

"Business for Ships is Miserable Dull:" A New Brunswick Mariner Confronts the Waning Days of Sail

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Prologue'

Captain Thomas Reese Anderson cursed the searing heat and full, damp air. He felt limp and tired and there was a haunting uncertainty in the pit of his stomach. The symptoms of dysentery were not unknown to him and he dreaded another bout, but he had little time to play the invalid. Standing on the promenade at Kobe, Japan, his senses longed for the persistent fresh bite of the autumnal breeze of his native New Brunswick. An involuntary shiver pierced his body as he recalled a vivid boyhood memory of how by mid-August the nights cooled noticeably and brought a foretaste of a sterner season. Japan appealed to him, and the almost seven weeks he had already spent in Yokohama had offered many delights. Yet for all of that he was tiring of the relentless responsibility of being a ship's master. It was not the first time Anderson felt weary of seafaring, but this time the homing urge had more power. He was fifty-five years old and for the past thirty-eight years the sea had been his calling. In truth he hardly knew his hometown, or his kin for that matter. He had spent precious little time there in the last quarter century, especially since being widowed after only a few months of marriage. His most recent experiences had been consumed with long voyages to East Asia that kept him away for a year or more at a time.

On this day — Thursday, 24 September 1891 — he stood surveying the scene of the "treaty port" of Kobe, the harbour into which his vessel, *Albania*, had sailed but a few hours earlier. In the foreground to seaward lay an orderly boat slip protected and enclosed by a sturdy breakwater. Here were clustered an array of small launches, some of them steam-powered yachts, while others were Japanese boats — so similar in appearance and mode of power to the Chinese sampan that most foreigners insisted on calling them by this name. Here too was the bonded warehouse and the harbour navigation light. As one who had seen hundreds of ports, Anderson's mind was quick to register a complete impression. The town seemed smaller than it was because it was so evidently backed by the high wall of mountains that rose sharply just a mile and a half from the beach. The shore installations were remarkable for their tidy, ordered arrangement — clearly the work of a determined "western" creative hand, he thought; instinct told him that he would like this place. Turning his gaze, he surveyed the harbour — a superb harbour, he thought, bristling with the masts of a dozen vessels. Most were British or American "clippers," the last generation of the

once-great fleets that had been the standard of Anderson's days at sea. In the harbour were a couple of steamers, their soot-stained smoke stacks a jarring intrusion for those whose eye knew and loved the beautiful profile of the masts of the sailing vessel. Anderson was ambivalent on the matter of the steam. Mechanical details he understood and appreciated implicitly. He liked to think of himself as a shrewd man of progress; far be it for him to dismiss these newer forms of shipping. Did not all mariners admire and appreciate the speed with which their mail could move around the world? Yet his world, his skill, and his life were inexorably tied to sail. This is what he was born to, what occupied his mind. Even his dreamy moments were filled with the composing of new rigging details, or plans for new fittings. It was as if his vessel were a living extension of his character and personality. Personal pride demanded that his vessels be the best painted and polished – being "shipshape" was an obsession. Though he could not know it at the time, it would please him that they would say of him at death that he never allowed the bottom of a ship under his command to scrape land.



Figure 1: *Kaigandori* (also known as the Bund) and harbour at Kobe, *circa* 1880. Note the row of trading houses facing the harbour and the series of *godowns*, or warehouses, that occupied the compound behind these buildings.

Source: National Library of Australia, MS 6681, box 54, Harold S. Williams Papers. Reproduced with permission.

His reverie was brief. Casting his eyes to landward across the broad swath of the promenade, which lay between the boulder-secured embankment fronting the Foreign Concession, he noticed a line of newly planted trees. These had replaced those torn out by the typhoon that had ravaged the harbour only two months earlier. Immediately his eye was drawn to the bustle of *Kaigandori*, the wide avenue beyond the promenade. *Jinrikisha*, or "rickshaws" as westerners called them, were lined up awaiting takers, the emaciated and ill-

clothed footmen hardly bigger than the average cabin-boy, squatting on haunches amid a pall of tobacco smoke engrossed in noisy, animated conversation.



Figure 2: Thomas R. Anderson

Source: Reproduced with permission of the Mount Allison University Archives. The photo is believed to have been published originally in *Biographical Review Province of New Brunswick* (Boston, 1900), 414.

The avenue was also filled with men pulling large two-wheeled freight carts – a kind of rickshaw with a basket instead of a passenger seat. A stylish carriage or two with liveried drivers ferried fashionable western ladies to destinations in the Foreign Concession. That said, any foreign viewer would be struck by the general absence of horse-drawn vehicles. Pedestrian travel evidently was the way of the place; no doubt the imposed confinement of the Foreign Concession limited distances. But then *jinrikisha* were so cheap! Along Kaigandori, facing the harbour was a continuous line of very impressive and decidedly western buildings. Anderson judged them to be about twenty years old – about as old as the settlement itself. Still, there was something fresh and uniform about the look of the place. Even the name was new. Kobe had only just been incorporated in 1889 and many mariners with older charts still knew it by its former name, Hiogo. For the moment

his thoughts turned to the tasks ahead: to locate shore-based lodging and to contact his chartering agent. Thus began the final episode of what proved to be Anderson's final voyage.

