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Volume I.

JULY, 1910

Number 3

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# THE LOOKOUT

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THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK  
ONE STATE STREET

## AN APPEAL

WE intend to build a new Institute that will be a model to its kind throughout the world. The land is purchased—the best available site in the city. The plans are drawn. We are ready. And still we delay.

It should be begun at once. Otherwise it will not be ready for use next May when our present lease expires. Until it is done we cannot expand our work and help more than a very limited number of the seamen of the port. But we cannot begin until we have more subscriptions. Nothing else delays us and hampers this work. We have raised \$352,000. We need \$340,000 more to completely pay for the land and building.

The Institute relies upon us to secure these subscriptions and start the building. We are doing the best we can, but it is a big undertaking. We need your help as well as your subscription. If all the friends of the Institute would rally to our assistance and carry this appeal to their friends the remainder would soon be raised and we could have our new building, free and clear, by May 1, 1911.

That is what we are asking you to do. Now is the time that your help is needed. Your subscription may be made payable any time before the building is completed, but we must know that you stand back of us and that the money will be forthcoming.

In making this appeal we confidently believe that those who help to make the new Institute possible will find it a continual source of honor and pride, and that, in the future, they will be grateful to us for persuading them to have a part in the building of it. Can you not persuade yourself and others to help us now and generously. The building was described in the May issue of THE LOOKOUT.



# THE LOOKOUT

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Published by the Seamen's Church Institute of New York  
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OFFICE, ONE STATE STREET, NEW YORK

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## A Bit of History

THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE emanated from the Young Men's Church Missionary Society, which was organized in 1834. The object of this Society was to aid in the education of young men for the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church and in support of missionaries of that church. For a long time it was merely an auxiliary of the City Mission Society. The results of its organization, though very important, were not equal to the wishes of its members. About the time that that was recognized, the unfortunate plight of the seamen coming into this port was noted and it was determined to reorganize this Missionary Society and to devote its whole strength to these neglected men.

In 1844, the Protestant Episcopal Church Missionary Society for Seamen in the City and Port of New York was organized, which proceeded to erect a floating church. At that time the average number of seamen constantly in port was estimated at 5,000; the number arriving here annually, at 40,000.

It is from this small beginning that the present work has grown to meet the needs of a port in which it is now estimated 400,000 seamen annually arrive.

Connected with the Society in its very earliest days were men of substantial position, whose names are still highly respected. Among the patrons, for instance, we find Robert B. Minturn, W. H. Aspinwall, Jacob R. Leroy, William

S. Wetmore, P. A. Schermerhorn, Edgar Howland, Henry Chauncey; two firms, Boorman, Johnston & Co. and Hicks & Co., and a woman, Mrs. Ban-  
yer. Among the life members mentioned in the records of 1845 appear the names of Brown, Norrie, Aldis, Stagg, Prime, Hoffman, Irvin, Jones, Edgar, Tooker, Bowne, Seymour, Nelson, Taylor, DeRham, Griswold, Couch, Jay, Bogert, Adee, Kermit, Watts, Astor, Pierpont, Edwards, Peet, Winthrop, Lorillard, Roosevelt, Spencer, Wolfe, Moorewood, Austen, Sampson, Aldrich, Tomes, Cushman, Merrill, Loder, Tucker, Boisseau, Wilmerding, Petit, Benedict, Herrick, Hastings and Field.

Other names equally well known and as closely identified with the history of the city occur in the lists of subscribers and donors. To the generosity and activities of these men and women the existence of the Institute is due. To them belongs the credit of having made it possible. This is undoubtedly a matter of pride with their heirs and the same pride may be transmitted to a future generation by those who have a part in making the new Institute possible. We would like to see in the new building a room or a floor or some other portion of it marked by a fitting tablet as a gift of the descendants of these early patrons, to their memory.

The present work of the Institute is a continuation of its initial purposes. Its methods have been increased and changed to meet the new situations that



have arisen, yet there has been no departure from the original plan of the founders.

Although the practical, aggressive work of the Institute has become particularly conspicuous, the spiritual welfare of the seaman is not overlooked, and a church on land as well as a church on water is maintained for his benefit. The clerical members of the staff are at his disposal and the sacraments of the Church are regularly administered.

