The Log *of* Mystic Seaport®

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On the cover: Sometimes accompanied by his family, Captain Daniel Walls kept the 80-foot coasting schooner *Robert Jno. Beswick* (built at Milford, Delaware, in 1901) running under sail on Long Island Sound well into the 1920s. In this 1924 photo, the schooner's yawlboat pushes the vessel along as the family enjoys the view. This photo is included in *Sails & Sailing: A Selection of Great Nautical Photographs from Mystic Seaport's Rosenfeld Collection* (Mystic Seaport, 1999). (Neg. 13357F, ©Mystic Seaport, Rosenfeld Collection)

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Submissions of previously unpublished articles and illustrations concerning the American maritime experience are welcome. Editorial guidelines, and information on the annual Gerald E. Morris Prize Article Contest, are available from the Editor. *The Log of Mystic Seaport* is abstracted in *American History and Life* and *Historical Abstracts*.

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Pfizer Life is our life's work.
ROLEX

Sightings

Since becoming President and Director of Mystic Seaport last year, I've had the extraordinary good fortune to meet many, many people who share a passion for the sea and its stories, as well as a special few, like Olin Stephens, Carleton Mitchell, and Stanley Rosenfeld, whose very lives are sea stories in themselves. Each of these men is in his nineties, each made *and* recorded important sea history, and each continues to pursue Mystic Seaport's mission of broadening the public's understanding of our country's maritime roots and legacy.

Olin Stephens is not only a world-renowned yacht designer and a prominent contributor to the Museum's important collections of yachting and boating history. He is an active trustee emeritus who visits Mystic Seaport frequently and generously shares the fascinating stories about his designs, the craftsmen who built to them, and the owners who cherished the results.

Mystic Seaport is proud to be one of those owners. In the Museum's famous schooner *Brilliant* we have a living example of one of the earliest and best-known of Mr. Stephens's designs. In 2000, *Brilliant*, in her 69th year, sailed with the OPSAIL fleet, went on to take top honors in the open-ocean races that ensued, and then made several port calls in Europe and the Caribbean. She returned nearly a year later, after logging nearly 12,000 sea miles, and without a seam showing in her gleaming wooden hull. (In fact, she was so well designed and built that in the upper two-thirds of her hull, not only is the planking original, but so is the caulking!) In her honor, we have just introduced a wonderful little book about *Brilliant*'s design, continuing career, and triumphal millennial voyage, derived from the log kept by her renowned skipper, Captain George Moffett. *Brilliant* is a timeless treasure, and Mystic Seaport invites you to join in celebrating *Brilliant*'s 70th year.

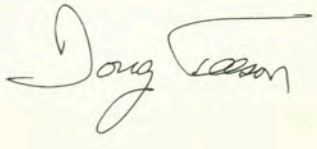
The works of Carleton Mitchell and Stanley Rosenfeld are also well-represented in Mystic Seaport's amazing collections. Our new Web site (*www.mysticseaport.org*), will connect you directly, digitally, to Mr. Mitchell's camera artistry. And our new Collections Research Center makes it easier than ever to appreciate the award-winning photography of Stanley Rosenfeld and his father Morris, whose Rosenfeld Collection comprises more than a million images—the world's largest single collection of marine photographs.

There is a certain timelessness to being at sea, maybe especially in smaller craft. The sea, for all its variety from moment to moment, watch to watch, and day to day, is a constant that stretches back in time and is part of the shared experience of anyone who has ever been on the water in a boat. Whether coasting, voyaging, or gunkholing, you know you're in waters that were tracked by people before you. But you don't see the tracks. You see the elements, just as they appeared to others down through the ages. To find the sea tracks, you have to follow what people leave behind, like letters, songs, photographs, and material objects.

Two of the authors in this issue trace the wakes of seafaring forebears through the writings they left for posterity. The letters of coasterman Richard D. Tillotson and lightship master Josiah Richmond are transformed by authors Willis White and Nancy Whittier into a pair of absorbing sea stories. And in Dan Milner's poignant memorial, we learn about William Main Doerflinger's important contributions to maritime history through his work in collecting the music of seafarers.

In the article by the Museum's own Cheryl Chaput, whales' teeth carry part of the tale about our own *Charles W. Morgan*'s movie career. You may have seen scrimshaw, but I'll bet none quite like that depicted on page 87! Rounding out the issue, in "Boats for Young People" (of all ages, I might add) we present a sampling from the recently published new edition of *Mystic Seaport Watercraft*, by current and past curators Maynard Bray, Ben Fuller, and Peter Vermilya. These three distinguished colleagues presided over the collecting, preserving, and interpreting of over 500 unique watercraft here at the Museum. When you next visit, be sure to ask for a tour of this unsurpassed collection.

Lastly, the Museum bade a fond farewell to Vice President for Collections and Research Jane Keener, whose distinguished career at Mystic Seaport (see inside back cover) spanned an era of major growth and change. Jane's successor, Dr. William Cogar, joins us from his former position as Chief Curator of Collections at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia. Look for more from (and about) Dr. Cogar in the next issue.



Richard D. Tillotson, Captain of Coasting Schooners on Long Island Sound

WILLIS H. WHITE

You had ought to see the Noank Ship yard. . . . There are now nine new vessels on the stocks building, and six of them will carry over 2000 tons a piece, — one ferry boat being rebuilt, one steamer, one light ship, three three-masted schooners, one four-master and two two-masters, all being overhauled and rebuilt. I wish you could see that yard. There are about 700 men working there every day and they want more now. They have got 5,000,000 feet of hard pine bought, and since the first day of January they have unloaded 13 three-masted schooners with lumber. It would do you good to see that yard.[1]

Such was the enthusiasm of Richard D. Tillotson, captain of sailing vessels in the coastal trade on Long Island Sound, as he wrote his shipmaster father in 1897. Richard needed all the enthusiasm he could muster. He was in a shrinking profession.

For over two centuries, beginning in the 1620s, coastal sloops and schooners were the only practical means of carrying people and bulk cargo from port to port on the eastern seaboard. But the 1800s brought change. Roads improved. Steamboats appeared and took the cargoes that required speed and reliability, like people and mail. Railroads finally connected port to port, and barges towed by steam-powered towboats reduced freight costs to a minimum by combining the bulk cargo capacity of the schooners with the reliability of steam.



Captain Richard D. Tillotson (1866-1940) looked very dapper when he was photographed by W.H. Mowbrey at Newport, Rhode Island, ca. 1900. (Courtesy author)

Coastermen did not give easily. For every new challenge, they found a new response. They moved from sloops to schooners, increasing the amount of sail, but not the size of the crews; they reduced crew costs by installing steam-powered donkey engines to raise sails and anchors; and most important of all, they increased the size of vessels. After the Civil War, as heavy bulk commodities—especially coal and lumber—became the principal cargoes for coastal schooners, vessel size increased from 50-foot, two-masted schooners of 40 tons to 250-foot, five-masted schooners of 3,000 tons. With their profits depending on the efficient handling and delivery of these bulky goods, schooner owners and captains looked for any way to reduce the cost per ton.[2]

Into this struggle stepped Richard D. Tillotson, a third generation coasterman. His grandfather William had served as mate on Long Island coasters in the 1830s. His father Richard, in a career that began in 1837 and ended in 1899, made nearly 1,000 round trips to almost every port on Long Island Sound, carrying every imaginable bulk cargo, from cordwood, coal, and hay to ashes and manure. He sailed in the halcyon days of the Long Island cordwood trade. He was lucky; Richard D. was not.

This is the story of Richard D. Tillotson, his optimism, perseverance and determined desire to earn a living as a full-time coasterman in a time when American commercial sail was rapidly losing its viability. He survived by serving niche markets, commanding private yachts, and occasionally sailing the big schooners out of Long Island Sound and along the weather coast of North America.

Richard Davis Tillotson was born 24 September 1866 at Mt. Sinai, Long Island, New York. His career on the water officially began in 1880, at the age of 13, when his father paid him $20.00 for work on the schooner *Wonder*, and it almost ended the next year, when his father's vessel "was run into by a tow" and Richard was knocked overboard, but rescued "after having sunk twice." For the next ten years Richard sailed as an apprentice to his father, learning by experience how to assess the

weather, manage a vessel, and navigate Long Island Sound. He reached a milestone in 1888, when he advanced from wage earner to partner, sharing in the profits from each trip. In 1890, he acquired his own vessel, the 53-ton, 70-foot schooner *Ella* and commenced carrying cordwood on his own account from Long Island's north-shore landings.[3]

But his timing was unfortunate. The cordwood trade was on the wane. Competition from the railroad and lack of demand had reduced the Brookhaven cordwood fleet from 37 vessels in its heyday to 6 in 1890. The freight a coasterman charged on his cargo was his income, and without cargo he had no livelihood. Something had to be found to replace cordwood. Richard's father used a network of personal contacts to arrange cargo, but Richard augmented this network with a broker, James H. Cox and Company of New York City. In addition to cordwood, Richard soon carried paving stone down the Connecticut River to Bridgeport and coal from New York Harbor to ports on Narragansett Bay. To make a profit with these heavy cargoes he replaced the 53-ton *Ella* with the 122-ton, 96-foot, centerboard schooner *Mary Ann Predmore.*[4]

Up to this point in his career, Richard had sailed only vessels owned by his father or himself, but in September 1895 he made a change. Since the Panic of 1893, the U.S. economy had been depressed, meaning that cargoes became harder to find and profits became more meager, especially when they had to be shared with a broker. To avoid the worries about cargo and concentrate on his skills as a shipmaster, Richard for the first time agreed to sail a vessel owned by someone else. As he wrote, "arrived at Stonington at five o'clock and when I arrived Mr. Hancox had the papers all ready and a crew shipped for me and an order written for me to go to Port Johnson."[5]

A coasterman's season generally lasted from March to early December. He then "layed up" during the winter months, usually finding odd jobs to tide him over. In the winter of 1895, Richard helped refurbish Mr. Hancox's 48-year-old, 65-foot, centerboard schooner *Argo,* which was docked at West Mystic. They removed "all of the old timbers which are decayed" and replaced them with new ones. Richard predicted that he would "have a good vessel when we get through, if I don't have to leave her." To keep him company, he brought his wife Maud and four-year-old son Henry over from Mount Sinai and, once the repairs on the vessel were complete, they moved aboard because Mr. Hancox needed a live-in watchman. Richard told his parents it was a good situation: "Mr. Hancox boards us and pays me besides."[6]

The Tillotson's liked West Mystic, and the West Mystic community liked them. Maud told her in-laws that "we have company most every night or we go somewhere and have a good time." The *Mystic Press* proclaimed that at one gathering "the Captain manipulated the bow in producing fine music on his violin." Richard was as "happy as a clam at high water." These were the good times.[7]

In the spring of 1896, before the coasting season began, he decided to move permanently from Long Island to Connecticut to be nearer coasting opportunities. Consoling his disappointed parents, Richard explained: "I am sorry to move but what is the use of staying there when I can not hardly get enough to eat, . . . here I can make a living and I can have clothes to wear and be home every trip." Equally important, he assured them "I can get a living here in the winter."[8]

With the 1896 coasting season began a pattern that was to follow Richard for most of the next decade. Start each season with a new owner, new vessel, and a burst of optimistic anticipation for the new season's success. The year 1896 began with the old *Argo* and a new owner, Oscar Tift. In the Spring Richard carried seed oysters from Milford and New Haven to Providence, and in the summer he carried coal and piles, for which he got a good price because "they are very heavy things to handle, 35 and 40 feet long."[9]

Richard was pleased. "I am doing very well with the schooner and if nothing happens I will be better off in a year or so than I ever was before. My owner likes me pretty well. . . . I am paying him some money all the time." In July, Tift rewarded Richard with a new vessel, the 82-ton, 85-foot, centerboard schooner *Emma A. Chesbro.* Although she was 27 years old, Richard called her "the boat I have always wanted and she is a daisy. Tell Pa that he had ought to have been with me last night. Tell him he would have come across the Sound quick and the beauty of it was we did not have to pump. . . . I have got the best boat in the fleet." With the *Chesbro,* Richard carried coal to New London, Connecticut, and Westerly, Rhode Island. He pushed the season. On Christmas day, he wrote to his parents that he was "here in Stonington with a load of coal for Westerly and we are froze out at the River. . . . It is very cold weather here."[10]

Maud did not like to be alone. Though she went with Richard at every opportunity, she had to be home for Henry during the school year. Like many seafarers, Richard wanted Henry "to have a good education" so that he could "get something else to do besides going on the water." But even at the age of five, Henry was already dreaming of going to sea. After a summer on the vessel, he wished he were "on the boat again."[11]

