

The LOOKOUT



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The LOOKOUT

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Telephone Bowling Green 2710

EDMUND L. BAYLIES
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ARCHIBALD R. MANSFIELD, D. D.
Superintendent

or
MARJORIE DENT CANDEE
Editor, The Lookout

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This month's cover shows a Black Ball Liner, Becalmed. It is reproduced through the courtesy of the artist, Charles Robert Patterson. Vessels of the Black Ball Line carried a great deal of the trans-Atlantic passenger trade during the early part of the last century, until steamers drove them out of business.

Racing across the ocean was fast and furious, often for high stakes. While the packet ships were not built for speed, as were the clippers that followed them, they often made fast passages, owing to the fact that they were commanded by men who never let up on them, and kept them moving night and day in all sorts of weather. Rain or shine, blow high or low, one of the Black Ball liners sailed from New York for Liverpool on the first and sixteenth of each month, and for many years these were the European mail days throughout the United States. A distinguishing mark of these ships at sea was a large painted black ball under the close-reef band on their fore-top sails.

The Lookout

VOL. XXI

MAY, 1930

No. 5

Reserve this Date—May 22nd,
12 O'clock Noon

THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE
SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

REQUESTS YOUR PRESENCE
UPON THE OCCASION OF THE

DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL OF OUR SAVIOUR

25 South Street, New York City
(four blocks from South Ferry)

Thursday, May 22nd, 1930, at Twelve O'clock Noon

The Bishop of New York OFFICIANT
The Rev. Robert Norwood, D.D., PREACHER

BUFFET LUNCHEON AT ONE O'CLOCK

CARD OF ADMISSION REQUIRED.

Building Open for Inspection from Noon to 4 P.M.

Taking The Census

ONCE in ten years Uncle Sam tries to check up on the size on his great big family. When the volunteer census takers entered the ever-crowded lobby of the Institute one evening they saw immediately that they were going to have their hands full.

Seafaring men, with their love for the freedom and spaciousness of the rolling deep, do not relish the notion of being counted, classified or pigeon-holed along with land lubbers, but the eleven volunteer women enumerators and three men took their difficulties good-naturedly and set about counting the weather-beaten tars of every age, race and creed.

The leader of the group of census takers explained the purpose of the census to the men in the lobby, at the motion picture show, and in the cafeteria.

They found that our sailormen hail from all over the world—from Finland, Denmark, Turkey, Sweden, West Indies, England, Scotland, Africa, Egypt, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Germany and all the republics of South America.

They all spoke enough English to get along, however. Many hung back, but others seemed

quite pleased at being included in the census. But they were shy, and whenever possible went to the men rather than the women enumerators. Although they were all respectful and well behaved, they had an aversion to removing their hats.

A lone, blond youth did not take off his hat while being enumerated. Once, when the suggestion was made to a man that he remove his hat, he replied: "I never take it off."

A large number of the aliens believed that the census had something to do with compulsory military service. One man came up to ask—"for a friend," he carefully explained—what would be done about a man who was in the country illegally. The official explained that all information was strictly confidential and the census takers did not care how the men got into this country.

Another man, answering the question about his married state, said he had married thirty-five years ago, when he was thirteen years old.

A seventeen-year old youth confided that his wife was thirty-eight. Many of the seamen seemed glad to stop and talk for a few moments.

Two Innocents Abroad

When sixteen-year old Barry Knox first gave evidence of having served five months as an ordinary seaman, Mother Roper smiled and refused to believe him. Short of stature, with a childish countenance, mischievous eyes and dimples, he gave the impression of being just a lonely little runaway boy.

But after careful examination of his discharge papers, she was compelled to admit that he was a full-fledged seafarer. Questioning him, he admitted, boy-like, that the reason he lost his job on board the N. . . . was that he "tripped on the deck with a plate of eggs in one hand, a plate of griddle cakes in the other." "I was comin' along the deck," he explained, with a chuckle, "an' I saw the steward comin' the other direction, an' he was so fat he had to walk carefully 'cause his stomach was in the way. So I began to laugh like the dickens an' 'fore I knew it down I fell on the deck with the eggs goin' one way an' the cakes the other!"

"Aw, that's nothin'," piped up another young voice at Barry's elbow. Turning, Mother Roper beheld another seaman, a few inches taller than Barry, but just as innocent in appearance.



