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The Maritime Revival: Antimodernity, class, and culture, 1870--1940

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THE MARITIME REVIVAL:
ANTIMODERNITY, CLASS, AND CULTURE, 1870-1940

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
History

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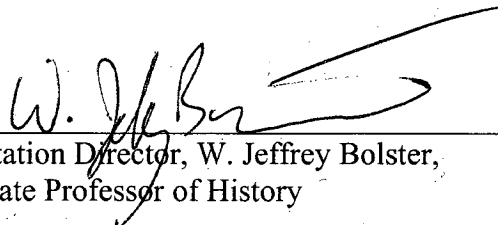
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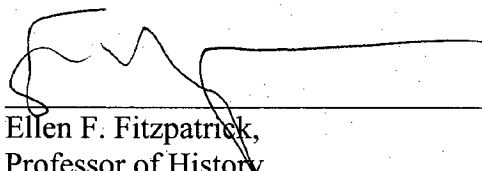
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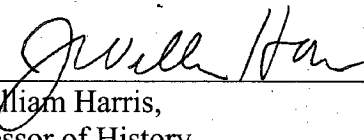
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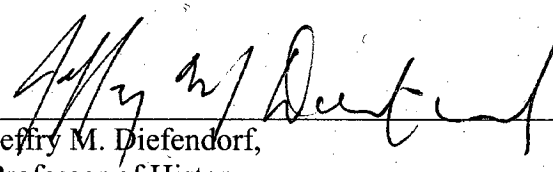
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife, Aviva, the one person who had more faith in me than I, at times, had in myself.

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First and foremost, this dissertation, to say nothing of my entire graduate career, would not have happened without the effort and guidance of Jeff Bolster. A powerful advocate, judicious mentor, and tireless ally, Jeff has shepherded this project from its earliest days—by advising, challenging, guiding, cajoling, disagreeing, but, most importantly, allowing me the latitude to chart my own course—while always forcing me to think harder and deeper about its themes and analyses. Unequivocally, I could not have succeeded in graduate school without Jeff and all he has done for me. I truly appreciate his input, accessibility, attention, and seemingly endless patience with my endless questions.

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PREFACE

From the beach in a Rhode Island seaside town, I watched cargo vessels, tugs, and barges leave Long Island Sound and head northeast towards Providence, the Cape Cod Canal, or off to points further removed, limited only by a young boy's imagination. Not twenty miles away, Mystic Seaport Museum had preserved three vessels from the age of sail, including the last wooden whaleship remaining in the world. Between these two poles, I grew up surrounded by both the contemporary and antiquarian maritime worlds.

My hometown was made up of villages of shingle-style homes, tourist cottages, a honky-tonk of oceanfront bars and carnivalesque amusements, a park designed by Frederick Law Olmstead associate Warren Manning, stretches of unspoiled barrier beaches and salt ponds, an industrial river that grew into an estuary, and finally, surrounding the safe harbor of Little Narragansett Bay, a quaint village made up of crumbling grand hotels, Colonial and Classical Revival homes, and, despite what folks on Martha's Vineyard say, the oldest carousel in the United States. That Westerly, Rhode Island, was one of the few places on the East Coast to watch the sun set over the water only added to its charms.

The Great New England Hurricane of 1938 truly devastated the area, but the sea had entered its psyche even before that; there remained—in the decoration of houses, hotels, and bars, in street names, in the museums, advertising, tourism, and especially, living in the memories of people—elements that resonated beyond those modern cargo carriers leaving New York and Port Elizabeth, Bridgeport, and New Haven. Surrounded

by so much of the modern maritime world of the 1970s and 1980s, I found that what people instead remembered as fact were heroic tales; something more along the lines of the museum down the road than the view from the beach.

This project is my attempt to reconcile those visions.

—G.M.G.

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ABSTRACT

THE MARITIME REVIVAL: ANTIMODERNITY, CLASS, AND CULTURE, 1870-1940

by

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University of New Hampshire, May, 2009

Between 1870 and 1940, Americans redefined their perceptions, ideas, and cultural meanings of seafaring under sail. The Maritime Revival—a cultural phenomenon that took the workaday nineteenth-century maritime world and converted it into an archetypical exercise in essential Americanism—selectively picked stories, symbols, and specific lifestyles and elevated them to heroic status. Part of larger nineteenth-century revivalism, the Maritime Revival created an image of seafaring that was a small subset of the entire experience-as-lived. By the 1930s, Americans recognized a heroic, but lost, golden age of sailing ships that did not correspond to the maritime world that had once been a ubiquitous part of American life.

This dissertation draws on American tonnage statistics, the writings of adventure-seeking young sailors, visual arts, and maritime preservation movements to illuminate how and why the Maritime Revival developed and matured between the Centennial and World War II.

A conservative group of old-stock Americans believed seafaring represented essential American cultural values, and incorporated its symbols and aesthetics into a

heritage movement. If initially engineered by eastern elites to insulate themselves from social changes, the Maritime Revival's redefined image of seafaring appealed to middle- and working-class Americans. Many responded enthusiastically, and used it to participate in a culture cast as essentially American and patriotically important. Popular art, literature, historic ships, and museums celebrated square-riggers, and the romance and sublimity of the oceans. A variety of cultural forms, from fine arts to kitsch and advertisements, diffused the ideas of the Maritime Revival throughout American culture to people of all social classes.

Not every piece of cultural output associated with ships and the sea, nor every aspect of contemporary maritime industry, nor every mariner, were part of the Maritime Revival. Some Americans embraced modernizing marine worlds, but Maritime Revivalists looked backwards to lament a passing era and acted to preserve the material and intellectual culture of seafaring's past. In so doing, they helped ease their own transition into the modern world, and created popularized images of sailors, ships, and lifestyles that profoundly influenced how Americans remembered the maritime past for most of the twentieth century.

INTRODUCTION

IMAGINING MARITIME HISTORY

Americans at the turn of the twenty-first century think they know something about maritime history. From Errol Flynn to Johnny Depp, *Treasure Island* to “Gilligan’s Island,” Patrick O’Brian to Popeye, and Old Spice advertisements to Jimmy Buffet songs, they have been fed a steady diet of tales, texts, images, characters, and popular histories. From these, most contemporary Americans have gleaned that sailors were not only white men, but iron men on wooden ships, that square-rigged sails were the propulsion of choice before the decline of the maritime trades, and that pirates were not murderous, rapacious thugs, but instead Robin-Hood figures or proto-socialists. Similarly, sailing routes were all transoceanic, whether Gold Rush ships sailing to California, Atlantic packet trading, bold naval engagements, three-year whaling trips, voyages of exploration, slaving—the list goes on.¹ When change did occur, it merely converted the iron men to yachtsmen, the speedy tea clipper races to America’s Cup Races, and the ordinary

¹ See Daniel Vickers, “Beyond Jack Tar,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 50, no. 2 (April 1993): 418-424; Basil Lubbock, *The Down Easters: American Deep-Water Sailing Ships, 1869-1929* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat Company, 1929); Allan Nevins, *Sail On: The Story of the American Merchant Marine* (New York: United States Line Company, 1946); Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921); James Delgado, *To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1990); Robert H. Patton, *Patriot Pirates: The Privateer War for Freedom and Fortune in the American Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2008); Ian W. Toll, *Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006); and Eric Jay Dolin, *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007).

seamen in one's family tree into Sea-Captain ancestors. These epistemological devices helped Americans engage with their maritime past, and they were all created by wealthy, educated, and usually urban upper-class Americans in the eastern cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By drawing on the maritime past and its symbols, these eastern elites tried to establish their own cultural standards of taste and distinction as inherently American. Examining the cultural constructions of seafaring created between 1870 and 1940 and exploring the reasons behind their creation reveals how Americans redefined their perceptions, ideas, and cultural meanings of seafaring under sail in a relatively brief period of time. The Maritime Revival, a cultural phenomenon that took the workaday nineteenth-century maritime world and converted it into an archetypical exercise in essential Americanism, selectively picked stories, symbols, and specific lifestyles and elevated them to heroic status.

The Maritime Revival succeeded as a preservation movement because it saved both maritime material culture and the idea that seafaring was central to American national identity. Maritime Revivalists rescued historic ships and championed disappearing preindustrial lifestyles. They helped popularize maritime images and literature, provided that these works represented the accepted storyline that acknowledged seafaring's essential American values. Maritime Revivalists also used the selective application of maritime heritage to address present and future concerns about a changing United States at the end of the nineteenth century. But in so doing, their efforts built a carefully circumscribed vision of the actual maritime experience-as-lived.

This project proposes that from about the Centennial to the Second World War, certain wealthy, white Americans utilized the maritime past as a means to maintain their

position in the social order, insulate themselves from social change, sustain their cultural heritage, and influence mass culture's tastes during a period of rapid and dislocating flux resulting from immigration, industrialization, urbanization, economic downturn, and war. Some Americans, whether artists, intellectuals, or businessmen, embraced progress and were less troubled by the modern nation and plural society developing around them. Others retreated into the past because present and future looked bleak. According to some of our most capable historians, late nineteenth century Americans were either searching for order; anxious over a perceived loss of status, or looking backwards to salve the hurts of the present and help ease the transition into the modern world.² This project is not a history of the clipper ship era, nor a history of naval deeds. It does not purport to present an encyclopedic survey of the American maritime experience from the colonial era to the modern merchant marine. It is not a social history of captains or their wives, or sailors, or minority contributions to maritime industries, nor is it a treatise on commercial fishing's past or present problems. Finally, it does not even suggest that the maritime experience was anything extraordinary to Americans before about 1870.

Whatever scholarly interpretation one accepts, between 1870 and 1940, upper-class Americans from old-stock families looked to the past to buttress the cultural values that they saw under attack from rapid social change. Alongside creating cultural hierarchies of highbrow and lowbrow or reviving Colonial archetypes in art, architecture, and literature, many upper-class Americans looked to the maritime past as a vehicle they could use to stress the importance of a single, essential American culture. Heroicized

² See Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform; From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Knopf, 1955); and T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace, Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

seafaring could help educate new arrivals as to correct behavior and a fundamental, predefined Americanism. It could establish old families' tastes and aesthetics. Failing that, the idea that seafaring possessed inherent cultural values could be used to fight being overwhelmed by the values of the polyglot masses swarming at Liberty Enlightening the World's proverbial golden door. This project explores how a redefined maritime culture was used to instill values or prop up what was passing by keeping it alive in memory—albeit a very selective memory. Books, advertising, exhibitions, museums, and personal experience late in the age of sail all diffused this perceived maritime experience through American culture.

The phenomenon was not limited to maritime worlds. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a romantic sense of the past was used as a counterpoint to the modern world. Appalachian culture, the “wild” West, and colonial lifestyles all offered a contrast to a world of progress and modernity. These idealized lifestyles downplayed conflict, poverty, and social inequity, and in so doing, the values they espoused offered an alternative to the problems associated with the growth of industrial capitalism. If industrialization brought with it social fragmentation and skies choked with coal smoke, championing preindustrial life harkened back to an idyllic pastoral of social cohesion.³ But nostalgia for the past was “coeval with modernity itself,” one Harvard cultural theorist has written, largely because of its relationship with the present or future. “Fantasies of the past determined by the needs of the present have a

³ Jane S. Becker, *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of an American Folk, 1930-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3,4. See also, Simon Bronner, *Following Tradition: Folklore in the Discourse of American Culture* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1998); and Paul A. Shackel, ed., *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2001).

direct impact on the realities of the future.”⁴ An idealized image of the past could be used “as a crucible of reform” by middle class social and cultural reformers in the Progressive era. “They believed that the practices, aesthetics, and cooperative spirit of preindustrial communities,” according to an Appalachian folklorist, “could transform an increasingly troubled society.”⁵ Between the end of the nineteenth century and the World War II, material and intellectual culture from many spheres became the foundations for attempts to construct a generalized American culture. Geographic regions and their corresponding cultural texts—from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the North Shore of Massachusetts to the American West—all became the places to locate an authentic American culture that contrasted with an industrializing world.⁶ Areas were identified by their respective regional enthusiasts, who then experienced the cultures firsthand and presented their material objects and skills for purchase or display. Their culture was ultimately consumed—either intellectually or materially—by Americans seeking communion or continuity with the past, a grounding for themselves in a predetermined essential American culture, an antidote for industrial capitalist society, a way to assimilate immigrants, or an opportunity to regain some sense of normalcy for themselves or their social class in a rapidly changing society. What began as a longing for the old way of life became a vehicle for reform, and was ultimately transformed into a

⁴ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi. See also, Michael D. Clark, *The American Discovery of Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

⁵ Becker, *Selling Tradition*, 4.

⁶ See Marybeth Hamilton, *In Search of the Blues* (New York: Basic Books, 2008); Elijah Wald, *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues* (New York: Amistad, 2004); Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

consumer commodity by market forces.⁷ In the growing consumer culture, one of the easiest ways to interact with the past was to purchase pieces of it, whether those pieces were Appalachian baskets, Currier and Ives lithographs, or ship models. Building an imagined past around the American maritime experience was an integral part of this larger revivalist impulse between the Centennial and World War II.

The Maritime Revival was the work of a small, upper-class subset of the population taking a small slice of the maritime experience-as-lived, and convincing Americans of its completeness, value, and significance. Literati from Henry James to Ralph Paine; heritage-brokers William Sumner Appleton, George Francis Dow and Charles Francis Adams; artists N.C. Wyeth, Charles Patterson, and Henry Scott Tuke, and preservationists Zephania Pease, William Crapo, and Carl Cutler all promoted the idea of using the maritime experience as a tool to uphold their own cultural standards, as did hundreds of other lesser-known upper-class Americans who heralded a heroic maritime culture of the past. They were all converts to what historian James Lindgren has called America's new "civil religion": the sentimental heritage of a consecrated past.⁸ Establishing themselves as trendsetters in art and literature, these eastern elites succeeded in recasting the maritime world inside a narrow vision of square-rigged sail just as others

⁷ For more on the commodification and sale of lifestyles or cultures, see Elizabeth Outka, *Consuming Traditions: Modernity, Modernism, and the Commodified Authentic* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009); Christine Bold, *Selling the Wild West: Popular Western Fiction, 1860-1920* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987); and Tim Cole, *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

⁸ James M. Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England: Preservation, Progressivism, and the Remaking of Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 38. See also, Ian Tyrell, *Historians in Public: The Practice of American History, 1890-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Max Page and Randall Mason, eds., *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

had selectively redefined the Colonial and Revolutionary generations.⁹ Mass culture picked up their filtered imagery and distributed it throughout the United States. Much like the idealization of early American forms during the Colonial Revival in architecture, the Maritime Revival utilized a corrected imagery and sanitized version of the past. Not surprisingly, this was more a reflection of their old-stock American culture than an accurate representation of the maritime past-as-lived. One of the first things Maritime Revivalists did was to create a dichotomy between “the sea” and “the shore.” By establishing a bifurcated experience, one that would have been unrecognizable to any seventeenth- or eighteenth-century waterman or coastal zone dweller, Maritime Revivalists created an exotic construction of mariners and their world. Only the most heroic, white, archly masculine players were a part of the portrait.

James Lindgren, an authority on historic preservation and the remaking of American memory, has argued that the “the preservation movement actually went to the heart of the most contentious issue in the early twentieth century: Whose culture would prevail as the nation went through the throes of immigration, industrialization, and modernization?” Inherently conservative, the Progressive-era historic preservation movement and the Colonial Revival were at their core a “longing for stability and roots.” Moreover, the early twentieth century heritage movements were ways to “forge upper class solidarity....[which] enabled them to preserve class authority.” Old-stock American cultural values and social class structures would serve to balance an unstable present and

⁹ See Thomas A. Denenberg, *Wallace Nutting and the Invention of Old America* (New Haven: Yale, 2003); Geoffrey L. Rossano, ed., *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival* (Savage, MD: Rowan and Littlefield in association with Historic Cherry Hill, 1991); Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002); and Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

influence an uncertain future by building a usable past. Using the past necessarily required creating a mythic picture, one absent any “untidy episodes” that did not fit the bill. By determining the appropriate symbols and pertinent material culture, upper-class “preservationists protected materials that made those [foundational] myths concrete.” Ultimately, historic preservation made connections between objects—whether a silver service or historic structure—and the essential values from the past. An old house might appear worthless, but when visitors were told in “church, newspaper, and schoolroom that the same home was a symbol of a hearty, brave people,” the material object was suddenly imbued with an important narrative and a heroic past. By connecting material objects to essential values, old-stock Americans tried to impart their own cultural values to the majority of Americans.¹⁰

However, this top-down attempt to influence the cultural life of a changing United States would not have succeeded without centuries of fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of revivalism. Ashore, attention to the colonial period and Revolutionary generation blossomed during the Colonial Revival because examples of its architecture still dotted the landscape and the memories of military heroes had been invoked regularly since the Early National period. Colonial Revival architects and preservation groups created a commodity—heritage—for which a willing market existed. Since the end of the Revolutionary War, Americans had been steeped in the heroic traditions and sacred memories of that conflict, not the least of which was the deification of George Washington and the concrete example of the eponymous city rising on the banks of the Potomac River. Similarly, maritime life was familiar to Americans. They had been

¹⁰ Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 6-10.

steeped in it for even longer. Ships, sailors, and the infrastructure of maritime commerce were all features on the ordinary landscape of nineteenth-century daily life. This familiarity with seafaring among in the citizenry made the product being sold by elite Maritime Revivalists more acceptable. The architectural Colonial Revival began with grand Georgian Revival homes for the few and ended with small capes for the many. In like fashion, the Maritime Revival started with the historical memories and symbols that an elite group considered important. But Americans already familiar with ubiquitous maritime experiences ultimately made these symbols their own.

The efforts of Maritime Revivalists distorted the real maritime world—the experience-as-lived—by softening the abuse, smoothing the rough edges, and homogenizing what was a very diverse set of scenes and players. Old-stock Americans saw their culture assaulted on every side—from immigrants, industry, and the rise of cities. Men saw their own status waning in a world that was moving out of the Victorian era.¹¹ Seeking refuge in the maritime past, they carved out a masculine haven. Ironically, as more women became active in Progressive-era reforms, they too heralded the whitewashed portrait of the maritime past championed by men.¹² But it was an incomplete picture. Women, African Americans, Azoreans, Cape Verdeans, Asians, Hispanics of all extractions, and the multitude of southern and eastern Europeans who

¹¹ See Kevin P. Murphy, *Political Manhood: Red Bloods, Mollycoddles, and the Politics of Progressive Era Reform* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); James Chace, *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft, and Debs—The Election that Changed the Country* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Kim Townsend, *Manhood at Harvard: William James and Others* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹² Lillie B. Titus to Charles Francis Adams, 18 December 1903, Massachusetts Historical Society Council and Officers, Records Relating to the Restoration of the Constitution (frigate) 1896-1925, folder, Constitution (frigate) Letters 4-30 Dec. 1903, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

contributed to the American maritime experience were excised from the picture despite their myriad contributions. Despite playing central roles for centuries, minorities and women were absent from the realm of the heroic past. Instead, only those whose presence conveyed an acceptable set of cultural values remained.

During the Colonial Revival, certain specific architectural design elements and styles of houses were privileged over others.¹³ Likewise, the Maritime Revival ensured that only selected pieces made it into popular memory for the expressed reasons of either educating or excluding something, or somebody, from the dominant culture. Maritime Revivalists portrayed sailors as men, typically white men, clothed in blue shirts, white pants, and red cravats. Women, if present at all, were long-suffering lonely wives and girlfriends waiting ashore. American ships ruled the waves. Above all, for Maritime Revivalists, the only vessels worth remembering were ocean-going, deepwater square-rigged ships. Naturally, this ignored quite a bit of the real world, from African-American sailors to women at sea to the Royal navy to the innumerable fleet of coastal, Great Lakes, canal, and river craft both small and large.

Around 1870, the familiar—and ubiquitous—maritime world began to change in ways that rendered it alien to many Americans. Industrialism went to sea in the form of steam and steel. A brief uptick and subsequent decline surrounding the Civil War and its aftermath was categorized as overall decline instead of what it really was—the bursting

¹³ See William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival* (New York: Garland, 1977); Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, published for the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1985); Frank Shay, *Iron Men and Wooden Ships* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1924); Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling, eds., *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Basil Lubbock, *The Western Ocean Packets* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat Company, 1925); and Theodore J. Karakanski, *Schooner Passage: Sailing Ships and the Lake Michigan Frontier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

of a hastily-inflated bubble. The end of sail power and subsequent perceptions of decline led to a narrative of overall decline.¹⁴ This in turn sparked a cultural response that had little to do with the maritime world but a great deal to do with the changes facing American society during the same period. The pragmatic plans for revitalization and calls for a renaissance of American shipping sparked by the initial recession of shipping developed into cultural mechanisms intended to stem the flow of Americans turning away from the maritime experience.¹⁵ As the perceived decline continued, the calls remained, but other more overt acts took center stage. Some people went to sea during the last days of the commercial square-riggers. Others wrote books, either informed by their own experiences or the results of prodigious research and attention to detail. Still others collected ephemera, preserved vessels and skills, or launched museums and maritime parks. Each removal from the lived experience created, in American popular memory, an increasingly deeper sense of romanticism and a further idealized image of ships, sailors, and waterfronts that could be used to educate the masses to core American values—or to wall off upper-class culture from late-nineteenth-century social change. The relationship was symbiotic, though. Without the earlier existence of the working-class culture from which to cull the appropriate memories, or a new mass culture to consume the corrected

¹⁴ See John Roach, *Our Commercial Marine: An Investigation into the Causes of the Decline of Our Shipping Interest* (New York: American Protectionist Publishing Company, n.d. [1880]); David A. Wells, *Our Merchant Marine: How It Rose, Increased, Became Great, Declined and Decayed* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1882); Charles S. Hill, *History of American Shipping, Its Prestige, Decline, and Prospect* (New York: American News Company, 1883); John Allen, *Decline of American Shipping: Its Causes and Remedies* (New York: Pease and Sammis, 1884); Arthur H. Clark, *Clipper Ship Era: An Epitome of Famous American and British Clipper Ships, Their Owners, Builders, Commanders and Crews, 1843-1869* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1910); Alan Villiers, *The Last of the Wind Ships* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1934); and Spencer Appolonio, *The Last of the Cape Horners: Firsthand Accounts from the Final Days of the Commercial Tall Ships* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 2000).

¹⁵ See John Codman, *Free Ships: The Restoration of the American Carrying Trade* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1878); and Samuel Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin* (1887; repr., Boston: Charles Lauriat and Sons, 1923).

symbols, the ultimate mission of the Maritime Revival—to sustain what elites considered essential Americanism—would not reach fruition.

The motives and thoughts of Maritime Revivalists, and the changing meaning and significance of things maritime in American culture, are sometimes difficult to ascertain overtly, but cultural history's methodologies offer ways to unlock both conscious and unconscious intent. Some theorists have asserted that when historians “began to wonder about the consciousness as well as the behavior of their subjects” they had no real choice but to turn to the methods and foci of cultural history.¹⁶ Behavior is easy to observe and to quantify, but motivations and important ideas are only visible upon exploring what historical actors thought was important. Uncovering, analyzing, and interpreting significance provides a way to explore (usually) unspoken beliefs and motivations. “Man is an animal suspended in webs of culture that he himself has spun” Clifford Geertz summarized of Max Weber, while in turn taking “culture to be those webs.” Thickly describing cultural patterns and delving into cultural meanings required examining myriad pieces of cultural output.¹⁷

Exploring historical actors' private musings and public pronouncements, contrasting published missives and editorials with personal correspondence, and examining public exhibitions as well as private collecting habits all serve to illuminate the values that Maritime Revivalists found important and the messages they hoped to disperse. Examining a panoply of sources helps uncover objectives both conscious and unconscious. “The thing to ask [about deliberate human action],” Geertz asserted, “is

¹⁶ Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, *The Power of Culture: Critical Essays in American History* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1993), 2.

¹⁷ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5-6.

what their import is: what it is, ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride, that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said.”¹⁸ The individual pieces that Maritime Revivalists found important point towards their ideas of a coherent whole of American culture and, in the process, reveal deeper patterns of cultural behavior with some very specific motivations. Cultural analysis then, according to Geertz, was not an “experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.”¹⁹ Interpreting and establishing the meaning of a voyage, or book, or advertisement, or artwork, or museum exhibition, or ship restoration is best revealed by interpretation within its web of historical context, and the Maritime Revival was part of a very specific set of social and historical conditions.

During the Maritime Revival, both the individuals and groups involved were trying to affect the social fabric and political power in their society by privileging one cultural expression over another. “Cultural meanings,” Fox and Lears have assured their readers, “have social and political origins and consequences, in private and public realms alike.” Old-stock Americans thought their identities in danger of dilution and tried to use their culture to affect American social cohesion. Retreating into their cultural past, it did not necessarily matter that they imagined embellished representations of their ancestors’ experiences. Attention to the power of culture also helps to “clarify the basic values by which we live and have lived,” Fox and Lears have said, “in our most intimate as well as in our most impersonal relations.”²⁰ For those old-stock Americans averse to their

¹⁸ Ibid., 10.

¹⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

²⁰ Fox and Lears, *Power of Culture*, 4.

changing society between 1870 and 1940, what mattered was a perceived continuity of values—the values of a rugged, archly masculine, orderly, democratic (but still deferential) society. This society was one in which challenges to the established order came from without—from the British or Indian attacks—rather than from within. External challenges were easily attended to by utilizing long-established sets of values. However, like the issues surrounding slavery and the Civil War a generation earlier, coping with internal challenges was much more unsettling and much more difficult to address. It was one thing to have one's values attacked by "heathen Indian" outsiders.²¹ It was entirely another to see those same values threatened by the Catholicism, anarchism, or unionism of new Americans—the recently arrived immigrants.

When examining the elements of revivalism, culture has several definitions. Culture can be social; as in a way of life or a set of values. It can be an amalgam of symbolic meanings and significance, along the lines of Clifford Geertz's "webs of significance" and their interpretation.²² For others, culture is the artistic or intellectual creativity of a given society. Within this project, multiple lines intersect. Artistic culture, elements of taste and distinction, symbolism, and social values and ways of life all interact with one another. The essential values espoused by *social* cultural practices used *symbolic* cultural texts already existing in the United States and diffused them through

²¹ Both Mary Rowlandson in the seventeenth century and Richard Slotkin in the twentieth century identified the act of overcoming external challenges as important criteria in the formation of core American values. See Alden T. Vaughn and Edward W. Clark, eds., *Puritans Among the Indians: Accounts of Captivity and Redemption, 1676-1724* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1981); and Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

²² Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, 5-6. See also, Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York, Pantheon, 1984); and Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961).

publicity and use of *creative* culture efforts such as art and literature. Each simultaneously informed, and depended upon interplay with, the others. For example, the Enlightenment values espoused during the Revolution and in the Declaration of Independence were personified by heralding Revolutionary-era privateer John Paul Jones for his symbolic value, which in turn found artistic expression in works ranging from James Fenimore Cooper's 1823 work, *The Pilot*, to popular art on insurance company calendars by the turn of the twentieth century. In short, each aspect of culture—social, artistic, and symbolic—affected each of the others.

Rarely did any of this cultural interplay operate in linear fashion. Mass or popular culture moved upwards over time, and elite culture and tastes eventually trickled downwards.²³ Much like the messy interaction of social, artistic, and symbolic culture, each layer of high and low culture influenced the others. This, though, did not stop elites around the Centennial from trying to place themselves and their class in privileged position. To use their social cultural heritage as a buttress against late nineteenth century change, upper-class Americans first needed to establish a hierarchy of artistic and intellectual culture that placed their tastes at the top. Old-stock Americans established categories of highbrow art: refined, quietly dignified, and needing a particular set of intellectual tools to understand, and lowbrow, mass, or popular art: forms designed more for entertainment than enlightenment. "This world of adjectival boxes, of such crude labels as 'highbrow,' 'middlebrow,' and 'lowbrow'...always positioned above or below each other on an infinite vertical scale," Lawrence Levine wrote, did not exist before the

²³ See Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (1954; Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1983); Ernst Hans Gombrich, *The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (London: Phaidon, 2002); and Denise Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

end of the nineteenth century.²⁴ Establishing this hierarchy was essential for the old families to separate themselves from the newcomers, immigrants, or even the *nouveau riche*. Immigration, industrialization, urbanization, greater mobility, and the growth of ever-larger “anonymous institutions” resulted in a “sense of anarchic change, of looming chaos, of fragmentation, which seemed to imperil the very basis of the traditional order.”²⁵

The solution to these threats was for elite “arbiters of culture” to establish “canons that identified the legitimate forms of drama, music and art and the valid modes of performing and displaying them” as well as “establishing appropriate means of receiving culture.” Creating the artistic hierarchy established some art forms as legitimate and ranked art forms in relation to one another, helped maintain class distinctions, and ultimately elevated the social class engaging with the art at the top of the hierarchy. Hierarchical categories of artistic output allowed elites to wall themselves off from a changing society. They could “escape into Culture,” according to Levine.²⁶

But elites could also employ the newly-constructed hierarchy of creative culture to elevate their social culture. By declaring their creative cultural tastes to be on top of the hierarchy, they were declaring their social culture to be there as well. Art hierarchies allowed creative culture (high art forms) to be engaged in propping up social culture (one’s way of life, one’s heritage, or one’s social standing). Elites, as Levine argued, had a “vested interest—unconscious though it may have been—in welcoming and

²⁴ Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 176.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 184, 177.

maintaining the widening cultural gaps that increasingly characterized the United States. Despite all of the rhetoric to the contrary...there were comforts to be derived from the situation.”²⁷ Once elites had built the distinction between their own high culture and the masses’ low culture in terms of the creative arts, it was a short step to insisting that their way of life, social, or historical “cult of heritage” had been elevated to the position where it was a beacon.²⁸ And once that happened, it was no great leap at all to finding heroic archetypes riddled throughout that heritage.

Using a particular image of the past to influence the present and future implies some contest or power relationship, and theories discussing the various uses of culture run the gamut from cynically hegemonic to those championing the broad agency of the working class. Theodor Adorno and Antonio Gramsci argued that the ruling class determined the ideas or products delivered to the masses. Cultural values were determined from above and moved downward, and everyone except the ruling class was a pawn to be acted upon. “The masses are not primary, but secondary, they are an object of calculation; an appendage of the machinery, wrote Adorno. “The customer is not king...not its subject but [instead] its object.”²⁹ Only slightly less cynical, Gramsci believed that through “intellectual and moral leadership” the ruling class led society and

²⁷ Ibid., 227.

²⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1. The opening line of Lowenthal’s work aptly ascribes the quasi-religious significance to the uses of heritage.

²⁹ Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein, (1991; repr., London: Routledge, 2002), 99.

when conflict arose, it was channeled into “ideologically safe harbours.”³⁰ Eric Hobsbawm’s notion of the invention of tradition is a more useful guide to understanding culture and the Maritime Revival. When social bonds weaken in periods of flux, new traditions are invented using familiar symbols and rituals “to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior, which automatically implies continuity with the past,” he wrote in 1983. “In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past....which is largely facetious.” He has identified three types and reasons for these inventions. First, those “establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups...[second] those establishing or legitimatizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and [third] those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, values systems and conventions of behaviour.”³¹ These three principles undergird the Maritime Revival. Symbols and imagery, artifacts, rituals, lifestyles, types of employment, and locales either stressed membership in the essential American culture that was being presented, demonstrated the essential rightness of that culture or those values, or were used to educate outsiders into the correct value systems of the society that they were joining (or were attempting to join), provided the dominant culture would allow them entry.

The value and limits of cultural hegemony remain contested. Cultural theorist Scott Lash has argued that in a technologically advanced world, power can exist outside the older frameworks of hegemony. Culture, once outside the “profane everyday” world,

³⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith; (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 57; John Storey, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 119.

³¹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Inventing Traditions” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 4, 1-2.

was perhaps now within and required consideration along with (cultural) industry.³²

Nicholas Thoburn has suggested limits of power within hegemony and identified areas, including fluid definitions of social class, which help to limit power relationships.³³

Flexibility within power relations allowed upper-class Americans to appropriate elements of working-class culture upwards into their social strata. Flexibility also made working-class Americans receptive to these perfected pieces—whether material objects or ideas—once they were returned to them from higher up the social hierarchy. A more recent historiographic assessment on the operation of culture between social class hierarchies has concluded that while upper-strata groups tried to impose a particular orthodoxy from above, what was accepted below did not always line up with the homilies from on high. The upper class was not devoid of influence, but the great press of people could be selective in their acceptance of the various messages. Each social rank retained some input within his or her culture, but even so, “power...followed closely on the social structure” in early America. Moreover, the “relatively homogeneous” social structure of early New England contrasts sharply with the United States of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁴ An increasingly plural society included a greater diversity of racial and ethnic groups than existed in early America and industrial capitalism created greater economic, social, educational, ethnic, and religious distances between these groups. Geography and spatial relations expanded considerably while new

³² Scott Lash, “Power After Hegemony: Cultural Studies in Mutation,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 24, no. 3 (May 2007): 55-56, 74.

³³ Nicholas Thoburn, “Patterns of Production: Cultural Studies After Hegemony,” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 24, no. 3 (May 2007): 81, 88.

³⁴ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 11, 13-14.

communications technologies from penny newspapers to the telegraph to radio and movies shrank these same distances. The new science of psychology was turned to advertising, in the process creating new desires and a growing consumer consciousness. Communications helped reduce regionalism and moved towards a national culture, and the growth of mass culture overlaid older class structures. These were the changes the old guard was fighting against, but they were simultaneously participants. With tools absent from an earlier America, the upper class could assert influence on popular tastes, attitudes, and culture. Wealthy, eastern elites were willing to utilize these new media to establish their social ranking.

Of course, those occupying lower social classes also benefited culturally from the diverse world of the Progressive era. As upper-class reformers tried and, at times, succeeded in influencing the tastes, or bathing habits, or childrearing, or education of the working class, those who were being acted upon had more choices than ever and greater agency to pick and choose from the buffet presented to them.³⁵ It is important to remember, though, that this table had been set by the upper class, however ironic it was that the dishes were occasionally co-opted from a working-class bill of fare. “High culture has been and will continue to be renewed from below, just as popular or even mass culture derives much of its energies from above,” one influential cultural historian has written. “The boundaries shift and dissolve, the categories harden and soften, each era defines itself both through acceptance of and rebellion against the values of the

³⁵ See Marilyn T. Williams, *Washing “The Great Unwashed”: Public Baths in Urban America, 1840-1920* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991); Nurith Zmora, *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994); Ellen Condeliffe, ed., *Jane Addams on Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1985); and William J. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grassroots Movements During the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

past.”³⁶ This, perhaps, is the most useful maxim with which to explore the operation of revival culture. Each group was simultaneously acting and being acted upon. Exploring the diffusion, meaning, and influence of cultural texts and practices ultimately requires acceptance of an upward and downward fluidity.

The great press of Americans retained some control over their cultural diet mostly because the menu evoked familiarity. As elites attempted to establish proper lines of taste, behavior, and social organization, nearly every American maintained some memory of an omnipresent maritime experience. Fortunes built on shipping or whaling reminded old-stock Americans of the source of their wealth. Fishing, oystering, or canal boat driving remained ubiquitous. Working-class Americans, even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, could still find employment on the waterfronts and in the berths of oceangoing and coasting vessels. Through their employment, their attention to the maritime world persisted. Recently-arrived immigrants almost all arrived by boat, creating a common experience among diverse immigrant groups. An ocean voyage could stimulate a New York schoolmaster to wax poetic. It is unlikely the wonder of the sea was lost on immigrants either, considering its contrast to the agrarian societies from which many began their emigration. Even though upper-class Americans created a picture of an acceptable, if incomplete, maritime past, the experiences of ordinary Americans across all social strata facilitated the reception of these ideas.

Wealthy eastern elites and old-stock Americans wanted to establish their culture at the top of American society to secure their position in a changing society. They attempted to do so by asserting the primacy of their socioeconomic class’s artistic or

³⁶ Martin Jay, “Hierarchy and the Humanities: The Radical Implications of a Conservative Idea,” *Telos* 62 (Winter 1984-85): 144.

creative endeavors, personal histories, social status, and sense of taste and aesthetics. However, holding the apex position in a hierarchy, whether an artistic hierarchy, a socioeconomic hierarchy, or aesthetic hierarchy, had ambiguous results. In addition to creating class distinction, top rank in the social hierarchy offered visible aspirations for the *nouveau riche* and even the new middle class. “Elites had more allies than they were ever comfortable with,” Levine argued, “for to many of the new industrialists as well as many members of the new middle classes, following the lead of the arbiters of culture promised both relief from impending disorder and an avenue to cultural legitimacy.”³⁷ Elites attempted to secure their own position in society by elevating their culture to center stage. They wanted to stress its importance, but also to offer it up as a model for all to copy—provided from a safe distance. The very nature of trying to influence an increasingly-plural society undermined some of the protectionist objectives. Elites offered up the culture they created as representative and encouraged the masses to gaze upon it. By inviting them to consider their creation a model, to copy their example, or to purchase it for a price, though, elites lost an element of control. Going public in an era of mass communication, newspapers and magazines, advertisements, world’s fairs, and museums, what had begun as an elite attempt to protect themselves grew to include a gradually broadening circle of participants. Once the creature escaped from the laboratory, unexpected adjustments to the approved message occurred over time.

The long-term influence of the Maritime Revival during the twentieth century is deeply evident at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when most Americans know very little of the technical language of the age of sail. In terms of the maritime lexicon,

³⁷ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 176.

twenty first century Americans' lack of familiarity usually manifests itself in one of two fashions (though admittedly, there is room for competent seamanship between these two extremes). First, the Maritime Revival has created a culture akin to that of a military reenactment group, where every technical nuance is memorized in excruciating detail and minor errors in terminology are treated as practically flogging offenses. One need only spend time on a Maine head boat or at a maritime museum to experience this aspect of seagoing language. Alternatively, many Americans are so divorced from the historic maritime experience-as-lived that a Renaissance fair-like atmosphere prevails, where every sailor is a "matey," every vessel afloat is a "ship," and every sailing craft is a "tall ship," a term completely devoid of meaning to a preindustrial sailor, when all vessels were "tall." On any given day, Disneyworld and Key West are evidence of this caricatured salty speech. I have tried to remain above the fray of technical minutia for the most part in this project, but the actors of the Maritime Revival did not, and understanding, at least minimally, the precise language of sailing is instructive.

A brief note regarding maritime terminology is in order. Sailing craft can be broken down into two main categories: square-rigged and fore-and-aft rigged. These two types do not describe the shape of sails, rather, they indicate the ways in which the rigs are constructed. Rig refers to the masts, booms, gaffs, yards, and supporting stays and shrouds. Fore is the front; aft is the back. Fore-and-aft rigged vessels have sails that are set along the length of their hulls. The sails are either triangular, or broadly trapezoidal in shape, as on the many gaff-rigged schooners that prevailed in the nineteenth century. At any marina in the world today, the typical, if not exclusive, type of sailboat is fore-and-aft

rigged. Square-rigged vessels are craft whose sails are set perpendicular to their hulls, hence “square.” The sails themselves are more rectangular-trapezoidal in shape.

Within the two broad categories, each particular rig has a specific name. The only sailing vessel that can truly be defined as a ship possesses three or more masts, all of which are square-rigged. A bark (also spelled barque) has three or more masts, with all but the farthest aft being square-rigged. A brig has two masts, both square-rigged. A square-rigger also possesses a number of fore-and-aft sails. Within fore-and-aft rigs, the most popular sailboat afloat today is a sloop—one mast, fore-and-aft rigged. For most of the age of sail, schooners made up the majority of coastal fleets. Typically rigged with two or three masts, the most extreme had seven. There are myriad other combinations, all with specific names—brigantines, barkentines, hermaphrodite brigs, topsail schooners, ketches, yawls—and all unnecessary to describe here.

For the purposes of this project, I have generally used the term “vessel” when referring to sailing craft to avoid confusion and because it is generally unnecessary to differentiate beyond square versus fore-and-aft rigs. Occasionally, primary sources and other very specific instances require use of the precise terminology. For the non-nautical reader, the most important pieces of information to retain are that each type of sail operates differently, and that form typically follows function. In general, square sails are more powerful but less maneuverable, and fore-and-aft sails are more maneuverable but less powerful. The intended use of a vessel determines its rigging plan, as well as other design factors. Square-riggers, with more power, typically crossed oceans where cargo-carrying capacity was important and there was less need for maneuverability. Fore-and-aft vessels sacrificed power and cargo space for the important maneuverability needed

when traveling near the coastline. This brief discussion merely scratches the surface of nautical nomenclature. There exist hundreds of specific words for the same reasons precise vocabulary is important in medicine: at times, accuracy is truly a matter of life or death. Rather than remembering all the actual terms themselves, for this project it is more important to consider why most Americans have forgotten this highly specialized terminology while some have retained, or re-learned it. It is also key to remember that what remains in broad, public memory is, most likely, the result of the Maritime Revival.

The ideas of the mature Maritime Revival unconsciously influenced much of the twentieth century's maritime historical scholarship, so in order to explore how the collective American memory of seafaring changed during and after the Maritime Revival, chapter one establishes a baseline for nineteenth century maritime industries. It explores the steady growth of commercial marine enterprise, its diversity of workforce and trades, and the contours of growth and decline. Hopefully, it will put to rest a trope in maritime history: the myth of declension after the Civil War. This declension narrative is, almost completely, a construction of Maritime Revival consciousness.³⁸ Chapter two considers young men who chose to go sailing for adventure rather than employment. Nearly without exception, they were children of privilege who sailed out of desire rather than of economic necessity, and their perceptions of the experience reveal its meaning for them. Ironically, while they co-opted a working-class experience by going to sea for adventure, their participation would not have been possible without their shipmates going to sea with the opposite motivation: the age-old reason of needing a job. Chapter three surveys the

³⁸ Recent scholarship, notably Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, in *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), reject the canonical narrative of decline and instead explore a progressive maritime story, but they do not conclude that cultural revivalism was the origin of the declension narrative.

wealth of printed materials that was published during the Maritime Revival. Some were first-person narratives, others meticulously-detailed histories, and others purely fictional. All offer commentary on the shape of the maritime world for the time in which they were written, and taken together expose the changes between the incipient and mature Maritime Revival between 1870 and 1940. Chapter four considers the visual culture of the Maritime Revival as both subject of artworks and object of publicly-exhibited works. Additionally, the divisions between high and low art are manifest in subject matter and medium. Finally, chapter five explores the maritime preservation movement, beginning with the efforts to save the frigate USS *Constitution* between 1896 and 1906, and ending with the establishment of a maritime museum attempting national reach in the 1920s. Both of these efforts were the brainchildren of eastern elites, and both required mass support to attain successfully their mission and stated goals.

From the wealthiest blueblood to the most ordinary ship modeler, the expressed purpose of Maritime Revivalists was the preservation of maritime lifestyles and traditions because these were deemed important to the values of both individual and nation. With differing motives, each group found cultural importance in the maritime experience, even if some of that importance was the result of clever packaging or marketing. The Maritime Revival achieved its goals of bringing national attention to a passing lifestyle and preserving historic vessels. It also helped some Americans accept the present and future by invoking the power of the romanticized past. As a result, the narrow image of seafaring under sail created during the Maritime Revival influenced how Americans envisioned maritime history for most of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER I

THE GENESIS OF THE MARITIME REVIVAL

On June 20, 1913, a group gathered in New Bedford, Massachusetts, to dedicate a monument entitled “A Dead Whale or a Stove Boat.” The statue, designed by early twentieth century sculptor Bela Pratt, memorialized New Bedford’s most celebrated and prominent industry: the whale fishery and oil business. A rugged and handsome harpooner stands in the bow of a small whaleboat about to “dart his iron” into the back of an unsuspecting (and unseen) whale. In bronze glory, both man and boat leap from a granite slab. Pratt’s model for the whaleman was a white man named Richard McLachlan despite the fact that few white men had thrust harpoons into the backs of whales for nearly half a century. Instead, people of color: African Americans, Azoreans, and Cape Verdeans, manned the boats of the whale fishery. Yet, when deciding who and what to memorialize in New Bedford, there was a distinct “absence of color.”¹ The participants in New Bedford’s premier industry had been whitewashed. Why both Pratt and the sponsors of the memorial sought out a Caucasian as the ideal whaleman is an important question. However, the social class of these men, and why they were erecting a memorial to a defunct industry on the eve of the technologically-advanced warfare of the Great War is even more important to understanding how manufactured cultural

¹ Robert Lovinger, “An Absence of Color,” *New Bedford Standard-Times*, June 11, 2000, <http://archive.southcoasttoday.com/daily/06-00/06-11-00/e011i148.htm> (accessed December 10, 2008).

memories charted Americans' understanding of maritime history for most of the twentieth century.

William Crapo and Zephania Pease, the statue's sponsors, witnessed the tail end of American whaling and watched the industry decline significantly by the early twentieth century. Not all American commercial maritime interests were on a declensionist path, but public perceptions failed to coincide with the actual state of affairs. Steam and diesel power and huge upturns in domestic trading made growth the most appropriate word to describe American maritime enterprise in the last third of the nineteenth century, but technological progress was cast as injurious to the old ways of life. Public cognizance of that growing maritime world did not deepen, and a declension narrative persisted after the Civil War. In actuality, the decline was an anomalous bubble bursting, but American foreign shipping's failure to return to an atypical high point resulted in perceptions that all American maritime enterprise was similarly flagging. More workaday spheres—coasting and canal traffic, and predictable passages under steam—emerged from their long-held places in the background. A more prosaic maritime world filled the commercial vacuum but failed to stir the public's consciousness like well-publicized singular record passages accomplished through pluck, luck, and grit.²

By the 1890s, both ashore and afloat, minorities and immigrants increasingly populated a labor force that had once been the purview of old-stock eastern families. Upper-class Americans from seafaring families were loath to consider these demographic

² See Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America's Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008); Andrew Gibson and Arthur Donovan, *The Abandoned Ocean: A History of United States Maritime Policy* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2000); and Ralph D. Paine, *The Old Merchant Marine: A Chronicle of American Ships and Sailors* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919).

changes in a positive light. Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1930 was in the throes of change, but there was resistance from the old guard. “The old sailor aristocracy of the towns, with few exceptions,” wrote Mary Rogers Bangs, “has died down to scattering individuals who manage somehow with straitened incomes to preserve the elegant environment of their youth.”³ Rather than concede their waning heritage, eastern elites engaged select pieces of their “elegant” Anglo-American culture as vehicles to resist social, technological, and economic changes. Inventing a story of perseverance in the face of decline freed old-stock families to lionize their, and by extension America’s, achievements from an idealized past. The story of the New Bedford statue was only one example of a much larger revival movement that emphasized a golden age juxtaposed against a declension narrative.

The romanticization of sailing craft in the age of automobiles demands attention. More worthy of inquiry is why sailing craft retained such celebrated status and how a story of increase could masquerade as decline for most of the twentieth century. Between 1870 and 1940, the Maritime Revival created a sense that square-rigged sailing was synonymous with all maritime enterprise. The decline of sail became a cultural metaphor for the supposed decline of all American maritime activity.⁴ Old-stock Americans used their heritage to create a cultural mirage by recasting an expanding maritime world as one in retrograde. But a fading way of life was the real reason square-rigged sail’s decline

³ Mary Rogers Bangs, *Old Cape Cod: The Land, the Men, the Sea*, new ed. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin/Riverside, 1931), 305.

⁴ See Robert G. Albion, William A. Baker, and Benjamin W. Labarree, *New England and the Sea* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1972); and George W. Dalzell, *The Flight from the Flag: The Continuing Effect of the Civil War on the American Carrying Trade* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940).

was so troubling. In the face of technology and modernization at sea, the loss of seafaring under sail's preindustrial lifestyle was particularly disturbing—and particularly vexing to the veracity of how the maritime world was portrayed in American culture for most of the twentieth century.

Between deliberately shorthanded crews, the incorporation of more labor-saving devices, and unpleasant labor conditions, fewer Americans had either the opportunity or the desire to ship out. The exodus of Americans led to crews fleshed out with foreign sailors, who garnered the same negative reactions afloat as they did ashore.⁵ Once the purview of native-born Americans, maritime industries were being taken over by foreigners. On land, the Colonial Revival focused on a picture of the past where there were no alien immigrants, no sooty factories, and no teeming slums. Similarly, Maritime Revivalists retreated into a past without steam, diesel, and steel; one where red-blooded American sailors manned speedy wooden square-riggers. Only by centering on this deliberately authentic experience, in essence a return to a sort of oceanic pastoralism, could upper-class Americans use the heroicized past to sustain essential American cultural values.

The mischief resulting from the creation of the declension model first requires examining old-stock Americans' reactions to nineteenth-century changes that were far greater than an illusory decline of American maritime power.⁶ Then, creating a statistical

⁵ John G.B. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy, 1789-1914: An Economic History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), 221, 306, 307, 427, 428.

⁶ See Stephen Budiansky, *The Bloody Shirt: Terror After Appomattox* (New York: Viking, 2008); Colin Flint, ed., *Spaces of Hate: Geographies of Discrimination and Intolerance in the U.S.A.* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003); Robert M. Fogelson, *America's Armories:*

picture of the nineteenth-century maritime experience-as-lived clarifies the conditions that helped recast growth and progress as decline.⁷ Finally, the interaction between real social and cultural change, the reluctance to accept progress and modernity, and the lamentation of a “lost” past shows how all three united to quicken a Maritime Revival movement that refashioned Americans’ view of maritime culture, history, and heritage for the next century.

Change, Reaction and Retreat

Inventing an acceptable vision of the past helped upper-class American elites cope with the enormous and unprecedented changes American society underwent in the decades between the Centennial and the beginning of the Great War. Prosperity and order stood in opposition to the growing class-consciousness of the working classes, which resulted in a period of protracted conflict between these rival interests. The consolidation of wealth and business interests pulled Americans away from time-honored and familiar values and forced upon them new hierarchies of control, new concepts of society and culture, and new ways of life. Adrift in a sea of changes, some Americans embraced the avant-garde, others sought order through organizational culture or political action, and others still smoothed their transition to the modern world through a retreat

Architecture, Society, and Public Order (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

⁷ *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennial Edition Online, <http://hsus.cambridge.org/HSUSWeb/toc/hsusHome.do> (accessed 10 October 2006).

into the culture of the past. All of these phenomena are well documented.⁸ Regarding reactions to social change, the Maritime Revival was a project of those Americans who looked backward.

The rise of a new middle class of professionals and bureaucrats challenged the old order. Warren Susman argued that Gilded Age changes led to the development of new cultural forms, and produced a “fundamental conflict” between the old order that he called “Puritan-republican, producer-capitalist” culture and a “newly emerging culture of abundance.”⁹ This culture of abundance was the result of technological changes and the communications revolution, advances in transporting people and products, and most importantly to Susman, the role of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century “Organizational Revolution” in helping to create a new social class of “bureaucrats: managers, professionals, white-collar workers, technicians, salespeople, clerks, [and] engineers.”¹⁰ Producing neither goods nor crops, this class pushed paper. Set in opposition to the older culture of Puritan-republican, producer-capitalist culture, this new middle class of Progressive-era organizers possessed different values. Where the old order “envisioned a world of scarcity...hard work, self-denial...sacrifice and character,”

⁸ See Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States 1877-1919* (New York: Norton, 1987); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace, Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981); Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1995); Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Society: Public Policy and Social Change in American, 1900-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Norman Pollack, *The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962).

⁹ Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), xx, xxi; Thomas Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision: Ideas and Institutions in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lexington: U of Kentucky, 1975), xii.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, xxi. See also, Wiebe, *Search For Order*.

the newer culture emphasized “being liked and admired,” “*plenty, play, leisure recreation, self-fulfillment, dreams, pleasure, immediate gratification, personality, public relations publicity, celebrity*” as well as “buying, spending, and consuming.”¹¹

Not all Americans were comfortable with the shift to the culture of abundance. W.H. Taylor of Narragansett, Rhode Island recalled, with some despair, the shift in values. “I can remember well more than 60 years ago when thes [sic] songs was sang,” wrote Taylor around 1927, “you could see in every action thire [sic] love of country with fife and drum they would march the streets every body seamed [seemed] to be friends and was happy [sic] and contented and loved thire [sic] country.” Old-stock American “forefarthers,” [sic] by Taylor’s accounting, had, “with thire [sic] hard work and enegy [energy] conkerd [conquered] the forest and turned them into home and farms for thire [sic] good. And the decendenc [descendants] of this sterdy [sic] stock was stil [sic] building the foundattion [sic] to the most prospours [prosperous] nation wichever [sic] was created.” Looking to the heroic past as a time when behaviors were more authentic and selfless, Taylor exemplified the patriotic values of the Puritan-republican class. Hard work, struggle, and self-denial for the greater good of the nation were the values that Taylor thought important—and passing from view—as some members of American society in the 1870s and 1880s transformed their values. His views placed him squarely in the antimodernist camp.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., xxiv, xxii. Italics in original. See also, T.J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York, Basic, 1994) and Simon J. Bronner, ed., *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920* (New York: Norton, 1989).

¹² Typescript, W. H. Taylor, “Memories of Narragansett Pier,” n.d. [c. 1927?], 35. David Patten Papers, MSS 605, Folder 38, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI (hereafter cited as Taylor,

From his syntax, Taylor will never be mistaken for a scholar or member of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant elite, yet his observation of the changes surrounding him supports Susman's argument. "Whether I am right or not in looking back 70 years," he asked rhetorically, "it seams [sic] to me thire [sic] waas [sic] a difrent [sic] fealing [sic] and air to everything today." Taylor, in typically antimodern fashion, did not approve of the new values his countrymen were embracing, and the difference he felt in the air was the shift towards a culture where abundance, leisure, and consumption were the new mores. "Now thire [sic] is too much value put on how much has he got [.] the man is now masured [measured] by his money it dose [does] not matter hoe [how] he required [acquired] his wealth" he wrote.¹³ Newfound attention on wealth as a yardstick set the stage for this set of values to reshape American culture.

Susman identified one group—the middle class organizers and new consumers—who would be particularly important in an American culture refashioned around consumption. This shift in cultural values was significant; if the past was to be used to reinforce the ideals of the old order, that past had to be considered desirable to the new. Between the 1880s and 1920s, some specific pieces of Americana were being processed and packaged for sale in new mass markets. A sudden attention to celebrity, personal pleasure, and possessions made a heroic past, whether real or imagined, a valuable commodity, and some members of the new professional class were practically tailor-made to be consumers of celebratory heritage. The budding culture of abundance

Narragansett Pier, and folder number). The circa 1927 date is the closest possible, and resulted from extrapolating information found on page 16 of Taylor's undated memoir.

¹³ Ibid., 35.

reflected the newly formed divisions in American society while simultaneously allowing members of this incipient class to buy into the old. However, the middle class assault on the old order was only one front in the culture war.

A triumvirate of massive industrialization, urbanization, and immigration was at work reshaping the economy, demographics, landscape, and consciousness of Americans in Gilded Age and Progressive-era society. Even earlier, as Thomas Bender has suggested, urbanization and industrialization altered the ways in which all classes saw themselves and their place in American society. A shift from rural to urban life between 1800 and 1850 led to changes that were “felt and dealt with by a far wider spectrum of Americans” than previously believed.¹⁴ However, the changes Bender has described before 1850, and the move “towards an urban vision” of the United States were small when compared with those endured in post-bellum American life. Where the industrialization of Lowell, Massachusetts, was unsettling to some in the 1830s and 1840s, the agrarian “Jeffersonian legacy...of a belief in republican freedom, community, individual morality and industriousness, and the moral and economic value of turning the land to productive uses” nonetheless remained, because most Americans still lived outside the eastern cities.¹⁵ By the 1880s, however, social and cultural changes were occurring on an unprecedented scale that made the changes in the first half of the nineteenth century pale by comparison.

The new character of industrialization and immigration also produced reaction by old-stock Americans. Industrialization had long been part of the American landscape, as

¹⁴ Bender, *Toward an Urban Vision*, x, xii.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.

had immigration from northern European nations. Industry, massive though it was in eastern cities before the Civil War, was ambiguous; upper-class Yankee capitalists owned the mills and factories that were creating the change. The resulting urban growth was thus difficult to criticize.¹⁶ After the war, however, immigration on a heretofore-unseen scale, and of a new character, created new and challenging problems. Existing somewhere between the older Puritan-republican culture and the new middle class, the burgeoning immigrant/working-class culture provided labor for the growing industrial might of the United States after 1880. Pushed by poverty from their home countries, the economic possibilities in America also pulled immigrants into the United States. The new immigrants were not yet a part of the culture of abundance (which could perhaps more precisely be termed a culture of consumption), though they undoubtedly wanted to become a part of it. To old-stock Americans, though, the immigrants were an affront to both the newer culture of abundance and the old order. Some Progressive-era reformers established settlement houses with the goal of educating and assimilating the immigrants into American culture, whether old or new. Others were less charitable, and Jacob Riis's 1901 exposé, *How the Other Half Lives*, further horrified some old-stock Americans who feared that newly arrived "swarms" of immigrants were a pestilence that would dilute or

¹⁶ See John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Robert F. Zeidel, *Immigrants, Progressives, and Exclusion Politics: The Dillingham Commission, 1900-1927* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004); Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); and Walter Benn Michaels, *Our America: Nativism, Modernism, and Pluralism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995).

even destroy the essential American identity the elites of society had so carefully built over nearly three centuries.¹⁷

Ironically, some immigrants' countries of origin initially held a highly romantic place in American minds. National governmental institutions copied Greek democratic and Roman republican models, American artists adorned George Washington in togas, Italian sculptors created works for the United States Capitol, Italian painters and musicians travelled to Massachusetts and Maine. Similarly, American artists, writers, and intelligentsia were drawn to Rome as the center of western art because, according to William David Barry, they thought of Italians "as possessing akin to what we now call 'soul'."¹⁸ This idyllic image, and increased ease of travel, drew American artists to an Italian sojourn to experience open sensuality and a freedom absent in the United States. Travel through Italy offered the opportunity to consider contemporary American issues of class, race, and gender from a different vantage point. These artists and writers, once released from the constraints of American society, had the chance to explore new senses of self, their own national character, and "otherness in various forms."¹⁹ Once immigrants began arriving in large numbers, though, experiencing this otherness became a two-edged sword for Americans. When indigence and a crumbling housing stock

¹⁷ Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (1901; repr., New York, Scribner's, 1939). See also, Keith Gandall, *The Virtues of the Vicious: Jacob Riis, Stephen Crane, and the Spectacle of the Slum* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); James B. Lane, *Jacob Riis and the American City* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1974); and David Ward, *Poverty, Ethnicity, and the American City, 1840-1925: Changing Conceptions of the Slum and the Ghetto* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹⁸ William David Barry and Randolph Dominic, "The Italian-Americans: They Called Them Magic Acadians," *Maine Sunday Telegram*, October 11, 1981, D1.

¹⁹ Robert K. Martin and Leland S. Person, eds., *Roman Holidays: American Writers and Artists in Nineteenth-Century Italy* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), 1-8.

created slums in New England's cities, some of poverty's poetic charm went missing. "And the banditti that had looked so colorful...as accessories in landscape oils," Barry has written, "now seemed to threaten society."²⁰ Sensuality, irresponsibility, and a general "otherness" were the very qualities that marked the immigrants as alien, criminal, or racially impure once Italy arrived at America's golden door.

Immigrants hailing from southern and eastern European nations differed from Anglo, Germanic, and Scandinavian immigrants from the generation or two previous. Members of these northern European groups had crewed American vessels since the 1870s and 1880s as declining labor conditions took some of the shine off of seafaring for native-born Americans. Northern European immigrants were more easily assimilated. Further, at sea, these foreigners were "out of sight, out of mind." However, southern and eastern Europeans had different cuts to their jibs, were more numerous, and unlike the northern European sailors, presented a conspicuous presence on land. Everything from education and language to culture, foodways, and political leanings marked these immigrants as an alien presence in the United States. What started as a trickle in the 1830s and 1840s became a deluge of outlandishness after the Civil War.²¹ When they remained in their own neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves, the immigrants were less of a problem for those from an older American culture, but they were still troublesome. More

²⁰ Barry and Dominic, "The Italian-Americans."

²¹ See Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers, *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Susan L. Mizruchi, *The Rise of Multicultural America: Economy and Print Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Reed Ueda and Conrad E. Wright, *Faces of Community: Immigrant Massachusetts, 1860-2000* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society; Northeastern University Press, 2003); and Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke, eds., *A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991); and David Ward, *Cities and Immigrants: A Geography of Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

upsetting, though, were the many that did not stay put. Their perceived threat to essential Americanism increased along with their growing numbers. “They spilled over into the public spaces that characterized nineteenth-century America...that included theatres, music halls, opera houses, museums, parks, fairs, and the rich public cultural life that took place daily on the streets of American cities,” wrote Lawrence Levine. “This [the rich public cultural life] is precisely where the threat lay and the response of the elites was a tripartite one: the retreat into their own private spaces whenever possible; to transform public spaces by rules, systems of taste, and canons of behavior of their own choosing; and, finally, to convert the strangers so that their modes of behavior and cultural predilections emulated those of the elites.”²² Establishing propriety among the immigrants would help to protect American culture, whether its art and theatre or its fundamental national identity.

The attitude of old-stock Americans towards the new immigrants was evidenced by the disdain heaped upon them in a 1906 letter from Daniel C. Roberts, President of the New Hampshire Historical Society, to Charles Francis Adams, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Roberts applauded Adams’s efforts lobbying the United States Congress to restore the 1797 frigate USS *Constitution*. Among other goals, the restoration of such a symbol would help to indoctrinate essential American values in the next generation of native-born Americans. Preservation efforts, wrote Roberts, were important because they would “help us in the endeavor to kindle in the minds of the

²² Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 177. See also, Daniel Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Daniel Rogers, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004).

children some idea of that which the relic stands for, and possibly [kindle] in their hearts some patriotic fire.” For old-stock American children, the restored *Constitution* would be an important lesson in Americanism. Despite considering it a premier example of core American values, Roberts thought other children might not recognize the benefit. “But how little the swarming offspring of the immigrants realize what it all means to them,” Roberts concluded.²³ Adams and others thought that this particular piece of the maritime past could be used as a tool, an “object lesson of patriotism,” to educate the new arrivals.²⁴ Roberts, from his perch in the Granite State, remained unconvinced that the “cultural predilections”²⁵ of immigrants could ever be converted towards those of old-stock Americans. Clearly, not all Americans welcomed their new polyglot society.

The New Bedford whaleman statue, much like the restoration of the USS *Constitution*, speaks to Anglo-American culture’s need to seek out a heroic past for symbolic value in contemporary life, as well as the jingoism behind such an attitude. The statue may have memorialized an imagined past, but one thing that it did not do was reflect accurately the parameters of the contemporary industry it was representing. Even though “white whalers hadn’t dominated since the Civil War,” Pratt’s statue was commissioned by William W. Crapo as a monument to the heyday of whaling, which

²³ Daniel C. Roberts to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 29 March 1906, Massachusetts Historical Society Council and Officers, Records Relating to the Restoration of the Constitution (frigate) 1896-1925, folder, Constitution letters, 20-31 Mar. 1906, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA (hereafter cited as Constitution Restoration Records, and folder name).

²⁴ Anon., “To Save Old Ironsides. Put Her in Commission. And Make Her an Object Lesson of Patriotism and Naval History.” *New York Tribune*, 3 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) Clippings (fragile) 1897-1906.

²⁵ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 177.

conveniently ignored the “years of black and brown whalemens” in the boats.²⁶ Crapo, like New Hampshire’s Roberts, located his cultural heritage in the early nineteenth, rather than the early twentieth, century.

A sense of national unity had sustained the young United States during the Revolutionary and early national eras. After weathering the Civil War, Americans “had to establish ‘national character’ in a different sense,” as one historian has written. Values, temperament, and ruling class were all questions, and nativists had the answers.²⁷ A century earlier, American identity was easier to locate. Change was slower, immigrants less conspicuous, and most importantly, any of the harsh realities of the early national period experience-as-lived had been softened by time. By the turn of the twentieth century, though, old-stock Yankees were becoming increasingly uncomfortable as they saw New Bedford becoming a haven for “immigrant Irish, Jews, Azoreans and more.”²⁸ *New Bedford Morning Mercury* editor Zephania Pease helped push Pratt to use a white whaleman as model and advised Pratt to ignore Herman Melville’s three harpooners of color, Queequeg, Daggoo and Tashtego, because they were “not typical of the glorious host of whalemens who made the fame of New Bedford....The whalers of yesteryear, whom the sculpture honors and perpetuates, is the Native born – ‘A health to the Native born, Stand up!’ ” wrote Pease.²⁹ Crapo and Pease were but two of many people troubled by the dilution of an essential American identity by immigrants. There

²⁶ Lovinger, “Absence of Color.”

²⁷ Dale T. Knobel, *America for the Americans”: The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York: Twayne, 1996), 156.

²⁸ Lovinger, “Absence of Color.”

²⁹ Zephania Pease, as quoted in Lovinger, “Absence of Color.”

was little Americans could do to rebuff industrial capitalism or the flow of people away from agrarian life and into the cities. Instead, they resisted the flow of foreigners.

Maine writer Kenneth Roberts, celebrated by Americans in the 1930s and the Pulitzer Prize committee in the 1950s for his novels of colonial and American Revolutionary generation heroicism, was most famous for *Northwest Passage* (1937), on the French and Indian War. Before his career as a novelist, though, he set out to combat the rising tide of immigration. Through a series of articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* and culminating with the xenophobic (and ponderously titled) *Why Europe Leaves Home: A True Account of the Reasons Which Cause Central Europeans to Overrun America, Which Lead Russians to Rush to Constantinople and Other Fascinating and Unpleasant Places, Which Coax Greek Royalty and Commoners into Strange Byways and Hedges, and Which Induce Englishmen and Scotchmen to Go Out at Night* (1922), Roberts vilified immigrants for their character and politicians for failing to take a stand against immigration.³⁰ He was somewhat sympathetic to southeastern and central European economic conditions and he recognized that the Bolshevik revolution in Russia had helped to push Europeans out of their native countries. Still, in an effort to lobby Congress, Roberts deplored “the timidity of politicians who fail to stop immigration” by

³⁰ Kenneth Lewis Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home: A True Account of the Reasons Which Cause Central Europeans to Overrun America, Which Lead Russians to Rush to Constantinople and Other Fascinating and Unpleasant Places, Which Coax Greek Royalty and Commoners into Strange Byways and Hedges, and Which Induce Englishmen and Scotchmen to Go Out at Night* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1922). For more on Kenneth Roberts, see Ben Ames Williams, *The Kenneth Roberts Reader* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1945); and Jack Bales, *Kenneth Roberts: The Man and His Works* (Metuchen, NJ & London: Scarecrow Press, 1989).

“hedging here and trimming there in order to get the Italian vote or the Irish vote or the German vote or the Polish vote in certain sections.”³¹

Roberts was anti-Semitic and ultimately, a racist.³² He considered German, Polish, and Russian Jews willing to “turn a penny honestly or dishonestly whenever or wherever they can; and even the Jews themselves will admit that they do it dishonestly far more often than they do it honestly....[the dishonest] are the true human parasites.”³³ He was hostile towards Italians, Yugoslavians, Greeks, Turks, Germans, African-Americans, Portuguese, Spaniards, Czechs, and especially, as is clear from above, Jews. Immigrants, he thought, were lazy, dirty, vermin-infested loafers, wife-abandoners, and cheaters, and immigration a bane to the racial purity of America.³⁴ “If more and more immigrants continue to pour in, and assimilation continues bad,” he wrote, “either the United States will develop large numbers of separate racial groups...or America will be populated by a mongrel race.”³⁵ The Greeks and Romans were undone by unrestricted immigration, turning each ancient civilization into a “mongrel race,” he believed, and “Unrestricted immigration will inevitably and absolutely do the same thing to

³¹ Julian Street, review of *Why Europe Leaves Home* by Kenneth Roberts, *New York Times Book Review and Magazine* (July 30, 1922), 55, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9D00E1D91239EF3ABC4850DFB1668389639EDE> (accessed May 27, 2008); Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, 23.

³² According to biographer Jack Bales, Roberts “relied on the theories of pseudoscientific racists....[and] proponents of Nordic superiority...Madison Grant (*The Passing of the Great Race*, 1916) and Lothrop Stoddard (*The Rising Tide of Color against White-World Supremacy*, 1920). Roberts not only had read their books but had meet both men, in fact, his arguments were occasionally just mere paraphrases of passages from their works.” Bales, *Kenneth Roberts*, 17.

³³ Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, 16-17.

³⁴ Bales, *Kenneth Roberts*, 14-20. Neither the list of offending nationalities nor offensive traits is exhaustive.

³⁵ Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, 21.

Americans.” There was no question in his mind which group should be at the top of the social and racial hierarchy of the United States. “The American nation was founded and developed by the Nordic race,” wrote Roberts, “but if a few million more members of the Alpine, Mediterranean and Semitic races are poured among us, the result must inevitably be a hybrid race of people as worthless and futile as the good-for-nothing mongrels of Central America and Southeastern Europe.”³⁶ Parasites and mongrels were coming in to destroy the purity of America that, in his estimation, compared favorably with Hellenic and Roman civilization. In a more charitable moment, Roberts considered the Irish to be “among the very best of our immigrants,” perhaps reflecting the progress the sons and daughters of Ireland had made at “becoming white” in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁷

Roberts’ timely message found support with a popular audience. A glowing review by Julian Street in 1922 in the *New York Times* called the book “Keenly observant, vividly and breezily written, often humorous and always sound.” “Sane and disinterested readers will, I believe,” continued Street, “find it impossible to disagree with him.”³⁸ Street agreed that immigrants were “wretched hordes of Central and Southeastern Europe”; the only objections to Roberts’ book would come from the “steerage of our luxurious national craft, and from persons more concerned with getting their friends aboard than with maintaining a certain standard of desirability in the ship’s

³⁶ Ibid., 22.

