



● Scuttlebutt ●

A Virtual Success

In April, the Midwest Model Shipwrights had their inaugural virtual meeting on Zoom. In spite of a few minor glitches, the overall response from those that attended was very positive. Here are a few comments:

“The meeting was an excellent one in my opinion. I suspect you will be hearing similar reactions from others.

Positives:

1. Easy for people from outside Illinois to attend. (We had participants from Georgia, Texas, Arizona and Oregon.)
2. No travel, even for the locals.
3. Ships on Deck photos were better than what we can usually see in person.
4. Presentation (PPT) was as effective as in person.

Negatives:

1. No face-to-face “schmoozing.”
2. Hard to have private conversations one-on-one.

As someone said, the key to online meetings is discipline. We did pretty well. Since we will probably have to have at least one more meeting like this (perhaps several) we will have the opportunity to improve.”

Bill McCready

“I'd like to express my thanks to everyone who helped with today's meeting. I thought it went very well. A few glitches but unfortunately that's to be expected with this technology. I'm working from home at the moment and have had a couple of occasions when I suddenly find I'm talking in a meeting but nobody can hear me!

There were some advantages to the format. As people were presenting ships on deck, it was much easier to see what they were talking about because you could see the pictures. Being able to use the chat feature also kept the interruptions to a minimum. Case in point, Patrick was able to ask me for a link, and I could paste that straight to him accurately and without disturbing anyone.

I do want to get back to physical meetings but maybe we could have folks send pictures before the meeting that could be shown as they're talking.

For me personally, these meetings (online or physical) also give me a kick to get back to my ship.”

Richard Gardiner

May Meeting Notice

Scratch Building on a Budget

By
John Mitchell

Got a lot of time on your hands? Join us for our second online meeting on Wednesday, May 20th. Proceedings will begin at 7:00 PM, but you will be able to log on as early as 6:30 PM. Be on the lookout for your Zoom invite, which will be sent to you by no later than May 19th. Hope you can join us!



“Just wanted to say ‘Thanks’ for yesterday. I think there are a number of unexpected bonuses by experimenting with the monthly MMS meeting via Zoom. Just some observations of the benefits from using Zoom last night:

- Out of state members can attend and discuss their ships!
- More ships on deck! (Folks don't have to stress about carrying their ships/jigs/materials)!
- More focus on fine details, which can be difficult to see when presenting in person.
- Less stress related to driving home in the evening.
- More availability for members who might be only marginally ambulatory.
- Great control of the conversation. (Love those Mute buttons!).
- A lot more options for more in depth ships on deck discussions, which offer some additional perspectives on modeling techniques from some of our really experienced modelers!

A couple of things to consider for the next time:

- Could we perhaps extend the meeting invite to the other Tri-Club members? Just curious – we had a full boat last night and it was terrific!!
- It would be really beneficial to consider doing some telepresence meetings (Zoom, etc.) during the year after life returns to normal – perhaps quarterly?”

Patrick Sand

● **Scuttlebutt** ●

Continued

A memo from the NRG



In response to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, and to help ease your time while practicing social distancing, **the Nautical Research Guild has decided to make the digital edition of the *Nautical Research Journal*, Vol. 65.1 – Spring 2020, free for all to read and enjoy.** Please share this digital edition with all your friends, family, and fellow modelers you think might enjoy, or need, a fun distraction.

Our hobby is going through an adjustment with club meetings cancelled. But on the plus side, many modelers are now able to spend more time than ever in the shop. It is great for those of us that have this great hobby in common to be able to spend more time doing something we love rather than staring at the walls. We are all in this together, so take this opportunity to work on a model or researching your next project while stuck at home.

If you wish to share this with your friends, family and fellow modelers, please use this link:

<https://thenrg.org/covid19>. We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the *Nautical Research Journal*.

Free Plans



If you are looking for your next scratch-built project or contemplating your first model of this type, the North Shore Deadeyes may have the answer to your quest.

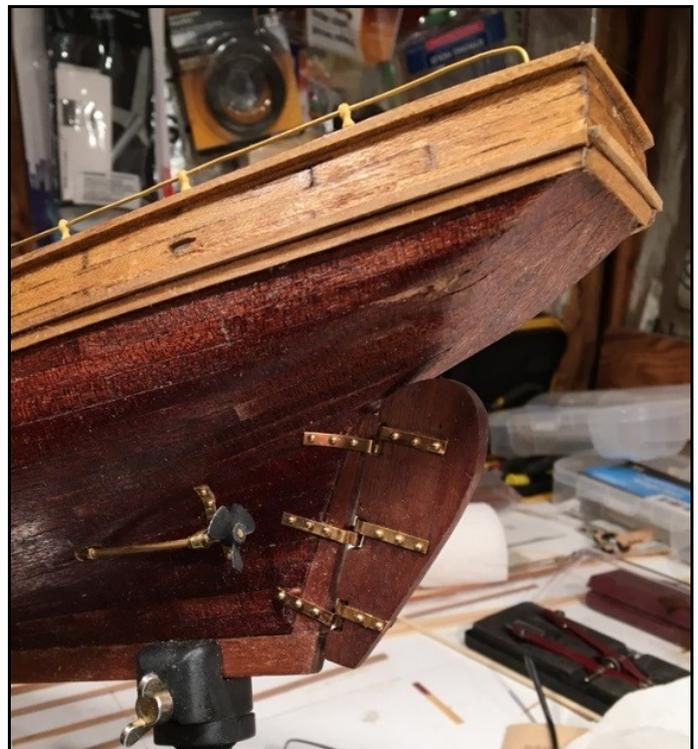
Gordon Field stated that the NSD has a library of over 140 sets of plans that are available to everyone in the Tri-Clubs. Not all of them are usable in their present forms (they might need photocopying as a result of condition, they might need reducing in scale, etc.). He also stated that it would be appreciated if they were returned when the builder is finished using them.

