

The Ship Club Sebbe Als, Augustenborg

Sebbe Als on the Hudson River

Fifty years ago, on July 4, 1976, Sebbe Als sailed up the Hudson River as part of Operation Sail, the spectacular international parade of tall ships held to celebrate the 200th anniversary of American independence.





The folk singer Pete Seeger, who accompanied us throughout the entire journey.

Our crew aboard Sebbe Als was invited to participate in the celebration of the United States Bicentennial. On July 4, we were to sail up the Hudson River together with a large fleet of historic vessels as part of the grand Operation Sail event.

Financial support from a number of organizations made the voyage possible. Sebbe Als was transported to New York (Port Elizabeth) aboard a container ship, while the crew flew across the Atlantic to join her.

The trip became an unforgettable experience. Throughout our stay, we were accompanied by the world-renowned folk singer Pete Seeger and members of the Hudson River sloop Clearwater. Their friendship and hospitality made this a journey we will always remember.

This document was written by Palle, Puk, Jesper, Edith, and Carl Otto and is reproduced here as they originally wrote it.



*The directors
of Operation Sail 1976
express their thanks
to the officers,
cadets and crew members
who took part in
the Parade of Sail
in New York Harbor on
July 4, 1976,
and thereby made a significant
contribution to the celebration
of the American
Bicentennial.*

Signed in New York City in the State of New York,

Emil Mosbacher Jr.
Emil Mosbacher Jr.
Chairman



The Jumbo Jet Flight from Kastrup to New York

Wednesday, June 30, 1976

Here we are sitting at the airport 29 of us on our way into the unknown. Everyone has bought ceramic mugs from Flemming, and everyone has also bought liquor (a bottle of schnapps as a gift for the Americans). Now we sit here sweating in the heat while cooling off with a cold beer. Spirits are high all around, and some of us probably have a few butterflies in our stomachs as well. This is incredibly exciting.

It is 12:00 noon, and we have just noticed that the flight has been delayed from 12:40 to 1:50 p.m. The waiting is long. We have used part of the time to sing through our songs, and people around us were staring. Beer can of course be drunk when it is hot and you are waiting but it has to come out again eventually so now I am sitting here alone guarding the bags and the liquor, because as Palle said: "Nobody is allowed to all leave at the same time."

Then suddenly it was our turn, and the aircraft stood there large, powerful, and exciting. We were seated quite far apart, but that didn't matter much, because once we had taken off once

we were in the air we went visiting each other. The plane held 386 passengers. There was a cinema and music on board. We started with a wonderful meal: first a small bowl of shrimp, then a hot meat dish with vegetables, and finally cheese and crackers. We could have red wine or whatever we wanted.

Steen Weile had two portions of the hot meal, three desserts, and later three additional meals. No great mountains there...

Some of us went to sleep, others watched films. They saw Lucky Lady. There was not much to see until we reached the southern tip of Greenland. It was absolutely magnificent, and many photos were taken.

Then we flew over Canada, which for a long stretch looked empty and rather bleak. Further west we could see occasional roads and forests. We were sitting comfortably. It was almost like riding on a coach bus. We read, dozed, and played cards. Later we were served a light meal consisting of sandwiches, beer, cake, tea, or coffee.

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We passed over Montreal, which was hidden under clouds. We have descended a little further now and can only see clouds at the moment.

It is now 5:25 p.m., and we are about an hour and a half delayed, so whether we make it to the concert depends on how things have been arranged for us on the ground whether a bus is waiting, etc. Ah, just now we were given a scalding hot washcloth to clean our faces and hands wonderful!

“Please fasten your seat belts,” comes the announcement over the loudspeaker, and shortly afterward we land at Kennedy Airport. Getting through customs goes relatively smoothly.

Consul Holm Petersen from the Danish Consulate is there to receive us, and he has arranged for a special customs officer who quickly guides us through the arrival hall, where Mimi, Derek, and Lance Lee are waiting. They have a bus ready for the luggage, and a couple of private cars take us to Central Park.

“Good heavens - we’ve really made it to America!”

It was raining and thundering, and it was very warm—tropical, humid air at 22°C (72°F). Despite the weather, a large crowd had gathered, and they were wildly enthusiastic about Pete Seeger, who had been performing alone since 6:30 p.m., and it was now 8:30 p.m.

We were welcomed onto the stage and sang a couple of the melancholic songs from our homeland. Carl Otto then gave the first of his very successful “presidential speeches,” which caused great excitement and applause among the Americans.

The concert ended with Pete’s signature tune, “Bye Bye Sweet Roseanna,” and on the spot he improvised a few verses about SEBBE ALS and its crew, who had come from so far away.

We were quite exhausted afterward and were treated to apple juice in a changing shed by Pete’s wife, Toshi. After a bit of discussion about plans for the next day, we drove in several cars to our “home” on Henry Street, where after many difficulties we finally managed to meet up. By then it was 4 a.m. Danish time, and 11 p.m. local time.



