

THE SEA HISTORY

GAZETTE



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DUTCH RECREATE THE PAST

The former German lightship *Elbe 3* is being converted at Amsterdam to a bark and should be sailing next summer. The vessel is similar to the bark *Alexander von Humboldt* which was also a lightship, used in the North Sea and the Baltic from 1906 to 1984 and whose story is told by Morin Scott in SH 48. The *Humboldt* is now a German sail training ship. Other Dutch treats include a pair of Dutch East Indiamen. In late October *Amsterdam II*, a replica of an Indiaman, was launched after being over five years under construction (SH 50, p.38). The vessel was transported by land on a huge trailer and then shifted over onto a floating pontoon, which was then sunk allowing the replica to float. It is reported that *Amsterdam II* will be the flagship Op Sail 1990. Another replica, also a Indiaman, is due to be launched later this year at Lelystad, on the IJsselmeer, for active sailing. (Sea Breezes, January 1990, 202 Cotton Exchange Building, Old Hall Street, Liverpool L3 9LA, England)

FAMOUS CLIPPER SHIP COMMISSIONED

The Canadian Government is planning to build a full-scale reproduction of the fast and beautiful clipper ship *Marco Polo*. Built in Nova Scotia in 1851 the vessel, widely held to be the first 'real' English clipper ship, later held the Liverpool to Melbourne record. A government sponsored group based at St John's, New Brunswick, on the east coast of Canada has engaged Melbourne

Smith, the outstanding designer and builder of these ships, and he is now finishing up design studies for the reproduction. Mr Smith is a first choice to handle the design, as he has also been working for a number of years on plans to build a reproduction of *Sea Witch*, one of the three major American tall ship offerings for Operation Sail 1992, a project endorsed by the American Ship Trust (see SH 13 p.19-21, copies of the article are \$1 each). *Sea Witch*, built in 1846, was in the first generation of American clipper ships and holds the record home from China. While it is not the most glamorous and noisy arrival amongst the three tall ships proposed for the US, Smith is certainly the man to bring a ship project in on time, and how fine it would be to see these two contemporaries in US harbors in 1992.

THE SHIP BEATEN BEFORE SHE WAS BUILT

The first of several ironies in the life of TS *Foudroyant*, formerly the 80-gun frigate HMS *Trincomalee*, occurred before she was even built. In 1812 the Admiralty dispatched plans for *Trincomalee* to Bombay (where she was to be built) in the frigate HMS *Java*, but they didn't reach their destination. Enter the USS *Constitution* which took down the *Java* en route and effectively beat the ship to beat her before she was built! The *Trincomalee's* keel was eventually laid in Bombay in 1816. Now, as if linked by this earlier irony, these two ships lie anchored 3,000 miles apart—the world's two oldest ships afloat. Fortunately, new plans for the restoration of *Foudroy-*

ant now in Hartlepool, England, may make her a national treasure as much cherished as her American counterpart. John Mennear of the Hartlepool Museums has informed NMHS of the museum's successful bid to become the restoration base and future home of the vessel. The plan is to have her restored and presented as the premier attraction in the Maritime Center planned for the Hartlepool marina complex. (Hartlepool Museums, Department of Leisure Services, Civic Centre, Hartlepool, Cleveland, TS24 8AY England)

CHRISTEEN REDIVIVUS!

The *Christeen*, oyster sloop of 1883 now safely ensconced at the Connecticut River Museum in Essex, Connecticut (see *Gazette* Vol. V, no. 10 and 12), is now licensed to go oystering in Connecticut waters. A non-profit corporation, Tradewinds Education Network (TEN), has been set up to restore and sail the vessel, and an oyster festival will take place at the museum to welcome her in proper style on April 21, with local restaurants competing to produce the best oyster stew, and tonging, dredging, cracking and shucking exercises to be held for the enjoyment and enlightenment of all hands. *Christeen* will also be Belle of the Ball at the NMHS Annual Meeting, to be held at the Museum on May 19. One thing needed now is a new mast: 13in at the base, 40ft long. Of course a bigger spar can be accepted and shaved down. (Tradewinds Education Network, PO Box 642, Essex CT 06426)

