing!

Ed. Note: Hans Konrad Van Tilburg is a nautical archaeologist. This article was originally a paper presented to the University of Hawai'i at Manoa for the "Symposium on Maritime Archaeology and History of Hawai'i and the Pacific" in February, 1995.

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Part 2 of 2

PIRATES ON THE PACIFIC COAST OF NEW SPAIN

By Craig Arnold

"In this prize I took a Spanish manuscript of a prodigious vallue– it describes all the ports, roads, harbours, bayes... also I took in this prize another jewell... Dona Juana Constanta–a very comely creature... The ship was called the ROSARIO."
Captain Bartholomew Sharp

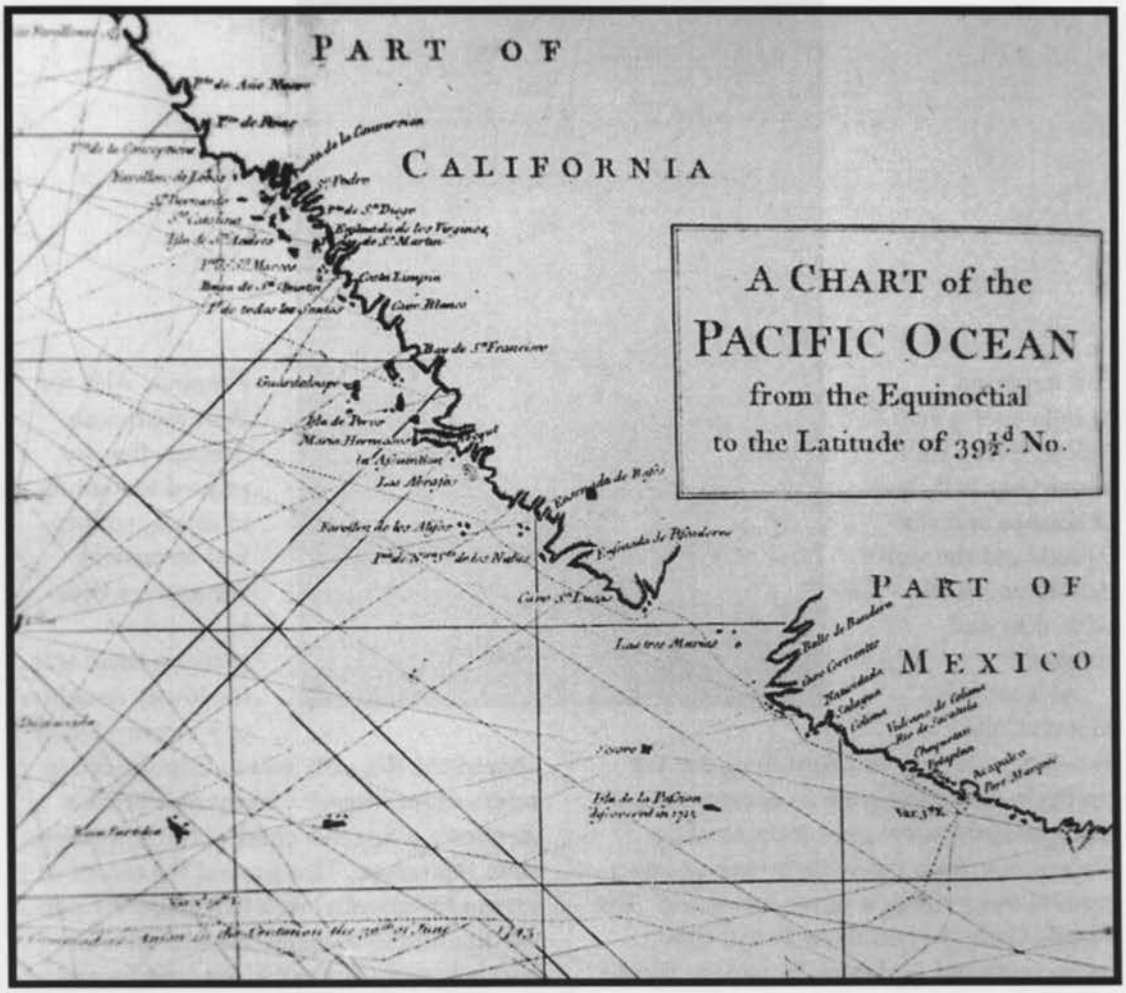
Inside the walls of Intramuros, the Spanish heart of old Manila, bells clanged from the city's churches, echoed by more bells in the native quarter. Chinese fireworks popped and crackled along the streets and the smell of incense hung in the air as a long procession wound around the city, headed for the waterfront. In the center of the procession, a religious image of a great galleon was being carried. When the throng at last reached the wharves, a real galleon loomed up before them. The Archbishop of Manila stepped forward, raising his hands to bless the ship at the beginning of her voyage across the Mar del Sur to New Spain.

"God bring you to safe harbor!" intoned the Archbishop, and, as seven cannon thundered forth a salute, the Manila Galleon slowly pulled away from her moorage, flags and pennants streaming from every mast. She stood out of Manila Bay and set her course to the southeast, for the San Bernardino Strait and the open sea. With God's blessing and a share of luck, she would drop anchor again in the harbor of Acapulco, on the coast of Mexico, not more than seven months hence.

For two and a half centuries, from 1565 to 1815, Spain sent such ships across the Pacific to tap the riches of the Far East. The round trip from Acapulco to Manila and back consumed eighteen thousand nautical miles—the longest navigation in the world in those times.[1]

The Manila Galleon was the thread knitting together the seaborne Spanish empire, which stretched from Spain itself across the Atlantic to Mexico and Central America (together called New Spain), and from there to the Philippines, center of Spanish power in the Orient. To those islands came Chinese and Japanese junks, Malay proas, and other Asian craft, piled high with the East's offerings: cloves, cayenne, curry, cinnamon, pepper, silks, porcelain, jade, lacquerwork, pearls, ivory, rubies, sapphires, diamonds. In return, the Spaniards offered Mexican silver, which the Chinese cast into shoe-shaped ingots called *sycees*.

Normally a single ship left Acapulco early in the year, laded with silver and European goods. Dropping



An eighteenth century map showing the route of the Manila Galleon, running down the coasts of California and Mexico to Acapulco. The gap between Cabo San Lucas at the tip of Baja California and Cabo Corrientes on the mainland is evident, with the Three Marias islands between them. This was a favorite waiting place for pirates in quest of the Manila Galleon.

Photo by John Wright

south to the 13th parallel, they sailed westward to the Marianas, then hurried for the San Bernardino Strait, the eastern door to the Philippines, before the monsoon struck. This westward route was not unpleasant, and, using the Northeast Trades, could be sailed in as little as three months.

By contrast, the eastward voyage to Mexico was longer and more arduous. As one traveler on this route recalled:

> The voyage from the Philippine Islands to America may be call'd the longest and most dreadful of any in the world, as well because of the vast ocean to be cros'd, being almost the one half of the terraqueous globe, with the wind always a-head; as for the terrible tempests that happen there, one upon the back of another . . .[2]

Heading northeast from the Philippines, Mexico-bound ships caught the Kuroshio Current near Japan, then the North Pacific Current, which carried them across to California. Making landfall near Cape Mendocino, the ship sailed south to Cabo San Lucas, and thence to Acapulco. This seemingly endless voyage could take seven months, and many was the galleon whose crew and passengers developed scurvy and beriberi. Living on a diet of salt meat and biscuit, with poor sanitation and primitive "medicine," the Spaniards and their mixed-blood crews died like flies. In one galleon that reached Acapulco, only 192 of 400 people who had embarked at Cavite remained alive.[3] Another galleon hove into view off the Mexican coast, drifting aimlessly, sails slatting in the wind. It was the SAN JOSE, which



George Anson, who sought the Manila Galleon in the vast reaches of the Great South Sea.
Photo by John Wright

had departed Manila over a year before. Every soul aboard her had died of disease and starvation, and the ship drifted on, filled with silks and corpses.

At least forty Manila Galleons vanished, never to be heard of again. Yet profits in this trade were so enormous that the Spaniards never gave it up until the Napoleonic Wars threw their empire into a turmoil from which it never recovered. The Manila Galleons had more to fear than rocks, reefs and typhoons, however. By the late 1500s and for two centuries after, their very name promised treasure beyond belief for swarms of pirates.

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Meanwhile, on the other side of the Americas, in the bustling English colonies which faced across the "Atlantick" to their motherland, two shady sea captains joined forces in 1683. John Cooke and William Dampier were old hands at buccaneering. Dampier, an oddball pirate with literary and scientific tastes, had served in the 1680 expedition of "that incomparable sea-artist Bartholomew Sharp" (as the latter referred to himself).

Sharp, Dampier and a band of over three hundred pirates had sought to emulate Henry Morgan, crossing the Isthmus of Darien to plunder the Spanish city of Panama. Alas for their avaricious dreams, the city proved too strong to attack, so they had to content themselves with lesser prizes. (Among these was the lovely daughter of a viceroy, taken aboard the ROSARIO, whom Captain Sharp reserved for himself. Sharp also lifted a *derroterro*, a Spanish chart of the South Sea, from this vessel. This proved the means of saving his rascally neck twice, first by permitting him to navigate back to the West Indies by way of Cape Horn, and second, as a gift to King Charles II, it sprang him from Marshalsea Prison and into a Royal Navy captaincy. Sharp promptly betrayed his royal benefactor by seizing a merchant ship and sailing back to the New World, taking command of the buccaneers on Anguilla. "Once a pirate, always a pirate," King Charles may have ruefully concluded.)[4]

Bartholomew Sharp had pointed the way, however, for other "sea-artists" to plunder in the Pacific, and Cooke and Dampier were among the first to follow in his bloody footsteps. Sailing from Virginia, they took and robbed a ship off the Sierra Leone, then ran down the coast of Brazil and rounded Cape Horn in February, 1684.

Arriving off Panama, the buccaneers met with misfortune when Cooke suddenly fell ill and died. He was succeeded by Edward Davis. Shortly thereafter, they were joined



Pirate, author, amateur naturalist, naval officer, explorer—a man who wore many tricorn hats, William Dampier. One of the most extraordinary, yet curiously inconsistent, individuals linked with the great epic of piracy in the New World, Dampier survived a thousand perils to die abed in London in 1715, aged 63.
Photo by John Wright

by a Captain Swan in his ship CYGNET, and other parties of buccaneers led by captains Harris and Townley. This brought their force up to about one thousand. They then sought to attack the Spanish plate fleet sailing from Peru to Panama, but the Spanish admiral held the twin advantages of the weather gage and heavier guns, so the marauders retired.[5]

As so often happened with pirates, a band as large as this did not hold together long. Some 470 men under Dampier sailed away, to sack and burn Leon in Nicaragua. This group then broke up. In late August of 1685, Captain Swan and the CYGNET, with Dampier aboard, sailed northwest up the coast of New Spain. They were bound for Acapulco, the eastern terminus of the Spanish Pacific empire.

At this time, three treasure ships came annually to the Mexican port. Two were Manila Galleons of one thousand tons each—large vessels for the day—and one was from Lima, carrying silver *reales*, quicksilver and cacao.

Captain Townley tried to cut out the Lima ship in Acapulco harbor but failed, leaving her anchored safely under the guns of Fort San Diego.[6] The raiders then sailed northwest to Chequetan, where they landed ninety-five men and raided into the interior for cattle and provisions. Dampier and Swan then took up station with four ships at Cabo Corrientes, just west of the present resort of Puerto Vallarta. On January 1, 1686, they again decided to raid into the interior for cattle—and in so doing, missed the Manila Galleon, which sailed past while they were ashore.

In February, the pirates landed at Rio Santiago on the mainland near San Blas. Another raiding party swarmed inland for provisions, returning to the coast in a body of seventy men and fifty-four horses. By now the alarm had spread, and the Spaniards ambushed the returning party. As the Dons invariably followed a policy of no quarter to *los piratas*, the luckless brigands were slaughtered to the last man.

Dampier and Swan sailed to the Three Marias Islands, a favored watering stop for buccaneers. The islands lie between Cabo Corrientes on the mainland and the tip of Baja California, a little over two hundred miles southeast of Cabo San Lucas. The Dampier/Swan party by now were starving. They baked the roots of yucca plants for food, as the Indians of the region did. Dampier, suffering from dropsy, had himself buried up to his neck on the beach. This brought on a profuse sweat and he began to recover.[7]

They careened their ships at Tres Marias, scraping off the accumulation of marine

life. Meanwhile, Captain Townley had left them and taken the town of La Villa. Retreating toward the sea, Townley was ambushed by the enemy, who recaptured his loot ($1,650,000, according to Wycherley),[8] and slew some of his men. In retaliation, Townley beheaded his Spanish captives, sticking their heads on poles so that his foes might have a good look.

(Buccaneers in general were not noted for excessive kindness toward captives. Morgan's men drove captured nuns and priests before them in their 1671 assault on Panama, and Sharp took this leaf from his old commander's book in his attack on Arica in 1681. In the seventeenth century, life was cheap, and the life of an heretical enemy even more so.)

On March 21, 1686, Dampier and Swan gave up their hunt for prey on the coast of New Spain, and sailed west. They reached Guam in May, and after more hairsbreadth adventures in the Far East, Dampier returned to England in 1691. Within a few years he was a national celebrity, following the publication of his book, *A New Voyage Round the World*.

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Dampier returned again and again to the scenes of his original crimes. In January, 1699, he sailed in command of HMS ROEBUCK, carrying twelve guns and fifty men, on a voyage of exploration to New Holland. Giving this man a regular naval command was a mistake. He was a dreamer, ill-suited to the duties of an officer in His Majesty's forces. On this voyage he managed to provoke a mutiny and lose his ship, and was only saved from marooning by one of the many instances of astounding fortune which attended his life. Returning to England, he was court-martialed, fined the whole of his pay while captain of the ROEBUCK, and declared unfit for any further service in the Royal Navy. Their Lordships of the Admiralty were definitely not amused.

Nothing fazed Dampier. Sailing again in 1703, this incorrigible rogue set out with two ships on a privateering expedition to the South Sea—the War of the Spanish Succession then being on. He wheedled the owners into giving him command by promising fantastic profits which he claimed his knowledge of those waters guaranteed.[9]

The voyage was a disaster. Dampier exercised command in a typically autocratic and bungling manner, and furthermore refused to attack prey his crew found tempting. The loudest voice of protest in the fo'c'sle belonged to Alexander Selkirk, a contentious Scot. Dampier's co-captain, Stradling, finally marooned the malcontent at Juan Fernandez Island off Chile—but this was not to be the last of Selkirk. Sailing on to the Gulf of Nicoya on the coast of Costa Rica, Dampier made some minor captures of shipping, then set a northwesterly course.

On December 6, 1704, near present-day Manzanillo, Dampier in the ST. GEORGE engaged the Manila Galleon, bound in to Acapulco. Dampier's delay in giving the order to board the Spaniard allowed her time to run out her great guns and return fire, nearly sinking the English ship. The galleon mounted 18- and 24-pounder guns, in contrast to Dampier's puny 5-pounders. After a brief and unequal contest, the latter beat an ignominious retreat.

This was the last straw for most of Dampier's crew. Under one Funnell, thirty-three of them deserted, leaving him with twenty-eight men and boys in a ship with its bottom about to fall out. Dampier ordered the shot holes in the ST. GEORGE filled with tallow and charcoal, being afraid to drive nails into the rotten wood.

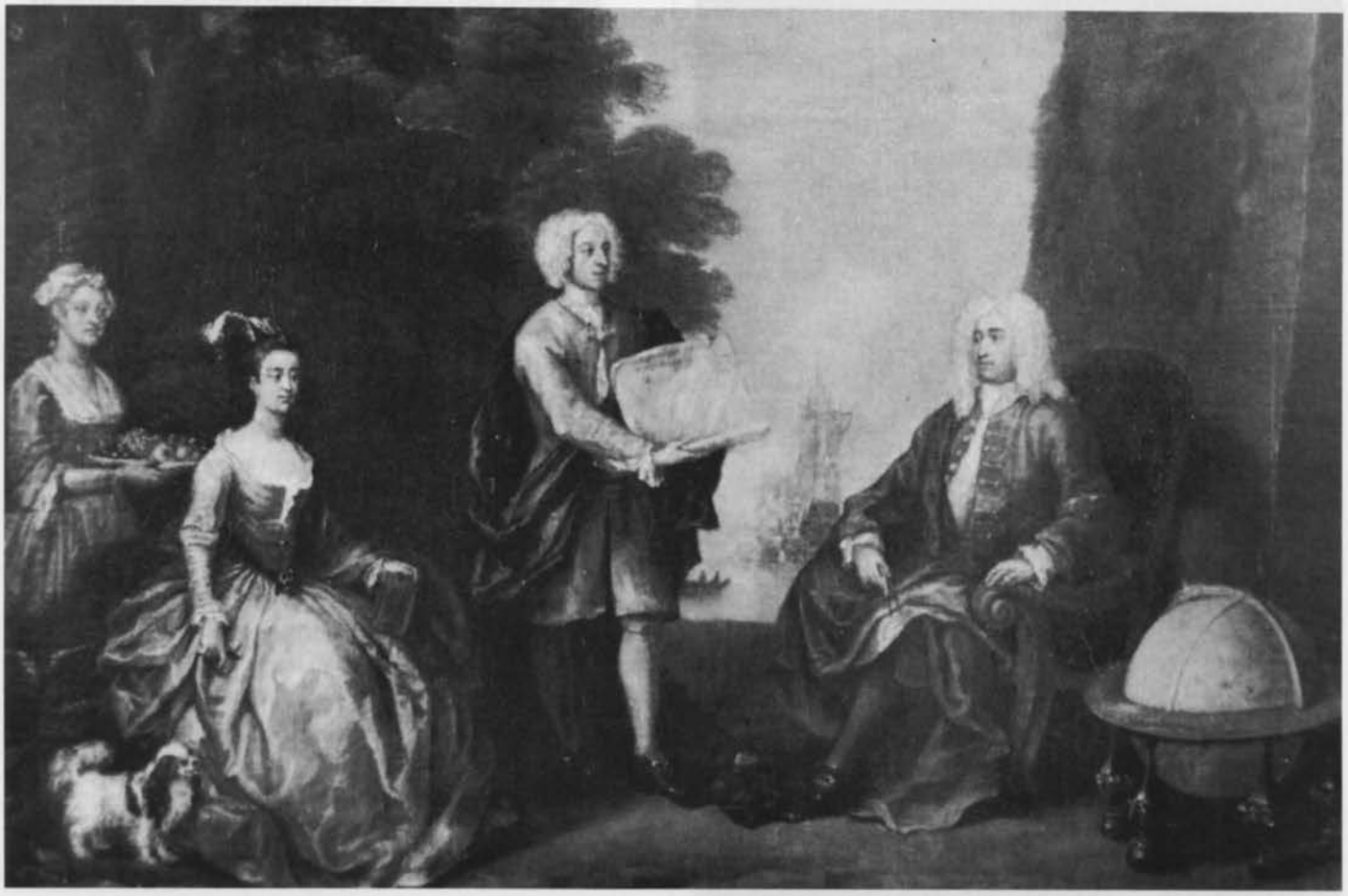
At last even this makeshift effort had to be abandoned. The pirates captured a Spanish bark and transferred aboard her, bidding the leaky ST. GEORGE adieu. Sailing across the Pacific to the Dutch East Indies, they lost the bark as well, and finally returned to England poor as beggars.

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"The Pirate Who Couldn't Shoot Straight"—if William Dampier may be so called—had one more adventure in store. It seems incredible by this time that anyone would let him near a ship, but the exigencies of war make for strange bedfellows.

On August 1, 1708, the British commander Woodes Rogers sailed from Bristol on his famous privateering expedition. (A "privateer" took enemy shipping in wartime under color of law, carrying with him a letter of marque. In this era, however, the line between "privateer" and "pirate" was wafer-thin, and many old seadogs cleverly shifted back and forth between the two, including Dampier, William Kidd, and Edward "Blackbeard" Teach. In any case, one nation's privateer was considered another's pirate, legal niceties or no.)

Rogers was a capable man, and he had two excellent ships named DUKE and DUCHESS. As if to balance the excellent with an element of *opera bouffe*, he took along William Dampier as his navigator.



Woodes Rogers (seated right) and his family, in a typical eighteenth century *genre* portrait. The globe, dividers and ship in the background are references to his circumnavigation between 1708 and 1711. The picture is by William Hogarth.

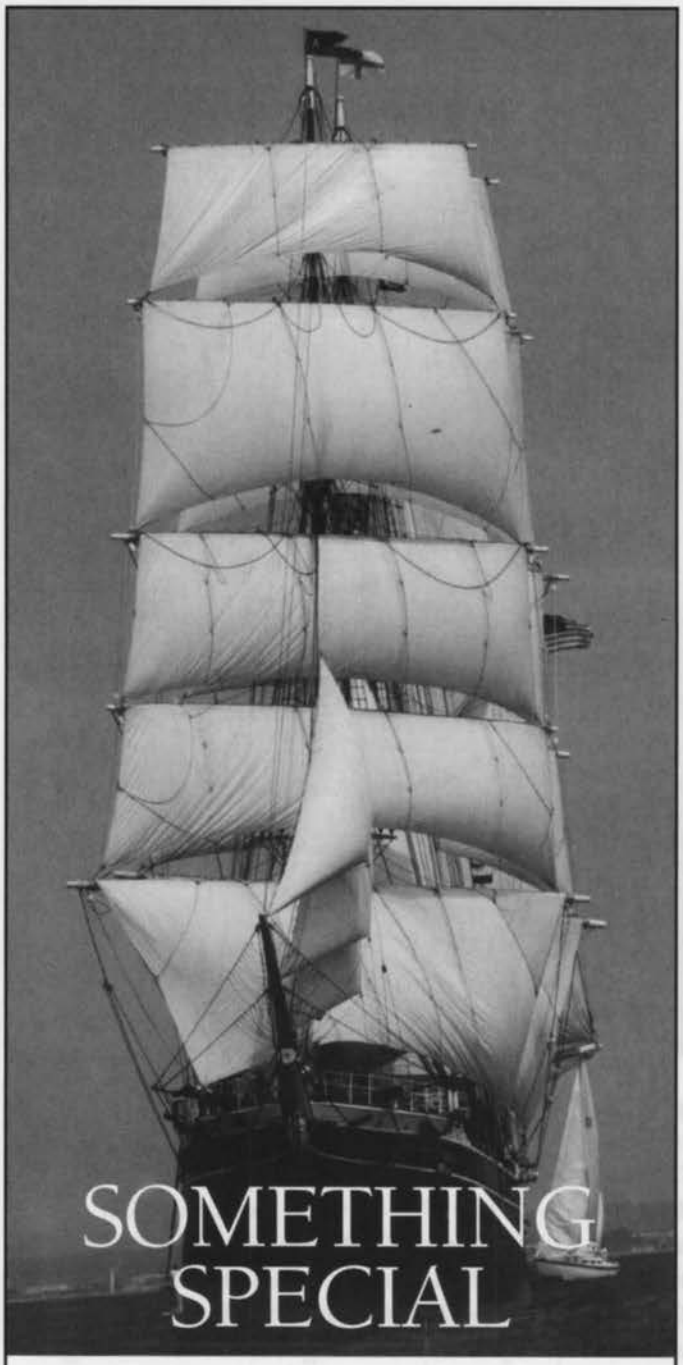
Photo by John Wright

Rounding the Horn and reaching Juan Fernandez Island early in 1709, the expedition sent a party ashore for water. The party was startled when a man clad in goatskins, with shaggy hair and beard, bounded out from the trees, speaking in a clear Scots accent. This was none other than Alexander Selkirk, the mutinous seaman marooned on Dampier's last voyage. For four years, Selkirk scrambled after goats and managed to survive. Once the Spaniards came, having spotted the smoke of his fire, but Selkirk eluded them by hiding in a "great tree." When he saw William Dampier among his rescuers, however, he asked to be put back on the island.