The Jumbo Jet Flight from Kastrup to New York



Greenland seen from the plane

There were air mattresses for everyone, so we quickly crawled into our sleeping bags and fell asleep instantly.

We slept in the basement of a bomb-proof gymnasium at the Henry Street Settlement, a large complex that functioned almost like a community center for the entire neighborhood and for all ages, both Black and White, though mostly Black. We had access to the gymnasium, a large bathroom, and a small kitchen.



The journey from Port Elizabeth to the Bath Marine Museum, passing the Statue of Liberty.

Thursday, July 1, 1976

Fifteen crew members had to get up early to go and retrieve SEBBE at Port Elizabeth. There was no peace and quiet, so everyone was up at around 5 a.m. and began making breakfast. The crew prepared good packed lunches American sandwiches and set off, accompanied by Lance Lee. Those who stayed behind spent about an hour over coffee and then went out with a guide named Beth to explore parts of Manhattan.

We looked at shops, bought records, T-shirts, and postcards. We went into a small pub, drank cola, and wrote letters home.



The rowing trip from Port Elizabeth

The rowing trip from Port Elizabeth - Never have so many people spoken so much English while understanding so little of it and yet it led to many amusing experiences.

The fifteen crew members had to wait three hours before they were allowed to take possession of SEBBE at Port Elizabeth. About twenty bewildered Americans rushed around, but eventually the boat was launched. After it had been rigged, it was thoroughly filmed by A.C.L.'s photographers. They had a very fine sail to Brooklyn Bridge, where the vessel was brought alongside the pier. Late in the afternoon they returned to Henry Street. Three other crew members had gone with Pete to Yonkers to find a suitable anchorage. Another three had gone to Kennedy Airport to pick up Åse and Birgitte.

That same evening, the entire crew was invited to a party at the Bath Marine Museum, a newly opened museum which, on the occasion of our visit, had created a Viking exhibition.

We met a large number of people there members of the Clearwater organization, museum staff, and others who later helped us in various ways. Everyone had a glass in hand, and there was plenty to drink.



The children gave a nice welcome

Fredag den 2. juli 1976

The day was partly a day off, with time for private sightseeing. We all needed to relax a bit to slow down and split into small groups.

Some of us went to the ship, since the director of the Henry Street Settlement had asked if 60 children, mostly Black, from a local daycare center could be allowed aboard.

The ship was moored in a quiet place near the old Brooklyn Bridge, but there was a drop of about three meters (ten feet) from the pier, so the children were helped down one by one at a time. It was a great experience for the many children. There was so much to see in the big city, and the children gave us a warm and friendly welcome.



It was a great experience for many of the children.



There was a lot to see in the big city.



Here C. O. gives one of his famous presidential speeches.

Official opening of the Marine Museum

The event was the official opening of the museum, attended by various prominent figures such as the mayor and others. Once again there were glasses for everyone, and plenty to drink. People wandered around chatting as best they could, and there were many linguistic “gems” to be found.

The following conversation took place between one of the “important” guests and Carl Otto, who wanted to explain that his eldest son had just gone to Boston to visit a girl.

It went like this:

“My oldest son are in Boston to use a girl!!!”

Perhaps it wasn’t even entirely untrue—but is it any surprise that the man looked completely shocked?

Lance gave a heartfelt speech about SEBBE and the ship club, and C. OI. presented gifts and once again delivered a brilliant, heartfelt speech, which was greatly appreciated.

Some then quietly went home again...



It may look serious, but it was only for fun!



The legendary ship Unicorn, which had been used in the film Roots, served as our overnight stay on the night before July 4.

Saturday, July 3, 1976

At 9 a.m., a bus was waiting outside to pick us up along with our most “important” luggage for a trip to Croton-on-Hudson, where a Danish-American “Rebild” (US Independence Day) Festival was being held. There were many people at the site, and we saw an opportunity to raise funds. We set up a Viking market using two chairs and a plank of wood. We sold badges, jewelry, postcards, and similar items for \$70 (about 450 Danish kroner).

Together with the Danish Radio Boys’ Choir, a young orchestra, and a number of American Scouts, we took part in the opening ceremony. Afterwards, we traveled straight across Manhattan to Brooklyn Bridge, where SEBBE was moored.



We joined the Danish-American Rebild Festival.

She was prepared in record time, and in pouring rain (huge American raindrops), we sailed to the starting point at Gravesend Bay. Along the way we met a Maersk ship and exchanged horn blasts and flag signals.

We came alongside the brig Unicorn, a magnificent vessel.

Her crew was very helpful, and with great care SEBBE was moored to the larger ship. Both vessels attracted a great deal of attention, and curious speedboats constantly came racing past. But the mate aboard Unicorn had a powerful voice—he would shout “slow down” in time to prevent the waves from disturbing us too much. In the evening, we enjoyed ourselves greatly with the crew.

