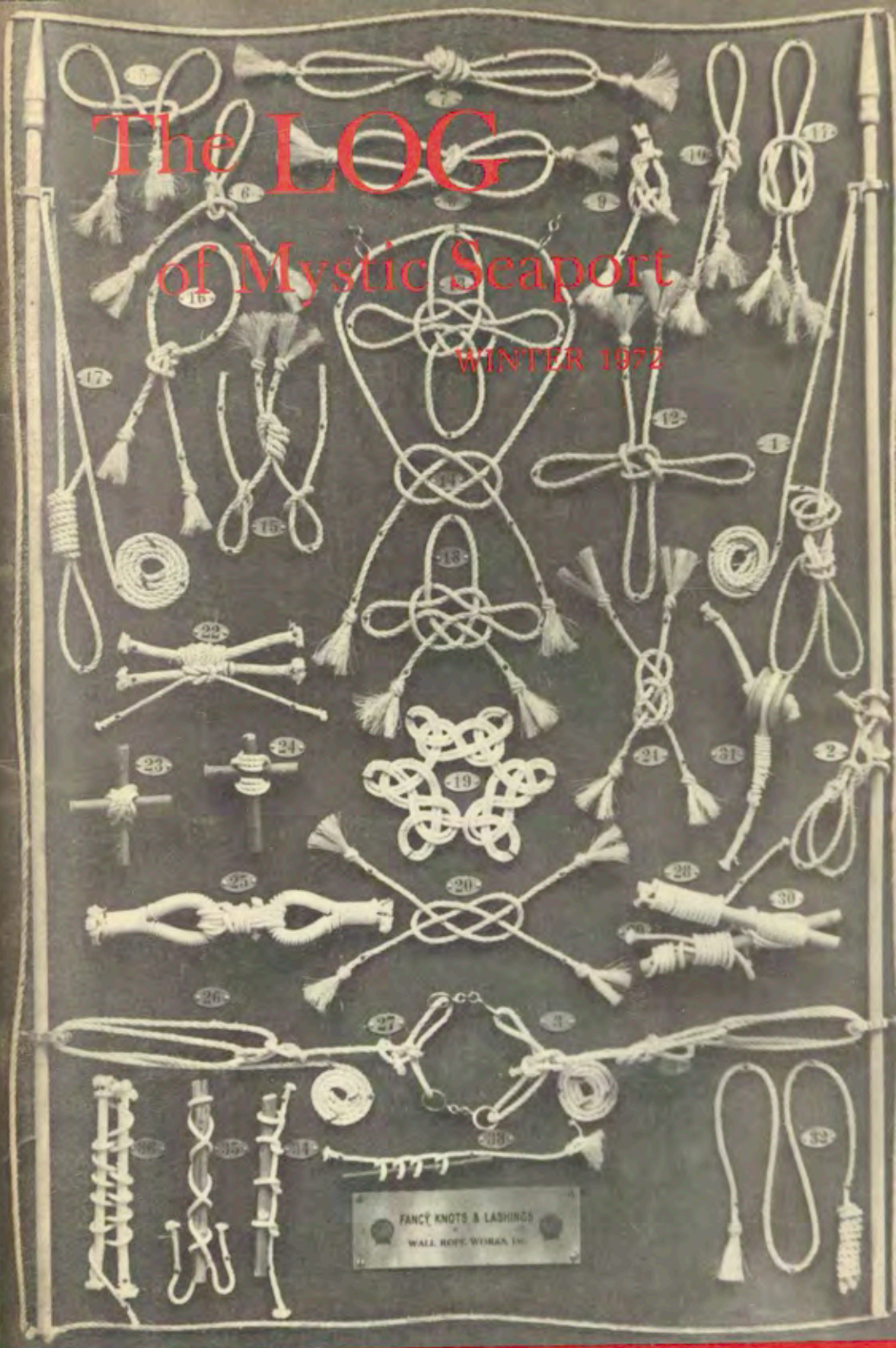
The LOG of Mystic Seaport

WINTER 1972



The Marine Historical Association, Incorporated • Mystic, Connecticut

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BUILD A LOG CANOE? WHY BOTHER?

By Sidney Heckert Dickson

The Chesapeake Bay log canoe may be the oldest class of sailing craft in North America. It is well known that when John Smith first visited the Bay the dugout was the sole means of water transport used by the natives, and that the canoe was quickly adopted by the white settlers who, by the mid-1600s, were busy modifying the Indian form to sharp-ended craft of more than one log.

It seems that from those early times onward some of the canoes, both Indian and colonist, were as much as forty and fifty feet in length. The largest one I ever saw was the *Anna Florence*, (bug-eye-rigged, later converted to power), 16 tons net, 57.6′ long, 15.8′ of beam, 4′ in depth. Built in 1918, she was, to my knowledge, the last large, log-bottom boat to come from Chester (Kent Island), Maryland. The 1961 *Merchant Vessels of the United States* lists her as a freight boat out of Annapolis. Her logs, I believe there were eleven of them, were in good shape as late as 1968 when she fell into unsympathetic hands and was allowed to go to ruin.

It is not unknown for these Chesapeake canoes to last in service for more than a century, new topsides being constructed on the old bottoms from time to time. The oldest canoe known to me in service at this time is the 27.5′ Tilghman Island canoe, *Island Bird*, 1882, Captain Sidney Covington, builder. She takes part in the races held on the Eastern Shore rivers, Miles and Tred Avon, with a dozen or more survivors of a bygone age when there were thousands of similar vessels employed in the business of tonging oysters, carrying produce, crabbing, transporting people on business and pleasure, even carrying hogsheads of tobacco on pairs of canoes lashed together catamaran style and, of course, racing. For centuries the log canoe was the all-purpose vehicle for the Bay country, whose people used the many creeks and rivers as they now use the roads.



Flying Cloud *at Todd's Point in 1932. She capsized right after having her picture taken. Photograph: H. Robbins Hollyday.*



Island Bird *in about 1936, and still healthy in 1972. Photograph: H. Robbins Hollyday.*

When sail was first applied to any of the various types of Chesapeake canoe may never be known—perhaps in the early 1700s. Joshua Thomas, the famous "Parson of the Island," is known to have had a two-masted, leg-of-mutton rig on his canoe *The Methodist* in the early nineteenth century. This particular canoe was said to have been the largest hewed from a single log: between 20-30′ long and about 5′ wide. Still another canoe was made of the same tree felled by Hance Crosswell near King's Creek off the Annamessex River. It is said today that the centerboard was first installed in St. Michaels by a builder named Sinclair; however, Marion V. Brewington gives credit to its appearance in the mid-nineteenth-century Poquoson boats.

Mr. Brewington mentions three general types of canoe in his *Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes & Bugeyes:* the Poquoson, the Pocomoke and the Tilghman Island. It is the Tilghman Island boat that has endured as a class—perhaps because of the suitability of her rig, perhaps because of her construction, perhaps because of the intense interest of her owners and friends in competition. Organized Sunday and holiday races have been held since 1840, with some lapses for wars and slack periods of enthusiasm. When "racing" canoes were first built and when the first "spring board" was used, I never have learned. The *Island Bird,* and the *Island Blossom,* 1892, were built as "pleasure boats." Judging by their fine ends and slight beam, the pleasure of Captain Covington and his followers must have been competition, for with their rigs of today—admittedly larger than the originals—it is risky to leave them untended with both spars up. The *Bird* will capsize at a moment's notice or less should someone set foot on a washboard while her masts are stepped.

