

WELCOME  
Homer L.  
Ferguson  
To Haywood

THIRD SECTION

# THE WAYNESVILLE MOUNTAINEER

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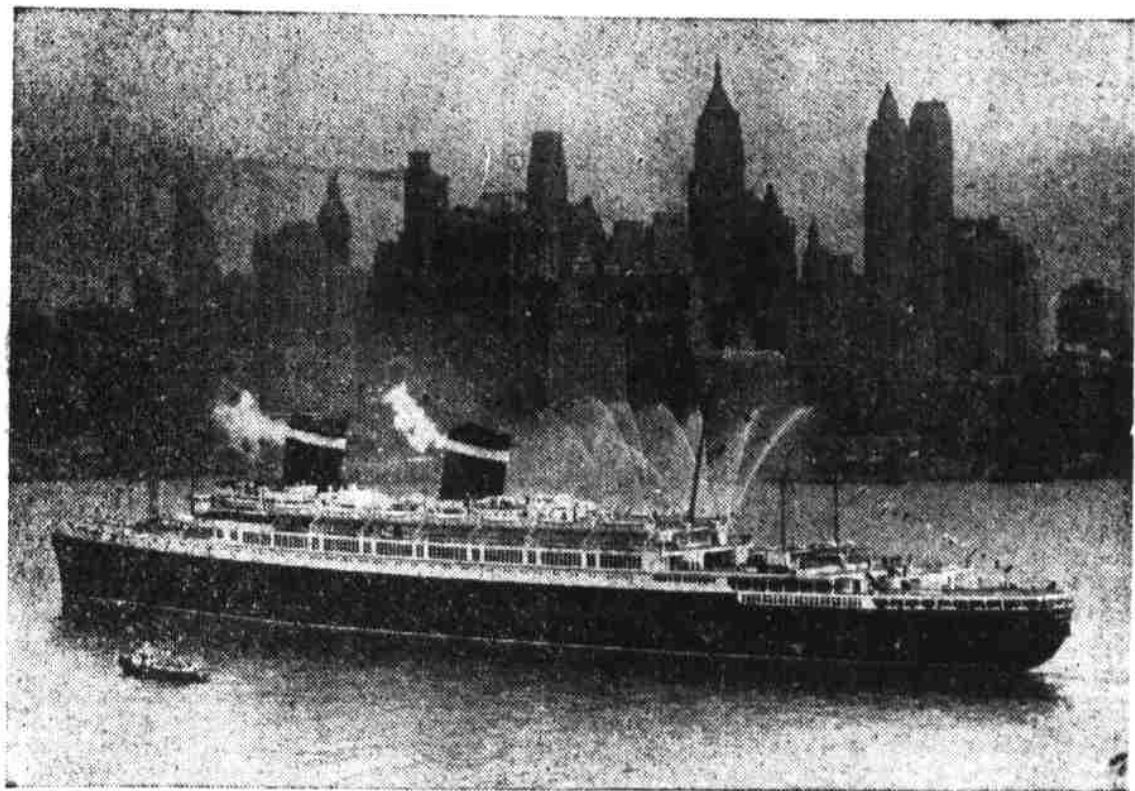
Associated Press News

