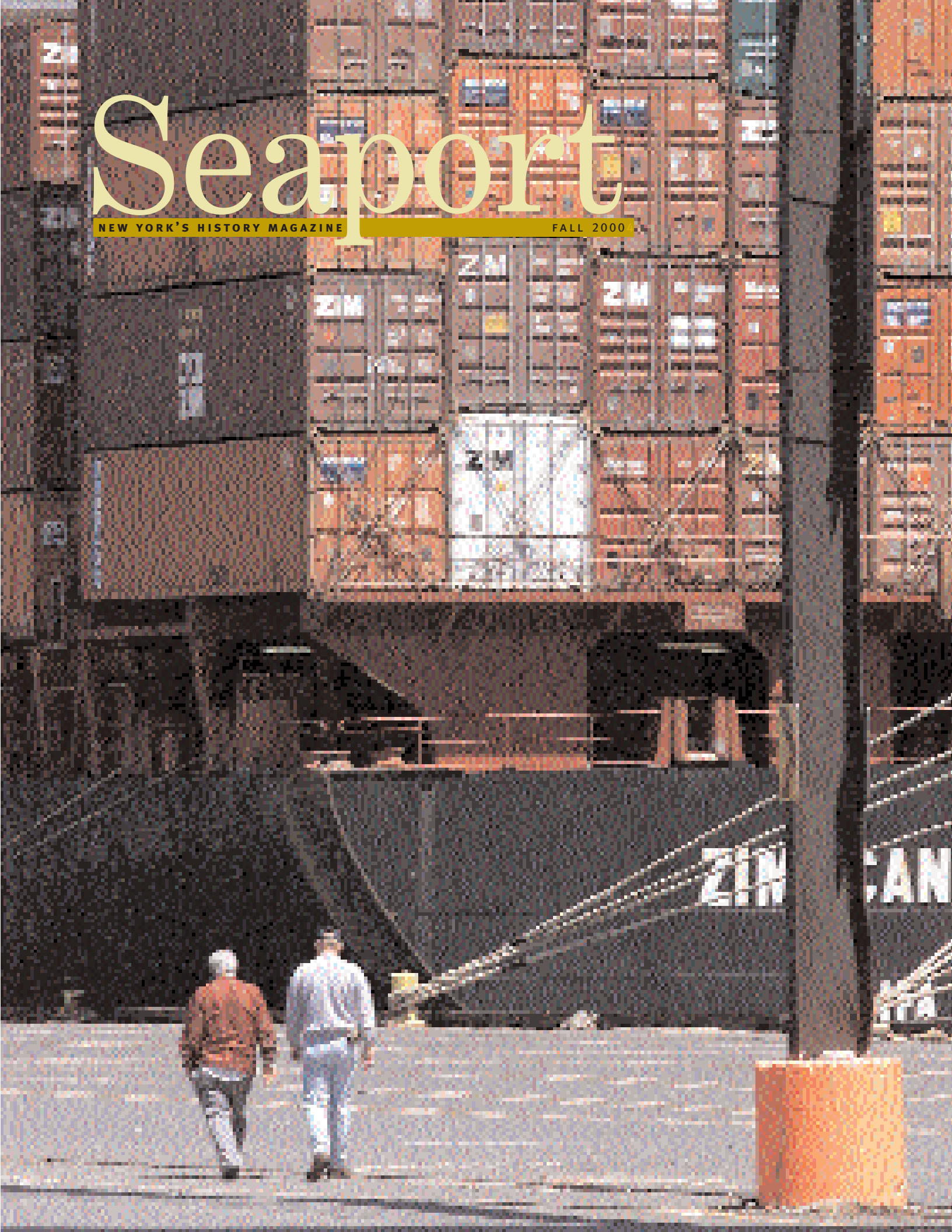
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Peter Neill

Dollars and Dreams

The great Fourth of July Parade of Sail is behind us. On that glorious day, which saw the "debut" of our 1885 square rigger *Wavertree*, tens of thousands of New Yorkers and visitors lined the Hudson and East River shores, reminding those of us who preserve ships why we do it.

The world has moved on technologically since the days when full-rigged ships carried the world's commerce. We've largely abandoned wind in favor of steam to power our ships. We live our lives hooked up to computers. The new Age of Exploration takes us not across the seas, but under the seas and to the stars. So why, then does a parade of tall ships, representing a dead technology, inspire such awe and excitement?

For me — and I think for many others, including those who have contributed, and continue to contribute, to the museum's efforts to restore the *Wavertree* and the other ships in our fleet — the fascination with tall ships can be summed up in one word: vision. Those who designed and built these ships, as well as those who owned them and sailed them, had vision and the courage to pursue big dreams.

Every day at South Street, we honor the vision of the tall-ship builders and sailors of yesteryear by restoring the *Wavertree*, the largest such restoration project ever undertaken at a museum. At 279 feet, the *Wavertree*, built in 1885, is the largest cast-iron-hulled sailing ship still surviving. In taking on this job, which we estimate will end up costing in excess of two million dollars, we have been accused of all kinds of folly. But we know the nay-sayers are wrong: The rapturous reactions of spectators, generous donors, the press, and the army of staff and over fifty volunteers who are laboring to restore the ship tell us they're dead wrong!

Saving the *Wavertree* and ships of her ilk and bringing them back to life is not just about restoring ships. It's about keeping the spirit and vision of the great Age of Sail alive in a world that is too often run by bean counters. We may have computers to keep us on track and in touch, but we still need dreams to keep us moving forward.

Museums today are exhorted to generate revenue, to be entrepreneurial, to watch the bottom line. We have been extraordinarily successful here at South Street in all those areas. Our education programs are booming; our sail training programs aboard the *Lettie G. Howard* and *Pioneer*, both of which we restored here at the museum, are more than paying their own way; our Elderhostel program has grown into one of the largest in the country. But while we keep an eye on the bottom line, we hold on to our dreams, always remembering that what our visitors and program participants are buying is the product not of cold, hard calculation, but "the stuff that dreams are made of."

Volunteers attach rigging to completed steel yard at Caddell's Shipyard in Staten Island. Yards were designed by Charles DeRoko.

Photos by Norman Brouwer

Clockwise from upper left: Volunteers and staff set up the *Wavertree*'s backstays; ship awaiting departure for the Parade of Sail; member of the restoration crew repairs leather chafing gear; fearless crew members go aloft to put finishing touches on the rigging.

IN THE GALLERIES by Jack Putnam

Melville the Collector

Herman Melville is world-renowned for his literary masterpieces. An exhibit at the museum sheds light on another aspect of Melville's life: his interest in visual images and the prints that inspired his prose.

As a teenager, Herman Melville was strongly influenced by the sea stories of Captain Frederick Marryat. Later in life, he collected engravings made for Marryat's story, *The Pirate,* and this print "The Mast-headed Midshipman," a vignette engraved by J.C. Edwards after a drawing by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. for the 1836 edition of Marryat's *The Naval Annual; or, Stories of the Sea.*

The French are the lads for painting action. Go and gaze upon all the paintings of Europe, and where will you find such a gallery of living and breathing commotion on canvas as in that triumphal hall at Versailles?…

The ruminations of some nineteenth-Century art historian? Well, yes and no. It's Herman Melville, writing "Of the Less Erroneous Pictures of Whales, and the True Pictures of Whaling Scenes," Chapter 56 of *Moby-Dick*. Although we think of Melville primarily as a literary master, he was also blessed with an extraordinary visual sense. His ability to evoke action and place through the written word was balanced and informed by his perceptive and well-trained eye.

Herman grew up with art; his home and the houses of his relatives were decorated with paintings, prints, and drawings. References to those scenes often made their way into his later writings.

Herman's fondness for collecting and viewing art was possibly inherited from his father, Allan, a merchant and importer who collected prints and drawings on his travels. In adulthood, Herman built up a sizable art collection of his own. In his last residence at 106 East Twenty-fourth Street he was at last able to surround himself with the treasured images that had long slept in portfolios.

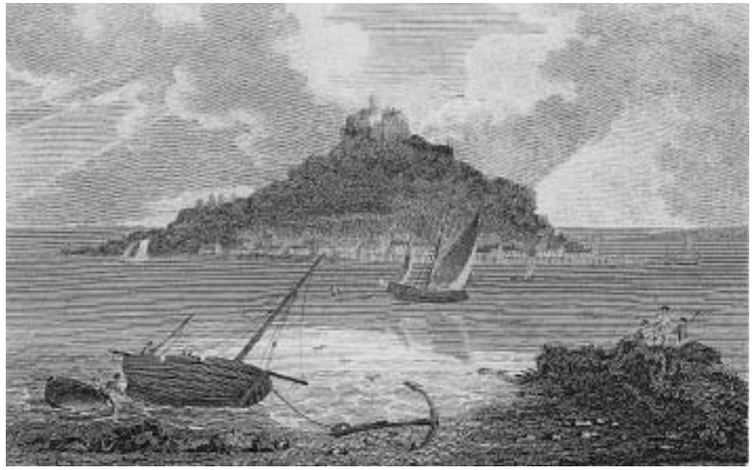
Today, thanks to some dogged intellectual detective work by Robert K. Wallace, author of the forthcoming book *Frank Stella's Moby-Dick Series: Of Whales and Waves in Paint, on Metal, in Space* (University of Michigan Press, September 2000) and Regents Professor of Literature and Language at Northern Kentucky University, we have an opportunity to view some of the images actually owned by Melville himself. "Prints from Herman Melville's Collection of Art," which opened at South Street in June, comprises forty-six of the more than four hundred prints Melville was known to possess at the time of his death, and provides a remarkable window into the author's tastes and sensibilities. One of the prints in the exhibit bears the label of a frame shop on Fourth Avenue, just around the corner from Melville's townhouse.

Jack Putnam is a Melville expert and the educator in the museum's Elderhostel program.

First shown at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the exhibit embraces a broad range of subjects from whaling and seascapes to views of Italy, Greece, and the Middle East, pastoral landscapes and work by such contemporary impressionists as Turner and Manet.

After Melville's death, Elizabeth Shaw Melville sold most of Herman's books, but kept his art collection, which passed on to her daughter, Frances Melville Thomas, who displayed parts of it in her home, and in turn passed the entire collection on to her four daughters. Happily for us, Bob Wallace has been able to reassemble a good portion of the collection for this exhibit, which, appropriately hangs in the museum gallery named for Melville who frequented the streets and lanes of South Street and immortalized them in his writings.

It is also particularly fitting that these prints are being shown at South Street, since it was here in downtown Manhattan, notably on Fulton and Nassau streets, that a new and uniquely American printmaking industry flowered during Melville's lifetime. Herman's collection of Turners, Claudes, and Piranesis stands in elegant contrast to the mass-market prints of Currier & Ives, churned out at their two shops, one at Nassau Street, the other on Spruce Street, to decorate the parlors and and offices of the nation's growing middle class.



Prints, which before the age of photography, television, and the Internet, were a common source of information about faraway places and important events, inspired Herman Melville and informed his fiction. Among the prints in his personal collection, and shown in the exhibit Prints from Herman Melville's Art Collection, are (top to bottom): "Destruction of the Indiaman," engraved by T. Jeavons after a drawing by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A. for Frederick Marryat's book *The Pirate*; " "St. Michael's Mountain, Cornwall," engraved by J. Storer after Louis Francia; and "Venice–The Dogana," engraved by J.T. Willmore after J.M.W. Turner, R.A.

All images courtesy of New Bedford Whaling Museum

A BRIDGE BUILDER

In the 1920s Othmar Ammann, a little-known Swiss engineer, conceived of a mighty span linking upper Manhattan to the rural reaches of northern New Jersey. In this excerpt, adapted from a forthcoming book, *Empire on the Hudson* (Columbia University Press), we learn that the greatest challenges facing Ammann had less to do with technological hurdles (though they were daunting) than with politics. In the end, he proved to be master of both.

BY JAMESON W. DOIG

Othmar Ammann was born in 1879 in Switzerland. In 1902 he graduated from the Polytechnic Institute in Zurich, and he then found work as a structural draftsman in Europe. One of his former professors soon urged him to go to America, where the engineer has "greater freedom in applying individual ideas" and where young men might take charge of work which in Europe "only graybeards would be allowed to perform." Ammann took his advice and in 1904 he landed in New York.

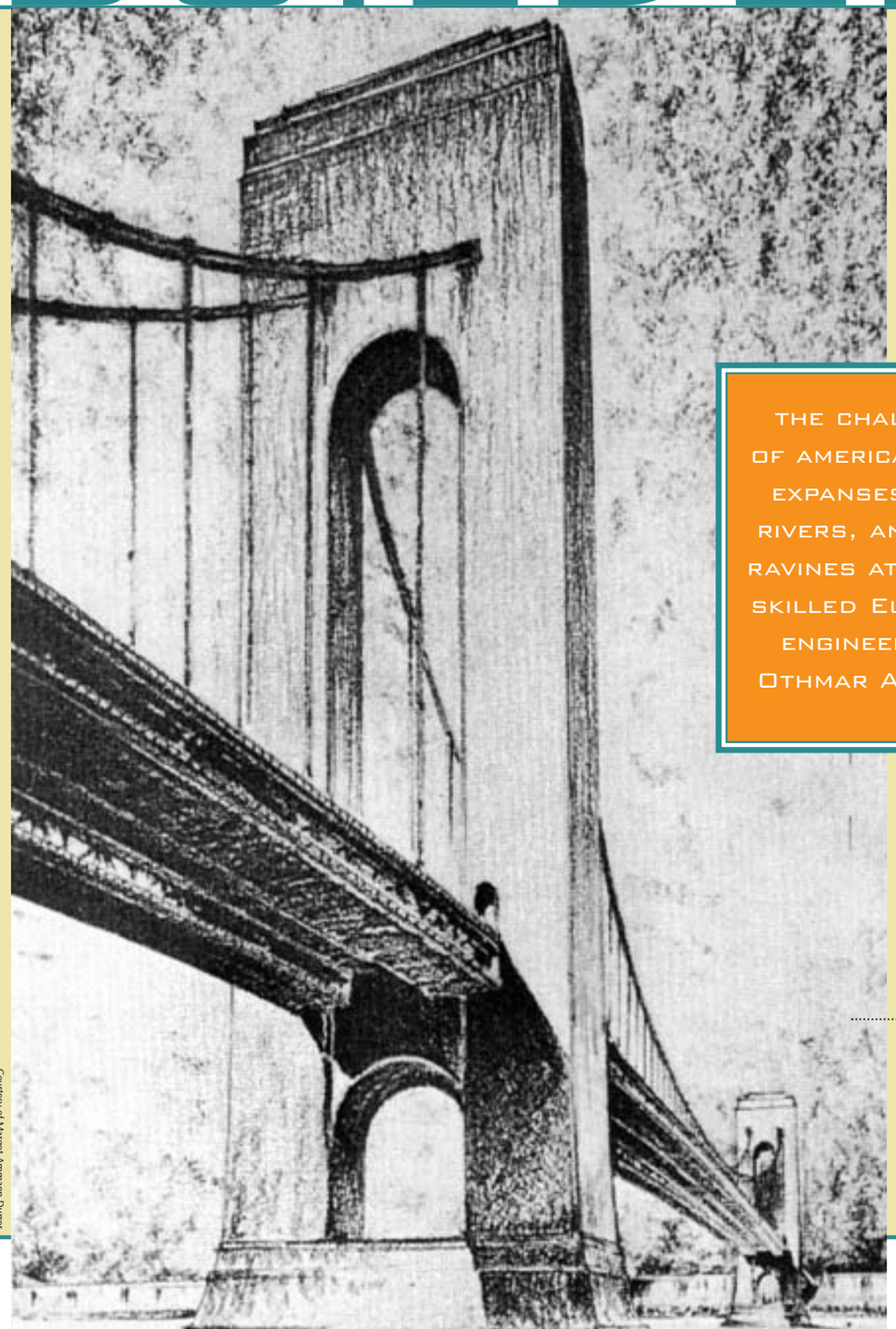
During the next several years he worked as an engineer in Manhattan, Chicago, and Pennsylvania, and he worked on several major bridges, including the Queensboro in New York City. The possibility of a bridge across the Hudson also attracted his early attention: Visiting the Palisades cliffs across from upper Manhattan soon after his arrival, he later recalled, "I could envision the bold undertaking, the spanning of the broad waterway with a single leap of 3000 feet, nearly twice the longest span in existence."

In 1912 Ammann joined the firm of Gustav Lindenthal, the well-known railroad-bridge engineer, and Lindenthal soon appointed him as his chief aide in work on the Hell Gate Bridge. The Hell Gate was completed in early 1917, and Lindenthal then had very little work to occupy his staff. He suggested that Ammann take a temporary position in New Jersey, managing a clay mine in which Lindenthal had invested. Ammann took that job, and with his managerial skills he turned a shaky financial enterprise into a healthy firm. Then, in 1920, Lindenthal called him back to assist in developing plans for his proposed Hudson River span, which would carry railroad trains across the river and land them in Manhattan at Fifty-seventh Street.

This railroad plan had its origins in the 1880s, when Lindenthal, recently arrived in New York, proposed that a massive bridge be constructed over the Hudson from Hoboken to Twenty-third Street. The span would carry ten railroad tracks, enough to allow all the New Jersey lines to cross the Hudson at that point; once in Manhattan, their passengers and cargo could be distributed throughout the central business area and beyond, into Brooklyn and points to the east and north. In 1890 Lindenthal's company obtained federal approval to construct the span. The Pennsylvania was interested and tried to persuade other railroads to join in, sharing the costs. They were unwilling, and the Pennsylvania then embarked on a less expensive passenger project; in 1910 it completed a tunnel which brought its New Jersey trains under the Hudson to its new passenger terminal at Thirty-third Street.

