A FOREIGN VOYAGE

PACIFIC MARITIME LABOUR IDENTITY, 1840-1890

John T. Grider

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A Foreign Voyage - Pacific Maritime Lobour Identity, 1840-1890

Published by Sun Media Bloemfontein (Pty) Ltd.

Imprint: SunBonani Scholar

Research, academic and reference works are published under this imprint in print and electronic format.

This printed copy can be ordered directly from: media@sunbonani.co.za
The e-book is available at the following link: https://dx.doi.org/10.18820/9781920382896

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FOREWORD

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The Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice was established at the University of the Free State, South Africa, with a view to creating space for ongoing debate, reflection and research on a range of matters concerning social justice.[1] The Institute maintains that communication and action across identity and difference serve to generate a disruptive-productive knowledge community so vital to academic endeavours. Consequently, from its inception in 2011, the Institute has brought together voices from, and between, all disciplines and from many transnational settings. It is this sense of shared humanity that affords people working in social justice environments genuine opportunities to form solidarities and learn from one another.

In its established research framework, *Shared Complicities; Collective Futures*, the Institute fosters multiple analyses in areas as varied as space, race, rights, class, labour, gender, feminisms, differentiated abilities, justice, democracy, reconciliation, mourning, forgiveness, legacy, globalisation, humanity, art and culture. The Institute's international collective of research associates and fellows contributes generously to multidisciplinary research contours aimed at studying the problematics of human relations, their imports from the past, how they permeate the present and how they might project into the future.

Following some inter-institutional work between the two universities, John Grider, who currently holds the chair at the History Department of the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse, joined the Institute as a research fellow in November

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1   The Institute was established as part of a settlement with the university after the notorious 'Reitz incident' – the public exposure of a racially offensive video made by four white students with black custodial staff in which the students were voicing their opposition to racial integration in residence halls on campus. For a detailed analysis of this critical juncture, see Van der Merwe & Van Reenen, *Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from Reitz* (Bloemfonten: SUN PReSS, 2016).

2015. He recently completed this captivating project, which investigates the complex interplay between gender, class and race sourced from the narratives of men who found themselves working in the transforming Pacific maritime industry during the mid-nineteenth century.

It is of utmost importance in contemporary social and political scholarship that commentators do not lose sight of history and acknowledge the power of reproduction and continuity, even if these are not joined or linear. Primary research is painstaking work, which involves accumulating evidence from original archival material not usually penned for research purposes and transporting readers and researchers to another setting that may seem wholly unfamiliar to them. It takes significant time and dedication on the part of the researcher to compose a coherent narrative, support it with secondary sources, and bring it to relevance in current debates on any given subject. Critical researchers work parallel to, and with an appreciation for, this kind of historical work as it is integral to exposing pathologies of the social, as well as the political, as they translate and transport themselves through time and space.

Grider's work in this monograph invites interlocutors to view human interaction through the lens of labourers in an extremely important industry during a very interesting period in history. The maritime industry was not only an essential vehicle for expanding the processes of capitalism, colonisation, industrialisation and globalisation, which feature so prominently in current debates on social justice and inequality, but also paved the way for international trade and migration of peoples that have become so commonplace in the modern world. The manners in which shifts in gender, race, class and technology irrevocably change labour compositions and conditions, as well as identities and interactions, resonates across epochs and geographies and gives readers from numerous perspectives much to contemplate in their lives and work within the complex terrain of diverse societies, which are arguably the most important developments in modern states.

Collaborating with John Grider, AFRICAN SUN MeDIA and the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice on this undertaking has been a most valuable experience that has enriched our questions and discussions on race, gender and labour, especially in light of the recent, significant changes in the global political

climate. This work is an investigation into what came before and offers an insight into what kinds of journeys brought the world to where it is now.

Dionne van Reenen

Researcher at the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice,
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January 2017

Acknowlegements

There are many people and institutions that deserve my deepest gratitude for the completion of this book. I would first like to acknowledge the assistance provided to me by the staffs at the Hawaii State archives, the Bancroft Library, and the G. W. Blunt White Library. The archivists at these research institutions provided invaluable guidance through their archived materials and I could not have accomplished my research without them. I would also like to acknowledge the "The American Maritime People": National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for College and University Teachers, hosted by the Museum of America and the Sea Munson Institute at Mystic Seaport in 2010. My participation in this program allowed me to expand my thinking about maritime history and greatly improved the scholarship of this project. I would also like to thank the Department of History and the staff at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where this project began. In particular, I would like to thank my advisor and mentor, Dr. Julie Greene, who believed in this project and whose enthusiasm continues to serve as a great source of motivation for me. I would also like to thank my unofficial mentor, Dr. David Chappell, who took an interest in me and my work and assisted me in my research endeavors in Honolulu. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The University, the College of Liberal Studies, and the Department of History have all proven extremely supportive of my scholarship and have done much to fund my research since my arrival. In addition, my colleagues in the History Authors' Writing Group (HAWG) at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse have provided me with extremely helpful feedback that has improved this book in innumerable ways. My thanks go out to SUN MeDIA and Louis Botes for their hard work in putting this book together in publishable fashion. To the staff of the Institute of Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State, I owe a special debt of gratitude for getting this book published. Dionne van Reenen, in

particular, assisted me in the publication process and to her, I am most grateful. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support in the long and arduous process of research and writing. My wife, Constance, and my children, Jordan and Sam, have suffered and sacrificed along with me and I could not have completed this book without their love and support. I hope they take as much pride and satisfaction in their contributions to this book as I do.

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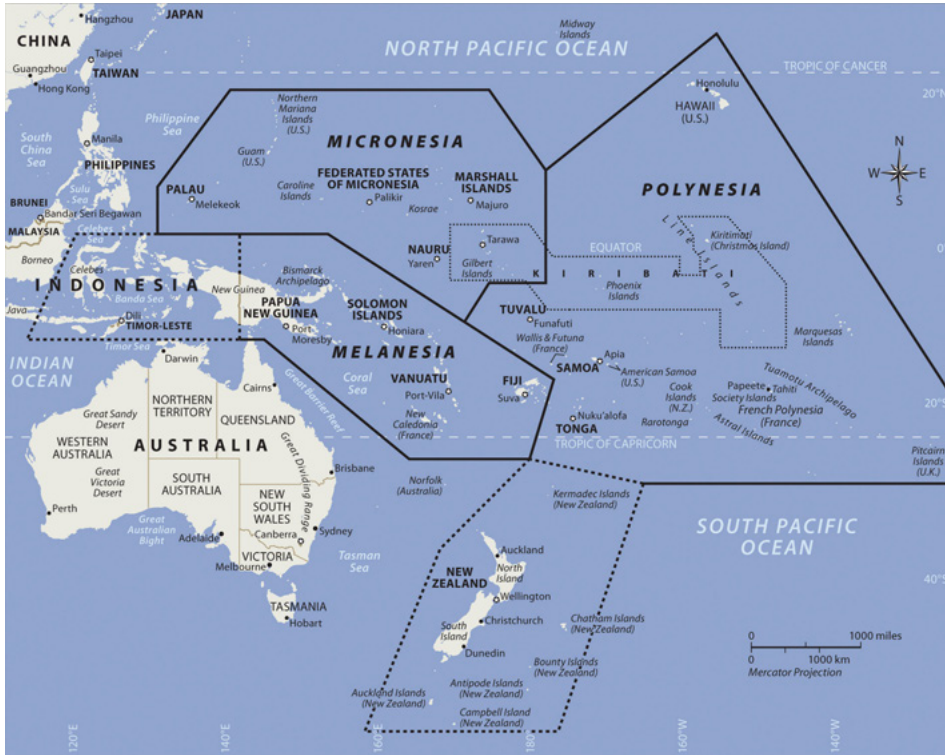*University of the Free State*
Bloemfontein, South Africa

8 February 2017

MAPS

MAP OF THE PACIFIC
Source: Adapted from *https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific_Culture_Areas.*

Map of Oceana

Source: *World Regional Geography: People, Places, and Globilization* http://open.lib.umn.edu/worldgeography/chapter/13-1-the-pacific-islands/

INTRODUCTION

Several ships brought George Clement Perkins to San Francisco in 1855. Born in Kennebunkport, Maine, in 1839 to a middle-class family, Perkins' ambition was to follow in his father's footsteps and captain his own ship. At the age of eleven, Perkins ran away from the family farm and went to sea. He went to Boston and applied to the captain of the *Bald Eagle* for a position as ship's boy but the captain told him that he was too young and could not join the crew. Undaunted, Perkins stowed away aboard the *Bald Eagle* and sailed with the vessel to New Orleans, hidden in the ship's hold. Perkins was discovered in New Orleans where the captain, probably out of admiration for the boy's determination to go to sea, accepted the youngster as part of the crew. For the next four years, Perkins sailed aboard several vessels in the Atlantic, including the *Lizzie Thompson*, the *Lunar*, the *Nathaniel Thompson* and the *Cotton Planter*. During his voyaging, Perkins befriended an older sailor named Harry Fairbrother and the two decided to go to California to make their fortunes. Perkins and his friend signed aboard the clipper ship *Galatea* in 1855 and sailed for the Pacific.

Like many young sailors, Perkins saw the Pacific as a place where even a sailing man could find opportunity and fortune. When the sixteen-year-old Perkins reached San Francisco, Captain Barber of the *Galatea* asked the young sailor to stay with the ship and go to Manila. Perkins refused, however, and told the captain, "I would not go on with you for half your ship, because I am going to own a vessel of my own by the time you are getting back". Perkins then went to a shop and bought himself a pistol, a shotgun, a pickaxe and a shovel, and headed for the mines. Perkins was confident of his success and reasoned that "being a sailor, I thought I would have the usual sailor's luck".[1] Like most sailors who tried their hand at mining, however, Perkins failed miserably. But, unlike most seamen who

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1   George Clement Perkins biography BANC MSS C-D 840.

went to the mines, Perkins decided that his future was in California and he did not return to the sea.

Perkins travelled all over Butte, Plumas, Sierra, Tehama and Lassen counties before he gave up mining and took a job driving a mule team. Being a sailor, Perkins was quite inept at driving mules and took a job as a store porter in Oroville. The ambitious young man saved enough money working as a porter to purchase a ferry at Long's Bar, which he improved and sold for a $1000 profit. Soon after, Perkins was promoted to clerk at the Oroville store and eventually purchased the business from his employer. Perkins was well on his way to the financial success he had sailed to California to find. He went on to start several more businesses in milling, sheep and cattle ranching, and banking. The sailor-turned-entrepreneur did not forget his boyhood dream, however, and with the sizable fortune he had made on land, Perkins became a partner in the Goodall, Nelson and Perkins Pacific Coast Steamship Company.[2]

Already a success in business, Perkins turned his ambitions towards politics. In 1869, Perkins ran as a Republican for the California State Senate, defeating his Democratic opponent. Eleven years later, Perkins was elected Governor of California and, in 1893, he became a U.S. Senator. Perkins had come a long way from the eleven-year-old boy who had stowed away aboard the *Bald Eagle* in a desperate attempt to go to sea.

While dictating his biography, Perkins looked back upon his time as a sailor with pride and nostalgia. Perkins had sailed to the Pacific, worked in the Pacific and became the governor and U.S. senator of the first Pacific state.[3] But, Perkins was lucky. Many seamen who went to the Pacific had their own dreams of achieving success and prosperity. Instead, most seamen found the Pacific a place of hard work and danger that held few economic opportunities.

The sailors who stayed at sea would witness their maritime workplace altered forever. During the second half of the nineteenth century, sailing vessels and seamen from the Atlantic Ocean sailed to the Pacific Ocean in large numbers to

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2   Ibid.

3   Ibid.

take advantage of new overseas markets. These Atlantic vessels, and the men who sailed them, brought with them a maritime tradition and community based on concepts of labour and manliness at sea that united sailors in a common identity as seamen. The Atlantic maritime identity provided seamen with a sense of self-worth in an often brutal workplace that subordinated men to their employers' whims and separated them from families and larger communities on shore. Sailors found comfort and stability in their labour-based community and identity that often transcended racial, national, ethnic and religious identities, making the maritime community relatively tolerant, at least by shoreside standards.

In the late nineteenth-century Pacific, however, the introduction of new Pacific peoples into the maritime labour community and the development of new maritime technologies threatened to dismantle the Atlantic maritime community and the manly identity associated with it. In facing the challenges aboard ships in the Pacific, the men who worked at sea created new maritime communities and traditions quite independant from the Atlantic maritime world.

Until recently, historians have largely neglected the Pacific's role in altering the maritime industry and those who worked at sea. Historians have too often neglected to see the Pacific as a region separate from the Atlantic, treating it simply as an extension of the Atlantic world. Over the past twenty years, historians have produced several excellent studies that examine issues dealing with race and gender among the maritime working class but comparatively little has been written regarding sailors in the Pacific. Most maritime historians, especially those who write about maritime labour, limit their investigations to the Atlantic and only briefly discuss the Pacific in relation to the Atlantic maritime world.

Marcus Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* discusses the rise of capitalism and the creation of a maritime working class aboard British vessels in the early eighteenth century. Rediker argues that a maritime "brotherhood" grew from the common experiences of seamen both aboard vessels and along waterfronts in Atlantic ports. At sea, sailors experienced natural horrors, such as storms and unseen or uncharted geological formations, and manufactured terrors, such as harsh discipline, rigorous work schedules and corporal punishment. Working at

sea also removed seafarers from family and friends ashore as cruises often lasted for months or even years. In port, sailors held visits to brothels, taverns, and jail cells, physical disputes and wage contract negotiations in common. These commonalities created a maritime labour identity that set sailors apart from those who worked on land and formed a strong bond among the seafaring community.

In *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker expand on Rediker's previous 1987 work to argue that seamen's experiences and their shared identity led to revolutionary ideologies and activities that challenged the burgeoning capitalist system and united sailors with other labouring classes caught within the ever-expanding Atlantic economy. Paul Gilje's *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* traces the history of sailors' rejection of traditional hierarchies while in port that helped to create the revolutionary spirit of the eighteenth century. Rediker, Linebaugh and Gilje's studies deal with an era that predates European and American expansion in the Pacific. Prior to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, relatively few Atlantic vessels sailed to the Pacific and, even during the early 1800s, European and American ships only travelled to the Pacific on whaling voyages and the occasional trading expedition to California, Oregon and China. Rediker, Linebaugh and Gilje do, however, provide a good foundation for understanding the Atlantic maritime community that would experience the challenges that awaited it in the Pacific.[4]

Daniel Vickers also provides excellent studies that expand our knowledge of the maritime working class and adds to our comprehension of the men who worked at sea. In *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850*, Vickers illustrates the role of local economies in the creation of wage labour systems and the motivations that led many men to look to the sea for their livelihood. Vickers argues that the competitive, capitalist nature of the New England fishing industry subverted community formation and led

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4   Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Paul Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

fishermen to have little unity, except in their alcohol consumption and contempt for landsmen. Because Vickers examines a small, specialised group of maritime labourers, *Farmers and Fishermen* does not discuss the larger seafaring community found aboard deepwater vessels and he only covers the fishing grounds and ports of the North Atlantic.

In *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*, however, Vickers looks at a broader pool of seamen and examines their motivations for going to sea. According to Vickers, young men in small port towns, such as Salem, Massachusetts, saw working aboard sailing vessels as a natural step towards personal independence and, in many cases, an end in itself. Vickers argues that small port towns' economic dependence on the sea and the personal relationships that most young men had with officers and crewmen made sailing, either as a means to accumulate capital for future shoreside ventures or as a career goal, an obvious occupational choice. *Young Men and the Sea*, however, only examines sailors from small port towns who tended to sail on relatively short, coastal voyages with men well known to them. While still part of the larger maritime community, Vickers claims that these men usually abandoned the sea as the industry became less reliant on personal connections during the nineteenth century and gravitated towards large port cities. Because Vickers's subjects tended to leave the sea during the nineteenth century, or disappear from the local records as they joined vessels in larger ports, he does not follow the maritime community into the Pacific and examine how it might have affected the choices small-town sailors made about making a living aboard ships. Vickers also pays little attention to the racial diversity aboard the vessels he studies, focusing almost exclusively on the white majority. Vickers offers almost no analysis on the African American seamen who made up approximately 10 percent of the sailors aboard American vessels.[5]

Other scholars, however, have studied the maritime community's racial make-up in detail, and offer detailed analyses of non-white seamen. W. Jeffrey Bolster's *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* provides the best comprehensive

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5   Daniel Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994) and *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

study of black men at sea. Bolster argues that black men were an essential part of the Atlantic maritime community from its inception and helped to create the community's traditions and characteristics. Bolster also covers the opportunities and limitations for African American men at sea. According to Bolster, seafaring set racial restrictions on black men but provided them with ample opportunities not available to them on land. Seafaring allowed black men to work side-by-side with white sailors on a nearly equal footing and allowed them to provide economically for families on shore and earned them respect and admiration in black communities on land.

In *Black Sailors: Afro-American Merchant Seamen and Whalemen Prior to the Civil War*, Martha Putney conducts a statistical analysis of black sailors' presence and role aboard American vessels. Like Bolster, Putney argues that blacks were a regular and influential presence aboard ships, where they served as seamen, boatmen, harpooners, cooks, stewards and officers.

In *Charles Benson: Mariner of Color in the Age of Sail*, Michael Sokolow conducts a more focused and personal study of black sailors by examining the life of Charles Benson, an African American sailor who sailed the Atlantic as a steward and cook during the second half of the nineteenth century. Using Brown's personal diary, Sokolow traces the black sailor's home life and life at sea. Sokolow examines Brown's personal perceptions of his work, his family life, his fellow seamen and the gender implications of a black man working at sea in a domestic capacity. Sokolow provides a compelling look at the life of a sailor and reminds us that seamen were individuals within a greater maritime community with their own opinions, emotions and aspirations. Although the above studies provide excellent analyses of African Americans' role and importance at sea, none address the racial implications for blacks in the Pacific. The Pacific introduced several new racial groups into the maritime labour community that directly influenced blacks and their livelihood aboard ships. While Sokolow, who looks at the life of an individual sailor who never sailed the Pacific, would have to stretch his argument in order to include the Pacific, Bolster and Putney both deal with large collections of seamen, many of whom went to the Pacific aboard merchant and whaling vessels. Unfortunately,

both authors limit their analyses within the context of the Atlantic and, in essence, treat the Pacific as a mere extension of the Atlantic Ocean.[6]

Other maritime historians have examined the cultural aspects of the maritime community, especially in regards to gender and notions of manliness among sailors. In *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whalemen, 1830-1870* and *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women: An Untold Maritime History*, Margaret S. Creighton and David Cordingly, respectively, examine sailors' complicated relationships with, and perceptions of, women within the homosocial ship's environment and in the heterosocial port environment. Creighton and Cordingly both claim that sailors objectified women, as illustrated in female figureheads on the prows of ships and the references to ships and the sea as women and simultaneously romanticised and demonised them. In his essay, "The Captain's Wife at Sea", Haskell Springer also tackles the complex relationship between sailors and women. Springer claims that women who went to sea tended to be relegated to the more traditional Victorian standards of domesticity and womanhood. In *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women and the Whale Fishery, 1720-1870*, Lisa Norling argues that the New England whaling community had to readjust gender roles and expectations to meet the industry's demands, which included men being away at sea for years at a time. Norling claims that women became "deputy husbands" while their men were away, but that this relationship did not threaten or blur the lines between men and women. B. R. Burg's *An American Seafarer in the Age of Sail: The Erotic Diaries of Philip C. Van Buskirk, 1851-1870* looks at the often hidden world of homosexual relationships between men who made their living at sea, arguing that homoeroticism was commonplace among sailors, if not, often openly discussed. While these studies build the framework for understanding the gendered identity of seamen, they, too, focus exclusively on men and women in the Atlantic world. The Pacific presented a plethora of challenges to sailors' gendered identity that simply did not exist in the Atlantic and provides a great deal of insight into manliness among seafarers. By not addressing

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6   W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997); Martha S. Putney, *Black Sailors: Afro-American Merchant Seamen and Whalemen Prior to the Civil War* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Michael Sokolow, *Charles Benson: Mariner of Color in the Age of Sail* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

the Pacific's effect on gender identity, the above authors have left much of the gendered nature of seafaring untold.[7]

Historians have also largely ignored the impact of steam technology on the maritime community and gendered identity of sailors. Few scholars have written about steam technology and its nautical applications in the nineteenth-century Pacific and, those rare studies that do, usually examine it from the top down, ignoring the larger implications for maritime labourers. Andrea Sutcliffe's *Steam: The Untold Story of America's First Great Invention*, traces the history of the first commercial steamboats but does not discuss steam's impact on seagoing vessels and the men who sailed them. In *From Sail to Steam: Four Centuries of Texas Maritime History, 1500-1900*, Richard V. Francaviglia explains the transition to steam propulsion aboard ships along the Texas coast and in the Gulf of Mexico but he does not address the impact the technology had on those who worked at sea in the nineteenth century.[8] Laura Tabili's essay, "'A Maritime Race': Masculinity and the Racial Division of Labor in British Merchant Ships, 1900-1939", examines the changes brought about by steam in the early twentieth century but it does not discuss the history of steam during the nineteenth century. Steam technology affected every aspect of the maritime community in virtually every ocean and sea across the globe. The dearth of steam navigation studies in Pacific maritime history has created a gap in our understanding of the changes in the maritime

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7   Margaret S. Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830-1870* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995); David Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women: An Untold Maritime History* (New York: Random House, 2001); Lisa Norling, "Ahab's Wife: Women and the American Whaling Industry, 1820-1870," and Haskell Springer, "The Captain's Wife at Sea," in *Iron Men, Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920*, ed. Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); B. R. Burg, *An American Seafarer in the Age of Sail: The Erotic Diaries of Philip C. Van Buskirk, 1851-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Lisa Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women and the Whale Fishery, 1720-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

8   Richard V. Francaviglia, *From Sail to Steam: Four Centuries of Texas Maritime History, 1500-1900* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1998).

industry and the labour community and identity at sea, not only in the Pacific but everywhere.[9]

Over the last several years, some histories have been written about the maritime Pacific, but most of these skip over the nineteenth century. Most recent Pacific maritime histories deal with Captain James Cook's explorations in the 1770s, the mutiny aboard the H.M.S. *Bounty* and the United States and Japanese imperial navies during the Second World War. There are no comprehensive studies of maritime labour, racial relations at sea or the Pacific maritime world as a whole. David A. Chappell's *Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* and Robert J. Schwendinger's essay, "Chinese Sailors: America's Invisible Merchant Marine, 1876-1905", provide rare exceptions. Chappell gives a fairly complete description of the effect of maritime labour on Islanders from across the Pacific and the influence that Islanders had on the Atlantic maritime industry in the Pacific and his work has greatly influenced and informed my own. However, Chappell's focus is on the relationship between Islanders and white officers and crewmen and he rarely discusses other racial groups, such as blacks and Asians. Despite these minor shortcomings, Chappell's work is extraordinary and covers an aspect of Pacific history that had previously received little attention and I am greatly indebted to him for this. Schwendinger's "Chinese Sailors" provides an analysis of Chinese seamen similar to, if briefer than, Chappell's analysis of Pacific Islanders. Although the essay is short and the topic deserves much more attention, the author exposes the large role played by the Chinese in the Pacific maritime labour force and calls attention to the changes taking place in the maritime community. Unfortunately, Chappell and Schwendinger represent exceptions to Pacific maritime history and the field remains woefully understudied.[10]

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9   Andrea Sutcliffe, *Steam: The Untold Story of America's First Great Invention* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Laura Tabili, "'A Maritime Race': Masculinity and the Racial Division of Labor in British Merchant Ships, 1900-1939," in *Iron Men and Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920*, ed. Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling.

10   David A. Chappell, *Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* (New York: M. E. Sharp, 1997); Robert J. Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors: America's Invisible Merchant Marine, 1876-1905," *California History* 57(1) (1978): 58-67.

Many historians may shy away from the Pacific as a single location or system and focus on specific regions within the larger ocean. This is mainly because of the sheer size and diversity of the topic. As the Earth's largest geologic formation, the Pacific encompasses a dizzying array of cultures, religions, languages, races and ethnicities. Incorporating these varied and seemingly disparate peoples into a single history is a daunting task but a necessary and potentially rewarding one. Some historians have recently examined the Pacific's transnational characteristics and how it influenced immigration and labour. Yong Chen's *Chinese San Francisco: A Trans-Pacific Community* and Madeline Y. *Hsu's Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* both convincingly argue that Chinese immigration to the United States did not sever immigrants from economic, social, familial and communal structures in China. Instead, Chinese immigrants maintained close ties to South China, allowing for stable overseas communities. Neither Chen nor Hsu, however, discuss the Pacific's role as a conduit for maintaining the links between China and overseas communities, nor do they discuss Chinese experiences aboard ships as both sailors and passengers.

David Igler's book, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush*, represents one of the few studies that address the larger Pacific community. In his study, Igler argues that the Pacific served as a conduit that united previously isolated communities into a larger Pacific world through imperial competition, exploration, trade and disease. His book serves as an excellent example of how the Pacific, though extraordinarily diverse both environmentally and demographically, can be studied as an interconnected system, separate from other ocean "worlds". In many ways, this study complements Igler's and picks up where he left off. This study focuses primarily on the Pacific after the California Gold Rush, when many of the imperial structures, trade connections, cultural contacts and assumptions, and demographic shifts had already been made. But the studies do differ in significant ways. Igler focuses primarily on how the sea affected shoreside communities and largely ignores how native Pacific communities changed life aboard ships.[11] This

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11   Madeline Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000); Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A Trans-Pacific*

study seeks to shed light on the workers who participated in the transformation of the Pacific through labourers and their interactions at sea and in port.

The Pacific's immense size also makes research difficult, with archives in some of the most remote places on the planet and sources stretching from Alaska to Australia and from China to California. Maritime historians have avoided the Pacific and focused on the Atlantic because of the readily available sources in both the eastern United States and in Europe. In addition, the many ships that plied the Pacific sailed from Atlantic ports created a bias towards Atlantic waters and peoples. Separating the maritime world by oceans and seas is a difficult prospect. Throughout the nineteenth century, ships from the Atlantic sailed to the Pacific, and ships from the Pacific sailed to the Atlantic. Although both oceans influenced each other, they both maintained separate characteristics and communities that influenced the men who sailed them in different ways. Despite the fluidity of the maritime world, the Pacific is a rich topic of study in and of itself and deserves the scholarly attention that the Atlantic has received.

The following study attempts to fill some gaps in maritime history by shifting the focus away from the Atlantic and onto the Pacific. Ships brought trade goods, imperial rule, and new political, religious and economic concepts from the Atlantic world to the rest of the globe during the nineteenth century. And, while the world was transformed by the Atlantic nations, it also changed the Atlantic world. The nineteenth-century Pacific witnessed the coming together of all the world's people into the first truly global economy. The first stage for this globalising act occurred aboard the wooden sailing vessels that came from the Atlantic and in the ports and natural harbours in the Pacific. Atlantic sailors interacted with a wide variety of Pacific peoples who, in turn, became sailors themselves. Understanding how maritime labourers from many different cultures and nations interacted with and affected one another within the context of the early global economy will allow us to appreciate the Pacific's role in world history.

Community (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000); David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3-15; and "The Pacific World: Social and Ecological Convergences in the Pacific Basin, 1770-1850," as presented at the Organization of American Historians annual conference in Boston, 27 March 2004.

In the 1840s, the Opium War and the California Gold Rush opened the Pacific to American and European trade, bringing ships and men from the Atlantic world to the Pacific in unprecedented numbers. At first, the Pacific seemed like a sailor's paradise, where danger and adventure abounded among lush tropical isles and exotic foreign lands. Fantasies regarding beautiful island women, savage cannibal warriors and far-off ports of call raced through the minds of men who sailed from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In addition, during the 1840s and 1850s, sailing technology reached new heights with the development and construction of fast-sailing clipper ships. These vessels symbolised both the technological advances made in the sailing industry and the high level of skill necessary to work with sail. In the Pacific, seamen had the chance to sail the best merchant ships in the world and test the skills so important to their identity and community.

The Pacific also offered sailors economic opportunities on land and at sea. Many men left the sea to work in the rich Californian and Australian gold mines, but most returned to maritime work after they failed to make it rich on land. For those who stayed at sea, and for those who eventually returned, work aboard ships in the Pacific had advantages. Acute labour shortages in the Pacific increased sailors' wages, and many discovered that going to sea paid better than any job or mining claim on land. For several years, the Pacific offered seamen from the Atlantic an arena in which to practice their profession and test their skills in a new, often unpredictable environment. But the Pacific presented several obstacles for Atlantic seamen and the continuation of their maritime community and identity. By the end of the nineteenth century, these obstacles radically changed the Atlantic maritime community in the Pacific, creating a separate Pacific maritime community and culture.

Native Pacific peoples from Asia and Oceania acted as the primary agents of change in the maritime labour community. The tendencies of sailors to ignore national and racial difference made the incorporation of Pacific peoples into the maritime labour community seem like a foregone conclusion. When Asians and Pacific Islanders served aboard American and European vessels, however, they brought with them work habits and concepts of manliness that often differed from those held by sailors from the Atlantic. Sometimes, native Pacific peoples did fit well into the Atlantic tradition. Sometimes they did not. More often than not,

Pacific Islanders blended well with their counterparts from the Atlantic. Pacific Islanders' native maritime history and their knowledge of the sea and sailing made them excellent candidates for maritime labour. They also readily adopted many of the cultural traditions held by sailors from the Atlantic. Sailors from the many Pacific Islands adopted the clothing, nautical language and rowdy social habits of crewmen from the Atlantic tradition. Pacific Islander sailing skills and their willingness to become part of the maritime labour community usually earned them the welcome of other seamen.

Pacific Islanders, however, did not simply disappear into a transplanted Atlantic maritime labour community. As David Chappell argues, sailors from the Pacific Islands also influenced the labour community they entered. Non-Pacific Islander sailors were influenced by their Pacific Island crewmates with whom they developed often close personal relationships. Pacific Islander and non-Pacific Islander seamen worked and socialised together regularly and formed close friendships. Non-Pacific Islander sailors also occasionally married Pacific Island women, settled into native communities and started families. Friendships and familial bonds with Pacific Islanders influenced non-Pacific Islander sailors' perceptions and tied them intimately to the Pacific. As a result of their skill, adaptability and influence, Pacific Islander men became a regular presence aboard ships in the Pacific and an integral part of the budding Pacific maritime community.

Asian seamen also served aboard ships in the Pacific, drastically altering maritime labour. At first, Asians entered the maritime labour community in small numbers, usually serving as cooks and stewards. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Asians, mostly from mainland China, served on American and European ships in the tens of thousands. Political and economic upheaval in China sent thousands of Chinese men fleeing from their homes in search of safety and economic opportunity. China had its own maritime heritage, but political events had drastically reduced the Chinese naval and merchant fleets by the mid-1800s. Sailors from the Atlantic tradition were not impressed with Chinese maritime traditions and refused to acknowledge Chinese sailors' skills as seamen. Aboard American vessels, Chinese seamen bore the brunt of non-Asian sailor hostility.

Unlike Pacific Islanders, the Chinese tended to be unwilling to adopt the culture and labour identity they found aboard foreign vessels. Chinese sailors maintained their own national dress, language and dietary habits, shunning Atlantic traditions. In addition, Chinese and non-Asian sailors did not socialise with one another while at sea or in port and non-Asian sailors did not marry into Chinese families. By not becoming intimately involved with their non-Asian counterparts, Chinese seamen were further distanced from the rest of the maritime community. Non-Asian sailor animosity towards the Chinese, first developed in Asian ports and aboard "coolie" ships, intensified when Asians flooded the job market with cheap labour. Animosity towards cheap Chinese labour influenced the Pacific maritime community by eroding the national and racial tolerance once found aboard ships. This eroding of racial tolerance increased drastically as steam propulsion replaced sail in the Pacific.

Technological advances such as steam engines posed additional threats to sailors' labour-based manly identity by removing many of the dangers associated with sailing vessels and by deskilling the sailing profession. Technology and mechanisation allowed employers to hire crewmen who had little or no experience at sea. Not relying on unpredictable winds, steam propulsion eliminated much of the guesswork from sailing and made ships more resilient to inclement weather. Before steam engines, sailing skills required years of training and experience to competently work the variety of ropes, spars and masts found on sailing vessels and gave mariners a sense of pride and worth that steam technology did not. Steam technology devalued sailors' professional skills and labour, destroying their sense of manly identity and requiring them to either leave the sea or learn less skilled and less valued jobs. American and European shipping employers turned to lower paid, less skilled and more pliable Asian crews to replace non-Asian sailors. Faced with unprecedented racial diversity and job competition, many sailors began to re-evaluate their profession and the identity that sailing previously engendered. In the end, racial intolerance and technological innovation caused the Atlantic maritime culture to dissolve aboard ships plying the Pacific.

The end result of the dissolution of the Atlantic maritime tradition in the Pacific was a narrower, racially bifurcated Pacific maritime labour community. Pacific maritime labour unions in the United States and Australia specifically excluded Chinese

seamen, ending centuries of maritime racial tolerance. In doing so, however, non-Asian seamen created a Pacific labour community that was antagonistic towards other maritime workers, and ignored the common experiences, interests and goals seamen shared, regardless of race and nationality. The "brotherhood of the sea," that had once existed aboard American and European ships foundered and sank in the Pacific. Pacific sailors would not unite again across racial and national lines for another hundred years.

This study uses Atlantic maritime labour community and identity as its starting point for unravelling the Pacific's history and its impact on the world. While the Pacific would eventually influence the entire globe, this influence occurred first aboard sailing vessels from the Atlantic maritime tradition, where it changed centuries-old work patterns and the labour-based identity held by Atlantic sailors. Because of this study's broad scope and its attempts to conceptualise a larger "Pacific World", a few explanations about important terminology are required. Throughout the text, I refer to an "Atlantic identity" or "Atlantic tradition". These terms are meant to reflect the common experiences and values held by men who learned their sailing profession in Atlantic waters. In no way can these terms reflect the diversity found in the Atlantic maritime world but they do serve to illustrate that commonalities and a sense of identity and familiarity did exist in the Atlantic maritime community that would separate it from maritime communities found in the Pacific. As Igler has argued, the value of an admittedly oversimplified concept such as the "Pacific World"

> resides as a way to frame *history* itself: an oceanic rather
> than terrestrial approach, a peopled rather than a
> vacant waterscape, a place of movement and transits,
> and a methodology that searches for the vital interplay
> between global, oceanic and local scales of history.[12]

The term "Pacific peoples" also appears frequently throughout the study, and is meant to reflect the Pacific in the broadest terms possible. In what follows, "Pacific peoples" does not only refer to the island, archipelago and peninsular peoples in Oceania. Instead, "Pacific peoples" refers to all people indigenous to lands in the

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12   Igler, *The Great Ocean*, 11.

Pacific Basin and around the Pacific Rim. This includes a wide range of peoples including Polynesians, Melanesians, Micronesians, indigenous Australians, Native North and South Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and anyone in or around the Pacific who did not participate in the creation of the Atlantic tradition but who played essential roles in the eventual creation of a Pacific World and a Pacific maritime tradition. As with the term Atlantic tradition, Pacific peoples does not in any way represent the variety of experiences and values represented by the diverse peoples who lived in and around the Pacific and participated in maritime activities. The term does, however, provide a contrast for understanding the changes that occurred in the Pacific and aboard commercial vessels that began to sail Pacific waters in the nineteenth century. Where appropriate, I have limited my analysis to specific Pacific peoples and pay particular attention to the Polynesian peoples of the Hawaiian archipelago and Chinese sailors.

Finally, the term "manliness" appears throughout the study. This term is used instead of the term "masculinity", more commonly used by scholars today. Since much of this study focuses on sailors' perceptions (both accurate and inaccurate) about themselves and others, and, out of a desire to let the subjects speak for themselves as much as possible, I have chosen to use a term sailors from the Atlantic tradition used frequently to describe themselves, others, and their working-class maritime culture: "manliness". This term better reflects nineteenth-century conceptions of manhood and helps us to better understand men's identities aboard ships during the 1800s without attaching too many current definitions of masculinity and maleness which may not be applicable to the time period.

The first chapter briefly and broadly covers the creation of the maritime labour community and identity in the Atlantic from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, with particular focus on the role of gender in community and identity formation at sea. Chapter 2 examines early maritime forays into the Pacific and the motivations for increased Atlantic maritime presence in the second half of the nineteenth century. The chapter also discusses the ways in which perceptions about the Pacific attracted seamen from the Atlantic and the ways in which the immense ocean reinforced the Atlantic maritime labour community and identity. Chapter 3 considers the role of Pacific Islanders in the Atlantic maritime labour community and shows how these newcomers contributed to and challenged that community.

Chapter 4 examines the Asian presence in the maritime labour community and the ways in which they interacted with sailors from the Atlantic tradition. The final chapter discusses the ways in which steam technologies, combined with racial antagonism, altered the sailing profession and laid the groundwork for the dismantling of the Atlantic maritime tradition aboard ships in the Pacific.

Just as the Pacific Ocean offered a new region for economic growth and prosperity for American and European nations and merchants in the nineteenth century, so, too, does this vast and diverse location offer historians the opportunity to expand our knowledge and understanding of long-term globalising trends and patterns. Maritime historians have broadened our understanding of history by contextualizing Europe, the Americas, and Africa into an "Atlantic World". By placing Asia, the Americas, Australia and the Pacific Islands in the context of a "Pacific World", we shall further expand our comprehension of the past. The answers to many global and transnational historical questions can be found in the Pacific, and the aim of this study is to assist in opening the Pacific to greater interest by closer examination of the men who had first-hand experiences with these issues: sailors.

Chapter 1

THE ATLANTIC ORIGINS OF PACIFIC MARITIME IDENTITY

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The fire burning on San Francisco's Folsom Street wharf on 6 March 1885, did not consume the lumber lying there in great heaps and stacks; instead, it smouldered deep within the more than three-hundred sailors who gathered in the pitch-dark night intent on making a stand. The darkness made it impossible to see the anger on the sailors' faces but it accentuated the ill-humour expressed in their voices. A drastic monthly wage reduction on 4 March proved the final blow to men accustomed to low pay, poor food, cramped quarters, unhealthy and unsafe working conditions, abusive officers, uncaring shipowners and unscrupulous boarding house operators and crimps. As a steady rain fell, drenching the sailors' bodies but not dampening their determination, labour organisers from the International Workmen's Association, the Knights of Labour and the Steamshipmen's Protective Association delivered speeches amidst the mariners' angry shouts.[13] Despite the organisers' practiced and incisive rhetoric, their speeches served as little more than long-winded ceremony. No one needed to explain to the merchant mariners that they represented an exploited working class. Many had arrived at the meeting already determined to create a maritime union. With the speeches delivered and

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13   Sigismund Danielwicz, J. J. Martin, M. Schneider and Burnette G. Haskell represented the International Workmen's Association, P. Ross Martin represented the Sacramento Knights of Labor and B. B. Carter and Joseph Kelley represented the Steamshipmen's Protective Association. The sailors in attendance at the union meeting worked primarily in North America's West Coast lumber trade. Paul S. Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1923), 46-47.

the men growing hoarse from prolonged shouting, the meeting adjourned just before midnight with 222 sailors creating the Coast Seamen's Union.[14]

The Coast Seamen's Union represented more than exploited sailors looking to solve immediate labour disputes over pay and working conditions; it also reflected fundamental changes in maritime labour and culture in the Pacific Ocean. During the nineteenth century, Pacific mariners linked the world together in systems of trade, labour and cultural exchange, serving as both agents and victims of colonisation and rapid global transformations. In the Pacific Basin, international free-market capitalism took root in markets previously closed to trade; technological innovations and market infrastructures allowed unprecedented reliability and frequency in communications and travel; and transnational labour forces, including representatives of virtually every class, race, ethnicity and nationality, moved across once-treacherous waters to every port, colony and nation bordering the Pacific Ocean.[15] Men's labour, and their willingness to face the sea's hardships and dangers, made the increased capitalist incorporation of the Pacific possible. As Deryck Scarr writes: "Incorporation of the Pacific's coastal societies into world trading and largely Western cognitive as well as competitive systems was at first maintained by British, American [and] French shipowners out of their own distant ports".[16] Meanwhile, as seamen turned the Pacific into a capitalist market region, the experience altered them and their profession.

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14 Stephen Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea: A History of the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, 1885-1985* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, Rutgers, 1986), 7-8.

15 Seamen like Richard Henry Dana and Herman Melville represented a small, but influential, group of sailors from the upper classes. Both Dana and Melville used service at sea as a means to escape familial and professional responsibilities at home. Dana was from an old, wealthy Boston family and was a Harvard Law graduate. Myra Glenn, *Campaigns Against Corporal Punishment: Prisoners, Sailors, Women, and Children in Antebellum America* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1984), 87.

16 Deryck Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands: Passages through Tropical Time* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2001), 104; H.C. Brookfield, *Colonialism, Development and Independence: The Case of the Melanesian Islands in the South Pacific* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 1-47; Tim Bayliss-Smith, et al., *Islands, Islanders and the World: The Colonial and Post-Colonial Experience of Eastern Fiji* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 44.

The sailors on the San Francisco docks came from a maritime labour tradition created in the Atlantic that united seamen into a common identity and community based on work at sea and their profession's presumed manly qualities. When sailors from the Atlantic maritime tradition arrived in the Pacific in the nineteenth century, the vast ocean, and the people who lived there, altered the maritime traditions upon which Atlantic sailors' identities and community were based. Primarily Scandinavians and Germans, the men who stood on the Folsom Street lumber wharf in 1885 learned their trade aboard ships in the Atlantic and firmly embraced the traditions and culture that constituted life for sailors aboard European and American vessels.[17] These men also realised that their labour-based identity had experienced several challenges from elements specifically found in Pacific waters, as well as from industry-wide circumstances that threatened the deterioration of sailing as they knew it. As a seamen's handbook from the time put it, the labour situation in the Pacific "had reached a limit of endurance for those who still retained a spark of manhood".[18] When the members of the newly formed Coast Seamen's Union left the waterfront on 6 March 1885, they hoped that, in addition to securing better pay and working conditions, they could salvage their identity as sailors and as men.

In order to fully appreciate the changes that occurred in the Pacific maritime community, one must first examine maritime culture and identity as it developed in the Atlantic Ocean. The origins of the Atlantic maritime tradition stretch back to the seafaring peoples in the ancient Mediterranean, however, a discernible Atlantic seagoing culture was not evident until the fifteenth century when Portuguese ships started sailing down the West African coast searching for trade and a passage to Asia. Within two-hundred years, the Spanish, English, French, Dutch and Swedish joined the Portuguese in supporting Atlantic voyages and establishing colonies and trading ports in Africa and the Americas. Expansion across the Atlantic and the establishment of colonies introduced Europeans to new peoples in the Americas and Africa and provided European nations with the potential for extraordinary wealth. As Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker argue,

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17   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 2-3.

18   *Handy-Billy Book of New Century Pamphlets for Seamen* (International Seamen's Union of America, 1901).

in order to capitalise on the vast and profitable resources found overseas, European nations, merchants and investors had to figure out

> how to mobilize, organize, maintain, and reproduce
> the sailoring proletariat in a situation of labour scarcity
> and limited state resources. Rulers discovered time
> and again that they had too few sailors to operate their
> various maritime enterprises and too little money with
> which to pay wages.[19]

Life at sea in those days presented men with infinite dangers and hardships that appealed to few. Even in the best circumstances, men faced backbreaking work, low pay, disgusting food, poor sanitation, confinement, rampant disease, traumatic climatic events, shipwrecks and loneliness as they left friends and family behind. However, their work, especially the dangers and discomfort involved, gave seafarers a sense of identity based on skill, endurance and what they understood as manly courage.

In a world fraught with peril and discomfort and usually absent of feminine influences for months at a time, masculine identity proved a very important matter for the men who sailed ships. But, this identity relied on individual and social variables that made masculine identity more than a simple issue of physical prowess and bravery. Manliness not only mirrored land-based attitudes towards gender, it also reflected concerns regarding shipboard life, where "womanly" duties, such as cooking, sewing, and healthcare required attention. The personal backgrounds of the men forced into close quarters without female companionship also influenced perceptions of masculine identity. Relationships with fathers and stepfathers, mothers and stepmothers, uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers and sisters, would have all played roles in developing ideas of proper manhood and womanhood for seafaring men. As Margaret Creighton has argued regarding nineteenth-century whalemen, "the whaleship bore the stamp of the society that launched it".[20] Manliness at sea reflected social, racial, generational, and class-

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19   Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 150.

20   Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 195.

based elements combined with daily necessities of comfort and survival that made male identity a complicated and highly contested issue.[21] The realities of working at sea, however, forced men to ignore or abandon some traditional masculine roles and expectations held among people who worked and lived on land. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, two elements primarily defined shoreside manliness in Europe and the Americas: paternalism and property.

Paternalism rested on men's ability to provide for their spouses, children and any other family members under their care. In exchange, members of a household submitted to the power and control of the household's paternal figure.[22] Male heads of households regulated family labour, education and resource distribution. Others' dependence provided men with an identity that placed them firmly on top of the familial and social pecking order, however, the nature of work at sea prevented seamen from effectively creating paternalistic familial structures that supported manly identity and self-worth.[23]

Sailors went to sea for days, weeks, months, and even years at a time. Patriarchal manhood required a man's constant presence in or near the household in order to tend to family matters and ensure that family members followed the proper roles and labours assigned to them.[24] Sailors, who attempted to create their own families, discovered that they could not effectively maintain their authority as heads of households while they were gone for long periods. Upon returning home, sailors discovered that wives and children had created their own familial hierarchies and support structures that did not account for the sailors' presence or their ability to provide for a family when present.[25]

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21   Margaret S. Creighton, "Davy Jones' Locker Room," in *Iron Men, Wooden Women*, ed. Creighton and Norling, 118-137. Creighton argues that masculinity played a central role in maritime culture and identity.

22   Tony Chapman, *Gender and Domestic Life: Changing Practices in Families and Households* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 33.

23   Ruth Wallis Herndon, "The Domestic Cost of Seafaring: Town Leaders and Seamen's Families in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island," in *Iron Men, Wooden Women*, ed. Creighton and Norling, 63.

24   Ibid.

25   Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 53-65; Herndon, "The Domestic Cost of Seafaring," 55-69.

Sailors' inability to provide families with economic security also undermined any pretence towards patriarchy and shoreside manly identity. The maritime industry did not pay its workers well and, as often as not, seamen did not receive pay for two to three years at a time. Women and children dependent on seamen's wages were often disappointed by a sailor's return if he had received little or no pay, or returned empty-handed because he had spent his wages in foreign ports. Because of this, seamen's wives often took on the role as breadwinner and formed communities in port towns where they could rely on one another for financial and emotional support. Sailors' wives worked as washerwomen, seamstresses, cooks, boarding house keepers, shop owners, prostitutes and madams in order to meet family financial needs that their men could not.[26]

Sailors' long absences and meagre wages often required American and European civil officials to assume sailors' patriarchal roles for destitute families. As Ruth Wallis Herndon argues, civil officials literally became "town fathers" as they assumed roles as "surrogate fathers, husbands, and masters to all whose households did not function in accordance with European patriarchal tradition."[27] Mariners often arrived in their home ports to find that town leaders had provided their families with poor relief, sent them into indentured servitude, put them under guardianship or removed them as transients. Town fathers also found it necessary to care for destitute sailors who had no employment or means to support themselves. Instead of being strong patriarchs upon whom others depended, sailors themselves depended on others. As a result, seamen with families often felt like outsiders and failures in their own homes on shore and quickly learned that their patriarchal identity was fleeting at best.

It is difficult to get a clear picture of home and family life for men who spent much of their time at sea during the nineteenth century. Most did not write of their life experiences and, those who tended to, wrote about their time at sea or in foreign ports. However, as Lisa Norling illustrates in *Captain Ahab had a Wife: New England Women and the Whalefishery, 1720-1870*, maritime work created emotional hardships and gender confusion that required whaling captain's families

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26   Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 59.

27   Herndon, "The Domestic Cost of Seafaring," 58.

to carefully negotiate familial roles that aligned with societal expectations. These relationships often proved difficult as women had to live with the loneliness created by their husbands' absences and then relinquish control over family matters when their men returned. Men also found it difficult as they returned home to wives and children who were virtual strangers and homes where their daily presence was unusual.[28] Whaling captains, however, could usually provide their families with a comfortable and stable living and, by the mid-nineteenth century, they were influenced by romantic Victorian ideals of domesticity. Sailors, especially those not involved in the coastal trades, could rarely provide financial and emotional stability for their families. The wives of sailors who did marry often had to depend on a variety of survival strategies that did not factor in their husbands' financial contributions. Such arrangements would have served to undermine a sailor's authority and necessity in the family home.

Deeply embedded in European and American concepts of patriarchy and manhood, property provided another obstacle to sailors trying to live up to shoreside ideas regarding manliness.[29] Ownership of property or land allowed men to achieve a level of independence for themselves and to provide their dependents with the material needs to survive and prosper. Property also provided men with a great deal of power over their children since a father could bequeath to sons and sons-in-law the property that would someday allow his offspring to maintain their own households and reproduce the patriarchy so important to masculine identity.[30] This is not to imply that all men who lived and worked on land owned property or had the ability to obtain it. Many landsmen, especially in Europe, did not own real estate, even if they had the financial resources to purchase it. Many landsmen, however, practiced crafts that allowed them a good, if modest, living and a stable residence with their families. Even those men who worked for wages on land, and whose wives and children had to help supplement family incomes, usually lived at

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28   Norling, *Captain Ahab had a Wife*, 165-213.

29   Peter N. Stearns, *Be A Man!: Males in Modern Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1979), 34-36.

30   Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 131-176.

home and could assume most, if not all, of paternalism's requirements. Property, and the patriarchal power that usually accompanied it, served as a goal, however unattainable for most, that unified landsmen around a common manly identity. Living most of their lives at sea excluded most seamen from ever establishing this shoreside identity, or even making a pretext for traditional patriarchal roles.[31]

In order to maintain a sense of manliness and self-worth, sailors developed their own manly identity in opposition to shoreside standards and traditions. As historian Peter N. Stearns argues, aboard ships "surrounded by relative strangers, deprived of the comfort of many community structures and customs, people needed to seek a new identity. Heavy emphasis on gender traits was the key result".[32] Stearns discusses the role of gender in the creation of new identities for new industrial workers in the nineteenth century. However, sailors were among the first peoples to work for wages in an industrial fashion and the same claim holds true for them as for wage workers who came decades later.[33] Without dependents that relied upon them for food, clothing, shelter and guidance, seamen had to prove their manhood in different ways. Maritime labourers looked to their work and other traditional manly notions, such as strength and courage, to define masculinity at sea.

Sailor's work was challenging and required strength, endurance, bravery and discipline. As a result, as Richard Henry Dana put it, "An overstrained sense of manliness is the characteristic of seafaring men".[34] The sailor's first great challenge was the sea itself. Most new sailors suffered for several days, or even weeks, from unrelenting seasickness that kept many in their bunks until they were acclimated enough to the pitching and rolling to keep a meal or two down. For example, in 1856 when Charles A. Abbey shipped out on his first voyage at the age of fifteen, he was seasick twenty-four of his first twenty-six days at sea and could do almost

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31   Stearns, *Be A Man!*, 35.

32   Ibid., 37.

33   Ibid., 57.

34   Richard Henry Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: Walter J. Black, 1930), 259.

no work.[35] The affliction often proved quite debilitating and some men could not adapt, leaving their ships at the nearest port. Some even died from seasickness, as constant vomiting dehydrated them to the point that they passed away before doing any work at all at sea. Even "old salts" could be stricken after a long absence from the sea or in especially turbulent waters. Sailors had little sympathy for those plagued by seasickness. Seasickness was seen as a rite of passage and, as Dana wrote, "A well man at sea has little sympathy with one who is seasick; he is apt to be too conscious of a comparison which seems favorable to his own manhood".[36]

Storms presented another of the sea's inherent dangers, sinking ships and washing men overboard. Oddly enough, most sailors could not swim, and falling overboard usually meant death, even in calm, warm seas and with a ship's master willing to stop or turn his vessel around to save a crewman. Obstacles such as uncharted reefs, submerged rocks, fog-shrouded coastlines and fires aboard ships could sink a ship and kill its entire crew in a matter of minutes.[37]

Working sailing ships was also hard, strenuous labour that required strong backs and steady hands and feet. Sailors had to hoist sails, climb rigging, reef sails, weigh anchors and steer their vessels. This work was made especially difficult when ships pitched and rolled violently during a storm or gale and rain, sleet or snow pelted them unmercifully.[38] Even in calm seas, sailors fell from rigging onto decks and into the water, blocks and marline spikes fell onto unsuspecting men on deck, seamen fell down hatches and cargo came loose, smashing the unwary or unlucky.

Before the introduction of steam in the early 1800s, all work aboard a ship had to be done with sheer muscle and skill, requiring men to exert themselves to the fullest. Working aboard a sailing vessel was so dangerous, as well as physically and

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35   Harpur Allen Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers: The Diaries of Charles A. Abbey, 1856 to 1860* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1989), 26-32.

36   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 70; Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 46.

37   Pablo E. Perez-Mallaina, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleet in the Sixteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 176-181.

38   Richard Henry Dana, *The Seaman's Friend: Containing a Treatise on Practical Seamanship, With Plates; A Dictionary of Sea Terms; Customs and Usages of the Merchant Service; Laws Relating to the Practical Duties of Master and Mariners* (New York: Scholar's Facsimiles & Reprints, 1979), 13-95.

emotionally strenuous, that sailor mortality was higher than prisoner mortality in the United States well into the nineteenth century.[39] Sailors, however, used the dangers and difficulties of their profession to define their masculine identity and revelled in their seamanship skills.

The sailing profession, as it existed by the early nineteenth century, developed in a climate in which labourers and employers viewed each other with hostility. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker examine this hostile relationship and come to the conclusion that it resulted in

> a fitful but protracted war among rulers, planners,
> merchants, captains, naval officers, sailors, and other,
> urban workers over the value and purposes of maritime
> labour. Since conditions aboard ship were harsh
> and wages often two or three years in arrears, sailors
> mutinied, deserted, rioted, and altogether resisted naval
> service.[40]

While sailors occasionally respected their officers for their seamanship and decent treatment, the absolute power held by officers tended to overshadow mutual affection. Because sailing required men to put themselves in danger physically and emotionally, demanded constant back-breaking work, offered little monetary compensation, and challenged established masculine identities, few men jumped at the chance to serve aboard merchant vessels.[41] As Marcus Rediker points out in *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, workers were asked to risk their lives in lonely, uncomfortable circumstances, with "no long-term secular increase in wages in the first half of the eighteenth century".[42]

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39   Whittington B. Johnson, *The Promising Years, 1750-1830: The Emergence of Black Labor and Business* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993), 62.

40   Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 150.

41   Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 123. Rediker argues that able seamen, the largest category of sailor in the eighteenth century, received an average wage of £1.66 and that from 1700 to 1750, real wages did not increase at sea, but did for wage earners on land.

42   Ibid., 125.

The hard life many discovered aboard ships led them to rebel against their employers, either directly through mutiny or physical and verbal attacks against officers, or indirectly by jumping ship or shirking duties. In order to ensure that the labour supply met the demand for a maritime workforce, states and employers developed coercive and violent systems to obtain workers and guarantee their relative compliance. Maritime elites, namely states, shipowners and officers, developed a system of punishment and brutality to penalise those who shirked their responsibilities or challenged their superiors and to discourage other sailors who might follow the lazy and malcontent's rebellious examples.[43] Civil maritime employers often kidnapped unsuspecting men in the Atlantic's port towns when short-handed and naval officials regularly pressed both seamen and landsmen who happened to be on or near a town's docks into service, especially during military conflicts with rival European nations. In order to ensure that sailors, both willing participants and those physically pressed into service followed orders and acquiesced to low wages and long periods without pay, civil and naval maritime employers used extreme forms of corporal punishment. Maritime discipline included sadistic practices such as lashing, keelhauling, imprisonment and starvation in order to punish men for failing their duties or participating in outright rebellion, as well as more moderate abuses such as hitting sailors with rattans, belaying pins, marline spikes, and fists (if no blunt instrument was at hand) in order to ensure speedy compliance with orders.[44]

The discipline aboard vessels enforced by officers posed a serious threat to sailors' manly identity. By joining a vessel, either voluntarily or by force, a sailor relinquished his freedoms and placed himself under a captain's paternal power. Sailors signed shipping articles that outlined the duration of their service, their skill rating and the pay they received. Once they signed these articles, sailors were obligated to fulfil their contracts to the letter. Sailors who broke their contract

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43   Charles P. Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 47-56.

44   Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 150-151. In *The Seaman's Friend*, a working manual for sailors, Richard Henry Dana defines keelhauling as: "To haul a man under a vessel's bottom, by ropes, at the yard-arms on each side. Formerly practiced as a punishment in ships of war". Although extremely rare on merchant vessels, keelhauling was not unknown. Dana, *The Seaman's Friend*, 112.

could be discharged, physically punished, imprisoned, or even executed if the charge proved serious enough.[45]

Governments created laws to enforce shipping articles in favour of employers. As Leon Fink has argued in *Sweatshops at Sea: Merchant Seamen in the World's First Globalized Industry, from 1812 to the Present*: "Whereas other white workers were experiencing the rapid elimination of coercive contracts (enforceable through criminal sanction) – with indenture effectively ended by 1830 – seamen's employment stood out precisely for its relative unfreedom".[46] John A. Butler writes that, in 1790, Congress passed the United States' first maritime laws, and

> based on the kinds of individual contracts then
> current, the articles favored the interests of shipowners,
> remained vague on the specification of voyage
> destinations and durations, defined in more detail the
> requirements for victualling and medical care, and
> preserved the master's supremacy at sea.[47]

The 1790 maritime laws eventually served as the model for the United States' first fugitive slave laws in 1793, further highlighting sailors' unfree status. This loss of freedom turned sailors into indentured servants, relinquishing control over their lives and handing it to their employers.

Aboard vessels, a captain, also known as a ship master, was "lord paramount".[48] All orders given by a ship master had to be followed immediately and expressly. The captain determined the amount and quality of food sailors received, the condition of sailors' quarters, and the amount and type of work sailors did while at sea and in

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45 Dana, *The Seaman's Friend*, 131-167, 189-195, 203-205. Skill rating refers to the number and types of skilled jobs a seaman could do. The ratings in the Anglo-American maritime industry were boy, ordinary seaman, able seaman, second and third mates, chief mate and master. Other shipboard positions included cook, steward, carpenter and sailmaker.

46 Leon Fink, *Sweatshops at Sea: Merchant Seamen in the World's First Globalized Industry, from 1812 to the Present* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 44.

47 John A. Butler, *Sailing on Friday: The Voyage of America's Merchant Marine* (London: Brassey's, 1997), 16.

48 Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 12-13.

port, much as a father or master would have done on land. Captains also decided all punishments aboard their vessel and could mete out virtually any punishment they wished for virtually any reason. From the fifteenth through the seventeenth century, Europeans used physical punishment rather liberally when dealing with their social inferiors, and sailors did not represent a deviation from this practice.[49] By the nineteenth century, however, Europeans and Americans reserved corporal punishment exclusively for women, children, prisoners, slaves and sailors. By including sailors among those who could receive corporal punishment as a matter of course, states and employers, in essence, placed them among the most helpless and dependent people in society. However, as Matthew Raffety has argued in *The Republic Afloat: Law, Honor, and Citizenship in Maritime* America, American sailors began to campaign against maritime corporal punishment and "sought to limit (if not bar) officers' use of the most dehumanizing and emasculating punishments".[50] Sailors exerted their manhood during the early nineteenth century to prevent officers from using excessive force and, with the help of sympathetic reformers ashore, were able to make flogging illegal on United States ships in 1850. But, other less brutal physical punishments were still allowed and flogging did occasionally, if very rarely, occur.[51]

Despite the shift away from flogging and other physical abuses, the United States government continued to regard sailors as wards of the state, who needed protection from courts and consulates overseas. In 1823, the United States Supreme Court ruled that courts needed to protect sailors,

> because they are unprotected and need counsel;
> because they are thoughtless and require indulgence;
> because they are credulous and complying; and are
> easily overreached. But courts of maritime law have
> been in the constant habit of extending towards them

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49   Robert Shoemaker, "Male honour and the decline of public violence in eighteenth-century London." *Social History* 26(2) (2001): 190-208; Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001),

50   Matthew Raffety, *The Republic Afloat: Law, Honor, and Citizenship in Maritime America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 116.

51   Ibid., 117.

a peculiar, protecting favor and guardianship. They are emphatically the wards of the admiralty.[52]

As late as 1897, the US Supreme Court stated that, "seamen are treated by Congress as well as by the Parliament of Great Britain, as deficient in that full and intelligent responsibility for their acts which is accredited to ordinary adults".[53]

Unable to rely on the full constellation of landsmen's manly values, sailors clung to as many traditional shoreside masculine traits as possible. As Jeffrey Bolster points out, sailors "took a fierce pride in their technical competence",[54] and it became the hallmark of a sailor's professional and masculine identity, and providing the cornerstone for much of maritime culture. In 1851, Richard Henry Dana published the *Seaman's Friend*, which summed up the rights and responsibilities of officers and crew, outlining much of the labour culture aboard vessels that had developed in the Atlantic over four centuries, especially aboard British and American vessels. The *Seaman's Friend,* and the culture it portrays, are rife with gendered references to a sailor's identity aboard ship.

According to Dana, seamen, or those "before the mast", fell into three categories aboard Anglo-American vessels: able seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys. Able seamen constituted the most skilled and experienced sailors aboard, and to rate as an able seaman a sailor had to be able to reef, steer, and work rigging.[55] The next class, ordinary seamen, consisted of men with sailing experience who could furl and reef sails, and steer the vessel. Sailors on their first voyage constituted the final

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52   *Harden v. Gordon*, 11 F. Cas. 480 (No. 6047) (C.C. Me. 1823).

53   Bruce Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 11-12.

54   W. Jeffrey Bolster, "'Every Inch a Man': Gender in the Lives of African American Seamen, 1800-1860," in *Iron Men Wooden Women: Gender and Seafaring in the Atlantic World, 1700-1920,* ed. Margaret S. Creighton and Lisa Norling (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 154.

55   Reefing was a means by which sailors reduced the amount of sail exposed to the winds in order to slow or stop the vessel or to protect the rigging from storms and gales. Dana, *The Seaman's Friend*, 118; *The American Ship-Master's Daily Assistant; or, Compendium of Marine Law and Mercantile Regulations and Customs* (Portland, Maine: J. M'Kown, Printer, 1807), 140-143.

category known as boys. A maritime saying stated that, "a boy does not ship out to know anything", and, at least theoretically, a boy could not be faulted for his ignorance or mistakes during his first cruise as he literally learned the ropes during that time. A boy's duty included mundane chores such as sweeping, coiling rope, greasing masts, polishing brass, and hauling but officers and crew also expected them to venture into the rigging from time to time, if only to do the simplest and least dangerous jobs there. While all seamen were expected to do every job that needed to be done without complaint or question, Dana declared, "in allotting the jobs among the crew, reference is always had to a man's rate and capacity; and it is considered a decided imputation upon a man to put him upon inferior work" when a person with a lower rating was available to do it.[56] Dangerous and skilled jobs were reserved for men and, aboard a vessel, men meant experienced and skilled sailors.[57]

Age, race and shoreside social class and skill were often muted among crews because they did not usually apply to the specialised work at sea and "all green hands in the merchant service are termed boys, and rated as such, whatever may be their age or size".[58] The term "boy", as used in the merchant service, illustrates how important masculine identity was for sailors, especially lifetime and long-term seamen. Many of the sailors rated as boys were indeed children, but not everyone with this rating was a child. The work a man did on land meant nothing aboard a ship and "a full-grown man must ship for boy's wages upon his first voyage. It is not unusual to see a man receiving boy's wages and rated as a boy, who is older and larger than many of the able seamen".[59] Indeed, boys often received no wages during a cruise, and their training served as their only compensation. Although working for wages challenged manly identity, at least by shoreside standards, not receiving a wage emasculated older men serving as boys, but it reinforced the sense of

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56   Dana, *The Seaman's Friend*, 161.

57   Ibid., 158, 165.

58   Ibid.

59   In 1851, the merchant service usually paid able seamen about twelve dollars a month, ordinary seamen about ten dollars and boys received between zero and eight dollars a month. Dana, *The Seaman's Friend*, 158.

manliness among skilled sailors who received payment for their services.[60] A green hand or young boy might receive wages, however, if he seemed strong enough to handle many of the manly tasks of sailing. In this way, even the youngest or most inexperienced sailor could claim a sense of masculinity in a labour environment obsessed with manly strength and skill.

