

# National Maritime Museum at San Francisco

## Golden Gate National Recreation Area



The National Maritime Museum at San Francisco tells the story of seafaring people and ships that helped shape the development of the West Coast of North America. It is a fascinating story because the West Coast's growth was so rapid once the 1849 Gold Rush set things in motion. Within a few years, thousands of people arrived here from all over the world and began to create new cities, industries, and ways of life dependent on entirely new systems of

supply by land and sea. The historic ships, the artifacts, and the exhibits within the National Maritime Museum make it possible to visualize the lives of men and women who financed, built, sailed, supplied, or traveled aboard ships when the sea was still the primary means of regional and coastal transportation.

The National Maritime Museum offers three main attractions: the Museum

itself, the historic ships at Hyde Street Pier, and the sailing ship *Balclutha*. During your visit, also enjoy the beautiful views and pleasant atmosphere of Aquatic Park and watch contemporary shipping traffic in the Bay. All these areas are managed by the National Park Service as part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area. We invite you to explore on your own or participate in the many programs offered by the National Park Service.

### The Maritime Museum

The Maritime Museum takes you through many years of seafaring history. Allow ample time for exploring the many models, exhibits, and photographs in the West Coast's largest maritime museum. Parts of old San Francisco Bay vessels and numerous ship models are displayed on the main floor where you will also find a museum store with maritime history literature, restrooms, and public telephones. Models, artifacts, and photographs on the second floor take you back to the time of the Gold Rush, Cape Horners, steam schooners, and bay craft.

The Maritime Museum building was constructed as a Works Project Administration (WPA) effort and completed

in 1939. The works of prominent artists and designers of the time are visible inside: 37 mural panels, sculptures, and elaborate terrazzo marble floors grace the interior. The building served a variety of functions—a nightclub, anti-aircraft command headquarters for the Pacific Coast, a recreation center—until 1950 when the newly founded San Francisco Maritime Museum Association was given the city's permission to establish a museum to preserve San Francisco's maritime history.

**Guided Tours** of the Museum are offered daily at 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. Meet a National Park Service ranger on the ground floor for a half-hour tour.

For real history buffs, the museum houses two special collections. The **J. Porter Shaw Library** contains many historic newspaper articles, books, pamphlets, ships logs, charts, and maps. Located on the second floor, this reference library is open Monday - Friday. The Museum's **photo archives** contain over 100,000 photographs of sailing ships and steamers, their ports, and views of the ever-changing San Francisco waterfront.

### Maritime Museum

Foot of Polk Street  
Information: 556-8177  
Open daily 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
(Except Christmas and New Year's Day)  
No admission fee  
Museum store

### Aquatic Park

While visiting the various attractions of the National Maritime Museum, save some time to wander around Aquatic Park. The bayside scenery couldn't be nicer and Aquatic Park offers many places to relax including park benches, lawn areas, and the sandy shoreline. Food service, restrooms, and drinking water are available. The Golden Gate Promenade, a 3½ mile scenic walk, begins here and follows the shoreline to Fort Point National Historic Site under the Golden Gate Bridge.

**Lifeguards** patrol the beach and help ensure the safety of those swimming in the lagoon. The water is generally cold, but calm. On request, lifeguards will provide water safety demonstrations. Shower and locker facilities for swimmers are located in the Museum basement and entered on the building's north side; these facilities are open 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. during the winter and 9:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. in the summer.

**The San Francisco Senior Center** provides food service and a daily

schedule of activities for senior citizens. This private, non-profit center is located in the east end of the Museum building. Call 775-1866 for information.

