# ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

## An interview with
## Gerald F. "Jerry" MacMullen, 1897-1981

## September 5, 1971

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**PREFACE**

Gerald F. "Jerry" MacMullen has written a number of books: one is The Star of India: The Log of an Iron Ship; another is They Came Sea, a Pictorial History of San Diego Bay. These books were an outcome of Mr. MacMullen's life-long interest in maritime activities - especially those related to San Diego bay.

In this interview MacMullen reviews the years of his education at San Diego High School and University of California (Berkeley) and starting out (in 1921) as a police reporter on the Tribune. This lasted until 1928 when he moved to the Union as the waterfront reporter. During this period he had also served in the Naval Militia and became acquainted with Don Stewart.

Mr. MacMullen's observations as a waterfront reporter, as a Navy veteran, and as a former director of the San Diego Historical Society are very interesting. But this interview is more closely related to his activities and knowledge pertaining to the *Star of India.* For the researcher or student interested in the San Diego waterfront, the information provided in this interview is invaluable.

Thomas E. Walt, Editor
April 20, 1993

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**INTERVIEWER'S NOTE**

This is an oral interview with Gerald F. "Jerry" MacMullen made on Sunday morning, September 5, 1971. My name is Robert G. Wright and I am going to interview Mr. MacMullen.

**ROBERT G. WRIGHT:** Can you tell me, Jerry, where you were born and when?

**GERALD F. MacMULLEN:** I was born in San Francisco, California, November 16, 1897, in a house in the 100 block of Union Street on the hill overlooking the bay. My father was the managing editor of the Daily Morning Call in San Francisco, which later became the Call-Bulletin, and I think is now called the News Call Bulletin, or something of that kind, an afternoon paper. It was a morning paper when he came on it. He came here in 1888 from New Jersey. He came here to die of tuberculosis. The doctor said if he moved to California he might last for six months. So he and my mother came out here. He had been working on a newspaper as a reporter in New Jersey. They landed in San Francisco with thirteen dollars between them. He went to work and reported on various papers there and finally stuck with the Call. And, as I say, by the late 1890s he had become manager-editor.

In 1899 the managing editor of the San Diego Union died and John D. Spreckels, who owned the Call at that time, also the Union (in San Diego), sent him down here to take over the Union and straighten it out, which it needed. Then a few years later they bought the Tribune and he became editor and manager of both of them. He remained in that capacity until he died in 1933.

I am told that I witnessed the departure of the battleship, OREGON, on her famous trip around to the east coast at the time of the Spanish-American War. My mother told me that she held me up to the window as the OREGON passed by in the bay down below so that I could say that I had seen the OREGON. Of course, I was only about a year old at that time, so I have no recollection.

**RW:** That started you on your nautical research?

**GM:** I've always been nuts about the water. If they left their hands off me for one minute I was gone and making it straight down to the bay with my mother in hot pursuit. The result was that I saved practically all of my spare time when I was a kid spending it on the waterfront. As I got older, my father used to meet me after Sunday school. We would go for a long walk, always along the (San Diego) waterfront. And, of course, in those days there were still square-riggers tied up at the docks.

I remember one morning we were going up Market Street, which was H Street in those days, and we got to the corner of Fourth and Market. This again in the field of what you can tell people you have seen this or you have seen that: My father stopped at the corner of Fourth and H and pointed with his cane - of course, everybody carried a cane in those days - to a little yellow house with a picket fence in the middle of the block, with a couple of great big rubber trees growing in the yard. He said, "Son, I want you to take a look at that; that is Canary Cottage." I said, "Dad, what is Canary Cottage?" He said, "Well, I'm not going to tell you now, you are a little too young to know about things like that, but anyhow you will be able to say

that you saw Canary Cottage." "Why can't I see it later?" He said, "It isn't going to be here much longer. You know we just had a municipal election and the longhairs won." Of course, Canary Cottage was the headquarters of Ida Bailey who was San Diego's most famous "madam." That house actually stood there for years. I remember many times going by. In 1911 that is when it happened.

**RW:** Which corner was it on?

**GM:** It wasn't on the corner; it was between H and I Streets (which, of course, now are Market and Island Streets) on Fourth Street, on the west side of the street about the middle of the block. I believe there is a red brick two story building. It may still be, but at one time it was a big bakery. That was on the site of Canary Cottage. That business of course was running wide open in those days, but as I say, the longhairs won in the election and they got a reformed government. They closed "Stingaree," which, of course, it meant that they just scattered all over San Diego. Because you can't stop the world's oldest profession merely by a municipal ordinance.

A funny thing happened, when I went to the Serra Museum something came up about "Stingaree" and I went to look in the index to see what they had on "Stingaree." The name "Stingaree" was not even in the index of the San Diego Historical Society. I asked somebody why it was and they said Mr. Marston didn't approve of the "Stingaree." So I immediately started a file on "Stingaree" based on what little scraps and information I had been told. I hope they still have a file on "Stingaree" out there.

I grew up here, of course. I went to San Diego High School; graduated in 1916; went to the University of California (at Berkeley) and graduated from there in 1921. I was delayed three years. Unfortunately, they had a measles epidemic during my freshman year up there. Meanwhile I had joined the old Naval Militia of California which was the forerunner of the Naval Reserve. I earned the high rank of what we now call Radioman, 3rd class. In those days it was Electrician, 3rd class (radio). As I say, I was in the hospital up north at the University of California with measles when World War I broke out and, of course, I was immediately called to active duty. I sent telegrams back and forth, "What should I do?" Apparently Don Stewart, who was battalion commander, asked my father where I was and so on. My father told them, and to and behold, I got a long envelope one day. I opened the envelope and here was a medical discharge from the Naval Militia. But in the meantime they had already gone. They were, I think, the only Naval Militia Division in California which didn't go into training camp. They went to Mare Island and went directly on the ships going to sea. They were a crack division which was split up into two divisions, the 3rd and the 10th. They went right to sea; they went out on the *FREDERICK* and the *SAN DIEGO* and were scattered around all over the world.

They still hold an annual reunion here in San Diego. Of the 640 men who went, I think there are only 24 left on that roster now. There is only one officer left; all the rest of them are gone and, of course, most of the men are gone, too. We hold gatherings once a year. Some of the boys show up with canes; one of them is totally blind. But the old spirit is there. I often wonder if there are any reserve officers today who would have that cohesive feeling among his people more than 50 years later when they get together. Of course, the spark plug of the thing was old Don Stewart. He was the battalion commander. Don died here two or three years ago, just short of his 96th birthday.

**RW:** I have his book here. It is an excellent book; unfortunately, I haven't gotten as far through it as I wanted to; Frontier Port (is the title). It is fantastic.

**GM:** That was Don's contribution to history. There was so much floating history being told about San Diego that he said he was going to write a book about it. So he did. He fiddled around with it and dictated the thing to Sylvia Arden, the librarian at the Serra Museum. She worked one day a week as Don's secretary in those days. Don called me about the thing; he wanted to get somebody to help. He realized that it wasn't in shape for publication. I located a chap who was working on the Union at the time and he fiddled around with it for about a year and then finally dumped it back in my lap. So

I had to take the thing over; he hadn't done a thing on it. The sampling of the material was priceless, but it was completely disorganized. Don would think about one thing and we would talk about that, then he would think about something else on an entirely different subject.

I put the book together and turned it over to a publisher and it was printed at Don's own expense. The thing that was sort of a great satisfaction to me - of all of the histories of San Diego which people have written, I think this is the only one of these minor histories of San Diego which ever ran into a second edition. Don was frighteningly accurate in his memory. I remember one day I called him up and said, "Don, do you know anything about a big four-masted bark called *Balclutha?"* "Yes," he said, "she was in here. It was about 1887 or 1888." [Editorial note: This is wrong. *Balclutha* was a three masted full rigger. She came as *Pacific Queen,* e. 1936.] "You know there is a funny thing about her; a couple of years before she came down here she capsized in San Francisco bay." I sort of did a double take on that one because that is one of the classic salvage cases on the coast: was the capsize and the subsequent raising of (a ship) that went down in San Francisco bay in 1885.

