

NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY FIGUREHEADS  
FROM THE MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM COLLECTION

A Thesis  
by  
CAROL AILEEN OLSEN

Submitted to the Graduate College of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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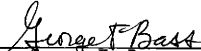
Major Subject: Anthropology

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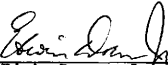
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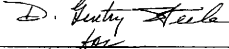
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## ABSTRACT

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the  
Mystic Seaport Museum Collection. (May 1984)

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For over 5,000 years the bows of ships and boats have been decorated, yet the history of ship decoration is scarcely examined. This thesis presents examples of the variety of bow decorations from around the world from the 3rd millenium B.C. to current times and shows several of their different meanings.

An especially close look is taken at 20 of the 19th and 20th century figureheads at Mystic Seaport Museum in Mystic, Connecticut. Several of those carvings have been identified through this research, and documentation of Mystic Seaport's collection has otherwise been considerably improved. The methods used for researching Mystic Seaport's carvings are shown and a vocabulary has been developed for their stylistic and technical aspects. This vocabulary facilitates comparing similar figureheads, which is a central theme of this thesis.

Additionally, the 19th century shipcarvers' trade is outlined including training, work environment, materials and how they were used, preparing and delivering figureheads, fastening carvings to their ships, and finally, the payments and contracts involved in shipcarving.

Figureheads throughout history have reflected the social, political, economic, and artistic climate of their day. They are often symbols of national importance or show a culture's past or contemporary heroes. In this sense figureheads become an important mirror of their time and their importance in history should not be overlooked.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my friend  
Lawrence G. Lossing  
with affection and thanks.

Art in stark reality should  
mean the study of life,  
for what goes on about us,  
or within us, is the stuff  
that art is made of.

Malvina Hoffman  
Sculpture Inside & Out

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BOW DECORATION

Figureheads have decorated watercraft for at least 5,500 years with stunning variety and varying meaning within different cultures, but there has been surprisingly little study of these important ship decorations. Although it is the primary purpose of this thesis to present new information about some of the 19th and 20th century figureheads in the Mystic Seaport Museum collection, consideration will first be given to a few examples of figureheads from around the world.

Antlered heads are depicted on vessels in prehistoric Egyptian rock-carvings of c. 3500 B.C.,<sup>1</sup> perhaps serving some religious purpose or imbuing the vessels with animal strength.

The excavated Cheops ship, dated to ca. 2600 B.C., shows a more refined bow decoration (Fig. 1). The stem is carved in the shape of papyrus, not only a symbol of early Egypt, but also the material of which earlier Egyptian boats were built, something the carver may have sought to recapture. Over the next 2,000 years in the eastern Mediterranean, proliferating bow decorations included pharaohs, flowers, birds, lions, butterflies, and many other images;<sup>2</sup> the handsome bas relief from Khorsabad shows that some Phoenician ships bore horsehead

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The style and format of this thesis are those followed by The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration, which is published by Academic Press Inc. Limited, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DX, England, in quarterly editions; see Blackmann, D.J., 1982, Ancient harbours in the Mediterranean. Part I. IJNA, 11.2: 79-104.



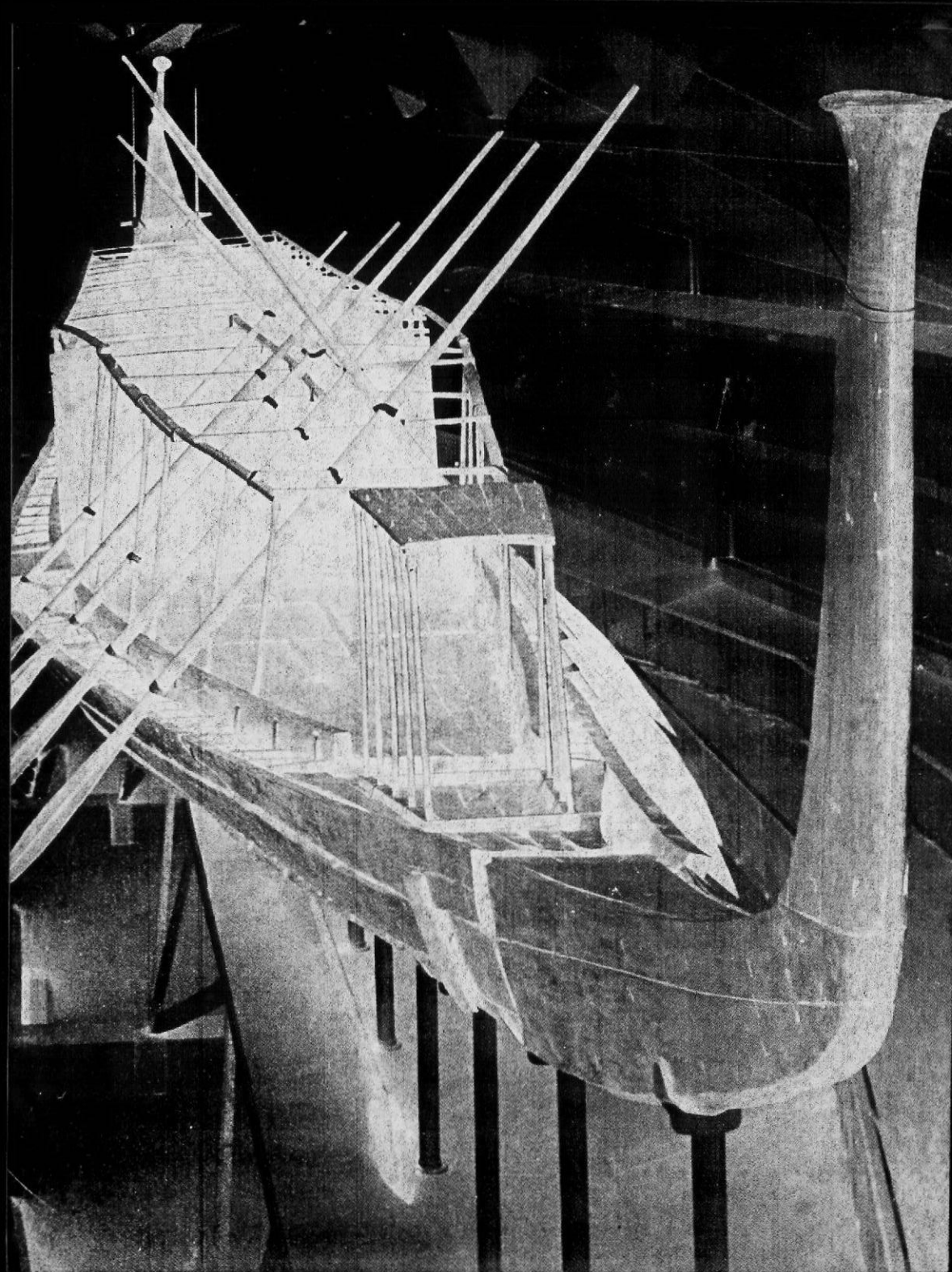


Figure 1. Carved papyriform stem decoration on Cheops vessel, c. 2600 B.C. (Jenkins, 1980: fig. 79).

decorations.<sup>3</sup> The full significance of several of these decorations is still to be determined, but increasingly my research on later ship figureheads shows that bow decorations are not frivolously chosen and that often there are several levels of meaning to them. I suspect this was true in earlier historical periods as well.

By 750 B.C., Greek vase paintings show ships with eyes, known as oculi, decorating their bows (Fig. 2). Intended in many cultures to help vessels see their way, oculi are found along coastal regions of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Even vessels launched in California from 1939 to 1941 are reported to have had oculi,<sup>4</sup> and some Americans still refer to a bow as "the eyes of the ship."<sup>5</sup>

Roman warships and merchantmen carried decorative carvings, paintings, or bronze plaques on the sides of their bows or stemposts which related to the ship names.<sup>6</sup> On merchant ships, the bow carvings seem to relate to their cargoes as well; for example, carvings of Liber, god of wine, are found on ships likely carrying wine (Fig. 3). A large Roman grain ship named for the nature goddess Isis was described by the second century A.D. sophist, Lucian: "How gently the poop curves up, with a little golden goose below.... Corresponding at the opposite end, the prow juts right out in front, with figures of the goddess Isis, after whom the ship is named, on either side." These, as well as other decorations and features of Isis, made Lucian conclude: "All very wonderful to me."<sup>7</sup>

The famous Viking ship excavated in 1904 from a land burial at Oseberg, Norway, is dated to ca. A.D. 800 partially by the style of its bow carvings (Fig. 4),<sup>8</sup> and provides an example of northern medieval bow decoration. Its beautiful coiled-snake figurehead and the intertwined animals decorating its stem down to just



Figure 2. Oculus decorates ship bow in an Attic vase painting of the 5th c. B.C. (Bass, 1972: 57, fig. 11).

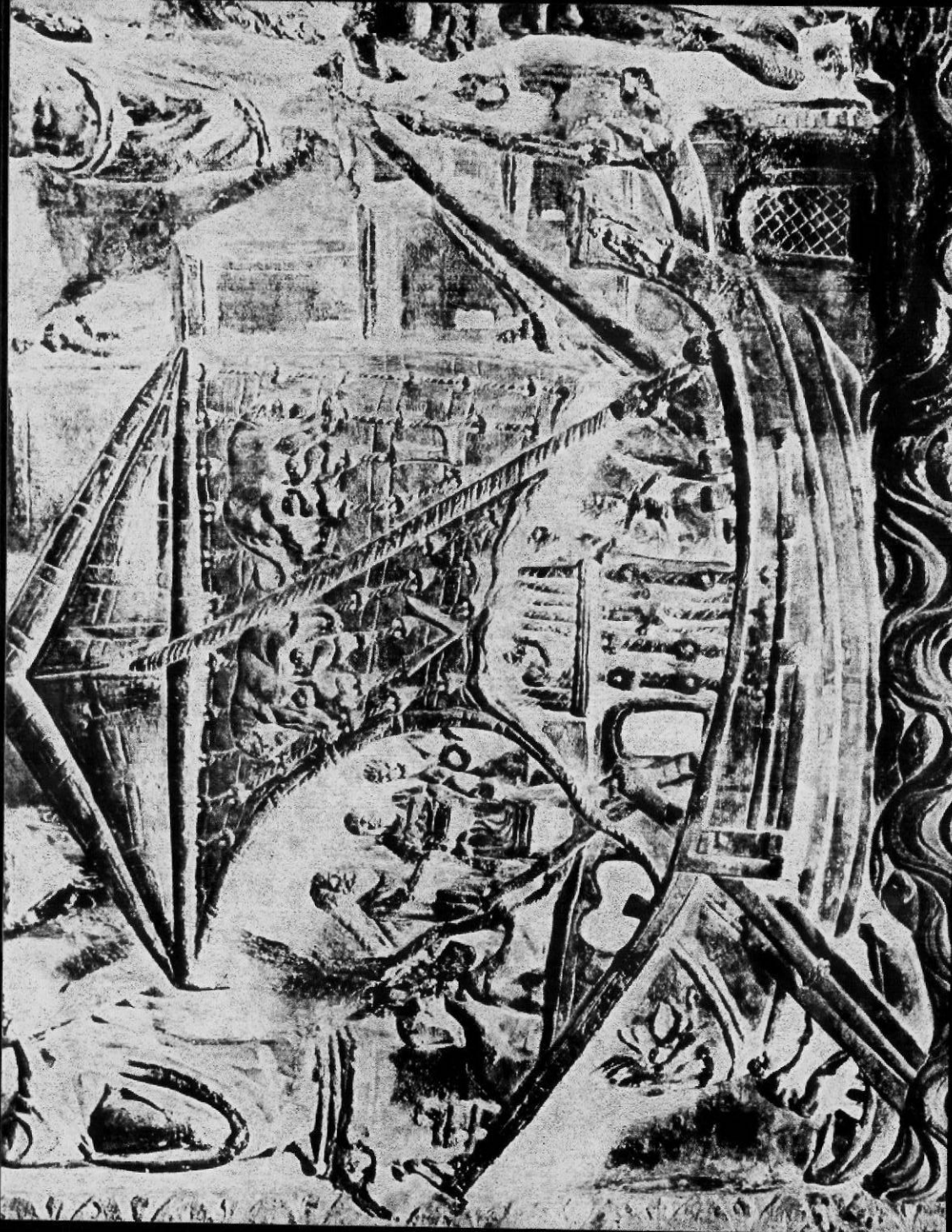


Figure 3. Liber, god of wine, is shown in relief on this Roman ship stem (Bass, 1972: 86, fig.16).





Figure 4. A coiled-snake figurehead and intertwined animals decorate the stem of the Viking ship excavated at Oseberg, Norway (Bass, 1972: 172,fig.11).

below the waterline are in the same art style as contemporaneous decorations on Norwegian doorways, tombs, tools, and many other objects.<sup>9</sup>

Although many cultures' shipcarvings can be compared to their other decorative art, as just seen, all bow decorations are not designed for beauty. According to observers in 1833 and 1843, Marquesans displayed on their canoes the skulls of enemies they had slain in battle,<sup>10</sup> and in 1859 Truk Islanders reportedly were raising sand-piper figureheads as a proclamation of war (Fig. 5).<sup>11</sup>

In Malekula, New Hebrides, boat owners rely on figureheads to bring them luck. Three of these carvings provide different degrees of luck, and rituals surround their acquisition. The distinctions between these carvings would seem negligible to the casual observer, but they are very important to the people who use them. The first is a solub e res (Fig. 6A). Anyone has the right to it without payment. The opening in the beak of this abstracted bird ends at the first bend. This specific part is different on the second figurehead type, a solub wok-wak (Fig. 6B) where the opening continues down the neck. This ensures greater luck than the first type, and the boat owner must purchase the right to this second type from someone already having one. Type three (Fig. 6C) is said to be used by older boat owners who want something affording even greater luck. This type of figurehead sometimes represents a pig or other animal, and a financial arrangement must be made for it to be copied from someone already owning one.<sup>12</sup>

Figureheads are thought to strengthen boats in the Squally Islands of the Bismarck Archipelago. On the rounded bows of some canoes (Fig. 7), a tiny beaklike knob (urugila) represents a bird which "drinks the water and then flies strong and fast, as will the canoe."

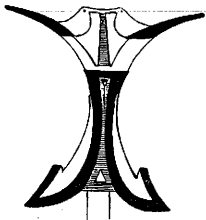


Figure 5. Sandpiper figurehead,  
Truk Islands (Haddon  
and Hornell, Vol. I,  
1936: fig. 283. Used  
by permission of  
Bishop Museum Press).

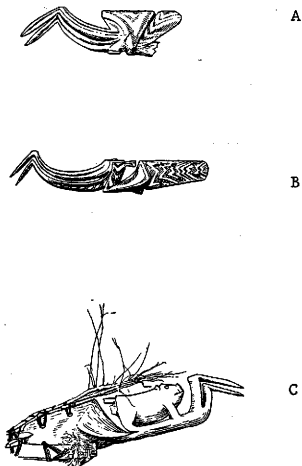


Figure 6. Figureheads from Malekula, New Hebrides. A. Solub e res figurehead. B. Solub wok-wak figurehead. C. Pig figurehead. (Haddon and Hornell, Vol. II, 1936: 28, figs. b, a, and c. Used by permission of Bishop Museum Press.)



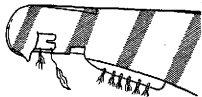


Figure 7. Figurehead from the Squally Islands of the Bismarck Archipelago (Haddon and Hornell, Vol. II, 1936: 147, fig. 91a. Used by permission of Bishop Museum Press.)

Behind the urugila is an opening with a tonguelike projection called pakoto (the mouth of a bird); the projection represents the tongue of a crocodile. Special leaves are tied below the pakoto in such a way that they will sway in the wind "to give buoyancy so that the bow will ride above the waves," and pieces of broken fishline or netting are attached to sway in the wind and sing in order to attract the fish.<sup>13</sup>

Exotic-looking dragon figureheads (Fig. 8) are still used in the Orient in the seasonal dragon-boat races which began long ago to commemorate the 4th c. B.C. death of the famous Chinese poet and statesman Ch'u Yüan.<sup>14</sup> Although well loved by the Chinese people, circumstances caused Ch'u Yüan to be dismissed from his government position and, in despair, he drowned himself in the Milo River. The people were so distressed that they sent out boats in search of his body, and a re-enactment of this search became an annual ceremony during which offerings of boiled rice in bamboo tubes were thrown into the river. One day, however, Ch'u Yüan's apparition complained that the offerings were being eaten by an evil dragon, and that to frighten the dragon the rice should be wrapped in silk and then tied with five-colored threads.<sup>15</sup> As the Oriental dragon-boat races continue today, the dragon figureheads help retain the story of the origin of the races.

On the other side of the globe are some of the most interesting examples of figureheads, the only zooanthropomorphic ones known, found along the São Francisco River in Brazil (Fig. 9). They began about 1880, shortly after the area unsuccessfully petitioned the government for the status of province rather than comarca (small county). It seems that, in order to increase their own prestige, the people then began to emulate the decorated bows they saw on oceangoing vessels in the country's large harbors.<sup>16</sup>

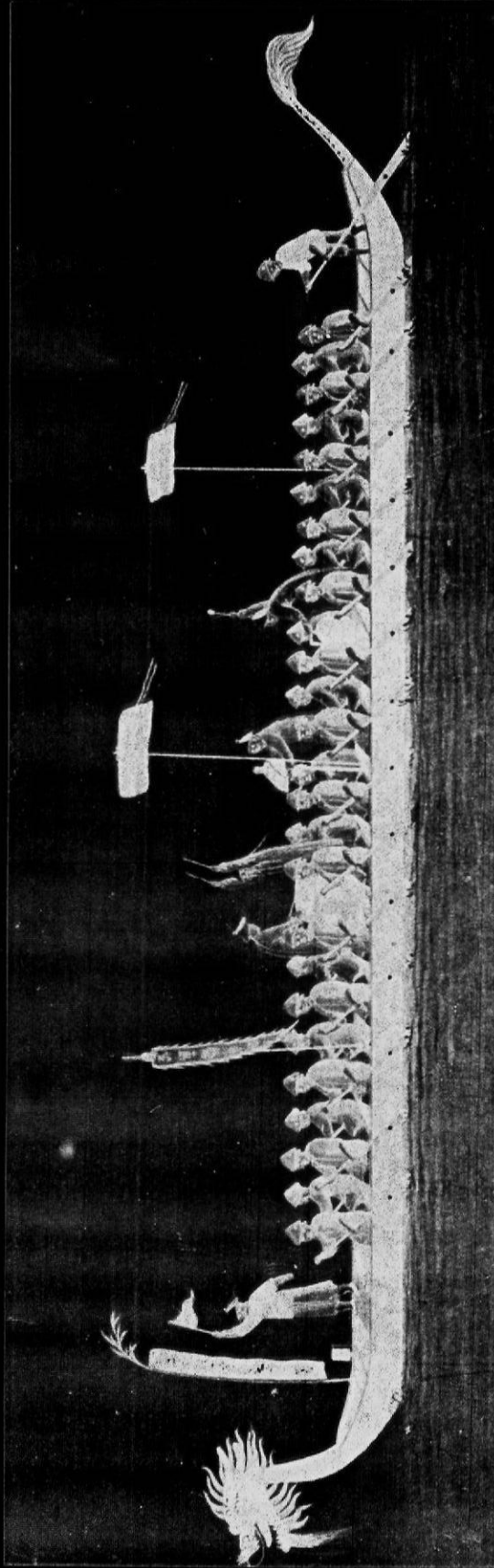


Figure 8. Dragon figurehead used in Oriental dragon-boat races (Frere-Cook, ed., 1966: 293, fig. 22).



Figure 9. Zooanthropomorphic figurehead, São Francisco River, Brazil (Pardal, 1974: 71,fig.44).

If we imagine that in nearly every region of the world's oceans and rivers, boats have been decorated for thousands of years, each a little different from any other, and each with a significance peculiar to its culture and owner, the great range in the subject of ship figureheads begins to suggest itself. For the scope of this thesis, however, we turn to ship decoration of Western culture, which became most embellished in the 17th century. Our evidence can be taken from much of western Europe and includes the Dutch drawings by the van de Veldes (Fig. 10), the recently excavated Swedish warship Vasa of 1628,<sup>17</sup> the French stern designs by Jean Berain, who was court artist to Louis XIV,<sup>18</sup> and English engravings of ships such as the 1637 Sovereign of the Seas.<sup>19</sup> These lavishly decorated vessels were intended as symbols of the glory of their nations and specifically the power of their kings. Nonetheless, one audacious ship captain is said to have had the heavy stern carvings sawn from his ship while at sea, in order to improve the vessel's sailing qualities.<sup>20</sup> Convention says that his heavy carvings may have been designed by the famous mid-17th century French artist Pierre Puget, who was criticized in his day for caring more about the extensive display of sculpture than about the maneuverability of ships.

Evidence of continuing elaborate ornamentation in 18th century Europe can be seen in English Admiralty models (Fig. 11) and French figurehead drawings (Fig. 12), while some American bow ornamentation of this time, such as that on Rattlesnake (Fig. 13), appears more simple. But whether elaborately or simply executed, 18th century figureheads typically have the posture and bent knees shown in these examples, which Sutherland's Shipbuilder's Assistant, published in 1711, shows was part of a mathematical calculation for the appearance of the entire ship

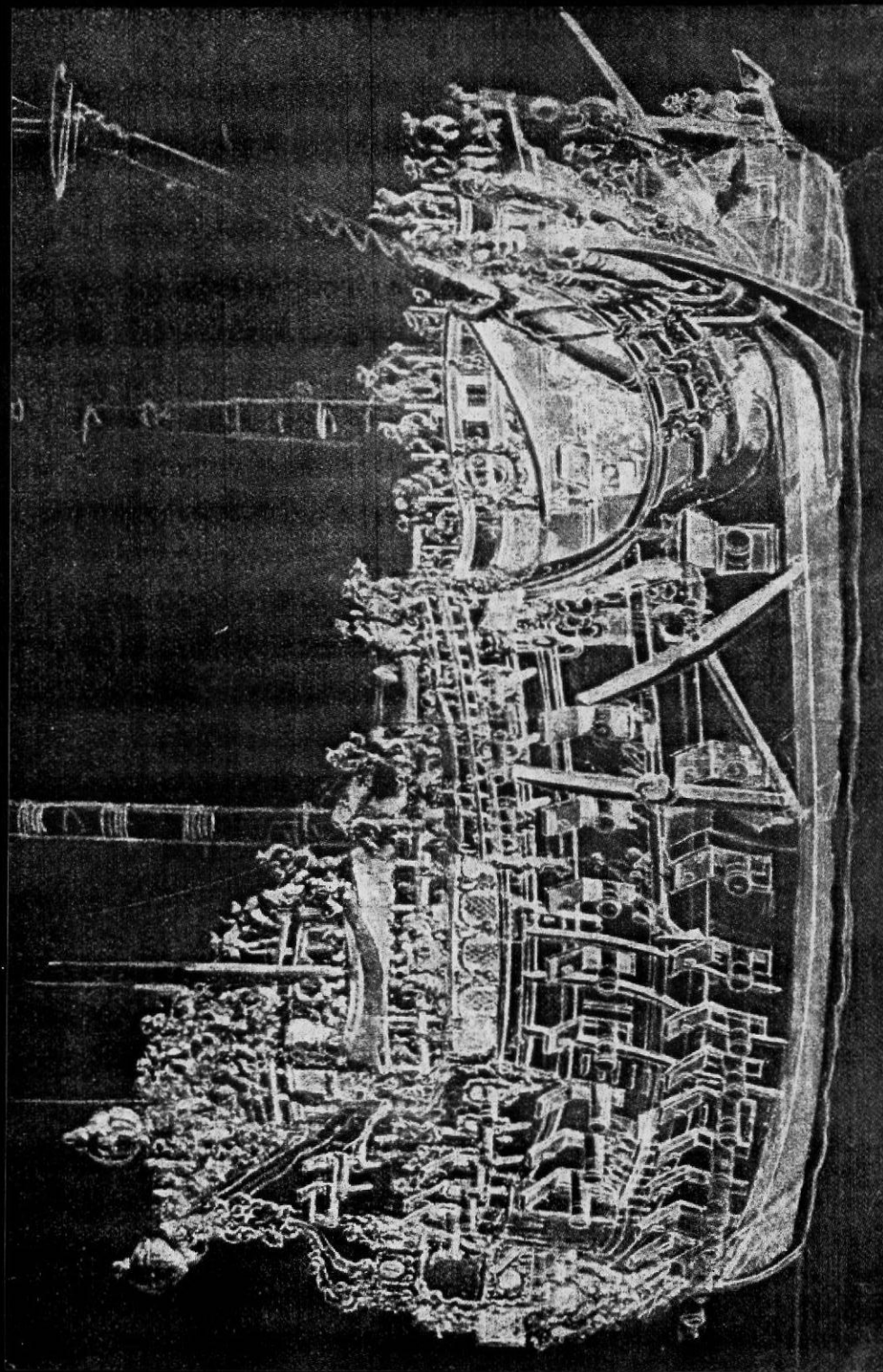


Figure 10. Van de Velde ship drawing (Laughton, 1973: p1.12).

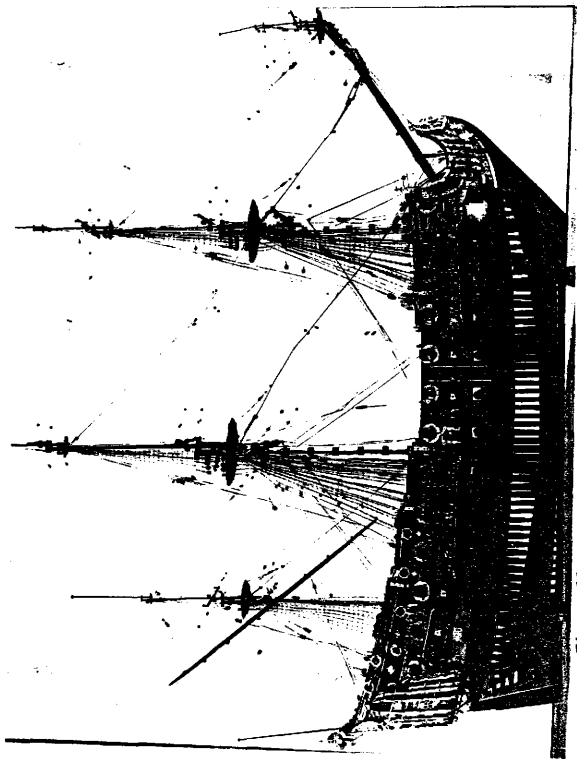
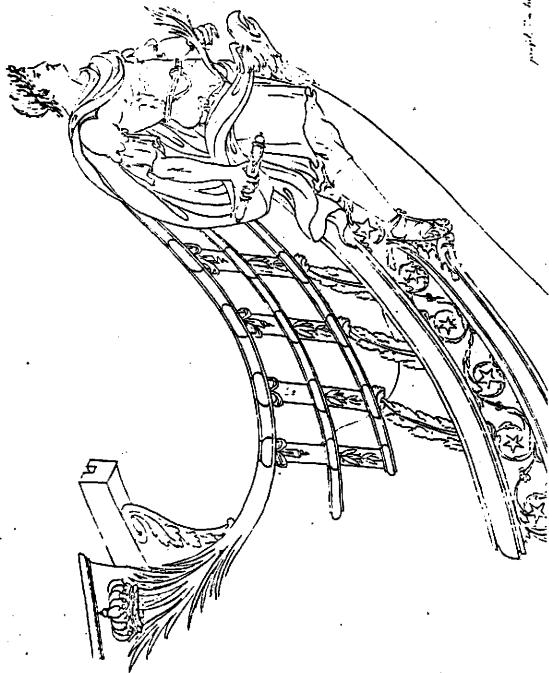


Figure 11. H.M.S. Burford, 1722, English Admiralty model.  
(Illustration provided by Mystic Seaport.)



*pencil in the background of the sketch*

Figure 12. Pen and pencil sketch of Roman figurehead by French artist Y.S. Collet (Mystic Seaport Museum Collection).



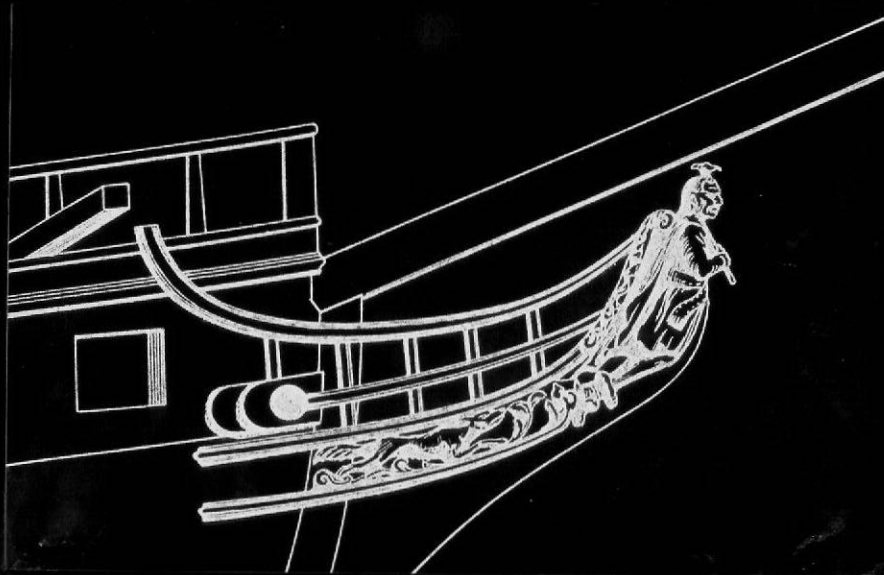


Figure 13. Indian figurehead on American privateer Rattlesnake, 1781 (Brewington, 1962: fig.14).

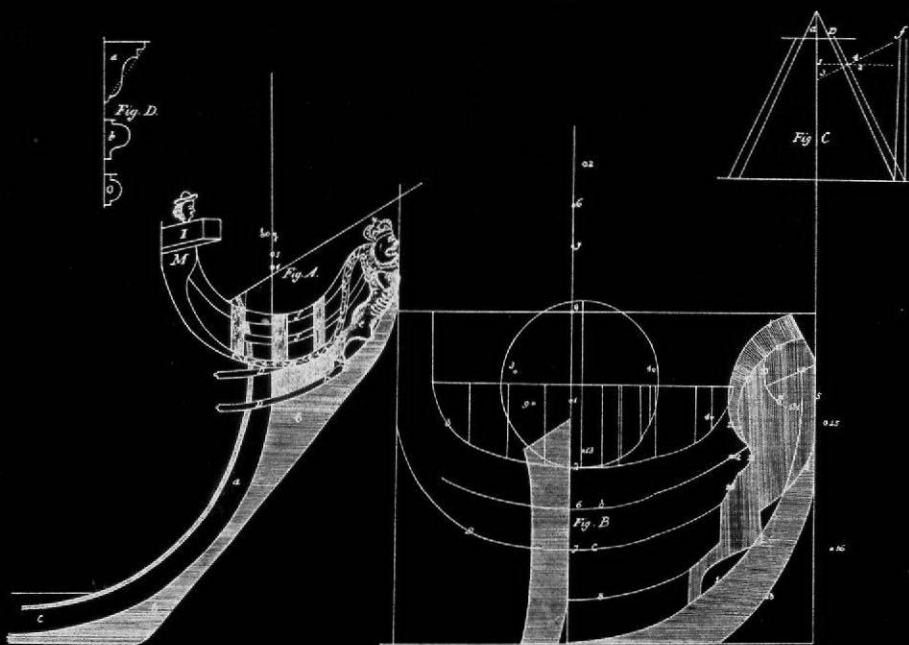


Figure 14. Mathematical calculations determining bow and figurehead shapes (Brewington, 1962: fig.3).

bow (Fig. 14 at page 18). This suggests that mathematical bases could also exist for the designs of some 19th century figureheads.

#### Reasons for 19th Century Figureheads

Before examining Mystic Seaport's 19th and 20th century carvings, we should consider some of the many reasons why shipowners cared to have figureheads.

Ship identification was surely one of the advantages of using bow ornaments, as we find custom houses recording figureheads in their official vessel descriptions (Figure 15). Also, by readily distinguishing one vessel from another, figureheads helped those 19th century passengers who were unable to read ships' names to locate specific vessels.

Further, shipowners enhanced family prestige and honored family members when they used portrait figureheads of their wives, sons, and daughters, and carved portraits of shipowners themselves were not uncommon on 19th century bows.

There were also financial considerations. Shipbuilders contended that decorating vessels could add \$2,000 to a ship's sale price abroad,<sup>21</sup> and a well-fitted and handsome vessel surely must have been an advantage in attracting passenger and cargo business.

As figureheads are more closely studied, they seem often to serve more than one purpose. For example, Chaa-Sze (Tea Felicity), a tea clipper trading between London and Canton in the late 19th century, carried a Chinaman figurehead, behind which tea cups were carved in the trailboards.<sup>22</sup> The decoration thus not only corresponded to the name of the vessel and identified the cargo, but it likely also flattered the Cantonese with whom business was being conducted.

I certify that the Ship Robin Palmer owned  
by Charles Martin has three part of three weeks  
that her length is ninety six feet height below  
her main twenty eight feet her height four  
teen feet and that she has three hundred  
seventeen tons of stuff. That she has a square  
stem no quarter work. Timber is for quarter  
Galleon a negro figure head. —

I agree to the above. The 3<sup>d</sup> Day of July 1803  
By man James  
Lawson

Figure 15. Custom house record mentioning a negro figurehead, 1793 (Newport Historical Society.)

But finally, and perhaps predominantly, there seems little question that once a figurehead was on the bow of its ship, it became a good luck emblem, which the crew expected would protect the ship.<sup>23</sup> Nineteenth and 20th century poems and prose about figureheads attest to their popularity, as do several surviving photographs which show crewmembers posing with the figureheads on their ships.

It is because figureheads were often cherished carvings with many levels of meaning that they have been saved in collections such as the one at Mystic Seaport Museum.

## CHAPTER II

## HISTORIES OF MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM FIGUREHEADS

Although many figureheads were important enough to have been saved in the 19th century, subsequent decades saw them sold as antiques and shipped to new owners around the world. Typically, by the time figureheads arrived at 20th century museums, their histories were unknown. Almost never is the wood inscribed with a date, ship name or carver's name, and thus museums often simply label these ornaments "Unidentified Figurehead - 19th Century." It now appears, however, that a great deal can be done to recover the histories of unidentified figureheads, especially by finding similar carvings whose histories are known. The following chapters not only will make stylistic comparisons, but also will emphasize the historical and social contexts of these important bow decorations.

The following 20 figureheads were selected for research from among the approximately 75 figureheads in Mystic Seaport's collection for their variety in size, costume, appearance and, when known, their vessel types. The carvings which remain tentatively identified are referred to in this text within quotation marks. I continue to use these names, albeit in quotation marks, rather than to label the figures "Unidentified" or to refer to them by descriptive names, such as "Woman with Binoculars" or "Woman Holding Roses" (as I had planned in 1981 to do with these carvings), because as the following story about the "Belva Lockwood" figurehead shows, the names by which carvings were early known can sometimes prove years later to be significant. I do not want to risk losing knowledge of the early names

by which figureheads were known.

1. "Eelva Lockwood" figurehead. In 1951 a female figurehead was acquired by Mystic Seaport (Fig. 16). She was said to represent a 19th century woman named Belva Lockwood, but Museum records indicate that no vessel by that name could be found in Lloyd's Register or other available sources. On the assumption that the name was incorrect, the carving was labeled "Unidentified."

Early in 1982, however, I found portrait drawings and photographs of a woman named Belva Lockwood.<sup>24</sup> She was the first woman ever nominated for President of the United States (Fig. 17) and she closely resembles Mystic Seaport's figurehead. Belva Lockwood ran for the Equal Rights Party in 1884, and thus her image as a figurehead may have decorated a ship with a political name, perhaps something like Equal Rights, a name found in latter 19th century shipping records.

The figurehead appears to be in the same style as that on the 294-ton, 3-masted schooner Mary B. Wellington (Fig. 18), which was built in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1883. I believe the Mary B. Wellington photograph provides a good indication of how the "Belva Lockwood" carving looked on the bow of her vessel.

2. Eunice H. Adams figurehead. For several decades, this bust carving (Fig. 19) was unidentified at Mystic Seaport Museum. I was able to discover from which ship she came through the following circumstances.

I saw at the Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts, a portrait stern carving (Fig. 20) which looked similar to this figurehead. The stern carving was labeled "From the



Figure 16. "Belva Lockwood" figurehead, Mystic Seaport Museum. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

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FOR VICE-PRESIDENT.  
SARAHETTA L. STOW.



BELVA A. LOCKWOOD.

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III. We will not support any candidate who is not a native-born citizen, nor one who has not been long enough in our country to be thoroughly acquainted with our people and their relations with other countries, especially with the United and Great Britain.  
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Treasurer: Mrs. J. E. Chapman, 1111 Broadway, New York, N. Y.  
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**Equal-Rights Platform** will be provided for women and men. The *Woman's Herald or Liberty* will be provided for women and men. The *Woman's Herald or Liberty* will be provided for women and men. The *Woman's Herald or Liberty* will be provided for women and men.

**Belva A. Lockwood**, the "Grand Lady," has arrangements to speak in New York, Philadelphia, New York, and elsewhere. Write for particulars.

alism of the country as to to employment, trade, and politics, women shall to every dollar shall be paid in good time.  
II. We will not support any candidate for office, unless he has so avowed that women will be recognized to the full in their political rights, and that they enjoy equal and supporting rights with that of the male sex.  
III. We will not support any candidate who is not a native-born citizen, nor one who has not been long enough in our country to be thoroughly acquainted with our people and their relations with other countries, especially with the United and Great Britain.  
IV. We will not support any candidate who is not a native-born citizen, nor one who has not been long enough in our country to be thoroughly acquainted with our people and their relations with other countries, especially with the United and Great Britain.

The will not to sustain the general national will, nor will we sustain any man as a candidate for office, unless he has so avowed that women will be recognized to the full in their political rights, and that they enjoy equal and supporting rights with that of the male sex.  
II. We will not support any candidate for office, unless he has so avowed that women will be recognized to the full in their political rights, and that they enjoy equal and supporting rights with that of the male sex.  
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**NEW REPUBLICAN**  
The Republican Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Republican Party**  
The Republican Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Democratic Party**  
The Democratic Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Prohibition Party**  
The Prohibition Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Liberty Party**  
The Liberty Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Woman's Herald or Liberty** has extended the four years. Mrs. Stow will bring all her articles to the aid of the Equal Rights Party and the *Woman's Herald or Liberty*. The *Woman's Herald or Liberty* will accept of Mrs. Stow's articles when the price will be reduced to \$10. It will be a journal of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. Send in your subscriptions; it will give the result of all. *Woman's Herald or Liberty*.

**Equal Rights Party**  
The Equal Rights Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Republican Party**  
The Republican Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Democratic Party**  
The Democratic Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Prohibition Party**  
The Prohibition Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Liberty Party**  
The Liberty Party is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a party of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.

**Woman's Herald or Liberty**  
The *Woman's Herald or Liberty* is a journal of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a journal of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects. It is a journal of reform, and its object is to secure equal rights for women in all respects.



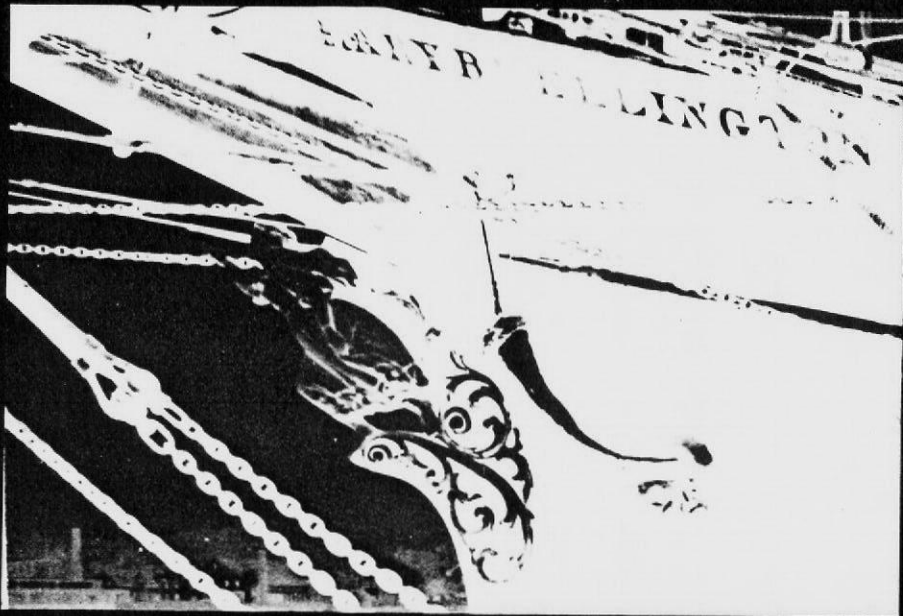


Figure 18. Figurehead of Mary B. Wellington built 1883 in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Three-masted schooner 131x32x11 feet, 294 tons. (Mystic Seaport Figurehead Photo #73.899.456.)



Figure 19. Eunice H. Adams figurehead, 1845, on display at Mystic Seaport Museum. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

Figure 20. Stern carving of whale-ship Eunice H. Adams on display at the Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum, New Bedford. The similarity of these portrait carvings led to identification of Mystic Seaport's figurehead. (Photo, shown below, by Carol Olsen.)



1845 whaleship Eunice H. Adams." I learned that the Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum had identified their stern carving based on its unquestionable similarity to a portrait figurehead which survived, to their knowledge, only in a photograph. That entire photograph (Fig. 21) shows the ship name painted on the hull, so there is no doubt about the vessel's identity.

It was my good fortune that this photograph showed Mystic Seaport's figurehead mounted on the bow of her ship in the 19th century. It was possible, therefore, for the first time in decades, to know that Mystic Seaport's carving was from a ship named Eunice H. Adams. The most compelling evidence that the carving at Mystic Seaport and the figurehead in the photograph are the same are the identical wood cracks seen in their right-side drapery and the area just below it (Fig. 22A and B).<sup>25</sup>

If these figures are compared, there at first seems to be one difference. On the vessel, the woman's neck ruffle is longer than on Mystic's figurehead, but that is explained by the fact that the Museum's carving is broken in that area; the break may have occurred during the figure's removal from the ship, since it is just above the metal fastening which held the figurehead to the bow.

Research has disclosed that Eunice H. Adams, formerly Eunice H. Nickerson, married Freeman E. Adams in Nantucket, Massachusetts. In 1845 Mr. Adams had a 107-ton, 81-foot long, single-deck, 2-masted whaler built in a Bristol, Rhode Island yard, and he named his new schooner-rigged vessel after his wife.<sup>26</sup>



Figure 21. Bow of whaleship Eunice H. Adams in New Bedford. Carved trailboards with an acanthus motif are placed beneath the figurehead. (Photo: The Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts.)



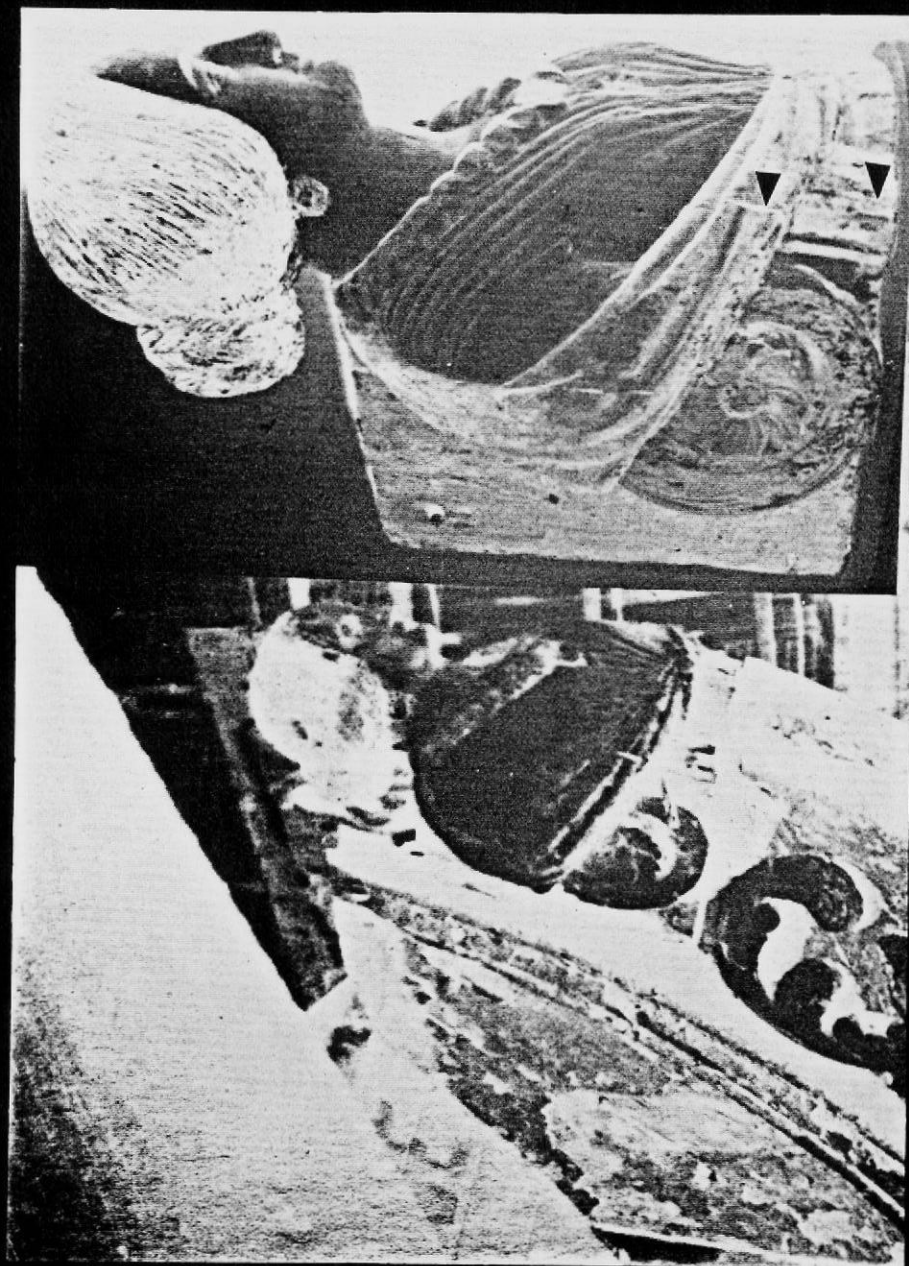


Figure 22. Identical wood cracks confirm the identity of this figurehead.  
 A. Detail of 19th century photograph (see Figure 21) of  
 Eunice H. Adams bow. (Photo: The Whaling Museum, New Bedford,  
 Mass. B. Figurehead on display at Mystic Seaport Museum.  
 (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

Presumably Mr. Adams ordered this delicately carved figurehead of his wife. The figurehead has a kind, yet solemnly watchful expression, appropriate for the bow of a ship, and the overall impression is one of dignity; this is reflected, too, by the vessel bearing her formal name.

Details of the carving are worth noting. For example, the neatly combed hair is shaped into precise coils at the back of the head. The dress is conservative, and the earrings and brooch, both of which originally were gold-covered, add to the subject's handsome appearance. The carver has carefully textured the dress, and with small holes at the collar he has suggested lace. Shawl-like drapery is wrapped around Mrs. Adams, finishing her costume nicely. The attractive appearance of the figurehead is completed by trailboards having an acanthus motif (Fig. 21) which was also used in the stern carving (Fig. 20).

Close examination of the bow and stern carvings indicates to me that these portraits are not by the same carver. One source says such a situation is not unusual; different men within the same shop sometimes crafted the bow and stern carvings.<sup>27</sup> I find that the figurehead is more delicately carved than the sternboard portrait. There are some stylistic differences as well. The stern design shows the woman's hand resting on a book, a pose also seen in portrait paintings of the day (Fig. 23). Further, the stern figure is without small details of the figurehead, such as earrings and the lace-like holes at the collar. Instead, the stern carving uses larger features not seen on the figurehead, such as a belt, upper sleeve decoration, and a rose at the left side of the hair.



Figure 23. 1847 portrait by J.G. Chandler of 18-year old Mrs. Luther Lee of Deerfield, Massachusetts, which echoes the dress and demeanor of the Eunice H. Adams figurehead. Also, one hand resting on a book is seen in both the portrait painting, above, and in the Eunice H. Adams stern carving (Figure 20). (Photo: Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, Massachusetts.)

The Eunice H. Adams was probably already decorated with these carvings on the day she was launched in 1845 at Bristol, Rhode Island. We know that from Bristol she sailed to the major whaling port of Nantucket where her career continued until at least 1869.<sup>28</sup> From 1872 to 1878 she worked out of New Bedford,<sup>29</sup> and Lloyds Register shows that she also sailed some years subsequent to 1878. To judge from the vessel's condition, it must have been in the last phase of her history that the photograph (Fig. 21) was taken.

3. Magdalena figurehead. The largest figurehead at Mystic Seaport was long without a definite history; in 1981 I was able to locate a photograph showing that this carving (Fig. 24) is from Magdalena, a steamship built in 1889 for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (Fig. 25).<sup>30</sup> Further research showed that the newly built vessel enjoyed special recognition in August of 1889 when she carried the Lord Mayor and Members of the Corporation of the City of London to the Royal Naval Review at Spithead and was given a place in the Royal Procession.<sup>31</sup>

Although Fig. 25 shows Magdalena at some distance, certain features of the figurehead can be seen clearly: the outline of the unusual hair ornament, the branch atop the right arm, the necklace shape, and some details of the classical gown. Carvings which are stylistically comparable to the Magdalena figurehead are shown on pages 193 and 194.

4. "Two Sisters" figurehead. The "Two Sisters" are extremely rare because they are a double figurehead (Fig. 26). The figures were separately carved





Figure 24. Magdalena figurehead, now at Mystic Seaport Museum (Stackpole, 1964: 16).

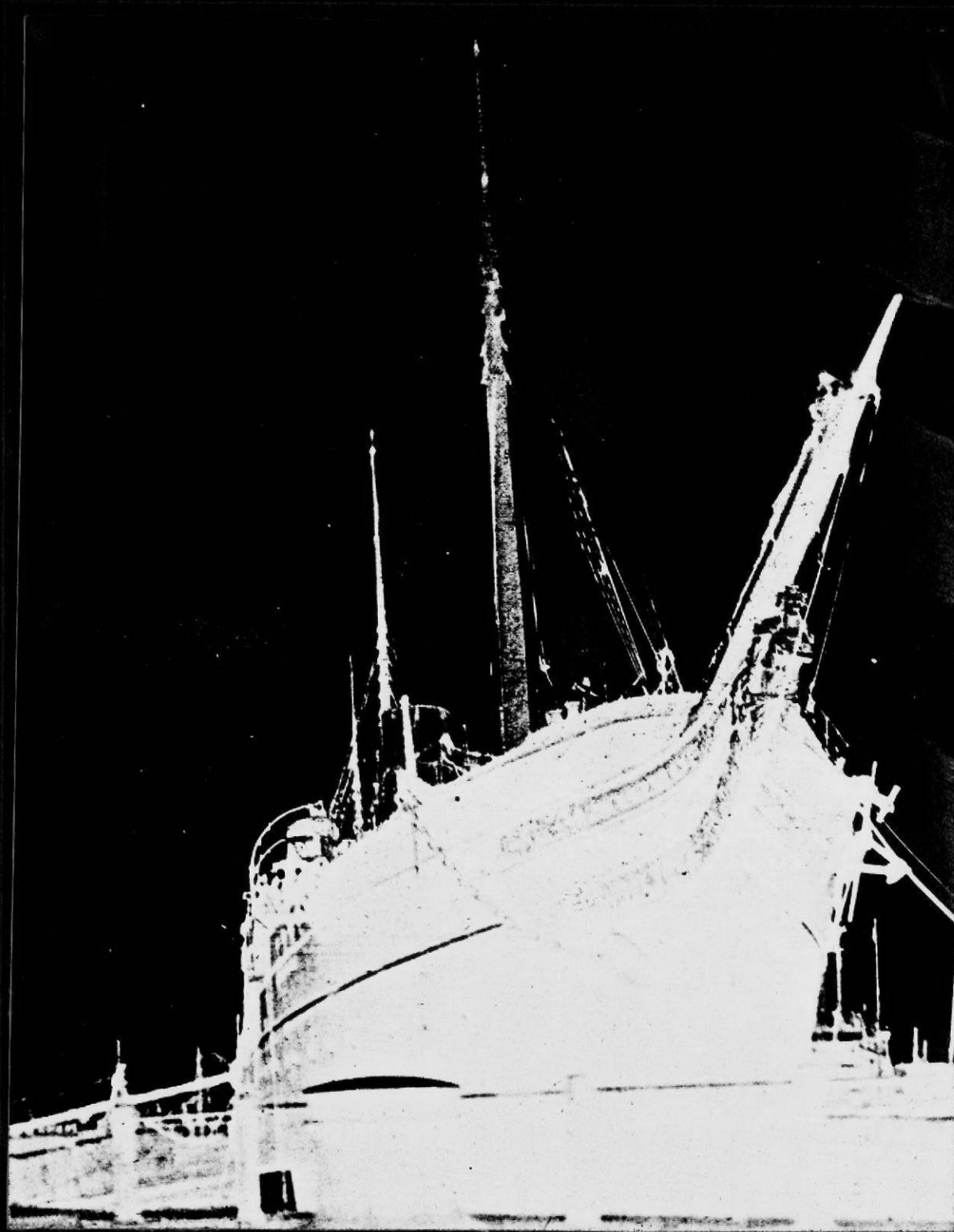


Figure 25. Magdalena, a steamship built in 1889 for the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. (Photo: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.)