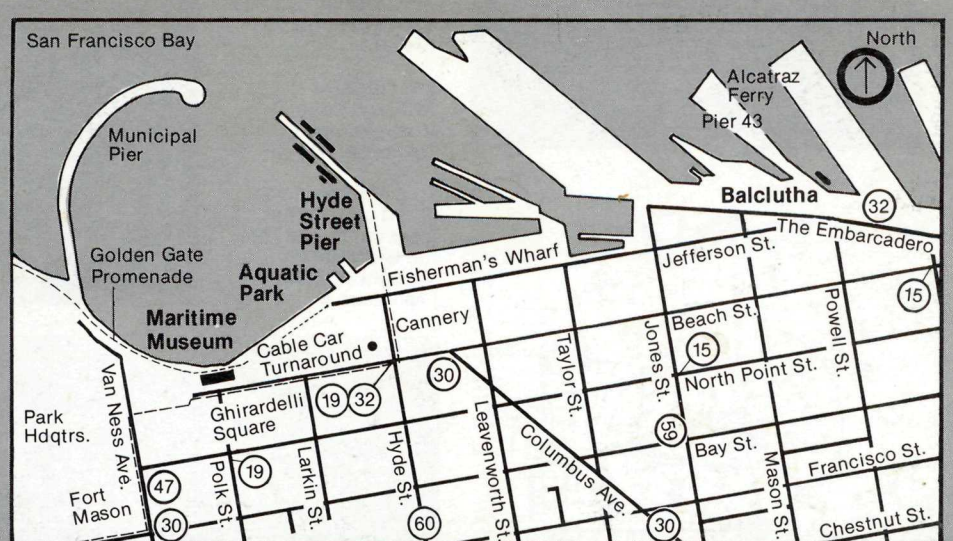
### Aquatic Park

Bounded by Van Ness Avenue, Beach Street, and Hyde Street  
Information: 556-2904  
Open all day.

**Public Transit** is the most convenient way to get to the National Maritime Museum and the Aquatic Park area. The 60-Powell & Hyde cable car, the Muni 19-Polk, and the 32-Embarcadero come directly to Aquatic Park. Other convenient Muni lines include the 30-Stockton, and 47-Van Ness. For the *Balclutha*, Muni provides convenient service with the 19-Polk, 15-Kearny, 32-Embarcadero, or the 59-Powell & Mason cable car. Parking is usually scarce due to the

number of people visiting the northern waterfront.

**We welcome your comments.** If you have any questions or suggestions concerning your visit, please feel free to write to the park's Superintendent at Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Building 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123; or call the park's general information number: 556-0560.



# National Maritime Museum at San Francisco

## Hyde Street Pier

The five historic ships berthed at the Hyde Street Pier vividly recall different eras of maritime commerce. Aboard these ships or alongside on the wharf, you can view exhibits and enjoy the surrounding scenery. Or as you stand on deck, imagine yourself about to embark on a voyage aboard ships and to ports of a time gone by.

### Three historic ships can be boarded.

**Eureka** From 1890-1957, this double-ended, "walking beam" ferryboat first carried commuters between San Francisco and Marin County and later provided service to San Francisco for passengers arriving in Oakland on transcontinental trains. The *Eureka* was powered by a massive 4-story steam engine: this power system drove the large, visible walking beam high atop the ferryboat, which in turn was connected to a 27-foot diameter side-mounted paddle wheel. In her day, the *Eureka* was the world's largest passenger ferry.

**C.A. Thayer** Built in 1895, this sailing schooner had a varied career in maritime commerce. She was designed to carry lumber and traveled along the West Coast, to the South Sea Islands, and to Mexico. After 17 years in this trade, she became a salmon packet, sailing each year to Alaska to load salted salmon. The *Thayer's* final career took her to the Bering Sea as a codfishing vessel. By 1950, her last year in codfishing, she was the only sailing ship in commercial use on the Pacific Coast.

**Wapama** Built in 1915, this steam schooner is typical of the engine vessels that replaced sailing ships such as the *C.A. Thayer*. Along with her lumber cargoes, the *Wapama* could carry up to 30 passengers. Her elegant passenger quarters and long deck for cargo combined comfort and utility serving the West Coast travel and trade industry until 1947. The *Wapama* is the last of some 225 wooden steam-

ships that once served commercial shipping needs.

