

## Truce Talks Commence at Community Church

The following morning, Tom McHale rode into town to have a long talk with Captain Davids of the AMERICAN YANKEE. Captain Davids was one of the last dozen patients still recovering in the church, having developed the fever the day after his rescue. He was better now, but still weak, and resting in a bed just ten feet from the pulpit.

"I heard how you kept 'em from the bananas last night," Captain Davids said. "Tell you the truth though, if I'd have been well I'd been with 'em."

"I'd have been with 'em too," McHale said,

"except Bindle made me his deputy. You know those bananas are going to rot."

"So I've heard."

"And so I have a plan. Let's write a letter to the company. Tell them the truth. Tell them the paperwork is going to take at least a month and that their bananas will be no use to anybody."

"And ask them to sign a release, turning the bananas over to the town," said Captain Davids.

"Exactly. And we'll get Jesse Williamson, who led the raid last night, and ask him to ride the letter into the city at a gallop. The town could

go without haircuts for a time. He could be in and back in four days."

"Get a paper and pen," Captain Davids said. "This town saved my life."

The letter was composed and Jesse Williamson, the town barber, was sent for and agreed to take it in.

"What if Bindle won't honor the reply?" Jesse asked, sliding the letter into his pocket.

"Then I'll ride with you for those bananas," McHale said.

"And I," said Captain Davids.

## Compromise Agreement Hopefully to be Worked Out

During the next four days, the paperwork out at WRECKMASTER H. Q. seemed to increase if anything. Replies came in from the Eastern Fruit Pack Shipping Company, the Hampton Boat Works which had built AMERICAN YANKEE in 1836, the United States Coast Guard, and the United States Department of Naval Affairs. All these letters had to be answered, and in addition, forms had to be sent out -- often in duplicate or triplicate -- to the Costa Rican consulate, the United States Department of Agriculture and the Wreckmasters' Office itself in Brooklyn. Messengers and clerks were coming and going. Miss Williston worked from 8 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night, and the McHales, father and son, took shifts standing guard with the hunting musket by the AMERICAN YANKEE. Every afternoon, late in the day, as the big ball of the sun set magnificently over the horizon, Tom McHale would walk down to the hulk of the AMERICAN YANKEE, climb as close as he could to the hold, and sniff. The bananas were holding up fine.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the fourth day, Jesse Williamson arrived all hot and dusty from his long ride to the city. He gave Tom McHale a wink as he got off his horse, and went with McHale into the living room to present the reply to Oscar Bindle.

"What's this?" Bindle asked, turning the envelope over and over.

"It's a letter from the Atlas Line in New York, the owners of AMERICAN YANKEE," McHale said.

Bindle opened the envelope suspiciously and

read the letter.

TO THE WRECKMASTER, WHOEVER HE MAY BE, AT THE SITE OF THE AMERICAN YANKEE.

DEAR SIR:

WE ARE IN RECEIPT OF A LETTER, DATED SEPTEMBER 23, 1842, FROM OUR CAPTAIN HARRISON DAVIDS OF THE AMERICAN YANKEE. CAPTAIN DAVIDS INFORMS US THAT ONLY DUE TO THE EFFORTS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE TOWN WAS IT POSSIBLE THAT HE AND EVERY MAN OF THE CREW WAS ABLE TO BE RESCUED FROM THE

AMERICAN YANKEE. IN APPRECIATION OF THIS FACT, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAS VOTED TO WAIVE ALL RIGHTS TO THE CARGO OF THE AMERICAN YANKEE AND SPECIFICALLY AND DELIBERATELY GIVE THIS CARGO TO THE TOWNSPEOPLE IN CONSIDERATION OF THEIR BRAVERY. OUR GIFT IS EFFECTIVE AS OF THE DATE OF THIS LETTER.

SINCERELY  
JAY HORACE GREENE  
PRESIDENT, ATLAS LINES

When Bindle had finished, he turned the letter over to see if there was anything on the other side, which there wasn't. Then, scowling, he held the letter up to the light.

