

Archive: Tully Papers

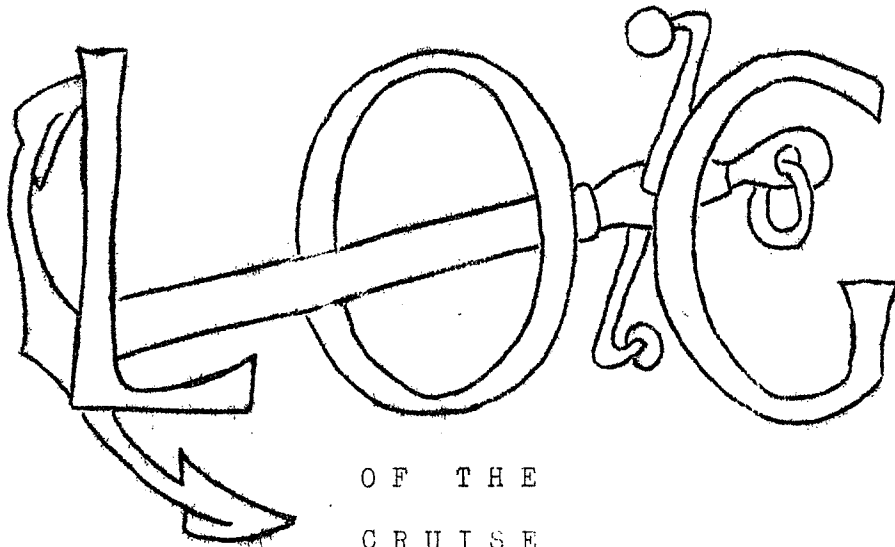
Logs of the President's Trips, Cruise on Board USS Philadelphia,
April 30 - May 8, 1938

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library & Museum

Collection: Grace Tully Archive

Series: Grace Tully Papers

Box 7; Folder = Logs of the President's Trips:
Fishing Cruise to Dry Tortugas, Florida,
November 29-December 6, 1937



OF THE
CRUISE
OF THE
PRESIDENT

on board

U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA
Captain Jules James, USN., Commanding

U.S.S. FANNING, Escort
Commander E.H. Geiselman, USN., Commanding

April 30th
to
May 8th
1938

On Board U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA

The President

Honorable Marvin H. McIntyre

Captain Walter B. Woodson, U.S.N.

Colonel Edwin Watson, U.S.A.

Captain R.T. McIntire, (MC), U.S.N.

Mr. Rudolph Forster

Lieut. E.E. Berthold, U.S.N.

Chief Pharmacist G. A. Fox, U.S.N.

J. L. Learson, C.Y., U.S.N.

Mr. Russell Wood

Mr. Stringfellow

Mr. Tom Walters.