WAYNESVILLE, N. C., TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1946

\$3.00 In Advance In Haywood and Jackson Counties

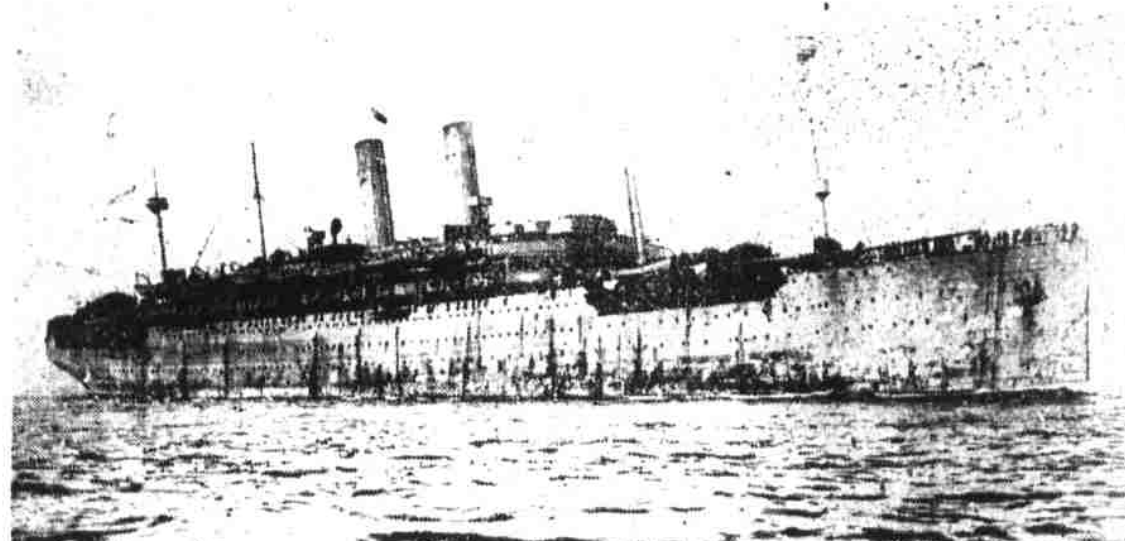
## Ferguson's Yard Builds Biggest U. S. Liner

Newport News Built America Greeted In N. Y.



### FOR PLEASURE AND SERVICE ABOARD AMERICA

- 3 Smoking Rooms
- 3 Public Lounges
- 3 Dining Salons
- 3 Children's Play Rooms
- 3 Libraries
- 4 Beauty Parlors
- 5 Barber Shops
- Ballroom
- Cocktail Lounge
- Shopping Center
- Novelty Shop
- 3 Complete Galleys
- Gymnasium
- Swimming Pool
- Print Shop
- Tailor Shop
- 3 Motion Picture Projection Rooms
- Bake Shop
- Butcher Shop
- Ice-making Plant
- Bird Room
- Fish Room
- Post Office
- Carpenter Shop
- Upholstery Shop
- Pastry Shop
- Lobster and Oyster Bar
- Ice Cream Plant
- 4 Public Bars
- 6 Service Bars
- Dog Kennels
- Cigar Store
- Hospital and Operating Room



The "OLD" AMERICA comes to Newport News to be reconditioned. Mr. Ferguson's success in getting the refitting job kept thousands of men at work during the slump in shipbuilding after World War I.

America Is  
In  
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Time Troop  
er Reconverted  
Newport News  
Yard

The following ac-  
the S. S. America was  
the recent issue of The  
bulletin. The ship land-  
back on the 11th amid  
as this is the largest  
passenger ship afloat.

of the America is  
her contributions and  
are unequalled in  
of the American Mer-  
delivered to the Uni-  
Lines July 27, 1940, for  
Atlantic service, there  
of over six years in  
owing to the inter-

1, 1941, our Company  
request from the Uni-  
Lines that we convert  
into a convoy  
Transport within a  
two weeks. On June 15,  
Day commissioned her  
West Point and drafted  
service of her coun-  
by protecting ships of  
and maneuverability  
her crew to outfit  
on the sea, under the  
in the air, and this was  
the fact that the Uni-  
most continuously sought  
to be destroyed. During  
and one-half months  
she raced to and from  
the globe without rest  
pressure, but not once  
have her engines over-  
once did she fail her

America not been a  
she would have been  
retired no doubt, but  
millions of returning  
trans whose careers were  
by the war, she too is

The USS America and Mr. Homer L. Ferguson received a dual welcome last week in New York city where the great Newport News built luxury liner was welcomed back into passenger service under the flag of the United States Lines.

Mr. Ferguson was aboard the ship as it made the Newport News to New York run and upon its arrival in the big city the ship and its builder, Homer L. Ferguson, were loudly acclaimed by the press writers and radio men aboard. As "Dean of American Shipbuilders", Mr. Ferguson shared in the reception tendered the great ship and was congratulated by shipping men,

government inspectors and marine officials all over the country for the outstanding reconversion job done on the America.

