

OLD NEWS

June & July 2024

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Jonas Salk Tests Polio Vaccine

By Paul Chrastina

Although his parents had little formal education, Jonas Salk was a diligent student who earned superior grades in the public schools of New York City. He advanced so rapidly through high school that he graduated at fifteen in 1929. After earning his undergraduate degree at New York's tuition-free City College, he entered medical school at New York University, where he studied under the virologist Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr. and became interested in the rapidly growing fields of virology, epidemiology, and immunology. By developing vaccines made from killed or severely weakened bacteria and virus cultures, Francis and other researchers were creating artificial immunities to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases that had previously claimed thousands of lives each year.

Salk received his medical degree in 1939 and decided to devote himself to laboratory research. He later recalled, "I wanted to be of some help to humankind . . . in a larger sense than just on a one-to-one basis."

After working with Francis to develop an influenza vaccine that protected many American soldiers from the flu during World War II, in the spring of 1947 Salk was offered a position as director of a small research laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh medical school in Pennsylvania. University officials wanted to expand and reorganize the laboratory, and they offered Salk a chance to pursue his own interests.

Salk asked Francis for permission to take the new job. "Try it for a year," Francis suggested.

Salk was thirty-two years old and married with a growing family when he began working in Pittsburgh. Having been given a free hand to set his own research agenda, he turned his attention to one of the nation's most urgent health concerns—the crippling disease known as poliomyelitis, or, more commonly, polio.



A March of Dimes poster to raise money for research on polio.

A viral disease of the central nervous system, polio erupted in more-or-less epidemic proportions every summer across the United States. During the summer of 1947, the number of Americans affected totaled 10,827. The initial symptoms, including fever, headache, fatigue, and nausea, were deceptively flu-like. But within twenty-four hours, victims could find themselves suddenly paralyzed in one or more limbs and struggling for breath as the virus irreversibly damaged nerve tissue in the spinal cord and the base of the brain. Many of the afflicted were paralyzed

for life; a smaller proportion suffocated to death.

"Polio season" lasted roughly from June to September. Each summer brought apprehension and uncertainty. In many communities, movie theaters, public parks, summer camps, and swimming pools were forced to close for fear of spreading the disease. The most terrifying aspect of polio outbreaks was their seemingly random nature. Typical precautions, such as maintaining good hygiene and nutrition, seemed to offer no guarantee against infection. Children were most

susceptible to the disease, which had also become known as infantile paralysis, and hospital wards across the country were filled with young polio survivors who would never walk unassisted again.

Fortunately for Salk, the fight against polio had been championed by its most famous victim, former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had atypically contracted the disease at the age of thirty-nine, and who was instrumental in establishing the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (NFIP) before his death in 1945. The foundation, known for its signature "March of Dimes" fundraising campaign, had raised millions of dollars to provide assistance to polio victims and their families. The NFIP was looking for laboratories willing to conduct research into every aspect of the disease and to develop a vaccine to prevent its spread.

In November of 1948, Salk notified the university administration that he wanted to participate in ongoing polio research. Just before Christmas, he was visited by Dr. Harry Weaver, research director of the NFIP. Weaver told Salk that the foundation was planning to subsidize a comprehensive study to better understand the polio virus. Prior research had found that there were at least three distinct types of polio, and the foundation wanted to verify this finding and make sure there were no more wild strains of the virus that might have escaped detection. The slow, tedious work of "typing" the virus from hundreds of blood and tissue samples was expected to take at least three years, and Weaver said that the foundation was prepared to spend "a couple hundred thousand dollars per year" to accomplish it.

Along with Salk, researchers from twenty other laboratories had been recruited to undertake the massive study. Salk was pleased to learn that his mentor, Thomas Francis, was among the participants.

By 1951, the painstaking virus typing study verified that only three strains of polio virus existed. Type I comprised eighty-five percent of the samples and was the most common cause of paralysis of the limbs. Type II was a weaker variety that made up twelve percent of the samples and was less likely to cause permanent damage. Type III, at only three percent, was the most lethal strain, causing not only paralysis, but frequently death, shutting down its victims' respiratory systems.

To the frustration of polio researchers, outbreaks of the disease took a severe toll during the time that it had taken to complete the study. Between the summers of 1948 and 1951, 103,059 cases of polio were reported nationally. As the study ended, Salk quietly began to explore the possibilities of formulating a vaccine that would protect against all three types of polio. He notified Weaver that he was ready to begin working on a vaccine that would first be tested on lab animals and then on human volunteers.

The vaccine Salk intended to develop would contain virus particles that he would kill by treating them with a solution of formaldehyde. Although the vaccine would be unable to cause infection on its own, it would stimulate the immune system to produce antibodies that would combat any future exposure to live virus strains. This approach had worked in the development of the influenza vaccine, but it was contrary to prevailing wisdom that a more effective vaccine could be made from living but drastically weakened, or "attenuated," strains of virus. The advantage of a "live" vaccine, if it could be made, was that it could be given orally and would confer permanent systemic, or "gut," immunity to wild virus infection. A disadvantage, Salk believed, was that it could still pose a threat of infection. Salk's opponents were

concerned that a killed vaccine would have to be delivered by injection into the bloodstream and might not confer lasting immunity.

At the NFIP, Weaver had been troubled by Salk's intention to break with conventional methods. He urged Salk to proceed cautiously. "I will have to insist," Weaver wrote, "that all funds . . . be expended exclusively for typing experiments." He left open the possibility that Salk might find other sources to underwrite the kind of studies that he wanted to undertake and concluded: "I am very grateful to you for setting down your thoughts in such great detail."

In September of 1951, Salk and the other researchers who had been involved in the typing study traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark, to present their findings to an international congress of polio experts.

At the meeting, Salk gave a brief presentation of his laboratory's findings, but he did not mention his unorthodox ideas regarding a vaccine. A summary report on the conference mentioned only the potential for developing a live virus vaccine, stating: "The attenuation of the virus by successive transfer in tissue cultures provides hope of the production of non-virulent strains . . . and these may ultimately be used to provide an immunizing agent for human beings."

On the return voyage from Copenhagen, Salk was introduced to NFIP president Basil O'Connor, who had attended the conference with his daughter Bettyann, herself a polio victim. Salk and O'Connor hit it off immediately. Salk was able to explain to O'Connor why he considered the killed vaccine option worth pursuing, and by the time they arrived home, Salk had a powerful ally in his quest to develop a vaccine based on killed strains of polio virus. In January of 1952, Salk received an NFIP grant of \$211,420 and permission to begin

work on his vaccine, with the stipulation that the effort be kept secret so as not to raise false hopes or cause professional condemnation.

Although simple in theory, producing large amounts of killed virus vaccine presented a seemingly endless series of technical difficulties to Salk and his associates. The most critical of these was to ensure that every infectious particle in a given batch of vaccine had really been killed, or "inactivated," by the formaldehyde solution. If too little formaldehyde was used, a few microbes might survive the process, and the resulting vaccine might serve instead as a dose of infection, with potentially disastrous results. Using too much formaldehyde, on the other hand, could damage the virus so badly that a subsequent exposure to a wild virus would not be recognized by the immune system. Producing a vaccine that was both safe and effective required a long, careful process of trial and error. Salk doubled the size of his laboratory staff, who worked day and night until the ideal concentration and mixing technique were found. By the spring of 1952, after conducting successful tests on mice, monkeys, and chimpanzees, Salk felt that he was ready to begin human trials of the vaccine.

That May, Salk arranged to inoculate children at two western Pennsylvania schools. "When you inoculate children with a polio vaccine," he noted, "you don't sleep well for two or three months." Nevertheless, it was time to get the vaccine into clinical testing. The first was Polk Center, a state-sponsored school for mentally handicapped children; the second was the privately run Watson Institute for Crippled Children, which housed mostly polio victims. The goal of the trials was to monitor the children's antibody levels before and after they were vaccinated. In the case of the Polk mentally handicapped children, the levels would indicate if the vaccine stimulated resistance to all three types of polio. With the Watson children, who had already had polio, they would show if it stimulated antibodies for whichever two of the three polio types the child had not already contracted. Parents of the children agreed to the tests on the premise that children who might otherwise contribute little or nothing to society could at least take part in the fight against the public menace of polio. Salk also vaccinated himself,

his wife, and their three young sons. "He felt that he couldn't ask other parents to let him give this vaccine to their children if he wasn't willing to first try it on his own," his son Darrell, who was five years old at the time, later recalled.

During the summer of 1952, a record number of 57,879 polio cases were recorded across the United States, resulting in 21,000 paralyzed victims and 3,000 fatalities. Salk was relieved to find that none of the vaccinated children at the Polk and Watson schools showed any ill effect from their vaccinations, and blood tests indicated that they were all—for the time being—immune to future infection. "It was the thrill of my life," Salk later recalled.

On January 22, 1953, Salk presented his findings to his NFIP colleagues at a meeting in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Reaction to the Polk and Watson experiments ranged from cautious speculation that the children's immunity was only temporary to enthusiastic calls for a larger trial of the vaccine to be mounted as quickly as possible.

Although the results Salk presented at the Hershey meeting were meant to have been kept strictly confidential, the news soon reached the press. *Time* magazine reported that there was "solid good news on the polio front," claiming that "Researcher Salk" was "ready for the big attack," and the *New York Post* brashly announced "NEW POLIO VACCINE: BIG HOPES SEEN!"

When Salk learned of the headlines, he traveled from Pittsburgh to NFIP headquarters in New York to meet with Basil O'Connor. Although he was confident in his vaccine, he knew that the results of such a small study were not sufficient to warrant mass-producing and distributing it to the general public. He worried that the exuberant publicity would lead to premature expectations of a working vaccine by summer.

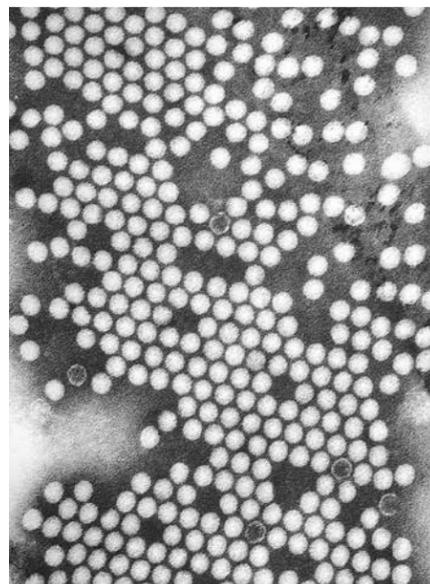
"This is a huge embarrassment," Salk told O'Connor. "It makes it look like I was hunting for publicity, [and] like we've got the vaccine."

Salk then suggested "I might be able to exert a moderating effect if I went directly to the public myself and told them, perhaps by radio, exactly what the situation was, and exactly why it was not yet time to count on polio vaccination."

