

**THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE *SNOW JEANIE*: A MERCHANT VESSEL IN  
THE PRE-REVOLUTION TOBACCO TRADE**

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Biography of the *Snow Jeanie*: A Merchant Vessel in the Pre-Revolution Scottish Tobacco Trade. (May 2015)

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This research follows an eighteenth-century merchant vessel through the major stages of its use, from its construction to its final voyage, highlighting the human interactions that occurred in and around the vessel and its movements. The goal is to provide a narrative overview of the social and economic impact of the maritime industry in colonial America and to show how a single vessel could connect different cultures and economies. The research focuses on the tobacco trade between the Scottish “tobacco lord” John Glassford and the British North American colonists who provided the goods and services that enabled the trade. The study’s evidence is based upon the letter book of Alexander Henderson, a Scottish shop owner in Chesapeake Virginia and a factor of Glassford. The book includes letters detailing ship use, the exchange of goods, and business practices. In addition, ship records from Port Glasgow and Port Greenock provide information on the movements and descriptions of the tobacco ships themselves. By detailing the multiple stages a vessel encountered during a voyage, one can create a holistic study of the maritime industry’s socioeconomic impact and the stories that a single wooden vessel can tell about pre-Revolution America.

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In addition, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Kevin Crisman for guiding me in my cautious entrance into nautical archaeology. Though I certainly felt in over my head at times with the endless complications of ship terminology during my first graduate-level course, Dr. Crisman's support (and perhaps occasional sympathies) kept me pushing on.

My research would have been impossible without the generous financial support I received over the past year. I want to thank the Department of History for providing me with the Undergraduate Scholarly Activities Grant, the Department of Anthropology for the Undergraduate Research Award, and Dr. Crisman for personally supporting me as I followed the path of the *Snow Jeanie* and traveled to Glasgow, Scotland to research at the Mitchell Library Archives.

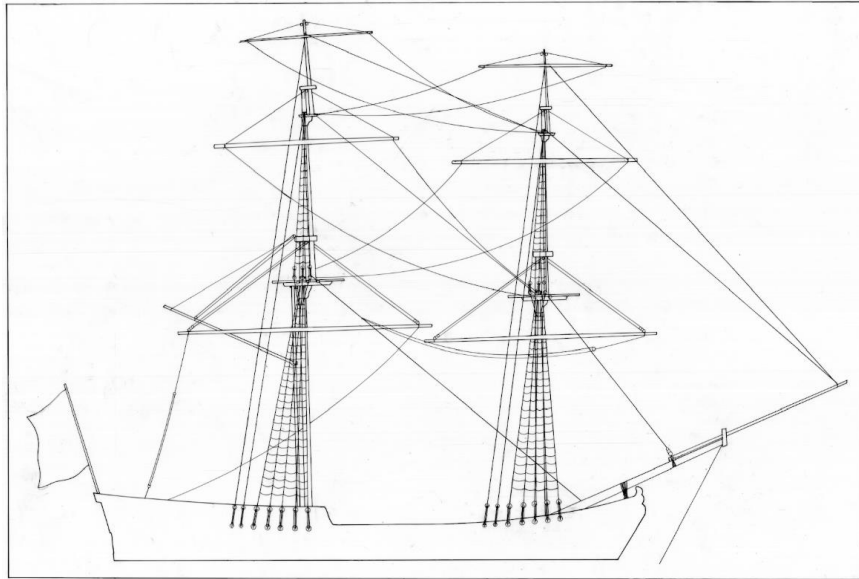
I would like to thank my parents for supporting me throughout my time in college and never questioning my choice to pursue the major that I love. I would also like to thank my wonderful group of friends for never failing to listen when I needed a stress-relieving venting session.

John Glassford would never have entered my life if it not for the George Washington's Mount Vernon Association. I wish to thank Molly Kerr for guiding me through the transcription "e-ternship," as well as Eleanor Breen for leading the way in studies of John Glassford and my personal archaeological experiences.

And finally, I give thanks for the Department of Anthropology academic advisor Marco Valadez. I often boast to my peers that I have the best academic advisor and I genuinely believe it to be true. Marco's door has been open do me constantly during each road bump I faced throughout my college career and his advice has transcended the world of tests and papers. I have always known that whenever I enter his office I will come out feeling calm and confident about whatever issue I faced. Marco was the most influential person to me throughout my college experience and I really do not think I could have been as successful without him.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION



*Figure 1. Replication of what the Snow Jeanie's sail plan may have looked like.*

The maritime industry's advancement played a significant role in the economic development of colonial America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The trade that emerged within the North American British colonies led to an economic independence (which was a catalyst for their quest for a political equivalent) and port towns created a sense of community based around the common shipping trade. At the center of this maritime growth and economic prosperity was the small merchant vessel. The ship not only connected the American colonists with others, both within the colonies and abroad, through the transfer of goods but also became a trade of its own as more and more men began to work for the industry as sailors or shipbuilders. The maritime

industry transcended any particular socioeconomic level- the running of these merchants' ships impacted wealthy merchants and poor sailor boys alike.

Scholars have noted the ways in which the American maritime heritage is historically significant. In *Young Men and the Sea*, Daniel Vickers argues that there are more extraordinary narratives of seafaring life than any other early modern laboring occupation and that there have been nearly as many depictions of the sailor's life as the number of authors who have attempted to describe it (Vickers and Walsh 2005). We do not, however, often find records of the common sailor or journey as the unusual and exciting tales were normally the tales that warranted documentation. These accounts may be thrilling but they do little to truly portray the ways in which maritime trade impacted Colonial America's economy and culture.

### **Historic Background**

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Virginia and Maryland's tobacco production largely defined the early Chesapeake economy. Glasgow, Scotland, conversely, was an "international *entrepôt*" (Devine and Jackson 1994) due to the city's business importing American tobacco and ideal location on the river Clyde. Scottish historian T.M. Devine coined the term "tobacco lords" to describe the enormously wealthy Glaswegian tobacco merchants during this time period. By 1772, tobacco accounted for eighty percent of American imports to Scotland and tobacco lord John Glassford's predominant firm, John Glassford & Company, became one of the three largest firms in the nation. The multiple firms in the booming Glasgow tobacco trade succeeded in opening more than sixty large and diversified general stores across colonial America, mainly due to the extension of a lucrative system of easy credit to their customers (Cuddy 2008). Though

these merchants held considerable economic power, the Glasgow trading culture never recovered after the Seven Years War and American Revolution.

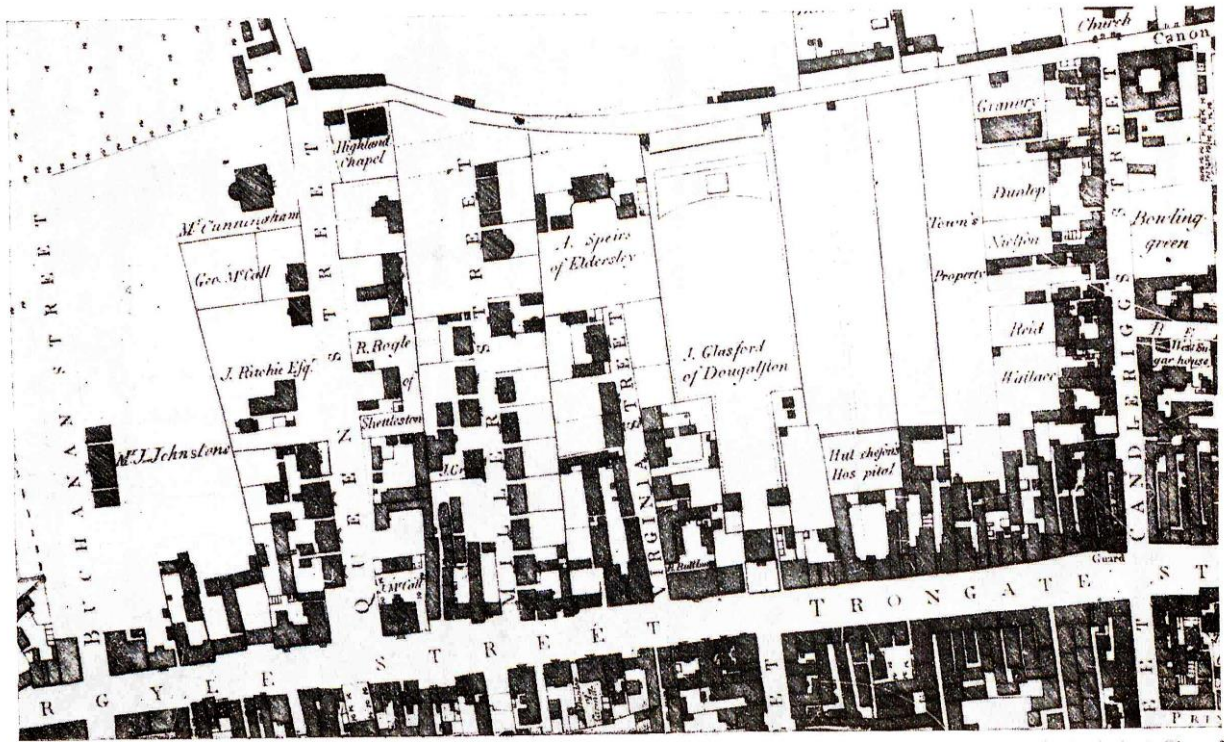


Figure 2. A map of the Argyle Street-Trongate area of Glasgow in 1778, showing the location of the town houses of the leading merchants. Note Glassford's property in the center of the map. (Devine 1975)

Through my study of Glassford I learned that he possessed a larger fleet of ships than any of the other tobacco lords- at least twenty five, according to Devine (1975). I utilized the letter book of Glassford's factor, or appointed shopkeeper, Alexander Henderson, covering the years of 1753-1768 to learn more about the ships used Glassford for trade. In the letter book, Henderson highlights the shipping events during this time and includes correspondence with nearly forty different ships. Glassford's most frequently used ships were the *Jeanie* (also called the *Snow Jeanie*), the *Henderson*, the *Fair American*, and the *Potomac*. I have decided to focus on



predominantly studying the *Jeanie*, which was his most often used ship as it achieved 18 voyages in 11 years (Henderson 1999). Though I may refer to the *Jeanie* as a “ship” when discussing the vessel in generalities, the snow and the ship were actually two different types of vessel.

