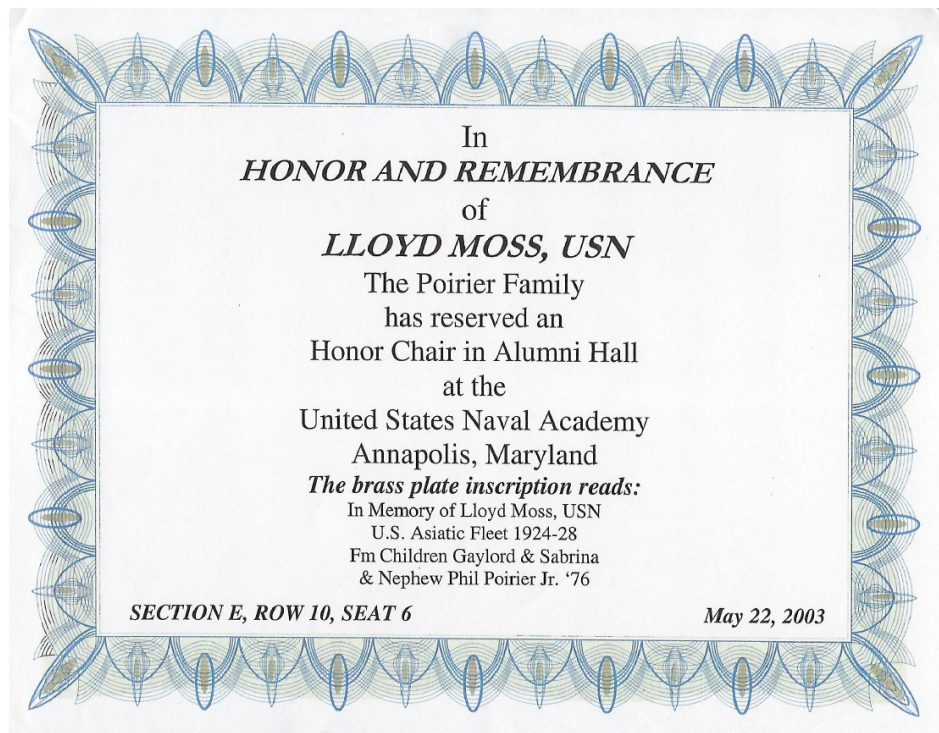


MEMOIRS OF UNITED STATES NAVAL SERVICE (1927 - 1930)
*As recorded by Lloyd J. Moss in May 1974 and transcribed by granddaughter
Shelagh Lewins*



INTRODUCTION

Below are the memoirs of Lloyd J. Moss concerning his service in the United States Navy from approximately 1927 until 1930. These memoirs were lovingly transcribed verbatim by Lloyd's granddaughter, Shelagh Lewins. I am Lloyd's nephew and have added some headings, footnotes and pictures for readability and context.

Lloyd's recollection and perception of events and his insight and detail are remarkable when you consider that almost fifty years had passed between the below events that occurred in the late 1920's and when he wrote his memoirs in 1974.

Lloyd's naval service occurred during a period of significant historical and military events including:

- Turmoil in Central America and U.S. intervention,
- The development and eventual deterioration of European colonialism in China coupled with the rise of Chinese nationalism and the competition for internal political power,
- The beginning of Soviet influence in China after the 1917 Revolution,
- Increasing United States engagement in Asia and the rise of Imperial Japan in East Asia, and
- Changes in military operations including the adaption of new technologies and tactics, like the gyroscope and the conduct of signals intelligence on radio transmissions.

The impact of some of these events continue to this day, including a rising China that has not forgotten the "Century of Humiliation" when it was dominated by foreign powers. It is hard to imagine that foreign warships and military forces were deployed not just to China's coastal cities but far inland. Coincidentally, just a few years later, Lloyd's brother-in-law Albert (Al) served on U.S. Navy river patrol boats on the Yangtze River while in the U.S. Navy from 1932 - 1934.

I have retained Lloyd's recollection of his courtship and marriage to my Aunt, Florence (nee Poirier) Moss, and the impact of the Great Depression because they reflect the challenges of the times especially for the spouse of a sailor. It's amazing that, despite having very limited courtship and little time together, Florence and Lloyd were married over fifty years when he passed in 1982. In my youth, I remember them as very warm and thoughtful individuals and, with their children Gaylord and Sabrina, a wonderful family.

We are grateful to Lloyd for his service and for passing along these recollections. Most of all, we are grateful for his fearlessness and curiosity. As a young man in his early 20's, Lloyd exercised incredible maturity and drive to strike out and learn about his environment. Lloyd Moss lived history; he didn't just observe it. Since 2003, Lloyd has had an Honor Chair reserved in his memory in Alumni Hall at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland with the following words on a brass plaque on the arm rest:

In memory of Lloyd Moss USN

U. S. Asiatic Fleet 1924-28¹
Fm Children Gaylord & Sabrina
& Nephew Phil Poirier Jr '76

It is only fitting that this document is being finalized on U.S. Independence Day.

Phillip L. Poirier Jr.
United States Naval Academy Class of 1976
July 4, 2020

¹ I was guessing on the exact years of his naval service when I reserved an Honor Chair for Uncle Lloyd.

MEMOIRS OF NAVAL SERVICE (1927 - 1930)

1927

Meeting his future wife, Florence Poirier

When New Year's Eve² came up I thought I would go to the nicest dance hall around and that occurred to me to be the Crystal Ballroom out on Revere Beach. All the big name orchestras in the twenties appeared there sooner or later and it was a very pretty place located just above the beach. Not long after I went in I saw a girl that I thought I would like to dance with and when the music started and she was still sitting there I got up the nerve to walk across the floor and asked her if she would like to dance. And so in effect began the dance of my life that still continues forty-seven years later.³ We danced several times that night, and I was vaguely aware that there was a fellow around that was her escort but I paid no attention to him. I asked and got the girl's name and address, scribbled it down on a slip of paper, lost the paper but got her address again when she was standing in line at the coat check-room at the end of the evening.

Moving South -- Operations in Central America

Within a couple of days the Marblehead⁴ (*picture below*) was again on its way south to Guantanamo,⁵ and the usual battle practice maneuvers. But it didn't last long this time. There was big trouble in Nicaragua so we started across the Gulf of Mexico at high speed.⁶ The ship's landing party of sailors, since we had no marines on board, got organized and held practice sessions with machine guns on the fantail deck aft. One wild bullet made a hole in the hollow iron flagstaff.

2 Lloyd was born on January 1, 1907 – possibly that's why he really seemed to enjoy New Year's Eve.

3 Lloyd is referring to my Aunt Florence (nee Ely) Poirier, my father's older sister. Revere Beach is just south of Lynn and Salem, Massachusetts, where the Ely and Poirier families lived in the 1920's and 1930's.

4 "Marblehead" refers to USS Marblehead (CL-12). See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Marblehead_\(CL-12\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Marblehead_(CL-12)). An excerpt of the ship's history from the Naval History and Heritage Command is attached as Appendix A. Coincidentally, USS Marblehead was named after Marblehead, MA, which is adjacent to Salem, MA – only a few miles away from Revere Beach!

5 Guantanamo Bay is in Cuba, which became a U.S. protectorate after the Spanish American War. Although Cuba was granted its independence in 1902, the United States and Cuba signed a lease of indefinite term in 1903 for a base in Guantanamo which the Navy has used for training and other purposes. It's most notable purpose in recent decades was as a military prison for suspected terrorists and fighters from the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars after the attacks of September 11, 2001.

6 The deployment of USS Marblehead to Nicaragua was associated with the United States intervention in the Nicaraguan Civil War, a brief description of which can be found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicaraguan_Civil_War_\(1926%E2%80%931932\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicaraguan_Civil_War_(1926%E2%80%931932)). Interestingly, with respect to the specific timing of Marblehead's detachment to Nicaragua on February 5th, Wikipedia states the following context: "*Moncada's forces began marching westwards towards Managua, defeating Conservative forces along the way. Meanwhile, Liberals led by Francisco Parajón struck at the city of Chinandega, causing one of the most destructive battles of the war. The battle raged from 6 to 9 February 1927 and saw 500 Conservative defenders face off against between 600 and 2,000 Liberal attackers, with "hundreds [being] killed on each side."*"



So we arrived off the coast at a point called Bluefields, anchored well out from shore in water that seemed as rough as the mid-Atlantic no matter how calm the weather was. It made for a very uncomfortable anchorage. The landing force was sent ashore in whaleboats and then we got underway again and slowly cruised north up the coast as far as Puerto Cabezas (Bragman's Bluff) and anchored again offshore. The sea was a little calmer but there was still the long rolling ground-swells. It was an extremely dull place to be because we were so far out Nicaragua was just a dark line on the horizon. Then someone dropped a fishline over the side and instantly caught a catfish. After that everybody came up with fishlines and catfish were coming up in swarms. Somebody wired three hooks together to make a treble hook and found that just by dragging it through the water you snagged fish without even any bait. The enthusiasm for fishing immediately dropped to zero and we just had a very dull time for the rest of our stay in the Caribbean.



As sometimes happens at sea when everything has been the most monotonous something astounding develops. Approximately on February the fifth and two o'clock in the morning someone came and shook me awake and gave me this news: The Marblehead had just been ordered to proceed with all haste to China to protect

American civilians from the effects of the Chian-Kai Shek revolutionary army which was fast approaching Shanghai from the south.⁷

The gyro compass electrician was being transferred off the ship because he was nearing the end of the enlistment and I had the best qualifications to take over the job so I had to dress hurriedly and go down to the Central Station and get as much last minute instruction as possible before the instrument became my sole responsibility.

At that point in time the gyro compass⁸ was a fairly new invention and was considered to be so complicated and mysterious in its operation that the man assigned to look after it was relieved of all other duties. Whenever the compass was running, which was all the time the ship was underway or in an alert condition, I had to sleep on a cot right beside it. I could go where I wanted to during the day but was subject to call over the loudspeaker system to rush back to the compass instantly. This was usually done when the Navigator wanted to make an accuracy check between one of his repeater dials on the bridge and the master compass by telephone or voice tube. The location itself was interesting. It was a small compartment about 10 by 15 feet and was at the very bottom of the ship beneath a U-shaped steel frame that supported the foremast. I could look straight up the tub with ladder hand-holds inside that was supposed to be my escape avenue in battle if the ship went down. The regular hatch in the ceiling would of course be tightly dogged down in times of emergency. I found out later on that there had been so many new electrical cables routed through this tube that I couldn't possibly have squeeze up it anyway. I would love to talk to the man who came after me and was aboard when the Marblehead was very badly damaged by the Japanese.⁹

Heading to the Pacific and Hawaii

Now to get back to that early morning. We got under way as soon as we had sufficient steam up, went back to Bluefields in a hurry, took our landing force back aboard without even dropping the anchor, then went full speed to the Panama Canal.¹⁰ Here I discovered one of the fringe benefits of my new job. Since there were gyro repeater instruments in all the important navigational locations on the ship, I always found it necessary to be doing something to the unit that was located in the

7 This was a time of significant turmoil in China in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty, and infighting between the left and right wings of the KMT (Nationalist Party) formed by Sun Yat Sen. During this time, the National Revolutionary Army led by Chiang Kai Shek was moving towards Wuhan and Shanghai. Presumably, the US government was interested in protecting US economic interests in China, which were largely centered out of Shanghai and along the Yangtze River. 1927 is also considered to be the start of the Chinese Civil War, which was largely a struggle between the KMT and Chinese Communist Party (CPC) for ultimate control of China. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Civil_War. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_massacre.

8 A gyro compass identifies "true north" and is critical to the navigation of the ship and the operations of various systems that require directional or location information to operate properly. As a former US Navy officer of the deck and gunnery officer, suffice it to say it's a bad day when your gyro goes out. Given that, Uncle Lloyd was a prized asset since he was likely the only person who knew how the gyro operated and could repair and maintain it.

9 The Marblehead was damaged in the Battle of Makassar Strait in what was then the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) near the outset of World War II in February 1942. It steamed west around Africa to the US and was later repaired and served in the Atlantic theater during WWII.

10 The distance from Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua to Colon, Panama (on the Atlantic coast) is about 400 miles.

most interesting spot at the moment. So naturally I chose the glass-enclosed fire control station high above the pilot house. From there I could see everything going on in the Canal Zone for miles around.

At Balboa¹¹ supply station we took on a full stock of supplies including machine guns and two small cannon for the landing force. There was no time for liberty in the city this time and we were on our way across the blue Pacific headed for Honolulu in short order. One day during this run I was called down to the electrical officer's stateroom and given a short written test. Afterward he told me that I was now electricians mate 2nd class and I realized that I had another benefit from being a gyro compass man.

The Marblehead steamed into the great naval base of Pearl Harbor on approximately February 17th. Then the tension sort of eased up and instead of racing on the China we began to hold battle maneuvers among the Islands and to have liberty in Honolulu and on Lahaina Island.

Naturally I found the islands fascinating and covered as much territory as possible by walking and riding the local busses everywhere. Telling about it would take a book in itself besides the comparison with today's Hawaii is too unbelievable according to what travelers since the war tell me. I did much of my exploring alone or with one other friend. It paid off unexpectedly one Sunday in Lahaina when I was invited to join a group hiring a car to make the circuit around the island. The crowd looked like they were after a wild ride over that extremely rough terrain and I knew the roads had no safety features so I declined and they got someone else to help pay the driver. Late that evening we got the news that the car had gone over a cliff and the ship raced back to Honolulu with one man in a coffin and the others so badly hurt that I never saw them again. I'm sure the memory of that Newport-Providence ride at the end of boot camp helped keep me from taking this trip. Lahaina raised cattle and once I saw a small inter-island steamer anchored a little way off the coral beach. Cattle were being driven into the surf and forced to swim to the side of the ship where a man lassoed their horns while standing on deck then a winch lifted them up like you pick up a rabbit by the ears and in no time they were landed kicking and bawling on deck. I saw a novel way of breaking in new land here.

Most of the area was steep mountain slopes rising up from flat coastal plains. These slopes were composed of extremely rough sharp pointed lava practically impossible to walk over but with rich volcanic soil scattered through it. The system was composed of two big steam tractors moving parallel and 200 yards apart up the slope. Each tractor had a cable winding drum on it and on the ground was a huge very heavy obsolete iron flywheel on its side and attached to cables on opposite sides. First one tractor would reel in its cable dragging the wheel across the field then both tractors would move a few feet and the other tractor would drag it back resulting in a breaking up and leveling of the lava. You could always see rain falling somewhere in between the high peaks of the mountains, and a system of catch basins and irrigation ditches was raised almost exclusively on the flat plains and many little narrow-gauge railroads carried out cane stalks to local rolling mills. (See picture in my album).

