The LOG



# of Mystic Seaport®

FALL 1974

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THE COVER: A crew of riggers manned one of the Seaport-built whaleboats in races during Maritime Heritage Week last summer. The Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard is in the background.

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THE WHALEBOAT

PERFORMANCE AND USE

BY WILLITS ANSEL

In the whaleboat of 1870 function rigorously determined design. The boats aboard whaleships were unnamed, unadorned, and considered expendable.[1] Boatsteerers were responsible for the readiness and maintenance of their boat, and mates for the training of the crew, in which they took pride, but their interest in the boat tended to be practical. They were utilitarian craft: nothing about lines, rig, construction, or fittings was for show or without purpose. To understand the design, one examines the use to which they were put.

On sighting a whale and the order of the captain to lower, the boat's crew – mate in charge, boatsteerer and four oarsmen – ran to the davits, lifted the line tubs into the boat, put in the plug, threw off the gripes and gig tackle, raised the boat enough to swing in the cranes that supported the keel, and then lowered. The mate in the stern and the boatsteerer in the bow went down in the boat; the men came down after it was waterborne, scrambling down the chains and over the channels. Davit tackles were cast off as oars were shipped and the boat shoved off. One English writer said that two boats could be pulling away from the side of the ship one minute after sighting a whale.[2]

Lowering in rough seas was routine. Joseph Conrad in *Last Essays* describes meeting a whaleship in the wastes of the Southern Ocean on Christmas Day, 1879. A keg full of newspapers was thrown overboard as a present.

> I never saw anything so ready and so smart as the way that whaler, rolling desperately all the time, lowered one of her boats. The Southern Ocean went on tossing the two ships like a juggler his gilt balls, and the microscopic white spec of the boat seemed to come into the game instantly, as if shot out from a catapult on the enormous and lonely stage. That Yankee whaler lost not a moment in picking up her Christmas present from the English wool clipper.[3]

This article is excerpted from the next book to be published by Mystic Seaport, Inc. *The Whaleboat, 1870-1970, A Study of Design, Construction, and Use*, by Willits D. Ansel, is scheduled for Spring, 1975.



Boat from the *John R. Manta* raising her mast. Courtesy of Kendall Whaling Museum.



Crew from Mystic Seaport raising mast. Photograph by author.

Immediately the oars were "lined," that is, the whale line or warp was led out of the larger after tub, back around the loggerhead, forward over the oars, through the bow chocks, under the pin, back to the box for several coils of four or five fathoms (the "stray line"), and then to the "live" irons in the crotch on the starboard side.

Away from the side of the ship, the boat might raise the mast.[4] Going on the whale under sail was the preferred way, particularly if the whale was to leeward and the boat could run down on it. Oars were used if the whale was to windward and paddles, because of their silence, in light airs and if the speed under sail dropped below three knots. Sometimes sails and paddles were used together.

An undisturbed sperm whale moves along at three to four knots. The approach is made as quietly as possible to avoid gallying it. Sailing "on" became increasingly the rule after 1850. In 1880, Henry Hall noted the whales had become shy and were easily gallied by oars; therefore sailing on was more successful.[5] A whaling captain in the bowhead Arctic fishery wrote later that anyone not going on under sail if wind permitted did not know his business.[6]

If the wind did not permit, the crew pulled toward the whales. A trained crew in smooth water could pull five miles the first hour and four the second. Pulling to windward, they could make four knots and a green crew not over three.[7] These figures were verified in trials on the Mystic River in a loaded whaleboat in 1973. In one sprint over a quarter-mile course, a Mystic Seaport boat made six and one-half knots. The boats are fast and easily driven under oars; they are also very quick to accelerate. The writer observed a boat lying dead in the water with the oars ready; on the order to pull, the boat got up to speed rapidly. The long oars are limber as the men put their backs into the stroke. The boats pull easily; as part of a green crew, I pulled some four miles in one with little effort or fatigue.

Extravagant claims were sometimes made for speed of the boats and endurance of the crews. One author states that the boats could make "ten miles an hour in dead chase of a whale by oars alone."[8] This would have been driving the boat at considerably greater than hull speed. Another author, Robert Ferguson, quotes the mate as saying it was nothing for a crew to pull twenty miles to windward in a rough sea with "never a whimper out of them."[9] There probably was no whimpering but it must have exhausted the toughest crew. A gallied whale moves at from eight to ten knots and was rarely successfully approached under oars.

When pulled, five men were at the oars of the standard whaleboat carried by an American whaleship. The boatsteerer pulled with the four regular oarsmen. The mate handled the steering oar in the stern: sometimes, to give an extra bit of power and to control the stroke, he put his hand on the stroke oar and pushed with each stroke. I have seen motion pictures of an Azorean boat with the men pulling hard. The mate is not only pushing with his right hand on the stroke oar, but he is sculling the steering oar with his left hand. To scull an oar perhaps twenty-two feet long with one hand took a big man.

The steering oar had several advantages over the rudder which was only used when the boat was under sail. The moving boat could be turned faster because of the great leverage of the oar, and it could be used in a seaway when a rudder could be out of water. A boat without way on could be turned by sweeping the stern around with the oar. The oar had other uses, too: it could be used for sculling through narrow leads through ice floes, around docks where it was too confined to use the oars or for very quiet approaches on whales. It was invariably used in working around the whale when it was lanced.

Under sail, the boats with the larger rigs of the late-nineteenth century could make seven to eight knots in smooth water with a fresh breeze well aft of the quarter, it was noted by Brown.[10] Some, he said, claimed ten knots. Four to six knots was a good average for a boat beating and running in the course of sailing over a period of time on a number of headings. These figures appear reasonable following tests of the boats in Mystic in 1973. The boats were more weatherly than expected and were fast in light airs. The boat tested had a gaff main and a small jib with a total of about 340 square feet of sail. Its waterline length was about twenty-six feet. With her long run and low wetted surface, she should have been fast. She was sensitive to weight shifts and trim, as to be expected in a light vessel: the 900 pounds or so of live ballast was actively used. She proved tender initially and stiff when heeled, sailing with thylee rail level with the water, occasionally taking in small amounts. The boat accelerated quickly and, in coming about, with her length and light weight, sometimes lost headway, requiring the backing of the jib. This was not always necessary and the observation that a "whaleboat because of its length and comparative flatness of its keel and the slight purchase of the rudder, will not come about easily under sail" is a bit strong.[11]

It has often been observed that a looser boat is fast and the same has been said of whaleboats. Captain Bodfish wrote of a boat



What appears to be a crack raising crew. Fairhaven, Massachusetts, in the background. Courtesy of Kendall Whaling Museum.

which had been strained through negligent hoisting when half-full of water. Thereafter she worked a great deal under sail, but was very fast. Thereupon, the other boats were given the same treatment. He claimed they did not leak despite this rough handling.

The techniques of approach under sail and oar varied with the type of whale. In going on the bowhead under sail, since the danger is mainly from the flukes, the boat is layed about or paddles are used to keep her off when darting. The boats sailed directly at the right whale, which settled very rapidly when hit, thus sometimes allowing the boat to sail over it without touching. Going on under sail took able handling. Captain George Comer, whaling in Hudson Bay around 1900, describes in his journal jibing and capsizing at the instant of darting.[12] Captain Bodfish also wrote of losing whales through poor handling of sails. Boats were sometimes sailed up to the point of collision with sperm whales, but usually the boat ranged up on the whale's starboard quarter to give the boatsteerer an easier dart if he was righthanded. The boat then sheered off, sometimes using oars or paddles to clear the flukes. If the boat had a jib, it was generally taken in before



Demonstration interpreters racing whaleboat at Mystic Seaport, 1974. Photograph: Claire L. White.

darting to clear the forward part of the boat; however, today the Azoreans sometimes go on with the jib still set.

The boatsteerer darts his first iron and, if time permits, his second which is attached to the whale line with a short warp. If the second iron cannot be darted, he throws it overboard to prevent its flailing around in the boat as line is taken out. He then attends to the lowering of the mast as the whale sounds.

Lowering the mast and later maneuvering around the whale for lancing were supreme tests of a crew's training. Captain Earle of the *Charles W. Morgan* described the steps in lowering the sail and mast of a gaff-rigged whaleboat.

1. Halyards were let go by the boatsteerer after planting harpoons and throwing warp over from the box
2. The boat's crew, remaining seated, caught the sail and tied it
3. Bow oarsman cast off shrouds and wound them around the mast
4. Boatsteerer lifted mast while the men steadied it
5. Mate and men aft caught the mast while it was lowered, its heel in the hinged tabernacle[13]

The mast was passed aft, its heel jammed under the after thwart, rested and lashed to a fitting on the cuddy board, and the

end allowed to hang over the starboard quarter. All this was done "quicker than it takes in the telling," as the boat pitched and rolled, line ran out, the whale sounded, and the boat picked up speed as the line was snubbed.

Another description of lowering the mast with a spritsail, apparently after the boatsteerer and mate had shifted ends, has the bow oarsman furling the sail around the mast, placing the sprit up against the mast and lashing the whole with two half hitches, and then unshipping the mast. The men aft caught it. In this instance the mast was small, only 13′ tall, used in a boat whaling from shore; the mast was stepped in a hole in the second thwart.[14]

A description of striking the large mast of an Azorean boat concludes by saying: "The speed with which the heavy mast and huge sails are lowered, rolled, and lashed together is incredible."[15] The mast of one whaleboat I measured, small by Azorean standards, was 24′6″ tall and 5-3/4″ in diameter most of its length. The boom was almost 26′ long.

The technique of attacking the whale when under oars was different from going on under sail. The sperm whale is approached from directions out of his field of vision, generally from on his quarter or, less frequently, head on. In the latter case, the boat turns sharply just before striking. The boatsteerer pulls the oar farthest forward. On order, he peaks his oar, stands, seizes the iron from the crotch, and darts it.[16] The oars were used for backing off or sterning immediately after darting. Sterning was an exercise in which the crew had received much drilling. It was claimed a boat moving forward under oars at its highest speed could be stopped in one boat's length.[17] This was tried and to our surprise found possible by a crew at Mystic Seaport.

