



the LOOKOUT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK



MAY 1973

THE PROGRAM OF THE INSTITUTE

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

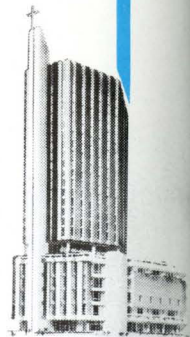
More than 753,000 such seamen of all nationalities, races and creeds come into the Port of New York every year. To many of them the Institute is their shore center in port and remains their polestar while they transit the distant oceans of the earth.

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

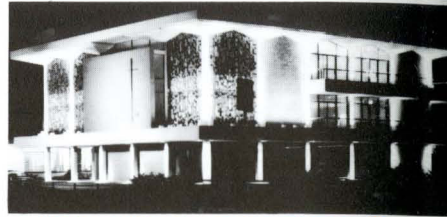
Each year 2,300 ships with 96,600 men aboard put in at Port Newark, where time ashore is extremely limited.

Here in the very middle of huge, sprawling Port Newark pulsing with activity of container-shiping, SCI has provided an oasis known as the Mariners International Center which offers seamen a recreational center especially constructed and designed, operated in a special way for the very special needs of the men. An outstanding feature is a soccer field (lighted at night) for games between ship teams.

Although 54% of the overall Institute budget is met by income from seamen and the public, the cost of the special services comes from endowment and contributions. Contributions are tax deductible.



Seamen's Church Institute
State and Pearl Streets
Manhattan



Mariners International Center (SCI)
Export and Calcutta Streets
Port Newark, N.J.

the LOOKOUT

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Cover: Marine Fire Station Number 1,
located at the tip of lower Manhattan,
NYC.

Photo credits: pages 3, 4, 5,—U.S. Coast Guard

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One of the few on-the-scene photos of the savage Arthur Kill fire.

BARGE AFIRE... TO THE RESCUE

At approximately 6:00 A.M. on the morning of October 25, 1972, a loud explosion jolted Ray Kenney, SCI ship visitor, from sleep at his home on Staten Island, N.Y. At approximately the same time, the Rev. Douglas Wolfe, SCI resident chaplain, saw from his bedroom window overlooking the New York Harbor, billowing clouds of black smoke rising into the distant air.

Hurried telephone calls soon deter-

mined that a barge loaded with fuel oil and gasoline had exploded in the vicinity of the Arthur Kill waterway located between Staten Island and New Jersey near the mouth of the harbor. To everyone's relief, there were no reports of injury to merchant seamen or other workers, and by mid-afternoon all aspects of the fire were declared "under control." A major port disaster had been averted through

skilled co-ordination of municipal and military firefighting efforts.

What few people knew was that the nerve center for co-ordinating such emergency action is a facility called the Rescue Co-ordination Center—a Third Coast Guard District installation located on Governors Island—a small island just to the east of Manhattan's Battery and only several hundred yards offshore from the Seamen's Church Institute.

OPERATION RESCUE

At the Center, on the morning of October 25, Lieutenant Roy C. Samuel-

son, Jr. by pier the Liberian tanker Alchemist was partially loaded with chemicals, the Defender and another private tug went to her rescue and pulled her to safety.

Minutes after the explosion, municipal firefighting companies from Staten Island and New Jersey were rushing to the scene of the fire where burning oil was rapidly spreading across the 500 yard waterway between the island and the New Jersey coast.

Back at the Rescue Center, Lt. Samuelson immediately notified his commanding officer, Captain William Kes-

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son, Jr., search and rescue controller on watch, began to receive phone calls almost immediately reporting the explosion.

"I heard the explosion," he said, "and then the calls started coming. First a Staten Island resident . . . and then the duty air controller from Kennedy Airport."

A third call reporting the explosion came from the private tug, the Defender. The tug had been conducting normal operations with the barge but had moved to mid-channel after the explosion. Learning that at a near-

by pier the Liberian tanker Alchemist was partially loaded with chemicals, the Defender and another private tug went to her rescue and pulled her to safety.

While Samuelson was contacting Captain Kesler, other center personnel were notifying or confirming action reports with such agencies as the NYC Fire and Police Departments, the Dept. of Marine and Aviation, New York Harbor Police, Environmental Protection Agency, MARAD, etc. The Sandy Hook Pilots Association was also contacted to insure that all incoming vessels would be kept from the area.

