FAMOUS SHIPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE UPON AMERICAN HISTORY: A STUDY OF SAILING VESSELS TO 1861

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FAMOUS SHIPS AND THEIR INFLUENCE UPON AMERICAN
HISTORY: A STUDY OF SAILING
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To envision the famous ships that have influenced the history of America, we must focus upon a passing show which gives a continuous performance of development from the time of the ancients who, through the excellent method of trial and error, gave to progress their valuable contributions.

As is often the case, we must look to the art of a people to find the earliest accounts of their customs. And who would these people be but the Egyptians whose wonderful river has been, perhaps, the greatest single factor in the development of our civilization, from a materialistic viewpoint?

The first people to make pictorial records of their vessels were the Egyptians. One of the earliest-known pictures of a ship is found on an Egyptian vase believed to date from as early as 6,000 B. C., and now in the British Museum. This picture depicts a sailing-vessel with masts and square sails.¹

After a lapse of some three thousand years, the Egyptians showed a marked improvement. On temples and tombs appear pictures of Nile river ships laden with cattle and other

¹ Ellison Hawks, Romance of the Merchant Ship, p. 23.
articles of commerce. These ships demonstrate a most interesting acquaintance with intelligent construction. Let us note the main features of these old boats on the Nile.

These ships had sails, and crews of paddlers numbering twenty-six a side. In addition, at the rear of the vessel there were several men who steered by means of paddles. One early picture shows a vessel in the forward part of which is a look-out man, armed with what appears to be a rod for sounding purposes. The commander of the ship stands in a position where he is able to chastise the rowers with a thong that he carries, and the pilot is seated on a small deck.²

About 300 B.C., the Egyptians had developed a ship of striking characteristics, such as straight sides, high and over-hanging bow and stern, square sail, and an A-shaped mast.

This mast consisted of two poles, fastened together at the top, but separated at the bottom, and so arranged that, when not required, the mast could be lowered to supports. This type of mast was later replaced by a single mast carrying a yard. A further improvement was the substituting of oars for paddles, and the use of a single oar for steering instead of a number of paddles.³

Although we are indebted to the Egyptians for a high degree of development, it must be borne in mind that they were, primarily, a river-transportation group. The many achievements on the open sea, including battles, as

²Ibid., pp. 23, 24.
³Ibid., p. 24.
depicted in the hieroglyphics, were exceptions rather than the general rule, for the Egyptians were not a seafaring people.\(^4\)

Not so, the Phoenicians. These were truly maritime. Having migrated from Arabia, they already possessed a knowledge of ships and navigation from their experience along the Persian Gulf. So when they arrived in Northern Syria about 1,500 B. C., they were ready to settle down to the business for which they are famous: sailing and trading all around the Mediterranean, thus spreading civilization to people who further improved it and sent it on down to us. Also, the first circumnavigation of Africa is attributed to them.

... A Phoenician fleet is, indeed, believed to have circumnavigated the African continent. Sent out by an Egyptian king, this fleet sailed down the Red Sea, and after three years entered the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar. There seems to be good reason for believing that this voyage actually took place, and considering the period, it was an extraordinary achievement.\(^5\)

While we cannot find accurate and dependable accounts of the construction of their ships, the earliest-known pictures reveal galleys containing crews of from fifty to

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\(^5\) Hawks, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
a hundred and twenty, all, excepting the chief, bending to the oars. Evidently, they had used the Egyptian ship as a model, but the many improvements were their own, doubtless evolved to meet the necessities of their hazards. These were the people who devised the method of increasing speed by employing two and three banks of oars, in the types of ships known as the biremes and triremes of history. It was Xenophon himself who paid high tribute to the Phoenician ship and its excellence in orderliness and precision in space economy, as well as the perfect synchronization of the oarsmen - marked contrast, he says, to the ships of the Greeks, no mean manipulators themselves, if we recall the achievement at Salamis. Virgil, in the fifth book of the Aeneid gives us an idea of the value of contests, stimulating improvement in mechanism and seamanship.

Here and there Virgil gives us delightful little sea-cameos which show how keenly the ancients exulted in their ships, and raced them against each other past rock and cliff, through wind and spume. 6

It was Pytheas who well may be called the father of scientific navigation, for it was he who ventured first far out of sight of land on the Atlantic Ocean. He it was

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6 Chatterton, op. cit., p. 82.
who discovered the relationship of tides and the attraction of the moon.

As to the species of ship in which Pytheas sailed we can but speculate. Most probably it was somewhat similar to the Phoenician type, with oarsmen and one mast with square sail. But what is known is that he sailed out through the Pillars of Hercules. At that date Cape St. Vincent - then known as the Sacred Promontory - was the furthest of the world's limit in the minds of the Greeks. He was the first to sail along the coasts of Northern Gaul and Germany. He was the discoverer of at least most of Britain, the Shetlands, and Norway as far as the Arctic Circle. And as he voyaged he studied the phenomena of the sea - collected invaluable data as to tides and their origin. Himself a Greek and unaccustomed to tidal movements, he was the first of his race to connect this systematic flowing and ebbing of the sea with the moon.

Living about 330 B.C., he introduced astronomical measurements for determining geographical position, and so he substituted fact for conjecture, proof for supposition, clarity for probability, thus establishing himself as:

... the founder of the science of navigation - the science which has enabled seas to be crossed in safety and continents to be discovered; which has given to the ship of all species a freedom to employ her speed without sacrificing safety. Indirectly arising from these may be traced the development and civilizing and peopling of the world which have so entirely modified history.

7 Ibid., p. 28.

8 Ibid., p. 27.
Though much is known of Julius Caesar, his rightful place as a scientist in the field of navigation has been overlooked.

The geographical information which Caesar brought back concerning Gaul and Britain after his campaigns cannot be lightly regarded. It was the knowledge which an explorer bestows on a wondering community. Such items as prevailing winds, tides, currents, the influence of moon and the nature of harbours along the coast, the depth of water, and so on, might have been appreciated still more had the Romans been as eager for scientific knowledge as they were for organization and conquest.

But even so, the Romans became master shipbuilders, having learned in an incredibly short time the construction and control of a Carthaginian quinquereme washed up by shipwreck. Critics are high in their praise of the construction of the Roman craft whose relics are today in existence. It would reward the "pick and shovel" type of investigator to examine the ruins that were found in Lake Nemi, as well as the more recent discovery in the excavations, 1910, at Westminster and now in the Museum at Lancaster House. The ship was one of the classis Britannica and was built in a Roman shipyard at Boulogne. It is thought to have been the flagship of Carausius. The material was oak and the dimensions ran ninety feet in length by eighteen feet beam. Her treenails were one and

9 Ibid., p. 77.
a fourth inches in diameter.\textsuperscript{10}

But the parade is rapidly passing, and we are brought to the great progress made by those intrepid navigators who changed the center of interests in trade routes from the Mediterranean to that vast waterway, the Atlantic Ocean. We see pass in quick review the better-known of the Portuguese navigators, especially Diaz whose discovery of the Cape of Good Hope had tremendous results. Through the changing picture one lone figure seems to dominate the age — that figure, who, although not a seaman himself, seemingly did more to advance navigation, through his marvelous forum which he called a school, than any other person the world had yet known. By bringing together distinguished navigators, allowing each to study the maps and charts of all the rest, Prince Henry, the Navigator, was evidently designated by some unseen Power to inspire the greatest navigator of them all, Christopher Columbus.

\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 77-78.
CHAPTER II

VESSELS OF DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

The Period from 1492 to 1588

Columbus and his time.--Columbus was caught up in the Renaissance whose intensified movement falls between 1350 and 1550. The Renaissance Movement, it will be remembered, took two directions; one, toward reviving the knowledge that Europe had known but had neglected almost to the point of extinction during the Dark Ages; the other, toward striking out into new and hitherto untried fields of learning, thereby contributing to the volume of information of the entire world. Since the second grouping means scientific investigation, and navigation already making remarkable advances, we find the proper placing of Columbus - at one and the same time the product of the Renaissance, and, also, the greatest instrument for its expansion. Two tremendous influences upon his work must here be recalled: the reading of Marco Polo's book which gave him the inspiration to try to reach the Far East without encountering the land robbers of Asia; the other, the practical achievements of Prince Henry's navigators.

Most people are familiar with the story of Columbus's
life, but fewer are acquainted with his scientific ability and attainments in the control of ships as they are placed into combat with not only the waves but all the other elements involved in successful navigation. Living in an age of great happenings, he contrived and executed the greatest happening of them all. And this with only three tiny ships!

The Santa Maria.—It was because the mandates to secure ships for the voyage were so tardily observed that the Santa Maria came to be one of the group, and the flagship, at that. Her nickname was La Gallega due to the fact that she was built in Galicia, famous for her shipyards, and especially for the building of large ships. But the Santa Maria was small and, therefore, not the boast of the owner, Juan de la Cosa. When Columbus himself was at the Rio Tinto, he saw her and succeeded in chartering her, not because he liked the ship, but because only two small caravels had been obtained thus far and he was in need of three vessels.

Authorities disagree as to whether she was a caravel or a full-fledged ship. Morison insists she was not a caravel.

Columbus's Santa Maria was a nao or ship, not a caravel. That is perfectly clear from his journal. Repeatedly he speaks of la nao when he means the flagship, and la carabela or las carabelas when he refers to Nina or Pinta or both. 1

1 Samuel Eliot Morison, Admiral of the Ocean Sea, p.120.
Salvador de Madariaga, also an authority on Columbus, pro-
claims:

The flagship was just the biggest of three sister
caravels. She measured 233 tons and had a big castle
aft and a smaller one at the prow. She differed, how-
ever, from the lateen caravel in that her sails were
square. She was about one hundred and seventeen feet
long in all, with a deck of about sixty-six feet.  

So the question persists: what type of ship was the Santa
Maria?

Was it a ship, a *nao* - that is, a solidly built vessel
with raised constructions at forward and after parts,
rigged according to the generally accepted style of the
period for that sort of vessel, with square sails on the
two forward masts, and a lateen, a triangular shaped sail,
on the aftermast - or was it a caravel, a more lightly
built craft usually carrying lateen (fore and aft) sails
only?

There are weighty authorities aligned on both sides
of the question, but we are going to throw in our lot
with those favoring the *nao*.  

Even though the authorities do not agree as to type of vessel,
they do agree that the Santa Maria,

... whatever her hull may have been, carried
square sails on both the fore and main-masts; that the
mizzenmast had a lateen sail; that she had a small top-
mast, not much larger than a good-sized flagstaff, lashed
onto her mainmast and fitted with a diminutive topsail;
that she had a spritsail on the bowsprit; and that she
had at least one small boat, sometimes towed astern and
sometimes hoisted on deck.  

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2 Salvador de Madariaga, *Christopher Columbus*, p. 193.


4 Ibid., p. 10.
It is difficult to comprehend this uncertainty because:

In 1893 an exact replica of the Santa Maria was built at La Carraca by Spanish workmen for the Chicago Exhibition. She was sailed across the Atlantic on the course taken by Columbus on his first voyage, and the officer in charge of her reported that she pitched in a most horrible manner.

There is an interesting story concerning the name of the flagship. At first called La Gallega, she became known as Mariagalante, or frivolous Mary. Evidently because this name displeased the very religious Columbus, the ship was rechristened the Santa Maria. But it is claimed that the not-so-religious seamen still held to the old term of Mary Gallant.

On Columbus's ships, the white sails were painted with crosses and possibly other heraldic or religious insignia.

On such occasions, too, the royal ensign of Castille and Leon was hoisted at the main truck. Columbus had a special banner for his fleet, consisting of a green cross on a white field, with a crown on each arm of the cross, one over an F for Fernando and the other over a Y for Isabel; on later voyages he doubtless displayed his own arms on a jackstaff forward. A variety of gaily colored pennants, bannerrolls and flags was carried to be run up on mastheads and yard arms on great church festivals if the vessel were in port, and these banners were much larger in comparison with the ship's length than is considered proper today. At sea (popular illustrations to the contrary notwithstanding) no flags were flown, because they soon wore out.6

The Pinta.--The Pinta was pressed into the service

5 Hawks, op. cit., pp. 50, 51.
6 Morison, op. cit., p. 129.
under great opposition from the owners, Rascon and Quintero. She was about fifty-one feet long and had square sails instead of being lateen as was usually the case with caravels. She was faster than the Santa Maria, as attested by the fact that she was the first to sight land upon arrival in the New World. Her name meant The Painted One.

The Nina.--The Girl gives a new light on some of those strange associates of the great Colon, for, while he was all seriousness with the gravity of the undertaking, the seamen did not concur with his mood.

The mood of the expedition in Palos, as suggested by these names was therefore that of a full-blooded, irresponsible and gay adventure - not in the least the lean, tense and ambitious crusading spirit which animated Colon.\(^7\)

The Nina was shorter than the Pinta, had one castle, and had the three-cornered, or lateen sails.

All three of the ships were armed.

Artillery was carried by all three vessels; iron 'lombards' of about nine centimeter caliber which threw a stone cannon ball, mounted in carriages on deck; and small breech-loading swivel guns called 'falconets' of about four and five tenths centimeter caliber, which were charged with odd bits of ironmongery to repel boarders, and were mounted on the bulwarks. The only small arms mentioned by Columbus on the first voyage are crossbows and espingardas, primitive muskets made of a tube of bronze or iron secured to a wooden stock.\(^8\)

Not the least marvelous of the features of the voyage

\(^7\)Madariaga, *op. cit.*, p. 192.  \(^8\)Morison, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
is the fact that, although not particularly seaworthy, the feat was actually accomplished. We do have this in their favor:

The seaworthiness of the three famous caravels may have been somewhat underestimated owing to the surprise and admiration which they won by the outstanding performance for which they became justly famous. To sail from the Canaries to the Antilles in thirty-four days is even in our time a remarkable feat for ships of that size. Over unknown seas and winds, it was a masterpiece of that happiest of combinations, daring, skill and luck.  

While iron bolts were used where there was known to be great strain, only wooden trunnels were employed to fasten the planking to the frames. Tallow and pitch, blended, covered all the ships to help prevent barnacles and teredos.

...and every few months a vessel had to be hove-down and graved on some convenient beach. This was done by careening her alternately on each side, cleaning off the marine growth, repitching the bottom and paying the seams. In order that the heaving-down process should not strain her, she had to be constructed with heavy wales and wide bilges and floor timbers; vertical skids were secured to the topsides in order to protect the planking. Some kind of dark preservative was applied to the topsides, probably a mixture of whale oil and pine tar, which the Niebla region produced.  

While the preparations were being made for the famous voyage, there were many riots in protest. People were frightened for themselves and their relatives and friends and much of what today would be called sabotage was practiced

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9 Madariaga, op. cit., p. 193.
10 Morison, op. cit., p. 123.
in order to prevent the departure or to wreck the ships before rescue would be beyond possibility. Much of the tranquillity which ultimately was brought about was the work of the Pinzon brothers - good navigators themselves and heartily in accord with Columbus's ideas. They offered to supply one of the ships and did so.

... Others, with their owners and crews, were pressed into the service by the magistrates under the arbitrary mandate of the sovereigns; and it is a striking instance of the despotic authority exercised over commerce in those times, that respectable individuals should thus be compelled to engage with persons and ships, in what appeared to them a mad and desperate enterprise. During the equipment of the vessels, troubles and difficulties arose among the seamen who had been compelled to embark. These were fomented and kept up by Gomez Rascon and Christoval Quintero, owners of the Pinta, one of the ships pressed into service. 11

At the beginning, it seems that Columbus was not actually in exclusive charge. The Pinzons, one of whom being the owner of the Nina, were doubtless in joint command at first, expedience on the outward voyage influencing the Pinzons to accept the leadership of Columbus as a matter of development, and, since the Nina was in charge of Martin Pinzon and the Pinta controlled by Rascon and Quintero, it was, perhaps, purely casual and incidental that the command of the Santa Maria fell to Columbus.

11 Washington Irving, Life and Voyages of Columbus, p.34.
... It was necessary, or at least it was advisable that the three vessels should keep together, and in order that they might do so after nightfall, it was arranged, as was customary on voyages of that period, that one ship should show a light as a guide to her fellows, and the duty of showing this light was given to the Santa Maria. It was further generally recognized at that period that the performance of this duty was the right or obligation of the commander of the squadron, but in this case, even if Pinzon had been the actual commander-in-chief, it may be presumed that the course which was followed would still have been followed. The purpose of making the signal was to enable the ships to keep station, and it is obvious that since the Santa Maria was the largest and slowest and the least manageable of the three vessels, it was easier for the Pinta and the Nina to keep station by her than for her to keep station by either of her smaller companions. 12

Everything was finally ready. What breath-taking anxiety!