Then he really threw me when he said, "You know, there was another British ship capsized up there. Along in the middle 1890s (I can't remember the way I used to, what was her name now) the British ship *Blairmore,* Captain Caw." At that time I practically went through the floor because I've got a bunch of clippings on the capsizing of the British ship, *Blairmore,* Captain Caw, in April in San Francisco Bay. [Editorial note: The *Blairmore* was built in 1893 and capsized in 1896.] That is the kind of a memory this old boy had. To his eternal credit, if he didn't know anything about a subject he would say, "No, I don't know anything about that; no, that doesn't ring any bells." He wouldn't ad lib the way some of these historical experts do from time to time. So if Don says that San Diego bay was discovered by Lord Nelson who commanded Noah's Ark, by gosh, that is how San Diego bay was discovered.

**RW:** Doing some of these tape interviews I've run into a couple of fellows who, after the first hour, I realized that they were not telling me what they had actually witnessed, but what they had read. It took me a while to realize what was going on. That is why you appreciate somebody like this.

**GM:** There is one thing that Don and I got into that is still a mystery thing. He tells the story that a British ship came in here and the captain's wife was with him. She was in poor health, had tuberculosis, as a matter of fact, and she died just as the ship entered San Diego bay. And he said that she was buried out in Mount Hope Cemetery. The captain himself later returned to San Diego and died here and was buried also in Mount Hope Cemetery. The name was Napton. We went out to Mount Hope to find the place. He said, "I know exactly where it is. He had a fountain built there." We looked all over the place; we couldn't find any reference to this captain in their records. Mount Hope Cemetery has excellent records back to 1868. We went to where he said he had seen this fountain and there is no fountain there. We went back to the office and we finally found a record on his wife. She is buried in an unmarked grave, in all places in the world, in a GAR plot in the Mount Hope Cemetery.

Don's theory was that there was a certain amount of hanky panky with cemeteries in the early days here, and sometimes somebody would be buried on top of somebody else; headstones would be removed and all that sort of thing. Don's theory was that that is what had happened to Captain Napton who was the captain of this British bark that came in here. We came onto some other interesting graves out there - Captain Cornelius who was a captain on a schooner that came in here. He was famous along the coast as a captain. He is buried out there. His son-in-law, I think, was Captain Clintbalm, buried quite close to him. Also buried at Mount Hope Cemetery is Captain David Rivers of the big down easter, *E. G. Roaks.* He came to San Diego after he retired from the sea and dropped dead of a heart attack right at Fifth and Broadway - D Street as it was in those days. He is buried out there with a very fine, big granite monument. He is out there, too, so heaven only knows how many other old sea captains there may be out there in Mount Hope Cemetery.

There are two other British captains that I know of that are buried out there - one chap who died just as his ship was entering San Diego. He was buried by the Masonic Lodge when they found out that he was a Mason. The other fellow died aboard his ship tied up at Babcock and Storey's wharf.

He was buried out there at quite an elaborate funeral. But some of these graves are marked. You know, I think that would be a hell of a nice thing some day for some outfit to get together and provide at least modest headstones for these sea captains who had died so many thousands of miles away from home and any friends, and now they are in an unmarked grave.

**RW:** This would be a job the Maritime Historical Society could fulfill their obligation. I want to go back to 1921, well, actually before the war started, when you said you had the measles. This was in 1918, then. And you were at University of California and you finally graduated in 1921.

**GM:** The measles knocked me out of one whole semester. The following semester, the next year after the autumn of 1917, I decided that I was going to go to what is now called Cal-Tech instead. It was called the Throop College of Technology in Pasadena. We were in the war then. Word was going around then that if you joined and went to one of these colleges then you would be sent to officers' training school in the Army. This didn't happen actually until 1918. I had been at Cal-Tech for a full semester already, so I went back there as a private in the United States Army. I was only in for about two months, but at least I can say that I had some World War I service.

Several years later I tried to get into the Naval Reserve, but I had a minor heart condition and I couldn't get by any of the duty-struck doctors. It wasn't until 1935 that I finally succeeded in crashing the Naval Reserve, which was fortunate because it was in the summer of 1941 that I was scooped up for active duty and stayed in until December, 1945. Then I got out.

I had been working for the papers before that time. I started out in 1921 as police reporter on the Tribune. That lasted until 1928 when I went on to the Union as the waterfront reporter. I stayed there until May, 1941 when the Navy scooped me up. When I got out, I went back doing waterfront for the Tribune and stayed for about a year. By that time they had discovered that they had demobilized too fast; there should have been people there putting things away in case they were ever needed again. I was solicited to come back into the Navy, so I did. I stayed for about three years.

**RW:** This was from 1945 to 1947?

**GM:** I got out in the summer of 1947. Then I fooled around for a while. I went to art school for a while because they had told me they could teach me how to be a magazine illustrator. They didn't; but I learned something there, mostly from the other students. Then January 1, 1954 I relieved John Davidson as director of Serra Museum. I was there for just over ten years. It was March, 1964. The situation up there had changed. For a number of years, a little group got control and they started an executive committee as well as the board of directors, and that is when everything happened. The executive committee just shoved the board of directors aside. They would take action which they wouldn't even report to the board of directors. It was a little bit of a mess. Under those conditions things were getting impossible, and I got rolled out. The chap who I was subsequently told was a distant relative of the director of the Historical Society and wanted to move to San Diego, and got the job. He lasted for about a year and a half. They've had troubles ever since. I understand things are pretty well ironed out now.

One of the first things they did was overhaul their bylaws and provide that the same people could not hold office indefinitely. They have a rotation clause now that an officer or a director can serve for only two consecutive terms, then they automatically have to drop off the board and have somebody else take his place. But I am getting away from what the San Diego waterfront was like.

**RW:** I want to bring you up to September 4, 1971. This is 1964 you have been talking about; what have you been doing since 1964?

**GM:** I've been retired, doing free-lance writing. I did a book in that time.

**RW:** The <u>They Came by Sea</u> book? I like books with photographs and color. It gives you a little three dimension.

**GM:** That book was written for the same reason that I wrote Paddle Wheel Days in California. I wrote that book when I was in the Navy, while I was in San Francisco. My wife stayed here. I only had a furnished room and I was all alone with nothing much to do. I had always been irritated by the fact that you could not find any information on the river steamers of California which had always fascinated me. So the idea occurred to me one dark and stormy night, "Look, you've got time on your hands, you are close to a Bancroft library, the California Historical Society, and the Pioneers Society; why don't you turn to and write this book?" So with a little office politics, I arranged it so that I would have the duty on Sundays and have a weekday for my day off. On those weekdays I really hounded the California Historical Society and the Bancroft library.

[Editorial note: This was, I think, when he wrote, Paddle Wheel Days in California.]

For the same reason nobody had ever gathered together and properly identified and made good use of the photographs which were available. Of course, the Title Insurance Company was the gold mine there. They really rolled out the red rug. So that is how I came to write They Came by Sea.

[Editorial note: Apparently this book was written in San Diego.]

A lot of pictures that I had taken way back when I was a teenager, because as I got older, prowling around the waterfront I generally carried a camera with me. I had a great big old No. 4 Kodak with, not a 4 by 5, but a 5 by 4 film that had five inch spools of each frame of four inches wide. I carried that until finally you couldn't get film for it any more; they quit making film for it. That is the way I got, purely by accident, some fairly decent picture.

**RW:** Are the negatives still holding up; they are not deteriorating with time?

**GM:** In those days the people who processed them did it carefully. They washed them enough to get all the hypo out of them and they are in pretty good shape. The ones that have started to go I had copied.