Having contacted Kesler, controller Samuelson and his assistant proceeded to round up and dispatch all available Coast Guard cutters and boats to the scene of the fire. From Governor's Island came two 110-foot cutters, two 65-foot tugs, two 40-foot patrol boats and three mobile land units. Stations from Long Island and Queens sent three vessels; and the Sandy Hook, New Jersey facility located at the approach to the N.Y. harbor dispatched an 82-foot cutter, a 44-foot motor lifeboat and three patrol boats. Soon these 14 Coast Guard vessels were converg-

power plant placed its vessel between the approaching flames and the company's fuel barges and storage facilities thus preventing serious damage to a major generating plant for the city.

For more than two hours, over 100 Coast Guard personnel and NYC firemen fought the scorching flames which were shooting some 200 feet in the air.

By 8:30 A.M. most of the flames on the water and pierside were extinguished, although firefighting companies ashore would battle the flames until mid-afternoon when all fire was declared under control.

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ing with municipal fireboats and several private tugs to form a massive waterborne firefighting company. New Jersey and Staten Island based fire companies were actively engaged in subduing secondary fires which had occurred within the nearby docking areas.

The flaming barge itself had broken loose from its mooring and was adrift, listing heavily and spilling oil into mid-channel causing flames to spread across the full width of the Arthur Kill waterway as well as downstream.

At the height of the fire, a NYC fireboat crew at a Consolidated Edison

By late afternoon all fires were out with no loss of life to merchant seamen or shoreside personnel.

Once again, the Rescue Co-ordination Center had been able to mobilize military and municipal forces to help insure the safety of the port and the lives of merchant seamen.

The "safety watchdog" of the harbor, it is always alert and ready for action in case of emergency.

* * *

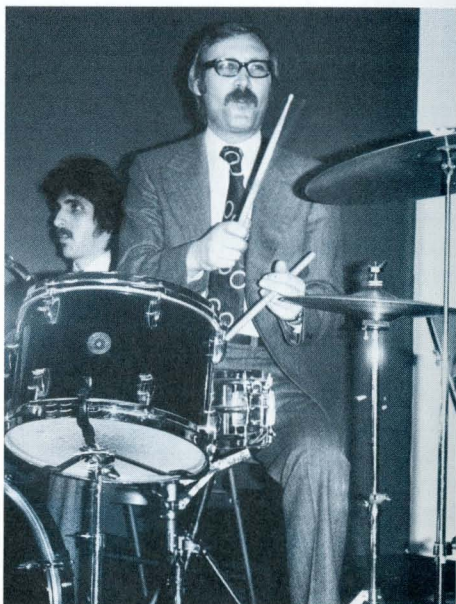
Our special thanks to the Third Coast Guard District Office of Public Affairs for providing much of the material for this article.

kaleidoscope



It was Mardi Gras at SCI, when the International Club was turned into a tropical paradise of glittering color and throbbing Latin rhythms.

Seamen and guests joined with members of the Young Swiss Association to make this the party of the year—so far. Even the mustached club manager and musician, Aldo Coppi, took a turn at the "skins" for a set or two.



Residents and guests were recently treated to a very special Sunday afternoon recital by Carmen Czernik. Born in Spain, Ms. Czernik studied at Juilliard and Rome's Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music. She has played throughout the United States and has made special concert tours of the Mid-East, South America, Mexico and the Caribbean.



Ms. Mary Mangelsdorf president of the Night Watch Association, joins seaman Paul Caro for a cup of coffee at the group's monthly coffee hour for seamen. Composed primarily of business women, the Night Watch members have long been among the most active participants in the Institute's volunteer programs.



Chaplain Miller Cragon, SCI director of Special Services, chatting with Karen Bacon, festival coordinator for New York City's Department of Cultural Affairs. Both were attending a "July Fourth in Old New York" presentation—a festival which SCI, the Cultural Affairs department and several Federal, City and other non-profit agencies helped to originate last year.



Ms. Edna Petersen, with the help of seaman Jim Lorier, stores the spring order of yarn which Women's Council volunteer knitters will soon be making into garments for 1973's Christmas boxes.



