

The Life of Capt. John R. Andrews

By

Rhys Anderson

Capt. Andrews lived a long and fulfilling life. He is one of few men that holds the honor of having served his country in both the Civil War and the World War and that is why I chose to research his life.



John R. Andrews was born to James and Maria Capt. Andrews on September 25, 1841 in Scarborough, Maine. Capt. Andrews attended public schools in Saco and Biddeford as well as Limington Academy where he graduated. After graduation Capt. Andrews taught in Cumberland



Mills and Saccarappa. Following his teaching job, Capt. Andrews acquired a position at the firm of Chadwick & York. At the age of just nineteen on September 20th, 1861, Capt. Andrews enlisted in the Union army where he began as second lieutenant. Over his four years of service up until November 16th, 1865, Capt. Andrews would earn the ranks of first lieutenant and eventually captain. As a member of the First Maine Cavalry (Maine's Cavalry Regiment that suffered the most casualties), Capt. Andrews was no stranger to the horrors of war. Capt. Andrew was even a prisoner of war at Libby prison where he was confined for a few months. The same day he was honorably discharged from the war he married Elizabeth Jane Milliken, whom he would eventually have five children with. Following the war Capt. Andrews moved around quite a bit. He lived in Iowa where he searched for farmland. He became an officer of the Pension Department in Washington. Capt. Andrews returned to Saco where he served as postmaster for twelve years, traveled to Ohio where he became a railroad contractor, and then New York where he was a mine superintendent. Capt. Andrews went to the graphite mines of New Jersey, but was unsuccessful so he went back to New York this time in the iron mines of Gouverneur. After the bulk of his travels Capt. Andrews would return to his hometown of Saco where he established a boat-building plant on the Saco River. After only three years Capt.

Andrews closed his plant and headed back out west only this time to Seattle, Washington. Once more Capt. Andrews was drawn back to Saco where he would reside until the outbreak of the first World War.

In 1917 at the age of 76, Capt. Andrews volunteered to help the U.S. government's war effort and was sent to the Portsmouth, New Hampshire Atlantic Shipyards. Capt. Andrews was a very experienced boat designer and constructor. In 1917 "Rudder Magazine" announced a worldwide yacht designing competition. The yacht was for a South African Diamond millionaire "Barney" Barnatto. Capt. Andrews entered a yacht he called "Squando" for which he was awarded first place.



Rudder Designing Competition

THE RUDDER Designing Competition for a 28-foot safe and sane day cruiser proved to be very popular. Plans were submitted from all parts of this country and from abroad, and the judges have been hard at work since the competition closed on May 1st analyzing the plans and selecting those which in their opinion were entitled to the prizes.

The conditions were taken from an inquiry addressed to THE RUDDER some months ago. THE RUDDER subscriber wrote:

"I want a boat to meet the following conditions:

"I don't want a cruiser, as I have two boys, one nine and the other five years, and want to be home every night, but must give them some amusement, at the same time keep my eye on the oldest kid.

"A boat of good beam, about 28 feet over all, with some kind of cabin or cuddy to keep food and clothes dry, and one that could be driven at least 10 or 12 miles and be easily handled by myself."

Of the number sent in seven have been selected as fully complying with all the conditions and having merit. These seven were from

Ralph E. Winslow, Bristol, R. I., who entered under the name of "A Hayseed".

G. F. Neuberger, Squantum, Mass., entered as "Fleet Captain".

Charles G. MacGregor, Buffalo, N. Y., entered as "Miskin".

G. de Coninck, Maisons-Laffitte, France, entered under "Fluctuat Nec Mergitur".

John R. Andrews, Saco, Me., entered as "Squando".

J. A. Beckwith, Detroit, Mich., entered as "Cadillac".

Wm. H. Taylor, New Bedford, Mass., entered as "New Bedford".

The judges, after very careful deliberation, finally selected the plans submitted in the order already named. The first prize of \$50 goes to Ralph E. Winslow; the second prize, \$25, goes to G. F. Neuberger; the third, \$15, to Charles G. MacGregor, and the fourth, \$10, to G. de Coninck.

The judges have furnished some criticisms of the plans of the four best designs, which are as follows:

"A HAYSEED"

The drawings of design you submitted are prepared with great care and your plans clearly and accurately show your ideas of form, construction and general arrangement.

The selected proportions of length and breadth, and general form of hull are good, though some objection might be made to the slackness of bilge for a great portion of boat's length. In a chop of a sea boat will roll easily. It is to be regretted that you did not make a table of offsets, or state your estimate of power required to drive boat at a named speed. You also failed to give displacement to L.W.L. shown. The designer is the one man able to make an accurate table of offsets, and as his calculations should include power required to drive and displacement, this information should be given. Construction details are completely and accurately worked out and selected dimensions and kinds of materials are correct for a boat of the size. The general arrangement of boat is good. A large cockpit with small cabin forward is a good arrangement for a boat of this type.

