

R. Stackpole

**ACTS OF THE APOSTLES CHAPTER xxvii**

**As a survivor of the wreck of the Nove Sotian schooner SNOW MAIDEN in late November 1955, I have a deep appreciation for those who go down to the sea, and for those who in times of crisis maintain the best practices of seamanship. My father often told the story of a mate –who traditionally kept the ship’s log ; the official record of the voyage. Apparently, while ashore at the outset of a whaling cruise, the mate had over indulged in what was known as , “Old Barbados Particular,” which was very un-Quakerly. Upon reviving the next day, the mate was shocked to discover that the captain had written at the end of the previous day’s log-entry, “THE MATE WAS DRUNK TODAY. “**

**Shocked and dismayed, the mate approached the captain and asked why this mark against his character had been recorded. The captain replied: Well, its true, isn’t it? ? The mate admitted it to be true. Well, said the captain, “So it stands.” One week later the captain happened to review the log book, which was his privilege, and noted with horror that his first officer had entered the following notation at the end of six consecutive log entries, “The Captain was sober today. Infuriated, the shipmaster asked why this entry was made, to which the mate replied, “Well its true isn’t it Sir,” to which the old man bellowed, “you know it’s true.” “Well, said the mate, “So it stands.”**

**This story does not begin to infer that Saint Paul had any such problem prior to his shipwreck as found in the Book of Acts, yet some of the crew of sailors and centurians hove-to under the island of Clauda, might have exhibited faults of their**

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**own. Yet, we learn in Luke's account that it was owing to Paul's strength of faith that one of the most famous shipwreck in history was recorded.**

**Although some scholars might suggest that Paul was no sailor or that the apostolic narrator told it wrong. As a maritime historian I wish to underscore the known fact that Paul was an experienced sailor who had traveled much of the Mediterranean.**

**And it should be noted that was the victim of a shipwreck three times. Paul, as we should know, was a man of enormous courage and force of character. And to me it is not surprising that in a time of crisis, as Luke's vivid narrative makes clear, Paul took virtual command of the ship on which he was officially a prisoner and destined to be delivered under guard to the Emperor in Rome.**

**Captain John Codman , a classically educated master mariner from Boston decided to offer his own version of Paul's shipwreck in the mid-1860's.. He believed that through his salty rendition fellow sailors would fully appreciate the story.**

**Codman's translation of Chapter 27 from the Book of Acts was printed in the Boston TRANSCRIPT and reads as follows:**

**8. Hauling upon a taut bowline, so that we just passed to windward of it, we ran into East Haven, not far from Lasea.**

**9. Now, d'ye see, we had made a long voyage of it altogether, and as it looked squally ahead and there were signs of bad weather, Paul called all hands aft and says he –**

**10. Shipmates, this looks like a bad business, and if we keep on it looks to me that the ship and cargo will come to grief, and maybe we will lose a number of our mess.**

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**11. Now getting under the lee of Clauda, we had hard work to get alongside the boat we had been towing.**

**17. But they finally hoisted her up to the davits and passed a belly lashing around the old ship to thrap her together. And then we got out of the shoal water, having clewed up and furled everything, and let her run for it under bare poles.**

**18. Coming on to blow harder and a heavy sea on the next day, they hove overboard some of the cargo.**

**19. Next twenty four hours coming in hard gales and sea increasing, all hands and passengers turned to and hove overboard all the gear lying about decks..**

**20. Weather so thick we could not get a meridian altitude of the sun nor a lunar observation for several days. The Gale is still continuing.**

**21. in the meantime, Paul had not given any more advice, but now called the officers together and said, "Well gentlemen, you had better have taken my advice and laid at anchor at Crete and then it would not have been a case of general average.**

**22. Keep a stiff upper lip, and believe me now when I tell you that whatever may happen to the ship, all hands will be saved.**

**23. For the Angel of the Lord stood alongside my bunk tonight.**

**24. And said, "Don't be afraid. You are bound to get to Caesar, and on your account the whole crew and all the passengers will be taken care of.**

**25. So, gentlemen, don't give up the ship yet, for I believe the Lord will do what he said."**

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**Indeed, it was on the fourteenth day of their travail that Paul urged everyone to take meat , in order to keep up their strength; and he also took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all. Those assembled passengers and crew were reported to be two hundred and sixteen souls. At Saint Paul's Bay on the island of Malta, visitors regularly visit the site of St. Paul's shipwreck.**

**I believe that it was through the faith and leadership of Paul that the lives of shipboard prisoners were saved. From there the beloved saint continued his journey toward Rome and his eventual destiny.**

**Sixty-one years ago, when I was rescued with other crew members from the wreck of the schooner SNOW MAIDEN of Cohasset, Massachusetts, I had no idea that I might have been guided safely ashore at Plymouth by the spirit of my ancestor Thomas Rogers who, while aboard the MAYFLOWER in 1620, signed the famous "compact" that bound our English ancestors to a new homeland called appropriately, NEW ENGLAND.**

**It was through the faith of those separatist Christians, who also survived a dreadful storm while crossing the Atlantic, that we enjoy our Christian heritage today, Amen.**