I

Who was this man and how was it that he came to be on the other side of the world when most of his contemporaries had their gazes so fixedly on the farms and factories of the North American continent? This essay tells the story of Thomas Reese Anderson and his voyage aboard *Albania* during 1891 and 1892. The story is one that illustrates a way of life that for a time was central to the functioning of Maritime Canada and its neighbouring regions.¹ The story, unto itself, is not overly remarkable. Day-to-day events had a sameness about them whether in port or at sea. Tedium was a fact of life for all the actors in the piece. Their voyages did take men far afield, where they could sense another world, though few seemed destined to reflect upon what they saw. For the modern viewer, the opportunity to undertake personal travel across an equivalent sweep of the globe is only now becoming a reality, perhaps even a commonplace. For us the so-called "global village" is becoming real at last and for most thoughtful travellers, the notion that a collection of rather ordinary fellow countrymen may have preceded us to exotic Indonesia, China or Japan a century ago does inspire admiration, especially given the technology of that earlier day. Equally fascinating is the picture of a Euroamerican world re-constituting itself in functional detail, custom and landscape imagery in the midst of very old and very different societies such as China and Japan.

For some of these westerners, the Orient became a place to settle. For these men and women it was a new frontier filled with possibilities for commercial profit and for reconstructing a style of life closed to them by the oppressive social structures of European class and wealth. For others, particularly North Americans, the opportunities were merely alternatives to striking out for the western frontier. Despite limits imposed by the Japanese upon foreigners, there was still a fluidity within the expatriate community. Far removed from the conventions of home, anything seemed possible, and political and economic events within Japan were changing rapidly. By 1891 the difficult period of Japanese political adjustment was ending. After two centuries of absolute rule, the feudal and excessively claustrophobic Tokogawa Shogunate gave way to a proto-parliamentary monarchy. Japanese attention was turning to the fashioning of an export economy. The Japanese appetite for western technology and western fashions was no longer confined to the few forward-looking members of an elite *samurai* class. Everyone had a sense that this was a place about to make a full-scale lurch forward toward the West. Even transient visitors like Anderson found themselves considering ways to profit from these trends.

Thomas Reese Anderson was born and raised in Sackville, New Brunswick – a small town at the head of the Bay of Fundy. This was one of the many small towns in coastal Maritime Canada that for a time during the nineteenth century derived its prosperity from a seaward orientation. The building and sailing of wooden sailing ships preoccupied many of the leading men in the scattered coastal towns and villages of the region. Between 1829 and 1872 Sackville shipbuilders constructed 114 wooden sailing ships. To be sure, many were small coastal schooners,⁴ but a number were larger. During the last quarter of

the nineteenth century, local masters were making long and complicated voyages to the major ports of western Europe, to the Caribbean, and to South American ports such as Montevideo and Valparaiso. Eventually some probed all the way to Asia.

By the 1890s the era of the tall ships was coming to an end, and while it would linger for many of the old school until the eve of the First World War, most masters were finding it harder and harder to find paying charters. As early as the 1880s this problem was being experienced, and it had much to do with the steel- and iron-hulled steamship's ability to dominate the major transatlantic runs. This development had been anticipated for several decades, indeed since the moment when steam engines had been set to the business of ocean shipping. Yet surprisingly, steam domination was slower to flower than many had predicted. The fast sailing "clippers" had held their own against the steamers on the long hauls between European and North American metropolitan markets and Asian and Pacific suppliers. Sailing interests responded to the challenge by building larger and more efficient ships that took advantage of technological advances in nautical science. For Maritime and other North American shipbuilders, who had initially profited by constructing poor quality "softwood" bottoms, this meant working with more durable wood and eventually with iron. Sailing masters also benefited from the development of climatological knowledge, such as the systematic understanding and more precise seasonal location of the major wind belts – the Northeast Trades, for example. In the end, however, speed and predictability, increasing cargo capacity, and the symbolic power of steam as an icon of "progress" left those working under sail to scramble for the poorer-paying bulk cargoes. This forced sailing masters and their owners into greater risk, or into habits of benign neglect of the upkeep of their vessels and treatment of their men, or both.

Anderson's vessel, *Albania*, was a 1438-ton sailing ship built in 1884 and registered in the port of Saint John, New Brunswick – one in the fleet owned by the Taylor Brothers of that city.' There is reason to believe that Anderson was a gifted and much respected mariner. He had gone to sea at age seventeen, become a master at twenty-one, and had risen to the position of senior captain of the Taylor Brothers fleet. In 1891 he took command of *Albania* for a passage to Yokohama. The details of the voyage can be reconstructed in great detail from the surviving documents found in the T.R. Anderson Papers in the Mount Allison University Archives.⁶ What follows is an account of that voyage and of the man who commanded it at a time when the age of sail was nearing an end.

II

Preparation for Departure

The account begins in February 1891 when *Albania* was awaiting a new charter in the port of New York. It is not clear what circumstances brought the ship to New York. By the 1890s New York was a major centre for the commercial carrying trade that this and other vessels in the Taylor Brothers fleet pursued even though the shipping agency was based in Saint John.' As was the case prior to any voyage, Anderson remained busy through the month of February overseeing the turnaround of the ship, which largely consisted of restocking the inventory of supplies, commissioning new sails, and readying the craft for an extended

passage into the Pacific. From 2 to 26 February, an accumulation of receipts testified to this activity. From the Townsend and East DRY Dock Company located at the Erie Basin in Brooklyn, Anderson purchased a variety of goods including oil, manilla rope, arsenic, shovels, a tarpaulin and a deck light. Later, larger orders of chandlery goods appeared, detailing the purchase of brooms, sail needles, wire seizing, a caulking frow, belaying pins, brass screws, lanyards and carpenter's tools – the standard array of goods needed to sustain any sailing ship, particularly one about to embark on an extended voyage into the Pacific.

Of special note was the purchase of sail cloth. The order specified a large quantity of "Laurel Duck" in various widths and dimensions, the total bill running to \$639.30, which was then discounted by thirty percent for a final figure of \$447.51. A notation on the receipt indicated that the cloth was to be consigned to the George J. Dick Company, sailmakers, and that the cloth was "for expo rt" – presumably this exempted it from ce rtain charges or customs duties. The invoice added a further \$308.74 for the making of the new complement of sail.'