RETIRED SEAMAN GIVES SHIP DRAWING TO INSTITUTE

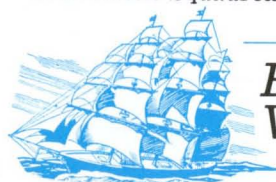
Mr. Richard Hogarth, a retired merchant seaman, recently presented a handsomely framed drawing of the China clipper the "Sierra Estrella," to the Institute. The lacquered pencil sketch was drawn in 1907 by Mr. Hogarth's late brother, Alex; and the vessel has particular importance to the Hogarth family whose grandfather was the "Sierra Estrella's" sailmaker.

Richard Hogarth also spent most of his life at sea, first serving in the British Merchant Marines at the age of 16, and later in the Royal Navy's IVth Battle Squadron. From 1930 until



his retirement in 1966, he worked as a dining room waiter on most all the British passenger ship lines. He remembers with particular pleasure his time spent working aboard the Cunard liners, the "Laconia," the "Franconia" and the "White Star."

Now retired, he lives in Manhattan but makes regular trips to England to visit his sister and older brother.



FINAL VOYAGE

SCI recently lost two of its oldest and closest "mariner" friends: Mrs. Minnie O'Connell and "Christopher" Svendsen. Institute Chaplain William Haynsworth conducted memorial services for each of them.

"MISS MINNIE"

Mrs. O'Connell, better known as "Minnie," was a true friend of seamen for she had been one herself.

As a young girl she had married a sea captain; and after his death she decided to go to sea. She sailed as a stewardess for the United States Line, working four years aboard the glamorous LEVIATHAN and then 14 years on the SS WASHINGTON.

Mrs. O'Connell's quick wit and independence added character to her personality. Her continued involvement in many of the Institute's volunteer programs (particularly, the Nightwatch) made her a greatly appreciated friend of the Institute.

SIGURD KRISTIAN SVENDSEN

"Christopher" Svendsen was a seaman who was nearly an institution in himself. Accidentally crippled and thus landbound, he expressed his love for the sea by the things he could make with his hands. Ship models, fancy knotwork and macramé were but a few of his crafts. Here at the Institute, he cared for, repaired and re-rigged the ship models. On occasion, a momentarily favored employee would find a piece of macramé brusquely pressed into his hand.

Chris' workbench was set-up in the corner of the Christmas Room of the Women's Council, and volunteers looked forward to seeing him whenever they came to the Institute. In addition, many a child's face was filled with wonder as seaman Svendsen told his tales of youthful days spent aboard the tall masted whaling ships. He was a unique link with the past which made the present have more meaning. He shall be missed.

SCI goes on the air

During the past year, SCI's Franklin D. Roosevelt Institute has been co-sponsoring a series of monthly seminars known as "Business Partners Around the Globe." The series is designed to offer members of the business community the opportunity to explore in some depth particular world trade opportunities.

Recently, the Voice of America taped for airing the seminar on Zambia and the African nations. Prior to the seminar they also taped an interview in which Dr. John M. Mulligan, our director, participated.

Naturally, Voice of America was interested in why each of the three co-sponsoring agencies—Seamen's Church Institute, New York State Department of Commerce—International Division, and the United Nations Association of New York—were interested in developing such a program.

Dr. Mulligan positioned the Institute's interest in co-sponsoring such a program by noting that many merchant seamen often enter the steamship or import/export industry after leaving the sea. He also pointed out that the growth of world trade is vital to the health of our merchant fleets; and that such growth can serve to both stabilize and even create greater job opportunities for the merchant seamen both here and abroad. In addition, the Institute is always pleased to help provide, when possible, a service for members of the international trade or steamship industries as they have long been both friends and supporters of the Institute.

The seminars are unique in that they were designed specifically for the businessman who normally would not have easy access to world trade specialists. However, the exceptional quality of in-



Dr. Mulligan, Institute director, talks with Zambian Ambassador, U. G. Mwila prior to the trade seminar on Africa — Close-up: Zambia.

formation and aid provided by the seminar panelists has encouraged representatives of large companies also to participate in the series. To date, there are more than 135 persons representing over 100 businesses (large and small) enrolled in the seminars.

