The Log *of* Mystic Seaport®

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On the cover: Shipwrights at New York's Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation prepare to launch PC-1264, one of two U.S. Navy fighting ships crewed by African Americans during World War II. Morris Rosenfeld & Sons recorded the event on 28 November 1943. (59232, © Mystic Seaport, Rosenfeld Collection)

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Sightings

In the last issue of *The Log,* Mystic Seaport's Board of Trustees Chairman William E. Cook reported on the transition in the Museum's management. J. Revell Carr, director for over twenty years, has moved to a well-earned retirement on Nantucket, where he will be free to pursue his scholarly interests. He left with the heartfelt thanks of our trustees and all his colleagues. In recognition of his service, the board has named him director emeritus, and the associate curatorship of small craft, endowed by an anonymous admirer, has been named in his honor.

Our new director, Admiral Douglas H. Teeson, currently superintendent of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, will join us in July, and in the meantime I have the honor of serving as interim director. This evanescent title has turned out to entail a challenging role. Under the leadership of the board chairman I hope to help effect a smooth transition from one strong leader to another. At the same time, Mystic Seaport is a busy place, and the perennial tasks of budgeting, fund-raising, and day-to-day managing will fully occupy my time for the coming months.

This will be an unusually interesting period at the Museum. After years of planning, fund-raising and construction, our state-of-the-art Collections Research Center is finally nearing completion. In the coming months, we will see the gradual move of our curatorial staff and collections to this efficient and carefully controlled environment. It totals over 40,000 square feet and occupies approximately one-third of the large Rossie Mill building opposite the Seamen's Inne. We have plans to renovate a second section of this building as an attractive boat hall for the storage and, we hope, exhibition of Mystic Seaport's preeminent collection of nearly five hundred small watercraft.

We were all delighted by the remarkable performance of the Museum's 68-year-old training schooner *Brilliant* in the year 2000. Designed by Trustee Emeritus Olin J. Stephens II and built to the highest standards by the Nevins yard in 1932, *Brilliant* was given to the Museum by Trustee Emeritus Briggs S. Cunningham in 1952. She is meticulously maintained and, sailing under the command of Captain George Moffett, serves as an educational vehicle and goodwill ambassador for Mystic Seaport. After appearing in the OpSail 2000 celebration in New London last July, *Brilliant* entered the race of tall ships to Europe and handily won first place. She was admired by many spectators at ports of call from the Netherlands to Ireland and Spain before she sailed back across the Atlantic to the Caribbean, where she is currently wintering. We expect to welcome her back to Mystic in May after a voyage that has brought great credit to her, Captain Moffett, and Mystic Seaport. In recognition of this and his many other achievements, Captain Moffett recently received the Sail Trainer of the Year Award from the American Sail Training Association.

This issue of *The Log* contains a number of articles that build on Mystic Seaport's efforts as The Museum of America and the Sea. In our continuing efforts to include naval subjects and address issues in African American maritime history, we offer you articles on the two black-crewed U.S. Navy vessels of World War II, the USS *Mason* and PC-1264. Though small and segregated, these vessels were significant beyond their size in the navy's transition to an integrated force at sea.

A third article, by the library director at the Maine Maritime Museum, takes us back a century to look at the hazards of work in the shipyards of Bath, Maine. The author's analysis of injuries and discussion of the lack of workers' compensation help broaden our insight on those who built the vessels on which our maritime history is based.

In December 2000, Mystic Seaport lost a great friend and valued advisor, Clifford D. Mallory Jr. Director Emeritus J. Revell Carr offers a tribute to Clifford and the other Mallorys who helped shape Mystic Seaport's course for more than 60 years.

We hope the concluding article will entice you to visit the Museum in the coming month to see in brilliant color what we can only hint at in black and white. Until 15 April, 22 quilts produced for the *Amistad* Friendship Quilt Project are hung in the Greenmanville Church. If you appreciate the quilter's art or are moved by the themes represented in the *Amistad* story, you should not miss this display.

James F. Engelhardt.

"Everyone Should Know About the *Mason*"

James W. Graham and the USS *Mason*

FRED CALABRETTA

On 16 June 1922, James W. Graham was born in the small South Carolina town of Lake City. His experiences were fairly typical for a black youth at that time and place. He endured racism and segregation, and hoped for something better. Twenty-one years later, on 17 November 1943, a United States Navy ship was launched at the Boston Navy Yard in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Although launchings were a common occurrence at that venerable shipyard, there was something unique about this particular ship. Eventually, the paths of this ship and the young black man from South Carolina would merge in a series of landmark events.



Two crew members pose on a snowy wharf at the Boston Navy Yard, with the USS Mason *(DE-529) in the background. This photo was taken on the day of the ship's commissioning, 20 March 1944. Jim Graham managed to avoid the photo sessions on this historic occasion and instead joined several shipmates for some liberty time in Boston. (National Archives photo 80-G-218862)*

The navy ship launched on that cold November day was an Evarts-class destroyer escort named the USS *Mason*, officially designated as DE-529. The *Mason* was the first ship in the history of the U.S. Navy to have an all black crew. Although her captain and her commissioned and petty officers were white, all other positions on the ship were held by blacks. The navy had officially opened up all positions to blacks in 1942, but in practice virtually all black sailors assigned to ships served as cooks and stewards. Even these men were exceptions when most black "sailors" served in construction battalions, as ammunition loaders, or on other shoreside labor assignments. The crew of the *Mason*, young men like Jim Graham, were pioneers. They would prove to others what they themselves already knew, that blacks were capable of handling all duties required of naval seamen. Unfortunately, for 50 years the country barely noticed.

Decades after the *Mason* and her crew made history, Jim Graham began a crusade to insure that their story was acknowledged and remembered. He and his wife Barbara have dedicated themselves to this effort, and to the story they consider so important. Married for 55 years, they live in Roosevelt, New York, on eastern Long Island. Their home is filled with photographs and memorabilia associated with the *Mason*.

They are a warm and outgoing couple who enjoy talking about the *Mason* and her crew. They speak candidly about Jim's experiences with discrimination, and about the frustration they have experienced as a result of public and government neglect of the *Mason* story. Yet their spirits have not been dampened by bitterness. They both have a delightful sense of humor, and are quick to point out their successes in bringing about

increased awareness of the *Mason* and her crew.

Jim grew up in a large family, with eight brothers and sisters. His mother died when Jim was eight years old, placing added responsibility on his father.

My father had what you would call a good job for a black man in South Carolina. . . . There was a big tobacco plant, and he had a year-round job, taking care of the warehouse, and night watchman, and all that. . . . We were about the only black people in town who had electricity in the house.

The town was very stringently segregated. I remember, as a kid, talk of the Ku Klux Klan and things like that. And my father, at the time, we would call him an Uncle Tom. We didn't know any better. He was a survivor. He was taking care of us the best way he knew how. We'd call him an Uncle Tom, because when he was around the white man, he was typical, subservient or whatever.

Blacks who didn't "know their place" in Lake City could suffer frightful consequences. One night Jim and his younger brother were out after dark when a group of Ku Klux Klansmen rode through town. As the two boys hid nearby, the Klansmen proceeded to the home of a black man who owned a business, a nice car and good clothes. Although they couldn't see what was happening, the two young boys could hear the man being severely beaten, his only apparent crime being the fact that he had achieved success in life.

The Japanese attack on the U.S. Navy base at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 brought the Unites States very abruptly into World War II. Our involvement in the war heightened awareness of the opportunities offered by service in the armed forces, and Jim took notice.

About six of us decided we would go down and enlist in the Air Force. I wanted to be a pilot. So we went down to Charleston and the guy told us right away that there were no Negroes in the Air Force, try the Army. . . . Coming back home, we passed a Navy recruiting station. and there was a Navy recruiter . . . . He said, "Why don't you enlist in the Navy?" I said, "No, I'm not going to cook for anybody, I'm not going to clean for anybody," and he said, "Well, you don't have to go into the navy in the steward branch, you can go in the same as the white guys," . . . so we signed up.

When I saw the sign that said "Join the Navy and See the World," and this sailor with his beautiful white cap on. He was spic and span in his uniform, and he had a girl on each arm. . . . I said, "That's for me!"

That was in June. I wasn't inducted until August of '42.

Jim attended boot camp at the navy's prominent Great Lakes Naval Training Center north of Chicago. Black sailors were segregated, receiving their training at a branch of the base called Camp Robert Smalls, named in honor of a black Civil War naval hero. The camp was separated by railroad tracks from the main facility housing white trainees. On one occasion, Jim and the other black sailors spent a week getting the camp into immaculate shape, in preparation for a visit from President Franklin Roosevelt. When the president came, Jim recalls that he drove right by, ignoring the training camp for blacks and visiting the facilities for whites.

After boot camp, Jim was stationed at Cape May Naval Air Base in New Jersey. He had received training as a radioman and was rated as a petty officer third class. He had hoped to be assigned to a ship and go to sea, but his duty at Cape May was not what he expected. "When we got to Cape May, that's when we found out we weren't going on board a ship, that we were going to be longshoremen! Working on the pier, tying up the ships, and



Jim Graham (right) *and shipmate Radarman 2nd Class Linden H. Kieffer Jr. seem to be enjoying life at sea as they sit atop smoke generators on the* Mason's *deck. (Courtesy James W. Graham)*

things like that. And that's when I became disgusted."

Jim recalls that he found support from an unlikely source. A white sailor from Georgia was helpful during this time. He provided encouragement and assisted Jim in learning seamanship. Then an opportunity arose that would have an major impact on Jim's life. A friend of his was offered an assignment on a new ship. The opening was for a second class radioman. The man declined the opportunity—he was reluctant to go to sea because he couldn't swim! He suggested that Jim take his place, despite the fact that Jim only held a 3rd-class rating at this time. They proposed working together to help Jim qualify for the 2nd-class rating he needed. Jim worked hard, was promoted to the rate of Radioman 2nd class, and got the assignment he wanted so badly.

In December of 1943, he was transferred to Norfolk, Virginia, for additional training. He thought

he was training to ship out on a destroyer, and didn't know that his ship would actually be a destroyer escort, a considerably less formidable vessel. He and the other black sailors who had been assembled at Norfolk also didn't realize at this time that they would soon be the focus of a naval experiment.

Blacks had served in many capacities and in significant numbers on board warships during the period from the American Revolution through the Civil War, but opportunities for them had diminished during the later half of the nineteenth century and up until World War II. Most served as cooks and stewards. As America's role in World War II expanded, President Franklin D. Roosevelt responded to pressure from various sources, including his wife Eleanor, and took steps to expand the role of blacks in the armed forces. One such action resulted in the navy's acceptance of blacks for all ratings, effective 1 June 1942. This meant that blacks would no longer be limited to duty as messmen, they could serve as signalmen, quartermasters, radiomen, or any other enlisted rating. In actual practice, blacks filling these new roles were limited to shore or coastal duty. Blacks on board the ships of the navy's combat fleet still were limited to positions as cooks and stewards.

Finally, the Navy Department relented and decided to test the performance of small groups of black sailors on combat ships. The navy ordered that two antisubmarine vessels, a patrol craft and a destroyer escort, would be manned by all-black crews, although the officers would be white. The patrol vessel was officially designated as PC-1264, and the destroyer escort was DE-529, the USS *Mason.* The *Mason* was named in honor of Newton Henry Mason, a navy flier who had been killed earlier in the war. The crew of the patrol craft helped set an important precedent, although their duty was limited to Caribbean and U.S. coastal waters. Jim Graham's training in Norfolk was preparing him to serve on the other vessel, and it would be a remarkable association.

As World War II continued and Jim prepared for the most important chapter of his naval career, events in Norfolk were a frequent reminder that blacks in America still had their own personal battles to fight. Jim had realized soon after he entered the service that a U.S. Navy uniform was no shield from racism. He and his fellow black sailors were subjected to discrimination and verbal abuse on navy ships and bases, as well as in the various cities where they were stationed. They encountered problems in Chicago, Cape May, Norfolk, and Boston.

In Norfolk, Virginia. . . coming back to the base one night, the guard on duty at the gate didn't want to let us through the gate where all the white sailors and officers went through. They had a special gate for the cooks and stewards and black guys. Being young, I guess, we said, "Well, we're going through there anyway." . . . We were in the service the same as those [white] guys. And the dog-gone guard wanted us to rip our patches off, because he said we were cooks and this and that. He wanted us to rip those patches off and use the other gate. We told him no way. We went strutting on through. You know he cocked his carbine on us. Boy did we take off.

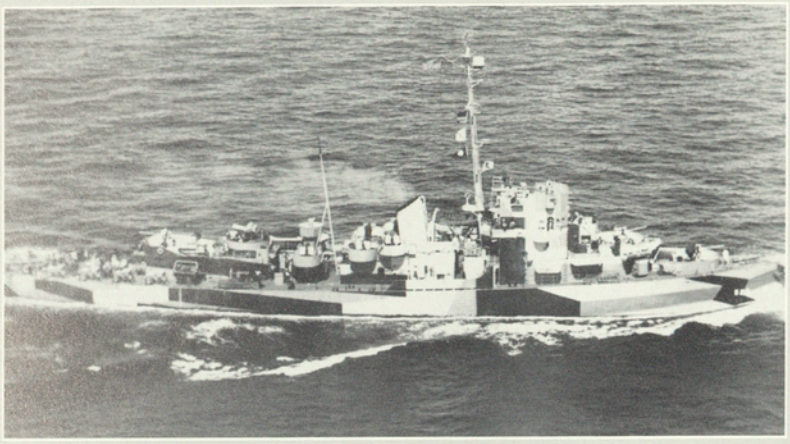
When we would go into a navy yard, say if we were tied up alongside a pier, and their were five ships tied up, we had to cross from the outboard to the inside to get to the pier. When we crossed the other ships they'd call us names—coons, niggers, monkeys, and things like that. We had to know how to conduct ourselves. But if I would catch one of those guys on the pier and recognize him, you'd have to call out the National Guard.