On Board U.S.S. FANNING

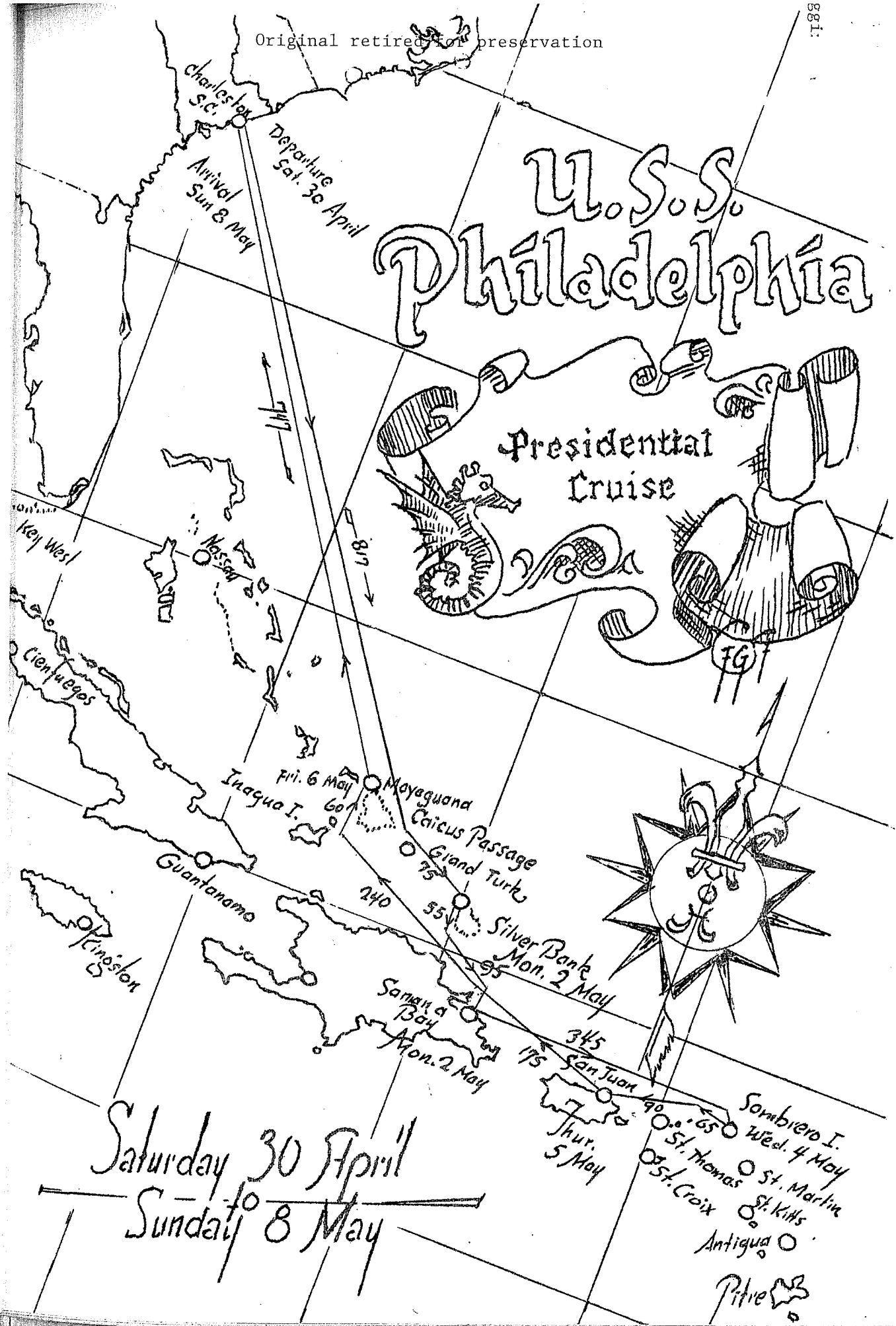
Mr. P. M. Hart

Mr. M. F. Reilly

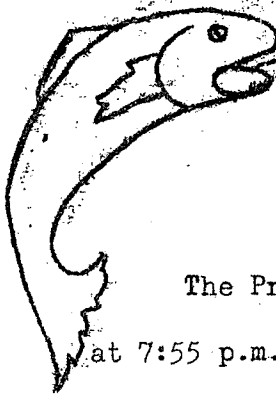
Mr. A. L. Peck

U.S.S. Philadelphia

Presidential
Cruise



Saturday 30 April
Sunday 8 May



The President boarded the Presidential Special at 7:55 p.m., and at 8:00 p.m., the train pulled out of the station, bound for Charleston, S.C., where the U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA and the escort ship, U.S.S. FANNING awaited his arrival.

FRIDAY
April 29th

The President spent the evening working in his car, Miss Tully accompanying the party to Charleston for the purpose of closing up business before the cruise commenced.

The remainder of the party, after having dinner as the guests of the President of the R. F. & P. Railroad and the General Passenger Agent of the Seaboard Air Line, spent the evening at cards, some trying to get revenge and others trying to further prove their skill.

* * *

Bright skies and warm weather awaited the party when they detrained at North Charleston and boarded motor cars for the Navy Yard. Governor Johnson of South Carolina and Mayor Maybank of Charleston greeted the President when he detrained and rode with him to the ship.

SATURDAY
April 30th

Along the road to the Navy Yard, the last of the much publicized azaleas were blooming, shaded by forms covered with Spanish moss. At the Navy Yard the President was greeted by Rear Admiral W. H. Allen, Commandant Sixth Naval District and the officers of the Yard.

