

Dastardly Deed Strands Schooner COURTNEY FORD

By J. Penelope Goforth

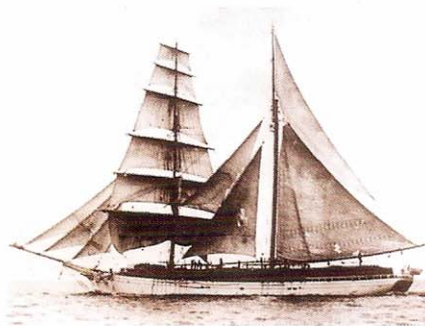


(Left) COURTNEY FORD in Killisnoo Harbor in Southeast Alaska, having delivered a load of lumber and supplies. She was fully loaded with “fish guano” from the local salmon and herring canneries. Outbound for San Francisco, this cargo was destined for the port of Honolulu to be used as fertilizer. (Photograph by Vincent I. Soboleff, Alaska Historical Society – Soboleff, #549-378.)

(Right) Such was the craftsmanship of Capt. Turner that despite the storms and wear on the wreck of the COURTNEY FORD, over 62 years later, Joe Armstrong (stationed at the FAA Cold Bay facility) took this photo of the bow of the ship, deeply embedded in the sands of Glen Island. (His photo was first published in Alaska Sportsman, September, 1964.)

Surrounded by colorful annual blooms, the iron kedge anchor of the schooner COURTNEY FORD now lies in state in a large flower pot at the entrance to city hall in downtown Anchorage, Alaska. How did the anchor come to rest in this unlikely anchorage, more than 20 years ago? The tragic tale is long forgotten by all but the saltiest Alaskans. It is a poignant story of sailor and ship, both in their prime, doomed by the act of a “dastardly miscreant”. The steadfastness of Seaman William Ode, and his devotion to duty as watchman of the stranded COURTNEY FORD, made national headlines in 1903.

Twenty-five to thirty-foot tides, as steep as those of the Bay of Fundy on the opposite side of the continent, scour out the shallow banks of glacial silt that surround the top of Cook Inlet. The deeper-draught vessels found a secure anchorage only in the central channel, hollowed out by the current of the Knik River fed by the Matanuska Glacier. Cargos of passengers and freight were offloaded on to flat-bottomed barges and lighters to the trading village of Knik,



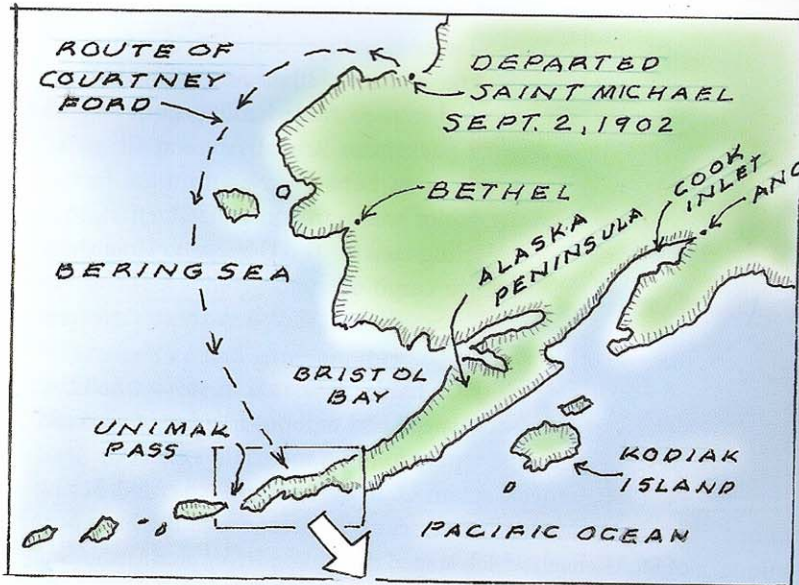
This view of COURTNEY FORD with a deck load of timber and crew most likely was taken either departing Puget Sound or arriving at San Francisco. (Jenny Bartlett's Sailing Rigs by the US Naval Institute Press, 2005.)

farther northeast toward the mouth of the Knik River or to the silted banks of Ship Creek. In time this practice gave the city of Anchorage its name — and likewise seemed an appropriate place for COURTNEY FORD's salvaged anchor to be displayed.

