



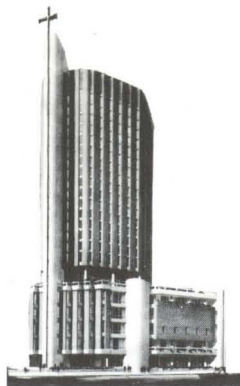
# the LOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



JULY-AUGUST 1976

# The Program of the Institute



Seamen's Church Institute  
15 State Street, N.Y.C.

The Seamen's Church Institute of New York, an agency of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New York, is a unique organization devoted to the well-being and special interests of active merchant seamen.

More than 753,000 such seamen of all nationalities, races and creeds come into the Port of New York every year. To many of them the Institute is their shore center in port and remains their polestar while they transit the distant oceans of the earth.

First established in 1834 as a floating chapel in New York harbor, the Institute offers a wide range of recreational and educational services for the mariner, including counseling and the help of five chaplains in emergency situations.

More than 2,300 ships with over

96,600 men aboard put in at Port Newark annually, where time ashore is extremely limited.

Here in the very middle of huge, sprawling Port Newark pulsing with activity of container-shipping, SCI has provided an oasis known as the Mariners International Center which offers seamen a recreational center especially constructed, designed and operated in a special way for the



Mariners International Center (SCI)  
Port Newark/Elizabeth, N.J.

very special needs of the men. An outstanding feature is a soccer field (lighted by night) for games between ship teams.

Although 62% of the overall Institute budget is met by income from seamen and the public, the cost of special services comes from endowments and contributions. Contributions are tax-deductible.

## the LOOKOUT

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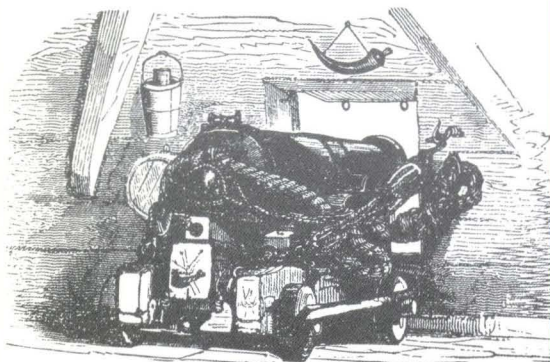
The Bon Homme Richard commanded by  
Captain John Paul Jones defeats the British  
frigate Serapis, September 23, 1779  
in the North Sea off the Yorkshire Cliffs.



the  
impossible  
victory

by Deirdre Donovan

(This story is for my father, who loved the sea and respected it, and who knew that it will be here long after we are not.)



There was nothing extraordinary about this young Scotsman. He had been born into a poor family in the Lowlands, and never wanted to do anything but go to sea. At 12, he signed on as cabin-boy aboard a British merchant vessel, because there was no other work to be had. He was acutely aware of his poverty, especially since most good commissions went to men of more affluent backgrounds. But he was a fighter, and seems to have realized that being poor meant that he would have to work harder to be accepted. He taught himself good grammar, mathematics, and naval architecture, culling information from any source available. This struggle left its mark on him though, for the defensive and insecure boy became a stubborn, cocky, arrogant man, ever quick to defend his superlative seamanship. He was known to be argumentative and difficult to get along with, a result of which was that he never did develop any lasting relationships.

On one of his trips he visited his brother, a tailor in Virginia, and liked what he saw. In this new land a man would be accepted for what he could do; not because of an accident of birth. He quickly took up the cause of the Patriots, resigned a commission offered by England and accepted one in the new Continental Navy. This was an amusing euphemism, since there was no "navy" at this time. The Colonies were totally unprepared for a sea war with England or with anyone else, for that matter. Their maritime experiences were limited to the merchant marine, and to privateer and whaling interests. They mustered together almost anything that would float, and waged hit-and-run guerrilla forays against the powerful enemy, who referred to them as "the Bathtub Navy."

During the Revolution, the Continental Maritime Commission was operating out of Paris, while hoping to persuade the French to enter the war against England. It was there that John Paul Jones went to accept his new command. The Commissioners, all proud and prejudiced New Englanders, were reluctant to accept

Jones, whom they considered "A disreputable upstart, typical of his race." But he had proved his worth in various encounters, and the learned gentlemen realized that this was no time for quibbling over protocol. However, in spite of the many prizes he took, they soon deprived him of command, and over his protests transferred him to the *Duc de Durac*, an ancient, worm-eaten East Indiaman. No one else would have it.