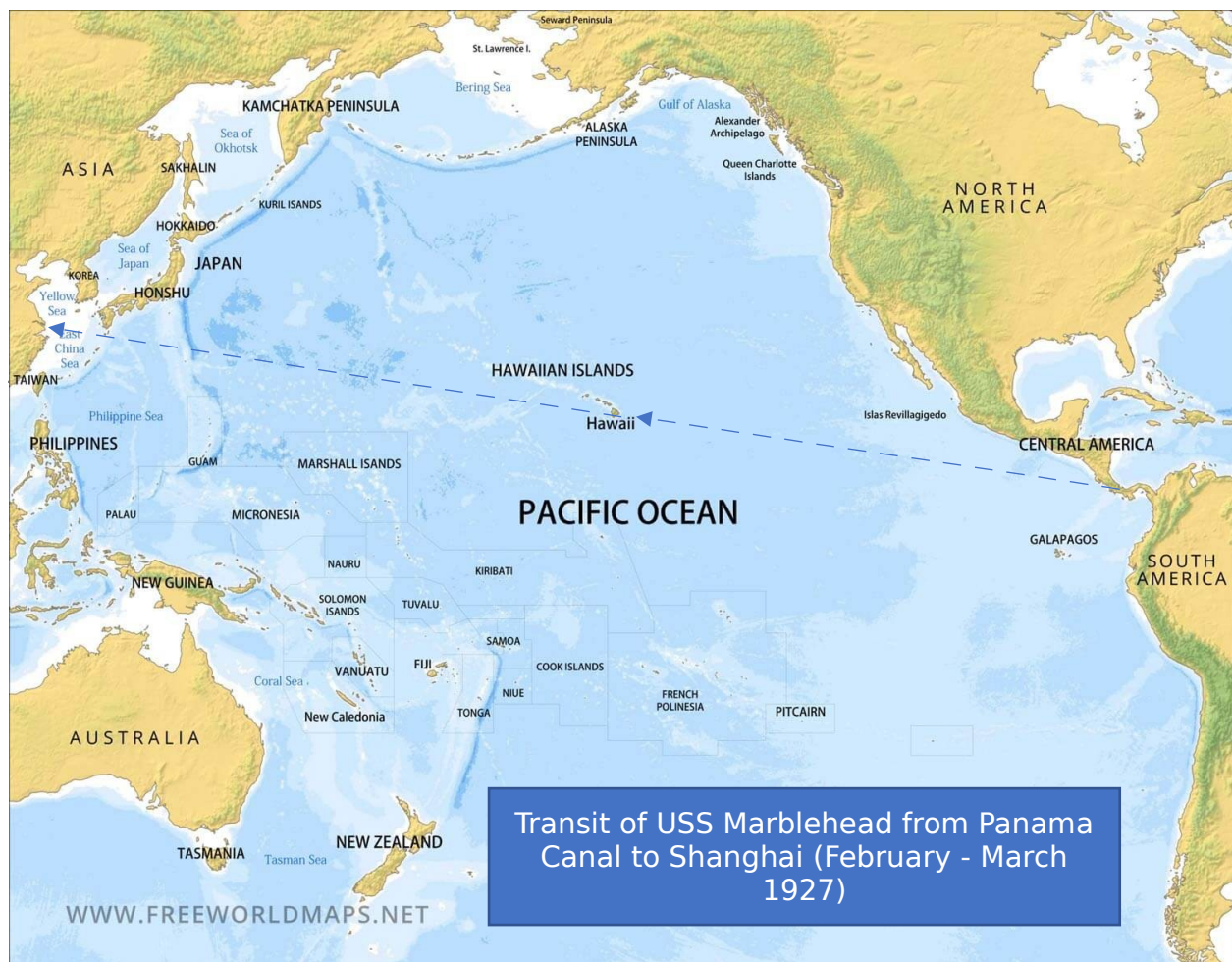
On to China

¹¹ Balboa is on the Pacific terminus of the Panama Canal. The distance from Balboa to Pearl Harbor is about 5000 miles.

About the fifth of March the situation in China suddenly took a grave turn and the Marblehead was ordered to Shanghai at all possible speed.¹² We began loading the ship full of all kinds of food and supplies plus live ammunition for the big guns, even extra torpedoes for the two triple torpedo mounts that the Marblehead had as regular armament on the after section of the main deck. We worked all day and most of the night then left Pearl Harbor about four A.M.

One amusing incident I remember was in connection with the taking on of the meat supplies. The cold storage rooms were four decks down below the engineers' living quarters. It was so arranged that the loading hatches were located exactly over each other so that they could all be opened up and stores could be lowered from the top deck straight down to the bilge deck. To speed the operation they simply put a heavy help mattress fender on the bottom and simply dropped frozen meat all the way down and men down below grabbed it and hung it in the cold rooms. Well, when hams began dropping past the engineers' berth deck one big water tender named Johnson grabbed a baseball bat and swung it at them as they went by. When he hit one it sometimes was diverted far enough over to land on our deck and somebody grabbed it up and rushed it down to the engine room and hit it away.¹³ Which meant that on late night watches for some time to come you could smell ham cooking on a little hot plate down under the main condensers somewhere.

It was quite a trip across the Pacific at a nearly constant speed of 25 knots.¹⁴ We broke the existing record for traveling between Honolulu and Shanghai. As before, the landing force was kept busy practicing with machine guns on the fantail deck and there was almost constant loading drills on the turret guns. The noise and vibration on light cruisers at that speed made it far from comfortable but we were so excited that we never noticed that.



Note: The above map illustrates the tremendous distances that Uncle Lloyd's ship was traveling.

The first thing we saw as we neared the China coast was a tall pillar of rock called "Lot's Wife" sticking up out of the ocean with nothing else visible anywhere. Some hours later the ocean's color had changed to a muddy hue and we had the instinctive feeling that we were in shallow water. The ship was slowed down considerably and after awhile the first grey coastline of China formed itself on the horizon.

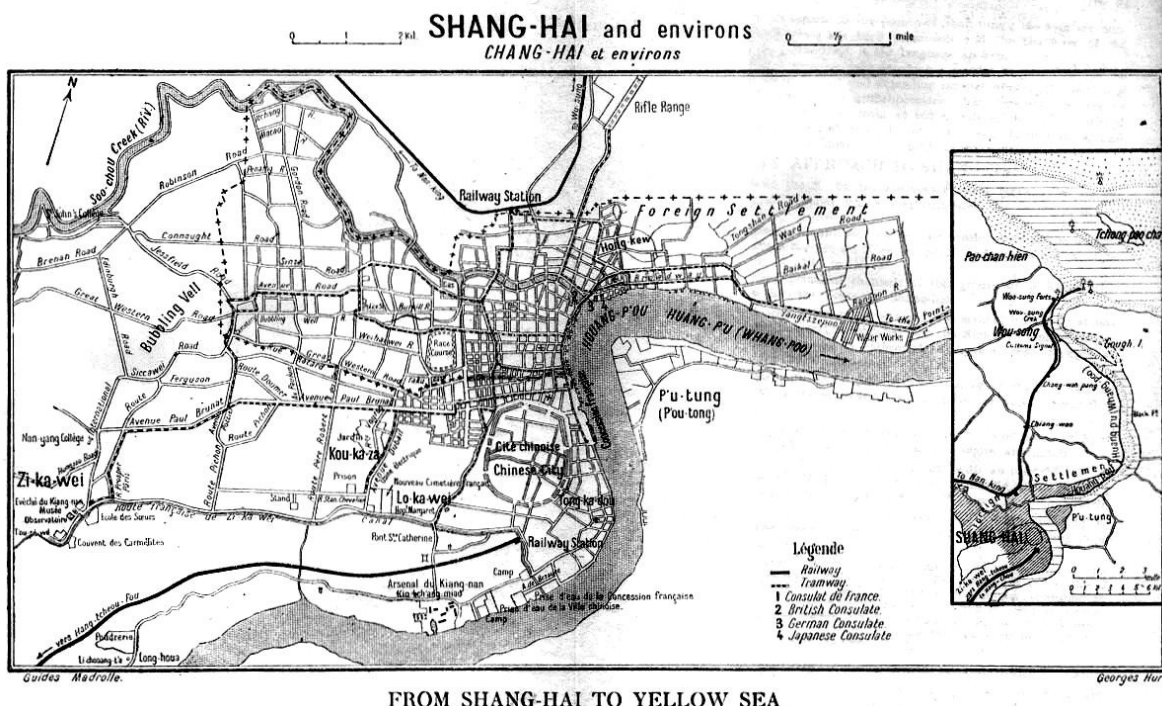
Arriving in Shanghai

The next thing we knew we were entering the mouth of the Yangtze river¹⁵ with only one bank visible and then were passing what someone said was Woosung Forts¹⁶ and we started up the winding Whangpoo river¹⁷ which is joined to the Yangtze Kiang at this point.

15 The Yangtze is the longest river in Asia. For more, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yangtze>.

16 The Woosung Forts are mentioned in this LA Times story of the Japanese attack on Shanghai in 1932. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1932/02/07/issue.html>

17 Aka the Huangpu River. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huangpu_River.



FROM SHANG-HAI TO YELLOW SEA

The Whangpoo is not a large river but it is navigable to all types of vessels for the approximate 20 miles into the city of Shanghai. It is hard to put into words the impressions we had on that short trip from Woosung to Shanghai. It was like going through Alice's rabbit hole and coming up in ancient Cathay. In the river itself were junks and sampans exactly like the old museum prints and populated with people to match. On shore we saw old men tending their dip nets suspended on poles like the old-fashioned well sweeps. The land was level as far away in the distance as we could see and all cut up into little fields with raised paths between. Almost all the farming was done by hand with only an occasional water buffalo pulling a rough plow.

Everywhere were coolies¹⁸ with poles across their shoulders and a five gallon oil can suspended from each end carrying nightsoil to the growing plants.¹⁹ Here and there along the big path that ran along the high river were little groups of Chinese soldiers in blue cottonsuits with wrap-around leggings. And once we saw a high-wheeled wheelbarrow being pushed along it and riding on it were six girls apparently headed for a small factory building a little further along the river. The absence of any kind of trees gave a strange look to the landscape and the houses stood in little clusters and were the same color as the earth and seemed to be made of woven bamboo, reeds, straw and mud.

Finally we rounded a bend of the river and saw the beginning of the city. On the left was the wire-enclosed Standard Oil Compound, composed of oil drum storage buildings, a glass factory for making lamp chimnies and the docks and warehouses, called GoDowns in China, and hordes of coolies all dressed alike in blue cotton and

18 Coolies was a term for manual laborers, which presumably included rickshaw operators.

19 Night soil is a historically used euphemism for human excreta collected from privies, pail closets, pit latrines, privy middens, septic tanks, etc. This material was removed from the immediate area, usually at night, by workers employed in this trade.

wide straw hats. The women in blue cotton pants and loose overjackets. The coolie men were much the same except that they stripped down to next to nothing depending on how hard they were working and how warm the day was. The shopkeepers and overseer type men were in black or blue gowns and wore felt slippers on their feet.

Directly across the river was a large factory building with a big sign facing the water that said "Keith's Eggs" a place where they dried and packaged millions of eggs and next to it down-river stood a very large electric plant: "The Shanghai Municipal Light Plant". Most all other signs were in Chinese and the same drab-colored scene extended up-river as far as we could see. I said drab-colored but it was far from drab in actuality for there was a bee-hive activity of every imaginable kind going on all the docks and all the little narrow streets and alleys leading back from the wharves. Little family-type factories were interspersed among the shops. The factories were likely to be making anything and the shops were just as varied. For example one of the things they made and sold were papermache articles to be burned on the graves of ancestors. I have seen paper model T Fords that burned on a man's grave would insure him transportation in the next world.

So far I have mentioned only the visual things so I must hasten to assure you that the smells and sounds were fully as strange and exciting as the sights. The smells were not always pleasant and aromatic, but no one can say they weren't potent. At first they seemed unbearable, but one gets used to it after awhile. The chattering of human voices seemed to be everywhere punctuated constantly by the gong tone of the traveling food vendors and the bamboo clack of the blind beggars and the clip clop of running rickshaw men.

As we came abreast of the Standard Oil compound we saw that a cruiser identical to ours was already tied up to the dock. We pulled a little upriver and then allowed the river current and rudder action to drop us back directly alongside the U.S.S. Richmond.²⁰ Heaving lines were then thrown across and soon we were tied up securely to the other ship where we stayed for some weeks.

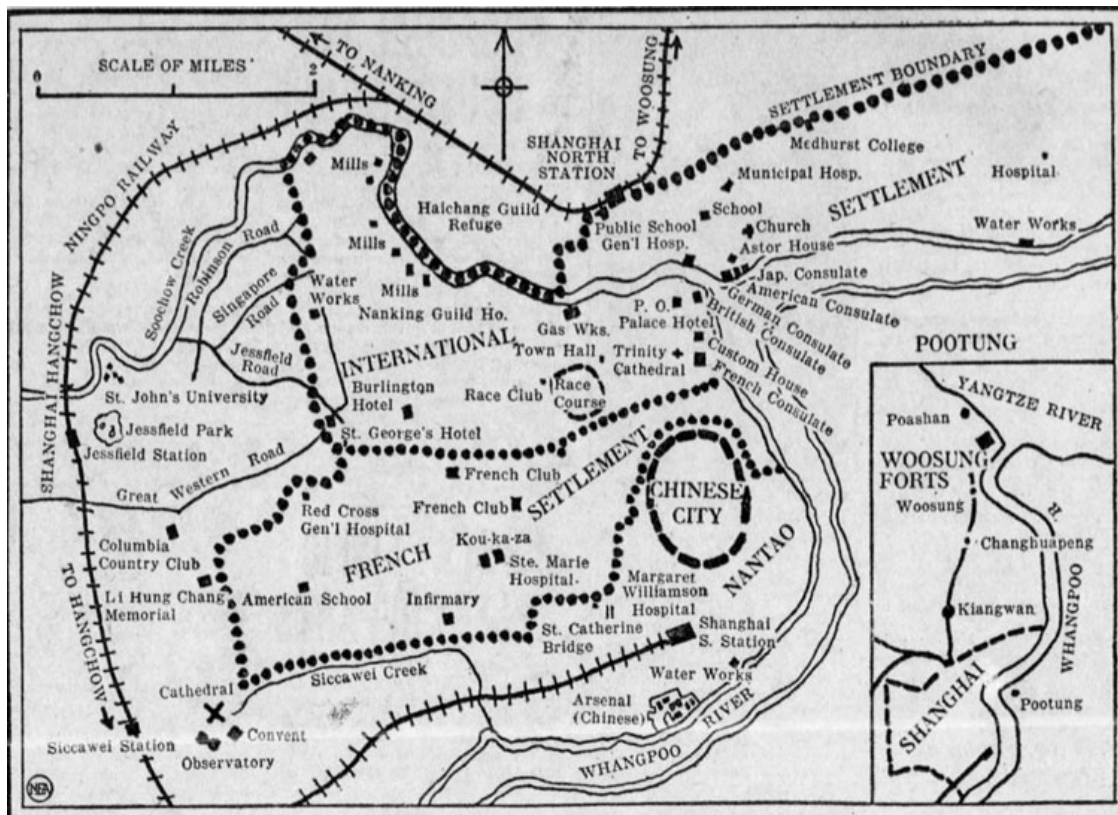
The military situation in the city had become stable just as we arrived in Shanghai and the existing forces had decided not to offer any resistance - quite a common occurrence in China in those days. It was said that money and understanding had been exchanged in high places and all was settled peacefully. In any case conditions had settled to the point where life was normal except that there was an 8 P.M. curfew and no one could be on the street in the International section after that.²¹ Liberty was soon allowed to our crew in the afternoon and a special Navy police force was sent in from all the ships in port. So, as my gyro compass duties were nil in port I quickly managed to be assigned to this patrol.

The setup I found in existence was most interesting. First of all, a headquarters was set up for us at the YMCA downtown at the corner of Szechuen and Hongkong Roads. All we had to do was appear there at 4 P.M. and be assigned a section to patrol then we were on our own until the next afternoon at 4. At our disposal was one of the most exotic and cosmopolitan cities of all the world, roughly eight miles long and three miles wide.

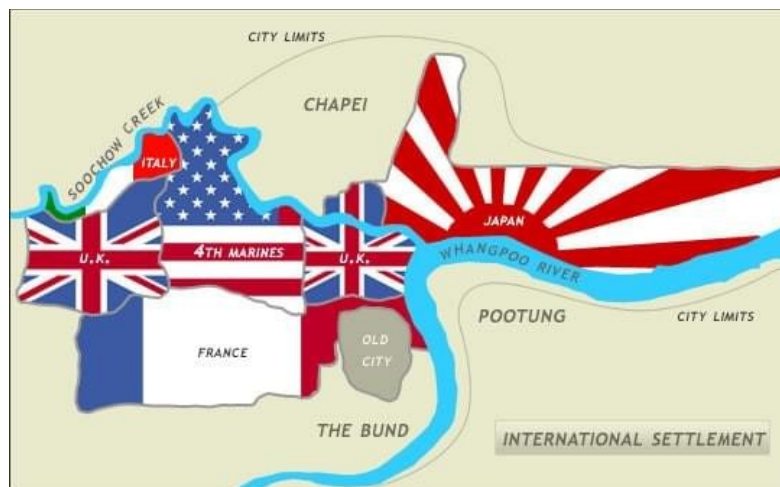
²⁰ USS Richmond (CL-9) was also an Omaha class cruiser.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Richmond_\(CL-9\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Richmond_(CL-9))

²¹ To understand Shanghai's "International Settlement," see
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai_International_Settlement.

