

# The LOOKOUT

AUGUST 1953



SEAMEN'S  
CHURCH  
INSTITUTE  
of NEW YORK



THE SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK is a shore home for merchant seamen who are between ships in this great port. The largest organization of its kind in the world, the Institute combines the services of a modern hotel with a wide range of educational, medical, religious and recreational facilities needed by a profession that cannot share fully the important advantages of home and community life.

The Institute is partially self-supporting, the nature of its work requiring assistance from the public to provide the personal and social services that distinguish it from a waterfront boarding house and so enable it to fulfill its true purpose: being a home away from home for the merchant seamen of all nationalities and religions.

A tribute to the service it has performed during the past century is its growth from a floating chapel in 1844 to the thirteen-story building at 25 South Street known to merchant seamen the world around.

## The LOOKOUT

VOL. XLIV

AUGUST, 1953

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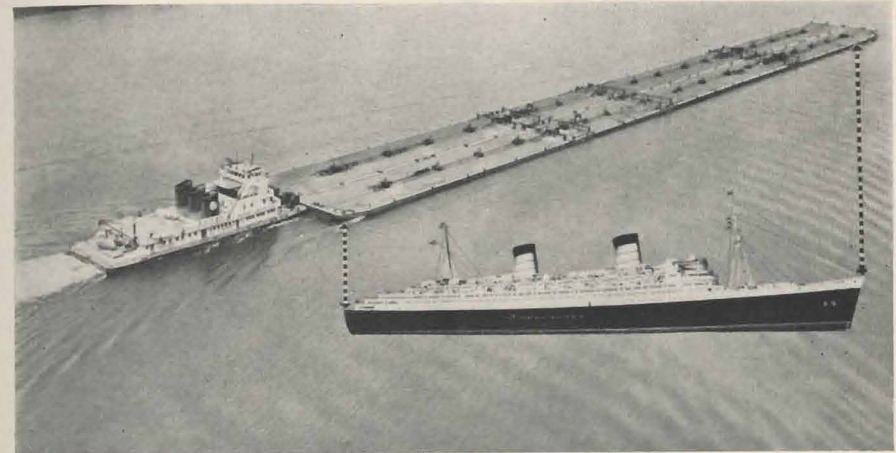
THE COVER: Hugo Nelson, retired seaman, is shown practicing one of the magical arts — getting a ship model into an old wine bottle. For an exposé, see page 8.

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NO. 8



The Queen Elizabeth, longest luxury liner on the high seas, is dwarfed by this modern integrated tow, which engages in the petroleum trade on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.