In attacking the bowhead under oars, the boat comes up alongside, the harpoon is darted, and at the same time the mate swings the stern out at right angles with the steering oar and orders stern all to clear the flukes. After gaining sternway, the men peak their oars and the line, now running out as the whale sounds, runs down through a channel formed by the peaked oars. Mate and boatsteerer then change places.

Changing ends by the mate and the boatsteerer was the universal practice, until recently in the Azores. Presumably it was done when the line was not running out and during a lull in the towing. That it seemed unnecessarily dangerous was remarked upon by several writers. One, W.J. Dakin, persisted in asking an old whaleman why, and the impatient answer was that harpooning a whale and killing it were two different jobs. Killing took special skill and was the duty and prerogative of the more experienced

mate. Perhaps it was a matter of prestige that the senior man dispatched the whale.

A whale that is harpooned may tow a boat at twenty knots for short sprints. He may tow the boat for hours, out of sight of the whaleship. If towed to windward, the bow pounds into head seas and sends spray bursting up in sheets. If it is rough, likely as not the boat is half-swamped. The boatsteerer, foot jammed in a brace in the stern sheets, struggled to control the boat with the steering oar, while the man who pulled the after oar tended the line at the loggerhead and the others bailed. The men moved aft as the whale sounded. With the whale pulling the bow under and the weight aft, a boat could settle evenly until it shipped water over the gunwale amidships. The racking of towing and sounding put great strains on the ends of the boat, sometimes starting the fastenings.

As the whale tired, the men faced forward and hauled in the line, which the after oarsman coiled down in the stern sheets. It was coiled carefully as the whale might make several runs taking line back out. As the boat was pulled up to the whale, the line was taken out of the bow chocks and brought back to one of the large cleats on each gunwale near the thigh board. This, called "bowing on," allowed the boat to be brought up alongside for lancing. The bow oarsman tended the line, heaving the boat in close as the mate, leg braced in the clumsy cleat, thrust the lance.

Often considerable maneuvering and work with the line, oars and steering oar was done alongside the whale during the lancing. The steering oar and the veering action of the line around the bow cleat kept the boat in position if the whale was moving; if the whale was not moving, the steering oar was used to sweep the stern around, or the oars were pulled or sterned together, or one side backed while the other pulled ahead to turn the boat and put the mate in the most advantageous position. In the flurry, all sterned to avoid the whale's death throes.

The task after killing was to get the whale alongside the whaleship. If possible, the ship worked toward the whale. Sometimes other boats could assist in towing, which could last hours and put more strain on boats and crew. Towing whales head first was the usual, but not invariably used, method.

The operation of boats whaling from shore is basically the same as whaling from a whaleship. The boats are launched from the open beach or from a ramp, usually with plenty of help from interested bystanders.[18] In the case of permanent ramps, larger boats such as the 38' Azorean boat may be launched. Skids are placed under the keels. The boats put out on the sighting of whales from shore, though boats from Australian stations some-

times went out on patrol and pulled along the coast ten miles or more on the lookout for whales. The Azoreans are now towed by power boats to the vicinity of the whales, and the approach is then made under sail, oars, or paddle. The power boats may assist in the killing and generally help in towing the whale to the factory.

Wherever shore whaling was carried on, the boats relied more on oars or, more recently, on a tow by a power boat rather than sail, though local weather was the determining factor. Centerboards were often omitted and the rig reduced, though the larger rig of the Azoreans is an exception. In Bequia centerboards are used.

The performance of the boats was directly related to the condition and state of training of the crews, and undoubtedly the high reputation of the boats was partly the result of efficient crews showing the boats to their best advantage. In the whaleships, the green crews were drilled on the voyage out. Boats were lowered and raised, the mast set and the sail made until the men worked quickly and safely. There was much exercise with the oars, drilling the men for speed in pulling and quick response to sterning or twisting the boat by pulling three oars and sterning two or the reverse. They drilled in the silent use of paddles. A spar was sometimes towed and the boats made runs on it to simulate going on a whale. A by-product of the efficiency with the oars in attacking whales showed in the excellent landings the crews made alongside vessels or docks in port. Landing through surf also came naturally after the training at sea. The mates encouraged competition between boats, and morale and agressiveness of the crew – a function of proficiency – had a good deal to do with the number of whales taken. Despite all the training, there was still danger, sometimes panic, and opportunities for foul-ups in the excitement of the chase.[19]

Attempts were made to duplicate the action in a whaleboat in drills at Mystic Seaport in the summer of 1973. Approaches were made on a slow-moving launch under oars, paddles, sail, and sail and paddles together. When within darting distance, the whale line was thrown to the launch, where it was secured, and the launch speeded up. The crew practiced sterning and then peaking oars, handling the boat under tow, lowering the mast under tow, letting line run from the tub, snubbing the line at the loggerhead, pulling up on the launch and recoiling the line, letting the line run out from the coils in the stern sheets, and bowing on.

Lowering the mast under tow and with the line running out was not difficult or dangerous under the conditions that prevailed. Sailing approaches were made running down on the launch and



Crew from Mystic Seaport drilling. The crew has just lowered the mast while under tow. Photograph by author.

sailing on it close-hauled. Jib was taken in first followed by the main after making fast. The main could be got down in about five seconds; releasing the shrouds and lowering the mast required another five. Furling the sails, passing the spars aft, and lashing them down took ten to fifteen seconds. With time spent between the three operations, the whole could be done in under a minute.

Mistakes were made at first. In one run close-hauled in a stiff wind the shrouds were released on the weather side before the sail was all the way down and doused. The heel of the mast jumped out of the step, in which it was none too well seated, and knocked the side out of the trough. The mast became jammed and could not be lowered. On another approach the whale line was "lined" on the wrong side – the starboard side of the mast – making it impossible to lower the mast over the starboard quarter without dropping it on the line. Tending the line and taking turns of the running line around the loggerhead took practice. It became clear why the nippers were safer than gloves, which could be caught and pull a hand into the running turns. The crew was mindful to avoid the line running out as they lowered the mast, but found they could still work in reasonable safety.

It was found that the boat was controlled easily with the steering oar when under tow. Pulling up on the launch as it slowed to two or three knots was easy for the crew. The line was coiled in

the stern sheets as it came in and was allowed to run out as the launch made another run. This was done a number of times and the line ran without kinks. The whaleboat was brought up alongside the launch and bowed on at the end of each practice run.

The point should be made that the first exercises were done slowly for the sake of safety and subsequent ones were controlled. Conditions of sea and wind were calm on the three days the crew drilled. In cold weather with a sea running and with a strong wind, all the operations would have been far more difficult.

In a further test of performance, one boat was measured and entered in a race against modern boats around Fishers Island, New York. Under the formula used, her rating was high, mainly because of the long waterline length. She was placed in a class with about a dozen smaller sloops of three different designs. The whaleboat was third over the starting line and maintained this position for most of the first leg of the course, which was a spinnaker reach for the sloops. The wind became very light, and the others pulled ahead. The next leg was to windward and the whaleboat was left far behind. With the tide at the Race off Fishers Island about to turn to a strong ebb, the crew of the whaleboat dropped out of the race and took to the oars. The conclusion was that whaleboats cannot compete to windward against yachts of modern design, particularly in light air. Off the wind, they hold their own very well.

In September, 1973, one of the Seaport's whaleboats sailed from Mystic, Connecticut, to Newport, Rhode Island, a distance of about forty miles. Along the Rhode Island shore the boat beat into a swell of about five feet. Progress was slow to windward under the small jib and reefed main. Halfway along the shore, the rudder pintles broke and thereafter the steering oar was used. The observation of the person in charge of the boat was that whaleboats were poor to windward if there was much swell or chop. The boat was wet and there was some pounding, though at no time did he have doubts about its safety. When the sail was not reefed, the loose-footed main was not flat enough to be very effective to windward. He found the boat slow in coming about, this was markedly so with the steering oar. Under sail the rudder brought her through the wind faster.

The voyage took two days. The crew of six spent the night sleeping beside their beached boat at Point Judith, and in the morning proceeded in the direction of Newport, pulling most of the distance until a southwest wind came up and took them in.

Another side of the performance of whaleboats is how the boats

used the men. A crew of six was jammed into a small boat filled with a great amount of gear. Often the men were to spend hours of exhausting labor in the boat, fully exposed to the elements. Probably as tiring as the physical effort was the tension of the hunt. Whaleboats are not easy on their crews.

The boats were crowded. About 900 pounds of gear, which by its nature is difficult to stow, goes into them. This equipment has to be in a special place, often awkward from the point of view of comfort, because of its use. Down the center of the boat goes the potentially dangerous whale line and aft are the coils that must be free and unobstructed. On two occasions crews from Mystic Seaport spent a full day in the boat. The only equipment was oars and sails, yet the boat was found to be cluttered. When the mast was lowered, though it was passed aft and hung over the stern in the approved manner, it was in the way of the after oar. Oars were in the way when under sail. The boat was without line tubs, live and spare harpoons, lances, drogues, paddles, lantern kegs, and the other pieces of gear found in a fully equipped boat.

Men in a whaleboat are exposed to the weather, for there is little shelter in the open, shallow boats loaded with gear. In the trials at Mystic, one trip was made on a raw day in March; after a few hours, several of the crew members had gravitated to the bilges as we sailed along. They lay under the thwarts in the bottom of the boat trying to find a little shelter. They could not have done this in an equipped whaleboat because there is too much gear and likely as not their weight would have been needed on the weather side if there had been more wind. Part of the pulling done that day was just to keep warm. The crews of yore were out in the boats in Arctic weather and certainly the clothing supplied by the ship's slop chest was inferior to our foul weather gear.[20] A whaleboat does not offer much protection for its crew.

