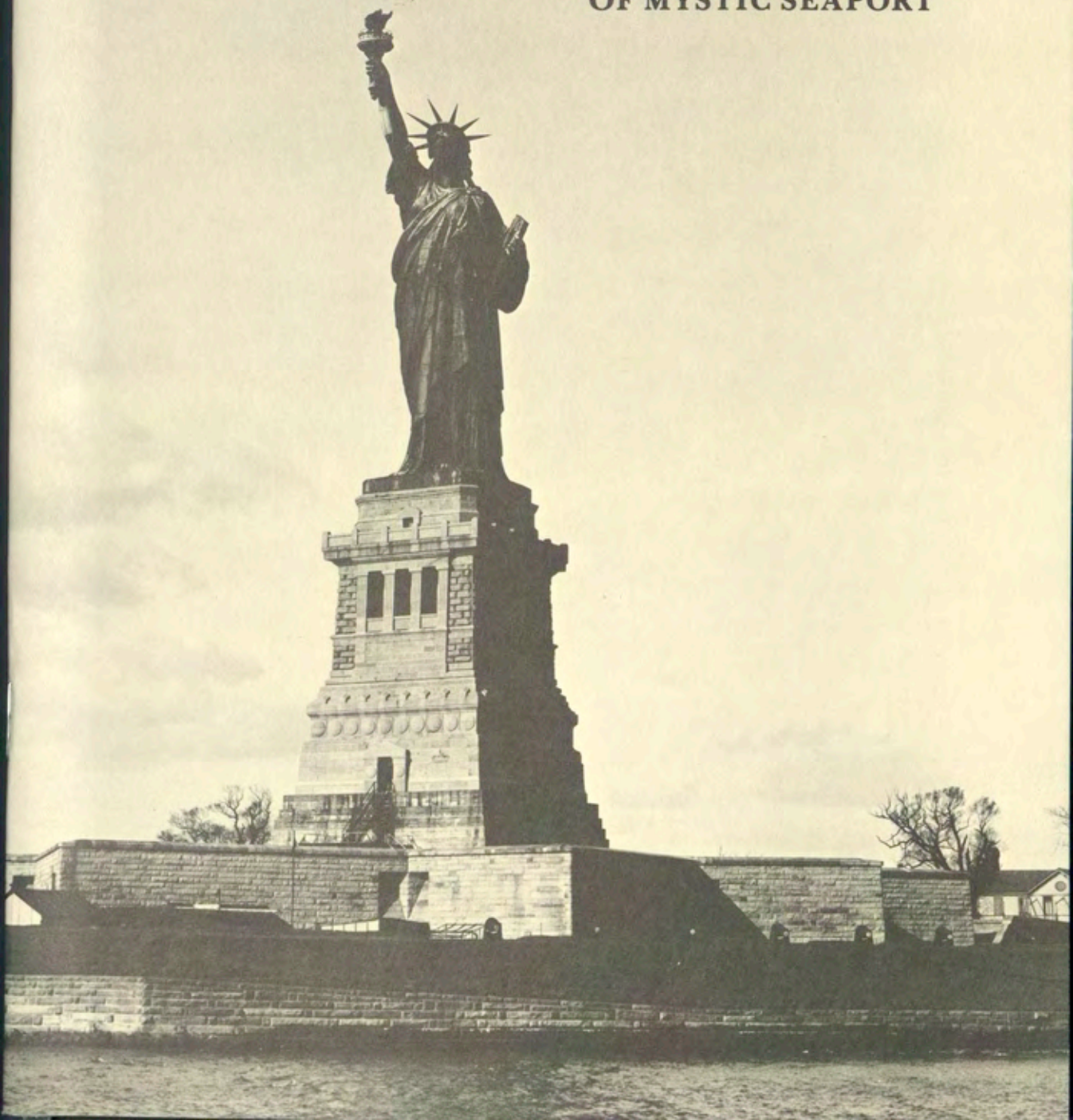
SUMMER 1986

THE LOG OF MYSTIC SEAPORT



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FRONT COVER: *The Statue of Liberty, photographed by Charles E. Bolles, ca. 1900. (Y1141)*

BACK COVER: *The Manhattan pier of the Brooklyn Bridge, photographed by C. E. Bolles, ca. 1900. (Y1144)*

Volume 38, Number 2 / Summer 1986

THE LOG OF MYSTIC SEAPORT

CONTENTS

Sightings 38

"Cruelty to Seamen"
Young Richard Henry Dana
Challenges Justice Joseph Story
PAUL K. CHAPMAN 39

A Cruise for Mackerel 47

Images of the Immigrant Experience 55

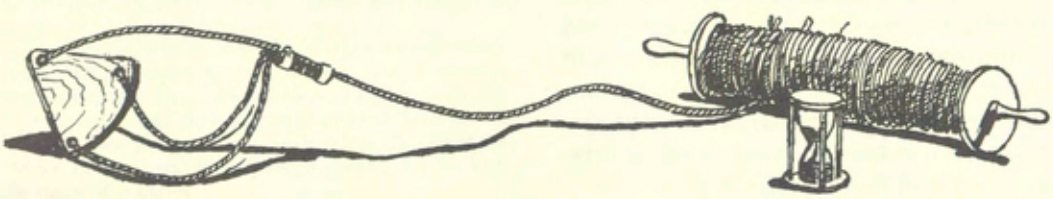
A View from the Rosenfeld Collection 61

Book Reviews 63

Letters 65

Acquisition 66

Historic Ships Afloat:
The U.S.S. *Barry* 68



SIGHTINGS



Twice within the past ten years our nation has conducted major celebrations of national importance. The 1976 bicentennial of our nation's founding was a celebration in which every American could participate. This summer, the centennial of the Statue of Liberty focused on one of our strongest national symbols. We honored the principle for which the statue was erected, and by extension the spirit that brought millions of our ancestors to these shores, many of them arriving beneath the gaze of the statue herself. For them and their descendants, the statue remains a reminder of our origins.

These celebrations evoked pride and patriotism in the best sense of both words. But, of all the innumerable bicentennial events around the country, the one that created an instinctive and overwhelming response was Operation Sail in New York. It was the unexpected jewel in the crown of the Bicentennial celebration. This popular fascination was given further expression during the tall ships parade past the Statue of Liberty this summer. For those of us involved with maritime history, the great public admiration for the tall ships during each celebration was gratifying.

The question is why? What makes this event interest people from all segments of society throughout this country and, indeed, around the world? I sense that two groups are impressed by these ships. The first is that group of maritime enthusiasts who understand how sailing vessels work, and who appreciate the demonstrations of seamanship they are witnessing. Then there seems to be everyone else: those who wonder and are amazed at how the vessels sail, and who literally stand in awe of what they are witnessing.

For both groups there are points in common. Certainly, all viewers of the tall ships are struck by the grandeur and elegance of these stately machines. In these ships we see man harnessing nature to move vessels and cargoes weighing hundreds of tons silently through the sea. We are seeing man in harmony with nature.

The romance of the sea is undeniably linked to these vessels: lofty spars and clouds of canvas, sparkling seas, and exotic ports. Yet this must be tempered by what can only be a dim awareness for most viewers: the hardships that life at sea in a tall ship must inflict upon its crew. Few can fully comprehend the savage nature of wind and sea. For all the times of serene beauty and tranquility, for the times of speed and exhilaration, there were stomach-churning moments of unavoidable duty: climbing aloft on a black night in a wet, freezing gale to reef a topsail.

Ultimately, I think all of us are aware that we are looking at something larger than life, yet fragile: an endangered species, a creature that is nearly extinct. The job for those of us involved in maritime preservation, as museum workers or as members of Mystic Seaport, is to foster this rare species and its habitat, to protect the vessels and the sea, and to promote understanding of the long traditions of seafaring, so future generations can experience the awe that we have felt during Operation Sail.

J. Revell Carr

"Cruelty to Seamen"

Young Richard Henry Dana Challenges Justice Joseph Story

DR. PAUL K. CHAPMAN

Among the nineteenth-century authors of sea stories, Richard Henry Dana is unique. His *Two Years Before the Mast* was written as social commentary, and was intended as a passionate plea for social change. While it is read today as an entertaining and informative documentary of life at sea and life in California before the gold rush, for Dana the narrative was part of a crusade to which he would dedicate his life—the improvement of intolerable conditions faced by common merchant seamen.

"[If this book shall] call more attention to the welfare of seamen, or give any information as to their real condition which may serve to raise them in their rank of beings, and to promote in any measure their religious and moral improvement and diminish the hardship of their daily life, the end of its publication will be answered."[1]

To ensure that the attention of the reader would focus on the sailors and their situation rather than the author, Dana did not sign his name to the first edition. Its author was known only as R.H.D., Jr.

Furthermore, he would allow nothing to stand in his way as he pursued his crusade for seafarers' rights. He was willing to jeopardize his future reputation as a maritime lawyer by directly challenging the judgment of the nation's most renowned maritime jurist, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story. What follows is the story of that controversy, the issues involved, and the consequences Dana faced as he took on such a formidable opponent.

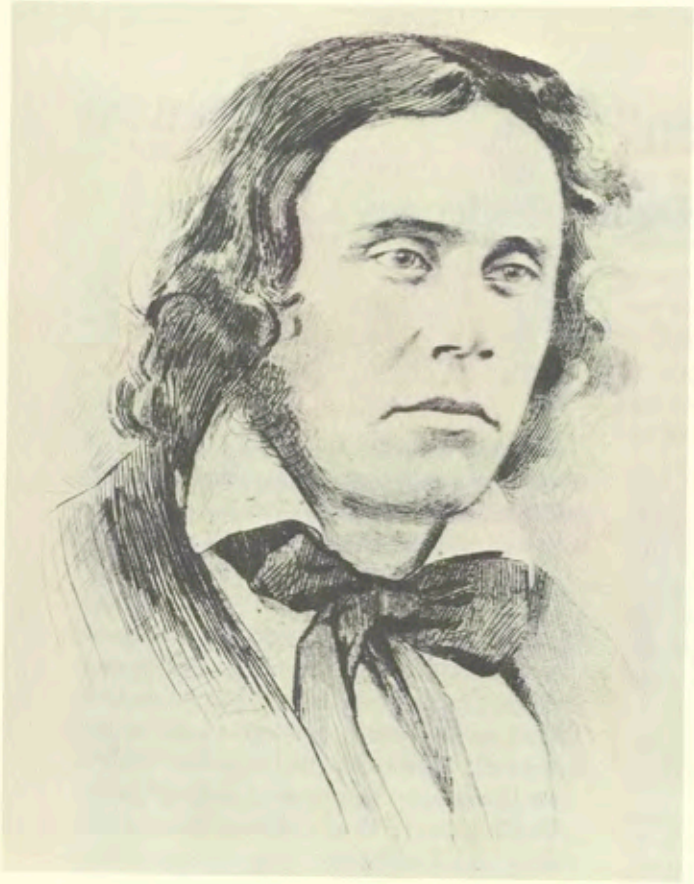
Dr. Paul K. Chapman is a third generation port chaplain. A graduate of Brown University, Andover Newton Theological School, and New York Theological Seminary, he has been on the staff of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey for seven years. He is Director of the Center for Seafarers' Rights, and is preparing a book on the rights of seafarers.