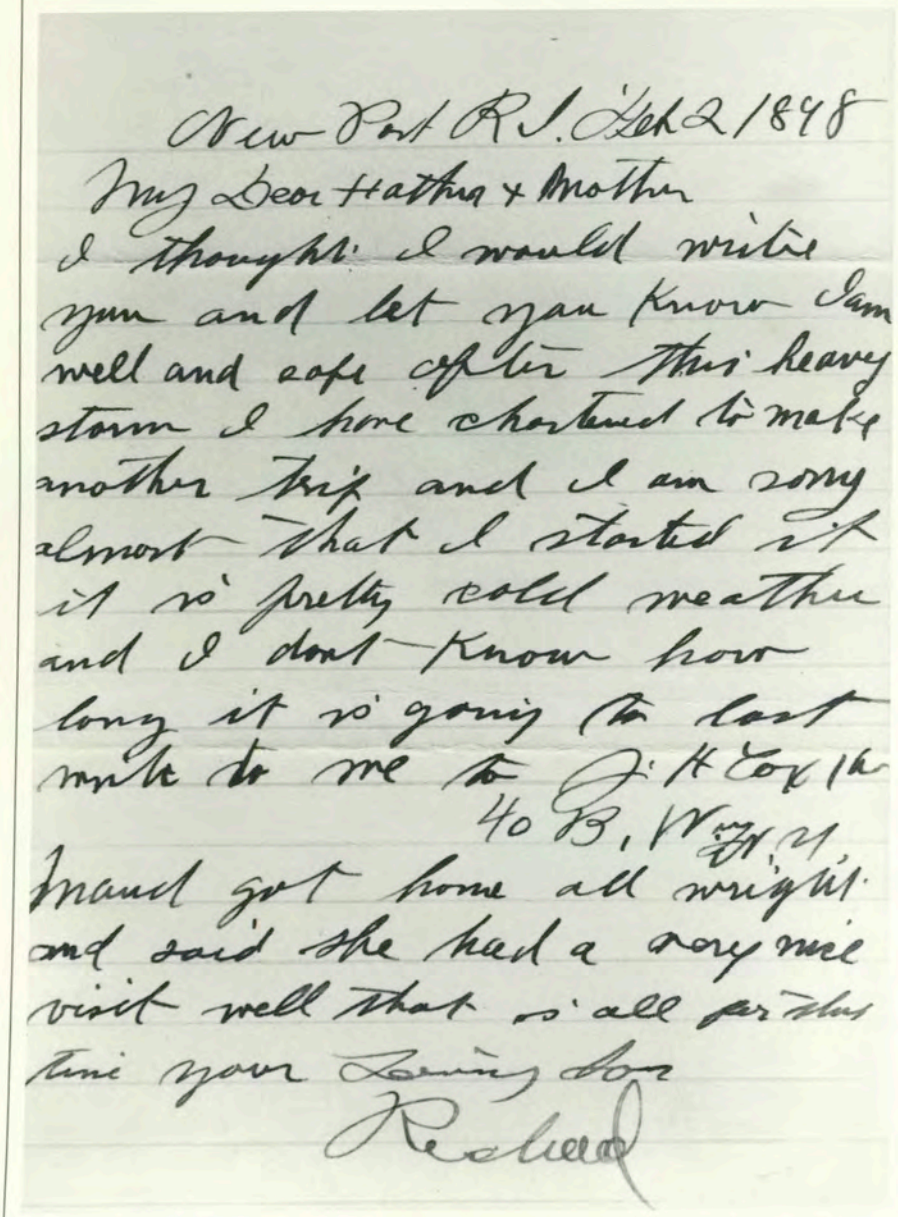
The family was together on the *Chesbro* that cold Christmas day in Stonington. "I have not got any crew, but Maud and me and Henry are staying on board all alone. We had a goose for dinner. . . . I wish you could all have been here," he told his parents.[12]

The 1897 season began with a March report that "Captains James McGowan and Richard Tillotson left in yacht *Flash* . . . for Long Island with several spars in tow," ready to make a penny any way they could. The season commenced in earnest with Richard's usual early season optimism as he prepared to make a trip on the 79-ton, 69-foot schooner *Silas Brainard*. "I have got the best owner that I ever had, Mr. Robert Palmer the Noank Ship builder." He was pleased that the 52-year-old *Brainard* had "a new suit of sails" and "only leaks about 10 strokes a day now loaded."[13]

In October he changed to another Palmer-owned vessel, the 227-ton, 104-foot *H.T. Hedges*, but it was a slow season, even as the nation began to emerge from a four-year depression. Richard alluded to the 1896 election of Republican President William McKinley, an advocate of the gold standard, as he remarked: "the times are pretty dull. If this is a sample of the McKinley times, I would like to try a year of Bryan times. I don't think they could be much worse. I could not get a load any where in the Sound." When he could find it, he carried mostly coal. One bright spot was the performance of the 30-year-old *Hedges*: "it blowed a gale of wind, but the old Hedges brought both topsails up Narragansett Bay. I never was in anything before but what I would had to have reefed. . . . She is a daisy to go in."[14]

Richard stayed with the *Hedges* for two more years. He moved from West Mystic to "a fine place in Groton" from which he could "see the whole New London Bay and City." and he survived the brief 1898 Spanish-American War, with its fluctuating freight rates and typical war scares, such as, "they are laying mines all over the Coast, we won't know where to anchor!"[15]

Richard carried anthracite coal from the depots at Perth Amboy and Hoboken, New Jersey, to small southern New England ports like Wickford, Rhode Island, and New Bedford and Hyannis, Massachusetts. Other cargoes included paving stone from New London to Bridgeport and 2,000 empty flour barrels from Newport to Bridgeport. The *Hedges* continued to perform well. "I had a splendid run from New London," Richard wrote his parents from New Bedford in April 1898. "The old Hedges went 60 miles yesterday in 6 hours and 10 minutes, that is pretty fair going for an old loaded coaster." A good performance demanded a good crew, and the mate was critical. As Richard said, "It is pretty hard work to run a vessel like this . . . without a good mate. . . . last trip we beat the whole length of the sound with the wind east."[16]


New Port R.I. Feb 2/1898
My Dear Father & Mother
I thought I would write you and let you know I am well and safe after this heavy storm I have chartered to make another trip and I am sorry almost that I started it it is pretty cold weather and I don't know how long it is going to last write to me to J. H. Cox Jr
40 B. Wharf
Maud got home all right and said she had a very nice visit well that is all for this time your loving Son
Richard

In a note to his father and mother from Newport in February 1898, Richard speaks of the discomfort of coasting through the winter. (Courtesy author)

There were times when his crew was ideal: "John Burk is with me . . . and he is the best mate I ever had, he looks out for everything and knows his place. I like him very much. Wall Parker is cook and he is a good savvy fellow. Have got a good crew—two Norwegians before the mast." And there were times when his crew had shortcomings, "I have got a full crew of Dutchmen, not much company."[17]

In the fall of 1899 Richard took a chance. He made his first trip out of the protected waters of Long Island Sound and southern New England, heading to Philadelphia and on to Norfolk, Virginia, for lumber. He was apprehensive: "I get a pretty good freight . . . far better than any load I ever had, if I get back all right." His concern was well founded. Trouble started early, as he wrote from the mouth of the Delaware River: "am having a devil of a time trying to get to Norfolk. It has been fog and head wind . . . there has not been a sail go out by the Capes for over a week." The trip back was worse: "was out in this last gale of wind, lost part of our deck load, and had a pretty close call in general. Vessel leaking badly, but will try and get home with her. I have learned one thing. Old vessels are no good to go to sea with. I have just found out what rough water is."[18]

Richard left the *Hedges* in December 1899 and immediately began to search for his next vessel. He expected "to close a deal . . . to sail a little 3 Master . . . through Mr. Cox," and when that fell through, attempted to buy the schooner *Emily,* with the assistance of Captain Thomas A. Scott, the salvage master of New London. "I heard the vessel was for sale and went down and saw Captain Scott and asked him to buy her for me, and he went right and saw the owner and made a bargain for the vessel. The man is to deliver her



Operated by the Thames Tow Boat Company of New London, the 88-foot coastal tug Gertrude, *built at Brooklyn in 1883, has a schooner barge towing astern and a good buildup of ice in this photo. (Courtesy author)*

side of Captain Scot's dock and then he pays for her and then I Pay for her as she earns it. . . . there are not many men around that will do that for me, but Captain Scott was ready and willing. I call it a good friend that will do that." Captain Scott was indeed a friend to mariners, but in this case the owner "backed out" on what would have been a nice deal for Richard, leaving him without a schooner for the rest of the 1900 season.[19]

He painted in the spring, ran a private yacht during the summer, and finished the season on the schooner barge, *Prima Donna,* carrying anthracite coal for the Thames Towboat Company from Newburgh, New York, to Norwich, Connecticut. Introduced in the 1880s and operated by coal or towboat companies, schooner barges were already challenging independent schooners in the anthracite coal trade. Towed in strings of four or more by powerful oceangoing tugs, schooner barges set sails on a reduced rig to assist when the wind was fair and to help maneuver if they broke free of the tow. With a captain and a man or two to handle lines, a schooner barge was an efficient and reliable alternative to a three- or four-masted coasting schooner, but it was not a great challenge for an experienced coasting captain like Richard. He wrote that he could make a good living at it, "but I prefer a schooner."[20]

True to his word, Richard bought the 135-ton, 91-foot schooner *Hannah Blackman* in time for the 1901 season. She was an old centerboard vessel, built in New Jersey in 1856, but Richard found her "to be far better than I thought," and sailed her in the southern New England coal trade for the next two years. The family moved from Groton to the larger port of Providence, Rhode Island, in the fall of 1902, where Maud gave birth to their second child, Ethel Maud.[21]

The 1903 season was an experiment. Richard went in the 14-ton, 48-foot cutter-yacht *Rufina,* owned by Dr. W.P. Church of Providence, vice commodore of the Rhode Island Yacht Club. Pay was good and regular, and Richard did not have to worry about freight rates and cargoes. Since the 1880s, yachting had grown popular, and Narragansett Bay was one of the centers of this summer activity, with both the grand sailing and steam yachts of the very wealthy and the more modest boats of professional men like Dr. Church. But despite the advantages, Richard was not impressed. "I can't say that I like yachting much. . . . this yacht is a regular racer and I dont like to get beat." Richard began the 1904 season supervising the overhaul of the *Rufina* at New London: "I have done lots of work on this yacht. Will lay out close to

$2000.00 on her. . . . I will be glad when I get through. . . . Everything is left to me and it is quite a care . . . I wish I had a coaster," and before the end of the season he had one, the 153-ton, 107-foot schooner *Bertha*. This 30-year-old vessel had been designed to negotiate the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal so was a boxy vessel with narrow beam.[22]

Young Henry turned 14 in 1905. It was time for him to learn the trade, and Richard needed a smaller vessel to bring Henry along, much as Richard's father had given him a virtual apprenticeship at sea. He gave up the *Bertha* for the tiny 14-ton, 39-foot schooner *Queen Esther*, and he loved it. He told his father: "she is fitted up with all modern improvements. She has a Providence windlass. Don't have to overhaul any chain. All you have to do is unlock the windlass and strike out chain on the wild cats. Steers with a screw wheel, has good cabin and a crack sailor. Just right for Henry and me." He reassured his parents, "she was built at Tisbury, Mass in 1884, so you see she is not so very old." Actually, Maud owned the vessel. Richard typically placed his capital assets in her name, probably for business reasons.[23]

There was a second personal reason to buy the *Queen Esther*. After many years at sea with bad nutrition, exposure, long hours at the helm, and constant smoking, Richard's father had bad circulation in his legs and he coughed continually. Richard wanted to get his father out in the fresh air on the water again, and in June 1905 he succeeded. His father wrote home from on board the *Queen Esther*, "I am enjoying one thing, I breath easy all the time. . . . Richard feeds me well and uses me fine . . . . it seems strange to get along without smoking day and night."[24]

As small as she was, the *Queen Esther* was ideal for the oyster business. Oystermen were rapidly turning to steam- and gasoline-powered vessels for dredging oysters, but there was still work for low-cost sailing vessels to carry the shellfish between beds. Through 1905 and 1906 Richard freighted oysters from the natural beds off New Haven and Bridgeport, where seed oysters were dredged up for transplant, to the growing and fattening beds of Long Island's Peconic and Great South Bays. Greenport was a common destination. Between oyster trips, Richard became an aggressive entrepreneur. Instead of earning income by charging freight on someone else's cargo, he reverted to the trading tradition that had prevailed in maritime America until a hundred years earlier and actually bought cargo at one port and made his money by selling it at another. He bought produce—"am coming to Port Jefferson to buy a load of potatoes, turnips, apple cider or anything that I can sell again"—and iron—"am coming over to Long Island and get a cargo of iron and junk. . . . pay the cost for everything, so any body that has any junk of any kind, they can turn it in to cash."[25]

