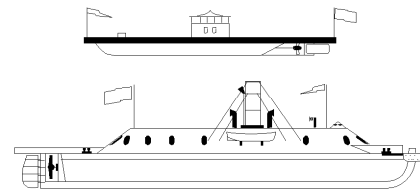


# Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

# Logbook



No. 139

JANURARY, 1998

## FROM THE PILOTHOUSE



**Bring-A-Model-Night, January 9**—Everyone is invited and encouraged to bring a model—or two or three!—for show and discussion. With little business in sight, and a big room, we will have plenty of time and plenty of tables, so let's have plenty to show as well.

**Election Time**—Where has this year gone?! The Bylaws provide that nominations for Skipper, Mate, Clerk and Purser be made in January for election of new officers in February. Get your ideas lined up. Current officers are all eligible for re-election. Editor and Historian are appointed officers.

**Speaking of the Historian**—Chuck Reynolds, who has held this post and taken conscientious care of the Society's library and other property for a couple of years, has requested relief. It does not take much time, but does need some spare space at your disposal; ask Chuck how much. A volunteer, or someone who will accept the appointment, will be greatly welcomed!

**And a Final Note on the Auction**—Our redistribution of ship-modeling wealth was completed when the last twenty-one lots, plus two that were never cataloged, were disposed of in sometimes-spirited open bidding at the December meeting (and some real bargains: notably the *Jefferson Davis* kit at \$60!). An additional \$262 was generated, bringing us very close to tripling the initial investment.

—Alan Frazer

## NOTICE TO MARINERS

The 1998 "Wooden Boat Show" will be at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels MD on June 26-28, 1998. This is the first time the "Wooden Boat Show" has been outside of the New England area. Advance three-day tickets will be available from "WoodenBoat" until June 12, 1998 at \$15.00 for adults.

Call "WoodenBoat" at 800-273-7447 for advance tickets.

Hugh Melton

## MYSTERY PHOTO

Welcome to "Mystery Photo." Here, Bill Clarke asks the burning question, "What Ship Is It?" Each month a photograph will appear in the *Logbook* asking the reader to identify a ship, or maybe to provide details on a specific scene or event. Tell us what you can about the photograph and, perhaps, the story behind the photograph as well. The idea is to learn to use photographs as primary reference sources. Bill invites everyone to participate in identifying these images and to contribute their own mystery photograph, if they wish. I will collate, tabulate, and masticate all information and responses, and present the aggregate to the readership in the next newsletter. Help solve the mystery!

The fifth Mystery Photo, *Logbook* No. 138, should be easy to identify -- at least by class, anyway! This photograph shows a vessel from the pre-dreadnought era, moving at moderate speed through a calm sea. Heavy smoke from coal fired boilers' rolls from the stacks and blows off to starboard by a brisk cross wind. Some of the features of this vessel appears crude by modern day standards. They reflect the thinking in vogue at the time when naval warship design was making its transition from wood to steel and sail to steam. Many of the fittings in use reflect the technology and manufacturing capabilities available then. Machinery was increasing being used to move larger and heavier fittings, replacing brute force. In this vessel, the most notable features are the round, superposed turrets with the too large gun ports, the row of casemated secondary guns, and heavy "military" masts. Notice the small amount of freeboard -- this must have been a very wet ship in unprotected waters. Let's see what we can learn from the photograph.

This photograph is rich with period detail, as is noted by looking from the ram bow to the stern. Notice the empty jack staff, as is customary for a ship underway. This ship carries twin anchor handling davits with unrigged triple blocks hanging from eyebolts. An old-fashioned anchor, lashed to the billboard, has its chain extending forward along the hull to the hawse opening. Several pairs of boat davits line the forecastle deck edge; the falls from the forward pair are secured to pads near the waterline. run out between them is a jacobs ladder. Does this indicate that that boat is away? Many sailors appear to mill about on deck. What do you suppose