Food was brought over from Clearwater. It consisted of salad, a macaroni dish, and hot tea. They were wonderful.

It was a magnificent evening. The sun set large and red behind the world’s longest suspension bridge, the Verrazzano Bridge, which was illuminated as darkness fell. It was a spectacular sight. We were anchored about two nautical miles away. We were allowed to sleep on deck aboard the Unicorn, but the evening was so beautiful that we had difficulty even finding our sleeping bags.



We pass the Statue of Liberty under full sail.

Sunday, July 4, 1976

This was a special day. Both America and Edith were celebrating their birthdays, and it was to be properly celebrated.

After breakfast we sailed closer to shore and found a pleasant anchorage where we could observe events both on land, on the water, and in the air. From early morning, the beach was black with people who had come to see "Op-Sail." We waited 3 - 4 hours, following everything and watching all the magnificent ships.

The start of Op-Sail was marked in the air, when several airplanes wrote across the sky in smoke: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!"

Then all the large ships arrived unfortunately only with working sails set. There was only a light wind, and it was against them.

First came the American training ship EAGLE, then the Danish training ship DANMARK, and then it continued one after another. It was a magnificent experience. It was a shame they could not set full sail. Finally it was our turn.

We got a slightly premature start and ended up ahead of those we were supposed to follow. While we were hoisting sail, the flag got stuck. But Kell Hach handled it like a squirrel he climbed up the shrouds and freed the flag. Meanwhile, the wind had shifted, and we had a good run downwind.

Along the route, warships from many nations were anchored on both sides. They dipped their flags, and the crews saluted.



With the Statue of Liberty to port.

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There was a dense crowd of historic ships.



We felt small among the large warships.

We saw PEDER SKRAM and dipped our flag, but in the confusion they did not see us. There were many pleasure boats weaving in and out among the participating ships, which added to the chaos.

We had good wind down to the southern tip of Manhattan, but suddenly the wind shifted 180 degrees and we sailed into a thunderstorm.

Very quickly everyone had to shorten sail and continue under engine. We were sailing very close together.

It was a cauldron of boats and waves—a miracle that no serious collisions occurred, but everyone reacted quickly. It was very unfortunate, as this happened just before the area where grandstands had been built for the public, where around three million people were gathered.



The weather meant we had to use the engine.

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There were truly many large historic ships.

We continued up the Hudson River and saw many of the large ships returning under full sail. Lance Lee was busy waving to them all with flags. He was clearly enjoying himself, his eyes shining. Just before the George Washington Bridge, the beam holding the engine cracked, and we had to switch to rowing. Shortly afterward, the Coast Guard arranged for us to be towed to Yonkers. We went ashore at a canoe club, where Pete and Toshi among others welcomed us. The club members had prepared a lovely meal for us, which was served in a parking lot outside the clubhouse.



Wherever we went, we were warmly received.

While we were eating, someone suddenly noticed that SEBBE had drifted due to a strong current and soft bottom, so we had to quickly move her to the marina. Meanwhile, a bus had arrived, escorted by three motorcycle police officers. They gave short rides around the area, to great amusement for some and alarm for others. With wailing sirens and flashing lights, we were

escorted by the police to a nearby park where a 4th of July celebration was taking place. The ship club was made honorary citizens and was presented with the city's golden key, after which C.O. responded with a fine speech and appointed the mayor an "Honorary Member."



There was always song and music with Pete.

The evening ended with a spectacular fireworks display. On the bus ride home, Pete Seeger played music, and everyone in the bus sang. People thought it was a regular bus, so we ended up with some of the city's residents on board, which only made it more fun.

In the building next to the canoe club, a yacht club had their clubhouse with jukebox, television, bar, and everything. They invited the entire crew for a nightcap (five pitchers of beer). Those who stayed the longest saw SEBBE on television and got pizza. Others quietly went home. Our friend Lance Lee left us later in the evening to travel back to Maine.

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Monday, July 5, 1976

We had plenty of time for breakfast, which consisted of a "Sønderjyds kaffebord" (South Jutland coffee and snacks) in the form of various cakes, pastries, cola, and coffee. The meal ended with eggs and bacon, and then we were all given a large packed lunch.

We set sail at midday toward Croton, and after about 20 minutes of rowing we came alongside another yacht club, where we were treated in the best possible way with large, cool drinks.

One of the local sailors was allowed to steer for a while, as he claimed to know the Hudson River like the back of his hand (but he had no idea there was a hole in it).



Spejderne havde sørget for telte

He was handed the helm and clearly enjoyed it. It was a very beautiful trip, but a hot day, so after passing the Tappan Zee Bridge we went for a swim. After about an hour of sailing we reached a cliffside the Palisades which a local resident told us about. It was a magnificent sight and reminded us a bit of Norway.