From Palos, then the most flourishing port of Andalusia, a village that contained little else among its inhabitants than some of the finest seamen-explorers in the world, he set sail with a fair wind on August 3 - a Friday - 1492, in the Santa Maria. Accompanying her were the two smaller craft Nina and Pinta. 13

Even at this late day, we are thrilled as we read from Columbus's own Journal:

We departed on Friday, the 3d of August, in the year 1492, from the bar of Saltes, at 8 o'clock, and proceeded with a strong breeze until sunset, toward the south, for 60 miles, equal to 15 leagues; afterwards S.W. and W.S. W. which was the course for the Canaries. 14

12 Voyages of Christopher Columbus, pp. 73, 74.

13 Chatterton, op. cit., pp. 156.

14 Franklin Jameson, Original Narratives of Early American History, p. 91.
Compass and Astrolabe.—Any account of the ships would be sadly inadequate without mention of the two devices that made the voyages of Columbus intelligent instead of haphazard. While there is no attempt at technical explanation of the compass, it is fitting to remind the reader that

While there is no theory to account for the earth's magnetism, there is large fund of information regarding it. The records of observation extending over many years prove that the earth's magnetic field is not constant in either intensity or direction. The changes are known as the diurnal, yearly, and secular changes. Changes in intensity are so small as to have no effect in navigation, and the same is true of the diurnal and yearly changes in direction. However, the secular change in the direction of the earth's magnetic field has values that make it important to the navigator. . . . 15

The two important things about a compass and concerning which Columbus had a good working knowledge are best pointed out in the following:

The measurement of the earth's magnetism at any place consists of determining the direction and intensity of that field. A magnet suspended in such a way as to be free to turn about its center of gravity would take a position with its magnetic axis directed along the lines of force of the earth's magnetic field. As it is practically impossible to suspend a magnet in that way, it is usual to determine the direction of the earth's magnetic field by means of two magnets, one constrained to turn about a vertical axis, like the magnets of the compass card, and the other, constrained to move about a horizontal axis, called a dip needle. 16

The astrolabe was an improvement upon the cross-staff,


16 Ibid., p. 40.
a crude instrument by means of which altitudes of sun and stars could be determined and positions on the earth computed from the angles measured.

John Cabot and his ship.—While Columbus was waiting for the King and Queen of Spain to make up their minds, his brother was urged to try to get the assistance of the King of England, Henry VII, first of the House of Tudor, an ambitious and forward-looking ruler. He declined to help, so later, when the voyage had been made and it was receiving publicity throughout Europe, Henry must have felt very much out of patience with himself and, doubtless because of pique, decided to get a man in the field to establish a claim for England. And John Cabot was the answer.

And having obtained royal grants that he should have the usufruct of all that he should discover, provided that the ownership of the same be reserved to the crown, with a small ship and eighteen persons he committed himself to fortune; and having set out from Bristol, a western port of this kingdom, and passed the western limits of Ireland, and then standing to the northward he began to sail toward the Oriental regions, leaving (after a few days) the North Star on his right hand; and, having wandered about considerably, at last he struck mainland, where, having planted the royal banner and taken possession on behalf of the King, and taken certain tokens, he has returned thence.

This brave little ship, about which so little knowledge seems available, was the Matthew.

Cabot succeeded in interesting King Henry VII, and

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in May, 1497, sailed in the Matthew. 18

The great significance of the initial voyage of Cabot is that it laid the basis of the English claim to North America, and since we are, perhaps, more English than we are inheritors of any other people, the vast amount of development opened up by the Matthew and her courageous sailors beggars description. However, the English claim had to be protected and substantiated before colonization could take place; specifically, Spain, England's most powerful rival and adversary, had to be defeated.

It is true, the greatest results of the work laid down by the Matthew were in the long-run; the immediate source of wealth lay in the fisheries.

In the march of discovery which marked the close of the fifteenth century, Henry VII took part, with his usual caution and parsimony, by lending John Cabot his royal countenance and a very sparing measure of assistance. Cabot's application to the king for letters patent in favor of himself and his two young sons, Sebastian and Sanctus, whose names were inserted to extend the duration of the charter opens the archives of the British colonial empire. The summer regions had been pre-empted; but the fisheries of Newfoundland, which were the reward of Cabot's adventures, proved a gold mine richer than the fabled treasures of El Dorado. It is Judge Prowse's opinion that from the time of the discovery the English never ceased to avail themselves of this treasure and that the fisheries built up the west of England. 19

Cabot himself wanted to reach Japan. The wonder is, what

19 American Historical Review, V. I, p. 186.
would have been the course of history if he had gained his ambition.

. . . Although John Cabot failed in his main purpose, he undoubtedly won the honour of being the first to sight the shores of America itself.20

And this was done with the aid of the little ship *Matthew*.

**The Golden Hind.**—From 1577 to 1580, Master Francis Drake proved himself the first sea captain to make the circumnavigation of the globe. Magellan, some fifty-seven years before, had died in the attempt, although he carries the fame, since his crew—a fragment of them—completed the voyage.

. . . Explorer, warrior, enricher of the realm, he at once became a national hero. Queen Elizabeth, a patriot ruler who always loved a hero for his service to the state, knighted Drake on board his flagship; and a poet sang his praises in these few, fit words, which well deserve quotation wherever the sea-borne English tongue is known:

*The stars of Heaven would thee proclaim,*
*If men here silent were.*
*The sun himself could not forget*
*His fellow traveller.*21

And what was the name of this famous flagship?

Drake's fleet consisted of five vessels: the *Pelican*, of 100 tons; the *Elizabeth*, of London, eighty tons; the *Swan*, fifty tons; the *Marigold*, thirty tons; and one other ship still smaller. The crews aggregated about one hundred fifty men all told. There were also supernumeraries, fifty gentlemen-adventurers, special artificers, two trained


surveyors, and boys. The commander traveled in style with his own page, drummers and fiddlers, a silver dinner service and probably a high-priced chef.  

After the Pelican had had a mishap before reaching Port St. Julian, Drake changed the name to the Golden Hind to compliment one of his partners, a golden hind being emblazoned on that gentleman's coat of arms. Through almost unbelievable disasters, the Golden Hind returned laden with richest treasure. It was upon the deck of this vessel that Queen Elizabeth knighted Francis Drake. She commanded... "that the Golden Hind should be lodged in a 'docke' at Deptford 'for a monument to alle posteritie of that famous and worthie exploite.'"  

Because necessary repairs were not kept up, she finally rotted away and is not in existence. Regardless of the reputation of Sir Francis himself, the fame of the Golden Hind still glows - the ship that took him on his voyage around the world. There are evidences that the knowledge of navigation, especially the management of ships in terrific storms, had great influence upon the English victory of 1588 and therefore upon the future colonization of the New World by the English.

Verrazano and the Dalfina.--Meanwhile, French explorers had become competitors with those of Spain and England in North America. It is a singular thing but not accidental that the three navigators who laid the bases of the Spanish,
English, and French claims to the New World were all Italians. Because the Italian ports were famous for their navigators and because Italy was not a nation, the seamen with extraordinarily big ideas that called for great expenditures naturally had to seek elsewhere for adequate financial backing. In a paper read before the American Geographical Society of New York on the 28th of November, 1871, is this opening sentence:

At the request of the President of this Society we undertook, with some hesitation, to prepare the following notes, embodying all that can be gathered together concerning the career of the Florentine Navigator who appears to have been the first explorer of a portion of our coast. Besides a report addressed to the French King on his return from the voyage, there are several notices of the expedition, which are sufficient to authenticate it. 24

In a paraphrased copy of this report to the King, we are introduced to the name of his wonderful ship, the Dalfina.

The Captain Giovanni da Verrazano, Florentine from Normandy to the most serene crown of France, says:

After the luck met with on the Northern coasts, most serene Lord, I did not write to your most serene and most Christian Majesty, about that which had been accomplished by the four ships, which it had ordered on the ocean to discover new lands;... how by the impetuous force of the winds, we were constrained, with only the ships Normanda and Dalfina damaged, to run back to Brittany, where refitted, your sacred Majesty must have received the report of what we did with this fleet of war along the coasts of Spain, afterwards the new plan to pursue the first navigation with the

24 J. C. Brevoort, Verrazano the Navigator, p. 3.
Delfina only, from which being returned, I will give an account to your sacred Majesty of what we have found.\[25\]

In a letter written in 1524, Verrazano does not give the name of New France to his discovery, but on the map of 1529, it is so called, that is, Nova Gallia sive Ivcatanet, and it is shown as extending from Florida to the Terra des Bretons.

Crignon, in 1539, had not seen Verrazano's chart, but says that many navigators, and even Portuguese, call this Terra Francaise. Jean Alphonse, who coasted South to Massachusetts Bay about 1542, says in his Routier, that these lands may well be called New France. Rasmusius, in 1553, calls it Nova Gallia, and Robault, in 1562, calls it New France. Father Biard, in 1614-16, is of the opinion that Verrazano was the godfather of this name.\[26\]

We know that Verrazano sailed to the mouth of the St. Lawrence River.\[27\]

Cartier's ship, La Petite Hermine. When Jacques Cartier returned from a voyage to Newfoundland and vicinity, looking for the much-desired passage to the Far East, he had not been successful in his main search, but, as is often the case, the thing he did find was of vastly greater importance. When he returned to France in September, 1534, he had not found the passage he sought but had discovered something immensely

\[25\] Ibid., p. 34.  \[26\] Ibid., pp. 142,143.

\[27\] Ibid., p. 96.
more valuable, Canada, a kingdom ready for the making.\textsuperscript{28}

But it is with the second voyage we are concerned, because it is here the name of the \textit{Petite Hermine} appears. The purpose of the second voyage was to explore the regions of the St. Lawrence and Saguenay, reputed by the Indians to be possessed with precious stones in abundance; also many rich metals. All the story of the French in Canada is the result of the voyages of pioneering spirits and their gallant ships. But to the bravery of this ship, the \textit{Petite Hermine} has the added pathos of martyrdom. Since, through deprivations, the party of Cartier had dwindled until there were not enough men left to take care of all three ships, one had to be sacrificed - this was "poor little Hermine." They removed everything they could use and then abandoned her to the Indians who tore her apart to get the iron bolts and nails.

Our worship is directed toward the soul and spirit of the brave little \textit{Hermine}, martyred by the savages. She needs no relics, true or spurious, to preserve our remembrance of her. She constitutes the symbol of the unforgettable sacrifices of those early French pioneers into the North American wilderness, whose fortitude and courage won a new realm for their country. A new realm indeed, but one lost through unpreparedness. What a lesson for us today! \textsuperscript{29}

While we usually think of Verrazano, Cartier and Champlain in one group, the time placing of Champlain's biggest

\textsuperscript{28}Culver, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 39. \hfill \textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 43.
achievement, the founding of Quebec, forces us to leave the account of his ship until the next chapter.

Of tremendous importance to American history was an affair of ships pre-dating English colonization – the destruction of the Spanish Armada. The first two Tudors had been instrumental in building up a strong navy. This navy, plus the daring exploits of the Elizabethan seamen, stood England in good stead when the crucial moment came. For this was no ordinary clash – it was to determine the whole course of development of that part of the New World that was to become the United States, whether it would be English or Spanish, as it had started out to be.

Frobisher, Howard of Effingham, Drake and Hawkins, tackled this enormous and clumsy fleet of sixty magnificent vessels as soon as it had entered the British Channel, and followed it resolutely to the Straits of Dover. .... The decisive engagement and the complete rout of the fleet took place next day, though the chase was continued on the part of the English to as far as the latitude 56°. 30

Thus England took over the championship of the seas and cleared the way for the planting of English colonies.

CHAPTER III

VESSELS IMPORTANT TO COLONIZATION

The Period from 1578 to 1634

The forerunner of English colonization and the ship that went down.--Even before the great contest with the Armada of Philip II, two expensive and unfortunate attempts at colonization had been made by Sir Humphrey Gilbert and his half-brother Sir Walter Raleigh.

. . . Meanwhile in the autumn of 1578, while the coasts of Chile were echoing to the roar of the Golden Hind's cannon, a squadron of seven ships sailed from England with intent to found a permanent colony on the Atlantic coast of North America. Its captain was one of the most eminent of Devonshire worthies, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and one of the ships was commanded by his half-brother, Walter Raleigh, a young man of six-and-twenty who had lately returned from volunteer service in the Netherlands. The destination of the voyage was 'Norumbega,' which may have meant any place between the Hudson and Penobscot Rivers, but was conceived with supreme vagueness, as may be seen from Michael Lok's map of 1582. This little fleet had at least one savage fight with the Spaniards and returned to Plymouth without accomplishing anything. In 1583 Gilbert sought a favorable place for settlement on the coast of Newfoundland, probably with a view to driving the Spaniards away from the fishing grounds, but an ill fate overtook him. On the American coast his principal vessel crushed its bows against a sunken rock and nearly all hands were lost. With two small ships the captain set sail for home, but his own tiny craft foundered in a terrible storm near
Payal. As she sank, Gilbert cheerily shouted... to his consort, 'The way to heaven is as near by sea as by land.'

Certainly, the venture was a dismal failure. But as any adult doubtless knows, "there are some kinds of failure that are better than success." This failure, for instance, had all the earmarks of martyrdom, which consists not merely of the act of sacrifice itself, but also the later approval and taking up of the cause for which the renunciation was made. It is with this thought that we agree:

Although John Cabot was granted the right to erect a settlement in Baccalaois, yet as he took no steps to found it, as the records of his second voyage disclose, he cannot be looked upon as the father of English colonization in the Western Hemisphere; that enduring honor belongs to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the heroic sailor whose name should be invested with a greater degree of fame than it enjoys. 2

Since Raleigh had been kept at home from Gilbert's fatal journey, he was soon prepared for another venture at colonization.

... The wealthy Raleigh could act promptly, and before five weeks had elapsed two ships, commanded by Philip Amidas and Arthur Barlow, had started on a reconnoitering voyage. On the fourth of July, 1584, they reached the country now known as North Carolina, at some point not far from Cape Lookout. Thence a northerly run of over a hundred miles brought them to the New Inlet, through which they passed into Pamlico Sound.

1 John Fiske, Old Virginia and Her Neighbors, V I, pp. 23, 29.

2 Philip A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia, V I, p. 2.
and visited Roanoke Island. In the spring of 1585 Raleigh, who had lately been knighted, sent out a hundred or more men commanded by Ralph Lane to make the beginnings of a settlement. They were convoyed by Raleigh's cousin, Sir Richard Grenville, with seven well-armed ships.3

Francis Drake later called at the Island and took Lane and the sufferers that were with him back home. This second magnificent failure at colonization was a source of further efforts on the part of the English who were determined that the Spaniards should not have possession of the New World without taking England into consideration. Events were moving rapidly that were bringing on the inevitable conflict between the champion of the seas and the contender for the title. The defeat of the Spanish Armada guaranteed England's claim to that title.

It was not fair for one or two patriotic spirits, or even a small group, to take the tremendous risks involved when practically the whole nation would derive benefits, if their efforts proved successful. Nineteen years after the destruction of the Armada, colonization was undertaken by the stock-company method, now so prosperously demonstrated by the British East India Company, which had been chartered by Good Queen Bess. Such a method had advantages:

... An undertaking having the public support was more likely to attract to it men of the highest qualities than one relying upon a small body of adventurers, inasmuch as it offered more opportunities of winning personal

3Fiske, op. cit., pp. 30-32.
reputation, and was less subject to the distractions of fraud and envy. . . . The commonwealth was not only more able to hold and defend a colony which it had erected, but it was also in a more favorable position to promote the interests of such a community. 4 Also, another was, "that it would furnish the English shipyards with a vast quantity of the finest timber, which could now be purchased only of foreign countries and at exorbitant rates." 5 At Christmas-tide in 1606, the London Company dispatched to Virginia its first colonists. "Riding on the Thames, before Blackwell, are three ships, small enough in all conscience's sake, . . . The admiral of this fleet is Christopher Newport, an old seaman of Raleigh's." 6 Captains Bartholomew Gosnold and John Ratcliffe were on board their respective ships. There were, besides the crews, one hundred and twenty men who were the colonists. The personnel of the Council in Virginia were on board but no one as yet knew which ones they were, for the names were in a sealed box which was not to be opened before arrival in Virginia.

Months later the sea-weary colonists arrived at their destination. On the twenty-sixth of April, 1607, they found Chesapeake Bay; the 12th. of May, they named a point

4 Bruce, op. cit., p. 7.  
5 Ibid., p. 10.  
of land Archer's Hope. Here they landed. They liked the place because of the beautiful and abundant wild life, but did not remain because the shallow water prevented the ships coming near. They went on up the river and at a place thirty-odd miles from the mouth, the three ships came to anchor.

The Susan Constant and her companions.--These three brave little ships were: the Susan Constant, the Goodspeed, and the Discovery.

. . . The Susan Constant, of one hundred tons burden, was commanded by Captain Christopher Newport, and was the flagship for the little fleet. For Captain Newport was in charge of the expedition. The Goodspeed, of forty tons burden, was commanded by Bartholomew Gosnold, who had persuaded Gates, Somers, Hakluyt and Wingfield to secure a charter from the King. The Discovery was only of twenty tons burden, and was commanded by John Ratcliffe. . . . These little vessels proved to be the advance guard of an infinite argosy flying between the shores of the Old World and of the New.7

And so the establishment of a realm beyond the seas was off to an amazing start.

The Mayflower.—It is well known that the Pilgrims did not intend to land at Plymouth Rock, or even anywhere on the New England coast because of their agreement to the contrary.

. . . . They hoped to settle near the Hudson. But storms and the wretched ability of the Mayflower, made it advisable for them to land north of their

7 J. A. C. Chandler and T. B. Thames, Colonial Virginia, p. 20.
objective - at Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod. There, sea-weary and scourged by a plague of pulmonary disease, the Pilgrims gave thanks for present safety and agreed that the bay of Plymouth-to-be was an excellent 'harbor for boats.' And thither they went to begin the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

It seems, for obvious reasons, it was the custom not to send a single ship, but to have two or three vessels in a "fleet." So the Pilgrims had planned to have two, the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell*. Let us see what happened:

Both ships set out for America, but the *Speedwell* leaked so badly that it was forced to turn back, and finally the little *Mayflower* went on alone with a hundred passengers. On the 29th. of November they reached land, but they had been carried far out of their way, and the land they saw was the desolate northern end of Cape Cod in a region which had been granted to the New England Council. After some discussion they determined to settle in the vicinity and after exploring the coast for a month landed at the spot which had been called Plymouth on John Smith's map. Since they had neither a patent for the land, or a charter giving political rights, the heads of families, the 'Pilgrim Fathers,' as we call them, had drawn up in the cabin of their ship the 'Mayflower Compact,' binding themselves to be governed by the majority.