In eight months the ship, which in war service, was the troop-carrying West Point, was restored to her pre-war beauty and comfort and last week it returned to the North Atlantic passenger service for which it was originally built in Newport News in 1940.

As she sailed up the North River in New York last week she was greeted with the din of whistles and horns, the salute of a naval cruiser convoy and an 18 plane es-

cort by naval fighter planes. Over 400 passengers, including an official party from Newport News, headed by Mr. Ferguson, with News and radio men from New York and London, made the trip. For speed and comfort the ship was acclaimed as a fitting entry in the race of the Blue Ribbon liners who vie for trans-atlantic passenger trade.

Mr. John Franklin, president of the United States Lines, who was also aboard, praised the ship highly and paid singular tribute to Mr. Ferguson, whose company built it, converted it for war and then reconverted it to peace time service.

Extensive as was the work on her exterior it was dwarfed by the job required on her interior. Designed for ready conversion as a Navy auxiliary, the America was taken over by the Navy and re-named the West Point in June 1941. As a commercial liner she had accommodations for 1,202 passengers. She was converted by us into a convoy unit loaded transport with facilities for 5,400 troops in two weeks' time. On two other occasions her capacity was further increased until she was able to transport 8,000 passengers.

These changes involved the almost complete removal of all of the America's staterooms. Bulkheads were removed to furnish huge unbroken spaces in which to erect berths for troops, four tiers in height. Her ballroom and many other beautiful paneled spaces were used for troop berthing, messkit washrooms, shower rooms, or for any purpose necessary to enable her to carry more troops with only one purpose in mind, to help win

10,000 square feet of wooden decks were renewed, and all of her exterior equipment such as life boats and winches were reconditioned, tested, and proven as good as new. The watchers on the Battery in New York will observe no difference in the appearance of the America, as she passes, from that of 1940, except the absence of the huge American flags on her hull.

Interior Work

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the war. She was more completely converted for troop transport service than was any other commercial liner in the world. Two other large ships three times the size of the America carried only 14,000 troops as compared to her 8,000.

Interior Decorations

The specifications in general called for the reconversion of the America exactly as she was originally. This has been done except in some instances where duplication of original material or equipment was not possible. Some of her wood paneled spaces which were expendable during her war service have been decorated with modern American color schemes. Rather than the loss of decorative quality this change has resulted in brightening these spaces and making them even more typically American in

### DATA ON THE AMERICA

|                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Length overall               | 723 feet               |
| Maximum Beam                 | 93 ft. 3 in.           |
| Sports Deck                  | 92 ft. 4 1/2 in.       |
| Full load, tons              | 35,440                 |
| Boilers                      | 6                      |
| Propellers                   | 2                      |
| Decks                        | 10                     |
| Crew                         | 677                    |
| Passengers                   | 1,049                  |
| Speed                        | over 25 knots          |
| Launched                     | August 31, 1939        |
| Sponsor                      | Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt |
| Delivered                    | July 27, 1940          |
| Commissioned as West Point   | June 15, 1941          |
| Decommissioned after war     | February 28, 1946      |
| Delivered after reconversion | October, 1946          |
| Shaft Horsepower             | 37,100                 |
| Public spaces                | 23                     |
| Rooms and Spaces             | over 950               |
| Wire, cable used (miles)     | 158                    |
| Lighting fixtures            | 7,278                  |
| Electric lamps               | over 14,500            |
| Electric fans                | 751                    |
| Bulkhead spaces (miles)      | 10                     |
| Capacity meals per day       | 6,000                  |

a colorful circus scene by Charles Baskerville, who also executed the lacquer decorations around the main entrance in the First Class Lounge. Represented are such famous American artists as Howard B. French, Allyn Cox, Freemont F. Ellis, Constance L. Smith, Pierre Bourdelle, Charles B. Gilbert, Glen M. Shaw, Barry Faulkner, C. J. Marsman, Allen T. Terrel, Griffith Baily Cole, T. C. Skinner, Constantine Alajalay and T. Austin Purves, Jr.