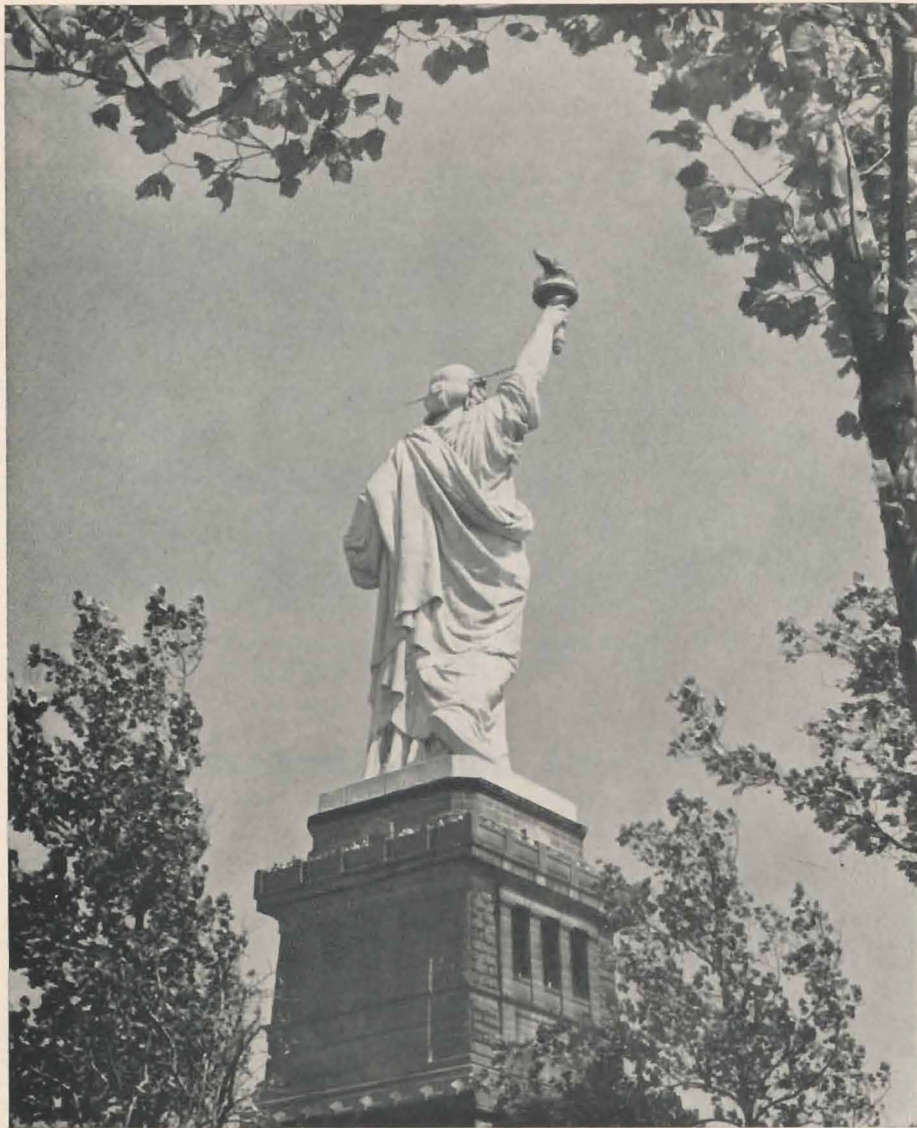
## Riverboat and Steamship

THE inlander who has lived along the Ohio or the Mississippi is apt to experience something of a disappointment when he gets his first look at an ocean liner. The glory and majesty of a liner is bound up in good part with its size, and the inlander has seen riverboats pushing barge tows that are far longer than the largest ocean liner. Shoving their mammoth tows between the green hills that flank the upper Mississippi, such picturesque sternwheelers as the *General Allen* and the *Alexander Mackenzie* compare very well with the ocean liner in its seaport surroundings of haze, smoke, noise, clutter and confusion.

True, these old sternwheelers are fast disappearing; the majority of the survivors are now in the coal trade on the Monongahela and Ohio rivers. However, for power and ability to warp big tows around tight river bends, their diesel suc-

cessors are hardly less impressive. These modern twin-screw towboats develop well over 3,000 horsepower and can thread their way through narrow channels with tows of more than 30,000 tons.

The inland routes served by these vessels are vital extensions of the ocean and coastal shipping lanes. During 1951, for example, thirty million bushels of grain was barged to New Orleans via the Mississippi. Often a ship that carries this grain to South America returns with coffee that is barged upstream to the same area the grain came from. Other important inland grain routes are the Illinois Waterway, which brought seventy million bushels into Chicago, and the New York State Barge Canal, which delivered enough grain to an export elevator at Albany, New York, to fill 182 ocean freighters.



## The Statue on Bedloe's Island

**T**O Americans the Statue of Liberty symbolizes all that is best in their country; to those whom she welcomes to a new land, she stands for the brave hopes that brought them here.

But though it might be hard to imagine being without our most honored national monument, our ancestors were at first so indifferent to her that we nearly didn't get her at all.

Most of us remember from grammar school that the Statue was a gift of France, but few know anything of the circumstances that attended it. Few can name the Frenchman who promoted the idea, or the man who gave it form. The promoter was Edouard Laboulaye, a lawyer-author-businessman and ardent friend of American liberalism. Throughout the Civil War, while Napoleon III was openly aiding the South against the Union, Laboulaye and his liberal friends identified themselves with the North, helping the cause in the only way they could — with fighting words.

With the end of the Civil War there was fear in France that the victorious Union would be slow to forgive those who had abetted the secessionists. Although Laboulaye had more confidence than did his friends in the solidity of the friendship forged in the American Revolution, it might have been as an antidote to possible bitterness against France that he sparked the formation of the Franco-American Union and inspired the famed Parisian sculptor, Frederic Auguste Bertholdi, to work on plans for an independence monument to be given to the United States in commemoration of the partnership that had won the American colonies their freedom from the British yoke. The pedestal for the statue, in Monsieur Laboulaye's view, should appropriately be paid for by subscriptions from American contributors, thus making the project a joint endeavor and strengthening the bonds of friendship between the common people of the two nations.

The monument continued as little more than a dream for a few years. In the meantime, Napoleon III lost a war and with it, his crown. The French Republic was reborn. This lent impetus to the monument idea.

In 1871 Bertholdi visited the United States to find a site and arouse interest in financing a pedestal for the colossus that was taking shape in his mind. Returning to France assured of American cooperation, he busied himself with the

actual execution of the project with Gustave Eiffel, the brilliant engineer responsible for the Paris tower which bears his name, lending his talents to the solution of technical problems.

