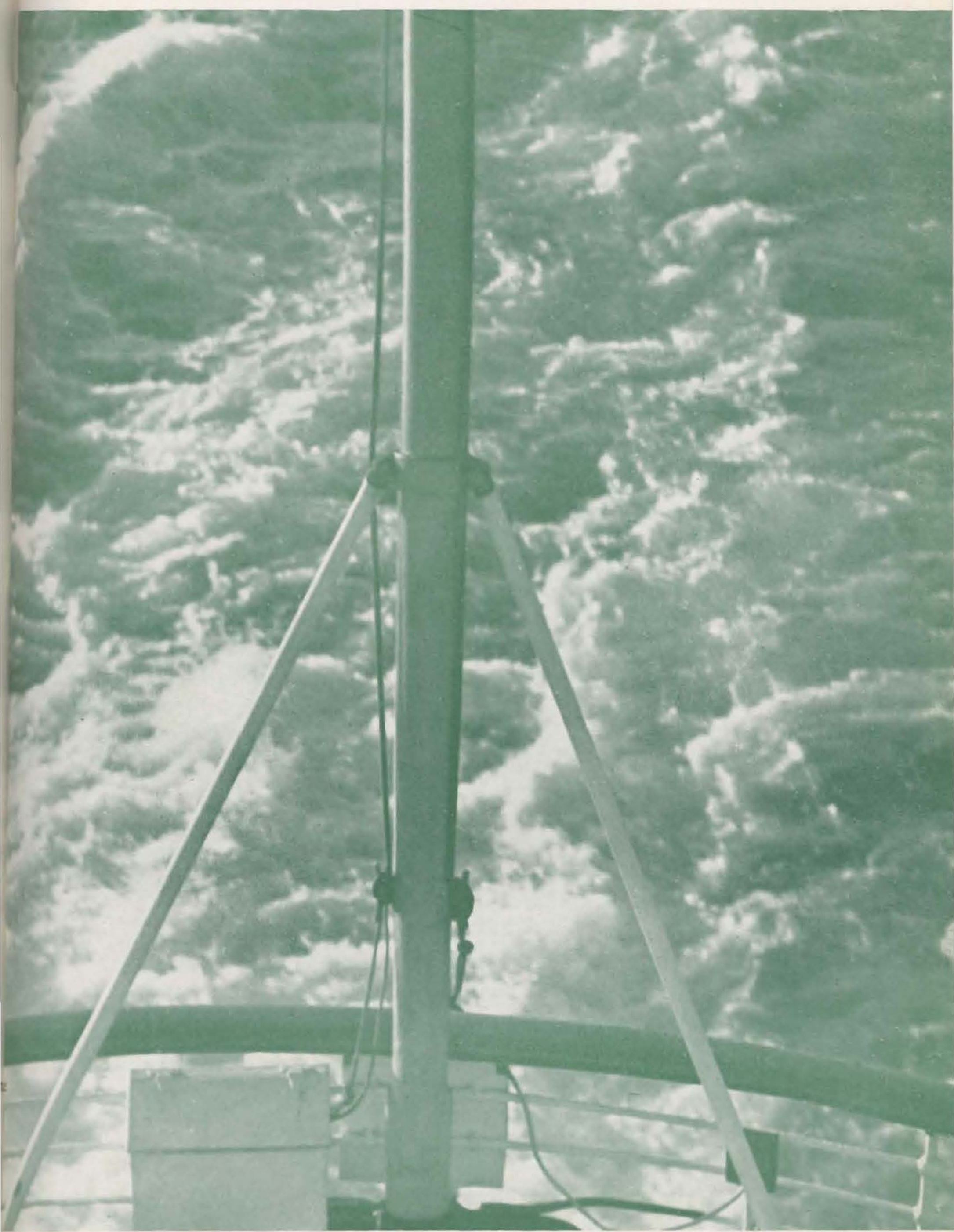
# The LOOKOUT



SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK
VOL. XXVIII NO. 9 SEPTEMBER, 1937

THIS MONTH'S COVER SHOWS a view from the taffrail (the rail around the vessel's stern) on the S.S. Pennsylvania.

*Courtesy of "The Ocean Ferry"—United States Lines*

*The* LOOKOUT

VOL. XXVIII, SEPTEMBER, 1937

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

*by the*

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

25 SOUTH ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.

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*Entered as second class matter July 8, 1925, at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.*

*Subscription Rates*

One Dollar Annually

Single Copies, Ten Cents

Gifts to the Institute of $5.00 and over include a year's subscription to "The Lookout."

*Address all communications to*

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

25 South Street

John Masefield, England's Poet Laureate, dedicated "a little poem—not an ode" to the sailors of merchantmen and fishing fleets at the opening of Great Britain's first Merchant Navy Week. It is as follows:

"They dare all weathers in all climes and seas,
In every kind of ship; and risks they run
Are all the greatest underneath the sun.
Their fortune is as flinty as their bread.
Some truces nature grants them, never peace;
The work they do is hourly undone.
By them we make our money and are fed,
Let England, doing justice, honor these."