O'Connor agreed and arranged for Salk to deliver a national address on the CBS radio network on the morning of March 26. The special presentation, called "The Scientist Speaks for Himself," lasted only fifteen minutes but was heard by hundreds of thousands of listeners. After being introduced by O'Connor, Salk briefly and soberly explained that he was, as had been reported, developing "an experimental vaccine that appears to be safe." The experiments, he continued, "are still in progress and many are quite incomplete." Finally, and most importantly, he emphasized: "Although progress has been more rapid than we had any right to expect, there will be no vaccine available for widespread use for the next polio season."



Franklin Roosevelt and a child with polio.



Polio virus.

Despite Salk's repeated caveats, public pressure mounted on the NFIP to produce a vaccine, and Salk agreed to do everything possible to begin a large-scale field trial in the spring of 1954. O'Connor arranged for pharmaceutical manufacturers to begin producing vaccine according to Salk's protocol. He then drew on the NFIP's huge base of support to enlist twenty thousand doctors, forty thousand nurses, and over two hundred thousand volunteers to administer polio shots in elementary schools across the country. Every five-liter flask of vaccine being mass-produced was sampled and subjected to stringent safety tests, first by its manufacturers, then by Salk's laboratory, and finally by the U.S. Public Health Service. The vaccine was rejected if the samples showed the slightest sign of virulence or spoilage. In March, Salk began vaccinating schoolchildren in the Pittsburgh area as a prelude to the national vaccination program, which was scheduled to begin on April 26.

Three weeks before the national program was to get underway, Salk and O'Connor found themselves blindsided from an unexpected quarter. Radio host Walter Winchell, whose Sunday night program consisted mainly of celebrity gossip and commentary, had a listenership of an estimated twenty million people. Winchell had never previously concerned himself with medical issues, but on April 4, after delivering his trademark introduction, "Good evening Mr. and Mrs. America and all the ships at sea," he announced: "Attention everyone! In a few moments I will report on a new polio vaccine. It may be a killer!"

After cutting away to a commercial, Winchell returned and said:

Attention all doctors and every family in the United States. The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis plans to inoculate one million children with a new vaccine sometime this month. The United States Public Health Service tested ten batches of this new polio vaccine. The Government's Public Health Department, I am told, found that seven out of the ten contained live, not dead, polio virus.... The name of the vaccine is the Salk vaccine, named for Doctor Jonas Salk of the University of Pittsburgh.... The Polio Foundation is trying to kill this story, but the United States Public Health Service will confirm this in about 10 days.

Salk did not listen to Winchell's broadcast, and he didn't learn of its terrifying assertions until the following morning when he arrived at his laboratory. For the next few days, he fielded phone calls from reporters, parents, and public health officials who demanded to know if the story was true. Barely containing his irritation, Salk replied that Winchell had seriously misrepresented the facts. First, the vaccine was not, as Winchell said, a "cure" for polio; it was a preventative. And while it was true that

out of hundreds of batches of vaccine four—not seven—had been rejected, this was part of the quality-control process, which ensured only vaccine that passed three consecutive safety tests would be released. "There is no possibility that live virus could have been contained in any inoculations given to any children," he said. "All vaccine used has been tested and found to be completely safe."

As for the alarming contention that the Public Health Service would confirm Winchell's story, the next day that department issued a bulletin clearly stating that "no vaccine that was unsafe has been released for use."

The following Sunday, Winchell refused to back down, instead claiming that a source "temporarily to remain anonymous" had informed him that the government was stockpiling thousands of "little white coffins" for the children who were apparently doomed if they were injected with the polio vaccine.

Salk had had enough. In an interview published in the *Pittsburgh Press*, he insisted that the vaccine was safe.

Salk said: "We will go on, despite advice from sidewalk superintendents like Walter Winchell. He was wrong in his statistics and wrong about the danger. If he had called me, I would have been able to explain. But the guy was just interested in creating a bit of a sensation."

Most people soon came to realize that Salk was right, and the panic caused by Winchell's irresponsible reporting died down almost as quickly as it had arisen. Later, it was discovered that the broadcaster's "anonymous" source was a former employee of the NFIP who had been fired by Basil O'Connor and was seeking revenge.

Despite the successful debunking of the vaccine scare, about 150,000 parents who had signed their children up for the trial changed their minds, and the state medical board in Wisconsin announced that it was pulling out of the program, but other states stayed with the program.

On April 26, 1954, the national field trial began. During the next nine weeks, a total of 1.83 million children in the first three grades of elementary school participated in one of three ways. To accurately test the effectiveness of the vaccine, 650,000 children were inoculated; 750,000 received a placebo; and 430,000



Walter Winchell.

served as "observational controls" and received no injection. Regardless of their status, all were given lollipops and badges identifying them as "Polio Pioneers."

The children were then carefully monitored for signs of polio infection, and the final results of the field trial were tabulated by Salk's mentor, Thomas Francis, at the University of Michigan. On April 12, 1955, Francis announced that the vaccine had proven seventy percent effective against Type I polio, ninety percent effective against Type II, and ninety-four percent effective against Type III. Francis's presentation was aired on live radio, and spontaneous celebrations broke out across the nation to rejoice at the news. "It was as if a war had ended," one reporter noted.

The polio vaccine was quickly licensed for use by doctors, but within weeks, alarming news arrived: seventy-nine children in five western states had developed polio and ten had died after being vaccinated. An investigation revealed that the victims had received defective vaccine manufactured by the California-based firm of Cutter Laboratories. The bad batches of vaccine, it was concluded, had probably been contaminated after their samples were tested, due to Cutter's practice of keeping live virus cultures in the same building as its bottling operation.

Salk was devastated. "This was the first and only time in my life that I felt suicidal," he later recalled. After a Congressional investigation, however, all blame for the tragedy was placed on the manufacturer, and both Salk and his vaccine were vindicated.

Polio immunization became a routine procedure, and the number of polio cases decreased sharply every year. By 1961, only 161 cases were reported, but due in part to the "Cutter incident," Salk's injected vaccine was replaced in 1963 by an oral vaccine developed by Dr. Albert Sabin of the Children's Hospital

Research Foundation in Cincinnati, Ohio. From the beginning, Sabin had been critical of Salk's "killed" virus approach. After decades of independent research, Sabin created an effective vaccine using weakened "live" virus cultures that could be more easily delivered on sugar cubes or in sweetened syrup.

As a result of both Salk's and Sabin's vaccines, polio was finally eradicated in the United States, with the last known case reported in 1979. In 1999 a federal advisory panel recommended that the United States return to using the Salk vaccine, due to the small chance of infection present in use of the Sabin live vaccine. Currently, both types of vaccine are used worldwide, and the incidence of polio has been restricted to parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, where efforts to provide immunization have been hampered by political and social instability.

Jonas Salk received numerous awards for his work and went on to found the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California. He died in 1995.

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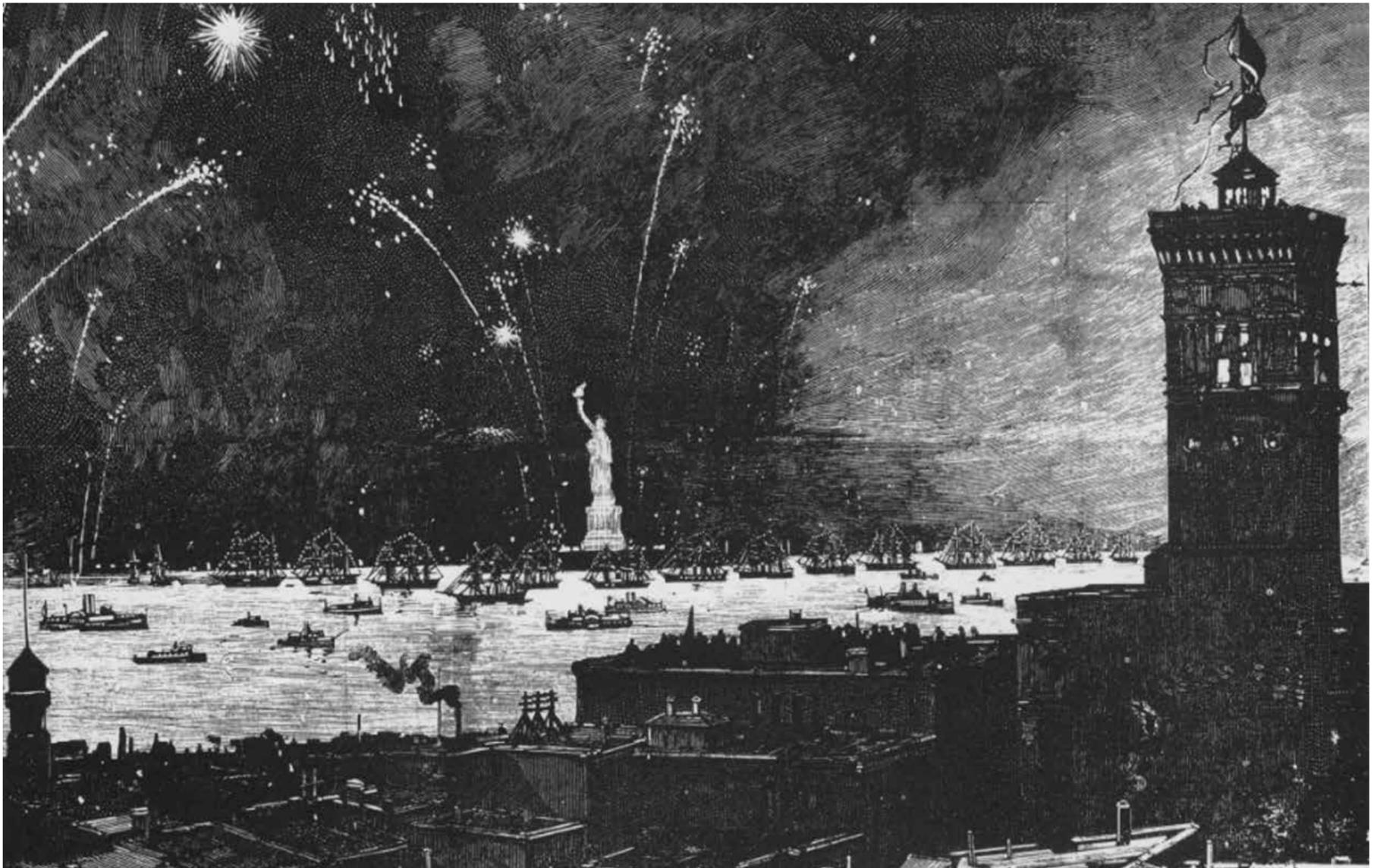
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Jonas Salk with vaccine.

