



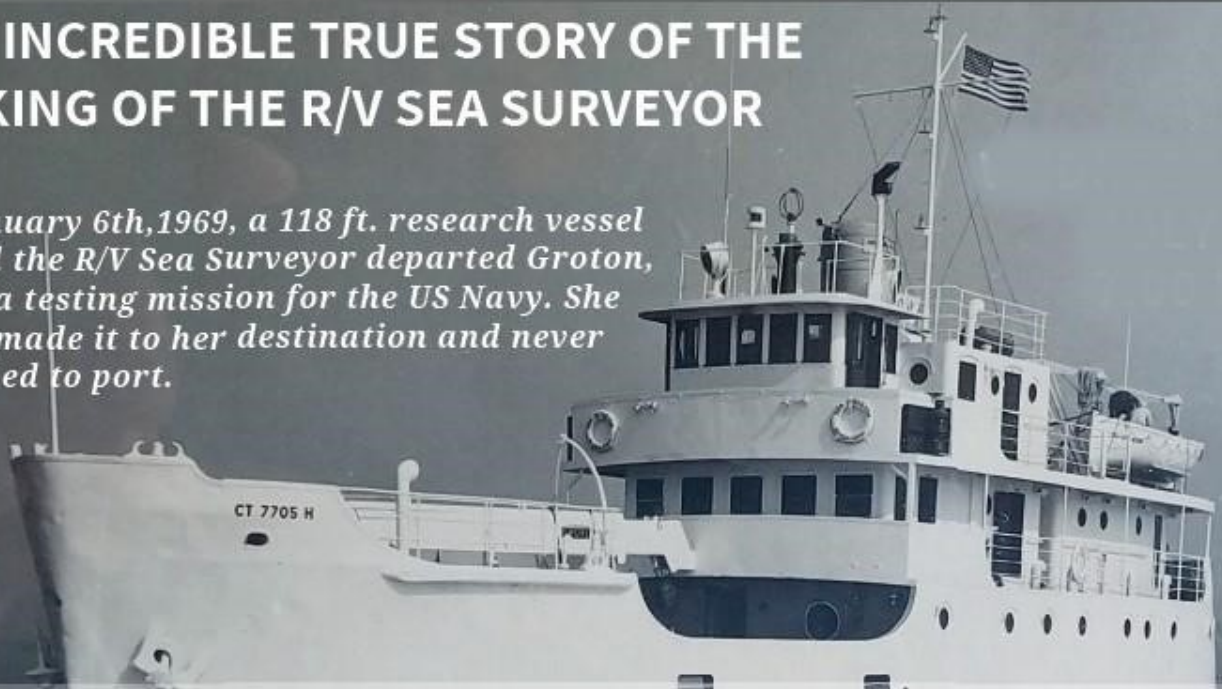
## NOANK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Presents:

# WE ARE VERY LIKELY TO DIE:

## THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY OF THE SINKING OF THE R/V SEA SURVEYOR

*On January 6th, 1969, a 118 ft. research vessel named the R/V Sea Surveyor departed Groton, CT on a testing mission for the US Navy. She never made it to her destination and never returned to port.*



**Learn about the R/V Sea Surveyor, her mission, and the incredible experience twelve crewman had after her sinking. Presented by Walter Banzhaf, one of the twelve survivors of the Sea Surveyor.**

JOIN US: 7:30 PM - WEDNESDAY, September 21, 2022

*The Latham/Chester Store, 108 Main Street, Noank*

Noank's Capt. Adrian Lane and Ernest Maxwell were two of the twelve men aboard the R/V Sea Surveyor when she sank January 7, 1969. The crew survived the sudden sinking and a harrowing 26 hours in open water before being rescued by a Norwegian ore carrier. Learn all about their "unplanned maritime adventure" through the recollections of one of the twelve survivors, Walter Banzhaf.

The public is cordially invited. Refreshments will be served.