One night coming back from liberty I was coming into the yard. Our sister ship was DE-530, we were always with them, and they always gave us the worst time, more names and this and that. And I was walking with this group, and I was the only black guy in this group, and I said to this sailor, we called each other mate, I said, "Hi mate, what ship are you off of?" He said, "The USS [John M.] Bermingham, *DE-530." I said, "Oh, that's our sister ship." He said, "What ship are you off?" I said, "The* Mason, *DE-529." He said, "Oh, that's that nigger ship." Just like that. He had on a white uniform and I had a white uniform, and we started fighting . . . and we finished and got up, and he went that way and I went this way.*

In this atmosphere of racism, the slightest gesture of kindness by whites became a memorable experience, such as the support shown by a group of sailors in a movie theater. Jim's voice wavers with emotion as he recalls the incident:

I remember one night in Cape May, New Jersey. A buddy and I. . . walked right in, all the other sailors were sitting there, an usher came and told us that we'd have to move, we would have to go up in the balcony. . . I said, "Why?" He said, "Up there is reserved for colored." We told him no. So he said, "I'll have to go get the manager." So there were about five white sailors behind us, and they told us, "Don't move. Sit right there. Don't move, . . . we're with you." After that the black sailors could sit anyplace. I'll always remember that.

Construction of the *Mason* began on 14 October 1943 at the Boston Navy Yard in Charlestown. She was launched barely a month later, on 17 November. Destroyer escorts, or DEs, were considerably smaller than destroyers; the *Mason* was 289 feet in length, with a 35-foot beam. They had been designed by the navy primarily for antisubmarine warfare and convoy duty, and they were used extensively to escort merchant ships and other unarmed vessels across the Atlantic. Their principal adversaries in that theater of the war were the notorious German U-boats that preyed on Allied ships.



The USS Mason *is shown here underway near Boston in August 1944, wearing her Battle of the Atlantic camouflage, designed to make her more difficult for German U-boats to identify and track visually. (National Archives photo 80-G-245458)*



Jim Graham admired the Mason*'s commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander William M. Blackford, as a "real navy captain." Blackford is seen here on board the* Mason *during the ship's commissioning ceremonies, with members of the crew standing in the background. (National Archives photo 80-G-218856)*

The DEs were not as heavily armed as destroyers or larger warships, but did carry depth charges, deck guns, and machine guns. Other important weapons were a relatively fast cruising speed of up to 21 knots and sophisticated radar and sonar tracking systems, both useful in contending with enemy aircraft and submarines. A total of 565 destroyer escorts were built during World War II, and many saw extensive service in the Atlantic. A number of them established impressive records, but the *Mason*'s service would be unique.

Initially, Jim Graham and his shipmates weren't aware that they were participants in an historic event.

When we left Virginia we went to Boston. They were building the ship in Boston. At that time we didn't know they were building a special ship for colored only. So we went to Boston, and we had to go through more training. . . then we went on board the Mason.

They didn't spell it out, that it would be all black or all Negro. . . . What happened was, it was supposed to be an experimental ship, and in the meantime, they had these black guys in training to become commissioned officers, and when they became commissioned officers, they would replace the white officers and it would have been an all black ship.

Once the crew of the *Mason* became aware that they were participants in an experiment, they felt extra pressure. "You had to succeed. The navy was watching. . . . We represented the whole Negro race. We had to walk proper. We had to do this. We had to stay out of trouble. And I didn't see myself as any different from anybody else."

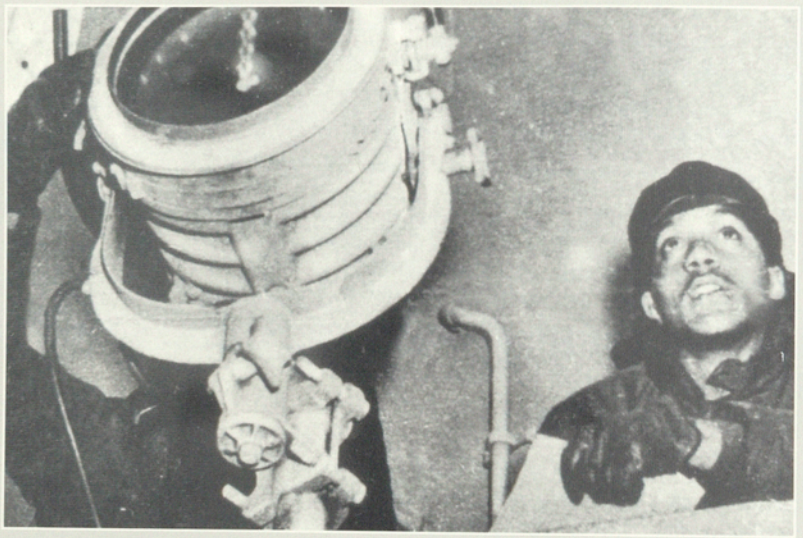
While Jim Graham's association with the *Mason* continued to develop, his relationships with three individuals also became increasingly important in his life. One of these individuals was the *Mason*'s skipper, Captain William M. Blackford. Blackford was a capable seaman and experienced naval reserve officer, and had been in command of a minesweeper prior to his assignment as commander of the *Mason.* At the time he took the assignment, the navy had not yet determined that the ship would have an all-black crew. As it turned out, he and the *Mason* were a good match. Jim Graham and his shipmates highly respected their captain.

Captain Blackford was a real navy captain. He was more interested in running a good navy ship than the integration, and all this thing with race. . . . I figure if we had any other person as captain on that ship, we probably would have wound up with everyone saying, "I told you so." . . . He didn't care if you were black or white if you had respect for him. We would have gone to hell and beyond with Captain Blackford.

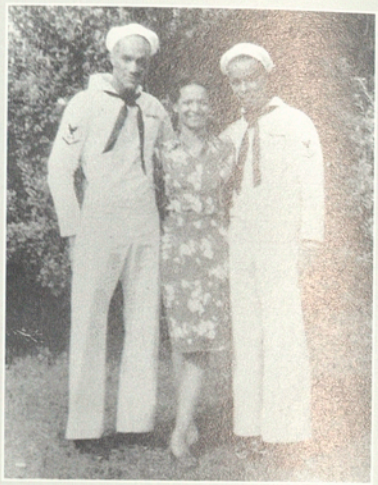
Blackford also firmly believed that the the *Mason*'s crew, despite their color, should be treated the same as all other sailors. Jim recalls an example:

At the theater [in Norfolk] they didn't want the sailors to go in the front entrance. They wanted us to use the back entrance with the cooks and the stewards. Not that we thought we were better than those guys, but we were seamen. We went strutting through the front. They closed the theater down and chased us all out of there. . . . We went back and got our Captain, Captain Blackford. The next night he went with us, and told them, "No good, don't treat these guys like that."

Another person who became increasingly important in Jim's life was Gordon Buchanan. Jim had known him since boot camp. He affectionately called his slender friend



Gordon Buchanan stands near one of the Mason*'s signal lamps. In addition to his duty as a signalman 2nd class, his model building and love of ships as a young boy helped prepare him for another important role on the* Mason*. He was the ship's recognitions officer, responsible for the identification of vessels encountered at sea. (Courtesy James W. Graham)*



Barbara Graham poses with her two favorite sailors, "big brother" Gordon Buchanan (left) *and husband James W. Graham, in this photo taken in 1945. (Courtesy James W. Graham)*

"Skinny." Buchanan was a sophisticated and inquisitive young man who had grown up on Long Island. He had many interests as a boy, including ships and the construction of ship models; he built hundreds of them. He was fascinated by ships and the prospect of going to sea. He wanted to see the world and serve his country, so he enlisted in 1942. Buchanan was a signalman on board the *Mason.* Since he had studied German in school, he was also a member of the *Mason*'s prize crew, which meant that if they captured a German vessel he would be among the group to bring it into port.

One day a photograph of Skinny Buchanan's younger sister Barbara caught Jim Graham's eye. "When I first saw her picture, I asked her brother, 'Do you mind if I write her a letter?' . . . after boot camp you have a 15 day furlough. Instead of going home to South Carolina, I came to New York with her brother, and met her."

On that occasion, Jim boldly told Barbara that he was going to marry her some day. She laughed at his brashness. They've been married for 55 years.

Barbara, like Jim, had no idea of the significance of the *Mason* until many years later.

At the time, an all-black crew meant nothing to me. I had no idea that the navy had been so discriminatory in the first place. I was 17 . . . I'm from New York. There was none of this practice going on, so obvious or whatever. We didn't have colored [drinking] fountains or black fountains. If you wanted to go to the movies, you went to the movies. You sat in the orchestra. . . . So this meant nothing to me. It didn't even cross my mind.

She shared the fears of other Americans who had loved ones in the navy. She had a brother and her future husband on the same ship, and she remembers thinking about the Sullivans. The Iowa family had lost five sons in the sinking of the USS *Juneau* in November of 1942. Barbara's fears intensified when she saw the *Mason* for the first time.

All I knew was my brother was on this ship. And I hadn't seen the ship so I assumed it was the Titanic*, a big old thing. And my brother was a navy signalman. . . my mother made the semaphore flags for him. When he came home one time he needed them, and she made them for him.*

That little splinter. . . It was a DE, but what did I know about ships? Absolutely nothing. I knew there was a big ship out there called the Queen Mary*, and it was a big, beautiful thing that I saw in the movies. So for them to be on a ship, fine, I'm thinking that they were on this kind of a ship. It never occurred to me that they had a DE, a small little thing. . . . So when I first saw that I was sick, I was distraught. That worried me to pieces. And then I prayed that my mother would never know about that little splinter sitting in the water. . . .*

I knew that they could take care of each other. And I knew that if at all possible, in any kind of circumstance, one would back the other. . . . The news was of great interest to me in the Atlantic theater. . . . And I prayed and prayed. But they came back, they did.

The *Mason* was commissioned on 20 March 1944. She had a crew of about 160 black enlisted men and 44 white officers. On 1 July she joined other DEs of Task Group 27.5 in escorting a convoy bound for Europe. The convoy consisted

of oil tankers delivering fuel for the allied war effort. They escorted the tankers to the Azores, and then brought another group of ships on to Northern Ireland. They were pleasantly surprised at the reception they received from the Irish people. Jim fondly recalls that it was the first time, at home or abroad, that the ship's black crew members were truly "treated as Americans."

The *Mason* returned to New York, and then continued to escort convoys across the Atlantic. The officers and crew effectively did their duty, and each of the ship's crossings and return trips were completed with success. German U-boats were a constant threat to convoys, and they were often detected on the ship's sonar. As a radioman and head of the radio shack, Jim Graham could closely monitor contacts with German U-boats. He frequently intercepted messages from German vessels. Fortunately, there were no attacks, and the *Mason* was never in grave danger as a result of encounters with German ships.

The *Mason* faced its greatest challenges when, as a member of Task Group 25.5, it escorted Convoy NY 119 in September and October of 1944. This time, in addition to German U-boats, the crew of the *Mason* faced an additional enemy; a massive Atlantic storm. The convoy left New York on 19 September 1944 after considerable delays due to bad weather. It consisted of U.S. Army tugboats and barges, and other small vessels, accompanied by the *Mason* and other navy escort ships. The seaworthiness of the tugs and barges was questionable, and the entire convoy would be severely tested.

We never should have gone out with all of those ships that day. We were delayed several days because of bad weather brewing in the Atlantic. . . . That was the storm of the century. It took 32 days to cross the ocean. In that storm we had winds up to 90 mile per hour. . . we had seas of 60 feet. The quartermaster said that when the ship rolled we went to 72 degrees. We had confidence in Blackford, he could do anything. . . as long as he was there we were okay. But there were other ships, we passed a couple of the big army tugs in the water, and we could hear the guys yelling. . . we could hear the guys screaming, and they couldn't get out. We lost 19 or 20 men. . . the little boats or tugs capsized. Then when we got into Plymouth, we had seams cracked on the ship, and we welded it and went out to rescue the other ships. We went out there and rounded up the stragglers and brought them in.

The *Mason* had survived its most serious test. Jim commented: "The [convoy] commander and the captain recommended that all of the officers and men aboard the ship be given letters of commendation in their records, but it was never acted upon. Most of the guys thought that it was because we were black." There was no question that they were deserving of the recognition, and they would receive it. But they would have to wait 50 years.

The *Mason* escorted a total of six convoys across the Atlantic before Germany surrendered in May 1945. On 23 May 1945 she completed what would be her last convoy escort voyage and docked in New York Harbor. Four days later, Jim and Barbara Graham were married. Three months after their wedding, the war in the Pacific came to an end. The *Mason* was decommissioned in October of 1945, and eventually sold for scrap. The ship had experienced an active life of only 18 months, but it had been an eventful 18 months.