With more than 1,000 sq. ft. of sail (roughly as much as a 50′ cruising boat with five or six tons of ballast and over 10′ of beam) on a 30′ boat with no ballast and only 6′ or 7′ of beam, it is necessary to employ unusual means to obtain some measure of righting moment. This means, known as a "spring board," is a fir plank about 14′ long, 10″ wide and 2″ thick. This board is shoved under the lee washboard aft near the mainmast and allowed to project to windward, resting on the weather washboard. The smaller boats carry two boards and the larger as many as five. Sometimes a board may have as many as three riders along its length, and your imagination may give you some idea of the havoc ensuing breakage of a board carrying this delicate ballast, among whom

the jib tender or fore sheet tender may be serving double duty.

When a canoe capsizes, she must be completely unrigged in the water before she can be taken ashore. Her sails must be removed, kept from sinking, and passed—if possible—to another vessel; spirits, paddles, bail buckets, poles and boards must be collected; sheets and halyards straightened out and then the delicate, costly, unstayed sticks must be unstepped. Considerable diving, swimming, working underwater, pulling and hauling is necessary to get the 35-50' spars out and, during the hour or so it takes, the sea nettles are usually busy adding their measure of irritation. Then the canoe can be worked ashore, bailed and rerigged or put away. A canoe can just as easily capsize to windward as to leeward if a flaw in the wind should catch a board man off guard, or should the jib tender let the jib go light. Hit a buoy with the end of a spring board, let a board break or a heavy puff catch any one of the crew unaware, and it's over to leeward with the heavy boards crashing into the sails where the board men have just been thrown.

Whatever the wind conditions, every man on board the Chesapeake Bay log canoe is always busy, must always be attentive, lest he be responsible for catastrophe. If there is a bailboy, he has two jobs. He must also keep a watch to leeward for other canoes, as the skipper and other crew members are usually well to windward when sailing anywhere but down wind. If there's anything worse than capsizing in a log canoe, it's a collision. At speeds of eight to ten knots, sometimes more, a crowded starting line, windward-leeward and opposite tack situations lend great excitement not only for those on board, but also for generations of spectators who have been watching the same boats vie against one another for as long as the oral tradition tells of local racing. While shouting may accompany tense situations, hard feelings are a rarity: beer busts, water fights, crab feasts, and barbed or tongue-in-cheek comments serve to add to the spectacle, to the memories, to the sport where only the boats endure; where the skippers, the crew and the moments—as intense as a summer squall—just as surely fly.

Since the first red man burned or scraped out a canoe from a felled pine, the building of log boats has probably gone on uninterrupted. It must have seemed that there would be no end to the usefulness of this cheap but easily moved craft. Probably the first decades of non-production in a thousand years of canoes have been the past two, for it has been twenty-two years since the log



For one canoe: five "shell bark" yellow pines 32-40" in diameter, 85-100' tall, about 110 years old.

canoe *Oliver's Gift*, the last log-bottom sailing canoe, was completed. While many men who helped or watched builders are alive today, the last of the canoe builders may be gone.

* * *

Four timbers 28' long, squared from 19,000 pounds of 80', 109-year-old yellow pine, now lie over in front of the shed. A fifth log—weighing near three tons—is inside the shed. You can go in and lift one end of it with one hand; the center log is finished.

The big trees were mature, ready to be cut, as they stood 'round the edge of the field at the marshy cove head off Woodland Creek—the watermen call it Lloyd's Creek—near the mouth of the River



Mill-squared balk is marked and rough sawn by mill. This was the only time professional help was used.

Wye. The farm is known as Wye Town Farm after the town of the seventeenth century, all traces of which have disappeared from the site. Early in January the trees were dropped and hauled to a nearby mill for squaring—a job formerly done by broad axe and adze. Today both time and lumber are dear. Much time and some lumber were saved by the mill, and there is ample opportunity, rather necessity, to bring the axe and the adze to bear. In fact, there is no getting around the adze. For while the broad axe makes quick but hard work of something the adze does slowly, I don't think there is any tool to replace the adze in canoe building. The chain saw is a handy, helpful tool and can fill in for old-time tools where there are large amounts of wood to remove. It saves time and money, too, for we were able to remove almost the entire inside waste of the center log in about an hour, and saved a timber 14′ x 18′ x 20′ long which in olden times would have been split up into kindling. And while there is great virtue in the practice of developing useful skills, splitting wood for days with wedges and a maul can be done by almost any anthropoid. Some of whom will no doubt mutter, "Anyone can do it with a chain saw." So then—try it. The chain saw can ruin the whole log in three seconds. It's like watching or reading about a good adze man or a good ice skater—not as easy as it seems! It's the learning that counts. Effective use of the chain saw is an entirely new and perhaps useful skill.





Roughed port garboard log is used to check marking on balk for starboard garboard log. Starboard garboard log is put on boat with locust treenails and some glue. Center log has centerboard case installed. Starboard and port wing logs will be installed next outside garboard logs.

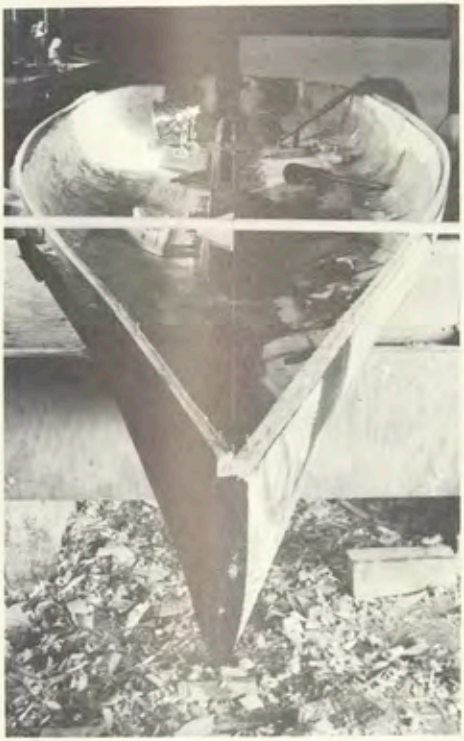
But how were these canoes designed and what about now? The original builder's model of the *Island Bird* is in the hands of the vessel's owner, great-grandson of Captain Covington, the builder. It's a carefully made model of pine, 1" to the foot with 1/2" lifts and stations marked off at even numbered 2' intervals from the bow. The bow faces to the left, so I made my model the same scale but with 1/4" lifts, bow to right, so that the two models could be held together and directly compared. I have been told by a builder who helped John B. Harrison construct the great square-sterned canoe *Jay Dee* in the early thirties that the molds from that building still exist, but I have no idea whether Covington fabricated templates or bent straps of lead or bolt rod to the desired curves. I suspect that molds were used in Covington's case, though some builders bent various materials to aid in the "winchemsquinchem" system more related to the less accurate "eye

ball" method. Just as boats are built lopsided nowadays, so they were in the past, and some don't seem to suffer by it—perhaps somehow being smart sailers because of it.

