

Is it mutiny?

No, it is ...

HILLIS ON THE BOUNTY

AT 19, ERIC HILLIS, A DALHOUSIE ARTS STUDENT, HAS SPENT A SUMMER UNRIVALLED FOR SHEER ADVENTURE AND EXCITEMENT. SAILING ABOARD THE N.S. BUILT MOVIE REPLICA OF THE HMS BOUNTY, HE HAS MET WITH AND SEEN PLACES AND PEOPLE MOST ONLY READ ABOUT. THE GAZETTE PRESENTS THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF HILLIS' OWN VERSION OF HIS LIFE ABOARD THE BOUNTY.

By the spring of 1962, almost everybody in Nova Scotia had been saturated with news and information of the Bounty. Since her launching in August of 1960, local papers had followed her path to Tahiti, and various organizations had expressed intentions of buying her from her owners, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Bounty had become closely connected with Nova Scotia, and the Nova Scotian heritage of sea life had made her a heroine.

I could not help but take notice of the ship, one could hardly pass a day without some reminder of her, either in the telephone book or the papers. And, like many males, I would have given my right arm to sail on her. But this was a dream to be relegated to a minor and unattainable position, along with being marooned on a desert isle with a couple dozen beautiful and doting females, and the hope of inheriting several million dollars.

MESS BOY

One day, just as the final examinations of 1962 drew to a close, I spotted a want-ad for crew for the Bounty. Without much hope, I answered it. The subsequent events moved too fast for description. Less than two weeks later I was flying to Long Beach, California to join the ship's crew as the lowly but essential mess-boy. Long suppressed dreams of romance completely erased any disappointment at my position.

My first introduction to Bounty and my first view of her ten miles of running rigging and her spars towering a hundred feet above the deck followed. We spent three weeks in Long Beach, refitting the ship for the summer-long publicity cruise.

At first, I steered clear of the rigging, feeling rather glad that I wasn't forced to work aloft. I was quite contented with scrubbing and general repairs. I figured that even if I didn't go aloft, my friends at home would never know the difference. But after awhile curiosity overcame fear, and before the summer was over, mess department duties received only a lick and a promise as the mess crew disappeared to help work sails.

After three weeks of steady work, everything was declared ready. Stores were taken aboard, and on the first of June we shook the dust from our feet and headed for the high seas. The first leg of our cruise was to be the short haul from Long Beach to Vancouver, B. C. The 1200 miles were to take us an estimated six days. But little did we "green" hands know what lay ahead of us.

We were barely a day out of Long Beach when a real Pacific storm gave us a real introduction to sea life. Winds gusted to eighty

knots and seas rose to fifty feet. It proved a pretty terrifying experience for someone used to small boat cruising around Nova Scotia. The wind blew right on our bow, preventing us from flying any efficient sail, and slowing us to a snail's pace. Seas broke over the first third of the deck. Over one twenty-four hour period our average speed was about one half knot, not taking into account the 6 or 8 knots we were making vertically.

Below decks was worse. Everything that had looked secure in port now seemed possessed of independent life. Each roll set something rolling around the galley. We got our morning exercise chasing attempted fried eggs around the grill; omelettes and scrambled became the order of the day mixed with that psychological oddity called sea-sickness.

Don't let anyone ever tell you that "mal de mer" is the indication of the novice. Even the most hardened salts react in some way to a rough sea after several weeks in port. The three basic reactions are violent illness, a loss of appetite, and a distinct aversion to food. The last category include the lucky souls who just became sleepy. All symptoms usually disappear after two or three days.

SHANGHIED

There is nothing to describe the sensation of knowing that no matter what, you can't get off the ship until you reach port, and there were times in the first days that I would have considered walking back to port. I was lucky, however, I fell into the second group of victims. Not feeling very good, I subsisted on cigarettes and oranges for about five days, but became quite used to the roll and pitch without any loss of items of nutritional value. Some of my less fortunate companions could, however, claim several hours of sea-watching and rail-leaning, two very exhausting activities.

After fifteen days of beating up the Pacific Coast, we awoke one morning, tore up on the deck to discover that we had reached the relative calm of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. We hove to for a day and a half repairing the damage done to paint and bright work by the sea. Then we made our way into Vancouver. The residents had been waiting for us for nine days, and the welcome that they turned out was directly proportional to the time that they had waited. As we sailed under Lion's Gate Bridge, approximately four hundred small craft turned out to meet us, and police estimated that three hundred and fifty thousand people lined the shore.

CELEBRITIES

Here we had our first taste of what living in the public eye would be like. Nothing was sacred, and the privacy of sea gave way to the goldfish bowl living of a floating museum. Bounty entertained over twenty-five thousand people a day, each one loaded with questions and a burning desire to go below decks. Of course, they weren't allowed there. It was private living quarters, and not authentic eighteenth century.

From Vancouver, we made the short trip across the Straights to Victoria. After two days of being open to the public, we made our way to Seattle, city of the World's Fair for 1962. We appeared in conjunction with the city's Seafare and the World's Fair. While in Seattle we were accorded all the rights of visiting cel-



MESSBOY ERIC HILLIS tends to chores aboard the BOUNTY. The Dalhousie Arts student was fortunate to spend his summer as part of the publicity cruise voyaging the coasts of North and Central America.