Talked out of this, Selkirk resumed duty as a seaman, and proved so able that Rogers later put him in command of a prize. He finally returned to England with the expedition in 1711, where he told his story to Daniel Defoe. One of the world's greatest works of literature, *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, therefore owes its inspiration to Selkirk—and, in a way, to William Dampier.

After sundry adventures, Rogers arrived in late 1709 off Cabo San Lucas. On December 21, the Manila Galleon hove into view and Rogers sailed after her to attack. Early the next morning, the DUKE caught up with the fleeing foe, as Woodes Rogers later related:

> At eight a.m., we began to engage by ourselves, for the *Duchess* being still to leeward, had not been able to get up, as there was very little wind. At first, the enemy fired at us with their stern-chase guns, which we returned with those in our bow, till at length we got close on board each other, whereon we gave her several broadsides, plying our small arms very briskly; which last the enemy returned as thick for a time, but did not fire their great guns half so fast as we did. After some time, we shot a little ahead, laying the enemy athwart



Congratulations to Captain Carl Bowman, the crew of the Star of India, to Ray Ashley, Director of the Maritime Museum of San Diego, and to the many dedicated officers, staff and contributors whose special talents and vision have made possible these priceless vessels to the city and guests of San Diego.

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> hawse close aboard, and plied her so warmly that she soon lowered her colours two-thirds down. By this time, the *Duchess* had got up, and fired about five guns with a volley of small arms, but as the enemy had submitted, she made no return.[10]

During the battle Rogers took a musketball in the face, which tore off a large part of his upper jaw and embedded in his cheekbone. For over six months, until the ball was removed, he suffered agony.

This galleon was commanded by a French officer (France and Spain being allies in the current war), with a crew of 193 men. The full value of her cargo was about two million dollars.[11]

The Rogers expedition later attacked a second Manila Galleon, the BIGNONIA, in the same area, but this attack was beaten off. The expedition returned by the usual route across the Pacific, reaching England in October, 1711.

Woodes Rogers became a famous name in British naval lore. He was later appointed governor of the Bahama Islands, with headquarters at the old pirate lair of New Providence. There he dealt severely with brigands such as Benjamin Hornigold, Charles Vane, Calico Jack Rackam and the "hellcat" Anne Bonny, bringing them to hempen justice or driving them farther afield.

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Our last "pirate" of this region was not really a pirate at all—except, of course, to the Spaniards. George Anson was a British naval officer placed in command of an expedition in 1739, during the War of Jenkins' Ear against Spain. (The name requires explanation: Robert Jenkins was an English merchant captain who swore before Parliament that a Spanish *guarda-costa* had seized him in the Caribbean and amputated an ear. He displayed a severed ear to bolster his claim. Seething with indignation, Parliament declared war—and so we have the War of Jenkins' Ear.)

Anson had been directed by the Admiralty to take several naval vessels, most notably the flagship CENTURION, of 60 guns, and a regiment of marines to the Pacific. There he was to attack Spanish towns and ships along the west coast of America, and to look particularly for the Manila Galleon.

For his regiment of marines, the Admiralty not too helpfully emptied Chelsea Naval Hospital of 259 of its aged and infirm inmates, and ordered them on board Anson's ships. Appalled by this parade of elderly, crippled men up his gangplank, Anson sent two on stretchers back to hospital. The Admiralty ordered them to return, and they were carried up the gangway, unable

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to walk. Of course they died after putting to sea, as did most of the "marines."

Anson's crews were the dregs of the Channel ports. Press gangs scoured the haunts of seamen and landsmen alike, cudgeling fresh "recruits" into insensibility, then dumping them on board. There they were victualled with weevily biscuit, rotten vegetables, meat kept in brine till it was rock-hard, and a water ration of less than a pint a day. No anti-scorbutics were provided, or even thought of, so Anson lost over half his 1900 men to scurvy and related ailments before the voyage was through. As Leo Heaps, the foremost historian of the Anson expedition, commented: "In the year 1739 His Majesty's Navy had altered little in its ways since Elizabethan times. The system was cruel, vicious, unrelenting."[12]

In September, 1740, the fleet of six ships at last got under way. The passage around Cape Horn was attended by mountainous seas and storms, and only three vessels made it, two being wrecked and one turning back. (It should be noted here that the development of Harrison's chronometer was still decades away, so there was no accurate means of determining when one had passed a certain longitude. One of Anson's ships calculated they were many leagues west of the Horn, but upon turning north, sighted breakers ahead, and were forced to wear ship and try again.)

Anson in the CENTURION reached Juan Fernandez Island with no more than thirty men fit for duty. His two stragglers joined him, and the shrunken squadron sailed on. On November 13, 1741, the English sacked Payta. Anson's hardened seamen swept into the town, taking it completely by surprise, while the inhabitants scampered into the hills:

> The Spanish governor was surprised in his bedroom by [Lt. Piercy] Brett and escaped by jumping out of the window in his nightgown, fleeing to his comrades in the hills, and leaving behind his beautiful young bride who sat up in bed, shocked at the appearance of a young English officer. Brett apologised for the intrusion and closed the door hoping the young woman would dress. A few moments later when he looked in again the governor's wife was being carried off through a rear entrance by a black slave.[13]

Payta was burnt and the English sailed northwest for Acapulco in February, 1742, only to find the Manila Galleon safe in the harbor and showing no sign of coming out.

Eventually, reduced to just the CENTURION, Anson and his hardy survivors sailed west and intercepted the galleon off the Philippines in June, 1743. After a savage battle, NUESTRA SEÑORA DE COVADONGA struck, yielding the greatest treasure ever taken from a single ship. Brought home by Anson in 1744, it was valued at five hundred thousand pounds, mostly silver, and required thirty-two wagons to transport it to the Tower of London. Anson and his senior officers became rich men, and every hand in the fleet received some share of prize money.

Having surpassed such freebooters as Drake, Cavendish, Sharp, Dampier and Rogers, George Anson made flag rank and was raised to the peerage. Promoted to the Admiralty, he aggressively carried out many reforms, drawing up new articles of war, reforming dockyards, creating a professional Corps of Marines, and expunging waste, inefficiency and corruption.

Anson's expedition to the west coast of New Spain and beyond was the last of its kind. The dynamics of sea power changed rapidly during the eighteenth century, with tactics shifting from individual raiders to



Ship's Salvage

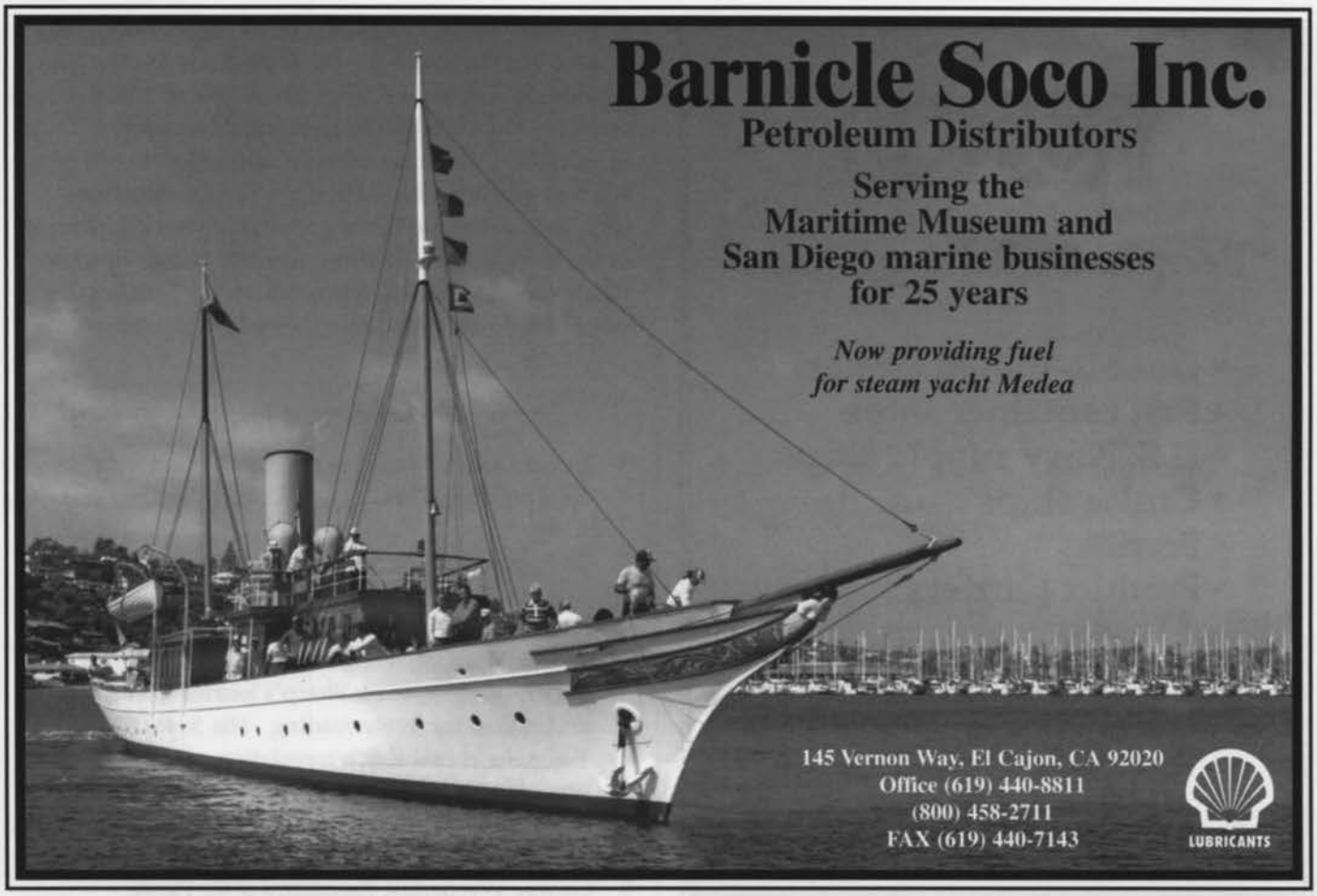
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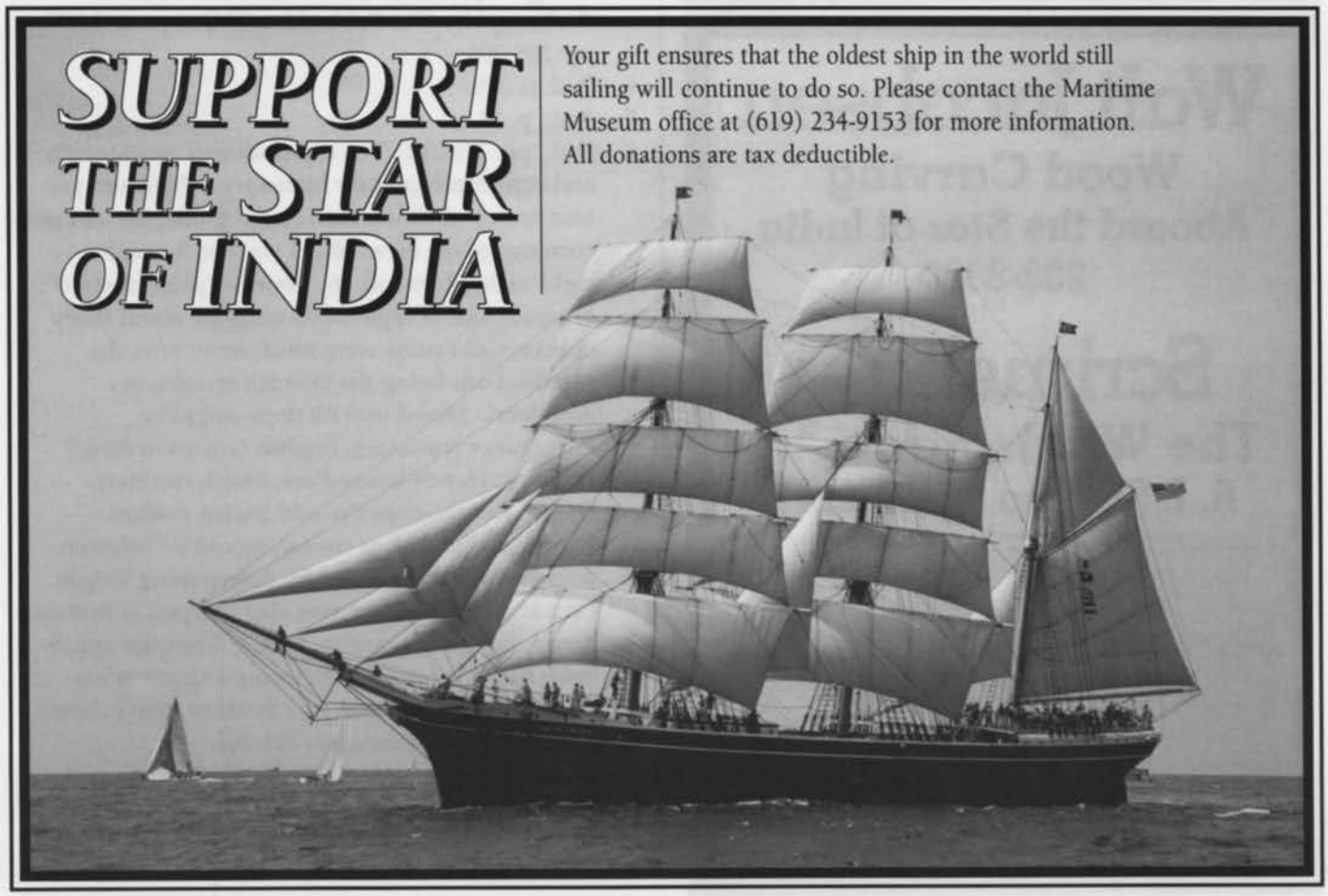
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large battle fleets. Even some years before the expedition sailed, the last of the old-style pirates in the New World had succumbed to progress. A new breed of governors such as Woodes Rogers and Alexander Spotswood vigorously pursued and hanged pirates wherever found. The black flags fled the Americas, skipping first to the Guinea coast and the rich pickings of the slave trade, and finally ending on Madagascar, where the last grizzled followers of the "Jamaica discipline" gradually faded into the native population.

NOTES

1 Eugene Lyon, "Track of the Manila Galleons," *National Geographic*, vol. 178, no. 3 (September 1990), p. 8.
2 Ibid., p. 32.
3 Ibid., p. 35.
4 Peter Kemp, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Ships & the Sea* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 777. Bartholomew Sharp's journal is still in print and makes for lively reading. His *South Sea Waggoner* containing a translation of the *derroterro* was of great help to later English mariners in the South Sea. The Spaniards, of course, had previously kept this data secret.
5 George Wycherley, *Buccaneers of the Pacific* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1930), pp. 205-206.
6 Ibid, p. 208.
7 Ibid., p. 21.
8 Ibid., pp. 211-212. The translation of seventeenth and eighteenth century monetary values into present ones is difficult. As a rough guide, the common currency of the New World was the Spanish eight-reale silver cob, the famous "piece of eight" of pirate lore. A typical cob weighed about thirty ounces. Gold coins were much more rare, the standard one being the Spanish escudo, or doubloon. Mixed in with these might be Portuguese crusadoes, English crowns, colonial shillings, French Louis d'ors, Dutch daalders, Danish ducats, even the odd Indian mohur. The basic division, of course, would be between gold and silver, followed by determining weight. (Much gold and silver was also shipped as bullion.)
9 Kemp, *Oxford Companion*, p. 227. Dampier apparently had a talent for convincing anyone in his presence that the moon was made of green cheese.
10 Wycherley, *Buccaneers*, pp. 281-282.
11 Ibid., 282.
12 Leo Heaps, *The Log of the Centurion* (New York: Macmillan,1973), pp. 28-29.
13 Ibid., p. 135.

BOOK REVIEW

Philip N. Thomas, *British Figurehead & Ship Carvers* (Wolverhampton, U.K.: Waine Research Publications, 1996). 115 pages. Illustrated.

Reviewed by Ted Miles

There has long been a need for a serious book dealing with the decoration of sailing and early steam ships built in the British Isles. This is especially so because many of the carvings have found homes in the collections of American museums. This book is the result of a huge amount of research which covered all parts of the British Isles. The main body of the volume consists of two biographical sections with the carvers divided between the Royal Navy and Merchant Marine. Indexes of merchant ships, naval ships and shipyards serve to tie the whole book together.

Most importantly for American readers, there is due notice taken of the ships (and their carvings) that are being preserved in the United States. The author has not neglected these surviving vessels. These square-riggers can be studied in this case from West to East.

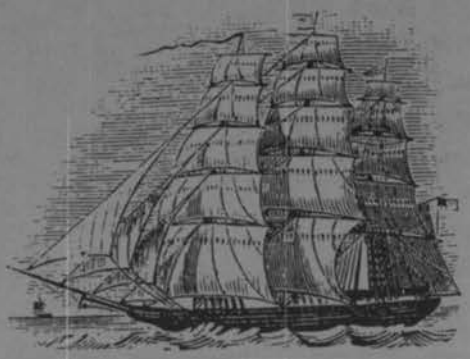
The four-masted ship FALLS OF CLYDE is covered in the entry for carvers Kay & Reid of Glasgow. Unfortunately, their original figurehead for this ship was damaged about 1902, and was replaced with a new one by E. B. Lovejoy of San Francisco. It is this carving that is today displayed in the Museum of History and Industry at Seattle. The carving and other decorations aboard today are by Jack Whitehead.

The bark STAR OF INDIA is covered with a picture and in the entry for carver George Sutherland of Glasgow. Her figurehead is Euterpe, the ancient Greek muse of music and lyric poetry, and the vessel's original name. In recent years, the figure has been re-painted white and looks grand. This figure, which dates back to 1863, is the oldest carving still in place on the bow of the vessel for which it was designed.

The ship BALCLUTHA is covered with a picture and in the entry for Alexander and Douglas G. Reid of Glasgow. Today their carving is in storage, but in honor of the ship's one hundredth year an exact copy was carved by Greg Powlesland of Cornwall. It is known that the Reids also did carved work for the saloon, which is still in place.

Another carving held by the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is the portrait of HOWARD D. TROOP which decorated the bow of a four-masted bark named after him in 1892. The figure is covered in the entry for carver John Roberts of Port Glasgow.

Roberts was active for many years and several of his figures still exist. There is a picture here of him at work on the figurehead for the bark GLENPARK of 1897, which will very likely be used to carve a new figure for the bark GLENLEE of 1896, now being restored by the Clyde Maritime Trust of Glasgow.





Greg Powlesland of Cornwall copying the original figurehead of BALCLUTHA in San Francisco. The original figure, on the right, is of pine. The copy is crafted of Alaskan cedar.

Photo courtesy of Ted Miles

The bark ELISSA is covered in the entry for Hay & Lyall of Aberdeen, and other carvers that worked in the yard of Alexander Hall at Aberdeen are covered by eighteen entries throughout the book. The ELISSA lost her original carving many years ago, most likely in the process of becoming a motor ship. The carving of today on ELISSA'S bow was crafted by Eli Kozlanski, in honor of Mary Moody, one of the major supporters of the bark's restoration.

On the East Coast, the ship WAVERTREE is being restored in New York. She was built by Oswald Mordaunt & Company at Southampton in 1885 and the man who probably did her carving was Dick Cowell of Southampton. It is also very likely that the carving from the ALLERTON, one of WAVERTREE'S near sisters, is on display in the post office at Talcahuano, Chile. There the ALLERTON ended her days as a coal hulk, a fate that nearly befell the WAVERTREE. The South Street Seaport Museum in New York hopes that someday they will be able to fund another figurehead for the ship.

The four-masted bark MOSHULU, which today serves as a restaurant in Philadelphia, was built by William Hamilton of Port Glasgow in 1904. She is not mentioned in the book, but her billethead is displayed in the Alands Maritime Museum at Mariehamn, Finland. This is a special case. Although the ship was built in Scotland, she was German-owned and the owners may

have chosen a local carver to do her bow decoration.

The above list will serve to show how useful the book is for the historian or the ship enthusiast. There are pictures or drawings on almost every page. In many cases illustrations were produced by Richard Hunter, another longtime figurehead researcher. His artwork fills many of the voids where photos were not available or could not be reproduced.

While not this reviewer's main interest, the Royal Navy carvings can be traced back well before the nineteenth century because the records of the various dockyards are still in existence. The research carried out by Mr. Thomas details this area equally well. There are several carvings from the Royal Navy owned by American museums. They can be found at the Mariners Museum, the Mystic Seaport Museum, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, and the South Street Seaport Museum.

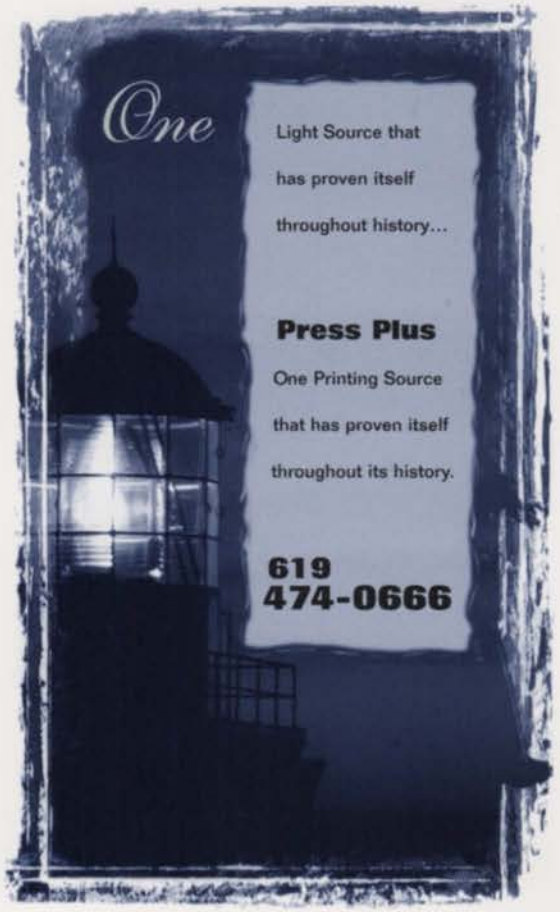
It is usually necessary to make advance appointments with the curators in order to see their reserve collections. The two biggest ship carving collections in the United States are at the Mariners Museum (Newport News, Virginia) and Mystic Seaport Museum (Mystic, Connecticut). Carvings from the Royal Navy and the British Merchant Marine are well represented in the collections of both these institutions.

