



The Maritime News

The Official Newspaper
of San Francisco Maritime
National Historical Park

March, April, May 2009

Asians In the Salmon Canning Industry



In 1870, the first gang of Chinese salmon cannery hands helped pack the season's catch at the Hume brother's cannery on the Columbia River. This was the beginning of the almost exclusive use of Asian immigrant workers throughout the West Coast salmon industry. Beginning with the Chinese, then the Japanese, and finally the Filipinos, the work of cleaning, butchering, filling, and cooking in the salmon canneries was done by gangs of Asian immigrants.

We at San Francisco Maritime are particularly concerned with these cannery gangs because our ship *Balclutha* carried Asian workers north from San Francisco to Alaska each year between 1905 and 1930. As many as 100 men were housed in the forward end of the 'tweendeck, an area known as "Chinatown." A portion of this area has been refurbished and is part of the "Cargo Is King" exhibit located in the 'tweendeck.

By the time our ship entered the salmon canning business, the pattern of labor management was well established. Cannery gangs were recruited and managed by independent labor contractors, who were paid for the season on the basis of the number of cases packed. Almost from the beginning, these contractors were themselves Chinese.

Chinese workers immediately proved themselves to be well suited to salmon cannery work. They brought physical deftness and discipline that was grudgingly admired, even given the anti-Asian tenor of the times. The development of the canning industry, beginning on the Columbia River, spreading to Puget Sound, and finally to Alaska, was based on the work of Chinese immigrant gangs.

The labor contractor was seen as an essential bridge between the Chinese crews and the cannery managers. Most of the Chinese spoke little or no English, and worked under the supervision of a Chinese-speaking foreman. This system had obvious potential for abuse. The labor contractors were responsible for recruitment, provisioning, establishing working conditions, and setting pay scales for their gangs, all without oversight by the cannery owners. The system was open to kickbacks, favoritism, inadequate provisions and living conditions, and to the blacklisting of anyone who complained.

Yet overall, the skill and reliability of the Chinese work force was recognized as being essential to the growing industry, and the wages were comparable to other opportunities open to the Chinese immigrants. Following the Exclusion Act of 1882, which outlawed new Chinese immigration, the older generation of skilled workers was very highly valued within the cannery workforce.

After 1885, as the effects of the Exclusion Act began to be felt, the Japanese government opened immigration to its citizens, and a wave of Japanese workers arrived to partially fill the void in the cannery workforce. Working initially under the old Chinese contractors, the Japanese newcomers gradually found acceptance, and enterprising individuals rose to become foremen, and finally independent labor contractors. The Japanese never fully displaced the old Chinese hierarchy, but they came to form a significant percentage of the workforce.

The last major wave of Asian immigrants to join the cannery gangs were the Filipinos, who arrived in significant numbers beginning in the early 1920s. Changes to the immigration laws in 1921 and 1924 barred most Japanese, but the Filipinos were American subjects, with free access to the nation's labor market. By the later years of the 1920s, the Filipinos became an important element in the mix, particularly in the gangs sailing out of Seattle, which by that time rivaled San Francisco as a supply point for the Alaskan salmon industry. Again, some of these "Alaskeros" worked their way into the ranks of contractors, continuing the old patterns of labor management.

The old system of contract labor began to come apart in the first half of the 1930s. The newly formed Alaska Cannery Workers Union at San Francisco was able to force the investigation and finally the criminal conviction of a notoriously corrupt contracting firm in 1934. A separate organizing effort at Seattle was spearheaded by Filipino workers, and the Cannery Workers and Farm Laborers Union was established at about the same time. The assassination of two union officials in 1936 helped to galvanize support for the Seattle union, which finally included workers of all ethnic backgrounds. Union representation for the cannery workers was finally won in 1938, and the two separate unions ultimately united as the Alaska Cannery Workers Union.

Welcome

Spring brings more than flowers to National Parks – it's when a whole new season of programming beings. In April, park rangers will start raising sail on the 1891 *Alma* for three-hour interpretive programs on SF Bay. In May, the park honors Asian Pacific American Heritage Month with tours of *Balclutha* and the replica San Francisco junk *Grace Quan*. And researchers can now get a tantalizing glimpse of tugboat history in a newly acquired park collection: two ledgers detailing San Francisco steam tug operations from 1908-1913.