The son of a prominent Cambridge family, his grandfather having been Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, there was never much doubt that Dana would go to Harvard College. It was far less likely that a youth of Dana's social station would go to sea in the fo'c'sle of a common trading brig, the *Pilgrim*.

At Harvard, he was stricken with a disease, probably measles, that weakened his eyesight, making study difficult. Long evening hours reading books and manuscripts by the light of candles and whale oil lamps became impossible. Dana himself made the decision to temporarily leave the close work that college requires in exchange for work in the clear, fresh salt air and infinite horizons of the high seas. It was, in fact, a rather common prescription for weak eyesight in those days.

What prompted Dana to choose life in the fo'c'sle over the relative comforts of the passenger's cabin, for which a man of his social class was eligible, we do not know. Perhaps at age eighteen he shared the romantic notion about the life of a merchant seafarer, which led many young New England men to the docks of Salem and, later, New Bedford to seek adventure and, perchance, a small fortune on the high seas. If so, any vestige of such romanticism was abruptly and permanently dispelled by life aboard the *Pilgrim*. The "witchery of the sea, its songs and stories" were soon eclipsed by the "plain matter-of-fact drudgery and hardship" Dana experienced in his life as a merchant seaman.

For two years, from his very first day at sea,



Young Richard Henry Dana (1815–1882), as he appeared upon his return from California in 1836. (Charles F. Adams, *Richard Henry Dana: A Biography*, Boston, 1891)

Dana endured the misery of the normal routine of shipboard life and of the ravages of a merciless sea. This he might have tolerated in silence, but for the abuse that he and his shipmates suffered at the hands of the unscrupulous Captain Thompson, which left an indelible impression.

After leaving Boston in August 1834, the *Pilgrim* rounded Cape Horn and proceeded to the coast of California, where for some months the crew loaded hides brought from trading posts along the shore. During this time, Captain Thompson developed a particular dislike for a seaman named Sam, who like Melville's Billy Budd, was hesitant in speech. For no more reason than Melville's Claggart had in accusing Billy, Thompson accused Sam of impudence, and on one spring evening flogged Sam to within a breath of his life.

A Swedish shipmate named John had challenged the captain by asking, "What are you going to flog that man for, Sir?" For that, he too was put in irons and flogged.

"Have I ever refused my duty, Sir? Have you ever known me to hang back, or to be insolent, or to not know my work?" asked John as he was tied spread-eagle to the shrouds, his back exposed.

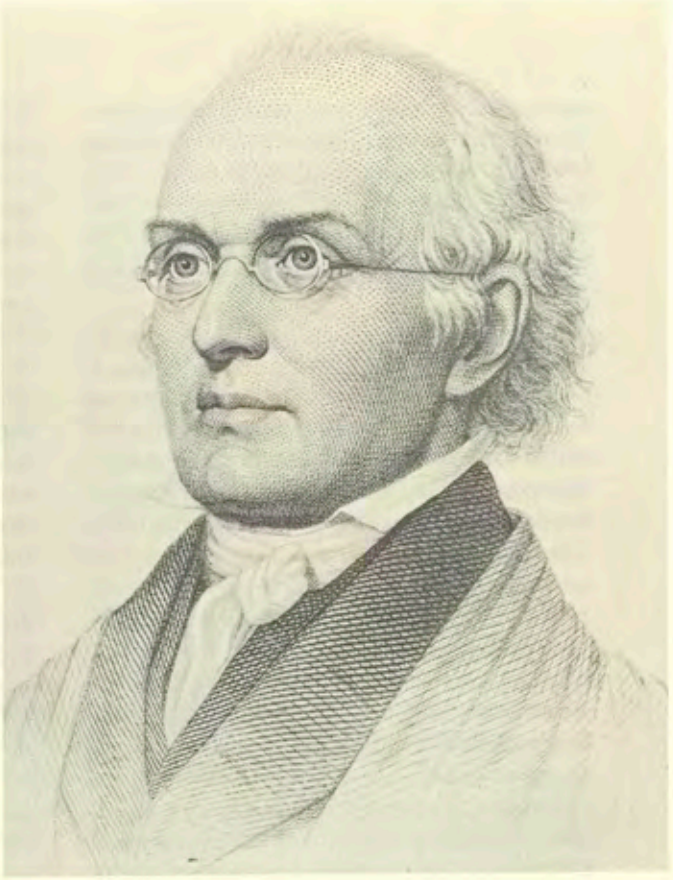
"No," said the captain, "it is not that that I flog you for; I flog you for your interference—for asking questions."

"Can't a man ask a question here without being flogged?"

"No," shouted the captain. "Nobody shall open his mouth aboard this vessel, but myself."[2]

Both Sam and John eventually recovered from this brutal punishment, although their scars went with them to the grave. Dana, however, never fully recovered.

"A man—a human being, made in God's likeness—fastened up and flogged like a beast! A man, too, whom I had lived with and eaten with for months, and knew almost as well as a brother. . . . But . . . what is there for sailors to do? If they resist it is mutiny; and if they succeed,



Justice Joseph Story (1779–1845).
(William W. Story, *Life & Letters of Joseph Story*, Boston, 1851)

and take the vessel, it is piracy. . . . If a sailor resists his commander, he resists the law, and piracy or submission are his only alternatives. Bad as it was, it must be borne. It is what a sailor ships for."[3]

It was Saturday, the night when traditionally the crew sang and reminisced about sweethearts and wives, but deep gloom filled the crew's quarters. That night Dana vowed, as he later wrote, that although he could probably never obtain justice for Sam and John, "If God should ever give me the means, I would do something to redress the grievances and relieve the sufferings of that poor class of beings, of whom I then was one."[4]

Dana kept his vow. Four years later, in 1839, he wrote in a letter to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story: "While at sea, it was my lot to witness many instances of cruelty and oppression, and to hear of many more. One in particular, which I saw was of so shocking a character that, being unable to interfere at the time, I made a vow, that if God should put it in my power in the course of my future life to do anything in behalf of seamen, I would do it."[5]

The correspondence was prompted by a controversy that developed between Dana and Justice Story, a jurist of formidable stature. A close collaborator with Chief Justice Marshall during the first years of the U.S. Supreme Court, Story was special in that he both sat on the bench—in Washington and as a Circuit Court Judge—and taught at Harvard Law School, which credits him as being one of its founders. His Supreme Court opinions, of which he wrote over 200 in his fourteen years there, supplemented by his prolific commentaries, which served as law school texts, provided the foundation for law without which the fledgling U.S. Court system might have foundered, according to Roscoe Pound.

Although he wrote landmark opinions on many aspects of the law—prize, conflict of laws, copyright, equity—it is in the area of admiralty

that he is most important from our perspective. In his 1836 opinion, *Brown v. Lull*, he set the precedent of defining seafarers as wards of the court, incapable of caring for themselves and therefore requiring the special attentions of the court, a definition that stands to the present day.[6]

Was it not then rather brash for this young law school student, Richard Henry Dana, to challenge him? At issue was Story's judgment in the case of Nichols and Couch. Like much of New England, Dana was enraged at Story's leniency, and set about publishing an article condemning Story in a legal periodical called *The American Jurist and Law Magazine*. But what would happen to his future career if he should publicly challenge the wisdom of Judge Story, who presided in the courts where Dana would soon be practising? Dana questioned himself whether it would not be professional "suicide" to publicly criticize the nation's leading maritime jurist.

However, Dana's reforming zeal, his vow to see justice done, was uppermost in his mind. Before the article appeared, and at the urging of the editor of the *American Jurist*, he wrote to his former teacher, "I should think meanly of myself if I suffered an over-anxiety about persons to prevent my speaking."[7]

"Cruelty to Seamen," published in 1839, described a case as shocking today as when its witnesses first testified. William Nichols was master, and William Couch first mate, of the 330-ton ship *Caravan* of Newburyport, a cotton freighter. A day or two before she sailed on a passage from Liverpool to New York, Henry Burr, a Frenchman, was signed on as cook. Once at sea, he proved completely inadequate to the task and was required by the officers to move to the fo'c'sle and assume the duties of a seaman, a job for which he was likewise unqualified, which became obvious a few days later when he was ordered to reef the foretopsail. When Burr failed to lay hold of the reef tackle, the mate beat him twenty or thirty times with the foretopsail halyard until he fell down, then kicked and stomped upon him. Not an hour later, the seamen who were aloft witnessed the captain beating Burr on the quarterdeck. His head and mouth were covered with blood. Apparently dead, he was lowered by a rope into the fo'c'sle. But he survived till the next day, when he was raised from the fo'c'sle, lashed to a spar, and kept there in the April rain and cold until late in the evening, when he was again let down into the fo'c'sle. He died that night.

There was more to the witnesses' story. "The district attorney then showed to the jury a piece of bamboo, upon which was fastened a sail needle, projecting about ¾ths of an inch, and called several witnesses who testified that the captain and mate were in the daily habit of pricking the deceased with this instrument, in the arms, legs, back and thighs."[8]

The defense did not challenge the testimony. However, the lawyers for Nichols and Couch produced witnesses who defended the integrity of the officers, relating their family connections and their good reputations while on shore. The defense argued that neglect of duty required appropriate punishment, and that while the pricker was a bit unusual, it was no more cruel than the spur used by the equestrian to encourage a horse in its performance.

But it appeared in his charge to the jury that Judge Story was not persuaded by the defense. Nichols and Couch were being charged under an Act of Congress of 3 March 1835, which provided that, "If any master or other officer of an American vessel on the high seas shall, from malice, hatred or revenge, withold from them suitable food and nourishment, or inflict any cruel or unusual punishment, every person so offending shall, on conviction thereof, be punished by imprisonment not exceeding five years, or by fine, not exceeding $1,000. or both according to the nature and aggravation of the offense."[9]

Story, in review, said that no witnesses contradicted the evidence that the officers had done the beating with "malice, hatred and revenge," and that inflicting punishment with a sail needle was indeed cruel and unusual. Further, he doubted whether any punishment of Burr for failure to perform as a seaman was justified since he had been signed as a cook. The captain was, he said, as culpable as the mate, since he had witnessed the beating without interfering.

The jury returned a guilty verdict.

Before sentencing, Judge Story lectured the officers and underlined the dastardliness of their crimes. He emphasized that, while it may have been true that Burr was an imposter, not knowing how to cook, the reaction of Nichols and Couch was totally inappropriate, and indeed, they were lucky they were not tried for manslaughter.

Against this background, imagine the surprise of the courtroom and the general public, which had followed the case with great interest, when the judge meted out a lenient sentence. Couch, a poor man with a family to support, was fined $10.00 and jailed thirty days. Nichols was fined $100.00 and jailed ninety days. The two also were allowed their choice of jails, his honor wishing to make the imprisonment as easy as possible.

