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STEAM PACKETS ON THE CHESAPEAKE
A History of the Old Bay Line Since 1840

By
ALEXANDER CROSBY BROWN

CORNELL MARITIME PRESS
STEAM PACKETS ON THE CHESAPEAKE
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Steam Packets on the Chesapeake traces the exciting history of the nation's oldest steamboat line, the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, which for more than 120 years has maintained faithful and uninterrupted service under the same corporate name on the storied waters of Chesapeake Bay. The Old Bay Line, as it became familiarly known in the maturity of its years, began in 1840 with a fleet of four little wooden-hulled sidewheelers to offer regular and dependable transportation of passengers and freight from Baltimore at the upper end of the Bay to Norfolk at the southern end.

Here is recounted the Old Bay Line's story against a vivid background of both national and local events. Even though the route of the Line has been wholly confined to the 200-mile length of the Chesapeake, its service has been in effect a microcosm of all American steamboating. Many great dramas have taken place beside this historic waterway and three major wars—the Civil War and World Wars I and II—have left telling marks. Here is traced how successive operators of the Old Bay Line have kept their fleets at the forefront of American shipping through fire and foul, thus becoming a valued tradition.

Backgrounded by chapters relating the origins of steam navigation on the Chesapeake, this history of the Old Bay Line is recorded from its modest beginnings to the triumphal celebration of the Line's centennial in 1940. This happy event was soon beclouded by threats of war and succeeding chapters recount the vital role played by the Line in those trying years. Two-thirds of the fleet was requisitioned for combat, leaving Nazi wolf packs on one hand, while the remaining steamers kept the home fires burning on the other.

The immediate Post World War II history of the Bay Line was enriched by the final episode in the extraordinary career of the former Bay Line flagship President Warfield. Exidus 1947. This story is detailed from its beginning to its sad ending on a scrap heap in Haifa, Israel.

The subject of steam navigation on the Chesapeake will be found entertaining for landlubber and hard-bitten mariner alike. Steamboat buffs

About the Author
Alexander Crosby Brown lives in Newport News, Virginia, where he has been on the editorial staff of the Daily Press since 1931. He graduated from Yale in 1928 and sailed around the world in a schooner prior to joining the staff of The Mariners Museum at Newport News in 1936 where the greater part of the research required for Steam Packets on the Chesapeake was subsequently carried out.

During World War II he was on active duty in the U. S. Navy, serving for a period on the staff of naval historian Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison. He holds the rank of Commander, U. S. N. R. For four years following the war he was Chief of Publications of The Mariners Museum, then attended the College of William and Mary, receiving his M.A. in history there in 1951.

A life member of the Steamship Historical Society of America and an associate editor of The American Neptune: A Quarterly Journal of Maritime History, he has long been interested in nautical research and writing and is author of Women and Children Last and other nationally published books.

(continued from front flap)

will welcome the full appendix giving complete technical details of the more than two score vessels owned by the Line. The illustrations are contemporary photographs and reproductions of old prints and paintings. These pictures well record the development of the arts of the shipwright on this historic Southern waterway, ranked by one flambouyant Bay Line traveler of yesteryear as being unequalled even by the great bay of Naples.

"Alec Brown has done an immense service in reminding us all not only that this is the way Americans used to travel, but that in at least one blessed corner of our country, we can still do it today." Walter Lord, in his Foreword.
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CAMBRIDGE MARYLAND
Local Writer Relates Story
Of A Tragic Disaster At Sea

ALEXANDER C. BROWN

The U.S. Mail Steamship Arctic of the Collins Line was in the 1850's the largest and most elegant transatlantic liner in the world. Her tragic loss as a result of a collision marked the beginning of the century-long decline of the U.S. Merchant Marine. The disaster is recorded in "Women and Children Last" by local resident Alexander C. Brown. (From a lithograph in The Mariners' Museum.)

There were acts of courage and heroism, but there were also disasters by horrible stories of catastrophe, drown, collisions, abandonment, and shipwreck. Of about 400 souls on board only 60 were saved. Seventy per cent of those were women. Thirty per cent of the passengers. Not a single woman or child was saved.

Perhaps the hero of the story was the crippled boy, Willie Lucas. After actions had been taken to stop the flooding of the ship, Captain Lucas stepped into his cabin to explain the noise and confusion to his son. But Alexander Boydell, the captain's man who took care of Willie had already explained the situation. It was Willie who reassured his father, "Don't mind me, Father. Go back on deck; you're wanted there to take care of the ship."