The boats are easily pulled in a calm sea. Any boat is hard on the crew if it is being pulled to weather and there is a sea running. Under sail the whaleboats require attention and effort. The rig is very simple, and the absence of mechanical advantages in sheaves and blocks is met with manpower. There were plenty of men in the boat, and therefore the main sheet was a single line from a bridle on the boom to the hands of a man. He might take a turn around a cleat, but it could not be belayed. The lack of washboards along the sides and the relative tenderness of the boats meant the boat could ship water quickly. The crew must be attentive. The boats depend heavily on live ballast, which puts demands on the men. Even the privileges of rank add little to the



A boat from the *Daisy* with dead whale. Whaleboats often towed the whale to the whaleship. Robert Cushman Murphy Collection at Mystic Seaport.

comfort of the mate. He has no real place to sit as he steers, and the tiller points up at an angle that suggests it was meant for a man standing. As a matter of fact, he is supposed to be on his feet looking for whales.

Though the men might become exhausted and exposed, whaleboats could save men's lives as they proved many times. They were fine seaboats and men survived terrible voyages in them; in the end, the boats served their crews well.

> The whaleman's boat must be light, for it has to be quickly lowered, and it must be able to sail and carry sail, because arms are things that tire and oars are things that make a noise; it must be strong, for it has to bear the roughest usage. All these good qualities the true whaleboat possesses.[21]

FOOTNOTES

1. The boats of the Bark *Esquimaux* (c. 1840) were exceptions. Her log has a drawing of a whaleboat with the name *Osprey* on the quarter. Boats used in shore whaling lasted longer, were named, and were often painted up.
2. W. Scoresby, *An Account of the Arctic Regions, with a History and Description of the Northern Whale-Fishery* (Edinburgh, 1820), p. 236.
3. Joseph Conrad, "Christmas Day at Sea" in *Last Essays* (Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1926), p. 33.
4. If a sea was running, it was no easy matter to raise a mast which might be 24′ tall, 4-1/2″ in diameter for most of its length, and with shrouds and halyards, weigh 80 pounds. A crew at Mystic Seaport practiced raising and lowering a whaleboat's mast. The sea was calm and the wind light during our drills; the operation won respect for the men who used to do it in blowing weather.

5. Henry Hall, *Report on the Shipbuilding Industry of the U.S.*, 1882, 10th Census, vol. 8, p. 23.
6. Hartson H. Bodfish and Jos. C. Allyn, *Chasing the Bowhead* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), p. 145.
7. George Brown Goode, ed., *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887), Section V, p. 242.
8. William Davis, *Nimrods of the Sea* (North Quincy, The Christopher Publishing House, 1972), p. 158.
9. Robert Ferguson, *Harpooner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936), p. 181.
10. James Templeman Brown, in *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1887), p. 242.
11. William John Hopkins, *She Blows! And Sparm at that* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922), p. 35.
12. Capt. George Comer, Journals of the *Era*, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic, Connecticut.
13. Capt. J.A.M. Earle, "Fighting Sperm Whales," in *Yachting*, February, 1927, p. 32.
14. Everett Joshua Edwards, *Whale Off* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1956), p. 57.
15. Trevor Housby, *The Hand of God* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1971), p. 19.
16. Melville makes the point that many whales were lost because the harpooner, pulling his heart out to the last, was expected to leap up, turn around, instantly take stock of the situation, and heave the harpoon. It took more strength and judgment than most men could muster, Melville thought.
    Charles Beetle wrote of one young, recently promoted harpooner, who, standing and turning to face the whale for the first time, fainted dead away.
17. Reginald B. Hegarty, *The Rope's End* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), p. 54.
18. An old photo shows the launching of a boat from the beach on Long Island; eleven men are helping. This was a small boat between 27′ and 28′ long. A ramp makes launching far easier. The author with another man, using planks, rollers, and a block and tackle, easily hauled a whaleboat up on a beach, cleaned the bottom, and put it back in. The boat was 30′ long and had ballast equal to the weight of gear carried. Another time four men rolled one over on the beach to clean and paint the bottom.
19. Happening often enough to be mentioned several times in interviews of whaling captains by Brown, green crew members sometimes jumped overboard at the moment the harpoon was darted.
20. Also we had plenty of coffee and sandwiches; they had to make do with 30 pounds of biscuits and water.
21. *Rudder*, 11, no. 3 (March 1900), p. 123.

AN ACCOUNT OF A PASSAGE ABOARD THE USCG *EAGLE*

BY W.S. GATES

The breeze was damp, yet the day was remarkably mild for the 28th of January.

The *Eagle*, the Coast Guard training barque, lay in her berth at the Academy in New London. Her yards were braced hard to starboard, and t'gallant masts partially lowered.

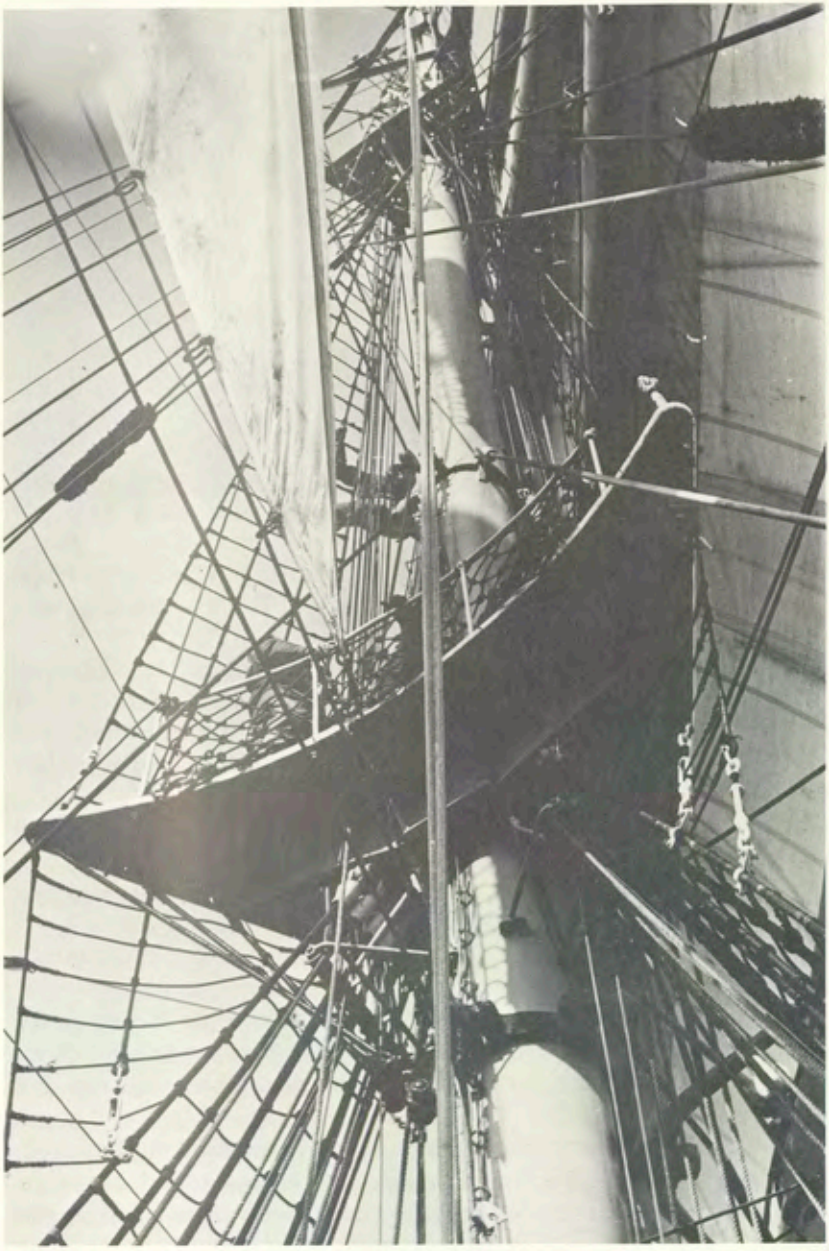
We boarded and were greeted by Capt. Cassidy, then shown to our lockers and hammocks. It was late in the morning and we had until sunset to familiarize ourselves with the ship and her running rigging.

The *Eagle* was bound for Baltimore, Maryland, for maintenance, and we were on board to learn and help sail her. Though few of us had sailing experience on a working square rigger (except Nat Wilson, who was a former crew member of the *Eagle*) we were familiar with them through our rigging work on the whaling barque *Charles W. Morgan* and the training ship *Joseph Conrad*. Our boss rigger, Charlie Andersen, had sent us off with an admonishment to keep our eyes open and learn as much as we could.

Six of us from Mystic Seaport were aboard. Three riggers: Dave Spaulding, Tom Krieg, and Will Gates; a sailmaker, Nat Wilson, and his apprentice, Grant Gamble; and the first mate from the Seaport's schooner *Brilliant*, Jan Miles.

We were not the only civilians on board. There were newsmen from several papers, a television reporter, and graduate students from New York University shooting sailing footage for a movie they were making.

Unlike the other civilians aboard we requested that we be considered part of the crew. Captain Cassidy agreed to this, since most of the regular crew were newly assigned to the *Eagle* and



Looking aloft on the foremast

were unfamiliar with square rigger sailing. We stood watches with the deck force and when "sail stations" were called, we hurried to our assigned mast.

The crew was divided into three watches, each lasting four hours, so that during a twenty-four hour period, a single crewman is on watch for a total of eight hours. The pattern is four on eight off. The pattern was strange at first, but once we adjusted to it, time passed quickly. Those of us from Mystic Seaport were divided up among all three watches – we combine our experiences in this account.

Sheets, clew lines, buntlines, and leech lines are used to control the square sail itself. Braces, halyards, and lifts are used to control the yard to which the sail is lashed. All these lines run down to the deck, where they are belayed to the pinrails, which run along the sides of the ship, and the fife rails which surround the masts.

There are over two hundred belaying pins on the *Eagle*, but only about ten different lines run to them, so once you are familiar with one section of pinrail you know the rest.

To learn the pinrail layout is not difficult, but it is important to be able to get the right line quickly. There's no time for fumbling around on a stormy night.

