The Log *of* Mystic Seaport®

Spring 2000

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On the cover: As Mystic Seaport's lift dock descends, the Freedom Schooner *Amistad* enters the water on 25 March 2000, during a ceremony attended by nearly 10,000 people. Project Director Quentin Snediker *(left)* and lead shipwright Roger Hambidge handle lines on deck. (Judy Beisler photo)

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Sightings

After having written almost 90 Sightings pages during the last two decades, it is an interesting moment for me as I prepare to write my last few. As some of you may know, I announced to the Board of Trustees and the staff in early January that it was my intention to retire at the end of this calendar year. My thought, with my last few Sightings pages, is to use this column to reflect on the early years of my involvement with Mystic Seaport (then the Marine Historical Association) and then in the next Sightings, look at the last two decades and the Museum's maturation, and finally to project a bit into the future.

I joined the staff of the Museum in 1969 following the suggestion of Ernest Dodge, the longtime Director of the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Ernest had said that Mystic Seaport, with its range of collections, programs, and ventures, was a great place to learn. He was absolutely correct; every day at the Museum has been a learning experience. I am extraordinarily grateful for having had this opportunity to work with and learn from the fine people who make up the Board, the staff, and the volunteer corps of Mystic Seaport, and the museum profession as a whole.

My decision to step aside at this time is the result of a number of factors. The year 2000 is a turning point for the Museum, with a number of major projects reaching completion and several extremely important initiatives about to get underway. It seemed like an ideal time—particularly with my having been in the chief executive officer's position for over 22 years—for the Board to seek fresh, energetic leadership for the Museum. By almost any standard, Mystic Seaport is in a strong position with well-earned national and international respect, and this will stand it in good stead as new leadership takes the helm.

That strong position is the result of the hard work of the staff, volunteers, and Board, as well as the support of our members and donors over the 70 years of this Museum's existence. Two exceptional individuals who preceded me in two of my jobs at the Museum contributed enormously to the Museum and made my work substantially easier. While I joined the staff as a research associate in the Education Department in June of 1969, the Curator's position was offered to me within 14 months. It was a daunting prospect to take responsibility for the object collections, the historic buildings, the ships, and the exhibitions, but I had been preceded in the job by Edmund E. Lynch, who had applied rigorous standards to the curatorial work of the Museum. Ed had set the Curatorial Department on a proper course, which made it easy for me to build on the solid foundation he had established. The maritime museum field continues to benefit from Ed's talent and experience in his role as Curator of Independence Seaport Museum in Philadelphia.

Seven years later, Waldo C.M. Johnston retired as Director of Mystic Seaport, and I was given the opportunity to assume that position. During his 12 years as director, Waldo had, with Ed Lynch, transformed Mystic Seaport from a casual institution that paid erratic attention to detail and accuracy, into a highly respected institution. By the time Waldo retired, Mystic Seaport was widely known for the range and caliber of its program and was a leading institution in its field.

Innumerable people have influenced me and helped Mystic Seaport to its present point of accomplishment. I personally benefited from giving parents and encouraging mentors. But I am particularly indebted to Ernest Dodge for guiding me to Mystic Seaport, and to Ed Lynch and Waldo Johnston for the arduous and sometimes agonizing work they did to put Mystic Seaport in great shape and on the proper course when I took over the helm. Without their fundamental work, Mystic Seaport would not be the superb institution that it is today.

J. Revell Carr
DIRECTOR

Strength and Durability

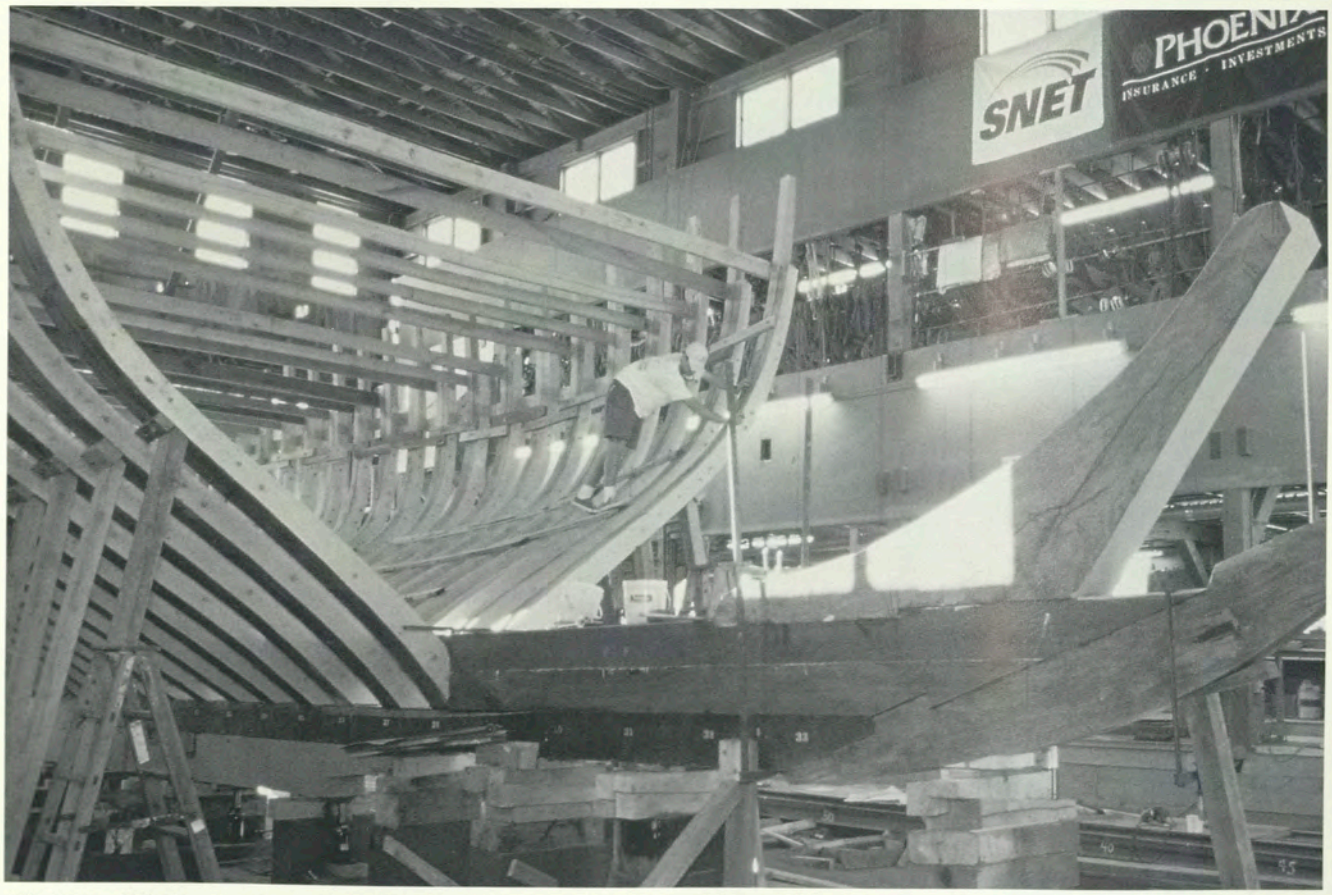
The Woods of the Freedom Schooner *Amistad*

QUENTIN SNEDIKER

Woods from many parts of the world have been gathered to construct the Freedom Schooner *Amistad*. Species used in traditional wooden ship construction are chosen based on several factors. First in importance is a species' inherent characteristics: its relative strength, growth patterns, density, resistance to decay, and resistance to marine organisms. Secondary factors are price and availability. All of these factors are then balanced in choosing material for a particular application in the vessel's structure. Keels are chosen from dense, rot-resistant species, while masts are chosen from those that grow long and straight while being relatively light. Balancing these choices is is a constant part of the many challenges in building a wooden vessel.

To construct the *Amistad*'s hull, we selected purpleheart for the basic backbone structure upon which the rest of the vessel is assembled: the keel, stem, sternpost, and keelson. Purpleheart is a dense, tropical hardwood from Guyana, South America. The most common tree in the Guyana rainforest, it is extremely resistant to decay.

Most of the major framing elements of the *Amistad*'s construction were built of two species of wood. Frames may be be thought of as the ribs of a ship. We chose live oak and white oak to build the frames. As explained in the Autumn 1998 *Log*, the frames are made up of overlapping

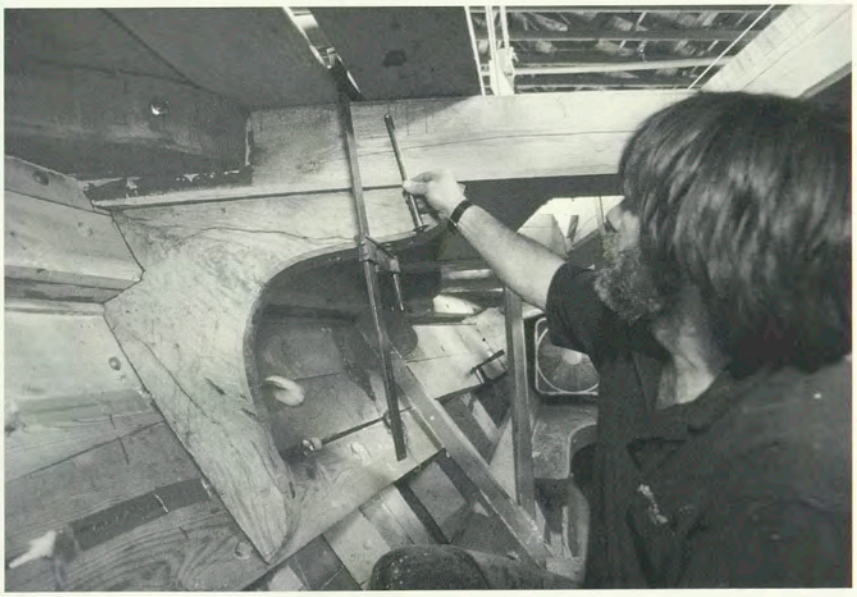


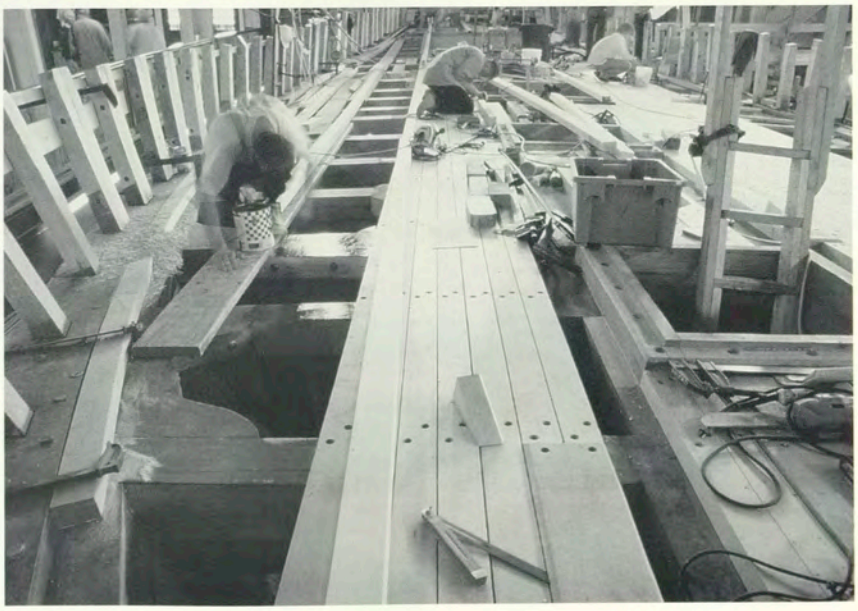
The Amistad*'s hardwood skeleton will give her strength for many years. Here at the bow, the live-oak stem knee has been set up on the purpleheart keel. The frames that sit atop the keel are made up of overlapping futtocks, the lower ones of live oak, the upper ones of white oak. (Bill Grant photo)*

sections called futtocks. The lower futtocks of each frame are live oak from South Carolina. In the age of wooden ships, dense, heavy, rot-resistant live oak was considered the best available material for this application. Live oak is the wood that gave the USS *Constitution* the nickname "Old Ironsides." The upper portion of each frame is Connecticut-grown white oak. This strong, durable species was the most common material used for this purpose in New England shipbuilding practice, and it remains an excellent choice.