"FATE OF THE SHIP"

"The fate of the ship shall be mine," Captain Lucas had told his second mate. When the captain had to leave all he could for his passengers he took brave little William by the hand and they mounted the poopboard paddle box. In the time-honored custom of the sea Captain Lucas, together with his son, went down with the ship.

It was not to be. After being struck down by the vessel, father and son were blown up by a buoyant force of air. But a piece of the ship's paddle box struck and killed Willie instantly. "In another moment I beheld my dear child a blackened corpse on the surface of the waves," the heartbroken father reported. But he climbed out on the paddle box and managed to hold on until rescued.

An weary after a disaster there was the aftermath of criticism. If the Arctic had been built with water tight compartments...
ALEXANDER C. BROWN

Little space and not at all, enormously the passengers. Evidently, as pointed out by the author, the newspaper reading of the passengers was based on fiction, not on understanding or knowledge. One can hardly imagine the topics discussed on the ship, given the limited space and the predominant focus on literature and conversation.

SHIP ROUTINE

When he had introduced his conclusion to the story, the author gives a vivid description of a routine of activities on a ship in port before leaving. He credits it with, "at the end of the journey, there was the last minute search of Liverpool's grottoes to inspect the presence of a full crew on board at sailing time." Names and descriptions of important passengers embarking for such a fatal voyage create a feeling of foreboding. In command of the Arctic was veteran Captain James C. Luce, his 49-year-old master, who had been skipper since the liner first entered service in the autumn of 1850. The author adds, "For this particular voyage trip Captain Luce had brought along with him his steersman/second, William Fearing Luce. William was crippled and his parents thought that the ocean voyage might do him some good and, at least afford a change of a scene. Captain Luce desired his boy and had designed to make his company. The Captain's assistant and other officers were described as "dreadfully distinguished at New Yorkers' expense."

The Arctic sailed from Liverpool on September 20, 1854, and the routine of a ship at sea. On Wednesday, September 27, the ship was captured by Liverpool and his three days from her destination. She had gone up the length of the Grand Banks lying east of Newfoundland, the vast region notorious for its cold, treacherous mists.

PLOWED THROUGH FOAM

While the Arctic plowed through fog and fog, the passengers were assembling at noon in the dining room. Shortly thereafter came the alarming cry from the lookout. "There's a steamer ahead!" Then the shrieking crash of the collision with the smaller French auxiliary screw steamer Vertu.

The author vividly portrays the collision, the scattering of the Arctic's four terrors later, and the actions that followed is one of the great events of the sea. It is comparable to Walter Lord's "A Night to Remember," no story on the tragic loss of the Titanic in 1912.

There were acts of courage and brawn, but these were effaced by the stories of heroism, greed, enmities, abandonment, and infamy. Of about 400 souls on board only 86 were saved. Seventy per cent of these were crewmen. Thirty per cent were passengers. Not a single woman or child was saved.

Perhaps the hero of the story was the crippled boy, Willy Luce. After actions had been taken to stop the flooding of the ship, Captain Luce stepped into his cabin to explain the cause and composition to his son. But Abraham Dayrell, the captain's man who took care of Willy had already explained the situation. It was Willy who reassured his father, "Don't mind me, Father. Go back on deck, you're wanted there to take care of the ship."

FATE OF THE SHIP

"The Arctic was a fine ship," Captain Luce had told his second. When the captain had done all he could for his passengers, he took the biggest little box with the ship and the little box fell into the time-honored custom of Captain Luce and his family, together with his son, was taken on deck.

It was not to be. After being sucked underwater, the father and son were thrown up by a buoyant force of air. But a piece of a porthole paddle was caught in the bell of the water, the seaweedfs father reported. But he climbed out of the paddle box and managed to hold on until rescued.

As usual after a disaster there was the aftermath of a confrontation of events. The Arctic had been built with: with a history, and now a story, the mammal could be further. Why not in a way to future time? Why not better bring back?"

(Eisode Note: This review of Daily Literary, Library, Alexander C. Brown's book on the "The Fate of the ship as the last of our famous passenger line." This book has been written by Rear Admiral C. W. M. Dorey, director of The Mariners Museum. Prior to retirement from the naval service, Admiral Dorey was considered one of the great expeditions in the Arctic and the author of "Operation Deep Freeze." This article is "The Frozen Frontier.")