Several bills pertain to food supplies. Fourteen hundredweight of beef, ten barrels of pork, five barrels of flour, ten of bread (no doubt the notorious "ship's biscuit" or hardtack) and barrels of herring anticipated the long passage out of contact with fresh supplies. It also foreshadowed a limited diet. Anderson also took on board two barrels of beer and two cases of whisky and a large supply of tobacco was also purchased, but these supplies when spread among twenty men over five months hardly suggest an intemperate life at sea.

Preparations for departure were nearly completed by 21 February, for on that day the vessel was issued a clean "Bill of Health" by the American authorities, who noted that the ship was "now ready to depart from the Po rt of New York for Yokohama Japan and other places beyond the sea, with twenty persons including the Master of the said vessel."⁹ More specifically the authorities certified that *Albania* was "free of plague." On the same day another document testified that the freight carried consisted of 56,000 cases of refined petroleum valued at \$14,000, and a small lot of turpentine and resin, all of which was being sent by the charter party of R. Isaacs and Company of New York to its firm in Yokohama.' In a separate letter to Captain Anderson, the Isaacs firm directed him to repo rt to its agent in Yokohama and to proceed "with all possible dispatch...wishing you a safe, pleasant and speedy voyage.'"

Departure seems to have been delayed for several days, perhaps because of bad weather, for Anderson found it necessary to pay someone to shovel snow off the deck and to repair a window. During this time he appears to have busied himself replenishing the ship's slop chest with items ranging from handkerchiefs and socks, work wear such as oil skins, sea boots, wool drawers, blue overalls and check jumper, and finer garments for himself, such as white shirts, cuffs and collars, and "one soft black hat." Most of the slop chest items were used to supply the crew with work clothes – if not at the outset of the voyage then as need arose, for there are later records indicating the debiting of clothing items against the pay of crew members. Among the other notable items purchased were rifle shells, cartridges and revolver shells, a year's subscription to *Scribner's Magazine* (which he apparently ordered be sent to a niece, Carrie who was attending "college") and a two-volume work entitled *The Intellectual Development of Europe*.¹²

The Voyage

The ship departed New York on 25 February. Anderson had made a similar passage aboard *Asia* the previous year, when he sailed to Shanghai; he was therefore familiar with the route. He set his course across the Atlantic toward the Azores, thence southward in the Northeast Trades toward the Cape Verde Islands to round Africa by the Cape of Good Hope. During the middle of March, as he neared the equator, he penned a long letter to his mother that he hoped to put aboard a returning vessel. He told her of encountering a strong storm with head winds lasting for five days. Happily, he observed, the ship was in excellent condition, though he lamented that it had not been well kept by the previous master and he had much to do to get it right. Regrettably, the log describing this first part of the voyage has not survived. It is possible nevertheless to chart his progress from Saturday, 16 May, when *Albania* lay just to the west of the Cape of Good Hope. True to nautical lore the passage round the Cape was accomplished in bad weather. Anderson's brief notations in the log describe heavier weather that "reduced our speed very materially, vessel knocking about and plunging into easterly sea...at midnight of the sixteenth and seventeenth a gale from north by west...took in upper mizzen topsail, carrying fore and main upper topsails and cap jib foresail...heavy squalls and rain."

After that *Albania* made steady progress across the Indian Ocean, encountering other storms but none that gave significant difficulty to what apparently was an easy passage. Through this period Anderson recorded little of life aboard ship except the daily reckoning of position and a notation here and there of bad weather encountered. Anderson did refer to a total eclipse of the moon seen through a break in the clouds on 23 May, and an acknowledged "Her Britannic Majesty's Birthday" the following day. A few days later Anderson's meticulous attention to the good order of his ship was evident when he noted that the carpenter had been set to work caulking the deck under the starboard chain locker, which suggests some leakage at this location, perhaps because of bad weather. This determination to keep the ship in top condition, and no doubt to keep the men busy, occurred repeatedly in his records. His log frequently included notes to himself about new fittings and pieces of material that had to be acquired to fix or improve some part of the fabric of the vessel. But there was time too for lighter pursuits. On 28 May, Anderson wrote about cleaning his rifle, observing that "she is a daisy to shoot with. Lots of cape pigeons, albatross and mollybacks."¹⁴

By 2 June the vessel came in sight of New Amsterdam Island, located in the Indian Ocean midway between South Africa and Australia. It would be nineteen days before land was sighted again, this time at Christmas Island, just off the coast of Java in the East Indies. If nothing else, this landfall indicated that they had arrived in Asia; for the remainder of the voyage they were never far from land. Evidently the ship had planned to put in at Anjer, a port in the Serat Sunda Straits between Java and Sumatra. Here Anderson was able to collect mail which had been dispatched on the steam packets by the Taylor Brothers during the two months following his departure from New York.

The correspondence he received was both personal and commercial. For example, Taylor Brothers wrote about developments arising from an insurance claim and anxiously requested Anderson's knowledge of the whereabouts of a particular document relating to

the case. Evidently they hoped that he would forward by return steamer the information needed to resolve the impasse. Later letters from the agent provided Anderson with news of the state of the charter business. While much of this news pertained to charter rates quoted in North American ports – something hardly likely to affect Anderson in the midst of a commitment that would consume the biggest part of the twelve months ahead – it perhaps underscores the importance of economic information to men engaged in trade. Significantly, the news was not very rosy. C.E. Taylor reported in a letter written from New York on 27 May that a sister ship, *Abyssinia* was "here discharged and not chartered yet... we are trying to get 26 [dollars per ton] for Shanghai but cannot yet get it." This and other gloomy reports led Taylor to the pained reflection that "business for ships is miserable dull." Nevertheless, for Anderson there were already prospects. In a letter dated 13 May, Taylor Brothers alerted him to a return cargo they had booked for *Albania*:

The *Albania* is chartered of Yokohama to New York 12000 privilege Hioga [the port of Kobe] New York \$12,500, 40 days to load charter, privilege of canceling [sic] if ship does not arrive at Yokohama about the 1st September. This is about \$1000 above the rate got by some other vessels lately owing to size but it is low enough¹⁵

Typical of the mix of news contained in this correspondence was a reference to another master who had apparently given up the sea to try farming – without success, it seemed. The writer stated that "he is entirely tired of farming and wants to go to sea again next fall. Says he will sell his stock." Other letters contained news of friends and acquaintances and brought Anderson up to date on the passing of various people. C.E. Taylor offered news of his own health, suggesting that the custom of going south for the winter had, for some, commenced long before the advent of packaged holidays and airline seat sales: "I got the La Grippe and took relapses so was advised by the doctor to go south. I went to Mobile was there three weeks and came [home] via Chicago for a week and returned much better."¹⁶

The speed with which shipping news travelled greatly improved the ability of factors, and all those dependent upon serving the world fleet, to anticipate the arrival of vessels. A good example was seen in a letter from B.S. Rairden of Anjer sent to Captain Anderson on 3 June, fully three weeks before *Albania* arrived in Java» Rairden had earlier learned of the *Albania's* departure from New York and no doubt predicted the probable appearance of the ship in Anjer. In any event, Rairden sent a typewritten letter to Anderson offering to supply him with fresh water, good anchorage and trusty boatmen, all of which might be paid for by a bill on the consignee – the company receiving the cargo – at Yokohama. Rairden had undoubtedly been forewarned via telegraph by Taylor Brothers of *Albania's* anticipated arrival in these waters, for the letter also included news of other ships in the company's fleet. Significantly, the ships referred to were also in Asian waters – *Austria* was loading at Hong Kong for New York and *Armenia* at Cebu for the United States. Whatever the case, Rairden succeeded in winning Anderson's business, for among the papers is a duplicate of a "sight draft" valued at 132.15 guilders for an order of fresh

foods and other supplies, including firewood and a case of gin, which was to be charged to the consignee, R. Isaacs and Brothers of Yokohama.¹⁸

Albania's stay in Anjer was short, lasting no more than two days it seems, for the record of daily positional reckonings shows that the ship soon pressed on toward the Banka Strait, a passage along the northeastern coast of Sumatra. From this point Anderson sailed steadily northeastward for about a week, crossing the equator again on 6 July. Continuing northeastward through the South China Sea toward Japan, Anderson took time on 17 July to record the fact that they had been at sea for twenty weeks. During the next week, no doubt in anticipation of arrival in Japan, Anderson began a "Memorandum of wants" — a shopping list of ship's gear and supplies needed to replace those that had suffered deterioration or loss on the long passage.

Progressing toward his destination, he reported being becalmed in the East China Sea between Formosa and Japan on 26 July; this apparently lasted only a day or so, for he finally entered Yokohama about 30 July.

Activities in Japan

Upon arrival in Yokohama, the shipboard routine changed profoundly as attention turned to discharging cargo and repairing the vessel. It was a time also to enjoy the company of other masters and to receive and exchange intelligence from other men of trade, either by mail or through personal contacts. Anderson evidently also took advantage of some of the social opportunities available ashore.

His most immediate problem, however, was the discharge of cargo, a process that began almost immediately and consumed about five days. A certificate from the marine surveyor's office dated 4 August indicated that the cargo had been unloaded "in an orderly way and had been received with only damage due to the stress of weather alone and not any neglect of improper stowage."¹⁹ In spite of this report, the consignee, R. Isaacs and Brothers, challenged the state of the cargo. Before he could settle the charter, Anderson was involved in a protest with the agency, which required the arbitration of the British Consul in Yokohama and another surveyor.

It is difficult to establish whether there was any basis for the protest. One can speculate that trading companies were exploiting the difficult market for charters under sail. In the face of competition from steamers, sailing masters had to turn their ships around as quickly as possible in foreign ports in order to make their vessels as efficient as possible. Moreover, any delays in the receipt of payment or any unproductive layovers forced captains to contend with brokers over demurrage charges.²⁰ Where the captain may have been in doubt about his position either through inexperience or uncertainty about how local courts might decide the case, he must have been tempted to accept reduced payment even though the claim may have been unwarranted. In any event, Anderson was soon engaged in a war of nerves with the Isaacs' agency that extended into the second week of September, with each side claiming the other was liable for the added cost of the protest.

The point of contention amounted to the loss of twenty of the 56,000 cases of kerosene shipped; in the end a seemingly trivial sum of \$25.90 was deducted from Anderson's settlement of accounts with Isaacs. Of course, this was only one of the charges

set against the agreed payment for the voyage. A long list of expenses was charged against the charter, including the bill from Rairden in Anjer, as well as costs in Yokohama for towage, pilotage, refit, and so on. In the end, Anderson accepted a sum of \$4710.56, the net profit of a charter contract initially calculated at \$14,275 prior to expenses. Of this amount Anderson dispatched a sum of £965.14.10 to his account at Taylor Brothers in Saint John in two separate notes of exchange, one sent by mail via Vancouver, the other via San Francisco.²¹ On 21 September he set sail for Kobe to collect his return charter for New York.