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### North River Station

Games and tables have been provided for the use of the seamen at the North River Station. It is not expected that these will be in great demand during the summer months. The Institute rooms get the western sun—awnings at the windows would cool and darken the rooms and attract men looking for "a cool spot." There are two windows in the reading room, three on the second floor, and three on the top floor, the assistant's and sexton's quarters. We would be grateful at the North River Station if some friends of the work would provide this comfortable necessity.

A new Institute flag has been received at the station for daily use.

The Women's Municipal League has once again met a need which is appreciated by the passer-by as well as by the sailor in the Institute. The League provides 300 lbs. of artificial ice daily and 600 lbs. on Saturday during the summer for the large ice-chest in the cellar and cold water, from the fountain erected by the League on the outside of the building as well as through faucets in the reading-room, relieves, refreshingly, many a thirsty man.

Recently Mrs. H. T. Weidenfeld, executive secretary of the Committee on

Fountains, visited this station in the interest of the League.

The Reading Rooms are now open from 10 A. M. to 10 P. M., which affords an earlier hour for the men to see the shipping news.

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### Breakwater Notes

Sunday, May 29th, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Woolsey and the Misses Luella and Clara Ghear, of St. Anns, Brooklyn, came to the Breakwater to lead the singing. They were certainly a great help. The only way of judging whether they thought such work was worth while was to ask them to come again. They came gladly on June 19th. This time the Misses Ghear and Mr. Sherman sang a trio which added greatly to the attractiveness of the service.

Sunday, June 12th, Miss Virginia Deems, of Pocantico Hills, N. Y., added greatly to the pleasure of some twenty-five or more seamen who attended the services, by a very pleasant rendering of the song, "Calvary."

Tuesday evening, June 7th, Mr. Gustave Schwab and a friend of his, gave an informal banjo concert. The men just revelled in it. There is no doubt about it, they must come again *soon*.

Thursday evening, June 9th, Chaplain Smith, of Governor's Island, gave an informal lantern lecture on his experiences "One Thousand Miles up the Nile." You could have heard a pin drop almost any time from the moment he began to speak. There was, we admit, an occasional noise in the rear of the room, for a number of extra chairs had to be brought into use. The sailors enjoyed his talk immensely.

Other lantern lectures have been given including "The Highlands of Scotland," "The Tower of London," and Charles Dickens' "Oliver Twist."





### A NEW BREECHES BUOY

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE LIDGERWOOD MANUFACTURING CO.

The prevention of accidents and disasters seems of greater importance than hospital treatment after they have occurred. Both are necessary. Much has been done in respect of mines, machinery, house and ship building, railroad construction and operation, and legislation is still busy with these matters. But while public interest is alert for humane treatment of laborers and their families, attention should be called to "*life saving*" at sea.

Among other inventions and plans for the rescue of seamen from wrecks, we are glad to notice the efforts of the revenue cutter service, Captain W. G. Ross, commandant, who has placed upon Revenue Cutter "Snohomish" a new "breeches buoy," which goes far to solve the problem of taking off from wrecks at sea passengers and sailors otherwise helpless, by taking up the slack of the "buoy" lines on the wreck and on the passing vessel. Not being taut at

either end, the lines have an elastic yield, and pull in and out, as the waves toss the vessels near and from each other, by means of an adjustable reel having a safety accommodation adapted to a varying distance. Persons saved in this way may still get a ducking, but that happens also when the wreck is fast on a shore or reef outside, in the hands of the life-saving coast service. The total loss of the steamer "Valencia" and the loss of 136 lives Jan. 22, 1906, called attention to the need of such an apparatus. The wreck did not go to pieces for 36 hours after the vessel struck. Congress then voted \$100,000 for a vessel with rescue machinery, including the said breeches buoy.

Another much needed appliance is one insuring the quick and safe lowering of life boats from davits on a ship's deck. Many lives have been lost by the uneven lowering of good boats or by their overturning on striking the water.