*Reprinted from The New York Times, July 18, 1937*

# The Lookout

VOL. XVIII SEPTEMBER, 1937 No. 9

## The Port of the "Otago"*

By Dixie Tighe

THERE is another link today between the Joseph Conrad Library of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and the author for whom this sailors' shore library was named.

The "link" is the round brass port with its inch thick glass "light," 6 inches in diameter, taken from the side of the captain's cabin of the iron barque *Otago*, which was commanded by Joseph Conrad in 1888. The *Otago* was his only command.

We saw the porthole yesterday in the Joseph Conrad Library. It does not look its age and is as heavy and shiny a porthole as ever we have seen.

* * *

The porthole is a gift to the library from Alan Villiers, the author of "The Cruise of the Conrad." It was when Villiers was sailing the *Joseph Conrad* and was in Melbourne, Australia, that he was given the relic of the author's famous squarerigger.

It was presented to him by Mr. J. M. T. Butler of Hobart, Tasmania, who took it from the *Otago* when her coal-hulk days were over and she was grounded in the River Derwent.

Villiers brought the relic home with him in his ship—which means that the brass port after sailing probably a million miles in the *Otago* made a last wind-driven voyage of 25,000 miles to its new home.

* * *

Unhappily, we don't know the million-mile itinerary that the port made in the *Otago* but we can tell you something of the voyage it made with Villiers in his squarerigger.

*Photo by Leroy Gates*

**The Port of the "Otago"**

From Melbourne the *Joseph Conrad* with the famous port on board, sailed to Auckland, N. Z., then to New Guinea; from there she beat from Samari to Lord Howe Island, on to Tahiti and home to N. Y. directly from Papeete, this last run taking 106 days.

Alan Villiers saw the *Otago* frequently when he was a newspaper man in Tasmania some years ago, and he describes her as "a sweet and able little vessel, with beautiful lines—just such a little ship as Conrad would have loved."

They aren't sure yet just where the brass port will hang, maybe over the door to the library, maybe on the wall opposite the figurehead of Conrad. (*Continued on Page* 10)

* Reprinted from The New York Post, May 18, 1937.

# Ship Models *

By Hendrik Willem van Loon

WE build ourselves ship models and so did our ancestors. But the motives that inspire us are very different. The Roman who crossed from the mouth of the Scheldt to the coast of England was so profoundly grateful when, once more, he set foot on dry land, that he went to the nearest pottery and ordered himself a clay model of the vessel that had carried him across the turbulent ocean and he dedicated it to the Deity who looked after the welfare of the local fishermen, together with a liberal largesse in coin of the realm for the upkeep of her shrine.

He said, "Oof" or "Oh, la-la!" or "Eheu!" or whatever a seasick Roman said on such occasions, and he promised himself that if ever he were fortunate enough to return to his native city he would go to the Temple of Poseidon and present that dripping sovereign of the deep with a marble replica of the barbarian scow that had been his home for so many uncomfortable days.

Our cousins of the Middle Ages, although they had learned a little something about the use of the compass and the log, were just as much at the mercy of the tides and the storms, and they too, ere they undertook any voyage of importance, were apt to promise some particular patron saint (Saint Nicholas to this day has survived as such, among the staunch Calvinistic skippers of the Low Lands) a nice little ship in return for a comfortable and safe trip. The finished product was then deposited in the church of the old home town and, since rivalry is one of mankind's most besetting sins, the different travelers were soon competing with each other to see who could turn out the best-looking and most expensive ship model.

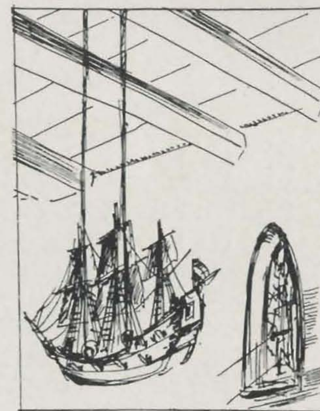
Those little ships, of course, were exceedingly fragile. All but a very few have perished hundreds of years ago. A few lucky ones have escaped the ever-present menace of the vandal and the souvenir-hunter. They are now among the most treasured pieces of our museums.