During the weeks between arriving in Yokohama and departing for Kobe, Anderson again oversaw the *Albania's* refit. Apart from the replacement of several parts of the rigging and a good deal of repair and maintenance work to the deck area, yards and sail, he let a contract with a local man named Kintaro to repaint the more visible portions of the ship. This included gilding the head and tail boards, painting the bowsprit and stern, and redoing the name of the ship in white zinc. Perhaps more important was the attention required within the hold before receipt of a new cargo. The spillage of kerosene posed a particular hazard, especially if *Albania* was to collect a cargo of tea for the return passage. The hold had to be carefully cleaned of oil, and the old dunnage and ballast discarded and replaced with new clean materials. New dunnage consisted of woven matting that was readily available in Japan and which served to separate the cargo from the ship's side and ballast materials. All this had to be verified by a marine surveyor before another charter could be contracted, and on 8 September John J. Efford of Yokohama provided a clean bill of health, with the added assurance that *Albania* was "a very good risk for Insurance."--'

The opportunity for the crew to spend time in port allowed for intemperance and produced further headaches for masters. Indeed, the problem was endemic in the shipping industry. A good crew was hard to obtain; throughout the last decades of the century the North American merchant marine had expanded faster than the labour supply of seamen. The opportunities for shore-based employment in the factories of New England and the Maritimes, or the lure of obtaining land on the western frontier, worked against choosing a life before the mast, which after all was little changed in comfort and working conditions from the eighteenth century. As a result, foreign sailors were being employed in considerable numbers in North American fleets and great problems existed in shipboard communication and discipline.²³ While Anderson recorded very little on the matter, correspondence from associates at Taylor Brothers suggests that there had been problems with the crew, perhaps during the voyage. The crew was a cosmopolitan lot. The first mate, Edward King, was a fellow New Brunswicker from Saint John; the second mate, R.W. Clementson, was a young man from Manchester, England who, Anderson noted, was very inexperienced but likeable. The rest of the crew consisted of a mixture of Europeans and Asians, along with one seaman from Chile. Of these, Johannes Olsen and Peter Dahl, the cook and steward, were Norwegian; John Soderman, the carpenter, was described as a Russian Finn; seamen Johannes Isaakson and Victor Holmquist were Swedes; and Juan Mageldina [a.k.a "Domingo"] was Chilean. A Scottish sailor, Matthew Cairney, was described by Anderson as "the poorest thing of the whole heap." Nine Japanese and one Filipino rounded out the crew on the outward passage.²⁴ In any event, in a letter dated 4 September Taylor Brothers commiserated with Anderson: "Are sorry to hear you have not been very well [the allusion is to a report in letters from Anderson from Anjer and from

Yokohama dated August 7th and 18th]...no doubt worry of having such poor crew makes you feel worse."²⁵

What had provoked the reference is not clear. In his letter home in March, Anderson did note that there had been a good deal of sickness among the crew during the early part of the voyage. The worst involved a Japanese seaman who had severely blistered hands that Anderson had lanced. He also suggested that the cook and carpenter had not been very good at their duties, but there was no hint of discipline problems apart from the Scotsman Cairney. Perhaps it was this individual who was the anonymous crewman that appeared before the master of *S. Godiva* asking to work his passage "to the Sound." In any event, Captain Grant agreed to take the seaman.²⁶ Other masters had their own problems with crew. For example, Captain Killey of *Simla*, whom Anderson befriended during the layover in Yokohama, wrote:

We [Killey and another mutual friend described only as "old Mac"] have both had more trouble with old sailors and I am having 3 men put aboard tomorrow from jail. My chief mate has been boozing since you left & letting the work go to the Devil. So I have paid him off and made the 2nd mate chief.²⁷

Captain Robinson of the sister ship *Abyssinia* reported to Anderson that he had a "Negro" crewman knife a Japanese sampan man in Yokohama harbour while unloading cargo. The seaman had been arrested and jailed; Robinson had him released only to discover from the British Consul that according to Board of Trade regulations the offender could not be docked wages for time lost during this episode or for time during the voyage when he had been sick with the "venereal." Anderson evidently recruited a different crew for the return passage; only the two mates remained while the rest were new men, almost all with British or European surnames.

The crew were not the only ones to enjoy shore leave. Like most westerners visiting the exotic ports of Japan, which after all had only been open to common traders for about two decades, Anderson sampled the delights of Nippon. There were opportunities to shop for local crafts, and included among his papers is a handbill advertising a "Native Fine Art Exhibition" at which foreigners could buy *cloisonné* work, bronzes, ivory, and silk goods from a sales staff that spoke six European languages. The proprietor, J. Nakashima, claimed to offer good prices and promised to save the purchaser the frustration of trying to fathom local markets.²⁸

The port also offered a full range of more conventional merchants and marine services, most of which were operated by non-Japanese. Indeed, the extent to which a foreign community and trade support infrastructure was in place in ports like Yokohama and Kobe was most striking, and Anderson availed himself of these services to again purchase stocks of clothing to be supplied to the crew as needed and charged against their wages.

For those who sought more pleasurable comforts far from home there were hostels and hotels, and further afield tourist resorts such as Hakone and Katsura. Anderson apparently suffered a bout of ill health about the time he arrived in Japan. It may have been a case of dysentery. There is a hint that he may have tried to recover his health by visiting

some of these spots. Perhaps it was a Japanese *onsen*, or hot spring resort. Whatever the case, the experience failed to meet his expectations as a westerner. Ever the businessman and quick to note an opportunity, he must have discussed the limitations he saw with an acquaintance, for he proposed the need for a "health sanatorium" especially aimed at foreigners. In a lengthy letter to Anderson, the acquaintance, Neil Munro excitedly took up the proposal, arguing the merits of this location over that, the opportunity to find the services of a medical practitioner, and so on.²⁹

Nonetheless, Anderson did find comfort on shore. Though shrouded in ambiguity, the reports of Captain Killey suggest that Anderson entered into a dalliance with a Japanese woman – one "Ohauna san." Killey writes:

