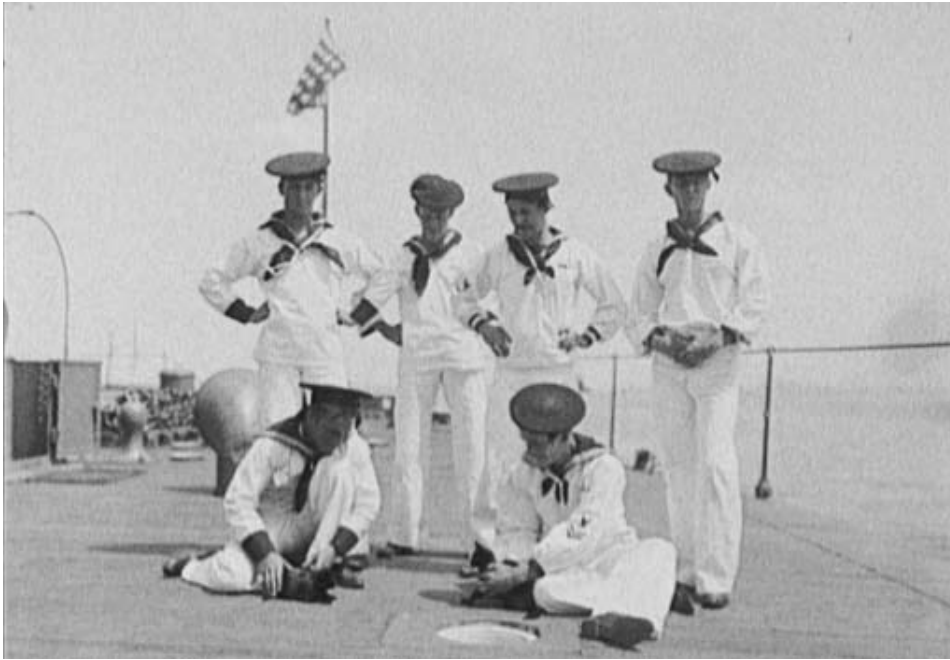


# Private Circulation

For Georgia (20 Oct. 1945–23 Jan. 2009)



Sailors aboard the *U.S.S. Nabant* and the ship's mascots, photograph: Edward H. Hart

## DAVY JONES'S LOCKER

In a November 1916 article by *American Magazine* Isaac White—the head of the Bureau of Accuracy and Fair Play, a department within Ralph Pulitzer's newspaper the *New York World*—noticed that several recent reports of shipwrecks all claimed that the ship's cat had been rescued. White asked one of the ship news reporters to explain. "There was one of those ships that carried a cat," the reporter said, "and the crew went back to save it. I made the cat the feature of my story, while the other ship news reporters failed to mention the cat and were called down by their city editors for being beaten. The next time there was a shipwreck there was no cat; but the other ship news reporters did not wish to take chances, and put the cat in. I wrote a true report, leaving out the cat, and then I was severely chided for being beaten. Now when there is a shipwreck all of us always put in a cat."

Although a wide search through nearly two years of the *New York World's* microfilm proved fruitless, many other newspapers (the *New York Times*, the *New York Tribune*, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, and the *Sun*) between 1899 and 1916 contained accounts of shipwrecks or cats. This issue of *Private Circulation*, a collection of sundry events, is dedicated to the ship's cat, whether real or made up.



Feb. 1899 – A large shark washed aboard the steamer *Adria* and sailors beat it with every available implement. According to the men aboard, the shark bit off a mouthful of heavy chain. Some of the choicest parts were cut from the dead shark and fed to the ship's cat.

March 1889 – There was concern among the crew that the French bark *Lecog* would not fair well after it sprung a leak in the Gulf of Mexico. In an attempt to perk the crew's moral, the captain left the deck to procure liquor. While he was absent the iron-made *Lecog* shot stern-side down. The lurch threw a sailor on the forecastle overboard, who managed to climb aboard a dingy and save the ship's cat. The captain, his wife, their infant, and the crew drowned. The two survivors floated for four days until rescued by the Norwegian bark *Parametta*.