<http://www.noankhistoricalsociety.org>



## Noank Art Show Artist Spotlight—Dick and Peggy Traskos

*By Gretchen Feddericci*



Local photographer **Dick Traskos** says his images "attempt to capture special combinations of light, texture, reflections, and composition in nature." He focuses primarily on capturing these elements as they present themselves in landscapes, and his work often features maritime subjects. Animals, however, are also a favorite, and his photographs of them are often in turn reinterpreted by his wife, artist Peggy Traskos, who depicts them in oils or pastels.

Mr. Traskos says photography "runs in the family": he comes from a family of photo-enthusiasts, from those who worked for manufacturers of photographic chemicals to his mother, whose snapshots of the family and other subjects likely sparked his interest in the medium. It was not until Dick retired that he pursued photography in earnest, however. He found inspiration in the sights he encountered on vacations with Peggy and from drives along the meandering backroads of Connecticut.

Traskos has been an Elected Artist Member of the Mystic Museum of Art, and his photographs have been featured at the Connecticut Artists Exhibition at the Slater Museum, the Mystic Art Association, the Essex Art Association, and in the Fence Show, and a number of his images currently grace the walls of the Chelsea Groton Bank in Mystic.



**Peggy Traskos** is a local Mystic artist known for her pastel work—in particular, her highly popular portraits of animals. Her depictions of each creature give them personality and pathos that make her work especially engaging. She loves "the expressions or stances of different cows, goats, sheep and horses and [tries] to give them a connection to the viewer." Traskos also paints in oils, and her subjects include landscapes, seascapes, and still life compositions as well. Although she often creates from photographs taken by her husband, artist Dick Traskos, her pieces have a distinctively "plein air" feel.

Peggy has studied at the Lyman Allyn Museum, and she has trained closely with a number of local notable artists, such as Joanne Ballinger, Foster Caddell, Tim Mockler, and Christopher Zhang. After many years serving as an elementary school teacher and part-time library teacher, she now paints full time. She has been an Elected Artist Member of the Mystic Museum of Art, won an award at the 2019 Connecticut Pastel Show at the Southington Community Center, and her art has been featured in a variety of shows, such as the Connecticut Artists Exhibition at the Slater Museum, a group show at the Mystic Noank Library, a solo show at Barley Head Brewery. She often features in the Fence Show midsummer festival in Old Lyme.





## Selections from the NHS Photograph Collection

*By John Wilbur, NHS Historian*



NHS1989.107.010, gift of John and Betsy Hall

This image of Main Street enjoyed popularity on picture postcards. It is certainly no earlier than late autumn 1904, and no later than 1928, the years that the trolley, or more correctly, The Groton and Stonington Street Railway, was in business. Indeed, a trolley car (the actual trolley is the whip-like device through which the car gets electricity) is paused at the Waiting Room, which stood at the corner of Main Street and Ward Avenue. The trolley visible on the top of the car is in the lowered position. Power is being drawn through the trolley at the other end of the car, indicating this car came in from Mystic and is bound for Groton. Just out of frame to the right is the old Noank School, situated at what is now the Park. School children used to bang on the fence to get the attention of the Waiting Room attendant, who would then sell candy and/or ice cream over the fence to them.

The trolley tracks came into Noank over the northern end of West Cove on a low trestle, up Sylvan Street, across Main Street, and over a bridge and on to Elm Street (now Mosher Avenue) before turning north on

Elm. There was a passing siding on Sylvan Street, and cars would meet at Noank, one being held until the car bound in the opposite direction had passed. In this photo is an arch-roofed vehicle in the passing siding bearing the legend "Advertising Car," and below that "Hale's Studio, New London, Conn." Hale's Studio dealt with all things photographic, and opened a Mystic Branch in 1906.

The group of children on the south side of the street may be watching the photographer at work, or else building up the resolve to cross the rutted and muddy mess that is Noank's main thoroughfare, to get to school. Regardless of their immediate intentions, they are of use in refining the approximate date for this photo. Textile historian Susan Jerome offered the following: "The photo was taken much closer to 1904 than 1928. The children's outfits include a few clues, particularly the boy's oversized flat cap and the two striped stocking hats. On the other side of the street, two women walk along in skirts that reach to the ground. Their two hats are somewhat visible, so were probably on the

larger size but not too big, indicating a date of 1900 to about 1908.” So, most likely this dates from 1904-1908. Distressingly, there is an astonishing amount of paper trash strewn about near the children, no other historic photographs show a comparable mess.

