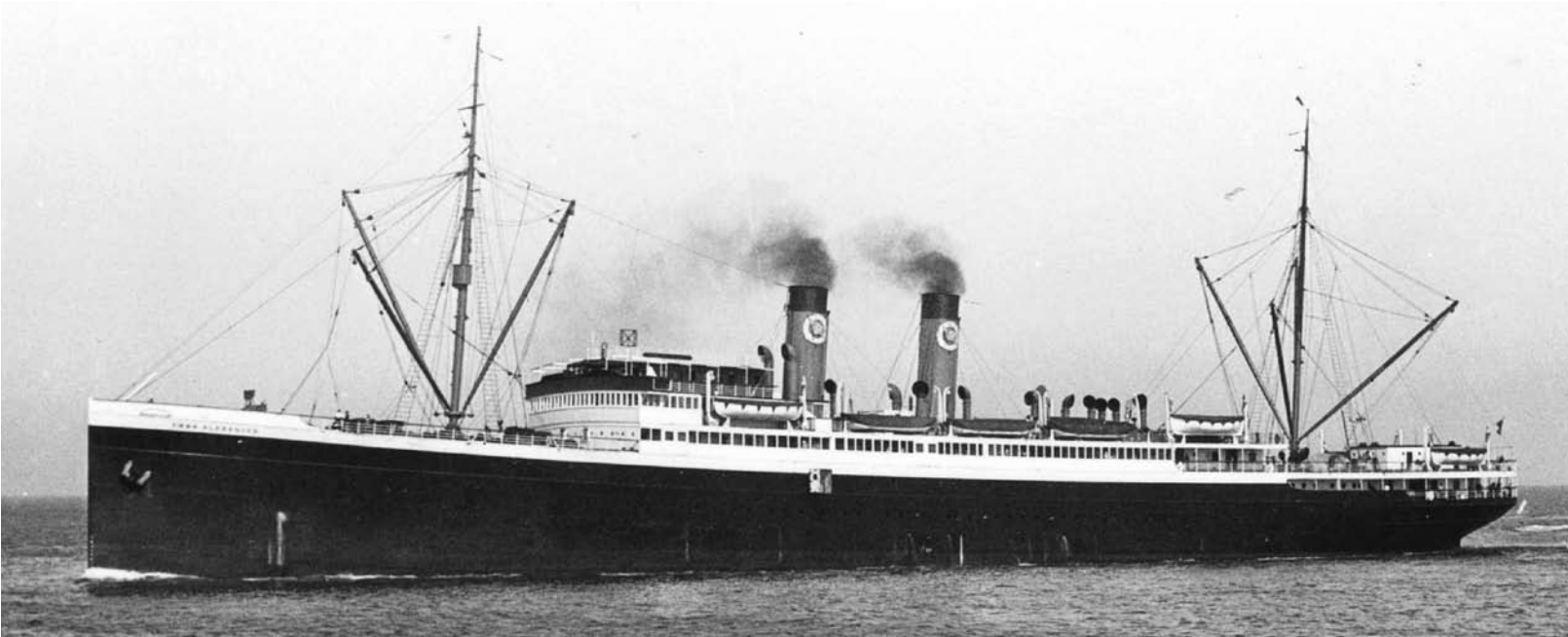


Black Newsman Went to Sea on the Admiral Line



The S. S. *Emma Alexander*, a 424-foot passenger ship in the Admiral Line Fleet. Photo: NPS, J7.22.532. Thomas C. Fleming, right, 22 years old, in 1929. Photo: Courtesy Max Millard.



In the summer of 1926, Thomas C. Fleming, later the co-founder and longtime editor of San Francisco’s leading Black newspaper, the *Sun-Reporter*, worked for a season as a bellhop aboard the steamer *Emma Alexander*. The *Emma* was a coastal passenger liner, running between Victoria, B.C. and San Diego for the Admiral Line. Admiral Line was the last big operator in the coastal passenger trade, a trade that began in the Gold Rush era and carried on until the mid-1930s. While the deck and engine crews of the Admiral Line ships were entirely white, the stewards department was all black. Work as a cook, waiter, porter or bellhop offered the only shipboard employment available to Black Americans on the West Coast until the Civil Rights revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Mr. Fleming’s recollections, now available on the Web, offer an intriguing glimpse of this little-remembered piece of our maritime history.

