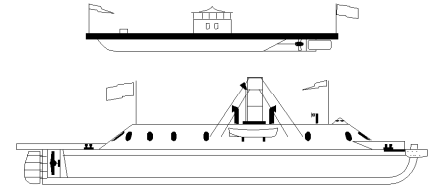


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 181

<http://members.nbci.com/HRSMS/>

July, 2001

To Build A Ship Model



Starting in about 1998, the HRSMS started a series of lectures that were given at each meeting on various techniques used to build ship models. This series was titled "To Build A Ship Model". This series ran aground late last year and we started a new series on various maritime subjects. That series will run out of scheduled subjects after the August, 2001 meeting. Since we have had a new influx of new members lately, there has been a suggestion that we rerun, in some format, the "To Build A Ship Model" series. It has also been suggested that rather than just go back and rerun the series in the same order that some subjects might have more of an interest than others and that we should run the more desirable ones first. So, if you have any suggestions as to which subjects are most desirable contact Graham Horn, who will continue to coordinate this series with your requests. To refresh everyone's memory here are some of the subjects that we have covered in the past:

Research Sources

Lofting

Types of Woods for Model Building and Sources

Sharpening

Hull Construction

Plank-on-frame

Plank-on-bulkhead

Bread and Butter

Strip Wood on Mold

Fiberglass

Planking Techniques

Jigs and Mass Production Techniques

Machining Techniques

Chemical Machining and Metal Etching

Brazing and Soldering

Pewter Casting

Model Rope Walks

Rigging Techniques

Masting

Making Gratings and Other Deck Furniture

Sail Making

Coppering

Finishing Techniques

Preparation

Painting

Figure Making

These subjects are just a suggestion, if anyone has any new subjects or better ideas, please submit them. Graham's address and telephone number are:

P.O. Box 12188

Loblolly Lane

Rockville, VA 23146

804-749-4719

Mystery Photo



This is Mystery Photo, *Logbook* No. 180! Its great to be back after my four month hiatus. I hope you missed me. I've gotten a little rusty; the switch to the BI-monthly format coupled with the interval needed for the guest columnist really got me out of my rhythm. In my absence though, I'd like to thank Joe for his excellent "guest photo" challenge—a nice piece, well put forward. It was fun having the opportunity to "play" Mystery Photo for a change. But it was even more fun putting a little steam in Joe's boiler.

If I remember correctly, we imposed a few new rules that specified a cut-off date for responses and we asked Bill if he would submit a few lines of text and ask a few questions pertaining to aspects of the photograph. The cut-off date is not realistic now, so I will accept responses up to the day I send the finished column to the editor. As for Bill, I was hoping that with our reversion back to a monthly column, he would keep his part of the change; alas it was not to be! So, without any specific items to check or I's to dot and T's to cross, let's get to the photograph.

I like this picture because it takes a bit of intuitive thinking to get the identification right. If it weren't for the open gun embrasures and the US ensign at the stern, I expect many of you would make mad dashes through foreign shipping lists to help identify her. I would, too! In fact, her appearance started me looking through the various merchant ship lists. I thought that she was a coastal passenger ship that was converted into a gunboat for the Spanish American War.

While the US flag certainly narrows our search opportunities, we still need a bit of luck to make a positive identification. This time we're not just matching armament

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and rigging arrangements with other published photographs. The ship presented here is visibly different from her appearance in other documented photographs, except for one, and if you haven't seen it, it's a real gem! She has foreign-built written all over her, especially with that stern shape. Foreign designs often employed a rolled sheer strake at the stern pierced with port lights. My guess is that this feature is intended to allow more sunlight into the space than would be possible with the lights cut into the flared or vertical sides.

The history of this vessel is intriguing and it took careful reading through at least six reference sources to piece together properly. This image really shows the need to use and follow primary reference sources. I initially relied on the photographic evidence to chart the vessel's history, and for the longest time I had my time line going backward. But later I saw my error and found that the evidence makes an interesting story!