Shipwright Turner's Seaworthy Vessel

Like many ships sailing Alaskan waters in the late 19th century, COURTNEY FORD was designed and built by master shipwright Captain Matthew Turner at his shipyard in San Francisco Bay. An early pioneer in the northern cod

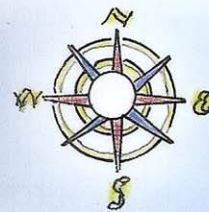
fishery, Captain Turner parlayed his knowledge of weather, currents, and ship handling in those stormy waters into crafting vessels made to survive even the tempests of the North Pacific.¹ Turner's passion was sailing yachts; sleek-hulled boats built for speed. He was wildly successful in combining the grace and speed of a yachting craft with the yeoman elements of the workboat. The brigantine (later schooner) COURTNEY FORD, launched in 1883, was such a vessel.²



SEE LARGE SCALE MAP BELOW

"THE KUDIAKOF ISLANDS ARE LOW AND GRASS COVERED; THE WRECK OF AN OLD SCHOONER IS A CONSPICUOUS LANDMARK ON THE SOUTHWESTEALY ISLAND."*

FROM U.S. COAST PILOT VOLUME 9, 1904 EDITION



GLEN ISLAND & WRECK OF COURTNEY FORD SEPT. 7, 1902

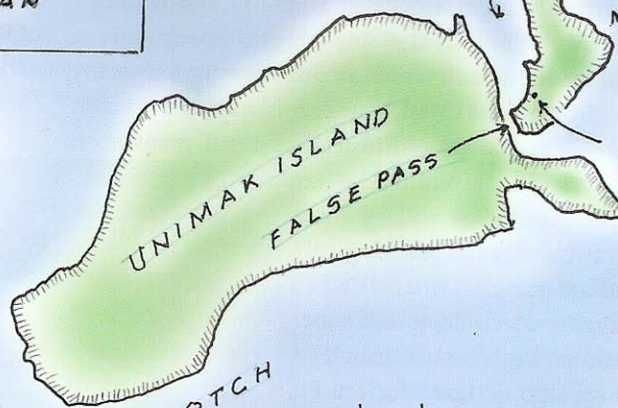
AMAK ISLAND
IZEMBEK BAY
BECHEVIN BAY



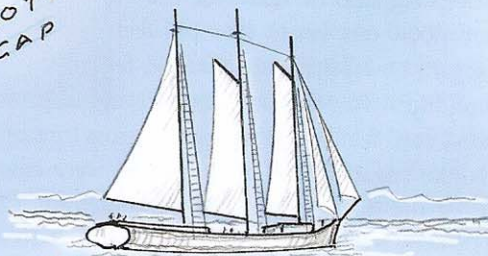
GOLD BAY

MORZHVOI BAY

VILLAGE OF MORZHVOI



UNIMAK PASS



COURTNEY FORD APPROACHING BREAKERS ON GLEN ISLAND SEPT 7, 1902

JPG / RRB 2015

The final journey of COURTNEY FORD. *

Note: The site and the remains of the schooner's hull were nominated for the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 by the National Park Service.

“...small pieces of iron had been inserted into the space around the compass; completely distorting the magnetic function of the compass — giving inaccurate readings. Loyal to his crew, Captain Burgeson laid it to ‘the dastardly work of some miscreant’ who had it in for the ship or the crew...”

Built of premium-grained Puget Sound fir and trimmed with California redwood, the ship sported many unique designs that made Turner’s vessels among the most seaworthy of all those on the West Coast. Turner incorporated his own creation of the Bermudan sail instead of a gaff spanker on the mainmast and a conventional — course, double topsails, topgallant, royal, and skysail — foremast. Just below the bowsprit, a billet head of elegantly carved scrollwork proclaimed her name, COURTNEY FORD. The ship sported a capacious cargo deck along with superb maneuverability in squally weather. Both these attributes were highly desirable qualities in a ship destined for the Pacific trade. The two-masted 400+ ton vessel was 146-feet long (not including the elegant bowsprit), a spacious 34-feet in the beam, and a 12-foot draft.³ This translates into a cargo capacity of a half-million board feet of lumber, or 300 gross tons of break-bulk goods like sugar, wheat, and fruit; all were common trade goods of the day. Within days of launching, COURTNEY FORD, with a full complement including 8-10 officers and crew set sail for her first merchant voyage.