³⁷ Kenneth Roberts, “The Rising Irish Tide,” *Saturday Evening Post*, February 14, 1920, 61. See also, Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

³⁸ Street, review.

company.” Further, Street reminded readers that Roberts’s publisher claimed his conclusions in chapter 4, “The Remedy,” were the “basis for a permanent law now under consideration” by the U.S. Congress. Undoubtedly, these were the deliberations over the Immigration (Johnson-Reed) Act of 1924.³⁹ On this point, Street asserted: “May the day soon come when this book, having served its purpose, will sink to unimportance.” Finally, Street urged all “Americans whose children are to live in the United States” to read the book. “It ought at the present time,” he insisted, “to have the right of way over any other book I know.”⁴⁰ This was a powerful endorsement in the pages of the *New York Times*. Given their agreement regarding the low character of some of the immigrants, Roberts and Street both questioned whether assimilation was possible; instead believing that stemming the tide of immigration was necessary to national and racial survival. “America is confronted by a perpetual emergency as long as her laws permit millions of non-Nordic immigrants to pour through her the sea-gates” Roberts declared. “When this inpouring ceases to be an emergency, America will have become thoroughly mongrelized, and will no longer be the America of Washington, Adams, Jefferson....The climate and scenery of America will have no more power to counteract the inevitable ruin, corruption, and stagnation which follow cross-breeding than the climate and scenery of Central Italy had to perpetuate the genius of the ancient Romans.”⁴¹ Closing the door seemed to be the safest course of action.

³⁹ Knobel, *America for the Americans*, 236.

⁴⁰ Street, review. Except Knobel, as noted, Street is all of the quotes.

⁴¹ Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home*, 97.

Roberts had clearly tapped into a vein of prejudice amongst Americans fearful of losing their national character. His fame as a writer of historical novels trumpeting the bravery of pure, true Americans of the Revolutionary generation, spoke to his, and the reading public's, ability and desire to utilize the image of a past heroic culture as comfort in a changing United States. Though none of his books ever won the Pulitzer Prize, the prize committee awarded him, just a few months before his death in 1957, a special citation for "his historical novels, which have long contributed to the creation of greater interest in American history."⁴² As in the rest of revival-inspired art, literature, or ideology, he succeeded only in creating interest in a fairly sanitized version of American history. Roberts's views, as expressed in *Why Europe Leaves Home*, were endorsed when President Calvin Coolidge signed the Immigration (Johnson-Reed) Act in 1924.⁴³

Nativism was a potent force, and Anglo Americans used their culture like a citadel, protecting their way of life by walling it off and also offering a shining example on a hill. Men like Pease and Crapo looked to the past reverentially and recalled a heroic golden era of whaling, before economic panic and depression, before petroleum and steam power, before industrialization, and before immigration darkened their white city.⁴⁴ The actual New Bedford had offered views of "the queerest looking nondescripts from foreign parts," as would any seaport, wrote Herman Melville in 1851. This observation, based on his personal experience from 1841, was precisely the era Pease and Crapo

⁴² Bales, *Kenneth Roberts*, 118.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁴ Lovinger, "Absence of Color."

memorialized with a white whaleman.⁴⁵ Theirs was an exercise in selective memory by a generation that longed for old values in a changing world. This was more than simple nostalgia; it was a conscious attempt to use the past as a balm for those fearful about the present and future culture of the United States.

A central irony to this effort was its absolute ahistoricity. Despite perceptions and memories to the contrary, “multiplicity had been the reality” throughout American history.⁴⁶ The United States had, even in the colonial period, possessed great diversity, including peoples from Ireland, African slaves, Native Americans, Caribs, and Atlantic Creoles.⁴⁷ However, the pace of change had increased exponentially by the end of the nineteenth century as incremental change and mild heterogeneity gave way to a flood of new, foreign, complex and dislocating phenomena that were “more immediate and undeniable,” which made, Levine wrote, “an already heterogeneous people look positively homogeneous in comparison to what they were becoming.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or, the Whale*, Northwestern-Newberry Edition, vol. VI, Harrison Hayford, ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1988), 31; Herschel Parker, *Herman Melville, A Biography, vol. I, 1891-1851* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 180.

⁴⁶ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 175.

⁴⁷ See Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1998); Ida Altman and James Horn, eds., “*To Make America*”: *European Emigration in the Early Modern Period* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Karin L. Zipf, *Labor of Innocents: Forced Apprenticeship in North Carolina, 1715-1919* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); and Charles Fanning, ed., *New Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000).

⁴⁸ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 175-177, 207. See also Jack Beatty, *Age of Betrayal: The Triumph of Money in America, 1865-1900* (New York: Knopf, 2007); Julie Husband and Jim O’Loughlin, eds., *Daily Life in the Industrial United States, 1870-1900* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004).

Crapo and Pease were hardly the only men lamenting the entry of non-“native born” others into what they perceived as a previously homogenous society.⁴⁹ Upon witnessing immigration firsthand at Ellis Island, Henry James was left with an impression of something “immeasurably alien” that challenged an individual’s “supreme relation...to one’s country.” James, disconcerted, felt the entire “idea of country itself underwent something of a profane overhauling through which it appears to suffer the indignity of change.”⁵⁰ A United States altered by immigration and urbanization was more than James cared to bear. Instead of addressing societal problems like many Progressive-era reformers (whatever their true motivation) James instead undertook “little excursions of memory...directed to the antecedent time....[that] ministered, at happy moments, to an artful evasion of the actual.” These memories were of a comforting past as he imagined it, before his twenty-year European sojourn. His image of the past was a valuable coping mechanism, allowing him to escape the reality of the new American life. Evasion was the only recourse for the dilution of American identity, for “there was no escape from the ubiquitous alien into the future, or even into the present;” James lamented, “there was an escape but into the past.”⁵¹ Both locals like Crapo and Pease and a national figure like James used the past to soothe the social dislocations of their present reality. Yet, while they may have been retreating into a past that bore little resemblance to the actual lived

⁴⁹ Zephania Pease, as quoted in Lovinger, “Absence of Color.”

⁵⁰ Henry James, *The American Scene*, ed. Leon Edel (1907; repr., Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968), 85-86.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

experiences of their ancestors, the image they created for themselves also offered a powerful tool to help assimilate the new arrivals.

Revivalism: Public and Personal

“Architecture,” architectural historian David Stevenson Andrew has asserted, “is the most public of all the arts.”⁵² Accepting this maxim, the buildings a society constructs offer rich insights into its ideals. Whether emulating Georgian styles in the colonial period, Neoclassicism in the early national era, or Victorian architecture after the Civil War, Americans valued styles and ideas imported from abroad. With the advent of Colonial Revival architectural styles after the Centennial, Americans referenced their own history and heritage; instead of looking across the Atlantic for inspiration, some Americans found it in their own colonial past. “The rejection of the immediate and recent past led colonial revivalists to idealize the distant past,” Bridget A. May has claimed. “They viewed the colonial era as a golden age.”⁵³ The Colonial Revival heroicized early colonists and the Revolutionary generation as archetypal Americans, preserving old houses, antiques, and art, and also building new houses in the colonial style.⁵⁴ At its outset, most who participated were old-stock Americans. “The preservation of Colonial buildings,” William Rhoads has asserted, “has been almost

⁵² David Stevenson Andrew, pers. comm., September 5, 2007.

⁵³ Bridget A. May, “Progressivism and the Colonial Revival: The Modern Colonial House, 1900-1920,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1991): 110.

⁵⁴ William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival* (New York: Garland, 1977), 477.

exclusively the domain of men and women who could claim Colonial ancestries....New building was also affected by this exaggerated concern for ancestry.”⁵⁵

Concern for ancestry was a direct result of the deluge of immigrants who threatened, so the elites believed, core American values. “Civilized man, and especially one of Anglo-Saxon descent,” declared architect Joy Wheeler Dow in 1904, “is a home-loving creature.”⁵⁶ Therefore, the values of the home were ever-important to maintaining Anglo-Saxon culture. Dow described other requirements for an awareness of ancestry, such as the ability to trace one’s lineage (having “no black sheep to make him ashamed”) and attention to collecting “sundry heirlooms, plate, portraits, miniatures, pictures, rare volumes, diaries, letters and state archives to link him up properly in historical succession and progression.” Dow concluded that all this was necessary because Anglo-Saxons both needed and wanted feelings of continuity with the past. In short, he decided, “We are covetous of our niche in history.”⁵⁷ Undoubtedly, part of this yearning was driven by a sense that the Anglo-Saxon niche was getting smaller upon the arrival of each immigrant ship.

Architectural historian William Rhoads was the first to identify Colonial and Colonial Revival architecture as a vehicle to combat rapid societal changes at the end of the nineteenth century, positing that such styles imbued newly arrived immigrants with

⁵⁵ Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 437-438.

⁵⁶ Joy Wheeler Dow, *American Renaissance: A Review of Domestic Architecture* (New York: William T. Comstock, 1904), 17. Despite the name, Joy Dow was male.

⁵⁷ Dow, *American Renaissance*, 18-19.

core American values.⁵⁸ “One purpose in preserving buildings associated with great national events,” Rhoads believes, “was to inspire the young and foreign-born with a sense of respect for the nation’s founders and their ideals.”⁵⁹ In the absence of preservation, new building in the colonial style would suffice. The very act of copying the Revolutionary generation’s architecture was nationalistic. “There can be little doubt,” Rhoads has written, “of the patriotism of the architects or clients who chose to model houses after the Georgian residences of the most illustrious of the founding fathers.”⁶⁰ This replication of style created ties to their values as well as their architecture.

Often, these simulacra bore little resemblance to the actual colonial experience, as the impressive architecture erected by Colonial Revivalists was often on a scale that no heat-loving colonist would have ever considered building. “Many colonial revival houses were large with irregular and complex outlines,” Bridget May has asserted. “The goal of variety in design was achieved with wings, ells, bay windows, and other protrusions, and a multiplicity of roofs, materials, windows, and applied decorations.”⁶¹ Creating an imagined past was perfectly acceptable for the positive “psychological” benefit on the “cultivated American man or woman,” claimed Dow.⁶² “We may not, indeed, have inherited the house we live in; the chances are we have not. We may not...[have] ever

⁵⁸ Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 536. See also William B. Rhoads, “The Colonial Revival and the Americanization of Immigrants,” in Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, published for the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1985), 341-361.

⁵⁹ Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 536.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 481.

⁶¹ May, “Progressivism and the Colonial Revival,” 111.

⁶² Dow, *American Renaissance*, 19.

gloried in the quiet possession of as ideal a homestead,” Dow continued, “but for the sake of goodness—for the sake of making the world appear a more decent place to live in—let us pretend that they did, and that it is ours now. Let us pretend that God has been good to us.”⁶³ Divine Providence had put Anglo-Saxonism at the top of the social hierarchy, and clearly, pretending and imagining was more important to Dow than one’s actual legacy. All that was necessary was that one envisioned the correct imagery, which, in Dow’s case, was a plate of the Governor Smith House, in Wiscasset, Maine, a classic federal with a two-story elevation built in 1792. Similarly, historian Rhoads has agreed that authenticity was not always necessary to transfer the correct sets of values. “Nor did the Colonial building,” Rhoads has concluded, “have to be of the Colonial era to work for Americanization.”⁶⁴

Houses and public buildings were the most public expression of this tendency to find inspiration and essential American values in heroic generations past. However, the subtext of Colonial Revival architecture was resistance to social change. “One important group of Colonial Revivalists,” Rhoads has asserted, “looked back nostalgically or even longingly to an earlier era when America had been ruled by an aristocracy and class divisions remained distinct.”⁶⁵ In the Progressive era, social class retained an important role, especially among those Progressives attempting to combat the problems wrought by a rapidly changing society. “Proponents of progressivism and advocates of colonial revival architecture,” Bridget May has written, “were seeking to bring back a time that

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 538.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 461.

was thought to be distinguished by ‘plain living, high thinking and sober acting.’ For colonial revivalists, the colonial period was just such a time—quieter, stabler [sic], and more peaceful. Then, people had been more admirable and life worth living.”⁶⁶ The dichotomy within some Progressives’ ideals was that their goals of reforming social ills sprang directly out of a deep concern for the dislocating changes occurring in the United States. Even under the moniker of Progressivism, some, conservatively, looked to the past for a more admirable lifestyle to juxtapose against the chaotic present. It was, therefore, not a contradiction that the “great majority of Colonial Revivalists were either politically or socially conservative or disinterested.”⁶⁷

Still, not all Progressives were Colonial Revivalists, and vice-versa. Other Americans who patronized Colonial Revival architects “supported the ideal of an American aristocracy,” while others saw it as a style that was “simple, lacking pretension...antithetical to the florid taste of the wealthy, especially those recently arrived at riches.”⁶⁸ Colonial Revival styles were a way that old-stock Americans could combat the ostentatious displays of the Carnegies, Vanderbilts, or Morgans, who copied European architecture for their “cottages” at Newport and Hyde Park. It was a way for old-stock Americans to combat what they considered both the poor taste of immigrants and the poor taste of the *nouveau riche*. Immigrants, industrialists, middle managers, the *nouveau riche*, and modernists all challenged the old order in one way or another.

⁶⁶ May, “Progressivism and the Colonial Revival,” 109.

⁶⁷ Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 476.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 467-468.

Retreating into a simpler time with more honest values seemed to be the only strategy for cultural survival.

Revivalism blossomed at the end of the nineteenth century as perceptions of cultural regression or dilution pushed Americans uneasy with late nineteenth century changes to retreat into a past of their own creation. Against a backdrop of what Nell Irwin Painter has called a time of “standing at Armageddon,”⁶⁹ revivalism and the preservation of historic sites helped to entrench an essential American identity by using the symbols and values of early American culture. The USS *Constitution* became one such symbol. “Around this old ship cling many of the brightest pages of our Country’s history,” wrote Andrew C. Trippe of the frigate “Her decks, where heroes have trod in the past, will be the inspiration of heroes in the days to come.”⁷⁰ The Maryland Historical Society was urging both houses of the United States Congress to preserve the old ship because, Trippe asserted, the “memory of the great deeds of its people is the best heritage a country can leave to their descendants.” By looking to the past and preserving the rotting hulk, the ship would be emblematic of essential American values for future generations. The values that “one living object lesson of heroism and fidelity to duty like this old battle ship,” could pass on, Trippe continued, “is worth volumes of written and printed words.”⁷¹ If a picture was worth a thousand words, as far as Trippe was concerned, a symbol was worth ten times that. In addition to passing on values to future

⁶⁹ See Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*.

⁷⁰ Maryland Historical Society to the U.S Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, “Memorial,” 21 January 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 11-21 Jan. 1897.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

generations, historic preservation during the Colonial Revival could sooth anxieties. “The same [historic] sites,” Rhoads has written, “could help bolster the flagging spirit of the native American whose way of life was under attack by alien forces.”⁷² Groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, Daughters of the Confederacy, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, and more menacingly, the revived Ku Klux Klan, all lionized old-stock Americanism by appeals to Colonial and Revolutionary culture or antebellum values. Pastoralists went back to the land, the Arts and Crafts movement invoked simpler styles, and antimodernists retreated into preindustrial culture as a coping mechanism to ease the transition to modernity.⁷³ As what appeared to be swarming hordes of immigrants overran the eastern industrial cities, the past provided certainty in an uncertain present.

Phenomena such as the Colonial Revival, antimodernism, pastoralism, and the arts-and-crafts movement all sprang from segments of American society—wealthy eastern industrialists, old-stock New England and Dutch patroon families, scions of shipping, whaling, or fishing legacies, or agrarian-republican farmers—that were more conservative, possessed traditional values, and resisted social change and its consequences. While modernist-leaning Americans embraced European intellectual traditions and progress, others pined for the loss of the old days.⁷⁴ These groups of old-

⁷² Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 537.

⁷³ See Lears, *No Place of Grace*; and David Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁷⁴ See Peter Gay, *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy: From Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond* (New York: Norton, 2008); and Maureen A. Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivism, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

stock Americans sought continuity with a past that was less complicated, one where they retained their position at the top of the social hierarchy.

Like the Colonial Revival, the Maritime Revival offered some Americans a cultural construction of their own that did not reference English or European culture. Like the Revolutionary generation, the real achievements of American maritime commerce supplied the paradigm for Americans to idealize their maritime past. Success for the colonists was survival; success for the Revolutionaries was victory; and success for maritime aficionados was the commercial triumph of the 1850s and 1860s clipper ship era. "These Clipper ships" wrote Samuel Eliot Morison in 1930, "were our cathedrals, our classics, our old masters."⁷⁵ Here, the Maritime Revival located its zenith, its archetypes, and its prototypes. By the 1920s, square-rigged sailing vessels had earned epic status. Sailors, often considered rather coarse as a group, were rehabilitated as heroic figures. Images of both were chosen by upper-class Americans but then disseminated to Americans throughout the social strata. The cultural perception of maritime decline brought in its wake a renewed call for renaissance, but also a deeper sense of romanticism and removal from the maritime experience-as-lived in contemporary America.

As did the Colonial Revival, the Maritime Revival ensured that only selected pieces of history made it into popular memory. As idealized capes, gambrel-roofed shingle-style houses, or Georgian revival architecture dominated Colonial Revival

⁷⁵ George Caspar Homans and Samuel Eliot Morison, "The Sea Story of Massachusetts," in Massachusetts Special Commission on the Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Founding of Mass Bay Colony, compiled by the Marine Committee, *Massachusetts on the Sea, 1630-1930* (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, 1930), 10.

architecture, a similar idealization occurred afloat, creating caricatures of the experience-as-lived.⁷⁶ Above all, the only vessels worthy of remembering were foreign-trading, deepwater, square-rigged ships. As the Maritime Revival moved through the decades between 1870 and 1940, the ideas and imagery matured, eventually resulting in an exceptional, albeit narrow, portrait of what was once an ordinary experience. Each removal created increasingly idealized images of ships, sailors, and waterfronts that were then used to educate the masses as to core American values—or, failing that, protect essential American culture from rapid social changes.

In the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, wealthy, white, Anglo American, old-stock eastern families faced what they perceived as an assault on their culture from both sides. They were attacked from without via immigration, and from within by a newly-formed class of urban professionals that refuted longstanding cultural values and mores in exchange for a more immediate consumerism. The battle lines had been drawn, but the old guard was at a numerical disadvantage. Their most potent weapon was a retreat into their past and their culture, the heritage that they held so dear.⁷⁷

The Contours of the Nineteenth-Century Maritime World

Heritage stressed emotional responses over actuality. It mourned the passing of a preconceived golden age or the faded glories of days long past. If old-stock elites were to

⁷⁶ See Axelrod, *Colonial Revival in America*.

⁷⁷ See Joyce Appleby, *A Restless Past: History and the American Public* (Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 2005); Kendall R. Phillips, ed., *Framing Public Memory* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2004); and Gregory M. Pfitzer, *Picturing the Past: Illustrated Histories and the American Imagination, 1840-1900* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

insist that technological progress and a society becoming more plural were challenges to their core values, framing these changes as losses was a prerequisite to utilizing their heritage. And if they were going to define theirs as the one essential American heritage and use it as justification for cultural hegemony, the loss had to be cast as the demise of something grand. Americans had been steeped in maritime life and culture for centuries, so the decadence of American maritime power offered a potent vehicle for building such a heritage movement. However, an inconvenient fact was that the maritime world had become more important since the Revolutionary era.

Before the cultural shift of the Maritime Revival, Americans had a far different view of a maritime culture that was a common feature of daily life. During the five decades between the end of the War of 1812 and the beginning of the Civil War, the United States rose from obscurity on the world stage to a prominent place—second only to Great Britain—among the world’s commercial maritime powers.⁷⁸ The maritime world’s influence was encompassing; few Americans could remain oblivious to the contours of the seascapes surrounding them. Almost all segments of society were in some way connected to this world, and individuals were banally familiar with all things maritime that permeated their culture. The maritime world was also diverse. Some women played important roles ashore by tending to families and to businesses ashore while men were away at sea; other women followed their captain-husbands to sea.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 419-421.

⁷⁹ See Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women and the Whale Fishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000); David Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors’ Women: An Untold Maritime History* (New York: Random House, 2001); Martha Hodes, *The Sea Captain’s Wife: A True Story of Love, Race, and War in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, Norton, 2006).

African Americans comprised almost one-fifth of the maritime workforce before the Civil War.⁸⁰ These contours may have been impressive, far-reaching, innovative, and lucrative. What they were not, however, was anything other than ordinary. Few people paid maritime life any unusual attention.⁸¹

Maritime historians, for most of the twentieth century, held that the heyday of America's maritime commerce began an ascent after the War of 1812, peaked in the 1850s, and was destroyed by the so-called "flight from the flag" during the Civil War. This canonical view fostered a sense of loss and established an implied logic of value to the maritime experience. "America touched the zenith of her maritime achievements in 1855.... Her shipping was greater than ever before and relatively greater than at any time since" wrote Carl Cutler in 1930.⁸² American vessels were nearly as numerous as were Britain's, but larger, more efficient, and in better condition. Moreover, "no other nation shared so largely in the most desirable and profitable commerce of the world," according to Cutler. "Viewed superficially, it was the moment of America's maritime supremacy."⁸³ There is merit to Cutler's claim, but his assessment is too romantic. By the 1920s, when he was writing, decades of the Maritime Revival had colored Cutler's

⁸⁰ W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2.

⁸¹ Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*, with Vince Walsh, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 3.

⁸² Carl Cutler, *Greyhounds of the Sea: The Story of the American Clipper Ship* (New York: Halcyon, 1930), 307. See also, Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *The Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860* (New York: Scribner's, 1939); Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Square-Riggers on Schedule: The New York Sailing Packets to England, France, and the Cotton Ports* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1938); Robert Greenhalgh Albion, et al., *New England and the Sea* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1972); and Benjamin Labarree, et al., *America and the Sea: A Maritime History* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1998).

⁸³ Cutler, *Greyhounds of the Sea*, 307.

views. In fact, 1855 was the peak year only for sailing craft and sail power, the one area of the maritime world that was actually in decline. Whether considering vessel type (class) or activity (trade), the aggregate numbers of tonnage afloat, over a longer time scale, reveal a different trend.⁸⁴

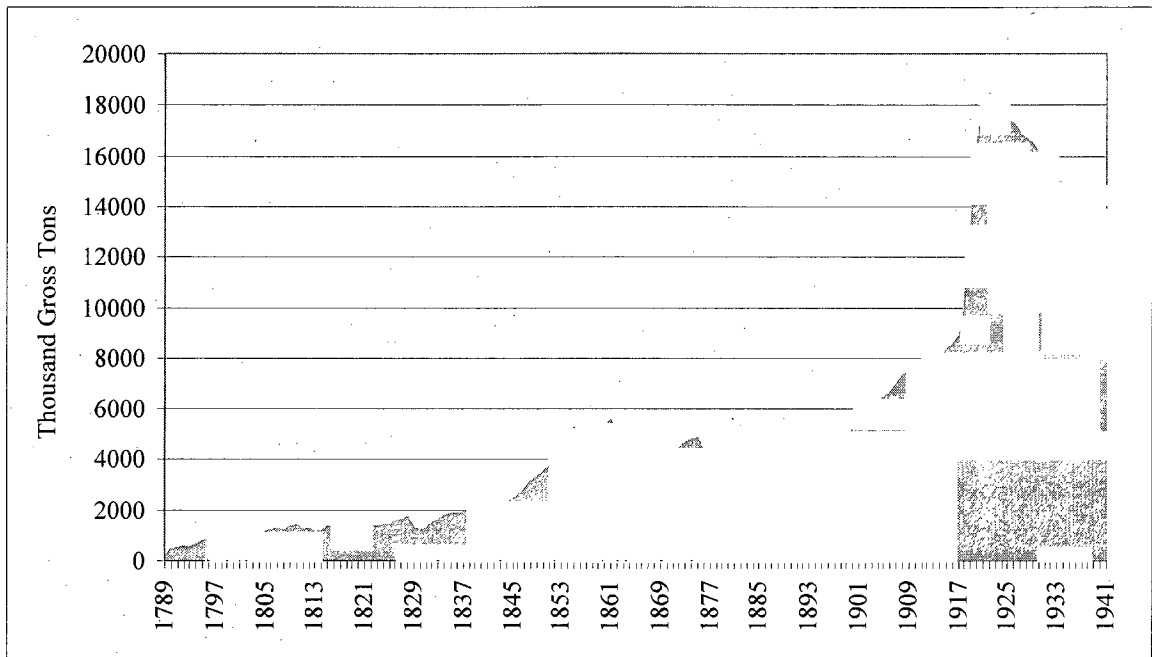


Figure 1.1: Total Merchant Vessel Tonnage, 1789-1941.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ "Table Df578-593 – Documented Merchant Vessels—Number and Tonnage, By Type of Vessel and Trade, 1789-1970," *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Millennial Edition Online, <http://hsus.cambridge.org/HSUSWeb/toc/hsusHome.do> (accessed 10 October 2006) (hereafter cited as Table Df578-593). These data were used to create the following graphs. The documentation process excluded vessels smaller than five tons. Coastal vessels of more than 20 tons were issued licenses, but sometimes smaller coasting vessels were issued licenses as well. Additionally, a plethora of other craft fell outside documentation parameters. Barges, scows, lighters, and canal boats operated exclusively in harbors, canals, rivers, or lakes, were also exempt from documentation procedures. Moreover, the Historical Statistics of the United States (HSUS) at times disagrees with figures in Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries and Public Policy*. A close examination of Hutchins' sources and HSUS sources reveals that the HSUS incorporates Hutchins' sources and additional sources. Therefore, I have accepted the figures in the database 60 years more recent. Additionally, Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar's, *Way of the Ship* relies on the HSUS figures on pages 422-425.

⁸⁵ Table Df578-593.

When viewed in depth rather than superficially, American maritime power afloat had been steadily increasing for centuries. (See figure 1.1: Total Merchant Vessel Tonnage, 1789-1941.) From the close of the War of 1812, documented tonnage of American sailing merchant vessels grew from 1,365 thousand tons in 1815; to 1,978 thousand tons in 1840; to 3,010 thousand tons by 1850. In 1855, which Cutler assigned as the peak year, the documented tonnage of American sailing merchant vessels was 4,442 thousand tons, but it was higher still in 1860 at 4,486 thousand tons. The actual statistical peak came in 1861, the first year of the Civil War, when tonnage hit 4,663 thousand tons. This was indeed a high point for American commercial sail, but sailing craft were hardly the only vessels afloat.

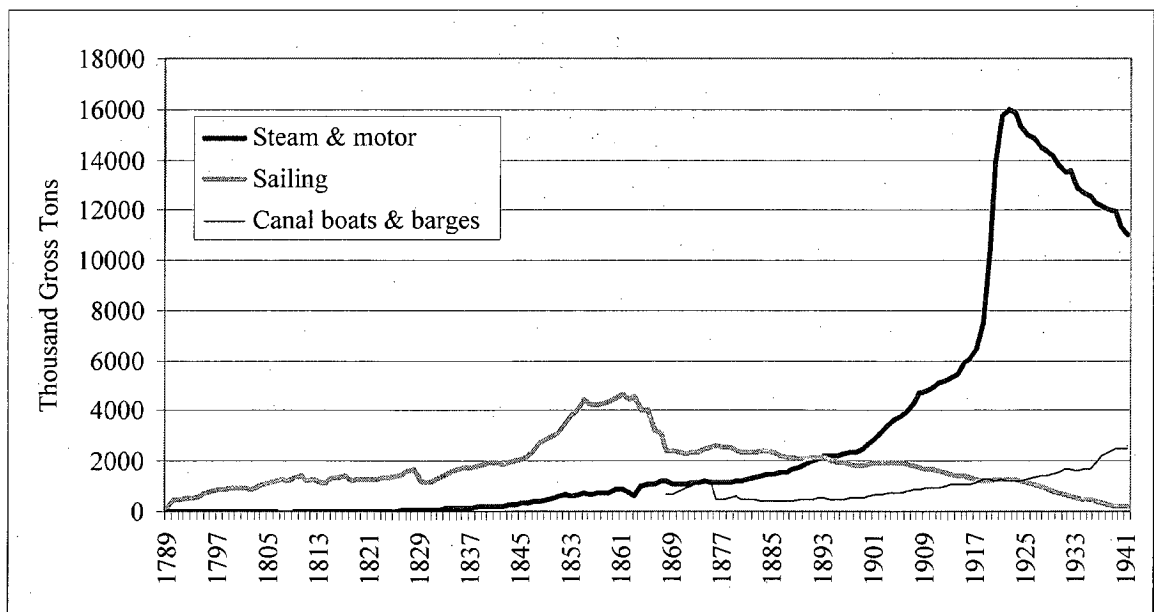


Figure 1.2a: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1789-1941.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Table Df578-593.

Steam and motor vessels, as well as river and canal boats, were all a part of the ubiquitous maritime experience. (See figure 1.2a: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1789-1941, and 1.2b: Proportions of Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1789-1941.) When considering everything afloat, instead of just sailing craft, the maritime world in the middle decades of the nineteenth century takes on a different contour. Sailing craft remained the largest class of vessels until 1893, but powered vessels were present, as well as river and canal boats, albeit late arrivals in terms of documentation. (See figure 1.3: Proportions of Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1850-1900.) Absent from the data until 1868, canal boats and barges, to say nothing of the myriad small vessels similarly absent, would further skew tonnage figures upward if completely documented. To ignore the existence of these other craft overlooks a significant part of the maritime experience-

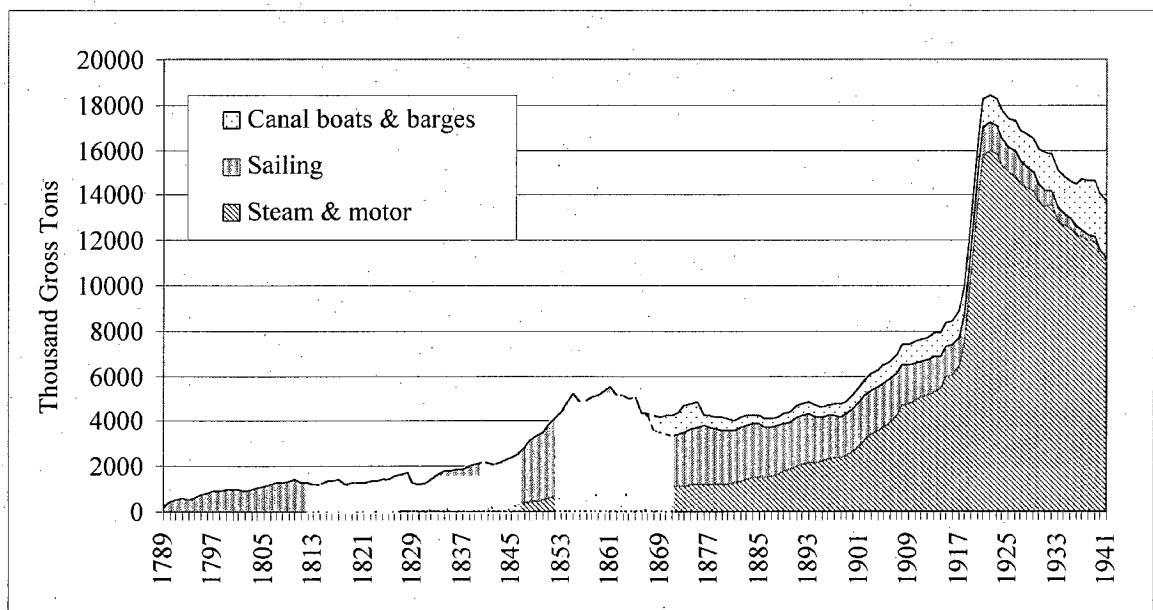


Figure 1.2b: Proportions of Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1789-1941.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Table Df578-593.

as-lived in nineteenth-century America. It also ignores the two classes (motor vessels and canal boats/barges) of vessels that were actually demonstrating growth after the war.

First, the combined tonnage of sailing vessels, powered vessels, and riparian traffic shows that, despite some fluctuation, American maritime power afloat was a story of overall growth. Second, the documentation parameters were stacked in favor of larger vessels, and, in the 1850s and 1860s, many of these happened to be sail-powered foreign trading vessels, well represented in the data. Third, the remaining smaller craft participating in other trades, even when considering holes in the data sets, were nevertheless represented in significant numbers. Complete documentation of these other

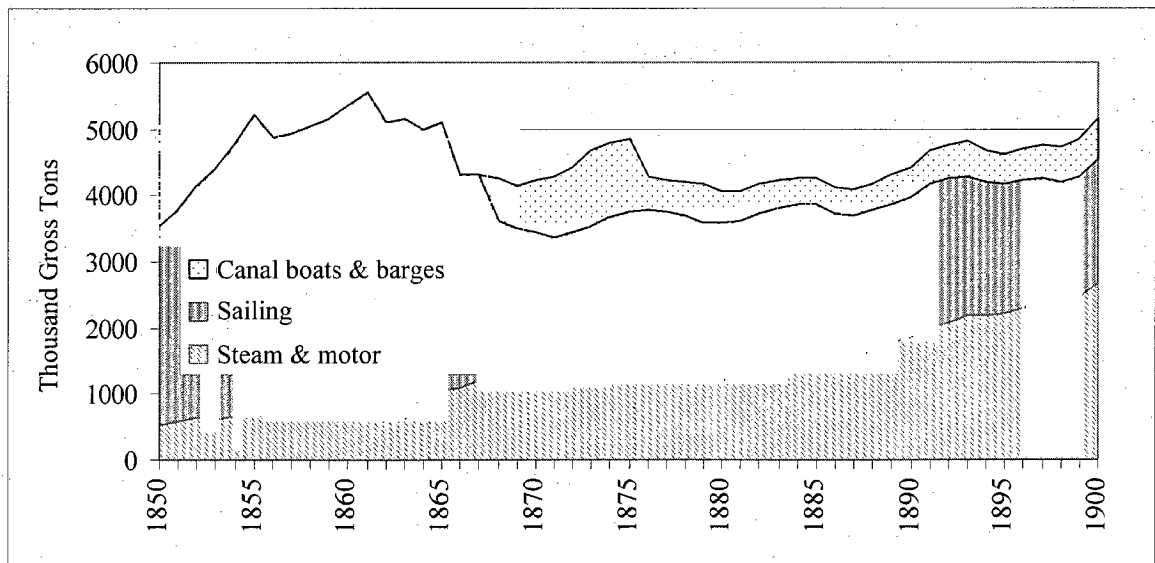


Figure 1.3: Proportions of Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1850-1900.⁸⁸

craft would only increase their representation in proportion to well-documented larger vessels.

⁸⁸ Table Df578-593.

Large sailing vessels were privileged by documentation parameters, and similarly, the activity they conducted was privileged as well. Maritime Revivalists held foreign trading superlative even though coastal and internal trading tonnage (with a few exceptions) surpassed foreign trade tonnage over both long and short terms. (See figure 1.4: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Trade, 1815-1941.)⁸⁹ Vessels engaged in the coasting

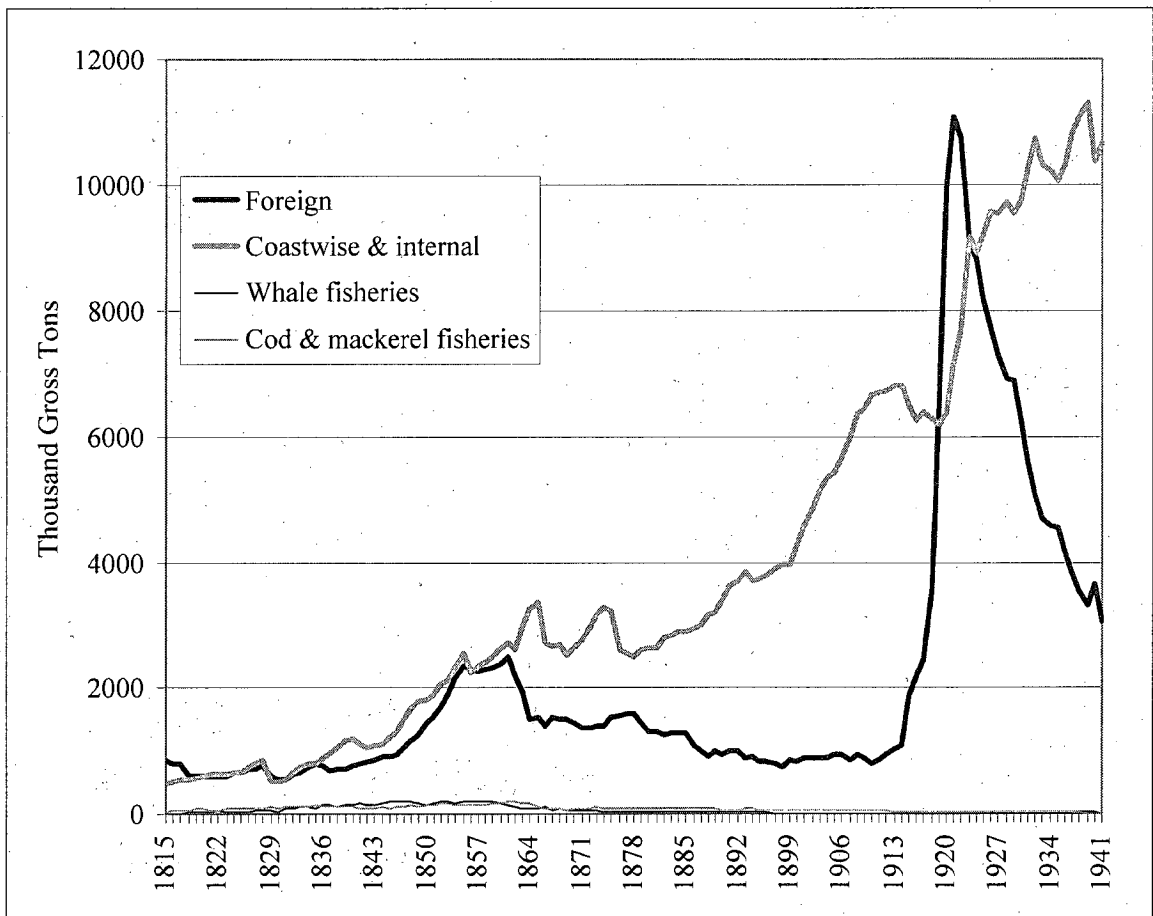


Figure 1.4: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Trade, 1815-1941.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Certainly, the statistics do not tell the entire story, and there were exceptions such as US-Canadian trade on Great Lakes schooners and East Coast-Caribbean schooner trading.

⁹⁰ Table Df578-593.

trade made up approximately half of the sailing tonnage afloat for much of the nineteenth century (circa 1815-1860), and even greater percentages during the last four decades of the nineteenth century. Given that the vessels involved were smaller, the tonnage numbers actually represent a greater number of individual vessels, yet these craft and this trade were, and have been until very recently, widely ignored.

Frederick Pease Harlow, writing at the height of the Maritime Revival in the late 1920s, provides evidence of the primacy assigned to foreign trading. When he first went to sea in 1875, he sailed on a square-rigger in the deepwater foreign trade on a voyage from Boston to Australia and the Far East. He then sailed on a second voyage aboard a coasting schooner, and completed his sea time on a square-rigger, trading in Barbados. However, he wrote, in his 1928 narrative, that, after a short trip on a lowly coasting schooner, a deepwater vessel had been his ultimate goal at sea. During the 50 years between his voyaging and his authorship, square-rigged, foreign trading vessels gained a steadily-increasing panache. As a result, Harlow changed the facts of his own experience when it came to telling a good story for public consumption.⁹¹

Since foreign-trading sailing vessels drew all the attention from Maritime Revivalists, they converted deepwater sailing on board square-rigged vessels into the entirety of the American maritime experience. They conveniently forgot many elements, among them the importance of the coasting trade. Since before the American Revolution, coasting generally involved a greater tonnage of vessels than did the foreign trade, and

⁹¹ This determination was made by comparing Frederick Pease Harlow, *The Making of a Sailor, or, Sea Life Aboard a Yankee Square-Rigger* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1928); to the sea journal of Frederick Pease Harlow, Harlow Family Papers, Collection 287, box 2, folder 7, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT.

coasting continued to grow after the Civil War. Also conveniently forgotten was the rising importance of steam and motor craft as sailing craft tonnage fell off. Finally, the anomaly of the 1850s high point came to define the entire story, again ignorant of tonnage figures remaining steady overall after the Civil War. An emphasis on one type of sailing vessel, one trade, and one way of life during an anomalous period—the twenty years of boom times inflated by clipper ship statistics—set the stage for disappointment and the beginning of a declension narrative. Since deepwater square-riggers garnered all the attention from Maritime Revivalists, all it would take was an incident of contraction to set their story in motion.

This contraction came during the Civil War. The war was a watershed, and it did lead to a loss of American shipping. Much loss resulted, either directly or indirectly, from Confederate commerce raiders that physically destroyed vessels and drove up insurance rates. These factors led to the so-called “flight from the flag.”⁹² During the course of the war, more than 1,600 northern commercial vessels, totaling 774,000 tons, transferred registry to foreign nations. While the vessels effectively became neutral traders and were cheaper to insure, protective cabotage laws prevented them from returning to American ownership at war’s end. The numbers are compelling: American vessels registered for foreign trade declined by 1 million tons, from 2.5 million tons just before the war to 1.5 million tons after it. During the course of the war, American shipping declined 45%, as registered tonnage shifted from being 15% higher than the

⁹² Labarree, *America and the Sea*, 354-355.

closest competition, Britain's, to lagging by 30% by the war's conclusion.⁹³ Moreover, American vessels made up 70% of the tonnage entering the United States in 1860; after the war this percentage dropped to 46%. Most significantly, when comparing financial value, 66% of America's foreign trade value was shipped on American carriers before the war; after the war less than 28% of foreign trade value moved on American vessels.⁹⁴ The war and its aftermath ushered in a huge contraction of the industry after two decades of impressive growth, and this contraction was the impetus for the narrative of decline.

Immersed in the mature Maritime Revival of the 1920s and 1930s, writers and historians alike could not avoid the spirit of their times, and they hung their work on a narrative of peaks and valleys. However, the canonical peak only works if one reads the data narrowly. First, to achieve the 1855 apex, one must ignore almost all craft other than sailing vessels, specifically those American sailing vessels involved in foreign trading. Second, while the data leave no doubt that the period from 1850 and 1870 did indeed see substantial increases in American tonnage for both sailing craft and other vessels, the gains and losses from 1850 to 1870 were a statistical blip. "The extraordinary boom [of the 1850s and 1860s] had been caused to a considerable degree," wrote economist John G.B. Hutchins in 1941, "by the extensive construction of ships for the California trade, and the severe depression in this business...was consequently a severe blow to the maritime interests."⁹⁵ Surging trade, especially peak cotton exports to Europe, added to the economic boom that generated the peaks of American foreign

⁹³ Albion, *New England and the Sea*, 161.

⁹⁴ Labarree, *America and the Sea*, 324.

⁹⁵ Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 316.

trading under sail until the crash. The actual statistical peak of nineteenth-century American commercial tonnage afloat—the total of sail, steam, and river and canal boats—actually came in 1861, which was also the peak year for sail-powered tonnage, not 1855.⁹⁶ After 1861, aggregate tonnage declined slightly, then stayed approximately level until a steady rise after 1900. However, sail power declined precipitously. It was easy for Maritime Revivalists to see boom times and sail power's apex as the entire story—especially since it served their cultural purposes. Moreover, it was even easier for them to ignore the coasting trade, internal waterways and canals, and powered vessels once they sentimentally decided that square-rigged sailing possessed greater cultural power based on speed records and economic prowess. Ultimately, though, the Maritime Revivalists were not number-crunchers, they were responding to the raw emotion of seafaring under sail and the inherent values they believed it possessed.

Cutler and other like-minded Maritime Revivalists also ignored the *long durée*. If no data points existed between 1850 and 1870, the lines on the graph would show steady nineteenth-century increases in commercial tonnage. But the data does exist, and concentrating solely on deepwater sailing indicates the zeitgeist of the mature Maritime Revival of the 1920s. In his writing, for example, Cutler focused on square-rigged clipper ships, and in his museum collecting, square-riggers were privileged as well. Thus Cutler was disappointed in a shipment of “small schooner models.” “What I am looking for is ship models. I have no objection to an occasional bark or brig if the models are good ones, but I would prefer ships exclusively, and preferably ships that were good

⁹⁶ Cutler arrived at the 1855 pinnacle by reflecting on the condition and efficiency of American foreign-trading square-riggers, as well as the value of the trade. When considering sailing craft specifically and total tonnage of all craft, 1861 is the statistical peak.

examples of shipbuilding.”⁹⁷ By considering only deepwater sailing craft, the canonical maritime historians largely ignored the myriad other craft afloat. Since shipping tonnages were higher than they had ever been in the 1850s and 1860s, it is easy to see why this twenty-year statistical blip lent itself to becoming the entirety of the story. From a shortsighted vantage point, and viewed through an exceptional lens that saw only sailing craft, a focus on this anomalous time period necessarily required the remainder of the story to be a narrative of decline, but this declension narrative holds true only if considering foreign-trading sailing craft.

There can be no denying that the Civil War precipitated a decline in the tonnage of American foreign-trading vessels, decline in the value of American foreign trade, decline in the number of American vessels carrying on foreign trading, and the overall loss of sailing craft. However, American shipping experienced a commensurate rise in steam and motor vessels. And while the loss of square-riggers was a blow to foreign trading, it was a boon—due to protective cabotage laws—to the coasting trade, which actually increased during and after the war. (See figure 1.5: Rise of Coasting as the Source of American Tonnage, 1815-1941.) Overall, American tonnage continued to increase, reaching high points around the time of the Great War. Following the data through into the 1940s reveals such a spectacular rise in American tonnage afloat—and not just warships—that it is impossible to graph without diminishing the chart’s scale to the point of irrelevance.

⁹⁷ Carl Cutler to J.A. Drinkwater, 12 December 1930, Carl Cutler Papers, Collection 100, box 1, folder 20, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (hereafter cited as Cutler papers, box and folder numbers). Underscore in original. Barks and brigs were also square-riggers.

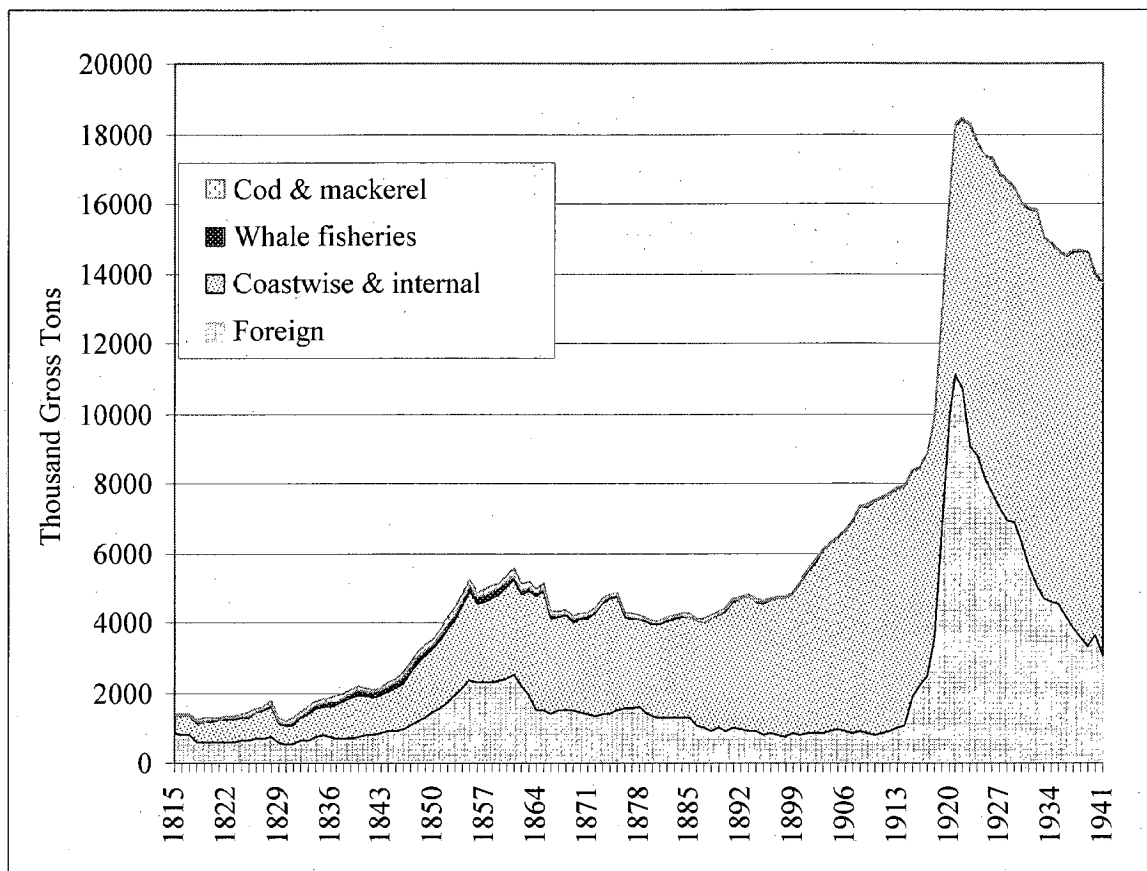


Figure 1.5: Rise of Coasting as the Source of American Tonnage, 1815-1941.⁹⁸

The only conclusion to be drawn is that American shipping was not really so retrograde after the Civil War. Common perceptions, in both contemporary and twentieth-century commentary, did not match the reality of the situation, which was that registered tonnage did fall off briefly, but recovered by the Centennial. The nature of American merchant shipping was simply changing. Neither sailing ships nor American foreign trading would retain primacy after the war. Other elements, though, filled the vacuum: steam and powered vessels replaced sail power, and coastal trading, river, and canal traffic supplanted foreign trade. (See Figures 1.6a: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by

⁹⁸ Table Df578-593.

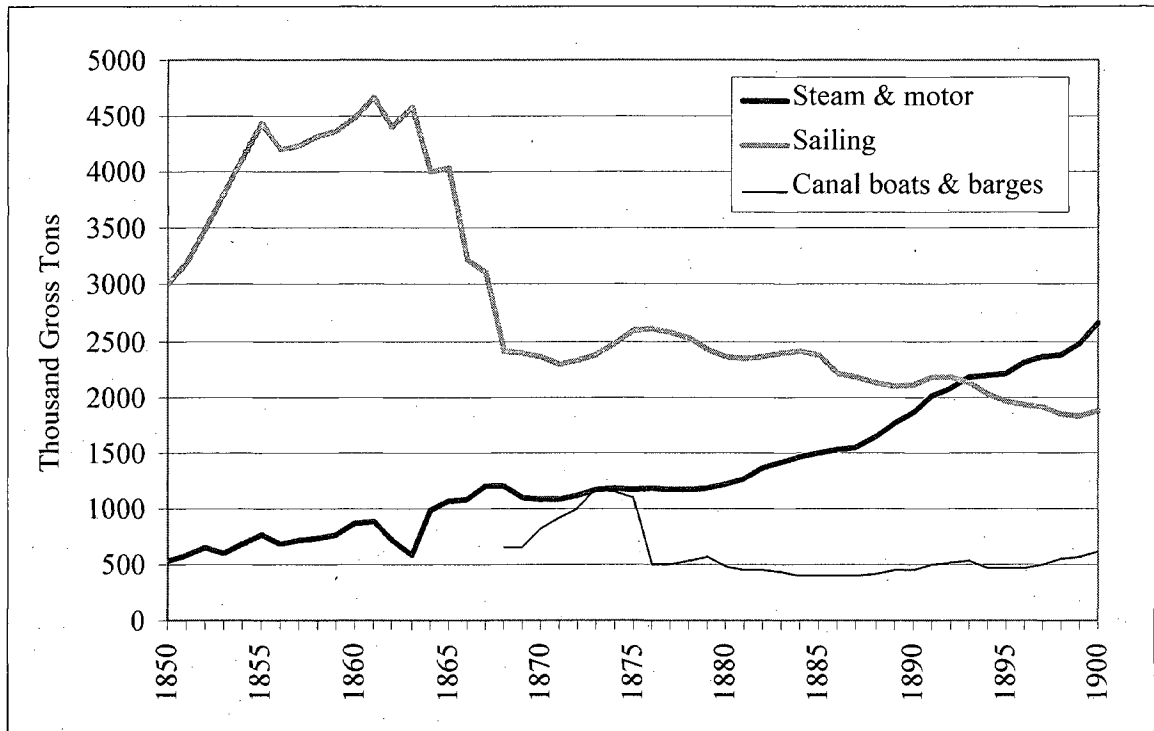


Figure 1.6a: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Class, 1850-1900.⁹⁹

Class, 1850-1900, and 1.6b: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Trade, 1850-1900.) A plethora of maritime activities continued to dot the land- and seascape of the United States. These growing segments of the maritime world could not be shoehorned into the declension model. This tonnage, however, was largely ignored as irrelevant to historical consciousness and the collective memory of Maritime Revivalists. Mostly remaining invisible, river, canal, and coastal trade, and iron, steel, steam, and diesel, did not fit into the heroic mold of exceptional square-rigged clipper ships boldly plying the deepwater foreign trade, but without some kind of loss, establishing cultural value through rarity would have been much more difficult. With cultural hegemony at stake, this particular

⁹⁹ Table Df578-593.

moment offered an opportune, if fictitious, chance to claim a loss and to establish its value in the minds of contemporary Americans.

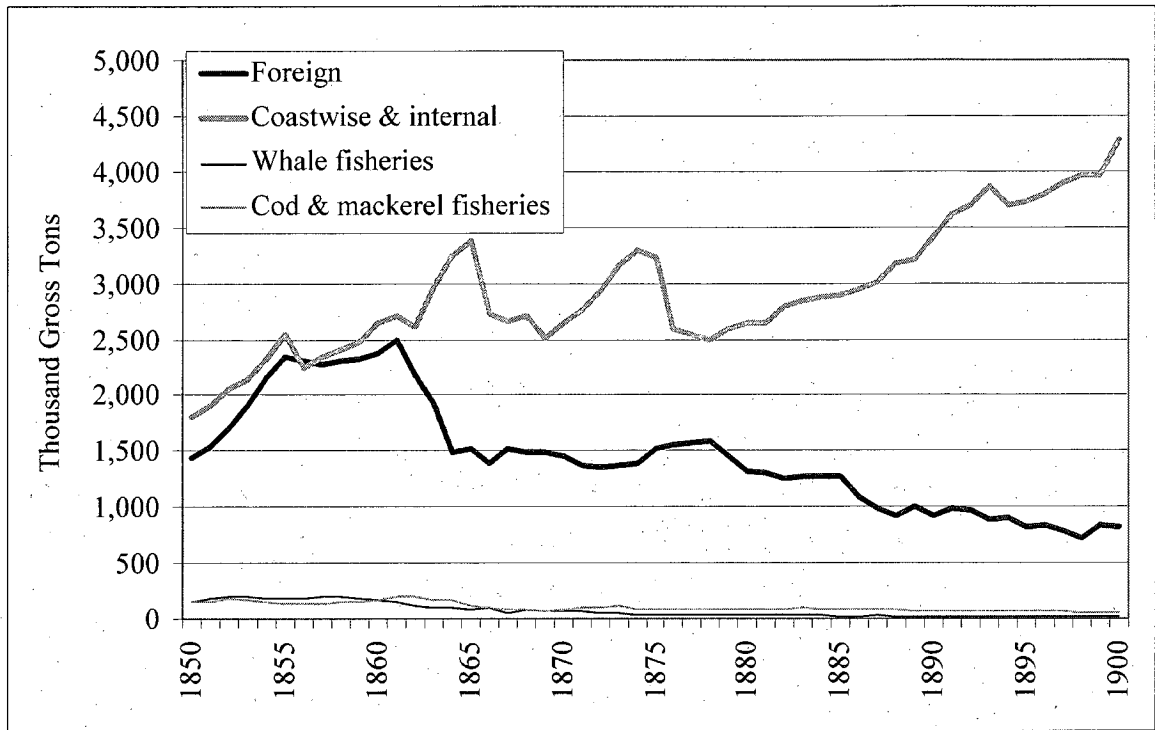


Figure 1.6b: Merchant Vessel Tonnage by Trade, 1850-1900.¹⁰⁰

As foreign trade declined after the Civil War, the more workaday coasting industry remained strong and continued to expand, although without the visibility of foreign trading, but coasting was an inadequate substitute for the more conspicuous sail powered foreign trade. A part of the equation was the latter's recently spectacular economic and technological growth.¹⁰¹ From this vantage point, highly publicized Civil War losses in this maritime sphere led to an outward perception that the decline was

¹⁰⁰ Table Df578-593.

¹⁰¹ On technological innovation, see Howard Chapelle, *The Search for Speed Under Sail, 1799-1855* (New York: Norton, 1967).

universal. Maritime Revivalists leaped upon this perception to build a powerful sense of loss in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. This skewed perspective cast a long shadow on the practice of maritime history for much of the twentieth century. The end result was that coasting, its sailors, vessels, and the destinations involved, were considered prosaic; square-riggers in the foreign trade were inspirational. Likewise, the growth of powered vessels was not perceived as growth in the correct maritime sphere. Shoveling coal or pumping diesel oil held none of the elegance of clean, wind power. Conveniently forgotten were the crimps, boarding house masters, driving captains, bucko mates, floggings and other corporal punishments, and the hard, dirty, dangerous work of seafaring under sail. The value of the square-rigged sailing experience was tied directly to its absence, and its loss and rarity fed the heritage movement. In short, while the brownwater industry—internal transportation on canals and rivers—that had existed in sizable volume since the colonial era maintained itself and grew in the absence of the more conspicuous foreign trade, culturally, it never achieved the prominence of the latter. “America is a brown-water nation, with a blue-water consciousness,” historians Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar have asserted in 2008.¹⁰²

The persistence of America’s deepwater mentality was a version of manifest destiny transferred shipboard. Economically, spatially, socially, and politically, features of mid-nineteenth century westward expansion, with all its corresponding contemporary superlatives, metaphors, and imagery, were also occurring afloat.¹⁰³ Deepwater square-

¹⁰² Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 1.

¹⁰³ See Theodore J. Karamanski, *Schooner Passage: Sailing Ships and the Lake Michigan Frontier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000); and John O. Jensen, “Great Lakes” in *The Oxford*

riggers were the most noticeable, if not the most numerous, vessels in the maritime world. They were the largest, fastest, most technologically advanced vessels of their era. Generally, they were the most highly decorated with ship carvings, possessing elaborate figureheads and stern and trail boards. The trade in which they were involved was among the most lucrative. At a time when lead type was set by hand, owners paid to produce lavish, four-color advertising cards to increase their business. Owners commissioned portraits of their vessels. Contemporary Americans paid close attention their newspapers' shipping news and to the speed records set by these ships, and often took great national pride in American ships competing with British and European vessels. Similar to the conquest of the continent, the rapid rise of American commercial dominance of the seas seemed preordained to Americans in the 1850s and 1860s—until Civil War losses challenged this idea of America's watery manifest destiny.

To recover American shipping's providential destiny, Maritime Revivalists created an imagined golden age when all ships had figureheads, all sailors were heroic, and all ships were foreign trading square-riggers. Nineteenth-century Americans paid attention to foreign-trading square-riggers because they were the best advertised, certainly the largest on the waterfront, and because the foreign trade, by its very nature, instilled a sense of international competition among nations.¹⁰⁴ However, justifiable attention and single-mindedness are two different orientations. Americans living before

Encyclopedia of Maritime History, vol. II, John B. Hattendorf, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 105-111.

¹⁰⁴ See Georgia W. Hamilton, *Silent Pilots: Figureheads in Mystic Seaport Museum* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1984); Carl Cutler, *Greyhounds of the Sea*, Basil Lubbock, *The Romance of Clipper Ships* (London: Peter Blue, 1938); and Albert F. Blaisdell and Francis K. Ball, *Heroic Deeds of American Sailors* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1915).

the Civil War had recognized that these vessels did not occupy the entirety of maritime culture.

By contrast, Maritime Revivalists anointed deepwater square-riggers with singular status. Unlike domestic trade, foreign trading made square-riggers the objects of an international competitiveness, and patriotic sentiment tied their successes to America's success. Their mid-century expansion and subsequent visibility placed them in the public eye. Most importantly, though, deepwater square-riggers were the vessels involved in the one segment of the maritime world that was actually declining in the late 1860s and 1870s, and their loss fostered a sense of value through rarity. By preaching a gospel of declension that emphasized great vessels, speed under sail, and America's economic prowess, Maritime Revivalists smoothed over the variations of the nineteenth-century maritime experience, helping to maintain a seafaring mentality long after the reality of the experience-as-lived had moved beyond deepwater square-riggers. Holding on to this imagined past helped to ease the dislocation and change in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.

Antimodernism Afloat

In 2003, a British Airways Concorde made its final flight from London's Heathrow Airport, around the Bay of Biscay, and landed in Bristol, England. Upon its landing, Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, called the supersonic aircraft an "icon of the 20th century," but added "Today is one of the saddest in aviation history but at the same

time, it's a day to reflect on the glory of what the UK can achieve."¹⁰⁵ Clearly, his lament for the end of an era and the high point of a nation's aviation achievement carried intense cultural baggage. Nevertheless, despite the demise of the Concorde, the millions of other airline pilots, flight attendants, air traffic controllers, and airline passengers saw no decline in boarding lines, numbers of flights, and airport congestion. Similarly, the conspicuous loss of square-rigged, foreign trading vessels did not accurately reflect the entirety of the maritime world. The changing nature of the tonnage—new vessel types, new power sources, and new trades—led to lifestyle changes that stoked the narrative of decline. Steam power reflected industrialization afloat, and, as with industrialization on land, the antimodernist reaction was strong.

Preindustrial work was more closely tied to the rhythms of the natural world. Farmers' days and growing seasons revolved around the sunlight and darkness; sailors' lives relied on the vicissitudes of wind and water. Ignoring the elements could mean death by starvation for landmen, and death by drowning for sailors. Steam power brought industrial work to sea, and with it, greater command of the elements. Also, steam helped to decrease the natural perils of seafaring, at the cost of a commensurate rise in the danger from the machinery. Trading one peril for another, shipboard life began to look like any other unskilled labor where machine was more important than man. Some commentators recognized a decrease in the seamanship and work ethic demanded by preindustrial sailing.

¹⁰⁵ BBC News, "Last Concorde Lands: The last Concorde has landed at its new home—the Bristol airfield where it was built," November 27, 2003, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/bristol/somerset/3238674.stm (accessed March 20, 2008).

Fred Harlow described his experience with this work ethic in 1876 aboard the ship *Akbar*. “Whatever you were called, there was no mistaking the idea that you were wanted on deck with all speed possible,” Harlow wrote in 1928. “The last man out or the last man at a pull on the braces; if the habit continued, was usually reminded of the fact in no gentle tones. Consequently we all had a certain pride in our work and adopted the motto, ‘Be the first to answer a call and see that you get there.’”¹⁰⁶ Admittedly, Harlow’s narrative was written firmly within the zeitgeist of the mature Maritime Revival, but even so, a life steeped in maritime culture gave him some point of comparison between pre- and post-Revival attitudes. On his vessel in the 1870s, the crew jumped to their orders. Walking the docks of Seattle in the 1890s, he watched as the mate of the ship *Spartan* gave an order, only to be met with stony silence and a look of inconvenience. “There was no hearty response of an ‘Aye, aye, sir!’, but instead, the sailor looked at the mate, as much as to say, ‘How do you expect me to get up there?’ and the looking aloft he surveyed the situation, without a reply, and took his good old time clearing the brace. I walked away in disgust, glad that I had given up the sea as a means of living.”¹⁰⁷

Whether on land or at sea, the real changes that confronted late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Americans were the challenges to older, preindustrial lifestyles. “The good old times fealing [sic] is gorn [gone],” wrote W.H. Taylor, and the loss of the old ways was detrimental to such a young nation. “The country is far two [sic] yong [sic] to get into its founddation [sic] any loos [loose] stones,” he wrote. Taylor believed that there was a real threat to the nation’s very existence: “The peopel [sic] must remember

¹⁰⁶ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 136.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

Rome fel [sic] by her pride and extravence [extravagance] and Rome stood for a thousand years.” Like many before him, Taylor offered a solution, and it involved reviving the way things used to be. “Now the peopel [sic] must get out thir [their] fife and drum,” he exhorted, “and put the old life and love of country as in your grandfarthers [sic] days.”¹⁰⁸ For Taylor, the danger lay in diluting what he thought was an essential American culture, and along with it, a work ethic and patriotic love of country. Without these, the United States would go the way of Rome in one-tenth the time. His solution was reviving the values of the Revolutionary generation.

The loss of America’s deepwater trade was only an overt symptom seized by Maritime Revivalists. Their larger concern was the loss of the sailing lifestyle—replete with its newly-elevated cultural symbolism. Frederick Pease Harlow, in his role as ethnomusicologist, described the use of shipboard work songs: “The ‘Badian negro’ did not sing them for poetic meaning. Far from it,” he wrote in his unpublished 1948 memoir. “These songs were sung in heavy work, where accented action was needed for a strong pull all together with marked time.” But his sense of loss was palpable: “I doubt if the modern sailor of today can see any sense in a chanty [sic]. The sailing days are gone forever.”¹⁰⁹ Harlow, like Taylor, considered music a central piece of revival culture. Taylor referenced fife and drum to invoke memories of life during the American Revolution and Civil War. Harlow thought sea chanteys an important piece of maritime culture so much so that he included them in his 1928 narrative *The Making of a Sailor*

¹⁰⁸ Taylor, “Narragansett Pier,” 35-36, folder 38.

¹⁰⁹ Typescript, Frederick Pease Harlow, memoir, n.d. [1948?], 106, (hereafter cited as Harlow, memoir). Photocopy in possession of the author and deposited at the G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT.

and wrote a complete, stand-alone book of sea music.¹¹⁰ He considered the disappearance of work songs as one more example of the passing of a way of life aboard ship.

The transition to steam after the Civil War was “destructive of an old way of life,” according to Edward Sloan in 1981. “Steam was a destroyer, not just of ships and men on occasions, but of a longer and honored tradition of human enterprise.”¹¹¹ Sloan has identified many ambiguities that developed alongside steam power, not the least of which was a radical reorganization of American seafaring after the Civil War. Sloan has written: “American seafaring in this period is not noted for progressive achievement nor for its winners. For these, one must turn to the celebrated exploits of pre-Civil War maritime America.”¹¹² Sailors’ maritime culture was in flux; steam power created new circumstances that meant uncomfortable changes for seamen and resentment among officers. Steam, according to Sloan, challenged everything from “a sailor’s self respect,” to command structures, to the duration of voyages, and to reliance on capricious natural forces for propulsion and course direction. Many sailors and officers refused to learn the new technology, and for those who did, steam was at best ambiguous for them and their profession.¹¹³ However, steam power was hardly the only change; Gilded Age mariners

¹¹⁰ See Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*; and Frederick Pease Harlow, *Chanteying Aboard American Ships* (Barre, MA: Barre Gazette, 1962). Although completed in the 1920s, *Chanteying Aboard American Ships* was published posthumously.

¹¹¹ Edward W. Sloan, “Vulcan Now Rides in Neptune’s Barge”: Steam Propulsion and Seafaring Enterprise in Post-Civil War America,” in *American Industrialization, Economic Expansion, and the Law*, Joseph R. Frese and Jacob Judd, eds. (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981), 56.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 56.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 57-60.

had to contend with bigger, multi-masted schooners, steel hulled vessels, tugs and barges competing for labor and space on the water, wire rope replacing natural fiber, and a new business model that focused on growing synergies between the railroads and shipping lines.¹¹⁴ Like so many canonical maritime historians, the ideas of the Maritime Revival unconsciously pepper Sloan's writing. Not only did his concentration on steam cause him to ignore the considerable changes elsewhere in the maritime world, it also caused him to ignore the actual numbers of continuously-increasing registered tonnage when adding steam and motor powered vessels into the mix.

A style of life, rather than a trade or method of propulsion, was the true victim of the conversion from sail to steam power. In fact, the arrival of marine steam power in significant quantity represented growth and progress in maritime spheres. Steam, iron, and coal had shifted economic concentrations on land away from farms and towards an industrial economy. Similarly, steam transformed the maritime world by replacing sailing vessels in marine commerce. Sailing tonnage had declined in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, but, in the same three decades, steam and motor vessels increased almost threefold, with the upward trend continuing and increasing substantially after the turn of the twentieth century. However, the real issue was anti-technological; steam power resulted in changes to a shipboard culture and lifestyle at sea that had remained largely unchanged for centuries. Similar to the loss of rural life and farming for city life and work, the sense of loss driven by steam power was the loss of a preindustrial lifestyle, with similar antimodernist responses.

¹¹⁴ Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 199-204.

Fred Harlow, who sailed in the 1870s, compared his own experience under sail to more modern steam seamanship. Years after he had left the sea, Harlow attempted to correct a building contractor who was incorrectly rigging a block and tackle. “As a boy,” he wrote, “my first lesson aboard ship was to coil a rope and reeve a tackle correctly, and I bet with him [the contractor] the drinks that any ship in the harbor would substantiate my argument.” They agreed to go to the harbor to the nearest ship. “She was not a square-rigger,” he wrote “but [was] the steamer *Valencia*, which I said would answer the question just as well.” Harlow and the contractor saw six lifeboats hanging from two block-and-tackle per boat. Harlow found “Out of the six boats, on the side, there were only two tackles rove correctly. Two, out of twelve. Think of it!”¹¹⁵ Chagrined, Harlow had to buy the drinks that day.

“Oh you sailors of to-day!” he lamented. “There is no incentive for you to improve in your work. No goal to reach. The same is true with the apprentices in most of the other trades. You learn your trade by skimping through—pay your dollar dues and are called skilled workmen before your eyeteeth are cut....How does the journeyman of to-day compare with the journeymen of forty years ago? There is no comparison! And the same can be said of the sailors.”¹¹⁶ Ever the antimodernist, Harlow was as irked by the work ethic ashore as he was afloat. But clearly, the modern lifestyle and work ethic crossed the land-sea line. The arrival of steam at sea had the same ill effects on seamanship as it had on the work ethic of the shoreside trades. Worse still, steam and

¹¹⁵ Harlow, *The Making of a Sailor*, 137.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

industrialization afloat converted a preindustrial job that had once been the purview of Yankee ingenuity and pride into just another factory job.

The Evolution of the Maritime Revival

Fred Harlow, Carl Cutler, and Ted Sloan represent the incipient, mature, and post-Maritime Revival sensibilities. Each was influenced by this cultural phenomenon, and, like many others of their respective generations, their views were not unique. They thought the portions of the maritime past worth remembering were made up of wooden square-rigged, deepwater vessels, not coasters, iron hulls, or steam power. Technology was a convenient bogeyman for the increasing discomfort of Anglo-American culture in a modernizing United States. As seafaring adapted to technological change, not everyone accepted these changes as progress. Yet, despite the best efforts of the Maritime Revival or those writing in its wake, there was indeed a progressive story to be told, though, its players were not the celebrated heroes of pre Civil-War American ships and sailors. The problem was that telling a fact-driven, progressive maritime story required acceptance of a pluralism afloat that few elites would countenance on land. Tales of progress would not herald a past golden era, nor serve as an educational tool, and without some sense of rarity, it would be difficult to commodify and to sell—for either cash or intellectual capital—to a mass culture. Following the law of supply and demand, scarcity helped to create value, and white Anglo elites used the loss of a golden age to create a rarified maritime experience. This was sound logic, as well as a calculated use of their cultural power. Successfully substituting their created image for something that remained ubiquitous in American life was a cultural coup.