Thomas Fleming was eighteen years old and freshly graduated from Chico High School in 1926, when he arrived in the Bay Area to look for work. After being turned down by the Southern Pacific Railroad, he heard that the Admiral Line was hiring and was immediately shipped aboard the *Emma Alexander*, leaving that afternoon. The first trip was to Victoria, with stops at Seattle and Tacoma on the return leg. The passage to Victoria took 27 hours and the ship laid over at Seattle for a day on the trip south.

Fleming worked for several months as a bellhop, from six in the morning until late into the evening, for \$45 per month. There was no union representation on these ships. Only when the ship was in port did the men get a day off. Most of the work was seeing to the needs of the passengers. With tips, Fleming could make an extra \$25 if he moved quickly. He could also make a bit on the side supplying the occasional bottle of Canadian whiskey to passengers on this prohibition-bound American flag vessel. He reports that the passengers treated the Black stewards and the white crew about equally. All were seen as servants.

After a dispute with the Bell Captain on the *Emma*, Fleming made a trip on the smaller *Admiral Dewey* as a room steward. He was laid off as the summer travel season came to a close. Returning to Oakland, he got a job as a cook with the Southern Pacific Railroad, and stayed with that for five years.

Although Thomas Fleming worked only briefly for the Admiral Line, his recollections add to our understanding of life and work aboard these ships. Until stumbling across this series of articles, I had no idea that the stewards department on these coastal liners consisted of African Americans. The work of these thousands of seafarers, over decades of service, had rated no mention in the standard histories.

A rich collection of Mr. Fleming’s articles, prepared and presented by his colleague Max Millard, is available on the Web at www.maxmillard.com/blackhist.htm. It is well worth a look.

By Stephen Canright, Park Curator, Maritime History



Marseille Pope, seasonal Park Ranger and first grade teacher, helps her class raise the staysail on the historic ship *Balclutha*. See story on page two. Photo: NPS

Welcome

Winter is a slow time in some national parks, but here at SF Maritime the off-season is a our chance to dig deep into the history and significance of our cultural resources, looking for fresh stories to tell, and new ways to tell them.

In this issue of *The Maritime News*, we take a look at the important contributions of two African Americans to the history of the sea and San Francisco. The issue’s cover story explores the maritime experiences of Thomas C. Fleming, longtime editor of San Francisco’s *Sun-Reporter* newspaper. Besides being a fascinating glimpse into the life a leading Bay Area citizen, it is a reminder of the depth and breadth of our shared maritime heritage. On page two, explore the artworks of Sargent Johnson, a New Deal artist whose works will forever be displayed in the soon-to-be-reopened Aquatic Park Bathhouse Building. I encourage you to dig a bit deeper into their histories and the important contributions of other Bay Area African Americans.

This fall’s oil spill spotlighted the Bay’s environment, and our Aquatic Park district was impacted, along with many National Park areas. I want to thank all of our partners, friends, and neighbors for their unflagging support and understanding during that incident.

There are so many ties that bind a community together, and so many connections that make us a nation. Our heritage is one. Our environment is another. We must protect all those bonds, for ourselves and for our children.



Kate Richardson, Superintendent

1 Black Newsman Went to Sea

In 1926, Thomas C. Fleming worked for a season as a bellhop aboard the steamer *Emma Alexander*.


2 Artist Sargent Johnson

In 2008 we commemorate the 75th anniversary of America’s New Deal Heritage. Johnson’s New Deal art works endure in the Aquatic Park Bathhouse Building.

4 Green Sailors on a Blue Sea: Activity Page for Kids

If you were a sailor on a voyage across the sea and you needed to get rid of some stinky trash, what would you do?

- Thomas C. Fleming...1
- Superintendent’s Message...1
- Visitor Information...2
- Artist Sargent Johnson...2
- Events and Programs...3
- Kids Activity Page...4
- Park Map...4
- Today In the Park...4



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Francisco Maritime
National Historical Park

Established in 1988, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park encompasses only 34 acres, but contains the most national historic landmarks of any unit in the National Park Service. In addition to the fleet of ships at Hyde Street Pier, the park includes the Aquatic Park Historic Landmark District (Bathhouse building, urban beach, lawn area and bocce ball courts), a Visitor Center and a research library (in Fort Mason Center).

