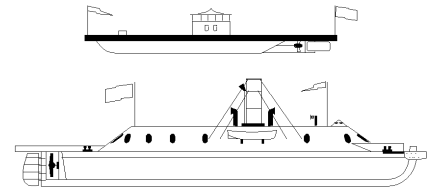


Hampton Roads Ship Model Society

Logbook



No. 307

WWW.HRSMS.ORG

January, 2012

From The Bridge



Happy New Year

I hope everyone had a great holiday season and a good start for 2012. Let us hope that the year 2012 will be much better than prior years. I know many of us have made New Year's resolutions. One of my resolutions is to spend more time ship modeling with the ultimate goal of finishing a ship model in 2012. Have you noticed how easy it is to make New Year's resolutions and a lot easier to break them? I read where most New Year's resolutions are broken by the middle of February. Maybe we can reverse this trend.

The next few months bring good model building opportunities as we tend to spend more time inside. Let us use this time to work on your current ship model project or to get started on a new model. If you use your time wisely, you can make a lot of progress over the next few months. And do not forget to bring your project to the monthly Show and Tell portion of our meetings to share your progress with the members.

We will have a lot of business to go over during the January meeting. We will have nominations for Officers, selection of a Founder's Award Committee, discussion on the banquet in March and other items that may come up. We are also looking for volunteers to do presentations at our monthly meetings. Tony Clayton is the program committee chairman and he works very hard to ensure that we have a program at every meeting. We can help him out by offering to do a presentation. It can be on any topic that you think would be of interest to the membership. Most presenters will say that giving a presentation is very rewarding to them. The presentation does not have to be very elaborate. It can be a "how I do this" presentation, a documentation on your current modeling project, a talk about maritime history or photo essay of places or things that may interest the members.

Do not forget that we are participating in the IPMS Richmond Old Dominion Open show and contest to be held on Saturday, February 25. As sponsors of the wooden ship model class in the contest, I hope that HRSMS will be well represented. I will have more details at the meeting.

I look forward to seeing everyone this Saturday.

Ryland

Mystery Photo



Mystery Photo #306: December is the time for gifts and giving, and this month's Mystery Photo gives us an incredible challenge. The image is provided by Bill Clarke, and his gift to you is a high angle, oblique image of three very interesting vessels pier-side on a clear day. Gifts are great to give and always great to receive—this one may give you a fit. While the three wise men brought the baby Jesus gold, frankincense, and myrrh, The Clarke gives us a sail boat, a freighter, and an ark. Since the ark seems to be the center of attention, we'll assume it to be our subject for the month. (Of course the other two gifts are fair game as well; and by identifying them, you may earn an advanced detecting degree.)

I've done a little research to get you started. The summer, 2005 issue of the Nautical Research Journal (NRJ) contains a somewhat intriguing article titled "An Ark for Noah," and, as you might expect, no photographs accompany the essay. The article is interesting in that it's an academic exercise in what if; but "what ifs" are not very useful to the model maker—unless you wish to build the design the author provides. In this case, it's a very practical and well thought out raft design; a sort of Huck Finn-Tiki hut combination. Our ark looks different.

The more familiar, King James' version of the story of Noah and the ark quite naturally provides for a vessel with a more "shippy" hull carrying a barn like superstructure—renaissance artists ensured it. Shippy designs pander to the simpler mindset of those uninitiated in "why" ships and objects designed to float look the way they do. Certainly a raft is the most practical approach to the Ark, but our minds are full of the ancient artist's interpretations of the design. It's the same thought provoking paradigm that produces our preconception of what Christ looked like—the man who resembles a long haired hippy from the sixties. Artists following their mores and made them look that way! We no more know what the Ark looked like than we do Jesus Christ. But to paraphrase

(Continued on page 2)

MEETING NOTICE

Date: Saturday January 14, 2012

Place: Mariners' Museum

Time: 1000 Hours

(Continued from page 1)



Mystery Photo

the fellow who ran Liberty Baptist in Lynchburg, VA—you'll know them when you see them.

Now, these comments are not intended to blaspheme a higher power or to promote or slam the raft concept because it certainly is the best idea going. But if we go with our preconceptions based on religious

his FEMA money and ooze-proofed the homestead. The result is the imposing, floatable object we see in this month's Mystery Photo. So, it would appear that The Clarké has found a way to take it with him!

Not so fast, say our respondents! At least they might have said that had they known where this pen was going. Dave Baker and the elusive Charles Landrum had no trouble

identifying our monthly focus of attention. And, yes, they are unanimous in not identifying the vessel as the *Clarke Ark*. Instead, they agree that what we have is a roofed-over pre-dreadnaught tied to a pier in New York City. (Yes, you know how to say it now.) Charles even said that one of his clues was "the bulged gun port near the bow and the fact that her quarterdeck was lower than her forecastle. She looked like a pre-dreadnaught." Always go with your gut!