Dana was outraged. The spectre of Captain Thompson flogging Sam and John must have loomed large in his memory. Dana could but question the justice of a tongue lashing and such a light sentence for a malicious crime. Or was it a mockery of the law? Was not the law written to protect sailors from capricious violence at the hands of despotic masters where, on the high seas, there is no appeal to a neutral body? What deterrent effect can the law have if sentences are so minimal?

Furthermore, this was not the only case under the 1835 statute in which Judge Story exercised extreme leniency. In 1838 Captain Winn had been indicted for imprisoning "from malice, hatred, and revenge," John Bassett, his chief mate. The law reporter described the details.

> It appeared that when the ship was near the Feejee Islands, Captain Winn took offense at something that the mate did, and ordered him below. Soon afterwards, he ordered him to set the evening watch; but he refused to go upon deck, saying that he had been sent from duty with dishonor, and would not return to it unless honorably reinstated. Next morning Captain Winn imprisoned him in his stateroom, which was very small, and ordered him to be kept on short allowance. He also ordered the skylight to be covered with lead, and confined him in this situation about three months. His food was brought to him but once in twenty-four hours, and at different times, sometimes in the morning, sometimes at evening, and sometimes not at all. The weather was so warm (it being in the tropics) that he was obliged to keep naked all the time, and then his distress for want of pure air was very great, and the vermin were extremely annoying. Several other circumstances were detailed by the mates respecting his imprisonment which were disgusting, and need not be stated here. He finally returned to duty, but having more trouble with the captain, was again confined in the same place three months.[10]

So serious was the effect on Mr. Bassett that he appeared to be permanently mentally disabled. The defense lawyer made no argument on behalf of his client, and for all this, Justice Story sentenced Captain Winn to ninety days in the jail of his choice.

For Dana, the problem was not with the law. The problem was with enforcement. What good was a law intended to protect seamen when the judge who set the precedents appeared to scoff at its punishment provisions. Dana had been a seaman. He knew from experience what went on at sea. But Justice Story, in his remarks to the jury in the case of Nichols and Couch, said he also knew what took place aboard ships at sea. He had passed his boyhood "among seamen of all grades, and he knew the trials, difficulties, and dangers they had to pass through."[11]

Who was to be believed in such cases, the sailors in the fo'c'sle, often of no repute, or the masters and officers of the quarterdeck, often known as upright citizens?

In both the case of Nichols and Couch and the case of Captain Winn, there was a parade of witnesses who testified to their respectable characters—boyhood friends, merchants, and ship owners. About such character references Dana was most cynical. "It is to be expected, that the master of a vessel, in the short intervals which he spends at home between his long voyages, when in the midst of family and friends, both to please and to restrain him, and in his intercourse with the merchants and insurers upon whose good opinion he depends for his bread, would preserve a respectable appearance. It would be the strangest thing in the world if he should show signs of cruelty or of a tyranical disposition at such times."[12]

That very captain who came into the court with a retinue of friends and associates to testify to his good character "when on shore," under the pressures of life at sea sometimes changed quite radically, according to the seamen. Yet the common seaman had no such respectable credibility and suffered from the reputation of being unreliable. In fact, the testimony of the sailors was often disregarded when compared to that of the officers. According to Dana, the captain had nothing to fear. There was no "reliable" witness to testify against him unless it be a passenger, but with a passenger present, the captain exercised great restraint. "The sailor comes into court under very different circumstances from the master. He is thrown among the land lords and sharks of all descriptions; is often led to drink freely; and comes upon the stand unsided, and under a certain cloud of suspicion as to his character."[13]

Was the testimony of seafarers to be so disregarded, asked Dana. In the Nichols and Couch case, after long cross-examination of all the sailors, not a single inconsistency was discovered by a very able defense counsel. Indeed, the crew were willing to be cross-examined separately to verify that there was no conspiracy ("combination") in their response.

But what was to be said in defense of the credibility of the officers' testimony in such cases? The credibility controversy was difficult. Who should the jury believe when officers and crew offered contradictory testimony? One contemporary captain insisted that "a false sympathy has been gotten up for sailors by means of books which have had too extensive a circulation . . . and have obtained a good deal more credit than they deserve. People on shore believe that sailors are almost universally abused, and a jury can scarcely be found who will convict a sailor or clear an officer. . . ." According to Captain Charles Ringbolt, who challenged Richard Henry Dana, "*Two Years Before the Mast*, . . . however interesting in many particular[s], convey[s] very wrong impressions as to the general treatment of seamen."[14] Admitting there were exceptions, Captain Ringbolt claimed that seamen were generally well treated by their officers, but once they got ashore, they were victimized by crimps, landlords, and lawyers who distorted the picture of life at sea.

He related in detail a personal experience. In 1841 he sailed from Boston with a crew that, as usual, was brought on board by a shipping master, some sober men and some drunk. All soon sobered up and served the captain well except one seaman, Isaac Brown, who was so violent that the crew complained to the captain that their lives were in danger. The captain was obliged to put Brown in irons for most of the trip, and when he was occasionally freed, a guard had to be kept on him. Once, when he was free, he jumped overboard in a suicide attempt and was rescued with great difficulty. The captain's intention was to bring him safely back to the U.S. where he could be hospitalized; but on arrival in New York, he disappeared like all the rest of the crew when the crimps came swarming aboard.

On pay day, instead of Brown, a landlord appeared with a written order signed, "Isaac, his mark 'X', Brown," demanding $100 in back wages. Captain Ringbolt was suspicious, since Brown could write, and refused to pay since Brown had not done a day's work and had been maintained, board and room, for months.

The case went to court and Ringbolt was dumbfounded by the crew's perjury. Seven of the crew (all that were left in the city) solemnly swore that "Isaac Brown performed his duty like any other man, excepting for a few weeks, when the captain cruelly confined him in irons. The circumstances of his jumping overboard were unknown to them. Two of these men were those who begged me in the first place to confine him because their lives were in danger, and two of the others assisted in rescuing him from drowning!"[15]

Ringbolt could not speak because he was part owner of the ship. The testimony of his two officers was outweighed by the seven crewmen, and Ringbolt was required to pay $300. But as he learned later, not a penny went to Brown, who never heard of the trial. The lawyers and landlords had trumped up the whole case, and had convinced the seamen to perjure themselves.

"Let me not be misunderstood as asserting

that officers were always in the right, and sailors always in the wrong, for some say I am prejudiced in favor of the captains, from holding that situation myself. I only claim a portion of public sympathy for all sides."[16]

But in the case of Nichols and Couch, public sentiment was heavily on the side of the seafarers, and Dana spoke for many in challenging Judge Story's failure to impose the sentence that the law required.

The Judge, according to Dana, had not only failed to use the law to help deter future violence, but he had, in giving sentence, ignored the letter of the law. The law said that sentence shall be pronounced according to the "nature and aggravation of the offense." There could be no other grounds for leniency. "And since in these cases, the offense was clearly aggravated covering the whole ground of the statute, and more, without any mitigating circumstances in the act itself, is not the judge bound to inflict the full penalty?"[17]

Dana's case was passionately and persuasively argued. Yet the editor of the *American Jurist*, out of respect for the esteemed judge, now sixty years of age and a frequent contributor to the *Jurist* himself, was hesitant to publish this commentary written by a twenty-four-year-old candidate to the bar. In order to assure editor Hilliard that the judge would entertain no resentment against the *Jurist*, Dana wrote a personal letter to Justice Story on 30 September 1839, accepting full responsibility for the article; and received from Story a letter in return, dated the next day. The correspondence does honor to both men.

In his letter, Dana emphasized that while the case of Nichols and Couch was the primary topic of the *American Jurist* article, his intention was not so much a specific attack on the judgment in that case, as a general attack on leniency in all such cases. He added that he had such respect for his professor and mentor that he trusted the article would not create any "unpleasant feelings." "I have been brought up with such a conservative reverence for office and age . . . I was at times almost led to think that, considering everything—my youth, my situation in school, etc.—it might be better for me not to come out upon the subject."[18]

Did the article jeopardize his career, a career that began so auspiciously with the publication of his famous book when he was twenty-five? From his point of view, tragically, these youthful years were the apex of his professional life. Although he did many useful things in later years, he never had the same satisfaction. He later was nominated ambassador to the Court of St. James, but the U.S. Senate failed to confirm his appointment. He resolved to write a book on admiralty law and a series of admiralty reports of Massachusetts, but they were never written. His only other work was a handbook, *The Seaman's Friend*, published in 1841. He died at age sixty-seven, doing research in Rome to write a book on international law.

The Dana whom the world remembers died at age twenty-five. The irony of having all his aspirations and achievements eclipsed by a successful first work severely disappointed Dana in his later years. Shortly before his death he wrote bitterly to a friend: "My great success—my book—was a boy's book, done before I came to the bar."[19]

But these personal disappointments were in no way a consequence of his outspoken criticism of Justice Story. Story's reply to Dana applauded the student and confirmed that justice depends for its administration on full and free debate. Dana's article for the *Jurist* required no apologies.

But Justice Story's letter also shed further light on the case and on the problem of the reliability of the witnesses' testimony. What had been reported in the newspapers as very consistent testimony from the seamen of the *Caravan*, was, in fact, "so incredible and contradictory" that the judge feared the jury would not render a guilty verdict. Despite the questionable evidence and the "exaggerated statements of cruelty given by some of the witnesses," the judge believed that the defendants were indeed guilty, and later evidence corroborated this judgment. But he was troubled by the testimony from the seafarers. "If you had been as long in a court of justice as myself, you would be astonished and humbled at the vast extent of exaggeration and even of perjury which characterizes civil and criminal cases, where seamen

and officers are concerned, respecting the crimes and misdemeanors and bad conduct of each. I lament the painful necessity of saying so."[20]

But what of Dana's accusation that Judge Story's lenient sentencing of William Nichols and William Couch represented a basic misunderstanding of the intent of the 1835 statute? Judge Story gave a simple and startling answer. To his young student, he wrote:

> It may not be known to you that the very Act, by which officers are now liable to be punished for abusing seamen, was drawn by me, and procured to be passed by my very urgent solicitations. . . .
>
> Believe me, dear sir, with the truest regard,
>
> Affectionately, your friend,
>
> Joseph Story[21]

NOTES

[1] Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: P. F. Collins & Sons, 1937), p. 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 100–102.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 101.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[5] William W. Story, ed., *The Life & Letters of Joseph Story*, 2 vols., (Boston: Charles Little & James Brown, 1851), 2:314.

[6] "Seamen are a class of persons remarkable for their rashness, thoughtlessness and improvidence. They are generally necessitous, ignorant of the nature and extent of their own rights and privileges, and for the most part, incapable of duly appreciating their value. They combine, in a singular manner, the apparent anomalies of gallantry, extravagance, profusion in expenditure, indifference to the future, credulity, which is easily won, and confidence, which is readily surprised. Hence it is, that bargains between them and ship owners, the latter being persons of great intelligence and shrewdness in business, are deemed open to much observation and scrutiny; for they involve great inequality of knowledge, of forecast, of power, and of condition. Courts of admiralty on this account are accustomed to consider seamen as peculiarly entitled to their protection; so that they have been, by a somewhat bold figure, often said to be favorites of courts of admiralty. In a just sense they are so, so far as the maintenance of their rights, and the protection of their interest against the effects of superior skill and shrewdness of master and owners of ships are concerned. Courts of admiralty are not, by the constitution and jurisdiction, confined to the mere dry and positive rules of the common law. But they act upon the enlarged and liberal jurisprudence of courts of equity. Whenever, therefore, any stipulation is found in the shipping articles, which derogates from the general rights and privileges of seamen, courts of admiralty hold it void, as founded upon imposition or an undue advantage taken of their necessities and ignorance, and improvidence." Federal Case No. 6047 (CC M1823)

[7] Story, *Life & Letters*, p. 314.