Sept. 1899 – Water flooded the decks and gathered in the hold of the American three-masted schooner *Newton*. Hurricane winds had submerged the vessel and opened up its seams. Captain Heath ordered the masts cut. He tied Mrs. Heath to the top of the companionway leading to the poop deck. The severed foremast was allowed to hang by its forestays, acting as an improvised sea anchor. The crew tied themselves to the deck and waited out the storm. A day later the captain, crew, and Mrs. Heath discovered shelter in the "coach house," a structure a few feet square built over the companionway. There they subsisted on biscuits and greasy, brackish water found above the donkey boiler. The winds abated and the men set to work building a raft from the wreckage, rigged a pole, and flew a rag as a distress signal. At the aft end of the *Newton*, which barely floated above the surface of the

Wockle from the U.S.S. *Flusser*

water, a sailor found Sampson, the ship's cat, sitting on a shelf in the flooded cabin. Mrs. Heath petted and fed the cat. Back on land the captain said, "We all had a peep into Davy Jones's locker."

March 1900 – The Norwegian bark *Concord* was smashed to pieces near Cape Macau. Eight rescued crew members and Captain H. Johannsen arrived in New York City Sunday night aboard the steamer *A.R. Thorp*. Johannsen said, "I bought the *Concord* in Russia a year ago for \$7,000 and all that I have of her now is Monkey, the ship's cat."

Feb. 1901 – Bound to New York from Norfolk, Virginia, carrying a heavy load of timber, the two-masted schooner *Ida L. Ray* sprung a leak when a great swell lifted the timber and slammed it back onto the deck. After three days of battling high seas and vainly signaling for help, the crew abandoned the crippled vessel, bringing with them the ship's cat. The shipwrecked crew subsisted on crackers and fresh water. When waves broke over the small

ship, the cat cried and she was once washed overboard. Because she was a favorite, some of the sailors sobbed when she froze and Captain Andrew Anderson was forced to drown her.

Jan. 1902 – High winds broke the fore boom and the gaff of the *Clifton*, a three-masted schooner from Nova Scotia. The Finnish sailor Victor Corkee was washed overboard and lost. Water burst into the cabin, filled the galley, and destroyed the companionways. Eventually the rudder was lost and the ship was anchored by an improvised kedge. One day later the steamer *Exeter City* was sighted. The ship's cat and mascot, Molly, climbed the rigging and refused to come down. After the sailors boarded the *Exeter City's* jolly boat, they set the *Clifton* afire.

Jan. 1904 – After a five-day delay, the liner *Noordland* finally docked. Mrs. Dooley's cats, Salome and Haydee, were missing and a ship-wide search was ordered. The skins of Salome and Haydee were found under the bunk of a man traveling from Italy who confessed to slitting their throats and eating them over the course of four days. Mrs. Dooley said she plans to stuff the cats.

Feb. 1904 – The British steamship *Kentigern*, en route from Portland to Limerick, was severely disabled by high ocean swells. The captain and crew abandoned ship for the steamship *Albano* with the starboard rail underwater and swells washing over the deck. The ship's cat refused to leave, but was rescued by a sailor who tucked her under his coat. The captain's canaries were left in the cabin.

Dec. 1904 – The *Sabine* arrived in New York carrying survivors from the water-logged four-masted *Edith L. Allen*. The *Allen* hit a

submerged derelict. The ship's seams burst and four feet of water filled the deck. The captain's daughter rescued the ship's cat, who had sailed with Captain Le Blanc for thirteen years.

Sept. 1906 – Bill, the British steamship *Indrashima's* cat, was awoken by the roars of a tiger treading water in his flooded cage, while a knot of pythons floated in the starboard alleyway.