Lindenthal never lost his interest in spanning the Hudson, however, and with the Hell Gate completed and World War One at an end, he began to develop new plans for the great crossing. Now, in 1920, he moved it uptown, to cross the Hudson at Fifty-seventh Street. He then brought in Ammann as his principal assistant, and, noting the increasing importance of automobiles and trucks, he redesigned the bridge to carry rubber-tired vehicles as well as rail trains. By the early spring of 1921, Lindenthal was able to display his new scheme: A Hudson River bridge at Fifty-seventh Street that would be 6,600 feet in total length, with a central span across the Hudson of 3,240 feet — more than twice the length of any bridge span yet constructed. One bridge deck would carry ten railroad tracks, and a second deck, above it, would have four rapid-transit tracks and sixteen lanes for automotive traffic. The bridge would cost $100 million, and the entire project might total $210 million. As the *Scientific American* noted with admiration, this "vast bridge … could easily take care of the whole of the traffic which surges to and fro between Manhattan and the mainland."

It was this environment — of a marvelous engineering project, to be carried out under one of the world's premier bridge designers, in an atmosphere of optimism — that enveloped Ammann in his early months of work. But the Lindenthal plan soon faced important hurdles. As Lindenthal was completing the general plans for the Fifty-seventh Street bridge, a bi-state Study Commission issued its final report in January 1921, recommending the creation of the Port Authority. The commission proposed that the new agency bring railroads into New York via new tunnels from New Jersey under the Hudson to Manhattan and under New York Bay to Brooklyn. (Decades later, the Brooklyn branch of



Courtesy of Margot Ammann Durrer

THE CHALLENGE OF AMERICA'S VAST EXPANSES, WIDE RIVERS, AND DEEP RAVINES ATTRACTED SKILLED EUROPEAN ENGINEERS LIKE OTHMAR AMMANN.

Ammann's 1920 design for the Hundred seventy-ninth Street bridge called for clothing the tower's steel skeleton with stone.

Sketch, courtesy Margot Ammann Durrer; photo, courtesy Port Authority of NY & NJ

Ammann's proposed bridge over the Hudson, a sketch completed in 1923.

The Swiss engineer (third from left) and staff at the site of the Fort Lee Bridge, 1926.

this scheme would be championed by Congressman Jerrold Nadler and Mayor Giuliani.)

Lindenthal quickly recognized that his Fifty-seventh Street Bridge and the rail-tunnel plan were in direct competition. Once the Port Authority had been created in April, he urged it to embrace his rail-vehicular bridge instead of the tunnel; but the authority found fatal weaknesses in that option. A bridge with many lanes that exited at Fifty-seventh Street would add thousands of cars a day to Manhattan traffic congestion; also, many buildings would have to be torn down to make way for the passenger and freight railroad terminals which Lindenthal's plan required. Because of these problems, business leaders in New York City strongly opposed the scheme. In December 1921, the Port Authority rejected Lindenthal's bridge and embraced the tunnel plan.

Although Lindenthal continued to appeal to the rail lines to support his bridge, he made little progress, and by the fall of 1922, his financial situation was very rocky and his company could only afford to pay his staff part of their monthly wages. Now the close alliance between Lindenthal and Ammann began to sunder; and it soon became clear that their underlying values and their world-views were quite different.

The two men shared the enthusiasm for the great project that Lindenthal had created in his mind and on paper. For both were civil engineers on a grand scale — bridge-builders who came from Europe to the United States because the young nation had the vast expanse, the wide rivers, and deep ravines, that could provide challenges to skilled engineers. To Lindenthal, however, there was no alternative to the massive and expensive project he had proposed. Neither tunnels under the Hudson, nor bridges farther upriver, nor a bridge limited to motor vehicles (and therefore much cheaper than a bridge with huge girders to carry railroad trains) — none of these could possibly meet the need for improved transportation between Manhattan and the western regions. Moreover, Lindenthal had been New York City's bridge commissioner in the first years of the twentieth century, and there he had had a taste of engineering work in a government agency; he was strongly averse to relying on that political and conflict-filled route. In Lindenthal's mind, insulation and professional integrity were crucial; and the engineer could be relied upon to work out the best way to meet the collateral goals which all great engineering projects must achieve — principles of economy in construction, the aesthetic quality of the project itself, and an understanding of how the project would fit into the broader patterns of economic and social relationships within the metropolis.

Ammann's perspective was different. He was a pragmatist. His main goal was to bridge the Hudson. Of course he had the psychological advantage in thinking about alternative ways to achieve this goal

TRYING TO SELL HIS VISION TO BUSINESS LEADERS AND RESIDENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER TESTED AMMANN'S POLITICAL SKILLS.

since the original design was not *his* plan. More important, perhaps, Ammann — in contrast to Lindenthal — could encompass political obstacles, and strategies to overcome them, within the analytic framework of his engineering mind. Bridge engineering was not an armchair activity; you had to go into the field continuously, marshal and motivate your workers, and modify your preliminary designs as the land and the weather and the impact of human mischance required.

So too, close exploration of the *political* terrain associated with any large project was essential; and this might require meeting with local politicians and business people and interested citizens, in towns and county courthouses across the region, in order to work through the proper combination of engineering, aesthetic, and political designs.

When Ammann considered the problem, he found an alternative to the Fifty-seventh Street bridge that might win wide support, and in the fall of 1922 he took his idea to Lindenthal. Ammann urged Lindenthal to shift his short-term goal to a less expensive bridge limited to autos, trucks, and light transit — a bridge that would span the Hudson several miles north of the midtown area. But to Lindenthal, a massive bridge at Fifty-seventh Street was the only satisfactory way to solve the intertwined problems of freight and passengers — at one stroke joining New York City's vast economic strength with the economies of New Jersey and the rest of the continent.

As 1922 drew to a close, it seemed evident to Ammann that he would have to take some initiative on his own. But if Ammann felt compelled to strike out on a different course at the end of 1922, perhaps breaking free of Lindenthal, he would need to forge a new alliance which could help him achieve his goal. And this brought him to George S. Silzer.

In November 1922, George Silzer, Democrat from Middlesex County, was elected Governor of New Jersey. He would serve as the state's chief executive from January 1923 until January 1926, with the state legislature controlled by the Republicans throughout those years. Silzer's victory in the 1922 election provided Ammann with just the opportunity he needed, as he tried to extricate himself from Lindenthal's fixation. Ammann was already acquainted with the new governor, because Silzer had been an investor in the clay mine which Ammann had managed in 1917-20. In the weeks before Silzer took office in mid-January, Ammann talked with him about the need for a Hudson River crossing, the economic and political problems that surrounded the Lindenthal bridge, and the advantages of a bridge farther north, joining vast and rural Bergen County to the urbanized New York shore. A northern crossing could be limited to motor vehicles and light trolleys, which meant that its cost would be far less than the Lindenthal colossus. Ammann had studied various sites, and he preferred a bridge that swept from the Palisades cliffs, in the town of Fort Lee, across the River to One hundred seventy-ninth Street in Manhattan.

We have no direct account of the views which Silzer expressed at this meeting, but later evidence clearly indicates that he was enthusiastic about Ammann's proposed bridge, and that he hoped it might be financed by private capital. Moreover, Silzer was wary of the alternative "low cost" way to overcome the Hudson barrier — a series of tunnels under the Hudson.

If a Fort Lee bridge was a promising idea, what role should Silzer take in advancing the cause? Silzer was a Democrat, and the area of his state that would be most directly affected by a new bridge at Ammann's preferred location was Bergen County, a major Republican stronghold. It would be better for Silzer to leave the visible organizing efforts to community interests in northern New Jersey and New York; local business and political leaders would probably mount a vigorous campaign once Ammann had demonstrated the engineering and economic feasibility of the great design.

However, Silzer could offer guidance on how Ammann and others interested in the Fort Lee bridge might gain local support. Also, he could contact leaders in the financial community confidentially, in the hope that private capital might be attracted to the scheme; and he could approach the recently created Port of New York Authority to ask if it would endorse such a bridge.

The major burden, then, fell to Ammann. He would need to develop interest within the communities of Bergen County and nearby Passaic County, and across the River, in northern Manhattan and the Bronx. Indeed, he would need to persuade local business leaders and elected officials not only that his bridge was an interesting idea, but that it was the *best solution* for the near future.

How to proceed? For Ammann, the answer came in three parts: He would need to sketch out a bridge design that was so dramatic, so arresting, that it would claim the attention and approval of the attentive publics of northern New Jersey and New York. And he would need to work out the probable cost for the bridge, so that it would strike a chord as financially feasible — in contrast to Lindenthal's expensive scheme. Then he would need to take this design, and his ideas on how the bridge would benefit the region, directly to public officials and local groups on both sides of the Hudson.

The first two steps were, for Ammann, comparatively easy. He concluded that it was feasible to construct a bridge over the Hudson with a center span as wide as the entire river, which would permit Ammann to overcome a major obstacle to bridges across the Hudson — the concern that bridge piers would have to be placed in the river itself, presenting a hazard to navigation and thus prompting a veto by the national government. And he designed a bridge which was strikingly light in appearance, and which carried a cost estimate proportionately lower than other long-span bridges.

The third step — knocking on doors, trying to convince skeptical and preoccupied local officials, newspaper reporters, and shopkeepers to embrace his scheme — *that* was a different story. Ammann had confidence in his professional abili-

ties, and in the value of a great bridge at Fort Lee. But he was a modest man, and one who did not talk easily of his interests and his passions. However, in order to make any headway in developing public support for a bridge between Fort Lee and One hundred seventy-ninth Street, Ammann would have to break through his natural reticence and champion his own plan — until a civic organization could be formed to take the leading role in this public relations effort.

This third step would also mean that Ammann would soon have to break formally with Lindenthal, so that Ammann could campaign openly for the uptown bridge. In the short run, this break would almost certainly mean that Ammann would have to join the ranks of the unemployed: To carry out the engineering studies for the Fort Lee crossing, and to campaign for approval would absorb almost all his waking hours.

In addition, he and Governor Silzer would have to find an operating organization that could take Ammann's designs, raise the funds needed, and actually build the bridge. In early 1923, the two men began their campaign. It was an effort that would continue for the next two years, with the engineer taking the lead. Ammann frequently spent his days in the political trenches, and his nights bent over engineering drawings and calculations.

On January 9th, Ammann reported to Silzer that he had met with the governing board of Bergen County, and that their initial reaction was to support "the bridge at Fort Lee." They also agreed with Silzer's view that no new vehicular tunnels under the Hudson should be constructed until the Holland Tunnel was in operation.

A week later, Silzer was sworn in as governor, and in his inaugural address, he referred to the great advantages of northern New Jersey: "It is especially attractive to those who find the congestion of New York City unbearable, and who seek to live in a section at once high, healthy and accessible." But this high and healthy land was not really accessible, Silzer pointed out, especially to motor vehicles, which had to wait for hours to cross the Hudson by ferry. It was now time, Silzer argued, to give close consideration to building a bridge across the Hudson, a bridge "of ample size to care for vehicular and passenger travel, and for railroad terminal service."

During the next few months, Ammann met with several local groups in New Jersey, described his idea for a great span at Fort Lee, and received modest encouragement. Meanwhile, Silzer contacted Dwight Morrow of the J.P. Morgan firm for his view on whether Lindenthal's bridge could be built with private capital; Morrow's response, sent to Silzer on March 2nd, was decidedly pessimistic. Ammann then urged Lindenthal to cut down the size of the bridge and move it northward. But Lindenthal was adamant, and by the end of March, Ammann had left his firm.

Through the spring and summer of 1923, Ammann made little progress in gaining support for his own bridge. The possibility of a vehicular tunnel at One hundred tenth Street or at One hundred twenty-fifth Street, financed by investors, appeared to be of greater interest in the Bergen area, and that enterprise would almost certainly kill any prospects for a Fort Lee bridge. Other speculators began to look at Fortieth Street as a possible site for private undertakings. However, during these months the tunnel investors, and their supporters in the New Jersey legislature, found that they faced triple-barreled opposition — from the Port Authority, and from the chief executives of both states.

The port agency wrote to the governors, pointing out that its plans included a set of tunnel projects, and it argued that no interstate crossings should be undertaken unless they were consistent with its program, which had the approval of the state legislatures. Both governors were sympathetic to the Port Authority's position and vetoed the private-tunnel bills. At the time, Silzer was willing to consider private financing, but not of a tunnel which would undermine prospects for a bridge at Fort Lee. New York's Governor Alfred E. Smith was adamantly opposed to having private corporations build and control *any* major highway arteries across the Hudson.

Through 1923 and into 1924 the Port Authority's own staff did not appear interested in adding vehicular bridges to its duties. During most of this period, it was reasonable to foresee that the Holland Tunnel, then under construction by another agency, would be followed by other underwater crossings built by the Holland Tunnel's commissioners, possibly with one or two others financed privately.

Concerned about the possibility that tunnels uncoordinated with its own plans might be approved, the Port Authority's commissioners decided in November 1923 to hold a public hearing on "the proposed additional vehicular tunnels." Now Governor Silzer and his bridge-building adviser saw an opportunity to enlist the Port Authority in their own campaign. The port commissioners and staff had viewed their mission mainly in terms of tunnels for rail freight. But bridges as well as tunnels were plausibly within their domain; and though they thought mainly about railroads, they also had some interest in freight movement by truck — and trucks, of course, could travel on bridges as well as in tunnels....

The Port Authority's hearing was scheduled for December 5th, and during the intervening weeks, Ammann worked furiously to strengthen the case for a bridge at Fort Lee. His calculations indicated that a single-span bridge at that location would cost no more than $30 million — in contrast to several hundred millions for the Lindenthal project. Moreover, the immediate cost could be reduced to $25 million, if the electric railway tracks he had included in the design were deferred.

Based on existing ferry traffic and studies by the Committee on the Regional Plan, Ammann estimated that three million vehicles would use the Fort Lee bridge in the first year — enough to meet all annual charges, if a reasonable toll were levied. Assuming continued increases ("in a few years the traffic should treble," he told Silzer), capital costs could also be paid off, and the bridge would surely become self-supporting.

He then suggested to Silzer that they talk with "some of the prominent bankers" and Silzer sent Ammann to confer with Dwight Morrow. Meeting in early December, Morrow and Ammann agreed

AMMANN ESTIMATED THAT THREE MILLION VEHICLES WOULD USE THE TOLL BRIDGE IN ITS FIRST YEAR, GENERATING ENOUGH INCOME TO MEET ALL ANNUAL CHARGES.

The span closer to completion in 1930.

The Hudson River Bridge under construction in the fall of 1929 from Fort Washington Park.

Photos courtesy Port Authority of NY & NJ

Ammann speaking at the dedication of the Bayonne Bridge, November 1931.

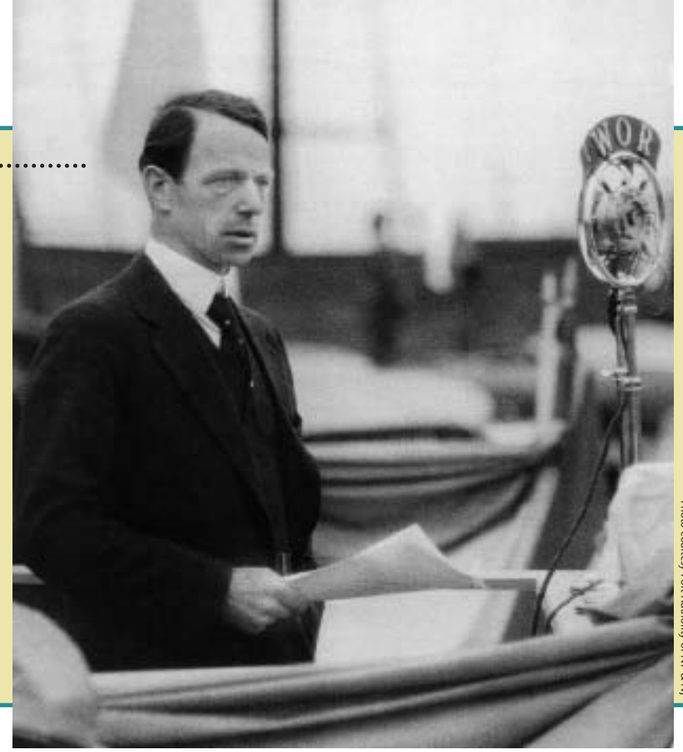


Photo courtesy Port Authority of NY & NJ

> A GREAT BRIDGE IN A GREAT CITY, AMMANN ALWAYS BELIEVED, SHOULD BE A WORK OF ART TO WHICH SCIENCE LENDS ITS AID.

that the bridge might well be self-supporting, but Morrow doubted that adequate private capital could be attracted; both wrote to Silzer to recommend that *public* funds be used — either state moneys, or Port of New York Authority bonds.

The Port Authority's public hearing strengthened Ammann's position. Most speakers agreed that more vehicular crossings of the Hudson were needed; and while there was support for new tunnels below Fifty-seventh Street, the prestigious Committee on the Regional Plan and other speakers argued for a bridge farther north. The crucial question was, *who* would take responsibility for such a bridge, and here Ammann's own views were clear. "The most practicable way" to proceed, he wrote to Silzer the day after the hearing, would be to have the Port Authority take on the challenge. Therefore, he urged Silzer to place Ammann's Fort Lee plan "at the earliest possible moment before the Port Authority."

