

The LOOKOUT

JULY 1953

SANTA PAULA

SEAMEN'S
CHURCH
INSTITUTE
of New York

THE COVER: Here is the tugboat's view of a sailing. In a moment the last streamer joining passengers and their friends ashore will break as two Dalzell tugs, one pushing and one pulling, back the *Santa Paula* away from her berth. See page 8.



The LOOKOUT

VOL. XLIV

JULY, 1953

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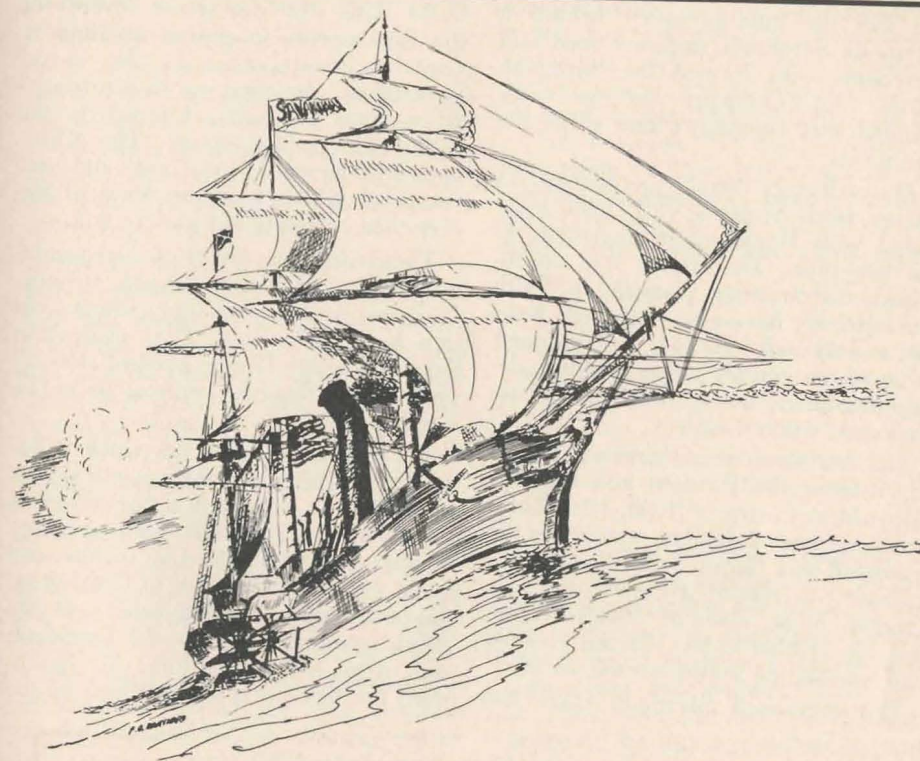
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NO. 7



The Savannah

A Famous American Ship — The First Steamer to Cross Any Ocean
By Frank O. Braynard

THE *Savannah*, of 1819, was a failure by almost every standard. Begun as a sailing ship, she was completed as a steamship. Sent over to Europe in the hope that she could be sold for a fancy price, she found no buyer. Restored to a simple sailing craft, she blew ashore off Long Island when only three years old and was lost. And yet today, over 130 years after her loss, the *Savannah* is reckoned one of the world's most illustrious ships.

This judgment of history is no chance development. The *Savannah* has a right to her niche in immortality. She was

an historic vessel of the first import, despite the countless historians who belittle her voyage. The *Savannah* and her twenty-nine day crossing to Liverpool constitute a great American maritime epoch.

It is true that she was building in 1818 as a sailing craft. But she was hand-picked for conversion from countless others of her type also on the ways in ports along the Atlantic coast. She was selected by Capt. Moses Rogers, a man who would have been famous on his own merit had he never commanded the *Savannah*.

Moses Rogers had been master of the John Stevens' steamer *Phoenix* on her historic voyage from New York to the Delaware in 1809. He later commanded Robert Fulton's steamer on the Hudson. He was the guiding spirit behind a group of Savannah shipping men and merchants who formed the Savannah Steam Ship Company and he commanded that company's one ship—the *Savannah*.