Spring also brings the park's Teacher-to-Ranger-to-Teacher program. San Francisco teachers can receive a stipend to work as a Park Ranger during this eight-week program, and help us make stewardship bloom in a new generation. If you're a teacher, and would like to join our crew this summer, call 415-561-7170 to apply by April 24.

Please don't forget to visit during our new "first Sunday free" program. On the first Sunday of each month admission to the park's historic fleet is waived, and the park's maritime research library is open all day. Bring the family down to the park and help us welcome our 1886 square-rigger *Balclutha* back from her winter drydock!

Kate Richardson
Superintendent



As we celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May, we do well to recall the contributions of these generations of hard-working immigrants to the salmon packing industry. An excellent treatment of this story can be found in *Organizing Asian American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry*, by Chris Friday, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1994. This book is available at the park library. For library information, see page three.

By Stephen Canright, Park Curator,
Maritime History

Photo, top: Chinese workers unloading rice packaged in matting from a wagon. The goods were then loading on to the sailing vessel adjacent to the dock. The photo was taken in San Francisco during April 1906. On May 3 and 10, the program "Chinese Cannery Workers" will be presented on *Balclutha*. See page three. A12.24365 NPS Photo

1 Asians In the Salmon Canning Industry

We celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month during May and remember the hard-working Asian immigrants in the salmon canning industry.

2 The Red Stack Tugboat Ledgers

Park acquires two volumes covering operations of the company's steam tugs between 1908 and 1913.

4 Decode a Signal Flag Message

How did ships at sea communicate with each other before radios and phones were invented?

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Established in 1988, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park encompasses only 34 acres, but contains the most national historic landmarks of any unit in the National Park Service. In addition to the fleet of ships at Hyde Street Pier, the park includes the Aquatic Park Historic Landmark District (Bathhouse building, urban beach, lawn area and bocce ball courts), a Visitor Center and a research library (in Fort Mason Center).

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Collections Corner

The park has recently acquired two very interesting ledger books produced by the Shipowners and Merchants Tugboat Company of San Francisco, the old "Red Stack" line. The two volumes cover the operations of the Company's steam tugs between 1908 and 1913, recording each job undertaken by each boat, and what was earned for the job. The information contained in these volumes is of particular interest to the park because, during this period, Red Stack owned and operated the tug *Hercules*, now a treasured part of our historic fleet.

Built at Camden, New Jersey in 1907, the *Hercules* was the newest, the largest, and the most powerful of the Red Stack boats. The ledgers give us a look, in detail, at just what the *Hercules* was doing during these early years of her career. Much of this is new information. Our best source previously on her early operations is a personal log book kept by the boat's first Captain, Daniel G. "Smokestack" Thomsen, covering the period from January 1908 to July 1909, including her maiden voyage from New Jersey to San Francisco by way of the Straits of Magellan. The new ledgers, therefore, overlap in time with Thomsen's log, and, for this period, add only limited new material. The later of the two volumes, covering the period 1911 to 1913, is all new information.

The *Hercules*, throughout her career with Red Stack, was primarily an "outside" boat, making long coastal or even deep-ocean tows. She was often gone for weeks at a time, venturing as far afield as Tahiti, and routinely making trips to Hawaii.

The bread and butter of her work was in the rapidly expanding oil transport business. Red Stack contracted with Standard



The Red Stack Tugboat Ledgers showing a page from the volume covering 1908-1909. NPS Photo

Oil of California for the towage of their tank barges from San Luis Obispo to their refinery at Point Richmond. In the ledger column for receipts for many of these tows is the abbreviation "incl," apparently indicating that the cost of the tow was "included" under a regular agreement. *Hercules* also towed oil barges for Associated Oil from Monterey to Martinez, most of them iron or steel sailing ship hulls converted to tank carriers. She also towed Union Oil's wooden-hulled barkentine *Fullerton*. As one of the earliest oil-fired steamers to operate on the West Coast, the *Hercules* was intimately involved from the beginning in the petroleum business.