Jim Graham was discharged from the U.S. Navy on 6 October 1945. Like most of his *Mason* shipmates, he was anxious to get out. He had only been married for a few months, and he was looking forward to starting a new life with



A sailor and his sweetheart—Jim and Barbara Graham are seen here in 1945, during the early days of a romance that has endured for more than 55 years. (Courtesy James W. Graham)

Barbara. Being in the navy hadn't provided any relief from racial discrimination, and things were no better when he began to look for a job in the electronics field. "It was the darndest thing to try to find a job. I went to just about every training school in New York City. . . American Radio Institute, Delahanty, RCA, I went to all of them. I couldn't get a job. I wanted to be a radio technician. I figured that anything in the radio field I'd be able to repair it or fix it. I exhausted all of my GI Bill of Rights."

Eventually, Jim did manage to find work in his field. He set up a successful business for himself repairing televisions. They were just beginning to appear in American homes, so Jim was once again breaking new ground. His services were much in demand in the greater New York City area.

It wasn't until years later that Jim recognized the significance of the *Mason* and her crew. When he did, he also realized that the story was not well known. He had been a



Naval service has been a defining experience in the lives of many Americans. Like many former navy men, Jim proudly displays his veteran status as well as patches representing his favorite ship. (Fred Calabretta photo)

part of something important, and yet most people, including navy personnel, did not know the story of the *Mason* and her all-black crew.

I said to myself, we really shouldn't fall through the cracks. Somebody, other than us should know about the Mason. *In another 20 or 30 years none of us will be here, and someone should know about the* Mason. *And I thought, if you want anything done, you have to do it yourself.*

No one had heard of the Mason, *and it really didn't make sense to me. And that's when I got started.*

He decided to take action, and since his retirement in 1986 he has worked tirelessly to promote an increased awareness of the accomplishments of the crew of the USS *Mason.* Barbara remembers:

It was after he retired, we were sitting around, watching the History Channel, and he was reading everything he could about history. And then one day he said, "You know, this isn't fair. Every time I see anything, or read anything, we're not there." He said, "I'm going to do something about it." . . . I'm very proud of him, because he's tenacious enough to keep this up.

Jim's tenacious approach, and his dedication to the crew of the *Mason* have brought impressive results. Largely through his and Barbara's efforts, a book has been published and a videotape program has been produced, both documenting the *Mason* story. The federal government has finally acknowledged the contributions of the men of the *Mason.* In September of 1994, Jim accepted, on behalf of the *Mason* crew, a certificate of appreciation from President Bill Clinton. Then, four months later and 50 years overdue, the Secretary of the Navy presented a proud Jim Graham and 10 of his shipmates with a commendation for their exploits with Convoy 119. The recognition will take a most impressive form later this year, at Bath Iron Works in Maine, where the navy will launch a new Arleigh Burke-class destroyer named in honor of the *Mason*'s crew. The new USS *Mason,* DDG-87, is scheduled to be launched in June of 2001.

Barbara and Jim Graham are justifiably proud of the young black men who served on the *Mason.* In Barbara's words: "These boys acquitted themselves beautifully. And if they hadn't, I think the doors would still be closed."

Jim admits that when he entered the navy he didn't think much about politics or patriotism. Naval service for him and many others represented adventure and a chance to see some of the world. Today, he is deeply patriotic.

I love the navy. I loved the navy life. I learned a lot. It gave me a good grounding to grow up with. I learned how to respect authority and accept other people. . . . I would enlist and go through it all over again, if it was worthwhile. I could do it all over. I have no regrets, even the bigotry, the racism. I have no regrets. If the navy wanted men 78 to 80 [years old] or veterans, I'd be one of the first in line.

Motivated by his patriotism and a powerful sense of dedication to his shipmates, Jim Graham has helped all Americans to remember an important chapter in their history. As blacks and members of other minority groups continue to struggle for equal opportunities in the armed forces, they can look to the *Mason* story as an important milestone.

I think everyone should know about the Mason *because there was a time when we didn't have it so good in the navy. There was time when blacks caught hell all over the country. And if you don't know where you're coming from, you don't know where you're going. When I was growing up. . . you were an outcast, you couldn't do anything. Today you can.*

Sources and Acknowledgements

This article is based primarily on oral history interviews conducted with James W. and Barbara Graham at their home in Roosevelt, New York, in November of 2000 and January of 2001. The interviews were recorded, and the recordings have been added to the oral history collections at Mystic Seaport's G.W. Blunt White Library. In addition, Jim graciously made available photographs and other material from his extensive archive of USS *Mason* documentation.

Readers looking for more information on the USS *Mason* and her service can refer to Mary Pat Kelly's *Proudly We Served: the Men of the USS Mason* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995), James A. Dunn's *On Board the USS Mason: The World War II Diary of James A. Dunn* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1996), and Charles Dana Gibson's *The Ordeal of Convoy N.Y. 119* (New York: South Street Seaport Museum, 1973).

The author wishes to thank Jim and Barbara Graham for their hospitality and their enthusiastic cooperation in sharing the story of the USS *Mason.*

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PC -1264: Experiment in Equality

CHERYL B. CHAPUT

Racial segregation was a fact of American life in the early 1940s, and it was no different in the U.S. Navy. Although black personnel had previously served as sailors aboard naval warships, after World War I black men could only enlist as messmen, or officers' cooks and stewards, and during the 1920s they were excluded from enlisting altogether. As World War II progressed, however, the need for sailors in convoys and in battle became more pronounced, and the time was ripe to reopen the other ratings that had been temporarily closed to African Americans, both on shore and at sea.

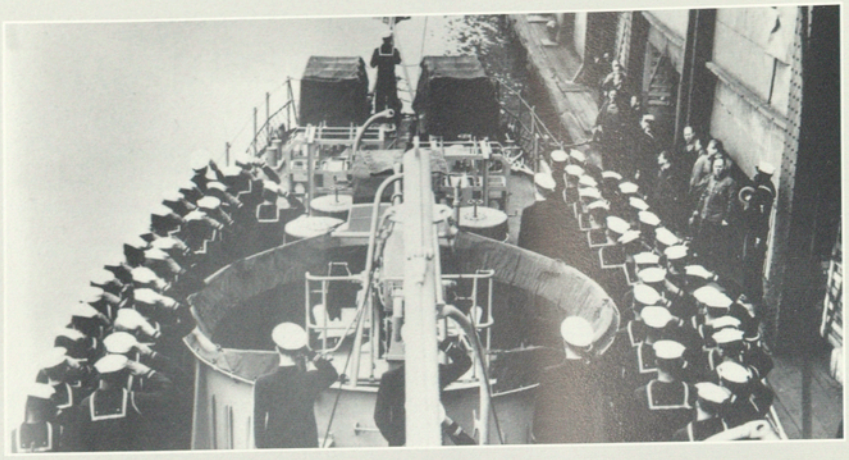
Even when the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 mandated a policy of nondiscrimination, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox formed a committee that concluded: "Within the limitations of the characteristics of members of certain races, the enlisted personnel of the naval establishment is representative of all the citizens of the United States. Therefore, no corrective measures are necessary." The reasoning, which was generally accepted at the time, was that white men would not accept the black man either as an equal or especially in authority over him. Many naval officers also questioned the ability of blacks as seamen aboard ships.[1] The nation's goal was, after all, to win the war, and it was necessary to put men into positions where they were most fit and efficient. It



Fresh from the ways at the Consolidated shipyard, PC-1264 floats free in the Harlem River on 28 November 1943. It would take nearly five months to finish and outfit the ship for service. (Neg. 59246A © Mystic Seaport, Rosenfeld Collection)



The commanding officer of PC-1264, Lieutenant Eric S. Purdon, reads his orders to the assembled officers and crew during the ship's commissioning ceremony. Purdon was born in the Philippines and raised in Great Britain before coming to the U.S. to attend Trinity College. He worked as a book editor before receiving his navy commission in 1943. His 1972 book, Black Company, *gives a vivid picture of life on board the ship. (U.S. Naval Historical Center photo 92461)*



Formed beside the ship's 40 mm. gun mount, the crew of PC-1264 salutes the flag as the ship is put into commission. The enlisted crew numbered 60 men, and during the ship's 21 months in commission more than 125 individual enlisted men served on board. (National Archives photo)

was especially ironic that such racist attitudes were still so strongly held throughout the U.S. at a time when it, as a democracy, was combating Adolf Hitler's efforts at world domination by a white master race.

Not until 1 June 1942 were blacks again accepted into the U.S. Navy for general service, beginning the movement toward integration. Training, however, remained segregated until the war was nearly over, in a separate part of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois called Camp Robert Smalls in honor of a black naval hero of the Civil War. Even with training equal to that for white sailors, general ratings for blacks still meant shore duty and small harbor craft. Large, seagoing ships were still manned by white men, due to a Bureau of Naval Personnel policy that sought to avoid racial tension.

In reality, the policy had just the opposite effect. Black morale suffered because blacks only served in subservient roles. White morale suffered because white sailors resented blacks for not sharing the hazards of combat.[2]

In 1944 the U.S. Navy began an experiment to test the ability of African Americans to man a ship equally as well as white men. The Navy Department assigned all-black crews to two small combat ships. They would employ white petty officers and commissioned officers until black men gained experience and were promoted to replace them. The USS *Mason*, DE-529, was the first vessel to be commissioned, on 20 March 1944. She went into duty as a convoy escort in the Atlantic, making several successful crossings and performing heroically in several instances. Although she had an all-black enlisted crew, her white petty officers were not fully replaced with qualified black men before the end of the war.

The second ship was Patrol Craft 1264, which also served in the Atlantic, hunting enemy submarines and escorting convoys from New York to Cuba as a unit of the Eastern Sea Frontier. She was the first U.S. Navy ship to have an all-black crew, including petty officers, and she was also the first navy combat ship to have a black officer assigned to her.

Built at the Consolidated Shipbuilding Company yard in Morris Heights, New York, PC-1264 was a PC-461-class submarine chaser, a type developed at the Defoe yard of Bay City, Michigan, in 1940. More than 360 of these vessels would be launched by the end of the war, and 319 were commissioned for U.S. Navy service. These 280-ton, steel-hulled vessels were 173 feet long, with a beam of 23 feet and draft of 10 feet. Powered with twin diesel engines, they could reach a flank speed of 21 knots. Though small, they were fighting ships, armed with depth charges and "mousetrap" bomb launchers for attacking submarines underwater, 3-inch guns to fight submarines on the surface, and machine guns for defense against aircraft. They were equipped with radar, radio listening gear, and sonar to detect U-boat activity.[3]

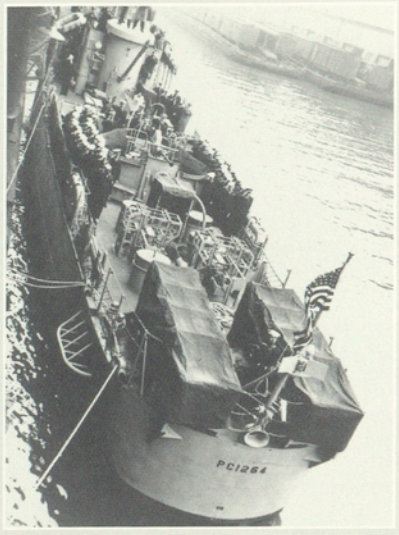
Launched into the Harlem River by the Consolidated yard on 28 November 1943, PC-1264 was outfitted at New York and commissioned on 25 April 1944,

a month after the USS *Mason*. PC-1264 had an original complement of five white officers, eight white senior petty officers, and 52 black enlisted men. The first commanding officer, Lieutenant Eric Purdon, admitted that the ship represented continued segregation in the navy, "but, to evaluate the efficiency and capability of such an enlisted crew, it had to be, if the new-found policy of general ratings for blacks was to continue, and ensure that individual jobs could be filled solely on the basis of rating and ability." This mission they fulfilled admirably. Within seven months, black crew members had qualified to replace the white petty officers, and the ship repeatedly received excellent ratings for performance. Lieutenant Purdon's reports to the U.S. Navy Bureau of Personnel made it clear to anyone who still needed convincing that "race is not a factor in seamanship." The crew reciprocated Purdon's faith in them. "We would always try to make him proud of the fact that he was the skipper of the 1264 with everything we attempted to do," Gunners Mate Richard Bennett wrote later. Like the crew of the *Mason*, these sailors proved the case that black men could and should serve on combat ships.[4]

In May 1944, PC-1264 joined the Eastern Sea Frontier naval force on the Atlantic coast. Ordered to the Submarine Chaser Training Center at Miami, the ship made its shakedown cruise and the crew went through the training program. Proving themselves as able seamen, however, was only part of the plight of African American sailors. Much of the civilian world, especially in the South, segregated whites and "colored" people, and shore leave was often less than relaxing for the crew of PC-1264. Even training was hampered by racist attitudes. At the Submarine Chaser Training Center, the abandon ship drill required the use of the municipal pier at Miami Beach. Class for the crew of the PC-1264, however, was canceled when the city of Miami Beach refused to allow the black sailors to use its public pier and beach.[5]

On 10 July 1944, PC-1264 reported for duty at New York. Through the summer it escorted convoys from New York to either Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, or Key West. But in the fall, cracks were discovered in the ship's engine bed, forcing a lay-up for repairs. She then escorted a French submarine from New London to Key West. Here, the crew encountered the continuing racism in the service. The black petty officers went to a movie on the Coast Guard base and sat in an area reserved for petty officers. When they were ordered to sit in the stewards' section because they were black, the base commander endorsed this decision, stating "flatly that no blacks would sit in white seats on his base—period."[6]