An English sector, a French sector, a Japanese sector and the rest loosely American, German and other nationalities combined. That doesn't mean there were only Europeans. Actually there were Chinese by the millions everywhere except the Public Garden along the river in front of the English Concession. This was kept in the old tradition and the only Chinese in there were the nannies (ahmas in Asia) with their baby carriages and little children. Sailors were tolerated if they were quiet and well-mannered.



Note: International Settlement



Note: Shanghai International Settlements by country.

The city was governed by a commission made up of Western residents entirely separate from the Chinese outside the Concessions.²² Service men in trouble were turned over to their own commanding officers to be dealt with by military law. That could be pretty stern in those days, but it was pretty mild compared to the justice meted out by the Chinese courts. We saw plenty of evidence of that in photographs of the death by a thousand cuts etc. that were circulated around.²³ I have seen Chinese prisoners being carted off to a place of execution. Life seemed to be awfully cheap for the Chinese, there were such hordes of them in the city that it was hard to see how they could find enough food to eat.



There were rickshaws everywhere and sampans on the river. If you topped anywhere you were instantly surrounded by a mob of screaming coolies all bidding for your patronage in their vehicle. But if you were new to Asia, just off the cruise boat you could easily think that you were being attacked by a lynch mob. The usual procedure was to step into the rickshaw whose shafts were resting on your feet, then as the coolie lifted the shafts to running position you hit out at the others who were in the way and so off you went down the street at a trot. If you knew your way around the city you gave the foot boards a little kick to right or left when you came to a place to turn and so on. If you didn't know the city the coolie would stop as soon as he came to a spot out of sight of his recent competitors and then would begin a dialog in pidgin English in an endeavor to fix your destination. You had to learn by experience because if a coolie couldn't understand you at all he might suddenly break out in big smiles and say "Maskee, maskee" signifying that everything was clear and off he would trot toward some dive where he thought any sailor would want to be. The only remedy for this was to jump out of one vehicle without paying and get into another one, sometimes changing two or three times until you got a coolie who understood where you really wanted to go.

If you were staying awhile in the city it was better to select a coolie, let him know he was your man and everywhere you went from then on day or night you would find him waiting for you when you came out to take you wherever you wanted to get. The pay was a little difficult to figure out at first you had to be told by an old China hand about what to give them for a certain trip, and after that you sort of figured

²² A general description of the "concessions" can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concessions_in_China. These foreign settlements and concessions were established during a period that the Chinese refer to as the Century of Humiliation. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Century_of_humiliation.

²³ Death by a thousand cuts is not just a phrase. It was a form of torture and execution in Imperial China.

out what was right yourself. If you gave them too much money they screamed just as loud as if you gave them too little because that indicated you were a green hand and didn't know the system and might be taken for much more. Here is an example of the rates: One Chinese yuan or Mex dollar was worth 45 cents in our money. That yuan was divided up into 255 coppers. The distance from Keith Eggs across from the Standard Oil Compound was four miles. For trotting this four miles the rickshaw coolie received 80 coppers.²⁴ One yuan would buy three quart bottles of Japanese beer. It was the usual thing to see a pay-master sitting under an umbrella on a loading wharf as coolies filed by. After each returned from carrying a heavy load onto a ship he was handed one copper for his back-breaking labor.²⁵

The straight section of the Whangpoo River in the very center of the city was called battle ship row and the middle of the river was occupied by the naval flagships of our, and several European nations.



Note: The equivalent situation might be a row of foreign warships anchored in the Mississippi River off St. Louis.

On the right hand shore was the wide avenue called the Bund and directly across it was the main banking and commercial area of Shanghai. (See below picture)

²⁴ This would be about US 15 cents.

²⁵ This amount is less than a US 1 cent.



This portion of the city had the look of an important European city, buildingwise. The main streets going straight back from the Bund were Rue du Consuls which became Avenue Joffre after a dozen blocks. Next along was Edward VII Road that was important as it divided the French section from the English. You couldn't buy a light bulb on one side of this street and take it to the other side of the street because it wouldn't fit due to the difference in construction. The same applied to many other things. Then there was Nanking Road which became Bubbling Well Road (*see below picture*) further along. Next was Peking Road that turned into Sinza Road and went on for another two miles.



Note: Bubbling Well Road

After Peking Road the Whangpoo made a sharp bend and the important Soochow creek²⁶ flowed into the river at this point. (*See below picture*)

²⁶ Aka the **Suzhou Creek** or the Wusong River.



The creek had nine bridges over it in the first mile. But the first one crossed at the junction of the two waterways, and cut across the upper end of the Public Garden. It was made of iron and painted green and directly alongside the north approach was the elegant old Hotel Astor still furnished and managed exactly as it was in King Edward VII's time. In the beautiful solid mahogany paneled bar of this hotel I enjoyed the last remnant of the free lunch institution. It was the hotel's custom to keep the uneaten portions of ham, beef roasts etc. in silver covered dishes on a counter next to the bar. As a patron you were welcome to go over at any time and slice off whatever you wanted and carry it back to the table where you had left your drink. Obviously it wouldn't do today but then anyone in a place of that kind was sure to be quiet and mannerly about the operation. I never went there in uniform, having by this time found out that I could have a suit made for a ridiculously low sum.

State of Chinese Politics

It is interesting to comment further on the political situation. In those days we foreign nationals paid no attention whatever to the Chinese laws. As I have already stated, France and England still held concessions in Shanghai. Germany had lost hers when she lost World War I. The American policy had turned away from foreign concessions and as a goodwill gesture we were in the process of turning over our portion of the city to China.

But at the same time the Japanese were doing just the opposite.²⁷ Day by day they were entrenching themselves deeper into the former German and American sectors. The Hongkew section of the city was already being called the Japanese Concession in 1927 and they were rapidly taking over the businesses of the American sector which ran for five miles down river along Yangtsze Poo Road and approximately one mile inland from the river.

The other side of the river, Pootung, behind the wharves was solidly Chinese and a mass of rabbit warren type buildings for as far as you could see. I have never

²⁷ For a history of Japan's encroachment on and eventual domination of China in the late 1800's through World War II, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_China%E2%80%93Japan_relations#:~:text=Conflict%20after%201870,-As%20Japan%20modernized&text=japan%2C%20having%20built%20up%20a,Arthur%20on%20the%20Liaotung%20Peninsula.

stepped foot over there except for the Standard Oil compound. To compare conditions then with now is most difficult. As I write, May, 1974, the five marines who were symbolically guarding the American Embassy in Peking have just been asked to leave China because they have been seen jogging in the park with the words "U. S. Marines" written across the front of their sweatshirts.

To get back to my guard duty. I was always assigned to roving patrols in the areas where service men congregated, namely dance halls, barrooms etc. and I was expected to help the fellows keep out of trouble whenever possible.²⁸ We didn't care what they did as long as it didn't involve stealing, fighting or hurting people or anything that was likely to give the service a bad name. When the curfew hour came I always managed to be in a dance hall so I would take off my belt and leggings and join the merrymaking until five in the morning when people could leave the buildings and go home. We of the patrol squads if we tired of one place could always put our duty badges back on and move wherever we liked as though we were on some official duty.

For the first few weeks the main streets had barbed-wire entanglements down their centers and there were sandbag machine gun forts at principle intersections. That looked pretty grim but one soon forgot about it when you were inside. The traffic police in the British section were big powerful looking Sikhs from India. They did an excellent job and best of all they seemed to like Americans and came to our aid whenever we needed it. The wives of these Sikhs although they weren't bad looking were notable for the fact that they always seemed to wear big yellow men's shoes. They must have had big feet for women. As time went by and no violent action occurred the curfew was relaxed an hour more at a time until there was none at all, but still I stayed on as special policeman for as long as we were in Shanghai. I traveled all over the city day and night and never again will I expect to see anything as interesting as the International City of Shanghai at the end of the era of Western control in China. No one book could do justice to it as it was in those days.

North China Developments

About June 10th conditions in North China became so dangerous for foreign nationals due to roving bands of Chinese army units that the Marblehead was sent to the Gulf of Chihli (Po Hai²⁹) and we found ourselves based at a place called Chinwangtao³⁰ near where the Great Wall comes down to the sea.

28 This duty in the Navy would typically be referred to as "shore patrol."

29 Also referred to as the Bohai Sea.

30 Chinwangtao is now known as Qinhuangdao. The US established an Army base there in 1912 called Camp Holcomb, which was surrendered to the Japanese on December 8, 1941.



When we came to anchor all we could see about a mile away was a rock jetty with a railroad track on it where the British had a station for loading ships with coal from mines somewhere inland from this point. About a half mile back from the beach we could see a little Chinese village all one-story buildings composed of grey cinder block, rough timber and plaited reed. Even they seemed to be plastered with grey mud and it was about as basic as anything I had seen so far. In some of the dwellings the family pigs roamed in and out the same as the children and chickens were often tied by one leg to a string attached to the door frame. When we went ashore on liberty there were no paved roads and no rickshaws but there were donkeys.

Chinamen stood around the boat landing with their steeds and we found that we could hire either a donkey or a little long-haired Mongolian horse for one Mex dollar (45 c) for all day. The saddles weren't so good. They looked like a wooden sawbuck frame covered with old padded quilts but it was the only way to get around. The men seemed very loath to leave their animals in our care and ran along behind. But I never liked this idea so I always galloped my animal out of town until I lost his owner from sight then I could explore the countryside for the rest of the day unimpeded. Many of the other sailors found that if they got off their mount for any reason the chinaman promptly rented it to someone else and it was a battle to get it back. The country here was quite level with barren mountains too far away for me to reach in a day but I found many small walled towns within range and they were very interesting.

One day I was riding a big jackass at a fast pace and was about to cross the railroad track when he suddenly balked and I flew over his head and landed flat on the track. Fortunately I didn't break any bones and was able to lead him across and remount on the other side. Another time was even more serious. I was riding a Mongolian horse quite a way inland when I came upon a portion of the Chinese army. The officers were mounted on horses the supplies were carried on camels and the regular soldiers walked. I was just riding under the stone entry arch into the town when my horse suddenly took a vicious bit on the neck of another horse close by. There was pandemonium for a minute as the other horse fought back. I struck out indiscriminately with my whip and then just as quickly all was quiet and the Chinese officer had made a sharp command to the horses and he had a tight hold on the reins of his horse and mine too and he was staring directly into my face with a calm but frightening expression. I could do nothing but stare right back and we held that

position for what seemed like a very long time to me. I didn't know what was going to happen when finally he let go his hold on my horse's bridle and I urged the horse straight ahead right through town and out the other side without looking back.

I put as much distance as I could between me and that spot but then I had to get back to Chinwangtao. There was no other road but the one I had just come over so I decided to ride down the footpaths between fields to the sea-shore and work my way back that way to avoid the army. All went well until I came to the mouth of a river that was much wider than I ever expected it to be as it wasn't very large further inland. There wasn't anything to do but swim it so I whipped the horse into the water much against his will. The water got deep almost immediately and I quickly found out that you can't stay in the saddle of a swimming horse. I hung onto his mane the best I could and eventually his feet struck bottom again and we climbed up the bank on the opposite side. From there on it was an uneventful clop clop along the sandy beach back to the boat landing.

One other event that should be recorded was our trip to the Great Wall about twenty miles north by railroad. The Peking-Mukden Railroad³¹ ran through Chinwangtao and there was a dinky little station building all by itself between the town and the sea coast. Someone in the ship's personnel office bought the tickets for our liberty party and on the proper day we were waiting at the station well before the eight o'clock scheduled departing time. Someone knew in advance about our picnic because along came a couple of enterprising Chinamen selling bottles of champagne and the usual open top 5-gallon Standard Oil cans with cracked ice in them. (Italian Swiss Colony "Golden State" California champagne). 1 pt. 10 fluid ounces. The price per bottle was 1.80 Chinese Mex dollars, approximately .60 in our money. Where they got either the wine or the ice I'll never know. Maybe from the restricted British colony located around the point of land from where we were anchored. Anyway they soon sold out their entire stock and everyone was pretty happy when a train appeared about 8:15 but not for long because it turned out to be a freight. So we waited. After half an hour another freight came along much to our disgust. So with the assistance of the champagne we all resolutely made up our minds that we would get on the next train no matter what it was. At 9 o'clock along came a train composed mostly of the low-sided wooden freight carriers loaded with red bricks. It didn't even stop but was going slow enough so that we all piled on champagne buckets and all. As you can imagine we were all pretty merry by that time anyway and some of the fellows took to building high chimneys out of the bricks. When the train went around a curve naturally some of these chimneys toppled over and the last we saw as we went along were Chinese farmers running from their fields to gather up this great bounty that fell their way.

We got off the train at Shanhaikwan,³² a little walled city built up against the Great Wall near where the latter meets the sea. We were met by both rickshaws, men and donkeys for hire. It was quite apparent that a rickshaw couldn't get up on the wall so I hired a donkey and rode up a ramp onto the city wall and from there to the Great Wall. It was a tremendous experience for me and I rode along the top a couple of miles across the level plain, the wall being some forty feet high in places and with a varying width at the top but enough of a path to ride on. When I came to the hills

31 The Railway has been known by many names. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beijing%E2%80%93Harbin_railway

32 Now known as the Shanhaiguan District of Qinhuangdao. It's about 10 - 12 miles north of Qinhuangdao.

the wall's construction changed from mortared grey blocks to dry irregular stone. As I went higher up toward the mountains I found the wall to be very crooked and to follow along the top of all cliffs and similar natural obstacles. There were watch towers spaced along the entire distance. Some of the ones down on the plain were quite large and would have sheltered a large group of soldiers. There were stone or block fences along the top. The side facing Manchuria was crenelated to furnish openings for the bowmen to fire on attacking Mongols.

After a few hours I had satisfied my curiosity about this wonder of the ancient world and being hungry returned to the town and found a little establishment near the R.R. station with signs on it in English - "The North Hotel". The front entrance seemed to be also the dining room so I went in and sat down. Never in my life had I seen a place so thick with flies. Apparently the air space was so filled with them flying about that they kept bumping into one, a circumstance that I've never observed anywhere else. I was rather desperate for food as I had just ridden some distance so I looked at the English side of the menu and noted the words "All chickens killed when ordered". So I ordered chicken and sure enough just outside the back door of the one room wide building I heard a short scuffle and a chicken squawk and in a reasonable time the steaming hot fried bird was placed on my table and I gobbled it up before it got cool enough for the flies to light on it. The ride back was in a proper passenger coach and I could appreciate the roadbed which was surveyed and engineered by none other than Herbert Hoover before World War I when he was a very successful civil engineer.³³

We spent all of July at this place and it began to get pretty dull anchored out in the bay all this time. We ran out of movie film after awhile and began showing the same ones over again. There was a little British gunboat named "Cornflower" tied up to the coaling dock and sometimes her crew were invited over to our ship in the evenings to see the pictures. And a few times I accompanied the movie projectionist over to the British fenced-in community to show our pictures to the port executives and their families.

The radio shack crew started printing a little sheet containing the world's news and passing it around every morning. A few Chinese merchants, called bumboat men, were allowed to come aboard once in awhile and spread their wares out on the deck for us to buy. Embroidered silk, jewelry, brass objects and antiques. Of course there is always the scrubbing and gunnery drills for the deck force and the machinery cleaning and repairing for the black gang to keep the crew occupied.

Finally on the 8th of August we hauled up the anchor and headed back to Shanghai where I went back to police duty in one of the world's most exciting cities very happily. I had come to know some of the White Russians³⁴ who had escaped from Vladivostock by this time and they had some terrific stories to tell of recent happenings in Russia. More of this later.

To the Philippines

33 Herbert Hoover, 31st President of the US (1929-33), worked with mining concerns in the area of Tianjin, China from 1898 - 1901, at the height of the Boxer Rebellion, which was a anti-imperialist, anti-foreign, and anti-Christian uprising in China, toward the end of the Qing dynasty.

34 White Russians refers to those supporting the former Tsar in opposition to the Bolsheviks after the 1917 Russian Revolution.