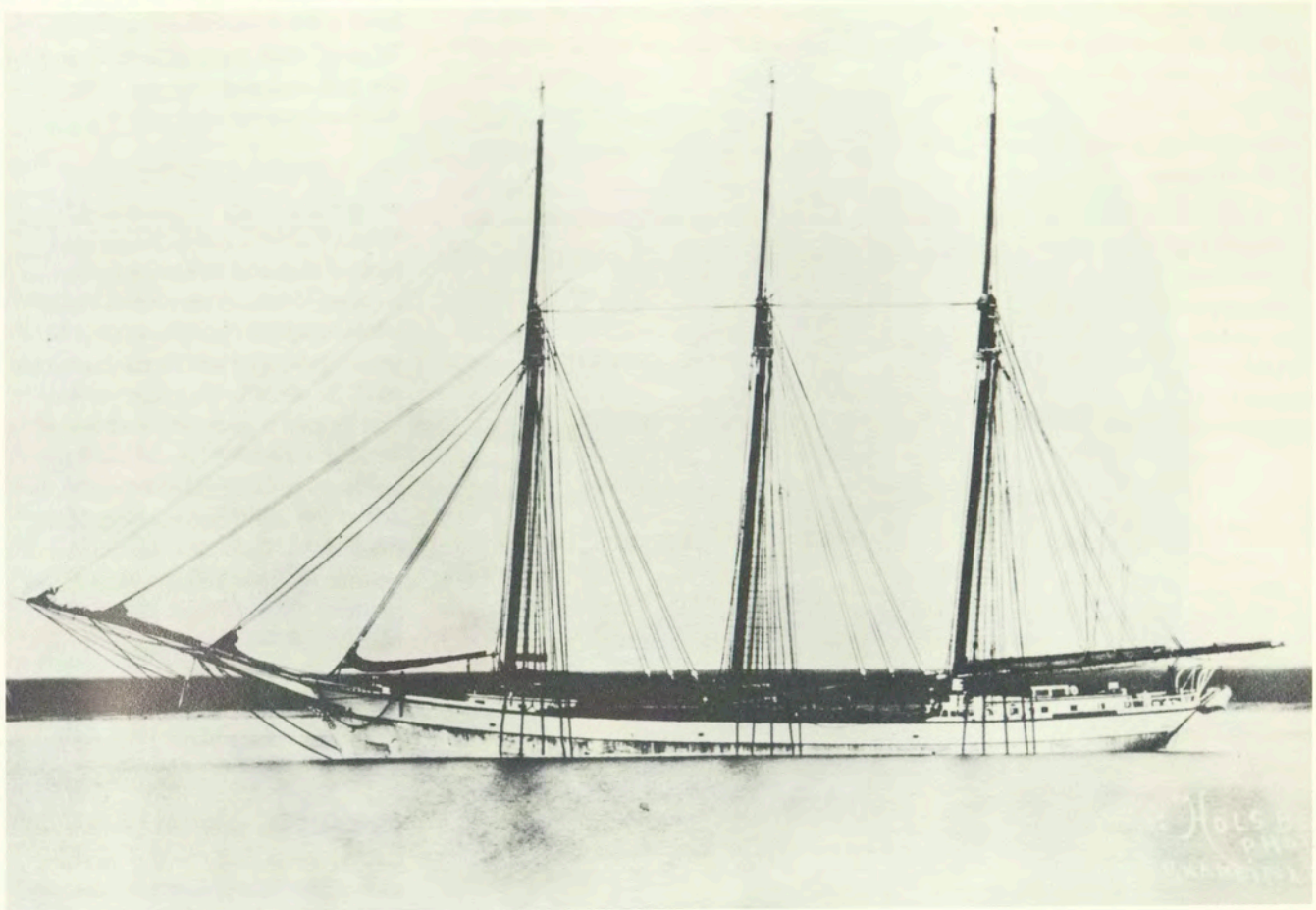
Though the *Queen Esther* was his primary vessel during this period, Richard continued to augment his income by occasionally sailing the *Rufina* for Dr. Church. When the doctor decided to change vessels in 1906, Richard handled her sale and the purchase of a new vessel, the *Opitrah III*, but this purchase appears to have ended his association with Dr. Church. Richard moved his family to New London.

The *Queen Esther* soon became obsolete. He no longer needed the vessel for Henry, because Henry left to crew on a yacht, and Richard's father died in the summer of 1906. Besides, as Richard said, "she is a little too small for other business. If I get a chance to sell her and get my price, I will do so, and try and get a larger schooner. . . . the small vessels are getting scarce, but the business for a hundred ton vessel is better now than it has been in a good many years." Richard sold the *Queen Esther*, which like so many of her sister vessels was soon unrigged and converted to power—first steam and ultimately a gasoline engine.[26]

In 1907, Richard again ventured out of Long Island Sound. He went in the 394-ton, 142-foot tern schooner *Belle O'Neill*, 28 times greater in cargo volume (net tonnage) than the *Queen Esther* and 3.6 times longer. The 26-year-old schooner was by far the largest vessel he had ever sailed. He even impressed himself, as he wrote his niece when in New York, "I have quite a ship . . . I lay at the foot of Java St. . . . come and see me."[27]

In the *"Belle"* he brought hard-pine lumber from the southern timber ports of Georgetown, South Carolina, and Jacksonville, Florida, to New York City to be used in the construction of the rapidly expanding city and its suburbs. Richard enjoyed the life: "I like the schooner very much, she is a big able vessel." And he was always glad to be on the move, as he wrote from Jacksonville in June 1907, "I am all loaded and will tow to sea tomorrow morning so when you get this letter you can think of me as sailing North in the Gulf Stream."[28]

Richard signed Henry as mate in the *Belle* for a short time in the spring. Richard was proud of his son, as he wrote his mother, "don't you think Henry has grown to be quite a man?" And a man he had to be, for 16-year-old Henry's tasks were to manage a crew of seven men—"have been real busy . . . painting and scrapeing. . . . it is quite a job to keep the crew at it"—and to keep the vessel in working order—"I have been running the engine to-day and I had a good deal more dirt on me when I got through this afternoon than I did the day I picked potatoes for Mr. Warner."[29]



Captain Tillotson commanded the 142-foot three-masted schooner Belle O'Neill *in 1907, making voyages to the southern timber ports. Launched at Bath, Maine, in 1881, the* O'Neill *was abandoned at sea in 1909. She was photographed by C.V. Holsbey at Fernandina, Florida. (Courtesy Gene Reid, Mystic Seaport 1976.1.172.34)*

Richard's tour on the *Belle O'Neill,* ended in the fall of 1907, but he reached another milestone before the year was out: "I was in Providence Wednesday and got my license. I am a little proud of it. I can now take any size sail vessel ever built to any port of the world . . . Capt. Wilcox the Inspector gave me quite a compliment after I had taken the examination." By all accounts, Richard knew his business. He never lost a vessel, and never, according to the record, had a serious close call.[30]

As skilled a mariner as he may have been, Richard could not so easily navigate the ill winds that blew through the nation's economy. Soon, the economic downturn of 1907 had reduced opportunities for masters of sailing vessels, whatever license they might hold. In 1908, Richard turned back to Long Island Sound and with Jacob Ockers, oyster king of Long Island's south shore, purchased the 53-ton schooner *Lillie A. Wilson.* As early as 1896 Ockers had pioneered the use of gasoline-powered vessels for tending oysters in Great South Bay, but still employed sailing vessels for the long hauls. Richard might freight oysters from the natural beds, or in early summer he might carry empty oyster shells, called cultch, and deposit them on artificial beds for oyster spawn to set upon. Oyster aquaculture was expanding so rapidly that, to meet the demand for cultch, oystermen began mining old shell in the Housatonic River near Stratford, Connecticut. Results were good. As Richard wrote in July 1908: "I have been shelling out of Stratford, have done very good with this vessel, have done better in her than any vessel I ever had on my own hook. I have just payed for three new sails and a new hawser, over three hundred dollars, which the vessel has earned and given us a good living besides. . . . She has been so far a very lucky vessel." And there was a bonus. Henry joined him in the fall. Henry wrote in November, "We are here in Milford unloading oysters for the Wm. M. Merwin and Sons Co. . . . this is our third trip," As the oystering business slowed up in December, "we layed the schooner up in Wickford, R.I. and came home on the train."[31]

Between 1909 and 1911, Henry made a decision that underscored a trend in the profession. Young men were abandoning sail. Tutored from youth in the art of sailing,



Henry Tillotson (1891-1919) turned away from sail about 1910 and made his career in powered vessels. He died during the Spanish influenza epidemic in 1919. This photograph was taken ca. 1911. (Courtesy author)

Henry turned to steam. Henry had always been serious about his career. As early as 1906 one of his shipmates predicted that "Henry would go clear to mast head," and Henry himself said in 1910, "I've got to stick to business. If a man is to be successful he must keep hustling." During his sailing years Henry served short tours in a steam-powered towboat and in the steamer *Cactus,* a U.S. Lighthouse Service tender "that sets buoys and takes supplies to light houses and light ships," but in 1909 he committed to long-term employment in the steam-powered oyster boat *Ruel Rowe,* which went between New Haven and Narragansett Bay. This gave him the opportunity to advance. And he moved quickly. In 1909 he earned his first license—second-class pilot of steam and motor vessels. In 1910 he qualified as a first-class pilot, and in 1911, at the age of 20, he was licensed as a full-fledged master and pilot of steam and motor vessels, forever sealing his commitment to steam. Henry saw the future. Richard stayed with sail.[32]

And Henry was not the only one. Captain Jesse Mott, Richard's cousin and a longtime Long Island coaster, became master of the passenger steamer *Rhode Island.* Captain Henry Acker Smith, Richard's lifelong friend and shipmate from Mount Sinai, told Richard "I am running a steamer and have been since I went to New Haven. Sometimes I feel like taking hold a schooner wheel again. . . . When I start now, all I do is to ring the bell and away we go." But Richard stayed with sail.[33]

The first 20 years of Richard's career is a study in adaptability. When railroad competition and lack of demand stole cordwood as a cargo, Richard turned to coal; when schooner barges pulled by steam-powered towboats captured coal, he went to pleasure yachts and oyster schooners; and when smaller schooners could no longer survive on Long Island Sound, he sailed the big three-masters along the eastern seaboard. Richard's resourcefulness reflects that of his profession. Railroads and steamboats were viable competitors at the time of the Civil War, yet American coastwise sail found niches in which to survive well into the 1900s.

Richard's life after 1911 is less well documented, but there is nothing to suggest that it was any less demanding than it had been before. Richard sailed the 266-ton, 125-foot *Ann Louisa Lockwood,* a 43-year-old three-masted schooner, in 1912 and the 235-ton, 110-foot *Jesse L. Leach*—a 57-year-old two-masted schooner that was older than he was—in 1920 and 1921. He was in Greenport in 1928, suggesting that he may still have found work in the oyster business, and he was in Maine in 1932. Maine was the last refuge of coastwise sail in the northeastern United States.[34]

Richard D. Tillotson died 14 March 1940 at the New York State Homeopathic Hospital at Middletown, New York. His death certificate showed his occupation as "sailor" on a "sailing ship." He was 74, and his life had virtually mirrored the extinction of cargo-carrying under sail on the northeast coast of the U.S.[35]

NOTES

1. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 18 April 1897; all letters cited are in possession of the author.

2. For a general discussion of coasting-schooner life, see John F. Leavitt, *Wake of the Coasters*, 2nd ed. (Mystic: Mystic Seaport, 1984).

3. Richard Tillotson Family Bible, *The Old Testament and New Testament together with the Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1816); in possession of author; Mt. Sinai was the home of his parents in 1866. Richard Tillotson household, 1860 U.S. Census, Suffolk County, New York, population schedule, Town of Brookhaven, page 758, dwelling 597, family 629; Richard Tillotson, Account Book, 1879-80, Book 39, in possession of author; *Port Jefferson Times*, 17 September 1881; Samuel H. Miller, Diary, 14 April 1888, in possession of W.H. White (2001); Daniel S. Davis, "What Became of All the Old Time Vessels," 1908, in possession of author; data on this and other vessels referred to in text was drawn from the annual *American Bureau of Shipping Register* and from the annual listing of U.S.-flag shipping, *Merchant Vessels of the U.S.*

4. Richard Tillotson, Account Book No. 42, 1852-76, in possession of author; Richard D. Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 10 July 1894; net tonnage, which approximately represents cargo volume, is used to give an idea of relative vessel size.

5. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard Tillotson, 28 September 1895.

6. *Mystic Press*, 22 November 1895, newspaper microfilm No. 84-6, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Connecticut; Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 4 December 1895, 24 January 1896.

7. Maud Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 20 January 1896; *Mystic Press*, 24 January 1896.

8. Maud Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 20 January 1896; Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 5 March 1896, 16 February 1896.

9. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 14 June 1896.

10. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 4 July 1896, 25 December 1896.

11. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 6 May 1896; Maud Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 6 November 1896.

12. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 25 December 1896.

13. *Mystic Press*, 12 March 1897; Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 18 April 1897.

14. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 2 August, 1897, 20 October 1897.

15. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 4 April 1898, 26 April 1898.

16. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 4 April 1898, 19 May 1898.

17. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 8 March 1898, 19 April 1899.

18. Richard D. Tillotson to Alilah Tillotson Miller, 5 October 1899; Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 7 October 1899, 2 November 1899.

19. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 28 January 1900, 9 March 1900.

20. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 19 November 1900; for schooner barges, see Paul C. Morris, *Schooners and Schooner Barges* (Orleans, Massachusetts: Lower Cape Publishing, 1984); for an excellent history of the coal trade and the replacement of schooners in the anthracite trade out of New York and Philadelphia (but not the bituminous trade out of Hampton Roads), see W.J.L. Parker, *The Great Coal Schooners of New England, 1870-1909* (Mystic: Mystic Seaport, 1948).

21. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard Tillotson, 14 March 1901.

22. Richard D. Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 28 July 1903; Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 13 June 1904.

23. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 11 May 1905, 4 May 1905.

24. Richard Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 15 June 1905.

25. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 11 May 1905; Richard D. Tillotson to Samuel H. Miller, 26 October 1905.

26. Richard D. Tillotson to Richard and Julia Tillotson, 28 June 1906; Works Projects Administration, *Ship Licenses Issued to Vessels under Twenty Tons and Ship Licenses on Enrollments Issued out of the Port of Providence, Rhode Island 1793-1939* (Providence: National Archives Project, 1941), 2:147.

27. Richard D. Tillotson to Grace Miller, 14 January 1907.

28. Richard D. Tillotson to Alilah Tillotson Miller, 25 June 1907.

29. Richard D. Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 18 January 1907; Henry Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 9 April 1907; Henry Tillotson to Alilah Miller, 10 April 1907. The "engine" must have been the donkey engine used to help raise the sails, not an engine to propel the vessel.

30. Richard D. Tillotson to Alilah Tillotson Miller, 6 December 1907, in possession of author.

31. Richard D. Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 11 March 1908; on freighting oysters and "shelling," see John M. Kochiss, *Oystering from New York to Boston* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press for Mystic Seaport 1974), 124-29, 171-76; Richard D. Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 26 July 1908; Henry R. Tillotson to Julia Tillotson, 25 November 1908, 31 December 1908.