About Out of a thousand persons who say "I have read this" or "I have read that," there is not one perhaps, who is able to express any opinion or say that hearing about. —LAPCIDIO HEARD.
WOLF TRAP
The Baptism of a Chesapeake Bay Shoal

by
ALEXANDER CROSBY BROWN

~ FROM ~
THE VIRGINIA MAGAZINE of HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
VOLUME 59 April, 1951 NUMBER 2
Sir Samuel Argall

£500 at the death of my sister the Lady Argall. I give to the aforesaid Anne Percivall all my lands, tenements & goods in Virginia. I bequeath £10 to the poor of East Soton co. Kent to be distributed by my brother in law Sir Edward Filmer; £1 to the poor of Walthamstowe. To my servant John Carter £2. To John Wrotth who now attends upon me £5. To my brother in law Edmund Randall esq. £20.

Executors. My brother John Argall & my friend Nicholas Hawes... 54

The beginning of the bad reputation given Argall by historians can be traced directly to William Stith, who, writing in 1747, may have had access to documents now lost. For the most part Stith's history seems to be founded on original sources. Much of his narrative closely follows that of John Smith. His discussion of Argall's administration of the colony seems to be based on something more unreliable than Smith and more biased. 80

Stith was obviously an admirer of Edwin Sandys, and indiscriminately let this prejudice him against those who stood in opposition to Sandys. The key to Stith's castigation of Argall is found in the paragraphs quoted below. In this passage he brings Sandys before a meeting of the Company and thoroughly vindicates his administration of the Company. For this purpose Stith (as he says of Sandys) was naturally led to set forth the evils of the previous administration.

The Time of Sir Edwin Sandys's Office being expired, there was held a great and general Quarter Court of Election... To this splendid Meeting, Sir Edwin Sandys made a long and very handsome Speech, laying before them the State of their Affairs at the time of his Accession to the Office of Treasurer, and then, In this he was naturally led to set forth, as well the Negligence and bad Government at home, as particularly the vast Loss and Damage, which the Company had sustained, in the Time of their Deputy Governor, Captain Argall... 55

Sir Thomas Smith and Alderman Johnson had been before in their (the Company's) chief Offices, and the Company conceived themselves to have little Reason to be satisfied with their Conduct and Proceedings. But in Virginia more especially, where the Effects of their Management had been more sensibly felt, they were notoriously infamous, and utterly detested and cursed by the whole Colony. 56

Argall's biographer in the Dictionary of National Biography, C. H. Coote, stands virtually alone opposed to the evil reputation that has accrued to Argall through the obstinate perseverance of dozens of writers. Coote, writing in 1885, states positively that there is no justification for Argall's unhappy reputation. It is obvious that other writers have made little reference to Coote's defense or the available evidence but simply have rendered a verdict as directed by the skillful William Stith.

54 Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 21, 287.
55 It is to be noted that Beverley, writing Virginia History in 1705 ("Second Edition revised and enlarged, 1704 - 1712"), forty years before Stith, does not belong to the Int.-all-similar-on-Argall school. Possibly Beverley, otherwise a fairly credible historian, did not have access to Stith's sources.
56 Smith, History, pp. 176-178.
WOLF trap: The Baptism of a Chesapeake Bay Shoal

by Alexander Crosby Brown

For a Historian to bring alive a long-forgotten event, no matter how seemingly inconsequential, is not unlike a military commander driving a sufficient force against the enemy. The story of how Captain John Smith named Chesapeake's Swan Point, the story of how the poor man's daughter rode a horse across the bay to warn the colonists of the approaching Indians is one such event. The story of how Captain John Smith named Chesapeake's Swan Point, the story of how the poor man's daughter rode a horse across the bay to warn the colonists of the approaching Indians is one such event.

The first thing to notice about the Wolf Trap is that it was named "Wolf Trap". The name comes from the fact that wolves were common in the area at the time. The wolves were a threat to the colonists, and the Wolf Trap was created as a way to keep them at bay. It was a place where they could be captured and taken further away from the settlement.

The Wolf Trap was used by the colonists as a means of controlling the wolf population. The wolves were captured and then moved to a place where they could not harm the colonists. The wolves were either released or killed, depending on the colonists' needs.

The Wolf Trap was used for many years, and it was a key part of the colonists' efforts to control the wolf population. The Wolf Trap was eventually abandoned, and the land was returned to its natural state. The Wolf Trap is a reminder of the colonists' efforts to control the wolf population and of the importance of wildlife management.
convoy which included a "small square stern ship, & one pink and a small jarge."