There is more written about the *Mayflower*, perhaps, than of any other ship that pertains to American history, with the possible exception of the *Santa Maria*. From such an abundance of material, the problem is not what to find, but is one of what to select.

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While it is true there is not an exact model of the Mayflower extant, it is very easy to reconstruct her in our minds from the descriptions of writers of her period. She was small—just about half as large as an ordinary modern fishing schooner.

. . . She was some ninety feet long and a little more than twenty-five feet wide with three masts. On the main mast and fore mast she carried two large square sails. On the mizzen mast, instead of the usual gaff-spanker sail, typical of later days, she carried a single lateen sail, a triangular form with the spar lashed to the mast a little above its middle point. On her high bowsprit, instead of the ordinary jibs of today, she carried a single square sail; its boom being lashed to the sprit and the sail hanging down almost to the water.10

Although the rigging of the sails was about as now, the sails were larger in proportion, because, later, it was deemed expedient to have four sails instead of the two large ones. These four were called the mainsail, topsail, topgallant, and royal.

If, considering everything, the sail plan was not so bad, the hull of the Mayflower was wretched, according to modern ideas, although it must be remembered that the ship was the product of English shipwrights who were, for their day, polished masters of their craft. Under water, the Mayflower's hull left little to be desired; indeed, hulls have not changed under water greatly, save for narrowing of the width, since the first sea-going ships were made. But, above the water-line faults abounded.

10 Clark, op. cit., p. 46.
The chief trouble was the high superstructures built at the stern and over the bows - the name forecastle, still surviving, is an apt title for the towering structures. These high erections, of course, caught the wind and made it difficult to control the ships in times of storm.\[11\]

Naturally one wonders why the builders did not construct the superstructures more substantially. And just as naturally the reason is seen:

However, since their weight would have lifted the center of gravity too high if they were substantially made, these bow and stern castles, painted all colors of the rainbow in response to the expansive spirit of the times, were built as lightly as possible - in fact they were quite flimsy. Thus, though the hull of the ship was stout and strong, the superstructure creaked and groaned with every movement of the vessel and, in a storm, it split and cracked until rain poured in from above and green water and driven spray flooded in from the sides. For this reason, when we read of the seventeenth century ships being leaky, it is usually the superstructure which is being criticised and not the hull - for they were good hulls, as witness the fact that the Mayflower made several voyages between the Old World and the New, once in just thirty-one days, excellent time for a sailing ship. In the sixteenth century hulls were poor but by this time they had been greatly improved.\[12\]

And so, Carlyle to the contrary notwithstanding, it was not the "poor little ship Mayflower." Nor were her passengers the first colonists, but were the second group to remain permanently in the expansion of English control.

Champlain and his ship, the Bon de Dieu.--There are few characters of the French who appeal more to the

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\[11\] \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 46, 47.
\[12\] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 47.
imagination than does Samuel de Champlain. Notable as the
discoverer of the Great Lakes, the founder of Quebec, the
Father of New France, he was also a profound student of
waters, coasts, their dangers and potentialities.

... But few know that he was also a captain in the
Royal Navy of France, an expert hydrographer, and the
first man to advocate a Panama Canal. And fewer still
remember that he lived in an age which, like our own,
had its record-breaking events at sea. Baffin's
'Farthest North' reached in 1616, was latitude 77° 45'.
This remained an unbroken record for two hundred and
thirty-six years. Champlain's own voyage from Honfleur
to Tadoussac in eighteen days broke all previous records,
remained itself unbroken for a century, and would be a
credit to a sailing ship today.\textsuperscript{13}

Of Champlain's vessel, \textit{Bon de Dieu}, there is extant no exact
description, but it was reproduced for the tercentenary cele-
bration of Quebec in 1908 from the corresponding French
merchant vessels of the day.

... She was about a hundred tons and could be handled
by a crew of twenty. The nearest modern equivalent of
her rig is that of a barque, though she carried a little
square sail under her bowsprit and it had no jibs,
while her spanker had a most lateenish look. Her main-
sail had a good hoist and spread. She had three masts
and six sails altogether. The masts were 'pole', that
is, all of one piece. The tallest was seventy-three
feet from step to truck. ... She carried stone ballast;
her rudder was worked by a tiller, with the help of a
simple rope tackle to take the strain; and the poop con-
tained three cabins.\textsuperscript{14}

Highly significant to history was this famous captain
and his equally famous ship. For not only were the two the

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{William Wood, All Afloat}, p. 54. \textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 55.
burden, from her bow projects a beakhead, a sort of
gallery, painted and carved, and used as a place of
rest or punishment for the sailors. At the tip of the
beakhead is the figure-head, a red lion with a golden
mane. The ship's bow is green, with ornaments of
sailors' heads painted red and yellow. Both forecastle
and poop are high, the latter painted a blue mottled
with white clouds. The stern below is rich in color
and carving. Its upper panels show a blue ground
picked out with stars and set in it a crescent holding
a profile of the traditional Man in the Moon. The panel
below bears the arms of the City of Amsterdam and the
letters V.C. forming the monogram of the Dutch East
India Company — Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie.
Five carved heads uphold the stern, above which hangs
one of those ornate lanterns which the Dutch love so
well.

To add to all this wealth of color, flags are fly-
ing from every masthead. At the foretop flutters the
tricolor of red, white, and black, with the arms of
Amsterdam in a field of white. At the maintop flames
the flag of the seven provinces of the Netherlands,
emblazoned with a red lion rampant, bearing in his paws
a sword and seven arrows. The bowsprit bears a small
flag of orange, white, and blue, while from the stern
flies the Dutch East India Company's special banner.
It is no wonder that such an apparition causes the simple
natives ashore to believe that some marvelous bird has
sworn in from the sea, and then that a mysterious
messenger from the Great Spirit has appeared in all his
celestial robes. 16

Such a ship was the Half-Moon — imposing — magnificent!

Another description says:

De Halhe Moen, or Half Moon, was a small merchant
ship differing hardly at all from the type then common
in all north European countries. She exhibited the
familiar lines of the late sixteenth century ships: a
steep fore and aft, a narrow high stern transom whereon

16 Haude W. Goodman, Dutch and English on the Hudson,
appeared the crescent moon, from which she took her name. Thereupon also were the two shields displaying the lion of the United Provinces and the arms of the Dutch East India Company under whose ownership she sailed. 17

As to the results of the voyage of the Half-Moon:

... Think of the results flowing from this casual, accidental visit of Hudson to New York Bay, for it was hardly more than that. Several other navigators and discoverers had entered that harbor prior to Hud- son but nothing had come of their calls. It was Hud- son's detailed report of the nature of the country he had seen which impelled the Dutch authorities to found a colony in the neighborhood. Perhaps if somebody else had taken advantage of these neglected opportuni- ties, the Empire State Building would not be stand- ing today where it does; there would have been no Tammany Hall; and these lines would never have been writ- ten to add their tribute, slight but sincere, to Henry Hudson's vision in appreciating the advantageous situa- tion of the island which was destined to become the heart of the great city of New York, and to the sturdy and seaworthy little bark which made possible that vision, the Half Moon. 18

While every colony's founding was the result of suc- cessful voyage-making, the outstanding ones selected may be regarded as types, and a good idea of the others will be mentally deduced. Therefore, in order to advance rapidly to the American-made vessels, this chapter will be concluded with an account of the ships which brought over the first of the settlers of Maryland.

The Ark and The Dove.--Maryland became noteworthy among other things as the first English proprietary colony

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18 Henry B. Culver, Forty Famous Ships, p. 74.
and also as the first to pass a statute for religious toleration.

There was much of promise even in the names of the two ships, the Ark the instrument of faith and the Dove bringing confirmation of that faith. There is much assurance in names.

The two vessels, the Ark, a new ship of about 360 tons, and the Dove, a pinnace of sixty tons, set sail from Cowes, Richard Orchard master, on November 22, and though some of the seamen, who according to Father White were plotting against the proprietor, expected further orders from the council postponing the voyage, no such orders came, and the vessels proceed down the Channel and headed out into the Atlantic. Separated by a storm, the Dove returned to the Scillies and the Ark went on without her, laying her course southward toward the Canaries, a route that the Dove, in the company of a London ship, the Dragon, later followed. Tarrying for some time in the West Indies, where at Barbados the Dove joined the Ark, the voyagers replenished their stock of water and provisions, laid in a supply of seed corn, and recuperated from the effects of the life on board.19

And the life on board was, no doubt, hard and must have necessitated recuperation, for all the luxuries of travel were lacking.

After being again separated and again reunited, and after being on the voyage three months in all - about seven and a half weeks actually on the sea - these ships arrived "within the Capes of Virginia," February 27, 1634. They

not only were welcomed by the Virginians, but the travelers were materially assisted. Leonard Calvert explored the nearby waterways and

... On March 3, 1634, they started up the bay, and on the northern side of the Potomac landed on an island which they called St. Clement's (now Blakiston). On March 25 they celebrated mass, erected a great cross hewn out of a large tree, and solemnly took possession of the country. Later they moved southward along the coast and took up their location permanently at the Indian town Yoacomaco, later St. Mary's near the head of St. Inigoes Creek.20

Having reviewed the conspicuous vessels in the colonizing of the New World, let us now go on to a study of the ships that were actually American and trace their part in placing the United States where it is today in world's affairs.

20 Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

SHIPS IMPORTANT IN BEGINNING OUR MERCHANT MARINE

The Period from 1607 to 1776

Salt spray upon America.—It is conceded that the ocean is the greatest natural barrier to communication, but it is natural, too, for human beings to strive to overcome barriers, and so the ocean proved to be not only a challenge but, in time, a veritable highway.

In the life of this, our United States, nothing has been of greater influence than the ocean. Salt spray from the seven seas has drenched almost every page of our history; it has seasoned the lives and fortunes of us all — and our fathers before us for some three centuries. America, for all the three thousand miles[1] width of our continent, is a maritime nation.

Since business is the most progressive element in civilization, it was the business-man, seeking profitable trade, who made the ocean lanes which were later used in colonization.

Two requisites for lucrative commerce are: an abundant supply and a ready market. Fishing, then, became our first source of American trade.

In the beginning, America was host to a merchant marine for nearly one hundred years before anyone ever

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1 Clark, op. cit., p. v.
dreamed of daring to settle on this continent — other than the Spaniards who founded their Central American colonies not as new homelands but as military and religious outposts. . . . By 1500, or shortly thereafter, Spain was well launched on its colonial gold rush. But from St. Augustine on its Florida beach, northward, the wilderness was unbroken. Off the coast of Newfoundland, however, off the shores of Maine and Cape Cod, deep in the foggy and storm-swept waters, lived the richest multitude of cod fish the world knew. Hungry millions in Europe depended upon fish, as the cheapest form of flesh-fodder, for their very existence. So, to reap this finny harvest, soon after 1500, British and Dutch and French fishermen began to visit the New World. 2

The situation meant not only the opportunity for individual prosperity, but, as fishermen of several nationalities began their activities, the element of national rivalry gave zest to their efforts.

. . . Often there were as many as three hundred fishermen on the Banks alone, as, for instance, in 1587 when 350 ships landed their catches for the summer season on the empty shore of the Newfoundland Bay, where St. Johns now stands, to dry the fish before venturing home. . . . And that was but one harbor of several scores between St. Johns and the harbor where Gloucester, Massachusetts, now stands — and still carries on the oldest American trade. Each year, the ships would leave England, Ireland, Scotland, Holland and France in the early spring and sail westward. 3

The first American-built ship, the Virginia. — It was logical that the ship-building industry should eventually appear on the continent. The ill-fated Popham colony launched in 1607, at the mouth of the Kennebec, "a faire

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2 Ibid., p. 3.  
3 Ibid., pp. 3-4.
pinnacle of thirty tons," the Virginia which safely crossed the Atlantic. It is from this vessel that the Mercantile Marine had its start. There seems to be unanimity of belief that the Virginia was the first of which we have record. Indeed, long before colonists came, fishermen had constructed fish-drying stations, wharves, houses, and even shipyards.

The Pilgrims a fishing people.—Often overlooked is the hard fact that the Pilgrims were fishermen.

The Pilgrim Fathers, driven to the northward of their intended destination in Virginia, landed on the shore of Cape Cod not so much to clear the forest and till the soil as to establish a fishing settlement. Like the other Englishmen who long before 1620 had steered across to harvest the cod on the Grand Bank, they expected to wrest a livelihood mostly from salt water. The convincing argument in favor of Plymouth was that it offered a good harbor for boats and was a place of profitable fishing.  

The Blessing of the Bay.—The first ship built at Boston was the Blessing of the Bay, 1631. While the amphibious Pilgrims soon set to work not only in trading but also in the building of trading-boats, our attention is arrested by the even more energetic Puritans at Boston who

... came bringing carpenters and ship builders with them to hew the pine and oak so close at hand into keelsons, frames, and planking. Two years later,


Governor John Winthrop launched his thirty-ton sloop Blessing of the Bay, and sent her to open friendly commercial relations with the Dutch of Manhattan.\(^6\)

With the slipping of this ship into the Mystic River at Medford, New England began the creation of her own merchant marine.

Armed and designed to fight if necessary, the Blessing was primarily a trading vessel. Very small and high bowed, she had but one mast. However, she earned her name. . . . In a few years, she was trading regularly along the entire New England coast and voyaging now and then down around Cape Cod and Long Island to trade with the Dutch on Manhattan Island. There she acted not as a freighter does today, carrying a cargo for a fixed sum, but carrying various items of merchandise which her captain traded with the Dutch — no doubt exchanging New England salt (made out of sea water), maple sugar, pearl ash and the like, for the molasses and West Indian sugar which the Dutch ships brought to their Colony from the West Indies, and the tea and spices which other Dutch ships brought to their colony from the East Indies via Amsterdam.\(^7\)

Undoubtedly, it was trading with the Dutch ships from the West Indies and other distant markets that enticed the Americans into reaching out for their business first-hand.

Brisk though the traffic was in furs and wampum, these mariners of Boston and Salem were not content to voyage coastwise. Offshore fishing made skilled, adventurous seamen of them, and what they caught with hook and line, when dried and salted, was readily exchanged for merchandise in Bermuda, Barbados, and Europe. \(^8\)

The success of the Blessing of the Bay proved an inspiration to the other towns of the New England coastline.

\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 2, 3.
\(^7\)Clark, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
\(^8\)Paine, op. cit., p. 3.
Plymouth, Cape Elizabeth, Newburyport, Ipswich, Marblehead, Salem, and almost every other town had its shipyard.

Trade with the West Indies.—Having their ambition whetted by possibilities of trade with the West Indies, it was inevitable that the Americans, sooner or later, should cast anchor in West Indian ports.

This West Indies trade actually began in 1636 when Thomas Mayhew of Boston and Governor Winthrop's son, John, sent a little sloop to Bermuda. Loaded with corn and smoked pork, she traded her cargo for oranges, lemons, and potatoes and came home to earn a net profit of twenty pounds, a profit for a month's voyage equal at least to $1,000 today. Soon voyages were extended to Havana and other West Indies ports so that, by the time the first American depression, that of 1641, arrived, the Colonists had their own New Deal all waiting in the youthful but flourishing West Indian trade. 9

The Desire.—In 1640 a famous ship made a record. This was the Desire. Its creation was prompted by the interest of Massachusetts men in the West India trade.

Their first West Indian man was the one-hundred-and-twenty-ton Desire, Captain William Pierce, which brought home cotton, tobacco, and Negroes from the Bahamas and salt from Tortugas. As to the outward cargo, it seems to have been composed just as were many cargoes which for two centuries followed, for Winthrop's shrewd comment says of it that 'dry fish and strong liquors are the only commodities for those ports.' In 1664 an historian records of Salem: 'In this town are some very rich merchants.' 10

This little ship later made the voyage to Gravesend in twenty-three days, a record for her day and very good in any time.

9Clark, op. cit., p.20. 10Marvin, op. cit., p.195.
Old Salem.--From out of the group of New England towns mentioned above we must select old Salem, for undoubtedly she led the others with a romantic and astounding flair.

No study of the life and especially of the romance of the American merchant marine would be complete without consideration of the extraordinary part borne in it by this most characteristic coast town of Puritan New England. Salem won and held her unique fame because the pioneer instinct was strong in her people. Her ships sailed where no other ships dared to go. They anchored where no one else dreamed of looking for trade. The first American vessel to the Cape of Good Hope hailed from Salem; the first to open commerce with Hindostan, Java, Sumatra, and, through the Dutch, with Japan. If not the earliest, Salem ships were almost the earliest on the west coast of Africa, where they were long masters of the situation. They were the first in the Fiji Islands, first in Madagascar, first in New Holland and New Zealand, and among the first in South America.11

It would require a whole volume to relate all the known exploits of the Salem ships and their intrepid sailors. But a few of the most spectacular demand attention here. For instance, there was the Light Horse which opened up trade with northern Europe in 1734 with a cargo of sugar for St. Petersburg; also, the Grand Turk with rum as a part of her cargo for the voyage to the Cape of Good Hope; the Atlantic which was the first ship to flaunt the Stars and Stripes at Bombay and Calcutta; and certainly not the least, there

11 Ibid., p. 195.
was the Mt. Vernon which netted its owner, Elias H. Derby, $100,000 on one voyage to the Mediterranean. These were all property of Mr. Derby who owned about forty ships, one of which made forty-five voyages to the Far East.