Considered as a whole, the plans are very creditable and we have awarded the first prize to the designer.

"FLEET CAPTAIN"

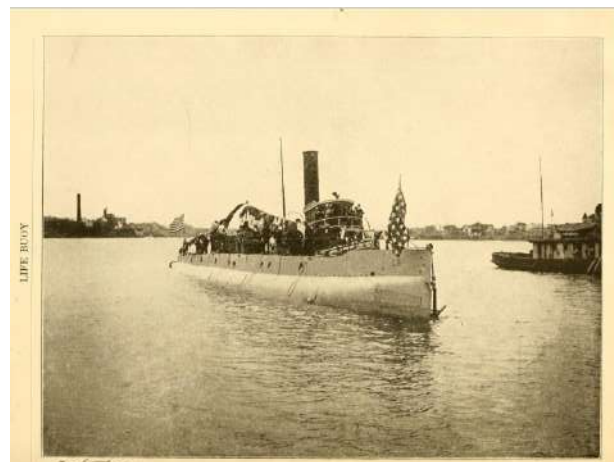
Your lines drawing is moderately accurate and neatly prepared. We are inclined to believe that a decrease in curve of bilge and a slight increase in width of floor at and near to stern would improve the shape and initial stability. You did not send table of offsets, or state displacement, or speed boat will make with power mentioned on construction plan.

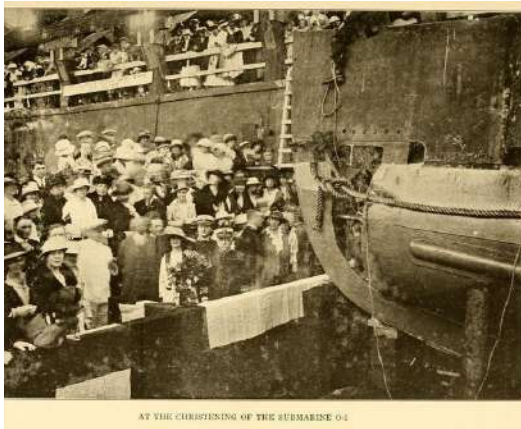
The construction details are clearly shown, but you failed to give particulars of dimensions of materials. Plans are prepared for the purpose of explaining the designer's ideas to a builder or user of the plans. Of course the builder of a boat can measure the various details shown on a drawing, but this is a lengthy process and likely to prove very inaccurate. It is very essential to state dimensions and give other particulars of principal parts of the hull structure.

The general arrangement shown is good for a small craft of the type.

The design as a whole indicates that you have a fairly accurate knowledge of the proper way to explain your ideas of form and construction by means of drawings. You, however, should always bear in mind that a designer must make his plans so complete that guessing on the part of the user is eliminated.

Needless to say Capt. Andrews knew a lot about boats and was known by various nautical magazines and yachtsmen. It is due to this vast knowledge of boat construction that Capt. Andrews was placed in charge of designing ships and made superintendent of construction in the Atlantic Shipyard. During his time in the Atlantic shipyard he oversaw the construction of both



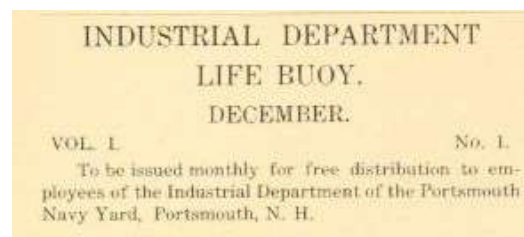


AT THE CHRISTENING OF THE SUBMARINE O-1

submarines and battleships. One of the first submarines built in the shipyard was the L-8. There is little information of the day to day lives of the shipbuilders in the yard and more specifically the quiet John R. Capt. Andrews. However a

magazine that was “To be issued monthly for free distribution to employees of the Industrial

Department” can help show what the average



employee would be exposed to. The magazine simply named “Industrial Department Life Buoy” would most definitely have been seen by Capt. Andrews. The magazine illustrated what life was like as a shipbuilder. At the beginning of every month's issue there was a chart that showed workplace accidents and while there were far less casualties in the shipyard than overseas, it was still a dangerous job. The magazine was also littered with patriotic propaganda. In every issue there were a multitude of articles all promoting the sale of war bonds urging employees to buy

them as it was “their duty as an American.”

