Pictorial Report

OF

THE AMERICAN
SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY
FOREWORD

We do not pretend to know just what kind of a world this is going to be when the Second World War is over.

However, whether it is the kind of a brave new world which anyone may imagine, or of some other sort, we are confident of three things:

1. That education will still be important and necessary.

2. That there will be slack to be taken up by this national Society in efforts which may be made to serve merchant seamen, and

3. That our impartial cooperation will be helpful to many who may engage in this work.

As these three items make up the foundation upon which our efforts to improve the social and moral condition of seamen has always rested, we feel we can view the future, no matter what it may hold, with faith and trust that God's blessings and favors will continue toward us as they have done in the past.

ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT

Progress in every phase of the maritime industry during this war has been nothing short of phenomenal. The general public's interest particularly in merchant seamen and the solicitude of the government and the public for their welfare has reached unprecedented heights.

In welcoming this outpouring of well-deserved interest, we are prone to disregard anything which might detract from our rejoicing that seamen are receiving the recognition they so richly deserve.

During this past fiscal year this national Society also has made notable progress. This story can best be told in pictures with only enough text to explain them.

What cannot, however, be told adequately by pictures or even in words is the devotion and help of our staff of workers, without whose assistance our varied and useful service to seamen would not have been possible.

Throughout the year our good friends have given us splendid support in our undertakings. Because of this we are entering upon a new year stronger and better equipped to carry on. With their continued help we will be able to augment all our work and progress as never before.
LIBRARY FOR SEAMEN

This Society maintains and operates its Library for Seamen in the Seamen's House, Y.M.C.A., at 550 West 20th Street, New York City.

For twelve hours every week day, most holidays included, and from 2 to 10 P. M. on Sunday, this Library serves seamen.

Here they find the latest and best books, technical, reference, fiction and non-fiction, a librarian eager to help with a problem or just listen. Every seaman discovers that this library is just as homey and comfortable as shown by the picture on the right-hand page—including the flowers which are always there.

During the major portion of the past fiscal year, the Coast Guard occupied most of the accommodations at Seamen's House. These men and boys who came from almost every State in the Union made intensive use of this library while they were there. This in part accounts for the fact that the attendance was more than 20,000 during the year. However, merchant seamen still made as liberal use of the library as ever.

From about 6 until 10 o'clock each week day evening, and from 2 until 10 P. M. on Sunday, our Information Service is continued from this Library.

At Christmas and for an indefinite period thereafter, suitably inscribed books chosen by the men themselves were distributed to patrons of the Library.

Among the features of the Library for Seamen is a most unique file of clippings which contains very carefully selected material culled from the New York Times, Herald-Tribune, Christian Science Monitor, National Geographic Magazine, Collier's, Saturday Evening Post, Fortune and P. M. These clippings not only include articles with reference to the men in our merchant marine in World War II, but also illustrations and maps particularly from the Times and P. M. The period covered by this clipping file begins March, 1941, and includes practically everything which would be of interest to merchant seamen and bearing upon their lives and careers. Of course, shipbuilding and the shipping trade are included, as are Adult Education, the activities of the Coast Guard and Navy, casualty lists and honors to merchant seamen.

Every relationship of the merchant seamen with the rest of the general public is covered by clippings in this file. A cut showing a portion of it appears at the top of another page.
LIBRARY FOR SEAMEN
On the Brooklyn Waterfront
Maintained and Operated by The American Seamen’s Friend Society

The big sprawling Port of New York comprises as an important element the long waterfront on the so-called East River and lower bay. Here near Erie Basin, the Brooklyn-Queens Y.M.C.A. maintains the Bethelship “Y,” for merchant seamen, and here, too, this Society has extended its library service for the benefit of the men of the merchant marine. The same liberal policies are in force here, but all under the same professional standards as are carried out at all times by this Society.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES FOR MEN AT SEA

The task of supplying books and other reading matter for merchant seamen aboard ships was undertaken very early in this Society’s history. As everyone is well aware, many changes have taken place since this work was established in the early part of the last century. During the past year we have greatly expanded our facilities for supplying the men of the merchant marine with good books and magazines. As we are now equipped with two trucks, one used particularly for pick-up work and the other for delivery of books and magazines to the ships, we have been able to make our service even more extensive and efficient than ever before.

We are very particularly indebted to the American Women’s Voluntary Services, to the Special Committee of the United Service Organizations, Inc., the Civilian Defense Volunteer Office, the Victory Book Drive sponsored by the American Library Association, and a host of other friends without whose thoughtfulness and active aid we would have been unable to supply the thousands of books and packages of magazines which have gone out to merchant seamen aboard ships in the Port of New York and elsewhere.