Of almost equal importance were the models built for the engineers of the shipyards of the 17th and 18th Centuries. It was an era when the whole of our planet was being discovered by the leading maritime powers of Europe. It was the age when just one more gun on one final galleon would settle the fortune of an entire continent. The Spaniards and Portuguese started it. They in turn were deprived of their power by the Dutch. The Dutch were defeated by the English and the French also suffered a similar fate. The number of ships that were being built in those days must have been out of all proportion to the size of the countries that produced them and paid for their upkeep. But when ships were the beginning and the end of a country's prosperity, that country would turn its forests into planks and its peasants into sailors, regardless of the consequences. Hence a golden day for the naval architect. He could build and experiment and change and grope around for new forms to his heart's content. For he was up against a problem that never faces his modern colleagues. He had no decent harbors at his disposal. He had to rely upon open harbors without breakwaters. And very shallow ones at that, offering no space for manoeuvring. He had to make his ships as heavy as possible, for his employers, their lordships of the Admiralty, thought of naval engagements in terms of the weight of the actual iron cannon-balls that one squadron could fire at another in a given number of minutes.

The naval architect therefore was constantly weighing and measuring, "Just how heavy can I make my vessels to carry the utmost number of guns without making them so heavy that they cannot enter or leave our ports?"

Speed, of course, also entered into his calculations, and there he depended almost entirely upon the shape of the hull, for the rigging seemed to have reached its height of perfection, like the modern locomotive.

The 17th Century, especially when the big ships suddenly increased from an average maximum of 800 tons to one of 1800, made the naval experts pay special attention to their hulls and they were forever working on small scale models. For those engineers did not work from blueprints as we do. They worked in large wooden halls where all the planks and beams were carefully laid out according to a general plan, painted black on white on the walls. And for that general plan the bosses and foremen needed something concrete and visible, hence the hulls that were prepared to give them guidance. The rigging by then had become so completely a matter of tradition (sailors being the most conservative of human beings) that little attention was paid to it. Every waterfront man could rig a ship, just as we boys, who spent our days along the shore of the North Sea, could turn an old wooden shoe into anything from a barkentine to a sloop without one faulty rope or spar. Those old models have survived in greater quantities than the tiny vessels dedicated to the Saints of Heaven. But now, too, most of the better preserved ones have found their way to our museums and private collections.



*Drawing by Hendrik W. van Loon*

**Ship Model Suspended From Church Roof, A.D. 1600**

The only category that remains (more or less) at the disposal of the amateur are the "sailors' ships." Life on board an old sailing vessel was incredibly dull, monotonous and tedious. And the sailor had no tools except his knife with which he split his rope and ate his lobscous and cut his initials across the face of a mate he happened to dislike. Out of this strange combination of boredom and a versatile pocket-knife, we got tens of thousands of ships, big ones and small ones, careful ones and shoddy ones, excellent replicas of the vessel of which the sailor had been an inmate and dreadful caricatures of bottoms that bore about as much relationship to the objects they were supposed to represent as my own efforts within the field of drawing horses and dogs.

* Reprinted from the "American Collector," June 27, 1935, by special permission of the author.

A Scene in the Institute's Ship-Modelling Class

Came the day that we rediscovered a lot of things that had been completely forgotten during the early days of the great industrial revolution, which had reduced all life to horsepower and profits. And suddenly, when practically all sailing vessels had disappeared from the surface of the sea, we realized that a great deal of beauty had been lost in the warfare between man and machine. We could no longer watch a five-master trying to outrun a storm under full sail, or as much sail as its master dared to hoist. But we could at least have a little five-master on our own mantle-piece. And so our grandparents and our fathers and uncles began to collect ship models and the lucky ones and those who knew the tricks of the trade laid their hands upon some right noble specimens of the old naval architects' art.

Then the industrial revolution reached its peak in the era of the great prosperity. Morals, manners, integrity, an appropriate sense of the eternal balance of things went cheerfully by the boards (and not only the Boards of Directors). Everything had to be exploited for all the traffic would bear. Harmless old pastimes like autograph collecting, ship-model collecting, stamp collecting, they all of them became rackets. Every man was entitled to everything according to the new code of happiness. It was unfair that only a few of us should own and enjoy ship models. Every garage must have two cars and every house must be provided with a dozen genuine ship models. Even if the proud owner did not know a Chinese junk from a Zanzibar dhow, the ships must be there on the mantlepiece of the dining room so that the lord of the mansion, pointing to a Holland "flute," could casually remark, "See that New Bedford whaler? That was the one of which my grandfather was captain in the year 1852!"

Of course, supply followed demand. The industrious Germans began to make ships by the thousands and a few years later the Japanese began to copy them by the hundreds of thousands. The German product was bad enough, but at least it had some respect for tradition and stuck with more or less fidelity to a certain definite type of ship without mixing 14th Century galleys with the men-of-war of Nelson's day. But the Japanese, who have never yet copied a thing without making a mess of it, recognized no laws or rules or regulations. Just as they killed our old love for little Japanese gardens by dumping millions of cheap substitutes upon the market, so they are now threatening to kill the love for ship models by floating their vast squadrons of dreadful little caricatures that are offered to an indiscriminate and undiscriminating public under the name of ancient ship models.