Iron and steam technologies had created a new and modern maritime world, but the gap between the contemporary maritime world and the world the Maritime Revivalists remembered grew wider with each subsequent decade. Both the Spanish-American War and the Great War were fought using naval technologies far advanced from a generation or two past.¹¹⁷ Over time, these memories became more a caricature than a portrait, with some features exaggerated, others distorted, and still others reduced to impotence. By the mature Maritime Revival of the 1920s, industrialized shipbuilding and waterfronts defined the contemporary maritime sphere of the United States.¹¹⁸ Alongside this modern maritime world, upper-class Americans specifically chose ideas and imagery for their emotional appeal, heroic or archetypal status, or perceived expression of core American values. After setting the standards of taste, elites commodified and packaged the selected elements for mass-market appeal.¹¹⁹ Old-stock Americans used new media outlets and mass culture to bring the Maritime Revival to a larger audience, one well prepared by centuries of maritime traditions. Despite lacking any personal or family connection, Americans who had once been excluded by the

¹¹⁷ See Jak P. Mallmann Showell, *The U-Boat Century: German Submarine Warfare, 1906-2006* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006); Jeffery Dorwart and Jean K. Wolf, *The Philadelphia Navy Yard: From the Birth of the U.S. Navy to the Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); George W. Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994); Robert A. Hart, *The Great White Fleet: Its Voyage Around the World, 1907-1909* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1965).

¹¹⁸ See Thomas R. Heinrich *Ships for the Seven Seas: Philadelphia Shipbuilding in the Age of Industrial Capitalism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); and David B. Tyler, *The American Clyde: A History of Iron and Steel Shipbuilding on the Delaware from 1840 to World War I* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1958).

¹¹⁹ See Peter Conolly-Smith, *Translating America: An Immigrant Press Visualizes America Popular Culture, 1895-1918* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 2004); Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origins of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (1899; repr., New York: MacMillan, 1912).

Maritime Revival embraced what was advertised as their common American heritage.¹²⁰ For the price of popular culture ranging from Currier and Ives ship lithographs and seafaring narratives to movie, world's fair, and museum admission tickets, they could interact with the agreed-upon maritime conventions and join in the enthusiasm for things maritime. Elite conspicuous consumption and middle- and working-class imitation brought the Maritime Revival to many social groups. Values were still being passed on, but instead of using maritime imagery to exclude immigrants and the working class, they were now being invited to join the club—for a small fee.

As the older world of wind-powered commerce waned, a preindustrial way of life and skill set began to disappear along with it. The changes brought about by steam and mechanization in maritime labor were typical of similar changes on land. Rapid industrialization displaced skilled laborers and an agrarian lifestyle. Minorities and immigrants increasingly populated a labor force that had once been the purview of old-stock eastern families.¹²¹ American attentions could not substitute more mundane considerations of coasting, canal, and river craft, or iron, steel, and steam technologies for

¹²⁰ See Hanno Hardt, *In the Company of Media: Cultural Constructions of Communications, 1920s-1930s* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000); Wiley Lee Umphlett, *The Visual Focus of American Media Culture in the Twentieth Century, the Modern Era, 1893-1945* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2004); David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Thomas C. Leonard, *News for All: America's Coming-of-Age with the Press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and Robert Sobel, *The Manipulators: America in the Media Age* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1976).

¹²¹ See Robert Sobel, *The Age of Giant Corporations: A Microeconomic History of American Business, 1914-1992* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993); Thomas Muller, *Immigrants and the City* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); Joseph M. Perry, *The Impact of Immigration on Three American Industries, 1865-1914* (New York: Arno Press, 1978); Peter Jensen Hill, *The Economic Impact of Immigration into the United States* (New York: Arno Press, 1975); and Stanley Lebergott, *Manpower in Economic Growth: The American Record Since 1880* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964).

past attention-grabbing headlines of naval victories and speedy clipper ships.¹²²

Americans substituted a contrived marine world in place of the one that had existed for most of the nineteenth century. Without the lenses of nostalgia, romanticism, and the vicissitudes of historical memory, all of which were informed by the Maritime Revival, a narrative of decline belongs more in the realm of fiction than historical fact.¹²³ Yet, perceptions of decline had an enormous amount of cultural power at the end of the nineteenth century and images of a lost way of life fit nicely into a kind of oceanic pastoralism. Championing halcyon days long past provided an influential narrative in old-stock American culture, one that offered a means to retain influence in a changing United States.

However uneasy New Hampshire Historical Society President Daniel C. Roberts may have been regarding the success of educating the immigrants through cultural hegemony, many others thought it a valuable method. Pieces of material and intellectual culture could instill essential values and prop up a way of life that was changing. Books and advertising, public exhibitions and museums, mass culture from movies to clothing, and shipping out late in the age of sail were all ways in which the maritime experience—once cleaned up and heroicized—could be spread through American culture. The elites of American society (Lawrence Levine's arbiters of culture) helped to determine cultural trends and to create a popular image of things maritime. This image was then diffused—

¹²² See Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries* and Carl Cutler, *Five Hundred Sailing Records of American Built Ships* (Mystic, CT: Marine Historical Association, 1952); Frederick William Wallace, *Under Sail in the Last of the Clippers* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat and Company, 1936); and Mary Matthews Bray, *A Sea Trip in Clipper Ship Days* (Boston: Gorham Press, 1920).

¹²³ See Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*.

sometimes through ideas, other times sold through media outlets—throughout American culture, effectively replacing the actual experiences of fifty or more years past. By divorcing image from reality, a fairly small number of eastern elites succeeded in redefining the meaning of the American maritime experience. They took a dirty, diverse, and working-class experience and co-opted it for their own social class. They converted it into an upper-class endeavor, and sought to emulate their ancestors through yachting and pleasure boating. “That the spirit of our sea-loving ancestors still lives in our young men and women,” asserted the Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, “may best be judged by viewing the regattas which take place throughout the summer months off our shores.”¹²⁴ Once the upper class had co-opted a working-class experience and built a sanitized version of the past, they set about selling it to the whole of an amenable American society through cultural institutions and popular culture. Of course, these eastern elites had assistance. Americans were already familiar with the maritime experience-as-lived, and this had prepared them to receive the messages of the Maritime Revival. Ironically, some consumers of this new vision were the very working classes and immigrants whose ancestors had participated in the past maritime world. Other consumers’ only experience with things maritime was the immigrant ship upon which they arrived. Either way, what began as a top-down attempt to impose cultural hegemony via imagined traditions was transformed into a piece of popular culture through mass media, albeit one that bore almost no relation to what actually went on among merchant vessels, warships, schooners, and canal boats of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

¹²⁴ Massachusetts Special Commission on the Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Founding of Mass. Bay Colony, compiled by the Marine Committee, *Massachusetts on the Sea, 1630-1930* (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, 1930), front endpaper.

Like the Colonial Revival, the Maritime Revival helped soften the dislocating effects of a changing United States. “Old American families thought of it as the style of their ancestors,” William Rhoads has written of the Colonial Revival, “while some immigrants approached it to become better Americans.”¹²⁵ Both to combat cultural change and to help pass on core American values to the groups causing the change, Maritime Revivalists looked backwards to create a usable past out of a vision of their own heritage.

¹²⁵ Rhoads, *Colonial Revival*, 551.

CHAPTER II

CRAZY TO GO TO SEA: MODERNITY AND ANTIMODERNITY ON THE WATER

In October 1929, 22-year-old Stan Hugill signed on board the British bark *Garthpool* for a voyage to Australia. Hugill sang sea chanteys, work songs intended to coordinate a crew's efforts while they performed shipboard tasks. In the 1850s, chanteys allowed shorthanded crews to use their collective strength efficiently. By 1929, Hugill's expertise in coordinating shipboard activities through song was invaluable to the *Garthpool's* crew, but in reality, the heyday of the singing sailor was at least six decades past. Hugill, though, noticed that his shipmates constantly asked him to recreate the practices of past sailors. "All our young crew," noted Hugill, "are very interested in these chanties and want to learn them as speedily as they can, and I'm getting quite hoarse repeating the various versions to...these embryo chantymen...They all feel as though they want to do this voyage in real old clipper-ship style." The enthusiastic crew's desire to recreate past customs extended beyond music. The sailors asked the vessel's sailmaker to build them a canvas horse to enact seafaring's equivalent of a mortgage-burning party—a "Dead Horse" ceremony—at the end of their period of indebtedness to the ship. Despite his shipmates' enthusiasm, Hugill quickly noted that the dead horse ceremony was "a custom that has long since fallen into disuse."¹ The crew's desire to make their

¹ Stan J. Hugill, "The Last Voyage of the *Garthpool*: Britain's Last Square-rigger," *Sea Breezes* 8, no. 124 (March 1930): 105-106.

1929 voyage in the fashion of 1850s clipper ship sailors reflected their cultural perception of a past golden age of sailing ships. Many of these 1920s sailors who signed on board the remaining square-riggers were looking for an adventure, but they also realized that they were witnessing the twilight of commercial square-rigged sailing by the late 1920s and they needed to undertake this authentic experience before it disappeared.² Anything they could do to provide some continuity with past mariners was fair game, and Hugill was only happy to oblige his shipmates.

Seafaring's meaning to post-Civil War American sailors depended upon their perspective, their reason for shipping out, and their social class. Forward-looking people of all social classes found ways to engage with waterborne life in the 1880s and 1890s. In a modernizing world, commercial opportunities coexisted with newer recreational activities. Increasingly, both men and women took to the water for pleasurable activities, from swimming, to small boat handling, to yachting.³ Seafaring as employment also remained important in the last third of the nineteenth century. A man could find work in an ever-modernizing steam and diesel fleet, join the iron and steel-hulled Navy, or receive training at a nautical school.⁴ The labor force responded to changing

² Similarly, baby boomers hopped freight trains and hitchhiked around the United States mimicking Woody Guthrie and other Depression-era drifters, and the children of baby boomers followed the Grateful Dead into the 1990s. Both groups sought out these avenues for adventure before each opportunity passed from the scene.

³ See Ed Holm, *Yachting's Golden Age, 1880-1905* (New York: Knopf, 1999); William Picard Stephens, *Traditions and Memories of American Yachting* (Camden, ME: International Marine Publishing Company, 1981); Douglas H.C. Phillips-Birt, *The History of Yachting* (New York: Stein and Day, 1974); Winifield M. Thompson and Thomas W. Lawson, *The Lawson History of the America's Cup: A Record of Fifty Years* (Boston, 1902); James Tigner, *Yesterday on the Chesapeake Bay* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 2007); H. Christopher Martin, *Virginia Crew, 1877-1997* (Charlottesville: Rivanna Press, 1998); and Atwood Manley, *Rushton and His Times in American Canoeing*. With Paul F. Jamieson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1968).

technologies. Beginning in the 1840s, growing substantially after the Civil War, and again expanding in the 1880s and 1890s, steam vessels challenged sail power, especially on shorter routes where coaling stations existed. Square-rigged sailing vessels grew larger to compete and remained important into the twentieth century because, as the saying goes, air is free. With lower overhead, these vessels emerged as long-distance bulk carriers, sailing fewer voyages over longer routes.⁵ Increased competition and falling rates led to declining labor conditions on board, with corresponding decline in the quality of crews on square-rigged vessels.⁶ Sailing vessels may have benefited from economies of scale in the bulk carrying trades, but fewer men looked to square-rigged vessels for long-term employment, as modernity obliged them to build seafaring careers upon steam-and diesel-powered vessels. Seafaring under sail grew antiquated, and quality—of cargo, ship, crew, and officers—transferred to modern vessels.

Sailing's decline made the experience rougher, the voyages longer, and the lifestyle increasingly alien to modern Americans by the turn of the twentieth century. Conversely, for Americans with antimodern inclinations, attachment to the sail experience became something akin to pastoralism on land, with its meaning redefined in

⁴ See Lewis R. Fischer and Even Lange, *International Merchant Shipping in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: The Comparative Dimension* (St. John's, NL: International Maritime Economic History Association, 2008); Jennifer Speelman, "Nautical Schools and the Development of Maritime Professionals, 1874-1941 (New York City, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts)" (PhD diss., Temple University, 2001); Donald L. Canney, *The Old Steam Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990); Harold G. Bowen, *100 Years of Steam in the United States Navy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1937); John H. Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation* (New York: William F. Sametz and Company, 1908); and E. N. Dickerson, *The Steam Navy of the United States: Its Past, Present, and Future* (New York, J.A. Gray, 1863).

⁵ See Howard I. Chapelle, *American Sailing Craft* (New York: Kennedy Brothers, 1936); and Basil Lubbock, *The Down Easters: American Deep-Water Sailing Ships, 1869-1929* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat Company, 1929).

⁶ John G. B. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy, 1789-1914* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), 372-376, 426-430.

terms of a heroic narrative. If the men who shipped out before the Civil War did so solely for employment, those sailing after the war had more complicated motivations. As modern maritime endeavor made sailing less effective as a career path, a new breed of sailor emerged. Some were nostalgic, trying to experience the last gasps of commercial sail before it disappeared forever. Others sought spiritual solace in an intensely authentic experience juxtaposed against industrialized mass culture. Some men responded to family folklore and its traditions, attempting to reconnect with family pasts. Others were looking for adventure at a time when adventure took on patriotic significance during America imperialism in the 1890s. Still others sought to redefine themselves by leading a primitive, preindustrial, and strenuous lifestyle as standards of masculinity changed and modern society seemed guilty of softening American manhood. In so doing, these men stepped outside their social class and took up working-class traditions by embracing an increasingly antiquated technology and its customs. Participating in this oceanic pastoral helped middle- and upper-class men adjust to the complexities of modern life.⁷

Whether seeking employment or an authentic antimodern adventure, family history and proximity to the coast were signal factors influencing middle class young men to go to sea in any era. “What sailors shared in common, more than any other feature,” historian Daniel Vickers has written of seventeenth and eighteenth century

⁷ T.J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 1981), 57-58. Lears identified class as a significant element of the antimodernist impulse. “Older WASP elites” were his “dramatis personae” whose resilience over time “required the maintenance of cultural hegemony.” (xvi). See also Simon J. Bronner, “Introduction,” in *Manly Traditions: The Folk Roots of American Masculinities*, Simon J. Bronner, ed., (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), xi-xxv; Martin Green, *The Great American Adventure* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); and Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). For more on pastoralism, see Sarah Burns, *Pastoral Inventions: Rural Life in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

sailors, “was the simple experience of having grown up beside the sea.”⁸ Playing along the shore, fishing, boating, watching vessels, and listening “to their older brothers talk about their work on the deep” are only a few of the familiar socializing experiences resulting from family and proximity. As the nineteenth century progressed, more mariners hailed from inland, but family and proximity remained important. “I came from an old New England sea-faring family,” wrote maritime author Carl Cutler in 1930. “My father went to sea when about 13 years old and continued until he was 25, and then went into the Baptist ministry.... He has always been more of a sailor than a preacher, however. That fact resulted in my going to sea and spending a year or so trying to become a sailor.”⁹ Family and proximity were important to young men seeking nautical employment from the colonial period to the Civil War, and they remained important during the Maritime Revival. By the 1870s and 1880s, however, the same overt act—shipping out under sail—had taken on a new and different meaning. Rather than following in the footsteps of their ancestors for a career, sailors during the Maritime Revival sought adventures, authentic and intense experiences, and a way to express older masculine values to regain senses of self. During a time of increasing secularization, feelings of social dislocation, and a sense of cultural authority in crisis, these men embraced the workaday employment of their ancestors with renewed enthusiasm,

⁸ Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*, with Vince Walsh, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 58.

⁹ Carl Cutler to Ednah Farrier, 10 July 1930. Carl Cutler Papers, Collection 100, box 1, folder 14, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (hereafter cited as Cutler papers, box and folder numbers).

instilling in it new meaning, and hoping to regain some foothold for their life in a modernizing America.¹⁰

Modern Mariners

What then, of young working-class men seeking careers and long-term employment at sea during the years of the Maritime Revival? Before the mid nineteenth century, seafaring offered both stage-of-life employment and a path for advancement to the officer corps.¹¹ Working-class men could take one or two voyages in their youth, and then settle into employment on shore. Those who remained at sea could elevate themselves in both shipboard rank and social status ashore. After the Civil War, technological advances in ship design and engineering made sailing craft increasingly obsolete, and, with them, the lifestyle of seafaring under sail.¹² By the 1890s, anyone seeking a long-term career at sea would instead turn to steam- or diesel-powered vessels for their training. Alternatively, bulk carriers transporting grain, guano, and oil continued to sail and to provide employment for mariners into the 1930s. Other working-class Americans could find employment laboring on docks as stevedores and roustabouts, or afloat in more advanced craft as oilers, engineers, firemen, and stokers.¹³ Still other men

¹⁰ Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 31-33.

¹¹ See Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*.

¹² Edward W. Sloan, "Vulcan Now Rides in Neptune's Barge": Steam Propulsion and Seafaring Enterprise in Post-Civil War America," in *American Industrialization, Economic Expansion, and the Law*, eds. Joseph R. Frese and Jacob Judd, (Tarrytown, NY: Sleepy Hollow Press, 1981), 56.

¹³ See K.T. Rowland, *Steam at Sea: A History of Steam Navigation* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Eric Arnesen, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen and Unionism in the 1930s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988),

might learn marine engineering or navigation at one of the maritime training schools then coming into existence. In these institutions, men could earn professional status for themselves, which in turn helped to professionalize modern maritime enterprise. The vessels, voyages, training, and eventual job goals of this type of seafarer indicate that none of these employment opportunities represented any exceptional status for seafaring.

Training in nautical schools had existed since the 1830s, especially in eastern cities like Boston. In 1839, noting the degraded condition of American seamen and the need for “measures by which this class of men are increased and improved,” Boston Port Society President Samuel Cabot urged Massachusetts Senator John Davis to support federal funding for a nautical school. While the Port Society “look[ed] upon a nautical school as one of the most important [enterprises]...claiming the support of Government,” the nautical schools were unfortunately linked to discussions about creating a mandatory maritime apprenticeship program. Both ideas were equally vilified by organizations of no less import than the Boston Chamber of Commerce and the Boston Marine Society, whose “principal ship owners on this matter” were “almost universally opposed” to having such a law thrust upon them, despite the laudable goal of improving the quality of seamen. “Compulsory apprenticeship,” wrote Chamber President N. Appleton, “would not fall in with our Yankee habits and Yankee notions,” not to mention Yankee miserliness.¹⁴

State and private nautical training schools developed independently of federal funding, proposals for which were generally rejected. Perhaps no proposal was more

¹⁴ U.S. Senate, *Documents on the Subject of Apprenticing Boys on Merchant Vessels, and the Establishment of Nautical Schools*, 25th Cong., 3rd sess., March 2, 1839, S. Doc 300, 1-5, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://docs.newsbank.com> (accessed March 5, 2007).

creative than the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs's 1869 attempt to give a vessel to New York City to "assist in the care and education of the...juvenile dependents of the city, with a view particularly to training them for the nautical service." Naval Secretary Gideon Welles responded vehemently, objecting to "recruiting the navy from the purlieus of cities." If the goal was increased American participation, "making our naval and commercial ships reform-schools, or places of refuge for youthful offenders," he insisted, "will not elevate the character of our seamen, or make the profession attractive to American citizens."¹⁵ Welles was correct in his assessment; if the goal was to professionalize maritime employment, culling sailors from reformatories was a poor idea. Finally, after decades of wrangling, on June 20, 1874, Congress authorized the Secretary of the Navy to provide the states, upon the request, "a suitable vessel of the Navy, with all her apparel, charts, books, and instruments of navigation...to be used for the benefit of any nautical school...for the instruction of youths in navigation, seamanship, marine enginery and all matters pertaining to the proper construction, equipment and sailing of vessels." In a nod to Welles's earlier objections, the act provided that "no person shall be sentenced to, or received at, such schools as a punishment, or commutation of punishment, for a crime."¹⁶ The New York Nautical School (now SUNY Maritime Academy) took immediate advantage of the act in 1874, followed by the Pennsylvania

¹⁵ Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, *Report to Accompany Joint Resolution S. R. No. 225*, 40th Cong., 3rd sess., Com. Rpt. 262, 1-3, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://docs.newsbank.com> (accessed March 5, 2007).

¹⁶ *An Act to Encourage the Establishment of Public Marine Schools*, Public Act Chapter 339, 43rd Cong., 1st sess., *US Statues at Large* 18, part 3 (1874): 121, American Memory, A Century of Lawmaking, <http://memory.loc.gov/> (accessed March 5, 2007).

Nautical School in 1891 and the Massachusetts Nautical Training School (now Massachusetts Maritime Academy) in 1893.¹⁷

Forward-looking young men seeking a seafaring career could take this course of action, especially since class considerations and the declining reputation of seafarers had been addressed, if not completely satisfied, by the act's final provision. The greater good was that public marine schools helped to professionalize American seafaring as technology advanced and education in marine engineering became too complicated for on-the-job training. These schools modernized the labor force while shipbuilders modernized vessels and propulsion. As in Progressive-era education ashore, men considering seafaring as a career could receive professional training in the latest technologies. Formal training instead of "learning the ropes" at sea, iron and steel instead of wood, and coal and diesel instead of wind made tin-can sailing about as exceptional as factory work. If Briton William McFee found romance in British tramp steamers, B. Traven certainly cast them as an industrial hell in his 1926 work, *The Death Ship*.¹⁸ Seafaring of this kind was neither adventurous, character building, glamorous, nor authentic to those men trying to escape modern American society and culture. Industrialization had gone to sea, and any romantic, heroic, or unique status to the job had to be found elsewhere.

Beyond nautical employment, there were plenty of ways for middle- and upper-class men to participate in maritime life—provided they accepted modernity in the

¹⁷ "History of the U.S. Merchant Marine Cadet Corps," <http://www.usmm.org/cadetcorps.html> (accessed March 2, 2007). See also, Speelman, "Nautical Schools and the Development of Maritime Professionals."

¹⁸ See James T. Babb, *A Bibliography of the Writings of William McFee* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1931); and B. Traven, *The Death Ship: The Story of an American Sailor* (1926, trans. 1934; New York: Knopf, 1934). Traven's nationality is disputed as either German or American of German descent.

maritime world of the 1880s and 1890s. Instead of looking to the sea for employment, pleasure boating and yachting offered middle and upper classes chances to experience life upon the water. Everything from canoes and Adirondack guide boats to naphtha-powered launches and excursion ferries offered leisure opportunities. Coney Island, New York offered the middle class recreational activities.¹⁹ New housing developments in Watch Hill and Narragansett, Rhode Island created upper-class waterfront enclaves. Both reinforced the idea that the middle and upper classes were finding new ways to interact with the marine environment, almost always for pleasure rather than work.²⁰ The Water Rat's oft-quoted proclamation from *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) that "there is *nothing*—absolute nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats" expressed a new attitude towards small boat handling that resonated with the leisure class.²¹ In contrast, sailors before the Civil War might have considered Samuel Johnson's maxim: "No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned," more appropriate.²² Clearly something had changed between Johnson's and Ratty's assessments of life on the water.

¹⁹ See Michael Immerso, *Coney Island: The People's Playground* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

²⁰ "Watch Hill Rhode Island and Its Attractions as a Summer Resort," (1887; repr., Watch Hill, RI: Book and Tackle Shop, 1977), in possession of the author; "Narragansett Improvement Association, Inc.," (Narragansett, RI, September 15, 1920), Narragansett Improvement Records, MSS 483 SG31, folder 31, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

²¹ Kenneth Grahame, *The Wind in the Willows* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 7. Italics in original. See also Thorsten Veblen, "The Theory of the Leisure Class," in David A. Hollinger and Charles Capper, eds., *The American Intellectual Tradition, A Sourcebook, vol. 2, 1865 to the Present*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 141-155.

²² "The Samuel Johnson Sound Bite Page, Quotes on Soldiers and Sailors," www.samueljohnson.com/soldiers.html (accessed April 12, 2007).

The transformation of sailing from business to pleasure was most pronounced in the development of yachting. In 1917, Brown University professor Wilfred Harold Munro offered a contemporary treatment of the decline of Bristol, Rhode Island, as a shipbuilding center. The town had ceased launching vessels of note until 1863, when “Herreshoffs began to send from their yard the yachts that were to ‘show their heels’ to all rivals.”²³ The Herreshoff reputation and their yachts guaranteed that in Bristol, “the old seafaring spirit still exists, though mightily transformed.” “From the port today go forth vessels of a very different type,” wrote Munro. “They lack the capacious holds of the olden days but they carry sails larger than any of the old captains ever dreamed of. Their business is not to carry merchandise; they sail forth from Narragansett Bay to lead the yachting fleets of the world.”²⁴ The transition from seafaring to yachting marked the class lines along which maritime enterprise became bifurcated over the course of the Maritime Revival. Yachting and pleasure boating was the purview of middle and upper classes, while commercial maritime enterprise remained a working-class endeavor, one undertaken in smelly, smoky, cold steel vessels rather than shiny yachts. Yachtsmen and pleasure-boaters were a part of this story because they reflected newer sensibilities about how to engage with the water. So too were the working-class mariners trying to eke out an existence upon steam- and diesel-powered commercial watercraft, because they reflected modernity at sea and their motives contrasted with those of the young men “crazy to go to sea” between 1870 and 1940. But, for the Maritime Revival, the middle- and upper-class men who took to the sea—not on yachts, pleasure craft, or industrialized

²³ Wilfred Harold Munro, *Tales of an Old Sea Port* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1917), 31.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

steamships, but instead on square-riggers long after they had diminished as career opportunities or economic forces—provide the principal narrative. Neither pleasure nor career building drew these men to sea, but they willingly stepped outside their middle- and upper-class social structures to partake in what had been, before the 1860s, primarily a working-class endeavor. As these young men shipped out on wind-driven bulk carriers, their motivations to go sailing were far different from those of their working-class shipmates and officers.

Sailing as a Masculine Adventure

Negotiating masculinity was rough terrain for young men as their identities and conceptions of masculinity were pulled in new directions between the 1880s and 1930s. American men began viewing genteel Victorian values, such as self-restraint, as effeminizing forces and grew increasingly worried about their gender identities. Stepping beneath one's social class was one way middle- and upper-class white men attempted to redefine their masculinity in this period. Gail Bederman has explored the remaking of manhood in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, and, in addition to linking race and class to gender identity, she found that middle-class men often "appropriated activities which had been deemed working-class." Working-class codes of manliness developed "to resist the moralistic manliness of the middle class," according to Bederman. "This rough, working class masculinity had celebrated institutions and values antithetical to middle-class Victorian values—institutions like saloons, music halls and

prizefights; values like physical prowess, pugnacity, and sexuality.”²⁵ Feats of strength, gendered spaces, and shore-leave debaucheries such as drinking, fighting, and whoring were all significant elements of seafaring life. Going to sea under sail was an experience tailor-made out of working-class cloth, one ready to be co-opted by men seeking to reassert themselves and their ideas of masculinity in the 1880s and 1890s.

Claiming the merits of one’s primal self also helped men navigate the murky waters of changing masculinity. Anthony Rotundo has asserted that cultural standards of masculinity underwent their most radical transformations in the 1880s and 1890s.²⁶ A new standard of “passionate manhood,” according to Rotundo, supplanted previous standards based upon devotion to community (communal manhood) or self-reliance (self-made manhood). Passionate manhood rejected Victorian ideals of self-restraint and instead turned toward more primal virtues. While nineteenth century middle class culture had always identified passion with the male of the species, “what changed in the century’s final decades,” Rotundo has written, “was the valuation of these passions” which had once been viewed as “dangerous” or an “evil that threatened both soul and society.” Instead, Americans began valuing passionate behaviors. Now, whether celebrated via Cooper’s Leatherstocking novels, Melville’s South Sea adventures, Jack London’s tales, or the many books heralding American Indians, Rotundo has argued that

²⁵ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 17, 245. See also, John Tomsich, *A Genteel Endeavor: American Culture and Politics in the Gilded Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1971); and Robert Dawidoff, *The Genteel Tradition and the Sacred Rage: High Culture vs. Democracy in Adams, James, and Santayana* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

²⁶ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 222. For more on masculinity studies, see Kenneth Clatterbaugh, “Literature of the U.S. Men’s Movements,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 25, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 883-894. See also, Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Peter N. Stearns, *Be a Man!: Males in Modern Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990); and J.A. Mangan and James Walvin, eds., *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1987).

“a man’s ‘animal instincts’ were seen in a positive light” at the end of the nineteenth century.²⁷

While there are some key exceptions, seafaring had always been primarily a masculine world and work environment.²⁸ Everything from the physicality of the work, to the single-sex environment, to the hierarchy of command marked seafaring as an archly masculine endeavor, so closely associated with manliness that some individuals considered the act of a woman even *writing* about seafaring anathema. In 1937, young maritime enthusiast J. Ferrell Colton (living in that bastion of maritime culture, Coyote Range, Arizona), wrote of his concern that some valuable manuscript material of the late Frederick Matthews was being turned over to one “Mrs. Protheroe,” who had sailed with her father, Captain Reed, in the 1890s.²⁹ Colton was not concerned with her gender; rather, he thought her a poor writer and scholar, one given to “romanticism.”³⁰ What the young man did not do, in 1937, was challenge her right to write about maritime topics based upon her gender.

His correspondent, Captain P.A. McDonald, thought differently. McDonald was a retired square-rigger captain living and working as a shipkeeper in Winslow, on

²⁷ Rotundo, *American Manhood*, 227.

²⁸ See David Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors’ Women: An Untold Maritime History* (New York: Random House, 2001); Margaret S. Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830-1870* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling, eds., *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women and the Whale Fishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

²⁹ P.A. McDonald to J. Ferrell Colton, 17 June 1937, J. Ferrell Colton Collection, SFMM HDC 1076, box 1, folder 2, J. Porter Shaw Library, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, (hereafter cited as Colton collection, box and folder numbers). See also, Octavius T. Howe, M.D. and Frederick C. Matthews, *American Clipper Ships 1833-1858*, vols. I and II, (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1926, 1927).

³⁰ J. Ferrell Colton to P.A. McDonald, 28 June 1937, Colton Collection, box 1 folder 2.

Bainbridge Island, Washington. His age is unknown, but he was at least 60 years old in 1937, so he likely he first went to sea in the 1890s. Before the 1870s, women were better integrated into the maritime world, tending homes and businesses ashore or, like Protheroe, sailing with their captain-fathers or captain-husbands. McDonald's seafaring experience was more a masculine enterprise, and forty or fifty years later, he had serious "misgivings...as to the very valuable material of Matthews being handled by a woman." As ideas of seafaring's inherent masculinity expanded during the Maritime Revival, in McDonald's view, it was abhorrent for a woman to participate in the discourse of these newer masculine qualities. He illustrates Bederman's point that "As Victorianism lost its cultural power, defenders of white male power turned to masculinist versions of civilization in order to supplement old-fashioned ideologies of civilized 'manliness' with newer sorts of primitive 'masculinities.'"³¹

If crossing class lines to live the rough life of a square-rigger sailor helped middle-class sailors recover their passionate manhood, stepping outside one's social class nevertheless presented a dilemma. Frederick Pease Harlow, son of a Methodist minister and later an important chronicler of life on a square-rigger, sailed in the late 1870s, when his berth in the carpenter's cabin amidships caused immediate trouble with the mate. The boy who had signed on to be a real sailor quickly took to visiting the sailors in the fo'c's'le. "Don't ever let me catch you in that fo'c's'le again" admonished the mate. "I've given you a room by yourself, away from those old sailors, and you...are to have nothing to do with them whatever." The mate claimed that he did not want his greenhand to have his "head filled with old sailor's notions and tricks," further warning his young

³¹ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 217.

charge that “if you are counting on following the sea, the less you have to do with them the better.”³² Of course, filling his head with the notions of sailors was one of Harlow’s primary reasons for signing up in the first place. Harlow’s berth amidships probably resulted from both his lack of experience and his uncle’s influence in finding a ship. Either way, it separated him from the very working-class experience he so wanted to have, and he found his own solution by continuing to fraternize with the “real” sailors despite the mate and class barriers.

Eighteen-year-old W.H. Taylor of Narragansett, Rhode Island, also found himself outside his shoreside class on his 1868 voyage to Cuba. He received a healthy dose of reality as shipboard hierarchy manifested itself. The immediate case regarded food. The captain dined on “a stew made of pork potatoes onions and some very good looking biscuit. We thought this was prety [sic] fine.” However, to the chagrin of Taylor and the crew, “Ower [sic] expectations was soon banished.” After serving the captain’s fare, the cook exited the galley, threw a pail of dirty water over the rail, and “returned shortley [sic] with ower [sic] meal in the same pan.” The crew’s dinner was the “corned beef wich [sic] we had bin smelin [sic] hashed up with a few potatoes...hard tack, coffee,” reported Taylor, and “put on the floor of ower [sic] quarters.” The final ignominy, a lack of dining table, starkly reminded Taylor that he was no longer ensconced in his comfortable shoreside social class. For the rest of the voyage, the crew ate the same meal of smelly corned beef, ship’s biscuit, and coffee, day in and day out. Unsanitary conditions and monotonous food were common at sea and generally been accepted, despite considerable grouching, in the past. Thirty years before Taylor sailed, the

³² Frederick Pease Harlow, *The Making of a Sailor, or, Sea Life Aboard a Yankee Square-Rigger* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1928), 92, 84.

Pilgrim's cook advised college boy Richard Henry Dana to throw overboard the sweetmeats and other land food he had stashed in his sea chest. (Dana knew the food would be bad, and had tried to plan accordingly.) In an alien environment, Dana accepted the solution of the more experienced sea cook.³³ Similarly, Taylor knew his situation had changed when he was forced to admit that the provisions were “quit[e] a change for one who was use to the best of liveing [sic]” back on shore with his parents in Narragansett.³⁴

Seeking out adventures was another way young men with superior prospects could challenge middle-class values and step outside their social stations. Easily romanticized as a difficult, preindustrial, working-class life, square-rigged sailing became a grand adventure where young men could reassert their newly-valued passionate masculinity. As seafaring under sail became less common, it gained status as an adventurous undertaking for American men seeking out what Martin Green has called the “Great American Adventure,” tied to an “energizing myth” of both patriotic Americanism and empire-building.³⁵ One avenue for adventures—the army—was closed to men who could have previously found regenerative adventures anywhere from Bull Run to Appomattox. On land, there were fewer opportunities for adventure in the West as California gained statehood and the population west of the Mississippi grew. However,

³³ Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea*, (1840; repr., New York: Penguin, 1981), 48.

³⁴ Typescript, W.H. Taylor, “Memories of Narragansett Pier,” n.d. [c. 1927], 35, David Patten Papers, MSS 605, folder 37, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI (hereafter cited as Taylor, Narragansett Pier, and folder number), 20.

³⁵ Green, *Great American Adventure*, 3-4. See also Martin Green, *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 1979); and Bruce A. Harvey, *American Geographics: U.S. National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World, 1830-1965* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

seafaring under sail remained a viable adventure, one newly characterized as exceptional in American culture. A sailing voyage reinforced cultural values and at the same time offered an adventure that did not involve being the target of grapeshot.

W.H. Taylor's sense of adventure had been cultivated by his proximity to water in Narragansett, but some of his impressions of sailing were also the result of the influences of popular culture. Part of his romanticization, he wrote, "had been put in by Copper, [Cooper] Daner [Dana] and Dampier."³⁶ Sailing to Cuba with potatoes and onions was hardly the most romantic of the carrying trades, but the voyage nonetheless felt like a romantic adventure to Taylor. "We sailed about 1 P.M. and in a few hour we was out sight of land and for the first time," he mused. "It makes one feal [sic] how littel [sic] he is."³⁷ Similarly, when Fred Harlow's older brothers returned home and told tales of the hardships at sea, he ignored them. Despite their "admonish[ing] us never to follow the sea for a living," wrote Harlow, "I took particular pains to observe that they didn't remain ashore for any length of time." "I judged that there must be something very fascinating about the life," and this fascination helped draw him seaward not because he had to, but rather because he wanted to have adventures similar to ancestors and his older siblings.³⁸

Folklorist Simon Bronner has offered some middle ground regarding the motivations of Maritime Revival-era sailors, one that lies somewhere between Green's view that patriotism and empire-building were the main incentives for adventurer-

³⁶ Taylor, "Narragansett Pier," 20, folder 37. That is, James Fenimore Cooper, Richard Henry Dana, and William Dampier.

³⁷ Taylor, "Narragansett Pier," 19, folder 37.

³⁸ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 5.

seekers, and Bederman's argument that *fin-de-siecle* white male ideas about civilization, masculinity, and race were the source.³⁹ Bronner has maintained that folklore provides an avenue to transfer masculine values over time, especially within groups. Modern masculinity, he has argued, was rooted in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century images and symbols of traditional male practices, from hunting and fishing, to facial hair. Generally, these traditional behaviors, while often cross-cultural or, at times, contradictory, nevertheless centered on independence, competition, aggression, physical prowess and domination, and social groupings. Whether in cowboy culture or among Vikings, these were the values men deemed significant in cultures far removed in space and time.⁴⁰ Bronner has identified a multitude of traditional behaviors that expressed masculine values, including speech patterns such as dirty jokes and "salty swearing."⁴¹ He has examined initiation rituals in all-male environments such as military hazing rituals from the Virginia Military Academy's so-called "Rat line" to the Royal Navy's crossing-the-line-ceremony.⁴²

Folk traditions, traditional behavior, and symbolism all helped men between 1880 and 1920 build some sense of continuity with the past and helped them adjust to a more

³⁹ Green, *Great American Adventure*, 2-3; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 239.

⁴⁰ Bronner, "Introduction," xxii-xxiv. See also, Sarah Watts, *Rough Rider in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Desire* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003). Bronner examined traditional practices in many cultures, including the masculine uses of *taiko* performances in Japan.

⁴¹ Bronner, "Introduction," xv. See also, Deryck W. Holdsworth, "'I'm a Lumberjack and I'm OK': The Built Environment and Varied Masculinities in the Industrial Age," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* 5, Gender Class and Shelter, (1995): 11-25.

⁴² Simon J. Bronner, "Menfolk," in *Manly Traditions*, 15-17. Considering his focus on male groupings, and his inclusion of the Royal Navy, it is ironic that Bronner neglects merchant sailors' culture. He uses language derived from cultural representations of seafaring ("salty") to describe coarse talk on land, and co-opts the sailor's ceremony as evidence of male hazing rituals without actually considering the overall shipboard environment. Despite this omission, his point remains valid that imagery and symbolism were methods which folk tradition helped to pass on masculine values.

complicated male identity. The contours of industrial capitalism made it more difficult for every American man to be self-reliant success story. Growing demands for suffrage diluted political power as well as demonstrating feminist inroads into what had once been an all-male preserve.⁴³ Folkways and manly lore were balms for these challenges to masculinity.

Family folklore and public memory helped to build a bridge between the dislocated masculinity of *fin-de-siecle* American men and their heroic pasts. At the dedication of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society's new whaling museum in 1916, Haverford College President Francis Barton Gummere lionized the New England men who had gone a'whaling. "Time and circumstance have swept away one of the great types of our American manhood," Gummere said, "along with [a] handicraft in which courage, resourcefulness, agility, clear eye, and steady nerve, were the very commonplaces of the calling." He challenged the audience to resist "the deplorable fad of blackwashing our past and deprecating old types of manhood. Let us rather idealize them."⁴⁴ By 1916, the lore of whaling was considerably more heroic than the industry itself, but the image of Gummere's idealized whalers had been growing for decades. Even without direct connection or relation, the symbolism of rugged individuals bravely facing the punishing elements was potent to the men who sailed during the Maritime

⁴³ See Lawrence Goodwin, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Norman Pollack, *The Populist Response to Industrial America: Midwestern Populist Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Robert C. McMath, *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993); Sara Hunter Graham, *Woman Suffrage and the New Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Aileen Kraditor, *Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (1965; repr., New York: Norton, 1981); and Eleanor Flexner, *A Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States*, ed. Ellen Fitzpatrick, (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1996).

⁴⁴ James Lindgren, " 'Let Us Idealize Old Types of Manhood': The New Bedford Whaling Museum, 1903-1941," *New England Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (June 1999): 165.

Revival. Shipping out was a way these men could maintain ties to folk traditions, even if they only imagined that these traditions belonged to them, their ancestors, or their own or social class. Embracing the traditional symbolism of maritime life and wrapping oneself in these traditions and heritage provided some psychological continuity with the past.

Youth and Family Influence

Folkways also helped to socialize younger boys into disappearing maritime traditions, and a youth filled with maritime activities influenced many men to ship out under sail. Generations earlier, adolescent boys familiarized themselves with watercraft as part of their upbringing at the feet of fathers, older brothers, and uncles. After the Civil War, as the unusual phenomenon of going out on the water for recreational purposes took root, using the sea as a playground or exploring decrepit waterfronts offered young boys entrépôt into maritime traditions and symbols. Rodman “Tod” Swift, a scion of a prominent New Bedford whaling family, sailed as a boy in waters off Nonquitt, Massachusetts, and later on Buzzard’s Bay as a teenager.⁴⁵ Harlow sailed Narragansett Bay “from one end to the other, exploring the bays and inlets,” with his brother, he wrote, “and many a hard blow we were in so that reefing and knotting were not entirely new to me.”⁴⁶ Harlow had more chances to learn small boat handling in his cousin John Soule’s sailboat. John Soule “was a boat builder...[who gave] me the privilege of using the boat when not in use.”⁴⁷ Marine artist Clifford Ashley, who would

⁴⁵William H. Bunting, *Sea Struck* (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 2004), 14-15.

⁴⁶ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 5.

ship on board the whaling bark *Sunbeam* in 1904, wrote that, in the 1890s, the “unpoliced ships and grass-grown wharves made a marvelous playground.” Ashley and his childhood playmates learned to swim, paddle, and row around the vessels laid up in New Bedford’s harbor. The boys climbed rigging, and “played games and pretended one thing and another,” Ashley wrote, “always it was something that smacked of the sea.”⁴⁸ Undoubtedly, much of the charm resulted from the fact that these scenes took place upon abandoned vessels and wharves. Free of adult supervision, childhood imaginations had both setting and symbol for grand adventures.

Fred Harlow, like Ashley, found ships, shipyards, and waterfronts the playgrounds of his youth. As an old man, Harlow built a model of famed Boston ship builder Donald McKay’s last ship, *Glory of the Seas*. “When a boy of 13, I played about the hull of the ship before she was launched in East Boston,” he reminisced while constructing the model. “And 5 years later I became a sailor on the ship ‘Akbar.’” Between his seagoing family ties and childhood playground, according to Michael J. Mjelde, “the McKay ship became a further factor inspiring him to ship out.”⁴⁹ A generation earlier, maritime life had been more closely associated with work than with play. Much like maritime life’s shift from an occupation to yachting for adult middle- and upper-class men, adolescents who grew up messing about in boats solely for fun could not help but conclude that there was something adventurous about the experience. Exploring decrepit ships and crumbling wharves or sailing in small boats for pleasure,

⁴⁷ Typescript, Frederick Pease Harlow, memoir, n.d. [1948?], 23. Photocopy in possession of the author and deposited at the G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT.

⁴⁸ Clifford Ashley, *The Yankee Whaler*, popular ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin/Riverside, 1938), 1, 117.

⁴⁹ Harlow, memoir, 341; Michael J. Mjelde, *Glory of the Seas* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), 14, 244.

reinforced seafaring symbolism in young boys and helped to turn shipping out under sail into a rite of passage for some middle- and upper-class men.

Family, like the physical symbols of seafaring, helped to idealize certain types of manhood. Fathers and brothers were important to masculine development in boys, Bronner has asserted, but “in addition to considerations of patriarchal influence, the role of powerful women—mothers and teachers—regarding the developing boy” also deserves consideration.⁵⁰ The meaning of the family and of proximity to water changed during the Maritime Revival, and this shift in family influence is illustrated by the contrasting cases of Joshua Slocum and Frederick Pease Harlow. Slocum, the first man to circumnavigate the globe single handedly, went to sea in 1860 and was twelve years older than Harlow, who first sailed in 1875. Slocum, reared in Nova Scotia, was “born to seafaring,” wrote biographer Walter Teller. Though the son of a farmer, “his forebearers, by and large, were sailors.”⁵¹ Slocum himself identified with his sailor-ancestors. “On both sides of my family were sailors,” he wrote, “and if any Slocum should be found not seafaring, he will show at least an inclination to whittle models of boats and contemplate voyages.... As for myself, the wonder of the sea charmed me from the first.”⁵² Similarly, both Harlow’s immediate family and more distant ancestors had seafaring roots. “Long before I left high schools I had made up my mind to become a sailor,” Harlow wrote in 1928. “Three of my brothers were in the merchant service and there was nothing else for me to do for we all took to salt water like ducks.” His grandfather, Isaac Winsor, had

⁵⁰ Bronner, “Introduction,” *Manly Traditions*, xvii.

⁵¹ Walter Magnes Teller, “Joshua Slocum: Navigator and Writer,” in Joshua Slocum, *The Voyages of Joshua Slocum*, ed. Walter Magnes Teller (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1958), 3.

⁵² Joshua Slocum, *Sailing Alone Around the World*, in *The Voyages of Joshua Slocum*, 225-226.

commanded both merchant ships and whalers and, according to family story, “was a Tartar from the old school.”⁵³ Family legend maintained that his grandfather once heaved a harpoon at a recalcitrant mate. Harlow later wrote that he had been saved the ignominy of being a “descendant of a murderer on the high seas” only by a fortunate pitch of a whaleboat.⁵⁴

Family folklore operated differently for Slocum and Harlow, even though a seafaring family history played an important role for both men, Slocum first worked an insufferable job ashore making leather boots with a “father, irritable and defeated, holding him to a hated task,” but family lore passed on the idea that one went to sea for work. Slocum ran away to sea at age fourteen as cook on a fishing schooner, failed and returned home, but left once and for all upon the death of his mother two years later.⁵⁵ Harlow’s home life was considerably more positive, as was the family lore about seafaring. “Did I run away from home to go to sea; or was I knocked down with a club and dragged all over the barn floor for refusing to milk the cows?” he rhetorically asked his readers in his 1928 narrative. “No! I never was knocked down at home, for my father was a Methodist minister...and he lived his life as a minister of the gospel should. I had the best of homes and my parents did everything they could to make life pleasant.”⁵⁶ As the son of a minister, Harlow grew up in an educated environment, and despite being born in Illinois, the family quickly returned to the East coast and lived in Boston and

⁵³ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 1-3.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁵ Teller, “Navigator and Writer,” 4-5

⁵⁶ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 3.

Duxbury, Massachusetts, and Bristol and Newport, Rhode Island.⁵⁷ The Reverend Harlow “did all that he could to make me understand that there were better things on land for me to follow than going to sea,” wrote the younger Harlow. He quickly added “but to no avail.”⁵⁸ With a higher level of education, a more cosmopolitan upbringing, and an admittedly better home life, Harlow looked on sailing as a grand adventure rather than a mere job. Slocum represented an older world of seafaring, one where men went to sea because that was simply what men living near the water had done for centuries. Harlow sailed because he wanted to take his own place in the family tradition, emulating his older brothers and his deceased grandfather. Even as square-rigged sailing waned, it offered him that place.

Once seafaring became an exceptional, rather than a normative, experience, many families began discouraging their young men from going to sea. The younger generation might consider participation in folk traditions worthwhile, but their parents, perceiving poor decisions, could be quite distressed. In 1868, W.H. Taylor of Narragansett, Rhode Island wanted to get away from the workaday life of helping his father run a bathhouse. When given the chance to take over the family business, Taylor announced, “I was now 18 years old and I had a desire to go to sea.” The views of his parents, though, were different than those of previous generations. “Both farther [sic] and mother,” reported Taylor, “was very much against it.”⁵⁹ Similarly, Harlow’s family opposed his going to sea in 1876. His eldest brother, Julius Harlow, mate of the ship *Windward*, wrote home,

⁵⁷ Harlow, memoir, 1, 11, 23, 25.

⁵⁸ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 3.

⁵⁹ Taylor, “Narragansett Pier,” 17, 19, folder 37.

“Do not let the boys follow the sea. At best, it’s nothing but a dog’s life.”⁶⁰ Fred Harlow did not heed his brother’s advice, nor did his mother’s objections carry any truck with him. “My dear old mother, with tears in her eyes,” he wrote, “helped me get my things together” for his voyage. Leaving weeping mother behind, Harlow “proudly” walked to the wharf. “I felt like a sailor and wanted to act like one,” he claimed, “carrying my bag as I had often seen others go aboard their ship.”⁶¹

Rodman “Tod” Swift’s mother was similarly chagrined at her son’s decision to sail in 1904. Swift descended from prominent New Bedford whaling families; wealth, education, and intimacy with sailing and whaling abounded on both sides of his family tree. But, like Taylor’s and Harlow’s parents, neither of Swift’s parents were enthralled with his desire to ship out. To convince them, he was forced to broker an agreement: He would remain at Harvard if they would drop their opposition to a sea voyage after he graduated. Both parties honored the agreement, and Tod shipped as an ordinary seaman on the bark *Astral* in October 1904.⁶² His mother judged seafaring inappropriate for one of her son’s station by the twentieth century. Dismayed that Tod requested she stop sending so many letters, she wrote one final post, insisting that, if his claim of a decent captain and mate were true, “they will have discovered that you are different from ‘ordinary seaman.’” Mother Swift also wished her son had brought along some reading

⁶⁰ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 4.

⁶¹ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 10. Harlow’s fictionalizing of himself is particularly interesting. He claimed that this was his first sea voyage, but the archival evidence of his shipboard journal and discharge certificate prove that it was in fact his second trip. When writing his first-person narrative blended fact and fiction to create plot devices and tales with rising action, climax, and denouement. In this case, Harlow wants to take on the sailor identity so strongly that he places himself at the center of the story to the degree that we can almost see a Currier and Ives lithograph of his walk to the schooner with sea-bag upon shoulder.

⁶² Bunting, *Sea Struck*, 4, 5, 19, 224, 243.

material, “as well as pajamas and many other things” that she undoubtedly thought would make the recent college graduate more comfortable.⁶³ Harlow’s mother was of similar mindset, and “as she thought of some little article that would be of service to me” she tucked it into his bag.⁶⁴ These women’s negative influence failed to keep their sons from taking part in family tradition for the sake of adventure alone.

Family members resigned themselves to their sons’ desires but still attempted to assert some influence on their behalf. Taylor’s father saw that there was no convincing his eighteen-year-old son otherwise. “I was determined to go,” Taylor the younger wrote, and “farther [sic] see [saw] that there was no use of trying to stop mee [sic].” Instead, the elder Taylor met with one Captain Whaley, and “said to him that I was crazy to go to sea.” Whaley took the young Taylor on a brig bound for Cuba with a cargo of hoop poles, potatoes, and onions.⁶⁵ Harlow’s father exerted similar influence. “Seeing my determination,” Harlow wrote in *The Making of a Sailor*, “he finally gave his consent,” and the elder Harlow convinced his son to take a shorter coasting voyage first and arranged a meeting with next-door-neighbor Captain Winslow.⁶⁶ Reality differed from this published account, however, and the boy’s first voyage was a long one aboard a square-rigger, but his father, along with uncle Frederick Pease of Boston, did play an

⁶³ Sarah Swift to Rodman “Tod” Swift, 5 October 1904, in Bunting, *Sea Struck*, 243. William Bunting has assured me that the complete text of Swift’s diary made it into print in *Sea Struck*, and that any ellipses in correspondence was undertaken to eliminate redundancy rather than content. He wrote: “I can only assure you that none of the edits removed anything significant. Most were of repetitive material, or else extraneous references to other people, doings at home, etc. Indeed, the whole point was to leave the important parts in!” E-mail message to author, March 28, 2007.

⁶⁴ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 9.

⁶⁵ Taylor, “Narragansett Pier,” 19, folder 37.

⁶⁶ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 7, 9.

important role by brokering the voyage on a solid vessel with a decent captain.⁶⁷ Similarly, Tod Swift's seafaring uncle, Captain Francis Stone, asked his friend Captain Smith of the Anglo-American Oil Company, a branch of Standard Oil, to negotiate a berth for his nephew. Smith's influence virtually guaranteed that the young Harvard graduate could avoid foreign vessels, and, true to these intentions, Smith placed Swift on board the American-flagged *Astral*. Like Harlow's uncle, Swift's Uncle Frank used his connections to insure his nephew would steer clear the shoals of landsharks, shipping agents, boarding-house masters, and leaky-washtubs and other dastardly foreign vessels. More importantly, these familial connections ensured that Tod Swift, who signed on board at ordinary seaman's rank, "would be housed apart from the common sailors," according to W.H. Bunting, "in a deck house physically and symbolically between the cabin and the forecastle, and customarily occupied by petty officers, apprentices, and boys."⁶⁸ Harlow held a similar berth, apart from the fo'c's'le hands, on his own first voyage. Upon discovering that Harlow had no square-rigged sailing experience the mate, "made no comment," however, he was "very agreeable to my uncle" Harlow reported.⁶⁹

In earlier eras, parents of diverse social backgrounds encouraged their sons to go to sea, but neither Taylor's, Harlow's, nor Swift's families did so.⁷⁰ Going to sea under sail was no longer an avenue for advancing a career—ocean-going career opportunities

⁶⁷ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 82; Glenn M. Grasso, "Foreword" to Frederick Pease Harlow, *Chanteying Aboard American Ships*, (1962; repr., Mystic Seaport, 2004), xv-xxi, xx. Harlow's 1928 account reflected the spirit of its time; changing the order of his voyaging resulted in a story of rising action that matched the public memory created by the Maritime Revival.

⁶⁸ Bunting, *Sea Struck*, 24, 224-225.

⁶⁹ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 86, 84.

⁷⁰ Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 58.

were to be found elsewhere. Sailing was no longer an acceptable career path for middle class men, or so their parents believed. For parents, the decline of seafaring under sail made following wind ships a fool's errand. For young middle- and upper-class men, it elevated the experience into a grand adventure—and in any era, there is no greater adventure than the one of which your parents disapprove.

Courting Difficulty to be Authentic

Despite parental concerns and efforts on their behalf, these young men were not going to sea to be comfortable; in fact, their goals were quite the opposite. A newfound concentration on physicality and a focus on the male body played additional roles as men began reaffirming their manhood through strenuous activities. Folk traditions and family lore had offered balms for some challenges to masculinity and had helped socialize boys into the cultural symbolism of the maritime world. As they became men, adjusting to a male identity complicated by the contours of industrial capitalism was another challenge. Some men felt emasculated by the rapid pace of business and new managerial class employment because corporatism had sapped their virility.⁷¹ Once an all-male preserve,

⁷¹ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 87. See also, Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); and Hays, *Response to Industrialism*. One reason middle class men sought out difficulty and rougher, more working-class activities resulted from a fear of one of the late nineteenth century's most vexing diseases—neurasthenia—which was characterized, according to its discoverer George M. Beard in 1881, by “nervelessness—a lack of nerve force.” Beard asserted that “men, like batteries, need a reserve force, and men, like batteries, need to be measured by the amount of this reserve.” Problems arose when the nerve force needed to sustain everyday life exceeded reserves, and the root cause of these problems was modern American civilization—everything from the need for punctuality, noise, and telegraphs to new ideas, buying on a margin, politics, climate, and race, to name but a few. Nearing epidemic proportions between 1870 and 1915, a chief component of modern civilization's excessive stimulation was the rapid pace of business and production. Like its contemporary, phrenology, neurasthenia is not recognized by modern medicine. There is no evidence that Maritime Revival-era sailors went to sea to combat neurasthenia. However, given the time period and scale of the alleged epidemic, it is likely that some of these men had at least heard of the disease and its cure, which was, as late nineteenth-century psychology professor G. Stanley Hall advocated,

demands for women's suffrage diluted their political power as well. The difficult living and working conditions of seafaring presented American men a path away from the effeminizing forces in their rapidly changing society. In 1834, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., had gone to sea to improve his physical health. Six decades later, living the life of a square-rigger sailor in a wholly masculine world offered similar salutary effects for American men's mental health.

Choosing the right adventure was important, but physical preparation for one's voyage was, too. Each adventure-seeking sailor undertook some simulation or practice before the actual event of sailing, and physical activities and fitness were important considerations to the men sailing during the Maritime Revival. Fred Harlow wrote that while he was "not a big husky fellow, I was of an athletic build and took part in all kinds of sport" including wrestling, sparring, and handsprings.⁷² While a young man in Bristol, RI, Harlow was an avid baseball player, and when "not on the Common, after school," he wrote, "I could always be found in John Soule's sail-boat."⁷³ When Irving Johnson went to sea on the bark *Peking* in 1929, he spent months physically training for his voyage around Cape Horn. He remarked, "I was something of a wrestler myself." Johnson shipped out with his friend Charlie, who was two years on the Princeton University

encouraging "primal savagery in American boys and adolescents. Hall spent much of his career writing and lecturing on ways to use a return to the primitive to "revitalize passionate and powerful manhood within advanced civilization." Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 78, 87, 95, 101; and George M. Beard, *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences*, (1881; repr., New York: Arno, 1972), 5, 103, 105-106, 113, 117, 122, 161, 172. For more on neurasthenia, see Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter, eds., *Cultures of Neurasthenia from Beard to the First World War* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2001); Tom Lutz, *American Nervousness, 1903: An Anecdotal History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991); and Francis G. Gosling, *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870-1910* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

⁷² Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 5.

⁷³ Harlow, "Memoir," 23.

varsity wrestling team and had been on the track team as well.⁷⁴ In footage filmed before the voyage, he demonstrated his physical prowess and ability to take punishment by undertaking challenges, ranging from suffering spills from high-wheeled bicycles to climbing telephone poles with rotten bases to simulate the movement of going aloft at sea.⁷⁵ Like Johnson, Harlow practiced “sailorizing” techniques before signing on board. His brother had constructed a mock-up of a ship’s mast, yard, and sail in the attic of the family home. In addition to learning the ropes in John Soule’s sailboat on Narragansett Bay, the young Harlow learned how to furl square sails in the attic long before he would have to undertake the task at sea.⁷⁶ Similarly, Taylor was familiar with watercraft before his voyage. “Altho [sic] this was the first time I was this far from land,” he wrote regarding his sole voyage to Cuba and back, “I was quite a sailor in knolage [sic] I had ben [sic] many times to New York and Providence in vesales [sic].”⁷⁷ Pre-Civil War sailors did not undertake this physical preparation—it was something unique to the Maritime Revival. These men, separated by decades but tied with the common thread of culture, came to look at physical fitness as a way to bolster their masculinity. This popular fixation with fitness, as historian John F. Kasson has argued, was a way to demonstrate the “transformation from weakness to supreme strength, from vulnerability to triumph, from anonymity to heroism, from the confinement of modern life to the

⁷⁴ Irving Johnson, *Peking Battles Cape Horn* (1932; repr., Peekskill, NY: National Maritime Historical Society, 1995), 2.

⁷⁵ *Around Cape Horn*, videocassette, by Irving Johnson, 1929 (film) and 1980 (narration), executive producer Kenneth Mahler (1985; Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum Film and Video, 2002).

⁷⁶ Harlow, memoir, 25; Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 5.

⁷⁷ Taylor, “Narragansett Pier,” 19, folder 37.

recovery of freedom.”⁷⁸ The concentration on the male body and physical fitness offered a path, away from the dehumanizing structures of life in a modernizing United States where mass culture was alienating and destroying one’s sense of psychological individuality, and toward a sense of “authenticity.”

The physical challenges of square-rigged sail became a natural extension of physical fitness ashore. The shipboard work—climbing high aloft, raising anchor, setting and furling sails by handling hundreds of pounds of wood and canvas against the wind, and loading cargo—was undertaken while sailors never slept more than four hours at a stretch and might be exposed to equatorial heat or to sub-Antarctic cold. Previous generations expected the physicality of the job, but they took no real note of it save to complain about the hardships at sea. Both bodybuilding and square-rigged sailing were responses to a life that offered young men a future tied to desks, classrooms, and boardrooms, and the young men who sailed during the Maritime Revival wanted to experience as much physicality as possible to insure they were receiving the so-called “real thing.”⁷⁹

Willfully making things as difficult as possible illustrates the changing cultural meaning of square-rigged sailing. Quests for antimodern authenticity, desires for physical fitness, practicing for one’s voyage beforehand, and rebuilding one’s masculine

⁷⁸ John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 8. See also, Kathryn Grover, ed., *Fitness in American Culture: Images of Health, Sport, and the Body, 1830-1940* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1989); Pamela L. Moore, ed., *Building Bodies* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997); and William R. Hunt, *Body Love: The Amazing Career of Bernarr MacFadden* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989).

⁷⁹ Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 3.

identity were all united by something new under the sun: for the first time, the desire to make one's shipboard life as difficult as possible was a stated goal. For example, romanticizing hardship and the adventurous nature of square-rigged sail was one of Alan Villiers's chief preoccupations. In 1929, Villiers and shipmate Ronald Walker set out with a movie camera to film a passage on one of the last square-rigged vessels. They sought a craft "without a wheelhouse and without brace winches, and those other man-saving gadgets of later days," wrote Villiers. He and Walker wanted to film an authentic Cape Horn passage in an older-style ship, one where the crew "had to stand their frigid tricks at the huge open wheel, unprotected, tortured by the cold fury of the wind, sodden by the ceaseless rain, cut by the merciless hail." However, Villiers revealed his true colors: "We had no desire to share their misery!" he cheerfully admitted, "but that was part of the life we wished to record on the film, the romance of the helm. A wheelhouse would take it from us."⁸⁰ Villiers's admitted that the modern conveniences found on several of the vessels that he and Walker rejected as subjects of their film were indeed beneficial to sailors in terms of workload, comfort, and safety. They would also cause the "loss of some of the most vivid, most striking, and hardest to obtain of the pictures we sought." The greater the hardship, the greater the sense of adventure, authenticity, and romance. Villiers wanted his film to "stir people's blood...compel in them some fear of the cold heartlessness of the bitter sea, some admiration for the courageous spirits who set out in their old sailing ships and always fought it." Villiers filmed and wrote towards the end of the Maritime Revival, but his outlook was the same as that of the young men seeking adventures on square-riggers from the 1870s through the 1930s. His point of

⁸⁰ Alan Villiers, *By Way of Cape Horn* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Company, 1930), 12-13.

view was a culmination of nearly fifty years of men sailing for adventure, romance, masculinity-building, or antimodern impulses. These predecessors had identified square-rigged sail's essential values, and he enthusiastically accepted them when shipping out in the 1920s. Villiers asserted that "we wanted to film the real life aboard the Cape Horn ship," while in actuality, he wanted to film the most romantic, heroic, and archetypically masculine elements of the story. Other vessels at the docks of Port Lincoln, Melbourne, and Wallaroo, Australia, which he had rejected because they possessed too many modern conveniences, were real Cape Horn ships too, and far more representative of square-rigged sail in the 1920s.

Similarly, Carl Cutler, writing in 1930, wanted to portray life on clipper ships at its most heroic—and difficult. Embroiled in an argument with Charles R. Patterson regarding an illustration in Cutler's *Greyhounds of the Sea* (1930), Cutler admitted that he probably should have used a scene showing "more typical reefing conditions." Instead, he chose to include a much more difficult operation, "the thing at its hardest...with a short handed crew."⁸¹ Before joining the bark *Peking* in 1929, Irving Johnson and shipmate Charlie visited Northern Ireland's natural wonder, the Giant's Causeway. Johnson's hat was blown out to sea, and Charlie suggested that he take advantage of a near-by "wishing stream" and "wishing seat." Johnson drank from the stream, sat upon the seat, and wished for his wayward hat's return. About half an hour later, the hat drifted ashore. Having confirmed the power of the seat, Charlie suggested that Johnson wish for more. Thinking this a famous idea, Johnson again "drank from the magic spring, then sat in the stone seat and said 'I wish for plenty of exciting storms on

⁸¹ Carl Cutler to Charles R. Patterson, 24 June 1930, Cutler Papers, box 1, folder 13a.

our voyage around Cape Horn.”⁸² Before the Maritime Revival, this brand of hubris would have been considered absolute insanity. Now, seeking out difficulty, and even asking for it, assured the young men who shipped out that they were indeed having a true and intense experience, one that allowed them to commune with their ancestors, ideas, and folk traditions. Cutler, Johnson, Villiers, and Walker wanted to represent an antiquated way of life because the Maritime Revival and the constructive power of decline had influenced their own attitudes, so that difficulty made for a more laudatory historical memory of the sailing experience. By the late 1920s, these men’s outlook reflected a new significance for sailing that had been developing since W.H. Taylor had first been crazy to go to sea.

Jackson Lears has asserted that a major tenet of antimodernism was more than mere escapism, that antimodernists’ “quests for authenticity eased their own and others’ adjustments to a streamlined culture of consumption.”⁸³ For Maritime Revival sailors, living the preindustrial life of a square-rigger sailor was the way to do this. Taylor was among the first to sail and the first to leave the sea. His voyage changed his impression of life at sea: “It took some of the romance out of me,” lamented Taylor, “the trip being somewhat of a disappointment [sic].”⁸⁴ Taylor “stil [sic]...did not give up the idear [sic] of following the sea,” but between disappointment that his initial voyage fell short of the

⁸² Johnson, *Peking Battles Cape Horn*, 3-4.

⁸³ Lears, *No Place of Grace*, xiv. See also, Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man*.

⁸⁴ Taylor, “Narragansett Pier,” 20, folder 37.

writings of Cooper, Dana, and Dampier, and his “parants [sic]...so much against it,” he accepted his father’s offer to take over the bathhouse business.⁸⁵

Taylor’s oceangoing experience reflected several elements important to antimodern ideas. As were many young men, he was indeed crazy to go to sea, and had the opportunity to do so at the conclusion of the Civil War. He also went on a coasting voyage, the one segment of the maritime economy growing after the war. Moreover, his specific impressions of a seafaring lifestyle were learned from books and popular culture in addition to the firsthand experience of living on the shores of Narragansett Bay for most of his eighteen years. Most importantly, Taylor represents precisely the kind of young man who would want to ship out. His decision was based on more on a desire to experience a kind of life rather than out of economic necessity. Indeed, Taylor likely lost money by sailing, considering his family’s success at servicing the wealthy bathers on Narragansett Beach.

Taylor, like Harlow, McDonald, Swift, Johnson, and Villiers after him, embraced sailing culture as an opportunity to commune with the past at a time when both seafaring culture and America were changing. It was a search for authenticity in a changing world—in his case, a new world of hotels, wealthy seaside visitors, and bathing beaches. In the end, his quest for the authentic—augmented by a little parental pressure—resulted in keeping him ashore for the rest of his life, his experience easing his personal transition to a modern life in the beachfront service industry. As with so many others, Taylor’s backwards glance helped him to move forward and adjust to a changing Narragansett in the Gilded Age.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 25.

For Harlow, too, seafaring helped him ease into modern American life. At the close of his 1928 narrative, he writes: "After parting company at Boston, I have never seen one of the crew since," hardly a ringing endorsement of shipboard camaraderie.⁸⁶ Moreover, an experience during his third voyage, on board the bark *Conquest* to and from Bridgetown, Barbados, took some of the romance out of seafaring. On the return voyage, a drunken Captain G.W. Howes insisted that the crew set more sail, despite foggy conditions. When the captain went below, the mate had the crew furl the sail. Then, the captain returned topsides and demanded it be set again. This drama was repeated four times, until the fog lifted and all on board realized that the vessel was headed for Chatham Beach on Cape Cod, with little sea room to alter course. "This incident," Harlow wrote in his memoir, "no doubt was the cause of my not becoming a sailor for the rest of my days, for I was disgusted that a captain of a ship should so far debase himself in the interest of the ship and crew and owners as well, that it left a lasting impression on me that there were better things ahead."⁸⁷

One of the better things ahead for Harlow was becoming part of the new managerial class where there was far more money to be earned and no chance of drowning. He moved to Chicago and worked for the Methodist Book Concern as a clerk and then salesman, at "better salaries than I could get at sea."⁸⁸ Even so, he left the job after refusing the unmanly job of washing the windows, as there was "a woman who took care of all three floors" of the building. Harlow remained on land for the rest of his

⁸⁶ Harlow, *Making of a Sailor*, 377

⁸⁷ Harlow, memoir, 101, 109.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 110.

working days as an employee for Wells Fargo, American Express, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, among others. Harlow united masculine, adventure-seeking, and antimodern tendencies while he simultaneously adopted a modern outlook and employment. He ended his working life in an occupation that may be the epitome of the managerial class then coming into existence: an accountant for Seattle concerns such as the William Stanley and Sons Brickyard, the Occidental Fish Company, the Dean and Johnson Lumber Company, and the Puget Sound Navigation Company.⁸⁹

Joshua Slocum, the first person to sail alone around the world, stands in stark contrast to the antimodernism of Maritime Revival sailors. When Slocum wrote his serialized tale, *Sailing Alone Around the World*, for *The Century* in 1899, he was an old man and had already had a long career afloat. He may have been nostalgic in his old age, but his motivation for a seafaring career had always been gainful employment. “When times for freighters got bad, as at last they did,” Slocum wrote “I tried to quit the sea, [but] what was there for an old sailor to do?”⁹⁰ His solo circumnavigation returned to preindustrial technology, and ultimately, Slocum succeeded in finding a way to utilize his past skills for both individual achievement and future income. He was astute enough to know that, at the height of the Maritime Revival, American readers would have a taste for his manly adventure story of a single man against nature.

Ultimately, Maritime Revival-era sailors lived the tensions between antimodernity and modernity. After his one voyage, Harvard graduate Tod Swift worked as an engineer at the North Star gold mine in Grass Valley, California, and, when homesick for

⁸⁹ Harlow, memoir, 112, 114, 119, 166, 167, 170, 175. Even as an accountant, Harlow maintained his maritime connections and his enthusiasm for the vessels on the Seattle waterfront never dimmed.

⁹⁰ Slocum, *Sailing Alone Around the World*, 226.