The American man-o-war *Charleston* has arrived and is a fine specimen of a modern battleship. The price of p.k.g. [here he seems to be referring to the cost of female company] has gone up from what I can hear since her arrival. Last quotation Firm and rising! Speaking of this interesting topic I may mention that our diggings is just the same as when you left. I have been up at least every other day and have never seen a soul there in the shape of a stranger or a man of any description and I think we have every reason to congratulate ourselves upon the good thing we struck. I am going ashore to have a parting p. this afternoon so I expect the bottle of fiz [sic] will be hauled out. I can tell you my friend with the greatest confidence that I don't believe Ohauna has been with anybody since you left, at least as far as I know and have seen. The night I got your wire [informing of Anderson's arrival in Kobe] I went up & told her the good news of your arrival. Poor little Jap she was quite delighted but she has not been at all well since you left...she seems quite bent upon going to Kobe and I am sure she is very fond of you so the sooner you send for her the better. I don't think you could get anything to equal it down there.³⁰

In a later communication Killey stated that Ohauna was "far gone I assure you 'on Capt. Anderson, sa.'!...Hope you are taking light suppers and going to bed early!" For his part Anderson was silent on this matter, though in a letter to his mother that seems rich in irony given Killey's suggestive intimations, he wrote that he was "enjoying a pretty good time in Japan and shall feel sorry to leave this country as I believe if I could live on shore here and go to the mountains and sulphur springs occasionally I would be very well."

It is hard to know whether Anderson spent much time on shore while loading in Kobe. Throughout the time he was there, he was repeatedly contacted by Captain Robinson of *Abyssinia*, who arrived in Yokohama shortly after *Albania* had departed for Kobe. *Abyssinia* was another of the Taylor Brother's vessels and Robinson had a very difficult passage, having encountered two typhoons in the China Sea which had generally battered his ship. Evidently Robinson was less experienced than Anderson and sought advice about how he should go about restoring the vessel. In desperation he requested Anderson to return to Yokohama to help with this difficult task."

To make the trip back to Yokohama overland required that Anderson obtain an internal passport from the Japanese authorities.³⁴ On 12 October he obtained the required document, which specified that he had permission to travel from Kobe to Himeiji by rail and thence to Yokohama via Kyoto, returning by way of Nara and Osaka. The route proposed was curious, for Himeiji lay west of Kobe, the opposite direction from his ultimate destination. Perhaps he intended to see the sights; Himeiji is famous for its castle, and the reference to Nara offers further hints of this since it is, along with Kyoto, one of the ancient imperial cities of Japan, though more directly on the route between Kobe and Yokohama. Regardless, it seems that Anderson never made the trip. Throughout October, Robinson repeatedly wrote that he had given up hope of seeing Anderson. Possibly Anderson's health prevented travel. Robinson also noted in a letter that rail lines between the two cities had been closed because of an earthquake, which may offer another explanation. Anderson continued to offer advice to Robinson by mail and occasionally by telegraph, and he quickly deduced that little purpose would be served by his presence in Yokohama, especially after Robinson's initial desperation subsided. Anderson did provide assistance by attending an auction in Kobe of ship's fittings and supplies being liquidated from *Marquis of Lorne*;³⁵ these were then forwarded to Robinson for

By mid-November *Albania* was loaded and ready for the long return passage to New York. On 6 November the Delacamp shipping agent in Kobe suggested with perhaps an implicit sense of impatience that they were not prepared to allow him further "lay days" – unproductive time at the agent's expense. They pressed him instead to call in to sign the remaining bills of lading and to prepare to clear the port. Anderson's preoccupation during the week or two leading up to departure was with settling the crew. The record shows that several new men were engaged, and several signed notes conveying money for safe keeping to the captain. As always there were problems getting the men on board. Among these problems were many seeming trivialities. For example, the man engaged to serve as third officer was being pressed by a creditor for an overdue laundry bill; Anderson intervened to make the delinquent settle the matter by threatening to refer it to the court. Another seaman had to be apprehended and put on board by the local constable. When caught, James Kelly claimed illness – to which the port doctor attested that "he was suffering from alcoholism." In the end Anderson's crew again comprised of a mix of European and Japanese seamen. By 16 November all was in readiness to weigh anchor.³⁶

Anderson had toyed with the idea of making the return passage back through the Pacific via Cape Horn – the route Robinson had taken outbound to Japan. Evidently he chose not to follow this route, for the record of the voyage shows that he returned around Africa. There are few details of the homeward passage. Eighteen days out, off the Malay peninsula, he signalled to a passing steamer bound for Singapore that all was well, assuming no doubt that this message would in due course make its way back to Taylor Brothers. By 7 February 1892 *Albania* was off the island of St. Helena in the southern Atlantic, and less than forty-five days later he was in the Hudson channel awaiting a pilot to take him into New York.

Epilogue and Reflection

We have little to judge Anderson's state of mind or health at this point except for a letter from Taylor Brothers that stated: "You have now brought your ship to a bad market...As you wrote us that you prefer not to make another voyage at present, we have written to Capt. Brownell to come in two or three weeks and take command of the ship."³⁷ No doubt Anderson was weary of the sea and wished a break to assess his future. The growing difficulty of getting good charters and of making sailing ships pay must have been on his mind. Though his duties as master kept him busy for some time after returning to New York, Anderson did follow his resolve and returned to Sackville. The record reveals that among his most urgent immediate concerns was to find a woman to keep house for him. Over the next year it appears that several young women came and went. Finally he found a young woman who seemed to fill the position – evidently she was so suitable that he married her and late in life fathered two sons by her. One cannot help but wonder what it must have been like for him to return to his birthplace. He had spent few days in his adult life in Sackville, though for many years he faithfully attended to his mother and her needs by letter. Did this small town seem parochial and backward to one whose days on shore had been lived in New York, Hamburg, Le Havre, Liverpool, Havana, Shanghai and Yokohama? Or did the isolation and limits of village life and the broad horizon of the Tantramar marshes echo the life he had known at sea? Anderson offers no reflection on the matter. Generally ship's masters like Anderson were accorded some prestige in these communities. Anderson returned a man of some means and soon took a place among the small circle of the local business oligarchy. He was among those who formed the Sackville Board of Trade in 1901; later he was elected to the Town Council.³⁸ It is clear also that he arrived home with a restless energy that he soon turned to landward pursuits, both financial and social.