Superintendent

Kate Richardson

Chief of Interpretation

Marc Hayman

Public Affairs Officer

Lynn Cullivan

Editor

Christine Baird

Mailing Address

Building E, Fort Mason Center
San Francisco, CA 94123

Fax Number

415-556-1624

Park Information

415-447-5000

Contributors to Volume 19: Tim Campbell, Stephen Canright, Lynn Cullivan, Leslie Graham, and Amy Hosa.

The Maritime News December, January, February 2007/2008 Volume No.19

Sargent Johnson: Bay Area Artist

The Federal Arts Project (FAP), one of the many New Deal social and economic programs enacted during the Great Depression (1933-1941) by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration, employed many Bay Area artists in creating a variety of public art works. These works were commissioned for public schools, military bases, libraries, and housing projects. Among these artists was Sargent Claude Johnson, 1888-1967, a prominent black sculptor, ceramicist, painter, and lithographer.

Beginning in 1935, Johnson kept steadily employed by working on and supervising various federally-funded projects. The FAP gave Johnson the opportunity to work with new materials on a massive scale and in well-equipped studios. One project he supervised was the Aquatic Park Bathhouse building.

Built in 1939 as a joint project of the City of San Francisco and the New Deal, Works Progress Administration (WPA), the building is a unique structure designed in

the Streamline Moderne style and a focal point of the park. Both the interior and exterior contain art funded through the FAP.

Johnson designed and carved the green Vermont slate that adorns the museum entrance. The slate runs along the sides of the wide, main entrance and all across the tops of the doors. The two-inch thick pieces of slate were cut into three by four foot pieces and carved by Johnson offsite. They were then attached to the building using wires and plaster of Paris.

Johnson also designed the large tile mosaic that covers the second floor outer wall of the building. This part of the building is currently inaccessible to the public due to construction, but can be glimpsed by walking along the promenade and gazing up. The greenish, blue tiles are filled with smiling fish and other fanciful images of the sea.

For much of the Depression Johnson was able to stay employed and off the relief

rolls because of government sponsorship of art. During a 1964 oral history interview Johnson said that working with the Federal Arts Project was the best thing that ever happened to him. “It gave me more of an incentive to keep on working. ...I thought of getting out of it because I come from a family who thought all artists were drunkards and everything else. I thought I'd given it up at one time but I think the WPA helped me to stay.”

March 31, 2008 kicks off the celebration of the 75th anniversary of America's New Deal Heritage. This celebration hopes to heighten public awareness and appreciation of America's New Deal experience. The Aquatic Park Bathhouse building, and its unique artwork, stands as a reminder of what the New Deal meant for Americans during the 1930s and 1940s.

See the websites, www.newdeal75.org and www.newdeallegacy.org for more information.



Photo, left: Carved slate on the front of the Aquatic Park Bathhouse building. Photo, above: Section of the tile mosaic covering an outer second floor wall of the building. Artist Sargent Johnson, employed by the Federal Arts Project during the late 1930s, created both works. Photos: NPS

Teachers Pope and Guzmán Join Ranger Ranks

Last summer the park was fortunate to welcome two San Francisco public elementary school teachers, Marseille Pope and Rubén Guzmán, as park employees in the Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) program.

Marseille and Rueben arrived in late June, donned the NPS uniform, and immediately immersed themselves in learning maritime history and developing educational programs for the public. They had to rapidly learn the ropes of working at a national park. Their duties included opening and closing the park, staffing the information desk, and presenting programs to visitors.

As if that wasn't enough for eight weeks

of employment, they also tackled some special projects. Marseille began work on a traveling trunk that will be filled with hands-on maritime activities aimed at first through third graders.

Rubén, whose first language is Spanish, offered his educational programs in English and Spanish, and worked with several employees to develop programs to best reach the Spanish speaking public. He also researched and translated the park's Junior Ranger Program and park safety information. This will be the first time the Junior Ranger program will be available in a second language.

The TRT program aims to engage teachers from under-served schools that are

not currently being reached with park programs, and pays particular attention to school districts with large, ethnically diverse populations.

This past October Marseille and Rubén returned to the park with their classes for a ranger-led tour. The students boarded the ships, helped raise a sail on the park's historic square-rigged ship *Balclutha*, and sang a sea chantey.