**RW:** And you identified them?

**GM:** Oh, yeah. I've got most of them identified, but there are still some that I am working on. I have found that the safest way to identify the negative is to put identification right on the negative. As you know, there is a little sort of a rim around the negative which is perfectly clear gelatin; there is no emulsion on it. Take this smooth side of the negative and take the eraser from an ordinary lead pencil, rub that until it becomes burl. Then take one of these fine point pens and dip it in ink and you can write beautifully on that. It doesn't get on the picture at all, of course. So then you have the identification right on the film.

**RW:** That brings us up to 1971. Though you are semi-retired, I know you write for the Sunday Union.

**GM:** I work strictly on a free-lance basis; I am not a member of the staff.

[Transcriber: More interruption]

**RW:** That was a good arrangement, all right.

**GM:** Yeah. When I was at the University of California I had a pretty well messed up schedule at that time.

**RW:** Did you have a major?

**GM:** Yes, I enrolled in electrical engineering. Why I ever decided to do that I don't know, because I can take a column of figures and add them up five times and I'll give you five answers, and they will all be wrong. What was I doing trying to be an engineer?

One thing about Cal-Tech, everybody, regardless of what engineering they were taking, the surveying class was spending the Easter vacation down at Newport Beach. But at the end of that year I went back to the University of California. Another fortunate thing about Cal-Tech, they required everybody since 1921 to take 124 units for graduation. I only had 121 1/2 units and I got off of that campus in a hell of a big hurry because I didn't want them to change their mind.

**RW:** Let's go back a bit. What was your father's full name?

**GM:** My father's full name was James MacMullen; he had no middle name. My mother's maiden name was Margaretta Fischer. Her parents were both born in Germany. My father was born in County Cavan, Ireland. She was born in New Jersey. My father came to this country at the age of three months.

**RW:** So did they meet in New Jersey?

**GM:** Yes. As a young man, he went to Rutgers College. He was one of the large typical Irish immigrant families. He was the only one in the family who ever went to college.

He was there for two years and the money ran out, so he had to go to work and help support the family. He worked in New Jersey until the family doctor told him that he was in the last stages of tuberculosis and if he would go to California, he might last for six months. That is why they moved to California. And he lasted until 1933. It wasn't tuberculosis at all, of course. He had a bronchial condition that the doctor had misunderstood.

**RW:** This was in days before X-rays?

**GM:** Oh, yes.

**RW:** Then, as you say, they went to San Francisco and you were born there just a few years after they arrived.

**GM:** They came in 1888; 1 was born in 1897.

**RW:** You left before the earthquake (in 1906)?

**GM:** We arrived here June 21, 1899, I believe, on the steamer, Corona.

**RW:** When you arrived here you were only about two years old. You don't remember too much about San Diego at that time. Do you remember where you moved to or what part of town you lived in?

**GM:** My first home for a couple of weeks was at Horton House which was where the U.S. Grant Hotel stands now. In those days the houses were not known so much by addresses as they were by who owned them. We moved into the Copeland house which was at the corner of 7th and A Streets.

That house is still standing, but it is now on 30th Street around Ivy Street. Then we moved into the Havermale house. That was on the southwest corner of 2nd and Beech Streets. We lived there for about a year, and then moved to the Scott house. It was at the northwest corner of 1st and A Streets. By that time people were beginning to refer to houses by numbers instead of by who owned them. We were there for 13 or 14 years. We stayed in that same neighborhood until 1914 when my father built the place in Coronado where I am living now.

**RW:** That was quite a move to go clear across the bay to Coronado. That was like going out into the back country.

**GM:** Oh, it wasn't so bad. There was a ferry every 20 minutes from 6:30 in the morning until 11:30 at night. Of course, nobody had any business going back and forth after that. It worked out pretty nicely.

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**Tape 1, Side 2:**

**RW:** You were talking about the ferryboat. Was this the Coronado ferry?

**GM:** It is funny how one little picture will stick in a kid's mind all his life, but I remember being on the upper deck of the ferryboat with my mother and a captain who was a friend of the family. The ferryboat had a panel box that came through the upper deck and one of the planks was broken off of the panel box. My mother was talking to the captain, old Captain Peter Johnson, the father of Hilton Johnson, who later became port pilot for many years. While she was talking to the captain, I remember looking intently in through this crack in the planking of the panel box and how intrigued I was at this huge paddle wheel turning around inside of the paddle box there. It was so clear in my mind of this paddle box coming up through the deck.

It could only have been the *Benica.* The *Benica* was the only ferryboat we ever had in San Diego bay that had a walking beam engine. I've wondered since then why I didn't remember the walking beam until I got hold of a photograph just a few years ago that shows her with a walking beam in her later years had been encased in a house. But that puts it back to 1903 at the very latest because she made her last run, so I am told, on July 4, 1903 when she was replaced by the ferryboat Ramona.

**RW:** I know you have a photograph of her. (Looking at picture)

**GM:** Look at the spread in here on the *Benica.* See the housing in here between the pilot-house; there is a walking beam inside of that. That is why I don't remember the walking beam due to the fact I didn't see it. A kid certainly would have been so intrigued with that walking beam through there, if I had seen it I would have gone over to the edge of that walking beam and probably would have fallen in.

**RW:** Probably for safety reasons, too.

**GM:** Probably, because people were allowed to go up on the upper deck.

**RW:** You say you played around the waterfront a lot and you saw a lot of fishing boats. I know the Chinese were very active. Were they active during your time there, or before your time?

**GM:** Before my time. You see, the Chinese to a certain extent, dominated the fresh market fishing here, way, way back in the 1870s and 1880s. Then when the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, the Chinese had, by this time, built up quite a sizable fleet of Chinese junks here in San Diego bay. They were typical Chinese junks with one exception: they were built out of California redwood all the way through with the exception of the masts and the

rudder stock. Those were iron bars which they had sent over from China. They were built in the typical junk fashion with the planks edge-nailed together. They would take the triangular gouge with a chisel out of the plank just above the seam and then drive a nail catty-corner to that to the next plank below. That is how they were held together. They were all sewed together. They were just ordinary black house nails. (These were cut, wrought iron nails, not wire nails.) But the darn things lasted a long, long time. When the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed, one proviso was that a Chinaman could not own a merchant vessel of any kind. So the Chinamen had to sell these junks to anybody who would buy them - either that, or just break them up. That is when the junks started to go. Some of the local fishermen bought them at bargain rates and used them. They were very, very handy craft.

Pat Chase, who was the Star and Crescent tour captain, he and his father bought one of the junks. They used her for fishing and also, I regret to say, there was a certain amount of poaching done down in Mexico with the Chinese junks. I remember seeing one junk. It was a great big green three masted junk that used to anchor off the foot of Fifth Street. I don't know anything about her, who owned, her, or anything else, but I do remember her as a kid, seeing her anchored there. Johnny Wheaton, who was a ferryboat captain here for many years, showed me a photograph once of a little tiny two masted junk with just one Chinaman sitting in the junk. That picture was taken in 1916. So there was one junk on the bay. Amazingly, the name of the junk was *Hazel.* I don't know why a Chinaman would call a junk *Hazel,* but anyhow that was the name of the junk. Captain Wheaton had a picture of it.

When I was a kid the salmon boats were the backbone of the fishing fleet.

**RW:** I didn't know that salmon was this far south.

**GM:** It wasn't. (They were built for fishing up north.) [Transcriber: Omission as a result of poor tape clarity.] Apparently they started talking so loudly about the virtues of these fine fishing boats they had that (the way things do sometimes happen) they came to be known as Columbia River salmon boats. But, actually, it should be Sacramento River salmon boats. That is what the Butcher Boy was working around here now. She was the last one. When I was a kid, they were very common. Then, of course, gasoline engines were starting to come in and people began using the one cylinder engine boats. They gradually eased these salmon boats out of the trade and a few Monterey boats started coming down here. Then eventually [omission] these larger fishing boats took over the market trade, and, of course, by the time I was half grown they were all power boats and no sailing boats.

**RW:** But fishing by that time was like it is now, the albacore and yellowtail, and so forth, they didn't go out far enough.

