

South Bay Model Shipwrights

Founded by Jean Eckert 1982

Website : <http://www.sbmodelships.com>

The Foghorn

June 2021



Model of a Viking ship found near **Skuldelev**, Denmark built from a Billings Boats kit on display at the **Los Angeles Maritime Museum** in San Pedro, CA.



Future Course Headings...

- **Future meetings: In-person meetings still cancelled until further notice.** Until the Los Altos Public Library announces a reopening date, we will continue our Zoom meetings every two weeks. Our next scheduled meeting will be **Thursday, July 1 at 7 PM.** Keep an eye on your inboxes for Jim Rhetta's announcement and Zoom link information. And take pictures of your projects for show and tell!

- **Museums are starting to open!**

Great News! I see the museums are starting to open and have been doing so for the past couple of months! **For the most part, masks are required and being fully vaccinated is helpful.** To see what museums are open, I recommend checking their websites and/or calling. Check the museum list in the included **SBMS Resource Guide** for contact information.

- **Entry deadline, August 2, 2021. 2021 NRG Photographic Ship Model Competition.**

The **Nautical Research Guild Board** is proud to announce that the **2021 Photographic Ship Model Competition** is accepting entries. **Entries must be received by August 2nd, 2021. Entry fee is \$30 to be paid via the NRG store.** The last NRG photo competition was in 2015 so you have had six years to build your masterpiece!

All the photos will be submitted on-line...no more downloading files to a DVD or driving to the post office. Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded to the top three models in the categories of Apprentice, Journeyman and Master builder. There will also be a Best of Show medal awarded. In addition, achievement ribbons will be awarded on a point basis. Every model entered will receive a written review of their model from our judges.

The Competition is open to **Regular NRG Members in good standing only.** To see all the details and enter your model, go to <https://thenrg.org/contests>. We look forward to seeing your model photographs soon.

- **Cancelled-October, 2021. Nautical Research Guild Annual Convention, Oxnard, CA.**

The in-person NRG convention for this year has been cancelled as the problems with the coronavirus pandemic are anticipated to continue to the end of this year. It has been rescheduled still at the **Channel Islands Maritime Museum** (Fig. 1) for October, 2022. Check the NRG website for more news on this.

A virtual visit to this wonderful little museum can still be done via its website at;

<https://cimmvc.org>

and there are several very nice video tours of the museum on YouTube as well.



Fig. 1. Model of French 64 gun Ship of the Line, ***Le Protecteur***, Channel Islands Maritime Museum, Oxnard, CA.

- **2021 NRG annual conference will be held virtually later this year.** More on this later on the NRG website.



Maritime Matters of the Month

• ***Clotilda, the Last Ship bringing Slaves from Africa to America is found in Alabama.(Ken Lum)***

An interesting recent episode of the news program, **60 Minutes**, informed me about the discovery of the last ship to bring African slaves to America in 1860. Named the ***Clotilda***, its presumed wreckage was discovered in 2019 at the bottom of the **Mobile River** just north of Mobile Bay and the city of Mobile in Alabama (Fig.2).

