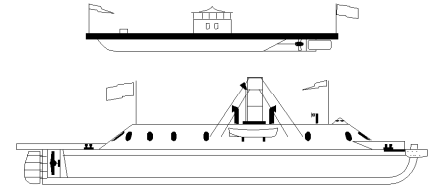


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 168

<http://members.xoom.com/>

JUNE, 2000

MINUTES



5-12-00

Host: Bill Clarke

Guest: Mark Heilenday, 3rd meeting

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper at 2010 hours.

Corrections to the minutes: Under old business, since Bill Clarke was not at the April meeting, he did not make the comment about the banquet menu being a trial balloon for the NRG Conference.

A purser's report was given. John Cheevers noted that monies had been dispersed for deposits for activities related to the NRG conference. The dues for the HRSMS membership in the NRG were paid.

Following the traditional ritual, a vote was held and Mark Heilenday was admitted to the HRSMS. Welcome aboard, Mark.

Old Business: There was discussion of the NRG Conference. It was noted that the lunch on Saturday is not priced yet. The committee will decide the price structure. The harbor cruise on Friday has a capacity of 137. Registration is currently scheduled for 4-8 PM on Thursday. No vendors have yet committed to the conference.

New Business: The Mariners' Museum has leased a boat for the Parade of Sail. Bill Peach said that he has room for 10 people on his boat. Greg Harrington said that he received notice of Toronto 2000 Model Boat Exhibition, to be held at The Pier: Toronto's Waterfront Museum. He also received an inquiry on RC combat fleets in the area. The consensus was to direct the question to the Elite Fleet. Dave Baker showed the book The Naval Institutes Guide to the Combat Fleets of the World, 2000 -2001. Joe McCleary presented a naval book list, a copy of Naval History Magazine and a price list for paper models. John Cheevers showed brochures for Disney World, Majic Kingdom and a paper model.

The meeting was adjourned and the thundering herd fell upon the strawberries like vultures that had not seen a carcass in a month.

Clerk



Mystery Photo



Welcome to Mystery Photo, *Logbook* No. 167. This month, Bill ran a super picture for the Mystery Photo and Dave Baker, Bob Comet, Bob Krumpen, Rod Napier, and Joe McCleary all narrowed the identification to one of three *Yorktown*-class gunboats. While they all provided interesting bits for the story, they tended to disagree as to the particular member of the class; Dave Baker and Joe McCleary think she is *Concord*, while Bob Comet vascillated between *Concord* or *Bennington* and eventually chose *Bennington*. Bob Krumpen and Rob Napier made no specific choice. The question is; who is correct? Read on and we'll see.

Usually there is one attribute on any ship that identifies it above all others. The trick is to find it. This is just the case with our mystery vessel. In fact, there are two attributes to look for, but only one is genuine enough to nail the identification. Let's discuss the unique markings for this class.

The three *Yorktown*'s along with *Dolphin* were the first of the Steel Navy's gunboats (*Dolphin* was originally built and classified a dispatch vessel.) As John Alden says in *The American Steel Navy (ASN)*, on page 39: "As the Steel Navy's counterpart to the old wooden gunboat and steam sloop, [they] were designed to cruise for long periods on distant

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station, to be inexpensive to operate, and to be formidable enough to deal with native uprisings and with minor incidents provoked by third- and fourth-rate nations.” You see this influence in the shape of the *Yorktown’s* hull, the heavy auxiliary sail plan, and a heavier than usual armament—six 6-inch rifles verses 4 & 5-inch rifles on later gunboats. I am reminded of the accuracy of Alden’s comment when I compare *Yorktown’s* hull form with that of *Kearsarge* by studying photographs of each. (I used the launch photo of *Yorktown* in *ASN*, pp-38, and a photo of the U.S. Navy model of *Kearsarge* from the cover of the *Nautical Research Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 1.) The similarity in their appearance was amazing, both being three masted, well-decked vessels. With steel shipbuilding being a new science, we see that these ships were mere extensions of conventional wooden ship construction and thinking.

Looking for the class particulars and dimensions, Joe McCleary captures them best: “USS *Concord* (PG-3), the second ship to bear that name, was launched on March 8, 1890 at N. F. Palmer, Jr. and Co, shipyard in Chester, PA and commissioned on February 14, 1891. She was 244 feet long, with a beam of 36 feet and a draft of 14 feet. Her displacement was 1710 tons and a top speed of 14 knots. She carried six 6-inch guns as her main armament but her armor was only 1/2 inch thick except on her conning tower where it was 2 1/2 inch thick (I would want my battle station to be in the conning tower). She had a complement of 187 men.” Additionally they were completed with three masts and six standard U.S. Navy ship’s boats of varying types and sizes.