Rubén and Marsaille will continue to draw on their summer experience and incorporate NPS themes into their lessons. In April 2008, during National Park Week, they will wear their uniforms to school and do a special program on National Parks.



Park Ranger Ruben Guzmán with a visitor. Photo: NPS

The park plans on continuing the TRT program for the 2008 summer season. For more information, and how to apply, please call Park Ranger John Cunnane at 415-561-7170.

Visitor Information

Dates and Hours of Operation

The **Hyde Street Pier**, located at Hyde and Jefferson Streets, is open 9:30AM – 5:00PM—last entry at 4:30PM (October 1–May 24), and 9:30AM – 5:30PM—last entry at 5PM (May 25–September 30).

The **Aquatic Park Bathhouse Building** is located on Beach Street at the foot of Polk Street. The building was closed in July 2006 for major renovation work. For more information, call the Visitor Center, 415-447-5000. The Senior Center, located in the building, remains open.

The **Visitor Center**, located at the corner of Hyde and Jefferson Streets, is open 9:30AM – 5:00PM (October 1–May 24) and 9:30AM – 7:00PM (May 25–September 30).

The **Maritime Library**, on the third floor of Bldg. E in Fort Mason Center (auto entrance at Buchanan Street and Marina Blvd), is open to the public by making an appointment: Monday–Friday (1PM–4PM), and the 3rd Saturday of the month (10AM–4PM). Call 415-561-7030.

No-Fee Areas

Visitor Center, Hyde Street Pier, Aquatic Park Historic District and the Maritime Library (Fort Mason Center).

Boarding Pass (Entrance Fee For Historic Vessels): \$5.00

Free for supervised children under 16. Free with Federal Interagency Annual, Senior, and Access Passes, and San Francisco Maritime NHP Pass.

Reservations/Permits

Reservations for school groups and other educational groups must be made at least two weeks prior to your visit. At least one month's notice and application for Special Use Permits is required. Filming permits are arranged on an individual basis.

Contact Information

General Park Information: 415-447-5000
Maritime Store: 415-775-2665
Maritime Library: 415-561-7030

USS Pampanito: 415-775-1943
Park Website: www.nps.gov/safr
Association Website: www.maritime.org

Music, Tours, Events, Classes and Living History

MUSIC

CHANTEY SING

Saturdays, December 1, January 5 and February 2, 8PM-MIDNIGHT. Free. Aboard a historic vessel at Hyde Street Pier. Reservations required: call 415-561-7171 or email peter_kasin@nps.gov.

Sing traditional working songs aboard a historic floating vessel. Bring a mug for hot cider served from the ship's galley.

MUSIC OF THE SEA FOR KIDS

Saturdays, December 15, January 19 and February 16, 3PM. Aboard Balclutha at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). History comes alive for kids in this special program, where the songs are geared for younger ears and chosen especially for fun. Ages 7 and up. ☺

HOLIDAY EVENT

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

Saturday, December 8, 3:00PM. Aboard the historic vessels at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). For information call 415-447-5000.

Bring the whole family down to Hyde Street Pier for an old fashioned holiday. Music, refreshments, ornament-making and a visit from Santa (by boat) will be part of the fun from 3PM to 4:45PM. Then, beginning at 6PM, the park's costumed Living History players will take you back to a bygone era, where you will meet and talk with the captains, their wives, and crews during a lamplit tour of the vessels decorated for Christmas 1901. Reservations required for the 6PM program, 415-447-5000. ☺

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

CHANTEYS: THE AFRICAN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN CONNECTION

Saturday, February 23, 3PM. Aboard Balclutha at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission.

Join Park Ranger Peter Kasin and park volunteer Richard Adrianowicz for a program on chanteys of African American and Caribbean sailors, stevedores, and fishermen. The choruses to these work songs are easy to sing and participants are encouraged to sing along. ☺



WILLIAM SHOREY: WHALING SHIP CAPTAIN

Sundays, February 10 and 24, 1PM. In the Visitor Center theater. No fee. A series of slides will introduce you to the extraordinary life and accomplishments of

☺FUN FOR FAMILIES PROGRAM

the only black whaling ship captain on the West Coast.

