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Op Sail 2000 at Portland, ME, **by Jamie Kingman Rice – Maine Historical Society.**

July 28-31 2000

Over the weekend of July 28th to July 31st 2000, the City of Portland, Maine welcomed 23 tall ships as part of Operation Sail's *Op Sail 2000* celebration. Tall ships from around the world sailed into Casco Bay, including ships hailing from numerous US ports, the Ukraine, Argentina and Brazil. The public was offered an opportunity to tour the ships, as well as participate in a series of organized events and entertainment including historical exhibits, musical guests and local cuisine.

On Friday July 28th the tall ships paraded from Portland Head Light to the Fore River, with public tours of the ships in the late afternoon, as well as a welcoming ceremony from 5:30 to 6PM. On Saturday and Sunday, tours continued with day long and evening entertainment. A number of cultural organizations offered exhibits to correlate with the weekend's event. The Portland Harbor Museum (now part of Maine Maritime Museum), Portland Museum of Art, Osher Map Library, The Children's Museum of Maine, the Naval Reserve Center, Portland Yacht Services, even the Southworth Planetarium at USM hosted exhibitions as part of the Maine Maritime Heritage Trail- dedicated to highlighting Maine's maritime history, sites, industries and culture.

Nearly 100,000 spectators looked on as 23 tall ships entered Portland's harbor that Friday, with an estimated 300,000 visitors throughout the weekend's festivities. Portland, Maine marked the final destination for *Op Sail 2000's* United States tour that year. 60 ships started the voyage from Genoa, Italy to Bermuda then on to Puerto Rico, where the American leg of the tour began. The entourage split into smaller groups after Norfolk, Virginia with 23 ships ending the voyage in Portland, Maine. A group of tall ships continued on to Nova Scotia, which marked the end of *Op Sail 2000* as a whole.

Operation Sail, Inc, or Op Sail as it is commonly known, was founded in the early 1960s by Frank Braynard, and Nils Hansell and championed by Pres. John F. Kennedy . It is well known for its organizational debut at the 1964 World's Fair at New York. A second Operation Sail was organized in conjunction with the 1976 Bicentennial, and a third in 1986 to mark the restoration of the Statue of Liberty. It was also represented at the 1992 commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the Americas.

Tall ships that participated in Portland, ME Op Sail

Ship Name (length; home port in 2000)

Libertad (340 ft.; Buenos Aires, Argentina)

USCG Eagle (295 ft.; New London, CT)

Cisne Branco (228 ft. Brazil)

Ernestina (156 ft. ; New Bedford, MA)

Californian (145 Ft.; San Diego, CA)
Sherman Zwicker (142 ft.; Boothbay, ME)
Harvey Gamage (131 ft.; Portland, ME)
Lettie G. Howard (125 ft.; New York, NY)
Spirit of Massachusetts (125 ft.; Boston, MA)
American Eagle (122 ft.; Rockland, ME)
Bat'Kivshchyna (89 ft.; Kiev, Ukraine)
Bowdoin (88 ft.; Castine, ME)
Larinda (86 Ft.; Cape Cod, ME)
Grand Nellie (75 ft.; St. Thomas, USVI)

Fritha (74 ft.; Harpswell, ME)
Isaac H. Evans (65 ft.; Rockland, ME)
Mistral (63 ft.; Maine)
American Promise (60 ft.; Maryland)
Lycia (60 ft.; Manfredone, Italy)
Palawan (58 ft.; Portland, ME)
Maine (56 ft.; Bath, ME)
Eleanor (55 ft.; Kennebunkport, ME)
Ishmael (48 ft.; Vineyard Haven, MA)