Through labour, sailors were able to reclaim a masculine identity that living at sea had initially stripped from them. Manliness based on seamanship not only offered a surrogate identity for sailors, it also served as an outright rejection of shoreside standards and values. By referring to inexperienced landsmen, regardless of age, as "boys", seamen carved out a manly identity that, while having little meaning on land, had great importance aboard ship and provided sailors with a sense of self-worth and value to others.[61]

Skill also offered seamen a substitute for the shoreside masculinity associated with patriarchy. Labour and skill provided experienced sailors with dependants who relied upon them for their economic and physical security and for professional education. Officers depended on skilled sailors to sail safely their vessels across treacherous waters while ordinary seamen and boys depended on able seamen to teach them their trade and keep them relatively safe in a dangerous and deadly work environment. Sailors remained dependent on their officers to provide them with food, lodging and employment at sea. In the sailors' environment aboard a ship, such as their quarters and in the rigging, working-class seamen's culture

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60   Working for wages provided evidence that a man was not independent, but rather depended upon his employer to provide him with the ability to earn a living. Lack of independence struck at masculine identity for workers, whether on land or at sea, but seamen had a separate masculine identity from those on land from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries that allowed them to maintain a manly identity while receiving wages. Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 31.

61   Charles Benson was an African American sailor in the late-nineteenth century who wrote a diary in which he discusses the satisfaction and sense of worth he received while serving as a ship's steward. Sokolow, *Charles Benson,* 61-77.

prevailed and a system of dependence formed among sailors in a near-family structure.[62]

Able seamen, especially those older and more experienced, garnered a great deal of respect from their crewmates. Experienced sailors, while not possessing the power of landed patriarchs, did possess knowledge regarding work aboard vessels, weather, currents, ports and officer temperaments. By sharing knowledge, experienced men could increase an ordinary seaman or boy's value to employers, keep less experienced sailors from hurting or killing themselves and others, make liberty in a port more enjoyable and safer for the uninitiated, or prevent the inexperienced from incurring the wrath of officers angered by thoughtless mistakes, failures in duty or disobedience. According to Perkins, while sailing between the United States and Ireland in 1856, he befriended

> one of the sailors who took a great fancy for me. He
> was a man about 40, and I was only about 16, yet
> we became chums and he kind a talked to me as his
> protégé. He had been to California, was an old sailor
> and had been to sea 30 years of his life.[63]

As the old sailor's protégé, Perkins would have learned a great deal about sailing and life at sea and in port. Withholding knowledge might make a voyage miserable for the less knowledgeable, especially boys and green hands on their first cruise. Experienced sailors' knowledge provided them with a great deal of power over their shipmates and, when an experienced man spoke, the wise paid attention,

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62 Aboard both merchant and naval vessels, certain parts of a ship were the exclusive domain of either crew or officers. Officers claimed the bridge and the cabin quarters located at the rear of the vessel, while crew held dominion over the rigging and their own quarters located before the mast. Officers could enter the crew's domain at any time but to do so too frequently was considered a breach of authority and might eventually lead a crew to desert or mutiny. Greg Dening, *Mr. Bligh's Bad Language: Passion, Power, and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 17-156.

63 George Clement Perkins biography, BANC MSS C-D 840. George Clement Perkins went to the goldfields of California where he made enough money to leave the sea and start his own business ventures. Perkins eventually became the Republican Governor of California in 1880 and a U.S. Senator in 1893.

whether during a direct lesson about skill or during a hair-raising or humorous yarn spun by a talented storyteller.[64]

Because the rating system reflected the manly values and identity so important to mariners, they took their own ratings and the ratings of others quite seriously. When a sailor signed shipping articles to sail with a vessel, he listed his own rating. Wages depended upon a sailor's skills and rating, giving incentive for seamen to lie about their rating to receive more pay. Remarkably, sailors rarely acted deceptively when it came to their ratings because the consequences of lying were too great. At sea, all aboard the vessel would quickly discover a sailor's ignorance if he falsely claimed a higher rating. Once a sailor's deception was discovered, he would immediately be demoted to his proper rating and receive the appropriate pay to that rating. In addition, he could be severely punished by his officers, put in irons or discharged at the nearest port. A dishonest sailor would also lose his fellow crew members' respect because they suffered the most from false rating claims. Depending on its size, each vessel ideally carried a certain number of men from each rating. Suddenly "losing" a "skilled" crew member, meant more work for everyone else and increased the danger from the sea's many hazards. A false rating also meant a false claim to the manliness associated with skill and experience at sea. By lying about his abilities, a sailor challenged the masculine identity of every man who possessed the skills he did not. Alienating the crew in this fashion, could make for a very long and lonely cruise for a man whose only company was the men on the ship who he had insulted, endangered and overworked.[65]

Dangers at sea allowed sailors to lay claim to a presumed manly virtue shared and admired by landsmen: bravery. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, going to sea even as a passenger took courage. Wooden ships at the wind's mercy provided little comfort or safety. To go to sea as sailors spelled further danger because sailors had to climb to great heights up the rigging to work the ship, regardless of climatic conditions. Sailors and landsmen alike admired the dexterity and ease with which a skilled seaman scaled the slippery ratlines to the highest

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64   Horace Beck, *Folklore and the Sea* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 355-387.

65   Dana, *The Seaman's Friend*, 159.

points on a ship and the fortitude men displayed standing on a pitching and rolling deck in the middle of a night-time storm. Military bravery provided the only parallel to the bravery displayed by sailors during their daily labour aboard a ship and, as they did many military figures, many people viewed sailors as heroic. While sailors did not necessarily enjoy the dangers they faced, they readily accepted the heroic and manly image that accompanied facing such hazards. Sailors usually ignored or made jokes about their own and their comrades' close calls, no matter how harrowing or spectacular. As Dana wrote:

> Whatever your feelings may be, you must make a joke
> of everything at sea; and if you were to fall from aloft,
> and be caught in the belly of a sail, and thus saved from
> instant death, it would not do to look at all disturbed,
> or treat it as a serious matter.[66]

Seamen knew all too well the dangers on a ship but they did their best not to dwell on the mortal possibilities. When a fellow sailor found himself in a tight spot, however, his shipmates rarely hesitated to come to his aid, putting their own lives at risk to save a comrade.[67] Since there was no other help available, seamen often relied on each other's bravery at sea to save their lives. Failure to help a comrade marked a sailor as a coward, and, in maritime culture, where bravery and dependability were everyday matters of life or death, a coward was no man.

Compassion and generosity towards others also ranked among accepted manly qualities from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, appreciated by both seamen and landsmen. Before the nineteenth century, European and American men from every class and social position considered love, generosity and compassion towards one's friends as among the most esteemed manly virtues.[68] Openly declaring

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66   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 32.

67   Ward Stafford, A. M., *Important to Seamen: Extracts from a report Entitled "New Missionary Field"* (New York, 1817), 6.

68   Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society: Britain, 1660-1800* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 1-12; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); and George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 1-29.

love and tenderness did not threaten manly identity but, instead, enhanced it. Because they depended so much on one another, seamen extended their assistance to other sailors beyond the needs dictated by immediate danger aboard ship. Sailors developed a reputation for generosity and compassion that impressed even their harshest critics. One early nineteenth-century Christian missionary wrote approvingly that sailors were:

> Warm in their attachments, quick to feel for others,
> easily melted by sympathy, and at the same time
> strangers to avarice, and liberal to a fault, their charity
> is always active, and they are ready to hazard life itself
> to rescue or relieve a stranger.[69]

Most merchant vessels did not include a ship's surgeon on their lists and contracting a disease or sustaining an injury often left a sailor to care for himself or rely on his shipmates' kindness. When duties permitted, sailors took food and drink to ailing shipmates and did what little they could to make them comfortable or assist them in healing. Often, sailors could do nothing to assist stricken comrades other than provide a familiar presence and lend a sympathetic ear as they watched shipmates deteriorate and die. Caring for others also constituted an act of self-preservation. Every sailor knew that one misstep could put him in his sickbed and that if he did not help others, he himself might not receive assistance during his convalescence.

Few women travelled aboard merchant vessels, especially before the nineteenth century but, when they did, women usually took over caregiver roles for ailing seamen. For example, Mary Russell, who sailed aboard her husband's ship the *Emily* from 1845 to 1851, wrote, "I have today commenced the Office of ship's nurse. The lame and sick and bruised all come to me. Doctoring done free of all expense".[70] Nursing was traditionally a woman's role on land, but most recognised the absolute necessity of caring for one's comrades in an isolated and hostile

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69   Edward D. Griffin, D.D. *The Claims of Seamen: A Sermon, Preached November 7, 1819, In the Brick Church, New York, For the Benefit of the Marine Missionary Society of that* City (New York: J. Seymour, 1819), 8.

70   Eleanora C. Gordon, "The Captain as Healer: Medical Care on Merchantmen and Whalers, 1790-1865," *The American Neptune,* 54 (Fall 1994): 272-273.

environment, and providing sick or injured crewmates with some basic care was not necessarily seen as emasculating. In *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush*, Susan Johnson has argued that the homosocial communities in the California goldfields "encouraged men to stretch, twist, invert, or even temporarily abandon customary ideas and practices".[71] Similarly, the homosocial maritime environment created situations where men quickly had to create family-like structures among themselves and take on roles mothers and sisters had assumed before. While sailors may have wished to relegate nursing duties to women if they had the chance, seamen realised the need and desire to care for friends and saw such activities as a manly duty.[72]

Aboard ship and in port, sailors at times exhibited their generous nature in ways that would have shamed most charitable societies. When sailors reached a port they received payment, in part or in full, from their voyage, putting up to several months' wages in their pockets. Much of the money went to the various entertainments, debt collectors, shipping agents, and hucksters found in great abundance in port towns.[73] Within a matter of days or weeks, sailors spent most of their cash with little or nothing to show for it, except perhaps some blurry memories of tavern interiors, fist fights and brief encounters with prostitutes.[74] Sailors also lost a great deal of their money to debts owed to unscrupulous crimps and boarding house keepers who could relieve a seaman of years' worth of wages in a matter of days.[75] Since cash rarely had the opportunity to burn a hole clean through a sailor's pocket, most sailors viewed money as a temporary companion that would soon leave for more loyal and wiser company. Sailors' spendthrift

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71   Susan Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2000), 127.

72   Griffin, *The Claims of Seamen*, 8. The characteristics that Griffin praises in this document make it clear that caring for one's comrades was an essential part of a manly character and something to be admired.

73   Hugh H. Davis, "The American Seaman's Friend Society and the American Sailor, 1828-1838," *The American Neptune* 39 (1979): 48.

74   Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 56-57.

75   Captain Ringbolt, *Sailor's Life and Sailor's Yarns* (New York: C.S. Francis & Co., 1847), 57-59. John Codman wrote under the penname "Captain Ringbolt".

attitude, when combined with a seamen's penchant for helping fellow sailors in need, led them to give freely to those less fortunate than themselves.[76] Not all sailors exhibited generosity to a fault but a sailor who gave all he had to help a friend or even a stranger who had fallen on hard times, was certainly not uncommon. One observer wrote, in regards to sailors' attitudes toward their fellows: "No men are so liberal; none, whose hearts and hands are so easily opened; none, who have such a strong fellow-feeling; none, who are less careful to preserve their lives".[77]

At the same time that maritime culture developed on the high seas, European culture began to experience cultural and social changes on land. The wealth accumulated by European nations through their colonies, and the ships that transported natural resources and finished products across the seas, created a burgeoning middle class and an increasingly affluent elite class. The need for the growing middle class to define itself led to calls for moderation and temperance, and elites' increased leisure time led to the formation of a "polite society" in Europe and its colonies. Middle-class values included a strong element of self-control, especially in matters regarding drinking, sex and spending.[78] As Philip Carter argues, for the upper-class proponents of polite society:

> [P]oliteness was the means to acquire a suitably refined,
> yet virtuous, personality that proved superior to many
> existing forms of manly virtue which, on account of
> their association with elitism, violence or boorishness,
> were judged detrimental to truly polite sociability.[79]

Elites in polite society increasingly associated "violence and boorishness" with poor and working-class people.

Life aboard ship and in port towns proved especially violent and boorish but sailors did not attempt to modify their behaviour according to elite social trends;

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76   Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 9-12.

77   Stafford, *Important to Seamen*, 1.

78   Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 45-49.

79   Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 1.

instead, they opposed such a transition and revelled in their rough manners.[80] Sailors tended to agree with polite society's elite critics who feared that "refined manhood" led to weakness and effeminacy. In port, sailors publicly flaunted their opposition to bourgeois morality and elite society's social standards, living up to "manly" stereotypes in the search for pleasure and identity.

Bravery, hard-work, strength, compassion, generosity, and skill constituted manly elements that landsmen could recognise and admire. Sailors' transience and their behaviour in port towns, however, made them a suspect group and most landsmen rejected seamen as social outcasts, despite romanticizing seafaring and seafaring men. Sailors embraced the repulsion that landsmen had for them and used it to create a maritime culture and to define their manhood in direct opposition to shoreside residents and the social elite who oppressed seamen and exploited their labour. By rejecting some shoreside norms, sailors could create a sense of community and identity, based on their work community, that did not rely on others' concepts of respectability or masculinity.[81] The shoreside behaviour of sailors leading to the repulsion felt by many landsmen included excessive drinking, the use of physical violence, the use of foul language, their sexual activities, their tendency to work and socialise across racial lines, their physical appearance and their scorn of religion.

Liberty ashore not only meant a temporary cessation of labour, it also represented freedom from the ship's discipline and oppression. After months at sea, sailors' pent up frustrations and lusts came boiling to the surface and exploded when they finally received shore leave. Excessive drinking constituted one of the primary elements of sailors' time in port and many headed straight from their ships to the taverns that populated the dockside "sailortowns" found in every port. Aboard

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80   Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 211-247. Linebaugh and Rediker argue that sailors actively rejected middle class and elite society's morals and standards of behaviour, creating a proletarian movement that inspired and informed the revolutions in North America and France during the eighteenth century.

81   Joan Druett, *Hen Frigates: Wives of Merchant Captains under Sail* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 78. Druett writes: "In view of the 'refining' nature attributed to the female sex, it is interesting to speculate whether any of the seafaring wives imagined they could exert a 'civilizing influence' on board ship. It would have been quite a challenge, mariners by long custom being independent both in behaviour and speech".

ship, sailors put themselves and their shipmates at danger if they drank excessively and they might awaken from a drunken stupor to find themselves chained and locked in the ship's hold, awaiting more severe punishment. Free of the dangers and discipline of the ship, sailors went ashore with up to a year's wages in their pockets, ready to spend a good portion of it on drink. Most sailors drank with abandon and, as one critic put it, "in the paroxysms of intoxication", sailors were "liable to perpetrate the vilest or the most atrocious crimes".[82] Sailors did not limit their drinking to taverns and pubs but often took to the streets, revelling in their drunkenness, "disturbing the State's dignity, its quiet and its peace".[83] All classes and individuals had their own drinking habits and other people certainly drank to excess at times but a sailor in port could usually put most of them to shame with the amount he could imbibe in a single sitting.[84] Sailors cared little for middle-class demands for moderation and temperance.

When in port, sailors drank more than their fill, not only to create a sense, if often illusory, of freedom and independence from employers but also to defy those who demanded discipline and obedience from them on shore. Drinking also ignited other maritime cultural elements and activities that shocked and frightened port towns' bourgeois and elite classes.

As historian Jeffrey Bolster writes, fighting constituted one of the manly elements of maritime identity, and sailors "valued pugilism and pluck, traits that stood them in good stead in both their rough-and-tumble waterfront world and their routine defiance of ship's officers".[85] Aboard ship, fighting assumed many forms, including fencing, wrestling, boxing, and black men's head-butting contests. Boxing proved the most popular martial contest since it showcased manly qualities

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82 Andrew Brown, *Dr. Brown's Sermon on the Dangers and Duties of the Seafaring Life: Preached Before the Protestant Dissenting Congregation at Halifax; And Published at the Desire of the Marine Society in that Place* (Boston: Belknap & Hall, 1793), 36; Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 47; Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 56-56.

83 *Alta California*, San Francisco, 4 April 1850.

84 Madelon Powers, "The 'Poor Man's Friend': Saloonkeepers, Workers, and the Code of Reciprocity in U.S. Barrooms, 1870-1920," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 45(4) (1994): 1-13.

85 Bolster, "Every Inch a Man," 154.

such as courage, stamina and physical strength.[86] But, sailors also used physical violence to settle personal disputes and to challenge the authority of officers. Some men submitted to the abuse of officers, but many stood up to them and exchanged blows, often getting the better of their superiors. In fighting each other and their officers, sailors defended their sense of manliness by illustrating that their submission to discipline and disrespect had limits that they were willing to back up with strength and courage. On shore, sailors also fought one another and landsmen, sometimes in relatively harmless and friendly brawls and, on occasion, in deadly disputes involving knives and blunt instruments. Sailors enjoyed fighting landsmen, if for no other reason than to show their manly superiority over the softer lubbers. Soldiers, in particular, were a favourite shoreside adversary since soldiers not only represented what sailors saw as the worst in landsmen but they also represented the extreme discipline and oppression of state and social elites. To call a sailor a soldier, or to use the nautical expression "soger", was a terrible insult reserved for the most unseamanlike men.[87]

Sailors spoke a nautical language that gave seamen who spoke different languages the ability to effectively communicate and sail their vessel efficiently. Maritime terminology seemed exotic and foreign to landsmen and certainly separated them from people ashore. However, what truly marked a sailor's language, especially when lubricated by deleterious spirits, was his ability to use foul language without shame or conscience. Swearing caused landsmen, especially religious leaders, tremendous consternation. During a sermon, one missionary warned, "those who frequent the sea to beware of an unprofitable and pernicious sin, to which from example and inconsiderateness they are much exposed, not to say addicted; I mean the sin of profane swearing".[88] Foul language represented an outward and public signifier for debauchery, wickedness and disobedience that many felt common in seafarers and many middle-class people worried that such activity might have

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86   Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 117.

87   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 126.

88   Brown, *Dr. Brown's Sermon on the Dangers and Duties of the Seafaring Life*, 33; Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 128.

repercussions on land.[89] A common sight in any port town was a drunken sailor and his companions swaying down the street, shoulder to shoulder singing profane songs regarding any number of lewd subjects.

Many middle-class people, especially missionaries and women, worried that children might be influenced by such language but sailors did not worry about this since they often did not have children and, if they did, they rarely saw them.[90] While elite, bourgeois and even working-class fathers had to set a good example for their children as part of their patriarchal duty; sailors rarely had such concerns. The only children in regular contact with sailors were young boys working to become sailors themselves. Teaching boys aboard a ship to swear was part of the initiation process and a "skill" that new sailors had to learn. On a ship, officers and crew used expletives regularly without thinking but sailors knew landsmen expected them to swear and that it upset and repulsed many of them. Sailors used swearing ashore to reject middle-class notions of manly moderation and elite notions of polite manliness. In this way, profanity served to illustrate that on shore sailors were free from discipline and that landsmen's approval was neither expected nor wanted.

After months at sea, men conducted sexual and social activities with prostitutes both in private rooms and in public alleys. Many sailors certainly had sexual relations with one another aboard ship but scantily documented evidence makes it difficult to determine how often such relationships developed.[91] The absence of evidence may suggest that homosexual relationships were taboo and something

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89   Lars Andersson and Peter Trudgill, *Bad Language* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1990), 15, 55, 65-66. Andersson and Trudgill argue that "Many people are shocked, appalled etc., by swearing. They argue against the use of swear-words… on the grounds that they are offensive, blasphemous, obscene, insulting, rude or just unnecessary…but of course it is obvious that people sometimes swear precisely because they want to be offensive, insulting etc." The authors continue: "Swearing is tied to social restrictions which mirror the values of the society" and that, "Individuals on the edge of society – young people, the unemployed, alcoholics, and criminals – can be expected to show less control over their social behavior and language. And there is no doubt that swearing is very typical of peripheral groups".

90   Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 105; Kindeleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 88.

91   Creighton, "Davy Jones' Locker Room," 128; Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 189-194; Burg, *An American Seafarer in the Age of Sail,* 73-82. Philip C. Van Buskirk's journals provide rare

not openly discussed. It may also suggest a level of commonality that did not warrant special mention by either sailors or officers. Hard and fast rules about heterosexual and homosexual identities did not begin to make an appearance in the United States and Europe until the late nineteenth century. As George Chauncey argues, before this time, sexual activity did not necessarily translate into sexual identity and same-sex relations may not have constituted a deviation from the norm at sea or on land.[92] In any case, while in port, sailors made no pretext about their sexual endeavours and openly displayed their sexual desires and activities. Prostitution ran rampant in "sailortowns" and sailors spent a great deal of their pay on prostitutes' services. Not possessing many shoreside masculine traits, sailors could use sexual activity and conquest to reaffirm their manhood.[93] Sex only received passing mention in Christian tracts and sermons and women never received direct mention. Middle- and elite-class social propriety prevented addressing sex directly but the tracts and sermons' tone seemed to imply and operate on the assumption that sailors' sins included illegitimate sexual activity by consistently referring to sailors' "uncommon depravity".[94]

Another element of maritime culture that white landsmen found repugnant included the tendency of whites to work and socialise across racial lines.[95] The large percentage of non-white sailors made mariners a suspicious group to begin with. The Atlantic maritime community developed simultaneously with the racial ideology that rationalised chattel slavery in the Americas and the conquest of native peoples. As a result, multi-racial and ethnic labour practices existed prior

and detailed descriptions of homoerotic encounters and fantasies within the maritime community, shedding some light on how sailors viewed each other sexually.

92   Chauncey, *Gay New York, 67-97*; Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002), 98-104.

93   Stearns, *Be A Man*!, 44; Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), 131-134.

94   Griffin, *The Claims of Seamen*, 8.

95   Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 63-65.

to nineteenth-century racial categories based on skin colour.[96] Africans and, to a lesser extent, Native Americans had always been part of that community and had helped create its traditions. African and Native American sailors did not necessarily present the same racial challenges to white sailors that they did for white landsmen. They had always been part of the maritime community and whites assumed they always would be. Fears of racial conspiracies and miscegenation made white landsmen uneasy with the seemingly indiscriminate social behaviour of white seamen.[97] Because white seamen associated regularly with blacks and Native Americans, white landsmen considered them no better than people of colour and, thus, worthy of suspicion.[98]

In order to guarantee high returns from voyages and to discourage sailor rebellions, maritime employers targeted the poorest and most ethnically and racially diverse populations in the Atlantic. Poor European men often possessed few options as Europe's population rapidly increased starting in the fifteenth century and less land and fewer jobs were available shoreside.[99] Many poor young men willingly took to the sea hoping to make a meagre living; some hoped to go to sea for a short time in order to raise some extra cash for their futures on land; while others hoped to stave off starvation and homelessness until better opportunities presented themselves shoreside.[100] Hiring men from different ethnic, racial, and national origins also allowed employers to save money by providing them with the ability to manipulate differences in national currencies. Africans, for example, often served as slaves aboard European vessels or signed on at lower wages than

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96   According to Winthrop D. Jordan, *The Whiteman's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), racism was not inherent in European culture, rather, it was a long development based largely on economic pragmatism in the Americas.

97   Thomas J. Davis, *A Rumor of Revolt: The "Great Negro Plot" in Colonial New York* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1985).

98   Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 181.

99   Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 31-49.

100   Vickers, *Farmers and Fishermen*, 4.

their European counterparts because they could make more money on a ship than anywhere on shore.[101]

Employers hoped that a poor and diverse workforce would also mean a divided workforce. Believing that crew diversity meant that language, culture, religion, physical appearance and ethnic and national rivalries discouraged seamen from working in concert against their employers, officers and shipowners sought men from varying backgrounds. But, the formation of an Atlantic maritime labour identity curbed sailor division over time. Crew diversity was also a pragmatic matter for employers. As ships sailed across the Atlantic, crewmen died, deserted, or otherwise terminated their terms of service and officers had to hire sailors wherever they found them, be they European, African or Native American.[102] As maritime trade in the Atlantic steadily increased from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, so did crew diversity. Sailors often left ships in foreign ports, providing employers with a cosmopolitan labour pool in port towns and making ships "a meeting place where various traditions were jammed together in a forcing house of internationalism".[103]

Using diversity as a tool to control workers, however, did not have the employers' desired effect and sailors' realised that they had more in common with each other than with landsmen who shared the same nationality and language. The international character of the maritime workforce created a relatively tolerant labour pool that, according to a contemporary observer, made

> those engaged in its pursuits citizens of the world. It
> subdues their national prejudices, and overcomes their
> local feelings. They forget that they are English, or
> Scotch, or Dutch, or French, whilst they realise that
> they are *men*, partakers of the same nature.[104]

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101 James Barker Farr, *Black Odyssey: The Seafaring Traditions of Afro-Americans* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 23.

102 Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 151.

103 Ibid.

104 John B. Romeyn, D. D., *A Sermon Delivered in the Middle Dutch Church On the evening of the Lord's Day, March 21, 1819, For the Benefit of the New York Marine Missionary Society*

Sailors never completely lost the prejudices learned on land but sailing with men from various national, ethnic and racial backgrounds certainly tempered those prejudices enough to allow men to live and work together in relative harmony.[105] Out of the adversity of the maritime environment and the diversity among crewmen, a maritime labour culture developed that allowed ships to sail productively and efficiently and provided the men who sailed them with a common manly identity.

Physical appearance provided another defining element of Atlantic maritime labour culture. In port, mariners flaunted their masculine maritime identity in front of disapproving landsmen. Mariners' dress and tattoos marked them as men of the sea and reinforced many of the stereotypes that landsmen held about them.

A sailor's dress immediately marked him as a man of the sea. Many observers remarked on sailors' "peculiarity of dress", and "their aversion to mingling with other people".[106] Clothing served as an important symbol of the sailor's identity and, while there was little uniformity in sailors' dress, a few constants existed. A sailor's wardrobe reflected the practical necessities of his work. Pea jackets, loose flannel shirts and bell-bottomed duck trousers allowed for the freedom of movement sailors needed to climb rigging and stay warm on the high seas; straw and canvas round hats, painted with black paint or tar, kept the sun, rain and sea spray off their heads; and neckerchiefs served as quick bandages, tourniquets and safety lines. In addition, when in port towns and cities, sailors' clothing clearly identified them as seamen, becoming an unofficial uniform. Their clothing distinguished them from others and immediately announced their profession, social position, and general attitudes and values. The "quasi-uniform" also let seamen identify one another when in a foreign environment, thus reinforcing community ties among maritime labourers.[107]

(J. Seymour, 1819), 12.

105 Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 82-84.

106 Griffin, *The Claims of Seamen*, 10.

107 Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher, eds., *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (New York: Berg Publishers, 1992), 1; Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communication Through Clothing* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 1-4; R. C. Holmes, "Sailors and Their Clothing," *The American Neptune* 17 (1957): 95-202. R. C. Holmes served

On shore, the sailor's clothing indicated he was hardened by his experiences at sea and street-wise from his experiences in foreign ports and, thus, not a man to trifle with. Such displays of masculine fashion served as more than mere posturing. The areas sailors frequented often represented the most dangerous areas in port cities and, by displaying a tough front, sailors made assailants think twice before assaulting a mariner. Donning their best bell-bottomed trousers, pea coat, neckerchief and cap, most mariners headed straight to dockside taverns and brothels. However, their conspicuous dress called attention to their presence in port and their reputations as immoral and undisciplined often made them unwelcome.

Mariners also had a penchant for tattoos that marked them as sailors and served as living scrapbooks from the distant ports they had visited. Borrowing the techniques and traditions from several Atlantic peoples, virtually all seamen permanently decorated their hands, feet, arms, chests and backs with ink-and-needle-rendered anchors, mermaids, dolphins and crucifixes.

These images were often beautiful and detailed but tattoos represented more than aesthetically pleasing body art; they also constituted an important rite of passage for sailors. Many landsmen wore clothing similar to that of sailors, especially those working on the docks but from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, only deepwater sailors covered themselves with tattoos. The tattooing process proved long, painful and dangerous, exposing sailors to possible infection. Similar to the clothing styles they wore, but far more dramatic, tattoos were a mark of distinction. According to historian, Alfred Gell, tattoos announced to sailors and landsmen alike that an individual was a man of the sea who possessed all the trappings of class, lifestyle and worldview that that profession represented.[108] Yet unlike clothing, tattoos were an indelible mark of a sailor's profession and travels.[109] As Nicholas Thomas argues, "Whereas objects gathered might be lost, broken or sold, and could only ever tenuously connected with one's person and uncertain in their significance,

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as a mariner during the late nineteenth century and his article consists of many of his own reminiscences regarding seamen's lives.

108 Alfred Gell, *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 10.

109 Beck*, Folklore and the Sea*, 196-201; Bolster, *Black Jacks,* 92-93.

THIS IMAGE ILLUSTRATES THE CLOTHING COMMONLY WORN BY SAILORS DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.
'THE SAILOR'S RETURN', REPRODUCTION BY PERMISSION OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARIES.

your tattoo is not only ineradicable and inalienable, it is unambiguously part of you".[110] This was particularly important to men whose ability to own and keep property was highly questionable.

The attitude held by many "respectable" landsmen can be seen in the way sailors were treated by church congregations. Christians often believed that sailors went to religious services "to mock at religion, or from some other improper motive" and did not usually welcome such men into their congregations. [111] Rather than suffer angry stares and accusations of impropriety, most mariners avoided worship altogether.[112] Some seamen considered themselves devout Christians and tended to their souls as much as life on a ship and the unwelcoming stares from parishioners allowed but most sailors rejected religion outright.[113] Many sailors considered religious devotion unmanly and targeted shipmates who prayed and read the Bible for harassment and ridicule. Peer pressure caused many to abandon their devotions and assume the anti-religious sentiments of their shipmates. Many seamen scorned religion because of the ostracism they faced from land-based parishioners. Despite missionary attempts to establish churches and safe lodging for sailors in ports around the world, most chose to fend for themselves without the benefit of religion, preferring to rely on long-established sea lore. [114]

Just as the maritime community was racially diverse, motivations for going to sea were also diverse. These motivations often reflected the differing racial interactions between sailors. Native Americans often joined New England whaling crews as boatmen and harpooners, especially during the eighteenth century, in hopes of

110 Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole, and Bronwen Douglas, eds., *Tattoo: Bodies, Art, and Exchange in the Pacific and the West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 20.

111 Stafford, *Important to Seamen*, 4.

112 *Report of the Marine Bible Society of New York: At Their First Anniversary Meeting, April 21, 1817* (New York: J. Seymour, 1817), 11.

113 Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 80; Romeyn, *A Sermon Delivered in the Middle Dutch Church*, 19-20.

114 *Constitution of the Marine Bible Society of New York, Auxiliary to the American Bible Society: Together with and Address to Merchants and Masters of Vessels and an Address to Seamen* (New York: J. Seymour, 1817), 12; Hugh H. Davis, "The American Seamen's Friend Society and the American Sailor," 45-57; George Duncan Campbell, "The Sailor's Home," *The American Neptune* 37 (1977): 79-184.

paying off debts to white merchants. By the end of the 1700s, the whaling and merchant industries required more and more labourers, and employers often turned to the sons of propertyless white colonists.[115] For white sailors, going to sea often represented a desperate escape from the law, a chance for adventure or a last ditch opportunity to support themselves but it usually precluded supporting a family. Some white sailors married and had children in "home" ports but the low pay and long absences, up to several years in some instances, largely precluded a traditional, domestic life. As Daniel Vickers has argued, white sailors involved in coastal trades and other maritime activities based in small ports with short cruises often went to sea as part of local networks that allowed men to establish themselves financially and eventually establish stable shoreside occupations and families.[116] For those who went on extended deep-sea voyages, however, the inability to support a family struck at the heart of white masculine identity and ideals of proper manhood. By going to sea, a white sailor gave up shoreside standards of manhood and respectability and exchanged them for a more martial, maritime manliness. But, going to sea held different meanings for non-whites who shared neither the same standards of manhood nor the same opportunities on land as their white counterparts.[117]

For free blacks and, to some extent, black slaves hired out to merchant vessels, seafaring offered an opportunity not only to prove their manliness and human worth to whites but also to achieve independence and respectability in their own shoreside communities. Relegated to the most menial, low-paying work in northern cities and, usually unable to acquire their own productive land, free blacks often found in seafaring the ability to support a family. Jeffrey Bolster

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115   Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 22. Creighton bases her argument about Native American men in the whaling industry on Daniel Vickers, "Maritime Labor in Colonial Massachusetts: A Case Study of the Essex County Cod Fishery and the Whaling Industry of Nantucket, 1630-1775" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1981), 156-157, 171, 274-282.

116   Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 96-130.

117   The theoretical basis for the argument of the role of labour and conceptions of American manhood comes from Eric Foner, *Politics and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 34-53, and Katherine G. Morrissey, "Engendering the West," in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past,* ed. William Cronon, et al. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), 132-144.

argues that despite receiving the same low wages as white sailors, black seamen found maritime labour far more profitable than factory jobs, dockside work or day labour, where racial discrimination by employers and fellow workers was more prevalent. For example, from 1810 to 1813, blacks made up 13.4 percent of sailors shipping out of Philadelphia.[118] Although black sailors' families lived modestly at best, they lived as well or better than most other black families in their communities.

The respect granted to black sailors by white sailors, including officers and by shoreside blacks, offered its own rewards to black men willing to spend much of their life away from friends and family. Many white men brought the prejudices and racial assumptions they learned on shore with them onto ships where men of every race served but, quite often, the seamanship, bravery and experience of men of colour won them respect from white men who previously regarded non-whites as inferior. This does not mean that racism aboard nineteenth-century vessels did not exist, it certainly did. But close physical contact and mutual reliance on the skill, compassion and bravery of the men around them, regardless of colour, made holding fast to racial prejudices impractical and dangerous. Life at sea offered black men a relatively egalitarian lifestyle, where one's skills meant more than skin colour. Black sailors usually received the same pay as white sailors and black and white sailors also lived in close quarters with one another before the mast and freely socialised together in port. While at home, black sailors garnered respect from their communities due to their more or less equal footing with white sailors, the bravery they displayed by going to sea, the money they possessed after a voyage, and the hair-raising stories they related to friends and family. By going to sea, black men could support themselves and their families and created a manly identity through the labour they performed. In short, life at sea held many advantages for blacks that simply did not exist on land and, while at home, black sailors made their occupation very clear to all who saw them.[119]

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118 Martha S. Putney, *Afro-American Merchant Seamen and Whalemen Prior to the Civil War* (New York: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1987), 123; Farr, *Black Odyssey*, 239. Farr argues that due to the many maritime labour opportunities, "sailor" and "mariner" ranked as the fourth most common occupations among San Francisco's black population in 1860.

119 Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 158-189. The argument for the role seafaring played in the lives of African-Americans and their shoreside communities is based on the extensive research

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the maritime labour community constituted "in many respects a world by itself; governed by different laws, connected by a different language, and not likely to fall under the influence of those plans which are set on foot for the reformation of landsmen".[120] Separated from the rest of society by their work, the maritime community created a society that did not rely on landsmen's standards or beliefs. By creating their own subculture aboard ships and in ports, sailors made themselves strangers to people who did not make their living on the sea. At the same time, they created an extremely close-knit community, "the different members of which are not separated by local obstructions, but are consistently passing and re-passing in different directions, constantly intermingling with each other. In every port they find their brethren, in every port they are at home".[121] By the early nineteenth century, men sailing aboard American and European vessels possessed a strong sense of who they were and what was expected of them.

David Roediger has argued that white, wage-earning landsmen in the United States relied on race as the basis for their new labour consciousness. White sailors, by contrast, relied on their profession's manly, martial attributes, such as bravery, skill, combat, generosity, strength and compassion as the foundation for their labour-based identity. To counter, as well as to submit to, the dehumanizing and disenfranchising effects of low wages, poor rations and physical abuse, sailors revelled in sailing's dangers and hard physical labour, flaunting manly qualities associated with their work.[122] Manliness provided sailors with the means to face the sea's hardships with both pride and dignity, which seemed to compensate for the profession's monetary shortcomings and led men to return to the sea, time and again. The compensatory elements of manliness also proved valuable to employers

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and analysis done by Bolster.

120   Griffin, *The Claims of Seamen*, 7.

121   *Report of the Marine Bible Society of New York*, 9.

122   Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*.

as sailors grudgingly submitted to the abuses and cost cutting measures practiced by ships' officers and owners.[123]

As sailors moved from the Atlantic to the Pacific in the nineteenth century, however, they faced new challenges that forced them to re-evaluate and redefine their manly identity. Increased Pacific trade in the nineteenth century introduced new peoples to the maritime culture. Racial and ethnic diversity provided one primary challenge to manly identity in the Pacific. Seafarers always represented a cosmopolitan mix of races and ethnicities but an even greater diversity of men worked aboard Pacific ships than aboard ships plying Atlantic waters. As in the Atlantic, Europeans, European-Americans, Africans, African-Americans, American-Indians and South Americans sailed the Pacific. The Pacific, however, also boasted large numbers of Melanesians, Polynesians, Malaysians and Asians. These relative newcomers to the maritime world, that had developed and taken shape in the Atlantic, carried with them their own masculine ideals and identity. The sailors' cultural, racial, class and personal backgrounds determined their perceptions of manliness and shaped how they thought maritime labour should fulfil manly expectations.

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123   Charles W. Brown and Richard Henry Dana both provide detailed discussions on the sailors' acceptance of abuse and hardships. In regards to physical punishment, Brown states, "Going to sea was a hard life. Much has been said and written about the brutality and cruelty of the old ship masters. A ship's forecastle was not a good place for a weakling. Dudes were at a discount. Men were expected to 'step lively' when orders were given, and prompt obedience was demanded and speedily enforced. The language used was rough and forcible. A blow frequently followed a command, and sometimes they were in close company. A man who became an officer frequently had to fight for his promotion. If an officer could not enforce his orders by using his fists he might use a belaying pin, a heaver, or a slung shot—but he must get obedience. All this was expected, and was considered by those interested as a part of the game". Charles W. Brown, *My Ditty Bag* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1925), 21. Dana describes an unjust flogging off the coast of California and writes, "I had no real apprehension that the captain would lay a hand on me; but I thought of our situation, living under a tyranny, with an ungoverned, swaggering fellow administering it; of the character of the country we were in; the length of the voyage; the uncertainty attending our return to America; and then, if we should return, I would do something to redress the grievances and relieve the sufferings of that class of beings with whom my lot had so long been cast". Neither Dana nor the rest of the crew either raised a hand or spoke out against the punishment, though all were outraged by it. Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 105.

By the end of the nineteenth century, technology, particularly steam powered ships, also threatened sailors' manly identity by making sailing less dangerous and unpredictable and by deskilling maritime work. The use of steam engines on vessels allowed shipping companies to hire smaller, less experienced crews. Steam removed much of the guesswork from sailing since it did not rely on the wind for propulsion and lessened the danger from storms. With few or no sails on board, ships required fewer labourers and men did not need to know how to work the many ropes, spars and masts sailing ships required. These skills took many years to master and gave experienced men a measure of pride that work on steamships did not. In short, steam power devalued sailors' traditional skills and labour and struck at the very heart of their manly identity. Racial and cultural diversity, combined with technological changes, forced seamen to re-evaluate not only the work they did but also the identity that work once engendered.

As manliness decreased, so did its compensatory qualities and, by the 1880s, sailors' satisfaction with their working conditions disappeared. The embittered sailors who formed the Coast Seamen's Union on the San Francisco wharves in 1885 understood these changes and wanted to counter their more disturbing effects. Without a strong manly identity as partial compensation, sailors began to demand higher pay, better food, shorter hours, safer conditions and greater legal recourse against their employers.

SAILING IN THE PACIFIC

PERCEPTIONS AND A NEW MARITIME LABOUR IDENTITY

CHAPTER 2

SAILING IN THE PACIFIC
PERCEPTIONS AND A NEW MARITIME LABOUR IDENTITY [124]

Seaman Charles Goodall stood on the *St. Mary*'s deck, wet, cold and generally miserable as the weather vacillated between rain, sleet and hail. Goodall did not so much mind the intemperate weather itself; a sailor grew accustomed to occasional bouts with harsh and uncomfortable elemental forces. What angered and discouraged Goodall was that he had been wet, cold and generally miserable for the past four months. In early March 1849, in New Orleans, Goodall signed articles aboard the *St. Mary* after learning about gold discoveries in California. Like tens of thousands of other would-be prospectors, Goodall knew that California gold would change his life forever and make him a very wealthy man. The voyage to California, however, had not lived up to his dreams. In fact, very little about his journey had gone smoothly or easily and a more superstitious seaman might have decided that the trip was an omen for future struggles and failures in California's mountains and foothills. [125]

Troubles aboard the *St. Mary* started from the first day and did not stop until the ship docked in San Francisco Bay. The small sailing vessel was scheduled to leave New Orleans on 7 March but when the steamer tug came to take it out of port most of the crew had not yet arrived and the *St. Mary* was forced to

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124 Portions of this chapter originally appeared in *Sublimations of Sexuality: Exploring of the erotic*, Jon Braddy, K. Billy Huff, Robert Moore, eds. (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press). ISBN: 978-1-84888-496-0. In press.

125 Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852. BANC MSS C-F 116.

return to the dock for the night. The twenty-odd passengers bound for California complained about the delay, convinced that they were victims of a conspiracy to detain them in port. At sea, the situation grew worse. The vessel proved to have much in common with a kitchen strainer and water poured into the craft, soaking the passengers, the crew, everyone's personal possessions and the cargo and provisions. To make matters worse, most of the cargo had not been properly secured in the rush to depart and much of it came loose during a gale. The stores stowed on the deck went overboard. Even the galley stove came loose and the cook could not start a fire without risking the entire vessel, requiring all aboard to live on bread and cheese for several days. Many of the *St. Mary*'s woes might have been prevented had the ship's master, Captain Chasteau, not been "blind drunk" the entire time and constantly arguing with his first mate, whom Goodall referred to as an "empty-headed numbskull".[126]

The vessel's poor condition prompted the captain to take it to Baltimore, the nearest port, where proper repairs could be made.[127] While delayed in Baltimore for thirty-nine days, Goodall's personal troubles continued. He developed an "inflammation in the throat" that kept him on shore at John Ballis's Sailor's Home under a doctor's care. In the meantime, the *St. Mary*'s passengers filed a complaint with the vessel's owner, who discharged the captain as a drunkard and replaced the first mate. On 14 May, with a new captain and mate, who held the full confidence of passengers and crew, the *St. Mary* set sail for California for the second time in two months, and all aboard left Baltimore "with buoyant spirits, and a hope of a quick passage to the land of gold".[128] Unfortunately for Goodall and the other thirty-two people on board, his trials on his quest for California gold had only just begun.

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126   Ibid.

127   Map of the Ship *Apollo* of New York, 1849. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. Ships that sailed from the eastern United States to the Pacific via Cape Horn did not make a straight run down the North and South American coasts. In order to catch the best winds and currents, ships had to sail far to the east, almost touching the African coast at Cape Verde before turning south towards Cape Horn.

128   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852. BANC MSS C-F 116.

Despite the extensive repairs to the schooner, it still leaked horribly, making everyone miserable as they headed for South America. On 10 July, the *St. Mary* arrived in St. Catherine's, Brazil, only to come under quarantine because of a rumoured cholera outbreak in the United States.[129] After an eleven-day quarantine, the *St. Mary* received permission to sail, and on 14 April, left St. Catherine's and headed for Cape Horn. Two days after reaching the latitude of Cape Horn, the *St. Mary* ran into headwinds that "commenced to blow a continual gale" that lasted from 31 August until 11 November, sending the vessel on a three-month struggle to round the tip of South America. In a two-week period, from 16 September to 1 October, the vessel travelled hundreds of miles but made absolutely no forward progress, ending at the beginning of October along the same longitude from where it had started in the middle of the previous month. Pelted by rain, sleet, snow and hail, drenched by high seas breaking over the bow and flooding through the decks, and plagued with continuous frosts, the voyage around Cape Horn proved "one of great disagreeableness and not unattended with peril". On 4 November, the vessel finally passed Cape Horn's latitude on the Pacific side and headed north, a "full sixty-seven days after passing it on the Atlantic side a distance of only about 1, 000 longitudinal miles". Seventeen days later, the *St. Mary* limped into its first Pacific port, Valparaiso, and passengers and crew could "bring out our clothes to dry that have been wet these last three months".[130]

Goodall and the rest of the people aboard the *St. Mary* stayed in Valparaiso for nine days recuperating and waiting for repairs to their battered and scarred vessel. At last on 30 November, they left and began the final leg of their long sea journey. Finally, on 25 January 1850, the *St. Mary* passed through the Golden Gate and entered San Francisco Bay after an excruciatingly long 322-day journey, 263 of which were spent at sea. Typically, the voyage from the eastern seaboard to

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129   Ibid. Goodall may be referring to Santa Catarina, Brazil. Goodall questioned the validity of the quarantine, suspecting that it was only a stall tactic to get more money out of the vessel while it lay in port. Robert G. Hancock, Jr., "Pestilence from the Sea and American Maritime Quarantine Policy," *The American Neptune* 50 (1990): 94-106.

130   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852. BANC MSS C-F 116.

California via Cape Horn took no more than four to eight months.[131] On 12 February 1850, Goodall left the ship that had brought him to the Pacific coast and headed for the California goldfields determined to make his fortune. After all, Goodall had suffered through the last year in order to mine gold and he referred to his long miserable cruise as "California gold hunting with a vengeance".[132]

For many sailors who sought riches in California, however, the diggings proved far more challenging and far less rewarding than rumours and advertising broadsides had promised and Goodall's shoreside labour yielded primarily frustration and disappointment. Although Goodall's predictions of wealth in California proved seriously flawed, he was completely correct in assuming that the Gold Rush would change his life forever. Goodall's story also illustrates how Atlantic sailors often arrived with inaccurate, preconceived notions about the Pacific and its peoples and what both offered newly arrived seamen.

By the early nineteenth century, both the maritime world and the world on land began to experience transformations that would profoundly and fundamentally alter maritime culture and challenge sailors' labour-based identity in the years to come. Most of the transformation experienced on land in the early nineteenth century would eventually be felt throughout the maritime industry but sailors in the Pacific experienced them before those in the Atlantic. Two notable factors affecting the Pacific maritime culture included the burgeoning China Trade and the California Gold Rush.

Whaling and the California hide and tallow trade drew many ships from the United States to the Pacific from 1791 to 1848 but the lure of the China trade interested merchant vessels most.[133] On 30 August 1784, the first American ship to enter the China trade, the *Empress of China*, arrived at Canton eager to trade

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131 Charles R. Schultz, *Forty-Niners 'Round the Horn* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 4.

132 Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852. BANC MSS C-F 116

133 James H. Hitchman, *A Maritime History of the Pacific Coast, 1540-1980* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1990), 1-16; James P. Delgado, *To California by Sea: A Maritime History of the California Gold Rush* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 1-17; Ernest S. Dodge, *New England and the South Seas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), 27-56.

and profit from the large potential consumer pool and exotic and finely crafted Chinese goods, such as porcelain and silk. The China trade, however, presented several problems for hopeful American maritime merchants in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. First, distance created an obstacle that required ship's masters to decide whether to head east and south from the United States round the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and enter the western Pacific from the Indian Ocean or to head west and south round Cape Horn in South America and enter the eastern Pacific directly from the Atlantic Ocean. In either case, a sailor, officer or investor could expect a China voyage to last at least two years. Early in the China trade, most vessels rounded the Cape of Good Hope since the eastward course provided them with multiple ports in Asia and Malaysia where they could obtain supplies and make necessary repairs. The eastward route had also been well travelled by European vessels and fairly reliable charts existed, which limited navigational mishaps and catastrophes such as running aground. The Pacific, on the other hand, required vessels and seamen to face the often unrelenting, brutal weather at Cape Horn. As Charles Goodall's adventures illustrate, rounding Cape Horn could consume a great deal of time and energy and present tremendous danger and suffering. In addition, the Pacific had few large ports in which to re-supply and only Valparaiso and the Hawaiian Islands offered ships much-needed and much-appreciated sanctuary on the voyage to China.[134] Also, the vast distances of the Pacific and lack of comprehensive or accurate charts upon which sailors could rely made losing a ship and taking to a lifeboat almost certainly fatal. Sailors then had to rely purely on their own skills, luck or divine intervention to get them safely to one of the few, scattered Pacific ports.

Another obstacle for American merchantmen sailing to China was that the United States had almost nothing that the Chinese wanted. Americans wishing to trade in China had to rely on Spanish dollars. The Chinese accepted Spanish dollars as their standard international currency and the Spanish dollar was the only trade unit the Chinese would accept from American and European traders. The demand for Spanish dollars created a serious trade imbalance for the American merchant marine as vessels left their home ports with virtually nothing in their

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134 Ernest S. Dodge, *Islands and Empires: Western Impact on the Pacific and East Asia* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 57.

cargo holds. The search for viable trade goods for the Chinese market, however, led American merchant vessels to branch out into the Pacific and expand their trade networks to include the Pacific Islands and North and South America. For a short time, Americans traded ginseng from the Pacific Northwest to the Chinese, but it was of poor quality and the Chinese quickly stopped purchasing it. Sea otter and seal pelts provided American merchants with the first viable consumer goods for Chinese markets and in 1785 fur-hunting expeditions began to arrive off the North American coast from Vancouver Bay to Lower California.[135] From 1795 to 1805, the United States dominated the Pacific fur trade, with 68 American vessels trading along the north-west coast.[136] The region, however, did not possess the provisions or replacement sailors that vessels needed in order to sustain their crews, so American trading vessels turned increasingly to the Hawaiian Islands in order to winter between fur seasons, obtain fresh provisions, and hire native crewmen, boatmen and fur-hunters. The fur trade was relatively short-lived, seriously dwindling by 1805, and it disappeared altogether by 1825.

American maritime traders looked to the Pacific Islands to replace the trade lost due to the decline in the demand for otter pelts. Many Pacific Islands had trade goods that interested Chinese consumers and American traders quickly turned to them, intent on exploiting their natural resources and the Islanders' labour. Sandalwood offered an alternative to otter fur for those trading with the Chinese, and it grew on several Pacific Islands, especially in Polynesia and on Fiji. The Chinese had an almost insatiable appetite for the aromatic wood, used primarily for manufacturing "joss sticks".[137] As with otter pelts, the sandalwood trade did not last long, beginning in 1790 and tapering off considerably by the 1820s.[138] Sea slugs, or *bêche-de-mer*, provided the next potential trade good for Chinese

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135 Dodge, *New England and the South Seas*, 62; Elliot Grinnell Mears, *Maritime Trade of Western United States* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1935), 107.

136 Delgado, *To California by Sea*, 3; Igler, *The Great Ocean*, 30-37.

137 R. Gerard Ward, ed. *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 1 (New York: The Gregg Press, 1966), 47. Joss sticks refer to incense sticks used in religious temples and ceremonies practiced by the primarily Buddhist Chinese population. The oil from sandalwood was also placed on paper bundles and burned as a curative for illness, injury or any other misfortune suffered by an individual, family or household.

138 Dodge, *Islands and Empires*, 59-60.

markets. The American trade in *bêche-de-mer* began in 1822 when Captain Benjamin Vanderford cured the first cargo of the sea creatures aboard the ship *Roscoe* for Chinese consumption. The Chinese used processed *bêche-de-mer* as a food seasoning and the trade in sea slugs remained steady, if small, throughout the 1840s.[139] As the century progressed, American merchants and their European counterparts continued to search for trade goods Chinese consumers desired. Eventually, Americans and Europeans found a solution to their trade deficits in an Asian flower.

Many Chinese across the social spectrum, from peasant labourers to state officials, smoked opium produced from poppies. Europeans and Americans had traded opium to China in small amounts since the late eighteenth century but as the Chinese demand grew and foreign traders looked for answers to their trade-currency problems, the trade in the narcotic expanded rapidly. In 1820, China consumed between four and five thousand foreign opium chests, eighteen thousand in 1828 and, by 1839, the Chinese had purchased forty thousand chests from foreign merchants.[140] The Chinese government passed several laws prohibiting the sale and consumption of the highly addictive and socially destructive drug but foreign merchants, Chinese consumers and state officials simply smuggled opium into China at an ever increasing rate.[141] In 1839, the opium issue came to a head when Chinese official, Lin Zexu, confiscated Britain's opium stock at Canton and destroyed it publicly. The British responded to the official Chinese actions by going to war against China in what became known as the First Opium War. The war proved a military and diplomatic disaster for the Chinese as British military technology exposed the weaknesses of pre-industrial China, resulting in the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing. Prior to this treaty, China traded with foreigners according to the Canton System, which limited all foreign trade to the port city of Canton. After the treaty, China had to open four more ports to trade, namely,

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139   Ward, *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870, vol. 1*, 48; Dodge, *New England and the South Seas*, 86-100.

140   R. Keith Schoppa, *The Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 14.

141   Timothy Brook and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 6.

A painting of the port of Canton c.1850. In the foreground are Chinese vessels and in the background are the are the foreign 'factories'. (Public Domain image)

Amoy, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai. This greatly increased Chinese opium consumption as well as foreign trade and influence.[142]

While the opening of more Chinese ports created a small increase in trade to East Asia and the Pacific, the California Gold Rush created the greatest motivation for increased merchant activity in Pacific waters. From 1800 to 1847, approximately 200 ships went to California to purchase hides and tallow.[143] In 1850 alone, 495 vessels, 140 of which were American, arrived in San Francisco and, in 1855, 824 ships sailed into California's largest port.[144] The discovery of gold brought over 100000 new people to California in 1849 and, in 1852, over 250000 people arrived.[145]

The incredible influx of people to California and the millions of dollars in gold income prompted an increase in merchant and passenger shipping in the Pacific. By 1870, almost 500 vessels entered California in regular foreign trade.[146] The new and growing California population required basic necessities for sustaining life and conducting mining operations, such as food, cookware, clothing and tools, not produced locally, as well as luxury items, such as alcohol, opium, chinaware and silverware from Europe and America. Approximately half of the gold seekers in California and virtually all of the trade goods and supplies brought to California, arrived by ship. The need for lumber and food in California also spurred maritime activity along the Pacific coast as timber and wheat producers from Oregon and California began to take advantage of the growing demand for these goods in California and Asia. Virtually overnight, the California Gold Rush made the Pacific the focus of future American and European shipping enterprises.[147]

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142   Joyce A. Madancy, *The Troublesome Legacy of Commissioner Lin: The Opium Trade and Opium Suppression in Fujian Province, 1820s to 1920s* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center and Harvard University Press, 2003), 1-54.

143   Delgado, *To California by Sea*, 5.

144   Hitchman, *A Maritime History of the Pacific Coast, 1540-1980*, 22.

145   Clyde A, Milner II, Carol A. O'Conner, and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds., *The Oxford History of The American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 168.

146   Hitchman, *A Maritime History of the Pacific Coast,* 1540-1980, 23.

147   Mears, *Maritime Trade of Western United States*, 113; *Schultz, Forty-Niners 'Round the Horn*, 1-3.

A view of San Francisco Bay in 1851. The bay is crowded with ships bringing goldseekers and supplies and the structures in the foreground were all constructed between 1849 and 1851. (Public Domain image)

For the small number of sailors going to the Pacific in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and, for the larger numbers sailing after the California Gold Rush, the Pacific offered an environment where maritime manhood could flourish. However, danger abounded in the nineteenth-century Pacific, and sailors' identity depended on the perils involved in their work. The Pacific Ocean held perils that had not existed in places like the Atlantic and Caribbean for decades or even centuries and inaugurated something of a renaissance for maritime adventure, skill and danger. These perils included the hazards of uncharted waters, the perceptions of the native Pacific Islanders, pirate activity and the inherent dangers of the unusually harsh Pacific sea environment

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Atlantic and Indian oceans were well charted and explored and, while navigational and chart errors certainly occurred, published maps and charts were generally accurate. The Pacific Ocean, however, represented a largely unknown geographic location for Atlantic sailors and was rife with undiscovered hazards. The Pacific is dotted with volcanic and coral reefs and islands, many of which had not been charted as American and European vessels began arriving in greater numbers in the late 1840s. Spanish and Portuguese sailors had drawn charts of the far western Pacific since the seventeenth century and Britain's Captain James Cook had made multiple voyages to the Central and South Pacific in the eighteenth, surveying several areas but no accurate, comprehensive surveys existed for nineteenth-century seamen. Instead, merchant mariners had to rely on word of mouth and maritime periodicals for news of newly discovered, or improperly charted, Pacific hazards.

Between 1790 and 1873, over three hundred articles appeared in American maritime newspapers and magazines giving the coordinates of newly discovered islands and reefs or making corrections to published charts that had improperly located geographical features.[148] By the middle of the nineteenth century, very few naval surveys had been conducted by any nation and merchant vessels did not possess the necessary time and navigational equipment to provide completely accurate coordinates for reliable charts. Seamen had to keep a vigilant lookout whenever they came within several miles of islands and reefs located on charts

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148   Ward, *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vols. 1-7.

since they could not be completely sure of their own navigational correctness or that of published charts.

In 1831, Captain Ezra Smith wrote to the *New England Palladium* regarding an error found on the "Arrowsmith's Chart", published in 1798, while aboard the whaling ship *Hope* in 1829. Smith writes that in early December, the *Hope*

> [had passed] the Caroline Island, not doubting its
> existence as described in Arrowsmith's Chart. I passed
> within two miles of it; and when not more than nine
> miles north of it, ascertained by observation, that it was
> about six miles east of the position assigned to it by
> Arrowsmith's Chart.[149]

In 1848, Captain Henry Thompson of the ship *Talbot* wrote to the Honolulu missionary paper, *The Friend*, that Lazaroff Island was "much too far to the westward, it will be advantageous to Captains of vessels passing in that vicinity, to know its true position".[150] Thompson then went on to provide the Lazaroff's coordinates as he found them, in the hopes that other vessels would avoid finding it in an accidental and disastrous fashion.[151] On 21 December 1850, Charles Goodall, then aboard the *Fanny of Nantucket*, wrote: "made the Island of St. Coro sixty miles to the Eastward of where we expected to make it which confirms the proof that the Islands are set to wrong on the chart in about the 12th degree of Lat".[152] A mistake of a few miles may not seem a huge error when one considers the Pacific's immense size, but it could prove disastrous for a ship, especially at night when the first sign of land might be the sound of breakers on the shore or a sickening crunch of timbers and a sudden stop in forward progress.

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149 *New England Palladium*, Boston Mass., 18 February 1831, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 4, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 88-89.

150 *The Friend*, Honolulu, 1 April 1845, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 4, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 346.

151 Ibid.

152 Charles Goodall journal and common place book, 1847-1852, BANC MSS C-F 116.

Chart and navigational dangers continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century as American ships sailed the Pacific in increasing numbers in order to take part in the California Gold Rush trade and the growing trade in China and other ports in East Asia and Australia. Increased traffic to California and other parts of the Pacific meant that new sea lanes would be travelled and that little-used lanes would see greater use. The number of merchant vessels that called at Hawaii before and after the California Gold Rush illustrates the rapidly increasing maritime traffic in the Pacific. In 1847, the year before gold was discovered, 67 merchant ships visited Hawaiian ports, primarily Honolulu. In 1850, 469 merchant vessels made landfall in the once sleepy island ports.[153] Increased traffic meant that more seamen put their lives in peril in the nearly uncharted Pacific.

From 1790 to 1848, maritime journals and newspapers in the United States reported 98 different vessels wrecked in the Pacific. Some ran aground while others faced typhoons, gales, foundering, fires, and, in the case of the whaling ship *Essex,* sperm whale attacks. From 1848 to 1873, American newspapers and journals reported 180 ships lost in the Pacific due to similar causes.[154] In less than half the time, post-gold discovery shipping in the Pacific lost almost twice the number of ships. Increased numbers of ships definitely had a great deal to do with the larger losses but continued reliance on incorrect charts also played a major role.

In 1850, Samuel C. Jones, mate aboard the *Harrison*, reported to the *Boston Daily Journal* that Clipperton Reef was incorrectly marked on his chart as a "rock" and that, "as this Rock is liable to be fallen in with by vessels from California for Peru or Chile, the writer submits this information for the benefit of navigators who may be bound to California". The same inaccuracy was reported almost a year later in the *Boston Post* by a Captain Tumbull, who stated that Clipperton "rock" actually had a six-mile-long reef attached to it. The error had still not been corrected by 1854 and Captain Upshur, commanding the *Orion*, informed *The Daily Mercury*

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153   Edward D. Beechert, *Honolulu: Crossroads of the Pacific* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 57.

154   Information compiled from a survey of the newspaper articles recorded in Ward, *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vols. 1-7. More vessels may have been lost at this time but they are not in the surviving newspaper records.

about Clipperton Reef, stating that the obstacle was "a most dangerous place for vessels, who should always give the Rock a wide berth".[155] Many of the chart errors were far worse than a six-mile difference in location or misinformation about an extending reef. In 1861, Captain Keyte aboard the French vessel *Queen* reported that, upon

> reaching the parallel of Walker's Island, five degrees
> to the eastward, we steered due W until considerably
> past its position, but saw nothing; repeated the same
> operations, on five different parallels…cruised in the
> vicinity for six weeks without success, and finally
> abandoned the search.[156]

As late as 1867, Captain Cleveland of the ship *Niger* reported that he had discovered that "Christmas Island is laid down 45 miles to the eastward of its true position on Norie's and Blunt's charts".[157] With islands, reefs and rocks misplaced on charts or not on the charts at all and, with charted islands that did not exist, sailors wrecked vessels could not provision their ships with fresh water, food and wood in an emergency or, in the worst case, were unable to make landfall when forced from a sinking vessel.

Calls from the maritime community for a comprehensive Pacific survey by the United States government went largely unheeded before California's acquisition. In 1849 and 1850, three survey teams went to the Pacific concerned primarily with charting the California coast and did not conduct a great deal of "far detached

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155 *Boston Daily Journal*, Boston, Mass., 23 October 1850; *Salem Register*, 28 October 1850; *Boston Post*, 22 September 1852; *The Daily Mercury*, New Bedford, Mass., 13 February 1854, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 189-193. The captain of the *Harrison*, S. P. Savage, also reported the inaccuracy regarding Clipperton in the *Salem Register* in late October.

156 *Daily Evening Standard*, New Bedford Mass., 1 January 1862, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 7, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 315-316.

157 *The Daily Mercury*, New Bedford, Mass. July 25, 1867, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 188.

surveys".[158] In 1855, another government survey was conducted to provide a more comprehensive charting of sea lanes in the Pacific, especially those used by merchants headed for China and Japan. But, the 1855 survey proved flawed, probably because of shoddy work conducted by the naval officers in charge. In 1858, Lieutenant John M. Brooke conducted the most comprehensive United States survey to date aboard the naval schooner *Fenimore Cooper*. Brooke had many of the same criticisms for the existing published charts as his merchant contemporaries, particularly G. W. Blunt's 1856 charts, in which many islands were placed incorrectly and some did not exist at all. Brooke even found that a British Admiralty chart contained many inaccuracies stating: "It is remarkable that the Admiralty chart of late issue should be so inaccurate". While travelling from Hong Kong to Yokohama in 1859, Brooke wrote, "I find all the charts of these islands (in my possession) wrong. I shall endeavor to correct them in some respects".[159] Brooke conducted an excellent and accurate survey but, for unknown reasons, the Navy failed to publish his findings in a timely fashion and Brooke's charts went unused.[160] Throughout the nineteenth century, merchant mariners had to rely on each other's findings, reported directly to other seamen or published in various maritime periodicals in order to piece together as accurate a charting of the Pacific as possible.

As we have seen, sailing the Pacific without wrecking one's vessel or losing one's life proved a challenge to the men who made their living at sea. To make matters worse, sailors had more to worry about in the Pacific than geographic obstacles and inaccurate charts. Many Pacific peoples seemed as dangerous as and, in some cases, more dangerous than, any reef or typhoon at sea. For sailors entering the

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158 Autobiography of James S. Lawson, San Francisco, 1879 (BANC MSS P-A 44). Born in Philadelphia on 13 February 1828, Lawson graduated from Central High School in 1845. In October 1845, Lawson was appointed assistant teacher at Catherine St. Grammar School. In 1846, Lawson became an assistant at the Friends' School at Wilmington, Delaware. On 1 January 1848, he became the clerk for Prof. A. Baihi (?) at Taft U.H.S. On May 1, 1850 Lawson was ordered to be the aid to Mr. Davidson, who was going to do survey work on the Pacific Coast for the federal government.

159 George M. Brooke, Jr., *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure, 1858-1860* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 1-139.