Oct. 1906 – Traveling from the Isthmus the two-masted schooner *Rhoda* was nearly destroyed by two back-to-back hurricanes. Scotia, the captain's black-and-tan terrier, was washed overboard and then washed back aboard. He was rescued and put in the second mate's quarters. He escaped (reportedly to visit his friend Bill, the ship's cat) and was swept to his grave by another swell. Bill spent both hurricanes "at full length on the sheerpole of the main rigging, right in the wind's eye," said the captain.

Cognac from the U.S.S. *Flusser*

Dec. 1906 – On a trip from Germany to Hoboken, Gretchen, the steamship *Rhein's* cat and mascot, had to be ejected from a cargo hold containing 40,000 canaries.

Feb. 1907 – Near Sea Girt, New Jersey, in a heavy fog during dinner the steamer *Seneca* plowed into the bark *Charles Loring*, nearly breaking it in two. No one was injured. An hour later a warning light was placed on the partially submerged bark. The ship's cat, who refused to come down, was left clinging to the rigging.

Dec. 1907 – The British steamer *Puritan*, on its way from Colombo, Sri Lanka, was hit by heavy weather outside Sandy Hook, New Jersey. The ship's cat Benbow was washed out of the galley along with the cook and a scalding pot of pea soup. Neither Benbow nor the cook were injured.



Aug. 1909 – For at least twelve days a black cat was imprisoned in a crate containing an automobile en route to New York from Paris. Hearing his cries, the crew broke open a couple of boards and the exhausted cat stepped out and collapsed. He drank a saucer of milk and was able to walk across the gangplank where he was christened the pier's new mascot, Adriatic.

Sept. 1910 – Onboard the Norwegian *Gaa Paa* from Sumatra to Brooklyn, Captain Hansen's five-year-old daughter Sigrid called out to the ship's cat Kisse, who was standing at the end of the bowsprit. According to Sigrid and the cook, Kisse once meowed before leaping to her death into the Indian Ocean.

Jan. 1911 – Aboard the *S.D. Carleton*, a curious ship's cat stuck his nose into a bucket of Portuguese man-of-wars. He dashed to and fro across the deck for an hour.

May 1911 – When Jack the terrier saw Rully the *Kasenga's* cat fall overboard he barked for help and jumped in after his best friend. The sailors shouted to some men aboard a nearby boat who rescued Jack but left Rully to drown. Once before Rully had fallen overboard and was saved by seizing the end of a rope with his teeth. The ill-fated cat also broke a leg falling down a hatch. Jack was presented with a silver collar for his bravery.

Aug. 1913 – Duffy MacNab was the Scottish liner *Caledonia's* mascot—a large, tea-drinking, black cat, referred to by sailors in the singular as “The MacNab.” According to Purser Johnson, Duffy sailed 200,000 miles aboard the *Caledonia*. Impatient to reach land, however, Duffy attempted to leap across a ten-foot gap between the ship's fore-



Winston Churchill restrains Blackie, the mascot of *H.M.S. Prince of Wales*, from joining an American destroyer.

castle and the roof of the West 26th Street pier. Angus MacLean, a close friend of the cat, witnessed the fatal plunge and dove overboard to the rescue. He groped blindly underneath the pier, but was hauled back aboard the deck, among teary-eyed sailors.



The name of Cat Island, located in the central Bahamas, may refer either to a once large population of feral cats, or to the pirate Arthur Catt. Or not.

“Just before the *New York* left the Liverpool landing stage on January 12, 1916, Emmeline, the black cat, belonging to the *St. Paul*, walked on board, having missed passage on her own boat. Directly the *New York* was made fast and yesterday Emmeline, with a big pink bow tied around her neck, walked ashore and boarded the *St. Paul*, just before the vessel sailed for Liverpool at noon.” —“The Liner *New York* Has Stormy Voyage,” the *New York Times*, 23 January 1916