

1852-1853 - J. H. Jacobs
 1853-1855 - J. E. Meier
 1855-1856 - O. P. Nielsen
 1856 - P. Foppes
 1856-1859 - C. Hauschild

Voyages:

1847/48 - from New York/New Orleans
 1848/49 - New York/intermediate ports/New York
 1850 - New York
 1850/51 - New York
 1851 - New York (2 x)
 1852 - New York
 1852 - Quebec
 1852/53 - New York
 1853 - New York
 1853/54 - New York/Charleston
 1854 - New York
 1854/55 - New York
 1855 - New York
 1855/56 - New Orleans
 1856 - Quebec/London
 1856-1859 - New York/intermediate ports

The *HERSCHEL* ex *ORLEANS* was sold in Surabaya, on Java, Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), in 1859, for 20,000 fl. Her later history and ultimate fate are not known.

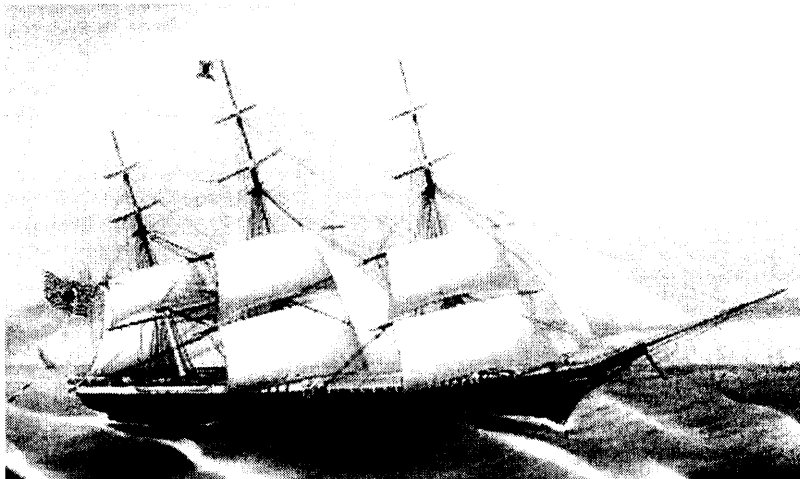
Sources: Robert Greenhalgh Albion, *Square-riggers on Schedule; The New York Sailing Packets to England, France, and the Cotton Ports* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1938), pp. 292-293; Ernst Hieke, *Rob. M. Sloman Jr., errichtet 1793*, Veröffentlichungen der Wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen Forschungsstelle e.V., Hamburg, Band 30 (Hamburg: Verlag Hanseatischer Merkur, 1968), p. 372; Walter Kresse, ed., *Seeschiffs-Verzeichnis der Hamburger Reedereien, 1824-1888*, Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, N. F., Bd. 5 (Hamburg: Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, 1969), vol. 2, p. 208.

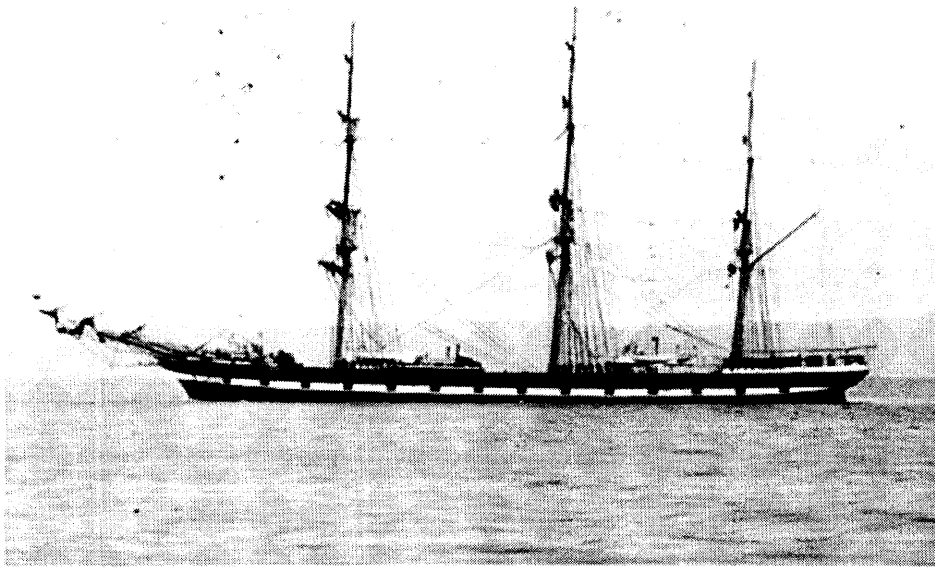
[13 Dec 1997]

Aaron + Moses Sailed on ORPHEUS 1856 TO U.S.

