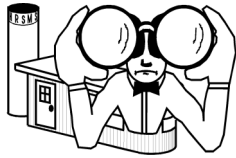


From The Bridge



Mystery Photo



Details are Important

- both in ship models and in conversations.

Lacking ideas to write about, I am simply offering this anecdote:

The Queen Mary was to have been named the Victoria, with the traditional -ia ending of nearly all Cunard steamships. When the time came to inform King George V of this decision, Sir Percy Bates and Sir Ashley Sparkes, two of the top people at Cunard, requested an audience at Buckingham Palace. It was left to Sir Ashley, who was Cunard's top representative in North America, to speak to the king. He said: "Your Majesty, we are pleased to inform you that Cunard wishes your approval to name our newest and greatest liner after England's greatest queen." Without a moment's hesitation, the king replied: "My wife will be delighted". And that was that.

This account was told to Frank Braynard in 1946 by Vincent Demo, a Cunard executive who became co-chairman of Cunard in North America. Frank Braynard told the story in his first book, published in 1947 as *Lives of Liners*. For the next 42 years he was criticized for publicizing an "apocryphal" anecdote. Then in 1998, while attending a dinner party on Long Island, he was given the privilege of sitting at table with the grande dame of the area. She was thinking hard about how to open the conversation, and when she began, she startled Frank Braynard with her opening comment: "My favorite ship story", she said smiling, "is about when my father went to see King George V." She was Eleanor Sparkes, and told the identical anecdote, almost word for word as Vincent Demo had related it 42 years earlier!

(From "Picture History of the Cundard Line 1840-1990" by Frank O. Braynard and William H. Miller, Jr., Dover Publications, 1991)

Greg

MEETING NOTICE

The May meeting will take place online.

1000 Hours

May 8, 2021

Mystery Photo # 418: Had the Mystery photograph been taken on a clear day, and had it been taken a few blocks up river, the resulting image would have been very much like an image you can find on-line file named: "1894-look-at-Rainier-fire-station-and-hotel". Except that in this image there is no almost-readily-identifiable warship, no large wharf, no railway, no pier sets, and no fog to add that pensive flare of Mystery. But the 1894 image does have the 'titled' buildings, a small steam powered schooner, and a rail line crossing expansive mud flats. But that's getting ahead in the story. If you are any student what-so-ever of warships, particularly US Navy warships, identifying the type and class of ship found in this month's Mystery Photo should be a no brainer. For those of you who don't know, here is a hint: there are only two ships to choose from. Find the 1894 photograph and you will at least solve for the location of this month's Mystery Photo.

Our heavy mist-shrouded image captures what appears to be an aircraft carrier tied to a wharf. The wharf seems to be located at an "S" bend along the shore of the waterway. Trees and a 4-line railway line the right side, a single consist threads its way through. At the bottom, two sets of pier pilings stand along the shore. Old fashioned power poles dot the photo throughout. On the roof of the wharf we see the only readable signage, more signage is on the roofs of the wharfs in the distance; and the stack, kingposts, and booms of a merchant ship are visible there as well. Near the bow of the aircraft carrier we see several ship's boats, they lay just ahead of the spud barge located between the wharf and the ship. And the background is dominated by very large hills and, perhaps, a mountain just to the right of center. The colors are all grey and black which gives the viewer the impression of a cold, wintry day. In fact there appears to be evidence of snow here and there along the ground and atop the rail cars. This is very much a cold industrial, water-front scene.

Three replies this month: John Wyld, Rob Napier, and Dave Baker reported in. And they all got it right. No offense to the players and those who didn't play but identifying the ship was relatively easy, it's the back story where the real Mystery lies.

John Wyld led this month's charge into the mystery, one that combines two of his real passions—trains and ships. He leads us off by describing "A surreal and bucolic - without the cows - scene. It has certain qualities that make it look so last century - early in the century at that. One thing quite noticeable is the lack of high density industrial or shipping activity. And

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

note the lack of personal vehicles or even trucks. The only cars visible are railroad freight cars, many of which are of the single-sheathed wood variety, an early to mid-twentieth century fixture on most railroads which minimized the use of steel (and costs associated)."