Moses Rogers bought the *Savannah's* engine from Stephen Vail, later associated with Morse in the invention of the telegraph. The engine was an inclined direct-acting proposition, with one cylinder having a forty-inch bore and a sixty-inch stroke. It was designed to be of ten pounds steam pressure, developing ninety horsepower and making six knots, without sails.

The *Savannah* was launched August 22, 1818 at the Crockett and Fickett's shipyard at Corlear's Hook, New York. Local citizens of the day referred to the *Savannah* as a "steam coffin," and it was necessary to recruit a crew from New London, home town of Moses Rogers and his brother-in-law, Steven Rogers, who was sailing master on the vessel.

The completed *Savannah* made her

trials in New York Bay in March 1819. Only one contemporary picture of the vessel has come down to us today. It was by a Frenchman named Marestier, sent to America to study American steam boats. This drawing shows several of the experiments in design credited to Captain Rogers. One is the swivel smokestack, designed to direct sparks away from the sails. Another is the collapsible paddle wheels. The sketch does not show the iron frame and canvas cover which took the place of the even-then conventional paddle box.

There can be no doubt of the speculative nature of the *Savannah* episode. It is seen in the novel ideas which went into her construction. It is evident in the way Captain Rogers grasped at every opportunity that came along to publicize his vessel.

For example, when she reached Savannah on her first voyage it was discovered that President James Monroe was up the coast at Charleston, making a tour of the South. Up anchor and away went the *Savannah* to Charleston. Captain Rogers hurried ashore at the South Carolina port, met the President, and urged him to continue his Southward journey as far as Savannah on the

new ship. The President declined. It is reported that he feared his popularity in South Carolina would suffer if he left the state in a Georgian vessel. The *Savannah*, we presume, was registered at Savannah.

But Captain Rogers was not to be outdone. When President Monroe's party reached the Georgian seaport, there was the *Savannah* ready and waiting. We can imagine she had all her flags flying May 11 when she took the President and his suite for an all-day excursion to Tybee Light and return.

The *Savannah's* log book, bound in heavy canvas probably from the ship's own sail locker, is in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington. It shows that the 320-ton craft left her pier under steam at 9 A.M. on May 22, now celebrated throughout America as Maritime Day. She anchored at noon at Tybee Light, remaining there until 6 A.M. the 24th. Two hours later she dropped her pilot and her voyage was really under way. For fuel she had 75 tons of coal and 25 cords of wood. It permitted only between eighty and ninety hours of steaming time on the whole voyage.

The vessel's approach to the Old World was marked by two episodes worthy of note. In one she was chased by a British revenue cutter whose master thought she was on fire. In the other she neatly confounded efforts of a British sloop of war to force her to lower the United States flag.

The revenue cutter *Kite* had been sent to the relief of the *Savannah* by the admiral of a fleet lying in the cove of Cork. The station at Cape Clear had sighted her with smoke belching from her bent stack and concluded she was on fire. The surprise of the Britishers can be imagined when the *Savannah*, without a sail set, out-distanced them completely. It was not until after the exasperated cutter's crew had fired shots at the American vessel that she stopped and gratified their curiosity.

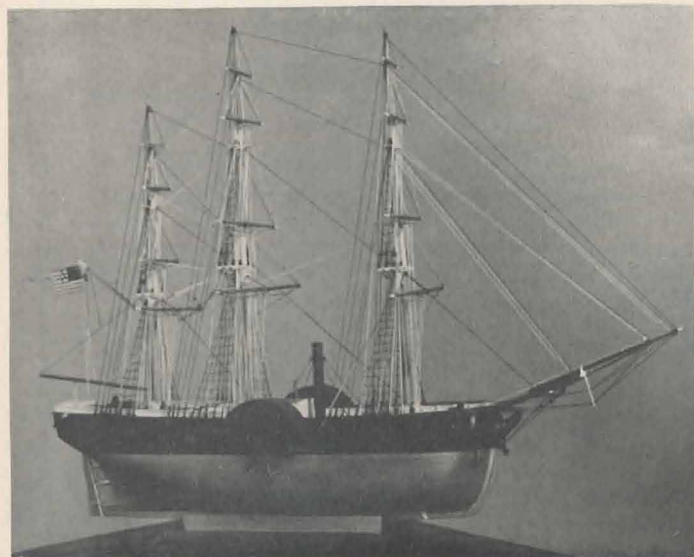
Proud of his new ship and with memories of the War of 1812 still in