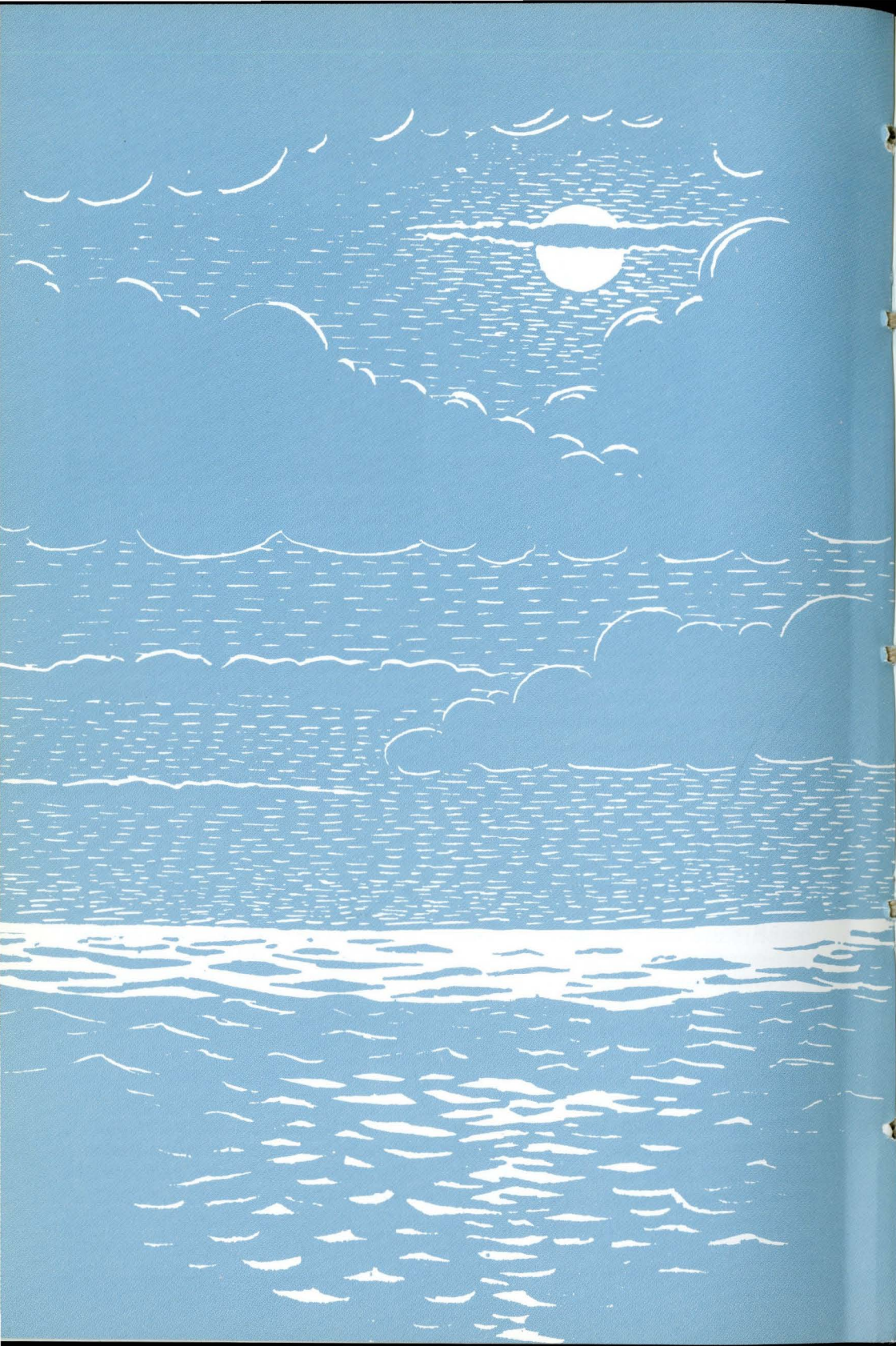


FROM OUR SHIP VISITOR'S LOG

During the month of February, SCI Ship Visitors in Port Newark and New York called on a total of 304 ships in the New York/New Jersey port area. In many cases individual ships were visited more than once.

AT PORT NEWARK

The Mariners International Center in Port Newark reported that foreign seamen made 1735 visits to the center during the month. Bilingual personnel were particularly useful in helping non-English speaking seamen make telephone calls.



a night at sea

by Stanley S. Hawley

Editor's Note: The following story was written by a young merchant seaman. It is based on observations he made during his first summer at sea while standing watch aboard a ship en route from San Francisco to Buenos Aires.

He may not be quite at home with his nautical terminology but his obvious love of the sea, feeling for adventure and his potential as a writer makes us pleased to print his work.

The able-bodied seaman on the "four-to-eight" watch stuck his head in the open door of my bunk-room.

