



# Maine's First Ship

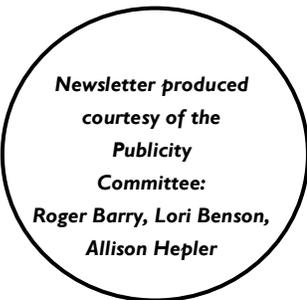
Newsletter



## Winter 2020

Special points of interest:

- Vessels of the Popham colony
- Jane Stevens Visitor Center hosts visitors this summer
- MFS in the news
- Rigging updates
- Updated website
- "Art of the Virginia" virtual exhibit



Keel donation from Morton-Kelly Trust. Thanks, Erik Jorgensen



## Virginia continues to make progress amid pandemic

Volunteers kept Maine's First Ship moving ahead this summer, despite covid-19's unrelenting ability to present challenges. Some volunteers took *Virginia* projects home, while others simply worked on long-neglected house chores.

After closing in April, we re-opened the boat shed in June two days a week with safety precautions such as hand sanitizer, masks, and social distancing.

As numbers of positive covid-19 cases across Maine rose in the

fall, we decided to divide volunteers who were still willing to work on the ship into "pods" of two or three and spread out the work across 5 days a week.

As a result, the last piece of lead keel is being hung by Charlie and Jim A.

As you can see in the photos below, the deck is finished and Gail, Elise, Jeremy, and Reg are now caulking and paying the deck. The caulking is tarred hemp, the same material that the original builders would have used. Orman, our *Oliver Twist*, has been rolling the oakum.

Paul C. and Paul K. are constructing the bulwarks, and Dana and Bruce are gathering materials to install the engine and its accessory parts.

Outside, Fred is working on the windlass drum, while Jim P. is cutting decorative pieces for the transom.

Dan Wood has been overseeing the dock construction.

Riggers have been so productive they are taking a few weeks off.

You'll see photos of all the progress inside!



DECK — BEFORE (L) AND AFTER (Below)



## President's Notes



Still an amazing endeavor . . .

Even as we are unable to come together this year we still have a lot to give thanks for at MFS, especially to our family of friends, staff, board, and volunteers. For me it has been not only a lesson in ship-building and history, but the meeting of people from around America and the world, who

have been enthralled by our building of Virginia. Also to me it has been amazing to work together with so many different people to bring Virginia to realization, and I give thanks to all of you.

Stay safe,

- Orman



## Jane Stevens Visitor Center hosts visitors this summer

The Jane Stevens Visitor Center in the Bath Freight Shed opened in Mid-July for visitors from near and far. "We were glad to be open five days a week," said Volunteer and Board member Dorsey Harrison. The Center remained open until October 11 and then twice a week until November 9, when the increase in COVID-19 cases across Maine caused a complete closure for the Winter. Tours are available by appointment.

Volunteers trained for their docent work via Zoom, and made adjustments to space inside the Freight Shed to protect volunteers and guests. These included a physical

plastic barrier at the desk, a hand washing station at the door to the boat shed, hand sanitizer by the check in, separate holders for clean versus used pens, and disposable masks available free of charge. Dorsey added that "we also implemented a waiting area on the deck so only one group was touring the facility and boat at a time and engaged in enhanced cleaning."



Volunteer docents Allison Hepler and Rob Stevens loved their weekly "tour of duty" at the Freight



Shed: "We met visitors from all across the country who had come to Maine for an extended stay. We also re-acquainted locals with the progress on the ship."

# MFS riggers reflect on how rigging differs from ship construction

By Jim Nelson



*Virginia's* rigging continues apace, though I find myself reflecting on how very different the process of rigging the ship is from building it, and how that difference makes the progress that's been made on rigging much less visible than that of the ship itself.

A ship is built, literally, from the ground up: the keel is laid, frames are built and put in place, planking is fastened on, decks are put down. The hull is completed and then the smaller, finer aspects of the shipwright's art at-

tended to. The rigging, however, is done in pretty much the opposite order.

For several years now we've been working on the details: building the blocks, or pulleys, that are a major part of the rigging, making and attaching the rope "strops" — the rope bands that will hold the blocks in place, each one different and specially made for its purpose — measuring and cutting the heavy standing



rigging that will hold the masts up. The result of our efforts appears to be just a great jumble of sundry gear.