"It's their letter all right," Bindle said to nobody in particular. "That's their stationery."

McHale and Williamson stood at the front of the desk, shifting from one foot to the other.

"I will ACCEPT their offer," Bindle said. McHale and Williamson broke into smiles. "BUT, it can't take effect until these FORMS are filled out."

Bindle opened a drawer and pulled out some government blanks headed TRANSFER OF CARGO. "And these forms," he continued. "can't even be SENT until after our government paperwork has been finalized and filed as per our regular schedule." Bindle slammed the desk drawer, "which will take at LEAST a month."

McHale looked up to see the figure of his wife standing in the hallway between the kitchen and the living room, carrying a tray laden with tea and cakes. There were tears in her eyes.



## Expeditionary Force to Make A Few Changes This Night

Little time was wasted in organizing an attack on Mr. Bindle and his bananas. At 11 o'clock that night, a group of forty-two men, wearing dark clothing, their faces painted with charcoal, tiptoed past the snoring form of Oscar Bindle and walked down the dune to the beach and the AMERICAN YANKEE. The tide was high. Water lapped almost all the way to the bow of the mighty clipper ship.

ZZZMMMMMMFFFFFF. MMMMM. Said Oscar Bindle inside his carriage.

The men stopped in the sand, still as the night. The springs on the carriage shook and Oscar Bindle rolled over and went back to sleep.

"We'll have to hurry," McHale whispered. "There's a storm coming."

Indeed, dark black clouds billowed in from the north, flickering past the thin crescent of the moon. The wind was up, and it rustled the leaves in the trees at the back of the beach.

ZZZMMMMMMFFFFFF. Said Oscar Bindle.

From the beach in front of the Parsons farm to the east of the McHale property, another group of townsmen moved a long line of empty wagons toward the AMERICAN YANKEE. They moved slowly and silently, carefully following the ruts of the wagon in the front in an effort not to disturb the sleeping wreckmaster.

Tom McHale and his son had shimmied up a rope to the main deck of the clipper ship. They were quickly followed by Captain Davids and several of the other men.

"The hold is aft," whispered the Captain, pointing toward the back of the boat, lest the townspeople not know which direction lay aft.

As the breeze grew stronger and a light drizzle began falling, the Captain turned a handle and lifted the heavy door, revealing eighty-eight tons of beautiful yellow bananas lying in beautiful disarray in the hold of the ship.

"The smell is good," McHale said, sniffing agreeably. "We're on time."

Moments later, as the forty-two men were ranging along the length of the ship and down into the hold, forming a banana version of a bucket brigade, a tremendous thundercrash announced the arrival of the storm. Sheets of rain washed across the deck, sending the townspeople below for shelter. The wind struck with gale force fury, and lightning lit the sky.

"We'll just sit it out," McHale said. "But I feel sorry for those fellows with the wagons."

But then, two very interesting things happened, almost at the same time. In the first place, over the fury of the storm could be heard the high-pitched, squeaky voice of Oscar Bindle, up

and about due to the storm and fully observant of the wagons ranging along the beach.

"WHAT'S GOING ON HERE! GET AWAY FROM THAT SHIP! McHALE? McHALE? WHERE ARE YOU?"

Tom McHale huddled low in the Captain's cabin, and quivered at the sound. He had no idea what the punishment was for a deputy that leaves his post.

But then, the second of the two interesting things happened. As the men listened to the wreckmaster, ranting on and on from the shore, in his sing-song voice, they became astonishingly aware that the great AMERICAN YANKEE was starting to move. It was subtle at first. With every crash of a wave, they at first felt the slight movement, almost a trembling from side to side. Then, as the ferocity of the storm increased, and as the tide apparently rose higher, they could hear, over the wind and the surf and the pattering of the rain on the deck and the yelling of Oscar Bindle, the unmistakable sound of wood sliding over sand. They were pulling free.

Captain Davids' eyes widened. He stood straight up in the cabin. "EVERYBODY ON DECK!" he screamed. "LET'S GO! WE'RE GONNA SAVE THIS SHIP!"

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