



Maine's First Ship

Newsletter



Spring 2016

You are invited to Celebrate MFS Visitor Center

Special points of interest:

- Visitor Center opening
- Summer program for students
- President's Message
- Planking
- Docents
- Davis Foundation grant



Newsletter produced
courtesy of the
Publicity
Committee:
Roger Barry, Lori Benson,
Allison Hepler

Thanks to a grant from the Maine Humanities Council, Maine's First Ship celebrate its updated Visitor Center at the Bath Freight Shed Saturday July 9 at 2 pm.

The Visitor Center design and construction has

been a remarkable collaboration of MFS volunteers with a variety of skills: Roger Barry, Lori Benson, Jeremy Blaiklock, John Bradford, Jay Coffey, Allison Hepler, Orman Hines, Jim Nelson, Thom Payne, George Race, & Robert Stevens. New

track lighting is being installed by Steve Vachon.

All are welcome for this brief program and stay for refreshments and see the latest progress on *Virginia*.

Student Summer Programs Begin July 11 & August 1

Maine's First Ship still has a few openings in its summer woodworking camp, more in Session II. Renamed Plank and Keel Woodworking Camp, the summer program is open to students entering grades 7 through 10. According to instructor George Sprague of Bath, "We offer students a chance to develop and hone woodworking skills related to wooden boatbuilding," including working on *Virginia* along-

side MFS's volunteer shipwrights.

Camp is held in the Bath Freight Shed in downtown Bath. There are two three-week summer sessions being offered: Session I is July 11-28 and Session II will be held August 1-18. Each session is Monday-Thursday 8 am until noon. Students in each session will get to build a half-hull model of *Virginia*, and construct a 12 foot Bevin's skiff.

Field trips to local woodworking and boat shops, and rowing on the Kennebec River are also included.

The programs are free. Interested students and parents should contact Maine's First Ship in its new office above J.R. Maxwell's, phone 443-4242, or email mfs1@myfairpoint.net. Students can download an application from the website, www.mfship.org.



President's Notes



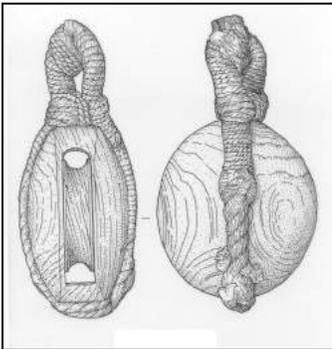
An onshore breeze has been keeping the boat shed cool enough to keep us working diligently on planking *Virginia*. If you get a chance to visit us this summer you will be able to see our newly renovated Visitors Center funded by a grant from the Maine Humanities Council. Many thanks go to all the volunteers who are working on our ship, the Visitor Center

and the docents who are staffing it. Everyday our docents and volunteers get a chance to meet people who are visiting Maine and eager to learn about the Popham Colony's major accomplishment, *Virginia*. Often, they are accompanied by friends who have visited before, wanting to show off Maine's connection to early colonial history. We are placing brochures at the State Tourist Offices, local business and other

venues to increase our visibility, which is growing every year. On July 11th our student program will be starting up with the building of Bevin's Skiffs under the guidance of shipwright George Sprague in the Freight Shed.

Fair winds and a following sea,
Orman

Local Company Woodex Supplies Rock Maple Sheaves for *Virginia*



Most of the many, many parts that will go into the making of *Virginia* will be built on-site by our construction team from raw materials. For some parts, however, we need a little help from our friends. Such is the case with a largely unseen but crucial component of the ship's rigging: the grooved wheels, known as

sheaves, that form the heart of the vessel's blocks (pulleys to landlubbers). A sheave, comprised of a round, hard wood disk with a groove cut in the edge to accept the rope, might look simple enough, but it requires specialized skills and tools to make. Happily for Maine's First Ship, Woodex was up to the task and ready to help.

Woodex is a Georgetown company, and since 1905 they have produced bearings (the part of an engine that supports and guides a turning shaft) out of rock maple impregnated with petrolatum wax. While this material has never to our knowledge been used for sheaves in blocks for sailing ships, every indication is that it will be ideal. Rock maple hard enough to serve as a bearing will certainly be hard enough to bear the strain of *Virginia*'s rigging. What's more, the manner in which the wood is treated keeps it permanently lubricated, a big advantage in block construction.

Dave Boucher, Production Manager at the em-

ployee-owned company, and the rest of the team there have been unfailingly generous with their time, materials and technical suggestions. Soon we look forward to the delivery of more than one hundred shiny new rock maple sheaves, and with those in hand, the crafting of *Virginia*'s blocks, and the rigging of Maine's First Ship, can begin in earnest.

For more on Woodex, visit their web site at [www.http://woodexbearing.com/](http://woodexbearing.com/).

Docents Needed for MFS Visitor Center this Summer



As we head full-tilt into the summer, volunteer docents are still needed to help with the Visitor Center. Over 4000 visitors came through last summer. Interest continues to run high in *Virginia* and her history and construction.

