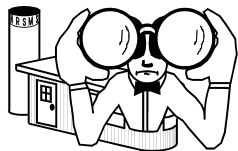


From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



On the last weekend of April, I took some time off from work and headed north to attend the 30th annual Northeast Joint Clubs Ship Model Conference and Show which was held in New London Connecticut at the Port 'N' Starboard Convention Center at Ocean Beach Park. This event was a joint effort of seven ship model clubs from Philadelphia to Massachusetts with the Ship Model Society of New Jersey being the host Club.

The event was well attended by the public as close to seventy ship models were on display. For the Conference, which included a buffet meal and seven one-half hour presentations, there were close to 110 ship modelers and their guests in attendance. Chuck Passaro was the keynote speaker at the luncheon and he discussed his experiences in designing ship model kits for Model Expo.

An event like this is really nice for the ship modeler. It is a chance to see old friends that have been made in this hobby and to make new ones. Most of the models had their builder close buy, so it was a good opportunity to discuss how they did this or how do I do that. The exhibition hall held a wealth of knowledge, as many of the modelers have been building ship models all of their life. To talk ship modeling and to see the work of others was very inspiring. I know that many of the participants left the Conference with a renewed desire to tackle their current project. Seeing the work of other ship modelers is always very inspiring.

At the last meeting, John Cheevers told us that he had been contacted by Gene Larson of the Washington Ship Model Society about having a joint club meeting in the fall. This now looks like it can be a possibility and John will have more information at our May meeting. Having attended the Conference in Connecticut, I can see how all members who can attend a joint meeting will benefit. I have heard many stories from the joint club meetings held in the 80's and 90's and I realize how beneficial these meetings are. There is so much to learn in this hobby and when you combine the experiences and knowledge of other ship modelers at such a gathering, it will definitely enhance your knowledge of ship modeling and improve your modeling skills.

I want to thank George Livingston for his presentation on Part 3 of the building of his Charles W. Morgan.

(Continued on page 2)

Mystery Photo #310: Alright we seem to be stuck in the "B" row with another excellent submission from the Dave Baker archive. "B" could stand for Baker, or "B" could stand for barracks ship. Excellent photograph and I'm glad to have it for study. This image is a crisp, clear aerial oblique portrait framing three vessels and a portion of shoreline. The odd way where the largest vessel is not centered in the frame suggests that the print may be cropped from the original negative in an attempt to fairly include the little launch you see on the right. Besides cropping, how else do you adequately compose an aerial photograph—one that obviously predates World War Two?

Now, the intent of this Mystery Photograph is to identify the largest vessel. I could have said the funny looking vessel, I could have said the floating barn, I could have said Noah's ark. But by using today's standards, the other vessel looks a bit odd as well. And you should know intuitively that we don't mean the launch, so the focus of this mystery is the largest vessel. Anyone who identifies the smaller, but no less odd, ship rafted to the largest will get high marks from me. And, if you take on and identify the launch...well then...you'll be in a class by yourself.

Now that the confusing ground rules are out of the way, let's get to the deconstruction of this fine image. Alright, we have several vessels anchored in very calm water. The calmness of the water strongly suggests a protected anchorage like a harbor or up a lazy river. The vegetation—and you can see a few palms and palmettos—suggests a tropical climate. The architectural style suggests, to me at least, a place like Panama or Hawaii or even the Philippines. The tank farm in the distance suggests a large naval installation.

To help with the timeline, aside from the age of the vessels, we can loosely identify several cars and trucks found on the road between the ships and the tanks, and in a lot located in the same vicinity, by shape. None of them appear to

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday May 12, 2012

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1000 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



While in Connecticut, I visited the Charles W. Morgan and saw the progress that has been made on the restoration of this ship. George's model is a very accurate representation of the real Charles W. Morgan and I cannot wait to see Part 4 of his construction.

Please bring your current modeling project to the meeting for the members to see your progress. By doing so, you may inspire other members to start making some sawdust.

I look forward to seeing everyone Saturday.

Ryland

(Continued from page 1)

resemble vehicles built after about 1935 or before 1920. Heck just the lack of volume with the vehicles and the unimproved state of the visible roadways suggest the same time period.



Mystery Photo

Again, if the image was un-cropped you would see that this tank farm is rather substantial in terms of



size and number of tanks. Also, if the original image traversed far enough to the left you would find an important landmark—one that has been written of in this column before. That landmark, and I'm going from memory here, is one of only two or three to exist in the US Navy. I say three because my faulty memory seems to be telling me that the others are located in San Diego, California and New London, Connecticut. (Oh what a gem for you fact checkers!) We'll get to this later.