After engine repairs, PC-1264 returned to duty in December 1944, making one more convoy run before she was assigned to



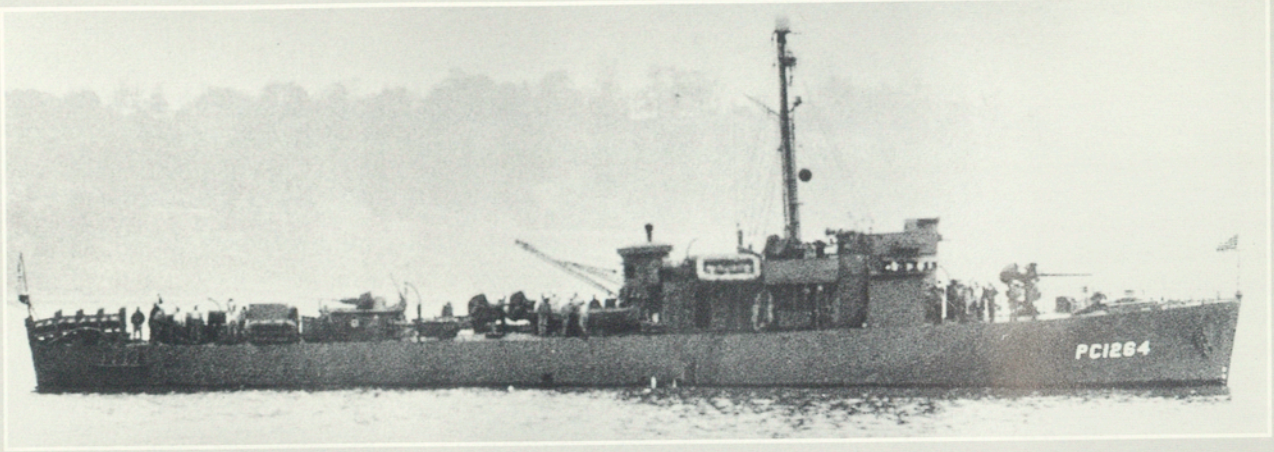
PC-1264 is commissioned on 25 April 1944. Tarps shroud the depth charge racks at the stern. (U.S. Naval Historical Center photo USN 1151766)





TOP: Quartermaster 3rd Class Adolph R. Cork communicates with another ship using a signal lamp while Seaman 2nd Class Marcus Coleman talks to the bridge by telephone. When the white petty officers were reassigned, Cork became the ship's lead quartermaster in charge of the helm and signals. (U.S. Naval Historical Center photo 92465)

On the flying bridge above the pilothouse, three officers and two enlisted men pose as if on watch. The ship's original officers were commanding officer Lieutenant Eric S. Purdon, executive officer Lieutenant George R. Poor, gunnery officer Lieutenant Will F. Otto, engineering officer Lieutenant Ernest V. Hardman, and communications officer Ensign Frank W. Gardner. In May 1945 Ensign Samuel L. Gravely Jr. joined the ship as communications officer, becoming the first black officer aboard a U.S. Navy combat vessel. (U.S. Naval Historical Center photo 92464)



PC-1264 in service. (Ted Stone photo, courtesy Robert W. Daly Sr.)

antisubmarine patrol off New York. The government had received reports that Germany was arming U-boats with V-2 rockets to attack U.S. ports, so a patrol craft screen was set up in the wintry North Atlantic.

During this seemingly routine patrol duty in January 1945, Lieutenant Purdon ordered a drill in which the ship would "attack" the sea buoy at the outer end of the channel into New York. The crew was amazed when their sonar fix on the buoy's anchor showed it begin to move rapidly, and the drill turned into an actual search and destroy attack. Although they could not confirm a hit with their rocket-launched "mousetrap" bombs, it is likely that they damaged U-866, which was found disabled soon after. Presumably, the U-boat was lying in wait beside the buoy to attack passing ships and ran out to sea when it picked up the sound of the approaching patrol craft. Other than a couple of hunts for U-boats while shepherding convoys, this was as close as PC-1264 got to combat action.[7]

On 2 May 1945, the first black officer reported aboard. Ensign Samuel L. Gravely Jr. had joined the U.S. Navy as an enlisted man in 1942 and became the first black person to be commissioned from a college V-12 officer training program when he received his commission as an ensign in December 1944. He was assigned to PC-1264 as communications officer, and by the end of 1945 was the ship's executive officer. Black commissioned officers had become a priority of President Franklin Roosevelt, with encouragement from his activist wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. The main route to a commission was the V-12 college program of intensified training taken by men such as Samuel Gravely and Carl Rowan. The other was a special officer training program established at Camp Robert Smalls in January 1944. Of the original 16 men in this program, 12 ensigns and one warrant officer were commissioned in March 1944 as the U.S. Navy's first black officers. They are often referred to as the "Golden Thirteen." Lieutenant Purdon sought, unsuccessfully, to have one of them assigned to PC-1264. By the end of the war the navy had about 60 black officers, but it was better prepared to train them than it was to employ them. Most received shore assignments, and Gravely was the first ordered to a combat ship.[8]

When the war against Germany ended in May 1945, PC-1264 was ordered to the Pacific after the navy finally concluded that her presence there would not stir up racial resentment among white sailors of the Pacific Fleet. She was at Key West, preparing to pass through the Panama Canal on her way to the Pacific theater when Japan surrendered in August. Returning north, the ship was assigned to training duty at the Submarine School at New London. There, she played the role of target for submariners in training.

Due to the excellent record of the ship and its crew, PC-1264 was chosen to represent patrol craft for the 1945 Navy Day Parade witnessed by President Harry Truman. But with the rapid demobilization of the armed forces, the ship was slated to be decommissioned. Ensign Samuel Gravely was executive officer when PC-1264 was decommissioned at Staten Island, New York, on 7 February 1946.[9]

In 1945 the Department of the Navy published its "Guide to the Command of Negro Naval Personnel," a service manual for white officers responsible for Negro troops. Its four basic principles confirmed the lessons learned on the USS *Mason* and PC-1264:

(1) As a fighting machine, the Navy is concerned first of all with developing its

services to the highest possible level of fighting efficiency;

(2) To attain such efficiency all personnel must be employed at the highest level of their individual training and capabilities;

(3) No theory can be accepted which assumes differences in ability based upon race;

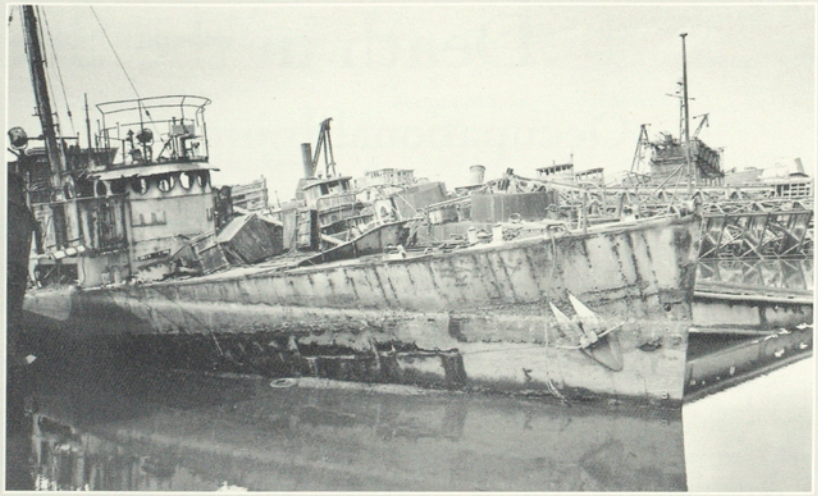
(4) Racial differences of performance are generally caused by improper command practices or previous civilian experience which can be corrected through wise command policies.[10]

However slowly integration may have actually occurred in practice, changes in policy occurred as early as 1945. Separate training of black and white men at Great Lakes Naval Training Center ceased in June 1945. Admiral Chester Nimitz endorsed a recommendation to the Secretary of the Navy that the advances in racial policy made during wartime should be permanent policy in both the regular and reserve navy. An official directive from the Bureau of Naval Personnel resulted in 1946, which stated:

Effective immediately, all restrictions governing the types of assignments for which Negro naval personnel are eligible are lifted. Henceforth they shall be eligible for all types of assignments in all ratings in all activities and all ships in the naval service. . . . In the utilization of housing, messing, and other facilities, no special or unusual provisions will be made for the accommodation of Negroes.

In an age when the "separate but equal" justification for Jim Crow segregation prevailed throughout the U.S., this was a sign of progress within the U.S. Navy, even if the results, in terms of numbers and duty assignments, would not become apparent for another decade and more.[11]

Through their moral courage and attention to duty, the men of PC-1264 and the USS *Mason* achieved far more than their enlistments required. In proving their equality and their ability to a very conservative institution, they set standards by which the U.S. Navy, like American society, attempts to measure the participation of all, regardless of race.



An ignominious end to a notable ship, the hulk of PC-1264 remains in a scrap yard on Staten Island, as shown here in 1991. (Courtesy Robert W. Daly Sr.)

Notes

1. Mary Pat Kelly, *Proudly We Served, The Men of the USS Mason* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1995), 182.

2. Julius Augustus Furer, *Administration of the Navy Department in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1959), 308.

3. William J. Veigele, *PC Patrol Craft of World War II, A History of the Ships and Their Crews* (Santa Barbara, California: Astral Publishing Co., 1998).

4. Eric Purdon, *Black Company, The Story of Subchaser 1264* (Washington, D.C.: Robert B. Luce Inc., 1972), 25; Samuel L. Gravely Jr., "The PC-1264: A Small Ship with a Big Mission," *Patrol Craft Sailors Association History Book* (Turner Publishing Co., 1990); Richard Bennett, "Why Black Company Was Written," typescript courtesy Robert W. Daly Sr.

5. Purdon, *Black Company,* 45.

6. Roy C. Smith III, "USS PC-1264: Forgotten Groundbreaker," *Naval History* 12:1 (January/February 1998): 25-26.

7. Smith, "USS PC-1264," 26; Veigele, *PC Patrol Craft of World War II,* 364.

8. Smith,"USS PC-1264," 26; Veigele, *PC Patrol Craft of World War II,* 364; Samuel L. Gravely Jr. was off active duty from 1946 to 1949. After his return he rose to command of a destroyer in 1961, was promoted as the navy's first black admiral in 1971, and retired in 1980; for an outline of his career, see Henry E. Dabbs, *Black Brass: Black Generals and Admirals in the Armed Forces of the United States,* 2nd. ed. (Charlottesville, Virginia: Howell Press, 1997), 30-33; Paul Stillwell, ed., *The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993), xviii-xxv, 265-66; Purdon, *Black Company,* 121-22.

9. Smith,"USS PC-1264," 26; the hulk of PC-1264 still exists in a Staten Island backwater, beyond salvage but still recognizable as one of the two ships whose crews did so much to prove black equality in the U.S. Navy, Veigele, *PC Patrol Craft of World War II;* communication from Robert W. Daly Sr.

10. *The Negro Yearbook, 1947* (Tuskegee: Tuskegee Institute, 1947), 372.

11. Ibid., 373.

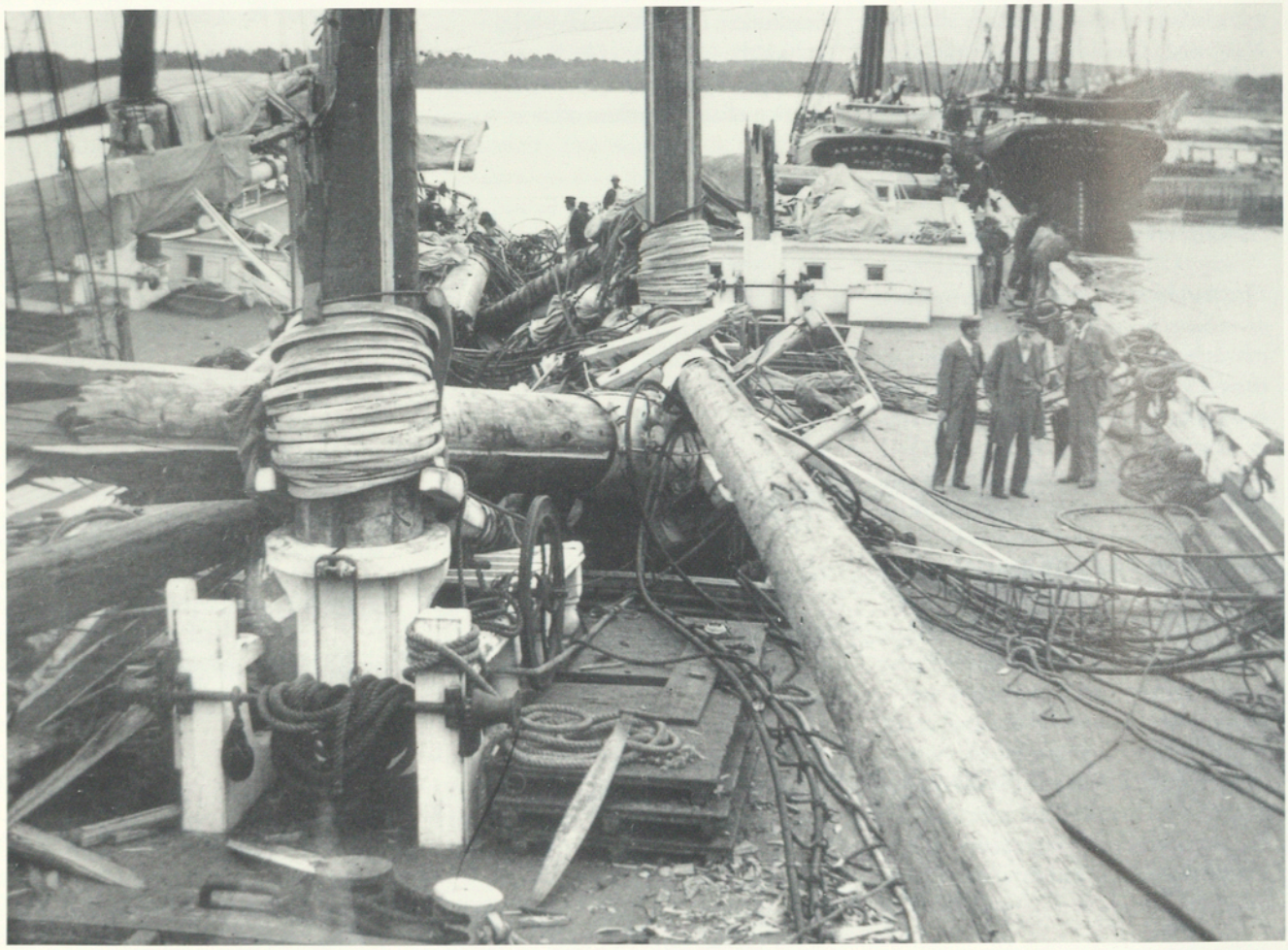
Cheryl B. Chaput is a cataloger in the Registrar's Office of the Curatorial Department at Mystic Seaport.

