



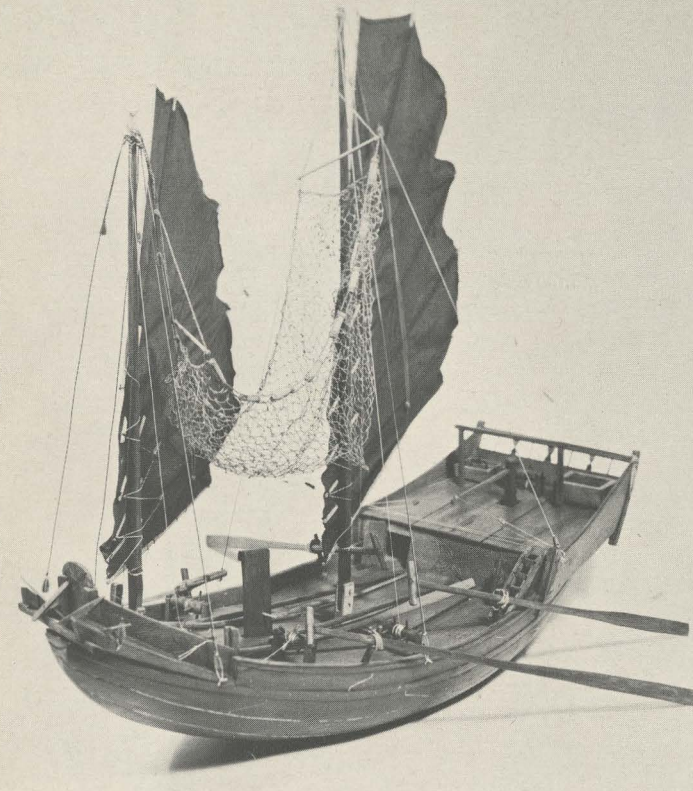
# the LOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



JUNE 1966





U.S. merchant seamen and U.S. Navy personnel see this type of Vietnamese fishing vessel along the coast and rivers of Viet Nam. Model shown (from SCI Marine Museum) was a gift to the Museum from the Republic of Viet Nam.

## the LOOKOUT

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SEAMEN'S CHURCH  
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COVER: Titanic Tower of SCI, a memorial to those lost in the historic sea disaster of 1912, rises majestically into the sky.



## HOMER'S MANY VOICED RESOUNDING SEA

Tom Taft

O many voiced resounding sea,  
Thrilling with tireless ears to Homer's heroes  
Wrenching glory from elysian shores,  
Venetian galleys scouring Orient's gold  
Remain fixed in your ageless memory,  
Recalling Cyrus' great march against Greece  
As vividly as Vikings stroking their galleys  
Along Gibraltar's stern, rocky face!

Fellow voyager and measurer with time,  
The fairest blood has poured itself out  
In the fathomless caverns of your timeless  
presence,  
Spanning cave man's short romp through life  
To atomic aged men gouging out space;  
Witness to mountains writhing in birth,  
Mirror to stars when men had no eyes.





## FABULOUS FLOTSAM

by  
David  
Gunston

Of all the strange and legendary substances of the Orient, ambergris is by far the strangest. Floating gold, fabulous flotsam, priceless refuse — call it what you will, it remains one of the queerest substances the world has ever seen and one with more mystery, lore and legend about it than perhaps any other.

Throughout its long and changing history, ambergris has been sought after by men as a highly precious commodity. In many ways it is remarkable that today it should still be highly prized, and that watchful skippers, hopeful whalers and alert beachcombers should still look forward to chancing on a mass of the stuff.

Everyone today knows that ambergris is a pathological secretion of a sick sperm whale, a kind of bile, if you like, but the knowledge came slowly. Men knew of the value of it long before they realized its true origin. They sought it for a variety of purposes, some of which sound surprising to modern ears; but whence it came, only conjecture could try to answer.

In earlier times than the present, sperm whale were exceedingly common creatures. The sub-tropical seas must

have teemed with them, as the oceans of the world no doubt teemed with whales of all kinds and sizes. That was before men started seriously to hunt them. Consequently, the discharge of ambergris from the bilious cachalots must have been many times greater than it is today when the species is perilously near extinction. Large quantities of the wax-like substance left the gaping mouths of overfed whales to float about the lonely seas and, often enough, to get washed up on beaches as far apart as India and Barbary.