These were very attractive ships, which must have made them favorites of photographers everywhere. Our Mystery Photo, for example, presents an excellent port bow view that is clean enough to yield the vessel’s predominant identifying features. Joe McCleary says, “The two things that give her away is her bow scroll (they were all different) and the coolie hat on top of her stack. *Concord* was the only one to have this appendage which is listed in the 1899 and 1900 editions of JANES as an identifying feature. It was probably added after the ship went out to the Far East and was intended to protect the boilers from monsoon rains.” Dave Baker says, “A photo of the *Concord* in almost (but not quite) the same configuration appears on pg. 158 of the 1969, revised and corrected edition of the DANFS, Vol. II.’ Then adds, “*Concord* was in the Philippines from 1 May 1898 to June 1901.” Using this information, we can narrow the time window for this photograph. Joe defines the time frame when he says, “I chose this timeframe because photos of *Concord* taken at the International Naval Reviews in 1893 do not show the coolie hat and in 1903 the ship was altered to have only two masts, according to JANES.” Both men suspect the photograph was made in the Far East at this time.

Joe and Dave were able to take the identification further than Bob, Bob, and Rob and positively identify the vessel as USS *Concord*. What say ye Clarke; did they nail it?

Rob Napier asked an interesting question when he sent his response. “What do they call that bow decor anyway? It isn't really a figurehead?” No Rob, technically it should be called a bow ornament. This small piece of superfluous decoration was the identifying mark of steel warships built near the turn of the century. The tradition is another carry-over from the sailing navy. While most of these ornaments resembled shields or cameos, they were frequently referred to as scrolls because lots of scroll shaped filigree was worked into their designs. Some of the designs even included a figurehead. Take the example of *Cincinnati* as seen on the half-title page of Alden’s *The American Steel Navy*. A committee of representatives from the host or sponsoring city usually contributed to its design.

On last thing, I mention it here because Joe stirred my memory when he added a small item to his response that mentioned *Bennington’s* fate while in Navy custody. On July 19, 1905, a deadly boiler explosion wrecked *Bennington*. This disaster resulted in significant loss of life, but the disaster could have been much worse if it hadn’t been for the quick thinking of a chief boatswain’s mate named L. J. (Whitley) Gauthier. He sacrificed his life to slip the sinking ship’s anchor, allowing her to be towed to shallow water where she

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MEMBERS RECEIVE AWARDS

Congratulations to the members of the HRSMS who were recognized at the Mariners' Museum, 2000 Scale Ship Model Competition.