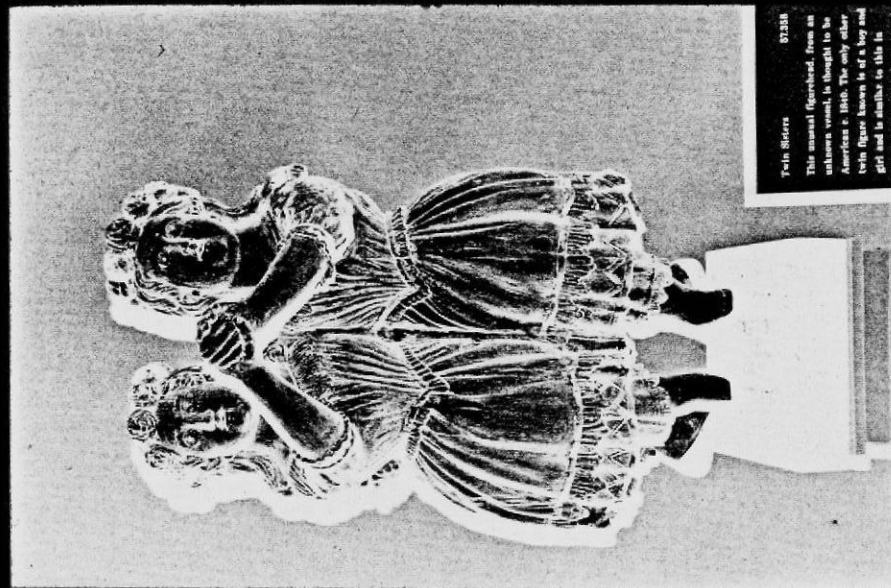


Figure 26. "Two Sisters" figurehead at Mystic Seaport. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

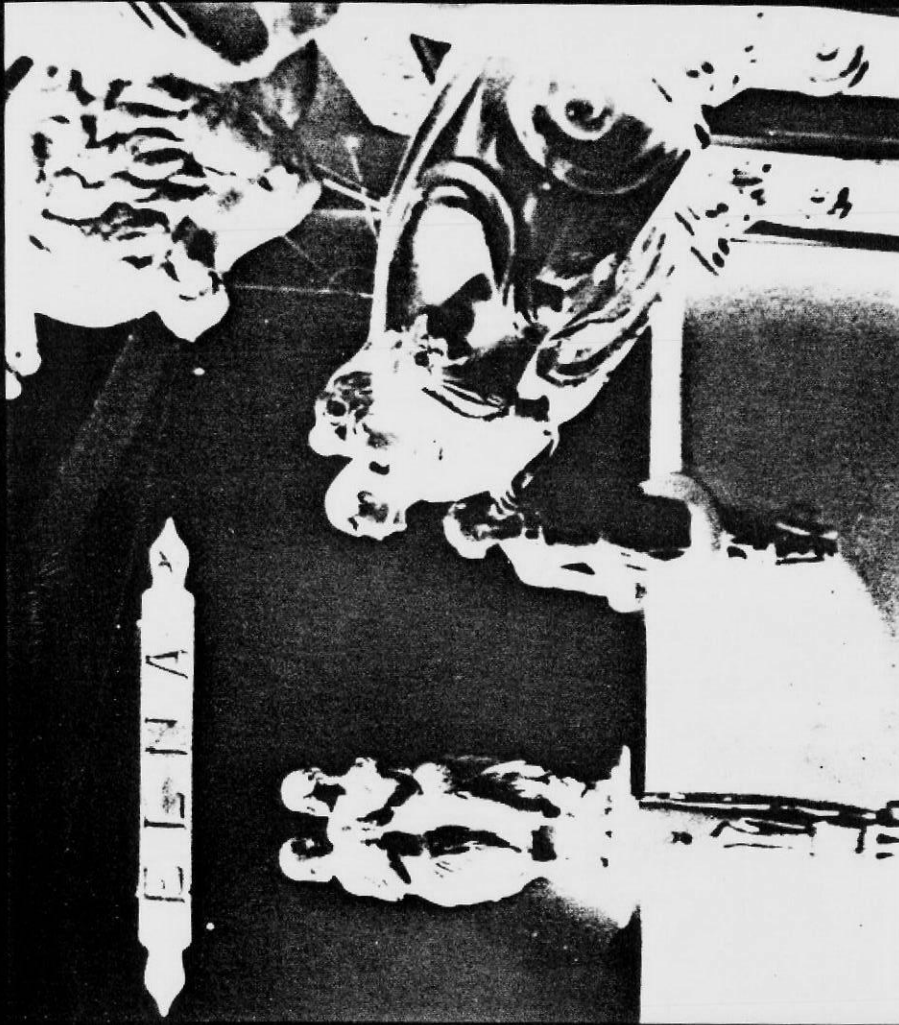


Figure 27. Double figurehead formerly in the Skagen Hotel Collection. Removed from a ship between 1852 and 1895 (Poulsen, 1977:171).

and joined together.

The only other double carvings said to be figureheads which are presently known to me are 1) the figurehead formerly in the Skagen Hotel in Denmark (Fig. 27 on page 37); 2) shipcarver H. J. Møen's double figurehead (Fig. 28); and 3) the double carving at the Altonaer Museum in Germany (Fig. 29).

The profile of the double figurehead (Fig. 28) by Henrik Julius Møen, who carved professionally from about 1842 and died in 1881,<sup>32</sup> is very similar to that of Mystic's carving. This, naturally, draws attention to his shop. However, his style of carving skirt folds in particular is different from that of Mystic's "Two Sisters," so while H. J. Møen himself may not have carved Mystic's "Two Sisters," possibly his son, William Edelhart Møen, did.

The younger Møen was trained by his father<sup>33</sup> and would have known how to do this style of double figurehead. Also, William's stern ornament of Mercury (Fig. 30) shows his ability to do a turned torso, as required for Mystic's "Two Sisters" and, at least in a photograph, Mercury's rather long nose set close to his small mouth is similar to the facial features of Mystic's "Two Sisters." Mercury's long hair ends in tight curls, some of which cross in the style of the shorter sister at Mystic (see page 140), and the carving of Danish Queen Louise by one of the Møens uses the same style of lace as on Mystic's "Two Sisters" (see page 127). The "Two Sisters'" clothing style suggests that they date to the 1850s,<sup>34</sup> and during that decade William E. Møen worked with his father. William then worked independently after 1860<sup>35</sup> and died c. 1905.<sup>36</sup>

One other possible carver of the "Two Sisters" could be the apprentice, Fr. Chr. Jorgensen, whom



Figure 28. Double figurehead by H. J. Møen, 1850s.  
Carving now missing (Poulsen, 1977:  
171).





Figure 29. Double carving at the Altonaer Museum.  
(Photo courtesy of the Altonaer Museum  
in Hamburg.)



Figure 30. Stern ornament. Contemporary photograph with superscription "Mercury with merchandise carved in Apenrade 1862," tentatively identified as the work of W. E. Møen (Poulsen, 1977:98).

H. J. Møen trained, but examples of his work are, unfortunately, unknown.<sup>37</sup>

One last point should be raised. Mystic's two girls have been called twins for many years,<sup>38</sup> but for a better likelihood of recovering their lost history, the more general appellation "sisters" seems preferable. Perhaps in the past they have seemed to be twins because their dresses are identical and they have in recent decades been painted exactly the same. Measurements do show facial differences between them, however, and one girl is noticeably taller and wears her hair longer. Again, the question of whether these girls are twins is sufficiently open that I refer to them as "Two Sisters."

5. "Hebe" figurehead. I suspect that this figurehead (Fig. 31), which has long been labeled "Unidentified," is Hebe, goddess of youth and cupbearer to the gods. Some of the flowers at her base are mere buds, seemingly a suggestion of her youth. The cup she holds, which appears to be a modern replacement and which hopefully was based on the original, further indicates the goddess' identity. Hebe was also a subject used by 19th century fine art sculptors, such as Antonio Canova.<sup>39</sup>

Considerable care has been taken in the carving of this figurehead. For example, we seldom see an arrangement of flowers at a figurehead base. Also, the base scrolls are unusual for the elaborate flowers carved there (see page 113) which further match the flower worn on the left side of the woman's hair.

Since 1956 this figurehead has received minor repairs to her nose, replacement of her arms, and other work which arrested dry rot. She has also been repainted.





Figure 31. "Hebe" figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

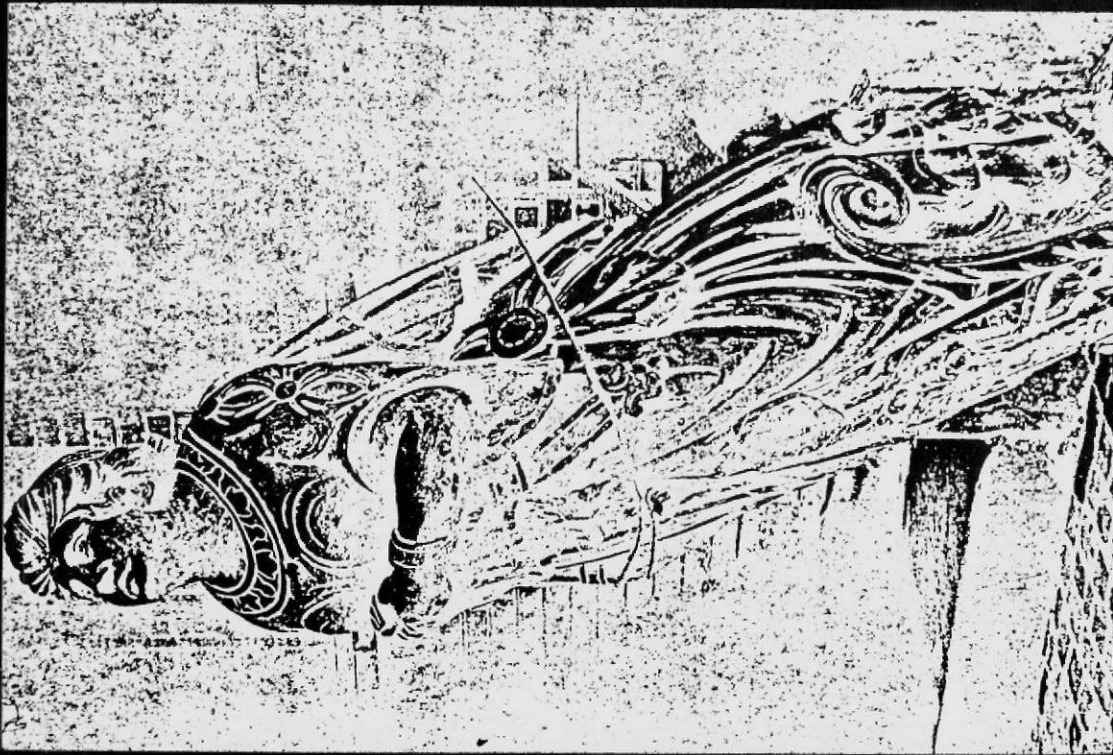
6. Iolanda figurehead. This carving (Fig. 32) was published in 1964 as an unidentified figurehead,<sup>40</sup> but soon thereafter a Mystic Seaport Museum member, Robert D. Huntington, Jr., said that he knew the carving's history. It was the second figurehead of the steam yacht Iolanda built in 1908 by Ramage & Ferguson in Leith, Scotland. When the original figurehead had to be removed in 1931 due to dry rot, Mrs. Moses Taylor, Huntington's grandmother and owner of Iolanda, commissioned the replacement figurehead which was nearly identical in every respect to the first carving.<sup>41</sup>

Although this information was in Mystic's file, it had not become known before I studied the carving in 1981; the figure was until that time displayed in the Shipcarver's Shop as an unidentified figurehead.

I was able to find three types of photographs which now provide a more complete history of this carving:

- 1) A photograph of Iolanda's first figurehead (Fig. 33);
- 2) A close-up view of this figurehead which positively identifies it as Iolanda's bow decoration (Fig. 34);
- 3) Views of the beautiful yacht Iolanda (Fig. 35).

Iolanda was a very prestigious vessel since, at 310 feet overall, she was one of the largest yachts in America when built in 1908 for Mr. Morton Plant.<sup>42</sup> Leaving from New London, Connecticut in 1908, Mr. Plant and friends sailed Iolanda on a 33,000 mile cruise, and when they docked in Palermo, Sicily, the Italian princess for whom the yacht is named came aboard for a brief visit. The vessel's log, published as a book by Mr. Plant, reads:



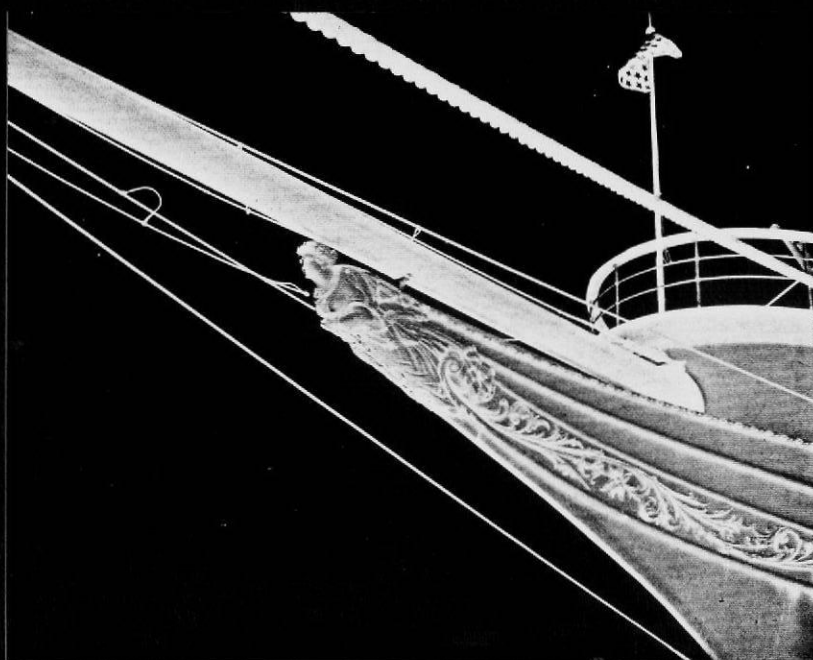


Figure 34. This photograph, which I found at The Mariners' Museum in 1982, provided the first positive identification that one of Mystic Seaport's carvings was the figurehead from the Iolanda. (Photo: Maritime Museum Association of San Diego.)

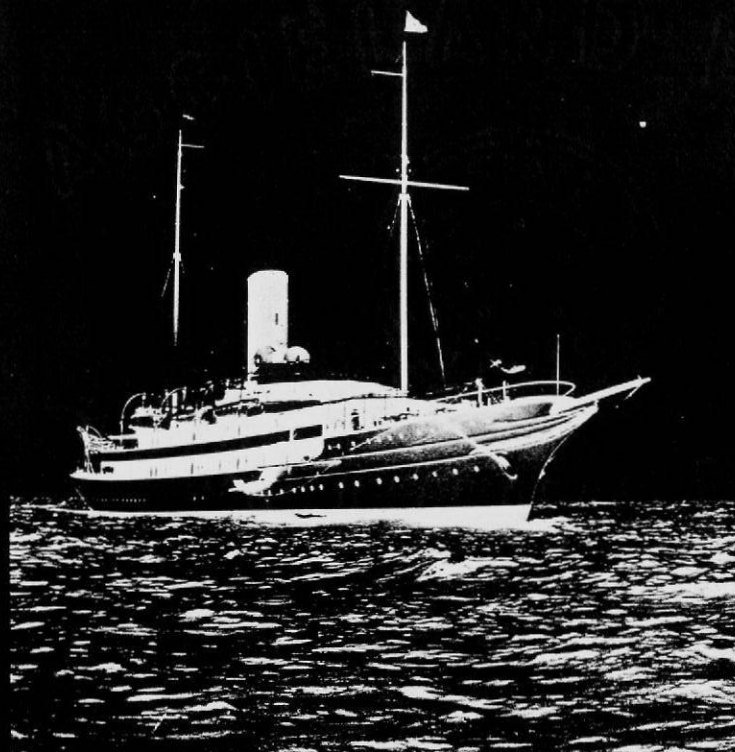


Figure 35. Iolanda. (Photo: The Mariners' Museum.)

"May 31st: At 4 P.M. Her Royal Highness Princess Iolanda and Miss C. Margaret Brown paid us a visit. The Princess is a beautiful little black-eyed girl, with lovely features and a sweet disposition."<sup>43</sup> Clearly, the mature and heroic-looking figurehead in classical array is not a portrait of this young princess. It is a figurehead type which is found on other steam yachts, such as Zara,<sup>44</sup> at the end of the 19th century.

Several features of the Iolanda carving (Fig. 32) are distinctive: the fleur-de-lys at her base front, drapery going through the fingers of her left hand, the designs at her collar, and one curl incised into the middle of her forehead. She is in very solid condition, and I suspect that she was only on the luxury yacht Iolanda from 1931 until 1940, when the British Navy began to use the vessel and had all of the luxury fittings removed, presumably including the figurehead.<sup>45</sup>

#### 7. Eagle figurehead from the Great Republic.

Recent research now provides new information about the style, subject, and dramatic history of the American bald eagle, symbol of the United States, which rode on the bow of the famous, Donald McKay-built 1853 clipper Great Republic. Carved from pine 130 years ago, this eagle (Fig. 36) is still in nearly excellent condition because it was on the Great Republic for only two months. The following account tells why.

McKay's Great Republic was to be the world's fastest and longest merchant ship, but investors viewed her great 325 foot length as unusual and as an unproven risk, and were fearful of financing her. Nonetheless, McKay, confident of his idea, built the Great Republic entirely with his own funds. The event captured both American and European attention, and her launch date



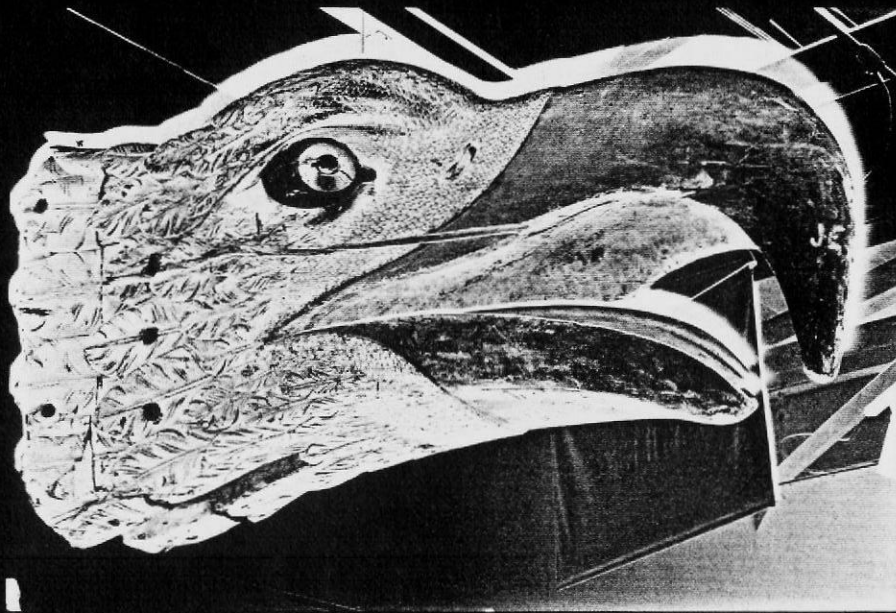


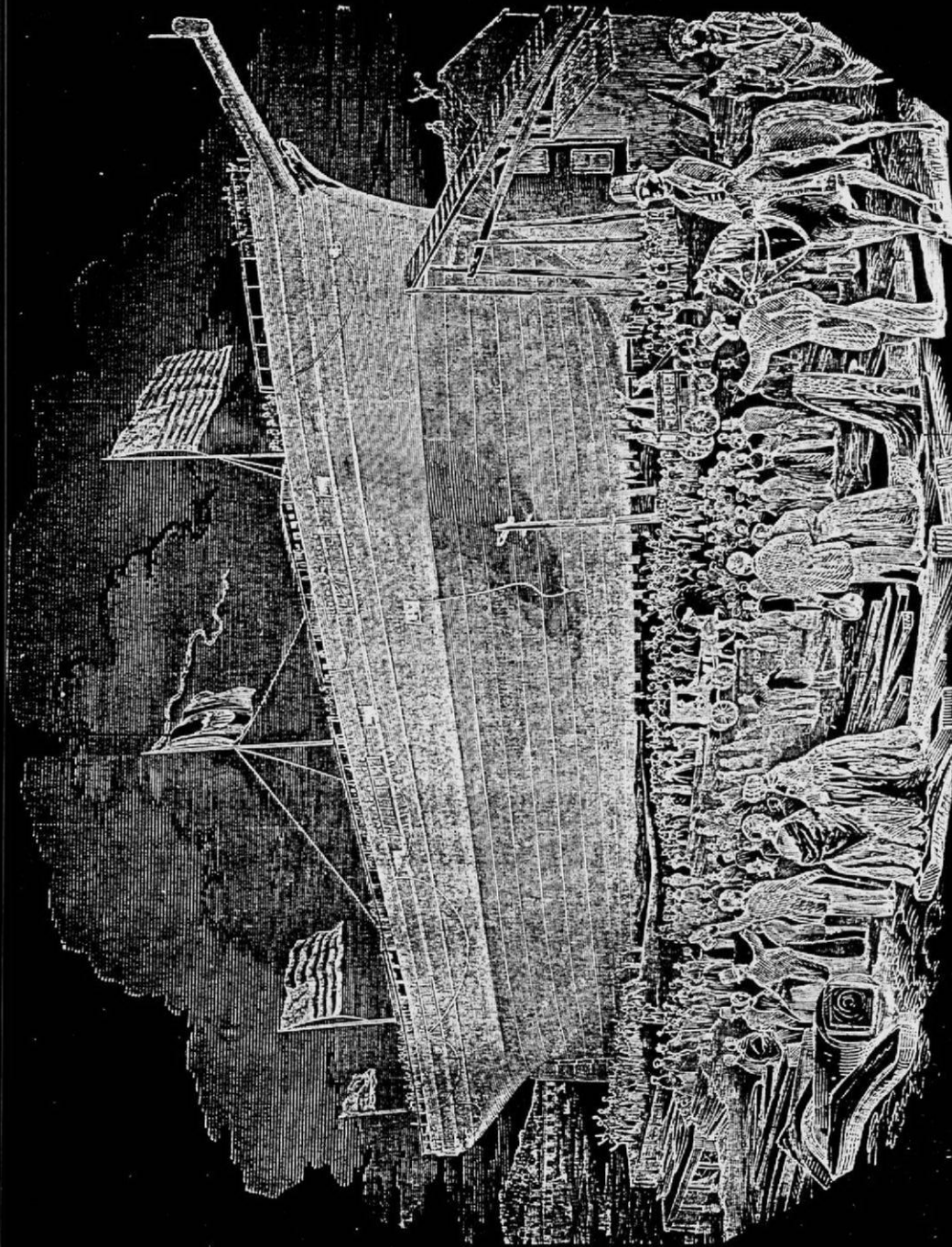
Figure 36. Eagle figurehead from Great Republic.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)

was declared a public holiday in Boston. Thousands of out-of-town people arrived on specially run trains, and newspapers described people occupying every possible space on land, water, and in nearby ships' rigging to see the Great Republic slide down the ways (Fig. 37).<sup>46</sup> People praised the beauty of this well-loved ship, yet for all the discussion about every part of her, scarcely anything appears in writing about the eagle figurehead. This was not customary. Nineteenth century newspaper accounts of launchings many times described decorative carvings, and one could reasonably conclude that the Great Republic's eagle figurehead was not well received. This is explicit in one account:

... (S)uch a bow for sharpness, beauty and strength, has never been produced in this country. Yet it is plain, even to nakedness, having the national eagle represented as emerging from below the bowsprit, as its only ornament. But even simple and appropriate as is this ornament, it adds nothing to the beauty of the bow.<sup>47</sup>

About two months after her launch, the Great Republic sailed to New York from East Boston to pick up her first cargo. This was the only voyage the eagle figurehead would make on the ship; the vessel caught fire in New York on December 26, 1853 and burned almost completely.<sup>48</sup> Donald McKay's great ship became a financial disaster, and the hull remains were sold to A. A. Low and Brother.

Captain Nathaniel Palmer supervised the rebuilding of the Great Republic, and perhaps the modified hull design then rendered the eagle figurehead unsuitable. At any rate, the eagle was removed from the bow and kept at Captain Palmer's home in Stonington, Connecticut; the Palmer family later sold the carving to Mystic Seaport Museum.



LAUNCH OF "THE GREAT REPUBLIC," THE LARGEST MERCHANT SHIP IN THE WORLD. [For description, see page 269.]

Figure 37. Gleason's Pictorial (1853) view of Great Republic.



The forepart of Great Republic did not burn in the New York fire and it appears that the eagle at her bow escaped damage. Since that time, however, this bow eagle must have been repainted, since its current color is brown, whereas 1853 depictions show a light-colored eagle at Great Republic's bow (Fig. 38). White is the color of the bald eagle's head in nature. Fire did destroy the Great Republic's stern eagle, however, but accounts say it measured 36 feet between the wing tips<sup>49</sup> and held the American shield in its talons. Such stern eagles can be seen in miniature on models of the Great Republic today.<sup>50</sup>

Contemporary sources say the carving was done by "Messrs. Gleason & Co."<sup>51</sup> Their design is particularly interesting because this almost 8-foot-deep figurehead on a 325-foot-long hull was a mere punctuation point of decoration and an abandonment of the more common, full-striding figures on other clipper ships. One advantage of this figurehead's design was how closely and securely it was attached to the vessel.

The Great Republic's eagle figurehead in a sense symbolizes the 1850s American clipper era, a time described in 1895 by a United States senator who looked back on it with first-hand experience:

I can remember very well the time when the names of the great shipbuilders, Donald and Lauchlan McKay and their brothers, were famous all round the world. They were building or commanding the marvelous clipper ships for which the shipyards of New England were unrivaled. It was a contest which enlisted the feeling and the pride of the whole people of the country. There was no boy's play of yacht racing in those days. The strife was between nations and the prize was the commerce of the world. ... The merchant who could get the fastest ship had the market for the fruits of the Mediterranean, for the rugs of Smyrna,



Figure 38. Clipper ship Great Republic painted by J.F. Buttersworth, 1853.  
(Photo courtesy of the Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.)

for the silks of India and the teas of China. ... It was the time when California and Australia and Oregon were first opening to trade, and it was the ships of this McKay family, of Donald and Lauchlan and their kindred, that carried off the prize in every contest. ... The flag of the United States was a flower that adorned every port and blossomed on every soil the world over.<sup>52</sup>

Surely, in that era, national pride motivated McKay's use of the ship name Great Republic, a synonym for the United States, and it also ultimately determined the use of the carved American eagle at this vessel's bow.

8. Admiral Farragut figurehead from Great Admiral.

David Glasgow Farragut (Figs 39,40, and 41) served on Navy vessels from 1810 when he was 9 years old, and by the time of the Civil War, he was a leader of considerable experience. In 1862, he commanded the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron, capturing the city of New Orleans, and in 1864 he gained a difficult victory at Mobile Bay, Alabama. For his important triumphs, Farragut received profuse tribute in the 1860s. Congress named him the first full Admiral of the United States Navy; New York City gave him \$50,000 to purchase a New York home;<sup>53</sup> Harvard University students drew Farragut's carriage through the university grounds;<sup>54</sup> and when he left New Hampshire, 2,000 shipyard workers cheered Farragut as a national hero.<sup>55</sup> Acclaim came also from Europe, as the Prince de Joinville wrote from France: "The achievements in Mobile Bay are without parallel, and throw the greatest honor on your flag. All naval men pay a just tribute of admiration to Admiral Farragut."<sup>56</sup>

From 1867 to 1868 Farragut personally visited every European country and was received in each one as a hero; reports from diplomats said that no such welcome



Figure 39. Portrait figurehead of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut on the bow of the medium clipper Great Admiral, built in 1869 (Mystic Seaport Museum figurehead photograph).

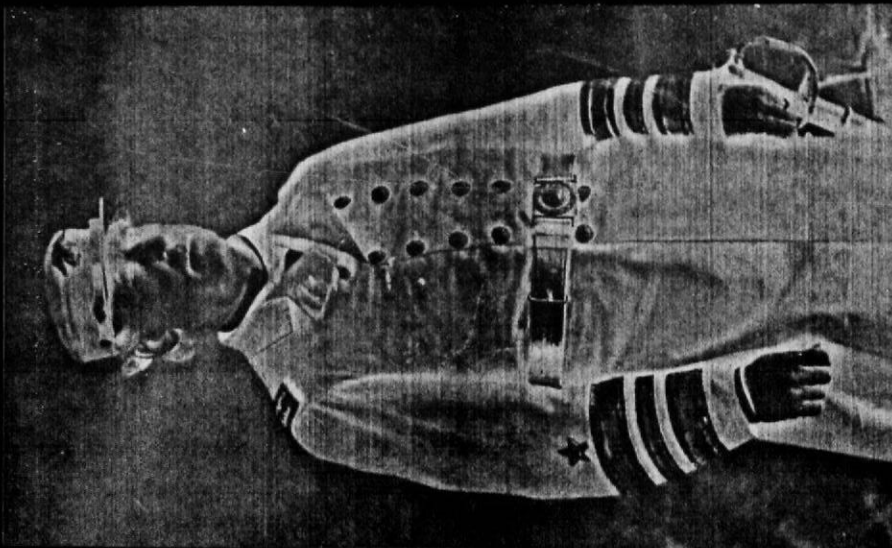


Figure 40. Photograph of Admiral Farragut, published in 1869 (Montgomery, 1869: frontispiece).

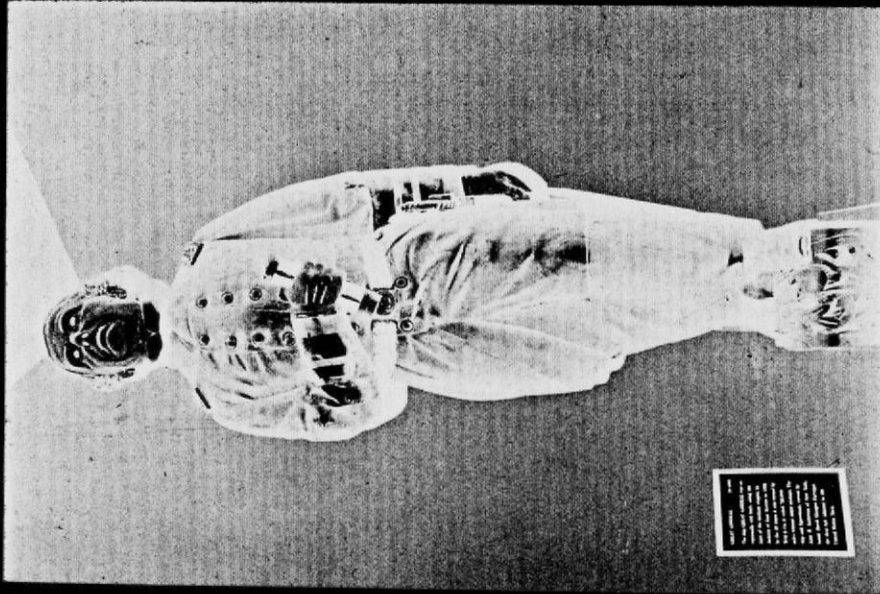


Figure 41. Figurehead of Admiral Farragut. Restoration in 1958 included a newly carved head. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

had ever been extended to a foreign dignitary.<sup>57</sup> His reception in Copenhagen was described this way by one official: "Of course he was honored as the first character of the American Navy, but there was something in his history, his appearance, and his manners that drew people to him as a man, ...".<sup>58</sup> When Farragut returned to America in 1868, the country knew of his powerful prestige abroad and its glorious reflection on the United States.

It was amidst this fervor of national devotion that William F. Weld & Company, which owned perhaps the largest American merchant fleet, decided in 1868 to call their new vessel Great Admiral, the title also of a poem about Farragut, by Richard Henry Stoddard, which said in part:

Ay! For there is not one  
Can do what he has done;  
And, History, greater none  
Thou consecratest.  
Immortal honor, then,  
To this, our man of men,  
Whose soul is greatest when  
Our need is greatest.<sup>59</sup>

Because of Farragut's international renown, the portrait figurehead of the Admiral (Fig. 41 and compare Fig. 40) likely helped to gain more immediate recognition for Weld's new ship Great Admiral (Fig. 39) as she traveled the world carrying cargoes of tea, wood, pickled cabbage, and other products.<sup>60</sup> Such recognition might even have proved of some economic advantage to Weld's business.<sup>61</sup>

Great Admiral was the favorite ship in the Weld fleet, which is perhaps why the figurehead was given the extra care of being removed from the ship's bow during voyages and stored in a special closet below decks<sup>62</sup> (see page 231).

Great Admiral was finally sold in 1897 to Capt. E. R. Sterling, and when in December 1906 she was shipwrecked off the Pacific northwest coast,<sup>63</sup> the figurehead was salvaged and returned to the Weld family. A photograph of this carving on their property shows the original base missing, and today's replacement base scroll includes a small shield to suggest the larger one originally behind the figurehead. That original shield, in conjunction with its carved anchor, symbolized the United States Navy in which Farragut served.<sup>64</sup>

In 1958 restoration to the figurehead was necessary because of wood rot, and it then received a newly carved head, sword hilt and base scroll, as well as fresh paint and gild.<sup>65</sup>

As Great Admiral continued to sail, tributes to Farragut were ongoing, long after his death in 1870. Poems, portraits, and sculpture kept his name and honor prominent. Statues of Farragut, created by the best artists, were placed at important locations, such as one by Augustus Saint-Gaudens in Madison Square, New York,<sup>66</sup> and a 30-foot high monument by Virginia Ream in Farragut Square, Washington, D.C. Those statues were unveiled in 1881; by that time Great Admiral had carried the bow carving of Farragut for 13 years, as she would continue to do for another 25 years.

9. "Rhine-Maiden" figurehead from Rhine. On Friday, December 10, 1886, the Scotland newspaper Greenock Telegraph told of the launch at 11 o'clock that day of a splendid 1690-ton iron sailing ship built to the order of Mr. James Nourse by Russell & Co. (Fig. 42). The ship's name was Rhine, after the German river,<sup>67</sup> and early Mystic Seaport records describe this ship's figurehead of a woman holding a harp (Figs. 43 and 44) as a

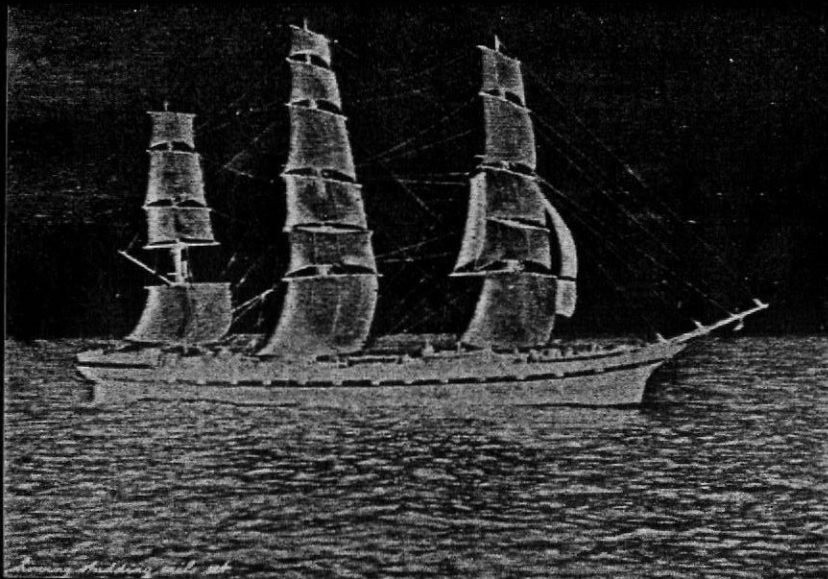


Figure 42. Nourse's coolie ship Rhine rolling down to St. Helena. (Photo: Sea Breezes, 1928, Vol. XI: 105.)

Figure 43. Rhine's figure-head holds a harp at her side. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

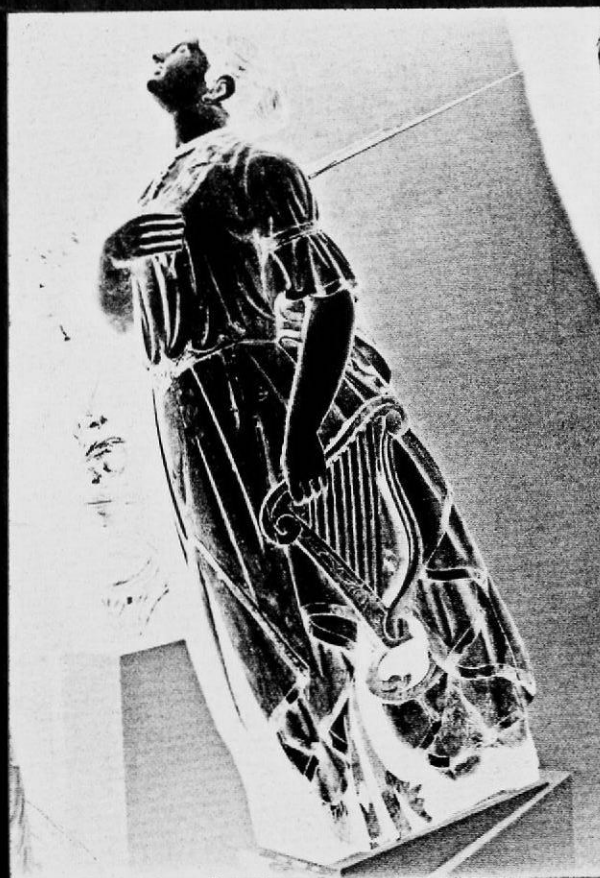






Figure 44. Figurehead in place on the bow of Rhine  
(Mystic Seaport Museum figurehead photograph).

"Rhine-maiden or Rhine-daughter."

In place on Rhine's bow, the figurehead was canted forward so that she seemed to look straight ahead. Her 20th century appearance charmed one observer who wrote "I remember standing on the wharf in Charlestown as a small boy and gazing at the pretty lady on the bow of the Rhine."<sup>68</sup>

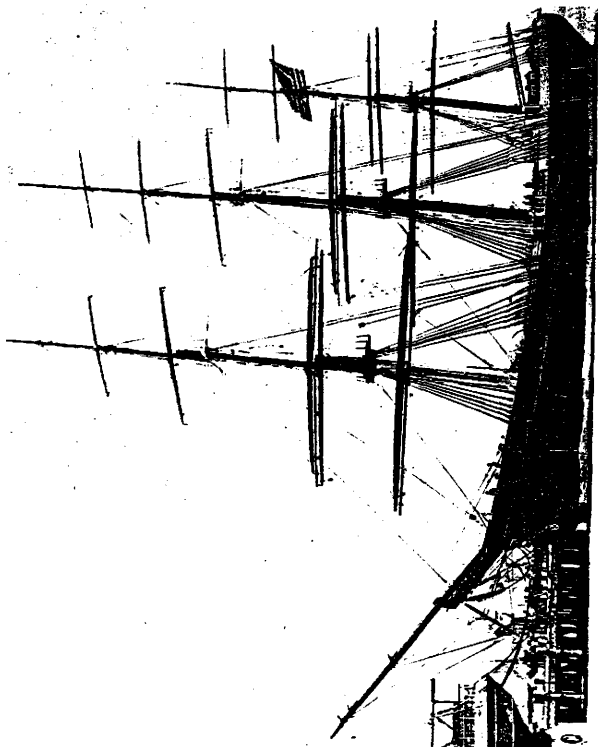
By the time this carving came to Mystic Seaport in 1951, the wood's interior was extensively decayed. After the decay was carefully removed, a wood preservative was applied, and photographs show that, fortunately, these repairs did not alter the figurehead's external appearance. Also, beneath her "aluminum color" surface, traces of an earlier green paint were found to which color her dress was restored,<sup>69</sup> and her hair was painted red.

As part of the James Nourse fleet, Rhine and her several sister ships made frequent visits to Calcutta, India, as part of the coolie trade.<sup>70</sup> Near the end of Rhine's career in the 20th century, she worked several years out of Boston, Massachusetts, and was finally broken up in 1926, 40 years after her launch.<sup>71</sup> This, according to Museum records, is when the figurehead was removed and sold.

10. Indian figurehead from Seminole. This Indian figurehead (Fig. 45) is particularly important to Mystic Seaport because it comes from a Mystic, Connecticut-built vessel. She was the Seminole (Fig. 46), a cargo-carrying bark built in 1865 at the Maxson Fish yard for Lawrence Giles & Co. of New York.<sup>72</sup> Campbell & Colby are the only shipcarvers known to have worked in Mystic in that year, and the Seminole figurehead, therefore, has been attributed to their shop.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 45. Indian figurehead from Seminole, 1869.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)



The carving came to Mystic Seaport in 1957 from the Port Adelaide Museum in Australia. I recently discovered a photograph (PO172-C72) at The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, which shows it at an even earlier date on display in the garden of Mr. F. A. Stevens, Leferre Terrace, North Adelaide. A note on the photograph says that Mr. Stevens purchased the figure from a second-hand dealer. Thus, we now know a little more about this carving's early history.

Nothing is recorded concerning the choice of the 1865 ship name Seminole. However, another vessel named Seminole was in Admiral Farragut's victorious fleet at Mobile Bay, Alabama, in 1864,<sup>74</sup> so the re-use of the name by Lawrence Giles & Co. in 1865 could have been a tribute to that well-known military battle. Another possible attraction to the name, and hence the figurehead, is the historical reputation of the Seminoles for being strong and courageous; they were described in 1841 as being "the only Indians who could not be defeated."<sup>75</sup>

Indian figureheads date back to American Colonial times. In fact, 18th century European art sometimes personified young America as an Indian since Indians were unique to the New World.<sup>76</sup> With this connection between America and Indians, it is clear that Indian figureheads helped to distinguish 18th and 19th century American vessels at sea. Several 19th century Indian figureheads survive (see for example Figs 47, 48, and 49) and 19th century shipcarvers also produced Indian cigar store figures.<sup>77</sup>

11. Serpent figurehead from Phantom. With bulging eyes searching ahead, red nostrils flaring, and his mouth clamped shut, this almost comical serpent (Fig. 50)



Figure 47. Indian chief from Sachem. This carving is on loan to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and illustrated with the Museum's permission.

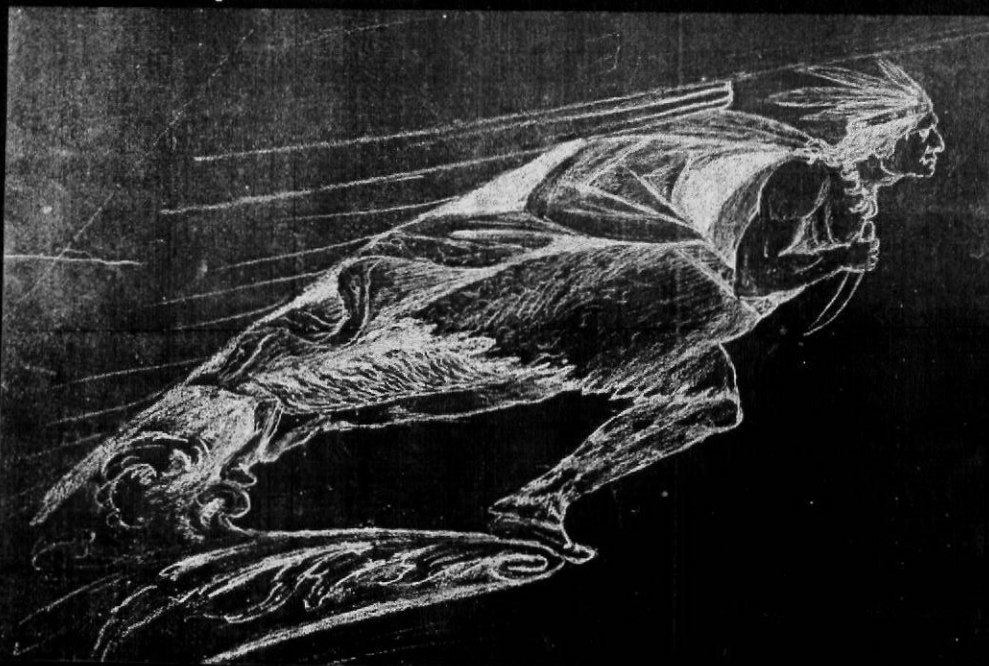


Figure 48. Indian figurehead sketch by E. Warren Hastings (working 1865-1896) for King Philip (American Neptune Supplement, 1977: pl.XXVII).

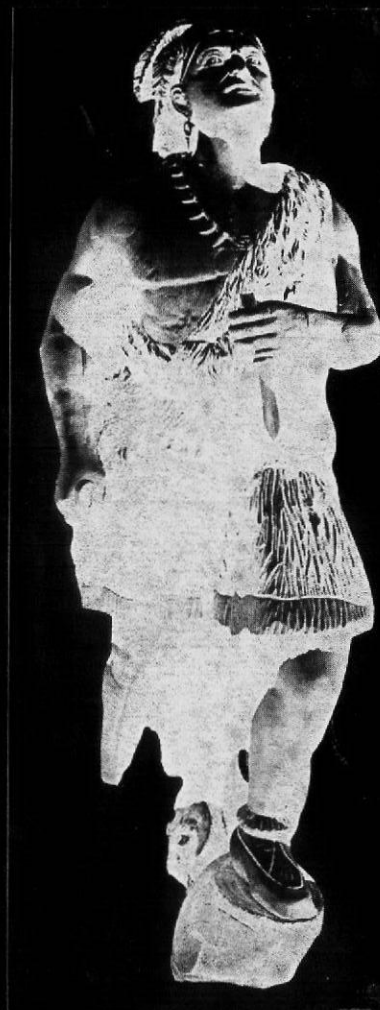


Figure 49. 6'9" figurehead from Indian Chief built 1877 in Quebec. Carving is now at the Peabody Museum (Hansen, 1979: 205).

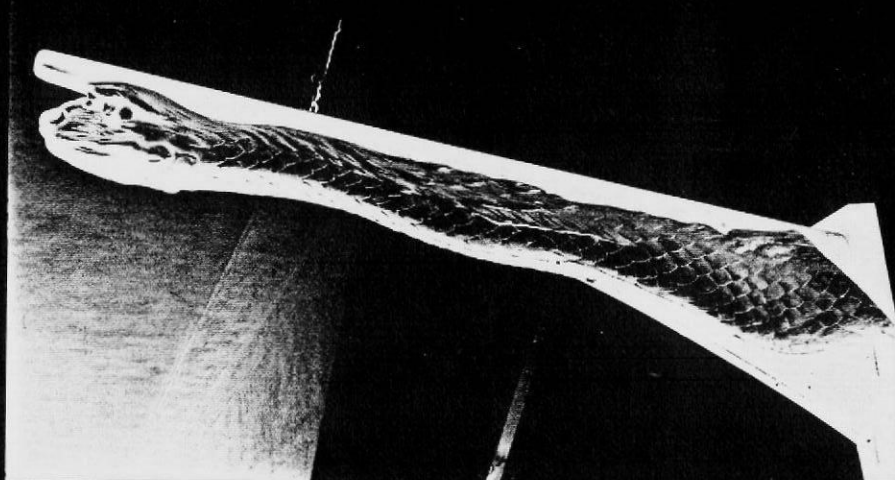


Figure 50. Serpent figurehead from Phantom. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

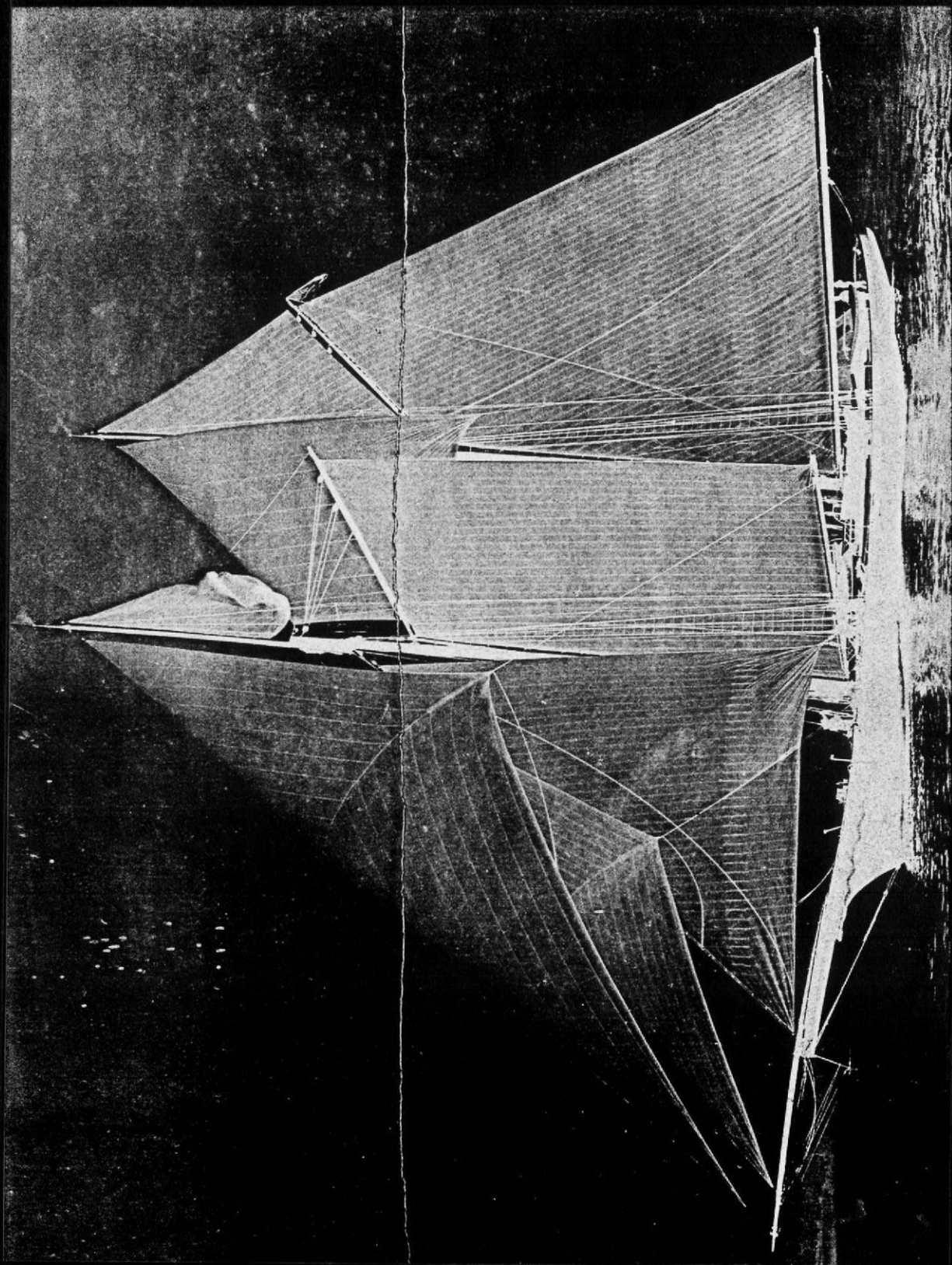


seems to rush forward. It is the figurehead from the 19th century yacht Phantom, and its glistening appearance in black and white photographs (Figs 51, 52) suggests that its wood was originally gilded. Such undulating, fish-scaled figureheads are very unusual, but something of a likeness is seen on the 1732 royal barge of Frederick, Prince of Wales (Fig. 53).