Massachusetts, took a position in Boston with the Submarine Signal Corporation, testing underwater acoustical technology aboard modern motor vessels.⁹¹ Irving Johnson and Alan Villiers took to sea with portable movie cameras. Despite a lifetime sailing “outmoded” vessels, P.A. McDonald still embraced the very modern idea of looking to the federal government for assistance.⁹² He lamented that the New Deal had failed to improve the prospects of the American merchant fleet. “In the over sea trade our outmoded ships can not hope to compete with the up to date motor-vessels of Japan, Holland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, Etc., without a substantial subsidy and improved labor-conditions” he wrote in 1938, while complaining that “so far, our so-called ‘Labor Relations Brd’ has failed to get related, and have only succeeded in gumming up the works.”⁹³ These men went to sea looking backwards, but they all found ways to embrace the culture of the future economically, technologically, and politically.

An Oceanic Pastoral

Heralding and idealizing a certain type of masculinity, the founders of the New Bedford Whaling Museum, between 1903 and 1941, developed exhibits that championed the authentic, preindustrial and heroic lifestyle. “Intent as it was on redeeming the reputation of Yankee whalers, the museum had essentially become a memorial to the golden era’s ‘old type of manhood’” James Lindgren has written. “Whether it was through their Whaleman Statue, jaggig wheel exhibits, or the ship-shape *Lagoda*,

⁹¹ Bunting, *Sea Struck*, 314, 317.

⁹² See Lisbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁹³ P.A. McDonald to J. Ferrell Colton, 6 June 1938. Colton collection, box 1 folder 3.

museum makers had idealized a world that presumably passed with mechanized whaling, newer immigrants, and industrial factories. However, those same museum makers—and their sons—were precisely the men who had ushered in the new era.”⁹⁴ These museum makers and their sons were of the same kith and kin who privileged square-rigged sailing above other maritime enterprise. Antimodernism paradoxically helped insure that the new era would prevail—but not before the Maritime Revival helped to build a public memory of seafaring far different from that of previous generations. Square-rigged sailing’s new meaning insured it a central place in American culture, helping to create a popular image of seafaring that was, in effect, an oceanic pastoral.

Ultimately, these men relied on the working-class sailors to provide the environment for their adventures, but the luxury to choose one’s own adventure was a privilege of middle- and upper-class men. If family and proximity set the stage, free time and economic freedom offered the opportunity, and even though they sailed shoulder to shoulder, the meaning of seafaring to the middle- and upper-class sailors of the Maritime Revival differed considerably from that of their working-class shipmates. Working-class sailors might find seafaring an adventurous challenge, and share the value of adventure, but they sailed for employment. Like boys taking to water for fun, the men who signed on board sailing ships in from the 1870s through the 1930s had the means to devote some of their early adulthood to adventure, and while every boy might crave adventure, only those with secure economic standing could afford to take so much time solely for personal development. Square-rigged sailing for middle class youth was a way to

⁹⁴ James Lindgren, “New Bedford Whaling Museum,” 205.

prolong their adolescence, a central requirement for the development of middle class youth culture.⁹⁵

Signing on board sailing vessels gave white men, told that they should laud their primitive sides and live strenuous lives, places where they could reclaim their masculinity and class standing. Life afloat encompassed most of the elements of a desirable masculinity, as scholars of gender have pointed them out: suffering under adverse conditions, experience in male groups with a hierarchical command structure, and reliance on physical and mental strength. Like logging camps, fishing vessels, and shore-based fishing camps, sailing provided a male-segregated spatial environment, and, by the 1880s, also provided a significantly greater racially-segregated environment than it had in the past.⁹⁶ Such discrete spaces allowed white men the chance to have their authentic preindustrial experience before moving along with their careers ashore. At the same time, the gendered space and racial segregation on board offered middle and upper-class men a veritable safe zone—one free of gender and racial considerations—in which to reinforce the primacy of white men who were seeking to reassert their dominant role in American life. Sailing's all-male environment helped to establish “caste thinking”

⁹⁵ See Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Paula S. Fass, *Children of a New World, Society, Culture, and Globalization* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Neil Campbell, ed., *American Youth Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Richard L. Rapson, ed., *The Cult of Youth in Middle Class America* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1971); Howard P. Chudacoff, *How Old are You?: Age Consciousness in American Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989); and Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

⁹⁶ Holdsworth, “‘I’m a Lumberjack and I’m OK’,” 13. Holdsworth has explored how masculine identities found expression in male-segregated “built environments” in urban settings, but also in the above-mentioned camps. Characterizing it as a turn “Towards Jim Crow at Sea,” W. Jeffrey Bolster reflected on the removal of African Americans from seafaring after the Civil War despite their participation in maritime life for centuries in *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997). For more on gendered spatial arrangements and its consequences, see Daphne Spain, “Gendered Spaces and Women’s Status,” in *Sociological Theory* 11, no.2 (July 1993): 137-151 and Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1992).

among these men, and helped reinforce core American values as they saw them.⁹⁷

Sailing square-riggers was an anti-feminist, antimodern adventure that helped middle class men renovate their senses of self and reestablish a sense of superiority in a changing society. Ruggedly masculine values could be inculcated into middle- and upper-class young men by reinventing square-rigged sailing as an elite tradition, when in actuality, most of these participants moved outside of their social class when they redefined the meaning of seafaring.⁹⁸ Not every middle-class white man who shipped out between 1870 and 1930 recognized these motivating factors, but they are among the reasons privileged young men started seeking out experiences that, a generation earlier, would have been beneath them except as members of the officer corps.

Throughout their youth, middle- and upper-class men had the luxury of choosing their own paths. On land, they need not find employment in northeastern factories nor midwestern farms. Shoreside, they avoided work as roustabouts or longshoremen. Afloat, they shunned shoveling coal into steamships' boilers and pumping diesel fuel into combustion engines. These jobs held none of the panache that seafaring under sail possessed. In fact, these men did not need to go to sea at all; they chose to do so because seafaring represented a very specific idea to their social class and culture. Revival-era sailors went to sea seeking authentic, preindustrial experiences that would connect them

⁹⁷ Green, *Great American Adventure*, 217. Scandinavian and German-owned and officered vessels dominated square-rigged sailing by the 1930s, providing American men a largely white environment in which to cultivate further a sense of racial superiority.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 221, 6, 80; Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 17, 184, 185, 193. See Allen Warren, "Popular Manliness: Baden Powell, Scouting, and the Development of Manly Character," in Mangan and Walvin, *Manliness and Morality*, 199-219; and E. Anthony Rotundo, "Learning About Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-Class Family in Nineteenth Century America," in Mangan and Walvin, *Manliness and Morality*, 35-51. See also John Peck, *Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719-1917* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Bert Bender, *Sea-Brothers: The Tradition of American Sea Fiction from Moby-Dick to the Present* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

to the halcyon days of square-rigged sailing and to the exploits of their ancestors, who had built a nation on all forms of maritime enterprise. Square-rigged sail fulfilled their quest for genuine, intense experiences against the backdrop of a modernizing world. By seeking out these antimodern experiences, upper-class young men were trying to create meaning and continuity with a past they saw slipping away in a modernizing society and culture. As they did so, the diversity of American maritime life, whether of workforce, vessel type, technological advance, or trade, was lost to popular culture and public memory. Whether strenuous living to reclaim one's masculinity, seeking ties to the past, living out authentic experiences, or being an adventurer in the service of national, racial, or class supremacy, these young men of the upper and middle classes were crazy to go to sea for reasons far different than those of their fathers and grandfathers.

CHAPTER III

ARMCHAIR SAILORS: PUBLISHING AND THE MARITIME REVIVAL

Frederick Pease Harlow sailed square-riggers in the 1870s during the embryonic Maritime Revival. While he left the sea and spent nearly forty years as a bookkeeper, the sea never left him. He was a collector of maritime *objets d'art*, a ship model-builder, and a musicologist who collected seafaring songs. In the 1920s, he began writing his memoirs during slow times around the office of the Puget Sound Navigation Company. Harlow's family connections to the sea may have influenced his decision to sail in the 1870s, but his 1928 book, and its publisher, better reflected the sensibilities of the mature Maritime Revival. The Marine Research Society of Salem, Massachusetts, and its publisher, George Francis Dow, were instrumental in shepherding Harlow's work from manuscript to publication. "Thank you so much for remembering me," Fred's wife Gertrude wrote thanking Dow for his recent gift of an inscribed copy of his *Arts and Crafts in New England, 1704-1775: Gleanings from Boston*. "Also I thank you for the very nice cordial letters you write to Fred. I trust you are going to find just the right title for Fred's 'Darn good youth,'" she confidently declared in January, 1928.¹ Fred's first book was out by the end of the year, with the more marketable title, *The Making of a*

¹ Gertrude G. Harlow to George Francis Dow, 5 January 1928, George Francis Dow Papers 1926-1928, Ms. N-1133, box 7, folder 1929, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA (hereafter cited as Dow papers, box and folder numbers). Considering the conversation, it is apparent that Gertrude Harlow had received Dow's *Arts and Crafts in New England, 1704-1775: Gleanings from Boston* (Topsfield, MA: Wayside Press, 1927), and not his other work published in 1927, *Slave Ships and Slaving* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1927).

Sailor, or, Sea Life Aboard a Yankee Square-Rigger. For Harlow, square-rigged sailing's decline was a loss of American identity, and his Maritime Revival-era seafaring narrative offered the cultural antidote. For Dow, publishing maritime books was a logical extension of his work for the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) and his position as secretary of the Essex Institute. He had spent his career establishing that colonial and Revolutionary-era Americans, their homes, and their material culture represented proper American aesthetics and essential American values. As technological progress in the marine world marched on, Dow's attention to antiquarian artifacts and heroic characters and experiences turned seaward.

The attraction of the sea in the 1920s was not limited to the young men who signed on board the last commercial square-riggers. Many more were armchair sailors who discovered their own connection to maritime heritage through the printed word. Remaining on dry land, their desire to commune with a golden age of sail was motivated by the same cultural forces as those of young men who shipped out. The proliferation of maritime books between 1870 and the 1930s reflected some Americans' desire to celebrate maritime heritage, but only the segments they deemed noteworthy. Seldom were weevil-filled ship's biscuit, cramped and damp quarters, or corporal punishment remembered, and when they were, they deserved mention only to cast sailors in a sympathetic light. Instead, nearly all books on maritime topics lauded the maritime experience.

Seafaring literature can be divided into three categories: first-person voyage narratives, fiction, and non-fiction, and their evolution illuminates the development of the Maritime Revival from the 1880s through the 1930s. Within each, the messages of

individual authors were contingent upon both contemporary maritime events and their respective cultural milieus. As the Maritime Revival progressed decade by decade, the published output rode the wave of current events in the contemporary maritime world. In the 1870s and 1880s, authors called for a merchant marine renaissance, directly or obliquely referenced maritime law and Congressional Committees, and openly vilified bureaucrats and politicians, whom they saw as hindering America's return to the seas. In the decades around the turn of the twentieth century, calls for renaissance remained but were tempered with antimodern characters and ideas. These works romanticized the experiences, lifestyles, and labor force of the sea, and located core sets of national values and behaviors in sailors and seafaring. By the mature Maritime Revival of the 1920s and 1930s, meticulously-crafted books of technical details and antiquarian histories appeared in print, giving permanent record to what was now lauded as a heroic era.

Sea Narratives

Although voyage narratives reached back to Homer's *Odyssey*, first-person voyage narratives published or reissued during the Maritime Revival responded to renewed interest in a traditional marine world that was fading by the 1870s.² First-person accounts offered readers opportunities to identify with individual protagonist-authors and their daring deeds, and, while grounded in fact, these works often read like works of fiction. For readability and salability, narratives were constructed with an eye toward telling good stories over exact details, and these works sometimes trod a fine line between fact and fiction. Though eyewitness accounts chronicling actual voyages,

² See Robert Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

almost without exception these narratives represented idealized voyages and sequences of events, and they were complicated by innuendo, speculation, memory, and ulterior motivations.³

Sea narratives shared common characteristics, many of which Richard Henry Dana established in 1840. After going to sea to reinvigorate his health, he returned to land and wrote *Two Years Before the Mast* with a reformer's agenda to make sea life less harsh for the men who sailed the world's unregulated oceans. *Two Years Before the Mast* "initiated the genre of journey narratives," according to Thomas Philbrick, and established three major tenets often emulated by others. Such narratives were written in the first person. They were archly masculine: all engaged young men as their protagonists. Most significantly, they all took a "young hero" away from "familiarity and security of his home surroundings," Philbrick wrote, placed him "into a remote region," and forced him to engage with "primitive nature and uncivilized peoples."⁴ The shipboard environment and its unique culture, as well as the ship's ports of call and destination, made up the strange, the primitive, and the remote that lent journey narratives their transformative power. Dana went to sea to improve his eyesight, but returned with his life's work defined. "If God should ever give me the means," the tender college boy vowed after witnessing a brutal flogging, "I would do something to redress the grievances

³ See Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

⁴ Thomas Philbrick, "Introduction," in Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea* (1840; repr., New York: Penguin, 1981), 23.

and relieve the sufferings of that poor class of beings, of whom I then was one.”⁵ He would reform sailors, their habits, and the exploitive practices of their employers.

Reform, Dana’s stated motivation for writing his narrative, was decidedly rational, and it addressed his contemporary maritime experience-as-lived. Since he sailed between 1834 and 1836 and wrote in 1840, when seafaring was still a commonplace activity, *Two Years Before the Mast* serves as a helpful basis of comparison to later works. Dana’s concerns were firmly planted in the maritime world as it presented itself in 1840, without overly-romantic impressions. Dana described early California, and much of Harper and Brothers’ brisk sales resulted from Americans trying to learn about California during the 1849 Gold Rush.⁶ Still, whether readers focused on abuse, reform, or travelogue, little in Dana’s work suggested anything heroic, archetypical, or extraordinary about the seafaring experience, though he was, at times, awed by the sea’s magnificence. *Two Years Before the Mast* suggested quite the opposite: that seafaring was a miserable experience for its participants, who were largely without rights once at sea.

As Philbrick noted, nineteenth-century readers “regarded the book as an urgent call for the reform of the condition of seamen,” but its effect on the “reality of maritime life” was minimal. However, “its effect on the literary image of that life was enormous.”⁷ While not a work of the Maritime Revival, *Two Years Before the Mast* nevertheless cast a very long shadow upon future literary output of Maritime Revival-era authors by

⁵ Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea*, Thomas Philbrick, ed. (1840; repr., New York: Penguin, 1981), 157.

⁶ Philbrick, “Introduction,” 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

establishing key parts of the sea-narrative form. By the 1880s, the contours of American maritime life had changed, as had the motivations of narrative writers. Few looked to reform seafaring's labor conditions. Instead, set against industrial America and westward expansion, these writers were trying to save what they considered a passing industry and important lifestyle. Dana's basic formula remained; masculine voices wrote in the first person about dislocating events in alien lands and cultures, and these became transformative experiences. But the authors were no longer the people being renovated. Instead, they wrote about the transformative power of sea narratives in an attempt to influence their readers and shape national policies.

Captain Samuel Samuels's *From the Forecastle to the Cabin* (1887) epitomized the marriage of Dana's narrative construction with the exigencies of what Samuels saw as declining American maritime power. Samuels was probably already at sea when Dana sailed, but he published decades later. Like Fred Harlow, Samuels considered seafaring an American birthright, and, also like Harlow, never let the facts get in the way of a good story. His highly-embellished autobiography described rollicking tales of adventure, from his initiation into alien shipboard life as an eleven-year-old cabin boy, up through experiences with foreign cultures once he was in command, at age twenty-one. Samuels added to Dana's formula by making himself, rather than the seafaring experience, the centerpiece of the story, exploiting his own life as a nautical archetype for younger Americans. As did Benjamin Franklin, Samuels built a tale of American ingenuity out of his life story, setting himself as a model for the self-reliant American man, and, by extension, the merchant marine. His voyage narrative was a caricature, with himself as exemplary of all that was strong, independent, essentially American, and masculine,

values that he believed were critical to the repair and growth of American maritime power.

Samuels was concerned primarily with reinvigorating America shipping, and he editorialized throughout the text on how to accomplish this goal and why it was necessary. He asserted, based on his experience in the merchant service, and especially his command of the 1853-built packet ship *Dreadnought*, that American ships had dominated the Atlantic packet trade in the 1840s and 1850s. Whether trading with England or the Continent, American ships “were the wonder of the world,” preferred by passengers and merchants alike, and surpassed only by California clippers in the 1850s. German and English shipping companies looked to East Boston’s Donald McKay to build them vessels.⁸

When Samuels wrote in 1887, American merchant shipping had suffered heavy losses, partly resulting from the Civil War and partly resulting from what he considered suspect politicians and policies. By aiding the Confederacy, England took advantage of the Civil War to “regain her supremacy” of the deepwater trade that the United States, he claimed, “in a great measure...had wrested from her.” But Americans themselves were more to blame than the British. Tariff barriers protected nineteenth-century American industries from foreign manufactures, and likewise, registry laws required American-flagged ships to be built in the United States.⁹ However, American shipyards were not competitive, and some voices advocated loosening the registry laws. For these people,

⁸ Samuel Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin* (1887; repr., Boston: Lauriat, 1924), 258.

⁹ John Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy, 1789-1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1941), 57. See also, Joanne Reitano, *The Tariff Question in the Gilded Age: The Great Debate of 1888* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); and Jack Beatty, *Age of Betrayal: The Triumph of Money in America, 1865-1900* (New York: Knopf, 2007).

Samuels reserved special venom. “Why should we not have the same protection in shipping that we have in manufacturing?” demanded Samuels. “Who but the foreign interests among us are clamoring for free-trade in shipping?” Since the war, he claimed, “we have gridironed this country with railroads,” encouraged industrial and mining interests, and helped the United States recover from Civil War-era debt thanks, largely, to protectionist policies.¹⁰ He alluded unsympathetically to the Populists’ revolt, and especially belittled demands by some shippers to employ the cheapest carriers, regardless of nationality. American seafaring could never recover while some shippers supported these positions, and all these issues were part of the United States’ seafaring problem, as far as he was concerned.

Samuels had Captain John Codman, author of *Free Ships: The Restoration of the American Carrying Trade* (1878), and other advocates of “free ships,” in his sights. Free ship supporters wanted to allow American shipping companies to buy foreign-built craft; American shipbuilders resisted because they “believed that they would receive more orders” if they fought against allowing American companies to buy vessels abroad.¹¹ Samuels agreed that the loss of American shipping had to be remedied, but disagreed with Codman’s solution.¹² Samuels argued confidently that American yards could become competitive in iron and steamship construction. “Fie upon the coward who says we can’t build ships equal to hers [Britain’s] and asks for permission to buy her ships,”

¹⁰ Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, 258-259.

¹¹ Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 434; Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America’s Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2008), 215.

¹² See John Codman, *Free Ships: The Restoration of the American Carrying Trade* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1878).

he declared at his book's close. "It is not for the American mind to retrograde and to look across the ocean for an inspiration."¹³

Samuels used his adventurous life and his autobiography to highlight successful American shipping and suggest legislative paths for recovery. He urged Congressional leadership to "rise to the occasion" and provide assistance to American shippers and shipbuilders.¹⁴ He hoped that the "short-sighted policy" on marine affairs was "due to ignorance rather than to the influence of lobbyists who are stimulated by foreign gold." Calling Codman and his ilk the "Benedict Arnolds among us" and claiming that the only people in the United States "who clamor for free ships" were those more concerned with "the interest of Europe," Samuels's position supported the findings of the 1869 Lynch Committee and the 1882 Dingley Committee, both of which demonstrated "great solicitude" for shipbuilders, even obsolescent wooden shipbuilders.¹⁵

To bolster his case, Samuels raised the timeworn specter of national security against free ship advocates. He questioned whether the United States would exist if it had lacked naval power during the Revolution, War of 1812, and Civil War. The U.S.

¹³ Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, 307.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

¹⁵ Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, 259; Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 435, 471; Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 216. Led by Maine Congressman John Lynch, the Lynch Committee refers to the Select Committee on the Causes of the Reduction of American Tonnage, and specifically to their 1870 report, *Causes of the Reduction of American Tonnage* (to accompany bills H.R. 1261 and H.R. 1262), report, 41st Cong., 2nd sess., February 17, 1870, H. Rpt. 28, 1-294, serial 1463 (hereafter called and cited Lynch Report). The Dingley Committee refers to the Joint Select Committee on American Shipbuilding, and specifically to their 1882 *American Shipping* (to accompany bill H.R. 7061), report, 47th Cong., 2nd sess., December 15, 1882, H. Rpt. 1827, 1-323, serial 2159 (hereafter called and cited Dingley Report). U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed October 21, 2008).

Navy's "nursery was our mercantile marine," insisted Samuels.¹⁶ Apathy on the part of politicians had resulted in the United States Navy sinking to insignificant levels. "Now, what are we?" he chided, and answering his own question: "One of the great nations of earth, at the mercy of the least of nations in case of war. We have been too much absorbed in the interior development of our country and in money making."¹⁷ Indeed, national defense was the same rationale wooden and iron shipyards, the Navy, and shippers with shipbuilding connections—all protectionist advocates—had used over the previous decade to guarantee continuation of the current registry laws that prohibited foreign competition.¹⁸ Samuels wrote in 1887 in support of protectionism because the free shippers were building support: the minority report of the Dingley Committee vociferously advocated for free ships and shipping, and anti-protectionist Grover Cleveland was elected President in 1884.¹⁹ Samuels wanted to ensure that the protection of American maritime enterprise did not flag under growing calls for policy change.

Treacherous foreign influence and commerce, domestic apathy, outright treasonous behavior, and the bogeyman of free trade all conspired, so Samuels believed, to reduce American shipping to embarrassing levels, and the United States had been emasculated in maritime affairs. Why, he asked, had the United States, only a few decades earlier the "strong arm on the ocean," become "paralyzed" to the extent that the

¹⁶ Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, 307.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁸ Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 434.

¹⁹ Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 473; Dingley Report, 22. See also, H. Paul Jeffers, *An Honest President: The Life and Presidencies of Grover Cleveland* (New York: W. Morrow, 2000); Alyn Brodsky, *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Character* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 2000); and Richard E. Welch, Jr., *The Presidencies of Grover Cleveland* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1988).

“weakest nations look in pity at our fallen greatness?”²⁰ Shipping was critical to the economy, national pride hung in the balance, and American honor demanded maritime prominence on a world stage. Concerned that England had regained maritime supremacy at the expense of the United States, Samuels echoed the sentiments of the Lynch Committee. “Every consideration, whether of interest or of national pride,” said their report, “impels us to build upon our own soil the ships which are to bear the flag of our country to all quarters of the globe.”²¹ With no truck for second place, Samuels, more poetically, referenced classical mythology. “Niobe’s children could never be restored, but our shipping can,” he wrote, “and it will again be in the van among all the nations.”²² Samuels’s formative years and rise to command were experienced at sea, and there, he believed, could be found the values to inspire both readers and politicians.

If the return of American primacy afloat was Samuels’s motivation for writing in 1887, the posthumous republication of his work reflected the different priorities of the mature Maritime Revival. A new edition of *From the Forecastle to the Cabin* appeared in 1924, at the height of the Maritime Revival, and its new introduction reflected the obsessive attention to accuracy—in model building, in technical details, in recreating shipboard culture, and in record-breaking feats—that characterized the “authentic” experience so important to antimodernists. Accuracy of detail could be ignored when describing the rougher edges of the experience, but when pertaining to superlative achievements, it helped to cast square-rigged seafaring in a heroic light and allowed the

²⁰ Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, 258.

²¹ Lynch Report, xiv. The registry and cabotage laws arose from the Tonnage Act of 1789.

²² Samuels, *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, 258.

consumers of the Maritime Revival's output the opportunity for appropriate veneration of the maritime past. Ralph D. Paine, an author of collegiate and maritime fiction, introduced the 1924 edition and explored a key incident in Samuels' career: his purported record of 9 days and 17 hours to cross the Atlantic in 1859.²³ Paine went to great lengths to straighten out facts without impugning Samuels's memory or reputation. "Nothing is further from the present writer's mind," wrote Paine, "than to discredit, in the smallest degree, the illustrious career of Captain Samuels and his ship."²⁴ To secure Samuels's reputation for a new generation of enthusiasts, Paine exonerated Samuels as the source of false information by using the captain's own words (or lack thereof), noting that Samuels omitted the legendary, but undocumented, record-breaking passage in a book otherwise full of superlatives. Additionally, Paine's own careful research of contemporary newspaper marine reports revealed that Samuels had indeed reported the information accurately at the time of the actual passage. Paine dismissed Samuels's oft-quoted claim as the product of an aging memory: "A perplexing bit of nautical history and the weight of the evidence is against the authenticity of the alleged passage of nine days and seventeen hours!" he concluded. "It may be fairly set down as a legend of unknown origin," he continued, "which deluded Captain Samuels himself when he had become a very old man who dreamed of departed splendors and to whom the past was a romance dimmed and remote."²⁵ Paine nevertheless noted that Samuels and the *Dreadnought* still recorded numerous fast Atlantic passages—the fastest being 13 days, 8 hours, with four

²³ John H. Morrison, *History of the New York Ship Yards* (New York: William F. Sametz and Company, 1909) 141. <http://books.google.com> (accessed March 31, 2009).

²⁴ Ralph D. Paine, "Introduction," in *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*, xix.

²⁵ Paine, "Introduction," xxiii.

runs being fewer than 16 days—to show how both Captain and ship were worth remembering with superlatives, even if they had been caught up in an idle sea story. Samuels's most astonishing feats were accomplished while he sailed on square-riggers—one ship in particular. For Paine, Samuels's life still stood as an exemplar of America's best values. Seeing only decline and a loss of status in the real world, Samuels had publicized his story in 1887 in a bid to influence the present state of maritime affairs. By 1924, the sense of decline was different—more cultural than economic—yet the captain's autobiography still had a role to play in reclaiming the heroic past for present and future Americans.²⁶

Maritime Fiction

Fictional seafaring grew in popularity during the Maritime Revival. New works incorporated themes of heroic sailors and the elemental challenges of seafaring as value-infused activities. Other works, published earlier, experienced significant rebirth and recognition in the 1910s and 1920s. For authors, the fictional world offered a medium where statements of purpose could be passed, subtly or explicitly. Social class remained a principal factor in the underlying messages of these works of fiction. While heroicizing the maritime past, calling for the resuscitation of marine affairs, or exploiting a romanticized version of history, all the authors imparted, along class lines, what they believed were essential American values.

²⁶ In the sixteenth century, Richard Hakluyt used accounts of English voyages, according to Jack Beeching, to “promote national confidence,” and hoped “to give policy, whether private or national, a better sense of direction,” because England had “arrived laggardly on the world’s commercial scene.” Hakluyt wanted his late-arriving nation to achieve a place among the Venetian, German, Dutch, Spanish, and Portuguese competitors on the world stage. Samuels had similar goals. See Jack Beeching, “Introduction,” in Richard Hakluyt, *Voyages and Discoveries: The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. Jack Beeching (New York: Penguin, 1972) 11-12, 9.

Scottish-born Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, serialized in 1881 and published in 1883, began the rehabilitation of pirates in American culture. Stevenson recast these criminals not as murderous, rapacious thugs, but as independent, strong-minded, exciting, and admirable characters. He aimed at a youth market; "If this don't fetch the kids," Stevenson asserted, "why, they have gone rotten since my day."²⁷ In addition to establishing many elements of twentieth-century pirate lore and legend, Stevenson popularized these villains as heroes, and set them on a path that would end with pirates cast as proto-socialist egalitarians.²⁸

He could not have foreseen this transformation when he wrote *Treasure Island*. A boys' coming-of-age story, *Treasure Island* was an incarnation of the masculinity-building adventure story, with upper-class protagonists partaking in a working- (or criminal!) class endeavor.²⁹ The book received new life in 1911 when publishers Charles Scribner's Sons commissioned an edition gloriously illustrated by American N.C. Wyeth. Wyeth was a student of the great American illustrator Howard Pyle, who encouraged students to paint from personal knowledge and experience. Born in Massachusetts, Wyeth drew inspiration from his love of history, from the Revolutionary War battlefield

²⁷ Robert Louis Stevenson to W.E. Henley, 25 August 1881, in Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, vol. 1, <http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/lit/literarystudies/TheLettersofRobertLouisStevensonVolume1/chap18.html> (accessed July 19, 2006). Stevenson also lived in the United States.

²⁸ See Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

²⁹ Robert Louis Stevenson, *Treasure Island*, Scribner's Illustrated Classics Series (1911; repr., New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 1999); and John Peck, *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719-1917* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

near his home in Pennsylvania, and from the coast of Maine where he summered.³⁰

Wyeth's seventeen illustrations mixed light and dark imagery, action, vivid characters, and tension. The edition's great success established Wyeth as a brilliant illustrator and established *Treasure Island* as a classic of American boys' literature.³¹

Similarly, Englishman Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous: A Story of the Grand Banks* (1897) was a strong influence on American fiction aimed at young men. Main character Harvey Cheyne, the young, spoiled son of a wealthy railroad executive, was washed overboard from a steamship and rescued by the crew of a Gloucester fishing schooner, codfishing on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. Kipling's coming-of-age story placed a privileged, upper-class boy into a working-class environment where he underwent a transformative experience. Modern and traditional were set in opposition; Harvey fell from a steamer and was rescued by fishermen on a working sailboat. At a time when the growing railroads competed with marine transportation, Kipling made Harvey's doting father a captain of industry, running a railroad, while casting the captain and crew of the schooner as the boy's saviors.³² The result was that the once-spoiled,

³⁰ Farnsworth Art Museum and Wyeth Center, "N.C. Wyeth," <http://www.farnsworthmuseum.org/wyeth/nc.html> (accessed February 22, 2008). See also, James H. Duff, et al., *An American Vision, Three Generations of Wyeth Art: N.C. Wyeth, Andrew Wyeth, James Wyeth* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1987); Kenneth L. Roberts, *Trending into Maine* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1938); and Lucien L. Agosta, *Howard Pyle* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987).

³¹ Brandywine River Museum, "N.C. Wyeth Catalogue Raisonné," <http://www.ncwyeth.org/ncbio2.htm> (accessed October 25, 2008). See also Michael Cart, *From Romance to Realism: Fifty Years of Growth and Change in Young Adult Literature* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996).

³² See Maury Klein, *The Life and Legend of Jay Gould* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Sarah Gordon, *Passage to Union: How Railroads Transformed American Life, 1829-1929* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996); Albro Martin, *Railroads Triumphant: The Growth, Rejection, and Rebirth of a Vital American Force* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Edward J. Renehan, Jr., *Commodore: The Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (New York: Basic Books, 2007); and Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 199-204.

effete brat returned with a more mature, masculine persona.³³ Like *Two Years Before the Mast*, both *Treasure Island* and *Captains Courageous* removed their protagonists from familiar settings and thrust them into alien surroundings that resulted in personal growth. Both were repeatedly republished throughout the Maritime Revival, and both resonated with American audiences, even though not written by Americans.³⁴ Their protagonists stepped outside their established social classes and earned qualities otherwise unavailable in industrializing America.

Though now vying for first position as the greatest American novel, *Moby-Dick, or, The Whale* (1851) was an abysmal failure during Herman Melville's lifetime. Still, *Moby-Dick* possessed characteristics similar to other maritime fiction under consideration, and attained its popularity during the Maritime Revival. Protagonist Ishmael took to the ship for a life-changing experience, "a way of driving off the spleen," he said. His motives were bleaker, though. "Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet" mused Ishmael, "then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can."³⁵ Ishmael's reliance on seafaring to bring him out of his maudlin funk places Melville's

³³ Rudyard Kipling, *Captains Courageous and Other Stories, including Rikki-Tikki-Tavi and the Maltese Cat* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1959).

³⁴ After its first appearance in 1883, *Treasure Island* was republished in 1911, 1915, 1926, and 1933 by Charles Scribner's Sons, (New York), 1926 by J.H. Sears, (New York), 1927 by George H. Doran (New York) and 1934 by Whitman (Racine, WI). *Captains Courageous* was first printed in 1897 and reprinted in 1898, 1899, and 1911 by the Century Company (New York), 1907, 1922, 1937, and 1939 by MacMillan (London), and 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928 ("School Edition") and 1932 by Doubleday and Doran (Garden City, NY). Neither list of editions is exhaustive.

³⁵ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or, the Whale*, Northwestern-Newberry Edition, vol. VI, Harrison Hayford, ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press and the Newberry Library, 1988), 3.

novel in the company of other sea fiction. Like the creations of Stevenson and Kipling, the semi-autobiographical Ishmael also stepped outside his social class. "I do not...ever go to sea as a passenger...nor...as a Commodore, or a Captain, or a Cook...No, when I go to sea, I go as a simple sailor," Ishmael told his audience.³⁶ Yet, he was forced to confess, "at first, this sort of thing is unpleasant enough. It touches one's sense of honor, particularly if you come of an old established family in the land." "If just previous to putting your hand into the tar-pot, you have been lording it as a county schoolmaster....The transition is a keen one, I assure you, from a schoolmaster to a sailor."³⁷ Still, Ishmael willingly put himself into a working-class, alien environment and harsh life at sea. *Moby-Dick* was no simple coming-of-age story, but Melville still wrote of a sea change. On one level, the upper-class Ishmael, seeking transformation, embraced a working-class experience. On another, by pursuing the white whale, he and the rest of the crew underwent the greatest of all conversions, though not one well understood by most of his Victorian-era readers. They were transformed from prosaic nineteenth-century whalemens at sea into philosophic warriors on a metaphysical plane, traveling, with their obsessed captain, from rational to irrational, and ultimately, from life to death.

Heretofore, scholars have attributed the Melville renaissance of the 1920s to two cultural movements: first, the shift from Victorianism to modernism, and second, the shift of America's cultural center from New England to New York City. Also, in 1921, Raymond Weaver's biography, *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic* brought *Moby-*

³⁶ Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

Dick newfound appreciation among modern literati.³⁸ It has not been recognized, however, that the Maritime Revival had created new demands for maritime-themed literature, particularly of American origin, and this additional factor also contributed to Melville's newfound prominence in the 1920s. Melville, from an old New York family of Dutch descent, belonged squarely within the "right sort" of people socially. Even if straitened circumstances led a young Melville first to teach school in Lansingburgh, New York, and then to whaling aboard the *Acushnet*, he and his family clung to their social standing, maintaining their New York City residences and taking grand tours of Europe, despite a lack of financial resources.³⁹ To upper-crust readers, Melville was the one of them: an old-stock American of their social class, a writer on maritime topics, and alive in the period of American development they considered unadulterated, before the present state of a disturbingly diverse, mongrel nation.⁴⁰ Like the Victorian-era Americans earlier, antimodernist Americans in the 1920s did not need to address the angst-ridden insights that the modernists recognized in Melville. All old-stock Americans needed to see was an adventurous whaling story.

Ironically, Melville's own attitude towards ethnicity and the working class was generally sympathetic. His major characters included South Pacific Islander Queequeg, African Daggoo, and Native American Tashtego, the three harpooners from *Moby-Dick*,

³⁸ Douglas, Ann, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, Noonday Press, 1996), 21. See also Eleanor Melville Metcalf, *Herman Melville: Cycle and Epicycle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953); Lawrence R. Thompson, *Melville's Quarrel With God* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1952); and Raymond M. Weaver, *Herman Melville, Mariner and Mystic* (New York, George H. Doran Company, 1921).

³⁹ Herschel Parker, *Herman Melville, A Biography, vol. I, 1819-1851* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 133-137, 182-185, 553, 661-701. See also, Jay Leyda, *The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville, 1819-1891* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1951).

⁴⁰ See Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*.

and Babo, the leader of a slave rebellion in *Benito Cereno*. His short story, "The 'Gees" (1856), short for "Portuguese," was, despite its derogatory language, "an implicit critique of the racist views of Melville's narrator," according to Gavin Jones. "The deep punning of Melville's sketch turns language against itself: the narrator's attempt to use language to validate a view of racial inferiority ironically suggests a rich and sophisticated intellectual heritage."⁴¹ Similarly, critic Carolyn Karcher has asserted that Melville's goal of "The 'Gees" was "to subvert, rather than openly attack, the prejudices of his public." She has demonstrated that Melville was writing in opposition to ethnologists and Southern sympathizers who claimed that black inferiority justified a continuation of slavery. Melville satirized the "format and style of ethnologists' treatises on the Negro" to disabuse the ethnological argument of race.⁴² Even if old-stock Americans only saw a whale tale, Melville's subtle messages about race, the limits of human knowledge, and the metaphysical universe were clear to modernist American readers in the 1920s, searching for what Ann Douglas has called the "terrible honesty" of introspection.⁴³ For Americans socially dislocated by pluralism, suffrage, and 1920s excess, Melville's subtle commentaries were subsumed by his use of seafaring as the setting for his work. A whaling novel by a scion of New Amsterdam was enough to attract their attention, and

⁴¹ Gavin Jones, "Dusky Comments of Silence: Language, Race, and Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno,'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 10.

⁴² Carolyn L. Karcher, "Melville's 'The 'Gees': A Forgotten Satire on Scientific Racism," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (October 1975): 421-442; 421-422, 435-426. See also Edward Gredja, *The Common Continent of Men: Racial Equality in the Writings of Herman Melville* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1974).

⁴³ Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, 31-34, 205-209. See also, Peter J. Bellis, *No Mysteries Out of Ourselves: Identity and Textual Form in the Novels of Herman Melville* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990); and Bruce L. Grenberg, *Some Other World to Find: Quest and Negation in the Works of Herman Melville* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989). For modernists, Melville's rediscovery was a fundamentally American counterpoint to the end of Victorianism.

his subject alone allowed old-stock Americans to employ it as a piece of their heroic maritime heritage.

Ralph D. Paine's writing, more typical of Maritime Revival fiction, was far from Melvillean metaphysics. Writing during the 1910s and 1920s, Paine's popular novels targeted young men with the goal of instilling in them the appropriate sets of upper-class cultural values. Some of his books even bore the Boy Scout [Every Boy's Library] seal of approval. At a time when concerns over American manhood ranged from fear of neurasthenia to fear of woman suffrage, Paine's adventure stories, filled with archly masculine, white Anglo-American protagonists, guided the socialization and development of Americanism in his adolescent readers. His audience soon discovered that sailors, pioneers, bravery, and direct action (rather than considered thought) were all desirable characters or virtues.⁴⁴ When Paine's coming-of-age stories did not concentrate on brave Western pioneers, they focused on the exploits of collegiate lettermen, the adventurous sea stories of romanticized sailors, or some combination of the two; for example, a young male protagonist might abandon college and run away to sea. While telling these stories, Paine editorialized on topics such as U.S. maritime policy, cabotage laws, and the overall decline of American shipping. Well-informed but opinionated to a fault, he addressed policy issues with the knowledge of someone who closely followed the maritime affairs of the United States.

⁴⁴ See Paul Gilmore, *The Genuine Article: Race, Mass Culture, and American Literary Manhood* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001); Ruth Oldenzeitel, *Making Technology Masculine: Men, Women, and Modern Machines in America, 1870-1945* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999); John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

Portrayals of heroic past achievement allowed Paine to stress the importance of sustaining class structures and old-stock cultural values. Samuel Samuels's maritime narrative aimed at older generations and present-day policymakers; by contrast, Paine's pulp fiction was intended to educate the young, up-and-coming class of men who would someday lead the country. Paine's direct communion with his readers made his messages more effective. "To the undergraduate," according to the *Washington Herald*, the books set on college campuses were "a living picture of the life about him," and helped readers identify with Paine's message and characters.⁴⁵

Unlike Melville, who was virtually unknown until the 1920s, Ralph Paine was widely popular. A 1912 volume of his short stories, *The Judgments of the Sea and Other Stories* illustrated Paine's style, substance, topics, appeal, and breadth of audience. It contained such adventuresome gems as "The Praying Skipper," "The Last Pilot Schooner," "Dick Floyd, Mate," "The Surfman's Holiday," "John Janvin, Shipmaster," and "The Whistling Buoy."⁴⁶ These sea adventures had been first seen in *The Century*, *Scribner's*, *McClure's*, *The American*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Outing*, all contemporary magazines aimed at popular audiences.⁴⁷

The inclusion of his works in the "Every Boy's Library" series added to Paine's wide distribution. The Boy Scouts of America initiated the series in 1913 to combat what

⁴⁵ Ralph D. Paine, *The Fugitive Freshman* (New York: Scribner's, 1910), back matter advertisements. See also Joseph A. Soares, *The Power of Privilege: Yale and America's Elite Colleges* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); and Mitchell L. Stevens, *Creating a Class: College Admissions and the Education of Elites* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁴⁶ Ralph D. Paine, *The Judgments of the Sea and Other Stories* (New York: Sturgis and Walton, 1912) head matter, table of contents.

⁴⁷ See Arthur John, *The Best Years of the Century: Richard Watson Gilder, Scribner's Monthly, and the Century Magazine, 1870-1909* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1981).

Chief Scout Executive James West called the “grave peril” of America boys’ tastes “being constantly vitiated and exploited by the great mass of cheap juvenile literature.” Paine’s 1909 *College Years* was an approved volume. West insisted that it was the BSA’s job to influence boys not only in outdoor matters, but “also in the diversions of his other leisure moments.” He believed that boys gravitated naturally toward adventure stories, but this proclivity had to be cultivated in proper fashion if young men were to be socialized in the appropriate values. “What now is needful is not that his taste should be thwarted but trained,” West wrote. “There should be constantly presented to him the books the boy likes best, yet always the books that will be best for the boy.”⁴⁸ Joining *College Years* among books that had been judged good for the American boys of 1910s and 1920s were such notable titles as Jules Verne’s *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped*, and Jack London’s *Call of the Wild*. Most of the lesser-known books were similar to Paine’s—adventurous tales that taught civic virtue and the values appropriate to upper-class Americans.⁴⁹

Like his contemporary marine enthusiasts, Paine watched a modernizing maritime world throughout the 1890s and 1900s. Alfred Thayer Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783* (1890) stimulated a building program for the U.S. Navy that gathered speed under Theodore Roosevelt’s presidency in 1901. Naval development

⁴⁸ Ralph D. Paine, *College Years* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1909), head matter. See also, Jay Melching, *On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁴⁹ “Every Boy’s Library Boy Scout Books,” www.kaboodle.com/jhattaway/every-boys-library-boy-scout-books.html; “Grosset & Dunlap’s Every Boy’s Library Boy Scout Editions,” www.seriesbooks.com/everyboyslibrary.htm (accessed October 25, 2008). See also, Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (New York, Pantheon, 1986); and Robert MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

“provided the stimulus necessary to develop fully the American shipbuilding industry,” wrote John G.B. Hutchins, and, at the turn of the twentieth century, industrial shipyards building iron hulls and employing thousands of workers dotted the East Coast in Newport News, Virginia, Quincy and Boston, Massachusetts, and Bath, Maine, among other locales. Square-rigged merchant ships generally, and America square-riggers specifically, shrank precipitously in number during the 1890s, and British, French, and German iron-hulled steamship lines all grew dramatically.⁵⁰ In perhaps the most conspicuous display of iron and steam power’s domination of the seas, President Theodore Roosevelt sent the U.S. Navy’s so-called Great White Fleet around the world on a forty-five-thousand mile, six continent show-of-force tour in 1907.⁵¹

Against this contemporary seascape, Paine wrote of old-stock Americanism, heroic seafaring, anti-immigrant sentiment, and modern/antimodern conflict through his characters and their actions. *The Penfold Adventure* (1910) introduced elderly spinster Hester Penfold, living in a family mansion that was itself a product of four generations of seafaring Penfolds, as a classically antimodern Maritime Revivalist. The stately columns of the house had once been part of a ship’s masts, its “huge parlors and library resembled a maritime museum,” portraits of ships and captains graced the walls, and furniture from the China trade sat alongside “perfect Colonial pieces for which a collector would have bartered his soul.” Amidst these relics of her family’s past, Hester occupied herself reading “the treasures most dearly prized...logbooks and sea journals of her departed

⁵⁰ Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 459-460, 438-439, 488-494.

⁵¹ Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 260.

kinsmen.”⁵² Paine could have been describing any number of colonial or Colonial Revival homes in the Piscataqua River region (on the New Hampshire-Maine border), where he lived from 1906 to 1925.⁵³ Northern New England in 1910 was considerably different than the industrialized Boston-to-New-York corridor, and the Piscataqua region was one of the most conspicuous centers of Colonial Revival architecture in the country.⁵⁴ The area was also a hub of nineteenth-century wooden shipbuilding, but during Paine’s time in residence, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard regularly launched modern iron and steel warships and submarines.⁵⁵ His vantage point in Durham, New Hampshire, offered him stark contrasts between historic and modern shipbuilding, true colonial architecture in Portsmouth, and Colonial Revival architecture throughout the region. From Hester’s vantage point, though, she only saw the glories of the past. The logbook from which she read was from the ship *True American*, commanded by her ancestor, Captain Hosea. Another heroic ancestor, captured by a French privateer, succeeded in taking over the vessel with the aid of only three other men.⁵⁶ Hester was clearly an ancestor-worshiper, and through her, Paine championed not only colonial furniture and houses, but also maritime heritage as a piece of true Americanism.

⁵² Ralph D. Paine, *The Penfold Adventure*, (1910; repr., Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), 2-3.

⁵³ *Manchester[NH] Union*, “Ralph D. Paine Found Dead in Room in Concord Hotel Late Wednesday Evening,” April 30, 1925; 1, 3; “Shankhassick Farm,” www.shankhassick.com (accessed October 27, 2008).

⁵⁴ See Sarah L. Giffen and Kevin D. Murphy, *A Noble and Dignified Stream: The Piscataqua Region in the Colonial Revival, 1860-1930* (York, ME: Old York Historical Society, 1992).

⁵⁵ See W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Cross-Grained and Wily Waters: A Guide to the Piscataqua Maritime Region* (Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall, 2002).

⁵⁶ Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 4-5.

Paine's characters reflected old-stock attitudes because, for him, preserving the heroic maritime past offered concrete lessons in American values. He lived and wrote in the early twentieth century and saw firsthand the ignominious end of many old sailing vessels—their conversion to coal hulks. One captain's daughter feared her father's gallant ship would suffer such a fate.⁵⁷ Another preservationist, Hester Penfold, decided, with the "blood of a lineage of sea-rovers [coursing] vigorously in her veins," to restore and sail an old coal barge that had once been part of the family's fleet of clipper ships. Paine, interested in old ships, tapped into the enthusiasm for ship preservation, and his characters echoed much of the reasoning behind the restoration of the USS *Constitution* in 1906. Two characters, old ship's captains, proclaimed Hester's rebuilt family ship "would be a nautical object lesson" for modern Americans to see the sort of vessel that "carried the Stars and Stripes to every port in the world." Through his captains, Paine looked wistfully backwards to the pre-Civil War decades, when American square-riggers brought commerce around the world. Likewise, Hester, as a Progressive-era clubwoman, thought the ship would serve as a "sort of cruising historical pageant" to educate all who saw it.⁵⁸ Her talent for organizing was "going to waste," managing charities in Stonehaven, but rebuilding the vessel as an educational tool would be a fruitful extension of her charity work. Moreover, maritime preservation would rescue her valuable time by focusing it on something more directly related to essential Americanism. Paine's characters used pieces of culture, whether museum-like homes or restored ships, to

⁵⁷ Ralph D. Paine, *A Cadet of the Black Star Line* (1910, repr., New York: Scribner's, 1922), 167.

⁵⁸ Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 2, 8, 11, 10.

champion upper-class values and aesthetics. Ultimately, his own cultural output—popular fiction—did the same.

One value Paine stressed throughout his books was independent individualism and gallant behavior in young men. He especially liked to cast sailors as bold heroes and leaders. Richard Cary, the main character in *Four Bells* (1923), was just such a man, “worth his weight in gold,” because the “Navy had hammered into his soul certain ideas which he declined to regard as obsolete....Order, fidelity, obedience [were] essential to the conduct of a ship.”⁵⁹ Even though he was not a square-rigger sailor, these qualities made him just the man Hester’s niece Angela, was waiting to marry in *The Penfold Adventure*. However, in her own plot, Angela was sure she did not “know where to find a bold sailor,” and lamented that in the modern world, “the race is extinct.” Instead, she looked backwards for romance, and chose the “delightful game to live in the past” with her Aunt.⁶⁰ The sailors for whom she pined were, of course, not extinct, but there was little boldness to shoveling coal into a boiler in 1910. By 1923, Richard Cary’s service in the U.S. Navy in the 1920s made him an adequate substitute for a square-rigger sailor. To Paine, the leadership qualities Cary gained by seafaring were more important than the actual details of his service, and, while Paine was willing to update naval technologies, he remained committed to the idea that seafaring possessed and transferred intrinsic values.

For Paine, merchant marine and naval service were pivotal experiences for both individuals and the nation. He was a strong proponent of the U.S. Navy, and during the Great War he visited Atlantic-based allied warships on submarine patrol in order to write

⁵⁹ Ralph D. Paine, *Four Bells* (New York: Street and Smith, 1923), 2.

⁶⁰ Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 4, 6.

The Fighting Fleets (1918). His interest in the Allied naval forces continued after the war, when, as a guest of J.P. Morgan, he lectured to American, British, and French naval officers at the Morgan Library in 1918.⁶¹ Comfortable as he was among the wealthy and powerful, it was hardly surprising that his protagonists were all brave, upper class, and, of course, carried Anglo-American surnames. Both *The Long Road Home* (1916) and *A Cadet of the Black Star Line* (1910), part of Scribner's Series for Young People, illustrated the importance and consequences of doing right or wrong at sea. The cadet decided on duty over self. "What I ought to do, not what I want to do," he stoically declared, "is the course Captain John and Margaret told me to steer. And here is where I belong."⁶²

Duty, loyalty, and nerve were also values passed on to young readers through naval officer David Magowan, another of Paine's Anglophile characters. At times appearing a bit much like Rough Rider Teddy Roosevelt, Magowan exemplified a "shoot first, ask questions later" mentality of direct action. "International law, hell!" exclaimed Magowan. "All a naval officer needs in a jam is tact, guts, and horse sense." Magowan's soul possessed a "strain of sentiment seldom revealed....He was devoted to Service...ideals, tradition, and exacting requirements. Fidelity was his guiding star, duty a beacon." Magowan was also "unvexed by envy or doubt" and "knew where he

⁶¹ Ralph D. Paine, *The Fighting Fleets: Five Months of Active Service With the American Destroyers and Their Allies in the War Zone* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1918); *New York Times*, "Allied Fleets Busy Keeping Sea Safe," May 24, 1918, http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=2&res=9507E5DB163EE433A25757C2A9639C946996D6CF&oref=slogin&oref=slogin (accessed October 28, 2008). Dignitaries in attendance in addition to J.P. Morgan included British Vice Admiral Purefoy, French Admiral Grasset, and American Rear Admirals Fiske, Gleaves, Johnson, Usher, and Burd.

⁶² Ralph D. Paine, *The Long Road Home* (New York: Scribner's, 1916), 20-23, 27-29, 43-45, 238-241; Paine, *Cadet of the Black Star Line*, 198.

belonged.”⁶³ Magowan, and Paine’s other maritime characters, presented readers with values that contrasted sharply 1920s Prohibition culture, with its flaunting of the establishment.⁶⁴ Order, normalcy, and the status quo were more important. In a decade where lines between race, class, and gender blurred, Paine articulated specific traditional values: know your place; be strong, devoted, and faithful; be sentimental, but quiet about it; be reticent. Magowan’s character urged readers against the self-examination and reflection championed by many in the era; Paine’s messages were practically a recitation of the Boy Scout oath.

Industrialization, believed some of Paine’s characters, had created a major problem of rampant immigration, and Paine fashioned protagonists who claimed older values, from a time before American cultural life had to accept plural society. True men, and real sailors, “sprung from that undiluted pioneer stock” that remained in “rural New England” because, Paine asserted, these isolated places were “remote from the wash of later immigration.”⁶⁵ Hester Penfold looked at her town with pride, but disapproved of the “tamed, spiritless Stonehaven of the present” where the modern town had “given over to cotton mills and other unromantic industries” that employed “a polyglot horde of aliens who swarm and multiply in the squalid streets.” Stonehaven’s waterfront, “where once dwelt the lords of commerce,” had been taken over by factories and immigrants and

⁶³ Ralph D. Paine, *Midshipman Wickham*, (1923; repr., Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), 2.

⁶⁴ See George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); and Joshua Zeitz, *Flapper: A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women Who Made America Modern* (New York: Crown, 2006).

⁶⁵ Paine, *Four Bells*, 3.

wrecked its sense of history.⁶⁶ Similarly, *The Long Road Home* expressed deep animosity against southern and eastern European immigrants. Messrs. Barrington and Bayne, trying to re-establish sailing packet service in the river port of Eppingham, were stymied by a group of Hungarians who, from a rented a house on the outskirts of town, were selling bad rum to young townsmen. “Those are the boys,” Barrington lamented, “I hoped to make good Yankee sailors of.” Confronting the Hungarians, Barrington and Bayne broke down the door, held them at bay with a pistol, and called the townspeople to witness the spectacle. Unlike the immigrants, Barrington and Bayne were “men of the breed...unfamiliar to this generation.” Throwbacks to the era of the “pioneers and seafarers who had conquered the wilderness and the red Indian.”⁶⁷ At sea, immigrants ruined a tender moment in *A Cadet of the Black Star Line* when, instead of lingering on his steamer’s deck as he watched his true love sail away, the protagonist had to go below to quell a riot among Hungarians, Russians, and Poles being deported.⁶⁸ Paine thus suggested that direct action was necessary to combat social change, and that the Protestant work ethic of those he considered real Americans would triumph over slothful and corrupt behavior of newcomers.

Many of Paine’s characters illustrated a central idea of antimodernism; looking backwards to move forward. As anti-immigration sentiments rose between 1900 and the 1920s, readers could live vicariously through Paine’s deportation of the riotous eastern Europeans. They could enjoy the romance of an old square-rigger overtaking a steamer

⁶⁶ Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 3, 1.

⁶⁷ Paine, *Long Road Home*, 295, 298.

⁶⁸ Paine, *Cadet of the Black Star Line*, 190-195.

to the tune of a sea chantey, all while wistfully recognizing that these older visions of preindustrial life were fleeting. Bitter as it sometimes was, modernity marched on, but Paine's heroic past might ease the transition to the future for himself and his readers.

Paine built modern and antimodern tension in two young characters, Angela Penfold, a sailor-loving lass, and Ogden Haight, a good-dancing, well-dressed, melodramatic country club president. Angela properly venerated the past and her Aunt Hester, while Haight, the modern man, possessed all the deleterious traits that were softening older heroes of American masculinity. Haight represented modern America's problems; he was soft and theatrical where past mariners were tough and reticent.⁶⁹ Haight "thought it an affectation to mourn a dead Stonehaven" and that "sailors, a rough and ready breed of men, should be recognized only as ancestors" whose "proper place was among the family traditions." Unlike the antimodern Angela, Haight failed to respect his marine ancestors. While traveling to view the Penfold family's old clipper ship, Haight mistakenly believed they were going to visit a yacht. Angela claimed that he was "too modern to understand" Aunt Hester's desire to see a vessel related directly to her family's past. Haight retorted that "this is the twentieth century, or so I believed until I entered yonder door."⁷⁰

The markers of Paine's unease with the future were found throughout his writings. *The Call of the Offshore Wind* (1918) told the tale of a traditional Maine shipyard trying to compete in the age of steamships. After a series of seafaring adventures, the protagonist managed to save the shipyard by building vessels for World

⁶⁹ Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 12-14.

War I fleets. Clearly referencing the conflict between U.S. Shipping Board chairman William Denman and Emergency Fleet Corporation general manager George Goethals, Paine saw the resurgence of American shipbuilding during the war as the possible beginning of a path to renew American fleets after a long period of decline.⁷¹ More than just boys' adventure stories, Paine's popular novels addressed serious marine policy issues, whether shipping decline or naval power. In 1924, a year before his death, he penned the introduction for the re-publication of Samuel Samuels' *From the Forecastle to the Cabin*. While Samuels, however, focused on changing regulatory policy and maritime law, Paine was more concerned with inculcating young Americans with the Captain Samuels's values in order to help the United States regain maritime superiority.

Two works in particular best express Paine's concern with a changed United States, and a revitalized American shipping industry. Paine opened *The Penfold Adventure* with a description of the town of Stonehaven, "a port of vanished fleets." He thought it a pity that "Americans of this generation cannot realize that theirs was once a maritime race," a people "indomitable, alert, and renowned for pioneering voyages" that "dared to steer" into unknown seas for commercial success.⁷² For Hester Penfold, his central character, industrialization and swarming hordes of newcomers challenged the values of the present generation, and she looked backwards for valorous, archetypical behavior to inspire the current generation of American youth suffering from this myopia. To do this, she promoted the restoration of an old clipper ship. Paine's interest in renewed American shipping found exposure, too. Also in *The Penfold Adventure*, one of

⁷¹ Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 267.

⁷² Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 1.

his old salt captains hoped that the restored ship would make Americans “ashamed that they let their flag be driven from the sea.” He declared that the maritime past deserved remembrance and its future deserved renaissance because ship’s such as Hester’s “put this nation on its feet” a century earlier.⁷³

Free ship advocates continued pushing to repeal the registry laws, and they succeeded in 1912 and again in 1914.⁷⁴ However, American involvement in the Great War resulted in expanded American fleets for the war effort, even though the first wave of Americans headed to Europe on chartered foreign vessels. Only after President Wilson appointed Edward Hurley president of the Emergency Fleet Corporation were any vessels actually launched, and most vessels were appropriated or purchased, rather than constructed. Still, by the early 1920s, the United States possessed the world’s second largest merchant fleet, even if this numerically impressive feat failed to ensure the renaissance Paine and others were seeking.⁷⁵

Paine’s hope for a rebirth of American maritime enterprise became increasingly more pessimistic by 1923. He opened *Four Bells* with heady enthusiasm for postwar fleet expansions. Ocean-minded Americans cheered “a great hurrah” for the “mighty fleet” of newly-built cargo vessels intended to “restore the Stars and Stripes to blue water.” Paine hailed “Columbia’s return to the ocean, and all that” because he thought it a “splendid revival of the days of Yankee ships and sailors of long ago.” From exhilaration, cynicism made a quick entry when the “bubble broke,” leaving “much of

⁷³ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁴ Hutchins, *American Maritime Industries*, 433-434.

⁷⁵ Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *Way of the Ship*, 267, 273-274. Over 70% of the construction authorized by the Shipping Act of 1916 slid down the ways after peace had broken out.

Columbia's mighty fleet rusted at its moorings." Paine's greatest concern was the complacency and ease with which Americans gave up what he considered to be a vital part of their cultural and economic inheritance. By 1923, Paine was more circumspect about the prospects for maritime renaissance because Americans were not "deeply stirred by this calamity." Continuing the collective march inland, the nation "had long since turned its back to the coast and could not be persuaded to face about."⁷⁶

Paine, ever concerned about the acceptable values, located some of the problem in a lack of iron discipline afloat, brought about by social reformers. Sailors had gone soft and the "austere traditions of the sea," Paine wrote, "were jeered at by motley crews, alien and native-born." These twentieth-century sailors "had easier work and better treatment than sailormen had ever known," and this newfound laziness created problems for American ships.⁷⁷ Andrew Furuseth and West Coast sailors' unions had been working to improve sailors' living and working conditions for decades, culminating with the Seamen's Act of 1915.⁷⁸ What to Furuseth was a positive advance, to Paine was a negative; he believed the lack of discipline had dire consequences; "Mutiny ceased to be sensational," he pined, blaming foreign influences.⁷⁹ So, too, did the industry publication *Marine Journal* calling Furuseth, a Norwegian immigrant, a "foreign-born agitator" who created "dissent and dissatisfaction among a class of men that were before his coming

⁷⁶ Paine, *Four Bells*, 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁸ Joseph P. Goldberg, *The Maritime Story: A Study in Labor-Management Relations*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 49-51.

⁷⁹ Paine, *Four Bells*, 2. Goldberg quoted President of the Maritime Exchange of New York Vernon C. Brown's 1896 testimony before the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. Brown claimed that sailors were "deliberately invited to open mutiny and rebellion by these sailors' unions." Goldberg, *Maritime Story*, 21, 306.

content, prosperous, and happy.”⁸⁰ Along with unionism and laziness, industry leaders blamed radical politics for corrupting the mettle of sailors. With the Red Scare of 1919, and the recently-established Comintern fresh in Paine’s mind, the contemporary menace of worldwide communist revolution made its appearance in *Four Bells*. “Noisy Slavs preached Bolshevism in the forecabin. Every dirty loafer had a grievance,” Paine warned. “Ships limped into port with drunken stokers who refused to ply shovel and slice-bar unless they happened to feel like it. Wise gentlemen ashore,” Paine reported sagaciously, “diagnosed it as the poison of social unrest.”⁸¹ Fearful of both the future and foreigners, Paine played the role of wise gentleman ashore, summing up what he saw as the general problems with American shipping in the 1920s. It was not a pretty picture. Lazy or incompetent sailors, unionization, and Communists revolutionaries had polluted American shipping. A dearth of competent officers during the postwar shipping boom, and the lack of discipline begat further breakdown in shipboard order and respect for the chain of command.⁸² There was little about which to be hopeful, but with his usual indomitable Americanism, Paine found one way to combat the many of problems facing American shipping.

His solution was to repopulate the fo’c’s’les and quarterdecks of American vessels with those he considered real Americans, possessing the appropriate values. Naturally, Paine’s main character in *Four Bells* was just such a man because he espoused a “strong work ethic,” but was without “complicated emotions to muddle things,” and

⁸⁰ *Marine Journal*, October 16, 1909 and October 15, 1913, as quoted in Goldberg, *Maritime Story*, 51, 307.

⁸¹ Paine, *Four Bells*, 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1

overall, had a “natural aptitude for the sea.” Set against the foreigners and communists in the forecandle, Richard Cary was of the “English strain, fair-haired and blue of eye, that throws back to the Saxon blood.”⁸³ Paine believed Cary’s Anglo-Saxonism reflected the traits of essential Americanism that would trump imported values, a declining labor pool, and a nation diluted by immigrants.

Paine’s sympathetic characters were traditionalists. Hester Penfold lovingly remembered the heroism and masculinity of her family’s maritime past, and her granddaughter, Angela, reflected antimodern views in contrast to Haight, who looked clear-eyed toward the twentieth century. Old captains proclaimed patriotism and love of country in the form of maritime object lessons. Stonehaven itself, with its “unromantic” cotton mills, immigrant “horde,” and “squalid” streets, exemplified the decline of American commercial maritime power.⁸⁴ Compared to modern, effete men such as Ogden Haight, Paine’s true Americans responded with action. Messrs. Barrington and Bayne revived their hometown as a river port, and David Magowan and Richard Cary did their duty as men without thinking too hard on it. These heroic sailors represented an older, less complicated United States. Certain that seafaring was America’s birthright, Paine hoped for renaissance, although social conditions made him increasingly pessimistic throughout the 1920s. If, however, Americans had lost interest in actual maritime affairs, Paine made them interested in imaginary versions, with their nautical heroics.

⁸³ Ibid., 2, 3.

⁸⁴ Paine, *Penfold Adventure*, 1.

Non-Fiction

William Sumner Appleton, Jr., founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) in 1910, just five years after he had helped save Paul Revere's house from destruction. Like Samuel Samuels and Ralph Paine, he saw the past as an antidote to the threatened future. Appleton's motivation flowed from changes occurring around Boston at the turn of the twentieth century. Older cultural values were being lost as immigrants moved in, and Appleton, historian James Lindgren has written, "hoped to Americanize the newcomers by revitalizing Revere's memory.... With almost all new materials, it [the house] was born anew to foster patriotism, Anglo-Saxonism, and acceptable Yankee values."⁸⁵ A Boston Brahmin from a prominent family whose lineage went back to the 1630s, Appleton's career as a preservationist was an extension of his own family's history, much like the fictional Hester Penfold's interest was a direct reflection of her family's maritime past.⁸⁶

George Francis Dow was a like-minded and like-descended individual. An old-stock Yankee who could trace his lineage to the early seventeenth century, he became secretary of the nation's oldest local historical society, the Essex Institute of Salem, Massachusetts, in 1898. Dow pioneered material culture preservation and promoted the acceptance of everyday life as a worthwhile avenue of preservation. Nineteenth-century "preservationists," according to Lindgren, "most valued historic sites for the heroic deeds

⁸⁵ James Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England: Preservation, Progressivism, and the Remaking of Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3-4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

and inspirational values associated with them.”⁸⁷ In contrast, by utilizing outdoor museums and period rooms, Dow sought to humanize past actors and attempted a level of authenticity previously unknown in museums. In 1907, the Essex Institute installed period rooms representing typical seventeenth-century colonial households.⁸⁸

Scientific restorations, professional displays, and an eventual emphasis on aesthetic design demonstrated the preservationists’ “quest for authenticity in the machine age,” but one that reflected the “material and scientific precepts defining Western civilization.” The preservationists hoped that the “sight of those forms would prompt Americans—newcomer and native alike—to accept their aesthetics, work harder, live more humbly, and appreciate Yankee traditions.”⁸⁹ In 1919, Dow himself joined SPNEA, first as editor and then as curator, serving until his death in 1936. He brought to the institution a focus on everyday life that dovetailed with SPNEA’s already-established reputation for great house and great man theories of preservation.⁹⁰ What Dow and SPNEA presented as authenticity and appropriate aesthetic design reaffirmed their own cultural values while trying to impart them to the newly arrived immigrants.

Dow was one of the first social historians, though certainly not of the “proletarian meaning” later ascribed to the term. Like other historians of his era, he concentrated on one specific class of colonial Americans, those of “middling station,” when he

⁸⁷ Ibid., 154.

⁸⁸ George Francis Dow, “Museums and the Preservation of Early Houses,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 17, no. 11, part II (November 1922): 17.

⁸⁹ Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England*, 155.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 159. See also Dianne H. Pilgrim, “Inherited from the Past: The American Period Room,” *American Art Journal* 10, no.1 (May 1978): 5-23.

championed ordinary people's daily life.⁹¹ Through his Essex Institute period-rooms and work with SPNEA, Dow broadened the parameters of historic preservation. Even though Anglo-American colonial culture reigned supreme in his designs, Dow brought anonymous actors into the historical picture alongside the luminaries (and their houses) heralded by SPNEA. Not recognized by historians, though, are his maritime connections, made most conspicuous by the founding of the Marine Research Society (MRS) in 1922 and its inaugural publication, coauthored by Dow and John Robinson, *The Sailing Ships of New England*.⁹² The Marine Research Society was Dow's brainchild and the maritime arm of his lifelong project of historic preservation. His fingerprints—attention to material culture and social history—cover its mission statement. According to the MRS's advertising pamphlets, the organization was established to “collect and publish worthwhile material relating to the ship, its construction, rig and navigation; to the ways of the sailor and his adventures in uncharted seas; to the days of pirates and the merchant adventurers; and to any other matters of general interest that pertains to the commercial marine.”⁹³

Dow tapped into 1920s enthusiasm for seafaring under sail with *The Sailing Ships of New England*, Series One (1922), a richly illustrated large format book that contained pictures of sailing vessels and brief introductory text. An MRS advertisement, likely written by Dow himself, asserted that it was a “volume which was received with instant

⁹¹ Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880-1980* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 27, 32-33.

⁹² Robinson was curator of the marine room at the Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts.

⁹³ Pamphlet, *The Publications of the Marine Research Society, Salem, Massachusetts, (revised to November, 1932)* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1932). In possession of the author.

approval so that it went out of print in sixteen days after publication.”⁹⁴ Series Two (1924) contained more pictures and a biographical account of East Boston shipbuilder Donald McKay, the first extensive account of his life to appear in print. Dow wrote that the “keen interest in pictures of sailing ships” in the 1920s resulted in printing Series Two with better engraving and higher-quality prints of the ships. Building psychological tension, Dow advertised that the second series would be limited to 1500 copies, and “following the policy of the Society the book will not be reprinted.”⁹⁵ Of course, that only set up demand for a third edition. By 1928, he wrote,

the interest in the sailing ship has not diminished; on the contrary there never was a time when the demand for paintings of old-time sailing vessels was so great as at present, with constantly-increasing market values as a natural result. The publication of a third series of pictures of New England ships therefore seems timely and from the photographs that have been collected by the Society, two hundred and fifteen of the finest subjects have been reproduced in the present volume—a total of 769 pictures of ships thus far included in the three parts of this series and by far the largest collection of ship pictures ever published.⁹⁶

Dow and the MRS capitalized on demand for things maritime created by the mature Maritime Revival while the booming economy of the 1920s helped the middle class extend their tastes upward.

When considering the printed word, Dow recognized that historic preservation should not be limited to original publications. Thus, the MRS “also proposes to reprint certain publications that have now become rare and are inaccessible to the average

⁹⁴ Pamphlet, advertisement for *The Sailing Ships of New England*, Second Series, by George Francis Dow (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d [1924]). In possession of the author.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Pamphlet, advertisement for *The Sailing Ships of New England*, Series Three, by George Francis Dow (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1928). In possession of the author.

collector in this field.”⁹⁷ Preservation within literary circles meant ensuring access to information contained in old narratives. Like an American version of the Hakluyt Society, the MRS reprinted maritime narratives in works such as *The Sea, the Ship, and the Sailor: Tales of Adventure from Log Books and Original Narratives* (1925), which contained three reprinted narratives and two appearing for the first time.⁹⁸ Among other noteworthy reprints, the MRS republished Charles Ellms’s *The Pirates Own Book, or the Authentic Narratives of the Lives Exploits and Executions of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers* (1924), originally published in 1837, Edmund Fanning’s *Voyages and Discoveries in the South Seas, 1792-1832* (1924), originally published in 1833 under a considerably more ponderous title, and William Endicott’s *Wrecked Among Cannibals in the Fijis* (1923), a previously-unpublished manuscript about an 1829 voyage. The value of both Endicott’s work and the MRS republication was evidenced by Edward Winslow Gifford’s 1924 review in *American Anthropologist*. Gifford acknowledged the work’s general interest, as well as its value to anthropologists, of Endicott’s record of early nineteenth-century Fijian culture, including a cannibal feast. “It is hoped,” mused Gifford, “that similar journals of the past century, still lying in manuscript, will ultimately be published.”⁹⁹ A portion of the MRS mission statement proclaimed, “the Society

⁹⁷ Pamphlet, *Publications of the Marine Research Society*.

⁹⁸ Charles H. Barnard, et al., *The Sea, the Ship, and the Sailor: Tales of Adventure from Log Books and Original Narratives* (Salem, Marine Research Society, 1925). See note 26. See also, George Brunner Parks, *Richard Hakluyt and the English Voyages* (New York, American Geographical Society, 1928); and D.B. Quinn, *The Hakluyt Handbook* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1974).

