

Chapter 03110L 9/9/1939

SS SCHODACK 64 REFUGEES

**at Le Harve, France port
bound for Hoboken NJ**

ALBIN WESLEY PIERCE

Former 1923 crew member



9/30/2024

This is a **1939 story** about Albin Pierce's former 1923 freighter ship named **Schodack**. Albin's sailing days ended around 1932 but he cherished the memory of the Schodack.

In 1958, while watching a WW2 movie with Albin (Gramps), Glen asked if Albin had been in WW2. He was age 36 when the US entered the war in 12/7/1941. The draft cutoff was age 35.

He said 'no' he was not in the war but had been in the Merchant Marines years earlier aboard the Schodack. Those fellows sailed in freighter ships bound for foreign ports. I was age 11 and forget most of the stories.

WW2 started 9/1/1939 when Hitler invaded Poland. Two days later, bound by pact, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Germany expected the declarations.

A year later, Germany declared war with the US on 12/11/1941.

9/1/1939





9/1/1939 The man who started WW2; **Hitler.**



Le Harve France sea port captured by Nazis.



May 1940 Nazi flag at Le Harve

9/3/1939





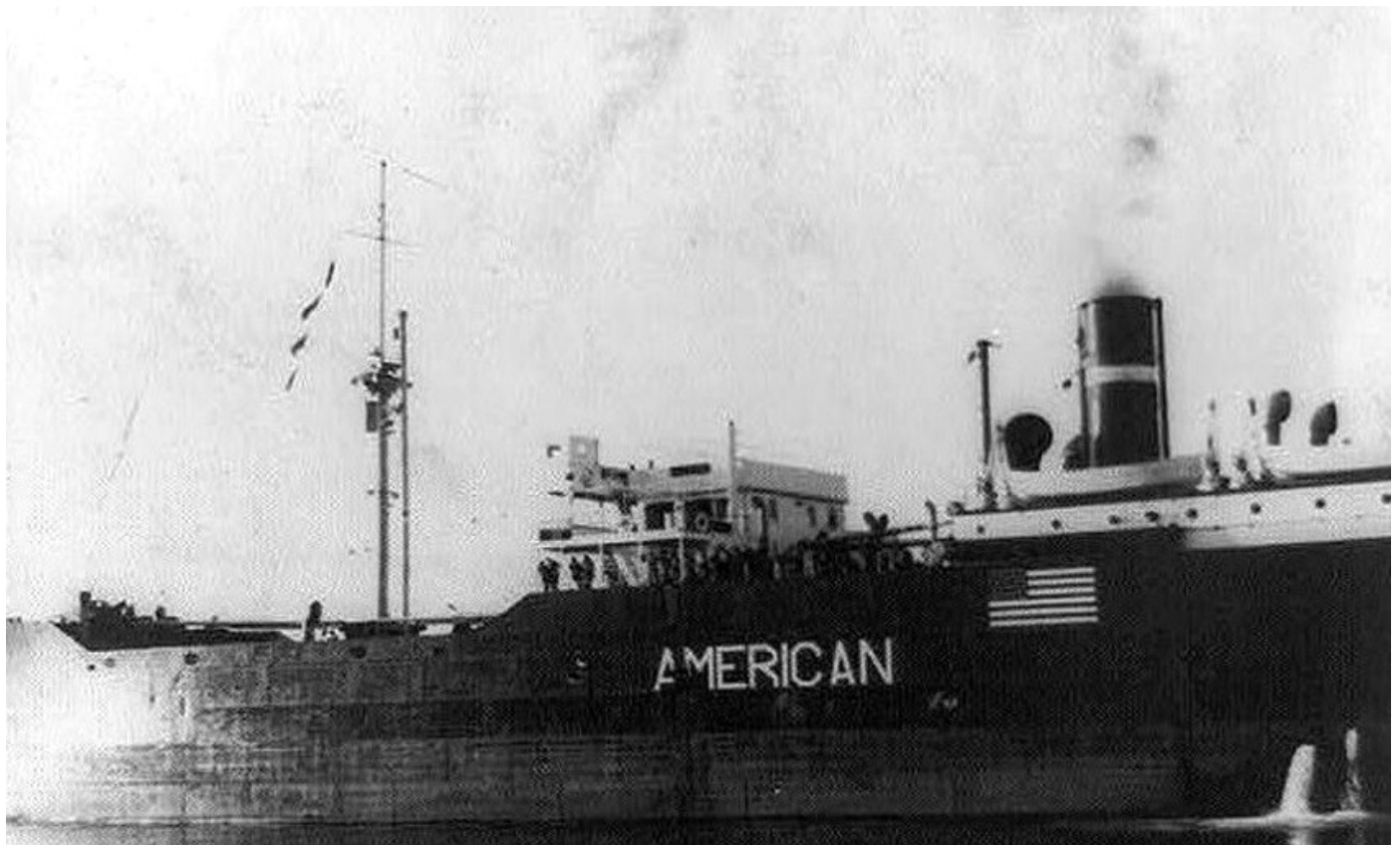
**Albin and Mabel Pierce reading the newspaper during WW2
at their home 16 Glen Ave, Fairfield NJ 07004**