At sunset we got underway. Our departure from New London was governed by the tide, not that we needed the tide to carry us out of the Thames River, but because at low tide even with our t'gallant masts lowered, our mast trucks cleared the bridge by less than a foot.

As we ghosted under the bridge at twilight, all hands looked aloft as the fore truck then the main truck cleared the girders, then, we all listened as an antenna on the mizzenmast scraped across the underside of Interstate 95.

After we left the Thames River that first night a series of squalls hit us while we crossed Long Island Sound under auxiliary power. The weather was uncomfortable but the ship took it easily. By midnight we were anchored in Fort Pond Bay on Long Island. There we would wait for daylight and clear skies to step the t'gallant masts.

By 0400 Tuesday morning the squally weather had passed, replaced by low patchy fog. The fo'c'sle lookout could occasionally make out lights on shore as a clear patch blew in from the nor'east. The stars grew clearer and the breeze was shifting towards north and west as dawn approached.

Shortly before dawn work was begun in preparation for raising the royal and t'gallant masts. All lines to those masts were freed on deck. A pennant led from the doubling through a sheave at the



Making ship: line ends strewn about the deck are coiled down and hung from their pins after a sail change. Note the electric deck winch lower right. This is one of several conveniences of the *Eagle*'s "modern" square rig.

base of the t'gallant then up through the block on the doubling and down to the upper topsail halyard. The halyard is led to a winch. The masts could then be raised fifteen feet to their stepped position. After tightening and tuning the standing rigging we were ready to weigh anchor.

Anchor detail was set, regular watch stations manned (helm, lookout, etc.) and anchor weighed. With a northwest breeze we were able to set sail crossing out of the bay towards Montauck Point.

To set a square sail some of the crew has to go aloft and out along the yard in order to let loose the gaskets (small lines which hold the furled sail on top of the yard) and throw off the sail. The sail is then said to be "in its gear" a term denoting the fact that the clews, bunts, and leach lines are still fast, thus leaving the sail hanging in loose folds from the yard. These lines are then slacked and the sheets hauled simultaneously. Sheets and clews oppose each other; the former pull down, the latter up. For the upper top, t'gallant, and royals the yard must be raised at this point. The sail is then free to catch the wind. Finally, the yards must be braced around to achieve proper trim.

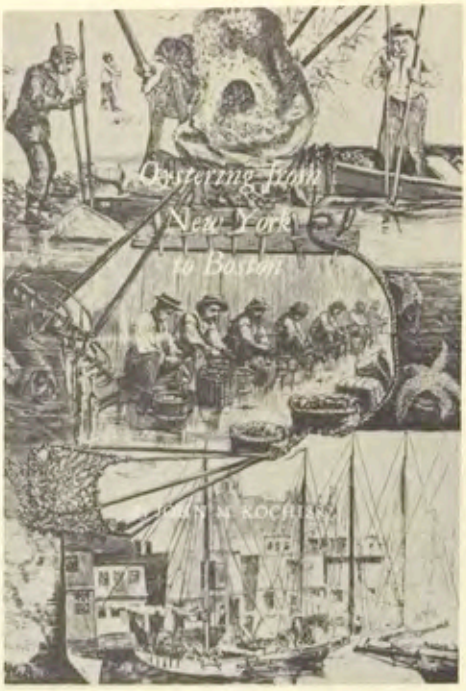


Rigger Dave Spaulding, center, works alongside *Eagle* crew during a sail change

Oystering from New York to Boston

by JOHN M. KOCHISS

with Foreword by
HOWARD I. CHAPPELLE



available October 1974

7″ x 10″, 280 pages, 87 illustrations, appendix, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. $13.50

Published for Mystic Seaport, Inc.

two, and three or more small black whales spouted low clouds of vapor then rolled back into the waves. The unexpected sighting brought several people to the rail. They watched the whales for a while then returned to their duties or bunks.

Life below decks on the *Eagle* was surprisingly comfortable. Once used to the gentle rolling of the vessel, it became easy to balance a tray of hot food down the companionway from the galley into "cadet mess" quarters. The food was reasonable and there was plenty of it. There was always a pot of soup in the galley, welcome after relief from watch. It always tasted good.

Bathing facilities consisted of a small steel-walled closet with several shower valves on the bulkheads. "Sea-showers" were the proper means of use: just enough water to get wet, then lather up, and finish with just enough water to rinse off.

We strung our hammocks fore and aft in the after cadet quarters – a large space amidships below the main deck. When the ship rolled our hammocks could swing. As long as we didn't hit anything we felt no motion.

Wednesday was another calm, sunny day. No sailing. Time off watch was spent lazing around on deck, reading, climbing rigging, taking pictures and sleeping. After lunch of ordinary good food some minor work was done aloft on the mainmast, freeing some

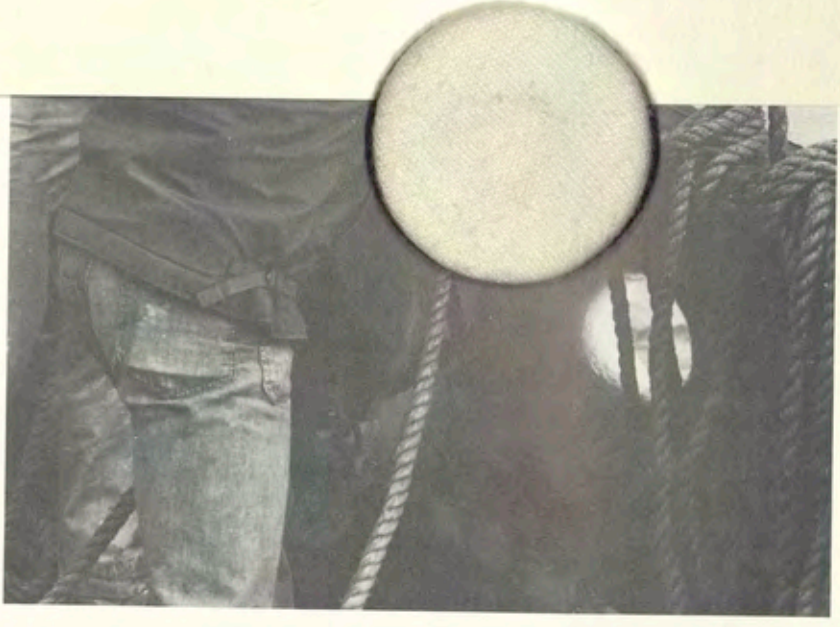
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Rigger Dave Spaulding, center, works alongside *Eagle* crew during a sail change

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Rigger Dave Spaulding, center, works alongside *Eagle* crew during a sail change

When sailing close on the wind, the lower yards are often braced around further than those above. This causes the upper, smaller sails to luff first if the wind shifts. The shift can be detected and corrected before the topsails or courses luff. In this way the danger of the big lowers shaking and ripping in a strong wind is minimized. This practice is called "fanning" the yards because of the twisting appearance of the yards as one looks up the mast.

In the alternate arrangement, known as "stacking," the yards all line up in the same plane. The yards are usually stacked when the ship is running free before the wind as we did that morning.

Our sequence of setting was first the lower topsails, then upper topsails and then the courses. For this short trip the *Eagle* carried no sails on her t'gallant or royal yards.

Traditionally the Atlantic is stormy in winter. But there were no storms. Indeed after the first night the weather turned clear and warm. As the day progressed the wind died, much to the disappointment of all. The sails would luff feebly or hang limp – we made little headway. The *Eagle* was due in Baltimore on February 1, so we continued under auxiliary power once again.

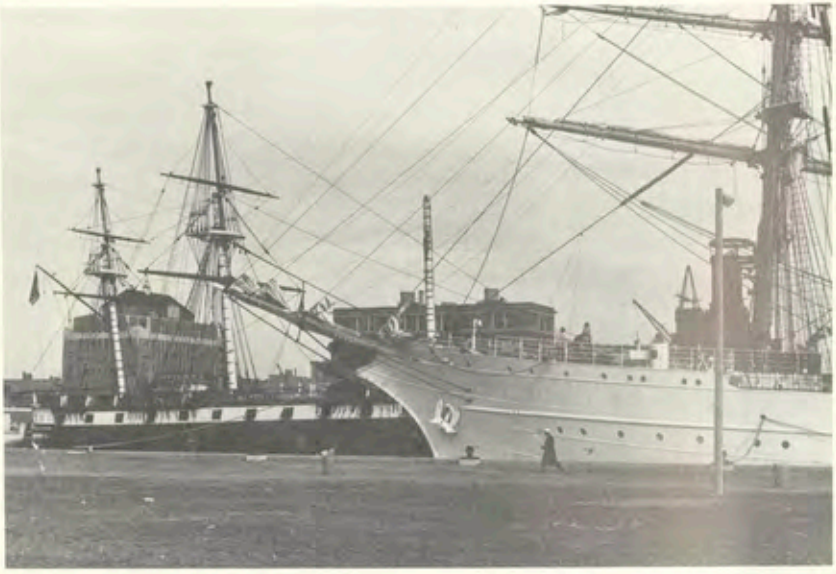
By sunset we were motoring through a calm sea, broken only by a low swell. As dusk fell the bow lookout was watching a vessel off the starboard bow and admiring the sunset when first one, then two, and three or more small black whales spouted low clouds of vapor then rolled back into the waves. The unexpected sighting brought several people to the rail. They watched the whales for a while then returned to their duties or bunks.

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Eagle in foreground at the city dock in Baltimore, *Constellation* in background. All photographs by the author.

unused t'gallant and royal buntlines. At about 1400, Chief Boatswain's Mate Crisci announced "*Eagle* films" being shown below decks in the cadet workroom. Off watch personnel were able to enjoy the films of previous *Eagle* cruises.

On January 31, we entered the mouth of the Chesapeake, and found our first good steady breeze. We sailed for most of the day and into the night.

The sky was clear, the air warm, the bay calm, and the breeze good. There was a fine sunset and we continued up the bay with square sails set.

At about 2300 the winds began to fluctuate and become light, so all the sails were drawn up "in their gear" so the sails were hanging in several pockets on the yards. We would soon learn the difficulties that those drooping "pockets" could cause.