Statue from France Unveiled in New York



On October 28, 1886, President Grover Cleveland officially unveiled a new statue in New York Harbor. The statue, “Liberty Enlightening the World,” was a gift from the recently-formed Third Republic of France to the United States. The idea of the statue had been proposed by a French historian, Édouard de Laboulaye, to celebrate the 1865 abolition of slavery in the United States. De Laboulaye also wanted to express the admiration of French republicans—who had deposed their King Napoleon III in 1870—for the principles of American democracy. Funds were contributed by the French people, and the statue was designed in France by the sculptor Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi. The statue was 151 feet tall and weighed 225 tons. It was constructed in France of copper sheets, assembled over a steel framework designed by Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel, an engineer who specialized in building tall towers. The completed statue was then disassembled and shipped to the United States.

Old News Plans To Cease Publication At End of 2024

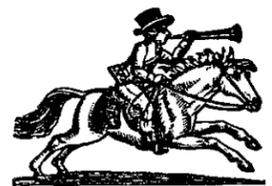
Old News will be going out of business at the end of this year. Like many other printed publications, *Old News* has become less profitable in recent years, and the publishers, now in their mid-seventies, will be retiring.

Three more issues will be published after the June and July, 2024 issue. Each of the final three issues will be double issues, twenty-four pages long, providing twice as much content as previous issues. There will be no further renewal notices sent, and no new subscriptions or gift subscriptions will be accepted.

Old News was founded in 1989 by the late Nancy and Dick Bromer. Their son Rick has been editor from the beginning. Rick and his wife, Sheri, became the publishers in 2000.

Primary writers have included Rick and Dick Bromer, Paul Chrastina, David Vachon, and Matthew Surridge. There were occasional contributions from other writers. Kathy McCarty was the original circulation manager, a post that she still holds. Sally Funk was a longtime circulation assistant.

Rick Bromer says: “Everybody at *Old News* feels extremely grateful to the subscribers who have supported our publication over the past thirty-five years.”



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Lord Exmouth Frees Slaves in North Africa

By Paul Chrastina

Admiral Sir Edward Pelew, Lord Exmouth, was commander-in-chief of the British Mediterranean Fleet in 1816 when he was entrusted with the delicate political mission of persuading the governors of the Ottoman Barbary States of North Africa—Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers—to free thousands of European slaves who had been captured by privateers under their sponsorship.

Lord Exmouth, fifty-nine, was a hot-tempered man who had never displayed much talent for diplomacy. He had risen to high command as a result of his physical courage and his knack for improvising brilliantly aggressive naval maneuvers. On one occasion, two small frigates under his command had out-sailed and captured a much larger and more powerful French ship of the line.

Despite his pugnacious nature, Exmouth hoped to avoid military conflict with the Barbary States of North Africa because warfare would unavoidably endanger the slaves whom he was trying to rescue. The British government provided him with ransom money; it also armed him with a fleet of warships whose firepower might intimidate the governors into accepting a low price for the release of the slaves.

For hundreds of years, Muslim corsairs from the Barbary Coast had been attacking European ships and coastal villages on the Mediterranean Sea. Under Islamic law, non-Muslim prisoners of war could be sold into slavery, and the Barbary corsairs derived most of their profits from the capture of Christian prisoners for sale in the slave markets of North Africa and Turkey. From 1803 to 1815, the governors of the Barbary States had taken advantage of the distraction provided by the Napoleonic Wars to expand their profitable operations, enslaving thousands of European men, women, and children.

Although Europeans called the Barbary corsairs “pirates,” the Christian nations of Europe had similar traditions of enslaving non-Christian prisoners of war, including American Indians and black Africans.

Slavery was still legal in the British Empire in 1816, and half a million black slaves were toiling in the British colony of Jamaica, but the idea that slavery was immoral had begun spreading within the United Kingdom. The British Parliament had voted to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade in 1807, and it would free the Jamaican slaves in 1833; but in 1816, British public opinion was especially sympathetic to the white, Christian slaves of North Africa, many of whom came from Mediterranean countries that had backed Britain in its fight against Napoleon.

Lord Exmouth felt that the piratical habits of the Barbary corsairs were morally repugnant, and he was eager to force them to reform. In January of 1816, he sent spies to map the defenses of Tunis, Tripoli, and Algiers. In April he set sail for the Barbary Coast with a fleet of five fully armed warships and seven accompanying transports, frigates, and sloops.

His fleet arrived off the coast of Algiers, the largest and most powerful of the Barbary States, on March 24. As Exmouth had hoped, the ransom money placed at his disposal was sufficient to convince the governor of Algiers, Omar Agha, to immediately free four hundred Sicilian, Sardinian, and Maltese slaves, who boarded the British transports for return to their homes.

Exmouth moved on to Tunis and Tripoli in April, where he purchased the freedom of a thousand slaves. The governors of Tunis and Tripoli were both cowed by the implicit threat of naval bombardment, so they promised to do whatever Exmouth asked.

When a translating error caused the governor of Tunis to believe—incorrectly—that Exmouth was demanding the abolition of slavery in his realm, the governor astonished Exmouth by promising to accede. Pleased at his good luck, Exmouth added the abolition of slavery to his formal list of demands when he moved on to Tripoli, where the governor also promised to abolish slavery.

Encouraged by this success, Exmouth returned to Algiers on May

14 and tried to convince Governor Omar to do the same.

Unlike Tunis and Tripoli, Algiers possessed strong defenses, including large fortified cannon emplacements on the walls surrounding the town and on a mole, or manmade promontory, defending the ships anchored in the harbor. A contemporary account stated:

Along the shore within twelve hundred yards south of the town, were three batteries and a very heavy fort. Another large fort and six batteries commanded the bay to the northwest. Many guns in other parts of the fortifications of the town, and in forts and batteries on the hills around it, were in situations which enabled them to fire upon ships. Altogether, the approaches by sea were defended by scarcely less than five hundred guns.

On paper, Exmouth’s fleet was badly outgunned. Exmouth, however, had noticed that the city’s cannons were arranged so that only a small percentage of them could be aimed towards the sea south of the city’s defensive mole. The Algerians evidently felt that it was not necessary to aim much firepower to the south because a shallow natural bar prevented ships from invading the harbor from that direction; but Exmouth realized that he would not need to enter

the harbor to destroy the ships of the corsairs that were anchored there. By anchoring most of his ships south of the mole, Exmouth reckoned that he could destroy the enemy ships by cannon fire while remaining safe from the majority of Governor Omar’s big guns.

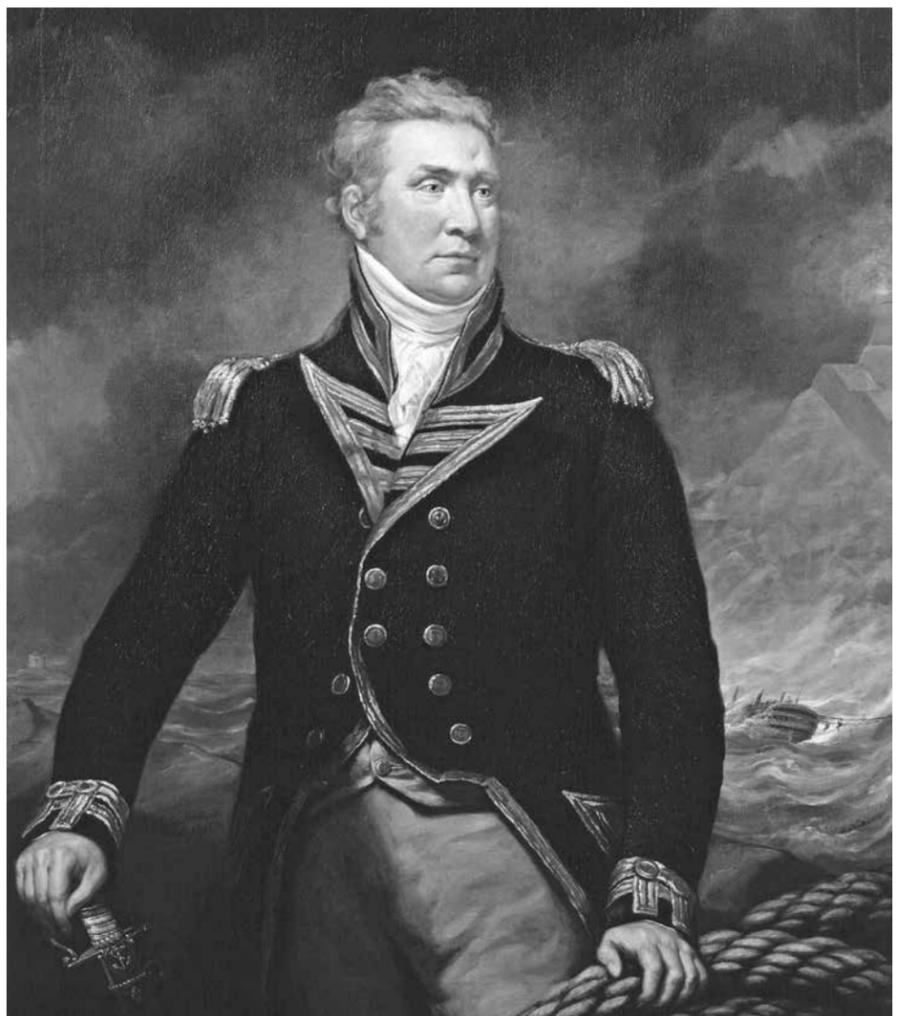
Omar, confident that he could withstand any attack, bluntly rejected Exmouth’s proposal that he abolish slavery. The meeting between the two men became heated, and Exmouth stormed out of the governor’s palace after warning Omar that he had “a very inadequate idea” of the destructive capabilities of a British man-of-war, and that if he did not comply, he “would have the world in arms against him.”

On the way back to the boat waiting to return to his anchored fleet, Exmouth and his party were surrounded by a mob of Algerians who threatened to put them all to death. Despite the crowd’s volatility, Exmouth made it safely back to the fleet, where he promptly gave orders to prepare for an assault.

Contrary winds made it impossible to bring the British warships into position to attack, and the weather delay gave both sides time to reflect. Exmouth began to have doubts about attacking Algiers without specific orders from the British Admiralty to do so, and Omar similarly began to have second thoughts about provoking the British to violence.



The Barbary States of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli were centers of the slave trade in North Africa.



Lord Exmouth.

The next morning, a boat flying a flag of truce approached Exmouth's fleet. Exmouth agreed to resume negotiations, and Omar asked for six months to reach a final decision. Although Exmouth suspected that this was merely a delaying tactic, he agreed to Omar's proposal.

On May 19 the British fleet set sail for England. Having made some headway in suppressing Barbary piracy, Exmouth felt that his mission had been moderately successful, but he worried that he might have gone too far in making direct threats against Algiers without authorization. This concern vanished when he got back to England on June 27 and learned that, only days after he had reached final agreement with Omar, a large flotilla of unarmed Sicilian fishermen working on the North African coast had been attacked on Omar's orders. At least one hundred of the fishermen had been killed while trying to escape, and the rest had been taken as slaves.