**GM:** No, the fishing they did was just for local consumption. There was barracuda, yellowtail, and so on. I was down to the market the other day and I saw some fresh fish, a dollar sixty a pound. In my day you could get a whole barracuda for twenty-five cents. They are practically all gone now. Some barracuda come in here. I talked to Joe (?) and he told me they do bring in some barracuda now, but most of the local fishing is trucked up here now from Ensenada. Another fish that has disappeared completely is pompano. They are considered hot stuff back in Florida. I talked to Joe about that and he said you could get it here at the Yu Chee Chung Company. "I fly it in for them by air express from Florida. The Chinese are very fond of it."

When I was a kid, we used to go fishing from all of the wharves. We didn't go fishing much off the (?) wharf because that was too close to the sewer outfall. [Omission as a result of poor tape clarity] Somebody told me it wasn't a true shark; but it actually should be called butterfish. They are very similar in appearance and general make-up to a pompano.

**RW:** I understand San Diego bay at that time was clear and you could go swimming. The stingrays would love to get in the bay.

**GM:** Yeah, there was lots of fishing in the bay. You could even catch croakers from the Santa Fe wharf, perch, sea bass. When we got over to Point Loma we would start catching halibut. If you knew the right people you could fish off the quarantine wharf. That was a very favorite fishing place for, as I say, those who knew the right people could get on the base and fish there.

**RW:** Did you have a boat in your early days?

**GM:** The first boat I had - oh, this goes back to about 1910 - my brother and I had a "sharpie." A "sharpie" is a flat bottomed boat that is like a great big rowboat with two masts; one mast stuck up practically on the stem and the other masts set forward of the tiller to lighten up the sails, no jib, no head sail. In fact, I think I've heard them called Connecticut River "sharpies." In the early days Don Stewart told me there were a lot of "sharpies" on the bay here. I am surprised that nobody seems to think that the boat can be built quickly and easily with a centerboard.

**RW:** But it didn't have much shear.

**GM:** It had quite a bit of shear. This one we had was decked over with sort of a shelter-like. There were slats in the bottom, so if it took water, you wouldn't get your feet wet. Don told me that there were a lot of them used for local fishing not only inside the bay, but outside for fishing for the commercial market. There was a certain amount of firewood trade on the bay. There was some sort of brush which grew over on the strand and these people who had these "sharpies" would go over, cut the brush, and bring it back to town and sell it for firewood.

**RW:** I have a sketch of San Diego what it used to look like. Was it pretty well like that; do you remember? (Apparently looking at the sketch)

**GM:** I don't know where this is here. All I can think of, "Let's fill up some more of the bay, but all of the places that have disappeared, like Spanish Bight, which was between Coronado and North Island. It was of no value to anybody. At low tide it was practically nothing but mud. Then over where Shelter Island and over where Lindbergh Field are now, that was known as Dutch Flats. The place which they call "Spanish Landing" (was not where) the old Spanish sailors used to land. I've sailed over that time and again; the land wasn't even created until about 200 years after the Spaniards had left. Then they call it the "Spanish Landing."

Then there were other areas that were filled in like down the foot of 32nd Street, along the Coronado Strand. The west side, North Island has been greatly extended. And, of course, the whole Shelter Island/Harbor Island complex, that was all just mud flats when I was a kid. I tried to sail over that, or row over it, at high tide, as the case might be. There was a much larger area than what we have now.

**RW:** The lower end of San Diego bay, was it pretty shallow from silt?

**GM:** Yes, that was always quite shallow. It was worse after the flood of 1916 when the Otay dam went out. It carried a tremendous amount of debris into the lower end of the bay. For years after that disaster we had to be very careful not to hit a snag because the trees came down. I remember when I was sailing the *Butcher Boy* down there we hit a snag and it took the centerboard out. We got home as best we could with the centerboard dangling. We got her over to San Diego Marine Works and they managed to get her on a cradle so they could chop out what was left of the centerboard and put in a new one. It broke the thing right off and, of course, you couldn't get the thing back in again.

**RW:** When did you buy the *Butcher Boy?*

**GM:** We bought the *Butcher Boy* in 1917 just shortly before I went into the service myself. I bought it from a chap who had been drafted. I had her for 13 years.

**RW:** Do you remember what you paid for her?

**GM:** This will slay you. Ordinarily, when you buy a boat years later, or sometimes only months later, you sell it for a great deal less than you paid for it. That is the history of boats all the way through. Well, I bought the *Butcher Boy* for $250.

I thought I was a big operator, when, 13 years later, I sold her for $450. I was quite proud of myself. About a year later I got a telephone call one night from some Lieutenant Commander who was stationed here at Naval Training Station and he asked me if I had ever owned a boat called the *Butcher Boy.* I said, "Yes, I knew quite a bit about her." He asked me some questions about her and he said, "I am considering buying her, but I think the guy is a little bit high on the price." I said, "What is he asking?" He said, "$1500." That was the guy I had sold it to and that was just a couple of years before. It went up from $450 to $1500. That is just a drop in the bucket to what they finally had to pay to get her just this year.

**RW:** What is so outstanding about the *Butcher Boy* other than the fact that it is age-wise?

**GM:** The thing that is outstanding about her, Bob, is not the *Butcher Boy* in her present condition because she has been rebuilt twice as a yacht. She was originally built as a regular salmon boat. She was engaged in fishing when there were no ships coming in and then when some sailing ship was due, the *Butcher Boy* which was owned by the brother of the man who ran the biggest meat market in San Diego, she would sail out to him an incoming sailing vessel and get their order for meat and groceries and so on and sail back into the bay. When the ship was tied up to the dock there would be the yellow wagon from the Bay City Market there with all of their meat and stuff aboard. In between sailing ships she was used for fishing.

The importance of the *Butcher Boy* is the fact that it is a distinctly local type of a small work boat, and a type which was of great importance to the fishing industry, not only in San Diego, but in Sacramento, San Francisco, Astoria. As a matter of fact, that hull model is practically the one which was used by the Alaska Packers for their salmon boats which they operated up in Bristol Bay in the summertime.

**RW:** The hull design was such that it made it more seaworthy?

**GM:** It was extremely seaworthy. They handled easily. Of course, the *Butcher Boy* couldn't spin around on her heel the way a thin keel yacht does. You had to have about a half an acre to come about because you couldn't come about, not in a sudden, in a knuckle-jointed change of course, but in a long sweeping change of course because of that great long keel that ran the whole length of her. She didn't pivot to any great extent on her centerboard. She came around slowly and you had to bear that in mind. Also you had to bear in mind the fact that she would run a long way because she had tremendous momentum. She was very, very heavily ballasted.

**RW:** She probably carried quite a sail, then.

**GM:** Yes, she did, but then it was an important time. I am very glad to see what Ken Reynard and the boys over there are doing. He is forgetting about the fact that she has ever been a yacht, and putting her back as a work boat of 1902. She will be the only one in existence.

**RW:** Based on your photographs, probably, and other information.

**GM:** From the photographs and fortunately they froze (?) the motor pool. I used to belong to the yacht club years ago and I found this picture in my locker of the *Butcher Boy.* It was taken in 1905. Fortunately she is heeled over toward the camera. I was up on the wharf when the *Butcher Boy* went by and the result is that you got a photograph there that is darn near a deck plan. It shows all the details very beautifully.

Joe Jessop has dug up some other pictures of her which helps getting these little details which will be needed. In her last rebuild they raised her sides, they raised her about one plank at the bow and at the stern, and about two and a half or three planks, I'd say, amidship because she doesn't have much shear now. She had tremendous shear; she was beautiful. She was very low amidship but, as I recall her, she didn't have much freeboard amidship. In the stern she had maybe two feet, the bow maybe three feet or so. She had beautiful sweeping shear to her which they are putting back. Fortunately they can find the ends of the original frame.