By 0030 Friday morning, the wind increased from light and variable to a steady twenty-five knots from the north. This shift placed the wind dead ahead. The pockets suddenly filled and billowed aft. The windage of the unfurled sails made it difficult for the helmsman to hold his course. The ship was in danger of drifting out of the channel.

Sail stations were called and aloft we went with the intention of deflating the pockets and furling the sails. Once aloft we found that the wind held the dacron sails so taut that we could not get a handful of cloth to pull. The yards had to be braced back around so the wind no longer hit them square, but ran down their length blowing the sails up against the yards where we could reach and handle them. This allowed us to put a good sea furl in all the sails. The mid-watch returned to their duties and the rest of us got back to our bunks around 0130. The rest of the morning passed uneventfully.

A beautiful sunrise found us in the upper reaches of the bay. We spent a quiet forenoon watching scenery on the shoreline and preparing the vessel for docking in Baltimore.

That noon we entered Baltimore Harbor. There were several boats that came out to greet us, among them Coast Guard and city fire boats which saluted the *Eagle* with streams of water arcing high through the air.

The city fathers of Baltimore had wanted the *Eagle* to visit there for quite some time, but she had been unable to make Baltimore a port of call until now. So before she went to the yards, the *Eagle* made fast to the city dock where there was a band and the mayor to greet her.

After the vessel was secured and all lines coiled, we went below to pack our gear prior to leaving the ship.

The passage had been a short one – only three and a half days – but the experience was valuable. We were able to compare the rigging of the *Morgan* and the *Eagle*: to notice similarities of geometry and system and differences of material and lead. We saw an evolution of the barque rig and a comparison of a whaling and a training vessel. But most important: we were able to watch and work with the rigging of a large square rigger under sail.

We are grateful for the experience and perspective gained in that voyage.

The author wishes to thank Tom Krieg and Nat Wilson for their help in preparing this article.

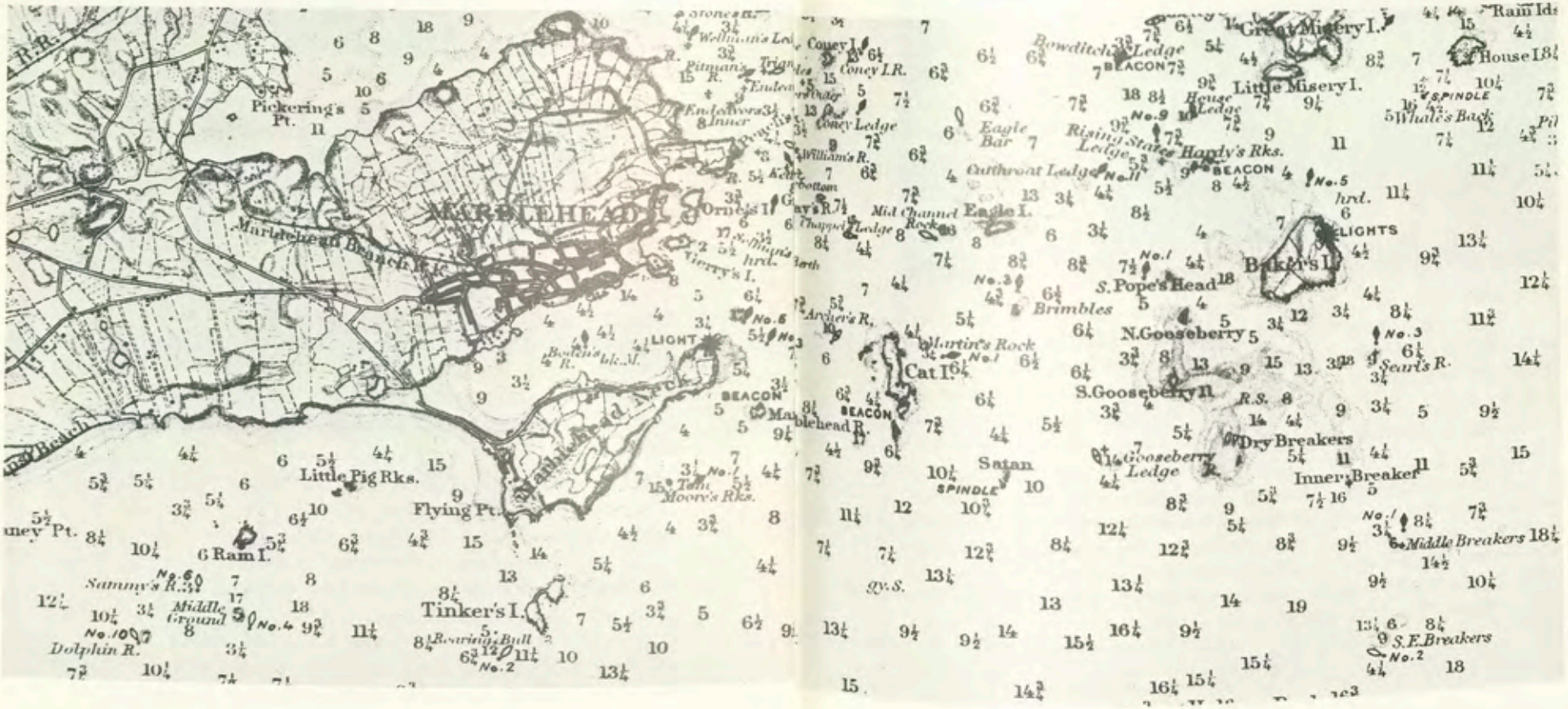
THE DRY BREAKERS

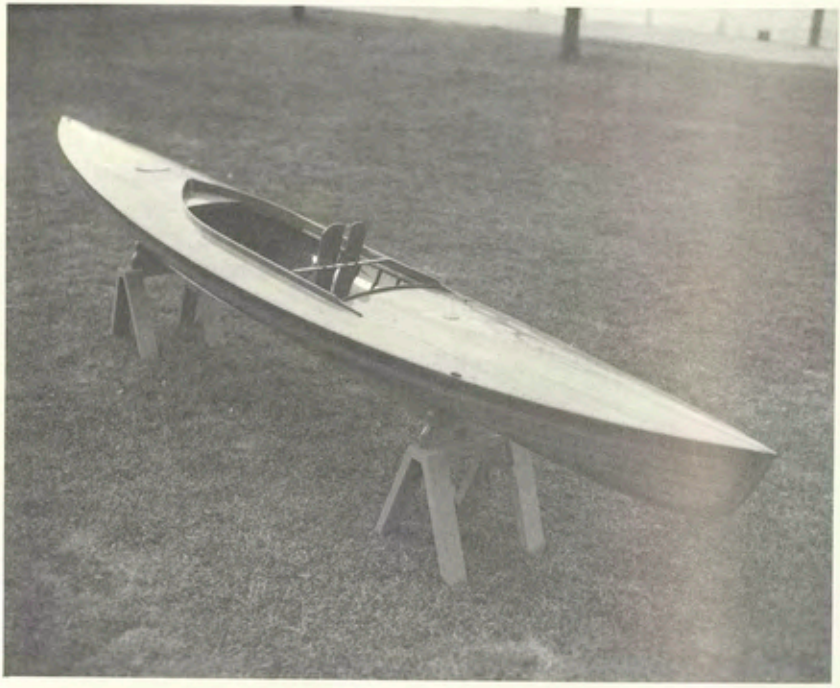
BY L. FRANCIS HERRESHOFF

Reprinted from the April 1948 issue of *Rudder Magazine* with permission of the publisher.

It is nearly twenty years ago now since I slept on the Dry Breakers, and like many another thing in past life it all seems fantastic.

The Dry Breakers are two clumps of barren rocks situated about three and a half miles east of Marblehead Harbor, and although there are many small rocky islands about Marblehead, the Dry Breakers have seemed to me much the wildest and most desolate of them all. While most of the other ten or so islands or rocks are difficult to land on, I have visited most of them in a very strongly





The canoe mentioned in the following article by the late Dean of American Yacht Designers, L. Francis Herreshoff, was designed by him for his own use in the waters around Marblehead, Massachusetts. The canoe is 16'3" in length, 2'3" in breadth, and was one of six built by Henri Vincent in 1931 while employed in the small boat shop at the Herreshoff Manufacturing Co. in Bristol, Rhode Island. Later owned by W. Starling Burgess, also a noted yacht designer, the canoe was given to Mystic Seaport in 1971 by Dr. Frederic Tudor of Milton, Massachusetts. After restoration by Peter Vermilya of the Mystic Seaport Staff, the boat is now on exhibition in the North Boat Shed.

built double paddle canoe, and several of them in all four seasons of the year. However few people land on the Dry Breakers simply because on the southeast side the sea is generally breaking, and on all the other sides the surrounding bottom is so strewn with boulders and ledges that, excepting to the lobstermen, they seem nearly unapproachable.

At a normal high tide the Dry Breakers are but a small clump of boulders, but at low tide their area (which is extremely irregular) would amount to several acres. This desolate clump of rock is called Dry Breakers because parts of them are usually some eight or ten feet above water. But in a winter storm the waves course over them so freely that from the mainland this region looks like a fiercely boiling cauldron of white water three-quarters of a mile long by half a mile wide.

About half a mile east of here is another ledge of rocks, but under water, called Inner Breakers. Still farther east, about a mile distant from the Dry Breakers, are the Middle Breakers which have a spindle on them and fairly deep surrounding water. From here to the southward lie the Outer Breakers, shoaling up to three feet at low water. If a very low tide should reveal the bottom of this region it would appear like a veritable shark's mouth, with row upon row of rocky teeth. But perhaps the most remarkable rock formation is Half Way Rock. This pinnacle rock rises sheer from fairly level bottom one hundred feet below the surface and extends above the water perhaps fifty feet more, and I must say it seems much more than that when you are up on it. The sides of Half Way Rock go down very abruptly, so that vessels of considerable draft can approach it within a few yards.