During the year we have been able to distribute an ever-increasing volume of both books and magazines plus hundreds of knitted articles, ditty bags, boxes of useful articles, games, cards and athletic goods. Of these the vast majority have been placed on ships flying the American flag; British, Panamanian, Dutch and Norwegian boats have also been served.

Thanks to our increased facilities and the help of our many good friends our current distribution of books alone is at the rate of about 4,000 packages or 100,000 books per year.
SELECTING AND PACKING BOOKS AND MAGAZINES FOR SEAMEN AT THE SOCIETY'S HEADQUARTERS
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS LIBRARY THE WISHES, TASTES, AND IDEAS OF ACTIVE MERCHANT SEAMEN HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONSIDERED. ALL CURRENTLY POPULAR AND WORTHWHILE FICTION AND NON-FICTION BOOKS ARE ADDED TO OUR COLLECTION AS SOON AS THEY ARE AVAILABLE.

THE BOOKCASE CONTAINING THE TECHNICAL BOOKS IS NOT SHOWN IN THE PICTURE, BUT THE WORKS IN THIS COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTION ARE CAREFULLY INDEXED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD LIBRARY PRACTICE. A CUT OF THIS FILE IS SHOWN AT THE LEFT OF THE NEXT PAGE. TWO SHELVES OF THE TECHNICAL BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY ARE ALSO SHOWN AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT PAGE.

SEAMEN MAKE LIBERAL USE OF THE TECHNICAL BOOKS FOR STUDY AND REFERENCE. ADDITIONS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING MADE SO THAT AT ALL TIMES THE BEST AND MOST USEFUL WORKS ON ALL SUBJECTS ARE AVAILABLE.
AT THE LEFT
THE CLIPPING FILE

AT THE RIGHT
CARD INDEX
TO THE
TECHNICAL FILE

TWO SHELVES
OF THE MANY
TECHNICAL BOOKS
IN THE
LIBRARY FOR SEAMEN
Anything like a complete account of the activities of the Society in connection with the collection and distribution of books, magazines and other articles for the benefit of the men of the merchant marine would require a small volume in itself, but some items at least are worthy of mention. All our books and magazines are carefully selected and segregated under the supervision of trained librarians who eliminate all women’s, children’s and other books unsuitable for merchant seamen. These books, however, are not discarded, but turned over to those who can make use of them, such as the New York Public Library, Sisters of the Good Shepherd, Florence Crittenton League, Greenwich House and others.

During the year we have supplied over 15,000 magazines to the Army Base, foot of 58th Street, in Brooklyn, and more than 10,000 magazines to the British War Relief Society.

At the Christmas Season, with the help of the American Women’s Voluntary Services, we were able to distribute hundreds of ditty bags and Christmas boxes, all of which were supplemented by the distribution of canvas toilet belts which we ourselves purchased. This distribution was continued after the Christmas Season was over, as many of the men, of course, were not in port at that time.

A large proportion of the books and magazines we place on board ships are in response to direct requests.
BOY SCOUTS SORTING MAGAZINES

The boys of Scout Troop 307, which has its headquarters at the 23rd Street Y.M.C.A., have done their bit for the war effort by sorting and classifying the thousands of magazines which are sent to us by our good friends. Working after school hours these boys have given most valuable assistance and have shown definitely the value of their scout training.

TECHNICAL LOAN LIBRARIES

In many ports marine technical books are practically unobtainable even in public libraries or book stores. With this in mind we assembled a collection of the most essential technical books, relying largely upon the experience we have had in our own shore libraries, but also consulting competent authorities.

The books were placed in substantial cases provided with a good lock and sent to the Superintendent of the various seamen’s agencies in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Mobile and Seattle, with the understanding that each Superintendent was to treat the books as though they were his own property and loan them out to seamen stopping there for study or reference purposes.
INFORMATION SERVICE

Last summer rumors were rife of an impending shortage of rooms for merchant seamen in the Port of New York. To cope with this situation, we started a free telephone information service for the benefit of merchant seamen. To acquaint seamen with this we placed placards similar to the one shown on this page on all the piers in the Port of New York.

While this service was primarily concerned with getting rooms for seamen, we soon found these inquiries were only a minor part of the total. Most of the inquiries were of a quite different nature—seamen wanted to know where they could have the services of a dentist, chiropodist, an optician or a physician; where to get reduced railroad rates, theatre tickets; twenty-four-hour laundry service and seamen’s passports. Some wanted blood tests to get married within twenty-four hours, others wanted ration cards for shoes. Almost every conceivable sort of question has been presented to us by seamen, including, of course, those who wish to return to seafaring. Old-timed licensed men wanted to know about the new courses in navigation and Diesel engineering; a Mohammedan wanted to know of a place where he might eat curry and rice and pray as the Koran commands.