No doubt tons of the stuff had been washed up for long centuries before human beings began to take note of such things, but whoever first discovered a lump of the dark grey, heavily-smelling product and decided it might prove useful no one knows. Primitive savage that he was, he probably tried to eat it.

In the course of time there must have been a good deal of experimenting with this dull-looking flotsam, for at various times in the earth's history, it has been used for such diverse purposes as a medicine, a love potion, a food, a savoury garnishing, an ingredient of wine and a fixative for perfumes.

We know that from the beginning of the eleventh century, for nearly six hundred years men believed that it was a mineral substance, a kind of resinous bitumen. Ancient alchemists went so far as to say that it erupted from volcanic fountains submerged beneath the ocean. This confusion with actual bituminous substances led men to hold that it was merely a form of ordinary amber, the product of fossilised coniferous trees. They called it amber-gris (or gris-amber, the two terms being apparently synonymous for some time) — grey amber — to avoid confusion with the true amber. So at first it was thought to be a mineral product, then a vegetable one, but never an animal one.

Just when the real origin of ambergris (or "amber-grease," as English mariners from the fifteenth century onwards began to call it in error) was discovered, we do not know, but it was known to come from whales by the beginning of the seventeenth century.

It is only comparatively recently, however, that fuller details of what ambergris really is have come to light from the great darkness of human ignorance about whales generally. We know now that only sperm whales are responsible for this precious commodity.

Sperms are the tigers of the large whales, and although much depleted by commercial whaling, they still favour the Indian Ocean. With their enormous barrel-shaped heads full of liquid spermaceti, their formidable row of four-inch ivory teeth and their reputation, there can be few denizens of the deep more unpleasant to encounter. When unhampered by man, sperm whales lead a fairly adventurous life, for their daily meals are often only secured after considerable struggles with the giant squids and cuttlefish that form their food.

Diving to immense depths under the sea, the sperm whales dislodge these grotesque cephalopods (some of which produce the ink-like protective camouflage dye used to make artists' sepia) from their rocky lairs. The squids usually put up a good fight and the head and face of an attacking sperm whale

may often be scarred and lacerated quite deeply before the huge jaws close like a deathly trap on the hapless victim. The trailing tentacles are bitten off and the body swallowed.

It is only some time afterwards that the ambergris is produced. For some unknown reason, the creatures which are the natural food of the whales sometimes disagree with them. The sharp horny beaks of the squids and cuttlefish irritate the whale's intestines sufficiently to cause the viscous, waxy secretion so prized by the human race.

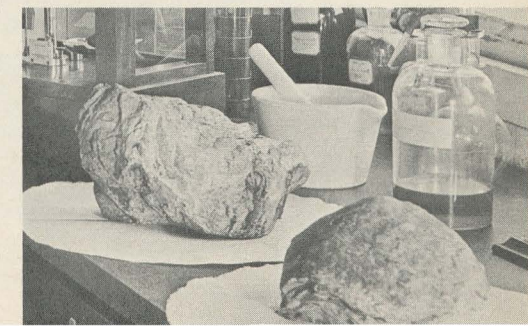
It is voided through the mouth and on contact with the air sets into a soft, rather cheese-like substance which floats on the water. In all quantities of ambergris — and it may be found in lumps weighing from a few pounds only to a hundred-weight or more — are found embedded dozens of the horny cuttlefish beaks, which resemble the beaks of giant parrots.

Not all sperm whales are afflicted in this way, but apparently an individual that once produces ambergris will always do so. Occasionally whalers will dismember a sperm to find its inside choked with the stuff; sometimes again it will discharge a quantity on diving from the whaler's harpoon.

In appearance, ambergris is difficult to describe. Melville described it as "very unctuous and savoury," like "ripe Windsor soap, or rich mottled old cheese." Frank T. Bullen (whose *Cruise of the Cachalot* contains many interesting accounts of sperm whales in the old days) called it "white and semi-transparent looking."