In his enthusiasm, he got too far in toward the shore, and suddenly we were grounded on a rock and the rudder broke. The man was very upset and probably also a bit embarrassed. We immediately replaced the rudder and continued toward Croton with another helmsman.

Half an hour from Croton we hoisted sail and glided majestically toward the shore, accompanied by a swarm of boats and even a seaplane. When we were about 200–300 meters from land, we lowered the sail, as we did not know the bottom conditions or whether there were rocks.

This was a great disappointment to the many people waiting on shore with cameras, who were extremely excited about the spectacular sight of SEBBE under full sail.

Never mind we had become cautious.

We were welcomed by two scout troops who had set up part of their tents for us, and people from Clearwater had prepared excellent food: chicken, corn, potato salad, lots of cold juice, melon, and coffee and we ate heartily.

We settled in, washed up, and some of the locals even offered us warm showers. Some went home with Dian and bathed there, while others went with different hosts who also provided showers.



Clearwater havde sørget for mad

When we returned, a group of people had gathered around a bonfire, and Pete Seeger was playing and singing. It was very cozy.



It was a great evening of conversation and "hygge".

The scouts handed out neckerchiefs, and C.O. was presented with a flag by one troop, while another troop gave out candy, tobacco, corn pipes, and more. What an evening. It had a real summer camp atmosphere - with bonfire, singing, full moon, and happy people.

There was plenty of friendly chatting late into the night before we could finally settle down.

- The scouts provided the tents
- Clearwater provided the food
- It was a great evening of conversation and "hygge".



Pete and Toshi's self-built house

Tuesday, July 6, 1976

We were to visit the Danish old people's home in Croton and were driven there in private cars. It was a great experience to visit the elderly residents and talk with them. Some had lived in America for 50 years and still spoke excellent Danish.

It was quite impressive one of the women was from Sønderborg, a man from Haderslev, and they all had many stories to tell.

We visited them in their rooms and then gathered in a large common room, where we sang Danish national songs, which they were very pleased with. Here and there, a small tear was shed.



The old woman from Sønderborg

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Danish meatballs were made (frikadeller)

Afterwards we were driven up to Beacon, where we were to stay as guests of Pete and Toshi until the next day. They lived high on a hillside, where they had cleared a patch of forest themselves and built a house almost like a mountain cabin with a fireplace (the kitchen had all modern conveniences). Next to the house they had built a brick annex with two large rooms where we were accommodated.

There were so many of us that Toshi had originally planned for the youngest and strongest to sleep outside on the lawn.



General comfort and relaxation outside the house

Initially most of the sailors were happy with the idea, but then something happened: Peter Larsen, on a short walk into the forest, had seen a black snake of over a meter in length. Even though we were told it was harmless and rarely came near houses, most of us asked to sleep indoors, so we ended up sleeping packed closely together. Toshi laughed a bit at this.

We unpacked and went for a walk in the forest, where we found a stream or rather a small waterfall that was incredibly beautiful.



The weather was fine and spirits were high.

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View from Pete's house



Comfort and relaxation

Some of us took off our clothes and bathed in the icy water. It was absolutely fantastic.

On the way back we saw a sign on a tree warning of bears (mainly in winter), which made our hair stand on end. Every branch along the path became a snake, and in the silence we heard cracking sounds that were clearly bears, hungry for real Vikings. Yes, imagination was certainly not lacking.

When we returned, Hans Jørgen had made frikadeller (Danish meatballs) that were better than our mothers', and we also had delicious salad, "stone soup" (Toshi's specialty), watermelon, fresh raspberries with cream, freshly baked wholegrain bread, cheese, and coffee. We ate outside.



Toshi and Pete at their home

It was wonderful - simply top class, with the most beautiful view over the Hudson River.

They had a funny custom: after eating watermelon, the leftovers had to be thrown into the forest beyond a certain point. If you failed, you had to do the dishes (there was a dishwasher). This ended up being Flemming and Edith's task. We relaxed, wandered around, and chatted here and there. As soon as darkness fell, we gathered again around the fire, where Pete played and sang. He improvised verses about the brave Danish Vikings right on the spot. He was amazing he had us completely captivated, and we could have listened all night. The view, the moon, the air, the people, the atmosphere - this was America at its most beautiful.



There was no wind and a lot of rowing.

Wednesday, July 7, 1976

In the morning we were driven down to Croton again. The night watch, which had been taking turns keeping watch on board the whole time, had been given breakfast by a kind American.

The boat was quickly stowed, as it looked like rain. We sailed under sail toward Nyack. Many people were on the pier, and there was great cheering. After about an hour of sailing, a storm broke loose, and we had to drop the sail and start the engine. When we were halfway to Nyack, the plank holding the engine broke, and we had to row for about an hour and a half.