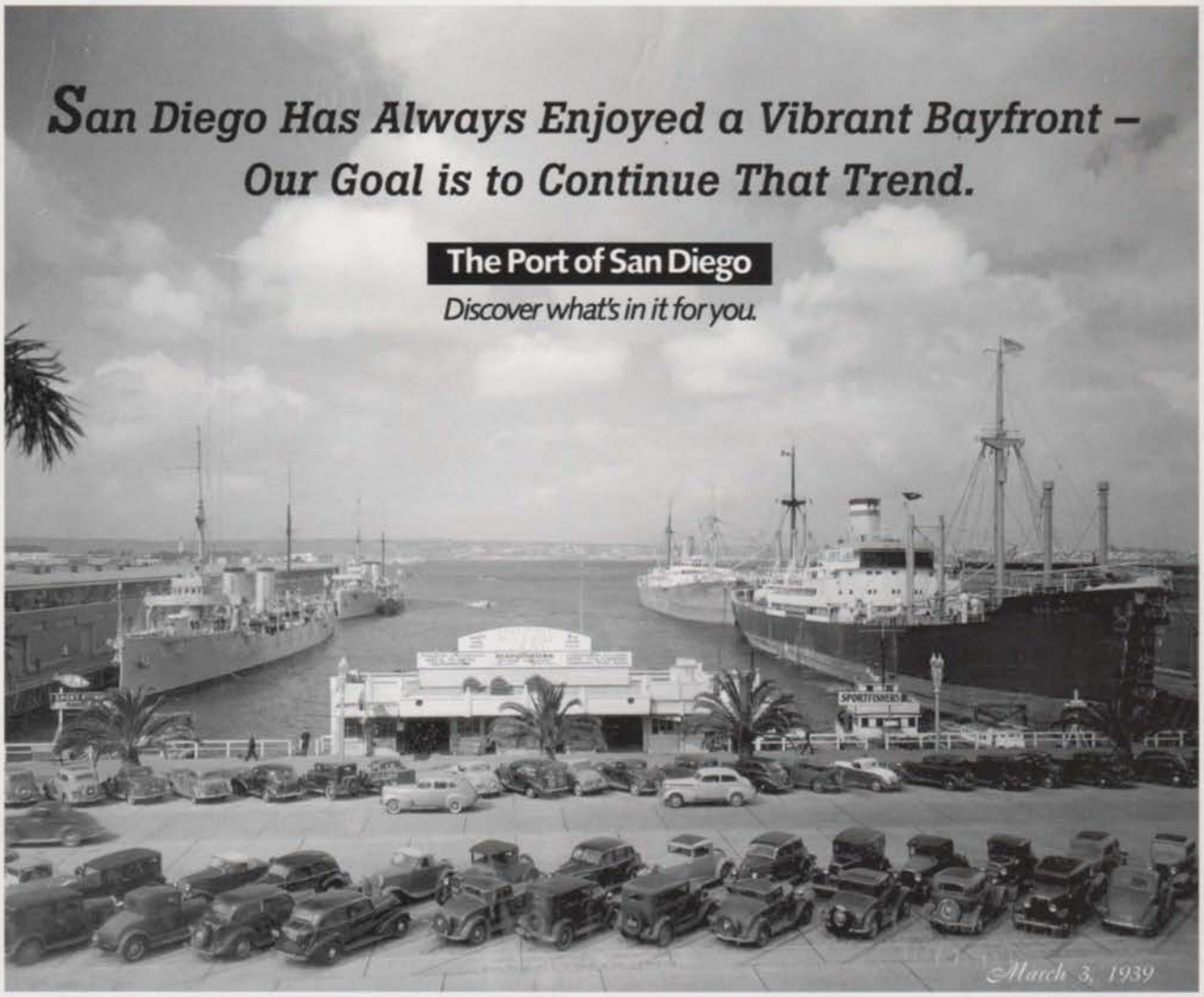
Sometimes there is a reverse migration of ship carvings. I heard recently that the figurehead from HMS CORNWALLIS, which had been for some years at the Philadelphia Maritime Museum, has been returned to England. I hope it gets a good home.

This book is not for all readers. Some of the photos did not reproduce very well, and with so many dates, the ever-present typos are bound to be present. But we are dealing with a reference work, not a slick coffee table book.

Marion Brewington's SHIPCARVERS OF NORTH AMERICA has been available since 1962. At long last, it has a British companion for those who enjoy the art of the figurehead. Mr. Thomas is continuing his research, so we can be sure of additional bits of information being added to this fascinating corner of maritime history and art in a future printing.







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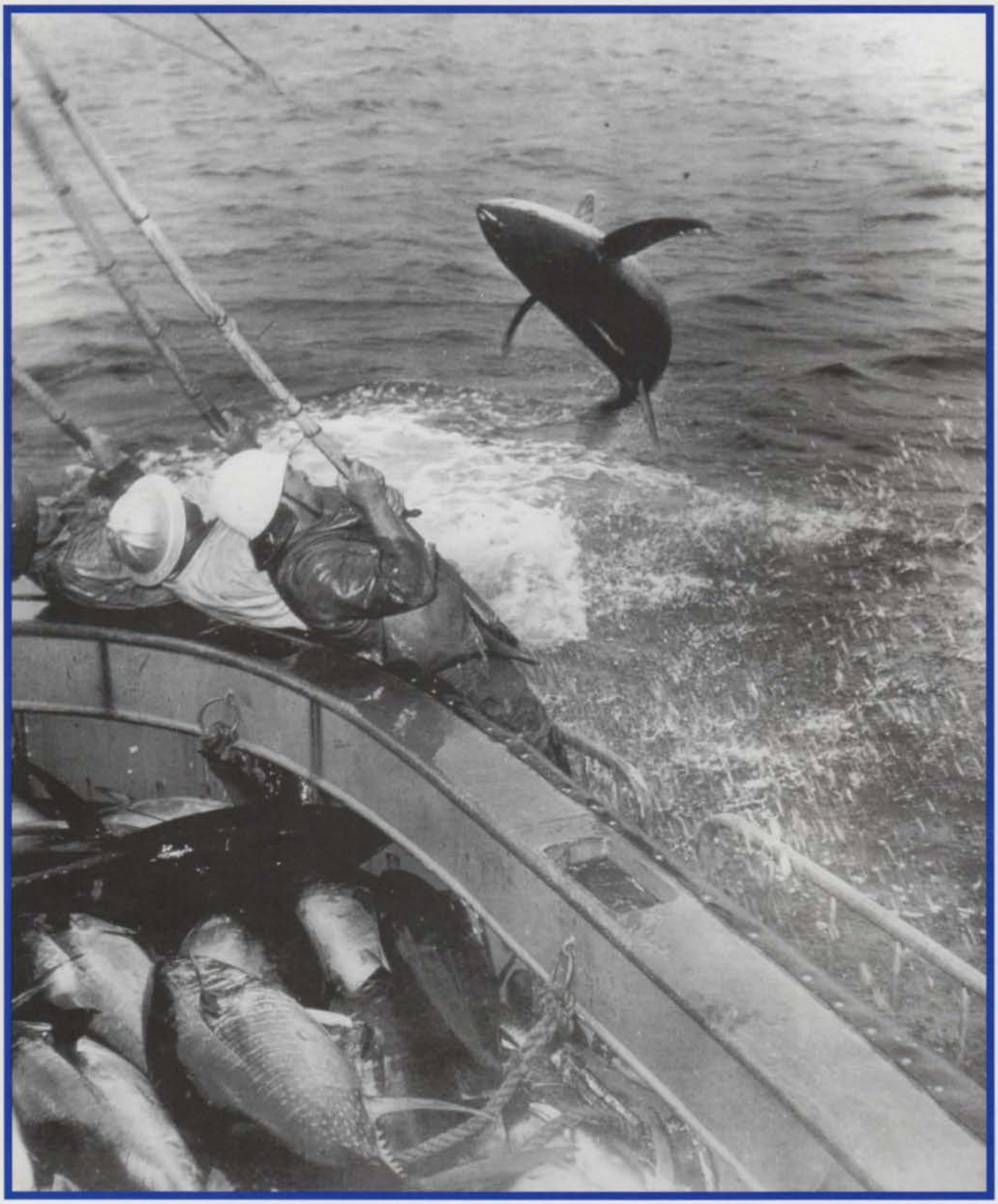
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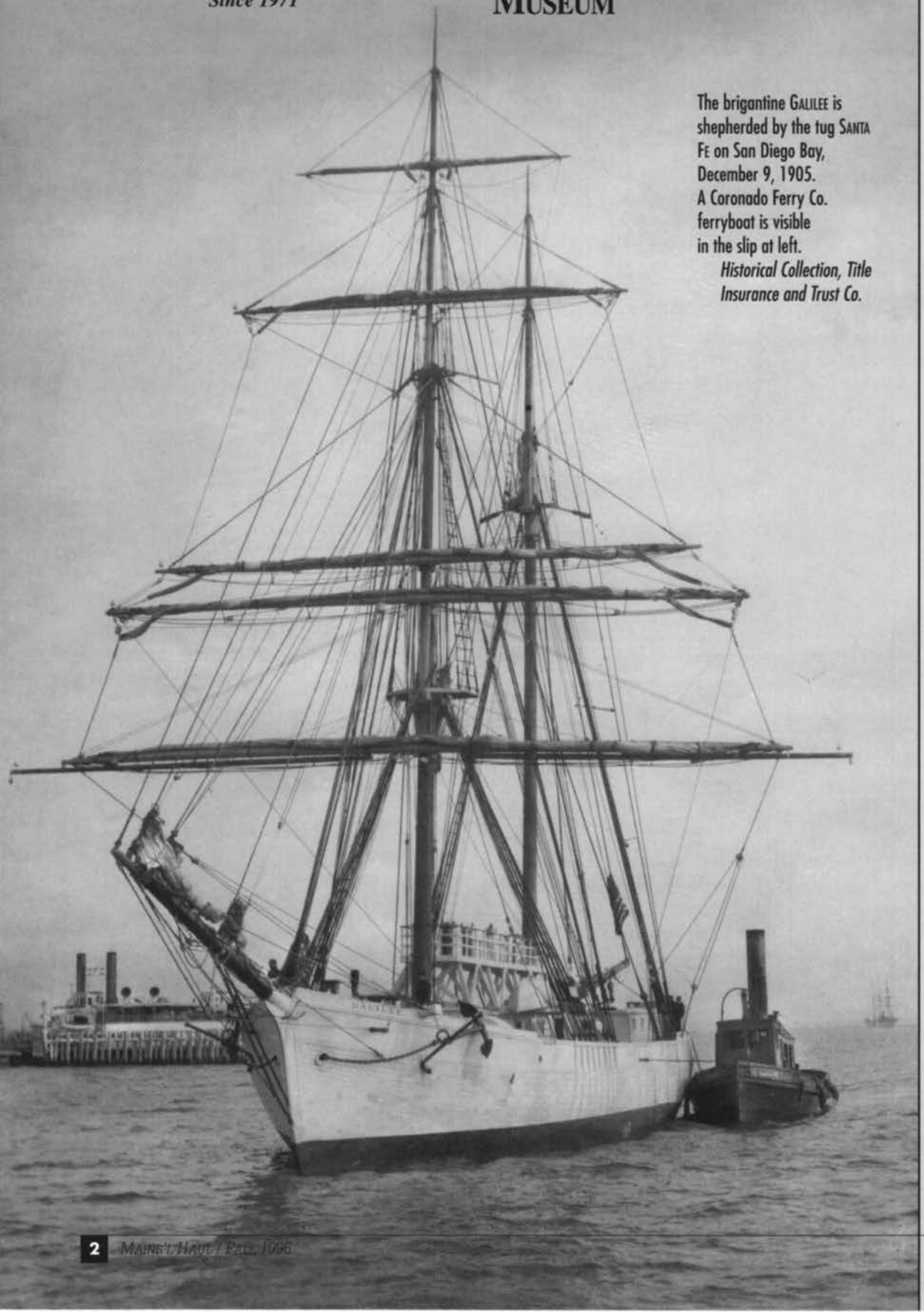
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The brigantine GALILEE is shepherded by the tug SANTA FE on San Diego Bay, December 9, 1905. A Coronado Ferry Co. ferryboat is visible in the slip at left.
Historical Collection, Title Insurance and Trust Co.

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STAR OF INDIA 1863

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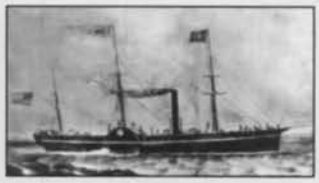
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On the cover . . .

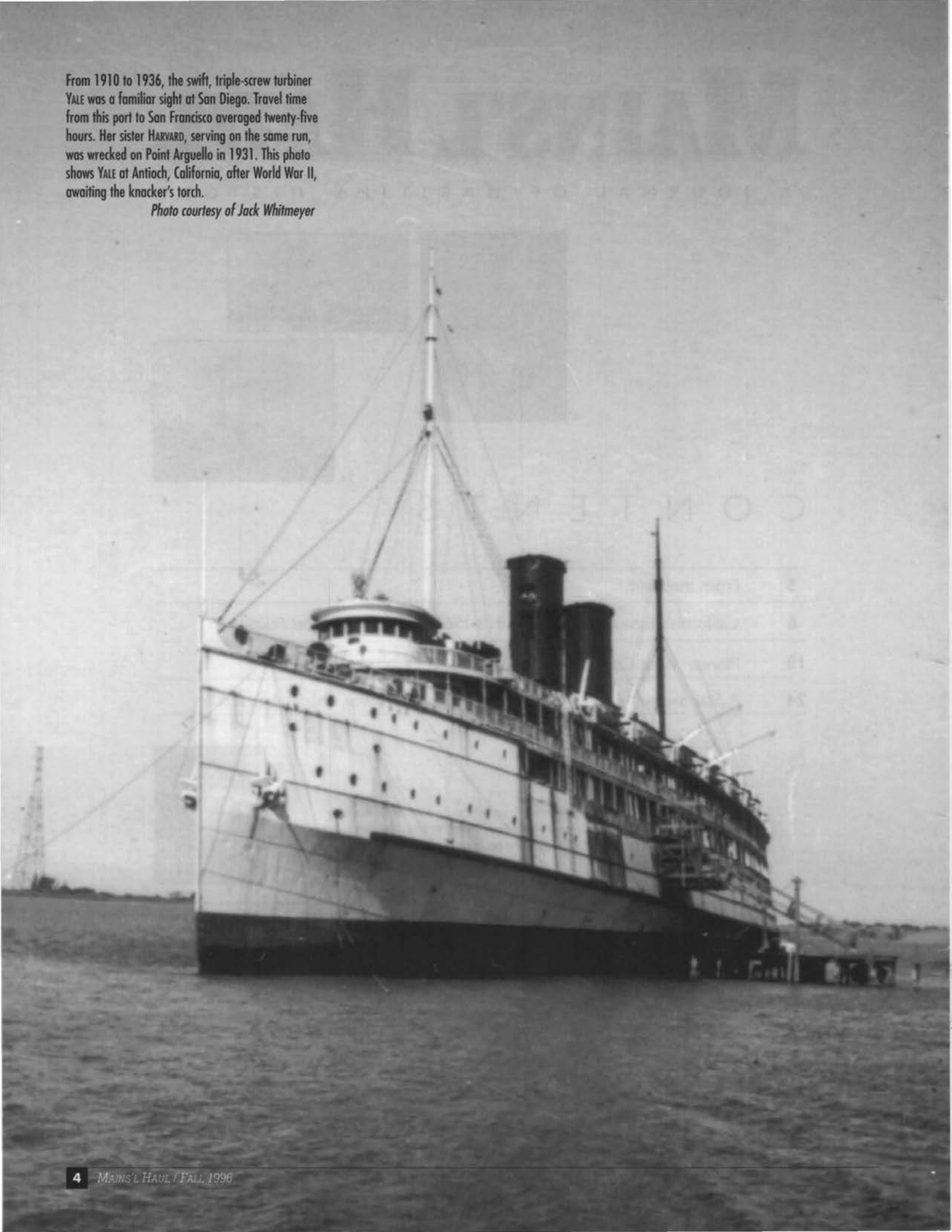
Three-pole tuna fishing was rugged work under the best of circumstances. The history of Southern California's tuna fleet from 1918 to 1963 is covered by August Felando in the article beginning on page 6.

Mains'l Haul is the quarterly historical journal of the Maritime Museum Association of San Diego. Its mission is to engage our members and the public in the study of maritime history, expanding their knowledge and appreciation of this field. The journal is also a benefit of membership in the MMASD.

Articles on West Coast and Pacific Ocean maritime history subjects are welcome. Send all submissions and queries to Editor, *Mains'l Haul*, at 1306 N. Harbor Drive, San Diego CA 92101. Contributors' guidelines are available on request. For advertising rates and information, please contact the Editor at (619) 234-9153. No portion of this journal may be reproduced or stored in any electronic retrieval system without the written permission of the Editor.

Craig Arnold, Editor

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



From 1910 to 1936, the swift, triple-screw turbiner YALE was a familiar sight at San Diego. Travel time from this port to San Francisco averaged twenty-five hours. Her sister HARVARD, serving on the same run, was wrecked on Point Arguello in 1931. This photo shows YALE at Antioch, California, after World War II, awaiting the knacker's torch.

Photo courtesy of Jack Whitmeyer

FROM THE HELM



Museums have many functions, and among them is public attic. People bring us their nautical stuff. They have a variety of reasons for doing so, and each instance is, for us, something of a validation of purpose: an assumption that objects acquire meaning as they move through people's lives and these meanings can be understood and shared through encountering the object. Memories are contained within objects, and we don't want to throw those memories away, individually or as a culture. Nor can we afford to.

But we also can't afford to remember everything by acquiring everything, hence the endless dilemma confronting our attempts to balance significance against resources: never enough space and never enough money to conserve and maintain all that we would like to collect. We have, for instance, a nail file owned by famous San Diego citizen and western gunfighter Wyatt Earp. We accessioned it, not because of its Earp connection, but because it came from the coastwise steamer YALE, once an important maritime link between San Diego and the world outside. Also of importance, *it is small*. We hope to acquire the former San Diego pilot boat because of her historical significance gained through long and honorable service (at her retirement, PILOT was the oldest working pilot boat in the U.S.). Though we are capable of caring for PILOT in appropriate fashion, space to moor the boat will be a determining issue.

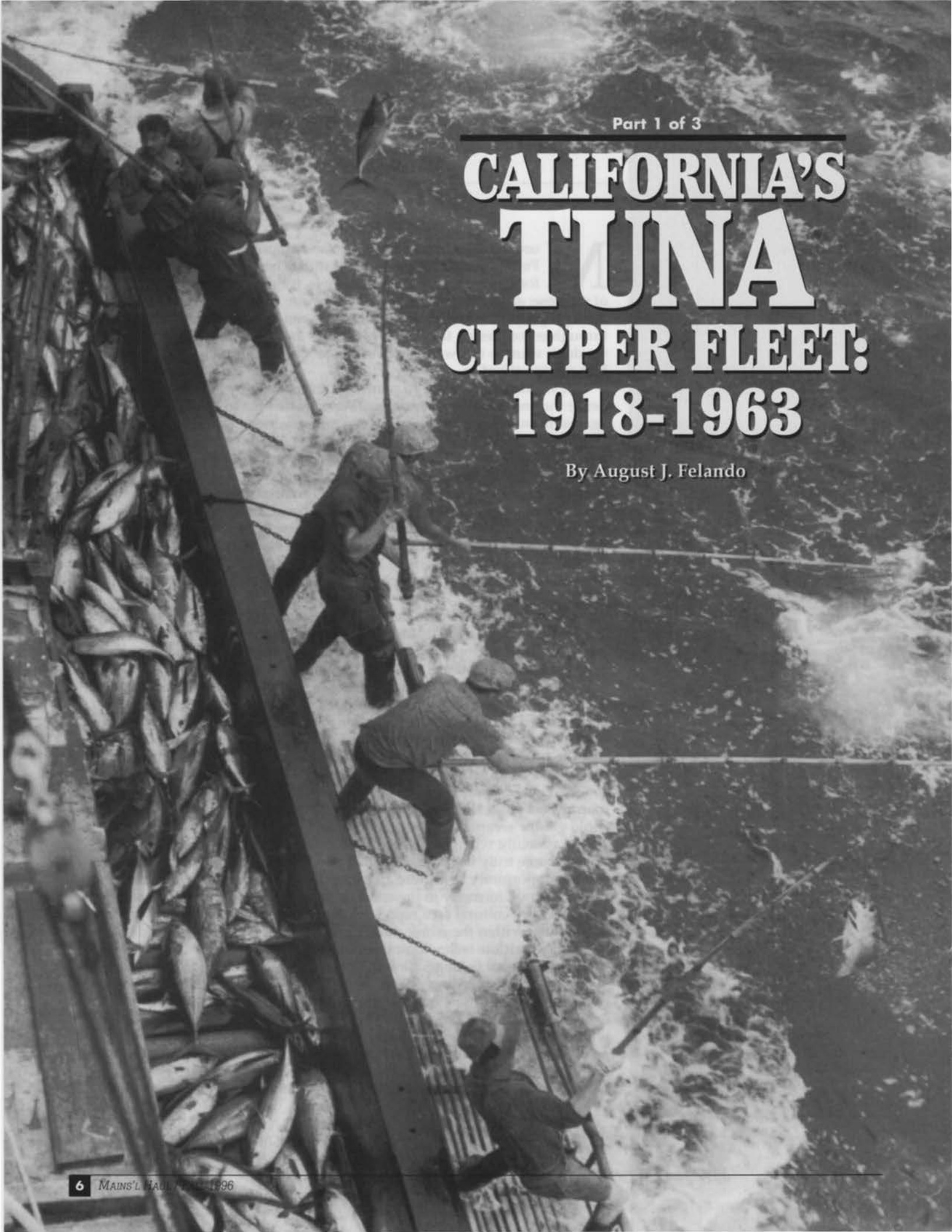
Though less than twenty percent of museum collections are on exhibit at any one time, it is in the realm of exhibit-destined items that decision-making gets really interesting. In past months our board has considered the tug HOGA, the last operational vessel to participate in the December 7, 1941 defense of Pearl Harbor. We have considered the battleship WISCONSIN and the submarine BARBEL. We have examined no less than four proposals to bring a deactivated Russian submarine to San Diego for temporary exhibit. In one instance, during a phone call to Vladivostok, I learned to my surprise that the principal behind one of the projects, a retired Soviet admiral, had obtained his submarine as compensation in lieu of a pension. To my query concerning the condition of the vessel and equipment, he replied, "The submarine is in good shape but it has no weapons. If it is important, I think I could get the weapons. At additional cost of course."



Occasionally, when we fail to acquire something spectacular, our limitations become truly heartbreaking. The San Diego Maritime Museum recently lost the opportunity to acquire an astonishing and exquisite collection of ethnic small craft, formerly in the custody of the Exeter Maritime Museum in Britain. Every cultural area represented by the boats of that collection is also represented within the ethnic makeup of our own region. Thousands of years of Pacific maritime technological achievement written in the lines of a Fijian proa or a Chinese fishing junk will now never be seen by our visitors.