**RW:** I was going to ask you, how much of the original of the *Butcher Boy* is there?

**GM:** Well, of course, her hull; all of her original hull would be there, the frames and the planking. Unfortunately, in her rebuild they took out her centerboard and put in a keel. But there is enough evidence left of where the centerboard was fastened and where the centerboard trunk went, so they will be able to put the centerboard trunk back exactly where it was. Even the slot is left at the bottom of her keel where the centerboard came out through. So they aren't going to have any problem at all in exactly locating the centerboard. They may have to recreate it from photographs because whoever had her set the mast quite a ways further aft than where it was originally. She will have to have a new bowsprit because the tremendous long bowsprit that she had is sawed off short. That is going to have to be replaced. In a way it seems a pity to tear all this stuff away because the chap who rebuilt her did beautiful work; the workmanship is superb. Some people are very unhappy that we are tearing it out, but why restore a 1971 yacht when you've got actually a 1902 work boat right under you there. She is going to be of considerable historical importance when he is restored. If I know Ken Reynard, she is going to be restored correctly, or not at all.

**RW:** That is typical Ken. That is why the *Star of India* is as well done as it is. I wanted to jump up to one thing before I forget it. I want to talk about the *Star of India* and your part in bringing it down. You seem to be fascinated somewhat by the Stingaree area; was it because of kind of a lively neighborhood?

**GM:** It was one of those naughty things that you mustn't talk about.

**RW:** And you were growing up in that area, too.

**GM:** My father would speak of Stingaree and my mother would say (while) tapping on the table that you just weren't supposed to know about it. It really bugged me when I found out this wasn't in the historical society (archives), a thing which, I'll grant you, was a nasty part of San Diego history, but definitely a part of the social history of San Diego. There wasn't a line about it in the files because Mr. Marston didn't approve of Stingaree. What I started out was for a file up there. When I went to work as a police reporter on the Tribune in 1921 there were still several cops who were familiar with it. You see, that was only ten years after Stingaree had closed in 1911. There were still a few of the old cops who had walked beats in Stingaree. I sat down and made notes of what I could remember what these cops had told me. You know, a funny thing, when I was down there on police beat - that's when they had no police station - on Second Street right next door to where the Shore Patrol is now. This dreadful old hag used to come shuffling down the sidewalk in a lousy looking dress and carpet slippers on. Frequently she would stop in front of the police station and chat with some of the older policemen, then go shuffling along on down Second Street. I asked George Pringle one day, one day after he had been talking to her, "George, who is the old lady who comes by and talks to you?" He said, "That's Ida Bailey!" She was the most famous "madam" in San Diego; she is the one who ran Canary Cottage.

**RW:** She must have been quite old at that time.

**GM:** She was way, way up in years. Ida Bailey was in business here back in the 1890s.

**RW:** You never did talk to her, I take it.

**GM:** No, I never did, and I wish I had. I wish somebody had talked to her. That was a time of history that people let slip through their fingers.

The thing that hurt San Diego history more than anything else was what I call the "guitar and frijoles" syndrome - if it ain't Spanish then it ain't history." They left so much stuff go down the drain because they were so busy telling and retelling and retelling over again the story of the Spanish missions and Father Serra. Nothing else counted.

**RW:** I think you are right on that because I can remember coming out here at 12 years of age from the New England area and all I was aware of was the Spanish atmosphere, the Spanish history, when there was actual Indian history here. And, of course, the development of San Diego from the 1850s on up, or even before that. Now you seldom hear about it, but I am more aware of it because of my later activities. It is true, there is a lot of history that has gone through San Diego.

**GM:** There were people who were still living who had taken part in what you might say the American occupation. They were just ignored. Of course most of them died and took their stories with them. A good example of this is that nobody knows what happened to James Keating who was the first keeper of the first Point Loma lighthouse. I found out recently, purely by accident, that he was one of the pilots here, if not the first pilot here in San Diego. There was another chap who was involved with a waterfront character. He picked up little bits about him here and there, but nobody ever thought while the man was still living to talk to him and get his stuff down - a fellow by the name of Enos Wall. He was the assistant keeper out at the lighthouse. He was a whaler and operated a whaling station here at one time. And those people were just allowed to go.

**RW:** That is true. That is why I have enjoyed talking to fellows like John Davidson because he was 20 years old when he got to San Diego and he can remember from 1906, I believe it is, on up to the present time. He still has that sharp memory. I've interviewed him and have his tape; it is a long one. I wanted to ask you about the *Star of India.* I know we've been jumping around enormously. Usually I like to just go chronologically all the way through and pick out things and then go back and go over it again. But we've been jumping around a bit, which is all right because what you are saying is great.

I know from your book, Star of India - The Log of an Iron Ship, tells quite a bit about the ship itself and how it was acquired. Is there anything you want to add to it? I'd like to know of your part in it and your trip down when you towed her down from the Oakland estuary.

**GM:** What started us off was a little article appearing on the front page of the Union one day about how they were going to save the *Benjamin F. Packard* back in New York. That gave a couple of us an idea. I rounded up some people whom I thought might be interested: Dr. (Harry) Wegeforth who was head of the zoo; Captain (W.C.) Crandall, who at that time was head of the Scripps Institute of oceanography, and very much interested in ships and their history; Commander McKane; Howard Morin; and myself. We met at the yacht club which at that time was over in Coronado. We all decided this was an awfully good idea to get hold of a sailing ship for a museum in San Diego. Dr. Wegeforth (of course he was a medical doctor) actually was a frustrated showman. He was nuts about any kind of a show and, of course, his monument was the San Diego Zoo. He started out with a couple of mangy animals in a piano box with chicken wire nailed over the front of it. That is how the zoo began. Now you see what he did with it. He had the idea of having an aquarium aboard the ship. Captain Crandall was also very much in favor of that. So the original idea was that we would get a ship and bring her down here, and she'd be moored down along the waterfront as a floating aquarium and also a maritime museum of sorts. Well, then we started casting about for ships. There were several that were considered. I had a friend up in San Francisco who did some scouting around.

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**Tape 2, Side 1:**

Finally, we got in touch with the Alaska Packers and found out that there were three ships that were available: the *Santa Clara* which we could have for $7,500; the *Star of India* was for $9,000; the *Star of France* for which they wanted $12,000. We discarded the Star _of France right away because we knew we might possibly, with great good luck, could get $9,000 where we would never get $12,000. So we forgot about the *Star of France,* a very beautiful ship, a full-rigged ship, iron, no leaking, 1876 from Belfast.

**RW:** Was this about 1925?

**GM:** Yes, 1925. A lot of people said we'd better take the *Santa Clara* as she was the most reasonably priced and not only that, but she is an American ship. We turned down the *Santa Clara* simply because of the fact that she was wood and we knew in this climate she just would not last! Actually, we were rather severely criticized for buying the *Star of India* instead of the *Santa Clara* because she was a British ship and the *Santa Clara* was an American ship. "Why didn't we get an American ship? She had been in here in the early days and ties in with local history." All of which was perfectly true, but there was that one angle of a wooden ship. We were so lucky because if we had bought the *Santa Clara,* of course, she would have been gone many, many years by now; she just wouldn't last.

Then came the burning question of the $9,000, which, of course, we didn't have. At one of the meetings Dr. Wegeforth said, "Jerry, your father used to be quite well acquainted with Jim Coffroth during his days in San Francisco, so you get your father to lay the arm on Jim Coffroth." I said, "Why pick me?" Wegeforth was a very persistent salesman, so the upshot of it was that when I went home that night I propositioned my father about it. He said he would see what he could do. So the next day he went over to see Jim Coffroth. He hemmed and he hawed and finally got to the point of did he have any idea where we could raise $9,000. And Jim said, "Yeah, I have." He opened his desk drawer, took out his checkbook and wrote out a check for $9,000. So that is how we got the $9,000 for the *Star of India.*

**RW:** Can you think of any reason why Mr. Coffroth did it?

**GM:** Apparently the idea appealed to him; he liked old things himself and he thought this was a worthy idea of getting a floating aquarium. He was very fond of the zoo. So he said, "All right, I'll go for the $9,000," which he did. So we closed the deal and bought the *Star of India.* Then we didn't have any money to tow her down here.