[8] Richard Henry Dana, Jr., "Cruelty to Seamen," *The American Jurist and Law Magazine* 9 (October 1839):94.

[9] Acts 1835, Ch. 313, 3.

[10] Dana, "Cruelty to Seamen," p. 97.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

[13] Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: Harper & Row, 1840), p. 464.

[14] Captain Charles Ringbolt, *Sailor's Life and Sailor's Yarns* (New York: C. S. Francis, 1847), p. 251.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 250.

[17] Dana, "Cruelty to Seamen," p. 107.

[18] Story, *Life & Letters*, p. 315.

[19] James D. Hart, "The Other Writings of Richard Henry Dana," *The Colophon* 19:6, p. 61.

[20] Story, *Life & Letters*, p. 316.

[21] *Ibid.*

A Cruise for Mackerel

The following account, which appeared in The Fishing Gazette, *21 November 1908, provides an intimate view of mackerel seining in the era before auxiliary power, ca. 1870–1910. The unidentified author, who may have been a journalist, brought an objective perspective to his first cruise, capturing many details not usually recorded.* The Fishing Gazette *praised him for making clear "that a very special knowledge and skill are required of the men who go down to the sea in ships. The catching of fish has indeed come to be a business which takes not only muscle, and endurance, and skill, and courage, but also head work of the best sort."*

Other useful sources on the mackerel purse-seine fishery include: George Brown Goode's The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States *(Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887); James B. Connolly's fictional "The Gloucester Fishermen: Night-Seining and Winter Trawling,"* Scribner's Magazine *31 (April 1902): 387–402, and* The Seiners *(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904); Albert Cook Church's* The American Fishermen *(New York: W. W. Norton, 1941); Gerald Fitzgerald's "Spring Mackerel Fishing,"* The Fishing Gazette, *6 June 1926; and Raymond McFarland's* Masts of Gloucester *(New York: W. W. Norton, 1937).*

Off Montauk—"Montaug," the fishermen call it. A peculiar smell in the air. "There's fish here all right," said the skipper, with a sniff. Other telltale signs—gannets and a myriad of sea geese, says a writer in the Baltimore "Sun."

My first watch aloft. Sea smooth as oil. The top or head of the mast is about ten feet above the crosstrees. It was several days before I had summoned sufficient courage to attempt that short but dangerous climb, but finally I had the giddy satisfaction of straddling that eminence. After a while I dared to stand up on a spot just spacious enough to receive the full weight of one foot, my arms around the topmast the while. A few of the daring ones would have the clewed topsail oftentimes lowered and spread over the masthead between the foretopmast and the maintopmast stay as a cushion.

It was my watch aloft on this morning, calm and lovely. I could have sworn that I saw a black streak of something—a whale maybe. Inside of ten minutes that inky, attenuated blur reappeared. What could it be? A water shadow probably.

Graham was coming aloft. I intended to call his attention to my find, but just as he reached the crosstrees it disappeared for the second time. I grew nervous. Again that confounded streak appeared. In vain I tried to point it out to my shipmate. I began to doubt the evidence of my own eyes.

"Oh, I see it now!" he exclaimed finally. "But don't let on that you see anything. It's too far off yet to make out just what it is. Wait until we get a little closer. We don't want to make a mistake and let the gang have the laugh on us."

But the skipper had observed my pointing and wanted to know what we were looking at. "It's got me guessing," Graham replied. "Looks to me like seaweed."

The men come on deck and look about curiously. Hanley, more curious than the rest, soon joins us. The black streak attracts his attention instantly.

"There's fish there, skipper!" he yells down, decisively. It was as if he had thrown a bombshell to the deck, every man making a dart for cover to oil up. "Its a jeesly raft, too," he adds.

The skipper comes up in a hurry.

"There's no need of us up here now," says Graham, not a little chagrined that the glory of proclaiming such welcome tidings belonged to the newcomer.

"Haul up the boat and pump her out," the skipper sings down. "Hoist the fore gafftopsail."

No sooner through with the topsail than we are told to hoist the balloon jib and the staysail.



Opposite: The mackerel fleet at Provincetown, summer 1912. Nearest the camera is the schooner *Clintonia*, with her seine boat and dory astern. Forward of the vertical wooden pump in the stern of the seine boat, the seine is flaked neatly, with cork line aft, ready for heaving. Photo by Henry D. Fisher. (76.208.217A)

We are about two miles from the school, if school it is, and the wind being light, we need all sail.

Soon after we had the boat pumped out the order came down to be ready to get into it. The skipper comes down and, eyes a-sparkle and hands a-tremble, takes the wheel. Every once in a while he nervously yells aloft:

"Can you see them yet?"

"Yes," comes the reply, "they are up black."

"Get into the boat!"

Helter skelter we jump over the port rail. We struggle for oars, each trying to pick out the best. We make noise enough to awake the dead, causing the skipper to curse us into comparative silence. Jim puts up a cry about his bow oar, which is a little shorter than the others, and which one of the men aft has appropriated to his own use and means to keep.

"They're gone down!" cries Hanley, whose information makes an effective damper to our good spirits.

"There they are!" he yells a little later. "They are right ahead. Keep her off! Steady!"

Into the boat jumps the skipper, the cook taking charge of the wheel. The skipper quietly gives the word to let go, trying to look calmer than he feels. Nick, our seine heaver, is at the steering oar. The skipper, never once taking his eye off the spot where he knows the fish to be schooling, climbs on top of the seine for a better view.

"Row hard, boys," he urges. We rowed and rowed until my arms ached.

The fish as I turned my head to look were going 'round and 'round in a circle, causing the water to boil with a noise like the distant roar of a waterfall. They were ringing.

I noticed that none of the old hands deigned to turn around to take a look, such a procedure usually being taken as a sign that the oarsman hasn't been serving too many seasons. As the skipper once said: "You fellows do the rowing and I'll do the looking."

"Way enough, boys! Back water! Hold your oars!" the skipper cries at last.

Abreast of the fish now. How it sends the blood coursing through one's veins, this matchless sight of thousands and thousands of mackerel disporting themselves! A season's work right before our eyes—to get. A raft all right, covering

Standing atop the seine, the skipper tracks a school of mackerel as the seine boat and dory set out from the schooner *Pinta*, ca. 1906. Photo by Albert Cook Church. (Courtesy the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts)





As the crew bends their ash oars under the direction of the captain at the helm, the cork heaver (aft), bight passer (center), and seine heaver (right) heft the seine out of the boat. Drawn by Henry Elliott and Captain Joseph W. Collins. (George B. Goode, *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the U.S.*, Washington, 1887)

surely half an acre. Appearances are very deceptive, though, for the fish may all be on the surface of the water, or they may extend downward for several feet.

"Start her up, boys! Put the keg in the water!" This latter remark is addressed to the cork heaver. Just as he is about to do so the fish flip their tails and disappear with a roar amid a great turmoil of water.

"Back water!" cries the skipper, sharply. "Hard!"

In a few minutes, just as the skipper expects, they come up again, but almost under our boat 'Round and 'round they go in a mad whirl.

"Easy on your oars, boys," the skipper almost whispers.

We edge away slowly, fearful lest the fish take fright again and disappear, perhaps for good.

"Go ahead—hard! Drop your keg! Put the seine into the water!"

The cork heaver gently slides the little black keg into the water. The seine goes over the gunnel in a black cloud, one bight after another striking the water with a splash. We row like demons, a bight reaching the water each time we bend back to our oars; for the seine heaver must watch his chance and heave at the opportune moment to prevent the twine from becoming entangled on the oar blades.

The layers of the seine are placed athwart the sternsheets. The bight passer, standing to port, takes each layer by the bight and passes it to the seine heaver, who gives the layer a bat over the starboard gunnel. The cork heaver takes care of his own bights, heaving in unison with the seine heaver.

Much depends on the captain at the steering oar. Some skippers are notorious for making poor sets, others for the masterly way in which they surround a school.

On the school depends just what kind of a set is to be made. All schools are not ringers, like ours. Often a flying set is made, it being the height of excitement to watch a seineboat crew, expert rowers all, row side by side with a school of wild fish, almost cracking their necks trying to head the fish off.

But we have no trouble getting around our school. Simply row, row, row until it seems as if the arms would leave their sockets.

"Way enough!" cries the skipper.

We are back at our starting point. As we sweep by, the man in the stern of the dory passes the keg, to which the bow end of the purse line

is attached, to someone in the bow of the boat. Being the bow man, it is Jim's place to unfasten the keg as quickly as possible—for time is money now—and pass the purse line aft to the davit, which has just been put in place in the center to port. For quickness of action I think a crew of seiners about the niftiest set of men alive.

We are now divided into two sub-crews, separated by the purser amidships. The ponderous piece of mechanism is swung up on hinges from beneath the sternmost thwart, where it has been out of the way of the two sternmost rowers, and securely bolted into place on the thwart. For a time we purse, without the aid of the machine, hand over hand both forward and aft, until the strain becomes too heavy.

Although we have surrounded the fish, we have not yet effected their capture. All that is to be seen of our seine is a line of bobbing corks 240 fathoms in circumference. It is a sea corral, the circular network extending straight downward, tide permitting, twenty-five fathoms. The foot is leaded.

When the fish start to go under the boat, as going through the foot ropes is called, the crew are practically helpless to prevent their escape. They can but cry and rave and swear and watch the fish flow under them to freedom, although sometimes the jabbing down of an oar will turn the fish back into the seine. Another expedient rarely tried is to throw an imitation shark, canvas on an iron frame, overboard, working it up and down close to the foot ropes by means of a line.

Suddenly the fish take a dive. When a school takes a dive after being surrounded it seldom comes to the surface again. From the time it disappears until the seine is dried in it is usually one prolonged period of anxiety.