160 Ibid.

Pacific Ocean, native Islanders presented several images that were both alluring and horrifying. From the perspective of men who relinquished their freedoms for long periods of time at sea, Pacific Islanders lived seemingly carefree lives in tropical paradises where generosity and sexual liberation were at their nineteenth-century zenith. This belief that the Pacific Islands represented unparalleled freedom and allure for sailors can be seen in Herman Melville's semi-autobiographical novel, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life*. In *Typee*, Melville's main character and narrator, Tommo and his shipmate, Toby, desert their whaleship to live among the native inhabitants of French controlled Nuka Hiva in the Marquesas archipelago. As his ship approaches Nuka Hiva, Tommo cries,

> The Marquesas! What strange visions of outlandish
> things does the very name spirit up! Lovely houris
> – cannibal banquets – groves of coconuts – coral
> reefs – tattooed chiefs – and bamboo temples; sunny
> valleys planted with bread-fruit trees – carved canoes
> dancing on the flashing blue waters – savage woodlands
> guarded by horrible idols – heathenish rites and human
> sacrifices.[161]

Before Tommo even makes landfall, he knows what awaits him: exotic peoples to pique his curiosity, beautiful women to satisfy his pleasures, warm sunshine for his comfort, natural building materials for his shelter, and easily obtained food for his sustenance. As literary theorist Richard Ruland writes:

> Tommo finds precisely what he is looking for. He is
> well aware that for him the ship represents the sterility
> of civilization. He knows he is civilised man yearning
> to lose himself in an exotic, primitive Paradise, and he
> even imagines the ship itself being drawn toward the
> life-giving luxuriance of the shore. The keynote of his

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161   Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life (*New York: Oxford University Press, 1996),

entire adventure is struck when he speaks of the first
girls who swim out to greet the ship as *mermaids*.[162]

According to Ruland, Tommo is a "deliberate fantasist". Like Tommo/Melville, many Atlantic sailors also "knew" what was waiting for them in the Pacific Islands. First published in 1846, *Typee* came out just before the California Gold Rush and was extremely popular. The book would have enflamed the fantasies of sailors who read it and added to their expectations about the Pacific and its peoples. However, most sailors headed for the Pacific would have been inspired, as Melville was, by the yarns of men who had been there and the accounts of Captain James Cook and his crew. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the ships entering the Pacific were laden with "deliberate fantasists".[163]

Sailors' fantasies did not only encompass the pleasurable and desirable, but Pacific Islanders also presented a threat, both real and imagined, to seamen's lives and physical wellbeing. Sailors discovered early that Pacific Islanders represented a wide variety of peoples and cultures, which differed from island group to island group. Islanders reacted to ships and sailors in varying ways, from open-armed acceptance to suspicion, to outright hostility and violence. Sailors relished socialising with welcoming islanders, understood the hesitation displayed by the more suspicious and wary and feared and loathed those prone to violence against outsiders.

On most Pacific Islands in the nineteenth century, native inhabitants outnumbered American and European sailors who visited in order to trade, rest or conduct other less benign and more dubious activities involving Islanders. This numerical disadvantage alone often put sailors ill at ease when among people who differed in appearance and cultural practices but, when combined with the Islanders' warrior traditions and martial skill, sailors had a real reason to fear.[164]

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162   Richard Ruland, "Melville and the Fortunate Fall: Typee as Eden," in *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's Typee*, ed. Milton R. Stern (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1982), 183-192.

163   Ibid.

164   Melville often describes the fearsome appearance of many of the Typee warriors and writes: "These celebrated warriors appear to inspire the other islanders with unspeakable terrors. Their very name is a frightful one". Melville, *Typee*, 40.

Unrelenting European colonisation in the Atlantic region had one benefit, at least, for sailors in foreign waters and ports: political stability. European peoples imposed their political systems, laws and moral standards on others in the Atlantic world. These impositions made Atlantic politics predictable, if not always safe, for seamen. Distance from Europe delayed colonialism and political and economic dominance in the Pacific. Sailors in the Pacific could never be completely sure that they were not arriving at an island at war and that their presence might spark local conflict. Sailors could also never be completely confident that they would not make a social faux pas that would earn them the Islanders' unfriendliness or even wrath.

From 1790 to 1848, American newspapers reported over fifty native attacks on European and American vessels, colonists and missionaries in the Pacific. Foreigners in the Pacific often brought these attacks upon themselves. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ships' crews occasionally captured and enslaved Islanders for use as labourers and as curiosities in Europe and America. "Blackbirding", or the enslavement of Pacific Islanders, usually through means of deception, was illegal by the mid-1800s but continued throughout the century in order to supply European colonies in the Pacific with exploitable cheap labour. This often caused Pacific Islanders to be wary of and hostile towards foreign ships and crews with which they whom they were not familiar.[165] For example, on 4 July 1871, the brig *Carl* left Lekuva, Fiji on a "labour cruise among the South Seas Islands". On the island, several natives "were caught, hauled on board the brig and thrust into the hold, and thus the atrocious trade was carried on until the slaver had nearly completed her living cargo". The Islanders, "maddened by being stolen from their homes…began to fight". The Lekuva natives set the ship ablaze, prompting the officers and crew to fire indiscriminately into the crowd. The crew put the fire out and inspected the "cargo". Seventy Islanders were found dead or wounded and the crew threw both the injured and the deceased overboard. When the *Carl* arrived in Sydney, Captain Joseph Armstrong, First Mate Charles Dowden and three crewmen were tried, convicted and sentenced to death. However, Armstrong and Dowden, "were reprieved and given life with three years in irons. Two seamen had death sentences were reprieved and one was

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165   Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 173-174.

sentenced for manslaughter". One of the *Carl's* owners, who was on the ship at the time of the massacre, turned Queen's Evidence and was not put on trial. Outrage in Australia and Britain over the reduced sentences helped inspire Parliament to create the Pacific Islander Protection Act in 1872.[166]

European and American governments and missionaries also contributed to Islanders' distrust of foreigners as they arrived on remote islands determined to eliminate Islander culture and supplant it with their own political, cultural and religious beliefs.[167] Islander attacks ranged in seriousness from events that involved kidnappings in order to obtain trade goods as ransom, to raids conducted to obtain ship stores, to the total massacre of a ship's officers and crew and the destruction of the vessel. While such attacks may seem somewhat justified to today's readers, given the circumstances of colonial activities, both legal and illegal, Atlantic sailors in the nineteenth century did not usually recognise the justification for violence against their own kind. In 1850, Charles Goodall noted that trading vessels took

> particular accord to keep amity with the chiefs, as
> many of them possess the power of doing us injury
> while few perhaps may do you good. And so crafty and
> treacherous are they in their intrigues that they will
> accomplish almost any enviable design and still make
> pretences of Friendship and good will.[168]

In 1792, Marquesas natives attacked a Captain Kendrick's vessel and "handed over into their canoes, iron, copper, guns, &c. [sic] without leave or licence",[169] and

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166   *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Honolulu, 4 January 1873 and 1 February 1873; Robert W. Kirk, *Paradise Past: the Transformation of the Pacific, 1520-1920* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2012), 214; "A brief history of the South Sea Islands Labour Traffic and the vessels engaged in it," (Paper by E. V. Stevens read at the meeting of the Historical Society of Queensland, Inc., 23 March 1950).

167   Steven Roger Fischer, *A History of the Pacific Islands* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 102-107; Glen Barclay, *A History of the Pacific from the Stone Age to the Present Day* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1978), 61-63; 75-76.

168   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, BANC MSSC-F 116.

169   *Boston Gazette*, 27 August 1792, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 4. ed. R. Gerard Ward, 195-196; Dening, *Mr. Bligh's Bad Language*, 189-213.

only left the ship after Kendrick and his crew killed approximately forty intruders. No crew deaths were reported in the attack but the sailors had to feel a bit insecure regardless of their superior weaponry and ultimate victory and survival. Captain Kendrick gave no indication as to the Islanders' behaviour or attitude towards himself, his ship and his men prior to the attack and it is possible that the assault was completely unexpected and perhaps unprovoked. Kendrick and his crew, however, may have provoked the Islanders, intentionally or unintentionally and caused the incident. Unfortunately, Kendrick's report on the conflict is vague about the events just prior to the eruption of violence.[170]

Sailors often held preconceived notions about particular Island peoples that certainly coloured their perceptions. In *Typee*, Herman Melville recounts his experiences with the Marquesan natives on the island of Nuka Hiva in the early 1840s. According to Melville, the Typee people who lived on the island had a well-known reputation as cannibals and savage warriors.[171] This reputation led Nuka Hiva Islanders and foreigners to avoid the Typee at all costs. The other native peoples of Nuka Hiva, particularly the Happar, were the source of the Typees' unsavoury reputation. In a constant state of war with the Typee, the Happar exaggerated the brutality and savagery of their enemies and spread this fear to foreign seamen. When Tommo and a shipmate deserted their ship at Nuka Hiva Bay, they headed inland, hoping to hide in one of the friendly Islander villages. Melville and his shipmate ended up wandering into Typee territory, where they were welcomed by the surprisingly hospitable Typee. The shocked Melville quickly learned that sailors' opinion of the Typee had been unfairly skewed by the Happars' propaganda.[172] Islanders' reputations, whether grounded in reality or fantasy, would certainly have caused seamen to be on guard and led them to interpret any unexpected or unfamiliar Islander behaviour as hostile. Even Tommo is suspicious of his beloved Typee, who he constantly praises and defends throughout his narrative and he is never sure if they are cannibals or not, despite

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170   Ibid.

171   Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole, and Bronwen Douglas, *Islanders*: *The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 57-73.

172   Melville, *Typee*, 40, 95-109; Joyce Sparer Adler, "*Typee* and *Omoo*: Of 'Civilized' War on 'Savage' Peace," in *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's Typee*, ed. Milton R, Stern, 244-249.

never witnessing any such behaviour. Misinterpreted Islander behaviour would have led to unnecessary violence between them and foreign sailors and would have tarnished any future relations between the two groups.

In 1797, Fiji, the *Snow Arthur* commanded by Captain Barber attempted to barter with the local inhabitants aboard his vessel but they only showed interest in receiving gifts from the ship's cargo. The next day the Fijians returned in their canoes laden with spears, clubs and bows and arrows intent on boarding the ship by force. The crew displayed their firearms in an attempt to discourage the Islanders from attacking but the Fijians mistook the muskets for mere war clubs and, instead of returning to shore, they formed a plan to attack the vessel and proceeded to climb aboard. The captain and crew showed incredible restraint by not opening fire on the Fijians as they attempted to board the vessel, only knocking those who made it to the deck into the water. The Fijians then proceeded to fire arrows at the *Snow Arthur* "in different directions, and shortly a general discharge from every canoe took place". Two crew members sustained wounds from the arrow fire and Captain Barber immediately cut his anchor cable, fired "two or three swivels and a few muskets" into the canoes and beat a hasty retreat from the island. Although Berber's account of his incident with the Fijians is more complete than Kendrick's report on his incident with the Marquesans, Berber presents himself as suspiciously innocent of any wrongdoing, placing the blame entirely on the Islanders.[173]

Attacks on European and American vessels, while extremely rare, continued into the nineteenth century. In 1834, Fijians attacked a French brig, the *Amiable Josephine*, killing everyone on board.[174] A year later, Fijians attacked the *Awashonks*, an American whaling vessel from Falmouth, Massachusetts, killing three officers and three crew members. The Fijians went on board the *Awashonks* bearing food and other gifts for the officers and crew, showing a great deal of interest in the whaling trade's tools and hunting implements. Prince Coffin, the ship's captain, showed the native leader the harpoons, lances and boatspades. A Fijian native

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173 *The Albany Sentinel,* Albany, New York, 29 August 1797, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 359-360.

174 *Salem Mercury*, 6 May 1835, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 381.

took a boatspade presented to him and promptly swung it, severing Captain Coffin's head cleanly from his body. According to an observer, "a general rush was now made by the savages to overcome the crew, some of whom fled below, others aloft, and a part prepared themselves to sell their lives as dearly as possible". Pandemonium erupted on the ship's deck as "a general warfare ensued, in which the first and second mates, and three of the men were killed; and a Nantucket boy, by the name of Wood, badly wounded". The battle continued until the wounded boy secured a pistol and shot the Fijian leader to death, upon which the Islanders fled the ship.[175]

While shipwrecks posed a much greater threat to their wellbeing, seamen sailing to the Pacific after the discovery of California gold were very aware of the dangers they faced from Pacific peoples, however unlikely. Several eastern newspapers, both those geared towards the maritime community and those written for a landsmen audience, carried stories regarding sailor, missionary and colonist massacres and attacks by Pacific peoples. Many such stories from the Pacific appeared in different newspapers and the reading public proved quite interested in these harrowing tales. This was due largely to the general public's fascination with Pacific peoples and such stories sold newspapers, whether true or fabricated. The success of *Typee* was largely due to the British and American publics' fascination with the book's topic and the possibility that is was a "true" account. Sailors also would have heard more details, if greatly embellished, regarding massacres in the yarns that seamen related to each other. Some sailors even gave first-hand accounts of such massacres or, at least, many claimed to have seen such events first-hand. Conflict between sailors and Islanders occurred with some frequency and not all proved newsworthy but such stories greatly interested seamen faced with a cruise to the Pacific.

From 1848 to 1870, reports of over twenty attacks by Islanders appeared in American newspapers from Hawaii to Massachusetts. It appears that the number of attacks decreased during the second half of the nineteenth century but they

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175 *Salem Mercury*, 27 April 1836 and *Essex North Register*, 29 April 1836, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 386-389. The officers killed during the attack included Captain Prince Coffin of Nantucket, mate Alexander Gardner of Nantucket and second mate Swain of Nantucket. The names of the crew members killed were not given in the report.

still occurred occasionally. In 1851, Caroline Islands natives killed Captain Obed Luce and five crew members serving aboard the ship *Boy*.[176] That same year, on Upolu Island, Henry Bernharst, a German carpenter aboard the *Phocion*, died on shore after he received "a stab in the side, in an affray with three Tonga natives and a Portuguese one of the crew".[177] And, at Tabiteuea, natives destroyed the brig *Randolph* and killed the vessel's entire complement, including Captain Charles D. Perry.[178] At Nauru, in December 1852, Islanders attacked the whaleship *Inga*, throwing the crew overboard, robbing the vessel and setting it adrift and, later, murdering three crewmen on shore.[179] In 1859, the *Maid of Australia*, out of Sydney, was attacked by Islanders and "most of the crew…had been murdered…in cold blood, by the natives of Mallcolo or La Peruse Island".[180] Such tales, genuine or not, would have made sailors visiting the Pacific Islands wary, if not outright fearful, when dealing with native inhabitants.

While outright attacks certainly terrified Pacific seamen, what scared and disgusted them most, was the presumed penchant of many Islanders to practice ritual cannibalism on defeated and captured foes. From their earliest contacts with Pacific Islanders, Europeans and Americans believed that Islanders consumed other human beings, reflecting Western assumptions that all "savages" practiced

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176 *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 5 June, 8 July 1851, 16 July 1851; *Daily Journal*, Boston, Mass., 7 July 1851; *The Daily Mercury*, New Bedford, Mass., 7 July1851; *The Independent*, New York, 12 June 1851; *The Alta California*, San Francisco, 1 August 1851, and *Salem Gazette*, 6 September 1851, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 5, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 534-545. The reported attacks were compiled by myself from the records of news stories about the Pacific conducted by the Work Projects Administration in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870.*

177 *Boston Post*, 6 November, 1851, and *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 6 November 1851, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 7, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 377-378.

178 *The Daily Evening Union*, Newburyport, Mass., 6 September 1853, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 6, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 541.

179 *Salem Gazette*, 1 April 1853; *The Daily Mercury,* New Bedford, Mass., 20 April 1853; *Boston Daily Atlas*, 21 April 1853; *New England Farmer*, New Bedford, Mass., 23 April 1853; and *Boston Daily Advertiser,* 25 April 1853, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 5, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 34-40.

180 *The Daily Herald*, Newburyport, Mass., 24 June 1859, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 4, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 115.
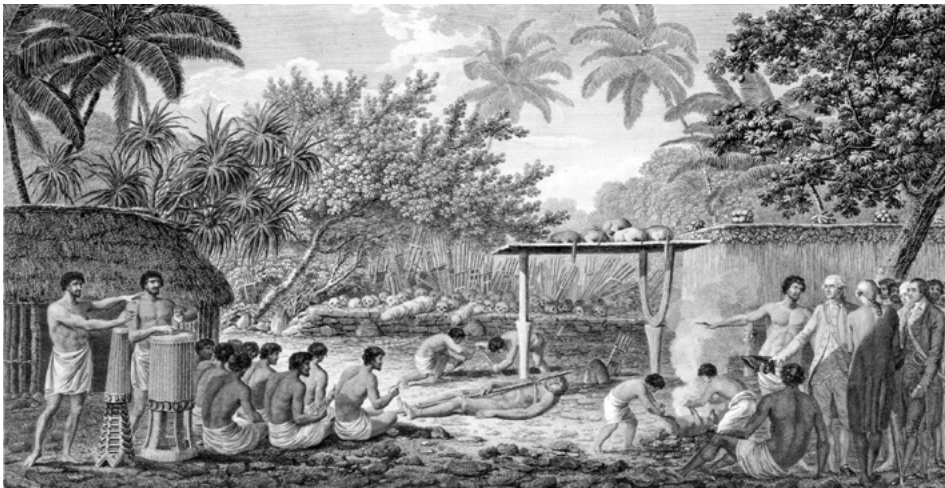
A HUMAN SACRIFICE SUPPOSEDLY WITNESSED IN 1773 IN TAHITI BY CAPTAIN JAMES COOK DURING HIS FAMOUS VOYAGE OF EXPLORATION. THE SCENE ILLUSTRATES BOTH THE ALLURE OF THE PACIFIC NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE FEAR OF ASSUMED ISLANDER 'SAVAGERY'. (PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE)

cannibalism. Pacific Islanders also accused each other of eating human flesh, which further fuelled American and European beliefs in Islander cannibalism. However, we must keep in mind that ideas about cannibalism and how people in the Pacific used these ideas, is a complicated and heavily charged matter. As Tracey Banivanua-Mar has argued, Pacific Islanders and European and American colonisers have used cannibalism for their own ends and "wherever claims of ritualistic cannibalism have tended to proliferate so, too, has colonialism and conquest".[181] Reports of cannibalism, whether accurate or not, caught sailors' and landsmen's attention like no other stories coming from the Pacific Islands.[182] In 1850, reports flooded from the Pacific that Islanders

> massacred various parties of seamen touching at the
> Sandal Wood Islands…The Mary, cutter, has been
> attacked by the natives at Balade. They cooked the
> bodies of the captain and crew ashore and ate them,
> after which they burnt the vessel to the water's edge. A
> boat's crew from Rover's Bride had also been murdered
> at Effoo.[183]

In the Fijis, in 1858, "on the island of Waya, tribe of ferocious cannibals – had surprised a small vessel, and murdered, cooked, and eaten the crew".[184] Often, the

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181   Tracey Banivanua-Mar, "Cannibalism and Colonialism: Charting Colonies and Frontiers in Nineteenth-Century Fiji," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52(2) (2010):256; Peter Hulme, "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene," and Gananath Obeyesekere, "Cannibalism Feasts in Nineteenth-Century Fiji," in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-38, 63-64.

182   Gananath Obeyesekere, from "'British Cannibals': Contemplation of an Event in the Death and Resurrection of James Cook, Explorer," in Melville, *Typee*, 334-340.

183   *Daily Journal,* Boston, Mass., 27 July 1850, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 5, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 64. The *Rover's Bride* crew members who were killed at Effoo are listed as "Mr. William Jordan, first mate, of Berwich-on-Tweed; John Allen, of Liverpool; Frederick Gardner, of London; John Burroughs, of Glasgow; and Edward Ward, of Bristol, seamen."

184   *Daily National Intelligencer*, Washington, D.C., 31 December 1858, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 482-483. In response to this

massacres perpetrated by Islanders had no American or European eyewitnesses. Any time Islanders killed foreigners, however, sailors assumed they were eaten by the native population.

Charles Goodall claimed to witness Islander cannibalism first hand when he sailed in the South Pacific in 1850 but he was predisposed to believe the stories of cannibalism. At the village of Somosomo on the Island of Taveuni, Goodall reportedly saw an

> old chief who paid us a visit dressed up in all the
> gayness of a butterfly. Has the name of being the most
> horrible Cannibal in all the Feegees. Certainly, there
> was nothing in his looks to contradict the popular
> statement. Indeed himself and all that was about him
> had the appearance of confirmed man eaters.[185]

Goodall also wrote that he saw the native men of Somosomo bring back a war captive whose fingers were cut off and presented to Goodall's captain as a "curiosity". Although Goodall did not see any cannibalism in this case, he assumed it and he commented that the Islanders behaved "as you might expect savages to do". Goodall did, however, claim to witness one act of cannibalism on Taveuni that disturbed him. According to Goodall, the natives brought a dead man to the beach and "his head was split open and his brains stewed on the beach. This was a horrible sight to go to bed and reflect upon especially on one's birthday in such a place as this".[186] There is no way to verify the accuracy of Goodall's claims. However, it is important to keep in mind that, as Peter Hulme has argued, such tales were "sailor's yarns, sometimes transcribed into would-be best-sellers", and that as Banivanua-Mar stated, "the rumours, hearsay, and seafaring yarns complimented the existing myth-models in Europe that frequented Victorian

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attack, the *U.S.S. Vandalia* sent a detachment of sailors and marines against the natives, destroying a native village and killing fifty.

185   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852, BANC MSS C-F 116.

186   Ibid.

horror genres. They entertained a purchasing public".[187] In short, Goodall may have simply embellished or fabricated the above scenes in order to one day sell books to a public expecting and wanting to read about cannibalism in the Pacific.

Some sailors found themselves in awkward situations when dealing with "cannibalistic" natives who possessed trade goods and labour that merchant ships desired and who showed a ship and its crew generosity and friendliness. On Guadalcanal, H. E. Raabe, Captain McPurden and a handful of crew members from the *Emma P.* were invited on shore to participate in a native banquet. While the sailors were not pleased with the invitation, they knew that to decline would hurt their chances to obtain pearls, ebony and sandalwood from their hosts and might even invite violence. Raabe's shipmate, a sailor named Bunk, had warned him earlier in the cruise that "we trade with the niggers round the Islands and that means watch out or they'll invite us to a picnic".[188] When Raabe inquired as to why they should decline such an invitation, Bunk answered, "Damn good Reason! We'd be the picnic and they'd do the picnicking".[189] According to Raabe, he and his shipmates, watched in silence as their hosts clubbed several M'laita prisoners over the head with war clubs and proceeded to prepare the bodies for roasting. Although horrified by the dishes served, Raabe was impressed by the natives' fine manners and wrote:

> I had seen many so-called civilised picnics among all
> classes, but never have I seen such order among those
> savages. There was no greedy crowding. Every one of
> them provided himself with a banana leaf 'napkin' –
> there were stacks of them ready – and patiently seated
> himself, awaiting his turn at being served.[190]

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187 Banivanua-Mar, "Cannibalism and Colonialism," 256; Hulme, "Introduction: The Cannibal Scene," and Obeyesekere, "Cannibalism Feasts in Nineteenth-Century Fiji," in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, 1-38, 63-64.

188 Captain H. E. Raabe, *Cannibal Nights: The Reminiscences of a Free-Lance Trader* (New York: Payson & Clarke, Ltd., 1927), 129-142.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

Despite the impeccable table manners displayed by the Guadalcanal residents, the seamen did not wish to share the meal of "long pig" and diplomatically passed by pleading that they were not great warriors and had not helped defeat the enemy, and, thus, had not earned the right to consume them.[191] Raabe's Story must be viewed with extreme septicism as he wrote his observations in a published book meant for consumption by the general public. Potential profits and fame were at stake and the author may very well have been willing to stretch the truth or to make up his memories entirely in order to sell books.[192]

While sailors were sometimes portrayed as victims of Pacific peoples with frightening gastronomic habits, most stories that sailors heard or read about the consumption of human flesh involved Christian missionaries, intent on spreading their monotheistic religious beliefs to the polytheistic island populations. The relationship between sailors and missionaries was ambivalent, if not, outright hostile. But images of missionaries and their families killed and eaten by Islanders highlighted the perceived danger presented by the Pacific and some of its native peoples. Sailors often read or heard about cannibalised missionaries such as those on Efate in 1855 who "had been barbarously murdered. Only nineteen days after they were landed under the most cheering circumstances, the two Rarotongan teachers and their wives were murdered to furnish materials for a horrid cannibal banquet".[193] However, missionaries, too, had reason to spread rumours about Pacific Islanders and cannibalism. Spreading stories about native cannibalism justified the need to send missionaries overseas and helped to raise money for soul-saving ventures. As William Arens wrote, "Western culture has congratulated itself for putting a stop to this cultural excess [cannibalism] through colonial 'pacification' and introducing Christianity to once-benighted natives".[194]

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191   Ibid.

192   Banivanua-Mar, "Cannibalism and Colonialism," 256.

193   *Essex County Mercury*, Salem, Mass., 28 November 1855, in *American Activities in the Central Pacific, 1790-1870*, vol. 2, ed. R. Gerard Ward, 258.

194   William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 40.

Determining the reality of Pacific Islanders' cannibalistic practices can be difficult, considering the often unreliable and biased sources. Many of the events related in newspapers and by sailors' yarns had no living witnesses and, those who had witnessed such events, may have exaggerated them in order to please their audiences or satisfy some other agenda. Even Melville argued that such stories overstated cannibalistic practices in the Pacific. Melville wrote, "so horrific and improbable are these accounts, that many sensible and well-informed people will not believe that any cannibals exist" and that, "others, implicitly crediting the most extravagant fictions, firmly believe that there are people in the world with tastes so depraved", Melville continued, "Truth, who loves to be centrally located, is again found between the two extremes; for cannibalism to a certain moderate extent is practiced among several of the primitive tribes in the Pacific".[195] Regardless of the truth behind Pacific cannibalism, sailors aboard American and European vessels firmly believed the stories to be true and approached the Pacific and its island peoples with the assumption that Pacific Islanders were, or were at one time, cannibals.

Pacific Islanders, however, were not the only people that merchant sailors in the Pacific had to fear. Pirate vessels also plied the Pacific, searching for vulnerable ships loaded with cargo. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, piracy had flourished in the Atlantic, Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico. However, by 1825, very few pirates operated in these waters making them much safer for both seaman and financial investors.[196] In the Pacific, piracy experienced a renaissance during the nineteenth century. Regarding the Pacific during the 1870s, Captain H. E. Raabe, then a common sailor aboard the *Emma P.*, wrote: "No laws were observed in these waters. Who'd know the difference? Who'd enforce them? Who'd be benefited by them?"[197] Pirates also damaged sailors' reputation among Pacific Islanders. As Melville wrote, "there is nevertheless, many a petty trader that has navigated the Pacific whose course from island to island might be traced

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195   Melville, *Typee*, 196. Melville believed that the Typee were among those who practiced moderate cannibalism.

196   Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue-Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Naval World, 1700-1750* (1987), 254-287.

197   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 58.

by a series of cold-blooded robberies, kidnappings, and murders".[198] When such trader-pirates visited an island, the local inhabitants might not welcome the next ship that arrived. The absence of any regular legal or military authority in the Pacific, combined with the valuable cargos aboard most vessels and a large number of uncharted islands, made the Pacific a haven for pirates and those who walked the fine line between honest trade and piracy.

Clipper ships, often carrying the most valuable cargos in the Pacific, including California and Australian gold, Spanish silver, tea and opium, usually sailed to the Pacific armed to the teeth. To protect themselves from pirates, "every tea clipper was provided with an armory of muskets, pistols and cutlasses besides two cannons…and they had special magazines for powder, ball and grape shot, small arms and ammunition, etc.".[199] But most trading vessels did not possess the armament carried by large, well-crewed clipper ships. Along the Chinese coast and in Chinese trading ports, sailors had to be on constant vigil. Officers and crew had to keep a close watch over Chinese pilots, as

> they knew the waters well enough, but were generally
> in the pay of the pirates…and thus rarely missed an
> opportunity of putting the ships in their charge ashore
> or wrecking them on some uncharted rock, which they
> kept secret for such occasions.[200]

South East Asians from the South China Sea coastal region, referred to collectively as "Maylays" during the nineteenth century, had a reputation for piracy, and "a trader is just what they like to get". As sailors approached the South China Sea and Chinese coastal waters, they kept a close lookout for any sign of Malay pirates, who had a reputation as "a damned bloody lot". [201]

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198   Melville, *Typee*, 42; Adler, "*Typee* and *Omoo*," 44-49.

199   Basil Lubbock, *The China Clippers*, 2nd Edition (Glasgow: James Brown & Son, Publishers, 1914), 175-176.

200   Ibid.

201   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 23.

While serving aboard the *Ontong* in the late 1870s, Raabe spotted a suspicious looking ship in the South China Sea. Malay pirates often disguised their ships to look like common fishing boats in order to get close to trading vessels and attack them, and any fast moving ship with an "oriental cut" immediately put a crew on edge. Malay pirates, fully aware that European and American traders outgunned them, usually shipped large crews aboard to make up for their lack of firepower. The ship Raabe spotted fit this description, and the *Ontong*'s commander, Captain Richard, decided to avoid the suspicious vessel. If it proved to be a pirate vessel, he reported to his crew that he would, "Get all hands on deck and deal out the guns and cutlasses. If I'm wrong, you fellows can give me the ha-ha, but I'll bet a hundred to one that the fellow's coming for us". Captain Richard proved correct, and the "oriental" vessel closed on the *Ontong* quickly. The ten-man crew, including one "supercargo" passenger, prepared to be boarded by the pirates, "Ready to fight to the finish. No medals, glory or cheers for reward. Men who never performed for the applause of an audience – but their lives would have to be paid for dearly". Captain Richard ordered his crew to open fire as the pirate vessel came alongside the *Ontong*.

Undeterred by the rifle fire, the pirates swarmed aboard the merchant ship and "ceased to be individuals. Each became a unit in a many-jointed, brown monster, whose only object was to annihilate its foe with utter disregard for its own innumerable wounds". The fight turned to hand-to-hand combat with cutlasses and "creeses", and each man killed, both pirate and merchant sailor, "went down fighting as long as breath was in them". Only Raabe and the supercargo, Hall, remained alive to face the pirates, and both took to the rigging in a last desperate attempt to escape death, or at least postpone it for a while. Raabe and Hall sat in the rigging for an hour as the pirates plundered their ship, ignoring the two helpless men above them. The two men resolved themselves to certain death, when another ship came into view and proceeded to attack the Malaysian pirates. The rescue ship, however, proved to be a ship from John Bullard Hayes's fleet, a pirate better known as "Bully Hayes". Hayes's men, the "Bullies", defeated the Malay pirates, and Raabe survived the double pirate attack, eventually joining Hayes in capturing slaves from remote Pacific Islands.[202]

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202   Ibid., 224-251.

Sailors tended not to seek out the many dangers found in the Pacific and only the suicidal and mentally unhinged looked forward to running aground on a coral reef, struggling against the almost undefeatable typhoon's power or fending off attacks by Islanders or pirates. These dangers, however, held special significance for seamen's manly identity in the nineteenth century and played into their deliberate fantasist expectations. The many unmarked and improperly charted hazards on Pacific maps worried sailors and made for tense passages through unknown regions but such dangers also allowed sailors to test their seamanship skills, strength and bravery on a daily basis.[203] When vessels came upon unforeseen dangers, sailors often had only seconds in which to avoid disaster and a ship's safety might completely rely on its crew's ability to act quickly, calmly and skilfully. Even the best sailors, however, could do little to prevent running aground on hidden reefs, especially at night or in a gale. When ships went aground, sailors had to display skill and brute strength in order to dislodge their vessels from beaches, sand bars, rocks and coral reefs. No sailor wanted to abandon his ship and only did so if the ship was burning uncontrollably, rapidly sinking or in such a state of damage or disrepair as to make sinking inevitable.

Abandoning a ship and taking to sea in a small boat represented a low point in any sailor's professional career. Sailors' primary responsibility was to assist their ship in sailing from one port to another safely and efficiently. Although officers, particularly ship's masters, ultimately held responsibility for a ship's safety, losing a ship meant that all aboard had failed in their duties. Such disasters represented a serious challenge to a seaman's manly identity so closely linked to pride in work and skill. Relying heavily on the work they performed to stake a claim to manliness, failure in professional duties meant failure as a man and a loss of manly identity. For this reason, and because their lives were at stake, sailors took the safety and condition of their ship seriously and willingly faced punishment for protesting to their officers and port consuls when a ship's condition seemed too unsafe.

Most important, abandoning a ship, especially in the vast expanses of the Pacific Ocean where charts might not possess correct information, often meant death for those in small boats. Ships' boats did not meet any sort of safety standards

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203   Bolster, "Every Inch a Man," 153-155.

and posed several problems for the men forced to board them and place their grim futures in these often dubious vessels. Ships' boats did not have shelter and those in them were constantly exposed to the elements. The boats possessed no decks and were thus prone to founder even in moderate seas. They often leaked and modifications and repairs at sea were almost impossible. There was often not enough room on the boats for the entire crew and passengers, and limited supplies and personal belongings could be placed on board. Most sailors stuck in boats at sea made for the nearest port or land, hoping to reach their destination or be picked up by a passing vessel before their food, water or sanity ran out and before a gale or typhoon hit them. Even when sailors had the good fortune of finding an island in the Pacific, they often discovered that the island did not have reliable food and water sources, providing only the opportunity for a short and much-needed rest and the possibility to repair their boats.[204]

The sea's environment was so inhospitable to human life that in extreme cases cannibalism among a ship's crew was considered appropriate and legal, if thoroughly disgusting and repulsive. And while sailors condemned Pacific Islanders for their supposed habitual cannibalism, consuming human flesh as a means of survival in extreme circumstances was deemed acceptable. The most famous case of Pacific cannibalism in the nineteenth century occurred among the whaleship *Essex's* crew in the early 1820s. In November 1820, the *Essex* crew commenced chasing a sperm whale pod when a large bull whale deliberately attacked the ship, not once, but twice, ramming the hull with its massive head. The whale created a hole and several leaks in the ship below the water line that the crew could not repair. The *Essex* started sinking slowly and the officers and crew hurriedly prepared the ship's boats for sea, taking on as many supplies as possible. The whale attack propelled the crew on a three-month journey filled with horror and grief. The boats eventually became separated at sea and, by the end of January, food supplies ran out and the crew began to perish. Aboard First Mate Owen Chase's boat, Isaac Cole died,

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204   Owen Chase, *The Wreck of the Whaleship* Essex*: A Narrative Account By Owen Chase, First Mate.* (New York: A Harvest Book, Harcourt Brace & World, 1999), 61-69. About one month after their ship was sunk by a sperm whale, Chase and the members of two of the boats' crews came upon a tiny island with a limited supply of food and water in late December, 1820. The *Essex*'s crew used the island to rest and resupply as well as they could before setting out to sea again.

and his fellow sailors saved his body for food. On Captain George Pollard, Jr.'s boat, Thomas Lawson, Charles Shorter, Isaiah Shepard and Samuel Reed died and were subsequently eaten. The situation aboard Pollard's boat continued to degenerate and the survivors drew lots to determine who would offer his body to feed the remaining crew. Pollard's seventeen-year-old cousin Owen Coffin drew the unfortunate lot. The third boat, commanded by Matthew P. Joy, was lost and all aboard presumed dead. Out of the twenty men who took to the boats when the *Essex* sank, only eight survived.[205] In short, sailors dreaded the necessity of abandoning a ship, for both practical and professional reasons.

Taking to a boat in the Pacific required a sailor to muster all of his skills, strength, courage, and sanity in order to survive his unenviable ordeal. Sailors had to know how to read the weather accurately, judge the direction and rate of currents, and navigate with few or no navigational instruments in a small, bobbing craft, or find their way to safety using dead reckoning to determine their location and eventual destination. In the 1880s, John Cameron, a Scottish-born seaman, was stranded on Wake Island when his ship, the *Wandering Minstrel*, ran aground and sank. He and the rest of the crew lived on the island for several months until the food, mostly "smoked mullet and birds" started to run out. Cameron and a Scandinavian sailor named Jorgenson decided to take their chances and make for safety in a boat. They rounded out their small "ship's company" by inviting a young Chinese boy, known as Moses, to join them. The Chinese boy proved more than willing to accompany the two men on their perilous journey despite the slim odds of survival, and Cameron and Jorgenson were more than happy to have him along because "Moses was young, fat, and probably tender".[206] Cameron and Moses displayed the sailor's most admirable qualities by taking care of each other and Jorgenson, showing proper restraint aboard the tiny vessel, and meeting all the hardships the sea threw at them, relying on seamanship skills and stern

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205   Chase, *The Wreck of the Whaleship* Essex, 21-22. Whaleboats were particularly dangerous for those using them as lifeboats. Whaleboats, because they were used to pursue whale during the hunt, were designed for speed. They were lightweight and had shallow drafts, allowing them to skim across the water quickly. These features were excellent for chasing whales in the Pacific but they made for poor lifeboats in any ocean.

206   Andrew Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1928), 302.

determination to survive and reach safety. Cameron and Moses proved their worth as both sailors and men on their terrifying voyage, passing every test they faced with as much dignity and bravery as possible. While not wanting to relive their experiences in the boat, both Cameron and Moses could later look back on the voyage with pride. Jorgenson, on the other hand, did not fare as well as his crewmates.[207]

Under normal sailing circumstances, Jorgensen looked and acted like the very ideal of a nineteenth-century sailor. But the challenges of a desperate voyage in a small boat shattered his manly mariner's veneer. The three sailors rationed the supplies they had secured and prepared on Wake, but after several weeks, the food began to run low and hunger began to set in. One morning Cameron discovered that in the night someone had broken into the food stores and eaten a fair portion of what remained. Knowing Jorgenson to be a fine sailor, Cameron turned on Moses and accused him, but the Chinese boy "stoutly protested his innocence". Cameron then turned on Jorgenson, who promptly pleaded guilty to stealing the food. Cameron later recalled:

> Infuriated by [Jorgenson's] criminal greed, I caught up
> a fish spear, intending to run him through; but my arm
> fell when I saw his pitiful face and heard his despairing
> wail: 'For God's sake, Cameron, strike! I'd rather die!'
> Who could kill a weeping man?[208]

Jorgenson's manliness as a sailor had melted away when he needed it most and Cameron lost respect for his one-time friend. Things grew even worse for the Scandinavian sailor as the voyage dragged on. One day Jorgenson stared at the water as if mustering up the courage to throw himself in and end his physical suffering and growing insanity. Cameron noticed the look on Jorgenson's face and said, "This way leads to Davy Jones' Locker". Jorgenson replied, "The sooner the better". "That," said Cameron, "is not the way Moses and I feel. If you're so downcast, why not step overboard?" The Scandinavian decided not to take the

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207   Ibid.

208   Ibid.

Scotsman's advice, and all three eventually made it to port alive. After reaching safety, Cameron's scorn for his emasculated friend led him to abandon Jorgenson, and the two never renewed their friendship.[209] Sailors depended on each other's manly qualities for survival, and Jorgenson's behaviour had put his manhood into question. Cameron believed that Jorgenson could not be relied upon when circumstances became difficult. In short, Jorgenson was no longer a man.

The Pacific allowed sailors to express their manly worth in a variety of ways based on the maritime culture and identity that had originated in the Atlantic. For sailors, the Pacific seemed to offer an environment where men could test and prove their masculinity through hard work and by facing dangers in far-off lands that had not existed in more travelled waters for decades. The work the men did in the Pacific did not differ greatly from the work done in the Atlantic during the nineteenth century, but the dangers Pacific sailors faced represented some novel challenges. The Pacific's vast size and unknown geographic hazards could make sailing in open water a harrowing experience. Pacific peoples could potentially make visiting islands or ports hazardous, presenting sailors with perceived dangers ranging from arrest and jail to massacre and cannibalism. Facing dangers, both real and imaginary, had always been part of the maritime culture and masculine identity so dear to seamen. Rife with dangers, the Pacific let men show that masculine identity on an almost daily basis. Recreational activities also allowed sailors to display their manliness, both at sea and in port. Fighting, alcohol and drug use, carousing with prostitutes and island women ashore, the good wages to be earned and shipowners' dependence on their skill and experience all allowed sailors to reinforce their manly identity in the Pacific.

Martial skill had always been an essential part of maritime masculine identity.[210] In 1858, Charles Abbey wrote in his journal, while lamenting that his ship was still at least fourteen days from San Francisco and its happily anticipated diversions, that, "Some of the starboard watch have manufactured 2 pairs of boxing gloves & the men have been practicing the 'manly art of self defense' all morning. Some of

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209   Ibid., 302-315.

210   Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 117.

them are quite proficient in it".[211] Occasionally, fights broke out among the crew that had nothing to do with sport. In 1853, a fight broke out between "William H. Williams, the cook – a Negro about twenty years of age – and the steward, Obadiah Paylin – a mulatto about twenty-four year old", aboard the *Santiago*. Witnesses claimed that the two young men had a dispute over a "small looking glass" and, within an hour, the steward pulled a pistol and shot the cook dead.[212] In 1856, aboard the bark *America*, seaman Harry Brant stabbed the first mate, Collins. Brant was intoxicated and, when the order came to go aloft, Brant went to his bunk instead. When Collins went to get Brant out of his bunk, pulling Brant down by his hair, the seaman took out his sheath knife and stabbed Collins in the side, just under the heart. When the bark reached San Francisco, Brant was arrested and Collins was taken to the Marine Hospital.[213] Although sailors fought quite often, they did not appreciate bullies aboard their vessels. For example, in 1849, seaman Charles Goodall criticised the first mate aboard the *St. Mary* for abusing a smaller man. According to Goodall, the mate possessed

> the insolence of a scoundrel with the knowledge of a
> jack-ass, and with all no seaman. Once he went so far
> as to strike one of our number who was a small man
> and unable to resist but it cost him all the influence he
> ever possessed amongst us each one doing as he pleased
> without any regard to him afterward, as he never had
> the courage to attack anyone near his size.[214]

Fighting with natives in life-or-death struggles allowed seamen to take their penchant for martial exhibitions to an extreme. Captain H. E. Raabe again illustrates how fears of Islanders made the Pacific a dangerous place where manliness could be displayed unapologetically. Regarding conflict with Pacific Islanders, Raabe wrote: "The cannibal savages were by no means ignorant. On the contrary, they were

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211   Harpur Allen Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers: The Diaries of Charles A. Abbey, 1856 to 1860* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1989), 148.

212   *Alta California*, 30 July 1853.

213   *Steamer Bulletin*, San Francisco, 28 June 1856.

214   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852, BANC MSS C-F 116.

intelligent and they were not cowards. They faced death or injury heroically. And they, in turn, showed great admiration for a formidable opponent".[215] Captain Raabe certainly feared what hostile Islanders might do to him, his ship and his crew. But, he admired their courage and martial skills even, and perhaps especially when they were directed at him. Raabe credited the Islanders with unquestionable valour, even while considering them "cannibal savages." Not to be outdone by savage Islanders, Raabe felt honour-bound to provide the Islanders with a formidable opponent that they would respect and admire. As Raabe wrote, "They knew we were playing a desperate game of chance with them and they respected us for that".[216] By labelling his opponents as "cannibal savages" Raabe legitimises his and other sailors' violence against Pacific Islanders, essentially making them responsible for their own deaths and injuries.[217]

The many dangers found in the Pacific during the nineteenth century certainly provided a stage for seamen to display their manliness but not all opportunities for gendered displays came in hazardous form. Most Pacific ports remained small until the twentieth century, but all possessed at least some enticement for men who had been at sea for months at a stretch. Sailors looked forward to making landfall and going to port. As John Cameron wrote:

> Life holds no harder ordeal for a sailor than to stare
> at a long-awaited landfall through the dusk, to see the
> lights blossom on land, to sniff the offshore breeze, and
> yearn for all that earth holds for him when he knows
> he must spend still another night in the same narrow
> forecastle that has confined him for months.[218]

Seamen often referred to small port towns, such as those along the Pacific north-west coast, as "dog holes", since they seemed only big enough for a dog

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215   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 113.

216   Ibid.

217   Banivanua-Mar, "Cannibalism and Colonialism," 274

218   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 35.

to turn around in.[219] Sailors preferred to take shore leave in larger ports such as San Francisco, Canton and Hong Kong. In these cities, mariners found ample opportunity to debauch themselves. After all, as A.J. Russel-Wood writes, "women and wine have historically been the prime compensations ashore for months of hardship on the high seas", and San Francisco, Canton and Hong Kong possessed both in excess. [220]

Before sailors could go ashore, the ship's business needed completing, which seemed to take an eternity to sailors eager to get ashore. The crowded and understaffed docks of San Francisco often required ships to wait for days before they could land. If a captain could not contract stevedores to unload his ship, he had to arrange an agreement with the crew to do the task for extra pay. The captain or one of his officers then had to sell the cargo to local merchants. After the cargo was sold, the men received pay according to their shipping agreement. After receiving payment and ending their contract with the captain, sailors made for shore. Those who could not wait jumped ship. Usually, a recently arrived ship found itself surrounded by boats full of "runners" offering to take seamen ashore to a shipping agent, or "crimp", who would set them up with lodging, entertainment, and future employment.[221] Some accepted the runners' offers, while others found their own way ashore.

In drinking establishments and in city streets, sailors displayed their manly prowess by drinking alcohol to excess and getting into fist and knife fights. Sailors often made it a point to drink the cheapest, most vile brands of booze available, because of its harsher and more deleterious effects. Sailors often drank liquor such as "strychnine whiskey" and "'Old Gravedigger – Special Reserve,' a barely adolescent whiskey, retaining all the lusty fire and vigor of youth, and not emasculated by having been matured in the wood, or anything else, for that matter".[222] By imbibing beverages

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219   Karl Kortum and Roger Olmstead, "…it is a dangerous-looking place: Sailing Days on the Redwood Coast," *California Historical Quarterly* (March 1971): 54.

220   A. J. Russel-Wood, "Seamen Ashore and Afloat: The Social Environment of the *Carreira Da India*, 1550-1750," *The Mariner's Mirror* (1983), 41.

221   Lance S. Davidson, "Shanghaied! The Systematic Kidnapping of Sailors in Early San Francisco," *California History* 64 (1985): 13.

222   Holmes, "Sailors and their Clothing, " 198; Davidson, "Shanghaied!," 15.

that maturation had not "emasculated", sailors reaffirmed their own manliness. But sailors were not a discerning group of drinkers, and in a pinch, they would lower themselves to imbibe the mellowest and most finely crafted intoxicating beverages. Sailors associated hard drinking with their manly identity and, while not all sailors drank, all acknowledged alcohol's role in maritime culture.[223]

While aboard the *Emma P.*, ship's boy H. E. Raabe witnessed an event that illustrates the association between drinking and manly identity. The *Emma P.*'s crew, "were well on their way to Happyland" when Captain McPurden grabbed the merchant-agent "supercargo", Mr. Gurney, who had a reputation for being something of a dandy. The captain, rather drunk himself, held Mr. Gurney by the collar, yelling, "Drink, damn you! – drink like a man or I'll put you to pulling with the bums".[224] Poor Mr. Gurney, outnumbered by the crew and bullied by the much stronger captain had little choice but to drink what the ship master offered him. Mr. Gurney was no sailor, nor was he much of a drinker, and

> To him, its contents must have been more like liquid
> fire. As soon as he was released he made a dash for the
> companionway…He descended only about half-way,
> and then collapsed, landing in a heap at the foot of the
> steps—down and out.[225]

The captain's insistence that Mr. Gurney "drink like a man" suggests alcohol's centrality to a sailor's manly identity and Gurney's comical reaction to the low quality beverage, which was more or less poured down his throat, fit perfectly with sailors' expectations of those not accustomed to seafarers' rough-and-tumble life.

Richard Henry Dana described his drinking experiences in San Diego during his hide-and-tallow cruise in 1835. Dana and some of his shipmates went ashore, and, "sailor-like, steered for the first grog-shop". Although Dana and his friend Stimson did not want to drink, the two sailors knew that "to refuse to drink with them would be the highest affront". According to Dana,

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223   Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 47; Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 6-10.

224   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 95-96.

225   Ibid.

> it would not do to *cut* our shipmates; for, knowing our
> birth and education, they were a little suspicious that
> we would try to put on the gentleman when we got
> ashore, and would be ashamed of their company; and
> this won't do with Jack.[226]

Each sailor had to buy a round for the entire group and Dana soon discovered that,

> we must go in order – the oldest first, for the old
> sailors did not choose to be preceded by a couple of
> youngsters…drink you must, every time; and if you
> drink with one, and not with another, it is always taken
> as an insult.[227]

Dana's grog-shop experiences in San Diego suggest alcohol's importance to the maritime community and sailors' manly identity. Although a rough-and-tumble lot who scorned landsmen's sense of propriety, sailors had their own forms of etiquette when drinking. Everyone had to participate and the younger, less experienced seamen had to defer to the more experienced men in the manly maritime hierarchy. To not accept another man's drink was a serious insult. This was especially true for Dana and Stimson, who were both well-educated and young. Had Dana and Stimson left the group before participating in their drinking ritual, and "try to put on the gentlemen", their shipmates would have assumed that the two thought themselves better men than their comrades. While Dana and Stimson's education and familial connections might matter by shoreside standards, they did not matter in the maritime community. Manly qualities such as skill, strength, bravery and experience mattered more and, if Dana wished to be part of the maritime community, he had to submit to its traditions and hierarchies.

Alcohol and drug use provided sailors with an arena to display their manhood and experience camaraderie and freedom when on shore. Drinking heavily with shipmates and losing control provided sailors with a sense of freedom lacking on

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226   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 116-117.

227   Ibid.

the highly disciplined ships. On shore, a sailor was his own man and careening down a street in a drunken state sent a message to others that a sailor cared not for social conventions and was free from discipline. Most of the shoreside public agreed with the *Daily Alta California* when it wrote in 1876:

> A crew of Sailors is made up of motley material.
> In many cases, they are fugitives from justice, and
> are usually dissolute men. They almost uniformly
> go aboard ship for the cruise in a state of thorough
> intoxication."[228]

The self-control exhibited aboard ships and that imposed by officers disappeared when a sailor made landfall and obtained shore liberty or dismissal. Drugs and alcohol, however, had darker and more damaging effects as well. Sailors' activities on land often proved dangerous and, occasionally, turned violent and destructive. Alcohol abuse was endemic among seamen and created problems for sailors, both on shore and at sea.[229] The reasons sailors drank to excess so often are difficult to determine. Scholars have wondered if drinking was just a means to promote unity within their labour community, a response to alienation from the rest of society, a remedy for the loneliness and guilt felt by men who left familial responsibilities behind them or a means to fight boredom at sea and in port.[230] Whatever the reason or reasons sailors took to drink, alcohol often proved more than a means of promoting maritime community and identity and sailors often suffered in multiple ways from alcohol and its influence.

In his diary, Gilbert Allen Patten wrote about an incident in which a shipmate "was crazy with drinking". Suffering from alcoholic delusions, Patten's shipmate had claimed that the previous night "some little men were round and one got killed they said he killed him he imagined they were after him".[231] At four o'clock in the morning, on 8 November 1863, Patten's fellow sailor removed his coat and

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228   *Alta California*, San Francisco, 3 June 1876.

229   Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 47.

230   Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 56-57; Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 47.

231   Gilbert Allen Patten Diary, 1863-1865.

jumped overboard to his death.[232]Alcohol had taken its toll on Patten's shipmate as it had on many sailors. A few sailors went "crazy with drink", but most who fell victim to alcohol wasted away slowly, deteriorating to a point where they could no longer work at sea or simply died from the physical damage caused by excessive drinking. More often, alcohol-fuelled misery occurred when intoxication led to immediate physical violence and destruction. Sailors often got drunk and then took out their anger and frustration on fellow sailors and other dockside workers who patronised bars and saloons frequented by seamen. Such violence included fist and knife fights, often with deadly results.[233]

Landsmen expected sailors to use violence against one another on occasion. For example, an *Alta California* article from 8 August 1851, entitled "Aquatic Sport", provides a humorous account of a fight between the second mate of the *Delia Maria* and a boatman on the Pacific Wharf. The two combatants fell into the water during their disagreement and "the engagement afforded a vast deal of sport to the spectators, from its extreme novelty, but opinions were divided as to which was the best man".[234] When sailor violence involved the larger seaport community, however, locals no longer looked on sailor's behaviour as humorous or harmless. The 1852 Honolulu Sailors' Riot provides the best example of sailors whose behaviour got out of hand and caused a backlash against their shoreside activities. The growing number of sailors landing in Honolulu during the Gold Rush, and the growing number of drinking establishments catering to sailors, disturbed many local residents. The local residents began to pressure the Hawaiian government to increase its police force, which had been cut the previous year due to a budgetary crisis and crack down on sailors. On 9 November 1852, John Burns, an able-bodied seaman, was arrested and jailed for drunkenness. Although the details of the sailor's arrest are unknown, one chronicler speculated that Burns thought ports like Honolulu existed

> for a sailor to ease himself with liquor and revelry and
> women after the weary months at sea...As he careened

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232   Gilbert Allen Patten Diary, 1863-1865.

233   Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 20-21, 56-57; Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 47.

234   *Alta California*, 8 August 1851.

down the uneven street he felt a glow of freedom. He
was a man, he was; no lubber could blow him down.[235]

Burns resisted arrest and a police officer clubbed him on the head in order to put an end to his struggles. The clubbing rendered Burns unconscious and the officer dragged him to the jail in Kamehameha Fort. Unfortunately, the officer's blow proved fatal for John Burns and he died the same day.[236]

As the sailors in Honolulu saw it, they were duty bound to seek retribution for a fellow seaman who had been unjustly killed for simply doing what sailors did while in port. Public drunkenness in Honolulu was punished by a night in jail and a six dollar fine or twenty-four lashes. In port, sailors expected to enjoy the freedom they lacked while aboard ship and the death of a sailor, at the hands of the shoreside authorities for a minor offense, demanded immediate retribution and justice. Sailors looked out for one another in life and, in Honolulu in 1852, sailors united in order to look after a fallen comrade. The next evening, "half a thousand sailors, inflamed with liquor, thronged the streets. They trooped to the fort, beating upon the heavy doors, demanding that the policeman be turned over to their vengeance". Unable to assail the fort's coral-slab walls, the sailors turned on the more vulnerable station house on Nuuanu Street, burning it to the ground before marching through Honolulu, breaking into saloons and terrorising citizens. The next morning, Hawaiian troops and unarmed natives cleared the debauched sailors from the streets, jailing fifty rioters.[237]

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235 Clifford Gessler, *Tropic Landfall: The Port of Honolulu* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1942), 67-69.

236 Ibid.

237 Gessler, *Tropic Landfall*, 66-69; Beechert, *Honolulu*, 50-51, The Hawaiian government passed several unsuccessful curfews and blue laws in the 1840s. According to Beechert, the Honolulu police force had been reduced to "six white men and two lunas [supervisors], 2 deputy lunas, 20 native constables and 2 station house men", while Lahaina had "1whiteman, 2 native lunas, 2 native constables and 1 jailor". Gessler claims that the 'blue laws" in Honolulu, while not always enforced, caused a great deal of complaining and frustration among sailors. Gessler also states that, "Drunk and disorderly conduct was punishable by a fine of six dollars, or twenty-four lashes, or a month in confinement in the fort. Those who fell over fences and broke them down must rebuild them or pay a dollar for each fathom broke". *The Weeks Argus*, Honolulu, Wednesday 17 November 1852.

The Honolulu riot illustrates how alcohol acted as both a catalyst for community and identity-building and as a destructive force for mariners. Frequent public drunkenness among sailors led to a greater need for law enforcement and public control in Honolulu. Burns's intoxication led to his arrest and his impaired state and heightened sense of manliness caused by alcohol led him to resist arrest, which led the police officer to use lethal force. The next day, alcohol intensified community feelings among sailors in Honolulu who were "inflamed with liquor". The inebriated sailors' impaired judgment then led them to riot, attacking the symbols of authority, namely, the fort and police station. The seamen then proceeded to steal more alcohol from local taverns and harass the symbols of civility and decency, namely, the local residents. Burns's story, and the riot that followed, illustrate how alcohol could unify sailors into a common community, but with often disastrous results. But, sailors continued to debauch themselves in Honolulu and other ports. From 1859 to 1861, 587 sailors were arrested in Honolulu with fines ranging from $2.50 to $37.[238]

Sailors also found other chemical substances in the Pacific. In San Francisco, Canton and Hong Kong, sailors regularly enjoyed visits to opium dens. Captain Charles P. Low recounted that, while in Hong Kong during his first voyage as a ship's boy,

> some four miles from the anchorage the opium ships
> were anchored in the river Typa…It was a favorite place
> for the mates to go and spend the evening, as they
> had plenty of drink and eatables and card playing…
> and pretty much every evening after supper the boat's
> crew were called away to take one or two of the mates
> aboard the opium ships.[239]

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238 Honolulu Harbor Master Seamen's Records, 1859-1861, 7(88).

239 Writing his book for the benefit of his family, Low consistently distanced himself from any behaviour that might be interpreted as immoral. Whether he actually visited the opium ships himself for the purpose of smoking is unclear, but the possibility certainly exists; Charles P. Low, *Some Recollections: Commanding the Clipper Ships "Houqua," "Jacob Bell," "Samuel Russell," and "N.B. Palmer," in the China Trade, 1847-1873* (Boston: George H. Ellis Co., 1906), 23.

Any port with a sizable Chinese population had opium dens that sailors frequented for narcotic, entertainment and sexual purposes. Sailors who so desired could also find opium dens in the Atlantic and Indian oceans but the Pacific boasted one narcotic that no other region possessed.

The *kava* root grew on most Pacific Islands, and Islanders used it to concoct an intoxicating beverage, used both socially and ceremonially. *Kava*'s reception by sailors was, at best, mixed. Most seamen found the "distillation" process repugnant, if not, utterly disgusting. Native women and girls chewed the fibrous root and spit the juice into a bowl, mixed it with coconut milk or water, then strained the liquid through their bare hands or through a cloth. John Cameron wrote:

> The process was more than disgusting; the youngsters
> chewed the root to a pulp and spat it, saliva and all,
> into a bowl; coconut milk or water was added; and
> the mess was strained through tapa or cloth…Is it
> necessary to say that my own libations were slyly
> poured upon the ground?[240]

A landsman, Albert G. Osbun, who travelled the Pacific from 1849 to 1851 to improve his failing health, wrote in his journal at Wallis Island that he "was invited into many of their houses [and] offered Kava to drink in all, but I could not drink with them".[241] For those brave enough to imbibe, *kava* offered some often pleasurable, if disturbing, effects. John Cameron stated, "That the liquor was heady enough I can testify, for I saw more than one man keel over".[242] After a single cup, Raabe experienced intense hallucinations; he saw frightening faces on a native totem pole as well as a beautiful woman, and he felt himself sinking through a bottomless bed of roses. Later, he settled into a euphoric, out-of-body experience before being tormented by an army of imps as he floated back to consciousness.[243]

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240   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 155.

241   John Haskell Kemble, ed., *To California and the South Seas: The Diary of Albert G. Osbun, 1849-1851* (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1966), 136.

242   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 155.

243   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 140-155.

Raabe's account, in particular, does not sound like the effects of *kava*, seeming to have more in common with opium dreams and may be fabricated to satisfy the book-buying public.[244] However, his account does illustrate Pacific sailors' familiarity with *kava* and suggests some degree of experimentation among the maritime community. Few sailors probably consumed *kava* regularly but many likely experimented with it to satisfy their curiosity and sense of adventure.

Sailors also debauched themselves in other ways in port. Saloons and opium dens usually had resident prostitutes for mariners to hire but brothels and streetwalkers also provided sailors with paid sexual partners. After months at sea, men had sexual relations with prostitutes both in private rooms and in public alleys. While in port, sailors made no pretext about their sexual endeavours and openly displayed their sexual desires and activities. Every port around the world had brothels and working women who made a living solely on seamen's lusts. All ports catered to sailors' sexual needs, however, as David Cordingly, in his book *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women: An Untold Maritime History*, writes:

> Things were rather different in San Francisco. This
> was the most notorious of all the ports in the Western
> world for its brothels, its nightlife, and the bizarre
> entertainments that were provided for the visiting
> sailors and the men who flocked into the city during
> and after the Gold Rush of 1849. [245]

San Francisco's entrepreneurs involved in the sex trade had to scurry in order to make supply meet demand as ever increasing numbers of sailors arrived in Pacific waters. In 1851, 451 ships dropped anchor in San Francisco carrying sailors and passengers eager to satisfy their desires after months at sea surrounded by men. The following year, 1147 ships arrived in San Francisco, again filled with sailors looking for women to hire for sex.[246]

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244   Martin Booth, *Opium: A History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 37-39.

245   Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 16.

246   Ibid., 17-19.

In order to satisfy boatloads of sailors and landsmen, prostitutes went to San Francisco from New Orleans, the east coast of the United States, France, Mexico, Peru, Hawaii and China. The sex trade performed admirably well in fulfilling its clients' needs and, "By the 1860s, San Francisco had developed into a flourishing frontier town with levels of crime, violence, and vice that matched those of long-established seaports". The area most frequented by sailors became known as the Barbary Coast and, "every adventurous sailor looked forward to sampling its delights and being able to boast to his shipmates about his experiences there".[247] So common were sailor-prostitute liaisons that locals often made light of sailor-prostitute behaviour.

In April 1850, a sailor and a prostitute in San Francisco wound up in jail after a night of revelry, not for soliciting sex, but for assault and disturbing the peace. The *Alta California* reported the incident in the form of a satirical epic poem, claiming that the "lovers" had imbibed too much and started singing loudly in public. A watchman approached them and "bade them both to cease, disturbing the State's dignity, its quiet and its peace". It required several watchmen to subdue the surly couple and throw them in jail "till nine o'clock this morning, when tis not too much to say, that his Honor will advise them both to jog along their way".[248] The newspaper's flippant report illustrates that most landsmen expected such behaviour from sailors. Other Pacific ports attempted to keep pace with San Francisco but they never matched the California port in regards to appealing to sailors' desires or tolerating their often obnoxious behaviour.

Only the Pacific Islands had a greater hold over sailors than established port towns when it came to sexual fantasy and experiences. Stories about the open and generous sexuality displayed by island women, were legend among both sailors and landsmen. Ever since Captain James Cook explored the Pacific during the eighteenth century, tales had abounded among sailors regarding island women's nudity, sexual openness and the bargain rates at which they often sold their services. Metal goods intrigued island peoples during the early contact years and

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247   Cordingly, *Women's Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 17-19; Hillary Evans, *Harlots, Whores, and Hookers: A History of Prostitution* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Company, 1979), 161.

248   *Alta California*, San Francisco, 4 April 1850.

women, often at the bequest of husbands, fathers, and community leaders, traded sexual favours to seamen for a few iron nails. Sailors began stowing their own supply of nails aboard ship, instead of stealing the ship's supplies, in hopes of using it as currency to secure sexual favours. Those visiting the islands were rarely disappointed and usually sailed for home unburdened by nails.[249]

I. H. Ham, travelling the Pacific in 1877 for health reasons, wrote of the Marquesas Islands, "The natives go naked…The females are very handsome & agreeable", and lamented "Why did not Granddad Adam and Grandma Eve behave themselves, so we could all go in the South Seas costume, it feels so good".[250] Missionaries and middle-class women, however, did not appreciate the "easygoing ways" displayed by Islanders and, as Mary Brewster, a whaling captain's wife, recalled, the "scenes she encountered made her blush".[251]

During the nineteenth century, missionaries arrived in ever increasing numbers in the Pacific Islands and did their best to eradicate the Islanders' native religious beliefs and sexual habits. The missionaries succeeded in converting many Islanders to Christianity but they never succeeded in completely curbing their sexual practices.[252]

Few sailors who wrote of their Pacific experiences detailed their liaisons with native women but John Cameron looked back fondly on the days when he visited the Pacific Islands and consorted with island women, writing "Yes, yes, ships and men and the world as a whole had been created for those people's pleasure". Cameron had a special fondness for the Hawaiians:

> Have I said enough to suggest the state of sexual
> morality in the Hawaii of those days? If not, let me

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249   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 9-10.

250   I. H. Ham Diary. BANC MSS 85/115p.

251   Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 128.

