

- November 23, 1967 -

ARCTIC EXPLORER Donald MacMillan is not a man to indulge in captious criticism but when he saw the image of his beloved schooner Bowdoin in a Channel 4 documentary recently — it was the Admiral's 93d birthday — he was "shocked, speechless and saddened," his wife Miriam, said. Neglect of the Bowdoin during the last three years at Mystic, Connecticut, where it has been berthed as an historic vessel, had done more damage to the famous schooner than 45 years of buffeting by Arctic seas and ice, Admiral MacMillan commented. When the Bowdoin was placed in the Mystic Museum in 1959, Mrs. MacMillan said, survey men went over her from bow to stern and found her in sound condition, good for many years. The MacMillans last saw the Bowdoin two years ago and even then were shocked at what neglect had done to it. Their shock then was nothing, however, Mrs. MacMillan said, to the blow they received from the televised picture of their beloved schooner. "You can't do that to a wooden ship," Mrs. MacMillan declared. "The schooner was down to a mere hulk, with masts down and holes in the deck, rotting away. We worked hard to have it placed in the museum because we thought it would be enshrined and preserved for generations." An estimate for restoring the Bowdoin was set at \$250,000 and the schooner, it was said, would have to be taken to a shipyard for the restoration. "We hope enough interest can be generated," the wife of the explorer said, "to provide the funds to bring the Bowdoin back to life."

-December 28, 1967

Denies Charges Bowdoin Neglected

"We have never received any state or federal aid but we are looking into that to find out what agencies have funds that might be given to us."

This was the reply of Director Waldo C. Johnston of the historic Mystic Seaport to the criticism of Admiral (ret.) Donald B. MacMillan of neglect of the famed schooner Bowdoin, acquired by the Mystic Seaport in 1959, and which the explorer charged had been allowed to fall into decay for lack of care.

Director Johnston denied that the Bowdoin had suffered major neglect.

Seeing on a television documentary last month his beloved schooner which he had sailed on more than a score of Arctic voyages, the explorer declared himself "shocked" at its condition. In the opinion of Admiral and Mrs. MacMillan, the Bowdoin was no more than a shabby ghost of its former self.

Mr. Johnston replied to the MacMillan charges, "We have done work on her over the years but perhaps not enough because of the financial difficulties involved."

The Seaport director said the

amount of money available for restoration of all the major ships in the care was limited to income derived from tourists and from donations from members of the Mystic Seaport Association.

Mr. Johnston asserted that the Bowdoin actually required restoration when she came into possession of the Mystic Seaport. The Seaport, he said, also houses five other major ships, numerous vessels and a reconstructed whaling village.

The Bowdoin, especially built for Arctic exploration, has been navigated by the Provincetown explorer through ice and Arctic storms, with its famed skipper, known to seamen as "Lucky Mac," successfully bringing her home after each perilous mission.

The Admiral and Mrs. MacMillan, after seeing the deteriorated Bowdoin on the television documentary, had declared that experts went over the ship before it was acquired by the Mystic Seaport and that they had pronounced the vessel thoroughly sound and good for many years.

The MacMillans have said that restoration of the ship from its present condition would require more than \$200,000, according to professional estimates. The marine experts had also said it would be necessary to remove the vessel from its present berth to a shipyard for the necessary work.

- April 25, 1968 -

ADMIRAL DONALD MACMILLAN'S schooner Bowdoin that took him on more than a score of Arctic voyages and shared the fame of the explorer himself, passed through the Cape Cod Canal last Friday en route to her final home in Camden, Maine. "Mac" himself and Miriam MacMillan watched their beloved schooner transit the canal in tow of the vessel Magnum II, owned by Renson Kelly of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, who donated the use of his ship for the job. The Bowdoin, enshrined at Mystic Seaport, Connecticut, for the past nine years, has been purchased by the Schooner Bowdoin Associates, headed by Dr. Edward Morse, president, and Dr. Peter Rand, vice-president, both of whom made several voyages to the Far North with Admiral MacMillan as members of the Bowdoin crew. In Camden the vessel will be reconditioned and made a museum and memorial to the Provincetown explorer.

-Feb. 13, 1969

MacMillan Schooner Getting Renovation

The MacMillan schooner Bowdoin, veteran of the Arctic ice fields, now rests at her berth in Camden Harbor, Maine, but the valiant ship is by no means sinking into decay.

On the contrary, workmen are busy at the considerable task of replacing deteriorated timbers and otherwise repairing the damage that can come to a wooden ship when she's out of action although in need of continuing care.