After several months, the Packers were beginning to get a little edgy; they wanted to get her out of there. Also, there was some indication that she was, to a certain extent, being cannibalized while she was still in the Packer's yard. They didn't know what to do about it. Dr. Wegeforth, without Authorization from his board of directors, drew the money out of the zoo to bring her down here, for which he was subsequently told that if he ever did that again, he would pay it out of his own pocket. We contacted the Red Stack Line people and they wanted $350 a day for a tug from the time she left San Francisco with the Star until she got back to San Francisco. That was out of the question; that was astronomical. About that time a captain by the name of Walter Brunnick was out of a job. He had been the skipper of a freighter. He used to be here as a commanding officer of one of the Naval Reserve training ships. He went around and talked to Dr. Harry (Wegeforth) and said, "Look, send me up to San Francisco and I'll scout around and see what I can do." They paid his expenses to go up there. He browsed around and found that the McCormick Steamship Company's steam schooner, *Wampa* was available for a job of that kind. According to the story that we got, she had a towing winch, which I don't believe because Harry Dring was never able to find any trace of anyone ever knowing of a towing winch on the *Wampa.* She just had a couple of big gaps back on the fantail.

However the McCormick people would tow her to San Pedro for $500, so Harry told him to go ahead and make the deal and get what tools he would need. He had to have a cook and a donkeyman - she still had her steam boiler on the back - to raise the anchor and all that sort of thing, and a couple

of sailors. Brunnick picked up a volunteer mate whose father was an old clipper ship captain. They got as far as San Pedro and anchored off Long Beach.

**RW:** Excuse me, Jerry, I thought you were involved with that actual towing from San Francisco down.

**GM:** Only from San Pedro down. To save money, "Gimpy" Brunnick fired the crew when they got to San Pedro, with the exception of the cook and the donkeyman; he fired the sailors. We could get by with that in those days, but you wouldn't now. About 11:00 o'clock one night I got a long distance telephone call, collect, from San Pedro from "Gimpy" Brunnick and he said, "Look, we are in Long Beach and I fired the crew. Get ahold of the Navy and see if they will get us down to San Diego." I got Dr. Harry out of bed. I guess he used to work through the night getting people out of bed here and there, because, not the next morning, but the following morning we were all set that we would go up to San Pedro. He had two bosun mates, one was named Sobieski who just died a couple of weeks ago; and a guy named Crose; Ernest Dort, who was postmaster at the time, and who was a reserve officer; and myself. We were the ones who were sent up to make up a crew for "Gimpy" Brunnick to bring the ship down.

Meanwhile they had gotten in touch with Admiral Phelps who was commander-in-chief of the Fleet Base Force. In those days the Navy was very generous about donating transportation to worthy causes, so they detailed a minesweeper - I think it was the *USS TERN* - to tow us down to San Diego. Also, they flew us up from North Island in one of the old Navy flying boats. We went in there off Long Beach and went over to the ship. We got in there before noon. We started getting ready, getting the anchor up. We had the anchor up and the *TERN* came alongside and passed a towing wire over to us. We shackled the towing wire onto one end of our anchor chains and let out about 15 fathoms to act as sort of a spring. You know, you take up the slack of a chain, and the slack takes up the slack in the cables, and so on. It is a pretty good homemade towing winch just in itself. We got underway, as I recall, about 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon, headed for San Diego.

We got down here the next morning early. Coming into the bay the first thing we shortened up the tow to bring her into the bay. We got just off the Naval Air Station and we got into the darndest pea-soup fog I had ever seen in San Diego bay. So we had to drop the anchor. A few hours later the fog burned off. The donkey boiler was leaking like a sieve. It hadn't been retubed or anything and there was about as much steam coming out of the fire boxes as going into the cylinders. But we were able to get the anchor up. That was the last job that that donkey engine ever did, getting our anchor up off of North Island.

We finally brought her into Broadway pier. Then one of the Star and Crescent tugs brought us over to just about where she is now, along the Embarcadero. She lay there for a couple of years, then was moved down to about the foot of State Street. The Harbor Department very obligingly threw together some old timbers and built a wharf for us and she lay down there for a couple of years until she was finally hauled away from there to go to the shipyard in 1959, her first dry dock in some 35 years, and got started on her way up.

**RW:** I know she was moored up off of where the police station is for years. Were you involved in getting her in there; when she was in place there?

**GM:** Joe Brennan said that space was available down there. They sent a pile driver down there and put in some piling and put in some sort of a dock.

**RW:** Then the stream was filled in behind it.

**GM:** Yeah. There was a little road down there; it wasn't paved; it was just a rough road down there. Harbor Drive hadn't been paved yet. Then it *(Star of India)* kind of fell apart when it was down there.

**RW:** Was the donkey engine in the deckhouse where the carpenter shop was to be?

**GM:** Yep. You see that deckhouse originally was three feet longer than it is now. Not having a donkey engine, Ken Reynard decided, due to the very narrow space, the aft end of the deckhouse came up almost to the main hatch. He could see all sorts of problems with tourists falling down the hatch trying to crawl through that narrow space. The deckhouse, when they got into it, was dry rotted out anyhow, so it had to be torn out. When it was replaced, instead of replacing it where it had been, he placed it about three feet forward of where it had been. So that carpenter shop is smaller than where the old donkey room was.

**RW:** By coincidence, the second weekend that I worked on the Star we tore that out. When I got my ride down there on a Saturday morning, it had already been cut off. We used the winch and any block and tackle and just literally tore it apart. It was so full of dry rot, even down through the decking. You could just take it out with your hands in powder form. We just took it off and threw it over on the sidewalk there. It was one of the hardest days of my life of working; but it is true, she was really gone.

**GM:** I saw where the deck was all rotted where the boiler had been from the fresh water which had leaked.

**RW:** I was surprised you didn't use the capstan, or something like that, to raise the anchor. Gt4: Well, we did. The capstan was operated from this donkey engine.

**RW:** Oh, I was referring to the capstan on the fo'c'sle head.

**GM:** That was operated from the donkey engine. From the aft end of the deckhouse there was a vertical shaft that went up to the conical gear on top of it and that engaged the conical gear of what they called the tumbling shaft that ran clear across the width of the deckhouse. On each end of the tumbling shaft there was what they called the gypsy head for handling lines and that sort of thing. They could use it for hoisting, like what you've got here (looking at picture). Now, in addition to these two gypsies on the tumbling shaft, there was a third wheel - that was a wildcat - and there was an endless chain that ran from this tumbling shaft up across the break between the deckhouse and the poop and into the base of the capstan, around another wildcat around the capstan base and back again. When you started up on this endless chain there was a clutch that you could engage or disengage. So when you were engaging the clutch on this wildcat on the tumbling shaft, then when that shaft revolved, of course, it pulled your chain in. This endless chain from the donkey engine up to the capstan is what operated the capstan. So you used the donkey engine for raising the anchor.

**RW:** I see. It could be all disengaged and you could manually use it if you wanted to.

**GM:** Yes. There was a key that you pulled out, about an inch and a half square steel key, that engaged in two key rings in the capstan. If you pulled those out, that disengaged all this machinery inside of the thing, and let you operate it by hand.

**RW:** Was the Star kept up before you acquired it? I know the donkey engine leaked and so forth, but how about the gearing, was that operable?

**GM:** Yeah, that all worked because they checked that thing out. Brunnick and Jim Worling and the crew checked that all out while they were still in Oakland Creek because they knew they were going to have to anchor in San Francisco bay. And with only five men, you know what a job it would have been getting that anchor up. They had to have that in operating condition and they did. And they used it in getting the anchor up when the Wampa picked them up in San Francisco bay. And, of course, they anchored in Long Beach, so we got the anchor up in Long Beach and we got the anchor up near the Naval Air Station here when the fog shut us down.