## **Evidence**

There is actually quite little known about eighteenth-century merchant ships. To the sailors and merchants, the vessels were so commonplace that the intricate details of maritime life did not always warrant documentation. The lives of the men who worked the ships were often relatively ordinary and the ships themselves were not glamorous, elaborate vessels. If any mariners or observers documented the journeys they often did so in the form of personal diaries or ship logs and very few of these survived.

That said, Henderson’s letter book provided me with an abundance of information. The accumulation of letters spans 8 years and includes updates to Glassford, schemes of goods to be imported to Virginia, and details of ship arrivals and departures. Glassford and Henderson discuss the *Jeanie* constantly throughout these letters with Archibald Omev most often the captain. The letter book includes dates that the *Jeanie* was at sea, lists of goods that she carried, and other details pertaining to managing the vessel. Through the invaluable records left behind by Glassford’s multiple shops, historians can better understand and answer the question of what it was like to be both a business-owner and consumer in colonial Virginia.

In addition, there are records of many of *Jeanie*’s arrivals and departures in Port Glasgow and Greenock kept at the Glasgow City Archives. Though the data tended to vary greatly from entry

to entry, this information was able to confirm many of the specific details pertaining to the *Jeanie* such as tonnage, departure times and dates, and the captain who sailed her.

One of the largest struggles I faced during my research was the lack of documentation detailing how and when Glassford purchased the *Jeanie* and what ultimately became of her. Throughout my research I searched endlessly for some sort of bill of purchase or record of her sale to avail. While there are records of Glassford's purchases of other ships, unfortunately whatever evidence there was for the *Jeanie*'s purchase is lost to time.

In addition, one peculiarity concerning early shipping names was an affinity for "trendy" names. Just as baby names gain popularity, ship owners sometimes chose from a handful of common names when naming their vessel. Throughout my research I came across 5 additional ships named *Jeanie* sailing in and out of Ports Glasgow and Greenock during the same time period, none of which could be confirmed to have belonged to Glassford. Furthermore, even records of a *Jeanie* under Omey's command tended to have spelling issues. The spellings of Glassford's ship varied between *Jeanie*, *Jeannie*, *Jeany*, and sometimes even *Jenny* (Clyde Tobacco Fleet: Analysis of Greenock and Port Glasgow Port Books, 1776).

Because there is no iconography or specific description of the *Jeanie* herself, to create an idea of what the ship looked like I have relied on depictions of other ships. Fredrik Henrik af Chapman's eighteenth-century portrayal of a snow sail plan was my main source of reference as I believe it was the best depiction of a snow from that era. I also used other images found in David R. Macgregor's *Merchant Sailing Ships* and other works to create as true of a recreation as possible.

Most of my information about the architecture of the snow came from Karl Heinz Marquardt's *Eighteenth Century Rigging* and Chapman's *Architectura navalis mercatoria*.

### **Narrative Outline**

In providing a “biography” of a ship, I will follow each step of her journey between the different cultures and peoples she encountered. However, the story of the *Jeanie* cannot serve as a perfect representation of all the vessels and the maritime culture of the entire colonies. The industry was extremely complex and varied greatly between locations and particular trades. I instead hope to follow historian Ann Smart Martin's method of reconstructing the “world” of a particular subject. In her book *Buying into the World of Goods: Early Consumers in Backcountry Virginia*, Smart Martin focuses exclusively on country merchant John Hook to cover every aspect of Virginia merchant socioeconomic systems. Each chapter examines a different facet of the business, from the methods of acquiring goods to the necessities of everyday life, based on the goods Hook sold in his shop, the ways in which consumerism changed over time, and the use of space within the store itself.

I also will channel anthropologist Clifford Geertz's method of “thick description.” While I find that a good amount of historic studies can be characterized as a “thin description,” which is a factual account without much interpretation, “thick description” provides “an elaborate venture in” (Geertz 1973). This research method aims to explain cultural significance through the small details, the contexts, and intents of actions and objects. I do not wish to simply examine the measurements and path trajectories of the ships- I want to examine what all those factual details meant for the colonial American.

Beginning in Glasgow, I describe the background of the tobacco lords who ordered the vessel's construction and then put her to use transporting goods in exchange for Chesapeake tobacco. Then moving to Boston, I will highlight shipbuilding methods and the cultural and economic impact shipbuilding had in New England. The next chapter describes the life of a sailor upon such a merchant ship before she arrived at port. Though these people - wealthy Scottish merchants, tradesmen shipbuilders in New England, Chesapeake shop owners, and sailor boys - were from drastically different background and most likely never met, they were all connected by the vessel. By following this vessel along its major milestones I hope to provide a portrait of the multifaceted eighteenth-century maritime culture.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **GLASGOW TOBACCO LORDS**

The Glasgow tobacco lords were fabulously wealthy, donning “red cloaks, satin suits, powdered wigs, three cornered hats and gold-topped canes” (Rediker 1989). Coming to power during the first half of the eighteenth century, the three largest firms were Alexander Spiers & Company, William Cunningham & Company, and John Glassford & Company. Though the merchants imported a plethora of goods such as sugar, grains, and rum, tobacco was by far the most important trade good for these men. Though the Scottish presence in the tobacco industry had really only begun a decade or so earlier, by 1772, 80 percent of American imports to Scotland included tobacco. Throughout this period, firms succeeded in opening more than sixty large and diversified general stores by extending easy credit to their customers, also serving as a bank of sorts (Devine 1975).

By studying Glassford and the tobacco lords, historians can better understand both the socioeconomic issues faced by early American colonists and their interaction with the British Empire. Glassford and Henderson’s storefront documents served as a time capsule for the ever-changing eighteenth century American economy as well as the impact the Revolutionary War had on the American businesses. The plentiful shop records present a wide array of information, ranging from the average shoe size of American colonists to the trans-Atlantic trading practices of European merchants. Along with Glassford, the tight-knit group of tobacco merchants found themselves entangled in the changing environment of a revolving society.

John Glassford was born in Paisley, Scotland in 1715 to a wealthy merchant and burgher. As Glassford's multiple marriages brought him to even greater wealth and power, he purchased several properties around Glasgow, including the most notable property, Douglaston. He cared greatly for improving his multiple estates and had a penchant for gambling. Glassford opened the store in Colchester in 1758 and the Alexandria store in 1767. Glassford never actually came to America, but instead sent several factors to run his shops (Devine 1975). Scottish poet Tobias Smollett wrote of a meeting with Glassford in 1771, "I conversed with Mr. G—ssf—d, whom I take to be one of the greatest merchants in Europe. In the last war, he is said to have had at one time five and twenty ships with their cargos- his own property- and to have traded for above half a million sterling a year." His many ships brought in imported goods from European manufacturers such as shoes, tools, medicine, textiles, and a plethora of other consumer goods, and shipped back the purchased American tobacco to Scotland (Cuddy 2008).



*Figure 3. Glassford family portrait (McLauchlan 1767-8).*

In the late 1750's, Alexander Henderson, a twenty-year-old Scot, and his older brother Archibald, became the factors for Glassford's shop in Colchester, Virginia. Over the next few years, Glassford and Henderson continued to open more shops around the Potomac River and Henderson came to be known as "Father of the Chain Store" These stores purchased tobacco directly from the farmers and in return sold imported goods. By the early 1760's, Glassford suggested that he and his merchants were owed £500,000 by Americans for their multiple purchases, and by 1778 that number had risen to £1,306,000 (Devine 1975). Together, John Glassford & Company opened a series of branch stores along the Potomac, similar to trading posts. The merchant supplied ordered goods such as firearms, cloth, rum, wine, sugar, salt, teas, dyes, paper products, and furniture to the stores and in return purchased tobacco from the Chesapeake farmers.

As the Glasgow tobacco reign peaked during the decade leading up to the revolution, competition became intense between the multiple firms. However, many of the tobacco lords possessed several smaller firms as well. Devine (1975) argues that the Glassford Company was the "most complex and highly integrated of all" the firms. Although the firm John Glassford & Co. was the main extension of Glassford's power, he and his partners also held shares in at least the following firms: Glassford, Gordon & Co.; Archibald Henderson & Co.; James Gordon & Co.; Henderson, McCall, & Co.; and George Kippen & Co. The tobacco merchants' economic power and success created a Scottish monopoly in the trans-Atlantic tobacco trade.

The concentration on direct purchase from the colonial tobacco planters was crucial to Glasgow's emergence as the most successful tobacco emporium in Britain (Devine and Jackson

1994). The smaller farmers could not produce enough crops on their own to sufficiently earn a decent commission, therefore the local stores worked with their limitations. Thus, the Chesapeake stores grew quickly and Glassford's company followed (Devine 1975).

### **Economic Success in Cash-Poor Colonies**

Glassford's associates could not only pay a higher price for tobacco than could English consignment merchants but could also sell them consumer goods in return for tobacco (Devine 1975). The system of extending credit to the cash-poor colonists was a crucial advantage for Glassford & Company. During the early colonization of America, the British Parliament did not allow export of English coins from the British Isles and refused to grant permission to build mints overseas. Prior to the American Revolution, colonies actually relied upon the relatively rare silver and gold Spanish coins for everyday transactions (Ripley 1893). Some of the colonies attempted to create a paper currency in the middle of the eighteenth century, however the value of this money depleted quickly. As the eighteenth century progressed the British Parliament took further action to prevent the legalization of American paper money. The Parliament revised the laws in 1773 to permit paper currency but kept the ban on private debts, therefore hardly changing the system. This led the American colonists to rely heavily upon foreign currency and created an unpredictable monetary system for the colonies (Cuddy 2008).

The shopkeepers would not only sell goods to the colonists on a debit but would also accept tobacco notes or collateral as payment. The merchants would accept cash as well, particularly in times of low tobacco production. Although some transactions consisted of a direct over-the-counter trade of goods for tobacco, most purchases were done with credit. A single unit of



tobacco, a 63-gallon hogshead barrel, was worth so much money that it was impractical for the storekeeper to hold an equal value in goods at a time. Therefore the stores worked on a running balance for each customer. Glasgow merchant James Coulter wrote that the “storekeepers generally sell their goods on trust, or time and receive payment in tobacco as the planters get it ready” (Devine 1975). This system did limit profits initially, but Henderson wrote on June 5, 1759 that “remittances from this store will be small for some time but in the end it may turn out a very good place.” To issue the customer a credit, the shopkeeper purchased tobacco directly from the farmer and credited them a certain amount, based on the current economic conditions and quantity of the crop. Henderson regularly monitored of each customer’s credits and debits through an intricate record system, provided below. The first sheet is the list charges from each person and the second it the current balance.