On the 27th August it was goodbye again to Shanghai and we were off to the Philippines. After a brief stop at Manila we sailed out around Bataan and into Subic Bay³⁵ where at a place called Olongapo was the big floating Dewey drydock.³⁶ This was a most interesting structure built in three sections at Newport News, then towed separately through the Suez Canal and across the Indian Ocean to Subic where it was joined together to make a dock that would easily take our 555 foot cruiser up out of the water for bottom scraping, propeller checking, repair of sonic gear etc.

Olongapo was a dull little tropical town cut right out of dense jungle built mostly for the use of people employed at the drydock and the related machine and supply shops.³⁷ However there was a trail that went two miles back into the jungle and ended at a bamboo pavilion called Gordon's Farm.³⁸ It was quite a joint the dance floor was plain earth pounded very hard and oiled by the action of sweaty feet over years of time. The native girls never wore shoes but they did have bright colored dresses made of nipa fibre, very cool and practical for the jungle. Their perfume smelled like cinnamon and they could talk very little English, but what words they did know were very earthy and we laughed for weeks after at some of the things they said to us.

It was customary here to get together and buy a keg of beer for each table and with the tap being opened and closed almost constantly the keg would be drained about the time to return to the ship. Gordon had a Ford engine out back that made a lot of noise and powered a generator that lit up the place quite nicely but the minute we left the hall we were in the blackest kind of dark you could imagine. Someone usually had a flashlight but it hardly made an impression and there was always the danger of coming across a hug python or other known animal of the region. There was a twenty-five foot python skin stretched across one side of the pavilion from a snake Gordon had shot as it floated down the stream right beside the dance hall. So you know what we were thinking of as we stumbled along indian file back to town.

I took one walk along a trail that bordered the bay as far as the town of Subic and found it to be just a cluster of bamboo houses on stilts with some outriggers used for fishing in the bay. On the way I had to cross a small river on a little ferry barge that slid along on a wire. Also I passed the first band of wild monkeys that I had ever seen.

Back to China

35 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Naval_Base_Subic_Bay#World_War_I_and_Inter-War_Years.

36 See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Dewey_\(YFD-1\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Dewey_(YFD-1))

37 Olongapo was no longer a dull little town when my ship, USS Gray (FF-1054), pulled in for repairs in late 1977 and early 1978. At that time, Subic Bay Naval Shipyard was a major ship repair and maintenance facility at the time, especially given its support for US 7th Fleet ships operating off Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s.

38 Gordon's Farm was about 5 miles east of the naval base. It was started by a former Marine in 1904 who settled in the area and created a "watering hole" for American sailors. Interestingly, based on tales told me as a new Ensign visiting Subic for the first time in 1977, it was common for sailors to have Filipina "wives" in Subic since they might be stationed in Western Pacific or make semi-annual tours there over several years. They could retire like kings on a relatively small American military pension given the low cost of living in the Philippines. Unfortunately, these areas had high incidents of tropical diseases like malaria.

As soon as the bottom work on the ship was completed we started off north again past Formosa³⁹ and into the great mouth of the Yangtze without stopping at Shanghai this time.⁴⁰ Another terrific experience had started - going 600 miles up into the interior of Asia. I felt like Marco Polo as the scenery changed mile by mile. At first the river is miles wide but there are islands and the channel mostly runs near the southern shore.



As evening came on that first day we dropped anchor at a place called Vine Point.⁴¹ It was September 6th, 1927. At this time the deck seamen were constructing machine gun barricades on top of the ship's higher structures above the main deck. The material they used was inch-thick boiler plate that we had picked up on our last trip into Shanghai. The bridge and other important control points were also sheathed with iron plates. It seems that one of our sister-cruisers, the Cincinnati,⁴² had passed some hill-top forts on the same trip a short time before and acquired a few bullet holes in her smokestacks. So we were prepared if one soldier had so much as thrown a pebble at us. We kept every gun on the ship, large and small, trained point blank on the forts as we went by. I was watching from my vantage point and any minute I expected to see the whole top of a hill vanish in smoke but I guess the Chinese were sufficiently impressed by our armament and nothing happened.

The next morning we got underway at daybreak and passed the city of Chinkiang before noon.⁴³ There is a very sharp bend in the river here and we had to manoeuvre forward and back to get our long ship around it. This is also the place where the Grand Canal that in olden times used to link north China with south China crosses the Yangtze.⁴⁴

On September 7th we anchored at a place called Pleasant Island. I didn't see an Island there but the river varied so in width that it could have been there and I just

39 As a result of its success in the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan gained control of Taiwan and renamed it Formosa. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Sino-Japanese_War. It retained control of Formosa until the end of WWII.

40 There's an interesting write up of travel up the Yangtze at this web site. <https://www.shippingwondersoftheworld.com/yangtze.html>

41 Vine Point is about 50 miles up the Yangtze River estuary.

42 USS Cincinnati (CL-6) was another Omaha class light cruiser. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Cincinnati_\(CL-6\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Cincinnati_(CL-6))

43 I believe Uncle Lloyd is referring to Chinkiang, which is now known as Zhenjiang. It is on the south side of the Yangtze about 40 miles east of Nanjing.

44 See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Canal_\(China\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Canal_(China)).

thought it was the opposite bank. When we passed the important city of Nanking⁴⁵ I saw very little of it because it is built back quite distance from the water.

On the night of September 8th we anchored at Tunglin Beacon. The next morning at KinKiang we crossed the top of a very large lake. It looked like the river had suddenly become a sea. That night we stopped at Hwangchow⁴⁶ and next day we cruised through level country to the Chicago of China, the big city of Hankow.

Hankow

Actually there are three cities here in a cluster where the Yun Ho river joins the Yangtze: Hankow,⁴⁷ Wuchang⁴⁸ and Hanyang all together, but separated from each other by water. It had been a wonderful trip, excellent weather and terrific variation in scenery.⁴⁹

I saw little Buddhist monasteries perched high up in rocky grottoes like in old Chinese paintings and I saw rice paddies below the level of the river and every conceivable type of landscape between. The Chinese themselves looked and dressed differently in different regions that we passed through. The river traffic was fascinating. Sometime we saw very ancient junks that looked as though they must have come all the way from Szechwan Province⁵⁰ on the border of Tibet. Some had very fragrant deck loads of camphor wood, delightful to smell. Sometimes we met big rafts of logs with families living on them drifting from distant forests down to the coast cities. Often we saw junks with chickens and a pig or two living on the deck and boxes of earth with vegetables growing in them. So often it seemed the old grandfather of the family would be leaning over the huge tiller guiding the vessel and he almost seemed to be an integral part of it, like an automatic pilot. Often I had to shake myself to realise that these things that I was seeing were real and not part of some old adventure film on a movie screen. When we reached our anchorage opposite the Bund we found that there was an English gunboat and a French one ahead of us and a Japanese gunboat behind us.

45 This is now referred to as Nanjing. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nanjing>

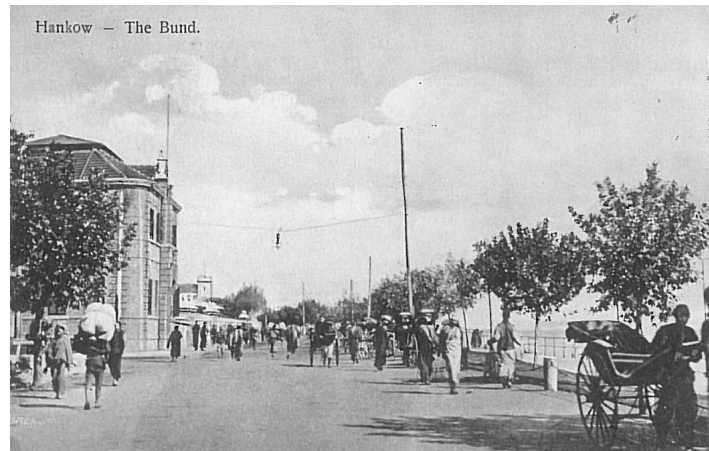
46 Hwangchow may refer to what is now known as the Huangzhou District and may also be known as Huang-Kang.

47 Now Hankou and part of Wuhan.

48 Now referred to as Wuhan.

49 See <https://www.cnn.com/2020/02/22/asia/wuhan-history-hnk-intl/index.html> for an excellent short history of Wuhan in the late 1800's and early 1900's when the city's name started to come into the press with Covid 19 pandemic.

50 The Sichuan Province. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sichuan>



Note: Map of Hankow with Hanyang and Wuchang, as of 1915. These three cities later merged to form modern Wuhan. The map shows the borders of the French, British, Russian, German, and Japanese concessions in Hankou.

Before we were allowed to go ashore on liberty we were called together and told that the normally peaceful hardworking people of this region had been organized into mobs filled with determination to drive out the foreign devils. The chief trouble maker at that time was a man from Soviet Russia named Borodin and he had stirred the people up to the point where it would be very foolhardy for any of us to go out

of the European Concession area of the city.⁵¹ So we were allowed to go ashore on liberty from 5:00 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. only.

I found Hankow a fascinating city quite different from Shanghai in ways that I can't explain. It looked different, smelled different and the people worked and lived at a different pace. One English department store that I remember, named the Whiteaway Laidlaw Company was the very epitome of the British Empire in the Far East.⁵² I couldn't go into the building without thinking of Kipling's stories. I visited all the bars but cafes were the most fun because the dancing partners seemed to have come from all parts of the world. One girl was sort of a curiosity because she was what we would call today a drop-out from an American church mission. In the process she seemed to have dropped further than all the other girls.

The anchorage in Hankow was a very uneasy one because of the immense amount of silt in the river. Once a day we had to start the ship's engines, move up slightly and haul up the anchor and let it down again so that it wouldn't get buried too deep in the bottom to extract. We had the small boat landing stairs lowered down from the quarterdeck to the water's edge and sometimes at night a body of a chinaman would become stuck on it and a deck hand would have to go down and push it off with a boat hook. The river current is very swift here and the exact color of a muddy field. It was so dangerous that three floating lines were trailed aft for a hundred feet to give any sailor unfortunate enough to fall overboard a fighting chance to save his life.

The electrical shop where we worked and slept was down below the water line and the portholes were about four feet above the water's edge. While at anchor was the only time we could keep them open for ventilation. We soon discovered the prime joke of river sailors. In the middle of the night when everyone was asleep some wise guy would rush into the compartment waking fellows as he ran past and yelling, "Close the ports, the river's rising!", then he would disappear before anyone recognised him. The fact of the matter was quite the opposite because what we had to worry about was that in the fall of the year the source of the great river way up in the Himalayas was beginning to freeze up and the level of the water dropped a little each day.

Since the Marblehead was a very large ship to be that far upriver we had to get out in time or be marooned in Hankow for the duration of inter. It was determined by the river experts that it would be dangerous to stay any longer than October 12th.

On the day before we were to leave we became aware of some trouble at the Japanese Concession. It was rumored that a mob of Chinese had formed in front of the main gate and were threatening to break down the barrier and rush in. All of a sudden all the deck guns on the Japanese cruiser fired volley after volley directly at the area of trouble. The point of contact was just out of sight from the Marblehead so I have no idea how many casualties there were and we never heard anything

51 Borodin was the alias of Mikhail Markovich Gruzenberg, a Bolshevik revolutionary and Communist International (Comintern) agent. He was an advisor to Sun Yat-sen and the Kuomintang (KMT) in China during the 1920s and Sen sought the assistance of the Soviet Union in advancing its republic.

52 Whiteaway, Laidlaw & Co (nicknamed 'Right-away & Paid-for' because it operated on cash payments only, no credit) was 'the' colonial emporium or department store in India and the Far East; it was founded in Calcutta by two Scotsmen in 1882 and also had branches throughout the British possessions and concessions in Asia. The Hankow branch was opened in 1918.

about it afterward but I have a vivid memory of hearing and seeing for the first time big guns fire in anger.

Return to Shanghai

We made a very fast passage with the current down river, leaving Hankow at daybreak on October 12th. We anchored the first night at Anking. Steaming dawn to dusk the next day brought us to a place called Siennumiao Creek the second night and a full day's run the third day found us at Shanghai by nightfall. Once we got there we got rid of our steel machine gun nests, took on a lot of new supplies.

A man from the State Department came aboard with his staff assistants. Also very quietly a small group of navy radio men who understood Japanese joined our regular radio crew. Of course nothing was ever said about them but we were pretty sure the men were from Naval Intelligence. They certainly didn't mingle with the rest of the crew during the trip to Japan.

** *Historical Note:* IN FACT, Uncle Lloyd was right on the money. This team was under the command of Naval Officer Ellis Zacharias, a 1912 Naval Academy graduate who was posted to the U.S. Navy's Asiatic Station as an intelligence officer specializing in cryptography. He was aboard Marblehead with the first comprehensive radio communication intercept unit, and successfully monitored, intercepted, and translated Japanese naval radio communications during training maneuvers. See

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2008/summer/zacharias.html>. See also https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellis_M._Zacharias.

Of course it was rumored in 1927 that the Japanese were fortifying islands of the Pacific against all treaty commitments. We were to be the first naval ship to have men going ashore on liberty for some time because the Japanese government was cool toward us after the 1923 earthquake.⁵³ They were suspicious that we had learned some of their military secrets when our ships were helping out after the disaster. However we were to find out that we were quite welcome this time.

Heading to Japan -- Nagasaki

⁵³ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1923_Great_Kant%C5%8D_earthquake



So we left Shanghai on October 19th and arrived in Nagasaki in the late afternoon of the next day.⁵⁴

Arriving at a new port in a new country always seems to have a special thrill for me, and Nagasaki was one of the best. The opening into the harbor is quite long and narrow. Once inside it opens up and part of the city is built on steep hillsides overlooking the bay. I found it a most satisfactory scene because it looked so completely what it was supposed to be - Japanese. True, there was a big shipbuilding yard on one side of the harbor but the water was pretty well covered with sampans and gray unpainted diesel-powered fishing boats. And the city was composed mostly of typically gray unpainted Japanese buildings with paper screens and thatched or tiled roofs. All so oriental appearing but different somehow from all the Chinese cities we'd just been seeing up the Yangtze Valley. Everyone was very excited about going ashore, but out of the question that evening of course but two oldtimers who had been there before managed to slip into a sampan after dark and get ashore for a couple of hours.

Next morning Japanese doctors came on board wearing gauze masks over their noses and mouths, something we were to find fairly common in Japan later, and the information was passed around that anyone in the liberty section that day who wanted to go ashore must first submit a pillbox sample of body waste to be checked for the presence of dysentery germs before he could leave the ship. The reason being that we had just come from central China where the disease was quite common. Well that was a surprise and shock to us but anyone knowing anything about the Marblehead crew would know that we could satisfy the authorities one way or another to get on the first liberty boat.

Southern Japan in those days was just as pretty and intriguing as it was in pictures and I loved it. There is no point in my going into a long description of Japan in 1927

⁵⁴ Shanghai is about 500 miles from Nagasaki (Kyushu) which is at the south end of the Japanese archipelago. It would appear Marblehead was transiting at a speed of about 18-20 knots.

because there are old books by such people as Lafcadio Hearn⁵⁵ that give a beautiful image of the place as it used to be. Suffice to say I covered the entire city on foot and then hired a bicycle to ride out country roads until I was stopped by signs in Japanese and English saying "No entrance, beginning of military restricted area".

There was a delightful restaurant overlooking the bay called, of all things, the Alhambra. It was managed by the Japanese wife, or ex-wife, I don't now which, of an American chief petty officer. The speciality of the house was excellent salad made of vegetables just picked out of the garden and a big slab of Australian steak served with two fried eggs sunny side up resting on top of it. That's one place that stands out in one's memory no matter how many thousands of restaurants you visit over the world.