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they are doing? Awning stanchions fitted into sockets below the deck edge line the deck -- this allows them to swing away when the ship clears for action. Some staging, with a sailor standing on it, hangs below the first two casemated guns. Casemate doors hang below their openings. The open bridge and bridge wings are fitted with canvas dodgers. The wood paneled bridge, which is standard for the time, is stained a rich dark mahogany in color. The armored conning tower, just below, has viewing slits at the top and just sees over the 8-inch turret. Heavy, electric powered boat cranes flank either end of the boat deck and they mirror a pair on the starboard side. Several ship's boats rest in cradles on the boat skid beams that straddle the upper deck. The forward of the two is a steam powered launch fitted with a canvas awning. Two searchlights sit atop the open bridge; another pair rest on platforms on the main mast. Maxim-Nordenfeldt automatic 1-pounders sit, two to a tub, in each of the lower fighting tops on the masts. What appear to be 30-caliber machine guns rest in the upper fighting tops. Each pole mast carries one cross yard and bracing of four wire rope stays secured with turnbuckles to outriggers at their lower end. What is the purpose behind the black cones at either end of the foreyard? A single burgee flies from the starboard side of the foreyard. Notice the other rigging associated with the masts and yards. A string of running lights rises to an outrigger on each mast. Looking carefully, you can see numerous ventilators spotted throughout the superstructure and fore deck. Does the paint scheme give a clue to the name of the vessel or the time frame of this photograph? though not well reproduced, the bow ornament is our best clue as to the name of this particular ship. Are there any features in the background that provide clues to the location of this image?

What conclusions can we draw from these clues? This ship is obviously a US Navy, pre-dreadnought battleship, as no other navy experimented with superposed turrets. A quick check of Reilly and Scheina's book *American Battleships 1886-1923* shows the vessel to be one of two built as the *Kearsarge* class, commissioned in 1900. One later class of battleship had the superposed turret design, the *Virginia* class, but they had three smoke stacks and a flat sloping face to the stacked turret. This class of battleship was the last fitted with the cheesebox style turret. In reality the turret is oval not round, as in the previous classes, but the shape is not discernible in any published photographs. Many critics, of the time, correctly criticized the too large gun port openings. Reilly and Scheina state in *American Battleships 1886-1923* that a new design 13-inch main caliber gun, of improved design and greater weight, required moving the mounting point some 14 inches further back from the turret ports than the guns in earlier turrets. In the next class of battleship, the Navy modified the turret design reducing the gun port opening in size. This change flattened and sloped the forward face of the turret and the turret roof. The utility of the secondary 8-inch armament suffered by using the same turret training machinery as the primary guns. The casemated 5-inch gun deck was a throwback to earlier thinking, giving the ship a large

relatively unprotected broadside armament. A hit to this area could easily wreck many guns. Other armament, including two torpedo tubes, was included to suit the many missions these vessels were expected to accomplish.

Let's see what the membership found out about this photograph. Let me begin by saying that I found this photograph reproduced on page 11 of Alden's book *The American Steel Navy*. Sadly, the photograph is uncaptioned, but photo credit and source are given as Frank H. Childs, National Archives. Bob Comet called, the night before the December meeting, and gave his assessment of the photograph. Citing Reilly and Scheina's book *American Battleships 1886-1923*, he was the first to identify the class but not the actual vessel represented in the photograph. Bob went on to say that these two vessels were more alike than sister ships from other classes. In fact, Henry Schekulin, Alan Frazer and your tireless scribe agree with Bob. We initially narrowed the time frame for the photograph from 1900 to 1909, when cage masts were installed. Alan then narrowed that to three years (1900-1903) by drawing attention to changes in the number and arrangement of the yardarms and to changes in paint schemes. Alan stated that as built the *Kearsarge* class were each fitted with two yardarms. This was later reduced to one yardarm and remained at one yardarm when the heights of the masts were increased. He said this photograph shows the vessel in the middle mast configuration. His comments on color scheme are equally good. Alan attempted to identify the time frame if not the actual vessel by studying the amount of buff paint on the upperworks of these two battleships. What Alan determined, however, was that the amount of buff paint increased with each subsequent repainting. Early photographs of these ships show the buff color extending only to the stacks, military masts, and boat cranes. Later photographs show the line of buff color extending down to the center of the main turret. Alan's approach to the problem shows the type of research and thinking necessary to correctly solve these photographic mysteries, and echoes what Bill Clarke always says about modeling the steel navy -- pick a day!

Normally, it is at this point that I ask "What does Bill have to say about the photograph?" Sadly, we may never know, as he is now (safely?) in the clutches of the his British pals. My reminder to him for his portion of the column produced this remark, "You are free to write what you wish about me, I will be across the pond!" This begs the question, "Does he even know what ship it is?"

Subsequent to writing this column, I had the opportunity to travel to the National Archives where I found this photograph cataloged in record group 19-N, numbered 19-N-11913, and labeled *Kearsarge*.

Kudos, Bob Comet, Henry Schekulin, Alan Frazer.

John Cheevers

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## MINUTES



The December meeting was rung to order at 2000 hours by the skipper.

Correction: the word response was substituted for reproduction in Bill Clarke's newsletter article.

There was no treasurer's report.