Colchester

Date	Description	Debit	Credit	Balance
1767 June 30	By friends (Bill) for assets 1 <sup>st</sup> July 1767 for	9.13.10		9.13.10
	By Balance		to Libers 11 97	9.13.10
				9.13.10
<hr/>				
1767 June 11	By (Bill) Tobias on Hunting Crocks 11/11/11 102.100 962 1262 373 11/100 2276			565 5.15.6
	By Cash			3
	By Balance		to Libers 11 97	2.12
				163.10.10.6
<hr/>				
	By Balance		to Libers 11 97	1.13.6
				1.13.6
<hr/>				
	By Balance		to Libers 11 97	8.6
				8.6
<hr/>				
	By Balance		to Libers 11 97	1.19.10
				1.19.6
<hr/>				
1767 Sept 13	By Account of Corporate Debt	25		6
				6

Figure 5. Record of balances from 1766-1767 at the Colchester store (Henderson 1766).

Such a system allowed the colonial small farmers to rescind their dependence upon their large-planter neighbors to buy their tobacco and gave them easier access to credit to buy goods once they sold their tobacco to the merchants. This, therefore, allowed small planters to purchase the goods they desired in advance of their ability to pay for them, while the Scottish merchant benefitted from increased business. This system of credit-and debit affected both large and small planters alike. The consumer debts were allowed to accumulate for more than four years before the merchants sought payment, either in the form of tobacco notes or similar collateral. The credit system allowed the customers to rack up a large amount of debt to the merchants. In terms of Glassford & Company, the company's flexible financial arrangements brought in a large portion of the local tobacco trade (Cuddy 2008). The accumulation of debts, however, played an important role in the decline of the company and the Glasgow tobacco trade as a whole, as I will discuss later in this chapter.



Figure 6. Tobacco being checked and loaded at a Virginia port in 1775.

### Goods Sold at Henderson's Store

After purchasing the tobacco from the farmers, Henderson shipped the crop off to Europe and in return requested a scheme of goods from European manufacturers to sell to the Virginians. Each requested scheme of goods was based upon products the Chesapeake customers requested, so studying the items provides an overview of consumer practices during this period. The shop owners tailored their shipments to the needs and local people's desires and sought to provide products of high enough quality to meet customers' expectations. Below is a scheme of the goods carried on the *Jeanie* on January 18, 1763.

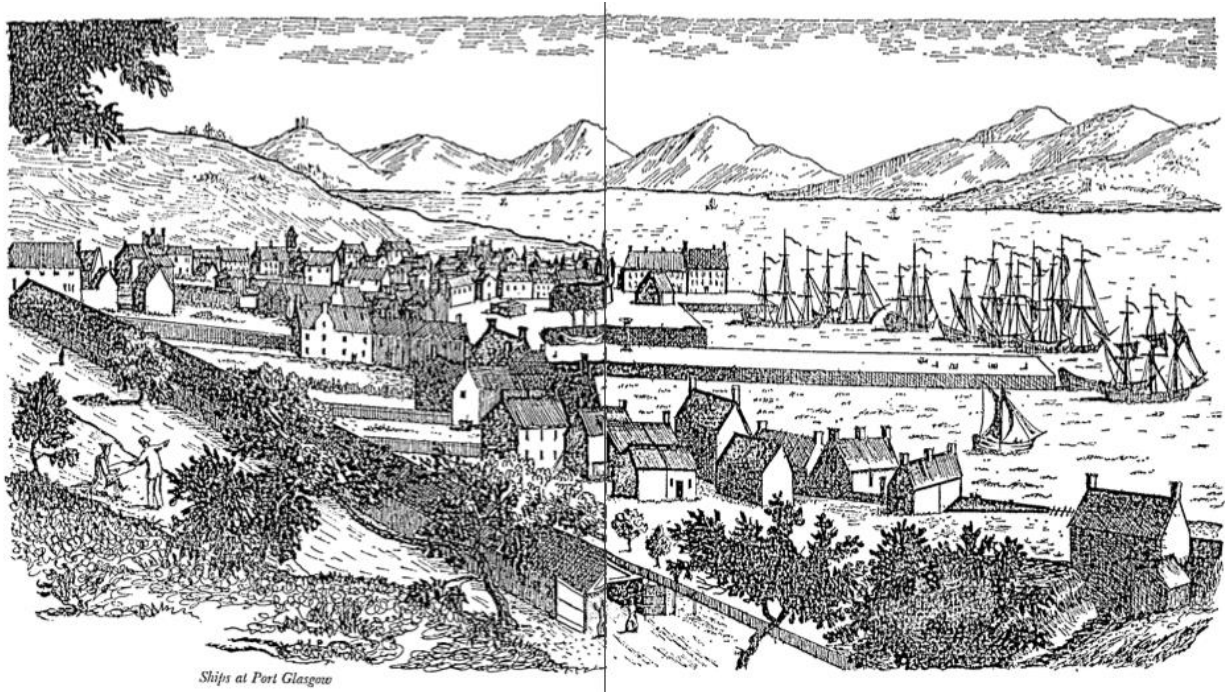
Figure 7. Scheme of Goods carried upon the Jeanie in 1763 (Henderson 1999).

Amount	Item	Notes
2 pes.	low priced Devonshire Kersey	
30 yd.	Black German Sarge	
60 yd.	Clear deep blue Sarge	
60 yd.	Drab Colo'd Sarge	
60 yd.	mix'd Colo'd Sarge	
15 yd.	Black Bro[a]d Cloth	9/6
15 yd.	Black Bro[a]d Cloth	12/
15 yd.	Ravens Gray Broad Cloth	12/
16 yd.	Clear deep blue Broad Cloth	9/6
2 pes.	fine Black Shalloon	44/
2 pes.	Black Bombazeen	
4 yd.	Blue Velvet	10/
6 doz.	Larged Wool Cards	
3 doz.	broad Cotton Cards	
8 doz.	Large coarse hair sifters	
4 doz.	Large Lawn Scarves	
1 doz.	Iron Wheat Riddles	
1 doz.	Wire Sieves	
12 doz.	Good Bed Cords @ 9/	
2 cwt.	Trace Rope	
2 cwt.	Drop Shot N 1	
2 cwt.	Drop shot 2	
2 cwt.	Drop shot B	
20 wt.	Salt Petter	
1 doz.	Looking Glasses 12 or 14/	
1 doz.	Looking Glasses 16 or 18/	
3 doz.	Stone Bottles 1 gal.	Brown Ware
5 doz.	Stone Bottles 2 gal.	Brown Ware
3 doz.	Butter Pots 1 gal.	Brown Ware
3 doz.	Butter Pots 2 gal.	Brown Ware
8 doz.	Blue & White Stone Quarts	
6 gro.	pint Pocket Bottles	
2000 ea.	Squares Window Glass 10 by 8 Inches	
2 cwt.	Frying pans . . . Long handles	
20 ea.	Iron Pots 2gal.	
20 ea.	Iron Pots 4gal.	
10 ea.	Iron Pots 6gal.	
10 ea.	Iron Pots 8gal.	
10 ea.	Iron Pots 10gal.	
120 M	8d Nails	
150 M	10d Nails	
24 ea.	Grindstones 3ft.	
2 gro.	quart Bottles, which may be fill'd with good Tarenton or Dorchester Ale.	
2 cwt.	Good Cheese, Dble Gloucester.	

Devine writes that shopkeepers needed to possess a rare handful of certain qualities in order to be successful- “shrewd business sense, charm in order to ingratiate oneself into the confidence of customers, a deep concern for the company’s interest and dutiful application to the labour of compiling accounts...” A good relationship between the shopkeeper and the customers was especially important. Merchant James Robinson told his shopkeepers to “drink in abundance” when soliciting new customers and to make every effort to “concile the affection and esteem of the people and to gain their confidence” by showing honesty in every transaction (Devine 1975)

Henderson did have a genuine desire to please his customers and was constantly in contact with Glassford informing him on the quality of the goods. In 1762 Henderson sent a scheme of goods to Glassford which informed him that the complaints of the shoes have been so “great & frequent” that the company needed to take greater care in choosing these shoes. “The Kilmarnock Shoes are intolerably bad,” wrote Henderson. When Henderson twice ordered rugs that never arrived, he wrote to Glassford on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1760 that “disappointments of this kind make a Man appear little in the Eyes of his Customers, by rendering him incapable of fulfilling the promises he makes them....” Shopkeepers often requested certain bright patterns and were quick to complain if the designs were not to their liking. The commentary between the shopkeeper and merchant once even took a slightly comical turn, when in a Scheme of Goods for the Colchester Store in 1763, Henderson wrote, “the inhabitants of this country have large feet & must have large Shoes, these sent in this year are much too small.” The shopkeeper thoroughly knew the characteristics of the goods and could inform the merchants which goods were of high quality and which to avoid (Henderson 1999).

## Shipping Vessels



*Figure 8. Ships at Port Glasgow (Nichol 1967).*

Richard Dell provides a fantastic analysis of the tobacco ships that sailed on the Clyde during this period. Dell pulled his information from the Port Glasgow and Port Greenock records and summarizes the movements of the vessels. In the thirty years before the American Revolution, the tobacco lords imported 750 million pounds of tobacco aboard 374 ships. Dell breaks the ships into two categories: ‘regulars’ which made four or more consecutive voyages to the Chesapeake or six voyages within a decade, and ‘casuals’ were rarely used, more local ships.