The Museum was fortunate to obtain tons of live oak when Hurricane Hugo devastated the South Carolina coast and felled many ancient trees in 1989. We obtained additional live oak timber from trees cut during a highway construction project. This wood will live on for many years in the *Amistad*, not only in the frames, but also as the breast-hooks and stem and stern knees that reinforce the ends of the vessel.







TOP: As can be seen in this bow view, the Amistad*'s nine lower strakes of planking are Connecticut white oak, while the upper strakes are tropical angelique. (Bill Grant photo)*

CENTER: Lead shipwright Roger Hambidge installs a live-oak hanging knee to support one of the Amistad*'s white-oak deck beams near the stern. The knee is notched around the yellow-pine clamp on which the deck beams rest. A horizontal lodging knee of hackmatack keeps the beam from shifting. Hambidge holds a drift that will be driven through the knee and into the beam. (Bill Grant photo)*

BOTTOM: The Amistad*'s deck is a complicated structure. In this view aft from the bow, the white-oak deck beams can be seen clearly. At left, the wide angelique covering board forms the margin of the deck. It is pierced by rectangular cutouts through which pass the white-oak extensions of the frames that act as stanchions for the rail. Most of the deck is Douglas fir, but the thicker midship king planks and those that will support the windlass are iroko. (Bill Grant photo)*



Using a sanding belt, Geoff Johnson and Joshua Mennone smooth the Douglas fir mainmast. Mike Elliott, rear, sawed out a square balk of timber from the fir trunk, then took down the corners to make 8, then 16, then 32 sides to produce a round mast 60 feet long. The 59-foot foremast was made the same way. (Bill Grant photo)





LEFT: In this below-decks photo, much of the Amistad*'s structure can be seen. At left, the oak frames are visible between the exterior angelique planking and the internal yellow pine ceiling planks. The sole (floor) and watertight bulkhead are also yellow pine. Notice the mahogany hanging knees and hackmatack lodging knees that secure the ends of the deck beams. David Cox works in the background. (Bill Grant photo)*

RIGHT: Cleaning up a saw cut with a slick, Frank Raposa begins shaping the Amistad*'s white-oak rudder. (Bill Grant photo)*

The *Amistad*'s planking consists of white oak for the lower nine strakes of underwater planking and angelique for topside and bulwark planking. Strong and durable as a planking material, especially below the waterline, white oak can also be steamed and bent to conform to a vessel's shape, making it important for planking as well as framing. Angelique is a stable tropical wood from Suriname, South America, which is available in the long clear lengths necessary for planking.

The graceful oval transom at the *Amistad*'s stern, which displays the vessel's name and hailing port of New Haven in gold leaf, is planked with two woods. The lower planks are white oak. The upper planks, finished with varnish, are iroko. A durable hardwood from West Africa, iroko has long been recognized as a superior shipbuilding material. The iroko used in the *Amistad* was presented to the project as a gift by the government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, the West African nation that was the home of Sengbe Pieh and most of his fellow captives aboard the original *Amistad*. Its use in this prominent position symbolizes the ties between Africa and America represented in the *Amistad*.

To frame the deck we used white oak for the long transverse deck beams, which are spaced approximately four feet apart, depending on deck openings and structures. The shorter fore-and-aft carlins, the blocking around masts and hatches, and the hatch combings are a combination of white oak and iroko.

Each deck beam is held in place by two horizontal lodging knees and a vertical hanging knee. Lodging knees are mostly hackmatack, with a few of live oak used up forward. Cut in Maine from a deciduous conifer called hackmatack or eastern larch, hackmatack knees combine

the base of the trunk and a major root, resulting in an angled timber with a dense, curved grain. Hanging knees are mostly Honduras mahogany, harvested by sawyers in Copén, Honduras, whose communal forests are certified well managed by the SmartWood program of the Rainforest Alliance. Knee production was organized by the Green Wood Alliance, a project of Aid to Artisans and the Certified Forest Products Council. The knees were cut from the remains of large trees that had already yielded their normal harvest of straight timber. In addition, a few hanging knees in the extreme forward and after ends of the vessel are live oak.

The deck is planked with three species of wood. The thick, wide "king planks" that run down the centerline of the vessel are iroko, again celebrating the connections between West African and American cultures. We used angelique for the covering boards, which run around the perimeter of the deck to cover the tops of the frames. The remaining deck planking is Douglas fir from British Columbia, chosen for its tight grain, relatively light weight, and its availability in extremely long lengths without knots.

Masts and other spars, totaling 12 in all, are also Douglas fir. Like deck planks, spars must be strong and light, with a little flexibility, and available in long, clear lengths. The fir for the *Amistad*'s spars came from Quilcene, Washington, on the eastern slope of the Olympic Mountains. The State of Washington Department of Natural Resources made possible the acquisition and transportation of this timber.

Many of the *Amistad*'s interior structural elements are constructed of long leaf pine, a dense and durable species native to the southern United States. Long lengths are used for the longitudinal timber on either side on which the ends of the deck beams rest. This is called the clamp. As was common in New England shipyards, we also used yellow pine for the internal planking, called the ceiling, the bilge stringers, the six watertight bulkheads, the cabin sole (floor), and interior joinerwork.



Beneath the Amistad*'s mahogany figurehead, Sierra Leone's cultural minister, Shirley Gbujama, addresses the launch-day crowd as the ship's sponsor, Ruby Dee* (left), *Representative Sam Gejdenson* (center), *and Senator Christopher Dodd* (right) *listen. (Mary Anne Stets photo)*

The *Amistad*'s rudder is white oak. Other woods are used in small quantities for special applications. Lignum vitae, the tropical wood so dense that it does not float, was used for the deadeyes and hearts that anchor the ends of the stays that support the *Amistad*'s masts. About 1,500 black locust trunnels fasten her frame futtocks. The many blocks that provide mechanical advantage for the running rigging that operates the vessel's sails are made of ash. Her wheel will be made of teak. The figurehead, now completely gilded with gold leaf, is carved from Honduras mahogany.

Taken as a whole, the strength and durability of the Freedom Schooner *Amistad* is a result of the many materials from many regions that we used to construct her. This assemblage of materials can be viewed as a metaphor for the vessel's true mission: a mission that celebrates the strength and durability of our nation through the diversity of its people.

Quentin Snediker has been the *Amistad* Project Director since 1995.

Collecting for America and the Sea

"A Sense of Participation"

The Carleton Mitchell Collection

AMY D. GERMAN



Carleton "Mitch" Mitchell at the helm of Caribbee *during the 1952 Transatlantic Race. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5388.14)*

Millions of us have sailed with Carleton Mitchell without ever stepping aboard one of his trendsetting boats. From the 1930s through the 1980s, Mitchell documented many of his voyages and races in words and pictures, inviting us to join him in some of the notable sailing adventures of the mid-1900s. We are fortunate that several years ago he chose to donate his collection of more than 20,000 photographic images to Mystic Seaport to be preserved for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

Carleton Mitchell was born in New Orleans in 1910. An uncle sparked his fascination with boats and the sea when he took the 10-year-old boy sailing on Lake Pontchartrain and in the Florida Keys. He has said that his writing career also began about this time. When a relative asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up, he replied that he wanted to sail and to write about it. These two interests never changed, and his career direction was set.

After moving to Chicago with his mother, Mitchell began to demonstrate his independent nature. He balanced the regimentation of the Illinois Military School with summers in the woods and lakes of northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. After graduation he took a year off to work as a surveyor on Canada's Lake of the Woods. Later that year he returned to New Orleans and took flying lessons before heading off to college.

After attending Miami University in Ohio for two years his desire to sail got the better of him. In the fall of 1932 he answered an ad in *Yachting* magazine for crew to sail the ketch *Temptress* from Hampton Roads, Virginia, to the West Indies. Fifty years later he still recalled "lying hove-to off Cape Hatteras for 56 hours in a gale which began along the track of the Gulf Stream, then clocked into nor'east to blow against huge rollers plus the current." The aged yacht only made it as far as the Bahamas, but Mitchell was captivated by his brief experience in these undeveloped tropical islands.

Out of school in the middle of the Great Depression, Mitchell tried many jobs, including fishing, shipbuilding, and vegetable picking before finding that he was a natural salesman. He supported himself with a responsible job at Macy's in New York, but he spent his spare time writing.

Undeterred by the many rejection slips he received, Mitchell took his savings and headed for the Bahamas to write full-time. He soon took up photography when an editor rejected an article because he could not supply illustrations. During the next few years he worked as a publicity

photographer for the Bahamas Development Board among other things and began selling articles and photographs to magazines, including *Country Life*, which published him in 1938. He also found plenty of time to sail, making a circuit of the islands from the Bahamas west to Jamaica and Cuba and back in 1936, and sailing in the Miami-Nassau Race in 1937.

Mitchell was in Norway when World War II began in 1939. He returned to enlist in the U.S. Navy, going on active duty in May 1941. After the U.S. entered the war, he was ordered to organize the U.S. Navy Combat Photography Units in 1942. This section of the navy's Office of Public Relations was charged with documenting and publicizing the navy's wartime activities. The Combat Photography Section issued more than 1,000 photographs and motion pictures in 1943 alone. Despite his own photographic ability, Mitchell spent much of the war as an administrator. He did, however, make one voyage from Norfolk to North Africa on the aircraft carrier *Ranger* in March 1943 "to learn the problems confronting Combat Photography Units on fleet assignments. Also to check on the performance of men and equipment." The photographs from this assignment give a glimpse of life on board an aircraft carrier during World War II.

Mitchell was elected to the New York Yacht Club in 1944, and as he was being released from the navy in 1946 he purchased the 46-foot John Alden ketch *Malabar XII*, renaming her *Carib*. He immediately sailed south, cruising from the Bahamas to Jamaica, Cuba, and back. The next year he embarked on a seven-month cruise of discovery through the Caribbean islands. Many of these islands had had little contact with the rest of the world since the end of slavery and the sugar economy in the mid-1800s. Shipping *Carib* to Trinidad, he worked his way up



Bahama fishing sloops and native workers dominated the waterfront at Nassau, Bahamas, when Carleton Mitchell began photographing there in the 1930s. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5452.1)



While administering the U.S. Navy Combat Photography Units during World War II, Carleton Mitchell made one voyage into the war zone, sailing to North Africa aboard the USS Ranger *in March 1943. During this inspection trip he photographed some of the daily activities on board an aircraft carrier. In this view, a torpedo bomber passes over the flight deck as a fleet oiler and a cruiser steam in the distance. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.6009.21)*



During his 1947 passage north from Trinidad to explore the Windward and Leeward Islands of the Caribbean, Mitchell photographed many of the island natives, including this fisherman on St. Lucia, who weaves a bamboo fish trap. He recounted this trip in his first book, Islands to Windward, *which included many of his photographic character studies. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.1201)*

the chain of islands, stopping to experience the native cultures and photograph the islanders and their surroundings. The resulting book, *Islands to Windward*, which he wrote in 1948 and published in 1949, introduced a generation of sailors and armchair travelers to the distinctive islands and encouraged the growth of tourism there.

Seeking a larger boat, Mitchell in 1949 purchased the 58-foot yawl *Alondra*, designed by Phil Rhodes and built by Nevins in 1937. Mitchell named his new boat *Caribbee*. After sailing to Florida and racing on the East Coast he shipped the boat to Norway and cruised the Baltic before shipping her back to Baltimore.

Mitchell published *Yachtsman's Camera* in 1950. This collection of photographs and explanatory text with the theme "sailing is many things" includes images of racing and cruising in the Bahamas, the Baltic, and the Gulf of Finland as well as Chesapeake Bay. The second part of the book, "Words About the Pictures," documents every shot with complete caption information. As he noted in his preface, "To me, pictures should be natural and easy, literally the unstudied record of a given instant in time; they should be direct and uncluttered, and have something to say; above all, they should convey a sense of participation."

His efforts to make his readers feel like participants were evident in his next book, *Passage East*, published in 1953. This log of the 1952 Transatlantic Race from Bermuda to Plymouth, England, on the *Caribbee* is told on a watch by watch basis with text and unposed photographs.