The meeting opened with a discussion about what to do with material that may be left over from the auction. It was agreed by all that there would be no material left from the auction. Allen then passed the sign-up sheet for the monthly meetings. October is still open. Alan mentioned that there was a photo exhibition at

the Mariners Museum. Alan asked if there was someone who would be willing to take the position of club historian. It would require room for several bookcases. Jim McCurdy said that he would contact Chuck Reynolds to view our archives and ascertain if he had sufficient storage facilities. Bill Clarke noted that a model symposium to be held at the Mariners Museum was reported in the Washington club's newsletter and that several members of our society would be participating (details can be found on the NRG homepage). Tom Saunders asked if it was too early to consider plans for the year 2000 NRG conference. Alan then asked Bill Clarke if he would be willing to work on the conference committee. Bill replied in the affirmative. Jim McCurdy and Jack Bobbitt volunteered to work with Bill and the nucleus of the conference committee was appointed. Tom Saunders presented a letter from a Mr. David Taylor looking for a model builder wanting to build a model of the *Trenton* or *Ossipee* on commission. The auction was then conducted. All items were sold.

Show & Tell: Jack Bobbitt showed his model of the *Wild Goose*. He said that the indexing pins for the removable pilot house were made of brass not wood. John Cheevers showed his model of a 39' Mariner. Jack Bobbitt talked about bending maple using a 50/50 mixture of ammonia and hot water. The meeting was adjourned.



## MYSTERY PHOTO

Contact John Cheevers by mail or telephone if you know what it is

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## NOTABLE EVENTS

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### DECEMBER

12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Jack Bobbitt

### JANUARY

9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Alan Frazer

### FEBURARY

13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: hoast John Cheevers

### MARCH

13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Greg Harrington

20-22 NRG & Mariners Museum Ship Model Building Symposium, Mariners Museum

### APRIL

10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Ulrich Guenther

### MAY

8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Southside Bunch

### JUNE

12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Bill Clarke

26-28 "Wooden Boat Show", St. Michaels Md.

### JULY

10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host David Tagg

### AUGUST

14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Williamsburg AARP

### SEPTEMBER

11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Dean Sword

24-27 NRG Conference, Morristown NJ

### OCTOBER

9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: TBA

### NOVEMBER

13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Heinz Schiller

### DECEMBER

11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host Jack Bobbitt

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## WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL




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Skipper:	Alan Frazer	(757) 865-7300
1 <sup>st</sup> Mate:	Joe McCleary	(757) 253-1802
Purser:	Bob Comet	(757) 934-1279
Clerk:	Tom Saunders	(757) 850-0580
Historian:	Chuck Reynolds	(757) 548-0844
Editors:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
	Bill Clarke	(757) 868-6809
	Tom Saunders	(757)-850-0580

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## Next Meeting

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**Date and Time:** Friday, January 9, 2000 Hours

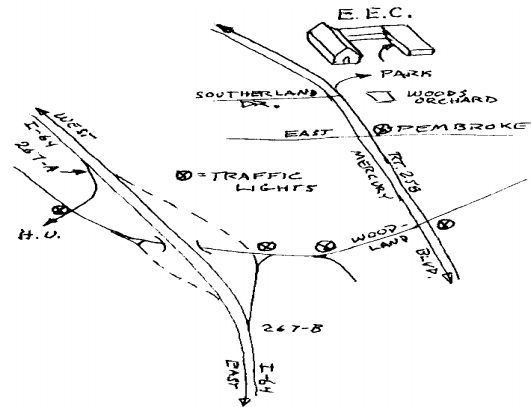
**Location:** Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 179 East Mercury Blvd., Hampton. Parish Hall open by 1930 Hrs., phone after that time, 723-8144.

**Hosts:** Alan Frazer (865-7300) and Tom Saunders (850-0580). Please call either one by Wednesday to let them know you are coming.

**Directions:**

**From Newport News and West, or from I-664,** take I-64 East to Exit 267-A, Settlers Landing Road/Hampton University. Left at light, going under 64, where Settlers Landing becomes Woodland Road. (\*) Stay in left lane, about 4/10 mile; turn left at light, Rt. 258 (East Mercury Blvd.). Continue about one mile to brick church on right, just past Woods Orchard, which is opposite Southerland Drive. Parish Hall entrance in right wing.

**From Norfolk,** I-64 West through Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel to Exit 267-B, Woodland Road (2nd Hampton exit). Right at light, bottom of ramp, and follow directions from (\*) above.




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## THANKS

The Members would like to thank Jack and Jeanne Bobbitt for their hospitality in hosting the December meeting.