(continued on page 18)

Ambergris in raw state at perfume laboratory. Courtesy of the AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

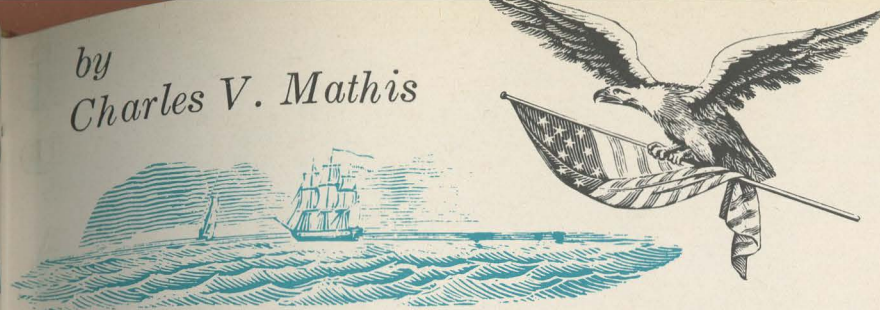




# THE FLAGSHIP NIAGARA



by  
Charles V. Mathis



The Battle of Lake Erie, one of the most stirring victories in American naval history, is commemorated by the historic old Flagship *Niagara*, only surviving vessel of Perry's fleet, now in her final berth in Niagara Park, on lower State Street, Erie, Pennsylvania.

The War of 1812 was brought on by disputes over maritime rights, by American suspicions that the British were encouraging Indian hostility, and by a revival of the Revolutionary feeling against British rule in the American continent.

It was fought for the most part along the Canadian border. Control of northern inland waters, especially Lake Erie, was considered essential by both sides; and the United States began building a small fleet at Erie late in 1812, under the direction of Daniel Dobbins of Erie, and later of Captain Oliver Hazard Perry.

Iron from Bellefonte and Buffalo, rigging and tools from Pittsburgh, sails from Philadelphia, and a host of other materials were brought to Erie, while the timber was cut within the present limits of the city.

The *Niagara* and her sister ship *Lawrence*, as well as four gunboats, were completed in the spring of 1813, while Perry brought four other vessels up the lake from Black Rock near Buffalo. By mid-August, they were ready for action, an achievement second in importance only to the battle.

Crossing the Erie bar, the water was so shallow that the guns had to be removed so the ships would not run aground. It is not known why Commander Robert H. Barclay of the British fleet did not take advantage of this occasion to attack.

Perry made his headquarters at Put-

in-Bay, off the Ohio shore and on September 10, 1813, sailed from there to fight the British. The *Lawrence* flew a motto flag bearing James Lawrence's imperishable words. "Don't give up the ship."

During the battle, the *Niagara* hung back and took very little part in the fighting. The *Lawrence* suffered many casualties, and finally was disabled. Perry then rowed to the *Niagara*.

Under his command, the *Niagara* kept the British from boarding the *Lawrence*. Two British ships became entangled, and the *Niagara* raked them with broadsides. The British fleet of six vessels surrendered after 15 minutes.

Perry then sent to General William Henry Harrison, the military commander in the West, the famous message, "We have met the enemy, and they are ours: Two Ships, two Brigs one Schooner and one Sloop." The victory gave control of Lake Erie to the Americans; General Harrison was able to cross the lake and take a large part of Upper Canada.

Perry's victory in 1813 and Macdonough's triumph on Lake Champlain in 1814 blocked British efforts at overland invasion. The Duke of Wellington declared that further British attempts would be futile without control of the Lakes. The stage was thus set for the Treaty of Ghent in December, 1814, which laid the foundations for an enduring peace.

The present *Niagara* represents the second restoration of the historic vessel and contains a 78-foot section of the original block oak keel. It is a hallowed symbol of the dawning of American naval greatness, and of the valor and fortitude of those who manned the infant Navy.



"Fight Against  
the Elements,"  
by Peter Krogh

## High Flying Safari

Hurricane Hunting in the Caribbean is the task of the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron at Hunter AFB, Savannah, Georgia. Under the direction of the Military Airlift Command's Air Weather Service, prop-driven and jet aircraft survey wide expanses of ocean, gulf and sea.