Nevertheless, I'm working with a carefully made half model carved after establishing length, beam, 3/4 beam and profile. I traced the lines of the model afterwards just to record the thing in case of accidental loss or damage. Wherever possible, I measure directly from the model to the timber or, in the case of the molds or templates, directly onto the plywood. As I fit each log, I cut it out of the template so that the plate fits square on the timbers, eliminating any chance of mislocation or out of square. That is, as the center log was the first log shaped, only its area was cut from the mold so the mold fitted the sides of the timber squarely. As the next log is readied and placed along the center log, its position is removed from the plate and the template then fits around the sides and the bottom of those two logs together.

The inside is next hollowed to within a fraction of 1" to 2-1/4" of the outside surface, depending on how much load will be carried at that point. Most old canoes were made up to 6" thick though many have been worn to several inches, both by shoveling oysters up from the smooth frame-free bilges and by wear and smoothing of the hulls' exteriors. It is said that some builders left extra meat so that they could take some off if they decided to change the shape a little. After and before races, it was often the practice for everyone to grab a piece of glass and scrape the bottom smooth while the boat lay on the bank drying out.

Tilghman Island builders often used gauge pins—dowels fitted from the finished outside of the boat of a length equal to the desired thickness of the log at that point. Then as they worked down the inside of the hull they stopped when the end of the pin was flush with the inside surface. I plan to rough out my logs closely before fastening and so avoid putting unnecessary holes in the boat. Then the logs will be edge-fastened with old-fashioned locust trunnels epoxy glued. Iron drifts have been the normal pins in more recent canoes, with the advantage that when the black iron rusts it is locked solidly into the wood. Unfortunately, above the water line this tends to burst the wood and encourage rot. And if the boat is built thin or wears thin, the iron pins are liable to breach the surface and there lie in wait for the tool which they will surely ruin. There will be about fifty of these edge fastenings in the four log joints, and some are sure to breach somewhere



View from bow before framing for mast steps and rising planks. Starboard log unfinished inside and out. All boatbuilding photographs by the author.

along their 16″ of length. There will be but three frames in the boat, one at the foremast, one at the forward end of the centerboard trunk and another at the main step. Stub frames will extend from the turn of the bilge above the log tops to carry several inches of cedar "rising streaks" and the outboard ends of the thin oak deck beams. About 800 sq. ft. of sail will be carried on spruce spars 6″ x 6″ at the butt with no standing rigging.

The accent throughout the construction will be on light weight. In the words of the great English motorcycle tuner Francis Beart, "What isn't there doesn't have to be towed uphill." This quote relates well to the log canoe, for her hull speed is rather easily attained given any air at all. When this speed is reached, the boats try to sail uphill over their bow waves. I would like to see this new boat get over the hump. The *Noddy*, one of Oliver Duke's last boats, has been seen to plane. And I cannot think of anything more exciting than a Chesapeake Bay log canoe 6′ wide under 800 sq. ft. of Dacron in 10 knots of wind, four men on the boards—sheet tenders, bailboy and all—skimming down the Miles River.

The First International Congress of Maritime Museums of the Atlantic Basin 30 September—6 October

By Waldo C. M. Johnston



Ceremonies in the Great Hall of the Queen's House at Greenwich

The first international conference of maritime museums ever held has just concluded its deliberations in London. Under the joint sponsorship of the National Maritime Museum of Greenwich, England, and Mystic Seaport, the conference brought together over eighty delegates from sixty maritime museums from fourteen countries. The Congress sought to define "the role of the maritime museum in the modern world" in general terms and, more specifically, to determine those areas of mutual interest and activity which concern all maritime museums in which the exchange of ideas and research would be mutually beneficial.

From the very outset, the Congress demonstrated the need for closer cooperation and better communications among maritime museums. The opening session pointed out, quite dramatically, the marked differences that exist almost universally between maritime museums and other museums. The mere fact that maritime museums deal with man and the sea—two different environments—requires them to present a broad spectrum of man's relationship with the sea and great diversity of collections. For example, whereas art museums, museums of science and technology, transportation museums and others can concentrate exhibits and presentations, maritime museums quite universally cover aspects of geography, archeology, art, books, charts and manuscripts, artifacts, history, trades and industries, exploration, and many aspects of man's socioeconomic development including naval and political enterprise. Maritime museums, in attempting to deal with such an array of topics and the development of coordinated exhibits that present to visitors the complex interrelationship of man and the sea, are still searching for expertise.

It came as no surprise that the preservation, care and maintenance of historic ships and small craft were matters of deep concern among many of the museums. Although old-fashioned wooden shipbuilding knowledge and skills still exist in many countries represented, there was universal acknowledgment that these crafts were endangered, and considered effort would have to be made to assure the continuation of old practices and skilled artisanship. Problems of nautical archeology were matters of widespread interest at the Congress. At the closing session the Scandinavian representatives introduced a resolution calling for more stringent governmental legislation to control nautical archeology and prevent indiscriminate exploitation of undersea discoveries. This resolution was unanimously adopted.

Other matters discussed included the use of modern display techniques in maritime museums, public relations and promotion, problems of display and labelling, information retrieval within, and information exchange between, museums.

The Congress produced several surprises. The most notable was the almost total lack of information that has existed among maritime museums. Time and time again, delegates expressed astonishment over the scope of activities being carried on in sister institutions. While lack of information was evident among European museums, it became startlingly evident in the European view of American museums. Beyond the basic knowledge of our existence, very few European museum directors had any conception of how American maritime museums operated, what they were attempting to do, or the extent of their activities and collections. Many instances of duplication of effort and research came out during the conference, and as delegates came to know one another, and particularly the American delegates, enthusiasm for the Congress mounted. It was just for these reasons that the original concept of the Congress developed three years ago between the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and Mystic Seaport in the U.S.A., and the decision made to sponsor the Congress.

As the importance of the deliberations of the Congress became increasingly apparent, and as the need for a continuing interchange of communications among museums in the future became evident, the delegates elected, halfway through the Congress, an Ad Hoc Committee to study possibilities and make recommendations at the closing session. This committee was composed of J. van Beylen of Belgium, Baron G.B. Ruben de Cervin from Italy,



Delegates being piped into dinner on the final evening of the Conference, with Admiral Sir Charles Madden (Chairman of trustees, National Maritime Museum) and Lady Madden; Basil Greenhill and Mrs. Waldo Johnston, and Waldo Johnston and Mrs. Greenhill leading the line.

Basil Greenhill from England, Hemming Henningsen from Denmark, Waldo Johnston from the U.S.A., Philip K. Lundeberg from the U.S.A., and Commander José Martinez-Hidalgo from Spain. This Committee deliberated during the remainder of the Congress and at the final session made the following recommendations, which were unanimously adopted.

First, that a permanent organization be formed to be called The International Congress of Maritime Museums, with membership open to acknowledged maritime museums or similar institutions throughout the world that possess significant collections of maritime history or related activities.

Second, that membership be by election to one of two categories—institutional membership and associate membership open

to individuals engaged in maritime activities.

Third, that the Ad Hoc Committee be authorized to continue in existence and carry on until the next international conference, with the additional charge of preparing a permanent set of by-laws and a slate of permanent officers to be elected.

Fourth, the Committee recommended that two additional members to the Ad Hoc Committee be nominated and elected by written ballot by the Congress, and Ole Crumlin-Pedersen of Denmark and Lauritz Pettersen of Norway were duly added to the Committee. The Committee also asked—and received—authority to investigate the possibility of joining the International Council of Museums as a member organization.

The Committee's fifth recommendation was that a temporary secretariat be established and David Proctor of the National Maritime Museum was elected to this post.

