FREEKIDS eBOOKS 4 of 5

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Volume 4 of 5: Ships through the Ages
All 5 volumes are originally from Eagle Comics 1950-69
11 fully illustrated pages suitable for 8-16 year old, suitable for boys and girls.
Real stories with titles: In the Beginning, China Seas, Greece & Rome,
The Vikings, Fighting Ships, Wooden Walls, Clippers & Steamship Ironclads.

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All these illustrated stories are taken from the great English Eagle Comics between 1950-69.
This was a golden age before computers and before digital war games took over, sending a lot of printed papers to the bin.

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SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

In the beginning...

THE STORY OF MAN AND HIS ATTEMPTS TO CONQUER THE SEAS GOES BACK TO THE DAY WHEN HE NEEDED TO EXPLORE AND HUNT FOR FOOD.  LET CAPTAIN BEN, SHIPPER OF THE SONG OF THE SEAS, TELL YOU THE THRILLING STORY BEGINNING THIS WEEK.

COUNTLESS CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE SINCE MAN FIRST BEGAN TO VENTURE ON THE WATER. HE HAD TO CROSS STREAMS AND RIVERS, SO FOUND THAT THE NATURE'S WAY TO DO WAS TO LIE ON LOGS THAT WOULD FLOAT UPON THE WATER, BUT ALTHOUGH HE USED TRANSPORT Him-SELF, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY ANYTHING ELSE.

AS TIME WENT ON, THE MAKING OF TOOLS AND LEARNING HOW TO KINDLE A FIRE ENABLED HIM TO FASHION A MORE PRACTICAL MEANS OF TRANSPORT CARRIAGE HIS ESSENTIAL BELONGINGS AND BEING ABLE TO HIGH-ROPE GREAT DISTANCES. PROGRESS IN WATER TRANSPORT VARIED IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD. THE PRODUCING OR CIRCUS, YOU SEE HERE, WAS FIRST PRODUCED BY THE HAND.

LATER, STICK AND BONE WERE USED AS PADDLES. IT WAS NATURAL THEN TO CUT THE STICK TO A DEFINITE SHAPE AND, FOR PATTERN, WHAT WAS MORE SUITABLE THAN HIS OWN HAND? NO ONE KNOWS WHEN THE FIRST PADDLE WAS MADE.

NEXT WEEK

CRAFT OF THE CHINESE SAIL
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

In our history of shipping, we now come to some types of craft found in the northern hemisphere early in the days of sailing ships. The coracle was probably in use in Britain long before the remains handed down to us... The coracle you see here was in use in Africa. It had a light frame covered with skin and was carried by a leather strap fixed to the seat. This type of craft is in use today but was a covering of tanned canvas instead of skin. Not much is known of the early sailing boats of the Britons.

...Caesar described them as having light frames covered with wickerwork, with skins over the wicker to make them watertight. They were in fact... an improved version of the coracle. Now we see a method of boat construction that is quite different—that of the Scandinavians.

This picture shows a detail of the craft below. The plans were left riddles so the rows could be fed to them. This method began a new era in water transport.

Next week: The Vikings.
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

Craft of the China Seas (1)

Last week we saw how the log took shape. Now I want you to see the two important trends in early boat building. The first was by the ancient catamaran, which developed from the raft. This light craft had three shaped logs lashed together.

The other important trend was the prau or dugout. Wishing to make his craft larger, the ancient boat builder added raised sides. These were found on some of the boats that were to be found in the eastern hemisphere centuries ago. With added legs these dugouts were less stable when used in rough waters.

Outriggers were fitted and with these, it was found more sail could be carried and made longer voyages possible. The migration to the various islands and countries of the Pacific now took place. Below is a sampan outrigger.

Next week: The Chinese junk.
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

Greece and Rome

This week we see the Greek and Roman ships. The galleys were long and narrow with a good turn of speed. But in bad weather they were practically useless and had to make for ports. This is a Greek galley dating about 500 B.C. It has three banks of oars.

These Roman galleys of 200 B.C. show the ram spike. The Romans introduced the corvus or crow—a gantry plank pivoting at one end. Round a pole from which the other end was supported by a rope, the corvus was let down on to a named ship and the spike held it in place while the Romans romanzed it.

The Roman merchant ship looked like this model. It was capable of carrying large cargoes. Its features are very much like the Phoenician ship that was shown last week. This type dates 200 A.D.

Next week: Ships of the North.
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

The Vikings

The Viking ships were swift and sturdy, capable of making long
travels across the ocean. The pointed ends were sharpened as time went on the active
driving technique altered little.

One of the ships used by William the Conqueror.

This shows how the planks fit into the stern post and the method used in
mounting the normal blade. A horizontal handle on the top was pivoted to turn
the ship left and right to turn it right.

Being of shallow draft, they were easily
reached when they carried out raids on
towns and villages in various parts of the
northern world. This sectional drawing
shows how much room there was to move about
also to carry cargo.

Next week:
The sailing ship grows.
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES
The Sailing Ship Grows Up

CAPTAIN JOHN CONTINUES HIS STORY ON THE HISTORY OF SHIPS AND BEGIN HIS WEEK WITH A SHIP.

THE FINE AND ART CASTLES WERE REMOVED IN LINERS; SIDE SCHOONERS TO THE 19TH CENTURY AND WAS USED FOR WAR AS WELL AS A MERCHANTMAN.

A SHIP OF THE WESTERN MARINER DURING THE 17TH CENTURY.

A SCENE ON A DECK OF A 15TH CENTURY SHIP.

NOTE HOW SIMILAR THEY WERE, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE MORE TALLER.