But, when I come to think of it, the harm they can do is really not so appalling as it would appear at first sight. A love for the really good and beautiful things of life is not and never has been and probably never can be a mass-product. In matters of taste and a fine sensitiveness for the differences between the good and the almost-good, the individual will always rule supreme.



# From Unclaimed Baggage*

By John McClain

SEAMEN lead a nomad's existence. Their personal belongings can usually be packed conveniently in a small suit case and in many cases a few items of clothing, a yellowed note, a tattered photograph, serve as the only means of identification in the case of death. By necessity sailors must be ready to pack up and depart on short notice, so there is neither time nor space to allow for such adornments as books, stationery, or even the few articles of a purely private and family nature which men in other walks of life would keep with them.

As a result, philanthropic institutions dedicated to the welfare of seagoing men are over-cautious in the matter of handling sailors' effects. Belongings left behind are watched over, held for a reasonable length of time, and finally filed away, in the belief that at some future day the owner may appear to reclaim them. In most cases this care is fruitless. The articles are worthless, the seaman is dead, or has long forgotten where he left them. But in rare instances, in enough instances to justify the entire practice, these belongings serve a definite end.

* * *

Here is an example:

From Mrs. Janet Roper, housemother and head of the missing seamen's bureau at the *Seamen's Church Institute of New York*, comes this stranger-than-fiction true story. A seaman wrote to her from a veteran's hospital in California, saying he had lost his memory from an injury on shipboard two years ago. He wrote:

**For the past two years I have been in a trance, not knowing what to do, not remembering anything about the past, about my relatives or any of my former life. Then, last week, a big package of old magazines was sent to the hospital here, and among them there was one which contained an article about you, Mrs. Roper. You have helped so many—and God bless you for it—and maybe you can also help me to find myself. When I saw the address, '25 South Street,' something came back to me. I believe I left a black leather suitcase in the baggage room, and in this bag were many photographs and addresses of my family and friends.**

**"Due to the fact that it is so long since I left those things there—in March, 1931, I think—I am not sure if you still have them in storage, but if so I would be the happiest man in the world to have them back here."**

It is customary for seamen to leave their baggage at the Institute with the understanding that after a year it will be moved to the unclaimed luggage room if they have not paid the checking charge of a penny a day or unless they have sent word asking that it be held for a longer period of time. Such unclaimed baggage is opened and all valuable documents, cash, receipts, photographs, references, etc., are filed away in a special locker, catalogued alphabetically, subject to their owners' identification. A great deal of clothing is found and this is all fumigated or washed and distributed to needy sailormen, an average of 700 such items being given out each month.

On receiving this strange letter, Mrs. Roper went immediately to the locker and under the seaman's name found a photographic album and a bundle of letters and papers. These showed that the seaman had served as a corporal in the U. S. Army, that he had an honorable discharge and many letters from commanding officers of various units in which he had served, commending him for "his fine conduct, dress, bearing and pleasing personality." Other references described him as "a thoroughly disciplined soldier, faithful and conscientious, and above the average in his performance of duty." Photographs of his family and of himself as a young boy, riding a bicycle, swimming with his sisters and brothers, around a Christmas tree, at the piano with his mother, on horseback with his father—all these will help to bring back his memory.

Mrs. Roper has mailed the album to the seaman out in California, with this note:

**"I am sure when you receive the package that I am just mailing to you, you will realize that the age of miracles isn't past, as I found upon referring to our unclaimed baggage file that fortunately many of the things you mentioned in your letter have been saved. I hope that the letter and photographs will help you to refresh your memory still further in order that you may once more get in touch with your relatives."**

* Reprinted from "On the Gangplank"—New York Evening Journal and American, July 6, 1937.

# The Waterfront*

By Guy Emery Shipler

I was on my way way for luncheon with the Rev. Harold Kelley, able superintendent of a church institution which has done much to redeem the shortcomings of humanity in raw deals with Indians and others; an organization which gives the seamen of the world a chance to live like white men during their stays in the port of New York. If there is any finer church organization in the world than the *Seamen's Church Institute* I haven't heard of it. I have never come away from a visit there without longing to take every one to have a look at it. I am convinced that all housekeepers ought to pay it a visit just to see what spick and span housekeeping is. And every architect should see it to learn how a building should be constructed. And—but everybody ought to see it. What an appropriately charming place is its Joseph Conrad Library! Through its talented librarian, Miss Ann Conrow, I learned that seamen love to read biography, proving that they are normal human beings. And I got a genuine thrill when Miss Conrow showed me, with proper pride, a newly framed letter from Christopher Morley and an accompanying copy of a cablegram written in the hand of the great Conrad. Morley's comments on the manuscript, which he presented to the library, were characteristically amusing. He called attention to Conrad's frugal counting of his words, pointing out that Conrad went so far as to note the number of words on the margin. And Morley had been "frugal" enough to keep the original copy written when Conrad was his guest a few years ago! Chris doubtless made a careful copy of Conrad's cablegram and tore down to the local Long Island telegraph office to file it.