This floating relic was originally built for cargo in the spice trade, but now was badly weakened by dry rot and by years of exposure to the parching tropical sun. Her hull had been pierced to take some cannon, the weight of which severely overburdened her and caused her to lurch and roll in the manner of some of her crew after a rowdy night ashore. She smelled heavily of arrack, cloves and tea, reminders of former cargoes from the Indies. It was the height of the improbable to think that this poor ghost was fit for the job at hand. Nevertheless, it was the best that Jones could get, and he set about making her seaworthy. She was re-christened the *Bon Homme Richard* in honor of Benjamin Franklin's almanac.



The crew consisted of a mongrel assortment of Americans, Irish and Scots, plus Frenchmen picked up in L'Orient. Jones harbored deep misgivings about these men, since he had acquired most of them under extremely chancy circumstances. Some had cheated the hangman by escaping prison; others were deserters from previous ships. Almost all would gladly have sailed with the Devil for a steady meal and berth.

There were several other French ships in the squadron. Among them were the *Pallas*, owned by the French Ladies of Honor, and the *Alliance*, captained by the weird Pierre Landais, whose only claim to immortality was his habit of ship-napping. None of these was to be of any help to the *Richard*. The squadron left L'Orient on August 15, 1779, and sailed along the coasts of Ireland, England and Scotland, raiding ports and setting fire to the shipping along the way.

On the twenty-third of September, hidden by a dense blanket of fog off England's Yorkshire cliffs, the *Bon Homme Richard* took up her death watch. Soon to appear was the *Serapis*, a strong, newly-built warship; the pride of the British fleet. She was escorting a valuable convoy home to England.

Jones had prepared his ship and his crew. The *Richard* flew the British flag as a decoy, and the men were decked out in stolen British uniforms. There was nothing to do but wait.

The *Serapis* rounded the cliffs and soon spied the *Richard*. Her captain, Pearson, called out "Ship-a-hoy!" What ship is that?"

Jones answered, "*The Princess Royal*."

But Pearson was skeptical. He had been warned that an American ship, manned by a renegade crew, was pillaging in the area. Determined to protect the convoy, he insisted again "Tell me what ship that is or I will sink you!"

The answer was "Sink and be damned!" At this moment on one could say which ship fired first.

Now all pretense was abandoned. The Union Jack came down and the Stars and Stripes went up. The men frenziedly tore off their bogus uniforms and hoisted their weapons to their naked shoulders. The sons of the Gael picked up their pipes and a mongrel chorus echoed the skirling of "Yankee Doodle." The entire scene was illuminated by a full harvest moon as crowds of spectators watched from the cliffs, their very souls shaking in disbelief.

At the first assault, three of the *Richard's* guns burst, killing most of the men stationed there. The *Serapis* kept up the hellish bombardment as *Richard* attempted to utilize her small size to harass the enemy with small-arms fire, weaving in and around the under the giant's rigging. But the *Serapis* had also been hit and her entire structure reverberated with the impact.

In the confusion, one hundred prisoners who had been locked below managed to free themselves and swarmed onto the fore-deck, brandishing sabers, stink-pots and pistols wrested from the unresisting hands of the dead and dying Patriots. Now the old wreck had to fight the enemy both inside and out! The battle was diverted from the sea and directed at her own decks as the *Richard's* officers attempted to quell the insurgence. Fortunately the prisoners had had no time to

plan a successful strategy, and in a short time they were back below decks, handing up ammunition to the *Richard's* crew under the baleful eye of a musket.

While the fighting was going on aboard the *Richard*, her decks were being splintered by enemy cannon. Jones called out in despair to the inappropriately named "*Alliance*" for help, but that worthy French ally sailed down upon her and raked her with fire fore and aft, killing several of the crew.

The ship was on fire in several places. She began to take in water. The vastly superior guns of the *Serapis* systematically annihilated entire sections of the slowly sinking *Richard*. Surely the end was near now.