The ledgers also indicate that *Hercules* made a number of trips towing Benson log rafts from the Columbia River to San Diego. These massive cigar-shaped rafts, comprising some 6,000,000 board feet of Douglas fir timber, would require about 15 days of steaming at three knots. The tug also did several trips with dredges for port improvement projects from Puget Sound to the Hawaiian Isles. These jobs were nor-

mally billed at a daily rate of \$200. While in the Bay, between her outside trips, the *Hercules* did ship assistance work, including a tow of the *Star of Alaska*, another name for our own *Balclutha*, from Butchertown, near Hunters Point, to China Basin, in October 1911, earning herself \$30.

For anyone interested in the operation of a tugboat fleet during the early 20th century, the ledgers offer a tantalizing glimpse of the business. Red Stack was running eleven boats during most of this period. The record of the vessels towed or assisted, shifted among the multitude of ports, piers, and anchoring grounds around the Bay, gives us a detailed snapshot of the complex web of maritime commerce during the period, and would certainly reward the closest examination.

By Stephen Canright, Park Curator,
Maritime History

Youth Boat Building Program



With a splash, and cheers from the crowd, the newest boat built by high school students in the Youth Boat Building Program at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park was launched, celebrating another successful program. The wooden, 17-foot Goat Island Skiff, was built by 24 students from Downtown High School on Potrero Hill. Park Superintendent Kate Richardson was on hand to help launch the skiff. In lieu of champagne, sparkling cider was enjoyed by all. The eighth year of this very successful program begins this spring with groups from Downtown High School, the Tall Ship Education Academy, and Girl Scouts Save the Bay building boats. The next launch will be on Thursday, April 2nd. Come down to the park and see boat-building in action! For more information about Youth Boat Building, please contact MJ Harris at mjharris@maritime.org or call 415-215-6291. Photo: Barb Wingo

Teachers: Be a National Park Ranger This Summer

As a teacher at Carver Elementary School in San Francisco, Michelle Irwin continued to pursue her love of the outdoors, taking her kids camping and fostering a distant dream to one day be a park ranger. Well, last summer the dream became a reality when Michelle donned a NPS uniform and worked as a park ranger on Hyde Street Pier in the Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) program.

Michelle conducted interpretive programs, worked in the Visitor Center, and developed a PowerPoint program. Using existing research, combined with her own studies in the park's library, Michelle created a photographic and historical tour of the history of the Underground Rail Road in San Francisco. She has presented a modified version of the program to fifth graders at Carver Elementary and the full



NPS Photo

version at the park last February during Black History Month. According to Michelle, "Why put aside that dream of being a park ranger when you can actualize it?"

Help the National Park Service foster stewardship for new and diverse generations of Americans. Receive training and

then work for eight weeks from June 15 through August 14, 2009. In the fall, bring your experience back to the classroom to share with your students.

Teachers receive a \$600 per week stipend, uniform, and a week of training conducted at the park. Teacher-Rangers will have the opportunity to get involved in a variety of activities including outreach efforts, writing and reviewing curriculum, conducting interpretive programs, and staffing the Visitor Center information desk.

The application deadline is April 24, 2009. For information and an application, please call Park Ranger John Cunnane at 415-561-7170; john_cunnane@nps.gov.

Photo, above: Michelle Irwin, in the green jacket, helping to raise a sail on the scow schooner *Alma*. Sailing on the *Alma* is included in the week of training.

Visitor Information

Dates and Hours of Operation:
Hyde Street Pier, located at Hyde and Jefferson Streets, is open 9:30AM to 5:00PM (Last pier entry at 4:30PM.)

Visitor Center, located at the corner of Hyde and Jefferson Streets, is open 9:30AM to 5:00PM.

Aquatic Park Bathhouse Building, located on Beach Street at the foot of Polk Street. The building was closed in July 2006 for renovation. The Senior Center, located in the building, remains open. For scheduled building tours, call the Visitor Center, 415-447-5000.

Maritime Library, on the third floor of Bldg. E in Fort Mason Center (auto entrance at Buchanan Street and Marina Blvd), is open to the public by appointment: Monday-Friday (1PM-4PM), and the 1st Sunday of the month (10AM-4PM). Call 415-561-7030.