Having gotten accustomed to his new boat, Mitchell had decided to race her seriously. In 1950 he won the Chesapeake Bay championship, and that winter was second in the Southern Ocean Racing Conference (SORC), winning the Miami-Nassau and St. Petersburg-Havana races. He won the SORC championship in 1952 and 1953, sailed in the 1952 Newport-Bermuda Race, and won the 1952 transat-



Mitchell combined racing, writing, and photography during the 1952 Transatlantic Race, which he described in his 1953 book, Passage East. *His crew of eight included J.W. Sherar* (left), *Basil McKinney* (center), *and Richard Bertram, a champion small-boat sailor who became a prominent powerboat racer and manufacturer. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5390.6)*



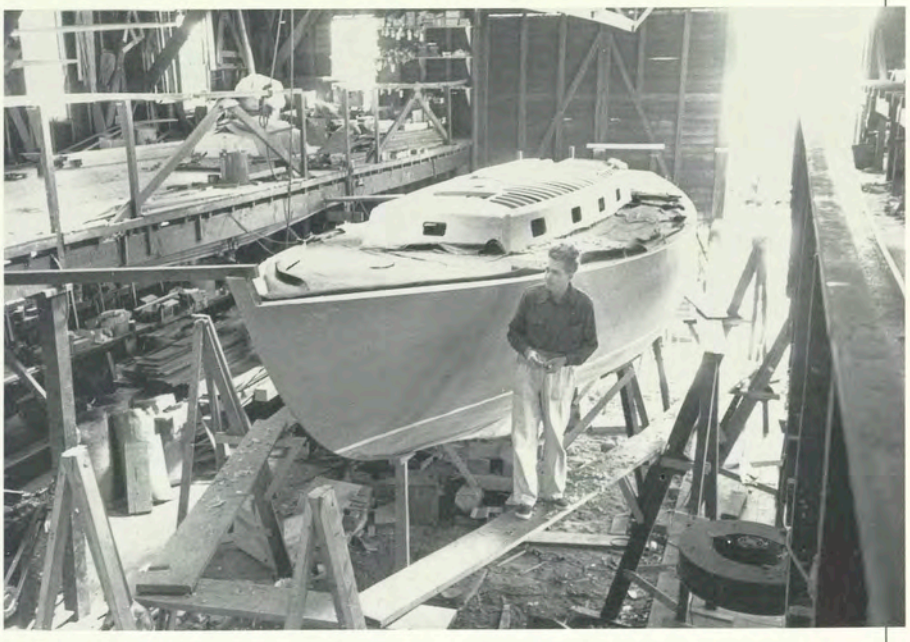
LEFT: The brothers Rod (left) *and Olin Stephens head out of Newport at the helm of* Columbia. *The two had helped Mitchell refine his ideas for* Finisterre *before Olin drew her plans. In his book,* Summer of the Twelves, *Mitchell described his friend Olin Stephens as a "painter, lover of good music, books, sports cars, and solitude." Mystic Seaport's* Brilliant, *Mitchell's* Finisterre, Columbia, *and many other boats confirm Mitchell's assessment of Olin Stephens as "an artist in line but a scientist in the application of precise engineering formulae." (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5293.8)*

lantic race described in *Passage East*. This crossing, followed by racing and cruising in northern Europe, earned Mitchell the Transoceanic Pennant of the Cruising Club of America, an organization dedicated to encouraging and celebrating long-distance and high-latitude cruising.

After sailing in the 1954 Newport-to-Bermuda Race, Mitchell laid up his much-traveled *Caribbee* to oversee work on his new boat. For some time he had been working with yacht designer Olin J. Stephens II to develop a sailboat that combined seemingly mutually exclusive features. Mitchell knew that he would name the boat *Finisterre*. He wanted her to be a boat that he could day-sail alone and race with a full crew, a boat that could venture into shallow gunkholes in the Chesapeake or Bahamas and could sail across the Atlantic safely, a boat that would combine high performance racing and comfortable cruising, and a boat full of the features that he as a "gadgeteer" enjoyed using. "I like 'em wide, and I like 'em shoal," he said, and that is what he got: a beamy, shallow, short-ended centerboard yawl 38 feet long. She had so many "gadgets" that Stephens was concerned about her performance. But he did not have to worry. Highly engineered and meticulously built by Seth Persson at Old Saybrook, Connecticut, the boat turned out to be everything Mitchell proposed she would be when he described his concept in a 1954 *Yachting* article. Launched in September 1954, the boat was even better than he hoped, as he described in a 1955 *Yachting* article. Within a few years the *Finisterre* model was evident throughout the ocean-racing fleet.

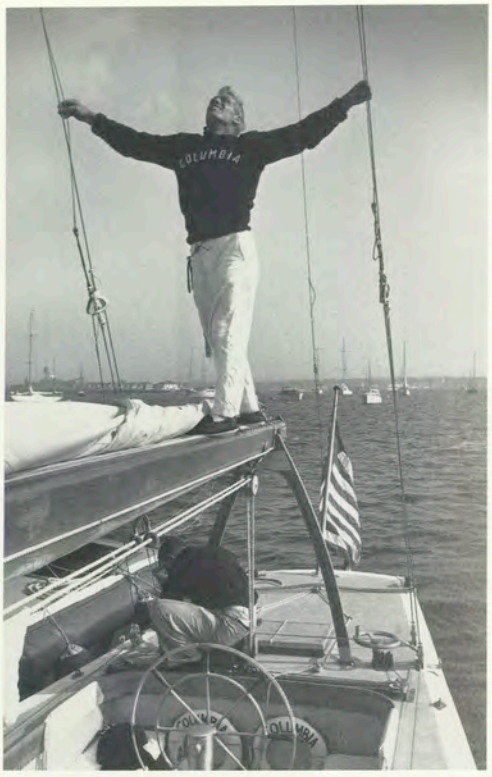
With *Finisterre,* Mitchell got off to a slow start as SORC runnerup in 1955, but the next year won the SORC and Newport-Bermuda Race before sailing the Atlantic to cruise the Mediterranean. The Cruising Club of America presented Mitchell with its Blue Water Medal for his second transatlantic passage and the many offshore miles he had sailed. In 1958 he and *Finisterre* won the Newport-Bermuda Race again.

Despite his great success as an ocean racer, Mitchell claimed "I have always considered myself more a cruising type than a racing skipper." In both 1957 and 1958 he withdrew from the SORC series



Carleton Mitchell spent part of 1954 overseeing the construction of his new boat, Finisterre. *He photographed the builder, Seth Persson, inside his shop at Old Saybrook, Connecticut, as the boat took shape. Mitchell called Persson a "meticulous craftsman, an artist in wood, whose one-man (almost literally) creation of* Finisterre *was the acme of boatbuilding." (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5361.14)*





With all sails set for downwind work, the 38-foot yawl Finisterre *shows off. Designed by Sparkman & Stephens to Mitchell's specifications, she was among the most influential postwar sailing yachts. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5270.31)*

A master of rigging, Rod Stephens checks the running backstays on Columbia. *He directed* Columbia's *foredeck operations during the America's Cup trials and defense. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5288.19)*

while leading in order to go cruising. Between sailing races and extended cruises on both sides of the Atlantic he continued writing and also acted as navigator for his friend Richard Bertram, whose sequence of racing powerboats named *Moppie* set standards in the World Offshore Powerboat circuit. Mitchell's *Sports Illustrated* article on the 1960 Miami-Nassau powerboat race resulted in the publicity Bertram needed to establish the Bertram Yacht Company.

Competition for the America's Cup had been interrupted by World War II and the reconstruction of Europe. In the mid-1950s, however, interest revived and the New York Yacht Club altered the America's Cup deed of gift to permit competition in smaller boats, allowing racing to resume in sloops of the 12-Meter class. At 44 feet on the waterline and about 70 feet overall, with 1,950 square feet of measured sail area, the 12 Meters were about half the size of the J Class sloops of the 1930s America's Cup competitions, but they were still large, high-performance boats. In 1957 the Royal Yacht Squadron issued a challenge for 1958, and four U.S. syndicates built boats to compete for the right to defend the Cup. Mitchell was navigator for Arthur Knapp's *Weatherly*, a Rhodes design. In a competitive series, *Weatherly* was outperformed by Harry Sears's *Columbia*, skippered by Briggs Cunningham, which went on to defend the Cup against *Sceptre*.

Although he did not sail in the Cup races, Mitchell put his photographic and journalistic skills to good use in documenting the 1958 America's Cup campaign. To give his readers a sense of participation, he recorded the series from preseason preparation through the elimination trials and the Cup races. The personalities, from owners and skippers to deckhands, are included as well as sail handling techniques of the day, and races viewed from aboard the vessel racing or its tender. Many photographs were taken aboard *Columbia* and other candidates to defend as well as the British challenger *Sceptre* during early trials in England, when Mitchell was invited to sail on board. This intimate view of America's Cup sailing was published in 1959 as *Summer of the Twelves*.

Mitchell shared much of his sailing knowledge in "how-to" articles in *Yachting*, but he could not share the instincts that won him an unprecedented third-straight Bermuda Race victory in 1960. In a race blasted by near hurricane-force winds shortly after the start, *Finisterre* stood up and charged to Bermuda, winning first in class and first in fleet on corrected time. Part of his ability was based on his long experience and great enjoyment of being at sea, which gave him a feel for the helm and intuition about sailing conditions. Part of his racing expertise was in surrounding himself with excellent sailors as crew members, who could handle his boat nearly as well as he could. And, as represented by *Finisterre*, a good part of his success was in knowing what made a good boat, and how to get the most out of it.

"With my secondary enthusiasms for music, nineteenth-century French painting, good food, hunting and sports cars, I am probably the busiest playboy

on record," Mitchell wrote in 1958. Indeed, his photography includes images of gunning in the Chesapeake marshes and relaxing on the Mediterranean coast and islands in addition to his racing and cruising pictures. As he cut back on his ocean racing in the 1960s he increased this activity, frequently contributing travel articles to *The National Geographic* and repeating his Caribbean passage in print in 1966 and 1971.

Believing in the importance of changing boats to match changing interests, in 1968 Mitchell began the transition from sail to power. He ordered a 42-foot Grand Banks trawler yacht, which he named *Sans Terre*. Taking delivery in Hong Kong, he made a short cruise there before shipping the boat to California. Then, he began a three-year, 16,000-mile cruise from Los Angeles to Miami by way of the Panama Canal, with many detours, all extensively documented through his photography. Since then he has owned a variety of power vessels, from long-range types—including the 62-foot *Land's End* and the 48-foot Hatteras Long Range Cruiser *Coyaba*—to small cruising boats and outboards.

Though best known for his books, Mitchell wrote and illustrated uncounted articles for various magazines. For six years in the 1950s he was on the staff of *Yachting*. Later he was a contributing editor for *Sports Illustrated*. The articles ranged from cruising guides that described cruises he took around the world to suggestions for safe sailing, mechanical advice, and even thoughts on how to eat well while cruising. Also of particular interest to him were articles about yacht design and construction. He had a large hand in designing the various boats that he had built for his use.

In 1996 Carleton Mitchell donated his collection of photographic negatives and prints, and his logbooks and other writings, to Mystic Seaport, generously providing funding for the cataloging and preservation of the collection. Now 90 years old, he remains in close touch by E-mail, offering information about photographs in the collection. His total recall of events that happened decades ago has been invaluable in completing the collection's records. As of March 2000, the collection was almost completely cataloged and this unique record of some of the most significant sailing activity of the 1900s is available to researchers. The Museum has created an e-mail address—mitchell@mysticseaport.org—for inquiries concerning the collection.