News of the attack had reached London three days before Exmouth's fleet returned, and he was embarrassed and angered to find newspapers blaming the massacre on "the discontent [of Omar] occasioned by the treaties concluded by Lord Exmouth."

The British government did not blame Exmouth for Omar's actions. Instead, it abandoned diplomacy and authorized him to return to Algiers, where "with vigor and determination," he was to use any means necessary "to complete the work [he had] initiated."

During the next three weeks, Exmouth assembled a new fleet of twenty warships selected to take advantage of every weakness in Algiers's defenses. In addition to sixteen large ships mounting over seven hundred guns, the fleet included four "bomb vessels" equipped with long-range mortars, and a stowed squadron of fifty-five smaller assault boats that could be deployed from the larger ships once they reached Algiers.

The fleet sailed from Portsmouth, England, on July 25 and reached Gibraltar on August 9. There, it met a squadron of six Dutch warships under the command of Admiral Theodorus Frederik van Capellen, who was patrolling the western Mediterranean for Barbary corsairs. Van Capellen offered to join the punitive expedition against Algiers. Exmouth "gladly and cordially" accepted the offer, and the combined fleet arrived off the coast of Algiers on the morning of August 27.

From his flagship, H.M.S. *Queen Charlotte*, Exmouth saw that Governor Omar had been informed of his approach and was prepared to fight. Gun crews manned the cannon emplacements around the harbor, and about ninety corsair ships of various sizes were moored in its inner harbor, protected by the land batteries and ready for battle.

At 9:00 a.m. Exmouth sent a messenger to Omar, offering him a final chance to avoid a fight by agreeing to the abolition of slavery and an end to piracy. In addition, Exmouth demanded the immediate release of all slaves still held in Algiers and the refund of the ransom money he had paid Omar two months earlier. Exmouth gave Omar three hours to respond, but the messenger returned after only two hours, indicating that the governor refused to concede.

Exmouth ordered his fleet to prepare to bombard the city's fortifications.

At 2:30 p.m. the *Queen Charlotte* and a column of the larger ships lined up south of the mole in the vulnerable area that Exmouth had mapped earlier. Smaller ships took up positions to cover the entrance to the harbor in order to prevent the ships of the corsairs from escaping. The bomb ships anchored out of range of the Algerian batteries, ready to rain high-angle mortar fire onto the waterfront fortifications. Five minutes later, Algerian gunners fired three shots in succession at the approaching ships. Exmouth waved a warning to a crowd of onlookers gathered on the shore and ordered his gunners to return fire.

The bombardment of Algiers lasted eight hours. Exmouth remained on the deck of the *Queen Charlotte* throughout the fight. He was hit in the leg by an Algerian musket ball that drew blood. Two more balls passed through his clothing, another smashed his telescope, and a fifth shattered a pair of spectacles in his breast pocket. He was also cut on the jaw by a flying splinter of wood.

By 11:00 that night, combined British and Dutch firepower had completely destroyed the corsair fleet anchored in the harbor. They had also badly damaged Governor Omar's fortifications and had set much of the town on fire. British and Dutch warships spent fifty thousand cannonballs, nearly one thousand mortar shells, and uncounted incendiary rockets. Most of the Algerian cannon batteries that had been positioned to fight back were silenced. No British or Dutch ships were lost, but 141 sailors were killed, and 742 were wounded. Algerian losses, by contrast, were later estimated at between three and five thousand of the thirty-five thousand men under Omar's command.

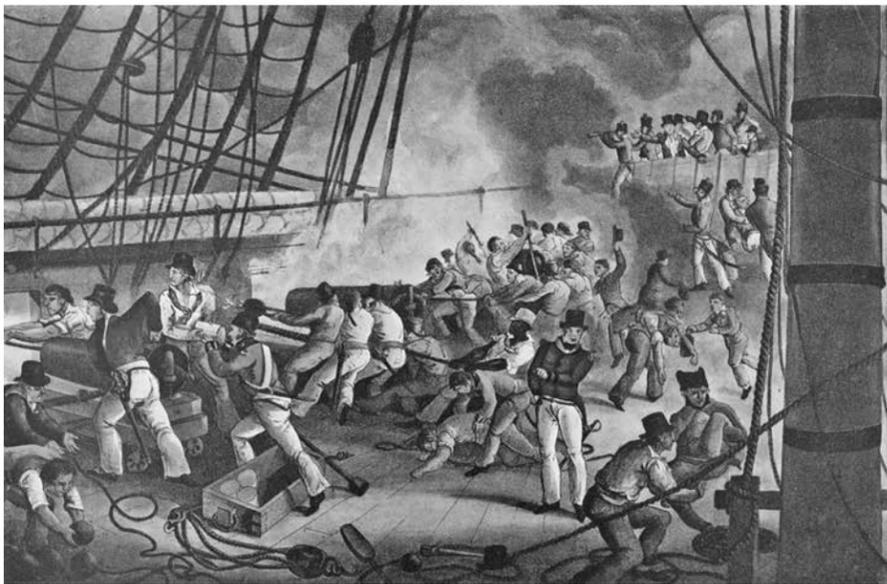
The next morning, Exmouth learned that his fleet was running extremely low on ammunition. He had outfought his enemy, but if Omar continued to resist, he would have to sail away in defeat.

As a bluff, Exmouth sent an ultimatum to Omar, offering him one last chance to avoid the total destruction of his city. Exmouth concluded: "As England does not war for the destruction of cities, I am unwilling to visit your personal cruelties upon the unoffending inhabitants of the country, and I therefore offer you the same terms of peace which I conveyed to you yesterday in my Sovereign's name. Without the acceptance of these terms, you can have no peace with England."

The bluff worked; this time the governor surrendered. After formal negotiations, he signed a treaty on September 24 agreeing to abolish slavery, to release all of the slaves in Algiers, and to return the ransom money he had previously accepted.

Lord Exmouth was greeted as a hero on his return to England and was rewarded with the title of viscount and a seat in the House of Lords. He continued to serve the navy until his retirement in 1821. He was named an honorary vice admiral of the United Kingdom in 1832.

Although Barbary piracy went into steep decline following the loss of the Algerian pirate fleet, the practice continued until 1830, when French King Charles X invaded and colonized Algiers and the surrounding territories, renaming them *Algérie*. The colony gained independence from France in 1962 and is now officially known as The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.



Shipboard view of the bombardment of Algiers.



To increase the accuracy of their guns, British ships lay still at anchor during the bombardment of Algiers. The vulnerable wooden hulls of the ships thus became motionless targets for the Algerian gunners who were firing at them from behind the stone walls of forts ashore, but the ships were positioned so that few of the immovable guns in the forts could be brought to bear on their anchorage.

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American Spies

Infiltrate Nazi Austria

By David Vachon

In December of 1941, when the United States declared war on Germany, Frederick Mayer decided to enlist in the army. Mayer was a twenty-year-old Jewish auto mechanic in Brooklyn, N.Y. He had lived in the United States for three years. His family had emigrated from Germany to escape anti-Semitism, but he was eager to return to Europe to fight the Nazis.

Mayer was of medium height with a powerful frame and had a yearning for adventure. He joined the U.S. Army Rangers, where he underwent rigorous commando training and where his fluency in German, French, and Spanish drew the attention of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

In 1943 Mayer was transferred to Bari, Italy, to be trained as a spy. In the fall of 1944, he was given his assignment: he would parachute onto a frozen lake near Innsbruck, Austria—behind enemy lines—to report on German supply trains moving through the Brenner Pass into Italy so that U.S. bombers could destroy them. Mayer would be accompanied on the mission by a radio operator, Hans Wynberg, a Dutch Jew who, like Mayer, had been in the United States just a few years before he joined the army. The plan was that after the drop, Mayer would seek out people from the Austrian resistance to guide them to a safe house, where Wynberg would set up his radio and remain secluded while Mayer mixed with people, learned what he could, and conveyed messages to Wynberg for transmission to the OSS.

During the months Mayer spent at the OSS training camp in Bari, he was under orders not to discuss his mission with other agents in training. The OSS was sending several teams of agents behind enemy lines, and the less each team knew about other teams, the less they could reveal if captured.

Although Mayer was a native German speaker, he had been away from Germany for six years. To familiarize himself with terms used by German military men and to assure himself that his spoken German was up to date, he spent three days disguised as a prisoner of war in Allied POW Camp 209 near Naples, where he mingled with German military men.

During his stay at the camp, Mayer met an Austrian prisoner of war named Franz Weber who had deserted from the Wehrmacht out of disgust for Hitler's policies. He had surrendered to the Allies, who had treated him as a prisoner of war.

Mayer immediately liked Weber, a devout Catholic from a small town

near Innsbruck. When Weber mentioned to Mayer that he had relatives in the area who were also opposed to the Nazi regime, Mayer decided that he wanted to recruit Weber as a third member of his spying mission. Mayer felt that the chief defect of the OSS plan for his spy mission was that they knew of no anti-Nazi Austrians near Innsbruck who could provide him with safe lodging after he landed.

When Mayer returned to the OSS station in Bari, he proposed the idea to his handlers, who agreed to bring Weber to Bari for an interview. Mayer was delighted when Weber agreed to join the mission.

Weber's hometown of Oberperfuss, six miles from Innsbruck, would be their first destination, but all nearby flat areas suitable for the parachute drop were inhabited, and the surrounding Alps were treacherous. Searching the map, Mayer found two small frozen lakes thirty miles southwest of Innsbruck that seemed ideal.

Just before the team was scheduled to make their parachute drop, Mayer, Wynberg, and Weber were informed that all the other agents who had been sent into Austria before them had failed to complete their missions. Three men had crossed into Austria from Yugoslavia in August of 1944; two of them had been captured and were presumed dead, while the third had been safely evacuated. Ten men had been sent into Austria from Czechoslovakia in January of 1945; all of them had been captured, sent to Mauthausen concentration camp, and shot. Despite the warning, Mayer and his associates remained eager to make the jump.

Beginning on February 20, 1945, they made three attempts to locate the two small lakes. Each time they flew over the area, cloud cover made the jump impossible. Late on the evening of February 24, the three men boarded a B-24 bomber in Brindisi, in southern Italy, and flew four hours north to the drop area, but visibility was again poor due to heavy clouds. Then, just a few minutes after they had hoped to see the lakes, the clouds opened to reveal a ten-thousand-foot-high glacial ridge that looked flat enough for a parachute landing. Eager to get on with the mission, Mayer, Wynberg and Weber made the jump, planning to ski down the glacier.