Death in the Shipyard

Occupational Injury Among Shipwrights at Bath, Maine, in the 1890s

NATHAN R. LIPFERT

At Bath, Maine, in 1897, ten shipyards labored under the summer sun, eight constructing wooden vessels, two building in steel. Since 1894, Maine had been falling from its preeminence in shipbuilding, and in 1897 was sixth among the states. Bath was still the most active shipbuilding center in the state, however, constructing 84 percent of Maine vessels built that year (5.4 percent of the nation's new vessels). On a warm Tuesday morning in August, then as now, the waterfront streets hummed with the sounds of the shipyard trades, and the noise echoed back from the far shore of the Kennebec River. At William T. Donnell's shipyard wharf in the south end of town, the four-masted schooner *George A. McFadden* was undergoing repairs. Among other things, it was planned to replace two of her nine-year-old masts. Frank Deloche and his rigging crew had removed the foretopmast the day before, and this morning had set up shear legs—a hoisting apparatus in the shape of an inverted V—for lifting the foremast out. Two riggers worked aloft, Charles Anderson on the shear head and John Johnson on the cross trees alongside him, both paying little



The shattered masts of the four-masted schooner George A. MacFadden *litter the deck after the nearly fatal accident of 24 August 1897 at Bath's William T. Donnell shipyard. (Courtesy Maine Maritime Museum)*

attention to work going on below. At the deck level, their mates worked to detach the mast's standing rigging. Without warning, both mast and shears toppled aft, and all four masts went down like a row of dominos, splintering in pieces and smashing whatever they struck. Anderson and Johnson rode the masthead 100 feet to the deck. Anderson walked away with bruises, scratches, and a broken rib. Johnson, unconscious, was thought to be fatally injured, but recovered. Donnell's shipyard attracted crowds of visitors, gazing in awe at the scene of nightmarish destruction (see accompanying photograph). When questioned by a reporter, Donnell said "he did not see that any one could be blamed for the accident, as the mast was in a worse condition than anybody supposed."[1]

Like the business of going to sea, the shipyard trades are frequently idealized, even in serious historical literature. Aspects of shipyard work are poorly documented, and it is difficult to properly study occupations that leave behind few first-person accounts. So it is with the occupational hazards of shipbuilding. Since such injuries are rarely discussed in shipyard financial records, in technological descriptions of ship construction, or in accounts of the active careers of vessels, it is easy for a maritime historian to disregard this aspect of coastal life. However, readers of nineteenth-century newspapers in a shipbuilding town were frequently treated to blood-curdling descriptions of injury and death in shipyards. It has proven possible to compile and analyze these newspaper accounts, bearing in mind the well-known tendency of newspapers to contain minor inaccuracies. It is certain that each of these injuries did occur, in approximately the manner described. Observations from these studies are grouped in appropriately journalistic categories.

How did shipyard workers hurt themselves? Table 1 is based on information on 324 injuries in shipyards and marine iron works in Bath and nearby towns, from 1826 to 1917.[2]

TABLE 1

Causes of Shipyard Injuries

Type of Accident	Percent of Total	Number	Deaths
Falls into ship's hold, elsewhere	20.	65	15
Hit or crushed by falling object	19.1	62	3
Worker cut or hit by tool	18.5	60	1
Staging fall or collapse	15.4	50	6
Flying metal splinters	4.9	16	0
Other	4.9	16	0
Caught in machinery	4.3	14	2
Struck by lightning	2.8	9	1
Rigging injuries other than falling	2.8	9	1
Overcome by fumes	2.2	7	0
Falling from aloft	1.9	6	0
Burns	1.2	4	0
Severely hot weather	1.2	4	0
Natural causes	0.6	2	1

The greatest danger was obviously that of falling. This situation, as with a number of the injury categories, is occasioned by the verticality of shipbuilding. A few of the falls in the study were ordinary clumsiness: tripping and falling on the ground, falling down the shop steps, tumbling from atop a pile of planks. However, most (and the most injurious) were falls from some high spot on the vessel itself. As you will notice, falls from the staging and falls from aloft are dealt with separately.

The largest number of these falls—60 percent—were descents into the hold of a vessel and onto the keelson and the jumble of odd bits of timber that accumulated down there in the process of construction. Such accidents often happened as a result of the dimness of the 'tween-decks, as in the 1898 fall of boss fastener Benjamin Brown in the Nathaniel Palmer yard (shipyards mentioned will be in Bath unless specified otherwise). Brown, working between decks, was cautioned to look out for a hauling line. Nonetheless, the line seemed to hit him in the face and he tumbled 13 feet to the bottom of the hold, bouncing off the keelson on the way. About 70 years old, Brown was probably lucky: he only broke a leg.[3]

The next-greatest danger was that of something falling onto the worker from above or otherwise hitting or crushing him. If you are working on the construction of a large vessel, many times you will be working directly above someone else working on the same vessel. If you accidentally drop something, whether it be a dollop of hot tar or a mast, it may have catastrophic results on workers below. One September day in 1900, Bath residents read this in a local paper: "Chas. S. Colby, the fastener, was quite seriously injured early Thursday morning at G. G. Deering's shipyard, having his left collar bone fractured and receiving a slight concussion of the brain. He was going up the ladder to the stern stage carrying an armful of bolts, when a counter timber which was being hoisted on board caught in the staging above, overturned a carpenter's [saw]horse which in falling struck Colby, who was about five feet from the ground. The horse fell nearly twenty feet. Colby lost his hold on the ladder and fell to the ground landing among the bed logs and rocks and the bolts fell on him."[4]



Sharp tools, including broad axes and long augurs, made shipyard work hazardous for shipwrights and spectators alike. Here, a child sits dangerously close while ship carpenters fasten timbers for the schooner R.F. Pettigrew *at the William Rogers yard in 1890. (Courtesy Maine Maritime Museum)*

At the shipyard of William Rogers in December of 1882, Benjamin Filer was hit by a jackscrew which had fallen one hundred feet. He suffered a compound fracture of the left arm.[5]

Considering the many edged and blunt instruments employed in shipbuilding, the category of being cut or hit by a tool is hardly surprising. Perhaps the worst thing about these injuries is that they were frequently self-inflicted. In 1888 ship carpenter Dwinal Cornish, hewing a timber at New England Ship Building Company, drove an adze into his ankle joint. It was thought the injury might be permanent. Nearly as bad was being struck by a workmate whom you were trusting not to hit you, as was George Baker in 1884 at the Hitchcock yard. He was holding a wedge while another man struck it with a sledgehammer; the sledge slipped and wounded Baker badly on the arm.[6]

Many of these accidents were gruesome in the extreme. However, some were not without an element of macabre humor: in 1895 Bath's *Daily Times* carried the following paragraph under the headline "ILL AUGURY."

"This afternoon a carpenter named Oliver, while at work on the deck of the barge at the yard of Kelley & Spear lost a toe in a somewhat peculiar manner. A carpenter was boring a hole through the deck from beneath and cut Oliver's toe off with the augur."[7]

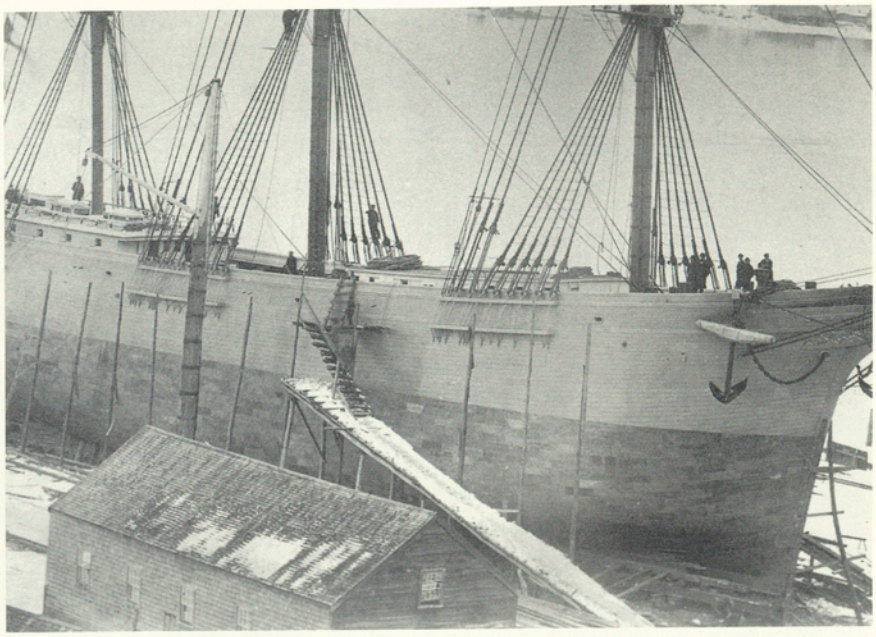
Typical of accidents involving staging was the disaster of carpenter Alex Mulligan at the McDonald yard (leased by Percy & Small) in 1900. He and a partner were sawing off top timbers near the bow of the five-masted schooner *William C. Carnegie*–the partner on the inside of the hull, Mulligan on the outside staging. He lost his balance and fell 33 feet to the ground, breaking the plank he landed on. It was thought that one of the staging planks shifted, causing him to fall. He was picked up unconscious and carried to the shipyard office; a doctor driving by was flagged down. The carpenter was found to have a concussion of the brain, right thigh fractured in two places, and a fracture at the base of the skull with hemorrhages of the eye, nose, throat, and ears. He died 30 hours later, without regaining consciousness.[8]

Injuries caused by flying metal

splinters were rare before the establishment of steel shipyards. In Bath, as soon as Bath Iron Works started building the city's first steel vessel, the local papers began the frequent mention of bloody accidents of this sort. Typical was the experience of William Thayer on the BIW bending floor in 1890. A workman was using a sledge hammer to shape a hot frame to the desired curve when a piece of steel flew out from beneath the heavy sledge and hit Thayer's thumb, nearly severing it. "Thayer bore the painful injury well and, with the blood running from the hand, dripping through the handkerchief which had been vainly wound about, walked up town in search of a physician."[9]

Injuries caused by being caught in machinery of some sort had an unnerving propensity to choose the youngest and most inexperienced victims. However, older men were at risk, too, like 67-year-old caulker Ephraim Toothaker, killed at the Percy & Small yard in 1910. Toothaker was working on the deck of the five-masted schooner *Dorothy Palmer*, which was being breasted in to the shipyard's wharf by its own donkey (hoisting) engine. The schooner's mate heard a strange noise and had the engine stopped. Going through the engine room to the chain locker, he found Toothaker wound over the messenger chain. His coat had been caught in the chain and his head drawn into the machinery, where he had evidently been strangled. More typical of this kind of accident was joiner Charles Norton of Arthur Sewall & Company. In 1889 he got his frock sleeve caught in a circular saw. His left forearm was so badly mangled that it had to be amputated.[10]

The "Struck by Lightning" category is an anomaly of this study, that might not occur at all in similar studies conducted in other areas. All nine injuries in this category resulted from the same accident: one lightning strike. On a July afternoon in 1902 a thunderstorm swept down the Kennebec River valley, and workmen sought temporary shelter from the downpour. About 20 men at the Percy & Small shipyard huddled under the bow of a four-masted schooner under construction. Lightning struck near the bow of the vessel, not damaging it but killing 56-year-old Leander Miller and badly injuring his brother Granville and seven others. This accident may not have been typical of shipyards, but the lightning was thought to have been attracted by the heap of chain and two large anchors on the ground at the bow of the vessel.[11]



Riggers finish up their work as the 195-foot ship Tabor *is prepared for launch at the Sewell yard in 1869. Note the flimsy staging they use to get on board. Riggers and ship carpenters both risked injury in completing these large and complex wooden structures. (Courtesy Maine Maritime Museum)*

Rigging injuries (other than falling) are given their own category because of the easy target of blame–the riggers themselves. Most of these are similar to the "Something Falling onto Worker" injuries, except that the "something" is an item of rigging or a piece of rigging equipment. However, there are accidents with very different circumstances. For example, in 1881 a newspaper article headed "Lost His Whiskers" described the hardship of one Daniel Vaughan who got his beard entangled in a block while helping to lower a load of timber at William Rogers's yard. Unwilling to have his face pulled through the block, Vaughan severed his heavy whiskers with a chisel he happened to be holding.[12]

Harmful fumes became a major concern with the increasing use of volatile chemicals in the twentieth century, and workers in modern boatyards and shipyards must know how to protect themselves from a wide variety of airborne poisons. In the period of this study, however, injury by inhaling fumes is seldom mentioned.