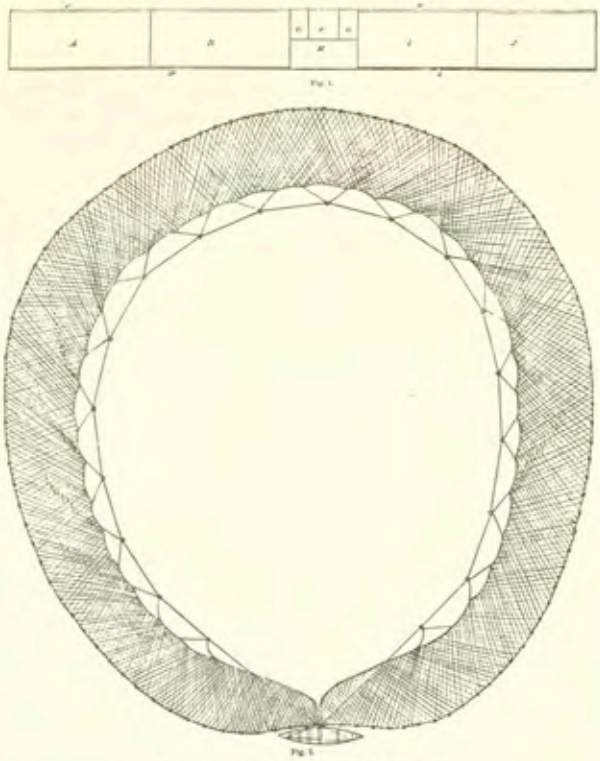
Everything is conjecture. Have the fish taken a dive underneath the foot? Too often is this the case. It is enough to take the heart out of any crew to behold, after the seine is half pursed up, the fish schooling again, not in but without the seine, perhaps but a few yards from the boat.

Pursing up a seine, especially with the hot sun beating down from a bright sky, is the hardest kind of work. After the seine is pursed up, the dory men, who have assisted in the operation, row to the bight of the seine.

Drying in is a slow, tedious job. It consists of hauling in the seine, little by little from bow to stern in concerted action, and flaking the twine thus gathered up, that is, putting it in layers athwart. If there is a goodly body of fish in the seine, they soon begin to come up on the twine, having been caught by the gills. If they come up on the foot ropes at the center and not anywhere else, it is a pretty sure sign that most of the mackerel have made their escape under the boat.

At last the foot of the seine is all in. No chance for the fish to get away under the boat now, although sharks often make havoc in trying to get at them.

Diagram of a purse seine measuring approximately 1,400 feet in circumference and 150 feet deep. The purse line passes through rings at the foot and draws the bottom together into a huge bag. The seine is then "dried in" (pulled back aboard the boat) until the fish are contained by a reinforced portion of the center of the seine called the bunt or bailing piece. Drawn by Captain Joseph W. Collins. (George B. Goode, *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the U.S.*, Washington, 1887)



THE MACKEREL PURSE-SEINE FISHERY.

FIG. 1. Diagram showing the different sections of a purse-seine: *A* and *J*, arms or ends; *B* and *I*, wings; *C*, *D*, *E*, and *L*, border of stout twine; *F*, bailing piece or bunt; *E* and *G*, skirts; *H*, under.

FIG. 2. Diagram showing the form of a purse-seine when spread in the water. (Sect. v, vol. i, p. 958.)

Drawings by Capt. J. W. Collins.

The bunt of the seine has been reached. The bunt is much stronger than the rest of the seine, the strands being thicker, making it harder on the men drying in. You will now feel the twine tremble as the mackerel surge against it.

Often the fish take a notion to dive in concert. If the school is large, look out for trouble. Once Thad Morgan's crew just finished pursing and the fish took a dive plumb to bottom. There was nothing to do save cut away the seine, else boat and all hands would have gone down, as has happened I am told.

No crew would ever think of leaving the vessel without a sharp bait knife in the boat. Also a torch is carried, so that if a set is made close to sundown it can be lighted and thus serve as a beacon to the vessel. Matches get damp quickly in the boat. To prevent this they are usually placed in a little tin can, along with a piece of charcoal, the latter absorbing the moisture.

As to our school, let me dismiss all concern about it by stating that we lost it through the breaking of the purse line. It was estimated that there were fully 40,000 fish in the seine. However, we made a successful set that evening, running to market fresh with 20,000 and sharing fifty odd dollars.

Let us suppose a school of medium size. Suppose the seine sufficiently dried in. Now if you look deep down into the water over the starboard gunnel you can see the imprisoned fish swimming about by hundreds. All the time they are slowly being forced into closer quarters as the seine is still further dried in.

Hanley, in the spare dory, in response to the skipper's signal—an oar raised to vertical—is making toward us in all haste. The two men in the other dory are having the time of their life in keeping the line of corks from getting bunched and from floating in toward the boat.

The seine is now alive with fish—a living wall of them. In their fury and turmoil they cause the water to seethe. The skipper puts an oar down to measure the depth of the living wall and makes a guess that there are at least 5,000 fish.

The line of floating corks, the seine having been dried in as much as possible, is now gathered into the boat, forming what is called a pocket. Both dories, containing the skipper and several of the crew, are rowed to the vessel. Had it been a pod of a few barrels the seine would have been dried in further and the fish dipped into the dory.

Having finished pursing the seine, the *Pinta*'s dorymen hold the bunt while the seine boat crew dries in the seine and tries to compute the catch. Photo by Albert Cook Church, ca. 1906. (Courtesy the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts)





Fighting to the last, the mackerel are dipped out of the pocket of seine between the schooner *Pinta* and her seine boat. The cork line has been pulled aboard and hooked under the schooner's rail. A piece of canvas prevents chafe as the dip net is laid on the rail. The bowman holds the seine boat away from the schooner with an oar. Brackets attached to the port gunwale hold the other oars out of the way. Photo by Albert Cook Church, ca. 1906. (Courtesy the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts)

It is possibly 5 P.M. The cook has the torches all ready, for he knows that an all-night job is in progress. The men in the dories have reached the vessel and clambered aboard. Now that he is aboard to the skipper is entrusted the delicate task of picking up the boat.

It takes a good eye, good judgment and a steady nerve to do this, especially when a heavy chop is on and a goodly haul in the seine. If the vessel comes too close it's good-bye to fish and boat, and perhaps some of the crew; if not near enough then it's a case of wasting valuable time in putting about for another pickup; all the time the fish swaying in the seine and liable to burst through their flimsy prison, as they often do, especially when the twine is the least bit rotten.

We will assume that the boat is picked up without mishap. The seine, or rather the bag of the seine, is between the boat and the vessel, on the port side. The loose line of corks that was gathered into the boat is now hauled up over the vessel's gunnel and made fast along the forward rail.

The boat is riding from the boom which has been lowered at the fore rigging. Men at the stern and bow of the boat fend it off from the vessel's side with an oar. Two or three other men remain in the boat to dry in as necessary. The rest of the crew prepare to hoist.

The dip net attached to the hoist is capable of holding a barrel and a half at one dip and has a handle twelve or fourteen feet long. The skipper is the dipper and stands just aft of the fore rigging.

Swinging the huge scoop out over the rail, he cries "Lower!" Scooping up all the fish the net will hold, he sings out "Set!" which means to hoist.

The two dory men stand at the rail a little aft of the skipper. As the net reaches the desired height the "captain," that is, the stern rower of the dory, cries "High!" The strain on the hoist is relaxed and the dory men dump the fish on the forward deck. As the fish strike the bare deck they begin beating a devil's tattoo with their tails.

When on the hook the mackerel puts up just

provide decent accommodations for their living cargoes. The ships had separate steerages for single men, families, and single women. Simple but wholesome food was served. Medical exams, inspections to weed out criminals, and later anarchists, and bureaucratic treatment were efficient but dehumanizing.

In 1892 Ellis Island was opened as the receiving station at New York. From the North River piers, where the upper class passengers disembarked, the immigrants were barged to the island to be probed, inspected, and processed. Fully 70 percent of arriving immigrants entered through Ellis Island.

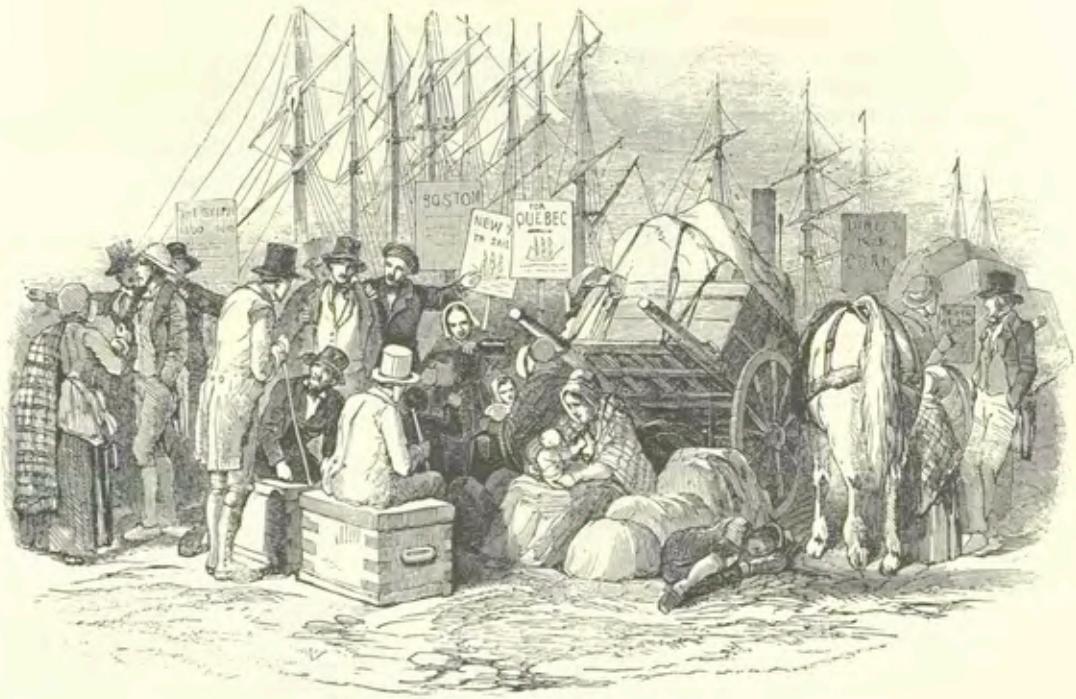
Eastern and Southern Europeans, escaping poverty and pogroms, made up half the nine million who came in the 1890s, and 70 percent of the fourteen million arrivals between 1900 and 1920. The height came between 1905 and 1914, exceeding a million a year—2,700 a day—six times.

But what was a dream of liberty for the new arrivals became a nightmare of ethnic pollution for many Americans who had lost touch with their own immigrant roots. In the 1920s the National Origins Act set quotas to control the influx, and the European flow slowed still further into the 1950s. Ellis Island was shut down in 1954.

Yet America is still a haven for emigrants, whether Haitian "boat people" or displaced Asians arriving by airline in California. Though they may be worlds apart from the nineteenth-century sea travelers, the Statue of Liberty still reflects the essence of their journey.