"When I was mess man on the G. . . .", continued the newcomer in a Southern drawl, "I was carryin' a crock of oatmeal under one arm an' a crock of molasses in 'tother, 'an by giminy, I slipped, an' the molasses an' oatmeal spilled all over me, my hair, an' everythin'. An' that's why I ain't got a job."

The two young salts then began to exchange anecdotes. So long and loudly did they brag, so vivid grew their imaginations as they boasted of their experiences at sea, that they soon drew around them a crowd of amused older seamen as listeners.

At last Mother Roper took them off to the Employment Bureau, where it was arranged that the youngsters could ship out together.

He Knew What He Wanted

A tall, well-set up young Scot was MacIntyre. Any girl would have looked twice at him and would have admired the ruddy tan of his complexion and the honest glance in his gray-blue eyes. He entered the reading room on the second floor of the Institute and sat down at a table littered with magazines and newspapers. His eyes rested on a current copy of "Liberty", then on a "Saturday Evening Post", then on a "Collier's", but each one he discarded in turn.

Finally, with a disappointed look he turned away from the table. One of our attendants, seeing his crestfallen expression, asked him what magazine he was looking for.

"Well, if it's not too much trouble for ye," said MacIntyre with a rich Scotch burr, "I'd be likin' to see a copy of what they call the National Geographical Magazine."

"I'm sorry, old man," replied the attendant, "but we're all out of copies of that. But we're hoping to get some more right

away. It's so popular and the copies are taken away so fast that we run out of 'em quicker than anything else."

So the attendant prevailed upon MacIntyre to accept a copy of "The Forum" as being the best substitute available.

The National Geographic is, without a doubt, the most popular among our sailormen. As MacIntyre expressed, "It shows pictures and has stories of places where ye have been yerself. That's why all seafarin' men like it."

Next in popularity, we have learned, are Wild West Stores and

Adventure story periodicals. After that, come Mystery and Detective Story Magazines. In the officers' reading room the marine and nautical journals seem to be most in demand. From 2,500 to 3,000 magazines are placed on the reading room tables every month. To all our friends who are now sending books and magazines we wish to express our sincere gratitude. They are helping to while away lonely hours.



Long Live Our Knitters

From Greenwich, Connecticut comes word that the Institute has more than one contributor ninety-six years old who is still knitting for our sailor boys. Our friend who has lived such a long

and useful life is Mrs. Lavinia Thorne, the generous donor of the compass in our entrance vestibule in memory of her husband, John R. Thorne, and her three children, Mary Hermione, Grace and Rougier Thorne. Mrs. Thorne also gave one of the

Dormitory Drinking Fountains on the ninth floor, in memory of her son, Rougier Thorne (1867-1924).

When the story of Mrs. H. Maria Schoonover Mulford (which appeared in the March issue of *The Lookout*) was read to Mrs. Thorne, she was very much interested to know of her contemporary who is also a knitter of unusual skill.

For fifteen years Mrs. Thorne,

who has always had a keen interest in seafaring men, fully equipped the nine men of the Fire Island Life Saving Station with hand-knitted articles. Caps, socks, scarfs and sweaters, were

wrapped in attractive Christmas packages and delivered to these "toilers of the sea." She continued this beautiful and useful work until she found her strength unequal to do so much knitting.

Now, at the age of ninety-six, she still enjoys knitting

scarfs and has contributed many to the Institute. The above photograph of Mrs. Thorne was taken when she was over eighty. The example of this Christian woman, and that of Mrs. Mulford, should interest the group of generous women who provide knitted articles each winter for our seamen and encourage them with the thought that they, too, may enjoy as long and as useful lives.



"Little Pal"

Pride swelled within the chest of Seaman Michael Miller as he pursed his lips and blew strenuously upon the cornet. From the battered instrument there emitted the dulcet strains of a sentimental song — a favorite among our seamen — "Little Pal." Michael was small of stature and Nature had endowed him with more determination than bone and muscle. Consequently, he presented a most pathetic, woebegone picture as, seated on the stage of our auditorium, his thin arms embracing the cornet, he puffed and blew.

The nine hundred sailors in the audience seemed deeply moved by the sad melody Michael had selected. Sea-blue eyes, gray eyes, brown eyes, black eyes soon grew misty with tears, and many a soiled and worn dungaree sleeve hastily brushed away the moisture from rugged faces. Suddenly, Michael, as though realizing that he had now "won" his audience, ceased playing. Reverently placing the cornet on a table, he stepped nearer the footlights.

