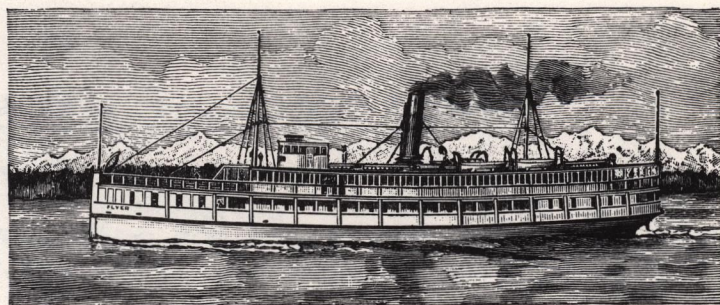


PUGET SOUND MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



NUMBER 153 -- OCTOBER 1963

OUR NEXT MEETING

When: Saturday Evening, October 5

Where: The Norselander Restaurant
300 Third Ave. West

Coffee Hour 5:30 Dinner 6:45 Meeting 7:45

Our Evening's Program

15TH ANNUAL OLD TIMERS BANQUET

Rear Admiral F.A. Zeusler to Speak

The October meeting will feature our Annual Old Timers Banquet when for the 15th year members will join together to honor the Old Timers in our midst. Gordon Brennen, chairman, has announced Rear Admiral Frederick A. Zeusler (U.S.C.G., Ret.) will be the speaker of the evening; his topic, "An Old Timer's Version of the Sea," in the course of which he will describe some of his experiences on the Coast Guard cutter BEAR. Admiral Zeusler has spent the major portion of his life at sea, both in government service and in the employ of the Alaska Steamship Company. His background includes oceanographic patrol in the Arctic and Bering Seas; sea duty in both world wars, and voyages to Europe, Asia and Siberia. He was in charge of three oceanographic cruises in Alaskan waters and one in the North Atlantic and at one time taught oceanography at the University of Washington. Members who have heard him speak before look forward to hearing him again, and we can assure those who have not that they have a very entertaining evening in store.

Another highlight of the program will be the presentation of an honorary life membership to the member who has done most for the Society during the past year. Lloyd Stadum, who received the award last year, will make the presentation.

The final event of the evening is the naming of the oldest member present. Joshua Green has been walking off with this distinction for several years now but members have great fun speculating on the identity of his runner-up and sharing in the badinage that accompanies the decision.

The evening will begin with a coffee hour and no-host cocktail hour from 5:30 to 6:30. Dinner will be served at 6:45 and the meeting will open at 7:45. Jim Vallentyne will act as master of ceremonies.

No President's Message from Capt. Virgil Roberts

There is no President's message in this Newsletter because Captain Roberts is away on vacation. How is he spending it? As might be expected of a PSMHS member, he is expanding his historical interests, touring Civil War battlefields in the East. We hope he will be back for the Old Timers Banquet.

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Scrapbook Clipping No. 20 - WALLY BEARDSLEY

THE DEMONS OF WHIDBY ISLAND

Does your mind ever yearn for moments of idyllic bliss on the wooded shores of Whidby Island? It does? Then, friend, beware! Yes, beware; for there are monsters and demons there. You can read all about it in The Seattle Telegraph for Friday, July 31, 1891. Quoted from the Marysville Leader, the article bore the title, "A Monster of the Deep - Sea Serpent Captured in Holmes Harbor by an Indian" and read as follows:

"Johnnie Sam, an Indian well known in this vicinity, has just returned with the account of a thrilling adventure which befell him at Holmes Harbor, on Whidby Island, Saturday last.

Johnnie, who had been hunting deer to supply fresh meat for one of the logging camps in that vicinity, was returning on the flood tide and when close to shore was terror-stricken at the sight of a marine monster which came up from the bottom, and biting the side of his boat, tore off a piece of oak plank five inches wide and four feet long. Rising again, it bit a big mouthful, ribs and all, out of the deer which lay in the bottom of the boat.