Taking her departure from the Lizard on 20 December 1696 the Wolf made a slow Atlantic crossing to arrive off Cape Henry on 16 March. The very next day on her way to the Rappahannock River she had the misfortune to run aground on the unmarked and as yet unnamed shoal in the Chesapeake described as being near "Point Neo Point," half way between the York and Rappahannock Rivers. In this exposed situation, Captain Purvis sensibly lost no time in getting help. A variety of small craft was impressed for duty from Gloucester and Middlesex owners and, so willingly and well did all hands turn to, that on 23 March, having been lightened by taking off guns, ammunition and provision, she was pumped out and dragged clear. Although sea water "dismannified most part of our bread and Peas and Flower," apparently the damage to the ship itself was not great. And a few days later she was brought into the Rappahannock, careened and repaired.2 Captain Purvis willingly acknowledged that without help from ashore "Shee must have been utterly lost."

All there remained to do was to settle up with the men and the unfortunate episode might be forgotten. But now the ship was off, Captain Purvis seemed reluctant to pay the piper. Finally due processes of law compelled him to make restitution, but it was not before the event had been thoroughly aired in epistles and proclamations that reached England and the halls of the Admiralty and the Lords of Trade and Plantations.

The first official word that all was not well occurred in the Virginia House of Burgesses on 12 May 1691 with the complaint of the Burgesses of Gloucester and Middlesex on behalf of their constituents that Captain Purvis had not paid up. The captain alleged that he was ready to settle at the rate of 18 shillings per month with those who had taken in the salvage operations. But the Council considered this amount insufficient since it did not include "travel time" for those who had come from as far as a day's journey away, so Purvis was ordered to pay at the rate of 23 shillings, "they having performed as good and as hard a service as any Seaman could." It was mentioned that the trouble was producing "great Clamours in the Whole Country" and was feared to present a "dangerous Consequence to the Peace and quiet."23

Purvis was still in no hurry to settle on this basis, however. But newly appointed Lieutenant Governor Francis Nicholson, the first top official in Virginia in many a year who showed any intelligent concern for the Colony's welfare, determined that for once the people should receive their just deserts. In this decision he was perhaps mindful of the turmoil which had existed in Gloucester County as a result of Bacon's unsuccessful "rebellion" and the reprisals of his avaricious predecessors, Governors Berkeley, Culpeper, and Effingham.

Meanwhile on 20 June, Purvis and the Wolf herself left Lynnhaven Roads to return to England. But restitution was in sight and on 31 July, Nicholson issued an "order for a Proclamation to ascertain the estate of Capt. George Purvis, that the salvors of H.M.S. Wolf may be paid and for representation of his refusal to pay them to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, that the money may be stopped from his pay..."24

This was followed by a proclamation on 1 August 1691 to the sheriffs of the affected counties enjoining them to make "diligent inquiry" concerning property belonging to Captain Purvis or the Wolf's owners so that it might be quickly attached. The preamble set forth the circumstances under which the Wolf came to require assistance.3

By 3d Inst. Han.25 their Maj. L. Govern., Whereas their Maj. byred Ship Wolfe Whereof Capt. George Purvis was Commander was run on ground in Bay between York and Raphe Rivers, being in great danger of being utterly lost, and notice being given by ye said Capt. Purvis, of ye danger of Loosing their Maj. Said Ship, to their Maj. Officers of ye Counties of Gloucester Middx &c desiring Assistance of men, Slopes and boats to be aiding & assisting for ye Saving ye Said Ship, accordingly many men Slopes and boats were Imprest for that Service and by ye Chieffull and greedy Endeavor of ye 3d &c men and Assistance of ye Slopes and boats many days, all ye Guns Ammunition provision &c were taken out of ye Said Ship, ye water bailed and pumped out, and Shee got off, without which help Shee must have been utterly lost, & after ye Burgesses of ye Several Counties of Gloucester &c Complaining to...4

2BHR, J. 177, 194-195.
3H. W. Porterfield, ed., Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West India, 1660-1695 (London, 1907), No. 1680. Although indicated as being the same vessel, No. 1530 of 12 March 1693 giving a list of the King's ships in the West Indies cites the Wolf, 4 gale rate, 202 men, 45 guns "returning with convoy from Virginia." Wolf was a common ship name and this large ship is obviously not the same vessel which ran aground in the Chesapeake on 17 March.
myselfe and y' Councill on behalfe of y' Inhabitants of their Counties that y' men that were Impris' for y' Saving y' S* Ship, were not paid by Capt Purvis, nor y' owners of y' Sloops or boates, and Capt Purvis, being present did faithfully promise that all y' Satisfactions should be made to y' men & to y' owners of y' Sloops and boates for y' good Service done by them, and then publicly owned that y' S* Ship had been utterly lost but it not been for y' help and Assistance of y' Inhabitants of this their Ma* Dominion, Notwithstanding which fair promises of y' Said Capt Purvis, Complaint is made that he hath not made Satisfaction to y' S* men, nor owners of y' Sloops and boates for y' great Services done. Now to y' end all persons Concerned may be Satisfied and their Ma* good Subjects encouraged to be Ready, upon all occasions to give their Assistance for their Ma* Service.