NEW PROGRAM

STAND BY TO ANSWER BELLS

Sundays, December 23, January 13 and February 17, 1PM. Meet at Hercules's gangway on the Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). Tour includes climbing steep ladders. Park Rangers will demonstrate how the captain atop the ship in the pilothouse communicated with the crew down below in the engine room. Help them use the voice tubes, bell and jingle system, and engine order telegraph. ☺

MORE PROGRAMS

HISTORIC WATERFRONT WALKING TOUR: FROM GOLD RUSH TO NATIONAL PARK Saturdays and Sundays, December, January and February, 10:30AM. Meet in the Argonaut Hotel lobby (495 Jefferson St.), adjacent to the Visitor Center. Free.

Over the last 160 years, industrial and recreational uses changed the environment of San Francisco's northern waterfront. Stroll with a Park Ranger to discover the history of this vibrant area on a walking tour through the Aquatic Park Historic District, the Cannery, Hyde Street Pier, and "Fish Alley" at Fisherman's Wharf. The tour is one hour and covers approximately one mile, with some gently sloping and uneven terrain. Dress in layers, wear sunscreen, and walking shoes. ☺

BOOK TALK: "THAR SHE BLOWS"

Sunday, January 13, 1:30PM to 1:45PM. At the Sailor's Den in the Visitor Center. Free. Join a librarian for a whale of a tale about great books to read about whales and whaling. She'll be spouting about Yankee whaling, Neeluk, an Eskimo boy, and more. ☺

CHILDREN AT SEA

Sundays, December 16 and January 6, 1PM - 1:45PM. Aboard Balclutha at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free).

If you were the child of an 1880s sea captain, how would you live on board a ship? What about school, chores, and who would you play with? Ranger Carol Kiser will reveal all the answers on this tour through the Balclutha. ☺

ADVENTURES AT SEA: LIFE ABOARD A 19TH CENTURY SAILING SHIP

Daily, December, January and February, 2:15PM. Aboard Balclutha at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). No tour on Christmas and New Year's Days, the park is closed.

Join in on a guided tour of the historic ship Balclutha. Discover the hardships and rewards of the sailors who fought for survival during the treacherous Cape Horn passage. ☺

CAULKING A SEAM

Sundays, December 30 and January 20, NOON. Aboard Balclutha at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free).

Watertight seams are essential on wooden sailing ships. Park Ranger Carol Kiser demonstrates the steps involved in caulking a deck seam. ☺

EUREKA ENGINE ROOM TOUR

Sunday, January 6, and Saturday, February 2, 2008 2PM. Meet on Eureka's gangway. Vessel admission (under 16 free). Take a special tour of the ferryboat Eureka's engine room and get a close-up look at what makes a steam ferry run.

HERCULES ENGINEERING TOUR Sundays, December 16, January 6 and February 10, 3PM. Meet at the gangway on the Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). Tour includes climbing moderately steep ladders and entering cramped spaces. Explore the major engineering spaces and learn about steam engine technology and its effects on the working environment of the marine steam engineer.

RESTORING THE C. A. THAYER

Saturday, December 15, Sunday, January 20, and Saturday, February 23, 2PM. In the Visitor Center theater. Free. This illustrated presentation will describe the recent restoration of the lumber schooner C. A. Thayer and the unique way she returned to Hyde Street Pier.

CRUISE OF THE SHENANDOAH

Saturdays, December 22, January 12 and Sunday, February 10, 2PM. In the Visitor Center theater. Free. This illustrated program describes the 1864-65 cruise of the C.S.S. Shenandoah in the Pacific Ocean during which she almost completely destroyed the San Francisco based Pacific whaling fleet. Join a Park Ranger as he traces the 27,000-mile cruise of the Shenandoah.

SMALL CRAFT ON HYDE STREET PIER

Sunday, December 16, Saturday, January 26 and Sunday, February 17, 2:00PM. Meet at the Small Boat Shop. Free. Join a Park Ranger for a special tour of the unique collection of small craft berthed on Hyde Street Pier's floating docks.

SMALL CRAFT COLLECTION TOUR

Sunday, February 10, 9:30AM-2:30PM. Meet at the Small Boat Shop. Free. Reservations required; call the Boat Shop at 415-556-4031. Bring a bag lunch and ride with us over to our small craft warehouse in Alameda. We'll tour the collection of nearly 100 local historic boats, discussing interesting elements of their history, design and construction.