## THE LOOKOUT

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*Subscription Price - - One Dollar a Year*

NOTE—Address all communications to  
ARCHIBALD R. MANSFIELD, Superintendent

In the June issue of THE LOOKOUT, we published a rather full account of our work at the Breakwater. It aroused considerable interest among the friends of the Institute. They have responded to its appeal in a practical and substantial way. One friend has donated a very fine talking machine. He was sufficiently interested to go over to the Breakwater himself and put it in operation, to the great delight of the seamen there. From another friend we have received a check for \$500.00, modestly given. It came to us accompanied by her visiting card, upon which was written this simple stipulation: "For the sailors' amusement."

We have recognized the necessity of developing this phase of this work for a long time yet it is only recently that we were enabled to undertake it in any thoroughgoing way. In planning the new building, we have had the architects provide suitable rooms and we have outlined a programme of entertainment that we hope to be able to put in operation as soon as the new structure is built. Of course, this entertainment will entail expense and equipment and personal service but, from the prompt response the mere statement of the work has brought forth, we are convinced that the success of this work is guaranteed. Other friends will doubtless be ready to follow where these generous donors have led. They may be well satisfied that this is one of the most practical phases of the work and worthy of their endowment.

During these hot months, when vacations consume so much of every one's interest and when so many are away and beyond the reach of our call, the Building Fund, very naturally, makes slow progress. Those who are minded toward contributing to this fund and who send their subscriptions now, may have the added satisfaction of knowing that each contribution is a source of cheer and encouragement for those who have the Building Fund in charge.

### Banking Department

Perhaps you read the April report of the Banking Department that was published in the June issue of THE LOOKOUT. Behind it, as indeed, behind any monthly report of this feature of our work, lies a story with which the public is none too familiar.

The office of the Banking Department is a desk enclosed with a heavy wire screen, situated in one corner of the shipping office of the British Consulate at No. 2 State St. A large sign is conspicuously displayed upon the enclosing screen. This is the way it reads:

"Special Notice to You! Do not take all your money out of this room. There are SHARKS and CRIMPS waiting for you outside. Count out the money you owe and the money you want to spend to-day. But leave the rest here and get what you want from day to day. DO NOT forget those at home who expect and need YOUR ASSISTANCE. We will send for you any amount of money to any part of the world, FREE OF COST."

The majority of the seamen paid off at this port, receive their wages in this shipping office. When they are paid off, they are advised not to take their



money with them, but to leave it with our agent, either on deposit or for transmission to their dependent relatives. The clerks in the consul's office, who have the sailors' interests at heart as well as we, co-operate with us in urging the seamen to save their earnings. During the month of April \$15,817.59 was deposited with our banking representative, and \$14,116.22 was paid out by him to our depositors or for them. Two-thirds of this money, \$9,984.80, was transmitted by him to their friends and relatives scattered throughout the world. It left a balance on deposit of \$17,093.11, which is held subject to the wish of the depositors, wherever they may be.

When a seaman deposits his money with us, he is given a formal receipt. In order to draw out his money, this receipt must be presented and when payment is made to him or for him the amount and the date are written in a space especially prepared for it on the back of the receipt. It is also entered of course, in our books, and on the stub of the receipt book.

It is possible, then, for a depositor to know, simply by adding up the memoranda upon his receipt, just what amount of money he has on deposit with us as easily as he could tell from a savings bank deposit book. In case these receipts are lost, every precaution is taken to protect the depositors against having the finders or thieves draw upon his deposit and the funds he leaves with us are surrounded by every safeguard that a well-devised system can suggest.

It is very gratifying to be able to record the large percentage of these deposits that is transmitted to the seaman's dependents. We are constantly

urging him to appreciate his responsibility in this matter and those who are directly engaged in shipping give us their co-operation. The following letter shows how the Glasgow Sailors' Home and an important firm of steamship owners, assisted us in this worthy undertaking:

CAPTAIN BUTLER, *S. S. Headley,*  
New York.

Dear Sir: The Superintendent of the Glasgow Sailors' Home writes us that Mrs. J—, the wife of the steward who has been on board your steamer for fourteen months, has not received any money from her husband. If he is still on board please get him to agree to a substantial cash remittance, and send it on to us, so that we can remit the amount to the woman. We think these men should make regular remittances to their relations. Your faithfully, —

There is a clerical error in this letter but its meaning is plain.