Gordon has created an Excel spreadsheet that is quite detailed. In addition to the vessel's name, it includes information on the ship type, use, year built, scale, type of rig, draftsman, publisher, number of sheets, and condition of the plans. He can be reached at fieldgordon@yahoo.com if you are interested.

● **Ships on Deck** ●

***Bluenose II* by Keith Zeilenga**

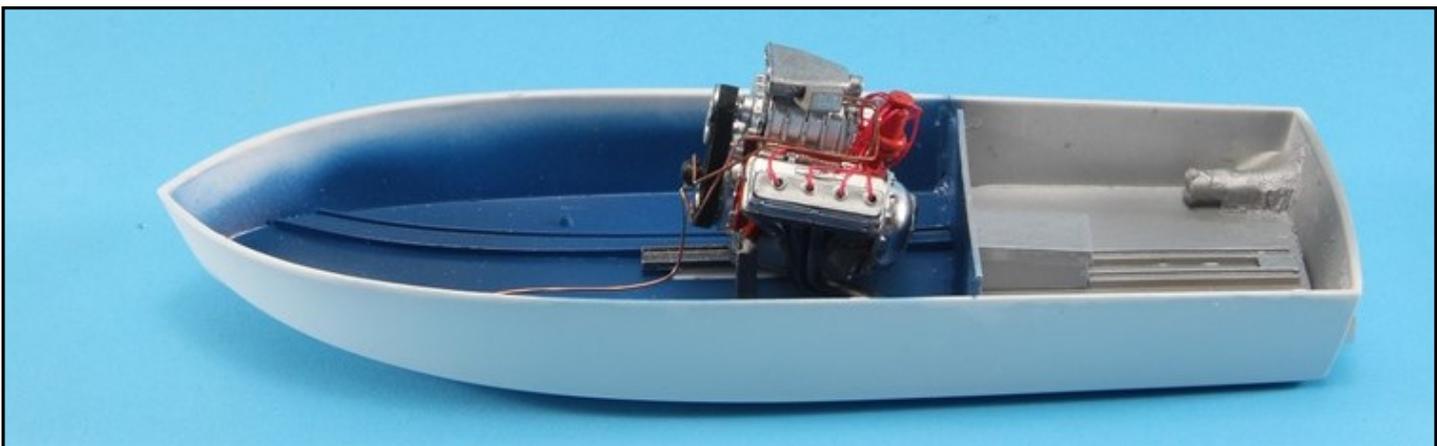
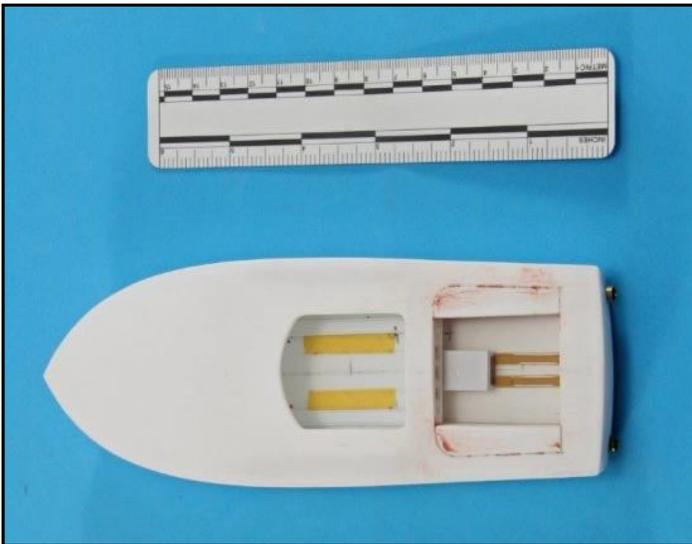
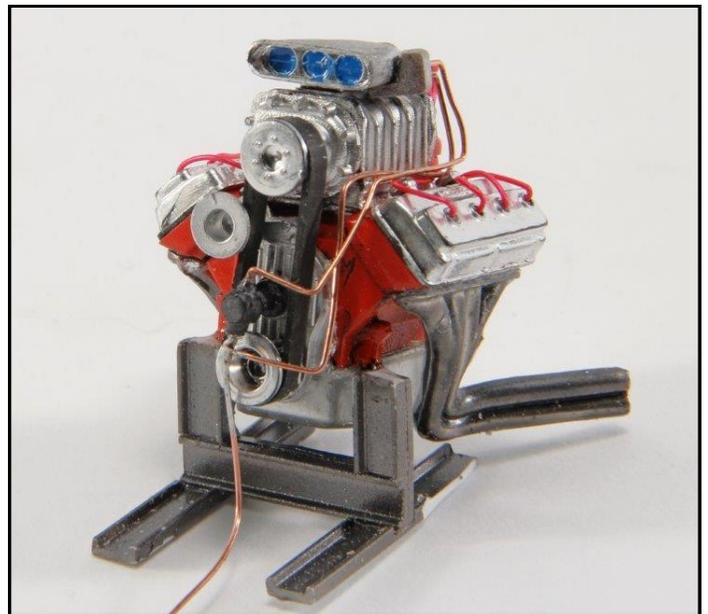
Photos by Keith Zeilenga