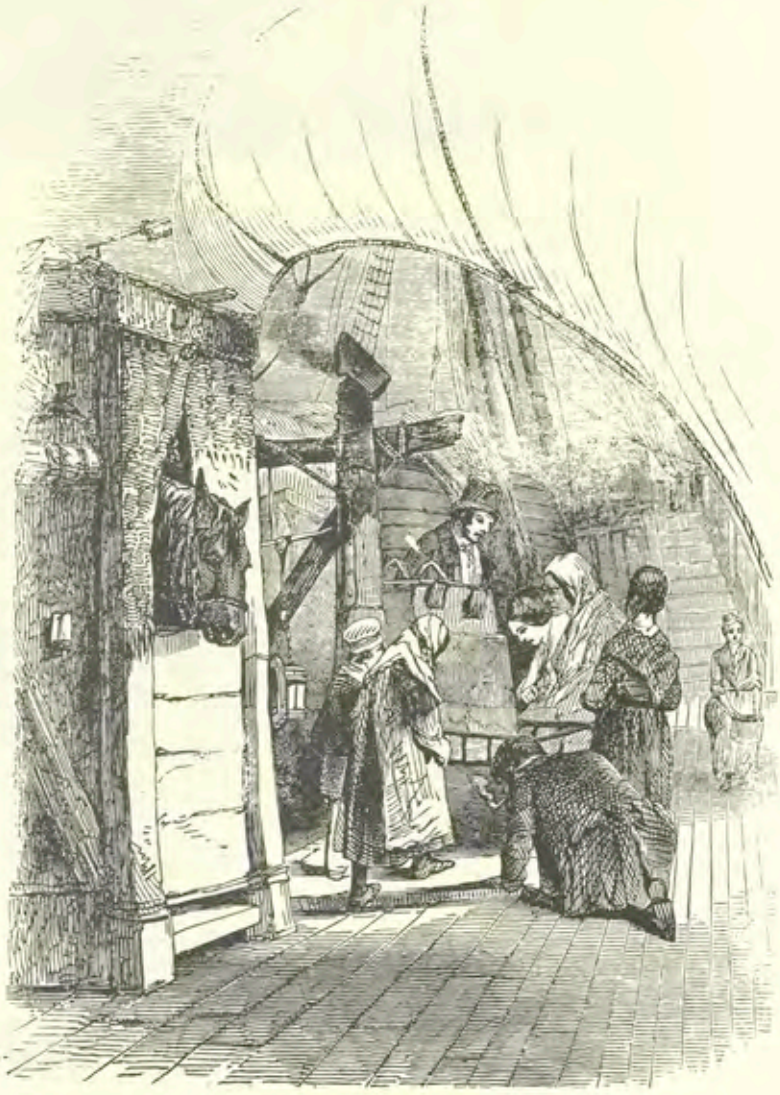
Compiled by Andrew W. German

"Emigrants' arrival at Cork—a scene on the quay." Ireland provided the first large wave of nineteenth-century American immigrants. (*Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851)

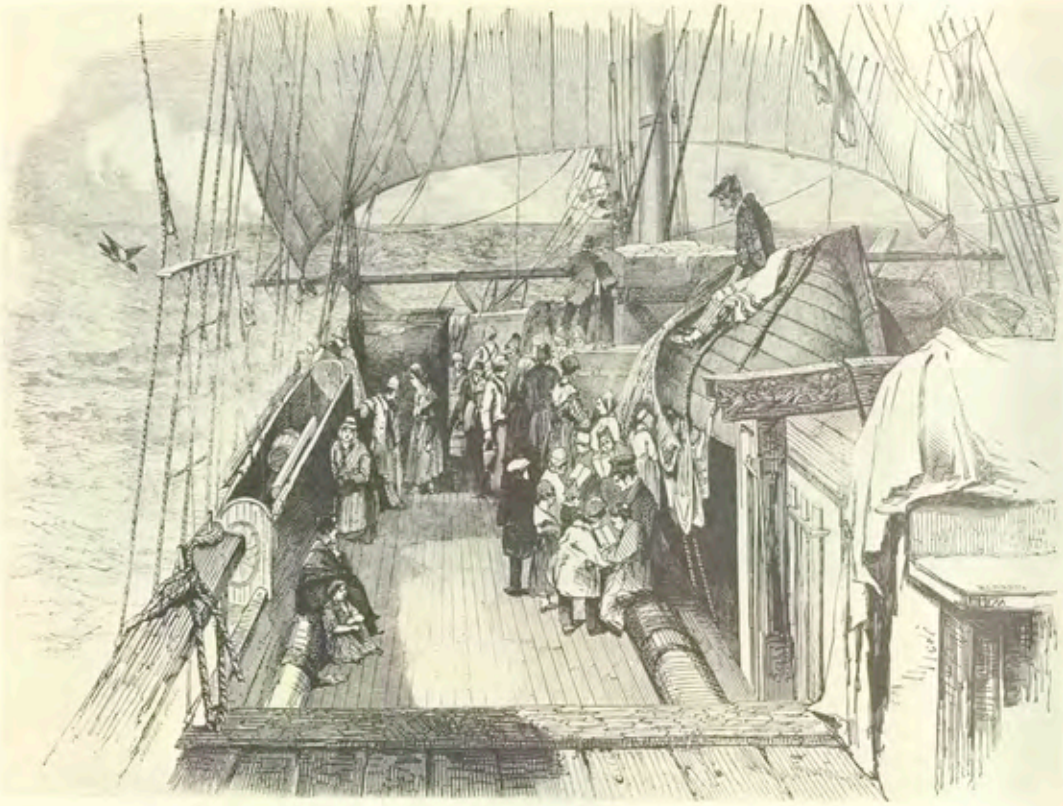




"Emigration vessel—between decks" depicts the double tiers of rude cubicles in which families were housed in steerage for the trans-atlantic passage aboard sailing vessels. (*Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851)



"Tea water!" In the sailing emigrant ships, emigrants usually did their own cooking on the small range on deck, when weather permitted. (*Illustrated London News*, 20 January 1849)



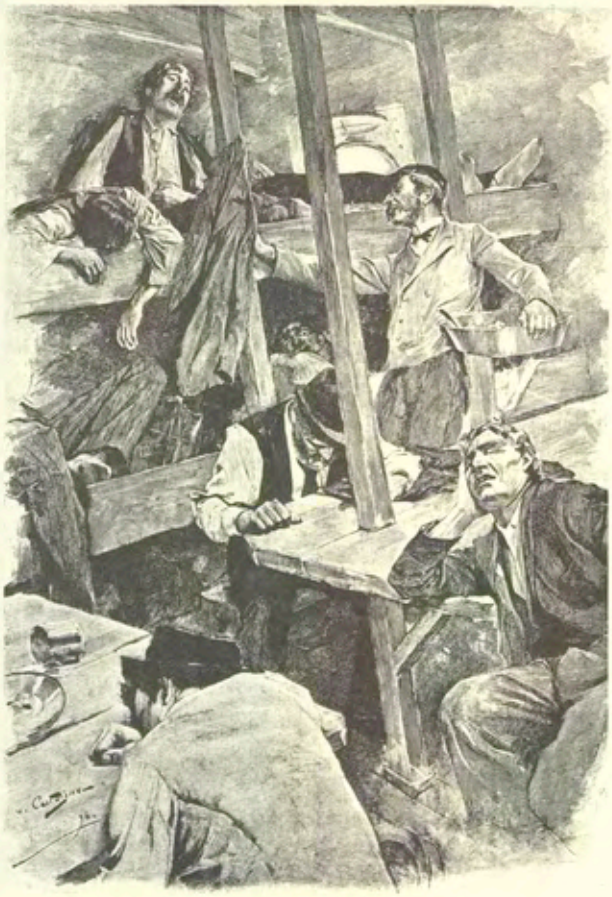
"Emigrants on deck." Steerage passengers had liberty of the foredeck when not confined by weather to their stifling quarters. (*Illustrated London News*, 20 January 1849)



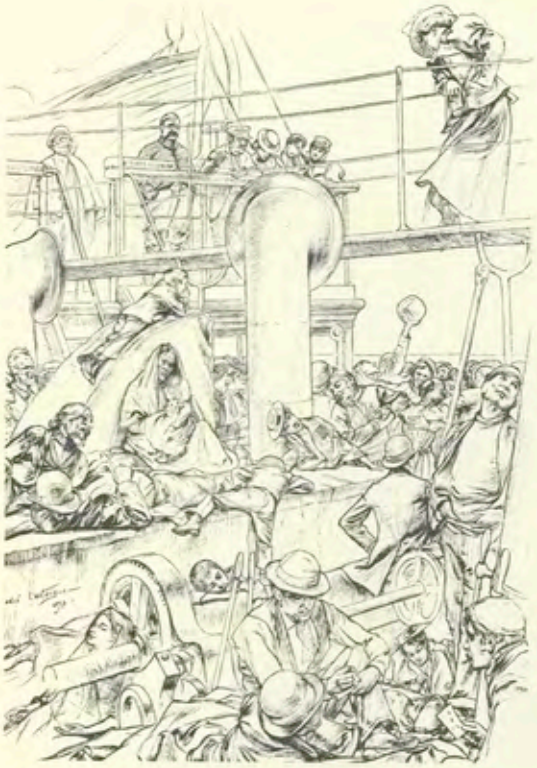
Ferried from arriving ships in New York Harbor, immigrants were hustled into the processing station in Castle Garden at the Battery as they stepped ashore in America for the first time. (*Harper's Monthly*, June 1884)



From the industrial port of Hamburg, many Eastern European emigrants departed for America aboard the great turn-of-the-century steamships. Drawn by Milton J. Burns. (*Scribner's Magazine*, November 1902)



In the steam liners, stewards delivered food to the steerage passengers, who were often too preoccupied by seasickness to attend to it. Drawn by André Castaigne. (*Century Magazine*, February 1898)





Above, left: Beneath the curious stares of upper-class passengers, steerage madonnas and roughnecks alike relax around the hatches and machinery on a steamer's well deck. Drawn by André Castaigne. (*Century Magazine*, February 1898)

Above, right: Modern, efficient, intimidating Ellis Island replaced Castle Garden as New York's immigrant processing station in 1892. Drawn by André Castaigne. (*Century Magazine*, February 1898)



Innumerable immigrants found new lives in rural America, but many never escaped urban poverty, winding up in such teeming ghettos as New York's Bone Alley (demolished as a health hazard about 1896). Drawn by Jay Hambidge. (*Century Magazine*, December 1896)

A View from the Rosenfeld Collection

Many of the earliest views in the Rosenfeld Collection are the work of Charles Edwin Bolles. Although best known for his yachting photographs, Bolles also took numerous views around New York Harbor. The cover photo of the Statue of Liberty is an example, as is this view of the harbor tug *Glen Island* towing the floating grain elevator *George Albert* past the Battery, ca. 1900.

Charles Edwin Bolles was born at Philadelphia in 1847. His early interest in artistic photography led him to a career as a professional photographer. By the early 1880s he had moved to Brooklyn, where he operated a large photographic studio. He was noted for his skill as a portraitist.

Bolles took up marine photography as a hobby, but later gave up his gallery to pursue it full time. He photographed a wide range of yacht races and regularly accompanied the New York Yacht Club's annual cruise with his camera.

His single-minded pursuit of maritime photography eventually contributed to a severe stomach ailment. Because of it, Bolles gave up photography about 1907 and went into the real estate business in Brooklyn. *Yachting Magazine*



(Y1143)

apparently held his photographs for some years, and published many of them around 1910. Morris Rosenfeld later acquired much of Bolles's work. Bolles succumbed to his stomach ailment in 1914.[1]

Built at Brooklyn in 1875, the seventy-two-foot *Glen Island* was originally named the *John Mitchell* and was renamed *Caroline* in 1912. She was abandoned in 1934. Built at Brooklyn in 1881, the *George Albert* was one of the International Elevating Company fleet of floating grain elevators in New York Harbor. She disappeared from the register after 1904.