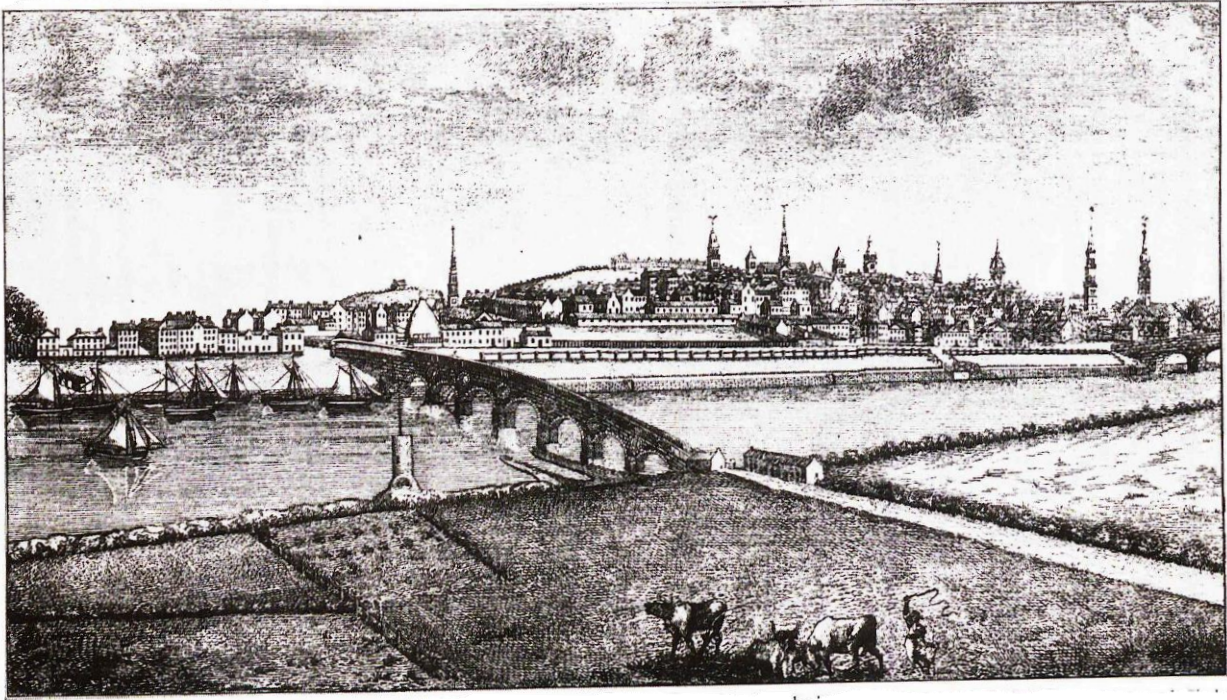
Below is a chart detailing the sizes and origins of the all of the tobacco vessels. It should be noted that “plantation built” simply meant that the ships came from the colonies, not necessarily a Southern plantation.



<b>Period of Building</b>	<b>1700-29</b>	<b>1730-39</b>	<b>1740-49</b>	<b>1750-59</b>	<b>1760-1769</b>
<b>Ships for which data known</b>	16	30	62	72	50
<b>Average Tonnage</b>	93.2	99	124.5	113.4	134.6
<b>British Built</b>	11	5	7	4	8
<b>Plantation Built</b>	5	25	55	68	42

*Figure 9. Size and Origin of Ships in the Clyde Tobacco Fleet, 1700-1769 (Dell 1982).*

By the middle of the century the average tobacco vessel as a two-masted snow, sized anywhere from 100-160 tons. The amount of cargo a ship could carry is called its tonnage, often calculated by multiplying the length of the keel by the beam and then multiplying the product by the depth. This number was then divided by 100 to reveal the tonnage of the ship, but the formula could differ between mariners. This was the most common way to describe the size of a ship, but may not have been accurate. Not only does this assume that all hulls had the same general form and proportions, but ships were often taxed based on their tonnage ships could commonly be reported as two-thirds its actual size (Goldenberg 1976). The largest ships are documented to be around 250 tons while the smallest were barely 50 tons. The *Snow Jeanie* was, of course, also a two-masted snow and the Clyde port records show that she is recorded as 150 tons (Dell 1982).



*Figure 10. View of Glasgow and the Clyde (Devine 1975)*

A vessel departing from Glasgow to the Chesapeake carried a hull of manufactured goods and normally fifteen to twenty seamen. In the case of the *Jeanie*, in June of 1763 she was recorded of arriving in Bristol with only Omey and ten other men (Minchinton 1957). The 3,500-mile journey took around five weeks but was largely dependent on the elements. The *Snow Jeanie*, however, was the fastest ship in the Clyde, making the trip in only 24 days. Relative to the other vessels, the *Snow Jeanie* had “extraordinary efficiency,” making 18 voyages in 11 years. The *Jeanie* came second only to the *Cunningham*, which made 15 trips in 7 years (Dell 1982).

The chart below details the voyage and turn-around times in the Clyde-Chesapeake trade from 1750 to 1776 and can show the rise in the shipping industry as the tobacco trade prospered

Year	Average Turn-round in Clyde	Number of Observations	Average turn-round in Chesapeake	Number of Observations	Average round-trip direct (days)	Number of Observations	Average round-trip via Europe (days)	Number of observations
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1750	76	6	53		231	5	-	-
1751	97	6			201	5	329	1
1752	103	6			194	5	325	3
1753	55	6			164	5	244	3
1754	120	4			166	1	233	2
1755	142	6	48		232	5	300	3
1756	90	6			218	5	243	2
1757	63	6			222	5	232	2
1758	136	6			200	5	331	1
1759	67	6		Total of	186	5	341	1
1760	105	6	44	231 for	233	5	384	1
1761	94	23		All.	212	6	306	3
1762	64	21			204	6	-	-
1763	49	21			204	4	230	5
1764	55	21			178	5	228	4
1765	52	18	40		169	6	220	4
1766	62	21			160	6	226	4
1767	48	20			155	6	243	3
1768	36	24			131	6	266	5
1769	51	31			151	6	235	3
1770	36	36	36		162	7	257	3
1771	35	36			136	6	194	4
1772	32	37			146	6	237	3
1773	40	32			159	6	279	5
1774	33	29			165	6	257	2
1775	36	28	33		126	6	180	7
1776	-	-	-		-	-	-	-

Figure 11. Voyage and Turn-round Times in the Clyde-Chesapeake Trade, 1750-1776 (Dell 1982).

### Impact of the Revolution

During the three years preceding the Revolutionary War, Glassford's firms imported on average one-fifth of all Glasgow-owned tobacco (Devine 1975). Yet throughout the Seven Years war and

onset of the American Revolution, Glassford's business began to struggle. During the ordeal of the Stamp Act, Glassford, when questioned about the possibility of recovering the massive debts owed by the American colonists, replied pessimistically that the possibility was 'uncertain' and that 'if these circumstances continue we may be unpaid' (Devine 1975).

This time period was also a dangerous time for a Scotsman in the colonies. The storekeepers were often vulnerable to political "diatribe" due to their assumed 'tory sympathies'. It could be said that a Scotsman in Virginia at this time was in "danger of his life (at least of being tarred and feathered) if he says a word that does not please them." In the case of men such as Henderson from Glasgow, Devine said that they "seem to be great objects of their resentment, the case is plain; to them they owe the money, some of them have been roughly handled..." (Devine 1975).

When the American colonists entered war with the British, it made the Scottish merchants unsure how to proceed with business. Devine writes that company representatives in the colonies had to operate cautiously during this time period because their desire to expand trade conflicted with the radical intentions to influence the British government by prohibiting imports and exports. Devine explains that early on in the war the tobacco lords stalled business as a result of their indecision. William Cunningham, the manager of another firm, wrote during this period that he decided to shut his ports and that, "the merchants here at present are undetermined what do to." Despite the colonies' open rebellion and pressure from the British government, the tobacco traders wished to continue trade with Virginia and Maryland during the first year of the Revolutionary War. Many factors petitioned the Virginia Convention during the summer of 1774, stating their willingness

to contribute to the common cause and to abide by all commercial restrictions if excused from bearing arms (Devine 1975).

As a whole, Scottish imports of tobacco stayed the same during the Revolutionary war. Devine (1975) cites that in 1775 the Scottish imported 45,863,154lbs of tobacco compared to 41,348,295lbs in 1774 and 44,543,050lbs in 1773. Nevertheless, the tobacco trade halted during the years following the war. Just 5 years later in 1780, the Scottish only imported 5,022,149lbs of tobacco. Although this number rose slightly over the next decade, hitting 10,615,535lbs in 1790, the imports never reached the same numbers as the mid-1700's. Devine states that the number of vessels traveling from the United States in 1785 was less than half of the amount in 1772 (Devine 1975).

Glassford's firm could never recover from the political unrest of the American Revolution and suffered the same fate as the other tobacco merchants. Devine (1975) writes that as the U.S., Britain, and France returned to peaceful relations in 1782, the merchants had to face the issue of lingering pre-war colonial debts. In order to collect the money owed to them, the merchants faced insurmountable logistic questions as well as the lingering American hostility towards the Scottish. Devine (1975) notes that Glassford sought "assiduously . . . to recover their property . . . and this by means of an agent sent out." However, when John Riddell of John Glassford & Company tried to follow the firm's instructions to collect the debts, he was violently driven from Virginia by an angry mob (Devine 1975). The American government was still too weak to adequately handle the issue of this massive debt therefore the problems continued into the 1780s. With the death of Glassford in 1783, the company and the debts fell into the hands of the

surviving members of Glassford & Company; Henry Glassford, James Gordon, Henry Riddell, John Campbell, and Archibald Henderson. Over the next few decades the company slowly divided among the five factors until it essentially dissolved into nothing (Devine, 1975). Despite his grandeur and power throughout much of his life, Glassford died leaving behind massive debts.

Though this downfall appears dire, Devine (1975) argues that the situation was not as universally harmful as it seemed. Though the debts still owed to the merchants totaled over £1 million at the beginning of the war, Devine writes that the income from tobacco sales made up for this. Additionally, he finds the sharp decline in pounds of imported tobacco deceiving. He cites other sources such as mercantile papers that suggest that the Glasgow presence in the Chesapeake peaked upon the end of the war. Although the Glasgow tobacco era had virtually disappeared, Devine asserts that the American Revolutionary War did not cause this. Instead, he argues that multiple, complex elements caused the downfall. The French wars between 1793 and 1815 destroyed the important trans-Atlantic market. In Virginia, the appearance of new crops began to challenge the hegemony of tobacco. Furthermore, as the colonies transitioned into an autonomous government, the Chesapeake saw the rise of its own merchant class, thus removing the need for a foreign presence. Although I agree with Devine that the American Revolution was not the only ultimate cause of the downfall of the Glasgow tobacco reign I argue that it catalyzed the imminent decline. The shifting dynamic of American consumerism created an unstable environment for the tobacco merchants. As the colonies turned into their own self-governing nation the ties with European businesses began to decline in favor of a stronger American mercantile class (Devine 1975).