### Two other ships can be viewed from the pier.

**Alma** This hard-working little vessel is the last remaining San Francisco Bay scow schooner still afloat. Built in 1891, the *Alma* was designed to carry bulk cargoes including coal, sand, lumber, and hay. She worked the Bay and nearby rivers, but was gradually phased out as trucks and highways began to take her livelihood away. Her final commercial career—oyster shell dredging—ended in 1958 when the use of more efficient equipment led to her retirement.

**Hercules** This ocean-going steam tug moved ships and barges to and within West Coast ports from 1907 to 1962. Equipped with a triple expansion steam engine and designed to handle the largest vessels of her day, the *Hercules* represents one of the finest American steam tugs. Although diesel engines eventually replaced steam, the *Hercules* is being restored to her original condition as a historic reminder of the contributions of these sturdy vessels.

### Many programs are available to help you explore the ships and their history.

**A Self-Guided Tour** is offered via a hand-carried device that provides recorded interpretive messages throughout the ships. This "By-Word" system is available free of charge at the entrance.

**Guided Tours** are available for those wishing to understand various ships in more detail. Explore the 4-story steam engine of the *Eureka*, see the craftsmanship and problems involved in preserving historic ships, or follow each ship's history with a ranger or docent tour guide.

### Living History Programs recall past

San Francisco and grain was her main load when returning to Europe. She is now largely restored to her original appearance: a "blue water, square rigged, lime juice windbag" as those who sailed these ships described them. On board, the many exhibits and museum displays trace her varied career.

events in the Tubbs Cordage Company, in a Victorian period houseboat, and in the galley of the *C.A. Thayer*. Park interpreters in period costume reenact the daily activities of years gone by.

**Films** including the "Last Voyage of the *C.A. Thayer*" recount maritime history. These films are shown either in the *Thayer's* fore-castle or the *Eureka's* movie room.

**Weekend Demonstrations** live the atmosphere at Hyde Street Pier: you can learn nautical skills, listen to folklore, sing sea shanties.

**Group Programs** featuring environmental education and history study are available. Contact the office for more information.

**Volunteer Programs** provide a chance for you to invest your energy in the ships. Consider:

**Docent Program** — Take some classes to train as a volunteer guide at the Hyde Street Pier.

**Steam Club** — Work on the restoration and interpretation of steam engines, including the 1,000 horsepower engine of the *Hercules*.

**Friends of the Alma** — Join a volunteer group that provides special programs involving the only ship in the collection that still sails. Contact *Friends of the Alma*, 2905 Hyde Street, San Francisco, CA 94109 for details.

## Hyde Street Pier

2905 Hyde Street  
(Foot of Hyde Street)

Information: 556-6435

Open Daily, except Christmas and New Year's Day

October-April: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

May-September: 10-6 p.m.

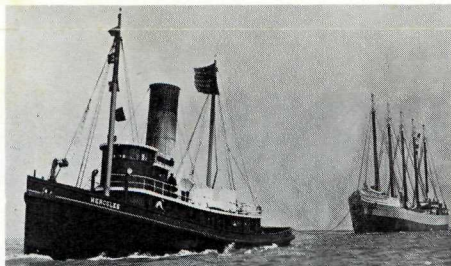
No admission fee

Main viewing pier is wheelchair accessible

Times and locations of programs are posted at the entrance of the pier.

## Balclutha

The *Balclutha*, launched in 1886, is a square-rigged Cape Horn sailing ship with a fascinating history of travel and trade. A steel-hulled, British-built merchant ship, the *Balclutha* is typical of hundreds of square riggers that called yearly for grain in San Francisco. She carried wine, whiskey, wool, window-glass, nitrate and rice; but coal was her primary cargo sailing to



The *Hercules* with a five-masted lumber schooner in tow.◀

The *C.A. Thayer* with codfish dories and fishing gear in 1948.▷

The massive "walking beam" steam engine of the *Eureka*.◀

This 1851 photograph shows the forest of masts that the Gold Rush brought to San Francisco.▽



From 1906-1930, the *Balclutha* sailed as the *Star of Alaska* for Pacific Coast salmon trade. Δ

The *Alma* under sail with cargo about 1907.▷

