HISTORY OF THE SHIP EUTERPE / STAR OF INDIA

*Star of India*, formerly named *Euterpe*
Launched: November, 1863
Length Overall: 278'
Beam: 35'
Gross Tonnage: 1197
Maximum Draft: 21.5'
Mainmast: 124'8"
Main yard: 72'
Rig: Originally ship, now bark

"One by one the few remaining sailing ships are disappearing. They drop away, and are heard of no more. With them goes much that is worthy and incalculable. It passes like a high squall sinking beyond the horizon, wind and sea, motion and color, romance and inspiration, a whole range of human endeavor, all vanishing to leeward with the tall ships in their midst. . . The sailing ship stood for a means whereby men were brought to their fullest development. She stood for a profession in which only merit could endure. She stood for things the world cannot afford to lose."

Master Mariner, Lincoln Colcord

The *Star of India* began her life as the British full-rigged ship *Euterpe*, named for the ancient Greek muse of music. She was launched at Ramsey, Isle of Man in November, 1863 and was engaged in the India trade until 1871. On her first voyage, she collided with a Spanish brig and was forced to return because of a "half-baked mutiny". On her second voyage to India in 1865, the ship was caught in a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal where the captain gave the order to cut away her masts to keep her from capsizing. On the voyage home (after repairs were made at Trincomalee and Calcutta) her first master, Captain William Storry, died and was buried at sea. The *Euterpe* made a total of six voyages to India.

Under ownership of Shaw, Savill in 1871 and until 1897, the *Euterpe* carried cargo and hundreds of emigrants from Europe to Australia and New Zealand, with occasional stops at San Francisco and at Chilean and European ports. Sailing around the Cape of Good Hope to New Zealand and back to England by way of Cape Horn, she made 21 voyages around the world.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, thousands emigrated from the British Isles to all corners of the earth. These were the glory years of the British Empire, the Victorian Age, and the peoples of those set out to colonize the globe. Theirs was one of the greatest migrations of all time, a surging out, and a daring leap into the little known. Abandoning hearths and homes their ancestors had kept for centuries, they boarded frail sailing ships to voyage thousands of miles across forbidding seas,
enduring every hardship imaginable. They were jammed like sheep into the 'tween decks and tiny cabins of these vessels. They were poorly fed for the most part, and their drinking water was strictly rationed. (Any laundry or bathing done had to be accomplished in salt water.) Children were born and children died. Sometimes adults died too, of the dropsy or some other ailment. More often the relentless pitching, rolling and yawing of the ship injured them as it clawed its way ahead. Seasickness was common, especially in the first weeks of a voyage.

The storms were awful. For weeks they would go "knocking about in the channel", battling to make it west and clear into the Atlantic. Vast seas deluged the ship, pouring into the 'tween decks and flooding out cabins; even passengers in the saloon were not immune from torrents. In the tropics, sweltering heat permeated the ship as it drifted through the Doldrums – at times becalmed, when the sea lay flat as glass and not a breath of air came. In the Roaring Forties below Cape of Good Hope, the winds returned with a vengeance. If they were bound for Australia or New Zealand, the ship "ran easting down" here, scudding before the prevailing winds all the way to her destination. In many ways this leg was the roughest of all. The ship ran along the northern edge of the southern Ocean - a cold, bleak and violent world. Enormous icebergs stretched for miles, the seas rose "mountainous high", as the old logs say. Winds of "hurricane force" could strike out of an "unsettled sky". The pale blue ink of matted, inscribed logs speaks of the desperate struggles of men against broken yards, sails blasted away, lines torn loose and gear mangled. A man overboard was a dead man and most commanders would not lower a boat. Why send others to their deaths for no purpose?

In 1897, the *Euterpe* sailed from London to New Zealand for the last time and ended up in Hawaii, under Hawaiian registry. From 1898 to 1901, she sailed between the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, Australia and San Francisco carrying mostly timber and coal. In 1900, the Euterpe officially became an American ship, owned by the Pacific Colonial Shipping Company and in 1901 the Alaska Packers Association (APA) of San Francisco purchased her. It was in 1906 that her name was changed to *Star of India*, identifying here as part of the fleet of APA ships whose names all begin with Star. During this phase of her career, she was rigged down to a bark and other alterations were made to accommodate over 200 fisheries workers aboard. From 1902 until 1923, the *Euterpe* made 22 voyages out of San Francisco into the Bering Sea to work in the salmon fishery.

By 1923, steam dominated the seas and the *Star of India* was retired to Alameda with other sailing ships. In 1926, a group of San Diegans, including Jerry MacMullen, purchased the ship and brought her to San Diego the following year where restoration began. With full restoration complete, in 1976 the Star of India was put to sea once again under full sail.

The history of the ship is indeed rich and varied and not without disaster. In addition to the aforementioned collision during the first voyage, she collided with the steamer *Canadian* in Scottish water in 1884, with the barkentine *Sir John*
Franklin in Newcastle, Australia in 1900 and then ran aground on the trip home off Hawaii. In 1905, she collided with the sternwheeler Fort Bragg in San Francisco Bay and in 1918 she was nearly driven ashore by ice at Cape Menshikof, Alaska. The storms presented another challenge to the ship and the men who sailed her. Having survived the cyclone in the 1865 voyage, she was also involved in another great storm in the Irish Sea in 1894.

Rounding the notoriously nasty Horn was no small feat for any ship in any era. . .

"Around Cape Horn, a ship's will-deck was always filled with salt water, which dashed against the bulkheads, drowned the winches and capstans, penetrated the deckhouses and seeped in everywhere-into the crew's boots and oilskins, irritating the skin of their hands and faces. The men, haggard with fatigue and numbed with misery, were only able to carry on through the ingrained disciplines, order and routine on board. These were the defenses against the uncertainty and chaos, and once they were broken down, all was lost.
The masts and spars stand out black and ghostly against the overcast sky; the moon appears fitfully, zigzagging its pale light through the swaying rigging. The masts and yards swing in crazy curves like diabolical metronomes. . . This was the price exacted by Cape Horn - terrible storms, untold suffering to the men, and a fearful ordeal for their ships. The headland, never even seen by mariners who had rounded it many times, far to the south or in a snowstorm, commanded fear and respect. To the seamen it was an implacable foe against which one fought with might and main. The whole desolate region was a graveyard for ships and their men."

"Euterpe:" Diaries, Letters & Logs of the "Star of India" as a British Emigrant Ship, Compiled and edited by Craig Arnold

The Star of India is a gallant survivor of the Great Age of Sail, and a fitting tribute to the "Iron Men" who took such vessels around the world.