Leaving for Kobe

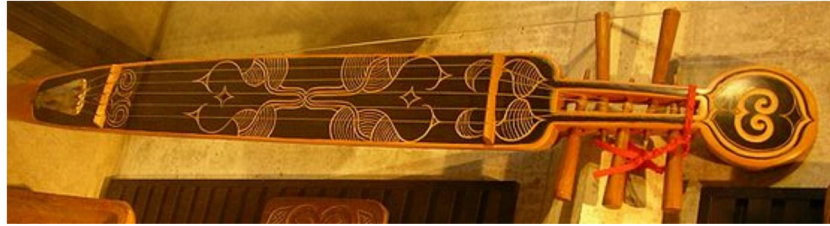
On the 26th we left Nagasaki and arrived next day in Kobe.⁵⁶ There we found a much different Japan. It's a much bigger city hence the people were more impersonal. The land is fairly flat around the city itself but there was a lovely park on higher ground. Being a much more modern city it was not so interesting as Nagasaki. But there were exceptions such as the night I came upon a band of Hairy Ainu⁵⁷ playing music and performing in the street for any yen that people felt like throwing to them.



55 See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lafcadio_Hearn

56 The distance by sea between Nagasaki and Kobe was probably 350-400 miles.

57 The Ainu are an ethnic group, distinct from the Japanese, that live today almost exclusively on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. They were traditionally hunters-gatherers and fishermen and didn't practice rice farming like the Japanese. They hunted bear, sea otter, deer, and other animals, gathered wild plants and fished for whales, seal lions, swordfish, and salmon on the open seas until they were driven inland by the Japanese. They were referred to as "hairy Ainu" because of their thick and often wavy beards and abundant body hair.



Note: The Ainu play a unique instrument called the tonkori.

Undoubtedly the high point of the Kobe trip was an arranged trip up to Kyoto the ancient capital. I could write pages about it, but will only say here that we went by train through Osaka to Kyoto, visited some of the temples in the city then took a street car to the base of Mount Hiei (*marked on the map below*). Then rack-railroad and cable car to the top. From there we walked down the other side through virgin forest of big Cryptomeria trees with here and there a most exciting old temple or monastery.



At the bottom of the mountain we came to the largest lake in Japan, Lake Biwa. We rode through beautiful scenery along the shore in another streetcar. Then turned back to a spot where a round brick-lined tunnel cut under part of the mountain back to Kyoto. The interesting part here was the tunnel which was a waterway. So we got into a long flat-bottomed boat filled with straw. There was a pole on the bow with a kerosene lantern fixed to the top of it. The boatmen stood in the stern and pushed the boat along with a punting pole. Most of the way it was completely black in there until finally we could see the tiny bright spot of light in the distance, at the end of the tunnel. It was another trip to remember always.

We were asked not to bring cameras ashore in Japan which was sort of a portent of future happenings. But I bought quite a few hand tinted postcards that are interesting to look back on today.

Heading to the Philippines

On November 2nd, we reluctantly said goodbye to Kobe and sailed down through the breath-takingly beautiful inland sea and out the strait between the cities of Moji and Shimonoseki. On the way we passed by the first square-sailed full-rigged ship that I had ever seen; a beautiful sight. From there we headed for the Philippines

again and enroute passed close to Taiwan (Formosa) at night, just in time to see a volcano in full eruption. What a sight that was, especially seeing it in the dark.

On November 7th we arrived in Subic Bay and remained in and around Manila Bay for the rest of November and December.

1928

This New Year's Eve I went to the Santa Ana Cabaret which was just outside the Manila city limits and danced until five o'clock in the morning. The wooden frame building was so large that they had an orchestra set up on a stage at both ends and although they played different music it didn't seem to interfere one with the other. The tables and chairs were set all along the sides and there was a series of arches made of criss crossed wood laths covered with flowers across the middle of the hall. The girls were almost all Philippino taxi dancers, that is we bought tickets for each dance and gave them to the girls when we went out onto the floor, just like Roseland in New York. At midnight the crowd went crazy throwing firecrackers around the floor and you had to be very agile to keep one from exploding under your feet. It was like a battlefield for awhile until the fireworks ran out. Almost everyone drank quarts of San Miguel beer except the girls who did the usual coaxing to have us buy them fake cocktails for which they got percentages from the management.

Reenlistment

The first of January I signed up to extend my enlistment for another year as there was much more of the Orient that I wanted to see.

All through January and the first week of February the ship maneuvered around Manila Bay, Mariveles Bay and Subic Bay for battle practice and we had quite a lot of time for liberty ashore in Manila. One weekend I took a train trip down to Batangas⁵⁸ and the Lake Taal volcano which was very interesting, but on the trip back late at night I was badly frightened when a large rock crashed through the train window and smashed against the compartment wall just above my head. I very quickly changed to the opposite seat which seemed much safer and tried to get some sleep for the rest of the ride, but it was difficult.

On the 9th of February the ship left on a trip designed to explore some largely uninhabited islands for the War Department. This was south of Manila in an area called Malampaya Sound.⁵⁹ Certain officers went ashore with parties of armed men and sketched maps, made notes of the kind of terrain, possibilities for landing fields, boat harbors etc.

Some of the islands were rather weird. One consisted almost entirely of serried rows of sharp rock ridges and the rock material was such that a piece held up and struck would ring like a bell. Some of the islands had cocoanut trees on them and we found out that it is very hard to shoot a cocoanut out of a tree with a forty-five caliber revolver.

⁵⁸ Batangas is about 60 miles south of Manila, and Lake Taal is in the general area.

⁵⁹ Malampaya Sound is off the island of Palawan and 300-400 miles SSW of Manila. Interesting, the Spratly Islands are just off Palawan and the subject of rapid military expansion by China, which claims ownership of the Spratly's along with several other countries - including the Philippines.

Another cruiser, I believe it was the Cincinnati, was making the survey with us and one of its sailors just disappeared when on a hike inland from the beach. We never found out what happened to him.

Next we cruised south to the Sulu Archipelago and stopped at the islands of Bongao and Tawitawi.⁶⁰ I didn't go ashore there. At one point we were close to the port of Dent Haven on the island of Borneo.

Then we went north again to Zamboanga the southernmost city in Mindanao. This was the most interesting stop and we were there for several days. The coastal area is all coconut trees with the town sort of peeking out from under the green cover. It was a very peaceful place that had the air of relaxing from a previous, more active time. There were street-car rails that were overgrown with plants and no cars or need of them that I could see. There were hard-packed paths back among the coconut trees and I hired a bicycle and rode around for miles in the cool shade. Once I came over a little ridge and there, under a waterfall, was a group of native women bathing. My sudden appearance created consternation among them so I thought it prudent to just keep on pedaling along as though nothing had happened. At one of the tree-shaded beaches I found, among the outriggers, an odd wooden sailboat, shaped like a turtle, with a rounded top and one small hatch for entering. It was so obvious that it wasn't built in the Philippines that I checked with a storekeeper nearby and found that it had come over from California some years before, landed at an unfriendly island in the area and the natives had eaten the captain. In one jewelry store they sold very nice articles made of polished black coral and coin silver. This was the only place that I have ever found black coral.

After leaving Zamboanga the ship went on to Davao.⁶¹ I did not go ashore in either place but those who did reported that Davao seemed to be taken over by Japanese (this was in 1928).⁶² They had established quite a colony and were in control of coconut and sugar plantations for miles around.

Back to North China

Then very suddenly our Captain got orders to proceed at top speed to Chinwangtao, way up in North China close to the sea-end of the Great Wall. We filled our fuel bunkers from an oil tanker at sea, the first time I had ever seen it done and it was a very dangerous operation with the choppy waves and both ships steaming along together, slow speed. At that time we were over the Philippine Chasm, probably the deepest spot in the world's oceans.

From there on it was top speed night and day. But while rounding the Shantung Peninsula⁶³ we nearly came to grief. Late on a very dark night at high speed and no radar, both Captain and Executive Officer were standing near the steersman when suddenly a ship loaded with Chinese people all over her decks came across our bow going in the direction of port to starboard. The Quartermaster on duty was a friend of mine and he told me what happened next. The Captain screamed "starboard!" at

60 These islands are in the far south of the Philippines Islands and adjacent to Borneo.

61 Both locations are on Mindanao.

62 Per Wikipedia: "During the American colonial era, the number of Japanese laborers working in plantations rose so high that in the 20th century, Davao soon became dubbed as a *Ko Nippon Koku* ("Little Japan" in Japanese) with a Japanese school, a Shinto shrine and a diplomatic mission from Japan." For more, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_in_the_Philippines

63 More commonly referred to as the Shandong Peninsula.

the steersman which would have brought our bow directly into the midship section of the other vessel. The next instant the Exec grabbed the steering control out of the man's hands and swung the Marblehead to full port. Later, the man on the stern watch reported that we missed the other ship by not more than eight feet.

I was sound asleep in one of the bottom bunks in the electrician shop, two decks down when all of a sudden the tremendous list of the ship threw everyone out of his bunk and we were piled up together against the bulkhead of the compartment with all sorts of gear on top of us and sea water was pouring down the ladder from an open hatch above. Gradually the ship righted itself and we sorted ourselves out very badly frightened. But just imagine what could have happened! Undoubtedly we would have cut clear through the Chinese ship with our sharp bow. I have seen other ships like this one, loaded with people covering every square foot of deck space from bow to stern. Probably they had left a port where their lives were threatened by a new military take-over and they had to escape to another part of the country.

Soon we were back at anchor off the port of Chinwangtao on the first day of March. It was terribly cold on deck and we all knew how little there was for us in that town so nobody showed up when the usual shore liberty time came up. After a few days the Medical Officer began to worry about the crew's staying cooped up below decks all the time and he organized compulsory recreational parties to go ashore and kick footballs around. His attempts to make us play regular games in that cold were pitiful. But the Chinese took full advantage of the situation. They peddled vodka and the furry Mongolian hats, with the long straps under the chin, to us as we were marched out to the British Coal Company's athletic field.

After leaving the fierce heat of Borneo just a few days before I suppose the cold seemed much worse than it was, but I did see a thermometer that read 15° above zero and the wind was right out of Siberia not far away. The next two months were rather dreary because we hardly moved from our anchorage a mile or so out from the coal wharf. The so-called Chinese "bum-boatmen" were allowed to come out and peddle their tourist goods, and one day a Chinese farmer brought out a pail of fresh eggs which he sold for one Yuan or Mex. Dollar (45c American money). Well that started a business fast. The engine room gang had their home-made oil stove and the electrical gang made their electric stove out of Nichrome wire and sheet asbestos and started frying eggs wholesale. Discipline seemed to be relaxed by common consent because of our isolation, I suppose. Very soon every group on the ship had a man coming down to the electric shop to bargain for an electric stove so that they could cook their own eggs. It was a very unusual Navy experience to walk into a gun turret all gleaming white paint and polished brass and see and smell eggs frying on a makeshift stove. Those Chinese sold us a lot of eggs at one Mex. A pail - (about 100 eggs), that spring.

When May was approaching the weather got better and it was announced on our bulletin board that a party of men with good conduct records would have the opportunity to go to Peking for a whole week. Well you may be sure I got on that list as quickly as possible.

May 3rd we boarded the train at Chinwangtao on the Peking-Mukden Railway. First off we found we had been given a first class coach which was divided up into little roomettes having all conveniences including a button to push when we wanted a boy to bring more beer. The trip took all day and what an interesting experience

that was crossing the farming section of North China. It all seemed very different from around Shanghai. Once we saw in the distance what looked like a bunch of sampans sailing round and round out there in the open fields but when we got closer we found it was a lot of sails fastened to a large round fram. It was a kind of horizontal windmill. In the little towns tht we went through we saw many women still with little bound feet. Everything was unusual to us in one way or another.

When we arrived at our destination I hired a rickshaw boy to take me to the Peking Central Hotel. It was a small establishment but adequate. I would have loved to have gone to the Grand Hotel des Wagon-Lits but I knew if I did I wouldn't have much money left to see al the wonderful things in that most exotic city. I was completely free to go anywhere but if I wanted to see the special sights like the Winter Palace, the Forbidden City or the Ming Tombs all I had to do was go to the Marine non-commissioned officer's club in the American Legation and join with others to go on a scheduled tour.

One of the sergeants told me an amusing account of how things were with them in Peking. It seems that the rickshaw fraternity in the city have nicknames in Chinese of course for every man in the Peking Marine battalion. So if some morning there is a man missing at 8 o'clock muster the sergeant, or one of the man's buddies who knows his Chinese name, goes out and commandeers the first rickshaw that happens along. He looks straight at the coolie, waves his arm around in a circle and shouts, for example, "Hoop-ekack-where?" The coolie immediately picks up the shafts of the rickshaw and with his passenger trots off down the street. Every time he meets another rickshaw coolie he shouts in Chinese, "Hoopekack?". There is some shouted answer and neither one stops trotting. Eventually contact is made with an affirmative answer, the coolie turns down an alley off Hatamen Street and there on the ground in the back of a little joss house is Hoopekack still asleep.

The case is solved. Private Murphy got very drunk last night and lay down to rest. Now he can expect to have at least five days extra duty in the mess hall as punishment for missing muster. At my hotel I was told that I could have my own rickshaw boy for the whole week for only six dollars. Of course I hired one on the spot and sure enough all week long no matter how early I got up, there was my rickshaw out front waiting for me and the coolie trotted all over the city with me for as late as I wanted to stay out. He got his meals from the street food venders and seemed to sleep in the rickshaw while waiting for me.

It would take a separate book to tell all I saw during this week's stay, so refer to the many descriptions of the city at that time that are still available. I was fascinated by the very high grey-colored "Tartar Wall" around part of the city and the sight of camel caravans from the Gobi Desert coming in under its arched gateways. There were grim things too, like the prisoners being carried out to the execution places on high-wheeled barrows. A narrow board with Chinese characters on it sticking up from their coat collars told the nature of their crime. Bits of colored, porcelain-coated roof tiles lay around near the Temple of Heaven and other important buildings and I still have samples of them today, together with pieces of the Great Wall of China.

I came upon one little back street that had a host of old weapon shops. I brought back a 41-inch sword that was supposed to have been used by the Imperial Palace Guard. Well anyway that seven days passed by very, very quickly and when it was

time to assemble and the U.S. Legation compound we found that we were not to return the same way that we had gone up.

It turned out that in our absence the Marblehead had moved to a new position off the coast from the city of Tientsin.⁶⁴ So we took another train to Tientsin, arrived there in the afternoon and were told that we would be picked up the next morning in a Marine Corps truck. Tientsin is a large and important city but at that time it had no access to deep water. The modern part of it was built by the British and some of the streets were built in the form of a crescent like in London, Bath, and Edinburgh. I never went to sleep at all that night, but I did explore the city from end to end. In one of the night clubs I met a couple of White Russians that I had known in Shanghai so we had a reunion and I learned even more about the place.

At nine the next morning we assembled at the U.S. Marine compound and rode in an open army truck down to the coast town of Tangku⁶⁵ and there went directly into one of our ship's motor boats and chugged across a wide stretch of muddy sea water called Tangku Bar. The Gulf of Chihli is so shallow here that the Marblehead had to anchor way over on the horizon so it was a long ride through the mud-colored ground swells to reach our ship at last.

Very soon after, we were underway for the port of Chefoo⁶⁶ which was just a few hours further down the coast. There was some kind of threatening action going on there between different Chinese army units and the Americans needed the reassuring sight of the Marblehead. We were there long enough to send a boat ashore with a couple of officers and an armed squad of men aboard.

This ended with our taking a few missionaries aboard and carrying them down with us to Shanghai and safety. We didn't linger long in Shanghai because the time had come for us to head back across the Pacific. So after taking on fuel and supplies we headed back to Honolulu at standard cruising speed. It seemed such a let-down to be back in such a quiet well-ordered place as Honolulu that I hardly went ashore at all.