ORPHEUS (1854)

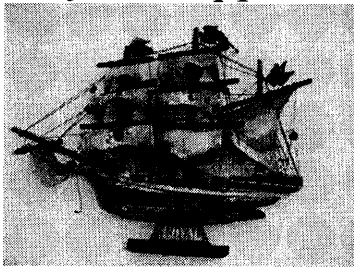
Oil painting by Oltmann Jaburg, 1854.
 Source: Peter-Michael Pawlik, *Von der Weser in die Welt; Die Geschichte der Segelschiffe von Weser und Lesum und ihrer Bauwerften 1770 bis 1893*, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums, Bd. 33 (Hamburg: Kabel, c1993), p. 390. To request a larger copy of this scan, click on the picture.





The Orpheus

History of Clipper Ships



Beginning in the late 1840's American shipbuilders started to build a new kind of merchant vessel - the Clipper ship. Several qualities set the clipper ship apart from other sailing ships. A clipper was technically a sailing ship with three masts on which sat a large expanse of square sails. It was designed to carry a small, highly profitable cargo over long distances at high speeds.

The clipper's masts, which could reach as high as a twenty story building, carried more sails and more kinds of sails than any other ship that had been built by that time. This cloud of sails controlled by a complicated web of rigging rose above a sharp bow and a sleek narrow hull. The long lines of the ship combined with the enormous driving power of the sails allowed the ships to "clip" along at speeds that earlier generations of sailors never dreamed of, and later generations never matched.

Sailing 150 miles a day was considered a good day's run only a few years earlier, clippers traveled approximately 250 miles a day. The best of the clippers could cover more than 400 miles a day. Speed was important to clipper captains because speed meant a big profits for the owners and captains.

Thousands of people were eager to get to the California gold fields and would pay premium prices to get there by the fastest clipper ship. Once there, the miners would pay top dollar for the goods and supplies they needed from back east. The ships that brought the goods to California first could earn a fortune for the owners. Tea from China brought a good price in New York and London, but it had to be delivered before it lost its taste. Some enterprising merchants made their fortunes by shipping ice from the ponds and rivers of New England to the tropics where it was a rare and valuable luxury, but they had to get it there before it melted.

People of the late 1800's wanted a faster way of traveling from country to country, as well as from coast to coast. Clippers provided this opportunity and often challenged other clipper ships to races to see who could hold the title of "the fastest ship". The clipper ship was built for speed, not volume, as were the other merchant ships of the era.

There are many stories and poems about clipper ship voyages. Some have the subject of romance, danger, or mystery. Some just tell about the ships themselves.



[Return to Select your Clipper Ship](#)

The Bremen ship *ORPHEUS* was built at Burg (now Bremen-Burg) by J. H. Bosse, and launched on 4 April 1854. 261 Commerzlasten / 588 tons register; 42,5 x 9,5 x 5,2 meters (length x beam x depth of hold). Original owners: Konitzky & Thiermann, Bremen, operators (1/3); Georg C. Mecke & Co, Bremen (1/2); and the captain, Diedrich Schilling (1/6). She was employed in the emigration trade to North America, and was known as a fast vessel: in December 1854, the *ORPHEUS* sailed from New York to Bremerhaven in the hitherto unheard of time of 18 days 6 hours.

Schilling was succeeded as captain in 1857 by Johann Philipp Wessels, who in 1862 also acquired Schilling's 1/6 share in the vessel. In 1862, Ferdinand Wessels appears as master, although possibly only as a substitute, since Johann Philipp Wessels was again captain of the *ORPHEUS* in 1863.