Smyth, Urquhart and Marckwald, Inc., a firm of women decorators, who were responsible for the original interior decorations for the America, were again engaged for this work. Throughout the public rooms and cabins they have achieved an atmosphere of lightness and cheerfulness, and have avoided stiffness or over-decoration.

Most of our difficulties in connection with the reconversion were in the procurement of materials and equipment. All of the furniture, rugs, draperies, and other furnishings on the America had been disposed of. Our first operation was to determine from our records where the original equipment had been purchased and to contact these firms to ascertain if duplicate articles could be furnished to meet our scheduled completion date. In some instances we experienced difficulty in finding manufacturers who would even accept our orders, much less guarantee delivery by any certain date. The strikes pre-

(Continued on Page Two)

resuming her career. She is taking her place in a strong American Merchant Marine, ready and able to play an indispensable part in revitalizing American peacetime trade and in building the economic foundations of a prosperous and progressive new world.

The America arrived at our Yard early Thursday morning, February 28, 1946, for her reconditioning. Now, after seven months of labor by her creators, she again has that bright well groomed appearance of a lady just returned from a beauty parlor and is ready to resume her place as Queen of the Ameri-

### can Merchant Marine.

Exterior Work

This restoration of the Queen's exterior beauty was brought about by the application of a few coats of paint. The work on her hull for many months preceding her painting, however, is typical of the thoroughness of our job in restoring the America to her former position as the finest and safest transatlantic liner ever constructed anywhere in the world.

It is said that beauty is only skin deep; in the case of the America many coats of grey paint had hidden her beauty. Their removal required the sealing of

many tons of paint from every portion of her hull, from her masts and stacks down to her keel. In all, approximately 165,000 square feet, the area of almost three city blocks. The bottom of the America was coated with the Navy's plastic paint. Its removal was accomplished by a method of wet sand blasting in which a newly designed machine for this purpose was used for the first time in our plant. More than 800,000 pounds of sand were required for this operation.

Hundreds of other jobs were required on her exterior such as the removal of all Navy installations consisting of gun foundations, life rafts, armor, shields, wind breaks, and many other items. Patch plates welded over many port holes were removed. All of her decks, including the promenade, had been enclosed; these were all cleared. Over

## Former Employee Terms Ferguson As "Tops"

LACHLAN HYATT

(Employed for 10 years by Mr. Ferguson)

It is a hard matter to express on paper the feeling in the hearts of the employees of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company in regard to Homer L. Ferguson. It is a feeling of respect for one's "boss"; yes, but it is a much deeper feeling of respect, it is respect for the man, not the boss, that is deeper. There is a very deep feeling of appreciation, appreciation for the many things Mr. Ferguson has done for Newport News, and vicinity.

It will be hard for one who has not been in Newport News to understand but Mr. Ferguson's greatest achievement has been in the building of men, and good citizens, and for that the employees are most grateful, and it is reflected in their work, and feeling for the shipyard as a whole.

I shall never forget an incident that happened shortly after I entered the Apprentice School. I was talking to one of the "old timers" and he said, "Son, if you ever want justice, and complete justice, in the shipyard concerning any matter, go see Mr. Ferguson, but be sure you're right, because you may not get what you want but you'll get justice." That feeling of fair play, and mutual respect between the management as a whole and employees as a whole, prevails in the shipyard, and that feeling is the largest single contributing factor for the production records during two wars.

Mr. Ferguson is respectfully called "Homer L." or "The Boss" by a majority of the employees