**RW:** From my experiences of manually running the capstan, raising • the yards up, and so forth, that is just plain work; you get tired going round and round. Invariably when the rope snaps, when it is shifting my leg is going over it, I get snapped and it hurts! Was she painted black like she is now?

**GM:** Yep.

**RW:** Is there any change from what she is today from what she was then, color wise?

**GM:** Yes, indeed, because the Alaska Packers, they were hell for this French yellow paint - French yellow and boxcar red, everything. The whole works was French yellow inside. The masts are French yellow, which they still are, that is correct. The deckhouse was French yellow trimmed with boxcar red. The lifeboats were boxcar red. That beautiful teak skylight back by the poop, that was painted French yellow.

**RW:** I would call it mast color now; is that right?

**GM:** Yeah, mast color. Privately I will tell you what the sailors generally called it, but not on a tape recorder.

**RW:** Was she fairly sound, the decking?

**GM:** Yes, her decks were very sound. What we used to do at first, one of the useful things that the Sea Scouts did, on Sea Scout drill night, there was a hand pump up near the fo'c'sle. They would man that pump and pump saltwater and we would hose the decks down with saltwater once a week.

**RW:** That would keep her tight. Was the rigging fairly good aloft?

**GM:** It was beginning to go. As a matter of fact, we used to replace when we could from stuff which we had scrounged from various places. The Navy was very good. In those days they used manila boat falls on all the ships. When those falls were condemned we worked the angles and got the condemned cartage that they were going to haul out to the dump. We put it on a barge and brought it over to the *Star of India.* The wire runners for the braces, the wire part that comes down to the bottom, a lot of those were discarded winch runners off of steam schooners, which I personally used to scrounge for myself. We scrounged paint from various people.

I remember one night coming down the gangway of one of the Breaker Line ships lugging a ten gallon drum of mast color paint with me. It was heavy. There was a friendly watchman along the pier, but I got by with it all right. Just recently the Maritime Research Society, which meets there now, really put the ship alive. The zoo was getting sick and tired of the *Star of India* by that time, along with a little period of her depression. The Maritime Research Society, by holding their regular meetings down there, at least kept her alive and they would donate a little money from time to time. I remember they donated money for ratlines at one time. Then with donations here and donations there and they made donations with the stuff that they were able to high-grade, such as winch runners and barrels of paint, and one thing and another. The society was limited to 40 members because they used to hold their meetings in aft cabin there and 40 was all they could get in there. They were known around the waterfront as the 40 thieves. Everything that they stole, of course, went to the *Star of India.*

**RW:** Who were some of the fellows in the original 40 thieves, and why were they formed?

**GM:** I went down aboard a Coast Guard cutter here one day and asked the skipper for some information on something - I forget what it was - and this Captain Morrow, a Lieutenant in the Coast Guard, he said, "I can't help you, but why don't you go to your local maritime society?" I said, "There isn't any local maritime society." "What, in a port like San Diego, there isn't a local maritime society?" He said, "You should have one." About that time I met a retired Coast Guard officer named Dave Marvin. Dave was a very scholarly chap (one of the nicest guys I've ever known) and Captain Bob Baker. Bob Baker's father, and three or four of us finally had lunch together one day and decided that we would establish some sort of a maritime society in San Diego. That is how it came to be formed.

**RW:** That was in what year?

**GM:** Oh, that was, I'd say, along in the early 1930s. We got out two publications in our whole career: one was that little list of merchant vessels, The San Diego Trade, a very modest thing because we only had about $35 to spend on it. Even in those days you couldn't get very much for $35. Then the reprinting of the Lyman list of the sailing vessels on the west coast. That was virtually way over as it would be at no cost to them. They still show these down there and, as I say, if it hadn't been for them, the old *Star of India* wouldn't be here today.

One of the ways in which they definitely saved the ship - during the war, one of our local super patriots, without consulting the owners of the Star, got in touch with the Office of War Production, or whatever it was, and said, "Look, there is a battered up old sailing ship down here in San Diego that nobody wants, with 6,000 tons of the finest steel in her. You'd better get down here and grab her for the scrap drive." So, quick as a flash, (this was the Los Angeles office) they got a hold of this marine surveyor and sent him down here to see if it would be practical to cut up the *Star of India* for scrap metal.

By great good fortune, the marine surveyor happened to be a member of the Maritime Research Society in San Diego, Captain A. C. Wilvers. He used to come down from San Pedro for every one of our meetings. He made a survey on her and went back and told them, "Oh, no, she is nothing but rust; there is practically no steel left in her. The cost of breaking her up would be fantastic. It is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of." So the office of wartime confusion said, "Thank you very much; we won't break up the *Star of India.*"

One of our members ran into Captain Wilvers not long after that and said, "We didn't know she was in that bad shape; this is terrible; she could sink under our feet any minute." The Captain said, "Shut up, you damn fool, she could go to sea tomorrow, but I wasn't going to be a party to having that fine old ship cut up for scrap." It was that close to having her go for scrap metal.

[Editorial note - Jim Mills: This is wrong. Jerry has mixed up two different events. They wanted to rig the ship down and use her for a barge. That was why they had her surveyed by Wilvers. They didn't need to survey her to scrap her. I remember what Wilvers said that night very well. It wasn't what Jerry remembered. What Wilvers said was that he drilled into the bottom plates and told the authorities they were far too thin. He told us that they were in great shape.]

**RW:** You say the owners, how many owners were there on the Star in the last years since 1926?

**GM:** She was owned by the San Diego Zoological Society. After I guess about ten years or so of ownership of the *Star of India,* they had had it right up to here; they got sick and tired of it. The idea of the aquarium had long since fallen through. She *(Star of India)* was getting to be a drain on them and they had no interest in her. So we got together and formed what is now the Maritime Museum Association which was made up of those people who were on the zoo's board of directors and they gave the *Star of India* to this newly incorporated group, which originally was called the San Diego Aquarium Society. They gave the ship to the San Diego Aquarium Society. Of course, they didn't have any resources or finances or anything else. She didn't start going downhill because she had been going downhill for several years already.

**RW:** What year was this that the Aquarium Society gave it up?

**GM:** I would say probably in the late 1930s. They retained title to her and finally the society changed its name to Maritime Museum Association because, of course, by that time all thoughts of an aquarium had vanished as completely fantastically impractical. I'll never forget one of our directors actually made a motion that the *Star of India* be turned over to the Navy for use as a target. Fortunately, there was no second to the motion. That was what the thinking was.

Those of us who were on the board, because we couldn't get anybody to go on the board, nobody wanted to have anything to do with her. People wouldn't accept being put on the board, "I don't want to be mixed up with that; to hell with it." But a bunch of stubborn old men, some not as old as the rest of them, but some of them pretty well along in years, they hung on and said, "Our thinking all the way through was that someday somebody is going to come up with the answer. There has got to be an answer somewhere."

Then Alan Villiers came in on a lecture tour. That was 1957. I attended the lecture and I said to him, "You know, we have an old windjammer down here in San Diego." "Yes," he said, "I must go down and see her tomorrow." I said, "Fine, I don't know if I will be available or not, but what time are you likely to be down there?" "Oh," he said, "around nine o'clock." "I'll go down and see that you are taken care of," I said. That was when there was a one-man crew, or rather a one-woman crew; Grace Hoff was the custodian then. As soon as I got through with Villiers - this was about 11:30 at night - I called John Bunker at his home. I said, "Look, John, I got Alan Villiers coming down to the *Star of India* and you'd better get yourself down there about nine o'clock and just by accident you might have a photographer along; there might be a possible time for a photograph with him." So, sure enough, there was John Bunker and a cameraman down there the next morning. Apparently he and Villiers hit it off very well together and that afternoon the Tribune came out with a three-column cut on page one. Here was Alan Villiers with a very sore look on his face surveying the *Star of India,* with a three-column head over, "She's a bloody mess." And Villiers gave out a blistering interview for the kind of people who would let this sort of thing happen to a fine old ship like the "Jolly Old Euterpe." That, Bob, was the spark which lighted.