In 1876 Bertholdi again came to the United States, this time as a sort of "advance man" for the money-raising campaign that seemed so slow in getting underway. With him were 21 crates bearing parts of the right arm holding the torch. The parts were assembled and displayed at the Centennial Exposition being held in Philadelphia. Still, however, the press was lukewarm. Even with the 42-foot arm publicly displayed as evidence, people were inclined to doubt that such an ambitious undertaking was ever likely to be completed. Moreover, the idea that the Statue could mean something to everyone just didn't get across. Mr. Average Citizen couldn't see himself contributing money for a "lighthouse for New York." Even New Yorkers were unexcited for the most part. They perked up, however, when several other great American cities threatened to take on the money-raising responsibility if they could have the statue for their own.

It wasn't until Joseph Pulitzer, cause-conscious publisher of the *New York World*, jumped on the band-wagon that the idea really caught hold of the American people. In a series of crusading editorials he flayed New York's rich men for failing to act upon the hands-across-the-sea gesture of the French people. He likewise upbraided the man on the street for leaving it up to the rich men. In short order the Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World became a *cause célèbre*. Committees, benefits, parties and all manner of fund-raising campaigns were organized and subscriptions rolled in.

On October 28, 1886, with much fanfare, the Statue which was to become an international legend was dedicated. President Cleveland spoke and Bertholdi himself, perched in the torch-bearing arm, lifted the French tri-colors from Liberty's face to the watching throng. It was not until 1924 that she officially became a



Through trick photography, this young lady will have a front view of the Statue of Liberty as the background for her picture—not New York's skyline, as any country boy would think.

national monument, her custody being transferred to the National Park Service at that time.

Through the years she has been visited by thousands of sightseers. Last year 650,000 persons took one of the two ferries from Manhattan's Battery Park to Bedloe's Island to get a close look at her. Ninety per cent of those who take the trip not only ride the elevator the ten stories to her feet, but also climb the inner twelve flights to her spiked crown from where they command a panoramic view of New York's skyline.

The endurance of those who make a visit to the Statue a part of their tourist itinerary is marvelous to see—particularly on a week-end. At the concession-dotted Battery Park, from where the Statue of Liberty ferries leave, visitors line up five abreast in a column stretching a block, despite the fact that the boats leave every half-hour on week-end afternoons. Once on board, they rush to the souvenir counter, buying miniature statues, some equipped with lights, some perched on the edges of ash trays. To please all tastes, there are Statue of Liberty earrings, hankies, pennants, pins, key rings, letter openers, knives, comb holders, binoculars, spoons, dishes, compacts, cigarette cases, blotters, thermometers and many other novelties. The children are excellent customers for the 50-

cent telescopes, the better to see the sights on the short bay crossing.

Once on the island, the souvenir business is even more booming. But the lines at the concessions are as nothing in comparison to those in the tunnel beneath the statue, for the elevator—even though it runs constantly—is limited in capacity to ten persons. The pace on the circular stairway leading to the crown is slowed by the crowd and the necessity for taking your time when you have twelve stories to go.

The size of the Statue is awesome to the beholder even when prepared in advance for a figure of heroic proportions. Until you get really close, however, she doesn't appear to be 151 feet high; nor does she look as though she weighs 450,000 pounds. This is doubtless because of her location; she seems to rise out of the sea. But then when you get near enough on the boat to see the tiny people standing on the balcony at the top of the pedestal, you begin to realize what an enormous figure this is. And when you crane your neck to look up at her from the vantage point of that balcony, you really know why she is called a colossus.

From the balcony the pattern of the copper sheets, unnoticeable from a greater distance, can also be discerned. Naturally, it would have been impossible

to build a statue like Liberty all in one piece. The way Bertholdi and his crew managed it was like this: model after model was made, the next one being a duplicate of its predecessor, only larger. Then carpenters fashioned wooden molds of each individual section according to the exact specifications of Bertholdi's design. Thin sheets of copper, chosen for its lightness, durability and resistance to weather, were hand-hammered onto the wooden molds. A steel and iron framework was designed at the same time and taken apart with the statue when the time came for its ocean crossing. The tons and tons of metal parts were shipped in 214 specially-made crates and re-assembled on Bedloe's Island in 1885-'86 with the aid of derricks.

Besides herding the phenomenal numbers of visitors through the Statue's labyrinths, not the least problem of the Island's staff of 25 is a monetary one. Because of the popularity of the Statue, the number of dimes collected for the elevator ride is appreciable and the income from the boat and other concessions is far from small. The unhappy fact, however, is that any profits which tourists bring in to the Statue go out by way of the National Treasury. The law is

such that any financial return from any national park or monument goes into the Treasury's General Fund and appropriations come back in proportion to the barest needs of the individual members of the Park Service. That is why the landscaped island that was a part of Bertholdi's original plan has never become a reality.