On arrival in Nyack we were somewhat surprised that no one was there to receive us. We went ashore and discovered that we were in the wrong place and had arrived an hour too early, so we stayed there.



Many guests came to see the ship

Soon a group of people gathered by the bridge to look at these strange creatures and the vessel they had arrived in. A Norwegian showed up with a bottle of schnapps - it was still raining.

Later we sailed to another bridge, where the proper reception took place. Pete Seeger was with us the whole time. We were welcomed by members of a yacht club (of the expensive kind), and after a swim we were treated in the clubhouse with delicious food. We stood on a veranda overlooking the Hudson River and ate while members came over to chat with us. One of them was from Denmark, Svend Schou, formerly from Aarhus. They were interesting people, and one of them gave the entire ship club a striped railroad hat, which we wore for the rest of the trip. Later we went inside the clubhouse, where many people had gathered by now. We all sat on the floor around Pete Seeger, sang, and spent a couple of very pleasant hours together. The young people later went rowing toward the old pier in town, while the rest of us settled down on the terrace.



For ronong ind til den gamle mole



Thursday, July 8, 1976

We were up early, had breakfast, and packed lunch bags, ready to depart at 8 a.m. It was a beautiful morning and looked like it would become a very hot day. Spirits were high throughout the boat.

We sang morning songs, even Christmas songs - everything full of atmosphere and Pete thought it was fantastic.

We rowed for about three hours in three shifts before a motorboat took us in tow toward the Washington Bridge. Along the way, the speed was increased, which damaged the rudder, so we had to use an oar as a temporary rudder.

At the bridge we had an arrangement with another boat, but it turned out to be too small, so we rowed while he went off to get a larger vessel. One of Pete's friends arrived and towed us to Ellis Island, but then he had to leave.

We rowed again for two hours, and with the tide in our favor we reached a speed of 6 knots.

We sailed into Pier No. 6, which turned out to be the wrong one. There was a four-hour wait while Pete went ashore, but nobody knew anything.

We rowed another 1200 meters and had to work hard to avoid the ferries.



Pete Seeger always had his banjo with him and played wherever we went, to the joy of many people.



A birthday cake with SEBBE ALS for C.O..

*What Pete just said is unknown, but could be
"This land is your land this land is my land"*

We then rowed to the correct Pier No. 6, got hold of the harbor police, and were told to row to the other side of the pier, where we were to stay and live on a ferry.

A young Clearwater girl, Marie (17), had only been informed the day before of our arrival. Since she was completely alone with the arrangements, she placed an advertisement in the newspaper asking for help and thereby managed to get the necessary assistants.

The ferry had to be prepared, and food had to be purchased, but everything went well. We lacked nothing. On the pier we were welcomed by a girls' scout troop (aged 8 - 12), dressed in white gloves and all. One of them was dressed as the "Princess on the Pea," with a golden crown, makeup, lipstick, hair done up, and heavily lacquered - quite dreadful. There was press present. Some were interviewed, and photos were taken. It was completely absurd. The crew had been looking forward to young, attractive girl scouts, so it was almost unbearable that most of them were only eight years old. Then we went aboard the ferry a large three-story vessel. We all went to the top deck and settled in.

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Friends of "Vitsen" held a sidewalk meeting.

Some stayed inside, others outside. We could shower in a nearby sports hall. SEBBE was locked up, and the engine and equipment were secured in a room.

We were told that it was a crime-ridden neighborhood with "Wild Angels" after dark, so we had to post guards.

People could walk straight from the street onto the ferry. Carl Otto contacted the police, who promised to patrol every hour during the night, which they did.

At dinner time a car arrived. A plank was lowered from the back, and we were served delicious food, beautifully arranged with tablecloths and plates and everything but it was a standing party, so we sat on the pavement and ate. It was festive, communal, and joyful.

It was in the harbor district, so many people drove past. One of them, a Danish-American, came by and returned shortly afterward with a round of beer. Yes, those were the times.

Word had gotten around that it was C.O.'s birthday, so a large cake had been made typically American, with lots of colorful sugar decorations and candles. The baker himself came to cut it.

The cake was very sweet and a bit excessive, but it had to be eaten and fortunately there was plenty of coffee.

A number of "important" people had arrived, and we all stood in a circle around C.O. and sang for him. He immediately responded with yet another short speech.



The cake was eaten wherever there was a place to sit.

It was all very cozy, and nobody really noticed that it was actually raining, because it was very mild.

But it was raining and still we stood around Pete singing and singing.

He was an extraordinary human being with a presence that captivated us all. At 10:30 p.m. we went aboard and pulled in the "gangway," talked a bit, and then went to rest; we had to get up very early the next morning.



The ferry we were to spend the night on.



Then SEBBE was lifted out and placed on a container flatbed.