TREASURE DIVING FORUM

The National Maritime Historical Society and The Explorers Club are sponsoring a panel on treasure diving that is sure to be lively. This unusual evening's program, entitled "Treasure Diving: Nautical Archaeology and the Sale of Artifacts," brings together a dazzling panel of experts to explore the controversial changing standards of nautical archaeology vs. treasure salvage and the glamorous sales of exotic objects from beneath the seas. Archaeologists, salvors, art dealers and historians will make up the panel and will include: Paul Johnson, Ph.D., Curator of Maritime History, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution; Jim Delgado, Maritime Historian, US Parks Service; Barry Clifford, President, and Christopher Hamilton, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, both of Maritime Exploration, Inc., the company that has undertaken the excavation of the *Whydah*, which sank in 1717 and is the only pirate ship discovered and authenticated in the Western Hemisphere. The program begins at 7.30PM on Monday, February 26, at the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, 212 628-8383.

GALA EVENT FOR SCHOONER

The Delaware Bay Schooner Project is hosting a fundraiser banquet and art auction on March 24 to support restoration of the oyster schooner *Clyde A. Phillips*. At the auction organizers will be announcing the groundbreaking ceremony and hauling out of the *Phillips* on Earth Day, April 22nd. The schooner will be used for environmental restoration programs focusing on the Delaware. Tickets for the party are \$35 and will include a cocktail hour and sea shanty program. For ticket information call 609 785-2060. (DBSP, PO Box 57, Dorchester, NJ 08316)

CANAL SYMPOSIUM DATE SET

Canal enthusiasts, industrial history

buffs, iron and steel preservationists and local historians will turn out on Saturday, March 17, for the ninth annual Canal History and Technology Symposium. The symposium is sponsored by Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums and Lafayette College. It will be held on the College's campus. Six slide presentations will feature such topics as the role of Irish immigrant laborers in building America's towpath canals; an early steelworks at Trenton, NJ; the iron and steel town of Thomas, Alabama; and the early history of the Delaware Canal. Mr. Gray Fitzsimmons, chief engineer of the Historic American Engineering Record of the National Park Service, will serve as moderator. For more information, or to request registration forms, contact the Canal Museum, PO Box 877, Easton PA 18044; 215 250-6700.

PROVIDENCE LOOKS FOR STYLISH TENDER

Harold Sutphen, President of Nautical Adventures, Norfolk, has written to ask you, our readers, for assistance. A few months ago, Seaport '76 Foundation announced a need for a new, less anachronistic tender to replace the inflatable that currently hangs from the davits on the stern of sloop *Providence*. Harold Sutphen graciously advised the Foundation that the Norfolk School of Boatbuilding would be interested in undertaking to build such a tender as a student project. Andrew Eller, then captain of *Providence* provided a design desiderata to assist in the selection of a suitable tender. But Mr. Sutphen feels he needs further guidance and asks our readers if they know where the School may find lines or design data for a working tender suitable for carriage on the sloop, a replica of a 65ft merchantman of 1768 modified in 1775 for operation as a warship. "We have access to a number of pulling boat designs," writes Sutphen, "but we're not sure if any would fit the vessel's 18th century lines." Any guidance would be most helpful. (Nautical Adventures, Inc., PO Box 371, Nor-

folk VA 23501)

CALL FOR MARINE FOREMAN

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park is seeking a Marine Maintenance Foreman to oversee the restoration, maintenance and operation of San Francisco Maritime's fleet of historic vessels. This position's salary range is \$40,000 a year. The Foreman's duties include; supervising two foremen and a staff of twenty-six; coordinating volunteer workers on the vessels; creating work plans and maintenance schedules; working with contractors and consultants; providing successful and positive visitor contact; and insuring compliance with cultural management and preservation statutes. To apply, contact the National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Branch of employment and Classification, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063, San Francisco, CA 94102; 415 556-3910.