We lost this opportunity because we lacked the space. Other wonderful opportunities will come our way: wonderful permanent and traveling exhibits, educational programs, artifacts and archival materials. Those too we will lose until our museum somehow moves beyond using its principal assets, the ships, to store and exhibit everything else. After more than half a century, we need a real home. We will never be able to acquire everything, nor would we want to. But we cannot afford to continue losing so much.

Raymond Ashley
Executive Director



Part 1 of 3

CALIFORNIA'S TUNA CLIPPER FLEET: 1918-1963

By August J. Felando



Right: The San Diego-based tuna clipper ATLANTIC made a historic voyage to distant waters in 1926. Many tuna fishermen criticized her size and cost, but, skippered by Captain M. O. Medina, she proved a great success.
Campbell Industries, San Diego

Left: As chummers throw bait into the water, a school of tuna goes into a feeding frenzy, snapping at barbless hooks cast by three-pole fishing teams. This superb action shot, taken from a tuna clipper's rigging, shows the outboard fishing racks pioneered by Captain Guy Silva and other San Diego fishermen in the 1920s and 1930s.
MacMullen Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum

During the fall of 1926, seventy years ago, the U.S. tuna vessel ATLANTIC departed the port of San Diego on a historic maiden voyage. Captain M. O. Medina and his nine crewmen understood that waterfront opinion had condemned the venture to a colossal failure. The 102' baitboat, built at Campbell Machine Co. of San Diego, and designed by Manuel Madruga, was considered "too big" at 148 gross tons (G/T). Shoreside pundits predicted that she would never be able to catch enough tuna to make trips profitable. The vessel reportedly cost $55,000, and could carry over 110 tons of iced-frozen tuna in her cork-insulated holds. Captain Medina recalled, "People told me I was crazy, and, until the vessel proved herself, I thought maybe they were right."[1]

The trade magazine *Pacific Fisherman* reacted to the ATLANTIC in a positive manner, stating that she "was in line with the present tendency to increase the size of vessels for fishing in distant waters." This trend was identified by the magazine's reports on the success of two Japanese alien tuna vessels built at Terminal Island Boat Works, San Pedro, California, during 1924 and 1925, and by the growing number of fishing vessels installing diesel engines.[2] The 75' PATRICIA I (71 G/T) was launched in July 1924 at a cost of $40,000. She had a frozen fish capacity of about 70 tons. With an innovative placement of bait tanks installed in the hull as well as on deck, thereby reducing the need for leaving the fishing grounds to replenish live bait supply, the vessel produced over 600 tons of tuna in eight months. This spectacularly good productivity caused the owners in 1925 to build the 108' PATRICIA II, and to announce plans for the construction of PATRICIA III. The PATRICIA II conducted her trial trip in August 1925. Her cargo capacity was about 100 tons and her cost about $68,000. She was powered by a newly designed 240 h.p. Fairbanks-Morse (FM) diesel engine. The registered gross tonnage of PATRICIA II is not known; she was lost in February 1927, off Magdalena Bay, Baja California.

The September 1927 issue of *Pacific Fisherman* reported that the ATLANTIC had delivered a record 105 tons of tuna. The success of the ATLANTIC and of Japanese flag vessels built in San Pedro resulted in a hectic race within the industry to build new high seas tuna baitboats of over 100 G/T, herein called "tuna clippers." As of June 30,

1925, there were 46 documented commercial fishing vessels designating San Diego as their homeport. The largest vessel, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, owned by Joe S. Soares, was of 63 G/T and about 78' in length.[3] Five years later, 81 tuna boats were homeported in San Diego. Of this total, 49 had been built since 1924, and 20 vessels were over 100 G/T. During the period 1926 through 1945, 140 tuna clippers entered the U.S. tuna fishery of the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The following represents a summary of the key features of this historic and unique development.

The Formative Years: 1918 - 1926

Some connect the tuna clipper era to challenges that confronted the U.S. tuna industry during the period 1918 through 1926. The industry was faced with the need to develop new tuna fishing grounds, and to encourage the entry of more fishermen. Harmful fish price disputes between organized fishermen and canners as well as poor albacore tuna fishing seasons off Southern California challenged the tuna canners' ability to find a reliable and inexpensive supply of tuna. In response, futile efforts were made to expand tuna fishing grounds on the high seas off California. As California landings of albacore sharply declined, it was found that bluefin tuna landings were insufficient to meet the needs of canners. Catches of the tropical tunas, yellowfin and skipjack, off Southern California were unreliable and very low.

In another response, the canners provided incentives for U.S. fishermen to fish for yellowfin and skipjack in waters off Baja California. Government surveys had confirmed the presence of such fish off the coast of Mexico. In addition, reliable reports of tropical tuna school sightings by merchant vessels were recorded. Importantly, the market had accepted the quality of canned yellowfin and skipjack. To assist the small California coastal tuna baitboats, seiners, and trollers, the canners provided service vessels, such as tenders, cold-storage barges, and mother ships. Even floating cannery operations were attempted. Turtle Bay, Magdalena Bay and Cape San Lucas became tuna operating bases. Large numbers of purse seiners engaged in the summer salmon fishery of Washington and Alaska, upon discovery of the success of California tuna seiners off Baja California, responded to this new opportunity to supplement their income. Many of these Northwest salmon fishermen moved their families to San Pedro because of the chance to fish seasonally on tuna, bonito, barracuda, sardines or mackerel with a multi-fishery purse seiner. By the summer of 1920, about one hundred small U.S. seiners were engaged in the fishery, and a significant drop in the number of U.S. baitboats engaged in the Baja California tuna fishery was recorded by the California Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.[4]

Mexican-American Disputes

On December 4, 1920, the 62' U.S. seiner MABEL was seized by the Mexican gunboat TECATE and taken into Ensenada. The captain and crew were jailed and the fish catch lost. The vessel returned to San Pedro on December 12. The government of Mexico soon recognized that the fishing operations of U.S. citizens were producing fish exclusively for citizens of the United States, that interests of Mexican vessels and canneries in the tuna fishery were insignificant, and that the most prudent course of action would be to impose import duties on supplies brought to service the foreign fishermen and to impose export duties, licenses and taxes. By 1923, the tuna fishery off Baja California was no longer experimental. The U.S. tuna canners could look to Baja California as a source of yellowfin and skipjack, and to Southern California as a source of albacore and bluefin during the summer months.

Within a few years after 1923, the U.S.



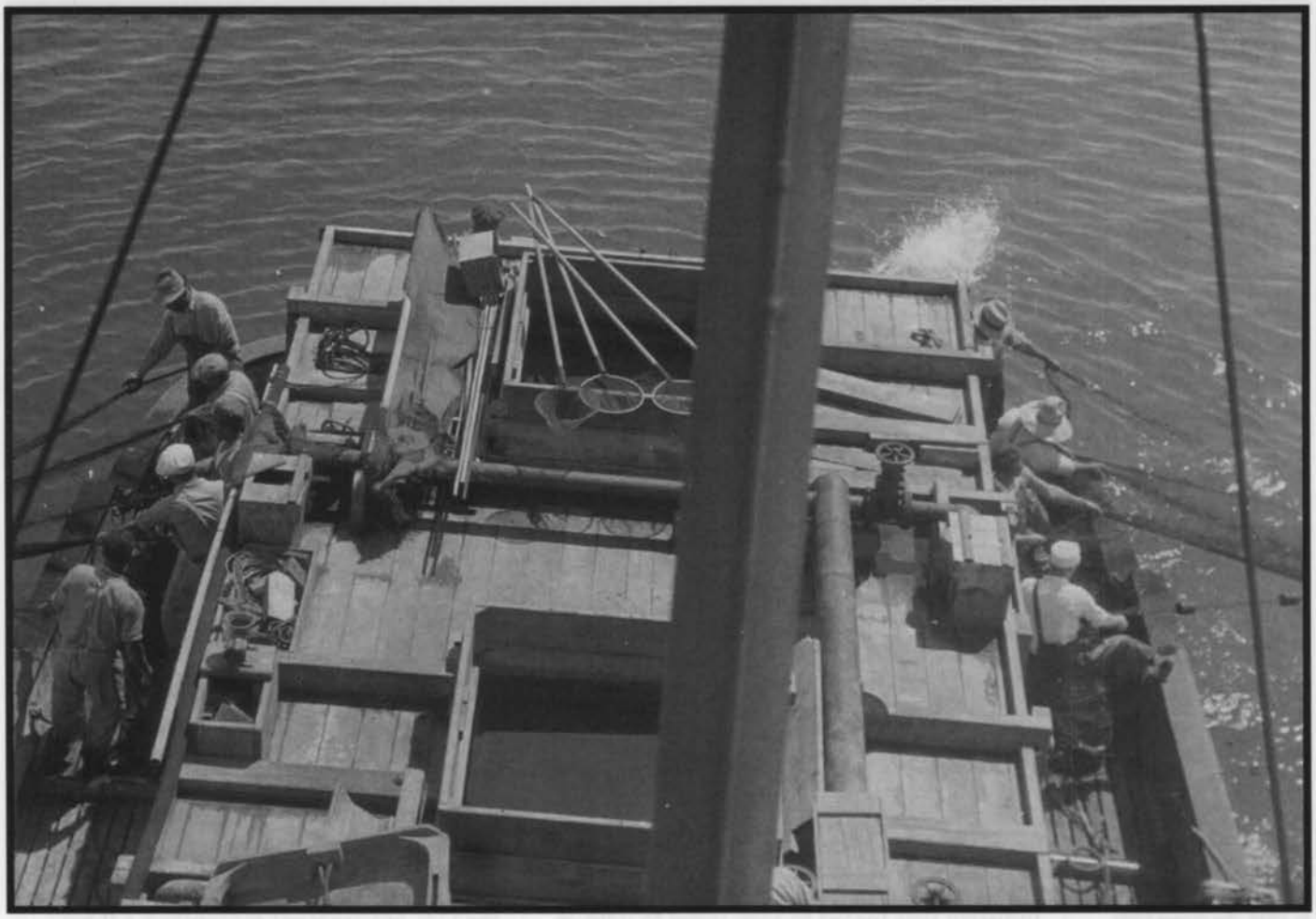
In 1934, the clipper CONTE BIANCO was launched at Campbell's Shipyard, San Diego. After several years of Depression doldrums, she heralded a new flurry of construction for the local fleet. Like most tuna vessels of the prewar period, CONTE BIANCO was wooden-hulled.

Campbell Industries, San Diego

industry was forced to seek ways to deliver tuna caught on the high seas off Mexico to U.S. canneries without using facilities controlled by the Mexican government. As the tuna fishing grounds off Baja California were developed, the Mexicans substantially increased their duties, licenses and taxes on U.S. citizens engaged in the fishery. In response, these fishermen and others evaded Mexican laws and regulations, and created international political problems that could not be resolved by the State of California. In March 1926, a concession operated by Japanese interests that utilized two large Japanese flag freezer ships in transporting tuna landed in Baja California to Southern California canneries was cancelled by the Mexican government. In May of that year, a treaty was negotiated between the United States and Mexico regarding all illegal operations at the border. The government of Mexico knew that the U.S. government recognized a three-mile territorial sea, and that U.S. fishermen had to go within Mexico's three-mile limit to unload the tuna catch onto tenders or mother ships. Mexican officials also knew that U.S. baitboats had to come within the three-mile limit to catch live bait.

A commission on fisheries was established by the treaty. However, its numerous meetings failed to resolve or mitigate the fishery problems. In September 1927, the *Pacific Fisherman* reported that the new baitboat DEL MONTE had been fired upon by a Mexican warship and that the U.S. vessels AMOR DE PATRIA and SUPERIOR had been seized by Mexican authorities. By the close of 1927, the treaty had been abrogated.

Meanwhile, the ATLANTIC was unloading record tuna catches, and three other new U.S. tuna clippers had commenced maiden voyages during 1927: the 92' LUSITANIA (138 G/T), owned and operated by Captain



A good overhead view of the bait tanks on the stern of an early tuna clipper, showing how the crewmen fished over each side.
MacMullen Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum

Manuel G. Rosa; the 82' OLYMPIA (92 G/T), managed and commanded by Joe C. Monise, and the 82' DEL MONTE (93 G/T), managed by co-owner Captain Manuel H. Freitas. The development of the American high seas tuna clipper fleet was under way, and its impact on the future of tuna fishing in the eastern Pacific Ocean was being recognized. The Japanese flag tuna fleet operating from San Pedro was also landing record tuna catches from the high seas off the coast of Mexico. On December 21, 1928, the Mexican government announced that the total of its "Exploitation and Exportation" duties had been reduced from $35.32 to $26.54 per short ton. The "Exportation Duty" on frozen tuna was still too high for U.S. tuna canners, and they began to rely more on the developing tuna clipper fleet and less on fishing operations based in Turtle Bay, Magdalena Bay, and Cape San Lucas.

Many explanations for this development in the U.S. tuna fleet have been offered. Captain M.O. Medina's explanation to this writer was: "My decision where to go tuna fishing was simply 'south of San Diego,' and the larger and faster the boat, the further south you could go."

This writer's father built the 108' ADVENTURER in 1928, with his partner Paul Bogdanich, for over $65,000. I asked my father why he and Paul, owners of a successful grocery market in San Pedro and former fishermen, would gamble all of their available cash in this new business. He answered that he looked upon the operation of the ADVENTURER as an excellent opportunity "to make a lot of money." His vessel was the first U.S. tuna clipper built at Harbor Boat Shipbuilding Co., San Pedro.

Baitboat Technology Developments

The decisions made by the owners of the new tuna clippers were based upon the conviction that "live bait" pole fishing was the most productive method to catch yellowfin and skipjack for sale to tuna canners. At this time purse seine technology used cotton nets and gear for net retrieval that was burdensome and risky. Ocean and weather conditions also placed serious limits on purse seiners operating on the rough high seas off Baja California. By contrast, sea and weather conditions had to be very severe for the pole fishermen not to work in the racks.

Baitboat technology involved the use of a bamboo pole having a short line and wire leader attached with barbless hooks, along with the use of live bait to take advantage of the tuna's eating frenzy to mistakenly identify "striker" hooks as live bait or to swallow a baited hook. This was a technology developed by Japanese fishermen in the early years of the California albacore tuna fishery. However, it was not until August 1920 that Captain M. O. Medina and his crew aboard the PEERLESS first tried the new barbless hooks used by competing Japanese fishermen. Captain Medina recalled his success of first using the "jap pole" with a striker hook as being "beautiful." He was pulling in fish so quickly that most of his crew were handling the fish on deck rather than fishing. The success of this trip became well known in San Diego's Portuguese and Italian fishing communities. Regarding this technique, Tsuida Motosake, a fisherman who started to fish tuna from San Diego in 1916, described pole fishing as "with a certain rhythm, and the fish came off the hook in mid-air. From a distance the tuna looked like silver petals falling from a tree."[5]

It is unclear who introduced multi-pole or teamwork fishing to the U.S. fleet. Multi-pole fishing allowed the crew to be more productive. Captain Frank Medina, brother of M. O. Medina, recalled his 1926 fishing trip aboard the 58' OCEANA, commanded by Joe S. Rogers. The vessel was at Uncle Sam Bank, off Baja California.[6] Large tuna were sighted, and Captain Rogers baited a pole and immediately hooked a large fish. As the fishing pole was held, youthful but powerful crewman Frank Medina used a gaff on the tuna. Then, Captain Rogers also grabbed the gaff under Frank's arms, and they both worked together to pull the tuna aboard. Captain Frank Medina's best recollection is that from this experience, San Diego fishermen of Portuguese descent started the idea of using two or more men with poles to bring aboard large tuna. Others in the fleet believe that "teamwork" fishing was made possible by the use of a swivel, a device which allows two or more poles and lines to be used, and that this tool was first introduced by Japanese baitboat fishermen.

In 1926, Captain Guy Silva of San Diego came up with the idea of using electricity to capture large 200 to 300 lb. yellowfin.[7] Two men would operate a bamboo pole that was attached with insulated wire connected to a 120-volt system. The tuna activated the electric charge when it took the bait on the hook. In time, tuna canners rejected the taking of such large fish, explaining that the meat of such size tuna was too dark for the American consumer. One-pole fishing involves tuna up to 20 or 30 lbs.; two-pole fishing concerns tuna of more than 30 lbs., and tuna above 50 or 60 lbs. involves the teamwork of three-pole fishermen. Larger tuna are taken by four or five pole teams.

Within a short time, other important innovations enhancing baitboat technology were developed in San Diego. A. R. Robbins of Robbins Marine Engine Works, San Diego, invented a reliable water pump system for circulating sea water in bait tanks. Captain M. O. Medina credits Captain Guy Silva of San Diego with the idea of placing 3'x5' iron fishing platforms or racks over a vessel's aft sides and stern as an alternative to the placement of pole fishermen on a deck rimmed with a lowered bulwark. This simple invention permitted the new large baitboats to be more seaworthy as well as more productive.[8] In

1927, Captain Silva's successful use of refrigerating machine equipment aboard his new 68' baitboat LOIS S. was widely publicized in the industry. The equipment permitted greater utilization and preservation of ice, allowing LOIS S. to sail far south of the Baja California peninsula to warm tropical waters frequented by yellowfin. This new system was quickly installed aboard the ATLANTIC, the LUSITANIA, and new vessels under construction.

During the period 1926 through 1931, forty-five new tuna clippers of 100 gross tons or over entered the U.S. tuna fleet. Three shipyards in San Diego built twenty-three of these vessels: Campbell Marine (fifteen), San Diego Marine Construction (five), and Peter Rask (three). Shipyards in the San Pedro area built eighteen of these vessels: Al Larson Boat Shop (eight), Harbor Boat Building Co. (four), and four other yards (six). Three other vessels were built in the San Francisco area. Only one vessel was built outside of California at Western Boat Building Co. of Tacoma, Washington. All but one hull were made of wood. The first baitboat built of steel and the only one with steel plates fastened with rivets was the 105' ORIENT, by Los Angeles Shipbuilding & Drydock Co.

In addition to these new vessels, seven craft were converted from other trades to commercial fishing as baitboats.[9] The 91' PROGRESS (169 G/T), was a former freighter that was briefly used as a tuna tender before conversion. Built in 1914 by Ed W. Heath of Seattle, Washington, she entered the tuna fishery in 1927-28. In the period 1928-29, four more converted tuna clippers entered service: the 142' GLENN-MAYNE (431 G/T), the only clipper to have twin diesels for her main power; the 139' HERMOSA (321 G/T), a former passenger boat that serviced Santa Catalina Island; the 113' THEODORE FOSS (170 G/T), a former tugboat, like the GLENN-MAYNE; and the 111' HESTON (346 G/T), formerly a schooner, converted into a tuna tender.

The former naval vessel EAGLE NO. 8, renamed FORTITUDE, was towed from Hawaii to San Pedro for conversion to a tuna clipper around 1931. This 200' vessel was powered by steam, with Poole geared engines of 2500 h.p. [*Ed. Note:* Built in 1918, this was one of sixty mass-produced patrol craft built by the Ford Motor Co. in a crash shipbuilding program during World War I.]

The 100' A.B. CARPENTER, of 174 gross tons, was a former steamship used as a fishery tender in Alaska before conversion to a tuna baitboat in 1931. In 1932, she was sold to Mexican citizens and removed from U.S. documentation. Significant fishing success was not associated with these converted tuna clippers.

During this period, Southern California shipyards were also building baitboats for resident Japanese aliens. The fishing success of the Japanese baitboats PATRICIA I and PATRICIA II in 1924 through 1926 and that of U.S. flag baitboats, influenced Japanese interests to build new tuna clippers during the period 1926 through 1931, including the ALERT, ASAMA, CIPANGO, COLUMBUS, ENTERPRISE, FLYING CLOUD, NISSHIN, PANAMA, SAN LUCAS, SOUTHERN CROSS, TAIYO and WESTERN ENTERPRISE.

From Flush Deck to Raised Deck

Shipyards in San Diego and San Pedro were largely responsible for transferring new technology and design to the developing tuna clipper fleet of California.

The converted baitboat HERMOSA is believed to be the first tuna clipper to have a forward raised deck design.[10] The raised deck feature was adopted in 1930 by the builders of the CHICKEN OF THE SEA,[11] NORTHWESTERN, MAGELLAN, OLYMPIC, MAYFLOWER, and CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

In December 1929, the EMMA R.S. was converted by Captain Guy Silva from a "flush" deck vessel to a 7' high forward raised deck vessel.[12] Within a short period of time, many tuna clipper owners followed this trend. It was recognized that regular ventures into waters off Cocos



The baitboat CABRILLO prepares for a cruise around San Diego Bay following her launching in 1935. Fishing families line her rails, and an OMAHA-class light cruiser appears in the background.
Campbell Industries, San Diego

Island and the Galapagos Islands required such a safeguard. The cyclonic storms that originate off Guatemala and then travel to Baja California before moving towards Hawaii also influenced the adoption of this seaworthy design.

It is believed that the Japanese-owned CIPANGO, launched in July 1929 by the San Pedro Boatbuilding Co., was the first newly built tuna clipper with a forward raised deck. However, it has been claimed that the SAN LUCAS, built in 1929 by Al Larson Boat Shop of San Pedro for Japanese aliens, was the first new tuna clipper to have a raised deck design.[13] This vessel was equipped with a "pre-cooler" brine tank on deck for chilling tuna before stowage in the hold.

Aircraft and Tuna Clippers

In 1920, naval airplanes, dirigibles and ships stationed at San Diego were used experimentally to locate tuna, sardines and other fish off the coast of Southern California.[14] These experiments quickly caused a fish cannery group to purchase a Curtiss three-passenger "Sea Gull" airplane for fish spotting from shore.[15] The eventual usage of aircraft by U.S. tuna fishing vessels at sea after World War II would require technological developments not foreseen in the early years of the fishery. Nevertheless, the idea of locating tuna by scouting aircraft operating from a tuna clipper generated enthusiastic activity in the industry during its formative years.

In 1930, Dave Johns, a Santa Monica aviator, and John Rados, president of Harbor Boat Building Co. of San Pedro, built the 104' RAJO (247 G/T) so that it could handle a one-man airplane with collapsible wings. The boat's boom was designed for purposes of lowering and raising the aircraft into and from the stern of the vessel.[16] The aircraft was never used aboard the RAJO, but the idea generated considerable interest in the fleet.