Jones saw that his only salvation was to haul alongside the *Serapis* and grapple with her at short distance. He brought his ship directly opposite the giant and instructed his men to toss aboard chains and grappling irons. Now both ships were lying bow to stern. So close were they that men of each ship leaped aboard the other to clean their pieces after firing a round.

Meanwhile the rumor had got around that the Captain and all the officers were dead, and that the *Richard* was sinking. The carpenters, believing themselves to be in charge, ran to the foredeck pleading "Quarters, quarters. Our ship's a-sinking!" The officer of the top-deck, on hearing this, imagined it to be the *Serapis* and yelled over "If you surrender, strike your colours then." Captain Pearson, hearing only the word "surrender" from the *Richard* called back "If you have struck, why don't you haul down your pendant?" Immediately came Jones' immortal reply, "Aye, we'll do that when all aboard are bone and ashes. But we'll see yours come down first. For you must know that Americans do not strike their colours 'til not a man is left to fight. And I have not yet begun to fight!" The battle re-commenced with new ferocity. The men of each ship stormed the enemy gangway 'til they were driven back or into the sea. So great was the carnage aboard the *Richard* that in order to get to



Captain John Paul Jones



the guns, men leaped over mounds of human flesh that moments before were also leaping over other mounds of flesh. At these moments Jones was everywhere — cajoling, threatening, encouraging. "Fight, me brave laddies, fight! Remember ye're fighting for your new homes, while the Bull fights only to fill his bloody purse with another prize." And fight they did.

The men were exhausted. The decks were slick with blood and gore. Another fire had started and there was no water to put it out. The *Serapis* had never seen anything like this. Why wouldn't they give up?

It was shortly after midnight when cries of alarm and terror sounded from the *Serapis*' decks. Men stood riveted in fear, their gaze directed towards the *Richard's* mast. A naked Patriot had climbed to the top and braced himself by calloused toes to the foot-rope, a bucket of grenades hanging from his teeth. Orders to "Shoot him down!" hardly had time to reach the air before a single grenade sped to its target. It struck the upper hatchway and fell between decks of the *Serapis*, where it ignited a quantity of loose powder. The explosion was deafening. Bodies, cannon and bits of ship flew skyhigh. "Quarters, quarters, for God's sake, quarters!" begged those remaining. The scene was closed.

Captain Pearson was escorted onto the *Richard* where he beheld the macabre sight of victors — maimed, wounded, dying — singing and dancing to "Yankee Doodle." "What class of men are you?" he demanded. "Americans, sir," came back the proud reply.

Afterwards, Jones wrote "... this was the most bloody, the hardest fought, and the greatest scene of carnage on both sides ever fought between two ships of any nation under heaven." The casualties were so many that neither he nor Captain Pearson ever gave a complete report. One of the *Richard's* officers estimated theirs at over three hundred.

Jones wanted to bring the heroic wreck home as proof of the impossible and as encouragement for the Patriot cause. But

the battered, bruised and sinking skeleton was in her death throes and gasping her last breaths. Scarcely two days after her astounding victory, the *Good Man Richard* was mercifully swallowed up by the sea. So ended the charmed life of a gallant ship.

Still there were more disappointments in store for John Paul Jones. The Maritime Commission continued to ignore him and at one point he found himself eighteenth in line for a command. On another occasion it was necessary for him to sell some spoils he had taken in order to pay expenses. In a letter, he pleads with the Commissioners "... I know not where to find tomorrow's dinner for the great number of mouths which depend upon me for food. My officers as well as men want clothes to cover their nakedness. I will ask you gentlemen, if I have deserved all this? Whoever calls himself an American ought to be protected here."

In 1788 Jones accepted a post as rear admiral from Russia's Catherine the Great, but was soon disillusioned with the title. His victories were credited to others, and Catherine tired of him.

Finally, he was falsely accused of attacking a Russian and left that country in disgrace. He returned to France, ill, embittered and penniless. Shortly after, the Father of the American Navy died and was buried in an unmarked French grave. More than a century later his body was found and brought back to his adopted homeland where he was honored more in death than in life. He lies at Annapolis. ■



From left to right: Mr. James P. McAllister, Sr. - President, McAllister Brothers, Inc.; Rear Admiral A.B. Engel, USCG (ret) - Superintendent, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy; and Mr. Thomas W. Gleason, President, International Longshoremen's Association; A.F.L. - C.I.O., Vice President - A.P.L. - C.I.O., present memorial wreaths for dedication during the Maritime Day Memorial Service at the Institute.