I Francis Nicholson Esq' their Ma* L* Govern' do declare that all concerned shall be paid & Satisfied.

On 18 January 1692 the governor's complaint was noted as being referred to the Admiralty in London and a final mention occurs a year later when the owners, Jeffrey Jeffries and other London merchants, cried "hold enough" and petitioned the Lords of Trade and Plantations on 7 January 1693 "for the stop on the ships pay, imposed on account of salvage charges, to be taken off on their giving security for the same." The garnishee treatment applied to the Wolf's charter money had evidently worked satisfactorily for Middlesex County Records mentioned on 1 January 1693 that "Ms. William Churchill, having at the last court made proclamation that all persons which did service on board their Majesties ship Wolfe should repair to him, and be paid for ye same." Apparently this terminated the affair Wolf in the colony but owing to the notoriety of the event it was almost inevitable that the shoal which was the cause of it all should become known thereafter as the "Wolf's trap." And it has so remained.

Although continuing to provide a hazard for shipping, nothing was done officially to mark the shoal by buoy or light until the very end of the Colonial period, although unquestionably local fishermen or pilots set up unofficial day beacons or markers of pound poles. It was indicated as "Wolf Trap" on John Thornton's New Map of Virginia (circa 1695-1700) and on Walter

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10Middlesex County Records, Ords, 1 January 1693, quoted in Philip Alexander Bruce, Institution History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1910), II, 183-184. Bruce mentions the affair of the Wolf, but fails to carry the account through to its conclusion.
11Hening, Statutes, VI, 35, cites the act of 23 March 1666-67 appointing Captain William Queen "chief pilot of James River." The act further states that: "the said pilot shall make, place, and maintain good and sufficient beacons in all necessary places from Willowbush Shoale including the whole Shoale to James City..."
Drawings appearing in "A Journal kept by mss Wm. Hawks on board their Majo. hired Ship y Woff Captn George Purvis bound as convoy to Virginia." (20 December 1690-14 October 1691). Harley Manuscript 466. These crude sketches, in all probability of H.M.S. Wolfe, are exceptionally early views of vessels identified with the New World.

Courtesy of The British Museum
Boston's 1735 chart of the Chesapeake. It is similarly shown on the Anthony Smith chart of 1776 as "Wolf Trapp Rock" and so comes on down to modern charts.12

But more than mere charting was needed to keep ships off and future Mathews County watermen had occasional opportunity to prove their seamanship and pick up some salvage money as well. In May 1748, the ship President outward bound with 459 hogheads of tobacco ran on the shoal. Robert Rose noted in his diary for 31 May of that year:

Mr. James Anderson from Wimbgury dined with me, and told, the President was not clear of the Wolf Trap but had Damnifled, all her Load, 100 Hhls Excepted and that Privateers infested the Bay of Chesapeake.

A year later Matthew Bogle was petitioning the council for remission of the export duty he paid on the damaged tobacco acknowledging that "he was at great Expense in raising, refitting and lading the ship."13

Only a few years later the Wolf Trap claimed another victim. The Maryland Gazette chronicles the arrival in 1754 from London of the Maryland Planter, Captain Thomas Askew, who "had the misfortune of touching on the Wolf Trap in the Bay and was obliged to throw overboard upwards of 20 tons of salt to lighten the ship, but received no other damage."14

Even later when the shoal was marked with a light we find Captain Chapman of the steamboat Petersburg reporting to the press in 1824, that the ship ashore on the Wolf Trap, is the Draper, of Boston, believed to be from Turks Island, bound to Baltimore, that she had several small craft around her, and he thinks she will be got off.15 Capitan Chapman hastens to state that, had his supply of bunker wood not been so low that he was compelled to keep going, he would have stopped to render assistance. A weak excuse if the Draper had really been in trouble, but the ship was obviously in good hands with Mathews County boatmen near by.