Gunning for rail birds in the Potomac River marshes, Mitchell recorded "Weepy," an African-American boatman, poling in a composition reminiscent of Thomas Eakins's 1876 painting, Will Schuster and Blackman going shooting for Rail. *(Mystic Seaport, 96.31.2322)*



Given unusually free access to the America's Cup contenders, Carleton Mitchell sailed aboard the British 12-Meter Sceptre, *recording her crew during some heavy-weather sailing in the English Channel. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5261.14)*



Shifting to powerboats in the late 1960s, Carleton Mitchell built the 42-foot Grand Banks trawler Sans Terre. *After a shakedown cruise near Hong Kong, he shipped the boat to California and began a three-year passage to the East Coast. He photographed her at one of the Channel Islands off the California coast near the start of the passage. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5056.25)*

Marveling at the amount of time Mitchell spent at sea, people often asked him "Don't you find the sea monotonous?" His answer to that question made it clear that he did not sail to get somewhere; he sailed for the pure enjoyment of it. "To a sailor nothing on this globe is less so. Every ripple and cloud has meaning, each mood beauty. As a farmer can love land, so can a seaman love water and take endless pleasure from the contemplation of it." In both living this philosophy and trying to convey it to readers, Carleton Mitchell has led a notable maritime life.

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Amy D. German has been cataloging the Carleton Mitchell Collection since February 1998.

The Panama Canal

ERIC ROORDA

(Adapted from a vignette in *America and the Sea: A Maritime History*)

"An interocean canal will be the great ocean thoroughfare between our Atlantic and Pacific shores and virtually a part of the coastline of the United States."
President Rutherford B. Hayes (1880)

Of all the tremendous forces on land and sea, only plate tectonics and civil engineering have proved able to separate continents. The movements of the Earth's crust shifted the Americas an ocean away from Africa over the course of millions of years of upheaval. It took only decades for human labor and ingenuity to split North and South America with a navigable channel, the Panama Canal. Like the opening of the Suez Canal in 1879, which put water between the continents of Africa and Asia and joined the Mediterranean Sea with the Indian Ocean, the piercing of the Isthmus of Panama in 1914 brought a host of changes to the way people moved around on, and thought about, the sea. It marked a new epoch in American maritime history.

The construction of the Panama Canal affected the relationship between America and the sea in three general ways. First, the canal changed the flow of American commerce. It also created a third saltwater coast for the United States, along with a colony, the Canal Zone, devoted to navigation. Finally, the canal altered the way the nation planned defense, prepared for war, and treated its closest neighbors in the Caribbean.

The waterway made the world smaller for mariners and their cargoes. The distance by sea between New York and San Francisco decreased by nearly eight thousand miles, saving the trip around South America. Steamers traveling from New York to Japan or China previously headed east to the Suez Canal to get there, but now saved nearly four thousand miles via the Panama route, shortening the trip by two weeks for a vessel averaging ten knots. The West Coast became 5,500 miles closer to the principal ports of Europe, Liverpool and Hamburg. Saving time and money for merchant shipping was an important reason for digging between the continents, following a long tradition of taking the shortcut across the narrowest spot in the entire American landmass.

The Spanish paved a "royal road" across Panama only decades after Vasco Núñez de Balboa became the first European to cross the isthmus in 1513. The road became an important link in the maritime system that brought precious metals in the holds of galleons from Peru to Spain. The dense jungle of the region engulfed the road as the Spanish Empire declined, but in 1849 a partnership of American shipping merchants led by William H. Aspinwall reopened the land route just in time to profit from the California gold rush. In their system, a stagecoach service connected two steamship lines, one from New York to the port of Aspinwall (later Colón) constructed on the Caribbean coast, the other on the Pacific side from ancient Panama City to San Francisco. The investors then imported workers, mainly Chinese and Irish, who completed a railroad across the isthmus in 1855.

Two decades later, planning began for a canal across Central America. Several routes were proposed, the favored American one being Cornelius Vanderbilt's partial water crossing of Nicaragua, which he used to compete with Aspinwall's Panama Railroad in getting California-bound passengers from the Atlantic to the Pacific. An international congress met in 1879 to consider proposals for a Central American canal and selected the plan of the French engineer Ferdinand de Lessups. Having successfully completed the sea-level Suez Canal in 1860-69, de Lessups brought thousands of Jamaican laborers to the isthmus and began work in 1881 on a sea-level canal, including a nine-mile tunnel through the continental divide. De Lessups later changed to a more economical lock-type canal, but in 1892-93 his company went bankrupt, and the courts found de Lessups and his son, Charles, guilty of breach of trust in the failure.

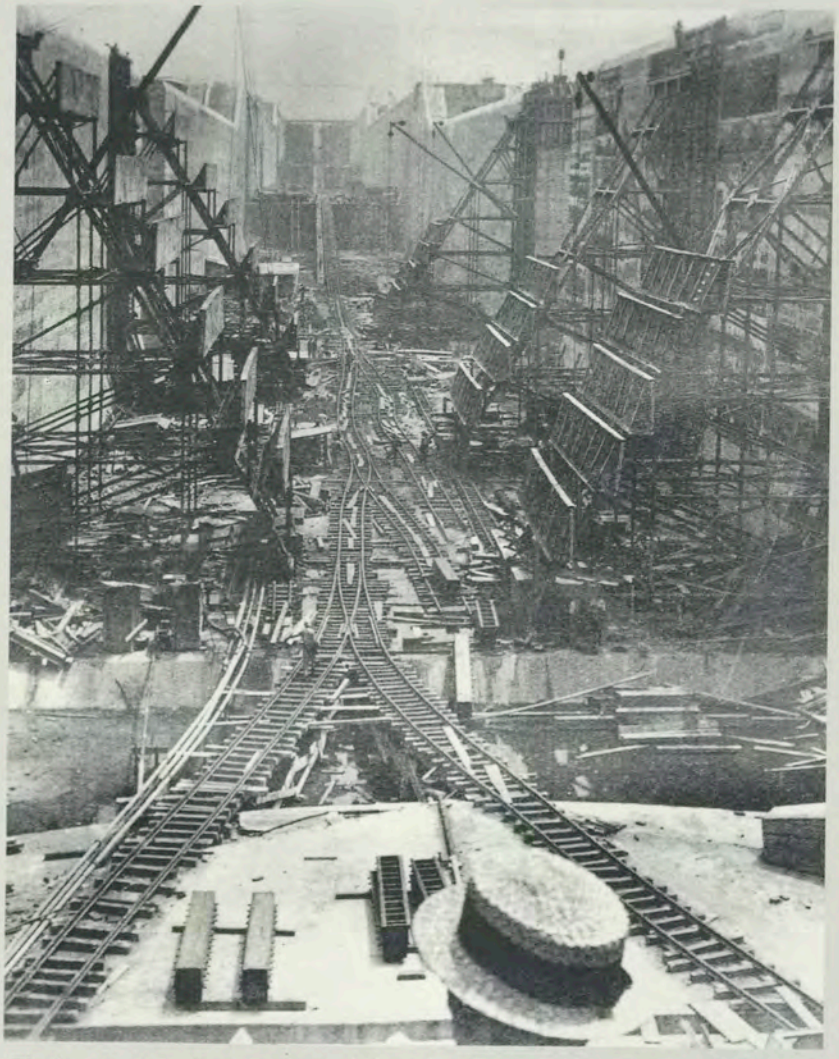
In 1901, Great Britain renounced her rights to an isthmian canal in the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, abrogating the Clayton-Bulwer agreement and permitting the United States to construct and control a canal that would be free and open to the ships of all nations on equal terms. By a later amendment to the agreement, Britain agreed to allow the United States to fortify the canal.

With ratification of this agreement, the United States had to choose a route for the proposed canal. The government still favored the Nicaragua route as the most promising site, but then de Lessups's successor New Panama Canal Company unexpectedly

lowered the asking price for its assets and franchises from $109 million to $40 million. On 28 June 1902, Congress immediately passed the Spooner Act, which stipulated two conditions for canal construction: purchase of the New Panama Canal Company for $40 million, and a grant by Colombia to perpetual control over the canal. The Act also established the Isthmian Canal Commission to control the construction of the waterway and gave it the right to purchase Nicaraguan rights, if the negotiations for Panama failed.

In January 1903, diplomats from the United States and Colombia concluded the Hay-Herran Convention that provided for the United States to pay $10 million and an annual rental of $250,000 for a 99-year lease, with renewal option, to a six-mile-wide canal zone. The U.S. Senate ratified the agreement, but Colombia rejected it, hoping to negotiate a higher payment after the New Panama Canal Company's charter expired the following year.

Theodore Roosevelt was deeply concerned at this turn of events and, on 2 November 1903, ordered U.S. warships to maintain the 1846 Treaty of New Granada that had granted the United States the right to maintain "free and uninterrupted transit" across the isthmus. Simultaneously, patriotic Panamanians and foreigners linked to the Panama Railroad declared the independence of their province from Colombia. The United States government immediately recognized the new country and, within two weeks on 18 November 1903, concluded the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which granted the United States perpetual use and control of a ten-mile-wide canal zone across Panama with full sovereignty and the right to fortify it. The United States guaranteed Panama's independence, agreeing to pay $10 million and, beginning nine years after ratification, to pay an additional $250,000 annual fee.



The three-step Gatun Locks, seven miles in from the Atlantic end of the canal, raised and lowered shipping 85 feet between sea level and Gatun Lake. Each lock in the canal was 1,000 feet long and 110 feet wide. Construction of the canal's three sets of locks (12 in all) required 4.5 million cubic yards of concrete. Keystone stereograph photo. (Mystic Seaport, 98.110.3)

The U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty. Ten days later, on 4 May 1904, Lieutenant Mark Brooke of the U.S. Corps of Engineers took possession of the canal works at Panama and began work using the French equipment remaining on the site. The following year, work halted temporarily when many workmen were dying of tropical diseases and there was disagreement on whether to construct a sea-level or a lock canal.

To solve one key issue, Colonel William C. Gorgas of the U.S. Army Medical Corps developed a health program to reduce deaths from malaria and yellow fever. He instituted a successful program of drainage, spraying, and sewage systems that eventually allowed canal construction to resume safely.

In June 1906, after experts determined that they would have to cut through mountains on the western leg of the canal and that there was a 12-foot difference in tidal ranges between the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the projected canal, President Roosevelt authorized construction to continue. The 51-mile canal would run in a northwest-southeast direction from

the Atlantic entrance, which was actually some 27 miles west of the Pacific entrance. The plan for the canal involved five steps: (1) damming the Chagres River to make man-made Lake Gatun through which a ship channel could be dredged; (2) constructing a harbor on the Caribbean side at Colón and dredging a sea-level canal from the harbor to the dam; (3) building the Gatun Locks at the dam to raise and lower ships 85 feet between sea-level and the new lake; (4) excavating the nine-mile-long and 300-foot-wide Gaillard Cut from Gatun Lake through the mountains of the continental divide; and (5) building the Pedro Miguel Locks and the Miraflores Locks to lower and raise ships to a dredged channel leading to Balboa Harbor on the Pacific side. This massive project to create the largest locks, dam, and man-made hole in the world (the Gatun Locks and Dam and the Gaillard Cut), continued for 12 years. The locks were constructed between 1909 and 1913, and excavation in the Gaillard Cut proceeded to the point where water was allowed into the canal, effectively breaching the isthmus, in October 1913. Dredging of the channel continued even after the first ships transited the waterway in 1914.