The sixth recommendation was that a newsletter be prepared and circulated to the membership twice a year, and the final recommendation was that a temporary dues structure be established to carry on the work of the Congress until the next conference is held and a permanent organization is fully established.

The Congress ended on a high note of enthusiasm and promise. The final state dinner was a truly magnificent affair and a fitting climax to a very unusual and worthwhile week. Basil Greenhill and his staff at the National Maritime Museum deserve our enthusiastic plaudits for the preparation and management of this Congress. Every detail of plans and organization was meticulously arranged and the results will have a significant bearing on the work and accomplishments of maritime museums throughout the world in the years ahead.

The information that was exchanged, the friends and contacts that were made, the closer international ties that were cemented and the better understanding among museums with mutual interests and ideals, all have served to make this conference an extraordinary affiar. I am proud indeed that Mystic Seaport had the initiative and foresight to join with the National Maritime Museum to bring about this Congress which has had a most salutary effect on our reputation as a museum of international recognition and repute. This alone made all our efforts worthwhile.



"PORT THE HELM"

By W.P. Albrecht

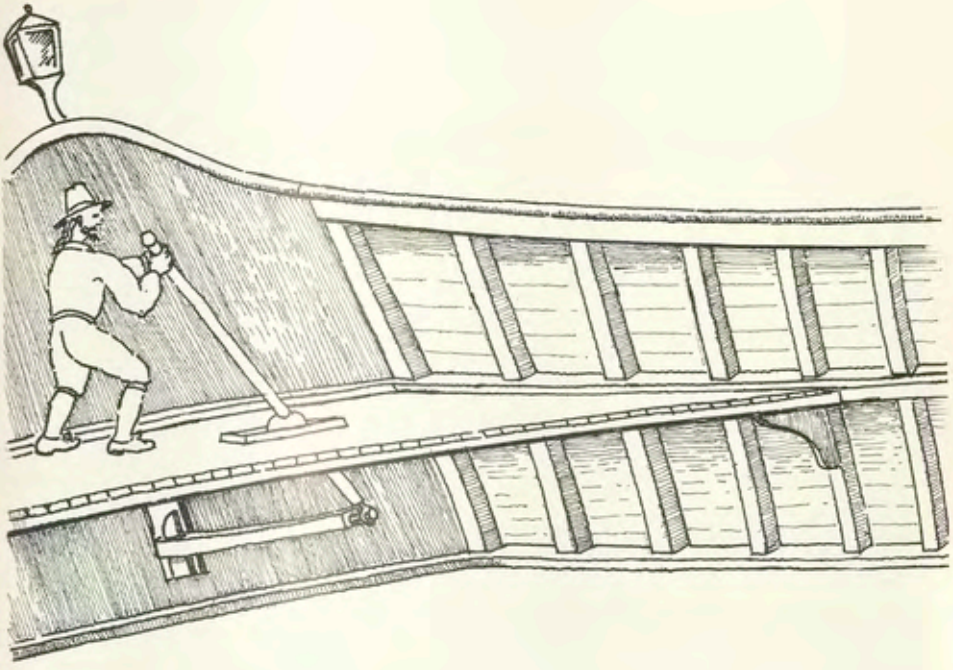
There is some doubt why moving a ship's tiller to the left has been called "porting the helm." The usual explanation recalls the time when ships carried a steering-oar on the starboard quarter and therefore, in landing, turned the left side toward the quay or wharf. The left side is said to have become the *port* side because it was next to the town or "port" or because the opening or "port" for loading cargo had to be on the left. *Port the helm* is then attributed to the earlier use of *port* for "the left side of the ship" (*OED*).[1] This explanation, although it cannot be discredited, overlooks other meanings of the verb *port* and their relation to steering.

Early Germanic ships were steered by an oar or paddle worked over the starboard quarter. Hence the right side of the ship came to be called in Old English the *steorbord* or "steering side." Since the steersman had to turn his back, more or less, to the left side, that side was called the *bācbord*. *Steorbord* remains in modern English as *starboard*, but, except in isolated dialectal use, *bācbord* has been replaced.[2] At least by the end of the fourteenth century *laddeborde* (MnE. *larboard*, probably by analogy with *sterbord, starbord*) had come into use. *Ladde-* is usually traced to Old English *hladan* "to load" or "to put cargo on board a ship,"

and *laddeborde* is therefore assumed to have meant the "loading side," which, because of the steering-oar on the starboard quarter, would have been next to the dock (*OED*).[3] *Larboard* has not disappeared, but it has generally been replaced by *port*. *Starboard* and *larboard* sound alike, and to prevent misunderstanding, the Royal Navy, in November 1844, and the United States Navy, in February 1846, directed that *port* be used to the exclusion of *larboard (OED)*.

But *port* "the left side of a ship" had already been in use for at least 300 years. The noun is first recorded for 1543 *(Shorter OED)*. The steering oar had pretty well disappeared from English ships by 1350-70; but even after the stern rudder came into general use, certain practices called for by the steering oar seem to have persisted, and as late as the seventeenth century a ship was likely to moor with her left side, rather than her starboard, along the dock. If she had only one entry- or loading-port, it was still on the left side.[4] Therefore, in the sixteenth century, the noun *port* "the left side of a ship" probably signified the "town side" or "loading side."

On the other hand, the appearance of both the noun and the verb, the latter in 1580, is close to the time when the verb *port* "to carry or bear" was current *(OED)*. Used as a command "to carry or bear the tiller," it could explain *port the helm*. In the two earliest recorded uses of *port the helm* the direction of motion is not indicated. The first mention is by Hugh Smith in Hakluyt (1580): "The William had her sterne post broken, that the rudder did hang clean besides the sterne, so that she could in no wise port her helme. . . ." The direction of *porting* is not stated, and the remainder of the passage, in which Smith explains how "we brought her to steere againe," does not show that *port* had any more connection with the left than the right.[5] The term next appears in Nashe's *The Terrors of the Night* (1594), where once more the direction of porting is not given.[6] The third appearance, in Captain John Smith's *A Sea Grammar* (1627), specifies motion of the tiller toward the left;[7] but in 1644 Mainwaring, although he distinguishes between *steady a-port* and *steady a-starboard*, speaks of "port [ing the helm] over from one side to another,"[8] and as late as 1776, *port* is defined in William Mountaine's *Seaman's Vade Mecum* as "to keep the same direction of the helm upon the starboard or larboard as has been last ordered."[9] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, therefore, and possibly in



helm hard-a-port
Whipstaff

the sixteenth, *port the helm* could mean carrying or bearing the tiller to either left or right. Possibly, having developed from *port* "the left side," *port the helm* generalized to mean motion of the tiller in either direction; but the usefulness of *port the helm* as an order clearly distinguishable from *starboard the helm* would make this extension of meaning rather surprising.

