



Maine's First Ship

Newsletter



Summer/Fall 2016

Third Annual Women's Shipbuilding Day Nov. 6

Special points of interest:

- Visitor Center opening
- Student-built skiff raffle
- President's Message
- Pemaquid gathering
- Visitors to MFS
- Monsoor crew volunteers

Newsletter produced
courtesy of the
Publicity
Committee:

Roger Barry, Lori Benson,
Allison Hepler



Join a group of other interested volunteers at Maine's First Ship's waterfront boatshed on Sunday, November 6, for the third annual Women's Shipbuilding Day in Bath.

While the original *Virginia* was built entirely by men, those involved with *Virginia* these days are looking to provide more opportunities for women to build the ship. "We enjoy this program," said MFS Volunteer Coordinator Jeremy Blaiklock of Arrowsic, "It's a great way to build MFS's volunteer base."

Shipwright Rob Stevens of Woolwich likes to tell visitors that Gail Smith, a participant in the first Women's Shipbuilding Day event, "is our best volunteer, but don't tell the guys that." This means showing up on Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout the year

to help build the ship. Smith, a retired EMT, hails from Topsham.

Also joining Stevens this year in this program is Isabella Pierson, a graduate of Rockland's Apprenticeship program. She is now a furniture maker, teaching woodworking and design at the Apprenticeship, the Center for Furniture Craftmanship, and the Steel House. In 2007, Pierson also participated, with Stevens, in building a spar for *Virginia* on the grounds of the Maine Maritime Museum.

Shipbuilding Day participants can expect a brief presentation on the background of *Virginia* and the colonists who built her. The rest of the day will be

Women's Shipbuilding Day



Presenters

Isabella Pierson and Rob Stevens

Isabella Pierson is a furniture maker in Rockland who teaches woodworking and design at The Apprenticeship, Center for Furniture Craftmanship, and The Steel House.

Rob Stevens, a Maine shipwright, has 25 years experience in the design and construction of historic vessels.

Sunday, November 6

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Join other volunteers at Maine's First Ship's waterfront boat shed for the third annual Women's Shipbuilding Day in Bath. Maine's First Ship is reconstructing the 50-foot pinnace *Virginia*, built by English colonists in 1607 at the mouth of the Kennebec River. Shipwright Rob Stevens will present an overview of *Virginia* before participants begin hands on shipbuilding activities.

Free of charge with no knowledge or experience required, tools supplied. Maine's First Ship is located on the river side of the Bath Freight Shed on Commercial Street in Bath, just north of the Route 1 Squamscott Bridge. For more information, contact Osmar Hines at 358-2419.

spent working on today's *Virginia*, a 51' pinnace. Currently, volunteers are planking the ship. Other work includes shaping one of the many spars needed to sail *Virginia*. Participants should come expecting to use hand and power tools, which will be provided.

"We're excited about doing this again," said Stevens. "It's a great day and we hope all who are interested in what building a boat is like will spend the day with us."

Women's Shipbuilding Day is Sunday, November 6 from 9-3.



President's Notes



As a volunteer & president of Maine's First Ship over the past several years I have been in the enviable position to observe the progress of *Virginia* from the strong ground laying days of the early board to the laying of the Keel in July 2011 and now with the installation of her planking *Virginia* has taken on the fulfilling lines of a ship capable of crossing the Atlantic.

As we cut each plank to shape with a saw and plane it to carefully fit the one above it there is the wonderful sense of accomplishment that a craftsman realizes from building something with our own hands. The thumping pulse of the locust trunnels being pounded into hard white oak planking through the frame and with the addition of a small wedge to each side they weld the pieces of "*Virginia*" into a living hull.

I think the vision of Maine's First Ship looks bright to fulfill our goal of reconstructing *Virginia*, bring the historic story of the Popham Colony to life, to sail her on the rivers and coast of Maine, enabling schools and the public to experience the early history of Maine and its remarkable shipbuilding history.

Orman E. Hines

Updated Visitor Center Exhibit Captures Local Attention This Summer

Visitors, volunteers, and supporters enjoyed Maine's First Ship's new exhibit space "opening" in July. Using an Infrastructure Grant from the Maine Humanities Council, MFS volunteers designed and built a more coordinated exhibit for visitors. "It's a great introduction to *Virginia*," said volunteer Roger Barry, who headed up the design team and created two large wall panels, one of which was a reproduction of Champlain's 1605 map of the Maine coast. The other was a life-size photograph of *Virginia*'s interior. "It really makes you feel like you're inside the ship," he said.