Two responses this month, both correctly identifying the roofed over barn as "the *USS Alton* (IX 5)." Not what some of you were expecting to read—right? Charles Landrum and Rob Napier had little trouble identifying the vessel. Charles said it this way: "She was the ex-*USS Chicago* one of the first ships of the new American steel navy and was commissioned on 1889 as a protected cruiser." And Rob has this to say: "Gotta be *USS Chicago* of the ABCD protected cruisers. Built at Cramp, commissioned 1889. Operated in the Squadron of Evolution." Both are right and both have identi-

fied one of the four original Steel hulled ships of the US Navy. In typical Navy speak these four ships were known as the "ABCD ships." A useless acronym made of the first letter of each ship's name—*Atlanta*, *Boston*, *Chicago*, and *Dolphin*, three protected cruisers and one dispatch vessel. For convenience I suppose, history often records them all as protected cruisers.

Chicago as built had these specifications: "Displacement 4,500 Tons, Dimensions, 342' 2" (oa) x 48' 2" x 22' 7" (Max); Armament 4 x 8"/30 8 x 6"/30, 2 x 5"/30, 2 x 6pdr, 2 x 1pdr.; Armor, 4" Shields, 1 1/2" Deck, 3" Conning Tower.; Machinery, 5,000 IHP; 2 Compound overhead beam engines, 2 screws; Speed, 14 Knots, Crew 409." Not large at all by today's standard for a cruiser but plenty big for the fledgling American steel shipbuilding industry of the 1880's.

Charles and Rob describe her career in general terms. Rob begins: "She served in various capacities in the Atlantic and Pacific. In her final duty as a commissioned ship, she served as a submarine tender at Pearl Harbor." To which Charles adds: "She was decommissioned in 1909 and served with the Massachusetts and Pennsylvania naval militias. She was re-commissioned for WWI 1917-1923. During this period she served as a flagship in the submarine force, first in the Atlantic and then in the Pacific from 1919-1923 at Pearl Harbor for Submarine Division 14." And they agree she was decommissioned there in 1923. Charles advances her time line a bit with this: "The Navy renamed [her] *ALTON* and reclassified her as (IX 5) in 1928." Rob agrees and provided an almost identical sentence as proof. Both mention that "she sank under tow in 1936 on her way to the breakers in San Francisco." The important facts here are how they link her with Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, how they identify her as the barracks ship *Alton*, and how they give us a starting point for our time line.

In an interesting aside, Charles says that "among her commanding officers were: Alfred T. Mahan, Thomas C. Hart and Chester Nimitz." Quite a heady list chosen to command this vessel, but the link with Nimitz is worth further exploration.

From a contemporary biography of Nimitz taken from the Internet we learn how tenuous our connection really is: "Chester W. Nimitz was born at Fredericksburg, TX on February 24, 1885 and was the son of Chester B. and Anna Nimitz. Nimitz's father died before he was born and as a

(Continued on page 3)

Nautical Term

Hog (1) Said of a craft that has lost her sheer, sagging downwards in her ends; said of any tired or badly built craft.

(2) A large heavy brush, or more recently a scrapper, for bottom work.

The background for the term in both meanings is not certain, based on the graceless curve of a hogback.

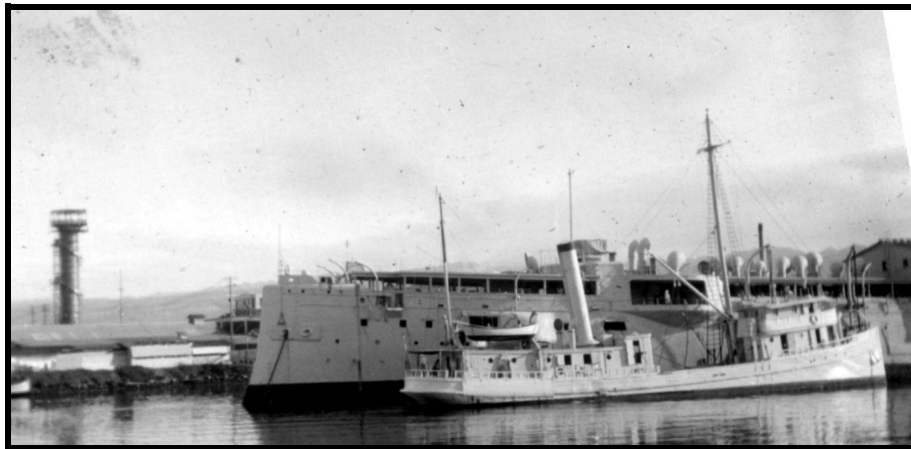
Submitted by, Tim Wood

(Continued from page 2)



