APPENDIX I

The American Seamen’s Friend Society portable library

The idealized library catalogue transcribed and annotated here is from a manuscript in the archives of the American Seamen’s Friend Society (ASFS), now in the G. W. Blunt White Library at Mystic Seaport, Mystic, Ct. (Collection 158, Box 2, folder 7.) From 1838 until the 1950s the Society was engaged in providing religious and other literature to US Navy and merchant vessels for the conversion, edification, and spiritual uplift of sailors. From 1858 these collections were presented as boxed libraries of approximately 40 to 45 volumes as chosen by librarians of the ASFS, according to this model collection policy, although there had been variant sizes, including some libraries with over 60 volumes.

The chart presents on the left hand side the categories of books recommended, and on the right side, examples of books in those categories. More than three quarters of the titles are religious, in keeping with the Society’s mission to improve the spiritual and moral conditions of sailors. Over half of those listed here were published by the American Tract Society in close alliance with the ASFS. All are Protestant and sometimes virulently anti-Catholic. Among them are juvenile titles, presumably aimed at young boys often serving on these vessels.

The manuscript has on its verso the following notation: “Report John Pierson on libraries - Presented to the Board May 31 1865”. In 1879 the Society published Pierson’s book entitled “Ship’s Libraries: Their Needs and Usefulness, which included a summary of the Ship’s Libraries program.

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**Ship’s library for Merchant vessel**

Plan of same with a specimen library of 40 vols. as actually provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>Bible, Bible Dictionary (always), Fables of Infidelity (Patterson) 12mo, Universalism not of God (Smith)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Bible Dictionary – with maps &amp; 200 cuts (Amer. Tract Society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A volume on Universalism (always), Universalism not of God (Smith)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A book of instructions for inquirers, James Anx. Inquirer (AmTrSoc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A book of instructions for Professors, Spencer’s Pastors Sketches (1stPart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A book of instructions for Professors, James Anx. Inquirer (AmTrSoc)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A book of instructions for Professors, James Anx. Inquirer (AmTrSoc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Part I] Religious: comprising from 2/3 to ¾ of the books

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**Bible**

A Bible Dictionary (always)

Bible Dictionary – with maps & 200 cuts (Amer. Tract Society)

A volume on Infidelity (always)

Fables of Infidelity (Patterson) 12mo

A volume on Universalism (always)

Universalism not of God (Smith)

A book of instructions for inquirers

James Anx. Inquirer (AmTrSoc)

A book of instructions for Professors

Spencer’s Pastors Sketches (1stPart)

The Blood of Jesus (Reid)

Faith & Assurance (Erskine)

Words of Jesus (Macduff)
Other didactic works
A volume of Sermons (always
Religious Biography & History

Clark’s Journey to Heaven 12mo
Spurgeon’s Sermons (Vol 4) 12mo
Life of Bishallavy (?)(AmTrSoc)
Life of Major Vaudeleur (AmTrSoc)
Soldier of the Cumberland (a memoir)
Anecdotes for Young (Methodist)
Footsteps of St Paul (Macduff)

Religious fiction
Including always Bunyan’s

Pilgrim’s Progress

Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress
Temperance tales (vol 5th)
Sargent’s

Helps over Hard places
Blue flag (Am.Tr.Soc)
Little Captain

Young Patriot AmTract
Harry the Whaler Society

Music,—with notes always.

Songs of Zion (new edition) with
notes (Am. Tract. Soc)
Sailor’s Hymn Book.

Foreign books—3 to 5 vols
In at least 3 languages

Jerry Creed TrSoc

[Part 2] Secular: comprising from 1/4 to 1/3 of the library

Almanac.
Book on health, with recipes for cooking &c.,
Scientific Books, -- always one or two, --Natural Philosophy & Astronomy preferred
History – always one or two vols.
Travels – always two or more vols,

Christian Almanac (AmTrSoc)
Soldier’s Health Companion (12mo (with Soyer’s Hospital Cookery)
Ganot’s Nat. Philosophy (12mo)
Mattisons High School Astronomy (12mo)
Lossing’s History of the United States
Curzon’s Ancient Monasteries (12mo)
Baird’s Modern Greece (in 12mo)
Lander’s Expedition to Niger
The foregoing served as a collection sample for developing the ASFS merchant vessel loan libraries. What follows is an alphabetical listing by author (or title) of the books listed in the ideal portable library.

Bible Dictionary. See Rand below.
Christian Almanac: see *Family Christian Almanac*.

Note that the *Christian Almanac* is listed as one of the secular recommendations on the ASFS list. It is improbable that all eight volumes were included in any of the ASFS loan libraries.


Sargent, Lucius M. *Groggy Harbor, or, A Smooth Stone from the Brook, and a Shepherd’s Sling.* Boston: Temperance Press, 1834.


Soyer, Alexis. *Culinary Campaign, being Historical Reminiscences of the Late War, with the Plain Art of Cookery for Military and Civil Institutions, the Army, Navy, etc.* London: Routledge, 1857.

The ASFS list refers to Soyer’s Hospital Cookery. This may be a variant.


