



# Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights ♦ www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com ♦ September 2017

## ● Scuttlebutt ●

**COMMODORE, Bob Filipowski**, opened the August 2017 meeting at 7:30 with a loyal crew of 24 on deck. We welcomed back our mate, **Tim Riggs**, who paid us a visit from his new home in Texas. Great to have you among us again, mate. We also welcomed a guest, **Dan Cicero**, from the Nautical Research and Model Ship Society club. Glad you could make it, Dan.

We held a great raffle that had as a prize the "Corel" kit of a *Wasa* cross-section donated by **Gus Agustin**. Thanks, Gus, for adding such a great measure of enjoyment to the evening, and congratulations to Richard Romaniak on winning this coveted item!



## Heads up on the NRG Conference Oct 25-28, 2017

The 2017 Nautical Research Guild Conference will be held in St. Petersburg, FL at the Hilton Bayfront Hotel. The NRG has arranged a special room rate of \$145.00 per night, and can be extended two days before the Conference and two days after the close. The last day to get this great rate is September 25th so, if you are going, now's the time to make your move on a hotel room.

### 2017 OFFICERS & STAFF

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| President (Commodore)     | - Bob Filipowski.....(847) 394-0757 |
| Vice Pres (Flag Captain)  | - Glenn Estry .....(847) 259-1574   |
| Treasurer (Ship's Purser) | - Allen Siegel .....(847) 446-7248  |
| Secretary (Ship's Clerk)  | - Bob Sykes.....(630) 766-6645      |
| Newsletter Editor         | - John Mitchell .....(847) 392-2259 |
| Photographer              | - Leon Sirota .....(847) 541-6285   |
| Web Master                | - John Pocius.....(630) 957-7298    |
|                           | jpdesign@mindspring.com             |

## September Meeting Notice

### Lofting Revealed By Gordon Field

**Gordon Field** is going to help us understand what all those lines on a ship's drawing represent. This will be your chance to become familiar with the subject of "Lofting" and how to use this information to help you build more accurate ship models.

Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m.  
Wednesday, September 20, 2017  
At: **The South Church**  
501 S. Emerson Street  
Mount Prospect, IL

## Saga of the Mystery Ship *Alvin Clark* By Bob Filipowski

In his opening remarks, Bob Filipowski stated that the story of the *Alvin Clark*, and Frank Hoffman, the man responsible for bringing her to the surface after 105 years on the bottom of Green Bay, is akin to a Greek Tragedy. Both the ship and the man would eventually be destroyed by circumstances beyond their control.

Bob started the presentation with a brief history of the *Clark*, relating numerous little known facts about the ship. One of the most intriguing involved the fact that this Great Lakes Brigantine was involved in the pirating of lumber taken from Federal lands located in remote regions of the Great Lakes. The lumber trade was a very lucrative business during the 19th century, especially in Chicago.



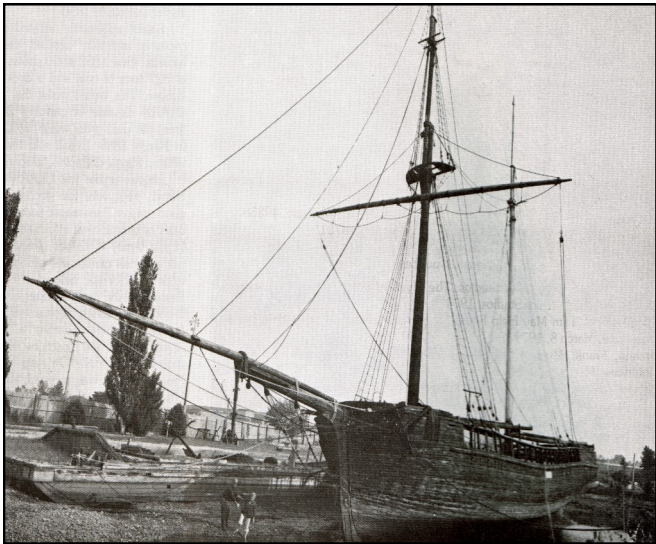
"Alvin Clark", continued on Page 2

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*"Alvin Clark", continued from Page 1*

At one point, Federal marshals actually caught up with the *Alvin Clark* in Grand Haven, Michigan, jailed the captain, and confiscated the ship and lumber. The crew was able to free their captain, retake the ship and cargo, and escape to Chicago where the lumber was sold!