A few days later, the two men talked by telephone, and Ammann suggested that the Port agency should be asked to make definitive studies not only of the Fort Lee plan but also of other interstate crossings that had been proposed — bridges from Perth Amboy and Bayonne to Staten Island, for example, and a scaled-down version of the Fifty-seventh Street span. If the Port Authority were to conduct such studies, Ammann noted, it would need an expert bridge engineer, and "I shall be frank in stating that I should be glad to occupy such a position."

Ammann and Silzer had agreed that Ammann would put together an extensive report on the Fort Lee project — covering technical engineering issues, traffic projections, financing questions, and probable impact of the bridge on regional development — and on December 17th, Ammann's twenty-two-page analysis reached Silzer's desk. That afternoon the governor forwarded the report to the Port Authority, with a letter from Ammann which concluded that the Fort Lee bridge could be paid for in twenty years. Silzer also released a public statement on his actions, noting that the Ammann plan was consistent with his own 1923 inaugural statement on the need for more Hudson crossings, and suggesting that the Port Authority could finance the Fort Lee bridge by issuing tax-exempt bonds — with "ample security" provided by tolls on the bridge.

The governor's efforts for the day had not yet ended. He also wrote a private letter to Commissioner Julian Gregory at the Port Authority, suggesting that, in carrying out its studies of the various bridge plans, the authority might want to secure the services of "such a man as Mr. Ammann, who is thoroughly skilled in this kind of work."

Gregory responded quickly, expressing his personal preference for bridging the Hudson at some point north of One hundred twenty-fifth Street. He also noted that Port Authority officials were now considering whether they should devote some attention to the role of trucks in moving freight in the region, and therefore to the need for vehicular tunnels and bridges. On December 21, 1923, the commissioners reported to the two governors that they would carry out a detailed study of the Fort Lee plan. Perhaps the Port Authority would now join Ammann in embracing the new automotive age!

Ammann's efforts were beginning to bear fruit. But the events thus far brought a measure of pain as well as pleasure. Most hurtful was the behavior of Lindenthal. Silzer had sent him a personal copy of Ammann's detailed report on the Fort Lee plan, and on December 20th he responded with a letter to the governor, alleging that Ammann had stolen Lindenthal's own ideas.

Meanwhile, since the Port Authority had now agreed to make a close study of Ammann's proposal, he waited for a call to join the authority's staff — and take part in that study — but in vain. Christmas came and went, and Ammann was still an unemployed engineer.

Unemployed, but with much to do. Ammann knew that the bi-state agency would be far more likely to take the next step and agree to build the great bridge if it found a groundswell of popular support. However, by the fall of 1923, the local terrain had become more complex, for a group of Bergen citizens had formed an association to lobby for Lindenthal's Fifty-seventh Street bridge.

So Ammann once again threw his energies into the effort to organize popular support for the Fort Lee enterprise. Between late December and April 1924, he held dozens of meetings with chambers of commerce and other groups in Bergen and nearby Passaic and Morris counties in New Jersey; and he wrote to and visited similar associations in the Bronx, Harlem, Washington Heights, Westchester, and Yonkers.

By December, Ammann had developed working sketches of the proposed bridge — with its thin, graceful roadway, and its great towers, which would be vast metal structures sheathed in monumental stone. And now, when he spoke, Ammann could show his audiences some visual hint of his own deep motivations, which lay beyond matters of practicality.

Years before, reflecting on the Hell Gate crossing, a monument to Lindenthal's own aesthetic imagination and engineering skill, Ammann had argued that a great bridge in a great city, although primarily utilitarian in its purpose, should nevertheless be a work of art to which science lends its aid. Now *he* might have the opportunity to create such a bridge, if the public and the state legislatures would approve it — and if some other engineer, of "greater reputation," were not chosen!

By the first months of 1924, Ammann's campaign had sparked enough interest in Bergen County that its influential state senator, William Mackay, was impressed. In March, meeting with Ammann, Mackay said he would champion legislation authorizing the Port Authority to construct a bridge at Fort Lee, as well as smaller spans between Staten Island and New Jersey. During the spring of 1924, the New Jersey legislature took the first bite, endorsing Port Authority surveys, and construction of two Staten Island bridges. New York State approved similar legislation. Soon after, Governor Silzer sent a brief note to the Port Authority's general counsel, Julius Henry Cohen:

> It has just occurred to me, in connection with the two bridges over Staten Island and your other bridge work, that the Port Authority ought to avail itself of the services of Mr. O. H. Ammann. … I understand that just at the moment he is available.…

Just at the moment, and for more than a year now. But still the Port Authority did not call.

During the fall of 1924, the Port Authority sought bids for design work on its two Staten Island crossings, and Ammann responded. As he wrote to Governor Silzer on November 21st, "I have submitted to the Port Authority a bid for the preparation of plans for the Arthur Kill Bridges and am now anxiously awaiting their decision." And while he waited, his political efforts produced significant results. In November, State Senator Mackay urged prompt action on a bridge over the Hudson, and he endorsed Ammann's plan as the most feasible. In the same week, the influential *Bergen Record*, which had favored a tunnel, endorsed action by the Port Authority to construct a bridge to upper Manhattan. By mid-December, the "Mackay Hudson River Bridge Association" had been formed, with the *Record*'s publisher and other county leaders as members. Finally, in late January 1925, the New Jersey Senate passed a bill authorizing the Port Authority to construct a bridge across the Hudson at Fort Lee, and the State Assembly soon followed suit. Ammann then journeyed to New York, where companion legislation had been introduced, and met with local and state officials, urging favorable action; in late March, New York State approved the bill.

The Port Authority would now move forward to construct a bridge from Fort Lee to One hundred seventy-ninth Street, and to build the two spans between New Jersey and Staten Island. But would Ammann have any role in their design and construction? In a letter on March 27th, Ammann expressed his hope that he would be asked to "take charge of the working out of the preliminary plans" for the Fort Lee Bridge, but he thought there would be opposition, and that an engineer "with long practice and wide reputation" might be selected instead.

Two weeks later, with the Port Authority bills signed in Trenton, Governor Silzer once again wrote to Julian Gregory, who was now Port Authority chairman. Noting that the authority would soon be proceeding with the Fort Lee Bridge, Silzer suggested that "you take into consideration for the doing of this work the name of O. H. Ammann," who "has spent two years of his time in advising the public of its advantages . . . and in every way has probably done more than any other one man to bring this bridge into being." Silzer also sent a copy of this letter to Chief Engineer William Drinker at the Port Authority; and he suggested that the two engineers meet.

A few days later, Ammann met with Drinker. He thought it was an "encouraging interview," though it contained disappointing news: Drinker told him that the Port Authority had concluded that their first projects — the two Staten Island bridges — should be awarded to "an engineer of long established reputation." The job went to Waddell & Hardesty, a firm led by the prominent engineer, J.A.L. Waddell.

However, in its short life the Port Authority had already begun to develop a few traditions — and one of these was a preference for hiring its own engineers and other experts as regular members of the staff, rather than relying heavily on outside contractors. By late April, the chief engineer (himself a railroad man) concluded that the authority ought to hire a staff engineer with bridge-building experience, and Drinker recommended Othmar Ammann.

The commissioners soon concurred with Drinker's recommendation, and on July 3, 1925 Ammann sent a letter to Silzer noting that he had assumed his duties as "bridge engineer on the Port Authority staff" two days earlier, and thanking the governor for his "goodwill and efforts on my behalf." The long and active campaign ended on a restrained note, with the governor's final letter to an engineer who had at last landed a job and who would now have to show that he had the capacity not only to fight for — but also to build — a great bridge.

July 15, 1925.
My dear Mr. Ammann:
I have your letter of July 3d, and am, as you know, pleased at your appointment, because I am sure that you will be of much service to the two states.

Yours very truly,
s/George S. Silzer

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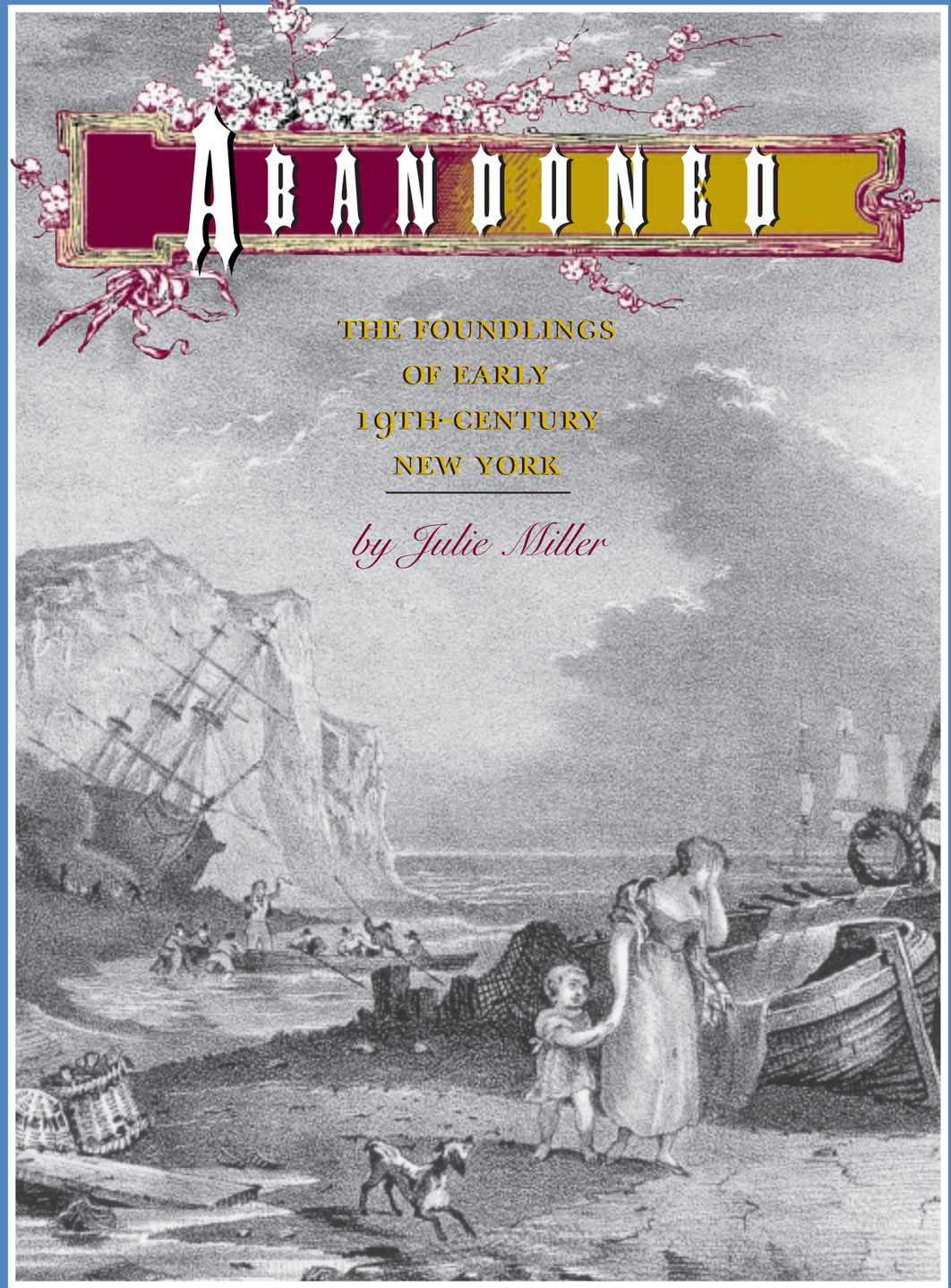
ABANDONED

THE FOUNDLINGS OF EARLY 19TH-CENTURY NEW YORK

by Julie Miller



New-York Historical Society

On a December evening in 1838 Philip Hone, a wealthy businessman and former mayor of New York, was holding a dinner party at his new house on Great Jones Street. His guests, as always, were glittering envoys from the city's intersecting worlds of the comfortable and the influential.

This evening, one guest was not only unexpected, but late. When Hone's servant went to answer the doorbell after the group had already sat down to eat, at first he saw no one there. Then he looked down and noticed a basket resting on the doorsill. The basket was warmly lined with cotton, and inside, dressed in clean, neat clothes, was a baby boy about one week old. There was a note pinned to his clothes, and a locket around his neck containing a curl of hair.

Hone was very pleased with his foundling. He described the child in his diary as "one of the sweetest babies I ever saw" and even speculated to his guests about the possibility of adopting him. But the gathering advised against it, arguing that if Hone adopted the baby he "would have twenty more such outlets to my benevolence." Persuaded, Hone wrote a note to the commissioners of the city's almshouse and gave it and the basket with its contents to his servant to take to the almshouse office in City Hall Park. Hone and his guests then returned to their meal, "the game and oysters cold, but our hearts warm."

One can speculate about the temperature of Hone's guests' hearts, but they were correct about the ubiquity of abandoned babies in New York. In 1838 at least fifty babies, probably more, had been abandoned in the city. On Hone's street alone, at least three had been left that year. The baby's mother, a widow, employed a method that many other abandoners used in New York at that time: she waited for darkness, placed the baby on the stoop of a likely house, rang the bell, then ran away before she could be seen. Others simply left babies in the entry or on the doorstep of a house without any announcement, hoping a passerby or the resident of the house would soon take notice. More careless abandoners left babies in alleys or simply on the sidewalk. Less frequently, women or children asked strangers they met in the street to hold babies for a few moments or an hour and then never returned.

The records of the commissioners of the almshouse, whose duties included the care of foundlings, contain many cases in which parents left infants with women, either wet-nurses, baby-farmers (women who cared for groups of infants in their homes), or other caretakers, then disappeared. When payments for a child's board ceased, the woman brought the baby to the commissioners whom she knew would pay her, or another nurse, for the baby's care. The latter method of abandonment speaks to either the poverty or the equivocation — or both — of these parents. Poor parents, especially single women, may have simply been unable to keep up with the payments. Or, unwilling to abandon their babies directly, they delegated the job to someone else. In some cases, however, this method was a scam in which parents deliberately colluded with wet-nurses and baby-farmers, hoping to get the fee the city paid wet-nurses of abandoned infants.

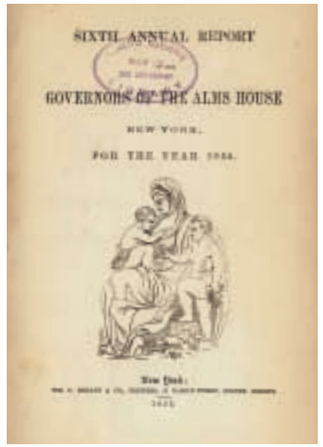
In some cases the line between abandonment and infanticide was very thin; sometimes it was nonexistent. In 1820, a columnist for *The National Advocate*, a New York City newspaper, commented in horror on the growing number of infants "born alive, but cruelly exposed to die in some neglected part of our city and suburbs." Some of these infants were thrown into the largest hiding place available to inhabitants of an island city: the water that surrounded it. One representative case, reported by the coroner and published in the *Advocate* on August 25, 1820, concerned "a new born female infant, found in Roosevelt-street-slip, tied up in a flannel cloth, with a brick attached to it."

By 1857 — six months before the devastating financial crash of that year — abandonments and infanticides had apparently increased (or concern about them had) to the point where city officials appointed a committee to study the possibility of opening a foundling asylum. A doctor who testified before the committee in 1858 described cases of infants thrown in the streets, in privies, and in cemeteries. The committee's report noted that "our own Hudson and the East River carry with them to the Atlantic, with the returning tide" the "dead bodies of infants cast out by unfeeling mothers."

Why did some New York parents resort to the extreme measure of abandoning their babies? Sometimes men abandoned infants, usually when their wives or lovers had died in childbirth, were imprisoned,

"The unwed mother is the leper of our social life. She is thrown off by her family — disowned by kindred and friends — all shrink from her, as the Jew of olden time did from the leper, and sadder still, the taint clings to the innocent child."

The abandonment of women and children by their seafaring menfolk was not uncommon in nineteenth-century New York. The artwork, opposite, from a piece of sheet music entitled "The Parting," dramatizes the plight of such women, who were sometimes forced to give up their children.



The city's almshouse was the only institution that systematically cared for foundlings before the Civil War. And though it also cared for other "outcasts," such as the destitute and the insane — it chose this allegorical image of a nursing mother for the cover of its sixth annual report.

"I am a poor friendless Widow in a strange city — had I kept it [the baby] — it would have lingered and died with starvation: oh it will drive me frantic — to think I must part with my first and only pledge of my departed Husband but God will forgive me — oh! I do it for the best."

disabled by alcoholism or insanity, or neglectful. This is what happened to baby Susan Jarvis whose father, John, a Hell Gate pilot, handed her over to the city's almshouse commissioners because her mother, Amelia, drank. But for the most part abandonment and infanticide were perpetrated by women — generally poor, unmarried women.

When groups of citizens began to organize foundling asylums in New York after the Civil War (no such institutions existed in the city before the war) they focused on the role that shame played in an unmarried mother's decision to abandon her baby. In its annual report for 1872, the Nursery and Child's Hospital, whose foundling asylum opened immediately after the Civil War, described the stigma attached to unmarried mothers and their babies:

> The unwed mother is the leper of our social life. She is thrown off by her family — disowned by kindred and friends — all shrink from her, as the Jew of olden time did from the leper, and sadder still, the taint clings to the innocent child.