One is struck by curious contrasts between the Institute and its environs. In spite of the modernity of the building there seems to cling about it all the tradition of the sea. It is not difficult, as one looks out on South Street, to see vividly the bowsprits of the old schooners which once stretched across that curving thoroughfare along the waterfront. If you give ear to your imagination you can still hear the wind whipping through the rigging. Along Front Street, as you walk away under the elevated, a strange conglomeration of little shops give off spicy fragrances of the Orient and you would not be in the least surprised if out of one of the quaint doorways stepped Conrad's Lord Jim himself. As you emerge suddenly into Battery Park, hedged about by Manhattan's skyscrapers, you say to yourself, "How like New York! From Conrad's world into the heart of the machine age by crossing a street!"

*Illustration by Courtesy of Scripps-Howard Newspapers*

Why is it that New Yorkers seldom see the places of interest in the metropolis? I suppose the percentage of New Yorkers who have visited the *Seamen's Church Institute* would be so small as to seem quite fantastic if it could be stated. I have spent more than half my life in these parts, but I have never visited the Statue of Liberty, never taken the trip around the island by boat, never been in the Museum of the City of New York. I have jaunted around innumerable European cities in rubber-neck wagons, and have never done the same thing in Manhattan.

* Reprinted from "The Churchman," July, 1937.

**Please Note:**

**Visitors are welcome on weekdays, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., Saturdays, 9 A.M. to 12 Noon. To reach the Institute, take any "L," or IRT (East or West side) Subway to South Ferry; or BMT Subway to Whitehall Street (South Ferry) and walk three blocks along South Street. Plenty of parking space for cars.**

# Hurricanes *

By Capt. Felix Riesenberg

"AUGUST, lookout you must," is part of that old sea rhyme about West India hurricanes.

So many seamen today, especially the younger men, have no conception of what a full force hurricane can do to a ship. Steam and steel have driven across the oceans for many decades, regardless of the wind, and a man nowadays may run through the dangerous seas, during the hurricane months, and never get a touch of the business himself. He reads about them, listens to storm warnings, and keeps right on, secure in the idea that nothing by way of wind or wave can hurt him.

A year ago I was bound south on board the *G. Harrison Smith*, running into the last part of a hurricane. In the Straits of Florida, we passed the *Dixie*, caught on a reef. The story is familiar and reflects credit on her master, so far as the handling of his ship is concerned, after the stranding. No lives were lost and the vessel was re-floated.

A steamer today, fitted with radio, and with her engines working, has little excuse for being caught in the dangerous semi-circle of a twister. In fact a prudent man, after taking every precaution as to the security of his ship, on deck and below, will then do his utmost to steer as far away as possible, even to the point of running a thousand miles out to sea while the danger passes.

Being caught in narrow waters, beset by swift and unusual currents, for the tides of the sea are affected by hurricane winds, is tempting fate. No matter how powerful a steamer may be, there is always the chance of a breakdown at some dangerous moment. A steamer without power is less safe than an old time wooden sailing craft.

A master, in a safe harbor, is justified in delaying his sailing if he has any reason to believe that going out will place him in the vicinity of a hurricane. Once out, it is his first duty to watch the weather and make certain that he has sea room, and that he knows the direction and rate of progress of the center. After that his course is only restricted by the proximity of land or sunken dangers; it is away from the storm.

The old rhyme is as follows:

June, too soon,
July, stand by,
August, lookout you must,
September, remember,
October, all over.

(Referring to the danger of West India hurricanes.)

History tells us some stirring stories. One of the most terrific of West India hurricanes swept over those seas in September, 1782, a century before Piddington, in his famous *Horn Book*, gave directions for maneuvering a ship in a circular storm.

*H.M.S. Centaur*, a ship of the line, commanded by Captain Inglefield, R.N., had undergone a heavy hammering during the course of Admiral Sir George Rodney's action against the Count de Grasse. She was ordered home with a fleet, including a number of captured ships.

On the evening of September 16, 1782, the *Centaur* was prepared for heavy weather. The mainsail was reefed and set, the topgallant masts were struck, and the cross jack yard was lowered to the nettings. Toward midnight the ship began to leak and all hands were turned-to to spell the pumps. Towards two in the morning the gale seemed to break; it had been severe. Soon, after much thunder and lightning from the S. E. with rain, it began to blow in strong gusts, the mainsail was hauled up and the ship rode under bare poles. This was scarcely done when a gust of wind, of exceeding violence, laid the ship on her beam ends.

The water came up out of the hold and appeared in the 'tween decks, filling the men's hammocks to leeward. The ship lay motionless and Captain Inglefield gave orders to cut away the main and mizzen masts, and as this was done, the foremast and bowsprit also went by the board.