Sometimes it's difficult for people reared in today's throw away society to fathom the possibility of repurposing items, but obsolescence does not have to equal recycle.

Several years ago when the idea of Scottish thrift was nearer the frontal lobe, many old naval vessels missed the scrapper's torch and were modified for additional use—some, before this ark, have even graced Mystery Photo. Charles and Dave will tell you that this latest incarnation happens to be *USS Prairie State* (IX-15). And as usually happens with replies, they differ in its more familiar title: Charles calls her "a drill ship" while Dave

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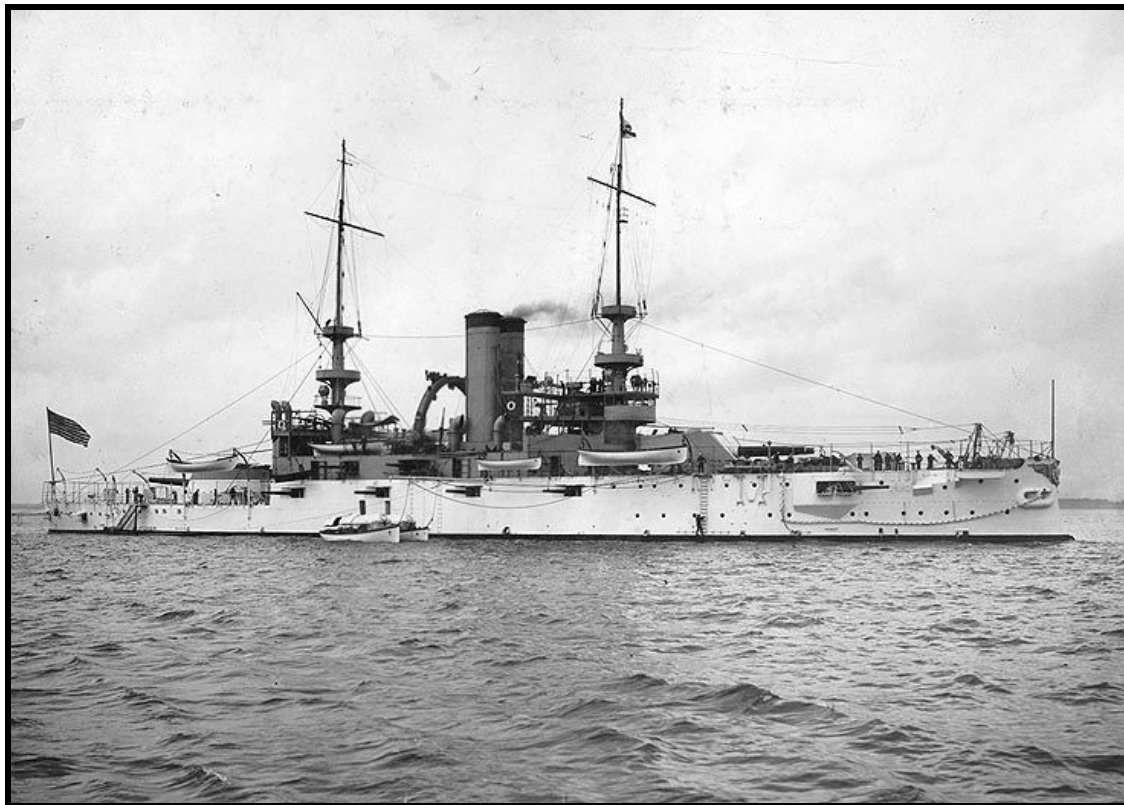


Photo # NH 60633 USS Illinois in harbor, circa 1901-1908

art and tradition, you would think that our Mystery photo might, indeed, capture the Ark tied to a big city pier! (And you all thought it was on a mountain in Turkey.) Well, the real ark might be in Turkey, but this ark belongs to Clarke not Noah, and the *Clarke Ark* is in New York City (say it like you hear it the Pace Picante commercial). It seems that in the aftermath of hurricane Isabel, a certain Bull Island flash took

when the idea of Scottish thrift was nearer the frontal lobe, many old naval vessels missed the scrapper's torch and were modified for additional use—some, before this ark, have even graced Mystery Photo. Charles and Dave will tell you that this latest incarnation happens to be *USS Prairie State* (IX-15). And as usually happens with replies, they differ in its more familiar title: Charles calls her "a drill ship" while Dave

**Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Banquet
March 24, 2012
Riverwalk Restaurant, Yorktown**

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Mystery Photo

identifies her as a “U.S. Navy receiving hulk.” But it’s all good; it’s all a matter, as Clarke often describes, of “picking a time.”