Ship owners and their captains had to be alert to the needs of the people with whom they traded; therefore the matter of commodities which would reap profit was a subject requiring acumen. Before the days of adequate refrigeration and also before sanitation in the preparation of foods was the science it has since become, spices were in greater demand. And if, as some do, we regard pepper as a spice, there is much of interest concerning this valuable article of commerce. The importance of pepper seems fantastic to the present-day student, but it must be borne in mind that tremendous fortunes have been made from this seemingly unimportant item.

The Rajah.--In fact, the fame of the ship Rajah was won by pepper, a fame certainly "not to be sneezed at" a modern slang addict would say. It was in the year 1795 that the schooner Rajah, property of Jonathan Peale, set out on a mysterious mission.

Nobody but the owner and captain knew of the Rajah's destination, and not a word was heard from the adventurous little vessel for eighteen long months. Then she came triumphantly to port with a cargo of pepper in bulk, the first, it is said, ever imported into this country. From this venture the lucky owner of the Rajah reaped a profit of seven hundred per cent. When
Carnes prepared for another voyage, rival merchants tracked him to Bencoolen, but the shrewd skipper kept the secret of his pungent monopoly. Though the truth finally transpired, as all such mercantile facts must, Salem still continued to dominate the trade with Sumatra, and to furnish a large part of the pepper of the world.12

Indeed, it was the Salem ship Friendship, while engaged in the pepper trade, that was captured by the Malays of a Sumatran town. The pirates murdered several of the crew and plundered the ship.

But Captain Endicott, who was on shore at the time, escaped to sea, and, summoning the help of several American ships from a near-by port, he managed to re-capture his robbed and empty vessel. A year later, the forty-four gun frigate Potomac visited terrible vengeance on the Malay pirates. Qualla Battoo was bombed and destroyed, and a hundred Malay warriors were killed and two hundred wounded in retaliation for the attack on the Friendship. Thus vigorously the United States, in the years when our merchant flag flew on every sea, protected the humblest of its sailor-citizens. 13

Shipbuilding at first a community project.—Now, all this account of great fortunes that were made must not mislead us into thinking that there were capitalists in profusion among the colonists. As a matter of record, there were very few rich men among the earlier colonists, and those few did not care to assume the heavy risks by investing everything in a ship. So among the New Englanders, the building enterprise had to be a co-operative venture.

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12 Marvin, op. cit., p. 201.  
13 Ibid.
And who can deny that this first experience in teamwork explains why it was the New England Confederation that fore-shadowed our national unity.

A vessel was a community venture, and the custom still survives in the ancient ports of the Maine coast where the shapely wooden schooners are fashioned. The blacksmith, the rigger, the calker, took their pay in shares. They became part owners, as did likewise the merchant who supplied stores and material; and when the ship was afloat, the master, the mates, and even the seamen, were allowed cargo space for commodities which they might buy and sell to their own advantage. Such co-operation was a matter of necessity to the New Englanders and was not duplicated anywhere.

While the French were exploring and fur-trading to the westward, the Dutch were also seeking riches in furs over trails to the Iroquois region, and the planters to the south were gaining wealth from their plantations. The New Englanders, meanwhile, confronted by the obstacles of unfavorable climate and rugged soil, were forced to seek a livelihood from the sea. And to do so meant that the forest must yield material for ships.

The partnership idea was an advantage in the matter of securing faithful service on the part of the crew, for they too had financial interests involved in the voyage. 

...Crews, with money scarce, were not paid very large wages. Men before the mast received about two pounds a month, mates about three pounds, and captains

14 Faine, op. cit., p. 3.
seldom more than five. But, each man, in proportion to his rating, was given space in the ship in which he could either carry goods of his own or goods for someone else which he contracted to trade for a share of the profits.

This really was an excellent arrangement for it not only saved the ship owners from paying large wages but it gave the sailors, every man jack, a personal interest in the voyage. The ship carried his property as well as his person and he had his fortune at stake in every storm or peril. Thus, although the wages were low, sea-men made very good incomes, and it was such an excellent opportunity for a boy that the forecastle was often filled with youths who went to sea much the same as modern youths go to college.\footnote{Clark, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 21.}

Not the least element in the building of American trade was the unhampered freedom of the captain of a vessel. Once his port was cleared, he could go where-ever he chose, change his course if he preferred, and bring home products not even known of at the outset of the voyage. This utter freedom, plus the absolute power at the command of the captain, not only stimulated the development of a self-reliance unsurpassed in all the world's history, but it offered an escape mechanism to the New England youths, so often held in rigid conformity to religious observance.

The extreme youthfulness of some of the commanders of sailing vessels was astounding.

... A single voyage often served to demonstrate a raw boy's ability to the berth of a mate and, if his luck was in, the third time out of his home port the boy might be a captain. Very commonly Yankee captains stood on their own quarter decks when in their early twenties and more than one Salem and Boston lad was
in charge of a ship trading on a two-year voyage while still under twenty-one.\footnote{16}

Among the youthful masters were the five Crowninshield brothers of whom we find:

Each was a captain of his own ship and each of them learned their profession by going before the mast - the career which the youth of New England at the time honored above everything else. The father, George Crowninshield, was the mercantile genius of the family but it was his sons who sailed their ships, traded for cargoes, and carried out the instructions which the father, in his Salem counting house, prepared for them.\footnote{17}

One of the Crowninshields, Benjamin, thus gives us an inkling of the ship-consciousness of the New England boy:

\footnote{18}{\ldots When little, boys were sent to a common school. \ldots and about their eleventh year began their first particular study which should develop them as sailors and ship captains. \ldots As soon as the art of navigation was mastered, the youngsters were sent to sea, sometimes as common sailors but commonly as ship's clerks. \ldots able to learn everything about the management of a ship without actually being a common sailor.}

The Empress of China. --But not all the ships sailed from New England. In the year 1784, New York entered the rivalry for Oriental trade.

Out from New York sailed the ship Empress of China for the first direct voyage to Canton, to make acquaintance of a vast nation absolutely unknown to the people of the United States, nor had one in a million of the industrious and highly civilized Chinese ever so much as heard the name of the little community of barbarians who dwelt on the western shore of the North Atlantic. The Oriental dignitaries in their silken robes graciously welcomed the foreign ships and showed a lively interest in the map spread upon

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Clark, \textit{op. cit.}, p.146.
\item[17] Ibid., p. 145.
\item[18] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
the cabin table, offering every facility to promote this new market for their silks and tea. After an absence of fifteen months the Empress of China returned to her home port and her pilgrimage aroused so much attention that the report of the supercargo, Samuel Shaw, was read in Congress. 19

But it was in the year 1737 that the most outstanding voyage of them all took place. This was achieved by the Columbia, the first American ship to circumnavigate the globe. More will be said in a later chapter about the Columbia, but it is imperative that she be mentioned in connection with the China trade, for she traded for furs in our own northwest and then took the furs to China to be exchanged for tea for Boston.

The slave trade.—It was only about three quarters of a century after John Hawkins made his voyage to the Guinea coast, bringing away three hundred slaves for San Domingo, that Puritan New Englanders entered the contest for the profitable slave trade.

The slave trade flourished from the very birth of commerce in Puritan New England and its golden gains and exotic voyages allured high-hearted lads from farm and counter. In 1640 the ship Desire, built at Marblehead, returned from the West Indies and 'brought some cotton and tobacco and Negroes, etc. from thence.' Earlier than this the Dutch of Manhattan had employed black labor, and it was provided that the Incorporated West India Company should 'allot to each patroon twelve black men and women out of the prizes in which Negroes should be found.' 20

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20 Ibid., p. 7.
And from this voyage on, the New Englanders sought negroes to supply the demand. To furnish Virginia and the Carolinas with the kind of labor most needed,

...Newport and Bristol drove a roaring traffic in 'rum and niggers,' with a hundred sail to be found in the infamous Middle Passage. The master of one of these Rhode Island slavers, writing home from Guinea in 1736, portrayed the congestion of the trade in this wise: 'For never was there so much rum on the coast at one time before. Not ye like of ye French ships was never seen before, for ye whole coast is full of them. For my part I can give no guess when I shall get away, for I purchast but 27 slaves since I have been here, for slaves is very scarce. We have had nineteen sail of us at one time in ye road, so that ships that used to carry pryme slaves off is now forced to take any that comes. Here is seven sail of us rum men that are ready to devour one another, for our case is desprit.'... It belonged to the dark ages with piracy and witchcraft, better forgotten than remembered, save for its potent influence in schooling brave seamen and building faster ships for peace and war.'

Whaling and whalers.—Any student who loves adventure, and dangerous adventure at that, can spend many an engrossing hour following the beginning of America's part in the whaling industry which has been a valuable contribution to the prosperity of our people.

It was New York colonists who took the lead in whale-hunting as a systematic industry. In 1644 the town of Southampton, Long Island, whose waters even in late years have been a favorite playground for marine mammals, appointed men especially to look for whales cast ashore. From this it was easy to hold

21 Ibid., pp. 7, 8.
boats in readiness to chase and kill whales which came close in, but were not actually stranded. The trade developed in the same way on Cape Cod, which bears so close a physical resemblance to Long Island... This business is by whaling sloops or schooners with two whaleboats and thirteen men... As whales grew more and more shy and voyages lengthened, these sloops and schooners gave way to brigs and ships carrying three or four boats and twenty to forty men. But until the Revolution the American whaler was seldom much larger than one hundred tons. In 1690 the people of Nantucket, 'finding that the people of Cape Cod had made greater proficiency in the art of whale-catching than themselves,' sent thither and engaged one Ichabod Paddock to remove to the island and instruct them in the best ways of killing whales and obtaining the oil. 22

This teacher must have known his subject-matter and his pupils must have been eager for what he had to teach, for the youth of Nantucket applied themselves with such assiduity that their little town soon took the lead in their highly profitable specialty.

Nantucket boys thus received the same thorough, painstaking preparation for their peculiar branch of the sea-man's profession which was being given to their comrades in the trading ships of Salem, Boston, and New York. The fame of this wonderful island of superb whalemen was world-wide. 23

The long-voyage whaleships.--The whalers of Nantucket were in great demand by French and English, and the powers in America had strenuous work to prevent their loss to America. Favorable legislation was passed by Massachusetts in 1789, and whaleships set out anew. Hearing that sperm whales had

22 Marvin, op. cit., pp. 133-134.
23 Ibid., pp. 137-138.
been sighted off Madagascar, Nantucket whalemen immediately started for that destination. Six whaleships were fitted out two years later for the distant field of opportunity. Their endeavors were richly rewarded. It is worthy of mention that the Washington, one of this group, carried the flag of the United States for the first time into the Peruvian port of Callao. The whaleships of the eighteenth century were not as good as the later models and it is a wonder that they ever got back home.

Their limitations were that

. . . They were short, broad, apple-bowed craft, averaging only about two hundred and fifty tons, slow and unwieldy under the most favorable conditions. But when it is remembered that these early ships went to sea uncoppered and passed nearly all of their voyage in warm latitudes, where weed and barnacles gather quickly on uncovered bottoms, the wonder is that the skippers of these old tubs ever managed to crawl back to Nantucket Island. The Beaver, of two hundred and forty tons, one of the six Pacific pioneers of 1791, is a good example of the crudity of the old whalemen. Her whole cost, fitted for the voyage, was $10,212, or less than one fifth of the cost of a first-class whaleship a half a century later. 24

But these whalers made good returns on the money invested.

As for the ships themselves, those that escaped the hazards of the trade eventually earned their costs many times over. Probably no ships ever earned so much over their original costs as whalers. This was so for several reasons. One was that the ships were very well built. Ordinary ships were not stout enough to venture into Arctic and Antarctic perils, and most whalers were specially constructed of the strongest materials. Another

24 Marvin, op. cit., p. 139.
reason was that the whalers were not designed for speed at all — speed meant nothing to them — so they could be as broad-beamed, as heavy and as low-masted as the owner wished. This weight and low center of gravity gave the ships great sea-worthiness and although they only waddled along, they were capable of surviving the worst storms that ever blew. A third reason was that they were never driven; whalers had plenty of time. ... And the fourth reason, perhaps the most important of all, was that whale oil seemed to act as a preservative.25

Of course, the whole ship in time would be saturated with oil. Thus the life of a whaling vessel was much longer than that of an ordinary merchantman. The Maria was built in 1782...

... She made twenty-seven whaling voyages over a period of seventy years, and in 1863, a still serviceable ship at eighty-one years of age, she was sold to a Chilean merchant. Other old ships included the Rosseau, busy for ninety-seven years; the Triton, which worked for seventy-nine years; and the Charles E. Morgan, of equal venerability.26

Continuing with the story of Nantucket: the whalers were not afraid to go anywhere if the possibilities of adequate reward seemed apparent.

The whalers of Nantucket, in their apple-bowed barks, explored and hunted in distant seas, and the smoke of their try-pots darkened the waters of Baffin Bay, Guinea, and Brazil. It was they who inspired Edmund Burke's familiar eulogy: "No sea but is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of England ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people — a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood."

In 1762, seventy-eight whalers cleared from American ports, of which more than half were from Nantucket. Eight years later there were one hundred and

25 Clark, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
26 Ibid., p. 186.
twenty-five whalers out of Nantucket which took 14,331 barrels of oil valued at $358,200. In size these vessels averaged no more than ninety tons, a fishing smack of today, and yet they battered their way half around the watery globe and comfortably supported six thousand people who dwelt on a sandy island unfit for farming and having no other industries. Every Nantucket lad sailed for his 'lay' or share of the catch and aspired to command eventually a whaler of his own.27

While Nantucket led in the business of whaling,

...Other ports of importance in the trade were Boston, Lynn, New Bedford, Falmouth, and adjacent Cape towns with Newport and Providence leading Rhode Island, New London leading Connecticut, and Sag Harbor, Long Island. Some 5,000 men sailed on these 300 odd ships, and annually the ships brought home about 50,000 barrels of sperm oil, some 10,000 barrels of right whale oil, and nearly fifty tons of whale bone.28

A few instances of famous whaling voyages are these:

...Other large catches included the Coral of New Bedford, $126,000; the William Hamilton of New Bedford, $109,000 and the Pioneer of New London, only a year out, $150,000. Certainly since the average cost of ship and provisions was well under $50,000, the owners doubled their money on many a voyage.29

What did England say?—From the foregoing record, it is logical to inquire into England's attitude toward the flourishing trade built up by her colonists. The British government, sooner or later, was certainly due to hear complaints from English merchants as they felt one article of commerce after another slip through their grasping fingers and become the profits of Americans. And so English law was called into being to throttle the new rivals.

28 Clark, op. cit., p.177.
29 Ibid., p. 183.
From the very beginning, of course, English merchants and shipbuilders sought to restrain the enthusiasm of the Colonies. The business began as early as 1650 when Parliament provided that nothing produced in Asia, Africa, or America should be imported into any part of the British Empire excepting in English ships. Really this was only a blow at the Dutch merchant marine, an energetic expansion of which was seriously threatening British profits, and Yankee ships were not bothered. But this first law was followed by others, each more stringent than the last. And in these, direct blows were struck at Yankee ships. The laws, especially those of 1663, forbade American ships to carry American products anywhere else in the world than to England. This meant that Yankee ships must take American sugar, molasses, fustic, tobacco, cotton, indigo, coffee, hides, iron, grains, lumber and all the rest to England first, and from there they could be re-exported under restrictions. So much for exporting. As for importing, the law provided that 'no commodity of the growth, production or manufacture of Europe, shall be imported into the British plantations but such as are laden and put on board in England.' Thus the laws deliberately, after starting out to ruin the Dutch, attempted to strangle the Yankees by forcing them to bring everything to England first and then coming to England again to load for home. At one stroke, America was cut off from France, Germany, Holland and all other countries - even from the West Indies. 30

American shipbuilding was already beginning to be active, for

In 1776, one third of the seagoing merchant marine of Great Britain had been bought or built to order in America because lumber was cheaper and wages were lower. This lucrative business was killed by a law which denied Englishmen the privilege of purchasing ships built in American yards. So narrow and bitter was this commercial enmity, so ardent this desire to banish the Stars and Stripes from blue water, that Lord Sheffield in 1784 advised Parliament that the pirates of Algiers and Tripoli really benefited English commerce by preying on the shipping of weaker nations. 'It is not probable that the American States will have a very free hand in the

__30__ Clark, op. cit., p. 35.
Mediterranean,' said he. 'It will not be to the interest of any of the great maritime powers to protect them from the Barbary States. If they know their interests, they will not encourage the Americans to be carriers. That the Barbary States are advantageous to maritime powers is certain.'

But the colonials disregarded the harmful English laws and went blithely on their way to increased prosperity. Bigger and better ships were constructed, and seamen grew more bold in their hazardous undertakings.

... Despite English laws, they sought their colonial good. Being naturally law abiding, they justified this law-breaking by believing that they were entitled to appeal to 'higher laws,' those of the common rights of man, a philosophy crystallized later on for all time in the introduction to the Declaration of Independence.\(^\text{32}\)

And thus the Americans rationalized their violations.