Honolulu

The spell of the Orient had gotten into my blood I guess and I kept thinking of all the excitement back in the East. Then an unusual thing happened. Word came by inter-ship mail that on the U.S.S. Trenton⁶⁷ which was going to replace the Marblehead in China, there was a 1st class electrician who wanted very much to go back to the States to be near his family. He had applied to his commanding officer for permission to change places with another electrician of the same rating. At the time I was only electrician 2nd class with no chance to move up because the Marblehead had a full complement of 1st class. Well, I thought I would try for it anyway so I started the legal papers going on my ship and there was

64 Now referred to as Tianjin.

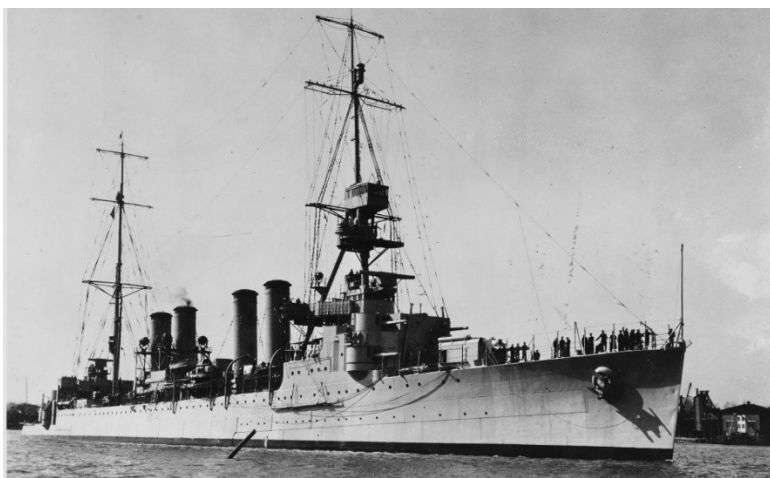
65 Now referred to as Tanggu and is a part of Tianjin.

66 Now referred to as Yantai. It is located on the northern tip of the Shandong Peninsula and across the Bohai Strait from Dalian, which is on the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula.

67 Uncle Lloyd joined Trenton as it was departing to relieve Cruiser Division (CruDiv) 3 on the Asiatic Station. USS Trenton (CL-11) was another Omaha class light cruiser. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Trenton_\(CL-11\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Trenton_(CL-11)). An excerpt of its ship's history from the Naval History and Heritage Command is attached as Appendix B.

correspondence back and forth and it seemed as though there would be just too much red tape to make the swap possible.

Transfer to the USS Trenton (CL-11)



Finally, on June 21st, the Marblehead was on maneuvers off Oahu when word came down to me that I was to prepare to leave the ship instantly. Then along came the Trenton on her way to Shanghai. I was ushered aboard a lifeboat with all my possessions - including my 41-inch Chinese sword strapped to my seabag. The boat was lowered into the water, rowed over to the side of the Trenton, seamen lowered lines for me to tie my gear onto, then they dropped down a rope ladder and I scrambled up to the deck the best I could and the ship was underway again before I had time to salute the officer of the deck. Since the two ships were identical cruisers I had no trouble fitting into the new routine. In a day or so I was given the examination for 1st class petty officer, passed it O.K., and I was on my way again.

Return to China

In a few days we were steaming up the Whangpoo River to Shanghai where we very quickly took on supplies and went right away up to the Gulf of Liaotung⁶⁸ and Chinwangtao once more. Happily we didn't stay there very long but proceeded down to Chefoo where an interesting transformation was just taking place.

It seems that Chefoo had just fallen to a new military outfit. It was mostly done by the exchange of money - few lives were lost. Formerly the city had been ruled by the Nationalist soldiers and most of the shops and public buildings were painted bright blue. But the new general named Wu Pi Foo,⁶⁹ I think, liked brown. It was so funny the first day I went ashore to see the people all up and down the main street very busily painting over the blue with a rich chocolate brown, using sticks wrapped with rags instead of brushes.

I came to like Chefoo very much. It seemed like quite an orderly place for China, having been administered by the Germans for many years before World War I. There was one super German restaurant and foreign food store left called "Fritz's". It was known all over the China coast for its wonderful food and drink and was still run by Fritz and his family, at #127 Tung Ma Lou, Chefoo, Shantung Province. A dinner there went on and on for many courses with a different beverage for every course

⁶⁸ The Gulf of Liaotung is the norther portion of the Bohai Sea.

⁶⁹ Uncle Lloyd may be referring to General Wu Peifu. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wu_Peifu.

and ended with a chestnut layer cake with which I have never found anything to compare.

There was a notice painted on the wall that read:

Since Friend to Friend is so unjust,

I really don't know who to trust

I have trusted many to my sorrow

So pass today - I will trust tomorrow.

Chefoo had no roads leading into it because what did not front on the sea was enclosed by a steep mountain range. However there was one trail that wound up and through a very narrow high pass. I used to rent a Manchurian pony and ride up into the region and it was like going back to Biblical days to sit up there and see the men and pack animals toiling up that stony trail and squeezing through between the rock walls at the top. One of the many things on the animals backs were what looked like big round grindstones, but were in reality pressed soybean cakes.

One day I followed a little path along the side of the mountain and came upon a spot that I have always thought of since as Shangri-la. It was a perfectly sheltered spot between two ridges just under the wind and facing south. There were springs and little running streams about. Remember all the rest of the mountain was stony and nearly barren. There were several little stone farmhouses surrounded by fruit trees and gardens, children were playing around it and it was a scene of utmost peace. I didn't stay long because I couldn't bear to disturb anything. But before I left a fine looking old Chinese grandfather came over and handed me a lovely big ripe peach. It is just one of the happenings that I can never forget.

We were in Chefoo through August and September. Athletic activities were encouraged ashore so I joined a small group that arranged to go over to the Mission compound and practice tennis twice a week. We played matches and reported the scores in the ship's newsletter, but I think the thing that we looked forward to most was stopping at C. May Lee's restaurant just across the street and consuming beer and sandwiches before time to return to the ship. We even had a charge account and just signed a chit each time we stopped in and settled up on payday. May Lee gave us back the chits then and I still have six of them today in my scrap book in 1975.

To Yokohama, Japan

Life in Chefoo could go on for months as far as I was concerned but all good things have to come to an end. However it was a good move because we took a couple of State Department people on board and headed for Yokohama. Arrived there on October 6th and anchored for a week. There were many evidences of the terrible earthquake of 1923 still about the city and we passed a stone fort on the way into the harbor that looked like a pile of jackstraws.

I went up to Tokyo twice and stayed at the Marunouchi Hotel - very modern. I saw no evidence of earthquake in Tokyo at all. It was an enormous city even then and I roamed all over it. Many of the streetcar conductors were women and that was a novelty to me then. I often got lost but the system of having a great many little glass-walled police boxes on street corners was most helpful as I had learned a few words of Japanese and the police usually knew a few words of English so they could

point out the way I wanted to go. I was much impressed by the sight of the roof of the Imperial Palace behind its high wall across the moat, the Ginza-dori, and the big department stores. (In 1928 two yen and eight sen equalled one American dollar). But Tokyo for me had none of the charm of the southern cities.

Next the Trenton moved down to Kobe and I enjoyed another trip to Kyoto and also 24 hours in Osaka, another very large city more industrial than any of the others. Then back to Nagasaki which I always found delightful. I met a Marine construction engineer on this trip who invited me up to his home high on a hill overlooking the harbor. It was really my first opportunity to see what a well-to-do Japanese home was like. I thought it was a very delightful way of life in warm weather, but I still wonder what it was like in winter.

To China

We arrived back in Shanghai by the end of October. Going back to Shanghai was like going home to me by this time so since I had not had my 30-days leave in the past year I applied for it there even though I knew it was practically never granted to men on light cruisers - I suppose because those ships were always on the move and they were not expected to be away from the States very long. But luck was with me. I had a good record, some influential friends and I had gone back to the Orient on another ship without first having leave at home. So an exception to the rule was made for me. The only restriction made because it was an exotic city - I was required to sign the deck officer's log once every 24 hours. Outside of that I was free as a bird in the Paris of the East.

I rented a first-floor apartment on Yuhang Road in the Hongkew section. A houseboy-cook and a rickshaw went with the establishment so I now lived as an old China Hand. This too seems to me like something from another world as indeed it is to the present day generation. My experiences and adventures during this time would fill a book in themselves, therefore I will not attempt to set them down here. Others have written about China of that period so I feel that it is well enough documented.

space with only an old blanket on it. I had to sleep, so I paid 30 centavos to the owner, put my billfold inside my undershirt, flattened my hat out to put my face on so it wouldn't be in contact with the dirty canvas, and lay down with all my clothes on. I think this was the nearest I ever came to sleeping with one eye open because I imagined all kinds of Oriental pirates sleeping nearby. I'm sure I was as vigilant as a seal on an ice floe until daylight then lost no time getting out of there. Believe me I arranged very early in the day to have a good place to sleep on the last night off the ship. And so that ended the year of 1928, and, like twelve months before, I celebrated the New Year in a combination restaurant-cabaret-dance-hall in a town called Maypajo in Caloocan, not far outside the Manila city limits.

1929

Manila and another reenlistment

On January 1st I extended my enlistment for one more year and received \$150 which represented the cost of transportation from California to New Haven, Connecticut where I first enlisted.

For the first part of January the ship stayed at anchor in Manila Bay. On the 6th and 7th, three friends and I had a nice trip south of Manila to a place called Pagsanjan de Laguna. The leader of the party was a most exceptional fellow named Goldberg who could make a deal with anybody about anything. He had acquired a Nash car from somewhere, which was quite a feat in Manila in 1929, and we started off driving on the jungle roads out of the city. Most of the way was single-lane, and when we met one of the very rickety buses which would be filled with back-country Philipinos and also have crates of chickens and a pig or two, encased in bamboo, lashed to the roof we had to push into the brush to let it go by. After awhile we came to an open area where there was an imposing Catholic church built of stone. It was a surprise to find it out there and it looked interesting so we went in. We were met by a Spanish priest who knew hardly any English but Goldberg soon became so friendly with him that he invited us over to his living quarters where he gave us port wine and we managed to have quite a nice visit with him.

Further along we came to a sort of plantation which turned out to be the beginning of an agricultural college. We met a couple of the instructors and they told us that this was a government endeavor to get some students interested in agriculture, the most practical and needed subject for them, but it was an uphill struggle because as soon as a Philipino gets a little education he insists on being a doctor or a lawyer.

Finally we arrived at our destination, Pagsanjan in the province of Laguna, a resort area which contains Pagsanjan Falls. We found the Abella Hotel near a small river and made the necessary arrangements for rooms and bathing near suits, then hired two long dugout canoes that had two boatmen each, and we were soon on our way upstream. When we entered the river gorge the swift water made it necessary for us to get out and pick our way along the shore over all manner of obstacles. The boatmen pulled and carried their boats along with great effort as the gorge grew narrower and narrower and the jungle foliage became so dense that at times it nearly met overhead. There were flowers clinging to the steep walls that looked like orchids to me but I can't be sure since I knew nothing about orchids at that time.



Finally, after forcing our way up past lots of turbulent water and rocks we heard and saw the falls, very high and beautiful, but in such arboreal darkness that we couldn't have taken a picture of them even if we'd had a camera. So, there in a fairly calm pool near the bottom of the falls the boatmen held the canoes while we climbed in, two passengers with a bowman and a sternman in each boat. It was my first experience with white water and it was surely a wild ride down the gorge with the expert steersman guiding us between and around huge boulders over all sorts of falls and rapids finally back down to calm river again. We were wet with spray most of the time and not a little apprehensive about making it at all some of the time.

After that experience we slept very well in mosquito-net-covered cots and were ready to start back to Manila early the next morning. We had to drive back the same way we came as there seemed to be no other route available.

The latter part of the month we had battle practice in and around Manila Bay, went into Subic Bay and Olongapo for a short stay in the floating drydock to scrape the bottom. The first two weeks of February were spent in exploring the islands around Coron Bay to gain more topographical information for the War Department. These islands included Busuanga, Coron, Culion, Bulalacao, all practically uninhabited and very wild and uninviting both from the sea and from the beach. It was much as I have described in a similar trip in 1928.

Return to China

After that we steamed up to Shanghai and tied up to the Standard Oil dock for about ten days after which we continued on up to North China to Tengchowfu⁷⁰ at which port I didn't go ashore.

After a short stay the ship continued on up the Chinwangtao where we stayed only two days and then went back down to Chefoo for a longer visit. This was fine with everyone because although it was cold at this season of the year it was always a happy though small sea-port.

It was during this stay in Chefoo that a mystery occurred that has never to my knowledge been cleared up. Our mailman was a seaman, 2nd class, who lived and conducted the mail business in a small, always locked compartment just aft of the wardroom. On a certain morning his business window didn't open at the appointed time. Naturally in no time at all the matter came to the attention of every man on the Trenton. The officers brought the Master-at-Arms to the door and they yelled and pounded on it to no avail. So next, with the permission of the Executive Officer, they broke the door down and inside they found nothing but disorder and about \$1.37 in

⁷⁰ Tengchowfu is on the north side of the Shandong Peninsula in the vicinity of Chefoo (Yantai). It is currently referred to as Penglai, and was also formerly known as Dengzhou or Tengchow

cash. It was calculated that there should have been about \$2000 in the safe. Remember that I have described Chefoo as rather a hard place to get out of except by sea, so where could an American seaman go undetected in that isolated spot of the China Coast. For days afterward the ship was alive with wild rumors and speculation about where and how he had gotten away. It was a fact that he was definitely a loner and there seemed to be no one who liked him or knew anything good about him. All I can remember about him was just a face looking out of the mailroom window. If he was ever found the Trenton crew didn't hear about it.

On March 25th we left Chefoo again for Shanghai. The climate is much milder down in Shanghai and the International City was again enjoyed by everyone. I knew that we would be headed back to America soon so I tried to go all over it again. I even slipped over into the ancient, exclusively Chinese part of the city that was there before the Westerners built the modern metropolis of 1929. From this place I have as a memento a piece of knife-shaped money which, according to similar specimens I have seen in a museum, dates from about 350 B.C.

So as I rickshawed down Bubbling Well Road and North Szechaun Road, The Bund, and all the rest, I kept thinking, "This is the last time". On the morning of departure instead of taking the rickshaw the four miles down to a spot opposite the mooring, I hired a sampan quite a way upriver and rode down the Whangpoo so that I could be a part of that exotic floating babble of the mysterious Far East for one last time. As I floated along I peeked out from under the plaited bamboo boat cover and tried to have all the sights, sounds and smells so firmly impressed in my mind that I could recall them clearly later on in life when I might be hemmed in on all sides by the mundane shackles of day to day working for a living. I couldn't have realized that my future would not only be separated from that scene by thousands of miles, but that the scene itself as I knew it would disappear from the earth.

It is strange to contemplate today that at that time it seemed like I was leaving behind a country where I was free to do almost anything I liked in a thoroughly bohemian atmosphere and going back to a country where there were restrictions on almost everything, for example, one couldn't even walk into a café and order a glass of beer.

Return to Japan

So with a last backward look we went down the Whangpoo and across the Yellow Sea to Nagasaki, Kobe and Yokohama - all familiar places by now. I took the train up to Tokyo again then on the last leave ashore explored more of Yokohama than I had seen in the past. I was joined by a little group of Japanese college students who volunteered to show me the sights of the city in exchange for some help with their English language pronunciation. Later, in a café over sake, they told me about Japan's destiny to rule the world. I shortsightedly took that to mean the Asian world as Japan was already well on the way to owning China. I bought a beautiful masculine kimono that I enjoyed wearing for years afterward and a woman's kimono that I brought back to Florence.

On my final trip back to the ship I had Japanese money to exchange so I stopped into a little bank near the wharf and found that if I was willing to accept silver dollars I could have 10% in excess of the exchange rate. It was the easiest money I ever made. I just lugged the extra silver aboard and secretly stowed it away in my foot locker, there to remain until I crossed the Pacific.

Return to United States

We arrived back in Honolulu on May 27th, spent a few days in Pearl Harbor then started off for Panama, arriving at the Isthmus on June 15th. Panama City was always a pleasant place to visit in those days to I enjoyed it once more for a few days. Then through the Canal and up the coast to Norfolk to anchor at the Naval base. The scouting planes and much of our war material was taken off here. I had time for a weekend in Williamsburg and a visit with the Harrises again.