Friday, July 9, 1976

We were woken at 4:30 a.m. and had breakfast on the ferry (provided by the girl scouts). We rowed from Staten Island for about two hours until we found the A.C.L. pier at Port Elizabeth, where SEBBE was to be lifted out of the water. It went quite quickly about an hour and a half during which the crew stood on the pier eating lunch (also provided by the girl scouts, so three cheers for them after all). It was very hot, and we were very tired when we finally reached "home" at Henry Street around 2 p.m. Everyone went for a shower. Some managed to sleep a little, but not much, because we had to attend a party at the Danish Consulate at 5:30 p.m. We had great difficulty finding a taxi because the British Queen had just arrived and was driving through the city in an open car, causing chaos. We made it, had some good drinks and delicious canapés, and the atmosphere was high. I was told from a very reliable source that we were served the same food or very similar food to what the Danish Queen had been served during her visit, so we had certainly arrived in style.



Boats were being built.

Unfortunately, five of the crew Esben, Cedde, Peter M., Carl Otto, and Edith had to leave at 7 p.m. by plane to Maine to visit Lance Lee and his wife. We were driven to the airport by Vice Consul Jørgen Andersen, who was extremely helpful. He had once helped Peter M. when he lost his wallet with 200 dollars and had to go through the whole bureaucratic process with police etc. before insurance reimbursed it. The wallet was later found at Pete Seeger's place when his wife was cleaning up after us..



The cabins the young people lived in

The young people had spent a great evening at the consulate, which they left around 8 p.m., after which they went “home” to plan our own private party the following evening for all our hosts along the Hudson River.

It was a very great experience to visit Lance Lee and see his workshop, where he employed many young men and women building boats. We spoke with several of the young people and visited them in their round houses, which they had built themselves, where they lived summer and winter in the middle of a forest without electricity or running water, but with a wood stove. They lived quite primitively, in a commune where everyone depended on and helped each other. We had come far into the countryside. It was clean, tidy, and very beautiful. Lance and his wife lived in a house right by the water. They lived very simply but comfortably, with a large loom in the living room, lots of drawings, books, and ship-related objects two people who worked a lot with their hands.



The cabins were nicely furnished.

Before we left, Lance gathered us on the lawn and said, among other things, that being with the crew during the few days he had been aboard had meant a great deal to him and had given him inspiration for his work with young people. He was enthusiastic about the way we could cooperate and the strong sense of unity we had.



It was amusing to see wooden boats being built in the traditional way in America.

He presented us with an envelope containing 770 dollars, which he had raised through lectures in Maine (a large area) and by writing articles about us and the way we had built the ship. He believed it was important for the ship club to have a major project to unite around, and he asked us to begin next year on a project C.O. had mentioned something we had been considering but had no funds for a traditional Faroe Islands style boat with 8 oars.

Because, as he said: "The world becomes better when people learn to do things together."

We were speechless for a moment. But 770 dollars is a lot of money, collected from ordinary Americans from 1 to 10 dollars depending on what they could spare and we felt it as a great responsibility.

It was a solemn and important moment where we, sitting on the grass, promised Lance and each other that we would build the boat and get many people to help us.



Now the ship was ready to have its planks fitted.

We said goodbye to these wonderful people, took the plane, and were back in New York City on Saturday afternoon around 3 p.m.



It became a truly fine farewell party.

Saturday, July 10, 1976

It was a very beautiful and warm day, when everyone could do whatever they felt like. Many went sightseeing in New York City.

Later in the day, everyone was busy preparing our party for those who had helped us in one way or another both from New York City itself and from the small places along the Hudson River.

Guests began arriving from around 6 p.m., and soon we sat down to a well-laid Danish table with good food, beer, and schnapps. Speeches were made and gifts were handed out.

Pete Seeger, Lance Lee, Beth, and Diana were appointed Members of Honor. National songs were sung, cheers were shouted, and we had a pleasant and cheerful evening, which ended with everyone sitting on the floor in a circle around candles, singing together with Pete as we had done almost every evening.

It was hard to say goodbye, but eventually we had to end the evening.



There was warmth and emotional moments.



We sailed out under engine power.

Sunday, July 11, 1976

We started with general cleanup and packing our personal belongings. After saying goodbye to some of the people from Henry Street, we and all our luggage were picked up by private cars. We were supposed to go sailing with Clearwater, but no one could find the way there, so once again we had to have the police guide us. They were very helpful. The time aboard was an experience. We were shown around the ship and told about their exciting work.

Several of us became so enthusiastic about their idea that we immediately signed up as members of the Clearwater group. After the sailing trip we were invited to a Clearwater festival, and when we arrived on shore we were transported in a small mini train to an area where the World's Fair had been held years earlier.

Next to the large globe, "The Unisphere", there was a group of Clearwater people who had set up a market selling items to support their work. There were folk singers and music in the area, and people sat on the grass enjoying themselves. It was a colorful scene.



Then the sail is hoisted, and some energetic Vikings help with it.