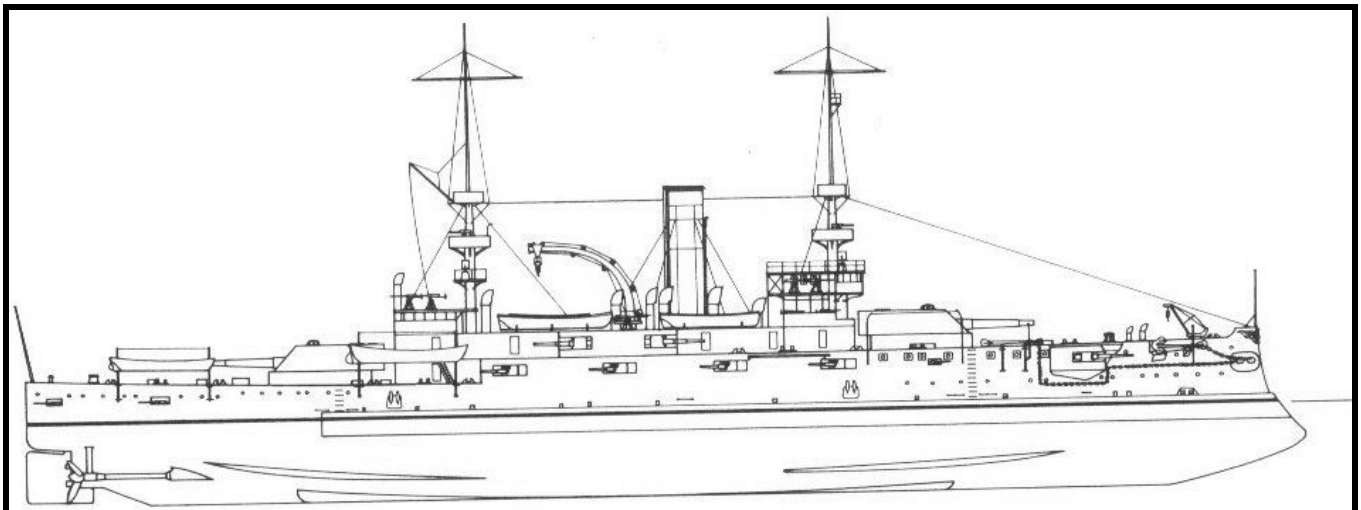
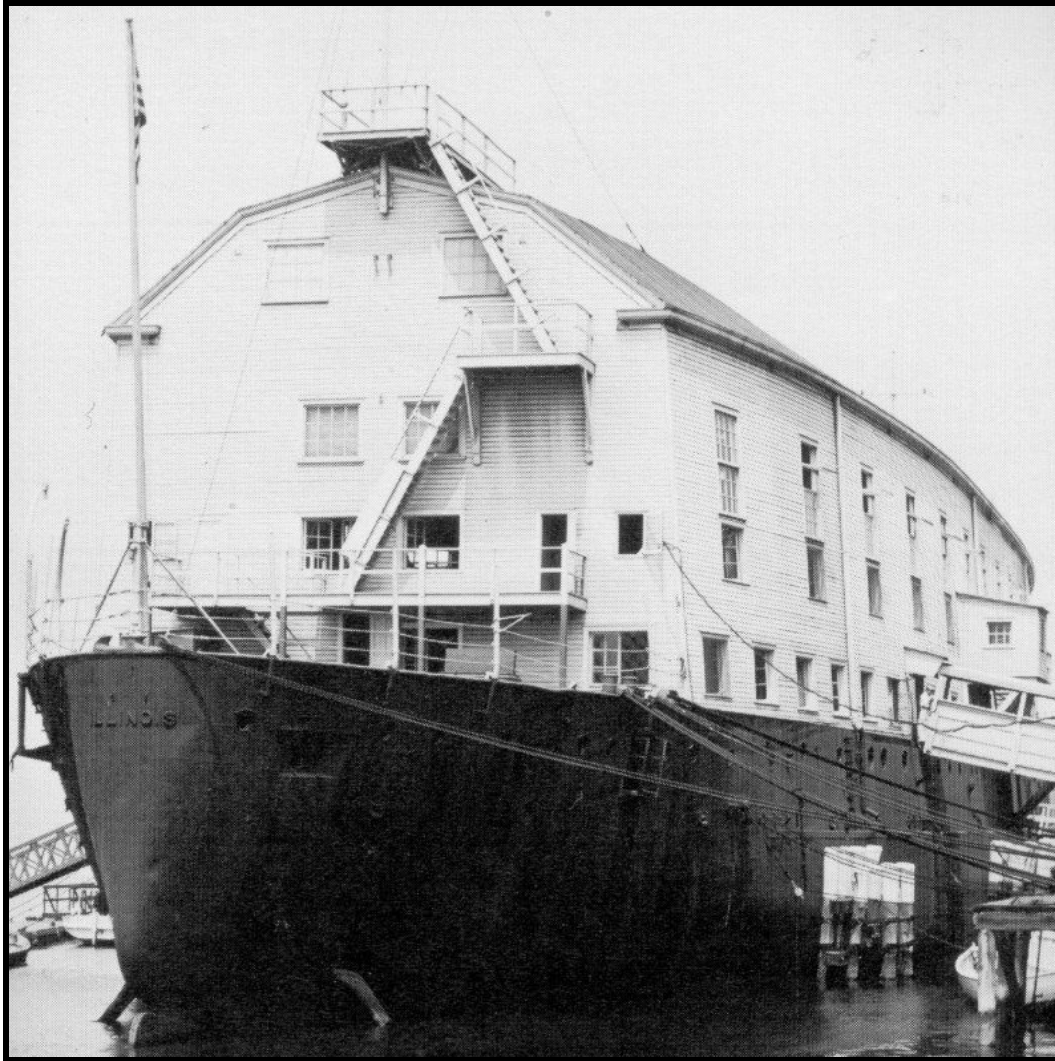
But before we get to the time line, let’s look a bit at