Two crafty members responded; each with bits and pieces of the story, and as we will see, they are correct in their identification if not with all their facts. Mark Heilenday struck first identifying our vessel as the purchased gunboat USS *Topeka*, "a Great White Fleet ship." Without listing any reference sources, I wonder if I should assume that he made his identification from memory or by matching the image with one of the vessels in his vast miniatures collection? Mark theorizes that the image was made sometime after an early 1900's refit.

Joe McCleary also responded but rambled on about the intricacies of time and space before he finally got down to business. (Joe: too much time underwater for you, my friend.) Actually, Joe, like me, found this image tricky to identify, only for different reasons. Joe's dilemma stems from the fact that this vessel was acquired by the US Navy in 1898, the first year *Jane's Fighting Ships* was published, but they didn't list her until 1904 and didn't publish a photograph of her until 1910. His perseverance paid off, however, when he found the photograph reproduced in the 1910 issue of *Jane's* to be the same as the Mystery Photo. He goes on to say, "DANFS is of little help, because although it shows a photo of the ship (NH 63371) taken in 1898, shortly after her conversion to a gunboat, the configuration shown in this photo is very different from that shown in the mystery photo, particularly the absence of the raised midships bulwark. The supporting brace between the stacks is shown, which is a very helpful clue. The Navy's web page shows the same, misleading 1898 photograph." Then for some reason he detours with this: "The web page does show a very interesting photo (19N14187) of a Chief Petty Officer firing a 1-pounder Maxim machine gun on the ship's focsl." (I'll explain this later.)

Both men correctly identify *Topeka* and both state that she was built in Germany for Peru. Mark makes his comment in the form of a guess while Joe states, "According to DANFS and the web page, *Topeka* was originally built in 1881 at Kiel by Georg Howalt for Peru under the name *Diogenes*, but the ship was never delivered for some reason." In reality, *Diogenes* and a sister, *Socrates*, were built as gunboats for the Portuguese Navy. (*Conway's All the World's*

Temporary Library Closing Schedule

Due to renovation, the Mariners' Museum Research Library & Archives will be closed to the public from August 1st through September 30th. Library and Archives staff will continue to provide reference and research services, but responses may take up to fourteen weeks during this period.

Fighting Ships, 1660-1095, lists them as merchant ships intended for Portugal.) For some unexplained reason, Portugal either never accepted them into service or immediately resold them to Peru. Peru, had recently lost most of her navy in a disastrous war with Chile and was looking to buy replacements quickly. Most lists state that Georg Howalt built them for Peru. Either way, they were transferred to the Thames Iron Works in England, where both were converted into gunboats for Peruvian service. The Peruvian Navy accepted delivery of *Socrates* and renamed her *Lima*. *Diogenes*, however, was never armed and remained in England. In 1895, Japan purchased her, but the British government blocked her delivery. Then, Joe adds, "The USN purchased the ship from the Thames Iron Works in London on 2 April 1898. The ship was immediately sailed to the New York Navy Yard where she was converted to gunboat configuration and in June of that year she sailed to join the Cuban blockade during the Spanish American War. After the war, she continued to patrol in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico."

All of this history doesn't explain her configuration in the mystery photo and why she differs so much from other published photographs. Let me try to clear this up a bit. Her appearance when purchased by the US Navy was not much different from the image Joe lists as NH63371. This image appears in most of the recognized lists such as *Jane's*, *Conway's*, Paul Silverstone's *U.S. Warships of World War I*, *Warship International*, No. 2, 1980, and the Naval Historical Center's Web page. This tripped me up because I assumed that the vessel as altered would follow the natural progression seen by most other warships when altered—generally, they tend to lose material rather than gain it. Our Mystery Photo shows a vessel with raised bulwarks and a heavy bark rig. NH 63371 shows no bulwarks, a lot of added port lights, and a light schooner rig. Also our photo shows three gun ports along the side verses two in NH 63371. But Joe's last comment about being employed as a training ship and Mark's comment about "after early 1900s alterations, not before" nails it. We are looking at an image of *Topeka* taken sometime after her refit when she was used as a training ship. The raised bulwarks are really hammock stowage and the added rig was intended to train landsmen how to sail. My mistake was in thinking that the Mystery Photo image came first.