Until 1948 the Statue's annual allotment for expenses was \$65,000. Since the electrical bill for the floodlights and torch alone is \$61,000 a year—and that is just one item of the expensive upkeep—little could be done by way of long-range improvements to Liberty's twelve-acre environment. However, in 1948, half a million dollars was especially appropriated to begin the long-neglected work of clearing the Island of eye-sores and beautifying the grounds. Today she has a brand spanking-new pier and a rear approach to the pedestal to replace the abrupt front one where the old pier now languishes, unused and dilapidated. If the idea of liberty continues in good favor, this will not be the only pier worn out by the thousands who make the pilgrimage to Bedloe's Island.

N. L. BREDESON



As the Liberty brings a load of visitors back to Manhattan, hundreds are lined up on shore waiting to begin their tour. On weekend afternoons two boats shuttle between Battery Park and Bedloe's Island, one leaving every half hour.

## TWO FISH AND A PUDDLE

The natives of Thailand have discovered a "magic" fish that may well solve the pressing food problems of their populous country. It's called Tilapia, and thrives vigorously on almost anything—garbage, plants or other small fish. It is completely indifferent to environment, and lives amiably in ponds, fresh water, stagnant water, ditches, swamps, tanks and even rice field irrigation ditches. It's edible when fresh, dried, smoked or pickled. But impressive though these facts may be, the people of Thailand are awestruck by the wizardry of the Tilapia for still another reason—two Tilapia placed in a pond will number 10,000 by a year's end.

Thailanders are journeying by foot, wheel and plane to Bangkok, where the Minister of Agriculture supplies each man with the necessary two fish from a huge tank, effortlessly kept full expressly for the purposes of distribution. The King himself and all his Cabinet have well stocked ponds of Tilapia — as has anyone with a puddle and two fish to begin with.

A Tilapia will weigh half-a-pound in six months, and double its weight in another half-year. It can reproduce at four months, and thereafter every two or three months, hatching 400 to 600 young at a time. In a land where the supply has always fallen far short of the demand, the Tilapia is a miraculous bonanza. The pessimists look with grave doubt far into the future, though the optimists are sure consumption can keep pace with reproduction.

## DEEPWATER RHUBARB

Recently scientists recording noises 2½ miles below the ocean's surface were startled and mystified at the strange roars picked up by their equipment. They investigated. Giant whales? Sea serpents?

Not at all. Seems that when two or three hundred *shrimp* get together, the hub-bub is deafening.

## PATHS OF GLORY

A salvage yard has become the last port of call for the three-masted schooner *Atlantic* that in 1905 logged the fastest Atlantic crossing of any sailing ship. Emperor William II of Germany awarded the vessel a cup of gold that was patriotically melted down in 1917 and found to be gold-plated pewter.

The *Atlantic* once carried 36,000 square feet of sail on towering 160-foot masts and served as a mother ship for submarine chasers and as a Coast Guard training vessel in the two World Wars. She has lain idle at City Island, New York since 1947.

The scarred hulk, with masts cut to 128 feet, that was towed the final 250 miles to the Jersey yards was but the ghost of the pace-setting vessel that had logged forty-four years of active, useful service since her launching in 1903.

The schooner's 144-foot steel hull is expected to yield 300 tons of scrap.

## TOOTH SHORTAGE

"Scarce as whales' teeth" may be on its way in as a popular figure of speech in the Fiji Islands. An official from that British colony has recently been searching New Zealand museums in an effort to bolster the Fiji supply of tambua — the native name for sperm whale teeth.

Although coins have replaced them as a medium of exchange, whales' teeth are still in demand among the Fijis for birth, marriage and death rites.

The shortage is attributed largely to the many American service men who sought them during the war as souvenirs. It had been hoped that the supply would rebuild itself naturally, but things have

not turned out that way — despite the fact that export of the valued teeth has been banned. This ban, however, will not deter the Fijis from presenting Queen Elizabeth with the largest supply in the islands when she visits there later this year.

## FISH STORY

A British seaman who was only going to be in New York a very short time recently wrote on ahead to Chaplain Daley at the Institute for help in locating a *fundulus heteroclitus*. It sounded tough until research at the Conrad Library revealed that *fundulus heteroclitus* could also be called "Zebra Killie" and still smell as fishy — for commercial fishermen know them by this simpler name and use tons of them for bait each year.

Learning that the small fish was olive drab in color and not at all attractive did not sway the seaman in his intention to get some specimens. He explained that he didn't care a snap what they looked like since he was only doing "leg work" for a crippled friend back in England who was a keen aquarist.

The seaman was steered to a commercial bait firm, and he was last seen sloshing back to his ship with a pail of water and *fundulus heteroclitus*.

## LANGUAGE DIFFICULTY

With due regard for the effectiveness of *Sea Fever*, John Masefield's poem, there is still room for surprise at the delirious response it drew from a freshman at the University of Puerto Rico. Asked by his English teacher for a summary of the piece, José wrote enthusiastically: "Because of the tenebrious up the ambient, he could not backward until the happy steep should come."