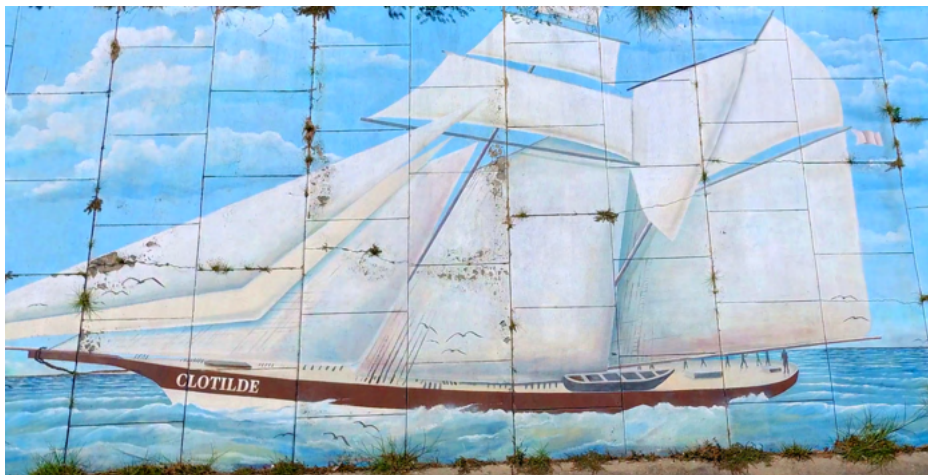


Fig. 2. Mural of the ***Clotilda*** in Mobile, Alabama
(Mobile.org)

The story of the ***Clotilda*** begins with a wealthy Mobile shipyard owner and steamboat captain named **Timothy Meaher** who built the ship in 1855-56. She was a two-masted topsail schooner of 86 feet length with a beam of 23 feet and a copper-sheathed hull..

Meaher got word that there was African tribal warfare going on in West Africa and that the King of **Dahomey** (now Benin) on the west African coast was offering to sell captives as slaves. Meaher sent the ***Clotilda*** under the command of Captain William Foster to the African port of **Whydah** where he arrived on May 15, 1860. There he loaded 110 slaves to be transported to Mobile. (The name, **Whydah**, is familiar as it was also the name of the ship commanded by the pirate, **Samuel "Black Sam" Bellamy** known as the '**Robin Hood of the Sea**' as discussed in the **February, 2021 Foghorn**)

At this time, the transport of slaves from Africa to the US was declared illegal by US Congress with the passage of the **1807 Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves**. Those caught smuggling slaves to the US were subject to various penalties, including capital punishment (only one slave ship captain was ever actually executed for slave smuggling). This Act was passed around the same time as the **1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act** by the British Parliament which established the **Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron** to interdict illegal slave ships sailing from Africa.

Nonetheless, the use of and trade in slaves of African descent was still legal within the boundaries of the US. A boom in cotton production in the US South fueled this activity and incentivized the smuggling. This was not to end until the conclusion of the American Civil War.

Fearing prosecution for smuggling, Captain Foster clandestinely debarked his cargo of slaves near Mobile, and he subsequently had the **Clotilda** towed upriver to be burned and sunk to dispose of this evidence. The slaves were then sold to various backers of the **Clotilda** venture. In 1861, the federal government prosecuted Meaher and Foster in Mobile for illegal slave importation, but the case was dismissed for lack of evidence from the ship or its manifest, and perhaps because of the outbreak of the Civil War.

After emancipation, many of the slaves from the **Clotilda** settled in the Mobile area and founded the town of **Africatown**. It grew to a population to 12,000 attracted by a paper mill and other industries established after World War II. Many continued to practice Takpa tribal customs and the Yoruba language into the 1950s. But since the end of the 20th Century, these industries have closed down and the population has declined to around 2,000. Perhaps around 100 are considered direct descendants of the **Clotilda** slaves. In 2012 the **Africatown Historic District** was recognized and listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#). Three of the oldest inhabitants who were considered to be members of the ship's original slave population, were **Cudjo Lewis** who died in 1935, **Redoshi (Sally Smith)** who passed in 1937, and [Matilda McCrear](#) (no photo available) who had survived until 1940. (Fig. 3)



Fig. 3. Photos of **Cudjo Lewis** (left) and **Redoshi (Sally Smith)** (right) (Wikipedia)

The ***Clotilda***, herself, was not found until 2019 by a reporter and historian, **Ben Raines**, and verified by people from the archeology company, **SEARCH, Inc.** (Fig. 4) Artifacts are still being recovered from this wreck of the last slave ship to carry slaves to America with the intent of establishing a museum.