That gem of an image that I mentioned earlier is in John Alden's book, *The American Steel Navy*, and appears on page 115. The photograph is dated September 1900 and is the

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MINUTES



HRSMS Meeting 5-7-01
Host, Brad Gray

The meeting was called to order by the Skipper at 2000 Hours.

A round of applause was given as the purser gave his report.

It was reported that Bill Clarke was seen lurking around the "Taco Stand" at the Mariners' Museum.

Old Business: There was no report on the Club shirts.

New Business: Bill Clarke said that he asked the Mariners' Museum to set the date for the 2005 Model Competition, so preliminary inquiries could be made. The Fords Colony Group will host the August meeting and John Cheevers will host the September meeting. It was reported that the registration forms for the 2001 NRG Conference will be sent out in the near future.

Show and tell: John Cheevers showed the book Lighthouse Tenders 1890 -1932 and other miscellaneous items procured from the for sale bin at the Mariners' Museum Library. Joe McCleary showed the latest catalog from Blue Ridge Machine and Tool. Alan Frazer said that A. J. Fisher is closing at the end of the month (June).

The meeting was adjourned to a presentation by Joe McCleary on modeling techniques.



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only other published image of Topeka configured as in our Mystery Photo. Alden notes that *Topeka* is seen off Boston in his photograph. I wonder if the Mystery Photo is off of Boston too, and taken in the same session?

Where Joe detoured: According to the Naval Historical Center, photo #: 19-N-14187, is taken on board USS *Hist*. The photo caption reads: "Chief Petty Officer demonstrates the operation of a Maxim 1-pounder machine gun, circa May 1898. USS *Topeka* is fitting out in the background." I think Joe just misquoted it or was in a hurry. (Time compression, Joe?)

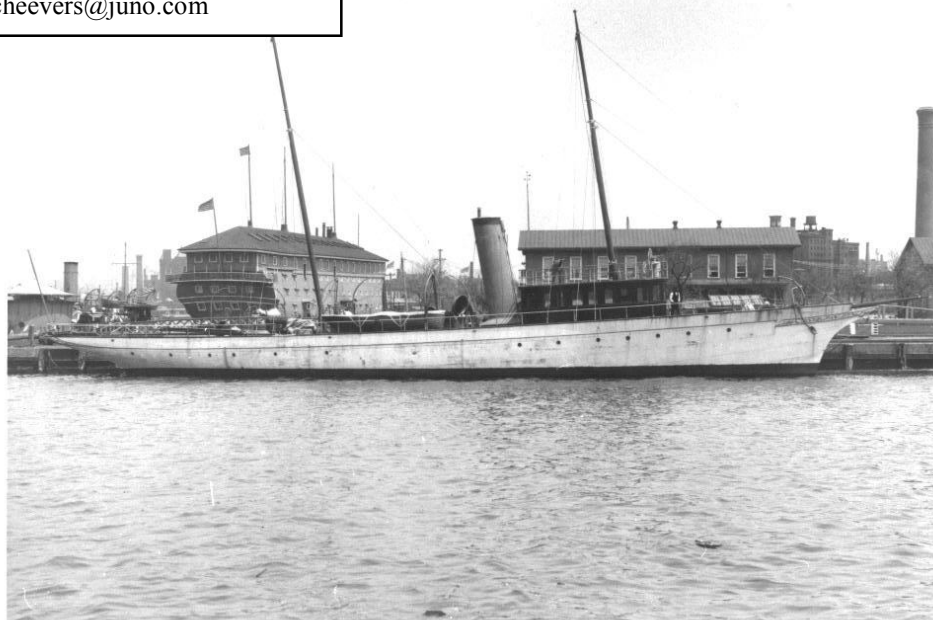
USS TOPEKA had a displacement of 2255 tons, a length of 259 feet 4 inches, a beam of 35 feet and a draft of 19 feet 6 inches. Her top speed was 16 knots. She had a crew of 167 men. Her armament at the time of her conversion is listed as six 4-inch guns, four 3-pounders, two 1-pounder Maxim machine guns, and one colt machine gun.