Vessel’s Successful Career for Several Years

“Shipping Intelligence,” reported in the newspapers at ports of call, noted the movements of COURTNEY FORD’s busy career hauling fruit from Suva and Fiji to San Francisco; dry goods and materials to Tahiti — and sugar cane from Honolulu, Hawaii. She chartered out on her mainstay coastwise trade: hauling lumber on numerous voyages from the Puget Sound sawmill towns to growing towns and cities all along the Pacific seaboard from Alaska to California.

The 1880s were a boom time for America’s western region, especially Alaska. In 1887, the *Morning Oregonian* carried a detailed article on the front page of the March 26th edition about the Scandinavian Packing Company of Astoria. They chartered COURTNEY FORD to transport \$50,000 of

canning equipment, machinery, and construction supplies to build their new cannery in the burgeoning salmon-packing industry in Alaska. In a follow-up article the next day, again on the front page, the *Oregonian* reported that about 100 men — 30 construction workers and cannery supervisors, along with 70 Chinamen — would be shipped up with the supplies.⁴

The *Alaska Sportsman* noted that for many seasons “she was in the canned salmon trade hauling outfits north and taking back the pack from Bristol Bay and Chignik.” She made coastwise runs between Nanaimo in British Columbia and the major westward port of Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians, hauling coal for the U.S. Navy. Then there was also the lucrative cargo of guano (rendered-herring-meal fertilizer) from Southeast Alaska canneries to fruit plantations in Hawaii.⁵

COURTNEY FORD made her name in the competitive shipping trade where speed and superior maneuvering could make or break the reputation of a merchant vessel. On June 14, 1899, under Captain O. B. Lindholm, she skirted Bering Sea ice to be the first vessel of the season into the busy port of St. Michael, which staged the Yukon River gold rush. “She arrived coated with ice from trucks to waterline,” crowed the “Shipping Intelligence” column of the newspaper.⁶

The brigantine COURTNEY FORD had her share of hard knocks, grazing rocks in uncharted Alaskan waters and being beaten up in North Pacific storms. In 1901, northbound out of the Puget Sound port of Everett for Unga Island, the vessel was laden with gold-mining supplies and equipment for the Apollo Mine. The squally North Pacific autumn weather deteriorated a few hundred miles south of Kodiak, where she sailed into the maw of a typhoon in the Gulf of Alaska. “Shipping Intelligence” in the *San Francisco Call* of October 1st, reported that she was “bespoken” (sighted and hailed by a passing ship) by the U.S. Army Transport ROSECRANS, 17 days out of Port Townsend with “foretopmast and foretopgallant mast carried away.” Enough sail remained for her to limp into Unga, effect repairs and get under way again. No big deal for the stalwart ship and her seasoned crew.

Changed into a Schooner with a Young Captain

She was subsequently re-rigged as a three-masted baldheaded (no topsails) schooner under the command of 25-year-old Captain Martin E. Burgeson.⁷ “When I took her with all new masts and sails, with a new donkey engine, with messenger chain to hoist anchor and to hoist any kind of cargo, she was tiptop in every way, and I was very proud of it,” he said. “As for sailing, it seemed to be the best in every way of any ship I was ever on.”⁸

The following year, however, COURTNEY FORD was headed south in ballast out of St Michael in Northwestern Alaska bound for Port Townsend, returning from an unexpected late voyage. (After their previous return from St. Michael to Port Townsend, which was to be their last trip of that season; Burgeson was ordered out of Port Townsend by the ship’s owner, the Pacific Shipping Company of San

Francisco, to rescue the cargo from another of the company's fleet that had been dismasted just off Cape Flattery.) It had been a dicey decision to sail back to St. Michael in October, so late in the northern sailing season. However, Burgeson had a financial share in the ship as well as a secure career with the company at stake. He later stated "... the insurance company had raised the insurance 20 percent for the late trip." (Apparently because the insurance rate had gone up, they decided to forego the coverage.) But he added "... being that I had been to Alaska so many times, I would take my chances to go."⁹