MODELMAKING

MODELERS' WORKSHOP

Saturdays, open throughout the winter, beginning at 9:30AM. On the car deck of the Eureka. Vessel admission. The Hyde Street Pier Model Shipwrights conduct ship model building classes on Saturdays. Classes begin at 9:30am and continue into the afternoon. Modelmeister Paul Reck, who has built models on display in the Visitor Center and St. Francis Yacht Club, is the primary instructor. Anyone interested in building models is invited to stop by. For information, contact Leo Kane at kanebulota@sbcglobal.net or Paul Reck at stoddardNH@comcast.net or call the Volunteer Office, 415-556-1613.

COSTUMED LIVING HISTORY

A DAY IN THE LIFE: 1901

Saturday, December 8, 6PM-9PM. Aboard the historic vessels at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). Reservations required, please call 415-447-5000. Step back in time to Christmas 1901. See the Holiday Event entry on this page. ☺

IN THE LIBRARY

MARITIME HISTORY CLASS OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC

Two Mondays, January 28 and February 4, 9AM TO NOON. In the Maritime Library. Free. Come join this free class on maritime history taught by park employees. Park historians, rangers, and librarians will transport you to the 18th and 19th centuries. Topics include the Gold Rush, ships sailing in the grain and lumber trades, and whaling. For reservations and info: Ted_Miles@nps.gov or 415-561-7009.

FROM THE ODYSSEY TO NORD VI: A RAFT VOYAGE ACROSS THE PACIFIC Sunday, January 12, 2008, 6PM. In the Maritime Library. Building E, Fort Mason Center. Fee: \$5 (\$4 Library friends and SFMNP) Reservations: 415-561-7040 or melani_van_petten@partner.nps.gov.

Sailor and author Dr. Urbanczyk will tell the story of his expedition from California to Guam aboard a 40-foot raft of California redwood logs, sailing 7,000 miles in 140 days to achieve the world's record for the longest bluewater raft voyage.

SHIPWRECKS, SCALAWAGS AND SCAVENGERS: THE STORIED WATERS OF PIGEON POINT

Saturday, February 9, 2008, 6PM. In the Maritime Library. Building E, Fort Mason Center. Fee: \$5 (\$4 Library friends and SFMNP) Reservations: 415-561-7040 or melani_van_petten@partner.nps.gov.

JoAnn Semones, author of *Shipwrecks, Scalawags and Scavengers: the Storied Waters of Pigeon Point*, will discuss the history of this local landmark, focusing on stories of the many shipwrecks that happened along the rocky shoreline.

VOLUNTEERS

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED AS A VOLUNTEER?

At San Francisco Maritime our volunteers provide a variety of services that support the exhibit shop, ships division, small boat shop, maritime library, historic documents department, and interpretation and education. We have the perfect challenge for you! Call the Volunteer Office at 415-556-1613, or visit www.nps.gov/safr/supportyourpark/volun

WWII SUBMARINE USS PAMPANITO

Open daily from 9AM, Pier 45, Fisherman's Wharf (Taylor and Embarcadero). Fee: \$9; discounts for families, children, seniors and active duty military. Information: 415-775-1943. Experience this authentic World War II submarine. See how the crew of 80 men lived in amazingly tight quarters. Many artifacts are on display. An audio tour features Pampanito crewmen telling their real-life war stories. A National Historic Landmark, the Pampanito is preserved and operated by the San Francisco Maritime National Park Association.



You can show your support for the park through membership in the Maritime Park Association, our non-profit partner organization. Your membership assists with education and preservation projects

for park ships and collections. Membership comes with special benefits at each level, including the *Sea Letter* magazine, free ship admission, and Maritime Store discounts. For more information, call Member Services at 415-561-6662 x12, or go to www.maritime.org.

Today In The Park

DECEMBER

1

Balclutha Ship Tour (daily)
Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Saturday)
Chantey Sing
Modelmaking Workshop open on Saturdays

2

Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Sunday)

8

Holiday Program: Christmas at Sea and costumed Living History players circa 1901

9

Eureka Engine Room Tour

15

Restoring the C. A. Thayer
Music of the Sea for Kids

16

Children at Sea
Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier
Hercules Engineering Tour

22

The Cruise of the Shenandoah

23

Stand By Bells

25

Park Closed

30

Caulking a Seam

JANUARY

1

Park Closed

2

Balclutha Ship Tour (daily)