John Cheevers

The Answer to Mystery Photo 180:
USS *Topeka*, PS-35
NH 63653A, Long Island Sound, 1904

MYSTERY PHOTO

Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or telephone if you know what it is.
jfccheevers@juno.com



NOTABLE EVENTS

JULY

- 13 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Alan Frazer
Bob Sanderson - Steamships

AUGUST

- 10 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Ford's Colony Group
Graham Home - Incompetence & Treachery

SEPTEMBER

- 14 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, John Cheevers

OCTOBER

- 4-7 **NRG Conference**, Rockville Maryland

- 12 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Graham Horne

NOVEMBER

- 9 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Heinz Schiller

DECEMBER

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

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

- 8 **H.R.S.M.S.** Monthly Meeting: Host, Southside Bunch

APRIL

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

MAY

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

JUNE

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

Thanks

The members would like to thank Brad Gray and his wife, Weezie for hosting the June meeting.

WATCH, QUARTER AND STATION BILL

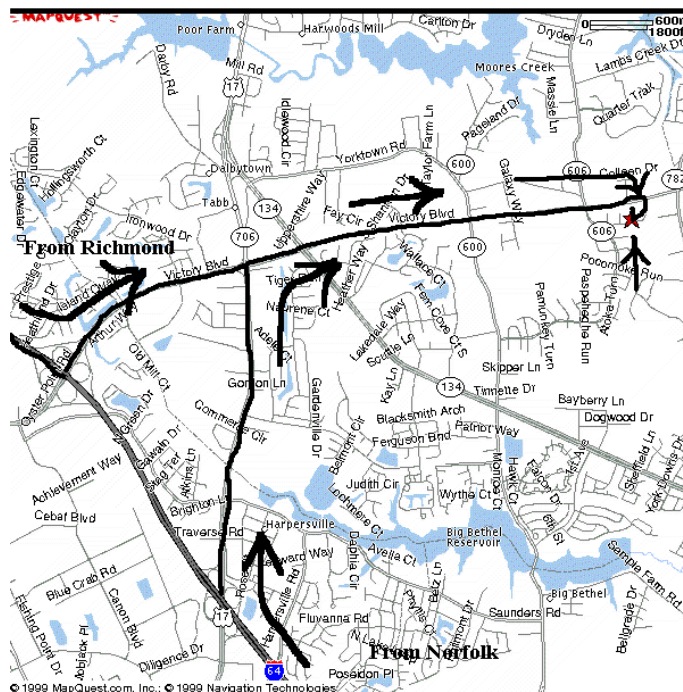


Skipper:	Bob Comet	(757) 934-1279
1 st Mate:	Len Wine	(757) 566-8597
Purser:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
Clerk:	Tom Saunders	(757) 850-0580
Historian:	Len Wine	(757) 566-8597
Editors:	John Cheevers	(757) 591-8955
	Bill Clarke	(757) 868-6809
	Tom Saunders	(757)-850-0580

Next Meeting

Date: July 13, 2001
Time: 2000 Hours
Place: 105 Accomac Turning, Yorktown, VA
Host: Alan Frazer

Easiest route from East or West is via I-64 to Exit 256-B, marked "Victory Boulevard (Route 171 North) Poquoson/Yorktown." Follow 171 for about 3.4 miles, to sixth light. Turn right onto Running Man Trail (Route 606); first possible left to Tuckahoe Trace (Route 1630); then third left into Accomac Turning (1631), to third house on left (The route numbers appear on every street in the neighborhood, and are lower and easier to read at night than the street names). Early arrivals please park in the driveway. Those coming from Hampton and East will probably know shortcuts to Route 171 via Magruder Boulevard/Hampton Highway (134), Big Bethel Road (600) and other combinations; a good Peninsula map will help others to learn them. There is no shortcut from the west. If you get lost, call 867-7666.



FOR SALE:

VIVITAR self-focus carousel slide projector (carousel not interchangeable with Kodak). Low mileage, like new. \$60.00 (sells new for \$169.00). 804-749-4720

Air compressor used for airbrush. Same model as sold by Micro Mark for \$119.95. Produces 40 psi with 1/12 H.P. motor. Mounted on resilient base to reduce noise and vibration. Like new. \$50.00.

Contact Joe McCleary, telephone 757-253-1802.