Two hitching posts, presumably granite, attest to the supremacy of the horse as the primary means of conveyance about town. Noank’s streets were still unsealed (unpaved) up to at least the First World War. A small group of people are standing in the middle of the road near the intersection of Main and Sylvan Streets. Magnification reveals them to be looking upwards at something, but what? One can speculate just how novel the trolley was when this photograph was taken, could it be the inauguration of service? It’s a tempting thought, service between Groton and Mystic began on 19 December 1904.

Worthy of note is that every structure in this photograph still exists, even the Waiting Room, which was moved a few hundred yards to the north and west and is now a dwelling, just to the right of the Noank Service Center. Another tie-in with the past, and maybe a comfort to some, is the sidewalk on the south side of Main Street. It doesn’t appear to have changed one bit in the past 110 some-odd years. It is just as it was just as it is today.

### *Picturing Noank*



This September, NHS will be hosting a special exhibit of paintings of Noank and Mystic scenes from the collection of Jonathan Sproul which were recently shown in the “Picturing Mystic” exhibit at the Lyman Allyn Art Museum. Stay tuned for more details and information on purchasing tickets.

### Change of Address:

The Noank Historical Society has updated our email to a Gmail account. You can reach us at [noankhist@gmail.com](mailto:noankhist@gmail.com)

### Noank News from Days Gone By

#### *150 Years Ago...*

“R & J Palmer, of Noank, have nearly completed the three-masted schooner for Capt. Frank Myers, late of the Belle of the Bay. The same firm is building a schooner smack for Capt. Winthrop Douglass to go into Havana fishing this winter. They are also building a similar vessel for the same business for Capt. Isaac Worthington, of Mystic.”

-The Stonington Mirror, October 3, 1872

“Noank ladies still sensibly hold to croquet”

-The Stonington Mirror, October 10, 1872



Florence Fitzpatrick plays a game of croquet off Riverview Ave. in Noank roughly 50 years later, c. 1922.  
NHS1991.005.101, gift of Florence Fitzpatrick Johnson.

#### *100 Years Ago...*

“The largest lobster brought into port in many years was landed Tuesday by Capt. Walter Rathbun of the fishing boat ALDEN, who caught a 21 pound lobster in his otter trawl while dragging off Watch Hill. Yesterday Capt. Rathbun brought in another large one weighing 10 pounds, caught in the same place.”

-The Day, Aug. 10, 1922



*Apart from the giant lobsters in the sound, news from "The Day" was dominated by the goings-on at the Noank shipyard. In the fall of 1922, the Noank branch of the Groton Iron Works, where work had been slow since the end of WWI, was re-opened to the excitement of the entire village:*

"That the local plant of the Groton Iron Works, recently sold at auction to Jennie R. Morse, sister to Charles W. Morse is soon to renew operations seems to be an assured fact as alterations and changes, to make the plant suitable for lines of work other than have been carried on there, are already under way, a small force of men being at work.

Harry F. Morse has spent considerable time at the plant of late and it is understood that he was enthusiastic about the future of the plant as a boat storage yard as well as a shipbuilding plant. The plant will operate under the name of the Noank Shipyard, Inc., and will build, repair or store small boats, yachts and larger craft.

One or two sets of marine railways for the handling of the smaller boats will be put in while the larger railways, already there, are to be repaired and put into shape to take out large yachts, steamers, barges, etc. A new sign bearing the name of the plant has been put up at the entrance to the property and another large sign advertising the variety of work which will be done there has been erected facing the river where it may be seen by all passing craft.

The local shipyard, which has always been used for the construction and repair of large boats, is an ideal location for a plant such as is planned, there being a sufficient depth of water on either side of the property for basins for the storage of boats. There is plenty of land upon which to store boats of any size or description."

