

MASTER SHIPPER

Sam Loveland

Editor's note: After reading Sam's account of his life's activities, "Master Shipper" seemed the appropriate title to his story. Before, during and since World War II, his company has been an important player in the shipping world. His personal contributions to the Normandy landings in 1944 were critical in the success of that operation.

I was lucky to have a father who began his career immediately after high school as Mate of a three-masted schooner, the SARAH D. FELL, and two years thereafter, succeeded his father as Master.

The schooner was named for Sarah Drexel, who became its owner when her husband, John R. Fell, died at 23 years of age. She married Alexander Van Rennsalaer, bought a large steam yacht in Scotland of which my grandfather took command and stayed with until he died in 1914. I believe she was the Aunt Sarah who inspired THE PHILADELPHIA STORY.

Dad booked the freights and sailed the schooner as if it were his own for an eventful and successful ten years, mostly in the West Indies trade, then advised Drexel

and Company, to whom he reported, to sell the vessel. He moved with a partner into the stevedoring business in Philadelphia, and, though his partner died, continued to prosper in that business through World War I.

His best customer was The Philadelphia Sugar Company, and they asked him why it cost so much to ship refined sugar through the Delaware & Chesapeake Canal to Baltimore. This was in 1920. He bought two small steel barges, formed S. C. Loveland Co., Inc., and by 1933, when I joined the company, had an expanded fleet of barges and tugs and was moving fifty thousand tons of refined sugar a year from Philadelphia to Baltimore and greater amounts to Norfolk, Virginia, and North and South Carolina ports, returning with forest products to as far north as New England.

In 1927, two steel American built ocean-going barges bought by the company in France were towed to Philadelphia by a Dutch tug that was coming to the U.S. to tow a tanker back to Germany. Dad persuaded the tug captain, Jan Kalkman, to ship me on board to work my passage back to Europe. The tanker, a German war



Sam and Dotty indulge a favorite pastime.

prize, bought by Esso's Italian company, had a large diesel engine which no one could operate properly. After taking on 4000 tons of diesel and 4000 tons of gasoline to pay the towing bill, it was being towed to Hamburg for a new power plant.

I joined the tug at Bayonne in May of 1927. It was thought that the tug could carry enough coal to make an English port, but bad weather forced an unscheduled stop in Spain. There, in about three hours, women brought nearly 200 tons of coal aboard in large straw baskets on their heads, walking a gang plank from a barge. Thus we proceeded to Hamburg arriving 46 days out of New York.

This was a great education for me in seamanship, navigation, and most important, ocean towing. I worked for S. C. Loveland Company during summer vacations and full time after graduation. Then, suddenly in 1938, Dad died, and it was up to me to run the company.

The War Years. Again it was sugar that propelled us into new territory. In January 1942, the War Shipping Administration was formed with Admiral Emory Land as its Administrator and Edmond Moran, president of Moran Towing in New York as an assistant. There was a shortage of ships to ensure importation of needed sugar supplies, and someone said "Loveland barges sugar." That evening I had a call from Ed Moran, and the next morning I went permanently to Washington. Ed Moran was made Director of Small Vessels (under 3500 tons), and I, Manager of Barge and Tugboat Services. We requisitioned every large barge and ocean tug that could be made suitable and operated them with agents (their owners where possible) and civilian crews. In this way, protected by Coast Guard and Navy planes from Key West, we barged sugar from Havana to Port Everglades, thence by rail to U.S. refineries. Not a single cargo was lost in three years of operation.

Ed Moran became a Navy captain and was made Deputy Administrator for Small Vessels and I became Director of Small Vessel operations. We directed all ocean towing for the military except for the Navy fleet tugs. Forty-nine ocean tugs 200' long, built by the Maritime Commission for the British under lend-lease, were delivered beginning in 1942 for operation by our office with civilian crews.

Early in 1943 Ed Moran was sent to England to review plans for the invasion of the continent. We towed barge equipment to England. Moran was made Tug Controller for the invasion and on the first of May he sent for me. I reported to Commodore Flanigan in London who

arranged for Lt. Commander Bill Kirk to be my Navy guardian. He was the brother of Admiral Kirk, Navy Chief of U. S. Attack Force. Our office was on an amusement pier at Lee-on-Solent, our supply ship a P & O passenger ship anchored off the pier.

We had charge of all allied tugs, British, Dutch, French, U.S Army and Navy, almost 300. Our mission was to tow to the Normandy coast, once a beachhead had been established, floating breakwater sections, grounding them in 30 feet of water to form harbors for unloading operations. Then sections of pontoon bridges to form a causeway to the shore a mile distant.

These breakwater sections were huge concrete structures, called Phoenixes, 400 feet long, 50 feet wide and 40 feet high with an anti-aircraft gun mounted on one end. My old friend Dutch tug boat captain Jan Kalkman and his crew were there with his British tug. They had survived the sinking of his tug by a German E-boat early in the war. He was elected to lead the way across, with a Navy camera crew aboard.