Volunteer Jim Nelson has created a rigging exhibit, and is working on rigging a sail to be hoisted aloft into the Freight Shed's ceiling.

Even WCSH joined in on the festivities and interviewed several volunteers. The reporter got back in time to produce and air a segment on the evening news.

In addition, volunteers designed and built 3 glass-top cabinets that hold artifacts similar to actual ones found at Fort St. George and tools related to the shipbuilding of the period

Project Director Lori Benson painted, organized, and updated the merchandise area. She incorporated a small part of a large canvas sail from the *Harvey Gamage* to give it a maritime "look."

Overall, said Benson, "it was a remarkable collaboration of MFS volunteers and neighbors who helped pull it all together." The exhibit serves as an introduction to the shipbuilding project, and "greet" visitors before they head outside to see the ship.

Visitors this fall and winter will continue to enjoy the exhibit on Saturdays when the Bath Farmers Market moves into the Freight Shed.



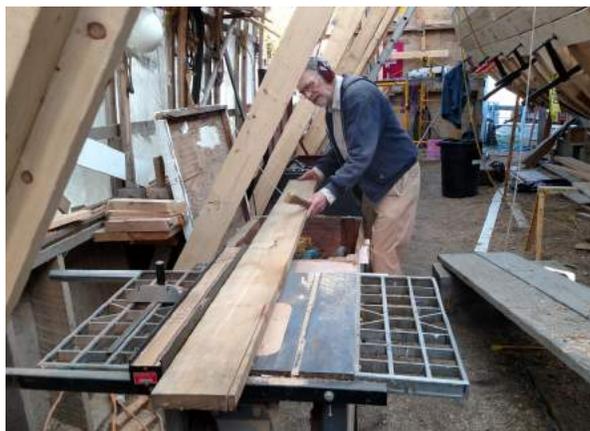
Rock Maple Sheaves Arrive from Woodex

Woodex, a Georgetown wood bearing company, has delivered 100 rock maple sheaves for use in *Virginia's*

rigging. With these, says head rigger and MFS volunteer Jim Nelson, he is ready to start production of the many blocks needed for the ship.



the time and want to know more about this aspect of the ship.



The shells to cover the sheaves will be made of ash donated by the City of Bath. Nelson has begun making patterns, and the parts will be cut on the bandsaw. He needs volunteer helpers, so come by if you can make

Photo above: MFS volunteer Steve Spaeth begins making blocks. Photo right: Woodex employees and MFS volunteer Jim Nelson display sheaves made by Woodex.

Own a skiff built by summer students



MFS is raffling off one of the 12' skiffs made by students this past summer. Tickets for the Bevin's skiff, designed by the Alexandria Seaport Foundation are \$5 each or 5 tickets for \$20. The drawing will be held at the Annual Gala Dinner next May.

The overall length of the skiff is 11'8", with a 4'6" beam, a maximum capacity of 450 pounds, and made of marine grade plywood.



Visitors Come From Far and Wide This Summer to See *Virginia*

Docent coordinator and Board member Lori Benson reports that, this year so far, there were visitors from 37 states, 14 countries and 4 provinces who signed the guestbook and indicated where they were from. A very loose count indicates a little over 3,000 visitors for the season.



How to Pound in a Trunnel? Teamwork!



Volunteer shipbuilders rely on each other to drive trunnels through the planking and into the frame. Volunteer crew from the BIW ship *Michael Monsoor* continue to provide much needed muscle and cooperation.



The secret to planking? Keep at it!

Topsides staging has come down because the planking can now be reached from the ground, as ship-building volunteers close in on the garboard (or bottom-most plank) of *Virginia*.





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

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Maine's First Ship
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 Ph: 207-443-4242
 Visit *Virginia* at
 27 Commercial Street
 (on the water side of the
 Bath Freight Shed)

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

MFS Volunteers Enjoy Themselves at Colonial Pemaquid



Volunteers Jeremy Blaiklock, Orman Hines, and Tony Chodorowski represented Maine's First Ship at the annual Colonial Pemaquid Encampment this summer. Volunteers Joanne Luneau and Letty Race constructed the period costumes for the "colonists" who brought the *Jane Stevens*, as well as a rigging exhibit made by volunteer Jim Nelson.



More White Oak Delivered

The wood came from Jim Ahrens and is being off-loaded by Higmo, a local sawyer. The rest of the crew are the volunteers.