What's it like to fly into the eye of a hurricane? The 53d's chief weather officer said, "Going in is rough, but once inside the eye, you can fly around as pretty as you please and even enjoy your flight lunch. But of course every storm is different, and they're all dangerous."

Another veteran Hurricane Hunter, observed that "once you make it to the eye, the weather's often fine. The air is so clear you can look up and see the sun and look down and see the water. But around the perimeter, the walls are solid vertical black clouds, and they often funnel in at the top."

Hurricane Hunting is a joint project of the Air Force, Navy and U.S. Weather Bureau. Each part of the ocean, Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico is partitioned off into weather zones, while overhead, Tiros and Nimbus orbiting weather satellites keep track of the whole area. The satellites often

relay back first warning of a new storm.

Hurricane season usually begins around the first of June and may last into late November or early December. During these months, regular flights are made in WB-47 converted jet bomber aircraft to survey the area.

While the high-flying WB-47 jets usually fly over the hurricane, the squadron's newly converted WC-130s, stationed at Puerto Rico, are ready actually to penetrate the eye of the hurricane with sophisticated weather-sampling gear and can withstand the turbulence and buffeting of the big storms.

One unique measuring device is the Dropsondes—a cylindrical "reporting station" ejected at 30,000 feet from the WB-47. As it drifts down over the eye on a parachute, it transmits temperature, wind velocity, humidity, barometric pressure and other data back to the mother ship, which relays it to computers at ground stations for instant analysis.

Through the use of Dropsondes, photographs, radar pictures and actual penetrations, the Weather Bureau's Hurricane Tracking Center at Miami can generally predict the course of the big storms.

## We are a kaleidoscope of the waterfront

A look-in on the world's largest shore home for merchant seamen...

Two annual May events observed in Manhattan, and in which SCI participates, are National Maritime Day and Marine and Aviation Day.

National Maritime Day (May 23) commemorates the anniversary of the first transatlantic voyage by any steam-powered ship, the American-flag *Savannah*, which left the Georgia port (for which she was named) May 22, 1819 for Liverpool. The vessel was constructed at Corlear's Hook, Manhattan.

Marine and Aviation Day (May 24) is sponsored by the Department of Marine and Aviation of New York City and is promoted to emphasize the importance of the port in international trade.

Highlight of Maritime Day was a noon-time ceremony at City Hall Plaza with speeches, music, precision drill exhibitions by maritime academy cadets, symbolic presentations and awards relating to the maritime service. An event of Marine and Aviation

Day was the noon luncheon held in the SCI Berwind auditorium.

The Rev. Mr. John M. Mulligan, director of SCI, represented the Institute at both events, giving the benediction and invocation and presiding as host for the luncheon.

Among the marine delegations to Maritime Day was the cadet student body of the Marine Maritime Academy, Castine, Maine, which arrived in port on its training ship, *State of Maine*, formerly the command ship *Ancon* in the Normandy invasion.

SCI had the Maine academy cadets as guests to the regular SCI Tuesday night dance for seamen, the event held in the SCI auditorium to accommodate the large attendance.

Another event of the month was the special dance held for seamen in the International Seamen's Club of SCI to celebrate the eighth year since the Club's founding.



Student cadet hats checked in at SCI dance







merchant marine school exhibits skill at City Hall.

RIGHT: Marine Maritime Academy students from Castine, Maine, attending SCI International Seamen's Club dance.

BELOW: The Rev. Mr. John M. Mulligan, SCI director, pronounces the benediction at conclusion of City Hall Plaza ceremonies held to commemorate National Maritime Day.



A group from the Women's Council recently boarded the harbor tugboat **Dalzelleagle** near the Manhattan Battery Park for a half-day of observing the work of a tug and its crew. The experience was provided through the courtesy of Mr. Lloyd N. Dalzell of Dalzell Towing Co., Inc. who is a member of the Board of Managers of SCI.



RIGHT:

Top brass from Marine Maritime Academy, Castine, Maine, look in at their students attending SCI International Seamen's Club dance. Chaplain Russell Brown, a native of Maine, guided the distinguished visitors about.