Inquiries came in a steady stream. We immediately started compiling a volume which is still growing and probably will never be a finished product. It contains information about almost everything a seaman might want to know.

FREE INFORMATION SERVICE

FOR ALL MERCHANT SEAMEN

9 A.M. TO 10 P.M. WEEKDAYS
2 P.M. TO 10 P.M. SUNDAY

Call GRamercy 7-8866

Ask us about anything you want to know

Rooms, Boarding Houses, Clubs for Officers, Seamen and Apprentices
Marine and other Hospitals, Clinics and all Health Services
Service Organizations

This service is operated and maintained for the benefit of all merchant seamen and their friends by

The American Seamen’s Friend Society
A national organization committed to all sailors and merchant seamen
Organized 1869
The Information Service has been used not only by seamen, but by the Traveler's Aid, the Community Service Organization, the Welfare Council of New York City, the Civilian Defense Volunteer Offices, the United Service Organizations and others, including most of the major service clubs. The service has been used by parents, wives, fiancees and friends of seamen, by lawyers who are drawing up wills or seeking missing clients, and by people who would give voluntary service.

"Ask us about anything you want to know." This all-embracing invitation has brought us a wide variety of queries, but we strive to answer every question, or at least direct the inquirer to the source where he can find the answer to his problem. The mounting number of calls testify to the value of this service to the seaman himself, his relatives, to the general public and institutions serving the men who go down to the sea in ships.
Sick crews can't deliver the goods.

A disease rate in the armed forces of sick crews was found maintaining good tone at the time of the last survey; only 35 were found ill using flagrant prostitution conditions. Yet this job is only begun. A big assignment awaits government and voluntary agencies, industry and labor on other lines of attack; the medical and educational.

The hazards of the merchant marine are not all flagrant prostitution conditions. The waterfront of the United States Army, the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the Coast Guard have changed because an enormous number of civilians have entered their training schools and drill. The traditions and the spirit of the merchant marine are quite different from those of a century ago.

A study was made of the Articles of Agreement signed by 1060 seamen who sailed on seventeen different vessels in 1937 and the same number of seamen who sailed on nineteen different vessels in 1943. A writer in a naval magazine recently stated that the seamen of today were quite different from those who sailed some years ago. The seamen of today have changed because of the tremendous number of civilians who have entered the merchant marine in recent years. The traditions and the spirit of the merchant marine are quite different from those of a century ago.

The material, mental, and spiritual welfare of merchant seamen has been an exclusive concern of scores of institutions. To attempt pictorially the services given at all agencies is beyond the limits of our space. But herewith are pictures of typical services rendered during periods of peace and war. Seamen have patronized these institutions for many years and probably will always.
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS, TEACHERS, AND
OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN THE
EDUCATIONAL, LIBRARY AND GENERAL
WORK OF THE SOCIETY DURING THE YEAR

Appleton, Margaret*  Lockwood, Mrs. W. W
Appo, Alice M.*  Lucas, Ann E.†
Beal, Florence  Lucas, Ruth A.†
Beaton, Mrs. Claire L.  Lyall, Gordon
Bendix, Dorothy*†  McDonald, Laura L.‡
Berlin, Mrs. M. L.  McElman, Mrs. Margaret H.
Bunney, Daniel J.  Mavi, Emmanuel
Croft, Leila  Messenger, Walter E.
Fitzgerald, Gertrude‡  Moscato, Charles
Harris, Philip S.  Parker, Elizabeth L.*
Healey, Robert M.  Payne, Laura
Healey, Ruth Ward  Pearse, Thomas C.
Heilman, Henrietta  Pollard, Peggy S.
Jorgensen, Mrs. Arthur†  Porth, Emil
Kelsey, Effie  Pratt, Charles A.
Kerkhoff, Mary  Quigley, Henrietta*
Kingaraad, Helen  Rehun, Leonard
Kubelle, Madeline G.  Sprague, Mrs. Ruth‡
Lawrie, Mrs. Edith M.  Steidler, George J.
Lemay, Harding  Strong, Mrs. Tracy†
Lent, Minnie B.  Turner, Caroline†
Leonard, Mary A.*  Webster, Ralph K.