The Bowdoin is undergoing a renovation that promises to see her restored to her former sleekness — when the sturdy vessel, under the hand of her famous skipper, returned safely again and again from the storms and hazards of the Far North. And no one is happier than "Mac" himself (Rear Admiral Donald B. MacMillan ret.) that the Bowdoin is in such loving hands.

The Bowdoin Associates, a non-profit group which includes a number of men who once sailed in the schooner with the explorer, has taken over responsibility for the preservation of the famed vessel. The Bowdoin, when restored, will be part of a marine museum complex in Camden Harbor.

Old Friends Of The Schooner

Dr. Edward Morse of Camden, a surgeon, is president of the Bowdoin Associates. He was one of the many carefully chosen college youth whose abilities and character qualified them to sail with Donald MacMillan on voyages that entailed both seamanship and scientific investigations.

They came from across the country, many of them now distinguished in their chosen fields, for a reunion with their former skipper when the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum was dedicated at Bowdoin College, the

explorer's alma mater. And they rallied to the Bowdoin when the brave, old schooner needed friends.

Dr. Morse is married to the former Helga Knudsen, virtually a daughter to the MacMillans, who lived with them for 10 years and whom they sent to Oberlin College, from which she was graduated. Her father, a Dane, was District Manager for many years in Greenland and the Knudsens and the MacMillans became fast friends. The former Mrs. Morse had attended school in Denmark before she came to live with the MacMillans and to continue her education here.

Recently a group of students at the Brooks School in Chatham called upon Admiral MacMillan to tell him they wanted to send a ping pong table to the pupils at the Eskimo school at Nain, Labrador, but they wanted to know first if he thought the Eskimos would enjoy it.

How To Get It There

What primarily bothers the Admiral, however, is how the young Chatham folk will get their table to Nain. It's off the beaten track for ships and planes and dogsled is the more familiar means of transportation.

The school, now operated by the Canadian government, was built by Admiral MacMillan and was formerly the MacMillan Moravian School. It was in the Bowdoin he transported to Nain the supplies to build, furnish and maintain it.

During its first years the young Eskimo students slept at the school. The MacMillans continued to supply it for years and the arrival of the Bowdoin at Nain was an event equaling a national holiday.

Still teaching at the school is Katie

- April 10, 1969 -

341

THE HIGH-HEARTED VOYAGEUR

A 94-year-old gentleman, a great seaman and explorer of Arctic seas, whose life has been an unending encounter with forces that challenge every faculty a man possesses, was honored this week by what Secretary of the Navy John Chaffee said was "a grateful nation." We'd like to add our own word to those to come to Rear Admiral (ret.) Donald B. MacMillan, on the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the North Pole by the Robert Peary expedition of 1909, of which Admiral MacMillan is the only surviving member.

Donald MacMillan would be the last to claim any special credit for what he would consider his modest contribution to that achievement. It has been his subsequent career, probably, that has brought him so many honors in his own right.

He was the commander of many Arctic expeditions and on one of them for four years he lived beyond the reach — perhaps beyond the hope at times — of rescue. What kind of man carries on under such circumstances? — knowing that he, his company and his work can be buried forever under Arctic snows?

Yet Donald MacMillan went on methodically, confidently, about the scientific tasks he had undertaken; living on blubber with the Eskimos, risking daily hazards, knowing unthinkable hardships. None of these distractions daunted the cheerful stamina of the man.

He was the poverty-stricken son of a Provincetown fisherman lost at sea. Life held out to him no silver spoon. Knowing deprivation himself, he could find a school for Eskimo children whose deprivation touched him. He led the young men he took with him on his Bowdoin voyages into those harsh disciplines of the sea that can condition one to the disciplines of life itself — from which none can escape. It says something about him that those young men loved him as sons.

Even at 94 "Mac" gives no quarter to age or an unpredictable tomorrow. In an uncertain, sometimes ominous world, we're grateful for him. He assures us that the human spirit is an incredible force against all the odds that can be mustered against it. We're glad he's with us and no little proud that he's one of our own.

Hattasch, beloved friend of the MacMillans who began her teaching career there 40 years ago. A native of Labrador, she journeys to Provincetown each Summer to visit her old friends here.

Eskimos Will Enjoy It

Admiral MacMillan was still pondering last week how the young Chatham folk would get their ping pong table to Nain. Years ago it would have been a simple matter of stowing it away in the Bowdoin.

But the MacMillans, former godfather and godmother to the Labrador Eskimos, are sure the young Eskimo folk will enjoy their ping pong table if it can just be gotten to them.

Should it happen that the Eskimos do not yet know how to play ping pong, Mrs. MacMillan says it won't take Katie Hattasch long to teach them. And Eskimo kids themselves love games and are good at them.