Gramps Albin and Grandma Mabel Pierce were avid newspaper readers. They read the war stories with trepidation that their two oldest boys (Albert and Charles) may get involved in WW2.

They read on 9/3/1939 that his old ship was taking on refugees, I suppose mostly Americans stranded in France. Here is the story.

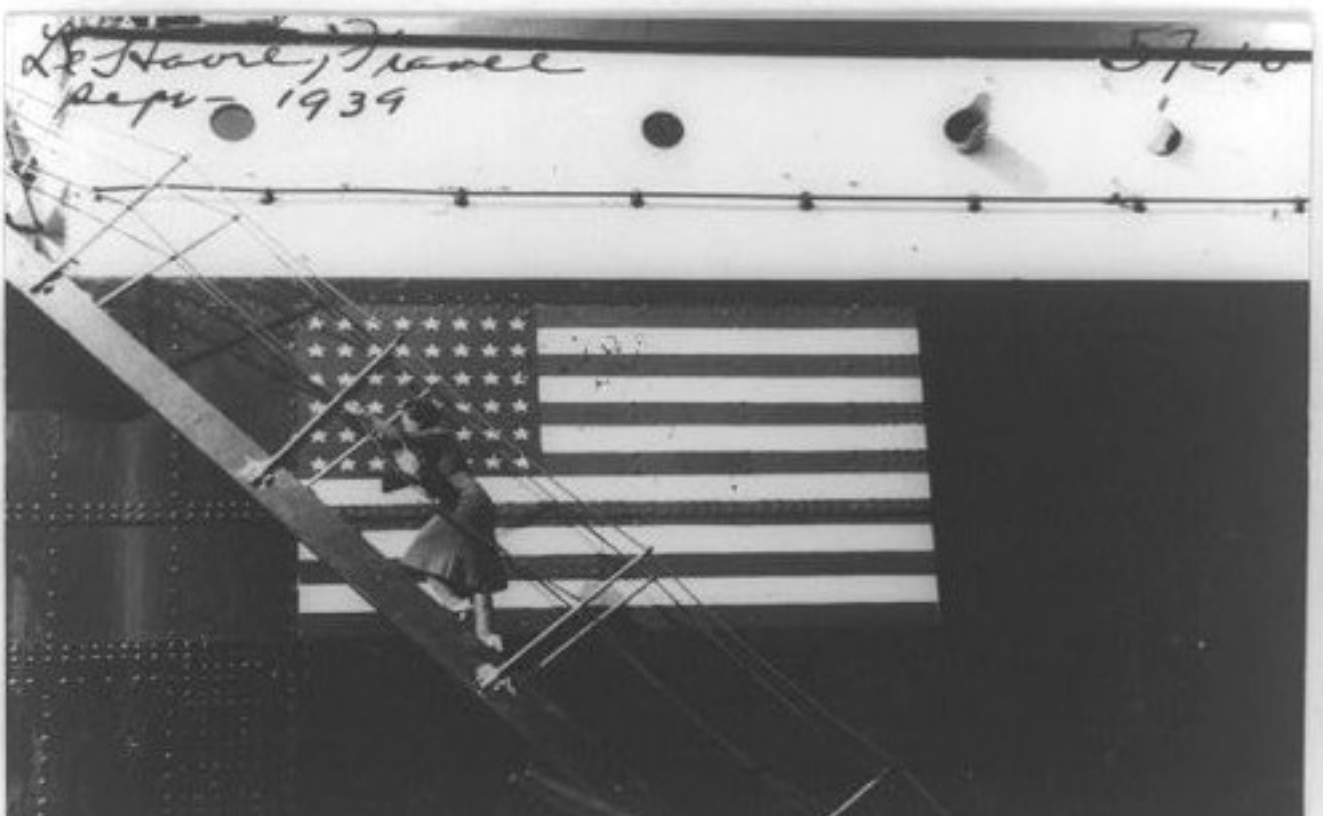
9/9/1939 SS Schodack at Le Harve France boarding refugees who are fleeing to the US to escape Nazi Germany..