## CHAPTER III

### NEW ENGLAND SHIPBUILDING

Shipbuilding as a trade appeared in the American colonies early in the seventeenth century. The first recorded instance of intercoastal trade came in 1636 when Thomas Mayhew of Boston and Governor John Winthrop's son sent a small vessel to Bermuda with corn and smoked pork. After the month-long voyage, it returned with goods such as oranges, potatoes, and lemons, as well as a small profit. In the years following, the exported goods increased to include Massachusetts's fish, furs, and limber, as well as goods from neighboring colonies like grain, cattle, butter, and rum. In return, New England received cotton, tobacco, salt, rum, wine, and even slaves. Thus, the New England ships provided a connection between not only American colonists and the West Indies but also the neighboring colonies (Morris 1979)

Throughout the seventeenth century, the shipbuilding trade began to increase rapidly. According to Goldenberg, the trade quickly appeared in colonial America purely out of necessity (Goldenberg 1976). Multiple wars towards the end of the seventeenth century had left the empire with a loss of almost 4,000 vessels. The French had adopted a policy to avoid naval battle to instead pursue merchant ships, and French privateers created additional harm to British vessels by capturing or attacking vessels. Though the British greatly needed to replenish their many lost vessels, the wartime economy caused a sharp rise in the cost of shipbuilding. Though colonial ships were less durable, being built of lower quality timber, they were far more affordable than British ships and were adequate for the short, intensive life to which the sailors subjected them (Morris 1979).

Most characteristics of the seventeenth century shipping industry carried over into the eighteenth century. Boston was still the leading port in Britain's North American colonies but other cities such as Philadelphia began to gain power. The price of ships in the colonies actually doubled during the eighteenth century but the cost per ton was still lower than the ships built in British yards. Morris states that most colonial ships cost about 3 to 4 pounds sterling per ton, while British vessels cost closer to 5 to 6 pounds per ton, so English merchants still relied heavily on colonial shipwrights (Morris 1979).



*Figure 12. The coast of Boston in 1735 (Rediker 1989)*

### **Vessel Construction**

The merchant vessel was the backbone of the maritime trade yet, there is little in-depth analysis of the physical vessel itself and the role the construction played for the bigger picture in colonial



America's economic development. Most scholars have focused on British warships as there are far more sources surviving today. The merchant ships were seen as so commonplace therefore scholars rarely discussed them in detail, with Chapman's *Architectura Navalis Mercatoria* being the one exception. Chapman recorded hull measurements and designs for many styles of vessel, even the common and rare alike. Furthermore, there have been even fewer studies of ship construction methods. Kellie VanHorn provides an overview in her Master's Thesis *Eighteenth-Century Colonial American Merchant Ship Construction*, but predominantly uses archaeological remains to study the physical designs of multiple vessels. I therefore aim to combine what is known about the shipbuilding trade as a whole and the specifics that we do know about both the *Jeanie* and construction to provide the best picture possible of her construction.

Merchants commonly sought one particular shipwright to build their vessels. Some builders were renowned for their quality work so merchants felt confident in their services. In addition, the merchant felt confident that the builder would provide a fair price once they established a relationship. However, kinship or past connection also often played a large part in the employment of a particular builder (Goldenberg 1976). The shipwrights did not take every inquiry they received. If their yards were full, shipwrights did not hesitate to decline offers. In addition, current market condition largely impacted the price and delivery date (Goldenberg 1976).

After the merchant contacted the builder to build a vessel, the two first created a contract. It was standard practice for the merchants to provide the shipbuilder with the naval stores and iron while the shipbuilder was to obtain the wood. The merchant gave the builder a list of dimensions

and details that he desired and the two decided on an appropriate cost. After establishing a price, the shipbuilder had the opportunity to alter any dimensions for the ship if he felt it provided a better construction. Sometimes the merchant requested measurements that were simply impossible to construct, so the shipwrights had to be sure to correct the inexperienced merchant (Goldenberg 1976).

The payment method varied from contract to contract. Merchants would rarely pay the entire sum in cash. Most often, the merchant and shipwright split the cost up into multiple forms. For example, the merchant could pay one third of the ship in cash, one-third West Indian crops, and one-third British goods (Goldenberg 1976).

The shipwright's first step in building the vessel was to plan the construction based on the dimensions the merchant requested. During the eighteenth century, North American shipwrights commonly built five types of vessels: the traditional ship and the sloop, schooner, brigantine, and snow, new to the shipbuilding industry. Most of the new designs and modifications came from European builders but, aside from occasional modification, colonial shipwrights followed these developments in their own creations (Goldenberg 1976).

Found in Goldenberg's study of shipbuilding, American naval historian Howard I. Chappelle argues that by the end of the seventeenth-century builders commonly relied on drafts to design their vessel. Several books on shipbuilding published this time period guided shipwrights through the process of the construction but most shipwrights created their own designs. Though one could use a formula to determine the proper dimensions of almost every aspect of a ship

construction, these guidelines did not ensure a well-built ship. The shipwrights were so skilled in their field that they knew when and how to make modifications to the rules (Goldenberg 1976). If he constructed the same form of vessel regularly, the shipwright could build the ship by “eye” and did not reference pre-drawn plans. Nevertheless, most often the builders had to produce a variety of vessels and had to plan out the different hull forms and other construction details prior to construction (Goldenberg 1976).

The next task of a shipwright was to get the timber and plank. While some builders purchased plots of forest and brought the trees to their own sawmills, most found it more practical to simply buy their wood from timber merchants. Shipwrights most commonly obtained their timber during the fall and kept it for construction during the next summer (Goldenberg 1976). Most English shipbuilders utilized white oak and there was an abundance available in the colonies as well, along with red oak. Other materials such as pine, maple, beech, birch, hickory, ash, and cypress were also plentiful but less frequently used. White oak was preferred due to its durability, strength, and resistance to decay (VanHorn 2005).

After he obtained the wood the shipwright could begin construction. The shipwright first laid the keel, or center beam, upon timber blocks placed by the shore of the shipyard. He then fastened the stern and the sternpost to the ends of the keel. Each frame of the vessel consisted of one floor timber which served as the lowermost component of the frame, at least four overlapping futtocks to lengthen the floor, and a two top timbers which were the uppermost component of the frame. The timbers had been molded and were then bolted in the center to the keel. The keelson, a small

addition to the keel, was then placed upon the center of the floor planks and bolted through them, connecting it to the keel (Goldenberg 1976).



*Figure 13. Ray Brown's Portrait of a New England Shipyard (Abbot 1902)*

The shipwright then faced the complicated task of cutting and fastening the remaining timbers. He ran two ribbands, narrow wooden strips, from the stem to the sternpost beneath the ends of the floor timber on either side. Working at the mold stations, he shaped each frame member according to his molds and attached the lower futtocks to the floors, then the upper two futtocks, and finally the top timbers. The builder then ran more ribbands along the ends of each timber set as he raised them. He used the ribbands as guides to shape and erect the remaining frames into place (Goldenberg 1976)

After building a staging system around the partially constructed hull, workmen began to plank the interior and exterior of the hull. As the interior-planking rose, the shipwright added beams to

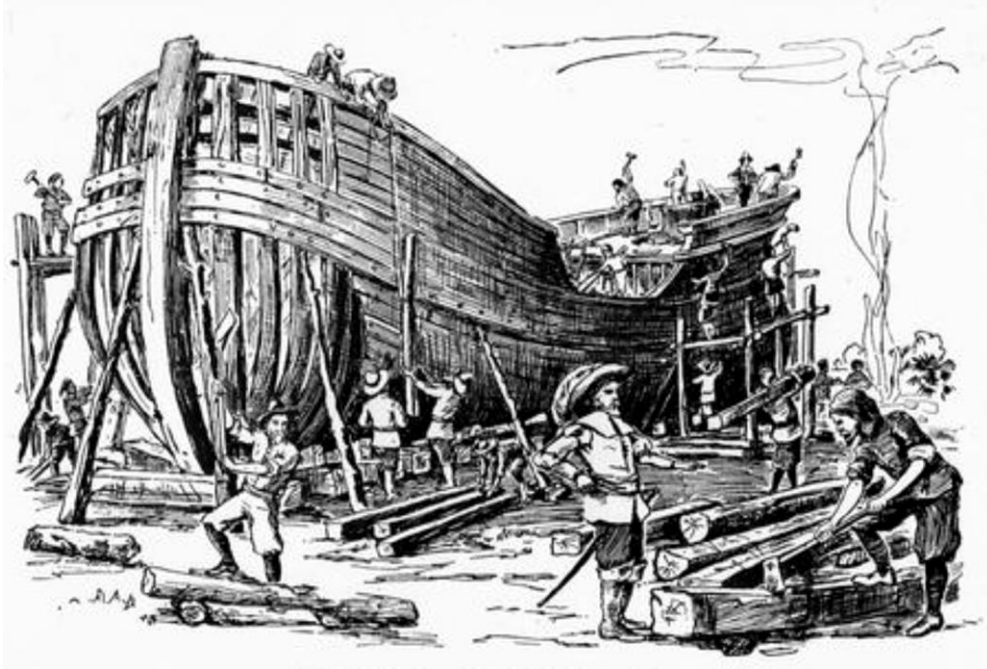
form the deck of the vessel and fastened them to the frame with large wooden knees, or curved wooden pieces (Goldenberg 1976).

Though the shipwright was the master of building the ship, numerous other craftsmen contributed to the project. Joiners worked to smooth the planking and did detailed work such as rails and interior cabin work. Caulkers filled the seams with tar, pitch, and resin to make the vessel watertight. Smiths worked with iron to create the metal components of the ship as well as forging the anchors. Mastmakers, sailmakers, blockmakers, and ropemakers all supplied their individual products while a mason laid bricks to support the galley and a glazier installed glass windows. In addition, painters, riggers, boatmakers, coopers, tanners, and carvers all had a role in the construction of the ship. Before the ship was complete, instrument makers, chainmakers, and upholsters all worked on the smaller details of the vessel (Goldenberg 1976). Thus, although the position of a shipwright was the epitome of a maritime career, the shipping industry created numerous other career opportunities for working New Englanders.

