Pictorial Report
OF
THE AMERICAN
SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY

A NATIONAL SOCIETY COOPERATING WITH ALL WHO AID MERCHANT SEAMEN

ORGANIZED MAY, 1828

ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-FIVE FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

The 116th Annual Report
FOREWORD

TO THE

ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY

"A friend is one who aids with deeds"

MOST of the activities of this Society as presented in our last Pictorial Annual Report were so well summarized in an Editorial in the New York Herald Tribune that we venture to reproduce it on the opposite page. All of the services mentioned in the editorial have been continued this year. Our libraries have been improved and expanded. More and better books have been sent to sea. The Information Service gave an ever increasing clientele even better service than before and we have made the most of every opportunity to serve worthy seamen with hospital after care and other aid.

Like its immediate predecessor, the following Pictorial Annual Report portrays the activities of the Society during the past fiscal year.

There is a big job ahead for all of us, and however well plans may be made there will still be much slack to take up by this Society. To continue our services we need not only all our resources but generous contributions, large and small, plus the active cooperation of our many friends.

**Editorial From**

**NEW YORK**

**Herald Tribune**

**Wednesday, August 11, 1943**

**Friend of the Seamen**

The extraordinary fortitude of American merchant seamen, which contributed so greatly to victory in the Battle of the Atlantic, and which is still maintained in fighting on all seven seas, has aroused unprecedented interest in their behalf on the part of government and of the public generally. But long before seamen's contribution to our national safety was so dramatically demonstrated, the American Seamen's Friend Society was doing a splendid job of making up to them on ship and on shore for the barrenness of much of their duty.

Foremost of its services is perhaps the library service—in the Seamen's House, Y. M. C. A. on West Twentieth Street, the reading room at the Bethelship 'Y' in Brooklyn—and the supplying of books and magazines for men at sea. The library and reading room, made comfortable and inviting as only a good library can be, and in charge of professional librarians, make available to thousands of men the sort of books they like and need. Special effort is made to keep top-notch technical books for men studying for promotion or for old salts who need refreshers before they join up again.

Centering in the libraries is an information service which invites the men to "Ask us anything you want to know." It started as merely a service to find rooms for sailors on shore leave; it has ended by almost literally fulfilling its generous invitation. Nor should one omit from a catalogue of the society's services "The American Seaman—A Review," which it publishes "to acquaint Americans with the men of the merchant marine." The American Seamen's Friend Society will continue to be friend to the seamen long after this war's battles have been won, in the mean time a contribution mailed to its office, 175 Fifth Avenue, will help with its war-time work.

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LIBRARY FOR SEAMEN

Perhaps the Society's Library for Seamen located at 550 West 20th Street, Manhattan in Seamen's House, and the other at 56 Sullivan Street, Brooklyn in the Bethelship Seamen's Branch, are best described in the words of some of the librarians in charge.

"This quiet, friendly room with flowers here and there, rests the sea-men's minds. A cordial greeting makes them welcome. The younger men often gravitate toward the table on which weekly magazines such as "Time," "News Week," etc. are available, and absorb themselves in reading the "March of Time" or some other item of interest. The older men speak of the flowers, perhaps, and seem to take quiet enjoyment in a woman's presence. Sometimes, as is not infrequently the case, they are hungry for conversation with one who agrees just enough to spur them on to greater eloquence; never about themselves, but just their observations on men and affairs. We who are in charge can hardly guess what an hour within these walls means to each one.

The Library has that bit of charm, of an informal sort, which means so much to men who go to sea; nevertheless on shore they search for something to ease the tension of the difficult days at sea. Some have the urge to "untension" themselves by drinking, others seek to shut out the other self of sea-life. All are in search of ways to adjust themselves to a brief interlude of shore-life.

Books are friends. They are the sort of friends who understand men of the sea, who meet them on terms of respect, who never intrude beyond the moment of fatigue, who are ever ready to serve to the extent they are required.

That the same men come back to the Library again and again, and remain for hours reading deeply or lightly as their tastes or the moment invite, bears out their oft-asserted statement that when they are at sea they think fondly of the reposeful moments they spent in the peacefulness of its surroundings, in the kindliness of its personnel, and in the excellence of its choice of reading.

SOME OF THE MANY NEW BOOKS ADDED TO THE LIBRARY FOR SEAMEN

The Library is a place where men can find the best and up-to-date technical books which enable them to study and "brush up" on navigation, engineering, handling of cargo, or ship's cooking; it is a place where they can find answers to particular questions—how to get to 45 Broadway, to Coney Island or some other place, where to go for a ration book, the mean-
THOUSANDS OF THESE ATLASES HAVE BEEN PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED. VERY POPULAR WITH SEAMEN, THEY SERVE TO ADVERTISE NOT ONLY OUR LIBRARIES ASHORE BUT OUR SERVICE OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES FOR SHIPS AND THE FREE INFORMATION SERVICE AS WELL.

ing of a word, the location of a place on a map; to some it is a place for getting general information and keeping up to the minute with current magazines or recent books on timely subjects; to others, and perhaps a majority, it is a place to come to just for something to read—a man may want to take a book to his room, or out to sea, but often he just wants to read in the Library. Here they may find books new and old, books to suit their varied tastes, whether for philosophy, poetry, a detective or western story, or a current best seller, or a book of cartoons to chuckle over.