252   Patricia Grimshaw, "New England missionary wives, Hawaiian women and 'The Cult of True Womanhood,'" in *Family and Gender in the Pacific: Domestic Contradictions and the Colonial Impact*, ed. Margaret Jolly and Martha MacIntyre (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 19-44; Caroline Ralston, "Changes in the lives of ordinary women in early post-contact Hawaii," in *Family and Gender in the Pacific*, ed. Jolly and Macintyre, 45-64.

state frankly that it was very low indeed. Many natives, many foreigners, by their stratum of society high or low, were tarred with the same brush.[253]

Regarding a visit to Papeete, Cameron wrote:

Scarcely had I set foot in Papaeete…when two buxom girls cast each an arm about my neck and shifted me from side to side with a lusty tenderness for which the attentions of the castle had made me ready. Not in the least displeasing to me personally."[254]

Ned Wakeman even rated the women according to island group. He writes:

[I]n the Marquesas, at Point Venus, Tahiti, and on the Friendly Islands, I have seen surprisingly beautiful native girls; in the Navigator group thousands of girls are models for a sculptor, and there are some fine figures in New Zealand, while there are but few in the Fijis and none in New Holland; in New Guinea, in Java and in the Ladrones, few; in New Caledonia and New Hebrides, none; but in Manila, the Solomon and Gilbert groups, many.[255]

Sex in the Pacific, whether bought and paid for with prostitutes, given freely by native women or taken through rape, allowed sailors to display their manly prowess and identity. While sailors would have felt a sense of manliness from playing the dominant role in sexual relations through their act of penetration and their partners' act of submission, sexual relations with women would have had

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253   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 211-227.

254   Ibid.

255   Gordon Newell, *Paddlewheel Pirate: The Life and Adventures of Captain Ned Wakeman* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1959), 57.

greater meaning for seamen.[256] For a brief time, sailors held a patriarchal role over the women they had sex with. Sailors paid prostitutes for their services, making these women dependent on their clients for their livelihood. At the same time, however, sailors depended on the women they paid for sexual favours. Sailors also gave gifts to both prostitutes and the women who had sex with them without pay. In the saloons where sailors and prostitutes converged, seamen often supplied their potential sexual partners with alcohol and tobacco during their "courtship". If a sailor expected an extended stay in a port or on an island, while his ship was repaired or while he was between berths, he might take up residence with a favourite prostitute or an island woman in a temporary and illusory marital relationship. Such relationships may have seemed natural to sailors who were often the sons of seamen. Sailors' wives and widows often became saloon keepers and may have occasionally prostituted themselves in order to provide themselves and their children after husbands left for sea or died.[257] It is difficult to say how sailors who grew up under such circumstances felt about their mothers' liaisons with men who paid for sex or alcohol. However, the children, who were raised by women who sold their sexual services for money, may have found taverns and prostitutes familiar and comforting. With few male role models in their lives, the domestic examples provided to the sailor sons of tavern keepers would have come from their mothers and brief visits from transient fathers and their mothers' clients. The sons of sailors along the wharves would have learned early that men's domestic role was, while often profitable to his dependents, brief and temporary. As sailors understood it, visiting prostitutes provided sailors with sexual pleasure and, possibly, fulfilled a manly domestic role.[258] Sailors, however, often fell victim to women and so, could lose their masculinity in their relations with women as easily as they found it.

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256 Trexler, *Sex and Conquest*, 26; 131-133; 173-174. Trexler argues that upon reaching the age of adulthood, males became the "inserting active" in sexual relations.

257 Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 154; Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 5-7.

258 Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 7-22; Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 149-156. In the late eighteenth century, 63 percent of the teenage mariners who shipped out of Salem, Massachusetts had lost their fathers.

Sailors' transience and the large sums of cash they carried after being discharged or paid off made them easy and desirable targets for thieves, confidence men and charlatans of all sorts. Sailors found themselves especially vulnerable in port towns like San Francisco, where crime flourished and sailors represented a large and regular presence. Prostitutes and thieves posing as prostitutes used alcohol, drugs and violence to render their victims unconscious and steal their money and possessions. Prostitutes also worked with crimps and saloon and boarding house keepers to "shanghai" sailors, overpowering unwary seamen with drugs and physical force.[259] Some women went so far as to marry or form "committed" relationships with their victims before stealing all their money and possessions and disappearing. Charles W. Brown, a sailor who became an officer, noted that the saying "a Sailor has a wife in every port" was, at best, "distorted into an undeserved reproach against all sailor men, conveying the impression that the poor feminines have suffered at the hands of the gay and gallant mariners…the poor sailors were more frequently fooled than fair maidens were beguiled".[260] Women who took advantage of sailors were not unique to the nineteenth-century Pacific but confidence women certainly flourished in Pacific ports. In *Two Years Before the Mast*, Richard Henry Dana provides a pre-Gold Rush example of sailors being taken advantage of by women. Dana's shipmate, known as "Sails", recounted a story about his own unhappy marriage. Sails had married a woman in New York, secured an apartment, fully furnished it and left his wife half the pay he had earned on a previous voyage. When Sails returned from his next cruise, he found his wife,

> off, like Bob's horse, with nobody to pay the
> reckoning'; furniture gone, flag-bottomed chairs and
> all; and with his "long togs," the half-pay, his beaver

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259 Davidson, "Shanghaied!," 11-17. According to Davidson, "the term 'shanghaiing' may date to the early sailing days when no ship sailed directly between Shanghai and San Francisco and, a voyager wishing to travel from one port to the other, had to sail around the world to reach his/her destination. Hence a ship starting a long, hazardous voyage was said to be making a 'Shanghai voyage,' and the luckless sailor forcibly impressed into a vessel's crew was 'shanghaied.'"

260 Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 110-119.

> hat, and white linen shirts. His wife he never saw or
> heard of from that day to this, and never wished to.[261]

Sails' wife may have simply tired of waiting for a husband away at sea for an extended period of time. However, Sails' claim that she took all his money, furniture and clothes without leaving word with neighbours, the shipping office or his employers does not speak well for her motives.

Charles Brown recounted a tale regarding an almost legendary young woman in late-nineteenth-century Auckland, New Zealand, who regularly conned sailors, both deckhands and officers, out of their money. Miss Mary McLean "was a bonnie Scotch lassie, with sweet blue eyes, brown hair, plump and petite, and pretty enough to have been a movie star if she had lived forty years later". While working behind the bar at The Thames Inn, Mary presented herself as a demure and plain barmaid and treated her maritime customers with attentiveness and sympathy. With common seamen, she arranged clandestine carriage rides on Sundays. Unknown to the seamen, however, she had a partnership with the stable owner and, after the poor sailor had reserved a carriage and horse team, Mary, in the interest of discretion, would cancel the date, leaving the mariner to pay for the carriage and team without the benefit of Mary's company. At any given time, Mary had several sailors paying for the same carriage and horses, splitting the profits with her partner. With officers, Mary set her sights a little higher. When an officer came into Mary's bar, he might find her "weeping profusely". When asked what was the matter, Mary responded that she had lost a twelve-pound brooch, which represented several years' savings and that, while the local merchant had another one, she no longer had enough money to purchase it. The sympathetic officer then visited the merchant, purchased the replacement brooch, and presented it to Mary as a "memento of his undying affection". Mary's activities among seamen became something of an inside joke, and if a sailor who had been to Auckland was asked, "Did you buy Mary a brooch?" the answer was often in the affirmative.[262] Shortly after the generous and smitten officer shipped out, the brooch could once again be seen in the storefront window. When one considers the dangers involved

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261   Dana, *Two Years before the Mast*, 260-261.

262   Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 112-117.

in visiting ports and partaking in their pleasures, it is easy to see why Captain McPurden warned the young Raabe,

> Rum and Women! Watch out for them; they get every
> good sailor. If they don't get you, you are better off on
> a farm. The Islands, when they get into your bones…
> Boy, they are already in your bones. The rum has you
> too. Next come the women. Just a year or two and
> you'll be going full before the wind. Rocks ahead, boy!
> Rocks ahead![263]

Working at sea made permanent relationships with women difficult at best and sailors made themselves vulnerable by developing attachments to women in ports. When women took advantage of sailors by stealing from them or running away, seamen often grew resentful and distrustful of women. Stories like the one about Mary McLean served not only as humorous yarns but as cautionary tales about sailors forming relationships with women on shore whom they could neither financially support nor fully trust.

The Pacific provided sailors with another means of asserting their manhood after the California Gold Rush: money. Pacific ports held many opportunities for seamen. Gold rushes in California and Australia, silver and copper mines in Peru, guano deposits in Chile and timber in Oregon, provided seamen with potentially profitable work on land.[264] Many sailors, who heard about gold discoveries in California, saw the precious metal as an opportunity to make a fortune in a short time and leave the hard life at sea completely or purchase their own vessel and increase their status. Gold provided the opportunity for sailors to end their dependence on wages and possibly put them in a position where others, namely, other sailors, would be dependent on them.

So many sailors saw California gold as a means to improve their situation that, according to one historian, "For many vessels, the passage to California was their

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263   Raabe *Cannibal Nights*, 43-44. Raabe thought there was actually danger and quickly took
          evasive action, turning the wheel sharply.

264   Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 23.

last".[265] Upon anchoring in San Francisco Bay, sailors and officers left or deserted their ships in great numbers, often abandoning them completely and headed for the goldfields. Seamen abandoned so many ships that the bay soon became crowded with unmanned vessels. Locals beached several abandoned vessels, converting them into hotels, brothels, saloons, casinos, stores, warehouses and jails. Early in 1849, the *California*'s entire crew deserted, "leaving on board only an engine-room boy and the ship's master".[266] Seaman Charles Goodall wrote in 1849 that San Francisco Bay was "crossed with shipping and scarcely a person on board".[267] Even officers were hard to find in Gold Rush San Francisco, leading Captain Charles M. Scammon to believe in 1850 that it was "almost impossible to get any officers here that are not drunk more than half the time".[268] The problem became so endemic that ship masters in San Francisco held a public meeting in 1850 to find a solution but nothing could stop the desertions.[269] For example, German-born sailor, Adolphus Windeler, arrived in San Francisco on 6 December 1849, aboard the ship *Probus*. Several *Probus* crewmen deserted the ship but Windeler and a few other men stayed aboard and agreed to unload the cargo for the captain at an extra charge. The captain refused to pay the men as agreed, so Windeler and his comrades deserted the ship to find work ashore. Windeler worked in the city for several weeks, after which, he and his shipmates took the money they earned and purchased a small vessel to head for the goldfields and try their hand at transporting and selling goods to gold miners. The work proved more difficult than the seamen had anticipated and the partners sold their small vessel and remaining trade goods and decided to try mining. Gold mining did not meet Windeler's high expectations and he eventually gave up and returned to the

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265   Charles Bateson, *Gold Fleet for California: Forty-Niners from Australia and New Zealand* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1963), 20.

266   Robert A. Weinstein, "North from Panama, West to the Orient: The Pacific Mail Steamship Company as Photographed by Carleton E. Watkins." *California History* 57(1) (1978): 46-58.

267   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852, BANC MSS C-F 116.

268   Letters to Ottis Kimball, 1849-1852, BANC MSS 70/90c.

269   *Alta California*, San Francisco, 21 September 1850.

sea.[270] Charles Goodall also tried his hand at mining when he left the *St. Mary* in February 1850. By November 25, however, Goodall gave up mining, sold his claim on the American River for $150 and "immediately left the mines".[271] With sailors leaving in droves, ship's masters had great difficulty securing crews to sail their vessels. The need for experienced, or even inexperienced, seamen to man the vessels sailing the Pacific in ever greater numbers created a labour problem for shipowners and commanders that served sailors well.

The wage sailors received depended on their skill and previous experience but, before the Gold Rush, seamen usually received approximately $12 to $20 a month aboard merchant vessels.[272] The Pacific labour shortage, however, changed sailors' wages drastically. During the 1850s, sailors could receive anywhere from $25 to $50 a month for a voyage, and monthly wages of $100 to $150 were not uncommon. Sailors quickly discovered that they could make more money sailing than mining.[273] As Captain Charles P. Low wrote regarding a crew he secured in Valparaiso in 1852:

> I tried very hard to keep them with me after our arrival
> in San Francisco, but they preferred to ship at big
> wages by the run to some near port and work their
> way back at going wages. They were making money
> and were saving it, and doing better than if they were
> working in the mines.[274]

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270   Adolphus Windeler, *The California Gold Rush Diary of a German Sailor* (Berkeley, California: Howell-North Books, 1969), 21-39, 45. Windeler's captain refused to pay him the amount he had agreed to and Windeler and his crewmates secured the services of a lawyer. The sailors won their case, but the courts and lawyers received most of the settlement, leaving the seamen with very little money with which to start their lives in California.

271   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852, BANC MSS C-F 116.

272   Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 44.

273   *Ewing* Mutiny Court Records. The United States Navy began to request that the government increase its pay for seamen in the Pacific so that they could compete with merchant mariner wages and prevent desertions.

274   Low, *Some Recollections*, 126-127.

In August 1852, Frank S. Redfield wrote to his brother back east, "I expect to find a berth on a steamboat. If I get it, it will be a good one $45-00 per month". The job never materialised but in October, Redfield "got a berth on board this schooner before the mast at $50". After five weeks, Redfield became the schooner's mate and received an extra $20 a month for his promotion.[275]

Occasionally, captains had to increase wages even further in order to maintain a crew large enough to sail their ships. In March 1849, aboard the steam bark *Edith K. Coulliard*, crew members learned that the captain raised their wages to $100 per month because of "gold fever raging on shore and the ship's company slightly affected".[276] In 1850, Captain Low planned a voyage to China. The ship was ready for sea but did not have a crew to take it to the Asian port. At that time, the available sailors were asking for $150 a month and would only sail as far as Honolulu. Having little choice, Low paid the going rate. The sailors and the shipping officers, or "crimps". demanded that the wages be paid in advance. Eight to ten crew members stood on the wharf while Low waited for the rest to arrive. While waiting, "the cry of 'Fire!' was raised, and before I had time to turn around my men were gone". No doubt, the sailors returned to their crimp and waited to be "shipped out" again. Low eventually secured a crew to go to Honolulu where the sailors "took their leave and went on shore; their time was up and they had earned their money very easily".[277] As this example suggests, employers found it difficult to hire crews for long voyages. During the labour shortage, most sailors refused to go to sea for months at a time, preferring to make short cruises and spend more time in ports where they could enjoy their increased wages and find work along the docks if they needed to supplement their income.

Sailors found that the Pacific offered them a chance to assume more control over their lives by having more leverage over shipping contracts and wage rates. In some ways, particularly when it came to wages, sailors had employers at their

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275   Frank S. Redfield Letters, 1852-1878.

276   Ship's Logs, 1838-1851 BANC MSS 93/136.

277   Low, *Some Recollections*, 98-102. Sailors also shipped to other Hawaiian ports, such as Lahaina, Maui, where they were discharged, usually after short runs. Of the surviving Lahaina port records, 107 non-Pacific Islander sailors were discharged in Lahaina. Records of the Port of Lahaina, Maui, 1850-1882, Series: 95, Folder 3.

mercy and showed that as much as seamen depended on officers and shipowners to make their living, those same officers and shipowners also depended on sailors' skill, bravery, and experience. Such obvious dependency on the part of the maritime elite gave sailors an increased sense of their own worth and manhood.

In January 1851, Henry McBeth shipped out on the *Burlington* at Valparaiso. McBeth provides an interesting and extreme example of how sailors in the Pacific maintained their manhood by defying their superiors and maintaining a sense of independence and self-worth. The situation aboard the *Burlington* did not bode well for discipline and good order from the beginning. The ship leaked badly and required the crew to man the pumps almost continuously. At quarter to six in the morning on 10 February, while riding at anchor in Lalcahuano Bay, the hands below decks were called to start work at six. The crewmen failed to appear at the appropriate time and the mate called them again. McBeth replied that it "'Just ain't time to turn too,' and using other insolent language did not appear for nearly half an hour". That same evening, McBeth and another sailor failed to show up for another watch, forcing the second mate and, eventually, the first mate and the captain to go into the forecastle to get McBeth and his comrade to do their duty. McBeth and his delinquent crewmate went back to work, "but McBeth used the most insolent language & wound up with the mutinous expression that he would go when he pleased & not before for any capt or mate". On 11 February, the insolent sailor left bones in front of the cabin door in a protest against the insufficient rations. The captain confronted McBeth about the bones but backed down and blamed the cook and steward for the poor rations provided to the crew. McBeth's insolence continued during his entire time aboard the *Burlington*.

The following month, McBeth beat the steward over another dispute about food as the other crewmen looked on. When the mate attempted to help the steward, McBeth punched him twice and the mate ran to get a handspike and deal with McBeth. Another crewman grabbed the mate when he returned and held him fast. The captain came forward and succeeded in restoring order through verbal commands. The captain then gathered the crew together and asked if they approved of McBeth's actions, to which they replied that they did. Again, the captain backed down and promised the crew better and more abundant provisions.

In April, McBeth confronted the captain about the quantity of tea given the men and demanded that the captain taste the tea and decide if it was good enough. The captain tasted it and replied that it was indeed good enough. McBeth, outraged,

> Turned around & threw the tea overboard saying
> that it was not fit for a dog and that any man who
> would give another such teas as that was not fit to be
> master of a ship with other impudent & uncalled for
> language.

The captain lectured McBeth but did not discipline him in any other way and ordered him off the quarter deck. McBeth did not follow this order "until he had continued a very impudent & abusive speech against the ship & capt when he went forward". The *Burlington* finally reached San Francisco in May and, before setting out for Sydney, the entire crew either deserted or obtained a discharge.[278]

McBeth's behaviour illustrates that sailors understood their new economic power in the labour-poor Pacific and, at times, used their leverage against their employers. McBeth and his crewmates knew that they could easily leave his ship and not worry about finding a good paying berth elsewhere. The officers also knew that the crew could easily leave and find work elsewhere, which may account for the officers' passive attitude towards the rebellious seamen.

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278   Burlington (ship) Logbook 1850 Sept-1852 Dec BANC MSS C-F 202. The officer who kept the log assures his readers on 24 February 1851 that, "The McBeth so frequently mutinous in this book is not the one Shakespeare introduced in his play of that name". The *Burlington's* log is exceptionally detailed. Most ship's logs contain mundane information such as weather, wind strength and direction, and ship location. The *Burlington's* log, however, contains very detailed descriptions of the crew and their behaviour. The fact that the crew was on the verge of mutiny for several months and disobeyed orders, showed disrespect for the officers and received several punishments during the time between 1850 and 1852, may account for the detail. Commanders rarely provided much detail in their logs because, if they had a disobedient crew, the shipowners might hold them responsible for the disobedience and be reluctant to hire them for future cruises. The *Burlington's* officers feared a general mutiny and may have wanted an accurate account of events in order to show the shipowners just what happened in case they lost the ship. Fear of losing the ship, in this case, outweighed the fear of seeming to have no control over the crew. Before and after Henry McBeth boarded the ship, the log is more mundane and contains entries regarding putting crewmen in irons as punishment. During McBeth's time on the *Burlington,* there are only few reported instances of sailors being punished.

Sailors in the Pacific, at least during the 1850s and 1860s, dictated the terms of their employment more directly than they had previously in Atlantic waters or even in the Pacific during the early part of the century.[279] Harsh discipline still existed on most ships but a sailor could more easily desert and find a more agreeable berth in the labour-poor Pacific without much fear of legal recourse or physical hardship. Having more money also allowed sailors to practice their manly shoreside rituals with more frequency and greater exuberance. Drinking with fellow sailors and carousing with prostitutes took up more of sailors' time as they had more money and more leisure time between cruises. San Francisco could eat up a sailor's cash rather quickly – high prices for food, lodging, and liquor made their wages seem less impressive – but in ports like Honolulu, Canton, and Valparaiso, a sailor's money went much further.[280] In short, sailors in the Pacific could walk with greater pride and more confidence after gold was discovered in California, prompting an increase in shipping and a corresponding labour shortage in the region. Not that sailors necessarily needed a boost in their sense of manliness or in their confidence but sailors enjoyed having the upper hand for a change. Officers, shipowners and crimps, however, quickly found ways to curtail or, at least, challenge the power sailors possessed in the Pacific and to destroy or, at least, dampen their masculine pride and confidence.

Sailors ashore inevitably ran out of money and needed to find work on new vessels. Mariners usually sought the help of crimps or shipping agents but the latter often proved corrupt and more than willing to cheat clients. Finding competent sailors proved all but impossible in most Pacific ports and many crimps and ship masters resorted to "shanghaiing" seafarers. San Francisco developed a notorious reputation for shanghaiing and, by 1852, twenty-three shanghaiing gangs roamed San Francisco's docks. Unscrupulous crimps lured sailors to their lodging houses with the promises of a bed and cheap whiskey. Using a "concoction of whiskey, brandy, gin and opium", crimps drugged unsuspecting sailors, who woke up days

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279   During the 1860s, cheap labour from Asia began to flood the job market, eliminating much of the leverage once possessed by sailors from the Atlantic tradition. Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 58-67.

280   Windeler, *The California Gold Rush Diary of a German Sailor*, 36.

later on unfamiliar ships.[281] Other crimps used less subtle means of securing seamen, such as beating them unconscious or cutting holes in already dangerous docks and wharves and waiting until a sailor fell through, whereupon thugs beat the poor fellow and took him to his new ship.[282] An even more direct method received the name "sailor stealing", which victimised both sailors and captains alike. Sailor stealing involved gangs of armed men attacking a ship at anchor and physically removing sailors for service on other vessels. From 5 January to 6 June 1853, the *Daily Alta California* reported three separate attempts by sailor stealing gangs to board vessels in San Francisco Bay and forcibly remove sailors. During the incident on 6 June, the "sailor thieves" succeeded in taking three men from the ship *Arethusa.* Ship masters lost huge sums of money paid to sailors in advance for future service and sailors ended up working on ships without a shipping agreement.[283] Shanghaiing reduced sailors to slaves, robbing them of dignity, free will, and manly esteem. Despite the potential dangers to sailors' lives and manly identity that shanghaiing represented, the nineteenth century Pacific seemed, in many ways, a sailor's paradise.

The Pacific offered opportunities for sailors to recreate the Atlantic tradition in a variety of ways, such as drinking heavily with fellow sailors and obtaining the services of prostitutes. Some experiences, however, were rather new to the maritime community and unique to the Pacific, such as the use of narcotics like *kava* and having sex with native island women. The Pacific also let sailors exert more control over their lives and break some of the bonds that had bound them so closely to their employers. Labour shortages made sailors a valuable commodity and sailors took advantage of the situation by demanding higher wages and shorter cruises.

Some of the challenges sailors faced were not new to the Pacific. Sailors' vulnerability to confidence men and thieves, especially when the confidence men and thieves were women, had always been an element of the Atlantic

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281 Davidson, "Shanghaied!," 13; Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 65-67; Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 135.

282 *Alta California*, San Francisco, 1 June 1853.

283 *Alta California*, San Francisco, 5 January 1853, 8 January 1853, 6 June 1853.

maritime culture and sailors expected to be approached from time to time, if not, victimised, by those looking to take advantage of them. Sailors sang songs about foolish seamen who had been taken in by a pretty face, only to be robbed and humiliated. Even shanghaiing, or "sailor-stealing", had been part of the maritime community for centuries. Sailors certainly hated finding themselves aboard a ship with a headache and without a shipping contract, bound for unknown ports for an unspecified amount of time but, even though the art of shanghaiing reached its zenith in San Francisco, the experience did not represent anything novel to sailing.

As sailors from the Atlantic maritime tradition would discover, however, the Pacific possessed many challenges that would threaten to destroy the very foundations that provided sailors with a strong sense of community and manly identity. During the nineteenth century, new Pacific peoples would work side by side with sailors from the Atlantic maritime labour community and their presence would alter the maritime world forever.

THE ROLE OF PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN THE MARITIME LABOUR COMMUNITY

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF PACIFIC ISLANDERS IN THE MARITIME LABOUR COMMUNITY

The schooner *Friendship* lay in Honolulu harbour, seized by the Hawaiian Admiralty's first Circuit Court in February 1850. The admiralty seized the vessel because a seaman, Charles Richardson, had brought suit against the *Friendship* and its master, Charles Bishop, for wages due. Richardson claimed that he and Captain Bishop had made a verbal agreement by which Richardson would receive $150 for making the passage from San Francisco to Honolulu as a common seaman. Bishop, however, claimed that he and the plaintiff had only agreed that Richardson would work the ship for passage to Honolulu. When Richardson approached Bishop for his wages, Bishop offered him a mere $15, at which point, Richardson secured attorney Allen T. Wilson's services and filed suit. Both sides called several witnesses to the stand, who provided often contradictory evidence regarding conditions aboard the vessel and the agreement reached between the two litigants, making a decision in the case difficult.[284]

Richardson's friend and primary witness, Benjamin Whitehouse, a paying passenger aboard the *Friendship*, testified that Richardson was a good sailor and that he had introduced Richardson to Captain Bishop in port in San Francisco and then left the two to discuss terms. As Whitehouse walked away, he had heard Bishop state

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284   001 Admiralty Court Records of the First Circuit Court, Hawaii State Archives.

that he did not need any more men and cared little if Richardson sailed or not but Whitehouse assumed Bishop's words were just part of the bargaining process. Whitehouse did not hear what agreement the two men reached but assumed that Bishop needed more sailors since, as Whitehouse testified, the schooner required ten crewmen to make the voyage but only had two experienced men before the mast at the time. None of the other witnesses, including the *Friendship's* first mate, passengers and seamen, could testify that they heard the two men's final agreement and most of the testimony consisted of opinions regarding the work done by Richardson, the quality of the ship's food stores, the going rate for sailors sailing from San Francisco to Honolulu and how many men a schooner required to sail the San Francisco-Honolulu passage.[285]

The case lasted from 7 to 12 February, ending with the court finding in favour of the plaintiff, Richardson. The court decided that the only question that had any true bearing on the case was whether or not Richardson sailed as a seaman or as a passenger and that Richardson "came on board the Schooner Friendship as a passenger and worked his passage without a written agreement is not sufficient to void his claim to wages". According to the court, regardless of Richardson's official position aboard the *Friendship*, "he was a seaman to all intents and purposes in the estimation of the law and has a right to wages". The court decided to award Richardson $92.50, the median wage arrived at according to the testimony of the witnesses regarding going wages at the time. Captain Bishop delivered the wages to the court on 13 February, officially closing the case.[286]

Richardson's lawsuit, in and of itself, was not a remarkable or rare occurrence in port towns around the world. Seamen often exercised their legal rights in order to secure

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285 Ibid.

286 Ibid. The witness testimony generally agreed to the poor quality of the food provided to the crew but many said it was no worse than that found on most ships. Testimony regarding the number of sailors needed to make the voyage from San Francisco to Honolulu varied. Most agreed that the month-long San Francisco-Honolulu run was an extremely easy run and opinions on the number of men needed ranged from four to ten sailors Wages testified to by various witnesses ranged from $60 to $125 for the San Francisco-Honolulu passage. The *Friendship* took twenty eight days to complete, an average run. In the lawsuit, Richardson sued for $250 but no reason is given why and Bishop claimed the $15 was a gift.

wages due from negligent or malevolent ship masters or to receive compensation for poor food, unnecessary physical abuse or abandonment on far-off shores and ports not specified in shipping articles. As Matthew Raffety has argued, by the early nineteenth century, "the courts sought to protect seamen from provisions that put them at a disadvantage" and most sailors would have felt comfortable going to consulates and courts to guard their rights.[287] While maritime law tended to be written to protect the interests of the maritime elite, courts still judged that sailors needed protection as wards of the state. What makes Richardson's case remarkable, is that he won it so easily, regardless of conflicting witness testimony, the lack of written shipping articles and only Richardson's claim to wages as proof that he deserved compensation. More often than not, courts found in favour of shipowners and officers.[288] The reputation of seamen as undesirables, who sought to shirk responsibility and take advantage of their employers and the courts, led most North and South American and European courts to rule against them unless evidence strongly favoured their case. Sailors' cases did not automatically meet with rejection, especially in cases involving unsafe vessels and officers who did not follow agreements laid out in signed shipping articles. In order to keep sailors in line and under their employers' discipline, courts usually dismissed sailors' suits or ruled against seamen.[289] Richardson's case, however, was not heard in a North American, South American or European court. Richardson filed suit in Hawaii, where the official state line regarding sailors differed greatly from that in other admiralty and maritime courts. That Richardson, a single sailor, was able to have the *Friendship* held in port until his case was tried speaks to Hawaii's concern over individual sailors and their treatment, even if foreign born.[290]

As an extremely small island nation, the Kingdom of Hawaii relied greatly on the sea for its livelihood and prosperity. Many Hawaiian men went to sea aboard both

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287   Raffety, *The Republic Afloat*, 43.

288   Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 71-72. As Kindleberger states, there has been no comprehensive study on seamen's success in court cases against their employers. The laws, courts, and ship records, however, were designed to benefit employers and keep seamen working.

289   Raffety, *The Republic Afloat*, 42-47.

290   001 Admiralty Court Records of the First Circuit Court, Hawaii State Archives.

foreign and domestic ships every year. Hawaii's economic dependence on maritime activities and the many Hawaiian men who shipped out, led the Hawaiian royal government to pay special attention to their native seamen's protection and good treatment. In Hawaii and on other Pacific Islands, sailors were not a despised, transient working class; instead, they were seen as a labouring elite, that brought economic security and wealth from across the sea. Hawaii's protection of sailors extended to foreign seamen, such as Charles Richardson and Hawaiian courts and other government officials looked upon sailors far more favourably than in other nations. In many ways, Hawaii represented the height of Pacific Islander involvement in the Pacific maritime community but thousands of Islanders from throughout the Pacific Ocean, while enjoying fewer governmental safeguards than in Hawaii, participated in maritime labour aboard both American and other vessels.

Pacific Islanders' participation in the maritime industry represented a growing diversity in the labour force during the second half of the nineteenth century. This threatened to alter the maritime labour community and the traditions that had developed in the Atlantic by the end of the eighteenth century and had been transported to the Pacific aboard American and European vessels. As newcomers to the traditional maritime labour community, Pacific Islanders brought their own ideals, cultural values and traditions onto foreign ships, threatening to destabilise the way sailors perceived both their work and themselves. Since Pacific Islanders had not participated in creating the Atlantic maritime cultural identity, sailors from the Atlantic maritime community could only guess at the ultimate impact Pacific Islanders would have on the sailing profession and seamen.

The Pacific Islanders represented a complex mix of cultures and ethnicities that shared a common environment and some common traditions, represented primarily by the three geographical and cultural regions of Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia.[291] Melanesians, who inhabited island groups such as New Guinea and the Solomons, were unusual for Pacific Islanders because they were not sailors. Melanesians rarely travelled long distances, preferring near-neighbour partnerships to long-distance trade and contact. Melanesian economic structures reflected

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291   Matthew Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 1-22.

their more local focus. Rarely exploiting marine resources beyond their coastlines, Melanesians primarily practiced limited slash-and-burn horticulture and hunting. Micronesians and Polynesians, on the other hand, sailed great distances and settled as far as the Hawaiian archipelago and Easter Island prior to European contact. Micronesians and Polynesians usually sailed in double-hulled sailing vessels and used sophisticated navigational skills to get them to remote island locations with pinpoint accuracy.[292] Micronesians and Polynesians both looked to the sea for their primary food and trade resources and maintained close links with nearby islands and islands along more distant trade routes. Micronesians and Polynesians also practiced farming and hunting in order to supplement their largely marine diet. Polynesian oral literature and genealogies deal almost exclusively with accounts of voyaging great distances across the sea, and their culture, both material and spiritual, is oriented towards the marine environment. Micronesian and Polynesian association with the sea made them excellent candidates for maritime labour when Europeans began to arrive in the Pacific.[293]

During the nineteenth century, tens of thousands of Pacific Islanders served aboard foreign vessels as seamen, contributing to a growing racial and ethnic diversity aboard nineteenth-century merchant vessels in the Pacific. As a global industry, merchant shipping experienced ethnic and racial demographic changes worldwide but no other maritime regions had as much diversity as the Pacific Ocean. Pacific Islander sailors sailed around the world to ports in North and South America, Africa and Europe but most remained in the Pacific, helping to put trading vessels in that ocean at the forefront of demographic changes in maritime labour populations. While men from every island participated in Pacific maritime labour, Polynesians, a group which included Hawaiians, Maoris, Tahitians, Samoans and Tongans, dominated Pacific Island participation on foreign vessels throughout the nineteenth century and most written records regarding Pacific Islanders are about this regional and cultural group.

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292   Paul D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea: Environment, Identity, and History in Oceania* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 2006), 86-93.

293   Fischer, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 23-80.
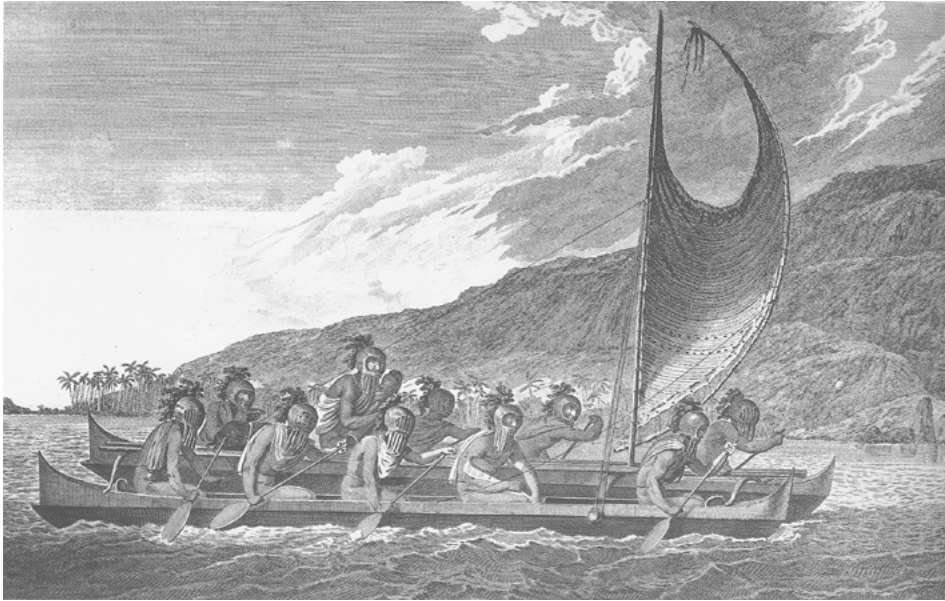
*POLYNESIAN PRIESTS SAILING A DOUBLE-HULLED CANOE (C. 1781)
MUCH LIKE THOSE USED BY THEIR ANCESTORS TO SETTLE THROUGHOUT
THE PACIFIC ISLANDS. (PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE)*

Hawaiian participation in the maritime community during the nineteenth century is well known, largely because the Hawaiian government created a great many documents, unlike many island societies in the Pacific that did not keep written records. Hawaii and its kings learned quickly that modern technologies and bureaucratic structures had great value. King Kamehameha I unified the Hawaiian Islands in 1810, largely by assembling a modern navy consisting mostly of American and British made vessels and led by American and British advisors.[294] British seizure of Hawaii in 1843, eventually led to a well-documented government bureaucracy that tended the island nation's relations with foreign merchants and seamen.[295] By mid-century, the Hawaiian government more closely resembled a European royal court than a traditional island monarchy.[296] The nineteenth-century Hawaiian governmental structure not only allowed for a more efficient and well-ordered system for recruiting seamen, it also left historians a record of Hawaiian maritime activities.[297]

While Pacific Islanders began sailing aboard European vessels as early as the sixteenth century, when Spanish ships began making inroads into the Pacific, large-scale participation in maritime labour on foreign vessels did not truly begin until the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries when ships from Europe and America entered the Pacific to trade with China

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294   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 12-14, 160. By 1811, King Kamehameha I had assembled a "mosquito" fleet of forty foreign-made vessels. Most of Kamehameha's sailors were Hawaiians, but many American and European beachcombers also served under the king and helped train the native sailors how to work the large fleet. Kamehameha's unification marked the first time that the Hawaiian Islands were unified under a single government and Kamehameha's descendants ruled the islands until the United States annexed them in 1898. Sylvester K. Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii, 1842-1898* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1945), 294-295.

295   Edward D. Beechert, *Honolulu: Crossroads of the Pacific* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 54-56.

296   Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii, 1842-1898*, 38-40.

297   The Hawaii State Archives have a large collection of records from the Honolulu Harbormasters office which provide rather detailed accounts of the coming and going of native sailors and the wages and treatment received by Hawaiian seamen.

and to search for whales and the precious oil they possessed.[298] Early on, Pacific Islanders, often referred to by Americans and Europeans as "Kanakas" tended to serve as guides, translators and "curiosities" aboard European and American vessels but foreigners quickly learned Islanders' value as seamen.[299] At first, foreign ships took Pacific peoples aboard as replacements for European, American and African sailors who died or deserted during a cruise to the Pacific. By the early nineteenth century, however, ship masters began going to the Pacific with smaller crews, intent on hiring Pacific Islanders to fill out their complements as needed. [300] Following the traditional racial and ethnic tolerance of the maritime community, seamen often welcomed the island newcomers and Islanders proved valuable additions to crews.

Pacific Islanders not only entered the maritime labour community, they also altered it in profound and meaningful ways. As David Chappell's groundbreaking study *Double Ghosts: Oceanic Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* argues, Pacific Islander sailors and their non-Islander counterparts participated in the cross-cultural exchange and transformed one another in a variety of ways; creating new identities, cultural practices, and social interactions. The cultural exchange Chappell illustrates was a large part of the creation of a Pacific world aboard merchant, whaling and naval vessels from around the globe.

Many of the first Pacific Islanders to serve aboard American ships did so during the late eighteenth century on vessels involved in securing sea otter and seal furs for the China trade. Hawaiian sailors became increasingly important to the fur trade as it quickly became apparent that the Northwest did not have the fresh provisions necessary to supply fur ships and that ships could rarely fill their holds with furs in a single season. Ideally located in the central Pacific, the Hawaiian Islands provided a port where ships could take on necessary supplies, rest up

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298   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 9-11. William Howells, *The Pacific Islanders* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 1-2. Spanish explorer Mendana was the first European to reach the central Pacific in 1568, christening several islands with Spanish names, such as Guadalcanal, Santa Ysabel, and San Cristobal, still in use today.

299   The term *kanaka* is Hawaiian for "person". Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, xiii.

300   Marion Diamond, "Queequeg's Crewmates: Pacific Islanders in the European Shipping Industry," *International Journal of Maritime History* 1(2) (1989): 124-128.

before heading to China, spend the winter between fur seasons and obtain skilled and experienced native seamen. The North American north-west coast fur trade began to dwindle by 1805 and few pelts were collected and sold by 1825 but Pacific Islanders had proved their worth and American vessels continued to seek out their services.[301]

Pacific Islanders, and Hawaiians in particular, were known for their excellent boat-handling skills, especially in rough surf. Boating was an essential skill sought after by sea captains in the in the early nineteenth century Pacific as there were few ports and natural harbours suitable for landing and loading cargo along the North American coast. As trade diminished in the Northwest, it moved steadily southward along the California coast, where American and European traders joined in the hide and tallow trade. California's rocky coast, high surf and few suitable ports, meant that a great deal of boat work was necessary in order to move goods from shore to ship. Richard Henry Dana participated in the California trade during the 1830s and remarked that the Hawaiians were "complete water dogs, and therefore very good in boating. It is for this reason that there are so many of them on the coast of California, they being very good hands in the surf".[302] As Paul D'Arcy explains, the construction, maintenance and use of canoes were of paramount importance for many Pacific Islanders and, their familiarity with such craft for long-distance voyaging and in surf, made them expert boatmen.[303]

Pacific Islanders' seamanship and boating skills led them to join whaling voyages, the most important maritime activity for Pacific peoples during the first half of the nineteenth century and secured their place in the Pacific maritime community. Chappell argues that whaling provided an avenue for Pacific Islanders to hone their maritime skills and make themselves valuable to foreign and, later, local employers aboard ship. Again, Islanders' boating skills made them desirable to whaling captains, as crews had to row out to their mobile quarry in order to get close enough to use their steel harpoons. Hawaii's central location in the Pacific and its sailor's experiences aboard foreign vessels, led many whaling ships to

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301   Dodge, *Islands and Empires*, 57-60; Dodge, *New England and the South Seas*, 57-59.

302   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 84-85.

303   D'Arcy, *the People of the Sea*, 79-86.

stop in the islands to hire Hawaiian boatmen. The Maoris, a Polynesian group from New Zealand, also proved skilled whalers and by the 1830s, American and European whalers regularly hired them. Although exact numbers are unknown, it appears, through anecdotal evidence, that Hawaiians and Maoris represented, respectively, the first and second most numerous island crewmen aboard whaling ships. Hawaiians and Maoris gained so much experience aboard foreign whaling ships that, by mid-century, native owned whaling ships began to ply the Pacific, hunting whales and conducting inter-island trading cruises.[304]

While sailors came from every inhabited island in the Pacific, Hawaiians, Maoris and other Polynesians tended to dominate Islander populations aboard whaling and trading vessels. Melanesians, while certainly participating in the maritime community, did so in much smaller numbers and "lagged behind" Polynesians due to rampant malaria on their islands, inter-island warfare, linguistic diversity and employer prejudice against Melanesian populations who tended to be darker-skinned than Polynesians and Micronesians.[305] Most foreign employers preferred to hire Polynesian and Micronesian peoples, generally considering them to be "civilized, rational business people" and "excellent sailors, too, after a short course of training".[306]

While whaling remained important to the Hawaiian economy throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s, the California Gold Rush made merchant shipping increasingly valuable to Hawaiians as the century progressed, eventually overshadowing the whaling industry. According to the Honolulu Harbour Commissioner's records, in 1848, 72 American merchant vessels entered the harbour, 31 coming from San Francisco and five from other California ports. These numbers increased dramatically over the next few years. In 1850, 187

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304 Honolulu Harbor Commissioner's Records, Registration of Entries and Clearances, vols. 1, 2, 3 and 6, 1842-1880. Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 15-16.

305 Spriggs, *The Island Melanesians*, 223-254; *Chappell, Double Ghosts*, 17.

306 Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 15-16. Benjamin Morrell was born in 1795 and died in 1839. Morrell was a whaling and trading captain who sailed the Pacific during the early 1800s. In 1832, Morrell published *A Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Sea, North and South Pacific Ocean, Chinese Sea, Ethiopia and Southern Atlantic Ocean, Indian and Antarctic Ocean.*

American vessels entered Honolulu, 137 arriving from San Francisco and just two from other ports in California; the rest arrived from ports along the eastern United States' coast. In 1860, the number dropped drastically, possibly due to the impending civil war in the United States and only 71 American vessels made port in Honolulu, 29 of which came from San Francisco. In 1870, merchant shipping had increased again to 108 American vessels, and in 1880, 148 anchored in Honolulu.[307] This number does not include the merchant vessels that sailed to other Hawaiian ports, such as Lahaina, which remained a centre for whaling ships and also experienced an increase in American merchant shipping after the Gold Rush, nor does it include the ships from European and South American nations that anchored in Hawaii.[308]

Increased merchant shipping to Hawaii, combined with maritime labour shortages in the Pacific, meant more Hawaiian men shipped out aboard merchant vessels. As we have seen, sailors in San Francisco demanded increased wages for short trips to Hawaii, where captains had to find a new crew if they wished to sail to other ports in China, Australia or various island destinations. Once again, Hawaiian officials left a comprehensive record of how many native seamen shipped out during the years after the California Gold Rush. Because so many Hawaiian men went to sea, and because so many Hawaiians died from diseases introduced by missionaries, foreign settlers and sailors, the royal government worried about a rapid loss of its population. Native Hawaiian populations had declined radically from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century. Conservative estimates place the Hawaiian

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307 Honolulu Harbor Commissioner's Records, Registration of Entries and Clearances, vols. 1, 2, 3 and 6, 1842-1880; During the late nineteenth century, trade between the United States and Hawaii increased dramatically. In 1873, U.S. trade in Hawaii totaled $529982. By 1878, U.S. trade had increased to $2112011. *The Friend*, 1 April 1879; *Weekly Bulletin*, San Francisco, 25 March 1875.

308 In 1850, 237 whalers and 469 traders from all nations anchored in Hawaiian ports. In 1851, 220 whalers and 446 traders from all nations anchored in Hawaiian ports. As the initial gold rush frenzy died down, the number of whaling ships increased through the rest of the decade and merchant shipping decreased, but American trading vessels arriving in Hawaii leveled off at about 100 a year, constituting the majority of trading vessels anchoring in Hawaii. Theodore Morgan, *Hawaii: A Century of Economic Change, 1776-1876* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1948), 226; Beechert, *Honolulu*, 57.

population in 1778 at 300000. By 1831, the population was just over 130000 and, by 1850, the population numbered approximately 80000 native Hawaiians. The most devastating single year came in 1804, when the islands suffered an outbreak of either cholera or bubonic plague, which cut the populations from approximately 280000 to 140000. Between 1826 and 1853, measles, whooping cough, influenza and smallpox also took their toll on the native Hawaiian population.[309]

To help counter population loss, in 1841, the Hawaiian government started to require captains to post bonds for the safe return of their men and required potential native seamen to obtain government permission to leave the islands. Bond amounts varied, depending on labour availability and employer need. Occasionally captains paid bonds as high as $500 but, in 1858, the Hawaiian legislature enacted a law that required captains to pay the harbour master $2 bonds per recruit for voyages lasting less than a year and $4 bonds per recruit for longer voyages.[310] Ship masters' willingness to pay these bonds, especially prior to 1858, illustrates not only the great need for maritime labourers in the Pacific but, also, the value placed on Pacific Island sailors.

Although the bonds prevented most captains from taking Islanders out of the Pacific, the bonds did not seriously discourage employers from welcoming Hawaiians on board and, the number of Hawaiians shipping out, increased dramatically. The Honolulu Harbour Master's bond application records for 1849 show that only 143 Hawaiians shipped out that year on merchant vessels. Just three years later, in 1852, 1214 natives sailed on foreign vessels. No records exist from 1853 to 1858 but, in 1859, the number stood at 975 bonds paid; in 1860 employers paid 860 bonds; 650 were paid in 1861; 339 in 1862; 693 in 1863; and 914 in 1864. The records for 1865 only include bonds paid until 20 June but, by that time, 288 had been paid. The sharp decline in the early 1860s might again be due to the United States Civil War since, by 1864, as the war wound down, the number spiked upward once more.[311] As these numbers show, merchant shipping

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309   Native Hawaiians Study Commission: Report on the Culture, Needs and Concerns of Native Hawaiians, Pursuant to Public Law 96-565, Title III. Final Report, vol. 1, 38.

310   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 39. Beechert, *Honolulu*, 52.

311   Honolulu Harbor Master, Seamen's Records, 1849-1867, vol. 1, Series: 88.

made a definite impact on the Hawaiian Islands and Hawaiian seamen entering the industry in such large numbers certainly affected the maritime community.

Other Pacific Island peoples also participated heavily in the maritime community during the late nineteenth century. On Rotuma, a Polynesian island north of Fiji that became a British colony in the 1880s, sailing aboard foreign vessels became a cultural tradition and a rite of passage for young men. According to early European visitors, Rotuma did not possess the same intense seafaring culture found on many other Polynesian islands but, after contact with Europeans, sailing became an essential element of Rotuma life. Seafaring was so crucial on Rotuma that British officials worried about the declining population caused by men going to sea. In 1881, the British took a census of the island counting a total population of 2491 people. In the 15 to 40 age bracket, women outnumbered men 638 to 440. The British commissioner, Charles Mitchell, attributed this gender imbalance to the fact that most young men had left the island on European and American ships, some never to return. Reverend William Allen, a Methodist missionary on Rotuma from 1881 to 1886, stated:

> The Rotumans are said to make splendid seamen. Before annexation, the island was regularly visited by numbers of whaling ships that came for the purpose of getting supplies of native food, and repairing and repainting the ships. The natives went on board those whalers out of curiosity at first, but afterwards great numbers shipped as sailors. By this means they have cultivated a strong liking for a seafaring life, and now every ship that touches at Rotuma finds young men desirous of visiting the world beyond their island home. Not only are the Rotuman sailors found in various parts of the Pacific, but some have reached Australia, America, and England.[312]

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312   Reverend William Allen, *Rotuma*, as read at the meeting of Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, 6th meeting, held at Brisbane, Queensland, January 1895.

In 1887, Commissioner A. R. Mackay wrote to the Colonial Secretary that, out of over 400 Rotuman men, all but 30 had gone abroad on ships at some point in their lives. Rotumans first went to sea in large numbers aboard whaling vessels, like many Pacific peoples, sailing to destinations such as Honolulu and the Bering Straits. As whaling decreased and merchant shipping increased, however, Rotuman sailors went further abroad, to destinations, such as New Zealand, Australia, China, India, around Cape Horn and as far as England. Although a small island community, Rotuma provides an excellent example of how people from all over the Pacific Islands participated in, and contributed to, the Pacific maritime community.[313]

The Pacific Islander seafarers possessed many qualities that sailors and employers coming from the Atlantic appreciated and respected. These included their natural seamanship skills, willingness to serve, ability to learn, language skills, ability to adapt to Atlantic maritime, bravery, generosity and loyalty, personal likeability, willingness to participate socially ashore and their belief in the influence of a supernatural world that influenced the sea's behaviour and sailors' destinies.

Pacific Islanders' seamanship skills presented the first quality admired and appreciated by others. Prior to contact and interaction with Europeans and Americans, Pacific Islanders made a living from the sea through trade and resource gathering, not to mention accomplishing the feat of sailing across the vast Pacific, settling every inhabitable island, long before Europeans reached their shores. The ocean played a key role in the culture and economy of virtually every island society in the Pacific and Islanders understood the ocean environment as well as, if not better than, their foreign contemporaries.

Polynesian peoples proved the most skilful and far-voyaging sailors, reaching as far as the Hawaiian archipelago and New Zealand approximately 1300 years ago, using canoes and sophisticated navigational techniques, which included compass points, latitude, longitude, and star charts.[314] The skills Pacific Islanders possessed

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313   Alan Howard, "Rotuman Seafaring in Historical Perspective," in *Seafaring in the Contemporary Pacific Islands: Studies in Continuity and Change*, ed. Richard Feinberg (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), 114-130.

314   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 1-2.

as mariners, combined with their eagerness to ship out on foreign vessels, made them perfect candidates for employment aboard European and American vessels sailing in the Pacific.[315]

The availability, willingness to serve and seamanship skills of Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian men made them a desirable source of labour for ship masters. Reporting on the recruiting of a dozen Hawaiians to serve aboard the Pacific Fur Company's ship *Tonquin*, a company clerk wrote, in 1811, "these men, who make good sailors, seemed very eager to serve us, and we could have taken on a much greater number".[316] Kerry Howe asserts that the Pacific Islanders tended to

> come willingly, and have proper engagements for
> wages, the same as would be entered into with persons
> whom we might ship [in Sydney]…I have never found
> any unwillingness on their part to embark, except on
> the subject of the rate of pay they are to receive.[317]

Pacific Islanders proved themselves willing and capable sailors and shrewd negotiators when it came to securing a decent wage. Americans and European observers explained Pacific Islanders' desire to serve on merchant vessels as a "love of wandering" and "the great disposition on the part of these men to travel".[318] One observer defined Islanders' desire to travel as racially and culturally motivated when he wrote that Islanders joined ships' crews due to "the passion… to see other countries, to become like *whitemen*".[319]

Richard Henry Dana remarked that the Hawaiians "are also ready and active in the rigging, and good hands in warm weather", attesting to their value to ships

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315   K. R. Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers: A Survey of Early Labour Recruiting in Southern Melanesia," *The Journal of Pacific History* 13(1) (1978): 22-35.

316   George I. Quimby, "Hawaiians in the Fur Trade of North-west America, 1785-1820, " *The Journal of Pacific History* 7 (1972): 95.

317   Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 24-25.

318   Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 25, 28.

319   Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 28.

needing to fill out their crew complements.[320] Early on, island recruiting usually took place between ship officers and local leaders who gave permission to, and occasionally ordered, commoners to ship out. Most went to sea aboard foreign ships willingly but, on occasion, desperate captains kidnapped young island men and pressed them into service as often happened to American and European sailors in port towns where maritime labour was scarce.[321]

Pacific Islanders' value to employers during the nineteenth century is impossible to overstate. By the time gold was discovered in California, and American merchant ships began to pour into the Pacific in increasing numbers, thousands of Islanders had served aboard foreign vessels. They were a regular feature in every Pacific port and even in a few Atlantic ports. In 1850, Charles Goodall noted that aboard the *Bark*, "The only Americans regularly belonging to her is the Capt. and mate the crew natives of the Sandwich Islands".[322] While the Pacific whaling industry would begin to decline during the 1850s, Islander participation in the maritime community increased during the second half of the nineteenth century as more and more American merchant vessels entered the Pacific and sought their labour. According to historian Ralph S. Kuykendall, after 1860, "the principal reservoir from which [seamen] were obtained was the youth of Hawaii".[323] In 1858, the brig *Victoria* left Honolulu harbour on a "whaling and trading voyage to the Arctic Ocean" with "15 seamen native to the Sandwich Islands", out of a total complement of 28 aboard, including the officers, boatmen, and craftsmen.[324] Such high percentages of Islanders amongst a ship's crew were not unusual and, aboard some vessels, they made up as much as 75 percent of the complement.[325]

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320   Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands*; Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 84-85.

321   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 37-39; Thomas, *Islanders*, 189-199.

322   Charles Goodall journal and commonplace book, 1847-1852, BANC MSS C-F 116.

323   Beechert, *Honolulu*, 70; Walter MacArthur, *Seaman's Contract, 1790-1918* (San Francisco: James H. Barry Co., 1919), 24; Diamond, "Queequeg's Crewmates", 126-131; Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 2 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1967), 138.

324   Victoria (Brig) Journal, 1858 April 20-October 5, BANC: Log 549, Manuscripts Collection, G. W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc.

325   Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 24-25.

Pacific Islanders' value to employers during the nineteenth century is obvious, as shown by the large numbers of Islanders who shipped out aboard American vessels, the willingness of captains to pay high bonds for their safe return to home islands and the regular praise officers lavished upon Islander sailing skills. The impact Islanders had on sailors from the Atlantic maritime tradition, however, must also be considered when looking at Islander influence on the maritime community as a whole. As newcomers to the maritime community developed in the Atlantic, the many Islanders potentially posed a threat to the labour structures and culture aboard American and European vessels. By working aboard foreign vessels, Islanders threatened to destabilise wages, work routines, labour unity, and seamen's labour-based identity by bringing Pacific Island cultural values and expectations onboard. Remarkably, as Chappell has successfully argued, Pacific Islanders did not destabilise the maritime community in any meaningful way; instead, they blended well with traditional Atlantic seafaring culture, often reinforcing maritime values and traditions while adding some of their own cultural elements.

Just as employers appreciated the seamanship skills Islanders brought to the vessels they sailed, common sailors saw the advantage of having able men serving next to them. The hard work and danger of sailing made having sailors who knew the sea and understood their jobs essential, not only for owner and officer profit margins but for the comfort and safety of other seamen. Islanders, coming from societies with maritime traditions, understood the ocean environment well, ensuring their sailing ability. American and European sailors often commented on Islanders' abilities as seamen, usually with praise and respect. Richard Henry Dana made the acquaintance of a Maori sailor named Bembo while aboard the *Julia* in 1842. Although no one on board liked Bembo because he was a "dark, moody savage". Dana praised his ability as a sailor and leader of men. According to Dana, Bembo "was as competent to command as anyone. In truth, a better seaman never swore".[326] Captain Charles P. Low's writing gives us some sense of how seamen felt about Islander sailors. In 1850, Low, then master of the *Samuel Russell*, shipped seventeen Islanders in Honolulu, writing that "they had never been to sea, and

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326   Herman Melville, *Omoo: A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1921), 72.

could talk very little English, but they were born sailors, strong and active and very willing, and they learned very quickly".[327] In 1848, J. C. Mullett recalled of two young Hawaiian sailors:

> [M]y first business was to learn them the English names of the ship's rigging, masts, spars, etc., etc., which they learned very readily, and long before the close of the voyage had become able to 'climb aloft with extraordinary velocity,' and one to steer.[328]

Litton Forbes wrote in 1875 that

> the men of Rotuma make good sailors, and after a few years' service in sea-going vessels are worth the same wages as white men. Scarcely a man on the island but has been more or less of a traveler…Thus the average native of Rotuma is more than usually capable and intelligent.[329]

However, not every Pacific Island man was an excellent sailor. At times, such as during the California Gold Rush, when seamen were at a premium, the quality of Islander seamen could suffer as experienced seamen had already shipped out, leaving only those with little or no experience. But, even the inexperienced Islanders eventually gained experience and proved they were usually capable, if not excellent, seamen whose skills deserved respect and acknowledgment from foreign sailors.[330]

Pacific Islanders also quickly learned the knowledge necessary to sail aboard the relatively large foreign sailing vessels in which they shipped. Knowing the ocean's

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327   Low, *Some Recollections*, 103-104.

328   J. C. Mullett, *A Five Years Whaling Voyage, 1848-1853* (Fairfield, Washington: Galleon, 1977), 44-46.

329   Howard, "Rotuman Seafaring in Historical Perspective," 130. Litton Forbes visited Rotuma in 1872, which helped inspire him to write *Two Years in Fiji* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1875).

330   Dodge, *Island and Empires*, 59.

moods, understanding tides and currents, the ability to navigate by star position and dead reckoning and a sense of wind patterns, certainly made Islanders excellent candidates for ships' crews but all of that was virtually useless unless they could grasp the specific knowledge of ropes, sails, masts, spars, winches, pulleys, watches, bells, compass points, and the verbal commands that identified the parts of a ship and set sailors to action. Captain Charles Low noted that Islanders tended to learn their trade very quickly. Low set out immediately to train the crew he picked up in Honolulu, recalling that, "from four to eight, I would exercise them in reefing and furling the sails on the mizzen-mast, and the mate did the same on his watch". Low and his first mate continued to work the men every morning "until they could handle canvas very quickly". The training often proved difficult and Low and his mate occasionally lost their patience but, soon, the new crew performed admirably, converting Low into an admirer of Islander seamen.[331] While some seamen found inexperienced Islander crews exasperating at times, as in the case of the *Wanderer*, which left San Francisco in 1851 with an "amateurish" Islander crew, most Islanders adapted well to working aboard foreign ships.[332]

Language skills made some island peoples more valuable as seamen than others. Possessing at least some "broken" English made Islander sailors very useful aboard American vessels. Speaking English allowed Islanders to follow orders more readily and learn the terminology and skills they needed quickly. This knowledge and ability to follow orders also translated into benefits for the Islanders' fellow sailors as it made working the ship less hazardous and socialising more enjoyable. In 1835, Joseph Osborn, then serving on the whaling ship *Emerald*, praised the qualities of Rotuman sailors, noting that, "they soon learn to talk English & there is but few of them but what can talk a few words".[333] The ability to speak English, even in a limited way, made the Rotumans a valued labour pool and certainly helped them to secure berths on foreign merchant vessels after the Gold Rush.

For several reasons, English was often the primary foreign language spoken by Pacific Islanders in the second half of the nineteenth century. Anglo-American

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331   Low, *Some Recollections*, 103-104.

332   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 55.

333   Howard, "Rotuman Seafaring in Historical Perspective," 114.

shipping dominated the Pacific, especially during the second half of the century. Many Islanders' first English words included maritime terminology and the curses hurled at them by officers and fellow sailors, whose frustration over difficult communication, often led to physical and verbal abuse. One sailor complained about non-English speaking Islanders, stating:

> All the long day we laboured, expostulated and
> gesticulated…If he [an Islander] was told to find even
> the main topsail halliards, he would turn in every
> direction, with a ghastly grin on his anatomy of a face,
> thrusting his hands in this way, and that.[334]

Even Captain Charles Low, who admonished his overly harsh first mate to "have patience" with their new Islander crewmen, rapped one on the head for moving too slowly when an order was given. Low's mate quickly and gladly admonished his captain, saying: "Have patience, Captain Low, have patience!" giving Low a good dose of his "own medicine".[335] A passenger aboard the *Randolph*, Albert G. Osbun, visited Fanning Island in 1850, noting of the Islanders there that, "A few of them have been on whale ships & can speak a little English".[336] Through shouts and blows, many Islander sailors became proficient in English, or at least the English used aboard ships, which consisted mostly of nautical jargon and swearing. Richard Henry Dana remarked that his crewmate Bembo swore often and, "together with a surprising familiarity with most nautical names and phrases, comprised about all the English he knew".[337]

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334 John Webster, *The Last Cruise of "the Wanderer"* (Sydney: Cunninghame, 1863), 2-3.

335 Low, *Some Recollections*, 103-104.

336 Kemble, ed., *To California and the South Seas*, 105. "A physician, the right-hand man of a fairly large-scale operator in placer mining, and the collector of a cargo of provisions with the hope of making a "killing" on the San Francisco market, Dr. Osbun was remarkable at almost every turn…Albert Gallatin Osbun was born at Cadiz, Ohio, on December 2, 1807, the son of Samuel and Hannah (Ross) Osbun. He attended Jefferson College at Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, graduating with the Class of 1826…Arrived in San Francisco aboard the steamer *Oregon* on June 13, 1849…Sailed aboard the *Rodolph* into the Pacific at the end of April 1850".

337 Melville, *Omoo*, 72.

Missionaries provided another reason Islanders often spoke English above any other foreign language. The religious fervour in the United States and Britain during the early nineteenth century led many devout Christians to foreign shores to spread the gospel. Daily contact with English-speaking missionaries and mass conversions to Christianity on several islands, led many Pacific Islanders to learn the missionary's native language. English language skills probably led employers to recruit from islands, such as Hawaii, with a large missionary presence. Hawaii's central location in the Pacific certainly led to its men participating heavily in the maritime industries but the Hawaiians' ability to communicate effectively also played a role in hiring practices. If officers could crew their vessels with English speakers or non-English speakers, the choice was heavily in favour of English-speaking Islanders.

On islands where missionaries experienced difficulties in establishing missions, such as in the Solomon group in Melanesia, located in the south-eastern Pacific, officers rarely recruited. Several factors contributed to such hiring practices, such as lethal diseases found on these islands, perceived Islander hostility towards foreigners and racial categorisation based on skin colour but language was also an important factor. European visitors remarked that, by the mid-nineteenth century, native peoples on Sikaiana Island, located in the Solomons, could speak "broken" English but, by this time, many Pacific Islanders elsewhere were fluent in it, making them far more desirable employees. Europeans considered the Solomon peoples amongst the most hostile people in the Pacific but, in 1861, one observer wrote:

> If the inhabitants of the Solomon group were the most savage race of men we encountered throughout the cruise, these amiable Sikayanese left on us the impression of being the most moral and peacefully disposed race of aborigines that we became acquainted with.[338]

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338 William W. Donner, "From Outrigger to Jet: Four Centuries of Sikaiana Voyaging," in *Seafaring in the Contemporary Pacific Islands*, ed. Richard Feinberg, 147-153.

The Sikaianese's good reputation among foreigners led to greater contact with foreign ships and employment on whaling and trading vessels than other Solomon peoples, which accounts for their "broken" English skills.

Teaching Pacific Islanders English often backfired on missionaries, as these language skills made many Islanders prime candidates for careers in sailing. Missionaries' animosity towards, and disgust with, sailors, who they believed lived transient and debauched lives, void of Christian worship, was no secret. Missionaries often railed against the evil influence sailors had on Islanders and lamented that sailors often represented the first contact that island societies had with Christian civilisation. As the Marine Bible Society of New York's 1817 constitution stated,

> Hitherto they [seamen] have carried to the wilderness
> an evil report of the land of promise; and by the fruits
> they have exhibited, have contradicted the glad tidings,
> which our faithful Missionaries have published.[339]

To lose converts and potential converts to men who regularly fornicated with prostitutes, drank to excess, rarely, if ever, attended religious services, freely used foul language and blasphemed and could not claim to have a stable home life with wives and children, distressed many missionaries dedicated to bringing Christ and civility to "savage" peoples. For sailors and officers, however, the religious and linguistic training missionaries provided was indeed a godsend, smoothing the way for efficient and safer labour.

Language skills also made Pacific Islanders excellent translators among other island peoples in the Pacific. Translators served officers in conducting trade, obtaining information, smoothing diplomatic relations and facilitating labour recruitment. On a cruise, John Cameron witnessed the value of the half-Hawaiian steward's linguistic skills, when Gilbert Island natives informed the translator that a missing ship had wrecked and was "dead".[340] Albert Osbun also bore witness to a translator's value on Samoa, where an Islander, named Sam Henry, came on

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339   *Constitution of the Marine Bible Society of New York, Auxiliary to the American Bible Society*, 7.

340   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 201.

board and presented "a certificate of Character &c. [sic] from the Capt. of a ship, as a good interpreter, honest &c. [sic] He has been on ships & to the States & is originally from the Island of Rottomah".[341] Although two other Islanders came on board with Henry, Osbun's only mentioned Henry by name. That Osbun mentioned Henry's skills as a translator, or mentioned Henry at all, as the primary mark of his character, illustrates how valuable linguistic skill was to employers and sailors.