● Ships on Deck ●

Modified Drag Boat by Kurt Van Dahm

Photos by Kurt Van Dahm

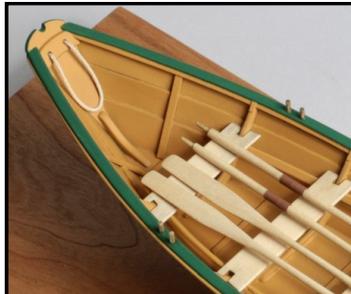


● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

Lowell Grand Banks Dory by John Pocius

Photos by John Pocius



Wisconsin Boats Diorama - Scale 1:32 - by John Pocius

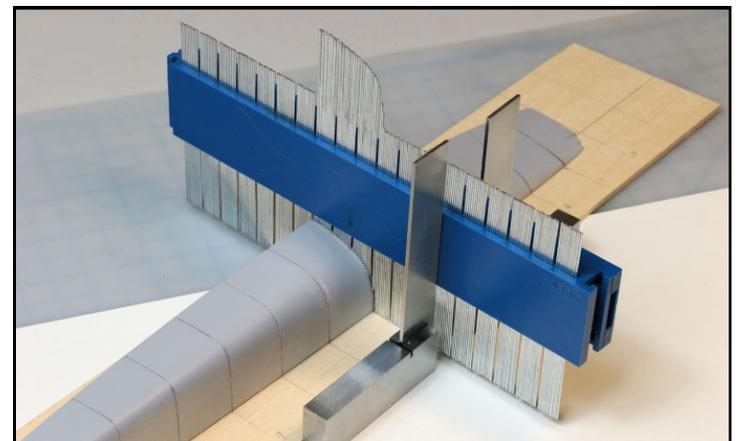
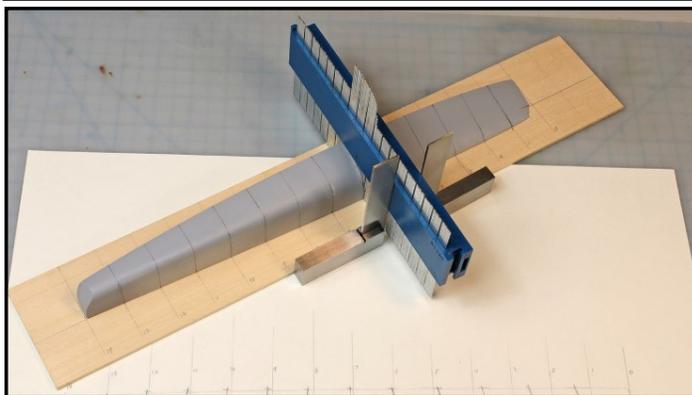
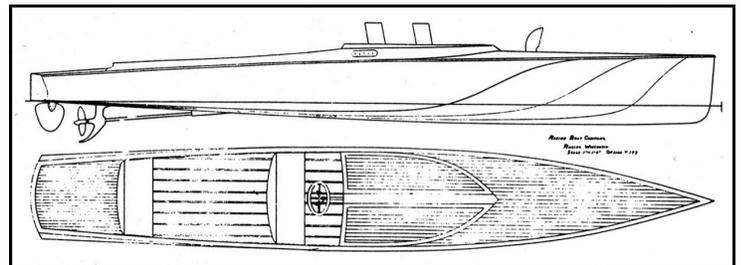
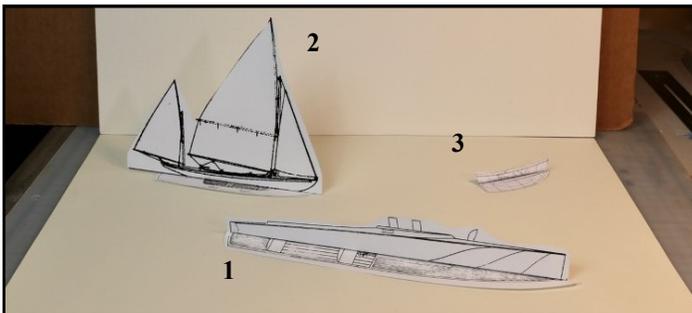
Boat #1: *Racine High Speed Boat*, 30 feet, from the Racine Boat Company Catalog 1914