There was a cozy atmosphere, and there was even time for a song.

We found a spot under some shady trees, and once again these wonderful Clearwater people arrived with large pots of exciting food and plenty of cold juice. We ate and drank, but the atmosphere was somewhat melancholic. Many of these wonderful people had become our friends. They had done everything possible to make our stay as successful as possible, so it was hard to say goodbye, and here and there a tear was shed. Efter en køretur direkte til lufthavnen var konsulatet igen os yderst behjælpelig med at komme hurtigt igennem. Man fik handlet transit, og efter en kort ventetid gik vi ombord.

After a drive straight to the airport, the consulate once again helped us through quickly. Transit formalities were handled, and after a short wait we boarded the plane. The flight went smoothly, and our arrival time in Copenhagen was so early that there were no customs officers on duty, so we only realized that afterward. In the early morning we dragged ourselves over to the domestic terminal, where Cimber Air received us and flew us to Sønderborg.



Unfortunately, we had to leave two members behind, who returned later on another flight. Family and press had gathered to welcome us home.

After a truly eventful journey with great cohesion and camaraderie, we now had to say goodbye to each other.



Of course, we brought the flag with the symbol of the anniversary and the big regatta "Operation Sail".

Sunday, august 1, 1976

Homecoming. The official return from America took place on Sunday, August 1 in Augustenborg Fjord during the harbor festival.

Despite a broken rudder and strong wind, we made a fine entrance into the harbor, where many people welcomed us, led by the ship PRINS VALDEMAR and the mayor.

After letting the journey sink in, we all agree that we are very happy about our trip to the USA, which despite its short duration gave us many good friends, and we learned something about America that is very different from what we are used to reading and hearing on TV and radio.

We came to know the ordinary American as a very helpful, hospitable, and friendly person regardless of skin color.

The enormous hospitality we met everywhere completely overwhelmed us, and it will be difficult to properly thank all those who contributed to making it the trip of a lifetime.

Palle, Puk, Jesper and Edith



The reception in Augustenborg after the conquest of America. An incredible number of people had gathered to welcome us.

Afterword

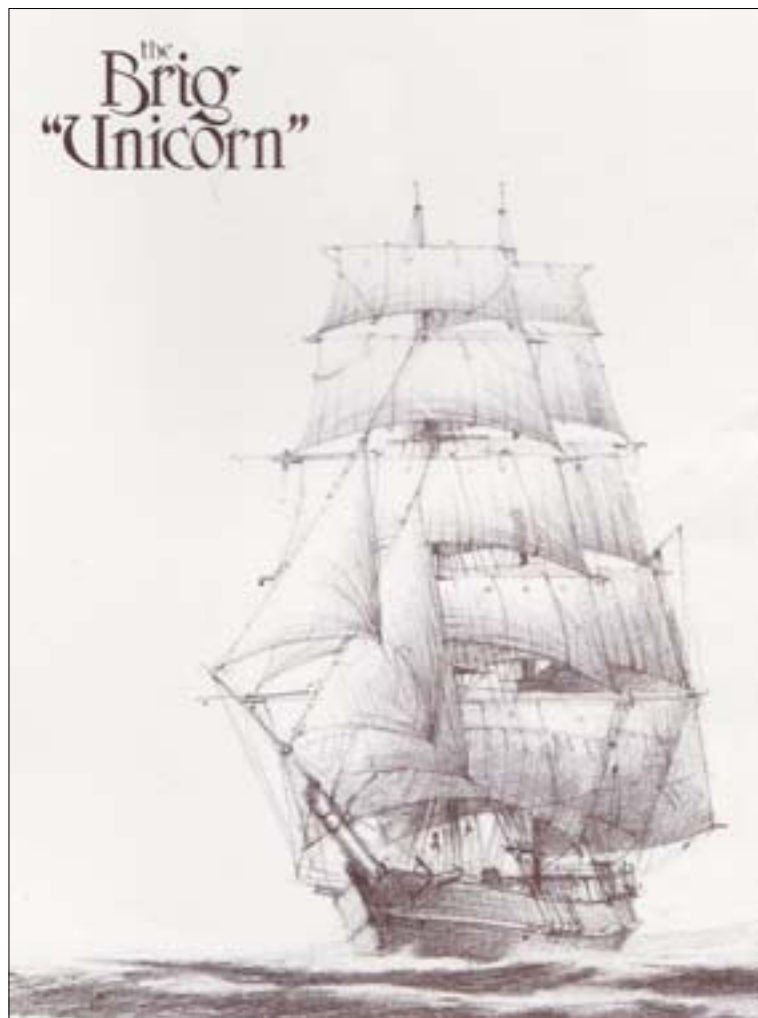
This trip would have been impossible to carry out without financial support from several sources. I would like first and foremost to mention the Mads Clausen Foundation, which provided a very substantial grant, which in turn was the reason that the Danish Parliament's U.S.A. Committee was able to provide a significant subsidy. The Municipality of Augustenborg and the County of Southern Jutland also contributed financially.