In attempting to become bankers for the sailors, we are confronted with a great difficulty. Our depositors are here to-day or this week, and then they are gone. For the most part, they belong to the "Deep Water" branch of shipping. They ship for long voyages. They do not always return directly to this port. It may be many months before we see or hear from them. But, wherever they may be, they do not hesitate to send for their money in case of need, and we are constantly recognizing their drafts, though they come from the ends of the earth.

Here, for instance, is a telegram from San Francisco:

"Wire me one hundred and twenty dollars from my account—arrived today from Manzanillo—wish leave tomorrow for New York."



Here is a receipt from the Finance Department of the London Board of Trade:

Sir: I am directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of a draft for the sum of £18, to be credited to the account of Ali Hussein, a depositor in the Seaman's Savings Bank. I am, sir, your obedient servant, —

And here is a letter sent to us directly from Philadelphia by the depositor himself:

Dear Sir: I inclose you my check and I want you to forward on my money here the sum of 90 dollars. My age 24, born in Cumbard. The vessel I was paid off with was Austraua boat called the *S. S. Cube*. I was paid off in New York. And oblige, —

Another letter comes from the Sailor's Home on London Docks:

Dear Sir: I have to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter enclosing check, value £20:8:0, on American Express Co. We have opened an account for Mr. — and have duly credited him with this amount.

I presume that he is on his way from New York to London and will call here for his money. Yours faithfully, —

It is not always easy to do business with seamen at such a long range. The seaman may not be entirely sober when he deposits his money or draws it out. His memory of the transaction may not be very clear several months later, and from such sources come many of our tribulations.

A few years ago, for instance, we received this letter from the Board of Trade offices, Cork, Ireland:

Dear Sir: Perhaps you may remember that when I was paid off at New York, from the *S. S. Casilda*, on the 24th of May last, I left with you, to be forwarded to my sister, Mary T—, the sum of 30 dollars.

Through some error she only received £5 by a bank draft. Will you therefore kindly send the balance to me, less any expenses, by Consular money order, payable at the above address. Thanking you in anticipation, yours respectfully, —

To this letter our agent sent the following reply:

Dear Sir: Your most remarkable letter of Nov. 27 received this morning. I wish to state that this Society does not do business in the way you intimate. The small receipt issued at the time of making out a check to your sister you left lying on the counter, and it is herewith handed to you; it explains itself and shows to you that you got a draft for five pounds, for which you paid me \$24.44. If you handed to me \$30 at the time, you got your change when the check was issued. Your truly, —

The letter and the reply to it explain the difficulties of this situation. Whether the writer of the letter was ever convinced or not is another question. He probably took his change and spent it in the way that drowns out all memories and perhaps we are now being abused, as very often happens, by one whom we treated most honorably.

This work that we are doing is well known wherever the sailor lounges along the water front. We are constantly receiving inquiries of all sorts written with the desire to locate any possible funds of which the seamen are supposed to be possessed. This inquiry was addressed to us from the Consul-General's office, and shows how naturally he turns to our Banking Department as the probable resting-place of a dead man's money:

Dear Sir: I shall be much obliged if you will kindly inform me whether you have any record of the deposit before Sept. 30th, 1902, by one ———, of one hundred and thirty-one dollars



(\$131.16) and sixteen cents. Mr. — states in his will that the sum in question was deposited with the British Counsel, but no such sum having been received here, I think it is possible that you may have it. Yours very truly, —

One of the compensations of the work this department involves is the gratitude expressed by the dependents to whom we transmit the seaman's wages. Some of these letters are so lengthily effusive that space does not permit us to publish them. Others are as brief and straightforward as this one:

Dear Sir: I write to let you know that I received the check all right. I thank you very much for your kindness. I remain, yours, —

We are dealing in these transactions <sup>of</sup> with people from all over the world. Many of our best patrons are Turks, Arabs, Somali and other Orientals. Some of them have very queer notions about banking. There is one depositor, for instance, who draws out all his money about twice a year, and within a day or two redeposits it. He simply wishes to know that it is safe and that he can have it whenever he wishes to ask for it.