# International Seamen's Club Anniversary Dance—A Smash



A capacity crowd thronged the International Seamen's Club to celebrate the eighth anniversary of its founding. There was special entertainment, colorful balloons, noise-makers, festive hats—and fun.



Boy meets girl at SCI Eighth Anniversary celebration of International Seamen's Club. So boy kisses girl.



Fun with balloons, hats and things.





## Life begins at forty... fifty... or sixty...? by Thor Dahl

When Walter Pitkin wrote his famous best seller "Life Begins at Forty," he created a slogan and made many take a new view about aging.

I thought of this when, on a ship visit from SCI's Mariners Center on board *M/V Eastern Kiku*, I met the "saloon boy," Ip Cheung Chung. He wasn't exactly young, and we can take for granted that he never had read Professor Pitkin's book. But in his broken "pidgin English" he tried to tell me that he was very happy in his first job at sea.

Ip Chéung Chung was born outside Shanghai in 1898, which makes him 68 years old, and at that age he has gone to sea for the first time in his life. He had still another surprise for me, but about that later.

Ip's family lived on a farm in China and worked the good earth. In his younger days he was a typical Chinese farmer boy, although he later drifted into that famous city by the sea, the "Pearl of the Orient," Shanghai, where he eventually married and settled down with his family. But later, revolution came to China. Communism took over and Ip wasn't happy with the thoughts of living in a state where everything was regimented.

He decided to flee the country, and in 1950, Ip set foot on board a sea-going craft for the first time when a sampan carried him and his family safely from the city of Macau to the teeming metropolis of Hong Kong.

Ip was then 52 years old and found life to be a struggle among his own people in this British-ruled city. He also had difficulties with the language; he learned to speak pidgin English.

After a few years he obtained a job as a cook in the home of an English "Master" who represented an oil firm in the town of Brunei. During that time he was impressed by the Christian members of a missionary society; he found a new religion—and new friends. When the position with the oil executive terminated, he was recommended to another position, as cook for an English architect who played an important role in the ever-increasing building boom in over-populated Hong Kong. Ip found it a pleasure to work for his kindly employer, and it was very comforting that he could now have his son with him, his son reared in Ip's new-found religion. But how to obtain a schooling for his son gave Ip concern.

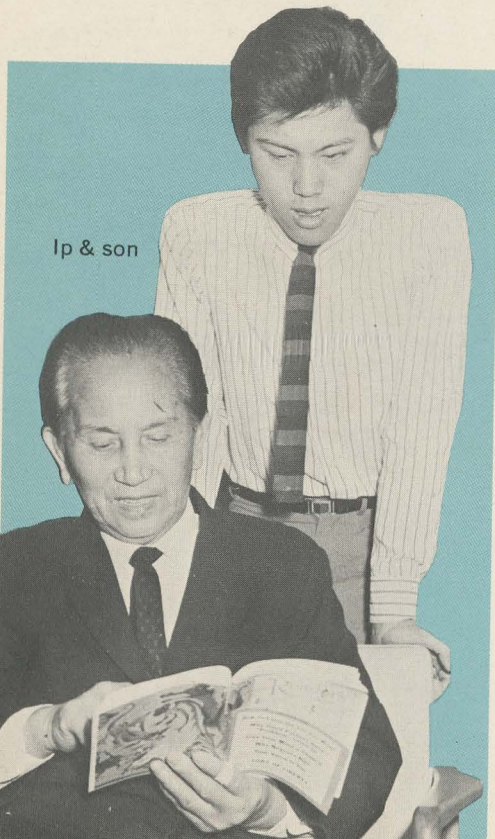
When his employer, the architect, returned to England, arrangements were made for him to get a job on a ship. Ip had very good recommendations as a man of sterling character; and to sea he went, as a cabin "boy" on the *Kiku*.

He told me he was very happy in his new life, for now he could travel and see new places. When I met him he had already made two trips on *Kiku*, and on the second trip something new had been added to his life as a sailor: when the ship called at Hong Kong the last time, Ip was able to get a job for his son, also as a cabin boy, on board the ship.