Anderson sought out opportunities for investment, many of which were conventional stocks and securities further afield. One of the local enterprises with which he invested was the Sackville Paper Box Factory. His own energies went primarily into founding and managing two construction companies: Anderson and LeBlanc and the Anderson Company. Among the significant commissions he undertook was the building of the Intercolonial Railway Station in Sackville and another station in Blackville, New Brunswick, as well as the construction of Hart Hall, the principal Ladies College building at Mount Allison University.

Tragically Thomas Reese Anderson was killed by a shunting engine one foggy night in 1918 in the vicinity of the Sackville station. He left a young widow and two children. Here our story ends. As a final word it might be argued that if, as C.E. Taylor said, "the business for ships in 1891 was miserable dull," the story of the men who sailed them and of the voyages they took seems anything but dull especially when, a century later, Japan is only an uneventful, though body-numbing nineteen hours away by aircraft.

Yet there is surely more that must be said by way of reflection on this brief fragment of a Maritimer's life. This episode underlines the extent to which some elements of late nineteenth-century Maritimes society was connected to a much wider world. Thomas Reese Anderson's brush with Asia contains a complex mix of elements. It was at once transitory and highly circumscribed by the nature of his contact. Nevertheless, he did spend

several months ashore on this voyage and the one that preceded it, and he did see and experience something of the place and its people. His purpose in Asia was commercial; along with thousands of other westerners with the same objectives, he helped to transform Asia profoundly. The fragments of evidence revealed by this small episode suggest that we have yet to learn much about the impact these two worlds had upon each other. There are strong hints that the West was beginning to cast a long and powerful shadow over the coastal cities of East Asia through the infrastructure of trade and the apparatus to support an expatriate community.³⁹ Much remains to be learned of this process and the role, if any, played by Atlantic Canadians in the commercial and cultural transformation of the Asian-Pacific world. Equally tantalizing is the question of how these connections fed back into the Atlantic Canada. While it did not feature in this paper, Thomas Reese Anderson's brothers, Charles M. Anderson and Gaius Anderson, both master mariners who had been engaged in the Australian wool trade, eventually settled with their families in New Zealand and Fiji, respectively, thereby following another line of connection into the Asian-Pacific world.⁴⁰ In Sackville and other Maritime towns there is anecdotal and material evidence of treasures brought home from the Orient by seafarers. What do we know and make of this? Did it influence artistic tastes, or did these experiences spark interest in the Asia world? What of the missionary impulse that sent many young Maritime men and women to China, Japan and Korea in the decade or two following?⁴¹ Perhaps for those of us who study the history and geography of this region, it is time to look well beyond our own shores and the traditional connections to Britain and the "Boston States" to probe these more exotic and distant external connections. Ironically, the current dictum that we must enter the era of "global competitiveness" may help encourage the search for past insights on this matter.

NOTES

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1. The genesis of this paper deserves some explanation. In 1986-1987 I was privileged to serve as Visiting Professor of Canadian Studies at Kwansai Gakuin University in Nishinomiya, Japan. Upon returning to Mount Allison University I proposed that my fourth year undergraduate research seminar explore the archival collection known as the Thomas Reese Anderson Papers. While each student set about to reconstruct a sample of Anderson's voyages, or probed other aspects of nautical life and economy, I was personally drawn to the fact that Anderson had sailed to Japan in 1891, the more so because he spent part of

this time in the port of Kobe – the area in which I had lived. It seemed appropriate that I too research and write a paper just as the students were doing. This is the result. The work has profited from the comments and individual seminar papers produced by the students who participated in the seminar in 1988 and 1989. Thanks are due to Huguette Arsenault, Giles Beland, Mark Bukich, Peter Colwell, Greg David, Traci Drummond, Sean Fitzgerald, Robert Keating, James Mason, Michael McCabe, Mehernosh Pestonji, Diane Risteen, Patricia Roos, Ian Ross, Graham Sheppard, Robert Thibodeau, and Brian White.

2. The term "Foreign Concession" refers to the separate settlement at Kobe created by foreign traders and their support services under the provisions of the treaties between Japan and the several European and American nations with which trade was conducted. Also called "treaty ports," these included Yokohama, Nagasaki, Niigata, Shimoda, Hakodate, Osaka and Kobe. The treaties were

created following Commodore Matthew Perry's thrust into Tokyo Bay in 1853 and ended when they were abrogated in 1898. Among the privileges enjoyed by traders was the right of "extraterritoriality," which provided traders whose home government had treaties with Japan the right to be governed by the laws of their home nation as administered by their respective Consular courts in Japan. During this period Yokohama and Kobe emerged as the principal trading centres and each developed sizeable Foreign Concessions that replicated familiar Euroamerican settlement landscapes. See J.E. Hoare, *Japan's Treaty Ports and Foreign Settlements – The Uninvited Guests, 1858-1899* (Folkestone, 1994). Much of the detail regarding the geography of Kobe in 1891 described in this paper has been developed by an exhaustive reading of English-language documents in the Kobe Municipal Archives, and also reference to a scale model of the settlement housed in the Kobe City Museum during a research visit in 1991. See also *Exhibition [Catalogue] of the Retrospective of Kobe Modernism* (Kobe, 1986) [in Japanese]. Work on a major study of this treaty port is underway by the author.