Building the Panama Canal required an immense amount of physical labor. Even with a fleet of Bucyrus steam shovels like the one in the background, it took 43,000 men from Spain, Italy, Greece, Barbados, Martinique, and Guadeloupe to dig the ditch, build the Gatun Dam, and pour the concrete locks. Keystone stereograph photo. (Mystic Seaport, 98.110.4)

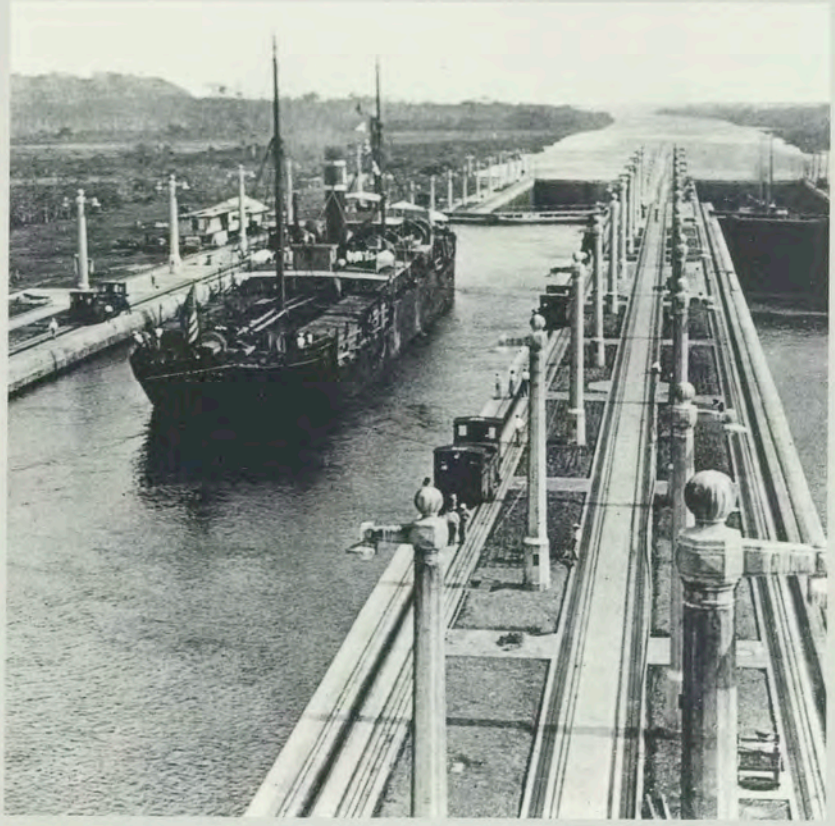
The success of the undertaking depended on the migration of tens of thousands of West Indian and southern European laborers. The Republic of Panama prohibited Chinese immigration, which had helped build the Panama Railroad, and the British colonial government in Kingston restricted the Jamaican emigration that had filled the ranks of the French effort, because many were stranded in Panama and had to be repatriated at British expense. The third wave of immigrants to go to work in Panama, then, came mainly from Barbados, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Spain, Italy, and Greece, comprising a labor force that expanded from less than 1,000 in 1904 to more than 43,000 in 1913. Even after completion of the canal, the number of employees never dipped below 10,000, few of them Panamanian citizens, while several thousand additional foreigners from the shores of the Caribbean and Mediterranean Seas lived in the port cities at either end of the canal.

The cosmopolitan atmosphere of Colón and Panama City resulted from the mixing of people from around the Atlantic world, and from the prominent Chinese community remaining from the 1850s, who ran stores, eateries, laundries, and lotteries. Both the new port of Colón and the old port of Panama had wild "sailortown" districts as well, with 350 saloons between them, most owned by expatriate Americans and frequented by the crews of merchant and naval vessels in transit, and by the U.S. military garrison defending the waterway.

Colonel George Washington Goethals, who headed the final stages of canal construction and became first governor of the Canal Zone, claimed from experience that the lawlessness and decadence of the two cities outstripped that of Deadwood, South Dakota, during the Black Hills gold rush of 1878. In direct contrast, Goethals's orderly Canal Zone was an insulated world of enforced sobriety and order, though literally across the street from the crowded, riotous terminal cities. The Panama Canal Zone was a unique maritime colony, organized for the purpose of defense and navigation, and kept rigorously "shipshape" by the officers and engineers in charge.

Canal tolls and profits from supplying coal, provisions, and repairs to passing vessels financed a lavish lifestyle for the American residents, who numbered about 3,000. They received their wages in gold and resided rent-free in pleasant houses. Conversely, the West Indian work force received wages in silver and lived mainly outside the zone in crowded and expensive urban quarters. Few Panamanians were employed by the canal at all, fueling local resentment of Americans, West Indians, and the Canal Zone itself.

The opening of the canal fulfilled many of the optimistic predictions about its influence on the flow of commerce. United States trade with South America doubled within three years, partly because the Panama Canal provided much faster transit between New York and the "wrong side" of South America, and between San Francisco and the East Coast. Vessels making the passage were also speeded by the fact that fouling organisms like barnacles on their hulls died in the fresh water of Gatun Lake and fell off, improving the ships' hydrodynamics. The Pacific Steam Navigation Company's *Oriana* demolished the record for a voyage from New York to the major Chilean port of Iquique soon after the canal opened, making the passage in 15 days. In 1915, the W.R. Grace Line introduced service from the west coast of the United States to Brazil and Argentina on the east coast of South America. At the same time, the First World War disrupted navigation between South America and Europe, allowing U.S. trade, much of it by way of the Panama Canal, to take its place, and helping this nation become the world's leading exporter.



Heading toward the Atlantic, the 313-foot Bull Line steamer Evelyn *passes through the Gatun Locks, ca. 1915. Bull Line ships ran from New York to the Caribbean and South America. The Panama Canal expanded the company's access to South American markets, making the Pacific ports of Peru and Chile closer to New York by water than the Atlantic ports of Brazil and Argentina were. Keystone stereograph photo. (Mystic Seaport, 2000.19.2)*

Although President Theodore Roosevelt said the canal was needed for "the commerce of the world," he believed the most important ships to use the canal would be battleships, not merchant vessels. Accepting the arguments of Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, Roosevelt maintained that building the canal would permit the U.S. Navy to maintain a single, unified fleet able to steam to the Atlantic or Pacific quickly to meet threats. This reasoning gained urgency after the U.S. gained outposts of empire in Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898, and steeled Roosevelt's determination to assist Panama in breaking away from Colombia for the sake of a canal treaty. Roosevelt subsequently took great personal interest in the canal construction, becoming the first American president to leave the country while in office when he visited the site in 1906.

Woodrow Wilson, who was president during the completion of the project, initially accepted the Mahan/Roosevelt theory of a unified fleet dependent on the canal, and the Navy Department drew up its war plans accordingly. The Panama Canal opened two weeks before war broke out in August 1914, apparently allowing these plans to be put into operation, but before the fleet could make its first trip to the West Coast for the Panama Exposition in San Francisco, landslides closed the famous Gaillard Cut. This deep gash through the continental divide became a tourist attraction during construction and was often likened to the Grand Canyon, but it proved so unstable that the canal remained impassable on and off for two years, until October 1916. In the meantime, skepticism about the viability of the canal grew in Congress, which passed an unprecedented naval construction bill providing for two fleets after all.

Nevertheless, United States defense during and between the world wars focused on the Panama Canal. Regarded as the key to the Western Hemisphere's security, the canal and its approaches through the Windward Passage (between Cuba and Haiti) and the Mona Passage (between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico) were guarded by a U.S. military and naval presence that increased dramatically after the waterway opened. In accord with Mahan's naval analysis, the U.S. established naval facilities in the vicinity of the canal and its approaches: at Balboa in the Canal Zone, on the Puerto Rican island of Culebra, and at Guantanamo Bay on the southeast coast of Cuba. U.S. military forces were also deployed to control the political and economic destinies of the Caribbean republics in order to maintain order in what had become the pivotal region for national security. Strategic considerations centering on the potential German threat to Panama prompted President Wilson to order the U.S. Marines to invade and occupy Haiti (1915-34) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24), and to purchase the Danish Virgin Islands (1917). In each case, German merchants, bankers, and shipping agents lost their share of business to Americans after the U.S. declaration of war in April 1917, when U.S. authorities sequestered German nationals to prevent them from aiding U-boats or attempting sabotage. The need to maintain authority in the Caribbean for the sake of the canal, prescribed by Mahan and perceived by naval planners even after the end of World War I, motivated the formation of a permanent naval squadron in the Caribbean, based in the Canal Zone. The Special Service Squadron was on call during the 1920s to engage in "gunboat diplomacy" where unrest broke out, and then during the 1930s to implement Franklin Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy with "good will cruises" to the ports of Central America and the Antilles. At home



At Gold Hill, the Gaillard or Culebra Cut passed through the continental divide. To create a channel 150 feet wide and 35 feet deep, 200 million cubic yards of earth and rock had to be excavated. A fault line crossed the canal at this point, causing frequent landslides that occasionally blocked the canal. Keystone stereograph photo. (Mystic Seaport, 2000.19.3)



President Theodore Roosevelt had seen the Panama Canal as an essential artery for the U.S. Navy to provide strategic access between the Atlantic and Pacific. In 1915, the battleship Missouri *was the first U.S. Navy battleship to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Panama Canal. Commissioned in 1903, the 388-foot* Missouri *traveled round the world to show off U.S. naval power with the "Great White Fleet," 1907-09, but was nearly obsolete by 1915. Ernest "Red" Hallen, the official Panama Canal Company photographer from 1907 to 1937, recorded the ship as it passed through the Gaillard Cut, where dredges work to clear landslide rubble from the canal. Hallen's perspective is nearly identical to the excavation photo of the cut above. (Mystic Seaport, 2000.19.1)*



Minor G. Robinson captured the sailor's view of the Panama Canal as he passed through the Miraflores Locks, bound for the Atlantic on board the 407-foot American freighter Dakotan *in 1934. Eight miles in from the Pacific, the two-step Miraflores Locks raised and lowered shipping 54 2/3 feet. Each lock had electric railroad engines like the one at left to maneuver ships into place. (Mystic Seaport, 87.43.41)*

in the anchorage at Balboa near the Pacific terminal of the canal, the sailors endured life aboard hot, stifling cruisers and often had bloody run-ins with the Panamanian police in the Cocoa Grove red-light district of Panama City.

The canal itself, with its vulnerable locks near both the Caribbean and Pacific entries, was defended by a regiment of infantry, a submarine base, several airfields, and an increasing number of artillery and anti-aircraft emplacements. Still, repeated "fleet problem" naval exercises demonstrated the vulnerability of the locks to air strikes, and the possibility loomed that an enemy might scuttle or blow up a ship in a lock chamber. These weaknesses became more serious with the outbreak of World War II in 1939. In order to reduce the risk, the Roosevelt administration began building a second set of locks at a distance from the Gatun, Miraflores, and Pedro Miguel Locks, to be reserved for the use of American ships. The new chambers were to be 25 feet wider than the original 110-foot double-flight locks in order to permit the passage of new *Montana*-class battleships and aircraft carriers fitted with anti-torpedo "blisters" on their hulls. The renewed construction on the locks and artillery positions combined to triple the labor force in the Canal Zone in six years to more than 37,000 in 1942, coming mainly from El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Jamaica. Work on the lock project halted within months after Pearl Harbor, however, as the realization set in that the alternate route would not be ready for years. The existing route reached its all-time height of activity during the war, averaging sixteen transits daily.

As World War II went on, the size, range, and destructive power of newly developed weaponry reached enormous proportions, including ships that would not fit even the unfinished wider locks; planes that could attack (or protect) Panama from bases thousands of miles away; and bombs that could damage the fragile locks beyond repair. U.S. defense planners began to discount the importance of the waterway, recognizing both its indefensibility



Traveling on his yacht Sans Terre, *Carleton Mitchell followed the American containership* Wacosta *through the Miraflores Locks in 1969. (Mystic Seaport, 96.31.5119.23)*

and the inevitability of a permanent two-fleet U.S. Navy that would never require transit. American control of the Panama Canal thus began to slip after the war.

The gradual shift in authority over the Panama Canal from the United States to the Republic of Panama started in the late 1940s, with the departure of American troops and planes from air bases on Panamanian soil outside the Canal Zone, and the transfer of long-range air defense to Trinidad. In 1955 the U.S. and Panama ratified a treaty that relinquished to the republic the right to supply ships in transit and the port facilities at the Caribbean terminal. Growing Panamanian resentment of U.S. control of the canal, symbolized by the Stars and Stripes flying above schools, offices, and houses in the heart of the country, led to bloody riots in 1964. An unratified treaty of 1967 would have replaced the Canal Zone with a bilateral administration, but opposition in the U.S. Senate, the Nixon White House, and the Omar Torrijos regime in Panama prevented an agreement for another decade. In the meantime, the significance of the passage to U.S. commerce declined, with less than one percent of the gross national product traveling by way of Panama. When negotiations resumed in 1977, Torrijos's threat to bomb Gatun Dam and drain the canal spurred the Carter administration to agree to surrender the Canal Zone immediately and arrange for the transition of the canal itself in 1999. Despite strenuous opposition in the U.S., the Senate ratified the treaty in 1979 by one vote over the required two-thirds majority.