Dropping hints along the way John continues: "There are also a couple of things that look out of place, mainly a large ship with a wide, clear deck tied up to a freight building. On this day, as the picture is taken, the strangest feature is the ship itself. The camera person is probably thinking "I have never seen anything like it before..." And he would be either right or half right. Only two ships ever looked like that."

"Let's move in and see if we can learn more. We realize quickly we are not in New York or any major East Coast port - the "Northeast Limited" sign on the building roof confirms. Of course "Limited" is true - this place looks like a camp outpost, likely in the VERY Northwest of either the US or Canada. Of course maybe I am making that assumption because I already know the story." (OK John, We know what you meant and will forgive the "Northeast" gaff as a Freudian slip.)

Rob writes: "It's been a while since I wrote about the MP. But it's of a carrier. So how could I let it pass by unnoticed? Couldn't."

"Clever and hard-to-read image. At first I thought it was one of those strange, pointy-nosed British carriers. In the fog, I thought Pacific Northwest. And this was substantiated by the sign on the building that reads "North Coast Limited / One of America's Fine Trains." So, I thought, we have a British carrier in British Columbia somewhere. Absolutely noticeable is that there is nothing on the deck of the ship. She looks inert, idle, sleeping if not dead, turned off, mothballed." Taking another look, Rob gets in closer: "I peer through the fog again and finally see that tiny flat at the very bow. Heh. That's the giveaway. Now I know it's American and revise my guess at location to Seattle/Bremerton area. Look up the sign about the trains and discover that we are in the US: the Northwest Coast Limited is a special passenger consist of the Northern Pacific Railway that runs between Chicago and Seattle." I you want to be sure, look up photographs of the British aircraft carrier *Eagle* or *Hermes*, the first ones, to notice some striking similarities—especially after casual observation—JFC.

Following their clues and intuition John and Rob slow-

ly bound their choices around the only two viable candidates. John realizes that "only two ships - nearly identical twin sisters LEXINGTON, CV-2, and SARATOGA, CV-3 looked like this ship." While Rob "spotted the two twin mounts ahead of the island" and could "make out [a] large flat funnel. Okay, she is Lexington or Saratoga, before the flight decks were widened forward in 1937." Not finding what he needed in his reference library, Rob resorted to the new, high tech research method. "I Google 'em both, but ship histories don't find the Mystery Photo. So I Googled the image itself, and, voila! We have USS Lexington." To tell them apart John says that "special recogni-

City Power To Be Supplied By USS Lexington

(United Press by R.C.A.)

TACOMA, Wash., Dec. 16.—Wires were looped along the city's streets today to carry power from the navy's airplane carrier, Lexington, which was expected to be ready Tuesday to supply the city with electric power.

The services of the Lexington were obtained when failing hydro-electric power resulted from a long rain shortage.

The Lexington is said to develop at maximum capacity enough power to serve a city several times the size of Tacoma.

(Continued on page 3)



What's Happening at the Museum?

O.K.! It's been long enough! The museum is slated to reopen on May 21st for members, May 28th for non-members! I hope all our HRSMS members will pay a visit very soon! You'll find some changes, some big, some not-so-big but important. The "down time" was well-spent and a lot of work was done. We'll have some guidelines to follow, especially those of us in the Model Shop, but most of the Museum will be familiar; you won't get lost! I believe Beth Heaton will provide us with more specifics. Beth is now the Volunteer and Internship Program Manager and will, therefore, be the model Shop liaison to the Museum. She's at bheaton@marinersmuseum.org. You may also reach her at 591.7712. And more good news! We are now scheduled to convene our June meeting in our old meeting room, upstairs in the Monitor Classroom. This may change in the future but for now it's back to normal (the future change will be a good one!).

I'm sure you'll agree that receiving the newsletters from other ship model groups is very helpful and entertaining and often helps us with our own projects. We have Ryland and Tom to thank. This month's Ropewalk gave the Museum a plug from our brothers in Ohio with the detailed info on Harold Hahn's very large, beautiful diorama. It's on display in "Defending the Seas" and always draws comments from visitors. It's very complex and very complete and if you study it long enough you'll learn a lot!