Seven feet eight inches now survive of Phantom's serpent figurehead, but as photographs show (Figs 51 and 52), the carving was originally much longer. The serpent's body continued along each side of the hull for about another 10 feet, somewhat like trailboards, but neither of those 10-foot sections is now known to survive.

The prestigious yacht Phantom had a succession of wealthy owners. The man for whom she was built, Henry G. Stebbins, was president of the New York Stock Exchange, a railroad president, a member of Congress, and holder of various other influential positions. As Commodore of the New York Yacht Club, he used Phantom as his flagship.<sup>78</sup> Phantom's several races, many of which she won, are recounted in The History of the New York Yacht Club. She even competed for the America's Cup in 1870, placing 5th in actual time and 7th in corrected time.<sup>79</sup>

It is not yet known when the serpent was put on Phantom's bow, partly because photographs showing the carving on the vessel are undated. However, the following outline of her history includes suggestions of times when the carving could have been done.



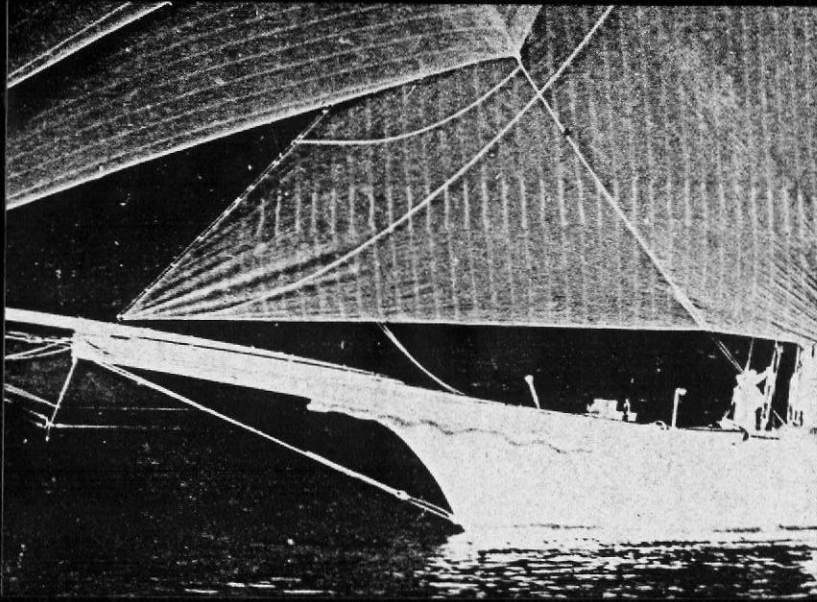


Figure 52. Detail of Phantom's bow. (Photo: New York Yacht Club.)

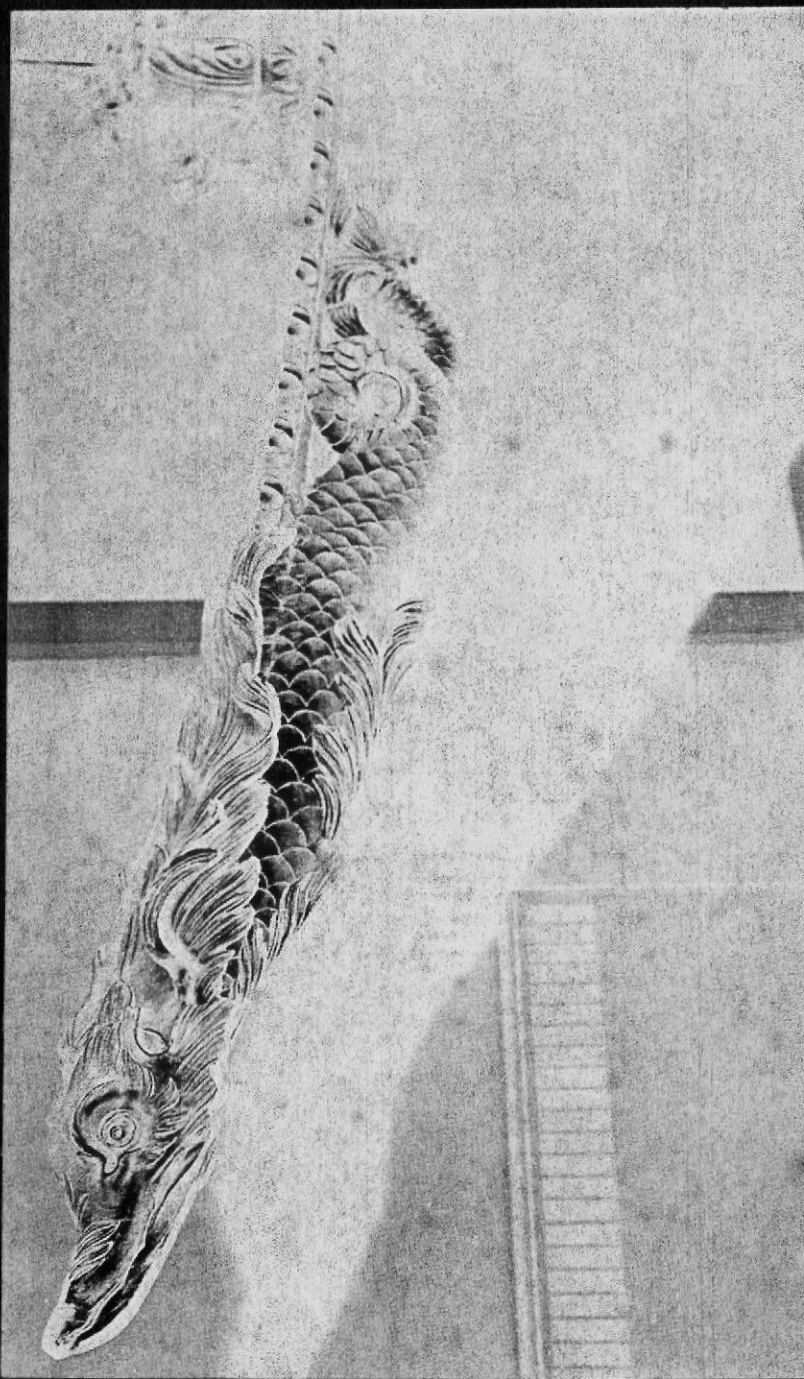


Figure 53. Figurehead of Royal Barge of Frederick, Prince of Wales, 1732  
(Costa, 1981: 52).

<u>Owner</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Henry G. Stebbins	1865	J. B. Van Deusen, New York, built and launched. Length 90 feet. She was a significant vessel and very probably decorated.
William H. Osgood	1873	Purchased
	1879	Had Robert Palmer of Noank, Connecticut, lengthen to 104 feet. It is not known if changes were required in the bow that would have affected the figurehead.
Henry S. Hovey	1880	Purchased
E.V.S. Thayer	1883	Purchased
	1884	Had James M. Baylis of Fort Jefferson, New York change length to 100.3 feet. Any changes to the bow and figurehead are presently unknown.
G.G. Haven	1886	Purchased
Charles C. Dodge	1888	Purchased
Henry S. Parmalee	1889	Purchased
	1900	Dismasted and sold out of New York Yacht Club to an unrecorded buyer to be used as a houseboat. <sup>80</sup>

It is possible the serpent was on Phantom as early as 1865. The carving is in very good condition and likely received the same excellent care that the vessel is known to have received.

Phantom's 1865 launch helped start the era known as the "Day of the Great Schooners." Parkinson says that era began after the April 9, 1865, surrender of

General Lee to General Grant at Appomattox, and that following that time yachting became a popular sport partly because of the accumulation of new wealth in the United States.<sup>81</sup> For such a distinct time in history, it is appropriate that a very distinct figurehead decorated one of the century's great schooners.

12. "Orlando from H.M.S. Orlando." Detailed examination of the surfaces of hundreds of figureheads has shown me that it is highly unusual to find on them carved inscriptions of any kind. However, carved into the left side of this figurehead (Fig. 54) is the name "HMS ORLANDO." Although several vessels have been known by that name,<sup>82</sup> I was able in 1981 to locate a photograph which may show this figurehead on the bow of the frigate H.M.S. Orlando, built in 1858 (Fig. 55).

The book British Warship Names indicates that H.M.S. Orlando was named for the main character in Shakespeare's comedy As You Like It.<sup>83</sup> The play, enormously popular in 19th century Britain,<sup>84</sup> characterized Orlando as a man of physical strength, moral excellence, and romantic sentiment. As a figurehead, he would surely serve as a reminder of those human qualities, and his heroic appearance would be particularly suitable for the warship he decorated.

13. "Lady Blessington" figurehead. Although the identification is not yet confirmed, this figurehead (Fig. 56) has been known for many years as "Lady Blessington," and the carving does bear some resemblance to Marguerite, Countess of Blessington (Fig. 57). That noteworthy woman is remembered as an author, particularly for her Conversations with Lord Byron, and for her considerable beauty of appearance and spirit. She lived



Figure 54. Figurehead inscribed HMS ORLANDO at the left lower base. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



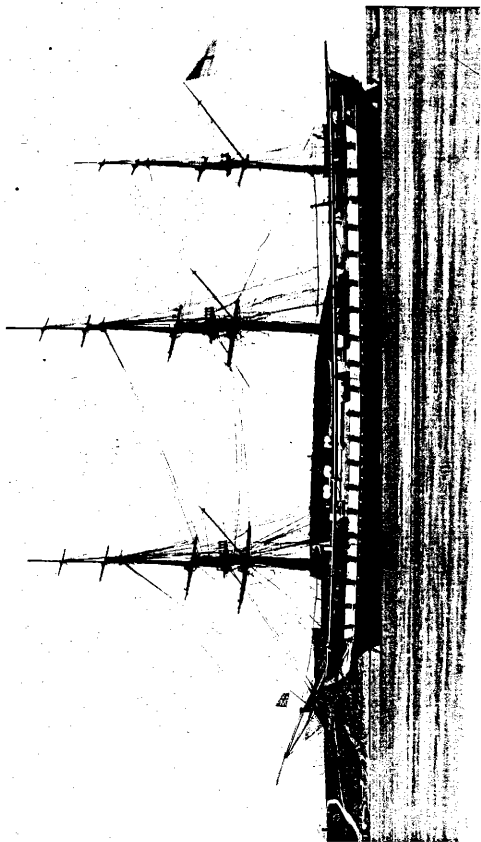


Figure 55. H.M.S. Orlando, frigate built 1858. (Photo: National Maritime Museum, London.)





Figure 56. "Lady Blessington" figurehead at  
Mystic Seaport Museum.



Figure 57. Portrait of Lady Blessington published in the Court Magazine No. 39 for Sept. 1835. (Photo: National Portrait Gallery, London.)

from 1789 to 1849.

The carving has long been attributed to a vessel named Lady Blessington, built in Belfast, Maine, in 1855. Perhaps one of the things calling particular attention to Lady Blessington in that year (6 years after her death) was the publication by R. R. Madden of a 3-volume work, The Literary Life and Correspondence of the Countess of Blessington.<sup>85</sup>

The "Lady Blessington" figurehead (Fig. 58) has the same pose and scroll style as the figurehead from the three-masted schooner Brooklands, 1859 (Fig. 59), which shows how "Lady Blessington" would have looked on her bow. The 140-ton Brooklands was 100 feet in length and built by Kelly of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, for the fruit-carrying fleet of Brixham, England.<sup>86</sup>

In looking for other figureheads by the same hand, I was able to locate in John Burlinson's private photograph collection in Florida a view of the "Lady Franklin figurehead" (Fig. 60), which appears to be by "Lady Blessington's" carver (compare Fig. 56). The photographer, Mr. Ernest R. Crang of Plympton, Devon, has advised me by letter<sup>87</sup> that when he photographed this figurehead it was being used as an eaves support at The Bantham Boathouse.

Early in 1983 I also saw a third figurehead which may be by "Lady Blessington's" carver; it is carving M-19308 in storage at the Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. A fourth carving that is strikingly similar is shown as GB-LO-CS-55 in Hansen (1979:106).

14. "Joan of Arc" figurehead. It is widely believed that figureheads always look straight out to sea, but this carving (Fig. 61) shows that there are exceptions to that rule. This reverent looking woman, when

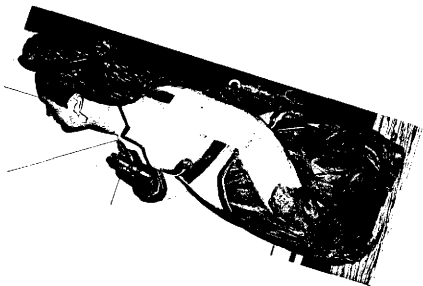


Figure 58. "Lady Blessington" figurehead.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)

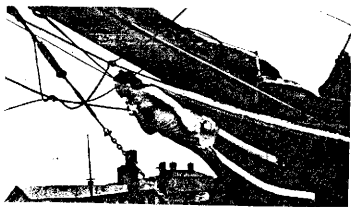


Figure 59. Figurehead of Brooklands ex-  
Susan Vittery. (Photo:  
National Maritime Museum,  
London.)



Figure 60. "Lady Franklin" figurehead said to be from the Frankfurt, a missionary ship. The carving was used as an eaves support at The Bantham Boathouse, South Devon. (Photo by Ernest R. Crang, provided to the author by John Burlinson.)

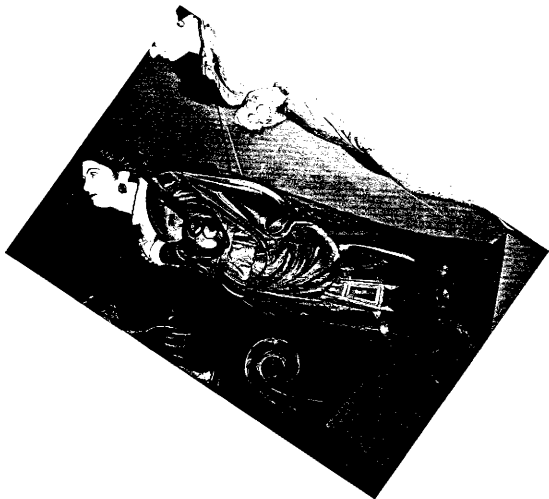


Figure 61. "Joan of Arc" figurehead, turned to the approximate angle of her ship's bow. Contrast her heavenward gaze to that of "Belva Lockwood," to the right, who looks straight ahead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

mounted on the bow of her ship, would look heavenward, as she holds to her breast some beads, probably of the rosary. The beads, in addition to her peasant-like braids (see page 142) and the fleur-de-lys on her dress (see page 131) suggest that she may be St. Joan of Arc.<sup>88</sup> Her style indicates that she could date from the late 19th or early 20th century, a time when vessels were recorded with the names Joan of Arc, Jeanne D'Arc, and Maid of Orleans,<sup>89</sup> as Joan also was called.

St. Joan received considerable public attention when she was canonized in 1920<sup>90</sup> and when, in 1923, she was the subject of George Bernard Shaw's celebrated play Saint Joan.<sup>91</sup> Events such as these have influenced ship-owners in the past in their selection of ships' names and figurehead subjects.<sup>92</sup> If Mystic Seaport's "Joan of Arc" is from this late era, it is one of the last figureheads carved in the 19th century tradition.

#### 15. St. George figurehead.

The moral, valorous and noble knight who was sainted for his great deeds, St. George, is the subject of a Mystic Seaport figurehead (Fig. 62). Of the historic person this carving represents, we are told "Few saints have been so universally honored as St. George, and yet there is not a saint in the calendar about whose life so little that is authentic is known."<sup>93</sup> Earliest accounts say that the man who became St. George was born in Cappadocia in the 3rd century. Stories of his life, however, vary as to his locale and deeds. Legends of St. George spread from the eastern Mediterranean to western Europe, and posthumously he became famous when he was credited by the 11th century Crusaders with having miraculously intervened on their behalf in various battles. His deeds were popularized in the 13th century

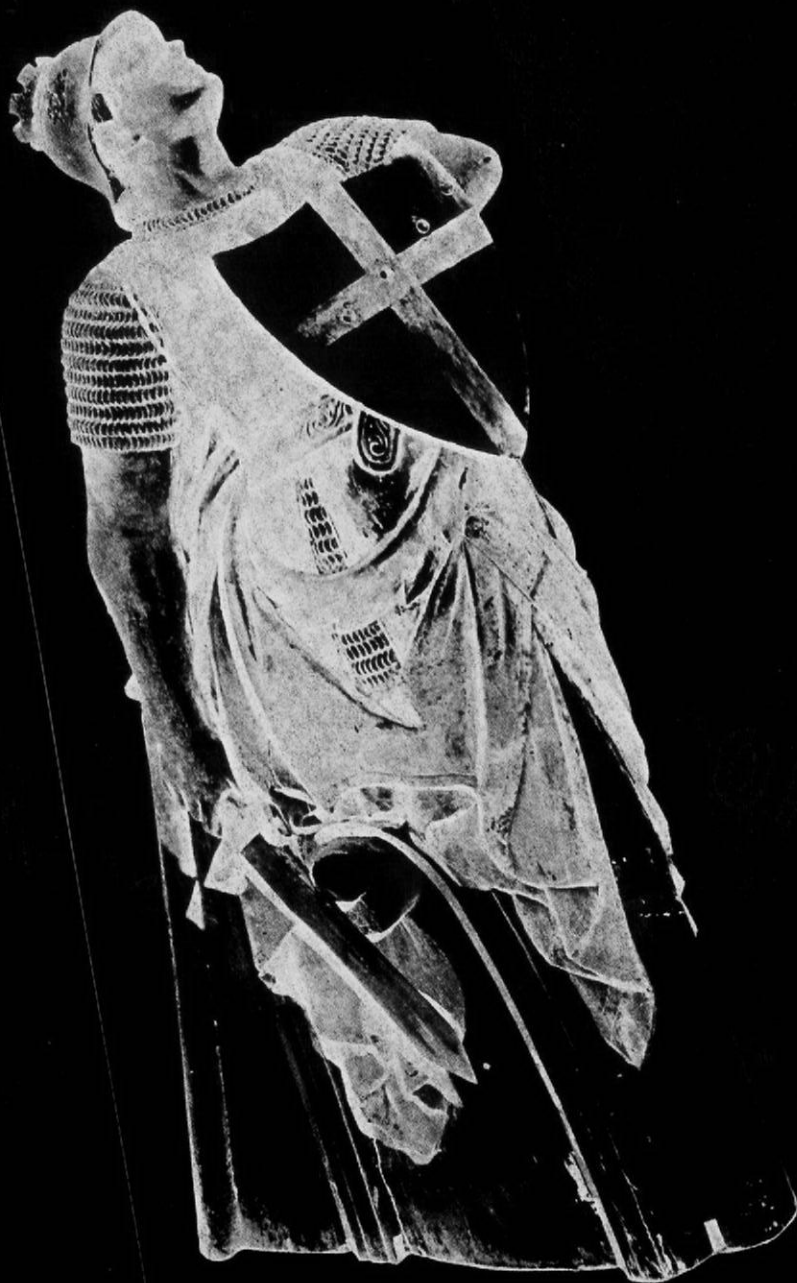


Figure 62. St. George figurehead (Stackpole, 1964: 30).



Legenda Aurea, and by c. 1350 St. George was known as the special protector and defender of England. It is surely in this latter role that we see him as a figurehead, probably from a late 19th century or early 20th century British ship. In fact, St. George's emblem, a red cross on a white background, seen on this figurehead's shield, became part of the national flag of England.<sup>94</sup>

St. George's dragon slaying, in one sense allegorical for the triumph of good over evil, was not even associated with him until about the 13th century,<sup>95</sup> but it is the main idea in the several St. George figureheads carved for important British ships during the last few hundred years. For example, the Prince Royal in 1610 (Fig. 63) and Phoenix in 1613 (Figs 64 and 55) had figureheads of St. George on horseback slaying the dragon. St. George, 1701, had a figurehead of the saint afoot fighting the dragon.<sup>96</sup> St. George, 1734, carrying 90 guns,<sup>97</sup> probably also had a figurehead of the saint, and St. George of 1840, carrying 120 guns, shows the saint afoot again, slaying the dragon (Fig. 66). He also decorated the English ship Trinity as early as 1400, as one of the four saints carved on the stern.<sup>98</sup>

Mystic Seaport's St. George figurehead is in very good condition, having had only some small repairs to the nose and chin, helmet, sword belt and blade, and a section of the base.

The high quality of this solidly designed and powerfully executed figurehead indicates that it was done by someone with academic training in sculpture, as is known to be the case with the beautifully carved, shield-carrying Bishop Absalon figurehead (Fig. 67). The Bishop Absalon figurehead is from the Danish training ship København and because 1) Bishop Absalon is a

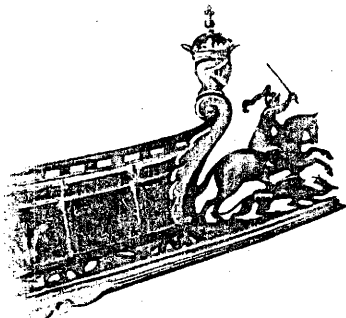


Figure 63. Prince Royal figurehead 1610  
(Laughton, 1973: pl.2).



Figure 64. Detail of  
Phoenix  
Figurehead,  
1613  
(Laughton,  
1973: 72).

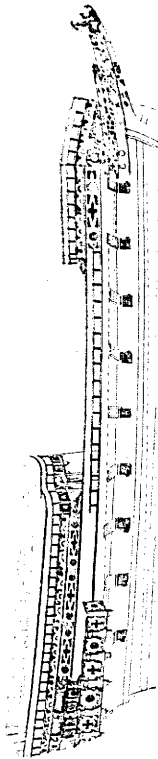


Figure 65. Phoenix 1613 (Laughton, 1973: pl.1).

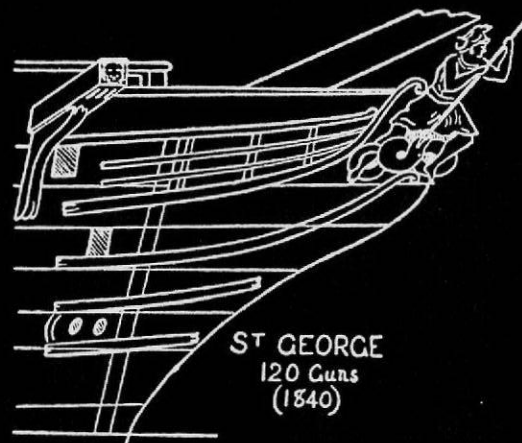


Figure 66. St. George, 120 guns, 1840 (Laughton, 1973: 39).

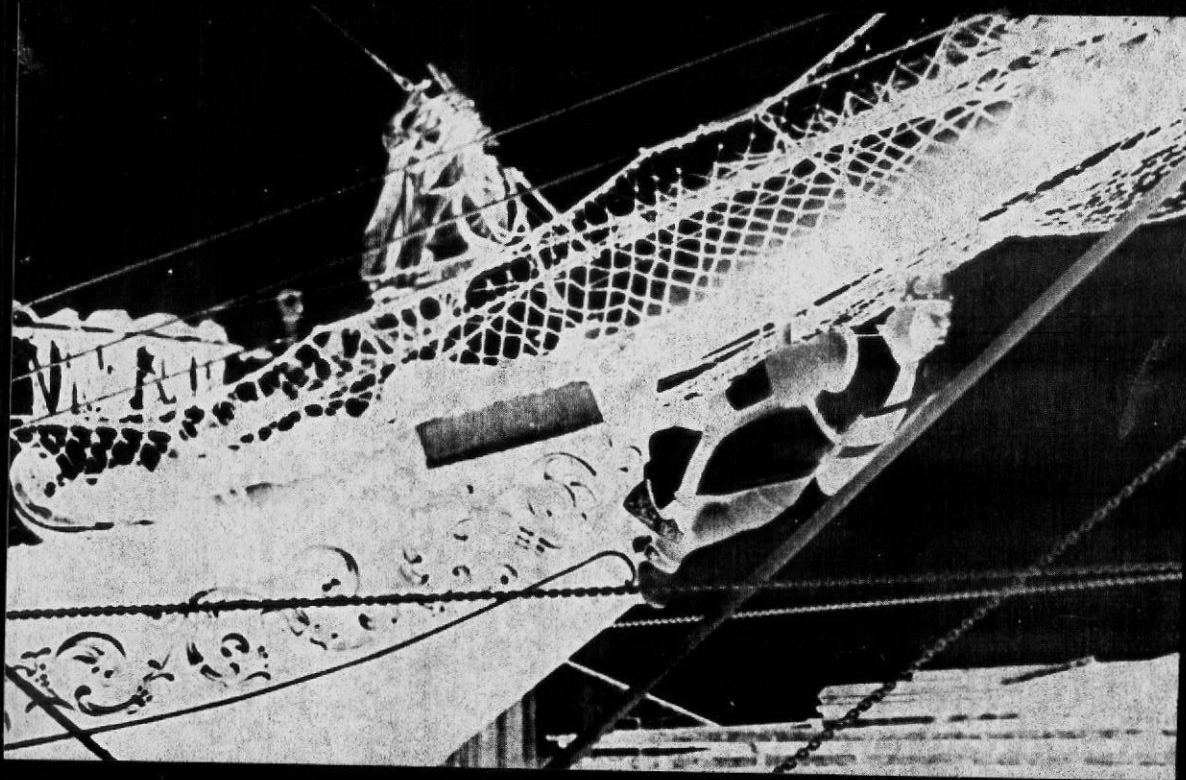


Figure 67. Bishop Absalom figurehead on Danish training ship København. Figure carved by sculptor Emil Hansen (Poulsen, 1977: 189).

hero to Denmark much as St. George is a hero to England, and 2) their stylistic appearance is similar, perhaps it will be found that the St. George figurehead at Mystic Seaport is also from a training ship, possibly Britain's last one, St. George,<sup>99</sup> although no photographs of that vessel have yet been located.

16. "Unidentified Woman figurehead #50.2874." This unidentified portrait figurehead at Mystic Seaport (Fig. 68) is unusual for the way both arms are held back and the sleeves blend into the skirt. She has stylistic similarities to the figurehead of the 72-ton cargo schooner, Jane Owen, which was launched in 1860 at Pwllheli, Wales<sup>100</sup> (Fig. 69), and Mystic Seaport's carving may well prove to have a similar background. The weatherbeaten surface of Mystic Seaport's carving reflects her many days at sea, and restoration long ago is particularly apparent at her nose and mouth.

17. "Fredericka" figurehead. When purchased by Mystic Seaport Museum in 1948, this carving (Fig. 70) was known as "Fredericka." She dates to c. 1825 based on her clothing and hair style; one unique feature is the carved hair comb she wears (see page 139).

"Fredericka" appears to be by the same carver as "Commodore Perry" at The Mariners' Museum (see page 117), and can be related stylistically to several other figures, such as the unidentified female figurehead on display aboard Royal Viking Sea (Fig. 71) and the unidentified female figurehead #OF32 at The Mariners' Museum.

Photographs and paintings show that this figurehead type is appropriate for a vertical bow (Fig. 72).

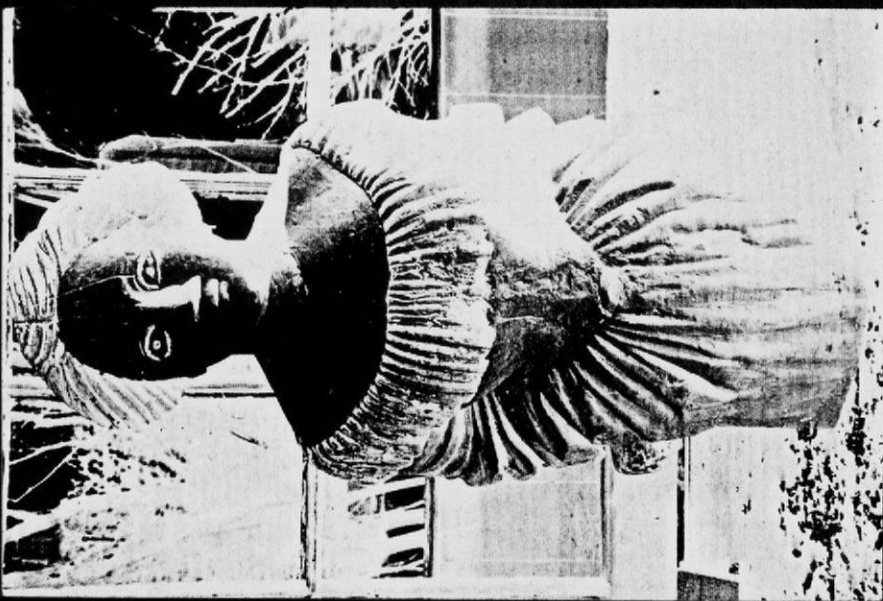


Figure 68. Unidentified Figurehead #50.2874 at Mystic Seaport. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

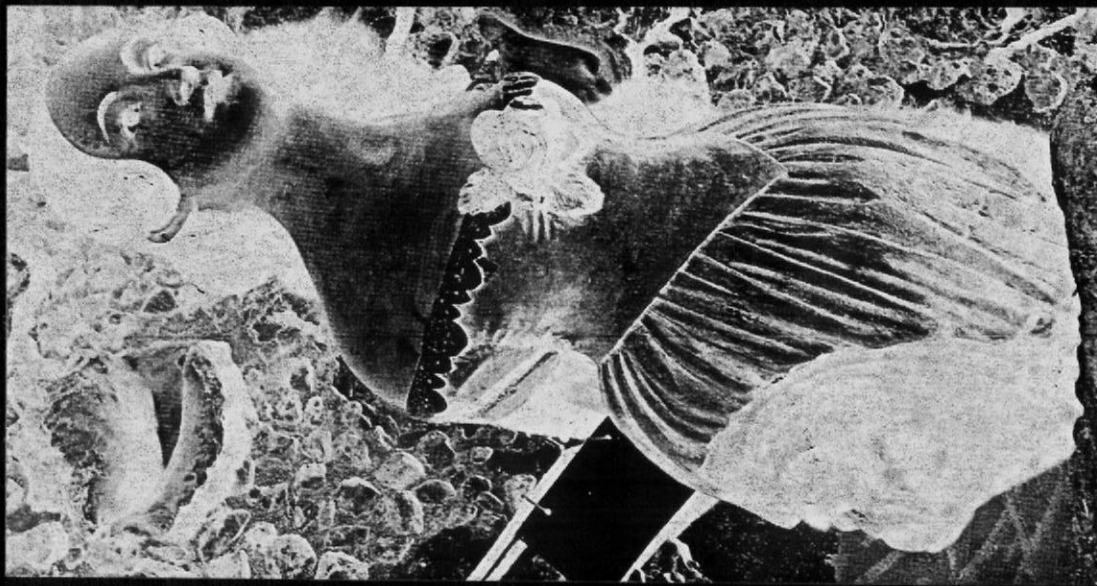


Figure 69. Jane Owen figurehead 1860 (Costa, 1981: 132).



Figure 70. Mystic Seaport's "Fredericka" figurehead; base is now incomplete. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

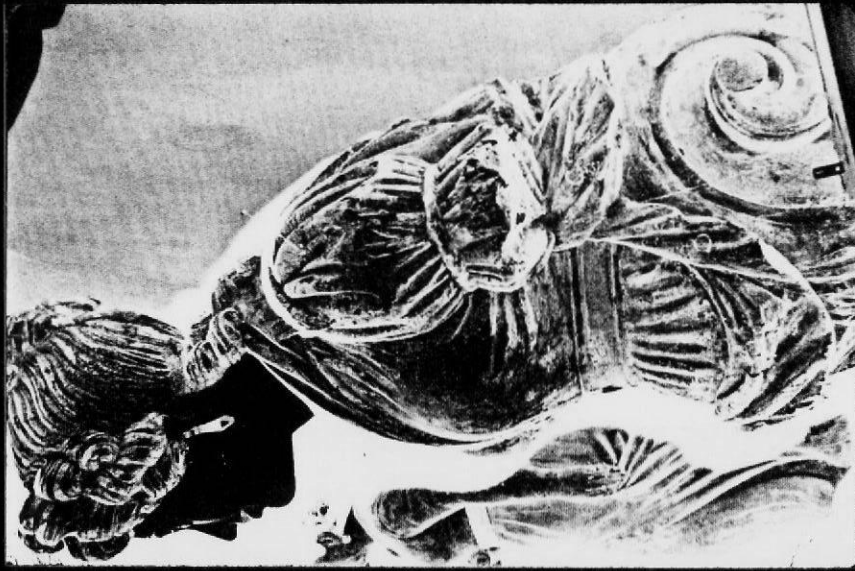


Figure 71. Unidentified figurehead aboard Royal Viking Sea shows probable appearance of "Fredericka's" full original base. (Photo, shown to right, by Carol Olsen.)



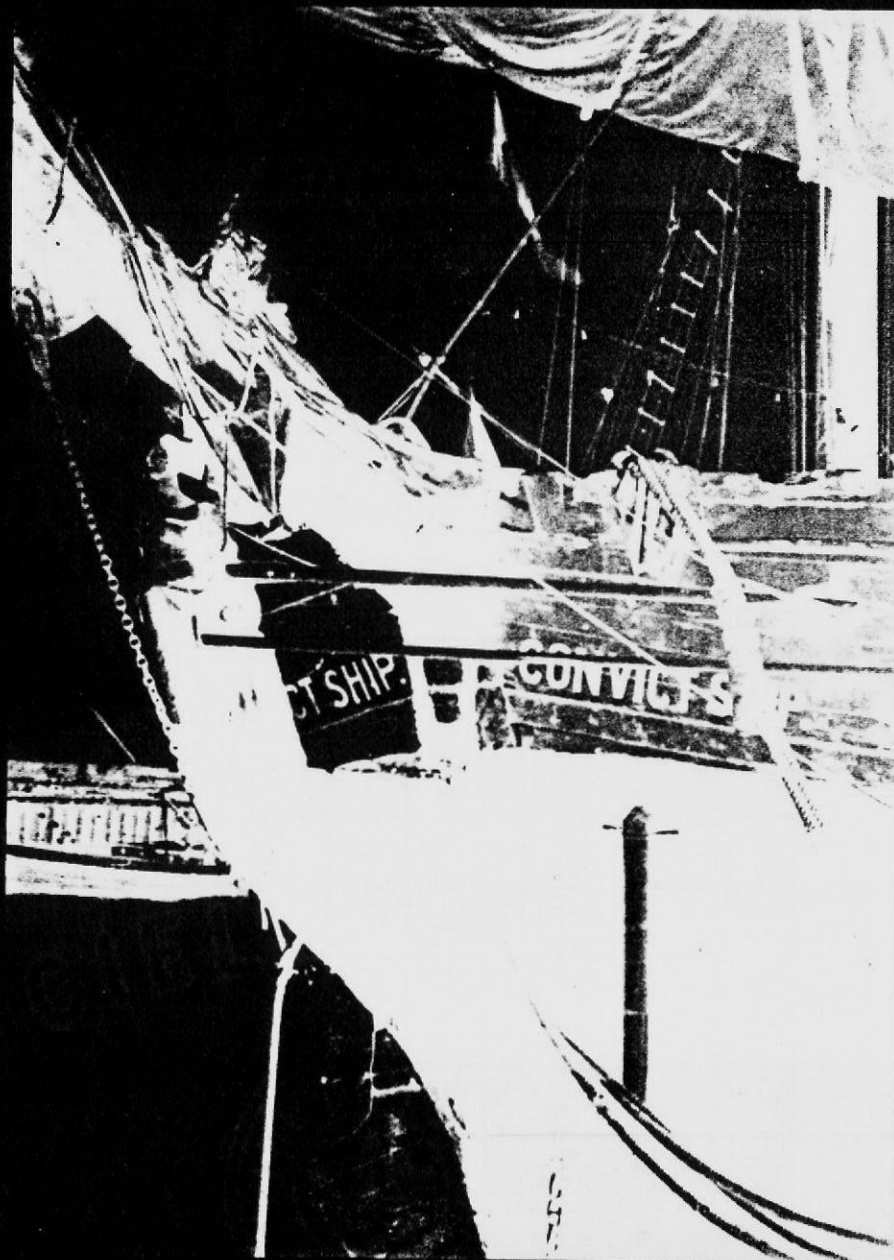


Figure 72. This photograph of Success shows the appropriate bow shape for figureheads like "Fredericka" at Mystic Seaport. (Photo: The Mariners Museum.)



18. "Aleppo" figurehead. When this figurehead (Fig. 73) arrived at Mystic Seaport in 1946, it was said to be from a vessel named Aleppo, yet many ships have carried that name. I think that a vessel to consider is the steel screw steamer Aleppo, 340 feet in length and about 47 feet in beam, which was built in 1900 by R. Stephenson & Co. Ld, Newcastle. She sailed until at least 1930.

This figurehead was previously published (Stackpole 1964:48) as being from the iron-hull Cunard liner Aleppo built in the 1860s, which measured 292 feet in length and 38 feet in beam. However, after looking at photographs of that vessel, which had been taken from a distance, I did not find her figurehead to have the appropriate profile to be Mystic Seaport's figurehead; nor does its pose show the right arm held to the chest, as on Mystic Seaport's figurehead. My own suggestion of the later-built Aleppo is admittedly tentative, and is based primarily on the size of this figurehead and the fact that it came to Mystic Seaport known as the Aleppo's bow decoration.

The identity of the whiskered and double-chinned, portrait-like figurehead is still totally in question. From his fine turban, cummerbund, and trimmed gown, he seems a man of distinction. When mounted on his ship, he looked heavenward, which suggests that his beads and the scroll he carries may have religious significance.

19. "Asia figurehead possibly from H.M.S. Asia." This figurehead (Fig. 74) came to Mystic Seaport attributed to H.M.S. Asia. All possible vessels by that name should be investigated, but I note that in C. de Brocktorff's lithograph of H.M.S. Asia, 1824 (Fig. 75), that vessel initially carried a style of Asian figurehead



Figure 73. "Aleppo" figurehead at Mystic Seaport (Stackpole, 1964: 49).



Figure 74. "Asia" figurehead, Mystic Seaport.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)

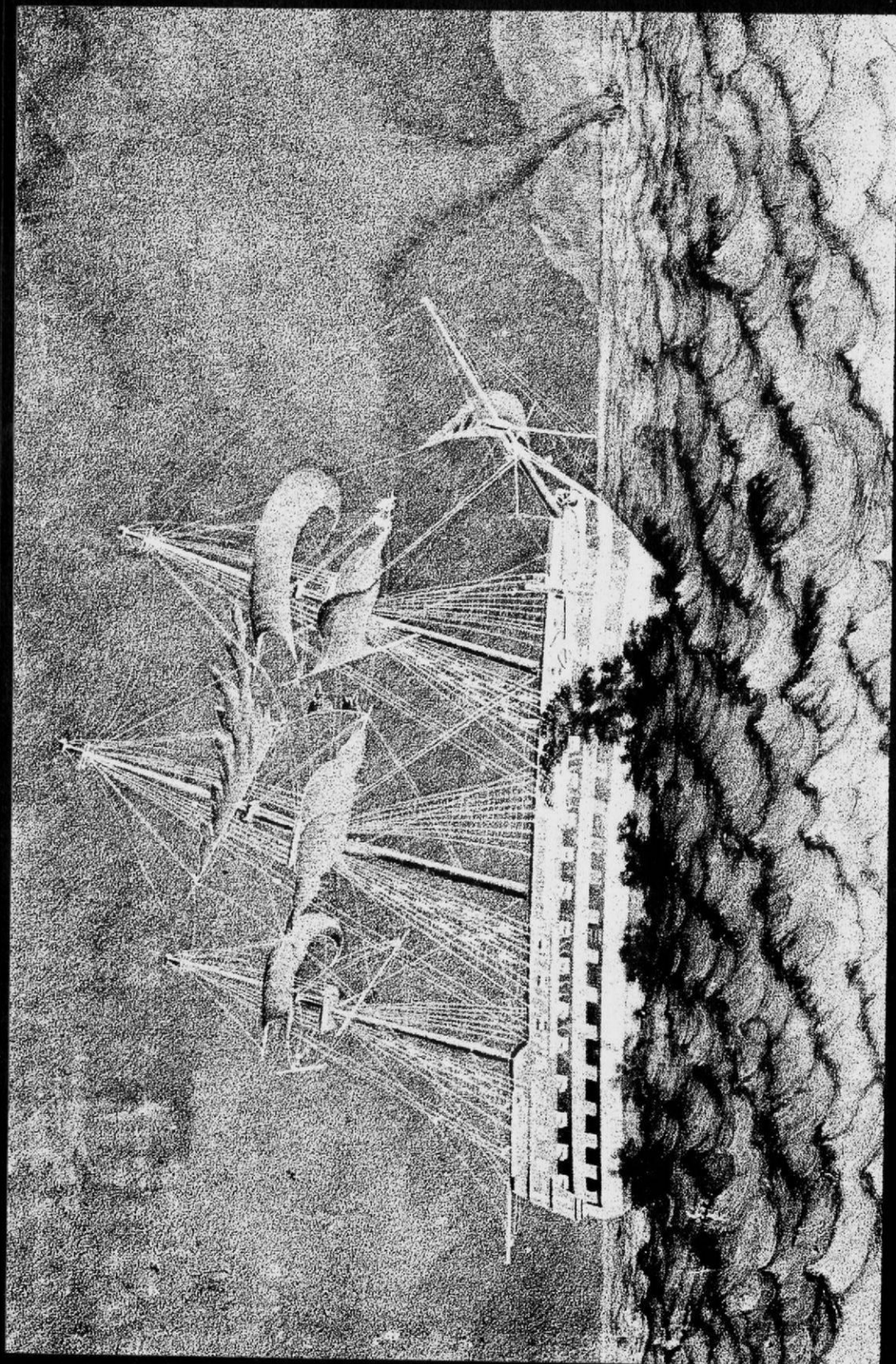


Figure 75. Lithograph by C. de Brocktorff from a drawing by H. Brett of H.M.S. Asia in a squall off Attica Feb. 27th, 1840. (Photo: National Maritime Museum, London.)

like the one now in the Victory Museum at Portsmouth (Fig. 76). Later photographs of the vessel (Figs. 77, 78) show a different bow carving: a half-figure, turbaned man, whose angular neckline corresponds to the "H.M.S. Asia figurehead" now at Mystic Seaport.

H.M.S. Asia, 1824 (Figs 77, 78) built at Bombay, was the flagship of the Admiral Superintendent at Portsmouth. She was a guardship after 1858<sup>101</sup> and was sold in 1908. Her lengthy career allows for the possibility that she had various figureheads, and it is to be determined if Mystic Seaport's figurehead was one of them.<sup>102</sup>

The Asian figurehead at Mystic Seaport is forcefully executed with dramatically furrowed brows, intent eyes, a firmly set mouth, and a muscular body beneath a partially gilded breastplate. The grim-faced lion upon his chest seems to flex leaf-patterned muscles. The carving's features are handsome, and examples, such as the one at page 195, suggest that "Asia" represents a standard style of 19th century English figurehead.

Internally the wood of "Asia" is fragile, but the exterior remains stable; records indicate that in 1934 it was repainted and re-gilded according to the original colors.

20. "Alexander Hamilton" figurehead. A figurehead purchased for Mystic Seaport in 1952 was said to represent the American statesman and first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton (Fig. 79). A painting by John Trumbull (Fig. 80), dated near the time of Hamilton's death in 1804, shows facial features quite similar to those of this figurehead, but since the figurehead's clothing style dates to the 1830s,<sup>103</sup>





Figure 76. H.M.S. Asia figurehead,  
Victory Museum,  
Portsmouth (Costa,  
1981: 60).

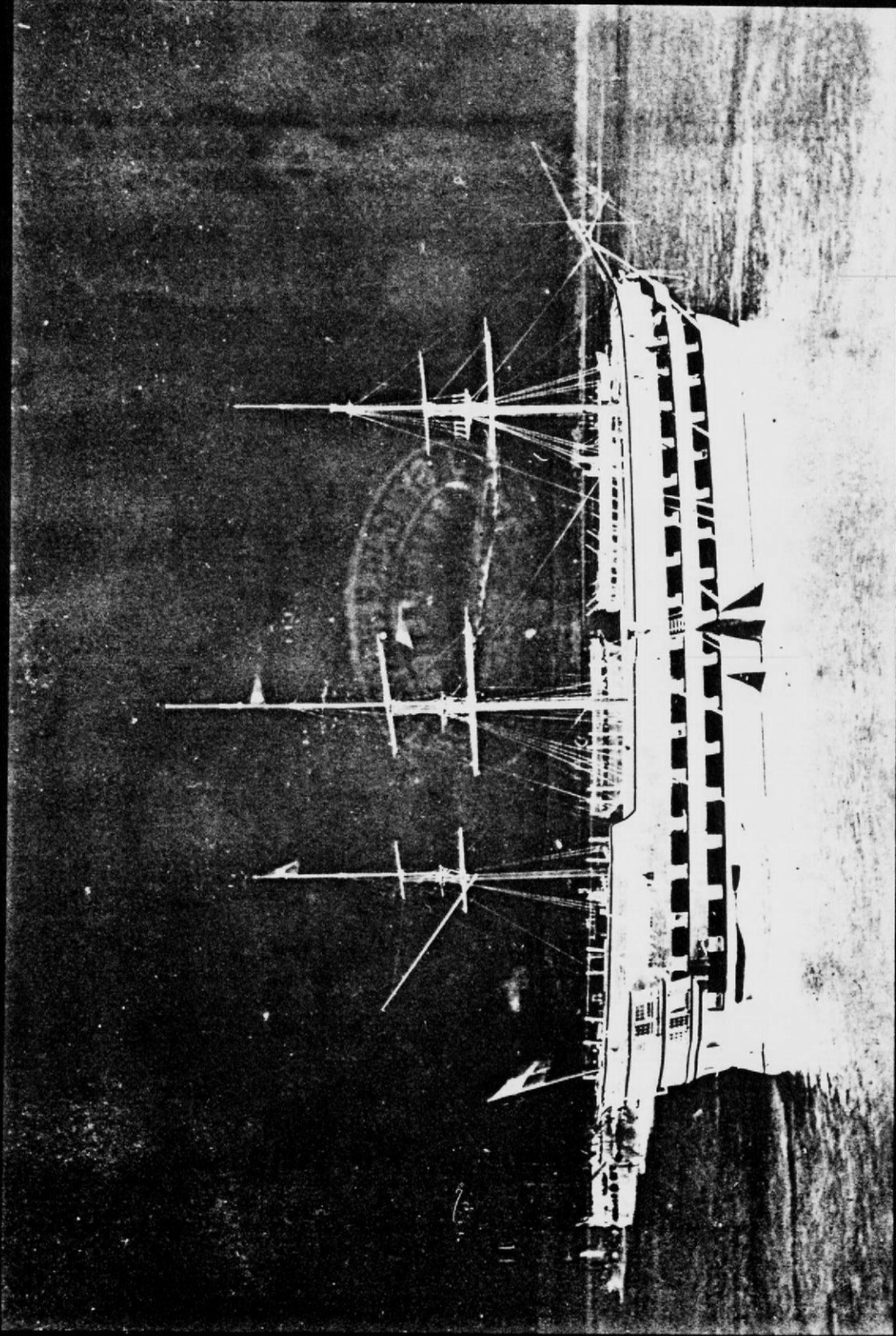


Figure 77. H.M.S. Asia, starboard side. (Photo: National Maritime Museum, London.)

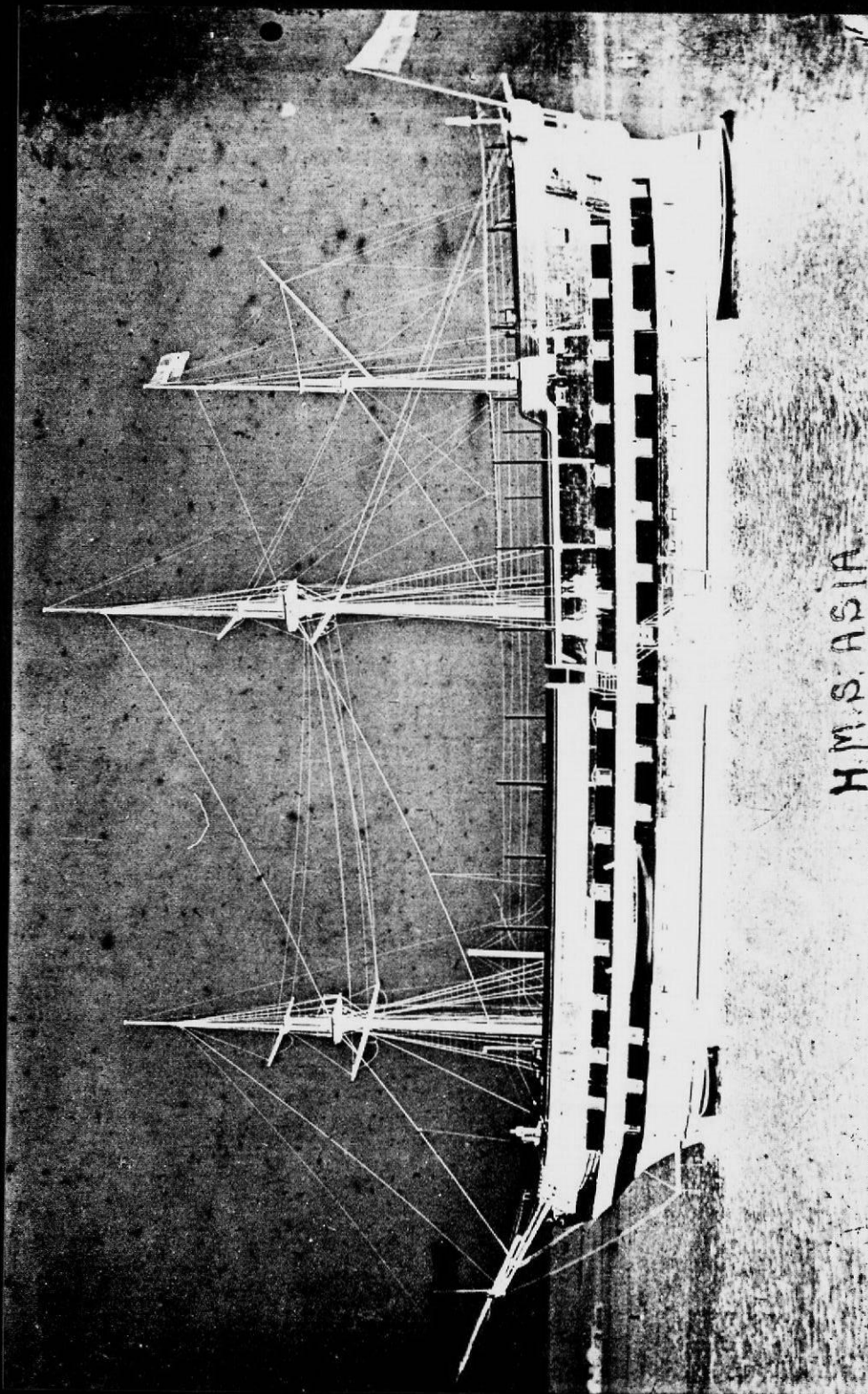


Figure 78. A square neckline, like that on Mystic's figurehead, is visible in this view of H.M.S. Asia's figurehead. (Photo: National Maritime Museum, London.)





Figure 79. Figurehead tentatively identified as Alexander Hamilton. (Illustration provided by Mystic Seaport Museum.)



Figure 80. 1806 Portrait of Alexander Hamilton by John Trumbull. (Photo: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; Gift of Henry Cabot Lodge.)

that is a more likely date for the carving.

Only two 19th century vessels named Alexander Hamilton are presently known to me, each built in America in the year of Hamilton's death, 1804.<sup>104</sup> Information about an appropriate vessel from the 1830s remains to be found.