his mind, Captain Moses Rogers refused to follow the custom at British ports of flying the Union Jack above the Stars and Stripes while laying off the bar at Liverpool. The captain of a British sloop took this as a personal insult and a boat was sent out to order the American colors down. Threatened with force, sailing master Steven Rogers, who was on deck at the time, turned to his engineer and said, "Get the hot water engine ready." Although there was no such engine, the idea of a bath of scalding water was enough to cool off the Britisher, who dropped the whole matter.

The *Savannah* did not have many pleasant experiences in England, although her trip up the Mersey was watched by thousands. She was generally viewed with suspicion. Newspapers of the day surmised that "this steam operation may, in some manner, be connected with the ambitious views of the United States."

Ten days of her thirty-three-day run to St. Petersburg were under steam, with the engines running for spells of fifty-two hours on two occasions. Eighteen hours was the *Savannah's* longest period under steam while on her Atlantic crossing. She did not use steam on her return voyage to Savannah because of rough October and November seas.

To deny that a ship which uses steam for ten out of thirty-three days is a steamship is like arguing how many angels can stand on the point of a needle. But such denials are common. The London ILLUSTRATED TIMES went so far as to describe the *Savannah* as "an afterthought of the Americans," according to a report in the New York JOURNAL OF COMMERCE on January 16, 1858. For the last word, however, we could not do better than to depend upon a first hand, on-the-spot account published in THE TIMES of London. It is in connection with the *Kite* episode. THE TIMES reported: "The *Savannah*, a steam vessel, recently arrived at Liverpool from America, the first vessel of the kind which ever crossed the Atlantic."



Savannah modelers have been plagued by the lack of authentic pictures. Shown here is a replica of the famous ship currently on view at the Institute's Marine Museum. This model is one of a special collection featuring the work of Lt. Comdr. Frank Eldridge, Jr., and Lt. Robert H. Mout.

There's A Book About It



KARAKUL sheep raising—there's a pursuit for you. Or prospecting for gold—or this uranium now. Good money there, for a guy with brains and ambition. Or hunting for precious stones—if a man knew how to recognize them all crusted with dirt and dull and pebbly. Well, you'd have to find out about 'em, that's all. A man may not want to spend all his days at sea—he's got to think of the future sometimes, of doing something different, maybe. And where'll he find out about it? Right down at the Institute's Conrad Library.

Oh, they know all right. You can march in and ask 'em straight out about those peculiar little fish you spotted down round the Belgian Congo last time out. They won't bat an eyelash. And the next thing you know, you're looking at 'em in a book. Rare tropical fish, it says.

I tell you, you can ask them anything. Why, I saw a poor guy one day, a foreign seaman he was, come in all het up about something. Not that I let my ears bug out where they don't belong, but I was boning up on art, figuring I'd pick up some unknown masterpieces in one of those foreign ports—but I could see this wasn't for me. Anyway, this guy had had a medical examination, and he knew something was wrong, but he didn't know what. And he couldn't read the paper they had handed him. Well, they calmed him down and spoke to him in his own language. They told him he had high blood pressure—which sure didn't surprise me, from the fuss he made. Then they told him what that meant, and gave him some kind of medical book, so he'd know how to take care of himself. He went out quiet as a mouse.

They've saved my life a few times, too. When you're shipping out, you can

send down to the library and get a whole pack of books for shipboard reading—anything you want. Sometimes, book bundles are put aboard automatically. Sometimes one of the crew volunteers to pick 'em up. More'n once, he's turned out to be a cowboy, and all he picks out are westerns. All the way to the Belgian Congo and back, one shoot-'em-up after another. Everybody's six gun is a-blazin', everybody's hoss a-gallopin'. But the librarians at the Conrad slipped over a few extras on the guy. He didn't even know he had 'em. They're pretty shrewd.