But now as we finish building those components and start to fit them to the spars, all those disparate parts start coming together as a functioning system.



Sails are "bent" or attached, and the rigging that will control them set in place. Finally, when the ship emerges from the boathouse, all this rigging will be set up where it ultimately belongs. With *Virginia* in the water, after the shipwrights have seen all their efforts come together, it will be time for the rigging to come together as well. From the jumble of sundry gear it will all turn into the lofty and complex system of spars, ropes and sails which will drive our ship before the wind.

I'm pleased to report we are well on our way.



# Vessels of the Popham Colony: The *Richard* of Plymouth and Sir John Popham's ship, 1606

By Rob Stevens

In 1582, the English with John Hawkins and Walter Raleigh were active exploiting the Western Hemisphere harassing the Spanish by smuggling, slaving, and piracy.

The undeclared Anglo-Spanish War lasted from 1585 to 1604 with fighting between Catholics and Protestants in Europe and English piracy in the West Indies. Many of the people involved in these battles went on to be involved in the exploration and colonization attempts of Newfoundland, "Virginia", and Guiana.

At the same time Basque, English, French, Dutch, and Swedish fishermen had been coming to the "Western Ocean" for decades. John Smith writes in 1614 that by 1600 there were 200 European vessels and 10,000 men and boys involved in the fisheries. The *Richard* of Plymouth was the first vessel sent by Sir John Popham, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, and others of the West Country to settle the Seconde Colonie in Northern Virginia. The *Richard* set forth from Plymouth August 12, 1606, four months before the Firste Colonie sailed for what would become Jamestown. All we know is she was a "Small ship of the burthen of 55 Tunnes or there-about." My estimate is she would be about 63 feet on deck. She carried "29 Englishmen and 2 of the 5 Savages, Mannido and Assacomouit," kidnapped by Captain

George Waymouth the previous year. The Captain was Henry Challons, who had made three previous trips to "Virginia." The Master was Nicholas Hines and the Pilot was John Stoneman who had been to Northern Virginia the year before with George Waymouth when the 5 Indians, the Mawooshon 5, were kidnapped. Whatever the purpose of kidnapping the Indians was, they were captured before there was a Virginia Charter. Sirs Popham and Gorges came into possession of them and it seems planned on using them as intermediaries between the English and the Indians.

The purpose of the voyage was "if any good occasion were offered, to leave as many men as wee could spare in the Country. Being victualled for 11 or 12 months." The *Richard* sailed to the Canary Islands 28°40'N, August 31 but the best they could make with contrary winds was the Antilles at 14°20'N, mid-October. Heading north they rescued Father Blasius from the Ile of Dominica where upon pain of death he taught the Indians how to make sails and rig them in their canoes. Heading north through Spanish-controlled waters, on November 10, at 27°N, likely north of the Bahamas, the Spanish captured the *Richard*

and, it appears, killed one crew member.

The crew was taken to Spain and imprisoned. Some escaped, one was murdered and one died of the Flux. The pilot Stoneham was offered great rewards for information about "Virginia" for which he refused and escaped. When Stoneham escaped there were 17 men still held by the Spanish. The Spanish used various methods to try to enlist the Indians. In August 1608 the Spanish Council of State sentenced the remaining crew to the galleys.

About two months after the *Richard* sailed, Sir John Popham sent a second vessel to meet up with the *Richard* and bring more supplies. The Captain was Thomas Hanham and the Master was Martin Pring. Nahanada, another one of the Indians kidnapped by Captain Waymouth the previous year, was brought back to Pemaquid where he would meet the Popham colonists the next year. The second vessel arrived in November, and after 6 weeks of waiting for the *Richard* and exploring more of the coast, it returned to England. Soon after, the Popham colonists set sail.

(Continued on next page)

## Vessels of the Popham Colony . . . . . (Continued)

### ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON THE VESSELS:

#### The **RICHARD** of Plymouth

55 tuns or thereabouts captured by Spanish November 10, 1606, Spanish prize crew could not make her sail well, so they took back onboard two English sailors, sank in Guadalquivir River, Spain

**Crew-** 29 Englishmen and two kidnapped Indians

**Captain** - Henry Challons Gentleman, of Stonehouse, Devonshire born before 1580, died before 1620, Escaped from Spain before May 1608, made 3 previous voyages to "Virginia."