## National Maritime Day 1976

National Maritime Day is always a day of special occasion in the Port of New York-New Jersey. This year the day officially began with an ecumenical service held here in the Institute's Chapel.

During the service, three wreaths sponsored by representatives of labor, management and government were dedicated and blessed in honor of the thousands of merchant seamen who have contributed so significantly to the welfare of this nation. Later the wreaths were taken by Coast Guard cutter to the city's upper harbor where they were cast into the water in special tribute to those merchant seamen who lost their lives at sea during the past two hundred years.

Also included in the Chapel service was a statement of appreciation for the many people who first came to this country by ship and who helped shape this nation's destiny. (This Bicentennial statement was so well received that we have printed it for you on the facing page.)

Other events in this year's Maritime Day celebration included a special Bicentennial review by U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Midshipmen, and an address by the Honorable Mario Biaggi — Representative, 10th Congressional District, New York.

The entire day's program was organized under the commendable leadership of Captain Robert E. Hart of the Marine Index Bureau, Inc. who was Chairman of the 1976 Maritime Day Committee for the Port of New York-New Jersey.

## Reflections On Maritime Day in this Bicentennial Year

We gather here in this chapel to recall the millions of men, women and children, ancestors of many of us at this celebration today, who came into this land of promise through the gate of the Narrows. They left lands where they no longer wished to live or where they were no longer allowed to live, to come to a land where they hoped to find freedom.

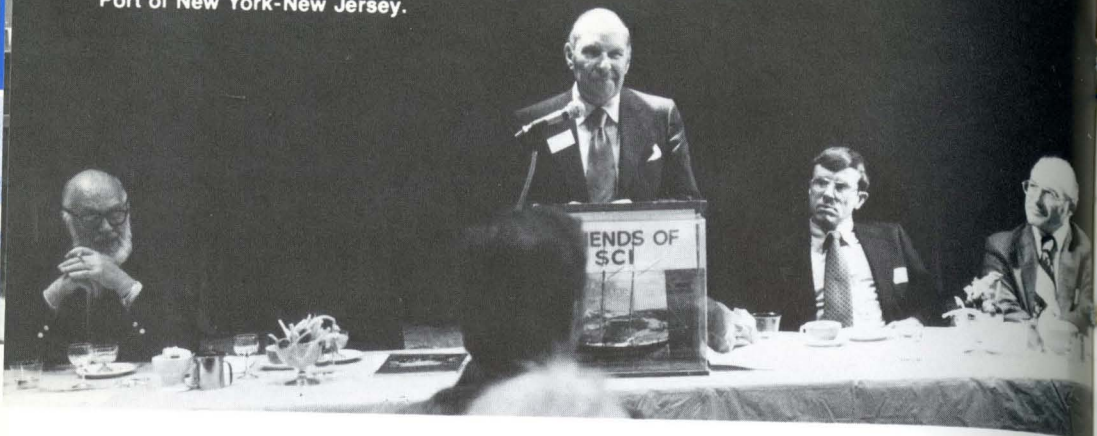
Our service this morning is in memory of these persons. They sailed into this port in every sort of ship and in every condition. Some arrived in comfort; some had to indenture themselves in return for passage; some came in chains. Many were illiterate, but had strong hands or valuable skills. Some were intellectuals; some were belligerent fighters. Most were honest, but some were scoundrels and criminals. The majority were ordinary folk who only desired to live and work in some degree of freedom.

Whether working together or fighting one another, they created this nation which still exerts its magnetic influence around the globe and continues to attract those who yearn for a better life.

When we look toward the Narrows this morning, let us pause long enough in our busy schedule to say a silent thank you to those ancestors who braved the dangerous seas in often dangerous ships to come here. Without their migration we would not be here, for they gave us our homeland. By giving up their nationality or having it taken from them, they gave us our nationality. In giving thanks for that, we must give thanks to them — for their courage, for their endurance and for their continuing hope.