Accessibility Information



Programs in the Visitor Center, on Hyde Street Pier, and in the library are accessible. Accessibility to programs on the ships varies. For detailed information, please call the Visitor Center, 415-447-5000, or <http://www.nps.gov/safr/planyourvisit/accessibility.htm>.

Boarding Pass (Entrance Fee for Historic Vessels): \$5
Free for supervised children under 16. Free with Federal Interagency Annual, Senior, and Access Passes, and San Francisco Maritime NHP Annual Pass.

No-Fee Areas

Visitor Center, Hyde Street Pier, Aquatic Park Historic Landmark District, and the Maritime Library (Fort Mason Center).



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Music, Tours, Events, Lectures and Living History

MUSIC

CHANTEY SING

Saturdays, March 7, April 4 and May 2, 8PM-MIDNIGHT. Free. Aboard a historic vessel at Hyde Street Pier. Reservations required: call 415-561-7171 or email peter_kasin@nps.gov. Sing traditional working songs aboard a historic floating vessel. Bring a mug for hot cider served from the ship's galley.

MUSIC OF THE SEA FOR KIDS

Saturdays, March 21, April 18 and May 16, 3PM. Aboard Eureka at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free).

History comes alive for kids in this special program, where the songs are geared for younger ears and chosen especially for fun. Ages 7 and up. ☺

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

EXHIBIT: WOMEN WHO CHANGED MARITIME HISTORY

Daily, throughout March. In the Visitor Center, 9:30AM TO 4:45PM. Free.

Photo exhibition illustrating the often overlooked impact women have had on maritime history.

SUFFRAGETTE MARCH AND LADIES SALON

Saturday, March 14, NOON and 3PM. In the Ark houseboat and Hyde Street Pier. Free. Turn back the clock to 1901 and experience a costumed living history reenactment of a suffragette march in support of votes for women. At 2PM, join a salon of Victorian women as they discuss issues ranging from corsetry to voting rights. Come voice your opinion! ☺

WOMEN AT SEA

Sundays, March 15 and 29, 3PM - 3:45PM. Aboard Balclutha at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free).

During the Age of Sail, the feminine presence was not part of a ship's crew. However, at times the captain would bring along his wife and daughters, which created a family atmosphere. Examine family life at sea on this ranger-guided tour through the Balclutha. ☺

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

CHINESE CANNERY WORKERS

Sundays, May 3 and 10, 3:00PM. Meet on Balclutha's main deck at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free).

On this walking tour of Balclutha, you will learn about the lives and cultural contributions of Chinese laborers who sailed from San Francisco to Alaska (in less than luxurious conditions) for the great salmon runs. ☺

CHINESE SHRIMP JUNK GRACE QUAN RAISES SAIL

Saturdays, May 9 and 30, 11:30AM. Meet on Hyde Street Pier. Free. Grace Quan is a replica of a 19th century San Francisco shrimp junk. Learn about the history of shrimp fishery on the Bay and watch her sail being raised. Come aboard and haul a net, explore the crew's cabin, and take a turn at the tiller. ☺

☺ FUN FOR FAMILIES PROGRAM

PROGRAMS

HISTORIC WATERFRONT WALKING TOUR: FROM GOLD RUSH TO NATIONAL PARK Saturdays and Sundays, March, April, and May, 10:30-11:30AM. Meet in the Argonaut Hotel lobby (495 Jefferson St.), adjacent to the Visitor Center. Free.

Stroll with a Park Ranger to discover the history of this vibrant area on a walking tour through the Aquatic Park Historic District, the Cannery, Hyde Street Pier, and "Fish Alley" at Fisherman's Wharf. The tour covers about a mile, with some gently sloping and uneven terrain. Dress in layers, wear sunscreen, and walking shoes. ☺

GUIDED TOUR OF THE 1939 AQUATIC PARK BATHHOUSE BUILDING Thursdays and Saturdays, March, April, and May. Tour begins at 11:00AM. Meet at the entrance to the Bathhouse Building (Maritime Museum), 900 Beach Street, at the foot of Polk Street. Free.

Join a Park Ranger for a tour of the first floor of this newly restored Works Progress Administration-era building. Learn about the unique architecture, the stunning murals and artwork, and the recently completed renovation work.