Now old Ip gives thanks to "his God" every morning and evening for the new life he has found; with planning, economy and the combined income of father and son, Ip hopes that his son can still get that schooling which can give him a good start in life — in a far more complicated society than that in which Ip opened his eyes.

During *Eastern Kiku's* stay in Port Newark, father and son were daily visitors to the Mariners International Center. They obviously enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and were extremely interested in the many things new to them. In the souvenir shop Ip bought a pearl necklace for his wife in Hong Kong. In the Center is a display of Bibles printed in the various languages and provided by the New York Bible Society. Chaplain G. B. Hollas arranged that Ip might receive a Chinese-language Bible.

*Mr. Dahl is a shipvisitor for Mariners Center of Port Newark, the Center operated by Seamen's Church Institute. He was born and reared in Norway.*



Ip & son

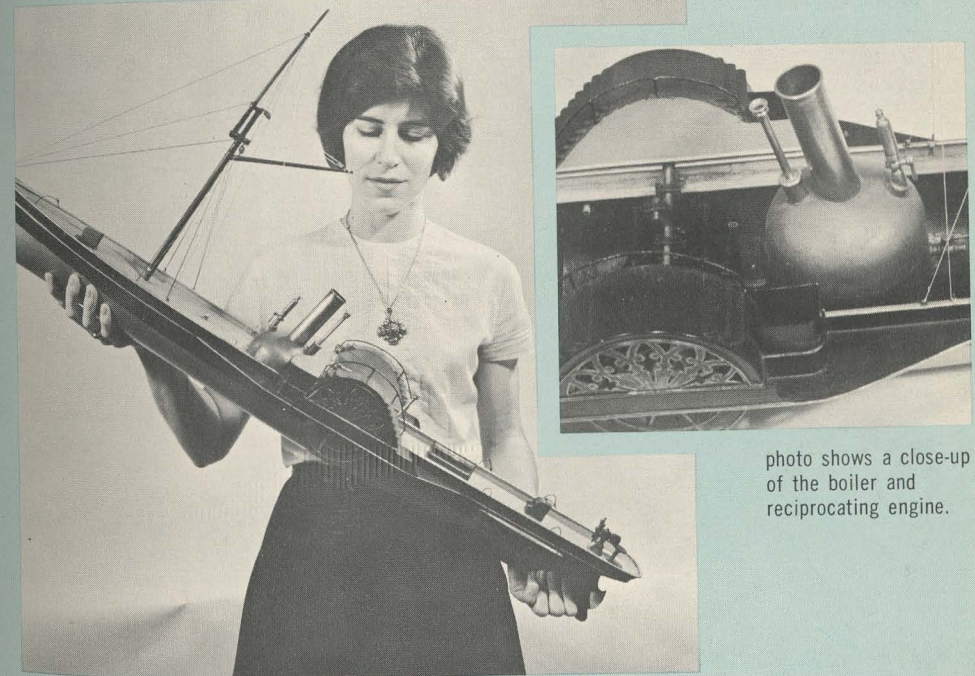


photo shows a close-up of the boiler and reciprocating engine.

A child's toy steamboat of European manufacture, probably made in France, is held by Elizabeth Echols of the SCI staff. It was recently acquired by the Marine Museum.

The toy — which must have cost a goodly sum even in the 1890's, when it belonged to some fortunate child — is powered by a miniature but operative reciprocating steam engine, precision-made, the engine driving the paddle wheels by means of a common shaft.

The boiler is heated by an alcohol burner. There is a steam-whistle which really works. Water is supplied to the boiler by means of a pouring tube next to the stack.



# AMERICA'S MEMORIAL TO MARINERS

The United States Merchant Marine Memorial Chapel at Kings Point, New York was conceived as a national memorial to the nearly 7,000 officers and men, including 210 cadets or graduates who were lost at sea due to enemy action.

This beautiful inter-faith chapel has served the cadets of the Academy since its dedication in May, 1961.

Two memorable occasions of national sorrow have been commemorated here. One service marked the death of President Kennedy, the other memorial was a tribute to Astronaut Elliot M. See, Jr., who crashed to his death before his Gemini space flight. Astronaut See was a graduate of the Academy, Class of 1949.