The enduring importance of the isthmus to America and the sea is suggested by the invasion of Panama in 1989, however, when the Bush administration cited the security of the canal as a reason for the removal of Manuel Noriega. The threat of attacks by Colombian rebels and distrust of the Hong Kong-based operator of Panama's cargo terminals, Hutchison Whampoa Ltd., continued to fuel some opposition to Panamanian control of the canal in the United States throughout 1999, but the transition took place on schedule anyway, not once, but twice.

The first ceremony took place on 15 December, rather than the official date of 31 December specified by the treaty, so as not to conflict with worldwide millennium celebrations on New Year's Eve. Former President Jimmy Carter led the U.S. delegation, while both President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright skipped the controversial event. He candidly characterized the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which gave the United States control of a wide swath of Panamanian territory, as an "element of colonialism," and admitted that the administration of the Canal Zone, more than 360,000 acres of subsidized housing, schools, and engineering facilities, had been "state socialism." He also discarded his critics' concerns about the safety of the canal as nothing more than "false stories," although he underlined the ongoing U.S. interest in the waterway, used by 14,000 ships annually in recent years. Six Latin American presidents and King Juan Carlos of Spain joined Carter in the festivities, but President Mireya Moscoso noted the absence of Clinton and Albright as further evidence of the historic "lack of diplomatic attention" paid by the United States to Panama.

The second ceremony took place on 31 December 1999, the day of the legal handover scheduled more than 20 years before, but at the last minute the U.S. backed out of participation in that commemoration of Panamanian national sovereignty. Rather than engage in the planned public ritual of lowering one flag and raising the other, U.S. representatives removed the red, white, and blue in private the day before. The flag of the Republic of Panama, originally designed and stitched by the wife of a French canal engineer in a room of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, finally flew over the Canal Zone. Despite the change in control symbolized by the events of December 1999, 150 years of close involvement on the part of the United States in the shortest route across the continent is unlikely to end any time soon.

Eric Roorda received a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University and served as teaching fellow in the Williams College-Mystic Seaport Maritime Studies Program. A specialist in U.S.-Caribbean relations, he is currently assistant professor of History at Bellarmine College and has written *The Dictator Next Door: The Good Neighbor Policy and the Trujillo Regime in the Dominican Republic 1930-1945* (1998).

America and the Sea: A Maritime History is the largest, most expansive book ever published by Mystic Seaport. In its 700 pages this colorful volume offers a comprehensive narrative history of this nation's commercial, naval, and recreational activities at sea and on the connecting rivers and lakes. The book includes 350 illustrations—many drawn from Mystic Seaport's collections—and numerous vignettes and short essays like this one. *America and the Sea* is priced at $65.00. Use your member's discount at the Mystic Seaport Stores Bookstore, 860.572.5386 or 800.331.2665.

On Board the SS *Republic*, 1924

Images from the Rosenfeld Collection



On April 1924 Morris Rosenfeld received a commission to photographed the United States Lines' newest passenger ship, the *Republic*, leaving us a detailed record of the interior of a great ocean liner.

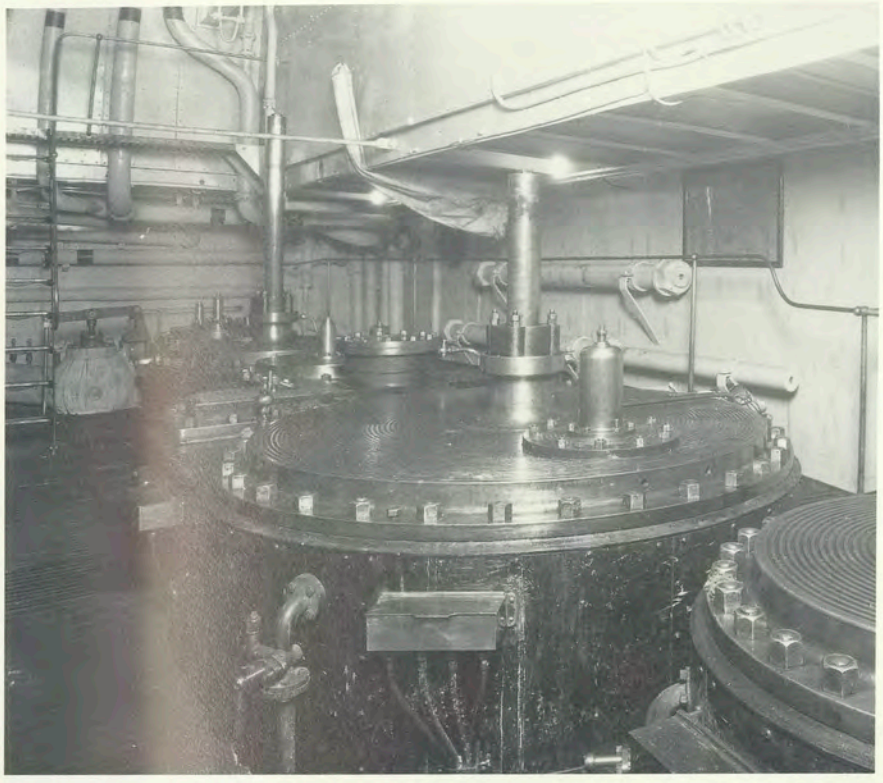
Actually, the *Republic* was not as new as she appears in the photographs. The ship had been ordered 22 years earlier by the Wilson's & Furness-Leyland Line of Great Britain. Launched as the *Servian* at Harland & Wolff's Belfast, Ireland, shipyard in 1903, the 615-foot ship and her sister *Scotian* were laid up because the company had canceled the contract before their launch. In 1906 the Hamburg-American Line bought the two ships and completed this one as the *President Grant*. Outfitted to carry 326 first-class passengers, 152 second-class, 1,004 third-class, and 2,348 steerage travelers—a total of 3,830 passengers each—the two ships were the largest immigrant ships in the world at the time. They were easily recognized by their six masts and by the position of the bridge on a small superstructure forward of the main superstructure.

Traveling between Hamburg and New York at 14.5 knots, the ship made 54 voyages between 1907 and August 1914. This was the height of European immigration into the U.S., with almost 8,000,000 arrivals during those eight years. With her capacity, the *President Grant* could have delivered as many as 200,000 people to the U.S. in that time.

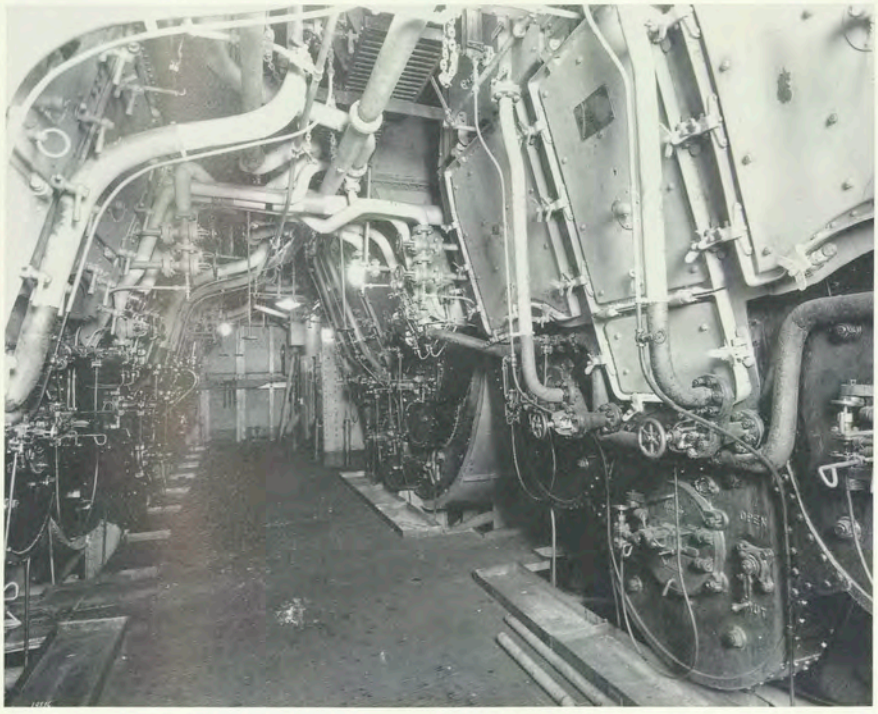
Interned at New York in August 1914 to avoid capture by the Allies when World War I began, the German-flag *President Grant* was seized by the U.S. when the nation entered the war in April 1917. Assigned as a U.S. Navy transport, the ship helped deliver the American Expeditionary Force to France, then home after the war, making 16 voyages and carrying about 40,000 men in each direction. In 1920 she was transferred to the U.S. Army for transport duty, including the delivery of Czechoslovakian troops from Siberia to the Mediterranean.

The *President Grant* was turned over to the U.S. Shipping Board in 1921. The Board supervised the U.S. commercial fleet, which had quickly become world-class through wartime construction

Having left the Hamburg-American Line wharves in Hoboken, New Jersey, the President Grant *heads down New York Bay, ca. 1910. In this photograph from the Merritt, Chapman & Scott Collection, the 615-foot ship is easily distinguished by her six masts and the small bridge superstructure between the second and third masts. (Mystic Seaport, 64.660.533)*



The Republic *continued to use the two quadruple-expansion steam engines installed about 1906. With cylinders ranging from 25 to 75 inches in diameter, and a 54-inch piston stroke, the two engines developed 7,500 indicated horsepower, driving the ship at 13.5 knots. The small high-pressure cylinder of this engine is visible in the distance, while the large low-pressure cylinder is out of the picture at right. (Negative 19540, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)*



In the bottom of the ship, sealed off with watertight bulkheads, the boiler room produced steam for the engines. Originally coal-fired, the four double-ended and one single-ended Scotch (watertube) boilers were adapted for oil firing during the ship's refit, and a second single-ended boiler was added. They produced steam at 215 pounds per square inch. (Negative 19536, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)

and the appropriation of German liners. The Shipping Board apportioned ships to the nation's shipping lines, and it assigned this ship to the new transatlantic passenger line, United States Lines. To make the well-worn ship into a showpiece of the line, the Gibbs Brothers' naval architectural firm designed a complete overhaul of the vessel, which was carried out by the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in 1923-24. The ship's two quadruple (four-cylinder) steam engines, generating 7,500 indicated horsepower, were retained, but the boilers were altered for oil firing. The separate bridge was removed, and the superstructure was extended forward to include a conventional bridge equipped with a new Sperry gyroscopic compass and gyro steerer.

The ship's living spaces were completely redone. Steerage bunkrooms considered adequate for waves of immigrants, or troops, were not suitable for the nation's flagship line. Redesigned as a cabin steamer, the ship's capacity was reduced to 605 first- and second-class passengers in two-, three-, and four-berth staterooms, and 1,396 third-class passengers in four- and six-berth staterooms. The total of 2,001 passengers was 1,800 less than her former capacity. To feed them, modern galleys with all-electric ranges and cooking equipment were installed. New watertight and fireproof bulkheads, and 44 boats accommodating 2,670, made the ship as safe as possible. The crew of 354 included 59 deck officers and crew, 57 engineers and engine room crew, and 238 in the purser's and steward's crew.

The *Republic* made 61 voyages on the route between New York, Plymouth, Cherbourg, and Bremen between 1924 and 1931. However, despite her comfortable quarters for immigrant passengers, she carried far fewer during the period. The 1924 National Origins Act had imposed quotas on incoming immigrants, so the demand for immigrant passage declined as

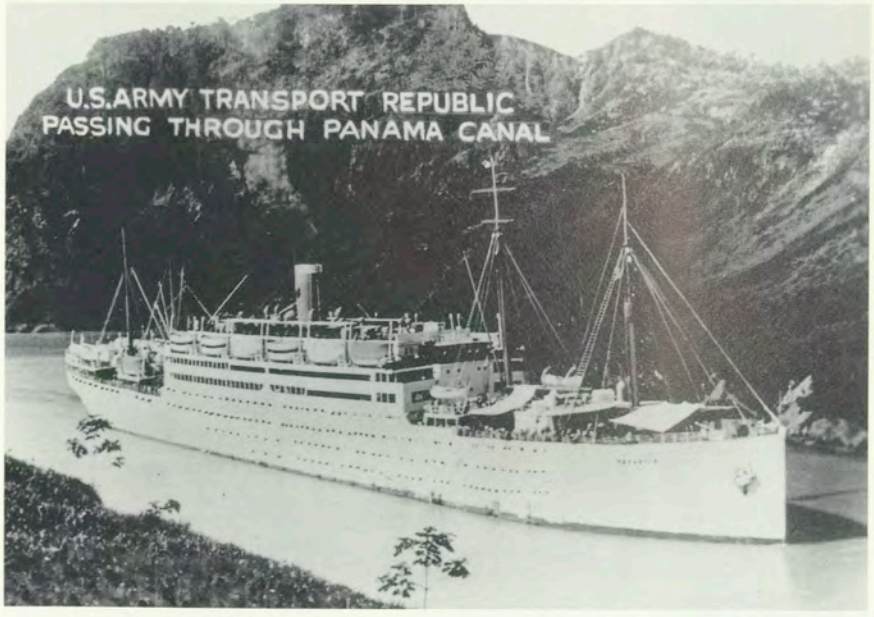
arrivals in the U.S. dropped from over 700,000 people in 1924 to around 300,000 a year for the rest of the decade.