The amount of detail that went into each vessel depended on how much the merchant was willing to pay. Some wanted very plain and inexpensive ships so they kept the painting and ironwork to a minimum. To be even more frugal, a common and effective way of reducing the cost of both constructing and operating a vessel was to “underrig” her- to furnish her with masts, sails, and cordage of a smaller craft. Conversely, some merchants wanted elaborate ships with fine details such as carvings, an elaborate figurehead, beautiful paintwork, and a finely decorated captain’s cabin (Goldenberg 1976). For the sake of tobacco trade, most of the ships were likely to spare the decorations in return for a higher profit. The merchants simply needed the ships to be durable

and well-suited to carrying goods- anything further than this was impractical and money that could be spent elsewhere.

When the vessel was almost complete, the shipwrights sheathed the bottom of the hull in order to protect the wood from erosion and other damage as well as provide a smoother sailing surface (Goldenberg 1976). Copper, which gained popularity in the eighteenth century, was the ideal material due to its resistance to marine life such as teredo worms that attached to the hull. The material, however, was very expensive so many shipwrights used sacrificial planks of wood nailed over layers of pitch and animal hair on the outer planking. Painting was then the last important task to be done before they launched the ship, but this was not always done elaborately. Goldenberg writes that in order to save money, a common inexpensive way to paint the ship was to cover the upper sides of the hull with turpentine, which eventually turned to a dark yellow. The underbody of the ship could be painted off-white with a combination of tallow and Sulfur (Goldenberg 1976).



*Figure 14. A portrait of a Colonial New England shipyard (Bogart 1911).*

It normally took about 3 or 4 months from contract to completion for a shipwright to build his ship. Ships built in the winter were expected to be ready at the end of spring while those built in the summer were often ready the fall (Goldenberg 1976). However, multiple issues delay the completion. Bad weather conditions, a delay in the purchase of material, and illness or death all could potentially drastically stall the construction of a vessel.

Once the ship was complete, it was time to for the launching. The launch of a ship was a celebratory event and attracted spectators from throughout the village. At the launching the new owner would customarily provide a free dinner and drink to all. Sometimes the ship was launched to celebrate a special day or event. The ship was christened with a simple toast, though most people probably missed the act during the festivity (Goldenberg 1976). However a special event, ship launchings were far from immune to accidents. While setting the ship loose, it was

possible for it to slide too soon and crush men beneath the cradle. If somebody was killed during the launch of a ship, the vessel was said to be “launched in blood” and was considered unlucky (Goldenberg 1976).

### ***The Snow Jeanie***

The *Jeanie* is also referred to as *Snow Jeanie*, which suggests that the ship was a snow or snaw. The snow was the most common merchant vessel during the eighteenth century. The snow had a standard main square course, the most distinguishing characteristic of the ship, as well as a loose-footed gaff sail. The gaff was normally set upon a trysail mast, sometimes called a snowmast, immediately abaft the mainmast. In the 1720s, shipbuilders began to add a boom, or horizontal beam, to the bottom of the sail which essentially created a “spanker” on the trysail mast (VanHorn 2005).

### *Masts*

The masts were only slightly inclined on this snow but the individual masts did have a definite taper. The main mast was 50 feet tall, the main topmast 32, and the main topgallant. The foremast was 47 feet, the foretopmast 31, and a fore topgallant of 14 feet. Snows do not have a royal mast. The bowsprit was 30 feet long and the jibboom 33 feet. The two had a 6-foot doubling.

Snows were a simple two-masted vessel so there was no mizzenmast. Instead, there was the trysail mast. The trysail mast was approximately 24 feet tall with a diameter of 7 inches. Neither the trysail mast nor yard had a taper, and the mast was connected just next to the main mast on



the deck, as seen below. The trysail mast served to help control the ship during harsh weather and assure that the ship's bow stayed to the wind. The snowmast was the defining feature between the snow and the brig, and a ship that could serve as both was called a hermaphrodite vessel.

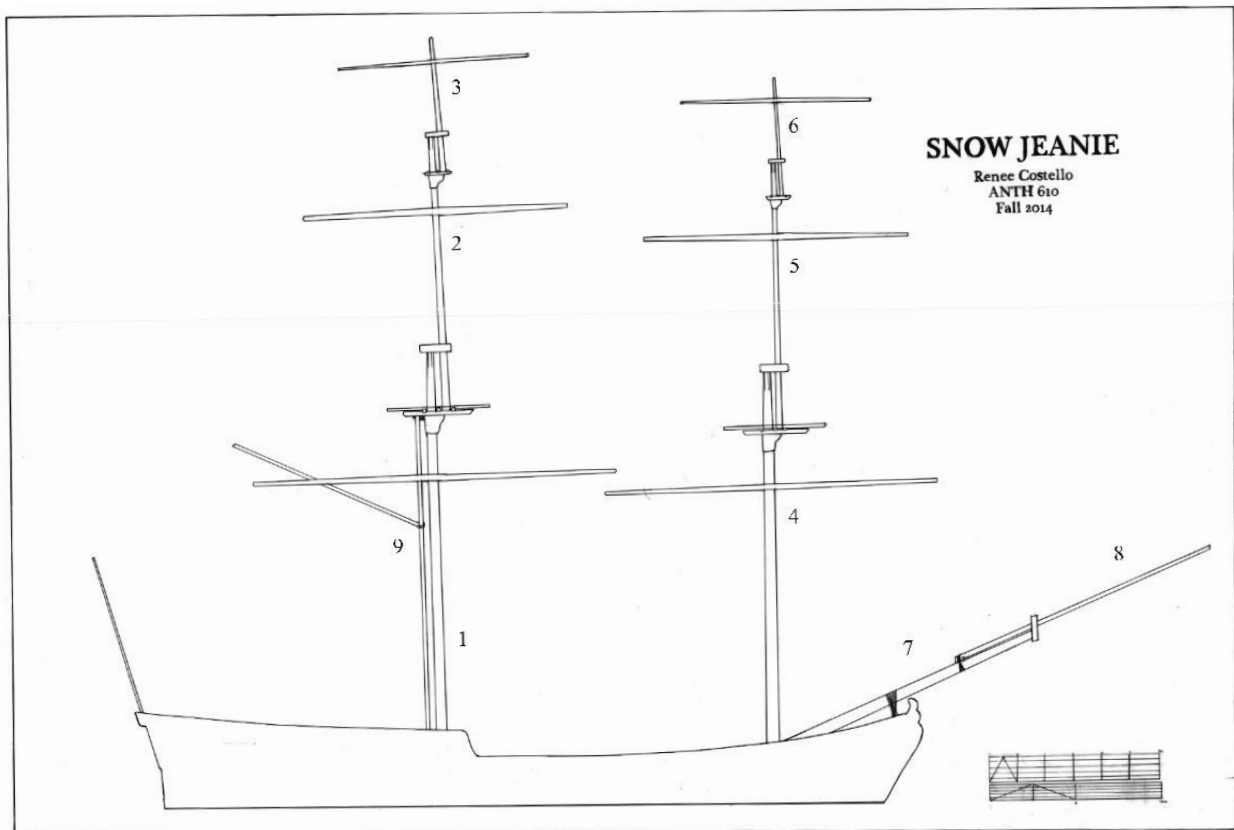


Figure 15 The standing rigging of the Snow Jeanie. 1) Mainmast, 2) Main topmast, 3) Main topgallant, 4)Foremast, 5)Fore topmast, 6) Fore togallant, 7) Bowsprit, 8) Jibboom

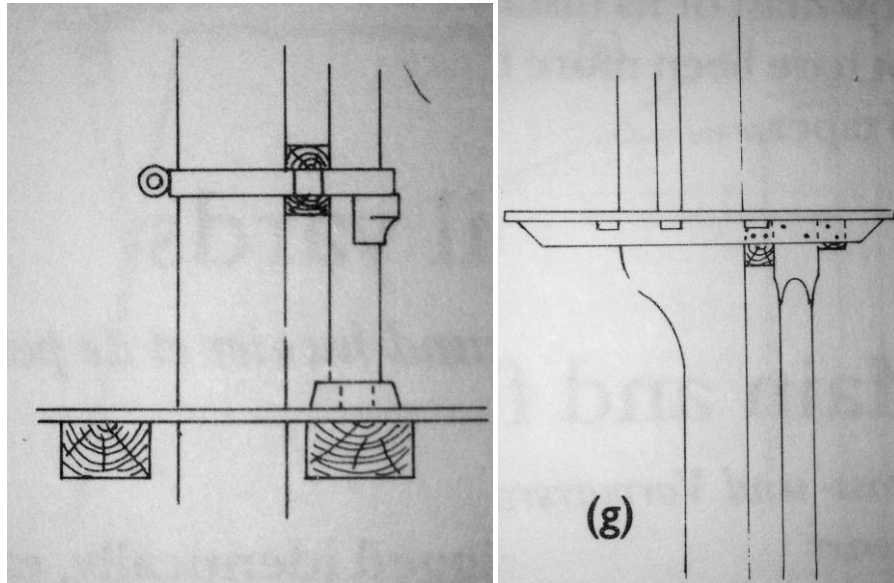


Figure 16. The mounting of a trysail mast to the mainmast (Marquardt 1992).