Midwest grain poured into New York via the Erie Canal and Hudson River. To alleviate the labor of unloading canal boats with bushel baskets, the first floating grain elevator appeared in New York in 1848, shortly after repeal of the English Corn Laws encouraged increased exports of American grain to Europe. Along the waterfront, a floating grain elevator would be positioned between an oceangoing ship and the canal boats delivering grain to it. The elevator's "marine leg" (conveyor belt) hoisted grain from the canal boat to the top of the elevator, where it was weighed and could be cleaned or mixed. A pneumatic tube then deposited the grain aboard ship, either for bagging or for trimming in the hold. The *George Albert* was one of the smaller elevators, with the capacity to transfer 3,500 bushels per hour. In 1880 elevators with multiple marine legs and tubes appeared, allowing one elevator to serve two vessels at once. Later, some elevators were self-propelled, unlike the *George Albert*.

By the 1880s seven firms operated thirty-three floating elevators at New York. In 1894 they merged to form the International Elevating Company, which controlled the business until New York's grain trade died in the 1950s.[2]

From steam yachts to America's Cup races to the Brooklyn Bridge, the Rosenfeld Collection contains about 1,150 8x10 glass-plate negatives by master marine photographer C. E. Bolles.

NOTES

[1] Obituary, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 16 October 1914, courtesy New York Yacht Club Library.

[2] Joanne Fuerst, "Floating Grain Elevators in New York Harbor, 1848–1959," *American Neptune* 38 (1978):131–41.

BOOK REVIEWS

Bernard C. Webber. *CHATHAM "The Lifeboatmen."* Orleans, Massachusetts: Lower Cape Publishing Company, 1985. 128 pp., illustrations, appendix. $25.00.

Some people have a firm belief that fate plays a part in their lives and, in retrospect, look back at events that seem to have led toward one great, personal moment. Bernard C. Webber is convinced that his first glimpse of a white painted boat lying off the fish pier at Chatham, Massachusetts, was an omen. The number, CG 36500, was her only name, and she was a thirty-six-foot motor lifeboat. Webber was in transit from Highland Light to Gay Head Lighthouse, his glimpse of the boat as it lay at its mooring on that day in 1946 was brief, and he had no inkling of the manner in which that boat would participate in the greatest event of his life.

Webber had spent the years of World War II aboard a tanker, supplying gasoline to our fighting forces in the Pacific. With the end of the war, a future in the Merchant Marine did not seem appealing, so he joined the U.S. Coast Guard. During the years between 1946 and 1952, Bernie Webber was shifted between various stations and duties in the Cape Cod area and was Boatswains Mate First Class at the Chatham Station when he, CG 36500, and three crewmen became involved in the greatest sea rescue in post-war years.

The morning of 18 February 1952 came in with a furious nor'east gale and snowstorm. There was no need to look at the tattered storm warning flags to know it was a wild day at sea. The very sea itself was a mass of white, blown spray and foam. Huge breakers roared down on the sandy shore and broke with thunderous booms that shook the earth and could be heard well inland. It was not long before fishing boats began to part their moorings, even in the sheltered waters of Old Harbor. The CG 36500 was called upon to rescue such boats and tow them to safety. It was an arduous day for Webber and his crew. Over the radio they heard that the tanker *Fort Mercer* had broken in half some forty miles off Cape Cod. To their amazement, they heard that CG 36383, a craft similar to their own, had been ordered to proceed from Stage Harbor, around Monomoy Island, and out to sea in search of the distressed ship. They could not believe that such a small craft could survive the conditions they would encounter and felt fortunate that their duties kept them in relatively sheltered waters.

Webber and his crew finished their work in late afternoon, tied up the boat, and headed for the station to warm up and relax. Upon arrival, they were informed that another tanker, the *Pendleton*, had also broken in half and her sections were drifting in the area. Webber was ordered out to search for the drifting wreck and to assist, if possible. He was told to pick a crew, and three men instantly volunteered.

Chatham Bar is a dangerous passage even in moderately rough weather. Bernie Webber could hardly believe he was ordered to attempt the passage in near hurricane winds and driving snow on a pitch black night. As he proceeded down channel toward the passage Webber radioed back to find out if he must proceed, for he felt headed toward certain death. Twice he was told to proceed.

In his own words, Bernie Webber describes how he worked that gallant little craft out to sea. With windshield smashed, with compass swept away, and with an engine that several times sputtered and died, he somehow found the drifting after section of the *Pendleton* and rescued thirty-two of her thirty-three-man crew. Then, with a terribly overloaded boat, without compass, in a pitch black winter storm, he somehow found his way back safely to Chatham.

That was a storm to be remembered. Seventy of eighty-four members of the two tankers were rescued from the four drifting sections, but the story of CG 36500 outshone the other rescues. Five gold lifesaving medals, the highest award the Coast Guard bestows, were presented to those who participated in the *Pendleton/Fort Mercer* rescues. Four of these awards went to the four crew members of CG 36500 for the accomplishment of a seemingly impossible errand of mercy.

Bernard Webber, son of a Baptist minister, did his part in World War II. In joining the Coast Guard, he reversed his role in a service dedicated to saving lives from peril on the sea. The Coast Guard took full advantage of his actions, and Bernie was exploited to the fullest in public relations events that seem not to have interfered with his basic humility. He writes in a straightforward manner and mentions people and policies he did and did not like.

CHATHAM "The Lifeboatmen" is a book I will often pick up and reread. This is a story of devotion, of tenacity, of willful disregard of orders that only confused efforts being made by a man laboring under conditions his superiors could hardly conceive. By shutting off his radio and putting the lives of his crew,

himself, and the thirty-three men aboard the after section of the *Pendleton* squarely on his own sense of judgment and good seamanship, he showed outstanding courage. There was no sense of heroics in this action. Webber later stood in the cockpit of his boat and cried bitter tears as he remembered looking into the eyes of the one man they could not save, who was tragically crushed as CG 36500 maneuvered in to save him.

"Semper Paratus," long the motto of the United States Coast Guard, was epitomized by the actions of the crew of CG 36500. It is hoped that she and her crew will always be remembered as a standard by which members of that service will be guided.

The boat survives in the hands of the Orleans Historical Society. For what she represents, I hope that she will be cared for long after the men who manned her on that fateful night have crossed the bar for the last time.

Captain Francis E. Bowker
Research Associate, M.S.M.

WoodenBoat Magazine. *The Directory of Wooden Boat Builders.* Compiled by Anne Bray and Cynthia Curtis. Brooklin, Maine: WoodenBoat Publications, 1986. 300 pp., index. $9.50 paper.

The compilers of this useful and needed directory have cast a wide net. The result is a listing of approximately 500 concerns, in forty U.S. states and six Canadian provinces, that repair, service, build, or have built wooden boats. I assume a questionnaire was circulated, and apparently the replies were printed as received without any attempt at analysis or interpretation, leaving that to the reader.

While the title announces this to be a directory of wooden boat builders, the shops and yards listed report, on the whole, a much heavier involvement in boat repair and servicing. Eighty, or 16 percent, of these concerns, including some of the larger ones, are engaged in no new construction whatsoever, being solely occupied with storage, maintenance, and brokerage.

Building boats and servicing and repairing them are by no means one and the same, and often work at cross purposes. Commercial yards frequently avoid new construction because it would disrupt their operation, and because straight servicing and repair pays much better and is less demanding of scarce boatbuilding skills.

The sheer bulk of the listings in this book may tend to give readers unfamiliar with the industry an inflated impression of the amount of commercial wooden boatbuilding actually going on. An estimate based on the numbers included in the listings yields an aggregate figure of from 1,350 to 1,500 new wooden boats built in 1985 by the concerns listed. Because a precise number of some of the listings must be estimated, it is hardly possible to come much closer than this, which, I am satisfied, is not too far from the mark, and then on the generous side. The addition of 500 more boats, boats possibly built by concerns this listing may have missed, raises the estimated total of new wooden construction for 1985 to somewhere between a low of 1,850 and a high of 2,000.

When it is considered there are at least several million active boat owners in this country engaged in recreational boating, out of an overall population of 230 million, 1,850 new wooden boats annually, or even 2,000, is not a large number, indicating how much farther the wooden boat revival has yet to go.

As a general directory this is certain to prove highly useful, and it contains as well much raw data that individual readers will draw upon according to their own special requirements. The arrangement of the listings by states is a convenient feature. It would have been useful had an index been included of the types and sizes of boats reported. While this is not intended as a criticism of the current publication, I might add that when a revised edition of this directory is issued two years hence, as the publisher has announced, an introductory chapter of background and analysis would add interest and depth.

John Gardner
Associate Curator for Small Craft Studies, M.S.M.

C. P. Kunhardt, *Small Yachts: Their Design and Construction . . . with numerous plates and illustrations . . . Edited, abridged, and with a preface by the Editors of WoodenBoat Magazine from the new enlarged edition of 1891.* Brooklin, Maine: WoodenBoat Publications, Inc., 1985. 271 pp., illustrations. $30.00.

Yacht enthusiasts, wooden boat fans, and maritime historians can applaud the men and women at WoodenBoat Publications for preserving one of the great classics. Because of the frighteningly frail acidic condition of all editions of Kunhardt, librarians at Mystic Seaport have been hoarding copies for twenty years. The Library was just on the point of incurring the considerable expense of strengthening individual pages using two copies of Kunhardt when WoodenBoat saved the day with their new edition.

No doubt there will be those who carp that Kunhardt has been abridged from the original. As

stated convincingly by publisher Jon Wilson, it was a matter of publishing part or not publishing at all, because the full work would have been financially unfeasible. No plans or illustrations were omitted, only the more ephemeral portions of the text dealing with the details of yacht design and construction.

WoodenBoat has quite literally preserved a great work in physical (as opposed to microfilm) form, and the price is a bargain. For anyone interested in studying the best in small yacht design a hundred years ago, there is no substitute for Kunhardt.

Plum Gut

LETTERS

In the "Historic Ships Afloat" article in the winter issue of *The Log*, I note the usual misinformation on the origin of the Liberty Ships, so send the enclosed for your interest.

So many people, including Henry J. Kaiser, tried to claim the "honor" of developing the design of the Liberty Ship that Admiral "Jerry" Land, Maritime Administration director, put out a press release stating that the design was taken from "an old 1879 tramp steamer plan," which, in itself was a lot of hogwash because there never was such a thing as a "tramp steamer design." Although there were a few British companies whose vessels just did "tramping," many tramp steamers were single vessels owned by the master and others. And the only difference between tramps and regular cargo carriers was that the latter were "liners" running on regular routes with specific ports, while the former went from and to any port where a cargo was available.

Anybody who claims to have designed the Liberty Ship had better have been employed by Gibbs & Cox in 1940–41 (as I was—having worked on her mast and rigging designs before the British "shanghaied" me, but that is another story) because she was the brainchild of William Francis Gibbs, as follows.