"Fellows," he began in a low, mournful voice, "as you're sittin' here thinkin' about that beautiful song I've just played, does it

remind you of your 'little pal' back home? I've got a little boy, fellows. How I'd love to see him!"

By this time nine hundred throats were gulping and swallowing emotional lumps. Then, with a dramatic flourish, Michael turned toward the wings of the stage: "Here is my 'Little Pal'," he cried excitedly.

Out upon the stage walked the biggest seaman one could ever hope to see. Six feet four, and almost as broad as he was wide, weighing easily 300 pounds. He wore, besides a beaming smile, short blue velvet pants, a white blouse with a Buster Brown collar, a big black flowing tie and a little boy's straw hat.

The sight was so incongruous and so ridiculous that it instantly turned the audience from tears to peals of laughter and loud guffaws. Michael and his "Little Pal" bowed again and again to the onslaught of applause. Their "stunt" brought down the house. It was only another instance of the mischievous pranks our sailor boys concoct at the Saturday night home-talent parties.

We received a most gratifying response from readers of *The Lookout* who sent us musical instruments and money for prizes.

Write Home!



Cool, restful green walls stenciled in white greet the eye as one enters our new writing room, on the mezzanine floor, overlooking the main lobby. Our sailormen, usually so silent, have been voicing their appreciation of this comfortable and pleasant room. The old writing room on the second floor, next to the Post Office, had served faithfully and well, but, with the expansion of our building into our new Annex, more and more seamen used the room until it overflowed.

The writing room is the generous gift of Miss Louise B. Scott, a founder of the Institute, who has given two Seaman's rooms in memory of her father, George S. Scott and her brother, George

Isham Scott.

Stationery is furnished at each desk free to all seamen, which proves an added inducement to follow the injunction:

"A letter to mother!
Sit down to it now,
It will smooth out the furrows
Which wrinkle her brow;
It will bring back the smile
To her glorious face
And her eyes will grow bright;
And when night comes apace
She will lie down to sleep
In contentment and say
Your letter has made it
A wonderful day!"

At the entrance to the new room, on the wall, are these words: *Write Home. Silence.* It is gratifying to see our seafaring guests observe both requests.



Our Past Has Been Great Our Future Be Greater

The Institute has just celebrated another birthday. We are proud of our record of growth and achievement.

* * *

You who have helped us so generously each year will rejoice to know that 1929 surpassed all other years in volume of service and activities on behalf of the men of the merchant marine.

* * *

The times are not as prosperous as they might be, and charitable and philanthropic organizations must carry extra burdens of unemployment, poverty, sickness and concomitant ills of those they serve.

* * *

The Institute's daily budget is the same whether we have the funds or not. Sailors are coming to us each day in increasing numbers. Summer months always show a smaller percentage of contributions, yet our work must go on.

HARRY Chairman
WAYS AND COMMITTEE
25 South New York

With increasing demands being made upon us, and with many friends standing loyally by us, we can continue our activities unhampered by financial problems.

* * *

When your annual contribution to the Institute comes due, and you receive a letter from us, will you make every effort to renew, and if possible, to increase your donation?

* * *

In this way we can make up for the loss of contributions and for the decrease in amounts we have noticed due to Wall Street affairs.

* * *

If you have already made your donation for this year, we thank you heartily for your loyal support. We earnestly hope that you will find it possible to send a little extra to help out during this time of stress.



The Old Ship Builders of New York

Editor's Note—This is the first of a series of articles on old New York: its ship builders, ship yards, ships, and other interesting and quaint features of the waterfront of years ago.

ON a bright morning, ninety years or more ago, Christian Bergh was sitting in his office at the northeast corner of Scammel and Water Streets, not far from the Grand Street Ferry, watching some workmen in his ship-yard. He was in a region of ship-yards, resounding with the axes and hammers of busy American ship-carpenters, calkers, blacksmiths and joiners. To one of Bergh's workmen who had just finished trimming a piece of timber, a hundred and fifty feet away, he shouted: "That's three-quarters of an inch out of line!" and in a few minutes he was beside the offending mechanic, upbraiding him in warmest terms.