In February 1931, Captain Guy Silva announced plans to experiment with a pontoon-equipped fleet biplane aboard his clipper, the 89' EMMA R.S. Captain Silva

had served in the U.S. Army Air Service during World War I. Silva and his son Grey Silva, both licensed pilots, planned to operate the aircraft. Captain Silva rejected the idea adopted by the owners of the RAJO, that is, of using a long boom to lower and raise an aircraft from a clipper's stern. His plan was to use trough-like skids hinged to the stern bait tanks and then extended to the water. The plane's fusilage would rest on the bait tank in a flying position, that is, with the tail level and nose facing forward. Then, the aircraft would be lowered and raised on the skids with block and tackle by using an electric winch. For unknown reasons, Captain Silva's experiment was not conducted. However, he was substantially correct when he predicted that "it will not be long before a fleet of clippers will be operating on the southern fishing banks, each ship provided with a spotting airplane."[17]

First Expedition to the Central Pacific

By 1930, tuna clippers were exploring new fishing areas beyond the equator and off the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador.[18] Within a five year period, the new tuna fishing area in the eastern tropical Pacific had been expanded to over 3,500 miles from Southern California. In 1932, the MAYFLOWER, under the command of Joaquin M. Medina, became the first U.S. baitboat to fish for tuna off Christmas Island, Palmyra Island, Fanning Island and Washington Island.[19] This pioneering trip produced only 45 tons of yellowtail because of the absence of bait about those islands. The catch was unloaded at Honolulu, and the vessel returned to San Diego on May 20, 1932.

In 1933, the CHICKEN OF THE SEA installed a fathometer, and she is believed to have been the first tuna clipper equipped with such a sounding device.[20]

Within six years of the maiden voyage of the ATLANTIC, the fishing area of the eastern tropical Pacific had expanded from Southern California to the Galapagos Islands. In the early 1930s, mother ship operations were again introduced to help smaller vessels compete with the tuna clippers in developing fishing grounds off Panama and Costa Rica. All of these operations failed.[21] During the period 1933 through 1935, plans for tuna freezer bases in Panama and Costa Rica were circulated within the U.S. tuna industry. By 1936, tuna clippers were operating from Puntarenas, Costa Rica, placing their catches into a cold storage facility for transportation by freighters to tuna clippers in California.

The Depression Years: 1932-1935

During this period, only a few tuna clippers entered the fleet. Four vessels were new, of which three were built in San Diego, and the third was launched in Seattle. Three former Japanese-owned vessels that were built in California changed documentation to become fishing vessels of the United States. Two former yachts were converted to tuna clippers in San Pedro.

Canned tuna imports from Japan had become a serious competitive factor. By 1933, imports were approaching 700,000 cases per year; U.S. production was about 1.4 million cases. In 1934, President Roosevelt signed into law a bill that increased duties on tuna canned in oil, resulting in a decline in imports of Japanese canned tuna.

No tuna clipper was built in 1932, and during its last six months, four clippers were lost at sea because of strandings or burnings. During the year, one former Japanese-owned vessel changed documentation to become a U.S. fishing vessel, the 107' PANAMA (246 G/T). In 1935, this vessel was sold to Japanese citizens and removed from U.S. documentation.

Two clippers entered the fleet in 1933: a former Japanese-owned vessel, the 110' SOUTHERN CROSS (253 G/T), and the new 111' SEA BOY (293 G/T), built by Lake Union Dry Dock & Machine Works, Seattle. The SEA BOY, operated by Captain A. C.



CAPE SAN VINCENT was part of the new wave of clipper construction in San Diego during 1935. Many of these vessels' names reflect the Portuguese or Italian heritage of the rugged fishermen who manned them—and whose ancestors had harvested the sea for centuries.

Campbell Industries, San Diego

Pires and managed by Franco-Italian Packing Co. of San Pedro, was the fifty-fourth tuna clipper entering the fishery since 1926, but only the second built outside of California.

Also in 1933, Captain Manuel M. Freitas took the 108' DEFENDER to the Philippine Islands to explore the potential of a baitboat tuna fishery. This was the first tuna clipper to fish for tuna beyond the traditional grounds in the eastern Pacific. Captain Freitas was accompanied by the 82' DEL MONTE and the 75' combination purse seiner and baitboat SUNKIST. It was reported by *Pacific Fisherman* that the DEL MONTE was converted to a purse seiner. If correct, then it may have been the first tuna clipper converted to a purse seiner. All three vessels were chartered by the Philippine Packing Corporation, a subsidiary of California Packing Corporation.

The Mysterious Disappearance of the BELLE ISLE

In June 1934, the 84' BELLE ISLE and her crew of twelve were reported missing. One report from a tuna clipper claimed that the vessel was last seen in the Gulf of Panama; another clipper reported her off Cape San Lucas, Baja California. Some fishermen believed that the boat was caught in a *chubasco* or severe cyclonic storm off Mexico. The vessel was owned and operated by Captain John Gabelich of San Pedro. No trace of her or her crew has ever been discovered. In 1940, it was claimed that the vessel had been identified by two aviators flying near the delta of a river located fifteen miles from La Union, El Salvador. Observations of persons visiting a wreck at this location shortly after the disappearance have been used to refute this claim. The

vessel was equipped with short-wave radiotelegraph and was built in accordance with standards of the American Bureau of Shipping. The tragedy remains to this day the worst loss of life and most mysterious incident in the history of the U.S. tuna fleet.

A New Era Begins in 1935

The first clipper to be constructed in San Diego in two years was the 112' CONTE BIANCO (259 G/T). She was built in 1934 by Campbell Machine Co. This venture by the Castagnola and Massa families caused new investments in the fleet by other prominent fishing families of San Diego.

Five vessels entered the fleet in 1935: the 116' CAPE SAN VINCENT, built by Campbell, was managed by Claude Corum and operated by co-owner Captain Vincent Gann. The 126' CABRILLO was also built by Campbell. Some observers of the industry consider the design of this clipper as representing a new stage in the development of the U.S. baitboat fleet. The vessel was managed and operated by co-owner Captain Joe M. Medina. The 98' MARICO changed registry from Japanese to American. Two yachts were converted into tuna clippers. The steel-hulled, 156' FISHERMAN II, a one-time British freighter, was converted at Craig Shipyard, Long Beach, California, by a former tuna clipper engineer, W. R. Dobbs of Los Angeles. This vessel, as a yacht, had been owned by famed author and sport fisherman Zane Grey. The steel-hulled 126' ROMANCIA, built in 1897, was owned and operated by a retired Navy veteran, William J. Brown. Both of these converted yachts were unsuccessful in the tuna fishery. By 1938, the ROMANCIA was engaged in the delivery of seals to a Southern California dog and cat food cannery. The FISHERMAN II left the tuna fishery by 1941.

During this period, a brine immersion system for the preservation of tuna was introduced to the tuna fleet. The 117' OLYMPIC was the first tuna clipper to experiment successfully with this new refrigeration system. Joaquin "Jack" Medina, Jr., then a young assistant engineer aboard the MAYFLOWER, recalls observing the OLYMPIC fishing off Costa Rica. He and his father saw the unusual scene of crewmembers storing the freshly caught tuna in the OLYMPIC's bait tank rather than in a hatch for icing. At his father's urging, he visited the OLYMPIC and later reported that the brine system reduced the need for ice and produced quality frozen tuna. Jack Medina and his father became convinced that brine freezing was the future. In early 1935, the MAYFLOWER installed a brine cooling system for her bait wells and deck tanks. By 1938, the MAYFLOWER was 100% converted to brine refrigeration with the installation of a series of steel tanks. By this time all the newly built tuna clippers were carrying their entire catch in brine, "using the bait wells, bait tanks and other watertight compartments in the hold for this purpose."[22]

[*Ed. Note:* August Felando is a member of the San Diego Maritime Museum's board of trustees, and has had many years of association with the tuna industry. He is currently leading a group to preserve the history of the tuna fleet in this area.]

NOTES

1 *The Tuna Fisherman Magazine*, February 1948, p. 18.
2 These two Japanese alien vessels were named for the daughter of a tuna cannery owner, Charles Haughton. The ATLANTIC was named by Captain Medina in remembrance of his first fishing experience on waters off his birthplace, Pico Island, Azores Islands.
3 Length in this article means the "register length" as stated for the vessel in the government publication, *Merchant Vessels of the United States*. The register length is usually shorter than the overall length of the vessel. The term "tonnage" of a tuna clipper can mean her registered gross or net tonnage. In this article, only the gross registered tonnage is used.
4 Geraldine Conner, "Expansion of Tuna Fishing Areas," *Fish Bulletin No. 30*,

Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Division of Fish and Game of California, 1931, p. 28.

5 Donald H. Estes, "Shio: Japanese Pioneers in San Diego's Fishery," *Boat and Shipbuilding in San Diego*, San Diego: Cabrillo Historical Association, 1983, p. 33.

6 This fishing bank was discovered by Captain Frank P. Silva of San Diego, who in 1925 built the 66' UNCLE SAM, of 40 gross tons. The date of discovery is unknown.

7 Coburn F. Maddox, "A Shocking Fish Tale," *California Fish and Game*, Vol. 16, pp. 136-139.

8 It is unknown when or by whom the following ideas were first introduced to the fleet: the use of a pad to hold the bamboo pole and the adoption of a permanent canopy over the bait tank to protect the chummer from flying tuna or hooks. In 1930, two separate incidents involving serious eye injuries caused by a "flying squid" or barbless hook were reported by the clipper POINT LOMA. In 1931, William A. Olsen, manager of gear supplier C. J. Henry of San Diego, offered a tin helmet that looked like a combination football helmet and a baseball catcher's mask.

9 During the period 1927-1929, four baitboats were converted from 105' U.S. Navy sub chasers: the HUNTRESS (ex-NO. 284), the MORGAN (ex-NO. 281), the EAGLE (ex-NO. 277), and the F.F.F. (ex-NO. 152). In 1920, the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, published offers in fishing periodicals to sell submarine chasers for $12,500 each, and during that year three vessels were purchased by the Seattle Fishing Association. By 1933, all four conversions named above had been lost at sea by burning or foundering.

10 During a trip commencing in February 1929, the HERMOSA became the first U.S. tuna clipper to fish for tuna in waters off Cocos Island. The waters off the Galapagos Islands were also fished for tuna in 1929. During the first quarter of 1930, the SAN SALVADOR became the first San Diego-based tuna clipper to fish off the Galapagos. By 1934, vessels were fishing off the coast of Ecuador.

11 Morgan Bank, located off Baja California, was discovered in 1930 by Captain Harold "Pop" Morgan of the CHICKEN OF THE SEA. This vessel was one of the first tuna clippers to be equipped with a bottom-sounding device called a "fathometer" and made by the Submarine Signal Company of Boston. Prior to this venture, "Pop" fished with his brothers Walter and Donald aboard the baitboat MORGAN, a converted Navy subchaser that entered the tuna fishery in 1926.

12 Captain Silva's EMMA R.S. was the first tuna clipper to have short-wave radio receiving and transmitting gear for both voice and code.

13 "Al Larson Boat Shop Celebrates 90 Years," *Pacific Maritime Magazine*, October 1993, pp. 10-18.

14 *Pacific Fisherman*, January 1920, p. 24; March 1920, p. 24; September 1920, p. 41; November 1920, pp. 42 and 44.

15 Ibid., October 1920, p. 60.

16 Ibid., April 1930, p. 41; June 1930, p. 36; July 1930, p. 41; August 1930, p. 40; September 1930, pp. 40-41.

17 Ibid., March 1931, pp. 21-22.

18 Geraldine Conner, "California Fishing Boat Census for 1929," *Fish Bulletin No. 30*, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Division of Fish and Game of California, 1931, p.74.

19 Coburn F. Maddox, "The Cruise of the Mayflower," *California Fish and Game*, Vol. 18, pp. 251-253.

20 Personal communication from Jack A. Medina.

21 The following vessels were used as "mother ships" in the U.S. tuna fishery: the former lumber carrier and motorship SIERRA, the former lumber carrier and steamship CENTRALIA, and the motorship freighter MAZATLAN. In 1930 and prior to use as a tuna mother ship, the CENTRALIA was removed from U.S. documentation and sold to citizens of Panama. In 1935, she was converted to a Panamanian flag tuna clipper with a reported capacity of 400 tons and crew of 23. It is believed that this fishing venture was ended by 1937.

22 H.C. Godsil, "The High Seas Tuna Fishery of California," *Fish Bulletin No. 51*, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Division of Fish and Game of California, 1938, p. 13.



PIONEER WEST COAST STEAMERS

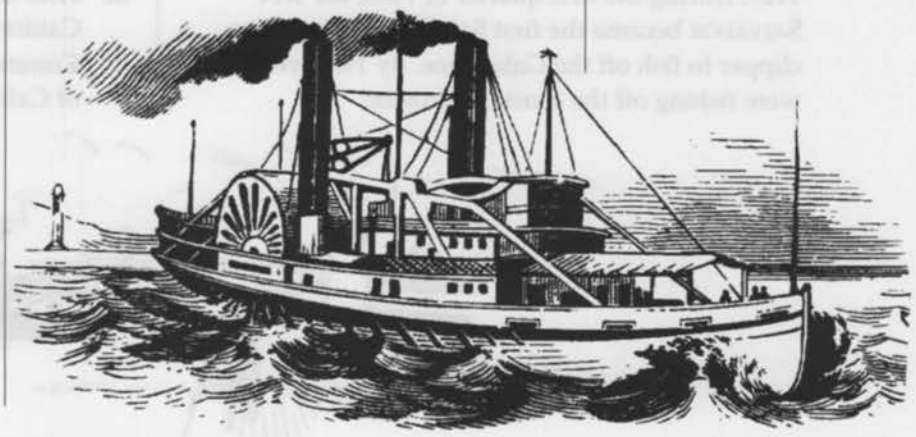
By Alan M. Thewlis

Today as we fly to San Francisco from San Diego in an hour or to Puget Sound or Alaska in just a few hours it is interesting to reflect on the fact that for almost three quarters of a century the fastest, most comfortable way to travel up and down the west coast of our continent was by steamship.

It all began in 1847 when Congress voted subsidies to ensure a monthly mail service to the Pacific coast. War had begun with Mexico in 1846, and though peace was not to be concluded until 1848, by early 1847 the issue was no longer in doubt. In August of 1846 the boundary dispute with Great Britain had been settled when the two nations agreed to extend the U.S.-Canadian boundary along the 49th parallel to the Pacific.[1] The goal of "Manifest Destiny"—a nation stretching from "sea to sea"—had been achieved. It was a nation which needed faster communication and transportation between east and west coasts than the long trip around Cape Horn.

In March 1847, Congress enacted a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to let contracts to carry mail between the coasts via the Panamanian isthmus in ships built under Navy supervision. A contract was awarded to the United States Mail Steamship Company for the run between New York and Chagres, Panama, and another to a group headed by W. H. Aspinwall, a New York shipowner, to provide service on the Pacific coast between Panama and Oregon. The latter group became the Pacific Mail Steamship Company and ordered three sidewheel steamships to be built in New York. They were named CALIFORNIA, OREGON, and PANAMA.

Of the three ships, CALIFORNIA—a two-masted sidewheeler—was the first to leave New York. She sailed on October 5, 1848 for the Straits of Magellan to enter the Pacific. On December 3, 1848—while CALIFORNIA was at sea in those days before





The steamer CALIFORNIA at Culverwell's Wharf, San Diego, in the early 1870s. She was the first steamship to serve the Pacific Coast. The little schooner is the DORINDA, for many years a trader to Baja California.
Historical Collection, Title Insurance and Trust Co.

radio communication—President Polk announced to Congress that gold had been discovered in California, and the great gold rush began. Many fortune hunters got to Panama by sea, and when the CALIFORNIA reached Panama after her long voyage around South America, she was almost overwhelmed by hundreds of gold seekers clamoring for transportation to San Francisco. Taking aboard as many passengers as she could, she set off to continue her voyage.

As she steamed up the coast from Panama she found herself woefully short of coal. She bypassed San Diego and Monterey, and by dint of using sail and the good fortune of finding a small emergency supply of coal in a cargo hold, she was able to reach San Francisco without burning some of her furniture and interior structure. The ship's 145-day voyage (28 days from Panama) ended at the Golden Gate on February 28, 1849.[2]

The second vessel, the OREGON—a three-masted sidewheeler—sailed from New York early in December 1848. In due course she arrived at Panama and, like CALIFORNIA preceding her, filled the ship with clamoring argonauts bound for the gold fields. After getting some low-grade coal at San Blas, Mexico, she continued up the coast and on March 30, 1849, entered San Diego Bay. Though sailing vessels in the hide trade had been coming into the bay for decades, OREGON was the first steamship to enter San Diego's glorious harbor. She stayed only a short time, and there is no record of her taking or leaving cargo or passengers. Nevertheless, the visit signalled the beginning of steamship travel up and down the Pacific coast. She continued on her way and completed the voyage to San Francisco on April 1, 1849. The leg from Panama to the Golden Gate had been steamed in just three weeks.[3]

(The OREGON later made history in a different way. On October 29, 1850 she steamed through the Golden Gate "bedecked with flags and all her guns sounding," bringing the news that President Millard Fillmore had signed a bill on September 9 admitting California to the Union as the thirty-first state.[4])

Meanwhile, gold rush fever had emptied the CALIFORNIA of her crew, officers and passengers, and the ship was unable to finish her voyage to Oregon to fulfill her contract requirements. The continuation to Oregon was cancelled and it was not until May 1, 1849 that she was able to get

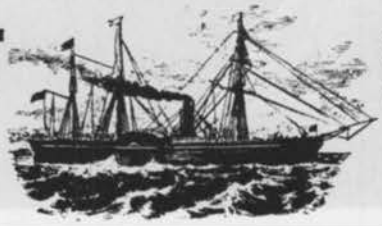
REDUCTION IN RATES!

THE PACIFIC MAIL STEAMSHIP CO'S

FAVORITE SIDE-WHEEL STEAMSHIP

SENATOR

Fare to Santa Barbara, San Pedro and San Diego,

CABIN  **STEERAGE,**

$5. **$3.-[]**

CHAS. THORN, Commander,

Will leave the Company's Wharf, corner First and Brannan streets, on

THURSDAY, Oct. 1st, 1874, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

FOR

SAN DIEGO!

CALLING AT

San Simeon, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Buenaventura, San Pedro (Los Angeles), and Anaheim.

NO EXTRA CHARGE FOR MEALS OR STATEROOMS.

FREIGHT, { To Santa Barbara, San Pedro, Anaheim and San Diego, } $2.00 PER TON.

STEAMER "CALIFORNIA,"

CAPTAIN STOTHARD,

For Freight Combustibles and Stock only, will sail from Wharf, corner of First and Brannan Streets, on WEDNESDAY, September 30th, at 5 P. M., for San Pedro and Anaheim, calling at San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura.

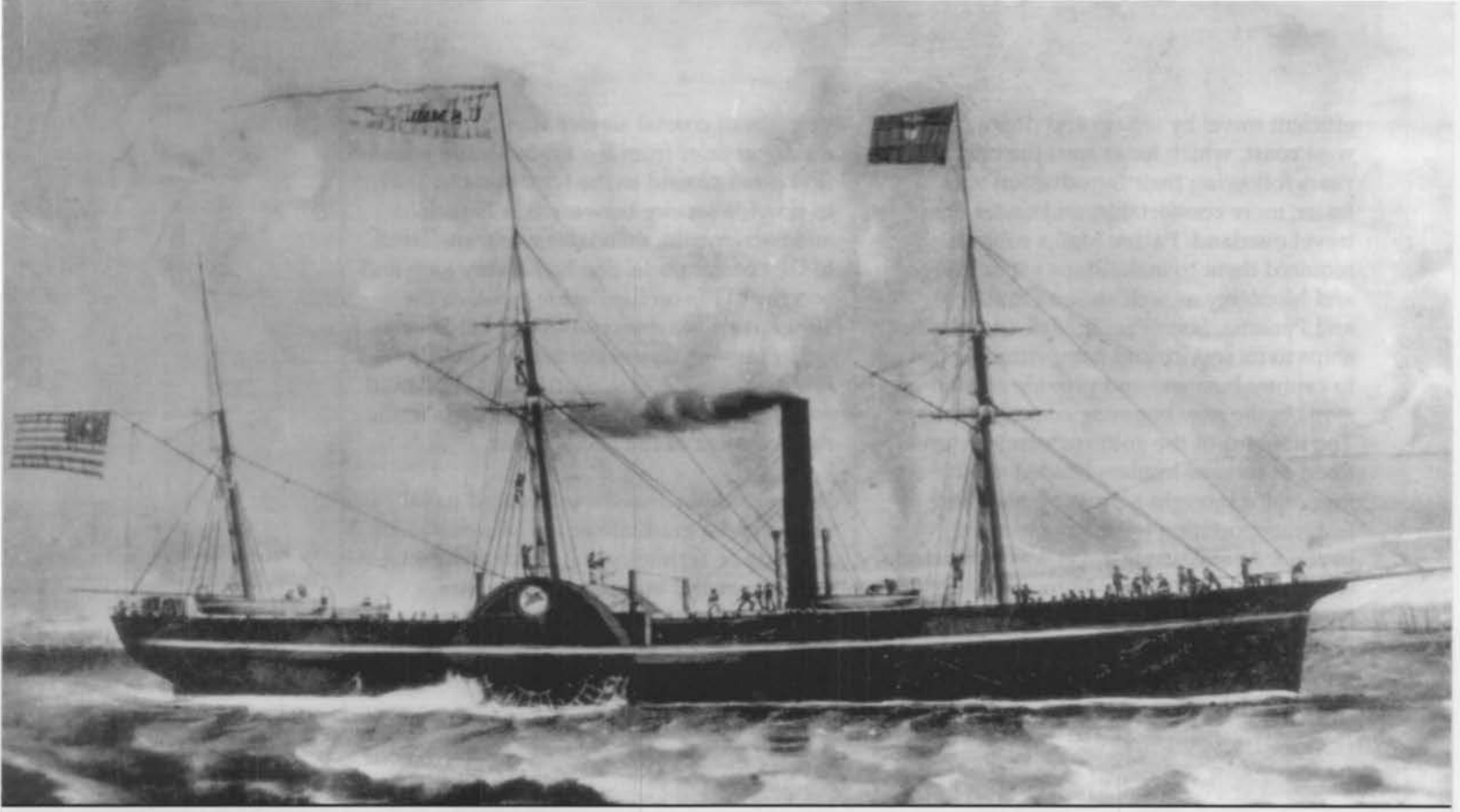
FREIGHT TO SANTA BARBARA, SAN PEDRO & ANAHEIM, $1.50 PER TON.

Combustibles and Coal Oil at Special Rates.

Company's Office, Cor. Sacramento & Leidesdorff Sts.

TAYLOR & COX, Agents.

ALTA PRINT, 529 California Street.



An old drawing of the steamer OREGON, second steamship on the Pacific coast and bearer of the news of California's statehood in 1850. The pennant at her main truck proclaims, "U.S. Mail."
Reif Collection, San Diego Maritime Museum

under way on her return passage to Panama.[5]

The third steamer, the PANAMA, followed her sisters in the long voyage through the Straits of Magellan and arrived at San Francisco on June 4, 1849 after a 17-day passage from Panama, stopping on the way at San Diego to land the commissioners who were to fix the boundary line between Mexico and the United States.[6]

Thus the three vessels began regular service up and down the coast. In the ten months of 1849 that these three ships operated, they landed 3,959 passengers at San Francisco.[7] Soon other companies and other ships added to the service, and "by sea" became the most common way to travel or ship goods north and south along the Pacific coast.