Boat #2: *Dimple*, a 16 foot yawl from the Fred Martin Catalog of Designs 1901

Boat #3: *Washstrake Dingy*, an 8 foot dingy from the Racine Yacht and Boat Works Catalog 1895

The diorama will be a scene on a Wisconsin lake — a contrast between sail, oar and power. The boats will have human figures and, the background will be an oil painting. Plans for the boats were provided by the late Steve Wheeler.

The plan for the speedboat was minimal. The attached drawing is all John had to work from, no dimensions are given. He determined the length to be 30 feet by comparing it to similar boats. He needed to recreate the buttock lines of the Racine High Speed Boat since it will be plank on bulkhead construction. Pocius made a half hull model from the longitudinal lift lines, then took off the buttock lines with a contour gauge.

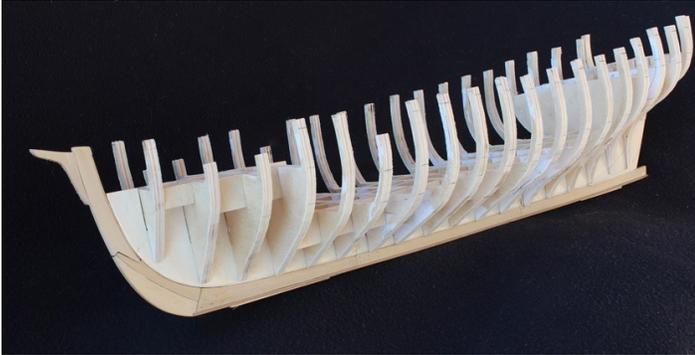


● Ships on Deck ●

Continued

HMS Swallow 1779 by Toni Levine

Photos by Toni Levine



● Ships on Deck ●

Continued

Royal William by Doc Williams

Photos by Doc Williams



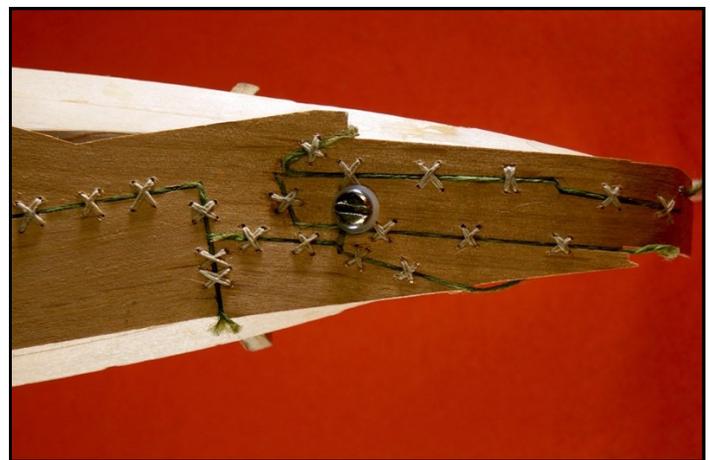
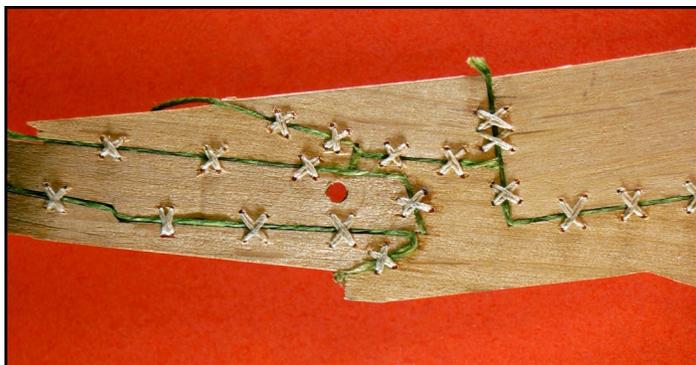
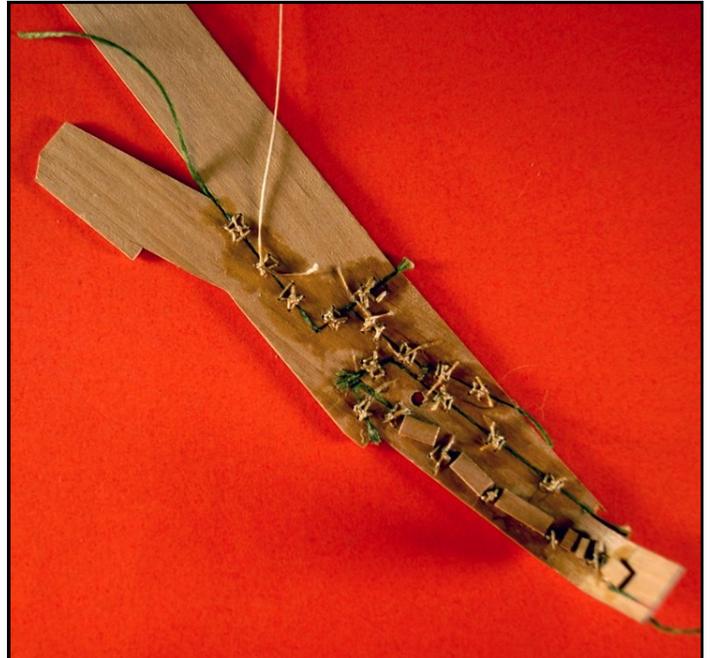
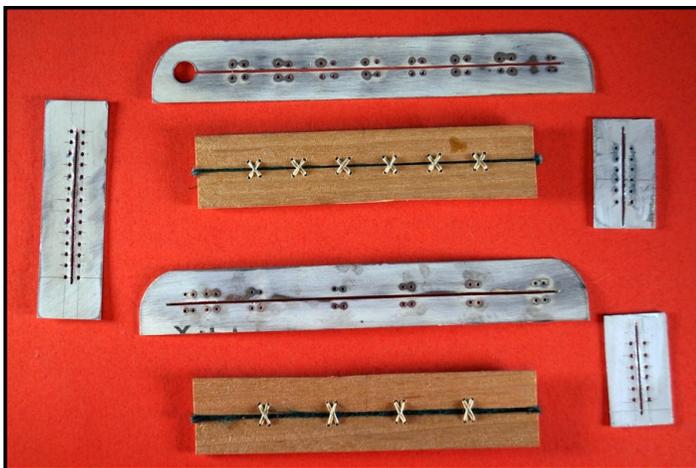
● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