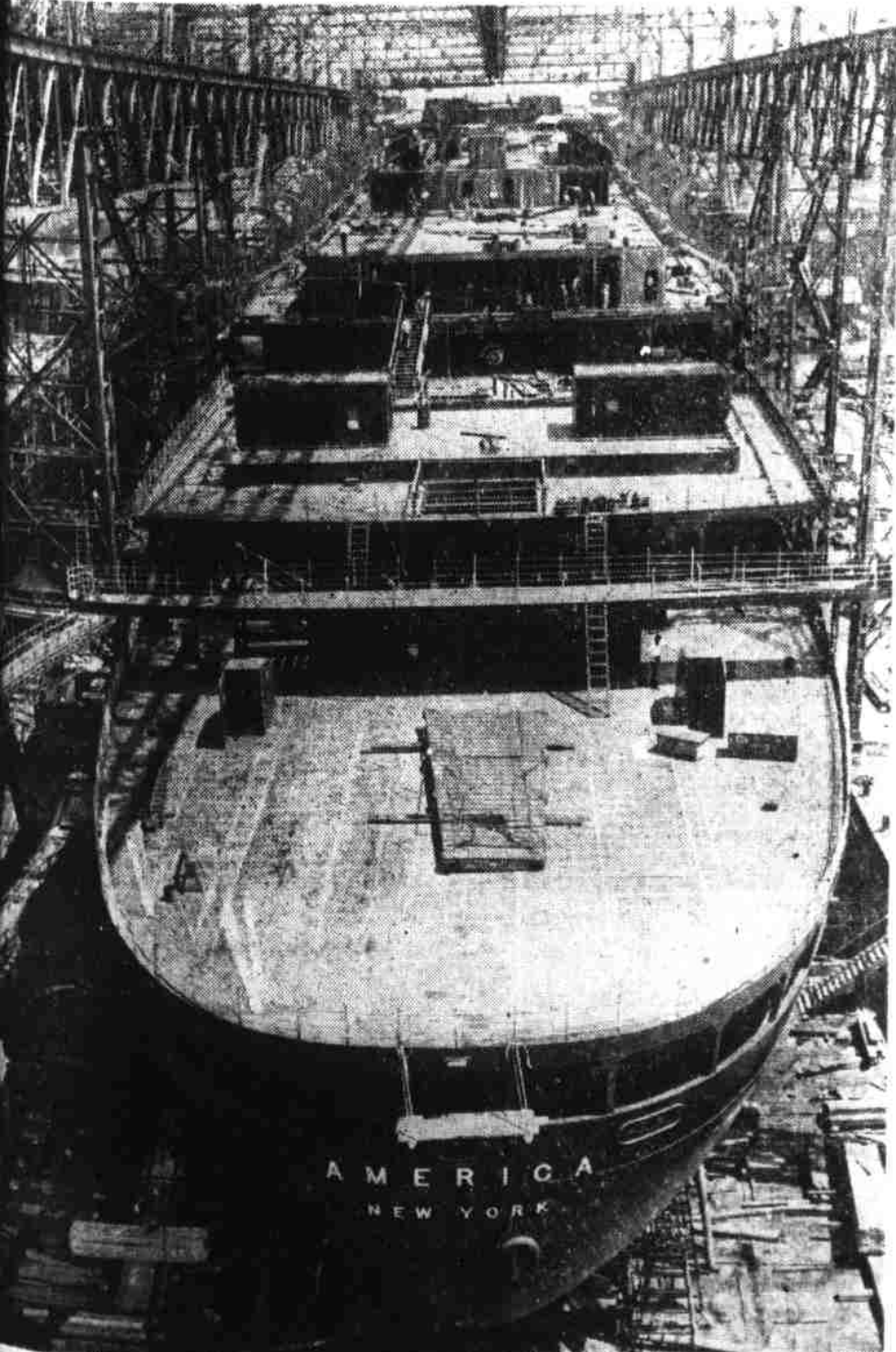


LACHLAN HYATT  
Photo by Ingram, Skyland Studio.