The ship immediately righted, but with great violence and her action was so quick the people had difficulty in working the pumps. Three guns broke loose upon the main deck and several men were maimed in the attempt to secure them. Every movable object below was destroyed; shot was thrown from the racks. The officers, who had left their berths naked when the ship first overset, had not an article of clothing, nor could their friends supply them. All of the quarter deck guns were hove overboard. The gun carriages, the anchors, all weights were jettisoned, and after a week of terrific struggle, the ship foundering, she was abandoned. Fourteen days later Captain Inglefield in the single boat to be launched, brought his remnant of dying men into Fayal.

The dangers are as great today.

*Reprinted from the Nautical Gazette, August 1. 1936.

# A Plea for Sea Training in Sail *

By Captain Alan Villiers

EDITOR'S NOTE: There is a feeling in many informed quarters that the training received by youths seeking seafaring careers has become soft and ineffective since the decline of the sailing ship as a training medium. Alan Villiers, noted sailor-author, photographer and lecturer, voiced his opinion on the matter in no uncertain terms April 23 at a luncheon meeting in his honor at the Seamen's Church Institute which was largely attended by distinguished guests.

In the course of his plea for the use of sailing ships as a practical and economical method of training American boys for seafaring careers, Captain Villiers earnestly recommended that America enter a windjammer in the annual grain race from Australia to England, pointing out that as this method pays under foreign flags it would also be of great benefit to the American Merchant Marine. In the course of his address, Captain Villiers said:

Courtesy, "Oil Power."
Photo by R. I. Nesmith & Associate

"It is not a necessity for the modern steamship officer who can learn much of what he ordinarily needs in academies ashore," he declared. "But the great Cape Horn sailing ship was and will always be one of the most splendid cradles of manhood of our day, not only for those destined for a sea career. It is a fact known to all who have served in such vessels that there is somehow an approach to the serious business of living that is forced upon one there, that is otherwise seemingly unattainable. I recommend the use of a commercial ship for this purpose. I see no reason why the United States should not lead in this respect, instead of lagging far behind. Few people realize that there are as many square-rigged ships under the American flag as there are under the flag of Finland. Yet there is not one sail-trained cadet available for the Merchant Service of this country. You have the ships—the full-riggers *Seven Seas*, my own old *Joseph Conrad*, the *Tusitala*, the *Pacific Queen* and others on the Pacific Coast; the barque *Aloha*; the four-masted barque *Sea Cloud*. You have the men to officer them, and can as easily *make* the men again as you did before.

"There is nothing that is superhuman in the management of a ship under square sail. In the grain fleet not five percent of the crews, at the setting-out of the voyages from Europe, are experienced Cape Horners: yet you never hear of an accident to these ships. Year after year they successfully accomplish the hardest voyage in the world, and they are manned by a few-score boys. Men sit at this table today in the prime of life who could sail a square-rigged ship anywhere—men who are experienced, too, in the handling of boys. I get an average of twenty letters a week from boys throughout this country begging for a chance to ship under sail. I can only tell them to apply to Erikson, and see if they can become cadets in the Finnish grain ships. Some of these letters are almost tragic in the intensity of the longing they express: these boys want to go to sea, and many of them are lost to American Merchant Service because they

* Reprinted from The Marine Journal, May 17, 1937. Courtesy, Mr. D. H. Primrose, Editor.

find no facilities for making what Conrad has ably called the classic approach to all seafaring.

"I have been on board the steam schoolships here, the *Empire State*, and others. There is no doubt they are splendidly run and do a fine job: but a year or a year and a half under sail would be a tremendous asset to these boys. Sail is the cradle of manhood; it eliminates the unfit; it inculcates discipline of body and mind: it brings out what there is in boys, and shows those who are fit to lead. It forces them to think for themselves: only at sea under sail and in the air do conditions ordinarily arise calling for sudden life-and-death decisions affecting the lives of other persons. Training conditions of this kind cannot be simulated: the sailing-ship provides them. It is in the elimination of the unfit and the development of character that the long-voyage sailing-ship excels. It is a question whether much of the existing training methods do not tend to promote selfishness which is a poor quality to take to the sea.

"One speaks of sail with no unbalanced nostalgia, with no idea that merely because it is old it must be good; with no notion that merely because a human being might have served a while in deepwater ships of this kind, he is therefore superior to his fellow beings. He is nothing of the kind. But he has shared in a profound and stirring and memorable experience that has shaken him up and shaken him down too; he has been one of a compact and disciplined body held together for the ship and by the ship, loyal to the ship and to his shipmates, and with his own efforts aiding her and them to complete a voyage . . . He has thought through to something of the reality of life and living. The undue prolongation of youth ashore, the absence of discipline in so many of the homes and in even the peoples' minds, the tendency towards the selfish view—these things are bad influences in much of present-day life ashore; and their too-long continuance makes bad officers. Every nation in Europe, with the sole exception of England, uses sailing-ships for the training of both naval and merchant service officers—not as the whole training, but as the most efficient sifter of material and developer of character the enmity of the sea has yet devised.