Ancient Egyptian Planking Techniques by Rick Szydelko

Photos by Rick Szydelko

Wood was a fairly scarce commodity in ancient Egypt, so their boats were built using available lumber of different widths and lengths. Planks were rarely more than six to eight feet long, less than eight inches wide, and were irregularly shaped. The wood pieces were joined using combinations of mortise & tenon joints, butterfly inlays, and rope lashings. I'm using only the rope lashing method for my model.



Apparently, the Egyptian shipwrights didn't have access to European caulking materials, so they used twisted reeds between planks with lashings being used to secure the reeds in place. I am a little skeptical about how watertight this method of sealing would have been, but if there were any additional techniques used, I haven't come upon them. My model uses small hemp twine dyed "apple green" to simulate the reed caulking

Rick Szydelko

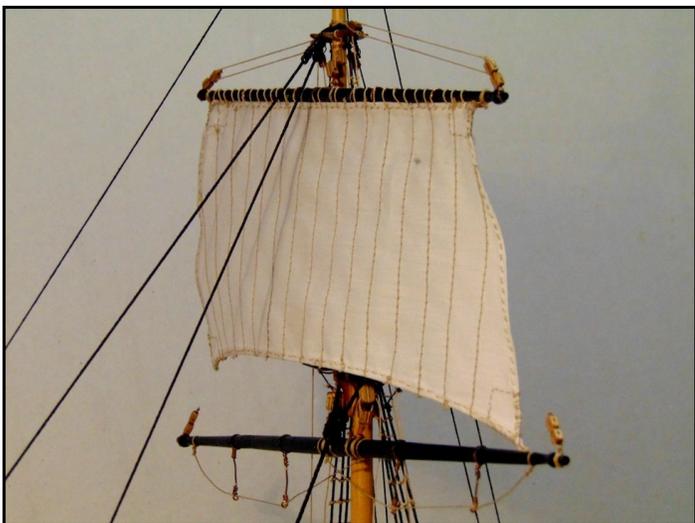


● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

HMS Hunter by Dan Pacholski

Photos by Dan Pacholski



Logging Tug by Neil Hurwitz

Photos by Neil Hurwitz

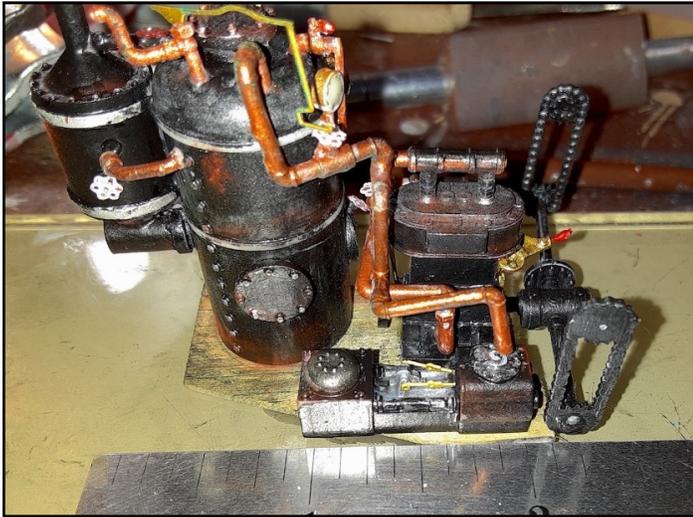


● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

Abrau-Dyurso by Glenn Estry

Photos by Glenn Estry



Blackened photo-etch brass then polished the raised lettering.