CRAFTS FOR KIDS

Saturdays, March 28, April 25, and May 30, 3PM. Meet at the entrance to Hyde Street Pier. Free. Hey kids, want to learn a little about life at sea and make a cool maritime craft? Come on down to the pier and join us! ☺

LIFESAVING AT THE GOLDEN GATE Sundays, March 22, April 5, and May 24, 3PM-3:45PM. Meet in the Visitor Center. Free.

In San Francisco's maritime heyday, countless lives were saved by the brave men of the Lifesaving Service. Join us at the Visitor Center exhibit and view the tools of the trade while learning about the Lifesaving Service. ☺

LIGHTHOUSES OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY Sundays, March 15, April 19, and May 17, 1:15PM and 3:15PM. Meet in the Visitor Center. Free.

Join Volunteer Warren Riley for a program on the role of lighthouses in the development of San Francisco. ☺

EUREKA ENGINE ROOM TOUR

Sundays, March 8, April 12, and May 31, 3PM. Meet on Eureka's gangway. Vessel admission (under 16 free).

Take a special tour of the ferryboat Eureka's engine room and get a close-up look at what makes a steam ferry run.

STAND BY TO ANSWER BELLS

Saturdays, March 21, April 18, and May 9, 3PM. Meet at Hercules's gangway on the Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). Tour includes climbing steep ladders.

Park Rangers will demonstrate how the captain atop the boat in the pilothouse



Join the Friends of the San Francisco Maritime Museum Library and help support the J. Porter Shaw Library at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. The Friends welcome members who are interested in maritime books, photos, oral histories and maritime lore. Membership includes reduced admission to Friends' events, free admission to the Pier, and discounts on book, photo, and vessel plan purchases at the library and the Hyde Street Pier Store. To contact the Friends, call 415-561-7040.

communicated with the crew down below in the engine room. Help them use the voice tubes, bell and jingle system, and engine order telegraph. ☺

HERCULES ENGINEERING TOUR

Saturdays, March 14, April 11, and May 23, 3PM. Meet at the gangway on the Pier. Vessel admission (under 16 free). Tour includes climbing moderately steep ladders and entering cramped spaces. Explore the major engineering spaces and learn about steam engine technology and its effects on the working environment of the marine steam engineer.

SECRETS OF THE BIRDS

Sundays, April 19 and 26, 9:30AM-11:30AM. Meet at the Hyde Street Pier entrance. Free. The lives of birds can seem secretive until we observe their behavior closely. On this beginner's walk around Aquatic Park, join Ranger Carol Kiser to identify birds and enter their unique world. Dress in layers, wear sunblock, and bring binoculars and bird books if you have them. ☺

ANIMALS OF HYDE STREET PIER

Saturdays, March 7 (3PM), and March 28 (10:15AM); April 4 and 18 (3PM); May 9 and 16 (10:15AM). Meet at the end of Hyde Street Pier. Free.

Come experience and observe a whole different world you might not realize exists at Hyde Street Pier. ☺

SMALL CRAFT ON HYDE STREET PIER

Saturdays, March 28, April 25, and May 2, 3PM-3:45PM. Meet at the Small Boat Shop. Free.

Join a Park Ranger for a special tour of the unique collection of small craft berthed at Hyde Street Pier's floating docks.

SMALL CRAFT COLLECTION TOUR

Saturday, April 25, 9:30AM-2:30PM. Meet at the Small Boat Shop. Free. Reservations required; call the Boat Shop at 415-556-4031. Bring a bag lunch and ride with us to our small craft warehouse in Alameda. We'll tour the collection of nearly 100 historic boats, talking about history, design and construction.

MODELERS' WORKSHOP

Saturdays, open throughout the spring, 9:30AM-4:30PM. On the car deck of the Eureka. Vessel admission. Membership in the Hyde Street Pier Model Shipwrights club is open to anyone interested in building ship models. Members build their own models and also work on a unique model of the Freda, the oldest active sloop on the West Coast. Modeling techniques are demonstrated. For information, call the park's Volunteer Office at 415-556-1613.