According to this view, shared by the Nursery and Child's Hospital and the two other private foundling asylums, the New York Foundling Asylum and the New York Infant Asylum, infant abandonment, infanticide, even suicide and a descent into prostitution were natural outcomes of the unwed mother's demoralizing fall from sexual purity.

The association of unmarried motherhood with shame and desperate acts was hardly unique to nineteenth-century New York. In his 1749 novel, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, British author Henry Fielding has a character exclaim on discovering the abandoned infant Tom Jones:

> it goes against me to touch these misbegotten wretches, whom I don't look upon as my fellow-creatures. Faugh! how it stinks! It doth not smell like a Christian … it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence, than to grow up and imitate their mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them.

Given the severe stigma of unmarried motherhood, it is likely that shame did play a role in some single women's decisions to abandon their babies. But when one takes into account the countervailing force of maternal love, it is clear that another powerful factor must have been at work. In the majority of cases this factor was poverty. Single women, whether widows, abandoned by their husbands, or never married, were particularly vulnerable in the growing yet fragile economy of early nineteenth-century New York City. While the trade that flowed through the port provided work for men as sailors, dockworkers, ship's carpenters, carters, builders, merchants, bankers, lawyers, printers, insurance agents, and any number of other professions and trades both on land and sea, few occupations were open to women and the ones that were paid poorly. Older, more established women might set themselves up as boardinghouse keepers (a good occupation in a city of transients), educated women might work as teachers, but poor women, many of whom were migrants from the countryside or immigrants from abroad, were restricted to sewing, laundry work, factory work, and other lowly trades. Many worked as domestic servants. Those with the fewest resources of money, skill, and social connections could exploit the resources of their bodies to work as prostitutes and wet-nurses. The low pay and working conditions in these occupations made it difficult or impossible for a woman to care for a child on her own. Employers of live-in domestic servants generally did not allow their servants to keep a child with them.

THE REALITIES OF SEAPORT LIFE ITSELF ALSO played a role in abandonment. As a port city, New York received more than its share of immigrants and transients. In a city of newcomers and passers-through, attachments were quickly formed and just as quickly broken, and women sometimes found themselves pregnant and alone. The urban anonymity that made it possible for an unmarried woman to form a sexual relationship was the same cover under which she was able to deposit an infant secretly on a stranger's doorstep.

Sailors were among the transients who sometimes left women, both married or single, alone in the city with babies. In December 1839 Abby Townly gave birth to a daughter, Louisa, at the home of Mary Martin, who was probably a midwife. Mother and daughter stayed with Mrs. Martin until February, when Abby left. Mrs. Martin kept the baby for three weeks, then, unable to support Louisa herself, brought her to the almshouse. Mrs. Martin told the commissioners that she had heard Abby say that her husband had gone to sea. It is hard to know if Abby Townly really had such a sailor husband, or if Mary Martin was telling the commissioners the truth, but in seaport New York their stories were certainly plausible.

For poor women alone with infants the periodic economic crashes, or "panics" of the nineteenth century were especially dangerous. If they were immigrants, lacking the support that nearby family members might provide, they suffered even more. It is probably not a coincidence that the *Advocate*'s editorialist noted an increase in infanticides in the aftermath of the Panic of 1819; the city's committee to study the possibility of opening a foundling asylum was certainly influenced by the Panic of 1857. The foundling abandoned on Philip Hone's doorstep at the end of 1838 was also, in part, a product of hard times — this time the Panic of 1837. It is very likely that Hone and his guests discussed the effects of this crash at his dinner party. Hone himself was badly affected by it. He had sunk considerable funds in a son's business venture and now it appeared likely that he would never see the money again. In his diary entry for May 26, 1837 he noted sadly, "A deadly calm pervades this lately flourishing city. No goods are selling, no business stirring, no boxes encumber the sidewalks of Pearl Street."

But Hone's distress did not compare to that of the mother of the foundling he entertained that winter evening. She was only a few months pregnant when her husband died in the wreck of the *Pulaski*, a steamboat whose boiler exploded off the coast of North Carolina in June 1838. In the note she pinned to the baby's clothing, she expresses the difficulty of being alone and far from home in a particularly harsh economic climate:

> I am a poor friendless Widow in a strange city — had I kept it [the baby] — it would have lingered and died with starvation: oh it will drive me frantic — to think I must part with my first and only pledge of my departed Husband but God will forgive me — oh! I do it for the best.

THUS WOMEN, MOSTLY SINGLE, BUT SOME married, and a few men, were driven to abandon their babies because of poverty, the shame of single motherhood, the social isolation that resulted from immigration, and other misfortunes. But they were also able to commit what appears to be an unthinkable act because of the "normality" of infant abandonment in the culture in which they lived. Infant abandonment as both a concept and a practice was firmly embedded in the European cultures from which New York's population largely came. Everyone knew the story of Moses,

Abandoned babies were often left with "baby-farmers," women who were paid to care for foundlings in their homes. Their less-than-tender care sometimes led to raids by authorities, like this one documented in an 1859 magazine article.

Harper's Illustrated Weekly / NYS Historical Association

Many foundlings' first stop was the city almshouse, which moved from City Hall Park to Bellevue on the East River, above, in 1816.

set adrift in a basket; some, given the tendency of citizens of the new United States to look to republican Rome for inspiration, may have been familiar with the myth of Romulus and Remus, suckled by a motherly wolf. Authors such as Henry Fielding, gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe, and Shakespeare, with whom nineteenth-century New Yorkers were as familiar as they were with the melodramatists of their own time, all made use of the comic and romantic aspects of foundlinghood.

Stories in which abandoned infants not only survived, but even rose to greatness, may have provided not only amusement for readers and theater-goers, but also justification and comfort to abandoning parents. Foundlings were a presence not only in the collective imagination, but also literally on the streets of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European cities. Historian John Boswell estimates that in the eighteenth century as many as one out of every three or four children was abandoned in French, Italian, and Spanish cities, while Rachel Fuchs finds that 15 to 20 percent of all babies born in early nineteenth-century Paris were abandoned. Thomas Coram, the founder, in 1739, of the London Foundling Hospital, reported seeing "young Children exposed, sometimes alive, sometimes dead, and sometimes dying" on the streets of London, while mid-nineteenth-century Londoners referred to infanticide as "the sin of the age."

Immigrants to New York from England would have been familiar with the London Foundling Hospital, just as those from Ireland would have known of the foundling hospitals in Dublin (established in 1730) and Cork (1747). The fact that New Yorkers used essentially the same few methods of abandonment over and over could be evidence of communication among the city's poor people about the practice. In short, when a woman found herself poor, pregnant, and alone, abandonment, which was not only illegal but heartbreaking, was a solution she knew others had resorted to.

New Yorkers were also able to think of abandonment as a possibility because the city had a system in place to care for abandoned babies and poor, illegitimate children. The commissioners — called governors between 1849 and 1860 — of New York's almshouse were in charge of poor people institutionalized in the city's almshouse, workhouse, jails, penitentiary, hospitals, and insane asylum, and of the so-called "outdoor poor," people who received relief payments from the city but remained in their homes. The commissioners were also in charge of abandoned babies, who they placed with wet nurses, typically poor women who lived in the city, or with pauper women living in the almshouse.

ALTHOUGH THE ALMSHOUSE HAD MOVED from its original site in City Hall Park to Bellevue near the East River in 1816, the commissioners' offices remained in the park. It was there that the outdoor poor came to apply for their handouts, where abandoned infants were brought by their finders, and where the wet nurses assigned by the city to care for these infants came to collect their payments. These offices, where Hone sent his foundling, were frequently the scene of a desperate, sweaty crush. In their 1847 annual report the almshouse commissioners describe the scene and the place of foundlings in it:

> ...dense crowds of human beings, of various countries, colors, and ages, filling the rooms and passage ways, to the extent of nearly preventing ingress and egress ... Humanity, from the earliest infantile existence, through all the periods of childhood and maturity, to the extreme limits of advanced age, our offices are the scenes of its plaintive supplication. Infants abandoned — just breathing their first moments, unclothed in some instances, in others conveyed as found in the public streets, in the rudest enclosures — find a home among us.

A little girl made use of this pandemonium to hand a crying baby — a sibling? a neighbor? a stranger? — to a woman and then, as the woman testified to the commissioners in February 1840, the girl "then pushed her way through the crowd and deponent has not seen her since."

Because safe and adequate artificial infant formula was not available until late in the nineteenth century, it was essential for the commissioners to place the infants with wet nurses right away. The wet nurses the city employed were typically mothers of infants who had either been weaned or died. The majority of them signed their names with marks in the commissioners' record books when they came to the offices to pick up their pay — an indication that they were illiterate. The nurses' husbands, when they were present, typically worked at humble trades, some of which were reliant on the prosperity of the seaport. According to records kept by the almshouse commissioners between 1838 and 1841, wet nurses' husbands included cartmen and packers, ropemakers, ship's carpenters, fishermen, and boatmen. Some of the nurses' husbands, like the husbands of some abandoning women, were sailors, away at sea. Among these was Mary Falconi, of whom the commissioners noted that although she was a native New Yorker, her husband was "an Italian mate of Ship Anson of Charleston." For these women breast milk was a saleable commodity.

Foundlings remained with wet nurses in their homes at least until they were weaned — sometimes much longer. One such boy, unimaginatively named Henry Foundling by the commissioners, remained with his nurse Martha Skaats until he was more than six years old, when she returned him to the almshouse and took another child.

Almshouse officials sent grown foundlings like Henry to school, then apprenticed them to tradesmen so they could learn to become independent even without the help of a family. In at least a few cases this arrangement worked out well. Sometimes it even led to adoption, as in the case of Catherine Carr Chapman. In 1847 a "visitor," (a kind of early social worker) appointed by the commissioners to check on the welfare of children apprenticed by the city, found her living with her adoptive father, William Chapman, in Harlem. The visitor noted: "with him 8 years; is a foundling; goes to school; is a very good child."

But happy outcomes were rare for foundlings. During the 1850s — if the sometimes obfuscating figures in the almshouse commissioners' annual reports can be believed — the city cared for an average of four hundred ninety abandoned and illegitimate babies each year. Of these, an average of two hundred died annually. Foundlings cared for by wet nurses in their homes shared the threadbare circumstances of the city's poorest families. Even so, they fared better than the infants the city distributed among the destitute women living in the almshouse.

The reputation of the almshouse for squalor and disease throughout the nineteenth century was probably what led the city to pass an ordinance in 1839 expressing the wish that when wet-nursing could be done "out of the [alms]house, it shall be preferred." The pioneering pediatrician Job Lewis Smith, who cared for almshouse foundlings in the middle of the century, was told by the superintendent "...that it would be an act of humanity if each foundling were given a fatal dose of opium on its arrival, since all of them died."

The morning after he dispatched his foundling to the almshouse office, Philip Hone went to check on his young visitor:

> I found him snugly tucked away in bed, at the almshouse (under the charge of Mrs. Frazer, who appears a kind, benevolent woman), apparently in good health and likely to do well. Mr. Winslow, the respectable keeper, and his people, appear much interested for the infant, and do not intend at present to send him out to Bellevue, as they usually do in these cases.

But a note in the commissioners' records indicates that they did send him to Bellevue, where we can imagine that his future was not bright.

BY THE 1850S THE HIGH MORTALITY RATE and poor living conditions for foundlings had grown into a full-blown scandal with accompanying publicity. Condemning the city's incompetence in an editorial provocatively titled "New York as a Nursing Mother," *Harper's Weekly* asked, even more provocatively: "How long shall the city remain a convicted murderer?" In 1869, following the advice offered by its 1857 committee, the city opened a foundling asylum on Randalls Island; the three private foundling asylums opened between 1865 and 1871. But institutionalization created problems of its own. In the twentieth century the city adopted foster care as an alternative.

While the practice of abandoning babies on the street diminished to a rarity during the twentieth century, the problems of poor children with inadequate family support did not go away. To these children, their parents and foster parents, and the city officials who oversee their fates, the story of New York City's abandoned babies, poor parents, wet nurses, and almshouse commissioners might sound painfully familiar.

Julie Miller is a doctoral candidate in American history at the CUNY Graduate Center.

"Infants abandoned — just breathing their first moments, unclothed in some instances, in others conveyed as found in the public streets, in the rudest enclosures — find a home among us."

by Colin J. Davis

Warfare on the docks

The Longshoremen's Strike of 1948

When dangerous working conditions, corrupt leadership, and an unfair and outmoded hiring system pushed New York dockworkers to walk out, their action tied up piers up and down the East Coast and led to important gains for waterfront workers.

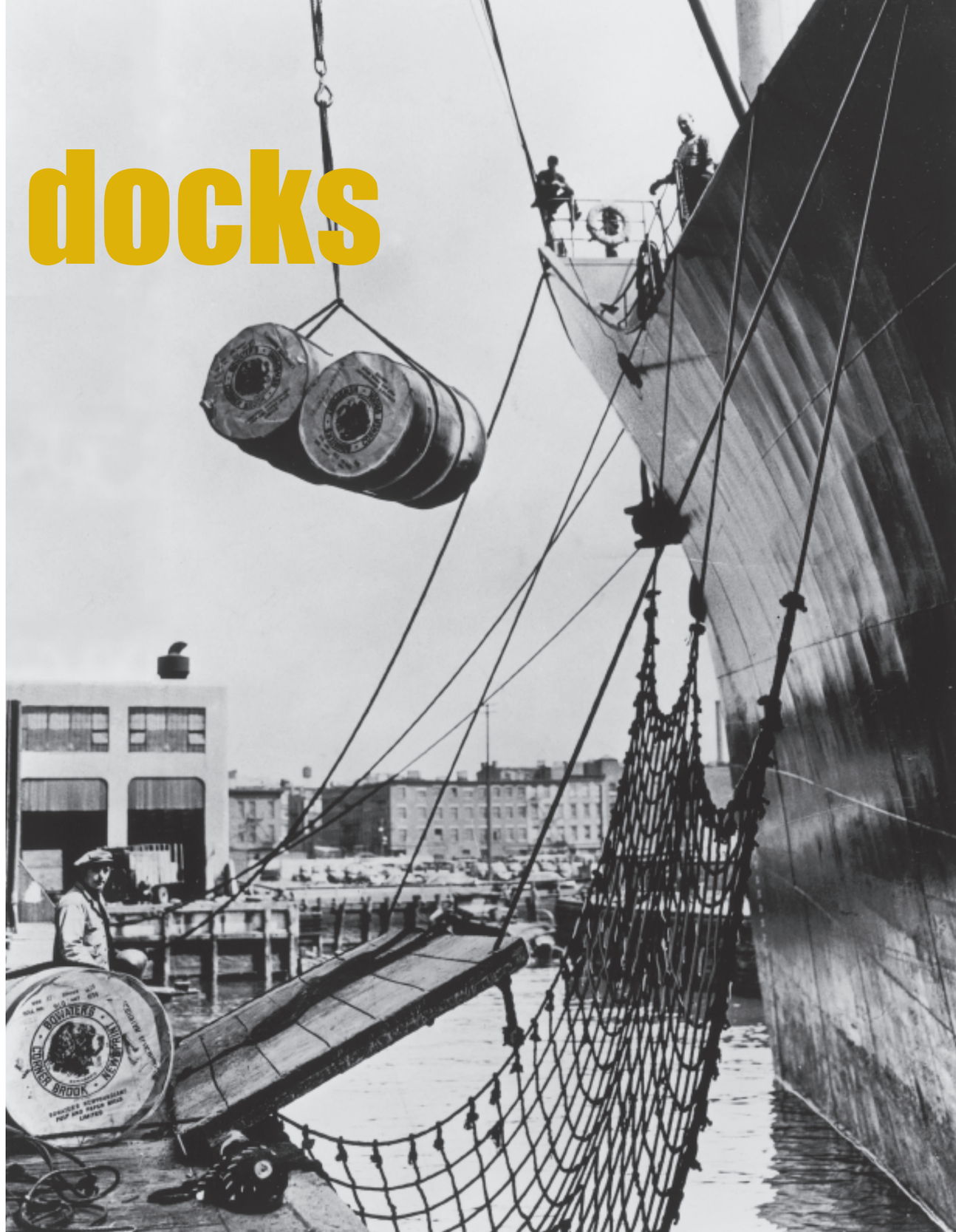
The New York longshoremen of the late 1940s labored in a port that extended for seven hundred miles, encompassing the coastlines of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Jersey City, and Hoboken, New Jersey. From the early twentieth century on, New York longshoremen had experienced little fundamental change in their work conditions. Much of the work still required a strong back and the skillful use of the hook to move cargo in and out of the ship's hold. Basic machinery such as winches still transferred cargo by sling from dock to hold or vice versa. What had changed since World War Two, however, was the introduction of the sling load, made possible by the development of heavier bearing winches. As one longshoreman complained: "Before the war we worked with a one-ton-draft — 2,240 pounds. Today the sky is the limit." When factoring in the severity of injuries that could be inflicted by the handling of such heavy loads, longshoring held the dubious distinction of being the most dangerous occupation in the nation.