32. Julia Tillotson to Grace Miller, 19 June 1906; Henry Tillotson to Alilah Tillotson Miller, 22 December 1910, 8 January 1908, 22 December 1910.

33. Roger Williams McAdam, *Salts of the Sound* (New York: Stephen Daye Press, 1957), 85; Henry Acker Smith to Julia and Richard Tillotson, 22 April 1904.

34. Samuel H. Miller, Diary, 1 November 1912; Connecticut Customs District Digital Database 1920-1921, G.W. White Blunt Library, Mystic Seaport; Grace J. Miller, Diary, 13 February 1928; Alila Miller Tuthill, Diary, 3 June 1932.

35. Richard Tillotson, Death Certificate No. 14822 (1940), New York State Department of Health, Albany, New York.

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Reflections of a Lightship Master

Captain Josiah Richmond's Service on *Hen & Chickens*, 1875-1879

NANCY R. WHITTIER

Lightships—the floating beacons of safety placed off coastal hazards to insure safe navigation—have a romantic aura of lonely vigilance. The first U.S. lightship station was established in 1820, and the number grew to 35 in 1850 and 54 in 1910. These heavily built vessels were designed for exposed areas and were anchored in the offing (distance offshore still in sight of land) to mark the hazardous rock clusters, reefs, or extensive shoals that were often reshaped by ocean currents, thus affecting approaches to harbors in heavily traversed sea-lanes. Subjected to all weather conditions, lightships were tossed aimlessly about, dragged off station by ice, set adrift by anchor line failure, rammed by ships when smothered in fog or driven snow, or swamped and sunk by tremendous waves. But mostly they lay at anchor on routine duty to show their lights and sound their horn as a guide to passing ships.

And what of the faithful lightship crews who maintained the daily routine? The crews of lightships were dedicated to aiding sailors under all circumstances, although they were not required to do so. The ships were to remain on station until replaced by one of the temporary lightships named *Relief*. Heroic stories abound, and records show that lives were lost. The men who signed on for this dangerous, isolated existence—going nowhere, often had previous seafaring experience on whaleships,

Josiah Richmond (1819-1889) began his whaling career as a greenhand aboard the ship Parker *at age 15. He made six voyages before taking command of the whaleship* Franklin *in 1853. After six voyages as master, 1853-71, he delivered the* Illinois *to Honolulu in 1872 and then retired from whaling. He commanded the vessels on the* Hen & Chickens *lightship station from 1875 to 1879. (Courtesy author)*

coasting vessels, or deep-water merchant ships. Their seamanship skills were an advantage, even when their assigned duties were no more than cleaning the light and keeping the vessel in spotless condition.

Through the 1850s, the fuel for lighthouse and lightship lamps was sperm whale oil. But as the price of sperm oil rose and availability declined, the Light-House Board shifted to colza (rapeseed) oil and then lard oil. Meanwhile, the whaling industry began to wane as whales became scarcer, competition for whale oil appeared in the form of petroleum, and whaling merchants invested their capital elsewhere. The loss of ships during the disruptive Civil War and several disastrous losses of vessels to Arctic ice only hastened the decline.

In 1872, when Captain Josiah Richmond returned to New Bedford from his twelfth and final whaling voyage, just 33 ships returned to New Bedford with whale products; in 1857, at the end of his first voyage as master, Josiah's vessel had been one of 105 returning New Bedford whalers. Josiah had spent 37 years at sea since his initiation to a seamen's life in the fo'c'sle on a whaling voyage to the South Pacific. His voyages varied as he progressed to boatsteerer, then officer, and, ultimately, master of the ship *Franklin* in 1853. The whaling public respected his nautical skills and judgment, and businessmen found him a man of integrity. He was a likable and jovial person—



In this detail from the 1878 chart of Buzzards Bay and Martha's Vineyard, the Hen & Chickens *light vessel (L.V.) is left of center, just southeast of Gooseberry Neck and east of the rock piles called Young & Old Cock. The* Vineyard Sound *light vessel is at bottom center, just southwest of Sow & Pigs Reef and Cuttyhunk.*



Hen & Chickens *lightship,* LV#2, *replaced* LV#8 *in 1877 and served on that station until 1907. Josiah Richmond commanded this vessel for a year before retiring from the service. Originally built in 1849, the 98-foot vessel was refitted as a lightship in 1867. The name was painted prominently on her red topsides. Like the preceding vessel, she raised a single lantern on her mainmast, illuminated by eight oil lamps and reflectors, which could be seen for 11 miles. In foggy weather the crew rang the large bell, visible on the foredeck, and operated the foghorn. (Mystic Seaport, 1992.10.12)*

a strict disciplinarian on shipboard, yes, but generally kind and considerate. In 1844 he married Nancy Knights, a New Bedford schoolteacher, and they had two daughters. Josiah and Nancy sustained their caring, committed relationship during years of separation through numberless letter "conversations." Their shared view of life was essentially religious; there was always hope for the future. Nancy and their younger daughter, Annie, sailed on Josiah's 1857 voyage, which took them around the world. Raising both daughters in the confines of a whaleship was not an option. Josiah sailed his next four voyages without family. During his years at sea he had less than a total of four years at home between voyages with the family he treasured.

The 1871 Arctic disaster, when ice claimed 22 local ships and their cargoes (but no lives), was catastrophic to New Bedford and its whaling industry. What was available to a whaling master during this time of transition, as the whaling industry faded and land-based industries succeeded? He found work close to home as a maritime civil servant. In 1875, Josiah applied to the U.S. Light-House Board and was approved for the position of master of the *Hen & Chickens* lightship that guarded a rocky area off the western approach to Buzzards Bay, about 15 miles southwest of New Bedford. The 1878 Buzzards Bay and Martha's Vineyard Chart of the area shows Young & Old

Cock as two prominent rocks in the cluster near Hen & Chickens rocks. Lightship *LV#8* was anchored a safe distance from Old Cock Spindle daymark. *Hen & Chickens*, as did all lightships, had the name of the station it guarded conspicuously painted on its red topsides. At night, its light was visible for 11 miles.

LV#8 had been built or acquired by the U.S. Navy in the mid-1850s as the steamer *Arctic* to carry out polar rescue operations. In 1860 she was converted to a lightship, with engine removed, and refitted with the usual schooner rig of two short masts and a cagework atop the mainmast to serve as a daymark. Serving on the North Carolina coast, the vessel was sunk by Confederate forces during the Civil War, later raised and refitted, and in 1867 the 98-foot vessel was assigned to the new Hen & Chickens station. Captain Josiah Richmond began his service 1 November 1875 on *LV#8* with an annual salary of $750.

Now, rather than spending years at a time on a ship halfway around the world, he was assigned to a ship a mere 15 miles from his family and more accessible for visits. Josiah, in his firmly established practice of keeping Nancy informed, sent her an account of his life aboard the lightship. Four pages of a letter preserved among family papers relate his amusing personification of the Young & Old Cock and Hen & Chickens rock cluster.

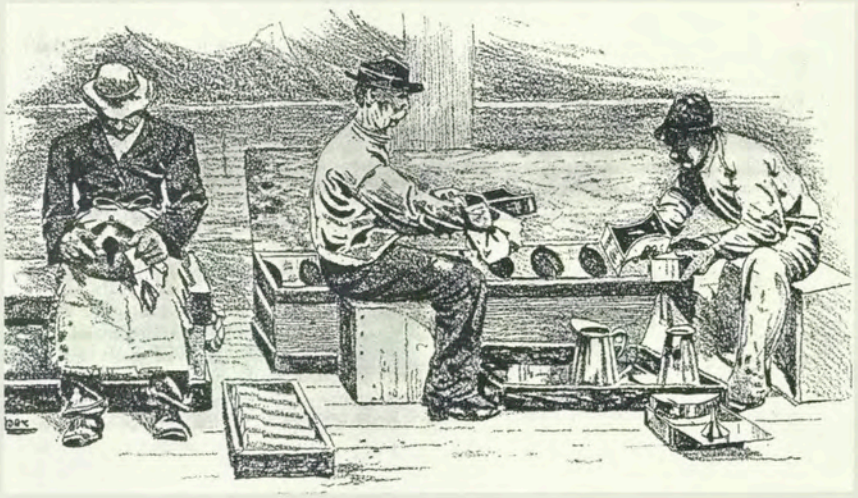
I have been thinking a few lines from this domestic poultry gang — There has been added 2 more watches to look out for that defiant proud old crower & his brood of chicks — I guess Uncle Sam mistrusts that one — One of them is the same gender for he sent a farmer there last fall & board [bored] a big hole in his back — then sent a Steamer with a big bar of iron some 30 feet long & drove that in his back to keep him quiet & I have heard no noise from him since [it became a daymark]. Then Uncle Sam has yet another Automatic (whistle) Buoy about 2 miles south of the old fowl & that one keeps an awful noise going constantly. So there is now 3 buoys, 7 men & a ship all watching his feathered majesty & his rocky imps, and he dont care a sea clam for all of us together. Why he almost got a vessel in his beak in spite of us all. The old crower took his time in a thick snowstorm & then the vessel cleared of his claws — a close call — but we keep a good lookout for him

You ask what I have to do — my duties are not very laborious — I get up at 6 oclock and check to see if everything is aright — walk the deck till 7 — then get breakfast, then receive the reports, that is that the lamps are trimmed — Lanterns cleaned — reflectors in order &c &c — then I do any little job I may find to do — read till 12 — then dinner. The same continues till 5 — then supper — then sunset Lantern lights — and then walk the deck, as I have done for years, till tired — 9 oclock to bed — You see rather a lazy monotonous life of it —

From middle of Nov. till last of March all the crew — consisting of Capt, Mate and five men — are to remain on board except 1 Jan. about a week when I have to be up to the city [New Bedford] to be paid off, get fresh rations &c — & send in Quarterly reports. Then from April 1st till Nov. — half the crew are up on liberty a week or ten days alternattely.

The Steamers from N[ew] B[edford] to N[ew] York pass so near us — every night & morning that they throw us letters & papers whenever it is calm enough to run near. Friends on board salute us in passing & during the excursion season we have many such.

I suppose you would like to know how Uncle Sam feeds us so I will give you our weekly bill of fare — It is no use trying to get a chick from this yard for they dont cook good — rather hard than tough — but once in a while we get a wild duck out of the chicken yard, but we have to be very sly about it. Well, Sunday to begin with, we have salt meat, potatoes & Duff and [lob]scouse — Monday salt meat, potatoes, cabbage, turnips — Tuesday beans & potatoes — always suet bread & butter, also tea & coffee — Thursday Duff again — Friday rice & Saturday codfish & potatoes — We breakfast at 7 — dinner at 12 — supper at 5 — We secure our rations every Quarter. In the summer we receive 2 rations less & have money instead to



Lightship crews were kept busy cleaning and polishing the lamps and reflectors of their lantern, as suggested in this 1891 illustration of the Nantucket Lightship by I. W. Taber. (Century Magazine, *August 1891)*

buy small stores—spices, fresh meats &c. We catch lots of fish & lobsters in the summer season. What do you think of our Table de Hôte—

Our Lantern is quite a big affair. It weighs about 1000 lbs, has 8 squares of light, 22 by 36 inches glass a quarter of an inch thick. [The Lantern] is lighted by 8 fountain lamps with reflectors like those head lights of a locomotive. [There is a housing to protect it by day at the foot of the mainmast.] It is hoisted up every night by a purchase attached to a winch & generaly takes 4 men to hoist it up. We are put here to see that a good light is kept going & Fog bell ringing.

The vessel is moored with a Mushroom Anchor weighing 5600 lbs. I generaly have 75 fathom (450 feet) of chain out—that 1-3/4 inch wire—So you see there is some weight ahead of the vessel. When very bad weather, we have 100 fathoms out & when the Old Cock, Hen & Chickens get their backs up it makes the old boat straighten all that out and the ship falls back & jumps for them like mad. About this poultry yard of Uncle Sam, we are keeping a close watch over them determined they shant do any more damage to our sailors if we can help it.

About 5 miles from us [across Buzzards Bay to the southeast] there is another set of domestic animals—Sow & Pigs. Uncle Sam has set 2 lights [Cuttyhunk Island lighthouse and Vineyard Sound *lightship] to watch them & they used to devour everything they could get their voracious mouth on. They have taken cargoes of coal, wheat, corn, lumber &c.—It did'nt make any difference—all was grist that came to their mill. They didn't stop to pick out—but now Uncle Sam has put out a big Fog whistle there that can be heard 20 miles—I guess they will grow hungry now.*

The annual reports of the Light-House Board for 1876 and 1877 show that during a heavy gale in April 1876, *LV#8* parted her mooring, drifted, and was brought up with the spare anchor a mile from station. The storm damage was repaired, but within a year *LV#8* was declared unseaworthy, retired from station, and used as a Relief vessel. The lightship *LV#2* was reassigned from a Virginia station to *Hen & Chickens* on 1 November 1877. She was a 98-foot vessel, originally built in 1849 and rebuilt in 1867.

Light-House Board records list Captain Richmond's removal from service by illness on 1 November 1879. Family letters relate his suffering a debilitating stroke. Josiah and Nancy lived out their lives in their New Bedford duplex house they shared with Annie, her husband, and their three children. One of those children was the author's mother, who saved a black tin box with a collection of Josiah and Nancy's letters, including the one that offers this intriguing glimpse of lightship life in the 1870s.