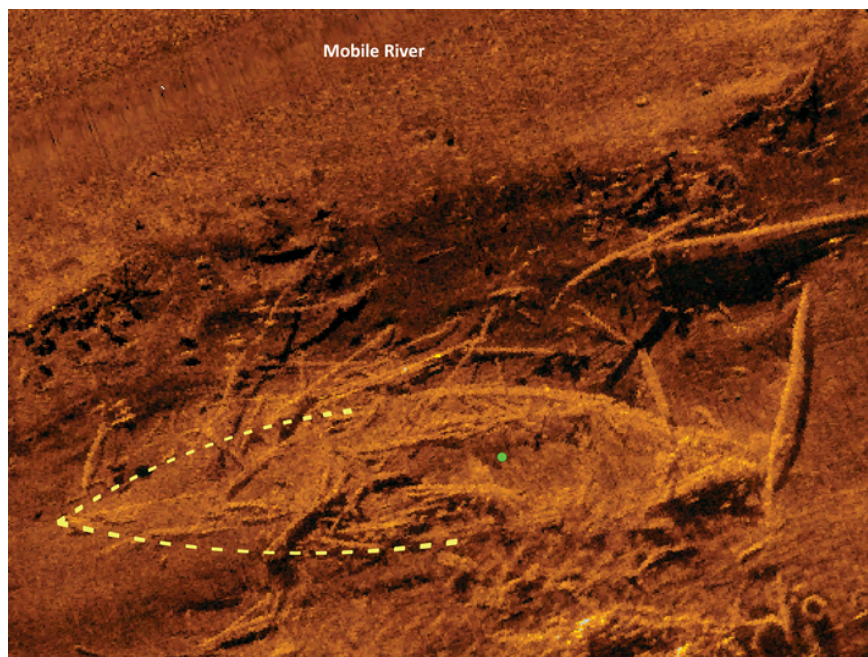


Fig. 4. Image of the ***Clotilda*** wreck with side-scan sonar. (Courtesy SEARCH, Inc.)

• **Video of talk on modelling Japanese Coastal Vessels by Clare Hess is posted.**

A lecture by our SBMS member, **Clare Hess**, on building models of Japanese coastal vessels given in May for the **San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park** has been posted at:

<https://vimeo.com/548942352>

A great opportunity to learn more about boat building in Japan! (Fig. ,5.) You will need to scroll down to around 26 minutes into the video to get to the start of the lecture.



Fig. 5. *Higaki Kaisen*, Edo Period Japanese Transport (Clare Hess)



Methods to Our Maritime Madness

• An Improved Seizing and Serving Machine (Ken Lum)

Seizing and serving in ship rigging is the wrapping of thin line around a doubling to form an eye or becket such as when stopping a block or when wrapping a thin line around a length of standing rigging line in order to reinforce it against chafing and unraveling. (Fig. 6).

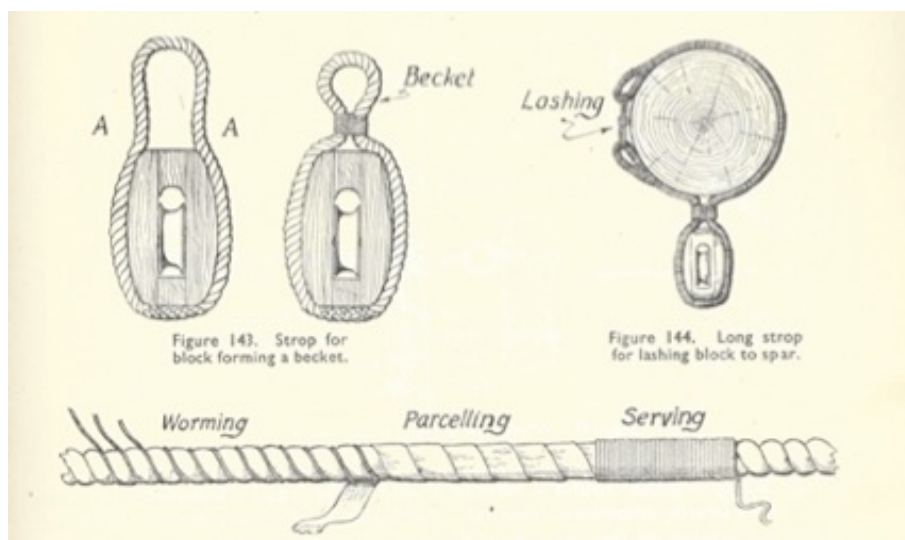


Fig. 6. Seizing and serving rigging line.
(Longridge, The Anatomy of Nelson's Ships)