WORKSHOP WONDERLAND

There is no shortage of upcoming workshops for boatmen to hone their skills. The Center for Wooden Boats announces five workshops in March: "Sand Casting and Foundry Techniques," with Prof. Paul Ford, March 3 and 10, 10AM to 3PM, fee \$40/\$50—students will also learn how to build a cheap but effective foundry; "Traditional Rigging Fundamentals," with James White, chief rigger of the bark *Elissa* restoration, March 17, 10AM to 5PM, fee \$40/\$45—first in a series; "Building a Maine Peapod," with Eric Dow, March 17 through March 24, 8:00AM to 5PM, fee \$500/\$550; "Wire and Fiber Splicing," with James White, March 24 and 31, 10AM to 5PM, fee \$80/90; "Introduction to Japanese Hand Tools and Their Sharpening," by Dale Brotherton, apprenticed seven years in Japanese temple carpentry, March 30, 7AM to 10PM, fee \$15/\$20—a talk and demonstration of the classic hand tools of Japan. (CWB, 1010 Valley Street, Seattle, WA 98109; 206 382-BOAT)

The Northwest School of

Concern For Future of Lightship Nantucket

The Lightship *Nantucket*, the longest serving and largest lightship ever built in the US, has been the sad victim of neglect arising from a custody battle.

In September last year the Selectmen of Nantucket exercised their first option and blocked the sail of the vessel from Nantucket Lightship Preservation, Inc., which owned and restored the vessel between 1985 and 1989 and made possible its appearance at Op Sail in 1986, to Lightship Nantucket, Inc. whom it was intended would continue maintenance and museum ship operations. The Selectmen consequently sold it to Nantucket islander Kevin Murphy for \$1 and its present trials began.

Update:

The winter issue of the Lightship Nantucket, Inc. newsletter reports, "In the middle of January an agreement was reached with the present owner, Kevin Murphy, that would allow our Chief Engineer, Bert Davis, on board to winterize the lightship. Part of this agreement was an understanding that we would not discuss publicly the present condition of the lightship." (Lightship Nantucket, Inc., Suite M, 465 Congress Street, Portland ME 04101)



Editorial

In the last issue of *New England Coastal News* I attacked the Heritage State Park in New Bedford for their lack of care of two notable historic vessels, the ferry *Alert*, which went between New Bedford and Cuttyhunk for many years, and the lightship *New Bedford*. For the last several months we have been covering the ongoing events surrounding the sale of the *Nantucket* lightship by the selectmen of Nantucket to Kevin Murphy.

It has been well documented that Murphy does not have the means nor the knowledge to adequately own a vessel such as this. The *Nantucket* is presently sitting at a berth at Little Harbor Marine in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Through lack of care she has developed a list to the starboard side. It is thought that this has been caused by the leaking of the portside fuel tank since the bilge smells of diesel fuel. It is also known that the vessel was not heated during the extreme cold weather we experienced in December. It is likely that beyond the problem with the list, the vessel may have suffered damage to her piping system. Also, the main engine had no antifreeze, which might have caused even more problems.

The bottom line is that Kevin Murphy, the man who took control of the lightship last fall, has neglected to show this historic vessel any kindness.

In December, the federal Interior Secretary, Manuel Lujan, listed the lightship *Nantucket* as a National Historic Land-

mark. He said, "She was the last lightship seen by vessels departing the United States, as well as the first beacon seen entering the country. The 1936 lightship No. 112, known by her former official designation of *Nantucket*, outlasted all other lightships assigned to that station."

This status can be removed if the lightship is not properly kept up and under the current owner, this should happen sometime this summer.

It is obvious that the selectmen of Nantucket should not have had the responsibility of anything of value. They have taken a vessel that was being maintained properly and given it to someone who is slowly letting it become a derelict. I wonder if they operate the Town of Nantucket in the same way.