When overall transatlantic travel declined with the Great Depression, the *Republic* was returned to the U.S. Army as a troopship. Through the 1930s she carried troops around the Pacific, and then on the regular run between New York and Honolulu by way of the Panama Canal. When the U.S. entered World War II the ship carried troops between San Francisco and Honolulu, as well as throughout the war zone in the Pacific islands.

Decommissioned in January 1945, the *Republic* was turned over to the army again as a hospital ship, but she completed her service as a transport, returning veterans to San Francisco from the Pacific islands in 1946. After nearly forty years of commercial and military service, carrying almost half a million passengers, the tired old *Republic* ex-*President Grant* was broken up at Baltimore in 1952.



On the new bridge, the Republic *was outfitted with a gyrocompass self-steering unit built by Sperry. Developed shortly before World War I for navy ships, the gyrocompass was used on merchant ships after the war. Far more accurate and responsive than a magnetic compass, a gyrocompass increased the accuracy of dead reckoning in navigation and made steering far more precise, saving fuel. The "Metal Mike" self-steering unit had just been developed, and the Shipping Board installed them in its passenger ships in 1924. Above the telephone and speaking tube on the bulkhead is a panel that indicates whether each of the ship's 19 watertight doors is open or closed. (Negative 19500, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)*



This view, ca. 1935, shows how the Republic *was reconfigured as a U.S. liner. Two masts and the forward superstructure were removed, and the main superstructure was lengthened, with a navigation bridge added at the forward end. As a U.S. Army transport, the* Republic *passed through the Panama Canal many times. This photograph of the ship passing through the Gaillard Cut was made into a souvenir postcard. (Mystic Seaport, 2000.33.1)*

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Research and photo selection by Andrew W. German



TOP: With 2,001 passengers and 354 crew on board, the Republic*'s steward's department had to prepare more than 7,000 meals per day, or about 40,000 during a transatlantic passage. This kept the ship's butcher shop especially active. At right, two men slice bacon on a meat cutter. Others pluck pheasants, prepare fowl for cooking, and butcher pork. (Negative 19486, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)*



CENTER: How do you peel potatoes for 2,000? The galley was equipped with a mechanical potato peeler (left). *The pan full of celery, the implements for mashing and whipping potatoes, the basket for boiling or frying, and the large galvanized tubs all represent high-volume food production. Nearly 200 people were involved in preparing and serving food on board. (Negative 19504, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)*

BOTTOM: With its electric ranges and cooks in their white jackets and toques, the Republic*'s galley might be mistaken for a large urban restaurant kitchen. But these men worked in a moving world to serve thousands of meals, both elegant and basic, under conditions never faced in a restaurant. (Negative 19527, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)*





Coffee was the essential beverage aboard ship. Presumably, the white enamel pots and heavy white cups were for doling it out to third-class passengers. (Negative 19519, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)



Travelers in first-class might feel they were at home when they entered the Republic*'s dining room. Upholstered chairs, flowers, and classical woodwork gave the feeling of being in a club or elegant restaurant rather than in a dining hall for 380 at sea. These passengers also had use of a social hall with dance floor, a writing room, a ladies saloon, a smoking room, a gymnasium, a veranda, and glass-enclosed promenades along two decks. A reviewer noted, "the scheme of decoration of all the public rooms is in the most excellent taste and gives an effect of light and airiness, . . . much more preferable. . . than elaborate carving and gilding." (Negative 19507, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)*



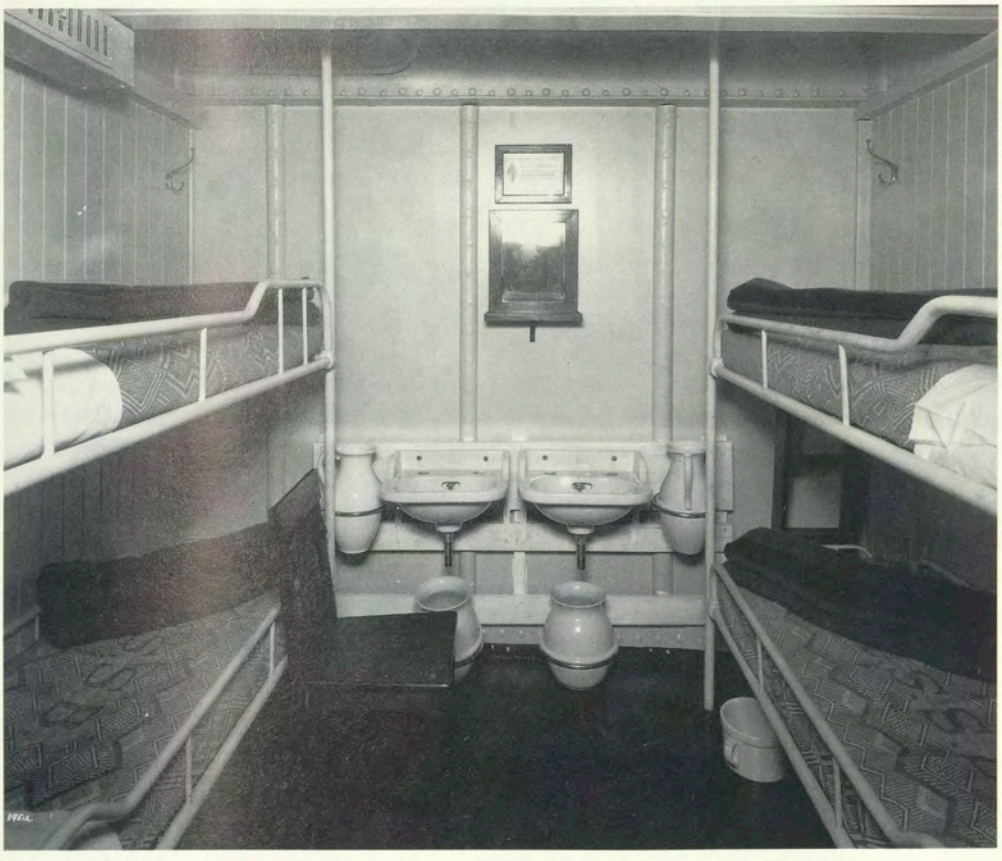
Though small, this first-class stateroom is appointed with carpeting, running water, and a steam radiator for heat. Curtains offer privacy for the wooden berths, which are covered with handsome spreads with the U.S. Shipping Board logo. As refitted, the ship had about 200 of these staterooms with two, three, or four berths. (Negative 19473, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)



The third-class dining rooms hearken back to the ship's time as a German immigrant carrier. With enough seats for 680, it would take two seatings for each meal with a full complement of immigrants on board. (Negative 19508, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)



The third-class smoking room, located in a separate house near the stern, was decorated with an image of Abraham Lincoln as an American icon for immigrants. Notice the ship's clock at right, which was set for local time at sea by being adjusted approximately one hour each day. To accommodate for the five-hour time difference between Europe and America, it was set ahead when the ship was bound east toward the Greenwich prime meridian, and set back when the ship sailed west toward America. (Negative 19489, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)



By the 1920s, even third-class passengers were housed in staterooms rather than open steerage bunkrooms. However, compare this to the first-class stateroom. Here, four people have metal pipe berths with U.S. Shipping Board coverlets. There is no running water. Each wash basin is filled from a large pitcher and drained into a waste jug. A chamber pot on the painted deck under the bunks serves as a toilet at night. The sign above the mirror notes that life preservers are stowed overhead. (Negative 19512, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)

Voyages
Stories of America and the Sea

A Preview



in the *Eaſt-Bay-Street Lottery*, may have them exchanged for Tickets in the *Agricultural Society's Lottery*, on application at the City Treaſurer's. June 23.

☞ *Windward Coaſt Slaves.*—The Sale will commence at 10 o'clock *THIS DAY*, the 3d inſt. on board the Barque FAIR ELIZA, *J. Williams* Maſter, lying at Gadſden's Wharf.

JAMES MILLER, Sen.

July 2.

☞ *Congo Slaves.*—The Sale of the PRET MARY's Cargo of 860 very prime SLAVES, will commence *THIS DAY*, the 20th inſtant, at ten o'clock, on board, at Gadſden's Wharf.

WM. BOYD.

June 19.



Mystic Seaport is preparing to open its most ambitious exhibit ever. *Voyages: Stories of America and the Sea* will open on 17 June in the Museum's refurbished Stillman Building, presenting visitors with seven sections that reflect our ongoing relationship with the sea as represented by immigration, river trade, foreign trade, U.S. Navy life, recreation, fisheries, and inspiration. "Although the exhibit is comprised of objects—maps, paintings, boats, clothing, tools, carvings, weapons, photographs, and other artifacts too varied to mention—*Voyages* is a story about people, not things," said the Museum's President and Director J. Revell Carr.

The first section of *Voyages*, "Coming to America: Immigrant Passages," asks: Do you know how your ancestors came to America? Unless they were Native American, the answer is most likely "on a ship." Offering visitors a space to ponder the ocean passage of those who came before us, the Coming to America section commemorates the journeys of Europeans who fled their homelands in the world's greatest migration to find religious and economic freedom in the New World; Africans who endured the horrors of the transatlantic "Middle Passage," reaching America as slaves; and Asians who crossed the Pacific to work but met walls of discrimination. The story of modern immigration by sea focuses on the recent influx of desperate Caribbean islanders, who still use small boats to reach America. The fishing boat *Analuisa*, which carried 19 Cubans toward Key West and freedom across the treacherous Florida Straits, represents these modern ocean pilgrims.

Each year the Museum will focus on a theme related to *Voyages*. In addition to being the first section of *Voyages*, the theme of immigration will come to life throughout the Museum in special programming and enhanced interpretation during the summer of 2000.

So prepare to consider your own immigrant roots and look for these recent additions to Mystic Seaport's collections on immigration by sea when you visit *Voyages: Stories of America and the Sea.*

LEFT: Although they came only intending to work until they earned enough to return home and prosper in their native lands, Asian immigrants faced increasing restrictions on entry into the U.S. When these Chinese came in the 1870s, they were still in demand as laborers. But after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the "Gentlemen's Agreements" of 1900-07, Asian entry into the U.S. was strictly limited. Not until 1943 were Chinese immigrants welcomed, and not until 1952 could Japanese become U.S. citizens. (Mystic Seaport, G.W. Blunt White Library, Harper's Weekly, *20 May 1876)*

CENTER: Until the transatlantic slave trade to the U.S. was prohibited by federal law after 1 January 1808, more than 600,000 Africans were legally wrenched from their families and native cultures to be sold in North America for a life of slave labor. On 28 July 1806 the Charleston Courier *advertised the sales of nearly 1,000 newly arrived Africans, including these groups identified only by their places of origin. (Mystic Seaport, G.W. Blunt White Library)*

RIGHT: Until immigration quotas were imposed by the National Origins Act of 1924, as many as a million immigrants entered America annually. After 1892, the majority of them came through Ellis Island, like these new arrivals in 1924 who have survived an ocean crossing and now wait to make travel connections either to join family or to pioneer a new life in their new land. (Negative 19684F, © Mystic Seaport, Inc., Rosenfeld Collection)

Book Marks

The books mentioned in this issue are a bit unusual in that they represent mainstream American writing, as opposed to strict maritime history reserved for maritime historians and enthusiasts. While these works do indeed address elements pertinent to such groups, they transcend the genre because of the broader human story that they convey. The selections consist of one best-selling fiction and two nonfiction pieces.