The President boarded the PHILADELPHIA after saying goodbye to those remaining behind. At 9:40 a.m., the last line was let go - nothing ahead but clear skies, cool sea breezes, hoped for pleasant hours of fishing, and a much needed rest.

Unfortunately, "Commodore" Pat McKenna was unable to make the trip, and missed a chance to serve under his new commission.

All hands sat out on deck to watch the sights while going out of the harbor, and upon clearing the breakwater speed was stepped up to 21 knots making a cool breeze which caused everybody to linger longer on the topside.

The afternoon was spent in resting up from the train journey and in getting settled.

After dinner and the movies all hands turned in early for a much needed good night's rest.

* * *

The day came in clear and warm, with a smart southeasterly breeze tempering the sun's rays.

SUNDAY
May 1st

Speed 21 knots.

After a late breakfast all hands attended church services conducted by Chaplain J. W. Moore on the fantail.

The remainder of the day was spent in resting up, overhauling fishing gear for tomorrow's sport, reading and spinning yarns.

In the evening, before the movies, a student Navy Band making their first sea cruise, under the leadership of Lieutenant Benter, led all hands in the singing of some old favorites. Although due to the large number of singers, the acoustics, and the fact that the singers in the rear had difficulty in singing the same bar as the singers nearer the band at the same time, it did not detract from the volume of clear dulcet tenor voices heard.

As the course the PHILADELPHIA is steering will take us out of the ordinary track, and as the charts for the area are rather incomplete, the ship is taking regular soundings with her sonic equipment, which will be forwarded to the Navy Department Hydrographic Office for inclusion in future charts. The deepest sounding taken today was 2900 fathoms, or over three miles.

* * *

Because the charts of Silver Bank, our first stop MONDAY
May 2nd
are incomplete, as we neared the bank at about 5 a.m.,
speed was reduced to 5 knots, and the FANNING took the lead,
lowering an anchor to 10 fathoms of chain. At about 6 a.m.,
the FANNING's anchor took hold, and the PHILADELPHIA anchored
5 miles to the northward of the FANNING on the northwest corner
of the Bank.

After a good night's rest and breakfast, all hands were
looking forward to wetting their hooks, but a choppy sea fore-
stalled putting the small boats in the water. About ten thirty
o'clock, the President, Secretary McIntyre, Mr. Forster and
Colonel Watson tried their luck from the forecastle.
Score: The President, two four ounce and one three ounce red
snappers and one piece of coral; the others, zero; total,
11 ounces of fish and a piece of coral.

Colonel Watson, as usual, protested, this time on the
grounds that species of such small size did not come under
the category of fish and that he would have to invoke the river
rule. His protest was to no avail however, and the President
made a clean sweep.

As fishing prospects looked bad, at 11 o'clock the ship
weighed anchor and got underway at 21 knots for the mouth of
Samana Bay, on the coast of the Dominican Republic, which was
reached at about 6 p.m., where the ships anchored for the night.

After dinner and movies and more singing, all hands turned
in for a good night's rest.

* * *

TUESDAY
May 3rd

The party was anxious to get down to the sport of trying to outwit the finny denizens of Samana Bay, so an early breakfast was in order to get in the boats sooner. However, the wind had veered to the northward making a choppy sea, and in order to get a lee the PHILADELPHIA shifted her berth closer to Cape Rafael, and the ship was maneuvered to provide a lee while the boats were lowered and filled with anxious fishermen about 10 o'clock.

The fishing luck however, did not match the anxiety of the fishermen, for two ten pound red snappers were the best of the haul, one being caught by Secretary McIntyre and one by Tommy Qualters. This being Secretary McIntyre's first try at this sort of fishing, the adage of "beginner's luck" held good. The President came in with a three quarter pound Spanish mackerel, and as usual, Colonel Watson's fishing philosophy of pulling on the third nibble did not work, his score remaining at "Swabo". The five fish caught was really not representative of the sport had however, for some good strikes were lost, Rudolph Forster having the ill luck of seeing a nice albacore "about so-o big" slide off his hook as it reached the side of the boat.

After the return of the boats to the ship, the anchor was weighed and a course set for Bombrero Island, a British possession to the northward of the British Virgin Islands, 315 miles distant to the eastward from Samana Bay.