The ship sides are quickly painted 'American' for any Nazi sub to identify. At this moment in time, America was not at war with Germany.



9/9/1939 Refugee woman in front of the American flag, stepping up the gang plank to board the USS Schodack at **Le Harve France** harbor. She wore the same dress and shoes for the next 13 days sea voyage to America.

Imagine the earlier days feeling of fear that one would not be allowed to board the ship. When walking up the gang plank, each step was a relief to escape the Nazis blitzkrieg.



She made it aboard. Could she be Jane Allison ??

TWO MAY BE ON SAME SHIP HOME

Miss Allison, George Prout
Sailed Saturday from
Le Havre.

Sailed 9/9/1939

The likelihood that two of this city's "foreign delegation" may be on the same ship bound for home from France was seen today with word that both Miss Jane Allison and George M. Prout sailed Saturday from LeHavre.

Miss Allison sailed on an American freighter, and friends here said they understood the name of the ship was Schodack. It was thought the ship would require about two weeks for the passage.

Mr. Prout did not give the name of the ship on which he sailed, but said it was a "12-day freighter." Earlier he had advised his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Prout, that he was registered to sail on an American freighter.



Jane Allison age 16.5
1932 Senior year high school.

I found the young lady who walked the gang plank.

She was in the 9/9/1939 manifest. Her name was Miss **Jane Elizabeth Allison** of 803 Franklin Street, Columbus, Indiana.

She was born 10/4/1915. Age 24 in 1939 when fleeing France. She died 2/3/1998, age 82, resting at Greenlawn Cemetery, Nashville, Indiana.

She was a 1932 graduate of Columbus High School and a 1941 graduate of McMurray College in Jacksonville, Ill.

She volunteered with the American Red Cross in 1943, at age 28, and served in the South Pacific during World War 2. Did not marry.



Miss Allison spent the summer in France on a travel scholarship from MacMurray college at Jacksonville, Ill.

Young Prout was in Europe for several months studying art on a travelling fellowship granted to him upon his graduation from the John Herron Art institute.

After he lands, Prout probably will spend some time studying in New England instead of coming directly home.

Walter Sharp, formerly of this city, is believed to be back in Greece after a summer tour of Spain, France and Italy. He has been an English instructor in Athens college for two years.

The last word received from him by his brother, William Sharp, director of the Columbus Boys club, was from Switzerland, which he described as "a safe place to watch the crisis."

Lee Miller, formerly of Seymour and a brother of Gordon G. Miller of this city, at last reports was in France, where he and his wife went on a vacation trip. He is connected with the Scripps-Howard newspapers, and it is possible that he will remain overseas to do war correspondence for them. He already has sent "color" stories and other material to his organization from Europe. His home of-

office instructed him to take whatever steps he deemed advisable regarding return to this country, it is understood.

Mrs. Miller is dramatic editor of the Washington News.

End

Trip took just 13 days.

Schodack due Friday 9/22/1939 at Hoboken NJ

FRIDAY
5th st., Hoboken.
SCHODACK, Havre, 8 A. M., 2d st.,
Hoboken.

During transit, the Schodack heard SOS morse code from British ships that were torpedoed by German submarines.