"You are mistaken, sir," said the man; "the beam is all right," and he appealed to Mr. Robert Connolly and Mr. Jacob A. Westervelt, other members of the firm, who sustained his position. Mr. Bergh, however, insisted upon the justice of his criticism, and proved it by measurement. "Bergh had a hawk's eye," said this mechanic to his friends. "The beam lay 'fore and aft' to him as he sat in his office, and he detected the deflec-

tion of three-quarters of an inch from the horizontal!"

Having submitted to the usual course of apprenticeship as a ship builder, Bergh was appointed by the United States Government to superintend the construction of the *President* and other war vessels in the Brooklyn Navy Yard; at the outbreak of the war of 1812 he was sent to Lake Erie to build sloops and cutters for service against the enemy. On returning to New York he established a ship-yard on the East River, and built packets for the Liverpool, London and Havre Lines, and the frigate *Hellas* for the Greeks, which was blown up in a Turkish port. Another famous vessel built by Bergh was the six-gun schooner *Antarctic*, constructed for a Captain Morrell who had thrilling adventures in the Antarctic Ocean catching beche-la-mere, a fish greatly in demand.

Mr. Bergh's tall commanding figure (he stood six feet six in his stockings), his blue frock-coat, blue trousers, broad-brimmed high hat, and white neckcloth, was long remembered along the docks. His honesty was pro-

verbial, his dislike of debt a passion. Christian Bergh was the first ship-builder to employ colored men.

Henry Eckford

At the immense fireplace in the Bergh house Henry Eckford was a frequent visitor. He was a Scotchman, who came to this country in 1796 and rose into prominence as a ship-builder. In Eckford's yard was built the ship *Samuel Elam*, a ship of 350 tons whose figurehead represented a man on horseback, and whose bowsprit was high enough

to clear the man's head. Also the ship *Beaver*, for John Jacob Astor, which carried a cargo of 1,100 tons in her live-oak frame and after a service of 40 years was broken up to furnish timber for another vessel. Eckford became Superintendent of the Brooklyn Navy Yard and built the U. S. frigate *Ohio*. When Eckford departed for Turkey to accept a commission as naval constructor at Constantinople, his departure created great excitement in New York City chiefly because he took with him a number of American me-



Photograph by American Photo Service

Time's changes on South Street. The clipper ships whose bow-sprits reached almost to the opposite sidewalk have gone and the open docks have given way to modern piers from which steamers leave for world wide ports

chanics, who were promised the extraordinary sum of two dollars a day a piece for their labors.

Adam and Noah Brown

These men, Bergh and Eckford were brought into prominence by the war of 1812, which marked the first great era of New York ship-building. Among the New Yorkers summoned to build a fleet for Commodore Perry were Adam and Noah Brown, who soon launched several privateers: the *Yorktown* teaser, *Paul Jones*, *Saratoga*, and *General Armstrong*. The most famous of their vessels was a steam battery called *Fulton the First*, designed by Robert Fulton, her keel being laid on the 20th of June, 1814. Eight years before the first steamboat in the world, the *Claremont*, also designed by Fulton, was constructed in the yard of another American ship-builder, Charles Browne.

Herbert Lawrence

Another prominent ship-builder was Herbert Lawrence, who in 1817 built the *Bolona*, the first steamboat commanded by Commodore Vanderbilt. Lawrence and his partner, Sneden, also built the first of the large Sound steamboats—the *President*, *Boston*, *Empire State*, *Granite State* and *Bay State*. It used

to be the delight of small boys to go in swimming off the docks about five o'clock in the afternoon, and float in the wake of those vessels.

Isaac Webb and Stephen Smith

The two most eminent apprentices of Henry Eckford were Isaac Webb of the firm of Webb and Allen, and Stephen Smith of the firm of Smith and Dimon. Among the ships built by Webb in his first yard, at the foot of Montgomery Street, were the *Superior* and the *Splendid*, for the China trade, of about 300 tons each. They were the largest merchant ships in the United States, too large, there being no cargoes for them.

Stephen Smith's claim to fame were his celebrated packets the *Independence* and the *Roscoe*, and the clippers *Rainbow* and *Sea Witch*. The *Independence*, built in 1834, commanded by the famous Captain Ezra Nye, sailed regularly to Liverpool on the 6th of March and carried the President's message.