On D-day, the channel was alive with vessels of all kinds. Planes were taking off over us loaded with paratroopers, some towing large gliders. In my army supply launch with Captain Ellsberg aboard, the Navy officer supervising the readiness of the Phoenixes, we moved around and had a wonderful view of this unprecedented undertaking. On the night of the third day, Commander Bill Kirk went with me aboard one of our big tugs towing its third Phoenix to Omaha, the American port. We were delighted to see it taking shape and pier head sections inside the breakwaters, with roadways, spudded in place. They had ramps on each side to fit the doors of LSTs so tanks and other rolling stock could roll off and drive across our pontoon sections and reach the shore. The handling and assembling of all these huge, heavy and cumbersome shapes took the coordinated work of many knowledgeable operators. Both British and American ports were in full operation by the eighth day.

On the eleventh day came a disastrous gale, unusual for this time of year. It made a wreck out of Omaha, washing many of the breakwater sections out of line and breaking them up. Roadways, landing craft and equipment were strewn on the beaches. The British port, somewhat protected by shoals, fared much better, so work concentrated on enlarging it, while Omaha was salvaged as much as possible.

Large deck barges, which we had towed over from the U. S. to carry food and ammunition to the beaches, came in very handy at this phase to lighten Liberty and

other ships. I was sent back to arrange for more of the same. While in London awaiting a flight I had several brushes with buzz bombs. The British, gathering on rooftops to watch them, had gotten somewhat blasé about these lethal cargoes coming over London, seldom taking shelter to escape them. But they made a big mess wherever they landed. I met up with Wally Booth, and he and I had a lovely dinner party with two attractive English girls who were dressed in military driving uniforms - a Miss Crestian, sister of an English friend of mine, and her friend, who we later found out was Kay Summersby, General Eisenhower's driver, who wrote a book about their relationship.

Back in the U. S. we arranged for more lighters to be towed across. Our tugs were constantly busy in all theaters of the war moving damaged vessels, floating derricks, dry docks, power plants, etc. Large barges were loaded in Gulf ports and towed to the South Pacific, supplying the various island-hopping operations there. From the Panama Canal they were towed to 22° south latitude and straight across to Noumea, New Caledonia. None was ever sighted by the Japanese. I have a copy of a letter written by Admiral King to Admiral Land on May 22, 1945, expressing the Navy's appreciation for the successful work of the War Shipping Administration tugs in the invasion of Normandy and for 158 important tows across the Pacific.

As the war was winding down, I wanted to return to S. C. Loveland Co., Inc. and by summer of 1945 was able to spend about half my time there. Then Admiral Flanigan, as Chief of Navy Transportation, retired and wanted me to go into business with him. Ed Moran strongly advised me to do so.

The two of us formed Inter-American Shipping Services in 1946 as Consultants for the marine industry - capital of \$10,000 borrowed by the Admiral from a shipping friend - the company owned 75% by Flanigan, 25% by Loveland. Through this company and others formed later we assisted the Standard Vacuum Oil Co. in replacing their fleet, obtained ships for the Argentines who had prospered during the war; and even helped to review President Peron's five-year plan. We made it possible for Esso to acquire the use of war-built tankers for their Italian company which it could not do directly under the Ship Sales Act. We formed a company, purchased three tankers, financed by a ten year charter

to Esso, manned them with Italian crews, and operated them under a management agreement with Esso. Ultimately, by selling these we were able to build new tankers in Japan.

We were offered \$1,000,000 by Onassis if we would sell him one of our ships under charter to Esso. He had been blackballed on the Baltic exchange by Esso for running out on a deal, and no major oil company would do business with him, so he wanted to be able to say that he had an Esso charter. Esso consented to the sale on the condition that Onassis not have possession until the expiration of Esso's charter in eight years. Onassis agreed and we used the \$1,000,000 as a down payment to build a new, larger ship in Japan.

In 1951, Admiral Flanigan retired and moved to Switzerland, so we moved all operations to S. C. Loveland Co., Inc. in Philadelphia. In 1965 when the British took over the Suez Canal, Shell was in a hurry to acquire the largest tankers that could transit the Canal. In three days we had arranged, with joint partners, to build six of them. Flanigan-Loveland continued to share in the ownership of ocean tankers, under various arrangements until liquidated in 1980. Loveland continued to move all kinds of freight on navigable U.S. waters. One shipment was the delivery from Camden, N. J. of a 330 ton pressure vessel for the first commercial nuclear power plant built by G. E. in Dresden, Illinois. We did so successfully and on time. Building a larger barge we delivered a second nuclear reactor from Eddystone, Pa. to a point on the Missouri River.

Anticipating the number of nuclear plants to be built, we constructed twelve heavily built ocean barges with decks to withstand ten tons per square foot. The barges could support all the heavy components of a nuclear plant totalling 1600 tons. When the nuclear program was abruptly cancelled in 1985, we lost the most important part of our traffic with much expensive equipment not liquidated.

We are now fighting the competition for bulk cargoes, coal, fertilizer and raw sugar, with two newly constructed ocean barges and other equipment. Our oldest son, Cappy, is running the company - the fourth generation in the marine business. It has been a life full of rich experiences, much fun and lots of luck.