Assembled, painted, and weathered resin-cast/photoetch steam engine on a platform, then mounted entire assembly into position in boat.

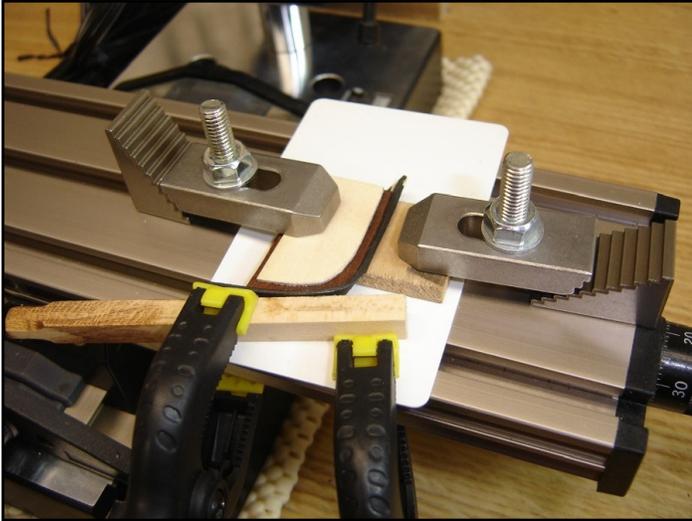


● Ships on Deck ●

Continued

***Diligence Half Hull* by Bob Filipowski**

Photos by Bob Filipowski



● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

Copper Plate Coloration by Richard Gardiner

Photos by Richard Gardiner



I still haven't decided if I'm going to be doing anything with the copper plates on my model (I do procrastination very well). I did an experiment a while ago using a patina. These are the samples I did with and without the patina: These were stuck to a stick that was painted using the same paint as on the hull. I wanted to check that the patina didn't effect the paint or adhesive that's on the copper tape. This is over a year ago now so it seems good.

The patina I used was from <https://shop.sculpt.com/birchwood-casey-antique-brown-gel-8oz.html>. I chose this for the color and because it's a gel that you can brush on and does not drip. You use it straight from the bottle. I then rinsed it under the faucet when it seemed the right color (a wet rag would also work). 8oz is enough for several ships. Although it's difficult to tell in the photo below, it will give brass a deep bronze color if you leave it for a while.

Richard Gardiner



USS Constitution by Bob Frysztak

Photo by Bob Frysztak



I decided to use dowels. Note to self for further turning: anything with a diameter under 5/32" is way to fragile to cut on. Ended up just sanding to shape in the lathe. Here is a pic of the new and completely accurate bowsprit, jib boom and flying jib boom assembled and mocked up. Need to make some irons to hold flying jib boom in place and then paint and/or stain.

Flying jibboom broke twice, so I just left one end in the chuck and held the free end steady.

Bob Frysztak

● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

Thames Barge by Gus Agustin

Photos by Gus Agustin



HMY Royal Caroline by Gus Agustin

Photos by Gus Agustin



MMS OFFICERS & STAFF



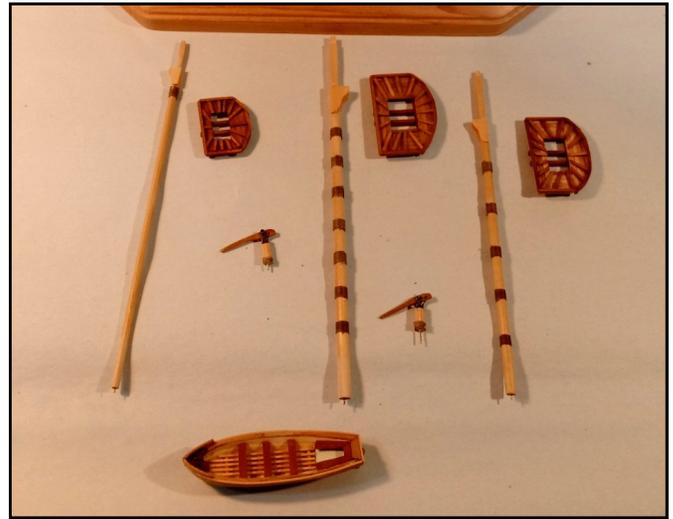
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Leon Sirota(847) 541-6285
Bob Fryszak.....(630) 234-5684
Web Master - John Pocius...(630) 957-7298
jpdesign@mindspring.com

● **Ships on Deck** ●

Continued

HMS Endeavour by Gordon Field

Photos by Gordon Field



● **MMS ANTI-PIRACY POLICY** ●



Here is a list of banned companies that have been pirating and duplicating kits, books, and plans from reputable manufacturers. Quite often these disreputable companies offer their products at what appear to be reasonable prices, but these items are often poor in quality. Many of them do not have websites. They market their illegal products

via the Internet on sites such as eBay.