David Brown

The beauty of the lines of David Brown's vessels was frequently remarked. He was the nephew of Noah Brown. He built many ships for the Liverpool packet lines—the *Liverpool*

of 1,174 tons, the *Queen of the West*, 1,168 tons. His favorite and speediest was the *Roscius* of E. K. Collins' dramatic line. When he died many flags in the harbor were at half-mast.

Jacob A. Westervelt

Jacob Westervelt learned the "art, trade and mystery" of ship-building by serving as a sailor and as an apprentice of Christian Bergh. He constructed many of the Havre packets. In 1852 he was elected Mayor of New York City and on leaving office was awarded the contract for building the United States steam frigate *Brooklyn*.

John Englis

John Englis, a native New Yorker, became foreman in the yard of Bishop and Simonson. His specialty was in the construction of steamboats of improved model and speed, having built fifty-six of them, averaging 1,500 tons each, previous to 1866. The Albany steamboat *St. John* of the *People's Line*, built in 1863, was the finest vessel of his construction, costing \$600,000 and entering the lists as the first of the "floating palaces."

Another envoy from Mr. Englis' yard was the steamer, *Newport*.

Democratic in their tastes and simple in their habits, the old ship-builders of New York had little social intercourse with the four or five "great men" of the neighborhood; but their boys liked to steal pears from Colonel Willett's place, which was defended by Old Camp ("Old Scamp" they called him). Colonel Rutgers lived on the block bounded by Jefferson, Clinton, Monroe and Cherry Streets, and a beautiful block it was, with its extensive lawn backed by a garden and its two-story brick house, sixty feet square. Judge Ogilvie, the last slaveholder on the East Side, occupied the handsome block bounded by Sheriff and Rivington Streets. Three of his slaves, "Jess", "Tom" and "Dick", being impudent rowdies, the ship builders' sons liked to lick them, being not at all awed by the aristocratic old judge with his queue, and his waistcoat full of snuff.

Jacob A. Westervelt lived on East Broadway a few doors below Gouverneur Street; Christian Bergh in a yellow clapboard house on Scammel Street.

(In the next issue there will be an account of the life of the ship apprentices and mechanics)



Musings of the Mate

Honesty

A touching incident occurred recently to illustrate how greatly our sailors appreciate the friendly word and the kind deed rendered in their behalf. Old Seaman Rudge fell off a dredge into the East River, was hit in the head by a passing boat and was dragged, more dead than alive, to safety. Someone picked up his pocketbook which had fallen to the deck and brought it to the Institute. When Rudge was discharged from the hospital he came to the Institute seeking employment and was greeted with the good news that his money and papers were safe. The old man wept with joy and vowed that "the Institute is the first honest place I've met on the waterfront in 55 years."



worked me so hard on the farm down in West Virginia. But if you'll only help me get back there I don't care how long or how hard I have to work." Our chaplain arranged to get a half-fare ticket for him, and he left, vowing never again to succumb to the lure of the sea.

Overheard in the Auditorium

Two young tars were discussing Prohibition. The argument grew somewhat heated until a third sailor interposed: "Aw, why not elect two Presidents—Smith and Hoover? That would mean three days wet and three days dry, and Mr. Barlow (our recreation director) to take care of Sunday!"

Back to the Farm



He was only seventeen and all he wanted was for us to help him get back to the farm. "I ran away to sea 'cause they

Another Letter of Commendation

Treasury Department
United States
Public Health Service
Stapleton, N. Y.
Dear Doctor Mansfield:

I was very sorry that circumstances prevented my seeing you again before leaving your building for I wanted to admit to you that I never dreamed that there was such a wonderful plant. Of course, I know in a general way about the Institute, but it never occurred to me that it could possibly be such a monumental affair both as to its building and to the scope and spirit of its purpose. What impressed me most was the Spirit of the Hive and the atmosphere of the place. Seamen clearly had the feeling that it was their Home Club and they took a personal interest and pride in it. If municipalities would maintain Home Clubs patterned on your Institute, for certain of their residents, I dare say that they would find it unnecessary to spend so much on their police and related departments. I note that health centers are to be constructed and the time must come when Home Clubs similar to your Institute will be maintained by cities.

I enjoyed thoroughly the opportunity to become more fully acquainted with the fullness of your Institute's activities.