In 1864, the *Alvin Clark* was headed for Oconto, Wisconsin, when the ship was hit by a sudden gale off Chambers Island in the bay of Green Bay. She was running empty, under full sail, and the hatch covers had been removed so the cargo hold could be cleaned out. This was a recipe for disaster, and the *Clark* capsized and quickly sank. Of the five crewmembers, only two seamen survived. The casualties included the captain, first mate, and a paying passenger. She would remain on the bottom for the next 105 years.



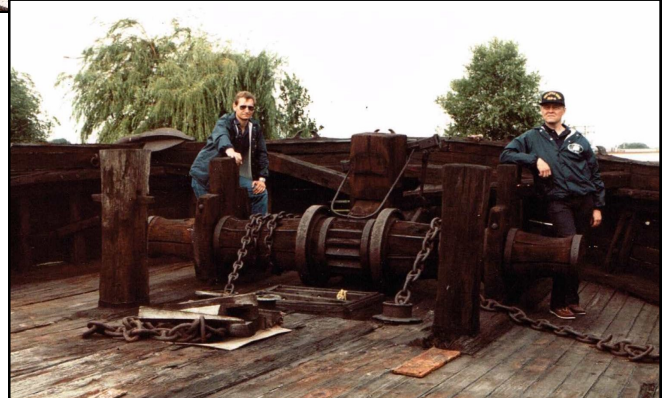
In 1967, a fisherman snagged his net on the *Clark*, and asked a local tavern owner/scuba diver, Frank Hoffman, if he could help retrieve it. Frank was able to accomplish this, and in the process discovered a wreck that was in remarkable condition. His fascination with the vessel would eventually lead him down a path to financial ruin as he invested his net worth in bringing the *Clark* to the surface.

Hoffman assembled a team of amateur divers, and through sheer determination and ingenuity, they were able to raise the 220 ton ship from a depth of 110 feet. It's interesting to note that the *Alvin Clark* did not feature any name boards, which is understandable considering the type of "business" she was involved in! It would be a year before her identity could be determined.

The accolades Hoffman received came from near and far. The first two years the ship was quite a sensation as an estimated 50,000 paying customers

visited the vessel each year. However, interest waned, and the funds needed to maintain the *Clark* became hard to come by. The anticipated government subsidies never materialized, and the *Alvin Clark* began to deteriorate.

This sad process was aptly demonstrated by Bob in his presentation using illustrations taken off the Internet, and with photos he took in 1984 when he visited the *Clark*. Here are a few of those photos:



In 1987, Hoffman was able to sell the *Clark* and property for \$117,000. He then moved to Florida where he lived out the rest of his life. In 1994 the *Alvin Clark* was bull-dozed, and sent to a landfill.



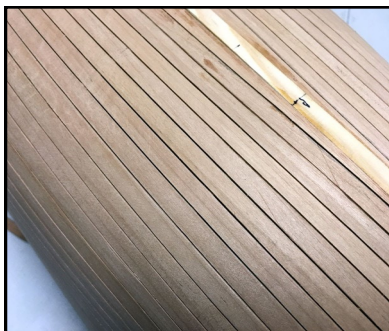
● Ships on Deck ●



Bob Sykes points out some of the finer aspects of his *Prince de Neufchatel* to fellow club members. This is looking like another fine model completed in record time!



Whenever Steve Wheeler comes down from Racine, Wisconsin, you know you're in for a treat! Steve brought his latest project, a 1/12 scale model of the 1907, double ended cruiser, *Lady Isabel*. Steve is building this impressive piece for the Wisconsin Maritime Museum at Manitowoc, where the actual vessel is on display. The planking is alder, which Steve highly recommends for demanding planking jobs.



When it comes to demanding planking jobs, Tim Riggs feels that his French Xebec, *Le Requin*, is right up there at the top. In fact, the model's excessive sheer, and extreme hull shape, have caused progress on this miniature to come to a grinding halt.



Tim was very interested in Steve Wheeler's comments about using alder as a planking material. This may be the answer to his dilemma. We certainly hope so!



Tim's second offering was a 1/48 Model Shipways Long Boat. Riggs admits that this model has also been in



"limbo" for quite some time. From the looks of it, the workmanship, as usual, is outstanding, and he's so close to finishing the model. We can only hope that the next time we see this little beauty, it'll be rigged and cased!



