

NEW YEAR'S COLLISION

Recently an inquiry came from the staff of the Redwood City Public Library Local History Room, in Northern California. In the Local History Room's files are three photos of the ship *Permanente Silverbow*, both dockside and steaming out into the San Francisco Bay. Unfortunately, the backs of the photos are blank and there is no caption information, which begs the question, "What is the story of *Permanente Silverbow*?"

In 1950, the Port of Redwood City, California, received Congressional approval and funding to widen its channel to 400 feet and dredge to a depth of 30 feet. This expansion of the port's capacity enabled the Leslie



During the 1950s, the Port of Redwood City was a thriving location of industry.

Salt Company to build a new wharf, and for the nearby Kaiser Permanente Cement Co. to upgrade its facilities as well. In the early 1950s, Kaiser Permanente based three large ships at the Port of Redwood City, including the SS *Harry Lundeberg*, which was used to import gypsum from Mexico, and the SS *Permanente*

Cement and SS *Permanente Silverbow*, both of which exported cement.

WAR. SURPLUS VICTORY SHIP

Named after the town of Silverbow, Montana, the ship that would later become *Permanente Silverbow* was ordered by the US Maritime Commission (USMC) during World War II as USMC Hull 108. She was laid down at the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation's ways in Portland (coincidentally owned by Henry J. Kaiser's Kaiser Shipbuilding Co.) as Yard number 1024, on 11 April 1944, as a VC2-S-AP3 ship, more commonly referred to as "Victory Ships." The AP3 is a general cargo carrier with a displacement of 7629 tons, is 455-feet long, 62-feet wide at the beam, and draws 28 feet when fully loaded. The ship featured five holds, capable of carrying 523,740 cubic feet of cargo, and could steam, at full speed (17 knots or 19.56 mph), for 51 days or 20,000 miles. Oregon Shipbuilding constructed 99 of the 141 VC2-S-AP3 types built during the war. Hull 108 was christened *Silverbow Victory* and launched on 23 May, just 42

PERMANENTE SILVERBOW

Permanente Silverbow alongside the Kaiser Cement wharf at the Port of Redwood City, California. The Port of Redwood City is located in the southern part of the San Francisco Bay, approximately ten miles from Port of San Francisco. (Local History Collection, Redwood City Public Library)

HOW DID THIS VETERAN WWII VICTORY SHIP COLLIDE WITH ANOTHER FREIGHTER ON A CLEAR NIGHT NORTH OF SAN FRANCISCO?

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