

SEARS

AMERICAN MERCHANT SHIPS

1850-1900

By
FREDERICK C. MATTHEWS



JAN 22 1932

SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
MARINE RESEARCH SOCIETY

1930
C.S.

CSL

387

M431a

Nancy Pendleton when new and after serving in her as master some eight or nine years was transferred to the *William H. Connor*. In 1885, Capt. Benjamin F. Pendleton, with his son-in-law Capt. Wilfred V. Nichols and his cousin Fred Carver, the son of Capt. Ben. Carver of the Searsport-built ship *B. Aymar*, established the firm of Pendleton, Carver & Nichols, shipowners and brokers, of New York. This firm continued until about 1900, by which time the California Shipping Company of San Francisco had bought up about all the Eastern sailing ships then operating.

Prior to taking command of the *Nancy Pendleton*, Capt. Benjamin F. Pendleton had been master of the brig *Leghorn*, the bark *Edgar* and the ships *William B. Kent*, *Bell Rock* and *Charlotte White*. He was succeeded in the *Nancy* by three nephews, in turn, Capt. Phineas Pendleton, 3rd, Frank I. and James N. Pendleton. Another nephew was Capt. John G. Pendleton, Jr., who was lost with all his crew in the ship *Solferino*, supposed to have foundered in a hurricane in the Indian Ocean, in 1861, while bound to Europe with a rice cargo.

NEW ERA

THE ship *New Era* was designed and constructed by John W. Griffith, a prominent naval architect who had planned many of the celebrated clippers of 20 years before and was given her name through being the first ship built with bent timbers, the invention of Mr. Griffith. Every frame timber that required curvature was bent from the straight log, the futtocks being extended in one stick from keel to rail. The use of iron, however, supplemented this method and the *New Era* is said to have been the only ship constructed in exact accordance with the ideas of her designer.

The *New Era*, built in 1870, was 179 feet, by 38, by 23 feet, and registered 1140 tons. Capt. J. Henry Sears of Boston is said to have been financially interested in her but her managing owners were given as Glidden & Williams, a prominent Boston shipping firm, and she was built for trade with the Orient. She made no passages around Cape

NEW ERA

Horn to the westward although on several occasions she reached San Francisco from China or Japan and then took wheat cargoes to the United Kingdom. She is said to have been of good model but so far as can be learned has no fast passages to her credit.

On Oct. 17, 1881, the *New Era* sailed from Hong Kong, with general cargo for San Francisco, encountering moderate northeasterly winds for the first few days. A strong gale from the north-northeast, accompanied with thick rainy weather, then blew up and lasted 12 hours. Fair weather was then had until noon of the 24th when the ship's position was by observation, 19:26 north, 120:41 east, the wind then being moderate from north-northeast. By midnight this had increased to a strong gale with heavy, overcast weather and a falling barometer. At noon of the 25th, a heavy gale from north-northwest was blowing with much rain and no observation could be obtained but it was judged that the ship was 65 miles due north of Cape Bojeador, the northwest point of the Island of Luzon. In attempting to take in sail, two topsails were blown away but the ship was finally hove to under a goose-winged maintopsail, on the starboard tack. The barometer had steadily fallen to 29:30. At 4 P.M. the typhoon had veered to the northwest, blowing with great violence, accompanied with heavy rain, thick weather and a very high sea. These conditions continued until noon of the 26th when it eased up a little and a lower foretopsail was bent and the sail set. At 4 P.M. the ship was wore off to the northward, the wind then hard from west-northwest. At midnight it moderated a little and the sea went down to some extent, the weather, however, still thick, with drizzling rain; the barometer at 29:10.

Shortly after midnight the 27th, breakers were seen on the starboard side extending three points forward the beam. Wore ship to southwest but soon after she struck the ground and kept driving and pounding over the reef until 1:30 A.M. when she remained fast and lay comparatively quiet. At daylight she had bilged and lay with head offshore which was seen to be a hard, sandy beach, half a mile distant. The wind had again increased to a strong gale from the westward, a heavy sea had got up on the reef and large breakers had formed around the ship as well as out a considerable distance to sea.