There were still many active lightship stations when the responsibilities of the Lighthouse Service (formerly the Light-House Board) were turned over to the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939. But gradually, in the interests of efficiency and automation, they were retired or replaced with fixed structures, such as Texas towers. The Hen & Chickens station was discontinued in 1954, after 88 years of service. The last American lightship, on Nantucket Shoals, was retired in 1983. Now progressively advanced technological instruments of navigation plot the precise location of ships, and monstrous sea buoys beam information as well as light to maintain safe pilotage in coastal waters. Only through lightships preserved in museums, or through documents like Josiah Richmond's chatty letter, can we gain an understanding of this once vital element of maritime life.

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A West Hartford, Connecticut, native and graduate of the University of Louisville, Nancy R. Whittier worked at United Technologies Research Department as a technical research assistant before retiring to raise a family. An avid sailor and researcher, she is editing the letters and journals of her great-grandparents, Captain Josiah and Nancy Knights Richmond.

Collecting for America and the Sea

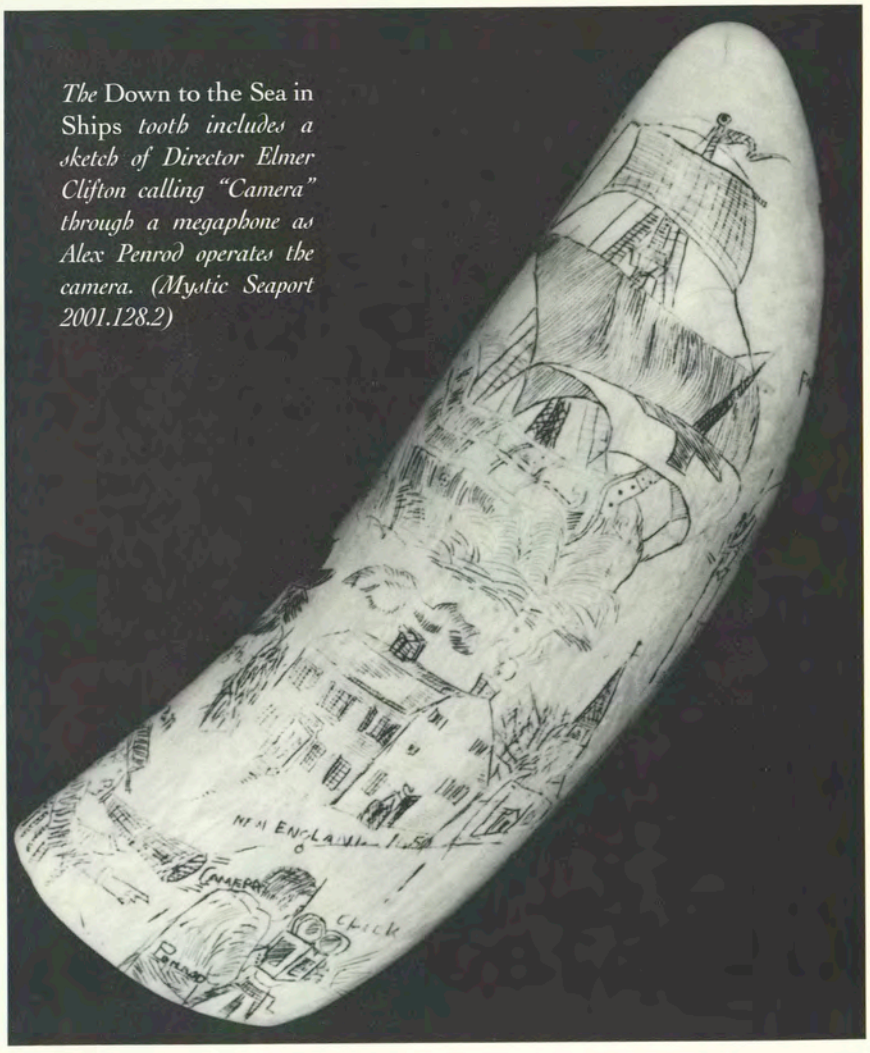
The Raymond McKee Collection

CHERYL B. CHAPUT

The *Charles W. Morgan* is a lucky ship. In 1921 she had just ended an 80-year career in the whale fisheries. She was tired-looking and a bit worn when opportunity came knocking for a brief second career, one of the glitter and glamour of movie stardom in the silent film spectacular *Down to the Sea in Ships*. She had already played a small role in the 1916 film, *Miss Petticoats*, earning enough as the whaling bark *"Harpoon"* to be fitted out for a 1916-17 whaling voyage to Desolation Island in the Indian Ocean. This time, the movies saved her from neglect at the end of her seagoing career.[1]

Down to the Sea in Ships was written by John L.E. Pell, a journalist with ambitions to be a playwright and screenwriter. A native of Westport, Massachusetts, near New Bedford, he was inspired by tales he had heard from old whalemen when he was a child. In 1921 he gained the support of New Bedford's board of commerce to produce a popular film that would offer an accurate picture of the city's whaling heritage. The Whaling Film Corporation was chartered in August 1921 to produce the film.[2]

To direct the film the corporation approached the famous Hollywood director D.W. Griffith, and he suggested Elmer Clifton, a star of Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* and his sometime assistant director. Hoping to establish his reputation as a director, Clifton joined the project. Because of the need for on-the-water photography, the corporation obtained the services of Alex G. Penrod, an instructor at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, who had developed new processes in ocean photography during World War I.[3]



The Down to the Sea in Ships *tooth includes a sketch of Director Elmer Clifton calling "Camera" through a megaphone as Alex Penrod operates the camera. (Mystic Seaport 2001.128.2)*

The *Morgan* was already cast as the whaleship lead, but she was not in condition to undertake a voyage; nor was the company prepared to expend the time and money necessary to outfit and operate her. As a speedier, more comfortable platform for shots of whaling, the company chartered the 122-foot


"Down to the Sea in Ships"

Produced by ELMER CLIFTON

THE CHARACTERS — THE PLAYERS

William W. Morgan . . . *William Walcot*
Henry Morgan . . . *William Cavanaugh*
"Dot" Morgan . . . *Clara Bow*
Little Patience . . . *Elizabeth Fo[illegible]*
Patience Morgan . . . *Miss Marguerite Courtot*
Thomas Allan Dexter . . . *Raymond McKee*
Little Tommie . . . *Thomas White*
Samuel Siggs . . . *J. Thornton Baston*
Jake Finne[illegible] . . . *Robert Hartigan*
"Jimmy" . . . *Agnes Turner*
"Scuff" Smith . . . *Leigh R. Smith*
The Town Crier . . . *Curtis Pierce*
"Henny" Clark . . . *Ada Laycock*
Nahoma . . . *Clarice Vance*
"Judy" Peggs . . . *Juliette Courtot*
Capt. the "Morgan" . . . *Capt. J. A. Tilton*
Siggs' Shadow . . . *Austin Gorham*

All postal cards addressed and handed to the ushers or left at the box office will be mailed.





LEFT: This promotional postcard for Down to the Sea in Ships *lists the cast and depicts a crucial scene when the evil Samuel Siggs (J. Thornton Baston) gives an ultimatum to Patience Morgan (Marguerite Courtot). (Mystic Seaport 1988.23.490) TOP RIGHT: Dot (Clara Bow) is caught by the mate in a trypot in the* Morgan*'s 'tween decks in this still from* Down to the Sea in Ships. *(Mystic Seaport 1988.63.10) BOTTOM RIGHT: Playing Thomas Dexter and Patience Morgan, Raymond McKee and Marguerite Courtot pose with the* Charles W. Morgan *in the background (Mystic Seaport 1988.63.7)*

motor fishing schooner *Gaspe,* recruited a small crew of experienced whalemen in addition to the crew of actors, and sent her to the grounds off Haiti in February 1922. The *Gaspe* went under the command of Captain James A. Tilton, a veteran whaleman who had made 19 voyages in the Western Arctic and the Atlantic between 1890 and 1920. His crew was a mixture of real West Indian and Cape Verdean whalemen and real actors in pancake makeup.

From the beginning, the Whaling Film Corporation had intended this to be a documentary that was also filled with the melodramatic suspense popular in silent films at the time. During filming the *Gaspe* took four whales, including one that tried out 100 barrels of oil.[4]

Perhaps the Caribbean filming was not entirely successful, for later in the spring the whaleship *Wanderer* stood in for the *Morgan* in sailing and whaling scenes filmed off New Bedford. Although stunt doubles were used in the sailing scenes, the deck and below deck scenes were all filmed aboard the *Charles W. Morgan* in New Bedford Harbor.

The story is one of of two lovers, who, sadly, cannot marry because the girl's father requires his son-in-law to be a whaleman. The gentleman, a factory owner, signs aboard a whaleship in order to win the girl he loves. But alas, while he is away the evil competition, who has lied





ABOVE: McKee prepares to harpoon a sperm whale in this still from Down to the Sea in Ships. *(Mystic Seaport 1988.63.4) RIGHT: As greenhand Thomas Allan Dexter, Raymond McKee poses in the hoops, on watch for whales, in this still from the film. (Mystic Seaport 1988.63.9)*

to the father about his whaling experience, is about to marry the obedient daughter, when, at the last moment . . . tense piano crescendo . . . our hero returns!

This was silent film diva Clara Bow's second film, although it was the first in which her scenes were not all left on the cutting-room floor. She later became famous as the "It Girl," from the vivacious character who had a magnetic personality (as in she's "got it") in the film called *It.*

Down to the Sea in Ships starred Raymond McKee and Marguerite Courtot as the leading characters. Fittingly, they married in real life in 1923, shortly after the film was made. Like so many greenhand whalemen, McKee was born far from salt water; in his case, Iowa. After work on the stage he had appeared in propaganda films during his Army Medical Corps service in France during the war, and this was a chance for him to become a star. Raymond McKee may be familiar to Mystic Seaport members as the intrepid sailor who spots the whale in the video of scenes from the movie that are shown in the Museum's exhibit, *Voyages: Stories of America and the Sea.* That was no stunt man up in the hoops, or in the whaleboat that was overturned by the whale!

McKee himself related, "I felt the boat lift and the only thought that struck me seemed funny, because I thought 'Why, this is just like being shot out of a volcano.' The next thing I knew I was diving to get clear of the broken-backed boat and the clutter of wreckage that was following me in. As I dove the whale must have been easing up, for I can remember being bumped aside by some smooth, slippery, rubbery mass. Then I broke surface." Director Elmer Clifton joked in the same interview that it was fortunate they got the scene on the first take![5]

During the filming of *Down to the Sea in Ships,* both in New Bedford and in the Caribbean, McKee took much interest in the professional whalers, endeavoring to learn some of their skills in sailing and in scrimshanding. As a result, he acquired quite a collection of sperm whale teeth with scenes of their Caribbean voyage artistically rendered on them by these skilled men, including a tooth showing several of the actors (front and back views!); Director Elmer Clifton wielding his megaphone; and Cameraman Alex. G. Penrod peering through the lens.

The film was shown to an enthusiastic New Bedford audience in the





TOP LEFT: In his later years Raymond McKee engraved this fanciful view of Maui's Pioneer Inn, with a cask marked Chas. W. Morgan in the foreground, on a tooth probably obtained from Japanese whalers who called at Honolulu. (Mystic Seaport, 2001.128.12) RIGHT: Inspired by his "whaling" experience to the end, Raymond McKee decorated this tooth with scrimshawed dolphins. (Mystic Seaport 2001.128.15)



This tooth depicts prominent characters in Down to the Sea in Ships, *some listed by real name—Baston, McKee, Walcott, Cavanaugh—and some by character name—Judy (Juliette Courtot) and Dot (Clara Bow). (Mystic Seaport 2001.128.2)*

fall of 1922 and opened nationally to lesser acclaim in 1923. The mixed aims of New Bedford to celebrate its history in documentary style and of Elmer Clifton to make a popular melodrama resulted in a film that didn't attain either goal. Yet, for Mystic Seaport the film provides some of the best movie footage of whaling and good documentation of the *Charles W. Morgan* at the end of her career. And there would be a further legacy.

Raymond McKee never became a great Hollywood star, but he maintained ties to his greatest starring role through his lifelong interest in whaling memorabilia. In his retirement he also practiced the art of scrimshaw and proved himself a talented artist. Living in Honolulu, Hawai'i, in the 1960s, he found that he could buy whale teeth from the Japanese whalers who stopped in port for provisions. Using a sharp scribing awl, he engraved, among others, images of dolphins, a sperm whale, an eagle, and the Pioneer Inn Bar of Lahina, Maui.[6]

After Raymond McKee's death in 1984, and Margaret Courtot McKee's passing in 1986, their son, Raymond Courtot McKee approached Mystic Seaport about his father's collection. The Museum was very fortunate to be able to acquire this remarkable collection, and Mr. McKee was very pleased to find an appropriate home for it. His father's work will remain together as a collection, and what better place to be preserved and memorialized than in the home of his father's "costar," the *Charles W. Morgan.*

NOTES

1. John F. Leavitt, *The Charles W. Morgan,* 2nd. ed., (Mystic: Mystic Seaport, 1998), 79.

2. For a complete history of the production, see Ronald Zboray, "The Making of *Down to the Sea in Ships,*" RF 284, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.; Gordon W. Thomas, *Fast & Able: Life Stories of Great Gloucester Fishing Vessels* (Gloucester: Gloucester 350th Anniversary Celebration, 1973), 179-81.

5. *The Morning Mercury,* Saturday, 14 April 1923, Scrapbook AC999 D3.6, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport.

6. Raymond Courtot McKee to William N. Peterson, 20 December 2001; Raymond Courtot McKee to William N. Peterson, 4 December 2001, Correspondence File, 2001.128.