As the run to Sombrero was made over a poorly charted area, constant soundings were taken with the PHILADELPHIA's sonic equipment, and the unusual depth of 4,140 fathoms, or over four and one half sea miles was recorded. This sounding was obtained in the Nares Deep to the northward of Puerto Rico.

TUESDAY
May 3rd
(Cont.)

During the day many radio despatches were received from Washington and the afternoon was devoted to answering them.

Due to the proximity of the Dominican Republic, advantage was taken of the opportunity, and cordial radio greetings were exchanged by the President and President Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic.

Many radio invitations to visit ashore officially and otherwise in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have been received and regretfully declined.

When the sun had set the wind veered to the northeastward again, making the ship much cooler, and this coupled with the pleasant tiredness that comes with fishing in the open boats made for a good night's sleep.

* * *

During the night the clock was set ahead one hour from Eastern Standard Time to Zone Plus Four time, and when they awoke many of the party had difficulty in reconciling what the ship's clocks and bells said in comparison with their watches.

WEDNESDAY
May 4th

The PHILADELPHIA and her escort anchored about one thousand yards from Sombro Island, a small, desolate, rocky and barren island on which there were about five buildings and a lighthouse. The President and the party were away in small boats for fishing about nine o'clock.

WEDNESDAY
May 4th
(Cont.)

Again, as on the first day of fishing, the President made a clean sweep, taking $28\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of fish, the biggest of which was a 20 pound pompano that put up a good fifteen minute fight. Colonel Watson, after orally humbling himself, broke his streak of bad luck, and on the last turn of the boat hooked and landed a five pound barracuda, leaving Dr. McIntire alone in the predicament of not being able to land a fish.

A curious coincidence happened when the small anchor of the President's fishing boat became entangled in a piece of coral and had to be abandoned, and the FANNING in weighing her anchor to get underway, fished to the surface and salvaged a large old fashioned ship's anchor which had probably been lost in the same manner.

While the President and his party were out fishing, the PHILADELPHIA, although the skies were overcast, got a shot of the sun and ascertained that the position of the Island was not accurately charted, the Island being charted two and one quarter miles east of its actual position.

After the boats were picked up, about 12:30, the PHILADELPHIA got underway for the vicinity of San Juan, Puerto Rico, 165 miles to the westward, where a mail pouch from Washington will be picked up in the morning. In view of this delivery

Original retired for preservation

and despatch of mail, all hands put in a little time on correspondence before taking a siesta.

WEDNESDAY
May 4th
(Cont.)

Courteous invitations and congratulatory messages continue to pour in on the radio, from citizens and organizations of Puerto Rico. As they were received, the invitations were declined, and the congratulatory messages were acknowledged.

* * *

It appears that Colonel Watson moved his mattress on topside last night and spread it out right under the airports to the President's cabin. The President complained bitterly of the fact that during the night he was awakened by the loud snoring of some woman third class who apparently was sleeping somewhere near his quarters and directed that this be called to the attention of the commanding officer. Investigation finally settled upon the Colonel as the guilty party.

THURSDAY
May 5th

Early in the morning the PHILADELPHIA, prominently flying the President's flag, anchored within 1000 yards of the fort of Morro Castle manned by the regular United States Army. The PHILADELPHIA was so close to the Fort she was almost in its back yard, but no gun salute was forthcoming. However, after careful coaching of the fort's commanding officer by Pa, the fort finally fired a Presidential salute as soon as the PHILADELPHIA got underway to depart.

Original retired for preservation

Shortly after anchoring, the pilot boat came
alongside with a pouch from the White House, and the
next couple of hours were taken up with disposing of the
contents, and refilling the pouch for its return trip.
This work was completed about 9:30, and at 9:45, the
ship was underway again, for Caicos Bank, speed 21 knots.

THURSDAY
May 5th
(Cont.)

During the afternoon the weather was ideal, with a
light cool breeze coming from ahead, and in view of this
the fore-castle served as office and lounge for the remainder
of the day, with the contents of the morning's pouch
demanding the majority of the attention.

The warm sun and cool sea breezes are beginning
to get their work in, and the effects of the rest of the
last few days is quite evident.