12The earliest navigators' chart of the Chesapeake, drawn by John Thornton and William Phillips about 1682, was published in 1706 in the English Pilot. Wolf Trap is not shown, possibly because of the proximity of a compass rose. But a larger work entitled A New Map of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Part of New York, and Carolina, made by Thornton (circa 1682-1700) and sold by W. and F. Mouat on Tower Hill, does show it, and thus has the distinction of being the earliest cartographical representation of Wolf Trap Shoal by name. A copy of the map belongs to Colonial Williamsburg. It does not appear in E. G. Swem, Maps Relating to Virginia (Richmond, 1914). See also Lawrence C. With, Some American Contributions to the Art of Navigation, 1719-1824 (Princeton, 1947), 19-20.
14Maryland Gazette, 17 July 1754.
15Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, 23 December 1824, quoted in John C. Emmerson, Jr., The Steamboat Comes to Norfolk Harbor (Portsmouth, Va., 1949), 337-338.
The Virginia Assembly's act of 10 February 1772 for "erec[t]ing and maintaining a lighthouse at Cape Henry and fixing buoys on the shoals in the bay of Chesapeake" marks a final stage in the effort to secure government maintained aids to navigation in Virginia which had its origins as early as 1721.\footnote{Arthur F. Blackman, "The Struggle for the Cape Henry Lighthouse, 1721-1791," The American Neptune, VIII (1948), 32-34.} The importance of the buoys was then considered not inconsiderable, and the final provision of the act stated that anyone who deliberately sank or destroyed one would be, if convicted, "adjudged guilty of felony, and shall suffer death, without benefit of clergy."\footnote{Hening, Statutes, VIII, 239-241.} At a meeting of the directors of the Cape Henry Lighthouse on 24 June 1773 Wolf Trap was specifically cited as one of the six Chesapeake shoals to be buoyed. But procrastination was the rule and apparently nothing was done about it immediately, although in February 1774 the Board specified the kind of materials the buoys were to be made of and presumably the placement of them then went forward.\footnote{Proceedings of the Directors of the Lighthouse, quoted by Blackman, "Struggle for Cape Henry," 32.}

Undoubtedly Wolf Trap was marked by at least a day beacon some time before the Revolution and attention given to it by the Federal government at the time that work was resumed on Cape Henry Lighthouse in 1790. But with increased shipping in the bay, this proved insufficient and finally on 3 March 1819 Congress passed an act which authorized either building a lighthouse on Windmill Point at the Rappahannock River mouth or establishing "a light-ship or boat on the Wolf Trap shoals, if the latter shall be deemed preferable."\footnote{Acts of the United States relating to ... Lighthouses, Light-svessels ... 1789-1855 (Washington, 1855), 30.}

The last named evidently was, for two years later a 180-ton light-ship, one of the very first in the United States, was brought to the shoal, the appropriation for 1823 including the item of $500.00 for the keeper's annual salary.\footnote{Ibid., 64.} A new light-ship showing two lights at elevations of 30 and 36 feet and costing $9,915 was moored over the shoal in 1841, its predecessor then being described as "unto service." This floating light continued a mark Wolf Trap until 1861 when it was said to have been "sunk or destroyed by the insurrectos."\footnote{Ibid.} A third light-ship, one of two vessels built for the war, was not until 1870 when the tower was placed above the water, and managed totors of the Cape Henry Lighthouse on 24 June 1773 Wolf Trap was specially cited as one of the six Chesapeake shoals to be buoyed. But procrastination was the rule and apparently nothing was done about it immediately, although in February 1774 the Board specified the kind of materials the buoys were to be made of and presumably the placement of them then went forward.\footnote{Proceedings of the Directors of the Lighthouse, quoted by Blackman, "Struggle for Cape Henry," 32.}

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FROM THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTIONS

Letters of
James Mercer to John Francis Mercer

(CONTINUED FROM THE PRECEDING ISSUE)

Edited by
JOHN MELVILLE JENNINGS

Virginia 23rd May 1783

Dear Brother,

I rec'd your favour of the 19th, yesterday evening, the Vessel being not sail'd, and if last will tell you that she would be made ready for the Havannah, as directed by yr. dr last Let. I had given directions to Robert to procure the Cargoe of Mr. Hunter, 1st Pitcher being with me yesterday morning and he being privy to Threlkill's notions I learnt from him that Threlkill had engaged, or was looking out for Freight to fill up your part of the Vessel. I therefore thought it best to wait on Mr. Hunter to know whether a Cargoe was, or could be furnished. I found it had not been done & Robert being in Town, I obtained Mr. Hunter's promise for an immediate supply Robert goes this morning to Falmouth to procure эaof to send the quantity or directly & I have sent for Threlkill to know what he has done & what he agrees for my last informed you that Luttie had declined taking the command of the vessel - one Stone was engaged in that character & I understood upon the express stipulation of having the consignme, this may not only affect your orders to merchant Paterson but also the destination of the voyage. When Threlkill arrives I shall be able to write you with certainty tho' it can not influence yr. orders as she will sail before your answer to this can arrive - however I hope your next will in some measure answer the same purpose as to the consignment, I shall consult Mr. Hunter & form my directions as to the return Cargoe of the vessel but as my address will be to Mr. Paterson, my orders shall be subject to your Contract if Patterson approves. I am sure there can be no returns from New Orleans except in Cash, this will not a freight to produce any profit here, I therefore have so far determined already as to order her to call at some of the West India Island for a Cargoe - of Rum Sugar & Molasses - you need not be prepared for any large Draught for the outfit, as I shall do the necessity here, unless for a small Sum - say $50. I wrote you long since that I had left you order on the Treasury with Colo. Munroe. He said he could prepare the needful sot & expected the same hope in answer to mine by Maj. Dick, but I have not rec'd a line from him on the subject. I write him by this post. At all events I expect to do all the