They're good about remembering a man when he's laid up in the hospital, and listening to a guy who's down on his luck. Sympathetic, you know what I mean? And if a man's not a brain, and doesn't go for that Plato stuff, it's all right. Look, you can go in and ask for a Batman comic book if you like.

I don't mean to be belligerent about it, but they've got the best darn technical collection on the sea and seamanship there is. A mate of mine borrowed their books to study for an officer's license. Well, he rated so high they asked him for the name of his preparatory school. And he up and says, "The Conrad Library, sir!" They've all kinds of textbooks, that give instructions on anything from qualifying for a ship's cook (with recipes, too) to how to operate radar at sea.

Lots of bigwigs call for the real low-down on ships and things all the time. Even the Library of Congress. And the questions they ask! Like what heated the cabins in passenger ships in 1900! (Gas plants, in case you're ignorant of the fact.)

You know, the Conrad Library is named for Joseph Conrad, the great



seaman-writer. A figurehead of him is there, and all his works are on the shelves. It's a big room, and quiet. A man can relax and catch up on the latest newspapers and magazines. And watch the noisy little tugs and the big quiet ships on the East River, just outside the windows. It gets so, it makes a man mellow. I found myself one day with a copy of Shakespeare in my hand. Wasn't bad either; the guy could write.

Well, like I said, aside from the pleasures of reading, or studying for the

next grade, a man's got to start casting about for something he's going to do when he quits the sea. I considered leather working for awhile—but leather's expensive. It'd be cheaper to raise your own, you know, but by the time you get going on that, the whole thing is too blamed complicated.

Now this here Haiti is something else. Good land there, and pretty cheap. There's a book all about it at the Conrad. You see, it's like this. . . .

—MIKE SODULKA

TRAINING SHIP

New York had another of its summer training ship visitors—this time the Belgian barkentine *Mercator*, here with 47 cadets and 15 apprentice seamen on the homeward leg of a three-and-a-half month training cruise. She is presently on her way back to Antwerp via Iceland and Ireland.

Due to the whims of summer breezes, New Yorkers missed the chance to see the *Mercator* under full sail. She had to use her auxiliary engine to gain the Belgian Line's Pier 14 at Fulton Street and again when she left port until she had passed Bedloes Island. It would also have entertained the onlookers to see the harbor craft hurrying to get out of the way, for it is port etiquette to give a sailing ship the right-of-way.

PROGRAM CUT

The Coast Guard has felt the first effects of its budgetary cut in the demise of its bi-monthly *Bulletin*. This is the first among several expected casualties among Coast Guard publications.

All aspects of the Service will be eaten into as a result of the \$32,000,000 cutback of the original Coast Guard appropriation for this year. Construction programs will be deferred, general operations reduced, levels of maintenance lowered, administrative and support programs cut back, and personnel costs overhauled. The latter cut will not be accomplished by removing present personnel; rather replacements for enlistments due to wind up this fall will not be made. Coast Guard officers arrived at this method for reducing costs after estimating that 1,159 men must be cut off as part of the general all-around reduction in costs.

Not the least of the cuts made inevitable by the actions of Congress is

the deferment of the Arctic chain of loran (long range aids to navigation) stations for general use of the Armed Forces. Although the project is well underway, winterization of its operations must now be abruptly halted. Private sources say that the "deferment" will inevitably mean a total halt to the project—if the saving of \$9,000,000 in that area is to be accomplished.

BIG TRAIN

In delivering three army barges from Charleston, S.C., to La Pallice, France, the Moran Towing and Transportation Company recently completed the first transatlantic barge tow since World War II. The tow measured over a mile in length, and the 4,071-mile voyage took the ocean tug *Kevin Moran* 21 days to complete.

Two eight-inch nylon ropes and one wire hauser were used to pull the "train," which measured 5,800 feet and caused foreign-flag vessels along the European coast to veer dangerously close for a good look.