With best wishes for your continued success and good health,

M. J. WHITE,
Senior Surgeon in Charge.

Distinguished Visitors

On Friday, March 14th, the Richmond County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution held a luncheon at the Institute in our Apprentice Room. Dr. Mansfield was the principal speaker. He told of the growth of the Institute, its aims, purposes and hopes for the future:

"We are expanding our dormitory space so that 1,600 seamen instead of 1,500 may sleep beneath our friendly roof each night. In our cafeteria, we offer to these mariners good, pure food of the best quality that is possible to procure. In the rooms, everything is as clean as human hands can make it. In our auditorium, we provide the best in moving pictures, vaudeville, lectures and entertainments. The crews who come to us each day are intelligent, full-blooded men — like your own boys away at school or college. They have traveled and have seen life, and underneath they have the same feelings as you and I, and therefore need the same things in life as you and I.

"Our work is patriotic. It is educational. An organization such as the D. A. R. can help us with our task of educating the citizens of this great country to

a realization of their responsibility toward these men of the sea who are the world's servants. "There is much work to be done. We need books and linens and knitted articles. We need your encouragement. The general public never stops to consider the personnel of the great ships that ply the waters of the world. But without the crews to man these vessels, there could be no progress, no commerce, no travel, no international good will. Return to your husbands and sons and inspire within them a desire to unite with us in this great welfare work in a great seaport."

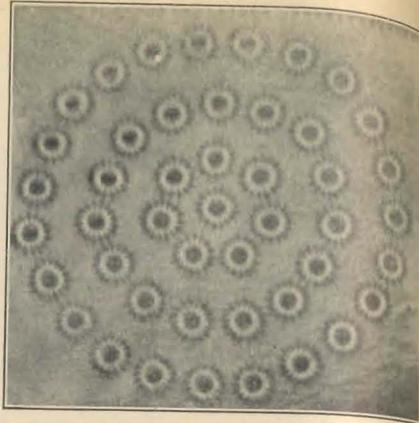
A Poem

The sea had turned his thoughts to poetry so he timidly approached *The Lookout* editor for information on rhyme, meter and rhythm. Eagerly, he studied trochees, anapests, dactyls, and spondees. The next day, he returned with the following:

To Mother Roper—

"Yesterday, today, or tomorrow,
 you're always the same,
 You listen to their bleeding
 hearts even though they are
 to blame.
 A loving heart to all you give
 regardless of their creed—
 But do they ever stop to think that
 your own heart may bleed?"

For Sale!



Two of the Institute's generous friends have made the lovely quilt pictured in the photograph on this page. It is a brown and white background, flecked with yellow and lined in white. The material is of good-quality gingham and the workmanship is of the finest. The design is the well-known "pineapple" design. Such a quilt is easily worth \$150. It was given to the Institute by its makers, Mrs. Herbert Fordham and Mrs. Beebe. We hope that someone who has a bedroom with antique furniture will want to buy this quilt to adorn the four-poster bed. The first person sending a check for \$150 to the Editor of *The Lookout* will become the owner of this beautiful quilt and it will be mailed parcel post, insured, to the address given. The money will be credited to our Ways and Means budget.

What is a Red Letter Day?

1930		APRIL					1930
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
First Quarter 6th	Full Moon 13th	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
EASTER	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30		Last Quarter 20th	New Moon 28th	



A Red Letter Day is a chance to commemorate some important event in your life by lending a helping hand to the other fellow.

* * *

A Red Letter Day is an opportunity for you to run the Institute for an entire day.

* * *

A Red Letter Day is a privilege, for it affords you a chance to bring happiness into the lives of thousands of lonely sailmen.

* * *

A Red Letter Day means that any poor, sick, crippled, "broke" seaman who crosses our threshold on your day will be given material and spiritual help.

* * *

No sailor asking relief will be turned away for lack of funds, for a Red Letter Day makes up the deficit in our daily budget.

* * *

Every Red Letter Day that we reserve on the year's calendar gives us a chance to make use of every opportunity for service that we see; to shun none on such a day.

* * *

Finally, a Red Letter Day is like every other good deed. It is retroactive. It makes the donor as well as the receiver happy.

* * *

Will YOU reserve a Red Letter Day on the Institute's calendar? \$273.97 is what it costs to run this great shore community for twenty-four hours.

* * *

Please send your check to Harry Forsyth, Chairman Ways and Means Committee, 25 South Street, New York.

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