Several surface details help make "Hamilton" an attractive figurehead. For example, his coat has carefully incised button holes and trim along the precisely shaped lapel. He has a well-tied stock, a trimmed and buttoned shirt, and a curly head of hair combed from a part at the back of his head.

## CHAPTER III

INDIVIDUAL STYLISTIC ELEMENTS OF FIGUREHEADS:  
THEIR APPEARANCE AND IMPORTANCE IN IDENTIFYING  
MYSTIC SEAPORT'S CARVINGS

Displays of figurehead collections in maritime museums typically give the overall impression that every figurehead is unique. The fact, instead, is that there are several basic styles of figureheads and for any one carving in a collection, there are likely others, elsewhere, that are essentially the same.

It is important to realize that similar carvings exist, since an unidentified figurehead can be compared to similar carvings, with the latter sometimes having been documented by date, country, ships, and perhaps with even the carvers' names known. The documented carvings can begin to shed light on the unidentified figurehead, or at least provide a place for research to begin.

I have found similarities between Mystic Seaport's carvings and other figures by developing and applying a method of stylistic examination, observations from which are discussed in this chapter. Every one of the 17 subheadings of this method has helped in further documenting Mystic Seaport's figureheads, because each has not only drawn attention to the distinct style of every carving but provided specific areas of comparison between figures. Such comparisons have in most cases led to my more fully identifying Mystic Seaport's figureheads.

In examining the surface of figurehead carvings, I begin at the base and work to the top of the figure.

I find it important also to work from one side of the figure to the other, looking, for example, first at the left scroll and then at the right, because this immediate comparison facilitates finding differences which, at times, can call attention to undocumented restoration. Analysis also includes photography, the first of the procedural steps to be discussed.

1. Photographs. Each figurehead is photographed from the front, back, and both sides. This makes it possible to accurately compare the figurehead to whatever views are published of any similar carvings.

2. Figurehead Type. I find that the figurehead types in Mystic Seaport's collection (Fig. 81) are: A) head, B) bust, C) half figure, D) scroll skirt, and E) full length figure. A sixth type, animal head/partial body is the Phantom's serpent figurehead type, shown on page 68.

3. Pose. As many examples in this thesis show, there are several basic figurehead poses. Although "Lady Blessington" (Fig. 82) is about ten inches shorter than "Lizzie" at The Mariners' Museum (Fig. 83), the slope of their shoulders, angle of their heads, the position of their arms, and other particulars about their pose are nearly identical. "Kathelina" is also very similar (Fig. 84). At times, such similar carvings will prove to be from the same shipcarver's shop since, as Fried describes in Artists in Wood, after creating a design, a carver cut out a paper or cardboard pattern (front and side views) and saved the patterns for use when a duplicate figure was ordered. Details of the figure could be changed as desired by the tradesmen. Fried also says that patterns of the same figure style were made in different sizes and kept on hand.<sup>105</sup>

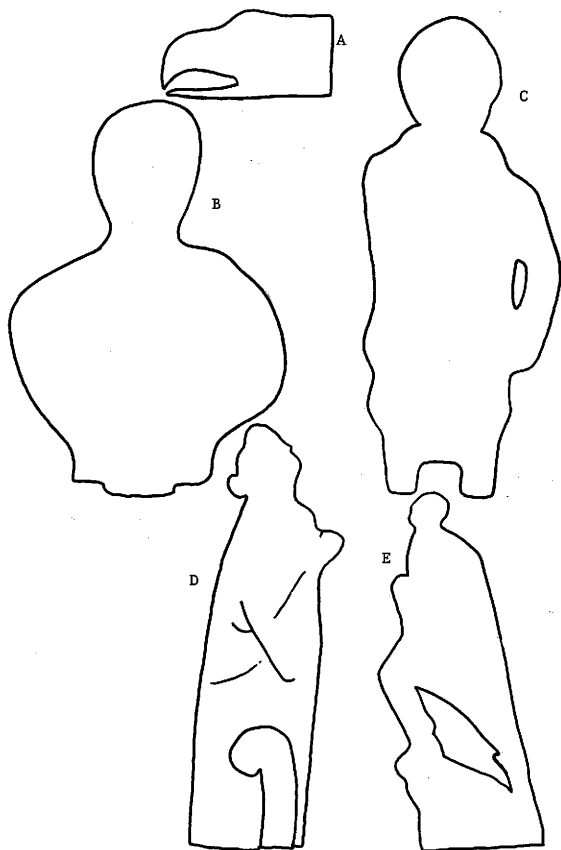




Figure 82. Tentatively identified as "Lady Blessington." (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 83. "Lizzie," at The Mariners' Museum. (Photo, shown to the right, courtesy of The Mariners' Museum.)

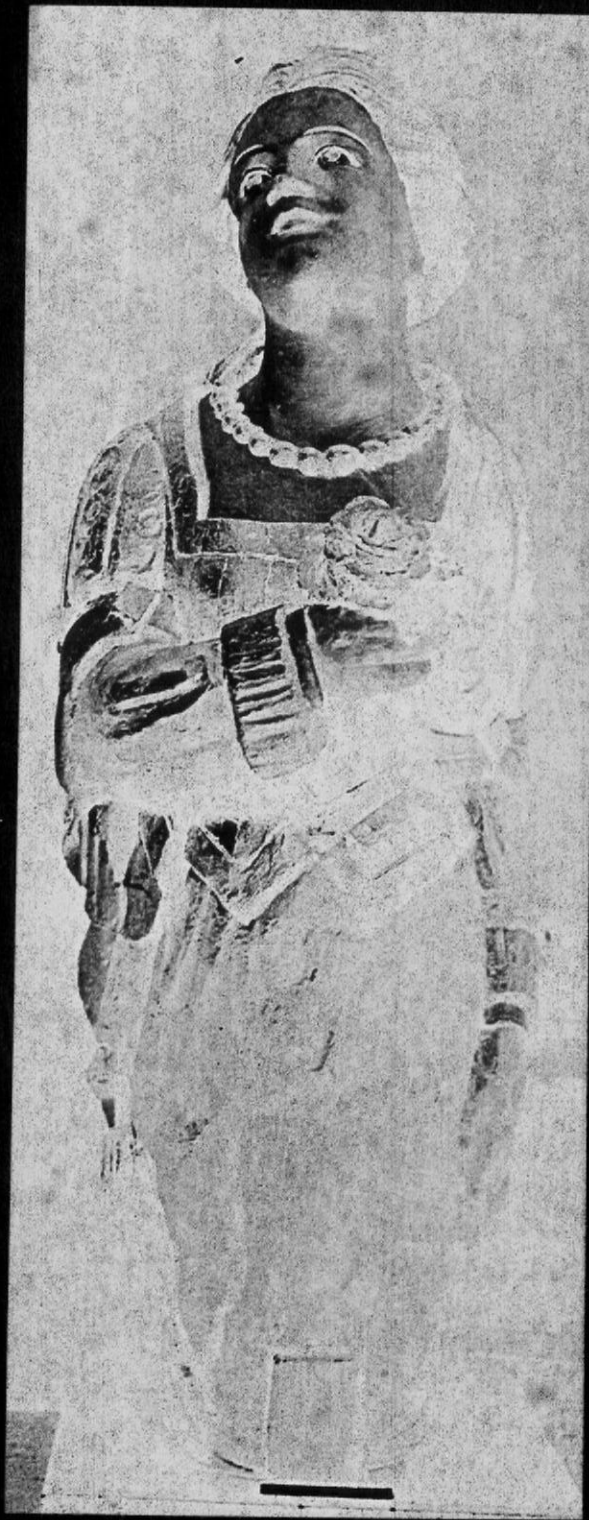


Figure 84. Figurehead possibly from Kathelina (Costa, 1981: 103).

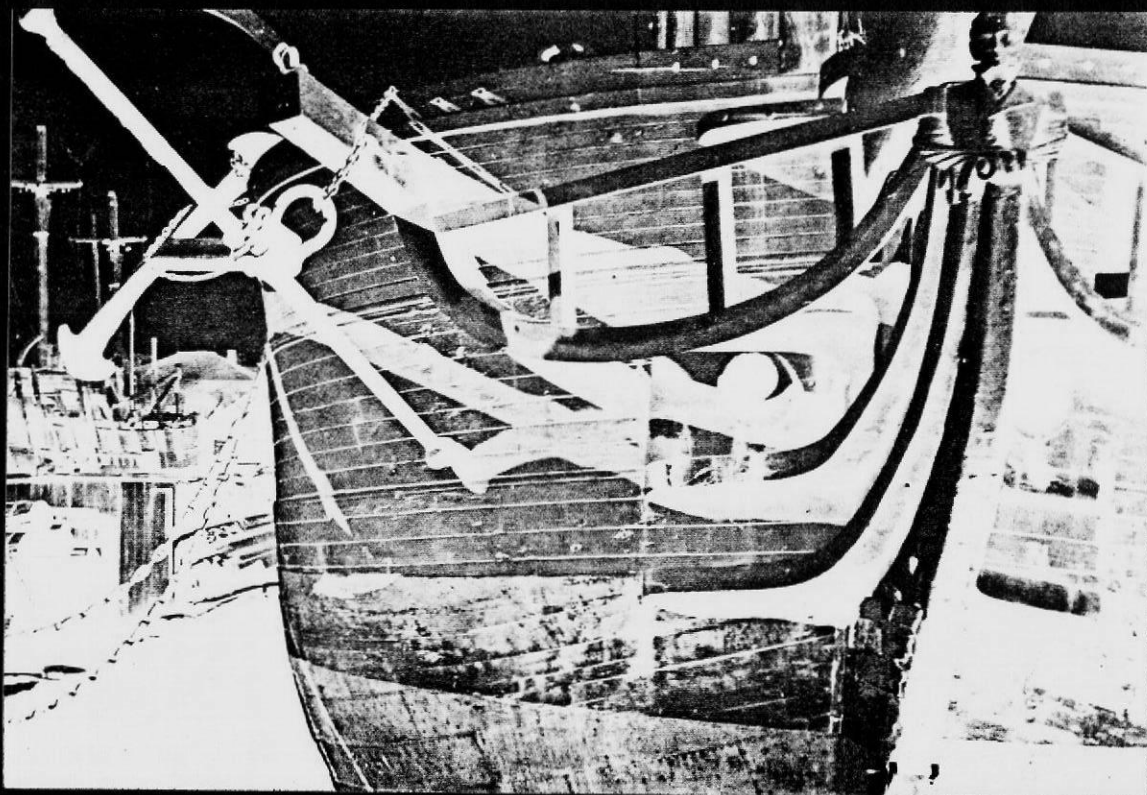
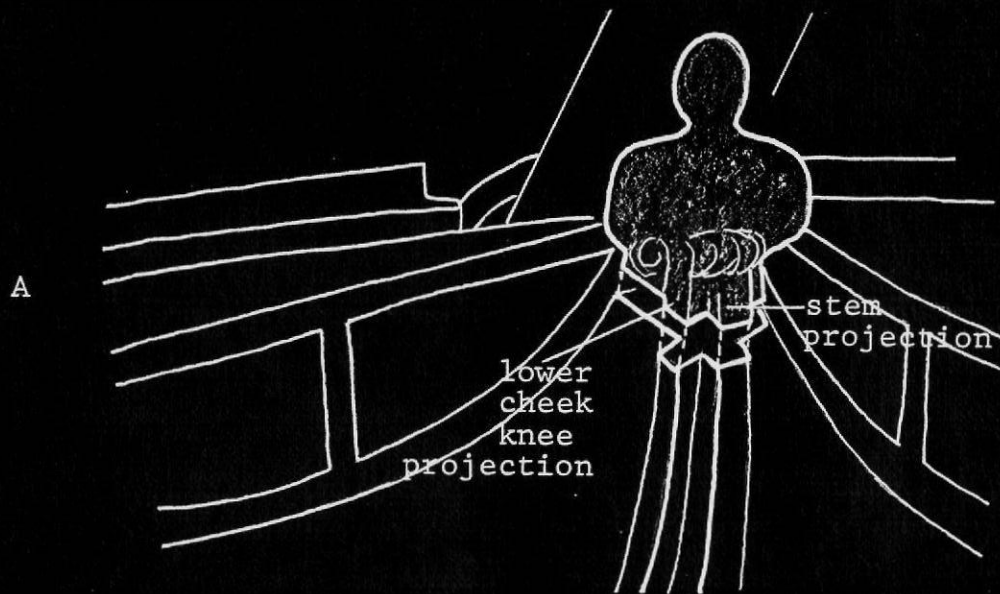
4. Base Dimensions. At the base of a figurehead there are special contours for the vessel's head design and when they exist, for the ship's cheek knees (Fig. 85A and B). On a figurehead whose history is lost, these shapes are important for showing the width of the stem which, in turn, should be some indication of the ship size.

5. Scrolls. Scrolls help to integrate visually the ship and the carving since the scroll often completes the line of a cheek knee or wale (Fig. 86). The details of a scroll can be as individual as the handwritten signature of a carver. There are traditions, as well, to scroll shapes and depths, many of which appear to be based on architectural motifs. Further, scrolls frequently have rather subtle linear incisions, often in leaf patterns. In order to describe and compare carvings, the following terms are employed for the various scroll types on figureheads.

5a. Fiddle scrolls. A scroll that turns toward the stern of the ship is a "fiddle" scroll (Figs 87, 88, and 89). Smooth-surfaced fiddle scrolls similar to that on the Iolanda figurehead (Fig. 87) are common, but other styles in Mystic's collection include a flowered scroll (Fig. 88) and a foliated scroll (Fig. 89). An example of how scroll style can be meaningful is that Mystic Seaport's unidentified Woman with Crown figurehead (Fig. 89) has a foliated scroll in the style of H.M.S. North Star, 1824,<sup>106</sup> and H.M.S. Orlando, 1858 (see page 76). On this basis alone, the likelihood is that Woman with Crown is an English figurehead.

5b. Front scroll. There appear to be relatively few surviving figureheads which used both fiddle scrolls and a front scroll, such as those seen on the "Alexander Hamilton" figurehead (Fig. 90A and B). A front scroll, therefore, is a distinctive feature for





B

Figure 85. Base dimensions of the figurehead correspond to the ship stem and cheek knee design. A. Figurehead details. (Drawing by Carol Olsen.) B. Commodore Morris. (Photo: The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.)

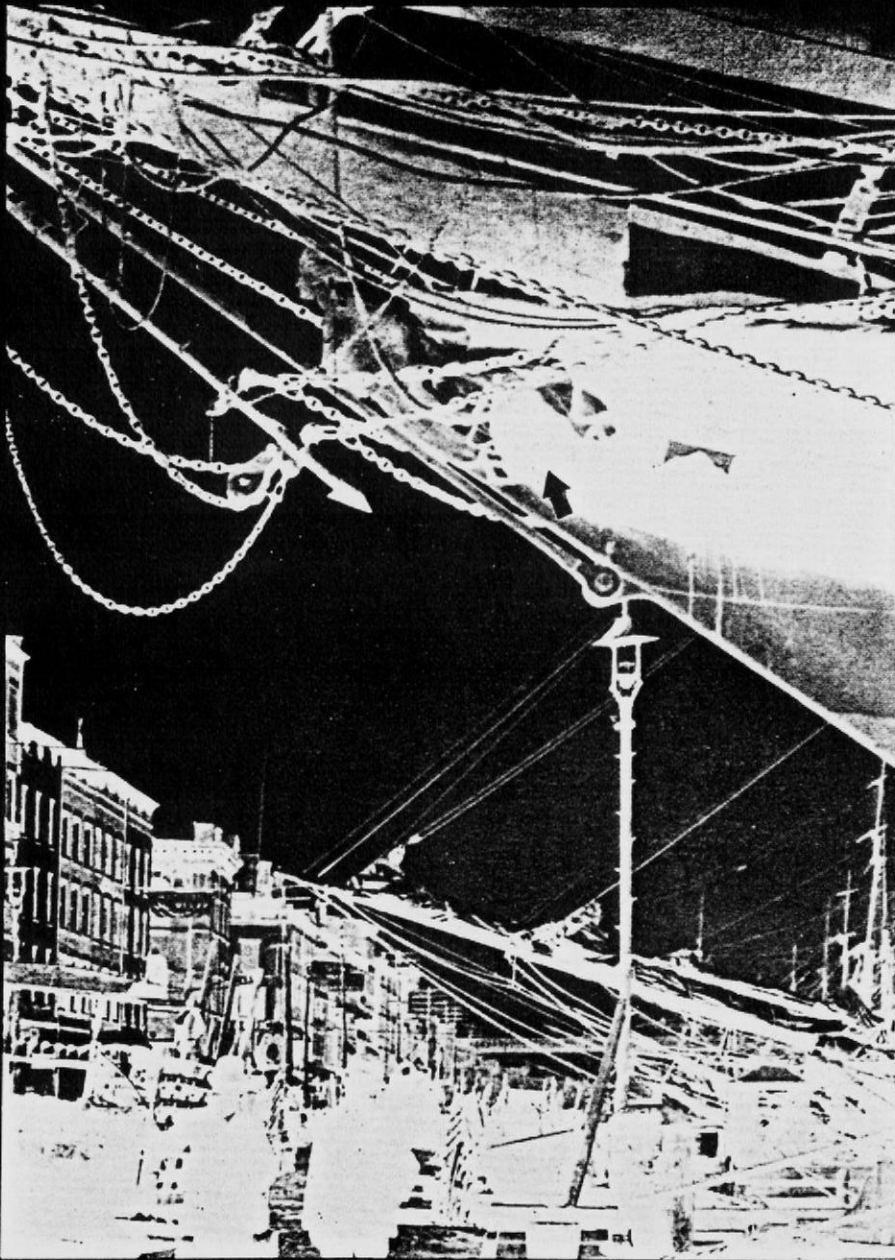


Figure 86. Scrolls help to complete hull lines  
(Johnson and Lightfoot, 1980: 13).

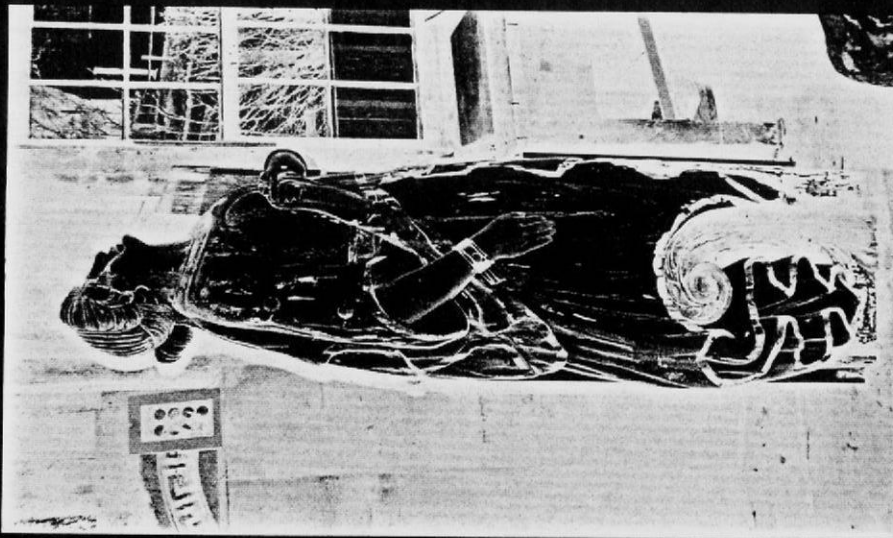


Figure 87. Smooth surfaced fiddle scroll of Iolanda figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

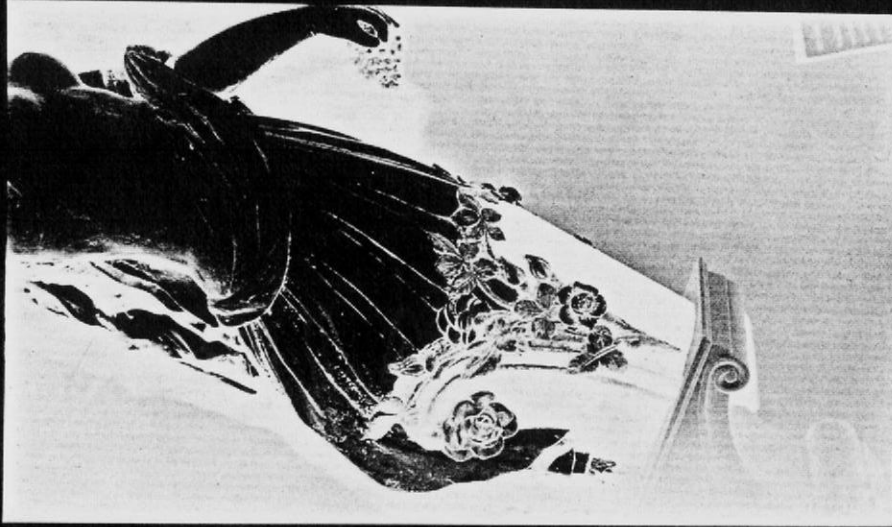


Figure 88. Flowered scroll of "Hebe." (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

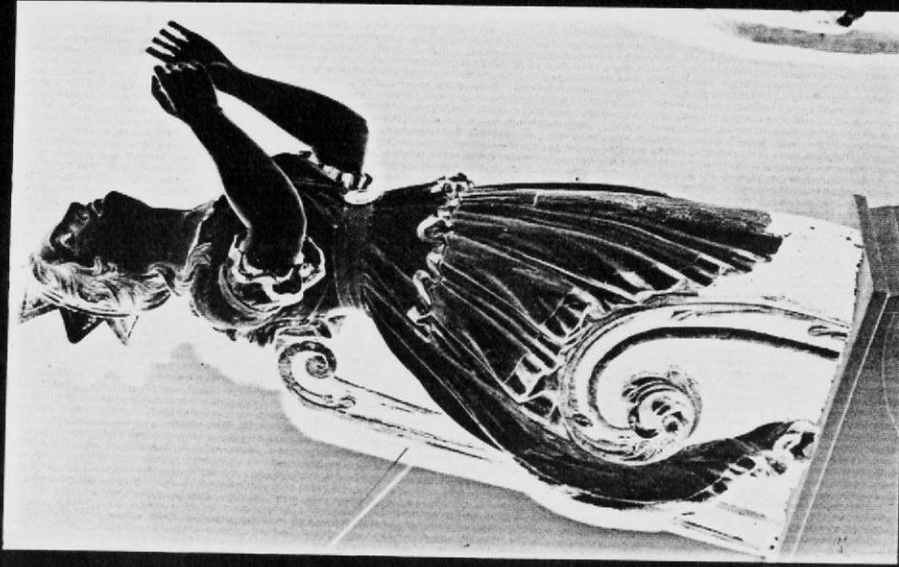
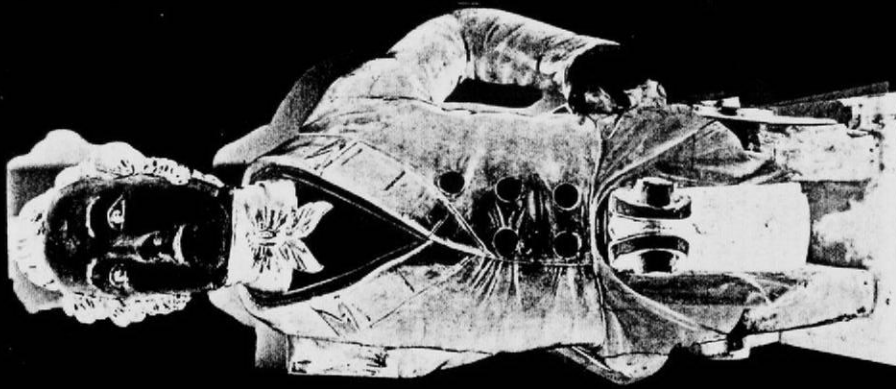
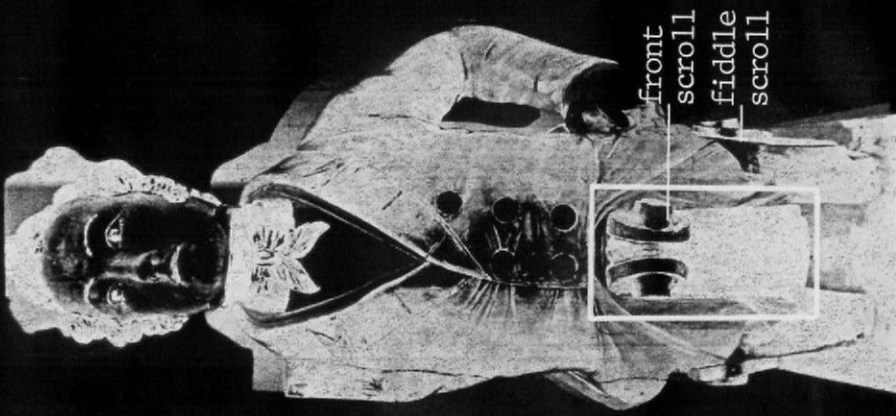


Figure 89. Foliated scroll of Woman with Crown carving (Stackpole, 1964: 41).





A



B

Figure 90. Front scroll and fiddle scrolls of "Alexander Hamilton" figurehead. A. Front view of carving. B. Front view with labeled scrolls. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)

comparison, and the slight differences in their shape will help link figureheads together for identification.

5c. Base scroll. I use this name for the large forward-turning scroll (often decorated with carved foliage) on which a figurehead's feet are placed (Fig. 91A and B). Usually the figure, lacing board (also see page 237), and base scroll are of one piece of wood, which makes the carving more solid than if it were composed of a carved figure attached to a separate base scroll. When wood joins do occur, especially on larger figures, they are more often for small sections, such as part of the base scroll front or other places which are not critical to the strength of the overall figurehead design.

6. Base Drapery. I have chosen this term for the drapery appearing near the base of some figureheads (Figs 92, 93, and 94). This drapery usually concludes at the waist. Presumably carvers developed favorite base drapery styles which they repeated.

It was the identical base drapery of the "Fredericka" (Fig. 92) and "Commodore Perry" (Fig. 93) figureheads that first caused me to compare them. I then noticed that they are both half figures with truncated arms, each looking slightly to the right. Additionally, their hair and costumes are highly detailed. Having now personally examined both of these carvings, it is my conclusion that they were probably done by the same carver. Again, my initial comparison was caused by the fact that they have the same base drapery style. A third figurehead, an Unidentified Woman (Fig. 94) has the same style of base drapery, and she, too, may prove to be by their carver.

Base drapery styles seem to help create the character of the figures. For example, the pious looking "Aleppo" figurehead (Fig. 95A and B) has a smoothly

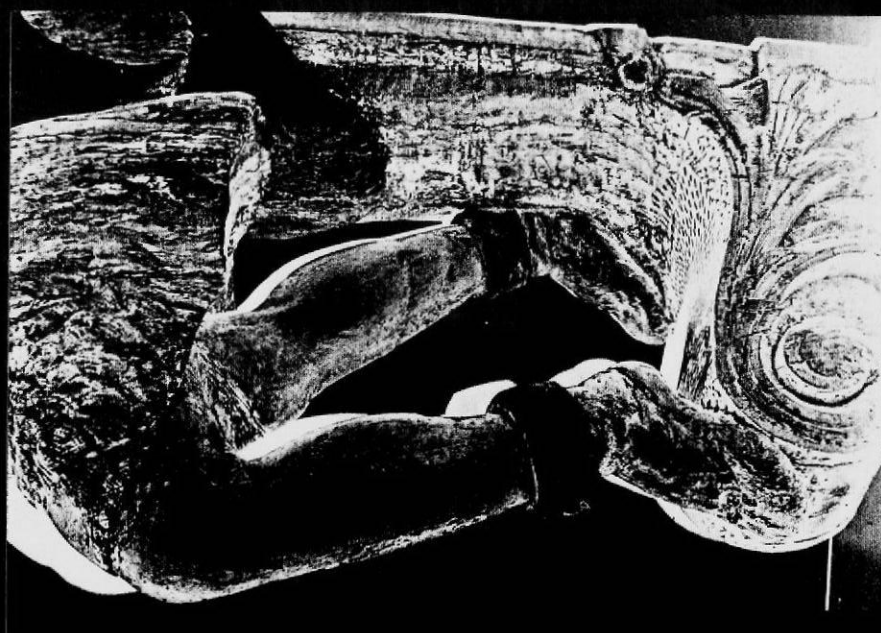


Figure 91. Base scroll shown on Seminole's Indian figurehead.  
 A. Base of figure. B. Base of figure with area delineated that is referred to as the "base scroll." (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)

B

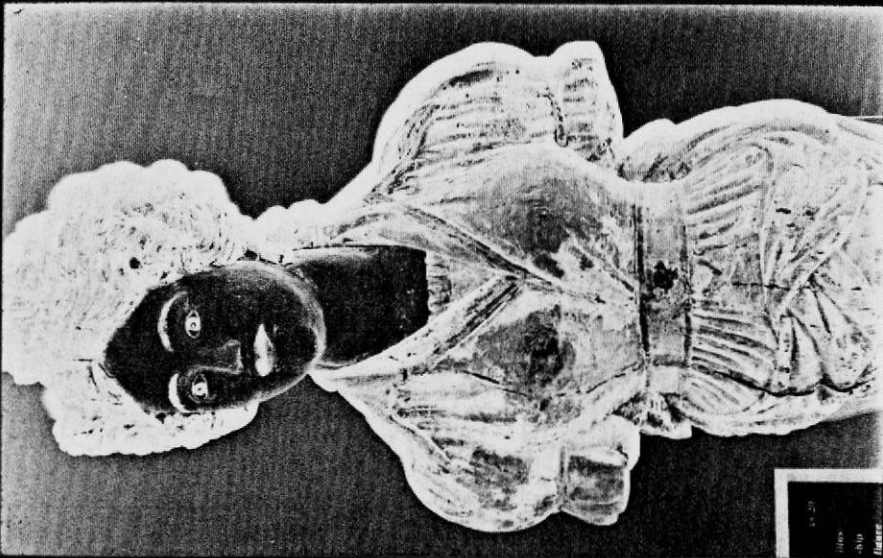


Figure 92. The base drapery of the "Fredericka" figurehead at Mystic Seaport is paralleled in other carvings. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

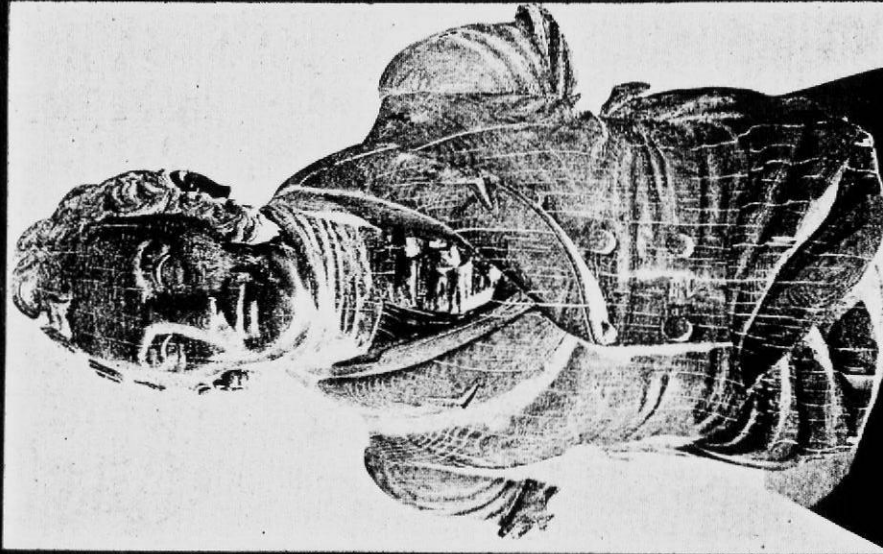


Figure 93. "Commodore Perry" figurehead with identical base drapery (Pinckney, 1940: pl. XIII).

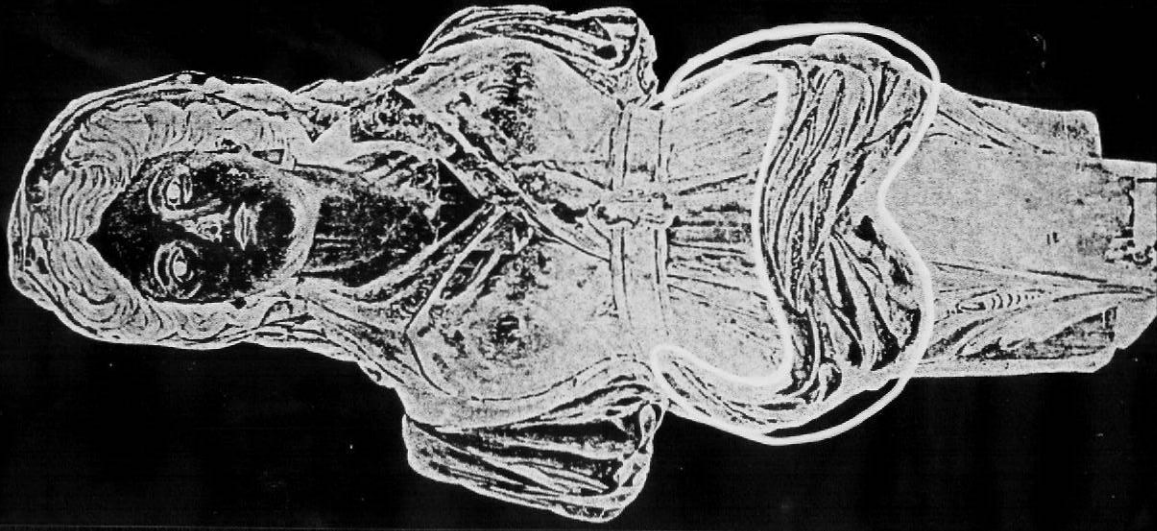
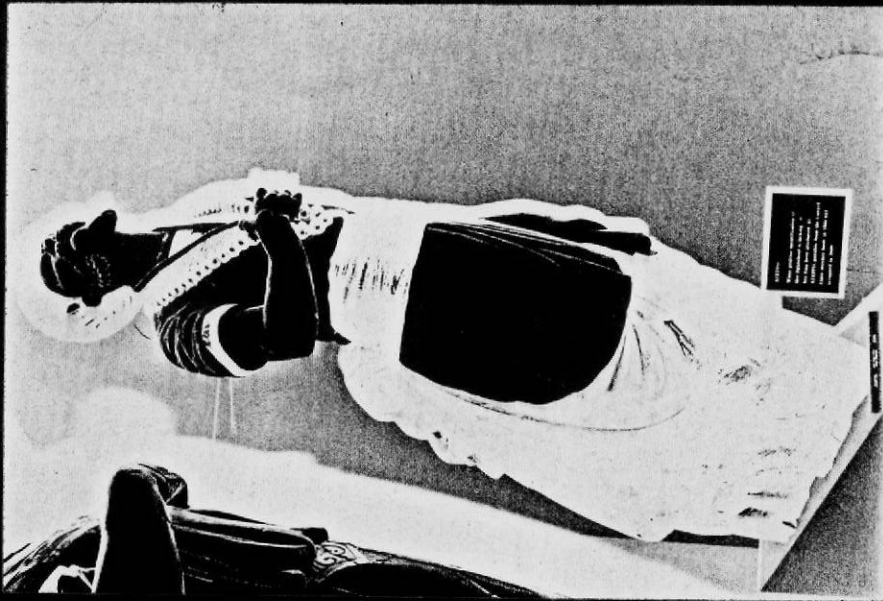
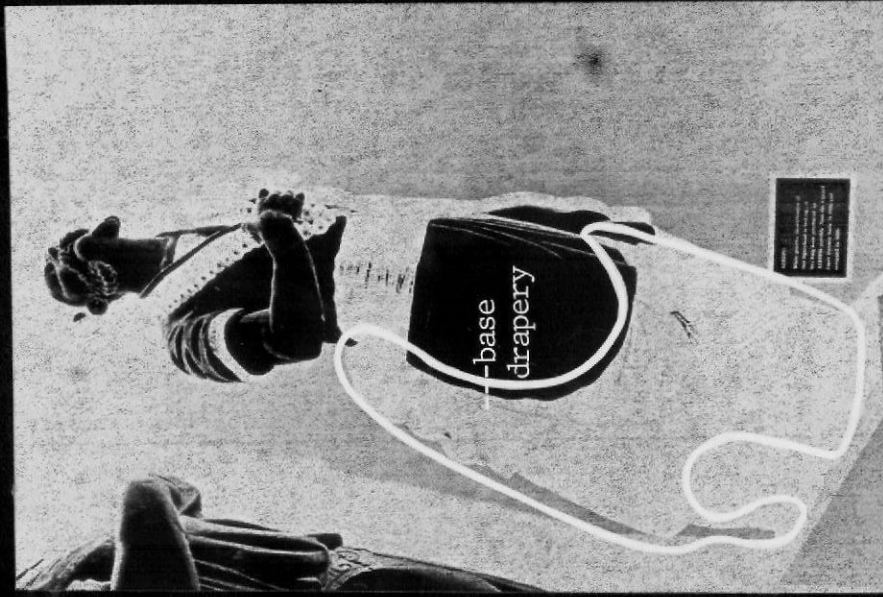


Figure 94. Unidentified Woman figurehead (Hornung, 1972: 19, fig. 28).





A



B

Figure 95. Base drapery of "Aleppo" figurehead. A. Left side of carving. B. Left side with base drapery delineated. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)



arcuating base drapery which is delicately edged in gilded, incised leaves and which draws up to a rich gather of folds. It is quite different from the more dramatic and deeply cut base drapery of Orlando which gives that hero added vibrancy and vigor (Fig. 96A and B).

The use of base drapery seems to be optional for the carver, however, and some figures, like Lolanda's (Fig. 87 at page 113) are designed without it.

7. Back Drapery. Back drapery is usually arranged vertically on either side of, and sometimes over, the lacing board (a lacing board is illustrated on page 234). Many back drapery arrangements exist, and I find that they help to distinguish carvings.

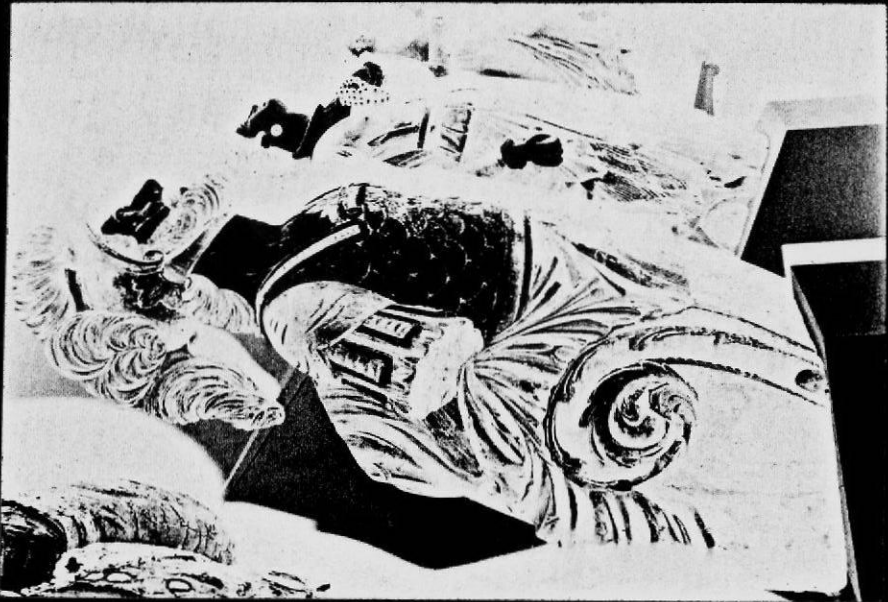
St. George's back drapery would shed water very well (Figs 97A, 97B, and 98) as would that on "Hebe," where the drapery prettily accentuates and envelops her long hair (Fig. 99A and B). The falling back drapery of Rhine's figurehead becomes part of her dress (Fig. 100A and B) and a nice variation on this is on "Joan of Arc," part of whose dress is swept upward to form her back drapery (Fig. 61 on page 83). I find that back drapery is typically carved in relief on each side of the lacing board, but Orlando's back drapery is a laminated section, seen now on his right side (Fig. 96) but missing from his left (Fig. 54 at page 76). Back drapery appears to be a decorative option since figureheads like the one from Eunice H. Adams (Fig. 22 at page 31) do not have it.

With such a range of back drapery styles, any similarity of back drapery on figureheads is reason for further comparison and investigation.

8. Lacing Board. In an illustration by naval architect George Simpson (see page 152), it is shown that the part of the vessel to which the back of a figurehead is attached is called the lacing piece.

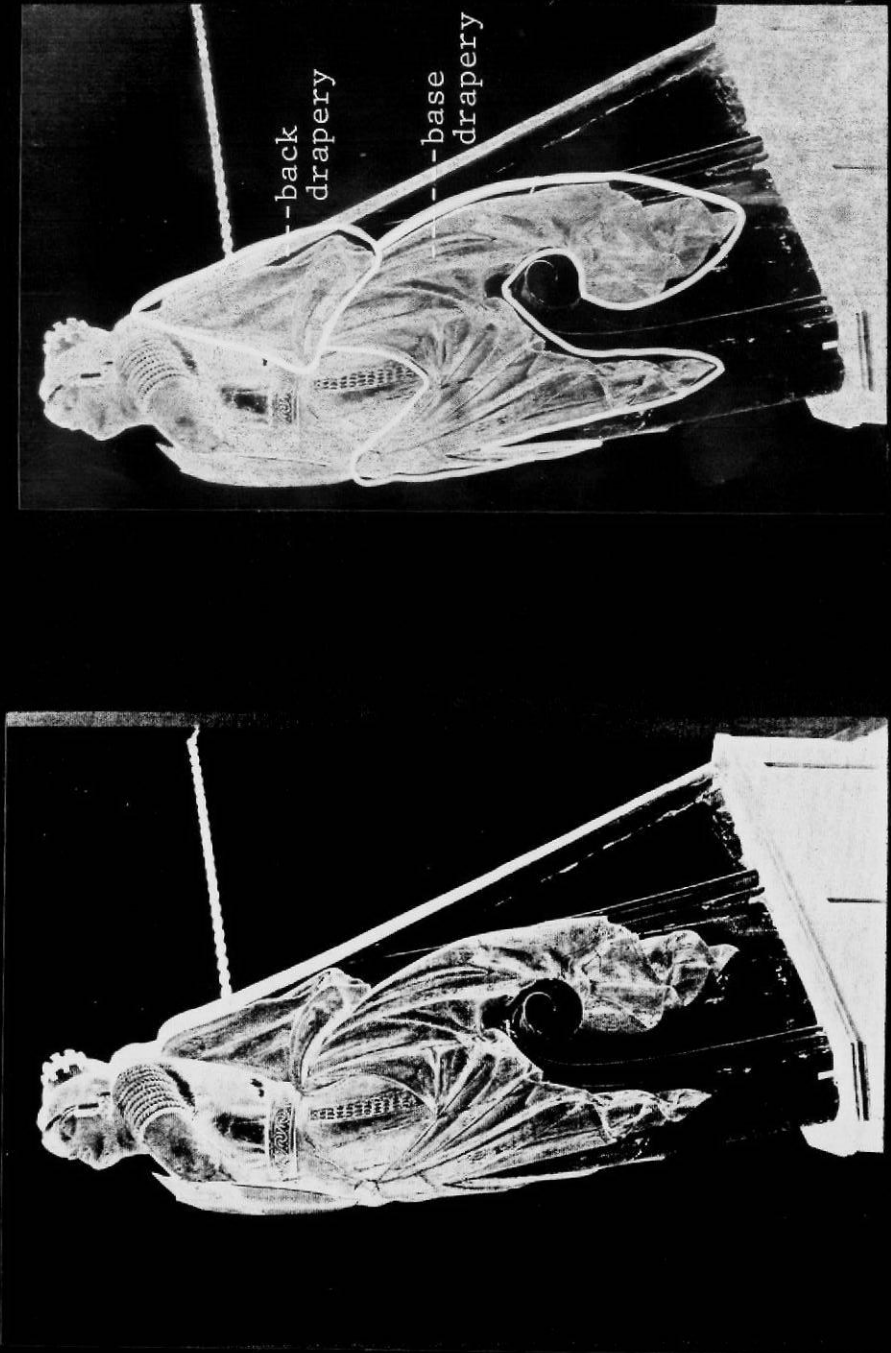


B



A

Figure 96. Base drapery and back drapery of "Orlando" figurehead.  
 A. Left side of carving. B. Left side of carving  
 with draperies delineated. (Photo and line drawing  
 by Carol Olsen.)



A

B

Figure 97. Back drapery and base drapery of St. George figurehead. A. Left side of figure. B. Left side of figure with draperies delineated. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)

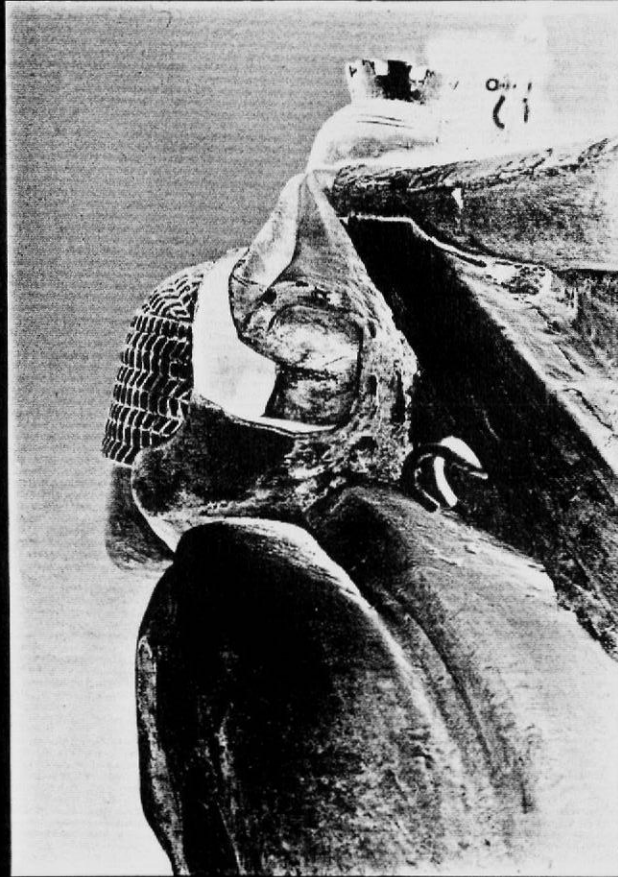
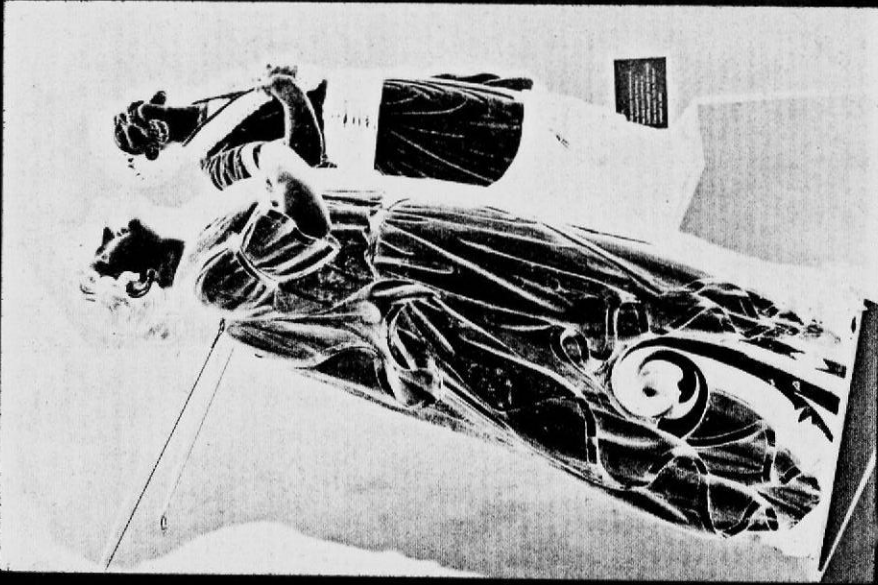


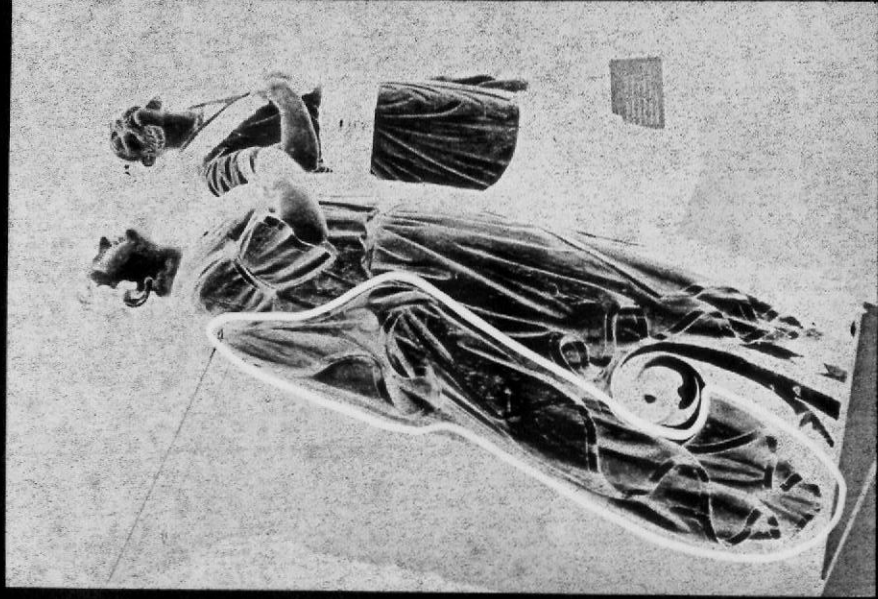
Figure 98. Close-up of St. George's back drapery. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



A

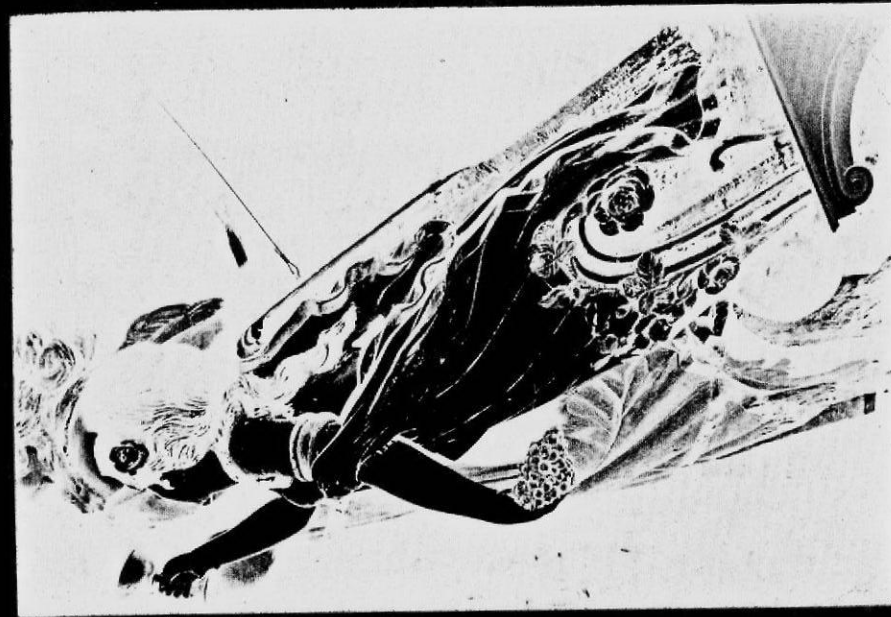
Figure 100.