"I advocate the use of one of the fine merchant vessels in this country for that purpose; such a ship could enter the grain trade and find profitable employment. Her trade could be New York to South Australia (in ballast if there was no cargo: all the Finnish grain ships go in ballast)—thence to the United Kingdom and the Continent with grain: thence with a bulk cargo (of which many are now available) westward to New York: and on again to Australia. These passages would fill a busy year: I should say no more than 20 boys ought to be carried, at first. It would pay. It pays under other flags: it could be made to pay here.

## Port of the "Otago"

(*Continued from Page 1*)

We don't believe there is a more interesting seamen's room than the Joseph Conrad Library at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York. We browsed around there yesterday and were shamed into absolute silence by the concentration of its sailor-readers.

It is a fine, light, airy room where hundreds of seamen come every day, many of them to study the technical books. We were particularly interested in the photographs on glass that were set into the windows. . . .

* * *

We asked what sort of books men of the sea particularly like and find that they have the old curse—you know, Chaplin wants to play Napoleon; well, here are these sailormen and they want to read about cowboys. The Zane Grey type of Western is the most popular. Of sea writers Alan Villiers is one of their favorites.

One of the greatest rushes in the library was during the peak of the popularity for the Mutiny Trilogy, "Mutiny on the Bounty," "Pitcairn Island" and "Men Against the Sea."

* * *

The sailors wouldn't care if they never saw a sissy love story. But they love poetry and philosophy and biographies of men like P. T. Barnum. Schopenhauer has his followers from the seamen.



# Man Overboard *

By Robert Wilder

WITH little or no introduction we turn today's column over to the *Seamen's Church Institute* . . .

Marjorie Dent Candee, one of our more consistent correspondents, writes us of a seaman, whose story we give you.

"I thought you might be interested in the following story which occurred on the waterfront yesterday:

"A seaman (who is so modest that he insists on our not using his name) was walking along the Battery sea wall just as the Statue of Liberty boat was docking. Suddenly he heard the people on board shouting "Man overboard" and instantly he jumped into the river and succeeded in rescuing a man from drowning. The man was a Chinese who had tried to commit suicide and was taken first to Broad Street Hospital and then transferred to Bellevue. The rescuer disappeared.

"The way we learned about the rescue was when the seaman came into the Seamen Institute's Welfare Department to ask for help in making out an affidavit to get duplicates for his ship discharge papers. He had lost all of these and $4 in cash (all the money he had in the world) from the pocket of his coat while in the river. His clothes were wet, but he did not even ask for dry ones. We insisted on giving him a suit of clothes and some shoes. Finally he summoned up enough courage to ask for a nickel. He wanted to go out to Astoria to his aunt's to borrow money, for he had planned to go to his home in Fall River by bus where his wife resides with his family. She is expecting a baby. We bought him a bus ticket to his home and gave him a dollar for his meals. He has never been on relief and has a good record with the various shipping lines he has worked for as an A. B. He was so modest—and this was not a pose with him—that when we asked him if he had ever rescued any one before he told of saving a boy from drowning while out in San Francisco and as soon as he had brought the lad ashore he fled the crowd of people. The police chased him, but he swam out of range. We suggested that we report these rescues to the Life Saving Benevolent Association with a view to obtaining an award or a medal, but he demurred. In these days when most heroes not only like but seek publicity it was somewhat refreshing to meet up with a person like him who, in all sincerity, wanted no praise, award or ballyhoo for his gallant act."

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Marjorie Dent Candee, at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, sends us a follow-up on the story we ran here on the rescue of a Chinese a few weeks ago. She writes:

"An interesting sequel to the story about the heroic rescue of a Chinese who jumped off the Statue of Liberty boat has developed. The wheels of fate grind exceedingly small and in this case they involve not only our seaman hero, but also a soldier from Governors Island and a French deckhand aboard the boat.

"It seems that when the cry 'Man overboard' went up, a soldier (of Polish descent) also answered the cry, as did our modest American seaman. The soldier, who had just purchased a new civilian suit, jumped into the East River and soldier and seaman together succeeded in saving the Chinese laundryman. It was rather dangerous rescue work, for the propellers of the boat were still in motion. A deckhand on the boat (of French descent, thus making it something of an international rescue) threw a rope and, aided by this, the Chinese was pulled to safety.

"We learned this when the deckhand came to the Institute asking for the seaman-rescuer (who, as described in your column, is now in Fall River—possibly by this time the proud father of a son or daughter). It seems that the deckhand loaned the seaman his best pair of shoes, but in the excitement forgot to arrange for their return. Now the deckhand happened to have a date with his girl that night, and since he had only his working shoes to wear, he had to pass up the date. In the Institute's Slop Chest we found a brand new pair of shoes which fit him perfectly, so I believe the girl gave him another chance, and so all's well.