THE REVEREND MILLER M. CRAGON, Jr.  
Director of Special Services  
Seamen's Church Institute of N.Y.

Mr. James P. McAllister, Sr. speaks to Friends of SCI about maritime organizations which contribute to the welfare of the Greater Port of New York-New Jersey.



## Friends of SCI Sail into Second Year

May 19 was occasion for the second annual luncheon of the "Friends of the Seamen's Church Institute."

Over 100 members and guests from the maritime industry and Lower Manhattan corporate community attended the event which featured Mr. James P. McAllister, Sr. as its main speaker.

Mr. Richard Pollard, "Friends" membership chairman, conducted the program and brief remarks were also made by Dr. John M. Mulligan, SCI Director, and George Avery, Director of International Central Service — Stauffer Chemical Company.

Mr. Avery had recently moderated the highly successful "Mini-landbridge" Seminar sponsored by the Friends of SCI.

Besides holding seminars and meetings of special interest to the maritime industry and corporate community, the Friends of SCI also work to further the Institute's reputation as the world's leading seamen's agency and to aid in the financial support of the non-income producing programs and services for merchant seamen provided by the Institute.

Although only in its second year, the Friends program is already widely accepted as one of the more popular membership groups as well as offering an enjoyable and unique means of Institute support.

## the sailor's boardinghouse system

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

The story you are about to read is true. It was because of conditions such as those described in this article that a group of concerned churchmen were encouraged to found what is today the Seamen's Church Institute of New York. Through the Institute's efforts the pervasive shadow of the waterfront boardinghouse was driven from the Port of New York and the seafarer no longer had to suffer the degradation which in the mid-1800s was considered his lot.



**Uncle Rudolph today** Uncle Rudolph Smale was a seafarin' man. And this is a tale that he told to me. In the early eighteen eighties, when it all took place, sailing ships carried cargoes across the oceans of the world. Bags of silver sand, for instance, were shipped from England to be used in the manufacture of glass in Pictou, Nova Scotia. Coal was loaded on there, and carried to Montreal. Or, from Calais, Maine, a brigantine might take a general cargo to Florida, discharge it, and then load lumber to be delivered at Trinidad.

Once a ship was at sea, with no shops or yards close by, the crew used its own ingenuity to make repairs in the best way possible. If the mainmast broke, or the sails ripped in a storm, they had to be mended with the materials at hand.

"Wooden ships and iron men," said Uncle Rudolph, "was a common expression that was entirely true."

And in those days with no wireless or radios, each vessel was a small world of its own. And since the captain had no way to communicate with officials on shore, he was truly the master of his ship.

Some captains considered it poor seamanship if they weren't able to make their crew desert without pay. Life aboard ship was deliberately made unbearable. Amid all kinds of weather — heat and humidity or sleet and snow —

the watches were always four hours on, and then four hours off if conditions permitted it. A man who was not actually steering the ship, or serving as a lookout must do the necessary chores about the vessel. Iron work around the deck rusted easily and had to be chipped and painted. There was rigging to be tightened; masts scraped; and other equipment repaired. Sleeping quarters were crowded and the food not always sufficient or palatable.

But to get to the story. All of the port cities in the United States had what was called the sailors' boardinghouse system. It was very profitable for the owners but not for the sailors.

As soon as a boat with its miserable,



hungry, overworked men tied up along the wharf, a runner from one of the boardinghouses nearby would come on board. These were persuasive men who would first pass out cigars and then begin to tell the sailors stories about how much better their lives would be if they deserted the ship.

by Celia L. Puffer



If a member of the crew had been foreign born (as was Uncle Rudolph) he was enticed to leave and become a free man in a free country. But no matter where a man had been born, conditions aboard ship were usually so bad that any change seemed to him to be for the better.

Such a rosy picture was painted that the men were glad to leave their belongings and earnings behind on the ship and follow the runners to the boardinghouses to take room and board there on credit. Then the owner would promise to find them their next jobs on another ship.

When a ship came in that needed a crew, the pay was so much per run between ports, not so much per month. This money was paid to the boardinghouse master and some of it was kicked back to the captain.

It was a vicious circle, with the sailors never seeing the money. If they asked, the boardinghouse owner would tell them how much they owed him because they had not paid for their room and board. He made himself appear very generous to even let these indebted men leave his establishment.