"Seven bells have gone," he announced.

"Thanks, Joe."

It was time to end the daily edition of my letter to my girl, and get ready to go on the eight-to-twelve watch.

There could be some squalls tonight, so I had better take my rain gear to the fo'c's'le head with me, I thought. Just the slicker and sou'wester—this weather is too warm for hip boots. If we run into rain, I can roll up my dungarees above the bottom of my slicker, take off my shoes and hang them under a protective ledge, and let it rain.

I climbed the steps from the forward well-deck onto the fo'c's'le head just as eight bells went. Tom, the ordinary seaman on the four-to-eight watch was glad to see me—but slow to leave. Boy, what a night!

The deck watch consisted of four people. There was the watch officer—on this watch, the fourth mate. Then there was a quartermaster and an AB. These two shared the wheel-watch—two hours apiece. The fourth member

was an ordinary seaman—on this watch, me.

Regular place for the watch was on the bridge, high above the water for maximum visibility. Between the bridge and the bow, however, was a maze of masts, kingposts, booms, and lines—all of which reduced clear vision beyond the prow of the ship. In the days before radar, the ability to see ahead was of utmost importance. The fo'c's'le head watch, therefore, though not as high as the bridge, was at the point of unrestricted visibility—to "keep a weather eye open" for anything that did not look like water.

On a cold, blustery night, this watch could be—well, that is another story. But, an evening on a tropical ocean offers a warm breeze, stars in a black sky undimmed by city lights, and phosphorous in the water.

The foam thrown out by the prow of the boat, in a semi-circle to either side, is grayish-white, even in the dark, made so by the presence of this phenomenon. In this constant spray of white, there are individual dots which stand out like spotlights.

This particular night, we were passing the Gulf of Tehuantepec, on the south-western coast of Mexico—perhaps ten or fifteen miles at sea. The mountains seemed to crowd down to the coast. Above and behind these, there was a constant play of lightning. The flashes illuminated the whole night—giving added brilliance to the phosphorescent foam, and rim-lighting the black clouds above the mountains.

As the vessel moved through the water, it constantly disturbed many small fish, and as they darted away they left their own white trails, cutting all

sorts of angles and curves, crossing and re-crossing each other's paths.

The ship approached a circle of white in the water, dead ahead, and maybe five or ten feet in diameter. I leaned over the prow and looked right down the stem as we ran into this spot, and it proved to be a school of small fish. Their trails, as they scattered, reminded me of the shower of light sent out by a bursting sky-rocket.

Every once in a while I saw a spot of foam a few feet away, followed by the sound of a splash, and knew that a medium-sized fish had jumped out of the water, probably chasing his next meal.

Off the port bow, I could see the phosphorescent trails of seven or eight large fish, evidently porpoises, racing the boat. Periodically I heard a splash, as one of them made his graceful arching jump out of the water.

At another time during the evening, just a few feet ahead of the bow, there appeared to be a shark speeding through the water, so covered with phosphorus that I could see the movement of his tail.

The clouds overhead were not heavy, and in one place the rifts between them stood out like the skeleton of a

human hand, black against the gray background.

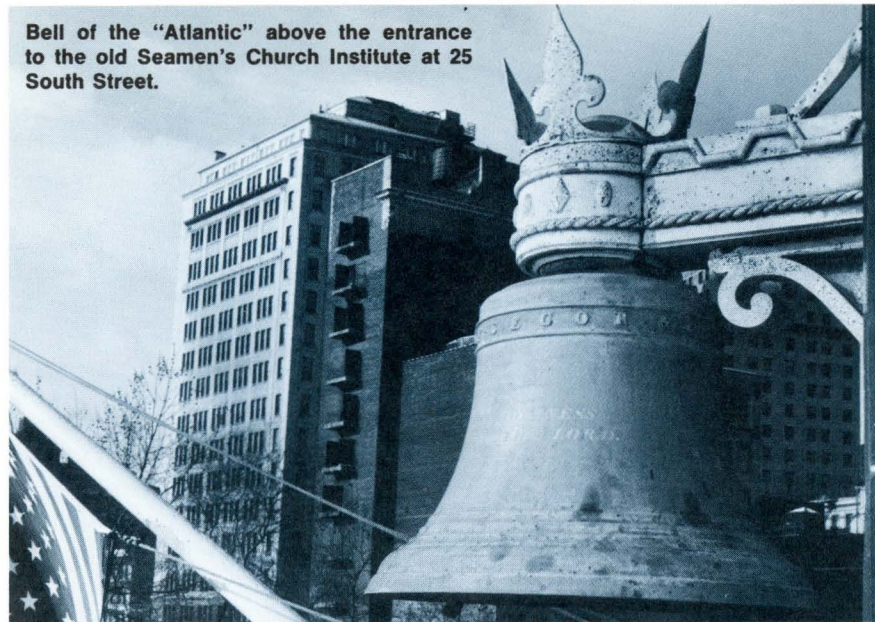
Clear, above the clouds, were the stars. Identification of constellations still meant little to me. The most striking thing, however, was to see the Southern Cross, low above the horizon off the starboard bow—then turn around, and there was the North Star, but slightly higher, off the port stern. Before the moon rose, many of the stars were so bright they cast rippling streams of light on the glossy surface of the sea.