Since the study, so far, brings us to the verge of the American Revolutionary War, we shall follow in the next chapter with an account of American fighting-ships.

\(^{31}\) Paine, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48.

\(^{32}\) Clark, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.
CHAPTER V

AMERICAN FIGHTING SHIPS

The Period from 1690 to 1854

Almost from the first, American trading-vessels were equipped for fighting as a purely defensive measure, for their purpose was primarily peaceful. But it was piracy that brought about the necessity for ships that could prove worthy in actual battle.

Piracy. -- Piracy, as old as marine commerce itself, grew as the development of commerce progressed until every nation found it necessary to combat it. But in fighting the pirates, the captors of richly laden pirate ships gained such valuable rewards for successful battle that it is difficult to draw the line between the war against piracy and the actual falling into the habits of the pirates themselves. Patriotism rationalized the seizing of enemy merchant craft. Better ships, able to defend themselves in any emergency, were in demand.

The Adventure-Galley. -- It was from a desire to wipe out piracy that the government of England began, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, to take measures to suppress
the "mad dogs of the seas." But,

... as all the regular navy was needed in the war with France, it was decided to organize a stock company in which the King, the Duke of Shrewsbury, Lord Chancellor Somers, the Earl of Bellomont, Oxford, and Romney, Robert Livingston, and others took shares, for the purpose of fitting out a privateering vessel to fight the pirates and at the same time to win some profit for themselves. The Adventure-Galley, carrying thirty guns and manned by over one hundred sailors, was fitted out and entrusted to the command of Captain Kidd, a sea-captain of New York who chanced to be in London at the time and who was warmly recommended by Robert Livingston to Lord Bellomont who had been appointed to succeed Fletcher as Governor of New York.1

Captain Kidd was a highly respected resident of New York and was a merchant of favorable renown. But, for all that, he was arrested, convicted of becoming a pirate, and hanged.

Strangest of all the sea tales of colonial history is that of Captain Kidd and his cruise in the Adventure-Galley. His name is reddened with crimes never committed, his grisly phantom has stalked through the legends and literature of piracy, and the Kidd tradition still has magic to set the treasure-seekers exploring almost every beach, cove, and headland from Halifax to the Gulf of Mexico. Yet if truth were told, he never cut a throat or made a victim walk a plank. He was tried and hanged for the trivial offense of breaking the head of a mutinous gunner of his own crew with a wooden bucket. It was even a matter of grave legal doubt whether he had committed one single piratical act.2

But Captain Kidd had shown himself a good judge of ships.

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Once in December, 1693, he captured the *Quedagh Merchant*, an East India vessel. He took the ship for his own and burned the *Adventure-Galley*. Then he sailed again for Madagascar. Later, while returning to New York, he abandoned the *Quedagh Merchant* with her valuable cargo, at San Domingo. No one knows what became of her, but the booty she bore is still being searched for by those who seek buried treasure.\(^3\)

While the *Adventure-Galley* and the *Quedagh Merchant* were not American ships, yet the close relationship to American history and the American personnel who were a part of their adventures necessitate an account of them in any study of American fighting ships.

War must be waged on the level of the lower group participating. This was especially demonstrated in the wars with pirates. The ships usually came alongside and, when the weaker vessel was disabled, she was boarded by the victors. Then, cold-blooded, hand-to-hand fighting, with cutlass and dagger, took place - degrading in both performance and ultimate effects.

Many exciting tales of conflict with the pirates have given heart to those who love law and order, however. Not all who fought pirates turned pirates in retaliation, but the

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\(^3\) Goodman, *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 174.
temptation to do so was there. One of the accounts given
great publicity was the capture, by the notorious pirate
Charles Vail, of the famous Captain John Shattuck in 1713,
while returning from Jamaica. With his ship of twelve guns
and a hundred and twenty men, Vail easily took Shattuck to
Crooked Island, seized his cargo, stripped his vessel, and
abused his crew before releasing him. This capture in-
vited revenge and consequently resulted in the building of
better ships and with better armaments than those belonging
to the pirates.

The ship Hopewell also suffered much at the hands of
pirates in 1713. Near Hispaniola she was robbed, her crew
ill-treated, and the mate carried off because the pirates
needed a navigator. And there were the depredations of the
infamous Ned Low who robbed a fleet of fourteen fishermen
while plying their trade off Cape Sable. No person with a
sense of fairness could learn of such things and not want
to strike down the offender.

A more satisfying story is the account of the brave
little Boston sloop Mary, sent out after the pirate Thomas
Pounds, in 1689. When Captain Samuel Pease of the Mary
was mortally wounded in the battle, Pounds strutted about
on his quarter-deck, daring the crew to come on. They ac-
cepted the challenge, swarmed aboard, took the ship, and
brought Pounds back to be hanged.

4 Paine, op. cit., pp. 10 et seq.
The Mediterranean pirates.---President Jefferson hardly had come into office when he saw the need for a firm hand with the pirates of the Barbary States. Their specialty was capturing merchant ships having business in the Mediterranean ports and holding them for ransom. Nations desiring protection against this practice would pay the pirate nations a fixed sum every year not to seize their ships. The undeclared war lasted until 1815, continuing throughout our War of 1812. The ships famous in this important participation will be emphasized in the discussion of war ships.

Suffice it to say here that our War with Tripoli not only brought fame to our country, yet in its infancy, but it established the principle of the freedom of the seas from racketeer nations.

As to the pirates operating in and around the West Indies, the United States navy performed a magnificent service. Several famous ships took part in subduing the marauders. In 1821, six light cruisers were sent out to find them, wherever they were.

The Enterprise and her companions.---The Enterprise, already having come with honors through three wars, was one of these cruisers. Arriving where four pirate ships were in the act of pillaging American merchant vessels off Cuba, the Enterprise succeeded in capturing three of the craft and
forty of the crew. The cutthroats were sent to Charleston where they were tried and executed.

. . . This warfare with the pirates became such serious business that in 1822 our little cruisers were reinforced by the thirty-eight-gun frigate "Macedonian," the thirty-six-gun "Congress" and several corvettes under the command of Commodore James Biddle. One of our cruisers, the "Shark," Lieutenant Matthew Calbraith Perry (who afterward led the memorable expedition to Japan), captured five pirate craft in a single season. Another young officer who figured brilliantly in this service was midshipman David Glasgow Farragut.5

At first, the Spanish governors considered the activity of the American navy an intrusion upon the profitable business of the pirates, but when they sensed the earnestness and power of the navy, they finally gave, if rather grudgingly, their support. By the end of 1825, these pirates were practically conquered.

The final crushing of the West India pirates was of vast benefit to the American merchant fleet, and one of the noblest tasks which the United States navy has ever performed in the cause of civilization and humanity.6 Many precious American lives were sacrificed to the work of clearing away the terrors of the Old Spanish Main and they as truly died for their country as if on a better-known battlefield.

The pirates did not give up without terrific struggles and certainly not without the concerted acts on the part of governments.

5 Marvin, op. cit., pp.191-192. 6 Ibid.
... Piracy died hard, but the eighteenth century saw it end among the people of civilized countries, although it was after the opening of the nineteenth century that Europe ceased to tolerate it on the part of the Barbary States. ... The stringent law against piracy, passed by Parliament in 1698, was much needed, although its enforcement proved impracticable during the war of the Spanish Succession (1702-13), the days of the famous Captain Kidd. By 1720, however, the British navy had successfully driven the black flag from the ports of the civilized nations and greatly restricted its ravages on the high seas.

Pirates and shipbuilding. -- We have positive and negative influences upon progress, and we may regard the pirates as one of the negative influences; that is, they did not intend to be beneficial, but, in striving to build ships that out-sailed all others, they stimulated others to do likewise, and development was hastened by their efforts.

... What improvement there was in the sailing qualities of ships, up until about a hundred years ago, was provided as often as not by smugglers and pirates. The truly great trains were employed at other kinds of work. Mankind did not have much respect as yet for machinery - and it should not be forgotten that a sailing ship is a machine.

The privateer. -- Certainly the improvement of fighting ships was greatly advanced by the privateer, a fighting ship itself. In order to prey upon enemy shipping, the privateer had to be able to overtake as well as to outclass in fighting

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7 Emory Johnson and others, History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States, V I, p. 83.

8 Alexander Laing, Clippership Men, p. 39.
the object of her activities. But just what is a privateer?

How is she different from a "Letter of Marque?"

... Legally there was no difference, but in practice a privateer was a vessel which took out a license for the purpose of cruising against the enemy's merchant ships. In order to send the prizes into port she necessarily carried a large crew. A 'Letter of Marque' was a merchant ship with a cargo bound for her port in the usual manner, but possessing this license which exempted her from convoy, nominally protected her crew from being impressed, and gave her the right to attack an enemy merchantman without having to wait until the latter attacked her. In a word she was primarily a merchantman, whereas the privateer was a fighting merchant cruiser. 9

Privateers were the legally authorized ships sent out against pirates and against enemy nations in time of war. Their effect upon the pirates has been shown. Now let us see their importance in war.

In the American Revolutionary War, the service of our small and inadequate navy was outweighed by that of the privateers. At the beginning of the war we had thirty naval vessels; at the end, only nine, with a fighting strength of one hundred and sixty-four guns.

... But in the same year the American privateers, converted out of merchantmen, and managed by individual ship owners, numbered four hundred and forty-nine, mounting in all 6,735 guns. The American privateers of 1775-83 captured or destroyed three times as many of the enemy's ships as did our frigates and sloops-of-war. 10

These privateers were so active that the linen ships going

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from Ireland to England had to have naval protection. They swarmed in the Atlantic all the way to Yucatan.

A letter written home from Grenada in 1777 gives a graphic idea, from the British standpoint, of the havoc of these privateers: 'Everything continues exceedingly dear, and we are happy if we can get anything for money, by reason of the quantity of vessels taken by the Americans. A fleet of vessels came from Ireland a few days ago. From sixty vessels that departed from Ireland not above twenty-five arrived in this and neighboring islands, the others, it is thought, being all taken by the American privateers. 11

The letter goes on to tell of a ship from Africa with a cargo consisting of four hundred and fifty negroes, gold dust, and elephant teeth, captured by an American privateer with only fourteen cannon.

Certainly, there was another side of the picture; England, also, had privateers that inflicted deadly damage to our shipping. The outstanding privateers of the Revolutionary War were: the Lexington, herself finally captured, the Repri-sal, lost on the Grand Banks, the Dolphin, and the Revenge.

In the War of 1812, privateers played an equally important part. These privateers were for the most part converted merchant vessels and carried merchant crews. They made more captures than did the navy.

The money value of British ships and cargoes captured by our government cruisers in the second War for Independence is estimated at $6,600,000; the money value of ships and cargoes captured by our privateers,

11 Ibid.
at $39,000,000. In this terrible attack upon England's 'pocket nerve' our great merchant marine proved six times as potent as our little navy. 12

The items included in the captures are: fifty-six war vessels, 2,423 merchant ships, 610 brigs, 520 schooners, 135 sloops, and the recapture of more than 700 American vessels. 13

The leading privateers during the War of 1812 included: the Chasseur, a schooner of sixteen long twelve-pounders and carrying a hundred men, which boasted eighteen valuable merchantmen captured on her first cruise; the Syren, the Governor Tompkins, the Harpy of Baltimore, the Prince de Neuchatel and the Young Wasp.

The beginning of our navy.--On December 22, 1775, the Continental Congress authorized the first naval fleet which comprised the Alfred, Columbus, Andrea Doria and the Cabot. Esek Hopkins was placed in command with the title of Commander in Chief of the Navy - a title never again borne by any naval officer, as it was later included in a part of the title of the President of the United States. Hopkins was court martialed and dismissed from the service for "woeful weakness" in a battle with the English Glasgow.

The Bonhomme Richard.--In 1777 John Paul Jones was given command of the Ranger, 308 tons, eighteen guns, and it

12 Marvin, op. cit., p. 128.

came forward with his inspiring poem, in response to which many an American heart has quickened with intense patriotism.

The Essex.--Community spirit and national patriotism were never more harmoniously blended than when, at the close of the eighteenth century, the citizens of Essex County, Massachusetts, built and presented to the United States a frigate of thirty-two guns, in protest against the destruction of our commerce by French ships. We were in a state of undeclared war with France.

All through a bitter New England winter, great oak timbers, on sleds pulled by plodding oxen, were brought into Salem while people thronged along the way to cheer. The construction went on busily for five months and seventeen days from the laying of the keel, and the launching took place on the 30th of September, 1799. When the Essex slid down the ways, she flaunted cordage, rigging, foremost, and mizzenmast—everything made in Salem. The occasion was one of rejoicing, for practically everyone present could feel he had a vested interest.

And the proud ship fulfilled every expectation. She made a glorious record. Very soon she was sent to the Indian Ocean to protect our trading vessels there, and in doubling the Cape

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Marvin, op. cit., p. 212.
Paine, Old Merchant Marine, p. 104.
of Good Hope became our very first warship to accomplish that feat. Later, she rendered excellent service in helping punish the pirates of the Barbary States. But if the Essex had done nothing else, she still would be famous for one outstanding cruise. Under command of Captain David Porter, she was sent to the Indian Ocean, in the autumn of 1812, to assist the Constitution and the sloop Hornet on a secret mission against British commerce. Being unable to meet appointments with the other two ships Captain Porter decided to change his course and, instead, to go to the defense of American whalers in the South Pacific. After breasting the terrors in doubling the Horn, the Essex reached Valparaiso, only to find that Americans already were being captured by British letters of Marque. Captain Porter immediately decided "to sweep the seas of all whaleships of the enemy." And he backed his decision with vigorous action.

So successful was the Essex that British whaling never recovered from her blows and the flag of the United States was supreme thereafter in that locality. Admiral Farragut who was midshipman on the Essex on this cruise, said afterward in his journal, that the reason the English whalers were not difficult to overcome was that many of the men on board were Americans who had been pressed into service against

21 Marvin, op. cit., p. 144.
their own country. The *Essex* was finally overpowered by the British men-of-war *Phoebe* and *Cherub*, March, 1814, but even in defeat she was famous for she had saved the greater part of our fleet and had captured their tormentors. 22

The *Hornet*, on the cruise mentioned in the foregoing account of the *Essex*, was commanded by Captain Lawrence who distinguished himself, his crew, and his ship in the battle with the British sloop *Peacock*, taking the latter a prize after an action of only fifteen minutes off the coast of British Guiana. When he returned, he was appointed Captain of the frigate *Chesapeake*.

The *Chesapeake*.--Captain Lawrence's appointment to the command of the *Chesapeake* was received in May, 1813, and already the British frigate *Shannon* was offering a challenge to come out and fight. Lawrence, whose bravery far exceeded his prudence, within two weeks sailed out from Boston to meet the *Shannon*. Even Lawrence's crew were not only new to him but new to the ship, and, without adequate preparation the *Chesapeake* was no match for the well-organized men on the *Shannon*. The inevitable happened. On the afternoon of June 1st, the *Chesapeake*'s colors were lowered after only fifteen minutes of fighting. A still greater tragedy was the sacrifice of the brave Lawrence. One of the most inspiring

watchwords of our navy has ever been that of his dying plea, "Don't give up the ship." Therefore, the fame of the Chesapeake rests upon disaster, but not just that. Perhaps the subsequent victory of Perry on Lake Erie might not have taken place but for the courage drawn from him and his men by that fluttering reminder of Lawrence's last words.²³

When the War of 1812 began, Oliver H. Perry with the title of Master-Commandant, was at Newport in charge of some gunboats. Only twenty-six years old, he was already a seasoned veteran of two wars. He now requested to be sent where he could meet the enemy. The Navy Department obliged by ordering him "to select such officers and men from his gunboat flotilla as were adapted for service on the Great Lakes and to report to Captain Isaac Chauncy at Sackett's Harbor." His order was received on February 17, 1813, and that very day he sent fifty men under Sailing-Master Thomas C. Almy, to Lake Ontario. At close intervals, two more groups of fifty men each were on their way. Perry himself with his thirteen-year-old brother James set out on a long and lonely journey. On arriving at Sackett's Harbor, he found a most depressing situation. The men were half-frozen and some were very ill with plague. Perry's task was to regain Lake Erie.

²³ Reynolds, op. cit., p. 19.

from the British who had captured all the vast region of the Territory of Michigan. An expected attack from the British detained him there two weeks, but he soon proceeded to Erie.

On the 27th of March he set up headquarters at Duncan's Hotel. By this time Sailing-Master Daniel Dobbins, assisted by Noah Brown, New York shipwright, had several vessels nearly constructed.

Two brigs, the Niagara and the Lawrence, which were being constructed at the mouth of Cascade Creek, had been built with white and black oak and chestnut frames, the outside planking being of oak, while the decks were of pine. Many trees found their places in these vessels on the same day they were felled in the forest. Each brig was one hundred and ten feet long and twenty-nine feet wide.

The Lawrence was so named by order of the Secretary of the Navy, who on receiving the news of the capture of the Chesapeake by the Shannon, June 1, 1813, ordered that one of the brigs be named after the Chesapeake's commander. Two gunboats, nearly planked up, were at the mouth of Lee's Run between the present Beech and Sassafras Streets of Erie, while work on a schooner called the Scorpion was just begun.

Perry learned that the British knew of the construction of the boats and were making preparations for attack. Therefore, the shipwrights, when not actually working on construction, were formed into a guard and drilled for defense.