The teacher shook his head. "Worst reaction we've ever had."

## FORAMINIFERA SAY CHILLY

The rhythm sequence of mud cores dug from the ocean forecasts a chilly century ahead, according to the British Museum of Natural History. By relating the layers of sediment found on the bottom of the sea to past geological ages, the British have been able to chart past climatic changes with amazing accuracy. The rhythm of these changes, say the Museum scientists, indicates that there will be steadily decreasing temperatures during the next hundred years.

Invaluable in "reading" the mud layers are the remains of foraminifera, tiny creatures which float on the ocean surface and flourish in sustained warmth. Cores with an abundance of foraminifera shells represent periods of warm weather; a scarcity of shells reflects a cold climate.

## ALCOHOL STUDIES

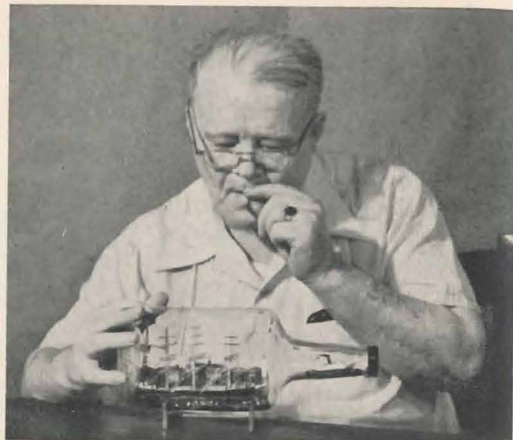
Mr. William J. Fowler, head of the Institute's Alcoholics Assistance Bureau, was one of 173 students to attend the eleventh annual session of the Yale University Summer School of Alcohol Studies during June and July.

The Purpose of the Yale program is to effect an exchange of knowledge, ideas and methods useful in controlling the alcohol problem. As a member of the Institution and Industrial Seminar, Mr. Fowler was able to contribute from the broad knowledge he has gained through his work at the Institute with alcoholic seamen.

The Institute's Alcoholics Assistance Bureau, the first among the seamen's agencies, was organized by Mr. Fowler in 1945. Since then, hundreds of seamen have established beneficial contacts with the Bureau, and its work has won the respect of the industry it serves.

# SHIPS IN BOTTLES

Here's One  
Man's Method



**H**UGO NELSON makes ships-in-bottles — tiny, precise replicas of the square riggers and schooners that once sailed the world's waters. Minute anchors, portholes, and deck plankings are painstakingly authentic. The rigging is squared away — every line and block of it — because these models are more than curios. They are a man's tribute to the ships he has sailed and loved — memorialized in delicate little carvings enclosed in glass.

Nelson likes to talk about his models and how they're made and how it was when he shipped on the sailing vessels for which they are named. He points to a model of the *Tropic*. Carved from white pine, painted as she was when in service, she's trim and sleek from bowsprit to stern. Her setting tells a story — for it's plain she's just upped anchor and is headed for the open sea, towed by a tiny tug streaming black smoke. The background is a miniature town, complete with a tall church steeple and a red and white lighthouse.

Construction of such a ship-in-bottle scene may take several weeks. Nelson starts by choosing a bottle for his ship — usually a wine container of thick glass with a wide body and neck. The neck will naturally determine the hull size of the model that may be squeezed through. He's long wanted to carve the

*Flying Cloud* — a fabulously beautiful clipper ship that set an all-time speed record for her class (89 days out of New York to San Francisco) — but he hasn't yet found a bottle large enough to do her justice.

Nelson relies on paintings, drawings, Loyds of London and his own vivid memory to guide him in depicting faithfully the vessel of his choosing. Often, it is one he sailed on in the old days, when, he recalls, a man ate salt pork and filled the rest of his being with a fierce pride in his ship.

The hull of the model is carved from a piece of white pine, soaked in water to increase its pliability. It will dry out to a rock hardness. Once the basic hull shape is complete, Nelson drills the portholes and mast openings. The deck is carefully scribed to simulate planking. The hatches, masts, lifeboats, etc., are cut separately. Not only are these pieces difficult in themselves, but they present a ticklish scaling problem. How large should a hatch or a lifeboat be, say, on a model  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches long? How tall the masts? It requires a remarkably true eye to achieve the proper balance.