Recently a young man whose attention had been called to a certain book, first glanced at it, then began to read and continued for several hours not stopping even for lunch until he had finished it. On another occasion a seaman was absorbed in one of the new books; he read all one morning, came back after lunch and read for another stretch of hours, left the book over night, came back the next day and finished it.

The thing that impresses those in charge most is the friendly way the men enter the Library with their cheery “Hello!” or “Good Evening!” They come in with a certain sureness that they will find what they are looking for either in recreational or educational reading.

More than 14,000 have made use of these Libraries during the past year, but currently the attendance is at an ever increasing rate.

MALVINA HOFFMAN, WELL-KNOWN SCULPTRESS, PRESENTED A BUST OF ARCHIE GIBBS TO THE LIBRARY FOR SEAMEN IN SEAMEN’S HOUSE AT A TEA GIVEN IN HER HONOR. ARCHIE GIBBS’ EXPLOITS ARE WELL KNOWN TO ALL READERS OF HIS RECENT BOOK, “U BOAT PRISONER.” HE IS AN OUTSTANDING MERCHANT SEAMAN AND ACTUALLY ESCAPED FROM A GERMAN U BOAT.
BOOKS AND MAGAZINES
FOR MEN AT SEA

"The true University of these days is a collection of books"

Books—Benevolent persons who may have books to spare for such an object, are invited to deposit them with the agent of the society, at No. 142 Nassau Street, New York; or to give information where they may be called for. Besides useful religious books, it is desirable to have those of a miscellaneous character, such as History, Biography, Voyages, and Travels, and any others that are good and true.

With the invaluable aid of more than 1000 "Benevolent persons" and organizations many of whom have been what might be called steady contributors, we have carried on the project started so many years ago. During the past fiscal year more than 62,000 books and over 293,000 magazines have been placed aboard vessels in the Port of New York. The vast majority of these boats flew the American flag but there were also British, Norwegian, Brazilian and other ships as well.

Currently about 70% of all of our books and magazines are supplied on request. The urgency and genuineness of these demands for reading matter is often attested by offers to defray the transportation costs and even in some cases to make donations to the Society.

Perhaps the reproduction of the letters shown on page 10 does not need to be supplemented but we cannot refrain from printing one extract from a letter we recently received.

"You can have no idea of the sense of comfort which is given one to know that when the watch on deck is finished that there is a library at hand to sustain interest and to give a lead and purpose to conversation which otherwise tends to become either aimless or just degenerate."

This bears out the closing sentences in an article in the old Sailor's Magazine and Naval Journal published March 1830, which appeared more than a hundred years ago and is quoted on the next page.
ONE OF OUR TRUCKS DELIVERS ITS LOAD OF BOOKS AND MAGAZINES FOR MERCHANT SEAMEN

A BASKET FULL OF BOOKS BEING DELIVERED TO THE LIBRARIES FOR SHIPS

EXTRACTS FROM THREE OF THE MANY LETTERS FROM SHIPS CREWS

American Seamen's Friend Society
376 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y.

Gentlemen:

We, the crew of the above-named vessel, wish to thank you and your organization for your contributions of books and magazines which were enjoyed immediately during the voyage.

As this was a particularly trying voyage to the crew, these books and magazines were a great comfort and valuable addition to the ship cargo.

We wish to thank you most heartily for your help. We will keep this letter to remind ourselves of your kindness and appreciation.

Yours very truly,

Ships Sec'y.

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Yours very truly,

Ships Sec'y.
"Knowledge is of two kinds; we know a subject ourselves or we know where we can find information upon it."

Some of our staff belong to the first class and do know the answers. But many questions asked by seamen and their friends in response, as it were, to our rather challenging invitation, "Ask us about anything you want to know," would stump us were it not for the Information Book pictured on pages 12, 13.

However, we also have available many other valuable sources of information and practically every call is satisfactorily answered. This is attested by the hearty appreciation expressed by seamen and others who make use of this service. Further evidence of appreciation is also given by repeated calls from the same seamen for information about other subjects. No doubt all this is due to the obvious inclination on the part of all members of our staff to leave nothing untried to supply the information desired.

The great number of daily calls testifies to the fact that Gramercy 7-8866 is a boon to the maritime community in the Port of New York.