8The schooner Marlborough.
9Unidentified.
By ALEXANDER C. BROWN
Editor's Note: The following article, written by the long-time Editor Alexander C. Brown, is not attributed to any specific publication. It appears to be a critique of book publishing practices.

"That somewhat-maligned individual, the trade reviewer, is the subject of the following comments. He is a book reviewer, to point out for the general reader some aspects of book publishing and book criticism which are of interest to him.

Despite the allurements of television, the book business is an exceptionally healthy state of affairs. More and more successful, publishing houses are catering to giant firms whose titles are seen in every week. The New York Stock Exchange, and, as in the case of a recent issue of Editor & Publisher magazine, a number of book reviews are booming on sale and making an important segment of the book business. The Daily Press reviewer is perhaps more important than ever before.

It is his job to offer unbiased criticism of the value of the books in a variety of categories which are of interest to all who read them and so as to assist but not necessarily lead the readers who support this billion dollar a year industry.

The book reviewer's task is one that has been described by the late Mr. John Dos Passos as "the artful dodger of Adams, somewhat qualified, as a young man, in that he is a dissatisfying business." Fortunately, he has had a hard time, however, although book reviewers are by no means infallible.

By 1962, books hit their peak of light of day in the United States. The book market was $2 billion, of which $1.5 billion was spent on books. According to a recent survey of book buyers, 70% of the population read books, of which 50% were among the "women's" categories. The book market was saturated, and most publishers were struggling to stay afloat.

For the book reviewer, the job was not only challenging but also demanding. They were expected to read and review books across various genres, from fiction to non-fiction, and from classic literature to contemporary works.

The Daily Press reviewer, in his role, had to strike a fine balance between providing unbiased criticism and helping to guide readers to the best books. This was a demanding task, and the reviewer had to be diligent in his research and reading.

In conclusion, the book reviewer's role is essential to the healthy state of the book market. They provide valuable insights and guidance to readers, helping to navigate the myriad of books available. Their critical thinking and judgment are crucial to the book publishing industry, ensuring that the best works are recognized and celebrated.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, feel free to contact us. We are always here to help.
SAFELY FOR A LONG-TERM NEED

By Judi Fung, Columnist

A t h o u s a n d bookstores and advertisers have
been in the habit of giving away free
books to potential customers. Many
reviewers, however, have taken to
complaining about the practice, saying it
is 

3 Last Novel Discusses
Oceanic Air Mail Service

of called their unmanaged, no

When time is of the essence, unfortunately most
reviewers will merely accept the
publisher's own estimate and
rather than risk offending any

DAILY PRESS, Newport News, Va.

"At least," he wrote, "there is something
in the book which is of interest to some
reader...the author has a feeling for
the sea...he has a sense of