If you are contemplating your next project, please check this list. If you are not sure, discuss it with Kurt Van Dahm before you commit to a purchase. For easy reference, this information will appear in all future issues of the *Forecastle Report*. Updates will be made as we become aware of any additional companies.

ZHL	Unicorn Model
RealTS	YQ (YaunQing)
Snail Model	Master
XinFeng	CN
JD Model	CF
LHQB	Shi hai
Shi Cheng	4H Model
Woodenkit (Russian MFG)	CAF Model
YengFan	SC
Moxing	DUJIAOSHOU
WN	

● Blackening Metal Parts ●

Model ship builders are quick to realize the advantages of chemically blackening metal parts. The process will not obscure any detail, and it affords the ultimate scale coating. Unfortunately, many attempts end in failure. Bob Filipowski opened his presentation by explaining the three most common reasons for this. Proper surface preparation was number one on the list. Metals oxidize or they may have oily residue on them, which prevents the blackening agent from doing its job. Many modelers will burnish the surface of the part with fine steel wool, but this procedure doesn't always get into tiny crevasses. Also, photoetched parts can be damaged if not handled carefully.

Bob recommended a product called SPAREX NO.2, which chemically etches the surface of non-ferrous metals such as silver, copper, and brass. Made by Krohn Technical Products Inc. of Carlstadt, New Jersey, this chemical has been popular with jewelry makers for years.

The membership was emphatically warned about the potential dangers of this product. Due to the fact that this material is a granular dry acid compound, personal protective equipment, which includes a dust mask (when mixing it), rubber gloves, and goggles or face shield are highly recommended. Certainly, it should always be stored in a safe place away from curious little ones.

The second reason may be the blackening agent itself. A number of years ago, Filipowski tried a product called *Blacken-It*, which is no longer manufactured. The results were less than adequate, and it wasn't until he tried another agent called *Brass Black* by Birchwood Casey that the procedure improved. The latter product is quite popular with gun collectors and model railroad enthusiasts. **Incidentally, both of these products are considered poisonous.**

It was stated that some Shipwrights had actually achieved success with *Blacken-It* when it was diluted 50/50 with distilled water. Bob could not confirm this, but he surmised that the thinned solution afforded a much slower process, which improved the chemical reaction with metals. This brought the presentation to reason number three.

Poor blackening is often the result of a common attitude found among most human beings. (Mostly male.) "If a little works well, then a lot must work even better!" Well, nothing could be further from the truth. Bob pointed out that many modelers keep metal parts immersed in blackening solution for as long as 20 or 30 minutes. This allows the agent to actually form a thick crust on the surface of the part, which easily flakes away when handled.

A short soaking time of approximately 20 seconds, followed by another 20 or 30 seconds out of the bottle is usually adequate for a first application. (If the pieces are too large to fit in the bottle, Birchwood Casey can also be applied with a paintbrush). The solution is then carefully wiped from the part with a soft cloth.



An old tee shirt works quite well for this purpose. If the darkened metal does not meet with your requirements, simply repeat the process. As stated earlier, SPAREX NO.2 is an excellent agent for removing oxidation and oily residue from metal parts, but the concentration of the solution can impact its effectiveness. The manufacturer recommends dissolving a half pint can (10 ounces by weight) in a quart of water. Depending on the size and quantity



of the parts you are working with, this may be overkill. Bob's earliest experiments with this process involved a small glass jar with approximately 2 ounces of water and 4 teaspoons of SPAREX mixed in. This seemed to work well. It was pointed out that this agent works at room temperature, but heating it to about 140° improves its effectiveness. A 16 Oz crock pot, such as the one shown in the photo is impervious to the solution, and can be purchased for as little as \$15.00.

When it comes to soaking the parts, the rule of thumb is to leave them in until they are shiny. The membership was cautioned about this process and photo-etched parts. If these thin fittings are left in the solution too long, they can actually start dissolving! When ready, thoroughly rinse the parts and allow them to dry. Do not handle them without clean rubber gloves or tweezers. The oil from your hands can result in a blotchy finish. Bob likes to put the fittings under a lamp to ensure that they are dry before immersing them in the blackening agent. The slightly heated metal can also assist in the process.



There's one other interesting phenomenon concerning this procedure. Some individuals have reported that the blackening agent will continue to react with the metal unless it is completely neutralized with a baking soda solution. If this is not done, the object may continue to exhibit moisture on its surface. One member stated that he experienced this problem almost a year after the parts had been blackened! Once the fittings have been allowed to dry completely, they can be buffed to a very nice luster, or left a dull black.