**Master** – Nicholas Hine (or Hinds or Haines) of Cockingham, near Dartmouth, escaped Spain to England before March 13, 1607.

**Pilot-** John Stoneman of Plimouth, Had gone on Waymouth's 1605 voyage. Ended up piloting the Spanish ship, **Peter of Sivill**, Captain Andreas Barbear, 180 tons, that captured the **Richard** after the Spanish pilot got lost. Escaped from Spain before November 1607. Captain Challons and 16 men still held captive when Stoneman escapes.

#### **Crew**

- James Stoneman – John Stoneman's brother, escaped with Stoneman

- Master Thomas Saint John-escaped with Stoneman

- Mannido - Indian kidnapped by Waymouth 1605, prisoner in Spain, lost to history.

- Assacomouit - Indian kid-

napped by Waymouth 1605. Severely wounded when captured by the Spanish. Manages to return to England. Sails to Martha's Vineyard 1614 with Captain Hobson and Epenow, a Nauset taken by Captains Harlow and Hobson in 1611. Lost from history after Epenow escapes at Martha's Vineyard.

- Master Daniel Tucker (1575-1625) – Cape Merchant [treasurer, factor], on the Spanish ship that missed Spain, ended up in Bordeaux, France, arrested and seized the Spanish ship and cargo. Ship owned in St. Malo, Captain Alphonse Camache. returned to England, total of 4 Englishmen on this Spanish ship in France. 1608- went as cape merchant for 2<sup>nd</sup> Jamestown Supply. 1618- appointed 2<sup>nd</sup> Governor of Bermuda

- Pierce Gliddon- Spanish ship missed Spain, ended up in Bordeaux, France

- John Walrond – Steward

- William Stone – (Ship?) Carpenter

- Robert Cooke of London, Lutheran, died of the flux in Spanish prison

- Nathaniel Hunfrie – Boatswain murdered in Spanish prison, murderer hanged.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> VESSEL

Around two months after the **Richard** sails Sir John Popham sends a second vessel, late September, Master Martin Pring, to meet the **Richard** at Pemaquid, Maine. Not finding the **Richard**, Hanham and Pring map the coast for six weeks and return to Eng-

land around February 1607. Sir Gorges feels this is the best map yet of "Virginia."

**Captain** – Thomas Hanham, 1576- 1652, grandson of Sir John Popham, investor in the Plymouth Company

**Master** – Martin Pring, 1580-1626, at the age of 23, 1603 was the captain of a 6 month voyage exploring "Northern Virginia". 1604 sailed to Guiana. Worked for the East India Company for years. Then worked for the Virginia Company.

**Crew** – Nahanada – Indian kidnapped by Waymouth 1605. No mention of this but must have been returned to Pemaquid on this voyage.

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

# “Art of the *Virginia*” virtual exhibit

Maine's First Ship has been awarded a grant to launch its first virtual art exhibit, *Art of the Virginia*. Originally planned for Maine's bicentennial, this exhibit will include paintings, drawings, maps, as well as rigging and other ship components.

According to MFS Vice

President Lori Benson, the exhibit will also explore the meanings of the images and also incorporate the historical and cultural context of the images and artifacts.

“The pandemic forced us to reconsider in-person exhibits, in addition to delaying *Virginia's* launch until 2021,” said Lori. This virtual art exhibit allows MFS to provide a more multi-layered labeling of the images, incorporating a variety of voices, she said.

Lori hopes this grant will allow MFS to mount this exhibit as the first of several, eventually producing a rotating display of images and commentary. Planning began in

October, with scholars of colonial and Wabanaki history offering their

expertise on the items, which will be part of the exhibit. The *Art of the Virginia* opens in mid-January.

The Maine Humanities Council's decision to award funding to MFS brings to three the number of grants that MFS has received from this non-profit. The first, in 2015, allowed MFS to build its Visitor Center inside the Bath Freight Shed, a 19<sup>th</sup> century railroad building on Commercial Street. *Virginia* is being built

behind the Freight Shed.