One of the local traditions is that in old times a new vessel or fishing boat should pass close to this rock and toss up on its seamed surface a coin or two for good luck, a sort of toll, contribution or votive offering to the aquatic gods of this region which they have good reason to fear. I have been told by the local old timers that even Engligh coins of colonial times had been found here, but this I doubt very much, for in a winter storm the seas mount to the very top of this rock and must scour it thoroughly. On my visit to the rock not even a modern coin was seen but perhaps I was so intent with holding on with all fours that I missed them. However even today few Marblehead sailors will pass the rock without trying to cast a coin up on it.

On the east side of Half Way Rock is a steep ravine almost perpendicular, and when the waves of an easterly storm strike this concave wall they spurt upward as much as two hundred feet, mostly in spray, which is an interesting spectacle even from the

mainland three and half miles away. Another tradition of Half Way Rock told by old timers is that many years ago a hand liner (a lone man in a dory) who was fishing in that neighborhood lost one of his oars and was being blown out to sea near nightfall. By dint of hard paddling with the remaining oar he made the rock and succeeded in clambering up its steep sides to the top where he spent the night. This man, so the story goes, had jet black hair the day before this experience, but the next day when he was taken off by a passing fisherman his hair was snow white, and when he got back to shore some did not recognize him. But I suppose all rocks and small islands along our coast have their local traditions, so I will not bore the reader with any more of them.

Just why at the time I should have wanted to sleep on one of these rocky islands I can't quite remember, but it may have been that I was fed up with the town and wanted a change. To be sure, the town had its art club, but about the only art that they practiced was the art of handling the knife and fork, and the members' sole accomplishment seemed to be in pretending they were someone other than themselves. And while our historical society was in a fine old building, the dear old ladies who dominated it believed contradiction was the general object of conversation. But the principal interest of the town, among old and young alike, was the propagation of the genus homo. Just why the townspeoples' thoughts all radiated around this single matter I can't say, for the habits of this human animal, both in breeding and bartering, have not changed much in the last thousand years. Nevertheless it so fascinated them that there was little time left over for other thought. The men couldn't tell one boat or yacht from another, and cared less. But if a couple, one male and one female, went out for a sail the boat at once attracted attention. If a married man took someone else's wife out for a sail, then the boat or yacht would become notorious for several generations, while the poor boat in which the man and wife went sailing was lost in oblivion. It made no difference if the yacht had grace, quality or ability. If she had not been manned by certain animals she might as well never have existed. Don't think for a minute that the women of the town were much different, for from childhood to deathbed they too had this same wholly absorbing interest.

A neighbor of mine (a widow of about eighty summers) used to hurry through her housework so she could stand at the window all day to peer out to see who was going with whom. Most people have the curtains up when they want to look out, but not this one! She carefully drew the curtains all the way down, but by having one finger on the curtains at eye level she arranged a peek



Several boats were built to this design in the early thirties and were active in all seasons. The scene is Marblehead. Does anyone know the man? From the Herreshoff Album, courtesy of Mrs. Muriel Vaughn.

hole which certainly reported many strange incidences. Of course most of the neighborhood was well acquainted with her habits, but the curious lady received rather a shock one day when a young man of the town, who was somewhat of a blade and a wag, in passing her house and seeing the edge of the curtain flutter, turned around, faced the window and took off his hat with a bow. It is said the edge of the curtain didn't flutter for two or three days after that, but firmly established habits are hard to break and I am sure if you took a walk around the town today you would still see the edges of several curtains fluttering.

So you can well imagine I gave a sigh of relief as I shoved off from the shore on my way to visit regions where the breeding season was brief and where part of the year could be used for other purposes, and where there were other species than homo sapiens. But there was one gauntlet I must run before being perfectly free. This was a public park by the edge of the harbor where there were benches for old codgers to sit in their all day inspection of the bathing suits the girls were using that season. As only one cane was raised in derision as I passed, I could see that I was not distracting their attention much. However, although nearly an eighth of a mile away from the cane, I could well imagine the conversation of the cane's owner as he pointed at me and said to his neighbor, "You see him? He's atryin' to get drownded." For it never would have occurred to the owner of the

cane that one might like to see the sun set from different surroundings, or be in places where the genus homo could not be seen.

I had chosen for this lonely adventure a night near the full moon, in the full equinox when the days and nights were about the same length. As I cleared the harbor and headed out to the eastward I experienced the thrilling sensation of complete detachment, which to me and several other single handers seems a pleasant contrast to being continually under the restraint, necessary on shore, to appear normal. So I whistled, sang and laughed as loudly as I could. This did not seem at all strange to the seagulls and tern which were doing just the same thing. In fact they seemed to come all the closer, and instead of saying, "This seems a strange fellow," they appeared to say, "We are glad to see one of you dumb creatures who can enter into the joy of living; one who can express his joy by screaming as loudly as the rest of us." On shore these expressions would be looked upon a heresy by the old women of both sexes, for to have expressed a joy in life after it had been created seemed to them quite sinful. The three mile paddle instead of being an exertion was merely exhilarating.

One of the joys of these excursions was the extreme simplicity of the equipment, for my conveyance consisted principally of two rather nicely shaped parts, one the canoe and the other the paddle, and experience has shown that neither would give trouble or break down if carefully handled. The paddle itself, we might say, was of one piece (or several pieces glued into one), and shaped so that every curve was for some well-thought-out reason, and thus it gave pleasure to handle. The canoe was of lapstrake construction, planked and framed, of nearly the same strength as a light yacht tender. Her model was that of an elongated lifeboat. She had watertight bulkheads at both ends and a white oak keel about one and one-half inches deep shod with brass the full length. On each side of the keel were two chafing strips of lance wood, for this canoe had been planned for landing on these rocky islands even if there was some sea running.

As I approached the Dry Breakers the ground swell was running in from the southeast and this made it necessary to approach from the northwest, which brought me over a bottom with a strange but dreadful fascination for me, for one after another we would pass over submerged boulders, perhaps four or five feet below the surface, that looked for all the world like great aquatic monsters moving back and forth as the undertow with its motion carried the canoe about. Now and then a ribbon of kelp would surge up like a dorsal fin or a tentacle of the moving monster below me. Not only

was I one of the most timorous souls that had ever ventured on the water, but for some years I had acquired the sailors' instinct to bear away suddenly at the appearance of any bottom. So as these brown colored monsters appeared below the surface it was hard for me not to call out "Hard alee" or "Helm up" as they appeared either to windward or leeward of my course, and my arms would take two or three strokes with the paddle to avoid them before my reason would bring us back on our proper course.

As I neared the shore the rocks below made surface eddies, and now and then a slight breaker, but although the canoe was now in greater danger it was apparent that we and not the bottom were moving back and forth. The sun was low in the westward and it was quite calm on the leeward side of the island, so the various rocks showed their positions plainly by the wave formations above them and we threaded our way right to shore without grounding. In fact there is a pool of quite deep water at a certain place that makes landing easy at certain tides. I climbed out of the canoe sideways on a shelf of rocks and, having the painter in hand, had her high and dry before the ground swells had chafed her against the rocks.

Now I stripped the canoe of all her movable parts and paraphernalia, which to be sure were not much weight, and took them to the highest point of the rocks which, as has been said before, was not much above high water. Then I dragged the canoe on her metal keel over the boulders to the same spot and blocked her firmly in place with driftwood, which is usually plentiful on these rocks. I suppose now the reader will wonder what I did for supper, for some people are quite panic stricken if caught without a galley with six feet of headroom and enough pots and pans to make them a galley slave. But I can assure you that in this case a very good supper was had without washing a pan, for I had brought along a rather large cocktail shaker and the necessary things to put in it, which were some eggs, milk, malted milk, brown sugar and, last but not least, some old New England rum. When these good things are properly proportioned and well shaken they become an eggnog that not only restores one to vigor and happy thoughts almost at once, but is nearly as sustaining as a three course meal, particularly if it is taken slowly while munching some hardtack.

I don't want the reader to think that I consider rum necessary with all meals, for I very seldom take it that way on shore. Nevertheless I have found rum one of the most compact of all foods for a canoe trip and one which never spoils. However I always measure it out most carefully, believing it to be as

dangerous as gunpowder if two charges are taken when only one is called for.

By now the sun had set, but at that time of year there was nearly an hour of twilight which I used in preparing my bunk in the canoe. This consisted chiefly in blowing up an air mattress, which not only covered most of her bottom but in the forward and after parts of the cockpit curled up nearly to her deck. (It was one of those tubular air mattresses that can lie on quite an uneven surface.) Needless to say, the mattress had to be laid out below the deck before inflation, but this was not difficult to do as her cockpit extended to the after bulkhead. I then spread one small blanket over the air mattress, put the other blanket, folded lengthways, at one side, while on the other side was my musette bag containing such comforts as a 44 caliber revolver, the bottle of rum and several small knickknacks. The canoe had a nice fitting canvas cover which snapped down over several buttons outside the coaming, so that I now had a snug, warm and watertight home to crawl into, which I soon did, for as I straightened up and looked around me I was almost overcome by the dreary and mournful surroundings. Though I had spent many nights afloat single handed I had never had such a sensation of loneliness before. In fact I nearly became panic stricken and considered launching the canoe and escaping from the dreadful place as soon as possible, but my better judgment made me realize that the attempt would now really be dangerous.