In May 1865, the cargo of the *ORPHEUS* on its return voyage from New York to Bremerhaven included a dozen alligators, destined for the zoological gardens in Köln and Dresden. The next voyage of the *ORPHEUS* was a race, roundtrip from Bremerhaven to New York and back, with the Bremen bark *GUTENBERG*, Capt. Hinrich Raschen, the wager being 500 Thaler; the race was won by the *GUTENBERG*.

In the night of 17/18 November 1865, the *ORPHEUS*, bound from Hamburg to New York with emigrants, collided in the vicinity of North Sand Head (in the English Channel) with the British schooner *MARIA*, from Scarborough, which sank; although the captain of the schooner was able to save himself, his wife and the 3 members of the crew were drowned.

In 1868, the *ORPHEUS* was re-rigged as a bark. On 2 November of that year, Kautzner, master, she sailed from Baltimore for Amsterdam with a cargo of tobacco, but early in December was stranded near Texel. The cargo was removed in lighters, and the vessel refloated, and towed to Nieuwe Diep. Shortly afterwards, the *ORPHEUS* was sold to M. Peterson & Søn, Moss, Norway, and from this time on sailed under the Norwegian flag, although retaining her old name. Her new captain was M. Bruusgaard. On 15 October 1877, on a voyage from Husom to London with a cargo of wood, the *ORPHEUS* was abandoned by her crew on Dogger Bank. On 19 October, the abandoned vessel was spotted approximately 100 miles from Cuxhaven by the Hamburg steamer *UHLENHORST*, which towed her to that port, whence on 22 October she was taken in tow by the steamers *GRAF MOLTKE*, *GERMANIA*, and *COWPEN* to Hamburg.

Source: Peter-Michael Pawlik, *Von der Weser in die Welt; Die Geschichte der Segelschiffe von Weser und Lesum und ihrer Bauwerften 1770 bis 1893*, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums, Bd. 33 (Hamburg: Kabel, c1993), pp. 390-392, no. 91.

[30 Nov 1997]

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ORPHEUS

The 3-masted, square-rigged Bremen ship ORPHEUS, built by J. H. Bosse, Burg (now Bremen-Burg), and launched on 4 April 1854. 261 Commerzlasten/ 588 tons register; 42,5 x 9,5 x 5,2 meters (length x beam x depth of hold). Original owners: Konitzky & Thiermann, Bremen, operators (1/3); Georg C. Mecke & Co, Bremen (1/2); and the captain, Diedrich Schilling (1/6). She was employed in the emigration trade to North America, and was known as a fast vessel: in December 1854, on the return leg of the voyage on which Don's ancestor sailed to New York, the ORPHEUS sailed from New York to Bremerhaven in the hitherto unheard of time of 18 days 6 hours. Schilling was succeeded as captain in 1857 by Johann Philipp Wessels, who in 1862 also acquired Schilling's 1/6 share in the vessel. In 1862, Ferdinand Wessels appears as master, although possibly only as a substitute, since Johann Philipp Wessels was again captain of the ORPHEUS in 1863. In May 1865, the cargo of the ORPHEUS on its return voyage from New York to Bremerhaven included a dozen alligators, destined for the zoological gardens in Koln and Dresden. The next voyage of the ORPHEUS was a race, roundtrip from Bremerhaven to New York and back, with the Bremen bark GUTENBERG, captain Hinrich Raschen, the wager being 500 Thaler; the race was won by the GUTENBERG. In the night of 17/18 November 1865, the ORPHEUS, bound from Hamburg to New York with emigrants, collided in the vicinity of North Sand Head (in the English Channel) with the British schooner MARIA, from Scarborough, which sank; although the captain of the schooner was able to save himself, his wife and the 3 members of the crew were drowned. In 1868, the ORPHEUS was re-rigged as a bark. On 2 November of that year, Kautzner, master, she sailed from Baltimore for Amsterdam with a cargo of tobacco, but early in December was stranded near Texel. The cargo was removed in lighters, and the vessel refloated, and towed to Nieuwe Diep. Shortly afterwards, the ORPHEUS was sold to M. Peterson & Son, Moss, Norway, and from this time on sailed under the Norwegian flag, although retaining her old name. Her new captain was M. Bruusgaard. On 15 October 1877, on a voyage from Husom to London with a cargo of wood, the ORPHEUS was abandoned by her crew on Dogger Bank. On 19 October, the abandoned vessel was spotted approximately 100 miles from Cuxhaven by the Hamburg steamer UHLENHORST, which towed her to that port, whence on 22 October she was taken in tow by the steamers GRAF MOLTKE, GERMANIA and COWPEN to Hamburg [Peter-Michael Pawlik, *Von der Weser in die Welt; Die Geschichte der Segelschiffe von Weser und Lesum und ihrer Bauwerften 1770 bis 1893*, Schriften des Deutschen Schiffahrtsmuseums, Bd. 33 (2., unveränderte Aufl.; Hamburg: Kabel, c1993), pp. 390-392]. Pawlik's book contains a color reproduction of an oil painting of the ORPHEUS, by Oltmann Jaburg, 1854, as well as of portraits of both captains Schilling and Wessels. [Posted to the Emigration-Ships Mailing List by Michael Palmer - 30 November 1997]

SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY IN CHELSEA

Shipbuilding in America began with the founding of the colonies. Until steam engines and wooden hulls replaced sails and wood, all sea going vessels were constructed of timber. Timber was a raw material that existed in abundance in the new world. From the sixteenth century, the timber situation in England and on the continent of Europe had greatly deteriorated and by 1800 the shipbuilding nations of Europe were suffering a timber famine. Due to the abundant supply and cheaper costs of shipbuilding timber, American ships cost far less to build than any European ship. Prior to the Revolutionary War, Massachusetts' led the rest of the country in the number of ships built and aggregate tonnage. Most of these ships were merchant vessels built for trade between the West Indies and North America or for trade or sale to Europe.

In the post Revolutionary War days the economy of the Massachusetts ship yards dropped considerably. The English markets were denied to American ships along with harassment of coastal traders by the British Navy. In 1786, the British applied their navigation laws to the United States. This ended the British market for American-built ships. In 1789, Congress passed a law that required that American flag ships be built in the United States. In 1793 France closed another market for American ships by passing a similar law. These events were followed by difficulties between France and England and by the War of 1812.

During the period of 1830 to 1856 the American shipyards along the eastern seaboard enjoyed a profitable increase in activity. This was the era of the famed American clipper ships, the most beautiful ship afloat. Built of oak and other hard woods, the clipper ship was designed and built for speed instead of capacity. The lines of the clipper evolved from a combination of features of the fast, sharp-ended ships built for slave and blockade running and those of the transatlantic packets and freighters.

The clipper was a long, narrow vessel with concave underwater lines and a long sharp bow flaring outward. The clipper had three masts or more that were set with a great slake and with square sails. These ships were designed to meet the needs of the China tea trade in the 1840's and the fast delivery of cargoes during the California and Australia gold rushes.

Numerous clipper ships were built in Chelsea shipyards that stretched on the waterfront near Williams and Marginal Street. The shipyards operated by shipbuilders: John Taylor, builder of "Storm King" 1853, the "Nabob" 1854, the "Malay" 1852, the "Aurora" 1853, the "Derby" 1855, the "Lotus" 1852; Jotham Stetson, builder of "Young Brander" 1853, "Neptune's Favorite" 1853, "Harry Bluff" 1855; Isaac Taylor, builder of the "Matchless" 1853; Winde & Clinkard, builders of "Daniel Webster" 1851, "Golden Gate" 1853, "William H. Atwood" 1852; from the yard of Rice & Mitchell, the "Orpheus" 1856; from the yard of Paul Curtis, the "Witchcraft" 1850; the yard of Dennison J. Lawlor, the "Olata" 1853. These names, represents a few of the ships built in Chelsea shipyards and their builders who helped write an important chapter in the maritime history of our country. The sea became a part of Chelsea life before the settling of the Village section of the town. The shipyards in Chelsea were turning out Sloops, Barks, and Brigantines before turning their abilities to building Clippers. The durability, speed and low cost of wood sailing vessels retarded the production of iron hull ships, introduced during the Civil War period. The introduction of steel ships in the 1880's made wooden commercial ships obsolete and caused a decline in the active shipyards.

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