They landed within a few hundred feet of each other and discovered that the snow was soft and hip-deep. On a second pass the plane dropped three containers of equipment that vanished into the snow. The air held so little oxygen at that elevation that it took them four hours to dig out two of the containers and bury their parachutes. They could not locate the third

container. As a result, they had only two pairs of skis.

When they were ready to move from the ridge to the valley below, Weber, familiar with the terrain, led the way on one pair of skis. Mayer and Wynberg waded through the snow, pulling a makeshift sled that they had fashioned out of the second pair of skis. On the sled was the forty-pound radio, along with other equipment.

After ten more exhausting hours, they found a ski hut that they identified from their maps as the Amberger Hutte. There was no smoke coming from the chimney: the valley was too remote for even the hardest sportsmen at this time of year. They broke a window to enter, built a fire, and spent a few days at the hut resting. Wynberg made several attempts to send a short-wave message to the OSS at Bari to say that they were safe, but he could not get through. Mayer was concerned that if Wynberg didn't make contact soon, the OSS might assume they had been captured and would stop monitoring the frequency Wynberg transmitted on.

When they were well rested, Weber led the others to the mountain village of Gries. Wearing the uniform of the German Alpine Corps, he went directly to the village mayor, the top-ranking Nazi in the village, and introduced himself as Lieutenant Erich Schmitzer. Weber told the mayor that he had been accidentally detached from his unit and needed assistance to get to the bottom of the glacier. He introduced Mayer and Wynberg as Dutch collaborators. The mayor lent Weber a large sled to carry their equipment down the icy mountain road, telling him to leave it with a woman who lived in the Sulztal Valley below. The sled had curved handles: it looked like "a Santa Claus sled," Mayer thought. They rode down the sinuous mountain slopes, often at great speeds, until they arrived at the valley town of

Laengenfeld, where they knocked on the woman's door. She fed them, and they stayed the night.

The next day they walked an hour to Oetzal Bahnhof, a village about thirty miles from Oberperfuss, where they planned to catch a train; but there were several uniformed men at the rail siding. Mayer decided to avoid contact with this group, so they walked two more hours before reaching a small train station and buying tickets to Innsbruck. A half hour into their journey, Weber was approached by two noncommissioned German officers who asked for his papers.

Weber, Wynberg, and Mayer were carrying their heavy radio, code books, gold, various currencies, and several sets of false identification papers for future use. Mayer calculated that if he allowed Weber to be arrested, the mission would end badly for all three spies.



Fred Mayer dressed in uniform of German Wehrmacht 106th High Alpine Rangers.



Pvt Hans Wynberg, U.S. Army, before his mission to Austria.



Franz Weber in Wehrmacht lieutenant's uniform.

He and Wynberg, trained for hand-to-hand combat, stood aside, ready to fight if the encounter required it or to leap from the train. Weber showed the German officers his passbook (an expertly crafted forgery supplied by the OSS) and told them that he was returning to his unit in Innsbruck with two Dutch collaborators. The soldiers accepted the story and moved on to question other passengers. At Inzing station, a few miles west of Innsbruck, Weber, Mayer, and Wynberg got off the train and walked forty-five minutes south to Oberperfuss.

Mayer did not want Weber to be seen by the villagers—as a known deserter, Weber could be arrested and executed. It was also important that Wynberg be sequestered in a safe house without being seen. After dark, Mayer knocked on the door of a contact provided by Weber—Koecheles Luis, an anti-Nazi who might help them find a safe house. When Mayer told Luis that he was a friend of Franz Weber, Luis replied he didn't know anyone by that name. So Mayer went back to where Weber and Wynberg were hiding and told Weber what had happened. Weber explained that in this village, people were known by the name of their property. "You need to go back," Weber explained, "and tell him my name is Tomasson Franz." With this introduction, Luis opened the door, and all three men were soon safe inside his home. The house was already full of refugees—a Russian girl, a Yugoslav worker, a family whose house in Berlin had been destroyed. Luis had a place to sleep for only one more person. Mayer decided that it should be Wynberg with his radio. Luis took Mayer and Weber to an anti-Nazi neighbor, Johann Hoertnagl.

Mayer felt that the success of his mission would depend on his meeting people who were willing to assist him. When Mayer met Hoertnagl's sister, Thomas Marie Hoertnagl, they immediately liked each other and began speaking about their mutual opposition to the Nazis. She offered to assist Mayer, becoming his first local recruit.

The next evening Weber was moved to a safe house owned by friends, and Luis found an attic room for Wynberg in a neighbor's house, where he strung up his antennae and made contact with Bari on March 7. Mayer, meanwhile, became acquainted with Weber's three sisters and some of their anti-Nazi friends.

By mid-March, Mayer was eager to leave the village and go to Innsbruck, but he needed proper identity papers first. From different sources he was able to cobble together a lieutenant's uniform from the German 106th Alpine Regiment. Needing documentation as a German officer, Mayer persuaded a nurse at the local hospital to give him a note stating that his credentials had been stolen by bandits while on the road from Northern Italy. Mayer doctored the note with a signature by a fictitious commander in Italy; then, to give the note more weight, Franz Weber's sister, Eva Weber, who was also a nurse, smuggled the note into the hospital and had a friend in the director's office write that Mayer had been admitted for treatment. Her friend then made the note official by stamping it with the hospital's stamp. Weber's three sisters were all willing to help Mayer with his spying. Louise Weber worked as head nurse at a hospital in Innsbruck. She bandaged Mayer's head and provided

him with papers certifying that he had sustained a head wound.

With his new identity as a German officer, Mayer bicycled to Innsbruck and began talking to people there. What he needed was information about troop movements and fortifications. To get that information, he decided to spend time at the officers' club where wounded soldiers were convalescing. Mayer later recalled, "I think they felt sorry for me; my head was bandaged and they saw me alone, so they asked me to join them." One evening an Austrian captain had just returned from Berlin where he had worked on reinforcing Hitler's Führerbunker. As he drank more, the officer began describing in great detail the exact location of the secret bunker in downtown Berlin, how it was disguised in a set of row houses, the thickness of its walls (three feet) and its distance below ground (thirty feet). That evening Mayer composed a lengthy report of what the engineer had said at the club, and he sent it to Wynberg through his circuit of intermediaries. Wynberg transmitted it the next day.

Eager to learn about trains carrying supplies through the Brenner Pass to Italy, Mayer walked into the busy rail yard where German soldiers and Austrian railroad workers were loading trains. "I blended right in," Mayer recalled. Mayer located the yard master, walked over to him, and said, "Oh boy, there's a lot of trains." The yard master responded: "Wait till tomorrow morning. Assembled at Hall we have over twenty-six trains, each with thirty to forty cars, loaded with ammo and tanks, that will be leaving April 3 and going straight through the Brenner." Mayer left the rail yard, wrote up his report, and passed it on to Wynberg through intermediaries. Wynberg radioed the encrypted message to the OSS in Bari, who later confirmed that thanks to this message, a massive strike by the Fifteenth Air Force had destroyed most of the trains before they reached Italy.

In another incident, Mayer learned from a bragging German officer the precise time when trains were being assembled. His message to the OSS stated, "Average of fourteen trains are assembled nightly between ten-thirty and twelve in new yards right outside of Hall." As a result of this intelligence, Allied air force bombers changed their bombing schedule to coincide with the time that trains were rolling through Innsbruck.

In early April, responding to a request from Bari for information on new German fighter jet production, Mayer discarded his lieutenant's uniform and found some plain work clothes. He went to the labor office in Innsbruck and told them he was a French electrician from St. Mariena who had lost his I.D. when the Russians approached and he was forced to leave his job abruptly. The clerk accepted his story and granted him a work card as an alien worker. Mayer found a job as an electrician, working for Robert Moser, an Austrian resistance leader he had met who was an electrical contractor.

Mayer's job allowed him to enter the Messerschmitt fighter jet production plant at Kematen, eight miles west of Innsbruck. He rode there by bicycle. When he entered the plant, he realized that the underground galleries, hollowed out of solid rock, had recently contained an impressive operation, but there were only a few dozen workers left in the plant; the assembly line was not running. Mayer learned that a lack of supplies had completely stopped production. He passed on this message to Bari: "Production zero in Messerschmitt-Kematen because of lack of resupply for past three months."

In sending messages to Wynberg in Oberperfuss, Mayer used intermediaries so that he and Wynberg could not be directly linked. He would put the reports that he wrote into unmarked envelopes. Typically, the messages would pass through several people, including a man Mayer knew only as Leo, who worked in the black market and associated with people from the resistance. Leo and others like him would pass on a sealed envelope to Eva Weber, who would give it to Thomas Marie Hoertnagl in Oberperfuss. Hoertnagl would then give the message to Wynberg for transmission. Because Mayer had so many contacts like Leo, he was able to send messages almost every day.

On April 20 Mayer learned from a contact that Leo had been arrested by the police, apparently for black market operations. Since Mayer lived in a room in the same building as Leo, he decided not to go home that night in case the police were still there. He went instead to Eva and Gretel Weber's Innsbruck apartment, where he worked on preparing a list identifying Nazi officials for the OSS.

At 11:00 p.m. Mayer was working with Eva on the document when six German SD (counterintelligence) officers entered the building. Mayer had just enough time to throw the documents into the firebox of the stove, stash his rucksack containing his .32 caliber pistol under a sofa, and begin climbing out the window. He was apprehended before he could escape. Eva, allowed to remain in the apartment to care for her children, slipped away later that night, leaving her children with a friend, and bicycled to Oberperfuss to warn Weber and Wynberg that Mayer had been arrested, so that they could change locations.

An optimist by nature, Mayer first thought that he was being arrested for not staying in the barracks provided for foreign workers. He was taken to Gestapo headquarters in Innsbruck where, throughout four hours of questioning and beatings, he maintained that he was a French foreign worker. Then his interrogator, Walter Guttner, Kriminalsekretar of the Innsbruck Gestapo, brought in Leo, the black marketeer, who said, "They know everything. Tell them everything or they are going to hurt you more." Mayer could see that Leo had not been beaten; he had merely decided to comply with the Gestapo without resisting. Mayer looked at Guttner and said, "I don't know this man."



The Amberger Hutte in summer. Mayer, Wynberg and Weber spent three nights at the isolated lodge in February of 1945.



Pre-war view of the village of Oberperfuss, Austria.

Mayer dropped the pretense of being a French worker. He realized that Guttner knew he was an American agent, so he admitted it, but he claimed to have come into Austria alone from Switzerland. Guttner did not believe him and asked repeatedly, "Where is the radio operator?" Mayer was determined to protect Wynberg. He had a high threshold for pain, and he was stubborn. He later commented, "The more they hit me the less inclined I was to talk." He was stripped naked, punched in the face, and many of his teeth were broken when a pistol was jammed into his mouth. He was whipped and almost drowned, but he would not tell Guttner and his men anything. After several hours he was thrown into a cold cell, where he woke up on the damp floor with his hands tied behind his back.