PORT'S BACK DOOR

Marking its centennial, the Hell Gate Pilots Association finds itself considerably shrunken in business and personnel. Six members round out the present staff which occupies the second floor of a house on Duryea's Pier in City Island, the back door of New York's harbor. In the golden age of the Hell Gate Pilots, before the turn of the century, the City Island crew guided as many as 40 ships a day through the treacherous waters of Hell Gate.

Between the first and second World Wars, shipping subsided in the East River and Long Island Sound, but exceeded all previous records during the

recent war. The pre-20th century bustle was mild in comparison with this period when sixty ships were sometimes cleared in a day. The staff soared to 26, many of them borrowed from Sandy Hook.

Today the arrivals and departures average 40 to 50 in a month. The men still have their busy times, however. When the weather gets rough, wind-tossed ships on the Atlantic are eager to take refuge in the Sound and the midget staff is kept hopping.

FLOWER LOVERS

Sixteen Russian seamen from the steamship *Volokalamsk* recently rowed ashore near a strategic Swedish airfield—attracted, they explained, by the urge to pick Swedish flowers as souvenirs.

The Russians denied knowing that they were in a restricted military area when police challenged them as they were returning to their lifeboat after a fifteen-minute sojourn among the daisies growing by the airfield.

However, the episode was regarded in some quarters as having more than the odor of flowers about it.

HYMENOPENEUS ROBUSTUS

A brick red shrimp that tastes like lobster has been fetched up from 190 to 250 fathoms by the exploratory ship, *S.S. Oregon*. The Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored the project to investigate the commercial fishing possibilities in the still virgin waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

Christened *Hymenopeneus Robustus*, the shrimp dwarf their small pink cousins and, in view of the quantities netted by the *Oregon* on every drag, may well develop into a serious rival on the market. The tasty newcomer is expected to revitalize the fishing industry down south, and shrimp boats will be a-comin' and a-goin' busily again.

SEA TREASURE

A treasure-laden Spanish ship that has been held captive by the sea off the Florida Keys for 220 years will finally be explored. Washington's Smithsonian Institution has received permission to send divers aboard the sunken vessel which was brought down during a hurricane. Sponsors of the expedition hope to confirm the belief that the ship was part of a fleet laden with riches for the Spanish crown.

GERMANS REBUILDING

Reduced to 120,000 tons of old vessels by the end of the war, the West German fleet is again taking a proud place among the merchant navies of the world. Its current tonnage is set at 1,840,000 tons and nearly a million tons are now being built in North Sea and Baltic shipyards. In 1939, with 4,500,000 tons, Germany had the fifth largest merchant navy in the world.

ALWAYS A GULF

The bald-headed three-masted schooner *Vema* recently sailed into New York harbor, returning from a two-month oceanographic voyage which produced scientific evidence that the Gulf of Mexico has always been a body of water and not a sunken part of the North American continent, as some geologists and oceanographers have maintained.

Twelve Columbia University scientists used instruments developed by the Navy and the University's Lamont Observatory to study the type, depth and thickness of the rock and sediment at the Gulf's bottom in arriving at the conclusion that the continental land masses were pushed up out of the oceans, which once prevailed everywhere. Geologists have long thought that the oceans were formed when the land subsided.



The Romance of the Tug

TUGBOATS and their crews, who push others around and get paid for it, seem to catch heavily at the public fancy.

"Why is it?" asks Captain Edward Lee of the *Dalzellaire*. "A short time back I had a woman in her eighties on board. She rode around with us off and on for more than a week. Then she wrote a book called *Toot-Toot*. You know, a book for kids, I guess. We got a copy here someplace. She was a nice old lady. But I mean why are people interested in tugs?"

John Omdal, deckhand who works the *Dalzellaire* in Captain John Cashin's crew, is amazed by the fact that young men will work for nothing to try to break into the business. "We had a young guy on here last summer for three months working practically day and night learning the ropes. There

wasn't an opening and he finally had to give up on it. For nothing, mind you, he worked three months. I can't figure it out. There's a kid on the *Dalzell* doin' the same thing now. You know, the union hiked the initiation fee way up because there was such a crowd who wanted tug jobs. It didn't seem to help."