If you haven't been in the "back yard" of the Museum, you should take a look. Our oversupply of anchors, buoys, guns, boats, engines, etc. was a bit of a jumble. Will Hoffman, our chief conservator, has inventoried and categorized almost the entire collection and made plans for much of it. It's much neater and, while it's not an open visitor attraction, parts of it will be in the future. Now, how about the *Princess Carolina* a.k.a. the Ronson timbers?

Well?

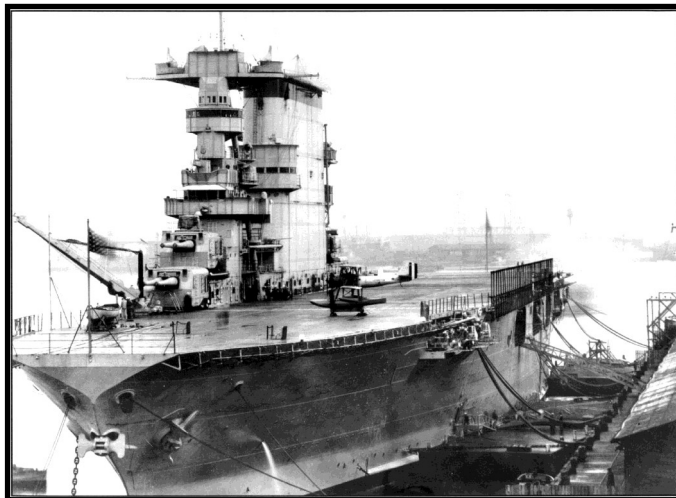
Ron Lewis

(Continued from page 2)

tion markings were applied to make it easier to determine which was which from a moderate distance. SARA had a wide vertical black stripe on both sides of her very large stack for instance." *Lexington* had the letters "LEX" painted at the stern of her flight deck for pilot recognition, *Saratoga* had the letters "SARA". Easy peasy!



This is the point in this essay where singer Jerry Jeff Walker in a fun Country and Western tune asks the burning question: "What's he doin' there?" And it's here that Dave joins the conversation because all three know the answer and his answer began with the answer. John begins the explanation this way: "Ships, especially big ships, generally go where there is lots of water. The LEX arrival backstory here is essentially the reverse. This ship is in this backwater port *because* there is too little water." Dave writes: "This month's mystery ship is the U.S.S. LEXINGTON (CV 2), and the photo was taken sometime around 1928-29 at Tacoma, Washington, where the ship was providing emergency electric power to that



USS Lexington at Tacoma showing off her 8 inch guns, 1929

city, whose electric generation system had quit." Rob clarifies the "quit" comment: "She is in Tacoma, Washington, supplying electricity to the city during a major drought in 1929-30 that left no water for hydro power."

So the system lacked water, it didn't quit for a better job, a relocation, or from some form of harassment, it was simply turned off. In today's world a catastrophe of this magnitude would get folks fired and offer "us" at least a week or two of enrichment in the major news cycle. A solution was required. Back then there were limited solutions. John describes the most logical one: "The town, Tacoma, WA, had requested President Hoover's assistance in getting temporary use of a generator - like the kind we use today when the power goes off in the neighborhood - only a really big-assed generator. The President 'Heisemaned' the request to the Navy, who sent the year old LEX to Tacoma for a month bracketing Christmas, 1929 - 17 December to 16 January." And so things were put in motion. It's important to know that the US Navy did not want to use their ship in this way, but were overruled. Big government got involved and they were voluted to comply.

The following is an excerpt from an article co-written by Dave Baker and Richard M. Anderson that ran in *Warship International* some forty years ago (Marty - No 4, 1977 to be precise). It highlights the technical reasons why one of the big carriers was reluctantly chosen for this task:

The city of Tacoma, Washington, (pop. 106, 817 in the 1930 census) depended for its electric power on the Lake Cushman Dam, near the southeast corner of the Olympic National Park. Very unusual drought conditions in the summer and fall of 1929 caused a severe low-water problem. When the penstock-intakes to the hydroelectric plant began to show above the receding water level, Tacoma found itself in desperate trouble. As there was no power grid inter-tie system in those days, the city was literally "out of juice" (prohibition was still in force then, too). The city fathers begged for assistance.