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

Boats for Young People

A Selection to Announce Publication of the New Edition of *Mystic Seaport Watercraft*

Never before has such a comprehensive compilation of watercraft in a museum collection been published.The Mystic Seaport watercraft collection, largest in the United States, is a treasury of American boat and vessel types. Not simply a collection of watercraft, it is also tangible evidence of a practical art form: the shaping of wood and other materials into useful and aesthetic floating objects.

In this new edition of a work first published in 1979, original author Maynard Bray is joined by Mystic Seaport's former curator Benjamin A.G. Fuller and present associate curator for small craft Peter T. Vermilya to describe and annotate the nearly 500 watercraft at the Museum (nearly double the number included in the first edition). This includes the vessels accessioned into the permanent collection as well as a number of boats that are used by special programs at the Museum, and others that are made available for public use in the Museum's popular Boathouse boat-livery program.

Mystic Seaport Watercraft features 455 entries and 721 photographs, illustrations, and plans, covering 140 sailing craft, from catboat to full-rigged ship; 220 rowing craft, from skiff to rowing shell; 51 powered vessels, from outboard to steamboat; 56 paddling and sailing canoes; and 4 iceboats.

The book includes supplementary reading lists for specific boats and boat types. For easy reference, the watercraft are arranged in four categories, according to their means of propulsion. The entire volume is thoroughly indexed. For the historian, the boatbuilder, and for those who appreciate fine craftsmanship, *Mystic Seaport Watercraft* will provide hours of pleasure and will serve as an inspiring reference.

The following selection of entries and sample photos represents some of the watercraft in the collections of Mystic Seaport that were built for or by young people. All were meant for happy, instructional moments on the water, some are classics of their type, and two represent tragic stories of young lives ended too early, but now memorialized in the collections of Mystic Seaport.

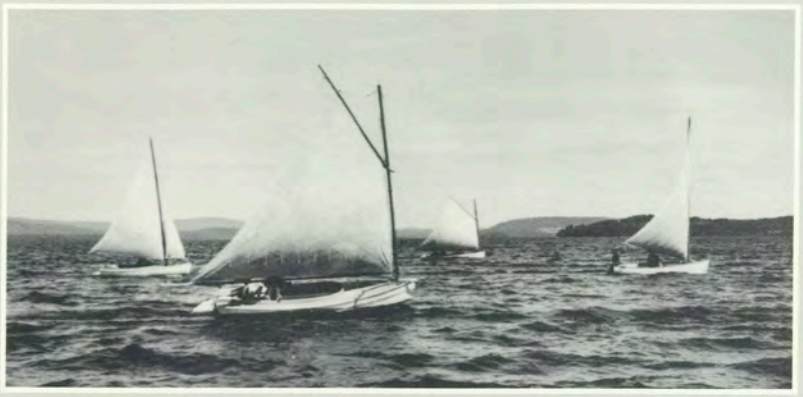
John G.
SAILING DINGHY
12' 10" x 4' 11" ca. 1930-31

This lapstrake round-bottom, cat-rigged sailing dinghy was built by John Gardner circa 1930-31 while he was the workshop counselor at Pine Island Camp, a traditional summer camp for boys established in 1902 on Pine Island in Great Pond, Belgrade Lakes, Maine. Dr. Eugene L. Swan, the camp's director bankrolled John's project with a hundred-dollar bill, the first that John had ever seen. There was no power on the island, and John with the help of a few young campers built the boat entirely with hand tools. Her Marconi rig called for a 21' mast, which Dr. Swan insisted be cut down to 18' in the interest of safety. C.J. Swan, youngest of the three Swan brothers, was a fine sailor, and he took over the boat when it was first launched. The boat was named in John's honor, long after he left the camp.

The design, a precursor to frostbite dinghies popular in the mid-1930s, was by Charles D. Mower, a prominent New York yacht designer. Mower's plans appeared in popular boating magazines like *The Rudder*, *Motor Boating*, and *Yachting*, which John eagerly read. Mower wrote with clarity, without pretense, and encouraged amateur construction of his versatile boats. Mower claimed to have built his first boat in a stable and his second under a rough shed, and this appealed to John, who learned boatbuilding as a boy with his family on the banks of the St. Croix River in Maine.

The hull is planked in 3/8" northern white cedar, with steam-bent white oak frames 7/8" x 5/8" on 8" centers, and copper-rivet-fastened at the laps and through the frames. Brass screws are used elsewhere, and the inwale, 1-3/4" x 5/8", is fastened to the frames with copper rivets. The 3/16" steel-boilerplate centerboard is missing, but the hole for the pivot pin and the block for the pennant remain. Her two-piece stem and staunch stern knee are in excellent condition, and the plank laps are still tight.

After years of summer sailing at the camp, *John G.* was modified to carry an outboard, and eventually



The John G. (right) *leads the Pine Island Camp fleet racing across Great Pond. (Photo: Courtesy of Pine Island Camp, Mystic Seaport 1993.12.27)*

retired from service. In 1990, 60 years after her launching, she was donated to Mystic Seaport where John Gardner again laid eyes on her. He expected her to be in rough shape, but after close inspection on her arrival, he was inspired to write a piece for the *Pine Needle*, the Pine Island Camp newsletter, proclaiming his amazement at her condition: "True, the centerboard, rudder and rig were gone, and the paint had long since turned to shoddy grime. But what I saw, while battered, was essentially repairable. She had lost none of her original shapeliness, no planks were missing or broken, rivets were tight, bent timbers remained unbroken."

Despite the research, John was unable to confirm her exact date of construction, nor the design, although all signs point to the Snapper, published in *Motor Boating* in 1925. As far as is known, *John G.* is the oldest documented boat which John Gardner built.

STATUS: Fair Condition.

DONOR: Benjamin B. Swan

ACCESSION NO. 1990.142
(*Watercraft*, page 38)



The Rookie-Class sailing dinghy Teal. *(Photo: Deborah Patterson, Mystic Seaport 1987.44B)*

Teal
ROOKIE CLASS SKIFF
9' 0" x 3' 6" 1930s

Henry Richardson Shepley designed the Rookie Class in part to test his theory about the best way to get young children into sailing. He felt that if youngsters were provided with a boat that was small enough and light enough to be completely controlled by the children themselves, they would learn to sail as readily and naturally as they learned to walk or swim.

About 50 of these little boats were spread between the Marion and Cohasset yacht clubs on Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, during the 1930s and were used by children ranging in age from four to eight for within-the-breakwater sailing. Some were still sailing at Cohasset in the mid-1980s.

The boats were built by Charles Anderson and a Mr. Parry of Wareham, Massachusetts. Simply built, the boats had single-plank sides, a centerboard, a short foredeck, and set a single 36-square-foot leg-o-mutton sail using iron rings for mast hoops. The first boats built cost $25 apiece.

STATUS: Good, unrestored. Rig missing.

DONOR: Mrs. T.E. Drew

FURTHER READING: Swan, William U. "Break 'Em in Early." *Yachting*, August, 1933.

ACCESSION NO. 1987.44
(*Watercraft*, page 40)

Galena (ex-*Fox*, ex-*Cockle*)
CUTTER TYPE
18' 9" x 6' 5" 1913

James E. Graves of Marblehead, Massachusetts, built this boat to the design of James Purdon. *Cockle*, as she was first named, was to be used as a pleasure boat by a couple of boys. Later she belonged to W. Starling Burgess whose young son, Frederic, sailed her extensively around Provincetown, where the family lived at the time. Purdon based his design on the English "plank-on-edge" cutters of the 1880s.

STATUS: Restored 1969-72, approximately 60% original, good condition.



Galena *under sail in Long Island Sound. (Photo: Courtesy of Dr. Frederic Tudor, Mystic Seaport 1972-5-111)*

DONOR: James Geier

FURTHER READING:
Darvin, Tom. *The Rudder Treasury*. New York: The Rudder Publishing Co., 1953. A reprint of *The Rudder*, March, 1915.

Tudor, Dr. Frederic. Letter published in *The Log of Mystic Seaport*, Spring, 1972.

ACCESSION NO. 1957.537
Plans for 1957.537 are available from Mystic Seaport's Watercraft Plans Collection.
(*Watercraft*, page 66)

Fiddler
HERRESHOFF BUZZARDS BAY 15' CLASS
24' 9" x 6' 9" ca. 1902

N.G. Herreshoff designed this class in 1898, and the first boats sold for $666.66 according to the Herreshoff Manufacturing Co. records. *Fiddler* was built a few years later for Miss Caroline M. Dabney, who was also her first skipper, and apparently a good one, for in 1904 she won the championship sponsored by the Beverly Yacht Club of Marion, Massachusetts. As years passed, Miss Dabney became Mrs. Parker and in 1933 her son, Augustin, outdid his mother, and *Fiddler* won the Van Rensselaer Cup, presented to the champion "15" of all Buzzards Bay.

In all, about 90 boats were built to this model, some having ballast keels six inches lower and known as Newport 15-footers, and others with Marconi rigs and pointed coamings, which came out in 1922 as the Watch Hill 15-footers.

STATUS: Restored 1971, approximately 65% original, good condition.

DONOR: Augustin H. Parker, Jr.

FURTHER READING:
Bennett Jenny. "Project Profile: The Return of the E-Class." *WoodenBoat* 124, May/June, 1995.

——— . "The Herreshoff 15." *The Boatman* 30, Nov/Dec, 1995.

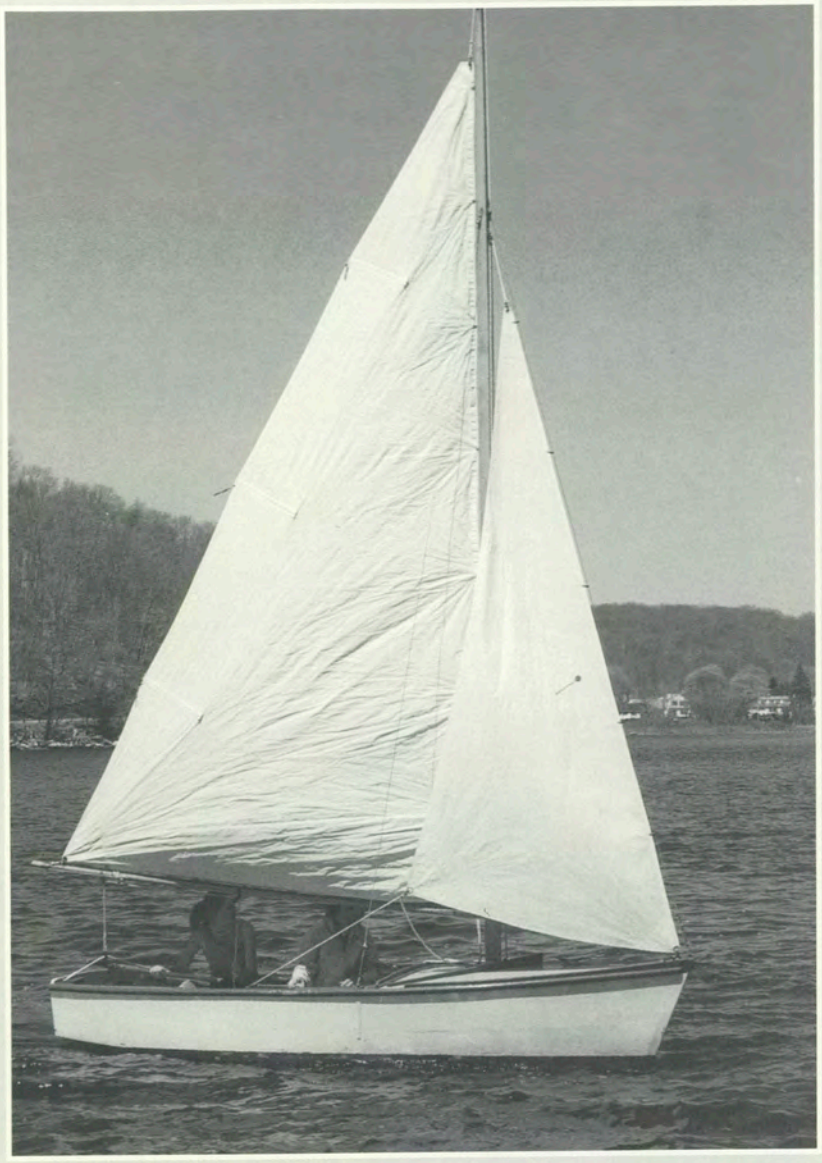
Bray, Maynard. "Replacing a Keel and Centerboard Trunk." *WoodenBoat* 124, May/June, 1995.

Cheever, David. "The Herreshoff Fifteens." *The Log of Mystic Seaport*, Summer, 1972.

ACCESSION NO. 1959.1286
(*Watercraft*, page 74)



Fiddler *is shown here being sailed by her original owner, Miss Caroline Dabney, and a crew of two other young women. (Photo: Gift of Augustin H. Parker, Jr., Mystic Seaport 1960.348)*



Half Hitch *under sail in the Mystic River. (Photo: Courtesy of Williams College-Mystic Seaport Maritime Studies Program)*

Half-Hitch
SEA SCOUT SLOOP BY
SCHOCK AND HARVIE
13' 2" x 5' 8" 1940

Half-Hitch was built by Mystic Seaport Trustee James Harvie and his father, John Barr Harvie, at Barrington, Rhode Island, in 1940 from a design by Edson I. Schock. The natural crook knees used in her construction are from a family apple tree blown down in the hurricane of 1938.

Professor Schock of the University of Rhode Island designed these sturdy 13' sloops in 1938 as a gift to the Narragansett Sea Scout Council, naming the design the Narragansett Bay Sea Scout. The vessel was intended to be a do-it-yourself project, built and sailed by Sea Scouts. Before World War II, 20 Sea Scouts were built on Narragansett Bay and 117 plans were sold to other Sea Scout units.