The selectmen, in their infinite wisdom, have not pursued taking the vessel back. Murphy, on the other hand, feels that it would be preposterous for them to do that. I see the vessel every two weeks at Portsmouth and the way it is taken care of it should have been taken over a long time ago. Actually, if the selectmen had done a proper check of who they were selling it to, he never would have gotten it.

Let's hope one of these two parties can see that they are damaging a historical landmark and make the proper move to find it a suitable home. A home where she will receive proper care and be opened to the public for the enjoyment of everyone.

Wooden Boatbuilding presents a "Planking Workshop," lead by NWSWB Head Instructor, Jeff Hammond, March 10, 9AM to 4PM, cost \$25—learn the basics of carvel planking through lecture, demonstration and hands on; "Interior Joinery Workshop," with Doug Blake and Charlie Moore, April 7, 9AM to 4PM, cost \$25—learn the basics of finish woodworking as applied to boat interiors. (NWSWB, 251 Otto Street, Port Townsend WA 98368; 206 385-4948)

Maine Maritime Museum is holding these upcoming apprenticeship winter workshops: "Surveying," by Sam Slaymaker, March 3, 9AM to 5PM, fee \$45/\$55—the mysterious art of determining the value and insurability of a vessel; "Half-Hull Modeling," by Arno Day, March 21 and 22, 7PM to 10PM, fee \$45/\$55—create a half-hull model mounted on a mahogany board. (MMM, 243 Washington Street, Bath ME 04530; 207 443-1316)

IN BRIEF...

The **Manitowoc Maritime Museum** reached an attendance milestone on December 1, 1989, when the staff greeted the 250,000th visitor since the opening of the new

museum facility in January, 1987. The museum has also announced the presenters for its **Spring Sunday Series** of programs. They include: Lynn Noel, presenting Logging and Great Lakes ballads and stories—March 4; Capt. Al Nelson, talking about his career in the Great Lakes bulk carriers—March 11; Roger T. Elliot, telling the story of the November, 1975 wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*—March 18; Special Video—"The Wreck and Rescue of the Schooner *J.H. Hartzell*"—March 24; Ron Sharper, discussing his sailing adventures—April 1. (MMM, 75 Maritime Drive, Manitowoc WI 54220)

The **Calvert Marine Museum** is seeking volunteers familiar with the history of Solomons and the surrounding waters to be guides on cruises aboard the *Wm. B. Tennison* in the summer, and there is always the Spring Lighthouse Cleanup of the Drum Point Lighthouse on Sat., April 7, 10AM to 4PM. Can you lend a hand? (CMM, Po Box 97, Solomons, MD 20688)

The **Kendall Whaling Museum** announces two upcoming events. On Tuesday, 27th of February at 8PM the Museum presents a special program in celebration of **Black History Month**. A new exhibit called

"Heroes in the Ships—African Americans and Cape Verdeans in the Whaling Industry" will open featuring the illustrated lecture program "They Weren't All Yankees—Men of Color in the New England Whale Fishery" by Jerry W. Hakes. Then, on April 27, 28 and 29, the Museum will hold its **Second Annual Scrimshaw Collectors' Weekend**. The program includes an informal reception on Friday evening; sessions and panels all day Saturday and Sunday; gala dinner and evening program on Saturday; and special exhibitions of the world's largest scrimshaw collection including recent acquisitions. For further information contact the Museum at 617 784-5642. (KWM, 27 Everett St, PO Box 297, Sharon MA 02067)

The **Long Island Sound Taskforce** is conducting a training course to prepare volunteers to help teach intertidal study classes to school age groups. These classes are held on the beach and at the Stamford Marine Center. The initial meeting is Tuesday, March 6, 9:30AM to 11:30AM, to determine interest and discuss general concepts. For further information, contact Pat Holman at 203 327-9786. (SMC, Magee Avenue, Stamford CT 06902)

Have you seen your name in the *Gazette* recently? Make sure that the *Sea History Gazette* is on your organization's mailing list.

NATIONAL MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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