Guttner later brought him some ill-fitting clothing and took him with a search party of policemen and Gestapo to the village of Oberperfuss. With Mayer in tow, Guttner's men conducted a house-to-house search for Wynberg and his radio, but without success. When they began to question Thomas Marie Hoertnagl, Mayer winked at her, as if to say, "They don't know anything; don't tell them." Hoertnagl pretended to assist Guttner by suggesting possible hiding places where Wynberg might be and by leading his posse on a wild-goose chase for several hours.

Mayer was returned to his cell at Gestapo headquarters in Innsbruck. He expected to suffer more beatings, followed by summary execution. To his astonishment, the next day Guttner suddenly stopped abusing him and began treating him with professional courtesy. Mayer got the impression that Guttner must be hoping to win some sort of favor from his prisoner. The Gestapo officer seemed to have become persuaded that Mayer was a very important person who should not be offended in any way.

On April 24 Guttner introduced Mayer to Dr. Max Primbs, his superior officer. Mayer remembered that Primbs was the officer who had eventually stopped the beating he was given while being interrogated. Primbs and Guttner escorted Mayer out of Gestapo headquarters and into Primbs's chauffeur-driven black BMW convertible. They explained that they wanted to introduce him to the highest-ranking Nazi party official in Innsbruck, Franz Hofer. In the car, Primbs told Mayer that he admired him for his courage in not crying out while being tortured. Guttner added: "I did not mean to torture you. I was just doing my job."

When they arrived at Hofer's mansion, known as the "Lachhof," Mayer was introduced to several high-ranking Nazi officials who were there for a dinner party. One official, Rudolf Rahn, told Mayer that he had lived in Los Angeles for a period before the war and offered to send a message to the OSS for Mayer. "I'm going back to Zurich, and I plan to contact your people and let them know that you're alive," he said. He offered to relay any message Mayer would like to send.

Mayer realized that these men were preparing for the inevitable American

invasion by presenting themselves as decent people, and they were hoping that Mayer would put in a good word for them. They knew, as Mayer did, that Allied troops had already invaded Germany and might be outside Innsbruck within days. Mayer gave Rahn a message to pass on to the American embassy in Switzerland: "Don't worry about me, I'm really not bad off."

Mayer later learned that Guttner had discussed Mayer with another captured OSS agent, Hermann Matull, who had convinced his captors that he was willing to work for them as a double agent. Despite Matull's pretense of working with the Gestapo as a double agent, he remained loyal to the OSS, and he had fabricated a story to elevate Mayer's importance so that Guttner would not shoot Mayer. Matull had told Guttner that he knew Mayer to be an important American agent—either a colonel or a general—and that if Guttner shot Mayer, the Americans, who were expected to invade Austria soon, would seek vengeance. He had urged Guttner to notify his superiors that Mayer was in his custody and that he might be a valuable go-between with the approaching American forces.

Meanwhile, Wynberg and Weber had remained safely hidden in the hayloft of one of the homes Guttner had searched in the nearby village of Rangen, and no evidence had emerged to contradict Matull's story.

Mayer was returned to confinement, but the conditions were vastly improved. He was fed and clothed, and on April 27 Guttner brought him a bag of cookies and a newspaper; then two days later Primbs had him released into his personal custody. It was now evident to Mayer that he had been selected to broker some sort of deal with the American forces when they arrived.

Primbs asked Mayer to help him with an urgent problem: his boss, Hofer, was planning to give a radio broadcast giving orders to resist the approaching Americans. Mayer agreed that resistance would be disastrous for the beautiful city of Innsbruck, because the Americans would shell the city if it resisted.

Mayer went into Hofer's Innsbruck office and made the argument that American forces coming from the north were expected to cross the border between Bavaria and Tyrol any day. Once the Allies had overcome the mountain obstacles that led to Innsbruck, defense of the city would be futile. Mayer told Hofer that if in his radio broadcast, he gave orders not to resist the invaders, Mayer would personally take him into custody and protect him from Austrian resistance fighters who were seeking vengeance. Then he would get word to the approaching Americans that the city was open, so that Innsbruck would not be damaged. Hofer accepted Mayer's offer in principle, but he was not ready to surrender to Mayer and declare Innsbruck an open city. Nonetheless, he did revise the script of his radio broadcast declaring that the farms and towns were not to be defended against the Allied forces, although he ordered armed defenders

to retreat to the hills. In exchange, Mayer assured Hofer that he would act as a go-between with the Allied forces.

That afternoon Mayer left Hofer and traveled with Primbs in his vehicle to Oberperfuss. Mayer left Primbs at the local inn with a glass of beer while he visited Thomas Marie Hoertnagl, who led him to Wynberg's hiding place. Mayer told Wynberg that he could come out of hiding because the Gestapo wanted local OSS spies to help the Germans negotiate with American forces.

Mayer decided to improve his appearance so as to look more authoritative. In Oberperfuss he and Wynberg found some hidden items of GI clothing, and Mayer cut his hair and shaved his face—a painful task since his lacerated face was still bruised and sensitive from the beating ten days before. Mayer put a pistol in his pocket for security. He and Wynberg then got back into Primbs's car and returned to the "Lachhof," where many of Hofer's staff had gathered. Hofer and his staff were pleased to see Mayer and Wynberg because they felt threatened by the groups of Austrian resistance fighters who were springing up in Innsbruck and roaming the city as the Wehrmacht forces fled, and Mayer assured them that he would protect them.

Over the next few days, Mayer traveled freely between Innsbruck and the "Lachhof." In Innsbruck he reestablished contact with resistance members who were part of the local police force. Accompanied by these anti-Nazi policemen, Mayer then returned to the "Lachhof." He persuaded Hofer to give another radio broadcast declaring that Innsbruck was an "open city" and that all defensive efforts were to be abandoned. Hofer also prohibited the destruction of the city's bridges and ordered an unconditional surrender to the Allies. After the declaration, Mayer arrested Hofer and declared all Nazis present to be interned as prisoners of war. The Nazis were pleased not to be given up to the resistance groups. Mayer then put Wynberg in charge of the police guards around the building and returned to Innsbruck.

The next morning Mayer learned that the American 103rd Division, moving south along the Inn River Valley, had arrived at Sharnitz, just

ten miles east of Innsbruck and would soon reach the village of Zirl, six miles away. Mayer had learned that American forces had artillery installed in the mountains above Zirl, ready to blast the city of Innsbruck. He urgently needed to explain to the American commander—before any shots were fired—that the city had surrendered.

After borrowing Primbs's car and driver, Mayer headed for Zirl. As a precaution, the car carried a large white flag cut from a bedsheet. He met the first American unit just outside of Zirl. Identifying himself as an OSS officer, he spoke with Major Bland West, the assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence and Security of the 103rd Division. West accompanied Mayer to the "Lachhof," where he formally accepted the surrender of Hofer and his staff. Following that formal surrender, the first American troops entered Innsbruck at 8:30 p.m. on May 3, 1945. Not a shot was fired.

Both Mayer and Wynberg soon left Innsbruck for an OSS installation in Salzburg; they quit the army a few months after the war ended.

Fred Mayer spent most of his career working for Voice of America (VOA) in the United States and abroad; Wynberg acquired a doctorate and taught chemistry at several American and European universities; and Franz Weber became a lawyer and legislator in Austria.

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Fred Mayer at Salzburg, Austria, in the autumn of 1945.



Back row: Hans Wynberg, Thomas Marie Hoertnagl, Fred Mayer. Front row: Anna Niederkircher (Franz Weber's fiancée) and Franz Weber.

Japanese Fisherman Runs Afoul of Laws Against Foreign Contact

By Matthew Surridge

In 1840 a fifteen-year-old Japanese boy named Manjiro began working as a fisherman to support himself and his mother after his father's death. Early in January of 1841, Manjiro traveled ninety miles from his village of Nakahama to the port of Usaura, where he joined four friends aboard a twenty-four-foot boat for a fishing expedition scheduled to last several days. They would remain close to land, because their simple oar-driven boat was not seaworthy for long voyages.



Nakahama Manjiro.

It was built according to government specifications that had been designed to prevent Japanese people from venturing far out to sea. Japan maintained a policy called *sakoku*, or "chained country," which prohibited contact with foreigners. Under this policy, which had been in effect for two centuries, the Japanese were forbidden to leave their country, and unauthorized foreigners were executed if found on Japanese soil.

On the first two nights, Manjiro and his friends anchored on small islands off the southern coast of the Japanese island of Shikoku. On the third day they were caught by surprise by a storm. Their oar broke, and the rudder alone was insufficient to control their boat. After two days they found themselves caught in a current that carried them out to sea.

On the ninth day at sea, they drifted near an island.

As the boat approached waves that were crashing on a reef, Manjiro and his friends jumped into the water. One man's leg was badly injured as the boat capsized, but all five made it to shore.

On the two-mile-wide island, they found a cave where they took shelter, making beds of driftwood. They found drinkable rainwater in rock crevices.

They also found edible plants and a population of wild albatrosses that Manjiro hunted with stones. The island had no other human inhabitants, but Manjiro and the captain found an old well on a hill. Near the well were two simple cairns, apparently raised to mark the graves of other mariners who had died after being shipwrecked on the island.

With food, drink, and shelter, the men were able to survive on the island as days, weeks, and months passed. Manjiro, the youngest, remained healthiest and found most of the food that sustained the stranded fishermen.

Five months after they arrived on the island, Manjiro was hunting game just before sunrise when he saw a ship far out at sea. He and the other men watched the distant ship through the morning, and at noon they saw it lower a boat that headed toward the island. Manjiro and the others attached a kimono to some driftwood

and used it as a flag to signal the men in the boat.

In response to their signal, the boat turned towards the shipwrecked fishermen. As it drew closer, Manjiro saw that its crewmen were not Japanese. They called out in a strange language to Manjiro and his companions.

The Japanese castaways knew that dealing with foreigners was a crime, but they were desperate to leave the island. When the foreigners made gestures inviting the Japanese to board their boat, Manjiro and the others promptly accepted the offer. They were given food, water, and new clothes. The Japanese were stunned by the large size of the vessel, which had three high masts.