Beyond the longshoreman's fear of accidents and crippling disability, his most pressing concern was the exploitative and inequitable method of obtaining work — the "shape up" or "shape" — a sort of cattle call that required the men to show up at a hiring hall for employment that might or might not materialize. This onerous practice, which had been abandoned in many other U.S. ports, still held New York longshoremen in its grip with only one small concession: Through strike action in 1945, the men had been able to reduce the number of daily shapes from three to two, one at 6:55 a.m. and the other at 12:55 p.m. These two abuses would eventually catalyze the longshoremen into the tumultuous strike of 1948.

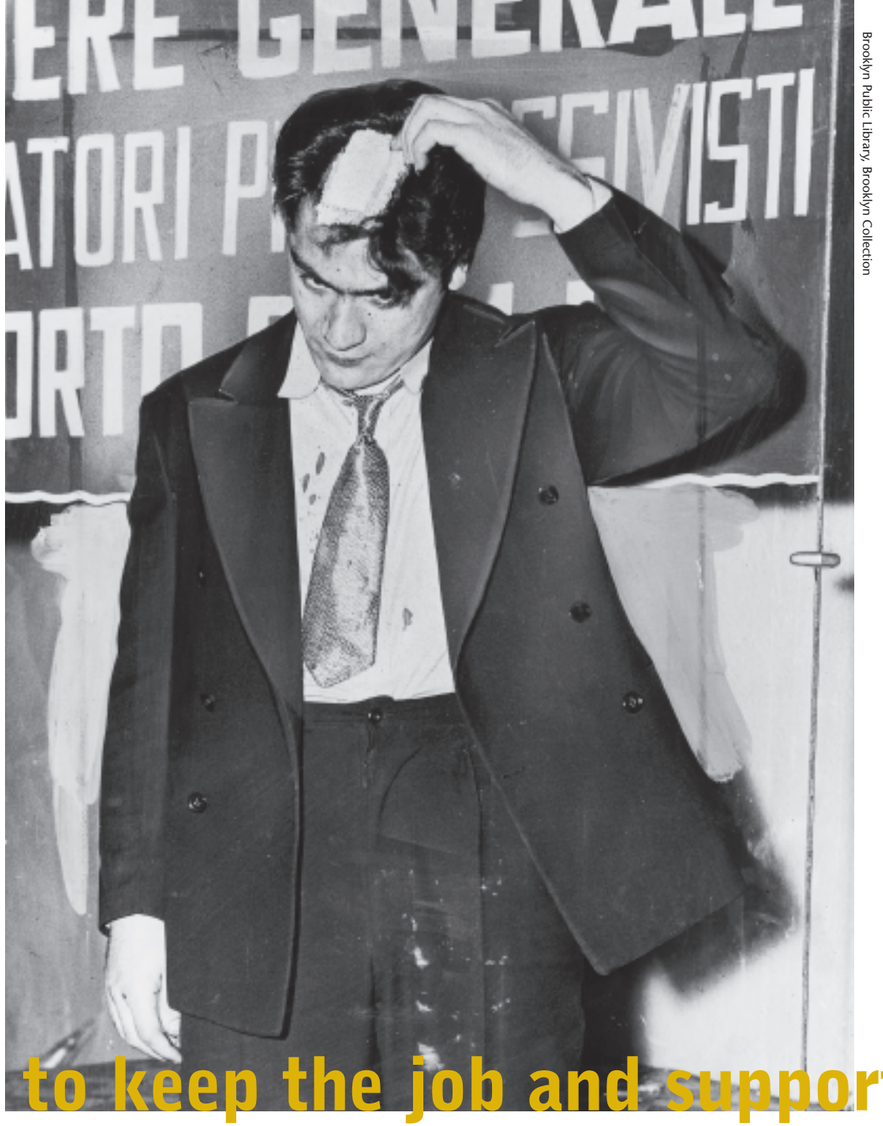
The shape-up system and its corresponding surplus of labor guaranteed subservience, and made for an insecure work existence. Its survival in New York can be laid at the door of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), the union that represented dockworkers on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, and their top leadership, in particular, President Joe Ryan. An attorney for the longshoremen, who testified in 1948 before the Senate Committee of Labor and Public Welfare, explained that the union leadership's power over hiring ensured that so-called "troublemakers" were kept "off the waterfront simply by not picking them in the shape-up." Even the Chief Counsel for the ILA, Louis Waldman, was forced to conclude, "I think this is one of the rare exceptions in modern industrial relations to have men come to the employer's establishment [each day] and make themselves ready and willing to work with no obligation on the part of the employer whatever to take them."

In addition to giving union leaders control over their membership, the shape-up system doubtless survived as long as it did because it provided union officials and hiring foremen with ample opportunity to line their pockets with kickbacks. It was standard practice for a longshoreman to better his chances of employment by bribing either the hiring foreman or a union official. The form of the bribe depended upon the system established on a particular pier; in some cases, it was an individual activity — a straight money payment, drinks before or after the shape, or card games in which the longshoremen purposely lost. One longshoreman known only as "John Doe" testified to the 1952 New York State Crime Commission (NYSCC) that he paid the hiring foreman two dollars per week and "once in a while on Fridays — buy him a pint of whiskey." It was "more than I could afford," the man admitted, "but in order to keep the job and support my family you got to do those things."

Kickbacks were also paid through so-called "kickback clubs." Situated in apartments, saloons, barbershops, or other



The slingload, opposite page, which enabled longshoremen to handle extremely heavy loads, was one of the abuses that catalyzed the longshoremen into the tumultuous strike of 1948.



Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Collection

Attempts to organize independent rank-and-filers within the ILA, was met with violence. In this 1940 photograph from the *Brooklyn Eagle*, organizer Peter Mazzie, age 23, displays a head wound inflicted by a chair-wielding goon during an organizing meeting. Among the rank-and-filers complaints was the survival in New York of the onerous shape-up system, which, as the cartoon, opposite, shows, had been abandoned in other U.S. ports.

"in order to keep the job and support your family you got to do those things"

storefronts, the clubs would gather cash from prospective workers and a list of names would be drawn up. Pat Wilson explained to the NYSCC how for years following World War Two, men would shape-up in his basement. In an astonishing admission, Wilson explained that his wife would pick up the identification checks or discs, and collect the wages from the payroll office. Although denying he or his wife were paid kickbacks, it was obvious that some form of payment was made. Thus, the shape-up was for the most part a sham. As one observer testified, "You will find that 99 out of a hundred times … names were submitted to that hiring boss before the men go to the shape-up." One longshoreman pointed out, "you pretend to shape-up … and the other fellows waiting there think they have a chance. But they don't."

The abuse of the shape-up could be tremendously lucrative. In one scam, hiring bosses, known as "phantoms" or "carried," collected wages under fictitious names. Thomas Maher, a stevedoring superintendent for the Huron Stevedoring Corporation, testified that Timmy O'Mara, a boss loader, regularly collected the wages of a Mr. Ross, totaling $25,000 for the period from 1943 to 1951. Maher explained that Huron Corporation continued the payments to O'Mara to guarantee "labor peace, he settled strikes."

Little wonder that gangsters were attracted to the New York waterfront. Thugs and members of organized crime fought each other for the distinction of becoming hiring bosses. Not only kickbacks were at stake, but also loan sharking, bookmaking, payroll padding, and contributions to charitable causes or testimonial dinners. Loan sharking was a common practice, forcing the men to borrow heavily in order to obtain a job. One longshoreman explained what it meant to turn down the offer of a loan from a loan shark: "If I refused, I didn't get the job." Even those workers fortunate enough to pay off the loan discovered that they could not obtain work again "unless they borrow some more and get into debt again."

Local union leaders used a more direct method for obtaining cash; they demanded contributions for testimonial dinners or to aid a sick worker. The longshoremen felt obliged to buy the five-dollar tickets or kick in the odd dollar or two to "help" a fellow worker. In some cases up to 15,000 tickets would be "sold" even though the hall would hold only one hundred people. Obviously, the longshoremen were not expected to attend the "dance." When propositioned for a cash contribution the man who refused "might find he couldn't get work, or he might get kicked around. The man soon gets the idea; he doesn't refuse more than once."

The criminal exploitation of the longshoremen could not have occurred without a critical alliance between the ILA and gangsters — an alliance that coincided with Joe Ryan's presidency of the ILA. Working as a longshoreman for a few years until injury forced him to stop, Ryan maneuvered his way through the ILA hierarchy becoming president in 1927. He cemented his control in 1942 by being elected international president for life. Just like his gangster allies throughout New York Port, Ryan gained financially from his union position. Through a complex web of semi-official organizations, testimonial dinners, and outright plundering of ILA funds, Ryan accumulated a wardrobe of expensive suits, golf-club memberships, automobiles, and plush vacations.

Ryan took money not just from the union and its members, but from employers as well. John William McGrath, president of McGrath Stevedoring Corporation, and Frank Nolan, president of Jarka Stevedoring Corporation, both testified that they paid Ryan cash every year. After intense questioning by the NYSCC, James C. Kennedy, president of Daniels & Kennedy Corporation, admitted that he paid Ryan $1,500 every year to ensure labor peace. Kennedy explained that once a year he visited Ryan's office and handed over the cash in an envelope. Incredibly, Kennedy reckoned that the only word the two had ever exchanged was "hello."

Ryan also welcomed convicted felons to the union and gave them jobs as organizers and, in some cases, presidents and secretaries of locals throughout the port. Ryan explained that the purpose of this hiring practice was to give the men a second change. But when pressed during a U.S. Senate inquiry, he admitted hiring convicts to fight Communist influence. "Some of those fellows with the bad criminal records were very handy out there when we had to do it the tough way."

As a result of these practices, theft on the docks was rampant and no cargo was safe. Even individual longshoremen were not immune from temptation in such a lax environment. Longshoreman Charles Strang described how one man attempted to steal silk: "The fellow … got quite a bit of silk wrapped right around his body and he had so much, and looked so fat that when the customs stopped him and asked him to bend, he couldn't bend at all." (laughter) Although watchmen stood guard throughout the port, they were intimidated into looking the other way. When one honest watchman stopped the theft of some cases of meat, the hiring foreman approached him with a dollar in his hand and, according to the watchman, said "he was making a collection flowers for me and that I was going to be throwed overboard."

Beyond numerous criminal schemes to fix hiring and extort money, the gangsters suppressed dissent through the maintenance of "order," something employers were not adverse to. As one company official revealed, "if I had the choice of hiring a tough ex-convict or a man without a criminal record, I am more inclined to take the ex-con. Know why? Because if he is in a boss job he'll keep the men in line and get the maximum work out of them. They'll be afraid of him." After Frank Nolan, president of the Jarka Stevedoring Corporation, was pressed to explain why the notorious Anthony Anastasia was hired by his company, Nolan replied, "He is resourceful and tireless on the job. He preserves discipline and good order on the part of the men."

This cruel system did not go unchallenged, but those longshoremen who confronted the atrocious conditions were quickly silenced. Before World War Two, Pete Panto, a Brooklyn longshoreman, organized a vibrant rank-and-file movement. Because of his activism he was murdered by Albert Anastasia, the reputed head of Murder Inc., and his body dumped in a lime pit in New Jersey. In 1945 the rank and file rebelled against ILA rule and embarked on an unofficial strike. Following that strike, two of the leaders, William E. Warren and Sal Barone, were viciously beaten, thrown out of the ILA, and warned to steer clear of the dock.

Following Pete Panto's murder, opposition to union leadership had to be accomplished in secret with the aid of outside supporters. Ironically, the two most prominent outside groups — the Communist Party of America and the Xavier Institute of Industrial Relations, run by labor priests from Fordham University — were philosophically opposed to one another.

The Xavier Institute attempted to attract longshoremen to its evening classes,

Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Collection

Shattered window at ILA rank-and-file headquarters gives mute testimony to the antagonism toward organizers, antagonism that eventually led to the crippling strike. Among those who tried to help strikers: labor priests like Father Philip Carey, below.

but organizing was dangerous and had to be done surreptitiously. Labor priest Father Philip Carey described one method — leaving leaflets in the men's toilet: "[We] pasted up the paper on the inside door of all the conveniences — which served a double purpose, it gave a man freedom from fear while he was reading and…, it gave him sufficient time to reflect on its contents."

Up until late 1948, the Xavier Institute played an observer role and it was the Communist party that took the lead in organizing rank-and-file opposition to the ILA. Sam Madell, a Communist Party member and organizer with the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), began a movement to obtain millions of dollars in back pay owed the longshoremen under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Back Pay Committees were formed in Brooklyn, Hoboken, and Baltimore. The back pay movement, according to William Glazier, Washington, D.C. representative of the ILWU, had become the "first mass anti-Ryan development" since the 1945 strike. This amalgam of rank-and-file activism and legal strategies would eventually culminate in the strike of 1948.

At the heart of the longshoremen's growing discontent lay differing interpretations of the Fair Labor Standards Act and how overtime payments were made. Since 1916, contracts between shippers and the ILA had established that a regular workday ran from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. It was agreed that anyone working outside those hours — and longshoremen typically worked in shifts as long as twelve to fourteen hours — should get time-and-a-half overtime pay. Attorneys for the back pay movement charged that men who worked through the night into the "regular" work day should get paid overtime. If, for example, a longshoreman worked to 8 a.m. he was paid time and a half, but if he continued working after 8 a.m., he was paid at the regular rate. Julius Bagley, one of the attorneys, compared it someone whose birthday falls on Christmas. That person, Bagley argued, expected not one present, but two. The longshoremen's attorneys argued, using the provisions of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act, that work during the evening shift was shift work, and longshoremen who labored overnight into the day shift should be paid overtime on top of the time-and-a-half payments.

The suits of the Back Pay Committees were challenged by the ILA and the shippers up to the U.S. Supreme Court. Ryan argued that the courts should not rule on contracts negotiated by the union, while shippers simply wanted to avoid paying overtime. The Supreme Court in October 1947 found for the Back Pay Committees. The ILA and shippers responded by attempting to persuade Congress to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act.

As the issue wended its way through the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, negotiations for a new contract between the ILA and the New York Shipping Association (NYSA) began in early June 1948. The rank and file watched closely; they knew from experience that Ryan and the district committee did not always represent the membership's best interests. They believed, with justification, that the issue was to be negotiated away. Indeed, the overtime question was a major stumbling block in the negotiations. Unable to reach a compromise, it appeared that a strike might follow. At this critical juncture, the federal government stepped in, motivated by the disruption a New York City dock strike would cause.

With its three hundred deep-sea piers, the Port of New York handled nearly as much cargo as all the other Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports combined. *Fortune* magazine calculated that the "entire port of Antwerp could be stuffed into Jersey City." As many as 200,000 New York City area workers were directly employed in the longshore industry, not counting insurance and financial companies. The size of the port and the immense amount of tonnage it handled guaranteed that the Federal government would take seriously any threat to its operation. Using the recently passed Taft–Hartley Act, President Harry Truman created a board of inquiry to investigate the dispute and recommend action to avoid labor conflict. Formed on August 17th, four days before the expiration of the contract, the board found that the overtime-on-overtime issue was the major stumbling block. As the board reported: "Because of the failure to arrive at an agreement, a cessation of work in this industry is imminent as of midnight, August 21, 1948." Again, using provisions of Taft–Hartley, Truman obtained an injunction barring the ILA from engaging in strike action for a period of eighty days (the order would expire on November 9th), and ordering the contending parties to resolve the dispute through collective bargaining. Truman also reconvened the board of inquiry to hold hearings and attempt to get the two parties to settle with assistance from conciliators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS).

Throughout September and October, a series of meetings was held with FMCS conciliators shuttling back and forth between the two sides. As before, the sticking point continued to be the overtime-on-overtime question. The employers also rejected the idea of a Welfare Fund for injured longshoremen. With the injunction expiring on November 9th, the parties by late October appeared ready to sign an agreement. The NYSA held fast and put forth their final offer on October 26th, agreeing to a ten-cents-per-hour increase and a vacation plan (with reduced hourly eligibility). The sticking point remained the overtime issue. The employers demanded that the agreement be placed under terms of Section 7 (B) (1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The pertinent section would give the employers an exemption from the overtime provisions of the act. The ILA, although unhappy that a welfare fund had been rejected by

Fordham University Archives

Strikers received support from two unlikely allies: the Communist party and the so-called "labor priests" from the Xavier Institute of Fordham University.

Corbis-Bettmann

"We are ordinary average working men with one big difference. We average a hell of a lot less than most workers."

the NYSA, nonetheless appeared to accept the offer. Complicating approval, however, was government insistence that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) supervise the balloting. Scheduled for November 6th and 7th, the balloting contributed to rank-and-file resistance to the agreement. The NLRB had declared those eligible to vote based upon those on the vacation list ending June 30, 1948. Only 12,664 New York and 2,500 Philadelphia and Boston longshoremen were on the list, thus excluding approximately 30,000 East Coast longshoremen. The ILA also used tried-and-tested tactics of distilling the potential vote by advertising the election late and holding a series of "quickie meetings" to forestall opposition. To further counter resistance to the contract, Ryan insisted that it was "a very fine agreement" and that only "disruptive elements" opposed it. The rank-and-file, unhappy with the agreement and incensed that the vote had been fixed, struck on November 10th, leaving in their wake an embarrassed leadership that had supported the agreement.