Back drapery of Rhine figurehead. A. Right side of Rhine carving. B. Back drapery of Rhine figurehead delineated. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)

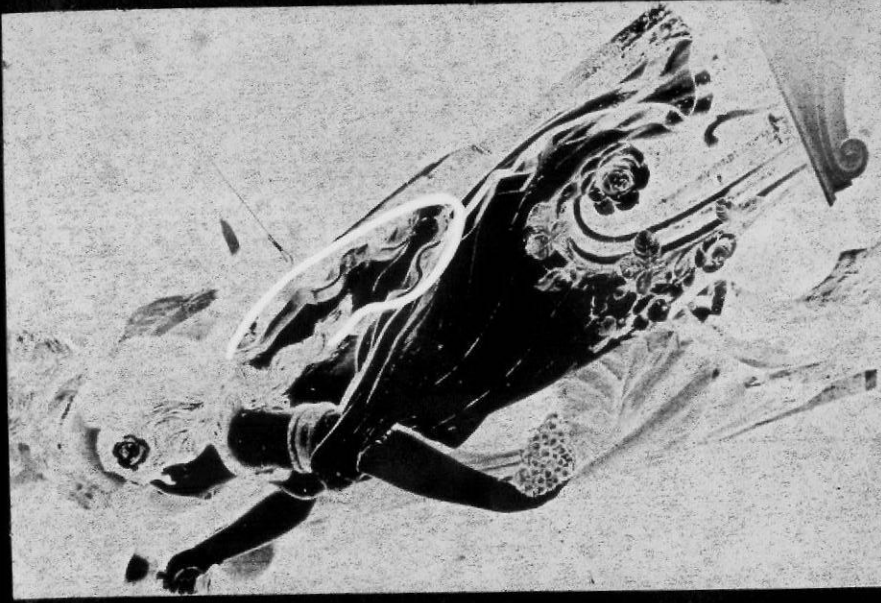


B





A



B

Figure 99. Back drapery of "Hebe" figurehead. An unusual feature of this figurehead is the opening between the back drapery and her bare back. A. Left side of figure. B. Back drapery delineated. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)

The lacing piece as part of the vessel is further confirmed by various 19th and 20th century sources.<sup>107</sup> Since I find no historical sources which provide a name for the back of the figurehead itself, I have been using the term "lacing board" (see page 234). Thus, in my terminology, the lacing board of a figurehead is made flush with the lacing piece of the vessel.

In the hundreds of figureheads I have examined, I have always found that each figurehead and its lacing board are one piece of wood. Laminations do not seem to occur for the lacing board itself (see pages 218 to 221), and more specifically, I find no exceptions to this rule in Mystic Seaport's collection.

9. Costume. Costume is of special interest because of the variety of information obtainable from it.

First, the treatment of carved clothing by different craftsmen distinguished figureheads. The appearance ranges from the very smooth surfaces of "Belva Lockwood's" dress (Fig. 101) to elaborately carved folds, like those of the "Two Sisters'" skirts (Fig. 102). In addition, the appearance of dress trim can be quite important. For example, the lace on the 19th century Danish Queen Louise figure (Fig. 103), which was carved by one of the Møens in Denmark, is quite like the lace on Mystic Seaport's "Two Sisters" figurehead (Fig. 102). This is part of the evidence that the "Two Sisters" may have been carved in the Møen shop.

Second, some carvers leave evidence of their woodcarving tools, as, for example, the gouge-shaped cuts on the skirt of the Iolanda figurehead (Fig. 104). That carving also shows decorative incisions at the neckline, bodice, sleeves, bracelets, waist, and gown edges. Such incisions are typical, although often less numerous, and should probably be imagined when one looks



Figure 101. Smoothly carved skirt  
of "Belva Lockwood."  
(Photo by Carol  
Olsen.)



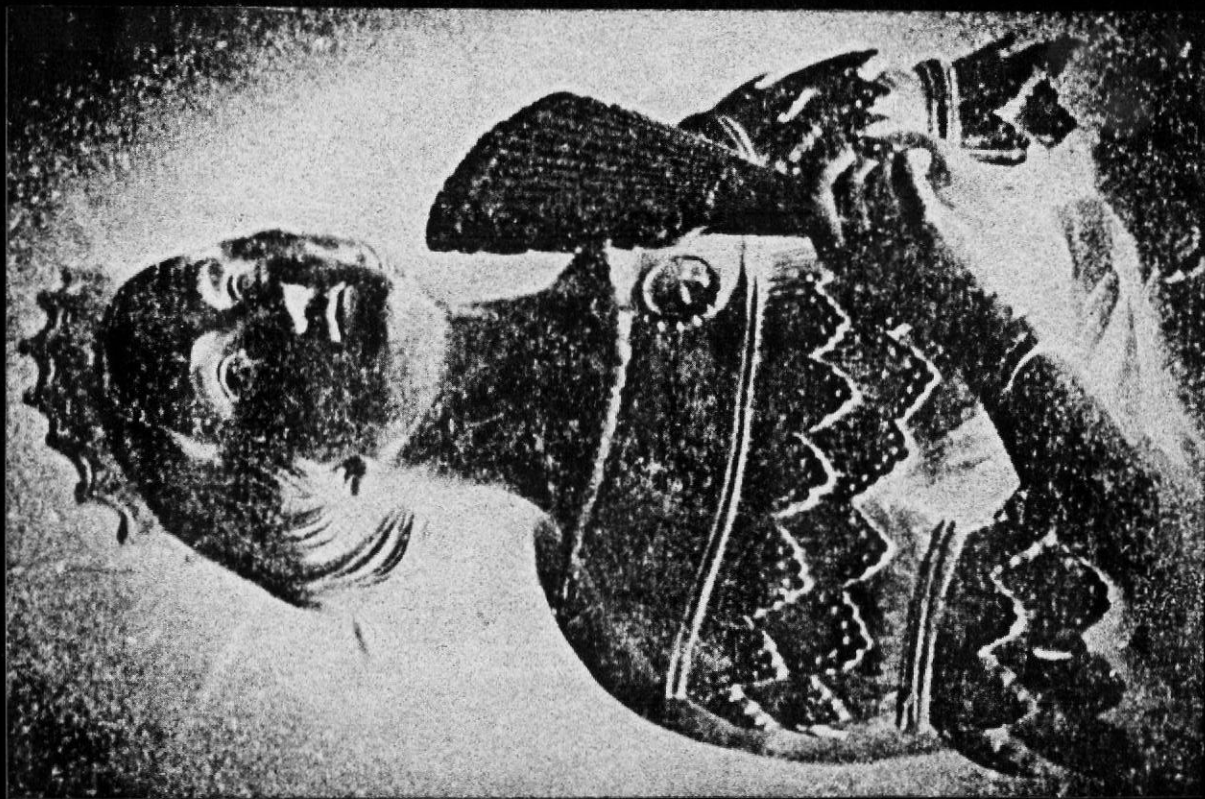


Figure 102. Lace trim on "Two Sisters." (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

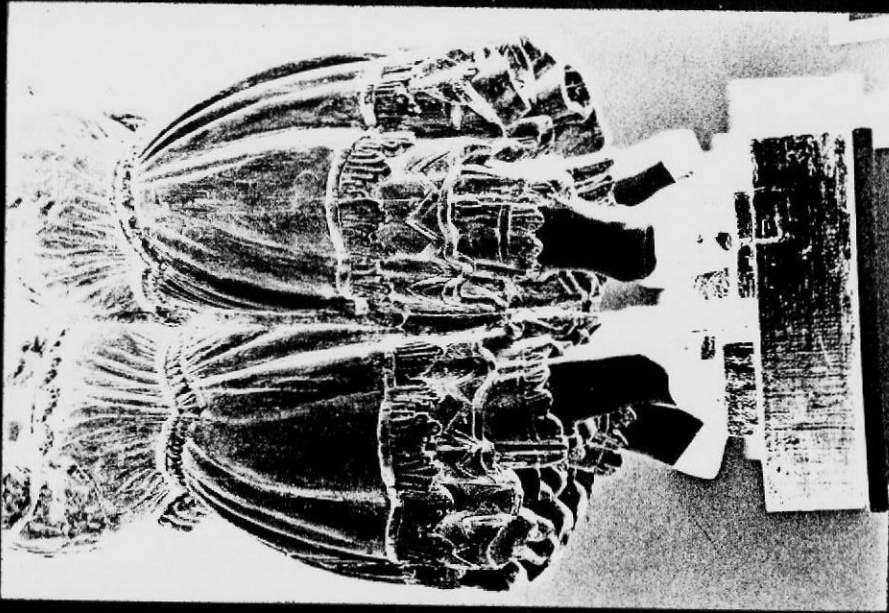


Figure 103. Note lace trim on Queen Louise, carved by one of the Møens in Denmark (Poulsen, 1977: 94).



Figure 104. Gouge shapes are obvious on the skirt of the Iolanda figurehead. Many incisions also decorate this carving's surface. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

at photographs of figureheads that do not show details very clearly.

Third, although figurehead costumes are often done with artistic license, the clothing of portrait figureheads usually appears to be accurate. Therefore, the clothing and hairstyle of Mystic Seaport's portrait-like "Fredericka" (Fig. 92 at page 117) have dated her to ca. 1825. In an unusual situation, the figurehead believed to be of Alexander Hamilton, the statesman who died in 1804, is depicted with the clothes style of the 1830s (Fig. 105), and I suspect, therefore, that he dates to the 1830s.

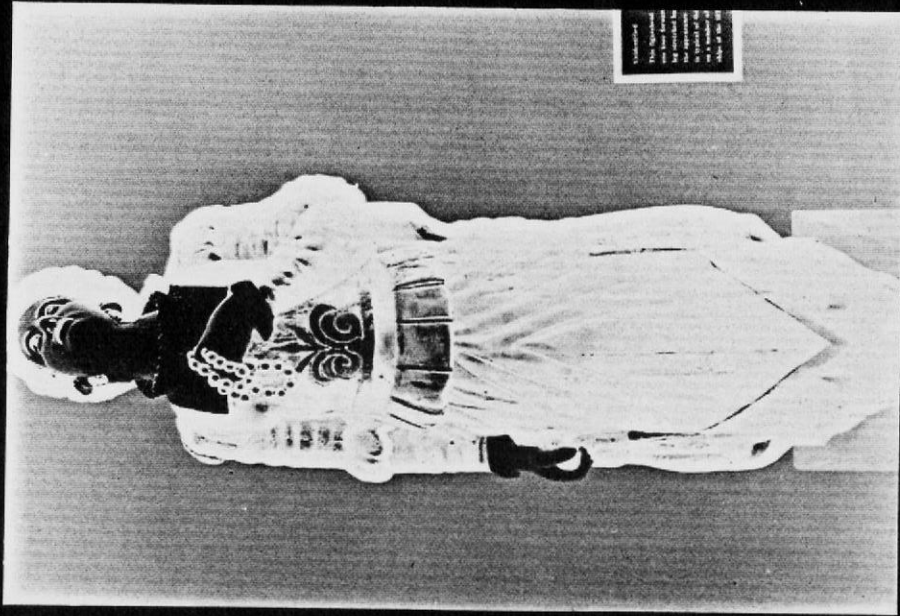
Not only is costume an important area of study because it 1) stylistically links carvings done in the same shop, 2) shows evidence of carving tools, and 3) helps to date figureheads, but it also may help to identify some figurehead subjects. For example, the cross upon St. George's breastplate (Fig. 106) helps to identify him, and "Joan of Arc" (Fig. 107) is tentatively and partially identified by the carved fleur-de-lys on her gown.

10. Head Wear. I have found two figureheads with nearly identical feathered hats: the "Lady Blessington" figurehead at Mystic Seaport (Fig. 108) and "Lizzie" at The Mariners' Museum (Fig. 109). Their many similarities in pose and design show a definite connection, but whether they were done in the same shop is a matter meriting further investigation. Figureheads adorned with carved hats seem most often to appear in photographs of late 19th and early 20th century European merchant schooners, which may provide a clue to the history of these carvings.

11. Facial Expressions. Even the expressions on the faces of figureheads can help to stylistically link carvings. For example, a furrow-browed, grimacing look,

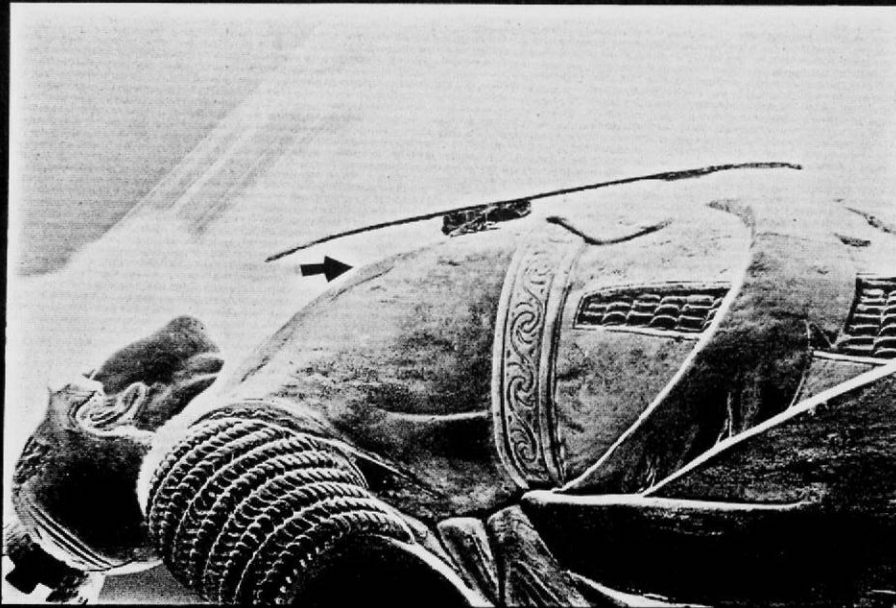


Figure 105. Although identified as Alexander Hamilton, who died in 1804, this figurehead's clothing style dates to the 1830s. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



The asymmetry of this fleur-de-lys appears due to restoration on the figure's right side. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

Figure 107.



The Cross of St. George is carved in relief on this figure's chest and is largely hidden by his shield. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

Figure 106.



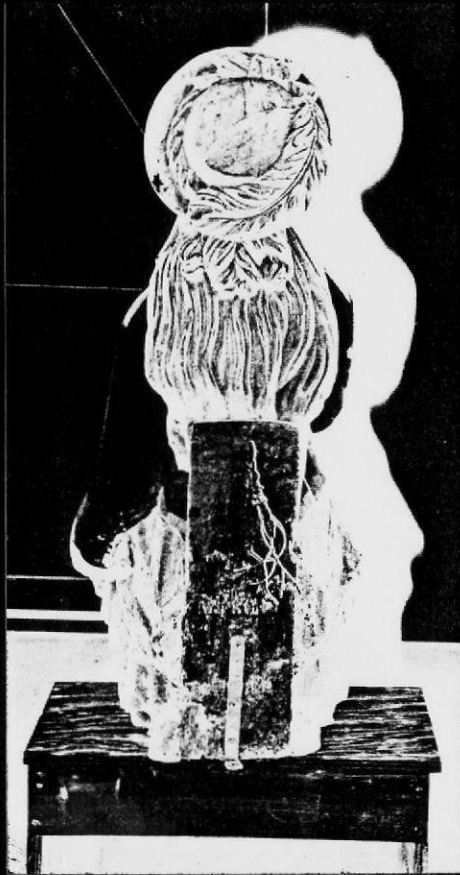


Figure 108. "Lady Blessington" at Mystic Seaport is carved in basically the same pattern as "Lizzie." (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

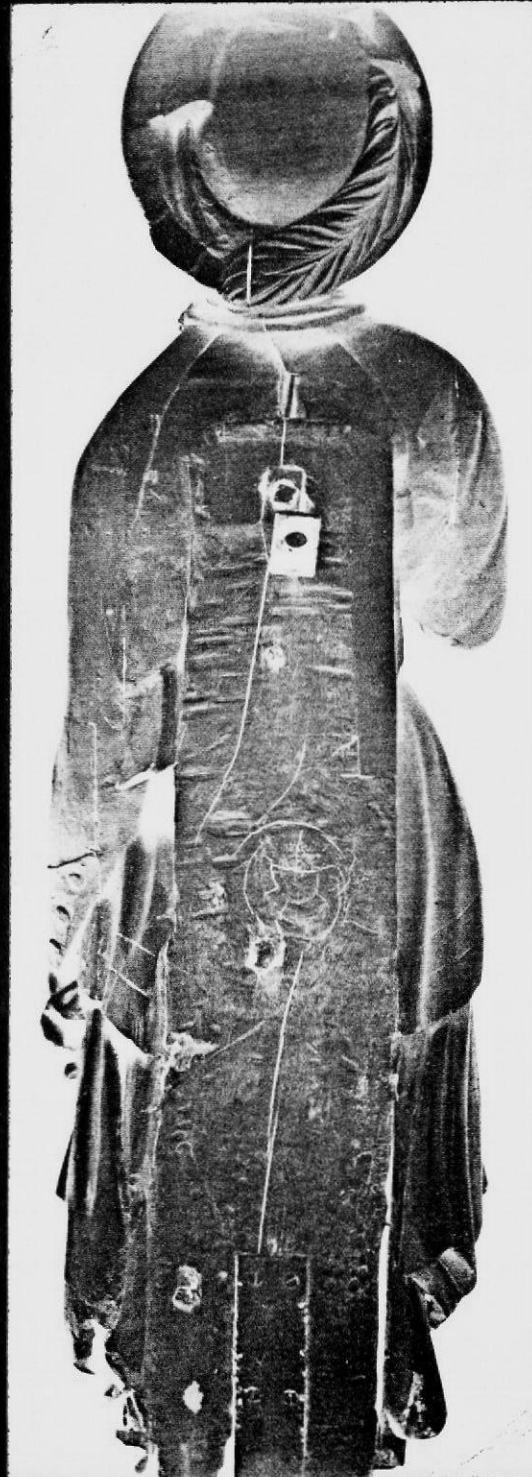


Figure 109. "Lizzie" at The Mariners' Museum is about 10" taller than "Lady Blessington." ("Blessington" length  $36\frac{1}{4}$ "; "Lizzie" length  $46\frac{1}{2}$ ".) (Photo courtesy of The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.)

although uncommon on most figureheads, is seen on both the "H.M.S. Asia" carving, possibly 1824, (Fig. 110) and H.M.S. Carnatic figurehead, 1823, at the Victory Museum in Portsmouth, England. While these figures may prove to be by different carvers, they were perhaps done from patterns available to Royal Navy shipcarvers.

I have observed that figureheads' facial expressions evoke varied responses from viewers but most typically they are described as kind, brave, courageous and, often, noble. Traditionally, however, figureheads' expressions are not those of laughter or even open smiles, not even Mystic Seaport's "Two Sisters," who are dancing (Figs 111 and 112). Perhaps it would seem flippant to go to sea with a laughing figurehead. On the other hand, very lively expressions can be found on the faces of animal figureheads, as evidenced by Phantom's serpent (Fig. 113) and the Great Republic's eagle (Fig. 114).

Nathaniel Hawthorne's story Shem Drowne's Wooden Image discusses a 19th century carver's desire to create a figure with a sense of life. In some Mystic Seaport carvings, such as Eunice H. Adams' (Fig. 19 at page 28), one does find a hint of inner vitality. Other carvings, however, such as the Rhine-Maiden (see page 144), more immediately suggest the material from which they were made. Clearly the effect of a figurehead is achieved partly through its facial expression; the eyes in particular can be important.

12. Eyes. The modeling of eyes varies from one carver to the next, some following the traditions of fine art sculpture. On figureheads, a hole is often cut for the pupil, and the outside of the iris may be incised, but the wood is not left thin and vulnerable to wave action. The pupils of Mystic Seaport's "Fredericka" (Fig. 92 at page 117) have been carved as small,



Figure 110. Face of "H.M.S. Asia" figurehead.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 111. Face detail of shorter sister of Two Sisters figurehead.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 112. Face detail of taller sister of Two Sisters figurehead.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)



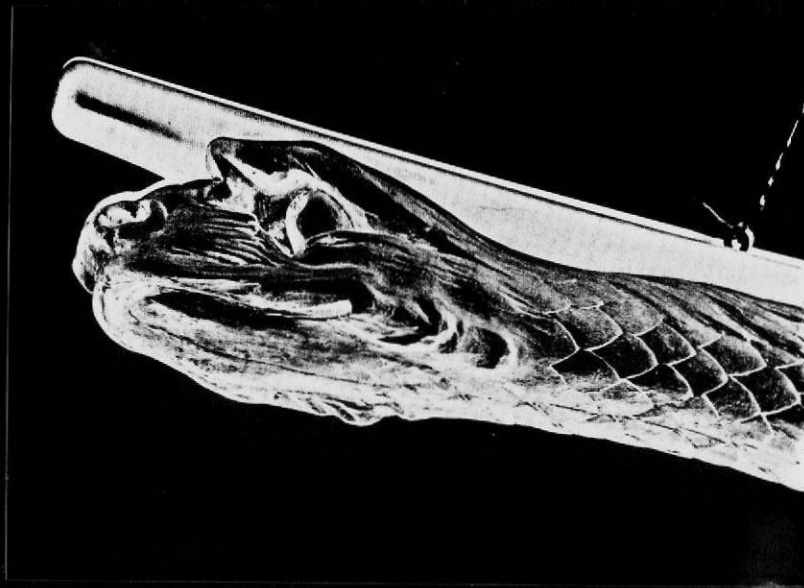


Figure 113. Face detail of the serpent from Phantom.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 114. Face detail of the eagle from Great Republic (Stackpole, 1964: 70).

projecting pieces of wood, but it is apparent by comparing her to other figureheads, particularly "Commodore Perry" (Fig. 93 at page 117) apparently done by the same carver, that this was not the original design.

One modern marine carver says that after blocking out a figure, "I like to finish the eye first because its appearance is critical and because it puts life in the [carving]. If you spoil it or don't like its looks, the eye can be recarved without doing over the whole head. With the completed eye to keep watch on what you're doing, it's easier to keep the rest of your carving alive. And, of course, it's someone to talk to as you carve: a benevolent eye approving your praise when the chips peel off as they should, and a glittering, fierce one to receive your muttered curses [when they do not]."108

13. Hands. Since hands, with their many contours, are especially difficult to carve, they may provide one good guide for linking together figures from the same shipcarving shop. For example, Rhine's figurehead and an Unidentified Woman figurehead at Mystic Seaport (see page 144) share many stylistic similarities, among which are their quite awkward and long hands.

In other cases, the quality of carving of the hands can be indicative of superior training of the carver. For example, on the original hands of the "Two Sisters" (the right hand of the shorter girl is poorly restored), the contours are convincing (see Fig. 26 at page 37). This strengthens the possibility that someone like W. E. Møen, who had anatomy training at the Danish Fine Art Academy, could have carved these girls, as is previously discussed on page 38, above.

Obviously, not all shipcarvers were as competent as the Møens, but William Rush, the well-known

late 18th and early 19th century American shipcarver offered a solution: "When I see my boys bungling in the carvings of hands, I tell them look at your own hands -- place them in the same position -- imitate them and you must be right. You always have the model at hand."<sup>109</sup> Perhaps however, some carvers avoided the problem by having flowers conceal hands, as is seen on the "Belva Lockwood" figurehead (Fig. 115).

Many figureheads on display in museums today show that when hands can be seen, carvers took care with details, showing not only fingernails (Fig. 116) but sometimes even rings.<sup>110</sup>

14. Hair. Carvers likely repeated on several carvings the simple hairstyles (Fig. 117) or more elaborate hairstyles (Fig. 118) that they preferred. Therefore, the fact that the hairstyles on "Fredericka" at Mystic Seaport Museum (Fig. 92 at page 117) and on the "Commodore Perry" carving at The Mariners' Museum (Fig. 93 at page 117) are both detailed provides part of the evidence that those figures are by the same carver, as discussed more fully on page 115, above.

Also, the general hairstyle and crossing curls of one of Mystic's "Two Sisters" (Fig. 119) is like that on a carving by W. E. Møen of Denmark (Fig. 120). That likeness helps support the theory that the "Two Sisters" were carved in the Møen shop, as discussed on pages 38, 125, and 136.

In addition to providing clues about its carver, the hairstyle of a figurehead sometimes provides information about the identity of the figurehead itself. One example is Mystic Seaport's "Joan of Arc" carving (Fig. 61 at page 83). Her identification is based not only on the fleur-de-lys on her bodice, and her holding what appear to be rosary beads as she looks heavenward,

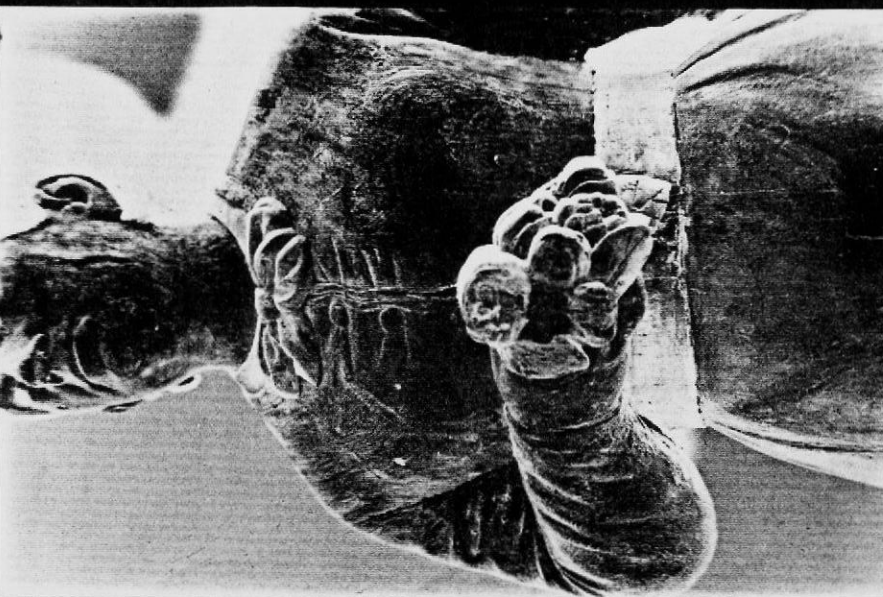


Figure 115. The "Belva Lockwood" figure-head holds flowers in her right hand. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

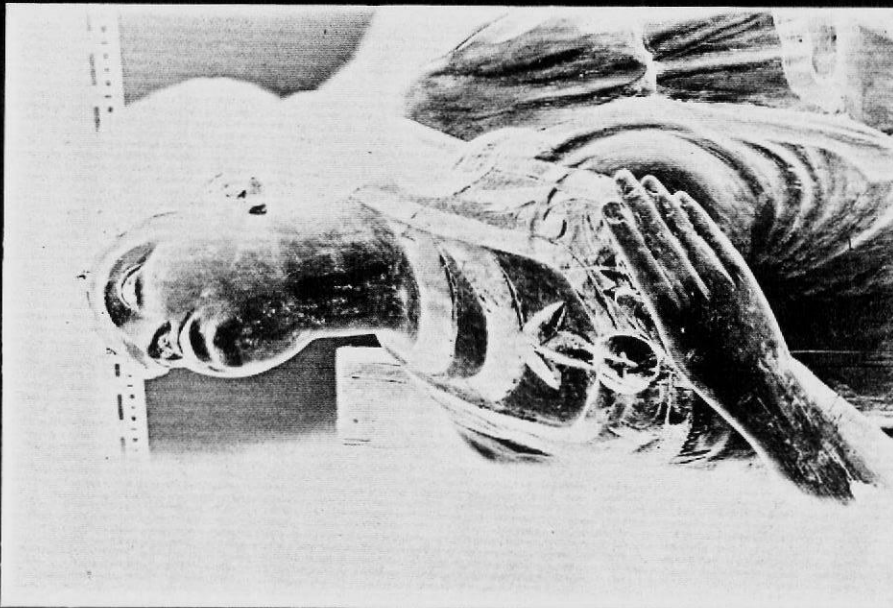


Figure 116. Fingernails are outlined on many figureheads. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 117. A fairly smooth hairstyle is seen on the "Belva Lockwood" figurehead (Stackpole, 1964: 14).



Figure 118. High relief hairstyle of the "Fredericka" figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 119. Crossed curls appear on the "Two Sisters" carving. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 120. Similar crossed curls appear on the Mercury carving by W. E. Møen. (Photo: Poulsen, 1977: 98.)

but also on the long, peasant-like braids down her back (Fig. 121).

15. Attributes. The objects which figureheads hold sometimes help to identify figurehead subjects. Since Magdalena's figurehead holds a palm branch, the emblem of victory,<sup>111</sup> she may be a goddess of Victory (Fig. 122). Another goddess-like figurehead holds a cup; she appears to be Hebe, cupbearer of the gods (Fig. 31 at page 43).

16. Jewelry. Large ships in the late 19th century carried figureheads of considerable proportions. Some examples in Mystic's collection stand 6½ to 8½ feet tall. When these are female figureheads, they are often decorated with enormous necklaces and heavy-looking bracelets. Sometimes similarities in this jewelry can be significant in comparing carvings.

For example, Rhine's figurehead (Fig. 123) and an Unidentified Woman figurehead (Fig. 124) have necklaces which are quite alike in arc and width, placed partially beneath the dress collars. Their several common features support the theory that these figureheads are from the same carving shop.

A very different jewelry style is seen in the heavy necklace of the Magdalena figurehead (Fig. 125), which is clearly by another carver. Presumably he, too, repeated elements of this necklace style on other female figureheads he produced.

Many smaller figureheads have more delicate jewelry. On "Belva Lockwood" (see Fig. 115 on page 138), very fine, carved lines depict the thin wires of her small earrings. Attention to such detail is another means of comparing carvers' work.

17. Other Distinguishing Features. The way in which the Magdalena and H.M.S. Espiegle figureheads (Figs. 126 and 127) both hold fabric between their fingers first





Figure 121. Braids, 34 inches long, are carved in relief on the lacing board of the "Joan of Arc" figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)





Figure 122. Magdalena's figurehead  
holds a palm branch.  
(Photo by Carol  
Olsen.)

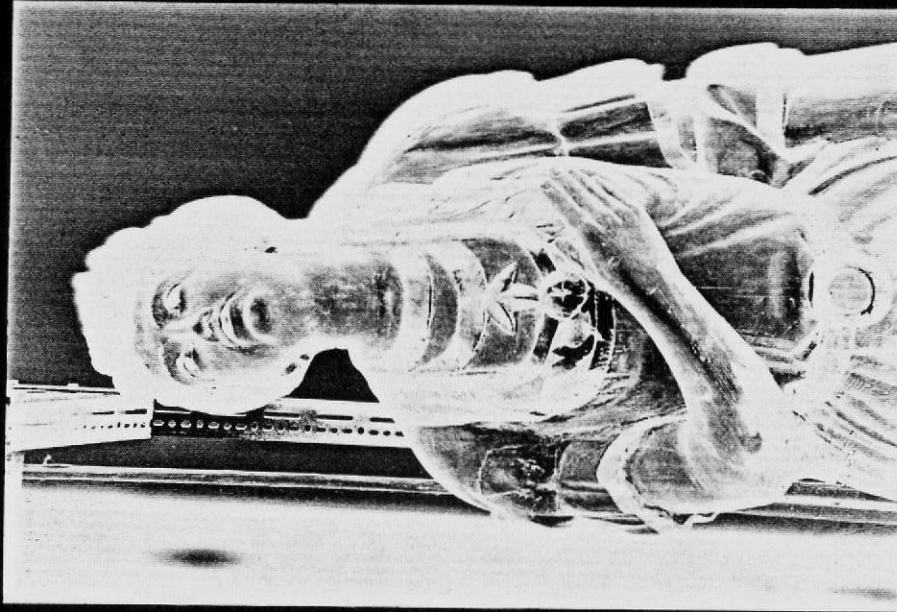


Figure 124. A necklace and dress trim similar to those on Rhine's figurehead are seen on this unidentified figurehead at Mystic Seaport. (Photo by C. Olsen.)

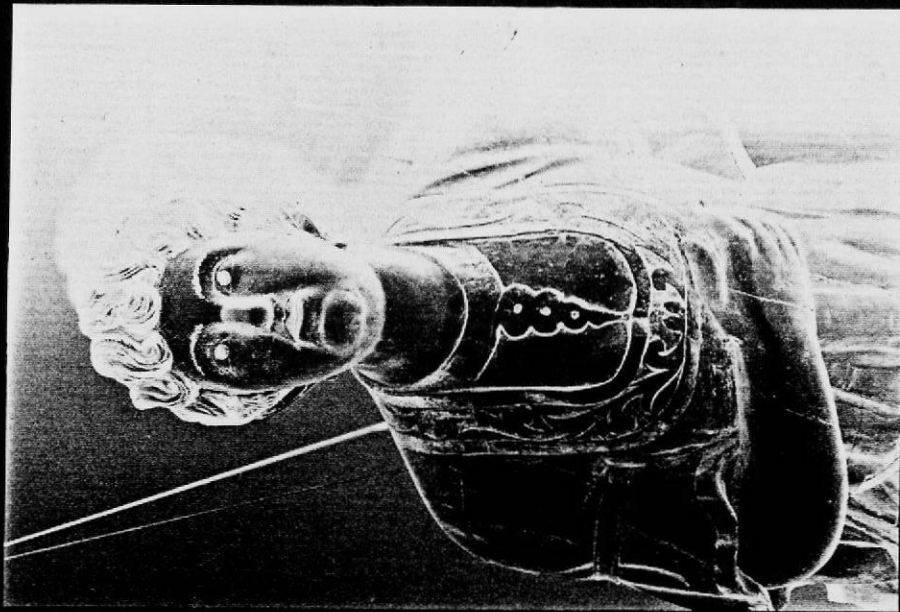


Figure 123. A distinctive necklace and dress trim are seen on Rhine's 6½' tall figurehead. Note the unusually low ears on this carving. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 125. Magdalena's figurehead  
is 8½ feet tall.  
(Photo by Carol  
Olsen.)



Figure 126. Fabric is held between the fingers of Magdalena's figurehead, a pose which is also seen on the figurehead of H.M.S. Espiegle's carving. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

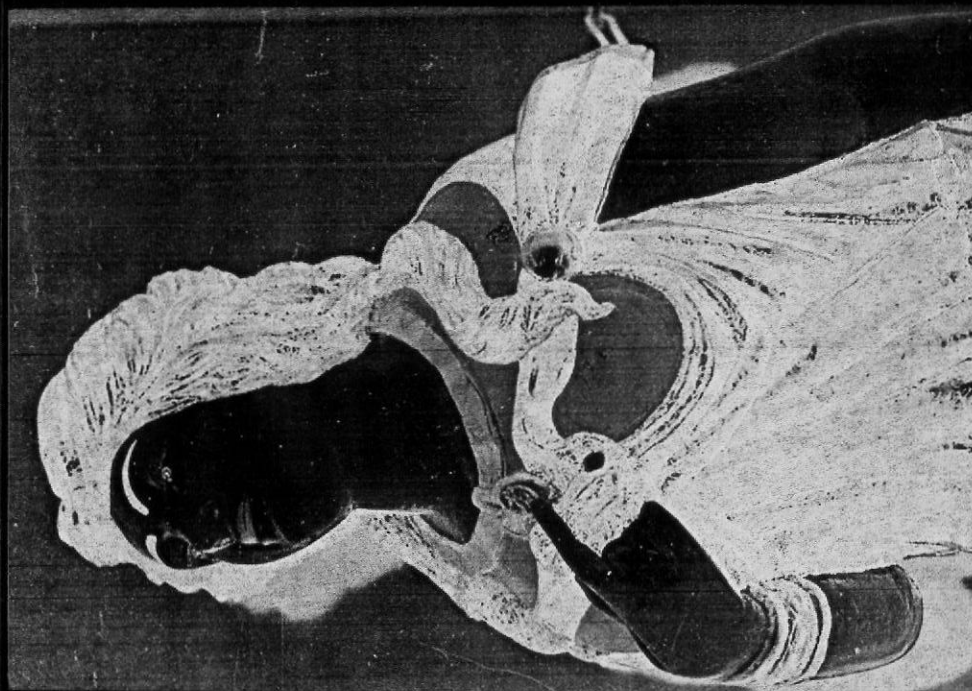


Figure 127. H.M.S. Espiegle figurehead (Costa, 1981: 87).

caused me to compare them. Their several other similarities then became obvious, such as the treatment of their hair, off-the-shoulder classical gowns, large jewelry, and general facial features. Further investigation is warranted to determine whether these figures are from the same shop.

Many figures have special distinguishing features, such as the way in which fabric is held, which should link carvings not only of the same era but, in some cases, by the same carvers.

18. Restoration in the 19th and 20th Centuries. By measuring and describing in written detail every aspect of a figurehead, the researcher will discover many otherwise unnoticed features, especially traces of restoration.

For example, on Mystic Seaport's shorter Sister (Fig. 128), I found that in one section three flowers fit into the space given only two flowers on the rest of her garland. A closer look revealed that those three flowers were restored.

Measurement and description also disclosed an otherwise unnoticed repair on "Fredericka": her left earring is restored and differs in detail from the right earring (Fig. 70 at page 92 and Fig. 118 at page 139).

More major restoration is apparent on figureheads like "Aleppo" (Fig. 73 at page 95) and "Belva Lockwood" (Fig. 16 at page 24). Their lacing boards have been cut away and the figures now seem almost carved in the round. Close examination of their backs, however, shows the outline of the original lacing boards on those carvings.

Sometimes pre-restoration photographs are available to help define modern alterations. Except where 20th century materials are apparent, it should also be considered that a 19th century carver, perhaps other



Figure 128. Three smaller roses at the back of one girl's garland drew attention to an area of restoration. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

than the original carver, may have done the restoration work.

Summary. In this chapter, similarities between Mystic's carvings and others have been shown in figure-head types, poses, scrolls, drapery styles, and elements of costume and anatomy. It has also been shown that such similarities are essential clues to identifying figure-heads, learning about their carvers, and finding further figureheads from the same shops.

## CHAPTER IV

## TABLES OF COMPARISON

Mystic Seaport's carvings are better understood when viewed in relation to one another and to figureheads outside the museum. The following tables show several ways in which comparisons have now been made.

Table I cites figureheads, dated when possible, with carving features similar to those of figureheads at Mystic Seaport. The range of dates for comparable carvings varies considerably. The figurehead which is possibly from H.M.S. Orlando, 1858 has parallels to carvings spanning 51 years from 1809 (H.M.S. Ajax) to 1860 (H.M.S. Warrior). On the other hand, available examples showing parallels for the Magdalena figurehead style cover only 23 years; however, those dates may well be extended by future comparisons.

Tables II through IX exclusively analyze Mystic Seaport carvings, with attention to their styles, dates, subjects, dimensions, weight, wood types, and national origins. Pertinent ship information is also given, including dimensions, builders, dates, and the purpose for which the vessels were used.

Time has permitted an investigation into only a few of the connections between Mystic Seaport's figureheads and similar carvings, but even that has been quite fruitful. It is clear that a comprehensive catalogue of figurehead styles is needed and that it could shed considerable light on the hundreds of extant figureheads in the world which remain unidentified and, so far, unrelated to any other carvings.



### Corresponding Ship and Figurehead Sizes

The correlation between ship sizes and figurehead sizes needs to be better understood in order to improve the documentation of unidentified figureheads. The following tables show the measurement information I have acquired for several of Mystic Seaport's figureheads.

The book Naval Constructor (Fig. 129), written about 1904 by George Simpson, naval architect, showed figureheads measured to the quarter inch in three different ways: length, depth to the outside of the arm, and width of the ship's lacing piece (which corresponds to the lacing board at the figurehead's back). Simpson's table is valuable at least for showing which figurehead measurements were significant to a naval architect and his method of measuring figureheads is used in the following charts.

Unfortunately, however, Simpson's correlation between ship sizes and figurehead sizes is not always reliable. For example, according to Simpson, Mystic Seaport's Rhine figurehead would have the length, depth, and width of a carving for a vessel 150 feet in length "B.S." However, Rhine was 257 feet in length. An explanation of Simpson's abbreviation "B.S." needs to be definitely known in order to read correctly the vessel length.<sup>112</sup>

For the present, however, the following tables regarding Mystic Seaport's figureheads are offered with currently available information in hopes that they will form a basis for closer examination of the correlation between documented ship and figurehead sizes.

Dimensions of Figureheads and Lacing Pieces.

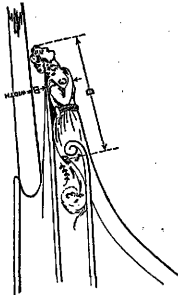


FIG. 12.

A	B	C	D
LENGTH OF LACING PIECE, INCHES.	SIZE OF LACING PIECE, INCHES.	DEPTH OF FIGURE- HEAD, INCHES.	LENGTH OF FIGURE- HEAD OUTSIDE OF STEM, FEET, INCHES.
460	12 1/2	30 1/2	9 6
400	12	28 1/2	9 0
300	11 1/2	26 1/2	8 6
250	10 1/2	24 1/2	8 0
200	9	22 1/2	7 0
160	8 1/2	19 1/2	6 0
100	7 1/2	15	5 0

NOTE.—Angle of lacing piece, 45°.

COMPARISON TO MYSTIC SEAFORT'S  
RHINE FIGUREHEAD:

Length of Vessel	Size of Lacing Piece	Depth of Figure- head	Length of Figure Outside of Stem
257' (78.3 m.)	8 1/2" (20.9 cm.)	19-3/4" (50.1 cm.)	77" (195 cm.)

Figure 129. Dimensions table (Simpson, 1918: 52) with comparison to size of a Mystic Seafort figurehead.

TABLE 1. CARVING PARALLELS

<u>Mystic Carving</u>	<u>Compare Carving of</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Re Following Features</u>	<u>Where Illustrated</u>
"Belva Lockwood"	Mary B. Wallington	1883	Form similarities, detail of holding her skirt	#73.899.456 Mystic Seaport figurehead photo
	Santa Anna	19th c.	Design, base shows recess and part of foot missing, as on "Belva Lockwood"	#63.174 Mystic Seaport figure-head photo
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Pose	#63.155 Mystic Seaport figure-head photo
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Pose	(Bishop, 1974: fig. 157)
	Osage	19th c.	Pose	(Lipman, 1972: fig. 4)
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Pose, form, hair, small opening between left arm and body	(Poulsen, 1977: 155)
	Virtue	19th c.	Pose	(Brewington, 1962: 36)
	"Pocahontas"	19th c.	Pose (This figure is far too crudely carved to be the work of William Rush, to whom it has been widely attributed)	(Brewington, 1962: frontispiece)

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Belva Lockwood" continued	Unidentified Woman "Indian Maiden"	19th c. 19th c.	Pose Pose	The Mariners' Museum #OF44 #63.46 Mystic Seaport Figure-head photo
	"Flora"	19th c.	Pose	(Poulsen, 1977:46)
	<u>Hoppet</u>	19th c.	Pose	(Poulsen, 1977:195)
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Pose	(Poulsen, 1977:194)
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Pose	(Poulsen, 1977:150)
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Pose	(Poulsen, 1977:153)
<u>Eunice H. Adams</u> figurehead	<u>Commodore Morris</u> Female figurehead	1844 19th c.	Base of carving corresponds to stem width and lower cheek knee; general pose Pose, shawl-like drapery	#62.116 Mystic Seaport figure-head photo #320695 Mystic Seaport photo

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
Magdalena Figurehead	<u>Olivebank</u>	1892	Holding branch to her right side, looking to left, off-the-shoulder classical gown, holding fabric between fingers of her left hand, hairstyle and wreath in hair.	#64, 240 Mystic Seaport figurehead photo
	<u>Hougmont</u>	1897	Pose, off-the-shoulder classical gown, large jewelry, fabric held between fingers of right hand	Hallén, 1975:107 and Mystic Seaport figurehead photo "Hougmont"
	<u>Falls of Clyde</u>	1878	Pose, classical gown, palm branch in right hand at side, hairstyle, wreath in hair, large jewelry	(Brewington, 1962: 90)
	<u>H.M.S. Espiegle</u>	1901	Holds fabric between fingers of left hand, off-the-shoulder classical gown, large jewelry, hairstyle	(Hansen, 1979: fig. GB-PT-VI-22)
	<u>Serica</u>	1888	Pose, off-the-shoulder classical gown, fabric held between fingers, large jewelry	(Hansen, 1979:130, fig. GB-TR-VM-3)
	Unidentified woman	19th c.	Branch held at right side, classical gown, fabric held between fingers	(Hansen, 1979:67 fig. D-HA-HA-1)

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Two Sisters" figurehead	<u>Scottish Lady</u>	19th c.	Back recess	On display at the Balclutha, National Maritime Museum, San Francisco
	Twins	1850	General design	(Poulsen, 1977:93)
	Mercury stern ornament	1862	Turned torso, hair, nose, and mouth	(Poulsen, 1977:98)
	Portrait of Queen Louise	1850s	Style of lace trim	(Poulsen, 1977:94)
	Dolores	Unknown	Hair, wreath	On display at The Mariners' Museum
	Twins	Later 19th c.	Dancing figures	(Poulsen, 1977:171)
	"Music"	ca. 1830	Hair, wreath	(Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts 1982: 183, fig. 132)
"Hebe" figurehead	Woman with Crown	19th c.	Opening at back	(Stackpole, 1964: 41)
	Aurora, goddess of dawn	1861	Undraped	(Norton, 1976:95)

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Hebe" figurehead, continued	Victory Megaera <u>Glory of the Seas</u> Hebe figure by Skillin shop Hebe figure by Antonio Canova	1849 1869 c. 1800 1816	Undraped Undraped Undraped Undraped Undraped	(Norton, 1972b: 13) (Norton, 1972b: 17) (Brewington, 1962: 80) (Armstrong, 1976) (Licht, 1967)
Iolanda figurehead	<u>Zara/Gersh</u> <u>Primos</u>	end 19th century latter 19th c.	General appearance, pose, hair Carved neckline style	(Hansen, 1979: 58, fig. B-AN-NS-2) (Hansen, 1979: 130, fig. GB-TR-VW-5)
Eagle from Great Republic	Eagle	Not given	Head only style	(Hansen, 1979: 191 fig. USA-CT-NY-1)

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Flowing Features	Where Illustrated
Admiral Farragut figurehead from Great Admiral	Samuel Skolfield	19th c.	Pose, windblown coat	(Pinckney, 1940: Plate XXIV)
	<u>McLaurin</u>	1878	Pose, windblown coat, skirting on ship stem	(Pinckney, 1940: Plate XXIII)
	<u>America</u>	1874	Pose, windblown skirt, skirting on ship stem	(Brewington, 1962: 80, fig. 74)
Rhine figurehead	<u>Hougoumont</u>	1897	Decorated belt shows at waist of peplos	(Hansen, 1979: 176, fig. SF-NA-AS-8)
	<u>Priar Tuck</u>	1863	Geometric opening at gown base	(Norton, 1976: 118)
	<u>Cambrian Chieftain</u>	1885	Geometric opening at gown base	(Greenhill and Giffard, fig. 84)
	<u>Magdalena</u>	1889	Large jewelry	(Stackpole, 1964: 16)
	H. M. S. <u>Espiegle</u>	1900	Large jewelry	(Hansen, 1979: 125, fig. CB-PT-VI-22)
	<u>Pommein</u>	1902	Carrying stringed instrument	(Hallén, 1975: 110, 111)
	<u>Falkland</u>	1889	Large jewelry	(Valhalla Maritime Museum, n. d.: fig. 26)
Unidentified Woman		19th c.	Several similarities in form and carving treatment, possibly from same shop	(Stackpole, 1964: 66)

TABLE 1, Continued



Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
Indian figurehead from <u>Seminole</u>	Sachan	19th c.	Indian, pose, bear claw necklace, armband, bare chest and legs, different cape design, high moc-casin, foot carved into lacing board as on <u>Seminole's Indian</u> , texture of skirt and cape possibly how originally carved on <u>Seminole's Indian</u> , and holding knife.	(Pinckney, 1940: Plate XIII)
	<u>Indian Chief</u>	1877	Indian, pose, holding knife, bare chest and legs, bear claw necklace	(Hansen, 1979: 205 Fig. USA-SE-PE-9)
	<u>King Phillip</u>	latter 19th c.	Indian, pose, different cape design, holding knife	(The American Neptune Pictorial Supplement XIX, 1977: Plate XXVII)
Serpent figurehead from <u>Phantom</u>	Royal Barge of Frederick, Prince of Wales	1731	Scales, line of body	(Costa, 1981: 52)
"Orlando" figurehead probably from H.M.S. <u>Orlando</u> , 1858	Canopus Warrior H.M.S. <u>Warrior</u>	1797 19th c. 1860	Warrior costume, name painted on breastplate Warrior costume Warrior costume	(Norton, 1972b: 13) (Meinz, 1968: 7) (Laughton, 1973: Plate 22)

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Orlando" figurehead, continued	H.M.S. <u>Ajax</u> H.M.S. <u>Bulmark</u> Warrior H.M.S. <u>North Star</u> Woman with Crown H.M.S. <u>London</u>	1809 1859 19th c. 1824 19th c. 1840	Warrior costume Warrior costume Warrior costume Foliated scroll Foliated scroll Appearance of similar figurehead mounted on ship	(Norton, 1976:92, fig. 55) (Hansen, 1979:101 fig. GB-CH-PE-3) (Costa, 1981:142 "Don Quichotte") (Hansen, 1979:121, fig. GB-LO-SM-1) (Stackpole, 1964: 41) (Norton, 1976:95)
"Lady Blessington" figurehead	<u>Brooklands ex-Susan Vinery</u> "Lizzie"	1859 19th c.	Pose including looking to right, base scroll design Pose, outline, slope of shoulders, details of hair, hat. She and "Lady Blessington" may prove to be from the same shop.	(Norton, 1972b:21) The Mariners' Museum
	Unidentified woman <u>Kathelina</u> (?) <u>Fair Wind</u>	19th c. 19th c. 19th c.	Hair, hat, jewelry, general appearance Pose, expression Pose	(Hansen, 1979: 106, fig. GB-LO-CS-55) (Costa, 1981:103) (Costa, 1981:167)

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Joan of Arc" figure-head	"Aleppo" <u>Garthpool</u> <u>Rajore</u>	19th c.  1882	Pose, eyes looking heavenward  "Abutment board"  Looking heavenward	(Stackpole, 1964: 49)  <u>Sea Breezes</u> , 1926  #50,982, Mystic Seaport figure-head photo
St. George figurehead	<u>København</u>  Unidentified Woman	1921  c. 1890	Similar quality of carving; shield-carrying  Pose, molding of base scroll	(Poulsen, 1977:189)  (Johnson and Lightfoot, 1980: cover photo-graph)
"Unidentified Woman #50,2874" figurehead	<u>Eunice H. Adams</u> <u>Figurehead</u>  <u>Jane Owen</u> <u>Tsaritsa</u>	1845  1860  19th c.	Hair combed off of neck  Dress  Both arms held back	On display at Mystic Seaport Museum  (Costa, 1981:132)  (Costa, 1981:164)
"Fredericka" figurehead	"Commodore Perry"	19th c.	Base drapery, pose, hair detailing, etc. Probably by same carver as "Fredericka"	On display at The Mariners' Museum

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Fredericka" figurehead, continued	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Base drapery, pose, dress, etc. Probably by same carver as "Fredericka"	(Hornung, 1972:19 and The Magazine Antiques March 1978, 547)
	Unidentified male	19th c.	Base drapery, pose, clothing, hair detailing, expression	(Hansen, 1979:81 fig. DK-HE-HS-3)
	"Irish Queen"	19th c.	Base drapery similarities, pose, clothing, hair detailing, expression, hair	On display at The Mariners' Museum
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Dress, hair, pose	On display in lounge of Royal Viking Sea, of Royal Viking Line
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	High waistline, detailed hair	(Hansen, 1979:191 fig. USA-CT-NY-2)
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	High waistline, detailed hair-style with comb	(Hansen, 1979:139 fig. GP-TR-WM-23)
	Male figurehead	19th c.	Expression, detailed hair, base drapery	(Bishop, 1974:fig. 136)
	Female figurehead	19th c.	Hair comb, high waistband	(Christensen, 1950: 57, fig. 106)
"Aleppo" figurehead	"Joan of Arc" figurehead	19th or 20th c.	Pose and looking heavenward	#58.1290 Mystic Seaport figure-head photo

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Aleppo" figurehead, continued	<u>Rajore</u>	1882	Looking heavenward	#50.982 Mystic Seaport figure-head photo
"Asia" figurehead possibly from H.M.S. <u>Asia</u>	"Saladin figurehead"	1st $\frac{1}{2}$ 19th c.	Poor carving which may have facial and turban features similar to those of "Asia"	(MacLaren, 1971: fig. 25)
	H.M.S. <u>Trincomalee</u>	1817	Appearance of similar figure-head mounted on ship	(Laughton, 1973: Plate 22)
	H.M.S. <u>Carnatic</u>	1823	Similar facial expression, turbaned figure	(Costa, 1981:60)
	Unidentified male	19th c.	Similar facial expression	(Hansen, 1979:121, fig. GB-LO-NW-64)
	<u>Dristigheten</u>	1785	Similar facial expression	(Costa, 1981:43)
	H.M.S. <u>Bellerophon</u>	1818	Foliage design on breastplate and Lion-head shoulders	(Hansen, 1979:123, fig. GB-PT-VI-8; Costa, 1981:65)
	H.M.S. <u>Ajax</u>	1809	Lion-shouldered breastplate	(Norton, 1976, 92, fig. 55; Costa, 1981:62)
	H.M.S. <u>Bulwark</u>	1859	Lion-shouldered breastplate and Lion head upon chest	(Hansen, 1979:101, fig. GB-CH-PE-3)
	H.M.S. <u>Centurion</u>	1844	Lion head upon breastplate	(Costa, 1981:89)

TABLE 1, Continued

Mystic Carving	Compare Carving of	Date	Re Following Features	Where Illustrated
"Alexander Hamilton" figurehead	Male figurehead	19th c.	Mortise for removeable arm	(Poulсен, 1977:154)
	"Jenny Lind"	19th c.	Mortise for removeable arm	(The Mariners' Museum)
	Knight figurehead	19th c.	Mortise for removeable arm	The Mariners' Museum
	Unidentified male figurehead	19th c.	Mortise for removeable right arm; right arm appears permanently attached	(Poulсен, 1977:172)
	<u>Malacca</u>	1853	Base fiddle scrolls and small front scroll	(Hansen, 1979:125, fig. CB-PT-VI-20)
	Unidentified male	19th c.	Hair, attire	(Hansen, 1979:174, fig. S-ST-SS-12)
	Male	19th c.	General appearance	(Poulсен, 1977:179)
	<u>Roseville</u>	19th c.	Hair, clothing	(Hansen, 1979:139, fig. CB-TR-WI-26)
	Male	19th c.	Hair, clothing	(Hansen, 1979:136, fig. CB-TR-WI-10)
	<u>USS Ohio</u>	19th c.	Small front scroll	(Johnson & Lightfoot, 1980: 118, fig. 159)
	Unidentified Woman	19th c.	Small front scroll	(Costa, 1981:100)
	Mr. Gladstone	19th c.	Base opening, similar style, dress	(Costa, 1981:127)
	<u>Disraeli</u>	19th c.	Clothing	(Costa, 1981:127)

TABLE 1, Continued

TABLE 2. LENGTH, WIDTH, AND DEPTH MEASUREMENTS FOR FOUR FIGUREHEAD STYLES

Style: ANIMAL HEAD ONLY

Eagle from Great Republic

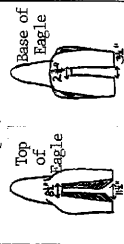
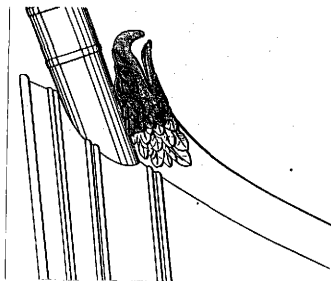
<p>Full Surviving Figure Length</p> <p>About 32" (81.2 cm.)</p>	<p>Width of Figurehead Lacing Board</p> <p>(Wedge-shaped open lacing)</p> <p>Top interior: 8<math>\frac{3}{4}</math>" (21.2 cm.) (21.2 cm.) Bottom interior: 2-3/4" (21.2 cm.) Top at back of eagle: 11<math>\frac{1}{2}</math>" (28.7 cm.) Bottom at back of eagle: 3<math>\frac{1}{2}</math>" (8.7 cm.)</p>	<p>Depth of Figurehead</p> <p>5'2" (1.5 m.) (See Figure 130 below)</p>
		

Figure 130.