Difficulty with Navigational Sightings

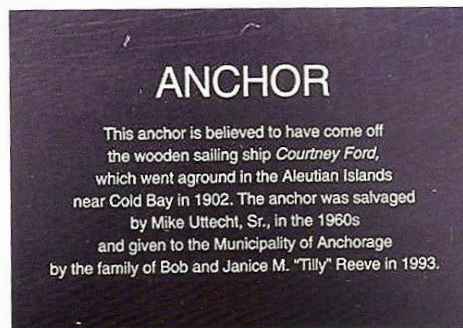
All seemed to go well until the beginning of their return trip from St. Michael. This time, the compass headings had been squirrely, at odds with the daily navigational sightings. Autumn storms of sleet, gale-force winds, and running-high seas beset COURTNEY FORD. Captain Burgeson sailing with a light crew of eight, and one "workaway," had all made numerous trips across the Bering and North Pacific — sailing in good weather and bad. But as they approached the southern Bering Sea islands, this stormy trip found them literally lost in the pernicious fog common to the Aleutian Islands in summer and fall. "It is a bad place to be in the Bering Sea, especially when getting through Unimak Pass which isn't very wide," Burgeson noted. The lookout reported he had spotted Akun Island, a dark speck off the starboard midship. Thinking the fairway through Unimak Pass was off the port bow, Captain Burgeson ordered the sails let out for a bit more speed. Still, he would have noticed the lack of the immense current swelling in the narrower waters of the pass.

More Trouble

The starless evening dusk settled into darkness quickly, compounded by fog swirling in squally breezes out of the west. Around 8 P.M., they heard the roar of breakers, before sighting a faint white line of foaming waves through the fog,



Today the anchor of the schooner COURTNEY FORD rests in state amongst the flowers at the south entrance to the Municipality of Anchorage.



COURTNEY FORD plaque: This plaque describes how the City of Anchorage came to be the resting place of COURTNEY FORD's anchor.

(Photographs courtesy J. P. Goforth, 2014.)

completely distorting the magnetic function of the compass — giving inaccurate readings. Loyal to his crew, Captain Burgeson laid it to "the dastardly work of some miscreant" who had it in for the ship or the crew while they were at St. Michael.¹²

"We had drifted eastward about forty-five miles with some sails up and the others closed, and rested on a sand spit a mile or two off shore," he reckoned. "The next morning we were high and dry, one-half mile from the water after the tide was out. We waited for an easterly wind at high tide, and with the help of a kedge anchor to help pull her out of the bed of sand ... we could not budge her; the holding ground was of fine sand and the anchor would not hold; just slipped right in. So with the high seas running, she would raise up and down

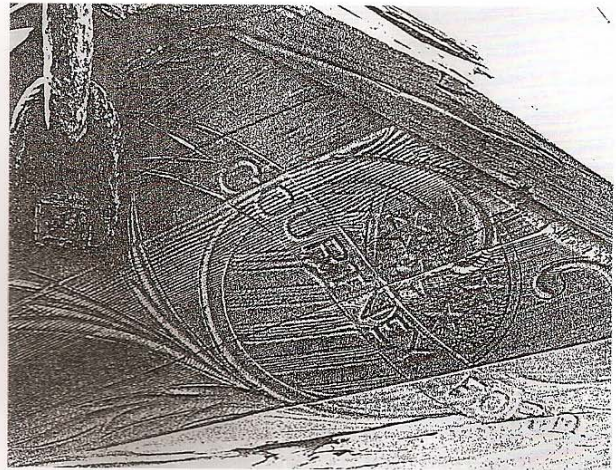
dead ahead. Startled, Burgeson bellowed "WEAR SHIP! WEAR SHIP!" (Turn her away from the wind) to avoid the shore ahead. But before the crew reached the rigging, the schooner COURTNEY FORD — slammed by a fierce williwaw — ran sharply up through the breakers and stranded herself high on the beach.¹⁰ The impact flung two men off the deck to their deaths in the pounding waves.¹¹ With each surge of the storm-whipped waves, the stern rose and fell — digging the bow of COURTNEY FORD deeper into the sandy beach. In shock, at both the loss of their fellow seamen and the impact of grounding, the men secured her as best they could in the dark. Burgeson later claimed he was dumbfounded by the event. No way should there have been a beach, let alone a sandy beach on their plotted course.

Looking for a Solution to their Problem

Captain Burgeson spent the rest of the night scrutinizing the course calculations on the chart, while the mates tried re-rigging the sails in vain to release the ship from the shore. Finally, suspecting the compass, Burgeson tore apart the binnacle (the housing for the compass that sits in front of the ship's wheel). To his disgust and rage, he discovered small pieces of iron had been inserted into the space around the compass;



Front page article in the San Francisco Call of July 3, 1903 told the saga of sailor William Ode who was left to serve as watchman on the ill-fated COURTNEY FORD. (The photo used in the newspaper may have been an earlier one, when she was rigged as a brigantine vessel rather than a schooner.)