Mystery Photo

young man he was influenced by his grandfather Charles H. Nimitz who had served as a merchant seaman. Attending Tivy High School, Kerrville, TX, Nimitz originally wished to attend West Point but was unable to do so as no appointments were available. Meeting with Congressman James L. Slayden,



Nimitz was informed that one competitive appointment was available to Annapolis. Viewing the US Naval Academy as his best option for continuing his education, Nimitz devoted himself to studying and succeeded in winning the appointment. Arriving at Annapolis in 1901.”

Following his commission, he served in various leadership positions including “brief service as the commander of USS *Chicago* and Submarine Division 14,” in the late teens. So, for a fortuitous lack of a “slot” at West Point the navy developed one of their best leaders and our story about the main interest of our Mystery Photo just got richer.

Now that the location of our image is rock solid, let’s see what else the replies brought and see if we can connect that mysterious landmark to our story. Both Charles and Rob sent with their replies an almost identical image to the Mystery Photo. While the image does not carry a caption, Rob says “the Mystery Photo is composed almost identically to the first attached photo, which is identified as being of *Alton* at the submarine base in Pearl Harbor in the 1930s, when she was a barracks ship.” Charles adds: “During the building of the submarine base in Pearl Harbor, she was used as a floating barracks. When the base was completed, *Alton* was sold for scrap...” Looking at the image, we do see an almost identical composition, but from farther away and a bit later in time.

That lapse of time helps us. Immediately you see

that most of the narrow one-story bungalow-style buildings are gone. Their footprint in the ground seems to be unoccupied. The only carry over structure is the flat-roofed block structure with the single row of ventilators running down the center of the roof. That building is identified by the Naval Historical Center as the battery shop, and is still used as such. The foot and pipe causeways leading to *Alton* are still there and unchanged. In the background you see the new multi story barracks building that was completed in 1928. Its completion almost certainly spelled the end of *Alton*’s service. Also to the left we see that landmark I mentioned. It is the submarine escape training tower. It was built in 1932. We previous set the start date for our timeline at 1928 with Charles’ comment where the navy renamed and re-designated *Chicago* as *Alton* in 1928. If the second image shows the escape, training tower which was built in 1932 and the surrounding buildings from our Mystery Photo are gone; we can narrow our timeline to just 4 short years. Kudos to Charles and Rob for getting us

there.

But what about that other odd vessel; can we do anything with her? Charles sent another image of *Alton* with this odd looking fishing vessel in it. It was gleaned, as were all the images supplied by Charles and Rob from Navsource.org.

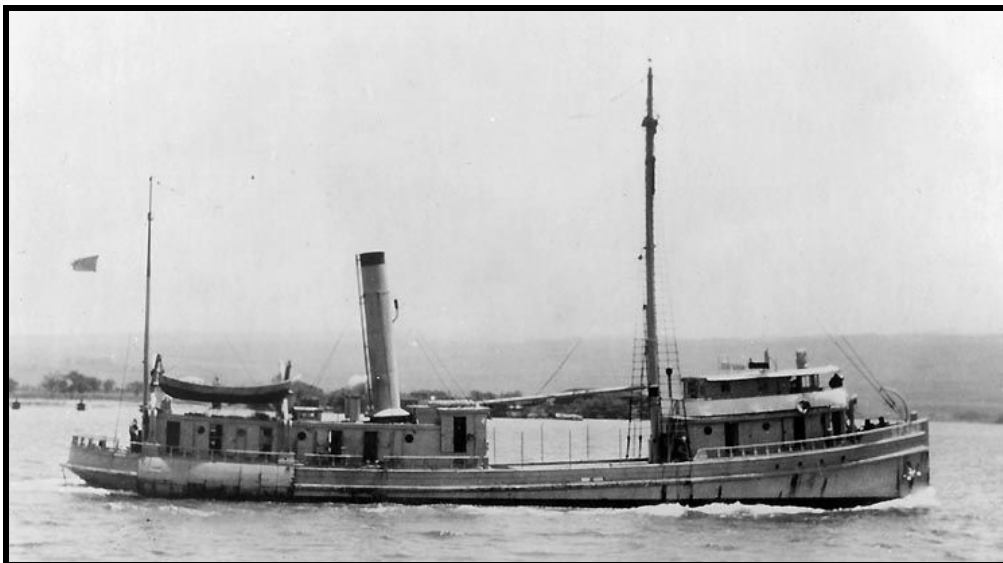


Photo # NH 47018 USS SP-467 (Delaware) underway in Pearl Harbor

This image is also taken off the port bow of *Alton*, but from a much lower angle and possibly from a boat in the harbor but more than likely from the opposite shore. In this image the view shifts slightly to the left cutting off the stern of *Alton* but bringing the escape tower into the frame. The odd fishing boat seems to be the center of attention but sadly it reveals little to help in identification.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)