However, the sympathies of the casual visitor to a tug like the *Dalzellaire* are apt to be wholly with the young man who wants a job on one. Everybody is happy. The air is clear, the ship is clean, the food is good and the cussing is just a full-throated song that carries no meanness at all. The crew is small and each man has the dignity of being as important as the next. The deckhand's split-second cleverness with a hauser on the forward bit is by no means secondary to the skill of the captain or the engineer. The cook won't even discuss

his importance.

If a visitor praises the food on the *Dalzellaire*, which is easy to do, the crew will noisily wish they had company every day so the cook would "put on the dog" and serve a decent meal more often. However, each man by himself will swear that Rubinich is the best damn cook in the harbor.

"Puh," shrugs Rubinich, "I oughta be. I been at it forty years."

The tenure of the *Dalzellaire's* crew is further evidence that the life is good. "We don't have a bunch of drifters," says Captain Lee, thirty years with Dalzell, but still a rookie compared with another Dalzell captain, Alfred Bennett, who has been with the company fifty-three years. "You can't have a new hand every other day in this business. You break in as a deckhand and learn everything about the business. It's got to be that way. You gotta know just how every man ticks in order to use him right."

This careful apprenticeship results in efficiency that is so automatic as to seem casual; again and again it spells the difference between a tight situation and a disaster when a 10,000-ton ship takes a dangerous sheer as it is swung toward the dock.

In a business sense, the critical factor in tugboat operation today rests with the fleet dispatcher, who daily plays an important chess game, the financial success of the company depending heavily on his ability to have the right equipment in the right locality at the right time. The hourly rate of \$37.50 charged for a tug is perilously close to its actual operating cost. The margin of profit must come from the "running time" charge added to each job. This charge depends on the distance the work is from Pier 1, North River, the tugs' base. If the job can be arranged so that only ten minutes is lost running between them, the balance of the time charged for is so much gravy.

The dispatcher usually works out a fairly elaborate strategy for using his tugs with maximum efficiency. This means he must have perfect knowledge of how long it will take a tug to do a certain job and how long it will take it to run between certain points in the harbor. It also means that each tug must produce in accordance with the dispatcher's timetable or else blow the schedule (and maybe the profits) for the whole day.

A boon to the dispatcher and the towing industry has been the diesel tug,



Cook Rubinich delivers a brief lecture to *Dalzellaire* crewmen on the art of appreciating good food. John Omdal, seated at the cook's elbow, is obviously at the head of the class.

which some estimate to have three times the earning power of a steam tug. The steamer spends several hours once or even twice a week taking on coal. It also has to stop for water every day—which takes at least a half-hour. A diesel tug, on the other hand, has only to stop for fuel about once a month, which makes it a much more efficient unit to work with.

Radio, of course, has become the dispatcher's main tool, replacing the spy-glass and the megaphone. Instead of bellowing out the window, he presses a button and says, "872 to the *Dalzella*."

"This is Cashin on the *Laird*," comes the answer. "Come in anytime, Milt."

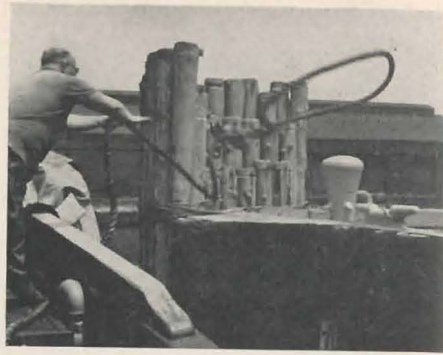
"Go to the end of pier 58 and hang on. The *Santa Paula* sails at 12. The *Dalzelleader* will help you."

"Right you are, Milt."

At Pier 58 Deckhand Omdal lassoes a cleat and snubs the hauser tight on the forward bit. The time remaining before noon, when he goes off watch, he spends scraping the monkey rails, which need a new coat of varnish.