-The Day, August 11, 1922

"A few men have found employment at the local ship-

yard and it is reported that there will be considerable work there soon. A four masted schooner is on her way here to be hauled out on the marine railways for extensive repairs. At the present time two old US destroyers are on the railways being junked."

-The Day, Sep. 29, 1922

"The force at the shipyard is gradually being increased until there are about 20 employed there. The large four masted schooner that was towed here from Boston has been hauled out on the railways and the most of the men are working on her, getting ready to put on a new keel and do considerable other repair work."

-The Day, October 10, 1922

"The force of men at the local shipyard has been gradually increased until there are now about 35 men employed there. All are at work on the large schooner that is hauled out on the marine railways and it is expected that the repairs to the vessel will take several more weeks, with that number of men. A small yacht was hauled out and stored for the winter at the plant Saturday."

-The Day, October 23, 1922

"A large truck carrying a large round stick of native timber through the streets of the village enroute to the local shipyard yesterday was a sight that the townspeople have not witnessed in several years and the truck and its load were closely watched as they traveled through, not because the sight was unfamiliar, but rather because it served to recall the time when every day saw one or more of these same kind of trees from the nearby woods hauled into town to be worked up for use in the construction of vessels of many descriptions. The only noticeable difference was the carrier, which in other days was a lumber reach with two to eight horses as the motive power.

This stick of timber was for the local shipyard for use on the schooner that is on the marine railways for repairs, and was cut by F. Barnes of Mystic."

-The Day, October 25, 1922

The Sylvan Street Museum will be open to visitors and researchers Monday afternoons and by appointment throughout the fall. Please call us at 860-536-3021 or email us at [noankhist@gmail.com](mailto:noankhist@gmail.com) with any questions, or to set up a date and time.

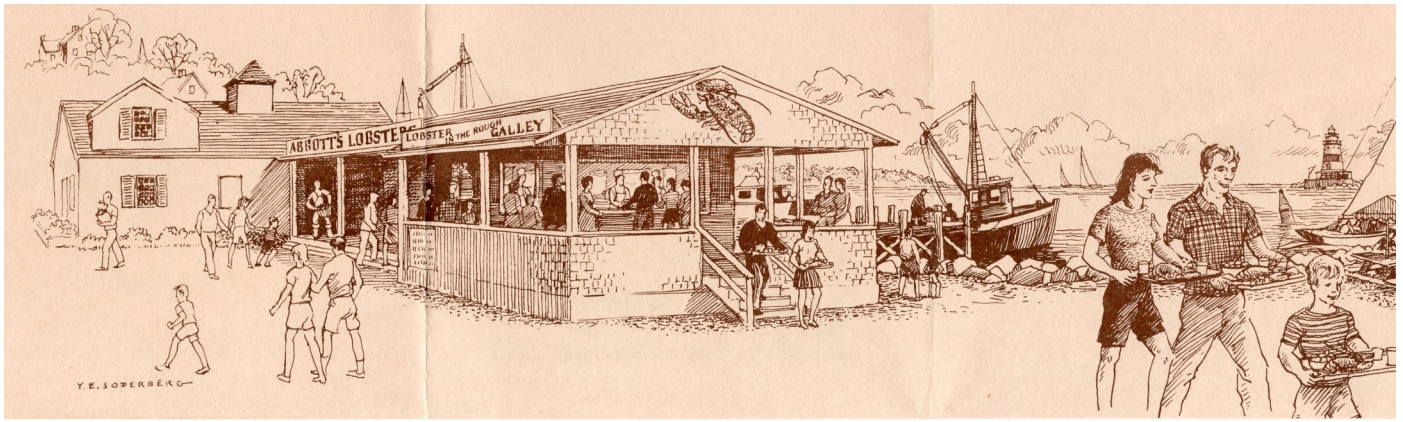


Illustration by Ynge Soderberg for a promotional pamphlet for Abbott's Lobster, published 1981

*50 years ago:*

### **Abbott Sends Lobster Feast to U.S. Diplomats in Vienna**

“Members of the U.S. diplomatic staff in Vienna, Austria sat down to an old-fashioned New England lobster dinner recently thanks to Ernest E. Abbott, owner of Abbott's Lobster Pound on Pearl Street.