Others bring to us their money for safe-keeping stipulating that they shall be paid back the identical coins they have deposited. During the financial depression of 1907, one of the Arab depositors drew out his money and had it exchanged for English gold; then he brought the gold back to us and requested us to keep it for him intact until he called for it. Our safe deposit boxes usually contain coin of some sort which is held for those who have more faith in it than in any other bullion.

The agent of this department has many odd experiences. About two years

ago, for instance, he sent four money orders aggregating \$200 to one Bava Balu Zulai at a complicated address in India. They were returned to him by the Post-Office Department of that country with the advice that no such man could be found. We took the matter up with the Post-Office Department, and a search was instituted, which resulted, after a year and a half of labor, in locating the man and handing to him his money.

Our depositors include seamen from all lands, from the hot tropics of Africa to the frozen ports of Russia. There are several verifications that we require from our depositors in order to identify them. Those who are thrifty and appreciate the value of money are apt in understanding these verifications and, as a specimen of concise and clean-cut adaptation to our rules, this letter is a model:

Dear Sir: Please sent for mie money \$15 of these 3 verifications. bohrn in 1873, 10 April, Riga, Russia. Paid off from *Sch. Carrie Strong*. Yours truly, —

A very large number of these depositors are ignorant and the banking agent is compelled to exercise his judgment in many instances.

One day, for example, a letter was mailed from a depositor in Nova Scotia asking that \$25 from his account might be forwarded to him. Within a few hours he followed this up with a telegram for \$125, the total amount of his deposit. Our agent sent to him the following reply, which may seem harsh to the reader, but which was undoubtedly an exercise of good judgment:

Dear Sir: On May 5th I received a letter from you enclosing my receipt for \$125.00, with the request to forward to the above address \$25.00. A money-



order was forwarded the same day, for which I hold the post-office receipt, also a receipt for the registration of the letter.

This morning I received a telegram to telegraph you \$125.00. First, you have only \$100 left; secondly, I must refuse this request, as it gives me no certainty that you yourself sent the message or someone else who may have come into possession of my receipt to you.

Furthermore, I cannot imagine why you want such an amount of money in such a hurry. In case your vessel is sailing, the money is perfectly safe and you can draw on me or order it sent anywhere in the world, if you will identify yourself by answering the following: Your age, where born, and address of your nearest relative given me. Yours truly,

### Do You Know?—We Need

A piano very much. \$10 a month rental comes hard when we believe there is a very good chance that some one might give us one, to call our own.

More friends who will volunteer to help us by singing at church or supplementing our lantern lectures with songs or "stunts of any kind."

Those old gramophone disk records which you have heard over and over. Give the sailor a chance to hear them.

There came a most encouraging response to our last article on the work at the Breakwater. Mr. Samuel W. M. Bishop has given us a splendid Victor talking machine and 100 records. This will be most useful to us in our efforts to keep the Breakwater an attractive rendezvous for the sailors. With great pleasure, we take this opportunity to thank Mr. Bishop for his thoughtful generosity.

### Departments

The following synopsis of the work done in the various departments during the month of May, gives a fair idea of the workings of the Institute:

May, 1910

#### Banking Department

May 1, cash on hand.....	\$17,093.11
Deposits .....	8,855.60
	<u>\$25,948.71</u>
Payments (\$3,965.30 trans-	
mitted) .....	9,104.68
May 1, balance.....	\$16,844.03

#### Shipping Department

Number of vessels shipped entire by Seaman's Church Institute.....	15
Number of men provided with employment in port.....	39
Number of men shipped.....	175
Total .....	<u>214</u>

#### Reading Rooms

Total attendance .....	9,831
Letters written and received....	2,642
Packages reading given.....	707
Number pieces baggage checked.	633

#### Relief Department

Assisted .....	47
Sent to Legal Aid.....	57
Sent to Hosp. and Disp.....	6
Visits to Hospitals .....	6
Sick seamen visited .....	45
Visits to ships in port.....	168

#### Religious Department

Number of services .....	24
Attendance total .....	738
Communion services .....	6
Weddings .....	1

#### Institute Boat "Sentinel"

Trips made .....	30
Visits to vessels .....	41
Men transported .....	156
Pieces baggage transported.....	125