While hard work constituted much of the sailing life, life at sea also consisted of a great deal of social contact among the men who lived before the mast in the sailors' living quarters. Language skills also assisted Islanders in forming personal relationships with their fellow sailors and helped to expose the commonalities between traditional Atlantic seamen and the Pacific Islanders. Traditional Atlantic sailors and Pacific Islanders often shared similar cultural values. Like traditional Atlantic seamen, Islanders put great value on storytelling and oral history. Below decks and on watch, sailors' yarns provided entertainment and life and professional lessons for listeners. Seaman Cephas Pearl wrote that below decks, "the yarns go round and round and you are not counted a sailor if you can't keep your end up".[342] Pearl bragged about his own yarning abilities, stating,

> I now count myself as great an old shell as the general
> class, and when the yarn goes round of your adventures
> in marine life, why I tell of my trips to 'Frisco and
> different part of the world that I have heard of, and as
> no person knows me or the difference, why it is hoisted
> in all right.[343]

Pearl's admission that no one knew him or the difference, highlights seamen's penchant for exaggeration while yarning. If a location was very remote from a ship or its destination, the more a sailor could embellish his yarn. However, yarning was more than entertainment and exaggeration. As Pearl wrote, yarning was "the

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341 Kemble, ed., *To California and the South Seas*, 110.

342 Eric W. Sager, *Seafaring Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989), 231.

343 Ibid.

ritual of affirming ties with the brotherhood of men".[344] Islanders' oral traditions
fit well with maritime oral traditions and provided a much-appreciated addition
to the traditional repertoire. Exaggeration and inconceivability were relished
elements in yarning, at which Pacific Islanders excelled. In the mid-1800s, an
Irish beachcomber bestowed a tremendous compliment upon Islander storytelling
when he said: "Adroit lying is regarded as an accomplishment, and one who is
expert at it is sure of a comfortable subsistence and a friendly reception wherever
he goes…and nothing but what is greatly exaggerated is likely to be believed".[345]
New Zealand Company agent, Edward Wakefield, was less complimentary
about Islander yarning when he described the Maori, E Ware's, storytelling.
According to Wakefield, E Ware was "an incorrigible exaggerator, and swells each
minute circumstance into an affair of state, taking delight in drawing repeated
exclamations of amazement from the surrounding badauds, who…drink in his
metaphors and amplifications".[346] Although Wakefield sailed aboard New Zealand
Company ships and traded with the Maori, he was not a sailor and, so, did not
appreciate E Ware's storytelling style.

The Islanders adapted themselves well to Atlantic maritime traditions, securing
their position in the maritime community and often endearing themselves to
their crewmates. While some Islander values, such as storytelling, translated
almost directly into the Atlantic maritime community, Islanders also adopted
cultural elements from foreign seamen that had no true parallel in native cultures.
Clothing constituted one such foreign cultural element. As we have seen, sailors
clothing had practical advantages but sailors also used clothing as a marker of
cultural and community identity. Adopting the appearance of a mariner, was an
essential element of becoming a sailor and many Islanders did so with enthusiasm.
With little or no need for money in island communities that did not use monetary
currency before the middle of the nineteenth century, many Islanders served aboard
foreign vessels in order to obtain clothing from the ships' slop chests as payment
for their work. A Hawaiian foreign minister commented on native sailors, "all

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344   Ibid.

345   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 63.

346   Edward Jerningham Wakefield, *Adventures in New Zealand, from 1839 to 1844* (New York: Da Capo, 1971), 75.

these traveled Islanders are readily distinguishable amongst the population by their superior cleanliness, dress and assimilation to foreigners in their manners and habits".[347] On Rotuma, Reverend William Allen noted, "When any of the men return from sea, they always wear home a European suit, including hat, collar, necktie, boots, and stockings."[348]

These statements illustrate Islanders' willingness, if not eagerness, to join the maritime community and become associated with maritime labour, even at the expense of alienating themselves from their shoreside communities by becoming too much like foreign seamen. Non-Islander seamen took note of this willingness among their Pacific Island comrades, appreciated it and often adopted Islanders as full-fledged members of the maritime labour community. By donning pea jackets, duck trousers and the other fashionable trappings of seafaring life, Islanders presented themselves as true seamen, willing to participate in cultural exchange.

Islanders also participated in other sailor pastimes such as fishing, playing checkers, and creating art. Scrimshawing was a popular maritime activity, especially on whale teeth and bones and Pacific Islanders scrimshawed as well, bringing their own cultural stylisations to the art.[349] One art form in particular, however, endeared Islanders to other seamen and that was tattooing. For centuries, Atlantic sailors had tattooed their bodies as a mark of their profession, creating souvenirs of their distant voyages. But, Pacific Islanders had made tattooing into a high art form. Sailors' tattooing practices seem to have been erratic until the late eighteenth century voyages of Cook when sailors and officers both often participated in tattooing in the Pacific. This set off a trend among sailors to get tattoos, especially on Pacific voyages. According to Nicholas Thomas, "In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a considerable number of European seamen…were tattooed by Tahitian, Marquesan, Maori, Samoan and other Pacific tattooists".

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347   Chappell, *Double Ghosts,* 163.

348   Allen, *Rotuma*, as read at the meeting of Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science.

349   Lee Wallace, *Sexual Encounters: Pacific Text, Modern Sexualities* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 68-75.

[350] In the late 1880s, Arnold Safroni-Middleton knew a sailor from San Francisco who "got in with a Samoan tatau [tattooer] had the history of Samoa tattooed on his back and legs, chief, women, birds and flowers etc.; he tried to persuade me to get tattooed but I declined". Safroni-Middleton went on to explain that, "Tattooing is a great art in the South Seas and the natives go through a deal of pain during the operations. Some of the flesh engravings are exceedingly well done". Even Samoan women participated: "The women try to outrival each other in the beauty of the tattooing which is mostly done on the lower part of the back and the thighs and hips, wonderful schemes of tattoo art".[351] Virtually every Pacific Island society practiced tattooing, the New Zealand Maoris providing some of the most extreme examples. Most island peoples tattooed their backs, chests, arms and legs but the Maoris tattooed their entire bodies in intricate geometric forms, including tattoos that all but covered their faces. Non-Islander sailors quickly adopted Pacific Island tattooing forms, however, few non-Maoris went so far as to consider their faces canvases ready for the artist's brush or, in this case, ink-dabbed shark's bone. Even other Pacific Islander, such as the Tahitians, Samoans, Tongans, Rotumans and Tikopians, considered the Maoris and their tattooing practices extreme.[352]

Labourers from the Atlantic tradition, who adopted Pacific tattooing forms publicly, demonstrated their acceptance of Islander seamen. By literally absorbing this cultural element of Pacific Island societies into their bodies, however superficially, sailors declared that Pacific Islanders had a place in maritime culture. Tattoos not only made Pacific Islanders more acceptable to their fellow seamen, it also marked a greater Pacific maritime community as multiple cultural elements from the Atlantic and Pacific merged. Pacific seamen, or at least sailors who had

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350   Thomas, et al., eds.,*Tattoo: Bodies, Art, and Exchange in the Pacific and the West*, 7.

351   A. Safroni-Middleton, *Sailor and Beachcomber: Confessions of a Life at Sea, in Australia and Amid the Islands of the Pacific* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 63-64. A. Safroni-Middleton was born in Kent County, England in 1873. Safroni was a novelist, composer, and dramatist. He went to sea at the age of fifteenand later became a violinist in the Orchestra in Her Majesty's Theatre in Sydney and the Carl Rosa Opera orchestra in London. He was best known for his military compositions. Safroni-Middleton dedicated *Sailor and Beachcomber* to his brother Mortimer Hugh Middleton who was "Lost overboard in mid-ocean while serving before the mast of a sailing ship out-bound for Australia."

352   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 94; Fischer, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 76-78.

made one or more voyages to the Pacific, were distinguished from others and united amongst themselves by the style of the tattoos that marked their bodies. Even in other oceans and ports outside the Pacific, surrounded by other heavily tattooed sailing men, sailors who had plied Pacific waters stood out as, if not, exactly a separate group, a well-travelled and worldly breed.[353]

But, tattooing represented more than a general acceptance of Pacific Islanders and their customs into the maritime labour community. It also represented a general acceptance of sailors into Islander communities. As Joanna White argues, Islanders tattooing foreign seamen represented several different personal and community cross-cultural relationships that illustrate the complexity of tattooing in the Pacific and among Islanders and non-Islander sailors, alike. For Islanders, tattoos expressed a wide range of familial, political, cultural and spiritual connections that varied from island to island. According to White, non-Islander sailors, "found in tattooing a unique means of reaffirming both their individual identities and their personal relationships".[354] Pacific maritime tattooing also shows the creation of new cultural forms unique to the Pacific. As White points out, non-Islander sailors did not simply adopt undiluted Islander tattoo styles. Instead, sailors and Islanders together created a hybrid form, evident by the 1830s and, "The tattooing of names, initials and dates and designs such as man, woman, and child – a striking symbol of domesticity for those away from home for prolonged periods – were all common".[355]

Many Pacific Islanders also displayed incredible bravery, a quality that seamen admired and counted on in a workplace fraught with dangers. As we have seen, Pacific Islanders had reputations among Europeans and Americans as fierce warriors and, while this frightened sailors, they understood and respected this martial bravery.[356] Some islanders had greater reputations as fighting men than others. The Maoris, for instance, were perceived as possessing a great deal of

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353 Beck, *Folklore and the Sea*, 181-202. Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 70-94.

354 Joanna White, "Marks of transgression: the tattooing of Europeans in the Pacific Islands," in *Tattoo,* ed. Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole, and Bronwen Douglas, 72-78.

355 Ibid.

356 Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 94.

martial valour, even among other Pacific Islanders, who often viewed Maoris with suspicion and fear. Seamen knew that Islanders, who made a living by going to sea on foreign ships by the middle of the nineteenth century, had once been warriors and possessed fighting skills that could not be ignored. By 1850, one observer reported that, the Isle of Pine inhabitants "only a few years since considered the most savage and treacherous of any…[were] rapidly acquiring even the English language, and seeking employment as seamen".[357] Non-Islander sailors also respected Pacific Islander's physical prowess and appearance. Herman Melville for, example, described his Maori shipmate Bembo as

> all compact, and under his swart, tattooed skin, the
> muscles worked like steel rods. Hair, crisp, and coal-
> black, curled over shaggy brows, and ambushed small,
> intense eyes, always on the glare. In short, he was none
> of your effeminate barbarians.[358]

Aware that Pacific Islanders were no more than a generation or two removed from a warrior tradition, sailors knew that Islanders represented a shipboard population deserving respect.

Islanders also displayed their bravery in their relationships with sharks. Traditional sailors feared sharks, referring to them as "living graves",[359] and greatly enjoyed killing and torturing them, "for seamen hate sharks as landsmen hate snakes, and seldom lose an opportunity of dispatching one".[360] They hated sharks so much that sailors referred to crimps, charlatans and boarding house owners as "land sharks", leaving one to wonder who was more insulted, the crimps or the sharks?[361] Many mariners' accounts of the nineteenth century Pacific refer to sharks and sailors' attitudes towards them. Although many shark species are harmless, or of

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357 Henry Burns, a British merchant on Uvea during the mid-nineteenth century, made this statement which may be found in Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 23.

358 Melville, *Omoo*, 72.

359 Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 62.

360 Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 31.

361 Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 65-67; Nelson, *Workers on the Waterfront*, 15-16, and Captain Ringbolt, *Sailors' Life and Sailors' Yarns*, 57-59.

little danger to human beings, sailors did not make this distinction and all sharks were fair game. Sailors feared other sea creatures, but none as much as the shark. H. E. Raabe wrote that, "the tiger shark is gentle compared to the octopus. If you have ever beheld the starring diabolical eyes of an octopus when making a dive, and you could dive again, then you were of the right stuff to be a success in the South Seas during the pioneer days".[362] Charles Nordhoff wrote of the danger presented by venomous sea snakes, stating:

> These salt water snakes are not often met with in the latitude where we saw this specimen, but they abound on the lonely coasts of New Holland, and not infrequently prove troublesome to the whalemen who frequent the bays of that and adjacent islands.[363]

In January 1859, Lieutenant John M. Brooke, while on a surveying mission in the Pacific, recorded three separate instances when he and his crew encountered sharks off the Hawaiian Islands. On 5 January, Brooke and his crew enticed approximately 20 sharks to his schooner, sending them into a feeding frenzy. The sight "afforded an idea of what would occur if a man were to fall overboard", and Brooke took out his fear and hate on the predatory fish, "harpooning nine in all. I struck them as fast as the iron could be straightened". The next day, two more sharks arrived, and Brooke attracted one and "put a bowline over him which finally chafed off on the tafferel but not until the seamen had given him several severe wounds. He took one knife with him and nearly broke my leg". Early on the morning of 16 January, more sharks arrived, and Brook

> caught two with hook & line and harpooned a third very large one. Got them all. I enticed the large one who came to the decoy, a piece of sharks liver. The iron struck him as he opened his mouth.[364]

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362   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 32 and Charles Nordhoff, *In Yankee Windjammers* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1940), 139.

363   Ibid.

364   Brooke, *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure*, 42-47.

John Cameron recounted a run-in with sharks he had, illustrating that the hatred of sharks went beyond killing them and included cruelty and extreme malice. Cameron wrote:

> After the sharks were hooked and dragged aboard, their heads had to be battered to pieces with handspikes, a long task, seeing that they endured a world of punishment before they succumbed. Cutting off their tails was quicker, but a dirty job, as streams of blood sprayed the deck over a radius of fifteen feet.[365]

Cameron and his crew deliberately tortured the animal out of revenge for the sailors eaten by sharks. Fear of being eaten motivated sailors' hatred and led them to destructive and abusive actions towards the deadly sea creatures.

While on shore leave, many sailors enjoyed playing the tourist and took advantage of local sights and recreational activities. Some seamen enjoyed swimming, but, when sharks were about, they avoided the Pacific's scenic beaches. In 1856, Harpur Allen Gosnell, a seaman aboard a clipper ship, "got a carriage (another boy & myself) & went to the water fall about 4 ½ miles from the town & had a good swim in fresh water we cannot go in the bay the sharks are so thick". Like most sailors, Gosnell refused to even consider swimming at a beach that had sharks and chose to take a dip in salt-and-shark-free waters.[366] Sailors perceived sharks as enemies who deliberately sought out seamen as a food source; sharks were to be avoided at all costs and killed when the opportunity presented itself.

Pacific Islanders tended to have a different attitude toward sharks and this attitude impressed sailors who had the opportunity to observe it. Whereas men like Gosnell refused to swim with sharks, Charles Nordhoff observed Islanders in Honolulu playing in the coral reef harbour, "showing their dexterity in meeting and overcoming the heavy rollers of the surf, and bidding defiance to sharks, and sharp rock".[367] He went on:

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365   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 31.

366   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 61.

367   Nordhoff, *In Yankee Windjammers*, 139.

> Unfortunate the shark, who, tempted by the smell of
> some savory morsel within the fatal harbour, pokes his
> nose over the reef. He is set upon, as a great prize, by
> the native amphibii, and despite the most strenuous
> struggles, is generally overcome, dragged out on shore,
> and roasted.[368]

Not only did the Hawaiians swim in shark infested waters but they took on the aquatic beasts in their own element. Sailors attacked and killed sharks from the safety of a ship's deck but Pacific Islanders attacked them in the water, displaying both a knowledge of the animals, as well as a great deal of bravery.

Generosity and loyalty were two more characteristics often displayed by Islanders that endeared them to sailors from the Atlantic tradition. Sailors relied heavily on one another in port and aboard ship and sailors assisted one another by giving money and possessions to their mates, even if they were strangers. Sailors were well-known, even among the shoreside population, for their selflessness and affection for one another. Pacific Islanders fit beautifully into this mould and were famous for their generous natures, even among seamen. The best account of how sailors perceived the generosity and loyalty of their Islander shipmates comes from Richard Henry Dana during his experiences in the 1830s. Dana wrote of the Hawaiians he met, "Whatever one had they all have. Money, food, clothes, they share with one another, even to the last piece of tobacco to put in their pipes".[369] Naval officer Charles Wilkes considered Islanders'generosity towards fellow sailors as, "one of the most pleasing of their social customs, and shows an absence of all selfishness".[370] In such cases, Pacific Islanders could even outshine men known for their generosity and camaraderie, raising the bar for loyalty and selflessness among maritime labourers. Throughout the nineteenth century, loyalty and generosity

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368   Ibid.

369   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 147-152.

370   Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition, 1838-1842* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1970), 27.

towards each other and their crewmates, remained an essential element of Islander character and solidified their position among maritime labourers.[371]

Islander and non-Islander seamen also regularly socialised together on land, participating in sailor pastimes like drinking, smoking and whoring. While John Cameron was the master of the *Ninito* he had a crew made up primarily of Hawaiians, for whom he had to pay a $300 bond per man. When he arrived in Tahiti,

> [he] was in danger, therefore, of losing a tidy sum if
> they deserted, as I feared they might, by reason of
> their racial kinship with the Tahitians, the similarity of
> conditions in the Hawaiian and Society archipelagos,
> the affinity of languages, and above all the women.[372]

In Bay of Islands, Pacific Islander seamen often fought with local men over the attentions of women. Pacific Islanders possessed a variety of intoxicants, such as *kava*, ti root and betel, before Europeans and Americans arrived but incorporated the use of alcohol and tobacco after contact.[373] Just as Islander sailors adopted the dress, professional jargon and penchant for swearing found among foreign sailors, they also adopted the tendency to get heavily intoxicated in port. From 1859 to 1861, at least 26 Islander seamen were thrown in jail in Honolulu.[374] In 1877, a labour recruiter aboard the *Bobtail Nag* in Sydney witnessed "a mixed crew of white men and Islanders sprawling about the deck in various stages of inebriation, and in positions and attitudes which may be described as the sentimental, the pegged out, pugilistic".[375] This drunken scene illustrates that Islanders participated in the drinking customs of sailors and that foreign sailors adopted them into the

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371   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 165.

372   Mac Marshall, "An Overview of Drugs in Oceania," in *Drugs in Western Pacific Societies: Relations of Substance*, ed. Lamont Lindstrom (New York: University Press of America, 1987), 13-47.

373   Ibid.

374   Honolulu Harbormaster Seamen's Records, 1859-1861, 7(88). Most of those put in jail paid fines commensurate with public drunkenness.

375   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 47; Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 211-212.

fold as full and equal participants in their debauchery. A whaling captain saw his crew, including the Islanders,

> emerge from a grog-shop plentifully supplied
> with bottles, and seating themselves on the beach,
> commence their carouse. The native envinced the
> greatest eagerness to get drunk, swallowing down the
> horrible 'square gin' as if it were water. They passed
> with the utmost rapidity through all the stages of
> drunkenness. Before they had been ashore an hour,
> most of them were lying like logs, in the full blaze of
> the sun on the beach. [376]

Another reason non-Islanders welcomed Pacific Islanders into the maritime labour community was that traditional sailors tended to like them. The nautical skills and knowledge Islanders possessed, the manly qualities they displayed, the cultural similarities to the traditional Atlantic maritime culture that they practiced and their adaptability to work patterns and traditions aboard foreign vessels, all made Islanders likeable in seamen's eyes. Racism did exist to some degree aboard ships in the Pacific but the seamanship skills of the Islanders usually muted any racist tendencies. There was, however, a more human and personal element to the affection foreign sailors held for Pacific Islanders. Dana, best illustrates sailor affection for Islander comrades. While working ashore in San Diego, processing the hides he and his crew had picked up along the California coast, Dana befriended several Hawaiian sailors who were also ashore. One Hawaiian in particular, a young man named Hope, became Dana's *aikane*, a friend "with whom he has a sort of contract – an alliance offensive and defensive –and for whom he will often make the greatest sacrifices". Dana took his *aikane* relationship very seriously, and when Hope became very ill, Dana taught him "letters and numbers; for he left home before he had learned how to read" and stayed with him and nursed him until Dana was forced to leave when his ship set sail for Boston. Dana stated that leaving his friends, especially Hope, "was the only thing connected with leaving California which was in any way unpleasant". For years afterwards, Dana often

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376   Ibid.

wondered what had become of Hope and lamented that he had had to leave his friend ailing in the small California port.[377]

Throughout the nineteenth century, sailors continued to befriend Islanders. At Kusaie, in the Eastern Carolines, John Cameron was greeted by a former sailor of his named Charley. Cameron was genuinely pleased to see Charley, saying: "Good Lord, Charley! What are you doing on Kusaie?" Charley replied, "I am King of Kusaie". Cameron was more than shocked and said: "I'll have to address you as 'Your Majesty' hereafter". Upset, Charley said, "Stop that, Captain: I'll always be 'Charley' to you". "Then you must drop the 'Captain' with me," replied Cameron.[378] Unlike most ships' officers, Cameron often moved from cabin to forecastle, working one cruise as a seaman and another as an officer, so he did not have the same class biases of other men who commanded vessels. Considering Charley a friend, Cameron was pleased with the Islanders new found success and prosperity and was willing to treat Charley as his superior. The two men, however, did not want to tarnish their friendship with unnecessary titles and formalities, preferring to be on a more relaxed and friendly first-name basis.[379]

Islanders' penchant for singing and dancing also won them favour from fellow sailors. Richard Henry Dana fondly recalled an occasion along the California coast in the 1830s, when his Islander friends sang him to his ship as he left San Diego:

> Old 'Mr. Bingham' and 'King Mannini' went down
> to the boat with me, shook me heartily by the hand,
> chanting one of their deep, monotonous, improvised
> songs, the burden of which I gathered to be about us
> and our voyage.[380]

Albert Osbun also admired Islander singing, writing of the Samoans, "Their tunes are new to me but good [and] simple; they sing well [and] very loud, making the Cocoa groves ring with their music". Osbun also wrote, "They are a people very

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377   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 147-152, 204, 284.

378   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 338.

379   Ibid.

380   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 284.

fond of fun [and] Jokes, of singing [and] of dancing, [and] they have given us specimens of their performances of every kind in great perfection [and] much to our gratification".[381] While on Samoa, Arnold Safroni-Middleton, a young sailor from England, stated that he had "never heard music that so truly expressed human emotions".[382] Safroni-Middleton's compliment is especially poignant because he went on to become a concert violinist and composer in Australia and England. Pacific Islanders often sang songs with maritime themes to which other seamen could easily relate. One Tikopia song deals with rough and deadly seas:

> The lightning flash has come at last, Has come to
> calm the raging sea, And I may drink and so not die /
> Though standing high the stormy sky, By thunder now
> will be brought low, For pounding rain will bring it
> low.[383]

This Tikopia song clearly illustrates the intimate knowledge and relationship that Pacific Island sailors had with the sea in relation to their own cultures and experiences. Sailors loved singing chanteys, which helped pass the time, set work to rhythm and helped bond the maritime labour community with a common knowledge of familiar tunes and, although most sailors could not understand the words sung by Islanders, they appreciated the island tunes and their often nautical themes.[384]

Foreign sailors also developed friendships and personal relationships with Islander men through Islander women. Foreign sailors often saw Pacific Island women as nothing more than potential sexual conquests but many felt true affection towards Island women, which occasionally led to marriage and children. In this

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381   Kemble, ed., *To California and the South Seas*, 113-119.

382   Safroni-Middleton, *Sailor and Beachcomber*, 107.

383   Raymond Firth and Rosemary Firth, "Tikopia Songs of the Sea," in *Man and a Half: Essays in Pacific Anthropology and Ethnobiology in Honour of Ralph Bulmer*, ed. Andrew Pawley (Auckland: The Polynesian Society, 1991), 407.

384   Frederick Pease Harlow, "Chanteying Aboard American Ships," *The American Neptune* 8(2) (1948): 81-89. Sea chanteys were songs that set the pace of work, allowing seamen to work in unison effectively.

way, foreign seamen became related to Islander men who went to sea. In 1850, Albert Osbun visited Wallis Island and relates:

> There are among them [three] white men [and one] negro, all married & have children. One from the States, one from Ireland & one from Scotland; all have been sailors. Some of them have quite interesting children.[385]

In the late 1880s, Safroni-Middleton visited Fiji and "came across a white man who had married a woman…he was sitting by his dusky beauty on the slopes that rolled seaward, quite as proud as any English father of his two tiny half-caste brats".[386] Not all marriages between sailors and Pacific Islander women were as happy as the one Safroni-Middleton witnessed on Fiji. While on Samoa, Safroni-Middleton befriended an old sailor who

> would sit drinking and smoking and yarning away for hours, telling us his experiences; he knew all the Islands, had been married over and over again, and as he was growing old and infirm from drink and temper (for he had a terribly fiery head) he would sit and curse the memory of his numerous family, not one of whom would help him. He had grown up sons and daughters on most of the Isles of the South Seas round about; some of the children were as blackish as their mothers, and some half white and half brown.[387]

Safroni-Middleton quickly grew tired of the old sailor and his stories, "for he told the same yarn night after night, and as I slept in the same room with him my life became a burden to me".[388] The old sailor's irritating behaviour may account

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385 Kemble, ed., *To California and the South Seas*, 132.

386 Safroni-Middleton, *Sailor and Beachcomber*, 107.

387 Ibid., 63-64.

388 Ibid.

for his marital island hopping and his children's refusal to help the ailing old salt but the obnoxious old man's story does illustrate how sailors often insinuated themselves in island societies, creating relationships with both Island men and women.[389]

Another important trait foreign sailors and Islanders shared, was their belief in a supernatural world that influenced the sea's behaviour and sailors' destinies. Steeped in maritime popular religion, many seamen believed that supernatural beings and spirits inhabited the seas and skies and could either lead men and ships to their doom, or deliver them safely to port. Appeasing, or at least not offending, these spirits represented an important part of maritime labour culture and sailors often went to great lengths to conduct themselves properly, lest they bring about their own destruction. For example, when John Cameron, Jorgenson and Moses left Wake Island in a boat after being shipwrecked, they killed a shark, greatly distressing Jorgenson, who firmly believed that killing a shark brought storms. Cameron flatly rejected Jorgenson's superstitious notion, but Cameron found himself uneasy as a storm quickly rolled in, threatening to sink their tiny craft.[390] Many sailors also believed that all Finnish sailors were wizards who had powers over winds and storms and wanted to bring misery and destruction to the ships they sailed.[391] Another superstition held that albatrosses were the souls of sailors drowned at sea and killing one meant certain doom for ships and crewmen.[392] Europeans clung to superstitions dependent on their nation or region of origin. According to Captain Ringbolt, sailors' popular religion often depended on where they were born and raised. Ringbolt claimed that Mediterranean sailors had several popular religious beliefs that included the belief in, and appeal to, Catholic Saints. He also maintained that Scandinavian seamen's supernatural faith "consists chiefly in a belief in demonology and witchcraft" and that British sailors tended to eschew others' beliefs, but were known to believe in "ghosts, hobgoblins, dreams,

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389 Robert E. Abrams, "*Typee* and *Omoo*: Herman Melville and the Ungraspable Phantom of Identity," in *Critical Essays on Herman Melville's Typee*, ed. Milton R. Stern, 205-206.

390 Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 302-315. Jorgenson's fears may have represented beliefs peculiar to Scandinavian sailors.

391 Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 39.

392 Beck, *Folklore and the Sea*, 291-292.

and supernatural warnings, lucky and unlucky ships and sailing days, and many more strange fancies of the sort".[393] Ringbolt also avers that American seamen had few of their own supernatural traditions but they were "continually brought into contact with the ruff-scuff of all nations, and must in a greater or less degree imbibe some of their ideas".[394] Pacific Islander religious and superstitious beliefs also attributed disaster at sea to supernatural powers, so Islanders also sought to stave off any unwanted attention from malevolent or jealous spirits. As Paul D'Arcy writes, Pacific Islander seafarers "made offerings to their sea gods before departure" and "carried ritual objects and magical chants for protection…Magic was needed to protect against hostile conjurers able to call up winds to overturn canoes".[395] Because Islanders also held beliefs in the supernatural, it is probably safe to assume non-Islanders sought their guidance when trying to appease the supernatural powers in the Pacific since Pacific Islanders possessed a greater knowledge of these beings and what appeased them.[396]

Just as Europeans had cultural traditions and legends regarding witches, many Pacific Islanders believed in malevolent sea witches. On the Trobriand and Dobu islands, natives believed in flying witches who tried to drown unsuspecting sailors and, on Louisiade, witches were supposed to perform cannibalistic rituals, cut off sailors' lips and confuse and baffle men to the point where they became lost at sea. Many island cultures believed in place spirits like the Melanesian *silava*, who inhabited treacherous reefs and areas with heavy currents, high surf and waves and whirlpools. The *silava* could take the form of various sea creatures, such as fish or giant octopi, and obstacles, such as floating logs, and attack a ship or canoe. Sailors had to learn to appease these spirits by using magical charms and amulets that placated angry spirits, called up favourable winds and calmed rough waters. Some spirits required that sailors decorate their vessels with charms, chew ginger while uttering spells or refrain from speaking while in particular waters.

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393   Captain Ringbolt, *Sailor's Lives and Sailor's Yarns*, 152-157

394   Ibid.

395   D'Arcy, *The People of the Sea*, 85.

396   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 60-77; Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 97-103.

Punishment for not following the proper etiquette could vary from shipwreck to drowning, to boils and sores.[397]

Non-Islanders, who held their own beliefs in the supernatural, would have seen the benefit of listening to Islanders when they warned about possible danger from the supernatural in the Pacific. Popular religion was a serious matter for men whose job put them at the mercy of elements that they could not control. Possessing knowledge and a means to influence the natural environment, however irrational or seemingly futile, gave sailors a sense of control and safety in an uncontrollable and unsafe world. Performing a ritual incorrectly, or ignoring it altogether, could spell disaster for mariners. Having men aboard, who knew how to deal with the supernatural in a particular region, would have been extremely important and probably meant that other sailors welcomed Pacific Islanders as fellow crewmates, guides and protectors in strange waters.

Islanders often used non-Islander family members as go-betweens with foreign ships and as shipping agents and sources of income, as these sailors often went to sea and brought back goods and cash that would benefit the island community. In 1872, Litton Forbes met a former sailor "of the name of Bill R---" on Rotuma who had been on the island for forty years and had insinuated himself into Rotuman society to the point that

> Bill had a good deal of influence with the natives
> and generally acted as the go-between in all dealings
> between ship-captains and the islanders. He could
> procure either seamen or labourers, or provisions or
> firewood, as the case might be, better than any other
> man in Rotumah.[398]

As "Old Bill's" case illustrates, sailors not only lived and worked with Islanders but, also, actively worked to introduce them to the maritime labour community. Old Bill certainly gained personally from procuring Rotuma sailors for foreign

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397 Maria Lepowsky, "Voyaging and Cultural Identity in the Louisiade Archipelago of Papua New Guinea," in *Seafaring in the Contemporary Pacific Islands*, ed. Richard Feinberg, 49-51; Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 64.

398 Litton Forbes, *Two Years in Fiji*, 222-225.

captains but his willingness to get Island men aboard ships, suggests that he believed that Islanders would make good seamen and that they would benefit from the experience. Old Bill did recruit Rotuman men, showing that he, as a sailor, thought that they belonged aboard vessels sailing the Pacific.[399] Children of Islander and foreigner marriages also often followed their fathers' examples and went to sea when they reached an appropriate age, thus expanding the relationships between Islanders and sailors.[400]

Pacific Islander men who went to sea, however, did so for their own reasons and with their own hopes and expectations. Many white and black sailors risked punishment by deserting their ships to make a go at the "easy life" they witnessed on the Pacific Islands and could not fathom why the Islanders wanted to leave their island paradises to serve aboard the cramped and unhealthy ships, where discipline and hard work were the rule. As Dr. Louis Thiercelin, who served as ship's doctor aboard a French whaling ship in the 1830s, wrote regarding sailor desertions in Tahiti, "what goads were needed to force the latter [white men] to try to exchange the sailors' harsh lot for the sweet life, characterised by its idleness and licentiousness, which was offering on land".[401] Few Pacific Islanders left records stating why they went to sea but many foreign observers commented on why they thought Islanders worked aboard foreign vessels. Working at sea satisfied the Islanders' love of wandering. It was also seen as a means of acquiring wealth and of protecting traditional masculine roles.

Some American and European observers explained Pacific Islander desire to serve on merchant vessels as a "love of wandering" and "the great disposition on the part of these men to travel".[402] In the 1830s, Joseph Osborn commented on the perceived love of Islanders to travel, stating that, "They love to visit foreign

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399   Ibid.

400   I. C. Campbell, *"Gone Native in Polynesia": Captivity Narratives and Experiences from the South Pacific* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 123-124.

401   Dr. Louis Thiercelin, *Travels in Oceania: Memoirs of a Whaling Ship's Doctor, 1866*, trans. and ed. Christiane Mortelier (Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press, 1995), 216.

402   Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 25, 28.

countries & great numbers of them ship on board the English whaleships".[403] Such sentiments expressed by American and European observers, however, often had self-serving motives, as ship masters could use "love of travel" as a justification to pay Islanders, who were often seen as tourists, less than other sailors. For elite and high-ranking Polynesians and Melanesians, travelling held educational and political advantages that might serve to bolster their local status.[404] Of this motivation, Nicholas Thomas writes,

> they perhaps escaped tensions or oppressions in their
> home community, and they might gain special status
> as immigrants in other island communities…Or, if
> they returned home they had the chance of capitalizing
> in whatever ways on their experience elsewhere. More
> simply, Islanders were often outward-looking.[405]

Some elite Islanders sailed aboard foreign vessels as "tourists", since they shipped out, not for any sort of pay but, rather, to see other parts of the world, gain knowledge of foreigners and collect foreign artefacts. Other Islanders saw the increased knowledge of the "ennobled tourists" as beneficial to the larger community and, thus, a desirable quality.[406] The love of adventure and sailing motivated many Islanders to take to the sea. Melanesians, Micronesians, and Polynesians certainly travelled a great deal during the nineteenth century, visiting California, China, New South Wales and the Pacific Northwest. However, Pacific Islanders served on ships for reasons other than the "love of wandering".

Pacific Islanders primarily served on ships to gain wealth. Like white and black sailors, Pacific Islanders worked on ships to support themselves and, if possible, their families and communities. Sailing allowed Islander men to provide their communities with trade goods that brought prosperity to the islands and that later

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403 Edvard Hviding, "Maritime Travel, Present and Past, in Marovo, Western Solomon Islands," in *Seafaring in the Contemporary Pacific Islands*, ed. Richard Feinberg ed,130.

404 Quimby, "Hawaiians in the Fur Trade of North-west America," 103.

405 Thomas, *Islanders*, 191.

406 Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 159 and Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 22-35. Both refer to elite Islanders who voyaged on foreign ships as "tourists."

became economic necessities as the century progressed and contact with foreigners increased.[407] Pacific Islanders had always seen the ocean as both a source of danger and potential wealth. The Vanatinai people from the Louisiade Archipelago of Papua New Guinea, for instance, had a rich religious tradition with several oral histories that included sea voyages which led to wealth and prosperity.[408] As Reverend William Allen noted:

> Instead of parents trying to keep their sons at home,
> as with us, they do their utmost to induce them to
> go abroad to see the white man's land, and learn his
> language. There is scarcely a young man on the island
> that is physically strong, who has not spent some
> months away from his island home.[409]

Rotumans, for example, saw the benefits of dealing with foreigners and encouraged their own sons to work with and learn from them in order to benefit themselves and their community. The maritime tradition that developed on Rotuma as a result of sailing on foreign vessels led the island to secure a great many foreign goods for an isolated Pacific Island.[410] In 1849, Tom Kanaka from Rotuma shipped out on a cruise in exchange for ten pounds of tobacco a month.[411] The material wages that the Marquesan requested may not have benefited his entire Marquesan community but they would have increased his status at home and inspired other young men to go to sea in order to secure their own wealth in goods. One Melanesian man from the Banks Islands explained his motivations to missionary David Hilliard as follows:

> Now these were my thoughts when I first went with
> the Bishop. That I would go to where everything

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407   Donner, "From Outrigger to Jet," 152.

408   Lepowsky, "Voyaging and Cultural Identity in the Louisiade Archipelago of Papua New Guinea," 49.

409   Allen, *Rotuma*, as read at the meeting of Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, 6th meeting, held at Brisbane, Queensland, January 1895.

410   Howard, "Rotuman Seafaring in Historical Perspective," 114.

411   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 57-58.

began, and that I would collect for myself axes and
knives, and hooks, and clothes, and other things a great
many, for I thought that they were just lying about and
that I could collect any number for myself. I did not go
for any other reason. I saw all these things in the ship,
and I thought I could bring a great quantity back with
me. Also I wished to see the country of the white men,
where it was, and what it was like.[412]

By travelling abroad and securing trade goods and tools for himself, his position
and reputation in the community would have increased. Unfortunately for this
sailor, his expectations regarding the availability of goods did not match well with
reality and he returned home with only the voyage to his credit and the wisdom
that comes from experience and disappointment. Despite this Melanesian's
disappointing first experience at sea, Islanders could usually achieve their goals of
securing desirable trade goods and, later, as the Pacific Islands became increasingly
incorporated into the world market system, cash payments.[413]

As long as Islanders accepted goods instead of wages, employers could hire them
less expensively than other sailors but, as Island economies became currency based
under colonial rule and cash became the standard for paying Pacific Islanders,
Islanders tended to receive the same wages as non-Islanders, especially when they
came from islands like Hawaii, where the local government required that they
receive competitive wages. From 1865 to 1885, seamen's wages worldwide did not
increase, remaining between $18 and $20 a month, occasionally increasing in the
Pacific due to labour shortages. During this time, Pacific Islanders who shipped
out in Hawaii received wages comparable, if not equal, to other seamen. From
the existing Honolulu Harbour Master's records of 27 vessels, which shipped
77 Islanders, one sees that from 1865 to 1885, the average Islander received
$19.21 per month. The lowest monthly wage received by an Islander during this
time period was $12 per month in 1872. This low pay may be attributed to the
sailor's inexperience as greenhorns received wages far below more experienced

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412   Howe, "Tourists, Sailors, and Labourers," 28.

413   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 158-163.

Two Polynesian boys (probably Hawaiian) sit on the bow of their ship in Honolulu. Reproduction by permission of the Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, Hawaii.

and skilled seamen. In 1882, several Islanders received $25 per month but four non-Islander sailors received $45 per month aboard the *R. A. Wentworth* and five non-Islanders aboard the steamer, *Jason Makee,* received only $10 per month. During this twenty-year period, Islanders received the same amount in advances paid as other seamen.[414] Despite the apparent anomaly in sailors' pay in 1882, the shipping articles clearly illustrate that Pacific Islanders shipping from island ports with active governmental agencies received roughly the same wages as their counterparts.

Protecting traditional masculine roles also motivated Pacific Island men to start sailing careers. Capitalist incorporation and colonisation of the Pacific had begun to alter island economies from farming, hunting, resource gathering and trading, to single crop plantation economies dominated by foreigners. During the nineteenth century, foreign companies began to exploit the resources and labour on Pacific Islands, establishing sugarcane and tropical food plantations and guano removal facilities across the Pacific. By mid-century, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia and the United States also began to capture and colonise several Pacific Islands, forcing local inhabitants to participate in the capitalist and colonial economies that the colonisers established.[415] The plantation and guano economies that arose on several Pacific Islands required large numbers of labourers that the islands could not always meet, leading to the importation of labour from other islands and Asia.[416] Despite job availability on land, such as plantation labour or guano extraction, many young Pacific Islanders preferred to go to sea to earn a living.

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414 Honolulu Harbor Master's Shipping Articles, 1869-1891, Hawaii State Archives. The status of a sailor as a Pacific Islander was determined by the sailors name as recorded in the shipping articles. Those with European and Asian names were not included in the count, despite the fact that several Pacific Islanders adopted European names, received Christian names after religious conversion, or had parents of mixed *kanaka*, Asian and European heritage.

415 Barclay, *A History of the Pacific from the Stone Age to the Present Day*, 108-148.

416 Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands,* 141-154; Fischer, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 120-168.

By the mid-1880s, an estimated 25 percent of the young men in Hawaii opted to go to sea.[417] The unwillingness to work on land may reflect many Islanders' traditional masculine biases and expectations. Across much of the Pacific, the masculine was associated with the sea and movement, whereas the feminine was associated with the land and permanence and, in some Polynesian societies, such as in Tahiti and the Marquesas, women were forbidden to travel by water under normal circumstances. [418] By working on land for others, many Pacific Island men felt their masculine identity threatened but the global market process that threatened to take that identity, also provided a means to retain it. Sailing on foreign vessels allowed men to maintain some traditional masculine roles and identities associated with the sea, and also created new masculinities associated with maritime labour

On some Pacific Islands, maritime labour became associated so closely with masculinity that, according to W. L. Allardyce, a European observer on Rotuma in the mid-1880s, "The few who have never been to sea at all have often to endure a considerable amount of banter at the expense of their experience".[419] According to A. R. Mackay, who was also on Rotuma in the 1880s, "it is a cutting reproach to cast at a man that he has not been away from the island; hence, partly, the anxiety of the young to accomplish their long cherished dream".[420] On Rotuma and other Pacific Islands, sailing created a masculine sphere where male communities and identities were shaped. As with sailors coming from Europe, Africa, and the Americas, sailing provided more than a means to make a living and, possibly, providing for a family or community; it also provided a manly identity based on labour and the experiences, rewards and hazards that accompanied it. In this way, Islanders brought their expressions of manhood aboard merchant vessels and adapted them to the masculine labour identity they found there.[421]

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417   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 161.

418   Fischer, *A History of the Pacific* Islands, 53-56; Lepowsky, "Voyaging and Cultural Identity in the Louisiade Archipelago of Papua New Guinea,"40.

419   Howard, "Rotuma Seafaring in Historical Perspective," 130-131.

420   Ibid. The quote from A. R. Mackay is from a dispatch to the Colonial Secretary dated 10 January 1887.

421   Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 36; Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 69.

While sailing allowed Oceanic men to protect and express their manhood through work, sailing aboard foreign vessels had its price and brought challenges to traditional identities. These challenges included racism, the harsh discipline and the inherent dangers of the sea. Although the maritime community was relatively racially tolerant, Pacific Islanders did experience some racism during the nineteenth century. Many foreigners found Islander names difficult to pronounce, so crewmates often provided new ones for Pacific Islanders. American seamen and officers sometimes gave Islanders common names, like Jack and Tom, names of famous Americans, such as Ben Franklin and Andrew Jackson, or used nautical terminology to label their Islander counterparts, for instance, Luff and Ropeyarn. Some Islanders even named themselves in this fashion. One Hawaiian sailor, for example, referred to himself as "George Washington". This naming practice certainly reflected many sailors' inability to wrap their tongue around different languages and the practice aboard ships to give fellow crewmates nicknames but it also reflected the racist attitudes held by some seamen and officers. Giving someone a name offhand, or sarcastically naming a lowly sailor with the name of a great man, showed a level of contempt and dismissal for Islanders and their native culture. White sailors, however, also received less than complimentary nicknames. In *Omoo A Narrative of Adventures in the South Seas,* Herman Melville describes a white, "good-for-nothing land-lubber" who the officers and men called "Rope Yarn".[422] White seamen occasionally rated scathing nicknames, although, as David Chappell points out, other epithets were more blatantly racist, though not used as names for individuals, like "savage, blackboy, nigger, buck, or fuzzy-wuzzy".[423]

Such racism, especially on the part of officers, kept most Islander sailors in labouring positions aboard ship where they served as seamen, cooks, stewards and boatmen. While some Islanders did move from the forecastle to the cabin and became boatswains and even officers on foreign vessels, most, like their white and black counterparts, did not. In 1882, for example, Hawaiian seaman, J. Kauhi, served as the chief mate aboard the *Ninito* for $50 a month, twice that of the common seamen on the vessel. Not surprisingly, the master of the *Ninito* at

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422   Melville, *Omoo*, 52.

423   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 54.

the time, was John Cameron, the sometime-seaman, sometime-captain.[424] That Cameron hired Kauhi as first mate is important because it illustrates the difference in racial attitudes between sailors and officers. As an officer, who also regularly shipped out as a seaman, Cameron probably did not have the same class or racial biases that other officers possessed. Officers often held the same class and racial prejudices that their shoreside middle-class counterparts held and despised sailors and non-whites, alike.

While in port, officers tended to associate with white middle-class landsmen who were not necessarily part of the maritime community. Such associations would have influenced officers' attitudes towards race and ethnicity. Seamen, on the other hand, rarely socialised with men outside of the maritime community. White landsmen's attitudes towards race would have had very little influence over men who associated with seamen of various races while in port. Sailors lived, worked and socialised with diverse men and racist attitudes were not as strong among the men before the mast as they were with the men who lived in the cabin. Sailors certainly had their own racial biases, preferring certain European ethnic groups over others, blacks from certain countries or regions over others, and Islanders from specific Pacific Islands or regions over Islanders from different islands or regions. However, the realities of sailing, the common experiences they shared and the maritime labour identity they held in common, while it did not eliminate racism, muted these biases both ashore and afloat.[425]

Working aboard ships also proved as difficult and, in some cases, more difficult, for Islanders as for other seamen. Although accustomed to the sea and its dangers and rewards, many Oceanic men had little or no experience with the harsh discipline expected and enforced on foreign ships. Those who had had direct contact with missionaries and went to their schools and churches and those who worked in the plantation or guano industries, knew, with a reasonable degree of certainty, the type of discipline they would receive on a ship but most found the experience shocking and new. Officers treated Islander greenhorns as they treated all greenhorns - with generous curses, shoves and blows. When a language barrier

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424   Honolulu Harbor Masters Records, Shipping Articles, 1869-1891, Hawaii State Archives.

425   Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 87-91.

existed between an officer and an Islander or, when an officer's personal racial animosity towards Pacific Islanders came into play, Islanders might be singled out for abuse. For the most part, learning the necessary skills to become a sailor had an equalising effect and experienced Islander seamen were not treated very differently than other sailors. This equalising effect, however, may not seem very appealing when one considers that sailors, even experienced sailors, could be imprisoned, flogged or starved for stealing, deserting or mutinying, not to mention for the many other offenses ships' officers perceived.

Going to sea also meant that Pacific Islanders put themselves in great danger, as all sailors did. Estimates put the death rate among Islander sailors in the nineteenth century at about 23 percent, and another 33 percent simply disappear from the record and their fates remain unknown.[426] Islanders faced the same hazards as other seamen, such as storms, loose rigging, poorly secured cargo, open hatches, hostile native peoples and other seamen. Islanders also faced some unique dangers. Old inter-island animosities, and new animosities created by increased inter-island contact, brought about by increased foreign trade, often led to conflicts between Islander seamen and local Islanders.

All sailors faced disease aboard crowded, unhealthy ships and in foreign ports but Pacific Islanders had little immunity to many diseases that were common in other parts of the world yet new to the Pacific Islands. Islander sailors often succumbed to these diseases aboard foreign vessels while their non-Islander comrades did not. Homesickness also had a profound effect on many Islander seamen and illness, or the death of fellow crewmates, sent many into a deep depression that many observers described as a "passive fatalism".[427]

Cold climates also took their toll on Islander seamen, weakening them or killing them outright. With no prior exposure to snow and ice, many Pacific Islanders refused to sail out of the Pacific around Cape Horn to Europe and the eastern United States. Having to pay many island governments bonds for a sailor's safe return, employers rarely signed Islanders on for cruises that would take them into the Atlantic and, as a result, most Islander seamen did not leave the Pacific.

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426   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 159, 161.

427   Ibid., 67.

Even the relatively mild climate of the Pacific Northwest, could prove difficult for people like the Hawaiians, who, "used to a dry, pure atmosphere, sank under its influence". Because Islander sailors tended to stay in the Pacific, merchant ships sailing in these waters had a much higher concentration of Pacific Islanders aboard their ships than those in the Atlantic.[428]

As newcomers to the Atlantic-based maritime industry, Pacific Islanders seemed to be in a position, although unintentionally, to help dismantle maritime traditions and identities aboard foreign vessels. By bringing aboard ships their own traditions and cultural values that were not developed within the context of the traditional maritime labour community, Islanders possessed the ability to potentially challenge, if not, outright alter, traditional maritime labour structures and sailors' masculine labour identity.

Islanders, however, did not prove a disruptive force while working aboard ships and, in most cases, they fit well into the maritime community. Islanders proved to be exceedingly adaptable to life aboard ship and showed an eagerness to learn new skills, see new lands, meet new people and profit, both materially and politically, from their experiences at sea. As a result, these Islanders quickly became a regular, and generally welcomed, presence aboard foreign merchant ships. Islanders' native maritime traditions and their native appreciation for manly qualities such as bravery, strength and virility, also put them in good stead with their non-Islander counterparts. Instead of altering the maritime community, Pacific Island sailors blended with it and foreign sailors adopted some Pacific Island cultural elements such as tattooing, local sea lore and popular religious beliefs and practices.

The cultural blending that occurred in the nineteenth-century Pacific, although dominated by traditional Atlantic maritime labourers, also illustrates the adaptability of maritime working-class culture. As a relatively tolerant and cosmopolitan labour force, sailors did not possess the same racial prejudices as workers and elites on land. Sailor tolerance and experience with diversity made them unusually willing to work with new and different people much more often than labourers on land. Sailor acceptance and willingness to work with others, however, did have its limitations. Racial biases did exist amongst the maritime

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428   Chappell, *Double Ghosts*, 54-58, 65-70, 158-167, 174.

community and could, at times, create tensions between Islanders and non-Islanders.

Foreign sailors also showed a willingness to accept Pacific Islanders because, even setting foot on a foreign ship, Islanders had a native maritime tradition that provided them with strong seamanship skills, a sense of duty and obligation to fellow sailors, cultural traditions that stressed martial and virile manliness and knowledge of local waters. In this way, Islanders did not challenge traditional maritime labourers, rather, they helped to consolidate the maritime community by illustrating that seamen, regardless of their places of origin or cultural background, had a bond and common identity that working at sea created.

When other Pacific peoples who had no strong maritime tradition of their own, or proved unwilling to adapt to the Atlantic maritime tradition, culture and identity, entered the maritime labour market, traditional Atlantic sailors did not prove as welcoming or as tolerant as they had been with Pacific Islanders.

ASIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PACIFIC MARITIME COMMUNITY

CHAPTER 4

ASIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PACIFIC MARITIME COMMUNITY[429]

On New Year's Day, 1857, Fou Sin, a native of Guangdong Province, stepped off of a Russian man-of-war and onto the shores of San Francisco. Fou was born in 1833, near Canton and his mother died when he was still a child. When he was about thirteen, Fou received his father's permission, or possibly his father's instructions, to ship out on an English brig, commanded by a Captain Simmons. Fou spent a year and a half at sea, sailing to England and back during that time. The experiences of the young man did not go beyond the ship on which he sailed, however, because the captain refused to give him shore leave, fearing that Fou might run away. After his voyage, Fou began working in a store in Hong Kong so that he could learn English. The presence of foreign merchants in Hong Kong and Canton, especially after the First Opium War, created financial opportunities for Chinese people living in the region. Knowledge of English made it possible for Fou to deal directly with both English and American merchants who frequented the port cities. Such an arrangement must have seemed beneficial to Fou and his family because it allowed them to participate in the considerable profits of both foreign and Chinese merchants.

The position at the Hong Kong store obviously did not agree with Fou because, after only a short period of time, he secured a berth as a cabin boy on the American

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429   Portions of this chapter first appeared in Philip D. Morgan, *Maritime Slavery*, (New York: Routledge, 2012).

ship *Captain Tiger* without his father's knowledge. In Singapore, Fou left the American ship and took a position as an English officer's "boy" for three years, after which he boarded a French whaler, the *Benan*, and sailed for Massachusetts. In October 1854, Fou arrived in Honolulu and worked as a cook for almost two years. In July of 1856, he boarded the Russian man-of-war which eventually took him to San Francisco.[430]

In San Francisco, Fou worked for three months in various kitchens before running into trouble with local authorities. According to Fou, at a "Spanish dance house" on Pacific Street, an African American, well into his cups, accosted him with a verbal barrage before advancing on him with the obvious intention of turning his verbal assault into a physical one. Fou then produced a concealed knife, intent on defending himself. When an onlooker saw the knife he shouted, "Look there! a Chinaman is cutting somebody with a knife". A police officer promptly arrested Fou and he sat in jail for two months awaiting his trial. The Grand Jury acquitted Fou when none of the witnesses for the state appeared at the trial. Prudently, Fou decided to leave town for a while and boarded the *Golden Age* as a ship's cook. After a short stint on the *Golden Age*, Fou returned to San Francisco and worked in a kitchen for a man named Faben who owned a hotel and boarding house on Sacramento Street. The position at the hotel lasted only six weeks and, while unemployed, Fou got into another fight, this time in a Chinese brothel. According to Fou, "I only fought with my fists, was not hurt, and escaped arrest".[431] Not long after his fight at the brothel, Fou met Chou Yee, an acquaintance from his time in Honolulu. Upon learning that Fou had no job and needed money, Chou suggested he go to the mountains where he could easily find a job as a cook. Fou took the advice, borrowed thirty dollars from Chou, and accompanied him to Jackson. After some looking, and with the help of a Chinese stage agent, Daniel

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430 *Murder of M.V.B. Griswold by Five Chinese Assassins; Fou Sin-- the Principal. Together with the Life of Griswold, and the Statements of Fou Sin, Chou Yee, and Coon You, Convicted and Sentenced to be Hung at Jackson, April 16, 1858. Illustrated with Correct Likenesses of the Murderers* (Jackson, Calif.: T. A. Springer, 1858), 16-17.

431 *Murder of M. V. B. Griswold*, p. 17.

Wickham, Fou acquired a job cooking for Mr. Horace Kilham. Fou's service on the *Golden Age* marked the last time he went to sea as a sailor.[432]

A growing group of Asian sailors entered the maritime labour force during the nineteenth century, further diversifying the worker community at sea. Whereas Pacific Islanders, with their strong, native maritime traditions and cultural values regarding community obligations and manly qualities, found acceptance among sailors from Europe, the Americas and Africa, Asians encountered a great deal of resistance and hostility. Asian men went to sea for many of the same reasons that non-Asians went to sea. Sailors from the Atlantic tradition, however, refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of Asian participation in the maritime community.

Several factors contributed towards this attitude. Sailors from the Atlantic tradition did not believe that Asians came from societies with strong, native maritime traditions (in fact, some Asian societies even viewed maritime activity as near criminal). Asians did not fit the physical characteristics appreciated by sailing men, tending to be smaller and more slightly built than their American, European, African and Pacific Islander counterparts.[433] In addition, Asians often refused to adopt the cultural trappings and practices that traditional Atlantic

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432　Fou Sin actually had some difficulty in securing a position as a cook. He stayed in Jackson for nine days before heading to the Cosumnes. Fou lost his way and accidentally went to Folsom before finally reaching the Cosumnes. After three or four days, Fou returned to Jackson and succeeded in finding a job. In California, Fou Sin was accused of being the first Chinese to murder a white man in the state's history. He was hanged for the crime but insisted on his innocence until his death. *Murder of M.V.B. Griswold*, 17-18.

433　G. Brush, "Growth variation and comparative growth homeostasis," in., *Human Populations: Diversity and* Adaptation, ed. A. J. Boyce and V. Reynolds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 128-130; Ira Dye, "Heights of Early American Seafarers, 1812-1815," and Pierre van der Eng, "An Inventory of Secular Changes in Human Growth in Indonesia," in *The Biological Standard of Living on Three Continents* ed. John Komlos (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1995), 95-103,176-177; Roderick Floud, "The Heights of Europeans since 1750: A New Source for European Economic History," and Ted Shay, "The Level of Living in Japan, 1885-1938: New Evidence," in *Stature, Living Standards, and Economic Development: Essays in Anthropometric History* ed. John Komlos (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 16-19, 200-201; S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Anthropology of Eastern China and Kwangtung Province* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, Limited, 1925), 1, 55; and *Anthropology of Northern China* (Oosterhout N.B. The Netherlands: Anthropological Publications, 1968), 1, 12.

sailors held dear and considered an essential part of maritime labour and identity. Asians also served in large numbers aboard steam vessels as unskilled labourers for less pay and fewer provisions than skilled sailors, making them appealing to employers, but threatening to other maritime labourers. Finally, early experiences that sailors had with Asian locals in ports and with Asian passengers aboard ships, before large numbers shipped out as seamen, prejudiced maritime labourers against Asian sailors. Prejudice against Asians united other sailors against them but ultimately fractured maritime labour unity along Asian and non-Asian lines, diverting workers from obtaining concessions from their employers.

The Chinese were the single largest group of Asians to participate in maritime labour in the second half of the nineteenth century and, like all coastal Asian people, had a history of maritime activities. Several cultural, political and economic factors, however, prevented seafaring from assuming the important role in China that it had in Europe and the Americas. Confucian concepts lay at the heart of Chinese ambivalence towards the sea and those who made their living there. Western societies greatly valued merchants' roles and contributions. Chinese society, however, under Confucian teachings, placed the merchant class at the bottom of the social hierarchy, below both peasants and soldiers, because merchants were perceived as parasites who produced nothing of value. This Confucian view of merchants tied in with the belief that China lay at the centre of the world, primarily in a cultural-political context, and as Wang Gungwu argues, "It was enough that foreign countries acknowledged the wealth and power of the empire and were welcomed when they brought tribute. If their traders brought cargoes that China needed, they too would be welcomed".[434] Because the Imperial Chinese court expected foreigners to come to China and offer tribute and trade, the court considered it unnecessary for Chinese merchants to travel to foreign lands.

Despite its peripheral status, the Chinese did develop a maritime tradition which ebbed and flowed in significance with the rise and fall of imperial dynasties. According to John King Fairbank, during the Qin and Han expansion into Guangzhou and Jiaozhou, "Experienced and massive coastal seafaring was essential

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434   Wang Gungwu, *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy* (London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 36.

to this early extension of the empire to southernmost China".[435] From these southern region's ports, the Han and later dynasties conducted their tributary diplomacy in western and southern Asia. Trade in southern China also depended on the use of nautical skills, although on a scale that did not stimulate large-scale maritime industries. Aside from a handful of trading centres along the coast, such as Funan and Linyi, most Chinese maritime trading partners included "small polities or port cities, which were incapable of challenging China's power".[436] Trade in the region remained rather small until the Tang dynasty expanded it to include spice and medicinal goods from the Southern Ocean, or *Nanyang*, archipelagos.

From the tenth to twelfth centuries, maritime concern once again declined as the Song dynasty found it necessary to direct its efforts towards defending the north from attack by Jurchen tribesmen. The fall of Kaifeng, the Song imperial capital, in 1127 to the Jurchen Jin dynasty, however, led to an increase in Chinese maritime activities. Forced into Hangzhou, the Song established the first imperial capital directly open to sea trade. The loss of trade with the north forced the southern Song to temporarily abandon the "earthbound" mindset and encourage trade expansion into Southeast Asia and the Nanyang. Southern traders took advantage of the opportunity afforded them by increased imperial interest for 150 years of Song rule and formed commercial links that still exist today. Unfortunately for the coastal Chinese, southern Song efforts to reunite the heartland of China and defend the southern provinces from Jurchen, and later Mongol, attacks limited the resources to extend trade and the "earthbound" consciousness never completely vanished.

In 1278, the southern Song fell to invading Mongol armies who reunified China under a foreign dynasty. After defeating the southern Song, the Mongols established their capital in the northern city of Beijing and the dominance of continental matters returned. The Mongols, however, appreciated the benefits of overseas trade and continued to promote free commercial activities. Distrustful of their Chinese subjects, the Mongols saw to it that Muslim traders from Central Asia dominated the Chinese maritime trade. Unwilling to sit on the sidelines,

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435   John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (London: Harvard University Press, 1992), 192.

436   Wang, *The Chinese Overseas*, 8-9.

Chinese traders soon began to participate in a thriving sea trade promoted by nomads from the northern steppes. But, the Chinese did not willingly accept the Yuan dynasty and, in 1368, Zhu Yuanzhang, founder of the Ming dynasty, drove the Mongols out of China.[437]

After defeating the Yuan, Zhu needed to contend with Chinese rivals who controlled the naval power off the eastern coastline. Supplied and funded by maritime concerns, Zhu's rivals presented a very real threat to his authority and security. In order to break the strength of these "rebel" fleets, Zhu decided to ban private trade with foreigners, thus limiting trade to the Chinese coastal cities and re-establishing the decaying tributary system. Predictably, those Chinese whose livelihood depended on foreign trade felt a great deal of resentment towards Zhu and his dynasty for effectively outlawing their profession and many sailors and merchants resorted to piracy.[438]

Zhu Yuanzhang's son, Zhu Di, offered many seafarers an alternative to returning to the land or conducting piracy by ushering in the "golden age" of the Chinese navy. In 1405, Zhu Di began funding the monumental naval expeditions of Zheng He, a court eunuch, employing thousands of sailors from the southern China coast. Zhu Di hoped to increase the prestige of the dynasty by collecting tribute from far-off kingdoms and flaunting Ming naval and political might. Several countries from as far off as Africa sent tribute to China, including several exotic animals in their cargoes, such as giraffes, which greatly amused the Ming court. Trade may have also inspired the voyages but, since the Ming never possessed much enthusiasm for commercial activities, they probably considered trade to consist of exporting Chinese goods on foreign ships, which would preclude voyages to foreign ports by Chinese merchant vessels. The weak financial rational of the expeditions, and intrigue and internal strife at the Imperial court between Confucian officials and court eunuchs, brought an abrupt end to Zheng's voyages in 1433. The court mothballed Zheng's ships, released his sailors and eventually destroyed all records of his expeditions, nearly wiping away his achievements from history. Within a

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437   Wang, *The Chinese Overseas*, 17-20.

438   Wang, *The Chinese Overseas*, 21.

few short decades, the Ming brought the ebb and flow of 400 years of Chinese maritime advancements to a screeching halt.[439]

Without a navy or an overseas merchant fleet in which to ply their profession, thousands of sailors and coastal peoples "were forced to return to the land, and when that could not earn them a livelihood and they had to go to sea, their ships were severely limited in size and capacity. No foreign trade was permitted".[440] Presented with few options with which to support themselves and their families, many seafarers decided to flaunt the overseas trading ban and took to smuggling.[441] Others decided to take more drastic steps and joined other disenfranchised Chinese sailors and Japanese seamen hurt by the Ming ban to form pirate organisations that preyed on Chinese and foreign trading vessels along the coast. Smuggling and piracy proved extremely devastating to local shipping by the 1620s. In response, the Ming launched a naval campaign to stop piracy and relaxed their foreign trading ban in order to provide smugglers with a legitimate outlet for their activities. The Ming succeeded in accomplishing their goals and trade exploded among the southern provinces. From the lifting of the ban until the fall of the Ming in 1644, Chinese foreign commercial trade experienced new heights, not surpassed until the modern era. Unfortunately, the fall of the Ming and the ascendancy of the Manchu Qing dynasty marked another decline in the fortunes of maritime China that created severe consequences for China's future.

The Qing instituted trading bans even more effective than those imposed by the Ming. Loyal Ming forces offered resistance to the new Manchu empire on both land and sea. Eager to consolidate their claims to the throne, and greatly outnumbered by the local population, the Manchus did not tolerate opposition. Just as Zhu Yuanzhang's rivals relied on naval power and local maritime support over 250 years before, so did Ming loyalists exploit their maritime positions to defy the Qing. But, in addition to implementing trading restrictions, the Qing went so far as to relocate Guangdong and Fujian coastal residents ten miles

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439   Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

440   Wang, *The Chinese Overseas*, 24.

441   Ibid.

inland in order to cut off their support to opposition forces. Eventually, the Qing succeeded in crushing the opposition and reaffirmed the continental orientation with a vengeance. Eager to prove their legitimacy to the throne, and interested in keeping the rebellious southern regions weak, the Qing relied on their draconian treatment of coastal peoples and Confucian learning in order to realign the southern mindset towards the continent.