At the end of the run the sailors had to leave the ship. Once again they were in an unfamiliar port and had no money to their names. So there was nothing to do but to go to another boardinghouse.

When Uncle Rudolph was a teenager

he had been in the unending circle of the boardinghouses. "Once," he remembered, "a ship was all loaded and ready to return to Europe. The crew had deserted and sixteen new men were needed for the trip back. And when this new crew came on from some boardinghouses, the captain expected his cut from the wages paid in advance to the boardinghouse owner.

"But this time there was trouble finding enough men. The runners worked hard to find the sixteen new ones, and for several days could get no more than fifteen. So, the night before the ship was to sail, this is what the runners did. They broke into an undertaking parlor, stole a corpse and dressed it in sailor clothes. In the darkness, when the fifteen live crew members were being delivered to the ship, the sixteenth one was dragged into the forecabin, and put to bed in one of the bunks. The mate was told that this was a good man who had to be doped in order to be taken aboard.

"The runners got their share of the money for the corpse as well as for the rest of the men because by daylight the ship was well away from the harbor," said my Uncle Rudolph to me. ■

Reference: Smale, Rudolph, *There Go The Ships*. Caxton Printers Ltd. Caldwell, Idaho, 1940.





# Colonial Cookery



**A**s part of the Bicentennial year we are printing a number of Colonial recipes in each of the remaining '76 issues. The recipes have been researched and tested by the "historical" cook, Betty Groff, and we hope that they will be a source of both good dining and conversation at your table.



## Crab a la Chesapeake

### Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon chopped green peppers
- 1 teaspoon grated onion
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 1 pint milk

### Combine:

- 1 pint crabmeat
- ½ pint cooked shrimp
- Lightly salt and pepper to taste

Make sauce combining the above and cook until smooth. Remove from heat and add ¼ pound *grated cheese*. Stir until smooth. Lightly blend the sauce with the shrimp and crabmeat. Then sprinkle on top a cup of the following mixture: buttered bread crumbs, grated parmesan cheese, salt, pepper and paprika. Bake 30 minutes at 350°. Serves six.



## Yeast Corn Bread

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 cups milk                               | 4 teaspoons salt              |
| 1 package yeast, active dry or compressed | 2 eggs                        |
| ¼ cup warm (not hot) water                | 7 cups flour (approximately)  |
| 1 teaspoon sugar                          | 1 cup yellow cornmeal         |
| 1-3 cup sugar                             | Salad oil or shortening       |
| 1-3 cup softened shortening               | 2 tablespoons yellow cornmeal |

Scald milk, pour into a large mixing bowl, and let cool until lukewarm. Sprinkle or crumble yeast into the water, add the 1 teaspoon sugar, and stir until dissolved. Mix the softened yeast mixture into the lukewarm milk. Stir in the 1-3 cup sugar, the shortening, and the salt. Beat eggs slightly and stir in.

Sift flour, measure, and gradually beat in 3 cups of the flour, mixing thoroughly. Add the 1 cup cornmeal and mix thoroughly. Gradually add enough of the remaining 4 cups of flour to make a soft dough. Turn out on a lightly floured board and knead until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). Place in a greased bowl, cover with a cloth, and let rise in a warm place until the dough is almost doubled in bulk.

Punch down and let rest on a lightly floured board for 10 minutes. Divide in half and shape into 2 loaves. Place in greased 9 by 5-inch loaf pans and brush the tops of the loaves lightly with oil. Sprinkle the tops of the loaves with the 2 tablespoons cornmeal. Cover and let rise until almost doubled in bulk. Bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) for 45 minutes, or until golden brown. Makes 2 large loaves.