The carved bilge head of COURTNEY FORD, a Captain Matthew Turner ship. (Robert Shaw, State Historical Preservation Office photo).

so hard that the water came in to a great extent and went out at each low tide.”

Emergency Measures and Further Trouble

Fearing the ship might breakup in the foul weather, as the next morning dawned grey and raining, the captain ordered the crew to set up camp on the narrow spit of beach. For a week, a watch was maintained, as they hoped to spot a passing ship for assistance. By now, Captain Burgeson and First Mate C.N. Sanderson had reckoned that the beach they were on was actually the long sandy spit-like Glen Island; the southern-most of the Kudiakof Islands, fronting Izembek Lagoon on the Alaska Peninsula. Therefore, the Aleut village of Morshovoi should be somewhere nearby.¹³ Traffic out of the busy post-salmon season of Bristol Bay might come close enough to Amak Island in the distance to see their signals. Burgeson dispatched his first mate and three other crewmen in the ship’s skiff to find a way through False Pass and search for the Aleut village.

“It is hard for me to tell of the hardships we went through the next three weeks before we got over to Dutch Harbor — a distance of around ninety miles, maybe more.” Burgeson recalled. The second of the tragic loss of life happened when the skiff capsized in the surf, drowning three more seamen — among them C. Carlson (carpenter) and Mate Sanderson, plus one more unidentified sailor.¹⁴ The fourth remaining seaman was found wandering not far from a trading post in a village run by a man named Bensen. The seaman directed Bensen back to the wreck site, where he could pick up the rest of the crew and take them back to his village.

Seaman Ode Left Behind When Crew Leaves

Captain Burgeson assigned Seaman William Ode to remain with COURTNEY FORD, while he and the remaining

crew went for help. Back in that day, it was not an unusual practice to leave a watchman at a presumably salvageable wreck. In his log, Ode himself speculated that should things get really bad, Burgeson would expect that he would make for Morshovoi Village.

“He [Bensen] took us all over to Dutch Harbor; charged me \$50 for the trip,” Burgeson related. While they were there, the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service vessel MANNING put in for fuel before heading south for the season. Burgeson reported his predicament to the captain of MANNING. “It didn’t seem to interest him very much,” he later said. Burgeson also asked for passage south, to which the captain replied that was possible, but not for another week when the cutter MANNING would head south. The next day, however, the last steamer of the season from Nome, CENTENNIAL, put in at Dutch Harbor as well. “It had been in a bad storm, too; most of the window panes in the pilot house were broken out. We all got our passage free to Seattle on it,” Burgeson wrote. On October 23, 1902, Burgeson and his four remaining crewmen arrived at Seattle. He then took the train to San Francisco “to settle up with the owners, stayed a week there.” (Apparently he also left the employ of Pacific Shipping as he says he booked a passage on LINDOUR to Aberdeen, Washington, and made a few more trips on various vessels as a relief captain; then ended his sea-faring career.)¹⁵ Nothing was heard of the schooner COURTNEY FORD or Seaman Ode until eight months later.

What happened over the following months in the rescue effort is about as foggy as the night they stranded. Some news reports say the owner of registry was C. L. Hooper & Co. of San Francisco. But Burgeson wrote in the *U.S. Customs Report of Casualty* that the owner was the Pacific Shipping Co. of San Francisco. More importantly, he stated that the

vessel was not insured.¹⁶ This fact had serious consequences. Because COURTNEY FORD was in ballast on this voyage, she had no cargo worth salvaging. Although the vessel was later valued at \$19,000, of which Burgeson had a 50% share, it is curious that neither he nor Pacific Shipping attempted a salvage effort. Burgeson noted that COURTNEY FORD had recently been re-rigged and was in excellent condition when he took command.¹⁷ Because she was uninsured, there would be no payout of her value as a vessel. With nothing to be gained financially, it appears that no efforts were made to rescue the vessel or Seaman Ode that winter of 1902-3.

Eventual Discovery of Seaman Ode's Logbook

What is known for sure is the story of how Ode made it to the end. As duty required of the watchman, he kept a logbook with daily entries, beginning with the departure of his crewmates and Burgeson.