There are six massive silver candelsticks and two smaller ones, each in the shape of a medieval sailing ship's prow, on both the Protestant and the Catholic altars in the Mariners' chapel. Each of the ships has an individual name engraved upon it. Those on the Protestant altar were taken from the Great O Antiphon used in the daily offices before the Magnificat at the Vespers service. The names of the ships on the Catholic altar were taken from the Litany of Our Lady, and the Stella Maris (Star of the Sea) is chased on the sail.

The chapel is the scene of many cadet weddings on graduation day and the days following graduation. It was built by public subscription at a cost of \$680,000. Congress provided \$100,000 for the furnishings.

The edifice was designed by the architectural firm of Eggers and Higgins, designers of the Lincoln Memorial and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The interior is done in striking simplicity; wedgewood blue walls convey the beauty of a clear sky and a calm sea; tall white pillars add grace and dignity.

Visitors admire the beauty of each of the three altars, these mounted on a turntable which may be rotated so that the proper altar faces the religious faith worshipping in the chapel at the time.

A silver cross seven feet high and topped by a crown of thorns is the outstanding feature of the Protestant altar. The cross was the gift of Rear Admiral and Mrs. Gordon McLintock in memory of both their fathers, one a Master Mariner and the other a Chief Engineer in the Merchant Marine.

The Catholic altar appears with the Tabernacle strikingly decorated in the nautical motif. It shows the waves, the fish, the cross and the star. The silver corpus on the gold, six-foot crucifix is modern in design. The semi-precious stones represent the Precious Blood of Christ Crucified.

In front of the Jewish altar are two seven-branched candelabra whose base is a dolphin. Inside of the Ark is a beautiful Torah.

In the center of the sanctuary is a marble plinth surmounted by a bronze and glass case containing the Roll of Honor book in which are written the names of those lost at sea. It is an exact replica of the one before the altar in the American Memorial Chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

The lectern is a gift of the Maritime Board of Great Britain and the reading plat is a piece of the deck from the famous British merchant navy training vessel *HMS Conway*.

Smaller chapels of the three faiths may be found on the lower deck of the chapel. These include Our Lady, Star of

the Sea (Catholic) Chapel, St. Andrew's (Protestant) Chapel, and the Chapel of Perpetual Light (Jewish). The statue of Our Lady in the small Catholic chapel shows Our Lady with hands out, blessing a ship, symbolically the first nuclear merchant ship *NS Savannah*.

The beacon light in the cupola of the steeple is marked on official charts and is visible for seventeen miles, serving as a navigation light to shipping on Long Island Sound. It is known as the Kings Point Light. The weather vane atop the chapel steeple is in the form of a full-rigged sailing ship.

Visitors are welcome to the Academy grounds on Saturdays and Sundays during the year, except in the month of August.

The altars may be revolved so that only the altar appropriate for the particular service held is visible. The mechanism which rotates them is stopped midway in this photo to show both the Catholic and Protestant altars.







It varies in colour from whitish grey to black, is light and fairly soft and possesses a queer, not wholly unpleasant, smell. Nowadays, of course, it is solely for its value as a fixative for the finest perfumes that it is sought at all. Perfume manufacturers pay anything up to three or four pounds an ounce for it.

Once ambergris began to have value, it became the centre of a trade. The Turks seem to have used it for as long as any, originally for high-grade cooking, and then later as a love philtre. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was valued as a general cure-all. Epilepsy, hydrophobia, heart and brain troubles, rheumatism—there was hardly anything it would not be good for.

A writer of 1691 states it "revives and creates spirits, natural, vital and family." Milton and many other writers mention it in various connections, and in 1646 Sir Thomas Browne refers to the odour encountered when seeking it in the carcass of a dead whale. Arabs, Moors, Indians, Portuguese, Spaniards and Persians all traded in it at different times and Zanzibar, Madagascar and Ceylon long remained large centres for its marketing.