the vessel’s origin. How did something named *Prairie State* come to be? Well, it seems that just after the end of hostilities in the Great War, the major industrialized nations met in Washington DC to see about limiting naval expansion and curbing the current arms race. The resulting treaty of 1921 or “Naval Holiday” as it was

euphemistically called at the time severely limited battleship strength and provided the political tool to remove many relatively new vessels from service; ships that, unfortunately, were thoroughly obsolete very early in their service lives. Scrapping battleships became the order of the day, and except for *USS Oregon* (BB-3), *USS Illinois* was the only pre-dreadnaught saved through Scottish Thrift.

While Charles is a bit vague on his time line, he nevertheless is very close. He says: “I started through the battleship listing at NAVSOURCE.ORG until I found one that survived into the 1950s.” Looking elsewhere in the image he adds: “The cars on the quay date from the early to mid 1950s.” Dave, however, is spot on, and I hope chronologically correct when he says “The photo was taken at New York City on 17 June 1954 about two and a half years before the IX-15 was scrapped.” (Well, well, well Bill; apparently there is another copy of the image float-

(Continued on page 4)



ing around in the cosmos.)



Mystery Photo

This vessel was indeed lucky! According to DANFS, “in 1919 the ship”, *USS Illinois* (BB-7), “was laid up at Philadelphia Navy Yard and was later loaned to the State of New York 23 October 1921 for use by the Naval Militia. Excluded from further use as a warship by the terms of the Washington treaty, *Illinois* was fitted out as a floating armory at New York Navy Yard in 1924 and was assigned to the New York Naval Reserve. She

14 x 6"/40, 4 x 18" tt, Armor, 16" 1/2 Belt, 14" Turrets, 4 " Decks, 10" Conning Tower, Machinery, 10,000 IHP; 2 vertical, Inverted, triple expansion engines, 2 screws, Speed, 16 Knots, Crew 536.”

As a barracks ship, she was stripped to the main and upper deck respectively and a three story wooden barn-like structure, fitted with what appear to be triple hung windows, was built over most of her exposed decks. A row of skylights was fitted along the longitudinal centerline of her roof and saluting platforms were fitted at each end as well. A single, tall “skinney” stack is fitted to the port side just aft of amidships to exhaust gasses from what remained of her power plant. Most contemporary images of *Prairie State* (apparently there are three) show her livery as a dark colored hull with white or light grey upper works. It’s unclear what color the “barn” roof is but it is slightly darker than the upper works. For those interested, the bow is to the left in the Mystery Photo.

In this Mystery Photo, *Prairie State* floats comfortably at pier #73 in the East River at New York City. You’ll understand how we know this later in the essay. In the meantime, Dave’s reply certainly defines the city: “My copy of the photo says the location is the NY Navy Yard at Brooklyn, but as I remember, the [Liberty] was moored on the Hudson River side of Manhattan.” Dave you are so close. In the seventies and eighties, the Liberty was moored in the Hudson River, at the Morton Street Pier to be exact. She shared the pier and more with *USNS Twin Falls* (ex *Twin Falls Victory*). But for this image she happened to be moored at the East River pier.