After the start of "Hitler's War," as the British called World War Two, Britain tried to replace her cargo ship losses by developing a quickly built, standard freighter. Under the War Ministry supervision, the Caledon Shipbuilding & Engineering Company at Dundee, Scotland, produced plans for such a vessel which became the Empire class of 5-hatch, flush deck, cargo carriers. Due to other war-time work of many shipyards, and material shortages, the British Purchasing Commission in New York City was directed to arrange for the building of similar vessels in the United States. Through the U.S. Maritime Commission, the firm of Gibbs & Cox, Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, was engaged to modify the British plans for American construction practices, and so, some 50 or 60 "Ocean" class vessels were built by three yards—Todd-Bath Iron and South Portland Shipbuilding Co. at Portland, Maine, and the Todd-California Shipbuilding Corp. at Richmond, California. These were called the Northeast Coast, Ten Thousand Ton Steamers, the specifications describing them as being "A steel, single screw, closed shelter deck steam vessel with an Admiralty type stem and cruiser stern, of 10,100 D.W. (deadweight) tons on a draft of 26 '10". To be built under the special survey of Lloyd's Register of Shipping, to class + 100-A1, and in accordance with British Ministry of Shipping and Factory Act Regulations." At the same time, plans were further modified for Canadian construction of a similar vessel, called the North Sands, Ninety-three Hundred Tonner. This vessel was described in her specs as "A steel, single screw open shelter deck steamer, with an Admiralty type stem and cruiser stern, to be built under special survey of Lloyd's, to class 100-A1, or of British Corporation of Shipping, and to be built in accordance with Ministry of Shipping and Factory Act Regulations." This vessel was of 9,300 D.W. tons on a draft of 25'6", but with scantlings to allow for an 18" increase in draft if the tonnage openings were to be closed at a future date. Both vessels had the common, flush deck, freighter profile of 2 hatches with the foremast between them, forward of the 3-deck-high bridge house, number 3 hatch with king posts P/S between the bridge and the 1-deck-high 'midship house, 2 hatches with the mainmast between them abaft the 'midship house, and an after house at the stern for stores and crew berthing.

When the United States needed an emergency shipbuilding program, it was a practical and simple job for "Willie" Gibbs (never so-called to his face!) to take the same hull and machinery, and then modify the superstructure and cargo arrangement to suit his ideas of a modern cargo carrier. And so the Liberty Ship was developed from the British original designs.

And concerning Kaiser's 4½ day ship—that was a publicity stunt to raise the public morale during the black days of 1942. He broached the idea to his friend Franklin Roosevelt, who gave him the "go

ahead" and issued the required directives to all concerned government offices for any assistance Kaiser might need. Some months after it became "past history," I was at the Walsh-Kaiser yard in Providence, Rhode Island, during which time Kaiser's travelling accountant made his monthly visit. During one of our weekly meetings in the superintendent's office, one of the department heads asked the accountant about that four-day job, and although he didn't give us any cost figures, he gave us the following condensed report of the action.

Special preparations were made, all the people notified of the program, and all the material required for one vessel was gathered, specially stored, and marked. When every bit and piece was in hand, the personnel was alerted, and at the beginning of the indicated day shift, all work on other vessels was stopped and everyone turned to on this special action, so that when she was launched, she was complete, down to all furniture, boats, booms, and gear on board, fuel in the bunkers, water in the tanks, and boilers with steam up so the minute she was waterborne, she was "operational." Normally, a hull is launched and the joiner work, boats, booms, etc., are all done in the wet basin. He ended by saying that while it was a grandiose, gung-ho publicity stunt, it most certainly was not for everyday practice because four ships could have been built for the cost of that one!

Sincerely—or, as the old-timers
used to say "See ya in Liverpool!"

Robert G. Herbert, Jr.
East Northport, New York

ACQUISITION

In the first years of this century, a sailor who wanted fast sails, and could afford the best, generally went to Ratsey and Lapthorn of City Island, New York. They built sails for everything from J Boats to sailing canoes, including most of the famous ocean racers and one-design classes. Their sails were the shape of speed.

The company was founded by Thomas W. Ratsey, whose family had been sailmakers at Cowes, England, since 1790. He sent his nephew, George R. Ratsey, to the United States in 1902 to take advantage of the increasing American interest in yachting. The firm established by George Ratsey became America's most successful sail loft.

Recently, Mystic Seaport Museum purchased Ratsey and Lapthorn's gore books, over 6,000 pages in thirty-eight volumes covering sail designs between 1902 and the 1960s. These gore books, together with the manuscript order books and sail plans given to the Museum by Mr. and Mrs. Colin E. Ratsey, present an interesting and complete picture of a sailmaker's work in the years before wind tunnels and computers changed the traditional ways that sailmakers design sails.

The gore books are to the sailmaker what a lines plan and offset table are to the yacht designer and builder. They completely define the shape of a sail, specifying the curve in the luff and foot, the position of the battens, the weight and placement of material, and the size, type and location of fittings. The object was to record all the information needed to produce a duplicate sail.

Sails are used up faster than the boats they drive. Few survive; those that do usually have lost their form and are in poor condition. If in good shape, they may have been poorly shaped, hence little used, and not representative. Naval architects' drawings only specify sail plan, not shape. Thus these gore books present primary documentation for successful sails—those that wore out because they were good. Drawings and specifications in these gore books will allow a period sail to be accurately duplicated, and will give the researcher an accurate view of the state of the sailmaker's art at any time in this century.

The page reproduced here shows another feature of gore book drawings: the way sails were changed. *Resolute*'s mainsail was built in 1914, but World War I broke out before it was used in America's Cup competition. When the series resumed in 1920 the sail was recut, and the drawings show how. Thus, besides recording a sail as built, the gore books show how it was modified and suggest Ratsey's ideas in doing so.

Cataloging the collection has just begun. Each volume covers a specific time period, and is organized by boat name or by class type. A general search is slow, as each volume's index has to be consulted. Plans are on opaque sheets bound into books too large for reproduction on a copying machine. We may not be able to fill reproduction requests in quantity until the volumes can be microfilmed.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with processing and cataloging the collection should contact Ellen Stone, Ships Plans Collection Manager.

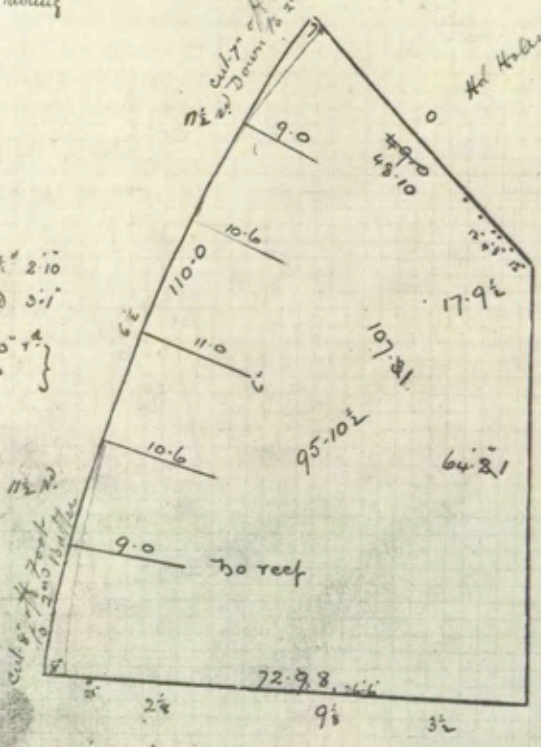
Resolute built by Herreshoff.

✓ Mainsail

No 1 18" Mercurius CBB. Loom 37 lb 7 ozs

25 mast hoops.

Leech 10" tabling
Head 12
Tack 10
Luff 20



Seam 1" x 2½

67 Foot-holes 10" to 15"

		middle			
18	16	12	18	16	774
43	69	62.0	53.1	27	1104
54	144	744	54	112	744
72	96		90.6	32	955.6
774	1104		955.6	432	432
					3/4009

1336½ Yds
10 CP
5 PP
4.5 Sewing
1396

Increased on curve 9.6

5 parrels eased ⅜ ½ ⅝ ½ ⅜ = 2⅜

So 6 ½ 23.8 6½ 23.8 6½ so 7⅝

10

July 2 Sail rubbed in peak + clew
7" less head, 8" less foot.

Parrels 1½ x 2¼
1⅝ x 2⅜ 1½ x 2½
(middle) 1¾ x 2¼ 2 x 2½

Ap 1920 4 eths added at tack
Foot increased 1.3

Hd written 2" of mast aye. Head — 3.4 ½ holl
Lh — 4.5
Luff — 3 2" holl same rope used.

GA Luff showed 2¾ T" no it was really like Holloway Luff 4¾"

had measured 65-1½

HISTORIC SHIPS AFLOAT

The U.S.S. *Barry*

Moored by the Navy Memorial Museum at the Washington Navy Yard in Washington, D.C., is a modern ship named for one of America's earliest naval heroes, Commodore John Barry.

The first U.S.S. *Barry* was the second destroyer in the U.S. Navy. These small, fast, moderately-armed vessels were developed in the late 1890s as torpedo-boat destroyers to protect large warships from attack by fast torpedo boats. In the First and Second World Wars they were also called upon to counter the more perilous threat of the submarine, serving on both fleet and convoy duty. In these conflicts the "tin can" sailors performed heroics comparable to those of the seamen of the old sailing navy.

U.S.S. *Barry*. (Courtesy Navy Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.)



The most recent U.S.S. *Barry* (DD-933) is a *Forrest Sherman* class destroyer launched at the Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine, on 1 October 1955. The 418-foot vessel was designed to carry 22 officers and 315 men. Her two turbine engines could drive her at thirty-three knots.

Most of the *Barry*'s career was spent in training, and on goodwill visits to foreign ports. While warfare is its purpose, the Navy has a historically important diplomatic function, representing strength to maintain peaceful coexistence and international commerce. At times the pursuit of naval diplomacy has verged upon war, as in the "Cuban Missile Crisis" of October 1962, when the *Barry* helped quarantine Cuba to prevent placement of Soviet missiles there.

The *Barry* also participated in the undeclared Vietnam War. In 1965 she joined the naval forces off Vietnam, and served for almost a year and a half in support of military operations ashore. During that time she steamed 55,000 miles and fired 2,500 rounds from her 5-inch guns in combat.

Following her Vietnam duty, the *Barry* was outfitted with some of the latest weapons systems. She was the first to carry the MK 86 Mod O Gun Fire Control System, which introduced digital computer operation of conventional naval artillery. Variable Depth Sonar and an Anti-Submarine Rocket Launcher made her a more potent adversary for increasingly sophisticated submarine warfare.

After twenty-six years of active duty the *Barry* was decommissioned in 1982. Now designated a permanent "visit ship" at the Washington Navy Yard, she reflects the spirit of the Navy: a dashing vessel type with a name as old as the Navy, a vessel that long served in the Navy's peacekeeping role, and a ship that displays the advances in technology that have kept the Navy a force to be reckoned with.

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For further information contact:

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