During the day, the President exchanged courteous
greetings with the Acting Governor of Puerto Rico, His
Excellency E. Garriago Morales by radio.

Secretary McIntyre was in receipt of a bouquet from
"The Gang" at Charleston praising his reportorial
dispatches and advising him that all papers were giving
him a by-line. They also asked in the same dispatch that
they get a little quicker action today as they had an
invitation to visit a "Historical Home" in Charleston;
believed to be a garble for "Hysterical Home."

Captain James and his Executive Officer, Commander
Davis had dinner with the President, and after dinner all
joined the crew in a community sing led by Lieutenant
Benter and the Band, followed by movies.

Original retired for preservation

As tomorrow will probably bring the fishing to an end, all hands turned in early to get a good night's rest and be fit for the battle of the Caicos fishing grounds.

THURSDAY
May 5th
(Cont.)

* * *

P.S. Colonel Watson was heard explaining that he had been so accustomed to sleeping under the skies in his active field work that he made it a custom one night during the cruise to sleep on deck. He chose this night as a proper one to gaze into the face of the elements, and in this secluded spot he indulged in reveries undisturbed until the deck swabbing crew came above. It has been Colonel Watson's contention that, he not being asleep, there must have been some other deck sleeper, or walker, undisclosed as yet, who caused these disturbing sounds.

EMW.

* * *

The day dawned bright, with a smooth sea, and the ship off East Caicos Island, trying to find an anchorage. Captain James attempted four times to anchor on the ledge with his bow about three hundred yards from the beach. On each occasion after the anchor was lowered to the bottom and a strain taken on the chain it slipped over the ledge until the chain was straight up and down in about a hundred fathoms of water. Captain James remarked, "It is pretty hard to anchor a ship when the beach is closer to you than the bottom."

FRIDAY
May 6th

An early start for the fishing expedition had been planned, but due to a heavy influx of radio messages during the night and early morning, the start was postponed until ten o'clock. The President took as a guest in his boat Commander Geiselman, Commanding the escort ship, FANNING.

FRIDAY
May 6th
(Cont.)

Captain Woodson wanted to fish today but the President would not take him. The President, on leaving the ship in the morning for fishing, told Captain Woodson he would rendezvous and pick him and Pa up after luncheon, but the fishing was so good that the President decided not to keep the rendezvous. Captain Woodson claims a \$2.00 rebate for this, but has little hope of out-talking Pa when the time for payment comes.

The President, as usual, got the largest fish, a 20 pound barracuda, and the largest number of fish, eight, thereby again winning the pool.

The fishing was so good that the party did not return to the ship until 4 p.m., making a total of six hours of skirting the reefs. Mr. Rudolph Forster turned in the second biggest fish, a 19 pound barracuda, and Dr. McIntire broke his streak of bad luck with 7 fish. An odd incident occurred in the President's boat, wherein 15 out of 17 fish caught in that boat were caught on the President's rod and reel, with the President and Dr. McIntire using it alternately, the other two fish being caught by Commander Geiselman on his own reel. One of the fish caught by Commander Geiselman was an unknown species, caught outside



PART OF THE CATCH AT CAICOS

and through the head, and was returned to Washington for identification and mounting. FRIDAY
May 6th
(Cont.)

While the President and the party were fishing, one of the crew of the PHILADELPHIA hooked and hauled aboard a voracious hammerhead shark measuring seven feet in length. This shark when cut open had 12 baby sharks in her, about 1 foot in length, and ready to take up life. As a result of this catch, Captain Woodson, having remained on board ship, claimed the biggest and largest number of fish for the day, but at the time of this writing, has little hope of persuading Pa. Alas and alack, not only will he be denied his \$2 rebate, but will also be denied his claim for a \$2 win, total net loss for the day, \$4.00.

Upon the return of the fishermen, the ship again got underway and set a course for Charleston, where it is expected she will arrive at about 6 p.m., Sunday, giving two whole days to rest before again shouldering the harness..

FRIDAY
May 6th
(Cont.)

After dinner, the President addressed the officers and crew assembled at the movies, expressing his satisfaction over the performance of the PHILADELPHIA, the first of the new cruisers authorized during his Administration, the keel having been laid down under the operation of the NIRA, and the Congress having provided for them in 1933. He also congratulated the crew on having a "Happy Ship".