Falling from aloft was rarely the result of foolhardiness or a daring stunt in the air. Riggers who fell were usually involved in circumstances beyond their control, like Anderson and Johnson in the accident described at the beginning of the article.

Although not common, burns were possible in a number of ways. Caulker Harry Pike had hot pitch splattered in his face at the Donnell Yard in December of 1890 (one eye was closed by scar tissue after the burn, but he may not have lost sight



Weather sometimes delayed ship construction, but the outdoor work went on year-round, as at the Kelley-Spear yard here in December 1922. (Courtesy Maine Maritime Museum)

in the eye). A more spectacular accident had happened a year earlier in William Rogers's yard when mill man Peter Armstrong was cleaning out a boiler. He had nearly completed the job and was spreading oil about the interior of the boiler when an explosion occurred. It was thought the boiler had not cooled sufficiently; also, Armstrong had a lighted candle with him inside the boiler. He was thrown from the boiler, and his face was seriously burned.[13]

A fairly minor factor in precipitating injuries was the weather on the Maine coast. Winter winds, sub-zero temperatures, ice, and snow are rarely reported as causing injuries, but occasionally severe heat took its toll. September 10, 1897 was the hottest day on record for Bath, with one thermometer recording 124 degrees. Three workmen at the Percy & Small yard were overcome by the heat, and one had to be taken home in a hack. At least once, in August of 1884, the heat was considered to be so extreme that the shipyards did not work.[14] It seems likely that there were many times Bath shipyards also closed because of winter conditions, but the newspapers did not bother to report it.

In fact, many shipyard activities were shut down even by rain. This was an accepted circumstance, and yet one that must have played havoc with contract deadlines and ship carpenters' household budgets. At the end of 1888, a Bath ship carpenter remarked that, between 1 June and 31 December, he had been able to work only five full (six-day) weeks because of the weather. In his 64 years he had not seen as long a stretch of bad weather.[15]

Certainly, few people would envy riggers at their unprotected work more than one hundred feet up the masts of a large vessel on a blustery winter's day. Riggers had more than their share of machismo, however, and on at least one occasion riggers employed at the Nathaniel T. Palmer yard insisted that any concern was misplaced, and that it was warmer aloft than it was on the ground.[16]

These studies have necessarily neglected minor injuries. Small cuts, bruises, thrown-out backs, sprains, and the like were too common to mention in any publication.

Why did shipyard workers get hurt? There are several ways to look at this question. Another way to phrase it is, Whose fault was it that workers got injured?

A careful examination of the *Bath Daily Times* for the entire period 1 January 1888 through 31 December 1890, revealed some 50 serious accidents to individuals which occurred in nine shipyards. In Table 2, Bath shipyards or shipbuilders are arranged in order of their safety records in the 1888-

1890 period, with the best records on the top and the most dangerous shipyards on the bottom.

One conclusion that can be drawn from this table is obviously that some yards were safer places to work than others. The results of this three-years survey are consistent with what is known about accidents in other years; that is, the four shipyards at the top of the list were rarely, if ever, the scenes of serious accidents, and the four shipyards at the bottom of the list were regularly reported as having accidents.

The table does show a correlation between the professional training of a shipyard's owner/manager and the accident rate in the yard. Yards run by businessmen trained as master shipwrights (master builders) had lower accident rates than yards owned by other businessmen. At the top and bottom are exceptions, which can perhaps be discounted. One is easily explained away: Chapman & Flint, although Maine natives, were absentee landlords, doing business out of their New York offices and giving free rein to a manager, Donald McKay-trained master builder John McDonald. The appearance of William T. Donnell and his son Harry near the bottom is harder to explain; not enough details are known about their operations to decide whether their large number of accidents per ship built is a result of the way they ran their yard or just a statistical anomaly. It is also evident that quality of workmanship and speed of construction did not have to be sacrificed for safety. The Chapman & Flint yard was well known for its quality products, including such superb downeasters as the *Henry B. Hyde*. C. B. Harrington, also known for quality and innovation, in earlier years completed three yawl boats a week with about 20 men. Some of the builders low on the list were also known for quality and innovative building, but maybe some of their business decisions were made at the expense of safety.

The column headed "Yard Type" indicates whether the yard built only for the fleet of the yard owner, or took shipbuilding contracts from outside. Contract yards are seen to be somewhat safer, although it is difficult to say exactly why this should be true. It is likely that contract builders were able to establish more reasonable deadlines, and to act as a buffer between the eager expectations of the prospective shipowner and the professional standards of the tradesmen. It may also have something to do with the fact that, in Bath, the five safest yards (four of them contract yards) were operated by trained master builders.

Incidentally, the Houghton Brothers. seem to deserve their position at the very bottom of the list. Not only did all three injuries occur in a single year, and another injury (a painter working on the family steam yacht) was deleted from the study because it was not regular shipyard activity, but also they actually completed no vessels during the period studied. One vessel was allotted to them because they launched it early the following year. Partially completed vessels were not counted for any other yard.

Shipyard tradesmen themselves saw a world of difference in the way different employers treated them, and they believed it could make a difference in the likelihood of injury. During 1888 the New England Company shipyard began building the big four-masted schooner *Tecumseh* and hired some subcontractors on a job-work basis; that is, at a fixed price per job, rather than at so much per day. Generally we have little idea of the personal opinions of shipyard workers, but in this case a Bath newspaper printed a letter from an unnamed "Carpenter of 35 Years Experience." This letter spelled out in some detail the things that were on the carpenters' minds.

Jobbers try to do the work with too few men, so that eight carpenters have to do the lifting and carrying of a plank which is a load for ten or more.

The men are hurried on every corner and place and sufficient time is not given to set the plank or ceiling so as to make seams suitable for calking [sic], the planks coming together in many places with hollow edges so that the oakum has no proper bearing and may be driven through. . . . Time is not given to make thorough and substantial stagings on which to do the work, while often men who are not carpenters and so incompetent, are set about it, thus endangering the life and limb of the workmen.[17]

They were concerned about safety, as the letter indicates, but perhaps not as concerned as they should

TABLE 2

Bath Shipyard Injuries by Shipyard, for the Years 1888-1890

Shipyard	Ships/Injuries	Ratio	Owner	Yard Type
Chapman & Flint	5/0	-	Merchants	Fleet
C.B. Harrington	5/0	-	Master Bldr	Contract
George Hawley	5/0	-	Master Bldr	Contract
Asa P. Hodgkins	2/0	-	Master Bldr	Contract
Kelley, Spear & Co.	17/4	4.25	Master Bldr	Contract
E.S. Crosby	5/2	2.5	Insurance Agt	Fleet
Gardiner G. Deering	6/3	2	Master Bldr	Contract
New England/NESB	29/20	1.45	Merchants	Contract
Harry Donnell	1/1	1	Master Bldr	Fleet
A. Sewall & Co.	6/7	.857	Merchants	Fleet
William Rogers	5/7	.714	Lumber Mcht	Contract
William T. Donnell	2/3	.667	Master Bldr	Fleet
Houghton Brothers	1/3	.333	Merchants	Fleet



Attached to fixed poles as needed, the haphazard stagings used in wooden shipyards were a frequent source of injury. Shipyard owners were only responsible for injuries suffered on the stagings they had built. If a shipwright altered a staging for his convenience he was responsible for any injury he suffered. Here, a shipwright perches on a staging while working on the frame of a barge at the Kelley-Spear shipyard in December 1916. (Courtesy Maine Maritime Museum)

have been. The table we just discussed indicates 50 injuries in building 89 vessels, or a city average of .563 serious injuries for each vessel built. The record on this schooner and another built on the same basis immediately afterward was nearly four times that average—four men were hurt by the time the second schooner was finished.

Like many other exciting and hazardous work sites, shipyards demonstrated a sometimes fatal attraction to children, who fell victim to the same dangers afflicting their elders. Communities with active shipyards found it difficult to keep children in school when a significant launching was taking place. Dr. Edward Briry remembered the first time he was allowed to launch aboard a new vessel, as a boy of nine. "Alvin Toby, one of our playmates, fell down the booby or lazarette hatch, losing two teeth. Another playmate, Frank Potter, . . . skylarking between decks, tripping, plunged his right arm into a kettle of hot tar and rushed for home with flesh hanging in strips." Briry himself survived without injury, but the vessel stuck in the mud and those aboard were stranded for hours. It was long after dark when young Briry returned home to unsympathetic parents.[18]

There were sometimes launching accidents involving adults, too, who were visitors not accustomed to shipyard hazards. In 1884, during the launch of a pilot schooner at the Hagan & Son yard, 15 men and boys—spectators—had a staging collapse under them, precipitating most of them into the water.[19]

Physical strength and fortitude were much desired attributes in shipyards. These qualities had the benefit of preparing the employee for the task of caring for himself in the case of injury. Edmund Coffin fell ten feet into the hold of a schooner building at the William Rogers yard, and walked home. When a doctor arrived to tend the injuries, he found two ribs broken, right hip and left leg severely bruised, left wrist broken, and upper jaw badly cut. Coffin had nothing on the legendary Thomas "Boxer" Welch, who also suffered a fall in a Bath shipyard. Welch finished his day's work and did not discover the extent of his injuries until, undressing at home, "he felt one of his ribs sticking out of his side." A surgeon found that three of the ribs had, in fact, been broken.[20]

One important reflection of the nineteenth-century attitude towards workplace injuries is found in law. Maine law, of course, has always held that causing injuries to others is wrong. However, the relationship between employer and employee was long held to create special conditions that mitigated any responsibility the employer had to provide a safe workplace. Employees did not often sue their employers in the early years of the nineteenth century. We start to see some Maine case law relating to work-

place injuries about 1861.[21] Almost none of these cases relate to shipyards; most concern railroads and mills. Case law generally records only cases that have been decided by the State Supreme Judicial Court. A search of Bath's municipal court records and the Sagadahoc County Supreme Judicial Court records (a forerunner of the present County Superior Court) reveals a similar scarcity of shipyard workers suing their employers.

One reason for this lack of shipyard legal cases was the "fellow servant rule." This rule of law held that an employer was not responsible for an employee's injuries caused by a fellow employee. Many injuries were considered to be "just accidents," the risk of which the employee had assumed upon taking the job (this was called assumed risk). Probably the only exception to the assumed risk and fellow servant rules was the matter of stagings. These temporary working platforms and ramps around the vessels' hulls were notorious sources of injury, accounting for 15.4 percent of injuries in this study. The employer was responsible for the condition of the stagings, if he had employed workers to build them. However, if the injured workman had chosen to build the stagings himself, he was out of luck. The legal ramifications of injuries were well understood by all parties, for some newspaper reports of injuries hint at an awareness of the issue. There is often a clue such as "The staging was one that he built himself."[22]

In one case the reporter went into such editorial detail that a point of view was obvious:

Seven men were to work on the staging of a large ship which is being built in Schofield's yard at Middle Bay about three miles from Brunswick village, when it suddenly gave way and they were precipitated to the ground a distance of over 49 feet they are all more or less bruised and it is expected that two of their number, will not live. . . . It is stated that some of them thought the staging was not strong enough before they went on to it, and wanted to add to its security, but were overruled by their boss who said he guessed it was all right. There should be no guess work about such a case, and we are surprised that intelligent men should have ventured upon a staging the safety of which they had even the slightest doubts. If such was the case they can but lay part of the blame of the accident on their own shoulders.[23]

No successful nineteenth-century cases were found where an injured shipyard worker obtained compensation from an employer by means of the law.

Stephen Conley fell in 1899 from a staging at the Arthur Sewall & Co. yard in Bath, which was then building steel sailing vessels. He struck the ground 30 feet later, landing on his head and shoulders, breaking nearly all his teeth. Claiming that an inadequate staging plank had broken beneath him, he sued the Sewalls for $10,000. Despite the plaintiff's claims of continuing and permanent injuries, the defendants were found not guilty.[24]

The most poignant case was undoubtedly that of Angie Cunningham versus Bath Iron Works, Ltd., also in 1899. She was bringing action on behalf of the estate of her 17-year-old son Mark who had been killed in 1896 by being drawn into the gears driving an angle-iron shears. The county court jury had awarded her $2,162.62, but the verdict was appealed and the state supreme court heard the case in 1899. Despite the fact that the dangerous wheels and gears were not shielded, the court was very interested to learn that no one had actually seen the boy's accident. It was not known whether the nature of the workplace caused the death. The court announced that "No machinery can be deemed safe for those who are thoughtless and inattentive or reckless and venturesome." It went on to say that the workplace could never be guaranteed to be absolutely safe. And, in the most revealing of arguments, "The employer is not an insurer." Employers were only expected to furnish equipment and workspace "reasonably and ordinarily safe and well adapted to the purpose for which they are designed." In this case it was decided that the gears were of the "usual and familiar type." Their obvious and exposed position, combined with the powerful rumble they made in operation, was considered to be a constant reminder to the workmen of the danger they represented. Mark Cunningham, a fitter's helper who had been employed for a month and a day, had not been required to be within three feet of the gears on their in-rolling side, in the normal performance of his work. The decision of the lower court was set aside, and Mrs. Cunningham got nothing.[25]

So the courts were unlikely to encourage the compensation of injured workers, at least until the passage of Maine's Workmen's Compensation Act in 1915. That Act made the fellow servant rule, the idea of assumed risk, and the employee's own negligence all not allowable as defenses for the employer.[26]

What good does it do us to know all this? Did accidents have any impact beyond physical pain?