The Qing policies regarding maritime trade illustrate that more than tangible historical events and trends, mainly the constant northern threats, influenced the "earthbound consciousness" of the Chinese. The more ethereal teachings of Confucianism also played a major role in literally grounding Chinese thought. Historian Wang Gungwu claims that the Manchus' feelings of cultural inferiority led them "to be more Chinese than the Chinese in their ideals of governance".[442] In order to out-Chinese the Chinese, the Manchus advocated Zhu Xi's orthodox Neo-Confucianism, which "entailed supporting all the strictures that admonished everyone to stay on the land and give filial support to the family by never leaving home, and it looked patronisingly on those who chose the vocation of trade".[443]

One also sees the Confucian influence on Imperial China's maritime policies in the perception of those who made their living at sea. Due to the migratory nature of life at sea, those who lived and worked on the water had no collectively-owned ancestral property, kept few records of their ancestral heritage and lived in small nuclear families. According to the Qing, this absence of proper filial piety represented a challenge to their dynasty and a potential site for future rebellion and disloyalty. Not only did the Qing see the far-ranging "junk traders", who often defied imperial bans by trading in foreign ports, as potentially disloyal, they also considered the "seagoing junks" as a menace. In addition, the court lumped Chinese fishermen in with ocean going traders, despite the fact that most resided permanently in coastal towns, migrating on a seasonal basis, if at all. In many ways, these poor fisher families and single men represented a greater threat to the empire than their more wealthy merchant counterparts. While traders stood a good chance of acquiring the resources for a more settled, and thus more filial,

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442   Ibid., 32-36.

443   Ibid.

life, poor fishermen usually remained poor and, when a financial crisis struck, they swelled the ranks of pirate ships in hopes of earning enough in plunder to support themselves and their families. At the heart of imperial perceptions of maritime China lay the matter of coastal peoples' "outward" gaze, which contradicted the Confucian insistence on an "inward", filial focus. This perception clouded the vision of the Qing to many of the realities and threats that existed beyond the coastal boundaries of the empire.

One of the realities the Qing failed to recognise, included the increasing numbers of Chinese settling overseas. Again, due to the Confucian-based internal focus, the court simply ignored the fact that many Chinese chose to migrate to foreign lands. Those who did migrate, often did so for short periods of time, in order to reap the profits of overseas trade or to sell their labour in various foreign extractive industries, such as agriculture and mining. While court officials did not realise the benefits of looking outward, those who relied on the sea, and those simply desperate to make a living, knew that opportunity also existed outside of China's cultural, political and economic heartland. By the end of the nineteenth century, tens of thousands of Chinese "sojourners" resided in the Americas, Australia, Africa and the Caribbean, not to mention Southeast Asia, Japan and the Nanyang. In these foreign lands and ports, Chinese sojourners met Western merchants and officials and, where contact occurred, the sojourners often prospered.

Europeans began arriving on China's shores in the early sixteenth century and arrived in ever increasing numbers until the end of the nineteenth century. At first, Spanish and Portuguese traders and missionaries constituted the vanguard of Western contact but, soon, Dutch, English, French, and during the final years of the eighteenth century, American, ships called at Chinese, Southeast Asian and Nanyang ports. While the Ming and Qing dynasties held firmly to their belief that China lay at the centre of the world, geographically, politically and culturally, and allowed the Westerners to trade in designated areas and offer tribute, as they expected all foreigners to do, neither court paid them much attention. The Imperial courts considered it completely natural that foreigners, geographically removed from the empire, wanted access to China's superior products. On the other hand, officials deemed foreign-made goods, even the mechanically sophisticated European wares, trivial and unnecessary to a "self-sufficient" China. This Sino-

THE SCENE OF CHINESE JUNKS IN CANTON AROUND 1880 ILLUSTRATES CHINA'S MARITIME TECHNOLOGICAL DISADVANTAGE WITH WESTERN NATIONS AND THE LOW OPINION ATLANTIC SAILORS HAD OF CHINESE SAILING SKILLS AND TRADITIONS. (PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE)

centric focus caused officials, especially during the Qing dynasty, to misinterpret the Westerners and the potential threats and benefits of the maritime tradition and power they possessed.[444]

The open hostility displayed by the Chinese imperial government restricted China's maritime development, made the country vulnerable militarily and economically to European and American nations and created problems for Chinese sailors looking to work aboard foreign vessels. Since China conducted little overseas trade and focused primarily on coastal trade and fishing, foreign seamen were unimpressed with Chinese maritime credentials. When sailors from the Atlantic began entering the Pacific in large numbers, China was experiencing a maritime decline. Whereas sailors from the Atlantic tradition respected the skills of those with strong maritime traditions, such as the Oceanian peoples, they had little, if any, respect for the Chinese. This led to tensions between Chinese and foreign sailors.

Before the Taiping Rebellion in China, few Chinese men left home for extended periods at sea in their attempts to support their families. The Taiping Rebellion, however, caused many Chinese men to flee China, for both safety and as a means to earn a living. Most Chinese took to the sea because of the chaos and destruction in China caused by the rebellion, which lasted from 1851 to 1864, killing over 20 million people and devastating the economy of southern China.[445] Many Chinese fled before the advancing imperial and Taiping armies as they destroyed villages, killed people by the thousands and conscripted men into military service. Many fled to the Guangdong Province, creating employment problems and food shortages in the overburdened region. In 1859, Charles Abbey wrote:

> Our steward (a Chinaman) came on the topgallant
> forecastle this morning and spun a long yarn about
> Coolies. He appears to think that it is a blessing to

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444   Robin Hutcheon, *China-Yellow* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1996), 1-82.

445   Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996), 126-139.

them to take them away, for he says that thousands of
them die annually of starvation.[446]

Although working as a "coolie" could seem like a living hell, many considered it better than the disorder and destruction occurring in southern China at the time. Going to sea as a sailor offered an even better alternative for those who could accomplish it. Shipping out on a foreign vessel allowed many Chinese men to escape the fighting and provide economic support for their families.

Other Asian peoples also sailed aboard vessels from the United States but not to the extent that the Chinese did. India has a long maritime history that included trade routes that stretched from China to East Africa. As early as the seventh century, Indian ships traded along routes from Canton to Aden on the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. When the Portuguese arrived in the Indian Ocean, Indian ships were a regular presence in every major port. Indian maritime activity peaked in the seventeenth century but declined in the eighteenth century, due to British colonialism and European trade dominance in the Indian Ocean.[447]

Indian sailors had worked as replacement crews aboard foreign merchant vessels trading between Europe and Asia during the early years of contact and beyond. Most early Indian sailors working on foreign ships had native experience at sea and hailed from India's north-eastern seaboard, where they participated primarily in coastal trade throughout the Indian Ocean. Unlike the Chinese, however, India had no governmental restrictions on seafaring. As colonised British subjects, the vast majority of Indian seamen sailed aboard British vessels. However, many left British vessels in foreign ports and found their way onto other European and American vessels.[448]

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446 Gosnell, *Before the Mast in Clipper Ships*, 227-228.

447 Om Prakash, "India in the Indian Ocean Trading Network on the Eve of the Europeans' Arrival in the Asian Seas," and Ashin Das Gupta, "The Indian Merchant and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800," in *Explorations in the History of South Asia: Essays in Honour of Dietmar Rothermund*, ed. Georg Berkemer, et al. (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2001), 53-70.

448 Robert Prescott, "Lascar Seamen on the Clyde," in *Scotland and the Sea*, ed. T. C. Smout (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1992), 199-200; Gupta, "The Indian Merchant,";

The Japanese also had a coastal maritime tradition, trading with China and other mainland nations but did not venture far into the Pacific until the introduction of western sail and steam. Japanese isolationism and xenophobia also prevented many Japanese men from joining American and European vessels during the nineteenth century. Japanese law forbade its people to leave the country and, to do so, could result in execution.

Some Japanese men, however, felt that the opportunities aboard foreign ships outweighed the risks and many men from coastal towns joined foreign whaling vessels during the first half of the nineteenth century. For example, Masukichi, a Japanese sailor known as "Tim" by his English-speaking crewmates, was picked up by the United States naval vessel *Fennimore Cooper* in Honolulu in 1858. Masukichi had arrived at Honolulu after the whaleship he served on was wrecked and he desperately wanted to return home to Japan. Lieutenant Brooke agreed to take him to Japan and Masukichi served aboard the *Fennimore Cooper* as guide and interpreter. Both Masukichi and Brooke feared that the Japanese sailor would be punished, if not killed outright, when he returned home. Fortunately, Japan had begun to trade with foreign vessels and local officials actually welcomed Masukichi home, where his ability to speak English made him valuable. Even after the opening of Japan to foreign trade in the 1850s and the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the Japanese government continued to restrict immigration abroad. As a result of Japan's anti-immigration policies, most nineteenth-century Japanese sailors served on Japanese ships.[449]

Filipinos also had a maritime history that included a great deal of piracy in the Philippine Islands, along the south-east Asian coast and against the ships bound for the Spice Islands. The Filipinos had very little maritime merchant trade of their own but began to serve aboard Spanish vessels after Spain colonised the

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and Prakash, "India in the Indian Ocean Trading Network," 53-70; David Ludden, *India and South Asia: A Short History* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 127-136.

449 Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 13; George M. Brooke, Jr., *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure, 1858-1860*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 138, 155; Igor R. Saveliev, "Rescuing Prisoners of the *Maria Luz*: The Meiji Government and the 'Coolie Trade', 1868-75," in *Turning Points in Japanese History*, ed. Bert Edstrom (Midsomer Norton, Avon: Japan Library, 2002), 72.

Philippines. During the nineteenth century, Filipinos served aboard several vessels that came from Europe and America to trade at ports like Manila.[450]

Non-Asian sailors' experiences with, and perceptions of, the Chinese before they had begun to work in the maritime industry in large numbers, affected the way seamen interacted with Chinese sailors. Non-Asian sailors did not welcome Chinese and other Asian sailors in the late nineteenth century as they had welcomed Pacific Islander seamen earlier in the century. Asian sailors, however, did enter the maritime work force and became a common sight on foreign vessels in the Pacific.

Just as most white and black seamen lumped all Pacific Islanders into the category of "cannibal", non-Asian seamen categorised most Asians as poor sailors. Because non-Asian sailors held so many preconceived notions, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Malaysian and Indian mariners never gained acceptance from traditional Atlantic sailors, even after Asians had learned their trade and proved they could sail as well as anyone. Cultural and linguistic differences, past experiences, wage competition and differing conceptions of masculinity, created tensions between Asian and non-Asian sailors in the nineteenth century that threatened to tear the maritime labour community apart.

An important reason for the traditional sailors' prejudice towards Asian seamen was the presence of Chinese contract labourers aboard American and European vessels. Other reasons for the prejudice were the means by which employers secured Asian labour, the Asians' perceived threat to maritime labour and culture, the dubious seafaring abilities of Asians and their clumsiness at sea, Asian foods habits at sea and the danger of fire, the lack of appeal of China's port towns, the failure of Asian maritime labourers to adopt traditional Atlantic maritime customs, Asian religious practices, tensions between Asian and black sailors, petty problems with Asian crew members and the introduction of steam power.

For centuries, Chinese imperial dynasties discouraged and actively prevented overseas immigrations. Before the nineteenth century, the Chinese government

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450 James Francis Warren, *Iranum and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding, and the Birth of Ethnicity* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2002), 208-237; Scarr, *A History of the Pacific Islands*, 104.

considered overseas Chinese as "deserters" and "traitors". By the nineteenth century, however, Imperial China considered overseas Chinese as "Chinese subjects" and "Chinese merchant-gentry". The Qing dynasty, which ruled from 1644 to 1912, began to change its immigration policy by the mid-nineteenth century. Several primarily economic factors determined the need of the Qing dynasty to allow, if not promote, immigration overseas. Overpopulation in China imposed heavy pressures on available farmlands and created outrageous inflation in many regions in China. As a result, many Chinese found themselves out of work and with no money to purchase food. In order to keep from starving, Chinese in the hardest hit areas felt it in their best interest to immigrate to foreign shores, where they could make a living.

Natural disasters often made the economic difficulties of overpopulated areas worse. Droughts and floods constantly devastated the crops and homes of millions of people. Those affected by natural disasters often had to move to other regions in order to keep from starving to death. From 1877 to 1878, a drought ravaged north-east China, which sent hundreds of thousands of dispossessed people into the already overpopulated provinces of southern China. As a result, not only did the drought affect the north-eastern provinces, it also overburdened the economy of the south.

The opium trade began to adversely affect the Chinese economy by the end of the eighteenth century. From 1800 to 1838, the illegal opium trade increased from $1800000 to $16000000. The illicit trade "gradually drained off Chinese silver, and seriously upset the internal Chinese fiscal system".[451] Various wars destroyed property and sent people fleeing from their homes.

As with natural disasters, such calamities hurt not only the economies of the areas where the fighting occurred but, also, the regions forced to absorb the thousands of refugees from the affected regions. The end of the international slave trade in the early nineteenth century created a market for a new form of coerced labour. Colonies and nations, once dependent on African slaves, needed to secure another labour force to take their place. The economic hardships of China placed many

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451   Yen Ching-hwang, *Coolies and Mandarins: China's Protection of Overseas Chinese during the Late Ch'ing Period, 1851-1911* (Kent Ridge: Singapore University Press, 1985), 32-35.

Chinese in financial predicaments that forced them to consider exchanging their freedom for a chance at financial stability overseas, where many worked as contracted labourers. [452]

Chinese labourers influenced sailors' perception of Asians in two ways. First, before the Chinese served in large numbers as crewmen aboard foreign vessels, they travelled as passengers and, more importantly, as cargo. Vessels that transported Chinese labourers were so overcrowded with their human cargo that they seemed very much like the slave ships that transported African slaves to the Americas. On 30 August 1870, the Honolulu newspaper *Bennett's Own* reported that the San Salvadorian ship *Delores Duarte* had arrived in port from China with "684 Coolies crowded in her hold in regular old slaver style".[453] The desperate Chinese seemed a suitable alternative and displaced Chinese men chose to sign labour contracts and work as contract labourers on plantations and guano islands in the Pacific and Caribbean.[454]

Few of the Chinese labourers had a true sense of what lay in store for them. They were paid very little and the housing, provisions and sanitation in their new work environments were substandard at best. The work on plantations and guano islands was gruelling and took its toll on the health of the thousands of Chinese labourers involved. Abuse towards Chinese labourers was so harsh that a multinational commission met in Cuba in 1874 to address the "dreadful treatment the coolies receive".[455] Working on the pineapple and sugar plantations in the Pacific and Caribbean, required long hours of back-breaking labour in tropical locations, exposing labourers to physical exhaustion and disease. On the Pacific guano islands, workers extracted dried bird droppings that had built up over centuries. The labourers mined the guano and transported it to cargo vessels,

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452   Ibid.

453   *Bennette's Own*, Honolulu, 30 August 1870.

454   Watt Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru: A History of the Chinese Coolie in Peru, 1849-1874* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1951), 14-19, 57-58; Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 303-306.

455   John King Fairbank, Katherine Frost Bruner, Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, eds., *The IG In Peking: Letters of Robert Hart: Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975), 126, 219.

all the while breathing in the fine and hazardous fecal dust. During the nineteenth century, tens of thousands of Chinese died far from home working for foreign employers.[456]

Chinese suffering, however, started long before they reached the plantations and guano islands; it began when they boarded the vessels that would carry them to their destinations. Transporting labourers was extremely profitable for American and European shipowners and captains, so they packed as many labourers into a ship as possible. An American sailor, Charles A. Abbey, while aboard the clipper, *Surprise*, wrote:

> [W]e are going to take 5 or 6 hundred '*Coolies*' to
> Melbourne & that will be awful. I shan't go in the
> ship if I can possibly avoid it for we shall be at least
> 3 months going & coming back & then shall lay 2
> months more in Shanghai.[457]

Abbey's reluctance to sail out on the *Surprise* reflects not only his desire to return home to New York but, also, the trepidation he felt about sailing aboard a ship with several hundred people crammed below decks for several months. Three years later, back in the Pacific, Abbey's ship happened upon the *Yankee* at sea and he wrote in his journal:

> She is a hard boat & I pity the poor fellows that are in
> her. Her last run was from Hong Kong to Havana with
> Coolies. Their freight money amounted to $60,000 of
> which $50,000 was clear profit. She is again chartered
> for the same purpose.[458]

Abbey's contempt for the ships carrying Chinese labourers did not stem from moral repugnance or concern for the human cargo. When Abbey referred to the

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456   Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru*, 14-16.

457   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 62. Abbey sought passage to New York on the ship *Charmer*, lying at anchor in Shanghai at the same time.

458   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 227-228.

"poor fellows" aboard the *Yankee*, he did not mean the Chinese but, rather, the sailors working onboard. Abbey's statements probably reflected the attitude held by many sailors in the second half of the nineteenth century towards "coolie cargos".

For many sailors, the first extended exposure to the Chinese was aboard overcrowded vessels, shipping workers by the hundreds. Just as Charles Abbey remarked on the numbers of "coolies" packed aboard the *Surprise* and the *Yankee*, other sailors marvelled at the size of the human cargo. In 1866, Captain Spilivado, commanding the ship, *Comania Maritima del Peru*, wrote in the ship's log: "[S]ailed from San Francisco to Honolulu to Hong Kong and Macao Roads taking 'coolies' aboard, then on to Callao where the several hundred Chinese were discharged".[459] John Baxter Will, a Scottish sailor, remarked on an experience he had in the 1860s in the Pacific:

> [W]e loaded a cargo of sugar, that is we filled up
> sugar but left a clear space of four feet right along the
> hold under the deck. This was filled up with Chinese
> coolies, as thick as they could stow, going to Shanghai,
> as to a land of promise, to get work.[460]

As with Abbey, Will's concern was not for the contracted labourers. Will decried shipping "coolies, as thick as they would go" was because of the discomfort sailors had to endure in transporting them. Will later wrote: "On arrival at Shanghai the coolies left and we were glad to see the last of them. They left an awful mess behind them".[461] In the sailors' minds, Chinese presence aboard vessels demeaned seamen and their work, causing undue stress and discomfort, eventually contributing to sailors' general dislike for Asian sailors.

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459   Log of a Voyage to the Orient, Captain Spivaldo, Master, September 23, 1865-June 10, 1866 BANC MSS C-G 57.

460   George Alexander Lensen, ed. *Trading Under Sail off Japan, 1860-99: The Recollections of Captain John Baxter Will, Sailing-Master & Pilot* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1968), 28.

461   Ibid.

Before the 1870s, the Chinese sailed aboard foreign vessels but, more often as passengers and, as mentioned before, more accurately as cargo. The immense number of labourers aboard most vessels and the way they were stowed below decks like other cargo dehumanised the Chinese in the sailors' eyes and made them a contemptible group. Sailors transported other passengers from Europe and the Americas to destinations in the Pacific during the nineteenth century but the Chinese represented a special case. Ships took gold seekers to California and Australia, missionaries to far-flung Pacific Islands and Asian ports, convicts and settlers to Australia and Pacific Island labourers to islands needing plantation and guano workers. But, gold seekers were freelance entrepreneurs seeking their fortunes; missionaries spread Christianity and literacy to foreign heathens; convicts and sailors both held the distinction of being generally despised by "respectable" society; settlers reminded sailors of the families they left behind or wished to someday have; and Pacific Islander labourers had already carved out a respected place in the maritime community.

In contrast to their hostility towards the Chinese labourers, sailors often fraternised with non-Asian passengers, even when a vessel's regulations expressly forbid it. Many Gold Rush diaries contain references to the relationship between passengers and crew during voyages around Cape Horn or by the shorter Panama route. Passengers and greenhorns headed for California and other Pacific ports often participated in maritime ceremonies when crossing the equator, suffering the good-natured, if often frightening, indignities associated with visits from King Neptune and his court. For example, in 1849, aboard the *Balance*, a man named Chamberlain was "lathered with slush & tar & shaved with a broad axe", during a visit from King Neptune. Chamberlain did not take kindly to the treatment he received and became belligerent; so the crew forced him to endure the ceremonial shaving again.[462] Sailors also played impromptu games with passengers. Passengers sometimes attempted to broach the sailors' realm and climb up into the rigging. When one did so, the sailors would chase him and tie him unless he paid a fine to

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462   Schultz, *Forty-Niners 'Round the Horn*, 122-124.

the seamen, known as "paying one's footing".[463] Passengers who opted to be tied up usually gave in and paid off the sailors.

Sailors also played practical jokes on passengers. In 1863, an emigrant to Australia wrote:

> The sailors threw a sheep down into our cabin last
> night which [woke?] the greater number of the sleepers
> by its continued bleating…many of the passengers
> caught up the sheep's cry for from every quarter of the
> cabin you could hear the 'Ma, Ma' during the greater
> part of the night.[464]

In 1864, sailors conspired with passenger, Maria Steley, and her friends to put a dummy dressed like a man in another woman's bed. According to Steley,

> the sailors dressed some clothes up like a man that is
> on board & flung it down the hatchway to us. We put
> it into the bed of that young woman who is not right.
> She pulled him about and believed it was the man.
> They are up to all manner of things to have a bit of
> fun.[465]

The hazing and teasing passengers received from sailors illustrates that seamen jealously guarded their authority at sea against landsmen but it also shows that they could enjoy the company of non-Asian passengers aboard their vessels. Seamen also spun yarns, danced, sang, played music, gambled, drank and prayed with passengers when they got the chance. In 1853, for example, emigrant Henry Whittingham, while sailing to Australia, wrote: "In evening, a yarn with a Sailor,

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463   Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 117.

464   Ibid.

465   Roving Cumbrian Journal, 1871 Oct. 31-1872 Dec. 20.

who related, with much relish, his adventures of hunting, debauchery, &c… When he had finished, I gave him a glass of marsala".[466]

Even when ships transported large numbers of mostly Irish immigrants and convicts to places like Australia, personal, if temporary, relationships developed. Settlers and convicts were a mixed group of men, women and children, to whom white sailors could relate more easily than to Asian passengers. Sailors might share a common background, place of origin, religion, or language with passengers from Europe and the Americas. The presence of women and children among European and American passengers also helped sailors to sympathise with them.[467] The Chinese, however, seemed foreign to most sailors and did not share cultural commonalities. Asian passengers spoke different languages, worshipped different gods, listened to and played different music and came from different lands. Asian passengers also rarely travelled in familial groups, except for the occasional set of brothers or cousins who travelled overseas together to find work.[468] European and American passengers, even the large number of emigrants headed for Australia in the nineteenth century, were not packed below decks as Chinese labourers were.

American scientist J. B. Steere observed the way the Chinese were stowed away aboard vessels in 1873 while on a voyage from Callao to China. Steere noted: "There were two tiers of platforms, one above the other, running entirely around the vessel…the space allotted to each man, which was something less than two feet in width and five in length". Steere continued: "There was also a double tier of the same running down the centre of the ship, leaving a narrow passage on each side between bunks".[469] Captains rarely allowed Chinese labourers to come up from below decks, forcing their "cargo" to remain in the cramped quarters for up to four months at a time. Sanitation quickly became a problem, and disease

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466 Journal of Voyage as Master of *California Packet*, March 2, 1850-August 23, 1850 BANC MSS C-F 10; Robin Haines, *Life and Death in the Age of Sail* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, Ltd., 2003), 154, 257; Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia*, 86.

467 Robin Haines, *Life and Death in the Age of Sail*, 96-118, 154. Andrew Hassam, ed., *No Privacy for Writing: Shipboard Diaries, 1852-1879* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 93-126, and *Sailing to Australia*, 107-134.

468 Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home, 1882-1943*, 16-54.

469 Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru*, 56-58.

spread rapidly among the Chinese labourers, making mortality rates among those aboard ships extremely high. From 1860 to 1863, the mortality rate ranged from 23 percent to 42 percent and averaged 30 percent per year. Conditions aboard the coolie ships were so horrible that, in 1855, the British government, already actively working against the Atlantic slave trade, passed a law prohibiting British vessels from participating in the "coolie trade".

For several years after the British stopped participating in the coolie trade, American vessels dominated the business. In 1862, however, as the United States fought a war against the secessionist slave states, Congress passed a bill that forbade the transportation of coolies to the United States. The 1862 law did not stop American participation in the trade but it did reduce the number of American vessels involved.[470]

At times, the Chinese refused to put up with the conditions aboard the ships. In 1850, Chinese labourers aboard the French ship, *Albert,* killed the captain and sailed back to China. In 1851 and 1852, respectively, similar events occurred aboard the British ship *Victory* and the Peruvian ship *Rosa Elias*; on both vessels, the Chinese killed the captains and returned to China.[471] Aboard the *Bald Eagle* headed for Callao, a "wild screech rang out, and the next moment an avalanche of Chinamen attempted to rush the hatchway ladders". Armed only with the boards they had removed from their bunks, the Chinese made a mad dash for the hatches but the crew reacted quickly and fastened the gratings before they could get out. The Portuguese captain and his mates began firing on the passengers through the gratings with revolvers. Driven by desperation, the Chinese did not back down from the hail of bullets and continued to hurl insults at the officers and attempted to make the hatchway. Within a short time, "a wriggling mass of dead and wounded Celestials piled up almost as high as the iron bars". The bodies piled so high that the pistol shots ignited the dead and wounded's clothing and the ship caught fire, killing all the Chinese on board and forcing the crew to abandon the *Bald Eagle*.[472] Incidents such as these highlighted both the desperation that the

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470   Ibid.

471   Ibid., 18-19.

472   Lubbock, *The China Clippers*, 45-49.

Chinese felt as passengers aboard vessels that transported labourers and the utter disregard that non-Asian sailors had for their lives and comfort.

Sailors in the Pacific occasionally mutinied when they felt abused, neglected or unnecessarily endangered by their officers but when passengers – or in the case of the Chinese, cargo – mutinied, sailors resented it. As we have seen, sailors saw their vessels as sanctuaries from the dangers the sea presented. A sturdy, well-handled ship could see a sailor through a violent storm; a ship's decks provided an advantageous firing platform to ward off aggressors and the crew quarters offered a temporary yet familiar home and family. Ships could seem like prisons, especially when anchored in an inviting and tempting port or officered by brutal men but, at sea, a ship meant safety and security. [473] When passengers, set on killing and revenge, rebelled, sailors lost their sense of security and saw the ship as a dangerous place. When sailors perceived that their greatest danger aboard ship came from within the vessel itself, they became hostile and focused their hostility on those who threatened them.

Sailors also saw deceased Chinese labourers as cargo. When possible, migrant Chinese workers arranged to have their bodies shipped back to China in case they died away from home. As early as the 1850s, hundreds of Chinese bodies were shipped from California every year. For example, in 1851, the *N. B. Palmer* shipped "seventy-five Chinese dead bodies in wooden boxes as freight" from San Francisco. In 1855, the *Sunny South* sailed from San Francisco with 70 Chinese bodies. In the month of April 1856 alone, 336 Chinese coffins left San Francisco for China. As Charles Low's above statement about the bodies shipped as "freight" illustrates, shipping Chinese remains would have contributed to sailor perception of the Chinese as cargo.[474] By seeing the Chinese as cargo or freight, sailors perceived Chinese as less human than themselves. This perception would eventually have serious consequences as more and more Chinese and other Asians entered the maritime labour force later in the century.

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473   Sager, *Seafaring Labour*, 222-244.

474   Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943*, 104-105; Charles P. Low, *Some Recollections by Charles P. Low: Commanding the Clipper Ships "Houqua," "Jacob Bell," "Samuel Russell," and "N.B. Palmer," in the China Trade, 1847-1873* (Boston: Geo. H. Ellis Co., 1906), 113.

The means by which employers secured coolie labour also influenced sailors' perception of the Chinese. Both sailors and Chinese workers signed labour contracts for a term of service with their employers. At first glance, this commonality in hiring practices might seem to have provided a shared experience that would unite workers. But, sailors saw the Chinese's labour contracts as different and as a very real threat to their livelihood and traditions. To make matters worse, guano companies used shipping articles as contracts to hire labourers.

When sailors joined a ship, they signed shipping articles that specified the name of the ship and its master, the sailor's rating aboard the vessel, the seaman's duties and the captain's responsibilities to his crew. In Honolulu, the harbour master provided his office's shipping articles to employers hiring Chinese labourers, crossing out maritime references in the documents and changing "seamen" to "servant", "voyage" to "term of service", and "master" to "agent".[475] Sailors already saw too fine a line between themselves and slaves. Slaves at least did not go willingly into slavery but, both sailors and contract labourers, signed away months and years of their lives to their employers. Employers often shanghaied both sailors and Chinese workers. Sailors were often beaten or drugged when shanghaied, whereas Chinese labourers were often deceived into labour contracts by employers. Employment agents often lied to Chinese labourers about where they were going to work and the amount they would be paid. The labour that the Chinese performed and the treatment they received from their employers, blurred the lines between slave and contract labour too much for sailors' comfort. On guano islands and plantations, sailors saw Chinese and other Asians underfed, diseased, overworked and without recreational pleasures. Working in faraway lands, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese and Malaysian workers had no means to escape from their employers or legally voice their complaints. Sailors could jump ship at the next port or seek assistance from port authorities, consuls and lawyers. Chinese labourers did not have these luxuries and, often, had to accept their circumstances until they or their labour contracts expired.

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475 Honolulu Harbor Master's Records, Shipping Records, 1865-1890. The examples of shipping articles used to hire guano labourers in these documents relate almost exclusively to Pacific Islander labourers but it can be assumed that employment agents used similar means to hire Asian labourers in the Pacific.

Instead of sympathising with the Chinese, sailors despised them because they represented a threat to sailing men and maritime labour culture. When Chinese and other Asians started to enter the maritime labour force, sailors worried that employers would treat Asian seamen as coolies had been treated. If the sailors proved right, wages would go down drastically and abuses against all seamen might increase. Since sailors and coolies both signed labour contracts, sailors feared that Asian sailors would sign contracts that made them virtual slaves in all but name. If Asians participated in large numbers, working at sea might grow even more unbearable. Sailors could not tolerate such a setback, especially since many strides towards seamen's rights had been made by the mid-nineteenth century aboard American vessels.

By far, the most important change for sailors aboard American vessels, was the 1850 United States law that made flogging illegal.[476] Flogging directly challenged sailors' masculinity by putting them on par with the other members of society eligible for physical punishment –namely slaves, women and children. In *Two Years Before the Mast*, Richard Henry Dana recounted a scene that became infamous in antebellum America and led many to support sailors' rights aboard American vessels. When Captain Frank Thompson of the *Pilgrim* threatened to flog a sailor named Sam, the sailor replied: "I'm no Negro slave". Thompson had Sam tied up "spread eagle" and "flogged like a beast". While flogging Sam, Thompson shouted "You've got a driver over you! Yes, a *slave driver—a nigger driver*! I'll see who'll tell me he isn't a *nigger* slave".[477] This incident off the California coast in the late 1830s helps to explain why sailors were so sensitive about their status. Working under a man who held a power over sailors that resembled a slave master's power over a slave was bad enough. But when the captain actually called his men slaves and himself a slave driver, as Thompson did, the line between slave and sailor blurred considerably and sailors felt even more put upon.

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476   Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 87; Glenn, *Campaigns Against Corporal Punishment*, 11-12.

477   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 101-105. During the flogging, Sam cried out to Jesus Christ for help, and Thompson replied "Don't call on Jesus Christ". Shouted the captain: "*He can't help you. Call on Frank Thompson!* He's the man! He can help you! Jesus Christ can't help you now!"

For centuries, flogging had been a common and, some argued, necessary tactic used to keep sailors obedient and productive. During the nineteenth century, however, European nations and, eventually, the United States, made flogging sailors illegal. Under the United States anti-flogging law, naval officers could still use physical force and shipboard imprisonment against seamen but they could no longer whip or beat tied or bound sailors. Other punishments became more common, such as "gagging", "bagging", "tricing up", and "keelhauling", but merchant ships began to follow the United States Navy in regard to flogging seamen.[478] Mates still carried belaying pins and captains still occasionally shot and killed sailors in extreme cases but, during the 1840s and 1850s, seamen and reformers, including Richard Henry Dana and Herman Melville, advocated sailors' rights and conditions slowly improved for seamen on American vessels.[479]

The ways sailors saw the Chinese respond to physical punishment caused seamen to worry about the abuse to which Chinese sailors might acquiesce and to fear that abuse against Chinese seamen, might cause a return to the old abuses for sailors in general. The abuse against Chinese that sailors witnessed aboard vessels and on shore proved, to the sailors at least, that the Chinese would accept virtually any punishment without question. That Asian workers did rebel against their oppressors and mutinied on several vessels, did not impress sailors because coolie mutinies threatened not only the officers but the vessels' working-class inhabitants as well. Even the Chinese working in China's ports seemed to take abuse without question. Basil Lubbock, a China clipper ship veteran, wrote about the Chinese who worked as longshoremen in Hong Kong: "[I]t was the custom to send the ship's boys into the hold with long bamboos, with instructions to encourage

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478   Glenn, *Campaigns Against Corporal Punishment*, 130. Glenn describes these punishments as follows: gagging seamen by placing a rod of iron across their mouths; "bucking" or "bagging" which consisted of "placing a bar or rod or iron...crosswise beneath the hams and in front of the elbow joints, after the wrists and ankles have been put in irons"; "tricing up", which meant that a sailor's hands were confined in irons, raised in front and with a rope triced up so that the feet barely touched deck; and keelhauling, the practice of hauling a sailor through water under the keel of a ship from one side to the other; Raffety, *The Republic Afloat*, 51-72.

479   Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* and Herman Melville's *White-Jacket or the World in a Man-of-War* brought the issue of flogging to the American public's attention and helped humanise the issue.

the coolies to work harder by giving them a crack every now and then as they passed along".[480] Captains and mates occasionally used a belaying pin, knotted rope or cat-o-nine tails to urge their crews to work faster but usually reserved such treatment for emergency situations or when the crew grew too disobedient. Only the most tyrannical and sadistic officers abused this motivational method and usually reserved it for boys and greenhorns.[481] When officers abused their authority by using physical prodding too often, or in unnecessary circumstances, sailors often started arguments and fights with their superiors. No self-respecting sailor would tolerate a crack on the back from a ship's boy wielding a bamboo pole. While in Chinese ports, sailors witnessed Chinese labourers submit to physical abuse from boys who, while under the authority of a vessel's officers, could not physically back up their actions if the Chinese labourers had decided to fight back.

Sailors' assumption that the Chinese submitted to any and every employer abuse did not bode well for the sailing profession but sailors also had a more personal reason for disliking the Chinese. The Chinese labourers' tendency not to fight back, led sailors to consider them unmanly. Sailors' labour-based identity relied heavily on manliness, physical prowess and the willingness to use one's fists. Charles Abbey formed a low opinion of the Chinese when he was a ship's boy in Canton. Abbey and his messmate, Bill, went into Canton to sample some of the city's sights and cuisine while on liberty. The two boys secured a local guide, whom they nicknamed "Sam" because he was a sampan pilot, who took them through the streets. As Sam walked ahead, the young men stopped at a fruit stand to purchase some persimmons. Not speaking Chinese, the two pantomimed that they wanted to purchase some fruit "shewing [the merchant] money, touching the fruit with our hands, and then pointing down our throats and nodding at him, rather an expressive pantomime it would have been anywhere else, but it was no go", The performance lost something in the translation, and the merchant "seemed to think at last that we wanted to eat *him*, and began to pull in his wares, shut up his shop, and call out for assistance". A crowd, marked by "alarm and indignation", formed around the boys with "malicious looks and apparent willingness to 'light on' us with their bamboos". Abbey turned to his mate, saying, "Bill, these yellow bellied

480   Lubbock, *The China Clippers*, 183-184.

481   Charles P. Kindleberger, *Mariners and Markets*, 47-56.

rascals mean mischief, just see what a bustle there is among them and how they look at us, let's get out of the way while we can". Making their retreat from the advancing mob, Abbey saw "one or two athletic, pockmarked, carriers" slip ahead with bamboo staves in order to cut them off and prevent their departure. Growing increasingly distressed, Abbey and Bill pulled out their knives and turned to face the crowd. To their surprise, "the hooting ceased, the turmoil subsided, and the mass appeared to 'simmer down' and each and every one to betake himself to his business, which, it clearly seemed was, *not* to molest us". Amazed, Abbey and Bill stared at each other, and Abbey said "What, are they such cowards as all that?...Good gracious! We could capture the whole city I believe, with a popgun & a big drum". The two walked quickly away, finding Sam, who "exhibited some anxiety to get us away from that quarter, and quickened his steps".[482] Abbey and Bill considered the crowd's backing down from two lightly armed boys as utter cowardice and they lost whatever respect they may have had for the Chinese. Aboard their ship, or in any other port in the world, the boys probably would have received a sound thrashing for causing a disturbance and pulling their knives but, in Canton, the youths faced down the numerically superior locals. The youngsters then proceeded to strut about the city, confident in their own superiority and manliness and equally confident in Chinese's lack thereof. Abbey's anecdote illustrates his, and probably other non-Asian sailors', contempt for the Chinese while highlighting his own manly prowess. Since fighting constituted a key element of manly maritime identity, facing down a large number of Canton's inhabitants proved to Abbey that he was a man. After the incident, Abbey walked through the city without fear, confident that he could handle any physical dispute with the locals. Because the men in the Canton market backed down from Abbey and his shipmate, Abbey assumed that they did not have the manly qualities necessary to overcome even an outnumbered opponent.

In the early 1870s, John Cameron witnessed an event in Singapore aboard the *John Worster* that did nothing to improve his esteem for the Chinese. A Chinese tailor came on board to collect a bill from a large, short-tempered Irish sailor named Tom Cannon. Cannon, visibly agitated at the tailor's arrival, assured him that he had no money to pay the bill. Unfortunately,

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482   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 71-81.

the Oriental kept nagging, until the giant's patience
gave way, and he picked up the Chinese as though he
were a baby (but a squirming, protesting infant, who
jabbered in all dialects of the Celestial Empire), carried
him to the side of the ship, and calmly dropped him
overboard.[483]

The tailor, dwarfed by the huge Irishman, could not defend himself and had
to endure the humiliation, offering only verbal protest. Besides illustrating that
sailors saw the Chinese as unwilling to defend themselves, Cannon's episode with
the tailor shows the contempt sailors had for the Chinese's physical prowess. Like
Abbey, Cameron uses his tale to illustrate to his audience what he sees as the manly
qualities of non-Asian sailors and unmanly qualities of Asian men, in general.

White sailors targeted the Chinese, in particular, for racial discrimination and
violence. Scorned by white landsmen in the western United States during the
1850s and 1860s, the Chinese also found their presence on merchant vessels
unappreciated by many white sailors. On land, the Chinese were subjected to
extreme violence and discrimination. In California, where most free Chinese
labourers went during the nineteenth century, anti-Chinese organisations formed
and protested "unfair" Chinese labour practices. Just as Chinese labourers worked
for less pay aboard ships, so, too, did they work for less in mines and on railroads
throughout the West. Anti-Chinese sentiment followed the Chinese as they helped
to build the expanding railroad system in the western United States. Sailors shared
this animosity towards the Chinese and their "unfair" labour practices.[484]

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483   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 114. The tailor was picked up by a nearby sampan
      and supposedly escaped without any physical harm as Cameron makes no further mention
      of him.

484   Najia Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the
      United States, 1848-82* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 30-42; Iris Chang, *The
      Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York: Viking, 2003), 38-92; Alexander Saxton,
      The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California (Berkeley:
      University of California Press, 1971), 3-66, 113-156; Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of
      Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987),
      261-269.

Once again, the issue of gender and the meaning of manliness and masculinity lay at the heart of this racial tension between sailors. Whites saw blacks and Pacific Islanders as capable seamen but considered the Chinese effeminate and, thus, not able to do the work sailing required. Some whites claimed to experience difficulty differentiating between Chinese men and women in "dress and figure", complaining "that the only apparent difference is, that they [women] are of smaller stature and have smoother features".[485] Because of their assumed feminine qualities, the presence of Chinese men on ships not only threatened white sailors economically but, also, threatened their manhood. Since sailors believed their profession was very manly, the presence of men they perceived as effeminate would have challenged their claims to manliness. Due to the threat the Chinese represented, white and black sailors protested their presence on merchant vessels and, occasionally, refused to work on ships with large Chinese crews.[486]

Nineteenth-century seamen's diaries and memoirs are filled with accounts that disparaged Asians' seafaring abilities. In the 1860s, while commanding a vessel trading between Japan and China, Scotsman, Captain John Baxter Will, witnessed an event during a typhoon that convinced him that Asian sailors were not good seamen. According to Will:

> Our crew of eight Manilla men and two Chinese,
> after sail was shortened and the ship laid to, with the
> exception of the boatswain, stowed themselves away
> below and would not come on deck. Luckily the only
> thing carried away was the port fore-lift, which I went
> aloft and secured myself."[487]

While a passenger aboard a Chinese-owned vessel sailing from Singapore to Penang, Captain John Codman, who wrote under the pen name of Captain Ringbolt, witnessed Chinese sailors behaving in a way unbecoming to seamen

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485 Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Land of Gold: Reality verses Fiction*, (Baltimore: H. Taylor, 1855), 95.

486 The theoretical framework for masculine identity and labour comes primarily from Johnson, *Roaring Camp.*

487 Lensen, *Trading Under Sail off Japan, 1860-99*, 42-43.

during a "furious squall" off the coast of Malacca. According to Codman, instead of working the ship in order to save it from a calamity, the Chinese gathered at the stern of the vessels and attempted to get hold of the line that held the ship's ensigns. The Chinese succeeded in securing the line and "bent on a flag, (if recollection serves me right, a white one) which they triumphantly ran up and then remained watching the result calmly". The ship lay almost completely on its side and the trysail sheet had come undone. Codman and his companion took charge, Codman taking the helm and his friend cutting away the loose sail, righting the ship and saving it from destruction, "which the Chinese firmly believed resulted from their having displayed the 'storm flag'".[488] In 1860, while accompanying the Japanese naval vessel, *Kanrin Maru,* from Yokohama to San Francisco as an advisor, Lieutenant John M. Brooke noted:

> I was much struck by the apathy of the Japanese early
> in the evening. There was every appearance of a gale,
> the hatches were not properly secured, and the light
> in the binnacle was very dim....At midnight, [the]
> Japanese below in a gale of wind is like the ostrich who
> burying his head in the sand imagines his whole body
> concealed.[489]

Brooke also criticised the lethargy displayed by the Japanese seamen when he wrote:

> [T]he Japanese were so tardy and seemed to care so
> little, only one or two coming on deck, that I became
> disgusted and went below, ordering Morrison not to
> permit the helm to be put up. [Unless] men were by
> braces etc., we might get into trouble.[490]

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488   Captain Ringbolt, *Sailors' Life and Sailor's Yarns*, 152-157.

489   Brooke, *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure, 1858-1860*, 224.

490   Ibid.

Brooke's criticism also extended to the Japanese's sailing skills when he noted: "The fact is Japanese helmsmen cannot steer very well", and "The Japanese have steered so badly that I can not rely upon their courses for currents".[491]

Thus, clearly, Asian sailors and sailors from the Atlantic tradition did not see eye to eye when it came to dealing with the sea's many dangers and sailing. Traditional Atlantic sailors valued bravery and action in the face of danger and, while they were often a superstitious lot, sailors saw superstition as an insurance policy against danger and not a primary tool for dealing with it.[492] Will saw the actions of the Filipino and Chinese sailors under his command as cowardly displays of poor seamanship. By hiding below decks from the typhoon's fury, the Asian sailors endangered themselves, their crewmates, and the ship and its cargo.

Codman (writing as Captain Ringbolt) also recounts the poor seamanship displayed by Chinese sailors, made worse by what he saw as cowardice. Codman was appalled by the Chinese sailors' seeming lack of common sense in hoisting a "storm flag" to save the ship instead of sailing the vessel. While the Chinese sailors were certainly more active than those on Will's vessel, Codman perceived their actions as completely inappropriate to the situation. Codman's recollection, whether accurate or not, regarding the "storm flag", speaks volumes about his position on Chinese seamen. Not only were they behaving inappropriately during a gale, according to Codman, they also displayed cowardice by hoisting a white flag, the symbol of surrender in Western society. Instead of bravely fighting the elements to save their vessel and their lives, the Chinese, Codman claims, readily surrendered to them. Codman, however, did not understand the significance of the "storm flag", The flag may have represented a distress call to other vessels or an appeal to supernatural forces that would have been completely rational according to Chinese and Filipino maritime customs. Codman only had his own maritime traditions by which to judge the Asian sailors' action and, so, probably interpreted their actions incorrectly.[493]

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491   Ibid.

492   Beck, *Folklore and the Sea*, 279-314.

493   Codman, *Sailors' Life and Sailor's Yarns*, 152-157.

Brooke's account of the "apathy" displayed by the Japanese sailors illustrates his shock and disappointment. Brooke's attitude towards Chinese was indifferent but he had some close personal relationships with Japanese sailors in the Pacific and saw the Japanese as a very capable people who deserved respect and admiration. Brooke wanted the Japanese to succeed in their endeavours to join the modern industrial nations and the sailors aboard the *Kanrin Maru* disappointed him deeply and personally. The naval lieutenant never gave up hope about Japan's future as a maritime power but his experiences aboard the *Kanrin Maru* certainly shook his confidence. Will and Codman's accounts, on the other hand, must be read with a great deal of scepticism, as both were writing for public audiences deeply prejudiced against Chinese and all Asians in general. In addition, both probably had racial prejudices of their own that would lead them to a less than a complimentary assessment of Asian sailors. However, these accounts illustrate how many non-Asian seamen and officers viewed Asians, especially the Chinese, and their sailing abilities.

It is difficult to determine whether the actions of the Asian sailors described by these seamen were common or if they represented relatively rare occurrences. What is important to keep in mind, however, is that traditional Atlantic sailors perceived them as common among Asians working at sea. Since the Chinese did not have a maritime tradition that was as far-ranging and widespread as the one developed in the Atlantic, non-Asian sailors who witnessed or heard about Chinese and other Asians behaving in what was interpreted an inappropriate and dangerous fashion at sea assumed that Asians did not have the strength, courage and skill to make good seamen. Since sailors depended so much on their crewmates to see them safely across hazardous waters, sailing with men assumed to have no natural inclination for seamanship might prove deadly or, at the very least, might create more work for skilled sailors who had to literally take up the slack left by presumably inept seamen.

Sailors from the Atlantic tradition often criticised Asians for being clumsy and used every accident and misfortune at sea as evidence for this unseamanlike characteristic. In May 1856, Charles Abbey wrote: "[T]here came on an unexpected squall & one sea knocked a poor coolie slap dab out of the weather

gangway (where he was on the lookout) to the deck & wet him through".[494] A month later, Abbey and his vessel were caught in another squall that knocked him and a Chinese sailor off their feet. Abbey congratulated himself for jumping "out of the wet" quickly but

> found that a Chinaman had gone (at the same time
> I did) over the capstan & carpenters bench head first
> & jammed his head under a spar which knocked his
> senses out of him. They lugged him away forward &
> nobody knew whether he was dead or not. [495]

Captain Anderson related his experiences during a storm as third mate aboard the opium clipper, *Eamont*, stating: "The Chinese cooks and stewards lay about in the wreckage of the saloon, but the third officer and two quartermasters managed to serve out a stiff glass of grog and a snack of grub all round".[496] Accidents happened with regularity aboard rolling and pitching ships and all sailors occasionally took a tumble, even the most competent and experienced. When traditional Atlantic sailors wrote about such incidents involving themselves and other seamen from the Atlantic tradition, they did so either to complement their quick-thinking or show compassion for an injured mate. When sailors wrote about Chinese seamen tumbling across decks or down hatches, they did so for the comedic value and to illustrate Chinese incompetence. Rarely did traditional Atlantic sailors sympathise with their Chinese counterparts, often showing indifference if not outright glee at their misfortunes. Lucius Waterman, a passenger aboard the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's ship, *China*, wrote in his diary:

> [T]his morning one of the crew of this Ship (a
> chinaman) put an end to his existence by jumping
> overboard after first attempting to kill himself. He was

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494   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 37, 51.

495   Ibid.

496   Lubbock, *The China Clippers*, 8-9.

suffering with a fever and was somewhat insane. No
funeral honors in consequence.[497]

The Chinese crewman's suicide certainly did not earn him his crewmates respect,
but the fact that he was Chinese contributed to the indifference Waterman, the
other passengers, the officers and the crew, at least the non-Chinese members,
showed for the tragically ill sailor.

Asians also gained a reputation for endangering their vessels and crewmates in
the Pacific in other ways. Asian sailors intensely hated the food served aboard
American and European vessels. This should not be surprising, especially when
one considers that even non-Asian sailors regularly complained about the poor
quality of ships' rations. Asian seamen favoured rice and fish, which reflected their
native diets, to hardtack and salt pork, which more closely reflected the food eaten
by Europeans and Americans ashore. With few exceptions, especially during the
early and mid-nineteenth century, foreign ships did not cater to Asians' dietary
preferences and provided all seamen with the standard shipboard fare. Asian sailors
addressed this gastronomic disagreement by bringing their own food aboard and
cooking it themselves. At first, this may seem an acceptable compromise that
benefited everyone. Asians could eat the foods they liked, employers could save
money on food stores and other seamen would not have to worry about stricter
rationing when food stores ran low. By cooking for themselves, however, Asian
seamen created a very real danger for their vessels and fellow sailors.[498]

Fire represented the greatest danger to ships and sailors at sea. If a fire on board a
ship, especially a wooden ship, could not be contained quickly, the people aboard
it had nowhere to go but into the boats with what little they could carry and
without the luxury of returning to the sinking vessels to get what further supplies
they might need. Chinese contract labourers headed for plantations and guano
islands aboard foreign vessels usually had to prepare their own food, sometimes
cooking in the ship's galley but, more often, cooking in their cramped quarters
below decks. Chinese labourers also smoked tobacco below decks, as they rarely

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497 Lucius A. Waterman, Journal 1869, Jan. 19-March 23.

498 Low, *Some Recollections*, 159.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE CROWDED CONDITIONS AND COOKING HABITS OF CHINESE PASSENGERS ABOARD 'COOLIE' SHIPS. 'CHINESE EMIGRATION TO AMERICA—SKETCHES ON BOARD THE PACIFIC MAIL SHIP "ALASKA"', HARPER'S WEEKLY 20 MAY 1876. (PUBLIC DOMAIN IMAGE)

had the opportunity to go above decks during a cruise.[499] Cooking and smoking below decks represented a major threat to ships and the men who sailed them. While accompanying the Japanese naval vessel, *Kanrin Maru,* from Yokohama to San Francisco, Lieutenant John M. Brooke noted that, "The Japanese [were] very careless about fires" and that, "the Japanese sailors must have their little charcoal fires below, their hot tea and pipes of tobacco".[500] When Asian sailors and passengers threw caution to the wind in order to satisfy their personal dietary preferences and chemical addictions, traditional Atlantic seamen grew angry and interpreted such behaviour as evidence that Asians were unfit for maritime labour. If Asians did indeed use fire aboard a ship in a careless fashion as often as sailors and ship officers claimed, seamen certainly had reason to fear and resent their presence. However, traditional sailors seemed to be less forgiving towards Asian seamen than they were to others new to the work structure and discipline aboard sailing vessels.

Seamen also found fault with Asians when it came to their liberty ashore and the entertainments they hoped to experience. Sailors looked forward to getting into port, any port, but China's port towns did not have the same appeal for them as other ports in the Pacific. In Valparaiso, San Francisco, Sydney and Honolulu, sailors could expect to find a saloon to get drunk in, prostitutes to have sex with, fresh food to eat, a dry bed to sleep in and, if there was time, local tourist attractions to see. Ports like Canton, Shanghai, and Hong Kong offered sailors a slightly different experience. When a sailor got liberty in Canton, Chinese shopkeepers met him on the jetty, calling out in the pidgin English spoken on the docks "Come my shop, catchee tea, pork, chops, boil 'em eggs!" A sailor might accept the shopkeepers' offers and go to their shops where "they give him gin, brandy, or anything they call for". Charles P. Low, who first visited Canton as a ship's boy in 1842, writes:

> [A]t the jetty at Canton we were met by Chinese
> runners, and taken up Hog Lane, China street, old
> China street, where they gave us tea and pork, chops

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499   Stewart, *Chinese Bondage in Peru*, 59-65.

500   Brooke, *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure*, 220-222.

and boiled eggs. This they did to secure our patronage
on the day when we had our liberty, with money to
spend in their store.[501]

Sailors experienced similar treatment in other ports where boarding house owners and crimps met the seamen as they left their ships, ready to get their hands on as much of their pay as possible. Chinese ports, however, differed slightly from other ports. Whereas boarding house owners, crimps, and prostitutes in non-Asian ports tried to rob and cheat sailors at every turn, most landsmen left sailors alone and went about their business. As sailors saw it, in Chinese ports everyone seemed eager to separate a sailor from his money.

While many Chinese certainly wanted to take advantage of the sailors, the sailors' perception that all Chinese had their eye on the sailors' purses was certainly exaggerated. The fruit vendor that Charles Abbey and his mate met in Canton, for example, seemed to want nothing to do with the two ship's boys and wanted only to get away from them. Several factors may have contributed to Abbey and his mate's sense of being misused by Chinese locals. Language certainly played a key role. Haggling with people who do not share a common tongue, or whose language seems utterly foreign and unfamiliar, probably caused sailors to question whether or not they were getting a fair deal or being cheated.

Chinese cities were also quite large, even by U.S. and European standards, and might well have intimidated seamen, especially the younger, less experienced ones. Charles Abbey described his first impression of Canton:

It was one continual cry, from the mouths of boatmen,
coolies, venders of all descriptions of stuff, children,
& dogs, while now and then the melodious bray of
some forlorn Jackass, reminded me of an immense well
sweep upon a rusty hinge.[502]

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501   Low, *Some Recollections*, 27-30.

502   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 71-81.

Abbey and Bill were also accosted by "hundreds of garrulous beggars, coolies, would-be guides, and children that at once encompassed our path proffering their services, or extending their hands for 'cash'".[503] Chinese cities had a great many stores, shops, restaurants, and marketplaces and, to the visiting sailors' eyes, places like Canton, Shanghai, and Hong Kong may have seemed founded solely to take advantage of sailors. Abbey wrote that "All kinds of businesses seemed to be represented, and all looked odd and strange to us as we sauntered along, our eyes wide with interest".[504] Foreign sailors did not usually venture too far into Chinese port cities, so they would only have seen the more consumer-oriented quarters.

Sailors' experiences with Chinese prostitutes also differed from those with non-Chinese prostitutes in other ports. While at sea, sailors exhibited discipline and self-control that allowed them to work effectively in cramped quarters aboard a vessel. In port, sailors released the tensions and frustrations created at sea by debauching themselves without much restraint. The ultimate goal of prostitution in China was the same, money for the prostitute and her employers and companionship and sexual gratification for the client, but there was also an almost ceremonial element to Chinese prostitution. According to historian Luci Cheng Hirata, Chinese prostitutes often entered their profession at an early age, sold by parents who did not want or could not afford a female child.[505] In brothels, young girls learned the "etiquette and necessary arts" needed by Chinese prostitutes. The decorum and passivity appreciated by Chinese men in the prostitutes they visited did not appeal to most foreign sailors, accustomed to more boisterous and active partners. In dockside taverns and brothels, sailors caroused with each other and prostitutes in a frenzy of dancing, singing, fighting and swearing. Many seamen would have experienced what seaman Horace Lane witnessed in a New York dockside tavern in 1804. Among the loud music, singing, and dancing that assaulted Lane when he entered, he noticed, "some of the soft-hearted females were crying, and others reeling and staggering about the room, with their shoulders naked, and their hair

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503   Ibid

504   Ibid.

505   Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 5(1), Women in Latin America (Autumn, 1979), 4.

flying in all directions".[506] A Western observer in China named "Jacobus" found Chinese brothels dull and wrote:

> Unfortunately, for those who like voluptuous pleasures,
> the Chinese prostitute has one immense fault –
> her frigidity. Copulation with her is accomplished
> mechanically: it is a commercial transaction which
> brings her in a piaster, and that is all. Never expect
> from a Chinese girl any refinement of voluptuousness
> –she is incapable of it.[507]

A seaman on board the Boston ship, *Amethyst,* echoed Jacobus's statement when he wrote, after leaving Canton: "I would not have given my Pelew Girl, for all the Women in the Chinese Empire".[508]

Experiences with prostitutes who sailors found less than exciting would have added to the feeling of being cheated by the Chinese population. Fortunately for the sailors, few left their ships in China and only stayed for extended periods when illness or injury forced them to remain on shore until they had convalesced or died. Because they did not end their cruises in China, non-Asian sailors did not get paid in full in Chinese ports. With only a few dollars in their pockets, sailors lost only small sums on food, liquor, opium, souvenirs, transportation, local guides and prostitutes.[509]

As we have seen, when Asians went to work as seamen, other sailors saw them as a dangerous element. Unsafe cooking practices, inaction during emergencies and unfavourable labour contracts, topped traditional Atlantic sailors' list of complaints against Asian sailors but non-Asian sailors found other faults with Asian sailors as well. Unlike Pacific Islanders, who found much to admire in maritime culture,

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506 Horace Lane, *The Wandering Boy, Careless Sailor, and Result of Inconsideration: A True Narrative* (Skaneateles, New York, 1839), 69-70; Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 3-5.

507 Evans, *Harlots, Whores, and Hookers*, 174-175.

508 *Amethyst* log, Peabody Museum, Salem. PMB 780.

509 Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront*, 14-24.

Asian sailors, and the Chinese in particular, showed no inclination to adopt traditional Atlantic maritime customs.

Pacific Islanders eagerly adopted traditional sailors' clothing styles, distinguishing themselves as sailors. Asians did not share the Pacific Islanders' enthusiasm for Western maritime clothing and maintained the wearing of clothing styles they had worn on land. Drawings, paintings, and photographs of Chinese sailors aboard foreign vessels consistently show them wearing regional Chinese garments and the clothing often worn by Chinese fishermen.[510] For sailors, clothing represented an important element of maritime culture and, by refusing to dress like sailors, Asians seemed to say that they did not want any part of the traditional Atlantic sailors' identity. Asian peoples, such as the Chinese, already possessed a strong cultural identity that they did not feel needed altering based on the labour they did.[511]

Asian and non-Asian sailors also did not socialise with each other when in port. White, black, Native American and Pacific Island seamen went to saloons, brothels, boarding houses, sailors' homes and, occasionally, even church services with each other. Asian sailors usually associated with local Asian populations in port towns. Chinese sailors had the most opportunity to socialise with people from their homeland, as almost every Pacific port, both small and large, had local Chinese communities.[512] Fou Sin, for example, the Chinese sailor who ended up working in the California goldfields as a cook in 1854, found himself in trouble when he got into a fight with an African American at a "Spanish dance house" and, afterwards, appears to have limited his social activity in San Francisco to Chinese brothels and other Chinese-owned businesses. The story of Fou Sin also illustrates how Chinese sailors used local Chinese populations for socialising and as employment contacts instead of the securing employment through other sailors, boarding house operators and crimps. While in San Francisco, Fou Sin obtained a position as a cook in Jackson, California, through Chou Yee, an associate he

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510 Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 58-67. Schwendinger's article possesses several photographs of Chinese sailors wearing Chinese clothing styles.

511 Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943*, 137-141.

512 Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943*, 96-123; Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home*, 16-54.

knew from his days as a sailor and cook in Honolulu.[513] Chinese sailors not only wanted to associate with fellow overseas Chinese, they often had to rely on local Chinese communities because of the exclusionary attitudes and practices of non-Asian sailors and landsmen. Traditional Atlantic seamen put Asians in a difficult position by criticising them for not wholeheartedly joining the maritime community, while simultaneously refusing them entrance for being different.

Asian religious practices also prejudiced traditional Atlantic mariners against the Asian sailors with whom they served. As mentioned in the previous chapter, popular religion played an important role in sailors' daily lives and, while people from different national and ethnic backgrounds held different beliefs in the supernatural, sailors respected the beliefs of groups who had long maritime traditions. English, Scottish, American, Irish, Scandinavian, African, Italian, German, Greek, French, Russian and Pacific Island sailors all had long maritime traditions and they generally respected each other's beliefs as legitimate and respectable. Since seamen from the Atlantic tradition did not believe Asians had their own long established maritime traditions, Asian beliefs in the supernatural did not find acceptance among non-Asian sailors.

Seamen Charles Nordhoff enjoyed watching the Chinese junks while in Canton because it helped pass the time while he was stuck aboard his ship in the harbour. Nordhoff wrote that, "the occasional passing of some great hulk of a Chinese junk with her vermillion streaked side, her many-storied poop, enormous rudder, and great goggle eyes painted on her bluff bows, was a grand event with us".[514] Although Nordhoff enjoyed the visual display provided by the junks, he did not respect the vessels or the men who sailed them. Nordhoff asked a Chinese man who supplied his ship with provisions about the purpose of the "goggle eyes" painted on the junks. Nordhoff recalled that the Chinese supplier "answered… with a shrug of contempt at my ignorance: 'Ayah! John, no hab eyes, how can

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513   Fou Sin actually had some difficulty in securing a position as a cook. He stayed in Jackson for nine days before heading to the Cosumnes. Fou lost his way and accidentally went to Folsom before finally reaching the Cosumnes. After three or four days, Fou returned to Jackson and succeeded in finding a job. *Murder of M. V. B. Griswold*, 17-18.

514   Charles Nordhoff, *In Yankee Windjammers*, 113.

see'". Nordhoff reasoned, "Certainly if Chinese sailors are no smarter than they look, their junks have need of all the eyes they can obtain to get along safely".[515] With a single sentence, Nordhoff called into question both the Chinese's nautical popular religion and sailing abilities and illustrates the contempt many sailors had for their Chinese counterparts and their beliefs.

Black sailors, in particular, seem to have resented Chinese seamen, even when they took on the most domestic positions aboard a vessel.[516] Throughout the nineteenth century, domestic positions, such as cooks and stewards, were often filled by non-whites. After the American Civil War, blacks appeared in fewer numbers aboard American vessels and, those who did serve, usually did so as cooks and stewards. Historian W. Jeffrey Bolster argues that this trend occurred largely because ship masters and shipowners stopped hiring their own crews and increasingly relied on crimps to hire workers. According to Bolster, crimps followed the more segregationist attitudes held by white American society during and after Reconstruction.[517] The crimps' racist attitudes certainly contributed to the reduction in black participation in the maritime industries and their pigeonholing into domestic duties but it does not fully answer why blacks stopped going to sea as often. Bolster does not adequately address other trends ashore or demographic shifts to the Pacific that might account for reduced black participation in maritime labour in the Atlantic. For example, due to the many maritime labour opportunities in the Pacific, "sailor" and "mariner" ranked as the fourth most common occupations among San Francisco's black population in 1860.[518] In addition, at least one black man, William T. Shorey, became a whaleship captain based in San Francisco during the 1880s.[519] When better opportunities offered themselves on shore, white sailors often left the sea to try their luck at more stable shoreside employment. In California, for example, many sailors tried their hand at

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515   Ibid.

516   Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants*, 123; Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 138.

517   Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 223-228.

518   Farr, *Black Odyssey*, 239.

519   E. Berkeley Tompkins, "Black Ahab: William T. Shorey, Whaling Master," *California Historical Quarterly* 51(1) (1972): 75-83.

gold mining in the early 1850s. Most sailors left the goldfields and returned to the sea but they did stop sailing for at least a short time to pursue other opportunities. After the Civil War, many black seamen may have seen their future, and the future of their families and communities, on land and not at sea. Those who chose to remain at sea may have done so in the Pacific instead of the Atlantic. Regardless, by the 1860s, many black sailors served as cooks and stewards at sea, putting them in direct competition with Asians.[520]

Working as a steward or cook had many advantages for any seaman willing to take on the job. Stewards and cooks had direct access to the vessel's stores, allowing them to take what they wanted for themselves, as well as direct access to the vessel's commander. These domestic positions gave cooks and stewards a great deal of power over their crewmates. Cooks and stewards controlled the amount and, at times, the quality of food served to other seamen. On his first voyage, Charles Abbey became seriously ill and the Chinese steward took care of him by bringing him "some biscuit with butter on them & a cup of green tea sweetened with sugar the greatest luxury I have tasted since we sailed".[521] The Chinese steward took a liking to Abbey and continued to bring him little treats throughout the cruise, much to Abbey's joy and satisfaction. Stewards also served the captain, who tended to side with their servants when disputes broke out between them and the crew. Cooks also had a great deal of power aboard ships because they controlled the food the crew received and, a cook angry at a sailor or an entire crew, could make life miserable for seamen.

Cooks and stewards also earned higher wages than other seamen. When the clipper *Flying Cloud* left San Francisco in April 1854, the highest paid sailors made $30 per month and received $60 advances. Both the cook and steward made $40 a month and received $80 advances.[522] Cooks also kept the fat, called

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520   Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 223-228.

521   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 31-33.

522   Crew List: Flying Cloud BANC C-A 169 pt. IV. Also aboard the *Flying Cloud* were an assistant cook, who received $25 a month and a $50 advance, and two assistant stewards, one who received $20 a month and a thirty dollar advance, and one who received only $10 for the entire cruise. The assistants probably received lower pay because they were new to the profession.