YOUR PATRIOTIC DUTY

Make your dollars serve the Government and help win the war. Buy United States Government Liberty Loan Bonds, the world's safest investment.

Join our Liberty Loan Saving Club now and be ready for the next Liberty Loan.

We have helped thousands to own United States Government Bonds on the partial payment plan.

Have you finished paying for your First and Second Liberty Loan Bonds? Why not continue your weekly payments and have them apply on the next Liberty Loan when issued? We will allow interest from time payments are made.

Leave your bonds with us for safe keeping, without charge.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK
PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

United States Depository Assets over Two Million Dollars.

SAVING
CONSERVATION and
THRIFT
WILL WIN THE WAR

PATRIOTISM DEMANDS THAT THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES
SPEND LESS and SAVE MORE

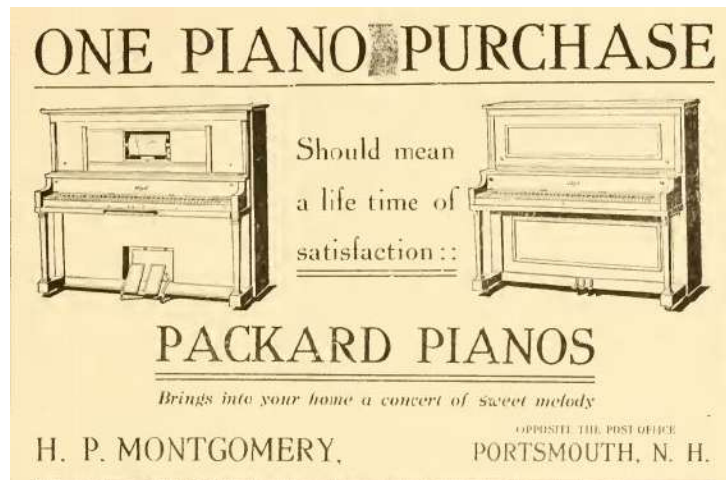
10,000 PEOPLE ARE SAVING THEIR EARNINGS BY THE HELP OF
OUR INSTITUTIONS. NEW SAVING ACCOUNTS SOLICITED.

PISCATAQUA SAVINGS BANK
(FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING) PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

"I SAW IT IN THE LIFE BUOY"

One could even find motivational letters, instructions, poems, stories, and quotes that were sometimes even written by the Industrial Departments directors. The majority of the letters and instructions just warned of traits employers dreaded or encouraged traits that employers favored.

They condemned slackers and unsafe work habits and promoted safety tips as well as just general work notes. Not unlike most magazines the Life Buoy had regular advertisements



which are useful for reflecting the capital culture of the era and what employees were spending their hard earned paychecks on. As for Capt. Andrews himself there is little to no information on what he did in his time during the war. His wife was already dead and his children were off in the world and no known letters of his exist from his time in the war. The only definite information regarding Capt. Andrews is that he worked in the Atlantic Shipyards from 1917 to the end of the war.

Capt. Andrews returned to Maine in 1920 where he would reside in York County for some time. Capt. Andrews died at the age of 83 on February 14th, 1925, in the home of his daughter Mary Beckwith. Capt. Andrews, a beloved man, was mourned all over Saco where his

funeral was held.

BIDDEFORD DAILY JOURNAL.
FEBRUARY 16, 1925.

POSTMASTER OF SACO FOR TWELVE YEARS

**Capt. John R. Andrews
Called by Death at
Daughter's Home.**

**WAS VETERAN OF
THE CIVIL WAR**

**Life Was Marked by
a Variety of
Adventures.**

The funeral of Captain John R. Andrews, a former postmaster of Saco and widely known as a Civil war veteran, who died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. James Z. Beckwith, 75 Spring street, Saco, Saturday night after a long illness, was held this afternoon at the home of Mrs. Beckwith. The services were private and were conducted by Rev. Charles S. Jones, pastor of the Second Congregational church of this city. Members of the Grand Army posts were present at the last sad rites.

The casket in which the body reposed was draped with the Stars and Stripes which the deceased loved so well. There were beautiful floral tributes about the casket.

The pallbearers were William H. Vinton, Percy Davis, Frank Marr and Myron A. Savage, members of H. H. Burbank Camp, Sons of Veterans.

Burial was at Laurel Hill cemetery.

Capt. Andrews' life was marked by a variety of adventures. He had served as school teacher, been superintendent of a coal mine, a builder of vessels, and as a designer of yachts he won the first prize in a yacht designing contest of international scope. His achievements would fill many pages and his experiences in the Civil war would fill a book. Modest to an unusual degree it was difficult to get Capt. Andrews to tell of his hairbreadth escapes during the three years service in the First Maine Cavalry, which lost more men in action than any other mounted regiment in the Union army.