The Harvies made some modification to the original design, using mahogany planking rather than plywood, and slightly lengthening the deck. Mr. Harvie donated the *Half-Hitch* to the Williams College-Mystic Seaport Program in 1986.

STATUS: Very good condition; garboards and centerboard well replaced at Mystic Seaport; sailed each year.

DONOR: James Harvie

FURTHER READING:
Williams, J. Harold. *Scout Trail 1910-1962, History of the Boy Scout Movement in Rhode Island. An Eyewitness Report*. Providence, Rhode Island: Rhode Island Boy Scouts and Narragansett Council, Boy Scouts of America, 1964.

Plans for "Sea Scout," Edson I. Schock Design No. 43, are available from Mystic Seaport's Watercraft Plans Collection. (*Watercraft*, page 87)

Joseph Conrad (ex-*Georg Stage*)
SCHOOLSHIP
OFFICIAL NO. 235832
111' 0" x 25' 2" 1882

"A single topsail full-rigged ship crossing three royals, she was 100 feet on the waterline, 25 feet beam, drew 12 feet, grossed 212 tons. She had been, when I found her, for 52 years a schoolship for the Danes. She was built by Burmeister and Wain in Copenhagen in 1882, of Swedish iron; her name was the *Georg Stage*, after the shipowner who financed her building, and she had been training 80 young Danes annually. Built for safety, she was exceptionally strong and as able and seaworthy as a good ship could be made." Thus Alan Villiers described the little ship he would rename *Joseph Conrad*, giving a sketch of her history in his book *Cruise of the Conrad*. (One correction to Villiers: The little ship was built for Carl Frederick Stage, but named for his son Georg Stage, who had died young of tuberculosis.)

Training her cadets in piloting, sail-handling, and general seaman-



The schoolship Georg Stage *in Copenhagen Harbor at the turn of the century with 80 Danish boys aboard. (Photo: Holger Knoidsen, The Danish Maritime Museum, SR-42:47; Mystic Seaport 1962.1252)*

ship, the *Georg Stage* cruised the Baltic and North Sea annually. Although she was equipped with a steam engine and retractable propeller, she rarely operated under power. In 1905 her routine was interrupted tragically when a steamship plowed into the *Stage* at night, sending her to the bottom with the loss of 22 boys. Raised and repaired, with the addition of watertight bulkheads, the ship returned to service until a new *Georg Stage* was launched in 1934.

Villiers bought the old ship and sailed her around the world during 1934-36. Afterwards, the *Conrad* became millionaire G. Huntington Hartford's yacht for two years. She then served as a training vessel for the U.S. Maritime Commission during World War II. She came to Mystic Seaport as a donation from the Maritime Commission in 1947 and has been on exhibit ever since.

STATUS: 1969, lower hull lined with ferro-cement; 1977, partially replated; 1984-85, maindeck frame repaired, new teak decking laid, arrangement of maindeck structures returned to 1934 configuration; 1987 fo'c'slehead ironwork repaired and new teak planking laid; 1995, poop deck ironwork repaired and new teak planking laid.

DONOR: U.S. Maritime Commission

FURTHER READING:

The Joseph Conrad, 1882-1982. Mystic: Mystic Seaport, 1982.

Underhill, Harold, A. *Sail Training and Cadet Ships*. Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, Ltd., 1956. Contains photographs and plans of this vessel as both *Georg Stage* and *Joseph Conrad*.

Villiers, Alan. *Cruise of the Conrad*. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1950.

——— . *The Making of a Sailor*. New York: William Morrow & Company, 1938.

——— . *Stormalong*. New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1937.

Mystic Seaport's *Joseph Conrad* archive includes three rigged models, four ships logs, three crew diaries, three movies, 16 oral-history interviews, and an extensive collection of photographs and drawings.

ACCESSION NO. 1947.1948
Plans for 1947.1948 are available from Mystic Seaport's Watercraft Plans Collection.
(*Watercraft,* page 143)

ADIRONDACK GUIDEBOAT
BY GRANT
#1905-9
15' 1" x 3' 3" 1905

Thanks to meticulous records and other shop artifacts, which are preserved at the Adirondack Museum, and thanks to a boat-building business that spanned more than half a century between 1880 and 1934, the Grants of Boonville, New York, are perhaps the best-known guideboat builders of the Adirondacks. Part of this was due to a distinctive and functional style of boat developed by Dwight Grant, a boat with a raking bow instead of the tumblehome bow generally used by the central Adirondack builders. Part was due to special planes that allowed the Grants to make a lapped plank with a shoulder rather than with the more common and weaker feather edge. It was also due to a steady demand for boats from the members of the Adirondack League Club, where guideboats remained popular long after motorboats had made them less fashionable in other areas of the mountains. Another contributing factor was the club's banning of motors on two of its lakes. Both Dwight Grant and his son Lewis were well known at the Adirondack League Club, where they served as managers for many years.

W.D. Baldwin, head of the Otis Elevator Company, bought this boat for his daughter Louise in 1905, the year before Dwight Grant died. That same year Baldwin bought three additional Grant boats for his Bisby Lake camp, doubling the size of its Grant guideboat fleet.

STATUS: Excellent, in use until given to Mystic Seaport.



The Grant-built guideboat with oars and seat in place. (Photo: Maynard Bray, Mystic Seaport 1985.84A)

over the stern as a rudder and a rock in the bow for ballast. *The Beano* also played a romantic role in 1922, when the donor's father proposed to his future bride aboard her.

STATUS: Good condition, recently painted, largely original.

DONOR: J. Devereaux deGozzaldi, in memory of his father, Jake deGozzaldi

ACCESSION NO. 1982.36
(*Watercraft,* page 234)

DONOR: Mary Louise Deupree (Mrs. James Y.), in memory of Louise Baldwin Vanderhoef

ACCESSION NO. 1985.84
(*Watercraft,* page 224)

The Beano
PEAPOD FROM LITTLE DEER ISLE BY MACE EATON
14' 0" x 4' 2" ca. 1914

In Maine, smart summer people turn to a local boatbuilder when they need a small boat for errands or recreation. When the family of the donor needed a boat for their summer cottage on Little Deer Isle, they contracted with Mace Eaton, whose shop was then on Blastow Cove, for a 14' seven-plank lapstrake pod with mast step for $20.

Eaton, in his late teens, agreed to a very low price, probably because part of the contract was to use cedar from another summer resident's woods (which had to be selected, cut, planed, and milled) rather than prefinished lumber. After finishing, the builder asked for and got another $20. The boat was used for picnics, fishing, exercise, and general utility. The donor's mother and uncle rigged her for sailing, with only an oar



Peapod 1982.36 in use on the coast of Maine. (Photo: Courtesy of J.D. deGozzaldi, Mystic Seaport 1982.36.2)



During a canoeing expedition in 1913, Osborne Merrill (chin on hands, right) looks out from under his Indian Girl canoe. (Photo: Courtesy of Kate and Fred Karshick, Mystic Seaport 2000.40.2)

Sarah Ellen
OPEN WOOD-CANVAS CANOE BY RUSHTON
INDIAN GIRL MODEL
16' 0" x 2' 9" 1913

J. Henry Rushton introduced this model in 1901, attempting to maintain his leadership in canoe-building. His new Indian Girl could be built as an all-cedar canoe or as a canvas-covered wooden canoe. To get his production organized, Rushton hired a Bangor, Maine, builder who began to work in 1902. Rushton's all-wood Canadian models were twice as expensive as was the all-wood model of this boat. These wood-canvas canoes were popular and kept the shop in business for 10 years after Rushton died in 1906.

As a Clarkson College sophomore, Osborne Merrill bought his new Indian Girl for $41 from Van's, the Potsdam general store, May 1, 1913, putting down $10. Merrill planned to use his new boat on the St. Lawrence—the "Big River"—where he worked as a host on the tour boat *St. Lawrence.* On the rough, windy afternoon of August 18, he took off to paddle a New York friend the 15 miles around Grindstone Island. Returning to Clayton, the canoe capsized about 40 feet from the dock. The friend waded ashore; Osborne never surfaced. Despite being pulled from the water in minutes, he never revived, a young heart-attack victim.

After his funeral, his mother, Sarah Ellen, arranged to have the canoe stored in a barn at their Heuvelton New York, farm, from whence his brother Aubrey "Doc" Merrill retrieved the boat in 1985. He gave the canoe to his daughter and son-in-law who restored it in a WoodenBoat clinic at Buffalo in 1992.

In September 1913, Mr. Van Ness, proprietor of Van's, had to write Osborne's father apologetically for the balance of $31 due on the canoe, a sad postscript.

STATUS: Excellent, recanvassed and refinished by donor in 1992-93.

DONOR: Kate & Fred Karshick

FURTHER READING:
Bond, Hallie. *Boats and Boating in the Adirondacks.* Blue Mountain Lake, New York: The Adirondack Museum; Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995.

Crowley, William. *Rushton's Rowboats and Canoes, The 1903 Catalog in Perspective.* Blue Mountain Lake, New York: The Adirondack Museum; Camden Maine: International Marine Publishing Co., 1983

Rushton Indian Girl Canoes, 1910; reprint, Madison, Wisconsin: Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, 1983.

ACCESSION NO. 2000.40
(*Watercraft,* page 358)

Mystic Seaport Watercraft **(ISBN 0-913372-94-3) is a 420-page, 8 1/2" x 11" clothbound book, which sells for $39.95. It is available through bookstores nationwide, but take advantage of your Mystic Seaport member's discount and purchase it through the Mystic Seaport Bookstore at (800) 331.2665, or by email at *bookstore@mysticseaport.org*.**

William Main Doerflinger, Dean of Maritime Music Scholars

DAN MILNER

William Main Doerflinger grew up surrounded by water. Residing during the school year on largely rural Staten Island, New York—connected to Manhattan only by ferryboat—he had a view out onto the busy Narrows through which sailed great oceangoing vessels and coastal craft entering and leaving the Port of New York. At his family's summer home on Long Island Sound, where he learned to fish and swim, he became attuned to the rhythms of the ocean which lapped against the sea wall of the property. This growing fascination with the sea was hardened when, at the age of 16, he sailed to Hamburg on a merchant ship owned by a family friend.

Bill attended Princeton University, where he excelled at languages, worked on the school newspaper, and first began to study folk songs. At the close of his third year, he traveled to Nova Scotia with a couple of friends on a trip that combined what would become his two lifelong hobbies: magic and traditional song. The three young men hired a horse and wagon and went from village to village, renting the schoolhouse for the night. While Bill prepared for the evening's magic show, his pals covered the town with flyers advertising "The Impossible Possible"—William Main Doerflinger.

The magic shows went well and Bill raised enough money to stay on in Nova Scotia in hopes of collecting maritime songs. Much later, he admitted to his son, Tom Doerflinger, that he was at first very apprehensive about approaching total strangers to ask whether they knew any old fishing songs. His fears were soon dispelled. Setting out by bus down Digby Neck on his first day of collecting, he mentioned his purpose to the driver, Guy Morehouse. "Oh, like this?" asked Mr. Morehouse, whose father had been a sea captain, and he promptly sang "The Ship *Rambolee*," about the shipwreck of the HMS *Ramillies* off the coast of Devon, England, in 1760. Bill never looked back after that encounter and the 60 or so songs that he collected on that first trip formed the basis of his Princeton thesis and would become the nucleus of his brilliant book on the folk songs of the American Northeast and Canadian Maritimes.



William Main Doerflinger (1910-2000).

After completing his undergraduate degree, Bill left Princeton in 1932 and entered into the Depression's greatest growth industry: social work. Always caring and compassionate, but always with proper gentlemanly reserve, Bill worked first with families at The Association for Improving the Conditions of the Poor. Next, at the Children's Aid Society, he counseled boys and helped them find work. Many, he observed, had fled to New York City to unburden their hard-pressed parents. Undoubtedly, his experience as a social worker contributed immensely to his success as a folk-song collector, for William Main Doerflinger truly understood the totality of traditional song. He knew that folk songs existed because of folk singers, and he loved them just as much as he loved the words and melodies of the songs and the history that created them. "I tried to find out as much as I could about their lives," he told *The New York Times*. "You have to get the general context of experience to which the songs are related."

Bill was also contributing book critiques to the *Saturday Review of Literature* during this period and, through that, was ultimately able to

find work in publishing, the field in which he was to spend a full 40 years. In life, one thing leads to another and it was at The MacMillan Company that William Doerflinger met and fell in love with the woman who would become his first wife, Joy Holmer, but there were hurdles to be cleared first. For one thing, Bill had already accepted a graduate scholarship to Harvard; more importantly, Joy had already agreed to do relief work in war-torn China. Nearly a year later, in July of 1939, William Main Doerflinger crossed Canada by train and the Pacific by steamship. Filled with Chinese junks, commercial vessels, and warships of many nations, Shanghai harbor made an indelible impression on him. Sometime afterwards, as the pair traveled to Peking, a United States consular officer in Manchuria told them, "You have come here just at the right time. The Japanese have repaired a big breech in a railroad bridge about three days ago. They sent a test locomotive across the bridge and it fell through… but don't worry, the Japanese military engineers have worked on the bridge again so, by the time you get there, they should have finished." Bill later remarked to Tom Doerflinger that he made sure the windows of his compartment were open as the train reached that all-important spot. Bill and Joy married in 1940 and Bill took a job as managing editor of *American Mercury* magazine and started work on his classic book of maritime and lumbering songs, only to be interrupted by World War II.