About 10:00 the moon made its appearance—a big yellow ball, rising from behind massive clouds. It struck me as looking like a boy peeking over the back fence.

The phosphorus could no longer be seen after the moon came up. But the clouds moving across its face made all sorts of shapes visible. I was entertained with the sight of a veritable menagerie in the sky—a rooster, a common hound with big ears, and a little fluffy poodle—all outlined in the clouds. And with them was the queen of the show—a mermaid.

Just an Ordinary Seaman's ordinary night.

Bell of the "Atlantic" above the entrance to the old Seamen's Church Institute at 25 South Street.



Ship's Bell at SCI Featured in New Book

We were pleased to note that Karl Wede, well-known nautical collector and author, chose to include a bell long associated with the Institute in his new book, *The Ship's Bell—Its History and Romance*.

Among other fascinating facts and legends he gives about ship's bells, he writes that . . .

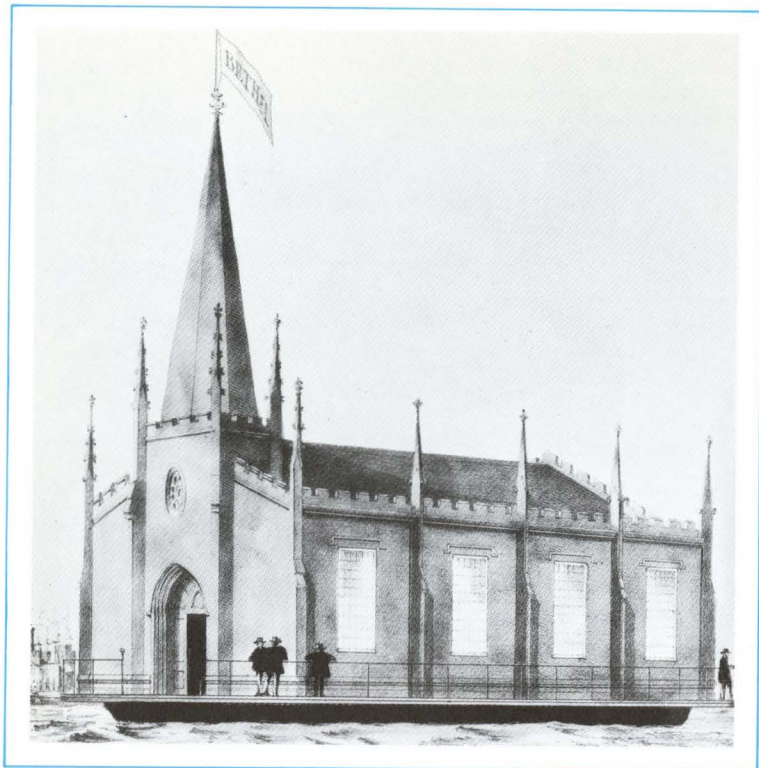
"A comparison of ships' bells with church bells is interesting. They have much in common. Ships bells usually come from a bell-maker or a foundry that also makes bells for churches, and for other purposes. Both church bells and ships' bells strike the hours, and are rung in time of danger as well as for prayer. There is one important difference. Church bells serve the churches for which they are made, sometimes for centuries, whereas ships' bells usually have much shorter careers tied to the life of a specific vessel. Bells seldom serve on more than one ship, though a few exceptions to

this will be noted later. However, bells from ships wrecked or scrapped often had new careers ashore, in some cases as church bells. The story of the bell of the S. S. ATLANTIC is a particularly dramatic case.