"slush", that they boiled off the salt pork and beef they served the crew. On shore, cooks sold the fat to local merchants, thus earning more money from serving on a vessel through this "slush fund".[523] Even though cooking and stewarding were considered "women's work", cooks and stewards saw their positions as manly because they provided non-white sailors with a means to support themselves and their families.[524] Charles Benson, an African American sailor who served as a cook aboard the *Glide* in the 1860s did not see his job as emasculating and took pride in the hard work he did. In 1862, Benson wrote proudly:

> I have been quite Busy to day in cleaning my cabin, we
> have taken up the carpets So I have a large cabin floor,
> & 4 smaller rooms that have white floors to scrub, it
> took me 2 hours to day, on my hands & knees, but I
> can do them quicker by & by.[525]

Like thousands of other black cooks and stewards, Benson's job allowed him to make a living and provide his family with their primary source of support.[526] In the Pacific during the second half of the nineteenth century, however, men like Benson had to compete with a growing number of Chinese cooks and stewards.

During the early nineteenth century, very few Asians shipped out aboard foreign vessels as seamen. Most Asians, and the Chinese in particular, who did ship out, did so as cooks and stewards and they eventually became a common feature on Pacific vessels by mid-century. The *Clarrisa B. Carver*, sailing to Yokohama, had a Chinese cook on board who became the steward after the steward refused to continue his work, preferring to sail as a common seaman. In 1876, the *John R. Worcester* had a Chinese steward who Emma Cawse, the captain's wife, said "was

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523 Low, *Some Recollections*, 17-18. Sailors used slush to grease the masts, in order to make hoisting the yards easier, but cooks guarded it jealously. Low wrote "the slush is the cook's perquisite, because it is the grease which comes from boiling the men's beef and pork. Some cooks will make ten or twelve barrels during a year's voyage, and they do not like the boys to touch it, and they swear at them if they drop or waste it".

524 Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 168-169.

525 Sokolow, *Charles Benson*, 70-72.

526 Ibid.

clean & particular…he makes beautiful bread every day & quite often makes me tarts & sweet biscuits".[527] Charley Ah Hee served aboard the *Florence* and helped the captain's wife, Kate Duncan, with her children when she suffered from seasickness. The *Wandering Minstrel* shipped out of Honolulu in 1886 with three Chinese stewards to serve the officers and passengers.[528] With so many Chinese taking the positions that blacks once filled, tensions between Chinese and black seamen could not be avoided. The Chinese steward aboard the *Clarrisa B. Carver* could not get along with any of the sailors who took the cook's position. The steward and one cook argued for two months before they came to blows. The cook attacked the steward with a meat cleaver but the steward got the best of the cook, "so he looked as if he was nearly murdered, blood all over his face". The cook threatened to shoot the Chinese steward, who ran to the pantry to get a carving knife. The cook had to be restrained and relieved of his pistol before things got entirely out of hand. The captain sent the cook back to the forecastle, put the Chinese steward back in the galley and made a stowaway the new steward.[529] By the early nineteenth century, most ships' cooks and stewards aboard American vessels were black.[530] Competing with Asian sailors, who tended to work for lower wages than non-Asians, would have caused a great deal of resentment among black sea cooks and stewards.

As more Asians started to ship out during the 1860s as sailors, cooks and stewards, traditional Atlantic sailors vented their hostility towards them and rarely had any complimentary words for Asians. John Cameron, usually an easygoing and tolerant seaman, referred to the Chinese as "the worst sailors of all". Cameron also wrote of the *Wandering Minstrel*'s crew, "A choice lot of cutthroats were the men. Scrapings of every port in the Orient had been assembled, with Filipinos predominating… Willing as they proved, however, they were not seamen, but ocean labourers,

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527 Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 138.

528 Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 241-247.

529 Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 138. The Chinese steward was forced to get a kitchen knife to defend himself because the captain had taken away his pistol a few days earlier for firing it on deck.

530 Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 168, 176.

and poor specimens at that".[531] Cameron's comment that these men were "ocean labourers" and not seamen is an important and telling one. Sailors needed both strength and skill to do their jobs effectively and earn their crewmates' respect. The largely Filipino crew aboard the *Wandering Minstrel*, according to Cameron, did not possess these skills and, while Cameron felt that some strict discipline might make them more acceptable, the crew could only provide the ship with mindless, unskilled labour. Many traditional sailors shared Cameron's opinion of Asians as mindless "ocean labourers" and found every opportunity to criticise them.

Not wanting to miss an opportunity to criticise Asian sailors, traditional seamen even griped about petty problems they had with Asian crew members. Charles Abbey complained about Chinese sailors who chewed betel nut while on deck, stating: "Our Chinamen came off Sunday night chewing Beetle nut & have done so ever since till now they have to Holy Stone the spit out of the decks where they have deposited it".[532] Traditional sailors also dirtied the ship unnecessarily with their habits, such as chewing tobacco, but these transgressions did not warrant comment by other sailors. Only when Asians committed such breaches, did traditional sailors comment and criticise. In 1859, Abbey criticised the Chinese steward for reading over his shoulder: "Our Chinese steward is sitting by me examining the pages, which he can't read, & asking me my age, & all manner of curious questions, original only in a Chinese brain".[533] Even when a

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531   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 241-247. Cameron also said that the *Wandering Minstrel's* crew that "They could have fitted perfectly into a picture of buccaneers of the Spanish Main if they had only had red sashes about their waists, cutlasses in their belts, braces of pistols in their hands, and above them the Jolly Roger".

532   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 62; Nordhoff, *In Yankee Windjammers*, 99. Traditional sailors seem to have found chewing betel nut a disgusting habit. Charles Nordhoff wrote about Malaysian sailors that, "They all chew betel nut, with lime. Their teeth and lips are in consequence as black as ink, and their capacious mouths, when open, remind one of an *un*whitened sepulcher". Betel nut is a combination mixture of *Areca* palm nut, the leaf, stem, or catkin of the *Piper betel* plant, and lime from coral or seashells. Betel nut can cause an acute reversible psychosis characterised by hallucinations and delusions in predisposed individuals who, following a period of abstinence, partake heavily of the drug. Marshall, "An Overview of Drugs in Oceania," 15-18.

533   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 227.

Chinese crewmate attempted to socialise with traditional sailors, men like Abbey considered it an unwelcome annoyance.

Steam power created another reason for traditional Atlantic sailors' resentment towards Asians. The use of steam engines on vessels allowed shipping companies to hire less experienced crews. Steam removed the guesswork from sailing since the new technology did not rely on the wind for propulsion and lessened the danger from storms. With few or no sails on board, ships required fewer labourers. Only the officers, and a handful of specialised tradesmen such as engineers, needed practical professional experience. Most crewmen had to know only how to heave coal and wait on paying passengers. In short, steam power devalued sailors' traditional skills and labour. Economically desperate Chinese, driven to sea by war, overpopulation and natural disaster, willingly worked aboard steamships for lower wages than other sailors, creating racial tensions among ships' crews.[534]

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company hired many Chinese to work its ships. In 1848, the New York-based Pacific Mail Steamship Company acquired a government monopoly over passengers and freight moving along the United States west coast. Ships travelling by way of Cape Horn could still move passengers and cargo freely but anything arriving via Panama had to be transferred to Pacific Mail Steamship Company ships. The company also secured a large portion of the trade to and from Asia in the Pacific.[535] The company hired Chinese sailors in Hong Kong for round trip voyages to San Francisco and then discharged them after the return trip. The mail ships carried mail, other cargo, and passengers and required large crews to see to the needs of people making the voyage to and from China. Anywhere between 70 and 175 crewmen worked in each vessel's engine room, cabins, steerage, saloons and four masts.[536] In domestic roles, Chinese did not pose a threat to white concepts of labour-based masculinity and white sailors did not mind when Chinese worked in domestic jobs, such as cooks, stewards, cabin boys,

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534   Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 303-306.

535   Weinstein, "North from Panama, West to the Orient," 47-53; Pacific Mail Steamship Company Journal and Logbook, 1883-1885. M-M 1829.

536   Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 60.

mess boys, storekeepers, bakers, porters, pantrymen and waiters.[537] But, when Chinese worked in the rigging or in the engine room of steamships, resentment grew. Resentment increased when the Pacific Mail Steamship Company replaced white and black sailors with their Chinese counterparts in 1867 in order to save money on wages and food stores.[538]

Traditional Atlantic sailors had such a low opinion of Asians that they refused to refer to them as sailors and often refused to serve aboard vessels that shipped too many. In his diary, Charles Abbey recorded the people aboard the *Surprise* in May 1856 by writing: "We have 41 persons on board all told & the steward is sick & two Chinamen & one sailor has had the scurvy ever since he has been aboard". Abbey refers to the Chinese sailors as "Chinamen" while simultaneously referring to the non-Chinese seaman as a sailor. Abbey later wrote: "Presently the order came '*Abbey*' loose the Main Royal & I started up the Rigging when I got upon the Yard, looking round I espied a '*Chinaman*' lumbering along up to loose the Mizzen Royal".[539] Here, Abbey not only denied the Chinese man the title "sailor", he also called into question the man's sailing ability by pointing out that he followed a command meant for another sailor and loosed the wrong sail. Abbey saw the Chinese as a threat to his profession and his maritime identity and, by refusing to consider the Chinese proper sailors, Abbey denied them access to the seagoing labour force, its culture and its community.

Other sailors shared the idea that the Chinese represented a threat to sailors and their profession and attempted to keep them off ships in the Pacific. Sailors and sailors' unions in the Pacific worked to keep the Chinese from working as seamen by supporting the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and denying Asians membership in union organisations. Occasionally, these steps backfired on non-Asian sailors. The Exclusion Act ended up harming both Asian and non-Asian sailors by reducing wages aboard steam powered vessels. The Exclusion Act prevented Chinese sailors from leaving their ships when in United States Pacific ports. As a result, Chinese sailors crewed these vessels on both the outward and homeward voyages at the

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537   Ibid., 63.

538   Weinstein, "North from Panama, West to the Orient," 51.

539   Gosnell, *Before the Mast in the Clippers*, 34, 46-47.

going wage rate in China. The average sailor's wage in American ports ranged from $25 to $50 a month, while the average rate in China ranged from $7 to $15 a month. Employers, like the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, had no incentive to hire crews in the United States at the higher wages and, since Chinese crewmen could not leave their ships, employers had no cause to hire replacement crews in the United States. By hiring Chinese crews in China, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, alone, saved $1440000 in wages during the last three decades of the nineteenth century.[540] Lower wages, in part caused by anti-Chinese legislation, further incited traditional Atlantic sailors against the Chinese. In 1878, sailors working for the Australian Steam Navigation Company went on strike against the company's policy of hiring Chinese and other "non-white" labourers, and in 1885 the Coast Seamen's Union officially took an anti-Chinese stance.[541] By excluding the Chinese, who made up a large percentage of Pacific seamen by the mid-1880s, the Coast Seamen's Union hurt their own cause by creating an excluded labour force, unhampered by union discipline and willing to work for less money, upon which employers could draw to work during labour strikes and lockouts. By the 1880s, the once racially tolerant maritime labour force was becoming increasingly racist and exclusionary, much to its detriment.

Despite traditional Atlantic sailors' claims, Asians often made fine seamen and went to sea for a variety of reasons. As with non-Asian sailors, maritime labour offered marginalised men a means to support themselves and their families, escape obligations, dangers, and hardships on land or find adventure on the high seas and in foreign ports. Fou Sin first went to sea as a ship's boy at his father's suggestion. The young boy did as he was told and returned to his family with a knowledge of trade and foreigners that would help his family in Hong Kong's frantic capitalist environment but, later, left aboard a ship for purely personal reasons, disregarding his father's wishes.[542] The Chinese steward aboard the *John R. Worcester*, who Emma Cawse called "Peter" because she had difficulty pronouncing his real name,

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540   Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 66.

541   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 13-14; Diamond, "Queequeg's Crewmates," 133.

542   *Murder of M. V. B. Griswold*, 16-17.

planned on leaving the ship when they reached Sydney to get married.[543] It seems safe to assume that Peter worked as a steward aboard foreign vessels in order to make enough money to start a new family. Peter's story also illustrates that Chinese sailors, although not following a traditional pattern of familial obligation by staying close to home and family, kept in contact with family members and were expected to fulfil duties owed to the family.[544] The Japanese whaleman, Masakichi, who Lieutenant Brooke took aboard the *Fenimore Cooper*, had a family waiting for him in Japan. Masakichi often worried about his family and Brooke wrote, "Poor Tim, I do hope there will be no difficulty in regard to his return and that he may find his wife & children well". Fortunately, Masakichi received word that his family was well and Brooke wrote that his Japanese crewman "came running aft to tell me that his brother, mother, sister, wife, son all live". As the *Fenimore Cooper* drew closer to Japan in 1859, Masakichi was "becoming very impatient; he walks up & down the deck restless as can be".[545] Masakichi's restlessness shows that he was eager to reunite with his family and that he had probably shipped out on an American whaler in order to help support them and fulfil his familial obligations.

Traditional Atlantic sailors considered Asians cowardly, as Charles Abbey's run-in with the mob in Canton illustrates, but Asians did fight when necessary. Sailors enjoyed fighting, whether in a barroom brawl or in the boxing, wrestling, and head-butting matches conducted at sea to pass the time, resolve disputes and relieve tension. Asians tended not to get involved in the ritualised combat at sea but they did defend themselves against assailants on vessels and in ports. The *Clarrisa B. Carver*'s Chinese steward's brawl with the cook, Fou Sin's knife

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543   Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 138.

544   Susan Mann, "Grooming a Daughter for Marriage: Brides and Wives in the Mid-Qing Period," in *Chinese Femininities/Chinese Masculinities*, ed. Susan Brownell and Jeffery N. Wasserstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 93-111.

545   Brooke, *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure,* 31, 138-141, 155-156. Masakichi's marital status at the time is in question. According to Masakichi's biographer, Haruyoshi Chikamori, Masakichi had divorced his wife just prior to sailing out on the whaleship, *Marry Frazier*. If Masakichi was divorced at the time, his presence aboard the whaleship may indicate that he sought to go off on an adventure to ease the pain of losing his family. Although uneducated, Masakichi received the honorary title of samurai and received financial support from the Awaji daimyo until 1877, during the Meiji Restoration, when he returned to his home village, remarried and became a tailor.

fight in the Spanish dance house and fist fight in the Chinese brothel, provide evidence for Asian martial ability but other Asians also defended themselves when necessary. Despite traditional Atlantic sailors' opinion that Asian sailors were less than masculine, the above stories provide examples where Asian men met the manly criteria set by traditional Atlantic seamen. Asian men often went to sea in order to fulfil their manly duties as defined by their own traditional cultures and understandings of masculinity. Asian men also defended their manhood with fists, knives and meat cleavers at sea and in port.

Asian, European, and American masculine obligations, and how men fulfilled those obligations, often reflected each other rather closely but traditional sailors tended not to look past their initial bigotry towards Asians, seeing only the superficial differences between themselves and Asians, and not the deeper motivations behind their reasons for going to sea.

At sea, Asians proved that, with experience and training, they could sail as well as anyone and, if traditional sailors resented their presence aboard ships, employers greatly appreciated it. Lieutenant Brooke praised Masakichi's skills regularly during their time together, stating that while on the whaleship "Tim" had been "a good and obedient worker". Brooke also wrote that Masakichi was "very industrious, a stout short but compact frame. Is very useful indeed." Masakichi's knowledge of the waters around Japan also made him a valuable and appreciated member of Brooke's crew.[546] Captain's wife, Emma Cawse, appreciated her Chinese steward's talents, stating that he "glides around like an eel, so noiselessly and quickly." When Cawse heard "Peter" was to leave the ship she hoped her husband would hire another Chinese, writing, "they are so clever and quick about everything".[547] Captain Charles Low wrote about his experiences in Hong Kong in 1862:

> We had not been able to get a white crew in China
> and had to ship fifty Lascars [Indians], with a serang as
> captain, and two officers. They all worked together and
> all hands were called when there was anything to do.

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546   Brooke, *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure,* 31, 38, 138.

547   Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 138.

> They made splendid sailors in warm weather and were
> like monkeys in going aloft.[548]

Although most Indian sailors shipped out on British vessels, and rarely on American vessels, Low was pleased to have them aboard, after some initial trepidation. His comment about the Lascars going aloft "like monkeys" may seem like an insult that calls into question their humanity but, for men who had to climb up the treacherous rigging, the simile, in this case, served as a sincere compliment. When Low's ship, the *N. B. Palmer*, reached New York, he lamented that, "some of my Lascars had been enticed away".[549]

Low also appreciated the Lascars' eating habits and the talents of the cook they brought with them. According to Low, they "lived on rice and dried fish, eating no pork or beef. They had a cook who made curry for them, fresh every day, and I had him make it for the cabin, it was so very nice".[550] The Lascars' dietary habits provided employers another reason for appreciation. Rice and dried fish were less expensive than the hardtack and dried pork and beef preferred by sailors from the Atlantic tradition. At times, Asian sailors even brought their own food aboard, saving employers considerable sums. Traditional Atlantic sailors hated rice because it was not "sailor" food and because, as John Cameron wrote, "On Saturdays we had a mess of rice, and a mess it was, half cooked, or boiled to a mush, or scorched. Only Orientals, as I now know, or those who have learned from them, can cook it".[551] Aboard American ships, rice became a crucial economic and political issue that did nothing to endear Asians to traditional Atlantic sailors but did endear them to captains and owners.

Asians' personal habits also caught employers' attention. Cramped coolie ships could be disgusting, foul-smelling places that bred death and disease but Asians did their best to keep clean and presentable. Captain Charles W. Brown wrote:

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548   Low, *Some Recollections*, 159-162.

549   Ibid.

550   Ibid.

551   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 15.

> I was greatly impressed with the cleanliness of these
> poor coolies. The between decks were crowded with
> so many occupants, but the bedding and wearing
> apparel and other belongings…were scrupulously clean
> and neat…I do not know of the people of any other
> nation who would have been as cleanly at as great an
> inconvenience to themselves.[552]

The Chinese's habits appealed to shipowners who knew the costs of dirty, unhealthy vessels where disease could spread quickly. The British journalist "Roving Cumbrian" observed the Chinese in San Francisco and wrote:

> The Chinaman is an admirable man, the best cooks,
> washermen, nurses, domestic servants, gardeners,
> workmen, labourers & artisans in California are
> Chinamen. In their persons they are marvelously clean:
> & they have a patience which is wonderful – He never
> drinks, & for that reason alone the Central Pacific
> Railway have 1 000 miles of line entirely maintained
> by China men – Never once have these Chinese it is
> said failed to do their duty.[553]

What the Roving Cumbrian said of the Central Pacific Railway could directly apply to the many American shipping companies in the Pacific. Unlike non-Asian sailors, who employers' assumed were dirty drunks to a man, the Chinese had a reputation for cleanliness and sobriety. This reputation for sobriety may have been overstated, as China suffered from a crippling opium addiction epidemic that ruined many families and individuals but shipping employers clung to the stereotype and hired Asians, particularly the Chinese, by the thousands. Chinese sailors were so popular with American shipping employers that, from 1876 to 1906, the Pacific Mail Steamship and the Occidental & Oriental Steamship

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552   Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 75-77.

553   Roving Cumbrian Journal, 1871 Oct. 31-1872 Dec. 20 BANC MSS 86/13 c.

companies, alone, hired 80523 Chinese seamen to sail their ships.[554] Such large numbers threatened to overflow the maritime labour community with cheap labour. This did not bode well for traditional Atlantic seamen, who refused to welcome Asians into their ranks.

Asian presence at sea in the late nineteenth century eroded the racial tolerance that had once marked the maritime community as a place where virtually anyone, rich or poor, white or black, Christian or pagan, could find the opportunity to work, start a career, seek adventure or escape shoreside responsibilities. In the nineteenth-century Pacific, new racial and cultural groups entered the maritime industry. Some groups, like the Pacific Island peoples, fit well into traditional maritime society and often enhanced and contributed to the labour community and identity found among sailors. According to traditional Atlantic seamen, Asians, and the Chinese in particular, did not mesh well with the established maritime community and their presence threatened to destroy the labour community's long-held traditions and values. Early experiences with Asians on land and at sea, and the incredible influx of Asian men into the maritime labour force towards the end of the century, unfairly prejudiced traditional Atlantic seamen against the newcomers. Most non-Asian seamen probably would have agreed with British Inspector General of Chinese Maritime Customs, Robert Hart's, assessment of the Chinese when he wrote: "Our Chinese friends have too much 'stay' – and yet too little 'backbone' in them: they are like an air-ball – it remains the same size, but gives way wherever pushed".[555]

Traditional sailor prejudice did not stop Asians from shipping out by the thousands in the nineteenth century. Extreme financial need drove most Asian sailors from their families and homes to the sea. Asians' economic misfortune, combined with their willingness to work hard, also made them attractive to employers, who hired them in large numbers. Instead of accepting their presence, traditional seamen rejected Asians and worked to keep them from serving aboard vessels in the Pacific.

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554 Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 61.

555 Letter 874 to F. L. Campbell of the Foreign office, 15 January 1893, in *The I.G. in Peking: Letters of Robert Hart, Chinese Maritime Customs, 1868-1907*, ed. Fairbank, John King, Katherine Frost Bruner, and Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson (London: The Belknap Press, 1975), 917.

In this way, traditional Atlantic sailors helped to fulfil their own prophecy that Asians would forever alter the maritime community. By not welcoming Asians, sailors from the Atlantic tradition encouraged Asians not to adopt traditional maritime culture and work habits. By denying Asians entrance into the maritime community, traditional sailors themselves altered that community by changing it from one of general tolerance and acceptance to a community of intolerance, rejection and racism. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Asians served as a catalyst for traditional Atlantic sailors to unite together and demand concessions from their employers.[556]

Although Asians' presence united traditional Atlantic seamen, it also created a rift in the larger maritime labour community that employers could, and did, exploit. In essence, traditional sailors helped to create a class of seamen that could undermine their efforts to secure better pay and working conditions at sea. Concerned about how Asians might destroy the traditional maritime community, those within that community, themselves, began to dismantle it.

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556   Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 158-284.

THE IMPACT OF STEAM POWER ON THE PACIFIC MARITIME COMMUNITY

CHAPTER 5

THE IMPACT OF STEAM POWER ON THE PACIFIC MARITIME COMMUNITY[557]

In 1925, Charles W. Brown criticised the younger generation of sailors who only had experience aboard steamships. Brown wrote about his boyhood heroes, officers and crewmen, who "were *men*—bold, brave, honest, adventurous—men who did something, who made their mark on their generation, who acquired a vast fund of practical knowledge from hard experience, diligent study, and travel all over the world".[558] He then went on to mock the heroes of the youths of the 1920s writing: "Comparing my boyish ideals with Charlie Chaplin, Jack Dempsey, and rich, unprincipled speculators of the present day overcome by money-madness and greed, it seems to me the old Master Mariners stand well by comparison".[559] Brown, who rose through the ranks to become a captain, criticised the overly tender and unmanly way that young men learned their trade aboard steamers. According to Brown, "Other qualities were demanded from sailors fifty years ago than those which are required today". Brown lamented that, "Activity, adaptability, and all-around skill are not needed by seamen as they were in the days of the supremacy of the American sailing ship".[560] Brown's mockery illustrates his contempt for the

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557   Portions of this chapter first appeared in *The Northern Mariner*, XXIV(1 & 2), January-April.

558   Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 6.

559   Ibid.

560   Ibid., 16-17.

effect that steam had on the seafaring community and his longing for a time when going to sea meant becoming a heroic, manly figure.

At first, sailors who had learned their trade under canvas resented the steam technology and the men willing to work below decks in the new engine rooms. A. J. Villiers, once a sailor himself, wrote that steamers might not always be able to

> proudly honk along, defiant of the sea. There are
> times…for the exercise of sea-skill in no small degree…
> if disaster is to be averted, when initiative is the quality
> most demanded of her officers. And if they fail? Well,
> the steamer may not be defiant of the sea any more.[561]

Villiers also discussed the character building elements that accompanied sail, stating:

> If the boy comes aboard a little weak and without
> much strength of character, the example of his
> shipmates will soon rectify matters and it will be quite
> a different boy who returns. The weak are made strong,
> the strong strengthened.[562]

According to the author, "there is the value of the actual seamanship experienced that the boy gets in sail that he would never get in steam". Villiers believed that sailing ships cast a spell upon those who went to sea: "And the spell is this—that it makes them men. Who does not want to be a man?"[563] Villiers clearly respected the manly qualities promoted by working with sail. In Villiers opinion, sail, not steam, made boys into men and made skilled sailing men the true seamen.

Steam technology forever altered the maritime industry. For thousands of years, men had used wind and sail to propel their vessels across the world's oceans and

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561 A. J. Villiers, *Falmouth for Orders: The Story of a Sailing Race around Cape Horn* (Garden City, New York: Garden City Publishing Company, 1929), 188, 190-193. Villiers wrote his book in part to convince the British Admiralty that training in sail should be compensatory for officers and crew.

562 Ibid.

563 Ibid.

seas. Sailing required men to possess special knowledge and skills that allowed them to make sense of the maze of masts, ropes and canvas every sailing vessel possessed and separated them from working-class people on shore. During the nineteenth century, steam slowly replaced sail, making the ancient nautical technology and the men skilled in the older technology obsolete.

By the late nineteenth century, many sailors realised that the maritime industry had become a steam industry and, that if they wished to make their living at sea, they had to adapt themselves to the new mode of propulsion. Many sailors abandoned the sea altogether, preferring to take advantage of opportunities on land or simply grew weary of life at sea. Other sailors found opportunities in coastal trading where sail remained the dominant mode of transportation far longer than it did in trans-Pacific shipping. The sailors who decided to remain at sea, whether aboard coastal or deepwater vessels, realised that they needed to employ new strategies in order to protect their labour identity and community and secure better working conditions and wages from their employers. Non-Asian sailors in the Pacific, more familiar with the Atlantic maritime tradition than their Asian counterparts, united together in attempts to unionise sailors aboard both sailing and steam vessels. By the 1880s, non-Asian seamen tended to ignore the differences between men who worked with sail and men who worked with steam. Instead, non-Asian sailors focused on their corporate employers' abuses and racial differences in the Pacific maritime community. Asians became a convenient scapegoat for non-Asian sailors in the late nineteenth century Pacific. As the union movement among non-Asian seamen grew, the maritime labour community became bifurcated along racial lines. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the maritime industry witnessed the opening of the Pacific to capitalist markets, the transformation from sail to steam and the racially motivated fracturing of the labour community at sea.

As ships from the Atlantic sailed in large numbers to the Pacific in the 1840s, sailing technology was at its zenith. "If great length, sharpness of ends, with proportionate breadth and depth, conduce to speed, the *Flying Cloud* must be uncommonly swift, for in all these she is great", announced the *Boston Daily Atlas* on 25 April 1851, when the clipper ship, *Flying Cloud,* was launched in East

THE COSMOS WAS AMONG THE CLIPPER CLASS THAT REPRESENTED THE HEIGHT OF MERCHANT SAILING TECHNOLOGY, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF SPEED. REPRODUCTION BY PERMISSION OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARIES

Boston.[564] As the *Boston Daily Atlas* predicted, the *Flying Cloud* did indeed possess the qualities conducive to speed and uncommon swiftness. On its first voyage from New York to San Francisco in June 1851, the clipper ship completed its record-setting voyage in 89 days and 21 hours and, on 31 July alone, travelled 374 miles in 24 hours. The *Flying Cloud* continued to display speed throughout its service at sea. In 1852 the ship sailed from Whampoa to New York in 94 days and in 1861 it sailed from London to Melbourne in 85 days.[565] Clipper ships in general and the *Flying Cloud,* in particular, represented the pinnacle of merchant sailing technology and the greater need for speed in the rapidly globalising capitalist market.

Gold discoveries in California, Britain's nullification of the Admiralty laws that enforced trade monopolies and opening markets in Asia, spurred clipper ship development and production.[566] Ships sailing to the new American settlements in California and ports in Asia had to be exceptionally swift in order to ensure that valuable cargos arrived at their destinations promptly, providing large profits for investors and much-desired products for consumers. Clippers fit the bill perfectly and the 1850s witnessed the production of dozens of clippers that could complete voyages around the world in well under a year.

The clipper ship's origins lay in the military struggle between the United States and Great Britain during the War of 1812. During the conflict, the United States

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564   *Boston Daily Atlas* 25 April 25 1851.

565   David W. Shaw, *Flying Cloud: The True Story of America's Most Famous Clipper Ship and the Woman Who Guided Her* (New York: William Morrow, 2000). The *Flying Cloud* made several voyages during its 20-year career with notable speeds. In 1852 to 1853, the ship sailed from Whampoa to New York in 96 days. In 1853, the ship sailed from New York to San Francisco in 105 days and set a record by sailing from New York to the Equator in just 17 days. The *Flying Cloud* broke its own New York to San Francisco record in 1854 by completing the trip in 89 days and 8 hours. In 1854 and 1855, the ship sailed from Whampoa to New York in 115 and 99 days, respectively. In 1856, the ship took 185 days to reach San Francisco from New York but sailed 402 miles on a single day. In 1867, the ship sailed from Gravesend, England to Brisbane, Australia in 106 days. The following year, the *Flying Cloud* went from Sydney to Gravesend in 112 days. The *Flying Cloud* ended its career in 1875 when it was scrapped and burned for its copper and metal fastenings.

566   Ralph D. Paine, *The Old Merchant Marine: A Chronicle of American Ships and Sailors* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 59.

had almost no navy to battle against the world's largest and most advanced navy. The United States Navy relied almost exclusively on fast privateering vessels to harass British merchant fleets and draw warships away from American coasts, ports and merchant vessels. Naval inadequacy in the War of 1812 had one post-war advantage for the United States. The war taught American shipbuilders, particularly those in Baltimore, how to build extremely fast and durable vessels. After the war, American shipbuilders applied their newfound knowledge and skills to merchant vessels, developing the "Baltimore clipper". In 1832, Baltimore merchant, Isaac McKim, commissioned the first true merchant clipper, the *Ann McKim*. Built for speed and not carrying capacity, investors regarded the *Ann McKim* as potentially unprofitable. The *Ann McKim*, however, inspired forward-thinking shipbuilders and, during the early 1840s, improved designs, such as the *Rainbow* and the *Sea Witch*, proved their worth on voyages to China.[567] In 1848, when gold was discovered in California, would-be prospectors, merchants, investors and shipbuilders saw the potential for the clipper to make a huge impact on maritime trade with California and the rest of the Pacific. The clipper's design allowed it to sail around South America quickly and withstand the punishing seas off Cape Horn. A $70000 clipper ship could pay for itself in a single voyage to California carrying passengers and freight at $60 per ton. Clipper profits attracted investors and, between 1850 and 1854, 160 clippers were launched for the California and Pacific trades.[568]

Part of the secret of the clipper ships' success was the high quality of officers and men who sailed them. Clippers were expensive to build and sacrificed cargo space for speed, putting efficiency aboard these vessels at a premium. Merchant officers usually hired just enough crewmen to sail their ships safely but clipper ships tended to carry large crews. In 1854, the *Flying Cloud* carried four officers, one boatswain, a carpenter, a sailmaker, two cooks, three stewards and 36 seamen. The valuable cargos carried by clipper ships also required larger crews than usual

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567 Paine, *The Old Merchant Marine*, 154-156; John G. B. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industries and Public Policy, 1789-1914: An Economic History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1941), 257-324.

568 Paine, *The Old Merchant Marine*, 165.

in order to defend the vessels from pirates if necessary. Often with gold or opium aboard, clipper ships held a large store of artillery, arms and ammunition.

Shipowners hired officers with excellent reputations to command the ships, and crews were chosen for their work ethic, experience and sobriety. Sailors usually jumped at the chance to work aboard a clipper, eager to serve on the best merchant ships afloat, see the distant ports to which they sailed and earn the bragging rights that went with being a clipper ship veteran. Money certainly did not inspire seamen to sign aboard a clipper since wages varied little, if at all, from those paid on other merchant vessels. The average wage for the sailors aboard the *Flying Cloud* in 1854, was $30 a month, which was the going rate on most American merchant vessels.[569] Officers also subjected sailors to greater discipline aboard clippers. Captains worked hard to ensure that the vessels operated at peak efficiency and the fast-moving ships developed a reputation for extreme discipline. When Captain Bob Waterman arrived in San Francisco aboard the *Challenge* in 1851, an angry mob met him and threatened to hang him because of rumours that he had mistreated and even murdered several sailors in order to get them to work faster. Whether or not the rumours were true, is difficult to say. Waterman claimed that his crew was disobedient and mutinous and he called for a hearing that never materialised. It is significant, however, that the discipline aboard clippers was so notorious that the San Francisco mob easily believed the tales that they heard about Waterman's abuses.[570]

In 1869, the opening of the Suez Canal created an easier link between Europe and Asia. This ultimately led to the collapse of clipper ships as sailing ships struggled to navigate this waterway. By the end of the nineteenth century, most ships sailing the seas were powered by steam. One of the only survivors of this unique era of sailing was the *Cutty Sark*, which sits gracefully on display in Greenwich, London to this day. By the time the hulls for the first clipper ships were being laid, steam locomotion was already in use in the maritime industry. The French became the first to successfully apply steam power to a vessel on 15 July 1783, when the

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569   Crew lists, *Flying Cloud* and *Albatross* C-A 169 pt. IV BANC. Shaw, *Flying Cloud*, 51. Seamen's wages are in sharp contrast, however, to the clippers' commanders, who received an average of $3000 for a California voyage.

570   Paine, *The Old Merchant Marine*, 174-176.

Marquis Claude de Jouffroy d'Abbans launched the *Pyroscaphe*, which steamed along the Saone River for fifteen minutes before the engines gave out. The paddle-wheeled boat's maiden voyage was short but it demonstrated the practical applicability of steam to river boats and ocean-going vessels.

Other inventors in Europe and the United States had also been working on applying steam to water crafts and the launching of the *Pyroscaphe* inspired them to continue developing steam engines for boats and ships. Marquis Jouffroy's application for a fifteen-year patent was rejected in France and steam engine developers all over the world used his steamboat as a model for their own designs.[571] John Fitch of Connecticut became the first American to apply steam power successfully to a boat in 1787, creating the first truly reliable steam-powered vessel. The small boat moved along the Delaware River at a snail's pace of 3 miles an hour but the experiment was a success and Fitch and others began to develop improved steam vessels with greater range and power, running a regular passenger service from Trenton to Philadelphia by 1790.[572]

American and European steamboat technology was originally developed for inland waterways and not for ocean-going vessels.[573] Inventors and investors realised that early steam engine technology would be inadequate for dealing with the much rougher conditions at sea which, in turn, might lead to a loss of investment and interest in the new form of locomotion. In addition, applying steam to deep sea vessels presented numerous logistical problems. Early steam engines relied on coal or wood as their fuel source and ships could not make long voyages or

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571   W. A. Baker and Tre Tryckare, *The Engine Powered Vessel: From Paddle-Wheeler to Nuclear Ship* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop, 1965), 11,17; James Thomas Flexner, *Steamboats Come True: American Inventors in Action* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 170.

572   John H. Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation* (New York: Stephen Daye Press, 1958), 5-45. Fitch's development of a steam engine for a water-going vessel is particularly interesting given that the United States had just ended its war of independence with Great Britain and there were no other steam engines of any kind in the United States, with the exception of Josiah Hornblower's atmospheric engine used at the Schuyler Copper Mines in New Jersey. The industrialisation of the United States had not yet begun and, in many ways, steamboats led the way in the development of industrial machinery. Sutcliffe, *Steam,* xi-xiv.

573   Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation*, 5-385.

short ones, for that matter, without carrying large quantities of fuel in their holds or making frequent stops at refuelling ports and stations. For the time being, steam was relegated to lakes, rivers and harbours and used for transporting goods and passengers to and from urban areas. By the 1820s, steam-powered ferries, tugboats, and barges dotted the north-eastern United States' inland waterways and became a regular and growing feature on every navigable river and lake in the United States.[574]

But, steam technology improved greatly over the course of the nineteenth century as shipbuilders developed new technologies and took cues from locomotive engineers. Shipbuilders replaced the inefficient paddle-wheel propulsion system found on early steam vessels, with screw propulsion. Screw propulsion greatly enhanced efficiency and increased speed by placing a propeller under the stern of a vessel. Unlike paddlewheels, which tended to come out of the water when a vessel rolled in heavy seas, screw propellers usually remained below the waterline. Paddlewheels also had the disadvantage, according to one critic, of having "five-sixth of the paddle surface…constantly out of the water, and in action against the air".[575] Screw propellers reduced wind resistance greatly, thus further contributing to greater steam engine efficiency. The transition from wooden hulls to iron hulls also improved steamships during the nineteenth century, making the vessels lighter, larger, more durable and more resistant to fire.[576] Better constructed boilers and engines allowed for higher pressure and greater horsepower, eventually making sails unnecessary even for long-distance voyages.[577]

American shipbuilders and investors resisted many of the new technologies, insisting that wooden sailing and paddle-wheeled vessels were adequate for the task of the United States merchant marine. British maritime technological achievements, however, gave them an advantage over American merchant activities.

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574   Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation*, 46-59.

575   Thomas R. Heinrich, *Ships for the Seven Seas: Philadelphia Shipbuilding in the Age of Industrial Capitalism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 15-18.

576   Captain James Williamson, *The Clyde Passenger Steamer: Its Rise and Progress during the Nineteenth Century, From the 'Comet' of 1812 to the 'King Edward' of 1901* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904), 67-80.

577   Williamson, *The Clyde Passenger Steamer*, 301-317.

Great Britain's shipbuilding so greatly outdistanced American shipbuilding that, after the Civil War, most American iron-hulled, screw-propelled steamships were built in foreign shipyards. British maritime profits, combined with American timber shortages in the 1860s and 1870s, and advancements in American iron production, forced shipbuilders in the United States to transition to iron-hulled, screw propeller steamships.[578]

The way steam was used in the early days of its maritime development may have reflected in part the low opinion sailors had of the technology. Sailors saw the ocean as a unique environment that tested a man's skills, physical strength, emotional wellbeing and courage. Boatmen on lakes and rivers may have worked on watercraft but they were by no means sailors.

Herman Melville gives us a sense of how seamen felt about inland waterways. In *Moby Dick*, Ishmael relates a story about a conversation he had at the Golden Inn in Lima with a group of "Spanish friends". Ishmael tells his audience about a mutiny that occurred aboard the whaleship *Town-Ho*. One of the main characters in the story was a "Lakeman" named Steelkilt who sailed the North American Great Lakes. Melville takes great care in describing the Lakeman, "though an inlander", as "wild-ocean born" and "as much of an audacious mariner as any". The author also goes to great lengths to assure his audience that, "those grand fresh-water seas of ours…possess an ocean-like expansiveness, with many of the ocean's noblest traits; with many of its rimmed varieties of races and of climes". Melville goes on to claim that the vessels on the lakes "are swept by Borean and dismasting blasts as direful as any that lash the salted wave", again suggesting that the freshwater Great Lakes are themselves oceans, rife with the dangers and challenges of their saltwater counterparts.

Although Melville does not directly disparage lakes and rivers, or the men who work upon them, he certainly suggests that seamen commonly found freshwater sailors inferior by presenting the Great Lakes as an exception to other inland waterways and by pointing out their "ocean-like" qualities. In his story, Ishmael

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578 Lawrence C. Allin, "The Civil War and the Period of Decline: 1861-1913," in *America's Maritime Legacy: A History of the U.S. Merchant Marine and Shipbuilding Industry Since Colonial Times*, ed. Robert A. Kilmax (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), 67-70; Heinrich, *Ships for the Seven Seas*, 17.

also tells his Spanish friends that Great Lakes sailors shipped out "in square-sail brigs and three-masted ships, well nigh as large and stout as any that ever sailed out of your old Callao to far Manilla". Melville again attempts to legitimise the Great Lakes' maritime qualities by pointing out that the vessels sailing on those saltless oceans were the same as the ships sailing on the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans. Melville goes even further in his description of the lakes by pointing out their cosmopolitan and exotic aspects. Melville argues that the lakes "contain round Archipelagoes of romantic isles, even as the Polynesian waters do…are shored by two great contrasting nations, as the Atlantic is…they yield their beaches to wild barbarians…those same woods harbouring wild Afric beasts of prey". For Melville, experiencing foreignness and change were central to the true sailing experience and most inland waterways did not provide these crucial elements. Inland waterways represented the mundane and predictable, a place where greenhorns, hayseeds and lubbers lived and a place that sailors rejected.[579]

During the mid-nineteenth century, American steamships were essentially seaworthy versions of river, lake, and sound steamers built in the United States.[580] Because steam technology first made its appearance on lakes and rivers, sailors may have perceived steam power as an inland waterway technology and not fit, either practically or symbolically, for the sea. Sailors worked in an environment in constant flux. Swells, rollers and waves made their workplace one of perpetual change and danger, which was crucial to the development of their maritime identity. Lakes and rivers did not change, remaining static and predictable and, thus, were not nearly as dangerous as the ocean. Sailors also lived and worked at sea for months or years at a time, removing them from shoreside communities and families. Inland boatmen could return to their homes and families regularly, distancing them from the homosocial atmosphere of life at sea.

Trans-Atlantic steamship services began in 1819, when the American ship *Savannah* sailed from New York to Liverpool. But, the British soon dominated the steamship industry and American steamers did not provide regular service

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579   Herman Melville, *Moby Dick, or The Whale* (New York: Humphrey Milford, 1920), 293-295.

580   John Haskell Kemble, "Side-Wheelers Across the Pacific," *The American Neptune* 2 (1942): 7; Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation*, 406-514; Beechert, *Honolulu*, 77.

until the late 1840s. The United States reasserted itself in the steamship industry after Congress authorised the Postmaster General to create ocean mail contracts in 1845. In 1847, the United States Mail Company and the Pacific Mail Company were organised and each received a $200000 annual government subsidy. The United States Mail Company was responsible for the Atlantic mail and the Pacific Mail Company's service included stops between the Panamanian Isthmus and the Columbia River. From 1847 to 1848, the Pacific Mail sent the *California*, the *Panama* and the *Oregon* to service its Pacific coastal route. Other steamship companies attempted to establish themselves in the Pacific, including the Empire City Line, the United States Mail Steamship Company, the Nicaragua Transit Company, the Central American Transit Company and the North American Steamship Company but none could adequately compete with the Pacific Mail.

From 1865 to 1875, the Pacific Mail expanded its fleet and extended its services from California to Japan, China, New Zealand and Australia and increased its role in the coastal trade in the eastern Pacific. This expansion was due, in part, to the 1865 Congressional legislation that awarded the Pacific Mail with a $500000 annual subsidy to open a mail line to Yokohama and Hong Kong. In the late 1870s, the Pacific Mail also won mail contracts from the Canadian, New Zealand and New South Wales governments. In 1875, the Pacific Mail reached its peak, boasting 40 steamships in its merchant armada. By the late 1870s, steam-powered vessels were a regular sight in every part of the Pacific, and their presence would change the Pacific maritime world forever.[581] In 1915, Hubert Howe Bancroft wrote, "A dozen lines of steamships, or thereabout, now crosses the Pacific between

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[581] John Haskell Kemble, "A Hundred Years of the Pacific Mail," *The American Neptune* 10(2) (1950): 123-143; Morrison, *History of American Steam Navigation*, 406, 408; Fred Erving Dayton, *Steamboat Days* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1925), 362; Norman E. Tutorow, "Leland Stanford, President of the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company: A Study in the Rhetoric and Reality of Competition," *The American Neptune* 31(2) (1971): 120-129. On 5 September 1851, San Francisco's *Daily Alta California* listed the steamships owned by the major American shipping companies in the Pacific. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company owned the *Golden Gate, Illinois, Oregon, Panama, California, Tennessee, Northerner, Republic, Antelope, Isthmus, Unicorn, Carolina, Columbus, Constitution, Fremont, Sarah Sands,* and *Columbia*; Vanderbilt Independent Lines owned the *Pacific, Independence, North America, Sea Bird, San Francisco,* and *Gold Hunter*; The Empire City Line owned the *New Orleans, Commodore Stockton, Monumental City, Peru, Chili, Coquimbo, Equator* and *New Grenada*.

America and Asia…Ships comprising scores of lines ply along shore, unite the islands and mainland, or sail direct for foreign ports".[582]

Steamers began to make their presence felt in the Pacific world along China's rivers and coastlines. The first known steamer in China was the *Forbes*, constructed by the Howrah Dock Company of Calcutta. The *Forbes*, a small paddle steamer, arrived at Macao on 18 April 1830, but shortly returned to Calcutta because adequate coal could not be found to operate the engines properly, illustrating the logistic need for coal stations. On 15 May 1845, the first American steamer, the *Midas*, arrived at Hong Kong from New York. For the next year, the *Midas* made two round trips per week between Hong Kong and Canton before sinking during a salvage venture to Manila.[583] Several American companies began to run steamers along China's rivers and coastlines, including Russell and Company the Shanghai Steam Navigation Company, Augustine Heard and Company and Olyphant and Company. The China steamers did not include deepwater vessels and the farthest-ranging steamships only went as far as Japan and the Philippines. Most steamers in Asia were relegated to rivers and coastlines because a system of coal stations had not been established, making long-distance voyages all but impossible.[584] By the late 1840s, however, a small but determined and growing number of deepwater, oceangoing steamships began to arrive in the Pacific.

The Pacific, however, lagged behind the Atlantic regarding the transition from sail to steam and, as late as 1885, sailing vessels still outnumbered steam vessels.[585] The Atlantic possessed far more shipyards in both the United States and Europe but,

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582   Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The New Pacific* (New York: The Bancroft Company, 1913), 1-2.

583   Edward Kenneth Haviland, "American Steam Navigation in China, 1845-1878, Part I," *The American Neptune* 16(3) (1956): 158-161.

584   Kwang-Ching Liu, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China, 1862-1874* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), 93, 130; Andrew Porter, *Victorian Shipping, Business and Imperial Policy: Donald Curie, the Castle Line and Southern Africa* (New York: The Boydell Press, 1986), 41, 45-47, 114; From a letter dated 17 January 1883 in which Robert Hart comments on the expense, availability, and quality of coal in China, in *The I.G. in Peking*, ed. Fairbank, John King, Katherine Frost Bruner, and Elizabeth MacLeod Matheson, 443.

585   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 8. According to Taylor, there were 18564 sailing vessels and 8398 steam vessels registered in the United States in 1885. By 1922, however,

as the nineteenth century wore on, fewer and fewer sailing vessels could be seen in the Pacific. However, the days of Pacific sail were numbered.[586] Richard Henry Dana returned to the coast of California as a tourist in the 1860s and marvelled at the changes he saw: "[T]he steamer *Senator* makes regular trips up and down the coast, between San Francisco and San Diego, calling at intermediate ports".[587] Dana's comment suggests that, not only had the California coast become more populated and integrated into a global market economy, but that steamers were a regular presence in these Pacific waters. In 1868, George Chase, a passenger on a cruise from California to Maine aboard the *Colorado*, kept a journal of his voyage. Somewhere off the coast of Central America on 11 September, the *Colorado* "passed the Steamer Constitution, bound up for San Francisco…A short time after, we passed the coasting Steamer Parkerson…also saw a sailing vessel off about 10 miles, the first one I've seen since we left San Francisco".[588] The *Colorado* had left San Francisco in late August and travelled along the busy California coast. That Chase had not seen a sailing vessel after travelling for over two weeks, highlights the slow demise of sail and the ascendance of steam in the Pacific. Just ten or fifteen years before Chase wrote his journal, steamships would have been a relatively rare sight, even along the coast, and sailing vessels, including the impressive clippers, would have been commonplace.

For long distance and trans-Pacific voyages, sailing vessels, which did not rely on a limited fuel supply, were superior to steamships until the 1870s. During a cruise between San Francisco and Panama in 1849, the Pacific Mail steamer *California* did not have enough coal to complete its run. C. Forbes, the *California*'s master, wrote:

> burning all the Wood we can rake together…This is
> close running, our coal is very low and very little wood

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there were only 5399 sailing vessels and 18960 steam vessels. Taylor does not, however, provide statistics on how many seamen were sailing on each type of vessel.

586   Tom H. Inkster, "Last Days of Sail of the North Pacific or Bound for Bering Sea," *American Neptune* 39(3) (1979): 184-189.

587   Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 387.

588   Journal and Letters Recording Journey from California to Maine, August-September, 1868 BANC MSS C-F 117.

left but I must reach soundings [even] if I cut off the
Bullwarks as my Ship is very light & the current very
Strong out of the Bay. If I drift to Sea there is no telling
when I will get back again, perhaps never.[589]

The early steamships that sailed the Pacific were hybrid vessels that carried both steam engines and sails. Long distances, inadequate coal supplies and the unpredictability of early steam engine models made sails an essential part of early steam-powered vessels at sea.[590] Several photos and paintings of steamships in the Pacific from the 1850s through the 1870s clearly show masts, rigging and sails at either end of the ships. This was especially true for the side-paddle-wheel ships that were notoriously inefficient to operate but which dominated American steamship design well into the 1870s.[591] The early steamships relied heavily on sails and only used their engines when they faced unfavourable winds and seas, or when leaving and entering port. When naval lieutenant John M. Brooke and his crew accompanied the Japanese naval vessel *Kanrin Maru* to San Francisco in 1860, the ship carried only six days of coal in its hold for a voyage that lasted thirty-seven days. Most of the voyage was spent under sail and Brooke marvelled at the vessels sailing ability, writing, "The ship lies to beautifully under close reefed maintopsail and fore storm staysail".[592] Early steamships, therefore, still required crews with seamen experienced with sails, rigging, and wind behaviour, and this protected the skills and value of seamen for a while. The use of steam power also had consequences for those who worked at sea and influenced sailors' perception of steamers and steamship crews.

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589 "Journal of a Voyage from San Francisco to Panama via Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego, Mazetlan, San Blas & Acapulco– 1849. Steamer *California*, C. Forbes, Master," in *California Gold Rush Voyages, 1848-1849*, ed. John E. Pomfret (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1954), 240-241.

590 Bateson, *Gold Fleet for California*, 12; Francaviglia, *From Sail to Steam*, 136-138.

591 Aboard the US.S. *C. P. Patterson*, T. Dewey wrote home to his mother that his ship had made over 10 knots "with all sail and steam". When speed was needed, both sail and steam could be employed. T. Dewey letters, BANC MSS 71/98z.

592 Brooke, *John M. Brooke's Pacific Cruise and Japanese Adventure,* 226. The sails aboard the hybrid steamships were few, and the main topsail and the staysail represented some of the most important of a steamships sailing equipment.

Steam technology completely altered the hierarchy and work patterns aboard ships. Before steam, a ship's complement included officers, petty officers, seamen and specialists. Ship's officers included the master and one or more mates. Aboard large vessels with many crew members, boatswains and quartermasters constituted the petty officers; able-bodied seamen, ordinary seamen and boys made up the crew; and cooks, stewards, sailmakers and carpenters made up the specialists, also known as "idlers". With the introduction of steam, came new petty officers in the form of engineers, and crewmen in the form of firemen and coal-passers. Steamships split seamen into three separate categories; the deck crew, who were responsible for the outside of the vessel; engine crews, who were responsible for the engines; and steward's crews, who waited on officers and passengers.[593] Even aboard the early hybrid steamers, the deck crew became less necessary and the skills associated with sailing became less valuable.

This trend towards sailor obsolescence increased dramatically towards the end of the nineteenth century as fewer and fewer steamers were built without masts and sails. As a result, deck sailors became increasingly deskilled. Cephus Pearl, a Canadian deck sailor aboard a hybrid steamer in 1884, wrote that, "work consists mostly of washing and scrubbing, and whoever can use a holystone can be an AB [able bodied seaman]". Another Canadian seaman, Benjamin Doane, wrote: "With the vanishing of sails, the sailor and his peculiar skill are obsolete, and the word 'sailor' is a figure of speech". Their increasingly obsolete status made deck crews, including officers, the minority aboard steamships. By the end of the nineteenth century, able-bodied and ordinary seamen made up only about 25 percent of steamship crews. In short, the true "sailor" was being replaced by the engineer and fireman and sailing men had reason to worry about their future on the seas.[594]

At first, sailors tended to like the early uses of steam aboard their vessels. Shipbuilders and owners, hesitant to change their vessels' designs, saw some very practical and benign uses for the technology. Ocean-going vessels first employed steam technology, not for propulsion, but as a deck tool. Known as "donkey

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593   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 10-11.

594   Sager, *Seafaring Labour*, 260-262; Williamson, *The Clyde Passenger Steamer*, 260-293.

boilers", these small devices were used to run deck machines and bilge pumps. Donkey boilers were used for winches and weighing anchors and freed sailors from the hated job of pumping water out of a leaky vessel by hand.[595] A. J. Villiers praised these contraptions when he wrote that a vessel could "make use of their donkey boilers for lightening labour in a score of ways when she had steam up".[596] But, when steam power was used to replace wind as a means of propulsion, sailors had good reasons for concern.

For seamen, steam had one huge disadvantage: fire. Galley stoves, personal cooking fires and careless smokers made any wooden vessel a potential fire hazard but a coal-fired furnace in the very heart of the ship made seamen particularly nervous. John Baxter Will, a Scottish seaman who worked his way through the ranks to become a captain, did not much care for steamships, especially the American wooden paddle-wheel vessels. Will travelled aboard the wooden paddle-wheeler *Oregonian* and later wrote: "She was the first ship I was afraid being on board at sea". Will continued by stating: "These old wooden paddle steamers, all the time I was in them, looked to me like match boxes; if fire once started, nothing could stop it although the fire hoses were stretched regularly every night".[597] The highly experienced Will had sailed on almost every type of ship afloat during his career but only the wooden steamers gave him cause for concern.

The record of wooden steamships lost to fire justified Will's fear of the highly flammable ships. Between 1848 and 1868, the Pacific Mail had 21 wooden side-wheelers built for its various Pacific routes. From 1869 to 1878, the company lost 12 steamships, three of which caught fire and burned. To put these numbers into perspective, within a nine-year period, the Pacific Mail lost over 14 percent of its side-wheel fleet, and almost eight percent of its total fleet of 40 vessels, to fire.[598] When the Pacific Mail's ships burned, there was always a considerable loss of life.

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595   Butler, *Sailing on a Friday*, 53.

596   Villiers, *Falmouth for Orders*, xviii.

597   Lensen, *Trading Under Sail off Japan*, 1860-99, 116-117.

598   Kemble, "A Hundred Years of the Pacific Mail," 130, 133-134. Kemble, "Side-Wheelers Across the Pacific," 36-37. The *America* burned throughout the night and into the next day. To prevent the fire from spreading to other ships or the city, attempts were made to sink the *America* with gun powder but the blaze did not stop until rain and a steam fire

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company Great Republic in China represents the hybrid design of early steamships which carried both engines and sail. Reproduction by permission of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

While off the coast of Mexico on 27 July 1862, the *Golden Gate* caught fire and ran aground near Manzanillo. When the fire was discovered, officers and crew made little effort to extinguish the flames and the ship was turned towards the nearby coast with the intention of beaching it. As the *Golden Gate* sped towards the shore, the fire spread aft, making it impossible to launch the lifeboats and putting those who jumped from the front of the ship in danger of being struck by the paddle-wheels. When the ship finally reached shore, it was almost entirely covered with flames. Those onboard then had to make the difficult decision of either staying with the burning vessel or jumping into the churning surf below. By the time the catastrophe ended, 223 people had died and the survivors relied on the kindness and hospitality shown them by the people of Manzanillo until the Pacific Mail's *St. Louis* picked them up. In compensation for the disaster, the Pacific Mail provided the crew's widows and orphans with half pay from July 1862 to 1 January 1864.[599]

On 24 August 1872, the *America* burned in Yokohama Harbour. Ironically, the *America's* boilers did not start the fire and could have actually prevented the tragedy. Instead, the fire started in the steerage quarters, which were being used to store hay for the animals on board the ship. At about eleven o'clock at night, the ship's quartermaster smelled smoke during a routine inspection and found the stored hay ablaze. Since the *America* lay in port, the steam pressure in its boilers had been allowed to go down. The steam that remained in the boilers was so low that it could not provide adequate pressure to the fire hoses and the crew, though willing, had no hope of fighting the blaze. The fire rapidly spread and, in less than an hour, all hands abandoned ship. Pandemonium broke out aboard the *America* and passengers, mostly Chinese steerage passengers, scrambled to rescue their belongings. Many passengers jumped overboard weighed down by their possessions and drowned. Others were killed when fellow passengers threw heavy trunks and boxes over the railing and onto their heads. A ladder near the

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engine placed aboard a tug extinguished the flames. Only the burned out hull, which later sank, remained. The cause behind the fire remains a mystery but rumor had it that locals set the ship ablaze because of resentment towards the Pacific Mail for hiring Chinese crews and hopes of looting Chinese passengers.

599   John Haskell Kemble, *The Panama Route, 1848-1869* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943), 144-145.

front of the ship broke as panicked passengers overburdened it, forcing many to jump blindly into the harbour. Boats from nearby vessels pulled several to safety,but 53 Chinese, three European, and three Japanese passengers, perished in the conflagration.

On 11 December 1874, the *Japan* steamed from Yokohama bound for Hong Kong with two cabin passengers, two European steerage passengers, 425 Chinese steerage passengers, and 128 officers and crew. While off Breaker Point in the China Sea, at about 11:30 on the night of 17 December, a load of wet coal in the *Japan's* forward coal bunker spontaneously combusted. The alarm sounded and the crew went to work on the blaze with 21 fire hoses but the blaze spread and, at 12:45, the captain gave the order to abandon ship. Most of the Chinese passengers were in the forward part of the ship, cut off from the lifeboats. As with the fire aboard the *America*, several passengers panicked and attempted to rescue their belongings. The fire spread to the rest of the ship, sending it to the bottom with 391 Chinese passengers, 23 officers and crew and one European steerage passenger.[600]

Fire aboard steamships and steamboats was such a problem that Congress established the Steamboat Inspection Service under the Department of Commerce in 1852. In addition, Congress passed over forty laws, several of which required engineers to be licensed and demanded proof of masters', mates' and pilots' competence. Engineers resented the steamboat regulations and resisted attempts by inspectors to enforce the regulations. Despite the federal government's legislative activities, accidents continued to occur aboard steamships, often resulting in a great many deaths. Although most sailors feared fire aboard steamships, other accidents occurred that sent steamships and men to the bottom. Between 1853 and 1878, the Pacific Mail lost fourteen steam vessels, 35 percent of its total merchant fleet, in addition to the three lost to fire. Although most of the wrecks did not result in any deaths, a total of 555 deaths occurred on five of the wrecked ships, the most catastrophic being the *Hermann*, aboard which 275 people perished on

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600   Kemble, "Side-Wheelers Across the Pacific," 37-38. According to Kemble, a Court of Inquiry at Hong Kong praised the *Japan's* captain, E. R. Warsaw, and its crew, "for putting forth every effort to save the ship, but criticized the insufficient inspection of bunkers and the lack of proper management in lowering the boats".

Point Kwatzu, Japan.[601] Other steamship companies experienced similar losses. The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company lost six ships between 1842 and 1852, to both fire and wrecking and the Collins Line lost the *Arctic* and the *Pacific* within a two-year period.[602]

Each new steamer wreck would have made sailors increasingly wary of steamship technology. Vulnerability to fire, and the overwhelming number of fatalities associated with steam-powered vessels, helped to initially turn seamen against the new technology. Sailing vessels, although an extremely dangerous place to work, seemed benign and welcoming when compared to the potential holocaust aboard steamers. Sailors accepted and willingly faced the dangers associated with living and working at sea but fire represented a danger that sailors could rarely overcome and seamen reluctantly served aboard ships that, in essence, left port already ablaze.[603]

Steamship catastrophes took so many lives because steam-powered vessels carried many more passengers than most sailing vessels. Passengers had crowded aboard barks, schooners, clippers and anything else that could float since 1849, determined to reach the goldfields in California and, later, in Australia. Before the Gold Rush, passengers had only occasionally travelled to the Pacific, usually to distant Pacific Islands as missionaries. But, the population boom on the North American west coast after 1849, changed the nature of passenger travel in the Pacific. During the Gold Rush, very few women and children made the journey to the Pacific and most ships headed to California carried young men as passengers. As steamship companies provided more regular service along the North American coast and Asia, and gold seekers and merchants established themselves in growing California communities, more and more women, children and entire families, made the voyage to the Pacific. Businessmen, labourers, missionaries, tourists, and government officials also started to cross the wide ocean between the United States

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601   Kemble, "A Hundred Years of the Pacific Mail," 134.

602   Kemble, *The Panama Route, 1848-1869*, 140.

603   Nineteenth-century steamship disasters also occurred in the Atlantic, with about the same frequency and loss of life. William Henry Flayhart III, *Perils of the Atlantic: Steamship Disasters, 1850 to the Present* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003), 17-18; Williamson, *The Clyde Passenger Steamer*, 44-66.

and Asia more regularly, creating a market for passenger travel along regularly scheduled steamship routes.[604]

Providing labourers with accommodations proved relatively easy for steamship companies; hold space was converted into quarters by the addition of dozens of uncomfortable bunks. Businessmen, tourists and government officials, however, required more comfortable accommodations for their cruise.[605] Staterooms and cabins became a regular feature aboard steamships during the second half of the nineteenth century, as did a growing maritime workforce who served more affluent passengers. To accommodate wealthier passengers' needs, steamships hired large numbers of stewards, cooks, bakers, waiters, porters and cabin boys.[606] The improved quarters and presence of the steward's crew made travelling by sea much more pleasant for passengers, prompting Charles Nordhoff, once a sailor himself, to write in 1874: "The voyage from San Francisco to Honolulu is now very comfortably made in one of the Pacific Mail Company's steamers".[607] But, the addition of many domestic servants among the crew would likely have threatened the manly identity of seamen aboard steamships. For most sailors, sailing was about skill, hard work, bravery, adventures in foreign ports and serving the needs of officers and crew – not waiting on wealthy patrons and their families. By dedicating so much manpower to service-oriented jobs, employers made seamen's labour less about skill and more about providing domestic comforts and service.

Many steamships began to hire stewardesses to complete their service staffs and accommodate the needs of their women passengers.[608] In 1884, the *City of Tokio* listed a white stewardess among its mostly Chinese crew and, in the journal he kept during his cruise aboard the *Colorado*, George Chase mentions a stewardess who brought him a bowl of gruel one Sunday morning. With women among a

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604   Bancroft, *The New Pacific,* 1-13.

605   Williamson, *The Clyde Passenger Steamer*, 291.

606   Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 63.

607   Charles Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands* (Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 1974), 18.

608   Sager, *Seafaring Labour*, 250-251. According to Sager, seven out of every 1000 workers hired below the rank of master on British steamships were women.

steamships steward's crew, how could seamen maintain the manly identity they had created based on their labour at sea? The sea had been a male domain for centuries and women aboard seagoing vessels, not as passengers but as a regular part of the crew, would have changed and threatened the male homosocial world at sea.

Captains' wives, daughters, mothers-in-law and missionary and settler women, had travelled aboard vessels in the Pacific for decades. Women at sea tended many of the domestic chores aboard a vessel, such as nursing ill or injured sailors back to health, attempting to hold religious services and making sure that the crew was properly clothed, especially when the women were related to the captain.[609] One captain's wife, Mary Patten, had even taken command of her husband's ship after he fell ill during a harrowing passage around Cape Horn. Mrs. Patten had learned navigation on a previous voyage and successfully sailed the clipper, *Neptune's Car*, from Cape Horn to San Francisco. Mary Patten gained the crew's support and, an agent from the Union Mutual Insurance Company, claimed that Patten "exercised a proper control over a large number of seamen, and by her own skill and energy, impressing them with a confidence and reliance making all subordinate and obedient to that command".[610]

Women crew members, however, were novel and an unwelcome challenge to sailors' manly identity and professional worth, even when those women worked as domestic servants. Aboard steamships, men had begun to lose their monopoly on maritime labour and identity. Such a challenge to sailors' identity and marketable skills would have only increased seamen's animosity towards steamships and those who sailed them.

Steam power made arrival dates to ports far more reliable and predictable than vessels that relied on unpredictable winds and steamship companies began to institute regular schedules for their ships' routes. The implementation was due,

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609   Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 78-79, 139.