Competition added vessels to the coastal service, but the first three ships of the Pacific Mail, the first to provide service along this coast, continued their operations for many years. The trio were well built and well run. CALIFORNIA and PANAMA were constructed at New York by the famous shipbuilder William H. Webb, while OREGON was built by another prominent New York yard, that of Smith and Dimon.[8] In accordance with the requirements of the subsidy contract their construction was supervised by the Navy, and certain features were included to permit the ships to be armed in case of war.

The fact that these were the first steamers to round South America and to operate on a regular schedule on a route about as long as a North Atlantic crossing, along a coast which had no repair facilities, speaks volumes about their quality.

The PANAMA was the first to retire. Her machinery was removed in 1865 and the hull sent to Central America for storage purposes in the coffee trade.[9]

The OREGON remained in Pacific Mail service for twenty years and then was sold to a lumber company, had her machinery removed, and was rigged as a bark bearing the same name. She spent a number of years hauling lumber from Puget Sound to San Francisco. It was on that dangerous coast that she was wrecked.[10]

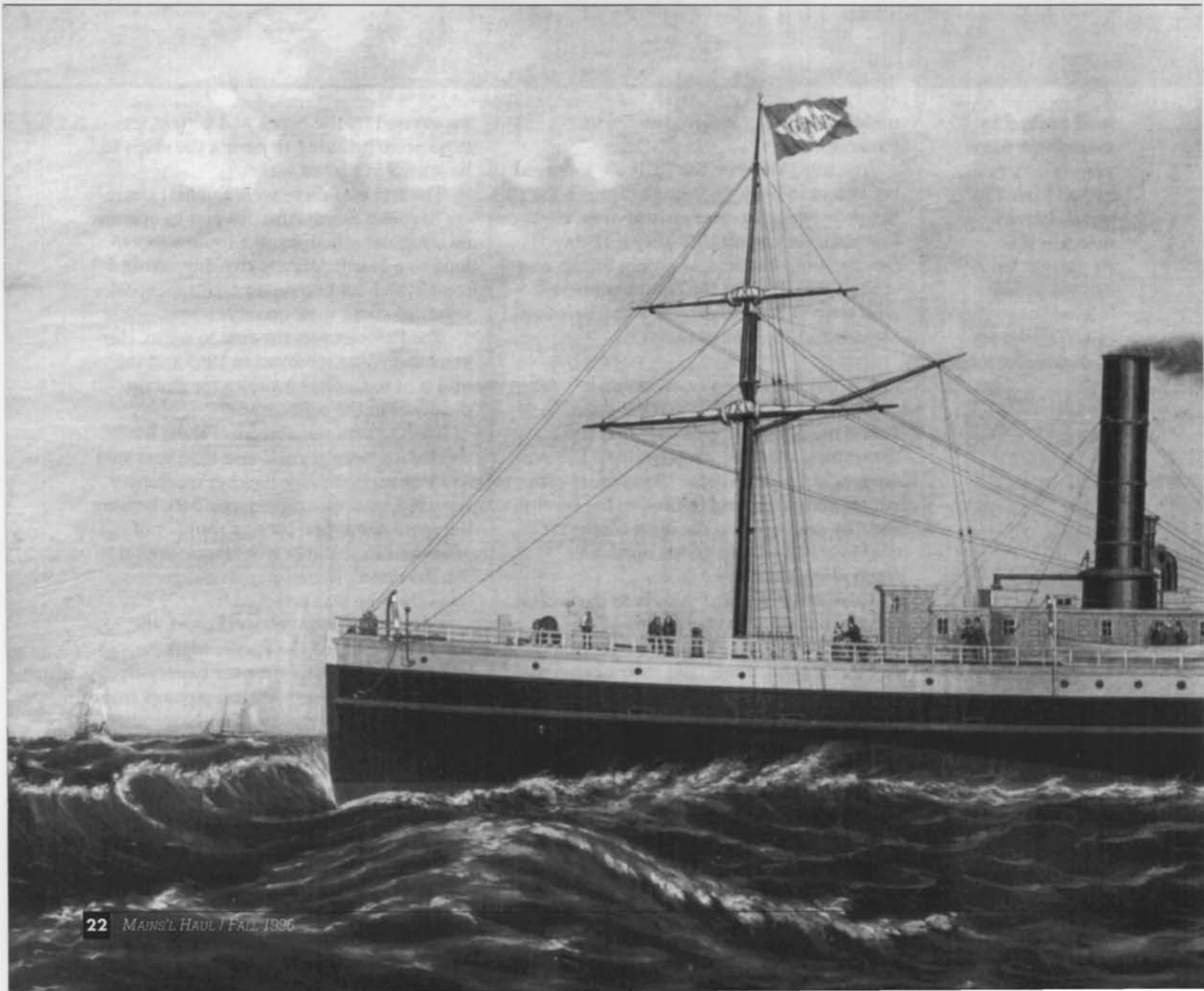
First to arrive on the west coast, the CALIFORNIA served the Pacific Mail Steamship Company for over twenty-five years. She completed her last passage from San Diego to San Francisco on November 17, 1875. Her machinery was removed, and she was sold, rigged as a bark. For many years her new owner used her in the coal and lumber trades, until she was sold to foreign interests in 1895.[11]

These three pioneering ships began

efficient travel by sea up and down the west coast, which for at least the next fifty years following their introduction was faster, more comfortable, and easier than travel overland. Pacific Mail's contract required them to make stops at San Diego and Monterey as well as San Francisco and Panama. Soon Pacific Mail added other ships to its service and competitors joined to capture business and provide additional stops in the new booming coastal economy. The impetus of the gold rush and the great flood of fortune hunters headed for the mountains brought a pressing need for fast transportation to Sacramento and beyond. Again, water travel was the fastest way to go up the Sacramento and American rivers.

Other ships soon followed the three pioneers to the Pacific. Among the other veterans of coastal service was the SENATOR, a side-wheeler from the Boston trade which first came around to the west coast in 1849 to provide service between San Francisco and Sacramento, then later was transferred to the coastal trade. She had a very long and successful life on the Pacific coast, as the 1874 advertisement reproduced here attests. Other famous steamship names would follow: ORIZABA, QUEEN, SANTA ROSA, HARVARD and YALE. All played prominent parts in the development of the Pacific coast.

[*Ed. Note:* Alan Thewlis is a retired naval officer and a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A naval architect, yachtsman and maritime history buff, he has served the San Diego Maritime Museum as a volunteer for twenty-nine years.]

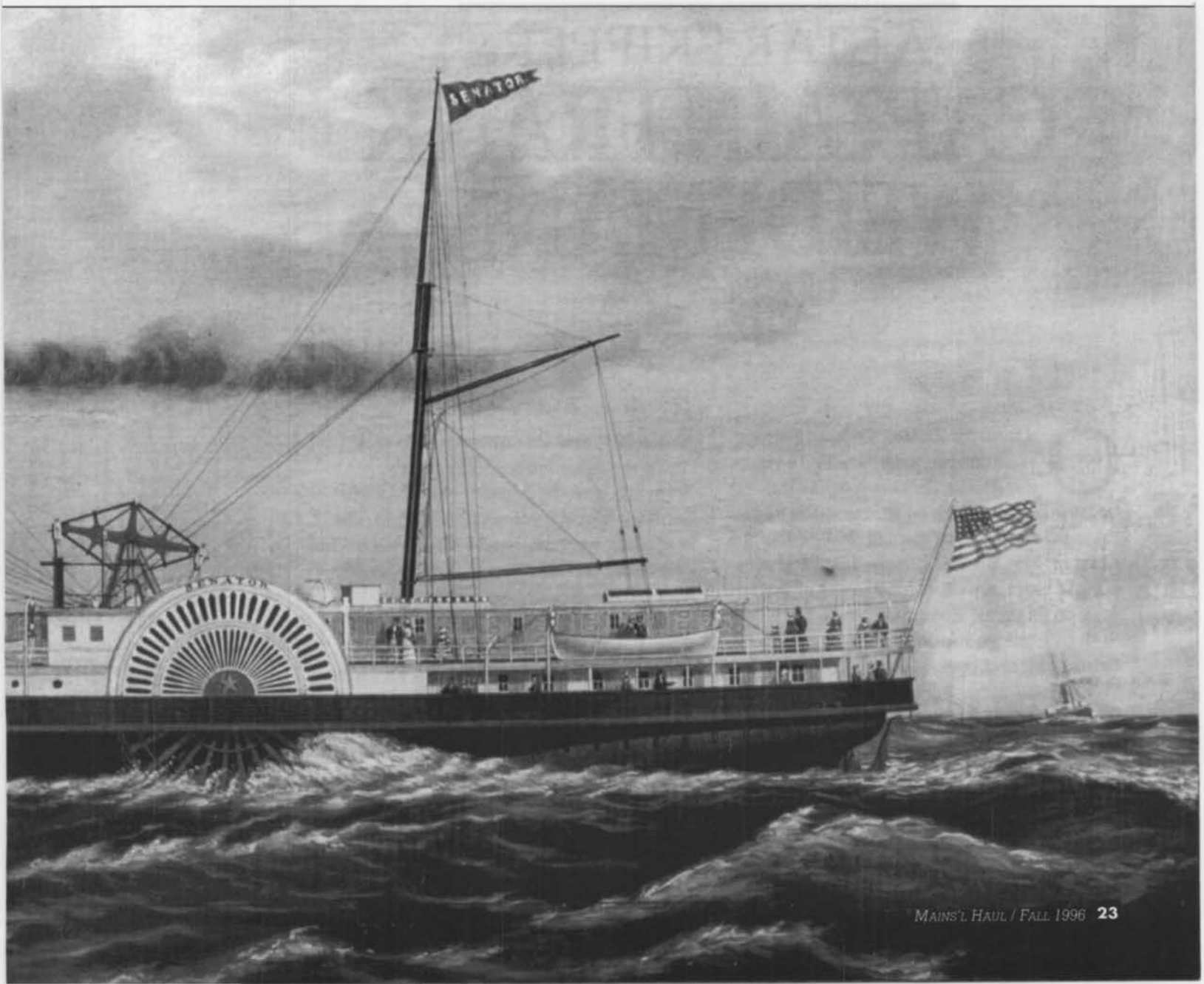


An 1875 oil on canvas depicts the sidewheel steamer SENATOR under way.
Photo courtesy of Ron Chamberlain

NOTES

1 *Encyclopedia Americana*, 1940 edition, Vol. 20.
2 Benjamin C. Wright, *San Francisco's Ocean Trade Past and Future* (San Francisco: A. Carlisle & Co., 1911), pp. 15, 17, 28.
3 Ibid., p. 28.
4 Edwin T. Coman, Jr., and Helen M. Gibbs, *Time, Tide and Timber* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1949), p. 29.
5 Wright, *San Francisco's Ocean Trade*, p. 24.
6 Ibid., p. 26.
7 Ibid., p. 28.
8 William Armstrong Fairburn, *Merchant Sail* (Center Lovell, ME: Fairburn Marine Educational Foundation, 1945-1955), Vol. II, pp. 1360-1362.
9 Wright, *San Francisco's Ocean Trade*, p. 29.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid. See also Jerry MacMullen, *They Came by Sea* (Los Angeles, CA: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1969), pp. 10-11.





Part 2 of 2



Frank Weidemann at about the time he was in command of STAR OF INDIA, from 1920 to1924.
Photo courtesy of Cliff Weidemann

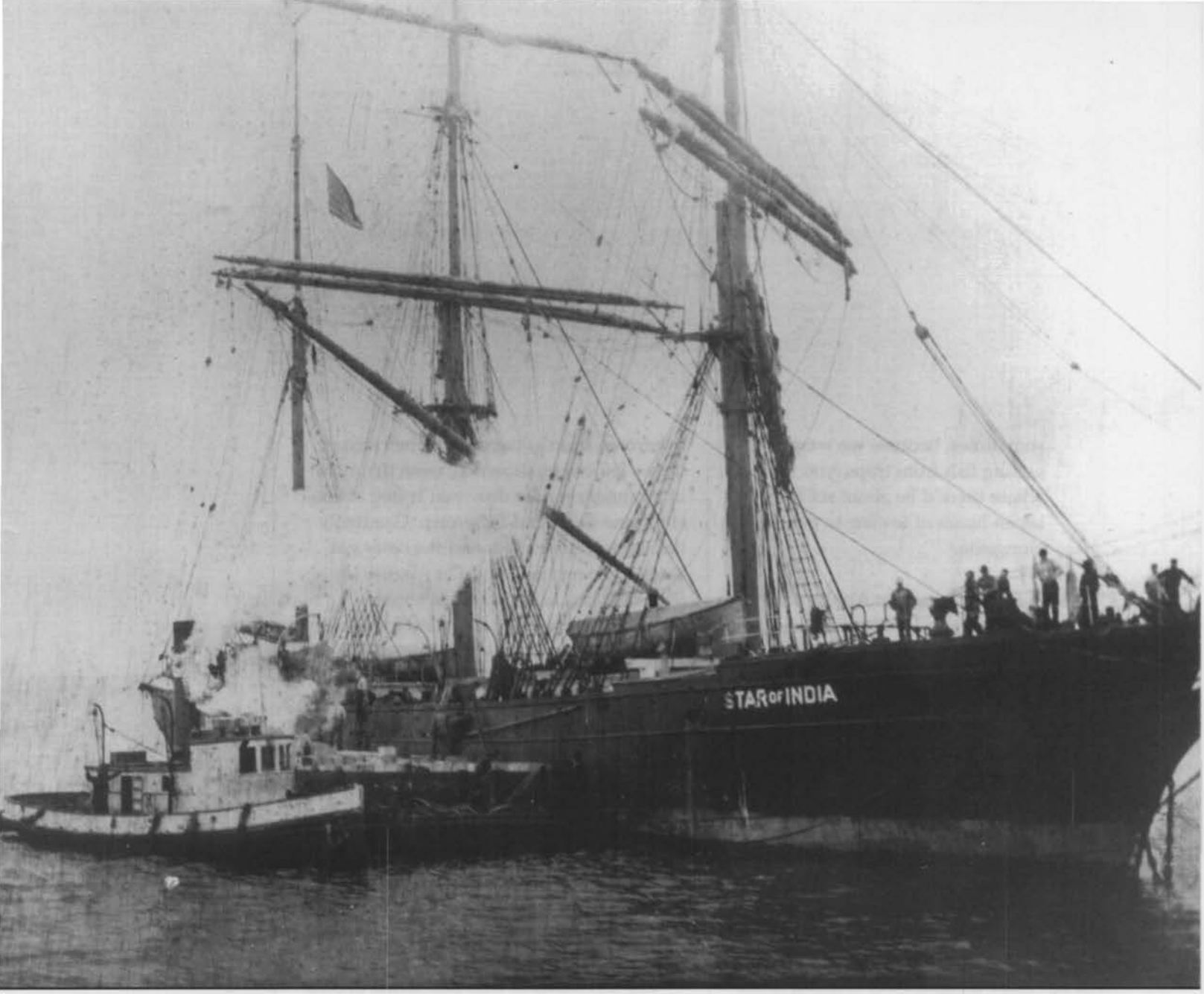
A STAR SKIPPER: CAPTAIN FRANK WEIDEMANN

By Charles A. Bencik

On January 2, 1920, Captain Frank Weidemann, veteran sailor with the Alaska Packers Association, became master of the bark STAR OF INDIA, taking the reins from Captain Woldemar Marzan. Marzan, her skipper for the previous six years, now took command of the STAR OF FRANCE.[1] Every year since 1902, STAR OF INDIA had sailed to Nushagak, in Bristol Bay, and back. Now it was Frank Weidemann in her big after cabin.

That first 1920 winter, they got the ship's donkey boiler surveyed, on February 26. It was time for a Special Number 3 Survey: her ceiling had to be opened up along her keel, and her bottom cleaned out in preparation. She left the A.P.A. basin in Alameda on the 27th, and was towed a mile west, down the inner harbor to Hanlon's Shipyard, and drydocked. They brought her back four days later. On April 15, she was ready to go to Pier 54, China Basin, San Francisco, and load tin, coal, box shooks, water, crew, etc.

Fo'c's'le hands were in short supply in 1920, but Weidemann couldn't wait. By April 20, he needed to clear off Pier 54; he took her to the stream, off Butchertown. Short on sailing crewmen, after a long and unsuccessful recruiting effort, Weidemann got STAR OF INDIA in tow northward with the steamer NUSHAGAK.[2] There were 88 whites and 137 Orientals aboard; her cannery contractor was 40 hands short. It was



An excellent action shot of STAR OF INDIA loading the salmon pack from a barge at Nushagak. Note how her main yard is "cockbilled" to serve as a cargo boom, for getting cases down the main hatch. Block letters on starboard bow show how ship's name was painted in her working days.

MacMullen Library, San Diego Maritime Museum

not an auspicious beginning, but the tow made up for the lost time.

Many a watch on her poop deck heard the tinny sound of the captain's Victrola and his beloved opera records, drifting up the companionway from his cabin. Slowly NUSHAGAK hauled her through the Unimak Pass and into the Nushagak basin, to the anchorage off the old Alaska Packing Co. cannery, near the mouth of Wood River. The barge came alongside, and men and supplies went ashore.

The work of a Packer ship's master did not stop when his ship reached the fishing grounds. No time for shore leave; now Captain Weidemann became a "beach boss," and Captain C. H. Williams, the cannery superintendent, became his boss. J. C. Bell at Kvichak, or John Heinbockel at Naknek might also be giving him orders, if one cannery needed help from another. "It's hard work, when the salmon are running," according to Cliff Weidemann, Frank's son. He remembered his father's experience at Wrangell in 1925 when he was master of STAR OF RUSSIA:

> My father was beach boss there, during the season, when the salmon started running. . . . "Get that fish alongside! Get it out of those barges, and get it in the cans, before the twenty-four hours is up!" [sic] Boy, that was a rush

sometimes, because we were getting fish from traps, you know, where there'd be about six or seven hours of towing to get them alongside.[3]

The fishing season in Alaska didn't begin before a lot of preliminaries were taken care of. The ships usually arrived in middle or late May; the salmon weren't due until after June 1. Meantime, tenders and boats in storage would have to be overhauled, fitted out and launched. Coal, tin, lumber and other supplies from off the ships had to be stowed. Cans and cases had to be made. New machines brought north needed placing and installation. Older machinery had to be overhauled and cleaned. Boilers, retorts and piping, drained at the end of each season, now had to be charged and fired up. Bunk assignments, messing times and work schedules had to be made up and published.

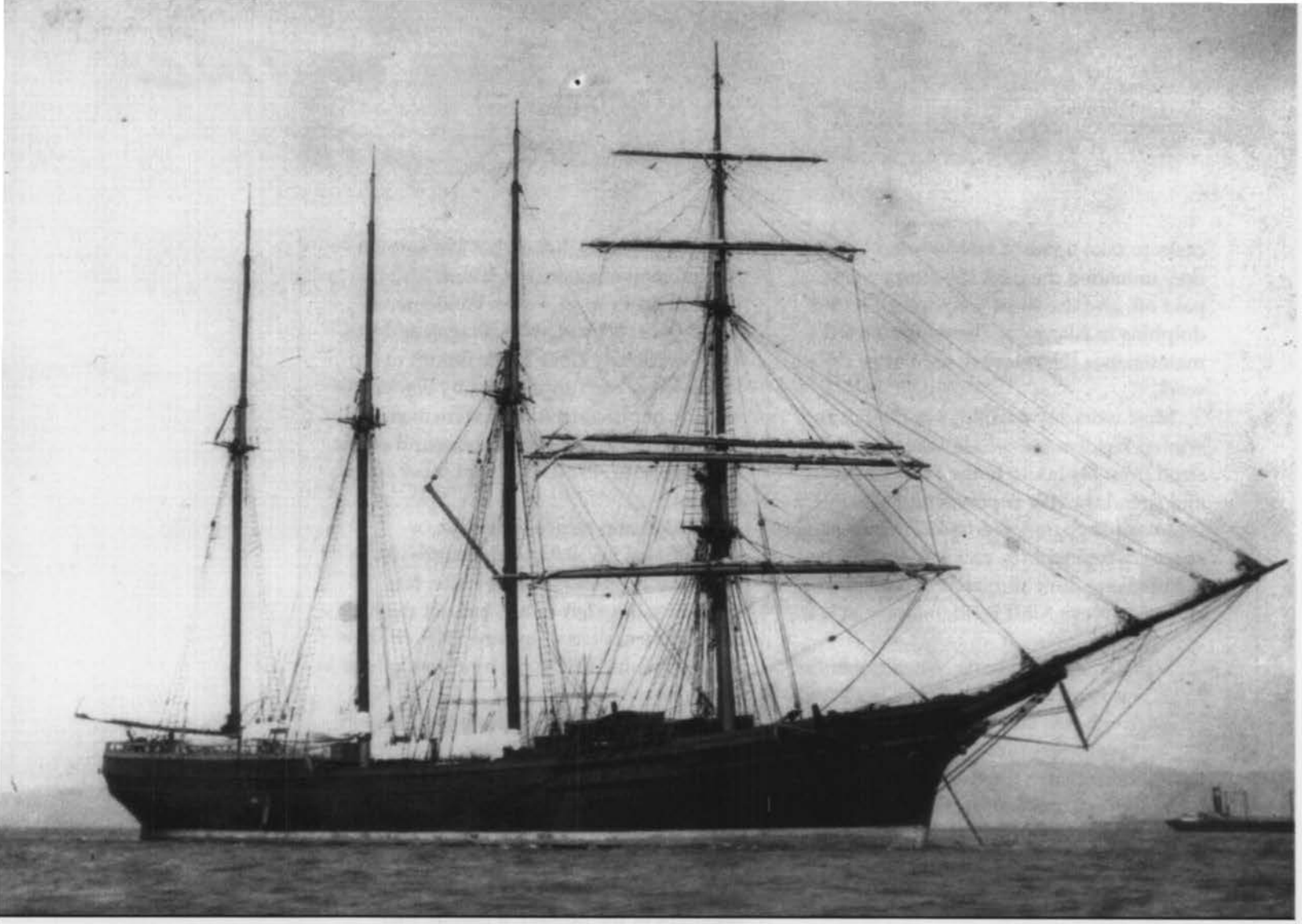
And when the fish finally arrived, the catch had to keep moving: off the fishing boats to the barges to the cannery chutes, and into the canning lines, before nature took its course. The ship masters who were beach bosses kept the whole process moving smoothly, including breaking up fights and cracking heads when necessary. The work was grueling and the weather was bad; and there were hardly any legitimate ways to blow off steam.

The pack at Bristol Bay in 1920 was double the previous year's, and Nushagak's was 44,000 cases. A series of some of the worst southwest gales seen in the area kept fishermen from going out for the catch. A dozen fishermen drowned; even the mate of a cannery tender drowned trying to rescue some swamped fishermen. Gradually the salmon run ended, and the cases got loaded aboard the ships. On August 16, STAR OF INDIA, with 219 souls aboard, pulled up the hook and headed for home.