"I would say that the author has
an eye for detail and an knack for

"It is a good story, well
written, and I would
recommend it to
anyone interested in
the subject..."
ed that the author is writing on
a subject in which he considers
himself an expert — generally
local history — seems upon an
increased "I" or undated "I"
to square off on a polemic de-
signed to demonstrate that he
should have been the one to
write on the subject. He is, then,
so full of himself and his own
small importance that he
ignores the "positive contribu-
tions of the work and carpe
about minute which he says
"used depth" on the validity of
the book if not directly accusing
the author of "rewriting his-
story.
Stephen Potter, another Brit-
ish humorist, puts it less ag-
gressively in defining "revis-
ionism" as the ability "to be
one up on the author" without
actually tampering with the
text — in other words, how
as critics, to show that it is
really you yourself who should
have written the book, if you
had the time, and since you
didn't, you are glad that some-
one has, although it is obvious
that it might have been done
better."
Well, there it is — essentially
unsatisfying — admittedly to a
degree, but the nation's book
reviewers do fairly well to sep-
ate the wheat from the chaff
of those 25,000 annual books. At
least the public is better in-
formed today on a host of things,
that it has been before —
and that includes books. Admit-
tedly, some reviews are sti-
cking; sweet and full of the
hallowed phrases and well
worn cliches that the writer of the re-
view hopes will please the pub-
lisher and he pleased up and
quoted by him in subsequent
advertisements. This would nat-
urally resound to him, the
reviewer's, greater glory by pub-
licity displaying his expert opin-
ion as being worthy of hearing.
Generally, however, and this is
the continuing regret of this
critic, it is not so much the
reviewer as the review medium
that the publisher shows his in-
terest in. Unfortunately a very
pedestrian piece is, say, the
New York Times which has this
appeals to publishers far
more than a brilliant essay in
the House of Owl or even the
Daily Press.
NARROW REVIEW
Occasionally an impatient
reviewer may produce a nar-
row, querulous review for one
or more of the five Reasons Mr.
Adams has outlined. Then too,
the desire to be smart rather
than completely fair sometimes
can dislodge the critic from
what should always be a posi-
tion of Olympian detachment.
Abigail Van Buren, sister of the
immortal Ann Landers, who's
column of advice to the
perplexed appears every morn-
ing in the Daily Press, conveys
a similar aid to the love-
less column. A teenage girl once
wrote Abby for advice on what
to give her boy-friend for Christ-
mas. She wanted to give him
something that he really, really
wanted, she explained.
Mme Van Buren did not hesi-
tate a moment. "Don't give
him that," she said. "Give him
a good book."
Local Author's Account Of Sea Tragedy Released By Publisher

"Women and Children Last," Alexander Cosby Brown's stirring account of the loss of the passenger steamer Arctic, was released by the publishers today and the author marked the occasion at The Mariners Museum where he presented a copy of his book to Librarian John B. Lochhead.

It was at the maritime museum that Brown carried on much of the research for his vivid portrayal of the sinking of the Collins Line steamer Arctic—the ship that was remembered as "the Roman warship.

The museum has created a special exhibit to honor the author who worked for four years at the institution as chief of publications. The exhibit includes samples of Brown's work, original manuscripts used in research, several prints of the Arctic and old shipbuilding images. It was arranged by the Roman warship.

The story of the sinking of the Arctic is one of special personal significance to Brown. His great-grandfather was present on the Collins Line in 1914, when the Arctic sank Sept. 15, 1914. Among the survivors were several members of the Brown family aboard the ship.

"The wooden hull, packed with passengers' baggage and supplies, sank when the vessel struck a reef. She took its life before the passengers' life boat reached the wreck. The author's work for the Sunday edition of the Newport News Daily Press has been the subject of several years of research."

Brown has been the literary editor of that paper since 1951. He has worked there for 10 years in preparing "Women and Children Last," which proved popular in the museum's lecture series.

"The museum's special library contains over 600,000 volumes, 100,000 photographs, maps and charts, numerous periodicals and ship's papers."

OFFICIAL: The Arctic's tragic sinking is one of special personal significance for Brown. His great-grandfather was present on the Collins Line in 1914, when the Arctic sank Sept. 15, 1914. Among the survivors were several members of the Brown family aboard the ship.

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Area Writer Did Research For New Book At Museum

By ROBERT W. NIEBOER

Additional evidence of continuing contributions to scholarly works by the library at the Mariners' Museum will be provided when Alexander Crayle Brown's book, "Steam Packet on the Chesapeake," is released by the Cornell Maritime Press in Cambridge, Md.

This new book about America's oldest steamboat line is based on a prior account of The Old Bay Line which the author prepared before World War II when he was serving at the museum as chief of publications. Brown drew heavily on the library's research until that time, and also obtained the illustrations used in the original work, plus new ones for the new book.

Brown also took additional photographs from the Old Bay Line collection of over 180,000 prints for inclusion in the fully illustrated volume. Several of the old photographs, sketches, and drawings were used in the original book, but all will appear again in the new book. A number of these new illustrations have been shown at the annual James River Camera Club-Mariners' Museum exhibitions of marine photography. One by Museum Curator of Exhibits Robert H. Burgess was the Documentary Award Winner in 1980 and showed an old Bay Liner pulling into Old Point Comfort Pier as seen from the roof of the Hotel Chamberlain. Its counterpart, a night view, was cited for honorable mention. In Brown's own picture of the Old Bay Liner City of Richmond, making the final visit of a steamboat to the site demolished wharf...

"The Old Bay Line" is the second of Brown's books to be released this fall. His account of the history of Women and Children Last, was published in September and has received excellent notice. A major portion of the research for this volume was also carried on at the museum library. A special exhibit case near the library entrance contains items of the original material, photographs and...