Now we get to find out if anyone receives advanced detective degrees. Let’s just say for talking purposes that identifying the ark earns you a “BS”—and we all know what BS means. Now due to the level of difficulty, we’ll award an “MS” if you identify the Liberty ship on the other side of the

(Continued on page 5)



remained there for more than 30 years, though reclassified IX-15 8 January 1941 and renamed *Prairie State* to allow her name to be assigned to a projected new battleship (*the uncompleted sixth Iowa, BB-66*). During World War II she served as a U. S. Naval Reserve Midshipmen Training School at New York. Following the war, she was retained on loan to the State as quarters for a Naval Reserve unit until 31 December 1956.”

USS Illinois (BB-7), a Newport News built warship, was a bit unusual in her appearance; unusual, that is, to the US Navy. The three ships of this class were the only US Navy built warships to sport tandem, side by side, funnels, a feature of many contemporary British pre-dreadnaught classes. This arrangement was never repeated “over here.” *Illinois* was not overly large by today’s warship standards, or battleship standards in general: “Displacement 11,565 Tons, Dimensions, 375' 4" (oa) x 72' 3" x 25' 10" (Max), Armament 4 x 13"/35

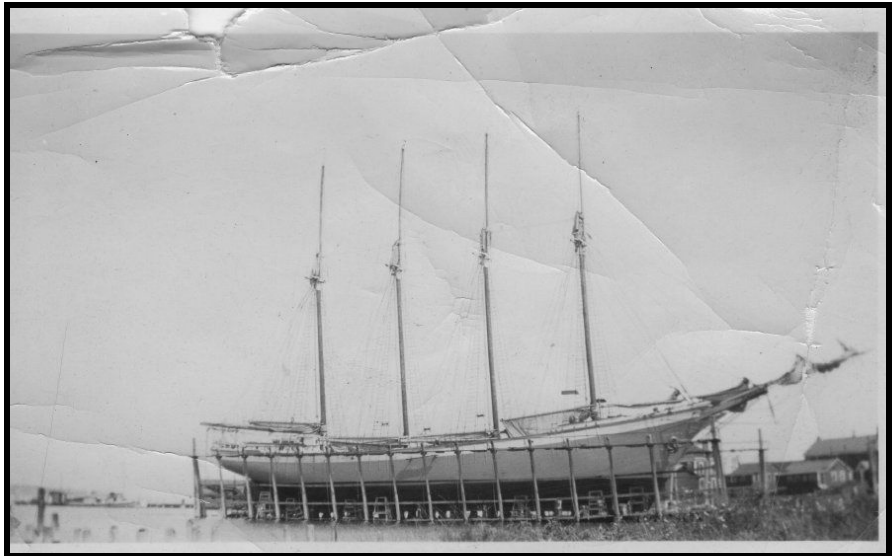
pier. We'll also award an "MS" if you identify the location and the date (within reasonable limits) of the image. You still with me? OK.



Mystery Photo

With this progression in mind, I think it's only fair to award a "PHD" to anyone who can identify the lowly schooner tied to the adjacent pier. Sound fair?

Here we go. Dave and Charles both earn a "BS" for the Ark. They both advance to the MS level for identifying the timeline, and location. And Dave receives additional MS honors by providing the only reply that identifies the Liberty ship. He says it very succinctly: "The Liberty Ship is the *John W. Brown*." Earlier in the essay you saw that he is well acquainted with the vessel and here is why: "I remember seeing BROWN from a bridge on a school outing to Manhattan around 1952. She was a Liberty Troop Transport and had berthing on the first platform deck as well as additional anti-aircraft gun protection over a standard liberty. I gave a