Brooklyn Daily Eagle. 9/22/1939, Fri ·Page 2

James A. Quinlan of 25 Dictum Court, radio operator of the America-France liner Schodack, reported when his ship docked in Hoboken today that what he heard "listening in" indicated there were "many more British ships being sunk than are being reported by the British Admiralty."

It was "pretty tough listening to those pathetic calls and being unable to do anything about it," Quinlan said.

According to Capt. Waldo Wolleston, master of the Schodack, SOS calls were received from eight or nine vessels when the Schodack was two or three days out of LeHavre, but she was too far away to respond.

The **Schodack**, a freighter, chartered by the United States Maritime Commission to aid in transporting American refugees, carried 64 passengers, including William Frank of 140-11 Ash Ave., Flushing, who related his adventures driving a German-bought Ford, bearing German license plates, through France.

Also among the passengers were five young men who had fought with the Loyalists in Spain and worked their way back as waiters. Two were Brooklynites, Morris Tobman of 8758 Bay Parkway and Hy Wallach of 1937 Strauss St. The veterans said they were captured by Franco forces in April, 1938, and were in prison until four months ago.

Another passenger returning from Spain was Mrs. Amelio Sancho, who she was going to live with a brother in Brooklyn. An American citizen, she said she went to Spain on a visit with her husband and two sons three years ago, but they were unable to leave because of the war. The sons were killed in a Barcelona air raid, and her husband, a Freemason who went to work with a Quaker relief group, was shot by Franco's men.

Still the first week of September 1939 at Le Harve France.

FOOD BARRED TO SOVIET SHIPS

Steward George Posipanko of the **Schodack** reported his order for flour was refused in LeHavre on the grounds it was contraband, but he managed to smuggle 100 pounds aboard. A Russian ship, tied up nearby, was unable to obtain any supplies, the steward said, because "it was ordered that no Russian ships were to be given food."

9/22/1939

American Radio Operator Certain German U-Boats Sinking Many Ships

HOBOKEN, N. J., Sept. 22.—(IP)—An American ship radio operator arrived in port Friday convinced that "the German submarines are sinking more ships than we ever hear about."

So despairing were the calls for help that they "almost made me cry," reported J. A. Quinlan, radio operator of the freighter **Schodack** which arrived with 64 war refugees after a 13-day voyage from Europe.

"They don't send out an SOS any more," he said. "They don't have time. It's just a lot of S's . . .

SSSS . . . and right after that the position. Then you'll get 'submarine chasing us' or 'submarine firing on us.'

"It's a terrible feeling to know some other guys are on a ship being shelled and you can't do anything about it. I sit here rooting like hell for them to get away. You sit listening to the calls—and then you hear nothing. You know they got them. They're gone.

"It makes you feel rotten all day. And it makes you think a lot when you go to bed.

The **Schodack** carried a champagne cargo of 700 tons.

Lawton Constitution Oklahoma, 9/22/1939, Fri · Page 6

From Europe on Freighter

By JAMES L. KILGALLEN

International News Service

NEW YORK, Sept. 22. — Humor and tragedy were intermingled in stories related by war fugitives when the staunch little American freighter **Schodack** steamed into port today. On the vessel's stern the words "America-France Line" were repainted to read "American," while large American flags were painted on her sides.

Some passengers were so devoid of baggage they appeared on deck in abthing suits and bathrobes during the voyage. The officers and crew gave over their quarters to the women and children among the 63 passengers. Normally the

freighter carries no passengers.

Mrs. George J. Sabel, of Pittsburgh, got the last \$20 in American money at the American Express office at Havre just before

the ship sailed. Nearly all the passengers were short of cash. Some were broke.

Mrs. Sabel's husband is owner of an accounting firm in the Farmers BaBnBkB Building. Sabel went to New York to meet his wife. They live at 1240 Murdock Street.

R. W. Savage, of Chicago, a Northwestern University student, and Jack Smothers and Ed Doucet, Evanston, Ill., high school graduates, reported their band instruments were "somewhere in Hamburg." They had crossed on the Hamburg-American liner Deutschland, on which they had worked as musicians. Due to the war the ship did not sail on the return trip.