Funny thing about this vessel, it looks for all the world like a Menhaden fishing boat. And a Google search titled "Menhaden Fishing boat" proves that's exactly what it is. The fact that images of these boats exist on various web sites tells us two things: 1) that the owners of the boat thought enough about

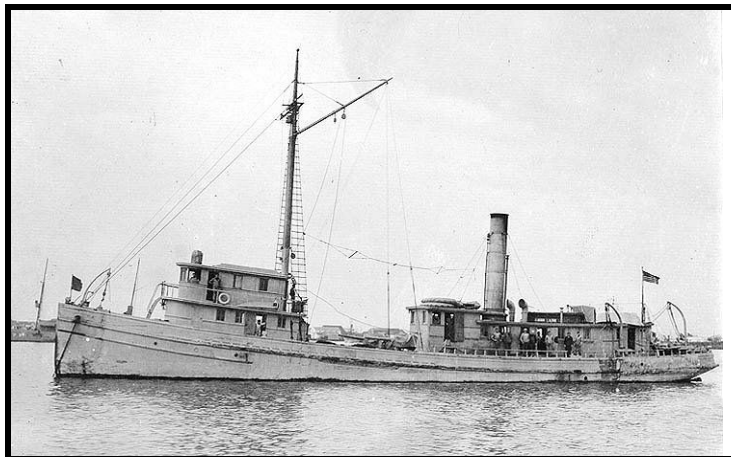


Photo # NH 55839 USS McKeever Brothers off Philadelphia, during WWI

their operation and the boat to document it on a web site, and 2) that the histories of some of these vessels is preserved due to their one-time government service. Indeed, most of what I found was images of certain menhaden fishing boats serving as Minesweepers or Section Patrol Craft. A cross check in Paul Silverstone's Warship's of World War One, page 195, shows a fine image of *McKeever Brothers* (SP-683) listed under the wartime acquisition section of minesweepers.

One of the first things I noticed about these fishing boats is that while they superficially similar in appearance they are not identical. The boat in our Mystery Photo has a slightly raised roof on the after deck house just forward of the tall, thin stack. Not all vessels from my Google search had this feature. But an image of *McKeever Brothers* did. Did I just find the identity of our odd vessel?

A search in Navsource.org for this vessel and her DANFS entry says no! *McKeever Brothers* was built at Noank, Connecticut, most likely by Robert Palmer and Sons shipyard. She was acquired for her wartime service in 1917 but she spent her entire navy career in the Delaware River, Delaware Bay area. She was returned to private service following the end of the war. It's just as well, because if you really compare images of this boat and our odd vessel you quickly discern that the stack is not raked the same as with

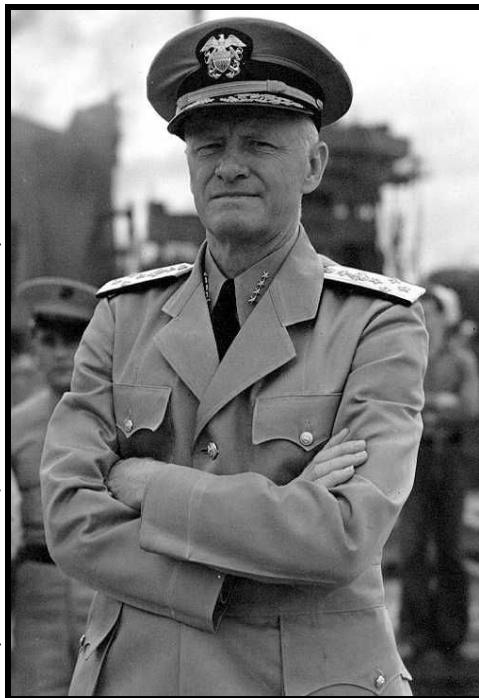
THE ANSWER
Mystery Photo 310
Photo Caption: Alton (ex-Chicago, C) at Pearl Harbor on 20 October, 1926, 80-G-1010827

our odd vessel and minor differences in the pilot house appear.