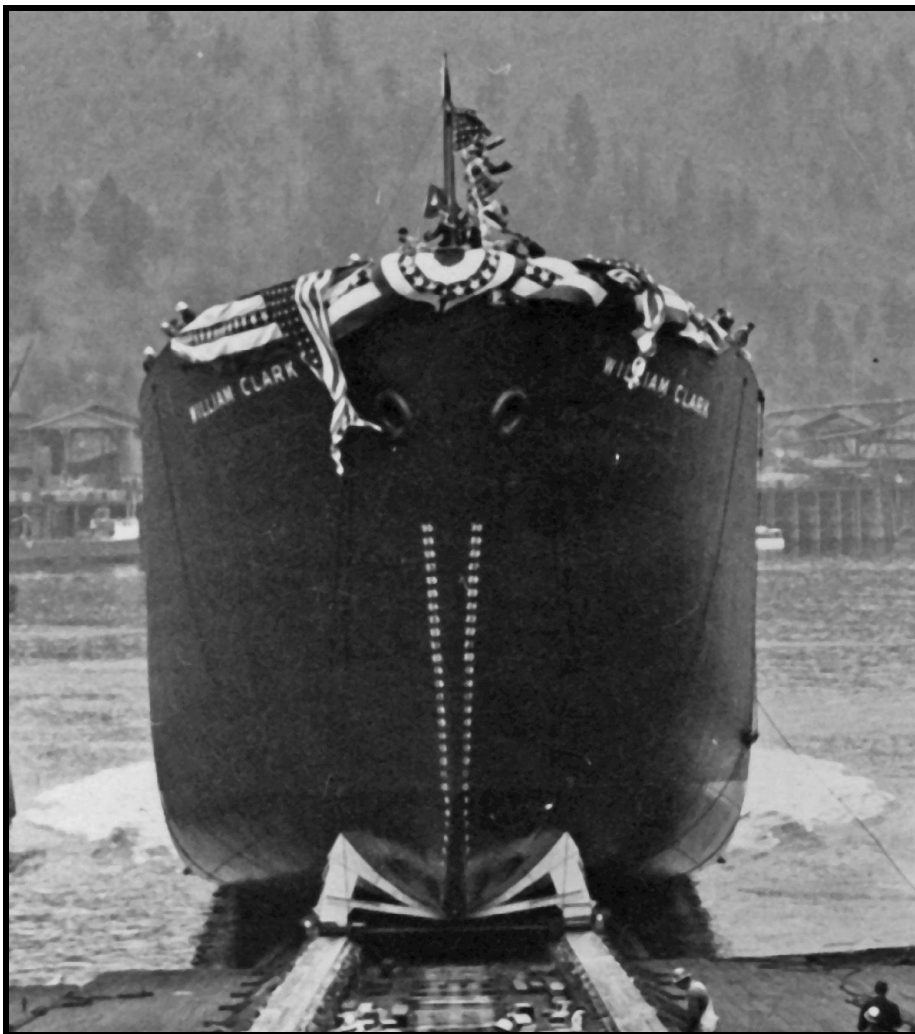
4th of July speech (as a substitute for SECNAV) aboard her around 1986 and was most gratified that the audience didn't leave during my oration." Then, as almost an aside, he adds: "she was then used as a training school by the New York City Department of Education."

I know that many HRSMS members are familiar with *John W. Brown* as well. She is one of 2 surviving Liberty ships capable of steaming today. *Brown* currently operates out of the port of Baltimore providing one day excursions of the Upper Chesapeake Bay and a chance to see an old fashioned reciprocating steam engine operate. I bet a show of hands will reveal just how many of you have walked her decks.

If you study the liberty in the Photo very carefully you will find a giant clue that unlocks her identification. Looking closely at her stack you can just make out these letters in two rows: "NYC" and below it "ord of Ed." Hum, do you see why Dave's aside is so important? Googling this clue produced very good results, including this site: <http://www.jwbalumni.com>. And one passage from the site solidifies the location of our Mystery Photo: "The first home of the schoolship JOHN W. BROWN was Pier 4, East River, New York City. **By 1950 the BROWN had been moved to Pier 73, East River** (the former berth of the schoolship ST. MARYS) **at the foot of East 25th Street.**"

Several more searches specifically aimed at pier 73 and east 25th street were fruitful as well. One described how the area in question, from 23rd to 30th streets, an area that fronts Bellevue Hospital where Frank-

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Mystery Photo

Lin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Drive runs, was reclaimed from the river using rubble created by the German bombing of British cities, primarily Bristol, during WWII. It was carried as ballast by returning cargo ships and dumped there creating the bump out of Manhattan Island at 25th street. At the time, the fill site was dubbed Bristol Basin. Our Mystery Photo shows Pier 73 and a small section of FDR drive, a smaller pier, and some off street parking. And, yes I agree with Charles, that the automobiles look like early 1950's models. An accompanying color image from the site appears to be taken from the FDR and captures the tree you see on the extreme left. Its caption reads: "Liberty ship JOHN W BROWN when she was operating as a maritime high school operated by the Board of Education of the City of New York...Ship photographed in New York in 1964 time frame." Notice the fire chief's red dodge sedan and the inscription on the bow of the Liberty.

Now for the PHD resistance

Dave, in his reply, offered these words of encouragement: "Hope you find out the identity of that nice Maine-built-looking schooner!" Identifying individual schooners without access to name boards is probably harder than identifying individual Liberty ships. What we can tell from the one found in the Mystery Photo is that she carries four masts. The one clue that I thought might crack her identification is the single white flag carried at the crosstree of her Spanker mast. It's very similar to the flag flown by the Liberty at her after mast. Well, it was a dead end; it yielded nothing.

A Google search of four-masted schooners in New York City was a bit more rewarding. The results revealed the unusual fact that a four-masted schooner named *Theoline* was the last remaining schooner in New York City. Could this be the schooner in the Mystery Photo? I was able to find an image of *Theoline* on the building way and two taken from her deck while tied to a NYC pier in 1936. Unless Bill's image provides the schooner's name or another, better annotated image surfaces, we may never have a proper identification.