Reacquainting with Florence - Getting Married

The next move was to Philadelphia, the home port of the Trenton. In a matter of a few days I managed to get on the first leave group and was on my way to Boston to get re-acquainted with Florence. I registered at the Hotel Statler which was quite new and luxurious, called Floss in Salem where she was then living and arranged a meeting for that evening. We had kept up a steady and interesting correspondence all during the time I was away and were eager to see each other again. I took her to dinner at the Statler and, naturally, we had much to talk about. Most importantly, during dinner I talked of our getting married to her complete astonishment though our letters had become more and more affectionate. We lingered long over the meal discussing the exciting possibility of a future together. I showed her the collection of souvenirs I had brought back, and when it was time to part I took her to her Aunt Lena's home in Jamaica Plain⁷¹ where she had arranged to spend the night. Before leaving her I made plans for our meeting the next day and the next, etc. Since I wanted her to return to Philadelphia with me as my wife and time was very short I had to talk fast for the next few days until finally she said "yes" and accepted the diamond ring I had bought. I got her father's consent and we set the date for July 23rd.

The next two weeks are a blur to both of us. Many preparation shad to be made, even for a small wedding, but we managed to make the necessary arrangements and Florence gave the proper notice for leaving her position which left her only four days in which to hurriedly purchase her trousseau. I called my parents in Durham to tell them I was getting married which came as a complete shock and surprise to them and Florence spoke and invited them to the wedding but they could not attend. I believe I soon checked out of the hotel and lived partly at Aunt Lena's in Jamaica Plain and partly in Salem. Florence's Aunt Ruby helped a lot to make plans and was very generous with her Packard car and her home in Danvers.

We were married at seven o'clock in the evening by the pastor of Florence's parish in the chapel of Saint Thomas the Apostle Church just over the Salem town line in the city of Peabody. We were attended by my sister Virginia who came down from New Hampshire where she was visiting a classmate during college vacation, and Florence's older brother Ernest. The reception was in Florence's home decorated with a very nice bower of ferns and roses, the work of Aunt Ruby. The guests were Florence's family and friends and, of course, Virginia.

⁷¹ A neighborhood in Boston.



Lloyd and Florence Moss at their 50th Wedding Anniversary

Afterward we taxied from Salem to the Boston Statler, and the next morning took the train to Plymouth, New Hampshire where a chauffeured car from Waterville Inn met us and drove us for miles through the woods to our destination. The Inn was a resort hotel back in the country near Waterville, N.H., recommended by Aunt Ruby, and it turned out to be one of the type that was fashionable at the time. Very antiquated conveniences and décor that catered to golfers and bridge players.

After staying one night we got in contact with the driver who had brought us up and arranged to be taken back to Plymouth. Knowing that we weren't satisfied with the Inn he had what turned out to be a most happy suggestion. He took us to Broad's Farm where they had a little cottage that they rented by the week to guests and fed the cottagers sumptuous meals in the farmhouse. Other than at mealtimes we were completely alone and it was exactly what we wanted. We roamed around the woods and fields, ate wild berries and became really acquainted with each other. We hated to leave when our week was up. Anyway, we boarded the train for Boston and suddenly in the North Station waiting-room we both decided at once that it was too soon to go back to Salem. But I was soon due back to the ship so we went to the South Station and boarded the train for Hartford, Connecticut after phoning my parents, and were met there by my father in his old Dodge car and taken down to Durham where Florence met the family and we stayed a few days for the family to get used to the idea that I was married. It was still a shock to them, but we all came through it O.K.

Time was now short so we were soon back on the train again bound for Philadelphia. On arrival I took stock of my cash and found that there was very little left so I looked for a nice small hotel downtown and registered at the Robert Morris where I could put everything on the bill until payday which fortunately was not far off.

Then we went up Market Street to West Philadelphia to look for a more permanent place to live. I had been up in that section once with a shipmate and liked it. So without much trouble we found what was to be our first home together. It was in a residential section on Irving Street just west of 52nd Street and between Locust and Spruce Streets. A little two-room second-floor furnished apartment in a typical Philadelphia brick-row house. There were miles of these houses built solidly a full block long with only a brick firewall between each family unit. In back were little walled or fenced yards opening onto an alley that also served the backs of the houses that faced on the next street over. The alley was for the use of the garbage-men, icemen, etc., but there was always a colorful lot of peddlers who used it too. One I remember well carried a damp gunnysack over his shoulder and sang "Baltimore crabs!" as he went along.

For furnishings we had a bed, a bureau, a Morris chair, a small gas stove beside a tiny sink, a table the size used by drug store soda fountains and two chairs. I soon manufactured more furniture by nailing orange crates together, and when they were covered with white oilcloth and draped across the front with blue and white checked gingham they looked pretty good to us. We shared the bathroom with the owner and her husband. We didn't need much furniture since we had carried in our total possessions in two suitcases. But it was our home and we couldn't have been happier in a villa on the Riviera. We made a game of budgeting everything and got along fine although our allotments seem impossible today. One example will serve to illustrate how we made do. For food for seven days for the two of us we had one five dollar bill. However you must consider that in 1929 we could usually find a market that was selling Nucoa brand margarine at three pounds for 25c. One week we had 10c left over so we bought a goldfish bowl at Woolworth's. The next week we bought a fish for five cents to put in it, our first pet. Hamburger was two pounds for 25c and pink salmon, the tall cans, were 16c each.

There was no lack of entertainment because Philadelphia has many parks and fantastic museums and art galleries. So we enjoyed life to the fullest for the rest of the summer and part of the fall.

Then the Trenton was ordered to Hampton Roads, Virginia for battle practice. This was a real blow to us but we soon solved it by Florence's packing our things back in their suitcases and riding train and boat down to Norfolk. In the meantime I had gone to the Navy Y.M.C.A. and gotten the address of a family named Warren who rented a room and furnished meals to couples like us. Mrs. Warren was a real southern cook of the first order. She piled that wonderful food on the table like every meal was a banquet. Usually three kinds of meat, hot biscuits, several vegetables and choice of desert. She was a real genius because if you looked out into the kitchen while we were eating there wasn't a dirty pan or spoon anywhere. She had been cook for a work crew sometime in her life and had learned to clean up everything as she went along.

We were accepted as part of the family and taken on weekend drives around the Virginia countryside. We thought we had just about the best of everything, and I got liberty off the ship quite often and Florence was looked after as part of the Warren

family when I was away. In mid-December the Trenton went back to Philadelphia. Our former landlady's two apartments were both occupied so I found another place on the next block on Spruce Street and Florence came back to move in. That situation wasn't satisfactory because it was only a bedroom with kitchen privileges and our mealtimes conflicted with the family's, so after one week we found an apartment on Sansom Street which was somewhat better. At least we had our own kitchen and privacy, and after stuffing newspapers in all the cracks around the windows it was fairly warm. But it wasn't like the little place on Irving Street.

Our first Christmas together was somewhat of a disappointment because I was obligated to stay on duty on the ship so that another electrician with children could go home. Knowing that it was helping a family be together over Christmas made it bearable for us. We planned to make up for it on New Years Eve by joining the revelry downtown and going to the roof garden restaurant on top of one of Philadelphia's larger hotels. The famous old play "The Drunkard" was being performed there and it was being given a lot of publicity. However, when we went downtown it was so quiet everywhere that it was easy to see why New York comedians always got such a belly-laugh from their audiences whenever they mentioned the wild nightlife of Philadelphia. There was no cover charge there even on New Year's Eve and of course no liquor because prohibition was still very much in force, in legitimate places anyway. We enjoyed the evening as no one pressured us to buy any more food and soft drink than we wanted to. The show was much less exciting and daring than we had been led to believe by the lurid ads.

1930

7 days of Civilian Life & the Impact of the Great Depression

Beginning January 1st I was a civilian again after 5 years and 72 days in uniform. In a couple of days the Trenton was due to sail away so Florence and I thought we would go over to the dock and watch it go downriver together for once instead of waving goodbye to each other. As usual everything happened as per schedule and at 8 A.M. sharp the lines were thrown off bow and stern and the ship slowly moved away from the wharf with a good portion of the crew lining the rails waving farewell. Suddenly, when the hull was about thirty feet out, there came the sound of a car racing around the warehouse and out onto the dock where it came to a screeching halt at the very edge. The door of the cab flew open and a tall, gangling ex-Alabama-farm-boy seaman fell out onto the planks. He was instantly up and teetering on the edge of the pier ten feet above the water screaming and waving his arms as if he was already swimming. The reaction on the Trenton was instant and uproarious, for he was joyously known by every member of the crew by his nickname. From bow to stern came the shouted advice, "Ears, don't jump!". "Ears, you know you can't swim!" "Wait, Ears, we'll send a boat for you!" Which is actually what happened. The captain rang down the stop signal to the engine room and had the starboard whaleboat lowered just long enough to pick up poor old Ears and return him to his ship. I only hope he didn't have too much extra duty penalty to do as he was a well-liked fun character.

As anyone who was living at that time knows, the country was just entering the worst period of economic depression in our history. So after checking around at many Philadelphia factories and finding nothing but "No Help Wanted" signs everywhere I decided that at least there was security in the Navy. There was the

added pressure of having to make up my mind within a certain number of days in order to retain my rank as electrician's mate, 1st class.

Reenlistment

So on January 7th I re-enlisted for the regular four year period and wrote a request for duty on board a new cruiser that was being constructed in the New York Shipyard which was located just across the Delaware River in Camden, New Jersey. I received \$100 bonus for shipping over, which was very welcome extra money to us. I was assigned to the receiving barracks at the League Island Navy base, South Philadelphia. This assignment made me available for any work around the base and I soon had to join a crew that was separating old World War I ships from the holding pens in the back channel. It was dangerous work handling heavy wire cables on the decks of the old rusted hulks as they were pulled and hauled by tugs on their way to the salvage yards where they were cut up for scrap iron. The weather was cold and often the decks were icy and snowy which didn't make it any easier. But when the boat was actually en route we had time to run around below decks and found many interesting and unique features about each ship, also mementos of the men who sailed the Atlantic during the war period.

The good part of this duty was that I got to go home to Florence every night like an ordinary working man. We were living in our apartment at Sansom Street, but kept in touch with Mrs. Bray back at Irving Street. In a few weeks our old apartment was again vacant so we engaged it immediately. By now we seemed to have acquired a lot of clothes and household stuff so we took all one evening filling our two suitcases, walking five blocks back to Irving Street, emptying them out, and carrying them back to Sansom Street for another load.

So we settled down to regular living in our little apartment, gradually adding to our household furnishings. I acquired some odds and ends of radio parts and assembled them in a set that ran off a 6-volt storage battery and a 45 volt "B" battery. After that we became constant listeners to the Amos and Andy program, Lowell Thomas with the news, and heard the first unintelligible squawks relayed from Admiral Byrd at the South Pole.

Transfer to USS Chester (CA-27)



Sometime in the early spring my work duty was changed to that of sub-inspector on the U.S.S. Chester as it was being fitted out with all its operating systems.⁷² My main job was to get thoroughly acquainted with the location of all electrical wiring and equipment on the whole ship. Routine day to day occupation was to follow close behind the Navy Yard workmen and make sure that in that maze of wires, pipes, cables etc., they didn't do such things as run a hot steam line close up under a junction box so that later in a time of emergency out at sea it would be impossible to open the cover of the junction box and repair a vital link in the ship's operating system. This was a real job as the workmen seemed to be only interested in getting their pipelines from point "A" to point "B" no matter what else was around them.

In the middle of June I was sent to the receiving ship in the Brooklyn Navy Yard for ten days of instruction on the new type of gyro compass, "Armor Mk IV," that was being installed on the Chester. Back in Philadelphia on June 30th I was officially assigned to the U.S.S. Chester as Gyro electrician. By the end of July the ship was ready for the Naval Acceptance Trials. A skeleton crew had been assembled in the Navy Yard by this time and so we all went aboard together with almost an equal number of technical engineers who brought with them all manner of test instruments. For example, every important bearing on the ship had a gob of putty with a thermometer or thermocouple stuck in it so that the running temperature could be noted and written down in a log book every quarter hour.

So after taking on stores we proceeded down the Delaware and up to Camden, Maine. Here, off the coast, was a carefully measured course where the Navy tests the performance of newly constructed ships before they are officially accepted by the Government. We had nine days to put the ship through all sorts of grueling stresses such as all possible speed ahead then a sudden stop and full speed astern during which thousands of instruments were constantly monitored and the readings recorded every quarter hour, and much oftener in some cases. I believe I remember that our maximum speed was 34.6 knots which is really traveling in a ship of that size.

We were usually at anchor in Camden at night and some of us could go ashore. One of the nice things about the affair was that the ship-building company furnished a complete set of hotel cooks and helpers for the trip, and they fed everybody royally five meals a day. The fifth was at midnight because there were so many technicians on duty 24 hours a day.

Camden, Maine is just about the best spot on the Atlantic coast for lobsters so of course our good cooks bought a lot of them and we gorged ourselves on them. As luck would have it the ship's trials went off so trouble-free that the last two days were dropped and we started back down the coast two days early with an excess cargo of lobsters in the galley. Word was quietly passed around that anyone could go to the galley when he was hungry and be given a hot boiled lobster at any time. I'll never forget how good they tasted nor will I forget walking into a steaming fireroom to check on something and seeing the fireman standing on duty before the array of valves and levers stripped to the waist and devouring a whole delicious lobster. The picture struck me as highly unusual and incongruous.

⁷² USS Chester was a Northampton class heavy cruiser. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Chester_\(CA-27\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Chester_(CA-27))

Shakedown cruise to the Mediterranean

On our return to Philadelphia the crew immediately set about preparing the ship for her traditional shake-down cruise. So, early in September we were underway across the Atlantic in excellent weather and sea.

We arrived first in Gibraltar to spend a few days. It's a one-main-street town, at that time everything seemed to be half English and half Spanish with a lot of little North African tourist shops. We could walk everywhere and there seemed to be little use for taxis or street cars. Once, while sitting in a bar, a funeral procession went by and as it passed every business establishment on both sides of the street put up the solid iron shutters all across the front as they do at night when closed. Then as soon as the last vehicle had gone by everything was opened right up again. I remember the thrill of being able to see the coast of Africa across the straits and from the landward end of the rock there was the tip end of Spain stretched out before me.

We left Gibraltar late in the day and as night came on the Mediterranean became covered with a blanket of fog. The chart book said that there were apt to be many small fishing boats around so the captain ordered very slow speed and he had a seaman with a portable telephone lowered in a boatswain seat over the bow and right down to the water's edge which fortunately was calm as a millpond. And so we cruised through the night.

The fog lifted with the very first rays of the sun so the speed was increased smartly and we came into the harbor of Barcelona not too much behind schedule. I found this city to be much larger and more modern than I had expected, with excellent transportation by subway and bus. There was much to see there including the remains of a national trade exposition from the year before. A particularly nice place to be after dark was one of the central avenues called Ramble del Centro. It was a beautiful wide boulevard with a parkway in the center where chairs for rent were placed under the trees from one end of the street to the other. Next to the buildings it was like one long sidewalk café. The weather was so calm and warm that you forgot it altogether and I just sat and enjoyed seeing all the many Spaniards strolling up and down in their fine clothes. I even met a Spanish engineer (metallurgy), Snor Jose M. Giol Feliu, who could talk a little English and who told me some of the sights that I should see while in Barcelona.

The next stop in our itinerary was Naples, a beautiful and exciting city to roam around. We had about a week there so I managed to see quite a lot. We landed our liberty boats at a very ancient stone quay where there were many paddlers selling fresh seafood, many varieties were unfamiliar to me and I wouldn't touch them, but the Neapolitans seemed to relish squid, octopus, sea snails and all sorts of things. Just beyond us, jutting out into the harbor, was a big gray stone fort that was built by the Austrians I was told. I roamed through narrow streets lined on either side with six-story tenement buildings.

Many push-cart merchants were going up and down singing their wares and often a woman would bargain with them from one of the top floors. When an agreement was made she would lower a little basket down on a long thin rope with the right amount of Lira in it and the merchant put the onions or whatever in it for her to pull back up again. Many hillside streets were all steps so of course no wheeled traffic. Women sat on these steps and operated hand sewing machines making gloves, clothes, lace. Or they prepared food for the next meal. Old people took care of little

children on these steps and all sorts of family life went on in the warm sunshine. The views from the high points of the city out over the Bay of Naples were beautiful. Parks were lovely with their stone pines, olive trees and gorgeous bright flowers. The people I talked to seemed happy enough but no one would talk politics or respond when I mentioned Il Duce. Older sailors with past experience said that in parts of the city where it used to be most dangerous to walk in were now perfectly safe for everyone. In the Art Museum I offered some Lira to a guide who had helped me, but he made it plain that he was not allowed to take money any more.