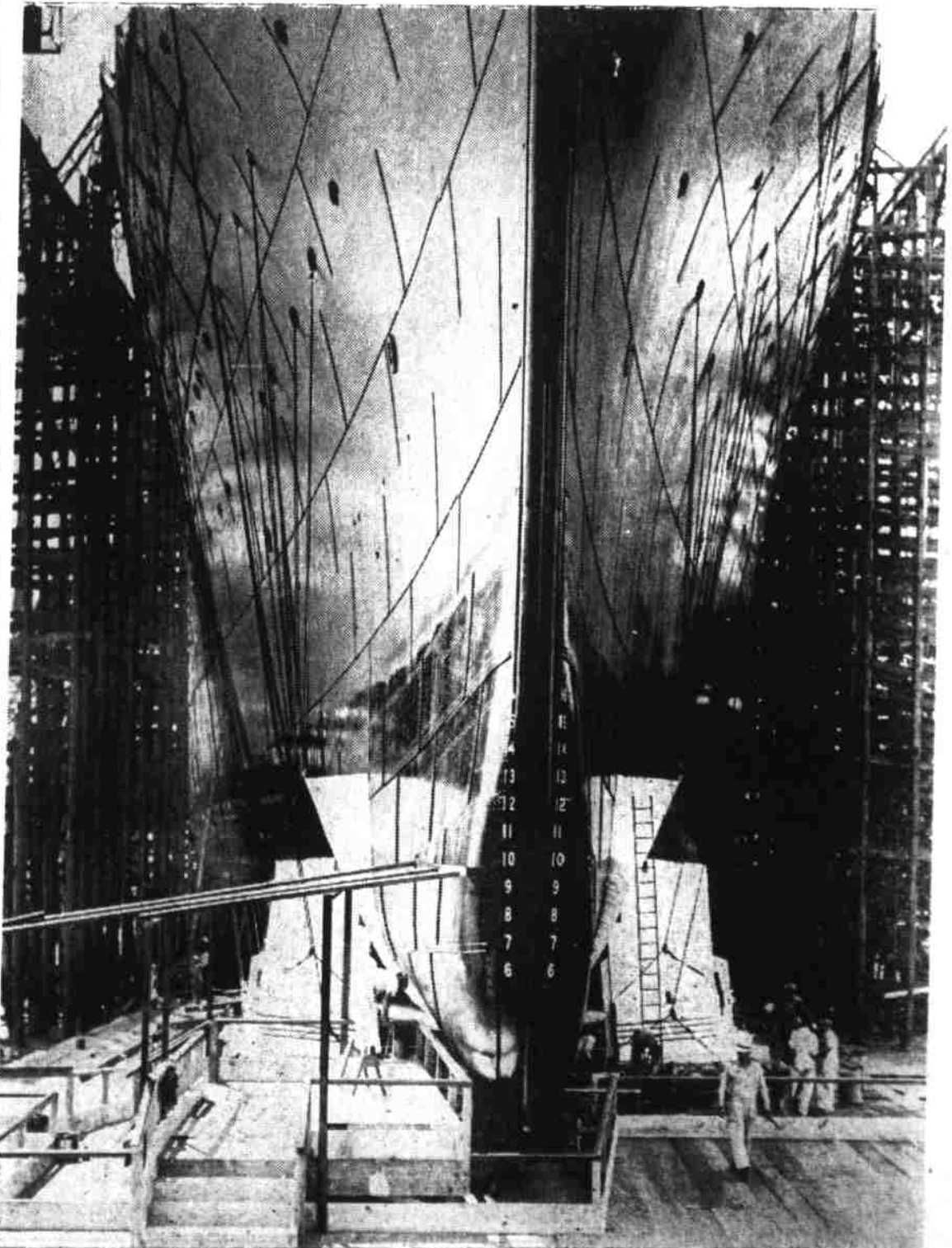
when he is referred to down in the yard.

It is generally conceded in the shipyard that Mr. Ferguson knows more about more different parts of a ship than any man in the yard. This covers a large territory when one thinks of the Boiler Rooms, Engine Rooms, Auxiliaries, and all the work above the Machinery Rooms, such as furnishings for galleys, staterooms, lounging rooms, and on up into the Wheel House. He not only knows what the various names are but can explain the mechanism. This is no small achievement.

If I were asked to describe the general feeling toward Mr. Ferguson throughout the shipyard in one word, I could only say "TOPS".



The SS AMERICA abuilding in the Newport News Yard.



All is ready for the launching of the S. S. AMERICA. This frontal view was taken from the keel level showing the size of the famous luxury liner. She was built in Newport News.