The second grant from Maine Humanities Council came in June, and allowed MFS to offset some of its revenue losses due to covid-19. This funding has been provided by the Maine Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan of 2020.

(Photo left: Mouse mainstay, made of canvas, seine twine, and rope.)



## MFS wreaths for charity

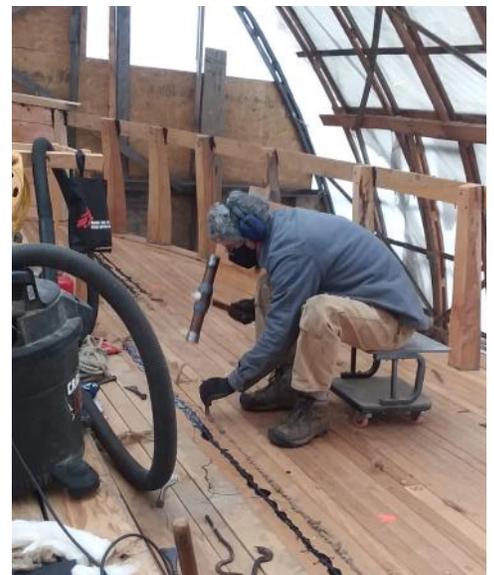
Maine's First Ship donated a wreath to the Midcoast Tree Festival that was auctioned off for charity. The fancy ropework ornaments (the round ones are mostly a knot known as a "monkey's fist", the star-shaped ones are appropriately called "star knots") were crafted by riggers David Bellows, Mike Foster, Bob Ireland and Jim Nelson. The wreath itself was decorated by Lisa Nelson, and not the yahoo riggers, which is why it turned out so well.

# Virginia deck caulking, bulwarks, keel, windlass, rudder



Photos clockwise, starting in upper left: Paul C., Mark, and Fred pound *Virginia*'s rudder pieces into submission, pitch ladle built by Jim Begin (who has also made our boring bars), Orman and Jim P. roll oakum, Jeremy caulks oakum into the deck seams, Eloise does the same plus Gail pays the seams with pitch, and Joe adds planks to the bulwarks.

Photo on page 8: Charlie and Jim A. hang the last piece of the lead keel!





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

# MFS website updated

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)

**Like us on  
Facebook**  
**Keep up with our  
progress on the web**  
[www.mfship.org](http://www.mfship.org)



The MFS Visitor Center is closed this winter, but you can keep track of what is happening by visiting us virtually at the [mfship.org](http://mfship.org) website. By selecting one of the image buttons you can get information about MFS, about the reconstruction of *Virginia*, about the history of the Popham Colony, or you can take a virtual tour of the Bath Freight Shed and *Virginia* in the boat-house. You can also see recent posts from the MFS facebook page. All of the pages are full of pictures. Here are a few of the things to try out:



Selecting the MFS logo gets you to the **About Us** page. When there, **Newsletters** allows you to see previous versions of the MFS newsletter. **Videos** shows a set of videos about

MFS; you can also select the youtube icon in the header.

**Current Status** shows a timeline in text and pictures of the reconstruction of *Virginia* over the last year. This is frequently updated with new pictures. Select one of the pictures to get a closer view.

**History** shows a number of articles about the Popham Colony and the original *Virginia*. Take a look at **Before Popham** for some context for the Popham Colony, and **Original Documents** to read some of the contemporary sources.

**Virtual Tour** is a 3D interactive tour of the Bath Freight Shed including the rigging and Visitor Center, and of *Virginia* in the boathouse. That page also has a button to show a 3D interactive tour of Bath from above in all of its fall glory. If you have problems running these, get a young person to help you; both of you will enjoy it.

## MFS in Maine Island Trail newsletter

Thanks to volunteer Jim Parmentier for his recent article on *Virginia*, which appeared in the Maine Island Trail Association newsletter! [mita.org](http://mita.org)



## Don't forget to donate to MFS

Even if you have not received an Annual Appeal letter from Maine's First Ship, we hope you will remember *Virginia*. Your donations have made it possible for us to purchase an engine, the lead keel, oakum and pitch, a dock, and wood — so much wood! We are grateful for your support as we look forward to a 2021 launch.