610   Cordingly, *Women Sailors and Sailors' Women*, 109-115. The quote is from a letter from the Union Mutual Insurance Company, New York, 18 February 1857, as found in Cordingly. Mary Patten became a celebrity in San Francisco for commanding the ship and was mobbed by reporters when she arrived in port.

in part, to the merging of several railroad and steamship companies during the second half of the nineteenth century.[611]

The merging of the companies began in 1869 when the California Steamship Company, specialising in inland water shipping, sold its fleet to the Central Pacific Railroad upon completion of the transcontinental railroad. In order to eliminate competition with the Pacific Mail, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads paid the steamship company over $4000000 to keep their shipping rates high. In 1873, the Pacific Mail announced that it would bypass San Francisco and deliver its freight directly to Panama, thus circumventing the transcontinental railroad companies. In response, the Central Pacific created the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company. After a seven-year competition war, the Union-Central railroad system seized control of the Pacific Mail, which began to work in tandem with the Occidental and Oriental line. Railroad companies had perfected timetables for their rail system and applied the same principles to their steamship interests.[612]

Regularly scheduled routes discouraged captains from attempting to break and set speed records.[613] For sailing ships, speed was of the essence. Clipper ships were designed and constructed so that they could arrive at their destinations and return to their home port as quickly as possible, ensuring the greatest profits. Setting time records and beating other ships in races to common destinations was a test of the skills and manliness of officers and crews. In 1852, for example, a Welsh seaman named William Saunders aboard the clipper *Tingqua* wrote:

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611 Walter Licht, *Working for the Railroad: The Organization of Work in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 79-124; Williamson, *The Clyde Passenger Steamer*, 81-98, 121-179, 291. Captain James Williamson claimed that many of the great changes that occurred in the shipping industry were "due to the transference of control into the hands of great railway companies, with their rules and regulations and power of enforcing them". In Lucius A. Waterman's journal, he kept a copy of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's list of cabin regulations. There were 12 regulations that included rules about smoking, pets, gambling, firearms, meals, etc. Lucius A. Waterman Journal 1869, Jan. 19-March 23: Misc., vol. 467, Manuscripts Collection, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum.

612 Tutrow, "Leland Stanford, President of the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company," 120-126; Kemble, "A Hundred Years of the Pacific Mail," 136.

613 Kemble, "Side-Wheelers Across the Pacific," 22.

> The second day out word was passed forward that
> Captain Whitmore "is out to make a record run." The
> *Tingqua* is a steady and fast ship, her master one of the
> best. We have a good crew, so, with favorable winds
> and weather we should make the Golden Gate in about
> 120 days.[614]

Friendly rivalries sprang up between ships and their compliments to out-sail one another and provided seamen with a great deal of pride and esprit-de-corps. Steamships, however, chugged along at a steady, monotonous pace that offered little excitement and provided no chance for seamen to distinguish themselves. Companies preferred to maintain tightly scheduled cruises for passenger convenience, market predictability and transportation cooperation with railroad lines.[615] Running a steamship at high speeds also burned up more coal, costing shipping companies more money.[616] Captain Charles W. Brown wrote: "The opportunity for exhibition of superiority to any appreciable degree is gone, because the qualities now rest in mechanism and not in personnel". Brown continued, "Captains cannot 'carry on steam,' as they carried on sail. The speed of a modern steamship is largely beyond the control of the captain and crew; it is dependent upon mechanical appliances".[617] Steam took the skill out of sailing and, thus, took the ability to display those skills and take pride in a job well done. Being dependent upon machinery to do much of their labour and restricted by timetables, sailors probably felt much like passengers aboard their own vessels instead of the essential element that ensured a ship made it from one port to another.

Firemen and coal-passers aboard steamships highlighted the deskilling of sailors "trained before the mast" and created a schism within the maritime community. While working with sail required months, if not years, of intensive training at sea,

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614   "Extracts from the Diary of William Saunders, Mariner, 1848 to 1963," *The American Neptune* 17(1) (1957): 22.

615   Tutorow, "Leland Stanford, President of the Occidental and Oriental Steamship Company," 122-127.

616   Liu, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China,* 93, 130.

617   Brown, *My Ditty Bag*, 190.

even the most inexperienced landsman could work as a fireman or coal-passer after a relatively short initiation. A whaling sailor and officer, Frank T. Bullen, wrote: "[W]hat is wanted in a steamer is only a burly labourer who is able to steer".[618] Increasingly, seamen's ability to splice ropes, climb rigging, furl and unfurl sails, and pull the proper lines when necessary, became obsolete. The trend towards obsolescence continued more rapidly later in the nineteenth century as iron-hulled ships, that relied solely on steam power, replaced wooden-hulled steamers equipped with sails.

Transoceanic telegraph cables placed further limitations over officers and crews aboard steamships by forcing regular contact with company officials who informed captains of their destinations and the goods they were to purchase and at what price. Before steam and telegraphs, captains had a great deal of freedom and possessed a considerable amount of knowledge about local weather patterns and markets. In essence, stream and telegraph cables reduced seamen and officers from traders and merchants to delivery boys. Although sailing vessels could seem like prisons to seamen, they also provided a sense of freedom and adventure as they sailed towards unknown ports and encountered unknown obstacles. Steamships, however, in regular contact with their company officials, plodded along in a predictable and mundane fashion cruise after cruise.[619]

Sailing required seamen to work outside in the fresh air and sunshine and sailors only went below decks when they needed to sleep or escape bad weather. The lower decks on sailing vessels were cramped, dark and wet and a place to be avoided whenever possible. Firemen and coal-passers, however, worked exclusively in the bowels of steamships, roasted by intense coal fires and without the benefits of sunlight or fresh air. Working in a ship's engine room was also a physically gruelling job that taxed the stamina of all who did it. Heaving coal into a furnace for several hours a day was difficult enough but, the need for fewer seamen aboard a steamer and the desire to cut expenses and increase profits, made the task far

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618   Frank T. Bullen, *The Men of the Merchant Service: Being the Polity of the Mercantile Marine for Longshore Readers* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1900), 257-259.

619   Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 106.

more difficult. One sailor reported that the work on a steamer "was too hard so we quit".[620]

With fewer crewmen aboard steamships, officers pushed their men harder, giving steamers a reputation for being places where employer brutality was common. Harsh treatment aboard steamers became so common that the National Seamen's Union of America started publishing a "Red Record", which reported cases of extreme abuse and listed the names of the officers responsible.[621] The hard, unskilled labour and harsh treatment found on steamships initially caused most sailing men to avoid working on them when possible and they despised the men who had no experience with sail.

In the 1870s, H. E. Raabe witnessed an event that illustrates sailors' hostility towards steamships and those who worked them. At the Solomon Islands, a group of beachcombers approached the captain of the sailing vessel, *Emma P.,* about securing berths aboard his vessel. The captain said that he needed more hands but worried that the beachcombers did not "look much like sailors". One of the men explained that they had deserted a steamer and that he had been a fireman and his comrades had been "coal-passers". The *Emma P.'*s captain responded by asking, "Ever sailed before the mast, pulled an oar or handled sail? I got no use for firemen".[622] The captain's statements show his contempt for firemen and their lack of sailing skills. Sailing ships needed skilled men who knew the sea and, although the beachcombers had experience at sea, they were not sailors in the captain's eyes. John Baxter Will also noted sailors' contempt for steam when he described an incident involving a sailing vessel that collided with another ship near Japan. A shipping agent aboard a mail steamer reached the shipping office in Tokyo before the damaged ship arrived and delivered the news about the collision. The damaged ship's captain failed to mention that he had struck another vessel and, when confronted with the agent's report, he said, "Oh he is an old steamboat man and knows nothing about sailing ship gear; all bosh". The captain assumed that he could cover up his negligence by questioning the agent's credentials as a sailor.

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620   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 75.

621   Butler, *Sailing on Friday*, 106-107; Druett, *Hen Frigates*, 80.

622   Raabe, *Cannibal Nights*, 75.

The captain's ploy might have worked, had Will not also witnessed the accident. Officials at the shipping office presented the negligent captain with an affidavit Will had signed, attesting to the collision. One shipping office official then asked, "What have you got to say against Will as a sailor?" The negligent captain remained silent.[623] This incident in the shipping office illustrates that steamshipmen received less respect for their seamanship skills and experience at sea than did men who worked aboard sailing vessels. Most mariners trained before the mast agreed with this bias and continued to view steam with suspicion throughout the century.

Economic issues also influenced sailors' perception of steamers and steamship crews. Sailing men believed that their skilled work deserved better pay than that received by firemen and coal-passers, who did low, or unskilled, labour.[624] When sailors received comparable or lower wages than firemen and coal-passers, they most likely grew angry. An unknown author aboard the *Edith K. Couillard*, a wooden-hulled, sail-rigged steamship that arrived in San Francisco in 1849, wrote in his journal on 23 March: "This day has given the men information of their wages being raised to $100 per month and all officers in proportion".[625] The author does not mention how much the crew made before reaching California but it is safe to assume that they were probably making anywhere from $15 to $30 per month. In addition, the author does not mention any difference in pay between sailors, firemen and coal-passers. Although the sailors aboard the *Edith K. Couillard* would certainly have appreciated the inflated California wage rates, they probably would have resented the same increase for the unskilled coal-passers. The journal's author makes no reference to the crew's state of mind beyond mentioning that, the "ships company" was "slightly affected" by "gold fever". Officers hoped that the pay raise would break the sailors' gold fever. However, three men deserted the ship on 25 March, despite the pay increase.[626]

Aboard the Hawaiian steamer, *James Makee,* in 1882, the five seamen aboard made $10 per run from Honolulu to San Francisco but the three firemen made

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623   Lensen, *Trading Under Sail off Japan, 1860-99*, 116-117.

624   Licht, *Working for the Railroad*, 79-124.

625   Ships' Logs, 1838-1851 BANC MSS 93/136p

626   Ibid.

$15 per run. Even the officers made less money than their counterparts in the engine room. The chief mate made $60 per run to San Francisco and the second mate made $30 per run. The second engineer, however, made $100 per run and the third engineer made $80.[627] In 1885, the six seamen aboard the Hawaiian steamer, *Planter* received $30 per month, while the six men in the engine room made $45 per month. The *Planter's* chief mate made $75 and the second mate made $45 per month, while the first and second assistant engineers made $125 and $100 per month respectively.[628] The discrepancy in pay does not seem to have anything to do with the officers' possible racial biases. All of the sailors and firemen listed in the two shipping articles had European names. It is possible that some of the sailors shipping out of Honolulu were Hawaiians who had converted to Christianity and adopted Anglo-Saxon names but this seems unlikely, given that most Hawaiian converts used Christian first names but kept Hawaiian surnames. The difference in wage rates clearly occurred based on the different work done by seamen and engine room men and illustrates the devaluing of seamen by the later part of the nineteenth century. While pay had remained relatively stable for deck sailors, they received less pay than engine room seamen.[629]

Working in a steamships engine room also seemed to have other benefits, such as greater shore leave. On military vessels, officers rarely allowed sailors to go on liberty ashore, fearing that the men would desert and leave the vessel short-handed. Charles Nordhoff, who served aboard an American man-of-war in the Pacific in the 1840s, remembered the despair and anger he felt lying at anchor in exotic ports but not allowed to leave the ship and take in the local sights and

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627 Honolulu Harbor Master's Shipping Articles, 1882. John Cameron was the first mate aboard the *James Makee* at this time.

628 Honolulu Harbor Master's Shipping Articles, 1885. John Cameron as the master of the *Planter* at this time.

629 According to Eric W. Sager, on board British "Saint John Steamers" and "Auxiliary Steamers" in the Atlantic between 1863 and 1914, able seamen made an average of $19.26, Canadian, per month and ordinary seamen made an average of $12.15 per month. Firemen during the same time period made an average of $21.15 per month, and "trimmers" or coal-passers, made $10.77 per month. First, second, and third mates made an average of $43.89 per month while chief engineers made $71.10, second engineers made $59.07, third engineers made $38.96 and fourth engineers made $24.80. Sager, *Seafaring Labour*, 247.

pleasures. Nordhoff later wrote: "We had now been over a year on board, and with the exception of a few boat's crews, not a soul but the officers had as yet even set foot on shore".[630] At Macao Roads, China, the crew sent the petty officers to meet with the captain with a petition for shore leave. The captain impatiently listened to their petition, and, as Nordhoff writes, "curtly refused their request." Nordhoff continues: "And, so, as this was to be our last port in China, our hopes of seeing anything of a Chinese town, were dashed. We all, and with justice, felt deeply indignant at this apparently wanton severity".[631]

The Revenue Cutter *Shubrick*'s log, however, tells a very different story.[632] From 14 June 1865 to 9 December 1866, Chief Engineer, Thomas J. Winship, kept a rather complete log of the goings on in the engineering department of the *Shubrick*. Most logs do not contain much information about sailors being given liberty and only mention it, if at all, when crew members returned to the vessel or deserted. From numerous logs, journals and memoirs written by mariners, we know that officers usually granted twelve to twenty-four-hour liberty on Sundays. Aboard the *Shubrick*, the men in the engineering department seem to have received a much more liberal liberty schedule. During the eighteen months recorded by the log, Winship had a total of nineteen men under his command. Three of the men under Winship's command were listed as firemen, four others did not have their jobs listed but were most likely firemen as well, two were promoted from coal-passer to fireman towards the end of the log and ten served as coal-passers. The firemen received the most liberty on shore, probably because they had a more technically difficult job than coal-passers. One fireman named Chapman, was granted a six-hour liberty on 2 July 1865 but deserted three days later. Fireman, Michael Fleming, who served for the entire eighteen-month period covered by the log, received liberty 17 times. Emille Jacktouires served for only four and a half months and received liberty ten times. Four other men received liberty

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630   Charles Nordhoff, *Man of War Life: A Boys Experience in the United States Navy* (New York: Dood, Mead & Co., 1895), 189.

631   Ibid.

632   Established in 1863, the Revenue Cutter Service was the precursor to the modern United States Coast Guard. Philip Catcher, *American Civil War Armies (3): Staff, Specialist and Maritime Services* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1986), 17.

several times, including William Riordan, who went on liberty nine times before his discharge; John Otgen, with 15 shore leaves; John Harrington, who received permission to go ashore ten times; and Philip Brady, who left the ship 17 times. The amount of liberty these four men received suggests that they were rated as firemen since coal-passers received less liberty. During the 18 months Winship kept his log, 11 coal-passers received leave an average of three times while seven firemen went ashore an average of 11 times. When compared with Nordhoff's experiences aboard a naval vessel, the difference is rather striking. Nordhoff spent more than a year on a ship that allowed no liberty at all, while the *Shubrick*'s officers seem to have allowed leave quite often, at least among the engineering crew. Although we have no record of the liberty granted to the deck sailors aboard the *Shubrick*, Winship's log and Nordhoff's memoirs do suggest that steamship sailors received some perks not given to men on sailing vessels.[633]

John Cameron served as master of a Hawaiian steamer called the *Planter* in 1886 and spent five weeks in San Francisco, visiting "old friends and making more". Although Cameron worked as both a sailor and officer throughout his career, his behaviour in San Francisco was quite unusual. Cameron wrote that during his extended stay in San Francisco that he had "the most ludicrous experiences" with his firemen. According to Cameron, his firemen were "Irish to the man; a better lot I never saw: their work was always done and done well; they could be relied upon in any emergency; they were happy-go-lucky, drunken, and lovable".[634] Cameron seems to intimate that he socialised freely with at least some of the men from the engine room and enjoyed their company immensely. Nowhere else in his memoirs does Cameron mention socialising with crewmen still under his command and this example may suggest the special treatment that firemen received. As a rule, officers, especially captains, did not fraternise with their men at sea or on land but Cameron not only socialised with his engine room men, he also praised their abilities at sea. Cameron's praise is especially poignant given that he had his own reservations about steamships, as illustrated by his comment that "'Tis a shameful

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633   Engineers Log of U.S. Rev. Steamer Shubrick, (C. M. Scammon Captain) H. H. Andrews Lieutenant Commanding, 14 June 1865-9 December 1866: Thomas J. Winship, Chief Engineer.

634   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 236.

confession I now must make: I forsook sail and dallied with steam – this in the service of the Inner-Island Steam Navigation Company, which operated a fleet of vessels between Honolulu and the outlying islands of Hawaii".[635] Cameron's praise may show that he understood the difficulty involved in working in the engine room and that such difficulties warranted better treatment and more respect for the men who did the gruelling work.

Engineer Winship's log seems to support the opinion that firemen and coal-passers had a more gruelling and punishing job than other seamen. Of the 19 men who served under Winship, two were discharged due to disability, two were released due to illness and two were taken to a hospital onshore when they became too sick to work.[636] Illness and disability occurred on every vessel during the nineteenth century but Winship lost almost a third of his crewmen to injury and disease over an eighteen-month period.[637] Working in the intense heat and foul, dusty and smoky air of the engine room seems to have taken its toll on the *Shubrick*'s engineering department. Such working conditions may have led officers to pay engine room men more money and allow firemen and coal-passers greater liberty in compensation for their difficult job.[638] Since military vessels tended to enforce more discipline than merchant vessels, we can probably assume that merchant firemen and coal-passers received even greater liberty than those on the *Shubrick*.

We must, however, take care when interpreting the limited sources regarding the different treatment received by seamen and firemen. For example, Winship wrote his log 20 years after Nordhoff's experiences in the Pacific. When Nordhoff sailed in the Pacific in the 1840s, there were fewer available seamen to replace deserters, so captains often kept tighter control over their men while in port. Discipline was also slightly more relaxed after 1850 when Congress outlawed flogging and, keeping crews content by allowing greater shore leave, may have been more important by the 1860s. Pay was also better in the 1860s for naval and revenue seamen, which

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635 Ibid., 215-216. Cameron writes that he was the captain of the steamer *James Makee* in 1883 and the captain of the steamer *Planter* in 1886, both out of Honolulu.

636 Engineers Log of U.S. Rev. Steamer Shubrick.

637 Gordon, "The Captain as Healer," 265-277.

638 Sager, *Seafaring Labour*, 248.

would have made them less likely to desert when on shore leave. The Gold Rush caused wages to increase for merchant sailors and many naval seamen deserted in order to take advantage of the favourable labour market. Naval and Revenue Cutter officers petitioned the federal government to increase pay for seamen serving in the Pacific in order to keep sailors from deserting to the goldfields or merchant vessels.[639] As a Revenue vessel, the *Shubrick* would also have been in port far more often than naval and deep sea merchant vessels and, keeping the crew aboard ship while in port so often, may have led to more desertion. We also have no idea how often the rest of the *Shubrick*'s crew received liberty, although military vessels tended to limit liberty for their crews. It does, however, seem likely that firemen received better treatment since they received considerably more pay than seamen. Higher pay for firemen meant that they were becoming more valued than men who worked with sail and increased wages elevated them within the maritime hierarchy. The increasingly prestigious position held by firemen would have meant that they received greater benefits and perks associated with their labour. Sailing men, on the other hand, would have experienced a decrease in prestige and had fewer benefits associated with their work.[640]

Sailors wishing to continue to work at sea often had to swallow their pride and accept berths on steamships, either working for less money on deck, or more money in the engineering department. Moving down to the engine room paid better but it forced men used to working in the fresh air inside the stale hull of the ship where they had to learn how to perform new tasks. While in San Francisco, Frank S. Redfield wrote to his brother in 1852: "I have not yet been able to find anything to do though I expect a berth on a steamboat if I can get it".[641] A sailing man, Redfield would have found service on the steamboat doubly aggravating since it was a steam-powered vessel that operated within the confines of San Francisco Bay. Redfield's tenure on the steamboat did not last long and he eventually quit. Convinced of his own skills as a sailing man, Redfield questioned the steamboat owners' competency. In 1853, he wrote:

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639   John Black mutiny records; *Ewing* Mutiny, Court Records.

640   Laura Tabili, "A Maritime Race," 184.

641   Frank S. Redfield Letters: ALS, 1852-1878 BANC. Letter to brother, San Francisco, 12 August 1852.

> I was only about six weeks on board the steamer owing
> to trouble I had with the owner of her he did not know
> how to handle her and would not give me a chance…I
> allow no man to stand on the forward deck and tell me
> how to keep my helm when I am pilot."[642]

By 1885, Redfield was looking for a berth on "a foreign voyage".[643] Redfield's difficulties with his employer had much to do with his pride and identity as a sailor. Having a great deal of skill and experience as a seaman, Redfield resented his subordinate position on an inland waterway boat to a man he considered inexperienced and incompetent. Redfield, like so many other sailors, did not respect steam technology or the men who worked with it.

There were, however, new skills associated with work aboard steamships. Firemen had to know how to tend their machines and keep fires burning evenly and cleanly; coal-passers had to learn how to manage their heaps of coal to prevent them from sliding about in a rolling and pitching sea; and deck crewmen had to know how to work with both wire and fibre ropes, how to secure anchors, how to operate winches and other deck machinery, how to secure and open hatches, how to lower lifeboats and how to operate fire-fighting equipment. Although the skills required aboard steam vessels were more specialised and often less complicated than on sailing vessels, seamen still had to learn intricate tasks if they wanted to do their job efficiently and secure promotions. [644]

Steam became even more unpopular with sailing men, both those determined to continue working with sail and those who made the transition to steam, as the century progressed. The deskilling of the sailing profession following the introduction of steam power allowed Asian seamen with no prior experience at sea to flood the maritime job market and tens of thousands of Asian men entered the maritime labour community in the Pacific, undermining the value of non-Asian sailors. During the late nineteenth century, the Chinese and Indians who went to

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642   Ibid. Letter to brother, San Francisco, 14 October 1853.

643   Ibid. Letter to brother, San Francisco, 21 November 1855.

644   Sager, *Seafaring Labour*, 260-261.

work aboard steamships created an element of racial animosity closely associated with steam that had not previously existed aboard vessels in the Pacific.

Most racial animosity aboard American vessels in the Pacific targeted the Chinese. The steamboats that plied the inland waters of China, and conducted the trade along the coast, had Chinese crews. Non-Asian sailors who had sailed to China would have probably associated the Chinese with steamboats. Between 1845 and 1878, more than 200 steamboats and steamships operated in or around China, prompting the American consul in Shanghai George F. Seward to state: "The only great success of our countrymen on steam navigation of late years has been made here on the coast of China".[645] This association would have led many seamen to be sceptical of both steam and the Chinese sailors who went to sea.

China's internal problems during the second half of the nineteenth century, which included economic depression, natural disasters and a devastating civil war, sent tens of thousands of Chinese men fleeing from southern China. Many Chinese men left their homes to work as contract labourers overseas, or travelled to distant lands as merchants and traders. Others decided to take advantage of the foreign shipping companies' desire to hire inexpensive, mostly unskilled labour and joined the crews of steamships. Many Chinese men who had previously worked on the local river and coastal steamers, foreign sailing vessels, and native junks and fishing boats certainly joined the deep-sea and trans-Pacific steamships, bringing with them the experience gained from working with steam and sail. Of the over 78000 Chinese men who worked aboard American steamships from 1876 to 1906, however, most had no sailing or steamboat experience when they entered the maritime service. While the majority of Chinese sailors came from the coastal provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien, and would have had some familiarity with the sea if not actual experience sailing it, many of those who went to sea from these provinces were newcomers who had fled from advancing armies and economic difficulties further inland. Chinese seamen quickly learned their jobs well and although most Chinese sailors worked in the engine rooms of foreign vessels,

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645   Letter to George F. Seward to Mr. Cadawalader, Shanghai, 13 December 1875; Haviland, "American Steam Navigation in China, 1845-1878," 158.

many also worked on deck, replacing the non-Asian sailors in the Pacific.[646] Non-Asian men who had joined steamships would have seen Chinese men at sea as a direct threat to their economic well-being, especially after tens of thousands of Chinese entered the merchant service as cheap labourers.

Sailors from India also started to enter the maritime labour community in large numbers with the introduction of steam power. Similar to the Chinese sailors' experience, Indian sailors had worked as replacement crews aboard foreign merchant vessels trading between Europe and Asia during the early years of contact and beyond. Most early Indian sailors working on foreign ships had native experience at sea and hailed from India's north-eastern seaboard. Expanding merchant steam fleets, however, required a greater number of labourers to work in engine rooms, on deck and in the domestic positions, and large numbers of Indians from inland areas started to fill out foreign crew lists. As colonised British subjects, the vast majority of Indian seamen sailed aboard British vessels. However, many left British vessels in foreign ports and found their way onto other European and American vessels.[647] Like the Chinese sailors, Indian mariners worked for far less money than non-Asian sailors and employers preferentially hired them over European, American and Pacific Islander sailors. Between 1888 and 1901, the number of Indian seamen aboard British vessels doubled. In 1901, 37431 sailors out of a total of 151376 seamen aboard British vessels were from India, making almost one in four British sailors Indian. On ships crewed by Indians, like those crewed by Chinese, Indians tended to represent the majority of the crew.[648]

Non-Asian seamen would have felt out of place aboard these ships. While non-Asian seamen were often separated by language and native cultures, they shared a common maritime culture and tradition that united them in a common community and identity. With so many Asians flooding the maritime job market, there was simply not enough time to assimilate them into the traditions created in the Atlantic and refined in the Pacific aboard European and American vessels. Asian sailors had to rely on their native cultures, traditions, and identities in

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646   Schwendinger, "Chinese Sailors," 61.

647   Low, *Some Recollections*, 159, 162.

648   Prescott, "Lascar Seamen on the Clyde," 199-200.

order to survive and hopefully prosper in the maritime world, as well as create new maritime communities, traditions and identities. Aboard the vessels crewed primarily by Asians, only a handful of officers, engineers, boatswains and deckhands represented the maritime tradition that had once dominated the Pacific maritime community.

Other Asians also participated in the maritime labour market as it became dominated by steam, but not in the same numbers, or with the same effect, as seamen from China and India. Filipino sailors, for example, remained a small but constant presence aboard foreign vessels throughout the century. Japanese sailors, on the other hand, largely disappeared from foreign vessels by the time steam power began to seriously alter the maritime industry. The political, social and economic reforms that dominated Japanese life during the second half of the nineteenth century also influenced Japan's maritime trades. The Japanese government continued to discourage immigration abroad, even after Japan opened to international trade. In 1870, for example, the United States Minister Resident in Honolulu, Henry Augustus Pierce, escorted Japanese ambassadors on an expedition in Hawaii to return Japanese labourers to Japan. Pierce reported on 17 January that "39 men with two Japanese seamen found in Honolulu, were subsequently sent direct to Japan".[649] The Japanese government also made monumental efforts to modernise its navy and merchant fleets, purchasing steamships from Europe and the United States. Japan's protectionist and isolationist policies led it to hire only Japanese crews and discourage seamen and potential seamen from leaving Japan to serve on foreign ships. The result of the Japanese government's policies made Japanese sailors on non-Japanese ships a rare sight by the end of the century.[650] Large-scale Asian presence aboard ships in the Pacific, regardless of their national origins, had severe consequences for non-Asian seamen.

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649   Henry Augustus Pierce, "Memorandum of interesting events that occurred at Honolulu, during the time I held the office of U.S. Minister Resident – July 1869 to September 1877" (BANC MSS C-D 137).

650   Saveliev, "Rescuing the Prisoners of the *Maria Luz*," 72; Sachiko Noguchi and Alan I. Davidson, "The Mikado's Navy and Australia: Visits of His Imperial Japanese Majesty's Training Ships, 1878-1912," *Working Papers in Japanese Studies, No. 3* (Melbourne: Japanese Studies Centre, 1993), 1.

Since Asians flooded the job market and worked for less than other sailors, the economic impact on white, black and Pacific Island seamen was often devastating. As we have seen, employers favoured Asian sailors who would work for one-third less than non-Asian seamen. The growing Asian presence created by steam technology, however, had consequences for non-Asian seamen that directly assaulted their manly maritime identity. In order to justify colonial expansion and dominance over colonised peoples in the nineteenth century, colonial powers began to recast the image of people of colour.[651] Asians were cast by colonial powers as irrational, emotional, cowardly, effeminate, childlike, simple-minded and backward.[652] In other words, Asians did not share the manly qualities possessed by middle-class, white Americans and Europeans. Employers used these racial stereotypes to justify low wages, poor food and lodging and harsh discipline provided to Asian seamen.

Employers also used these stereotypes to emasculate white seamen. Maritime employers had always considered sailors undisciplined, dependent and childlike and used these supposed characteristics as an excuse to replace them with Asian seamen during the steamship era. Employers claimed that white seamen lacked virtues that Asian sailors possessed; namely, docility, diligence and sobriety.[653] By making such claims, employers purposefully suggested that seafaring no longer required manly qualities like strength, bravery and skill. This suggestion directly targeted sailors' manly identity. Seamen's inability to live up to middle-class standards of masculinity had caused them to embrace the manly qualities that a life at sea did possess and that men shoreside recognised. If working at sea no longer required manliness from sailors, seamen had no identity as men. Because Asians made their appearance in the maritime community in large numbers with

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651   Kristen L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 11-12; Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2-8; Nicholas Thomas, Anna Cole, and Bronwen Douglas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel, and Government* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 14-23; Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 43-54.

652   Tabili, "A Maritime Race," 180.

653   Ibid., 181, 186.

the introduction of steam, non-Asian seamen associated Chinese, Indians and other Asians with steam technology and the dissipation of the maritime tradition and manly maritime identity they had known.

Steam technology changed the way men worked at sea and, for men who invested a great deal of their identity on the labour they did, created a cultural crisis for seamen. During the nineteenth century, the manly identity and community aboard vessels faded as canvas made way for coal. A. J. Villiers wrote that "in comparison with the sailing ship, the steamer is only a sea-factory".[654] As with factories on land, sea-factories deskilled and devalued the men who worked on them and forced sailors to redefine and re-evaluate their chosen profession. Unable to rely on their labour for manly identity, sailors had to seek new strategies and actions to define themselves and their community. Blaming technology and Asian seamen, who were already removed from the white, black and Pacific Islander tradition, seamen, primarily from north-west European nations, united in the Pacific in a last-ditch effort to save what was left of their traditions, community and identity. In attempting to salvage their way of life, sailors from the Atlantic tradition aided in dismantling their own maritime community by abandoning racial tolerance. White sailors became increasingly racially exclusive during the late nineteenth century, targeting Asians for exclusion from the maritime profession. As a result, the Pacific maritime community fragmented and the maritime labour identity created in the Atlantic virtually disappeared in the Pacific.

Many Pacific seamen saw their best hope for their future as sailors and men in the creation of an industrial maritime union. As one maritime labour leader explained at the end of the century:

> An organization of *men* lives on and by the ideal
> by which it is dominated…We wanted to learn to
> so conduct ourselves as to be able to reconquer our
> standing amongst our fellows as men and the standing
> of our calling.[655]

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654   Villiers, *Falmouth for Orders*, 191.

655   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 53-54.

Several initial attempts were made to create a seamen's union in the Pacific during the nineteenth century. In 1866, sailors in San Francisco organised the Seamen's Friendly Union and Protective Society to address problems including abusive officers, known as "buckos", the collection of "blood money" by shipping agents, which was deducted from sailors' pay, crimping and shanghaiing. The 1866 union movement failed, however, because seamen could not sustain a shoreside organisation while they were at sea. A second attempt was made in San Francisco in 1878, when coastal sailors created the Seamen's Protective Union to protect their jobs against Chinese and other deepwater sailors. The limited focus of the second movement made it weak, however, and it, too, quickly disappeared. In 1880, steamship sailors and firemen in San Francisco united with anti-Chinese labour leaders, including Irish revolutionary and socialist, Frank Roney, to create the Seamen's Protective Association. Most of the Seamen's Protective Association's leaders, however, were not seamen and the union collapsed by the end of 1882.[656]

Despite early failures to create a maritime union in the Pacific, Pacific sailors succeeded in forming the Coast Seamen's Union in 1885. Although a successful organisation, the union had a narrow membership. The Coast Seamen's Union initially only included men who worked on sailing vessels in the various coastal trades on the North American west coast. The union also saw Asian seamen as a threat to their future success at sea and excluded Asian sailors, especially the Chinese, from its membership. During the 1880s, seamen were creating greater solidarity and unity of purpose among themselves but in a narrower fashion that bifurcated the maritime community along racial lines. Most sailors involved in the coastal trade were whites, with Scandinavians predominating.

Despite its limited membership, several factors contributed to the successful creation of the Coast Seamen's Union. New opportunities opened up for those sailors who remained at sea aboard sailing vessels and steamships involved in coastal trading. Coastal trading held several advantages for seamen that deep-sea sailing did not. The coastal shipping, especially aboard the vessels involved in the lumber trade, allowed seamen accustomed to sailing vessels to practice their sailing skills. Until the end of the nineteenth century, two-masted sailing schooners

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656   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 4-7; Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 38-45.

dominated the industry and were not completely replaced with steam schooners until the early twentieth century. The ships that sailed along the North American coast from California to Alaska also paid exceptionally well.[657] For example, in the 1870s, John Cameron, still a young seaman, went to work aboard the *Commodore*, then engaged in the Puget Sound-San Francisco lumber trade. Cameron made $50 dollars a month aboard the *Commodore,* almost twice what most sailors were making in the deep-sea trade at the time. Part of the reason coastal sailors in the lumber trade made more, was because they had to load the cargo onto their vessels themselves without the assistance of longshoremen.[658] Cameron's first cruise lasted about three months and he received $150 when the ship returned to San Francisco.

The coastal captains also had a better reputation among seamen than did the often brutal deep-sea captains. The *Commodore's* master, Captain Gilmour, even helped Cameron to manage his money after his first cruise. According to Cameron, Gilmour sat him down and asked Cameron if his mother still lived. When Cameron answered yes, the captain said: "Well here's fifty dollars for her; fifty dollars for the bank; the rest you may use as you please". Gilmour then took Cameron to the Odd Fellows' Bank and deposited $50 dollars into Cameron's account. Captain Gilmour also protected his men from San Francisco's crimps and boarding agents. Cameron witnessed Gilmour threatening to throw a debt collector off his ship when the man came aboard to collect money from a sailor who owed him.[659] Coastal vessels usually did their own hiring and did not go through boarding agents and crimps to get their crews. This practice allowed seamen to keep most of their money, as boarding agents and crimps usually charged outrageous commissions and fees for their services, often putting sailors

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657   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 16-17; K. Jack Bauer, "Pacific Coastal Commerce in the American Period," *Journal of the West* 20(3) (1981): 1 2; Karl Kortum, "Annals of the Pacific Steam Schooners," *Sea History* 83 (Winter 1997-98): 40.

658   Kortum and Olmstead, "...it is a dangerous-looking place: Sailing Days on the Redwood Coast," 4 5; Kortum, *Annals of the Pacific Steam Schooners*, 40-42; Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 6.

659   Farrell, trans., *John Cameron's Odyssey*, 133-135.

into debt.[660] Coastal shipping also allowed sailors to spend more time in their home port.

Most cruises up and down the coast lasted only two or three months before returning home. These short cruises allowed seamen a more stable and regular presence in port. Although gone for periods of time, coastal seamen were not transient. This allowed them to become members of shoreside communities, not just temporary residents of a port's "sailortown". With more money in their pockets and more permanent residence on shore, sailors found that they could more easily start and maintain a stable family life.[661] In 1923, economist Paul S. Taylor wrote that "sailors say the proportion who are married and have families – among the coasting seamen particularly – is considerably larger than thirty years ago".[662]

During the late nineteenth century, coastal trading allowed Pacific seamen to begin to live more settled family lives. The ability for seamen to start a family was an important one. With the demand for sailing skills rapidly declining in the later part of the nineteenth century, the manly identity associated with those skills was also in decline. Although family life was not directly related to the manliness associated with the sea, sailors' ability to support a family was due to their maritime occupation. Their manly skills at sea might have been disappearing but, at the end of the nineteenth century, coastal sailors could lay claim to the manliness associated with raising and supporting a family. A more stable life on land also allowed coastal seamen the ability to form more stable community relationships with both seamen and landsmen. Coastal seamen had more money and permanent residence in port towns. As Taylor writes:

> These men wear good clothes when they come
> ashore, have some money in the bank, live in good
> sailor boarding houses or uptown, attend the better
> amusements which the cities afford, and, if met on the

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660   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 4-6.

661   Sager, *Seafaring Labour*,

662   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 17.

street, would not be distinguished from other good
citizens who work ashore.[663]

Permanent residences in port towns also allowed coastal seamen the ability to
maintain labour organisations on land. In addition, stability on land allowed
seamen to associate with landsmen's labour organisations along the North
American west coast, where they were heavily influenced by the anti-Chinese
attitudes held by most unions and labour activists.[664] With stability ashore and
families to feed, seamen looked to new strategies in order to better their working
conditions, protect and redefine their manly identity and create a new maritime
community.

The ethnic make-up of coastal seamen also played a role in union formation.
Although the coasting community had a diverse population, the vast majority
consisted of Scandinavian and other white seamen. This was especially true for
the enormous lumber fleet, where 40 percent were Scandinavian, 11 percent were
Finnish, ten percent were German, eight percent were American and the rest were
from other European nations. Scandinavians were so prevalent that sailors jokingly
referred to the lumber fleet as "California's Scandinavian Navy".[665] During the
late nineteenth century, Scandinavia was a world centre of progressive politics.
When Scandinavian sailors came to the United States, they brought with them
the ideologies of socialism and syndicalism that were capturing the attention of
Europeans. Scandinavian and other European sailors applied these ideologies to
their labour situation in the Pacific, making the coastal trade a fertile ground for
union organisation and action.[666]

In 1884, a severely depressed economy had lowered coastal sailors' wages to $20
to $25 a month. With sailors used to making higher wages and many starting
families, the wage decrease proved too much to bear. On 6 March 1885, the
angry sailors standing on the Folsom Street wharf agreed to create the CSU

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663   Taylor, *Sailors; Union of the Pacific*, 17.

664   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 13-14; Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, 113-156.

665   Kortum, "Annals of the Pacific Steam Schooners," 40.

666   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 2, 6.

and immediately went on strike for higher wages. By 14 March, the union had succeeded in securing a raise to $30 a month from most of the ship operators in San Francisco and several vessels shipped out with full union crews. The union also created its own shipping master so that members no longer had to rely on unscrupulous crimps and boarding agents to find work. Although initially limited to men aboard sailing vessels that operated in coastal waters, the Coast Seamen's Union laid the foundation for further maritime union activity in the Pacific. Andrew Furuseth, a Norwegian immigrant sailor who became the leader of the Coast Seamen's Union, wrote about the goals of the union:

> Our aims had application to all seamen of our race,
> and, therefore, we have steadily kept in mind that this
> coast was but a small part, and that, whatever success
> we might attain here, it would only be temporary,
> unless our ideals and our purposes could be extended
> to *all* seamen, not only in this country, but in
> Europe.[667]

Although primarily interested in protecting white seamen, the CSU realised that industry-wide cooperation was necessary for union success and extended its memberships to "coloured" seamen on the coast on 1 April 1885. On 10 April, the union also decided to allow deepwater sailors to join. Non-Asian sailors' animosity towards the Chinese, however, was too deeply ingrained in the maritime community and, at a meeting in December 1885, the union members refused to include Chinese seamen. Many coastal sailors had left deep-sea sailing because of Chinese wage competition and they wanted to protect their new occupations from similar circumstances. In 1886, the Coast Seamen's Union assisted the coastal seamen aboard steam vessels in creating the Steamship Sailors Protective Union. In 1891, the 3000 member Coast Seamen's and the 1000 Steamship Sailors Protective Union merged to create the Sailors' Union of the Pacific (SUP),

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667   Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 53-54.

uniting seamen aboard sailing vessels and steamships into a single organisation for the first time. Once again, however, Chinese sailors were excluded.[668]

The creation of the CSU and the SUP represented several important changes in the maritime industry. The unions represented the creation of a Pacific maritime community related to, but separate from, the traditions and culture created by Atlantic seamen prior to the nineteenth century. The creation of more shipyards in the Pacific and the rise of new urban centres, especially on the North American west coast, made Pacific seamen a native presence.[669] The goals of the CSU and SUP illustrated that Pacific seamen faced challenges unique to their maritime work environment. Union activity allowed non-Asian seamen to protect themselves economically, demand better working conditions at sea and create a labour community and culture with men who held many of the same ideals about what it meant to be a sailor.

As previously mentioned, steamships altered the maritime industry worldwide during the nineteenth century. Due to the greater number of steamships in their ocean in the nineteenth century, Atlantic seamen felt the impact of steam first and most profoundly. The Pacific, however, had a native Asian workforce willing to work for lower wages than non-Asian seamen. The presence of thousands of mostly unskilled Asian sailors aboard the steamships of large shipping companies contributed to non-Asian seamen's bias against steam and Asians in the Pacific. Seamen were unimpressed with Asian sailing credentials during the mid-nineteenth century and sailor animosity increased by the end of the 1880s. Sailors dedicated to working with canvas linked steam technology with unskilled, cheap Asian labour and non-Asians who worked aboard steam vessels saw Asian men as a threat to their livelihood. The Chinese represented the single largest Asian presence aboard American vessels and, so, bore the brunt of anti-Asian sentiment from the non-Asians who sailed under the United States ensign. The anti-Chinese movements started by working-class leaders and organisations along the west

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668   Schwartz, *Brotherhood of the Sea*, 10-22; Taylor, *The Sailors' Union of the Pacific*, 46-49, 57-65.

669   Bauer, "Pacific Coastal Commerce in the American Period," 11-14; Thomas R. Cox, "Single Decks and Flat Bottoms: Building the West Coast's Lumber Fleet, 1850-1929," *Journal of the West* 20(3) (1981): 65-72.

coast of the United States also influenced non-Asian Pacific seamen's perception of the Chinese. The combined presence of tens of thousands of Chinese seamen, and steam technology in the Pacific, created a dilemma for non-Asian sailors that threatened to deskill, devalue and replace them and their maritime community and identity. In order to protect their jobs, their manly identity and their labour culture, non-Asian seamen decided to unite under the union banner.

The advent of the unions heralded a new maritime community in the Pacific but it was a community that was far narrower than in previous decades or centuries. While sailors never created a racial utopia aboard sailing ships, they did express a racial tolerance that allowed whites, blacks, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders and to a far lesser degree, Asians, to serve together aboard vessels in the Pacific.

Steam, and the seemingly sudden appearance of large numbers of Chinese at sea, however, created a new era of racial intolerance and exclusion in the Pacific. When maritime missionary, John B. Romeyn, stated in 1819 that maritime commerce "makes those engaged in its pursuits citizens of the world. It subdues their national prejudices, and overcomes their local feelings", he could not have foreseen the changes that would occur to the sailing profession in the Pacific during the second half of the nineteenth century.[670] By 1885, seamen in the Pacific neither subdued their national prejudices, nor overcame their local feelings. A clear line between Asians and non-Asians had been drawn. Everyone in the maritime industry, to one degree or another, participated in the dissolution of racial tolerance and maritime traditions and culture at sea. Employers eagerly deskilled labour at sea by converting to steam propulsion and hired cheaper, less-skilled Asian seamen over their non-Asian counterparts; Asian seamen willingly worked for less money and refused to adopt the maritime customs they found on American and European vessels; non-Asian seamen refused to acknowledge the contributions and skills of Asian sailors and ultimately excluded them from the non-Asian maritime community. By the end of the nineteenth century, the maritime labour force was bitterly divided and racially antagonistic.

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670   Romeyn, *A Sermon Delivered in the Middle Dutch Church,* 12.

THE CREATION OF A NEW MARITIME IDENTITY

Conclusion

The creation of a new maritime identity

Like George Clement Perkins, many seamen who went to the Pacific had their own dreams of achieving success and prosperity but most did not find it. Most sailors in the Pacific, like German-born Adolphus Windeler and American-born Frank S. Redfield, ended up spending most of their working lives at sea and many died young, with little or no money. For the most part, seamen found the Pacific a place of hard work and danger that held fewer and fewer economic and social opportunities as the century progressed. Most sailors returned to the sea disappointed and angry at their failed attempts to secure a better life for themselves. The gathering on San Francisco's Folsom Street wharf in March 1885, which led to the creation of the Coast Seamen's Union was, in many ways, a culmination of three and a half decades of disappointment for sailors in the Pacific.

Initially, the vast Pacific Ocean offered the promises of adventure, good wages, and, for the lucky ones, like Perkins, the possibility of a life of luxury and wealth. After a few short years of relative prosperity for Pacific seamen, the harsh realities of the maritime industry re-emerged and dashed the hopes of sailors looking for more than hard, dangerous, uncomfortable labour at low wages.

By the time the Coast Seamen's Union and the Steamship Sailors Protective Union merged in 1891 to form the Sailor's Union of the Pacific, several changes had occurred in the Pacific maritime world. Sailors aboard American and European ships carried to the Pacific a maritime culture and identity that seamen had constructed over several centuries in the Atlantic. The Atlantic maritime labour community tended to ignore national and racial differences in the work

place increasingly and united around concepts of manliness and the common experiences associated with working at sea. Unable to maintain the stable family life that provided landsmen with a sense of manliness and accomplishment, sailors focused on the common dangers, abuses and hard work that constituted a life at sea in order to define themselves as men. Sailors' identity became almost inseparable from their work and its manly qualities but, as fundamental demographic and technological transformations occurred, so, too, did sailor identity transform. By uniting together in labour organisations in the late-nineteenth century, non-Asian sailors showed their desire to protect their livelihood and to maintain the maritime cultural identity that they shared in common. However, change was inevitable and non-Asian seamen's insistence on clinging to old identities led them to alter the maritime labour community in even more profound ways.

Laying much of the blame for their disappointment and loss of manly identity and compensation on Asian sailors, non-Asian sailors created unions that excluded Asians and eventually began to discriminate against, although not necessarily exclude, all non-white mariners. Under the heading of the SUP, union sailors continued to deny membership to Asian sailors while working to secure more concessions from employers for white sailors. In 1895, the SUP supported the McGuire Act, which addressed the most heinous abuses against seamen, such as punishment for desertion, wage advancements and allotments. The SUP continued to make progress when Congress passed the 1915 Seamen's Act. The act included abolishing punishment for desertion in foreign ports, provided crews' rights to demand safety inspections on their vessels and allowed sailors to collect damages for officer and owner neglect. The SUP and other maritime unions also supported the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, which not only required that vessels flying the United States flag be built in the United States, be owned by United States citizens and be subject to United States laws, but that United States citizens constitute all of the officers and 75 percent of the crewmen aboard. With the threat of war looming over Asia and Europe in the 1930s, sailors' unions all over the United States supported the Maritime Act of 1936, which called for the creation of 500 United States built, owned and crewed vessels to replace the aging American merchant fleet. Although these acts would have virtually eliminated any serious

competition from Asian seamen aboard United States vessels, racial discrimination continued and expanded to target other racial groups who possessed United States citizenship, namely, African Americans.

In the early twentieth century, the SUP joined the International Seamen's Union (ISU), an anti-militant craft union that maintained control over several maritime unions across the United States. Like the SUP, most of the ISU unions had exclusionary and discriminatory policies based on race. The SUP, and other unions in the ISU, continued to practice racial discrimination but, as the twentieth century progressed, legal, economic and social pressures began to make such discriminatory practices increasingly untenable. New Deal reforms made racial discrimination in the workplace increasingly difficult, as evidenced by the Work Projects Administration (WPA), which employed both white and non-white workers and gave non-whites legal recourse against local communities as well as supervisors.[671]

This trend continued and came to fruition during the Second World War when then president Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 forbidding companies with government contracts to discriminate based on race, colour or national origin. The Pacific merchant fleet expanded and participated heavily in the war under government contracts against the Japanese. Although 8802 specifically forbade employers from discrimination, unions could find themselves in violation by essentially forcing employers who employed union workers to break the law through union membership discrimination. As a result, unions had to alter their membership practices. However, with a shortage of merchant seamen and high wages, few white sailors complained about opening their doors to non-whites during the war.

From 1950 to 1980, the SUP successfully fought for better wages, individual crew quarters, heating and ventilation, laundry services, onboard recreational facilities and guarantees that employers would follow the McGuire and 1915 Seamen's acts faithfully but continued to struggle with racial issues. After the Second World

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671 Lizbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 279-282.

War, race-based discrimination among maritime unions continued to decline but remained a problem. For example, in the 1955 case *National Labour Relations Board v. Pacific American Shipowners Association* the Ninth Circuit of the United States Court of Appeals sighted the SIU, Pacific District, consisting of the Marine Firemen's Union, Sailors Union of the Pacific, and Marine Cooks and Stewards, as having a "long history of discrimination against negro seamen". In response, the SIU promised to "refrain from its discriminatory practices".[672] The SIU held true to its pledge to remedy its discrimination issues and sailors' unions continued to better their racial record, if slowly.

The economic realities of the United States merchant fleet, however, had more to do with racial integration than the laws and trends of the Second World War and post-war legal action and legislation. Unwilling to comply with U.S. maritime and labour laws and regulations, many shipping companies sold their assets to foreign companies. Others moved their operational bases overseas or registered vessels under the flags of other nations with more lax regulations, effectively giving up United States status.

The Second World War proved the high-water mark of the United States merchant fleet and, immediately following the war, United States merchant vessels represented 43 percent of the world's shipping. Between 1950 and 1970, United States shipping went from about 2000 vessels to under 900. By the mid-1990s, the United States merchant fleet had plummeted to just over 300 vessels. Due to an increase in global commerce and shipping in the early twenty-first century, the United States merchant fleet slowly grew to almost 500 vessels by 2005. However, the shrinking of the United States maritime industry is not only a matter of fewer vessels at sea. Few young Americans are choosing to go to sea as a career and a labour shortage looms for the United States merchant fleet. As a result, quotas

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672   218 F.2d 913 *National Labour Relation Board, Petitioner, v. Pacific American Shipowners Association,* Pacific Maritime Association, Alaska Steamship Company, American Mail Line, Ltd., Pope & Talbot, Inc., and National Union of Marine Cooks & Stewards, Respondents. No. 13386. United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit. 22 January 1955.

requiring a percentage of United States citizens serving aboard merchant ships may have to be loosened in order to meet labour requirements.[673]

In the meantime, seamen from the Philippines, Malaysia, India, and other areas surrounding the Pacific and Indian oceans, have been making up disproportionate numbers of merchant mariners in the Pacific and beyond. The SUP and other maritime unions also began to make a greater effort at international organising since the 1980s as the demographics of the Pacific maritime labour community became increasingly Asian. This is probably a wise policy since the dominance of Asian seamen on the world's oceans only shows signs of increasing as China comes into economic maturity and continues to expand its own merchant fleets to trade on the global market.

As more Asians flood the Pacific maritime labour force, and fewer and fewer non-Asians participate in the industry as labourers, Asians promise to create, or perhaps continue to create, the new maritime labour identity. What lessons, if any, can they and others learn from the reaction of non-Asian sailors in the Atlantic during the nineteenth century? Will Asian seafarers prove more inclusive than their non-Asian, nineteenth-century counterparts? Will they rebuild the cosmopolitan community and identity that once marked the maritime community that came from the Atlantic to the Pacific in previous centuries? Will they make the same mistakes and eventually turn to racial, ethnic, and national exclusivity, essentially creating competition and division that will work against their own interests? Will they create a completely different community and identity based on working at sea that meets the unique needs of an international workforce entering a new era of global trade? Or, will they grow weary of the working conditions of a life at sea and look for other employment so that they "can live without going to sea"?

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673   H. David Bess and Martin T. Farris, *U.S. Maritime Policy: History and Prospects* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981), 99-217; Benjamin W. Labaree, William M. Fowler, Jr., John B. Hattenfdorf, Jefferey J. Safford, Edward W. Sloan, and Andrew W. German, *America and the Sea: A Maritime History* (Mystic, Connecticut: Mystic Seaport Museum, Inc., 1998), 591-626.

Pacific shipwrecks and disappearances, 1810-1873

Pacific shipwrecks/disappearances as reported in various U.S. newspapers.

Pre-1848

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION*
Resource	reef	Agrihan	1820	
Wm. Penn	reef	Aitutaki	1847	
Baltic	reef	Bering	1847	
Thule	reef	Booby Reef	1845	
Erie	reef	Chatham	1840	
America	reef	Chatham	1845	
Chelsea	reef	Chatham	1845	
Damon	reef	Chatham	1847	
North America	reef	Chatham	1840	
Phantom	foul play	Chatham	1847	
Briton	reef	Christmas	1837	British
Bremen	reef	Christmas	1847	German
Stirling Castle	reef	Elizabeth Reef	1837	British
Emerald	reef	Fakarava	1843	
Pearl	reef	Fanning	1823	
Eliza Corry	reef	Fiji	1809	
Meridian	reef	Fiji	1836	
Reaper	reef	Fiji	1836	
Anastasia	typhoon	Fiji	1836	
Independence	typhoon	Fiji	1837	
Shylock	reef	Fiji	1841	
Benezet	reef	Fiji	1843	
Elizabeth	fire	Fiji	1846	
Canton Packet	fire	Fiji	1846	
Hercules	reef	Fiji	1847	
Russell	reef	Fiji	1847	
Jefferson	reef	Hawaii	1842	
Martha	reef	Helen Reef	1810	
Essex	whale	Henderson	1820	

PRE-1848 CONTINUED...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION*
Panama	reef	Hiva-Oa	1844	
Henry	reef	Hiva-Oa	1847	
Mary	reef	Jarvis	1825	
Marys	reef	Juan Fernandez	1833	
William Thompson	fire	Kauai	1847	
Gledstanes	reef	Kure	1837	
Parker	reef	Kure	1841	
Davis Paddock	reef	La Perouse St.	1848	
Holder Borden	reef	Lisiansky	1844	
Konohasset	reef	Lisiansky	1846	
Active	reef	Lobos De Afuera	1839	French
Resource	reef	Marianas	1817	
Sultana	reef	Marutea	1832	
Drimo	reef	Maui	1845	
Cadmus	reef	Morane	1843	
Brilliant	reef	New Zealand	1839	
Warren	reef	New Zealand	1839	
Falco	reef	New Zealand	1846	
Delphos	reef	New Zealand	1847	
Hope	reef	New Zealand	1849	
Dash	reef	Ngulu	1834	
Albert Henry	unknown	Nicaragua	1847	
Ann Alexander	unknown	Nuku Hiva	1847	
Catherine	fire	Oahu	1834	
Wilmington	reef	Oahu	1844	
William Nielson	unknown	Oahu	1847	
Tim Pickering	reef	Ovalau	1848	
Lydia	fire	Pacific Ocean	1835	
Pearl	gale	Pacific Ocean	1843	
Valetta	reef	Palau	1826	
Mentor	reef	Palau	1832	
Heroine	reef	Palmerston	1846	
Shaw	reef	Ponape	1843	
17 unnamed whalers	typhoon	Ponape	1848	
Averick	reef	Raiatea	1845	
Hiram	reef	Raiatea	1847	

PRE-1848 CONTINUED...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION*
Charles Doggett	reef	Rarotonga	1836	
Tacitus	reef	Rarotonga	1845	
Falcon	unknown	Rurutu	1826	
Paragon	flood	Society	1827	
Independence	reef	Starbuck	1836	
Corsair	reef	Tabiteuea	1835	British
Oregon	reef	Tahiti	1837	
Sir Andrw. Hammond	reef	Tahiti	1842	
U.S. Perry	reef	Tahiti	1845	
Telegaaph	reef	Tahuata	1836	
Neva	reef	Tasmania	1835	
United States	reef	Tongatabu	1848	
Ceres	reef	Tonumeia	1821	British
Ann	unknown	Torres Strait	1835	
Fawn	reef	Vanua Levu	1830	
Glide	reef	Vanua Levu	1831	
Oeno	reef	Vatoa	1825	

POST-1848

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION
Hope	reef	Australia	1864	
Dayspring	flood	Australia	1871	British
Virginia	reef	Baker	1859	British
Asterion	reef	Baker	1864	
Lady Washington	reef	Baker	1864	
St. Charles	reef	Baker	1864	
Mattapan	gale	Baker	1864	
Mary L. Sutton	reef	Baker	1865	
Seaman's Bride	reef	Baker	1865	
Minnehaha	reef	Baker	1868	British
Shaftsbury	reef	Baker	1869	British
Mattie Banks	reef	Baker	1869	British
Robin Hood	fire	Baker	1869	

Post-1848 continued...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION
Liebig	reef	Baker	1871	German
Napier	reef	Baker	1871	British
Ontario	reef	Butaritari	1852	
Canton	reef	Canton	1854	
Cathedral	gale	Cape Horn	1857	
Fleetwood	iceberg	Cape Horn	1859	
Antarctic	reef	Chatham	1853	
St. Peter	flood	Chatham	1855	
Elizabeth	reef	Chatham	1858	French
Empire	reef	Chatham	1862	
Alabama	reef	Chatham	1865	
Isabella	reef	Chile	1850	
Chalcedony	reef	Chile	1850	
Chatsworth	unknown	Chile	1860	
Maria Helena	reef	Christmas	1848	Chilean
J. E. O'Donnell	reef	Christmas	1848	
Robert Pulsford	reef	Christmas	1853	
John C. Fremont	reef	Christmas	1857	
Levant	reef	Christmas	1861	
Wild Wave	reef	Christmas	1858	
Zorgen Lorentzen	reef	Christmas	1863	
Logan	reef	Conway Reef	1855	
Pfeil	reef	Ebon	1859	German(?)
Tyrian	reef	Elizabeth Reef	1852	British
Vaquero	reef	Elizabeth Reef	1859	
Defender	reef	Elizabeth Reef	1859	
Mary Taylor	reef	Eua	1856	
Maria	reef	Fairway Reef	1855	
Sir George Grey	reef	Fangataufa	1866	Chilean(?)
Noonday	reef	Farallones	1863	
Collcastle	reef	Fiji	1849	British
United States	reef	Fiji	1849	
Sabine	reef	Fiji	1850	
Solomon Saltus	reef	Fiji	1852	British
Ceres	reef	Fiji	1853	
Plover	reef	Fiji	1865	

POST-1848 CONTINUED...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION
Oregon	reef	Fiji	1866	
Sea Breeze	flood	Fiji	1865/66	
Albatross	reef	Fiji	1870	
Electra	reef	Fox Islands	1863	
South Seaman	reef	French Frigate	1859	
Wanderer	reef	French Frigate	1859	
Daniel Wood	reef	French Frigate	1867	
Brandt	reef	Galapagos	1853	
Catherwood	reef	Galapagos	1856	
Austerlitz	typhoon	Guam	1852	
King Fisher	reef	Guam	1855	
Enterprise	reef	Guam	1855	
Edgar	reef	Guam	1855	
E.L.B. Jenney	reef	Guam	1862	
Emma Rooke	reef	Hawaii	1864	
Hornet	fire	Hawaii	1866	
Maria	reef	Hawaii	1869	
Tobacco Plant	fire	Hawaii	1849	
Brothers	fire	Hawaii	1850	
George Thacher	reef	Hawaii	1852	
Twilight	reef	Hiva-Oa	1859	
Charles Wirgman	typhoon	Hong Kong	1848	
Anglo Saxon	reef	Howland	1862	
Mason	reef	Howland	1863	
Arno	reef	Howland	1864	
Mary Robinson	reef	Howland	1864	
White Swallow	reef	Howland	1864	
St. Charles	reef	Howland	1864	
Monsoon	reef	Howland	1865	
Kathay	reef	Howland	1867	
Lizzie Oakford	reef	Howland	1868	
Washington	reef	Howland	1868	
Margaret	reef	Huahine	1859	
Clematis	reef	Indispensable	1862	
Syringa	reef	Jaluit	1868	British
Canton Packet	reef	Japan	1867	

Post-1848 continued...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION
Silver Star	reef	Jarvis	1860	
Abby Brown	reef	Johnston	1859	
Townsend	fire	Juan Fernandez	1854	
Horsburg	flood	Juan Fernandez	1860	
Marilda	reef	Kahulaui	1870	
John Wesley	reef	Kauai	1854	
Kalama	reef	Kauai	1856	
Elizabeth and Henry	reef	Kume Shima	1849	British
U.S.S. Saginaw	reef	Kure	1870	
Paragon	reef	Kusaie	1853	
Emigrant	gale	L'Esperance	1849	
Alexander Coffin	iceberg	Makanrushi	1856	
Robert Towns	reef	Malo	1873	British
Frances	reef	Mangaia	1853	
Speculateur	gale	Manua Group	1850	
William T. Sayward	unknown	Marianas	1855	
John N. Gossler	reef	Marianas	1855	
Huntress	reef	Maro Reef	1852	
Twilight	gale	Marquesas	1860	
Maria	reef	Marshall	1863	
Sophia	gale	Maui	1850	
Libelle	reef	Minerva Reef	1866	
Caroline	reef	Minerva Reef	1859	
George and Susan	reef	Minto Reef	1860	
Jacob B. Lancaster	flood	Molokai	1859	
Mary Hamilton	reef	Nepean	1873	
Arabia	reef	New Zealand	1852	
Alexander	reef	New Zealand	1859	
Flying Mist	reef	New Zealand	1862	
Cambodia	reef	New Zealand	1867	British
Sarah Mooers	reef	Ngatik	1854	
Legerde Main	reef	Niue	1852	British
John William	reef	Niue	1867	
Novelty	reef	Nukunono	1851	
Caroline	reef	Oahu	1850	British
Charles Drew	reef	Oahu	1850	

POST-1848 CONTINUED...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION
A. H. Howland	reef	Oahu	1852	
Nauticon	reef	Oahu	1856	
Winslow	reef	Oahu	1858	
Wild Wave	reef	Oeno	1858	
Norna	reef	Oroluk	1861	
Ceres	reef	Osprey Reef	1849	
Mexican	reef	Pacific Ocean	1850	
Ann Alexander	whale	Pacific Ocean	1851	
Alceste	unknown	Pacific Ocean	1851	British
Bald Eagle	unknown	Pacific Ocean	1851	
Dauntless	unknown	Pacific Ocean	1853	
Beatrice	unknown	Pacific Ocean	1861	
Julia Cobb	reef	Palmerston	1865	
Bellissima	reef	Palmerston	1866	British
Chatham	reef	Penrhyn	1853	
Fanchon	fire	Peru	1850	
Golden Sunset	reef	Phoenix Group	1866	
Clement	reef	Ponape	1855	
Mermaid	reef	Pratas	1856	
Courser	reef	Pratas	1858	
Alfred Hill	reef	Pratas	1861	
Romance of the Sea(?)	reef	Pratas	1861	
Daniel	reef	Raivavae	1853	
Eliza	reef	Rakahanga	1859	British
Rona	flood	Rakahanga	1869	
Samoa	reef	Rakahanga	1869	
Junius	unknown	Raoul	1849	
Sarah Frances	reef	Rarotonga	1849	
St. Lawrence	flood	Rarotonga	1855	
Swift	reef	Rarotonga	1863	
Cuba	flood	Rurutu	1859	
Hercules	reef	Samoa	1850	
Christopher Hall	reef	Samoa	1867	
Clematis	reef	San Cristobal	1861	
Belvidere	reef	Santa Maria	1851	

Post-1848 continued...

SHIP	EVENT	PLACE	DATE	NATION
Margaret	reef	Society	1850	
John Williams	reef	Society	1867	
Thetis	reef	Starbuck	1866	
Euryale	reef	Starbuck	1870	
Gem	gale	Suvarov	1849	
L'Albert	reef	Tahiti	1850	French
Archimedes	unknown	Tahiti	1857	British
Parachute	reef	Tahiti	1864	
Eli Whitney	unknown	Tahiti	1870	
Clarissa	reef	Tahiti	1870	
Channing	reef	Taiwan	1857	
Archimides	reef	Tematangi	1857	British
Unknown	reef	Tematangi	1857	German
Sally Anne	reef	Tonga	1854	
Anita	unknown	Tonga	1863	German
John Wesley	reef	Tonga	1866	
Metacom	reef	Tutuila	1860	
Arkansas	reef	United States	1849	
Carrier Pigeon	reef	United States	1853	
Adario	reef	Upolu	1850	
Unknown	flood	Uvea	1859	
La Belle	reef	Wake	1866	
Dashing Wave	unknown	Wake	1870	
Lion	reef	Wreck Reef	1856	

* U.S. nationality assumed unless otherwise indicated.

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"Grider's work in this monograph invites interlocutors to view human interaction through the lens of labourers in an extremely important industry during a very interesting period in history. The maritime industry was not only an essential vehicle for expanding the processes of capitalism, colonisation, industrialisation and globalisation, which feature so prominently in current debates on social justice and inequality, but also paved the way for international trade and migration of peoples that have become so commonplace in the modern world. The manners in which shifts in gender, race, class and technology irrevocably change labour compositions and conditions, as well as identities and interactions, resonates across epochs and geographies and gives readers from numerous perspectives much to contemplate in their lives and work within the complex terrain of diverse societies, which are arguably the most important developments in modern states."

Dionne van Reenen

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JOHN GRIDER joined the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State as a Research Fellow in November 2015. He recently completed this captivating project, which investigates the complex interplay between gender, class and race sourced from the narratives of men who found themselves working in the transforming Pacific maritime industry during the mid-nineteenth century.

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