Scratchbuilt Powered Ships

Silver Medal: John M. Bobbitt, Army Corps of Engineers towboat *Wild Goose*

John M. Bobbitt, Chesapeake Bay oyster dredger *Metunga*

Scratchbuilt Small Craft

Silver Medal: Alan D. Frazer, St. Lawrence River skiff

Bronze Medal: Robert E. Comet, Dutch fishing boat *MK12*

Semi-Scratchbuilt Powered Ships

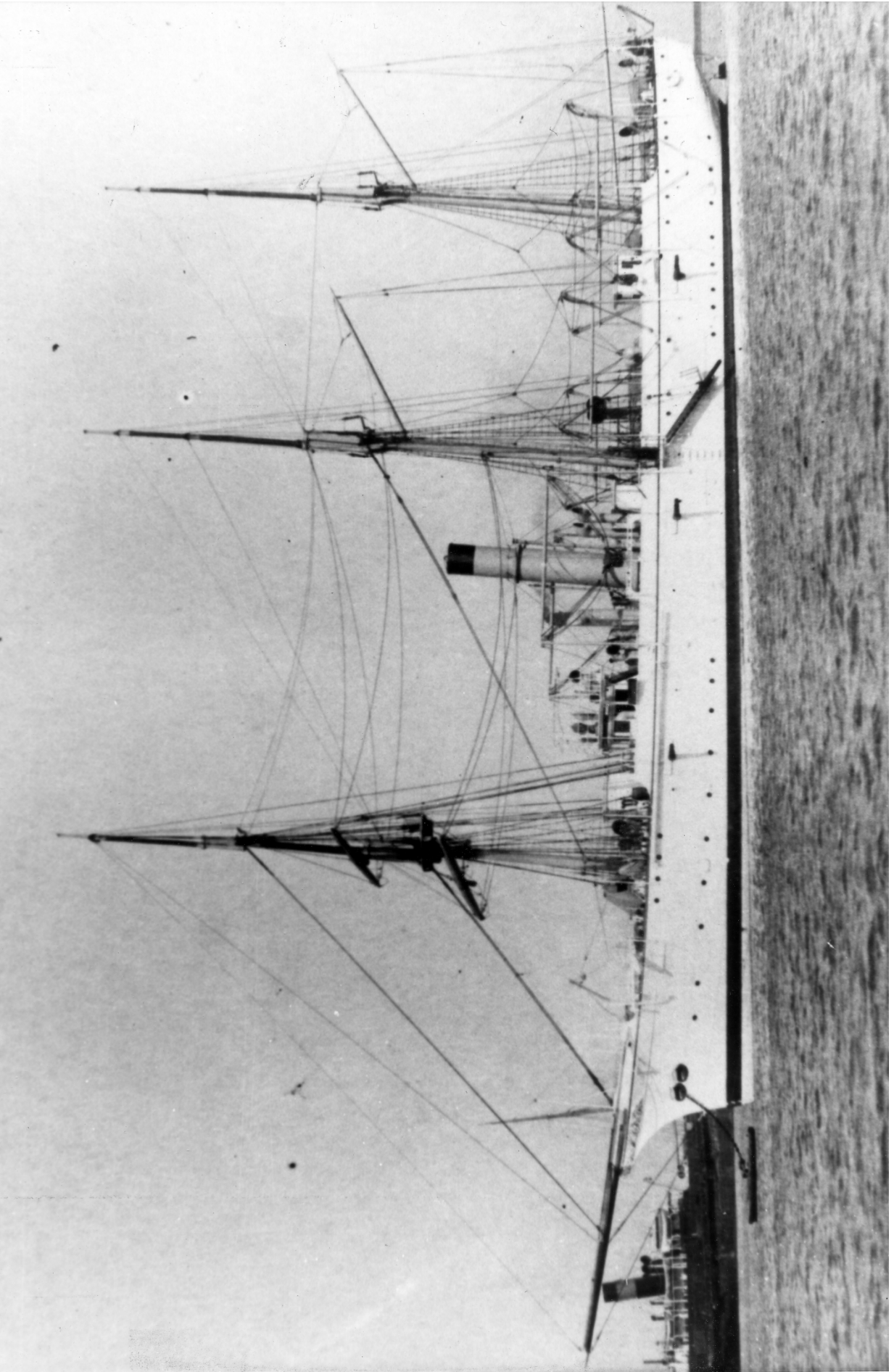
Bronze Medal: Robert E. Comet, torpedo boat USS *Winslow* (TB-5)

Kit-Built

Bronze Medal: Robert E. Comet, fishing schooner *Benjamin W. Latham*

Special Award

United States Coast Guard Award: John M. Bobbitt, Army Corps of Engineers towboat *Wild Goose*



NOTABLE EVENTS

JUNE

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Dean Sword
15-20 OpSail 2000

JULY

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:
1-2 Toronto 2000 Model Boat Exhibition

AUGUST

- 11 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Bob Comet

SEPTEMBER

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Williamsburg
AARP

OCTOBER

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Graham Horne
27-29 NRG Conference

NOVEMBER

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Heinz Schiller

DECEMBER

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: host, Jack Bobbitt

JANUARY

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

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

APRIL

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting:

MAY

Thanks

The members would like to thank Bill Clarke and his wife, Joe Ann for hosting the May meeting.

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was beached. I tell this story here not because *Bennington* is related to our Mystery Photo but because the story has some personal significance. When I was younger and still living in the great Commonwealth of Kentucky, everyone around my family and me knew of my passion for ships and things nautical. It seems that one family with whom I was acquainted took great delight in sharing a story about one of their ancestors who won a significant award for valor while he was in the navy. It seems that this individual was the very same Mr. Gauthier mentioned above. His action and posthumous award makes him somewhat of a legend back in those hills.

John Cheevers

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be hosted by Dean Sword on June 9, 2000 at 2000 hours.

2 Lynn Dr.

Portsmouth, Virginia

Telephone (757) 399-5415

From north:

I-64 to I-664 south. Cross the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge and take Exit marked Portsmouth Rte 164. Follow Rte 164 to the end (this is an interstate highway type road and after you cross the bridge over the Elizabeth River you are suddenly on a residential type street). At the first stop light turn right (Mt. Vernon Ave.) and proceed to the next stop light (Detroit St.) and turn right. See map below for the rest.

From south:

This greatly depends on from whence you come and I suggest that you call for directions. 399-5415



WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL



Skipper:	Bob Comet	(757) 934-1279
1 st Mate:	Len Wine	(757) 566-8597
Purser:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
Clerk:	Tom Saunders	(757) 850-0580
Historian:	Len Wine	(757) 566-8597
Editors:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
	Bill Clarke	(757) 868-6809
	Tom Saunders	(757)-850-0580

The Answer

USS Bennington, Gunboat Number 4, Photo No. 19N-11225