



# SMA Newsletter

Volume 46, Number 10, October 2019

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Meeting – Wed., October 16, 7 PM, Red Cross Building, 1207 N. Lemon,  
Fullerton, CA. 92832



## WORK IN PROGRESS

September 18, 2019

Reporter: Dave Yotter

### Continental Gondola *Philadelphia* 1776 – Dave Yotter



The *Philadelphia* is a gunboat of the Continental Navy. Manned by Continental Army soldiers, she was part of the fleet under the command of General Benedict Arnold that fought the 11 October 1776 Battle of Valcour Island against a larger Royal Navy fleet on Lake Champlain. Although many of the American fleet in the battle were damaged in the battle, *Philadelphia* was one of the few actually sunk

that day. On the days following the main battle, most of the other boats in the American fleet were sunk, burned or captured.

In 1935, amateur military marine archaeologist Lorenzo Hagglund located her remains standing upright at the bottom of Lake Champlain near Valcour Island, and had her raised. Bequeathed to the Smithsonian Institution in 1961, *Philadelphia* and associated artifacts are part of the permanent collection of the National Museum of American History, in Washington, D.C., where curator Philip K. Lundberg was responsible for arranging her initial display. The model of *Philadelphia* is scratch built at a scale of 1:16 from plans drawn by Howard Hoffman of the NMAH.

Her particulars are Type: Gondola (or Gundalow); Displacement: 29 long tons; Length: 53 ft.; Beam: 15 ft.; Draft: 2 ft.; Complement: 45; Armament: 1 X 12-pounder long gun, 2 X 9-pounder carriage guns, 8 X 3/4 -pounder swivels.

The initial launch of *Philadelphia* was delayed when Arnold ordered the after deck to be raised for the installation of a 13-inch mortar. The mortar was test fired on board and split in two with twenty men on board. The upper part went about twenty feet high over the men's heads and into the water but hurt no man. After a second mortar burst upon test firing, this time ashore, the idea of arming the gondolas with mortars was abandoned. Four square openings on each side of the inner planking is evidence of this experiment. The mortar platform was removed and ballast rocks were placed under the quarterdeck as a counterbalance for the 12-pounder forward.

Work on my model of the *Philadelphia* is DONE. After twenty years or so it is time to put it in its case and move on. Besides, the plans have faded to invisibility and are so brittle that every time I turn a new page a piece falls off. The most recent work was erecting the masts and spars and completing the rigging. I made a topsail out of drafting linen, complete with all its bolt ropes and such and hung it on the topsail yard with a loose furl, hanging in tis gear with a few gaskets passed to keep it controlled in a breeze. I did not bend the course and hauled the foot spreader aloft and tied it off to the main yard. There are pictures of *Philadelphia II* in this evolution when under way with sweeps.

Rigging is fun in 1:16 scale. Every size of line from 3/8" diameter to 1 1/2" is used at 1/8" intervals is on board. All this line was spun up using **Jim Burnes'** marvelous rope walk using a kind of dirty gray weathered hemp look linen thread. The art of the boatswain is well represented. Including lasings, seizing, whipping, serving, square knot, clove hitch, magnus hitch, bowline, Mathew Walker, anchor bend, anchor ring pudding, eye splices (around blocks, thimbles, toffles, hooks, masts, yards, booms). The Ashley Book of Knots was in constant use.

## USS *America* – Mike Eskew

*America* was a 19<sup>th</sup>-century racing yacht and first winner of the America's Cup international sailing trophy. On August 22, 1851, *America* won the Royal Yacht Squadron's 53-mile regatta around the Isle of Wight by 18 minutes. The Squadron's "One Hundred Sovereign Cup" of "£ 100 Cup", sometimes mistakenly known in America as the "One Hundred Guinea Cup," was later renamed after the original winning yacht. After a succession of subsequent owners, the yacht was sold to Henry Edward Decie in 1860 who brought her back to the United States. Decie sold the ship to the Confederate States of America the same year for use as a blockade-runner in the American Civil War, though he remained aboard as captain. The yacht was renamed *Memphis*, but the details of her Confederate service are unclear but could have been as many as seven to eight trips.