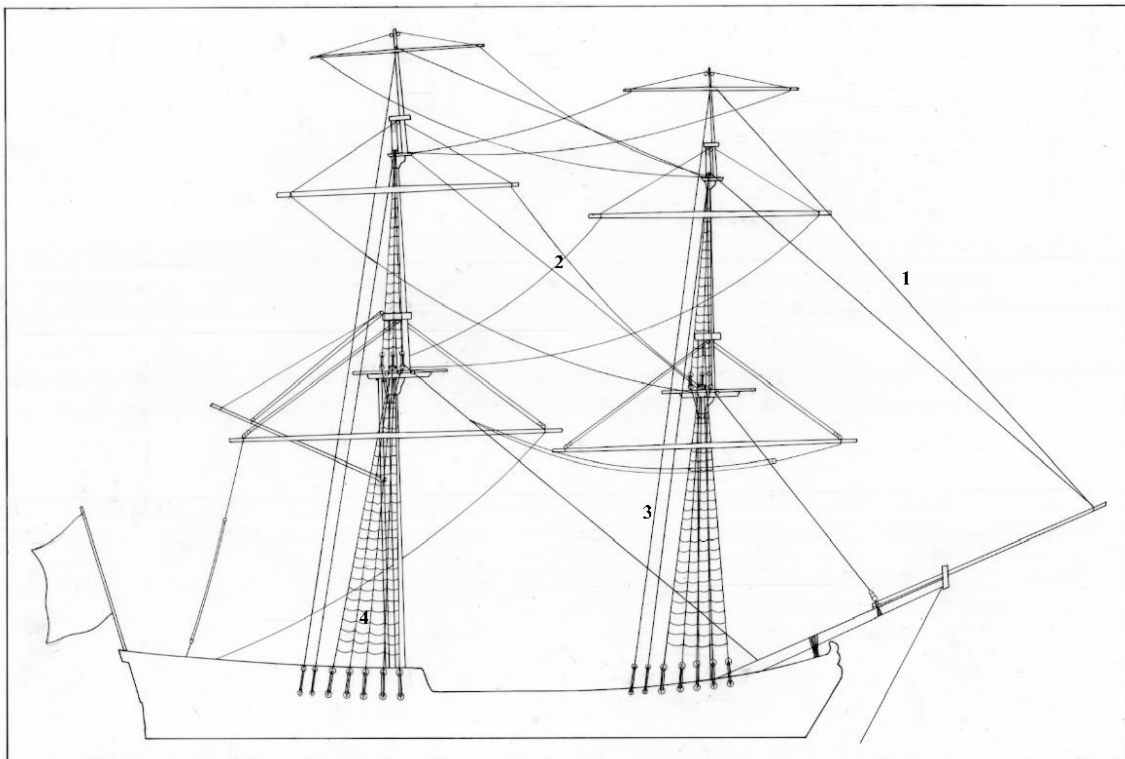
### *Standing Rigging*

The *Snow Jeanie*'s standing rigging consisted of stays on each of the masts. The fore topgallant and the fore topmast connected to the bowsprit, the main topgallant connected to the fore topmast, the foremast connected to the middle of the bowsprit just on the doubling, and the mainmast stay connected to the base of the bowsprit. The image below provides an adequate example of the stays found upon the *Jeanie*.

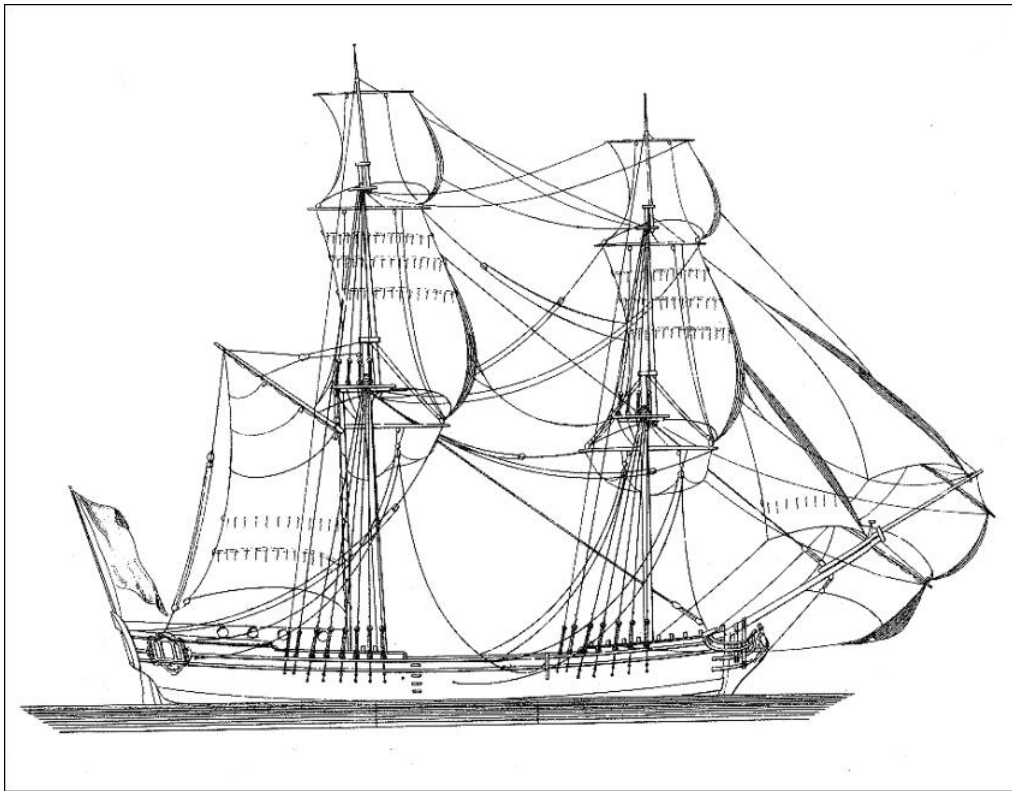
Four lower shroud lines on each side connected to a deadeye on the deck. On the topmast only three lines connected to 3 deadeyes just above the tops. These shrouds served both as a support system for the masts and ladder of sorts for sailors to climb up to the upper masts. The shrouds were lined with ratlines placed 13 inches apart laterally. The ratlines allowed sailors to climb up and adjust the uppers sails.

## *Running Rigging*

The upper yard braces connected to the opposite mast head. However, I found few details concerning the mainmast brace. While some iconography showed that the braces connected back to the foremast, many images depicted the brace going aft to the stern. Ultimately I chose to connect the brace to the back of the ship because the majority of the iconography showed it as such and I believe that the brace may have gone aft in order to avoid the snowmast. Below are two different depictions of a snow, one with the lower main braces connecting to the foremast and one connection to the stern of the boat. The braces of the lower foremast connected to the forward stay of the mainmast. The upper braces simply ran across and attached to the opposite attaching to the foot of a mast.



*Figure 17. The running rigging of the Snow Jeanie, 1) Shroud, 2) Braces 3) Shroud 4) Ratlines*



*Figure 18. A depiction of the snow rigging including sails (Marquardt 1992).*

### *Factual Discrepancies*

The most prominent issue I came across was a dispute in the tonnage of the ship. Initially, I found Carolyn Peter's doctoral dissertation over Glasgow's tobacco lords, which states that John Glassford owned "25 ships of 300 to 400 burthens" (Peters 1990). There was no citation for this figure but due to the fact that this information was really all I had, I concluded that the *Jeanie* was most likely around 350 tons. This would have been unreasonably large compared to the average size of a snow but seeing that she was Glassford's most used ship I did not question it too much. However, Dell published "The Operational Record of the Clyde Tobacco Fleet" which extensively covers the vessels used in the Clyde tobacco trade. Dell worked with the primary sources directly from the tobacco companies so I believe that his accounts are most accurate.

Dell presents the average tonnage of tobacco ships and from 1760 to 1769, the years the *Jeanie* was in use, the average tonnage was only 135. In addition, the largest ships ever employed in the tobacco trade were between 240 and 260 tons: not even remotely close to the claim of 300 to 400 (Dell 1982).

### **The Shipwright's Impact on Colonial Culture**

The initial growth of shipbuilding in New England created a capitalist disconnect with the Puritan lifestyle. Morris suggests that the local resources, skill and talent, and the ability to enthusiastically react to economic opportunity made commerce a priority in New England. John Winthrop's city on a hill now "overlooked a marvelous harbor bedecked with the tall masts of ships and waterfront filled with sights and sounds of trade with the Atlantic colonies, the Caribbean, and Europe." What was once a religious utopia was now facing the rise of a way of life based upon capitalist and material manifestations (Morris 1979).

The cultural impact of shipbuilding was widespread throughout the entire colonies. Towns across the coast, particularly in New England, revolved around the trade. Possessing a skilled trade created the possibility of social and economic growth and the shipbuilding trade provided once unknown workers with the opportunity to have a substantial position in their town. Shipbuilding represented an important occupation, and although the building of ships was rarely profitable for the individual shipwright, the industry played a vital part in the transformation of the American colonies (Morris 1979).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **EXPERIENCE AT SEA**

Historians often depict a sailor's life at sea as long, tiresome journeys full encounters with privateers and a rum-fueled mutiny. Many of the mariners were taken from small clustered local communities and launched into a new, boundless world. There is a romantic perception of the "Age of Sail" being a battle between man vs. the sea. This emphasis on the thrilling is understandable- the dramatic sea tales were what caught the public eye and ultimately ended up surviving the test of time. Additionally, the dangerous journeys and thrilling captains' logs are exciting to read. Though some merchant voyages were certainly just as dramatic if not more so, this was not the norm. Most mariners traveled across waters they knew well to ports that they had been to many times before. Seafaring was arduous and demanding labor, but more often than not it was a relatively predictable experience. The men saw these voyages as commonplace therefore their details were not often recorded or published. However, the common and the ordinary best describe life for the vast majority of mariners and to discount them in favor of excitement is to miss the true human experience for these men.

Rediker provides an overview of the characteristics of an average eighteenth-century Anglo American sailor. Often you found him wearing baggy wide pants cut a few inches above the ankle, tarred to protect against the cold wetness. He wore a blue and white linen checkered shirt, a blue or grey "fearnought" jacket, grey stockings, and a Monmouth hat. Rediker also describes the "peculiarities" in the language of those involved in the seafaring life: Technical terms,

unusual syntax, and frequent swearing. Most seamen left for sea in their late teens or early twenties while the more experienced captains were in their mid-thirties (Rediker 1989).