Accidents certainly had an economic impact. In the 300 or so serious nineteenth-century injuries in the study, only two examples were found in which a shipyard was reported to have reimbursed an injured worker.[27] There certainly may have been others, but it was not the usual circumstance.

In the 1880s and 1890s, the Maine Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics surveyed some 72 shipyard tradesmen. Slightly more than half claimed to receive weekly benefits in case of sickness (presumably including injury). However, all those who had such a benefit belonged to a labor organization,

a beneficiary organization, or both. It is more likely that one of these workers' organizations provided the sickness benefits than that the employers would have done so. It is also possible that some of these workers had arranged for personal health or accident insurance—this was not uncommon in the late 1800s.[28]

Although Bath has never become a large community (only about 11,000 inhabitants even today), there has been medical treatment available throughout the period in which shipbuilding has been an active industry. The first physician in town was Sarah Lombard, who arrived about 1760 or earlier. Through the nineteenth century, there were often as many as eight or ten doctors in business at one time. Hospital care, however, was not available until 1909. For most people, intensive and long-term care was only to be found in their own homes.[29]

What were the financial repercussions of a serious injury to a worker? Lacking the intimate details of the family budget for any particular case in the study, we can try to reconstruct the likely impact from information published by Maine's Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics. Let's take the case of Henry Malmsten, a ship carpenter who fell onto the main deck of a schooner from the vessel's topgallant forecastle deck—about eight feet or so—in the Percy & Small shipyard in April 1899. He was a few days shy of his sixty-second birthday. It was a serious accident, and two of the man's ribs were broken. The shipyard time book credits him with only five hours of work on the day he fell, a Thursday. On Friday, ten hours is placed opposite his name, and on Saturday, nine hours. These are the hours he would normally have worked on those days, although he almost certainly was not at work. This may have been some form of injury compensation paid by the shipyard. However, the next week Malmsten received no hours. The time book indicates that he missed 21 days, after which he returned to work full time. We do not know Malmsten's wages, but skilled mechanics in Bath were getting $1.75 to $2.75 per day in 1900. Malmsten, a native Finn, was well-thought-of in town. He had been elected a city councilman or alderman five times in the 1890s, and he was called a "first-class mechanic." He was probably earning at the high end of the range. If he was earning $2.50 per day, then this fall cost him $53.75, plus medical expenses, plus lost time to his wife and family in caring for him at home (he lived in a small house next to the shipyard). In fact, he never fully recovered from the fall, and died a year later.[30]

At $2.50 a day, Malmsten would have an earning potential of $780 annually. The State of Maine's statistics, however, indicate the average annual income for shipyard workers earning $2.50 daily was only $522. This disparity was because of work days "lost" for one reason or another. For the 21 shipyard workers questioned in 1895, there were an average 4.3 days lost to sickness, 16.2 days lost from an inability to obtain work, and 25.2 lost to other causes.[31] Nearly all of those questioned for these statistics lived in Bath, so their experiences are comparable to Malmsten's.

In light of this, Malmsten's $53.75 loss is a bit more serious. It was somewhere between 7 percent and 10 percent of his income for the year. It was likely to be compounded by the fact that, for two or three weeks that year, none of the shipyards within commuting distance would need his services. Also, he would need to take days off to harvest crops, gather fuel, do repairs on his house, or accomplish other tasks for which working in the shipyard for ten hours a day, six days a week, does not leave time.

There would, of course, be financial repercussions for the employer as well. The loss of a particularly productive worker, or even a foreman or the master tradesman himself, at a crucial point could mean the missing of a deadline and the forfeiture of a financial incentive payment or bonus. Missing a deadline can snowball, as one trade after another gets thrown off schedule, ultimately making the shipyard late in delivering a vessel. Catastrophes like the lightning strike at Percy & Small in 1902 that killed a man and badly injured eight others must have had an impact on the yard. However, this does not compare with the immediate and obvious difficulties suffered by the actual victims of the accidents.

How often did this happen, or how likely was a shipyard worker to suffer a major accident? In the study of the 1888-1890 period, 50 accidents were found in Bath shipyards in a labor pool of approximately 1,000. That constitutes a 5 percent chance that any worker would be injured in the 3-year period. The chances, of course, increase with the years—if a worker's career spanned 30 years, there would be a 50 percent chance of his sustaining a serious injury. The 1888-1890 study indicates an annual accident rate of 1.67 percent, less than half the rate of the railroad business and a small fraction of the mining accident rate of the period and comparing well to a 1995 national occupational accident rate of 2.89 percent.[32]

Because these studies have concentrated on the nineteenth century, the hazardous materials that became common components of shipbuilding in the twentieth century, such as asbestos and volatile chemical compounds, have not been mentioned. Even in the 1800s the common use of lead paints and putties, had long-term health implications, and some species of wood irritated skin and lungs when planed or sanded. So far, sources of information that would give insight into the dangers of these materials in the nineteenth century have not been identified. The most recent shipyard death in

Bath took place in 1989, when a 28-year-old staging worker was crushed by a temporary cover on a naval cruiser under construction. The shipyard's reaction was heartening—three supervisors were fired, disciplinary action was taken against 15 others, and a safety program was initiated with the ambitious (and, to date, unrealized) goal of eliminating all shipyard accidents. Employees at the yard raised more than $17,000 for the man's family, on top of insurance payments. Investigations into the accident were conducted by the shipyard, the union, and the federal government.[33]

Death still lurks in the shipyard, and occasionally steps out of the shadows. It can be said thankfully that these visits are much less frequent and that, when they do happen, the reaction is much more meaningful. There is little of the fatalism of an earlier century. However, building ships is still physically demanding work that frequently leaves a lasting mark on the men and women of the shipyard.

Notes

1. *Bath Daily Times*, 24 August 1897, 4; 25 August 1897, 4; 26 August 1897, 4; 27 August 1897, 4; 31 August 1897, 4; 3 September 1897, 4.

2. All the injuries in the study were reported in the local newspapers, and evidence that degree of noteworthiness. Although information sometimes is not complete, injuries may be presumed to compare fairly well with the modern standard of compiling statistics on injuries which involve at least one day of lost work. Full details of each accident, and the category in which it was placed, are contained in the author's files. A number of injuries were found not possible to categorize, usually because the accident was not well enough described in surviving accounts. These accidents were included in the study because other types of information were known—for example, where the accident took place and to whom. Uncategorized accidents are included in the table under Other.

3. *Bath Enterprise* 17 September 1898, 1.

4. *Bath Independent* 22 September 1900, 3.

5. *American Sentinel* 28 December 1882, 2.

6. *Bath Daily Times* 5 March 1888, 3; 5 September 1884, 3.

7. Ibid., 23 September 1895, 4.

8. Ibid., 24 May 1900, 1.

9. Ibid., 30 October 1890, 4.

10. Ibid., 6 December 1910, 5; 31 July 1889, 4.

11. Ibid., 16 July 1902, 1

12. Ibid., 2 April 1881, 3.

13 Ibid., 5 December 1890, 4; 29 July 1889, 4.

14. Ibid., 11 September 1897, 4; 19 August 1884, 3.

15. Ibid., 31 December 1888, 3.

16. *Bath Enterprise*, 6 March 1897, 1.

17. *Bath Daily Times*, 19 January 1889, 2.

18. *Bath Independent*, 25 February 1937, 8.

19. *Bath Daily Times*, 28 March 1884, 3

20. *Bath Enterprise*, 27 September 1899, 3; *Bath Daily Times* 2 February 1921, 3.

21. William Wirt Virgin, *Digest of the Decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court of the State of Maine* (Hallowell: Masters, Smith and Company, 1859); Albert R. Savage, *An Index-Digest of the Reports of Cases Decided by the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine* (Portland: Loring, Short & Harmon, 1897); Fred F. Lawrence, *The Maine Digest* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1916).

22. Lawrence, *Maine Digest*, 786; *Bath Daily Times* 24 May 1900, 1, Alex Mulligan death.

23. Ibid. 2 June 1875, 3.

24. Records of Sagadahoc County Supreme Judicial Court, Vol. 31, p. 444, case 202, Maine State Archives.

25. Charles Hamlin, *Maine Reports 92: Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine 1898-99* (Portland: William E. Roberts, 1899).

26. *The Revised Statutes of the State of Maine*, 6th rev., (Augusta: Kennebec Journal Printing, 1916).

27. *Bath Enterprise* 15 April 1899, 3; 10 September 1902, 3

28. *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, 1889* (Augusta: Burleigh & Flynt, 1890), 96-97; *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, 1891* (Augusta: Kennebec Journal Printing, 1892), 82-89; *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, 1895* (Augusta: Burleigh & Flynt, 1896), 62-69; Handbill, [James W.] Kelley, Insurance Agent, Small Manuscript collections, Maine Maritime Museum Library.

29. Levi P. Lemont, *1400 Historical Dates of the Town and City of Bath* (Bath: Levi P. Lemont, 1874), 6; George Adams, *The Maine Register for the Year 1855* (Boston: George Adams, 1855), 137; William Willis, *A Business Directory of the Subscribers to the New Map of Maine* (Portland: J. Chace, Jr. & Co., ca. 1860), 129, 131; Parker McCobb Reed, *History of Bath and Environs, Sagadahoc County, Maine, 1607-1894* (Portland: Lakeside Press, 1894), 158; *American Sentinel* 9 August 1883, 2; *Bath Independent* 20 November 1947.

30. Percy & Small Time Book, SM-44/5, Maine Maritime Museum Library; *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, 1900* (Augusta: State of Maine, 1901), 48; *Bath Daily Times* 30 April 1900, 5.

31. *Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Industrial and Labor Statistics for the State of Maine, 1895* (Augusta: State of Maine, 1896), 62-69.

32. United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1949), 153-154, 206; United States Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1997* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 397, 437.

33. *Times Record*, 9 March 1989, 1, 24; 13 March 1989, 3; 14 March 1989, 1; 15 March 1989, 1. Unfortunately, another shipyard death has occurred since the writing of this article. Steven Oldham, 48, is presumed dead after his crane toppled from a barge into the Kennebec River a few days before Christmas 2000. Oldham was not a Bath Iron Works employee, but worked for a contractor on a shipyard dredging project. Because no body has been found, and investigations are still in progress, few details have been made public as of 21 January 2001.

Nathan R. Lipfert is library director at Maine Maritime Museum, where he has also served as curator and assistant curator. He would like to thank Doris Rowland, Helen McPhee, Earle R. Warren, and Ralph Linwood Snow for their generous and timely help in gathering data for this study.

The Mallorys of Mystic Seaport

J. REVELL CARR



Clifford D. Mallory Sr. and his family on the occasion of the christening of his yacht Bonnie Dundee III *in 1940. Mr. Mallory is seen with his daughter Barbara to his left and to his right his wife Rebecca Sealy Mallory, his daughter Margaret, and his son Clifford Jr. By this time Clifford Sr. was President of the Board, and Margaret and Clifford Jr. were Trustees. (Mystic Seaport Photo Archives)*

In 1972, Dr. James Baughman's maritime business history of the Mallory family was published under the title, *The Mallorys of Mystic.* This thorough, carefully documented work traces the family's role in the American maritime industry from 1816 to 1941, but the role of the family in the preservation of American maritime history through their involvement in the Marine Historical Association was beyond the scope of the book. That involvement has been significant, with three generations of Mallorys having played important roles in creating and guiding the remarkable museum we know today as Mystic Seaport. Clifford D. Mallory Sr. was an important leader of the Marine Historical Association during its first decade until his untimely death in 1941. The torch was passed to his brother Philip R. Mallory, who led the Board of Trustees heroically for the next 20 years. During P.R. Mallory's years at the helm, the Museum went through a difficult maturation and emerged as a dynamic organization, Mystic Seaport, that was poised for greatness.

But among the Mallorys who have served this institution so well, one has served the Museum consistently from that first decade until the end of 2000, and has been more clearly identified with Mystic Seaport than anyone else. On 7 December 2000, Clifford D. Mallory Jr. died, and with him passed our direct links to our founders, the interesting people who shared their early vision, and all those over the years who have been associated with the Museum. Cliff was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1940, but, because of his father's involvement, he had been around it virtually from its founding in 1929. Remarkably, he went on to serve the Museum as a

Trustee and Trustee Emeritus for more than six decades. I had the privilege of serving closely with Clifford for half of his long term of service, and it was invaluable to have his perspective and recollections from the first 30 years to help guide us in more recent times.

