EPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

NCISCO

Maritime Museum

FOOT OF POLK STREET • SAN FRANCISCO 9 • PRospect 6-1175

KARL KORTUM
Director

DAVID NELSON
Assistant to
The President

Chairman
R GEORGE CHRISTOPHER
RD H. HARMS
Canal Company
President
ADOLPH B. SPRECKELS

OFFICERS
R. STANLEY DOLLAR, JR.
Robert Dollar Company
President WILLIAM COFFMAN
Underwood Corporation
President MAX M. LEMBKE
Broker
President WILLIAM N. MILLS
Office of America
M. A. CREMER
Exchange, Inc.
ROBERT E. MAYER
American Steamship Assn.
MARK S. HAMILTON
Geary, Wheat, Adams & Charles

TRUSTEES
Galvan Co.
GALLAGHER
Navigation Co.
W. GATOV
Harbor & Storage Co.
GROSSETTI
Union Local #9
NGERSOLL
Steel Corp.
RGE KILLION
American President Lines
LEIRD KING
Architect
KNEISS
Pacific Railroad
MAYER
Examiner
A. MOORE, JR.
Dry Dock Company
NEWHALL
Chronicle
N. ROSEKRANS
National Bank
G. WALTON
& Eckhardt, Inc.
WATSON
Steamship Co.

ADVISORY BOARD
BLAKE
Consultant
A. BOYD
American Geographical Society
BRUCE
Brewer & Co., Ltd.
E. BUCK
Distilling Co.
CAUTHORN
Francisco News
K. DAVIES
American President Lines
Fargo Bank
LILLEVAND
Lines
E. LONDON
Francis Hotel
LUNDEBERG
Union of the Pacific
J. MALONE
Firemen's Union
McGREGOR
Investments
JOBS PURCELL
Council of S. F.
QUAYLE
Steel Corp.
R. ROLPH
James & Rolph
J. RYAN
Architect
F. STONE
Stone & Son
CHENOR
Packers Assn.
NION R. TUCKER
ZELINSKY
Contractor

January 15, 1958

Doctor John A. Hussey
National Park Service
180 New Montgomery Street
San Francisco, California

Dear Doctor Hussey:

During a recent conversation with John Kemble he told me of your interest in adding further western historical sites to the National Park Program, and said that he had suggested that Mendocino City, California and its environs be taken into your program.

This letter is by way of expressing enthusiasm for this idea; I think a little coastal lumber town would be a wonderfully characteristic bit of early Californiana to preserve intact. Luckily, Mendocino City is pretty much unspoiled, or at least such is the case up to the present time. I have often wondered whether the lack of a resounding chronicler telling of the charms and industry of the Sonoma and Mendocino County coast has not partly contributed to the fact that they are still so much a forgotten corner of California.

One of the reasons that Mendocino City would possibly be suitable for your purposes is that I believe a full file exists of the Mendocino County Beacon, published there. An unusual kind of attestation to the rugged beauty of the town is that the motion picture "Johnny Belinda" was filmed there some years ago, Mendocino City representing, as I remember, a town on the coast of Nova Scotia in the script.

Comparatively little attention has been given to the early days of our coastal lumber trade here in California. For example, we recently turned up the figure of 353 schooners built in San Francisco during the dates of 1854 and 1870, the bulk of which were unquestionably used in the lumber trade and I would imagine that the cove of Mendocino City was one of the major ports that they visited in those days.

EPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Our program to induce the State of California to save the latter day lumber schooners, the three masted C. A. THAYER and the steam schooner WAPAMA will, I hope, serve to bring a little attention to the later days of the trade, when these vessels are put on display.

While on the subject of our nation's maritime past, I would like to call your attention to what I feel is one of the most unfortunate historical oversights that has occurred in many years. We have celebrated the actions of the men who took part in the Civil War very substantially in this nation, but it seems to me that there is an unfortunate tendency to memorialize the land end of the war between the States at the expense of the naval side. In brief, hundreds of thousands of dollars -- I suppose millions -- have been spent for granite monuments to mark inland battles, while at the same time the one remaining naval vessel that we have from the Civil War is allowed to sink at her berth.

It is quite true that a number of forts on the foreshores of our bays and rivers have been fortunately preserved, but this falls just a little short of the true essence of the naval war, which in my opinion should be pointed up by a man of war of that period which the public could go aboard.

I enclose a clipping from our files with a few attached notes describing what I consider to be the only logical contender for preservation, and, short of a MERRIMAC and MONITOR, the most famous naval unit of the war between the States.

I understand that the HARTFORD sank at her moorings this spring and I cannot tell you her status at the present time -- whether she has been raised or not -- or is even in any condition to be raised. In any case, it would be a very expensive undertaking, although I am thoroughly convinced that this expense is justified.

EPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

I do not think that the uniqueness of the HARTFORD as the sole surviving Civil War vessel is generally realized. If means were found to preserve her, we would be blessed with a representative man of war from the eighteenth century in the frigate CONSTITUTION now preserved at the Boston Navy Yard; a vessel from the Civil War period in the HARTFORD; a vessel from the Spanish American War in the cruiser OLYMPIA which is going to be preserved by an organization at Philadelphia; by a man of war from the First World War in the battleship TEXAS now preserved by that State; and with an opportunity to preserve a man of war from World War II unquestionably presenting itself in the next decade or so.

It is my belief that no model of a ship, nor photograph, nor painting, nor relic preserved in a museum, can remotely approach the graphic value of actually preserving a full-sized vessel. This has been borne out by the success that this Museum has had in preserving as a museum piece the last of the Cape Horn square riggers which used to visit this port.

It is not an easy program to accomplish, but the rewards are proportionate to the effort put in it. As an evidence of public response to a real ship, I can point to the fact that for two and a half years, which is the period that our vessel BALCLUTHA has been on display, some half a million people have gone aboard the ship and have paid almost $200,000 for the privilege. These funds are used to maintain the vessel and operate this Museum.

With all good wishes.

Sincerely,

Karl Kortum
DIRECTOR

KK:tj
Encls.

EPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

FARRAGUT'S SHIP ROTS

NORFOLK, Va.—(AP)—A tired old lady droops in her berth here Congress ponders whether it should give her an expensive prescription that would prolong her life. The old lady is the once proud USS Hartford on whose decks Admiral Farragut in his battle with the Confederates in Mobile Bay yelled:

"Damn the torpedoes. Full speed ahead."

A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives to restore the old lady and send her to Mobile as an historic relic. The navy estimates more than a million dollars would be required to restore her.

Meanwhile she is slowly rotting away in her berth at the St. Helena Annex of the Norfolk naval shipyard.

Stationed at Mare Island for more than 20 years (Farragut was first Commandant of Mare Island.)

Two of the "Hartford's" original Dahlgren guns and other relics from her are still over there.

The "Hartford" was built in 1858, is only surviving vessel from the Civil War.

EPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

180 New Montgomery Street
San Francisco 5, California

January 22, 1958

Mr. Karl Kortum, Director
San Francisco Maritime Museum
Foot of Polk Street
San Francisco 9, California

Dear Mr. Kortum:

Thank you for your very kind letter of January 13 calling our attention to the historical significance of Mendocino City, California.

As John Kemble informed you, the National Park Service is conducting a National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The object of the study is not necessarily to add historical areas to the National Park System. The primary object of the Congress in appropriating funds for this work is to determine which existing sites are of national significance, and to focus attention on those worthy of preservation. It is to be hoped that State and local governments and various historical and patriotic organizations will wish to share in the program of saving and administering the country's most important historic places.

With this preliminary out of the way, let me hasten to add that we are exceedingly glad to have your estimate of the historical importance of Mendocino City. It is not that we have to be "sold" on the site, since Mendocino City and its story are well known to me personally, but in presenting our assessments of individual places it helps us to have at hand the considered opinions of individuals such as yourself and of organizations such as the San Francisco Maritime Museum. Since one of the results of the survey undoubtedly will be to recommend one or two sites in the country as being best qualified to commemorate the part the lumbering industry played in our national development, you may be sure that we shall give careful consideration to Mendocino City and to several other early mill towns on the Pacific Coast.

EPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

We are also much interested in your suggestion that a warship representative of each of our country's major wars should be preserved and placed on display. The desirability and the problems of preserving a representative number of ships have already been called to the attention of the National Park Service, and we are sure that such a project as you propose will be considered during the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. Because of the nation-wide scope of your proposal, we are forwarding copies of your letter to the Director of the National Park Service for consideration by the historical staff of his office.

Although you did not request it, we are returning your clipping on the Hartford, since it shows evidence of being a file copy. We have made photocopies of it to send to the Director.

Your interest in the historic sites program of this Service is greatly appreciated. Incidentally, we in this office are ardent "fans" of the Maritime Museum. We have been so impressed with the high quality of your exhibits that we make it a practice to recommend that interpretive personnel from our field areas and Washington Office visit the museum and the Balclutha whenever they are in San Francisco. In fact, the term "Balclutha-type" labels and exhibits is frequently heard when Park Service historians, naturalists, and museum men get together.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) John A. Hussey

John A. Hussey
Acting Regional Chief of Interpretation

Enclosure

Copy to: √Director (2) (Attention Mr. Littleton) w/c incoming