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"Ships on Deck", continued from Page 3

When it comes to building large, impressive models, Doc Williams is really quite comfortable with the challenge. There's no doubt that his latest effort, the first rate

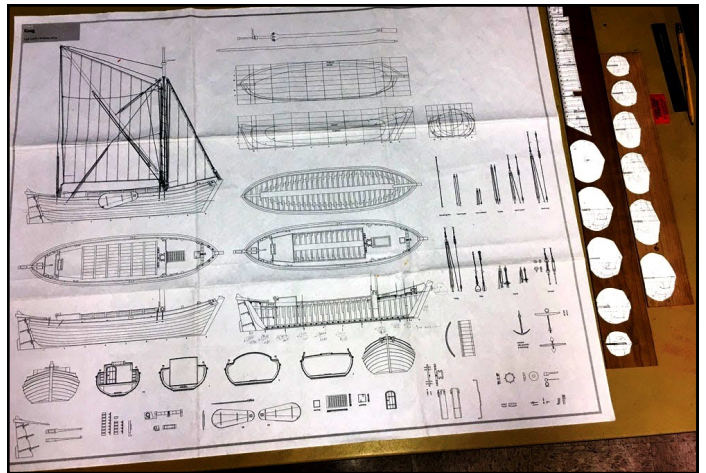


*Royal William*, epitomizes that description. With the first layer of planking applied, Doc is concentrating on getting the gun ports cut out. This is no simple task, since the slightest variation in their alignment will be quite evident when completed. He has resorted to using battens to insure that the runs are true and fair, which is providing the desired results. Nice work, Doc!



Ken Goetz stated that the *Bluenose* may have won all its races, but not in model ship building. He was referring to how long it has taken him to get to the rigging phase on this excellent model. Ken had to make the deadeyes from scratch due to the fact that this Canadian Grand Banks schooner sported a unique oval shaped version of this common fitting. This is just one example of the attention to detail that Ken puts into his work, which is simply outstanding!

Allen Siegel has decided to give scratch building a try. His model of choice is a Dutch *Kaag*, and is based on a



set of drawings featured in Ab Hoving's latest book, *17th Century Dutch Merchant Ships*. In spite of its small size, this coastal trading vessel is going to provide Siegel with some unique challenges. For one thing, the model will feature lapstrake hull planking, a totally new concept for him. The bulkheads, keel, stem and stern post are cherry, and the hull planking will be Swiss pear. With Allen's skill and enthusiasm, this should be a real eye-catcher!



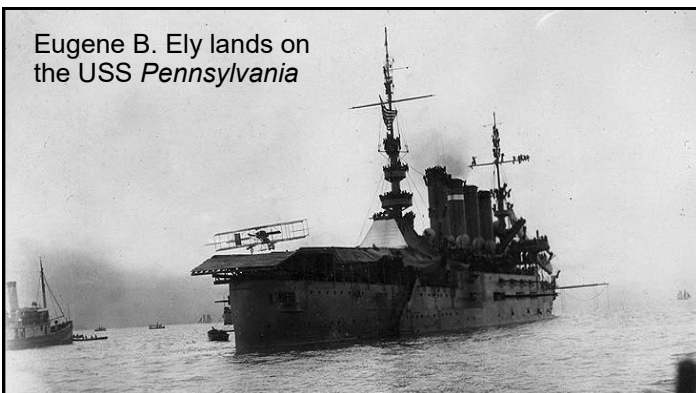
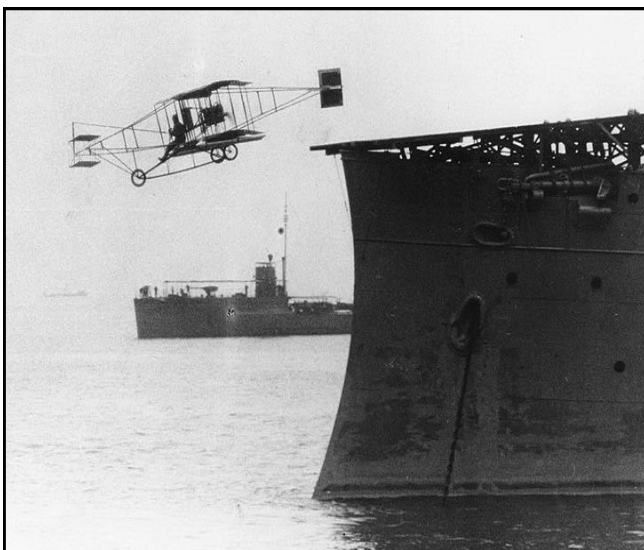
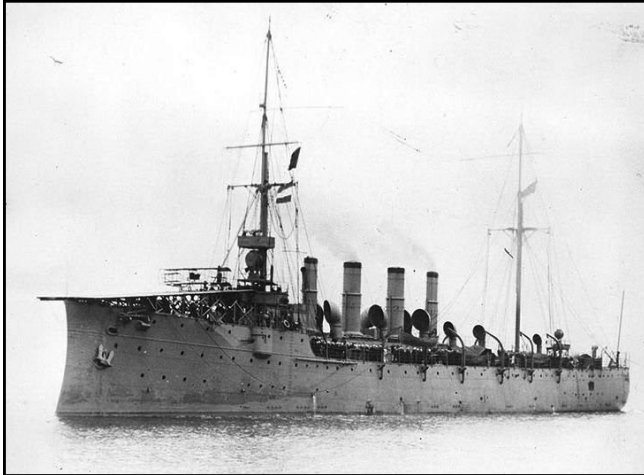
John Pocius sent us an update on his (1:32) *McKenzie River Drift Boat*. He got his inspiration from the book *Drift Boats & River Dories* by Roger Fletcher. The model now sports two figures, and a completed 1952, 7.5 hp, Evinrude outboard motor. The boat will be set in a diorama that features a painting of Mt. Hood in the background. John, it was good to hear from you again!