If *port the helm* came from a verb meaning "to carry or bear," how did it narrow in meaning to include only leftward motion? One cannot, of course, ignore the possible influence of *port* "the left side," which if not responsible for *port the helm* in the first

place apparently antedated it. A more evident reason was the need for a word that did not sound like *starboard*. *Larboard* persisted as the more usual and familiar term for the left side, and until the nineteenth century *port* tended to be used only when, as in phrases like *port the helm* or *top the yard to port*, "misrepresentation might be attended with very dangerous consequences."[10]

A further possibility is suggested by a method of steering used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When the stern rudder first replaced the steering oar, it was moved from side to side by a tiller attached to the rudder post and extending forward from the stern. Although this method was—and still is—satisfactory for very small vessels, the higher bulwarks and elaborate aftercastles of larger ships required some method of steering from a more elevated position, so that the steersman could see the sails. In the eighteenth centry, this method was provided by the wheel, but meanwhile—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—a device called the *whipstaff* or *whip* was frequently used. This was a vertical staff or rod, fastened at the bottom to the end of the tiller, provided with a fulcrum at the point where it passed through the deck above, and operated by a steersman standing on that deck, on the still higher platform, or on a plank athwartships. By moving the whipstaff to the left, the steersman turned the tiller to the right and, therefore, the rudder and the ship's head to the left.[11]

When the whipstaff was slanted to the left, its position resembled that of a ported musket or pike. *Port* in the military sense, that is, "to carry or hold a pike or rifle in both hands" is first dated 1625, and the *OED* quotation for 1688 clearly indicates that the weapon was held slanting across the *left* shoulder.[12] Of course, as both Smith and Mainwaring testify, the commands given to seventeenth-century steersmen applied to the direction of the *helm* or *tiller* and not the direction of the ship.[13] Nevertheless, as we know, *porting the helm* did not always mean moving the helm *leftward;* and a steersman, by moving a whipstaff, might "port [the helm] over from one side to another."[14] Therefore, if the command *port* came to signify motion to the left because a slanted whipstaff resembled a ported musket or pike, it began to do so at a time when moving the whipstaff to the left could still be considered *porting the helm*. I suggest, therefore, that *port* meaning leftward motion may have been derived from

the movement of the whipstaff, sometime during the sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and later applied to the helm, or horizontal tiller. Two other orders perhaps originating with the whipstaff were used, in the early seventeenth century, with the helm. These are, in Captain John Smith's words, "Right your Helme, that is, to keepe it in the mid ships, or right up," and "beare up" meaning "no neere [the wind], ease the Helme, . . . let her fall to leeward"* (p. 262). The second of these commands, *bear up*, is explained by Mainwaring as an order to put the "helm *up* to windward" (II, 96), but this meaning of *up* would not seem to account for "Right your Helme . . . keepe it in the mid ships, or right up." For this latter command, at least, the whipstaff would seem to be responsible.[15]

Probably *port* "the left side of a ship" developed from the loading- or entry-port on the left side or from the practice of docking left-side-to. Perhaps, therefore, it was because the left side was already called the *port side* that motion of the tiller in that direction came to be known as *porting the helm;* at any rate, *port* "the left side" must have influenced the present meaning of *port the helm*. But the verb *port* "to carry or bear" offers another explanation of *port the helm*, especially since, for a hundred years or so, the helm could be "ported" to either side. More than for any other reason, probably, *port* came to mean only leftward motion because it avoided dangerous confusion with *larboard*. This reference to leftward motion may have been strengthened, or even suggested in the first place, by the use of the whipstaff.

*There appears to be an unexplainable contradiction of terms here.—Ed.

Notes:

1. See also H.C. Wyld, *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1932).

2. See J. Wright, *English Dialect Dictionary* (London, 1898), I, p. 112.

3. Cf. Swed. *ladda;* Icel. hlaða (W. Skeat, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, Oxford, 1878-1882), p. 329. See also Bertil Sandahl, *Middle Sea Terms*, I, *The Ship's Hull* (Upsala, 1951), pp. 200-201, n.; E. Weekley, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (London, 1921); Wyld. Cf. Skeat, *Transactions of the Philological Society, 1888-90* (London, 1891), pp. 13-14.

4. R.D. A[nderson], "'Side-Shelves and Entry Ports and 'Port'," *The Mariner's Mirror*, IV (1914), pp. 153-154; R. and R.C. Anderson, *The Sailing-Ship* (London, 1926), pp. 85-89; E.K. Chatterton, *Sailing Ships* (London, 1909), pp. 146, 150, 155-156; C.E. Gibson, *The Story of a Ship*,

(New York, 1948), pp. 94-95; A. Jal, *Archéologie navale* (Paris, 1840), II, pp. 437-438; R.G. Lowry, *The Origins of Some Naval Terms and Customs* (London, n.d.), pp. 7-8; Sandahl, pp. 200-201, and 200-201, n.

5. R. Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation* (Glasgow, 1903), II, p. 290; *OED*.

6. *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R.B. McKerrow (London, 1910), I. p. 379; *OED*.

7. *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England & The Summer Isles Together with . . . A Sea Grammar* (Glasgow, 1907), II, p. 262.

8. *The Seaman's Dictionary* in *The Life and Works of Sir Henry Mainwaring*, ed. G.E. Manwaring and W.G. Perrin (Navy Records Society, 1922), II, pp. 255-256.

9. Quoted in "Port," *The Mariner's Mirror*, II (1912), p. 89.

10. W. Falconer and W. Bruney, *A New and Universal Dictionary of the Marine* (London, 1830), p. 350. Quoted from Falconer's 1776 edition by H.S. Vaughan, "The Use of the Word 'Port' with Reference to the Helm," *The Mariner's Mirror*, II (1912), p. 213. See also F. Liardet, *Professional Recollections* (Portsea, 1849), pp. 174-175; Mainwaring, p. 200; John Smith, p. 262; Vaughan, p. 213. In 1733 Bailey uses *larboard* in defining *port* but not *port* in defining *larboard* (*Universal Etymological Dict.*).

11. H.S. Vaughan, "The Whipstaff," *The Mariner's Mirror*, III (1913), pp. 230-237; IV (1914), pp. 133-144 (see also IV, pp. 152-153; 249); Anderson, *The Sailing-Ship*, pp. 156-157, 169; Mainwaring, II, pp. 255-256; John Smith, p. 234.

12. A possible connection between *port the helm* and *port arms* was suggested by J.S.C.[orbett], "Port," *The Mariner's Mirror*, II (1912), p. 346.

13. P. 262; see also Mainwaring, p. 130; and *Gentleman's Dictionary* (London, 1705), Fff5v.

14. Mainwaring, II, pp. 255-256. See also pp. 130, 163, 164, 200, 245.

15. See Jal, *Glossaire nautique* (Paris, 1848), p. 821.

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Editor's Note: *Mr. Albrecht has recently retired as Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Kansas.*

Director's Message

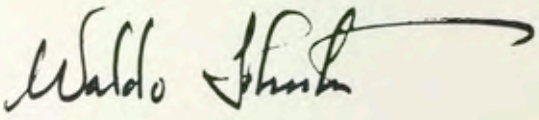
On August 8, 1972 the Accreditation Commission of the American Association of Museums announced that Mystic Seaport, having "met the standards of operation as established by the museum profession" has been granted accreditation. Mystic Seaport—together with the Yale University Art Gallery—thus becomes one of the two Connecticut institutions that have been granted accreditation as of this writing. To date 139 museums in the United States and Canada have been accreditated.

The museum accreditation program of the American Association of Museums was implemented in 1970 after two years of development. Its purpose was "to alleviate the widely varying levels of museum operations in the United States and to establish specifically defined guidelines and attainable professional standards to which a museum could aspire." Accreditation is accomplished through a rigorous examination by the AAM, including submission of a long and detailed questionnaire, an on-site investigation by an AAM accreditation visiting committee, and final review and decision by the Accreditation Commission.