Great Republic eagle figurehead in place on bow. The depth of Mystic Seaport's carving is 5'2" and is indicated in the shaded area of this drawing. Illustrations and ship models of the Great Republic suggest that the figurehead was actually of greater depth, perhaps about 7'9" (2.36 m.). If so, wood for the additional feathers was probably added directly to the stem. Illustrations also suggest those added feathers were less deeply cut than on the figurehead and that they did not end in a straight line as the feathers do on Mystic's figurehead. (Drawing from Brewington, 1962:60 with shading added by Carol Olsen.)



Style: ANIMAL HEAD/  
PARTIAL BODY

	Full Surviving Figure Length	Width of Figurehead Lacing Board	Depth of Figurehead
Serpent from <u>Phantom</u>	5½" at beginning of neck	Not recorded	7'8" (2.3 m.)
Style: <u>BUST FIGURE</u>	[On human forms, length is measured from top of figure including hat or hair ornament to bottom of surviving base.]		[On human forms, measured from back to front from lac- ing board to chest (or to outside of arm, when held to chest) as shown in Simpson's chart on page 152).
<u>EUNICE H. ADAMS</u> figurehead	17½" (44.4 cm.)	3-7/8" (9.8 cm.)	10-3/4" (27.3 cm.)

TABLE 2, Continued



Style: SCROLL SKIRT

	<u>Full Surviving Figure Length</u>	<u>Width of Figurehead Lacing Board</u>	<u>Depth of Figurehead</u>
Unidentified Woman #50.2874	28" (70 cm.)	4-7/8" (12.3 cm.)	10-11/16" (27.1 cm.)
"Lady Blessington"	36 1/2" (90.6 cm.)	5-3/4" (14.6 cm.)	12-3/4" (32.3 cm.)
"Alexander Hamilton"	37 1/4" (93.1 cm.)	6 1/2" (15.8 cm.)	11-1/8" (28.2 cm.)
"Hebe"	42 1/2" (106.2 cm.)	5-1/8" (13.0 cm.)	11-3/4" (29.8 cm.)
"Fredericka" now ... original probably ...	43 3/4" (108.7 cm.) 53" (132.5 cm.)	7" (17.7 cm.)	15" (38.1 cm.)
"Asia" (part of base now missing) ..	55" (137.5 cm.)	8" ? Lines obscured	14" (35.5 cm.) not full depth; lacing board cut away
"Orlando"	68" (170 cm.)	12 1/2" (31.7 cm.)	2 1/4" (60.9 cm.) (has very deep lacing board)
"Joan of Arc"	74" (185 cm.)	12" (30.4 cm.)	18" (45.7 cm.)
<u>Rhine figurehead</u>	77" (192.5 cm.)	8 1/2" (20.9 cm.) Restored. Larger originally?	

TABLE 2, Continued

Style: SCROLL SKIRT

	<u>Full Surviving Figure Length</u>	<u>Width of Figurehead Lacing Board</u>	<u>Depth of Figurehead</u>
"Aleppo"	84" (210 cm.)	11"? (27.9 cm.) Lines obscured	19-1/8" (48.5 cm.)
St. George	84" (210 cm.)	13" (32.5 cm.)	21 1/2" (53.1 cm.)
<u>Iolanda figurehead</u>	85" (212.5 cm.)	10-3/4" (27.3 cm.)	19 1/2" (49.5 cm.)
<u>Magdalena figurehead</u>	102" (255 cm.)	18" (45 cm.)	28" (70 cm.)

TABLE 2, Continued

TABLE 3. LENGTH, WIDTH, AND DEPTH MEASUREMENTS FOR FULL-LENGTH FIGUREHEADS

	Full Surviving Figure Length [Measured from top of figure including hat or hair ornament to lowest extended foot.]	Full Length of Carving [Measured from top of figure including hat or hair ornament to bottom of base scroll.]	Width of Lacing Board	Depth of Figure
"Two Sisters" shorter .. taller ..	33-3/4" (84.3 cm.) 36" (90 cm.)	Current base sections beneath feet are restorations	Lacing Recess: 14% long (37.3 cm.); 7-8" wide (17.7-20.3 cm.); 1 1/2-3" deep (3.8-7.6 cm.)	9 1/2" front to back (24.1 cm.); 17-3/4" (45 cm.) back to hands
"Belva Lockwood"	about 56 1/2" (141.2 cm.)	60 1/2" (153.6 cm.)	5 1/2" (13.9 cm.)	11-7/8" (30.1 cm.) not full depth; Lacing board cut away
Indian from Seminole	about 69" (172.5 cm.)	75" (187.5 cm.)	12 1/2" (31.7 cm.)	26 1/2" (66.6 cm.)
Admiral Farragut	89" (222.5 cm.)	Current base scroll is a restoration.	8" (20.3 cm.)	26" (66.6 cm.)

TABLE 4. FIGUREHEAD FACIAL DIMENSIONS; WEIGHT; WOOD TYPESStyle: ANIMAL HEAD ONLY

	<u>Face Length</u>	<u>Face Width</u>	<u>Figurehead Weight</u>	<u>Figurehead Wood Type</u>
Eagle from Great Republic	About 31" (78.7 cm.) from top of head above eye to bottom of beak.	About 22" (55.8 cm.) from outside brow ridges.	*	White pine <sup>113</sup>
Style: <u>ANIMAL HEAD/PARTIAL BODY</u>				
Serpent from Phantom	*	*	*	Teak
Style: <u>BUST FIGURE</u>				
Enrico H. Adams Figurehead	[Human face length measured from top of forehead (which is usually also the hairline) to the chin.] 5 3/4" (13.9 cm.)	[Human face measured with calipers at widest part of face (which is usually just above the ears).] 3-3/4" (9.5 cm.)	15 lbs.	*

\* To be determined

Style: SCROLL, SKIRT

	Face Length	Face Width	Figurehead Weight	Figurehead Wood Type
Unidentified Woman #50.2874	5½" (13.9 cm.)	4¾" (11.4 cm.) measured above ears	15 lbs.	White pine <sup>114</sup>
"Lady Blessington"	5-3/4" (14.6 cm.)	4-7/8" (12.3 cm.) measured above ears	45 lbs.	White pine
"Alexander Hamilton"	6-3/4" (17.1 cm.)	5¾" (13.3 cm.) measured above ears	*	Elm <sup>115</sup>
"Hebe"	5-7/8" (15 cm.)	4¾" (11.5 cm.) measured above ears	*	White pine
"Fredericka"	10-3/16" (25.9 cm.)	6-7/8" (17.6 cm.) measured at mid-section of face	*	White pine
"Asia"	8½" (21.3 cm.)	8-1/3" (21.2 cm.) measured forward of curls on face	*	Possibly elm <sup>116</sup>
"Orlando"	10-5/8" (26.9cm.)	7½" (18.4 cm.) measured above ears	*	White pine
"Joan of Arc"	7-3/4" (20 cm.)	5¾" (14 cm.) measured above ears	*	White pine

TABLE 4, Continued

Style: SCROLL SKIRT

	<u>Face Length</u>	<u>Face Width</u>	<u>Figurehead Weight</u>	<u>Figurehead Wood Type</u>
<u>Rhine figurehead</u>	6-7/8" (17.4 cm.) measured to curls on face at widest part of face above very low-set ears	5-7/8" (15.2 cm.)	*	White pine
"Aleppo"	7-3/4" (20 cm.)	6" (15.3 cm.)	*	White pine
St. George	6-15/16" (17.5 cm.) to estimated hairline	5-5/8" (14.2 cm.)	*	White pine
<u>Iolanda figurehead</u>	*	*	550 lbs.	White pine
<u>Margdalena figurehead</u>	9 1/2" (24.1 cm.)	8 3/4" (21.5 cm.)	*	White pine
<u>Style: FULL LENGTH FIGURE</u>				
"Two Sisters" taller .. shorter .	4-11/16 (11.9 cm.) 4-9/16 (11.7 cm.)	4-5/16" (10.9 cm.) 4-5/16" (10.9 cm.)	* *	* *
"Beiva Lockwood" Indian from Seminole	5-6/16" (13.2 cm.) 9 1/4" (23.4 cm.)	4-5/16" (10.9 cm.) 5 1/2" (13.9 cm.) at jawbone	* 545 lbs.	White pine White pine
Admiral Farragut figurehead	*	*	*	White pine

TABLE 4, Continued

TABLE 5. VESSEL INFORMATION\*\*

<u>ANIMAL HEAD ONLY FIGUREHEAD STYLE</u>	<u>Vessel Name/Use</u>	<u>Year Bt./By Whom Where</u>	<u>Length/Breadth Tonnage</u>	<u>Hull Material</u>
Eagle	Great Republic/cargo	1853/Donald McKay E. Boston, Mass.	325' x 4000 tons	Wood
<u>ANIMAL HEAD/ PARTIAL BODY FIGUREHEAD STYLE</u>				
Serpent	Phantom/yacht	1865/J.B. Van Deusen New York	Varied 90'-104' (see page 74) 140 tons	Wood
<u>BUST FIGUREHEAD</u>				
Emice H. Adams figurehead	Emice H. Adams/ whaler	1845/ Bristol, R. Island	82 x 23' 118-42/95 tons	Wood
<u>SCROLL SKIRT FIGUREHEAD</u>				
Unidentified Woman #50.2874	*	*	*	*
"Lady Blessington"	*	*	*	*
"Alexander Hamilton"	*	*	*	*

\* To be determined.

\*\* Obtained primarily from 19th and 20th century volumes of Lloyd's Register.

<u>SCROLL SKIRT FIGUREHEAD, Continued</u>	<u>Vessel Name/Use</u>	<u>Year Bt./By Whom Where</u>	<u>Length/Breadth Tonnage</u>	<u>Hull Material</u>
"Hebe"	*	*	*	*
"Fredericka"	*	*	*	*
"Asia"	*	*	*	*
"Orlando"	H.M.S. Orlando/ warship	*	*	*
"Joan of Arc"	*	*	*	*
Rhine Figurehead	Rhine/coolie trade	1886/Russell & Co. Greenock, Scotland	257.2 x 38.3' 1690 tons	Iron
"Aleppo"	*	*	*	*
St. George	*	*	*	*
Lolanda Figurehead	Lolanda/steam yacht	1908/Ramage & Ferguson Leith, Scotland	275.2 x 37.6' 1647 tons	Steel
Margdalena Figurehead	*	*	*	*

TABLE 5, Continued



<u>FULL LENGTH FIGUREHEAD</u>	<u>Vessel Name/Use</u>	<u>Year Bt./By Whom Where</u>	<u>Length/Breadth Tonnage</u>	<u>Hull Material</u>
"Two Sisters"	*	*	*	*
"Belva Lockwood"	*	*	*	*
Indian from Seminole	Seminole/cargo	1865/Manson, Fish & Co. Mystic, Connecticut	196 x 41.6' 1439 tons	Wood
Admiral Farragut	Great Admiral/ cargo	1869/R. E. Jackson E. Boston, Mass.	214 x 40' 1575 tons	Wood

TABLE 5, Continued

TABLE 6. CARVING DATES FOR MYSTIC SEAPORT FIGUREHEADS

Some dates have been estimated based on the figure-head's hair and clothing styles. Carvings preceded by an asterisk were dated by comparison to similar figureheads.

1820-1829

- 1824 "Asia" (possibly a later carving)  
ca. 1825 "Fredericka"

1830-1839

- ca. 1830s \*"Alexander Hamilton"

1840-1849

- 1845 Eunice H. Adams figurehead

1850-1859

- ca. 1850s "Two Sisters"  
1853 Eagle from Great Republic  
1858 "Orlando"  
ca. 1850s \*"Lady Blessington"

1860-1869

- 1865 Serpent from Phantom  
1865 Indian from Seminole  
1869 Admiral Farragut  
ca. 1860s \*"Hebe"  
ca. 1860s \* Unidentified Woman #50.2874

1870-1879

None

1880-1889

- ca. 1880s \* "Belva Lockwood"  
 1886 Rhine figurehead

1890-1899

- ca. 1890 \* St. George  
 ca. 1890 \* "Joan of Arc" (possibly ca. 1920s; see page 84)  
 ca. 1890 Magdalena figurehead

1900-1910

- ca. 1900 \* "Aleppo"

1911-1920 None1921-1930 None (unless "Joan of Arc" dates from this era)1931-1940

- 1931 Iolanda figurehead, duplicate of 1908 original

TABLE 6, Continued

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TABLE 7. FIGUREHEAD SUBJECT TYPES AT MYSTIC SEAPORT

The placement of figureheads in these categories is based on the best information presently available to me, although some may change category as more is learned. For example, when the identities of "Asia" and "Fredericka" are known, it may prove appropriate to list them instead as Famous Person or Literature-Related Figureheads.

Allegorical or Mythical Figureheads

"Hebe"

Iolanda figurehead

Magdalena figurehead

Rhine figurehead

Allegorical or Mythical Figureheads, Continued

Serpent from Phantom

Ethnic Figureheads

"Aleppo"

"Asia"

Indian from Seminole

"Family Portrait" Figureheads

Eunice H. Adams figurehead

"Fredericka"

"Two Sisters"

Unidentified Woman #50.2874

Famous Person Figureheads

Admiral Farragut

"Alexander Hamilton"

"Belva Lockwood"

"Joan of Arc"

"Lady Blessington"

Literature-Related Figureheads

"Orlando"

National Emblem Figureheads

Eagle from Great Republic

St. George

TABLE 8. SHIP TYPES FOR MYSTIC SEAPORT FIGUREHEADS

The vessel types are known of some of the figureheads listed below. However, an asterisk follows those carvings which presently rely on comparison to similar figureheads for suggestion of their tentative vessel types.

Merchant Vessels

"Aleppo" figurehead \*

"Belva Lockwood" figurehead \*

"Fredericka" figurehead \*

Great Admiral (Admiral Farragut figurehead)

Great Republic (eagle figurehead)

"Joan of Arc" figurehead \*

"Lady Blessington" figurehead \*

Rhine (Rhine Maiden figurehead)

Seminole (Indian figurehead)

"Two Sisters" figurehead \*

Unidentified Woman #50.2874 figurehead \*

Merchant Training Vessel

St. George \*

Warship or Other Government Vessel

"Alexander Hamilton" figurehead \*

"Asia" figurehead \*

"Hebe" figurehead \*

Magdalena figurehead

Orlando figurehead

WhalerEunice H. Adams figureheadYachtIolanda figureheadPhantom (serpent figurehead)

TABLE 8, Continued

TABLE 9. NATIONAL ORIGINS OF MYSTIC SEAPORT FIGUREHEADS

The national origins are known of some of the figureheads listed below. However, an asterisk follows those carvings which presently rely on comparison to similar figureheads for their tentative national identification.

United States

"Belva Lockwood" \*

Eunice H. Adams figureheadEagle from Great RepublicAdmiral Farragut from Great AdmiralSerpent from PhantomIndian from Seminole

"Alexander Hamilton" \*

"Fredericka" \*

Great Britain

"Aleppo" \*

"Asia"\*(or possibly carved in India; see page 196)

"Hebe" \*

Great Britain, ContinuedIolanda figurehead

"Joan of Arc" \*

"Lady Blessington" \*

Magdalena figurehead

"Orlando"

Rhine figurehead

St. George \*

Unidentified Woman #50.2874 \*

Denmark

"Two Sisters" \*

TABLE 9, Continued

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## CHAPTER V

## REASONS FOR SIMILARITIES IN SHIPCARVINGS

Conventional 19th century figurehead styles and bow shapes account for many figurehead similarities, as shown by specific examples.

Similar Design Sources

Published in 1799, A new Book of Ornaments for the Use of all who are any way conversant in Designing Building Carving Painting and Drawing Ships (Fig. 131) contains figurehead patterns which carvers could simply copy. A triton pattern from that book (Fig. 132) can perhaps better be visualized as a three-dimensional carving when compared to the photographed figure shown as Fig. 133. Although this compilation of patterns is the only book of its type known, its title suggests that there were others. Woodcarvers traditionally have used patterns; Frederick Fried mentions their use by some 19th century shipcarvers.<sup>117</sup>

Any 19th century carver using available patterns might have had apprentices who, in turn, relied on those patterns when they opened their own shops, perhaps in other cities. Patterns, therefore, make it quite conceivable that carvers located many miles from one another could be producing figureheads which were basically variations on a common theme. Note, for example, the stylistic similarities of Figs 134, 135, and 136, although each was obviously cut by a different carver.

Other factors, too, account for similar carvings, as will be discussed.





Figure 131. A book published January 1799 by Laurie & Whittle included figurehead and stern carving designs (National Maritime Museum, London).

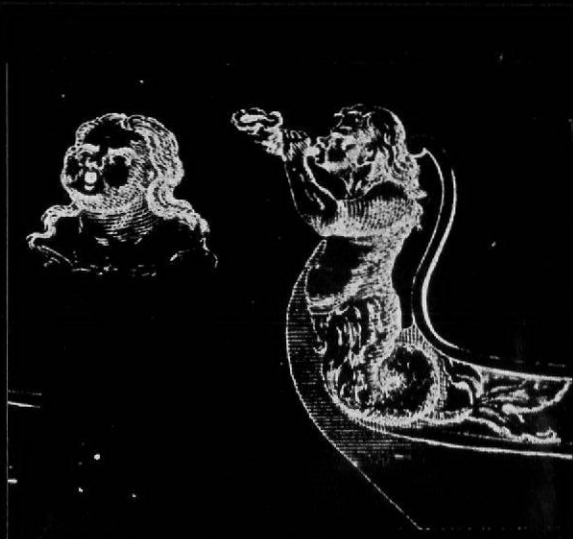


Figure 132. Triton  
figurehead.  
(Photo: A New  
Book of Ornaments  
[etc.] (1799: 7).)

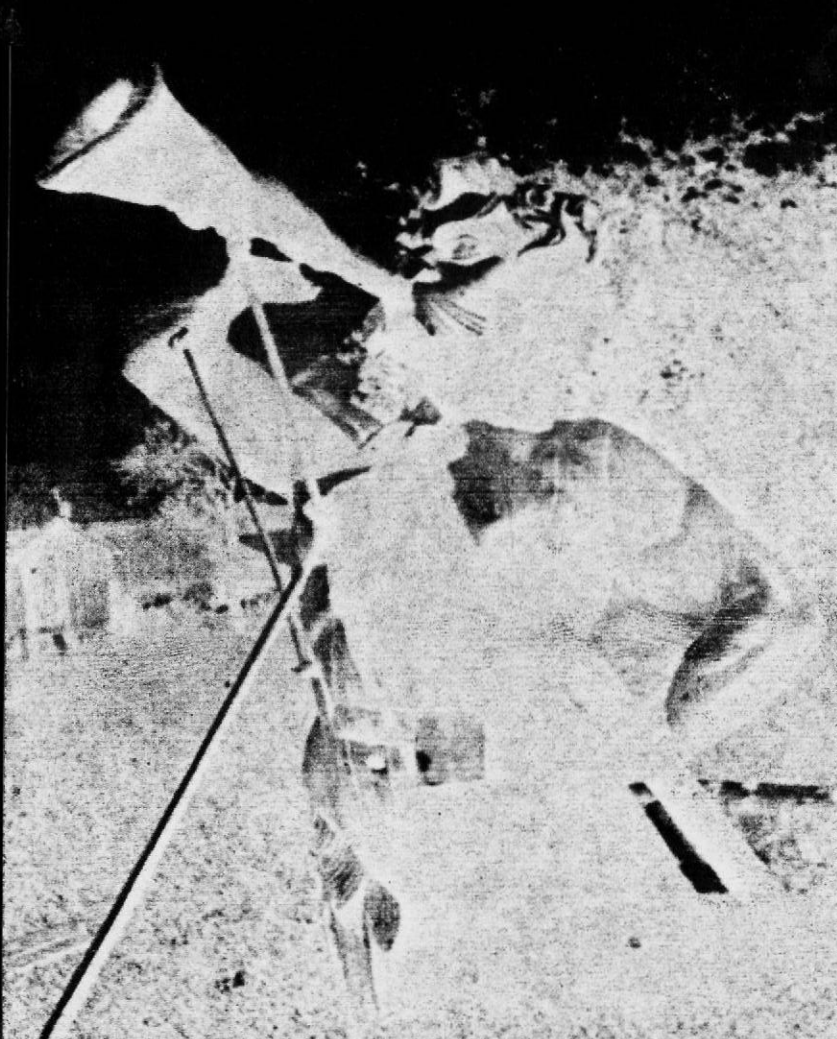


Figure 133.  
Triton  
carving. This  
photograph is  
inscribed as  
the figurehead  
of the U.S.  
Ship of the  
Line Ohio, but  
that is cur-  
rently an un-  
confirmed  
identifica-  
tion. (Mystic  
Seaport  
photo 50.911)



Figure 134. Unidentified Woman. Height 67 inches (170.1 cm.). (Photo: Detroit Institute of Arts.)

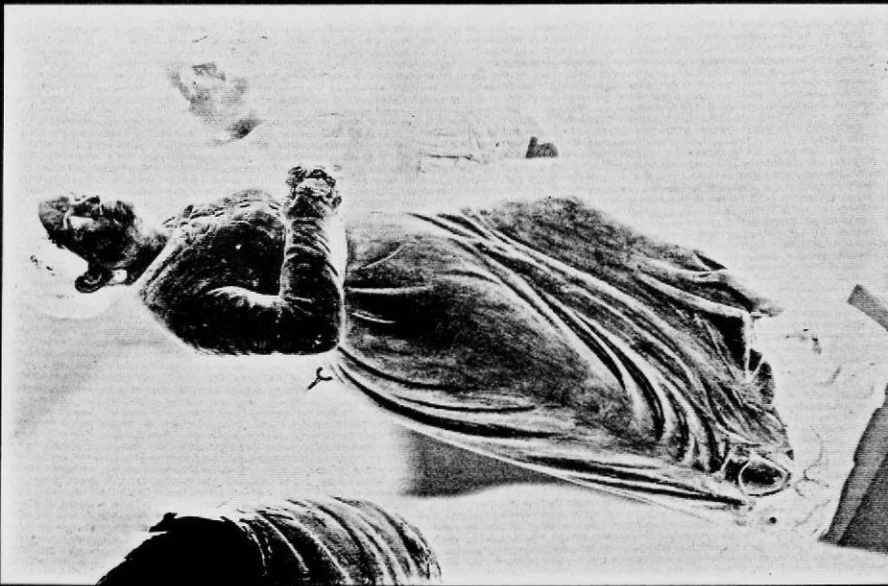


Figure 135. Conventional pose of the "Belva Lockwood" figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 136. "Osage" figurehead. (Courtesy of The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.)

#### Identical Figureheads From Different Carvers' Shops

The original 1908 figurehead from the steam yacht Iolanda (Fig. 137) was replaced in 1931 (Fig. 138) because of damage to the first figure. A new carver, Mr. Shirley in England, copied the original figurehead in minute detail, with the exception of the facial expression which he could not quite reproduce.<sup>118</sup>

This is the only example known to me of duplicate figureheads which sequentially decorated the same vessel; surely, however, others existed.

#### Similar Figureheads From Same Carver's Shop

The 19th century shipcarver William Southworth estimated that he produced at least 500 carvings in his 69-year career.<sup>119</sup> It is likely that many of those carvings were stylistically distinguishable as being from his shop.

At the same time, similarities in the Rhine figurehead (Fig. 139) and the Unidentified Figurehead 51.3358 at Mystic Seaport (Fig. 124 at page 144) suggest that they constitute an example of figureheads produced in the same, in this case unknown, carver's shop. Note especially the common features of their hair, faces, sleeves, necklaces lying beneath their collars, and the decorative bands at their necklines. Figure 51.3358, however, shows some improvement over the Rhine figurehead in the modeling of the face, ears, chest, and even the long hands; perhaps it was done later than Rhine's figurehead, or with the help of a more experienced craftsman within the shop.

#### Similar Figureheads Within a Fleet

Not only can figurehead similarities lead us to the work of one carver's shop, but also at times, probably to the vessels of a single owner's fleet. Note for



Figure 137. Original Iolanda figurehead, 1908. (Photo P0353 from The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia.)



Figure 138. Replacement figurehead carved 1931 for yacht Iolanda. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)





Figure 139. Rhine's figurehead  
 is similar to  
 Figurehead  
 #51.3358 at Mystic  
 Seaport, seen in  
 Figure 124.  
 (Photo by Carol  
 Olsen.)

example the nearly identical latter 19th century figure-heads carved by Charles A. L. Sampson of Bath, Maine, for the Western Belle and Belle of Oregon, both of which vessels were operated by Captain William H. Besse of New Bedford.<sup>120</sup> Since Rhine's figurehead (Fig. 139) was carved for one of James Nourse's ships, perhaps the similar but unidentified Figure 51.3358 at Mystic Seaport (Fig. 124 on page 144) will prove to have been on another ship in his fleet.

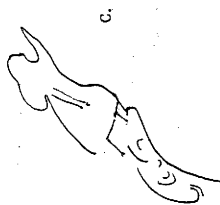
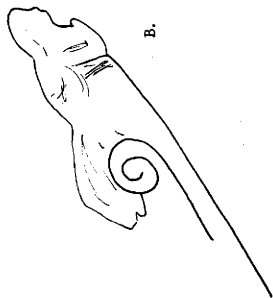
#### Similar Figureheads on Similar Ships

That similar ships have similar figureheads is the most important key in identifying figureheads. The need to conform to various bow shapes creates specific figure-head styles and poses, some of which are shown in Fig. 140. Convention in overall figurehead shapes appears to have been as desirable in 19th century ship decoration as convention was important in 19th century ship construction. That realization enabled me, a few years ago, to identify the specific ship for Mystic Seaport's carving "Magdalena" (Fig. 141); only the ship name was known at that time.

Hougomont and Olivebank have figureheads (Figs 142, 143) which are stylistically similar to "Magdalena." Since Hougomont and Olivebank were both 4-masted steel barks, about 300 feet in length, they suggested the era and ship size that might be appropriate for the correct vessel named Magdalena. Subsequently, I discovered photographs of the Magdalena, a Royal Mail vessel, built in 1889, which showed Mystic Seaport's figurehead on her bow.

Other examples of seemingly standardized figure-heads can be seen in the half figures (Figs 144, 145) of H.M.S. Trincomalee, "H.M.S. Asia," and





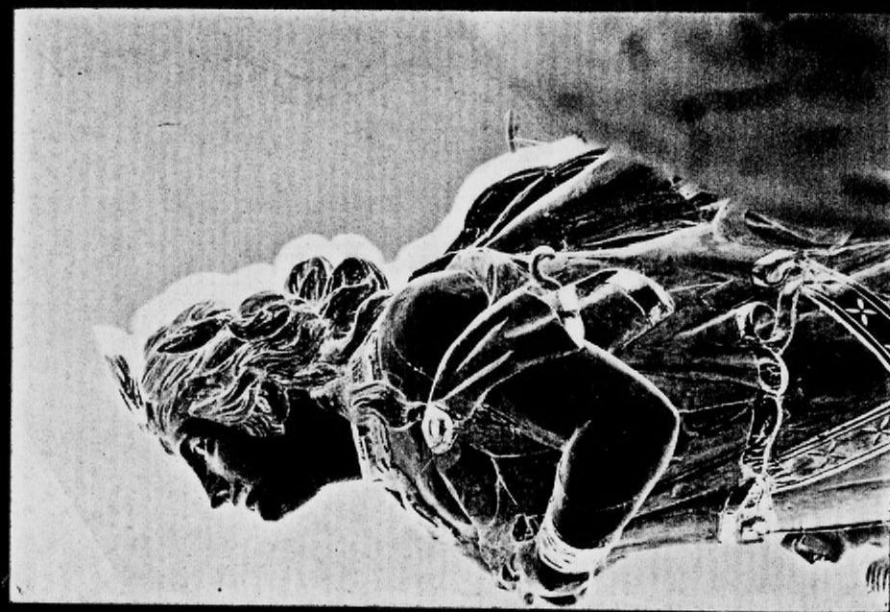


Figure 141. Figurehead of Magdalena,  
1889 Royal Mail vessel.  
(Photo by Carol Olsen.)

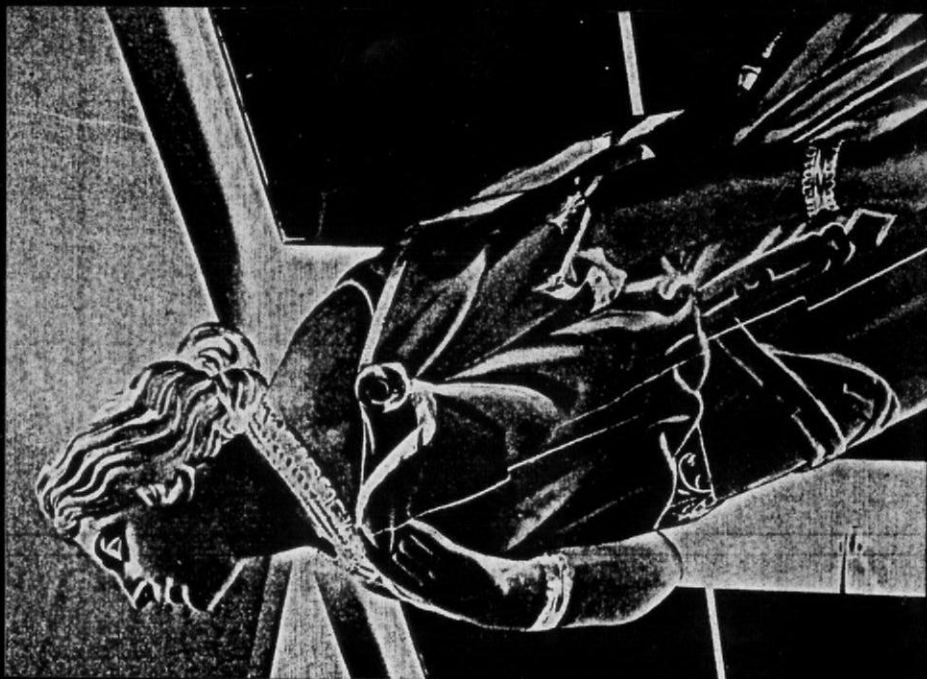


Figure 142. Figurehead of Hougomont,  
1897 4-masted steel  
bark (Hallén, 1975:  
107).



Figure 143. Figurehead of Olivebank, 1892, 4-masted steel bark. (Mystic Seaport Museum Figurehead Photograph.)

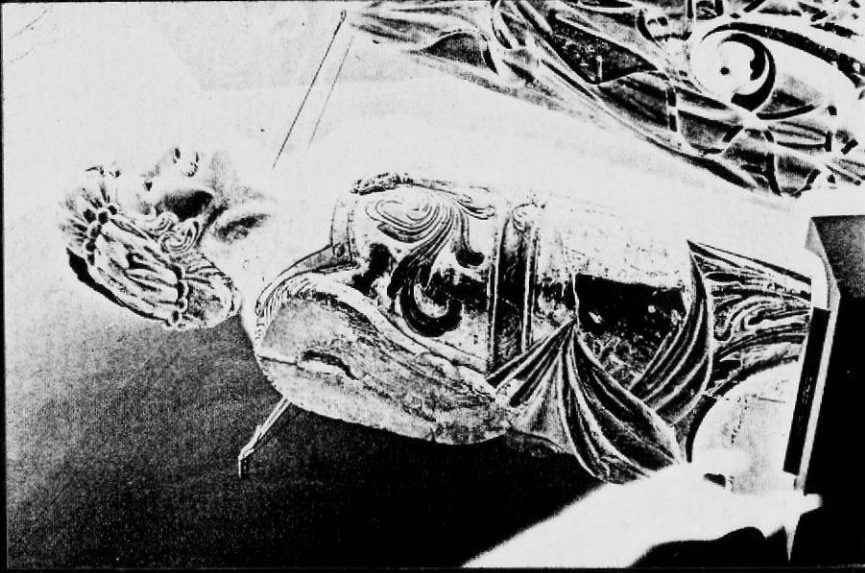


Figure 145. Figurehead of H.M.S. Asia, 1824 or later. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

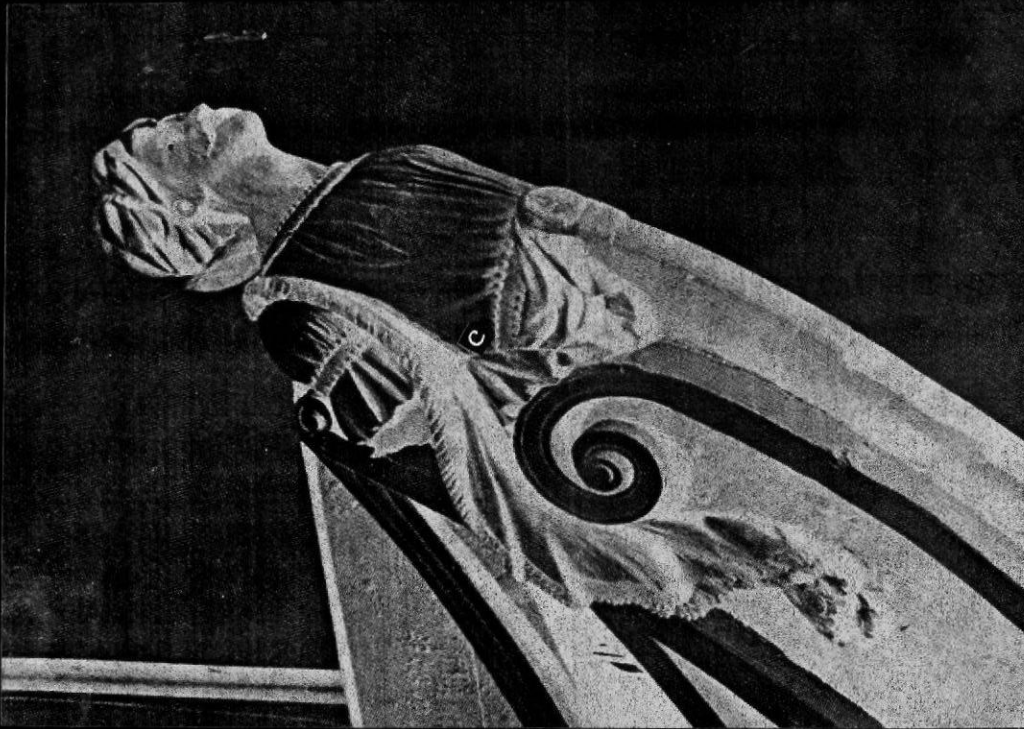


Figure 144. Figurehead of H.M.S. Trincomalee, 1817 (Laughton, 1973: pl. 22).

an unidentified Warrior (Fig. 146). Their poses and profiles are the same, and they share some common surface details. "Asia" and the Warrior have the same angled fastenings upon their breastplates, and decorative incisions on their waistbands (a and b in Figs 146 and 147); Trincomalee's carving and the Warrior have the same beading at their waists (c in Figs 144 and 146). Basic figurehead styles, dictated by bow shapes, facilitated figurehead carving while also assuring shipbuilders of continuity in the overall appearance of their ships' bows.

#### Similar Figureheads From the Same Dockyards

Some figureheads appear to help identify the regions where their ships were built. In the early 19th century, several Royal Navy vessels were built in Indian dockyards, particularly Bombay. Laughton, in Old Ship Figure-Heads & Sterns, says it was almost the invariable practice to give those vessels Indian figureheads.<sup>121</sup> As one example, he mentions H.M.S. Trincomalee, 1817. H.M.S. Asia was also built in Bombay, and the resemblance between the Trincomalee and "Asia" figureheads (Figs 144, 145) may indicate that they came from the same Indian dockyard.

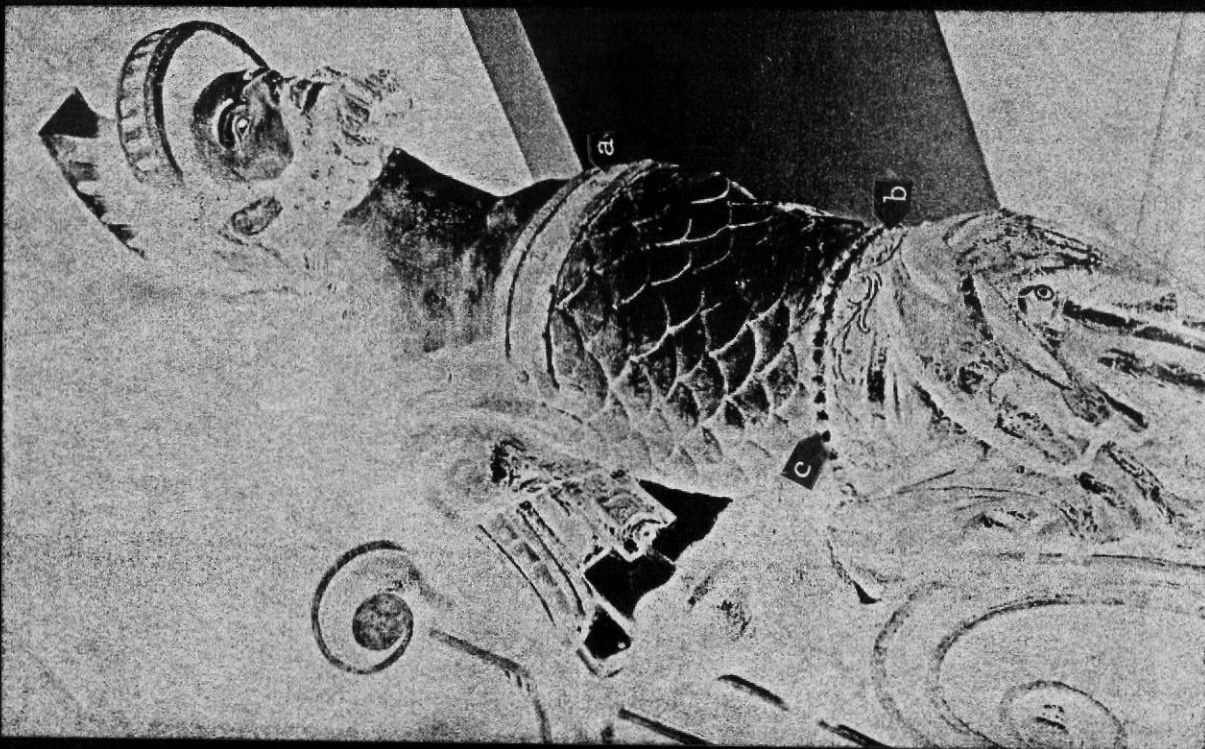
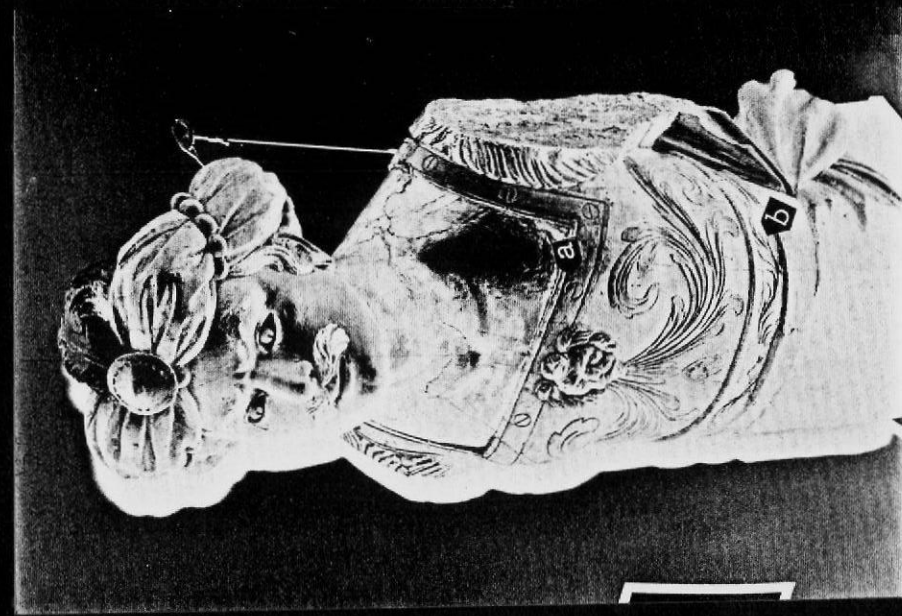


Figure 146. Unidentified Warrior figurehead (Costa, 1981: 141).

Figure 147. Arrows indicate similar details in "Asia's" figurehead. (Photo, shown above, by Carol Olsen.)





## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION: ASPECTS OF THE SHIPCARVING TRADE

SHIPCARVERS

Nineteenth-century shipcarvers were known by their reputations, the wooden figures displayed at their shops, and by advertisements in city directories. From the latter source, many 19th century American carvers have been identified in books by Pauline Pinckney and Marion V. Brewington. The trade of shipcarving often passed from father to son; examples from the East Coast include the Skillins and Fowle families of Boston, the Dodge family of New York, and the Colemans of New Bedford.

Also listed as a 19th century shipcarver is one woman, Jane Anderson. She and her son continued the shipcarving business of her husband, Jacob Anderson, after his death in 1855.<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, no photographs of Mrs. Anderson have yet been located.

Photographs show 19th century shipcarvers as rather respectable looking gentlemen, often nicely dressed and protecting their clothing with work aprons. In correspondence and advertisements they referred to themselves variously as "Artist," "Artist in Wood," "Sculptor," or "Carver;" sometimes they simultaneously chose more than one of those terms. At the other extreme were men who described their work as just "chopping" figures. The choice of title would seem to reflect the individual's training, self-esteem, and the clientele that he wished to attract, particularly since there was a great distinction in the importance of vessels to be decorated. United States Navy ships seem to have received some of the figures of highest quality. Just as ships were of greater or lesser stature, so were the carvers who were hired to

decorate them.

### Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship, often begun between the ages of 12 and 15, generally provided a young man's first professional carving training. Reports vary, however, as to the length of that training. For example, in 1865 the Canadian carver Louis Jobin began a three-year apprenticeship in the Berlinguet shop,<sup>123</sup> while earlier in the century Daniel Train apprenticed eight years with the famous shipcarver William Rush and then stayed on two years as a journeyman.<sup>124</sup> Yet another 19th century shipcarver reported in an interview: "Learn the trade? ... Yes, indeed, I've been at it since I was 13 years old ... It takes 12 to 14 years of apprenticeship to make a competent workman."<sup>125</sup>

Apprenticeships surely helped to standardize American shipcarving styles, and newly established shipcarvers sometimes advertised with whom they had done their apprenticeships. It was probably not only a matter of prestige to advertise that one had been William Rush's apprentice, but it may also have helped suggest the styles of work a carver could do. The New York Gazette and General Advertiser, May 25, 1799, announced:

Daniel N. Train, Carver, No. 144 Cherry Street, near the Ship Yards, offers his professional services to the citizens of New York and others, particularly owners and builders of ships. Having studied Naval Sculpture under William Rush, of Philadelphia, whose talents are extensively known, he hopes, from this advantage and future exertion, to merit the patronage he now solicits. Heads and other ornamental parts of ships will be accepted and prepared with neatness and dispatch.<sup>126</sup>

### Additional Training of American Shipcarvers

The training of shipcarvers could vary a great deal, not only based on the quality of teaching they received in



their apprenticeships, but also on the other resources they chose to use. Increasingly in the 19th century there were opportunities to learn anatomy, modeling, and design, particularly through art classes. For example, woodcarver Samuel Robb is known to have attended courses in the 1860s at the American Institute and at the National Academy of Design, New York.<sup>127</sup> At that time the latter facility had been offering art courses for about 40 years.

Possibly also offering inspiration to some shipcarvers were public monumental sculpture, such as those by the eminent shipcarver William Rush.<sup>128</sup> Further, "mechanics and artist" clubs in the 1850s, including the Mechanics Apprentice Library Association of Boston, had libraries, exhibitions, and lectures.<sup>129</sup> Surely these various resources offered ideas to some shipcarvers, as would more major public exhibitions like the 1841 exhibit of the American Institute of the City of New York, the annual exhibitions from 1811 of the Society of Artists, the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia, and the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Reference books such as the 4-volume Artist's Repository or Encyclopedia of the Fine Arts, published in 1808 by C. Taylor, served at least one shipcarver; William Rush is known to have used this material.<sup>130</sup> Shipcarvers were also influenced by other local carvers' work, and by the decorations they saw on incoming ships. Foreign vessels at times had very high quality carving and, as the following information shows, something is known of the training available to shipcarvers outside of the United States.

#### Some Designers and Carvers of Ship Decoration in 19th Century Europe

In England in 1811, the "superior class of shipwright apprentices" was started at the Royal Navy College,

Portsmouth. In order to design figureheads, these apprentices were taught freehand drawing by J. C. Schetky, who acquired a large number of plaster casts of classical figures for students to copy.<sup>131</sup> L. G. Carr Laughton wrote in 1925 that those plaster casts had recently been found in a garret at the Royal Navy College, Greenwich.<sup>132</sup> If they can again be relocated, they may prove to be the stylistic sources for some British figureheads now on display in museums.

In France, from c. 1643 to c. 1835, there apparently was a regular school of carving in the dockyards, from which came very high quality marine decoration.<sup>133</sup> Denmark employed a sculptor in the naval dockyard at Copenhagen until 1816, after which time the responsibility for designing decorations for warships is said to have been given to the Danish Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>134</sup> At the Office of Naval Construction, Holmen, Denmark, Johan Daniel Petersen became the leader of the Danish School of Ornamentation, where between 1831 and 1848 he designed many figureheads.<sup>135</sup> Also, following the custom of the time, Petersen practiced copying existing designs, which seems indicative of the continuing tradition in ship decoration designs.

Handsome decoration on foreign ships was noticed by American carvers. The best example is the reported influence upon William Rush of a French figurehead in a walking pose,<sup>136</sup> the results of which altered his style and ultimately the American style of shipcarving. After 1789, the Indian Trader figurehead that William Rush carved for the ship William Penn was so admired by carvers when the ship was in London that the Londoners "would come in boats and lay near the ship and sketch designs from it. They even came to take casts in plaster of Paris from the head."<sup>137</sup> This is one of the best illustrations of carvers borrowing ideas from one another and of

shipping facilitating such exchanges.

#### Public Recognition of American Shipcarvers

Whether inspired by foreign design or his own imagination, when an American shipcarver's efforts resulted in commendable work, his profession offered the opportunity for public praise. Newspaper accounts of ship launchings often included some comment about the decorations. For example, an 1880 reporter wrote about the Maine carver of one figure: ". . . To say Col. Sampson is a finished workman is to express in very mild terms our gratification in viewing so fine a work."<sup>138</sup>

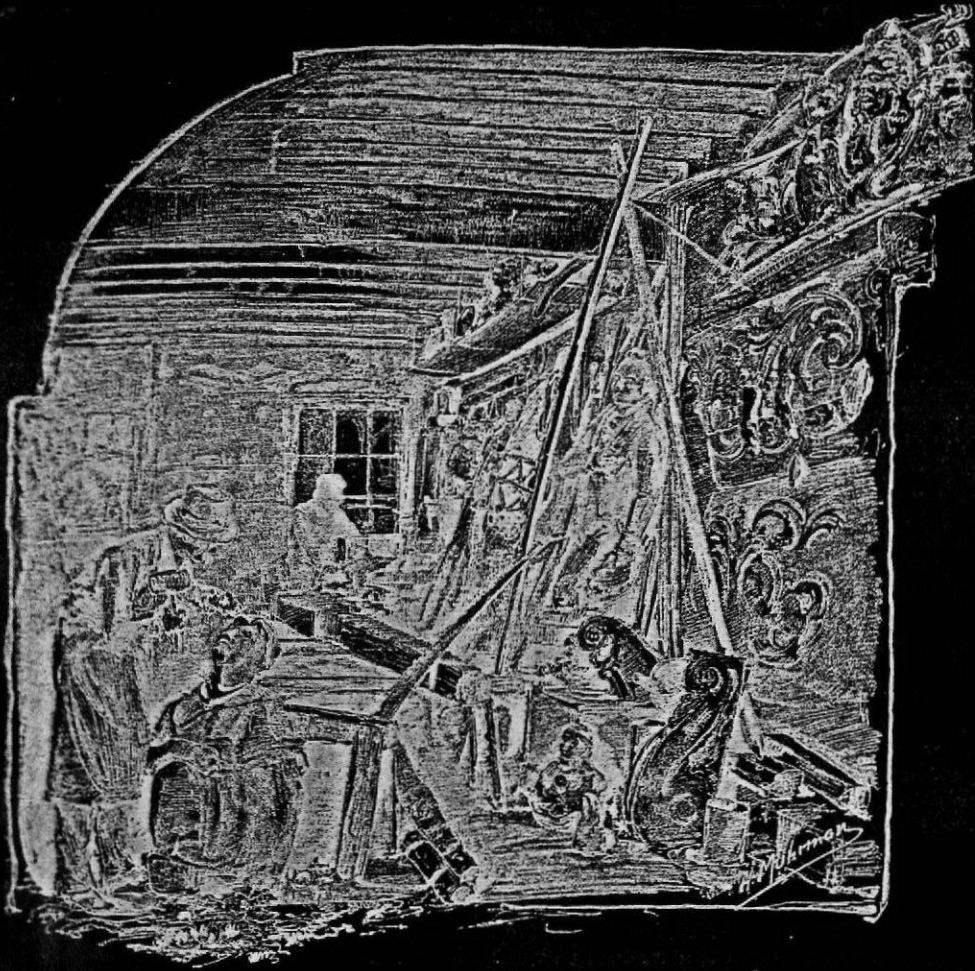
Public disapproval was equally possible, as shown by the comments that the eagle figurehead for the Great Republic added nothing to the beauty of the bow.<sup>139</sup> Even jests could be made. The figurehead of a newspaper reporter for the medium clipper Reporter, built in East Boston, was described as looking like "Colonel Green of the Boston Post, before he lost his hair and got religion."<sup>140</sup>

Since people noticed and commented upon the work of carvers, such public appraisals seemingly would have made young carvers more likely to emulate the work of the more highly praised men and, as illustrated, that would have been just one of several factors influencing similar shipcarvings.