THIS GIVES A GOOD IDEA OF THE SIZE THAT VESSELS ATTAINED DURING THIS PERIOD. NOTE HOW THE MAINS ARE NO LONGER IN ONE PIECE BUT ARE MADE UP IN SECTIONS. THE SMALL DETAIL PICTURE SHOWS A SHROUD TUBE USED TO KEEP THE SHROUDS TIGHT.

NEXT WEEK:
SHIPS OF THE 18TH CENTURY.
THE SHIPS DURING THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH I WERE HIGH STEERED CRAFT SUCH AS THE ONE ILLUSTRATED HERE, SHOWING YOU THE DECK. THE CREW NUMBERED ABOUT 300. THE GALLEY OR KITCHEN CAN BE SEEN FlUMBERED WITH A LONG SMOKE STACK. THE RUDERS WERE TURNED BY MEANS OF A HOPSTAFF. THE STEERING WAS MADE WITH BOTH RUDDERS TURNED.

THIS IS A VIEW OF A MAST AND TUP OR PLATFORM BUILT OVER THE SUPPORT OF THE TOPMAST'S SPARS. WHEN IN BATTLE THESE TOPS WERE USED AS A VANTAGE POINT BY MARKS MEN TO FIRE ON THE ENEMY.

THE BACKSTAFF, THE FORERUNNER OF OUR MODERN STANT FOR NAVIGATION.

THE SOVEREIGN OF THE SEAS IN 1637. NOT HOW MUCH CARVED, IS BEING USED.

THIS PICTURE SHOWS A GUN PORT WITH GUN IN ACTION. THESE GUNS WERE MUZZLE LOADED.
We now come to the ships of Brak, "The Wooden Walls" as they were often called. Here is H.M.S. Victory which was built at Chatham and took six years.

A view of the timber deck of H.M.S. Victory. Once a time, I wandered in line, she caroused her guns and 500 officers and men. For eight years she was set out of commission and used as a prison ship. Then Nelson saw her hull, lying at Chatham, ordered her to be refitted, and used her as his flag ship.

See the first attempt to apply steam power to ships. This "town boat" of Jonathan Hull's was a failure due mainly to insufficient power. The paddle wheels were heavy and often broke off.

This section of a ship of 1959. Showing how the hull was built up from the keel, the planking sides give added strength against the force of the water. To reinforce the deck, columns or hangers were let.

Next week: Clippers and steam ships.
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

Clippers and Steamships

In the 19th century, the steamship became more numerous and practical. In the Charlotte Dundas, the beam engine was driven by the piston to the paddle wheel at the stern. An interesting feature is the steering wheel, though at first the wheel turned in two separate ways; fitted and the ship was steered from the bow.

In 1840, the Britannia was launched in order to cross the Atlantic. About 20 tons of coal were used. The ship's capacity in the later days of the transatlantic trade, the Great Eastern, was much greater.

The famous Clipper, America, was built in 1851. Steamer ships were created to serve the merchant service. As they did not depend on the wind and made the figure of the clippers, with their tall masts and wide wings.

Compared to the lighter crafts of the time, their accommodation was much improved and they were more adequate for the needs of travel.

Next week, the Steamship Growing.
SHIPS THROUGH THE AGES

The Steamship Grows

This week's story brings us a pictorial showing the Ship of the Century, the German Panzer, of 1905. Her length of 542 feet made her the largest ship in the world. Designed by K. R. Nord, she built the great Lusitania. She was built in the famed of the Germans and was fitted with paddle wheels. Propeller and paddle wheels were both used to power the ship. All this time the great British was a failure as a passenger ship—this power developed by her engines was not sufficient for her size.

As ships became larger, more boilers were needed. They were even fired by hand and had to be raised and lowered to keep steam pressure at constant levels.

But even so better than the paddle wheel which came out of the water in a series of steps, cutting down speed. This picture shows the twin propellers of a ship that is undergoing repairs. The ship has been streamlined to reduce the drag in the water.

The coal was brought from the mines in large barges and piled near the furnace doors ready for the boilers. It was very hot and dusty, a large ship needed a supply of coal every day. Some 30 years ago, coal fuel was replaced by oil which was cleaner and easier to keep at a fixed temperature. Oil is fed to the furnace under pressure and is controlled by valves.

This engine dates 1886. The picture shows the piston making the stroke. The power was huge, and the ship was fast. She could travel to Paris in a week and a half and the trips were profitable.

Here is the last picture of a 5-ton anchor. In the workshop it is interesting to note that the anchor that weighs only a few pounds is the weight of the anchor, which is the weight of the coal that is on the sea bottom. The anchor keeps the ship from dragging; the spikes or palms dig into the ground.

Next week: The Ship of Today
The first man to... manufacture the modern steam engine was James Watt. He was born in Greenock in 1736. His father was a carpenter and craftsman and James, who was very rarely strong enough to play with his companions, spent most of his time reading books on all subjects and, above all, in rummaging about in his father's workshop.

Later, when his father died, James went from one job to another. He worked first for an instrument maker and then in the laboratories of the University of Glasgow. Everywhere he went he was known for the clever devices and improvements he introduced. At the same time he kept up his reading so that although much younger than the Professors at the University, he was still able to converse with them on equal terms.

But what Watt dreamed most of doing was to harness the power of steam to human use. A steam engine known as the Newcomen already existed. But Watt knew it to be slow and inefficient. How could it be improved? He built model after model; he experimented in the use of steam in all possible ways; he even learnt various foreign languages in order to study what scientists from other countries had written. At length, Watt's engine was ready, its epoch-making novelty being the method of condensing the steam away from the cylinder in which it was in motion.

It was in 1769, at the age of 33, that Watt received his patent on the steam-engine. Since then the invention has served as the model for countless later engines. But Watt had not yet finished—out of his extraordinarily prolific mind he devised a micrometer, a marine screw-propeller, a copying-press, new surveying instruments and many other inventions.