In traumatic times, most couples bind closer together but the extraordinary, adventuresome Doerflingers took separate paths, leading Joy to India on a humanitarian mission and Bill to North Africa and then to Italy working in psychological warfare with the Office of War Information. They were reunited in the United States in 1945. Bill ultimately returned to publishing, editing books on a plethora of topics for a long and diverse list of authors stretching from Woody Guthrie to Sir Edmund Hillary to Francois Sagan. The autobiography of the prolific Oklahoma bard, in particular, was a major undertaking. During that time the Guthrie family moved into the Doerflinger home, and Joy co-wrote *Bound for Glory* with Woody. Following Joy's untimely death, Bill was comforted by his sister-in-law, Ann Holmer. She became his second wife in 1950. The couple honeymooned in Nova Scotia. It is not known whether any folk songs were collected on that trip.

An intellectual with an obvious love of adventure and a passion for fun, William Main Doerflinger wrote three books. *The Middle Passage* (co-authored with Roland Barker)—a novel about the Guinea Coast slave trade set in 1812—appeared in 1939. *The Magic Catalogue: A Guide to the Wonderful World of Magic* (1977) rekindles the image of "The Impossible Possible" whose sleight-of-hand prowess bankrolled that first folk song field trip. His major work was first published in 1951 as *Shantymen and Shantyboys*; a revised edition appeared as *Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman* in 1972. In his Preface, Bill described the book as "a collection of songs that sailormen sang aboard deep-water windjammers, in the fishing schooners of the western North Atlantic, and in the West Indies trade; and of ballads of American and Canadian lumbermen." The actual collecting work took place over the 20-year period between 1930 and 1950, not only in the Maritimes but also in New England and New York.

Four chapters (including an essay) are devoted to sea chanteys, the hauling (pull) and heaving (push) work songs that seamen used to coordinate their effort at tasks such as raising and tightening sail, lifting anchor, and pumping bilge. They were the tools of the sailor, truncated simply with a cry of "high enough" or "belay" when a job was over, or elongated extemporaneously to complete a task. "Can't They Dance the Polka" was a shanty sung at the capstan or windlass.

Shipmates listen to me,
I'll tell you in my song
Of the things that happened to me
When I came home from Hong Kong.
To me way, you Santy, my dear honey!
Oh, you New York gals, can't they dance the polka!

As I walked down through Chatham Street,
A fair maid I did meet,
Who kindly asked me to see 'er safe home,
She lived on Bleeker Street.

* * * * * * * *

Just before we sat down to eat
We had another drink,
The liquor was so awful strong
I quickly fell asleep.

When I awoke next morning,
I had an aching head.
There was I Jack all alone,
Stark naked in the bed!

* * * * * * * *

With a flour barrel for a suit of clothes,
I went down Cherry Street.
There Martin Churchill took me in
And sent me around Cape Horn.

Three more chapters deal with the songs and ballads sailors sung for entertainment as they gathered around the main hatch or fo'c'sle head. While these songs could have been on any topic, popular or traditional, Bill Doerflinger chose to include maritime material only in this grouping. One ballad was "The *Flying Cloud*" –

We started on a voyage with a cargo full of slaves.
It would have been better for those poor souls to be going to their graves.
The plague and fever came on board,
swept half of them away.
We dragged their bodies to the rails and threw them to the sea.

It was a short time after, we reached the Cuban shore.

We sold them to the planter to be slaves forevermore,
In the rice and sugarcane to toil beneath the burning sun,
To drag along their wretched life till their career was done.

We again weighed anchor on our ship and put to sea again.
Then Captain Moore he came up on deck and said to us, his men:
"There's gold in plenty to be had far over on the Main.
Now if you agree, my lively lads, I'll tell you how it's gained."

William Main Doerflinger wrote that "The *Flying Cloud*" was a favorite not only under sail but in lumber camps as well. While Bill may have gone out in search of sea songs, he recognized early on that many men of coastal New England and Atlantic Canada spent their summers on shipboard and their winters in the woods. The work in both instances was labor intensive and largely solitary, and musical ability was a highly regarded talent that could brighten many a dull evening. The first verses of "Peter Emberly," a ballad about an accidental death in the forest, highlight the musical affinity between sea and woods.

My name is Peter Emberly, as you may understand,
I was born on Prince Edward's Island, near to the ocean strand.
In eighteen hundred and ninety eight, when the flowers wore a brilliant hue,
I sailed away from my native home, my fortunes to pursue.

I landed in New Brunswick, in a lumbering coun-te-ree;
I hired to work in the lumber woods on the Southwest Mir-a-mi-chi.
I hired to work in the lumber woods, where they cut the spruce logs down,
And while loading teams with yarded logs, received my fatal wound.

Now, there's danger on the ocean where the sea rolls mountains high,
And there's danger in the battlefield where the angry bullets fly.
There's danger in the lumber woods and death lurks solemn there,
And I have fallen a victim into that monstrous snare.

Peter Emberly died in January of 1881 (orally transmitted folk song differs from written history in that details may alter as successive performers reshape a song) when the weather was so rough that no priest was able to attend the burial. Bill Doerflinger was struck by the story. A meticulous researcher, he told me he sought out the grave in the Catholic cemetery of Boiestown, New Brunswick, where Emberly's friends had buried him. Bill's interest was instrumental in the placement of a granite headstone at the site. Two chapters in the collection deal specifically with songs of the lumbering industry, and another three chapters contain a general mixture of other traditional songs.

Much of the lore in *Shanteymen and Shanteyboys* was collected from retired seamen living in New York City. At Sailors' Snug Harbor on Staten Island, Bill located the man who was probably his favorite informant, Richard "Captain Dick" Maitland. Born in Manhattan, Richard Maitland had shipped under sail on the Black Ball Line packet *Alexander Marshall* and numerous other vessels. He was bosun aboard the *General Knox* in 1885. "I was on deck one night," he told Bill Doerflinger, "when I heard a Liverpool man singing it in the fo'c'sle. Yessir, that song hit the spot." Later, "arranged and adapted," it became an international hit. Although a closely related immigration song has been found a few times in Ireland, Bill Doerflinger was the only person ever to collect "The Leaving of Liverpool" from tradition; a little known fact is that he collected it twice, once from Dick Maitland and once from Captain Patrick Tayluer. Immortalized in its verses is the *David Crockett.*, Built at Mystic in 1853 as a California clipper, she spent most of her first four years in the North Atlantic trade between New York and Liverpool.

I've shipped on a Yankee clipper ship,
Davy Crockett *is her name;*
And Burgess is the captain of her,
And they say she's a floating hell.

Tough but fair Captain John Burgess was lost overboard during a South Atlantic gale in 1874 on what was to have been his last voyage before retirement.

William Main Doerflinger, the dean of maritime music scholars and one of North America's great folk song collectors died at his home in New Jersey on 23 December 2000. He was 90 years of age. He was sharp, dignified, and enthusiastic until the last.

At a memorial service in Morristown, New Jersey, on 20 January 2001, William Main Doerflinger's family and friends, and members of the maritime and folk music communities, paid tribute to an exceptional father, humanitarian, and scholar. Selections from the Doerflinger collection, including "The Leaving of Liverpool," were sung by The New York Packet and by Stout.

Modest above all else, Bill Doerflinger received great praise in his lifetime. Carl Sandburg wrote of him in 1951, "His toil was enormous, his scent keen, his fellowship among his human materials fine and lovely." Stan Hugill, last of the chanteymen, put it slightly differently, "Old man Doerflinger really knows his stuff."

The author wishes to thank Thomas Doerflinger for permission to incorporate remarks made by him at William Main Doerflinger's memorial service. Dan Milner is a singer, folksong collector, writer, and retired airline executive who lives in Connecticut.

Mystic Seaport Salutes!

JANE KEENER

One of the great strengths of Mystic Seaport has been the sense that it is a lively, hands-on museum, a place where visitors can experience the past. It is a sensory experience, as visitors see the sights, smell the Stockholm tar, hear the ring of the caulker's mallet, taste the real lemonade, and feel the deck move under them. One of the greatest strengths of Mystic Seaport in creating this experience has been, for almost 35 years, Jane Keener.

From the time Jane first began sharing her talents as a weaver with Museum visitors in the late sixties, or teaching a weaving class in the spring of 1969, she has been in the midst of the creative staff that has developed ways of engaging the visitor and making the experience memorable. Through her firsthand experience, working in the demanding role of interpreter and craftsperson, she approached the rest of her assignments with a keener sense of the needs of the visitor than most others had. This sensibility made Jane a particularly effective staff member in each of her positions as she was given more and more responsibility. She was lured away from the direct educational work of the Museum when she took over the coordination of the vital volunteer program. In this role she worked to make sure that the Museum not only benefited from the important work the volunteers accomplished, but that it was a good experience for the volunteers and the employees with whom they worked.



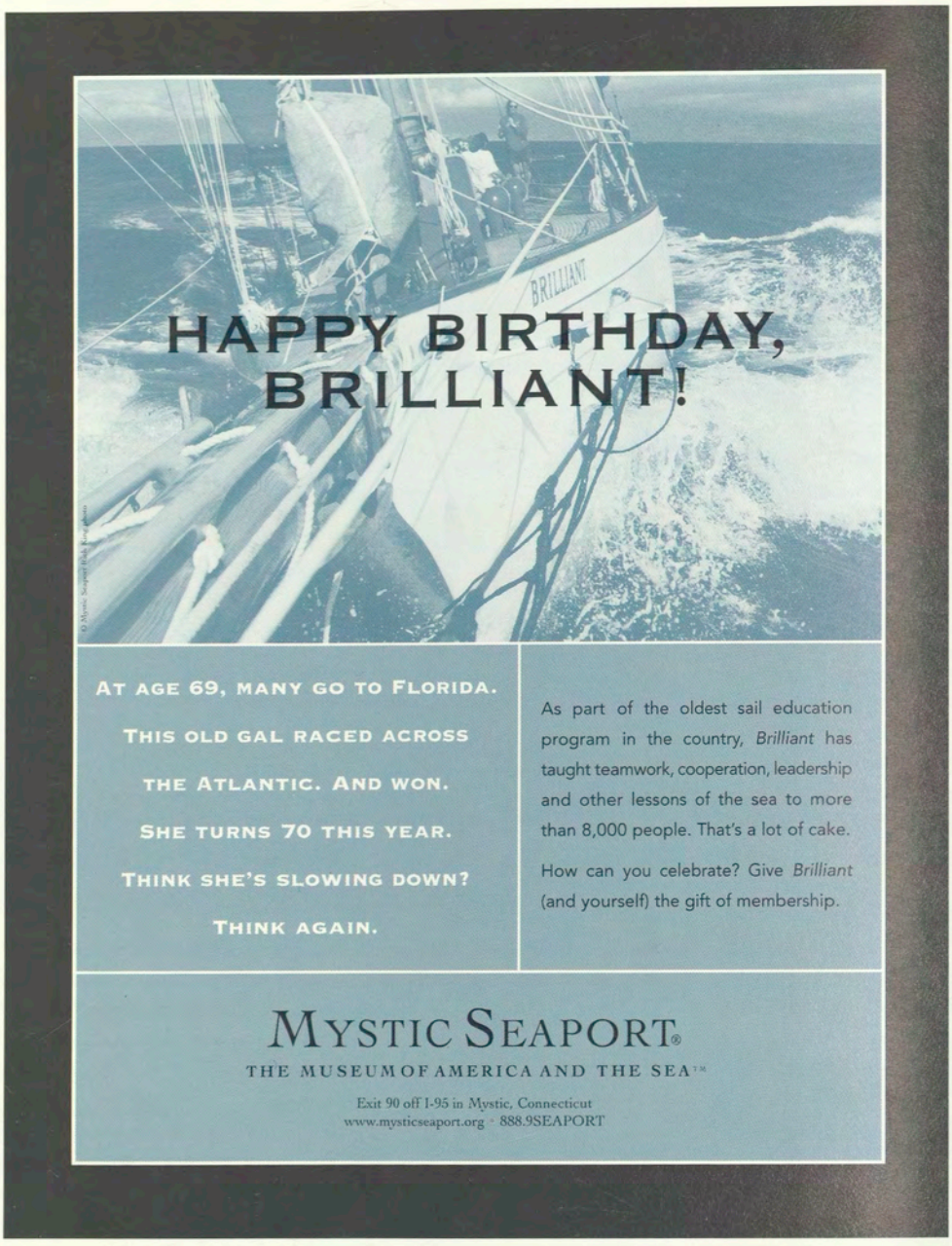
At Jane Keener's retirement party on 12 April, Mystic Seaport staff celebrated her extraordinary career. In honor of Jane's commitment to Museum Education, the Resource Center in Dickerman House has been renamed the Keener Room. Here, President Doug Teeson presents the handmade mahogany room sign to the delighted recipient. (Dennis Murphy photo)

However, it was not long before her interests and talents brought her back to the Education Department, this time as Director of Education with responsibility for interpretation, museum education programs, sail education, and the planetarium. Ultimately, Jane held the position of Vice President for Curatorial and Educational Programs, which covered a wide range of the institution's "museum" programs, the very core of our endeavor. She helped guide the Museum as a member of the Management Committee.

However, it was often in the innumerable additional tasks that Jane willingly took on that she exhibited her ability to organize and inspire others to accomplish often daunting assignments. Through it all she radiated a positive attitude of dedication, good humor, and absolute commitment to realizing the Museum's fullest potential that was felt by all who worked with her.

All of us who have had the honor, privilege, and joy of knowing and working with Jane will be able to think back from this moment of her retirement on the decades of good spirit and good work that exemplify her contributions to Mystic Seaport and our lives. We should all celebrate the Keener Era as we wish her the very best in the years ahead.

J. Revell Carr
Director Emeritus



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