Placing the muzzle of his Remington rifle close to the monster's head, the Indian fired three shots, and then hooking it, dragged it ashore, the boat meanwhile nearly filling with water. Here it required twelve blows upon the back with a double-bit ax to dispatch the animal.

The monster is described as being 13 feet, 9 inches in length with a body about a foot in diameter. The head and face resembles that of a monkey, as did also the long hairy tail which curved over the back. The feet were webbed, the forefeet having five fingers or toes each 12 inches long, and the hind feet 12 each. The animal was dark colored and covered on the back with coarse long black hair shading to gray of a finer quality upon the belly. The animal weighed about 250 pounds. Two projections, 12 inches long, were on the head though these were not of a horney structure.

Such was Johnnie's terror after his encounter that for three days and three nights he was tied to his bed and refused food of any kind. Even at the present time, when questioned, his face lights with a strange excitement.

The animal has since been seen by many loggers, as also by the captain of the tug CYRUS WALKER.

The existence of such an animal in Holmes Habor has been believed by Indians and white settlers for some time past, as shown by the fact that a boat had previously been destroyed by it and no Indian could be persuaded to fish there.

Johnnie refused to skin the animal on account of a current report among the Indians that a dreadful death would surely result. He returns Monday to carry away enough of the carcass to convince his doubting friends that his strange tale is not pure fiction."

And so, before you step aboard the Mukilteo-Columbus Beach ferry, think again of the demons that may be lurking in your path. As members of the PSMH Society, who are we to doubt the veracity of no less than the captain of the CYRUS WALKER. Seriously, though, I have the feeling that the demons we are concerned with here are "demon rum" and a wolf fish.

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CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP

A Few Words About Alaskan Stern-Wheelers - LES BANKER

In Sunday's Times, "Chart Room Chatter," Philip Spaulding came up with a timely suggestion. Why not bring some of the discarded Alaskan stern-wheelers down to the Seattle area.

Seattle already attracts attention with some novel transportation, mono-rail and catamaran; why not some stern-wheelers? Where else but Disneyland can you see one - and ride on one?

Perhaps while paying for the second lake bridge and bickering, dickering for a third one, we could use some stern-wheelers as ferries on the lake.

Of course, these huff and puff vessels are not as fast as hydroplanes but they do chug along at a fair clip and they toss up little rooster-tails in their wake, sort of bantam size.

Editorial footnote: With Miss Thriftway retiring, perhaps we could enter one in the races. Do you think they'd have a chance?

Captains, Engineers and Ships Agents?

(The following bit of cynicism was sent in by Harold Graham and since he is a marine engineer I thought it safe to print it.-Editor)

A Captain is a man who knows a great deal about very little. He does on knowing more and more about less and less until he knows practically everything about nothing.

An engineer is a man who knows a very little about a great deal. He keeps on knowing less and less about more and more until he knows practically nothing about everything.

A ship's agent starts out knowing everything about everything. He

winds up knowing nothing about anything - due to his association with Captains and engineers.

S T E R N W H E E L E R M E R C E R

Our exhibit "Northwest Shipbuilding" at the Museum is a well thought out display. My interest being Lake Washington, I wish to add a few remarks about the picture of the launching of the "Steamer Mercer:" the first steel vessel launched on Lake Washington in 1906. As my father, an uncle and two aunts are in this picture, I wish to correct the date to 1904.

The Mercer was originally built for and was shipped in boxes to Nome, Alaska, but for some reason was returned to Seattle. Captain Anderson, always looking for a bargain, picked her up for the lake trade. The hull, in thwartship sections, boiler, engine and wheel, all in boxes, were hauled out by horse and wagon to Pete LaPoint's Shipyards which today would be about where Seaborn's Marine is at Leschi Park. The hull was bolted together, then boiler and engine and sternwheel were installed. Around this was built a wooden house and wheelhouse. The picture shows the crowd standing by for the big event. Many people are identified in the picture but I think one of the most famous is missed. With a close look one can see Robert W. Patten, the umbrella man who made Seattle weather famous, with his small umbrella over his head.