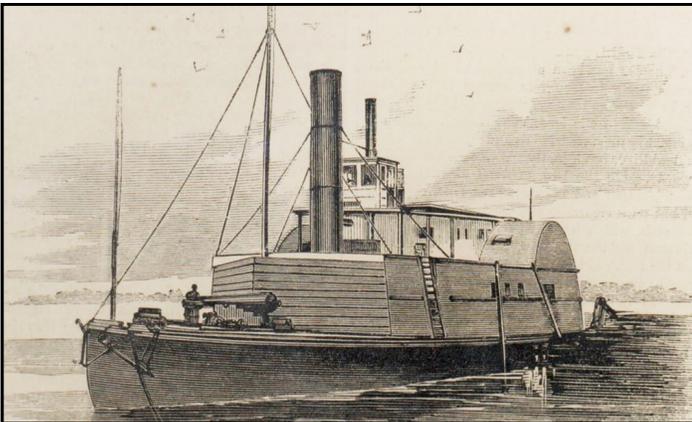


• HISTORIC SHIP PROFILES •

• Robert Smalls and the C.S.S. *Planter* ca1862•

Despite being born a slave in the low country of South Carolina, Robert Smalls never learned that there were certain things he just couldn't do because of his color. Maybe it was because his owner, John McKee, might have also been his father. The McKee family certainly favored Smalls over the other slave children; so much so that his mother worried he would reach manhood without fully grasping the "peculiarities" of the institution into which he was born. To educate him, she even arranged for him to be sent to the fields to work and to see other slaves at "the whipping post."

This education only led Robert to further defiance, and more than once he found himself in the Beaufort jail. Fearing for her son's future, his mother asked her master to send Smalls to Charleston to be rented out to work. By the time Smalls turned 19, he was earning one dollar a week (his owner took the rest) and he was receiving an education on the waters of Charleston harbor.



By the second year of the Civil War the Union Navy had set up a blockade, and the Confederates were dug in defending Charleston and its coastal waters. The C.S.S. *Planter* was a first-class coastwise steamer, which was used to supply the various blockaded island points. It was heavily armed with a 32-pound pivot gun, a 24-pound howitzer, and 200 rounds of ammunition, and Robert Smalls was the "wheelman" on board.

On the afternoon of May 12, the *Planter* returned to the Charleston docks to resupply. It was due to go out again the next morning, but that evening the white officers on board decided to take a break for the night — either for a party or to visit family — leaving the crew's eight trusted slave members behind.

At 2:00 a.m. on May 13, Robert Smalls donned the captain's wide-brimmed straw hat to help hide his identity, and ordered the *Planter's* crew to fire up the boiler, and hoist the South Carolina and Confederate flags. Easing out of the dock, in full view of the Confederate headquarters, they paused at the West Atlantic Wharf, and picked up Smalls' wife and children, four other women, three men and another child.



At 3:25 a.m., the *Planter* picked up steam. From the pilot house, Smalls sounded the ship's whistle while passing Fort Johnson, and at 4:15 a.m. passed Fort Sumter, "as coolly as if General Ripley was on board." Smalls not only knew all the correct signals to flash; he even folded his arms just so, so that in the shadows he passed convincingly for the *Planter's* captain.

"She was supposed to be the guard boat and allowed to pass without interruption," Confederate Aide-de-Camp F.G. Ravenel explained defensively in a letter to his commander. It was only when the *Planter* passed out of Fort Sumter's gun range that the alarm was sounded — the *Planter* was heading for the Union blockade!

At sunrise, Smalls ordered his crew to strike the Palmetto and Rebel flags and hoist a white bed sheet. Not seeing the "white" flag, Lt. J. Frederick Nickels of the U.S.S. *Onward* ordered his sailors to open her ports and prepare to fire. Just as the No. 3 port gun was being elevated, someone cried out, "I see something that looks like a white flag!"

True enough there was something flying on the steamer that might once have been white. The *Planter* neared the blockade, and the Union sailors scanned its deck and assessed its threat. When it became apparent that the Union ship would not fire, a rush of black men, women and children spilled out onto her deck — dancing, singing, whistling, jumping.

As the C.S.S. *Planter* steered under the stern of the U.S.S. *Onward*, the man piloting the boat stepped forward, took off his hat, and shouted, "Good morning, sir! I've brought you some of the old United States guns, sir!"

That man was Robert Smalls, and he and his family and the entire slave crew of the *Planter* were now free.

For a short period, *Planter* served as a gunboat for the Union Navy. As the ship burned wood, which was scarce where the Navy was operating, the Navy turned the ship over to the Union Army for use at Fort Pulaski on the Georgia coast. In 1863 Smalls was appointed captain of *Planter*, the first black man to command a United States ship. He served in that position to 1866.