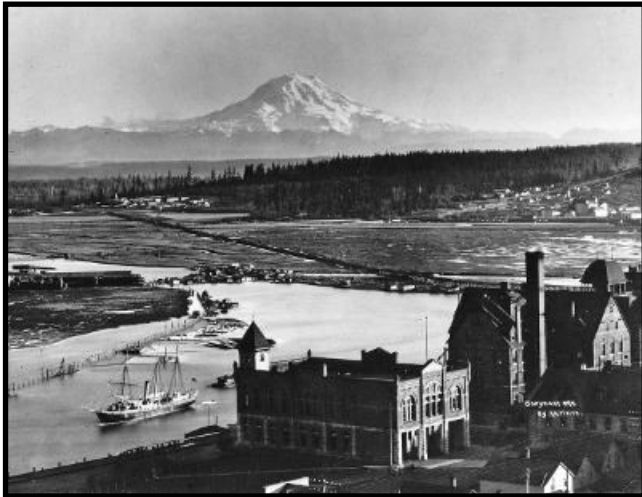
From the Puget Sound Navy Yard (Bremerton), the Lexington was sent on loan

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)



to generate power. As she would be stationary, her berth at Baker Wharf was dredged to insure sufficient circulation for her condenser intakes. From 17 December 1929 to 16 January 1930, her mighty generators delivered a total of 4,250,960 KWH (Kilowatt Hours) with ease. At first, in her exuberance, the frequency was a bit too high; electric clocks ran ten minutes ahead of Western Union time. From her capacity of 170,000 KVA, Lex fed the city lines (via transformers on railroad



An 1894 look from the Tacoma City Hall tower to Mount Tacoma (aka Rainier) over the fire station and the hotel.



(Continued on page 5)

AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY

AMERICAN NAVAL HISTORY

1856

November 20-22: The Barrier Forts. Following orders from Commodore James Armstrong, the ailing commander of the East India Squadron, Commander Andrew H. Foote lands with 287 seamen and marines to storm the barrier forts. In 3 days fighting the landing party, supported by the fire from sloops Levant and Portsmouth, captures four modern forts mounting 170 guns, plus a six-gun battery and repulses counterattacks from two Chinese columns, the first with an estimated strength of 2,000, the second of 4,000. All of the captured fortifications and cannons are destroyed. American casualties number 42, approximately 400 Chinese are killed.

1858

July 29: First Atlantic cable. The steam frigate Niagara, Captain William L. Hudson and HMS Agamemnon co-operate to lay a telegraph cable across the Atlantic Ocean.

1859

October 16-18: John Brown's Raid. The fanatical abolitionist John Brown seizes the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, in hopes of igniting a slave up-rising.

1859 Ends with no further actions.

Bob Moritz

Museum is open to the Public starting May 28

The Museum will be open to those with reserve tickets. If you intend to visit, please go to the Museum's website, read the new Guest Conduct policy, and make your reservation.

Nautical Term

Running Rigging: Applies to all the lines that can readily be moved, such as halyards, sheets, etc. The term is still heard on cargo ships, as well as on sailing craft.

Tim Wood

THE ANSWER

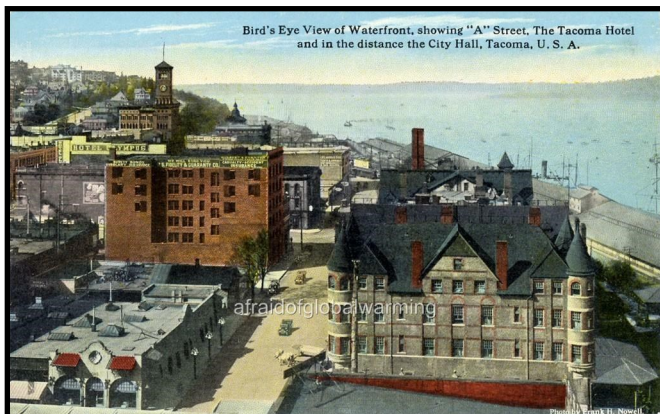
The Answer to Mystery Photo 418
UA Collection Photo # UA 474.12.01 USS Lexington (CV-2) supplying power to the city of Tacoma, Washington between December 1929 and January 1930