The Mercer was very fast for her day. With a good wind blowing she could do 12 knots, 7 ahead and 5 sideways. I have a schedule dated summer 1905 which shows the sternwheeler made four trips a day to Parental School, Firlock, Enatie, Mercer Slough, Newport, Newcastle, Appleton and way points. It also made excursion trips around Mercer Island.

Being the only all-steel hull on Lake Washington, she was used as an ice-breaker. Her most famous trip was breaking ice up to Woodinville and delivering much needed supplies to this stranded city.

With the building of the Fortuna in 1906 and the acquiring of other vessels, the Mercer was made into a very useful oil barge to feed the lake boats. During a storm she sank off Roanoke Dock at Mercer Island and still lies there today.

--- Capt. Robert E. Matson
7525 Jones Ave. N.W.
Seattle 7, Wash.

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BEACHCOMBING AMONG THE BOOKSHELVES - Alexis A. Alvey

Sorry to miss the last issue! As our editor so understandingly expressed it: "involvement with vacation" was responsible for missing the boat!

Part of my vacation included the reunion of ex-Wrens of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the organization. It was held in Winnipeg, a jewel of a city on the railway neckless of Canada. Regrettably, I had never really visited Winnipeg - my previous acquaintance with it only the "short dim view"

from the railway station while one's transcontinental train is serviced, or the "no view at all" from the Winnipeg airport.

Capital of Manitoba, Winnipeg is at the junction of the Assiniboine and Red rivers, and like all of Canada's larger cities, was born as a natural stopping and trading place of the early explorers, voyageurs and merchants. To prepare myself for the brief sojourn I chose to read THE RIVERS OF CANADA by Hugh MacLennan; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962; illustrated with map drawings, 170pp, \$4.95. (published in Canada as SEVEN RIVERS OF CANADA)

The seven rivers cover Canada from coast to coast and provide the "all water" route east to west. This fact is basic to an understanding of the early explorers and settlement. The author writes in an easy conversational style, never missing the geology, geography, personalities and history that surrounds and is forever associated with each river. His close examination of each was accomplished by foot, water, car and plane. His ability to describe each river with broad brush strokes was the effect of a large canvas viewed from many angles.

One of the rivers is the Red which, "geologically speaking, is not a river at all. It is a surviving remnant of what was the largest fresh water lake in existence, at least in recent geological history." (Lake Agassiz)

Most of us Westerners are oriented to an east-west attitude, but in Winnipeg and particularly with the help of Mr. MacLennan's book, one is made aware of the north-south continental divide and the fact that all of Canada's rivers flow mainly north.

My view of the Red was the same as Mr. MacLennan's - "brown and lazy, it twines through the flat city with the motion of a convolvulus and then wanders out again into the apparent sameness of the Manitoba plain." And when the Red floods there is nothing anybody can do about it. "Nobody can stem the overflow of a river which turns itself into a lake on a continental plain where the highest elevation seldom exceeds twelve feet."

The other rivers described in his book are the Fraser, Mackenzie, Saskatchewan, St. Lawrence, Ottawa and St. John.

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IT'S TIME TO GET ACQUAINTED

Thumbnail biographical sketches drawn haphazardly

Ella L. Martinsen: A former Alaskan writer now living in California, Mrs. Martinsen attributes her maritime interest to a double source: John W. Todd, Jr., manager of Shorey Book Store, and a childhood spent on Puget Sound. Her business dealings with Mr. Todd, who handles her book, BLACK SAND AND GOLD, at Shorey's, led indirectly to her joining the PSMHS this year. Mrs. Martinsen at one time owned a store in Dawson and has long been active in the International Alaska-Yukon Sourdough Club. She is an authority on the Yukon gold rush which she describes vividly in her book. The old gold rush steamers play an important part in her book which portrays many of the colorful figures

who journeyed north on them. Among other celebrities who made the famous trip was Joaquin Miller, gold rush reporter and famed California poet. An avid collector of Alaskiana, Mrs. Martinsen utilizes her extensive collection of rare old photographs and colored slides to illustrate the frequent lectures she gives on Alaska. Among her other interests are composing music and writing poetry. She is the sister of Rowena L. Alcorn who, with her husband Gordon, is a frequent contributor to the Newsletter.