ILA leaders had seriously misjudged the temper of their members and their own power to control an angry rank-and-file. A dramatic shift in power had occurred, and the members no longer fatalistically accepted their lot. Years of oppressive hiring practices and corruption, increasing sling loads, and unemployment had taken their toll. The catalyst came from empowerment through the Back Pay Committees making the members less likely to blindly accept their leaders' promises and threats. Also antagonizing the longshoremen were the inequities imposed by the Federal government. The rank and file were hampered by having to take strike action through injunctive law, while their ILA leaders and the NYSA ignored the Supreme Court decision on overtime payments. As Alfred Corbett, a member of the New Jersey Back Pay Committee, later testified: "It is hard for us to understand why an injunction against labor … can be immediately enforced, whereas a United States Supreme Court ruling can be openly flaunted by the shipping interests." As the strike progressed, however, the rank-and-file quickly learned the precariousness of their position. Having little institutional power within the union, and no recognizable leaders, the men quickly fell victim to a leadership determined to retain its power.

Within days of the wildcat strike, the ILA bosses scrambled to regain control. Hampering their efforts was a local leader within their own ranks, Eugene Sampson, the powerful head of Local 791 in Manhattan. Sampson had long coveted Ryan's presidency, and the strike gave him the opportunity to openly challenge Ryan's iron rule. With the onset of the 1948 conflict, shippers "attributed [the crisis] to the longstanding feud between Mr. Ryan and the so-called pretender to the Ryan 'throne,' John J. (Eugene) Sampson." The conflict between the two leaders reached a fever pitch on the first day of the strike when Sampson and Ryan publicly clashed. It would be the last open outburst throughout the remainder of the strike.

Ryan embarked on a path to master the explosive situation by doing a complete about face and declared the strike legal for all East Coast ports, thus turning it into the first official longshore strike since 1919. To avoid further divisive public clashes with his critics and to nullify internal criticism, Ryan ordered that the ILA Press Committee could make statements only in the presence of six members of the eleven-man committee. With these tactics, Ryan hoped to stifle institutional opposition and keep members in the dark concerning negotiations.

One other, and perhaps more important, method for suppressing dissent was to avoid any concerted effort to establish picket lines and informational meetings. By not organizing a fighting strike organization, the members would be left isolated and uninformed of strike strategy. The men instead were left to meet in bars and on street corners throughout the port to discuss strike events. They were thus scattered and unable to formulate their own demands and organization.

All was not lost for the rank-and-file, however. Interviews with journalists could at least bring their grievances to the public's attention. A longshoreman identified only as "Bill, a giant of a man," highlighted the inequities of the shape-up: "I only got about four hours that week [just before the strike], even though I was up every morning at 6 for the goddam shapeup…" Another striker, characterized as a "grey-haired, rugged docker," blamed the conflict on the shape-up: "Its [sic] a dog-eat-dog affair without rhyme or reason except that it pads the pockets of the stevedores with profits." One aged "docker with five grandchildren" compared his existence to that of other workers: "…we are ordinary average workingmen with one big difference. We average a hell of a lot less than most workers."

Corbis-Bettmann

Liner passengers arriving in New York in the first days of the work stoppage had to jockey their own bags — among them, actress Helen Hayes, with her husband, Charles MacArthur, and son, Jamie.

Strategically supplementing the individual grievances were oppositional organizations, namely the Back Pay Committees. An alliance of committees was formed under the title of the Rank and File Committee and a meeting was planned for November 16th at Manhattan Center. Ryan, correctly sensing a threat to his tenuous control, declared that no longshoremen would be present. As for those "communists" attending, "our men will throw them in the river." Determined that the meeting would not go unchallenged, Ryan, with ILA goons and members of the AFL Seafarers Union, attempted to storm the building. Although able to leave leaflets declaring the meeting a communist plot "to seek control of the ILA and to sabotage the Marshall Plan," Ryan's forces were forced to beat a hasty retreat. It was a hollow victory, however. Throughout the remainder of the strike, the ILA leaders and the federal government would take center stage in the unfolding drama. The rank and file and their allies, excluded from critical involvement in the strike, were forced to stand on the sidelines as frustrated observers.

Government involvement in the strike was predicated, above all, on the serious effect of the stoppage on the greater economy, and in part on the exportation of Marshall Plan goods. The initial casualties were passengers who arrived in the port on the first day of the strike. Newspapers reported that celebrities like the actress Helen Hayes and others were forced to carry their own luggage. Railroads serving the port also placed embargoes on freight and in turn laid off an estimated 1,100 freight handlers by November 16th. Fifteen hundred tugboat men were idled by the stoppage, and numbers of freight forwarders and custom brokers joined the ranks of the unemployed. *The New York Times* reported on November 19th that "150,000 bags of outbound mail were piled up awaiting settlement of the strike." General cargo, including $130,000 worth of bananas and $500,000 of chestnuts languished in the holds of ships. Particularly annoying to the Federal government was the curtailment of Marshall Plan goods. An official of the Economic Cooperation Administration estimated that 20,000 tons of goods per day were backing up on East Coast docks. The standstill of Marshall Plan cargo forced Paul G. Hoffman, Economic Cooperation Administrator, to appeal to Ryan to release the cargo. Ryan responded that only "army supplies to garrison troops overseas" would be handled. Strike-bound ships numbered eighty-four in New York Port with a total of one hundred seventy-nine vessels on the Atlantic seaboard. The *Times* explained that the "unusually small" number of ships trapped in the Port of New York was because "an abnormal number of vessels were dispatched the day before the strike, in anticipation of trouble."

The action of the New York rank and file inspired their brethren in other ports. By November 13th the strike had spread to Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Norfolk, Virginia. Some of the men in those cities explained how they were influenced to form Back Pay Committees and voice their anger toward a union leadership they judged to be superfluous. Like their New York brothers, however, the strikers in other cities were kept on the sidelines by an ILA leadership that continued to hold a tight rein over policy and tactics.

The ILA, for example, ordered its Gulf Coast locals to continue working at Jacksonville, Florida; Mobile, Alabama; New Orleans; and Galveston, Texas. The reasoning behind the decision was to continue shipments for the Marshall Plan, in order to avoid a more aggressive government response. Shippers tried to turn the tactic to their advantage by sneaking goods into the country through these open ports. Ryan responded by threatening "ship companies that any more diversions of ships or cargoes will result in tying up the South Atlantic and East coast Gulf ports."

Ryan also had problems with the Canadian members of the ILA. Although not party to the agreement, sympathy action by Canadian dockers made for an effective strike. In the early stages of the strike, shipping companies had begun disembarking passengers at Halifax, Nova Scotia and transferring them to trains for New York City. Ryan responded by ordering ILA members in the port to boycott any ships that used Canadian ports to bypass East Coast docks.

With a critical blockade of cargo in place, the Federal government stepped up its efforts to settle the strike. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) had already dispatched its assistant director, William N. Margolis, to New York City to try to bring about an agreement. Margolis, like his regional counterparts, Commissioner Thomas Steutel and Regional Director Howard E. Durham, was unable to break the impasse between the ILA and the NYSA. At this juncture, on November 24th, Cyrus Ching, the FMCS Director, flew to New York from Washington. "We have no authority to make them get together," Ching told reporters, "but we want to give them a nudge."

Although lacking tangible power, Ching was the official representative of the Truman administration and intended to use every weapon at his disposal — including bluff. By November 26th, after a series of hectic meetings with the ILA and NYSA, an agreement seemed in sight. The ILA and NYSA refused to settle. At this point, Ching played a new card, threatening Joe Ryan and John V. Lyon, chairman of the NYSA, with government action. When Ryan and Lyon inquired what the government was going to do, Ching replied, "I'll tell you at four o'clock." Ching was bluffing. As explained later, "they didn't know what further weapons the Government had, and they didn't realize that the Government didn't have any."

Unsure of the threat posed by Ching, Lyon and Ryan hammered out an agreement giving the longshoremen a thirteen-cents-per-hour increase, one week of paid vacation after working eight hundred hours per year, two weeks' paid vacation after working 1,350 hours per year, and, crucially, a welfare fund. The agreement was sent to the membership for a vote. A majority of the locals accepted the agreement. In Brooklyn, however, rank-and-file resistance remained strong, and four locals voted down the agreement. But with the rest of the port's longshoremen and those in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston voting for acceptance, the men drifted back to work.

The outcome of the strike confirmed the rank and file's latent power to effect change, and revealed the potency of a workforce once perceived by its own leadership as crushed and of no consequence. Although government action did much to influence the outcome, the rank and file still held the vital power of withdrawing their labor. As the strike progressed, however, it affirmed their weakness (and that of their allies) in the face of union and government action that divorced them from decision making.

The Back Pay Committees remained in existence and continued to press its claims, although in late 1950 the U.S. Court for the Second District decided against the suits. The Communist Party suffered greatly from the decision. As Sam Madell explained, the issue "was the closest that I ever really came to accomplishing something [on the docks]." The Xavier Institute carried on its program of evening classes for dockers and pushing the state and Federal governments to reform the industry. It would take another wildcat strike in 1951, and a barrage of Crime Commission hearings, for the longshoremen to rid themselves of the humiliating shape-up system.

The 1948 strike, then, did set the scene for a move toward democratic control of the ILA and a more secure and safe work environment. Rank-and-file action was critical to this process of change, but without clear avenues of control within the ILA, such a movement would remain on the outside looking in.

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150,000 bags of outbound mail were piled up awaiting settlement of the strike.

Thirty Dollars from Little Becky

New York's Irish Famine Relief efforts, 1846-1847

"My little Becky … insisted on sending a gold piece $2½ as her contribution and not satisfied … she put up some of her playthings for sale at 12½ cents a ticket," proudly recorded Jacob Harvey, a leading member of New York City's Quaker community about his daughter's contribution to Irish Famine relief in March 1847. Her toys, he reported, brought in thirty dollars.

BY HARVEY STRUM

Harvey and his daughter, Becky, were part of a national response to the potato blight in Ireland, news of which first reached the United States during the winter of 1845-46. Fundraising began in Boston, New York, and a few other port cities, but it wasn't until the spring of 1847 that famine conditions caught the broad public's imagination, and Americans rallied en masse to the cause of the starving.

As bad as the news was from Ireland, Americans, distracted by concerns over the Mexican–American War and lulled into indifference by minimal news coverage, reacted slowly to the developing crisis. The earliest relief efforts were limited mostly to the Irish community and to Quakers like Jacob Harvey, who organized some of the first non-Irish relief efforts.

Despite publicity, meetings, and favorable editorials around the country, non-Irish contributions remained rather modest between November 1846 and early January 1847. Quaker efforts led to meetings in Baltimore and Philadelphia, but attempts to attract public attention outside of the Irish and Quaker communities failed, and only a couple of thousand dollars were raised. Where the crisis did get public attention, the response was tepid. In Boston, rivalry and distrust between Irish Catholics and Scots–Irish Protestants, division over the Mexican War, and anti-Irish nativism delayed action. Although Quaker and non-Irish newspaper editors supported famine relief it appears to have become identified in the public mind as primarily a cause of concern only for Irish–Americans.

The arrival of the packet *Hibernia* in mid-January 1847 in Boston, followed by the *Sarah Sands* two weeks later, brought grim reports of mass starvation in Ireland, and changed the American public's mood "from apathy to action." By early 1847, famine relief efforts spread outside the Quaker and Irish communities and New York City's political and business leaders, led by Myndert Van Schaick, organized an effective non-partisan and non-denominational relief effort.

The first large-scale public meeting to receive national attention appears to have taken place in New Orleans on February 4, 1847. Newspapers across the country reprinted details, which included a speech by Henry Clay, a former presidential candidate and Whig leader. On February 7th, Bishop John Fitzpatrick of Boston appealed to Boston's Catholics from his Sunday pulpit at Holy Cross Cathedral to redouble their efforts to help their fellow countrymen. Two days later, at a mass meeting in Washington, chaired by Vice-President George Dallas, attended by members of the House of Representatives, Senate, and Supreme Court, "and graced by the presence of many ladies," a call went out to Washington, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston, New Orleans, and New York to organize relief committees to collect contributions for Ireland and Scotland. The Washington meeting, in the words of one of the speakers, Congressman William B. Maclay of New York City, wanted "a voice to go out from this hall tonight with power to awaken the sympathies of the whole nation."

By publicly endorsing the famine-relief effort, the nation's major political leaders blessed a nationwide campaign of voluntary philanthropy and provided the catalyst to motivate local political, business, civic, and financial leaders. By early 1847 relief efforts were spreading outside the Quaker and Irish communities, and more than one hundred relief committees sprang up nationwide to raise funds and ship food and clothing to Ireland.

This did not, however, lead to the federal government granting direct aid. At the time of the national meeting in Washington, Congressman Washington Hunt, a Whig from Lockport, New York, proposed that $500,000 be allocated to purchase and ship foodstuffs to Ireland, but his bill died in committee. Two weeks later, on February 26, 1847, Senator John J. Crittenden, a Whig from Kentucky, introduced a similar bill in the Senate, but it ran into considerable opposition from Democrats who argued that it was unconstitutional to approve foreign relief aid. When the bill nevertheless passed the Senate and went to the House, it died in committee, ending the effort to provide direct government aid.

At the suggestion of Captain George DeKay of New Jersey and the Boston–Irish Relief Committee, and supported by petitions from the citizens of New York City, Congress approved a limited proposal in early March to allow two warships, the frigate *Macedonian* and sloop of war *Jamestown*, to carry relief supplies from the ports of New York and Boston, respectively, to Ireland and Scotland. The government's failure to provide direct aid made it appear, as historian Timothy Sarbaugh concluded, that Polk and Congress "failed the starving Irish" by contributing only "two war-torn vessels."

Meanwhile, following the meeting in Washington, members of the New York State Assembly and Senate met with residents of Albany at the state capitol and also held a separate joint meeting of both houses of the legislature to discuss the famine in Ireland. Governor John Young presided, and a number of prominent state politicians spoke in favor of famine relief. The legislators called upon "our constituents throughout the state" to follow the example of the citizens of Albany and make arrangements for collecting and transporting provisions and clothing to Ireland; the legislators hoped that the combined influence of the press, clergy, and public meetings would persuade New Yorkers to join this philanthropic effort.

A proposal in the state legislature to authorize public funds for famine relief failed, but the state legislators, like Washington politicians, encouraged voluntary citizen participation, and recommended that shipping companies on the canals, rivers, and railroads transport provisions destined for Ireland free of charge. State legislators contributed three hundred eighty-one dollars of their own money for famine relief.

Although New York City served as the chief port for the export of relief to Ireland, the Albany Irish Famine Relief Committee, created in February, emerged as the central committee of the state. It

sent shipments of food via New York City to Ireland and Scotland from upstate New York, and joined with legislators in appealing to all New Yorkers to make donations. This exerted further pressure on residents of New York City to redouble their efforts to aid the Irish and organize a second New York City relief committee to coordinate relief efforts, and to assume responsibility for shipments forwarded by the Albany Committee.

Helping Ireland became fashionable among socially prominent New Yorkers. Responding to appeals from Washington and Albany, a group of affluent New Yorkers, including Jacob Harvey, Myndert Van Schaick, Philip Hone, John Jay, Theodore Sedgwick, and Moses Grinnell, redoubled their efforts. Prior to the February 9th Washington meeting, and in response to the latest news from Ireland, meetings were called for January 27th and February 7th to solicit contributions from firms, merchants, and wealthy New Yorkers, with Van Schaick emerging as leader of the fundraising effort. In the weeks that followed, the disappointing response by Washington and Albany lawmakers spurred on Van Schaick and others to expand the scope of their actions.

On February 12th, another meeting was held at the Prime's Building on Wall Street with Van Schaick presiding. According to the diarist Philip Hone, it was "well attended by the right sort of folks," and part of "a great movement in behalf of the suffering people of Ireland." Those in attendance pledged $9,000. The meeting issued a call for New York's clergy to solicit donations, and drafted a public notice for a general meeting on Ireland at the Tabernacle on Broadway.

Other New Yorkers agreed to forego lavish dinners and send the money they saved to Ireland. According to Philip Hone, two of his friends dispensed "with two sumptuous dinners," worth three hundred sixty dollars, to furnish an additional fifty barrels of wheat flour for Ireland. The two men, Moses Grinnell and William Wetmore, soon joined Hone as members of the general standing committee of the New York Relief Committee, and actively participated in the Help Ireland movement.

Responding to the appeals in the press a large crowd consisting of a "respectable male audience" showed up at the Broadway Tabernacle in mid-February to hear speeches about the Irish crisis. Myndert Van Schaick, who presided, was elected chairman of the Irish Famine Relief Committee. By the end of the meeting over $20,000 had been pledged. Actually, most of the money had been raised by large donations in the forty-eight hours prior to the meeting. The gathering received widespread coverage in the New York press, and abbreviated accounts were reprinted in newspapers across the country.

Temporarily, New Yorkers set aside their class, religious, and ethnic differences to raise funds for Ireland and Scotland. As Philip Hone noted in his diary: "The Catholic Churches have given nobly, and every denomination of Christians has assisted liberally in the good work: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Romanists are all united as one congregation in the brotherhood of charity."

Sunday, February 27th, was set aside as a day to raise funds in churches. Thirteen Catholic churches in New York raised over $10,000 while Catholic congregations in Harlem, Brooklyn, and Williamsburgh raised $200, $2,353, and $278 respectively. At Church of the Nativity on Second Avenue, even poorly paid female domestics contributed four hundred dollars at one service even though their "wages are little more than sufficient to supply their own wants."

In addition to funds contributed by the Protestant denominations listed by Hone, contributions also came in from New York's German Lutheran, Dutch Reformed, Universalist, and Unitarian churches. The city's synagogues also joined the cause of Ireland. Shearith Israel on Crosby Street held a special meeting to solicit contributions and raised one hundred seventy dollars, and another synagogue, B'nai Jeshurun, also contributed. Non–Irish ethnic benevolent groups, such as the Germans and French Benevolent Society, pitched in as well.