So in the end we don't have a *Clarke Ark*, and the pen that wrote that clap has been tossed. Our "Liberty" was not sponsored by a man from Lynchburg, and Theo may not throw us a line, but what we do have is a whole lot of story packed into one tiny image—Scottish Thrift at its best! Kudos go to Dave and Charles on earning MS degrees and many thanks to Bill for providing this image.

Degrees defined:

BS = Bull (Island) Slander

MS = More of the Same

PHD = Piled Higher and Deeper

For extra credit did anyone find a particularly intriguing Liberty with a very telling name? I did! In the course of my research I stumbled on a particularly apt image capturing the launch of an oddly named Liberty the *SS William Clark*...what do you think? Bill a little gift for you.

John Cheevers

MINUTES



Hampton Roads Ship Model Society
Monthly Meeting
December 10, 2011
Mariners' Museum

Guests: Bob Marchetti, 3rd
Bill Werling, 3rd

The Meeting was called to order by the Skipper, Ryland Craze, at 1008 hours. The Skipper recognized the guests and noted it was their third meeting. He asked if they wanted to join the society. Following an affirmative response they were asked to leave the room while the ritual vote was taken. Bob and Bill returned and were welcomed as new members. Corrections to the minutes noted the omission of a "e" from Jim Beale's name. Eric Harfst gave the Purser's report.

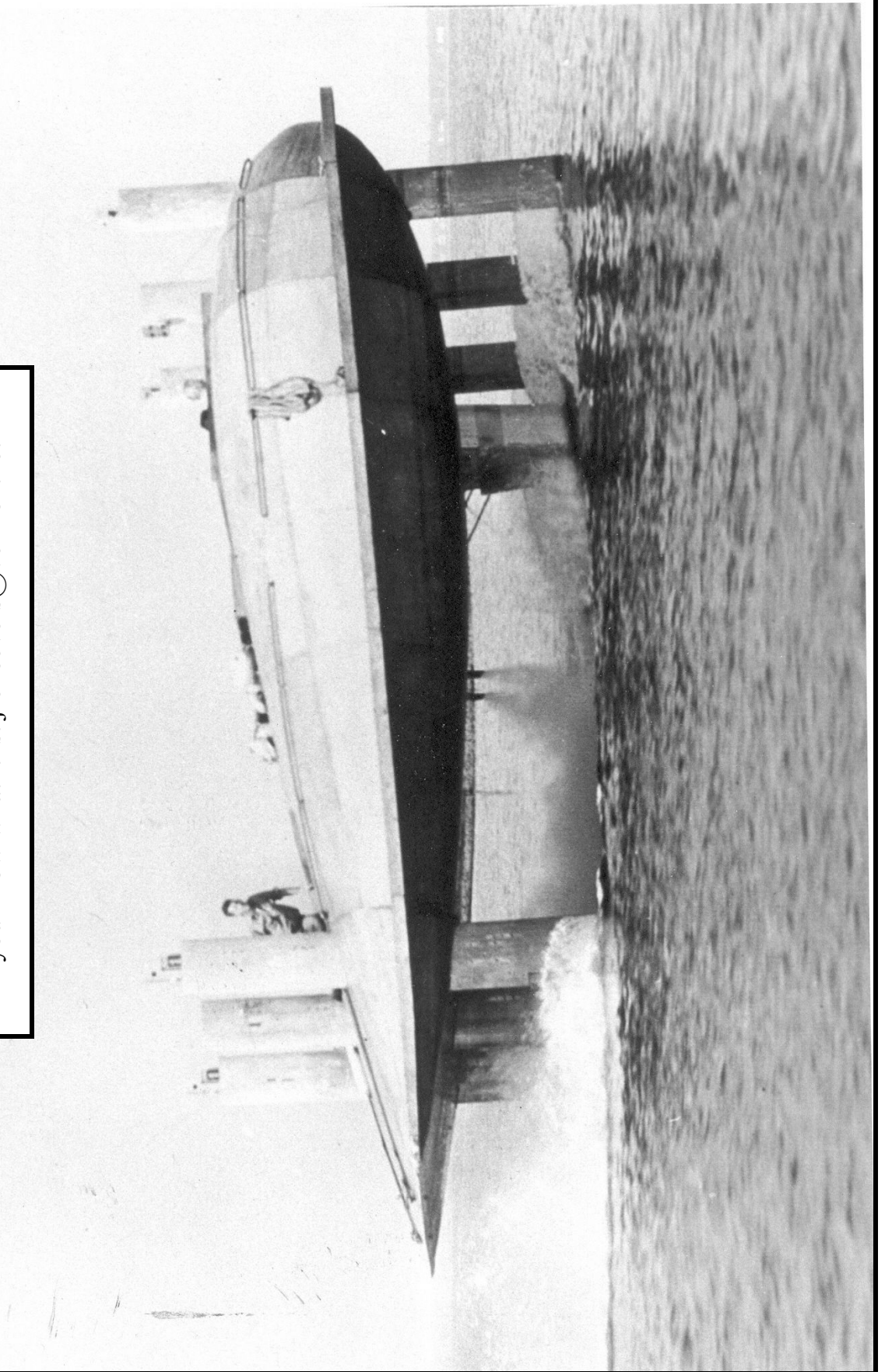
Old Business: The Skipper said the money for our participation in the Richmond IPMS show has been sent in. The Show will be held on February 25, 2012. Bob Moritz said if there was anyone bringing a model that needs help bringing it into the hall to let him know so assistance can be arranged. Details of the show were given by Bob. The Skipper inquired as to the whereabouts of the HRSMS banner. John Cheevers said that he might have it.