⁹⁹ E.W. Gifford, “Review of *Wrecked Among the Cannibals in the Fijis: A Narrative of Shipwreck and Adventure in the South Seas*, by William Endicott,” in *American Anthropologist*, new series, 26, no. 1 (Jan 1924): 104-105. According to the British Library’s Integrated Catalogue, <http://catalogue.bl.uk>, Fanning’s 1833 title was considerably more ponderous: *Voyages Round the World: With Selected Sketches of Voyages to the South Seas, North and South Pacific Oceans, China, etc., Performed Under the Command and Agency of the Author: Also, Information Relating to Important Late Discoveries; Between the Years 1792*

intends to restrict its work to the publication of matters of scientific or historical value.”¹⁰⁰ Like his interest in authenticity, scientific methodology, and aesthetics ashore, Dow concentrated similarly on these ideas in the maritime world, and limited print runs of the publications helped create an aura of exclusivity.

Whether at sea or ashore, demonstrations of superior old-stock American values required high quality products. The MRS solicited the “co-operation of serious students of maritime subjects,” in return promising promotion “so that the results of their investigations may become known through its PUBLICATIONS.” Seeking out the latest scholarship would ensure accurate representation of the past, provided those visions conformed to the parameters of the MRS mission. For work deemed important and appropriate, and inside the “scope of its activities,” the MRS was willing to undertake considerable efforts to publish, including “the editing, indexing, laying out and printing of books.”¹⁰¹ As long as these new works focused on ships, sailors, pirates, and merchant adventurers, they were worth MRS time and ink.¹⁰²

Ignoring myriad contours of race, class, labor, and gender in the historic maritime world, the MRS publications told histories shaped by the biases of their audience. Advertisements for Dow’s *Slave Ships and Slaving* (1927) revealed this narrow view. Initially, the text seemed inclusive enough, stating that, apart from piracy, there existed “no blacker page in the story of the sea than ...the voyages of the slave ships.”

and 1832, Together with the Report of the Commander of the First American Exploring Expedition, Patronised by the United States Government in the Brigs Seraph and Annawan, to the Southern Hemisphere.

¹⁰⁰ Pamphlet, *Publications of the Marine Research Society*.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² See Martin Green, *The Great American Adventure* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

“Uncounted millions of Negroes were...sold as slaves,” the text continues, and the “cruelty and horror of ‘the middle passage’ can never be told in all its gruesome details.” The slaves, however, were completely passive players, and the advertising quickly turned to the real story told in the book. “The slaving trade was also the grave of many of the seamen who engaged in it, for the African coast reeked with fevers and other fearful diseases.” The real actors were the sailors and their perils at sea and ashore: “Those who escaped the infection and ophthalmia of ‘the middle passage’, [sic] on reaching the West Indies, frequently opened their own graves by unrestrained drinking of new rum.” Other perils of slaving occurred at sea, although not for the Africans: “Many masters of slave ships were overbearing by nature; the trade exacted its toll” and made these men brutes of discipline. Moreover, the “cruelty inflicted upon the slaves was easily transferred to equally helpless seamen.” The sufferings of the sailors at the hands of cruel captains, themselves created by the trade in human beings, took the center of the narrative, with almost every sentence addressing the damage done to whites by the slave trade, from the risks of disease to the degradation of sailors and officers. *Slave Ships and Slaving* also addressed the ships themselves, especially those engaged in blockade running and the “numerous spirited engagements between slavers and blockading vessels.”¹⁰³ Here, too, Dow and the MRS focused on the white slavers, rather than the African slaves. Slaving was a black mark on maritime history, but largely because of its effects on whites, and dreadful treatment and conditions were only important when they pertained to the white crew and officers. The damage done to the kidnapped Africans was mentioned in passing, but was hardly the principal focus of the advertising. Like the Colonial Revival

¹⁰³ Pamphlet, advertisement for *Slave Ships and Slaving*, by George Francis Dow (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1927]). In possession of the author.

ashore, the Maritime Revival very carefully selected the pieces of the past worth preserving, and almost all of them concentrated on aspects of white, Anglo-American culture.

The MRS knew its audience and market consisted mainly of wealthy Americans. There was little interest in mass-market publication; exclusivity was part of MRS's marketing strategy from its very beginning. "The PUBLICATIONS are issued in small editions and it is a fixed policy of the Society never to reissue any of its publications," the MRS advertised. Some of the earlier publications were already out of print and "command high prices" if purchased used.¹⁰⁴ The *Log of the Marine Research Society* presented the society's news in a format that mimicked a ship's log. If one wades through the prose, one finds sales figures and descriptions of the success of MRS publications. Editions were generally limited to between 950 and 1500 copies, carrying the implicit threat of these works selling out.¹⁰⁵ Book dealers sold some books, but the MRS sold most books by subscription; some sold out before being published and released. "Sales to booksellers of new Publications—*Ships and Shipping* and *Whale Ships and Whaling*," reported the "Captain" of the society in 1925, "had been good. After taking account of stock orders received from 'Associates' and others, found that the entire edition of *Ships and Shipping* had been sold so that the book was *out of print*

¹⁰⁴ Pamphlet, *Publications of the Marine Research Society*.

¹⁰⁵ Pamphlets, advertising for Edmund Fanning, *Voyages and Discoveries in the South Seas, 1792-1832* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1924]) (1250 copies); Wesley George Pierce, *Goin' Fishin': The Story of the Deep-Sea Fishermen of New England* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1934]) (950 copies); Howard Irving Chapelle, *The Baltimore Clipper* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1930]) (1250 copies); and Edouard Gaubert, *Ships and Shipping: A Collection of Pictures Including Many American Vessels, Painted by Antoine Roux and His Sons* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1925]) (975 copies); John Robinson and George Francis Dow, *The Sailing Ships of New England*, Second Series (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1924]) (1500 copies). All in possession of the author.

twenty-two days before it was in print.”¹⁰⁶ Such advertising encouraged upgrading to a higher level of subscription—associate membership—with its associated privileges, one of which was never being shut out of a new offering. When the *Log* reported that some books had been over-subscribed, it nonetheless assured readers that “ ‘Associates’ who had filed permanent orders for all Publications of the Society, of course, had been taken care of.”¹⁰⁷

Coupled with the possibility of MRS publications selling out, the *Log* also utilized some lighthearted scare tactics to encourage sales. The weather for October 23, 1925, “Commences with steady trades, steering West,” claimed the *Log’s* remarks. “At 9 A.M. picked up a bookseller who hadn’t stocked the publications of the Marine Research Society. Had drifted 150 miles eastward from land. When rescued he was in a very exhausted condition having been in a boat for fifteen days with only one book relating to the sea.”¹⁰⁸ Other entries remarked on the prices commanded by MRS publications on the used book market. “One of the underwriters,” reported the *Log*, “sold his Large Paper copy of the *First Series of The Sailing Ships of New England* for \$50,” a princely sum for a book costing \$12.50 when first printed only two years earlier.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Marine Research Society, *The Log of the Marine Research Society*, no. 4 (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1925), 25, Boston Athenaeum.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. See also, Michele Moylan and Lane Styles, *Reading Books: Essays on the Material Text and Literature in America* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁸ *Log of the Marine Research Society*, no. 4, 36.

¹⁰⁹ Marine Research Society, *The Log of the Marine Research Society*, no. 3 (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1924), 24, Boston Athenaeum; Marine Research Society, pamphlet, advertisement for John Robinson and George Francis Dow, *The Sailing Ships of New England, 1607-1907*, First Series (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1922), G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic CT.

The *Log* was a useful vehicle for the society's advertisements to its membership. Copying a ship's log format offered the latitude to pepper sales figures and resale prices with general nautical information, fictitious accounts of booksellers lost at sea, and direct pleas to its target audience and their values—wealthy, upper-class, manly ideals. “You have the opportunity, therefore, to determine the value of our Publications and to pass upon the style and quality of the printing,” the MRS advertised, assuring members the right to refuse delivery if a publication did not meet their discriminating standards. The MRS also asked its members to “help by sending the names of any of your friends who may be interested in the kinds of books the Society is publishing so that announcements [sic] may be sent to them?”¹¹⁰ Soliciting among its membership ensured that current Associates and Subscribers would spread the message along to like-minded individuals of similar means. Word of mouth remained the best advertising technique. This was particularly important because “the Society,” its mission statement claimed, “desires to maintain an increasingly high standard in its PUBLICATIONS both as to worthwhile material and typographical excellence.” It was “most desirable to increase the number of Associates and Subscribers” so the MRS could continue to “produce fine books at reasonable prices.”¹¹¹

The MRS also published “special” publications, even more limited in number and commanding prices double those of regular editions. A large paper Quarto edition of *Ships and Shipping* (1925), limited to 97 copies, only 87 of which were for sale, cost

¹¹⁰ Marine Research Society, *The Log of the Marine Research Society*, no. 2 (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, 1923), loose insert in *Log*. In possession of the author.

¹¹¹ Pamphlet, *Publications of the Marine Research Society*.

\$15.00, twice as much as the standard addition.¹¹² Similarly, Wesley George Pierce's *Goin' Fishin'* (1934) cost \$5.00 in standard issue, but the limited edition of 97, again with only 87 for sale, cost \$10.00. It was printed on high-quality rag paper, bound in English linen with French marbled boards and end paper, had gilt edges, and was placed in a slipcase.¹¹³

Exclusivity, limited numbers, high quality publications, unique opportunities, self-judging value, and soliciting lists of like-minded friends were all methods the MRS used to increase its appeal among a certain class of Americans in the 1920s. The assurance that their message reached its target audience was evidenced by avid maritime art collector Franklin D. Roosevelt, then between political endeavors, writing to the *Log* in 1923 to inquire about John Paul Jones's landing on Martha's Vineyard.¹¹⁴

Considering the exclusivity of the advertising, public response was enthusiastic, if not overwhelming. The American Antiquarian Society praised the MRS's efforts and high quality. "I would just say how pleased we are," wrote assistant librarian Mary R. Reynolds to Dow, "with your splendid type specimen announcing the Marine Research Society Publications."¹¹⁵ A continent away, Captain P.A. MacDonald, generally a critical reader of seafaring books, had kind words for MRS publications. Writing to his young

¹¹² Pamphlet, advertisement for Edouard Gaubert, *Ships and Shipping: A Collection of Pictures Including Many American Vessels, Painted by Antoine Roux and His Sons* (Salem, MA: Marine Research Society, n.d. [1925]).

¹¹³ Pamphlet, advertisement for Pierce, *Goin' Fishin'*.

¹¹⁴ Mrs. Henry Collins Brown, "Governor Roosevelt's Ship Pictures," *The Mentor* 17, no.7, serial no. 318 (August 1929): 3-5; *Log of the Marine Research Society*, no. 3, 24. In the interview with Brown, Roosevelt indicated that he had been collecting maritime art, at the suggestion of his parents, since adolescence. Their suggestion was an alternative to his fulfilling his interest in the sea by joining the US Navy.

¹¹⁵ Mary Reynolds to George Francis Dow, 10 March 1926, Dow papers, box 7, folder 1926.

sailing enthusiast friend J. Ferrell Colton in Arizona, MacDonald offered advice on the best of the maritime books hitting the shelves in the 1920s and 1930s. “There are many fine books,” he wrote to Colton in 1936, “put out by the ‘Marine Research Society’ of Salem, Mass.”¹¹⁶ While seemingly understated in his enthusiasm, compared to his denigration of many authors’ and publishers’ offerings, calling the MRS’s books “fine” was high praise from the old man.

Sales figures of short-edition books conveyed less substance than the character of those book sales. On a business trip to New York City, MRS salesman “T.P.” wrote back to Dow in Massachusetts. “MRS going all right but no landslide, he reported.¹¹⁷ Business appeared slow in the summer of 1926, and not just for MRS publications, as T.P. reported to the home office that “dealers little cautious in purchases and business has been slow (very) all summer + [and] more so than usual. We will do OK however.”¹¹⁸ MRS books did indeed perform well overall in the summer of 1926. By far their most stellar seller was Octavius Howe and Frederick Matthews’s *American Clipper Ships*. In spite of sluggish sales on other topics, books that heralded the apex of square-rigged sail maintained market shares and public interest. On T.P.’s 1926 New York sales trip, *American Clipper Ships* outsold other MRS publications by more than two to one. So far, he had sold 1037 copies of *American Clipper Ships*, with the closest competition being Charles G. Davis’s *Ship Model Builder’s Assistant* at 432 copies. Fears of an

¹¹⁶ P.A. MacDonald to J. Ferrell Colton, 13 September 1936, J. Ferrell Colton Collection, SFMM HDC 1076, box 1, folder 2, J. Porter Shaw Library, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, (hereafter cited as Colton collection, box and folder numbers).

¹¹⁷ T.P. to George Francis Dow, letter #1, n.d. [1926] Dow papers, box 7, folder 1926. Underscore in original.

¹¹⁸ T.P. to George Francis Dow, letter #2, n.d. [1926], Dow papers, box 7, folder 1926. Parentheses and underscore in original. Double underscore under “very.”

important edition going out of print motivated buyers even during languid sales in the summer of 1926. Davis's *Ship Model Builder's Assistant* was "well liked," reported T.P., "but trade know they can reorder [,] but know Clippers is small ed."¹¹⁹ The society's marketing strategy of deliberate exclusivity paid off. Later that summer, T.P. reassured Dow that the Davis book was "doing fine", underlining "fine" four times for effect. He also thought he could declare *American Clipper Ships* out of print if Dow thought it was a sound business decision.¹²⁰ Dow's reply was unknown, but T.P.'s successful sales trip and the edition of *American Clipper Ships* were well known. "The little salesman," T.P. wrote Dow, "is still on the job. 'Clippers' sailed over the line and will be o.p. before issue no question[.] Sold enough today to put over and have one order I am calling 100 copies but I can make it 250 if I can supply that many[.]"¹²¹ The interest in maritime topics and sales of *American Clipper Ships* showed how deeply the era of square-rigged sail was developing as the central component of Maritime Revival memory.

Dow and MRS had tapped into a particularly powerful vein of American culture. Even as they were selling out their editions, T.P. wrote to Dow that a "Jew holiday today made it rather hard" to make many sales, pointing out one of the ironies of the upper-class Colonial and Maritime Revivalists.¹²² They derisively pigeonholed their non-white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant fellow Americans, yet needed to employ them in various ways. Dow had to sell his New-England based books in New York City as much as

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ T.P. to George Francis Dow, letter #3, n.d. [1926], Dow papers, box 7, folder 1926.

¹²¹ T.P. to George Francis Dow, letter #4, n.d. [1926], Dow papers, box 7, folder 1926. Underscore in original.

¹²² T.P. to George Francis Dow, letter #5, n.d. [1926], Dow papers, box 7, folder 1926.

Massachusetts's industrialists needed immigrant factory workers. While trying to preserve old-stock American cultural values via constructed colonial and maritime pasts, they were, nevertheless, forced to accommodate these "Others" in their midst. This accommodation reflected the very essence of antimodernism: the retreat into the past actually helped smooth the transition to the future. For all of their class-based exclusivity, Dow, the Marine Research Society, and Maritime Revivalists were setting standards of taste that trickled down to the working and middle classes trying to emulate social elites.¹²³

Howe and Matthews's volume on clipper ships epitomized a fixation on big square-riggers. These ships gained even greater status during the Maritime Revival. For some authors, emphasis on the single decade of the 1850s, the heyday of clipper ships, came to define the entire maritime experience. Likewise, antiquarian histories of clipper ships typified the Maritime Revival practice of chronicling. Books on the topic were wide-ranging, from Captain Arthur H. Clark's *The Clipper Ship Era* (1910) through Carl Cutler's magisterial *Greyhounds of the Sea: The Story of the American Clipper Ship* (1930), and beyond. While the first of its kind, Clark's book was mainly a reminiscence; he wrote to memorialize, rather than romanticize or proselytize. No antimodernist, Clark recognized steam power's benefits and realized that his was a record of "an era in maritime history long ago departed." He recognized that the "remarkable development" of steam power benefited the "welfare of mankind," but he still nostalgically declared that the clipper ship period, and the memory of its ships, builders, and captains, "will

¹²³ See Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

always find a welcome in the hearts of those who know and love the sea.”¹²⁴ Clark chronicled the social, economic, and political conditions leading to the need for fast ships, and his work was full of technical details and builders’ specifications. His personal experience put him in a unique position, as Carl Cutler would say a generation later, to “recall, rather than to inform.”¹²⁵

Conversely, Alexander Laing wrote *Clipper Ship Men* (1944) well after the Maritime Revival had redefined how Americans ought to contemplate their relationship with the ocean. Like Clark, Laing told a grand narrative, but depression, two world wars, and the revival of things maritime had recast the cultural landscape of maritime America since Clark’s 1910 effort. A century earlier, Laing wrote, Americans “began peacefully to invade the whole world with an idea and example.” The ideal of “personal liberty” emanated from our shores until it “mingled with the waters of every harbor on earth.” Admitting that “men were not perfect then: they are not ever,” he conceded “much of America’s bad went voyaging with the good.” Nevertheless, the clipper-ship era represented the “first time on human record that a powerful people had driven to the ends of the seas in great numbers and in peace.”¹²⁶ In 1944, peaceful invasions were distant memories as Allied armies marched toward Berlin, and Laing’s language resonated in a war-weary America. After the Maritime Revival, Laing could take the idea of a past

¹²⁴ Arthur H. Clark, *The Clipper Ship Era: An Epitome of Famous American and British Clipper Ships, Their Owners, Builders, Commanders, and Crews, 1843-1869* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1910), 348.

¹²⁵ Carl C. Cutler, *Greyhounds of the Sea: The Story of the American Clipper Ship* (New York, Halcyon House, 1930), x.

¹²⁶ Alexander Laing, *Clipper Ship Men* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1944), 3.

golden age on the sea as the basis of a discussion of present concerns. In the war of ideas with fascism, the maritime past became another weapon in the arsenal of democracy.

Between these two temporal and thematic extremes fell the majority of books on clipper ships published in the 1920s and 1930s. Most offered straightforward information about clipper ships, their disappearance from maritime life, and their importance to American culture. Taking for granted the clipper ship era as a maritime high-water mark, these books documented technical specifications and speed records of vessels that had passed from the common parlance of ordinary Americans. *American Clipper Ships, 1833-1858* (1926), by Octavius T. Howe, M.D. and Frederick C. Matthews, was encyclopedic in scope, recording the age of American commercial sail when vessels went to California for gold and to China for tea. Conspicuously absent from these non-fiction works were the other vessels on American waters. Few books devoted themselves to coasting schooners, river craft, canal boats, or Great Lakes traders. Books that deviated from the clipper ship model—for example, those devoted to commercial fishing or whaling—focused on their respective industries as a whole, rather than vessel design or individual heroic feats or records. Clark, Howe and Matthews, Cutler, and Laing researched and recorded, in often excruciating detail, straightforward information. Their concentration on the heyday of clipper ships, like so much other Maritime Revival activity, obscured and marginalized the diversity of the commercial maritime world.

New York City attorney Carl Cutler sailed on square-riggers as a young man, and his father “had been mate on deep water.”¹²⁷ From generations of family seafarers, he was acutely aware of sail power’s place in United States history. *Greyhounds of the Sea: The Story of the American Clipper Ship* was a comprehensive and commanding effort, and Cutler’s scholarship, if narrowly focused, has withstood rigorous scrutiny. His attention to accuracy, diligent research, and writing process were reflected in his 1930 description of his work ethic.

The actual work on this book has fairly aggregated seven years, normal working time. In addition to carrying on other work, I have spent each day on this work the amount of time a person usually spends on, let us say, a salaried position. During the last three years I have devoted all my time to the work, evenings as well as days....Every fact...has been dug out independently. I have not relied on a single statement of another writer, but have gone to official records, and where they failed, to the best contemporary sources of information, such as the marine columns of the daily press.”¹²⁸

Cutler’s scholarly fortitude was shaped by “some of the more blatant noises which have passed for authentic history in recent years.” He was deeply concerned with the “verdict of twenty years from now, when the clipper period will be appraised far more truly than it was by the men of 1860”; “I have no desire to figure in the ranks of writers who were ‘fooled’ by the careless work of those who accepted everything uncritically.”¹²⁹ Cutler believed that only absolute accuracy would adequately convey the true meaning and significance of the clipper ships. It was ironic indeed that clipper ships, in part because

¹²⁷ Carl Cutler to Charles Patterson, 24 June 1930, Carl Cutler Papers, Collection 100, box 1, folder 13, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (hereafter cited as Cutler papers, box and folder numbers). Cutler also had a home in West Mystic, Connecticut, a center of nineteenth-century wooden shipbuilding in the Northeast.

¹²⁸ Carl Cutler to Ednah Farrier, 25 August 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 16.

¹²⁹ Carl C. Cutler to F.A. MacGillivray, 28 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

of Cutler's and others Maritime Revival authors, would be ultimately appraised as far more important in historical memory than they ever were in fact.

Cutler's diligence and passion resulted from his strong belief that the clipper ship story was a central narrative of American history, one being lost, or worse, ignored, by Americans in the 1920s. His book was "not 'another clipper ship book,' " he insisted. Instead, it was "essentially American history, and American history which has never been written before." Although his specific topic was sailing vessels, "it is tied up at every step with the history of the country. It adds a new (that is, a hitherto overlooked) factor to explain the nation's development," he wrote to Ednah Farrier at G.P. Putnam's Sons.¹³⁰ Cutler insisted that his volume was more than a niche market book; the topic was "one of the most important and certainly far the most colorful achievements of the nation."¹³¹ This was a heady assessment, inviting favorable comparison with the American Revolution, the Constitution of 1789, the Civil War, and America's role in the Great War. But for Cutler, there was little chance those quintessential events in American history would be lost to posterity, because they already defined, for the majority of citizens, a fundamental American narrative. Cutler believed it his task to elevate the glory days of the clipper ships to their deserved status alongside the other principal events of the American experience.

Cutler was not alone in thinking this way. From the elite subscribers of the Marine Research Society to mass audiences consuming popular literature, many Americans were reading with enthusiasm about ships and seafaring. Scarsdale, New

¹³⁰ Carl Cutler to Ednah Farrier, 25 August 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 16. Parentheses and underscore in original.

¹³¹ Ibid. This is the exact quote, there is not a word missing in the original.

York, attorney and day-school administrator Albert Reese encouraged his old friend Cutler, whom he referred to as “Brudder” in correspondence, to seek out a publisher that could effectively advertise Cutler’s work. He suggested Simon and Schuster, who had “put *Trader Horn* over – and therefore can do anything.”¹³² Of course, Reese wanted his friend to succeed, but he also thought the timing was right for Cutler’s assessment of clipper ships, one that might “enter the best seller class,” he enthusiastically wrote Cutler. “A lot of people seem to be reading a lot of books about a lot of ships,” Reese noted. “Their mouths are watering for something like this.”¹³³

For maximum publicity, Cutler solicited then-Secretary of the Navy and renowned America’s Cup yachtsman Charles Francis Adams III to write the introduction to *Greyhounds of the Sea*. Adams was “favorably inclined to help...by signing a foreword,” replied aide Malcolm Stone, but was “very busy...and does not want to be troubled to write it himself.”¹³⁴ Instead, Cutler penned the piece and submitted it to Adams, who, while signing it, noted the plethora of books on the subject already in print. Adams “felt there had been a ‘flood’ of literature” produced in recent years, reported Stone, but “for the most part it was of little value.”¹³⁵ To differentiate his book, the Secretary recommended, Cutler should draw attention to his original research. Adams then signed the introduction, which appeared as his own writing. Incongruous as it may

¹³² Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, n.d. [September 1929], Cutler papers, box 1, folder 6. Underscore in original. Reese was referring to *Trader Horn: A Young Man’s Astounding Adventure in 19th-Century Equatorial Africa* by Alfred Aloysius Horn. Published by Simon and Schuster in 1927, the book was the number 4 non-fiction best seller that year and number 3 in 1928. See “Traveler’s Tales: *Trader Horn*—Introduction,” www.travelerstaes.com/catalog/trader/intro.html (accessed July 25, 2006).

¹³³ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, n.d. [September 1929], Cutler papers, box 1, folder 6.

¹³⁴ Malcolm Stone to Carl Cutler, 13 May 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 12.

¹³⁵ Malcolm Stone to Carl Cutler, 9 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

appear that Cutler, a man devoted to detail, wrote what passed as Adams's words, more important was that Adams, a Cabinet-level figure and premier yachtsmen dismissed the multitude of maritime books in the 1920s for their low quality. The public was less discerning than the Secretary of the Navy, consuming these tracts nonetheless.

At times, some Maritime Revivalists were more cynical about the public's demand and its lack of discrimination. Debating a single illustration, marine painter Charles Patterson, who had been hired to help illustrate Cutler's book, traded barbs with the author. Patterson chided Cutler, calling out inaccuracies in one of Cutler's own illustrations "another case of 'Down to the Sea in Books.'"¹³⁶ Cutler was nonplussed. "As to its accuracy," he retorted to G.P. Putnam's Sons representative, F.A. MacGillivray, "I spent more than half a watch once in freezing weather on a yard looking at just such a situation, and all I can say is that we did it there."¹³⁷ He was considerably more diplomatic when writing to Patterson directly, presumably because he wanted Patterson's artwork to remain in the book. In any case, Cutler confessed to Patterson, "my own wishes have not mattered, nor do they now. I am interested primarily in doing something that will tend to revive our interest in the ideals of what I regard as one of the finest periods in history, and anything which stands in the way of that can go by the board[,] for all I will do to prevent it."¹³⁸ Cutler strove to bring seafaring to generations of Americans growing further removed from the experience-as-lived—and growing less discerning as a result. Technical seamanship was important, as were discussions on the

¹³⁶ Charles R. Patterson to Carl Cutler, 23 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 12. Folder 12 is actually May 1930—this item is misfiled in the archive).

¹³⁷ Carl Cutler to F.A. MacGillivray, 24 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

¹³⁸ Carl Cutler to Charles Patterson, 24 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

merits of learning practical seafaring from books, but his interest in the presumed ideals and values of the clipper ship period was an even greater force. Artistic tensions notwithstanding, Cutler's eyes were on the larger prizes of record keeping, remembrance, and renaissance.

Not limited to East Coast yachtsmen, similar exchanges over the value of popular marine publications appeared in the correspondence between Captain P.A. MacDonald and J. Ferrell Colton. MacDonald had retired from sailing and worked as a shipkeeper in Winslow, Washington, in 1936. Colton was a young maritime enthusiast residing in that bastion of maritime culture and heritage, Coyote Range, Arizona. Generational differences spill from the pages of their extensive correspondence. Colton was writing a pamphlet cataloging all square-riggers still in existence in the 1930s. When published by G.P. Putnam's Sons in 1937, *The Last of the Square-Rigged Ships* had grown to 288 pages. In 1936, he was relying on MacDonald's personal knowledge and experience to guide him through the process. Accuracy was important to Colton, so he spent considerable time consulting MacDonald on the finer points of ship dimensions. "Chances are your figures are right but simply belong to another ship," wrote Captain MacDonald. "It is well to be very careful if you wish to write a detailed account of ships. I have noticed before in many fine and interesting books, the careless juggling of tonnage figures. Villiers [a reference to sailor and maritime author Alan Villiers] is most elastic on that score."¹³⁹ The old man possessed considerable sailing experience, and his job as shipkeeper afforded him many free hours in which to read the hundreds of maritime books on the market. MacDonald was a harsh critic of the many pieces of "flimsy,

¹³⁹ P.A. MacDonald to J. Ferrell Colton, 13 September 1936, Colton collection, box 1, folder 1.

superficial, trash, done up in nice parcels.” He wanted Colton to read only books of “solid facts,” and he included a list of “the real worthwhile books by the best informed authors” in a 1936 letter. The old captain included Cutler’s book, misnamed “Ocean Greyhounds,” among the valuable works, along with the volumes of the Marine Research Society.¹⁴⁰

Accuracy of information was of primary importance to Colton for the same reason it was to the MRS and to Carl Cutler. Like many before him, Colton concentrated on square-riggers. “The purpose of this pamphlet,” he wrote to MacDonald, “is to gather together all existing square-rigged vessels, whether auxiliary or not” that remained in 1936. To Colton, god was in the details: “I will do my best to make this statistical booklet as accurate as possible with the means at my disposal [sic], for without accuracy the thing is useless.”¹⁴¹ Shoddy facts threatened to marginalize the significance of square-rigged sailing because heroic feats of seamanship might be reduced to mere hearsay, rendering the era’s essential American ideals only suggestions, rather than dictums. Attention to detail would provide a necessary concreteness, absent in fiction or first-person narratives written with specific agendas, both of which risked converting the entire age of sail into pure legend. The non-fiction authors rescued the heroicized past by paying such close attention to the details that they could see little else.

Still, for MacDonald, technical accuracy and first-person narratives ultimately went hand in hand. “There is no question but that A.J.V. [Alan Villiers] and his books are proving quite popular with the American readers,” he asserted, “and, I hope, for his

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ J. Ferrell Colton to P.A. MacDonald, 18 September 1936, Colton collection, box 1, folder 1. With thanks to either Gustav Flaubert or Ludwig Meis van der Rohe.

sake, that his last book 'The Cruise of the Conrad' will yield him a rich return for the risks on his part."¹⁴² Villiers's popularity arose from his rollicking style, but his subject matter, and, especially, his timing, helped his sales in the years before World War II. Narratives added humanity to technical facts, and Villiers was only the latest in a long line of sea narrative writers that stretched back to Richard Henry Dana, Jr., in 1840.

Heroic Seafaring Spreads

In first-person narratives, works of fiction, and non-fiction works focused on accuracy and detail, a cultivated interest in maritime affairs had returned to American cultural life. Almost by definition, authors of first-person narratives wrote heroic tales that blurred the line between literature and fiction. Fiction, valuable in terms of the latitude it offered authors, threatened to turn all maritime stories into legends or tropes. Non-fiction authors, while devoted to presenting the accurate accounts necessary for proper veneration of the maritime past, still picked the most difficult, unusual, and most easily-heroicized topics to make their cases. Each genre's sense of exceptionalism ensured that very little of the coarse life of most sailors made it into print. Instead, what was published reflected the adventurous, masculine, and heroic world of sailing ships and sailors. Speed records, adventures in foreign ports, daring feats aloft, storms, and pirates were all fodder for maritime books. Indeed, when marine artist Charles Patterson criticized Carl Cutler's illustration of sailors reefing a sail, Cutler defended his decision to show a more difficult task, though he admitted "it would probably have been better" to

¹⁴² P.A. MacDonald to J. Ferrell Colton, 14 March 1938, Colton collection, box 1, folder 3.

depict a more commonplace activity.¹⁴³ Coping with difficulty was the essence of virtue to Maritime Revivalists; it demonstrated American manhood's tenacity and determination in the face of trouble. The inane boredom of shipboard routine, bad food, and discipline were rarely addressed; when they were, it was only to show what a sturdy bunch American mariners were.

Sea narratives, maritime fiction, and marine chronicles incorporated purpose-driven life stories, fantastical personalities, and highly-embellished heroic feats to present readers with characters that exemplified essential American values. Behind all of them was an undercurrent of declension, and writers hoped their works would spark recognition of past achievement and create hope for future renaissance, if not of shipping, then at least of heritage. To all of them, the American maritime experience was both extraordinary and central to national development.

The class orientation of authors and publishers, however, was ambiguous. Without doubt, their work stressed upper-class values, with privileged young men co-opting working-class experiences to attain personal growth. In some cases, publishers relied on upper-class subscribers as consumers of their product. In other instances, mass-market consumption of seafaring books brought their messages and romanticized portrayals to great numbers of Americans, young and old.¹⁴⁴ Some works were serialized, some reprinted dozens of times, some approved by the Boy Scouts of America,

¹⁴³ Carl Cutler to Charles Patterson, 24 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

¹⁴⁴ Public libraries in the United States significantly expanded during this period. See Abigail Ayers Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries and American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); Miriam Braverman, *Youth, Society, and the Public Library* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1979); Lowell A. Martin, *Enrichment: A History of the Public Library in the United States in the Twentieth Century* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998); and Wayne E. Weigand, *An Active Instrument for Propaganda: The American Public Library During World War I* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).

and some even made into motion pictures.¹⁴⁵ Authors and publishers decided on the topics and values, but once released, mass markets gave these ideas wide distribution. Both medium and message found far wider audiences than the upper-class Americans that writers and publishers probably had in mind.

¹⁴⁵ *Treasure Island* was made into a motion picture in 1912, 1918, 1920, and 1934, "Internet Movie Database" (accessed October 30, 2008); <http://www.imdb.com/find?s=all&q=treasure+island>; *Moby-Dick*, albeit poorly, in 1930, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0021149/>; and *Captains Courageous* in 1937, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0028691/>. In addition, other maritime fiction found its way onto film, for example, Frederick Marrayat's *Mr. Midshipman Easy* (1836) was made into the motion picture "Midshipman Easy" first in 1915, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0005741/>.

CHAPTER IV

FROM POSEIDON TO POPEYE: THE VISUAL CULTURE OF THE MARITIME REVIVAL

A fishing shack stands on a wharf in Rockport, Massachusetts. It has stood there for a very long time, literally since 1978, but in another incarnation for more than a century. Following the destruction wreaked by the famous New England “Blizzard of ’78” it was rebuilt in exact detail. While the shack’s beams and boards are only a few decades old, its place in the visual culture of the maritime world has a much longer pedigree. This humble fishing shack, dating from at least the 1890s (and some say much earlier) has become entwined in the maritime imagery of old New England since the nineteen-teens and -twenties. Artist, illustrator, and art teacher Lester Hornby (1882-1956), versed in French motif techniques, summered in Rockport. When a student brought him yet another depiction of the old fishing shack, he is purported to have exclaimed: “What—Motif No. 1 again!” and the name stuck. Since then, the shack has been the subject of countless photographs, paintings, drawings, etchings, puzzles, local celebrations, and tourist pilgrimages. The image has spread around the nation and the world, and it has graced everything from a prize-winning American Legion parade float in 1933 to a United States postage stamp in 2002. Motif #1 is so deeply ingrained in the

historical memory of Rockport and America that after the building's destruction in 1978, the community came together to rebuild it.¹

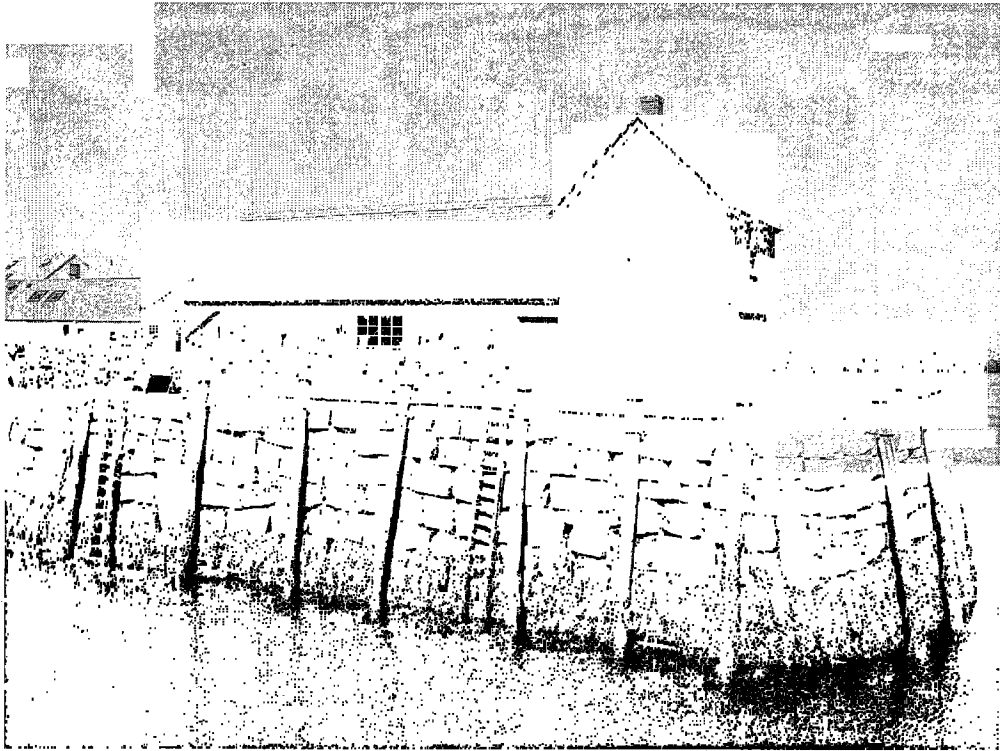


Figure 4.1 Motif #1, Rockport, Massachusetts, 2009.²

This chapter explores the diffusion of maritime imagery throughout American culture, and the implications of that diffusion, during the Maritime Revival. It is not concerned with an analysis of such images as the famous marine paintings of James Buttersworth or Charles R. Patterson, but instead with the styles, themes, mediums, means of dispersal, and venues that made these images so influential in the years after they were first created. Some forms, statuary, for example, were always intended for

¹ John L. Cooley, *Rockport Sketch Book: Stories of Early Art and Artists* (Rockport, MA: Rockport Art Association, 1965), 102, 105-106; Leslie D. Bartlett, "Motif No. 1: The Little Fish Shack Which Refused to Go Away," *Gloucester Daily Times*, Gloucester, Massachusetts, April 4, 2002, <http://www.rockportusa.com/motifone/column040402.html> (accessed September 24, 2008).

² Photograph by the author.

public display. Others, such as marine paintings, had a more limited appeal until reproduced in lithographs or the pamphlets of financial institutions in the 1920s. Working class or neoclassic, high culture or mass culture, art or advertising, maritime imagery was employed to spread messages of patriotism, bravery, charm, or the pastoral purity of the past. It visually expressed the values of old-stock American culture, and the images chosen for display or sale reflected a carefully circumscribed view of the maritime experience.³

Terms such as highbrow or lowbrow, high, popular, and mass culture are the subject of endless debate. Postmodernists insist that there is no distinction; it is all “culture,” while others trace the bifurcation between “low” and “high” to the second half of the nineteenth century. In either case, a popular “high/low” cultural delineation existed and was exploited by traditional elites. To the Americans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hierarchy of value in art and culture was just as “real” as the hierarchy of races among Social Darwinists.⁴

The old Rockport shack exemplifies the themes of marine visual culture during the Maritime Revival. The unimpressive shack has had a wider career in iconography

³ See Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt, *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 2001); Jonathan Smith, *Charles Darwin and Victorian Visual Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Frederick N. Bohrer, *Orientalism and Visual Culture: Imagining Mesopotamia in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Ray B. Browne and Marshall Fishwick, *Icons of America* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Press, 1978).

⁴ See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1991); John Story, *An Introductory Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1983); Herbert J. Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* rev. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). While not as pernicious in its application as Social Darwinism’s hierarchy of races, artistic and cultural hierarchies were nevertheless social constructions with significant influence.

than it did in fishing. As a piece of early twentieth-century working-class material culture, it was co-opted by artists for its quaint, preindustrial charm set against an increasingly mechanized Gloucester waterfront just down the road. Its commodification, whether by artists or Kodak puzzle manufacturers, illustrates the packaging and popularizing of maritime imagery across class lines. Its rebuilding is a visual reminder of the importance of tourist dollars to communities trying to display their rarified maritime objects to mass audiences. Operating at the intersection of highbrow, lowbrow, working-class and elite culture, its story demonstrates the fluidity of maritime visual imagery, and its universal or fundamental appeal, during the Maritime Revival.

High Art at the World's Columbian Exposition

The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition put Chicago on the world stage and contrasted a "dream city" of abundance and success with the difficult social and economic conditions of the late nineteenth century United States.⁵ The Haymarket riot's class warfare was only a few years past, social unrest and labor troubles plagued the North, and racial violence in the southern states was commonplace. The week the Exposition opened as a monument to American prosperity and innovation, a series of bank failures induced a panic and subsequently launched the Depression of 1893. Despite difficult times, the fair season, according to historian Dennis Downey, left impressions of "enchantment and innocence," even offering "safe haven from the tumult

⁵ Halsey C. Ives, *The Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the World's Columbian Exposition* (St. Louis, MO: N.D. Thompson, 1893-1894). See also, Carl S. Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Douglas Steeples and David O. Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation: The Depression of 1893* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1998).

and contentiousness” of the growing social problems.⁶ Chicago had risen from a frontier village to the world’s sixth largest city in only sixty-six years by “engaging the present,” instead of remaining tied to the past.⁷ Yet, in this fast growing city, the fruits of the modern industrial era were exhibited in buildings of Classical, Romanesque, and Renaissance style. Foreign visitors were “mystified” to find “products of a dynamic mechanical and electrical age” on display in buildings that “looked backward for stylistic inspiration.”⁸ The antimodern inspiration, though, was only an impermanent veneer.⁹ Little more than stage sets, the neoclassical buildings revealed their modern steel frame skeletons once visitors stepped inside. Like the buildings themselves, the exhibits took symbols from the past while engaging the present and future.

Educating the fairgoers was a principal goal, and Exposition directors offered visitors appropriate visual symbols to leave them with a genteel version of western civilization’s progress toward America. Although intended to attract and entertain a great press of humanity, the Exposition was more than “merely a show, a fair or colossal shop,” claimed Wilbur O. Atwater of the Agricultural Department. It was “pre-eminently an exposition of the principles which underlie our national and individual welfare, of our

⁶ Dennis B. Downey, *A Season of Renewal: The Columbian Exposition and Victorian America* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), xiv, 166.

⁷ Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World’s Columbian Exposition and American Culture* (Chicago: N. Hall, 1979), 30. Arnold Lewis, *An Early Encounter with Tomorrow: Europeans, Chicago’s Loop, and the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 2.

⁸ Lewis, *Early Encounter with Tomorrow*, 167. See also, Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

⁹ Stanley Appelbaum, *The Chicago World’s Fair of 1893: A Photographic Record, Photos from the Collection of the Avery Library of Columbia University and the Chicago Historical Society* (New York: Dover, 1980), 5. The detailed exteriors of the buildings were composed of staff, a mixture of jute fiber, plaster, and cement, hung upon steel frames. Cheap and lightweight, it allowed builders to create the elaborate facades and statuary on the fairgrounds.

material, intellectual and moral status...of the progress we have made, the plane on which we live and the ways in which we shall rise higher.... not only to our people, but to the world.”¹⁰ Atwater’s mandate was nearly as broad as the Exposition itself, and challenging, considering the variety of both visitors and subject matter. The difficulty, though, was to be borne “without complaint” wrote the Smithsonian Institution’s George Brown Goode in 1893, “because, though the Museum undoubtedly loses much more than it gains on such occasions, the opportunity for popular education is too important to be neglected.”¹¹ At an undertaking the size of the Columbian Exposition, visual imagery was one of the surest methods to inculcate the prevailing culture’s values onto large and diverse groups.

Not everyone shared an optimistic view of the Exposition. Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Frederick Douglass compiled a contemporary pamphlet, *The Reason Why the Colored American is Not in the World’s Columbian Exposition*, protesting the omission of African Americans from the formal exhibitions.¹² And not only African –Americans were ignored. “Without exception,” historian Robert Rydell has concluded, “these expositions were upper-class creations initiated and controlled by locally or nationally prominent elites.” Somewhere at the junction of Social Darwinism and industrial

¹⁰ Wilbur O. Atwater, “What the Exposition May and Ought to Be,” n.d., 4, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Records Unit 70, Exposition Records of the Smithsonian Institution and United States National Museum, 1875-1916, box 19, quoted in Robert W. Rydell *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 7, 241.

¹¹ George Brown Goode, *Annual Report of the United States National Museum for 1893* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1895), 59, quoted in William O. Craig, *Around the World with the Smithsonian* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2004), 28, 30. Goode weighed the financial and staff costs against the opportunities for education.

¹² See Trudier Harris, ed., *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Christopher Robert Reed, “*All the World is Here!*”: *The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

capitalism, the Columbian Exposition, like other expositions, helped promoters win “broad acceptance across class lines for *their* priorities and *their* decision-making authority.” These elites, whether promoters or the boards of experts organizing the various departments, presented utopian visions of America that bolstered their own legitimacy and provided an “intellectual scaffolding for the cumulative symbolic universe under construction at the fairs.”¹³ The worlds they created, in short, served to sustain the dominant culture’s hegemony.

Rydell has argued that world’s fairs had a “hegemonic function precisely because they propagated the ideas and values of the country’s political, financial, corporate, and intellectual leaders and offered these ideas as the proper interpretation of social and political reality.” Exposition organizers asserted American culture’s primacy by using symbolism that “attempted to organize society from a particular class perspective” under the guise of entertainment, vicarious travel opportunities, demonstrations of new technology, and artistic displays. These were all designed to offer Americans ways to “reaffirm their collective national identity,” establish faith in progress, sustain American institutions, and assure people of their particular place in the grand schema. By putting maritime images and objects on display, Exposition organizers established new uses for old symbols, and Americanism—whether racial, technological, or cultural—would remain at the top of the social hierarchy.¹⁴

¹³ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 235. Italics in original. See also, Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 2-4.

On a grand scale, the entire Exposition experience was an expression of nineteenth-century visual culture, and was a laboratory to explore the interplay between elite and mass culture in visual displays.¹⁵ Inside the buildings or out on the grounds, visual interaction may have been the most engaged some fairgoers ever were with the Exposition's offerings. The exhibits were "so numerous that a visitor could not pretend to comprehend them in detail," wrote *Philadelphia Inquirer* literary editor Joseph M. Rogers. "Most people preferred to view the scene of beauty by day or night from the outside, and to glance hurriedly at what was within."¹⁶ Considering the organizers' efforts to gather comprehensive collections, vast displays left visitors with overall impressions rather than specific memories. In this environment, artists, sculptors, and exhibit directors at the World's Columbian Exposition consciously employed maritime imagery to reconcile modernity and antimodernity by painting stunning visuals with broad brushstrokes.

The Directors of the Columbian Exposition chose to present working-class maritime lifestyles through the medium of high art. Not all artistic endeavor in the 1880s and 1890s lauded pastoralism, preindustrial life, or a simpler but more pure working-class culture. However, content decisions made by elite directors helped to push these artistic themes to the fore and towards mass audiences at the Exposition. Against a backdrop of industrial capitalism, trusts, labor unrest, economic troubles, and alarming social and

¹⁵ Ibid., 40; U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1991*, 111th ed., (Washington, DC, 1991), <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/statcomp/documents/1991-02.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2008); Badger, *Great American Fair*, 109. Admissions for the Exposition's six-month run totaled more than 27 million people at a time the United States population was only 62.9 million people, but this does not account for foreigners or duplicate admissions. Still, the fair was a signal event in American culture attended by huge swaths of the populace across economic, racial, and class lines.

¹⁶ Joseph M. Rogers, "Lessons from International Expositions," *The Forum* 32 (December 1901): 507, 512.

living conditions for workers and immigrants in the burgeoning cities, the contemporary working classes offered little more than revulsion to middle- and upper-class Americans. By contrast, scenes of traditional lifestyles passing from view offered visitors solace.

Art professor Halsey C. Ives, Director of the Exposition's Department of Fine Arts, catalogued thousands of pieces of juried art from nineteen nations. The unenviable task of compiling the highlights of the massive exhibition fell to his assistant director, Charles M. Kurtz. The fruit of his labor was a volume of the official illustrations; 336 engravings commemorating the best of the best at the Fine Arts Building. Fully one-sixth of the artworks included in the book expressed overtly maritime imagery.¹⁷

Designed for "two classes of persons—those who visit the Exposition and those who may not be so fortunate," according to Kurtz, the book of engravings recorded the artistic highlights of the Fine Arts Building and distributed them to Americans beyond the Exposition grounds. For those who attended, it was a preparatory catalog of "works especially worthy of study and attention among the hundreds of masterpieces" on display by artists from the "various countries of the world," by which he meant European nations, because while Japanese art was present at the Exposition it was not included in the book of highlights. As journalist Will H. Low wrote in 1893, "memories...are often gained on the ground made familiar through the study of guide-books and photographs, which, instead of dulling realization, add to it the zest of more thorough appreciation. In like manner, study, discussion, photographs, and engravings prepare one for the Columbian

¹⁷ Halsey C. Ives, *Official Catalogue, Part X, Dept. K, Fine Arts* (Chicago: W.B. Gonkey Company, 1893); Charles M. Kurtz, ed., *Official Illustrations (Three Hundred Thirty-Six Engravings) from the Art Gallery of the World's Columbian Exposition* (Philadelphia: George Barrie, 1893). 56 of the 336 artworks, or 16.67%, portrayed maritime themes.

Exposition.”¹⁸ After the Exposition’s “magnificent display of art has become only an influence and a memory,” the book would be a souvenir of “the measure of the splendors of the great event” visitors had seen. As for “those who may not visit the Exposition,” Kurtz concluded, the book “will convey an idea of them [the art] that could be obtained in no other manner so effective.”¹⁹ Attendees and non-attendees alike would learn, among other things, that American or Western European art was the most important, influential, and appropriate to present to the public.

Close examination of the maritime imagery in the *Official Illustrations* reveals themes at the heart of Maritime Revival ideology. Not surprisingly, seascapes occupied an important place. There were depictions of storms, as in Eugene Berthelon’s (France) “A Storm at Yport” showing waves crashing against a cliff; there were rocks and waves, as in Hans von Bartels’ (Germany) “Surf”; and there were peaceful scenes, such as Prosper L. Senat’s (United States) “Gulf of Ajaccio, Corsica,” showing a tidal shoreline with fishing boats beached at low tide. These three illustrated the breadth of the seascapes, with the fury of the elements on one side, and a certain charming decrepitude on the other. Romantic in style, they allowed viewers to commune with transcendent forces beyond the self—the awesome power of the elements—in this case the tide.²⁰

A subset of seascape was the ship painting. Nicholas Bastert (Holland) offered an idyllic scene of a single gaff-rigged sloop on an appealing pond in “The White Sail,”

¹⁸ Will H. Low, “The Art of the White City,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 14, no. 4 (October 1893): 504. <http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=AFR7379-0014-63> (accessed September 23, 2008).

¹⁹ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 7-8. See also, Julie K. Brown, *Contesting Images: Photography and the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1994).

²⁰ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 53, 47, 153; Norman F. Cantor, *Twentieth-Century Culture: Modernism to Deconstruction* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 3.

inviting his viewers to climb in and relax at a slower pace on the water. German artist H. Schnars-Alquist's painting "Going Freely" offers an image of a full-rigged ship plowing the waves. Though no land is in sight, several supporting vessels suggest a coast

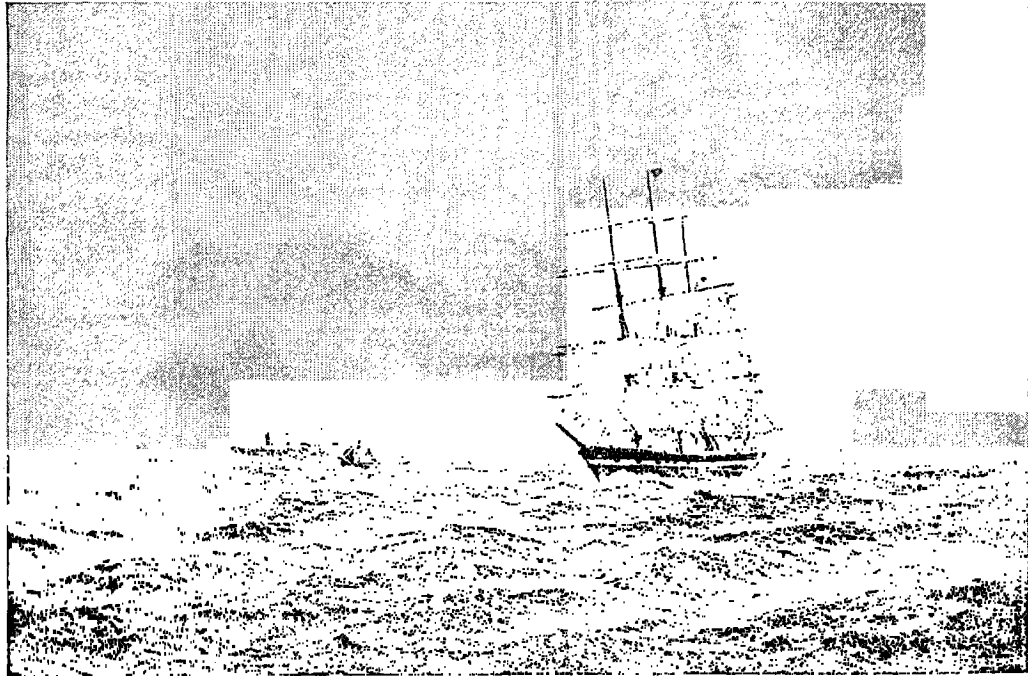


Figure 4.2 "Going Freely" by H. Schnars-Alquist.²¹

nearby, including a tiny gaff-rigged sloop, a half-dozen shadowy craft on the horizon, and an auxiliary steam-powered vessel traveling in opposite direction. Schnars-Alquist knew something of proper sailing technique: not every sail on the ship was set, as would be true near the shore. Still, "Going Freely" portrays the romanticized maritime experience in all its elemental majesty. The outbound square-rigger, antimodern and pure, was free, at least according to the title; the steamer, a picture of modernity, was tied to a coal bunker and, thus tethered, heads inbound towards an unseen port ashore. In both paintings, ships

²¹ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 182.

and boats are vehicles for a freedom to be found through authentic experiences that transcended the daily grind of modernity.²²

Paintings of sea battles showed the destructive power of humanity's failure to rise above the self. Still, they depicted mariners as idealized heroes, as in Frank Bourdillion's (Great Britain) depiction of post-battle carnage "On Board the 'Revenge.'" Other military works left individuals behind, concentrating on the material culture of seamanship. Charles-Edouard Delort (France) commemorated the "Capture of the Dutch Fleet in the Texel by the Hussars of the Republic, 1793," and despite hundreds of mounted cavalry surrounding ships caught in the ice, the vessels and their rigging dominate the painting. German painter Paul Hoecker's "On Board the H.M.S. Deutschland" depicts ten sailors of a gun crew, but the gun itself is the focal point. American Walter L. Dean's "Peace" shows the superior firepower of the Great White Fleet with nary a human being in sight.²³ As seafaring and military technologies moved forward, the preindustrial lifestyle disappeared, until humans disappear from the paintings. Individuals were alienated with every step closer to modernity, and, given the inherent destructive nature of military power, military imagery provided an interesting counterpoint to the Romanticism of the seascapes.

By contrast, the human elements of preindustrial life occupied a central place (34 out of the 56 maritime-related pieces) in the maritime portion of the *Official Illustrations*. There are too many works to list individually, but some representative examples will

²² Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 97, 182. See also, Bryan Jay Wolf, *Romantic Re-vision: Culture and Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century American Painting and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); William Vaughan, *German Romantic Painting*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); and Anita Brookner, *Romanticism and Its Discontents* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000).

²³ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 268, 105, 194, 291.

serve. An oceanic pastoralism encompassed a number of principal categories: maritime labor, shipboard life, the perils of the sea, and most importantly, children and the sea. These pastorals offered viewers images of a former purity, where preindustrial work was more natural and inherently more valuable in a spiritual sense. As technology tamed the elements, the viewers could see a past where men and women were at the mercy of forces greater than themselves. These images harkened to a golden age before industrial capitalism had darkened the skies, crowded the cities, and made humans a part of the machinery. Men and women in traditional labor were illustrated in paintings such as Frank Penfold's (United States) "The Herring Season," where people walk through village streets carrying baskets full of herring; Dominique Rozier's (France) "Fishmongers—Dieppe," depicting men and women selling cod and eels; and John J. Enneking's (United States) 1892 "Duxbury Clam-Digger,"²⁴ which shows a single figure standing in the mud, digging by hand on the clam flats, with salt grass and a horse and cart in the background. Victor Gilbert (France) offered a boisterous harborside fish market scene with "A Good Haul," replete with a forest of masts in the background, various species of fish in baskets and on the ground, barkers, customers, and fishmongers. In a nod to the expanding commercialization of the sea and its resources, two men in oilskins exchange money off to one side while the chaos of the market takes center stage. A number of themes were presented: traditional fishing, working-class sellers and customers, and the counterpoint of the rise of capitalism. All four paintings

²⁴ "American Impressionism: The Beauty of Work," Traditional Fine Arts Organization, Inc., <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/6aa/6aa52.htm> (accessed September 21, 2008). The full title of the piece is "A South Duxbury Clam Digger." Website supplied date of painting.



Figure 4.3 “South Duxbury Clam-Digger” by John J. Enneking.²⁵

depict scenes that, in reality, had been full of dirt and odoriferous gurry. Once idealized, they stood for a working-class, and therefore “authentic,” experience.²⁶

Portrayals of shipboard life were another authentic experience offered to art consumers. French painter Philibert Léon Couturier, called by his friend French Romantic poet and novelist Théophile Gautier, “*Le roi des poulaillers*” (the king of poultry), was best known for bucolic scenes of farm animals, washerwomen, and post-hunt still-lives, but the example of his work represented in the Fine Art Building was “At the Capstan—All Together” which portrays the massive group effort of marching around

²⁵ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 89.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 138, 29, 89, 197. See also Margaret Werth, *The Joy of Life: The Idyllic in French Art, circa 1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and John House, *Impressionism: Paint and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).



Figure 4.4 “A Good Haul” by Victor Gilbert.²⁷

an equally massive capstan to the beat of a drummer and bugler. Every sailor is smartly dressed in white and blue, and as the title implied, all were working together at a difficult task. Ultimately, the maritime scene could offer something that rural scenes did not, portraying the unity of a ship’s crew at a time when the chaos of industrial society seemed overwhelming. The increasingly rare act of raising anchor with human muscle contrasted with the rise of mechanization at sea, just as plow and oxen contrasted tractors on farms ashore.²⁸

²⁷ Ibid., 197.

²⁸ J r mie Pierre Jouan, “Philibert L on Couturier,” (2007) <http://www.philibert-leon-couturier.com/> (accessed September 18, 2008); Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 180.

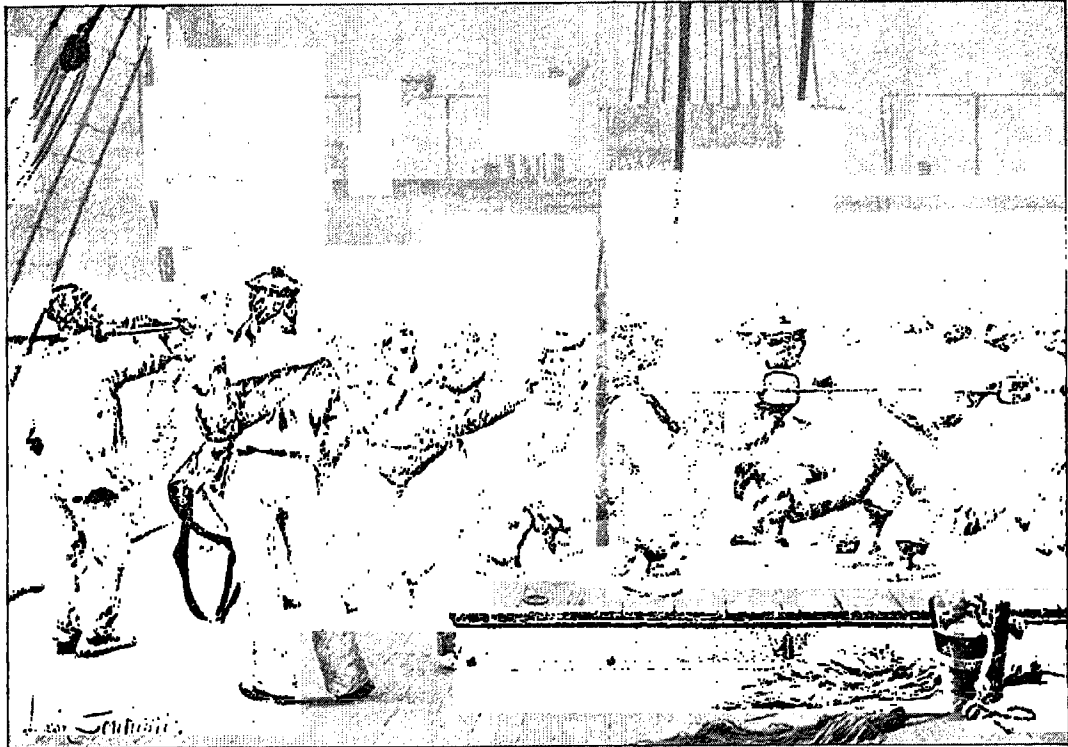


Figure 4.5 “At the Capstan—All Together” by Leon Couturier.²⁹

Henry Scott Tuke (Great Britain) offered further illustration of traditional sailors’ humanity in “Sailors Playing Cards.” Tuke, most famous for male nudes, had a strong interest in marine themes and images, and often incorporated the two motifs. In this case, his seven clothed sailors range in age from old, grey-haired and grey-bearded, to a clean-faced lad in the background sitting on the ship’s rail. Some men play cards while others watch. In “Sailors Playing Cards,” perhaps chosen by Exposition directors because everyone was clothed, Tuke represented most of the tropes of maritime imagery: one man wears a horizontal black-and-white-striped shirt, another plaid, still another denim. Several wear fisherman’s hats, one wears a sou’wester despite the pleasant weather, and another a hat with a pompom. One man smokes a meerschaum while another drinks

²⁹ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 180.

coffee from a tin cup. None of the figures address the viewer; all look elsewhere. The central figure, a middle-aged man, has a worried look on his face. Perhaps the cards are not going his way; perhaps he wonders if he will have employment at sea for as long as the grey-bearded sailor at his left. The boy on the rail has a similarly pensive expression.



Figure 4.6 “Sailors Playing Cards” by Henry Scott Tuke.³⁰

Tuke showed the camaraderie of shipboard life during a period of relaxation, as even those not actively playing are involved in the human connections. As historian Daniel Vickers has aptly written, sailing was a young man’s game; one rarely grew old in the fo’c’s’le. Under the pretense of a depiction of leisure activity, Tuke’s painting, with its diverse age range and garb, reveals the anxiety of past and present. Were these men the last emissaries of traditional shipboard life? Would the young boy have the chance to

³⁰ Ibid., 109.

grow old at sea? Was there a future for sailing? Asking these questions, Tuke built a palpable tension between young and old in the painting.³¹

The perils of the sea found thorough, if not fully accurate, representation in the art at the Columbian Exposition. Henry John Yeend King (Great Britain) pondered potential loss in “The Lass that Loved a Sailor.” King juxtaposed home and hearth with the sea, as a young woman longingly looks seaward. Interestingly, the sailor himself is not represented; only by the painting’s title can the viewer know the reasons for her melancholy visage. Both offerings from Great Britain’s Walter Langley concerned perilous seafaring. First, in “The Departure of the Fleet,” the fishing fleet has left the harbor, but women and children remain behind, looking out to sea. One man, with back



Figure 4.7 “The Departure of the Fleet” by Walter Langley.³²

to the viewer, looks through a hand telescope at the unseen, but presumably distant, vessels. Two women in the foreground look seaward as well, and two women in the

³¹ Ibid., 109. See also, Richard Dellamora, *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

³² Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 146.

background talk softly with concerned countenances. Buoyed by a youthful sense of immortality, a young boy mends nets, oblivious to the trepidation surrounding him.

Langley's 1889 "Disaster" concerns the danger associated with seafaring life.³³ From its title, viewer can assume that the women on shore gaze fearfully upon some terrible sight,



Figure 4.8 "Disaster Scene at a Cornish Fishing Village" by Walter Langley.³⁴

³³ Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, "Biography for Walter Langley," <http://www.bmagic.org.uk/people/Walter+Langley> (accessed September 22, 2008). The full title of the artwork is "Disaster Scene at a Cornish Fishing Village." See also, exhibit review, Birmingham City Art Gallery, Kenneth McConkey, "Painting in Newlyn 1880-1930," *Burlington Magazine* 127, no. 991 (Oct., 1985): 737-736.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.

but it is unclear what has happened. In the chaos, the waterfront is alive with activity—men are running, shouting, and taking action, women look worried, and a child hides her head in the folds of her mother's skirt. The viewer need not know the details to recognize the dangers of fishermen's lives. More explicitly, Eugene Chigot (France) offered a scene where a solitary fisherman rows a father and distressed, dead, or dying son to shore through waves in "At Etaples, Pas de Calais." Finally, German Adolf Brütt's bronze, "Saved," depicts a rugged sailor decked out in full foul weather gear from sou'wester to sea boots, carrying a young woman who has fainted from exhaustion or terror. Shoeless and clad only in a thin gown, this damsel in distress has been rescued by a heroic sailor. The sea is clearly a man's sphere; a place where strength and courage could hold the elements at bay and perform feats when necessary. Here, in beauty-and-the-beast imagery, the sailor, coarse but strong—and of course white—saves civilization.³⁵

The now-stereotypical "old salt" found plenty of publicity in the *Official Illustrations* catalog. Albert Aublet's (France) "Old Salts—Tréport" depicts eight bearded and greying sailors looking over the seawall at a harbor full of sailboats. In the foreground, a ruggedly handsome sailor is engaged in conversation with another sailor, one man looks wistfully towards the boats while smoking his pipe, and two pair converse. The eighth man, the oldest and greyest of the lot, stares directly at the viewer. The line blurs; who is observing whom? There was less ambiguity in Alfons Spring's (Germany) "The Fisherman's Home." The viewer is invited to look, as if through a window, onto a scene depicting a wizened old man mending a net beneath a dormer window. With his back to the viewer and face turned in profile, the chiaroscuro reveals thoroughly greyed

³⁵ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 79, 146, 230, 192, 78.



Figure 4.9 “Old Sailors—Tréport” by Albert Aublet.³⁶

hair and beard, and an age-lined face. The sailor smokes a meerschaum, and his home is filled with marine ephemera, most notably, a large ship model on the table beside him. Old and grey, he mends a net he perhaps can no longer set. It is a scene of loss and decline, whether of old age and decrepitude or the passing of an older lifestyle.³⁷

The typecast image of old salts offered transition to another piece of Maritime Revival ideology in the art at the World’s Columbian Exposition; socializing children into the value of maritime life. Elchanon Verveer’s (Holland) seascapes revolved around themes of fathers returning from sea to their loving families, young children playing on shore, or old men talking in sight of the ocean. In “Expecting Return of the Boats,” two old sailors in sou’westers, sea boots, and oilskins (one smokes the ubiquitous

³⁶ Ibid., 306.

³⁷ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 306, 233. See also, Patrick McKee and Heta Kauppinen, *The Art of Aging: A Celebration of Old Age in Western Art* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1987).



Figure 4.10 “The Fisherman’s Home” by Alfons Spring.³⁸

meerscham) look seaward as the fishing fleet returns. The older of the two men addresses a young woman holding a baby. The artist may be conveying the wife’s longing for her husband’s return, perhaps suggesting that the child will follow in his father’s footsteps. Such generational interaction, depictions of both masculine and feminine roles, and children representing the future were all typical of Vermeer’s work. John R. Reid’s (Great Britain) 1883 painting, “The Yarn,” shows a sailor, clean-shaven, but still grizzled and thoroughly working class, sitting on a wall above a harbor full of fishing boats and a square-rigger.³⁹ He wears heavy sea boots, dungarees, a loose-

³⁸ Ibid., 223.

³⁹ John Denison Champlin, Jr., and Charles C. Perkins, eds., *Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings* vol. IV [copyright 1885, 1886, 1887] (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913), 20.

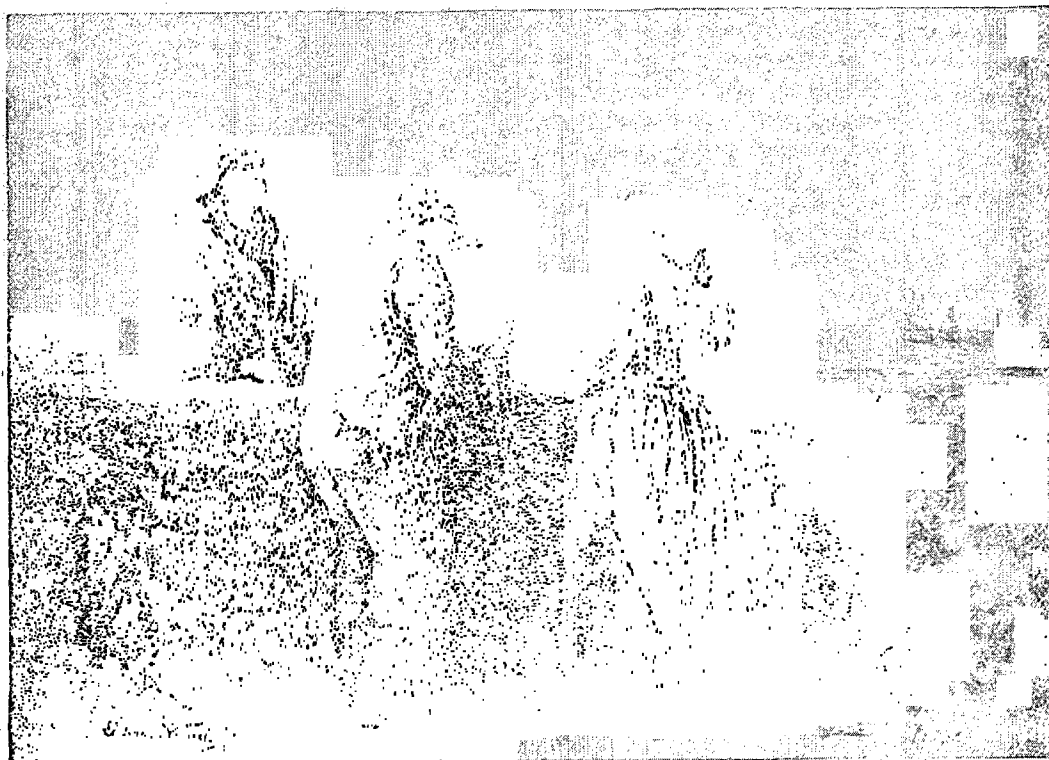


Figure 4.11 “Expecting Return of the Boats” by Elchanon Verveer.⁴⁰

collared shirt over a sweater over another shirt, and a hat with a cravat tied around it. Yet another sailor smokes a meerschaum. He spins a tale to two wide-eyed boys sitting in front of him, a young girl who wants to sit on the wall next to him, and a fourth child, a boy, climbing over the wall to have a better look at the harbor scene below. Reid’s painting struck a central note of Maritime Revival: cultural values transferred to younger generations via maritime heritage.⁴¹

Socializing children into maritime culture was clearly an important goal of Charles Kurtz’s selections, and in this instance, medium and message united. In addition

⁴⁰ Ibid., 46.