The ASFS list specifies an American Tract Society imprint; this may be a variant.
APPENDIX II

Surviving Books from ASFS and other Loan Library

-----*Farragut and Other Great Commanders*. London: Routledge, 1880?
Brown, Charles Oliver. Short Talks to Young Christians. Chicago: Revell, 1885.
Clark, John Alonzo. The Young Disciple. New York: ATS, 1854?
Craig, Adam, comp. Room at the Top. Chicago: Sumner, 1883.
Ellis, James J. John Williams, the Martyr Missionary of Polynesia. New York: Revell, 1889.
Halling, H. Sundagsbor for Sufrende. Christiana, Norway, 1858.
Hanaford, P. A. The Young Captain...Richard C. Derby. Boston: Degen, Estes, 1865.
-----The Happy Choice. Boston: Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1847
Leslie, Madeline. Theology in Romance. Boston: Jewett, 1851.
Moody, Dwight Lyman. Daniel the Prophet. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1884
Moore, Thomas. Complete Poetical Works. New York: Crowell, 1895?
Piozzi, Hester Lynch. *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson*. New York: Cassell, 1887?
Pugh, A.A. *Life’s Battle Lost and Won*. New York: America Tract Society, 1881?
Shipton, Anna. *The Lord was There*. New York: Crowell, 1870?
----- *When I Was a Boy*. Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1862.
Tenney, Francis V. *An Earnest Life*. Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1858.
APPENDIX III

The ASFS Librarian Loan Boxes

One of the mysteries of the loan library movement is the extremely low survival rate of the physical boxes themselves: only ten known of over 15,000 sent to sea by ASFS alone. Shipwrecks would account for a fairly high number of losses, as might neglect, overuse, and theft, but no reasons seem sufficient to cause such disproportionate loss. By the post-war 1940s, the American Merchant Marine Library Association had replaced wooden boxes with more vulnerable paper cartons, but they would not have figured in the ASFS count.

Most of the survivals are in one of two places: the Charlie Burden Collection at the Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, Maine (4), and in the G.W. Blunt White Library at Mystic Seaport Museum in Mystic, Connecticut (3). In listing these extant examples the following format is used: [Box Letter], Loan Library Number, Location, Date if possible, Size, Markings, Color, Contents, Notes.

[A] ASFS Loan Library No. 894. Carmen D. Valentino, book dealer, Philadelphia, Pa. Date ca., 1859-65. Size: 23 ½” high, 13” wide, and 6” deep. Markings: Paper label and stenciled legend of ASFS inside box and duplicate imprint-less labels. Stenciled in black paint above door is notice of ASFS: “To be returned to 13 Cornhill, Boston, or 80 Wall St. N. York. Color: None. Contents: None. Notes: “The person, to whom this Library is intrusted [sic], is requested to keep it in order, loan the books to the crew, and communicate letters occasionally for the Sabbath School or the donors who furnished it, and return it, even if books are damaged or missing, to be replenished at either office of the Society—No. 80 Wall Street, New York, or No. 13 Cornhill, Boston.” Its existence does challenge the claim that No. 1954 below is the oldest extant ASFS loan library

[B] ASFS Loan Library No. 1391. G.W.Blunt White Library. Mystic Seaport. Date: 1860s, 1890s. Size: 22 3/4” high; 13 1/2” wide; 6” deep. Markings: label inside door reads “American Seamen’s Friend Society. To be returned to 13 Cornhill Boston or 80 Wall St. New York.” Color: Faded Red. Notes: Box # 1391 appears to be a complete box, probably from the later 1860s, judging by the imprint dates of most of the contents and the relatively low number of the box. Many of the titles are juveniles and seem aimed at young sailors of at least young people. A large number of books in this box are publications of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society in Boston. Most are illustrated and many anonymous. The contents of this box betray almost no sign of use; certainly they are not books that eager tars manhandled. The relatively low number of the box, its later content of a late 19th-century book (Grenfell), and its good condition suggest that this may have been a refurbished box.

It was First Sent to Sea in October 1866; After Several Voyages on Different Vessells, in December 1873 it was placed on the Fishing Schooner “Piscataque” out of Gloucester, Mass., and did service until December 1908. Mystic Seaport Library maintains a complete inventory of the contents of this box and the books themselves, which show little sign of use. (Apparently the Valentino is the older extant box.)


[F] ASFS Loan Library No. 9995. Marine Maritime Museum, Burden Collection. Date: Markings: Library Number 9995 is stenciled inside box. “The person, to whom this Library is intrusted [sic], is requested to keep it in order, loan the books to the crew, and communicate letters occasionally for the Sabbath School or the donors who furnished it, and return it, even if books are damaged or missing, to be replenished at either office of the Society—No. 80 Wall Street, New York, or No. 13 Cornhill, Boston.” Color: Contents: 37 volumes, not present. Notes:


For some time the Mystic Seaport Library believed it had some volumes belonging to Library No. 11234, including these titles:

*Due South, or Cuba Past and Present*, by Maturin M. Ballou (Boston, 1885).
*The Ladder of Fortune*, by Frances C. Baylor (Boston, 1889).
*Beacon Lights of History*, by John Lord (New York, 1885).
*Lord Nial, a romance...*, by John M. Moore (New York, 1834).
*The Fortunes of Nigel*, by Sir Walter Scott (Boston, 1893).

This list is hardly representative of the usual ASFS libraries, and it now appears unlikely that these formed part of the *SS Roosevelt* Loan Library. None of these books contains ownership marks of the ASFS. Further evidence comes from a volume in Mystic’s Loan Library No. 1391 which contains Wilfred Grenfell’s *The Vikings of To-day* (London, 1896), an appropriately religious title dealing with missionary work in Labrador. A manuscript inscription claims that this is the only surviving volume from the Peary North Pole Loan Library (but see footnote ix for another possible Roosevelt title). By contrast, the earlier list of Roosevelt titles has only one religious title, *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Acknowledgments: For substantial help in the preparation of this study I am very grateful to Charles Burden, founder of the Maine Maritime Museum in Bath, Maine. A visit to his collection of ASFS books and boxes was the original inspiration for this study. I am also indebted to the H.W. Blunt White Library of
the Mystic Seaport Museum, and especially to Paul O’Pecko, the Museum’s Director of Collections, who made access to the archives of the Society a pleasure. To Deirdre C. Stam I owe thanks for her accustomed critical assessment of this essay.