October 4, 1902—"Boys left at 10 A.M. Took my stuff back to the schooner and pumped her out. Wind northwest."¹⁸

Captain Lundquist of the Alaska Commercial Company steamer ST PAUL, southbound out of Nome, arrived in Seattle in late June or early July of 1903, with the log William Ode had kept while he was alone, serving as watchman over the vessel. Some reports state he received it from the captain of a revenue cutter which came across the wreck earlier that spring. How the logbook came into Lundquist's possession, or where it disappeared after being made public, is unknown.

The news reports of Seaman Ode's log rocked the country, making the front pages and the headlines of the *New York Times* in addition to some Oregon and California papers. The log showed William Ode to be a resourceful and practical seaman, filled with confidence.

Watchman Ode's Dedication to Duty

October 5—"Found the skiff. Pumped her out. Shot one goose. Took canvas on board. Made sail for skiff from bed sheet."

He noted the daily tasks of pumping out the ship, gathering driftwood for fires, finding and carrying back fresh water, shooting ducks for food. Battered by winter winds of hurricane force barely a week after beginning his watch, the ship's holds flooded. He notes day after day having to pump her out. Still, in apparently good spirits, on **October 16**, he also duly writes of a total eclipse of the moon. The following day, on **October 17**, he notes the visit of two "Esquimaux," from whom he may have gotten directions on getting to the village of Morzhovoi. This encounter may have influenced his later decisions as the Aleutian weather took its toll.

On **October 27**, the force of the waves and williwaws eventually shoved COURTNEY FORD over on her beam ends. Seaman Ode's makeshift shelter of ship's timbers

A Winter Night in Port Armstrong

By Captain Olaf H. Hansen

We are anchored tonight in a sheltered cove,
And I sit in the wheelhouse and dream:
Watching the hurrying-scurrying snow,
As it flits past the anchor lights' gleam.

The storm-king is shrieking through rigging and masts,
And the Willi-wau's thundering squalls,
Sweeping down from the mountains in furious blasts,
My soul from its hiding place calls.

The slumbering Viking awakens once more,
And I feel like a king on his throne;
That is something a number of people ashore,
Quite likely, never have known.

Impatiently tugging away at her chain,
How she reels to the swirls in the bay;
Tomorrow, old girl, we will try it again,
But tonight you are come here to stay!

The blessing God sent me much brighter appear,
Now passing in silent review,
Also the fact I am anchored in here,
Instead of out yonder, hove to.

And my thoughts wander homewards far over the sea
To my dear Sweetheart and wife,
Where fain I would linger but that cannot be,
For such is a Sea Captain's life.

*Reprinted from Capt. Lloyd H. Bayers, MS 10,
Alaska State Library, Juneau, Alaska.*

and sails washed overboard. He had maintained his watch then for a grueling three weeks. Provisions likely ruined by seawater, he writes of a day trip to Izembek Lagoon to hunt ducks. It began to snow. It continued to blow. Into the sixth week of his ordeal, he noted the ship's hull had deteriorated, constantly taking on water. He could pump her out no more.

November 22—"Terrible wind. Made up mind to leave." Two more days pass as his resolve took shape. He outfitted the skiff and braved the surf.

November 24—"Left schooner. Came about six miles away from schooner and at 5 P.M., was swamped by breakers. Could not return, as beach was too steep."

Salvaging the Ship’s Anchor and Final Tribute to Seaman William Ode

Sixty years later, the timbers of COURTNEY FORD were still visible on Glen Island. Such was the strength of her build — that despite over a half century at the mercy of the wind and waves — a good deal of the hull, bowsprit, and even several upright feet of her mainmast remained imprisoned in the sand dunes. Joe Armstrong of the Federal Aviation Agency, who was stationed at Thornbrough Air Force Base near Cold Bay in 1963, brought back an amazing photograph of the aging but still recognizable hull. From the photograph, it would appear the ship CARRIE AND ANNIE didn’t salvage very much — not even the ship’s anchor.

That glory fell to Cold Bay resident Mike Uttecht, Sr., who visited the wreck, which was not far from one of his hunting camps. Mike was a local Aleut bear guide and hunter. He salvaged the anchor and displayed it not far from the Cold Bay airport. He told a good story about the vessel COURTNEY FORD, probably cadging many a drink and dinner in the Volcano Room, a well-known watering place for weathered-in travelers.