⁴¹ Ibid., 46, 127. See also, Claire Perry, *Young America: Childhood in 19th Century Art and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

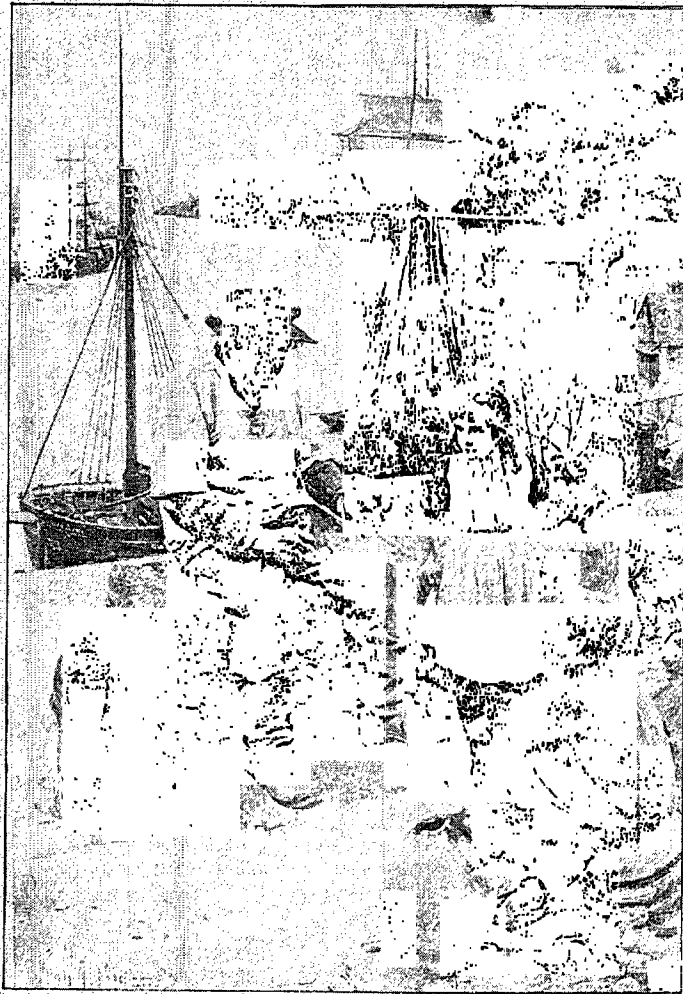


Figure 4.12 “The Yarn” by John R. Reid.⁴²

to the children in Reid’s “The Yarn,” a child features prominently in “A Young Sailor’s Training” by Virginie E. Demont-Breton (France). In ankle-deep water shoreside, a mother comforts her young son, afraid of the waves, while firmly preventing his retreat. Without the title, it is a charming scene of mother and child; with it, it becomes a scene of maritime masculinity building. Eugene Vail (United States) depicted three youths, two boys and a girl, sculling a small boat away from a steamer at the docks in “Marine”: showing a traditional wooden boat propelled by human power, moving away from the

⁴² Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 127.

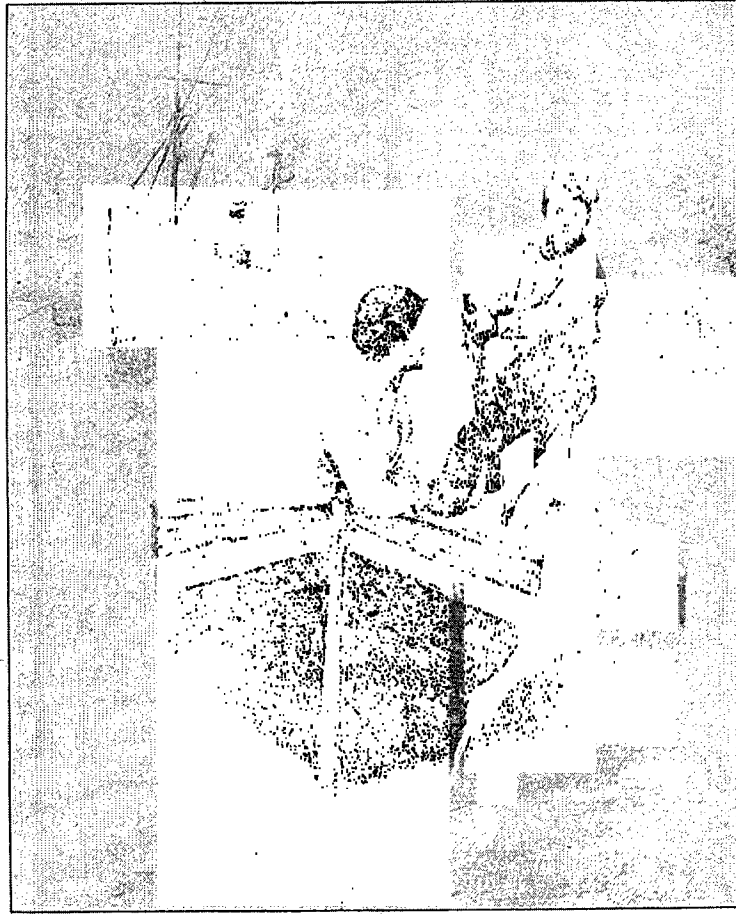


Figure 4.13 “Marine” by Eugene Vail.⁴³

iron-hulled steamer behind them. The boy sculling, propelling the craft with a single oar off the stern, looks directly at the viewer. His boat travels directly forward, coming right out of the painting as it moves ahead, away from the modern vessel at the dock.

Similarly, two young boys head away from land and out to sea in a sailboat in Walter L.

Dean’s (United States) “The Open Sea.” Bernardus Johannes Blommers (Holland)

portrayed the transfer of maritime labor to the next generation in “Shrimping at

Schevenigen,” where a teenage boy catches shrimp with a basket while his presumptive

⁴³ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 18.



Figure 4.14 “The Open Sea” by Walter L Dean.⁴⁴

sister looks on, carrying an even younger child piggyback. Finally, Robert V.V. Sewell’s (United States) 1888 “Sea Urchins” depicts five naked boys playing on the beach. Their clothes piled in the background, the three in the foreground play with a large model of a sloop. There are no adults on the empty beach, and no visible landmarks. The charming painting suggests that these children have, quite literally, been restored to a state of nature. Aside from a fairly nondescript pile of clothing, only the model boat suggests anything outside their idyllic Edenesque world. In perhaps the best expression of antimodernism in the entire catalog, the children in their innocence shed their worldly

⁴⁴ Kurtz, 270.

clothing, reject civilization, and return to nature on the beach. The toy boat completes the marriage of maritime symbolism to the oceanic pastoral. Modernity could not be escaped



Figure 4.15 “Sea Urchins” by Robert V.V. Sewell.⁴⁵

forever, as the boy in the background, just getting dressed, must have known. Here, the model, rather than an old sailor, transfers maritime cultural values on to the next generation.⁴⁶

“Several generations of Americans were unconsciously linked to the sea,” Andrew German has written regarding “the popularity of the ‘sailor suit’ as children’s clothing.” in the 1890s.⁴⁷ Boys’ “vestee suits” with “deep sailor” collars, embroidered white stars and emblems, and an included whistle and cord were sold by mail through

⁴⁵ Ibid., 293.

⁴⁶ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 19, 18, 207, 280, 293.

⁴⁷ Andrew W. German, *Voyages: Stories of America and the Sea, a Companion to the Exhibition at Mystic Seaport* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., 2000), 88.

Sears, Roebuck and Company. Costing \$3.50 (or \$4.50 for the more elaborate model), the sailor suits were at or near the top price point for other boy's vestee suits.⁴⁸ The fashion began in mid-nineteenth century England, and when parents "began dressing their



Figure 4.16 Soapine advertising card with sailor boy, circa 1885.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Sears, Roebuck & Company, *Fall 1900, Catalogue No. 110*, ed. Joseph J. Schroder, Jr., (1900; repr., Northfield, IL: DBI Books, 1970), 456, 457. Boys' suits ranged from a low of \$1.50 to a ceiling of \$4.50. Sears sold 4 boys suits costing \$2.00 or less, 5 suits costing between \$2.25 and \$3.00, 3 suits costing between \$3.50 and \$4.00, and only 2 costing \$4.50—the fancy sailor suit and #44567, "offered as one of the handsomest boys' suits made."

little boys in sailor suits,” historian Helen Rozwadowski has written, “they chose a style that more closely resembled the clothing worn by eighteenth-century sailors than the uniforms worn by contemporary ones.” By the 1880s, the style had spread across the Atlantic to the United States.⁵⁰ Young boys dressed in sailor suits also appeared in advertising, notably the Kendall Manufacturing Company’s fin-de-siècle advertisements for Soapine soap.⁵¹ Once popularized by the upper class, the fashion trend expanded to include more and more people, female and male, young and old. Some adult women, “initially in yachting circles and later outside them” even began dressing in sailor-themed clothing.⁵² Given the attention to transferring maritime values at the World’s Columbian Exposition and other venues of American culture, perhaps the connection was not as unconscious as German has suggested.

Kurtz, obviously, wanted to express the importance of the maritime past. To set up the exhibit, Art Department Chief Halsey C. Ives visited museums, academies, artists, and government officials in most European nations, and they all asked for space in the Fine Arts Building.⁵³ Stressing an elite preference for quality over quantity, Kurtz and the selection committee, when tracing the development of American art, were forced to incorporate works by artists who were justly famous in their own time but who, in the

⁴⁹ Advertising card, “Soapine,” Kendall Manufacturing Company, Providence, RI, n.d. [c. 1885?]. In possession of the author.

⁵⁰ Helen M. Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean: The Discovery and Exploration of the Deep Sea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2005), 17.

⁵¹ Advertising card, “Soapine,” Kendall Manufacturing Company, Providence, RI, n.d. [c. 1885?]. In possession of the author.

⁵² Rozwadowski, *Fathoming the Ocean*, 17.

⁵³ Kurtz, *Official Illustrations*, 9. Ives visited France, England, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Poland, Austria, Austro-Hungary, Italy, and Spain in search of artworks.

1890s were “almost forgotten.” He lamented that “general art-interest has been absorbed by work of more modern methods,” but these methods were “often of less truly artistic character.”⁵⁴ Just as these inferior modern methods were excluded from the American art retrospective, they were excluded in his compilation of Exposition highlights. Kurtz had a world of western art from which to choose, and to him, modern artistic endeavor lacked quality. Among the “quality” pieces they selected were those whose powerful imagery framed the maritime experience as heroic, romantic, and pure, juxtaposing the contents of Machinery Hall or the Transportation Building. But of course, what the art illustrated was not the entirety of the maritime story; it was only the sanitized version, even when the scene was full of dirt, tar, and fish entrails.

Public Statuary in Boston, Portland, and Chicago

By their very nature, memorials and other public statuary are designed to idealize and heroicize their subjects. During the Maritime Revival, sailors began to be heroicized on equal footing with their terrestrial military counterparts, such as George Washington and Paul Revere. Just after the Civil War, in 1865, the City of Boston established a soldiers’ and sailors’ burial plot in Mount Hope Cemetery in Mattapan, Massachusetts, later renamed the “Army and Navy Lot.” The Boston City Council solicited designs to erect a monument in the plot, and its final design was a platform base with an obelisk and, in bas relief, “an emblem of the army...[and one] emblematic of the navy” simply, and undoubtedly cheaply, designed by one Edward R. Brown of the city engineering

⁵⁴ Ibid., 13.

department.⁵⁵ On July 3, 1867, nearly one thousand participants trekked by rail and coach to the rural cemetery and sat before a “simple yet elegant monument hung with laurel and lilies” for its dedication. “Though simple in its details,” Boston Alderman and Cemetery Board of Trustee Chairman Charles W. Slack preached, the monument “yet speaks fully our gratitude.”⁵⁶

A few years later, simplicity had departed when the Boston Board of Aldermen began discussing a monument for Boston Common. To keep the Civil War’s memory “green in the inmost hearts of the people,” the sacrifice of the dead and their families deserved a public memorial as an “imperishable record” of their service. They concluded that “a Monument, suitable to the grandeur of the subject...be erected by the City Council of Boston in some conspicuous place.”⁵⁷ The new monument would rise above Flagstaff Hill, the highest point on Boston Common, at a cost of \$75,000, not including the foundation, six times the price of the simple obelisk in Mattapan.⁵⁸ The monument committee invited public comment, and Bostonians of “cultivated tastes” took the opportunity to make “critical examination” of designs submitted by leading artistic and architectural firms. These proper Bostonians largely agreed with the committee, and, prevailing over luminaries such as sculptor Larkin Mead and the architectural firm of

⁵⁵ *Erection and Dedication of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in the Army and Navy Lot, in Mount Hope Cemetery, Belonging to the City of Boston* City Document No. 80 (Boston: Printed by Order of the City Council, 1867), 9-11, 23, 24, <http://books.google.com> (accessed September 30, 2008).

⁵⁶ *Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument...in Mount Hope Cemetery*, 16, 17, 32.

⁵⁷ *Dedication of the Monument on Boston Common Erected to the Memory of the Men of Boston Who Died in the Civil War*, (Boston: Printed by Order of the City Council, 1877), 12.

⁵⁸ *Dedication of the Monument on Boston Common*, 13, 14. The Mount Hope monument cost less than \$15,500 a decade earlier. See *Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument...in Mount Hope Cemetery*, 21.

Peabody, Stearns, and Chandler, awarded the contract to Martin Milmore of Boston.⁵⁹

Reminiscent of Parisian monuments that paraphrased Trajan's victory column, Milmore designed a monument rivaling those of French or Roman emperors. "The column, inspired by classical design," Peggy McDowell has explained, "also harmonized stylistically with the allegorical figure it elevated."⁶⁰ From the highest point on the Common, the war memorial would rise over seventy feet, towering over the landscape in an impressive visual display when it was dedicated in 1877.

The impressive memorial was written in a symbolic language understood by large segments of nineteenth-century Americans, but not everyone was so enamored with size. In 1869, art critic James Jackson Jarves criticized the move towards these "huge effigies" for their "degree of disproportion, misapplication, and inappropriate ornamentation," presaging Milmore's design by only a few short years.⁶¹ Though "vulgarized by redundancy," these homogeneous monuments resonated with the public because the "symbolism must have been acceptably understood."⁶² Inspiring public memory, these shrines in prominent urban settings allowed all Americans to commune with the same symbolic language.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 14, 15.

⁶⁰ Peggy McDowell, "Martin Milmore's Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on Boston Common: Formulating Conventionalism in Design and Symbolism," *Journal of American Culture* 11, no. 1 (1988): 65.

⁶¹ James Jackson Jarves, *Art Thoughts: The Experiences and Observations of an American Amateur in Europe* (1869; repr. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin/Riverside Press, 1896), 302, <http://books.google.com> (accessed October 3, 2008).

⁶² Peggy McDowell and Richard E. Meyer, *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1994), 80.

Milmore's design for the naval portion of the monument is particularly instructive. Two pieces of relief sculpture portray sailors and naval scenes. The first shows a sailor's departure from home in similar fashion to a soldier's departure for war on the Army's portion of the monument. A "manly young sailor" leaves his family, with mother, father, wife, and children bidding him goodbye; wife weeping, but mother "with a look of patriotic pride." Nearby, another sailor also bids adieu to his family. Behind the departure scene is a broad view of a naval battle with a square-rigged warship and an ironclad bombarding a fortification.⁶³ The sailors are broadly masculine; one is taller than anyone else in the scene, and the other bends to kiss his baby tenderly. With children in the scene, their fecundity is implicit. The relief subtly reminded viewers to pass patriotism to the children, because while Civil War monuments were "tangible symbols of the gratitude and patriotism felt by concerned citizens," Peggy McDowell has written, they were also expected to "teach future generations about patriotism and unselfish sacrifice."⁶⁴ American moral values—home, family, children, and country—were typified by these superlative sailors and passed to the viewer.

The sea-battle scene of the relief is generic, emblematic of the war's naval conflicts. By contrast, the other three relief sculptures ("Departure for the War," "The Sanitary Commission," and "Return from the War") all include named individuals ranging from Generals and Colonels, to politicians, to literati such as James Russell Lowell and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.⁶⁵ Whatever the reason, sailors were

⁶³ *Dedication of the Monument on Boston Common*, 55.

⁶⁴ McDowell, "Martin Milmore's Monument," 63.

⁶⁵ *Dedication of the Monument on Boston Common*, 52-55.

presented generically, and this deficiency aroused the ire of G.V. Fox, a Massachusetts Historical Society member, who in 1877 wrote of the reliefs: "On these are some seventy to eighty human figures, *every one* of which, the sculptor informs me, is a portrait, but *not one*, even on the naval bas-relief, represents any regular or volunteer officer or sailor of the navy or marine corps."⁶⁶ After a protracted screed and history lesson pertaining to glorious naval engagements and the feats of captains and officers from Massachusetts, Fox continued: "there are some 'men of Boston' whose naval careers are so conspicuous that the omission of their effigies from the first monument which 'the grateful city' has built to the navy seems unaccountable." He bitterly concluded that it would be "a sorrowful sight to see the mothers, widows and orphans of these naval heroes of Boston and Massachusetts to whom 'the grateful city' has consecrated this very shaft, gathered at its base, on the very spot where their sacrifice was supposed to have been recorded and commemorated, searching in vain for the loved ones who left their arms to die for the Union." Fox's anger is perhaps understandable, but, in presenting sailors as everyman, the monument offered greater opportunity for Americans to identify with them. Moreover, it indicated the degree to which sailors were beginning to cross the line from commonplace laborers to archetypical, even if not identifiable, Americans.

Similarly generic, the memorial's full-figure sailor statue further illuminates how maritime imagery helped prescribe cultural values. "The Sailor," representing the Navy, faces seaward, dressed appropriately in an "open collar, knotted handkerchief, the navy

⁶⁶ G.V. Fox, letter to the editor, unknown newspaper, November, 27, 1877, pasted on front endpaper of *Dedication of the Monument on Boston Common*. Italics in original. The provocative headline for the letter was "The Army and Navy Monument. Do the Memorial Tablets Upon it Honor Those Who Most Deserve Honor There? —An Interesting Letter from One Who Thinks They Do Not," and handwritten next to it, "Inserted here at the request of Pres^d Rob.^l P. Winthrop by G.V. Fox, Member" of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

cap,” and button-flapped trousers. The handsome, rugged, and mustachioed white man stands “in an easy attitude,” but with strength and valor relayed by his hand upon his sword. The image of the sailor represents the “boldness and freedom” associated with the “brave fellows who fought under Farragut, Porter, and Goldsborough.” Rather than one of these officer-heroes, though, Milmore idealized a common sailor. Strong of feature and of weaponry, yet relaxed in posture and bearing, the statue expresses a “remarkable degree of personal courage and daring” that should be “accepted as the ideal of the true American sailor.” The monument used symbols easily understood in post-Civil War America and through its maritime imagery, presented predetermined sets of values to its viewers.⁶⁷

Milmore’s Monument put soldiers and sailors on equal footing, making both symbols of archetypical Americans and shared values. These perfected human elements stood between bronzes of a reified “Peace” and “History.” A feminine bronze, “America,” topped the column. In Milmore’s design, all five statutes united to suggest strength, peaceful relations among the sections of the country, rugged individuality, and remembrance of the past. Its classical elements, whether in design, morality, or democratic politics “probably encouraged its ideological acceptability” for American public historical memory in the 1870s.⁶⁸ The monument was bold, its classical symbols clearly understood, and its location prominent. Its conspicuous placement was loyal to its original intent, but as millions passed by the memorial over the years, its public setting

⁶⁷ *Dedication of the Monument on Boston Common*, 50.

⁶⁸ McDowell, “Martin Milmore’s Monument,” 65.

also allowed for the subtle transfer of these maritime images and the values they represented downward into mass culture.

To the design committee for the Portland, Maine, Soldiers and Sailors monument, singularity was more important than individuality. “A general similarity seems to prevail in the style of Soldiers monuments...and no one seems to stand preeminent on account of its originality or artistic merit,” wrote local sculptor (though living in Italy) Franklin Simmons in 1888, reflecting art critic Jarves’s prescient statement two decades previous. For the memorial to “be impressive in Portland,” Simmons warned the committee, its design must not repeat “what has been so often done before.”⁶⁹ Some proposals were too modest, others too derivative. “To avoid being invidious toward any one of the 4 Arms of the Service,” and believing it impractical to create four separate statues, Simmons’s fellow expatriate in Italy, William G. Turner, proposed a single statue of a Spartan mother encouraging “firmness, courage, and self-abnegation” in her progeny.⁷⁰ M.H. Mosman proposed four figures, “Peace,” “History”, a “Soldier,” and a “Sailor,” appropriately dressed that to express “the boldness, personal courage and daring so characteristic of the ideal American sailor.”⁷¹ Simmons’s fears were justified; when the proposed designs arrived, Turner had aimed too low, and Mosman had proposed a near-copy of the Boston memorial right down the ideal sailor. Simmons proposed something

⁶⁹ Franklin Simmons to H.B. Brown, n.d. [c. 1888], Portland Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association Papers, 1871-1891, Collection 380, box 1, folder 7, Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME (hereafter cited as Portland monument papers, box and folder numbers).

⁷⁰ William G. Turner to the Monument Committee, 14 December 1886, Portland monument papers, box 1, folder 3.

⁷¹ M.H. Mosman to Committee on Design, n.d. [c. 1890], Portland monument papers, box 1, folder 11.

different; his design demonstrated the recent elevation of common sailors into idealized heroes.

Instead of a single statue, or a group where all forms were approximately the same size, Simmons proposed a massive feminine figure of the Republic atop a pedestal, plus two groupings in high relief, one of soldiers and the other of sailors. “The design would be out of the common,” he asserted, “it would not be a rehash of what has been done over and over again.” His design, he humbly assessed, would be “impressive...on account of its originality, its magnitude...[and] its superior execution.”⁷² He won the competition.

The cornerstone was laid in May, 1889, and two years later, Simmons’s easily twice-life-size statue, “Our Lady of Victories,” stood atop a pedestal designed by Richard Morris Hunt, with the soldiers and sailors in high relief astride Hunt’s base.⁷³ An Admiral standing before wreathed flags takes center stage, flanked by a midshipman, cutlass in hand, to his left, and a sailor to his right. The officers are static, Admiral and midshipman looking straight ahead. The sailor, the Admiral’s right-hand man, is the only active figure, looking up and making ready “to throw a rope to a boat [unseen] that is coming alongside of the ship,” so Simmons wrote from Rome in early 1890. Ready to deflect potential criticism from the distant committee that he “should put a cutlass in the hand of the sailor,” he insisted that the midshipman hold the sword, and that the “rope in

⁷² Franklin Simmons to H.B. Brown et al., n.d. [c. 1888], Portland monument papers, box 1, folder 7.

⁷³ Maine Historical Society, Maine Memory Network: Maine’s Online Museum, “Soldiers and Sailors Monument Ceremony, Portland, 1889,” <http://www.mainememory.net/bin/Detail?ln=16498> (accessed October 1, 2008); Great Portland Landmarks, Virtual Tour of Congress Street, http://www.portlandlandmarks.org/go_congress_street_tour.shtml (accessed October 1, 2008).

the hands of the sailor is much better.”⁷⁴ Simmons placed a howitzer and shells behind the midshipman who, along with the Admiral, is dressed in a button-down officers’ jacket. By contrast, the sailor, dressed in open collared-shirt, cravat, and naval hat, stands in front of a standard maritime trope: a fouled anchor. Although different in design from the Boston monument, like there, a common sailor takes precedence over the officers and is the only active figure. Simmons, like Milmore, made an ordinary man extraordinary in public art.

By contrast, there were few displays of ordinary mariners in the maritime statuary at the World’s Columbian Exposition. Organizers lionized common sailors in the Fine Arts Building and elsewhere on the grounds, but in the Court of Honor at an exposition intended to commemorate Columbus, only larger-than-life displays of heroic maritime symbolism were worthy of the most famous sailor in Western history. With his status rising over the course of the nineteenth century, at the Expo, Christopher Columbus and his achievements were lauded as nothing short of godlike. The principal buildings of the Exposition—Administration, Agriculture, Machinery, and the immense Manufactures and Liberal Arts—were located along an east-west axis made up of the Basin and Court of Honor. At the west end of the axis facing east, the massive Columbian Fountain looked back towards the Old World, personified by a massive, classical, Statue of the Republic that faced westward. The fair’s official guidebook explained that the fountain was the “apotheosis of modern liberty—Liberty enthroned on a triumphal barge guided by Time, heralded by Fame, and rowed by...the Arts...Science, Industry, Agriculture, and Commerce.” Columbus’s achievement, feminized and deified, thus rode on a barge

⁷⁴ Franklin Simmons to H.B. Brown, 14 February 1890, Portland monument papers, box 1, folder 8.

guided by mythic characters and rowed by personifications of human endeavor. An honor guard of eight sea-horses preceded the barge; dolphins formed an afterguard, and two columns topped with eagles flanked the fountain.⁷⁵ “It seems but fair,” wrote Will H. Low for *Scribner’s Magazine* in 1893, “to call this fountain the most important of all the decorative sculptures.”⁷⁶ Low meant to praise the artistry and the designer, Frederick William MacMonnies’s, status in the art world, but the fountain’s symbolism and central location made Low’s assertion even more accurate. The juxtaposition of the fountain and the Statue of the Republic dramatically showed civilization’s westward march from Greece to the New World. To the south of the Court of Honor stood a column, its shaft decorated with tridents and anchors, with three ships projecting from it in east-west orientation. Poseidon stood atop the column, gazing down favorably upon the Columbian Fountain.⁷⁷ “MacMonnies’s epitome of youth,” Low wrote, “represents the future of our as yet experimental civilization.”⁷⁸ Low was more concerned with the nation’s youthful vitality and promise, but MacMonnies had utilized the classical mythological figures and maritime symbols to place the United States into the classical tradition hearkening back to Greece and Rome.

MacMonnies incorporated maritime elements in all three pieces of statuary around the Court of Honor—Liberty, Poseidon, and the Republic—and their interplay symbolized a divinely-inspired founding of America. The sea-god, second only to Zeus

⁷⁵ John J. Flinn, compiler, *Official Guide to the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: Columbian Guide Company, 1893), 22-23.

⁷⁶ Low, “Art of the White City,” 510.

⁷⁷ Appelbaum, *Chicago World’s Fair*, plate 27 (p. 30).

⁷⁸ Low, “Art of the White City,” 511.

in the Greek pantheon, sanctioned Columbus's effort and the advancement of western civilization into the New World. Liberty looked eastward in homage to its roots in Greece, and the Statue of the Republic gazed across the water as republican ideals continued their march westward. The three ships of Columbus were set into the column facing west, under the watchful eyes of Poseidon, who also symbolically maintained supreme control of the oceans—the ships were, literally, beneath his feet. Through its massive sculptural program, the visual imagery at the Basin and Court of Honor tied a heroic sailor's discovery to the higher plane of classicism, and more still, to an even higher plane of a divinely-inspired United States. The White City was designed to show just who was at the apex of world civilization, and just how they had arrived there—by sea.

Maritime Exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition

If the entire Columbian Exposition could be seen as one very large piece of visual culture, representation of maritime objects requires special attention. One of the largest structures, the Transportation Building, with workaday importance, contrasted with the high culture presented in the Fine Arts Building. Organizers displayed transportation not only because of its "utility," but also because nothing "equals it as a power in the progress of civilization." Watercraft played a central role in the exhibits, and Exposition organizers aimed to show "the development of water craft, from the crudest form of [sic] [to] the modern ocean steamship." Starting with the small boats and relics of "barbarous and semi-civilized tribes," as John Flinn put it in 1893, the modern waterborne transportation of western civilization "stands out in high relief by contrast." Moreover,

the technologies of recent decades were even more proof of “the genius of the age in which we live.”⁷⁹ Demonstrating western technological progress by comparing modern to aboriginal watercraft, the Transportation Building’s exhibits suggested these cultures remained backwards. The Exposition’s organizers assembled a history of marine technologies to champion what they saw as an inevitable march toward the apex of civilization.

Visitors could not fail to make the intended connection. While preparing an exhibit for the Exposition, Henry Whittemore wrote a history of the Providence and Stonington Steamship Company. The “great fair at Chicago,” with its attention to Columbus’s voyage in small vessels, had concentrated attention upon the “incalculable advances made in every branch of human endeavor,” so that now, the time had come to consider the “marvelous result of the application of steam to vessels.”⁸⁰ Like Whittemore, Transportation Department officials used their history of maritime technology to make a progressive case. The goal of the transportation department was “to keep the historical feature clearly in view,” reported Flinn, “and even to magnify it” should the experience-as-lived, or its significance, need augmenting.⁸¹

The Columbian Exposition marks one of the first, if not the very first, instances where the maritime past was put on display nationally, in admiring and laudatory fashion, for public consumption in the United States. The Centennial Exhibition, at Philadelphia in 1876, had displayed the latest technologies, but mention of maritime activities was

⁷⁹ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 93-95.

⁸⁰ Henry Whittemore, *The Past and Present of Steam Navigation on Long Island Sound* (New York: Crawford Print, 1893), 1.

⁸¹ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 95.

limited to discussion of current American tonnage (where, it is interesting to note, that the discussion concluded that any decline was “relative, whether the comparison be made with other countries or our own past”) and improvements in technologies, such as steam shipboard, iron hulls, or new lifesaving apparatus. In short, the display of American progress, not history, occupied the attention of Philadelphia Centennial Exposition planners.⁸²

At the Columbian Exposition, the directors, while celebrating progress, ultimately found a place for the past alongside the present. Visitors to the Transportation Building saw exhibits on “every known method” of water transit, ranging from “small craft...exhibited in full size” to models of larger vessels. “Drawings, plans and paintings” provided in-depth details, and organizers gave more attention than at previous expositions to the world’s rivers, lakes, and inland waterways.⁸³ Organizers built impressive displays of cutting edge technology, well beyond narrow, square-rigged views of the Maritime Revivalists. Fairgoers viewed marine technology great and small, in categories such as sailing vessels, steamships, special-purpose vessels and floating structures, marine mechanics, construction, and protection at sea. Vanguard technologies included steam and naphtha launches, vessels designed for jet propulsion, floating railway train transports, floating derricks, marine electric motors, powered deck winches, electric signals, new construction techniques, watertight bulkheads, heating, lighting,

⁸² Edward C. Bruce, *The Century: Its Fruits and Its Festival, Being a History and Description of The Centennial Exhibition, with a Preliminary Outline of Modern Progress* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1877), 32, 28, 164-165.

⁸³ Pamphlet, Geo. R. Davis and F.J.V. Skiff, “Classification of Department of Transportation Exhibits: Railways, Vessels, Vehicles, with other information for intending exhibitors,” (Chicago: Donahue and Henneberry, 1893), 8, Boston Athenaeum.

ventilation, and refrigeration, firefighting devices, and storm and coast signals.⁸⁴ The list was exhaustive. The American section presented a sixty-foot long, four-story high section of a modern Transatlantic liner, “following the designs of the new American steamships” under construction. It showed the interior of the liner, and reached almost to the top of the gallery four stories above.⁸⁵ Size, scale, and scope of the marine exhibits all pointed towards American progress.

However, alongside these advances, relics from the past reminded visitors of previous maritime achievements. The Transportation Building included a section for “trophies of yacht and boat clubs, relics of merchant marine and river transportation, relics of arctic and other exploration, and seamen’s associations,” including a 1790s wooden anchor found at the bottom of Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1889.⁸⁶ The Naval Warfare and Coast Defense displays included models of famous warships and relics of naval battles.⁸⁷ The organizers’ intended goal was comparative, designed to demonstrate advancements made over the centuries, but the comparison operated in both directions. By exhibiting past watercraft and relics in prominent venues at the Exposition, directors effectively memorialized those craft and elevated them to exalted positions.

Nowhere was veneration of the past more evident than in the exhibits of the Essex Institute of Salem, Massachusetts, both inside the Transportation Building and elsewhere on the grounds. The Essex Institute was the only entity from Massachusetts to exhibit a marine historical display. While some Massachusetts exhibitors offered the present and

⁸⁴ Davis and Skiff, “Classification of Department of Transportation Exhibits,” 15.

⁸⁵ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 98-99.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸⁷ Davis and Skiff, “Classification of Department of Transportation Exhibits,” 15.

future and displayed modern marine technologies, from safety valves and gauges, to gasoline launches, to pneumatic dynamite guns, the Essex Institute hoped to win converts to the cult of the past.⁸⁸ The Institute helped furnish the Massachusetts State Building, itself a copy of the John Hancock house in Boston, with Colonial-era relics, with the goal of making the building “attractive and comfortable and at the same time as truly colonial and historical as its members believed its exterior to be.”⁸⁹ The building had “awakened” some “historic interest” in the citizenry of Massachusetts, but like most Colonial Revival architecture, the design had been enlarged for comfort, so the reality of the newly-awakened historical interest, much like the degree of actual colonial accuracy, was somewhat fluid.⁹⁰ The parlor was “given over to the Essex Institute of Salem,” which furnished it with “a collection of portraits and of historic relics.”⁹¹ Massachusetts managers estimated that 800,000 people visited the State Building, and it is unlikely that very many discerned any significant design differences between the seventeenth-century table chair, the eighteenth-century black oak case clock, or the late-nineteenth century Colonial Revival building in which they were housed.⁹²

The Essex Institute displayed images of deepwater square-riggers plying the lucrative foreign trade to the world and used them to laud Salem as the first city of

⁸⁸ Massachusetts Board of World’s Fair Managers, *Report of the Massachusetts Board of World’s Fair Managers* (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing, 1894), 234.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹² Massachusetts World’s Fair Managers, *Report*, 28; Essex Institute Committee, *Salem at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893: Report of the Essex Institute Committee* (Salem, MA: Essex Institute, 1893), 29, 30.

American foreign commerce. The Institute, united with the Peabody Academy of Science for the exhibit, developed a large exhibit of the maritime past, offering fairgoers ship paintings, photographs, models, and nautical instruments to demonstrate the city's important maritime history.⁹³ The Institute, "in a most successful and artistic manner," illustrated the development of the city's commercial sailing vessels from "earliest days." The Institute provided oil paintings and models of important vessels all (save one) square-riggers built in Salem and engaged in foreign commercial ventures.

American commercial centers had moved away from Salem to Boston, and later, New York City, and the Essex Institute engaged their city's history focused on a time when Salem, by some accounts, was the center of the world.⁹⁴ Photographs of traditional Chinese, Polynesian, Philippine, and Fijian craft contrasted with western technologies and showed "marine architecture and means of transportation of different nations," but the Institute's primary concern was displaying to Exposition visitors the "style of vessels engaged in the commercial interest of Salem from 1765 to the present day," adding the necessary superlatives regarding Salem's leadership in initiating American foreign trade.⁹⁵ The Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers concluded that the Essex Institute was a "singularly appropriate" to provide transportation exhibits by "all the known peoples of the world."⁹⁶ Without the citizens, the ships, and the capitalist vision to extend their maritime commerce to the far corners of the earth, the good citizens of

⁹³ Essex Institute Committee, *Report*, 7-13.

⁹⁴ See Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin/Riverside, 1921).

⁹⁵ Essex Institute Committee, *Report*, 7.

⁹⁶ Massachusetts World's Fair Managers, *Report*, 179.

Salem past would never have had the opportunity to collect the “canoes and boats used by the natives in far-away climes” so valuable to the Transportation Building.⁹⁷ And without that claim to a heroic maritime experience, the good citizens of Salem present would have had fewer ways to remain relevant in a modern America. The Essex Institute brought Salem’s, George Francis Dow’s, and Massachusetts’s perspective to national and international audiences. Set alongside modernity, these relics reminded visitors of the path of progress, but their presence simultaneously conveyed the honorific importance of the maritime past.

Formal galleries and halls were not the only examples of maritime culture at the Columbian Exposition. Ordinary interactions with the physical layout familiarized visitors, in ways subtle and not, with both antiquated and modern maritime traditions and imagery. Waterways occupied a central place on the grounds, and visitors could arrive at the Expo via Lake Michigan aboard the *Whaleback*, a sizable passenger ferry of the World’s Fair Steamship Company, and reach every major building by some type of boat, from steam- and electric-powered small craft to a fleet of electric “omnibus boats” carrying up to 45 people at a time on round trip routes.⁹⁸ For a bit of Old-World romance, gondolas, “manned by picturesque Venetians,” carried visitors on the internal canals and basins of the fairgrounds.⁹⁹ The official photographic record by C. D. Arnold and H. D. Higinbotham revealed dozens of sundry small craft, sloops, rowboats, and a duck hunting boat, dotting the scenes.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ C. D. Arnold and H. D. Higinbotham, *Official Views of the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Chicago: Press Chicago Photo-Gravure Company, 1893), plate 82.

⁹⁹ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 106.

Other quiet reflections of maritime culture permeated the fairgrounds. Framed with a portrait of Oliver Wendell Holmes, a new copy of “Old Ironsides” (1830), “on which the ink was scarcely dry,” hung in the Massachusetts State Building.¹⁰⁰ New York artist Carl Bitter produced representations of “Neptune” and “The Fishermaid” among the sculptures that decorated the Administration Building.¹⁰¹ The Rhode Island Board of World’s Fair Managers failed in their attempt to have “Rhode Island Day” named on the anniversary of Rhode Islander Oliver Hazard Perry’s great naval victory on Lake Erie, but the women of Westerly, Rhode Island, succeeded in presenting a five-foot granite “vase” with a rope and anchor motif to the Women’s Building.¹⁰² The White Star Steamship Company Building, designed by famous architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White, was a circular pavilion that looked every bit like a steamship’s pilothouse, complete with a promenade deck for a front porch.¹⁰³ Situated on the edge of the lagoon, the building’s architectural details expressed maritime themes. Two Doric columns with ship’s lanterns marked the entry stairs. Slender Ionic columns supported a circular entablature. The first story porch and upper balcony railings were comprised of netting with a White Star Line life ring placed in the space between each column or stanchion. The building’s windows paraphrased ship’s portholes. Atop, a cresting wave motif trimmed the base of a low saucer dome. The building’s staff wore sailor outfits—dark

¹⁰⁰ Massachusetts World’s Fair Managers, *Report*, 25-26. The Managers reported that Holmes had handwritten it several months before the Exposition opened.

¹⁰¹ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 31.

¹⁰² Minutes of the Rhode Island Board of World’s Fair Managers, 1891-94, n.d. [1893], 119, World’s Columbian Exposition, Mss 820, folder 4, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI; *Providence Journal*, “New Design,” April 25, 1892, World’s Columbian Exposition, Mss 820, folder, Clippings, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI.

¹⁰³ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 153; Appelbaum, *Chicago World’s Fair*, 60, 62.

trousers, white shirts, cravats, and hats. Whether old or new, the recurring, but subtle, visual imagery at the Exposition familiarized visitors with the growing ubiquity of maritime symbolism, and enthusiasm for things maritime, in 1890s America.

If the White Star Line was enthusiastically nautical in appearance, it was nevertheless a minor building. By contrast, the Fisheries Building was more central to the mission of the Exposition, conspicuously placed, and far less subtle with its Romanesque-revival architecture. The building's sculptural program was distinctly fishy. Columns with basket capitals were detailed with octopi, frogs, sea ravens, turtles, eels, and a variety of more stylized marine beasts. Heavily-styled entablatures resembled netting complete with fish caught in them. The shafts of the columns were detailed with flatfish, frogs, turtles, and other marine flora and fauna.¹⁰⁴ Inside, the building held exhibits reflecting the history and methods of fisheries, aquaculture, and the largest aquaria to date at an international exposition. In addition to a central basin twenty-six feet wide, it contained 575 linear feet of glass-fronted tanks. Many state fish commissions provided displays in their own state buildings, and the Illinois display of native and cultivated fish, hatchery equipment, and "Aquarium," wrote Flinn, "is a worthy rival of the aquaria in the Fish and Fisheries building."¹⁰⁵ But the main event was the clearly the Fisheries Building.

The Fisheries Building's central location, across from the United States Government Building, assigned it importance. No expense was spared: scientists

¹⁰⁴ Appelbaum, *Chicago World's Fair*, 68-69.

¹⁰⁵ Pamphlet, Joel Cook, "The World's Fair at Chicago, Described in a Series of Letters to 'The London Times,'" World's Columbian Exposition Department of Publicity and Promotion (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Company, 1891), 9, Boston Athenaeum; Flinn, *Official Guide*, 59, 148, 139, 131, 133.

evaporated sea water by 80% at the United States Fish Commission's station at Wood's Hole, Massachusetts, transported it to Chicago, and reconstituted it with fresh water from Lake Michigan to achieve the necessary chemistry.¹⁰⁶ Many states, and foreign nations, contributed to the building. Fishing menhaden for its oil was a major industry by the 1890s, and Rhode Island displayed models of vessels, photographs, specimens, and fishing gear related to the menhaden and shellfishing industries. For a small state, the Rhode Island exhibit apparently attracted attention at the top, undoubtedly a result of the burgeoning menhaden oil fishery in the late nineteenth century, as the "Chief of the Fisheries Department in Chicago [J.W. Collins]," wrote one Rhode Island World's Fair Manager, "takes a deep interest in our affairs and has given the space, 1,000 ft [feet] for which we asked," which was no minor accomplishment considering the demands for space.¹⁰⁷ One of the most impressive exhibits came from Gloucester, Massachusetts, which occupied the "most conspicuous position" in the Fisheries Building. The Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers were pleased that "the city of Gloucester was able...to emphasize her well-known position in deep-sea fishing," although others may have noted the recent crash of their halibut industry in the 1890s. Private companies in Boston and on Cape Ann added items to form a more complete picture of the fishing

¹⁰⁶ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 61.

¹⁰⁷ Minutes of the Rhode Island Board of World's Fair Managers, 1891-94, n.d. [1893], 103, World's Columbian Exposition, Mss 820, folder 4, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI; *Providence Journal*, "Commissioners Meet: the Fisheries and Educational Exhibits at the World's Fair," December 31, 1892, Rhode Island World's Columbian Exposition, Mss 820, folder, Clippings 1892, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, RI. See also, H. Bruce Franklin, *The Most Important Fish in the Sea: Menhaden and America*, (Washington, DC: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2007).

industry and of the fishermen “who spend their lives in the Banks of Newfoundland in hazardous and weary toil” the Massachusetts Managers rather dramatically reported.¹⁰⁸

The exhibits were also dramatic. The United States Fish Commission considered a display with a live whale, the logistics of which were too complicated, but the Fisheries Building exhibited everything from “marvelously delicate” and “richly beautiful” microscopic sea life, to “plebian cat-fish, perch, and sucker,” to “sea anemones,” and “monstrous devil-fish, sharks, and other terrors from the deep.” Lighting from an unseen source illuminated the specimens, which provided visitors an undersea feel.¹⁰⁹

Between the exterior sculpture, scale of the displays, theatrical lighting, and promotion of some species as so-called “terrors of the deep,” it appeared that, on the surface, the oceans were being mystified, turned into spectacles for the public’s consumption. In fact, the opposite occurred. Despite dramatic flourishes to the contrary, the Fisheries Building was devoted to exhibits demonstrating human mastery over aquatic species, whether through the aquaria, displays of angling, commercial fishing, or aquaculture. As important as the exhibits were venues where visitors could dine on seafood. An important “provision was made in the upper part of the [Fisheries] building for an eating saloon,” wrote John Flinn, “in which a specialty is made of supplying food composed of fish and other animals taken from the water.” Ostensibly offering “those who patronize fish dinners at the Exposition” a firsthand example of the utility of American fisheries, and of “the value of fish as food,” it also reinforced the uses of nature

¹⁰⁸ Massachusetts World’s Fair Managers, *Report*, 178; Glenn M. Grasso, “What Appeared Limitless Plenty: The Rise and Fall of the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Halibut Fishery,” *Environmental History* 13, no. 1 (January 2008): 66-91.

¹⁰⁹ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 59, Appelbaum, *Chicago World’s Fair*, 72.

as a commodified resource.¹¹⁰ Moreover, the Café de la Marine, located directly next door to the fisheries building, also offered patrons taste of seafood, which was still uncommon for Midwesterners.¹¹¹ Finally, “epicurean visitors” could partake of a “continuous clam-bake” in the nearby New England Clam-Bake Building.¹¹² Both the Fisheries Building and the restaurants depicted nature as a force humans could conquer. With symbolism reminiscent of the Greco-Roman gods whose statues presided over the Exposition, there was certainly no more powerful a symbol than eating something to attain dominion over it. Ultimately, fishermen, consumers, and United States Fish Commission scientists worked to demystify the oceans for Exposition visitors.

Also distinctly conspicuous, American naval prowess was displayed enthusiastically for the world to see in a full-scale model of the Battleship *Illinois* “moored” at the at the Exposition’s North Pier.¹¹³ The craft was a replica built on a concrete foundation, partly because the lake was too shallow for a full-hulled vessel, and partly because a warship on one of the Great Lakes would violate the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817, which limited warships not to “exceed 100 tons burthen and armed with one 18-pound cannon.”¹¹⁴ The display of modern military might served to remind visitors that, should the power of culture fail to maintain social order, force was readily available to

¹¹⁰ Flinn, *Official Guide*, 59, 61.

¹¹¹ Appelbaum, *Chicago World's Fair*, 72.

¹¹² Bureau of Charities and Correction, Circular No. 6., “World’s Fair Notes,” bound into pamphlet, Davis and Skiff, “Classification of Department of Transportation Exhibits: Railways, Vessels, Vehicles, with other information for intending exhibitors,” 15.

¹¹³ Cook, “World’s Fair at Chicago,” 10, 12.

¹¹⁴ William H. Theisen, “Fact Sheet: History of Weapons and Live Fire on the Great Lakes,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security, United States Coast Guard, October 23, 2006, <https://www.piersystem.com/go/doc/1295/136141/> (accessed September 25, 2008).

the United States government.¹¹⁵ If any of the visitors appreciated this subtlety, it had little bearing on attendance. Among the United States Government exhibits—the Smithsonian Institution, an army field hospital, marine hospital, signal service station, weather station, and live-saving station complete with daily lifesaving drills—the *Illinois*, “fully equipped and manned by uniformed sailors,” was by far the most popular.¹¹⁶ Curiosity and the spectacle of modern American naval power overcame any coercive suggestion.

As these modern displays show, not everything related to the sea in the 1890s was part of the Maritime Revival. However, repeated displays of modern naval and commercial shipping, and fishing’s conquest of the seas primed Exposition visitors to embrace older maritime symbolism as still relevant in a modern world. Moored close to the *Illinois*, a reproduction Viking ship contrasted with both battleship and Beaux Arts buildings at the Exposition. Similarly, other examples of historic watercraft such as lateen-rigged Venetian craft and the myriad gondolas with their colorful gondoliers reminded visitors that the technology they witnessed elsewhere had more humble beginnings.¹¹⁷ At the southern end of the fairgrounds, replicas of Columbus’s three ships, the *Nina*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*, offered visitors object lessons as well; once, transatlantic crossings involved greater risk and far less comfort than the cross-section of the steamer in the Transportation Building or the quaintness of the White Star Pavilion.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 3.

¹¹⁶ Badger, *Great American Fair*, 104-105, 161; Flinn, *Official Guide*, 101, 149, 151.

¹¹⁷ Arnold and Higinbotham, *Official Views*, plate 70, plate 35.

¹¹⁸ Cook, “World’s Fair At Chicago,” 10; Arnold and Higinbotham, *Official Views*, plate 85, plate 86; Appelbaum, *Chicago World’s Fair*, 86.

These images of past maritime technologies demonstrated comparative progress, but at the same time, Columbus' ships and the Viking ship framed antiquated sailors who risked voyaging in these traditional, open craft in heroic terms. Rather than proving obsolescence through progress, these old vessels instead gave archaic sailors and sailing technologies newfound significance in the modern United States.

The whaleship *Progress* was perhaps the largest floating example of the preindustrial maritime world used to display simultaneously history and modernity. Neither stage set, nor prop, nor replica, the *Progress* was built in 1841 by the shipyard of Silas Greenman and Company in Westerly, Rhode Island. Launched as the *Charles Phelps*, the vessel was "later renamed the *Progress*," and "she was to end her days...as an exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893."¹¹⁹ The story of the *Charles Phelps* is rich with irony for the display of maritime visual culture at the Columbian Exposition. First, an 1841-built whaleship was, by any standard, somewhat out-of-date by 1893. True, other wooden whaleships were still whaling, but they were becoming anachronistic as mechanized whaling expanded. Second, the vessel had been "added, rebuilt, and renamed, [in] 1866"¹²⁰ and was perhaps chosen for its new name, in honor of the Exposition's theme. Likely, the ship's name was the only advanced part of it. Third, a whaleship in freshwater Lake Michigan was nearly as incongruous as the replicas of the *Nina*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria*. Fourth, the old whaler represented an earlier time and, despite its name, it was relegated to the outskirts of the fair in the South Pond area behind

¹¹⁹ Ralph Bolton Cooney, *Westerly's Oldest Witness: How Westerly and the Washington Trust Company Have Progressed Together for 150 Years* (Westerly, RI: Washington Trust Company, 1950), 19-20.

¹²⁰ United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, *Part IV, Report of the Commissioner for 1875-1876* (Washington: GPO, 1878), 612, 613.

the Agricultural Building. The vessel sat immediately adjacent to the Ethnographical Exhibit, Indian School, Shoe and Leather, and Anthropological Buildings, which were all hastily built to house overflows from elsewhere on the grounds.¹²¹ The ship was located in section of the Exposition already full of anachronisms such as the Ruins of the Yucatan exhibit, the Dairy Building, French Colonies, Windmills, French Bakery, and Cliff Dweller Exhibit, among others. About the only elements of modernity anywhere near the *Progress* were the elevated railway, the Krupp's Gun Exhibit, and perhaps most painfully unceremonious, a charging station for the electric launches that plied the waterways of the Exposition.¹²² To add insult to injury, the *Progress* had been cut in half to transport it through the Welland Canal.¹²³ Much like building façades made of plaster and staff, or a battleship constructed from concrete on the lakebed, the visual presence of the old whaler at an Exposition dedicated to western progress was more important than its actual functionality. It served as a full-scale reminder of past seafaring.

The ship was important precisely because it was a throwback. Like the Viking ship and Columbus's three ships, it reinforced Maritime Revival values that emphasized the heroicism of past generations of mariners. To casual observers, the whaleship was a part of the past. Once profitable and important, it was now obsolete. Yet at the same time, its presence reminded visitors of a maritime experience that was inaccessible,

¹²¹ Appelbaum, *Chicago World's Fair*, 95.

¹²² Map, "Rand. McNally & Co.'s New Indexed Standard Guide Map of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, 1893" in Brown, *Contesting Images*, xiii-xiv.

¹²³ Glass negative, "Starboard Stern View of the Whaling Bark PROGRESS in Tow of Tugboat RIGHT ARM," Charles F. Sayle Collection, MSM-CRC #1994.53.108, Collections Research Center, Mystic Seaport, Mystic, CT.

exotic, esoteric, and thus valuable in its absence. In its role as a full-sized visual of a square-rigger, it elevated what was once a mundane activity to an exceptional memory.

Maritime visual elements helped build a sense of the past alongside the present and, presumed future, at the Exposition. World's fairs typically presented cutting-edge technologies to give visitors positive expectations of the future, but at the Columbian Exposition, presenting an inspirational past was as important as demonstrating a bright future. Gondolas were juxtaposed with steam and electric launches; ancient caravels contrasted with modern ocean liners. As the natural mysteries of the deep gave up their secrets, fairgoers saw the mystification of sailors, preindustrial lifestyles, and square-rigged sailing. Visitors were subjected to continuous maritime visual cues at substantial buildings such as Fisheries and Transportation, smaller pavilions such as the White Star Building, or simply by the pervasive maritime imagery presented alongside the fruits of western civilization, from Greek mythology to electricity. The ties between past and present emphasized the progress of the modern age, but something else as well; they emphasized the importance of assigning to the past, or at least relics of the past, revered positions. The World's Columbian Exposition succeeded in demonstrating progress and the Socially Darwinistic advancement of western civilization, but the Exposition also succeeded in putting the past upon a pedestal. Between the Centennial Exposition in 1876 and the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, revivalism had created a powerful "presence of the past" in American culture.¹²⁴ By incorporating maritime symbols and images as formal design elements on the Court of Honor, Exposition organizers conveyed the centrality of maritime heritage to the birth of American civilization. By specifically

¹²⁴ See Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., *The Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States Before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965).

choosing certain images of maritime life for the Fine Arts Building, they championed the pastoral authenticity of the lifestyle and its participants. Displaying old and new technologies side-by-side offered visitors a progressive comparison, but it ultimately lifted these relics of the maritime past from their archaic, workaday positions to revered status in the galleries and on the grounds. Like the images of preindustrial life presented in the Fine Arts Building, the life of the sailors who employed these pieces of material culture similarly earned higher status. And the depth and breadth of the maritime visual imagery presented to visitors showed how deeply specific perceptions and ideas about things maritime had permeated American culture in fewer than two decades.

Sailors and Seafaring in Advertising

Whether high art and iconography or subtle maritime visions at the World's Columbian Exposition, a specific array of maritime imagery, decided upon by upper-class Americans, had begun its diffusion into mass culture in the United States. Advertisers used images of ships and sailors to sell everything from stoves to sarsaparilla. An advertising card, circa 1880s, exhorts consumers to buy Garland Stoves by capitalizing on the success of "Billee Taylor," a nautical comic opera first performed in London in 1880 and then performed in New York and London for the rest of the decade.¹²⁵ The card depicted a young woman asking Billee, in midshipman's garb, "Have you a Garland"? Of course he does not, but his brother "who lives in Starland has

¹²⁵ W. Davenport Adams, *A Dictionary of the Drama: A Guide to the Plays, Playwrites, Players and Playhouses of the United Kingdom and America from the Earliest Times to the Present vol. 1 A-G*, Burt Franklin Research and Source Work Series #73, (1904; repr., New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 159; H.P. Stephens and Edward Solomon, *Billee Taylor* (New York: A.S. Seer, 1881), <http://books.google.com> (accessed October 2, 2008).

an elegant Garland,” he assured her.¹²⁶ Dr. J.C. Ayer used the most famous sailor of all, Christopher Columbus, to sell patent medicine. On an advertising card entitled “The Discovery of America,” Columbus, two shipmates, and two clergymen giving their blessings, stand on the deck of a square-rigged ship. They look upon the shore of the New World at a billboard advertising “Ayer’s Sarsaparilla.” “Without doubt,” the ad’s copy reads, “the Discovery of America is AYER’S SARSAPARILLA.”¹²⁷ Columbus and his heroic venture are blessed, perhaps preordained, by the priests, and of course, these blessings are passed on to Ayer’s snake oil.

Calendar advertising offered another means to diffuse heroic maritime imagery. The Constitution Wharf Company’s Centennial Calendar of 1897 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the launching of the USS *Constitution* and offered a painting of the frigate dramatically sliding down the launching ways on October 21, 1797. It conveniently made no mention of the two ignominious, failed launchings a month earlier.¹²⁸ For a wharf, particularly the wharf with a direct connection to the *Constitution*, to use maritime imagery is understandable. Other companies, with more distant maritime connections, adopted marine images to sell their products and services. Specifically, insurance companies employed maritime imagery because the redefined meaning of the images spoke directly to the advertising objectives of insurance firms. “By the turn of the

¹²⁶ Advertising card, n.d. [c. 1880s], “Barstow Stove Company,” Boston, MA, Boston Athenaeum, Boston, MA.

¹²⁷ Advertising card, n.d. [c. 1880s], “Ayers and Company,” Lowell, Massachusetts, Boston Athenaeum, Boston, MA. Underscore in original.

¹²⁸ Constitution Wharf Company, “Launching the Frigate Constitution, October 21, 1797, Constitution Wharf Company Centennial Calendar, 1897,” Massachusetts Historical Society Council and Officers, Records Relating to the Restoration of the Constitution (frigate) 1896-1925, folder, Constitution (frigate) ephemera, 1897, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

20th century,” Dennis Robinson has written, “insurance companies had become aware of the need to appear rock solid and secure. Following a national trend, historic figures were commonly used to evoke a sense of patriotic duty to one’s country and family.”¹²⁹ The Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut, offered a particularly vivid calendar in 1900 of “Famous American Sea Battles” that included four naval scenes and their heroic commanders: John Paul Jones sinking the HMS *Serapis* (1779); Stephen Decatur’s destruction of the frigate *Philadelphia* in Tripoli Harbor (1804); William B. Cushing’s destruction of the CSS *Albatross* (1864); and Richard B. Hobson’s intentional sinking of the USS *Merrimack* (1862).¹³⁰ Each scene portrayed one of the four commanders inside a medallion of ribbon, palm leaves, or a shield, and each battle scene was dramatically filled with explosions, fire, and smoke. The company tied Hobson’s recent accomplishment during the Spanish-American War to older heroics; associating historical battles with this contemporary event reassured Phoenix’s customers of the company’s stability. By building continuity between past and present, a robust maritime past implied that the insurance company would be as resolute as these naval heroes.

In 1931, the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company issued a calendar illustrated by whaleman-turned-artist Clifford Ashley for far different reasons. Edward J. Berwind’s bituminous coal empire powered railroads, steamships, and New York City subways. Berwind sat on nearly fifty Boards of Directors, included banks, railroads,

¹²⁹ J. Dennis Robinson, “John Hancock and ‘Little Jones,’” <http://www.seacoastnh.com/jpj/johnhancock.html>, (accessed October 3, 2008).

¹³⁰ Phoenix Mutual Life Insurance Company, “Famous American Sea Battles Calendar, 1900” (Hartford, CT: 1900), Portsmouth Historical Society, “John Paul Jones: Sinking Famous Ships 1900s,” <http://www.seacoastnh.com/jpj/jpjcal.html> (accessed October 3, 2008).

insurance, steamship, and communications companies. His coal bunkering operations for the Navy, steamships, and railroads created a virtual monopoly on the bunkering trade. And his Berwind-White Coal Mining Company held their company town, Windber, Pennsylvania, in an iron grip. Resisting unionization for decades, the company considered its southern and eastern European immigrant employees to be “strike-proof,” yet in 1922, these non-union employees joined a strike by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) that lasted for sixteen months. Left out of a larger settlement, they continued to strike throughout the 1920s for better conditions and unionization. By enlisting support among immigrants, radical political action by ethnic fraternal organizations expanded, despite odds stacked against it.¹³¹ Dissatisfied with UMWA’s leadership, a group of dissidents and communists founded the rival National Miners Union (NMU) in 1928. As living and working conditions in Windber sunk to new lows during the Great Depression, the NMU initiated a series of strikes between 1929 and 1933. Federal nativist legislation such as the Johnson Act of 1924, and anti-Catholic attacks by the revived KKK, were two methods the company used to combat the influence of these foreign-born, union rabble-rousers.¹³²

Amidst economic downturn, striking workers, and bad publicity, in 1930, the company chose antiquated maritime imagery for their 1931 calendar. Entitled “A One Year Whaling Voyage: A Calendar by Clifford W. Ashley, 1931” it included four

¹³¹ Mildred A. Beik, *The Miners of Windber: The Struggles of New Immigrants for Unionization, 1890s-1930s* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 325. See also, Linda Nyden, “Black Miners in Western Pennsylvania, 1925-1931: The National Miners Union and the United Mine Workers of America,” *Science and Society* 41, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 69-101; Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Company, 1977); and Heber Blankenhorn, *The Strike for Union* (1924; repr. New York: Arno/New York Times, 1969).

¹³² Beik, *The Miners of Windber*, 9-10, 264-265, 308, 324, 329, 313.

paintings: "The Bark Canton Outward Bound From New Bedford," "The Flurry, A Boat From Bark Sunbeam Lancing Whale," "Cutting-In and Trying-Out/Bark Charles W. Morgan" and "Two Boats From Ship Niger/Getting Fast." All four were dynamic action scenes with varying degrees of blood, grease, smoke, whale's tails, and sea and sky. In addition to the four Ashley paintings, the graphic layout was a treasure of marine imagery. Three months per page were laid horizontally, bordered by Neptune, mermaids, sea turtles, sea horses, dolphin fish, sea stars, and, finally, topped with a scallop shell surrounding the year "1931."¹³³ Were it not for the tiny copyright, one would never guess this piece of maritime ephemera to be the product of a coal mining company from western Pennsylvania.

Edward Berwind's steamship connections suggest a maritime connection and offer one possible reason for the design, but, rather than steamers, the four paintings reproduced all depict the square-rigged whaleships that had ceased to sail by 1930.¹³⁴ Perhaps the company wanted to draw comparisons between two dangerous occupations, or two sources of energy, or to contrast the darkness of their mines with the open air of the sea. More likely, the calendar was intended to invoke preindustrial, mythic images of labor rather than the industrialized mining operations that were causing so much labor unrest in the late 1920s. In Ashley's whaling scenes, outmoded whalers were champions, conquering monsters of the deep. These company employees were not a mob of southern Europeans; instead they were archetypal Americans performing brave work

¹³³ Clifford W. Ashley, "A One Year Whaling Voyage: Calendar by Clifford W. Ashley, 1931," (n.p. [New York?]: Berwind-White Coal Mining Company, 1930). Donald A. Sineti Material Culture Collection, Bloomfield, CT.

¹³⁴ The bark Sunbeam was the last whaling voyage under sail, in 1924.

in an industry dominated by the United States for most of the nineteenth century.

Elevated to an exalted position and lionized in ways that ignored the malodorous side of nineteenth-century whaling, Berwind-White's use of Ashley's paintings was a buttress against their immigrant miners, union troubles, and problems wrought by industrial capitalism at the dawn of the Great Depression.

For whom the calendar was intended is unclear. For wealthy stockholders, it showed preindustrial seafaring imagery, rather than the dirty world of mining, strikes, and the resulting poor publicity. For corporate officers or New York office employees, using Ashley's paintings corresponded with the contemporary elevation of maritime images to status symbols occurring elsewhere among upper-class New Yorkers, which in turn allowed them to consume things maritime. If aimed at a larger group of employees, the middle class managers in Windber or elsewhere in the field, marine imagery provided a way to imitate the style of their employers higher up the social ladder. "The wealthy Berwinds, absentee owners living in New York and Philadelphia,' Beik has concluded, "could not have ruled the workplace without a lot of help from privileged sectors of the American middle classes and other residents." Middle class actors had a "vested interest in maintaining the autocratic status quo" because they benefited from the class hierarchy that put northern Europeans at the top and southern and eastern European immigrants at the bottom.¹³⁵ An upwardly-mobile, middle class manager could, perhaps, see the social benefit to emulating those higher up the hierarchy by accepting their preferred symbolism. The evocative whaling scenes offered ways for the managerial or corporate

¹³⁵ Beik, *The Miners of Windber*, 347-348. See also, Fred J. Peters, *Clipper Ship Prints, Including Other Merchant Sailing Ships by N. Currier and Currier and Ives* (New York: Antique Bulletin Printing Company, 1930); and *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Marine Collection to be Found at India House*, 2nd ed. (1935; repr., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

classes to distinguish themselves and their tastes from the working-class immigrants toiling in the mines. As for the final group of employees, the immigrant miners, given the reluctance of Berwind-White to provide adequate housing, wages, or occupational safety, it is unlikely that the company gave them a calendar annually.

As the experience with Berwind-White illustrated, the business classes continued to make use of maritime imagery. Like insurance companies, other financial institutions used maritime images to create a sense of stability and permanence for their endeavors. The offices and banking rooms of the State Street Trust Company of Boston, Massachusetts, were “patterned after an old-time counting house,” and maritime symbols took a central place in the historical décor. “Particularly of marine interest are the many models of privateers, merchant ships, and whalers...throughout the bank...On the walls are many ship and marine pictures, most of them rare,” reported the Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, suggesting the company was worth a visit by tourists to Boston.¹³⁶ From the turn of the twentieth century and continuing for over 50 years, the State Street Trust Company printed pamphlets and small books that described everything from their building and its contents, to historic figures, to the historic architecture around Boston. Not everyone had need of the Back Bay bank’s services, but their literature brought their collections, and Boston’s maritime history, to broader audiences. The *Log of the State Street Trust Company* provided descriptions of their “colonial banking rooms, its ship models, quaint furnishings, rare prints of ships, and views of Boston and other

¹³⁶ Massachusetts Special Commission on the Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Founding of Mass. Bay Colony, compiled by the Marine Committee, *Massachusetts on the Sea, 1630-1930* (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, 1930), 23.

New England towns.”¹³⁷ Among the pamphlets were *Ship Figureheads and Other Wood Carving Art in Our Nautical Collection* (1900); *Some Ships of the Clipper Ship Era, Their Builders, Owners, and Captains* (1913); *The Whale Fishery of New England* (1915); *Some Merchant and Sea Captains of Old Boston: Being a Collection of Sketches of Notable Men and Mercantile Houses Prominent During the Early Half of the Nineteenth Century in the Commerce and Shipping of Boston* (1918); *Old Shipping Days in Boston* (1918); and *Other Merchant and Sea Captains of Old Boston* (1919).¹³⁸ The State Street Trust, much like the Phoenix Insurance Company, used the past to assure customers of a stable present, and achieved that goal by elevating certain aspects of history. The endorsed maritime imagery—captains, square-riggers, and merchantmen—held central positions in the usable past they constructed. The Boston bank was not the only financial institution to utilize maritime heritage to imply strength. “Some years ago,” wrote Howard Chapin of the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1930, the “Rhode Island Institute for Savings” issued a “the booklet entitled ‘Ships and Ship Masters’ of Providence,” that might be of some use to ship modelers. In actuality, the Providence Institution for Savings printed *Ships and Shipmasters of Old Providence* in 1920.¹³⁹ After the upheavals of the Great War, Prohibition, the Harlem Renaissance, and suffrage, communing with the past offered these financial institutions an opportunity to create a

¹³⁷ State Street Trust Company, *The Log of the State Street Trust Company* (Boston: State Street Trust Company, 1926).

¹³⁸ Determined by searching the OCLC Connexion WorldCat Search, <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/> accessed August 8, 2005.

¹³⁹ Howard Chapin to Alfred S. Brownell, 26 July 1930. Carl Cutler Papers, Collection 100, box 1, folder 15, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (hereafter cited as Cutler papers, box and folder numbers); pamphlet, Providence Institution for Savings, *Ships and Ship Masters of Old Providence* (Providence, RI: Providence Institution for Savings, 1919), <http://books.google.com> (accessed October 3, 2008).

sense of permanence for their institutions. The 1920s might have a time of economic boom, but the appearance of stability, not raucous modernity, was what would attract new customers.

The Marine Lithography of Currier and Ives

Among the most widely distributed pieces of visual culture in the nineteenth century, Currier and Ives lithographs brought color maritime images to people in every locale. From 1835 to 1907 Nathaniel Currier, and then the firm of Currier and Ives, produced more than seven thousand lithographs on subjects ranging from portraits of American presidents to racist comics. Scenes of rural life, railroads, the frontier, politics and current events, the Civil War, and maritime activity, among many others, were printed in their New York shop and made their way into most homes around the United States and many around the world. In some cases, they were the first color representations rural Americans had ever seen.¹⁴⁰ Bernard F. Reilly, curator of historical prints at the Library of Congress, has called the art of Currier and Ives a “cultural patrimony, a vital part of this nation’s identity,” adding that the real “genius” of Currier and Ives was in their marketing. Currier and Ives knew what appealed to nineteenth century Americans, and, by tapping into this vein, gave vision to popular culture. They took the public’s pulse, produced the images, and then sold it back to their patients. Prints “came in a bewildering variety,” and were “designed with an unflinching instinct for the public taste.” “More than merchandisers, they were purveyors of news and

¹⁴⁰ Bernard F. Reilly, Jr., “Introduction,” in Gale Research Company, compiler, *Currier & Ives: A Catalogue Raisonné*, 2 vols. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1984), xxi; Roy King and Burke Davis, *The World of Currier and Ives* (New York: Random House, 1968), 8, 13, 16. See also, Colin Simkin, ed., *Currier and Ives’ America: A Panorama of the Mid-Nineteenth Century Scene* (New York: Crown, 1952).

decorative art, propagandists for the America of opportunity, romanticizers of the Far West, peddlers of nostalgic scenes and unwitting historians.” In short, the firm was “among the first to discern the mass market in America.”¹⁴¹ Their story exemplifies the mutability of barriers regarding old and new, highbrow, lowbrow, and mass culture.

The degree of interest and attention given to a small number of marine-themed Currier and Ives prints, especially clipper ship and whaling themes, is surprising given the total output of the company over their 72 years. The Gale Research Company’s *Currier and Ives: A Catalogue Raisonné* (1984) is the most complete index, with 7,450 lithographs produced by Currier and Ives.¹⁴² With the exception of angling and Civil War naval battle scenes, which were more focused on the military action than the vessels, approximately 6% (5.79) of the list is maritime-related. This includes 250 steam vessels, which account for 3.35% of the company’s total numbers. When considering only sailing craft, there are lithographs of 42 sailing vessels, 54 clipper ships, 5 sailing disasters, 75 yachts, 14 whaling scenes and 25 non-Civil War sailing naval scenes. Among the naval scenes are sundry sea battles, such as “The *Constitution* and the *Guerrière*” but also a scene called “Discharging the Pilot” which has no discernable military connection at all. This lithograph, also printed under the title “Clipper Ship ‘Ocean Express’: Outward Bound, ‘Discharging the Pilot,’” is particularly important because it indicates duplications among the list of sailing vessels. Even so, representations of sailing craft make up less than 3% (2.88) of the output of the firm. What eventually became the two

¹⁴¹ King and Burke, *World of Currier and Ives*, 8; Gale Research Company, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 975-976.