In 1862, she was scuttled in Dunn's Creak, north of Crescent City, when Union troops took the city of Jacksonville. She was raised, repaired, and renamed *America* by the

Union and served the United States Navy on the blockade until May 1863. She was armed with three smoothbore bronze cannon designed by John A. Dahlgren and cast at the Washington Navy Yard. A 12-pounder was located on the bow and two 24-pounders were placed amidships. She was assigned to the federal blockading squadron off Charleston, South Carolina and was on patrol the night of March 19, 1863 when she spotted the smoke of a blockade-runner near Dewees Inlet, South Carolina. She immediately launched colored signal flares to alert the rest of the fleet. The runner proved to be the CSS *Georgiana*, which was described as the most powerful Confederate cruiser then afloat. *America's* action ultimately resulted in the *Georgiana's* wreck and destruction. *Georgiana* was the most important vessel to be captured or destroyed by the federal blockade. In 1863 *America* became a training ship at the United States Naval Academy. On August 8, 1870, the Navy entered her in the America's Cup race at New York Harbor, where she finished fourth.

*America* remained in the Navy until 1873, when she was sold to Benjamin Butler for \$5,000.00. Butler raced and maintained her well, commissioning a rebuild by Donald McKay in 1875 and a total refit of the rig in 1885 by Edward Burgess to keep her competitive. Butler died in 1893 and his son Paul inherited the schooner, but he had no interest in her and gave her to his nephew Butler Ames in 1901. Ames reconditioned *America* and used her occasionally for racing and casual sailing until 1901, when she fell into disuse and disrepair. *America* was sold to a company headed by Charles Foster in 1917, and in 1921 was again sold to the America Restoration Fund, who donated her to the Naval Academy in Annapolis. She was not maintained there either and became seriously decayed by 1940. The shed that housed *America* collapsed during a heavy snowstorm on March 29, 1942. The remains of the shed and ship were scrapped and burned in 1945. (Wikipedia)

Mike has built a scratch model of *America* as she was configured in 1863 when assigned to the federal blockading squadron off Charleston, South Carolina. The model is in 1:96 scale on a solid wood hull and is fully rigged with sails.

## **Constitution Stern Carvings – Paul Payne**



Paul commissioned **Tony Devroude** to do the carvings for his 1:96 scratch model of USS *Constitution* on 1805. These are closely following a painting of the stern of *Constitution* by Felipe Corné done in 1805. So far Tony has completed the full stern with the carvings and the stern lights in three pieces. The carvings are in box with all the black background pieces in ebony. The name board is done also. The quarter galleries have been done in

three pieces and ready for attachment to the model. The figurehead (and trailboards?) are underway.

## **Continental Schooner *Hannah* – Don Dressel**

The schooner, *Hannah*, was the first armed vessel to sail under Continental pay and control. Acquired on August 24, 1775, her first captain was Nicholson Broughton, a captain in the Army. She was utilized to aid General George Washington in the siege of Boston by capturing provision ships making for the harbor from British ports. On September 7, *Hannah* captured the Royal Navy sloop *Unity* with naval stores and provisions. While sailing on a similar mission, she was run ashore on October 10 by the Royal Navy sloop *Nautilus* near Beverly. Saved from destruction and capture, *Hannah* was soon decommissioned as George Washington found more suitable ships for his cruisers.