COSTUMED LIVING HISTORY

A DAY IN THE LIFE: 1901

Saturdays, March 8, April 12 and May 10, 10AM-4PM. Aboard the historic vessels at Hyde Street Pier. Vessel admission.

Step into the past as you board our historic ships and meet the sailors and citizens of SF's waterfront. Enjoy musical fun aboard Balclutha during the sailors' afternoon "dogwatch." Learn about life in 1901 from the ferryboat passengers on Eureka, or join Mrs. Galan on the Ark houseboat for afternoon tea to discuss issues of the day. In March, take part in a suffragette march for women's rights. In April, learn about maritime arts and crafts during "Make and Mend." May's special event is a reenactment of President McKinley's visit to San Francisco in 1901. ☺



GO SAILING THIS SPRING ABOARD THE HISTORIC SCHOONER ALMA Feel the waves, breathe the salt air, and take in dazzling views while park rangers tell stories about waterfront history. The first sail of the season is Saturday, April 14. Alma will sail most Saturdays, and some Thursdays, through the spring, summer and fall. Call 415-447-5000 for specific dates. Ticket prices are \$35 for adults, \$30 for seniors, and \$20 for children ages six to 15. Children age five or under ride for free but must be accompanied by an adult. The three-hour program departs promptly from Hyde Street Pier at 12:30 pm and the program ends at 4 pm. Ticket sales help fund other interpretive programs at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. For more information, please call 415-447-5000.

IN THE LIBRARY

Programs are held in the Maritime Library, Building E, Fort Mason Center. Fee: \$5 (\$4 Library friends and SFMNPAs) For reservations call 415-561-7040 or melani_van_petten@partner.nps.gov.

The library is open the first Sunday of the month from 10AM - 5PM, and by appointment Monday - Friday, 1PM - 4PM. Immediate appointments usually available, call 415-561-7030.

GOLD RUSH PORT

Saturday, March 28, 6PM. Drawing on excavations in buried ships and collapsed buildings from the Gold Rush period, maritime archeologist James P. Delgado re-creates San Francisco's unique maritime landscape.

TAKING THE SEA

Sunday, April 5, 5PM. Maritime historian Dennis Powers will discuss his new book, *Taking the Sea*, about ship salvaging, and Captain Thomas Whitelaw, a hard-hat diver in 1860s San Francisco who went on to found a marine-salvage empire.

SURVIVING CAPE HORNERS

Sunday, May 3, 5PM. Join historian Ted Miles and learn about a group of square-rigged ships that had a human-like will to survive.



Today In The Park

MARCH

- 1 Free First Sunday
Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Sunday)
- 5 Bathhouse Building Tour (every Thursday)
- 7 Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Saturday)
Bathhouse Building Tour (every Saturday)
Animals of Hyde Street Pier
Chantey Sing
Modelmaking Workshop open on Saturdays
- 8 Eureka Engine Room Tour
- 14 Costumed Living History
Hercules Engineering Tour
- 15 Lighthouses of SF Bay
Women at Sea
- 21 Stand By to Answer Bells

- Music of the Sea for Kids
- 22 Lifesaving at the Golden Gate
- 28 Animals of Hyde Street Pier
Crafts for Kids
Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier
Gold Rush Port
- 29 Women at Sea

APRIL

- 2 Bathhouse Building Tour (every Thursday)
- 4 Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Saturday)
Bathhouse Building Tour (every Saturday)
Animals of Hyde Street Pier
Chantey Sing
Modelmaking Workshop open on Saturdays
- 5 Free First Sunday
Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Sunday)

- Lifesaving at the Golden Gate
Taking the Sea
- 11 Costumed Living History
Hercules Engineering Tour
- 12 Eureka Engine Room Tour
- 18 Animals of Hyde Street Pier
Music of the Sea for Kids
Stand By to Answer Bells
- 19 Secrets of the Birds
Lighthouses of SF Bay
- 25 Crafts for Kids
Small Boat Shop Collection Tour
Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier
Junior Ranger Day
- 26 Secrets of the Birds

MAY

- 2 Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Saturday)
Bathhouse Building Tour (every Saturday)
Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier

- Chantey Sing
Modelmaking Workshop open on Saturdays
- 3 Free First Sunday
Historic Waterfront Walking Tour (every Sunday)
Small Craft on Hyde Street Pier
Surviving Cape Horners
- 7 Bathhouse Building Tour (every Thursday)
- 9 Grace Quan Raises Sail
Costumed Living History
Animals of Hyde Street Pier
Stand By to Answer Bells
- 10 Chinese Cannery Workers
- 16 Animals of Hyde Street Pier
Music of the Sea for Kids
- 17 Lighthouses of SF Bay
- 23 Hercules Engineering Tour
- 24 Lifesaving at the Golden Gate
- 30 Grace Quan Raises Sail
Crafts for Kids
- 31 Eureka Engine Room Tour

Activity Page for Kids

Can you HEAR me now? Or rather, can you SEE me now?

Communication is very important at sea. Do you know how ships communicate today? Radios? Satellite phones? What if those things are broken? What if the people on the other ship do not speak the same language as you? What can you do?

Have you ever seen a ship flying lots of colorful flags? They are not just for decoration, they also have a purpose! They are the International Code Flags and Pennants. Seafaring nations have agreed on the code, so ships from different countries who speak different languages have a common way to "talk" while at sea or with people on shore. The British created the first international code in 1855. It has changed over the years. Naval officers can give orders. Merchant captains can talk to tugboats or send messages to passing vessels. They can communicate.

There are twenty-six flags and ten pennants. Can you guess why? Each flag represents a letter of the alphabet and has a name that begins with that letter. It's called the phonetic alphabet. You may have heard soldiers use it in movies. For example A is Alpha and Z is Zulu. Some messages are used so

often that captains only have to fly one flag. For example, when the flag for A (Alpha) flies alone it means "Diver Down," that a scuba diver is underwater near the ship. The Z means "I Require a Tug." The ten pennants represent numbers (0-9). Finally there is one answering pennant and three repeaters used for longer messages.

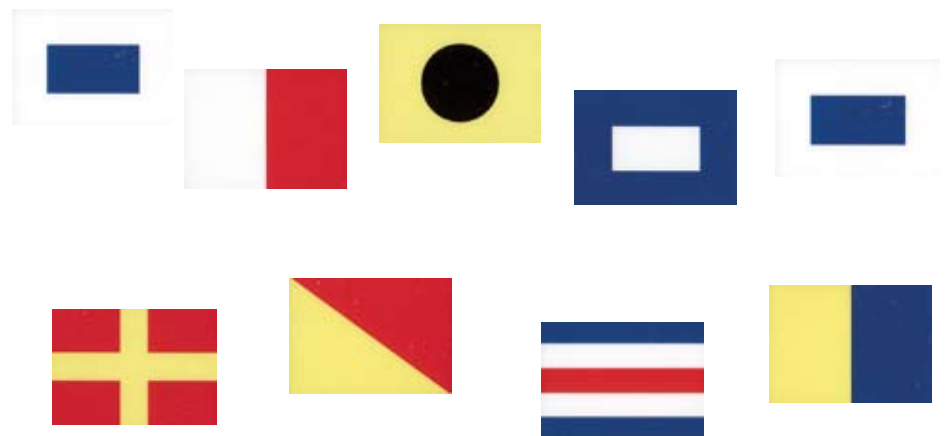
The number of flags used can also have meaning. A group of code flags are called a signal. One flag signals (like "Diver Down") are urgent or common messages. Five flags signals tell time and position. Signals can contain up to seven flags. When you read the code these signals do not spell words, but sailors either know the signal or can look it up.

It is hard to see some colors at sea, so the flags are only: red, blue, yellow, black, and white. To be seen clearly, some colors cannot be matched with other colors. Look at the flags. Can you figure out which colors work the best together?

Sometimes the captain of a big sailing vessel would bring along his family on a voyage. He would often give his kids the job of organizing and working with the signal flags. Signal flags are used to call for help, to warn others of dangers, and pass on other important messages. Would you like that job? It's an important job because you would be helping the ship to communicate.



You can cut out and keep the code chart so you too can read signals. You could also make your own set of flags to send messages! Use the code chart to decode this message.



Kids' Page by Brendan Wilson, Park Guide