Like many other people that work at Mystic Seaport, I had the good fortune of knowing Joel White. We were not close friends, merely acquaintances who happened to come together occasionally because of a shared subject interest: Boats. And like those many other people that knew him tangentially, I had my own image of who Joel White was, and after reading Douglas Whynott's *A Unit of Water, A Unit of Time: Joel White's Last Boat* (New York: Doubleday, 1999. 303 pages, $23.95) I found that I was neither completely correct in my judgment, nor far off the mark, either. The talented, generous man of word and deed was known to me, whereas his occasional hard edge, especially in business deals, was not. And I never put two and two together to come up with the image of Joel as a young boy depicted in some of the writings of his father, E.B. White.

Whynott spent a year in Brooklin, Maine, tagging along with Joel and others gathering material that would become *A Unit of Water*. The book relies somewhat on Joel's writings, but draws more liberally from the stories of the elder White, author of such wonderful children's classics as *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*. Whynott's readers are also introduced to a sometimes overwhelming number of people who populate Brooklin and other parts of Joel's life. Some are familiar, some are not. There is an equal litany of boat names with which to contend, a veritable who's who of sailboats new and old. While the need for a scorecard is an occasional distraction, it is forgivable in that we learn the workings of a different way of life and how many of the new boats evolved from the forms of the old.

I think the chord struck most deeply within me by this work, however, is the envy I felt for Joel when I finished the book. I do not covet his skill as a boatbuilder and designer because I never pictured myself as either. And I certainly do not envy the physical hardships that dogged his last year. Rather, it is envy for the man who eventually grew to know his father not only through a geographical closeness and physical reliance later in E.B.'s life, but through the father's written gift to his son, timeless stories and essays that often carried an element of young Joel in them. To gain a tender, lasting insight into the soul of a parent is truly priceless. Joel's legacy to his family and friends, in some ways as gripping as his father's words, will live on in his elegant designs, and in this well-conceived book about his life.

In *Blind Man's Bluff* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998. 353 pages, $25.00), Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew follow the development of the silent service of submarines from the end of World War II through the Cold War and beyond, concentrating on events that were known only in the inner circles of the U.S. Navy and national security. The stories behind the *Thresher* and other deepwater disasters, American and Soviet, and the salvage efforts to gather information and intelligence from them are laid out in full. These tales of espionage and bravado leave the impression that more than a few submarine officers spent their spare time swaggering out of John Wayne movies and into the control room. And yet the sense of commitment to service and fellow submariners shines clearly through the murky operations that often involved America's submarines.

The authors have used their journalistic skills, honed at the *New York Times* and *National Law Journal*, to uncover a series of spectacular stories that seem to be culled from the dreams of Tom Clancy. The use of Nazi snorkel technology just after World War II and later underwater tapping of communications cables illustrate the fact that submarines were, and are, more than a simple tool of war. Their role in international politics is portrayed time and again, as is the ingenuity of the men who saw greater capabilities in the concept of underwater warfare. The two appendices and chapter notes at the end of the book offer up enough tidbits to be the basis for at least one more book. Readers will reach the end of *Blind Man's Bluff* hoping the authors will decide to tell the rest of those stories in the near future.

Paul O'Pecko
Library Director
Mystic Seaport

Sena Jeter Naslund, *Ahab's Wife or, The Star-Gazer* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1999), 668 pages, illustrations, $28.00.

Inspired by a brief passage in *Moby-Dick*, Naslund creates a character worthy to stand with the impassioned captain of the *Pequod*. *Ahab's Wife* is, by turns, adventure story and romance, as it follows the life of Una Spenser through early-

nineteenth-century New England.

Fearing the abusive tendencies of her religion-mad husband, Una's mother sends her to live with her uncle and aunt, lighthouse keepers on an island off New Bedford. After a few isolated and peaceful years, Una discovers youthful passion with the arrival of two young sailors. She disguises herself as a cabin boy and runs off to join them on the whaler *Sussex*.

Adventure ensues as Una learns the ways of the whaleship, which is eventually wrecked in the South Pacific. The only survivors are Una and her two sailor friends. Following their rescue by Captain Ahab and the *Pequod*, one of the young men is driven to suicide by reminders of the horrors he and his companions committed in order to survive. Una and the second young man, Kit Sparrow, are married aboard the *Pequod* by Captain Ahab.

The newlyweds put ashore on Nantucket, where Una shepherds Kit through his descent into madness and eventual desertion. She is reacquainted with Captain Ahab, and they celebrate their passion and common experiences with marriage.

Una's life as the wife of a successful sea captain elevates her position in society, and she begins to move in the liberal, intellectual circles of New England. Through Una's acquaintances and experiences, the novel explores such controversies as slavery, the rights of women, and the influence of religion. After the birth of a son, Ahab's developing obsession with the white whale, Moby-Dick, and the eventual disappearance of the *Pequod*, the newly widowed Una retreats to Siasconset, where she meets her third husband. His memoirs become famous for the opening line, "Call me Ishmael."

This novel is a grand work, beautifully illustrated. It has been named to *Booklist*'s Editors' Choice list for 1999.

Mary O'Pecko Garm
Consultant Librarian, Scranton, Pennsylvania, Public Library

Letters

The cover photograph on the Winter 1999 *Log*/Annual Report elicited concern among staff and members who felt it inappropriate and out of character for the Museum to use such a sexist image. In the Museum's *Staff Bulletin*, President and Director J. Revell Carr gave the following explanation.

The cover of the Winter *Log*/Annual Report has certainly achieved the objective of catching people's attention and telegraphing that something different is happening here. However, the question has been raised as to whether this was an appropriate image to use for that purpose. Clearly, the image and what it symbolized should have had more interpretation. No one who knows Mystic Seaport would think that this was selected because it represents the attitudes within the Museum today. The image is an outrageous cultural statement of its time in the mid-1950s when in the post-World War II years more people were taking to the water in all manner of craft. This was one of the extremes and illustrates the American love affair with the automobile adapted to the water. The outrageous fins of the '50s cars have been applied to this Evinrude Lark and the company hired the Rosenfelds to get the perfect photograph showing the boat and, of course, the famous Evinrude outboard engine. The image also reflects the advertising mores and attitudes of that era 45 years ago, as sexist as it is.

The annual report in that issue of *The Log* cited as a major task of this past year the preparations for the exhibition *Voyages: Stories of America and the Sea*. This image, drawn from our collections, will be included in the recreation section of the new exhibit. It is a time capsule of the popular culture of that era. It is intended to convey that this Museum and this exhibition are not simply about clipper ships and the great age of sail, but that we collect, preserve, and exhibit materials that relate to the broad range of the American maritime story. There may be other images and aspects of the story with which we are uncomfortable, but we can not choose only what we like and convey a distorted story. Perhaps there was a better image to use, but I hope people will recognize this image as the caricature that it is as it outrageously telegraphs the era and that part of the story.

J. Revell Carr
President and Director
Mystic Seaport

Mystic Seaport Salutes!

CARLETON MITCHELL

In 1952, when well-known sailor, author, and photographer Carleton Mitchell joined Mystic Seaport, admission cost $1.00, membership stood at 3,500, and the 61-foot Sparkman-and-Stephens-design schooner *Brilliant* had just been donated to the Museum for use in its fledgling Youth Training Sail Education program.

Carleton Mitchell made history in his own Sparkman-and-Stephens beauty, the 38-foot yawl *Finisterre*, the only three-time winner of the Newport-to-Bermuda race, in 1956, 1958, and 1960. Mr. Mitchell is still sailing today.

As skilled as he was in competitive sailing, his passion lay in cruising, and in sharing his adventures through words and photographs. As an author, he has been called the heir to the throne of Thomas Fleming Day and Alfred F. Loomis. He is credited with eight books and countless magazine articles, which helped ignite the explosion in pleasure boating in the 1950s and 1960s.

One of his finest books is entitled *Yachtsman's Camera*, a manual that blends his talents for sailing and photography. He began taking photographs during the Great Depression. Largely self-taught, he developed his own unique style, focusing on "intimate people shots, full of character and personality." His photography archive numbers more than 10,000 black-and-white negatives, color slides, prints, photo albums, and other materials.

In 1996, Mr. Mitchell entrusted The Carleton Mitchell Collection to Mystic Seaport. In addition to the photography archive, the collection includes publications, logs, and correspondence chronicling the post-World War II era of yachting. The Mitchell Collection joins a number of other noteworthy collections here at the Museum, such as the work of the Rosenfelds, the Sparkman and Stephens photographs, and the *Yachting* Magazine Collection. What is noteworthy about Mr. Mitchell's donation is his enormous generosity in making possible much of the preservation work: the sorting, inventorying, cataloging, and rehousing that must take place in order to stabilize these priceless images and make them accessible.

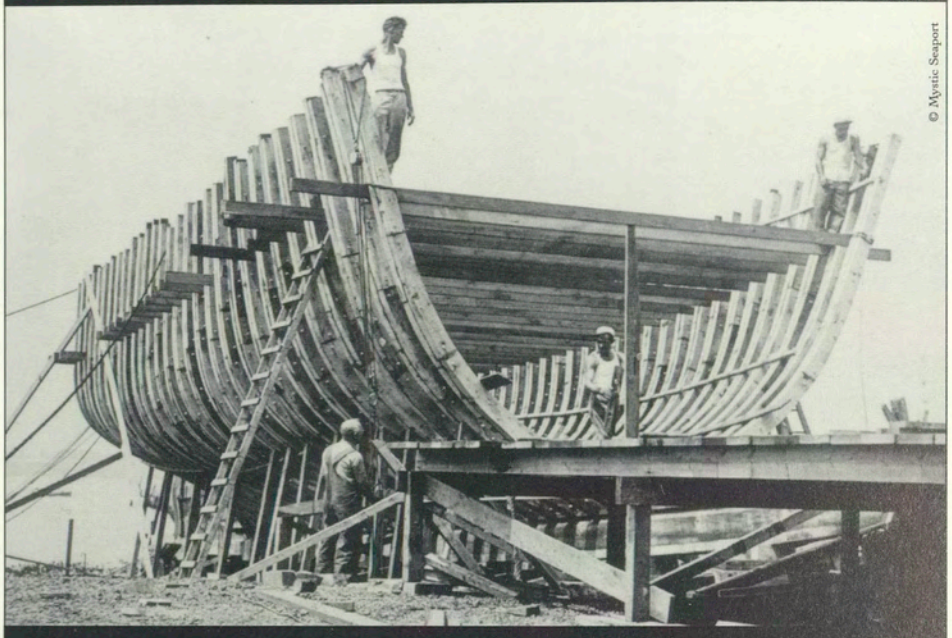


Carleton Mitchell receives the W.P. Stephens Award from Timothea S. Larr at Mystic Seaport's 1997 Yachting History Symposium. (Mary Anne Stets photo)

In 1997, Mystic Seaport named Carleton Mitchell as the recipient of the W.P. Stephens Award. Presented during the Museum's Yachting History Symposium, the award is given in recognition of a significant, enduring contribution to the history, preservation, progress, understanding, or appreciation of American yachting and boating. In his gracious acceptance speech, Mr. Mitchell echoed a thought that he has voiced frequently in the past, and which doubtless led to his choosing of Mystic Seaport as the repository of his precious archive: "So much of the lore of seafaring is gone. . . . Where are they now, the sailors and vessels of the past? Their memory and heritage are preserved by only a few maritime institutions, of which Mystic Seaport is best."

We are proud to salute Carleton Mitchell, his generosity, and his extraordinary work.

Most people think it's just a place
where ships were built.
In reality, it's a place where an
entire country was built.



On December 25, 1929, Mystic Seaport was founded on the site of a once-bustling shipyard to preserve a vanishing maritime tradition. On March 25, 2000, with the launch of the Freedom Schooner *Amistad*, Mystic Seaport made history again. Come explore the maritime tradition that continues to shape America. Climb aboard the ships. Hear the tales. And live the experiences of the many courageous seafaring people who built our country.

Experience The Sea On A Deeper Level.

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