Athelstan Spilhaus: That interest in the PSMHS is not confined to Puget Sound is evidenced by the many memberships held by residents of other parts of the country. Prominent among our "long distance" members is Dean Spilhaus of the Institute of Technology, University of Minnesota. Dean Spilhaus, who was born in Cape Town, Union South Africa, is distinguished in the fields of education, research, industry and government service, among others; so varied are his accomplishments that the Newsletter lacks space to list them all. Among them are the following: U.S. representative on the executive board of UNESCO, 1954-58; chairman, National Fisheries Center and Aquarium Advisory Board, U.S. Dept. of the Interior; chairman Scientific Advisory Committee, American Newspaper Publishers Assn.; member Committee on Oceanography, National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council (chairman beginning 1961); member Comite Mondial, L'Universite a l'Usine, Paris, France; member USNC Technical Panel on the Earth Satellite, IGY; member Advisory Panel on General Sciences, Office of the Secretary of Defense; member Research and Development Advisory Council Army Signal Corps; member of the Baker Mission to Korea, July 1952; Meteorological Adviser to Union of South Africa Government 1946; member Engineering Advisory Committee, Associated Universities, Inc.; member Governor's Committee of 100, State of Minnesota; consultant General Electric Company, General Mills, and Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Company; chairman Board of Directors, Pergamon Press. Dean Spilhaus is the inventor of the bathythermograph and the author of a number of books and numerous articles in scientific journals. Last year he served as United States Commissioner, Seattle World's Fair. Obviously the Dean is a very busy man - but not too busy for membership in the PSMHS.

A REPORT FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMEN, MR. & MRS. WALTER R. GREEN

The following new members were accepted at the September 11 Board meeting:

J.F. Griffiths
Pier 43
Seattle, Wash.
AD 2 1574, MA 2 3340

Scott Harrison
9722 12th N.W.
Seattle 7, Wash.
SU 4 0494

W.T. House
4215 32nd Ave.W.
Seattle 99 Wash.
AT 2 2532
MA 2 3340

C.A. Bursett
Amer. Mail Line
1010 Wash. Bldg.
Seattle 1, Wash.

LA 3 8214 MA 4 3400

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DUES - DUES - DUES! A Plea from Walter R. Green

In this Newsletter is your envelope for your 1964 dues. Please mail all dues to Walter R. Green, 1600 28th Ave. West, Seattle 99, Wash. Dues are payable October 1, 1963, and delinquent after January 1, 1964.

The year book is published every two years. There will be a new book in 1964 which will go to press shortly after the first of the year. All paid-up members' names will appear in the new book.

It does facilitate our clerical work when dues are paid promptly.

Thanks to all members who have obtained new members for us. We still need more new members.

MAPS FROM EDWARD W. ALLEN COLLECTION SHOWN IN TACOMA

We are sorry we were not able to alert members in time to advise them of the Northwest map exhibit which closed in Tacoma recently. The maps displayed were from the collection of Mr. Edward W. Allen, Seattle attorney, collector, scholar and author (and PSMHS member). The 56 maps in the exhibit ranged from the 1511 First Venice edition of Ptolemy's Geography, edited by Bernardus Sylvanus down to the 1865 Oregon and Washington map of Johnson and Ward. The display was sponsored by the Washington State Historical Society.

Robert Hitchman, another well known PSMHS member, helped to design displays for the exhibit and also wrote the foreword for the attractive catalog listing and describing the collection.

We wish to commend Mr. Allen for his generosity in lending the maps and Mr. Hitchman for his cooperation.

Plans are under way for another showing of the exhibit here in Seattle. We will try to keep members posted as to place and date so that they can attend.

See you at the Old Timers Banquet!

PUGET SOUND MARITIME
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

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Seattle, Washington



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