During the Stoneman's raid he rode for nearly a week in the saddle with but a little sleep and without much food, a part of the time so close to Richmond that he could see the spires of the Confederate capital. A southern cavalryman discharged his revolver at Capt. Andrews at such close range that his face was burned by the powder, but the bullet only tore a bit out of his ear. Horses were shot from under him, and his uniform of blue was cut up by the bullets of Confederate sharpshooters. He had close calls at the battles of Antietam, Rappahannock, Gettysburg, Cold Harbor, Trevillian Station and St. Marys Church.

Capt. Andrews was born in Scurboro in 1841 and was educated in the public schools of Saco and Biddeford, and afterward attended Limington academy, of which Prof. William Lord was principal. A few years later John Lord, a brother of Professor Lord and a private in the company of which Mr. Andrews was lieutenant, lay by Lieut. Andrews' side at Todd's Tavern in the Wilderness with a bullet wound through his left eye.

After leaving the academy, Capt. Andrews taught school in Saccarappa for one year before he went to work as clerk in the store of Chadwick & York at Kings Corner, this city. The following year he became associated with Lewis O. Cowan, then editor of the Biddeford Journal.

September 1 following the outbreak of the Civil war he was mustered into the First Maine Cavalry and on October 31 was mustered into the United States service as first sergeant. He became second lieutenant September 1, 1862, a year from the time he enlisted.

At Louisiana Court House, Captain Andrews and 27 other members of the company were taken prisoners and sent to Libby prison, where they were confined for a few months before being exchanged.

After being mustered out of service at the close of the war, Capt. Andrews returned to Saco, where he remained for a short time. He became interested in western farm lands and went to Iowa, but not being satisfied with conditions as he found them, returned to Maine. In 1866 he was appointed an officer in the U. S. pension department and for four years was in Washington. In 1870 he was appointed postmaster of Saco and held the office for 12 years. In 1882 he went to Ohio, where he was a railroad contractor for four years.

He returned to Saco where he engaged in business. He became interested in coal mining and operated a bituminous mine with success for three years. Later he prospected for graphite in New Jersey, but the results were not satisfactory and he went to Gouveneur, N. Y., where he acted as superintendent of an iron mine.

A few years later again found him in Saco where he engaged in boat building. At his plant on the banks of the Saco river he built several fine boats, among them being a motor boat for a wealthy man in

tensively for nautical magazines. In 1915 he closed out his business and returned to Saco. During the World war he was in the Atlantic ship yards at Portsmouth, N. H., where he had complete charge of designing and superintending work of construction.

In 1917 the Rudder magazine announced a contest for designing a yacht for Baron Baretto, a wealthy diamond merchant, in which draughtsmen the world over were in-

vited to compete.

Captain Andrews, who had been interested in boat building all his life, became a contestant and the plans he submitted were decided by the board of judges to be the best of any, and he was awarded first prize.

Captain Andrews was a charter member of Fred S. Gurney Post, G. A. R., of Saco that recently dissolved, and sent its charter back to the National organization. The action to cease its activities was taken at a meeting of six surviving members held at the home of Captain Andrews, who was the first commander of the post. Captain Andrews is the second member to die since the meeting was held December 5.

The deceased is survived by three daughters, Mrs. Mary Beckwith of Saco with whom he made his home; Mrs. Oliver Throckmorton of Indianapolis, Ind., and Mrs. Henry Putnam of Carthage, Mo., and two sons, Charles J. and Edwin S. Andrews of Detroit Mich.

Capt. Andrews lived a long and fulfilling life. Following it he left his children; Charles J. Andrews, Mary C. Andrews, Kate Andrews, Edwin Smith Andrews, and Anna W. Andrews.

Note from author: I tried multiple times to follow Capt. Andrews family tree and many of which were made private by the family. I attempted to reach out to two living family members, but unfortunately, they were unresponsive. Following this I reached out to the Biddeford Historical Society; Once more I was met with silence and it put an end to any chance of acquiring an oral history. My apologies for that.

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Year: 1880; Census Place: Saco, York, Maine; Roll: 491; Page: 512B; Enumeration District: 204

Year: 1900; Census Place: Carthage Ward 3, Jasper, Missouri; Page: 13; Enumeration District:

0060

*Year: 1910; Census Place: Seattle Ward 3, King, Washington; Roll: T624_1659; Page: 5A;
Enumeration District: 0157; FHL microfilm: 1375672*

*Year: 1920; Census Place: Saco Ward 3, York, Maine; Roll: T625_651; Page: 2A; Enumeration
District: 125*