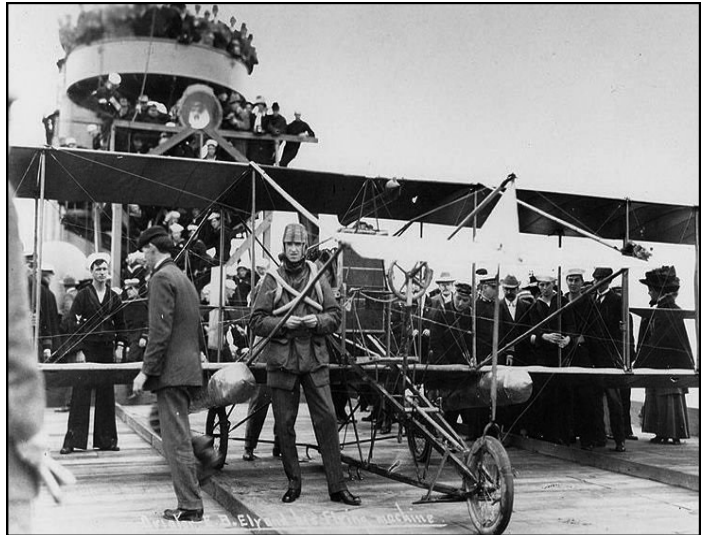
## **The First Aircraft Carrier**

Although not a true aircraft carrier, The USS *Birmingham* was the first ship to “launch” a fixed wing aircraft from a flight deck. On November 14, 1910, Eugene B. Ely took off in a Curtiss pusher from a temporary platform erected over the bow of this light cruiser. The airplane plunged downward as soon as it cleared the 83-foot platform, and the aircraft’s wheels actually dipped into the water before rising. Ely’s goggles were covered with spray, and the aviator promptly landed on a beach rather than proceeding to the Norfolk Navy Yard as planned.



Eugene B. Ely lands on the USS *Pennsylvania*

On January 18, 1911, the armored cruiser, USS *Pennsylvania* had the distinction of being the first warship to accomplish a shipboard landing by a fixed wing aircraft.



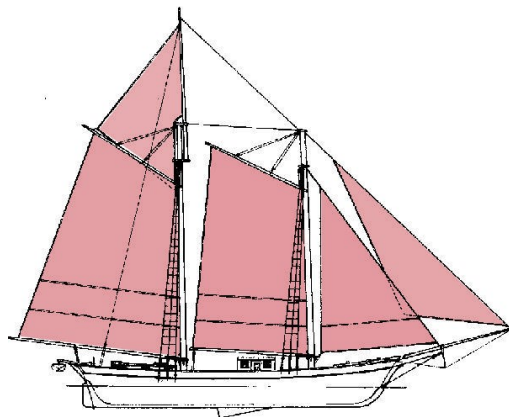
Eugene B. Ely died on October 19, 1911, when his plane crashed while flying at an exhibition in Macon, Georgia. Note the unique life vest he is wearing. It’s actually bicycle inner tubes!

## **A blast from the past**

September 2, 1954



U-505 comes ashore at the Museum of Science and Industry.



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