Nobody expected what happened at the end of the 1920 season. Weidemann must have found a few good sailors in Nushagak and made some shrewd trades. Jerry MacMullen tells of an impromptu race, proposed by Captain Marzan at the start of the return voyage.[4] STAR OF FRANCE, built in 1877, was an original J. P. Corry "Irish Star," built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast. She was a very fast sailer (fifty days from Sydney to San Francisco in 1897), beautiful, in excellent condition, the ship every sailor of the fleet wanted to sail in.[5]

Captain Marzan, who had toiled in STAR OF INDIA since 1914, knew she was no rocket. Imagine therefore his chagrin on arriving in San Francisco on September 12, 1920 to learn that Weidemann had brought STAR OF INDIA home four days ahead of STAR OF FRANCE. MacMullen claimed that whenever Weidemann told the story, years later, with a jovial gleam in his eye, he would chuckle, "Yesus! Vas Marzan mad!" The STAR OF INDIA'S skipper had her alongside Pier 54 at 1:30 p.m. on September 8. After a two-day homecoming "toot" for the crew, they commenced discharging cargo, and had her ready to head back to the shipyard in Alameda by the 13th.

Weidemann was to prove more than once that, with the right handling, STAR OF



The four-masted barkentine CENTENNIAL, a handsome wooden-hulled downeaster, as she awaited a tow from San Francisco Bay to Coos Bay, Oregon, in 1927. Frank Weidemann took her from Coos Bay to Melbourne with a crew of only ten men and boys, including himself and the cook!

Photo courtesy of Emil Petersen

INDIA could be a formidable sailer. An article in the San Francisco *Marine Exchange* (date missing), preserved by Cliff Weidemann, records her beating BOHEMIA, skippered by Captain Jack Schulz, in a race to San Francisco on the return from Nushagak:

> One of the most interesting races held between sailing craft in many years terminated here yesterday with the arrival in the harbor of the bark Star of India. She defeated the ship Bohemia in the run from Bristol Bay. Both craft departed the Alaskan port on the same day.
>
> Difficulty was experienced passing Unimak Pass but after the windjammers were free in the open, a spanking breeze filled their canvas and sent them southward. The vessels sped along together with 2 miles of each other for six days, and on the morning of August the 18th the Star of India lost its rival in the thick fog. The first question asked by the crew of the Star of India when she anchored off Meigs wharf yesterday was whether the Bohemia had arrived.
>
> The keen rivalry between the two vessels was made more interesting by virtue of the two skippers being brothers-in-law. Capt. Weidemann is master of the winning vessel, while Adolph Schulz is captain of the Bohemia.[6]

After the fishing season was over, Frank Weidemann seldom brought back mementos, or told many tales of the fishing grounds. (Some crewmen packed salted "salmon bellies" into small

casks to take home at season's end.)[7] After they unloaded the pack,the crews were paid off, and the ships were towed to the dolphins in Alameda. The winter's yard maintenance then started, regular as clockwork.

Most workday mornings in the fall and winter, Weidemann would take a bracing stroll from his house to the Packers yard and spend the day supervising STAR OF INDIA'S upkeep and overhaul. He inspected spaces, wrote reports, and saw that all repairs were done properly, to pass the annual surveys. Cliff Weidemann recalled:

> I was quite young, when my father was on the Star of India. . . . I was on board ship on Saturdays, not every Saturday, but maybe once a month or something I had to go down and polish the brass on Saturday morning, and my father would only work half a day Saturday . . .[8]

Mimi, his wife, and the children visited him there often, when school was not in session. They bought their first automobile, a Chevrolet they called "Baby Grand"; Frank and the family toured California in it on many happy outings.

The winter 1920-21 shipyard schedule called for chipping and painting the whole ship, including the spars. A donkey boiler survey was scheduled but postponed to the next year. There was also the usual drydocking.

In the winter of 1921-22, following another salmon season, it was clear that the Alaska Packers had no big plans for STAR OF INDIA. She received only a renewal of her fore topgallant yard and a routine drydocking. She wasn't getting any radio, generators or patent equipment. Hanlon's usually did the drydocking, but in 1922 the Moore Drydock, further to the west on the inner harbor channel, did the honors. In the winter of 1922-23, before her last salmon run, all maintenance was minor.

Four times in all, Frank Weidemann sailed STAR OF INDIA to Nushagak and back, anchoring close to the mouth of the Wood River each spring. But by September of 1923, her trips to Alaska were over. A.P.A. terminated Frank's command of her on January 31, 1924. They had other plans for him.

Weidemann returned to STAR OF ICELAND—as her skipper this time—on February 12, 1924. She also had a few years of sailing left in her, but not the luck of the STAR OF INDIA. In June 1929, STAR OF ICELAND would sail to oblivion as a pile of Japanese scrap.

On March 6, 1925, Captain Weidemann took charge of STAR OF RUSSIA. She made a voyage to Wrangell where, on July 4, there was a boisterous celebration in the town. Frank was there with friends, enjoying the company of the local "schoolmarms." The roads were paved with planks. As the highlight of the holiday, a parade was held, in which the big spectacle was an effigy of a whale, made of wood. As Cliff Weidemann recalled:

> Suddenly a car comes down the road, with the driver screeching, "The fish are in! Everybody back to your ships!" You had to go back to the cannery. You had to can the fish within twelve or twenty-four hours, or else you had to throw it away . . . They were very strict on that."[9]

Just a year later, the A.P.A. sold STAR OF RUSSIA to French interests, and she ended up as a coal hulk in New Caledonia. The A.P.A. had bought her in 1906, the first of their iron Harland and Wolff ships from the Corry's Irish Stars fleet, the inspiration for the "Star" names given to the A.P.A.'s iron and steel sailing ships.

On February 10, 1926, Frank



CENTENNIAL'S slender crew—minus Capt. Weidemann and the two mates—on her voyage to Australia and the South Pacific islands in 1927. From left to right are Cliff Weidemann (aged sixteen), "Major Hoople" and his dog, a man remembered only as "Luke," Emil Petersen (aged eighteen and alive today), "Blackie," Harry Pike, and Archie the cook. Photograph taken at Melbourne, Australia, on August 21, 1927, aboard the CENTENNIAL.

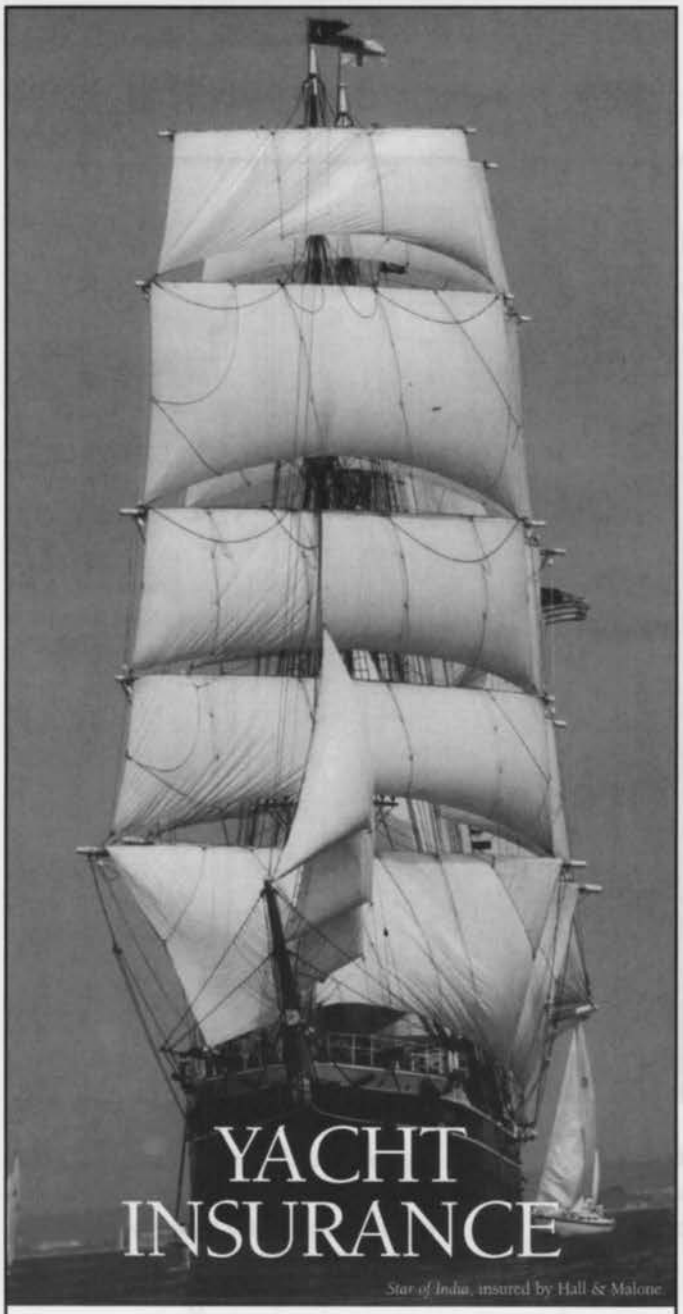
Photo courtesy of Emil Petersen and Cliff Weidemann

Weidemann reported aboard his last command for the Alaska Packers Association, STAR OF ENGLAND. His son Cliff, who was fourteen at the time, recalled:

> I was on the England as mess boy to about eighty fishermen. . . . They were mostly Italian and Scandinavian. . . . I had to bring the food from the amidship galley in big pots—with the ship rolling her silly head off—and get it into serving dishes for the table, then wash all the dishes. No time to be seasick!
>
> You just worked out of the galley. From five o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night, [I] peeled potatoes. I peeled a sack of potatoes a day. . . . I usually had to skin a bucket full of onions and carrots, I did all that besides waiting table and washing dishes. . . . Gee, they fed good. . . . We had mostly roasts and stews, and things like that. . . . The Alaska Packers always fed good. And I can remember, they didn't have refrigeration on the ship. When we left San Francisco, we had a couple of beef carcasses in the rigging, strung up by rope—and whenever we needed some meat, why, we'd lower away, and butcher our meat off, and up again! The salt air stopped the meat from going rotten. At least that's the story they told us, and it tasted good![10]

Cliff Weidemann did not seem to receive any special consideration for being the son of the ship's master.

I remember I'd been working



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almost 'til midnight, cleaning up the mess hall, and at five o'clock somebody pounding on the door: "Up! Get up! Your father wants you up on deck!" . . . "What in hell—it's five o'clock in the morning!" . . . "Get up!" I went up, and we were running before a howling gale. And he'd have me on the end of a rope, and I'd pull and then I'd have to puke, and I'd pull and I'd have to puke. I was really seasick, and the Star of England was rolling her stinking head off!

. . . We started out [for Alaska] on our usual, my dad's usual course. All the sailing ships would leave San Francisco, and head more or less for Honolulu, and then they'd make that Great Circle and get the prevailing westerlies and shoot up to Alaska. And usually it took about twenty-one days or three, four weeks to get up there. And we had a little old broken-down radio set on the Star of England and [the set was operated by] the bookkeeper, a guy named Matthews. . . . I was serving table in the dining room on the ship, and my father was sitting at the head of the table, and Matthews came in. "Captain," he said, "I was just talkin' to a Japanese ship up around Point Arena. He says he's got southeast winds." My father said, "Those damn Japs, they don't know southeast from northwest! See what you can get out of it!" So Matthews went off, and a little later he came in and he said, "The radio operator [on the Japanese ship] said it's southeast winds they got out there." So the mate was at the table, and my father says, "Bring her around! We'll head her back to the coast!" [And the mate said,] "What the hell's goin' on aroun' here?"

Anyway, they brought her around, we headed back for the coast, and we still had northwesterly winds when I went to bed, and it was five o'clock the following morning they rousted me out of bed. And the ship was galloping—holy smoke—rolling her cotton-picking head off. . . . The Star of England was not built for speed. My father used to call her a shoebox—square on both ends—anyway, we're goin'. The bow wave, I think, went out as far as I could see; this great vee, you know, that we were making. We were pushing the whole Pacific Ocean ahead of us.

And I think it was off the Columbia River that we passed our towboat that was goin' to tow us in! And my father on the radio—good thing we had that little radio—asked the can-

nery [up in Wrangell, Alaska] if they had any of the gas boats in the water. And they said yes, they had the Afognak and the Eagle, and whatever they had up there, Raven, were all in the water. My father says, "Send them down to Dixon entrance; I'm comin' in!" So we used the gas boats instead of the towboats, to go up the inland passage to Wrangell. . . . It worked! Well, we had a lee shore, and we couldn't claw off with that ship, you know. We had to go into Dixon entrance because we couldn't clear the land ahead of us. The wind had shifted around to the southwest.[11]

It was the last year sailing for the Alaska Packers for Frank Weidemann. He was detached from STAR OF ENGLAND on January 25, 1927. The A.P.A. would send only five of their sailing fleet north next year. Thus ended a career of nearly twenty-one years as mate and master with the Alaska Packers Association.

There still were other opportunities that year, for a sailor. Lumber freight rates were nineteen dollars a thousand board feet, so on March 14, 1927, with the aid of J. J. Moore and Company, Weidemann bought the CENTENNIAL, wooden 1286-ton A.P.A. four-masted barkentine. As his son tells it:

My father was laid off. He didn't have a job anymore. . . . Somebody told him about J. J. Moore and Company in San Francisco. They were big lumber exporters. So he went up there and they said, "If you go out and buy yourself a ship, we'll have a cargo for you: a million board feet of lumber for Cape Town."

My father went to see Mr. Tichenor [then president of the Alaska Packers Association] . . . He had his eye on the Star of Iceland. She would very comfortably carry a million board feet of lumber. But Tichenor wanted $15,000 for her. . . .

So my father says, "What do you want for the Centennial?" And Tichenor says, "You don't want the Centennial! She's ready to sink!" My father: "How much do you want for the Centennial?" Tichenor: "Well . . . four thousand?" My father said, "I can afford that!" That's how we bought the Centennial![12]

She'd been built in 1875 in East Boston as a full-rigged ship. The A.P.A. bought her in 1897, and after a fire aboard that burned her to the water's edge in 1904, they rebuilt her as a four-masted barkentine. She was tough. She even survived the Bristol Bay

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ice, despite having then lost her rudder and sternpost. She had the capacity for a million board feet of lumber, and with her barkentine rig, could be sailed with a small crew. Weidemann talked it over with Captain Weise, her former skipper, looked her over, and arranged for her purchase. They shifted her from the Packers' yard to a layup berth at General Engineering in Alameda.[13]

The winds of the northwest coast are prevailing northwesterlies, and time was important. The lumber cargo was ready in mid-April at Coos Bay, Oregon. Weidemann hired an old steam schooner, the PORT ANGELES, to tow CENTENNIAL to Coos Bay, where the local tug OREGON relieved the schooner, and brought her in. They loaded her at the dock in North Bend with almost a million board feet of lumber. Cliff says:

> While we were loading, a young and inexperienced crew practiced setting and furling sail—to the great amusement of the longshoremen working the cargo. We needed it, the entire crew came to ten men—including the captain and the cook.[14]

Weidemann's first mate was Woldemar Marzan, a good friend of Frank's, who had been master of the STAR OF INDIA for six years. Frank's son Cliff, aged sixteen, and Marzan's stepson, Emil Petersen, aged eighteen, were along as ordinary seamen. Jack Dickerhoff, aged thirty, who later contributed much to the restorations of STAR OF INDIA and FALLS OF CLYDE, was second mate. Other crewmen included Harry Pike, twenty-two, seaman; Archie, the cook; and three others now only remembered as Luke, "Blackie," and "Major Hoople" (apparently named for a cartoon character), who brought his terrier along for the trip.

On May 19, CENTENNIAL towed out, and her crew set sail for Australia. Frank's wife Mimi came up to see them off, and rode out with the tug. As Cliff relates:



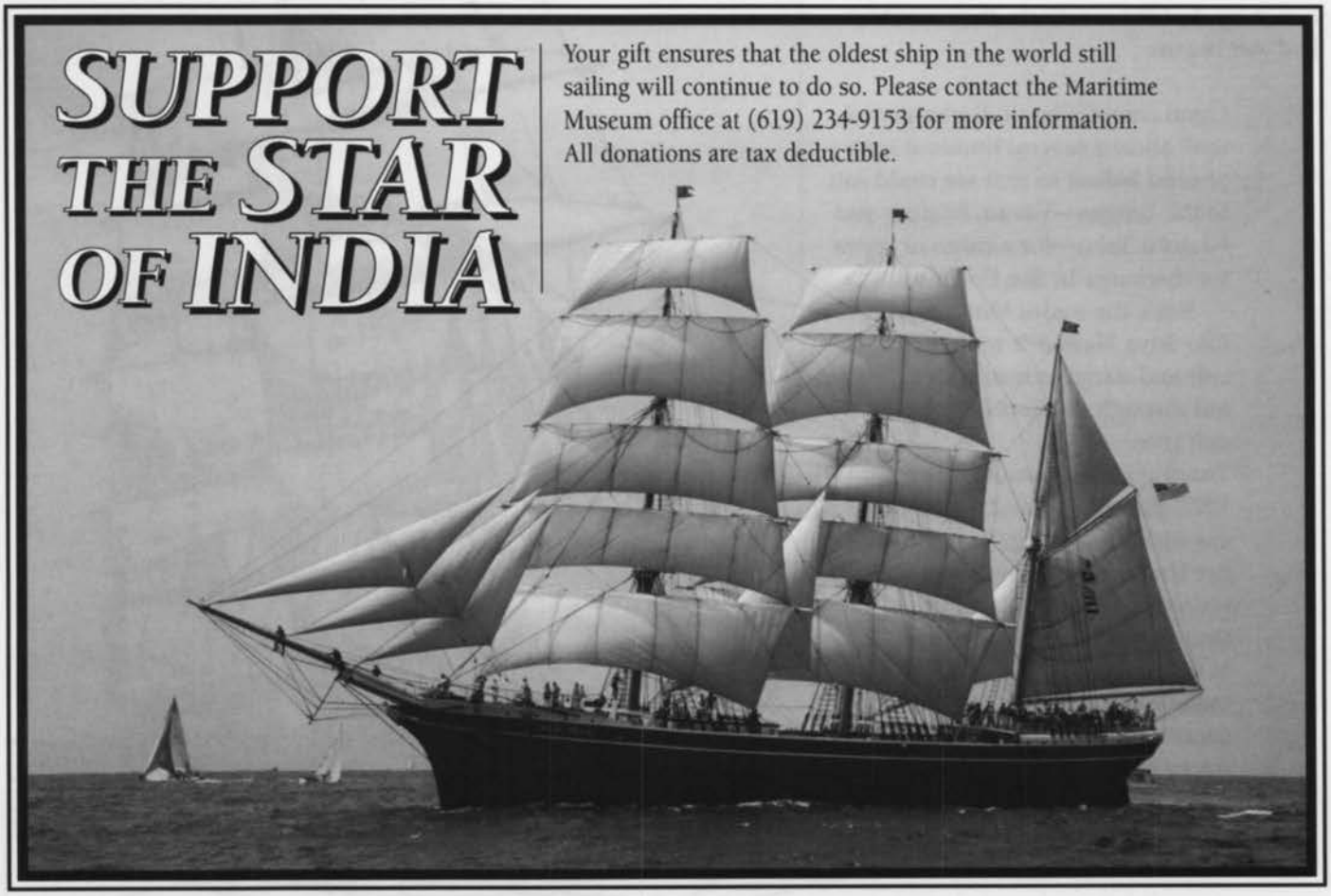
> Despite our practice, setting sail was a bit of a circus. Some of us, including me, got seasick while aloft loosing the square sails. . . . With every sail set we were finally on a southwesterly course to Australia.
>
> Just before dinner that evening, the mate, Marzan, sounded the bilges and found that the ship was leaking badly. We manned the main pumps amidships and pumped for nearly two hours before the water started to go down. The warm sun at Alameda had dried out the hull planking and opened the seams during lay-up and it took a few days to get things back together. We were

soon down to a twenty-minute pumping every evening.[15]

Thirty-nine days out from Coos Bay, they raised Cape Perpendicular, just south of Sydney. Fierce westerly gales met them as they sailed through Bass Strait towards Melbourne. On August 15, they sailed up to the entrance to Melbourne harbor (Port Philip Bay). Cliff remembers:

> The Centennial never would tack until she tacked on her own, going into Melbourne. That's the first time, I think . . . that the poor old thing tacked. A pilot came on board before he took her in, and asked if she would tack, and my father said, "No, she hasn't tacked in a hundred years" or something to that effect. . . . It probably was the current that did it.[16]

Frank Weidemann now had a problem. His rudder was damaged, his crew numbered ten men who had been awake and working for thirty-six hours, and the weather was uncertain. He had to get his ship into Melbourne harbor quickly, without waiting till the following morning for a tug. Proving what a fine seaman he was, he took the helm and entered the harbor under full sail, then turned the helm over to Cliff and went below to catch up on sleep. Cliff began nodding off at the helm until the pilot told him to sack out, which he did atop the main hatch. When he awoke in bright sunshine the next morning, he could scarcely believe his eyes. The barkentine lay safely in the middle of the harbor, surrounded by ferryboats and small craft. The CENTENNIAL'S tired crew, led by a Frank Weidemann who appeared on deck in his longjohns, spilled her fore-and-aft hamper and then set about stowing the squares'ls forward.