A grim story was told by Mrs. Emilia Sancho, widow of an American relief worker in Spain. She said her husband was executed "on Franco's orders" in Spain, and that she lost her two sons in the bombardment of Barcelona.

Capt. Waldon Wollaston said the **Schodack** left Havre September 9. He saw no submarines but heard eight or nine general SOS calls from vessels being chased or attacked.

Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph,
9/22/1939, Fri Page 7

FRANCO SHOOTS MASON

**Widow of American Says Spouse
Killed on Fake Charge**

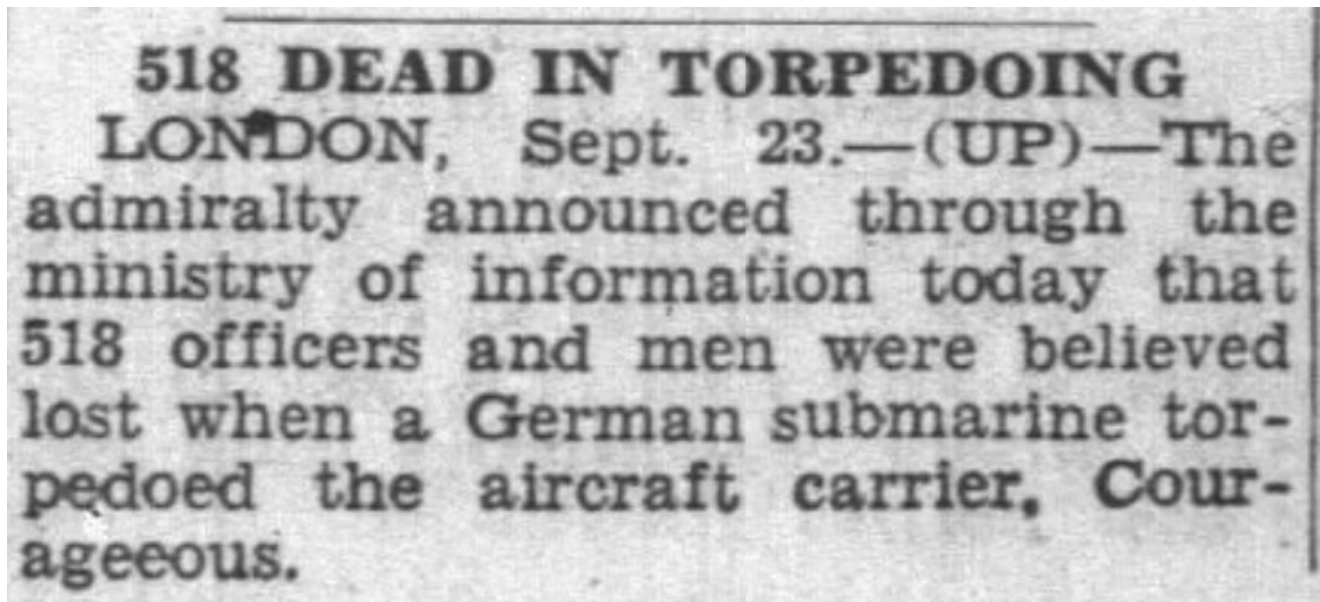
NEW YORK, Sept. 23.—(UP)—Mrs. Joseph Sancho charged today that her husband, a cripple employed by the Quaker relief committee in Barcelona, was executed by a Franco firing squad because he was a Mason.

Mrs. Sancho, who said her husband was a naturalized American, returned from Europe on the freighter **Schodack**. She said her husband was one of 18 men convicted in 18 minutes on a charge of secretly possessing arms. Police had failed to find any in their home.

A kindly priest, she said, brought her husband's clothing to her after he was killed. On the back of the wooden identification tag she said she found this message:

"Amelia—They shoot me because I am a Mason.—Love. Love. Love.—Joe."

The Schodack continued freight trips to France. However, the ship worried the Germans may misidentify the US neutral ship.



The Wichita Beacon, 9/23/1939, Sat ·Page 2



British
HMS
COURAGEOUS
SUNK
9/13/1941
518 die

