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# WING & WING

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The Official Newsletter of the American Schooner Association

## GORTON'S SCRAPBOOKS by Allan Bezanson



Undated postcard published by Frank W. Shurtleff, Gloucester, MA—Gorton's Scrapbooks

**O**ur fish are dried in the pure sea air by absolutely natural methods, and are salted in sea salt imported by us in chartered ships. We have the largest fleet of fishing vessels in the world and employ, besides our own fleet, as many more, all of which bring their products to our wharves."

This claim is from an advertisement

### 2005 OFFICERS

COMMODORE  
PETER THOMPSON  
VICE COMMODORE  
ALEX RHINELANDER  
REAR COMMODORE  
JOHN SENNING  
SECRETARY  
AL ROPER  
TREASURER  
MARY ANNE-MCQUILLAN

"Why you should eat Gorton's Codfish and other sea products" in the *Boston Globe*, 1906. It was found amongst scrapbooks at Gorton's, a fish processor still thriving since its founding in 1849. Gorton's has preserved an interesting collection of documents and copies of newspaper accounts relating to its schooner days.

In 1902, six years after Rudyard Kipling's visit to Gloucester and the publication of *Captains Courageous*, this article appeared in the *Boston Journal*. "Captains and Crews Courageous, The Men of Gloucester Will Have One of the First Pages of the Book of Heroes....The fishermen's life is hard enough, but when you consider that he plies his trade right in the track of commerce and consequently must, besides tending to his trawls in smooth seas and in seas mountain high, in blistering summer and in numbing winter – that besides he must

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## GREAT CHESAPEAKE BAY SCHOONER RACE REMEMBERS LANE BRIGGS

With the passing of long-time member Captain Lane Briggs on September 19, we all lost a good friend who will be dearly missed and who's life was celebrated this year at the GCBSR.



Lane with grandchildren

### A Ballad of Captain Briggs By Al Roper, 1992

A mountain man, he left the hills  
He sought the stormy seas,  
He built an ark of strongest steel  
Her mast the tallest trees;  
His crew comes on as boys and girls  
And goes ashore as men (and women)  
When you work with Captain Briggs,  
my boys,  
Everybody wins.

He dreams of crystal waters  
And crabs and fish galore  
And not a trace of garbage  
To wash up on the shore  
He loves the bays and rivers  
He knows the tides and winds  
When you sail with Captain Briggs, my  
boys,  
Everybody wins.

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Ballad continued from page 1

That maestro of all revelry  
He parties with the best  
He charms the pretty ladies  
And teases all the rest  
Regattas, beer, and oysters -  
Then do it all again  
When you play with Captain  
Briggs, my boys,  
Everybody wins.

A shot of rum to wake you up  
And then the day begins  
With bloodies up at Reggie's  
And kegs to make you grin  
Some Yukon Jack to go to bed  
And wash away your sins  
When you drink with Captain  
Briggs, my boys,  
Nobody wins

When you drink with Captain  
Briggs, my boys,  
Nobody wins.

**Captain Lane Allen Briggs**, born on June 18, 1932, recently passed over the horizon of a life replete with accomplishments, and a multitude of people who consider him a close friend or caring mentor. It was commonly said of Lane, if you were not his friend, it was only because



you had not yet met him. Generous to a fault, he leaves behind not only a loving family that includes five more Captain Briggs, but a large community that will keep him close in memory. Recipient of the American Sail Training Association Lifetime Achievement Award, and the American Schooner Association Award, founder of the Great Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race and Rebel Marine, he was an ardent and tenacious community leader and activist that helped reshape the blighted Norfolk waterfront to its present thriving state and in the process reached out to many troubled youth, giving them a leg up, respect and a chance for a career in the marine business.

With his characteristic mutton chops, gold earring and deep accent, he was the red-headed rebel master of the Norfolk Rebel; a unique creation of Lane's that intuitively recombined the age of sail with the age of steam to produce an environmentally efficient working vessel. The Norfolk Rebel, a schooner rigged, steel tugboat, the *Tugantine*<sup>®</sup>, was Lane's trademark, always plying the waterfront towing tall ships and old character vessels.

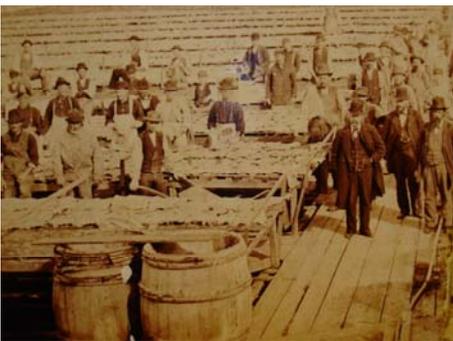
Lane, having passed over a horizon that we too shall follow, you have not left us but rather preceded us on a new voyage. Fair seas. *Photos courtesy of Lane Briggs' Family*



Gorton's continued from page 1

regard himself as an auxiliary life-saver - that if needs be he must let go his catch to take hold of poor fellows dumped overboard out of a sister craft or out of some wayward coaster - when you consider these things you must acknowledge that Gloucester has good reason to be proud of her men and her fleet."

From the *Gloucester Times*, "Today ends one of the most prosperous years, (1901) in the record of the fishing industry, as far as this port is concerned. In this connection, it is gratifying to note that the num-



Gorton's Flake Yards Circa 1900  
Courtesy Gorton's

ber of vessels lost from this port, nine, is the smallest for 20 years, and the number of lives lost, 48, the smallest with one exception for 16 years. . . They go and some do not return. Others step forward to fill their place and the never-ending battle of the sea and its toilers goes steadily on. Never a waver is there in the oil-clothed legion. Whole crews go down, but the ranks are always full. Fish is their harvest, the sea their field. From the sea comes the living for them and their little ones.

"Sang on the Wreck" is the headline in a January 1902 Boston Journal article. "Mrs. Clark's Honeymoon was Interrupted. Her Husband's Ship Went Down on Georges. Bride Prayed and Acted the Heroine. When their schooner *Eva L Ferris* was sunk, it was her first trip, her honeymoon, in fact, and yet the shipwreck left her undaunted, quite willing to try it again." . . "Great was our joy when we saw that Gloucester fisherman coming our way. It didn't seem as though any but Gloucester fishermen could have gotten us off that ship, so heavy was the sea. . . Mrs. Clark stood it like a brick. She didn't seem half as anxious as the rest of us.

Perhaps she didn't know the danger."

Gorton's collection includes handwritten diaries of schooner financial records, advertising material and recipes for yesterday's fishery products (messed bloater mackerel), secret radio codes and much more. Radio was at first unwelcome by skippers competing to locate fish and return early to port for the best price.



Gorton's Fisherman

The Cape Ann Historical Museum has a list of Gorton Pew vessels; 1906 to 1954. It totals 154, including beam trawlers as well as schooners. These schooners appear, notable in the history of the fishermen's races; Elsie, Esperanto and Thomas S. Gorton. Esperanto defeated Delawanna, Canada's entry in the first international fishermen's races in 1920, and took the series two straight. Gorton's has loaned its Esperanto cup to the Cape Ann

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