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BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE PUBLISHED WRITINGS OF JOHN LYMAN

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PREFACE

You might have known him as Dr. John Lyman, PHD, Professor of Marine Science at the University of North Carolina, or as Capt. John Lyman, USNR. Those were his professional names. Like many others who study and write maritime history, he did it alongside a myriad of other activities. To a group of people who remembered commercial sailing vessels, especially those of the Pacific Coast, plain "J. Lyman" at the bottom of the page meant words and opinions that were accurate, thorough, and often, definitive. His writing was simple, informative, and wide-ranging.

The name John Lyman appeared at the bottom of a large amount of writing. This can be divided into: Log Chips, his own periodical; six Marine Digest series; and over 200 contributions to other publications in the form of articles, book reviews, letters to the editors, and answers to inquiries.

The home-produced Log Chips ran from 1948 to 1959, mostly on a bimonthly schedule. The twelve pages of each issue were packed with historical data on recent maritime history, primarily concerned with the building and operation of sailing vessels in the 19th and 20th centuries. To quote the forward in issue number one, "Log Chips" has been created to preserve and disseminate in a concise form the researches of the Editor and his correspondents and to serve as a means of communication among them."

The production of Log Chips, which was solely the work of John and Mitchell Lyman, has been highly regarded from its first issue. I think the words of seaman and author Capt. P. A. MacDonald must have particularly pleased John, "John Lyman, himself a potential encyclopedia of already accumulated maritime data, and not hampered by the professional seaman's sentiment or prejudices, is the one man most qualified to treat and render clearly and objectively the yet unfinished story of sail on the Pacific."

A second category of John Lyman's writings was the series of ship biographies that appeared in the Marine Digest, a periodical published in Seattle, Washington devoted to the diverse maritime activities of the Puget Sound and the Pacific Northwest states. Beginning in 1941, John Lyman produced an outstanding group of ship biographies covering the full range of West Coast ship types.

As with all his works, commercial sail came first, but steam vessels were not forgotten. Even the little-remembered sealing fleet was chronicled. Unfortunately, that list is incomplete, covering only names starting with A through J. Produced during the same years as Log Chips, "Pacific Sealing Fleet" had to take second place to that very time-consuming periodical.

The staff of the J. Porter Shaw Library has made a bound volume out of the first two Marine Digest series, "Pacific Coast Sailers, 1850-1905" and "Pacific Coast Sailers that were Built Elsewhere

1905-1940." I'm sure John would be pleased to know that it is the most used book in the Library.

A third category of John Lyman's writings is composed of over 200 articles, notes, letters, and book reviews, which cover the span of years from 1931 to 1978. I have included in this bibliography even the smallest item, both for completeness and because the smallest bit of Lyman writing is a distillation of careful research.

The four sentences that make up the note at the bottom of page 49 of the Nautical Research Journal for April 1949 should give any maritime reader inspiration and food for thought.

"I remember, as a boy, seeing the "first wooden house in California,"...still standing in Monterey, which dated from the middle 1840s. It came around Cape Horn, knocked down in the hold of a ship from New England; so in those days it was a lot cheaper to stick to the native adobe style of architecture. But when the Gold Rush began, all the 'dobe puddlers went off to the diggings, and the Maine sawmills started shipping full cargoes of lumber to San Francisco. You can have your China Clippers and California Clippers, but I'll take the little brigs, half-brigs, and topsail schooners that came around Cape Horn with deck loads of lumber. The men in them were men."

John Lyman had a long and fruitful relationship with the American Neptune, his words appearing on its pages from 1942 until 1978. Editor Philip C. F. Smith had this to say in tribute:

"John Lyman's interests spread out in every direction and his knowledge in each area was tremendous. His scholarly offerings to such journals as this one and the Mariners Mirror, and countless others were prodigious... We shall all miss his good advice, absolute courtesy, and unwavering interest."

I never knew John Lyman first hand because the ages and places that we lived in were too far apart. I think of this bibliography as a belated thank-you to John for his writings and I hope that this effort will bring his words to a new generation of readers and writers of maritime history. As with any listing of this sort, I would appreciate any additions or corrections, which can reach me through the J. Porter Shaw Library. The complete text of the articles cited is available in the John Lyman Reading Room of the J. Porter Shaw Library, Building E, Third Floor, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, California 94123 (phone: 415-556-9870).

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