By the time the brigs were ready for launching the Americans found that they were destitute of rigging, sails, armaments, and general equipments, and with a view

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25 Ibid., p. 495.  
26 Ibid.
of hastening their arrival Master-Commandant Perry went to Pittsburg. Returning from this tedious journey, he hastened to Buffalo with Sailing-Master Dobbins for men and ammunition.\(^{27}\)

Luckily for the Americans, the English had to abandon Fort Erie. Therefore, the squadron at Erie was re-inforced by five more vessels: the brig *Caledonia*, the schooners *Somers*, *Tigress* and *Ohio*, and the sloop *Trippe*.

**The Lawrence.**—September, 10, 1813, the Battle of Lake Erie took place. The *Lawrence* took the brunt of attack from three big enemy ships for more than an hour with shattering damage to herself. So greatly disabled was she that Perry decided to transfer command to the *Niagara*, taking the blue flag with Lawrence's admonition with him, but calling to the men on board to remain steadfast. The Stars and Stripes were still flying above the *Lawrence*. He at once raised his flag above the *Niagara*, but, perceiving the change of ships, the enemy thought the battle was their victory. However, the tide turned and the enemy had to surrender after about thirty minutes. Perry, with a dramatic sense of values, returned to the wrecked *Lawrence* and there received the surrender of the British fleet.

Perry's cryptic report on the battle is famous and, in addition Lawrence's death had been avenged.

**Maconnoch's fleet on Lake Champlain.**—The battle which

\(^{27}\) *Ibid.*
drew the War of 1812 to such a close that the Americans could keep their northern territory was Master Commander Thomas Macdonough's victory on Lake Champlain with the Saratoga (flagship) with eight long twenty-four pounders, six short forty-two pounders and twelve thirty-two pounders; the Eagle with eight long eighteen pounders and twelve short thirty-two pounders; the Ticonderoga with eight long twelve pounders, four long eighteen pounders and five short thirty-two pounders; the Preble with seven long nine pounders; and less than a dozen small boats, September 11, 1814, the action lasting two hours, twenty minutes.23

Ships in the Mexican War.—Any study of sailing fighting vessels that have gained fame and influenced the history of the United States would be sadly lacking if it did not mention the ship-of-the-line Ohio, a vessel of 2,542 tons, seventy-four guns. She was constructed in New York, 1820, and saw active service during the Mexican War, along the coasts of Mexico. Also serving valiantly in this war were the sloop-of-war St. Mary's, one of the squadron capturing Vera Cruz, March, 1847; the sloop-of-war Dale, 566 tons, sixteen thirty-two pounder guns; and the Portsmouth, also a sloop-of-war, 1,022 tons. The service these and their

23 Reynolds, op. cit., p. 20.
MacKay, op. cit., p. 604.
sister ships rendered was a no small factor in bringing
the Mexican War to a successful close and thereby con-
tributing greatly to our "Manifest Destiny."

The Columbus and the Vincennes in Japan.—Of peculiar
interest to us now is the cruise of the eighty-gun ship,
the Columbus, and the sloop-of-war, twenty guns, Vincennes,
to Japan in 1846. When they entered the Bay of Yedo, they
were halted and forbidden to proceed. The Americans were
not allowed to land and were requested to leave as soon as
they obtained necessary supplies. The Japanese authorities
were polite but insistent. Japan's attitude towards ship-
wrecked sailors of foreigners was beginning to pall. She
imprisoned sailors on ships tossed up by storms. In 1849,
the warship Preble made a voyage to Nagasaki to rescue
some sailors of American ships held prisoners by the
Japanese. Commander Glynn thought the time opportune to
try to bring about more friendly relations. It was in
accord with his suggestion that, in 1853, Commodore
Matthew C. Perry made a friendly call at Yedo with the
steam frigate Susquehanna, the ship-of-war Mississippi,
said to be, with the exception of the Constitution, the
navy's most historic ship-of-war—the Saratoga, and
other ships. In 1854 he returned to Japan and negotiated

\textsuperscript{29}Edward M. Barrows, \textit{The Great Commodore}, p. 123.
a treaty.

It was in Japan that his theory received its highest vindication, and it is in recognition of this that Perry holds his high place in the estimation of the Japanese today. They saw him come to their shores with an inferior but indomitable force, to demand consideration of a just cause. They saw him return later with a superior force, but make no attempt to use it for reasons other than those urged on his first visit. They saw also that alone of many would-be invaders, Perry understood the Japanese point of view and respected it. He knew that he was dealing with a civilization not the less worthy because it differed from our own; that the purpose of his visit was not to impose a superior will but to develop a community of aims between two self-respecting nations. 30

Sailing vessels and steam.—Although Robert Fulton's successful demonstration of a boat propelled by steam was made in 1807, the steam-ship did not come into general use by the navy until the period of the War Between the States; and even for a long time thereafter, steam vessels were equipped with sails, in case the steam machinery broke down. It can be asserted, however, that the absolute dependence upon sails in time of war closed about the year 1854. 31

30  
Ibid., p. 361.

31  
Reynolds, op. cit., p. 33.
CHAPTER VI

WESTWARD EXPANSION AND THE CLIPPER SHIPS

The Period from 1803 to 1861

Even before the treaty of 1783 officially closed our Revolutionary War, there were, no doubt, those far-seeing thinkers who believed that some Great Power had determined that the boundaries of the United States would eventually reach the Pacific Ocean. After the treaty was actually achieved, which gave the United States the Mississippi River as her western limit, a great deal of attention naturally came to be centered upon the regions beyond. It is a well-known sociological fact that a river is a poor boundary, because the same civilization tends to follow the valley, which, of course, includes both sides of the river.

In the unfolding of our manifest destiny as it applies to our westward expansion, five important steps present themselves after 1783. And the first of these is the acquisition of Louisiana from France in 1803.

Importance of ships.—The purchase of Louisiana was occasioned by the necessities for protection of American boats and ships and the safe-guarding of the right of
deposit for shippers. As there were no overland routes of transportation that were dependable, the only way to send merchandise to the east coast was by ship. So from the very beginning of farming along the Mississippi River, the marketing of products was intertwined with transportation by ship. The construction of a packet, especially for the cotton trade, will be taken up a little later. As long as New Orleans was held by foreigners, complications would continue to harass the minds of our farmers. Since regular schedules for sailing were long in coming, the warehouse privileges with variable costs were of great concern to President Jefferson and the interests he served.

Texas.—Although in 1819, the western boundary of Louisiana was fixed, the annexation of Texas in 1845 was the second step in our Manifest Destiny after 1783.

Throughout the history of Texas, ships played a prominent part. Passing rapidly from the ships that brought the Spanish explorers and the ship of La Salle who introduced the French complication, our attention is arrested first by the infiltration of Americans into Texas, and, second, by organized groups who were brought to Texas under government contracts. And the rather interesting slant on the colonization just here is the fact that some of the colonists came by ship.
These were days of want and peril in the colony; yet its members continued to toil, and their numbers were increased by new immigrants. In April, 1822, the schooner Revenge, Captain Shires, brought upward of eighty colonists. They landed at Fort Bolivar, lately occupied by the forces under Long. They then proceeded up the bay, and ran aground on Redfish bar. The passengers left the vessel, and went ashore on the west side of the bay. From this point they proceeded in search of homes. Two of them, Moses L. Choate and Colonel Pettis, went up the San Jacinto river some ten miles above its mouth, where they made, perhaps, the first improvements ever effected on that stream.\footnote{1}

Also, in June, 1822, the schooner Only Son arrived at the mouth of the Colorado with a number of settlers, together with their necessary provisions.\footnote{2}

Every Texas school child can relate the story of the Lively with supplies that never reached Austin's colonists for whom they were shipped. The second trip of the Lively was disastrous:

About this same time the schooner Lively, now making its second trip, was wrecked on the west end of Galveston Island, and the cargo, consisting of the effects of the passengers and supplies for the colonists, were taken by the schooner John Motley and landed at the mouth of the Colorado.\footnote{3}

Another ship of great significance to Texas was Henry Austin's Ariel, the first steamboat to navigate the waters of Texas, or even of the Mexican Republic. Since our study is one concerned with sailing vessels and not steamboats we shall leave the Ariel with this mention, although further discussion would reward the student.

\footnote{3} Ibid., p. 125.
The ships above mentioned are just a few of the vessels that helped pave the way for the Texas Revolution and the establishment of the Republic of Texas which ceased to exist when Texas was annexed to the United States when John Tyler was President.

The Texas navy.—In 1836, when the Texans were fighting for their independence from Mexico, their efforts were greatly augmented by the effective service rendered by the addition of a navy, small though it was. It became possible . . . "that the authorities had managed, through the kindness of good friends, to pick up a small navy of three vessels, viz.: the Invincible, Captain L. Brown; the Brutus, Captain Hurd; and the Independence, Captain Hawkins." These ships were very active all during the period of hostilities and in no small degree helped pave the way for the Republic.

The Oregon country.—In 1787, what became known as the Oregon Country was a little known land. As our Revolution was closing, the great navigator, Captain James Cook, was making his explorations in the North Pacific. For Captain Cook so much respect was felt that Franklin, then our Minister to France and Marine Superintendent, urged our cruisers to forget our quarrel if they met Captain Cook and render him every aid. Traveling with the Cook expedition

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was John Ledyard, American, a youth who kept a journal and charted the voyage (1783).

Ledyard, an indefatigable worker and writer, kept journals of his travels. In 1783, after deserting the British navy in New York, he tried to interest merchants in sending trading ships to what is now the coast of Oregon and Washington. He was such an enthusiast of the Pacific Northwest and drew such a rosy picture of it that he was thought to be a dreamer. He wanted that country for America. He did not want it to go by default to Britain, Russia or Spain. 5

There were three people who were impressed: Robert Morris, John Paul Jones, and Thomas Jefferson. What New York merchants rejected, Boston merchants accepted. Charles Bulfinch, not yet the famous architect he afterwards became, worked as a clerk for Joseph Barrel, a merchant, Mr. Barrel, influenced by young Bulfinch's belief in such a venture, decided to send out an expedition. These two were joined by Samuel Brown, merchant, John Derby, Salem shipmaster, Captain Crowell Hatch, Cambridge, and John Pintard, New York. Their combined capital was fifty thousand dollars, a huge sum for their day. Now, for a ship!

The Columbia.—Their choice was the Columbia built at Scituate on the North River in 1773. She was old but substantial—213 tons—having three square-rigged masts, and boasting ten cannon. Her consort was the Lady Washington—

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Also: Justin Winsor, The Westward Movement, p. 238.
ninety-ton sloop - graceful, with one mast, large mainsail, three jibs, a square topsail. She could hardly be claimed seaworthy.

The ships' officers were most carefully selected. In charge of the expedition and commander of the Columbia was John Kendrick of Wareham, forty-five, a mariner. Captain Robert Gray, Boston, Revolutionary naval officer, was in charge of the Lady Washington. He was the real hero of the voyage, for circumstances soon drew him into full leadership. Going along, also, were: as first officer, Simeon Woodruff, formerly with Captain Cook; as second officer, Joseph Ingraham; the third, Robert Haswell of Hull - artist and writer of the expedition. The Columbia bore a fourth mate, an astronomer, a surgeon, and a clerk.

The two ships, after being overhauled, were laden with articles to be traded for furs, especially chisels and other utility articles, besides the usual beads and buttons. Governments, both state and federal, bestowed sea letters, and medals were sent to be used in the various places visited by the expedition. Many of these medals have been found in South America, Havana, and Oregon.

The vessels departed, September 30, 1787, amidst great acclaim. The purpose of the expedition was to trade for furs in the Oregon country and then the furs were to be taken to China and traded for tea for Boston.
After a voyage lasting a year, they arrived off the coast of Oregon. The traders spent the winter, 1788-89, at Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, watching and keeping forge fires burning for the making of chisels to trade for skins. The Indians drove shrewd bargains, going up on the price of skins from one chisel for one skin to seven for one. The *Lady Washington* cruised up and down the coast, returning to the *Columbia* when laden. The *Columbia* was ready for the China voyage, July 30, 1789. Before sailing, the captains decided to change ships with each other. From then on, Captain Gray continued to command the *Columbia*. The sale in China was disappointing, but the purchase money was spent for tea.

On August 10, 1790, having logged nearly fifty thousand miles, the *Columbia* stood in Boston Light, and steered up the harbor, welcomed by artillery salutes and a great crowd of rejoicing citizens. Going out via Cape Horn and returning via the Cape of Good Hope, the *Columbia* had circumnavigated the globe. 6

From a money standpoint the venture was not gratifying. Derby and Pintard, therefore, sold out to Barrell, Bulfinch, Brown, and Hatch. Just seven weeks later, Captain Gray set out on a second voyage. He was exhorted to be kind but firm, and, as before, not to trade with Spaniards. One interesting side light was that the carpenter of the *Columbia*, Samuel Yendell, later helped to build the

Constitution. He survived all the others, living until 1861.

The second voyage of the Columbia.--Only eight months were consumed in reaching Clayoquot, a fur-trading center on the northwest coast. Three of the men were killed by Indians who almost captured the Lady Washington. The Lady Washington, after crossing to Macao, was converted to a brigantine. She was the first ship to fly the American flag in Japan, more than sixty years before the opening of Japan to world trade. Needless to say, she was not cordially received. A new consort was built at Clayoquot - the Adventure. She was so good that she outsailed the Columbia. Mention should be made of the faithful Attoo, an Hawaiian prince attached to the expedition. When some Indians were plotting captures, Attoo, although promised great things, refused to wet the powder, thus frustrating the attempt.

Gray was more interested in other matters than furs. He very much wanted to find that great river he had heard of and he began to cruise around in search of it. Imagine his surprise on April 29, 1792, when he beheld three ships-of-war that proved to be the squadron of George Vancouver, now on an expedition of his own, having served with Cook on two voyages. Vancouver had been sent out to put into effect the Nootka convention with Spain, and also to do some exploring along the coast. When the ships of the two nations had
exchanged greetings, Vancouver said he had not discovered anything as yet and asked Gray what his success had been along the line of discoveries. When Gray reported that he believed he had found the great river, since, for nine days he had been unable to enter because of the swirling current at the bar, Vancouver very haughtily replied that he knew of such an opening, but that it was just a small river. He thought it was not worth his while.

A little less superciliousness, and Great Britain might have gained unquestionable right to the entire Oregon country. More than either Yankee or Briton dreamed of hung upon this chance meeting in the northern sea. The stake was the fate of an empire.  

Then Gray, as he said he would, returned southeast. At latitude 46° 58' he discovered what he named Bulfinch Harbor, later known as Gray's Harbor. He sailed ten miles up the river, stopping along the way to trade. Then fifteen miles more he went. He named the river for his ship, the Columbia. The ideas of Ledyard and the exploits of Captain Gray pointed to the time when, in 1846, Great Britain would give up its claim to the Oregon country along the Columbia River.

Oregon's Governor Norblad points out that at the time of Robert Gray's venture,

\[ \ldots \text{silver was used to buy tea from Canton, and} \]
\[ \text{the recurrent financial depressions were blamed partially} \]

\[ \text{\cite{Marvin, op. cit., p. 71.}} \]
on this withdrawal; so Captain Gray came to the northwest to establish fur trading that furs might be used to buy tea and to keep the silver in America. 8

The historical importance of the details securing the American possession of the Pacific Northwest are set forth on the beautiful Astor Column at Astoria, Oregon. The monolith is 125 feet high and commands a view of Pacific Ocean and Columbia River in panorama unsurpassed for sheer beauty.

A quick review of some of the outstanding ships in California history will show their bearing upon our later westward expansion. First were the two little ships of Cabrillo, who in 1542 stayed with his men six days in what is now called San Diego Bay. He continued north and found what is now Catalina Island. Then to the mainland they went to the Bay of Smokes, probably San Pedro Bay, afterwards visiting the Santa Barbara Islands, always looking for the mystical Strait of Anian. After Cabrillo died, Ferrelo continued the explorations going up as far as the present state of Oregon.

After Spain had come into possession of the Philippines, a famous ship in the new trade was named the Manila Galleon. Every year it made a voyage to the Philippines and back to Acapulco. Goods were then transported by mule to Vera Cruz where ships took the goods to Spain. This ship proved to be

8 Norblad, op. cit., p. 2.
one reason for the settling up of California. Because galleons were absolutely dependent upon the direction of the wind, they could not return by the way they went. On the return trip from the Philippines the ships had to go north until they found winds that were not against them. That is how the captains steered for America and down the California coast.

The Golden Hind.—Since English voyagers were active everywhere, it is not surprising that Francis Drake and his Golden Hind, in 1579, were also hunting for the Strait of Anian. He sailed along the coast of California and Oregon and probably reached what is now called Drake's Bay. Drake called his discoveries New Albion. An account of the Golden Hind was given in Chapter I of this study.

Don Sebastian Vizcaino.—Twenty-three years later a new viceroy, upon demand of the king, sent an expedition to locate a resting place for crews and a depot for supplies needed by the Manila galleons, on the California coast. Experienced in the galleon voyages, Vizcaino was the logical choice for the commander of the expedition. He had three ships, the San Diego, the Santo Tomas, and the Tres Reves. Accompanying him were Carmelite friars and a maker of maps.

9 Grace S. Dawson, California, pp. 32 et seq.
Following Cabrillo's course of sixty years before, he made every place clearer to follow because of the excellence of his maps. He named San Diego Bay for his faithful ship. He named many other places which still have the names he gave them, and he discovered the harbor of Monterey, so-called in honor of the County of Monterey, the viceroy.