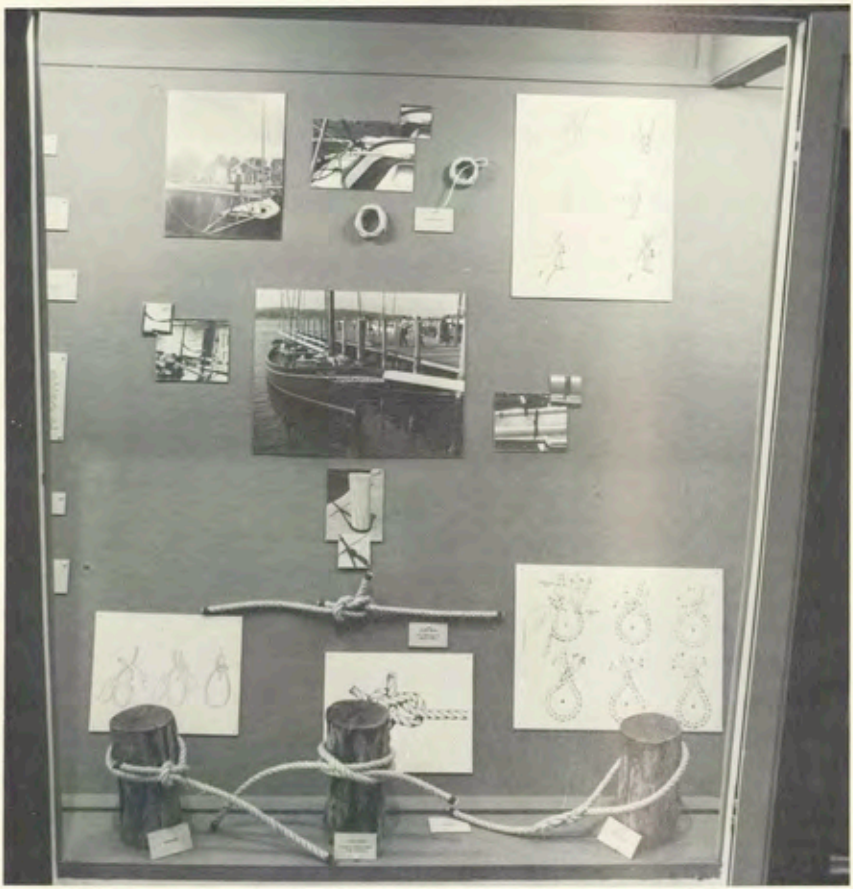
All of us are pleased that we have passed this examination by our peers; but we look upon this not as an honor, but an obligation. We have an indication that we are on the correct course and our navigation is accurate—but we are far from the finish line. We have a long way to go to reach those standards of perfection in exposition, teaching, research and administration toward which we aspire. We have a long way to go before this museum reaches its full fruition and its maximum capability—before we are satisfied with our performance and results.

Much windward work lies ahead.

But it is reassuring to know we are sailing "full and by."

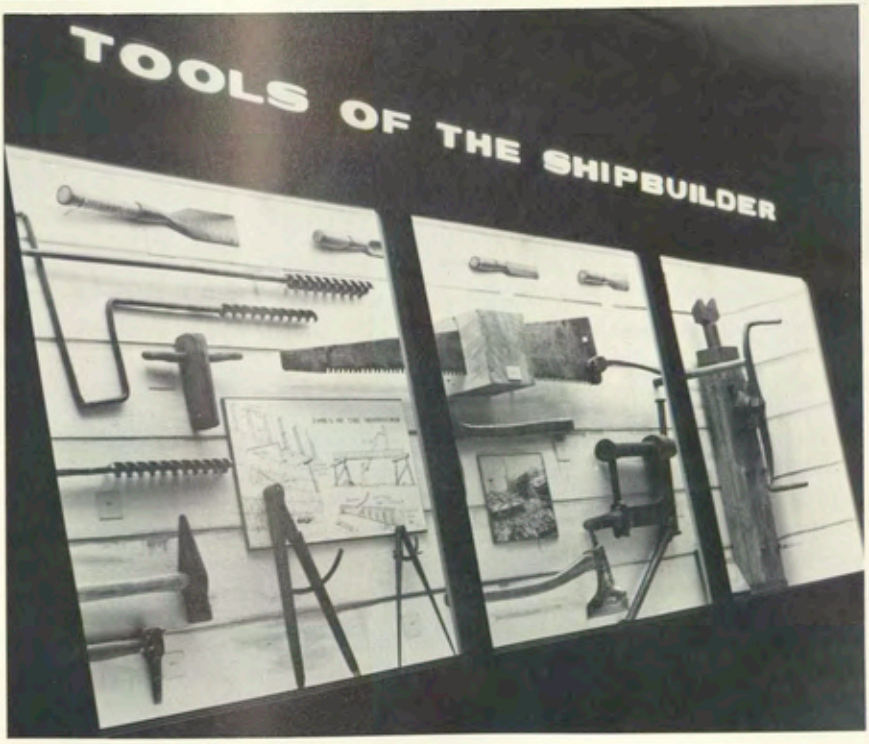


NEW EXHIBITS



From the display in the Stillman Building, *above*, a companion panel to our front cover of fancy knots and lashings, with documentary evidence of their use. *The Ashley Book of Knots* lists about four thousand. The Model Restoration Shop, in the Clift Block, *top, opposite page*, is a working exhibit where visitors may see model restorers William Quincy or Garrison Twing doing minor repair work on Seaport models. Here Bill Quincy with a model of the *Constitution*, which was a bequest from Harrison Cady. Built all in 1/4" scale, with dimensions of 71-1/2" height, and 10-3/4" beam, she is rigged with cotton sails. Once the daily helpers of every working shipwright, who considered his "kit" a prized possession, shipwrights' tools are increasingly hard to come by today. *Opposite, below*, in the basement of the Mallory Wing, one side of a dramatic exhibit commemorating a trade and skill extending back beyond the Egyptians. All photographs: Les Olin.




TOOLS OF THE SHIPBUILDER



This photograph of the fishing schooner *Hattie A. Heckman* was taken in Narragansett Bay by the late Edward W. Smith, whose fine collection of glass plate negatives was given to The Marine Historical Association by his son, Edward W. Smith, Jr. The *Hattie A. Heckman* was launched from the building yard of Arthur D. Story as Essex, Massachusetts in December 1895, for Captain George E. Heckman et al of Gloucester. The photograph was probably taken during the first or second mackerel season in Narragansett Bay as Mr. Smith, an ardent yachtsman and a summer resident of Newport, was most active at that time. The *Heckman* has the look of a new vessel and is completely typical in size and type of the Gloucester fishing schooner of her day. She registered 105 gross and 72 net tons, her register dimensions being 90′ length x 24.6′ beam x 10′ depth. In the spring and early summer she usually fitted out for mackerel seining as indicated by the photograph. About 1914, she was sold to go under the Canadian flag and was a total loss in November, 1922 when she stranded at Newfoundland and broke up.

BOOK REVIEWS

BLUE WATER COASTER by Francis E. Bowker. *International Marine Publishing Co., Camden, Maine. 1972.* $7.95.

It is hard to realize that even on the Atlantic Coast, with its seafaring tradition, only a relatively small minority knows what a coasting schooner is.

Captain Bowker is one of a select few who have sailed on coasters and who can describe with clarity and authority the many detailed facets of life under sail.