Railings are then set in the deck and strung — railing posts are usually bits of needles. The decks are varnished, the hull painted, and the ship glued together, except for the masts. Nelson uses the

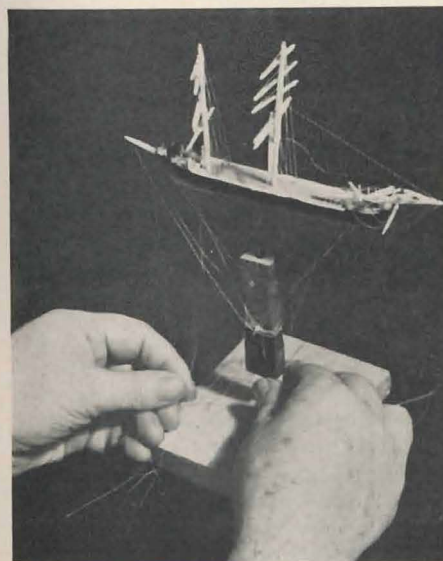
tinest of headless nails to secure the yardarms to the mast timbers, and a handmade needle drill to make the openings for the lines.

The lines are nylon. Sails, if used, are cut from stiff, white shade material that will not discolor with age. Blocks in the rigging are doughnut-shaped beads, painted and glued into place.

As a seaman who takes pride in his work, Nelson's rigging is correct to the last detail. So is his ship. He's amazed at landlubber model makers who put the forward hatch before the mast and perch the ship's bell in the stern. He shakes his head and allows he can't make head or tail of it.

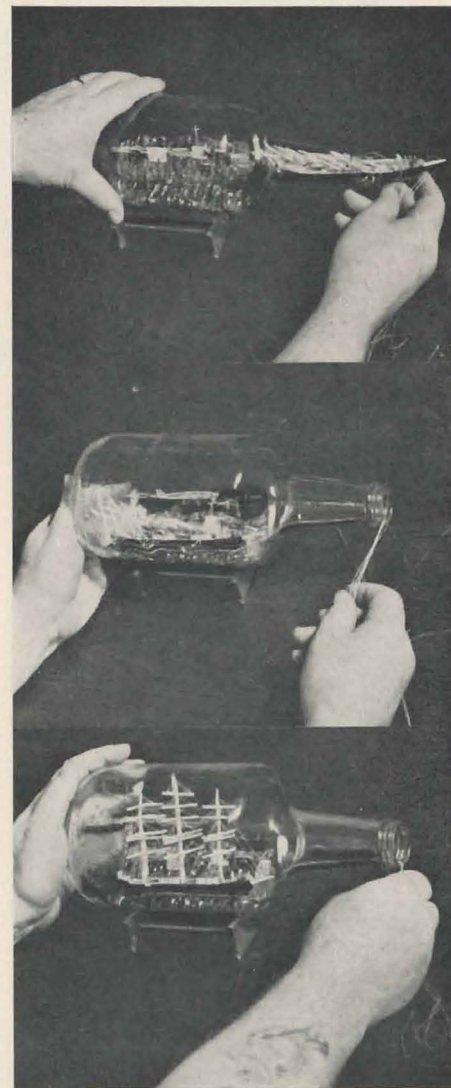
He works with the model perched on a narrow stand. Lines for each mast are threaded with an exceptionally slender needle, run through deck holes on either side, and emerge from the bottom of the ship. On a four-master, Nelson has as many as fifteen lines to contend with. Each individual line carries its own mark

In the photo below Nelson tests the rigging of the *W. R. Grace* while it is still on the work stand. At right is a sequence showing how the ship gets into the bottle.



of identification; it may be a knot, a colored marking, or a combination of both. Nelson can choose any of the threads dangling beneath the ship and know instantly by the marking its purpose and to which mast it leads.

Putty is used to anchor the ship and the background scene within the bottle. It must be allowed to "set" for approximately twenty-four hours before it can safely cradle a model. For this reason, Nelson prepares the putty a day or so



before his ship model will be complete. He colors it green for the land, and blue with white foam flecks for the water. He then cuts and paints the town buildings, brushing in doorways and windows, usually in red, white and blue combinations. These are set in the green hills with the aid of a number of elongated hooks and molding instruments from his extensive collection. He has numberless tools — many ingeniously homemade — to use in his exacting work. But he will tell you that the most indispensable aid of all is a goodly supply of patience.

When the ship is at last ready for the bottle, the masts are carefully pulled down against the deck. Unlike most modelers, Nelson does not hinge them to the deck. The yardarms are tilted diagonally and the lines gathered snug against the ship's bottom and pulled forward. The ship is slowly and gently inserted into the neck of the bottle, first supported by hand and then by steel pincers. Once she is resting lightly on the putty, Nelson

raises each mast separately by pulling the marked strings that now hang from the bottle's neck, and by guiding the wood into the mast sockets. He straightens the yardarms and pulls slack lines taut with a steel hook. A dab of glue at the base of each mast helps secure it. The braces are tucked through special portholes, and also anchored with a bit of glue.