I visited the ruins of Pompeii, the wonderful Roman resort city that was buried by Vesuvius in 79 A.D., lost sight of for centuries and even now not completely uncovered. Anyone with the slightest interest in ancient history shouldn't miss seeing it. On my second visit I was a member of the shore patrol and traveled around as aide to the patrol commander. It seems that he had gotten some inside information about Pompeii and he bribed a guide to show us the Roman pornography, something very few visitors got to see, at that time, anyway.

After leaving Naples, we went south toward Sicily. Then suddenly our radio shack got a message from the Italian Government to the effect that the volcano on the island of Stromboli was erupting and since we were the closest ship to it, would we check to see whether the island inhabitants were in need of help. Our captain immediately ordered full speed in that direction and the island came in sight at eleven o'clock that night. It was quite a sight. The whole island appeared to be just a mountain sticking up out of the sea but the upper part is tilted way over on one side. So, when we steamed around to that side what we saw was like a great gash in the side of the volcano and there was fiery lava belching up and spilling down to the water's edge. It was an extremely spectacular firework display from the Chester.

Anyway, we circled the island once and then came to anchor on the opposite side. From here we could see grape vineyards up the side with here and there little stone cottages, very peaceful, except that once in awhile a particularly large eruption would show a little flame above the top. One of our whaleboats was lowered and a small delegation of officers went ashore. They came back fairly soon saying the inhabitants were not very alarmed. Apparently this was no big deal to them as they must have seen it happen before and all the first stayed on the other side. So we sailed off again seeing the fireworks grow smaller and smaller in the distance. The next morning we had a beautiful trip through the Strait of Messina with fine views of both the toe of the Italian boot and the Island of Sicily.

Our next port of call was Piraeus, Greece. However, we were told not to stop in the port city at all but to get straight onto the electric train and go up to Athens a few miles inland. Piraeus had a bad reputation for cutthroats at the time so most of us did as we were told. Anyway it was a nice ride through country that I could imagine had once contained Athen's ancient walled road to the sea. I could look off and see the chalky, dusty hills in the distance and remember that it looked just as the text in our geography book said it should. At the edge of the city the train went underground and we were soon walking up the steps of the depot in the center of town. I found it very easy to get around because you could almost always look off and see a high point like the Acropolis or Saint George's peak to orient yourself by. I had the feeling of being in one of the world's wonder spots and tried to see everything possible. Although the monumental structures were very familiar to me from their pictures I actually found them much larger and more beautifully

fashioned than I had ever imagined. Most of the time I was alone because I can cover a lot more ground that way. But for a few hours I allowed a guide to attach himself to me and he showed and told me a lot about the city that I would have otherwise missed. He complained bitterly about Lord Elgin's stealing away the best marble displays. I didn't tell him that I thought they probably wouldn't be around to be seen by anyone today if he hadn't. He also showed me where some American archaeologists were just starting to uncover the area where the ancient market place was. I visited the place hollowed out of the rocky hillside where Socrates was imprisoned and I walked to the top of the high pointed hill where this is just room for one little building one half of which was Saint George's chapel and the other half a bar-room.

From Athens it was a fairly short run to the last port on our itinerary - Istanbul. I didn't get much sleep that night because we were sailing through the Dardanelles and the Sea of Marmara. I was up on the navigating bridge pretending to be checking on my gyro compass repeaters. There were two young officers there also, one of whom had studied the English campaign in World War I quite thoroughly and was pointing out the special points of interest as we went by them. This turned out to be another morning like the one when I first sighted Fujiyama. We came in sight of the city just as the sun was lighting up the dome of Saint Sophia. That, together with the tall, pointed minarets around, could only be one place in the world. We sailed into the Bosphorus and found a dock waiting for us which made going ashore very easy for once.

Istanbul had the feeling of a dangerous place. There was a peculiar odor about it that seemed to be a combination of wood ashes and blood. It was a city of little shops, cafes and bazaars often with the owner and his friends sitting out front under a canopy of grapevines, drinking coffee and smoking. Many of the characters we saw in the streets wore very frightening expressions. We had been warned on the ship not to cross the Golden Horn to Stambul, the older section, at night. All the streets were narrow, even in Pera, but there were alleys leading off from the streets that we were also very careful to avoid at night. In the daytime, as usual, I wandered alone all over the place but I hit one section on the outskirts of Stambul where the people really seemed to resent having a foreigner around so I didn't stay long. I tried to see as many of the mosques as possible. I went up in the fire tower in Pera, and I saw museums and bazaars, old city walls, and I don't believe I missed much.

The street-cars were very handy for us because at that time anyone in a military uniform rode absolutely free, even us foreigners. A peculiarity of the street-car motormen was that they hated to stop anywhere so it was commonplace for people to get on and off while the vehicle was moving slowly. Fortunately, they never seemed to move very fast anyway. I stopped for tea one afternoon at the Kahout, a small hotel, and found that the waiter was a nice young Greek fellow by the name of Evangelos G. Grigorides. We had a very interesting conversation about the difficulties a Greek has living in Turkey. He told me that because he was Greek he could expect no protection from the police or in the law courts. I asked him about going to Greece and he said that he would have to begin all over again there and living was very tough in Greece also. I was interested in noting how little of the old style Turkish writing was left around after Kemal Ataturk's decree Romanizing their alphabet overnight. About the only place I saw any was in old cemeteries. The red fez had completely disappeared from men's heads, too.

At the end of October we pulled away from the dock, continued on through the Bosphorus into the Black sea, sailed in a big loop there, then turned back through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, across the Mediterranean, through the Gates of Hercules and straight on back to Norfolk, Virginia. During this trip I found that I wasn't going to adjust to being away from my wife for long periods of time, so I put in a request to the Navy department for transfer to shore duty anywhere including the island of Guam. When the request came back negative I requested a Special Order Discharge as I had discovered that the Government was in one of its "reduce the military, save money" moods and you could get a discharge if you could prove that you had a job waiting for you in civilian life.

Separation from Navy (November 1930)

It was now the first of November and the very first weekend that I could get away I hopped an excursion train for Philadelphia and Floss. Of course we had a great reunion and both decided that something had to be done so we could be together. We persuaded a painter-paperhanger neighbor of Mrs. Bray's to hire me to work for him with the understanding that he fire me the first day without paying me any salary.

When I arrived back in Norfolk I lost no time putting through the necessary papers, and on November 20th I was honorably discharged for the last time. I had an excellent service record and was on the waiting list for Chief Petty Officer but nothing was worth being away from the one who made life a home wherever she was. Florence had found it necessary to get herself a job at the R.C.A. Victor Company in Camden while I was gone and it's a good thing that she did in those hard times. My last monthly paycheck in the Navy was \$96.60 and it was to be another while before I was to get another pay.

Our painter friend was true to his word since he certainly didn't need another man. I went out with his crew on the first Monday morning and after painting one door frame he came over to me and with a grin said, "That's a lousy job. You're fired." And that was it. Remember that was before the days of Social Security and Welfare payments.

Finding Work

So I started walking all over Philadelphia looking for work of any kind. All the factories without exception had signs out from reading "No Help Wanted". I risked getting into trouble with strikers in the hosiery mills of North Philadelphia but that was no good. I put my name in every employment agency I could find knowing that my first week's salary would go to the agency if I did get a job. It was just at the time when everybody was beginning to realize just how serious the 1929 depression was going to be, so we were earnestly considering our prospects for the future. However, we were determined to have a Christmas tree this year, come what might, but ornaments for it just seemed to be out of reach so we hung our Christmas cards on it, threw on some tinsel ruin and it looked very joyful and bright to us at that time of our lives.

1931

Great Depression

The winter and spring of this year proved to be a discouraging time for me. Very fortunately Florence had steady work at RCA Victor and was so good at her job that

she was kept on when many others with more seniority were let go as the depression worsened. So we had food and shelter, but I walked the streets of Philadelphia from end to end looking for work of any kind. I would have accepted anything. I even applied to the police and fire departments thinking that my service record would be a help there, but the age requirement was 25 years minimum and I was just 23. Almost the only want ads were for salesmen and, of course, I soon got caught up in the Electrolux vacuum cleaner promotion. I must have lugged that machine many miles around West Philadelphia and only sold one.

Finally, I began concentrating on the employment offices because they had something to gain by getting me a job and I felt that I wasn't all alone in my search. Each morning I would make the circuit of the agencies as soon as they opened and sure enough one morning in a piddling little store-front place on Arch Street the manager said that he had just had a call from the Frederick H. Levey Company, 1223 Washington Avenue, South Philadelphia, but he warned me that it would be hard work because it was an ink manufacturing plant. Well, that didn't faze me and I was on the way as fast as I could go.

At the factory I was interviewed by the general superintendent and then given a sheet of paper with several problems in mathematics to solve. Apparently I passed O.K. because I was hired and told to come to work the next morning and my pay would be \$22.00 a week. So next day I was shown how to operate a rolling mill where the combined dry and liquid materials are forced between two very smooth heavy rollers and the resulting smooth printing ink is collected by an apron having a razor-sharp edge pressed against the third, or offset, roller. The work not only was very hard, it was very dangerous as well. The factory was four stories high and every floor was completely carpeted with 1/4-inch-thick steel plates. All the materials came in steel drums or barrels and the mixing containers were steel tubs which had to be dragged from place to place so nothing but a steel floor could stand up under these conditions. Also machines, containers, tools, everything - including the floors - had to be cleaned constantly with kerosene and wiping cloths. Naturally the danger of fire was great so everything had to be kept clean and no wiping cloths allowed to collect anywhere as they could catch fire by spontaneous combustion, especially when one used cobalt driers.

I marvel now at the way I learned to handle heavy loads, set the very critical tension on the mill rollers by hand, and endured having my hands in raw kerosene much of the time. I'm sure no one today could be found in this country who would stand up to it. The methods now used in ink and paint production have been modernised like everything else so it is no longer necessary to work under those conditions. The colored inks that we made were sold to the Curtis Publishing Company, the National Geographic, and the Cuneo Press of Chicago, in fact, to newspaper and magazine publishers all over the country. I found that inks are not as simple as they look. For example, the chrome yellow background color of the cover of the Geographic was actually made of twenty-eight different materials and it wasn't easy to make every batch match the standard in shading, viscosity and drying properties.

Anyway, I had work and considered myself one of the lucky ones in those days. We could live on \$22.00 a week whether Florence worked or not, so we settled down to enjoy Philadelphia. We could eat out sometimes and go to a show when a good one came to town. I never quite got all the ink off me from one end of the week to the other but we were living in a home together, and that was all we really needed to

make us happy. In the late summer, Mother, Herbert and Virginia stopped in for a short visit during their vacation trip to the South.

Appendix A
Excerpt of Ships History: USS Marblehead (CL-12)
Naval History and Heritage Command

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/m/marblehead-iii.html>

1925 - 1928

A port in Massachusetts. (CL-12; displacement 7,050; length 555'6"; beam 55'4"; draft 13'6"; speed 34 knots; complement 458; armament 12 6-inch, 4 3-inch, 6 21-inch torpedo tubes; catapults 2, aircraft 2; class *Omaha*)

The third *Marblehead* (CL-12) was laid down 4 August 1920 by William Cramp & Son, Philadelphia, Pa.; launched 9 October 1923; sponsored by Mrs. Joseph Evans; and commissioned 8 September 1924, Capt. Chauncey Shackford in command.

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After commissioning, the scout cruiser *Marblehead* departed Boston for shakedown in the English Channel and Mediterranean. In 1925 she visited Australia, stopping enroute in the Samoan and Society Islands and, on her return, in the Galapagos. A year after her return, *Marblehead* was underway again on an extended voyage. Early in 1927 she cruised off Bluefields and Bragman's Bluffs, Nicaragua, her mission there to aid American efforts to bring together and reconcile the various political factions then fighting in that country. With one exception, Sandino, faction leaders agreed to the terms of the Peace of Tipitapa, 4 May 1927, and the United States was requested to supervise elections in 1928.

Marblehead next sailed for Pearl Harbor, where she joined *Richmond* and *Trenton* and headed for Shanghai, China. Upon arrival there she contributed to the show of force aimed at the protection of American and other foreign nationals of Shanghai's international settlement during operations against that city through the summer of 1927 in China's civil war.

In addition to her stay at Shanghai, *Marblehead* spent 2 months up the Yangtze River at Hankow, and visited several Japanese ports before leaving the Far East in March 1928. Enroute home the cruiser stopped at Corinto, Nicaragua, to assist in the preparations for elections under the Peace of Tipitapa, delaying her return to Boston until August.

Appendix B
Excerpt of Ships History: USS Trenton (CL-11)
Naval History and Heritage Command

<https://www.history.navy.mil/research/histories/ship-histories/danfs/t/trenton-ii.html>

1928-1930

The capital city of the state of New Jersey and of Mercer County, located at the head of navigation on the Delaware River about 33.1 miles northeast of Philadelphia, Pa. (CL-11: displacement 7,500; length 555'6"; beam 55'0"; draft 14'3"; speed 33.91 knots; complement 458; armament 12 6-inch, 4 3-inch, 2 3-pounder saluting, 10 21-inch torpedo tubes; class *Omaha*)

The second *Trenton* (CL-11) was authorized on 20 August 1916; and the Navy signed the contract for the scout cruiser on 24 January 1919. She was laid down on 18 August 1920, at Philadelphia, Pa., by William Cramp & Sons; launched on 16 April 1923; sponsored by Miss Katherine E. Donnelly, née Barnett, daughter of John F. Donnelly; accepted on 15 April 1924; and commissioned on 19 April 1924, Capt. Edward C. Kalbfus in command.

A starboard bow view of Trenton shows her in sleek fighting trim, with a number of crewmen mustered forward, mid-1920s. (Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph NH 43751)

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In January 1928, *Trenton* and her division embarked marines at Charleston and returned to Nicaragua, where they landed to assist in supervising the elections which resulted from Stimson's visit. She and her sister-ships rejoined the Scouting Fleet at Guantánamo Bay and resumed maneuvers. On 9 March, Light Cruiser Division 2 parted company with the Scouting Fleet. The four light cruisers rendezvoused with the Battle Fleet off the California coast and headed for Hawaiian waters, conducting drills enroute. They then (18-28 April) took part in Fleet Problem VIII in the Pacific waters between San Francisco, Calif., and the Hawaiian Islands. *Trenton* embarked two Vought O2U-1 *Corsairs* of Observation Squadron (VO) 3-S.

After completing the problem *Memphis* and *Trenton* cleared Honolulu to relieve Light Cruiser Division 3 on the Asiatic Station. During that tour of duty, *Trenton* entertained Brig. Gen. Stimson, now the Governor General of the Philippines. She participated in joint Army-Navy maneuvers in the Philippines and patrolled the northern Chinese coast, on one occasion in March 1929, putting a landing force ashore at Chefoo [Yantai]. *Trenton* served there to restore order in a time of political tension between rival Chinese factions, and Rear Adm. John R. Y. Blakely, Commander, Light Cruiser Division 2, wore his flag in the ship. The Chinese Chamber of Deputies explained to Minister to China John Van A. MacMurray that a U.S. warship would reassure the people of Chefoo. MacMurray thus recommended to his superiors that "a naval vessel be left at Chefoo pending the outcome of the present situation," and the cruiser continued to influence the people in the area until the violence simmered down.

Trenton's division was detached from the Asiatic Fleet in May 1929, and she steamed back to the United States in company with *Memphis* and *Milwaukee*. The light cruiser accomplished an overhaul at Philadelphia in the latter part of 1929, and then rejoined the Scouting Fleet. During the next four years, *Trenton* resumed the Scouting Fleet schedule of winter maneuvers in the Caribbean followed by summer exercises off the New England coast. Periodically, however, she was ordered to the Panamanian coast to bolster the Special Service Squadron during periods of extreme political unrest in one or more of the Central American republics.