A lifeboat was then lowered but it stove alongside and filled, drifting away to the southward with three of the crew. It was now evident that the ship would soon break up but it was decided best to remain by her rather than attempt landing with a boat through the heavy breakers. At 9 a.m. the masts fell and soon after the ship broke in pieces and became a total wreck. The remainder of the ship's company, 17 in number, were lashed to the starboard quarter rail and after an hour and a half of hard struggle with the waves, all got ashore safely about five miles to the southward of Cape Bojeador. Here they were agreeably surprised to find the men who had gone adrift in the damaged lifeboat. None of the ship's company were seriously injured although some of them were badly bruised. They saved no clothing but what they had on and that was in a very torn condition. They were kindly treated by the natives and on the following day were taken to Passequine, a small village about four miles from the scene of the wreck. There they remained until the Alcalde of the Province, Sr. Juan Piquines, hearing of their predicament, arrived and had them forwarded overland to Salamanque whence they were given passage on a Spanish steamer to Manila.

The *New Era* was insured in Boston for \$36,000. Her wreck was sold for \$755. The cargo realized \$3,000. Capt. C. H. Sawyer, who had been in the ship for several years, was in command when she was lost.

NORTH AMERICAN

THE ship *North American* was built by Curtis & Smith of East Boston, Mass., for Henry Hastings & Co., and launched Jan. 3, 1873. She was 220 feet, by 41, by 24 feet, and registered 1,584 tons. For her first few years she was considered by many authorities as the finest American ship afloat and at every port she visited, her beautiful model, lofty, symmetrical spars and extreme neatness in every respect caused much favorable comment. Capt. George W. Tucker was appointed her first commander.

During the greater part of her career the *North American* was en-

NORTH AMERICAN

gaged in trade between North Atlantic ports and the Orient, but during her early life she made five Cape Horn passages to San Francisco and later was at that port several times from China or Japan to load grain for the United Kingdom. She took in all eleven such cargoes.

On her maiden voyage the *North American* established a reputation for fast sailing ability that was consistently maintained throughout her whole career. Leaving New York, May 14, 1873, she arrived at Melbourne on July 24th, in 72 days' passage, having logged 14,112 miles, an average of 196 per day. From Melbourne she was 51 days to San Francisco, logging 10,500 miles; daily average, 204 miles; and from San Francisco to Liverpool was 95 days, logging 16,919 miles, an average of 178 miles daily. This total of 218 sailing days figures out an average of eight knots per hour throughout. Her run from San Francisco to Liverpool is often quoted as 94 or 93 days but Captain Tucker's report is as follows: "Took departure from San Francisco Bay buoy, noon, December 1, 1873; sighted Pitcairn Island on the 23rd day out, averaging thus far 189 miles daily. On January 3rd, had the wind from the westward, when a gale sprung up which continued until the 9th. During this period made some good runs of which 250 miles was the best day and 218 the least. Passed Cape Horn 41 days out. On January 13th, in southwest gales made 273 miles, and four days later made 281, the best day's run on the passage. On two subsequent days made 273 each. At noon, March 6th, passed the Skerries and at 1:30 took a pilot off Point Lynas, 95 days, 1½ hours from point of departure. Least mileage on any one day, 38."

The *North American* is credited with a run of 108 days from Philadelphia to San Francisco; one of 27 days, Yokohama to San Francisco, and one from Shanghai to Port Townsend of 30 days. On parts of various voyages she did some remarkable work; from 50° south, Pacific, to the Line, 16½ days, thence 20 days to the Golden Gate entrance; from the Line in the Pacific to the San Francisco Bar, 14 days, which has never been beaten and is one day shorter than the *Flying Cloud*'s; fastest; from longitude 175° east, to San Francisco, 12 days, the daily average being 227 miles. On this passage which was for her, the very long one of 34 days from Yokohama, she had very