New Business: The Skipper asked if there was interest in having a banquet this year. A motion was made, seconded and passed to have a banquet with the 24th of March our preferred date. Tom Saunders was asked if he would make the arrangements. The annual picnic was the next item of business. Bill Dangler said that the picnic area in Newport News Park had been reserved for September 8th. Ron Lewis said that due to scheduled events at the museum our usual meeting room would not be available on our March and April meeting dates. After discussion it was decided to move the meeting dates to the first weekend in March and the third weekend in April. Ron said that he would confirm the new dates with the Museum and report back to the group. Discussion was undertaken on the subject of a donation to the Mariners' Museum. Appreciation for the use of the meeting room and the research value of the library was noted. The discussion concluded with a motion to donate \$300.00 the museum library and \$300.00 to the museum's education department. The motion was seconded and passed by the members. There was mention that a number of members would not be at the January meeting. The consensus was that the absences would not affect the business to be conducted.

Show & Tell: Ryland Craze showed the book *Legacy of a Ship Model*, Rob Napier. Bill Dangler showed several miniature planes from Lee Valley tools. John Cheevers showed the glued-lift hull of the steamer *Snark*. John also had the lines

Mystery Photo

Contact John Cheevers by mail, e-mail or telephone if you know what it is. jfcheevers@verizon.net



NOTABLE EVENTS

JANUARY

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Nomination of officers, Presentation: The New England
Maritime Museum, Ron Lewis
14-15 Cabin Fever Expo, York, Pa.

FEBRUARY

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Election of officers
Presentation: Drawing Ship Lines, John Cheevers
25 **IPMS** Old Dominion Open, Richmond, Va.

MARCH

- 3 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Building the Oseberg Viking Ship model,
Tony Clayton
24 **HRSMS** Banquet, Riverwalk, Yorktown

APRIL

- 21 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum
Presentation: Charles W. Morgan--the continuing saga,
George Livingston

MAY

- 12 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JUNE

- 9 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

JULY

- 14 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

AUGUST

- 11 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

SEPTEMBER

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting, Picnic, NN Park

OCTOBER

- 13 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

NOVEMBER

- 10 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

DECEMBER

- 8 **HRSMS** Monthly Meeting: Mariners' Museum

NOTICE

The dates for the March and April meetings have been changed.

The Internet Craftsmanship Museum

Roger Cole has been invited to join the
Craftsmanship Museum.
<http://www.craftsmanshipmuseum.com/>

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plan for the model. Sean Maloon showed his model of the USS Arizona. John Wyld showed his 1943 *USS Independence* a "Comet cradle". Dave Baker showed reduced drawings for Norm Friedman's forthcoming book on Victorian era cruiser design. Gene Berger showed his Arizona built from the Trum-peter kit using aftermarket parts. Bill Altice box of parts and a tube of blocks made by Marvin Bryant. Bill offered a compressor and airbrush for sale. Bill Werling showed a Christmas catalog offering a 100th anniversary *Titanic* model. Stewart Winn showed his Armed Virginia Sloop model.

The meeting was adjourned to a video presentation by Ryland Craze.

HRSMS NAME TAGS

Pin Back \$5.25

Magnetic Back \$7.25

If you need a name tag contact Ryland Craze

E-Mail CKart55@aol.com

or

See him at a meeting

**WATCH, QUARTER
AND
STATION BILL**



Skipper: Ryland Craze (804) 739-8804
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Clerk: Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
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Editors: John Cheevers (757) 591-8955
Bill Clarke (757) 868-6809
Tom Saunders (757) 850-0580
Webmaster: Greg Harrington (757) 930-4615
Chaplain: Alan Frazer (757) 867-7666

THE ANSWER

Mystery Photo 306
USS Prairie State IX-15
Photo No. 80-G-639033
17 June, 1954, New York City