This is usually done with a hand operated machine which rotates the line between two clamps which are geared to rotate in unison so that the line being wrapped is not twisted.

The need to make gun tackles for my carronade model led me to make use of a seizing machine to seize line around stopped blocks. Initially, I used a very elegantly made seizing machine made by the late Frank Walsh for Jean Eckert which I have subsequently inherited. On using it, however, I found that I did not have a way to wrap the excess line so that it would not end up wrapping awkwardly around the chuck which held the alligator clip on the right side (Fig.7)

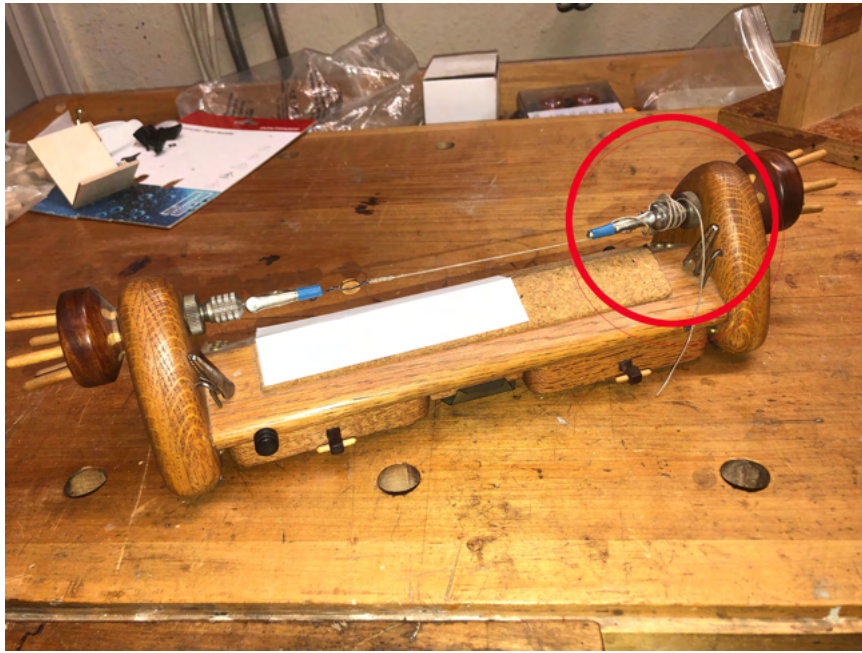


Fig. 7. Serving machine made by Frank Walsh showing how excess line was getting wrapped awkwardly around the right alligator clip holder.

So I took a look at a rope serving machine offered as a kit from Syren Models called the **Syren Serv-o-Matic** (Fig. 8).