A Third Edition of that valuable adjunct to the Information Service, the folder (pictured on page 12), entitled, Lodgings, Rest Centers, Entertainment, Canteens in the Port of New York for Merchant Seamen, was published during the past fiscal year. The total printings and distribution of the folder have now reached the 100,000 mark. A Fourth Edition will shortly be published which will bring the data up to date.

An article entitled "Gramercy 7-8866, Seamen Calling" appeared in the Fall Issue 1943 of American Seamen. This describes how the Information Service operates and serves seamen.
With other local organizations the AMERICAN SEAMEN'S FRIEND SOCIETY'S branch at this port organized a constant entertainment for the men of the fleet. An information bureau was equipped to which the sailors went on their arrival to have their money honestly changed and embark on excursions conducted about the place for their benefit. Every square foot of the rooms of this station of the Society was packed each hour of the stay of the battleships, by the American crews, smoking, yarning or reading and writing home letters.
HOSPITAL AFTER CARE

In many ways these United States of ours show less evidence of the vast world conflict than other parts of the globe. One part at least of our accustomed way of life has undergone great stress and strain. Hospital beds, doctors and nurses are at a premium. Marine Hospitals, in particular, are crowded and the urgent need for room almost compels the discharge of patients as soon as they are no longer in actual need of essentially hospital care. Every doctor knows and even most laymen suspect that after hospital care is not only important but in many cases almost as essential as hospitalization itself.

Our government, acting through the War Shipping Administration and other agencies, has established rest centers in strategic locations and has done much to care for merchant seamen suffering from convoy fatigue and other ailments but all these facilities still leave a very substantial amount of slack to be taken up.

Working mainly through and with the Social Auxiliary of the Marine Hospital and making use not only of the advice and suggestions of its staff we have been able to augment the facilities for after hospital care. During the past fiscal year we have been able to supply approximately 1000 days of after hospital care for merchant seamen. In each case we observe not only the wishes of the seaman but also carry out the recommendations of the trained social workers to provide this care in a suitable place. This service has not only been carried on in the Port of New York but in New Orleans and elsewhere.

The American Women's Hospitals Reserve Corps with the help and cooperation of the Jewish Temporary Shelter for Children, Inc. was able during the year to add a delightful home-like rest for merchant seamen on Riverdale Avenue at the northern boundary of New York City. This substantial, well equipped house called Gloryhole affords an almost ideal place where seamen can recuperate in country surroundings. Many of the men we have helped have been sent there.
WITHOUT ever having embarked upon anything like a formal publicity campaign, this Society is well and widely known, a true friend of seamen.

The thousands of books, magazines, useful articles of various descriptions and financial aid it has received over the years bears mute testimony of this fact. May our friends multiply in number and their gifts for the benefit of seamen continue.
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Three Editions of the American Seamen were published during the past fiscal year ending March 31, 1944. The new format of the magazine was adopted commencing with Volume 4, Number 1, and the completed indexes of Volumes 1, 2 and 3 were supplied to all subscribers and to the various libraries to which the magazine was sent.

NEW FORMAT

INDEX

AMERICAN SEAMEN
A REVIEW
Volumes I, II and III
Winter-Spring, 1941 — Fall, 1943
INCLUSIVE

Hereafter each Index of AMERICAN SEAMEN A REVIEW will cover one volume of four issues a year.

Price 25 Cents

Vol. IV, Number 1

Contents

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FOUR EDITIONS OF THE AMERICAN SEAMEN WERE PUBLISHED DURING THE PAST FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 1944. THE NEW FORMAT OF THE MAGAZINE WAS ADOPTED COMMENCING WITH VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1, AND THE COMPLETED INDEXES OF VOLUMES 1, 2 AND 3 WERE SUPPLIED TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS AND TO THE VARIOUS LIBRARIES TO WHICH THE MAGAZINE WAS SENT.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish we could personally thank all of those who have given books, magazines and other material support including, of course, the many who have aided financially, however, under existing conditions, the publication of all names would not be practical.

We are, however, very grateful to all of those who have assisted us during the past fiscal year and we sincerely trust that their generosity will continue.

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

James Foundation of New York, Inc.
American Women’s Voluntary Services, Inc.
American Women’s Hospitals Reserve Corps
United Service Organizations, Inc. Special Committee
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
Civilian Defense Volunteers Office
New York City Women’s Council of the Navy League
Girl Scouts, Inc.
American Red Cross
Victory Book Campaign
Boosters’ Club of Thomas & Betts Co., Elizabeth, N. J.
Community Service Society of New York
New York University
Boy Scouts of America
Rutherford, N. J. Public Library
New York Bible Society

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.”

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THE SOCIETY'S EXECUTIVE OFFICES ARE LOCATED IN THE FLATIRON BUILDING, ONE OF THE FIRST SKYSCRAPERS IN NEW YORK CITY.