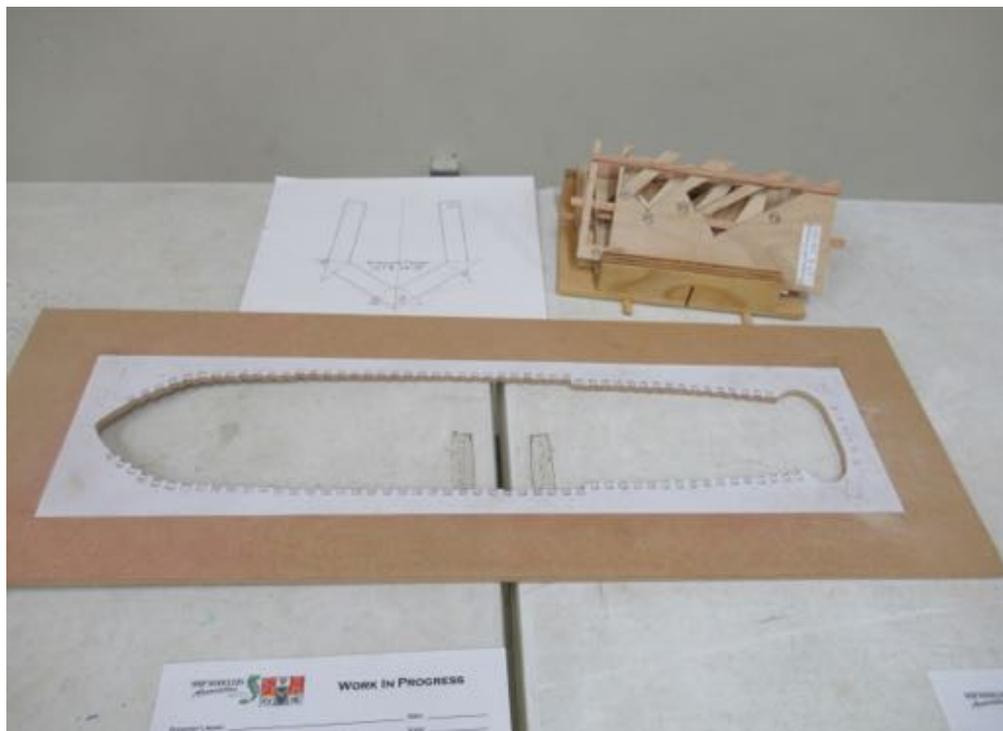
Don's 1:48 scale model of the *Hannah* was started by Richard Simon, a member of the NRG, who gave the model to Don to complete. It has been "on the back burner" for quite awhile, but is now being worked on. The model is based on the plans by Harold Hahn in consultation with the book [the Colonial Schooner 1763-1775](#) by Harold Hahn. Plans now are to complete the deck planking, install all the deck furniture, and complete the railing along the bulwark. The two main masts have been made along with the rest of the spars and fitted to the hull. Once the deck, deck furniture, cannon, swivels and other related items are completed, the masting and rigging will commence. Flags for the model have already been acquired (made by Gus Agustin) and will be the final item installed on the model. This model has no carvings to speak of, so that will not be a problem. The ship's boat is also complete and ready to install on the deck. Once the model is finally completed, a case will be made for the model using case parts obtained from Lloyd Warner a few years ago.

## **Rattlesnake 1780 – Jean-Philippe Dal Gobbo**

HMS *Cormorant* was probably launched in 1780 at Plymouth, Massachusetts. She was commissioned as the Massachusetts privateer *Rattlesnake* in 1781. The Royal Navy captured her shortly after she set out on a cruise and purchased her. In November 1781 she carried to England the first news of General Cornwallis's defeat. The Royal Navy registered her under the name *Cormorant*. In 1783 the navy renamed her *Rattlesnake* and paid her off and sold her in 1786. *Rattlesnake* was probably drawn by John Peck of Boston, Massachusetts, and probably built at Plymouth in 1780. She was very lightly built and was reputedly very fast. *Rattlesnake* had the appearance of a miniature frigate, with detached quarterdeck and forecastle. *Rattlesnake* was commissioned on 12 June 1781 under the command of Mark Clark (or Clarke). She had barely begun her first cruise when she encountered the 44-gun frigate HMS *Assurance*, Captain James Cummings commanding. *Assurance* captured *Rattlesnake* on 17 June. He sent her into New York, where she arrived on 8 July. The Royal Navy purchased her on 28 July at Boston. (Wikipedia).



Jean-Philippe is starting his first scratch-build model and has chosen the American privateer *Rattlesnake* of 1780. The model is in a scale of 1:48 and will be built using the Hahn method of constructing the hull. He has completed the Hahn method of building board which positions all the ships frames to insure a parallel alignment. The jigs to saw some of the frame blanks are done. Several of these jigs are needed and they vary depending on where the frames will be located in the hull. The frames will be from cherry.