## LESSER GREATS

by Josephine M. Opshal

For every American we honor, there are hundreds equally deserving who are all but forgotten. Can you name the following:

1. We often sing a song he wrote, because it is now our national anthem.
2. The inventor of the safety pin. He was one of our country's most brilliant inventors but he was such a poor businessman he got little benefit from his work.
3. Although he was born in Italy, he was so proud of becoming an American citizen that he signed one of his famous mural paintings, "Citizen of the U.S." His paintings decorate the walls of our national capital.
4. The patriot who hung the signal lanterns in Old North Church for Paul Revere's famous ride.
5. The New England sea captain who brought back the first cargo of black pepper bought directly from native growers.
6. The government official who set up our present-day weather bureau.
7. The crippled orphan who grew up to guide the formation of the Boy Scouts of America.
8. The two workers who cast the Liberty Bell after it cracked on being tested.
9. The first white explorer to visit the Yellowstone Park area. He told what seemed such exaggerated stories, that people called it "Coulter's Hell."
10. She designed and sold the first Christmas seals in our country in 1907 to raise funds for the Wilmington, Delaware tuberculosis sanitarium

### ANSWERS

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Francis Scott Key                         | 2. Walter Hunt                |
| 3. Constantino Brumidi                       | 4. Robert Newman              |
| 5. Captain Jonathan Carnes of Salem, Mass.   | 6. John Pass and Charles Stow |
| 7. Joseph E. West                            | 8. John Coulter               |
| 9. Major General Adolphus Washington Greeley | 10. Emily Bissell             |

## Battleship Oregon Story

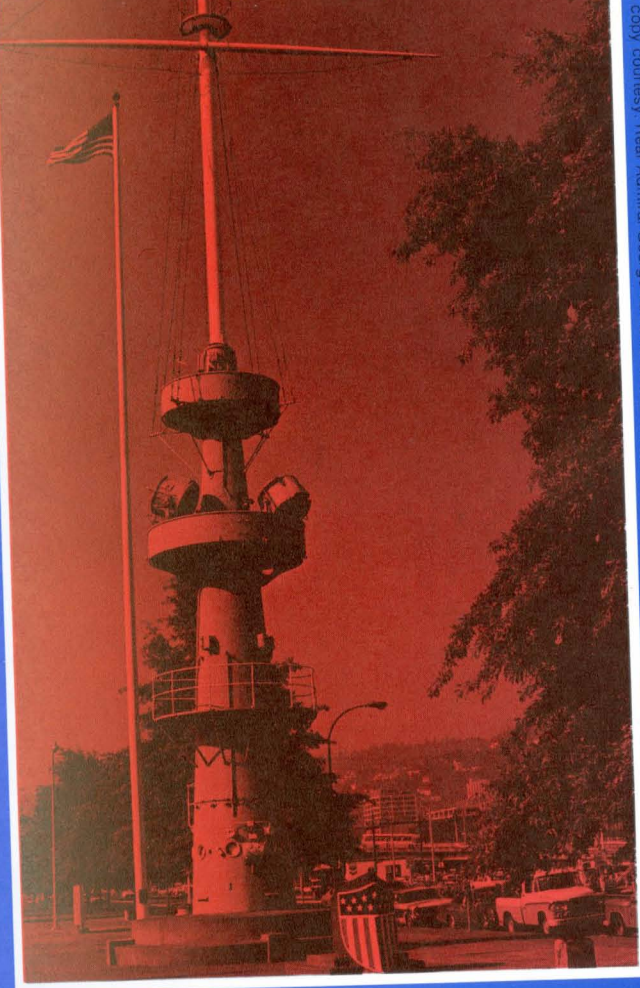


Photo and copy courtesy: Rear Admiral George van Deus, U.S. Navy, retired

Eighty years ago, in May 1896, the battleship *Oregon* completed her builder's trials in California's Santa Barbara channel. She and her two sisterships were America's pioneer battleships. Forty-six years later, during World War II, her guns, armor, and upperworks were taken for scrap steel but her hull continued to serve. That was ultimately scrapped by a Tokyo yard in 1956.

This picture shows her original mainmast as it stands beside Oregon's Willamette River at Portland. It is a monument to the pioneer of a ship type which, like the square-rigged clippers, served its time and vanished.

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*When We Build: let us think, that  
we build forever.*

*Let it not be for present delight alone.  
Let it be ... as our descendants will thank us for.*

*Let us think, as we lay stone upon stone, that a  
time is to come when those stones will be held  
sacred, because our hands have touched them.*

*And that men will say, as they look upon the  
labor of them:*

*See! This our fathers did for us!*

*John Ruskin*

We thank Mr. Bernard Grossman for bringing  
the above quotation to our attention.