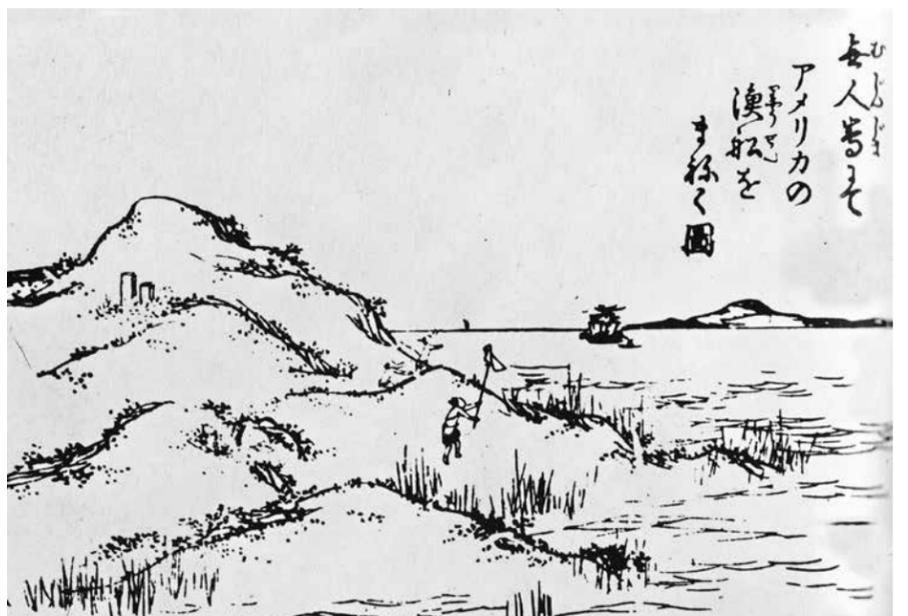
Manjiro was curious about his rescuers and their ship and the world beyond Japan. He learned the language spoken on board the ship faster than the other Japanese men, and he discovered that the ship came from a land called the United States of America.



Sketch by Manjiro showing the castaways on the island.



Sketch by Manjiro shows the island on which he and his companions survived after being shipwrecked.



Manjiro signals a boat by waving a kimono tied to a stick.

It was built for hunting whales and was called the *John Howland*.

The ship's captain, William Whitfield, explained to Manjiro that he could not take the castaways back to Japan. Foreign ships that had previously tried to return Japanese castaways had been fired upon and driven back to sea when they approached the Japanese shore. Whitfield told the five fishermen that he would take them to his next port of call, Honolulu, where King Kamehameha I of Hawaii had a policy of welcoming foreign sailors to live among his people.

During the next four months of the voyage, Manjiro continued to deepen his understanding of the language spoken on board the ship, served as lookout in the ship's rigging, and impressed Whitfield with his intelligence and curiosity.

When the ship reached Honolulu in November, Whitfield introduced the Japanese castaways to the royal governor, who found a house for them in a coastal village where they could make a living as fishermen, while waiting to find a ship whose captain was willing to risk returning them to Japan.

Over the next few weeks, as the *John Howland* remained in port in Honolulu, Manjiro often spoke with Captain Whitfield and learned about the many unfamiliar sights of Hawaii, including the churches, the mounted artillery, and the various kinds of ships in the harbor. He and the captain got to know each other well. Manjiro told Whitfield that while he hoped to return to Japan and to his family eventually, he wanted to explore the world first. Whitfield proposed to the youth that he adopt him, take him to the United States, and give him a western education. Manjiro happily agreed.

When the *John Howland* returned to sea, Manjiro sailed as a member of the ship's crew. He was aboard on May 7, 1843, when the ship berthed at its home port of Fairhaven, Massachusetts. There, Manjiro became the first Japanese to set foot in the United States.

He lived and worked with Whitfield on his farm that summer and attended school that fall and winter. He made friends in the community, gained a reputation for honesty, and became deeply interested in navigation. Whitfield arranged for him to attend Bartlett's Academy, a large school nearby that offered advanced studies in mathematics, surveying, and navigation.

Whitfield was away at sea when Manjiro successfully completed his studies in 1846 and accepted an offer to join the crew of another whaling ship, the *Franklin*. The ship's captain, Ira Davis, had been a harpooner on the *John Howland*, and he remembered Manjiro.

On the *Franklin*, Manjiro cruised the globe hunting whales. Eventually, the ship visited the Ryukyu Islands, which stretched from southern Japan toward Taiwan. The islands were claimed by both Japan and China, and the inhabitants traded with both of those countries, but the inhabitants seemed reluctant to trade with the *Franklin*. Manjiro did not understand the language spoken in the Ryukyus.

Later, the *Franklin* passed within

sight of Japan itself and encountered a Japanese fishing fleet of about two dozen boats. Manjiro went to visit the fishermen in a small boat, but the fishermen fell silent in his presence, uneasy with him, and apparently unsure if he was Japanese or a foreigner. Manjiro realized that he was speaking haltingly: he had forgotten much of his Japanese.

Manjiro felt an increased nostalgia for his homeland, coupled with a worry that he would forget even more of the language and culture if he did not return soon. The *Franklin* soon departed from Japanese waters, but Manjiro decided that he must make an effort to return to Japan.

In September of 1848, when the *Franklin* docked in Honolulu, Manjiro went looking for the other four fishermen who had been shipwrecked with him eight years before. The man who had injured his leg had died. Another was still living in Honolulu. And the other two had recently attempted to return to Japan but had not succeeded. They told Manjiro that when their ship had neared Japan, troops on shore had fired rockets at it. The two Japanese castaways had landed to find that nearby farmers had fled. The captain of their ship had refused to leave them without some official recognition by Japanese authorities that they had returned, and so they had come back to Honolulu.

It was clear to Manjiro that the Japanese authorities were as unyielding as ever in their attitude toward contact with foreigners, but Manjiro suggested that they might be able to circumvent the law by traveling first to the Ryukyus, where the inhabitants already traded with China. They could settle there, open a supply depot for international whaling ships, and then negotiate a way back to their homeland. Manjiro decided to continue working aboard the *Franklin* until he had saved enough money to finance his hoped-for whaling station.

He left Honolulu and resumed hunting whales, at one point serving as first officer of the *Franklin* when the captain fell ill. The voyage ended in 1849, leaving Manjiro with \$350. He briefly reunited with Captain Whitfield and his family in Massachusetts. Then, deciding that he needed still more money, Manjiro went to California, where he prospected for gold until he had a total of \$600. At that point he decided that he had enough cash to finance his return to Japan.

He went back to Honolulu, where he found that two of his old fishing comrades were eager to join him. Manjiro purchased supplies in Honolulu, including medicine, books, a clock, navigation instruments, tools, cooking utensils, coffee, sugar, preserved foods, casks of water, and soap. He went to the American consul and got an official letter stating that he and the other fishermen had been shipwrecked in 1841. Finally, he looked for passage on a ship that would take him to the Ryukyus. No ship was going directly to those islands, so he and his friends bought passage on a ship going to China and built a small boat of their own that they could launch from the ship.

The three men left Honolulu in 1851. When the ship was in the general area of the Ryukyu Islands, Manjiro launched his homemade boat and set sail with his two companions. It was cold and raining, but Manjiro's experience with navigation enabled him to keep the ship on course. They sailed overnight and the next day came within sight of land and saw fishermen on the shore.

The older of Manjiro's friends, who had best maintained his command of the Japanese language, swam ashore, but when he approached the fishermen, they ran away.

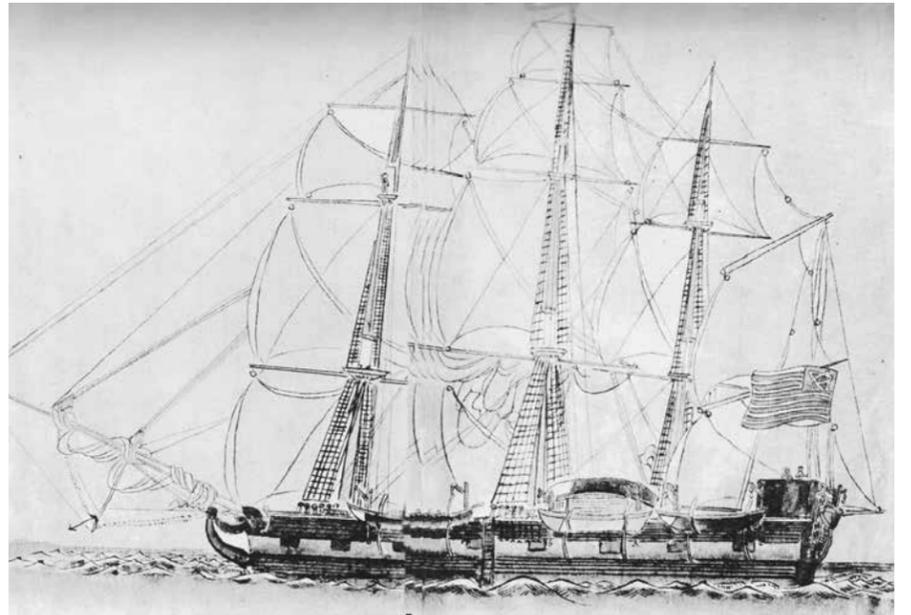
After all three men came ashore, they found a village with some inhabitants who spoke Japanese. Manjiro and his companions told their story, and the villagers gave them food and allowed them to bring their boat to shore. Officials representing the Japanese lord who claimed the islands soon came to investigate the matter. Manjiro and his friends were taken under guard to a larger village called Onaga, where they were imprisoned in the hut of the village headman, and a bamboo fence was built around the hut to hold them.

The next day, the three men were interrogated about their travels and about the books and goods from the outside world that they had brought with them.

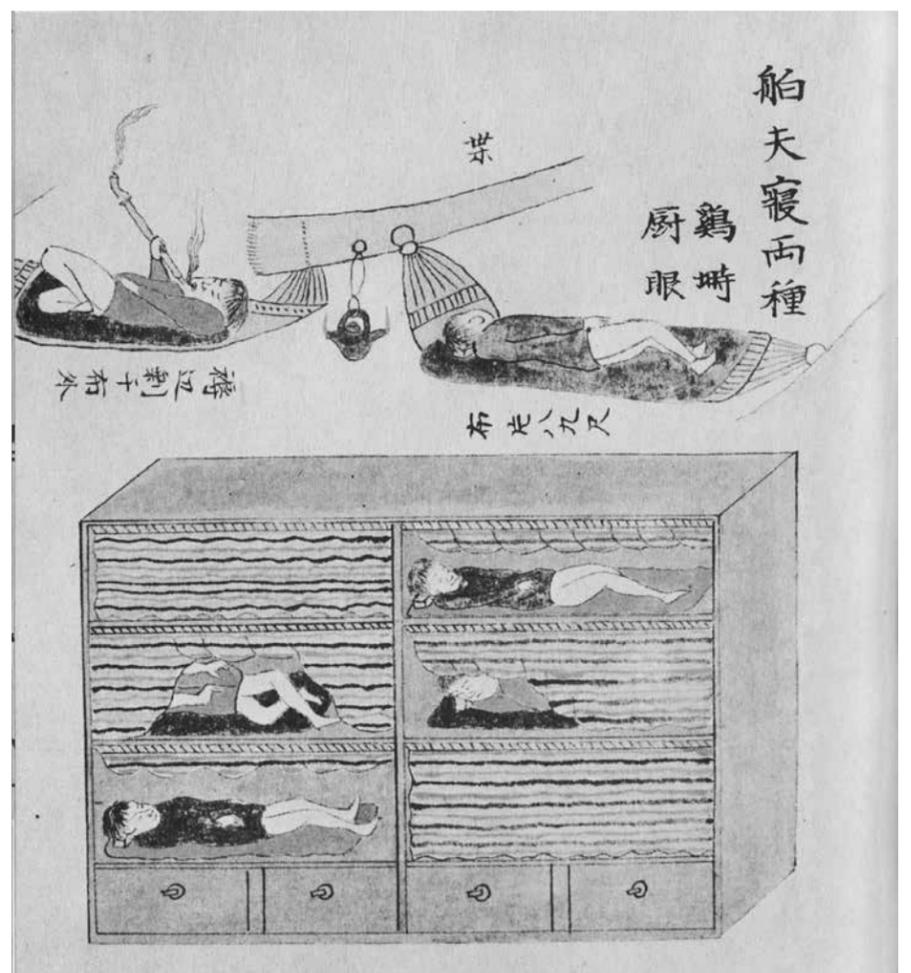
Manjiro did his best to explain both his own situation and the nature of the books and the other Western items he had brought. Many of the officials laughed at the foreign ideas that he tried to explain to them.