SAS purchased a full-page advertisement in our brochure, and the Danish Tourist Board provided a generous contribution.

We are also especially indebted to Atlantic Container Line in Gothenburg. Without this shipping company's helping hand in the form of free transport of the vessel, we would hardly have needed to consider the trip any further.

The company Kansas donated coveralls to the entire crew with "SEBBE ALS" embroidered on the back, and the company J.B.S. provided T-shirts for everyone, so that in New York we could present ourselves visually as a unified group. In practical terms, we have also been greatly assisted by Danfoss, whose contribution made it possible for us to receive extensive practical support from many different individuals. We should also mention the company C. Biehl in Gråsten, which helped with our brochure. Such a large task as raising funds and carrying out the practical preparations would not have been possible without a strong sense of camaraderie within the ship's association—both among the participants and those who stayed at home. We would therefore like to extend our thanks to everyone who helped in one way or another.

Carl Otto



Participants on the Trip

Carl Otto Larsen
Edith Larsen
Søren Larsen
Peter Larsen
Birgitte Larsen
Jens Kristensen
Flemming Rieck
Anne Rieck
Palle Fløe
Ruth Fløe
Steen Weile
Peter Remontius Møller
Esben Schøler
Henning Jessen
Åse Detlefsen
Jens Christian Nissen

Poul Bonde Rasmussen
Per Rosenberg
Jørgen Holm
Ulrik Grau
Erik Jørgensen (EXE)
Allan Hansen
Bo Hansen
Chresten Simonsen
Gitte Hack
Hans Peter Hansen
Hans J. Skeldgård
Hans Detlefsen
Jørgen Detlefsen
Jesper Christensen
Kell Hack



Relaxation during the Danish-American "Rebild Festival"



A small story

The Danish Embassy was kind enough to invite us to a reception. Of course, we gladly accepted. We showed up and had a very pleasant time with good Danish beer.

When it ended, we were to return to Henry Street Settlement and hailed a taxi. The driver was not sure where it was and wanted us to guide him, but that was obviously not possible—there is a difference between Augustenborg City and New York City. He drove on and on, and of course the meter kept running, which we were not happy about. After some discussion he finally stopped the meter and continued driving.

By then we had had some beer at the embassy, and what goes in must also come out. At one point I was desperate. I therefore told the driver to stop at the next restaurant, which he did. I jumped out and went inside, where I was allowed to use their toilet.

Oh that felt good! When I came out, I looked both ways oops! The taxi was gone, and where was I?

Now things were getting complicated!

A man came walking by, and I approached him in English and asked:

“Do you know where Henry Street Settlement is?”

“Yes,” he replied, “I do.”

“Can you walk there?” I asked.

“Yes, you can, if you have plenty of time, because it’s far.”

He asked who I was, and we had a nice little chat, because it was not every day he met a Danish Viking.

Suddenly he stepped into the street and waved his arms. A large American police car with two officers pulled over, and the officer in the driver’s seat rolled down the window and asked, “What’s up?” The kind gentleman explained my situation, and it worked. “That’s ok—jump in behind—we will drive you.”

So we drove off toward Henry Street Settlement, and we arrived at the same time as the taxi. I thanked the friendly officers and had gained another experience.

Steen Weile

En lille historie



A small story

*Sometimes the world is not so big!
The weather was very sunny during the trip, and one day I had gotten quite sunburned, so I was allowed to ride with Pete in his fine Saab 99. Sebbe was sailing down the Hudson River to an old pier. They set off by boat, and Pete and I drove by car.*

When we arrived at the pier, we could see Sebbe a little way out on the river. Pete then said: "You can get out here, and I'll drive up to the nearest radio station and have them announce that a Viking ship is arriving here."

The whole area was empty, but then a man came walking with a dog. He came up to me and asked:

"Do you have something to do with this ship?" pointing at Sebbe.

"Yes, I do," I replied.

"Where are you coming from?" he asked.

"From Denmark," I said.

"From Denmark!" he exclaimed in Danish.

"Where in Denmark?"

"Augustenborg," I answered.

"No way I used to be a veterinarian in Guderup."

"Oh," I said, "out by Dr. Kåd?"

"Yes, exactly. Do you know him?"

"Yes, of course he is our veterinarian."

A really funny experience.

One can only wonder out of millions of people in America, he just happened to come walking by at the exact moment we arrived with the ship, and it was the first and only time.

Sometimes the world really is small!

Steen Weile



Sailing with Sebbe in America, sailing with Clearwater, being with so many nice and welcoming Americans was overwhelming and will never be forgotten.

Sailing with Sebbe in America, sailing with Clearwater, being with so many nice and welcoming Americans was overwhelming and will never be forgotten.

Steen Weile