It is even said that the ingenious Moors trained their camels to smell it out and find it lying on the shores of Barbary. Even the Malays and the Chinese knew of it and used it. One of the most unusual happenings concerned with "ambergreece", as they called it, was in 1791, when Captain Coffin, a

Nantucket whaler who had sought it in many parts of the world was actually summoned before the bar of the English House of Commons to give an account of this rare and precious substance to credulous members.

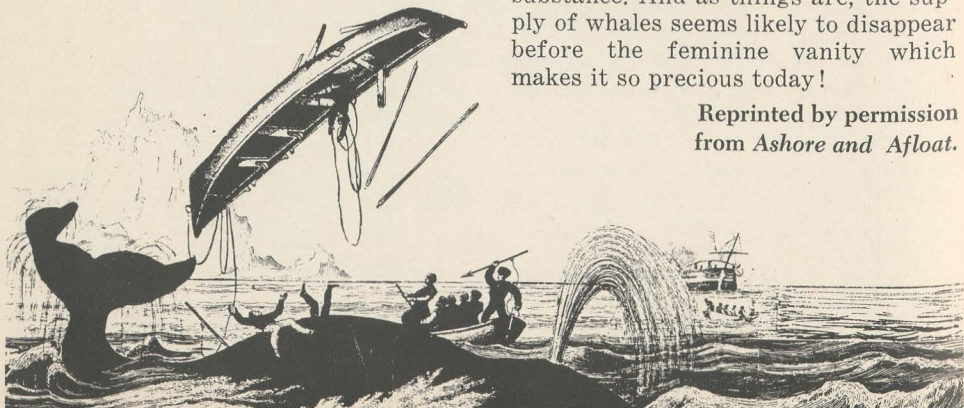
Since his day, world supplies of ambergris have steadily decreased and the price steadily risen. To such effect, in fact, that sizeable finds of ambergris are now sure to bring in their fortunate locators fortunes of anything from 5,000 to 30,000 pounds or more. A single piece sold in Paris at the turn of the last century fetched 18,360 pounds, while a mass towed ashore by an American fishing smack brought the vessel's owners close on 30,000 pounds.

The annual world supply of ambergris is very small indeed; sometimes only a few pounds come to light. Fortunately a good quantity goes a very long way, since the tiniest amounts fix the scents of perfume. The true chemical content of the substance cannot properly be determined, but it has this strange potency of retaining any scent with which it is incorporated.

Needless to say, substitutes and false essences made from artificial gums and balsams are often put forward as the genuine article, but a simple alcoholic test tells the expert the true stuff at once. Ambergris experts work like connoisseurs of wines, carefully grading all the samples that come into their hands.

As long as there are any sperm whales left in the seven seas, it seems man will always treasure this remarkable substance. And as things are, the supply of whales seems likely to disappear before the feminine vanity which makes it so precious today!

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from *Ashore and Afloat*.



## MEET THE BOARD

*David R. Grace*



Elected as a Manager in 1959, David R. Grace has already held membership on six Board committees, including the Executive, Planning, Ways and Means, Trust Funds, and Education and Program committees, and the chairmanship of the Real Estate Committee since 1962. He was elected a lay vice president in 1965.

Born in 1917, Mr. Grace was graduated from Yale University in 1939. After a two-year traineeship with the Phosphate Recovery Corporation, he served for four years during the war in the Naval Reserve, rising from the rank of Ensign to that of Lieutenant Commander. From 1946 to the present, he has been with Sterling, Grace and Company, as a statistician and, since 1947, as a general partner.

A president of Broad Tankers Corporation and a member of the executive committee of Pacific Air Lines Inc., he is also on the board of directors of Phs. Van Ommeren, Inc. and of Vision, Inc., and a member of the Newcomen Society.

Mr. Grace was married in 1944 to Nancy Major Erskine. They have four children.

### TWO HAIKU

1

In the white sea town  
old men curled against the wall,  
they hear bells in shells.

2

... remembering their time  
on old windjammers ... other  
coasts and other towns.

—Nonee Nolan



25 South Street  
New York, N. Y. 10004

AT NEW YORK, N. Y.

Return Requested

Memorial Chapel of the  
U.S. Merchant Marine  
Academy at Kings  
Point, N.Y.