¹⁴² Gale Research Company, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 833. The previous major works, notably Harry T. Peters, *Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People*, 2 vols. (1929 and 1931; repr. New York: Arno, 1976); and Frederic A. Conningham, *Currier and Ives Prints: An Illustrated Checklist*, rev. ed., (New York, Crown, 1970) are not as comprehensive as the Gale Research book.

most celebrated Currier and Ives maritime lithograph series, Clipper Ships and Whaling scenes, represent less than 1% (.91) of all their lithography.¹⁴³ Currier and Ives maritime lithographs held no special place in their total output. Maritime scenes existed alongside myriad other subjects, and generally in fewer numbers; in short, the lithography of Currier and Ives demonstrated the unexceptional nature of the maritime world in nineteenth century America. What really drew American attention, at least according to master marketers Currier and Ives, was horse racing. They produced 687 racing lithographs, which comprised 9.22% of their overall catalog.¹⁴⁴

Considering the relatively few maritime lithographs, the import later assigned to these prints is instructive. Renewed interest in Currier and Ives began in the 1910s and 1920s. New York art dealer Harriet Endicott Waite suggested contemporaneously that this attention arose because the “marine prints had never lost a certain sentimental interest, among the people of the New England coast, as relics of maritime history.”¹⁴⁵ Harry T. Peters, widely credited as the father of the 1920s Currier and Ives revival, considered the high quality of the marines to be the reason for their endurance. “Large group of marine prints by various artists must have equal rank as among the finest that the firm of Currier & Ives produced,” wrote Peters. “The marines include roughly three hundred prints of clipper ships, river and sound steamboats, whalers, steamships, cutters, yachts, schooners, frigates, ships of the line, and naval scenes of the War of 1812 and of

¹⁴³ Gale Research Company, *Catalogue Raisonné*, 138, 178, 133, 941-978.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 953-957.

¹⁴⁵ Reilly, “Introduction,” xxxiv. See also, “Smithsonian Archives of American Art,” <http://www.aaa.si.edu/index.cfm//fuseaction/Collections.ViewCollection/CollectionID/9259?term=Harriet%20Waite> (accessed October 5, 2008). Reilly paraphrases Waite.

the Mexican War and Civil War.”¹⁴⁶ Peters’s broader definition of maritime imagery still only accounted for 4% of Currier and Ives’s total subject output.¹⁴⁷ Peters then suggested his own reasons, beyond technical quality, for the popularity of maritime prints: “In the marine prints, just as in the pictures of other phases of national life at the time,” he wrote, “Currier and Ives gave the American people what they wanted and succeeded in handing down to us true and vivid pictures of those great ships and the hardy men who sailed them.”¹⁴⁸ Immersed in the mature Maritime Revival, he ignored the fact that the actual percentage of these subjects printed says otherwise. Someone was catering to public demand for things maritime, but it was not Currier and Ives in the nineteenth century.

Nevertheless, these maritime images were featured prominently in retrospectives about the company, most of which, not surprisingly, were first printed in the 1920s and 1930s. One particularly laudatory example, Russel Crouse’s 1930 work, *Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives: A Note of Their Lives and Times*, is useful because it was not a work about Currier and Ives, but instead a work that considered popular American history as it was illustrated by Currier and Ives prints. His book reproduced 32 plates, 6 of which (18.75%) were clipper ship and whaling lithographs. When including steam vessels, 9 out of the 32 plates (28.12%) reproduced Currier and Ives marine prints.¹⁴⁹ Crouse was exemplary of how people in the 1920s and 1930s, fully engaged in the mature Maritime

¹⁴⁶ Harry T. Peters, *Currier & Ives: Printmakers to the American People*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1942), 30.

¹⁴⁷ The number of extant prints expanded considerably between the 1930s and 1940s when Peters wrote, and 1984, when the more comprehensive Gale Research Catalogue was published. This accounts for the difference between Peters’ 4% and Grasso’s 6% of the total output.

¹⁴⁸ Peters, *Printmakers to the American People*, 31.

¹⁴⁹ Russel Crouse, *Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives: A Note on Their Lives and Times*, (1930; repr., Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Company, 1941), list of illustrations; 12, 36, 52, 56, 92.

Revival, cherry-picked pieces of the maritime past to offer to modern audiences. But Crouse was hardly the first person drawn to maritime lithographs. Much like the conversion of Motif #1 from dirty, fishy, decrepit shack into an international artistic icon, renewed attention to the working-class elements of the maritime experience in artistic circles helped redefine their symbolic value at the end of the nineteenth century.

Once thoroughly average, in quality, quantity, and consequence, Currier and Ives's maritime imagery became extraordinary in the 1910s and 1920s. New York antique dealer Fred J. Peters (no relation to Harry) asserted "certainly some one in the firm was ship minded, as there is no better ship drawing anywhere than that which appears in these prints."¹⁵⁰ Despite Peters's claims, other technologies and machinery received similar attention to detail: "It is apparent that trains alone [that is, trains but not other images in a composition], with all their parts reproduced with meticulous accuracy," wrote Morton Cronin, "were considered, if not exactly things of beauty, at least objects of commanding interest, worthy of an artist's exclusive attention, and capable of decorating walls without the companionship of any of the traditional subject matter of art."¹⁵¹ Cronin considered aesthetics from a purely compositional perspective. He was not focused on things maritime, and he recognized that careful details were part of Currier and Ives lithography when particular subjects demanded it. The importance

¹⁵⁰ Fred J. Peters, *Clipper Ship Prints, Including Other Merchant Sailing Ships by N. Currier and Currier and Ives* (New York: Antique Bulletin Printing Company, 1930), 10. Much has been made of the fact that sales manager Daniel W. Logan had been a sailor in his youth, but this employment was so typical in the early nineteenth century that the importance assigned to it is purely circumstantial. See also, H. Peters, *Printmakers to the American People*, 10; King and Davis, *World of Currier and Ives*, 13.

¹⁵¹ Morton Cronin, "Currier and Ives: A Content Analysis," *American Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1952): 324.

that the Maritime Revivalist Fred Peters assigned to the meticulous details of the ship prints resulted from his own ship mindedness, not that of Currier and Ives.

Fred Peters declared in 1930 “there can be but very little doubt in our minds as to what prompted so wide-awake a firm as Currier and Ives to make these prints. The sea and its romance being utmost in the public mind...Currier and Ives were catering to the public demand.”¹⁵² However, John O. Sands has challenged the view that nineteenth-century Americans had any special affinity for ship portraits, insisting these romantic attitudes could be traced back to the 1920s. “The romantic celebration of the wilderness became possible only when the wilderness was conquered,” he asserted in 1977.

“Perhaps the romantic celebration of the sea became possible only once it was conquered, by the steamship.”¹⁵³ Sands further argued that progress-minded Americans embraced steam power and that the “glorification of the sailing ship was by and for those who were outside the industry, who saw only the abstract concept.”¹⁵⁴ Harry Peters, Russel Crouse, and especially Fred Peters were just such men. They were all swayed by the Maritime Revival to see a preference for sailing ships that was simply not there before the Civil War.

Fred Peters himself played a central role in reviving the marine lithographs, and he is the most important to the Maritime Revival. He grew up listening to stories told by

¹⁵² F. Peters, *Clipper Ship Prints*, 9.

¹⁵³ John O. Sands, “American Ship Portraits: The Romantic Fallacy,” in Elton W. Hall, ed., *American Maritime Prints: The Proceedings of the Eighth Annual North American Print Conference held at the Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts, May 6-7, 1977* (New Bedford: Old Dartmouth Historical Society, 1985), 222.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* His technological argument was ultimately hung on the declension framework, Sands fell short of exploring all of the reasons leading up to the Maritime Revival. He was content to concentrate solely on ship portraits, but his conclusions help address why Peters, Crouse, and Peters were so enamored with ships in the 1920s and 1930s.

his stepfather, captain of a square-rigger. "In those days adventure was in the air," he waxed, "sailors and ships met with experiences unknown to present-day seafaring, and after a voyage of several months, the 'Old Man' was fairly bursting with salty tales." The Captain took his stepson to sea with him for several voyages, until Peters's mother forbade her son to continue following the sea. "But all this, as you may judge," Peters wrote in 1930, "had fired my young mind with a love for all things maritime." As with the other young men who had been crazy to go to sea during the Maritime Revival, this experience was seminal. Steered away from a life at sea by his mother, Peters "kept in close touch with its history and romance" through "collecting Currier ship prints."¹⁵⁵ In 1914, Peters began working with New York antique dealer and maritime relic collector Max Williams, who had purchased six Clipper Ship lithograph stones after the Currier and Ives went out of business in 1907. The clipper ship prints are some of the only Currier and Ives re-strikes, reproductions from the original stones. They are generally believed to be from around 1912—right in the middle of the Maritime Revival.¹⁵⁶

During Peters's association with Williams, the two men decorated the India House Club in New York City with Currier and Ives prints. Financier Willard Straight had hired them to decorate this new gentlemen's club for wealthy businessmen and shippers in 1914. According to member and fellow industrialist Walter L. Clark, the club's purpose was build relationships "between bankers and the promoters of foreign enterprises," and the guest list for the club's founding dinner read like a who's who of the

¹⁵⁵ F. Peters, *Clipper Ship Prints*, 16, 17.

¹⁵⁶ Gary Kunkelman, "Evaluating Authenticity of Currier and Ives Prints," Currier and Ives Foundation (1997-2008), <http://www.geocities.com/scurrier/> (accessed October 5, 2008); Philadelphia Print Shop, "How to tell if you have an Original Currier and Ives," <http://www.philaprintshop.com/currorg.html#restrike> (accessed October 5, 2008).

railroad, banking, steel, heavy manufacturing, and shipping industries.¹⁵⁷ Named for the East Indies trade that had built the fortunes of many eastern merchants, India House was “worthy of the romantic associations of its name,” wrote Herbert Croly in his 1924 biography of Straight. Its décor was a tribute to the period when the “eastern cities of the United States were centres [sic] of commerce rather than manufacture....It was adorned with models of famous clipper ships, with seafaring prints and with other reminders of the flourishing and picturesque days of the American merchant marine.”¹⁵⁸ The members of India House all made their money on iron, steel, coal, and diesel, but they wistfully looked backwards for their interior decorating needs. In large part, these men were responsible for the industrialization of the United States, and the only exposure to square-rigged sail these modern-day businessmen and shippers had was on the walls at the club. Nonetheless, they were the trendsetters. “The decorative scheme created a sensation,” Bernard Reilly has concluded, “and sparked an avid interest in the ship portraits and naval scenes for which Currier and Ives were known.”¹⁵⁹ In this, these wealthy shippers and businessmen sparked a demand for what had been, in the nineteenth century, a plebian art form.

The fact that maritime prints, especially the Clipper Ship and Whaling scenes, held a prominent but disproportionate place in the pantheon of Currier and Ives prints is a telling example of the fluidity of Maritime Revival ideology. The tastes of elites

¹⁵⁷ Walter L. Clark, “The Birth of India House,” in *India House Catalog*, xvii, xviii.

¹⁵⁸ Herbert Croly, *Willard Straight* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1924), 467. See also, “India House, 1914-present,” in René de la Pedraja, *A Historical Dictionary of the U.S. Merchant Marine and Shipping Industry: Since the Introduction of Steam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1994), 258-259; and “India House Club,” <http://www.indiahouseclub.org/>.

¹⁵⁹ Reilly, “Introduction,” xxxiv.

gravitated towards maritime elements, and in so doing, breathed new life into a mass art medium. As Reilly has explained, “after the war Williams and a partner, Fred Peters initiated a famous series of Thursday-night auctions. On these ‘servants’ night out’ occasions, prosperous businessmen bid on the large horse folios, views, and ship prints that alert dealers were beginning to salvage.” Competition for prints rose with the stock market, and “during that decade many of the finest and largest collections of Currier and Ives prints were built.”¹⁶⁰ “In their heyday, Currier and Ives prints adorned the walls of bar-rooms, firehouses, barbershops, hotels, and thousands of homes,” wrote Morton Cronin. “Sometimes selling for five to twenty-five cents each, and never for more than three dollars, they were aimed at the masses and the middle classes, a market which it was difficult to impress with the names of artists.”¹⁶¹ Along with the sport of kings, wealthy New Yorkers, some with maritime connections, others whose only connection to square-riggers was their gentleman’s club, decided on which themes mattered to them and were worthy of representation in their parlors, drawing rooms, and libraries. Attention to Currier and Ives prints generally, and ship prints specifically, showed how eastern elites co-opted working-class imagery and mass culture’s medium. The Maritime Revival helped to elevate these cheap, mass-market prints to high cultural status. A generation or two earlier, many of these same elites would have considered seafaring beneath them, except as a capital-building enterprise. Now, they embraced it to establish their own distinctiveness in a changing American society and world.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., xxxiv, xxxv.

¹⁶¹ Cronin, “Currier and Ives: A Content Analysis,” 330.

A Yankee Clipper Rides the Rails

Maritime imagery's ascent from sarsaparilla and stoves to insurance companies and savings banks parallels the maturing of the Maritime Revival, decade by decade. What started as a familiar stereotype of a sailor grew into a heroic symbol of masculine strength and sturdiness that helped advertise solidity for businesses that relied on the confidence of investors and customers. Continuity with history was, psychologically, a powerful advertising tool, and the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad Company engaged maritime heritage to promote their new express train to one particular group of passengers. Even before electrification in 1914, the rail line was the busiest in New England, but not every rider traveled first class.¹⁶² In 1930, the railroad capitalized on maritime imagery to promote their new flagship express train to wealthy New York and Boston businessmen. "Each car in our new train the 'Yankee Clipper' is named after a famous clipper," wrote railroad representative Leslie H. Tyler, "in each car...will appear the painting of the particular ship after which that car is named."¹⁶³ Paintings by marine artists Charles R. Patterson and Gordon Grant, among others, decorated the NY, NH & H RR's "Yankee Clipper," which was christened at New York's Grand Central Station in 1930. As one of the first trains with air conditioning, fresh food in its dining car, and an afternoon tea service, the train's luxury cost \$1.30 more than the Merchants Limited and the Knickerbocker, the NY, NH & H RR's other two express trains between New York and Boston. "To suggest the sea, car interiors are blue-green," wrote *Time*

¹⁶² Ronald Dale Karr, *The Rail Lines of Southern New England: A Handbook of Railroad History* (Pepperell, MA: Branch Line Press, 1995), 46, 48.

¹⁶³ Leslie H. Tyler to Carl Cutler, 14 May 1930, Cutler papers box 1, folder 12.

Magazine in 1930, of the all-Pullman train's decor.¹⁶⁴ Railroad officials offered the businessmen who rode the Yankee Clipper a way to join vicariously the ranks of heroic nineteenth century sailors.

The nautical theme offered New York businessmen, who now possessed a frame of reference where maritime imagery was a status symbol, luxurious travel in style. While enjoying modern comforts and speedy travel, they rode in cars named after historic ships, decorated in marine style, and gazed upon oil painted ship portraits. Wooden ships and steel rails married modern and archaic transportation technology. In the nineteenth century, to appear less threatening to passengers, railroad locomotives often employed classical architectural designs to appear more solid, safe, and reliable, despite the frequency of explosions and fatal accidents. This practice had ended by the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁶⁵ On board the "Yankee Clipper," this imagery operated in reverse. The clipper ships were speedy, as was the express train, but still, the reliable, safe, and solidly-built train of 1930 referenced an older, slower, and more perilous mode of transportation in order to evoke a luxury experience for passengers who now associated maritime imagery with upper-class endeavors. Opulence and luxury were words rarely used to describe nineteenth-century square-riggers, but the railroad's pampered passengers saw no discontinuity between nautical images and upper-class tastes. Workaday symbols had been thoroughly transformed into markers of elite status. Old and new side-by-side, the railroad unabashedly used marine symbolism to bestow

¹⁶⁴ *Time Magazine*, "New Trains," March 31, 1930, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,738971,00.html?promoid=googlep>; "The Lawrence Scripps Wilkinson Foundation Collection of Famous Trains," http://www.wilkinsontrains.com/traindisp.cfm?train_id=102, (accessed October 9, 2008).

¹⁶⁵ Julie Wosk, *Breaking Frame: Technology and the Visual Arts in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 14, 17-18, 179, 210.

distinction by uniting past with present, as did banks, insurance companies, and men's clubs. All three used it to expand the status of their institutions, their customers, and ultimately, themselves.

While the surcharge to ride the Yankee Clipper gave it an air of exclusivity, its presence in the train station brought the maritime imagery downward to the general public. Mass transit was a great equalizer; the train did, after all, arrive and depart from the same stations and ride the same rails as other trains.¹⁶⁶ It presented imagery in ways that made both the train and the maritime symbolism something to which working- or middle-class Americans could aspire. If one's aim, in the first year of the Great Depression, was to covet the life of successful businessmen, it was also to embrace the symbols they embraced, whether high tea, air conditioning, or clipper ships.

The train brought marine imagery to the public in other ways. Before being hung in the railroad cars, the ship portraits hung in the Grand Central Art Galleries inside Grand Central Station. Founded in 1922, the galleries also had a modern art division, the Grand Central Moderns, so that traditional and modern images existed side by side in the art galleries, too.¹⁶⁷ After the majority of the paintings were placed on board, artist Patterson wrote from New York City that "tomorrow afternoon the show opens of the 14 N.Y. N.H. + H RR pictures remaining" at an unnamed gallery, so there was some public

¹⁶⁶ The NY, NH, & H RR was the only major route in New England operated by a single rail line. Every train running between New York and Boston ran on the same sets of tracks and platforms. See Karr, *Rail Lines of Southern New England*.

¹⁶⁷ Leslie H. Tyler to Carl Cutler, 14 May 1930, Cutler papers box 1, folder 12; *New York Times*, obituary, "Erwin S. Barrie Dies at 97, Led Grand Central Art Galleries," July 27, 1983, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C06E4DF1039F934A15754C0A965948260>; "Smithsonian Archives of American Art," <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/collection/grancent.htm> (accessed October 9, 2008).

accessibility to the ship portraits even after the train had began its run.¹⁶⁸ The train and the gallery exhibit may have been meant for the business classes, but the public spaces of Grand Central Station brought the imagery to passers-by as well as to passengers.

Maritime Visual Images Come Full Circle

Simultaneously proscriptive and descriptive, the maritime visual culture of the Columbian Exposition and Civil War memorials tried to influence American culture from the top down. However, elite arbiters of high culture had less control once they released their cultural insights into the general population. Exactly where a plural American society, exposed to advertising, movies, and new forms of mass media, might take these heroicized maritime images could not be foreseen.

Mass culture ultimately spoke the final word on Currier and Ives lithography. In 1936, the Travelers Insurance Company of Hartford, Connecticut, began reproducing Currier and Ives lithographs on the calendars they gave out to their customers. The first edition included “The Clipper Ship Nightingale” and “A Midnight Race on the Mississippi,” and the particular prints “were chosen only after a great deal of thought” as well as for “artistic merit and historical value.” Further emphasizing the bravery and peril of the subject matter, the images of “clipper ships, pioneers, steamboats, and lightning express [trains] are all typical of activities in which many Travelers policyholders suffered accidents or lost their lives” the company concluded, stressing the heroics of days past that fueled the various revival movements of the early twentieth century. The plates depicting baseball, Central Park, the Rocky Mountains, and

¹⁶⁸ Charles R. Patterson to Carl Cutler, 23 September 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 12.

Thanksgiving were not commented upon. What was once an inexpensive and commonplace piece of visual culture for nineteenth-century Americans had been converted into high culture during the Maritime Revival, and then, from elevated position, the images returned to the masses, again in the form of inexpensive, ordinary prints on calendars.¹⁶⁹ Currier and Ives lithography had come full circle.

Another outcome of the downward diffusion of maritime imagery arrived in 1918, when Cracker Jack popcorn-and-peanuts added “Sailor Jack and his dog, Bingo,” undoubtedly a result of the Great War’s influence, to the confection’s packaging.¹⁷⁰ But perhaps the best example of Maritime Revival imagery’s conversion from working-class, to high culture, and then back into mass culture appeared on January 17, 1929, when cartoonist Elzie Crisler Segar introduced Popeye in his “Thimble Theatre” comic strip. No highbrow sailor, Popeye “impressed the newspaper-reading public with his crude but direct approach to problem solving,” fan club president Fred Grandinetti has written, “and the sailor became an overnight hit.” Popeye was so popular with American audiences that the strip was retitled “Thimble Theatre...Starring Popeye” by 1931. At the time of Segar’s death in 1937, his comic appeared in over 300 newspapers and had his own radio show.¹⁷¹ By World War II, Popeye’s fame had crossed the Atlantic, when,

¹⁶⁹ “The Travelers Insurance Company, 1936,” calendar (Hartford, CT: Travelers, 1936). In possession of the author.

¹⁷⁰ “Cracker Jack,” www.crackerjack.com/history.php (accessed October 14, 2008).

¹⁷¹ Fred M. Grandinetti, *Popeye: An Illustrated History of E.C. Segar’s Character in Print, Radio, Television and Film Appearances, 1929-1993* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1994), 4-6. And the rest, as they say, is history, as Popeye’s image has been reproduced in probably every conceivable medium.

forced to eat little more than “spinach, spinach and more spinach,” Anne Frank mused “maybe we’ll end up being as strong as Popeye.”¹⁷²

The elite cultural trendsetters who had anointed maritime culture as a savior of old-stock American values surely had more reputable characters in mind than an undereducated, inarticulate, street fighting sailor. Yet, Popeye incorporated most Maritime Revival principles. He was archly masculine, heroic, resolute, and loyal to a fault. He performed Herculean feats of strength, fought the oppression of lowbrow opponents, and defended American womanhood. He represented American individualism and initiative, and was ultimately the personification of the sailor-as-superhuman, especially after a healthy dose of spinach. These were the same traits as Maritime Revival heroes from John Paul Jones and David Farragut to the unknown sailor gracing Martin Milmore’s Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument in Boston. In the context of mass culture, heroicized sailor imagery took a turn unforeseen by Charles Kurtz or Fred Peters, especially when compared to the mariners of the MacMonnies fountain with Poseidon looking down from on high.

What began as an effort to lionize ships and sailors did just that in ways that elites did not intend. As self-proclaimed arbiters of high culture, they chose the canons and symbols that represented the appropriate American cultural values, and what they picked sprang directly from the working-class experiences of square-rigged ships and sailors. Eastern elites sanitized and repackaged these experiences to emphasize the appropriate values, then pushed their rarified and sanctified perceptions onto mass audiences through fine art, public art, statuary, and heroic characters. What they could not completely

¹⁷² Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, ed. Otto Frank and Mirjam Pressler, trans. Susan Massotty (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 287.

control was just how broad an appeal the new, proscribed symbols would have, once discovered by mass audiences. Elites were ambiguous towards the goal of completely prescribing culture because class differences served both them and the emerging middle class by creating distinctions between themselves and the working class.¹⁷³ This ambiguity afforded the opportunity for maritime culture to broaden beyond the parameters set by the upper class and return to its working-class roots. Maritime images and symbols broke the bonds of high culture and spread into areas such as advertising, movies, and kitsch. Mass culture, mass media, and national advertising transformed the symbols initially preserved by the upper classes into something with more widespread appeal, regardless of one's personal connection to the sea. The Maritime Revival had succeeded, but there was one final task—for the elites to rescue their symbols from the great unwashed and place them in temples of their own creation where these relics could be venerated with the appropriate dignity.

¹⁷³ Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow*, 177, 235, 227.

CHAPTER V

COLLECTORS AND PRESERVATIONISTS

In 1891, the Jibboom Club No. 1 formally incorporated their twenty-year-old fraternal organization. Sea captains and other mariners had been meeting informally around New London, Connecticut's waterfront since 1871, but upon incorporating, the Jibboom Club's members gained a unique hat and pin. The club took up residence in a waterfront building in 1894. The founding resolution declared that the "club is formed for the purpose of social enjoyment and the promotion of good fellowship among its members," and Jibboom Club members gathered to play billiards, cribbage, socialize, and smoke around the stove in the club's main room. A jovial bunch, they were known for a celebration and parade marking the birthday of their "patron saint" George Washington. He seems an odd choice of patron for master mariners, but club members noted that he made "at least one dangerous and fateful voyage across the Delaware River," according to Mystic Seaport Senior Curator Bill Peterson, "and that was good enough for them."¹

The Jibboom Club rooms were as devoted to collecting artifacts as they were to fraternizing. Similar to choosing Washington as their protector, club members were not particularly picky as to what they collected. Revolutionary War relics, exotic seashells, paintings, and ship models stood together, and Civil War swords were as important as

¹ William N. Peterson, "The New London Jibboom Club and the Jibboom Club Collection at Mystic Seaport," *Mystic Seaport Magazine*, Winter 2007, 27, 28.

swordfish bills. New London's whaling history prompted the collecting of harpoons, lances, and other whalecraft, and especially scrimshaw and logbooks. The club's "heyday," accord to Peterson, was between 1891 and 1926, and their interest in collecting colonial and Revolutionary-era artifacts reflected contemporary trends at the World's Columbian Exposition, the Essex Institute, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). As mariners, the Jibboom Club took special interest in things maritime, but whether it concerned Washington or whaling, this social club was dedicated to collecting reminders of the heroic past. Other marine collectors of this era were more discriminating, concentrating solely on marine *objets d'art*, but all collected material culture for the same reasons the Jibboom Club picked George Washington as their patron. Their goal was communing with the past, and gathering physical objects was a concrete way of connecting to their imagined heritage.²

Maritime collecting took many forms; ship-model building, portraiture, relics and ship parts, even preserving entire vessels. Venues both public and private housed collections. For all, the final step to glorifying maritime culture was collecting and displaying it publicly by putting approved objects, corrected images, and selected memories upon pedestals for all to see. In examining the motivations for creating these collections, it becomes clear that upper-class old-stock Americans were using things maritime to set their cultural preferences as examples for the rest of the country. Ironically, these elites needed the general public to attend their exhibitions to realize their goal of passing seafaring values to future generations.

² Ibid., 26-29.

The act of collecting was nothing new; Victorians packed their homes with gewgaws, big game hunters returned with trophies, and private collectors gathered memorable *objets d'art* for their personal enjoyment. In the twentieth century, though, maritime collecting took a new direction, as major maritime preservation movements, national in scope, mounted heritage campaigns. Despite some regional rumblings, the first two nationwide attempts at maritime preservation were rescuing the frigate USS *Constitution* from destruction between 1896 and 1906, and the founding of the Marine Historical Association, Inc., (MHA), which would become Mystic Seaport Museum, in 1929.³

Saving the Frigate USS *Constitution*

In late 1896, Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) President Charles Francis Adams, Jr., began what would become an ambitious decade-long project: saving the frigate USS *Constitution* from destruction. Adams, a Civil War General, Union Pacific Railroad President, author, historian, and descendant of two United States Presidents, took the reins of the antiquated MHS in 1895 determined to drag it into the future, professionalize its staff, and open its collections to researchers.⁴ Like his brother Henry, Charles was an antimodernist who saw no conflict in simultaneously modernizing one antiquated institution and working tirelessly to preserve another. The USS *Constitution*

³ See Arthur MacGregor, *Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Russell W. Belk, *Collecting in a Consumer Society* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Ian M.G. Quimby, ed., *Material Culture and the Study of American Life* (New York: Norton for the Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum, 1978).

⁴ Louis Leonard Tucker, *The Massachusetts Historical Society: A Bicentennial History, 1791-1991* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society; Northeastern University Press, 1995), 178, 183, 193-197, 225, 235-236, 244-253.

gained military fame during the War of 1812, and popular acclaim when Oliver Wendell Holmes penned the poem “Old Ironsides” in 1830, which helped to stave off the vessel’s initial destruction when it reached the end of military usefulness. The *Constitution* was thus already a national symbol, widely recognized and associated with heroics and patriotism when Adams began his campaign. It should have been an easy task but was not to be so in the modernizing United States. While Adams decried the “clubby character” of the MHS, he would nonetheless need to use every contact, pull every string at his disposal, enlist every possible Boston Brahmin, elite, and blueblood, and make every argument for the worth of the ship and the values it represented in order to bring this relic of the maritime past into the twentieth century.⁵ Even with his substantial arsenal of weapons and powerful allies, it was ultimately the agency of ordinary Americans that effectively saved the ship.

Considering the ship’s fame and reputation, it seemed, initially, that simply providing relevant information would spur Congressional action, which was necessary because the ship was still part of the U.S. Navy. Adams penned a memorial circular letter addressed to Congress and also sent it to historical societies around the country. In the memorial, Adams informed the Congressmen and Senators of the present sorry state of the historic vessel “sinking at her moorings” at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and offered a brief history of the ship’s naval glories, especially its defeat of British warships during the War of 1812 that “in the space of one short half-hour elevated the United States into the rank of a first-class power.” Adams compared the American vessel to British Admiral Horatio Nelson’s flagship, HMS *Victory*, preserved

⁵ Tucker, *Massachusetts Historical Society*, 249.

in Great Britain. The USS *Constitution*'s associations with "feats of devotion and daring" whose name was "synonymous with seamanship, courage, and unbroken triumph" in American public memory, asserted Adams, only served to make the vessel "more glorious...[and] more worthy of commemoration." Finally, the USS *Constitution* would preserve not only a "form of naval architecture now extinct" but also "cherished recollections" for "large numbers of American citizens who feel a patriotic and abiding interest in the associations she [the ship] must forever recall." He proposed the *Constitution* be rebuilt, permanently berthed and made easily accessible at the Washington, D.C. Navy Yard, and used as a floating Naval Museum.⁶ Martin Milmore's Civil War memorial statuary reified "Peace" and "History" in bronze; likewise, preserving the USS *Constitution* offered the concrete example of the ship as a "living object lesson of heroism and fidelity to duty," according to the Maryland Historical Society's A.C. Trippe as he responded enthusiastically to Adams' memorial circular.⁷

Other historical societies and heritage groups expressed their approval of the circular. Massachusetts groups such as the Old Salem Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution were "heartily in sympathy" with Adams's preservation attempts, and the Old Colony Historical Society of Taunton voted unanimously to send their own

⁶ [Charles Francis Adams, Jr.], "Memorial," December 26, 1896. Massachusetts Historical Society Council and Officers, Records Relating to the Restoration of the Constitution (frigate) 1897-1925, folder, Memorial 26 Dec. 1896, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA (hereafter cited as Constitution Restoration Records and folder name).

⁷ A.C. Trippe et al., to United States Senate and House of Representatives, 21 January 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, 11-21 January 1897.

petition through Massachusetts Representative Elijah Morse.⁸ Connecticut Historical Society President Charles Hoadly replied, rather formally, that his group had “voted that the President and Recording Secretary of this Society be authorized in the name of this Society to sign a petition in aid of said object.”⁹

In sending the memorial circular to historical societies nationwide, Adams began to build a network of supporters who could also lobby Congress. Trippe also responded directly to the Congress, offering the Maryland Historical Society’s support of the Massachusetts’ memorial circular, adding that the USS *Constitution* embodied “many of the brightest pages of our Country’s history.” The ship’s long, battle-scarred, and honorable service was symbolically important for future generations. “Her decks, where heroes have trod in the past,” wrote Trippe, “will be the inspiration of heroes in the days to come. The memory of the great deeds of its people is the best heritage a country can leave to their descendants.... There is no monument in our land which commemorates loftier patriotism and more modest bravery than do the shattered hull and bent spars of this gallant vessel.”¹⁰ This was typical of the Maritime Revival, which elevated selective ideas, people, or material objects of the maritime past to express the proper sets of essential American values—in this case, patriotism, country, duty, and fidelity. For

⁸ Eben Putnam to Samuel A. Green, 15 January 1897; James Seaver to Henry Haynes, 12 January 1897; Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, 11-21 Jan. 1897; “Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-present,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=M001007>, (accessed December 4, 2008).

⁹ Charles J. Hoadly to Massachusetts Historical Society, 2 February 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, Feb.-Aug. 1897.

¹⁰ A.C. Trippe et al., to United States Senate and House of Representatives, 21 January 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, 11-21 January 1897.

Trippe, preserving the ship was the “sacred duty” of the “representatives of the people.”¹¹ Like the items collected by the Jibboom Club and the India House Club, the *Constitution* was a single (albeit very large) material object that could be used to express specific ideas. The members of the Maryland Historical Society followed up Trippe’s letter—forming a committee, preparing their own memorial letter, and sending a petition off to Congress just two weeks after Trippe’s first letter to that august body.¹²

Adams’ appeal found enthusiastic support even as it moved away from the East Coast. Chicago Historical Society Secretary and Librarian Charles Evans sent the MHS an endorsement of the memorial, but the following day decided “some stronger action should be taken by this Society.” He requested additional copies of the memorial circular and asked advice on the “best means of attacking the strongholds of the powers that be.”¹³ The Minnesota Historical Society called on their Executive Council to adopt resolutions similar to those of the Massachusetts memorial circular and sent their own resolution to their Congressional delegation and Naval Secretary Hilary A. Hebert. The Minnesota Historical Society’s statement added that the ship must be preserved for “the sentiments she must ever arouse in the hearts of all true Americans,” implying that some of the people currently residing in the nation were not “true Americans.”¹⁴ If Adams had

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Mendes Cohen to Henry W. Haynes, 3 February 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, Feb.-Aug. 1897.

¹³ Charles Evans to Henry Haynes, 12 January 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, 11-21 Jan. 1897.

¹⁴ Warren Upham to Henry W. Haynes, 9 February 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, Feb-Aug. 1897.

made a case for preservation based on essential patriotic values, the Minnesota Historical Society's statement suggested a bifurcated society where conflicting values abounded.

The memorial circular made the newspapers in Denver, Colorado, hardly a stronghold of maritime heritage. Joseph F. Tuttle, Jr., founder and President of the Society of the Sons of the American Revolution in Colorado, heaped praises upon the old ship's name, victories, and crews. As a symbol of the nation, it was hardly "wonder that she should have always been the idol of the people and the object of their affectionate solicitude and interest! Her praises have been sung in song and verse!" he proclaimed, referring to the old sea song, "The *Constitution* and the *Guerrière*," and to the poem "Old Ironsides," written by Oliver Wendell Holmes in response to the "storm of indignation" that arose when rumors of the vessel's destruction had spread around Boston seventy years earlier. Seven decades later, the ship represented to Tuttle strength, loyalty, glorious victory, and, perhaps to a lesser degree, the triumph of the underdog, considering the ship's prowess against the world's most powerful navy. Preservation was important partly because of her storied past and her rarity in 1897, but also because the ship was a physical embodiment of an older Americanism in a changing United States. "Patriotic societies can do no more worthy work," Tuttle declared, "than to bring sharp counter influence to the iconoclastic spirit which is raising its hand to shatter this idol of the people's affection."¹⁵

Where precisely was iconoclastic spirit of which he wrote? Certainly some of it was inside a modernizing United States Navy more concerned with steel and steam than

¹⁵ Joseph F. Tuttle, Jr., "The Pride of the Navy-The Constitution-It Must and Shall be Preserved," *Denver Daily News*, Denver, CO, January 24, 1897, p. 9, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate), clippings (fragile), 1897-1906.

with preserving historic, but obsolete, ships. Tuttle's background helps to explain his rejection of this pure modernism. His grandfather was a Presbyterian minister who had moved from New Jersey to Ohio and his father, upon completion of seminary, took over a struggling Indiana school in 1862, leaving it on solid scholastic and fiscal ground when he retired thirty years later. Joseph Tuttle, Jr., an insurance man, moved to Colorado and founded the local chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.¹⁶ Tuttle and his ancestors were the very embodiment of old-stock American values. His eastern roots, his Presbyterian pedigree, his employment in an inherently conservative industry, his attention to heritage, and his group's enthusiasm for the *Constitution* campaign all pointed towards an antimodern outlook. It is likely that Tuttle, Jr., of Denver found iconoclasm throughout the West after William Jennings Bryan's 1896 Presidential campaign, with all its radical implications.¹⁷

Adams sought support and interest in the seats of revivalism: local historical societies and heritage groups. Interestingly, though, when word traveled beyond the limited circles of these organizations and into the press, ordinary Americans enthusiastically responded within weeks of the initial mailing. Adams probably

¹⁶ New England Historic Genealogical Society, *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 1904, vol. 58 (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1904) lxx, lxxi, <http://books.google.com>; "Colorado Business Directory 1911, Denver T-U-V, Denver County," trans. Joy Fisher, November 23, 2004, from James Ives, Jr., *37th Annual Volume, Colorado State Business Directory, With a Complete Classified Directory of the Entire State, Including Mines, Reduction Works, Etc.* (Denver: Gazetteer Publishing Company, 1911), <http://files.usgwarchives.org/co/denver/directories/1911-denvertv.txt>, (accessed December 6, 2008). See also, Denver Public Library, <http://history.denverlibrary.org/news/archive/april08.html>.

¹⁷ See William M. McBride, *Technological Change in the United States Navy, 1865-1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Gray Steel and the Blue Water Navy: The Formative Years of America's Military-Industrial Complex, 1881-1917* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979); and John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931).

suspected he could uncover pockets of like-minded Maritime Revivalists nationwide in the historical societies, but little imagined the support of ordinary Americans that would come forth when his message spread. Outside the movement's New England roots, Mrs. William Vincent Shaffer of Cincinnati, Ohio, for example, saw news of the memorial in the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*. Her grandfather, so she wrote to the MHS, had rigged the *Constitution*, and her cousin in Dorchester, Massachusetts, practically the MHS's backyard, had a picture of the job should the society be interested.¹⁸ The *Oakland [CA] Times* picked up a story from the *New York Sun* regarding the MHS memorial circular, which prompted a detailed letter from one William F. Herrick, who had sailed on the ship in the 1840s. Herrick went on to become a sort of jack-of-all-trades, with careers in design and engraving, machine shops, publishing, and finance, all while keeping interest in naval art and architecture. He proposed to the MHS—and to sundry Congressional leaders and a Boston insurance company president who had served on the ship—that he be placed in charge of the restoration effort. After a lengthy discussion of his qualifications and financing options, he echoed what Adams must have had in mind when sending the circulars out around the country. “Ask every state in the Union to Contribute live oak, oak[,] pine[,] fir, copper, iron, sails, cordage—masts, spars +c,” he suggested. “I am sure you could not do anything, [sic] wiser than to interest

¹⁸ Mrs. William Vincent Shaffer to Massachusetts Historical Society, 11 January 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, 11-21 Jan. 1897.

every man, woman + child in her reconstruction, as an object lesson in patriotism and right.”¹⁹

Adams’s stratagem worked; preserving the old ship found broad geographic and popular support, and its storied past made the accuracy of the rebuild important. The *Oakland Times* in large part agreed with the MHS position but added “the centenary of Old Ironsides would be well celebrated by putting her in proper repair....[But] the aim should be to make the fewest changes possible, and to preserve everything in her that comes from earlier days,” the editor asserted. Highly critical of past U.S. Navy rebuilds of historic vessels with modern fittings, he insisted that “she must remain to us as a specimen of the navy that has passed away....If the plan of a naval museum is adopted, it should not be forgotten that she is the greatest of exhibits, and in no way sacrificed to less important miscellaneous displays.”²⁰ Its new mission as a museum ship in some ways turned the USS *Constitution* into a very large ship model, with no detail too small to incorporate. In other ways, the issue of accuracy was tied to its intended purpose of creating patriotic values and educating the public. Preserving and passing on the ideals that the ship represented required its viewers to take a leap of faith that what they experienced was authentic and real. Herrick agreed. “The idea,” he wrote, “is to reproduce as she was in her prime, everything Complete.”²¹ An altered appearance, modernization and placement in difference service, or new and different materials all

¹⁹ William F. Herrick to Massachusetts Historical Society, 8 February 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, Feb.-Aug. 1897.

²⁰ *Oakland (CA) Times*, “‘A Famous Ship’ Efforts Being Made to Remove the Old Constitution,” February 8, 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate), clippings (frigate), 1897-1906.

²¹ William F. Herrick to Massachusetts Historical Society, 8 February 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, Feb.-Aug. 1897. Underscore in original.

would do violence not only to the vessel itself, but also to the transference of memory and continuity with the past it symbolized. Authentic construction materials, designs, and techniques were essential, just as accuracy of detail was essential in the non-fiction books of the Maritime Revival authors.

From his seat on high at the MHS, Adams had found a symbol and struck a chord in greater American sentiment. Tuttle in Colorado represented the elite interest in the ship's preservation. But Shaffer in Ohio and Herrick in California both saw the USS *Constitution* as a symbol of Americanism that could be used as an educational tool for present and future generations. Herrick, especially, spoke the same language of symbolic patriotism as the heads of heritage groups when he referred to the ship as a living object lesson. Elite and working class both expressed sentiments surrounding the ship as an icon. If elites considered the USS *Constitution* a way to push essential American values on the immigrants, working-class Americans felt connected to the ship based on its well-publicized military career or personal and familial connections to it.

Still, the task would not be easy, as the federal bureaucracy and amounts of money involved were daunting obstacles. Naval Secretary Hilary Herbert in 1895 reported that it would take \$458,000 to put the ship in active commission with a battery of modern guns, but simply to remove the historic vessel to Washington, D.C., “reproduce her as she was when she performed her memorable service,” and open the vessel to the public, the much lower figure of \$230,000 would suffice.²² Beyond restoration, even moving the hulk was expensive. The 54th Congress took up the issue

²² H.A. Herbert, *Letter from the Secretary of the Navy, in Answer to a Resolution of the Senate Inquiring as to the Cost of Rebuilding the Old Ship Constitution*, 54th Cong., 1st sess., Dec. 27, 1895, S. Doc. 47, serial 3349, 1-2, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>, (accessed December 11, 2009).

again in January 1897, two weeks after the MHS memorial had been printed into the record.²³ Massachusetts Congressman John F. Fitzgerald had apparently seen the memorial and newspaper reports of the ship's poor condition, trekked to Portsmouth, New Hampshire (across the river from Kittery, Maine) to inspect the vessel, and, when he returned to Congress, introduced a bill on January 14, 1897, requesting funds for repair enough to bring the ship to Boston. The House of Representatives next inquired as to the cost of moving the decrepit craft from Portsmouth to Washington, as the MHS memorial circular suggested, and received notice from William McAdoo, Secretary of the Navy that an estimated \$12,000 would be needed. Calling attention to the balance of the budgeted funding to keep the ship repaired and "in ordinary" at Portsmouth, McAdoo noted a shortfall of over \$4,000 to carry out Fitzgerald's plan.²⁴ Instead, Congress authorized the use of the approximately \$8,000 remaining in the already-appropriated repair fund to make the *Constitution* sturdy enough for the much shorter trip from Portsmouth to Boston. Amidst howls of protest from the New Hampshire Sons of the American Revolution, the ship returned to Boston in September 1897.²⁵

Adams' support came from modern, industrial shipbuilders and from Progressive-era clubwomen. The *American Shipbuilder*, a weekly journal of marine architecture and engineering, shipbuilding, and steam navigation, proposed printing an "elegant

²³ U.S. Senate, *United States Frigate Constitution*, 54th Cong., 2nd sess., January 5, 1897, S. Doc. 48, serial 3469, 1-2, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 11, 2008).

²⁴ U.S. House of Representatives, *Cost of Repairs to Frigate Constitution*, 54th Cong., 2nd sess., January 20, 1897, H. Doc. 196, 1, serial 3524, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 11, 2008).

²⁵ Tyrone G. Martin, *A Most Fortunate Ship: A Narrative History of Old Ironsides*, rev. ed. (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2003), 338.

engraving” of the ship in early 1897 and encouraged the MHS to preorder 100 copies as part of their search for interested “friends of the historical craft.”²⁶ At the other end of the industrial spectrum, the Young Ladies Charitable Association of Boston, which ran a free sanatorium, staged a “Gorgeous Marine Production” complete with elaborate costumes, to tell the story of the ship in February 1897.²⁷ Another women’s group, the Massachusetts State Society of the United States Daughters of the War of 1812, dedicated itself to the preservation of the ship upon its return to Boston. In 1898, at the request of Lillie B. Titus, head of the Massachusetts Daughters of 1812, Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge introduced an appropriations bill to restore the ship, though their “efforts to that end failed utterly,” Titus later wrote.²⁸ Then former Massachusetts Governor and current Secretary of the Navy John D. Long tried a different tack. With no mention of federal appropriation, on December 4, 1899, Long suggested to the House Committee on Naval Affairs that “the cost of such restoration [was] to be defrayed by popular subscription.” The Committee Report recommended passage of the bill, since the Daughters had requested “privilege of furnishing a sufficient sum of money to defray the entire cost” and that it was “more than a work of patriotism...it is a labor of love and reverence.” Moreover, the Daughters’ personal connection to the ship offered them an air of legitimacy. “Many of them [the women] are direct descendants of the men who helped build the ship,” reported the Committee on Naval Affairs, and “fought upon her

²⁶ Bradley and Howell [American Shipbuilder] to Massachusetts Historical Society, 9 February 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters, Feb.-Aug. 1897.

²⁷ Broadside, Massachusetts Historical Society, *Old Ironsides Frigate 'CONSTITUTION,'* February 9, 1897, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) 1897-1898 Broadside.

²⁸ Lillie B. Titus to Charles Francis Adams, 18 December 1903, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) Letters 4-30 Dec. 1903.

decks and commanded her when she gained her epoch-making victories.”²⁹ Largely as a result of Secretary Long’s efforts, on February 14, President William McKinley signed “An Act for the Preservation of the Frigate Constitution” authorizing the ship’s restoration “as near as may be consistent...as when she was in active service,” provided that the Daughters of 1812 had raised the required funding ahead of time.³⁰ Saving the old frigate with the help of the heritage group seemed to be gathering momentum, but despite the ladies’ best efforts, the amounts of money involved were beyond their abilities to raise. As the nineteenth became the twentieth century, the ship remained quietly at its dock in Boston, taking on water.³¹

Adams never really put the effort aside. In late 1903, he was once again neck-deep in the preservation effort, this time attempting to secure funding by intense lobbying of the Massachusetts Congressional delegations. He reprinted another version of the memorial circular, which included in its reasons for preservation language defining the ship as a sacred relic, practically deifying and certainly anthropomorphizing the rotting hulk. “She has been to Americans...a sentient being, to whom gratitude is due”; a “living monument, not alone of her own victories, but of the men behind the guns who won them.” The *Constitution* “speaks to us of patriotism and courage, of devotion to an idea, and to a sentiment for which men laid down their lives.” In no uncertain terms, he

²⁹ U.S. House Committee on Naval Affairs, *Frigate Constitution*, report to accompany H.R. 3718, 56th Cong., 1st sess., February 1, 1900, H. Rpt. 165, 1-2, serial 4021, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 12, 2008).

³⁰ Pamphlet, *PRESERVE THE SHIP*, n.d. [c. 1904], Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) printed material 1904-1925.

³¹ Martin, *A Most Fortunate Ship*, 339.

demanded nothing less than its “pious and lasting preservation.”³² With the advice of Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Adams planned a three-pronged attack. First, he lined up the big guns in the House and Senate to push the cause. Next, he appealed to William H. Moody, Secretary of the Navy. Finally, he took his appeal directly to the public. Lodge suggested Adams approach Maine Senator and Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, Eugene Hale, along with New Hampshire Senator and Committee member Jacob Gallinger, to enlist their support.³³ “If we have The [sic] two New England members of the Senate Committee,” Lodge wrote to Adams, “the battle is more than half won here.” Lodge also suggested that Adams and the MHS send another memorial circular to Congress, but warned against some of the mistakes of the past. “I think it would probably be wiser not to put forward here the plan to give the ship to the State of Massachusetts for museum purposes,” he insisted. “What we primarily want is to get her restored. I think I should confine myself simply to her preservation.”³⁴ Cautioning against narrowing the campaign’s appeal, Lodge further advised Adams in late 1903, “to leave out the words ‘especially those of New England descent’....The statement is of course quite true, but I think it would be wiser to leave it out and keep it to citizens of the

³² [Charles Francis Adams, Jr.], *The Frigate Constitution Memorial*, December 31, 1903, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Memorial Circular Letter 31 Dec. 1903.

³³ “Biographical Directory of the United States Congress,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=F000295>; <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000029>; <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=G000023>. (accessed December 11, 2008).

³⁴ Henry Cabot Lodge to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 4 December 1903, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) Letters 4-30 Dec. 1903.

United States generally.”³⁵ Reflecting on the Daughters of 1812’s failed campaign and efforts to secure federal monies back in 1898, Lillie Titus agreed. “So much sectional feeling [was] being aroused among the Senators and Representatives as to the ultimate destination of the ship should she be rebuilt,” Titus lamented, that “the matter could not be carried through.” Absent the federal appropriation, Titus and the Daughters of 1812 sent their own appeal for subscription money to restore the ship “all over the United States,” but this subscription effort failed as well.³⁶

Sectionalism of a different sort arose when Massachusetts Representative Frederick Gillett finished reading the new MHS memorial into the *Congressional Record*. Less concerned with the restored ship’s ultimate destination than with racial politics, Mississippi Representative and cotton planter John Sharp Williams remarked upon the propriety of reading the memorial. Previous House Speakers referred similar memorials and petitions to the “box,” to be printed but not read aloud on the House floor. “I am glad to see the present Speaker establishing a different precedent,” Williams quipped, adding “I can not fail to express my gratification at the fact that a New England Republican legislature and a New England Republican Representative are willing to preserve a ‘Constitution’ of some sort anyhow...even if it is preserved merely as a relic and a curiosity to excite the patriotism and the contemplative admiration of the American

³⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 16 December 1903, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) Letters 4-30 Dec. 1903.

³⁶ Lillie B. Titus to Charles Francis Adams, 18 December 1903, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) Letters 4-30 Dec. 1903.

people.”³⁷ Williams thought he saw a precedent-setting rule change that might allow southern Democratic petitions on everything from Jim Crow to lynch law to be read from the House floor. Williams’s commentary drew raucous laughter and applause from the Democrats and set off a brief debate on the finer points of House rules and whether the MHS was a legislative body. The discussion ended with New York Representative Sereno Payne’s declaration that he would personally block any future attempts at reading memorials or petitions should they arise from Mississippi Democrats. After this brief interlude, House procedure prevailed, and the body sent the memorial circular to the House Committee on Naval Affairs. Gillett wrote to Adams a few days later, “I enclose the page from the Record by which you will see that it was the first and probably the last resolution to be so read during this Congress.”³⁸

Sectionalism was alive and well in Congress in 1904, but this brief exchange in the House paled by comparison to the coming debate, sparked by the most recent version of the MHS memorial circular letter. All the luminaries Adams and Lodge had lined up did their respective parts. Lodge wrote Adams that it would be “a real delight” for George F. Hoar, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, to present the new memorial in the Senate.³⁹ Maine Senator and Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs Eugene Hale assured Adams that his committee would give it “careful attention,” and Harvard

³⁷ U.S. House of Representatives, “Preservation of the Frigate Constitution,” 58th Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record* 38, part 1 (January 5, 1904): 477-478; “Biographical Directory of the United States Congress,” <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=W000521>, (accessed December 12, 2008).

³⁸ Frederick H. Gillett to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 6 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

³⁹ Henry Cabot Lodge to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 4 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

University President Archibald Coolidge sent encouragement.⁴⁰ E.N Foss of Boston indeed wrote to his brother, Illinois Representative George Edmund Foss, to enlist his support.⁴¹ Boston and Maine Railroad President Lucius Tuttle, at Adams' request, "communicated with [Maine] Senator Gallinger, as you desire," and Gallinger responded to Adams under separate cover that he would "most gladly co-operate in securing the desired appropriation."⁴²

Gillett, as described above, gave the memorial its due reading from the floor of the House of Representatives, but within the week wrote to Adams that future petitions would "only fill the waste-baskets of the members." He further suggested that the matter was now in the hands of the Committee on Naval Affairs and that Adams should focus on the members of that committee exclusively.⁴³ Taking Gillett's advice, Adams wrote to Representative Ernest Roberts, the Massachusetts member of the Naval Committee, with the memorial. Leaving no stone unturned, he suggested fellow MHS member and Senate Chaplain Edward Everett Hale be employed to the task as he would "put in any desired amount of work," adding that the two Massachusetts men in the Senate might share an

⁴⁰ Eugene Hale to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 4 January 1904; Archibald Coolidge to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 5 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

⁴¹ E.N. Foss to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 8 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

⁴² Lucius Tuttle to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 5 January 1904; Jacob Gallinger to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 8 January 1904, both Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

⁴³ Frederick H. Gillett to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 9 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan.

interest in preserving the old ship.⁴⁴ Roberts concurred. "I will be very glad," he wrote back to Adams, "to do anything I can....I think it a good idea to have the Rev. Edward Everett Hale forward the work as you suggest, as I am sure he would have great influence with the Senators and Representatives."⁴⁵ With modesty characteristic of a man of the cloth, Hale wrote Adams, "I shall be very glad if I can do any good in the matter."⁴⁶

The Navy Department investigated the memorial circular's suggestions with little enthusiasm. While the MHS was lining up support in Congress, Naval Secretary William Moody reported to Adams on January 20, 1904 that the Chief Constructor of the Navy, Rear Admiral Washington Lee Capps had toured the vessel with an eye toward one of Adams's several suggestions, that of restoring the *Constitution* for use as a training ship.⁴⁷ However, Capps came to far different conclusions than Adams and the memorialists. "It is considered quite impractical to refit the Constitution as a training ship, the present condition of the hull of the vessel being such as to necessitate almost entire rebuilding, at very large expense," Moody paraphrased Capps, "when rebuilt it is believed that the vessel would not be suitable as a seagoing training ship for the Navy, the man-of-war of the present day being so entirely dissimilar to the Constitution in hull, equipment and ordnance." The best thing to do, Capps and Moody concluded, was to

⁴⁴ Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to Frederick H. Gillett, 12 January 1904; Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to Ernest W. Roberts, 12 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 13-26 Jan. 1904.

⁴⁵ Ernest Roberts to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 13 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 13-26 Jan. 1904.

⁴⁶ Edward Everett Hale to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 7 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

⁴⁷ [Charles Francis Adams, Jr.], *The Frigate Constitution Memorial*, December 31, 1903, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Memorial Circular Letter 31 Dec. 1903.

maintain minimally the vessel at the dock, perhaps using its deck as a naval museum.

“Such an arrangement... would preserve the sentimental associations connected with the Constitution... and would permit the perpetuation of the historical name ‘Constitution’ by transferring it to the most formidable type of modern battleship,” the two Navy men decided. “To that end it is recommended that authority be obtained to give the name ‘Constitution’ to the next firstclass [sic] battleship authorized to be built.”⁴⁸

The scheme provoked a blistering response from Adams, who then printed the exchange in the “Correspondence” section of the MHS proceedings. Point by point, Adams refuted Capps’ report to Naval Secretary Moody. Regarding the deteriorating condition of the ship, Capps “states [what] was already known,” quipped Adams. “The ship can neither be ‘repaired’ or ‘refitted’. That it has got practically to be rebuilt was well understood. When rebuilt, however, it would still be the Constitution.” Moreover, he laid out a cogent case for ship preservation, one that holds to this day regarding the replacement of parts and wood on rebuilt ships. “She was rebuilt in the same way seventy years ago, so that today there is in all probability hardly a fragment of the original in the present frigate,” he reasoned. “Every portion of the human body is renewed once in seven years; but, none the less, the individual man retains his identity,” he continued. “In like manner, the hulk now moored in the Charlestown dock is, in an unbroken line, the Constitution, and the traditions and memories of the original ship linger about it.” Adams wanted to preserve the ship, but he was most concerned with the associations, memories, and ideas that flowed from it. These were as important to sustain

⁴⁸ William H. Moody to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 20 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 13-26 Jan. 1904. Underscore in original.

as preserving the vessel itself. He further reasoned that given the huge sums of money spent by the federal government in 1904, the actual costs of saving the *Constitution* were trifling by comparison, especially “in view of the sentiment involved and the moral results flowing there from.” Because of this transfer of ideas associated with the ship’s unbroken chain of provenance, transferring the name to a modern warship was similarly unacceptable. “That name belongs to that ship, and that ship only,” concluded Adams.⁴⁹

While Adams worked Congressional leaders, he did not ignore popular appeals and grassroots efforts. As with his initial efforts in 1898, his latest effort elicited responses from ordinary Americans around the nation. Not everyone agreed that this was a good strategy, and Representative Gillett, who had led the charge in the House and recommended against any more petitions, put a “low estimate on outside assistance” once the matter was in the hands of the various committees.⁵⁰ Adams, who generally took Gillett’s advice, was unfazed and sent numerous copies of the memorial circular to the press. The *Boston Transcript* printed the memorial under the headline “Old Ironsides: A New Movement Under the Auspices of the Massachusetts Historical Society” and the *Springfield [MA] Republican* called the ship that gained fame during the War of 1812 “sacred” and connected its preservation to then-President Theodore Roosevelt’s first book, written on that war. The *New York Tribune* insisted that sentiment for the ship

⁴⁹ Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to William H. Moody, 26 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 13-26 Jan. 1904. Underscore in original.

⁵⁰ Frederick H. Gillett to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 9 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 4-9 Jan. 1904.

“should still prevail in every American mind and soul.”⁵¹ Adams also continued to enlist outside support from other historical societies, at least one of which drew out another familial connection. “To me, the proposed action is most grateful, not only officially but personally,” wrote Virginia Historical Society President William Gordon McCabe. “My great-uncle Capt: William Lewis Gordon of Virginia, was a midshipman under [Captain Isaac] Hull...in the actions of that glorious old ship” during three major battles during the War of 1812. “Very proud I am to bear his name,” McCabe concluded.⁵² In perhaps Adams’s largest coup, he secured an editorial that liberally quoted his memorial circular in one of the nation’s foremost magazines, *Harper’s Weekly*, on January 23, 1904.⁵³

In 1904, the Senate attached a \$400,000 appropriation to the 1904 naval appropriations bill intended to place the *Constitution* “as near as may be in the same condition as regards hull and rigging as she was when in active service.” Regrettably, for Adams, after all the planning, maneuvering, and effort, the provision was struck from the final bill at the last minute.⁵⁴ Discouraged, Adams continued his campaign throughout

⁵¹ Clippings, *Boston Transcript*, “Old Ironsides: A New Movement Under the Auspices of the Massachusetts Historical Society,” January 2, 1904; *Springfield (MA) Republican*, no title, January 3, 1904; *New York Tribune*, “To Save ‘Old Ironsides’ Put Her in Commission and Make Her an Object Lesson of Patriotism and Naval History,” January 3, 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) clippings (fragile) 1897-1906.

⁵² William Gordon McCabe to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 21 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 13-26 Jan. 1904.

⁵³ E.F. Martin to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 13 January 1904, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) letters 13-26 Jan. 1904.

⁵⁴ U.S. House of Representatives, *Conference Report on Naval Appropriations Bill*, report to accompany H.R. 12220, 58th Congress, 2nd Session, April 22, 1904, H. Rpt. 2762, 1-3, serial 4584, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 13, 2008). Upon the “disagreeing votes of the two Houses on certain amendments of the Senate,” the bill was sent back to conference, where the House Conference Report on the Naval Appropriations Bill (H.R. 12220) recommended that the “Senate recede from its amendments.” Foss and Hale, after pledging their support, were signatories to the report.

1904 in the one place he had found success—the press. He wrote an anonymous piece for the *Boston Herald* marking the August anniversary of the USS *Constitution*'s first great victory against the British Navy. In the piece, after heralding the ship's important victories, he criticized the Navy Department for allowing the ship to rot at the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston while rebuilding its contemporary, the USS *Constellation* at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. He further chastised the Navy Department for offering the name *Chesapeake*, “a name we lost in a fair fight,” to a new training ship. These factors “suggest an inquiry into the mental condition of a Congress and department,” he wrote with uncharacteristic sarcasm, “which for a moment permit such a disgraceful anomaly.” He closed with a charge to Bostonians “to inquire of Congress and the Navy Department: Why is this thus?”⁵⁵

In the coming year, the ship's prospects grew dimmer. The new Naval Secretary Charles Bonaparte repeated Capps' allegation that the ship, due to constant rebuilding, was not the same vessel. “It is important to bear in mind that the vessel...is not the vessel with which Hull captured the *Guerrière*,” Bonaparte baldly reported. “To exhibit the *Constitution*, therefore, as the genuine ‘Old Ironsides,’ charging...a fee for permission to inspect her...would not only ill accord with the dignity of the Government but would amount to obtaining money under false pretenses.” In addition to committing fraud, Bonaparte further thought preservation would be a “perfectly unjustifiable waste of public money, since when completed...she would be absolutely useless.” Instead, he proposed transferring the name to a new and modern warship, and breaking up what

⁵⁵ [Charles Francis Adams, Jr.], “Sunday August 30, 1812,” *Boston Herald*, August 30, 1904, 6, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) clippings (fragile) 1897-1906.

remained. But Bonaparte had at least one sympathetic bone in his body. "If, for purely sentimental reasons, it be thought that this supposed veteran of our old wars is entitled to a maritime end," he wrote in a statement of ultimate condescension, "she might be used as a target for some of the ships in our North Atlantic fleet and sunk by their fire."⁵⁶

Bonaparte's heartless proposal sparked an outrage that finally broke the Congressional lethargy. For all of the effort that Adams, sundry Congressmen, the Daughters of 1812, and other Boston Brahmins had expended, public outcry ultimately saved the ship. Once Bonaparte's suggestion for such an ignominious end for the ship reached the general public, a firestorm of protest arose around Boston. Boston politicians planned a Faneuil Hall protest against using the ship for target practice. "Such an act by the United States government," acting Boston Mayor David A. Welton wrote to the MHS's Vice President Samuel Green when inviting him to speak, "would be an outrage upon the patriotic sentiment of the people of Boston who treasure the glorious memories of her prowess in the great struggle for the honor and dignity of the nation."⁵⁷ Welton's protest found national publicity through the newswires, which picked up the Boston story and printed it around the country in newspapers ranging from the *Olympia [WA] Record* to the *Grand Forks [ND] Daily Herald* to the *Dallas Morning News*.⁵⁸ The lead line,

⁵⁶ U.S. House of Representatives, *Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1905, Report of the Secretary of the Navy, Miscellaneous Reports*, 59th Cong., 1st sess., H. Doc. 3, serial 4956 (Washington: GPO, 1906), 18-19. U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 14, 2008).

⁵⁷ David A. Welton to Samuel A. Green, 6 December 1905, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution letters, 6 Dec. 1905-Feb. 1906.

⁵⁸ *Duluth (MN) News-Tribune*, "Will Try To Save Famous Frigate Mayor of Boston Calls Meeting to Protest Against Breaking Up 'Old Ironsides'," December 7, 1905, 1. *America's Historical Newspapers*, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 15, 2008).

“Boston is grieving over Secretary Bonaparte’s suggestion,” began the sorry tale and quoted key players in the preservation effort. Former Naval Secretary Long said it was a “surprise he [Bonaparte] exhibited so much feeling against ‘Old Ironsides’ So long as a plank remains it ought to be held in reverence and preserved . . . [as] a stimulus . . . to patriotic education.” Harvard President Charles Eliot asserted, “let the Constitution stay where she is and as she is,” and Charles Francis Adams, with atypical succinctness, simply assessed “It is simply brutal. I am astonished at such a thing.”⁵⁹ The *Kansas City [MO] Star* editorialized that “nothing short of the prompt protest against the proposition to shoot the old Constitution to pieces, which is to find expression in Faneuil hall, would have been worthy of Boston.” Supporting the “perennial spirit of patriotism” of Bostonians, the editors warned “stay first the profane hand” and that if such “vandalism,” was done to the *Constitution*, other “historic shrines” and “hallowed landmarks,” perhaps even the “sacred elms on the Common” were sure to follow.⁶⁰ They implored “all who carry on traffic in Faneuil hall market forsake their stalls” to join the protest. The ship had patriotic and spiritual resonance, much like the growing quasi-religious reverence for other historical sites and preservation efforts of the early twentieth century. What had begun as an elite effort by New Englanders had blossomed into a national preservation

⁵⁹ *Kansas City (MO) Star*, “Boston Patriots are Shocked. Secretary Bonaparte’s Suggested Disposal of ‘Old Ironsides’ Resented,” December 6, 1905, 7, *America’s Historical Newspapers*, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed Dec 14, 2008).

⁶⁰ *Kansas City (MO) Star*, editorial, December 7, 1905, 6, *America’s Historical Newspapers*, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 15, 2008).

issue to the extent that the editors of a Missouri newspaper could justifiably demand that “butchers and green grocers” join in the opposition to the revered ship’s destruction.⁶¹

Between Bonaparte’s December 1905 announcement and January 1906, the public’s reaction was overwhelming. Artist, golden age illustrator, and founder of a Boston art school, Eric Pape designed an illuminated petition on a single sheet of paper 170 feet long and gathered 30,000 signatures in three weeks. On January 18, 1906, the day the petition went to Congress, House Chaplain Henry N. Couden gave thanks for the “sentiment deep down in the heart which...lifts men above the material and makes them heroes.” The Reverend Couden compared the “good old ship *Constitution*,” which had stirred in the nation’s heart the movement against its “ruthless destruction,” to the “Cross of Calvary,” and the American flag as symbols of American values. Petitioning a power higher than Congress, Couden prayed “the appeal may be heeded, that the gallant old ship...be preserved as an object lesson to future generations.”⁶² After the prayer, Massachusetts Representative Samuel McCall presented the Pape petition to the House. Heaping glories on the *Constitution*’s history, he refuted Bonaparte’s reasoning and suggested course of action, but he also spoke of the attachment Bostonians and other Americans had to the vessel. “The imaginations of the people have endowed this ship with a personality and a life,” he waxed, “and as in the case of men and women and all living things, her physical body has changed.” Our affection has gone out, not to mere

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Reverend Henry N. Couden offered the opening prayer honoring the USS *Constitution* on January 18, 1906 in the U.S. House of Representatives, 59th Cong. 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 40, part 2: 1238.

sticks of timber, but to a venerated personality.”⁶³ McCall’s anthropomorphized *Constitution* reflected the general feelings of the memorialists and other petitioners who had written to Congress, that the ship had become a living entity and therefore could not be destroyed. Upon delivery of a petition with signatures ranging from Massachusetts politicians and descendants of those who served on the ship, the House responded to what seemed to be overwhelming public demand and voted to investigate an appropriation. Two days later, Pape himself presented the petition in a cedar chest of his own design to luminaries in Washington including President Theodore Roosevelt and Admiral George Dewey. Roosevelt was impressed. “In no unmistakable way,” reported the *New York Times*, “the President indicated that the vessel ought to be preserved,” and Roosevelt directed the petition be placed on display at the Naval Academy.⁶⁴ Like the cause itself, the petition united the interests of Presidents, Senators and Congressmen, and ordinary men and women.

Bonaparte could have had no idea of the scope of national debate he would set off when suggesting the ship be blasted by modern ordnance. “It begins to look as if Secretary of the Navy Bonaparte was testing American patriotism,” the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported after the Faneuil Hall rally. “It is said in these days sentiment is at a

⁶³ U.S. House of Representatives, “The Frigate Constitution,” 59th Cong. 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 40, part 2 (January 18, 1906): 1238.

⁶⁴ [Eric Pape] “Biographical Sketch of Eric Pape,” *Gloucester Pageant*, 1910, see website, “Been Publishing, I’m Back,” <http://www.bpiib.com/illustrat/papebio2.htm> (accessed December 17, 2008); *New York Times*, “Huge Petition Delivered. President Roosevelt Enlisted for Preservation of ‘Old Ironsides’,” January 21, 1906, 4, http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=1&res=9807E7DD1531E733A25752C2A9679C946797D6CF (accessed December 17, 2008). Fellow golden age illustrator N.C. Wyeth was, for a brief period, a pupil at The Eric Pape School of Art, and in 1907 Pape designed another heritage memorial; the massive memorial bronze tablet and bas relief carved in the living rock commemorating the founding of Massachusetts Bay Colony in Stage Fort Park, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

discount...but it is doubtful if any proposal of the sort could have aroused so much proper protest as that of Mr. Bonaparte.”⁶⁵ The editors of the *Idaho Statesman* observed that “Bonaparte has made an egregious blunder in connection to the revered Constitution...he has stirred up a hornets’ nest and cannot get away from the results,” which were only exacerbated by his assertion that the multiple prior rebuilds made the current vessel something less than the original ship. They located the heart of the matter in the ship’s symbolic value rather than in the originality of its hull. “It is not the timber in the ship that the people love but the soul of the fighting craft...[which] remains through all rebuildings...the materials in the Constitution may change from time to time, but she still retains the maritime soul with which the public imagination has endowed her, and she will remain an object of veneration” as long as people continue to visit her, recognize her associations, and hold the memories important.⁶⁶ The Idaho newspaper hit all the key points of the *Constitution’s* importance in American culture, and also to the values espoused by the Maritime Revival. The vessel represented more than wood and iron. Instead, it had a “soul” and represented ideas worth remembering, venerating, and handing down, regardless of originality of timber. Ideas and ideals had triumphed over the material object.⁶⁷ What had begun with Adams seeking to preserve a concrete object

⁶⁵ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, “Saving the Constitution,” December 10, 1905, 10, America’s Historical Newspapers, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁶⁶ *Boise Statesman*, “Bonaparte’s Error,” December 12, 1905, 4, America’s Historical Newspapers, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 17, 2008).

⁶⁷ For more on the connection and transfer of sentiments among ideas and material objects, see Thomas J. Campanella, *Republic of Shade: New England and the American Elm* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), specifically, pp. 64-68, which discuss the legendary “Washington Elm” on Cambridge Common in Massachusetts. Despite evidence to the contrary, citizens refused to believe that George Washington, most likely, did *not* review troops while standing in its shade, and after the tree fell in 1923, its wood retained

for the values it imparted ended with those values transcending the object itself. No longer in the hands of eastern elites, Bonaparte's callous comments revealed a wellspring of public support across the United States. Adams's crusade was the catalyst; without his unwavering attention to the issue, public opinion could not have coalesced around the *Constitution*. But after that wellspring was tapped, the remaining pieces in the battle to save the ship fell into place very quickly.

There would be one final round of lobbying Congress, and Adams took advantage of the widespread support generated by Bonaparte's blunder. In February 1906, just as the 59th Congress began the naval appropriations budgetary debates, Adams printed yet another memorial circular, by far the most complete, and on February 20, 1906, it was again printed in the *Congressional Record*.⁶⁸ At issue was the appropriation that had been stricken in 1903. Again distributed to historical societies across the country, the memorial urged action in the form of petitioning their state's U.S. Senators and Representatives and encouraging their state legislatures to request official cooperation of their Congressional delegations "to co-operate in procuring the passage of the measure prayed for."⁶⁹ In it, he dismantled point by point Bonaparte's arguments regarding the originality of the ship, its usefulness, and justified public expenditures. He also included the text of his 1903 memorial, and his 1904 ship history and invective in the *Boston Herald*. He also backed up his argument with the latest visitation figures, which,

significance in public memory. "Once a vessel bearing the memory of a historical event, the Washington Elm now graduated into an object worthy of veneration itself," wrote Campanella.

⁶⁸ U.S. Senate, "The Frigate Constitution," 59th Cong., 1st sess., *Congressional Record* 40, part 3 (February 20, 1906): 2713-2715.