Workingmen, as well as the prosperous merchants, gave what they could. The printers at the New York *Express*, clerks at the A.T. Stewart and Co., journeymen lithographers, workmen of Moses Baldwin, and workmen at G.B. Miller and Co., all donated. The Young Men's Movement in the city agreed to solicit donations and collect them at the Mercantile Library, and the Clinton Hall Association offered a room in Clinton Hall for a fundraiser for Ireland sponsored by the Young Men's Movement on February 26th. Even schoolgirls, like Jacob Harvey's daughter, Becky, or the girls at Charlotte Haven's school contributed all they could for famine relief.

The city's musical societies gave a concert to raise funds. A ball sponsored by the Independent Sons of Erin at Tammany Hall in March netted four hundred twenty dollars. The Christy Minstrels gave a benefit concert for Irish relief.

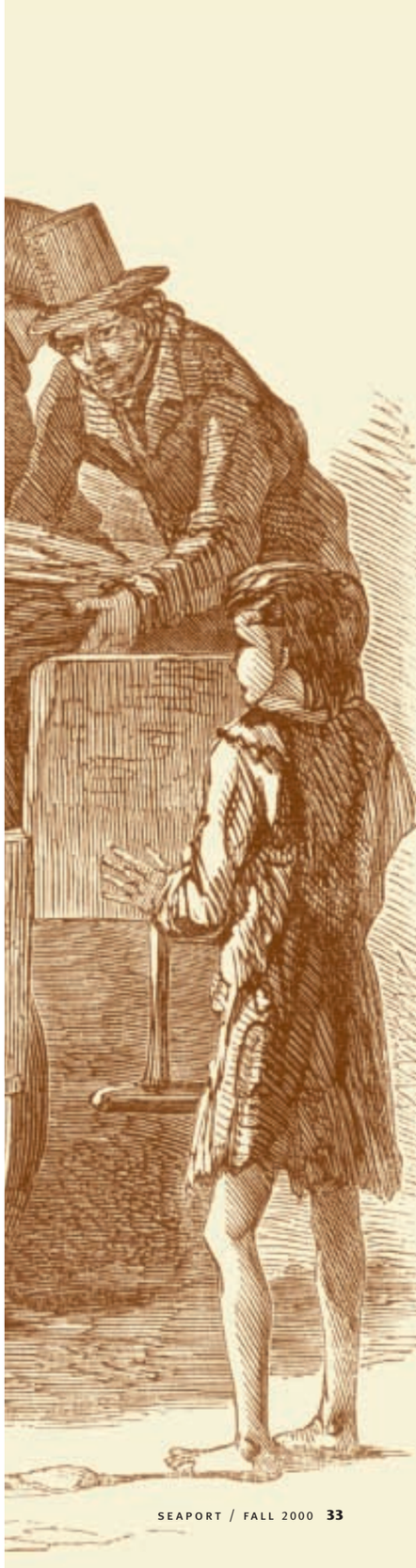
Instead of holding a St. Patrick's Day dinner, various Irish benevolent societies contributed the funds "to the relief of their suffering countrymen at home." Prominent New Yorkers, including Horace Greeley and Mayor Andrew Mickle, joined to sponsor a grand relief ball held at Castle Garden in February which raised $1,400, while others attended a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Tabernacle later in the month with the proceeds, two hundred sixty-four dollars, going to famine relief. In the spirit of ecumenism, Philip Hone chaired a fundraising lecture addressed by Bishop Hughes at the Tabernacle sponsored by the relief committee.

While most of the relief efforts in early 1847 in the United States were directed at raising funds for Ireland, a significant movement developed to contribute funds to Scotland, where famine also threatened the population. Public attention, which began to focus on the famine in Ireland in February 1847, soon shifted to include requests that part of the contributions go to relieve the distress in Scotland. Ethnic organizations, like the St. Andrew's Society, in Albany, New York City, and elsewhere, and the Caledonian Society organized relief efforts. Voluntary groups, like the Boston, Albany, and New York Irish Relief committees sent part of the funds they raised to Scotland and expanded their mandate to include famine relief in Scotland. In the mind of many Americans, famine relief for Scotland and Ireland merged. For some Protestant Americans, "Christian charity" appeared easier to tolerate if some of the relief aid went to Protestants in Scotland as well as Catholics in Ireland.

As with Irish relief, New York City was one of the first communities in the United States to get involved in Scottish relief. In mid-February 1847 the New York *Herald* recommended that a portion of the funds being raised for Ireland should be assigned to the distressed districts of Scotland, and urged the Scottish benevolent societies to act immediately to raise funds. "It is a matter of much surprise to us," the *Herald* concluded, that Scottish benevolent societies had not taken up the cause of Scotland, and suggested "something should be done at once." Across the East River, the *Brooklyn Eagle* made the same appeal: "We are sincerely anxious that Brooklyn should do something for the relief of Scotland, too."

Like aid for Ireland, aid for Scotland was a national effort. Bostonians sent the vessel *Morea* to Glasgow in April with relief supplies, and John Ross, Chief of the Cherokees in Tahlequah, in what is now Oklahoma, called a meeting in May to raise funds for Scotland, because, he explained, many of the Cherokee "are themselves, descended from Scottish ancestors." In the Midwest, the Caledonian Society in Cincinnati became the focus for Scottish relief. Scottish Relief Committees in Washington, Baltimore, Nashville and New Orleans and St. Andrew's Societies in Charleston, Savannah, Alexandria, and elsewhere raised funds from Scottish–Americans and others in the South.

While a great deal of fundraising originated in New York City, the port also served as an entrepot for aid efforts in other parts of the country. In the end, half the relief supplies sent from the United States, poured into the New York Irish Relief Committee, for shipment to Ireland and Scotland. Donations came from all over the country. For example, Tuscaloosa, Alabama sent three hundred fifty dollars, Pensacola, Florida donated three hundred twenty-five dollars, Knox County, Ohio sent ninety-nine dollars, Petersburgh, Virginia contributed over seven hundred dollars, Chicago donated seventeen hundred dollars. Even the



Detail from "The Dying Emigrant's Prayer," sheet music, New-York Historical Society

Choctaws and Cherokees gave to the starving Irish. The New York Committee used the donations to purchase foodstuffs for shipment to Ireland. Approximately fourteen vessels were chartered by the New York Committee between March and June 1847. The *Victor* was the first ship sent by the committee; she carried more than 5,700 barrels of cornmeal to the city of Dublin.

Until it dissolved in early 1848, the New York City committee continued to send provisions and clothing. Between February 1847 and February 1848, the committee received $171,374 in money and another $70,630 in provisions and clothing. New York's Quakers continued to send aid even after Harvey's death in 1848. The last known relief shipment, sent aboard the *Andrew Foster*, reached Dublin in June 1848.

One major consequence of the famine was a significant increase in poor Irish immigrants fleeing Ireland to New York, a diaspora that had a profound impact on the ethnic and religious mix in New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Albany, Troy, and many other American cities. By 1850, 26 percent of New York's population was Irish, and the 1855 state census recorded 28 percent of the city's residents came from Ireland. New York became the home of the largest Irish community in the United States. By 1860, 200,000 of the city's population of 800,000 came from Ireland, and by 1880 one-third of New Yorkers came from Ireland or were the children of Irish immigrants. In neighboring Brooklyn, 57,000 of the city's population of 205,000 came from the Emerald Isle in 1855, and by 1860 Brooklyn had the third largest Irish community in the United States.

The famine in Ireland and Scotland led to an outpouring of philanthropy in New York and the nation. The mass flight of the Irish, created by the potato blight, fundamentally altered the ethnic and religious mix of what became the most Irish city in the nation and the Port of New York — both as the center of relief for the starving in Ireland and a destination for those who could escape the famine — became a symbol of hope for those yearning for a better life.

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THE JEANIE JOHNSTON PROJECT

BY JOHN WEBB

First, what catches the eye is the bright yellow of a shipwright's hard hat as he attends a seam between planks. What follows is a sense of claustrophobia and foreboding as the walls seem to close in within the shadowy confines of the hollow hull. And to further descend the scaffolding into the inner sanctum of the *Jeanie Johnston* — that famous nineteenth-century Irish famine ship that has been re-created in a shipyard in southwestern Ireland — is to imagine the depths of uncertainty and fear that must have accompanied hordes of emigrants — many of them young, single women — on their journey to America.

But what they were fleeing — the darkness that lay over Ireland in those days — must have seemed far more frightening. For while more than a million perished in the infamous Irish potato famine, with thousands fleeing the poverty-stricken island nation, the *Jeanie Johnston* stood as a beacon of hope.

Indeed, the tall ship ultimately ferried hundreds to new lives, providing a vital connection between the histories of Ireland and North America. It is in recognition of that role that the newly re-created *Jeanie Johnston* — built at Blennerville, near Tralee in County Kerry — embarks in August of 2000 on a nine-month Millennium Voyage™ to twenty U.S. seaports including New York's South Street. Upon its return to Ireland the *Jeanie Johnston* will serve as Ireland's flagship.

But one hundred fifty years ago, the *Jeanie Johnston* was more than a trademarked symbol of international cooperation. From 1848 to 1855, the ship carried destitute emigrants to Baltimore, New York, and Quebec. Return trips also aided famine relief, which New Yorkers and other North American cities and communities had made a cause celebre in those days. In the winter of 1848, the *Jeanie Johnston* carried desperately needed food supplies from New York to Tralee. "The famine situation in Tralee at that time was very bad," says John Griffin, secretary and chief executive officer of the *Jeanie Johnston* project. "The west of Ireland fared worst, and the New York aid must have been a godsend for the people of Tralee during the winter of 1848-49."

With its crew of seventeen from all over Ireland, Britain, the U.S., and Canada and a passenger capacity of two hundred, hailing mostly from counties Kerry, Cork and Limerick, the original *Jeanie Johnston* sailed under the leadership of Capt. James Attridge, of Castletownsend in Cork. Unlike many of those so-called coffin ships, the *Jeanie Johnston* employed a doctor who even delivered a baby on the ship's maiden voyage from Tralee.

On the passenger lists were poor and middle-class farmers and tradesmen seeking refuge from a deteriorating nation, tenants of greedy landlords who wanted to clear their property, and many single women, including some who worked as crew to pay their fare. Despite their unpromising circumstances, many passengers went on to not only survive but to thrive in New York and throughout the U.S. and Canada. Records show, for example, that nineteen-year-old gardener Patrick Kearney left Tralee in March of 1849 and became a Hartford, Connecticut laborer the next year. By 1860, he was married with five children and had become a landowner with an estate valued at $1,500 and a laborer of his own.

The original three-masted bark that carried these passengers was built in Quebec in 1847 by Canadian shipbuilder John Munn. The 150-foot-long vessel weighed approximately 408 tons and was constructed of copper-fastened oak and pine. Purchased shortly after it was built by Tralee's Nicholas Donovan, owner of Donovan and Sons timber importers, the original *Jeanie Johnston* was sold in 1856 and went down in 1858, overloaded and waterlogged. All aboard escaped safely, thus preserving the *Jeanie Johnston*'s perfect record as a safe vessel.

Designers want that perfect record to go unchallenged this time around, and recreating the vessel — with an eye to seaworthiness by twenty-first-century standards — has been an enormous undertaking. Not only did a shipyard have to be built at Blennerville, near Tralee, but a shipbuilder familiar with nineteenth-century vessels also had to be found. Indeed, when master shipbuilder Michael O'Boyle, of Killybegs in County Donegal, saw an ad for such a position in the *Irish Skipper*, he told the *Irish Times*, "I wonder do those people know what they're getting into." He took the job, and was immediately faced with the problem of finding oak trees sufficiently old to produce the forty- to fifty-foot planks for the ribs of the ship. (Although the original *Jeanie Johnston* was constructed of Quebec oak and Oregon pine, the replica relied on oak from private forests throughout Ireland.)

"The main difficulty has been to respect the historicity of the vessel while complying with the most modern international marine regulations," says Griffin. "The reborn *Jeanie Johnston* will be classed a Class A1 Passenger vessel with all that entails." The craft now under construction will be expected to comply with International Maritime Regulations and is fitted out with modern communications, navigation, and lifesaving equipment, as well as twin diesel Caterpillar engines. And while the original *Jeanie Johnston* carried a full complement of two hundred passengers and seventeen crew, the reborn version may carry only forty total: ten professional crew, eighteen volunteer crew. and twelve fee-paying passengers.

The replica, designed by Fred Walker, former chief naval architect at England's Greenwich Maritime Museum, is based on descriptions and surveys of the original ship that have survived at Greenwich. The shipbuilders have emphasized authenticity by employing nineteenth-century-type materials and techniques to construct the vessel. Although some power tools are being used, so are traditional shipwright's tools such as the hand-wielded adze, an ax-like implement with a curved blade used for dressing wood.

If the project is linking today's shipbuilding techniques with those of another century, it is forging other connections, as well. Even in dry dock, the new *Jeanie Johnston* was strengthening ties between Ireland and the U.S., where friends of Ireland, businesses, corporations, and state agencies such as the European Union and the Irish Government have cooperated in raising funds for the $6.5 million project.

The not-for-profit venture, with revenues being invested in the ship and training programs for unemployed youth, is getting enormous support from grassroots Irish American groups, especially the Ancient Order of Hibernians of America. The major Irish sponsor is the Irish-American pharmaceutical firm Elan Corp.

But perhaps the greatest bonds were cemented on the Tralee scaffolding among more than two hundred young people from all over Ireland — North and South America, and Canada. "A very important aspect of the project is the North-South dimension whereby young people from Unionist and National communities in Northern Ireland are working alongside young people from the South on building the ship," says Griffin. Progressive Unionist Party leader David Ervine has described the *Jeanie Johnston* as "the ship of peace." And Northern Ireland politician and Nobel Peace Prize winner John Hume, described the *Jeanie Johnston* project as "a powerful example of North–South cooperation."

And together, those teams of young people are learning cooperation and tolerance as they ply centuries-old trades that could be lost if not for programs like this. "It harnesses the past while equipping people for the future with a splendid training experience," says Hume. "Not only will it cross a border and involve people from different ends of the country, but it will cross communal divides, skill divisions, generation gaps, different sectors, and eventually the Atlantic."

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The replica *Jeanie Johnston* under construction in Blennerville (this page) and a nineteenth-century poster advertising passage on the original ship (opposite).

All photos courtesy the Jeanie Johnston project

The Story of India House

by Margaret Stocker

India House presides over Hanover Square in lower Manhattan, looking more like an Italian palazzo than a New York City landmark. The pinkish sandstone building, rising to only four stories, embodies classical proportions and decoration, while defying real estate market imperatives to build to the sky.

For the last eighty-six years this nineteenth-century structure, described by the New York City Landmarks Commission as "an example of a large, freestanding symmetrical building, [with] few to equal it in architectural excellence in the city," has housed India House, a private luncheon club, founded in 1914 for the "encouragement and perpetuation of American foreign trade traditions."

India House was inspired by European enterprises, such as the East and West India Companies, established in the seventeenth century to develop sea trade with the East Indies (China, India, and Indonesia), the West Indies, and the Americas. The founders of India House saw themselves as the twentieth-century equivalents of the British, Dutch, French, and Portuguese merchants, captains, navigators, and ship builders — the power brokers of their day — who opened up distant markets and colonized the New World in partnership with their governments.

At the time of the club's founding, maritime commerce — the engine of New York's rise to commercial and cultural greatness — still defined international trade. The war in Europe, and the Russo–Japanese war required the commitment of American business working closely with government to forge alliances and arrange loans. In May of 1914, an American businessman and a diplomat resolved to strengthen the ties between foreign trade and United States foreign policy. James A. Farrell, Sr., then president of United States Steel Corporation and later namesake of the Farrell Shipping Lines, and Willard Straight, who had been appointed United States Consul General to Manchuria by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, hosted a dinner at the posh Metropolitan Club. They invited thirty-nine representatives of firms involved in foreign trade, who all agreed to join a club to promote their mutual interests in maritime trade. Private clubs then, as now, were pleasant retreats where the captains of industry could share a meal and post-prandial drinks while cementing personal and professional relationships.

Presidents of the Lackawanna Steel Company, Dollar Steamship Company, W.R. Grace Shipping, Chase National Bank, and United States Rubber all became governors of India House and remained active for its first two decades. The club's charter stated that its goal was to "create in this country a relation between the bankers and the promoters of foreign enterprises that would make it possible to handle foreign undertakings as they had long been handled in London." As the coordinated efforts of commerce and crown of the British East India Company had made England a world power, so India House would bring together commercial and political decisionmakers in New York on the brink of World War One.

Willard Straight brought Morgan Bank associates into membership and arranged for the National Foreign Trade Council to make India House its headquarters. Through acquaintance with Straight, the governor of the Philippine Islands and the former Minister to Japan joined the club. Another member, William W. Rockhill, had been Secretary of the Legation at Peking in 1884, Assistant Secretary of State in 1896, and an advisor to the Chinese Government.

Hanover Building, 1852, Hanover Square, N.Y. Colored lithograph by J.P. Newell. Published by J.H. Bufford, Boston. At the time this print was made, the building was the headquarters of the Hanover Bank and Insurance Company.

All artwork from the India House Collections, courtesy of India House

World-War-One–era cartoon reflects the club founders' mission of working more closely with government on foreign trade issues.