At 12 he is replaced by Jimmy Ireland. The *Laird* has moved in and put a bow line on the *Santa Paula*. Captain Dolland has taken over in the wheelhouse and Captain Cashin has gone to the bridge of the *Paula* to serve as docking pilot. Whistles are exchanged and the *Dalzelleader* begins hauling the *Paula* out of her berth.

All goes well and the *Santa Paula* is in midstream headed downriver by 12:15. Captain Dolland keeps the



A good deckhand has to be something of a cowboy.

Laird's hairy snout snug against the port bow of the *Paula* while Captain Cashin climbs down a tall ladder and returns to the tug, leaving the *Paula* in charge of the Sandy Hook pilot.

Captain Dolland flicks the radio switch and says, "*Laird* to 872. We're through here and headed downstream."

"Okay, *Laird*," the dispatcher answers. He consults his chess board and says, "Go to Pier 27 and hang on. A destroyer is on her way in."

At Pier 27 Captain Cashin, who is now off watch but standing by to act as docking pilot for the destroyer, helps Jimmy Ireland put a thin coat of varnish on the monkey rails.

"Keep it thin, Jimmy," he warns, "or it'll wrinkle up like it did before."

Meanwhile Jimmy is plotting how he'll handle the hauser on the forward bit in such a way as to keep it out of the wet varnish when they put a line on the destroyer.

New Lifeboat Radio



Cadets of the Kings Point Merchant Marine Academy testing Radiomarine's new lifeboat radio.

OUT of the grim research tests conducted by the United States Navy emerged a particularly fresh and extraordinarily frivolous pigment, tagged Muncell 7.5 red. A glittering coral, this compound was found to have maximum visibility under all weather conditions. Though admirably suited for milady's salon or her bathing suit, it is destined to take part in the sober business of rescue at sea.

It will tint the aluminum casing of Radiomarine's new lifeboat radio, an invention that because of its achievements in compactness, simplicity and adaptability has rendered all other lifeboat radios obsolete.

In the event of a mid-ocean disaster, this radio could be thrown overside from a height of twenty feet into the sea. There it would float with enough buoyancy to comfortably support a clinging survivor. With 46% of its structure above water, its brilliant coloring would make it readily visible to both victims and would-be rescuers. Its 60 lbs. could be easily lifted into a lifeboat by one man.

Someone totally ignorant of the intricacies of radio transmission would have no difficulty strapping the set down or setting up the aerial stored inside


the front cover. It consists of socketed sections of tubing, linked by an inside wire that prevents the dropping or misplacing of the links, or their incorrect assembling. Two handles which generate power when pumped are on either side; the set will operate on one pump. It would remain only for the castaways to set the indicator on "automatic" and pump. The set would automatically send out the international distress signals on alternating frequencies (500 K.C. short range, and 8364 K.C. long range.) No further twirling of dials necessary.

In the event there is a radioman survivor, the set may be switched to manual control. With the aid of earphones and a simple lighting device that indicates the strongest beam, messages may be sent and received. A layman, upon reading the instructions, should be able to operate the manual controls to the extent of identifying his ship, the morse code for which will be printed legibly in a slotted area on the face of the radio.

The Federal Communications Commission has ruled that the new lifeboat radio must be on every American ship by November 19th of this year. This alone testifies to the importance of the instrument as a further safeguard of lives at sea.



OIL TANKERS

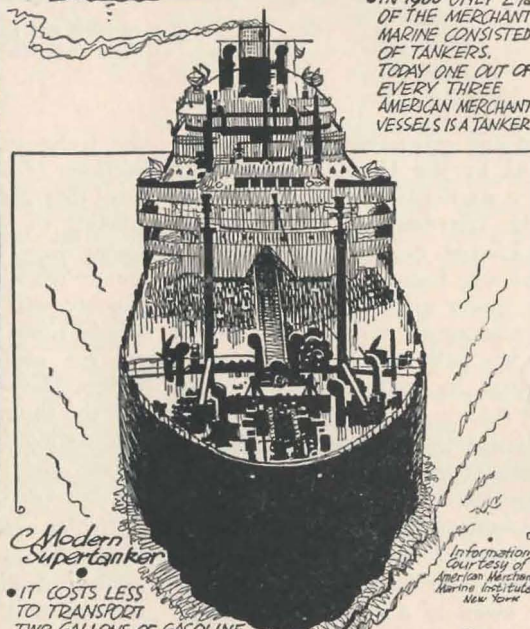


705'