Another vessel turned up by the Google search is *Delaware* (SP-467). *Delaware* immediately showed greater possibility because while *McKeever Brothers* served as an SP and only an SP, *Delaware* was re-rated over time from an SP, to an AT, and finally an YT. AT and YT are navy classifications for tugboats. Could it be that our odd vessel is serving as a tug in the Mystery Photo?

Checking *Delaware's* credentials, we quickly see a somewhat local connection. In DANFS we have this: "USS *Delaware*, a 242 gross ton minesweeper, was built in 1913 at Pocomoke City, Maryland, by E. James Tull as the commercial fishing vessel of the same name. She was acquired by the Navy 5 May 1917, placed in commission 22 May 1917, and formally purchased in August 1917 from the Delaware Fish Oil Company of Lewes, Delaware. Renamed SP-467 in 1918, presumably to avoid confusion with the battleship *Delaware* [BB-28], she spent the World War I era operating in the vicinity of Delaware Bay. Redesignated AT-53 in July 1920, and YT-111 a year later, the ship went to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, at about that time and was stationed there well into the 1930s. During those years she was listed in contemporary Navy publications as *Delaware*, though this may not have represented an official name change. She was sold in April 1935."

You can see from the accompanying image that our odd vessel is *Delaware*. She's identical right down to the raised portion of after deck house, the angle and thinness of her stack, the monkey rails, the boat davit, the masts and boom, and the use of canvas for the awning and bulwark on her pilot house. With so many images of her nestled up to *Alton*, you have to wonder if this is her assigned docking space.



Admiral Chester Nimitz

Two down, who wants to tackle the launch?

John Cheevers

Mystery Photo

Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or telephone if you know what it is.
jfcheevers@verizon.net



NOTABLE EVENTS

MAY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: RMS Titanic: Fortune and Fate, Ron Lewis

JUNE

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Ryland Craze

JULY

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Building Plastic Models - Charles Landrum

AUGUST

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Always Good Ships, Bill Fox

SEPTEMBER

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting, Picnic, NN Park

OCTOBER

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

NOVEMBER

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

DECEMBER

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JANUARY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers,

FEBRUARY

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers

MARCH

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

APRIL

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
Mate: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018
Purser: Eric Harfst (757) 221-8181
Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Historian: Bill Dangler (757) 245-4142
Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615
Chaplain: Alan Frazer (757) 867-7666

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
April 21, 2012
Mariners' Museum

The Meeting was called to order by the Skipper, Ryland Craze, at 1010 hours. There were no guests present. There were no additions or corrections to the minutes as published. Stewart Winn filled in for the absent Eric Harfst and gave the Purser's Report. The report included membership details and an accounting of the banquet expenditures.

Old Business: The banquet was discussed. Tom Saunders said that the number in attendance was slightly down from previous years and that we could incur a charge for use of the facilities if the attendance did not increase. He asked if the members wanted a change in venue. The members stated that they were very satisfied with the Riverwalk. After some discussion it was decided to put the banquet on the agenda for the October meeting. The Skipper recognized Bill Dangler as winner of the Founders Award. Bill was given a round of applause from the members. Tim Wood reported on the work of the lifetime membership committee. Other committee members were Bill Dangler and Ron Lewis. Tim said the life membership would be 10 to 15 times the annual dues. He then talked about the pros and cons of the lifetime initiative. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded and passed to not pursue the creation of a lifetime membership.

New Business: The Skipper said that Gene Larson of the Washington Ship Model Society made overtures to hold a joint meeting with the HRSMS. John Cheevers talked about past tri-society meetings that included the now defunct Richmond group. John said that the past joint meetings included a day of tech talks and a great deal of fellowship. John stated that he would respond to Gene's inquiry.

Show & Tell: John Cheevers had copies of Jack Bobbitt's presentation, "Rope Making" for distribution. John also showed models of a submarine and PT Boat by Kent Wade that he was going to put in the model builders stand. Bob Moritz showed his resin kit of the *USS Sumner*. Charles Landrum showed the book, *Into the Storm*, and recommended it as good nautical fiction. Tim Wood showed the progress on his Blue Jacket half-hull model of the J-class yacht *Endeavour*. Ryland Craze showed the progress on his 17th century longboat. Ron Lewis gave an account of the "Last Dinner on the RMS Titanic" held at the Mariners' Museum.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation on the *Charles W. Morgan*, by George Livingston.