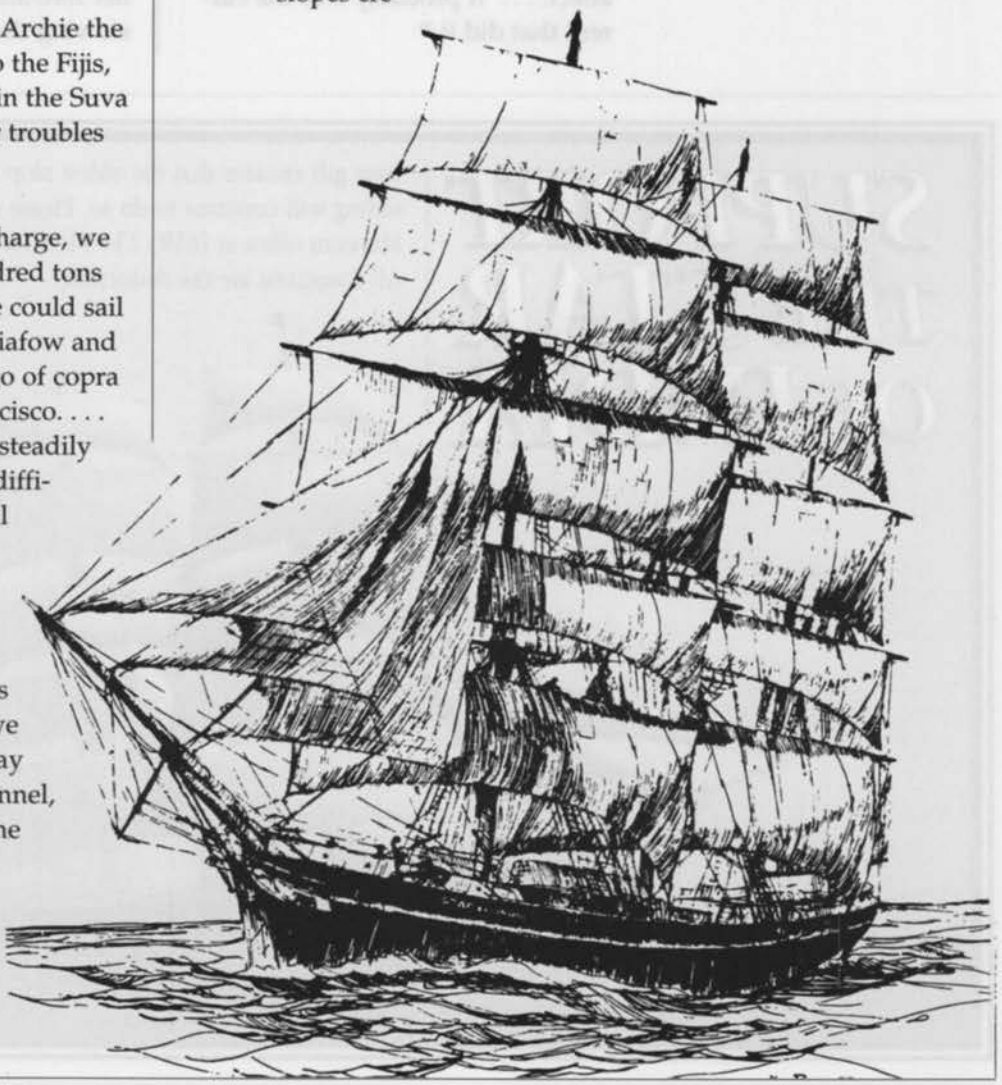


Most of the crew left in Melbourne, the able seamen having earned seventy dollars a month. Replacements were hired, and they sailed to Newcastle, New South Wales, where they loaded two thousand tons of coal for Suva in the Fiji Islands. Cliff recalls this phase of the voyage:

> We were twenty-seven days to Suva. On the way, we encountered a hurricane, a few days out of Suva. We snugged down to a fore topmast staysail, a double-reefed mainsail and a leg of mutton spanker. We were hove to for about twelve hours. Thanks to the high bulwarks we did not take any heavy water on board.[17]

Emil Petersen recalled that Archie the cook became ill enroute to the Fijis, and died. He was buried in the Suva cemetery. As Cliff recollects, their troubles had just begun:

> Upon completion of discharge, we took aboard several hundred tons of sand ballast so that we could sail to the Tongas—Vavau, Niafow and Niatoba Tabu—for a cargo of copra for discharge in San Francisco. . . .
>
> Since the trades blow steadily into Suva Harbor it was difficult and dangerous to sail out through the narrow entrance. . . . On Thanksgiving morning, 1927, the small island steamer MAKATEA gave us her towing hawser and we proceeded to sea. Halfway through the entrance channel, at the first heavy swell, the towing hawser carried away and we drifted down on the coral reef in just a few minutes. The MAKATEA didn't even slow down and continued on her voyage. We dropped the anchor but because of the depth of the water the anchor did not hold and our stern grounded on the reef and we had no way to get the ship off. This was at about nine in the morning and no one came out to see if they could assist us. Fortunately we had drifted into a more sheltered area and the ship lay relatively quiet with only an occasional bump!
>
> At about four in the afternoon my father noticed a heavy rain squall forming in the high mountains behind Suva. When the squall becomes heavily laden with water it starts coming down the slopes cre-



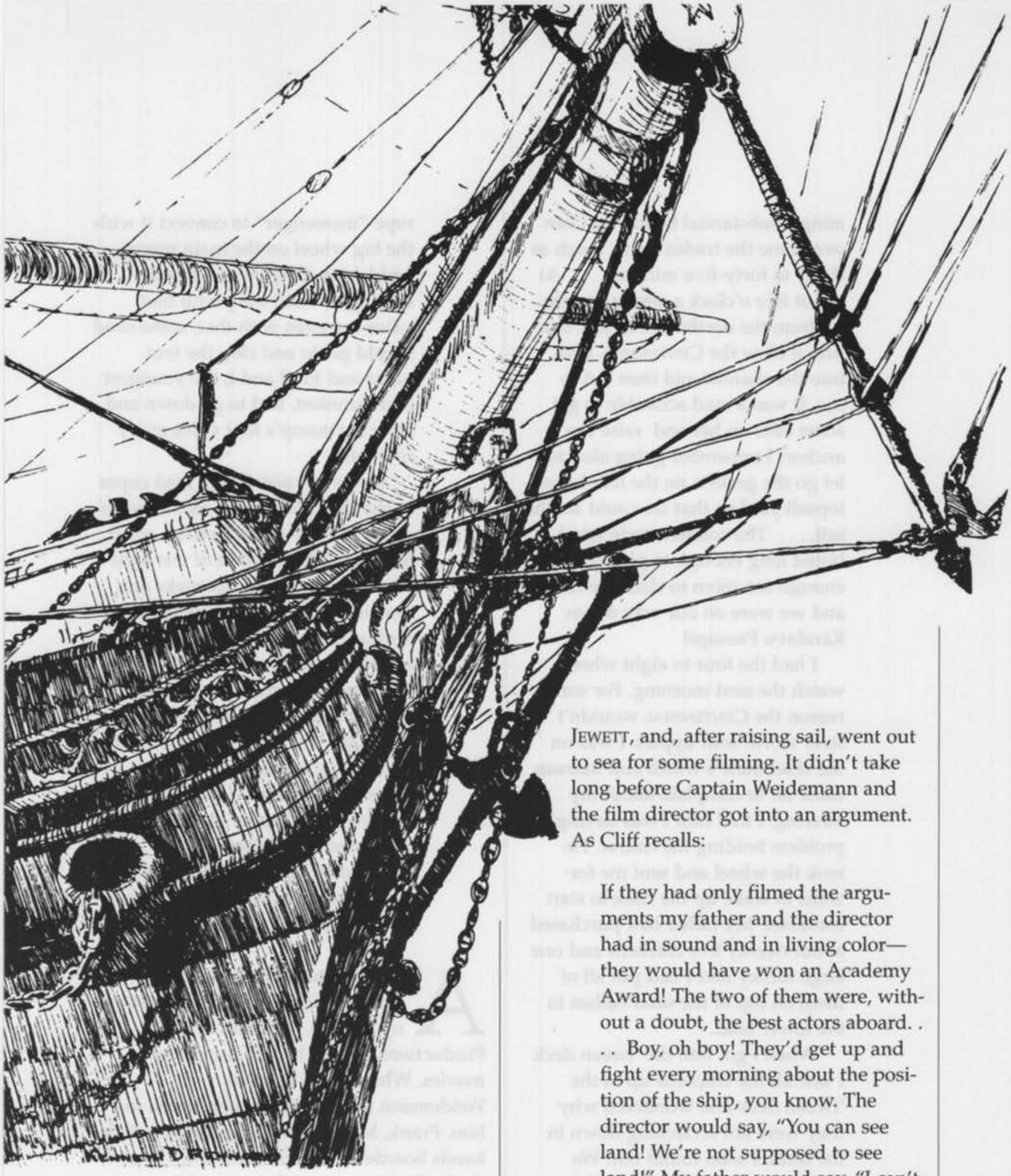
ating a substantial breeze that can overcome the trades for as much as thirty to forty-five minutes. . . . At about five o'clock a strong breeze hit from the northwest. In just minutes it blew the CENTENNIAL back into the channel and then out to sea. It was a mad scramble to get some sails on her and raise the anchor! I remember going aloft to let go the gaskets on the fore lower topsail yard so that we could set the sail. . . . The counter trade wind lasted long enough to give us enough sea room to clear the reef and we were on our way down Kandavu Passage!

I had the four to eight wheel watch the next morning. For some reason the CENTENNIAL wouldn't steer worth sour apples. I was on the chief mate's watch and Marzan came aft to complain about my steering. I told him I was having a problem holding the course. He took the wheel and sent me forward to wake up the cook to start breakfast. My father had purchased about twenty live chickens and one large turkey and I had put all of them on top of the sand ballast in the lower hold.

When I got into the 'tween deck I saw all the chickens up in the 'tween deck and wondered why they were not scratching down in the sand. I soon found out! We must have had nearly eight feet of water in the lower hold! I went on deck and told the mate about the water. The hatch was open and you could see everything from the main deck. He told me to call my father and then get steam up in my donkey [engine]. Meantime we were pumping by hand while I was getting up steam. We had a windlass with a gypsy head on top of the deck housing and the mate made a rope "messenger" to connect it with the big wheel on the main pump, amidships. There was a wooden housing around the pump foot valve but even with that, some sand would get in and clog the foot valve and Emil and I, the youngest and skinniest, had to go down and clear the pump's foot valve every so often.

It was not possible to load copra in the cargo hold until repairs were made and my father headed north for Honolulu. Because of our light condition we could not make any "easting" once we encountered the northeast trades. Instead my father headed up to about forty degrees north latitude to get the prevailing westerlies and then headed for San Francisco. We arrived after seventy-seven days at sea and tied up at General Engineering in Alameda. While we were gone the freight rate on lumber to Australia had dropped by half and it became impossible to make a few dollars on the next cargo.[18]

After returning from Australia, Frank Weidemann put CENTENNIAL up for sale, and Tom White Productions bought her for use in the movies. White asked Captain Weidemann to take her to Long Beach for him. Frank, Mimi, Cliff and a crew of deckhands boarded her in San Francisco, and the SANTA INEZ towed the venerable barkentine down to Craig Shipyard in Long Beach. There she was to be converted into a semblance of the French ship of the line REDOUTABLE for a movie about Lord Nelson. (Writers often refer to the film as "Lady Hamilton," but it was released under the title, "The Divine Lady." Another A.P.A. veteran, the SANTA CLARA, was converted to resemble Nelson's flagship VICTORY. Both vessels were also used in the movie "Evangeline.")



The Weidemanns hardly had time to say goodbye to their old downeaster. Two years later, in 1930, she would be burned at Long Beach. Frank meanwhile had served as technical director of the Nelson film, while Mimi sewed sails for the models used in the Hollywood special effects tanks, and Cliff worked as an extra. At one point during the making of the movie, Frank and Cliff boarded the three-masted schooner W. F. JEWETT, and, after raising sail, went out to sea for some filming. It didn't take long before Captain Weidemann and the film director got into an argument. As Cliff recalls:

> If they had only filmed the arguments my father and the director had in sound and in living color—they would have won an Academy Award! The two of them were, without a doubt, the best actors aboard. . . . Boy, oh boy! They'd get up and fight every morning about the position of the ship, you know. The director would say, "You can see land! We're not supposed to see land!" My father would say, "I can't help it! It's the wind—we have to go by the wind, you know." That sort of thing, blah, blah, blah. And the director would jump up and down; my father would jump up and down and everybody came to a standstill.[19]

In addition to "The Divine Lady," the Weidemanns were involved in 1928 in the making of the film "Hellship Bronson."

("Ship scenes . . . are authentic," said one contemporary reviewer.) "Mutiny of the Elsinore," originally released in 1920, was another film Frank helped with; one reviewer called it a "picturesque adaptation of Jack London's stirring story of the sea . . . vividly realistic."

Cliff says his father was also involved with the film "Wreck of the Hesperus" and retakes for several other films. The film featured Alan Hale, who later became known to television viewers as the Skipper on the series, "Gilligan's Island." As the "starring vessel" for this film, the studio used the old A.P.A. downeaster BOHEMIA. She was said to be haunted by the ghost of one her masters, who was murdered on board. Cliff relates:

> Periodically this ghost would appear, and scare the hell out of the skippers that were on board. Never happened while uncle [Jack Schulz] was on her. . . . I don't think he saw the ghost. Anyway, she had a ghost that went down with her. Woulda made a good story if they'd kept her.[20]

Tom White Productions had also acquired the CHARLES F. CROCKER, a four-masted barkentine. The Weidemanns had the heartbreaking experience of seeing the movie company destroy the masts of the ship with explosives, for the sole purpose of having a realistic derelict for a brief film sequence. Captain Weidemann declared it a "terrible waste of a ship." The Wrigley family, who were major property owners on Catalina, were in hearty agreement; they were furious over the debris resulting from the moviemakers' demolitions. The hulks of the CHARLES F. CROCKER and another movie ship, the PALMYRA, were obstructions of the Catalina shore as late as the 1950s.

Because his films were silent, at a time when sound pictures were the coming thing, it wasn't long before Tom White went bankrupt, and the Weidemanns parted company with him.

After a couple of odd jobs, Frank Weidemann began negotiating in late 1929 with a Mr. S. F. Small to buy the STAR OF SHETLAND. Unfortunately, the deal fell through when Small was wiped out by the stock market crash of October 1929.

Weidemann returned to service with the Alaska Packers, working as a kind of "used ship salesman." He was the ideal man for the job, having been mate or





skipper of so many of those ships, and well acquainted with the others. He would take prospective buyers around the yard, pointing out the remarkable qualities of the retired square-riggers tied up in A.P.A.'s "rotten row." As his son tells it, during one of his tours on board the METHA NELSON, Frank was going down the main hatch when a ladder carried away in the cargo hold:

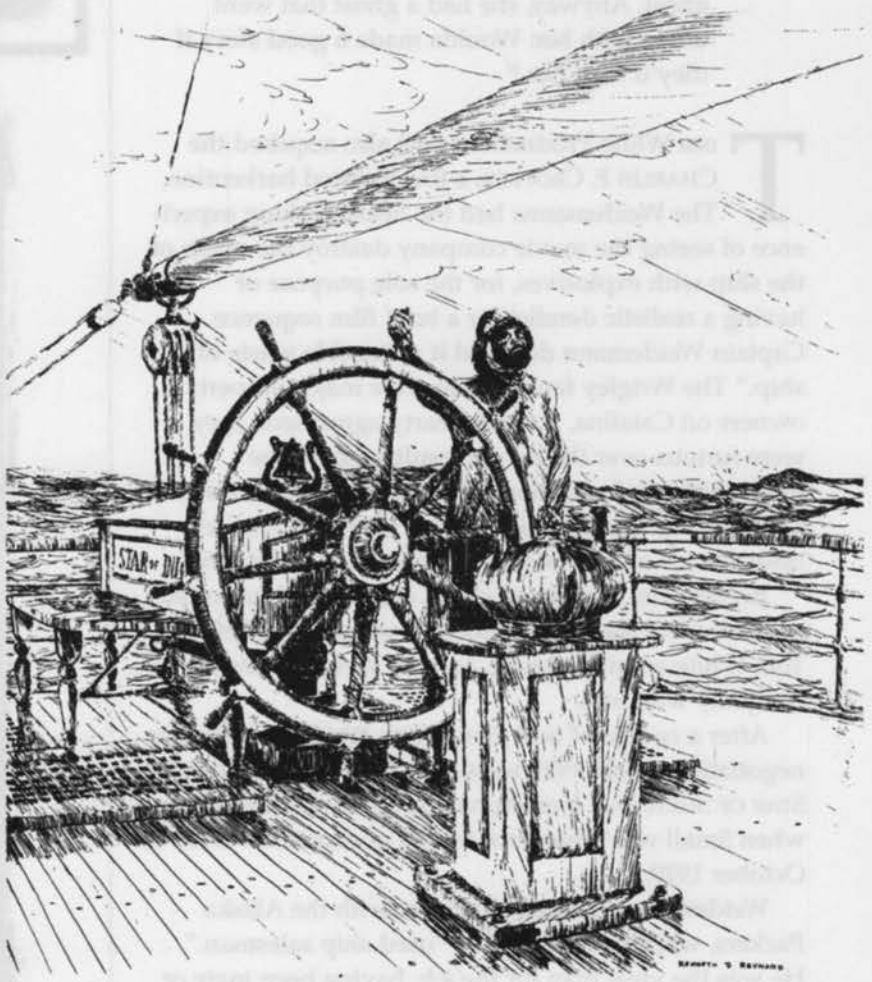
> My father dropped down and landed on the keelson; she had a high keelson in the lower hold. And he fell off the keelson and landed face-down, and broke his wrists, and I don't know what all. He was in a hell of a shape. And that finished his working days. When he got out of the hospital . . . the Alaska Packers gave him a kind of a watchman's job.[21]

As a result of this accident in November 1929, Weidemann and the A.P.A. fought a legal duel that went on in the courts for years, with the skipper claiming he was entitled not only to payment for his medical costs, but a pension as well.

The litigation dragged on interminably, the A.P.A. resisting all efforts to settle in Weidemann's favor. Meanwhile, Frank returned as a watchman in the A.P.A.'s Alameda yard, witness to the last days of many great old ships, some of whose decks he'd walked himself as mate or master: STAR OF SCOTLAND went for a gambling ship in April 1930; STAR OF ALASKA was sold to promoter Fred Kissinger in October 1933; STAR OF FRANCE went to fishing barge operators in March 1934; STAR OF LAPLAND, STAR OF SHETLAND and STAR OF ZEALAND were sold to Japanese ship breakers in November 1934.

His son remembered what it was like when they turned over STAR OF SHETLAND to the Japanese in the summer of 1936:

> That broke my father's heart. That was his last, shall we say, command. They sold her to the Japs; and my father went on board. They told him that he was going to sail her to Japan. . . . So my father had her, got the sails bent, the riggin' and everything ready to sail across. . . .
>
> And a ship came into San Francisco, a Japanese ship. And they had a captain and a full crew for the STAR OF SHETLAND. . . . Just about broke my father's heart. . . . And my father had the onerous duty of getting her away from the dock with the towboat, getting down in the towboat. And the Japanese captain took command. He had tried to show the . . . people





on board how to set the sails. But the Japanese captain insisted that his people were already trained. And the last my father saw the ship, she had her fore 'n' afters, her stays'ls and so forth, her foresails set. She was off to the westward. . . .[22]

Captain Frank W. Weidemann died on July 28, 1937, at the age of sixty-three. And so ended the last glorious days of American working sail.

[*Ed. Note:* Charles A. Bencik is a Maritime Museum docent and longtime student of the Alaska Packers and their ships. He has conducted extensive research in California, Washington and Alaska on this phase of American history, and is the author of several articles and a projected book on the subject.]

NOTES

1 Masters' Memoranda, Frank W. Weidemann, Alaska Historical Library, Juneau, AK.

2 Harold D. Huycke, "Colonial Trader to Museum Ship: The Bark STAR OF INDIA," *The American Neptune*, Vol. 10, 1950. Shipyard data from *Port Facilities at Oakland and Alameda, Cal.* and *The Ports of San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley . . . [etc.]*, USGPO: War Dept., Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Port Series No. 12, 1927.

3 Oral history interview with Clifford C. Weidemann in Vashon, WA, April 18 and 19, 1996. Details provided by Cliff Weidemann comprise the bulk of the data on his father contained in this article.

4 Jerry MacMullen, *Star of India: The Log of an Iron Ship* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1961), p. 67.

5 She'd been driven onto Egegik Flats in the Nushagak Bay ice jams of 1918, and stayed upright for fourteen days; when finally she was towed off with high tides, she was found to have suffered practically no damage. See also W. S. Stephenson, *Ships: A Chronicle of Marine Illustrations* (Seattle: Craftsman Press, 1947).

6 San Francisco *Marine Exchange*, n.d., c. 1921.

7 Interview with Henry Schulz, May 13, 1996. (Henry Schulz is the son of the late Captain Jack Schulz, brother-in-law of Frank Weidemann and an Alaska Packers skipper.)

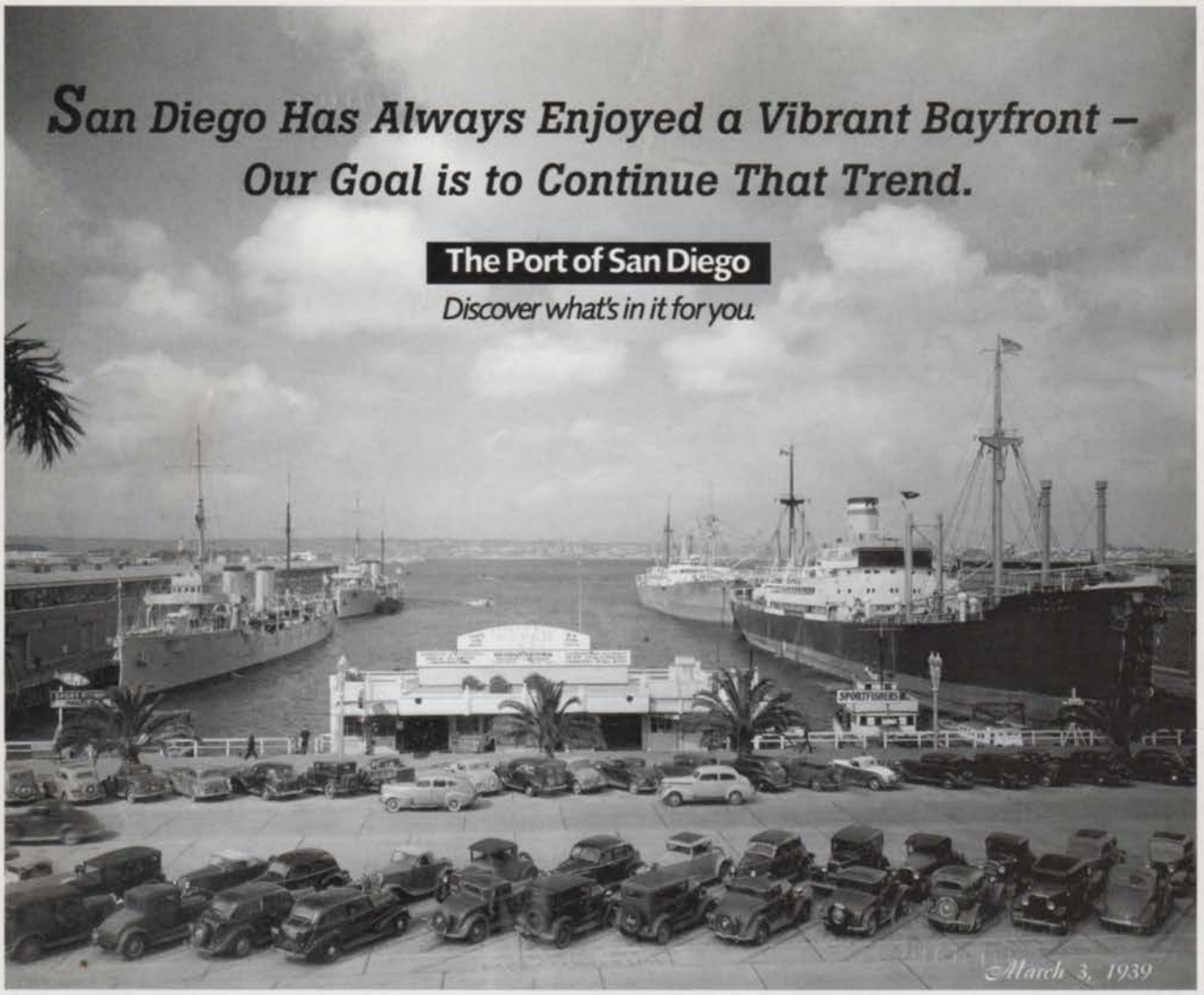
8 Weidemann, oral history interview.

9-12 Ibid.

13 *The Memoirs of Capt. Clifford C. Weidemann*, unpublished manuscript received by the author in 1996.

14 Weidemann, oral history interview.

15-22 Ibid.



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