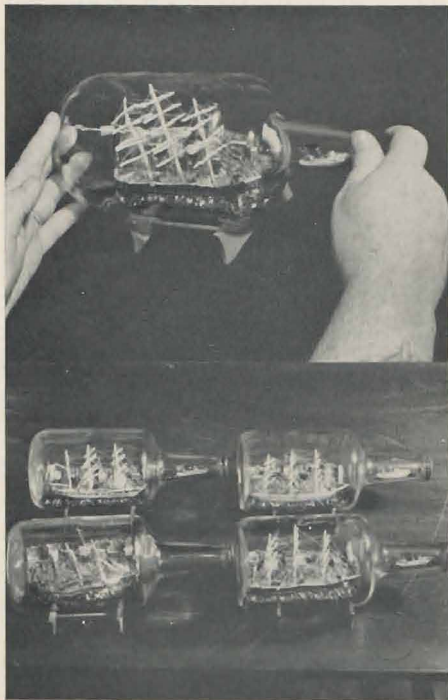
As he works toward the forward masts, he prods the stern of the ship a bit deeper in the putty, trapping her lines beneath her. By the time the model is fully rigged, she is securely set in the putty. A special knife cuts the lines as they emerge from under her prow. Since they have been dyed blue at this section, they blend with the water color, and the ends are practically invisible. There is one thread left — the towline that will be attached to the working tug. Putty is placed in the neck of the bottle for the tug. The model is carved in several sections; the pilot house and smokestack are glued on the main body. A bit of black steel wool simulates smoke.

The project is now complete. A tiny graceful ship rides her putty waves in the harbor of a painted town. She bears the name of a bygone beauty that may have smashed her hull on some rocky shore, or rotted in some forlorn and abandoned backwater.

But men like Nelson never will forget the sailing ship in her glory. He still recalls how it was to be on the wheel when his ship was pulling hard in a stiff breeze, and how she quivered and shook like something alive.

MAE STOKE

Gluing the cap on is an important final step. This will keep the delicate rigging from oxidizing and the model will last almost indefinitely. In the bottom photo are four recently completed units of "Nelson's fleet." He estimates that he has made over 500 ships-in-bottles, but he has only a few on hand. Most are given to friends or sold. Those shown here sell for \$35.



## Perry Centennial

IT IS now 100 years since Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry sailed four United States Navy ships into Edo Bay, Japan, opening the Land of the Rising Sun to commerce with the Western World. While Perry was undoubtedly, aware of the importance of his mission, it is improbable that he could have foretold the consequences as they have been revealed to us by modern history.

Through extensive trade agreements with the United States and the other Western powers, Japan soon closed a centuries-wide gulf separating her from the industrial, mercantile and military techniques of the West, until at the time of Pearl Harbor she was reckoned one of the world's great powers. However, among the feudal characteristics not forsaken by the Japanese during their industrialization was an arrogant militarism that burst hard upon us ninety years after Perry had negotiated his treaty proclaiming: "There shall be perfect, permanent and universal peace between

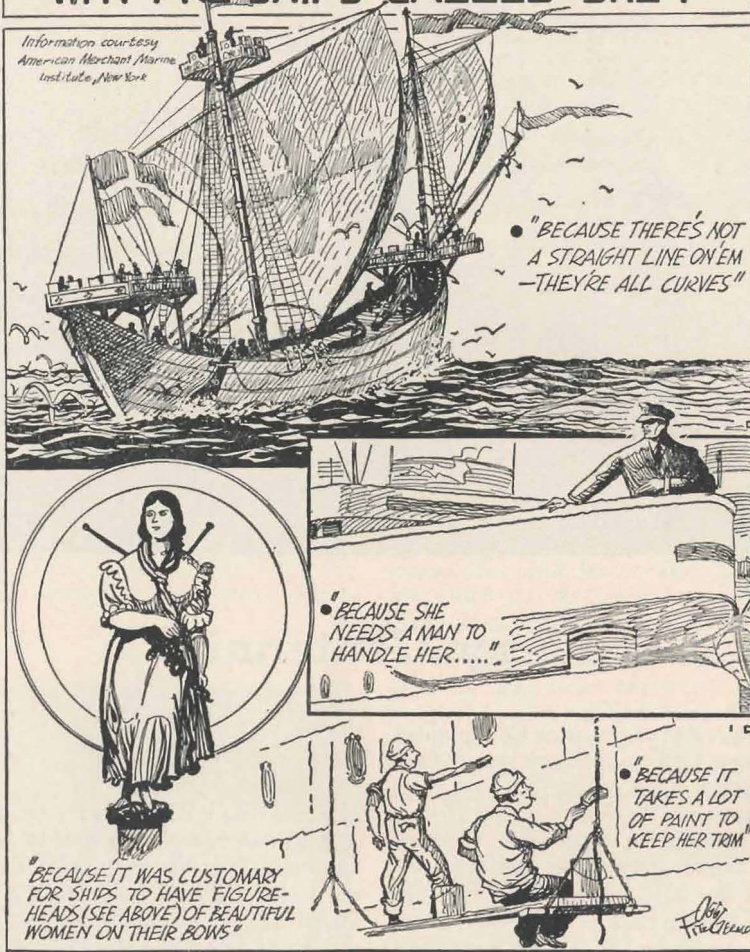
the United States of America and the Empire of Japan."