Abbott, who spent a few weeks in the Austrian capital last winter, promised U.S. Ambassador John P. Humes the delicacy after meeting while on a Christmas shopping spree in one of Vienna's large department stores.

“We got to talking about New England and I told him my profession and I promised to send over a batch of lobsters with the trimmings,” Abbott said.

About May 10, Abbott said he received a phone call from a member of the Embassy's staff asking when the meal could be shipped overseas. “I never go back on my word and jumped at the chance to accommodate my earlier offer,” Abbott stated.

About two weeks ago, lobsters, clam chowder, bisques and other assorted salt-water delicacies were shipped to New York's Kennedy International Airport by Pilgrim Airlines to be transferred to a trans-Atlantic Pan

American Airlines flight to Vienna.

“We packaged the whole meal at 6:30 p.m. and it arrived by air freight in Vienna at 10:30 a.m. the next day.”

Most of the food was contained in cans but the lobsters were air freighted live to retain their freshness. Each lobster travelled 9,000 miles in a special shipping box containing a portable refrigeration unit, Abbott said.

The meal reportedly pleased all 27 members of the Embassy's diplomatic corps. “I received personal notes of compliment from the ambassador and several of the embassy attachés. I guess they really enjoyed the meal,” Abbott said.

Ambassador Humes, as this nation's chief representative in Vienna, has been instrumental in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), Abbott said. The diplomat has held the position as ambassador about three years since receiving his appointment from President Richard M. Nixon.

Abbott has operated the popular lobster pound for several years on the banks of the Mystic River. He is active in local politics and is a member of the Republican Town Council.”

-The Day, July 7, 1972

### *In Memoriam:*

Patti N. Andersen—1935-2022  
John Lee Matthews—1937-2022  
Theresa Rowley—1933-2022  
Brian D. Turley—1936-2022  
Mark Turner—1937-2022





### Noank Sea Scouts Memorialized in *Boy's Life* Magazine

75 years ago, *Boy's Life* magazine introduced a comic strip called "Scouts in Action," which shared true stories of heroism and service from scouts across the country. The very first edition, released June 1947, featured none other than the Noank Sea Scouts. The strip begins "On a late summer evening some years ago...near the port of Noank, Connecticut" and details the actions of 12 year old Carl Lagenbacher, Jr., Lloyd Brooks, Ken Hodgson, and their fellow scouts during the '38 Hurricane.

The boys battened down the hatches of Noank homes while the hurricane raged. In the days following the storm, the scouts worked with both local police and members of the Coast Guard to patrol the Noank coastline, guarding against looters, providing aid to the injured, clearing debris, salvaging boats and delivering telegrams. A published report from the Pequot Council recognized the Noank Sea Scouts for delivering over 2,000 telegrams, although the scrapbook for the Noank scouts claims 7,000 telegrams were delivered.

Many local scouts sprang to action during the storm, and provided assistance to their communities in the aftermath. *The Day* reported that 500 scouts of the Pequot Council, made up of troops from Stonington, Groton, Mystic, Noank, Niantic, Montville and Waterford, assisted with hurricane emergency services. The Stonington Sea Scouts also delivered telegrams and patrolled the coastline, while other scouts delivered supplies, chlorinated wells and helped search for missing persons. Local Girls Scouts delivered clean water and sandwiches throughout the area. What distinguished the Noank scouts in this instance was the fact that their scout leader, Carl Lagenbacher, Sr., was in New York when the storm hit. They organized themselves and got to work in the chaos of the storm without the leadership of their Skipper.



Above: page from the Sea Scout Scrapbook, 1982.005.001, gift of Etta Buddington, Ella Briggs and Roberta Butson.



Right: "Scouts in Action," by Bob Brent and Fred Kida, published June 1947.

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*If you have any questions, concerns, and/or articles to share in the Noank Ledger, please contact us at [Noankhist@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Noankhist@sbcglobal.net). If you have any questions or concerns regarding the mailing of the ledger, or address changes, please contact Elizabeth Boucher at P.O. Box 9454, Noank, CT 06340*