# Members Models - August 2019



Don Dressel's model of *Hannah*



Mike Eskew's model of USS *America*

Dave Yotter's model of the Continental Gondola *Philadelphia* 1776



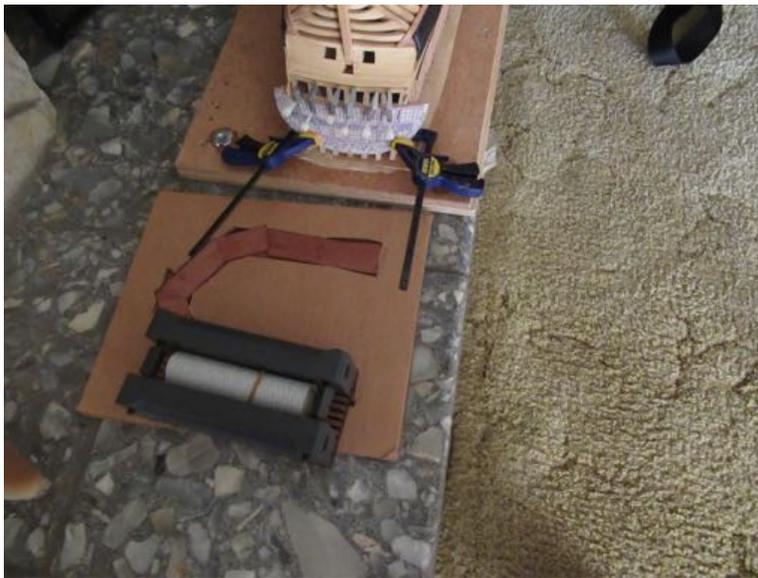
# Mayflower Group

By Don Dressel

**Old Salts in Port:** Steve Jones, John Bakker, Guy Bell, Tom Stellar, John Vanderneut, and Don Dressel.

**Ships in Port:** HMS Roebuck, American Frigate (tentatively *Congress*), HMS Beagle and *Royal Lewis*

The very informal and relaxed atmosphere at Johns house for the Mayflower Group meeting was once again very good with lots of fun and camaraderie experienced by those who attended. The usual drinks (coffee, soft drinks, water, etc.) along with the great cookies that John always has were enjoyed by all while discussions about everything nautical took place.



Don was first up to talk about his slow progress on the HMS *Roebuck* and the work on the stern that is one of the next steps in building the model. Don was fortunate enough to be able to enjoy the workmanship of Tony Devroude for his carvings on the stern and plans to send the stern “form” to Tony for that purpose. The figurehead has already been carved from boxwood primarily by Tony with a little help from Don, who had the good fortune to visit Tony a few

years ago at his home in Utah. Don also brought in a “sanding block” which can form a curved shape for the cant on decks – he had the “crew” help him in determining just how it worked.

Don also brought in a form jig that was used to make ships frames. This is primarily used in the Harold Hahn method of frame construction. For those interested, the details are fully explained (using the frame method of construction) in the [Nautical Research Journal, Spring 2019, Vol. 64, No.1](#) in the article *Modeling Hannah*.

Don also talked about making the beams and frame mold as well as his plans for continuing the planking of the outer hull and removing the model from the Hahn jig and building a regular construction “stand” to continue the work on the interior of the model.

John Vanderneut discussed his continuing efforts on building the American Frigate and the progress he is making, sometimes taking a few steps backward and then moving forward. John said he appreciates the advice he obtains from the Mayflower Group.



His gangways are now complete along with the railings and gratings. The cannon on the lower gun deck are fully rigged and some very nice cabin construction for the upper deck has been completed. It appears that the model is going to be very well done when once completed.



John Bakker is continuing progress on two of his models, the HMS *Beagle* and the *Royal Lewis*. On the *Beagle*, John is masting and rigging the model and is seeking advice on the rigging detail, which is being provided by members of the group. Much studying of the plans and details are involved. John also uses the Internet to see how other people are constructing and rigging the model. John is also thinking of making sails for the model but has not made up his mind yet. When John gets tired of working on the *Beagle*, he turns to his *Royal Lewis* to continue work on her.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **SMA Club Ship Model Plans**

Our Treasurer, Larry Van Es, has offered to take on the task of cataloging our Club's ship plans collection. This job has been attempted various times by others in the past with varying results. Larry promised to do his best. If you would like to help him with this endeavor, please contact him at: (714) 936-0389 or e-mail him at [larry@uswheel.com](mailto:larry@uswheel.com).

## **NRG Conference**

The registration form for the 2019 NRG Conference is now available for downloading from the NRG web site [www.thenauticalresearchguild.org](http://www.thenauticalresearchguild.org)

## **San Diego Ship Modelers Guild**

For those SMA members who may be interested, the San Diego Ship Modelers Guild now has their meetings on the *Berkley* on the second Tuesday of each month. Your editor and reporter routinely attend the meeting that is usually very informative and enlightening.

## **Spiling Presentation at Future SMA meeting**

For the interest of all SMA members there will be a second presentation on spiling planning at the next meeting, the second of four DVD's presented to your editor with the complements of Bob Filipowski, president of the Midwest Model Shipwrights.

## **New SMA Editor**

The president of the SMA made an announcement that Don Dressel is retiring as Editor of the SMA Newsletter after approximately 14 years as editor and an additional 19 years as assistant/article writer for the newsletter. Anyone who would like to fill this position should contact any of the SMA club officers.

## **Presentations**

The president of the SMA also announced that the officers are looking for members who may be interested in presenting a short presentation of ship model construction at a meeting. Again, contact any SMA officer if interested.



Dave Yotter's Continental Gondola *Philadelphia* 1776



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**NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 7:30 PM, HILLCREST PARK RED  
CROSS BUILDING**