Blue Water Coaster is an important and valuable contribution to our understanding of a by-gone, but once completely encompassing, method of carrying on maritime trade. From the founding of our country until the death knell of sail transportation was sounded by the proliferation of steamers built at the time of the First World War, the coastwise and West Indian commerce of the United States was largely carried on under sail—under much the same conditions as encountered by seaman Bowker.

He has used his experiences aboard vessels in two different coasting trades to give readers an intimate, salty and forthright picture of what it was like to be a seaman in coastwise and offshore sail. His understanding of the economics of latter-day sail is clear. His love for the vessels despite their state of disrepair and for life at sea despite its hardships is abundantly evident. It is also a pleasure to record his understanding of and sensitivity for his shipmates and the ports he visited.

In his coastwise voyage aboard the four-masted schooner *Alvena*, Captain Bowker gives the reader a vivid feeling for the routine of handling a sailing vessel at sea. Concisely illustrated by the clear and artistic drawings of John Leavitt and by reference to a number of fine close-up photographs, his descriptions are a delight to the sailor and at the same time easily understood by those unfamiliar with sail. Throughout the narrative of this last, abortive voyage of *Alvena*, comes in loud and clear the author's feeling for the sea, his ship and those with whom he had to deal.

The story of the offshore voyage aboard the three-master *E.P. Theriault* covers additional facets of ship handling but concerns itself more with character insights of Captain Bowker's shipmates and, especially, with his reactions to abusive treatment by his captain. Not neglected are glimpses of various Canadian and West Indian ports, described with sensitivity, understanding and warm appreciation. Yachtsmen who have cruised the area will wonder at the course followed in sailing from Grenada to Barbados. But don't forget—the *Theriault* had no engine to get her through the rough spots.

Blue Water Coaster is a readable, absorbing and welcome addition to the knowledge and lore of coastwise schooner handling and operation. Highly recommended.

ROBERT H. I. GODDARD

GAFF RIG by John Leather. *International Marine Publishing Company, Camden, Maine, 1971,* $15.

The republication of John Leather's *Gaff Rig* should be welcomed by the maritime-minded who did not acquire copies of the first edition for their libraries. In an age when the newest is generally accepted as the best, there is a reawakened interest in the old among some groups and especially so among sailing yachtsmen. "Character" boats have been making their appearance in increasing numbers, and a study of the fore and aft rig of the days of wood and iron seems not at all out of place.

Attempts to combine the aesthetic appeal of the antique with the scientific modernity of the Marconi rig have not been outstandingly successful. To many people, one negates the other, although John Leather has been rather successful in wedding the old to the new in the design of his own cutter yacht *Odd Times.* In the process, he made a study of the gaff rig in its various forms all over the world and the book is more or less the compendium of what he learned.

As might be expected, the various rigs of the British Isles were studied in detail and are so presented in photographs and drawings by the author. These are generally excellent, beginning with the sturdy seagoing ketch shown in color on the dust jacket, and showing the many and varied types of gaff rigs to be found in the cutters, smacks, trawlers, ketches and schooners sailing in British and Continental waters.

Unfortunately, his presentation of the gaff rig as we know it in this country is somewhat lacking at times in accuracy. This reviewer believes a case can be made for the claim that in the United States the fore and aft gaff rig reached its highest point of development and efficiency for its time, both in the commercial and yachting fleets. Perhaps Mr. Leather should not be expected to agree fully with such an idea, but it is to be wished that he had been able to study the rig as exemplified in this country at closer hand.

Because of the resurgence of interest in gaff-rigged catboats along the American East Coast, he was able to present a fairly detailed and accurate analysis of the rig, although his reference to and drawing of a main sheet boom bail such as was fitted to many catboat main booms, is not common. Such a bail was usually two half-bands with eyes through which the threaded ends of the bail or a similar device could be inserted. Nuts could be set up to bring the ends of the band together, making any fastening in the boom unnecessary.

Historically, he seems to have a number of misconceptions. For instance, he says "The boomless gaff was widely used for the foresails of North American schooners but its use as a standing gaff with brails seems to have been very limited." To illustrate this boomless gaff rig, he shows a drawing of a New York harbor sailing cargo lighter, sloop rigged. While it is true that boomless foresails were in use on American Schooners in the early years (before 1820), they almost invariably *did* brail in to the mast and the gaff *was* standing. The rig of the New York harbor lighters really had no bearing on the subject. They were just about the only vessels so rigged, designed that way simply because of their special requirements for going alongside larger vessels and piers to take on and discharge cargo.

The author makes a few mistakes,

such as calling the fishing schooner *Ethel B. Jacobs* in one place by that, her proper name, and *Elizabeth B. Jacobs*, which it was not, in another. He also names the *Thomas S. Gorton* built in 1905 as the last fishing schooner built without auxiliary power, whereas this honor belongs to the *L.A. Dunton*, launched at Essex, Massachusetts in 1921 and now preserved at Mystic Seaport.

However, most of the foregoing is historical rather than practical and in the study of the gaff rig is perhaps not as important as more details on actual fittings and rigging might have been. Many rigging features brought to a high state of development in American coasters and fishermen might have been studied and presented to greater advantage for the benefit of historically minded yachtsmen who are not wedded to fiberglass, aluminum and gadgetry.

Despite its failings, however, *Gaff Rig* is a book well worth having on any maritime library shelf and the International Marine Publishing Co. is to be congratulated for its republication.

JOHN F. LEAVITT
Associate Curator

ADVENTURES TO CHINA: AMERICANS IN THE SOUTHERN OCEANS, 1792-1812 by James Kirker. *Oxford University Press, New York, 1970.* $7.50.

When Mr. Kirker visited the G.W. Blunt White Library in 1966 in search of materials for this book, we got the impression that here was a competent historian who would produce a definitive history of American sealing between the end of the Revolution and the War of 1812. Even though the book falls a little short of our expectations, Mr. Kirker has done a good job of telling the story as defined in his subtitle. He has actually gone somewhat beyond sealing to include the beginnings of the sandalwood trade.

Adventures to China is divided into eleven chapters. The first establishes the goal, while the second and third identify the hunted and the hunters. Chapters four through eleven deal with geographic regions haunted by the sealers and sandalwood traders. Perhaps the most colorful and memorable are Mas Afuera, Fiji and Polynesia. Others include the South Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Southeastern Pacific, Australasia and Canton. Liberal appropriate quotations from manuscripts in institutions throughout New England and from published accounts of early voyages make for lively reading in all chapters.

This reviewer finds it strange that a book such as this should have been produced without a preface, foreword or acknowledgments page in which the author recognizes the assistance rendered him during his research. He apparently used original manuscripts in at least thirteen libraries. Some recognition should be shown to the institutions which opened their research materials to him.

One possible clue to this matter is the fact that the four items cited as being in the collections of The Marine Historical Association, Incorporated —journals on the *Asia, Warren, Minerva* and *Rebecca*—are in our library only in microfilm. In 1966 all four original journals were privately owned and Mr. Kirker was made aware of this fact. In those cases in which we could locate the information, we provided him with the names of the owners of the original volumes. He does not

give their names, so we can only conclude that he failed to contact them. Since we have a firm rule against granting permission to publish anything we do not own in the original unless we have permission from the owner, we are positive we did not give the author or publisher permission to quote from the four journals. It seems logical to conclude then that excerpts were published without permission.