After the movies and a few bars of "Sweet Adeline" the Kentucky Derby to be run tomorrow was the topic of conversation until the day's strenuous work at the end of a rod and reel sent all hands yawning to bed.

* * *

P.S. It developed afterwards that Captain Woodson's only participation in catching the shark was to give some totally unsound advice to the sailors who caught and pulled in this mammal. An unconfirmed rumor was passed around the PHILADELPHIA to the effect that Captain Woodson had an inferiority complex on fishing and did not wish to compete with such seasoned men of the sea and anglers as Captain Ross McIntire and Colonel Watson.

EMW.

Original retired for preservation

For the first day since last Sunday, the ship

SATURDAY
May 7th

did not make a stop for fishing, and the morning was taken up in resting and observing the routine weekly Captain's Inspection of the Crew and Living Spaces of the ship. Upon completion of the inspection, the President received all the commissioned and warrant officers of the ship in his cabin.

About four o'clock a combination tanker-freighter flying the Norwegian flag was observed on our starboard beam, the third ship sighted on this cruise, and calls were exchanged with her by the International Code. Due to an error on the Norwegian ship's part she was then reported to be the S.S. KOS VIII. At the time of sighting, Secretary McIntyre suggested that the ship was trying to intercept us as she had changed her course, but his suggestion was believed erroneous at the time.

At about 7:35 p.m., a call was intercepted from the Norwegian ship MARATHON, for medical assistance, and at the order of the President, course was reversed, and speed increased. At about 8:35, the MARATHON was sighted on our starboard bow, and it turned out to be the previously reported KOS VIII, which proved that Secretary McIntyre might be a novice seaman, but his maritime observations were right, to say nothing of his newspaper "nose".

A boat was lowered over the side in a choppy sea, coxswained by a Norwegian speaking gunner's mate and carrying Commander Davis, the ship's surgeon. After reaching

Original retired for preservation

the MARATHON, the doctor removed a steel splinter from an injured seaman's eye; the seaman's name was Ragnar Kristiansen, and he spoke no English. SATURDAY May 7th (Cont.)

This incident gave a good break for the newspaper men, and three dispatches were sent in rapid order as news was available. This incident also broke up the Movie show, then in full swing about the time the MARATHON was contacted. The President left the show to watch the proceedings on deck.

The Master of the MARATHON sent an appropriate signal of thanks to the Captain of the PHILADELPHIA, not knowing then that the President of the United States was on board. In acknowledging this message Captain James informed the Master of the fact.

* * *

Late rising, a late breakfast, and Divine Services were the order for the morning. A tropical rainshower threatened for a while to make the Divine Services be held below decks, but about 10:15, the sun came out and dried the decks, so that at 11 o'clock all hands turned out to hear Chaplain Moore conduct the services. The subject of the sermon was the religion of Benjamin Franklin. SUNDAY May 8th

After the services and lunch, all hands were busy making preparations to go ashore, and at the entrance of Charleston Harbor, the Secret Service Agents that were on the FANNING were transferred to the PHILADELPHIA, the FANNING proceeding to Norfolk.

Original retired for preservation

After tying up to the dock, Secretary McIntyre SUNDAY
tried to work a gust of wind into a gale, but it just May 8th
tuckered out, and the newspapers missed another break. (Cont.)

The docking was done without event, and after
greeting friends, a press conference was held on
board ship.

Following the press conference the President
received the Governor of South Carolina, the Mayor of
Charleston, Representative Thomas McMillan, Rear
Admiral Allen and others.

About 6 p.m., goodbyes were said to messmates
and the party left to board the Presidential Special
for the return to Washington.

* * *

Original retired for preservation
EPILOGUE

Edgar Allen Poe needed only the dark hours of the night to muse and create, and Whittier only the sight of his native New England mountains, but to get a hundred words or so of postscripts for this log out of Pa it took the following:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 4, 1938

From: C-in-C.
To : Pa.

Subject: Muses.

References: (a) PHILADELPHIA Log.
(b) Previous Logs.
(c) Previous Muses.

1. You will please "muse".
2. Walter has "mused" and is waiting.

F. D. R.

* * *