A brief look at the years of Cliff's involvement will illustrate the transformation that took Mystic Seaport from being a small, local maritime organization to being The Museum of America and the Sea. It will be clear what an instrumental part Clifford played and why he is so deservedly associated with the Museum.

C.D. Mallory Sr. groomed his children to assume responsibilities within the Marine Historical Association, and before his death both his daughter Margaret and his son Clifford were Trustees. Margaret served as a Trustee for almost as long as Cliff, but she lived in California during a good portion of her life, so it was difficult for her to be as engaged as Cliff. Cliff's younger sister Barbara, while not serving as a Trustee, has remained a consistent friend of the Museum to this day. The Marine Historical Association at the time Clifford and Margaret joined the Board in the late 1930s was a mere hint of what it would become. It had a few buildings along the Mystic River, two small exhibition halls, 90 members (compared with today's more than 26,000), and a couple of hundred annual visitors (compared with today's more than 400,000), but it had very big dreams.

Cliff was instrumental in turning those big dreams into reality. The year he became a Trustee, he was involved in a hands-on way in removing the paneling from the cabins of the downeaster *Benjamin F. Packard* before she was taken out and scuttled in Long Island Sound. This effort preserved this unique material so that almost 40 years later it could be reassembled in an exhibit recreating the interior of this long-lost vessel. That exhibition today gives visitors a glimpse of the style and craftsmanship in the cabins of those fast, late-nineteenth-century American sailing ships. Two years later, only a few month after his father's death, Clifford participated in one of the most significant decisions in the Museum's history. The venerable whaleship *Charles W. Morgan* had been damaged by the 1938 hurricane and was in desperate need of a new home. At a time when the world was at war, P.R. Mallory, Cliff, and the other Trustees made the difficult decision to take on ownership and responsibility for the *Morgan*. When she limped up the Mystic River on 7 November 1941, just a month before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Museum was making a statement that, despite war clouds, our maritime history was worth preserving and the ship would be cherished after the war.

Cliff's service during the war—appropriately, in the U.S. Navy—took him from the White House to Admiral William Halsey's staff in the South Pacific. It was here that a most wonderful thing happened to Cliff: he met Pauline Cropper, from New Zealand, who would become his wife and companion for life.

As the war ended, Cliff perceived a subtle problem for the Museum as it emerge from the fairly dormant years of the early 1940s. The problem was the ponderous and somewhat ambiguous nature of the organization's name Marine Historical Association. Was it a club? A museum? Did it preserve Marine Corps history? Cliff wrote to the Museum's founder and then Curator Carl Cutler on 7 June 1945, a month after the German



Never afraid to get his hands dirty, Cliff is seen cleaning shipsmithing tools while in lively discussion with Mrs. Ellen Scott during the first work weekend of the Pilots Program in 1974. (Claire White-Peterson photo)





TOP: As he was elected to the Presidency of the Board of Mystic Seaport in 1976, Cliff is seen in his home in front of a portrait of a Mallory yacht from the 1850s. (Mary Anne Stets photo)

Clifford and Revell Carr, then the very new Director of Mystic Seaport, share a happy moment at the end of the successful Annual Meeting of 1978. They worked together on behalf of Mystic Seaport for 30 years. (Mary Anne Stets photo)

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surrender, commenting, "Dear Mr. Cutler: I suddenly decided that the museum's name is certainly long and drawn out for these days of catch phrases and snappy monikers but I suppose nothing can ever be done to shorten it up a bit." With that perceptive observation, he began the discussion that resulted in the "snappy moniker" Mystic Seaport. That phrase was magic, and while it too was ambiguous, it has captured the imaginations of millions, symbolized the kind of lively experience we would provide, and has been copied by other "seaports" around the country.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Cliff worked diligently on behalf of the Museum, serving on and often chairing numerous committees. He was a fixture on the important Executive Committee from 1947 to 1989, helping to guide the growing Museum during fair winds and foul. He also held various Board officer positions, all of which served as preparation for the time when he would lead the Board.

Cliff served as President of the Board from 1976 to 1983, during which the Museum built a solid foundation for its future through the successful completion of its first broad-based fund-raising campaign. But there were many other achievements during this period. Cliff took office in the midst of the Bicentennial celebrations which included a special exhibition in the Stillman Building and the opening of the *Benjamin F. Packard* Cabin Exhibition. During the first year of his presidency, the Williams College-Mystic Seaport Maritime Studies Program began its highly successful undergraduate program at the Museum. The following year, with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Museum opened its comprehensive exhibition, *New England and the Sea,* and hosted the first American meeting of the International Congress of Maritime Museums, which had been conceived at Mystic Seaport in 1969. In the subsequent years of his term as leader of the Board, the Museum opened additional exhibitions, acquired and restored vessels, began symposia, initiated role-playing (first-person interpretation), received significant grants from prestigious organizations like the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, published important books, and firmly established its international reputation for excellence. By any assessment, Clifford's years as the head of the Board were years of great accomplishment.

Of course, at the end of his term as Board President, Cliff did not disappear. He continued to act as wise counselor to staff and Trustees in his roles of Chairman of the Board and Chairman Emeritus. There can be no doubt that his presence was felt throughout his 61 years on the Board and will continue to be felt by those who worked with him and learned from him.

So what was it that made this man such a significant and effective part of Mystic Seaport for all those years? There can be little doubt that he felt a sense of obligation to carry on the work his father had begun. But that grew into full commitment to the cause of advancing Mystic Seaport and its mission and incredible personal dedication to this objective. But what was the special talent that he possessed that enabled him to be so effective? It has to be the sheer force of his personality. Cliff was, in a word, *gregarious.* He loved meeting people, making friends, drawing people into his world and his interests and making you feel fortunate to share his world. Cliff had friends, good friends, real friends, all around the country and around the globe. It seems he knew almost everybody, and almost everybody knew him. His friends came not only from all parts of the world, but from all sorts of occupations and the widest variety of backgrounds. And you knew that these were people he cared for and in whom he had a genuine interest. He cared enough to be critical at times, but if you were on the receiving end of his criticism it was a beneficial experience.



As Clifford's term as President neared its end and the major fund-raising campaign neared its successful conclusion, Cliff discussed the Museum with fellow Trustee Walter Cronkite during a Mystic Seaport evening at the Indian Harbor Yacht Club in Greenwich, Connecticut. (Ken Mahler photo)

Through this outgoing character and marvelous sense of humor, Cliff was always able to bring people along in their thinking and guide their efforts. Mystic Seaport was the continual beneficiary of those efforts, and many of its successes over the six decades of his involvement were as a result of Cliff's positive personality at work. The family tradition of work on behalf of the Museum is being continued by his children. His daughter Diana Gros Louis serves on the Curatorial Committee; his daughter Veronica's husband, Michael Stubbs, has served as a Trustee for more than 20 years; and his son Charles joined the Board a decade ago. It is reassuring that Mystic Seaport will continue to benefit from this continued Mallory family involvement.

There will be a subtle presence of Cliff Mallory around the Museum in many manifestations, and there will be other more tangible evidence of this man and his influence on Mystic Seaport. The Pauline C. and Clifford D. Mallory Jr. Fellowships were established in their honor by their dear friends Wade and Angela Thompson. A handsome oil portrait of Clifford, holding a rolled set of plans for a Mystic Seaport structure, now has joined the portraits of his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather over the fireplace in the Mallory Buildings at the Museum. There will be, as a result of the many memorial gifts from his family and friends, an acquisition fund through which items will be purchased for the collection in Cliff's name. And, in a recent Board decision, the open space at the core of the Museum's galleries, which has been known simply as "anchor circle" because of the large anchor there, will be dedicated as "Clifford D. Mallory Jr. Circle" in lasting recognition of his incredible impact on this museum. This seemed appropriate for several reasons. The first is its centrality to all the things that so interested Cliff: the Library and the galleries with exhibitions of paintings, models, scrimshaw, and figureheads. Of course, it is directly in front to the Mallory Buildings, which tell the remarkable story of his family's involvement in the American maritime adventure from 1816 through his son Charles's present-day work in shipping brokerage. The Mallory Buildings are faced across the circle, appropriately, by the *Packard* Cabin Exhibition where Cliff's 1939 efforts have come to fruition. And then there is the enormous anchor itself, which stands as a bold symbol of Clifford himself, Mystic Seaport's solid anchor, holding fast in times of storm as well as during quiet evenings in safe harbors.

In many ways, seen and unseen, Mystic Seaport will forever reflect the man who, in my opinion, was *The* Mallory of Mystic Seaport.



The amiable, gregarious Clifford Mallory at his desk at home with his father's photograph above him. This was Clifford in his finest role of paterfamilias *to Mystic Seaport. (Mary Anne Stets photo)*

The *Amistad* Friendship Quilt Project

The *Amistad* Friendship Quilt Project is a community effort that produced imaginative quilts related to the *Amistad* story. Quilters were encouraged to use the themes of ethnic heritage, cultural diversity, and issues of human rights. The quilts on exhibit at Mystic Seaport are only a part of the total produced. Made by organizations and individuals, skilled quilters and children's groups alike, quilt blocks were received from all over the world and throughout the United States. Many of the quilters who submitted blocks and quilts connected deeply with the *Amistad* themes. Their work is thoughtful and passionate, colorful and creative. Their gifts are from the heart.

This project is sponsored by Mystic Seaport, Amistad America, Inc., and Montgomery College, the largest community college in the state of Maryland. The project leader is Mary Staley, art professor at Montgomery College. After exhibition, the quilts will be presented to Amistad America.

For this exhibit, 22 quilts are hung in Mystic Seaport's Greenmanville Church exhibit building. They will remain on display through 15 April 2001.





These quilt squares were designed and stitched by the Needles and Thread Quilters Guild of Chicago. Broken shackles symbolizing freedom combine with images that evoke the horrors of slavery. The sailboat theme is interspersed, reminding us of the historic ship and the new recreation. (Judy Beisler photos)

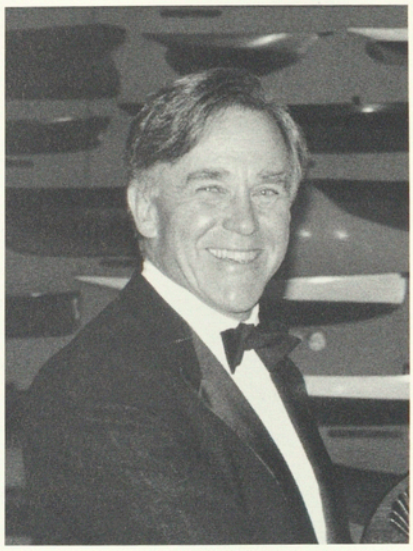
Mystic Seaport Salutes!

William Ewald Cook, Chairman of Mystic Seaport's Board of Trustees

Bill Cook has a long and distinguished history at Mystic Seaport. He and his wife Toni joined the Museum in 1965 and became Pilots in 1974. Bill was elected to the Board of Trustees in 1986 and became its Chairman in 1995. As a graduate of Yale (B.A. 1962) and Harvard (Ph.D. 1967), Bill began his professional life as a professor of English and assistant to the president at Manhattanville College. In fulfillment of his goal to become a naval architect, he established his own firm, Cook Yacht Design, in 1977.

Bill Cook's tenure as Chairman of Mystic Seaport's Board of Trustees has been marked by three major and significant milestones in the history of the Museum: the establishment of a new advocacy group known as the National Council of Advisors; the successful completion of the $41 million Campaign for Mystic Seaport; and the search for a new leader to replace J. Revell Carr, who retired after 31 years on the staff and 23 as Director.

Under Bill Cook's leadership, the National Council of Advisors was formed in 1997 to provide advice to the Board of Trustees and the professional staff of the Museum. Made up of individuals from all across the country, members have been chosen for their interest in maritime history and preservation. They serve as ambassadors and regional representatives of Mystic Seaport through their expertise, the prestige they bring, and the national recognition and support they attract. In addition, they alert the Museum to relevant issues or activities in their home areas and assist in the solicitation of financial support. Mystic Seaport is grateful for their participation.



(Katherine Cowles photo)

The second significant milestone is the completion of The Campaign for Mystic Seaport and the addition of over $16.6 million to the Museum's endowment. Bill believes that strengthening the endowment is paramount to the Museum's success, and he has eloquently and consistently emphasized this point, leading by the example of his own generosity. In 1998, Bill established the William E. Cook Endowment Fund, and he has encouraged others to establish endowment funds for Museum support. Bill's visionary leadership and commitment to endowment did not preclude his participation in other Museum campaigns. Recently, he was the first Trustee to step forward and make a new pledge to the Collections Research Center project in response to the Kresge Foundation challenge.

Bill Cook spent the greater part of 2000 chairing the search committee charged with finding a replacement for Revell Carr. Made up of six of the Museum's most dedicated and experienced Trustees, the committee considered candidates from Mystic Seaport and other museums, from educational institutions, and from the for-profit world. The committee agreed that the candidate must possess both strong leadership skills and "a passion for the sea." Bill Cook is convinced that the committee found that individual in Admiral Douglas H. Teeson. Bill and the committee are to be commended for enhancing the stature of the Museum while conducting the search with dignity and diplomacy.

Bill's generosity extends to nearly every department of the Museum. His greatest area of support, however, has been to set the standard for his fellow Trustees in emphasizing the need for, and the importance of, a strong endowment for Mystic Seaport. His example knows no peer. Mystic Seaport is proud to salute our Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Bill Cook.

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