[Editorial note: Jim Mills indicates that the above statement is incorrect - that most of the above activities were performed by him (Mills) and not by Mr. MacMullen.]

The guy who lighted it particularly was John Bate, the port director. Bate gathered us together and said, "Let's see what can be done about the *Star of India* before it is too late. He got in touch with Jack Donnelley who, in a moment of weakness, agreed to be the chairman of the finance committee and the restoration committee and the fund raising committee, the doorbell ringing committee and the arm twisting committee and all that sort of thing. And she started on her way up. But I am so convinced that it was that, "She's a bloody mess!" and the nasty remarks which Alan Villiers made. That is why we sometimes refer to Alan Villiers as the patron saint of the *Star of India.*

He not only did that, but when restoration was well on the way towards completion and we had our 100th birthday celebration, we were able to get Alan Villiers out here as the guest speaker.

**RW:** I was fortunate; I attended that. Of course, I had been involved with the ship a couple of years myself by then. When did Ken Reynard get involved?

**GM:** Shortly after the restoration started. That would be in about 1959 or 1960. That was a case of 'one man's bad luck is somebody elses good luck.' Ken was on the beach; he was on a cannery tender running back and forth between here and Peru. They sold the cannery tender and here was Ken on the beach. He floundered around and allowed as how maybe he could do something about the *Star of India.* So they latched onto him with great glee, because they hadn't had anybody by that time. It was purely on a committee basis. One committee would go down and say to do this; another committee would go down and say do that. There was no coordination.

They had an old guy on there as a sort of a caretaker. He was a master mariner, a very fine old gent, but a little difficult to get along with. Somebody was insistent that he should be in charge of rerigging the ship. He was getting a little tiring on his feet. Then we had another guy who somebody tried to shove down our throats, a rigger up in San Francisco. That was not Jack Dickerhoff the rigger. The deal was that he would come down here, but he wouldn't do any work; he would just tell other people how to do it. That was the time we got Jack Dickerhoff to come down here.

**Tape 2, Side 2:**

Jack was the one who supervised taking the masts off of her, which is the luckiest thing we ever did because they were in bad shape. They didn't do that on the *Balclutha* and they are in trouble now as a result of it. S should have taken her masts off when they had her alongside the dock. Anyhow, we got her masts off and put doubler around them, then put them back in again.

Jack went back to San Francisco and took the old rigging which had been rolled up. He worked it over and sent it back down and also cut a lot of new rigging and sent it down. By that time Ken had taken over. Of course, putting it in the hands of an expert that we've got here, everything went along nicely.

**RW:** That is about the time I got involved. I know that the Star now is a real asset to San Diego and I hope she continues to be; I am sure she will.

**GM:** The thing that makes me happy about the Star is the fact that although at times Ken is such a perfectionist he drives you stark, raving crazy sometimes. The result of that perfectionism is the fact that she has been restored as a sailing ship and not as a tourist trap.

**RW:** There is a big difference, I know.

**GM:** This business they have also done with other restorations. You come on a rusty frame somewhere and somebody will say we'll put a coat of paint on her and you lay the planks back down again. Well, when Ken took the badly rusted frame and said, "Okay, come on with the torch and we'll burn this out and weld in a new (piece) with red lead or what,, and then put the planking back down." As a result of doing it that way, we aren't having the problems that other ships are having. They are having real problems on the *Balclutha.* As a matter of fact, about half of her yards are down because the insurance company won't let them keep them up there, all of which could have been saved had they taken about three weeks more time when they were in the shipyard. But they had the trouble that we had. We fought them off, the secondary people, and up there they didn't fight them off. The secondary people wanted to get the job done, "Hurry up, hurry up." They wanted to open it up to the people so they could get the money started coming in to pay off all the debts. So they did; they just rushed everything. And they are paying for it now.

**RW:** How do you feel about the idea of actually sailing her?

**GM:** I think it is the grandest thing that I ever heard of. I am a little impatient with some of these timid people who don't have anything to do saying we don't have anyone to handle her, because with a nucleus crew we could have handled her. I see no danger whatsoever. It would be a wonderful thing to take her out and do a documentary film on handling a vessel like her.

**RW:** I thought there was a problem with insurance, for instance.

**GM:** That's a funny story. We were told right and left that when we went to get the insurance on her it would cost the price of the ship itself. But I had a funny experience over the insurance on that ship when she was still in the hands of the restoration committee. She hadn't been turned over to the Maritime Museum Association yet because the restoration committee had so many debts against her that naturally they weren't going to turn her over until they were paid off. At that time they were talking, at the time of one of these annual Portuguese celebrations here, about getting the *Star of India* in a nautical parade. I talked it over with some of the Portuguese people and we had a scheme of getting just two tops'ls and a couple of jibs and bringing her up with a tug to about La Playa and then heading up the bay - this, of course, being the time of year when you could depend on the

northwest breeze, and not too much of it - have the tug started down the bay and when you got a perfectly fair amount of wind aft, have the tug cast off, and, by golly, you'd have the Star under sail, in a limited way, on her own. They thought, too, that this would be a terrific idea.

So I went back to the restoration committee and they practically threw me out. "This is ridiculous; we can't have this sort of thing going on; it is foolhardy. They'd sink the ship; they'd run into an aircraft carrier; they'd do all this and they'd do all that; you couldn't possibly get insurance on it." I didn't say anything, but I called up a friend of mine the next day and told him what the problem was. He said, "Oh, we can insure that with no trouble at all; it won't be too much. It might be high, but it won't be prohibitive." So at the next meeting of the restoration committee I said, "About this idea of sailing the Star, I have found an insurance man who will insure the *Star of India* for the period that she is under sail."

Somebody said, "Who is it?" Like a damn fool I told them who it was. The next day my friend called up and said, "You know, I am sorry, but I am going to have to back off on that insurance deal." Very subtly I said, "Would you like to insure the *Star of India* for one day, or would you like to have "who-sits" one million dollar a year insurance when you can't have both?" I have since made some inquiries and I've never told anybody who this insurance man was. He is not in San Diego; he is from out of town, but he has assured me that it would be practical to insure the *Star of India* for two or three days, even under sail, with proper safe guidance. Incidentally, did you notice the mayor in his speech yesterday? He stuck his feet right into the middle of it. He said, "You know, someday we'll see that ship actually under sail again."

**RW:** But there was also a time set, too, about next year. I don't know who said it, I've forgotten now, but somebody said, "Next year."

**GM:** I'd like to see it done. It is going to require some wire pulling. It will depend very largely on the personnel of these regulatory agencies, shall we say. There is a certain agency which I shall not name, which has some people who are horrified at the idea of sailing the *Star of India.* And there are others who say it will be all right. There is only one thing required to get permission and that is that "I am invited to go along with you when you go."

**RW:** Yeah, the ship would be overcrowded with not enough room for the crew to work.

**GM:** The big problem would be keeping people off of her.

**RW:** She is a beautiful looking thing. As far as you know, she is safe according to marine survey. Has she been surveyed lately?

**GM:** No, she hasn't been surveyed. For the old ships that they used to take out for the movies, they never had surveys on them either. But on one of these short term deals, we know from the way the work has been done that there is nothing that is going to let go anywhere on her.

**RW:** You are talking about just an overnight sort of a thing?

**GM:** Yeah.

**RW:** That is, towed out to just beyond the Point (Loma) and then the sails up. That is great; I'd like to see it myself. I know that I have reservations.

**Interviewer's note:** This is the end of the interview. I kick myself for not asking him what happened to the donkey engine. I have an idea that it was scrapped out, sold for scrap in order to pay for paint or something else to maintain the Star as best they could, back in the 1930s, yet I don't know for sure.

***END OF INTERVIEW***