West, Mary Emily,* Librarian

* Indicates professional librarian.
† Indicates volunteer or partly so.
‡ Member Special Libraries Association.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The service this Society has been enabled to perform during the past year for the benefit of seamen would not have been possible except with the much appreciated assistance of many individuals, firms, corporations and associations, secular and religious, which have contributed books, magazines, knitted goods and a vast variety of articles and services for the benefit of seamen.

Such outstanding assistance has been given by some that they should have special mention. These include:

AMERICAN WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES
UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.
Special Committee
EAST SIDE DEFENSE COUNCIL
Branch of Manhattan Civilian Defense
Volunteer Office
AMERICAN WOMEN'S HOSPITALS RESERVE CORPS
Manhattan Unit
VICTORY BOOK CAMPAIGN
NEW YORK BIBLE SOCIETY
AMERICAN MERCHANT MARINE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

At Christmas time and throughout the year we have received generous financial support from such a host of good friends it is impossible to acknowledge their individual donations here, but we want them to know how much we appreciate their help.
HOSPITAL AFTER-CARE

The seaman who, because of accident or disease, has had a protracted period of hospitalization is not always able to go back to sea upon being discharged. Sometimes visits to the clinic must still be made before he can hope to pass the ship's doctor, or he may need rest for some weeks.

The Marine Hospital cares for the seaman while he is a patient, but after his discharge the necessary funds to meet his needs must come from private sources. The Social Service Auxiliary is the good angel which supports the medical social worker. Each Auxiliary is a lay board of public spirited women who raise the money to defray the seaman's incidental expenses for his return visits to the hospital, his tobacco and other minor needs, but for his major needs of room, board and clothing and equipment for sailing, they need the cooperation of the seamen's agencies. The agencies, however, are always under pressure from their own seamen patrons who go broke. Despite their willingness it is impossible to take care of every seaman and carry him through his after-hospital disability period.

Our objective, therefore, in this, as in other fields, is to take up the slack. During the past year we have cooperated with the local seamen's agencies in ports of New York and elsewhere. This service is supplementary to the work of the agencies rather than a taking over of what they are doing.
The procedure is simple. In New York, for example: The social worker telephones that John Doe will need hospital after-care for a few weeks. It may develop that Mr. Doe has already been taken care of for three or four weeks at a seamen’s institute, but the seaman may need further care. In these cases we authorize the social worker to continue to aid the seaman at our expense at some agency for the required number of days or weeks. As we cooperate with all agencies, the seaman or the social worker may choose his own place, or that nearest the clinic to be visited. In some instances he is sent to the country, or he is given such special care he needs. In short, whatever seems best for the patient receives our approval.

Very few seamen helped by our Hospital After-Care program come to our office. We know the medical social workers personally, and, therefore, we can accept their word as to the seaman’s need and the place to which he should be sent for his best advantage. We do not desire that any man about to be discharged from a hospital should travel a single unnecessary mile.

We heartily thank the medical social workers and the seamen’s agencies for their intelligent and sympathetic cooperation with us in this service.

THE AMERICAN SEAMEN—A REVIEW

The illustration on the opposite page gives a hint of the contents of the last two issues of American Seamen—A Review.

The First Annual Report of this Society, issued in 1829, referred to the objectives of the Sailor’s Magazine, published by this Society for more than a hundred years, in the following words:

“A magazine therefore was thought of which should exert an influence on landsmen by diffusing information respecting the case of our seafaring brethren, the measures employed for their benefit, and the success of those exertions.”

The American Seamen—A Review, although not exactly a successor to this publication, has always had a similar objective, namely, “To acquaint Americans with the men of the merchant marine.”

The Review started as a semi-annual, but this year will become a quarterly as originally planned. The two issues published during the past fiscal year devoted a substantial number of pages to pictures, and it is planned to continue this method of presentation, as we believe, as one of our subscribers said, “A picture is worth a thousand words.”

The policy of the Review is to present articles by those who have first-hand information in regard to the subject of their choice, but in all cases we avoid giving any degree of endorsement to the opinions they may express. In this way we strive to afford an opportunity for the expression of perhaps divergent points of view and leave it to our readers to determine their merits or demerits.
Contributions and legacies which will enable this Society to expand its work are needed and will be much appreciated.

All who aid merchant seamen everywhere receive the impartial and hearty cooperation of this national Society without regard for anything but the welfare of the men of the sea.

Checks should be made payable to The American Seamen’s Friend Society and mailed to the main office of the Society, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

FORM OF BEQUEST

“I give and bequeath to The American Seamen’s Friend Society, incorporated by the Legislature of New York, in the year 1833, the sum of...to be applied to the uses and purposes of said Society.”