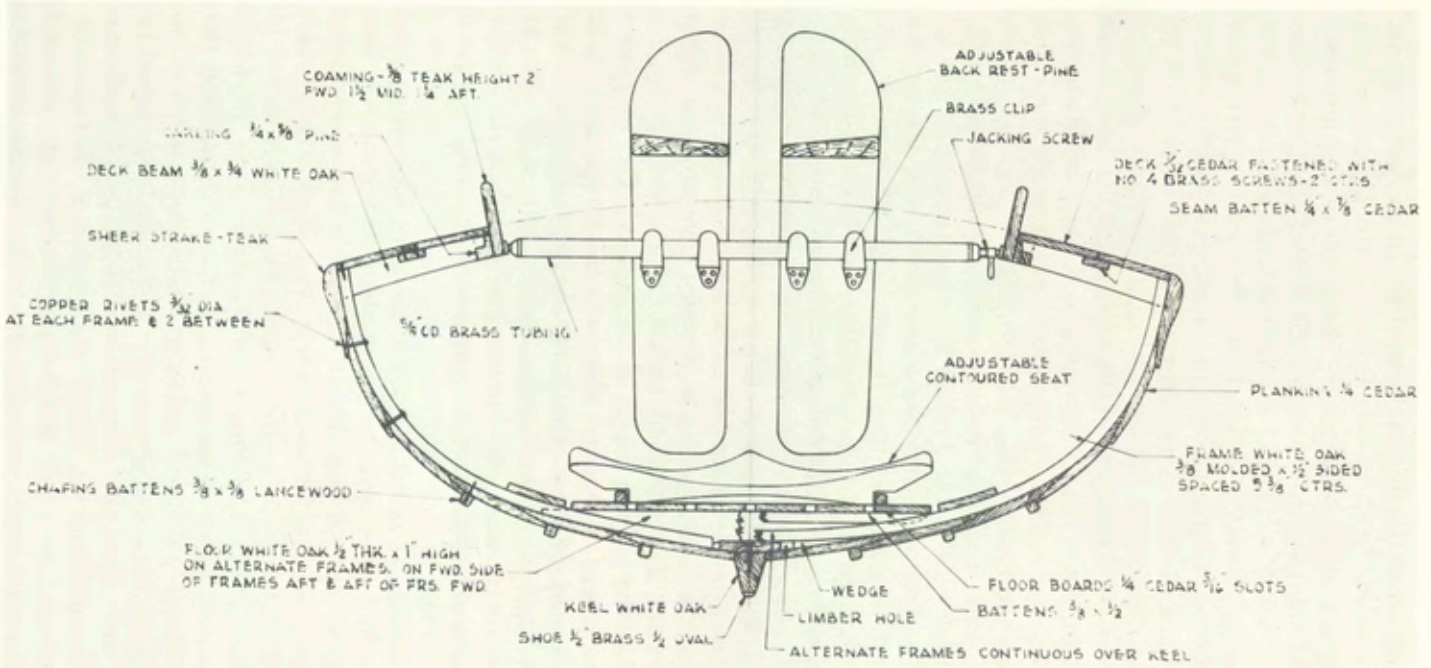
By this time the gulls, which no doubt I had kept from their favorite rookery, began settling around the rocks with a sad sort of croaking noise and an occasional strange squawk. The tide had risen quite high and the seas, as they broke on the rocks not a hundred feet away sang a mournful dirge as they slowly surged in with a low moan and then receded with a gurgling noise, at times rolling a few stones along with them, which added to the uncanny noises of the desolate place. "My," thought I, "what a comfort it would be to have a dog with me," for it is only at such times that man appreciates his best friend. Then I thought of building a fire for its cheer, but knowing this might make people on Bakers Island think that someone was marooned on the Dry Breakers, and they might risk their lives or damage their boats, I reluctantly decided to go without a fire and instead shamefacedly crawled into the canoe and pulled the canvas cover over the cockpit, took a good stiff nightcap, and turned in.

But I could not sleep. The lonely surroundings were almost too much for me, and I began to think that it was nice to have some sapiens nearby in the nighttime even if their number did seem

overpowering on shore in the daylight. Then it occurred to me that I had been in the habit of spending my evenings reading, and this melancholy mood might be partly the result of discontinuing that habit, and I then wished I had brought something to read and had a light to see by. In fact at that moment I was sorely depressed when it occurred to me that there was some reading matter on board for, strange to say, in my musette bag was a very small New Testament that in the past I had opened at times to read a few lines as I lay in the sunlight on these rocky islands. I cannot say I ever quite understood the meanings of its many short sentences, but somehow the construction of the sentences and the quaint words had had a soothing effect which made me more appreciative of my surroundings.

So I now opened the little book at random and, scratching a match on the underside of the deck, read this sentence, "Man shall not live by bread alone," and the match went out, leaving me again in the darkness. I began now to ponder on its meaning, and this thread of thought so absorbed my attention that the moaning of the sea and my lonely surroundings were nearly forgotten. Then I thought of the people on shore, all absorbed with the propagation of the species and stuffing themselves with bread. Surely this cannot be life in its full as the seagulls know it. Surely such an existence is futile. And to go through the process of dying without first truly living seemed unfair. What then can be the secret that makes the gulls so happy in the sunlight? Can they have a higher appreciation of beauty than we do? Perhaps. Or is it simply the contrast of the warmth of the sunlight after their gloomy night vigil on these drear rocks? For none are as appreciative of life as those who have recently nearly lost it. None perhaps can as truly appreciate the sunrise as he who has passed through dark hours.

With these thoughts I raised the canvas cover and looked around me. The moon had risen while I meditated and the scene now had quite changed. The moon was almost white in color as it pierced the eastern haze, and in contrast the rocks were black, the sea dark gray excepting in the path to the moon where it shimmered in white wavelets, the whole making a symphony in black and white whose cold beauty nearly overcame me. The wind had died out and the bell buoy to windward tinkled a languid tune, while off to the eastward the occasional groan of a whistling buoy could be heard. It is said that the full moon affects people's senses, disturbing some and calming others, but to me at that time, in those surroundings, it seemed delightfully intoxicating, and as I gazed at the moon the spirit seemed to detach itself from the body



16'-3" KAYAK MIDSHIP SECTION

L. FRANCIS HERRESHOFF DESIGNER

and float off to dance on the white wavelets, defying space and time. I could see that some of the seagulls at the edge of the rocks were affected by the moon and were standing up balancing on one foot and then the other, while the wiser ones, with their heads set back into their feathers, looked like round gray rocks.

Seeing all quiet around me, I again slid back into my nest, but when I next looked out the moon had nearly reached its zenith and seemed to be scudding through a fine mist that nearly obscured it. The foghorn on Bakers Island now brayed its mournful note and the clammy dampness soon drove me back under the blankets. How I now longed for morning, but I knew its welcome rays could not be expected for several hours. I must have dozed or slept some time, for when I next peered out there seemed a pearly grayness in the air, and even as I looked it grew a lighter gray. And now the rocks around me could be faintly seen. If in the moonlight we had had a symphony of black and white, now we had one of gray and lighter gray. Perched on a rock a hundred yards away sat a lone cormorant whose quaint silhouette in black and gray gave token of the coming light.

Even as I looked, the eastern sky had turned from gray to pink, the mists were parting as though an outer curtain had been drawn to reveal the change of scene. A hallowed stillness seemed to fill the air. The seagulls softly winged away and left the rocks to grayness and to me. Now distance gradually appears, pink, yellow, gray, and now a golden beam. And in the east the ocean's rim is seen. In rapid sequence the colors change until the complete spectrum is filled. Now faint, now clear they seem, when from the eastern sea the sun appears and lights the heavens with his golden beams. The day is here! I bow in reverence to the newborn day, stand up and stretch myself and seem to say, "Yes, I must live by other things than bread this day." I wash my face beside the rocks and feel the morning breeze, take the same repast I had the night before, pack up, launch, and leave that rocky shore.

The offshore breeze has rippled all the bay. I paddle on and on until I get my second wind and feel as if I could paddle to eternity. I know the seagulls' secret now, the contrast of the night and day, the changing scenes, the pleasant exercise that chases gloomy thoughts away and attunes the mind and body pleasantly. All that day I paddled heedlessly around and visited many a rock, cove and rivulet. I stretched my legs on sandy beach and climbed Eagle Island's forbidding shores. Thus was the day spent with the crow, the seagull and the tern. Yes, spent in a state of transcendentalism where the body seemed untiring and the spirit full of song. Many times during the day did I meditate how useless



L. Francis Herreshoff

June 1933. Courtesy of Mrs. Muriel Vaughn.

it was to attempt to live by bread alone without variety, contrast and pleasant exercise, and it occurred to me that perhaps nothing was more conducive to gaining this exalted condition than the double paddle canoe.

But the time finally came when I must return to home. When I had approached the town, to within about a mile, I noticed a peculiar odor, and on approaching closer realized that it was the town itself that stank. When I had been there before I had not noticed it, but after breathing the fresh air of the islands for some twenty hours it seemed quite noticeable, and I recollected that it is said the Indians can recognize a settlement many miles away by its scent. Perhaps this perfectly virgin air to breathe is one of the things beside bread that is necessary to really live, and perhaps nothing is better than the double paddle canoe to breathe it from, for the large sailboat with its cabin and galley never quite gets clear of the town air, and the power boat and the steamer (excepting the weather side in a breeze) are not much better than the town.

When I arrived home in the late afternoon I got myself some tea, ate some crackers and cheese, and decided that after lying down for a short rest I would get up and cook a good supper. But, strange to relate, when I awoke again another day had dawned and there I lay with my shoes and clothes on. This time when I arose it was decided that not only bread, but bacon and eggs were quite essential to proper living. But my visit to the Dry Breakers had made me a better man and in some way has helped me to be happier ever since, perhaps only by contrast.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Children have always had a niche at Mystic Seaport, but perhaps in a museum as large and all encompassing as ours the quaint little yellow cottage, across the street from the shipcarver, has escaped the notice of many members; for here in this little cottage the world of the very young unfolds and older people are encouraged to pass it by. It is virtually a museum within a museum, dedicated to our youngest visitors for whom the saga of the sea is still a prelude.

It was Miss Marion Dickerman who, many years ago, first saw the need to establish this mini-museum devoted exclusively to our most youthful citizens. Intensely dedicated to the young, as she has always been, she brought her dynamic persuasive powers to bear and, aided by members of the Pynchon family and others, she brought the Junior Museum into being.

Two years ago Mr. and Mrs. Russell P. Chubb became the latest to recognize the importance of this unique little museum, gave a magnificent contribution in memory of Thomas Caldecot Chubb, and for many months worked closely with the Education Department in developing a new concept of the children's museum. Based on the careful research of Lynn Peterson, Patti Biggins and others in the Education Department, the interior of the little cottage was completely renovated and a new exhibit depicting the life of children at sea was installed.