5

Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Saturday)
Chantey Sing

6

Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Sunday)
Children at Sea
Eureka Engine Room Tour
Hercules Engineering Tour
Modelmaking Workshop open on Saturdays

12

The Cruise of the Shenandoah
From the Odyssey to NORD VI

13

Book Talk in the Visitor Center
Stand By Bells
Family Appreciation Day

19

Music of the Sea for Kids

20

Caulking a Seam
Restoring the C. A. Thayer

26

Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier

28

Maritime History Class

FEBRUARY

1

Balclutha Ship Tour (daily)
African American History Month exhibit opens

2

Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Saturday)
Eureka Engine Room Tour
Chantey Sing
Modelmaking Workshop open on Saturdays

3

Historic Waterfront Walking Tour

(every Sunday)

4

Maritime History Class

9

Shipwrecks, Scalawags, and Scavengers

10

William Shorey: Whaling Ship Captain
The Cruise of the Shenandoah
Hercules Engineering Tour

16

Music of the Sea for Kids

17

Stand By Bells
Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier

23

Restoring the C. A. Thayer
Chanteys: The African American and Caribbean Connection

24

William Shorey: Whaling Ship Captain



The Maritime News is printed on recycled paper using soy-based inks. Please recycle it again.

Fun and Education for Younger Sailors

Think Like a Sailor!

Green Sailors On a Blue Sea

If you were a sailor on a voyage across the sea and you needed to get rid of some stinky trash, what would you do? Throw it over the side of the ship? We hope not! Today, when we think about taking care of the environment, we think about the “Three Rs:” reduce, reuse and recycle: **reduce** the amount of trash we discard, **reuse** or repair instead of throwing away, and **recycle** as much as possible.

More than 100 years ago people who sailed on deep-water ships like *Balclutha* were already masters of reducing, reusing and recycling.

Their record wasn’t so good though when it came to littering. Consider Fred Duncan and his four brothers and sisters who sailed with their mother and captain father aboard the *Florence*, a full-rigged cargo ship similar to our *Balclutha*.

One year at Christmas, Fred remembers that his father used the family’s tall laundry basket for a Christmas tree, decorating it with red and green ribbons – a good way to save a tree! But then once the presents were opened and the cabin was overflowing with wrapping paper, the family gathered it all up and tossed it over the side.

The family and the sailors on that ship used toilets that were really nothing more than chutes into the ocean. If the cook had some moldy meat, he just tossed it over the side. Fred remembers “Sharks often followed us for days, scavenging garbage thrown overboard from the galley.”

But at least they weren’t tossing plastic into the water. The food they ate didn’t have any packaging other than the barrels or bags in which it was stored. They drank from mugs or tin cups, not Styrofoam. For the most part, they were good stewards of the environment. They reused the materials they had on board out of necessity. Sails were patched and repatched until they couldn’t be used any more. Lines that had become worn in spots were spliced (rewoven) to be reused. And of course, the ship ran on wind power, a renewable energy!

Toys for the children were also improvised: Fred Duncan remembers making animals to play with by cutting out pictures on canned food labels – salmon and chickens and tuna and turkeys - and sticking them on cardboard or pieces of wood supplied by the ship’s carpenter. The sailors made dolls for Fred’s sisters, carving the bodies out of wood scraps and using oakum (unwound pieces of rope) for hair.

Once Fred made an aquarium for himself out of an old washtub and filled it with the strange and wonderful animals the sailors pulled out of the sea. Another time, the Duncan children were given a crate of toy ships that had been too damaged to be used for sale. Fred remembers how thrilled he was, and how it only took a little work by the carpenter to make the little ships right again.

Today we try our best to keep our world clean of litter, but we aren’t always so good at reusing or recycling. So, the next time you’re wondering how you could be a better friend to the environment, you might try thinking like a sailor!

Source: Deepwater Family, by Fred B. Duncan, Pantheon Books, 1969.

Find the words in the puzzle below.

E	D	O	L	L	S	I	S
C	E	P	O	R	Y	K	F
U	S	L	I	A	R	F	Y
D	U	A	C	A	A	H	P
E	E	M	H	Y	M	G	X
R	R	S	O	Q	C	E	P
S	L	I	A	S	I	E	M
S	P	I	H	S	G	A	R

DOLLS	ROPE
SAILS	RECYCLE
REDUCE	REUSE
SHARK	