The book has no bibliography, but rather has what the author chooses to call bibliographical notes. All these notes are at the back of the book. Even though this is a very commonplace procedure today, usually for reasons of economy, it is still a frustrating and inconvenient method from the reader's point of view. One thing I find very disappointing about the footnotes is that in citing original manuscripts the author never gives the date of the entry he is quoting or referring to. Such information is as vital for unpaged documents as page numbers are for published items. There obviously was a mixup in footnotes 24 and 25 of Chapter 10, page 160. One further matter regarding footnotes is the author's failure to identify or locate the log of the *Diana*, quoted from on page 48.

One frustrating habit of the author is his failure to identify the authors of most of his sources in the text of his narrative. A few examples are: "supercargo of a New England Vessel," "American Sealing Officer," "A New England Sealer," "Master of a New Haven Gang," "Master of a Connecticut Gang," "A Boston Ship's Master" and "A Connecticut Seaman." The end result of this practice is that the authors of the four sources most frequently referred to—Ebenezer Townsend, Jr., David Forbes, Nathaniel Appleton and Elijah Davis—do not appear in the index. Since there is no bibliography, it is difficult to determine that these sources were used.

The index, useful as it is, cannot be totally relied upon. In checking only the names of vessels, I found over twenty errors or omissions. The most frequent error was not giving all pages on which a vessel occurred. Another was listing a vessel on a page on which it did not appear. And at least one vessel did not appear at all in the index.

Taken as a whole, in spite of its shortcomings, I would recommend this book to anyone interested in sealing. The life of sealers and sandalwood traders is portrayed rather well. I think that Ernest Dodge made some of the same characters "come alive" a bit better in *New England and the South Seas*, but Dodge did not deal with as many of the individuals as does Kirker.

CHARLES R. SCHULTZ
University Archivist
Texas A & M University
(Former Librarian,
G.W. Blunt White Library)

Also Received:

GREAT SHIP DISASTERS by A.A. Hoehling. *Cowles Book Company, Inc., New York, 1971.* $6.95.

SEA FEVER: The Making of a Sailor by Emery N. Cleaves. *Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1972.* $6.95.

THE LUSITANIA CASE collected by C.L. Droste, edited by W.H. Tantum. *7 C's Press, Inc., Riverside, Conn., 1972.* $8.

CORNISH SHIPWRECKS Volume 2: The North Coast by Clive Carter. *Taplinger Publishing Company, New York, 1970.* $8.50

CORNISH SHIPWRECKS Volume 3: The Isles of Scilly by Richard Larn. *Taplinger Publishing Company, New York, 1971.* $8.50

LETTERS

Dear Miss Grey:

I've just read Mr. Cheever's fine account of the Herreshoff Fifteens and his wonderfully graphic description of the race on Buzzards Bay and suddenly it is 43 years ago and once again I am a boy of 15 with my friends on Flushing Bay (one of the most aptly named bodies of water on earth because even then it was a sink . . . but to us boys it was the world).

We weren't poor boys but it was simply unthinkable for any one of our families to actually buy a boat, even second hand. But we had boats. Many things drifted into Flushing Bay from Long Island Sound and even though smashed up by storms far away some of them were salvageable. Ownership of these prizes was determined by the simple law of the sea . . . first one to get a line on it owned it lock, stock and barrel. One of the boys hauled in a stove-in racing shell and through hours of patient work made it seaworthy. Where he got the oars I'll never know but I can see him now cutting through the water in that mahogany sliver. Another of the boys pulled in a smashed little catboat about 12' long and made it seaworthy once again. I remember, he named it *Damfino.*

The body of the "fleet" however, consisted of 14' (overall) Marconi-rigged homemade sail boats. The lumber was white pine stolen from various building sites after dark. The father of one of the boys was a tailor and the hours that man spent, after putting in a full day in a shop in New York City, sewing sails for us staggers the mind. Another of the boys who, although he didn't know it at the time, was headed for Webb Institute, decided on the design and told us exactly where to step the masts. (He is now a four-striper in the United States Coast Guard.) We put work into those boats that Captain Herreshoff himself wouldn't be ashamed of. And we raced . . . and we learned to sail. If I had a dollar for every time one of us capsized I could afford a Herreshoff Fifteen right now! Another of those boys soon became a jib-man on a Star-class boat that was raced in international competition. He was a HERO!

Archie Binns, author of *Lightship,* wrote a short story that ran in *Esquire.* It was about a group of boys that sailed their homemade boats into a harbor much like Port Washington where they found lying at anchor one of those sailing yachts that are seen only in expensive magazines . . . sleek black freeboard, seagreen below the waterline, soaring masts, gleaming metal. They drift past staring. The deckhand, in immaculate whites, invites them aboard and they tie up carefully. He tells them that

the owner comes out from New York maybe three times a summer for a short sail. The remainder of the time the boat lies there, swinging at anchor. The boys sail away in their boats that are a part of almost every minute of their waking hours. Archie Binns lived with his wife and baby daughter on a chartered schooner in Flushing Bay at that time . . . and those boys were us.

No, those awkward little boats weren't Herreshoff Fifteens but I'll bet my life that nobody in a Herreshoff Fifteen ever had a better time than we did.

Sincerely yours and congratulations on a fine publication.

John Wieting, Editor
New York Port Handbook
New York, N.Y.

Dear Dave [Cheever]:

My congratulations. That is an absolutely swell article you wrote for the Mystic *LOG*. I got a terrific kick out of it and learned a lot about the Beverly "15-footer" class that I never knew. Thank you so much.

I began racing *Varda* at Beverly in 1916 (age 10), my first racing boat. Crew were mother and "Whispering Harry" Perry of Monument Beach. Father was in the Navy and the pair of them used to berate my steering inability so strongly that I was frequently in tears. Perry was known as "Whispering Harry" because he was nearly stone deaf, liked to talk a lot and hear himself talk, so always spoke in a loud shout. Got the name from his scalloper friends in Monument Beach. He owned the big catboat *Defiance*, which used to tow *Varda* from Back River Cove to Beverly Y.C. He had a one-lung Lathrop in it and his language, when he couldn't start it, was *not* for a little Groton boy to hear.

I don't think Father took very good care of *Varda* (mind on bigger yachts). I raced her well into the 1920s and remember you could see daylight through her windward seams in any kind of a breeze. She was always full of water with somebody pumping. Sam Hallowell crewed for me a lot and was always sure she would sink.

John Parkinson, Jr.
Oyster Bay, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Gardner:

. . . This year's small boat workshop was my first—and it was one of the great experiences of my life. It was a source of real encouragement that our society has room left for men who want to produce beautiful wooden boats—and their fiberglass counterparts. The whole tone and atmosphere was great. . . .

Sidney S. Whelan, Jr.
American Museum of
Natural History



Above: this distinguished trio (left to right) of Benjamin W. Labaree, professor of history at Williams College, William A. Baker, curator, Francis Hart Nautical Museum at M.I.T., and Robert G. Albion, Gardiner Professor (Emeritus) of Oceanic History and Affairs at Harvard University, are the authors of New England and the Sea, *Volume V in our American Maritime Library series. (Not shown, book's equally distinguished picture editor Marion V. Brewington, director, Kendall Whaling Museum.) This Seaport book, published for us by Wesleyan University Press, was launched at a party in the G.W. Blunt White Library on November 16. Front cover: fancy knots and lashings—a panel from a new display in the Stillman Building. Back cover: Christmas Carol Sing, 1971. All photographs: Les Olin.*



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