This fall, a miniature nineteenth-century Captain's house was added to The Children's Museum. Meticulously researched and furnished by Mrs. Louis C. Owens and beautifully built by Dr. Whitman Reynolds – both Volunteers – the little house is a wonderful creation and adds an important dimension to the children's learning experience.

Though much credit for The Children's Museum goes to the staff, and particularly to the Education Department, the real credit goes to the Volunteers who man it almost exclusively and have made it a place reflecting their own love and faith for the very young.

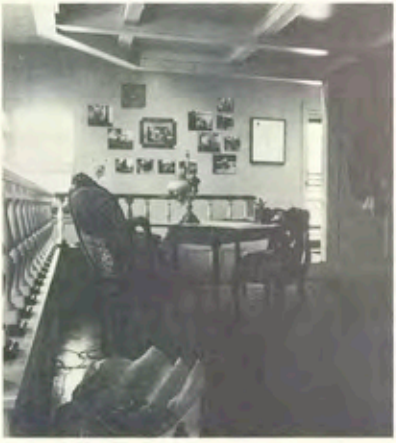
We have not yet perfected Mystic Seaport and have a long way to go to develop its full potential; however we have come closest with the The Children's Museum. When next you visit Mystic Seaport, step inside for a moment to taste its pure enchantment.

Waldo Howland

September 23, 1974

NEW EXHIBITS





Looking back into the past – that's what this young visitor to the Children's Museum appears to be doing. Nineteenth-century toys, games, books, clothes, and activities help visiting children recreate the lifestyle of seagoing children in their imagination.

Open all year, the newly renovated Children's Museum will be the focal point of a primary school program emphasizing sensory experiences adapted from research into the lives of children who went to sea with their families. Food preparation and tasting, seaweed pressing, macramé, sail-making, quilting, and chanty singing are just a few of the activities planned for visiting school children, ages five through eight.

Keeping in mind that parents are people too, a walkway area has been provided acquainting adult visitors with the theme, "Children Who Went to Sea," as well as allowing them to view their children's activities (background, top right). This formal area contains photographs of seagoing children; portions of logs, letters, and journals written by these children; and selected newspaper articles, board games, and magazines of the period.

BOOK REVIEWS

OYSTERING FROM NEW YORK TO BOSTON by John Kochiss. *American Maritime Library, Vol. VII, published by Wesleyan University Press for Mystic Seaport, Inc., 1974.* $13.50.

It has long been axiomatic that a primary responsibility of museums which embody both research and educational functions is to publish. The cry "publish or perish" has long been heard and heeded. Evidence to support the viability of this concept has been seen through the American Maritime Library's series of books published for Mystic Seaport by the Wesleyan University Press.

The most recent volume in this prestigious series is an ambitious undertaking requiring many years of research, countless interviews with a host of experts, and endless hours of compiling data, culminating in the first comprehensive study of the oyster industry from the colonial period to the present day along the eastern seaboard from New York City to Boston. Howard I. Chapelle says, in his introduction, "This report is one of the most concise and complete studies of an important fishery that has yet appeared, and offers a model for research and reporting on other American fisheries."

John M. Kochiss, a research associate at Mystic Seaport and the author of a definitive work on the deadeye published in 1970 under the museum's own imprimatur, presents for us every conceivable aspect of the oystering industry, delving into everything from environmental phenomena which either aid or hinder the growth of the oyster, the ever-changing methods of harvesting and marketing of the succulent bivalve, the tools and types of vessels required throughout the 200 years in which oystering flourished, all the way to the men who made it all possible, the oystermen themselves. An impressive array of photographs, sketches, and lines drawings plays a large part in helping the layman to envision the role of oystering as an important segment of the fishing industry in general. One can have only the greatest respect for Mr. Kochiss' tireless efforts in putting together such an extensive and complete picture for us, and for making it so entertaining and highly readable. He has even included a list of approximately 600 powered oyster dredge boats over five tons.

Perhaps one of the primary features of this work is that Mr. Kochiss never allows us to forget that the decline of the oystering industry was not due so much to the Darwinian order of things in which the strong (starfish, for example) devour the weak (the oyster) as to man's willful inconsideration of a natural ecological balance through his indiscriminate depositing of industrial wastes, thus polluting oyster-rich waters in the name of "progress."

On the other hand he makes an equally strong case for man's ingenuity in developing artificial means by which oysters were produced once the natural systems failed. He goes a step further in providing a clear picture of how state legislation, developed throughout the 200-year period, affected the industry. Ultimately it led oystering from a highly

localized enterprise where individual oystermen operated within a relatively small area for their own personal livelihoods to the inevitable burgeoning of a major industry wherein huge steam- and gasoline-powered ships took over in every phase from planting, to cultivating, to harvesting, to packing, to shipping finally to markets throughout the United States and to many in Europe.

The author appears not to have overlooked or given short shrift to a single facet of his subject. His descriptions of the vessels employed, sharpies and scows, skiffs and barges, opening houses and waterborne processing plants, are as impressive as his treatment of the tools and techniques employed in all areas of the industry.

Amply larded with humorous and anecdotal references, one especially appealing vision was evoked upon learning that "Dugout oystermen as a rule took pride in their craft, keeping them painted and in shipshape condition. The men themselves often dressed unusually well for their rough occupation. A Mr. Rowland, for example, always tonged in New Haven Harbor in a white dress shirt and cuff links, topped off with a derby."

As a child one learned that famous two-line question-and-answer "What noise annoys an oyster?" "A noisy noise annoys an oyster!" If that be true, the only noisy noise one can imagine would be the sound of applause for this remarkable treatise on a much-neglected subject.

FLORA H. FAIRCHILD

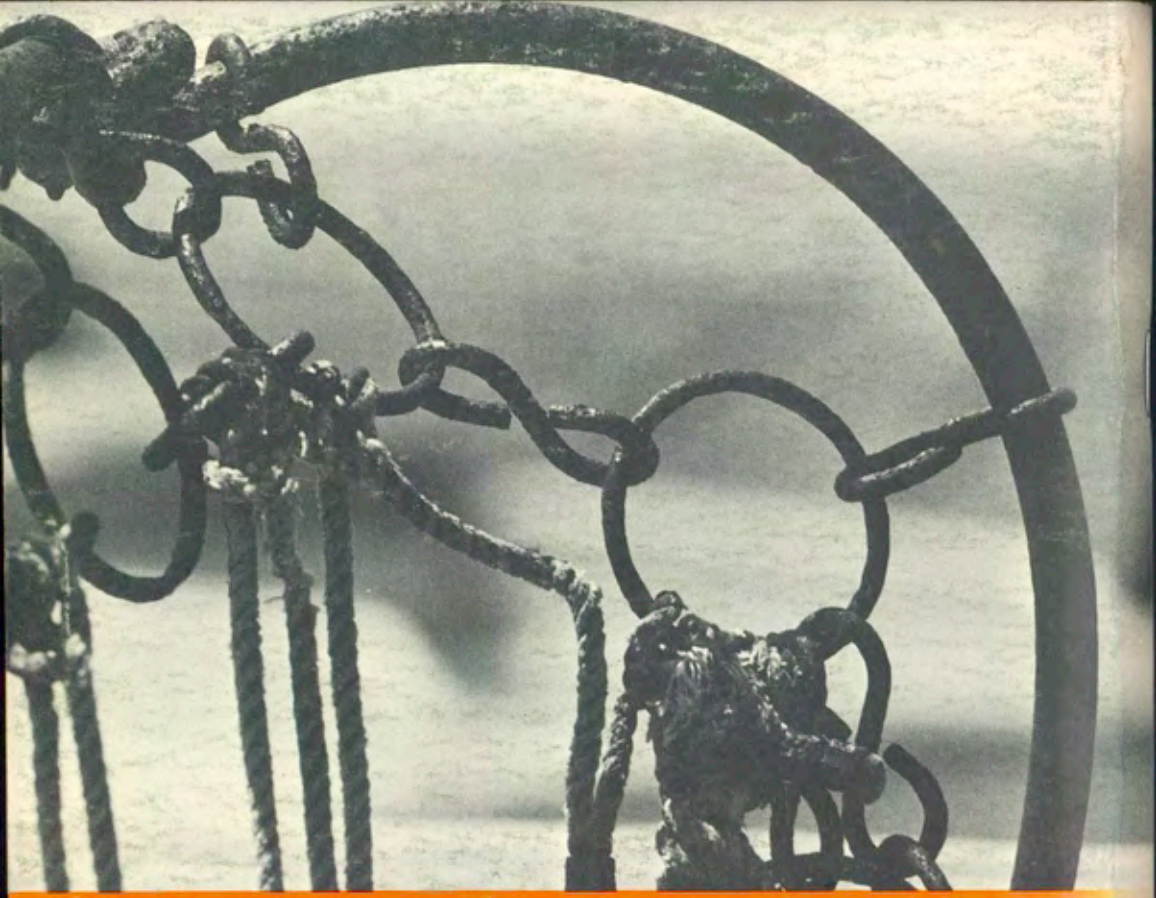
SHIP NAMES: ORIGINS AND USAGE DURING 45 CENTURIES by Don H. Kennedy. *University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1974.* $7.95.

This book, published for the Mariners Museum of Newport News, Virginia, is a small but comprehensive study on a subject which should be of interest to all who "follow the sea." The author's treatment of the history of naming ships is both clear and interesting. Readers are provided with an excellent classification of ships names and an adequate bibliography for further study. Some photographs, points of law, and other related subjects are interwoven throughout the book making this altogether a valuable addition to any library dealing with ships and the sea.

EDMUND MELLO



Rowena Owens, volunteer in the Children's Museum, teaches a young visitor how to needlepoint. Photograph: Mary Anne Stets. Back Cover: An oyster dredge on the dock beside the oyster sloop *Nellie*. Photograph: Claire White.



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