Deadly mushrooms that withered Nagasaki and Hiroshima were the prelude to another formal visit to Japan by United States Naval vessels. The years of American occupation that have followed have seen Japan become even more fully invested with Western ideas, until today the Japanese live under a political system modeled largely on that of the United States. Thus it is that the centennial of Perry's visit to Japan comes at a time when American interest in that country could hardly be greater.

Perry's squadron consisted of the three-masted sidewheel barks *Susquehanna* and *Mississippi* and the sailing sloops *Saratoga* and *Plymouth*. Model replicas of this squadron built by private interests and manned by the Capitol Naval Cadets were sailed in the Washington Tidal Basin on July 14 as part of the American observance of the centennial.

# WHY ARE SHIPS CALLED "SHE"?

Information courtesy  
American Merchant Marine  
Institute, New York



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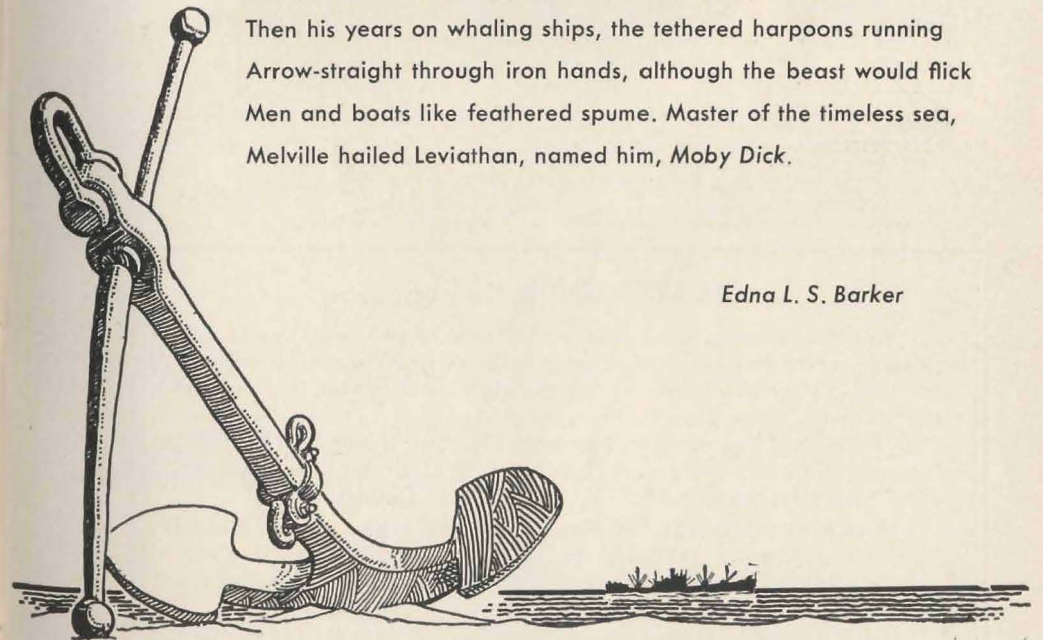
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## PRELUDE TO MOBY DICK

NEW YORK:

This was Melville's native port jutting toward the ocean,  
Scolloped deep with jetties made for many a lofty ship.  
Here the young boy at his desk felt the tug of tradewinds,  
Watched the doughty men-o'-war that knew the far tide-rip.  
Here he saw the barkentines, whalers and the schooners ride,  
Heard at dawn the anchor weighed while the sea was high;  
Saw unloaded clipper-ships fill with Yankee stuff to trade;  
At night the masthead lanterns hung like planets in the sky.  
The lookout in the crow's nest calling to him, "Land fall!"  
Cried across his sleep the ports of Borneo and Spain.  
He learned the rolling chanties sung by gaunt and bearded sailormen  
Familiar with the Isles of Spice as with an anchor chain.  
Salt encrusted canvas, snow piled on the afterdeck,  
Ice that numbed the bones of men, and made the taut sheets thrum,  
These to any youth like him, standing on the shore at home,  
Sang with creaking rigging of the long voyage to come . . .  
Then his years on whaling ships, the tethered harpoons running  
Arrow-straight through iron hands, although the beast would flick  
Men and boats like feathered spume. Master of the timeless sea,  
Melville hailed Leviathan, named him, Moby Dick.

Edna L. S. Barker





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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.