#### WORK ENVIRONMENT

##### The Shipcarver's Shop

American shipcarver shops were typically located near the waterfronts of major port cities. Paintings and drawings of shop interiors show scenes ranging from neat orderliness to a seemingly strewn array of carvings, wood shavings, and tools (Figure 148). We know from historical



AMONG THE FIGURE-HEADS.

Figure 148. From Scribner's Magazine May 1879  
"A Day on the Docks."

sources, plus popular literature such as Drowne's Wooden Image by Nathaniel Hawthorne, that carvers were often visited by townspeople who enjoyed watching wooden figures being formed. Fascinated children sometimes came by, too, although more tentatively, as Abraham Ritter described in 1860 in Philadelphia and Her Merchants: "There was a large log under the front window [of shipcarver William Rush's] shop, upon which we little boys on our way to school climbed and peeped under his window, wondering at the transformation of unwrought timber unto the form and appearance of human beings."<sup>141</sup>

Those 19th century carvers likely used razor sharp sets of European carving tools. For lighting, they may have preferred window arrangements where light came from at least two sides, so that the shadows created on the wood by the carvers' gouges and chisels would show up well; some carvers feel that a single light source tends to flatten the appearance of cuts. In photographs, shipcarvers' work benches appear to have stood at about waist level, and tall sitting stools probably helped relieve the many hours of standing or bending that were a difficult aspect of the shipcarving trade.

#### Planning Before Carving Was Begun

When a 19th century figurehead was needed, planning was necessary to determine the figurehead's identity, size, shape, wood, joins, painting, and attachment to the ship. Cost and time were also settled in advance. In each of these matters, there were variables to be considered by either the customer or the carver, as the following examples show.

#### Figurehead Subjects

Nineteenth century American shipcarver William Southworth said that sometimes a shipowner would

specifically tell him the type of figurehead he wanted. At other times, the shipowner would simply tell him the vessel name and ask for the suggestion of an appropriate figure.<sup>142</sup> Occasionally figurehead subjects were determined by those figureheads already on display in the carver's shop, since one letter tells of a buyer being offered a carving similar to one the carver had already made.<sup>143</sup>

### Models

Portrait figureheads were sometimes modeled directly from their subjects, resulting in scenes like that in Howard Pyle's 1895 painting "In the Woodcarver's Shop" (Fig. 149) (although Pyle's carver does not appear to be doing a figurehead).

Longfellow's 1850 poem The Building of the Ship similarly mentions a figurehead being modeled after a living woman:

And at the bows an image stood,  
By a cunning artist carved in wood,  
With robes of white, that far behind,  
Seemed to be fluttering in the wind.  
It was not shaped in a Classic mould,  
Not like a nymph or Goddess of old,  
Nor Naiad rising from the water,  
But modelled from the Master's daughter!

Live models were surely not always the rule. The Joseph Conrad portrait figurehead was cut from a photographic likeness,<sup>144</sup> and the design for Andrew Jackson for the U.S.S. Constitution was taken from a lithograph of the painting referred to as the "Hermitage Scene" done by R.E.W. Earle in 1826.<sup>145</sup> A sketch of Columbus, based on an engraving in Banke's Geography, was provided to one carver for a figurehead.<sup>146</sup> The "Orlando" figurehead at Mystic Seaport, based on Shakespeare's character in As You Like It, may be modeled after a costume used in one of the several 19th century versions of that play.



Figure 149. In the Woodcarver's Shop, 1895, by Howard Pyle.  
(Photo: Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington.)

The sources for figurehead ideas were at least as varied as the people, literature, and graphics of the 19th century.

#### Artistic License

Carvers used a variety of sources for their figurehead ideas; thus, we often find artistic license in figurehead costumes. The 1865 ship Seminole carried an Indian (Fig. 150) whose costume, research now shows, was not historically accurate for Seminole Indians.<sup>147</sup> The carver, apparently not obliged in that instance to re-search his subject, was free to carve a more stereotypic Indian figure.

In striking contrast to this example, however, is the considerable accuracy of the 1869 Admiral Farragut portrait figurehead (Fig. 151). Farragut's newly created rank of Admiral, the highest position in the United States Navy, was shown by his uniform and, accordingly, the figurehead had carefully depicted details of shoulder boards, brass buttons, gloves, stripes, sword belt, and the letters "US" on the belt buckle, all of which were carved in wood (Fig. 152). The accurate depiction of this hero may first have reflected shipowner William F. Weld's high regard for Farragut, but it also surely was helpful to the carver that Farragut was a well-publicized contemporary figure of whom many illustrations were readily available.

#### Figurehead Size

The figurehead's size was primarily determined by the ship's size. There were, however, other considerations, as shown in a letter of March 6, 1850, by carvers S. W. Gleason & Sons, 82 Commercial Street, Boston, to shipbuilders Fernald & Pettigrew of Portsmouth, New Hampshire:





Figure 150. The costume of the Indian figure-head from Seminole, 1865, varies from the attire worn by 19th c. Seminole Indians. This Indian is shown with face paint, a bearclaw necklace, a medal (possibly a peace medal), textured fur robe and skirt, beaded belt, and high moccasins. He holds a tomahawk and knife. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

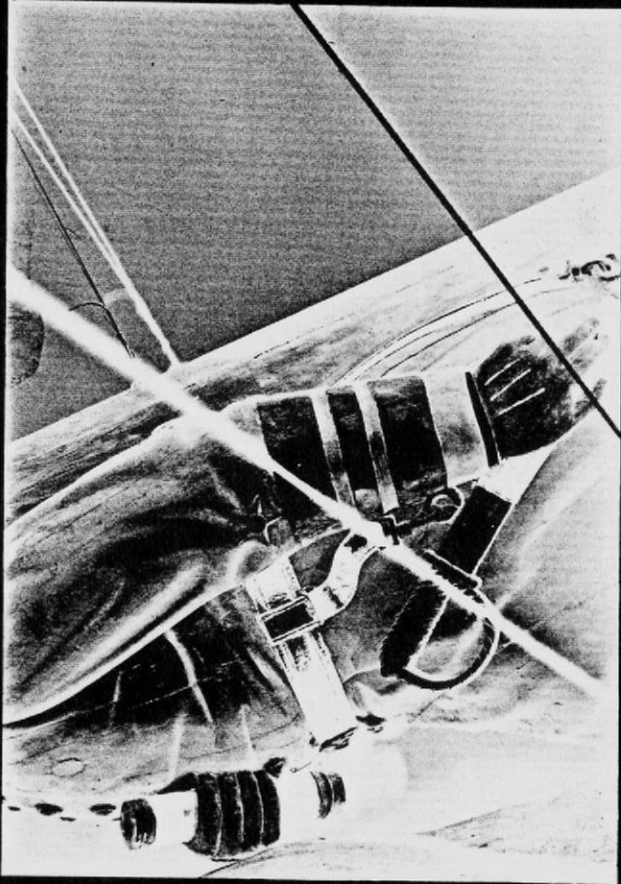


Figure 152. Left side detail of Admiral Farragut figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

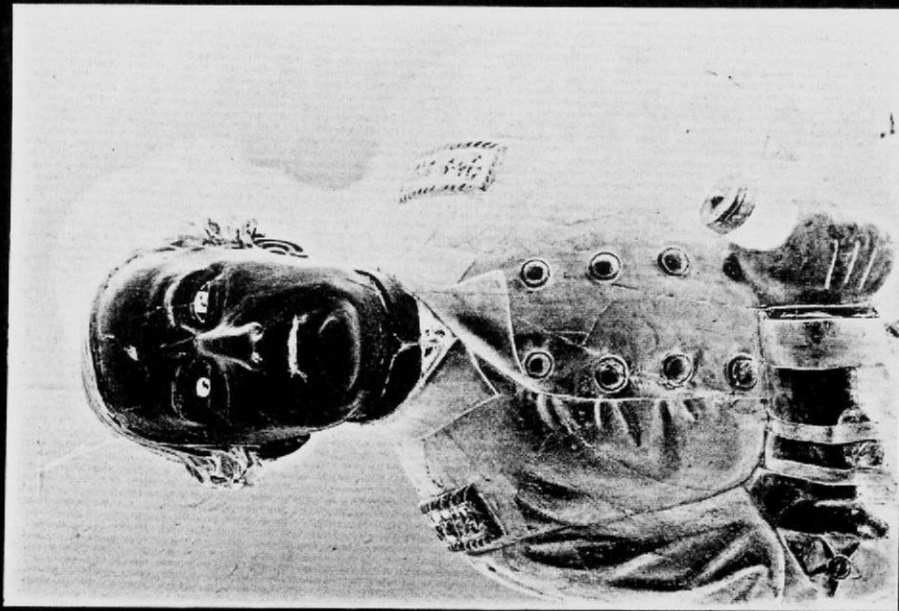


Figure 151. Admiral Farragut figurehead from Great Admiral. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

In answer to your question about the size of the figure we would say that we agree with you pretty much, that is to say, we think the figure should look the size of life after it is on & would have to be in reality 3 or 5 in taller, the standard height among Artists is for a female 5 feet 3 in -- suppose we make the figure 5 feet 6 in & the block or scroll as small as possible say 7 in -- extreme length of whole 6 feet 1 inch; how will that do?"<sup>148</sup>

The figurehead being described, although a little taller, is in the style of "Belva Lockwood" (see page 24). The letter shows the need for the carver and ship-builder to determine to the inch the proper figurehead size. Such measurements were important for the figurehead's fit on the bow, as was the need for the carving's profile to blend well with the bow shape beneath it. John Griffiths, a 19th century naval architect, emphasized the need for the shipcarver to have as much time as possible for his work so that he could properly plan the figure lines to harmonize well with the ship bow. Griffiths said that a poor appearance in the head of a ship greatly detracted from a vessel's overall beauty.<sup>149</sup>

#### Studies for Figureheads: Drawings, Wax Models, and Full Size Patterns

At times drawings of planned figurehead designs were sent to 19th century customers for approval,<sup>150</sup> and some of these original figurehead drawings survive.<sup>151</sup> Three-dimensional figurehead studies also survive in seventeenth and eighteenth century wax and wood models of Danish and English figureheads,<sup>152</sup> and a plaster study now in the collection of the Danish Maritime Museum at Kronborg Castle was prepared for at least one very large 20th century figurehead.<sup>153</sup>

Studies for figureheads sometimes included templates. For example, in 1846 a template was cut for the planned

U.S.S. Constitution figurehead of Andrew Jackson; the template was held to the bow in order to judge the appearance of the figure before it was carved.<sup>154</sup> More recently, the modern reconstructors of the 1875 Elissa in Galveston, Texas, used such a template at Elissa's bow to determine the most attractive looking figurehead style for her.<sup>155</sup> It is reasonable to assume that such templates were used occasionally in the 19th century as well.

## MATERIALS

### Wood

With the figurehead design and size agreed upon, the carver could arrange for wood. He may have had his own stock, or he needed to procure it from a spar yard<sup>156</sup> or other source. I assume that shipcarvers worked with well-seasoned wood and that they did not treat it with oil; accounts of 19th century wooden figures first being treated with oil appear to be for indoor carvings rather than for figureheads.<sup>157</sup>

Eastern white pine (Pinus strobus) was widely used by American carvers, and microscopic analysis at the United States Forest Products Laboratory<sup>158</sup> shows that this is the wood type of most of the carvings covered in this text, including those which were likely carved in Europe, such as the figureheads of Magdalena, Rhine, and H.M.S. Orlando. Table 4 at pages 170 to 172 gives more specific wood information.

Eastern white pine is excellent for shipcarvings because it has an even and straight grain, is moderately soft and easily cut in any direction, has minimal shrinkage and swelling, is free from resin, and, importantly, can withstand rough treatment. It is a very lightweight wood with a specific gravity of only about .34 green and .37 oven dry, compared to white oak with

a specific gravity of about .64 green and .79 oven dry.<sup>159</sup>

A table published in the Record of American and Foreign Shipping (Fig. 153) shows the years of expected service from different woods. It indicates that pine is very durable; as decking it could last 11 years. One should expect, therefore, that the lifetime of a pine figurehead could be considerably beyond 11 years, especially since figureheads were protected by paint and were constantly exposed to salt, which is a wood preservative. Also, on long voyages, some figureheads were removed from the bows and stored below (see page 231). For such reasons, figureheads carved from pine could last for decades.

#### Flaws in the Wood

Bungs which do not cover fastenings are sometimes seen on figureheads. They are probably replacement wood for small areas of imperfection in the original log.

In a different instance, x-rays show that a branch caused a section of wood to be slightly raised on the Eunice H. Adams figurehead now at Mystic Seaport; the carver appears to have drawn her hair line especially to disguise that flawed area.<sup>160</sup>

#### Solid Figureheads

It seems that carvers used solid logs whenever possible and that laminations were used only when really necessary to save wood or to improve grain direction. Solid logs were used for the figures of Eunice H. Adams and Commodore Perry (Figs 154A and B), with the heartwood going through the fiddle scrolls but not through the heads of the figures. Since wood checking usually originates from the heartwood, this positioning seems practical, but figureheads also exist with heartwood



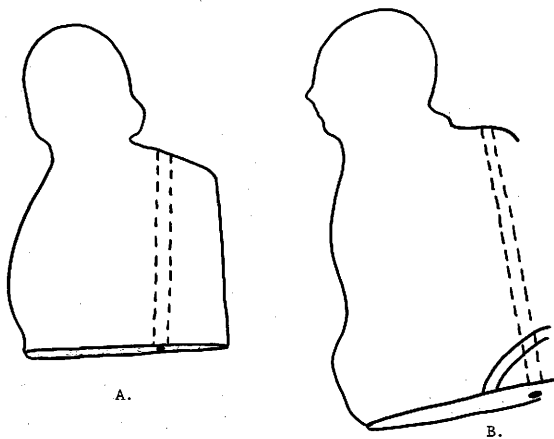


Figure 154. Placement of heartwood in some figureheads.  
A. Eunice H. Adams figurehead.  
B. "Commodore Perry" figurehead at The  
Mariners' Museum. (Drawings by Carol  
Olsen.)

continuing into the head.

#### Joined Figureheads

Each figure in the "Two Sisters" figurehead was carved separately, each from one log. More wood was added for the extended arms. X-rays show that two metal fastenings, covered with wood bungs, secured the "Two Sisters" together (Fig. 155).

#### Laminations

It appears that high curls, like those on Mystic Seaport's "Fredericka" (see Fig. 92 on page 117), are sometimes very small pieces of added wood with the grain running in the direction of the curl, presumably to facilitate carving.

Larger laminations are more common. The Great Republic figurehead is formed from seven pieces of wood (Fig. 156A-E). Among them are pieces added for the extra fullness of the brow ridge (Fig. 157), which are held in place by small but visible tacks. The lamination goes through the center of each eye and then carefully follows the outline of the feathers; a small ridge has been carved for the smooth joining of this wood.

Adding wood to a somewhat raised surface is common on figureheads. This is done particularly often in the case of figurehead arms, as on "Joan of Arc" (Fig. 158).

Lamination, as shown in these examples, eliminates the need for a log of the figurehead's total width, and it allows the grain to be aligned in the direction of the carving, thus making the wood easier to cut.

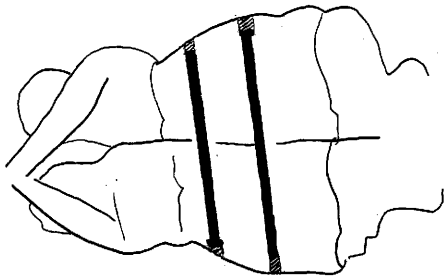
When the carver has an insufficiently wide log he must, probably with reluctance, add rather small pieces of wood, like those at the right shoulder and base drapery of Alexander Hamilton (Fig. 159A and B). However,





A

Figure 155. "Two Sisters" figurehead. A. Display of x-ray results prepared by David Mathieson, Mystic Seaport. (Photo of display by Carol Olsen.)  
B. Metal fastenings, with alternately arranged heads, secured the separately carved figures. (Drawing by Carol Olsen.)



B

Figure 156. Laminations and fastenings of Great Republic eagle. Some copper fastenings and bungs remain in the carving, as shown.

- A. Right side of eagle. Sections 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7 are separate pieces of wood.

Fastening holes d through h have the following diameters:

- d) 1"
- e) 1"
- f) 1-2/16"
- g) 1-3/16"
- h) 1-10/16"

Fastening holes d, e, f, g, and h are separate pieces of wood.

Fastening holes d, e, f, g, and h are separate pieces of wood.

- a) 1"
- b) 1"
- c) 1"

- C. Schematic drawing of wood as seen from the back of this eagle carving.

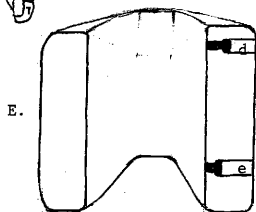
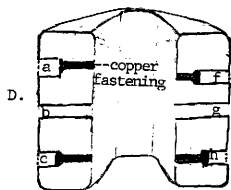
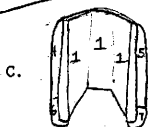
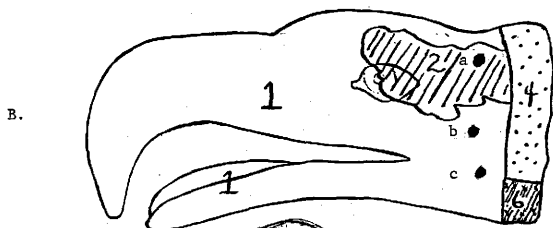
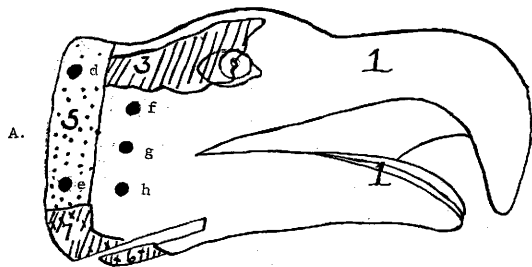
- D. Sectional sketch of eagle at fastening holes d, e, f, g, and h.

- a) bung depth 2-2/16"
- b) open and aligned with g)
- c) bung depth 2-6/16"
- f) 3" bung depth
- g) open and aligned with b)
- h) bung depth 1-10/16"

- E. Sectional sketch of eagle at fastening holes d and e.

- d) bung depth 1-2/16"
- e) bung depth 1-8/16"

(Drawings by Carol Olsen)



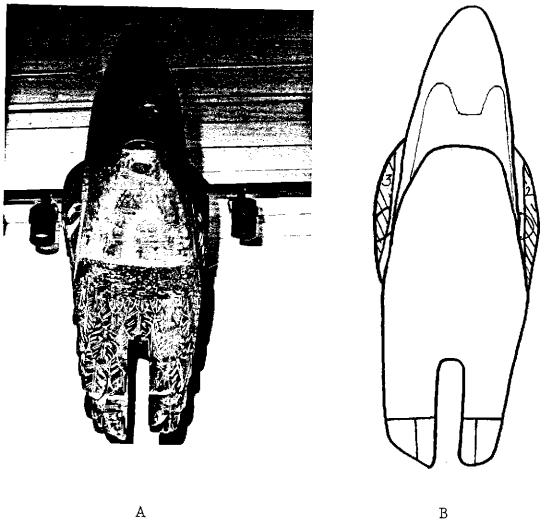


Figure 157. Base of the Great Republic eagle figurehead. A. The brow ridges exceed the width of most of this carving. B. Wood was added where extra width was needed. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 158. Laminations on the "Joan of Arc" figurehead at Mystic Seaport Museum. (Drawing by Carol Olsen.)

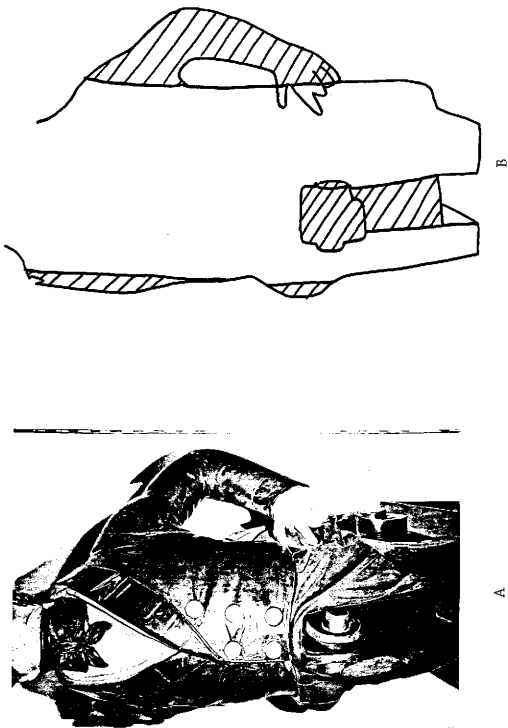


Figure 159. The "Alexander Hamilton" figurehead at Mystic Seaport Museum has several laminations. A. Front view of carving. B. Sections of added wood delineated. (Photo and line drawing by Carol Olsen.)

the carver's addition of wood for Hamilton's three-inch deep front scroll (also seen in Fig. 159) is quite practical: it eliminates the need for a main log of that considerable extra depth, most of which would have to be cut away in the final carving.

#### Permanent Arms

Hamilton's left arm is added, permanently-affixed wood (Fig. 159). This design, with a space between the arm and the body, is unusual; however, another example is seen in the Skagen Hotel photograph in Poulsen (1977: 172). Compare the more common style of the arm which is held at the side also being adjacent to the body, as shown on the Admiral Farragut, St. George, and "Aleppo" figureheads on pages 56, 85, and 95.

The flat surfaces at "Asia's" sides (Fig. 160) show how his permanently attached arms were positioned. The incisions atop the shoulders on both sides are probably the manes for now missing lionhead sleeves, as on the H.M.S. Bellerophon figurehead (Fig. 161).

#### Detachable Arms

Typically, outstretched figurehead arms were removable so that they would not be injured at sea. A tenoned arm fit into a mortise which was usually cut at the shoulder, as in the case of the right arm on Alexander Hamilton (Fig. 162).

"Hebe" (Fig. 163A and B) is the only example known to me of a figurehead having a mortise for each of her removable arms cut near the elbow, rather than at the shoulder. That design allowed "Hebe's" drapery to go just above her detachable lower arm, another feature which is uncommon (compare "Hebe's" drapery on page 43, above).



Figure 160. "H.M.S. Asia  
figurehead;" incisings  
at the shoulders are  
probably the manes for  
now missing lion-head  
sleeves (Stackpole,  
1964: 18).



Figure 161. H.M.S.  
Bellerophon figurehead  
1818; the lion-head  
sleeves appear to be  
attached just forward  
of the mane (Hansen,  
1979: 123).



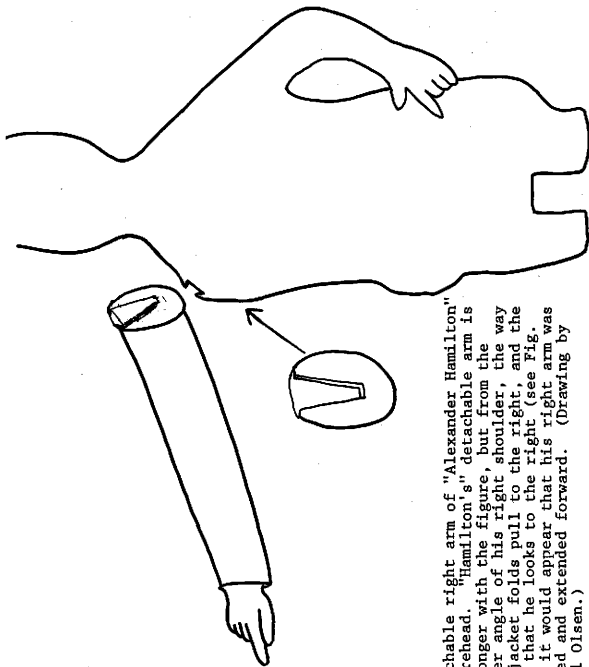
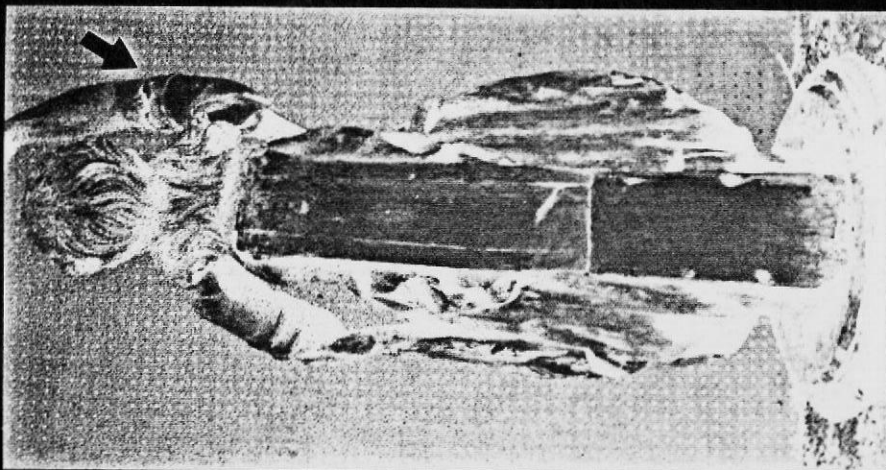
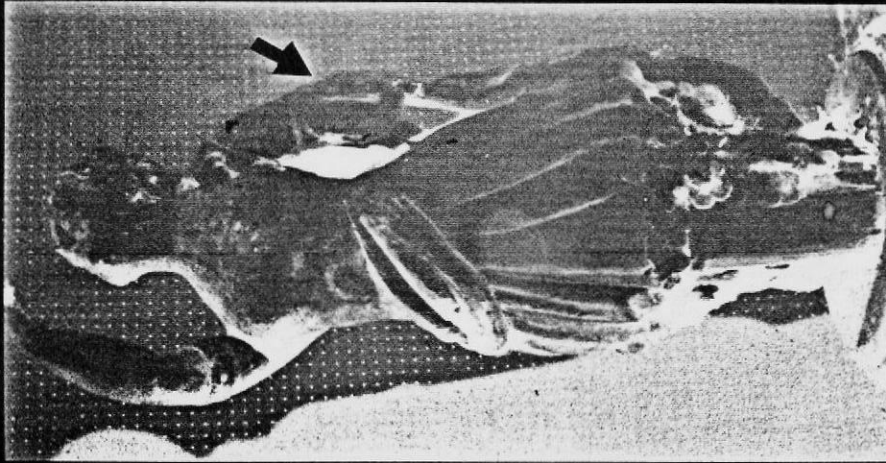


Figure 162. . Detachable right arm of "Alexander Hamilton" figurehead. "Hamilton's" detachable arm is no longer with the figure, but from the higher angle of his right shoulder, the way the jacket folds pull to the right, and the fact that he looks to the right (see Fig. 90), it would appear that his right arm was raised and extended forward. (Drawing by Carol Oisen.)



A



B

Figure 163. Detachable arms of "Hebe" figurehead. A. Join of detachable right arm can be seen. B. Mortise for the detachable lower section of left arm is visible. (Mystic Seaport Museum Figurehead Photographs.)

### Materials Other Than Wood in Figureheads

Sometimes the carver included materials other than wood in figureheads. St. George's iron shield (Fig. 164) is durable, realistic, and thin, with edges that will remain well-defined. The shield is set into a recess in the arm and secured by four metal fastenings which can be seen across the shield surface. The left arm was tapered (Fig. 165) in order to keep the shield securely close to the body and to have the shield clear the ship's bobstay.

### PREPARING AND DELIVERING FIGUREHEADS

#### Carving Figureheads

A figurehead's cutting was described in 1879 by a visitor to a New York shop:

He marks a center line on each side of the square block from which the figure is to be made; then he sketches the profile outline on two sides of the block and hews down to those lines. Then he sketches the front view on the hewed sides and cuts the block down. Afterwards the corners are reduced to that plump roundness so characteristic of the figurehead.<sup>161</sup>

The initial blocking-out of the figure could be done with an axe, and that job was sometimes given to an advanced apprentice.<sup>162</sup>

Wooden cigar store and circus figures, often comparable in size to figureheads, would sometimes each have a hole bored into the top of the head for a pipe. The projecting pipe was used as a handle in turning the figure during carving, and later for carrying the figure.<sup>163</sup> I have seen, however, no evidence of such pipeholes on the figureheads I have studied at Mystic Seaport, nor have I seen them on figureheads elsewhere in the United States.

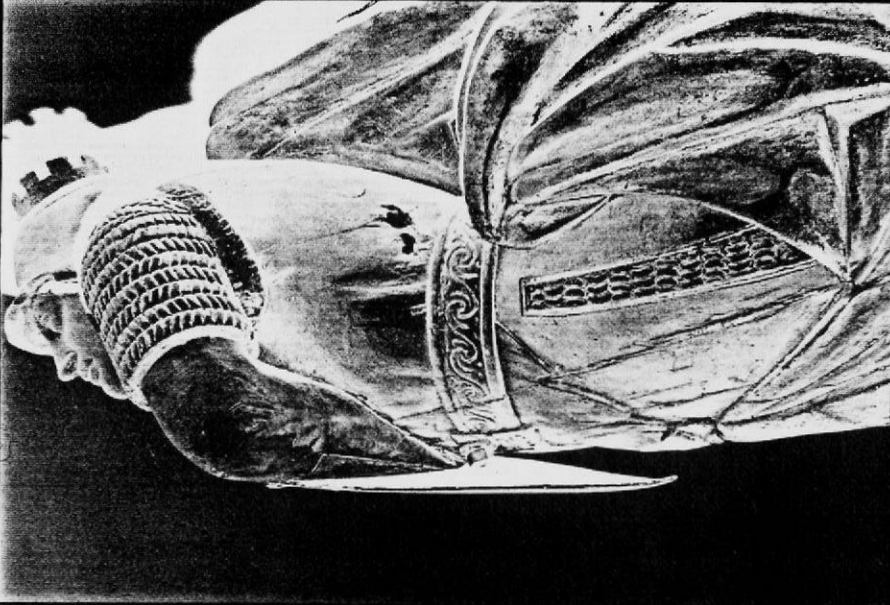


Figure 165. St. George's left forearm has been tapered to keep the shield very close to the figure. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

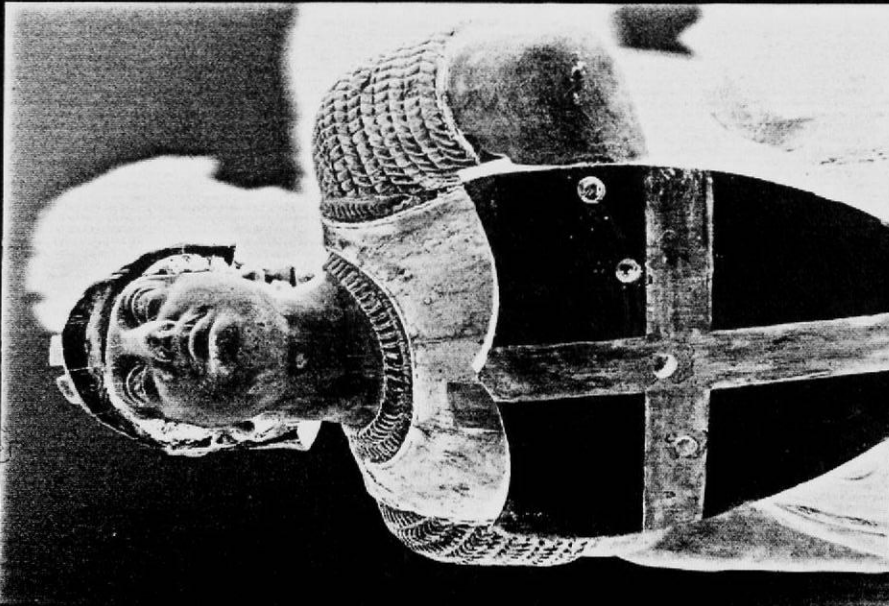


Figure 164. Four fastenings secure St. George's shield. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

### Painting and Gilding

A modern marine carver mentions that there is an advantage to first painting a completed wooden carving all white: it emphasizes any areas which need to be more crisply carved.<sup>164</sup> Possibly this practice aided 19th century shipcarvers as well, for recent x-rays have revealed that some of Mystic Seaport's figureheads received a base coat of white lead paint before being covered by polychrome paint.

At times the final coat of paint on figureheads was also white, perhaps to suggest finer, marble sculpture. Figureheads have also been finished with all-white paint with some gold trim or all-white with one or two areas of color like that seen today on Mystic Seaport's "Aleppo" figurehead (Fig. 73 at page 95). However, from 19th century newspaper descriptions and the primary paint layers on some surviving figureheads, we know that many 19th century figureheads were painted lifelike.

Figureheads were not always painted by the man who carved them. For example, The Eastern Times on July 6, 1854, made the following comment about the Emily St. Pierre figurehead: "Mr. [C.A.L.] Sampson is a young man of superior genius and skill and this production shows that our mechanics are not to be beaten. The painting and gilding by S.C. Sawyer is executed in the best style."<sup>165</sup> Possibly the better-carved figureheads were painted by professional painters. Gilding, on the other hand, seems to have been a common skill of shipcarvers, as indicated by advertisements.

Gilding could be costly as evidenced by one surviving bill:

New York November the 18 1859

Ship Andrew Jackson & ow: Drs:

To Samuel Baker

To painting the Between deck, the yards=		
Mast heads & gilding 3 Balls		\$81.59
Extra Work--to painting Graining & varnishing		
in Cabin--50 lbs Zinc	9c	4.50
1½ gallon spirits Turpt.	63c	.94
16 lbs White Lead	9c	1.44
3 lbs Patton drier	18c	.54
6 Sheets Sandpaper	1c	.06
1 lb putty	5c	.05
To Graining and Shading Entrys		7.-
5 7/8 Days Work	\$2.-	11.75
½ gallon Copal		1.50
47 Books Gold to Gilding on head @6/;		35.25
		\$144.33

Recd Payment:

Samuel Baker<sup>166</sup>

A further and unusual mention of gold leaf for a figurehead, as well as special paint for the carving, is made by H. H. Neligan, a crewmember aboard the Great Admiral (Fig. 39 at page 55): "It was the mate who took on himself to paint the admiral [figurehead] with a special enamel paint and real gold leaf. The mate also used to 'gold leaf' the scroll work on her stem and counter, having a screen around him, while fixing the gold leaf; to keep the wind off."<sup>167</sup>

#### Customer Approval

Although nicely carved and painted, figureheads could be refused by 19th century shipowners. A carving of Cassandra Adams (Fig. 166), for the 1876 Puget Sound bark of that name, was ordered by Cassandra's father.



Figure 166. Cassandra Adams figurehead  
(Brewington, 1962: 92, fig.  
88).

When it arrived from San Francisco shipcarver Edward Lovejoy, Mr. Adams considered the figure too buxom, too short-skirted, and otherwise too immodest to represent his daughter. The carving was returned and another commissioned.<sup>168</sup>

#### Mounting the Figurehead on the Ship

Barring dissatisfaction from the customer, a finished figurehead was soon mounted on the ship.

About 1780, in Boston, there were even head builders who picked up ships' carvings from the carver and then mounted them on ships, a specialty which did not last long.<sup>169</sup> In the latter part of the 19th century, shipcarver William Southworth had his carvings delivered to the ship carpenters, who placed them on the bow.<sup>170</sup> Many times, however, the carvers themselves tended to this final aspect of their work.

If a shipcarver's shop were higher than ground level, the larger carvings were likely lowered by tackle to a horsedrawn wagon on the street for transport to the shipyard. At the shipyard, figureheads were usually put in place by the time of launch, having been hoisted to the bow by a tackle line from the ship. That tackle line also made it possible to remove the figurehead at sea.

#### Removing Figureheads at Sea

So little information is published about the removal of figureheads at sea that this unique first-hand account from a Great Admiral crewmember is valuable:

First chance after leaving port a pair of sheer legs was shipped on the lee side of the forecastle head, a tackle was hooked to an eye-bolt between the Admiral's shoulders, some bolts were taken adrift, and the figure was hoisted on deck, to be stowed and bolted in his own locker under the forecastle head.<sup>171</sup>



## FASTENING FIGUREHEADS TO SHIPS

### Fastening Systems

Three slightly different fastening systems, as I perceive them, are shown in Figs 167 through 174.

Design #1, shown on the Eunice H. Adams and "Marcia Allen" bust figures (Figs 167A,B,C, 168, and 169), the "Belva Lockwood" full-length figurehead (Fig. 170A,B,C) and the A. McNichol billethead (Fig. 171) has a projecting lacing board and a base mortise.

Design #2, shown on the "Two Sisters" figurehead from Mystic Seaport (Fig. 172) and in a Scottish Lady figurehead photograph (Fig. 173), is characterized by a lacing recess, rather than a projecting lacing board.

Design #3, shown on the Great Republic eagle figurehead (Fig. 174A and B) is characterized by a mortise cut completely through the figure for attachment to the ship. The Phantom figurehead at Mystic Seaport (see page 68) also has this fastening design.

### Fastenings

Metal fastenings protruded from the backs of some figureheads to help attach the carvings to their ships (see Fig. 172 at page 239). The fastenings were iron or copper, with copper being the more durable but also the more costly metal.

Since better-built 19th century vessels were usually copper fastened, we may find that their figureheads generally had copper fastenings too. This is the case with the 1853 Great Republic ship and her eagle figurehead (see page 242).

In contrast is Mystic Seaport's "Joan of Arc." Being less well carved than many figureheads, it is somehow not surprising to find the less expensive iron,

Figure 167. Projecting Lacing Board and Base  
Mortise: Bust Figure; Fastening  
Design #1. A. Back of bust  
figure. B. Apparent means of  
attaching figure to vessel.  
C. Figurehead in place on  
vessel. (Drawings by Carol  
Olsen, based on Eunice M. Adams  
figurehead at Mystic Seaport.)



Figurehead front



Figurehead back

Figure 168. Base of Eumice H. Adams figurehead. The "t" shape corresponds to the vessel; the top of the "t" is the stem projection (2½"; 6.3 cm.). The ends of the arms of the "t" measure 2¼" (5.6 cm.) and correspond to where the vessel's lower cheek knees meet the figurehead. (Also see Fig. 85.) The carved base mortise, when fitted over the ship's stem recess, helped to give the figure lateral stability. This mortise is about 1" (2.5 cm.) wide and deep and is cut to within 9/16" (1.4 cm.) of the front of the figurehead. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

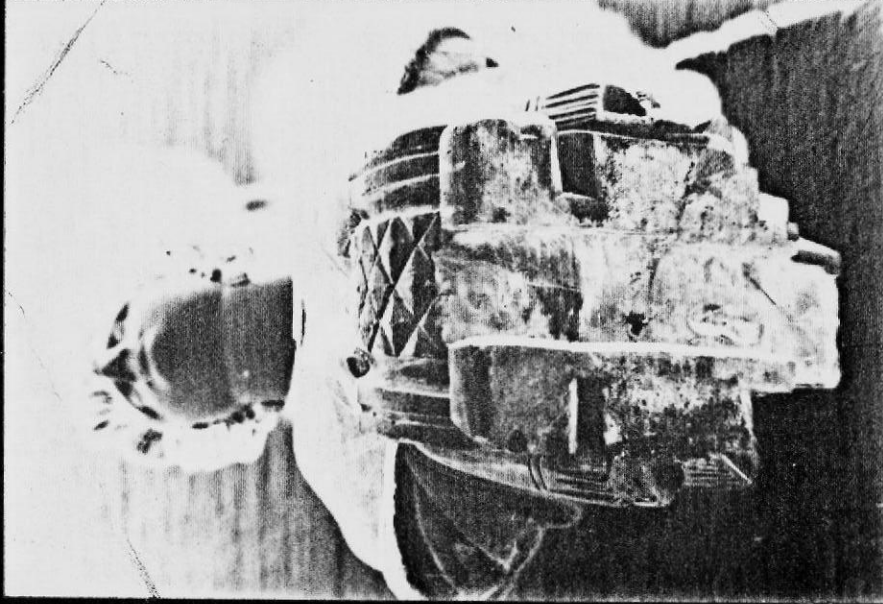
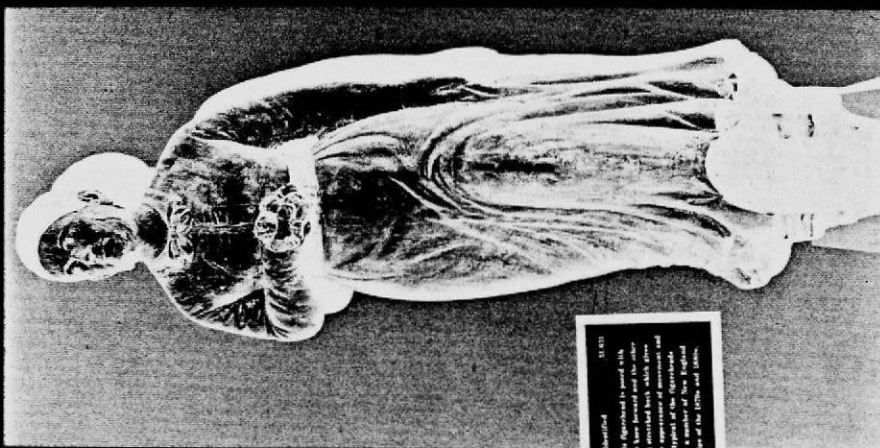


Figure 169. Base of 'Marcia Allen' figurehead at The Mariners' Museum. There is a differently shaped base on this figurehead and the base mortise is cut completely through to the front of the figure. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

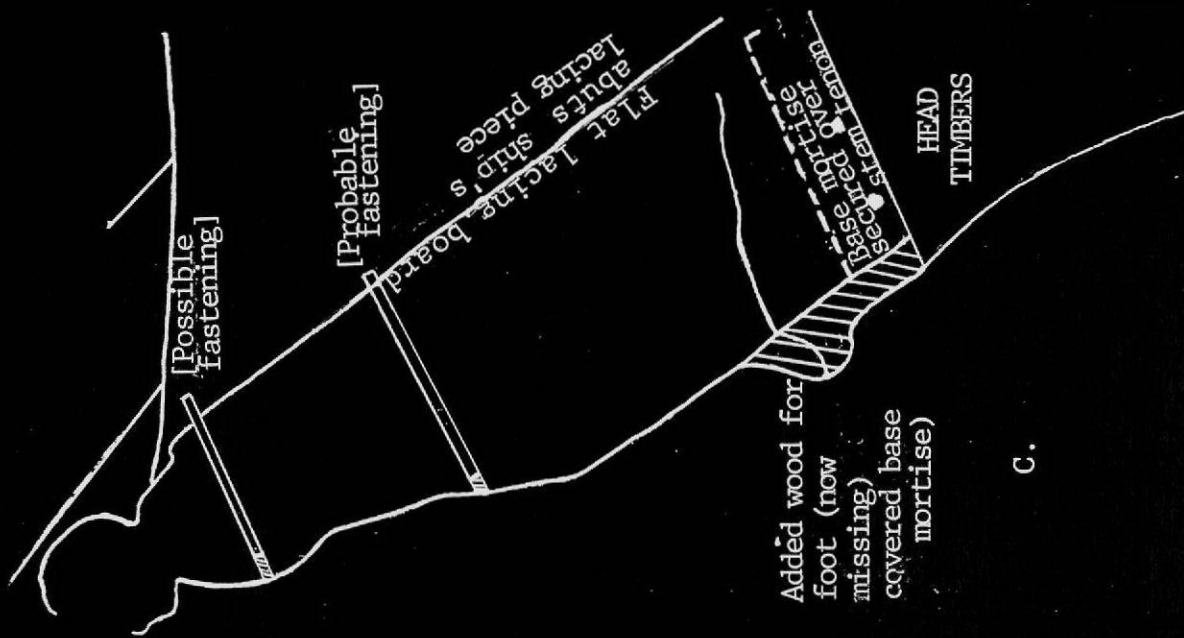
Figure 170. Lacing Board and Base Mortise Attachment:  
Full Length Figure; Fastening Design #1.  
A. Front of "Belva Lockwood" figurehead.  
B. The darkened area delineates the base  
recess, now filled with wood, on the  
"Belva Lockwood" carving. C. Probable  
attachment of "Belva Lockwood" figurehead  
to ship.



A.



B.



C.

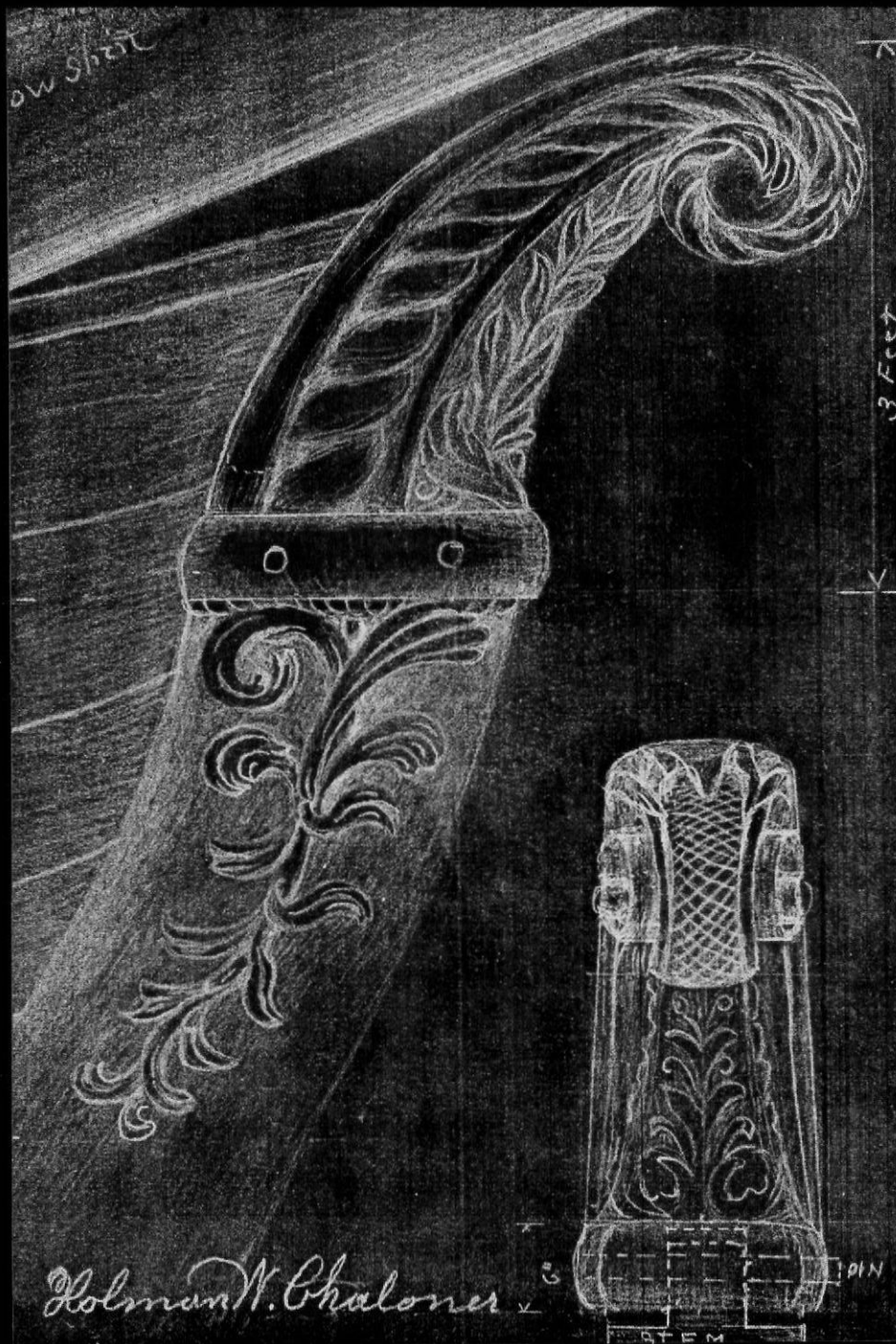


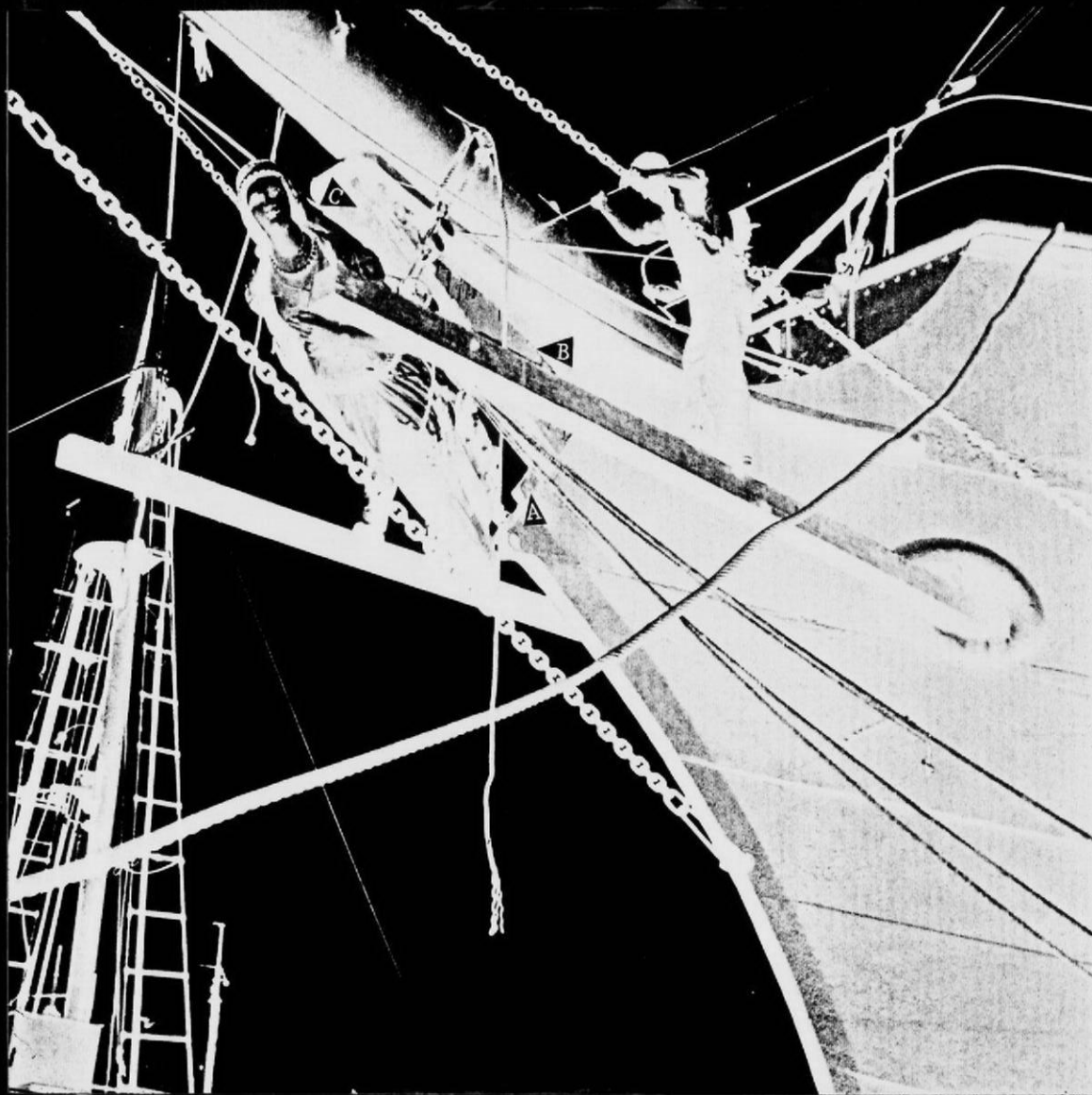
Figure 171. Lacing Board and Base Mortise Attachment: Billethead; Fastening Design #1. Billethead drawn and carved by shipcarver Holman W. Chaloner about 1874 shows a mortise into which the ship stem fit and was pinned (Brewington, 1962: 96).