Russian ships were known to be cruising along the western shores of North America in the sixteenth century, coming, perhaps, down the California coast.

American ships, too, in time made their appearance, especially Captain Shaler's Leila Byrd conspicuous in San Diego harbor in 1803, a trail blazer for American ownership. In the 1820's Yankee whaling vessels on the Pacific coast were numerous.

The United States frigate, Congress.--In 1845, the frigate Congress made a voyage from Norfolk to Monterey. A charming diary of this voyage was kept by the Chaplain Walter Colton. When the ship, whose commander was the famous Captain Stockton, entered the harbor of Monterey she found:

. . . at anchor the United States frigate Savannah, bearing the broad pennant of Commodore Sloat; the United States sloop-of-war Cyane, Captain Mervin; and the United States sloop-of-war Levant, Commander Page. We run up the red pennant and saluted the blue of Commodore Sloat with thirteen guns, which were returned by the Savannah. 10

10 Walter Colton, Deck and Port, p. 385.
Soon afterward, in 1846, the United States was at war with Mexico and the California phase of the war deserves more space than can be accorded here.

The influence of Joshua Humphreys.—Throughout all the centuries of ship-building, there is a continuous thread of improvement. In no place or time is this thread more golden than in America in the period between the building of the frigates of Humphreys in the last of the eighteenth century and the superb achievement of the ship-builder's art— the clipper.

The frigates of Humphreys were swifter than any other fighting ships. It will be recalled that he was the designer of the Constitution. The swiftness was attained by preserving a nice balance of strength and weight, mould of body, and plan of sail.

The chief virtue of the Humphreys design was a willingness to forget precedent. It was accomplished by a belief that fewer and better individual ships were the only effective answer to nations that already had a tremendous head start. 11

The East Indiamen.—Major Samuel Shaw and his comrade Captain Randall were ambitious to create an American East India Company to compete with the various East India Companies of Western Europe. This meant building ships that

11 Alexander Laing, Clipper Ship Men, p. 98.
matched the largest merchant vessels afloat.

The Massachusetts.--It was in September, 1789, that the initial First-Class American East Indiaman was launched at Quincy, Boston Harbor. This was the Massachusetts. Her lines probably were patterned after the English Indiaman New Triumph, but the Massachusetts was smaller.

The Massachusetts was a two-decked ship, with a length of keel of one hundred and sixteen feet and a breadth of beam of thirty-six feet. She was smaller than most of the barks now used in the sugar and coffee trade from the West Indies and South America, and not very much larger than the average three-masted schooner of today. . . . Besides her four mates she carried a purser, surgeon, several midshipmen, carpenter, boatswain, gunner, and sixty-seven men before the mast. 12

Her ambitious but futile voyage, while interesting, would not be mentioned here but for the important fact that great success in building superior East Indiamen later developed. In the period of 1815-1850, the Medford East Indiaman was greatly in favor.

But most ship-owners wanted vessels-of-all-work, as it were, which could be sent to any part of the world where chances were good and freights high. The finest type of the period was the Medford- or Merrimac-built East Indiaman; seldom over five hundred tons burthen, and usually smaller; for the size of vessels was just beginning to increase. . . . They were not sharp ships, or clipper ships, or one quarter the size of the most famous clippers; but they were the fastest

12 Marvin, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
and most economical ocean carriers of their generation. 13

The Packets. — The scientific attitude of being determined to bring forward all obtainable facts involved, and, then, to base every conclusion upon what the facts revealed, proved so gratifying that the common elements were transferred to the construction of our merchant ships. Naturally, the packet trade upon the Atlantic became almost exclusively the possession of Americans, in the eighteen twenties and thirties, "because Yankee ship-owners had the foresight to build better and faster packets, gambling a sacrifice of cargo capacity against the chance of making enough trips to compensate." 14

A packet was a sailing vessel which carried both passengers and freight, and a packet line, "as the term was understood before the Civil War, meant two or more vessels whose owners advertised sailings to designated ports, on schedules as regular as wind and weather permitted, and which depended for their profit on freight and passengers furnished by the public, rather than goods shipped on their owners' account. 15

At first, packets were run for coastwise trade but later the idea of trans-oceanic packets captivated ship-owners' minds. The Boston and Liverpool Packet Company was typical.

13 Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts, p. 255.
15 S. E. Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts, pp. 231-232.
It was succeeded in 1827 by a similar line,

... for which several packet-ships of about 425 tons each were built to order at Medford and Boston. The accommodation plans of one of these, the Dover (121 feet long, built at Charlestown by John M. Robertson in 1828) shows a forty-five foot main cabin with eleven state-rooms about six feet square; a library, wine and spirit room, covered deck abaft the mainmast, for passengers' use and 'bathing room' (by the bucket method probably) on the port quarter. The charge for cabin passage was $140, including 'mattresses, bedding, wines, and all other stores.' 16

The chief contribution made by the packets to the progress of shipping was the maintenance of the schedules mentioned above. The schedules were observed whether there were any passengers to travel or cargo either, for that matter. The departure astonished everybody, but it paid in dollars and cents so well that in the eighteen forties, when general financial conditions necessitated, the clipper itself could be made possible. This was because shipbuilders and owners were "accustomed to the Humphreys idea that the best way to cope with an adversary is not by the weight of numbers but by new ideas and the excellence of single achievements. In that sense Joshua Humphreys, if not the father, was surely the grandfather of the clipper ship era." 17

Famous packet lines.—It was the building of the Joshua Dates, 620 tons, in 1844, that inspired Enoch Train

16 Ibid., p. 233. 17 Ibid., p. 99.
to insist upon Donald McKay's moving from Newburyport to East Boston to set up his shipyard. The Joshua Bates was a record-maker for Train's White Diamond Boston-to-Liverpool Line. Other flourishing lines of packets were: the Black Ball, Red Star, Swallow Tail, and Dramatic Lines of New York, and Cope's Line of Philadelphia.

**Famous individual packets.**—If time and space would permit, much that would be interesting could be pointed out concerning the social life aboard the better packets. For all the amount of business transacted by the passengers, the social observances were given much attention. A few of the more famous packet ships include: the Washington Irving, 751 tons, 1845; (Train), White Diamond; Anglo-Saxon, 394 tons, 1846; New World, 1404 tons, 1846, the first three-decked merchant ship ever built in the United States; the Roscoe, Independence, Pennsylvania, Patrick Henry, Ashburton, and the Henry Clay, so popular in chantey songs; the Anglo-American, 704 tons, 1848, and the Jenny Lind. The Jenny Lind was Donald McKay's first contribution to the cotton-carrying trade. Frequently she made the "Triangular Run"—Boston to New Orleans, thence to Liverpool, and then back to Boston. When the cotton season was off, the ship carried passengers and cargoes of salt, iron, and other merchandise. Late in her career, she made some of her most successful voyages under
command of Captain Lauchlan McKay, Donald's brother. He was so efficient in his management of this ship that he later was placed in command of the famous clipper, *Sovereign of the Seas*, soon to be discussed.

Really, the cotton ships were themselves a special class. Often they reached fifty or a hundred per cent more capacity than the registration showed. How this was done requires elucidation:

... The bow was lengthened out under water, so that the deduction of three fifths of the beam made the tonnage length less than the actual length. They also made the hold much wider at the water than on deck, and much deeper than one half the beam, and constructed large poop and top-gallant-forecastle decks, covering nearly the whole top of the ship. These were open, however, amidships, and good for the stowage of 200 or 300 bales of cotton, which escaped tonnage taxation.18

The hard class of cotton workers were good chantey-men and it is claimed that they introduced the chantey song to American ships.

The chantey songs.—For good natured and effective co-ordination of effort, there is nothing more famous than the chantey songs. A good chantey man was always in demand, for his services were invaluable. As the men worked, the chantey man sang the song as a solo; then as a response, while they heaved and tugged, they sang the refrain. As a morale-builder

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18 Richard C. McKay, *Some Famous Sailing Ships and Their Builder Donald McKay*, p. 74.
the chantey song is without a peer. Some of the songs were not very refined, but they fulfilled their purpose. Some of the more popular chanties on American packets and clippers were: "Blow, My Bully Boys, Blow," "Shenandoah," "Rio Grande," "Yankee John Storm Along," "The Capstan Bar," and last but not least those innumerable verses to that much-courted lady "Sally Brown." There was the long drag chantey, used when any hauling consuming much time had to be done, such as "Reuben Ranzo," "Blow the Man Down," "Whiskey for My Johnnie," and "Roll the Cotton Down." The short drag chantey, such as "Haul the Bowline," and "Paddy Doyle" were reserved for additional hauling on already taut rope or light duties not requiring prolonged applications of strength. Furthermore, a good chantey man improvised, often delighting the crew with accounts of the ship's strong points or, in agreement with them, disguised berating of the captain or mate. Today the chantey is not so greatly needed. Nor is the ship the chantey men drove. Literally, the chantey man has passed out of the picture together with the ship he loved.

The Thaddeus.—In religion as well as in trade, the New Englanders were active, as evidenced by the small group

19 McKay, op. cit., p. 76.
Also see Chatterton, The Mercantile Marine, p. 159.
of Congregational missionaries who, with three Hawaiians, made a voyage to Honolulu, arriving April 4, 1820. They had been 160 days on the way. They had formed an organization which they termed the Church of Christ and had proclaimed as their purpose the conversion of the heathen and the desire to counter-balance the demoralizing influences of other New Englanders—the traders and whalers. Their ship was the Thaddeus.

It seems that this ship, in addition to trying to accomplish the objectives avowed, actually blazed a trail for the later exploitation of the sandalwood traffic. Ships that engaged in this profitable business were the Tartar and Mentor, together with the brigs Lascar, Becket, and the spectacular Cleopatra’s Barge. They carried the precious wood from Hawaii to the ever-ready markets of China. It is an interesting feature that the panic of 1819 occurred at the time of increased business in the sandalwood.

The clipper ship.—The crowning glory of all sailing craft was the clipper ship, that clipped or slashed her way through the water, instead of bouncing around like a tuba. She was scientifically constructed to be wave-resistant and her achievement was the result of many men’s strivings. To

20
Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts, pp.261-263.
follow a systematic line of development, let us start with the so-called Baltimore, although someone has said that the development of the clipper started as far back as you care to go.

The Baltimore clippers.—They were schooner-rigged as a general practice, although sometimes fitted out as brigs; however, as they never carried more than two masts, they were not really clippers as that name came to be applied. They were fast, though, being constructed with

... round pumpkin-like bows, carried high with an excessive overhang. From the bow, the lines ran aft gracefully to a long low-lying stern. The beam of these vessels was all out of proportion to their length, the greatest beam being well forward of the vessel’s center. This excessive beam gave them the ability to stand heavy press of sail, but they could not work to windward efficiently. Their underbodies were modelled somewhat after a codfish. 21

The Baltimore clippers had been used for short trips inside Chesapeake Bay where speed in making many trips counteracted the lack of larger cargo space of the slower vessels. In 1832, Isaac McKim thought a large ship could be built embracing the contours of the little clippers.

The Ann McKim.—The result was the Ann McKim, built in 1833. She had three masts, square sails sharp bow, narrow lines and certainly showed speed. But, because she was

21 McKay, op. cit., p. 114.
small, seamen did not take her seriously, for, since seamanship began, the speediness of a ship was connected with rashness out of all accord with good business. Furthermore, as to the men, swiftness was regarded as suicide.

While this was generally true, the newer faster ships were of value to one business, and that was the notorious opium racket. This was certainly

... a horrible business, but it paid tremendous profits and offered a rich spice of adventure, which some sailors found so attractive that they swallowed their scruples, and the records show three Yankee ships outstandingly successful over their British rivals. These three were the *Ariel*, 100 tons burden, built in Medford, Massachusetts, the brig *Antelope* and the schooner *Zephyr*, both built in Boston by Samuel Hall, soon to be one of the world's most famous clipper-ship builders. Pert, saucy little ships these were with speed their only need. 22

*The Rainbow.*—The *Ann McKay* was purchased by Howland and Aspinwall who thought so highly of her that they commissioned John W. Griffiths, already famous as a marine architect, to build the *Rainbow*. She was built for speed and the New York Herald said of her, "The *Rainbow* holds out a promise, we should judge by her model, of great speed."

The promise was fulfilled when, on the 19th. of the following September, Captain John Land brought her back into the port of New York from China after a voyage of seven months, seventeen days. The elapsed time included all detentions, as well as the discharging

and loading of cargo. Although neither leg of the voyage set a new mark by itself, it was the fastest round voyage to China and home on record. 23

Truly Griffiths had built a wonderful ship, fulfilling her every promise!

. . . . Griffiths was a genius and he really began the perfection of the clipper. It was he that first fixed the proportion of width to length at about one to five, whereas it had been as much as two and three to five, and it was Griffiths who first designed the clipper type of square sails which, lying flat, caught more energy out of the wind than the old bellying type of sail did and thus added to the clipper's speed. 24

The Sea Witch.—In July, 1850, there appeared, plowing speedily through the Golden Gate, a slender little ship which did not attract much attention until her captain called out to the Harbor Master, "We're just ninety-seven days out." Then everyone was interested, for this was a record. Prior to this voyage, the best time for the perilous 15,000 miles from New York to San Francisco had been 150 days. The folks back home were overjoyed at the news because the ship was the Sea Witch which

. . . . had actually accomplished what she had been built to do — to sail faster than any other ship had ever sailed before. Her owners had deliberately tried to create the fastest vessel afloat, the perfect development of the new type of sailing ship which came to be called the clipper. 25

It was the success of the Sea Witch that determined

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25 ibid., p. 212.
the acceptance of the clipper. Up to the time of her voyage, seamen were skeptical, thinking the clippers were not safe due to their narrowness. After this, however, clippers were in such demand that shipyards did a flourishing business making more and more of them. The *Sea Witch* was a John Griffiths masterpiece.

Her length, on deck, was 170.3 feet, her beam thirty-three and eleven hundredths feet, and her depth nineteen feet. Her tonnage was registered at 907.53. Over all, her length was 152 feet. The most quickly obvious thing about her, as the *Herald* noted, was Griffiths' treatment of the bows. They were definitely hollow at the waterline, and flared outward above water to a degree then considered remarkable. But most unusual of all, Griffiths had omitted the sacred 'trail boards.'

Too much praise cannot be accorded Griffiths, for he was the first naval architect who could comprehend the play of all the forces upon a ship and their influence upon what shape the ship should be made to have. And he made it to be "further refined to take care of the change in its own resistance, the shift in its own line of flotation, caused by the extra speed produced in these ways."

The *Sea Witch* broke more records than any other ship of her size, and took her part with other clippers in establishing sailing records for all time. Her most spectacular voyage deserves special mention: on March 25, 1849, she

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26 *Laing, op. cit.*, p.239.  
had come home to New York from Hongkong in only seventy-four days, fourteen hours, which is still the world's record for the same route or to any North American Atlantic port, by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, for either sailing vessel or steamer. 29

The California clipper ship era.—So closely blended with the gold rush to California was the building of faster ships that the period has been designated the California Clipper Ship Era.

There were three main routes to California for the Forty-Niners and those who followed for a long while: the perilous overland route whose way was marked, it was said, by the bones of those who perished along the way; the Panama route dangerous because of the terrible illnesses risked while crossing the isthmus, the men often breast-deep in the Chagres River; and the safest—the way around Cape Horn! To enable the gold-seekers to make all possible speed the occasion for the construction of faster sailing vessels emphatically presented itself.

While most of the passengers who doubled the Horn went by slower vessels, the necessity for taking supplies to San Francisco and vicinity gave the main impetus to the building of clippers that left all other sailing ships far

29 Ibid., p. 245.
behind. The foremost name in all this progress is that of Donald McKay. "To Donald McKay, America owes the honor of producing, during the Clipper Ship Era, the best, swiftest, most beautiful and largest merchant ships in the world, which contributed immeasurably toward her national growth and prosperity." 30

_Stag Hound._—His first great gift to the California Clippers was the _Stag Hound_. Built for George B. Upson and Sampson and Tappan of Boston, she was truly McKay's work, for he made all the designs and drafted not only her spars, but everything else, as the owners had given him a free hand and furnished him this great opportunity. She created a sensation even in the building-period, and when she was launched, the warmth of greeting by the huge crowd was in inverse proportion to the frigidity of the season, December 7th., 1850. It was expected that the cold would slow down the sliding along the ways, but so swiftly did she move, she almost missed her own christening. The foreman in the yard quickly sensed what was taking place; he grabbed the bottle of rum, smashed it on her forefoot and yelled: "_Stag Hound_, your name's _Stag Hound_!" And sure enough, a beautifully carved stag hound, painted in gold, decorated the bow.

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30 McKay, _op. cit._, pp. 116-117.
There were so many innovations in the construction of the Star Hound that it would require a whole chapter to recount them all. But she was convex in her run—not concave as ships had been; she was broadest in the middle. She had

. . . sister keelsons fourteen inches square, bolted diagonally through the navel timbers into the keel, and horizontally through the lower midship keelson, and each other. Her hold stanchions were ten inches square, and were kneed to the beams above and to the keelson below, so that their lower arms formed almost a rider along the top of the keelson. [31

She was towed to New York by the historic tug R. B. Forbes. She was loaded at the foot of Wall Street and her commander was Captain Josiah Richardson, her most enthusiastic admirer and ardent champion. She created great excitement for she was more heavily sparred than any other ship the city had ever seen. Her spread of canvas was over 3,000 yards. People who knew ship-building said so many harsh things about the Star Hound that for her first voyage, the insurance was exorbitant. Even so, her space was soon filled at the high rate of $1.49 per cubic foot. Her first cost was paid before she cleared for San Francisco.