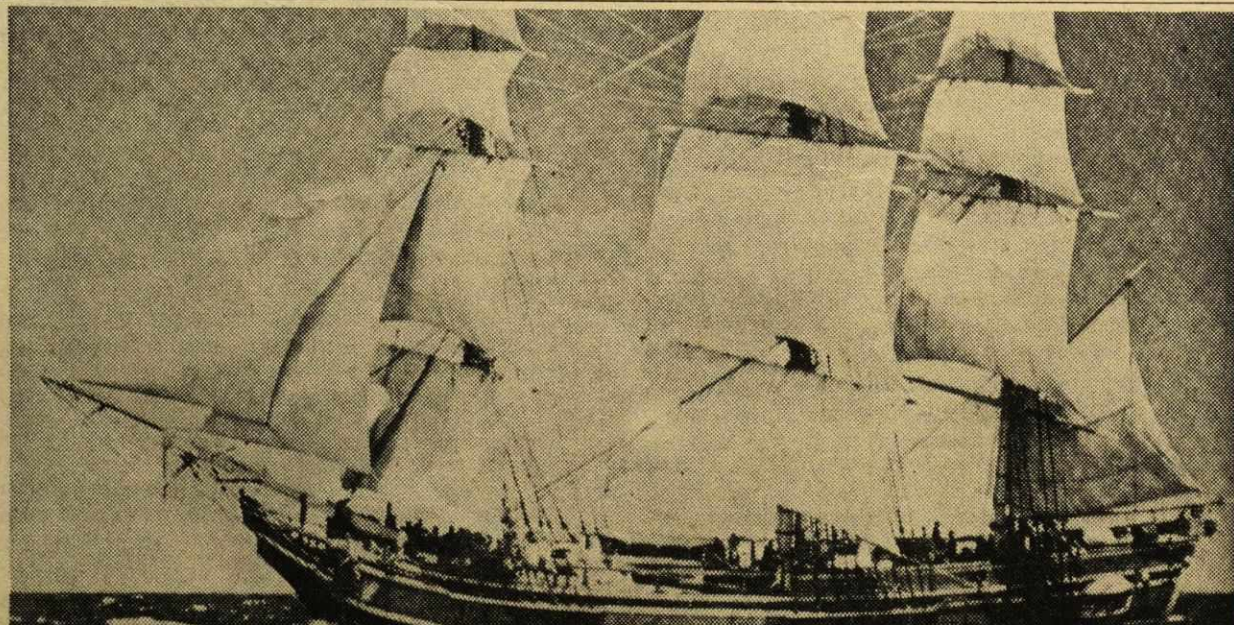
ebrities, which was inestimably good for my morale. We were given free tours of the Fair, complete with our personal tour guides. Only one incident occurred here to mar our stay, and it was laughable. Bounty's owners decided that as a good-will gesture they would take some city Fair Officials on a short cruise. Bounty readied up and cast off lines while a crew of several thousand watched. We moved about fifteen feet astern before we encountered a slight obstacle in the form of too much ship and not enough water. There was an embarrassing wait as the tide came in and then we tried again. No luck. All the VIP's went ashore. Next day a dredge appeared to clear the channel. The Port of Seattle which had insisted that there was 35 feet of water had taken soundings and found only 11 feet, not enough for Bounty's fourteen foot hull. The trip was made a few days later.

The rest of our stay passed without incident. On the 28th of June we left for San Francisco, enjoying a brisk sail back down the Pacific Coast. Our five day stay there was taken up with visitors and taking on stores for our 3300 mile trip to the Panama Canal Zone.

FROM PACIFIC TO ATLANTIC

We left San Francisco on July 9th, and for three weeks, we really enjoyed ourselves as we made our way past the U. S. and Mexico to Panama. This trip was my first introduction to the weather and surroundings of the semi-tropics, and it provided many new experiences for me and the rest of the crew who were novices at sea. Days merged into a succession of hot sun and balmy nights. Time lost all meaning, each day being the same routine, and a relaxed atmosphere prevailing all. Flying fish made their appearance, starting at the movement of the ship or of some predatory fish, and scooting into the air only to fall prey to a hungry gull. Some, attracted by Bounty's night-running lights, landed on deck and became an integral part of the next mornings breakfast. Porpoise played for hours in the bow wave, putting on endless shows of acrobatics and proving themselves to be the incurable show-offs that they are. The only reminder of the life-and-death struggle that took place beneath the surface of this placid sea was the occasional, ominous dorsal fin slicing the surface.

We arrived in the Canal Zone on an overcast, humid, day. After a day of taking on stores and getting our mail, we moved through the Canal to the Atlantic. Bounty's first return to her home waters since she left nearly two years before was complete.



THE HMS BOUNTY replica, was built for the MGM movie version of "Mutiny on the Bounty" by Smith and Rhuland shipyards of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia at a cost of \$750,000. Launched August 27, 1960, it spent nine months in Tahiti filming the movie and then on a publicity cruise around the world. The Bounty was the only ship replica ever built from the keel up for movie purposes.

(PLEASE TURN TO PAGE SIX)