Figure 172. The recessed lacing area of the "Two Sisters" has the following dimensions: 14-9/16" (37.3 cm.) greatest length, 8" (20.3 cm.) greatest width; and 3" (8 cm.) greatest depth. Four fastenings secured this figure to its ship. They were driven through the front of the carving and can be seen, now hammered down, in the photograph above. The diameter of these fastenings before they begin to taper is 1" (2.5 cm.) and 4 bungs of that size can be seen on the skirt front of this figure in early Museum photographs. Presumably because of restoration, only one of those bungs is now visible (see Fig. 26). One of the longer fastenings (upper right on shorter sister) had a full length of about 15-7/8" (40.5 cm.), about 8-7/8" (22.5 cm.) of which would have been secured in the vessel. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)



Figure 173. Lacing Recess; Fastening Design #2. The ship stem fit into the back of this figurehead to a depth indicated by the paint line on the hull. A) Stem tenon. B) Paint line. C) Fastening hole. The photo, taken in Seattle, Washington in 1942, is of the iron vessel Scottish Lady, built 1868 in Dundee, Scotland. (Photo: National Maritime Museum, San Francisco.)



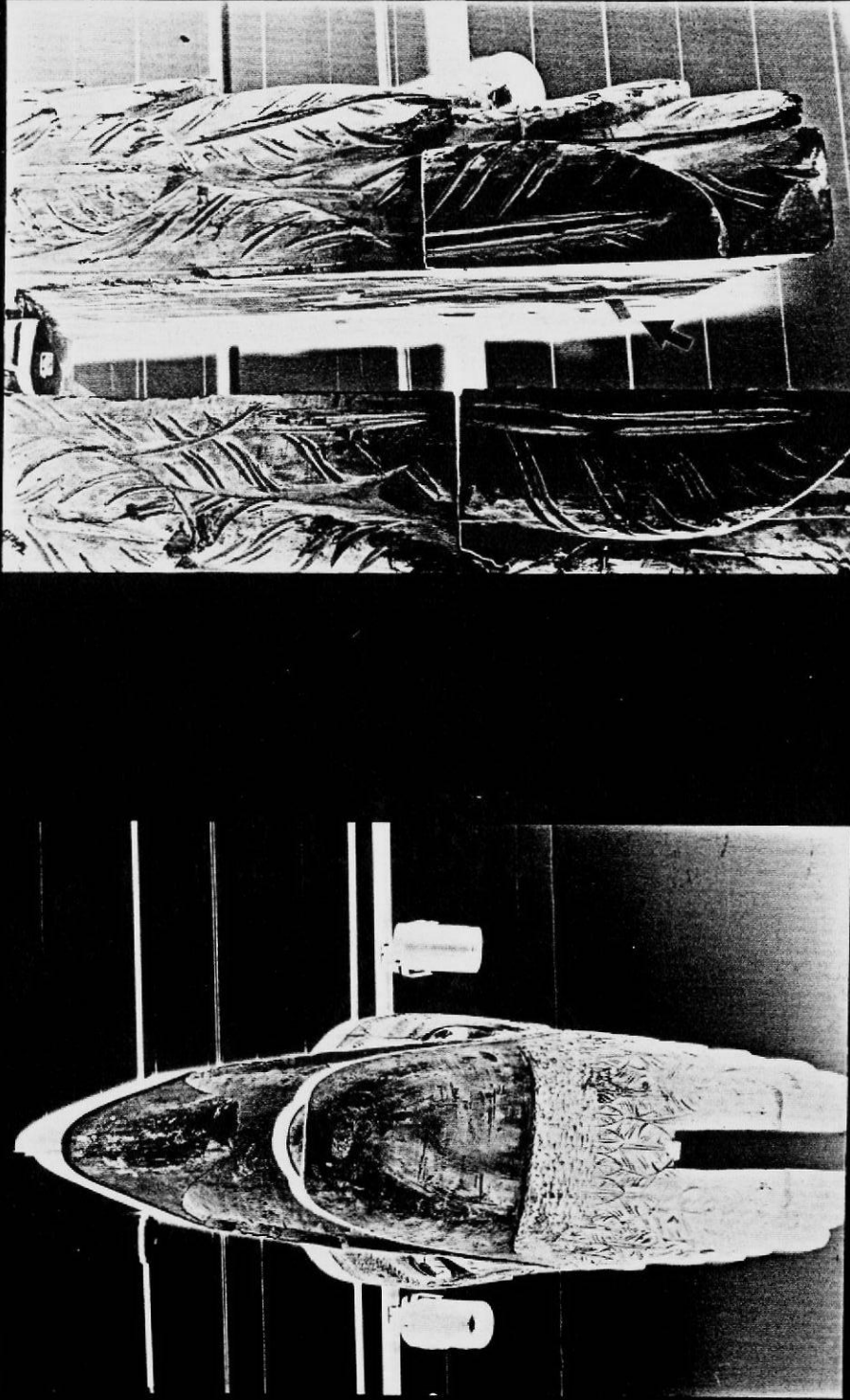


Figure 174. A Stem Opening Attachment; Fastening Design #3. A. Underside of Great Republic eagle. B. An arrow indicates one of the 8 copper fastenings driven into the ship stem to hold this figure in place. The fastenings are covered on the outside of the eagle by wood bungs (see fig. 156 on p. 218). (Photos by Carol Olsen.)

rather than copper fastenings in her.

On their bills, carvers listed metal fastening costs separately from their labor. For example, the 1846 bill for the U.S.S. Constitution's figurehead of Andrew Jackson shows the carving cost of \$250.00 plus \$3.00 for 12 pounds of copper bolts for the figurehead.<sup>172</sup>

As shown at page 218; fastenings were usually countersunk a small distance into a figurehead and then covered with wood bungs. This protected the metal fastenings from corrosive sea water, while also providing the inner strength of metal and an outer carveable surface of wood.

#### Abutment Board

I am labeling one fastening feature an "abutment board" inasmuch as there is sometimes a projecting section at the top of a figurehead's lacing area which is uniquely shaped to abut the vessel. One example is seen in the photograph of the Garthpool figurehead (Fig. 175).

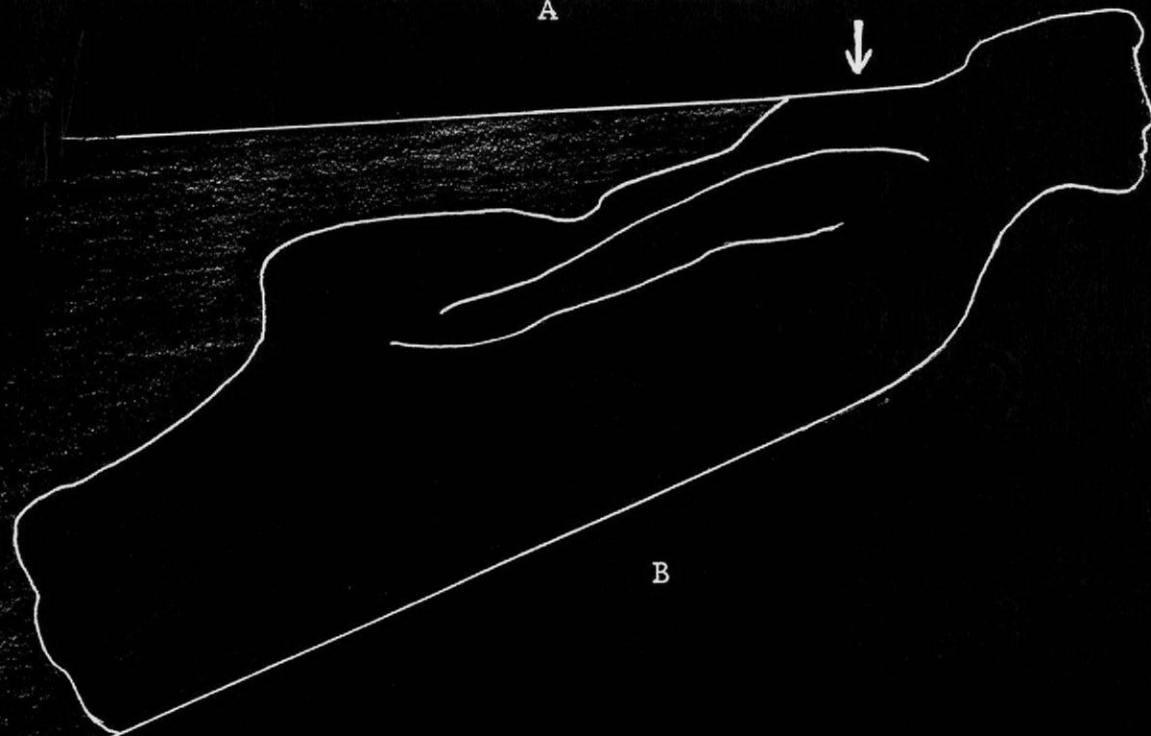
#### Misfitted Carvings

Once attached to a ship's bow by the various means described above, a carving was occasionally found to fit improperly. One example is the Captain McLaurin F. Pickering figurehead of 1878 (Fig. 176) which apparently was left on the bow despite its ill-fitting base scroll.

If the carving did not clear the bowsprit, however, there was no choice but to remove it for alteration. This occurred with Mystic Seaport's Rhine figurehead, according to a bill for 4 shillings, dated 1886, which I was able to obtain from the shipyard records of the builders Russell & Co. (Fig. 177).<sup>173</sup> This is the only



A



B

Figure 175. "Abutment board." A. Shown on Liliuokalani figurehead, now at the Newport Historical Society. (Photo by Carol Olsen.) B. View of abutment board with Liliuokalani figurehead in place on bow of yacht Aloha. (Drawing by Carol Olsen after Fried (1972: 62).)

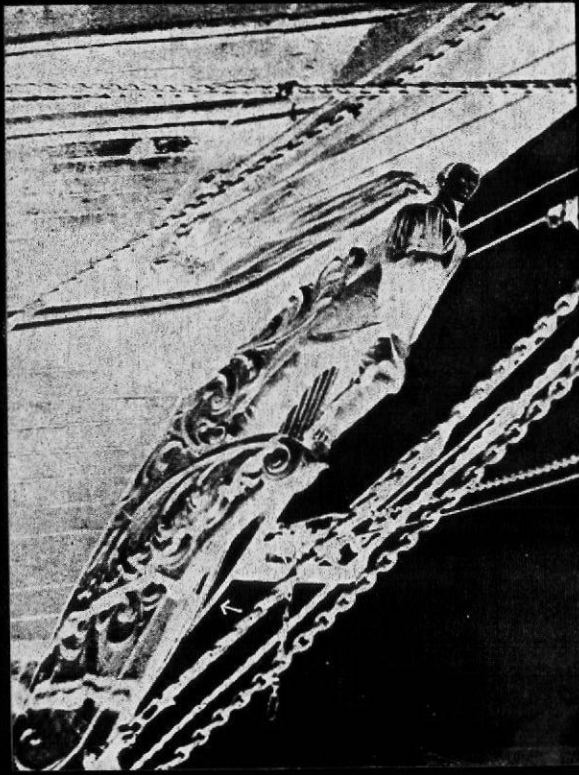


Figure 176. McLaurin figurehead, 1878  
(Pinckney, 1940: pl.  
XXIII).

No. 156. Supr. General

1886	(19) Larning						
Nov 20	To Lang Glasgow 63 ft. Heck Midg. 8/2			244	1		
	" 16. Gross	42		28	1		
	" 3. Seal. Trusses. Splight. 4/6			1	1/6		
	" Deming & Spall boards			5	10		11 11/1
	" Reducing head of figure to iron compass				11		
	" 1 Gross for John Roberts - 4c						11 1/3
							11 18 4

Figure 177. Entry in cost book of Russell & Co., builders of Rhine (ship No. 156) at their Port Glasgow yard in 1886 (University of Glasgow The Archives).

reference to the figurehead in their records, which suggests that the figure was done by an independent carver and only fitted on by the shipyard workers.

## PAYMENT

### Contracts and Cost

Shipbuilders or owners and independent carvers sometimes defined their responsibilities about figureheads in written contracts. A letter of 1846 from carver John L. Cromwell to shipbuilders Fernald and Pettigrew of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, made many details clear: the captain arranged for the carving, the carver was to provide his own wood, a date was set for the completion of the carving, the carver was responsible for the figurehead being painted and gilded, and the shipbuilder was to shape the trailboards and send them to the carver for decoration:

. . . This may certify that the under signed has agreed with Capt. Herman Eldredge to do the Following named carved work for a ship about 550 tons gross, Mess. Fernald & Petigrew Portsmouth NH, viz to find a stock and carve a mail Indian Bust. Head. Also to furnish stck & carve a Tafferal. the Trail Boards & Chocks (to be got out by Fernald & Petigrew, and sent on) to be carved by the undersigned. Also to be painted gilded and collared in good stile. Tafferal to be carved to correspond w/t head. To be completed by the first of April 1847 To be boxed up and safely delivered on Board one of the Portsmouth Packets Cash on Deliver in full for the above named carved work Compleat one Hundred Dollars.<sup>174</sup>

Not receiving payment until completion of the work sometimes caused problems. Carver Charles J. Dodge's mid-19th century letter asks for an advance on his earnings so that he could afford to send the shipbuilder the figurehead he had carved.<sup>175</sup>

Also, agreeing to the cost of carvings in advance sometimes posed a problem for the carvers, as is poignantly



shown in a letter from shipcarver John W. Mason to shipbuilders in New Hampshire.<sup>176</sup>

Boston Sept. 14, 1847

Messrs Fernato & Petigrew

Gentlemen -

Your large Bagle is carved but not gilt and I want you to grant me a few days more to gild it in. I can get it well done by Saturday so that you can put it in on Monday - three days will not make any difference with you I hope. I have cheated myself in this job. I ought to have charged you \$10 more - it will cost me more than I anticipated to gild it. He is a Bouncer. Carvers get sheared sometimes as well as shipbuilders - it will all be the same a hundred years hence.

Yours truly,

J. W. Mason

#### Time Involved in Shipcarving

Contracts and letters show a concern with time in shipcarving; the trade card of Levi L. Cushing, 1830, states: "Models of any kind executed at the shortest notice" (Fig. 178).

Specific information about the time involved in shipcarving is sometimes available. Four to six days apparently sufficed for one 19th century New York shipcarver to prepare a female half figure,<sup>177</sup> and late 19th century carver William Southworth claims that he carved 5½- to 6-foot-tall figures out of pine in about 18 days.<sup>178</sup> The approximately 10-foot-tall Andrew Jackson figurehead is said to have taken six weeks.<sup>179</sup> Variations in time can be attributed not only to the different sizes of figureheads but to the talents of the carvers, the varying amounts of surface detail, and any need for special care and accuracy in portraiture or costume.

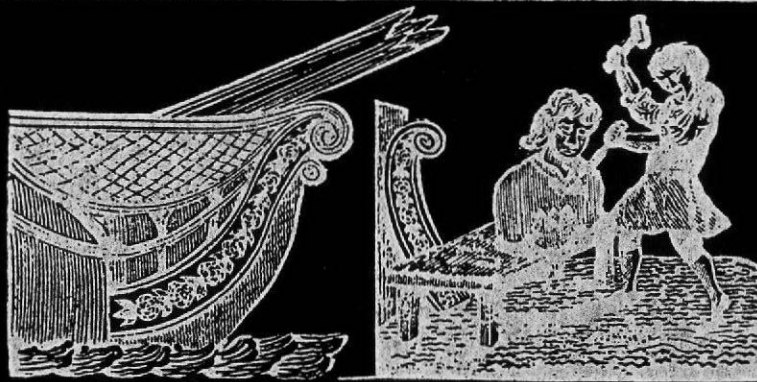


**LEVI L. CUSHING,**  
**CARVER,**

*No 79, Broad Street, opposite Custom House Street,*  
**BOSTON.**

Orders for carved work of any description will be attended to with fidelity and despatch.

L. L. Cushing continues the above business in Poplar Street, as usual, where orders will meet with prompt attention. **N. B.**...Models of any kind executed at the shortest notice.



Engraved and Printed by N. Dearborn, 20, State Street.

Figure 178. Trade card of Levi L. Cushing, 1830  
 (Pinckney, 1940: 135).

One suggested timetable for a wooden ship of 800 tons shows its keel being laid February 29, 1868, the carver's work being underway six months later in August, and the vessel being launched in September. That vessel's bow decoration appears to be a head only.<sup>180</sup>

#### As Shipcarving Declined Other Work Was Done by Shipcarvers

Shipcarving declined in the latter 19th century. Reasons include the economic depression of 1857, which decreased the number of ships being built, plus a change in attitude about carving. The money-making clipper ships had been handsomely decorated, but later in the century, in the words of carver William Southworth, "few shipbuilders cared for such elaborate work."<sup>181</sup> Stan Hugill, a square-rig sailor of the 1920s, says that by the 1920s sailors surely did not care whether a ship carried carvings, but he knew from older sailors that it had mattered more in the 19th century.<sup>182</sup>

Particularly with the decline in ship decoration, shipcarvers took on other kinds of work including shop figures, especially cigar store Indians, architectural sculpture, circus figures, and shop signs. An invoice of Julius Melchers, 1878, shows the variety of work that he did, giving his three titles of sculptor, modeler and wood carver (Fig. 179).

#### Commercial Art

The several titles by which 19th century carvers referred to themselves suggest how difficult it is to categorize one hundred years of carving by hundreds of men for thousands of vessels. If one were to try, however, it can be said that many figureheads were above the level of folk art, especially because of the need to suit the

Duesd. Mch. 18<sup>th</sup> 187<sup>8</sup>

Mr. W. *W. W. W. W.*

1120-1878

**to J. MELCHERS, Jr.**  
Sculptor, Modeler and Wood Carver.

FIGURES FOR TOBACCO BOXES always on hand or made to order.  
ORNAMENTS FOR CHURCHES. CARVING FOR VESSELS, BUILDINGS, FURNITURE.  
ORNAMENTAL PATTERNS FOR CARPENTERS.

No. 63 Randolph Street, near Jefferson Ave.

*Laber onabony*  
 April 20 to *W. W. W. W.*  
 May 23 - bust of *Geo. Buffum* *W. W. W.*

	\$ 50 00
	3
	\$ 53 00

*J. Melchers*

Figure 179. Invoice of Julius Melchers, 1878  
(Fried, 1970: 143).

figurehead design to the ship, and the several examples of fine modeling in figureheads which reflect training either by apprenticeship or formal classes. Shipcarving, on the other hand, is not fine art, even though fine art sculptors were sometimes commissioned to do figureheads. Shipcarving therefore is best described as commercial art,<sup>183</sup> and its quality is as varied as the men who created it. Its rank beneath fine art is suggested by a comment by a carver who remembered the famous William Rush: "Rush did an immense amount of sculpture carving, not all of it of the first class, but the best of it equal, I think I am right in saying, to the best that ever has been produced ... even if it was for the most part given to the making of ship and tobacconists' figures."<sup>184</sup>

#### SHIP AND BOAT DECORATION CONTINUE TODAY IN A MINOR ROLE

Although shipcarving as an established trade diminished in the 19th century, marine carver Jay Hanna recently explained:

Someone once wrote that the art of ship's carving is dead. Don't you believe it. It may be old and is surely tottering around with a cane, but it is kept alive by small injections of enthusiasm and skill from professionals and amateurs alike. It would be hard to find a Rush, Skillen, or McIntire today, but there's always someone around to do what little carving is needed."<sup>185</sup>

Boatowners today often do their own marine carvings when they do not know a professional to contact. There have been many fine examples at Mystic Seaport of visiting boats which were decorated by their owners, and in talking with these boatowners, I often found the reasons for their choice of decoration very interesting. For example, Wendell Crosby of Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, carved ivy trailboards from ivy used at his daughter's wedding,<sup>186</sup>

and a woman who admires the 1841 whaleship Charles W. Morgan at Mystic Seaport (Fig. 180) sketched and carved a billethead like the Morgan's for her own boat.<sup>187</sup> One of my particular favorites are the decorations for the fiberglass hull of Lucky Duck. A duck with a horseshoe around its neck is painted on the bow, and a wooden decoy duck floats from the stern when the boat is in harbor. The boat's spinnaker and stationery also use the emblem of the duck with a horseshoe around its neck, and it all refers to the book Make Way for Ducklings which the owners read years ago to their small children, who now are teenage crew aboard Lucky Duck.<sup>188</sup> Fortunately, since the 19th century decline of shipcarving, people have continued to find ways to decorate their boats.

In recent years full-sized figureheads have been carved for Falls of Clyde in Hawaii, Cutty Sark in Greenwich, England, and Elissa in Galveston, Texas. Owners of commercial passenger vessels off New England's coast, like Bill of Rights with an American shield on the bow and gilded acorns and oak leaves on the trailboards, and Shenandoah with a splendid gilded eagle, still find it desirable to have decorated bows, and drawings of figurehead designs in Marine Paintings at Peabody are dated as late as 1939.<sup>189</sup> Since 1936 at least 54 of the Norwegian Olsen Line merchant vessels have had bows decorated with glass mosaics, paintings, or beautiful bronze figureheads, evidence that the tradition of bow decoration is still alive on large ships.<sup>190</sup> There have been other times in history when the use of figureheads waned and then resumed; hopefully the present lapse is also a temporary one.



Figure 180. The binnacle of the Charles W. Morgan served as a model for one 20th century boatowner. (Photo by Carol Olsen.)

## NOTES

- [1] Illustrated in Landström (1970:13, fig.13), and Engelmayer (1965:pl.XXVI, fig.8).
- [2] A bird appears on a vessel painted on a Gerzean vase, c. 2900 B.C., shown in Petrie (1974:pl. XXIII), and on a vessel on the West House fresco painted at Thera, shown in Marinatos (1973). A lion head decorates each Egyptian boat in the relief at Medinet Habu, c. 1200 B.C., shown in Bass (1972:21). Osiris' boat in the temple of Sethos I in Abydos shows a Pharaonic figurehead which is illustrated in Landström (1970:119, fig.369).
- [3] Illustrated in Costa (1981:16), and Torr (1964: pl.2, fig.9).
- [4] Lyman (1943:58-59).
- [5] J. Revell Carr, personal communication.
- [6] Casson (1971:344, 345 and footnotes 1 and 2 on those pages).
- [7] Kennedy (1974:25).
- [8] Letter dated April 28, 1982 from Arne Emil Christensen to the author.
- [9] L'or des Vikings 146, and Anker (1969:figs. 118, 119).
- [10] Haddon and Hornell, Vol. 1 (1936:41).
- [11] Haddon and Hornell, Vol. I (1936:394).
- [12] Haddon and Hornell, Vol. II (1936:28).
- [13] Haddon and Hornell, Vol. II (1936:145).
- [14] Worcester (1971:531).
- [15] Worcester (1971:532).
- [16] Pardal (1974:129, 130).



- [17] Franzen (1960) shows many carvings from this sunken ship.
- [18] Norton (1976:62).
- [19] The richly encrusted stern of this ship is shown in a painting of Peter Pett and the Sovereign of the Seas, illustrated in Frere-Cook (1966:47).
- [20] Poulsen (1977:10).
- [21] Baker (1973:668).
- [22] Cape Cod Advancement Plan (1936:7).
- [23] Poulsen (1977:198); Norton (1972:10), Pinckney (1940:144), and Lipman (1972:25) each provide examples of this good luck association.
- [24] Davis (1981:133-148) and Winner (1969:1-139).
- [25] I am indebted to Mr. Elton W. Hall, Curator of Collections, Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum, for bringing this photograph to my attention.
- [26] This information was provided by the Nantucket Historical Association in a letter to the author dated January 23, 1981, and is from the printed Vital Records of Nantucket, P.R. 38.
- [27] Pinckney (1940:124, 126, 183).
- [28] The Survey of Federal Archives, Ship Registers of New Bedford, Volume 1, 55, and Starbuck (1964:606, 612, 620, 632). Also, the Whaling Directory published in New Bedford in 1869 shows that in that year Freeman E. Adams also owned three barks named B. Colcord, M. Wrightington, and Oak.
- [29] The Survey of Federal Archives, Ship Registers of New Bedford, Volume 3.
- [30] National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, Historic Photograph Negative No. C.7204. Also, a full starboard view of this is shown in Bushell (1939:144).

- [31] Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. (1909:7).
- [32] Poulsen (1977:94).
- [33] Poulsen (1977:98).
- [34] Comparisons can be made with the clothing of the child figures carved in the 1850s illustrated in Poulsen (1977:93, 95).
- [35] Poulsen (1977:97).
- [36] Poulsen (1977:114).
- [37] Poulsen (1977:97).
- [38] See, for example, Stackpole (1964:10, 11).
- [39] Licht (1967).
- [40] Stackpole (1964:59).
- [41] Letter from Mr. Huntington, Jr. to Mystic Seaport Museum dated October 1964.
- [42] This vessel was included in America's Largest Yachts 10.
- [43] Plant (1911:188).
- [44] Illustrated in Hansen (1979:58 as B-AN-NS-2).
- [45] Letter from Mr. Huntington, Jr. to Mystic Seaport Museum dated October 1964.
- [46] The Boston Post, October 5, 1853, gave the following account of the October 4th launching:

THE LAUNCH OF THE GREAT REPUBLIC

This triumph of marine architecture was launched from Mr. M'Kay's ship yard in East Boston at precisely 12 o'clock on Tuesday. The ceremony of introducing the noble fabric to her destined home occurred in the presence of an immense crowd of spectators, and she passed to her mission on the deep with the crash of cannon and the cheers of the people. She curtsied beautifully to the compliment as she glided coyly away from the shore, and gave her arm gracefully to the

steamer Forbes to be escorted into dock. We have never known so much enthusiasm attending the launch of a ship. Visitors were in town from the back country and from along the coast to witness the launch, particularly from Cape Cod, delegations from which arrived by the morning train. The wharves on both sides the stream where a view was obtainable, were thronged with people; men, women and children vied in interest to get a look, and boys and men clung like spiders to the rigging of the ship, and the sides and roofs of the stores and houses, to get a glance at the sublime spectacle. ... The river was full of vessels of various kinds and all kinds ... and all were crowded with eager lookers.

The day was fine and the moving life upon the land and water gave great interest to the scene. ... As the hammer of the clock fell at twelve, the stroke of a gun at the shipyard announced that the ship had started on her way, and she pursued her graceful course to the arms of the loving wave that opened wide to receive her. Captain Alden Gifford christened her in pure Cochituate The Great Republic, as she left her trail and took to her watery bed.

The Great Republic is one of the most beautiful crafts that ever took captive the heart of the sailor. She is 325 feet long, 53 feet wide, her depth 37 feet, and her capacity 4000 tons -- the largest merchant ship, probably, that ever tasted salt water. The Great Republic thus stands in front of the ships as the Great Republic she was named for stands in front of the nations, and we hope her prosperity may be in an equal degree with that of her great namesake.

Bradlee (1927:2, 3).

- [47] A Sailor (1853:6).
- [48] A print entitled "Burning of the 'Great Republic,' December 26, 1853 is illustrated in Bradlee (1927:21).
- [49] A Sailor (1853:7).

- [50] One Great Republic model is in the collection at Mystic Seaport Museum, and another is illustrated in United States Naval Academy Museum (1971:92).
- [51] A Sailor (1853:22).
- [52] Bradlee (1927:36).
- [53] Lewis (1943:331); Farragut (1879:475, 476).
- [54] Lewis (1943:329).
- [55] Farragut (1879:484).
- [56] Lewis (1943:296).
- [57] Montgomery (1869:50).
- [58] Montgomery (1869:133).
- [59] Lewis (1943:403).
- [60] I. Anderson (1926:70, 73). All of the voyages of Great Admiral prior to 1897 are shown in Matthews (1931:160-163).
- [61] Sources such as Matthews (1931:159) and Bunting (1971:8.16) say Great Admiral was built for William F. Weld & Company. Also, the Record of American and Foreign Shipping 1871 shows W.F. Weld & Co. as the owner of Great Admiral. It therefore appears to be an incorrect account in Anderson (1926:67) that the Great Admiral "had 7 years of service under 2 other firms before she was sold to the Weld Company in 1876." The significance of this is that it shows the vessel originally carried the name and figurehead of Farragut, given by the Weld Company, and that that occurred during Farragut's lifetime; he lived until 1870.
- [62] Neligan (1938:203-204). Neligan mentions that the Admiral Farragut figurehead was more than 20 years old when Neligan worked aboard Great Admiral. This seems to refute information in a letter I found at The Mariners' Museum in 1982. That letter, written January 18, 1940 by Mrs. Mary N. Pingree to Mr. Hill at The Mariners' Museum, said "The [Admiral Farragut] figurehead was originally made for the ship

'GREAT ADMIRAL,' which belonged to my grandfather [William F. Weld], but as it proved too heavy I believe it was replaced by a lighter and more ordinary female figure."

- [63] The ship's logbook, quoted in Matthews (1931: 165-167) says that on December 6 the Great Republic was located at 46:43 N. 127:58 W. Severe seas and weather caused the vessel to break apart and survivors were rescued on December 8 at latitude 47:5 N. longitude 128:10.
- [64] Letter to the author dated March 4, 1981, from the United States Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.
- [65] Stackpole (1964:7) says that the original carver of this figurehead was James Anderson. Based on Stackpole and New York Directories, Fried (1970:242) corrects the name to John W. Anderson, a New York carver. However, it is not clear in records available at Mystic Seaport how a carver named Anderson first became associated with this figurehead.
- [66] Lewis (1943:391).
- [67] White (1953:237).
- [68] Letter dated December 23, 1970, written by the late John F. Leavitt, Associate Curator at Mystic Seaport Museum.
- [69] Mystic Seaport Museum Accession records dated October 30, 1951, and November 7, 1951, letter to Mrs. Laurence J. Brengle from Carl C. Cutler in Mystic Seaport Registrar's file for figurehead 51.4002.
- [70] Especially see articles in Sea Breezes magazine volumes VII, IX, and XVI.
- [71] Sea Breezes (1935), "Fleet of J. Nourse, London," 272-273.
- [72] Matthews (1931:286-289).
- [73] Peterson (1977:66).

- [74] Farragut (1879:413).
- [75] Tebbel (1966:141).
- [76] Honour (1976:56).
- [77] Fried (1970:27).
- [78] Parkinson (1975:57).
- [79] Parkinson (1975:65).
- [80] Register of Vessels Belonging to the New York Yacht Club 27, 81
- [81] Parkinson (1975:47).
- [82] Colledge (1969:397).
- [83] Manning and Walker (1959:326).
- [84] Wright and LaMar (1959:xvii).
- [85] Encyclopaedia Britannica, Volume 3 (1967:774).
- [86] J. Anderson (1948:3, 4); a view of this schooner is shown on page 13.
- [87] Letter to the author from Ernest R. Crang, 1983.
- [88] This identity was first suggested by JoAnne Olian, Curator, Costume Collection, and the Theatre Department of the Museum of the City of New York.
- [89] Vessels by these names are referred to in Sea Breezes (Vol.XI,p.158; Vol.XII,p.316; Vol. XV,p.302; Vol.XXI,p.244, and Vol.XXIV,p.223).
- [90] Attwater (1980:187).
- [91] Attwater (1980:187 footnote).
- [92] The Minehaha figurehead, now at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Museum, was carved in the image of the English actress, Julia Bennett Barrow who, according to Ballou's Pictorial, May 17, 1856, was popular at the time for her readings of Longfellow's Hiawatha.

- [93] Perrin (1922:35).
- [94] Perrin (1922:37).
- [95] Hogarth (1980:19).
- [96] A model showing the figurehead is illustrated in United States Naval Academy Museum (1971:2,3).
- [97] Laughton (1973:105).
- [98] Laughton (1973:203).
- [99] Turner (1932:201) says "The St. George was not only Britain's last sail training ship, but also shared the distinction of being Britain's only one used solely for the purpose of training officers for the Merchant Navy, for she was not run on a commercial basis and carried no cargo." Another possible vessel to consider for this figurehead is St. George, built 1861 in Scotland, measuring 253 feet in length.
- [100] Costa (1981:132).
- [101] Correspondence from the Ministry of Defence, London, August 26, 1977, and Colledge (1969:53).
- [102] It would be worthwhile to compare the measurements of figureheads from various 3rd rate British warships to see if there was a standard size and whether Mystic's figurehead matches that size. Since H.M.S. Asia, 1824, was a 3rd rate carrying 74 guns and measuring 176 x 48', one comparison should be with the figurehead of H.M.S. Ajax, 1809, a 3rd rate of 74 guns measuring 176 x 48½'. Note too that an excellent visual comparison for Mystic's figurehead, as shown on page 195, figure 145, is with a figurehead on the bow of a smaller vessel, H.M.S. Trincomalee, a 5th rate carrying 46 guns and measuring 150½ x 40'. In 1847 H.M.S. Trincomalee was changed to a 6th rate carrying only 26 guns.
- [103] Dated by illustrations in Cunnington (1970) and by personal communication from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

- [104] Ship Alexander Hamilton built at Saybrook, Connecticut, listed in The Survey of Federal Archives, Ship Registers of New Bedford, Volume 1, number 66, and Alexander Hamilton, built Charlestown, Massachusetts, registered in Baltimore and shown in the Cutler file of ships at Mystic Seaport Museum.
- [105] Fried (1970:79).
- [106] Illustrated in Hansen (1979:121 as GB-LO-SM-1).
- [107] Among the sources in which a "lacing-piece" is defined as the part of a vessel's head-knee to which the back of a figurehead is attached are Meade (1869:337) and A Naval Encyclopaedia (1881).
- [108] Hanna (1975:64, 65).
- [109] Marceau (1937:19).
- [110] The "Melmerby" figurehead at The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, Virginia, has a carved ring on the third finger of his left hand.
- [111] Hall (1974:231, 232).
- [112] Professor J. Richard Steffy has recently suggested that this may be an abbreviation for "between stations," the same as "between perpendiculars," or the distance from the planking rabbet at the upper stempost to the rabbet of the upper sternpost. I plan to apply this suggestion to future ship and figurehead information.
- [113] In a letter to the author dated 3-11-81, Donna J. Christensen of the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, said "The [Great Republic eagle wood] sample is pine of the white pine group probably eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) of U.S. origin."
- [114] In a letter to the author dated 12-23-81, Donna J. Christensen of the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory said that the following figureheads are pine of the white pine group probably eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*): Unidentified Woman #50.2874, Iolanda's figurehead, Farragut,



Seminole's Indian, "Hebe," Magdalena's figurehead, "Orlando," "Joan of Arc," "Belva Lockwood," "Fredericka," "Aleppo," Rhine's figurehead, St. George, and "Lady Blessington."

- [115] Identified by Donna J. Christensen of the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory on 12-23-81 in a letter to the author.
- [116] Tentatively identified by Donna J. Christensen of the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory on 12-23-81 in a letter to the author.
- [117] Fried (1970:79).
- [118] Letter from Mr. Robert D. Huntington, Jr. to Mystic Seaport Museum dated October 1964.
- [119] Baker (1973:669).
- [120] Baker (1973:664). The Western Belle figurehead is presently in the Peabody Museum, Salem, and the Belle of Oregon figurehead is presently in The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, and is published in Hansen (1979:201 as USA-NV-MM-84).
- [121] Laughton (1973:93).
- [122] Fried (1972:63).
- [123] Fried (1970:158).
- [124] Fried (1972:57).
- [125] Fried (1972:63).
- [126] Fried (1970:172).
- [127] Fried (1970:34, 194, 195).
- [128] The Allegory of the Waterworks sculpture by William Rush (Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts, 1982:173) has some haircurl and dress similarities to a carving which is believed to be a figurehead, "Flora" (Figure NLCHS 1922.20) at the Tale of the Whale Museum in New London, Connecticut. More similar to "Flora" is Rush's Virtue, published in Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1982:121) and Pinckney (1940:pl. IX);

in the latter publication Virtue is mistakenly identified as a figurehead. "Flora" at the Tale of the Whale Museum does not appear to me to have been carved by William Rush, but perhaps by someone influenced by him.

- [129] Pinckney (1940:134).
- [130] Marceau (1937:10).
- [131] Laughton (1973:88).
- [132] Laughton (1973:89).
- [133] Laughton (1973:96).
- [134] Norton (1976:103).
- [135] Poulsen (1977:53, 54).
- [136] Brewington (1962:33).
- [137] Marceau (1937:64).
- [138] Baker (1973:665).
- [139] A Sailor (1853:6).
- [140] Fried (1972:58).
- [141] Marceau (1937:13).
- [142] Baker (1973:668).
- [143] Brewington (1962:76).
- [144] Pinckney (1940:166).
- [145] Pinckney (1940:108).
- [146] Pinckney (1940:89).
- [147] This is based in part on a letter dated April 14, 1981, to the author which gave the opinion of William C. Sturtevant, Curator of North American Indians who has worked for many years among the Seminole: "I do not recognize this as based closely on any known depiction of a Seminole (and I know nearly all those that were based

directly on reality). I do not recognize any other source either. It seems to represent the mid-19th century stereotype of Indian appearance, and is certainly not based directly on Indian reality."

- [148] Brewington (1962:76).
- [149] Griffiths (1850:391, 392).
- [150] Fried (1970:80).
- [151] See, for example, Brewington (1962:68,69).
- [152] Poulsen (1977:22).
- [153] Poulsen (1977:179).
- [154] Pinckney (1940:108).
- [155] Personal communication with Walter Rybka 1982.
- [156] Fried (1970:79).
- [157] Marceau (1937:43, 44) and Fried (1970:80).
- [158] Identified on December 23, 1981 by Donna J. Christensen, U.S. Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin from very small samples provided by the author.
- [159] Panshin and de Zeeuw (1970:452-454).
- [160] David Mathieson, Supervisor of Conservation at Mystic Seaport Museum, personal communication 1981.
- [161] "A Day on the Docks," Scribner's Magazine (1879:46).
- [162] Fried (1972:64, 65).
- [163] Fried (1970:80 and fig.197).
- [164] Hanna (1975:40).
- [165] Baker (1973:662).
- [166] Hulsman (1968:28).
- [167] Neligan (1938:204).

- [168] Brewington (1962:93).
- [169] Brewington (1962:42, 43).
- [170] Baker (1973:668).
- [171] Neligan (1938:204) and see the George R. Skolfield figurehead secured in the carver's shop by an eyebolt and tackle in Brewington (1962:82, fig. 77).
- [172] Brewington (1962:136).
- [173] Records in the Archives, University of Glasgow, Scotland.
- [174] Fried (1972:59).
- [175] Fried (1970:175).
- [176] Swan (1945:81).
- [177] "A Day on the Docks," Scribner's Magazine (1879:46).
- [178] Baker (1973:668).
- [179] Pinckney (1940:113).
- [180] Adkins (1978:15, 35, 37). The author gives no references.
- [181] Baker (1973:667).
- [182] Personal communication June 1981.
- [183] Fried (1970:82) recommends this term for show figures also.
- [184] Fried (1970:120, 121).
- [185] Hanna (1975:1, 2).
- [186] Personal communication at Mystic Seaport 1980.
- [187] Personal communication at Mystic Seaport 1980.
- [188] Personal communication at Mystic Seaport 1980.
- [189] Brewington (1968:figs.1137, 1138).
- [190] Illustrated in Frere-Cook (1966:94, 95).

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#### Additional Reference

Following my preparation of this text and final approval of it by my professors at Texas A&M University, Mystic Seaport Museum published a book about their figurehead collection which appears to be based in large part on my research: Hamilton, G., 1984, Silent Pilots. Mystic.

## APPENDIX I

## ACQUISITION OF MYSTIC SEAPORT'S FIGUREHEAD COLLECTION

The following portion of Mystic Seaport's figurehead collection was acquired in the first decades of the Museum's organization; Mystic Seaport began as the Marine Historical Association in 1929. An early gift was Dr. Charles K. Stillman's donation of "Asia" in 1933. Dr. Stillman's mother, Mrs. H. G. Stillman, purchased "Lady Blessington" for the Museum in the same year and "Orlando" in 1934.

One of the major donors of figureheads has been Mr. H. H. Kynett, a former administrator at Mystic Seaport. Of the 20 carvings in this report, he made the following 11 purchases over a 12-year period: "Aleppo" in 1946, "Fredericka" in 1948, "Unidentified Woman #50.2874" in 1950, "Belva Lockwood" in 1951, "Alexander Hamilton" in 1952, Phantom's serpent figurehead in 1952, Magdalena's figurehead in 1954, St. George in 1956, "Hebe" in 1956, Seminole's Indian figurehead in 1957, and Iolanda's figurehead in 1958.

Also in the 1950s, Mrs. Laurence J. Brengle, Jr., donated the Rhine figurehead in 1951, Mrs. Charles Francis Adams and her sister, Mrs. Henry S. Morgan, donated the Eunice H. Adams figurehead in 1956, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Livingston, Jr. donated "Joan of Arc" in 1958, and Mrs. E. R. Behrend donated the "Two Sisters" in 1959.

The Admiral Farragut figurehead has been on loan to Mystic Seaport since 1958 by Sumner Pingree, Jr., Charles Weld Pingree, and John R. Pingree, the great-grandsons of the original Great Admiral shipowner, William F. Weld.

The Great Republic eagle, on loan to Mystic Seaport since 1949, was purchased by the Museum in 1976.

The foresight of these few people in acquiring ship figureheads and their generosity in sharing them has provided the portion of the important figurehead collection at Mystic Seaport Museum which I was privileged to study.

## APPENDIX II

## LETTERS OF PERMISSION



Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use an illustration of the Minas Geraes from Paulo Pardal's book Carrancas Do São Francisco. We understand that this illustration will be part of your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection" and that this work is not intended for publication.

MINISTÉRIO DA MARINHA  
SERVIÇO DE DOCUMENTAÇÃO GERAL DA  
MARINHA

Name Ilma Just Soares

Date 2/2/1984

LETTER OF PERMISSION

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you may include a photocopy of the double carving at the Altonaer Museum in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

ALTONAER MUSEUM

By *Dr. Boye Meyer-Friese*  
Dr. Boye Meyer-Friese, Kurator

Date 09.02.84

ALTONAER MUSEUM IN HAMBURG  
NORDDEUTSCHES LANDESMUSEUM  
POSTFACH 50 01 25, MUSEUMSTRASSE 23  
2000 HAMBURG 50 (ALTONA)  
FERNSPRECHER 38 07 483 / BN 9.11.483

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you may use an illustration of the Iolanda figurehead in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

THE MARINERS' MUSEUM

By

Indira K. Kelly, Librarian

Date

January 25, 1984



THE MARINERS MUSEUM Newport News, Va. 23606

Area Code 804 - 595-0368

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE PHOTOGRAPHS OF MATERIAL  
FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE MARINERS MUSEUM

The Mariners Museum hereby grants to Carol Olsen

2212 Dewberry Lane; Bryan, TX 77801

permission for a single publication or reproduction in black & white of the  
following item(s): two of Lizzie (OF 45); Lady with a Rose - Osage (OF 60);  
Iceland - Levick - 110659.

This permission is conditional upon full payment of the stipulated reproduction fee of waived and is granted with the understanding that this item is to be used for: one-time use in a master's thesis - "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection".

The Museum should be credited as follows: "Courtesy of The Mariners Museum of Newport News, Va."

(signature) *Lois Oglesby*

(typed name) Lois Oglesby

(position) Curatorial Assistant

(date) February 13, 1984

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use the following illustrations in your unpublished master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection":

- 1) the view of the Great Republic which we have provided to you,
- 2) an illustration of the Indian Chief figurehead from the Peabody Museum collection, and
- 3) the Indian figurehead sketch by E. Warren Hastings which was published in the American Neptune Pictorial Supplement XIX (1977) on Plate XXVII.

PEABODY MUSEUM OF SALEM

By Paul F. Johnston

Date 6 Feb 1984

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use the bow illustration of the Eunice H. Adams which we have provided to you in your unpublished thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY WHALING MUSEUM

By *Dean W. Hall*

Date *January 24, 1984*

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to include an illustration of Scottish Lady in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM,  
SAN FRANCISCO

By *W. J. Gendron*  
Photo Librarian Assistant

Date 2/1/84

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you may use the illustration of the Iolanda figurehead in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

SAN DIEGO MARITIME MUSEUM

By David Bowdler

Date 1/30/84



Ms. Carol Olsen  
 2212 Dewberry Lane  
 Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use in your thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection" the following illustrations from Haddon and Hornell, Canoes of Oceania:

1. The sandpiper figurehead from the Truk Islands shown in Volume I as figure 283.
2. The Malekula, New Hebrides figures: solub e res, solub wok-wak, and the pig figurehead, shown in Volume II on page 28 as figures b, a, and c, respectively.
3. The figurehead from the Squally Islands of the Bismarck Archipelago, shown in Volume II on page 147 as figure 91a.

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Ms. Carol Olsen  
Anthropology-Nautical Archaeology  
Texas A&M University  
Bolton Hall, Third Floor  
College Station, TX 77843

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use the following illustrations in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection":

1. Stern of the Burford model.
2. Starboard side of the Burford model.
3. Mary B. Wellington.
4. Great Republic.
5. Rhine bow.
6. Seminole.
7. Phantom, starboard side.
8. "Lady Blessington" figurehead.
9. Andrew Jackson figurehead.
10. "Triton figurehead".
11. Olivebank figurehead.
12. Figure 56.178 - photo showing back and detachable arm.
13. Figure 56.178 - photo showing front and detachable arm.
14. Magdalena figurehead.
15. Left side of Great Republic eagle figurehead.
16. Pen and pencil sketch of Roman figurehead by French artist Y. S. Collet.
17. Iolanda figurehead.
18. Launch of Great Republic.

Ms. Carol Olsen  
Anthropology-Nautical Archaeology  
Letter of Permission  
Page 2

19. Bow view of Great Admiral.
20. St. George figurehead.
21. "Woman with Crown" figurehead.
22. Belva Lockwood figurehead.
23. Left three-quarter view of Great Republic eagle.
24. "Asia" figurehead.
25. Charles W. Morgan billethead.

MYSTIC SEAPORT MUSEUM

By J. P. Sullivan

Date Jan 25, 1984

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Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

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By *Schein Mohri*

Date *30 January '84*

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*Barbara A. Bernard*  
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DATE: February 21, 1984

Monroe H. Fabian  
 Monroe H. Fabian, Associate Curator

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to include an illustration of Howard Pyle's painting In the Wood-carver's Shop in your thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

By Laura R. White \*

Date Jan. 30, 1984

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Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

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DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

By  \_\_\_\_\_

Date 2/13/84

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you may use an illustration of the Sachem Indian figurehead from our collection in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

CARNEGIE MUSEUM

By James B. Richardson \*  
(Curator)

Date Feb. 7, 1984

\*Please note that the figurehead is an item on loan to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Permission is granted for non-published thesis only.

Ms. Carol Olsen  
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Suzanne L. Hyatt, Curator  
Name  
Memorial Hall Museum  
Deerfield, Mass.  
Febr. 17, 1984  
Date

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use my photograph of the "Lady Franklin" figurehead in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection."

E. R. Crang  
ERNEST R. CRANG

31 JAN 1984  
Date

Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use the following photographs from my collection in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection":

1. Lolanda figurehead.
2. "Lady Franklin" figurehead.

John H. Burlinson  
John Burlinson

Jan 26<sup>th</sup> 1984  
Date

"Lady Franklin" No 2. was abandoned at sea! on passage from New York to Trieste in 1856.

No. 1 was a gun powder keel at Hobart, Tasmania and eventually broken up.

Does Mystic Seaport Museum have a Lady Franklin

I have not checked their list yet!

Ms. Carol Olsen  
 2212 Dewberry Lane  
 Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use the following illustrations from Hanne Poulsen, Figureheads and Ornaments on Danish Ships and in Danish Collections in your unpublished thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection." \*

*for*

RHODOS  
 International Science and  
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*Hanne Poulsen*

By \_\_\_\_\_

Date January 1984

- \*1. Double figurehead on display in the Skagen Hotel, page 171.
- 2. Carver H.J. Møen with double figurehead, page 93.
- 3. Carving of Mercury, page 98.
- 4. Bishop Absalom figurehead, page 189.
- 5. Danish Queen Louise, page 94.



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Ms Carol Olsen  
 2212 Dewberry Lane  
 Bryan  
 Texas 77801  
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17 February 1984

Dear Ms Olsen

Thank you for your letter of 27 January.

We are pleased for you to use the photostat of the Cheops vessel from our book BOAT BENEATH THE PYRAMID provided that this is used only in your thesis and not for publication in any form whatsoever.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Clarke

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- 1) McLaurin figurehead, and
- 2) Trade card of Levi L. Cushing, 1830.

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By

Mary E. Ryan  
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Date March 5, 1984

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Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

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1. The figurehead on Rattlesnake, 1781 (figure 14 on page 15);
2. Lion figurehead, period of Queen Anne (figure 3 on page 3);
3. Simpson's measurement chart (figure 96 on page 101);
4. Cassandra Adams figurehead (figure 88 on page 92);
5. Billethead drawn by Holman W. Chaloner (figure 92 on page 96).

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Date 1/26/83

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Osage figurehead shown as figure 4.

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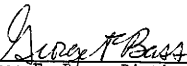
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Ms. Carol Olsen  
2212 Dewberry Lane  
Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

This will confirm that you have permission to use in your master's thesis entitled "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Figureheads From the Mystic Seaport Museum Collection" the following illustrations from George F. Bass, editor, A history of Seafaring based on underwater archaeology (New York, 1972, Walker and Company):

1. The 5th century B.C. Attic vase painting which shows an oculus painted on the vessel's bow, which is figure 11 on page 56 of my book;
2. The 2nd century bas-relief from Portus which is figure 16 on page 86 of my book; and
3. The 9th century prow of the Oseberg vessel which is figure 11 on page 172 of my book.

  
George F. Bass, Distinguished  
Professor of Anthropology,  
Texas A&M University

Jan 16, 1984  
Date

Ms. Carol Olsen  
 2212 Dewberry Lane  
 Bryan, TX 77801

Dear Ms. Olsen:

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2. Jane Owen figurehead.
3. H.M.S. Asia figurehead.
4. Kathelina figurehead.
5. Warrior figurehead.

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Dear Ms. Olsen:

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By   
\_\_\_\_\_

Date 8.2. 1984

## VITA

Carol Aileen Olsen was born on November 6, 1946, the daughter of Thelma Norine Torson and Albert Adolph Olsen. She grew up in San Francisco, California, and after working in San Francisco law firms and teaching English in Japan, she attended the University of California at Berkeley. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Art History in December 1977. During her years of study at Berkeley, Ms. Olsen also traveled to Europe, Australia, and South America. In 1976 she was an archaeological diver on the underwater excavation of the Defence, an American Revolution privateer which was scuttled by its crew in 1779. The 1976 season's work included a visit to the Bath Maritime Museum where Ms. Olsen saw shipcarvings on display. She discovered that many maritime museums had figurehead collections, but had done little research on them. Ms. Olsen returned to the University of California and began doing independent study projects on shipcarvings. She began the Nautical Archaeology program at Texas A&M University in Fall 1978 and during this course of study, she did several research papers on historical ship decoration. In the summer of 1979, as an Intern at Mystic Seaport Museum, Ms. Olsen first studied Mystic Seaport's shipcarvings. In 1980 and 1981 she was employed by Mystic Seaport Museum under a grant from the Mellon Foundation to more fully research Mystic Seaport's figureheads, and the combination of those years of work resulted in the material presented in this thesis. From 1982 to 1983, The Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Virginia, employed Ms. Olsen to research their figurehead collection, and that has also added considerably to the information contained in this thesis. In addition, Ms. Olsen has spoken to many audiences about shipcarvings, she has published an article in the International Journal of Nautical Archaeology, and has been the subject of newspaper articles and television programs which have discussed her work. Ms. Olsen's permanent address is P.O. Box 832, Clearlake Oaks, CA 95423.