(Continued from page 4)



flatcars on the quay) at 4,550 volts/60 cycles, until the winter rains refilled the reservoir to the point where the dam's generating plant was able to resume the municipal load. The grateful city paid \$78,509.60 (1.85 cents per KWH) at the accounting office of the Navy Yard. About one-fourth of this was for the oil fuel consumed; the rest was for the loan of the ship and to cover the active fleet service she had missed. The electrical engineering trade was quite impressed, and Lexington's good deed was spoken of with something approaching awe for years afterward. Some suggested that the six turbo-electric battleships (BB40, 43-46, and 48) might also serve in similar fashion for power production, but this was rejected, as they were limited to 35 cycles and, at 27,000 KVA apiece, all six together were weaker than Lex or Sara [Saratoga]."

So the deed was done. Power was generated as required. And when the Lake Cushman reservoir had refilled sufficiently, the hydroelectric generators were turned back on, and Lexington pulled the plug. John finishes his remarks by saying how "Tacoma maintained a special relationship with LEX until she was lost at Coral Sea (short ball hitters!). There is no evidence a "Low Water / High Power" medal was awarded to the crew. And so a relatively simple and calm scene reminds us of a much more complex real world scene." Of course, it is ironic that despite the navies best efforts to not comply, and coincident with *Lexington's* arrival, that "heavy rains and warm weather in



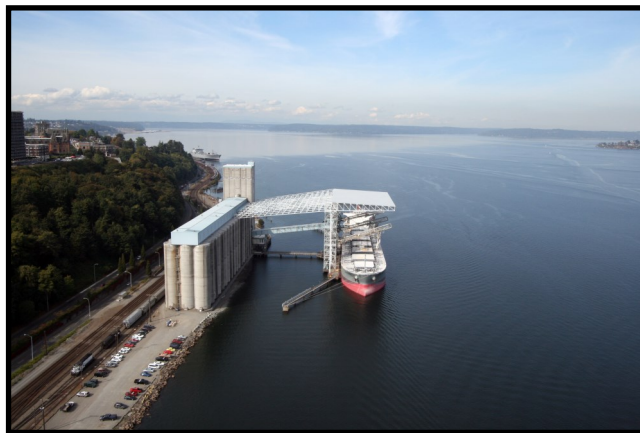
the higher altitudes caused a phenomenal rise of 3.3 feet in the Lake Cushman reservoir" which allowed her stay to be brief.

Referring back to the first paragraph, I thought it would be fun to find the place where *Lexington* tied up for that short wintry month. Tacoma today, like all cities in America, bears little resemblance to the city of 100 years ago. You can find the odd, scattered masonry survivor and a bridge or two but, by and large, highways and such and new building, have altered the landscape. So I began this effort looking at that clear crisp image that had the fire station and hotel in the foreground and the mountain in the background. The caption for this image says that the photographer took the image from the city hall tower.

City hall, now known as the "old city hall", still exists and offers the first bearing point. The mountain in the distance offers the second bearing. We know from the photo caption that

the mountain is the famous Mount Rainier that dominates all of the surrounding skylines of Tacoma proper. Looking at a map we see that the compass point looks off in the south east direction, and the mountain in the image is just slightly left of center. If we turn our attention 180 degrees from the "old city hall" we find a post card image, with a "birds eye view of waterfront" featuring the old city hall tower in the distance. Along the right side of this image are a row or wharfs that resemble the wharfs in our Mystery Photo. Since that's facing west northwest, we can assume that our Mystery Photo was taken down river or more literally further out in the bay, Commencement Bay—another irony. By looking at other images of the Tacoma waterfront we begin to understand the lay of the land, and we can see the development of the waterfront over time.