⁶⁹ Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to various historical societies, form letter, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution letters, 6 Dec. 1905-Feb. 1906.

according to official records, topped five thousand per day in 1904 and over one hundred thousand between 1904 and 1906. The American people's interest in the ship was "incontrovertibly proven," insisted Adams, "by the names of the thousands of pilgrims from all sections of the country annually inscribed on her register."⁷⁰

Response was uniformly positive. Large institutions such as the New York, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Virginia Historical Societies, were on board, as well as the smaller New England-based heritage groups. Sectionalism dissolved as historic societies from West Virginia, Georgia, Ohio, South Carolina, Montana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota all wrote their delegations, urging support of the appropriation. Smaller local societies from Rochester and Cayuga County, New York; Dauphin County, Pennsylvania; and Springfield and Deerfield, Massachusetts, also joined the effort.⁷¹ Letters from supporters with personal connections to the *Constitution* continued to arrive on the MHS's doorstep. During discussion at the Virginia Historical Society, "it was ascertained that the Grandfather of one of our Committee + the Great Uncle of another were officers on the *Constitution*, while the third is a descendant of her designer," wrote corresponding secretary W.G. Stanard, adding that a presentation sword from a member

⁷⁰ [Charles Francis Adams, Jr.], *The Frigate Constitution Memorial*, January 11, 1906, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Memorial Circular Letter 1904-1906.

⁷¹ Samuel V. Hoffman, 29 March 1906; John W. Jordan, 30 March 1906; Franklin H. Head, 6 March 1906; W.G. Stanard, 12 April 1906; W.S. Laidley, 19 March 1906; A.R. Lawton, 31 March 1906; Joseph Wilby, 31 March 1906; Joseph W. Barnwell, 24 March 1906; Laura E. Howey, 21 March 1906; R.G. Thwaites, 27 March 1906; Nathaniel Pite Langford, 9 April 1906; Nathaniel S. Olds, 2 April 1906; Willis J. Beecher, 21 March 1906; William H. Fay, 16 April 1906; W.F. Adams, 3 April 1906; George Sheldon, 20 March 1906; all to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., Constitution Restoration Records, folders, Constitution letters, 6-19 Mar. 1906; 20-31 Mar. 1906; and Apr.-Nov. 1906.

“who rendered gallant service on the Constitution” hung on the society’s meeting-room wall.⁷²

Instilling patriotic values through the concrete “object lesson” of the ship was an important theme among correspondents. They agreed that the ship should be preserved as an “object lesson showing what in 1812 was considered a well equipped vessel of war....and as an inspiration of patriotism to the youth of our Country.”⁷³ Daniel C. Roberts of the New Hampshire Historical Society felt similarly about the ship’s patriotic value to the youth of the country despite concerns regarding immigrant children.⁷⁴ In the heart of the old Confederacy, A.R. Lawton and Otis Ashmore of the Georgia Historical Society agreed. “Every consideration of patriotic sentiment and historic pride demands the preservation of the old war vessel,” Lawton wrote, “which may be made as an inspiration to future generations.”⁷⁵ A far cry from the Mississippi Representative’s sarcastic response to the reading of the Memorial three years earlier, the preservation of the USS *Constitution* had become a national issue, uniting Americans North, South, and West. Almost universally, their common ground was a belief in the necessity to instill contemporary youth with a patriotic set of essential American values. Elevated to a heady symbolic position, the *Constitution* could be employed to preserve some continuity

⁷² W.G Standard to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 12 April 1906, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution letters, Apr.-Nov. 1906.

⁷³ Chicago Historical Society to the Senators and Representatives from Illinois, Resolution, March 6, 1906, Constitution Restoration Records, folders, Constitution letters, 6-19 Mar. 1906.

⁷⁴ Daniel C. Roberts to Charles Francis Adams, Jr., 29 March 1906, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution letters, 20-31 Mar. 1906. Roberts’s direct statement on immigrant children appeared in Chapter One.

⁷⁵ Georgia Historical Society to U.S. Congress, 31 March 1906, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution letters, 20-31 Mar. 1906.

with the past, proponents of restoration hoped, for the impressionable youth of a modern America.

Finally, in the Naval Appropriation Bill of 1906, the Committee on Naval Affairs recommended “authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to expend a sum not to exceed \$100,000 to repair, equip, and restore the old Constitution, and put her, as far as practicable, in her original condition, but not for active service,” as well as reappropriating \$300,000 from the “unexpended balance” of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1904.⁷⁶ This time, fueled by public awareness, the effort succeeded and the appropriation survived the glacial budgetary process.

It had taken ten years, several dark hours, and near-endless frustrations, but Adams succeeded. The ship was not out of danger, but any further talk of allowing the ship to disintegrate, or to be used as cannon fodder, ended in 1906. By December 1906, workers had removed the deckhouse that made the ship look much like Noah’s Ark and begun restoration work using Captain Isaac Hull’s model out of the Peabody Museum of Salem, Massachusetts. “Some months from now,” reported the *Boston Evening Transcript*, “she will be a new Old Constitution, ship-shape for continued service as an inspiring object lesson.”⁷⁷ The following year the ship floated out of drydock, and a reporter from the *New York Evening Post* compared the old frigate favorably to the iron and steel warships also moored at the Charlestown Navy Yard: “On either side of her,

⁷⁶ U.S. House, Committee on Naval Affairs, *Naval Appropriation Bill, Report*, 59th Congress, 1st Session, April 28, 1906, H. Rpt. 3639, 12, serial 4907, U.S. Congressional Serial Set, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com> (accessed December 16, 2008).

⁷⁷ *Boston Evening Transcript*, “‘Ironsided’ Old and New the Rebuilding of the Good Ship Constitution,” December 5, 1906, Constitution Restoration Records, folder, Constitution (frigate) Clippings (fragile) 1897-1906.

witness the mutability of man-made things, the rust-eaten hulks of two more modern men-of-war, disabled, battered, forlorn....No, the advantage is with the Constitution.”⁷⁸ As predicted, visitors found the “spirit of the ship...still present” despite the new wood. The shipwrights were old and grey, the technology antiquated, and the restoration scene “seems so ancient that one needs to be reassured by the sight of a white and buff battleship...and a band playing a smashing Sousa march. That, at least, is modern material.” Juxtaposed against the modern naval yard, the *Constitution* and her workers were a throwback, an anomaly, and the workers hailing from the “little coast towns” of northern New England, “men who are the last remnants of their profession.” They were more valuable “than any lot of youngsters you can pick up anywhere,” their foreman blustered.⁷⁹

Wood and metal in the marine environment require constant vigilance and renewal, and Adams’ efforts ensured that the ship’s fate would thereafter be preservation rather than destruction. The *Constitution* underwent more restoration work, funded by the public at large, between 1927 and 1930. In addition to other funding sources, American schoolchildren collected pennies for the project in still another attempt to involve youth in the patriotic effort. In the early 1970s, the *Constitution* underwent another restoration, and again, the most thorough and accurate, from 1992 to 1995. At the time of this writing, the world’s oldest commissioned warship afloat is undergoing

⁷⁸ *New York Evening Post*, “The Awakening of ‘Old Ironsides’,” May 18, 1907, 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

work once more.⁸⁰ Only a powerful national symbol such as the *Constitution* had been able to sustain an effort that involved federal bureaucracy and lasted a decade or more. Adams championed the right vessel at the right time, mining a rich vein, not just of sentiments for a specific ship and its service, but also of the Maritime Revival's wider symbolism and its ability to transfer values through material culture.

Still, the patriotic sentiments of the citizens of a maritime nation ultimately saved the ship. Adams' original tactic of building elite support across sectional lines blossomed into a widespread popular movement as Americans with ties to the ship, its battles, the War of 1812, personal naval service at Portsmouth, or simply those with objections to Naval Secretary Bonaparte's plan came forward with the support that quickened the ship's preservation movement. The ship's quasi-religious symbolism remained fresh in Adams's mind because it made the *Constitution* a perfect object lesson of patriotism, one that could be employed to preserve the values of past American heroes. Like William Sumner Appleton's restoration of Paul Revere's house, the ship passed on the appropriate sets of aesthetic, nationalistic, and socioeconomic values to its pilgrim-visitors, and its restoration would only further the diffusion of these values. However, Adams's ideas had resonance beyond New England elites. Once his interest in saving the ship—based on his belief it possessed core American values—attracted public attention, popular support quickly grew. To be sure, some of these supporters were upper-class Americans of Anglo-Saxon, Protestant descent, such as the Colorado Sons of the American Revolution, but others were ordinary citizens whose interest had been piqued by naval

⁸⁰ "USS Constitution Timeline," <http://www.usconstitution.navy.mil/historyupdate.htm> (accessed December 17, 2008).

experience or who had grown up in a country where the maritime experience had been ubiquitous. The American past had been steeped in maritime experiences, creating fertile ground in which to plant the seeds of preservation—and revivalism—and priming the pump for renewed interest in seafaring heritage, however selective its focus, during the Maritime Revival.

The Collectors

Change, a sense of loss, and preserving the values of the past helped to create the Maritime Revival. Finding the best pieces to save, such as the USS *Constitution* as an object lesson, helped to transfer the appropriate values over time. None of this, though, would have been possible without a receptive public. Even though the elites were picking and choosing what they believed were the proper aesthetics and symbolic objects, they still needed audiences for their collections outside of their own social class. This is not to say that maritime collectors were egalitarians; they were not. However, regardless of their particular points of view, unless they could pass values onto society writ large, their preservation mission—whether of objects or values—would fail. For that reason, there was a degree of tension in the collectors' many activities. They wanted to present a rarified maritime past, but they needed a mass audience and mass media if their messages were to be diffused throughout American culture. Arguments regarding the amounts of original wood in the USS *Constitution*, and feelings that it did not matter to the ship's symbolic value, demonstrate how values can transcend the actual material object. For other marine collectors, though, the absolute authenticity of the material culture they collected was paramount if they were to transfer social and cultural values through these

inanimate objects. These items gained the legitimacy to impart essential values by being treated like rare works of art in museum collections.

Private holdings were the antecedent to publicly-displayed maritime collections, and ship models were the vital articles of such collections. No maritime collection would be complete without a ship model. “A ship model in a room suggests immediately a connection with the sea,” wrote author Charles G. Davis in 1925, “and all the mysteries that go with seafaring life.”⁸¹ For Davis, models captured the romance of sail, exotic ports of call, and the heroic imagery typical of the Maritime Revival. Models represented not only the vessel in question, but they also suggested “a life in the days of the famous clipper ships, those proud mistresses of the seas...or...a pirate schooner, a slaver, or a ship away back in the sixteenth century.”⁸² Lost lifestyles were put on display with every ship model. Like so many other marine records or detail-driven research, obsessive attention to detail was at the fore of the model-builder’s art. “It calls for the exercise of a great deal of patience and considerable skill to produce a miniature ship so accurately as to look exactly like the original vessel,” Davis continued. “There is ever a goal ahead to strive for...where no detail is too small to incorporate into your model.”⁸³

Beginning as an enterprise of shipbuilders, ship modeling’s popularity as a hobby swelled in the 1920s, especially among upper-class collectors and modern shipping magnates. “Interest in the model ships is comparatively recent,” New York Ship Model

⁸¹ Charles G. Davis, “Building a Ship Model,” *The Log of the Marine Research Society*, No. 4, (November 1925), 36. Boston Athenaeum.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 36.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 35.

Society President and New York artist Irving Wiles asserted to the society in 1921, arguing that it was “very delightful” to use models for decoration. However, it was also “a serious study requiring research in old books on marine architecture.” Wiles warned of foreign, counterfeit “antique” models flooding the market, and proposed establishing a maritime museum in New York City because “people do not know what the clipper ship period meant in this country.” He then launched into a speech that fairly dripped with Maritime Revival heroic-speak. Membership was a who’s who of bankers and industrialists, with Franklin D. Roosevelt as honorary president.⁸⁴ Roosevelt must have been favorably impressed with the society, because when Carl Cutler wrote to him inquiring about his collection of models, Roosevelt directed Cutler to “Mr. Henry B. Culver, of New York City,” who, in 1928, was “president of the Ship Modelers Association” and a modeler who knew “more than any other man in the country about ship models.”⁸⁵

But in 1924, then-President Wiles struck several chords in the Maritime Revival symphony. First, the clipper ship period was the most important period of seafaring. Second, using ship models in the decorative arts was growing in popularity. And third, ship modeling was “not a fad as the ladies know it, to use them for decoration.”⁸⁶ Wiles’s dismissal of modeling as a women’s decorating trend helped wall off the

⁸⁴ *New York Times*, “Ship Models Spur Interest in Craft,” April 24, 1921, E8, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=940DE0D7113FE432A25757C2A9629C946095D6CF> (accessed December 18, 2008).

⁸⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Carl Cutler, 3 December 1928, Carl Cutler Papers, Collection 100, box 1, folder 3, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT (hereafter cited as Cutler papers, box and folder number).

⁸⁶ *New York Times*, “Ship Models Spur Interest in Craft.”

Maritime Revival's physical spaces and ideals as masculine retreats. Nonetheless, his need to disavow the "fad" indicated that it must have been occurring. Clearly, people other than wealthy white men were making inroads into Maritime Revival culture. Finally, his charge that modeling required serious research to represent these heroic ships of the past accurately was one chord that reached crescendo during the Maritime Revival.

Wealthy businessmen's attention to ship model collections continued through the 1920s, but during that decade, attention to ship models diffused downward in American culture. The oldest private banking firm in the country, Alex. Brown and Sons displayed, in their Baltimore offices, a collection of "about 40 models together with close to 100 pictures of ships." Almost 1700 people attended an exhibition of these models.⁸⁷

Providence, Rhode Island, ship modeler and Autocrat coffee magnate Alfred S. Brownell helped to found the Ship Model Society of Rhode Island and "the interest shown in the organization was so marked," he wrote to George Francis Dow in Topsfield, Massachusetts, "that it was thought advisable to ask others outside of Providence to become associated with the Society so that whatever was obtained through research work could be given to the greatest number."⁸⁸ He invited Dow, a fellow maritime enthusiast, to join the organization, which also planned to publish a quarterly journal to spread the information on "ships, their design, construction and rig...as well as marine history" as

⁸⁷ N. Sjoberg to Carl Cutler, 15 April 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 4.

⁸⁸ Alfred S. Brownell to George Francis Dow, 18 March 1927, George Francis Dow Papers 1926-1928, MSS N-1133, box 7, folder 1927, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA (hereafter cited as Dow papers, box and folder numbers).

widely as possible.⁸⁹ Likewise, other private collections of maritime objects were the precursors to publicly-displayed collections.

The India House Club in New York City, noted earlier for its collection of Currier and Ives lithography, held many other maritime objects in their collections: oil paintings, watercolors, lithographs, etchings, woodcuts, and drawings of ships, maps and views of foreign ports, portraits of important merchants involved in the China trade, marine relics, salvaged ship parts, important papers, and, of course, ship models. In 1973, the collection catalog numbered 680 objects.⁹⁰ Since contemporary businessmen who, in 1914, wanted to earn money through maritime enterprise founded the club, the collection reflected simultaneously the past and the future. “New as years ago,” in 1935, India House was nevertheless “old in the traditions it holds.” Its décor was intended to be motivational for contemporary business interests by invoking the power of history: “Here we may plan the practical details of future growth,” founding member and U.S. Steel President James A Farrell wrote, “or dream the dreams of Robert Louis Stevenson and other inimitable storytellers of the sea, surrounded by inspiring memorials of the past.”⁹¹ These collectors revered the past while modernizing. As the membership list suggests, these contemporary businessmen recognized the industrial interconnections of land and sea in the 1910s. Farrell’s “Foreword” to the published catalog of 1935, however, focused solely on the demise of foreign trading while ignoring other forms of maritime

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Marine Collection to be Found at India House*, (1935; repr., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 144. The club also kept a maritime library.

⁹¹ James A. Farrell, “Foreword,” in *India House Catalog*, xii.

commerce. He pointed out that, when American industrial production finally exceeded domestic demand, there were few American foreign trading ships to carry the exports. “The palmy days of the clipper ship had been succeeded by our virtual eclipse as a maritime nation,” he wrote, “and public interest in nautical matters was at a low ebb.”⁹² The founding of India House coincided with a rebirth of American interest in ships and shipping—and the onset of the Great War—and was “organized for the encouragement and perpetuation of foreign trade traditions.” The club’s building was intended to illuminate the story of American commercial growth, both by its location in lower Manhattan and through its collections. “Here in these rooms are treasured the relics of the past, symbolizing the world-wide extent of our trading interests,” Farrell asserted. “India House is bound by every tradition with the adventurers of all ages who went down to the sea in ships, and all now engaged or interested in foreign commerce are represented on its roll of members.” This membership, while taking inspiration from the relics of the past hanging on the club’s walls, were nonetheless charged with maintaining “an undaunted front to the difficulties of our times,” which, to Farrell in 1935, meant sustaining American commerce, in the face of the Great Depression, and the challenges of the New Deal to unregulated capitalism. “We owe it to those who follow,” Farrell concluded, “to build...wisely and courageously...to be carried on by this and future generations.”⁹³ Classically antimodern, Farrell and his fellow members communed with the past while looking to the future for themselves, and their children. Their invoking the past through material culture and ideas soothed contemporaneous problems.

⁹² Farrell, “Foreword,” xi.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, xii.

The India House collection was eclectic, though more purely maritime in nature than that of New London's Jibboom Club. Members could take their inspiration from representational art such as oil paintings of the US Mail Steamer *Arago*, and the clipper ships *Flying Cloud* and *Northern Light*, or the portrait of Chinese (Hong) merchant Houqua. Pieces of old ships, whether the intact, original figure head of the ship *Glory of the Seas* or a fragment of a ship's knee from the steamer *Charlotte Dundas*, were revered like pieces of the True Cross. Lithographs of the schooner yacht *America*, of the Mississippi river steamboats *Eclipse* and *Natchez* (the latter from Currier and Ives), joined models, whether builder's half-models or three-dimensional models such as the British ship-of-the-line *Royal Sovereign*, in the India House's collection.⁹⁴ Also included were documents and relics of famous ships, such as letters from Joseph Conrad, an order of sailing signed by British Admiral Horatio Nelson, ships' clearance papers signed by Napoleon Bonaparte, nautical instruments such as an old sextant, globes, chronometers, a ship's bell from naval vessel, swivel guns, ships' lanterns, a pair of cannon, and signal flags.⁹⁵ The club's nautical decor was intended to create an atmosphere appropriate for the businessmen and business deals that promoted future American shipping interests. Collecting and displaying maritime paraphernalia became a concrete way to invoke the power of the past.

While satisfying to their owners, collections in private homes or clubs could not, like Colonial Revival homes and buildings, transmit values to the general public. If, as was a stated goal of the Marine Historical Association's founders, the Maritime Revival

⁹⁴ *India House Catalog*, 16, 26, 44, 51, 133, 62, 74, 103, 52, 53.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 133-137.

should spread the essential value of seafaring to greater numbers of Americans, collections needed to be openly displayed. Private collecting of maritime artifacts, beginning as an antimodern return to Victorian collecting habits, expanded outward throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Inviting the public inside, to engage these maritime collections directly, was the next logical step. As the Maritime Revival reached maturity at the end of the Roaring Twenties, a usable maritime past was needed more than ever to support “traditional” values. Heritage was becoming an American civic religion, and keeping the faith no longer sufficed. Spreading the faith of maritime heritage inspired the founding of the Marine Historical Association in 1929.

On Christmas Day that year, Edward E. Bradley, Charles K. Stillman, and Carl C. Cutler signed articles of incorporation agreeing to form the Marine Historical Association at Mystic, Connecticut. While Charles Francis Adams, Jr., had his eye on preserving a single tangible object with which to tell an American story of heroic patriotism, the three founders of what would become Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc. had loftier goals. First, they wanted to create a “fitting memorial to the hardy men who contributed so much to America’s honor and prosperity[sic] [prosperity] in former generations,” but the primary goal, as expressed in their 1930 *Statement of Plan and Purposes*, was nothing short of creating an organization that would be “a vital, growing force which shall be the rallying point...capable of playing a worthy part in a living America with a future to face.” Just as Carl Cutler believed his book about clipper ships, *Greyhounds of the Sea*, told a history essential to the nation’s strength, he and the other founders believed that their maritime museum could play “some small part, ultimately, in the re-creation of a powerful maritime civilization.” A sense of declension loomed large in the minds of

these men. In their view, the United States, “must regain, in a measure, her former position” on the sea.⁹⁶ By 1929, the idea of sparking a maritime renaissance was a shopworn trope, and one not altogether convincing given the ready availability of the Emergency Fleet Corporation’s surplus tonnage throughout the 1920s.⁹⁷

Mystic Seaport today would have its visitors believe that three locals met for some Christmas cheer, and after a cordial discussion, decided to initiate the beginnings of one of the nation’s premiere maritime museums. In fact, the idea of a museum, and especially its mission, had been under consideration for months, if not years. Carl Cutler, for much of the 1920s, had been collecting ship models and photographs while researching his first book, *Greyhounds of the Sea: The Story of the American Clipper Ship*. “My friends think I am altogether too extravagant in this direction,” he wrote to fellow model collector T.J. Southard in Maine, “but as I have no other expensive hobbies it probably does not matter.”⁹⁸ Cutler’s research collections, especially his ship models, began attracting some local attention, and he found himself receiving visitors who wanted to view the growing collection at his West Mystic, Connecticut farm. “Roused somewhat by my models and photos—for they know little of the rest of the work,” he wrote to his friend New York attorney Albert Reese in September 1929, “a couple of very wealthy multi-millionaires...have suggested founding a marine museum here.”⁹⁹ Six weeks later,

⁹⁶ Pamphlet, [Carl C. Cutler], *Statement of Plan and Purposes of the Marine Historical Association, Incorporated Mystic, Conn. 1929*, (Mystic, CT, 1930), 2-3, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

⁹⁷ Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America’s Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 277.

⁹⁸ Carl Cutler to T.J. Southard, 15 December 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 7.

⁹⁹ Carl Cutler to Albert Reese, 13 September 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 6.

“Stillman here seems to continue very keen on the Museum business,” Cutler wrote, while confessing that he was not altogether happy that Stillman kept commissioning him to search out ship models.¹⁰⁰ Cutler thought it best to retain some distance, since he had “sweat blood” to earn his own knowledge of ship models and resented acting as Stillman’s agent. Still, Cutler admitted that, on his research trips, he found ever-increasing enthusiasm for an East Coast maritime museum. “Somewhere, if not in Mystic, there is going to be a marine museum started before long, centering perhaps on New York and drawing its collections all the way from Connecticut to Philadelphia,” he confided. “Possibly another two or three months will tell whether it will be in Mystic or elsewhere.”¹⁰¹ Cutler was prescient; two months later, with his discomfort in check, he joined Stillman and Bradley in signing the articles of incorporation.

Cutler was the scholar, and Bradley and Stillman provided the money, yet these three different men nonetheless shared some common experiences. As a young man, Edward E. Bradley sailed on one voyage from New York, to the Far East, and then to San Francisco, between 1875 and 1878. He returned to Stonington, Connecticut, and invented various machines that revolutionized the manufacture of silk textiles. His interest in seafaring continued via yachting and model building. Charles Stillman graduated from Brown University and earned an M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. His interest in maritime affairs resulted from a family connection to Mystic shipbuilder Thomas Greenman. Stillman helped found the Block Island Tuna Club and became a devoted fisherman and yachtsman. Carl Cutler

¹⁰⁰ Carl Cutler to George ?, 1 November 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 7.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

also graduated from Brown University, afterwards attended Columbia Law School and passed the New York bar. He had gone to sea as a young man, and that experience, along with a seafaring family, prompted him to write *Greyhounds of the Sea*, a task that kept him busy throughout the 1920s.¹⁰² Beyond pleasure boating, none of these three men had much connection to contemporary seafaring in 1929. However, the employment of their youth, or their family's history, had left them with an interest in things maritime, and by 1929, they had fully embraced the culture of the mature Maritime Revival. All three men also shared a common perspective, if not common financial wherewithal, on the sets of values that seafaring offered. Heralding the past maritime experience was essential to perform "great future deeds" because from the seafaring experience "will always spring those higher qualities invaluable to national well-being, such as courage, sacrifice, the pioneer spirit of adventure, co-operation, loyalty, high aspiration, and true religion," they wrote. "To bring these factors of soul back...into the national consciousness cannot fail to be a patriotic service."¹⁰³ It would also serve national security, because, they believed, "keen, alert, intelligent material for officers" were the primary criteria for a successful United States Navy.¹⁰⁴

The three founders needed to educate the public in order to accomplish their goals. Like Adams, the Marine Historical Association (MHA) concentrated on the youth of the country. "Above all," they insisted, "the youth of America must be imbued with

¹⁰² Typescript, [Carl Cutler], "Incorporators of the Marine Historical Association," n.d. [1930], Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

¹⁰³ *Statement of Plan and Purposes*, 3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

the spirit of the sea and all for which it stands.”¹⁰⁵ Over the previous decades, the boys of the United States had gradually turned away from seafaring as a way to make a living, and as a result, there was a dearth of officer material and a general dilution of the important values they believed seafaring taught young men. They held that the Marine Historical Association had the opportunity build a program that contrasted the “beauty and mystery of the ships with the rugged qualities of the men who sailed them” and utilize this idealistic combination in the service of a “more practical and intelligent approach to future problems.” The MHA’s goals can be summed up as follows: they wanted to preserve relics and artifacts from wholesale destruction; educate the general public and especially the youth of the United States in sets of essential values perpetuated by the maritime experience; build renewed interest in the sea for commercial and military purposes; create an association that made “the scope of the work national, and, in certain aspects, even broader,” and above all, “to link the past with the present...[and] with the future.”¹⁰⁶

As Bradley, Stillman, and Cutler were forming the Marine Historical Association, Cutler was also in the final stages of publishing *Greyhounds of the Sea*. He assigned similar significance to both efforts. “It may help in some measure to increase our interest in nautical matters,” he wrote while soliciting notables to write an introduction to his book. “Possibly this involves an over-sanguine estimate of the book, but at all events I

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 4, 6-8.

have attempted to write with America's future in mind as well as her past."¹⁰⁷ Similarly, when writing to a prospective member of the incipient Marine Historical Association two weeks later, he assured her that the association "shall be something more than a museum or historical institution." Instead, it was to be a "living, growing record of America on the sea, designed to stimulate a practical as well as theoretical interest in marine affairs....we will have not merely a monument, but a vital force in the present day affairs."¹⁰⁸ The maritime experience was a path to national greatness that was sorely in need of a rebirth, and Cutler was determined to play a part in such a renaissance, whether in his own work or that of the Marine Historical Association. "From the viewpoint of national achievement," he wrote of his book to Naval Secretary and America's Cup defender Charles Francis Adams III, "it seems the almost perfect flowering of three hundred years of American pioneering."¹⁰⁹ Disciples of Frederick Jackson Turner might disagree, but to Cutler, seafaring was America's defining experience, its past worthy of recognition, and its future worthy of reconsideration. "When all is said the modern individual looms small beside the subject," Cutler wrote to F.A. MacGillivray of G.P. Putnam's Sons.¹¹⁰ Of the MHA he wrote that "our historical association is quite young, having been organized only last year, but we have an interested and interesting membership and hope to do something eventually toward the hard task of reawakening an

¹⁰⁷ Carl Cutler to Malcolm B. Stone, 16 May 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 12.

¹⁰⁸ Carl Cutler to Mrs. James Leeds Laidlaw, 29 May 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 12.

¹⁰⁹ Carl Cutler to Charles Francis Adams III, 11 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

¹¹⁰ Carl Cutler to F.A. MacGillivray, 2 July 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 14.

interest in the country's maritime past, with a view to turning that interest to practical account in rebuilding a worthy merchant marine in the future."¹¹¹

Maritime renaissance may have been the long-term goal, but rescuing marine artifacts topped the Marine Historical Association's immediate mission. While researching his book, Cutler discovered written records, models, and "other relics of our maritime past" were being destroyed "at an alarming rate" up and down the East Coast. Nevertheless, there remained ample resources to save.¹¹² Cutler and Stillman's private model collections were to form the basis of the MHA's collection, and once the two men united to form the new organization, any discomfort Cutler may have retained apparently disappeared as the two continued collecting for their museum. By 1932, the MHA possessed over 300 models and was expecting more with the arrival of a substantial collection from the Mallory Shipping Line.¹¹³ Stillman's and Cutler's private collections were hardly the only ones in the East, and the MHA sought to display publicly what had only been privately collected for most of the Maritime Revival. Civil War General and *Boston Globe* publisher Charles H. Taylor possessed "perhaps the best private collection of marine relics in the country," thought Cutler in 1930.¹¹⁴ Through his research, Cutler also uncovered "a number of large marine collections near New York," not the least of which was in possession of India House, as well as the collectors of the New York Ship

¹¹¹ Carl Cutler to James E. Whitney, 5 August 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 16.

¹¹² *Statement of Plan and Purposes*, 1.

¹¹³ Carl Cutler to Clifford D. Mallory, 10 August 1932, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

¹¹⁴ Carl Cutler to F.A. MacGillivray, 1 August 1930. Cutler papers, box 1, folder 16.

Model Society.¹¹⁵ New London's Jibboom Club No. 1 also kept a fine collection in their rooms, and Cutler, only ten miles away, must have known of its existence. Part of the Marine Historical Association's mission was to bring these artifacts out from behind closed doors and into public light. Private collecting might save the material objects, but public displays were vital if the remainder of their mission—building interest and passing on values—was to be fulfilled. The association's statement of purpose specifically mentioned public education, and included goals such as building a collection to “exhibit it to the public in an interesting manner,” providing for the “dissemination of information of a historical and timely nature for the general public,” and aiming higher than the local focus of the other “small public marine and naval collections” around the country.¹¹⁶

A statement developed and printed a year after the initial idea provides insight into what Bradley, Cutler, and Stillman thought was most important after reflection. Some of the best ideas, though, are drafted upon cocktail napkins, and in the MHA's case, a Mystic Pharmacy prescription pad. Unsigned and dating from around January 1930, they were most likely written by retired M.D. Charles K. Stillman, using up his scrap paper. He muses on the association's organizational structure, when to begin, finances, physical plant, board of directors, secure storage vaults, and even formulating and printing a statement of purpose. When considering the association's function, “Public Education and inspiration” is second only to creating the actual museum building

¹¹⁵ Carl Cutler to Richard A. Metcalf, 9 October 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 7.

¹¹⁶ *Statement of Plan and Purposes*, 3,4,7.

to display maritime arts, models, and other marine artifacts.¹¹⁷ Inviting the public to view and interact with the collections had been a part of the MHA's plan from Stillman's very first musings, because all of the flowery speeches about values, renaissance, patriotism, and country would have been worthless without a public program to distribute the message. Unlike private enthusiasts, the MHA's collecting could not be an end unto itself. Since, by June, a stated goal of the association was to "provide the machinery for keeping alive the interest in maritime development," for the entire nation, using the material collection to affect public opinion necessarily required its open display.¹¹⁸

A decade later, the Marine Historical Association acquired its centerpiece exhibit, the 1841 whaler *Charles W. Morgan*, the last remaining wooden whaleship in existence. The arrival of the ship defined the direction of the museum as something more than a static collection of ship parts and models in glass cases. It also meant greater expenditures, and, in 1942, caused the MHA directors to conclude reluctantly that they needed to start charging a small fee of 25 cents for admission to the *Morgan* and the museum building. Even so, there would be exceptions to the admission policy. Members, privately recruited, numbered 324 in 1942 and were of course admitted for free since they were footing the bills of the association. Sea scouts and servicemen would also gain free admission, since it was, after all, wartime. Finally, "special low rates," the

¹¹⁷ [Charles K. Stillman?], notes, n.d. [circa January, 1930?], (hereafter cited as Stillman notes), Cutler papers, box 1, folder 8. The notes are written on a Mystic Pharmacy prescription pad and are included in the Cutler papers, but the handwriting is conclusively *not* that of Carl Cutler.

¹¹⁸ [Carl Cutler?] to Sherwood Cheney, 10 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

directors reported, “will be made for school groups in charge of their teachers.”¹¹⁹ The mission of educating the public, especially American youth, would not be hindered by budget problems.

But in late 1929 and throughout 1930, the founders, board of directors, and members could not have known that the future would bring war and a whaleship to Mystic. They did know that their nascent organization needed storage space, land, a collections budget, and more members if they were to develop a living maritime memorial and use it to affect future policy. Even before the formal articles of incorporation were signed, Stillman intended to build a maritime museum. In October 1929, he offered his ideas about the impression the museum building should give visitors upon entry. “We should have some junk including a figure head to make atmosphere,” he wrote Cutler, though, ever the pragmatist, he added, “but not too much as funds need to be conserved for models and antiques.”¹²⁰ Stillman’s view illuminated the Maritime Revival aesthetic, simultaneously contrived and authentic. The appropriate atmosphere was necessary to interest people in visiting the exhibition and to set the stage for learning, but the true educational experience came from having appropriate objects in the cases. Both were important, both offered sanitized and approved symbols and imagery, both had to pass through the filter of a particular point of view. Both also ignored the vast range of maritime experiences that had existed outside the scope imagined by the Maritime

¹¹⁹ Typescript, “Marine Museum of the Marine Historical Association, Inc. Report of Progress,” n.d. [1942], 3-4, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 4. Although Mystic Seaport reports the 25-cent admission fee being initiated in 1938 (“Mystic Seaport at 75,” *Mystic Seaport Magazine*, Fall 2005, 14), the 1942 “Report of Progress” states “We have come to the conclusion that it will be necessary to make a nominal entrance charge of 25¢ this year to the Museum and the ‘Morgan’ owing to the greatly increased costs of carrying on the work and providing for the care of the ship.”

¹²⁰ Charles K. Stillman to Carl Cutler, 21 October 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 7.

Revivalists, who wanted Americans to believe that only objects and ideas found in museums and glass cases were appropriate representations of the maritime past.

Cutler's friend Reese, not directly involved but certainly a confidant, was of similar mind concerning the appropriate atmosphere. "Note for Stillman," he wrote to Cutler on New Year's Eve 1929, "The Nautical Museum should be housed in a fire-proof structure built to look like one of the finest clipper ships—such a structure would seize the eye and fancy of every passer by, drag him below decks and would be famous from Hong Kong to Oslo." In order to sell the museum to the general public, its aesthetic was as important as its collections and the ideas held within. But Reese, living in Scarsdale, New York, and well within the orbit of the City, could appreciate modernity. "I believe there is a building (skyscraper) in Hamburg," he continued, "that looks like an ocean liner."¹²¹ Reese was willing to embrace new architecture so long as it paraphrased an older way of life. Inside, at the symbolic heart of his proposed modern building, though, was the collection of old ship models and other marine relics, a monument to the past. So intellectually messy that he himself likely did not see it, his proposed building for the MHA had multiple ideas operating simultaneously, and his not entirely coherent vision reflected a modernizing America's penchant for simulacra, such as the majority of Colonial Revival houses, alongside historic buildings. At the very least, it was reminiscent of the neoclassical façades hung on steel frame buildings at the World's Columbian Exposition.

More realistic heads, and those perhaps not influenced by New Year's Eve libations, prevailed in terms of the museum structure. Within the year, the MHA's

¹²¹ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, 31 December 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 7.

corporate officers formed a publications committee and a building committee. They named MHA board member Clifford D. Mallory, a major New York shipper and avid yachtsman, to the building committee.¹²² “It will give me a great deal of pleasure,” Mallory responded, “to be associated with you,” and Mallory’s wealth and shipping connections certainly added strength to the MHA and its mission. More grounded than Reese’s flight of fancy, Mallory’s vision for the building was along the lines of an old dockside warehouse, built of stone for fire protection, and including a dock that “might have the atmosphere of a whaling dock.” He also inquired about reuse of old façades to “carry out the atmosphere” and even suggested employing architect who had built much of Yale and parts of Columbia University, Jason Gamble Rogers.¹²³ For many of those involved, creating the proper ambiance for the endeavor was important. Their goal was to elicit what they believed to be the correct feelings in visitors, to convey a certain type of reverence for what was on display.

As the Great Depression deepened, the MHA was forced to scale back plans throughout 1932, despite the rapid pace of collecting.¹²⁴ The burgeoning ship model collection eventually forced the issue, though. A sizable group of models was available, and the organization’s mission required they accept the collection. “The committee is both gratified and embarrassed by the accumulating evidence of the richness of our field and its responsiveness to sympathetic cultivation,” they reported in June 1933, “in spite

¹²² Typescript, “Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Marine Historical Association, Inc.,” September 3, 1930, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

¹²³ Clifford D. Mallory to Carl Cutler, 7 September 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 17.

¹²⁴ Typescript, Marine Historical Association, Inc., “Report of the Building Committee,” September 10, 1932, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

of a desire to hold plans for expansion temporarily in abeyance, , [sic] it has been found impossible....the moment presents opportunities of an unusual sort, if, indeed, it does not impose definite obligations.”¹²⁵ To fulfill their organization’s responsibilities, the committee began remodeling an existing building to meet their needs.¹²⁶ Mallory saw some of his need for “atmosphere” met, but the structure was not his desired waterfront warehouse. It was, however, gambrel-roofed and already on the waterfront. He would have to wait until the *Charles W. Morgan* arrived in November 1941, before his dreams of a whaling wharf began to be realized.

The MHA dragged its collective feet on the building project because the founders were most concerned with developing their membership. Even so, they were deeply concerned about adding the right sort of people to the membership rolls. Membership in the new organization was exclusive, by invitation only, and operated more like corporate stock ownership than a modern museum’s membership. One reason for the association’s selectivity was the goal of fundraising and increasing the collections. “The general policy,” Cutler wrote to U.S. Army Engineer Colonel Sherwood Cheney when inviting him to join, “is to move slowly and to invite membership only among those who will help.” Bradley, Cutler, and Stillman hoped to gather a group of about twenty-five men who were descended from “shipbuilders and owners whose means and interest will enable the plan to be carrier through,” as well as those with “interest and experience” to

¹²⁵ Typescript, [Carl Cutler] “A Brief Report of the Proceedings of the Board of Directors at a Special Meeting, Held Saturday, June 17th, 1933, at Mystic, Conn.,” June 17, 1933, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

¹²⁶ Typescript, [Carl Cutler], “Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of Marine Historical Association, Inc., June 17, 1933, Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3.

help the MHA expand its mission and achieve its goals.¹²⁷ Cheney was just such a man of means. A successful army engineer who had served in the Great War, he had married the daughter of a Chicago railroad company president; he later served as a military aide to President Coolidge.¹²⁸ Bradley, Cutler, and Stillman also wanted people whose personal or familial connections to seafaring would add legitimacy to the organization. It certainly did not hurt that some of the wealthiest men in the country had maritime connections stemming from their family's business interests, nor did it hurt that the Maritime Revival had been emphasizing the trendsetting value of maritime imagery and symbols in places such as India House.

The MHA had a standard roster of corporate officers, such as president, secretary, and treasurer, and their membership was divided into four classes: honorary, associate, active, and life members. Fees increased with level each level of membership, and only active and life members (\$10 annually and \$100 once, respectively) could vote on decisions at the annual meeting. "For the present," the members agreed to continue "the informal method of securing membership by invitation rather than by formal signed application and election."¹²⁹ Following Stillman's initial inquiries, Cutler followed up on suggestions that shipping magnate Clifford Mallory might have several prospective

¹²⁷ Carl Cutler to Sherwood Cheney, 10 June 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 13.

¹²⁸ *New York Times*, "Miss Elsie Parsons Married in Lenox," September 11, 1921, 21, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9F06E2DF153EEE3ABC4952DFBF66838A639EDE>; *Time Magazine*, "The White House Week," May 24, 1926, "*Time Magazine*," http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,751443,00.html?iid=digg_share (accessed December 19, 2008).

¹²⁹ Typescript, [Carl Cutler], "Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Members of the Marine Historical Society, Inc.," September 3, 1930, 2 (hereafter cited as MHA minutes, 1930), Cutler papers, box 6, folder 3. The typescript is a draft, and the word "Society" is circled, presumably for correction to "Association."

members in mind from around the New York City area.¹³⁰ Two months later, recruitment for the group of twenty-five was proceeding well when Cutler wrote to Edward C. Hammond, a prospective new member. “We feel that we now have the nucleus of a fine organization,” Cutler beamed, “and that the possibilities for doing an [sic] excellent and much needed work are developing in a highly pleasing manner.”¹³¹

Many in this nucleus were luminaries of the industrial, corporate, and naval world of the 1930s. The MHA recruited Admiral H.O. Dunn of Westerly, Rhode Island, the inventor of the Navy (Dunn’s) anchor, for a leadership role in the new association.¹³² At their first annual meeting in September, 1930, he became the MHA’s vice president, but he had been preparing for the position since at least July, when he thanked Cutler for the MHA letterhead and list of members.¹³³ Dunn, too, was interested in recruiting the right sort of people for the MHA. “If we haven’t numbers,” he commented on the length of the membership roster, “we have class. The numbers must come in time.”¹³⁴ Dunn’s agreeableness to keep membership of an upper-class character was a boon to the organization. He very quickly recruited Alfred H. Wilkinson, steamship officer, coffee and spice importer, and scion of one of Rhode Island’s first families, and Brigadier General Cornelius Vanderbilt, son of the railroad magnate. “It is unnecessary of me to

¹³⁰ Carl Cutler to Clifford D. Mallory, 19 April 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 11.

¹³¹ Edward Bradley to Edward C. Hammond, July 3, 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 14.

¹³² Newsletter, Northeast Region BSA—Sea Exploring Committee, “Ship 1 Celebrates 75 Years with a Gala Weekend,” *The Telegraph* 1, no. 3, (Fall 1996): 11; Ridley McLean, *The Bluejacket’s Manual United States Navy*, 5th ed., (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1917), 304.

¹³³ MHA minutes, 1930.

¹³⁴ H.O. Dunn to Carl Cutler, 30 July 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 15.

say that we are all tremendously gratified at having both these men interested with us,” Cutler enthusiastically wrote to the recently-installed vice president. “It would seem that, in a great measure due to your efforts,” he continued, “we have gained a momentum that is bringing us perceptibly nearer our goal every day.”¹³⁵ Cutler was correct in his assessment of momentum. Vanderbilt joined as a life member, and in the same membership drive, noted yachtsman and railroad mogul Arthur Curtis James, who, according to *Time* magazine in 1926, was “probably the largest railroad stockholder in the country,” joined the association as a life member as well.¹³⁶

The initial membership drive continued, with “excellent prospects of interesting some of the best known of the bankers of Boston and Hartford,” Cutler wrote director Clifford Mallory. “I think that we have some cause for self-congratulations, seeing that ‘we have not yet begun to fight’,” he explained, quoting John Paul Jones’s famous cry.¹³⁷ Cutler even suggested offering Naval Secretary and America’s Cup yachtsman Charles Francis Adams III an honorary membership.¹³⁸ By November of 1930, the MHA wrote to its current and prospective members that “the progress made by this Association to date has followed very closely the step by step program originally planned.”

¹³⁵ Carl Cutler to H.O. Dunn, 16 September 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 17; William Richard Cutter, *New England Families Genealogical and Memorial*, vol. 3, (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1914), 1148, <http://books.google.com> (accessed December 21, 2008).

¹³⁶ Carl Cutler to Brower Hewitt, 22 September 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 17; *Time Magazine*, “Notes: Railroad Mergers,” November 22, 1926, “*Time Magazine*,” <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,722775,00.html> (accessed December 22, 2008).

¹³⁷ Carl Cutler to Clifford D. Mallory, 16 September 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 17.

¹³⁸ [Carl Cutler], “Preliminary Report of the Publications Committee, September 26, 1930 (hereafter cited as Publications Committee Report, 1930), Cutler papers, box 1, folder 17.

“Membership has increased...and the character...has been maintained at a high level.”

Cutler then took the opportunity to make a pitch for donations of private collections.¹³⁹

Privately, however, Cutler was troubled with the neglect of collections development at the expense of attracting wealthy members. While waiting for his book to be released, he was financially strapped. “Last year we organized this historical association now numbering about fifty and including several who have literally more millions than I have dollars,” he confessed to Ray Baker Taft. “I have been trying to get them aroused on the subject of purchasing old models, and they they [sic] are very nice about it. They regard me with the same amused tolerance they accord to Fido.”¹⁴⁰ All agreed that building the membership was important, especially before soliciting contributions of cash, property, or marine collections, but the need for a museum building, and especially, funds to continue collecting models, books, manuscripts, prints, and paintings was never far from Cutler’s mind.

Nor was the educational aspect of the association’s mission. Once the membership was large enough, Cutler and the Publications Committee felt it important to publish several “short, inexpensive articles” appearing at regular intervals to sustain member interest.¹⁴¹ The first piece Cutler recommended was a “somewhat elementary article on the various types and rigs of sailing craft.”¹⁴² Despite Cutler’s frustration with the slow pace of collecting, the upper-crust character of the membership was a point of

¹³⁹ Pamphlet, *Bulletin No. 3—November 5th, 1930: Activities of the Marine Historical Association, Inc.*, (Mystic, CT: Marine Historical Association, 1930), Cutler papers, box 1, folder 19.

¹⁴⁰ Carl Cutler to Ray Baker Taft, 21 November 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 19.

¹⁴¹ Carl Cutler to Clifford D. Mallory, 4 October 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 18.

¹⁴² “Publications Committee Report, 1930.”

pride for the organization, especially to attract other like-minded and -moneyed people. Cutler rightly reasoned that the current membership consisting of modern yachtsmen, industrialists, bankers, and naval officers mainly experienced with the modern maritime world “might not be sufficiently well acquainted with such details to understand future articles” without a basic guide to the craft.”¹⁴³ These men, and to be fair, a few wealthy women, had enthusiastically joined an organization that was dedicated to preserving a maritime past, but some members were so divorced from the maritime experience-as-lived that they required a catechism of sorts to understand fully the details of what they, ostensibly, believed was worthy of remembrance. High talk of essential values, heroic ancestors, and patriotic nationalism aside, the Marine Historical Association’s mission repeatedly relied on statements that suggested the selective use of the maritime past could influence America’s future on the oceans. Ironically, the pieces of the past that Bradley, Cutler, and Stillman selected were sometimes so esoteric to their modern members that proper instruction was necessary.

Ignored during the recruitment of high caliber MHA members was the deep-seated racism of the founders, their organization, its friends, and ultimately, their enterprise. This was consistent with the Maritime Revival as a whole, which was largely the preserve of white men, with a vision replete with jingoism, sexism, and a sense that only one version of American maritime history was worthy of note. In essence, the Maritime Revival was an upper-class masculine retreat. So was the MHA.¹⁴⁴ The

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ “Stillman notes.” Stillman’s original musings called for “semi club facilities” including a members-only room at the MHA.

Constitution preservation movement was a bit different and included women, but the upper-class dimensions of its preservation remained, despite the fact that the ship would never have been saved without popular support. The Jibboom Club, India House, and the Marine Historical Association were spaces where a masculine vision held sway, and where the white men of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries could gather to imagine their heroic ancestors as possessing values essential to the nation they thought caught in the eye of a storm of pluralism.

The racial and political views of the founders and friends of the MHA speak volumes of their worldview, values, image of the United States, and what they thought important enough to preserve. In short, they sought to preserve not just the maritime past, but also their privileged position in American society as it was being chipped away. Politically, Cutler and his friend Albert Reese were conservative Republicans. Reese wrote from New York a long diatribe against 1928 Democratic Presidential candidate Al Smith's Catholicism. He justified his views on the grounds that the Catholic Church was a "political organization bent on obtaining temporal power" and that the "armies of Mohamet with their battle cry of 'Mohamet or the sword' have not been more fanatical than the Catholic followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth." He finally concluded "it is foolish to charge any lover of his country with 'bigotry' or 'intolerance', because he opposes a candidate...on the ground that such candidate is Catholic, and that sooner or later his loyalty to his church is certain to conflict with his loyalty to the constitution."¹⁴⁵ He added sundry reasons why a Catholic was unfit for office and how the church was inherently anti-American because its dogmas divided the loyalties of citizens.

¹⁴⁵ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, 23 October 1928, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 3.

Reese's anti-Catholic screed was only the tip of the iceberg for social views that tended to categorize anyone not a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant as an Other. He criticized his recently-engaged secretary as "a sweet faced daughter of Israel," whose time "might be better spent typing sailor's shanties" for Cutler's manuscript rather than wasting company time "sewing her fluttering heart into things for her Solomon."¹⁴⁶ Similarly, both Reese's unfettered capitalism and narrow view of ethnicity were evident in his account of his need, on a Saturday, to attend to "labor troubles on school jobs due to walking delegate trying to unionize some dagos we had working on the playgrounds....Told walking delegate to go to hell on a fast run."¹⁴⁷ He procrastinated reading Cutler's manuscript because either "senility" or an August heat wave had left him with "less ambition than a Charleston nigger."¹⁴⁸ If a man may be known by the company he keeps, Cutler, in some measure, agreed with his friend's conservative views. When G.P. Putnam's Sons requested some personal information with which to publicize his forthcoming book, he was cautious to a fault about what details to offer, and a bit nonplussed by the process. The publishing business was beginning to look "like running for office on the Dimmycratic ticket," he confided in friend and Associated Press reporter W.E. Playfair while seeking advice on how to proceed with G.P. Putnam's.¹⁴⁹

Cutler shared some of Reese's prejudices. Noted marine painter Charles R. Patterson, a man with whom Cutler clashed over illustrations for Cutler's book, wrote to

¹⁴⁶ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, 14 June 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 5.

¹⁴⁷ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, 6 August 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 16.

¹⁴⁸ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, 12 September 1929, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 6.

¹⁴⁹ Carl Cutler to W.E. Playfair, 23 August 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 16.

chastise publisher G.P. Putnam's failure to use one particular illustration. He then gave it to Cutler for his personal collection. Towards the end of the letter, he congratulated Cutler on his new enterprise. "I am glad to see that you have inaugurated your 'Marine Historical Association', and hope it is all it deserves to be, in the future," he wrote from his Maine studio in September 1930. "At least it has white men's names on the letterhead and nothing like Ginsburg or Kokolovich. With best wishes, Sincerely, CR Patterson."¹⁵⁰ Cutler responded immediately, calling the letter and gift a "bright spot," but quickly turned to the details of the new MHA. "You are right when you say that we have the right sounding names on the letterhead," he agreed. "We have the same kind on the membership list – throughout." Cutler then detailed the care the organization took to recruit the right sort of member, listed some of its more famous and wealthy members, and assured the artist that the MHA was in a fine position, given the wealth and status of its membership, to engage in "useful work on a large scale in the future." He also invited Patterson to visit. "I think you will be interested," Cutler was certain, "in some things we are doing to emphasize again the more important ideals of the old sailing ship days."¹⁵¹ The values that Cutler and his associates were espousing—patriotism, honor, duty—were hardly the only values being presented by these founders of the MHA, heirs to at least a generation of Maritime Revivalists. Their racism and jingoism permeated most aspects of their enterprise, whether writing, collecting, or presenting public displays. Like others before them, they utilized a sanitized version of maritime history to promote a particular social agenda and particular sets of upper-class cultural values. After the Great War,

¹⁵⁰ Charles Patterson to Carl Cutler, 30 September 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 17.

¹⁵¹ Carl Cutler to Charles R. Patterson, 3 October 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 18.

Bolshevik Revolution and Red Scare, Anarchists, Harlem Renaissance and New Negroes, the Nineteenth Amendment, Roaring Twenties, Prohibition and its problems, and ultimately, the crash of the Great Depression, the only certainty these men had was self-assurance about their place in the class hierarchy. Against a changing United States, especially against changes that were radically different from what launched the Maritime Revival between the 1870s through 1900s, the ideals represented by the old sailing ship days offered a comfortable zone, one where the world made more sense. The mechanics of sailing—wind, water, tide, celestial navigation—were predictable. If Mother Nature threw her worst at a sailing vessel and its crew, the course of action was unambiguous. Abusive captains and officers, international crews, poor pay and living conditions, and weevily bread were forgotten. What the maritime preservation movement remembered was the wage of whiteness, ignoring the true diversity of the historic maritime workforce. By concentrating solely on the white working-class experience they co-opted, Maritime Revivalists ensured for themselves an appropriate position in a social hierarchy that was changing almost beyond recognition by the 1930s. Adrift in a sea of changes, they retreated to a world of their own making, one that offered comforting versions of the past. Talk of using the past to affect the future meant less, at times, than maintaining one's social status and cultural values through one's associations, such as membership in one's Marine Historical Association. The values of past seafaring became a gospel spread by the Maritime Revival throughout American culture. Certain people were its high priests, and others were its congregation that had been made receptive by centuries of familiarity with the maritime experience-as-lived—and lost.¹⁵²

¹⁵² See David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*

“Strong belief in any idea makes men missionaries,” Reese asserted when maligning Al Smith’s candidacy in 1928. “What is true for them must be true for all men and they seek to win all men to their belief.”¹⁵³ Blind to the irony, Reese failed to see that his, and Cutler’s, faith in the story of clipper ships and other things maritime was, in essence, a civic religion. Cutler spent years writing a book that argued a small, but specific, subset of the maritime experience-as-lived was essential to the grand narrative of American history, and Reese enthusiastically supported his endeavor emotionally, editorially, and materially. “It was a great period, and the best of those men were something more than great,” Cutler confidently assured a supporter. “They saw and were true to a vision we ought not to lose.”¹⁵⁴ The civil religion that they built up around seafaring excluded many participants, and heralded white men, and largely one class of ships, as the entirety of the experience, at the expense of the great diversity of both vessels involved and the people who had historically participated. Given their socially conservative predilections, their outlook and the boundaries with which they framed the experience had considerable logic. As American society became more plural by the decade, Maritime Revivalists tried to redraw the older class lines and hierarchies.

Outside the Museum Walls

There was too much institutional memory in the rest of the American citizenry for the Maritime Revival collections to remain solely an upper-class phenomenon.

(London: Verso, 1991).

¹⁵³ Albert Reese to Carl Cutler, 23 October 1928, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 3.

¹⁵⁴ Carl Cutler to Mr. Ely, 31 December 1930, Cutler papers, box 1, folder 20.

Sentimental Americans with personal connections to the shipbuilders or early sailors on the USS *Constitution* came out of the woodwork when news of the ship's peril was publicized. The MHA developed a considerable collection of material culture from working-class sailing lifestyles. Elites may have been the trendsetters and the arbiters of taste, and, after 1930, the holders of the keys to the museum gates. However, they could not exist, fiscally or in terms of mission, without the public. Try as they might, they still had to invite people inside the walls to view their collected treasures, because without public exposure, their mission of education and value transference would fall flat. Moreover, just as the directors of the World's Columbian Exposition chose the exhibitions and themes but needed the public to participate by attending, the Marine Historical Association needed public interaction, too. A major portion of the Maritime Revival was co-opting what had once been a working-class experience and elevating it to high status, but the working class retained a familiarity with what was being put up for display. They too found importance in the maritime imagery or cultural symbols heralded during the Maritime Revival, but in different ways from the elites. Where elites elevated working-class maritime symbols or practices for the antimodern, authentic, preindustrial, or pastoral value, the working class conversely saw their experiences legitimized as their familiar symbols were elevated to subjects of high art or put on display in glass cases.

Once the symbolism and lifestyle gained panache, the scattered elements of it that remained took on additional value. A decade before it arrived in Mystic, Connecticut, the *Charles W. Morgan* was preserved on the estate of Colonel Edward Green just outside of New Bedford, Massachusetts. "She makes a lasting exhibit of a real whaler," reported

the Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, and “a most unusual and interesting spectacle well worth the short trip out from New Bedford.”¹⁵⁵ No exhibit of the past, the Boston Fish Pier also “makes a spectacle well worth seeing,” the same Marine Committee wrote.¹⁵⁶ By 1930, both the static exhibit of an old whaler and an active fish pier were expected to attract tourism. The *Morgan* signified an industry that had passed, and the fish pier represented a maritime presence remaining in the heart of a modern city. Both industries, though working-class experiences—one antiquated, one vibrant—were worthy of attention by tourists of all classes. The Maritime Revival had, in the end, erased the line between past and present. There was charm to be found in things maritime almost everywhere.

Saving the USS *Constitution* and founding the Marine Historical Association bookend the mature Maritime Revival. These two maritime preservation efforts were the first truly national attempts to bring maritime heritage and its corresponding cultural values to all Americans. One attempt relied on a symbol with name recognition and a storied past to convey values, as defined by a small group, of an essential Americanism. The other utilized a more extensive collection of diverse material culture to pass on the same sets of values. The *Constitution* memorialists defended the ship’s multiple rebuilds because the ideas they championed transcended the object itself, and both coastal dwellers and landlocked Americans agreed. For the MHA, the historical accuracy of the collected objects were necessary to transfer the same ideas. Leaders of both efforts

¹⁵⁵ Massachusetts Special Commission on the Celebration of the Tercentenary of the Founding of Mass. Bay Colony, compiled by the Marine Committee, *Massachusetts on the Sea, 1630-1930*, (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Tercentenary Marine Committee, 1930), 19.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

agreed on the specific value sets and also agreed that seafaring imparted these ideals. Moreover, they agreed that their upper socioeconomic class found these particular principles especially important in a changing United States. To diffuse these ideas throughout American society, the general public needed access, so they could experience the ship or the maritime museum. Ironically, despite their elite beginnings, neither of these enterprises could fulfill their respective missions without inviting public participation—and often the very public their organizers so derided in other areas of popular taste. The collectors and preservationists succeeded by rescuing maritime material culture at its moment of greatest peril. But by deciding what was worth saving and putting on display, they invented a truncated version of maritime history and painted a whitewashed picture of America's seafaring past that remade maritime historical memory for most of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

RE-IMAGINING MARITIME HISTORY

In the mid-1940s, Phillip J. Gallagher III posed for a photograph holding a model of a schooner he had built from scratch. Gallagher, born in 1915, worked in a Rhode Island textile mill as a loom mechanic and had never graduated high school. A third generation descendant of Irish immigrants, his home, family, friends, and Schaefer beer in bottles were important to him. Country was also important to him and he proved it every July 4th with an impressive display of illicit fireworks in his back yard. In short, he was about as working class as they came.¹

By the time Gallagher was growing up and entering the workforce, Americans had been provided a steady stream of a certain maritime imagery and an idealized maritime past, and the values established during the early decades of the Maritime Revival had become deeply rooted. Selective historical memories of the traditional seafaring experience maintained the values assigned to them, and the material reminders of these lifestyles that remained were becoming romanticized tourist attractions: T Wharf in Boston; Cape Cod; or Fred Harlow's beloved Seattle waterfront.² In a world of

¹ Phillip J. Gallagher III (1915-1991) was the author's maternal grandfather.

² See Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Andrew W. German, *Down on T Wharf: The Boston Fisheries as seen Through the Photographs of Henry D. Fisher* (Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1982); Mary Rogers Bangs, *Old Cape Cod: The Land, The Men, The Sea* (1920; repr., Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1930); and R.H. Calkins, *High Tide: The Drama and Tragedy of Seattle's Waterfront, Produced as a*

steamships, the few remaining fishing wharves and commercial square-riggers afloat were quaint and well-photographed anachronisms.

Gallagher had few maritime connections. Though his younger brother served, Gallagher had not been in the World War II navy, as one arm slightly shorter than the other kept him out of service. There was no family history of sailing or commercial fishing. He never owned even the smallest boat. Outside of recreational fishing at the beach in his hometown, he had little personal or familial connection to the maritime world. But he did live in an America that had been championing a particular version of the maritime past for almost three quarters of a century. Growing up in that culture persuaded him, in his mid 30s, to try his hand at modeling, not World War II airplanes, destroyers, or battleships recently in the news, nor vessels of the Great White fleet, but a nineteenth-century fishing schooner. After building the model on his kitchen table following his shifts at the mill, he was proud enough of his handiwork to have it and himself photographed, not in the industrial green clothing he wore to work, but instead in his Sunday best suit and tie.

If the Maritime Revival was initially engineered by eastern elites, Gallagher represented one end result of its expanded circle of participants. The symbols of traditional seafaring chosen by upper-class preservationists, wealthy businessmen, or scions of New Bedford whaling families had been diffused throughout American culture, until upper-class taste making had reached Americans of all social standings. Like the movement itself, its symbols continued to broaden. From the 1880s through the 1920s, clipper ships and square-riggers were in the vanguard of its imagery. By the 1940s,

Permanent Record of the Men and Ships the Author has Known During Many Years as a Waterfront Newsmen (Seattle: Marine Digest Publishing, 1952).

fishing schooners had earned similar panache as they, too, became rarities in the modern nation.³ Ideas of beauty are subjective, and advocating particular symbols, ideas, and material culture helped create an aesthetic that instilled things maritime with such beauty. Just as the Maritime Revival transformed the “working men who got wet” into heroic archetypes, their workboats became venerated objects.⁴ Gallagher thought the schooner beautiful—and worth building—because decades of Maritime Revival culture had influenced his points of view. He was not alone in his assessment; in ways subtle and not, the Maritime Revival changed how Americans thought about the maritime world.

Changing the ways that Americans of all social classes perceived the maritime world was the principal success of the Maritime Revival. Selecting certain aspects of the material, visual, and intellectual culture for preservation, revivalists had the chance to define these objects’ importance and significance. Such a selection had enormous power to sway historical and popular memory. In the end, what was being depicted by Maritime Revivalists bore less and less resemblance to the historic maritime experience-as-lived as the twentieth century progressed, excising, as it did, many of the rougher elements of seafaring and the diversity of its participants. As mass media and consumer culture spread what was once an upper-class message and selected imagery throughout American society, most Americans came to envision seafaring through the lens of the Maritime Revival. By the 1940s, the commodification and disbursement of things maritime, whether ideas or objects, was largely complete. Part of this success was evident by the

³ See Michael Wayne Santos, *Caught in Irons: North Atlantic Fishermen in the Last Days of Sail* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 2002).

⁴ See Rosemary Ommer and Gerald Panting, eds., *Working Men Who Got Wet: Proceedings of the Fourth Conference of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project* (St. Johns, NF: Maritime History Group, 1980).

degree to which ordinary Americans, even those with little historic connection to the sea, thought the maritime world important enough to purchase prints, build models, read books, save old ships, or visit museums.



Figure 6.1 Phillip J. Gallagher III poses with his handiwork, circa 1946.⁵

Like other Progressive-era preservationists, people such as James Farrell, Carl Cutler, and Charles Francis Adams succeeded in preserving myriad pieces of material culture. Whether Currier and Ives ship prints in India House, or Cutler's collection of ship models and manuscripts, the collectors not only helped save these materials for future generations, but also assigned them value and sparked popular interest in them.

⁵ Phillip J. Gallagher III (1915-1991). Photograph in possession of the author.

Displays, at the World's Columbian Exposition and the Marine Historical Association, likewise impressed upon ordinary Americans the significance of maritime material culture and its worth, as both decoration and object lesson. Saving the frigate USS *Constitution*, already imbued with patriotic values from its military service, marked the first time an old wooden ship found new life as a restored museum vessel. Its preservation launched a plethora of other ship preservation efforts from the 1920s onward to preserve perhaps the most conspicuous pieces of seafaring's material culture—the vessels themselves—not for their utility, but rather for their ability to transmit ideals by stirring emotional responses in their visitors.⁶

Like Colonial Revival art and architecture, which used motifs from the past on modern buildings with modern amenities, the Maritime Revival operated on a modern/antimodern divide that ultimately helped the revivalists engage a modern United States. Seafaring as an antimodern, “authentic” experience helped boys such as W.H. Taylor and Fred Harlow in the 1870s, and Tod Johnson in the 1910s, cross from adolescence to adulthood. The steam tugs bringing them in and out of harbors, the auxiliary engines below deck, and the Standard Oil transport on which Johnson sailed were forgotten; the preindustrial experience of sail power was instead remembered. Surrounded by the ephemera of earlier seafaring, the captain-of-industry membership of India House ate their lunches and did the business associated with modern vessels of iron, steel, steam, and diesel. Maritime artwork paid homage to the working classes, pastoral lifestyles, and innocent beachgoers of a supposedly simpler, preindustrial age. It also testified to the high drama and dangerous environment of seafaring—a motif that lost

⁶ Baltimore's *Constellation*, San Francisco's *Balclutha*, and San Diego's *Star of India* come to mind, to say nothing of the continuing restoration of the USS *Constitution*.

none of its power as the Maritime Revival proceeded through the decades of the early twentieth century. Art viewers could arrive at the World's Columbian Exposition or the Marine Historical Association in a modern America to come face to face with visceral reminders of traditional maritime life, with all its elemental perils. Likewise, the reading public could escape to a world of traditionally-rigged craft through works of history and fiction that transported them from a contemporary world of ocean liners and tramp steamers, submarines and mechanized warfare, and economic booms and depression. As in a Colonial Revival house with its plumbing and electricity, trappings of old and new existed side by side, and their interplay invoked the past while helping move into the future.

The goals of Maritime Revivalists changed over the decades, and they redefined success along the way. At the beginning of the movement in the 1870s, revivalists called for a renaissance of America's commercial maritime interests. As the contours of that renewal transformed American maritime power and brought modern industrial work culture to sea between the 1880s and 1910s, the revivalists began championing the preindustrial lifestyle of traditional sailors and sailing ships that, they believed, contained and passed on core cultural values. In the 1920s and 1930s, those values were heralded as archly patriotic, central to national development, and prerequisites for future progress. By the end of the 1930s, Maritime Revivalists had succeeded in re-establishing sailing's place in public memory as indicative of essential Americanism, worthy of recognition alongside historic houses, antique furniture, and the heroes of the Revolutionary generation.

The Maritime Revival did not suddenly end in 1940, and the manufactured image of the maritime world created between 1870 and 1940 persisted in American culture. There were modifications as the twentieth century progressed. The first, as we have seen, was the popularization and vulgarization of imagery that had been initially defined by elites. Later modifications, beyond the scope of this study, include expansion of the acceptable symbolism to incorporate Mississippi River steamship culture and Art Deco trans-oceanic luxury liner culture into the maritime heritage movement. After World War II, a preponderance of naval culture made inroads. The first modification—the popularization of elite imagery—was an unavoidably messy operation, in which elite culture both influenced and resisted mass culture. The latter—the inclusion of new forms—follow the basic pattern established in the early Maritime Revival; that value was created through perceptions of loss as the decades progressed.

The geographic reach of the Maritime Revival also continued to grow. On the periphery, more Americans signed on board as the modern world encroached beyond the eastern urban centers. Bradley, Cutler, and Mallory were trendsetters in Mystic. In 1930, Archer Milton Huntington, heir to a railroad and shipping fortune, founded the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia.⁷ The Penobscot Maritime Museum in Searsport, Maine, was founded in 1936.⁸ The idea of “waking San Francisco up to its sailing ship tradition” had “haunted” Karl Kortum for over a decade, and by 1949, he thought the

⁷ The Mariner's Museum, <http://www.mariner.org/visitorinfo/history.php> (accessed January 16, 2009)

⁸ Penobscot Marine Museum, <http://www.penobscotmarinemuseum.org/faqs.html> (accessed January 16, 2009).

time was right provided a “good newspaper campaign” could stir public enthusiasm.⁹ He approached *San Francisco Chronicle* editor Scott Newhall and executive editor Paul C. Smith, and his enthusiasm moved the project forward to formal incorporation within a year.¹⁰ Like earlier attempts at maritime preservation, an upper-class organizer took advantage of mass media to build the public support necessary for success. Maine was one of the last strongholds of wooden shipbuilding, retaining a popular image of rural or preindustrial life despite the presence of textile mills and iron shipyards. The Marine Research Society of Bath organized in 1962, founding what is now the Maine Maritime Museum within sight of the modern Bath Iron Works.¹¹ All these museums owed their existence to the interest—of their founders and the public—created by the Maritime Revival.

The initial goal of the Maritime Revivalists was to set up barriers between their social class and others, and to co-opt appropriate symbols as educational tools for the “others.” In the end, though, the Maritime Revival was more egalitarian than its founders intended. The privileged young men crazy to go to sea in the early twentieth century could not have done so without the ships and their working-class crews. Authors wrote romantic tracts on the merits of the working-class experience, and artists chose working-class subjects; museum directors saved working-class material culture. For all of the

⁹ Karl Kortum to Scott Newhall, 5 March 1949, *Scrapbook v. 1, Through 1950*, item no. US V 13 S3 pam. V.1, J. Porter Shaw Library, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park.

¹⁰ Scott Newhall to Paul C. Smith, 8 March 1949, “Inter-department Business Correspondence,”; typescript “Background of the Maritime Museum,” *Scrapbook v. 1, Through 1950*, item no. US V 13 S3 pam. V.1, J. Porter Shaw Library, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park.

¹¹ Maine Maritime Museum, http://www.mainemaritimemuseum.org/about/mission_and_history.php (accessed January 16, 2009).

upper-class cultural buttressing that occurred, there was a fair share of elite emulation of the very classes they at times rebuffed.

No matter how hard elites tried, they ultimately had little control over what happened once they had established the cultural tenets of the Maritime Revival according to their tastes. In the form of heroicized sailors transformed into a cartoon characters, naval heroes used as advertising tools, or an old warship rescued by schoolchildren's pennies, the ideas of the Maritime Revival were diffused throughout American culture; at that point, elite control ended and mass culture took over. All Americans, not just the descendants of the old rich, came to understand the maritime world—certainly not in ways historically accurate or complete—in a popularized form that resulted from the impressions first identified, defined, and diffused between 1870 and 1940. These impressions did not reflect the maritime experience-as-lived nor the diversity of the work or workforce, but in the twentieth century, the vision of seafaring under sail, deliberately established by upper-class men and women, eventually flowed upward and downward through American culture.

The class-based and racially constrained dimensions of the Maritime Revival were sometimes pernicious, but the movement succeeded in fixing attention on a lifestyle and culture that was passing from American life at the end of the nineteenth century. Even as upper-class Maritime Revivalists were selective about the things they saved, middle- and working-class modern Americans found ways to engage with the traditional maritime world being preserved. By the time “Flip” Gallagher built his model, his cultural milieu had, both consciously and unconsciously, influenced his ideas about what was beautiful, fascinating, interesting, or fashionable, helping him choose a maritime

motif to commemorate through his handiwork. When he turned his thoughts to the ocean world, a cultural movement called the Maritime Revival had already ensured that ideas, objects, and enthusiasm for these “olde things maritime” endured in a modernizing United States.

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