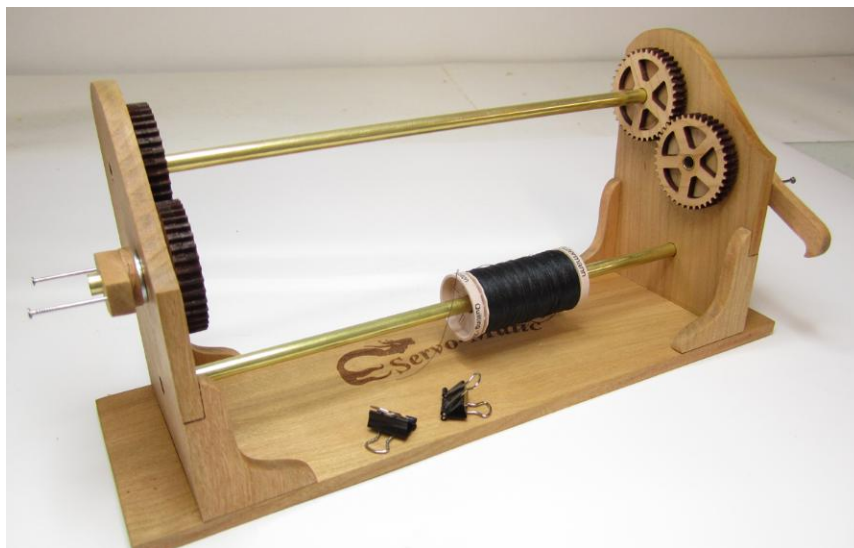


Fig. 8. **Syren Serv-o-Matic** rigging serving machine (Syren Models)

This device offered a way of wrapping excess line by feeding it through the hollow tubing of the axes of rotation and then wrapping the line around two nails afixed to each of the external handles on either side of the machine. However, I was worried that doing things that way would cause kinks to form in the line around each nail that would have to be

straightened out later on. I thought of a way to solve this problem by installing a couple of circular thread spools on these handles to take up the excess line instead in a way that did not form kinks. I found such spools from Amazon (where else?).

As it turned out, I had another serving machine obtained from another person's estate that could be modified to take these circular thread spools. (Fig.9).

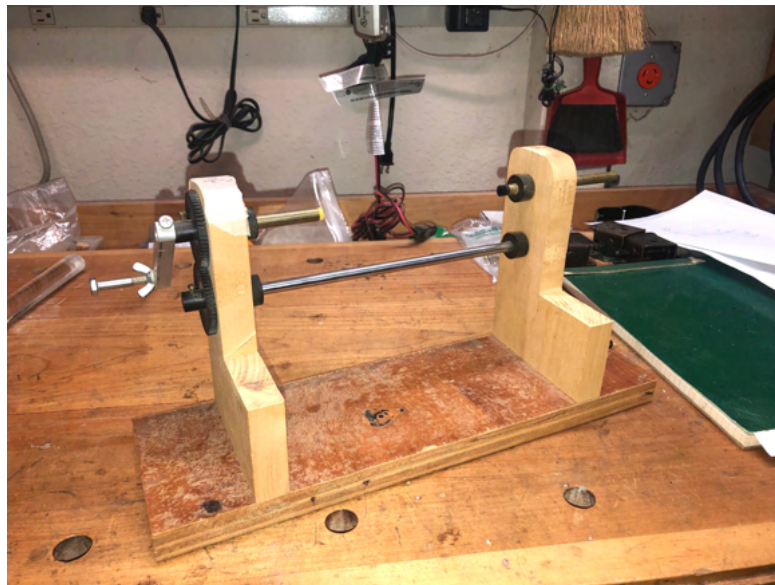


Fig. 9. Another seizing machine in my stash as it came to me.

And so, I added alligator clips, a couple of plastic thread spools to both sides of the machine and a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-20 threaded rod to provide for a spool of serving line conveniently placed in the way seen with the Syren Serv-o-Matic. (Fig. 10).