Successive images that walk us west along the waterfront confirm that we are zeroing in on the location. One interesting piece of information describes how these interconnected wharves extended for about a mile along the waterfront. Each building may have had its own name but I can identify where one that still exists is called the Balfour building and we know from Dave's reply that the one where Lexington docked was, ironically, named the Baker building. The two pier sets in the



Temco Blue Water facility

foreground of our Mystery Photo may have been an attempt to extend the wharves even further. An image found at Prettygrittytours.com, carrying the unwieldy long, string file name: "ebd0c149017d7cce76d9f54f5cdf5c2a", offers us a view from the western end of this wharf complex. That is the defining image that nails the location.

Most of the wharves are gone now, I think only 2 buildings remain. A piece of trivia exists, however, in that the complex was known as "the mile long wheat warehouse". This row of wharves would load bagged grain into the holds of waiting ships. The wharfs are no longer used for trade as intermodal terminals occupy most of the northern side of the former mudflats. In place of the Baker building, TEMCO Blue Water has constructed a modern set of concrete grain silos where loose grain is conveyed into the holds of bulk carriers. And those two unused pier sets are still there.

We close this essay with a final statement from John Wyld: "And so a relatively simple and calm scene reminds us of a much more complex real world scene."

John Cheevers



Four views of Butch Watkins' Chesapeake Bay Deadrise



Lee Martin's Soleil Royal

Gene Andes' ship in a bottle



John Cheevers Coast guard 100 foot revenue cutter



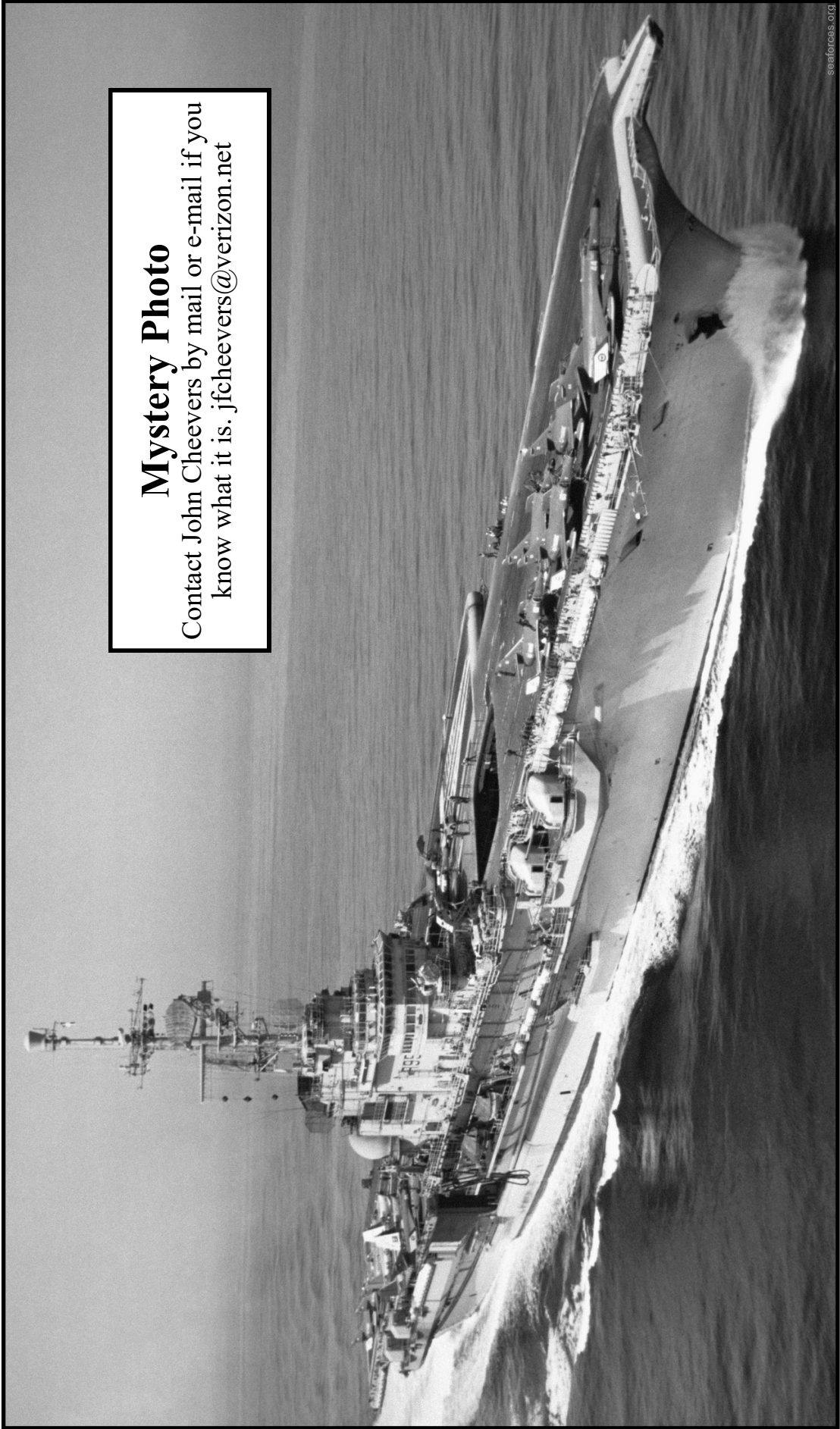
Two views of Bill Browns 26 ft. Chris Craft