Rockhill and Straight played key roles in both the government and private sectors in promoting American bank loans for railroad and road construction in China. Some critics saw the "Open Door to China" policy, which they lobbied for, as self-serving for big business; others argued that by helping China to industrialize, the United States was saving the Chinese from possible domination by the Russians or Japanese. In the end, American loans did not materialize and Manchuria was eventually overrun by Russia in the north and Japan in the south.

The founders of India House clearly saw themselves as heirs to the great tradition of maritime commerce in New York City and selected their new club's location accordingly. Aside from its proximity to the financial houses of Wall Street and the piers of the Hudson and East Rivers, India House founders chose One Hanover Square, in part, because its site had been a center of commerce since 1624 when the Dutch West India Company established the trading post called New Amsterdam. "India House is old in the traditions ... of pioneers who once lived around Hanover Square, and who laid so well in their day the foundations on which this greater New York has been raised," said James A. Farrell, Sr. in his foreword to the 1935 catalogue of the India House marine collection.

One Hanover Square, situated between Pearl and Stone streets, was originally part of a land grant from the Dutch West India Company; Abraham Martens Clock, miller and carpenter, built the first recorded house on the site in 1660. By the close of the American Revolution, Hanover Square was rimmed by shipping firms and related businesses. An 1852 lithograph shows One Hanover Square as the Hanover Bank and Insurance Company, which financed and insured clipper ships embarking on their voyages to the Indies and beyond. The bank's safe was in the lobby for many years and is still in the club's offices. Between 1870 and 1886 the New York Cotton Exchange conducted business here until it, too, outgrew the facilities. W.R. Grace headquartered its shipping firm here prior to 1914, the year Willard Straight leased the building for India House, whose members purchased it in 1921. In 1965 the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission designated India House an historic landmark.

In homage to the great traditions represented by its building and its historically rich location, India House members over the years have filled their clubhouse with a fine collection of maritime art and artifacts, including one of the largest collections of paintings and prints of clipper ships in the world. Historical documents, such as the 1770 charter of the Marine Society of the City of New York, recall how deep-water ship captains gathered to share their charts and pool their resources. A reminder of the first war is the brass bell from the SS *Leviathan*, in the building's vestibule. The *Leviathan* started life in 1913 as the luxurious German ocean liner *Vaterland*. When the United States entered the war in 1917 the *Vaterland* was in New York Harbor. Seized, refitted, and renamed *Leviathan*, she became an American troopship which carried over 100,000 boys "over there" during the war. After the *Leviathan* was scrapped in 1938, James A. Farrell, Sr. presented the bell to the club along with numerous marine paintings, ship models, and manuscripts. Later, his son, James Jr., donated additional paintings and a large collection of maritime books.

We will never fully know how discussions over luncheon at India House in the club's early days changed history. The maritime historian, Frank O. Braynard, in his 1973 foreword to the second edition of *The Marine Collection at India House*, states that "England could not have survived [World War Two] without the armada of American–built, American–manned, American–operated merchant vessels ... managed by many of the outstanding members of India House."

It certainly is clear that the founders recognized the importance of documenting the history of maritime New York through the institution they established. Due to their foresight, India House will be maintained as an historic building and continue as a vibrant gathering place for today's leaders. In 1998, the interior of One Hanover Square underwent substantial restoration. Exterior work is scheduled to start soon. Members can still enjoy three-star lunches in the club rooms and now non-members may make reservations for dinner or catered events at Bayard's Restaurant in India House. And the maritime art collection, whose catalogue is being updated, will continue to attest to New York's and America's contribution — past, present, and future — to the evolving global economy.

Margaret Stocker is curator of the marine collection at India House.

Original figurehead of the ship *Glory of the Seas*, presented to India House by James A. Farrell.

USS *Monitor*: The Ship that Launched the Modern Navy

by Benjamin H. Trask

The innovative fighting ironclad, built in Brooklyn and lost off the North Carolina coast, launched not only the modern Navy, but a rich trove of books.

The USS *Monitor* may be the most recognized ship in U.S. naval history. In the second year of the Civil War, ironworkers at the Continental Works in Green Point, Brooklyn, hastily assembled the ironclad ship in about one hundred days. The *Monitor* was the brainchild of engineering genius John Ericsson. Her revolutionary low freeboard, armor-plating, and turreted guns, however, caused many detractors to dismiss the contraption as sheer folly. The ironclad was described not as a fighting craft but as "a cheesebox on a raft." The cause for all this clamoring and hammering was the much-anticipated appearance of the Confederate ironclad, CSS *Virginia* (ex-USS *Merrimack*, also popularly spelled *Merrimac*).

On March 8, 1862, the ironclad *Virginia* steamed from the navy yard at Portsmouth, Virginia to Hampton Roads at the mouth of the James River. The rebel ironclad confronted the Union blockading fleet. The *Virginia* dispatched two large Union wooden warships and forced the USS *Minnesota* to run aground. The following day, the *Virginia* returned to destroy the stranded frigate. Fortunately for the crew of the *Minnesota*, the *Monitor* arrived just in time to protect the grounded ship, dueling with *Virginia* at point-blank range. The watershed engagement was a draw.

The two antagonists never crossed paths again, but thousands of eyewitnesses knew that naval warfare had forever changed. Dramatically, the age of timbered sailing warships had passed. Although these two vessels were not the world's first ironclads, their monumental clash signaled a major shift away from the traditional wooden man-of-war. As for the pair, ironically, before the close of the year, both ships were lost. With the imminent fall of Norfolk to federal forces, the *Virginia*'s crew was compelled to scuttle their own ship. The *Monitor*, on the other hand, sank during a storm off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

Intense fascination with these two innovative ships has never waned. Abraham Lincoln visited the *Monitor* and praised her officers and crew, as did the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne. Herman Melville penned poems about the epic battle. Hundreds of speeches, booklets, articles, and editorials were offered by lesser-known participants, bystanders, and historians. They recalled their respective roles or debated other points of contention decades after the Civil War. In the years following the Second World War, adventurers instituted efforts to locate the wreck of the *Monitor* using ever more technical research and navigational methodology. In 1973, a research team located the wreck, and two years later the fabled remains became the first National Marine Sanctuary under the management of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Fueling this interest, beginning in the mid-1950s, a blizzard of related publications appeared. These works included biographies, novels, monographs, and government reports. A good example from this publication boom is U.S. Naval Academy professor Robert W. Daly's *How the "Merrimac" Won: The Strategic Story of the CSS "Virginia"* (Crowell, 1957). Daly's effort remains an intriguing study because he strongly asserted that the *Virginia* was the clear victor. Despite his Union sympathies, the author asserted, "The facts, however, simply piled up and up in overwhelming favor of the *Merrimac* and that was that."

In Cold-War–era fashion, Daly concluded that the *Virginia* "was tantamount to an ultimate weapon." The Confederate ironclad terrified the Union leaders, who assumed that Washington, D.C. could be destroyed if the *Virginia* could chug her way up the Potomac River. "The *Virginia* was unique among all the ironclads of the Civil War, because to her were attributed powers she did not possess." Daly also noted that the *Virginia* altered the grand strategy of Union General George B. McClellan's Peninsula Campaign to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond. The *Virginia* ultimately contributed to McClellan's defeat, and resulted in three more years of war. Since the appearance of Daly's work, no scholar has drawn the same clear-cut conclusions. Nonetheless, his arguments still have merit.

With the discovery of the *Monitor* wreck, William C. Davis wrote *Duel between the First Ironclads* (Doubleday and Co., 1975). This work remains the most popular study of the two famed ironclads. Written early in the career of this well-known Civil War historian, it has been reprinted by at least three presses. As the title suggests, Davis outlined the construction of the ships, the watershed battle, the ships' respective losses, and their intertwined legacy. Davis concluded his book with the discovery of the *Monitor* wreck. The author included standard footnotes and maps, but has not updated the history by tapping newly discovered primary sources, recent scholarly articles, or NOAA reports.

The best overall book on the *Monitor* and the Battle of Hampton Roads is Edward M. Miller's U.S.S. *Monitor: The Ship That Launched a Modern Navy* (Leeward Publications, 1978). Miller's work is rich in detail, very readable, and enhanced by well-selected drawings, portraits, and attractive, original sketches. Miller had a unique association with the *Monitor*. As a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, he participated in "Project Cheesebox." This undertaking was a complete published study on the *Monitor*, that included sections on her legacy, history, and test results in a simulated sinking. Later in his naval career, Miller served as the manager of NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Unfortunately, the book is difficult to find, and more than twenty years of additional research have been undertaken on the wreck site since this valuable history was printed.

James Tertius deKay's *Monitor: The Story of the Legendary Civil War Ironclad and the Man Whose Invention Changed the Course of History* (Walker and Company, 1997) is a very readable pocket-sized account of the battle as seen through the eyes of John Ericsson. DeKay's interest in the engineering aspects of the ironclad is apparent and not explored in other histories. The illustrations are the standard fare, but they are well positioned and enhance the story. The author provided a detailed index, and short bibliographic paragraphs serve as endnotes.

John V. Quarstein, director of the Virginia War Museum and noted student of Virginia's Peninsula Campaign, has authored one of the latest histories of the Battle of Hampton Roads. *The Battle of the Ironclads* (Tempus Publishing, 1999) is a straightforward narrative of the history of the *Virginia* and the *Monitor* from their respective innovative conceptions to their demise. Quarstein's work of one hundred twenty-nine pages includes more than one hundred fifty illustrations. Interestingly, a few of the portraits do not appear in other relevant studies. The maps, however, are poorly reproduced, and the text contains annoying minor errors. The book has no bibliography or citations. Judging from the quotations, however, the author examined much of the vast literature of published sources.

All of the ever-growing number of monographs written about the encounter between the two ironclads depends heavily on the personal correspondence of Paymaster William F. Keeler. Keeler's remarks, so extensive, colorful, and rich in detail, are too often quoted by historians as that of a representative officer in the Union navy during the war. Keeler was opinionated, class-conscious, and officious, but had a keen eye. Researchers can access the letters by examining *Aboard the USS Monitor, 1862: The Letters of Acting Paymaster William Frederick Keeler, U.S. Navy, to His Wife Anna* (U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1964) edited by Robert W. Daly. The original documents are at the Naval Academy.

Just published by The Mariners' Museum and Simon and Schuster is an extremely important work that will balance Keeler's correspondence and add greatly to the human drama of *Monitor*'s lore by publishing excerpts of the letters of crewmember George Spencer Geer. As a landsman from Troy, New York, Geer provides the enlisted man's perspective of life onboard the *Monitor*. Edited by William Marvel, the work is entitled *The Monitor Chronicles: One Sailor's Account. Today's Campaign to Recover the Civil War Wreck*. Geer's detailed musings, usually addressed to his wife, Martha, reveal how the ironclad's multi-ethnic crew interacted, the importance the crew placed on rations, the living conditions on the ironclad, and the social differences between seamen and officers. Geer also elaborated on the fame associated with being one of the *Monitor* boys. Because of the great attention focused on the battle in the newspapers, Geer elected not recount in detail his involvement in the fight. Geer did, however, provide wonderful insight into a survivor's feelings concerning the sinking of the vessel and the loss of his fellow crewmembers. Following the disaster Geer confided to his wife that "… I could not tell you how often you and the children were on my mind that awfull night. In fact, I could think of nothing else but how would you get along if I was drowned."

These recently published monographs indicate that the public's attraction to the saga of the *Monitor* and *Virginia* remains strong. As NOAA expeditions continue to recover small artifacts and major sections of the *Monitor* wreck, unexplored facets of the shipboard life and the history of naval technology will be revealed. In 1998, NOAA and U.S. Navy divers retrieved the *Monitor*'s propeller which will be one of the symbolic cornerstones of The Mariners' Museum's future Monitor Center. What will be recovered next — the engine, the turret, or one of a pair of massive Dahlgren guns? Watch as the history of this legendary ship unfolds.

Benjamin H. Trask is an associate curator at The Mariners' Museum, a contributing editor to Seaport *magazine, and a regular contributor to the newsletter* Cheesebox, *the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary's activities report. He has also compiled for NOAA an extensive bibliography of published sources on the two ironclads titled* The Anvil Din.

***Monitor* crewmembers on the deck of the "cheesebox on a raft," and a rendering of the fabled clash of the *Monitor* and the CSS *Virginia* (ex-USS *Merrimac*)**

The Mariners' Museum

Waterfront Lawyer

An interview with Jim Longhi by Amy Danielian

In his book, Woody, Cisco & Me, *Jim Longhi tells the story of his friendship with the balladeer and activist, Woody Guthrie, and folksinger Cisco Houston. After they served together as merchant marines in World War Two, Longhi returned to his native New York and became a lawyer and activist on the waterfront. He was interviewed for* Seaport *by Amy Danielian about his postwar experiences as an attorney for the rank-and-file longshoremen and political action director for the National Maritime Union (NMU).*

Amy: *Tell us about the NMU, the National Maritime Union.*
Jim: Being a sailor, a seaman, was the dirtiest job. Life on the ship was hellish. I mean, the guys had no bunks prior to the NMU. You slept on the deck, and the food was miserable. There were two sets of cooking — one for the officers and one for the men; it was slop. It was a miserable existence.

What did the NMU do? We changed all that. The origins of the NMU? That grew out of the Depression and the whole Franklin D. Roosevelt New Deal, the CIO, the left wing. I was part of it. Although I was not a member of the Merchant Marine, I was a seaman and union member during the war. After the war, I became the NMU's political action director.

A: *Tell me about International Longshoreman's Association.*
J: The waterfront was a feudal system. In order to get a job, the men had to "shape up." Well you remember a movie called *On The Waterfront*? So you know about the "shape up." (See story, page 20) The workers meet in the morning, about six o'clock, and the boss picks those he wants, and the rest go home. And at the end of the work day, you're fired. And the next day, same thing. Who got hired? The guys that paid the two-dollar kickback. If you didn't pay the kickback, you didn't get hired.

It he underworld controlled everything together with the leaders of the ILA; Joe Ryan and the rest, it was corrupt from top to bottom. You had a combination of the corrupt union leaders, the mobsters. They had this hold on the waterfront.

It wasn't until about 1945 when the movement, the guys, the lefties, whatever you want to call them, were able to organize. And there was one guy in particular, Pete Panto, twenty-seven-year-old guy, and he succeeded in calling meetings. We had 3,000 guys at St. Stephen's church — inside, outside. And of course, Pete was murdered. By the Mafia. He wouldn't "yes" to them.

If I had known then what I know now I wouldn't do it. But I became the spokesman for the rank-and-file longshoremen. Eventually, we organized, and threw out the bums, and vindicated Pete. How did it differ from the NMU? The NMU was everything that the ILA was not: a democratic, fighting organization… Fighting for the men; no gangsters ruling us.

A: *Tell us, you were the model for the narrator character in* A View From The Bridge. *Let's hear more about that.*
J: During the struggle I was a spokesman. I was young, a lawyer, Italian–American, I speak fairly well and so on. And I was stupid enough, again to do the blah blah blah... heroic thing. If I knew now… well I wouldn't do it again. We lost three guys, three men killed.

People came to help us from all walks of life: ministers, doctors, teachers, movie stars. Bette Davis, John Garfield, Frank Sinatra. One guy, a slim, tall guy with a worker's shirt on, he came and he said, "What can I do to help? My name is Arthur Miller." I said, Jeez, Arthur Miller, you wrote the book…. What you can do is make a movie. Put the spotlight on us and keep the rats away. And so, Arthur and I did the first draft for a movie; it essentially was based on the life and death of Pete Panto and the struggle.

[Elia] Kazan and Miller were supposed to do it. Kazan was a great director, and interestingly enough they wanted me to play the lead. Can you imagine? What a crazy world. But then Miller and Kazan sold the movie to Columbia. They had to submit for editing. The FBI insisted on changing the whole political character, that the left wing were the rats. Kazan agreed to the changes, but Arthur refused. So Kazan hired Bud Schulberg as writer and made *On the Waterfront* which is a perversion of everything we stood for.

A: *And* View from the Bridge?
J: In the course of my life with Miller and *On the Waterfront*, Eddie came to me one day — a longshoreman, a wonderful guy. He tells me he's gonna kill Rodolfo. I asked him, "Why you gonna kill Rodolfo?"

"Mr. Longhi, please take care of my family, I'm gonna kill this son of a bitch because has betrayed my niece."

And Eddie tells me this story; that Rodolfo's an illegal immigrant and wants to marry Eddie's niece, he has to justify his name, he doesn't love her, on top of which, the guy is gay. Anyway, out of this I realized this man Eddie was in love with his niece, it's this Greek tragedy.

I tell Arthur Miller the story, and I said what an opera this'd make. And Artie wrote about this experience that I'm talking about and he called it *A View From The Bridge*. And I'm the narrator that tells the whole thing, and that's how that came about. It became, you know a world hit, and oddly enough it has recently been turned into an opera.

A: *What was the port like in the 1940s?*
J: Oh my God! Hundreds of ships, and movement and noise, and *smell*! Above all the smells, of spices. The waterfront was magical. Today it's dead. There are no passenger ships to speak of, the longshoremen don't have to unload the ships as they used to. Everything is put into containers now, and the container ships are great, big ones, and the port is too shallow. And it's all moved to Newark, to Jersey City. Voila!

Jim Longhi, left, in Sicily in 1948 with (l to r) grandmother of Brooklyn pal Mike Salas, Cisco Houston, and Woody Guthrie.

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