"When one views the bell of a ship that went down or foundered, he can only try to reconstruct in his mind the event that occurred. In the case of the ATLANTIC we know exactly what happened, as there were many survivors, and eyewitnesses on shore, whose reports are available. The ATLANTIC, built in 1846, sailed on November 25th from New London, Connecticut. There were hundreds of passengers on board in spite of the fact that many had cancelled their passage at the last minute, due to a storm springing up. But, what harm could even a strong gale do to a large new, steamer?

"The ship was still in sight of the shore when it happened; the boiler exploded! Such an occurrence was not





uncommon, as safety rules and construction regulations during the first decades of steamship navigation were still in their infancy. The ship became unmaneuverable and subject to the mercy of wind and waves. Thousands of people gathered along the shore unable to help. The shouts of terror and cries for help were scattered by the wind, but the urgent ringing of the huge bell could be heard throughout the night along the shore.

"The next day the ship foundered on the rocks of Fisher's Island. She sank in shallow water so that the foremast on which the bell was hung stood above the surface. Forty-two persons had lost their lives, but the bell had not been silenced. Rocked by the storm and the breakers, her sound continued to be heard over the scene of destruction and death:

'Far, over the waves like a funeral knell,
Mournfully sounds the ATLAN-

TIC's bell . . .'

In a similar vein, the bell played a big role in the newspaper reports, keeping up its tolling for fully three weeks, until it was removed from the wreck.

This did not end its career. At that time there was a Seamen's Mission in New York which had a floating "ship" church tied up at a pier. The history of the bell was engraved in its metal, and after having been consecrated it was hung in this floating church, where for many years it called sailors to prayer. Time passed, and the little church disappeared.

"The bell went to the Seamen's Church Institute, parent body of the Mission, which offered hospitality to seafarers of all nations. The Institute was then located on South Street, where the bowsprits of proud sailing ships rose high over the street traffic. Because of its associations and large size, the ATLANTIC's bell was in-



stalled at the third story level over the main entrance, high above the noise of the street. Although a human hand could not pull at the bell rope at that height, the bell struck the hours by ship time, day and night, by means of an automatic device.

"The Seamen's Church Institute also had a chapel, and over its street entrance hung a bell just as big as the ATLANTIC's bell. It was rung for devotional services. Its origin has never been quite determined, but it appears in photographs from 1915 onwards. It is believed that it is a replica of the bell of the old battleship USS PENNSYLVANIA of 1903, or a spare.

In 1968 the Seamen's Church Institute building was demolished to make room for new construction. The Institute moved to its new skyscraper home on State Street, near the waterfront. All its bells were put on permanent display in its second floor lobby. There the ATLANTIC's bell reposes, together

with bells from the NORMANDIE, SATURN, and others, as a memorial to ships that are gone. Musingly, some visitors strike the bells with their knuckles, listen to their soft notes and reflect upon their history."

* * *

Although we are not primarily a repository for nautical artifacts, we are pleased that objects such as the ATLANTIC's bell come to rest within our home. They are visual links to the long span of maritime history. In the case of the ATLANTIC's bell, it is also a gentle but constant reminder of the potential for disaster and loss of life which is a part of the merchant seamen's career—even today.



NOTE: For those readers interested in obtaining a copy of Mr. Wede's new book, they may do so by contacting the bookshop of the South Street Seaport Museum, 16 Fulton Street, New York, N. Y. 10038.

A TIMELY MESSAGE

It was one of those days when the wind blew strong
And the green waves rolled to the shore
When a scudded sky held the moisture down
And a chill played with the bones.

At the water's rim in the distant gloom
Great cumulus clouds were rising
Like prison walls about a dreary yard
All hope of escape was fading.

By a sloping rock where the limpets clung
The wash played round in circles
A bottle raced on the foaming surf
And smashed itself in a crevice.

A tinkling sound of moving shards
Brought music to the ear
And stooping down as the draw rushed out
The following note appeared.

No treasure trove, no mother-lode
You hereby find this day
No crock-o-gold or wealth untold
Is speeding on its way.

But I wish you joy and what is more
I wish you peace of mind
Such gifts in hand—you'll understand
How precious is your find.

Well the clouds stayed black and shore looked bleak
The wind blew fresh as ever
But a warmth grew and the spirit rose
The storm was nearly over.

—Patrick Murphy
(merchant seaman)