Three views of Sean Maloon's Siren

Mystery Photo

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



seafarces.org

NOTABLE EVENTS

MINUTES



- 8 **MAY**
HRSMS Monthly Meeting:
JUNE
- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting:
JULY
- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
 Presentation: TBA
AUGUST
- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting:
 Presentation, TBA
SEPTEMBER
- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting, Presentation: TBA
 19 Talk Like a Pirate Day
OCTOBER
- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting:
 Presentation, TBA
NOVEMBER
- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Zoom
 Presentation, TBA
DECEMBER
- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting:
 Presentation: TBA
JANUARY
- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Online Zoom
 Nomination of officers
FEBRUARY
- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
 Election of officers
MARCH
- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting:
APRIL
- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Zoom

Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
 Monthly Meeting
 Zoom Video Meeting
 April 10, 2021

Guests: Joe Lorenzo, 1st meeting
 Floyd Shelton, 1st meeting
 Alfred Ailsworth, 1st meeting

The meeting was called to order at 1010 hours by Skipper, Greg Harrington. The guests introduced themselves, giving a little information about their modeling history. There was no correction to the minutes as published. Ryland Craze gave his usual highly detailed Purser's report. Greg Harrington gave the webmaster's report noting additions to the website, including a newspaper article about Bruce Brown and his model building at the Watermen's Museum at Yorktown.

Old Business: Ron Lewis said that it was indefinite when we would begin meeting at the museum. The museum itself will be opening for members on the 21st of May. Greg was broaching potential issues with wi-fi in the meeting area. Ron Lewis suggested that the museum staff would be able to resolve any technical issue we would have with conducting a zoom meeting. Ron opened some discussion on the Deltaville Maritime Museum and recommended it to those who have not been there.

New Business: None

Show & Tell: Sean Maloon showed the cherry treenails in his Siren model and talked about his process for making them. John Cheevers showed work on his Elco 77 & 80 PT Boats, rub rails and chine spray strakes. John then showed his method of laying out the blanks for the PT Boats. Bill Brown showed the progress on his 26 ft. Cris Craft. Stewart Winn presented his finished Mediterranean Merchantman. Alfred Ailsworth showed work on his 1:48 schooner, *Lou Ann Phillips*. Joshua Fichmann showed spars and sails for his 1:50 *Black Pearl*. He also showed progress on his IJN Mogami and rhinestone picker pencils. Don Good showed progress on his Chesapeake Bay deadrise. Floyd Shelton showed pictures of a model pirate ship that he made for his son. Kevin Ritton showed the anchor winch for his *African Queen*. Ron Lewis found some very good spring clamps at Kroger for 49¢ each. Gene Berger brass parts for his DE.

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation, "Building the Whaling Ship Daisy", by Gene Andes,

**WATCH, QUARTER
 AND
 STATION BILL**



- Skipper: Greg Harrington (757) 218-5368
 Mate: Gene Berger (757) 850-4407
 Purser: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
 Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
 Historian: Tim Wood (757) 481-6018
 Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
 Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
 Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 218-5368
 Photographer: Marty Gromovsky



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