"The energy of docents really draws in visitors from far and wide," says Board member and docent Allison Hepler, "and anyone with an interest in history or shipbuilding or volunteering will make a great docent." The Visitor Center is open 6 days a week in the summer months, and schedules can be coordinated to accommodate anyone willing to volunteer.

Maine's First Ship Awarded Davis Family Foundation Grant



sets of replacement doors and transoms.

Maine's First Ship is an organization committed to reconstructing *Virginia*, a ship built at the mouth of the Kennebec, at Fort St. George, by English colonists in 1607-8. Fort St. George only lasted a year but the ship sailed back to England and became a re-supply ship for the

the 51' pinnacle along the Kennebec River behind the Bath Freight Shed on Commercial Street. "It's a real impetus to finish the planking," said Wood, "so we can begin the decking process." In the meantime, thanks to the Foundation, MFS can begin to purchase the materials.

Maine's First Ship has been awarded a grant from the Davis Family Foundation for the construction of *Virginia*, a ship being built in downtown Bath. The grant award of \$26,442 will pay for wood and fasteners needed to support the ship's deck.

"We are delighted," said Dan Wood of Woolwich, a Maine's First Ship board member and chief grant writer for the organization. "They awarded us the full amount that we requested, which will go toward wood materials like hackmatack knees and white oak beams, as well as fastenings we need." He noted that MFS already has decking, currently being stored by John Morse in Phippsburg.

Wood was quick to acknowledge the help of

Susan Smith of Phippsburg for her advice and feedback during the grant writing process. Smith has also helped identify other foundations that might be appropriate for Maine's First Ship's construction, education, and sailing plans.

MFS has received two grants previously from the Davis Family Foundation, which provides funding to educational, medical and cultural/arts organizations. Most recently, it awarded funds to the Bath Freight Shed Alliance to purchase and install three

colony at Jamestown, Virginia.

MFS laid the keel in 2011, finished framing last year, and has begun planking



Volunteers work hard, and show ingenuity



Crew members of the newly christened *Michael Monsoor* have been enormously helpful as *Virginia* volunteers.



Planking proceeds apace. At the Visitor Center, look for a new “dormer” in the plastic shed to allow better visibility from the Freight Shed.

A Model A from 1929, modified to lift heavy planks for the *Virginia*. Dick Forrest is at the wheel, with Paul Cunningham, and RB Omo readying planks for moving.





Maine's First Ship: Reconstructing the pinnacle *Virginia*

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Maine's First Ship

PO Box 231

Bath ME 04530

Ph: 207-443-4242

Visit *Virginia* at

27 Commercial Street

(on the water side of the

Bath Freight Shed)

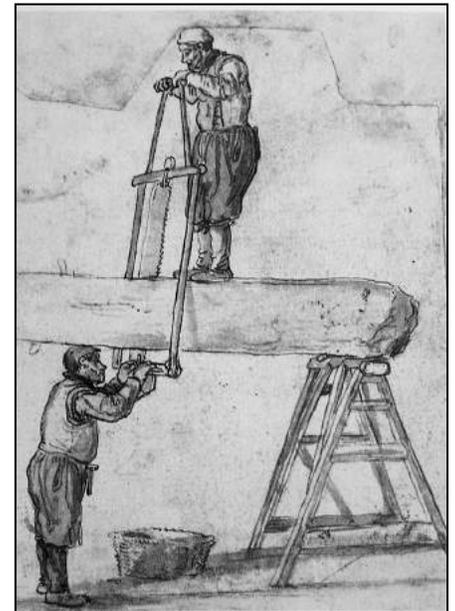
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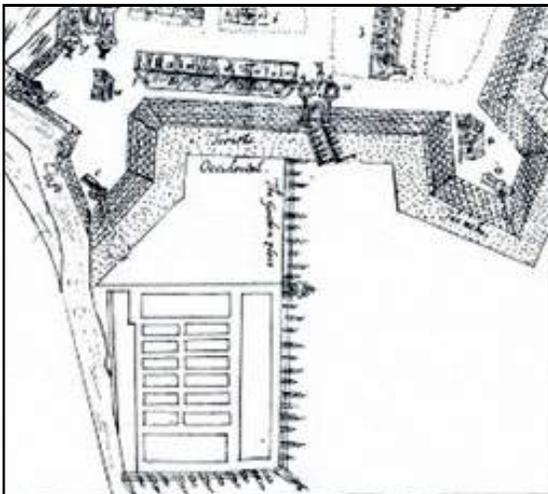
www.mfship.org



Special Thanks to Long-Time Business Partner, Big Barn Coffee



Special thanks to **Joanne Luneau** and **Letty Race** for constructing doublets and breeches for MFS volunteers in the **Colonial Pemaquid, encampment** July 30 and 31. MFS will bring *Jane Stevens* and a rigging demonstration.



1607-style Colonial Garden in the Planning Stage. Master Gardener Katherine Yu

has offered research and planning services to help construct a garden similar to what Fort St. George colonists may have planted. If interested, contact Merry Chapin, mchapin23@yahoo.com.