It was with great elation that the crew, upon arrival, sang this chantey:

Down the river hauled a Yankee clipper,
And it's blow, my bully boys, blow!

McKay, op. cit., p. 121.
She’d a Yankee mate and a Yankee skipper,  
And it’s a blow, my bully boys, blow!  
Blow ye winds, heigh-ho,  
For Cal-i-forni-o,  
For there’s plenty of gold,  
So I’ve been told,  
On the banks of the Sacramento.  

Her voyage from New York to San Francisco was 113 days — 108 at sea. The record established the fame of Donald McKay as a builder of fast and sturdy ships. When her captain Joshua Richardson reported that the ship had not been built that could outsail the Stag Hound, he little thought that such a ship was just being finished on the Stag Hound’s own ways.

The Flying Cloud.—This ship was the Flying Cloud. It was Enoch Train who gave the order for the biggest clipper in the world. As wood has its limitations, increase in size meant increase in strength in every detail; sails must be increased to take care of the added weight; masts had to be strong enough to withstand the furies in doubling the Horn, regarded to be the worst on the globe.

Thus, as American clippers passed 1,500 tons and began their development up to 3,000, and even more, sail and spars had to be increased as well until the world rubbed its eyes to see the long, lean American clippers scudding by with veritable clouds of sail — masts that stood a good 200 feet above the deck.

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32 Ibid., p. 127.

33 Clark, op. cit., p. 232.
counting skysail pole, and spars which spread out 100 feet from end to end. 34

Therefore, Donald McKay had a gigantic problem when he took Train's order. Train had said he wanted a ship of about 1,700 tons. She had 1,783 tons. She was 229 feet long, forty-one feet wide, twenty-two feet deep.

... Sweetly, delicately and yet strongly, he curved the lines of her hull; with inspired genius he drew the plan of her rigging until, from the deck, her stout upper spars towered so far aloft that they looked like the fibers of a spider's web. 35

While she was being built, Train hung around the ship-yard like a restless ghost.

She was sold to Moses H. Grinnell of New York for $90,000 before she had a name. When the momentous time came to carve the title, McKay was given the right to say what it should be. What visions of future achievements must have crowded his brain, as he looked up into the wide-spread spars and exclaimed: "We will call her the Flying Cloud!"

It is claimed that Longfellow's "The Building of the Ship" commemorates the construction of the Flying Cloud.

No voyage was more eventful than that of the Flying Cloud, beginning June 3rd, 1851, out past Sandy Hook, San Francisco bound. She was partly dismayed when only three days out. From Captain Josiah P. Greasy's log, we have the

34 Ibid. 35 Ibid., p. 233.
following:

June 6. - Lost maintopsail-yard and main and mizzen
toppallant masts. June 7. - Sent up topgallant masts
and yards. June 8. - Sent up maintopsail-yard, and set
all possible sails. June 14. - Discovered mainmast bad-
ly sprung about a foot from the hounds, and fished it. 36

Next encountered were calms and only moderate winds, and,
in consequence, for four days only 101, eighty-two, fifty-
two, and fifty-three miles respectively were possible. In
spite of these delays, she crossed the equator at twenty-
one days from New York. Then a mutiny occurred. Several
men had to be disciplined. Then more storms. When she
crossed latitude fifty degrees south in the Pacific, she
had made the distance from the same latitude in the Atlantic
in only seven days, which was a record. In dashing in at
the Golden Gate, August thirtieth, she had made the voyage
in eighty-nine days and twenty-one hours. Imagine the cele-
britation! Every American in that new state felt that home
was not as far away, since this record-breaking demo-
stration. And when the news spread, not only the owners felt
victorious, but practically everyone in the whole country.
Her record was bettered only once, and that was by the
Flying Cloud herself on her fourth voyage, in 1854, when
she made the distance less by thirteen hours.

Of course, on this first trip the inevitable happened.

36 McKay, op. cit., p. 146.
As soon as the ship had docked, most of the crew left for the gold-mines and the trip to China had to be made undermanned. In spite of this handicap, only one day out from San Francisco, coming into favorable breeze, she sailed 374 miles in twenty-four hours. This was so gratifying to the owners that they caused that day's run to be printed on white silk in letters of gold:

'... July 31, fresh breezes, fine weather, all sails set. At 2 p.m. wind southeast. At 6 squally; in lower and topgallant studding sails; 7, in royal; at 2 a.m. in fore topmast studdingsail. Latter part, strong gales and high sea running. Ship very wet, fore and aft. Distance run this day by observation 374 miles. During the squalls 18 knots of line was not sufficient to measure the rate of speed. Topgallant sails set.'

Although smaller than some of the McKay clippers, she twice made the voyage from New York to San Francisco in eighty-nine days and this no other ship was able to boast.

Credit must be given to Captain Creesy who was the driver of her powers. It was he who got the record results. Just by way of parenthesis, he was accompanied by his wife, herself a capable navigator. She was a splendid nurse as well as housekeeper, or rather, ship keeper, and made everyone feel at home aboard ship.

In 1863, the ship was sold to James Baines of Liverpool who paid a very low figure for her. Later she was sold again to Smith Edwards, and finally, while laid up

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for repairs, fire broke out and she was badly damaged and put out of service. Thus ended the life of a noble ship.

The contribution made by Maury.—The great impetus in making bigger, better, and faster ships, offered by the tremendous profits to be made in the California gold rush, was supplemented by the correspondingly rapid advancement in the co-ordinating of hydrographical knowledge. The outstanding scientist in this field was Matthew Fontaine Maury, United States Navy, who worked out reliable sailing charts. He induced navigators to record every item that would have a bearing on ships at sea or in harbors. Nothing escaped their vigilance—temperature, both of air and water, velocity of winds, directions of winds and currents—while regularly recurring phenomena came in for the most careful observance.

He furnished them with blanks to fill up and with valuable charts, and in a very short time organized a thoroughly interested corps of nautical observers, who by their combined efforts did much to shorten the passage to South America and around Cape Horn by many weeks. 39

The daily press.—By giving glamorous publicity, the newspapers did their part in keeping the people interested. They featured the building of a new type of ship, published logs of spectacular voyages, and emphasized every record sailing. Everything pertaining to the shipping to

39 Ibid., p. 116.
California and to the Orient was big news. Thus it was the desire to keep pace with the prosperity in California that placed America in the front rank of ship production.

The Flying Fish.—Another famous Donald McKay ship was owned by Sampson and Tappan, prominent ship-owners. They always demanded the best and saw that they got it. The Captain of the new ship was Edward Nickels. The figurehead bore a huge fish in such a position that speed was immediately suggested. The ship was as beautiful as she was fast, and is famous for taking part in more ocean races than any other. She was 198 feet six inches long, thirty-eight feet two inches wide, twenty-two feet deep. Her closest rival was the Swordfish, property of William H. Webb, New York's boast as a shipbuilder. Both ships had devoted champions, each group willing to gamble on the speed of its preferred ship. So it was decided to race them around the Horn - the severest test of speed and strength on earth. The details are very exciting and the result interesting: The Swordfish made the voyage to San Francisco in ninety days, sixteen hours arriving from New York. The Flying Fish made the distance from Boston in ninety-eight days.

In another race, there were four ships: the Flying Fish, the Wild Pigeon, the John Gilpin, and the Trade Wind.
The Flying Fish was the winner, making the entire voyage, from New York to San Francisco. The captains were: Nickels of the Flying Fish, Putnam of the Wild Pigeon, Doane of the John Gilpin, and Webber of the Trade Wind.

... Like steeds that know their riders, they were handled with the most exquisite skill and judgment, and in such hands they bounded out upon the 'glad waters' most gracefully. Each, being put upon her mettle from the start, was driven, under the seaman's whip and spur, at full speed over a course that it would take them three long months to run. 40

The Flying Fish made the distance in ninety-two days and four hours; the Gilpin made it in ninety-three days and twenty hours; the Wild Pigeon took 118 days; and the Trade Wind, having burned continuously for eight hours, arrived after 102 days.

After this, the Flying Fish made some remarkable runs, in several trades. She made her last trip around the Horn in 1857 - 100 days from Boston to San Francisco. In November, 1858, while returning from Foochow with a cargo of tea, she was wrecked. The insurers took her over and sold her to a Spanish merchant at Manila. When reconditioned, her name was changed to El Bueno Suceso. She plied between Manila and Cadiz. Several years she served before finally foundering off China.

Ships' crews were sometimes hard to obtain for various passages, but let the crier announce a San Francisco voyage on a Donald McKay ship and the applicants literally swarmed in their eagerness to sail.\footnote{41}

**The Sovereign of the Seas.**—This ship must not be confused with the English ship of the same name, built in 1637. The name first given this clipper ship was the Enoch Train, but, due to the impression that Train did not appreciate the honor, she was re-christened the *Sovereign of the Seas*. She was pronounced

'. . . the longest, sharpest, and most beautiful merchant ship in the world, designed to sail at least twenty miles an hour in a whole-sail breeze. Her extreme length was 265 feet, breadth of beam forty-four feet, length of keel 245 feet, length between perpendiculars 253 feet, breadth of gunwales forty-two feet, depth of hold twenty-three and one half feet, including eight feet of 'tween decks. It was estimated she could stow nearly 3,000 tons of measurement goods and not draw more than twenty feet of water.\footnote{42}

For grace, proportion, strength, and beauty of finish, she charmed the wondering masses of visitors who came to see this masterpiece of marine architecture.

She was Donald McKay's own ship and he had invested everything he had in the construction - hopes and dreams, as well as money. No one else believed in the practicability of such a large undertaking. But Donald McKay had been

\footnote{41}{Ibid., p. 165.} \footnote{42}{Ibid., p. 180.}
studying the trade and now knew its workings as well as he knew how to build ships.

When ready to depart from New York on August 4, 1852, she was laden with the largest cargo ever carried from that port: besides a year's supplies for the ship, she had about 2,950 tons of merchandise. Captain Lauchlan McKay was commander of the ship and Grinnell, Minturn and Company were the consignees.

A study of the organization of the ship's crew reminds one of that on a battleship - every man had his definite position in every event, corresponding to the battle stations on a man-of-war. The chief mate made trouble, insisting upon bullying the men - a procedure not countenanced by the kindly McKay. Because his reproof was mild and gentlemanly, the mate got the idea that the captain was afraid of him, so he kept on cursing the crew. Not only this, but he countermanded the orders of the captain and tried to take command, himself. He was quietly ordered off duty and was denied any further service throughout the voyage. Although McKay drove his ship hard, his consideration for his crew was commendable:

He had stoves in their quarters, and continually had one or more of the boys attend the fires and at the same time dry the sailors' clothes; warm coffee and tea, and provisions were served out during the night, as well as the day, and he never exposed his men more than absolutely necessary. 43

43 Ibid., p. 186.
Captain McKay's organization proved its value when a disaster occurred that would have caused a less disciplined crew to descend rapidly to "Davy Jones locker." After the rounding of the Horn had been successfully accomplished, in a gale the maintopmast, the foretopmast, foreyard and main topgallantmast, and every bit of canvas from the foremost were wrecked. With calmness and precision, Captain McKay gave his directions, impossible of fulfillment though they seemed. The crew responded magnificently and even vied with one another in justifying their captain's confidence in their ability and faith in the sturdiness of the ship. Consequently, she was able to arrive at San Francisco in 103 days and thereby beat the record of every vessel that had started as much as a month before she sailed. At the landing this chantey song rang out from the rope-tugging sailors:

"O, Susannah, darling, take your ease
For we have beat the clipper fleet,
The Sovereign of the Seas!"

On this one voyage, her cargo and passengers brought the owner over $98,000.

Captain McKay did not go to China, as was the custom of the California clippers on the return voyage. Instead, he called at Honolulu and took on a cargo of whale oil brought in by New England whalers operating in the Pacific.

44 Ibid., p. 188.
This was an innovation and was a great advantage for the whalers, because it opened up a method of cheap transportation for their products and enabled them to keep on cruising without loss of time for the long voyage back.

Certainly the most spectacular performance of the Sovereign of the Seas was beating the Cunard steamship Canada to Liverpool in June, 1853. The Cunard ship sailed from Boston, the Sovereign, from New York.

... By comparing her log with that of this steamer, it was found that the ship on June 25, 1853, was ahead 240 miles. On the thirtieth, she had beaten the steamer 325 miles. The steamer's greatest day's run was 306 miles and the same day the ship logged 340 miles; and the ship, too, was drawing twenty-two feet water, and rather crank, having been badly laden. 45

The ship's time still is the record for the month of June. The record time - New York to Liverpool - was thirteen days, twenty-two hours.

The Westward Ho.--The California commerce was not only great in itself. It benefited the East India and China trade, because, as there were not sufficient quantities for ship-loads of freight on the return trips, the vessels made a practice of going to the Far East for return cargoes. As soon as the Flying Fish had demonstrated her worth, the owners put Donald McKay to work on another clipper for all this business. Doubtless with Charles

Kingsley's work in mind, those in the position to do so named her the *Westward Ho*, a most fitting appellation. However, she became involved in the coolie slave-trade to South America. In 1857, she passed under the Peruvian flag, but the name remained unchanged. She plied between China and Peru. She finally was lost by fire in the harbor of Callao. Her construction forms a link in the steady chain of development of ships for speed.

The *Great Republic*.—In 1853 the greatest McKay production of them all was taking form—the *Great Republic*. She was registered at 4,555 tons, 6,000 tons stowage capacity. The occasion of her launching was one of great rejoicing. Fully fifty thousand people were present to see the magnificent ship slide down her ways. Many observers shook their heads, however, when it became known that in the christening Cochituate water was used instead of the usual bottle of champagne. The tradition of the sea had been violated. No good could follow. The substitution had been made in compliment to the many Boston ladies who were working hard in behalf of temperance.

In spite of the fact that she was acclaimed the strongest ship ever built, there was a stronger power that overwhelmed her—fire.

The *Great Republic* was partly towed by the tug *R. B. Forbes* and partly tried out under her own sails on the
first trip from Boston to New York.

The night of December 26th-27th, 1853, should long be remembered in the annals of New York City as the period when fire did its work upon the noblest specimen of naval architectural skill of which our country could boast. Upon arrival in New York, the Great Republic took cargo for Liverpool, and she was almost ready for sea when the disaster took place that shattered the hopes of her builder-owner. 46

The rigging had caught fire from blazing fragments from some buildings in the vicinity. Her masts were so high, they were beyond the reach of the fire-fighting apparatus, so that when the blazing spars fell to the deck, the ship was beyond human help. Just a few days previously, McKay had been offered $230,000 for her and had refused, for she had cost him approximately $300,000. She was the greatest vessel ever constructed of wood. The underwriters paid all their risks on the insurance, totaling $235,000.

Seemingly crushed with grief at the loss of his greatest ship, Donald McKay showed remarkable recuperative powers. January, 1854, to February, 1855, his shipbuilding activities revealed:

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ship Lightning</td>
<td>2,083 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship James Baines</td>
<td>2,526 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Champion of the Seas</td>
<td>2,447 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Blanche Moore</td>
<td>1,787 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Commodore Perry</td>
<td>1,964 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Santa Claus</td>
<td>1,256 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooner Benin</td>
<td>692 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Japan</td>
<td>1,964 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Donald McKay</td>
<td>2,594 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Tonnage</td>
<td>17,313 tons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the thirteen months following his greatest disappointment, he produced more fine ships and with greater tonnage than ever before in his life. This was Donald McKay’s reaction to disaster.

The clipper ship era was a short one. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made it possible for steam vessels to cut through to the East by a way impossible to the clippers. So, in spite of the determination of her owners to the contrary, the sailing vessel with all her glory finally had to bow to the inevitable, and steamships had gained the day. It is true, however, that

... as a rule, no better crews and vessels have ever sailed the sea than the Yankees at their prime. Their splendid clippers successfully challenged the slower Britishers on every trade route in the world. At the very time that the American was beating British yachts hull-down, the old British East Indiamen were still wallowing along with eighty hands to a thousand tons, while a Yankee thousand-tonner could sail them out of sight with forty. 48

The influence of war.—The War Between the States had a fatal influence upon our merchant marine:

The merchant marine in that critical period of transition from sail to steam was astray and directly the victim of the feud between the States as was that fair region of Virginia meadow, hill, and forest between the Potomac and Richmond, the scene of the death-grapple of the two mighty armies from 1861 to 1865. 49

49 Marvin, op. cit., p. 282; Clark, op. cit., p. 252; Laing, op. cit., p. 174.
While the fundamental cause of the decline was the growing interest on the part of Americans in the internal development, yet the loss of the cotton-carrying trade, the blockading of Confederate ports, and the ravages inflicted by the Alabama and other Confederate ships, all contributed their part in the decline of our merchant marine which continued until World War I gave a "frenzied stimulation."  

Summary.—Many ships that have influenced American history have passed in review—those whose development led to the possibilities of Columbus, the ships of discovery and exploration, the outstanding vessels of colonization, the beginning of the American merchant marine, also fighting ships, and those prominent in westward expansion, with special emphasis on the clipper ship.

And now they have sailed beyond the horizon—good ships, manned by seamen courageous. As the last of their breeze-filled sails disappear from our fascinated gaze, we wave adieu and wish them bon voyage, for we know their haven is the harbor of eternal fame.

50 Clark, op. cit., p. 231.
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