Later, when Mike passed, Bob and Tilley Reeve “inherited” the anchor. The Reeves who began and operated the legendary Reeve Aleutian Airways for many years, had terminals in Cold Bay, Dutch Harbor, and several other Aleutian ports. Recognizing its place in Alaska maritime history, the Reeve family eventually brought the anchor to Anchorage. They presented it to the municipality in 1993. The city installed it prominently by the south entrance. It is a fitting tribute to the dedication to duty of Seaman William Ode. 📍

Bibliography

- U.S. Coast Guard. Record of Movements: Vessels of the United States Coast Guard: 1790 - December 31, 1933, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1934; (1989 reprint).
- U.S. Customs, Department of the Treasury, U.S. Coast Guard. *Report of Casualty, Burgeson*. San Francisco, Calif., 1902.
- Newell, Gordon, Ed. *The H. W. McCurdy Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1966.
- Recollections of Martin E. Burgeson*, Shipwreck Files, Michael Burwell, Editor, Bureau of Minerals Management, Department of the Interior, correspondence files. 2009.
- Marine Digest*, Seattle, Wash., May 4, 1957.
- San Francisco Call*, San Francisco, Calif., 1903.
- The Constitution*, Atlanta, Georgia, 1903.
- Oakland Tribune*, Oakland, Calif., 1903.
- Port Townsend Leader*, Port Townsend, Wash., 1903.
- Morning Oregonian*, Portland, Ore., 1903.
- Alaska Sportsman*, Anchorage, Alaska, 1964.

Endnotes

- 1 Turner papers J. Porter Shaw Library, San Francisco, Calif.
- 2 Originally built as a skysail brigantine, a North Pacific storm that dismasted the COURTNEY FORD in 1901 caused her to be re-rigged as a three-masted schooner. According to *H. W. McCurdy Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*.
- 3 *U.S. Customs Report of Casualty* filed at San Francisco, Calif., 1902, page 1.
- 4 *Morning Oregonian*, March 30, 1887, page 1.

- 5 *Alaska Sportsman*, September 1964, page 10.
- 6 “Trucks” were caps situated on the very tops of the ships’ lower masts. One can only imagine the spectacle of a sailing ship in full rig with every line, sail, and bulkhead sheathed in ice.
- 7 In 1955 Burgeson wrote his recollections as a sailing man, including the first and only eyewitness recounting of the last voyage of the schooner COURTNEY FORD; *Recollections of Martin E. Burgeson*, page 3.
- 8 *Recollections*, op. cit.
- 9 *Recollections*, op. cit.
- 10 *Port Townsend Leader*, Port Townsend, Wash., October 24, 1902, page 4.
- 11 Although this dreadful fact is reported in many accounts, there is no mention of the names of these reputedly drowned men. And Burgeson does not mention any casualties upon striking the beach at Glen Island.
- 12 *San Francisco Call*, July 3, 1903.
- 13 Although the media of the day and even Seaman Ode sometimes referred to the village as Moravia, it was actually named by the Russians “Morzhovoi” — but was also called Morshovoi or Morshovia. (The village of 17 would have been on Burgeson’s chart.)
- 14 *Oakland Tribune*, October 23, 1902. The *Port Townsend Leader* story states that three men were drowned when the skiff swamped and does not mention the loss of life when the ship ran aground.
- 15 *Recollections*, op. cit.
- 16 *U.S. Customs Report*, op. cit. «
- 17 *U.S. Customs Report*, op. cit.
- 18 *San Francisco Call*, op. cit.
- 19 *The Constitution*, Atlanta, Georgia, July 4, 1903.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: J. PENNELOPE GOFORTH

Alaskan author J. Penelope Goforth (shown here with the cat “SeaLegs” who sailed with the author for many years) has traveled the Bering Sea coastline from Adak in the Aleutian Islands, the Pribilof Islands, to Nome and Kotzebue in the Far North. She has been a crabber on the Bering Sea and been around Admiralty Island in a sailboat race. She lived aboard her own vessel in Juneau

and Ketchikan in Southeast Alaska. The daughter of a merchant mariner, granddaughter of an Alaskan halibut fisherman, she counts among her ancestors many shipmasters and captains back to the independent Channel Island of Jersey. Her current home port, with the cat “Seitseman”, is Anchorage, on Cook Inlet, Alaska. As a photographer, journalist, writer/editor and speaker Penelope has enjoyed doing extensive research on Alaska maritime history topics and she has been widely published. Her first article for *The Sea Chest* was in March 2012.