



Building Virginia, Maine's First Ship

During our first Summer Shipbuilding Program with Regional School Unit #1 in 2010, local high school students learned historic shipbuilding skills while building the shallop *Jane Stevens*, an 18 foot 17th century fishing vessel

Master Shipwright Rob Stevens, shipbuilder and restoration expert who built the Snorri, an authentic Viking ship, led *Virginia's* keel laying ceremony in July of 2011. During the 2011 season, students and volunteers fabricated and raised four mid-ship frames and the ship's stem (bow). The transom was assembled and frames for a bow truss boatshed were built and raised and covered with greenhouse plastic.

Three local white pines were fashioned into the main yard, the main mast and the crowjack during the summer season 2012. Adult and student volunteers also worked on *Virginia's* frame construction.

Destroyed by tropical storm Sandy in October of 2012, *Virginia's* new boatshed was completed in December 2012 and work resumed with the setting of the sternpost and related deadwood.

During the 2013 season, the remaining ship frames and hawse timbers were cut, assembled, raised and faired for planking. The keelson and stem knee were fitted.

Plans for the 2014 season include hull planking and installing deck beams, knees and transom.



We welcome your support!

Maine's First Ship is a historically significant reconstruction project that is fueled by the generosity of our members and supporters, our partnerships within the local community, and the commitment of our *volunteers*.

As we build *Virginia*, our floating classroom, we are engaging students, visitors and volunteers in a broad range of opportunities to learn traditional skills. We teach practical ship design, and construction, including lofting, carpentry and related math, as well as ship preservation, operation and maintenance. These skills will help prepare participants to succeed in real life employment.

Maine's First Ship is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit dedicated to maintaining a welcoming environment for volunteers, students and visitors.

Become a member:

- Trunnel \$ 30.00
- Plank \$ 50.00
- Frame \$100.00



Business levels begin at \$100.00

To join, donate or volunteer contact us at:
Maine's First Ship

PO Box 231 Bath ME 04530

Bath Freight Shed 27 Commercial Street Bath Maine

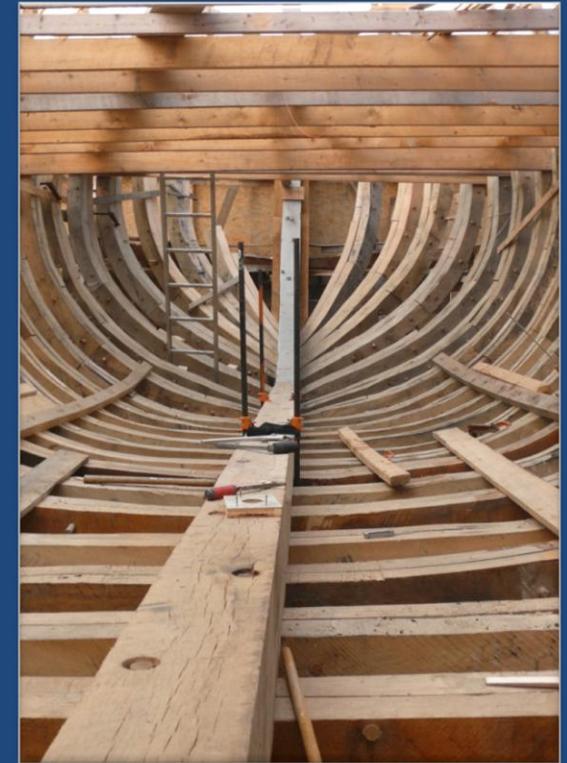
"When the flag of St. George is flying"

FMI visit us online at www.mfship.org

mfs1@myfairpoint.net

(207) 443-4242

Maine's First Ship **VIRGINIA**



*Building Maine's 1607 link to
American shipbuilding history*

Visit us at www.mfship.org

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Virginia on the Maine coast courtesy of Gil Ross

Purpose

Our purpose is to memorialize the efforts of those who built "Virginia", the first English ship built in North America to cross the Atlantic. Virginia was constructed by the Popham Colonists at Fort St. George in 1607-8, thirteen years before the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth. Popham Colony, the first English settlement north of Jamestown, was located near the mouth of the Kennebec River.

Seeking the Northwest Passage, gold, timber and other valuable commodities to benefit both England and the colony, these colonists included "one Digby of London." Assigned to produce a vessel for coastal exploration and trade, he built the pinnace Virginia having a burden (storage capacity) of "about some 30 tuns."

With an experienced crew of perhaps a half-dozen, plus many other colonists used to find, cut and haul timber to the site, Digby began Maine's long tradition of quality shipbuilding with 4000 ships built just on the Kennebec.

During her life time the "Virginia" crossed the Atlantic at least twice, carrying colonists from Maine to England in (the fall of) 1608. Then Captain Davies and Master Davies of the Popham Colony returned to the New World in (the summer of) 1609 to serve the Jamestown Colony.

Archeological studies of Fort St. George continue to unfold the story of these hardy colonists.



Vision

Maine's First Ship will build and operate a 51' 6" reconstruction of the pinnace Virginia to promote an understanding and appreciation of Maine's shipbuilding heritage and general history of this area and its peoples.

The highly visible reconstruction and operation of Virginia on the rivers and coast of Maine will inspire and inform both visitors and Maine students as they learn about the early shipbuilding history of Maine and our nation.

Public tours and lectures will be offered to teach participants the history of the Kennebec River—what Robert P. Tristram Coffin called the "cradle of an eloquent merchant marine that once covered the world." Visitors will have an opportunity to learn 17th century sailing techniques and to cruise to historic and ecologically significant sites in midcoast Maine. Our students will be trained to act as docents on the public sailings and school visits. Virginia will act as Maine's ambassador to other historic shipbuilding ports along the Atlantic east coast such as Jamestown, Plymouth and Mystic.



Virginia courtesy of Paul Cunningham



Mission

We will offer a range of educational programs, centered on historic ship design, construction, operation and maintenance skills designed to promote interest and participation in our local history and community. We will engage students of all ages in the "hands on history" reconstruction and operation of Virginia on the rivers and coast of Maine.

The reconstruction of Virginia as well as Maine's First Ship's education programs and visitor center are located at the historic 19th century Bath Freight Shed. Admission to our site, tours and programs are offered at no charge.

Year round hours are Saturdays and Wednesdays 9AM-3PM. Additional summer hours are Tuesday through Sunday mornings, and "when the flag of St. George is flying" over the boatshed.

Middle and high school students are invited to participate in two, three week boatbuilding courses, each summer. In addition, schools or civic groups may schedule one of our popular maritime history and shipbuilding lectures, followed by a group tour of Virginia by calling (207) 443-4242 or email:mfs1@myfairpoint.net.