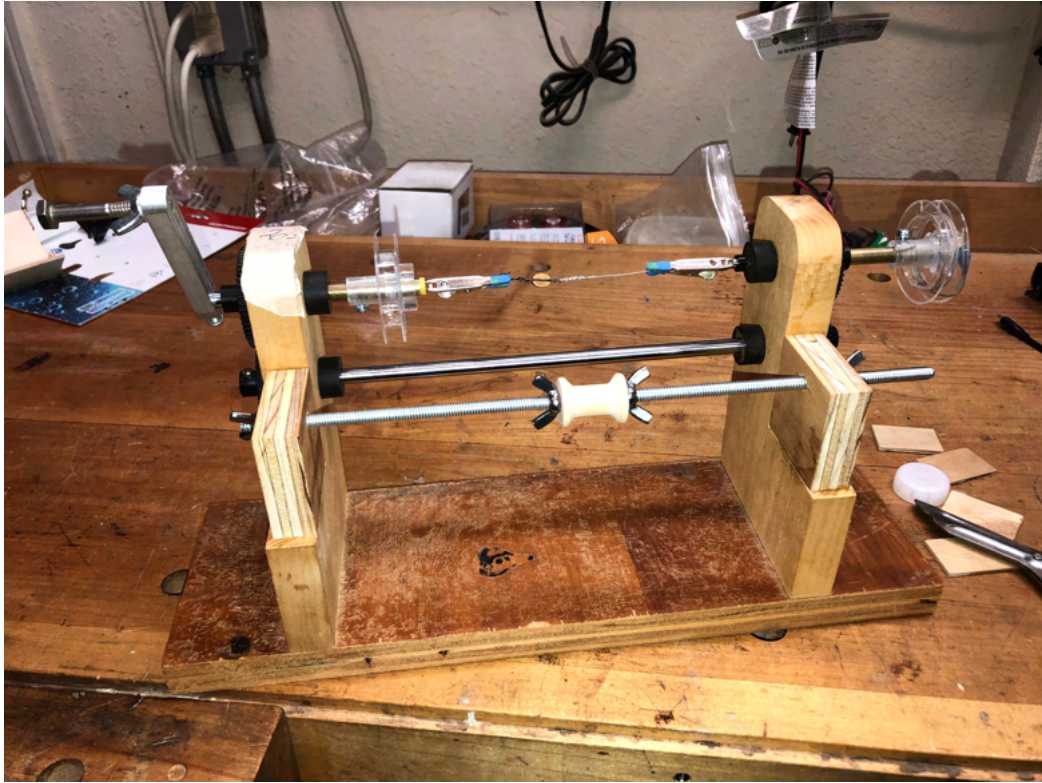


Fig. 10. Modified serving machine with plastic spools to take up excess line and a wooden spool mounted in the front on a $\frac{1}{4}$ "-20 threaded rod for line that is used for serving.

The serving line spool can have its position adjusted using wing nuts to constrain its movement on the threaded rod which is an improvement over the Syren Serv-o-Matic. For those in need of a serving machine, the Syren Serv-o-Matic looks like the best commercial unit out there and it can be modified to take on circular thread spools such as what I used on my modification. It can be purchased for \$57 from Syren Models.

<https://syrenshipmodelcompany.com/serving-machine.php>



*Under Construction at the Model Ship-
yard*

I do not recall receiving any pictures of current projects this time around, but I am out of time and will get some requests out earlier next month. Have a nice July 4th everyone and will see you later this week!



SBMS Club Officers

President	Jim Rhetta	email: jmrhetta@aol.com
Vice President And Newsletter Editor	Ken Lum	email: lum40@comcast.net
Treasurer	Jacob Cohn	email: jcohnster@gmail.com
Harbor Master	George Sloup	email: george.p.sloup@outlook.com
Webmaster	Jim Tortorici	email: oday20@earthlink.net



2021 Meeting Dates: All in-person club meetings are cancelled by the Los Altos Public Library until further notice. Instead, we are conducting Zoom meetings as an alternative. Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 1. Stay tuned for further news.



2021 Annual Club Membership

Send in your 2021 Club Membership with attached renewal form! Submit a \$20 check made out to South Bay Model Shipwrights and mail to Jacob Cohn, 726 7th Ave, Redwood City, CA 94063. Welcome Aboard!

2021 Membership Form

Make check out for annual membership of \$20.00 to South Bay Model Shipwrights and mail to Jacob Cohn, 726 7th Ave, Redwood City, CA 94063

Print your name _____ Phone# _____



Address

Receive our Foghorn newsletter by email? Yes ___ No___

Email address _____

To order a club name badge, add \$15.00 to your check and print your name exactly as it should appear on the badge