3. Although in recent years there has been an important growth in the literature on Maritime trade, seamen and seafaring as a result of the excellent work by members of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project and others, much remains to be done to explore the connections between this economy and the dozens of small communities that contributed to this way of life. Among the writings that go some way to fleshing out both the broader regional picture and some of these connections are: Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (eds.), *The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914* (St. John's, 1979); Rosemary E. Ommer and Gerald E. Panting (eds.), *Working Men Who Got Wet* (St. John's, 1980); Eric W. Sager, *Seafaring Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1820- 1914* (Montréal, 1989); Eric W. Sager with Gerald E. Panting, *Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada, 1820-1914* (Montréal, 1990); Judith Fingard, *Jack In Port: Sailortowns of Eastern Canada* (Toronto, 1982); Colin Howell and Richard J. Twomey (eds.), *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour* (Fredericton, 1991). For examples of individual Maritimers' experiences recreated from archival records, see Clement W. Crowell, *Novascotiaman* (Halifax, 1979); and Alan D. McNairn (ed.), *Life*

Aboard: The Journals of William N. and George F. Smith (Saint John, 1988).

4. W.C. Milner, *History of Sackville, New Brunswick* (Sackville, NB, 1934), 73-76.

5. *Albania* was built in 1884 by Oliver Pittfield of Saint John and was the largest of the ships comprising the Taylor Brothers fleet. See Esther Clark Wright, *Saint John Ships and Their Builders* (Wolfville, NS, 1975), 166.

6. Mount Allison University Archives (MAA), Thomas Reese Anderson Papers (TRAP) 8610/1/12-174, British Ship *Albania* papers, 1891. The account has been reconstructed from this source. Rather than break the text with an excessive number of footnotes, only the major references within this collection will be cited.

7. Taylor Brothers consisted of the partnership of Charles Edward and John Fletcher Taylor and John Peabody Burpee. The firm operated from Saint John between 1870 and 1904, and kept a fleet of some seventeen vessels, mostly large barques and ships from 900 to 1400 tons. Most of these were built for the company and several of those commissioned in the 1870s were built in Sackville or the neighbouring villages of Port Elgin or Rockland (Dorchester). Those that came later, however, were built in Saint John by Oliver Pittfield. See Charles Armour and Thomas Lackey, *Sailing Ships of the Maritimes: An Illustrated History of Ships and Shipping in Maritime Canada, 1750 -1925* (Toronto, 1975).

8. MAA, TRAP 8610/1/12/#5 and #9, British Ship *Albania* papers.

9. *Ibid.*, #10.

10. *Ibid.*, #11.

11. *Ibid.*, #13.

12. *Ibid.*, #19.

13. *Ibid.*, # 170.

14. MAA, TRAP 8610/1/12/170, Logbook of Daily Position, Ship *Albania* from New York toward Japan, entry for 28 May.

15. MAA, TRAP 8610/1/12/#25, British Ship

Albania papers.

16. *Ibid.*, #26.

17. *Ibid.*, #27.

18. *Ibid.*, #29.

19. *Ibid.*, #36.

20. Demurrage charges were the costs payable to a shipowner by the charterer for failure to load or discharge cargo in the time allowed.

21. MAA, TRAP, 8601/1/12/#73, British Ship *Albania* papers.

22. *Ibid.*, #52. Efford's survey noted that the ship had "2 1/2 suit of sail all in good condition... rigging very good...[the ship was] recoppered over felt at New York and passed half time survey January 1891."

23. Walter Magnes Teller (ed.), *The Voyages of Joshua Slocum* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1958), 9-10.

24. MAA, TRAP, 8610/1/12/2218/#67, British Ship *Albania* papers.

25. *Ibid.*, #51.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, #82.

28. *Ibid.*, #35.

29. *Ibid.*, #105. This is a fascinating letter which reveals much about contemporary racial attitudes and the habits and aspirations of the European community working in the East Asia trade.

30. MAA, TRAP 8610/1/12/#82, British Ship *Albania* papers. "P.k.g." may well refer to the "price of *kuruwa* girls." *Kuruwa* was one of the licensed quarters of Yokohama that was frequented by foreigners, including mariners. I am grateful to one of the anonymous referees for the suggestion of this connection and for the reference to Stan

Hugill, *Sailortown* (London, 1967), 304-307.

31. *Ibid.*, #84.

32. MAA, Capt. Titus and Jane O. Anderson Correspondence, 1849-1895, 7610/1/12/1/1, #98.

33. MAA, TRAP 7610/1/12/#91, #92 and #95, British Ship *Albania* papers.

34. *Ibid.*, #98.

35. Robinson was destined to be dogged with further problems. After the refit of *Abyssinia* he too made for Kobe, where in January the ship caught fire and had to be scuttled. Thereafter he had again to begin the task of repair - this time in dry dock. While Robinson does not indicate the cause of the fire, he does note that Kobe had experienced a rash of ship arson. *Ibid.*, #144.

36. *Ibid.*, #133 and #136.

37. *Ibid.*, #147.

38. MAA, 4801/1, Sackville Board of Trade, Minute Book, 1901-1917.

39. One excellent entry to the scholarly literature which focuses on the ports of Asia is Frank Broeze (ed.), *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the 16th-20th Centuries* (Honolulu, 1989).

40. MAA 7635, Anderson Family History.

41. Other documents in the Mount Allison University Archives shed some light on this process. As a Methodist institution with connections to the church's missionary arm, several students, particularly women, appear to have committed themselves to service in overseas missions in the two decades straddling the turn of the century. Several went to Japan, while others went to Korea, China and Chile. For an excellent exploration of this enterprise, see Rosemary R. Gagan, *A Sensitive Independence: Canadian Methodist Women Missionaries in Canada and the Orient, 1881-1925* (Montréal, 1992).