555'

An American tanker at the turn of the century

• IN 1900 ONLY 2% OF THE MERCHANT MARINE CONSISTED OF TANKERS. TODAY ONE OUT OF EVERY THREE AMERICAN MERCHANT VESSELS IS A TANKER



Modern Supertanker

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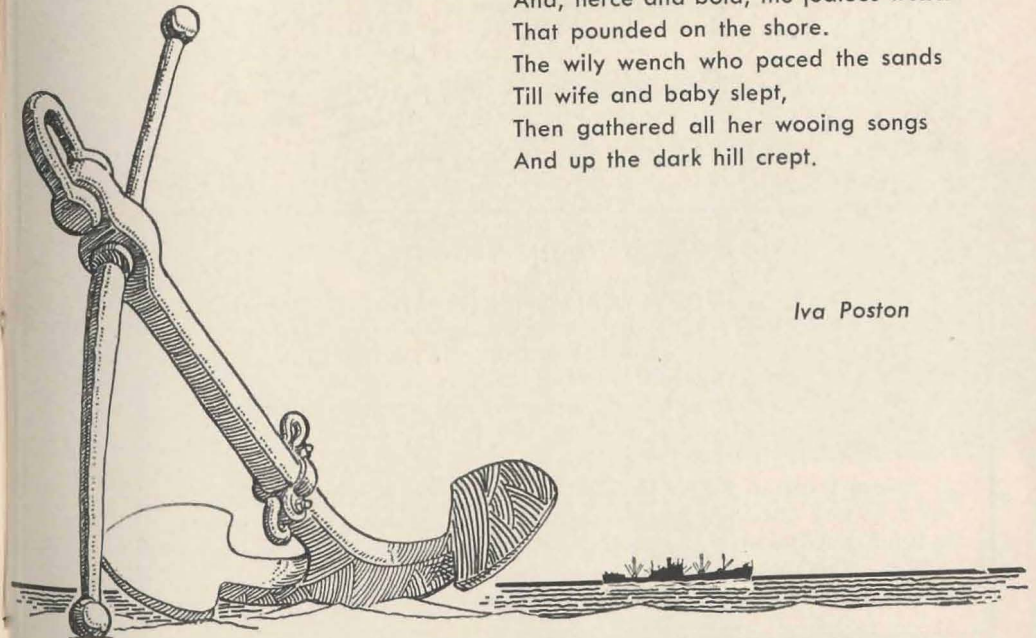
LONELY BEACHES

So long as I shall live no lonely beach
 Will be without a friend; nor waves, that pound
 Their fierce dull thunder there. Tides outward bound
 And wide-winged birds with wailing in their speech
 Will know my deep regard; a hand will reach
 For any sea-worn shell that may be found
 Abandoned on the shore. Old ships aground
 That list and tug will hear me begging each
 Inrushing surge to lift them free again.
 I'll kneel by seaweeds sprawled along the sand:
 To touch their broken stems, and sigh for when
 They gypsied out a thousand miles from land.
 Late moons that search a lonely beach must find
 Reluctant footprints I have left behind.

A SAILOR AND THE SEA

Three loves he had: his gay young wife;
 The daughter that she bore;
 And, fierce and bold, the jealous wench
 That pounded on the shore.
 The wily wench who paced the sands
 Till wife and baby slept,
 Then gathered all her wooing songs
 And up the dark hill crept.

Iva Poston



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LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we suggest the following as a clause that may be used:

"I give and bequeath to **Seamen's Church Institute of New York**, a corporation of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of.....Dollars."

Note that the words "**of New York**" are a part of our title. If land or any specific property such as bonds, stocks, etc., is given, a brief description of the property should be inserted instead of the words, "the sum of.....Dollars."

Contributions and bequests to the Institute are exempt from Federal and New York State Tax.