Manjiro was frustrated to find how difficult it was for him to speak Japanese fluently after being away from his country for so long. Over the following days, as the interrogation continued, he paid close attention to the formal phrases used by the interrogators. When he was left alone with his fellow castaways, he tried to practice his language with them. Eager to practice speaking Japanese, Manjiro slipped under the bamboo fence and spent time conversing with villagers in an orange grove close by.

This helped him regain his fluency in Japanese and also to gain sympathy with the locals. The imprisonment of the three men continued for seven months. It seemed that the gambit of approaching Japan through the Ryukyus had failed.



An American whaling ship as drawn by Manjiro.



Depiction by Manjiro of sleeping quarters on an American whaling ship.

Then, at short notice, they were taken by sea to Japan, where they were given an audience with the feudal lord who claimed the Ryukyus as his territory. This nobleman was intrigued by examples he had seen of technology from the West, particularly of foreign ships he had observed at sea. He questioned Manjiro closely about America and American technology. At the end

of the interview, he ordered Manjiro to build a scaled-down version of an American whaling ship.

Manjiro built the model, and the lord then asked him to build a ship large enough to carry cargo around a nearby bay. Manjiro was given a team of carpenters to help him, and under Manjiro's direction the ship was built in forty-eight days. The lord was

pleased, and he wrote positive reports about Manjiro to the Tokugawa Shogunate, the council of generals that ruled Japan. Orders then came commanding Manjiro and his friends to be taken to Nagasaki, the only city in Japan where foreigners were allowed to trade with the Japanese.

On arrival there, they were taken before a tribunal. Manjiro presented the letter he had received from the American consul in Hawaii; he described Western technology; and he spoke glowingly of the United States. He and his companions were then ordered to step upon a visual depiction of the crucifixion as proof that they were not Christian—a forbidden religion in Japan at the time. Manjiro had, in fact, converted to Christianity while in America, but as a Protestant he did not mind stepping on a Catholic icon, so he obeyed.

He and the others were then returned to prison but, after three days, they were released. The shogunate had believed their story and had ruled in their favor. Manjiro was free.

Rather than immediately attempting to open a whaling depot, however, he decided to visit his mother, still alive in his old village on the island of Shikoku. Manjiro reached his village in October of 1852.

For some months he stayed with his mother and family. The local lord made him a low-level samurai, or knight, and asked him to teach people about Western ways. Then, in late 1853, as rumors spread of an impending foreign invasion, Manjiro was summoned to Edo (modern Tokyo), the capital of Japan, by the shogunate.

When he arrived in October, he learned that in July, American Commodore Matthew Perry had arrived in Japan at the head of a small armada of black American warships. Perry had presented the Emperor of Japan with an ultimatum: either allow foreign trade or face war. Perry had then sailed off, promising to return soon. The shogunate had summoned Manjiro to provide advice on how to respond to this threat.

Manjiro provided the officials with information about America and argued that Japan would be best served by being open to American trade.

Ultimately, the most powerful officials agreed with him. It is unclear how much of an

effect Manjiro's testimony about American capabilities and intentions had on Japan's response to Perry's ultimatum, but when Perry returned to Japan in February of 1854, the shogunate agreed to open their country to trade and to safeguard shipwrecked sailors.

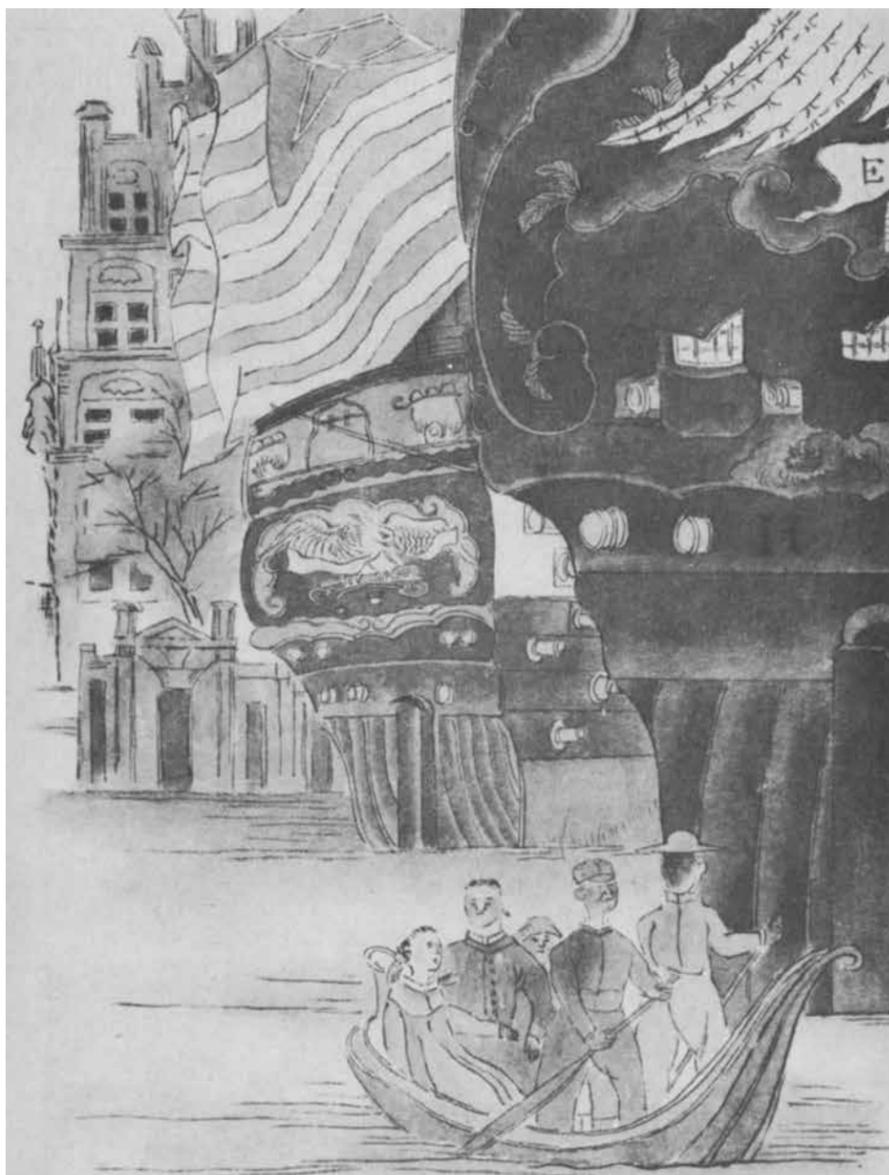
Manjiro was not a part of these negotiations because some officials feared he was too partial to the Americans. He did, however, translate some of the English documents into Japanese for the officials taking part in the negotiations.

In the years that followed, Manjiro gave many interviews to scholars and others in Japan who sought to understand the West. He was hired as an assistant to a prominent government official who was responsible for protecting Japan's coast, and he was made a *hatamoto*, a samurai in direct service to the Shogun, the ruler of Japan. He was also allowed to take a family name: he became Nakahama Manjiro, after his home village.

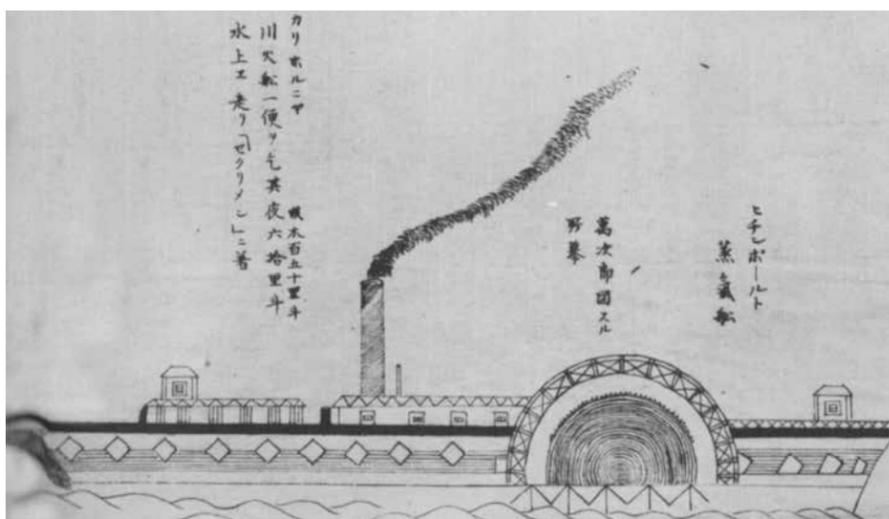
Manjiro went on to oversee the building of Western-style ships in Japan. He also translated textbooks and taught at a new naval training school established by the government. In 1860 he accompanied the first Japanese diplomatic mission to Washington; during the voyage, when the ship's captain was incapacitated by illness, Manjiro took command and guided the craft safely to port. He was appointed as a professor at Kaisei University (later Tokyo Imperial University) and served as a translator during a Japanese mission to observe the military techniques used in the Franco-Prussian War. During this expedition, in 1870, Manjiro was able to reunite briefly with his old friend, Captain William Whitfield, who had saved him from shipwreck and sent him to the United States to be educated.

Nakahama Manjiro died in 1898 at the age of seventy-three.

SOURCES:
Reischauer, Edwin O., and Albert M. Craig. *Japan*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1989.
Warinner, Emily V. *Voyager to Destiny*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc.: Indianapolis, 1956.



Sketch of Boston Harbor by Manjiro, who frequently drew the American flag with a single large star.



A steamboat off California, sketched by Manjiro.



Foreign ships in the harbor of Yokohama in 1861.