"Meantime, the Chinese laundryman's family sent word to the soldier that if he would call they would reimburse him for the ruin of his new suit.

"Also, the Life-Saving Benevolent Association is going to investigate the rescue, and it would not surprise me greatly if both soldier and sailor were the recipients of handsome gold medals for their bravery."

* Reprinted from "The Sun Deck," New York Sun, September 21, 1936.

This is not a movie "still," but an actual photo taken aboard the Roanoke, June 18, 1904, by the late Captain P. Vosseller while the ship was docked on South Street

## Sea-Songs

By Edgar A. Guest

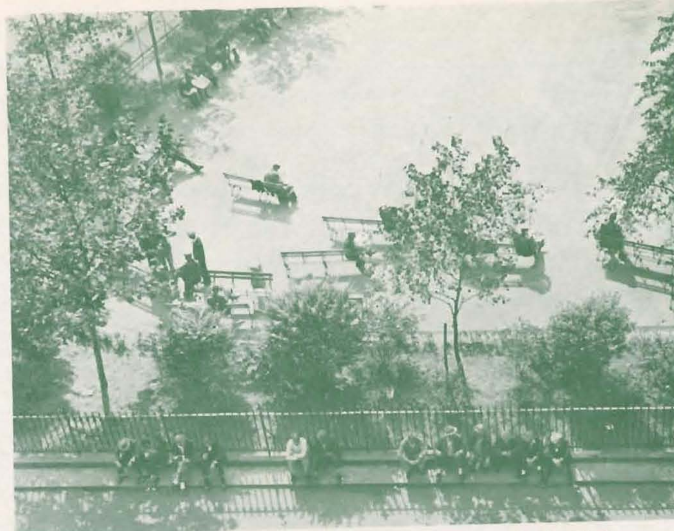
I've heard them sing their chantey song, ye ho, boys, ho!
But I like it better on the stage than where the billows flow,
For I've been out with sailor-men upon the deep blue sea
And one good northern hurricane was quite enough for me.
"Ye-ho, boys, ho!
When the wind begins to blow!"
I'd rather hear it on the stage than the Gulf of Mexico.

I love a good old chantey song and a hornpipe pleases me,
But I'd rather get them from the stage than a wind-tossed angry sea,
For I've pitched and tossed with sailor-men when the night was black as coal,
And I've no desire for a chantey song when the ship begins to roll.
"Ye-ho, boys, ho!
When the wind begins to blow!"
I'd rather be in a theater seat than the Gulf of Mexico.

For a day and a night we stood on end, first aft and then the bow,
And how we managed to stay afloat I don't remember now.
I only know that I had no taste for food and no ear for song,
And there's little joy in a chantey tune when the sea is running strong.
"Ye-ho, boys, ho!
When the wind begins to blow!"
I'd rather hear it on the stage than the Gulf of Mexico!

*(Copyright, 1933, Edgar A. Guest) N. Y. Eve. Journal, Oct. 13, 1933.*





An Autumn Day in Jeannette Park, Opposite the Institute
*Photo by Wm. C. Greene, N. Y. World-Telegram*

## Principal Facts About the Seamen's Church Institute of New York

—It is the *largest institution for merchant seamen* in the world.

—It was founded in 1834; in 1843 built a floating church and has now grown through a succession of mission and lodging houses to a modern, thirteen-story shore headquarters.

—It is a partially *self-supporting* welfare organization for active seamen who need friendship, guidance, recreation and emergency financial help.

—It provides a *complete shore community* for thousands of self-respecting seamen *each day*. It is home, post office, safe, library, employment bureau, clinic, club and church combined.

—It is open to *active seamen of all nationalities*, although eighty percent of the men served are American citizens from every state in the Union.

—It befriends *ship apprentice boys* from foreign countries and hundreds of American cadets every year.

—It instituted *free radio medical service* for ships at sea, thereby saving hundreds of seamen's lives in emergencies.

—It initiated legislation requiring *first-aid examinations* for every ship's officer obtaining a license.

—It has trained over 4,000 *seamen* in its Merchant Marine School and helped them to better positions.

—It *cooperates fully* with other seamen's welfare agencies, but should not be confused, e.g. with the endowed Sailors' Snug Harbor, which is for *retired* seafarers.

### What We Need:

The building is only partly self-supporting. Many of the facilities and all of the social and recreational services are provided seamen without charge, requiring gifts totalling $100,000. annually. Legacies are also needed to provide an adequate endowment fund. Our corporate title is: "SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK." Note that the words "Of New York" are a part of the title.

Address inquiries to:
REV. HAROLD H. KELLEY, Superintendent
Telephone BOwling Green 9-2710

# SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

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