Modern historians must depend on ship's journals, personal memoirs, private letters, and court records to gain information on the subject. Before the 19th century, however, sailors wrote very few letters (few that survived, anyway) and ship's journals, though common enough, tend to be sparing in detail. There is a sizable number of surviving court records and treatises but the majority of them tend emphasize drama, danger, and difficulty. The typical issues that mariners faced could be solved informally thus did not require formal record. Memoirs cover a wider range of evidence, bad times and good, but are still selective. Mariners composed them relatively late in life and the events were based on recollection. It was the ordinary and expected, as much as the extraordinary and feared, that local mariners encountered when they shipped themselves on voyages overseas (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

### **A Career as a Sailor**

Davis states that men went to sea, "to see the world, to get a good rate of pay, to get a good job of some sort at any price, to do what father did..." (Davis 1962). Mariners were often selected for a voyage based on their kin and family relationships. One can assume from the tangled integration of crew and town that the process of selecting a crew must have been based domestic and informal, "decided for the most part on street corners, across kitchen tables, and outside the meetinghouse door" (Vickers and Walsh 2005). Tavern and boardinghouses played an important role in facilitation the labor market for large port cities. Because the captain normally chose the crew he would bring along on the voyage, we have reason to believe that the mariners were Scottish like Captain Omey. Most sailors were paid entirely in cash, which was very rare for the

cash-poor colonies. The wages that sailors were able to negotiate depended on many factors such as skill and experience, physical capability, and personal attributes that made for a dependable hand (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

Prior to the voyage, the captain and sailors spent weeks preparing the ship for sail. Some of this work merely completed projects that had been ongoing for weeks or even months. The mariners purchased necessary tools such as boards, nails, tars, cloths, and rum and sugar to entice the sailors to keep working. As the date of sail approached, the pace quickened. This process was expensive and required the arduous work of dozens of men (Vickers and Walsh 2005)

Rediker elaborates as the mariner as a single entity in the collective workforce aboard the ship. The organization of labor began with the master, who represented the merchant. The master managed everything relating to the cargo, voyage, and sailors. In addition, he controlled the navigation and steering of the vessel, ran one of the two watches, and normally inflicted the punishments (Rediker 1989).

The mate came second to the master. He looked over the other watch and oversaw the daily routines aboard the ship. The mate needed to be prepared to take over the ship at any moment in the vent of the master's death so he needed a sure knowledge of navigation (Rediker 1989). The next line of command included the carpenter, the boatswain, the gunner; all with specialties absolutely necessary to the ship functionality. Next in line was the quartermaster, who did not require any special training. Instead, Rediker explains that he was an experienced or "smart" mariner who received a slightly higher monthly pay to assist with the mates. The cook on the



ship held a similar role- often a wounded seaman no longer able to perform heavy duty, the cook rarely was a trained chef based on the ubiquitous complaints about the ship's meals (Rediker 1989).

And lastly came the common seaman. The seaman was trained to conduct the necessary changes to the rigging and sailing of the ship as well as how to steer the ship, to knot and splice the lines, and to understand the winds, weather, skies, and mood of the commander. Rediker elaborates that two kinds of seamen could be found on a vessel- the able, trained seaman and the young inexperienced seaman, still trying to learn "the mysteries of tying a clove-hitch or going aloft to reef in a sail in a blustery thunderstorm" (Rediker 1989).

Though the mariners learned most of the necessary skills on the job, mariners had the option of using multiple guides detailing and rules and ways of sailing. James Love's *The Mariners Jewel*, published at the end of the seventeenth century, is one work that provides overview of the necessary proportional sizes of sails, ropes, and beams (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

### **A Mariner's Work**

According to Vickers, even the most detailed log-books and memoirs from seventeenth and eighteenth century sailors rarely describe the way in which routine work was performed at sea. Ship's journals, though intended to give record of the happenings aboard the ship, recorded the progress of the ship and its business more than the specific tasks and the men who performed them (Vickers and Walsh 2005)

That said, we do know that the multiple tasks were split up between the rankings of the men on board. Menial tasks were described as explicitly sailors' work while masters gave orders from the quarterdeck to the first mates, normally positioned forward. Large ships required an extensive amount of coordination but a small vessel such as the *Jeanie* was easier to manage. The men were split up between the day and night watches, each with only between four and two men on duty. This created a need for the masters and mates to chip in for routine tasks much more than those in a large vessel (Vickers and Walsh 2005). The greatest task worked on a voyage was setting and shortening sails, to trim them as the wind shifted and to man the helm, all of which was generally accomplished in two groups, one directed by the master and the other by the mate (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

### **Life on the Vessel**

When off duty, officers and crew alike were able to wash, mend clothing, swap stories, gamble, drink, sleep, and eat. Vickers highlights that much of this recreational activity took place in the same physical space and informal spirit as the normal laborious work. The master and mate, however, had cabins aft of the ship that included just a small bunk and little room for their individual portage. Even the captain's quarters were around eight square feet but they did have the advantage of privacy of which the ordinary hands lacked (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

Eating was one of the most commonly recorded forms of shipboard recreation. Despite their differences in class, captains and sailors ate the same food. The meals were plain, combining the limited supplied food such as beef, pork, lamp, and chicken, mixed with hard bread, beans, potatoes, or johnnycake and washed down with cider, beer, or rum. On shorter voyages

provisions did not deteriorate and mariners were spared the worst sort of tainted meat, wormy biscuit, and stinking water that faced sailors of long-distance trade. Fishing brought in fresh mackerel, cod, salmon, shark, barracuda, and dolphin. Most vessels carried livestock such as chickens, pigs, and sheep. Vickers argues that in smaller vessels there was no cook, so the work of preparation was equally spread throughout the crew (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

The drunken sailor is a cliché than appears in almost any depiction of the age of sail. Cotton Mather wrote that “serious piety” was most likely not high on the list of how spare time was passed among the “sea faring tribe”. But putting aside the common tropes of alcohol, how much of an impact did drinking have on the experience of a sailor? Most vessels carried some provision of alcohol varying between cider, rum, and beer. Mariners often purchased enough alcohol to last them through future voyages (Vickers and Walsh 2005).

### **The Voyage Aboard the *Snow Jeanie***

As I have stated previously, Henderon’s letter book provides readers with insight to almost every step of the *Jeanie*’s voyage. Though we do not see what happened to the ten men aboard the *Jeanie*, this letter book serves as the single most defining narrative of the vessel’s time at sea. In this section I will discuss each letter in which the *Jeanie* is mentioned.

Although Henderson’s letter book only spans 8 years, the *Jeanie* is constantly discussed throughout the entirety of the letters, until the last page of the letter book dated February 27, 1765 (Henderson 1999). Our first record of her role in Glassford’s company was in a letter to Captain Neil Jamieson from Henderson on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1758. Henderson writes that Captain

Merich is carrying 25 hogsheads of tobacco, marked “G”, down a river, most likely the Potomac, to be loaded upon the *Jeanie* for her voyage across the Atlantic. Hammrick notes that the G most likely was enclosed inside a diamond logo and was the Glassford “mark” branded to tobacco casks. Normally Glassford and Henderson would make note of a recently purchased ship in their letters so we can assume that the *Jeanie* had been in use for some time at this point.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1759, 116 hogsheads were shipped between the two ships, the *America* and the *Jeanie*, in addition to 2 [cwt] of fine Barley, 2 firkins of good herrings, and 1 cwt of good Cheese, made in the Parish of Dunlop if to be had. In the Port books we have her arrival confirmed on September 24<sup>th</sup>, (Henderson 1999) The vessel is not mentioned again in the letter book until June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1760. Henderson writes to Glassford’s son, James Glassford, his recommendation to procure the greatest dispatch for the *Jeanie*. Henderson suggests that to detain the vessel for even 15 days more would be the “of the worst consequence” (Henderson 1999) as it would slow down the process of trade and ultimately limit profit. However, that same day Henderson also wrote to John Glassford that the *Jeanie* sprung a leak after part of the tobacco was on board. The leak was fixed and she was able to take on 198 hogsheads of tobacco. Captain Omey expected her to sail in about 28 days but was uncertain on the certainty of the date (Henderson 1999).

On November 13<sup>th</sup> of the same year, Henderson writes to Glassford discussing the winter plans for the company. He mentions that his brother had hoped to charter “from some person in the province for the proportion of the friendship which he is to fill up, and also for the whole or the greatest part of the *Jeanie*, in case of her arrival, but I find it is not to be done for either. In

addition, he says the scheme that “some of the gentlemen have resolved upon” is to charter their vessels even at a lot freight and sell the tobacco they had purchased to load them in the country. Henderson writes that the company had no plans for the *Jeanie* but to lie in the winder, which would be a very bad affair as freights had been offered 7 pounds per ton (Henderson 1999).

One interesting event found in the letter book is that the *Jeanie* was chartered out to other businessmen on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1761. The *Jeanie*, under the control of Omey, was chartered to James Clark for Thomas Knox and Company, merchants in Bristol, on the following terms. She is to be loaded in ninety days from the first day of January and there will be a fee of three pounds per day past that point. She is to be discharged in thirty days after her arrival at the Quay of Bristol and the same late fee applies. Glassford will receive a ten pounds two shillings and sixpence per ton of 4 hogsheads that the ship carries, one half of which is to be paid at discharge of the ship and the other half three months after. Glassford will not pay any of the port charges, pilotage, etc. (Henderson 1999). In July of 1762 when Henderson expressed to Glassford that he was concerned about the charter of the *Jeanie*. He writes that there is a dispute over who is to pay the port fees (Henderson 1999).

Despite the disputes, the *Jeanie* arrived in Bristol around September of 1762, “with so light an insurance that, and the affair of the Bill, have both ended better than you expected.” (Henderson 1999) Her next voyage came in spring of 1763, carrying 34 hogsheads of tobacco, weighing 36203 net wt., under the command of Omey. In addition, Omey had undertaken to carry half a dozen Bacon Hams for Mrs. Glassford during this voyage. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, she had yet to arrive in Virginia. Henderson wrote, “We daily look & wish for the *Jeanie*’s arrival, her load of

Tobacco being ready. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, she was shipped back to Scotland with a much larger load: 92 hogsheads of tobacco, weighing 94095 wt. Although this seems to be a large shipment, Henderson writes, “tho’ my Quantity of tobacco on board the *Jeanie* is but small yet I have done everything in my power to contribute to the Dispatch of that Vessell, and I heartily wish her a good Voyager [sic]” (Henderson 1999). She apparently made it to sea just in time, as there was a very severe frost in that December that destroyed a quarter of the tobacco in Virginia.

Upon her return to Henderson, the *Jeanie* was so full of goods that it took eight days to unload it all. The return journey was even larger than the previous one, with the *Jeanie* carrying 113 hogsheads of tobacco marked “g” and 58 marked “JGA” (John Glassford, Alexandria).

Henderson concludes his letter, “I have only to wish the *Jeanie* a safe and Speedy Voyage and her Tobacco to a better Market than you expect for it.” She left Quantico to a clear sea on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Scotland in December, with considerable saving in insurance. Our last mention of the *Jeanie* is found in the last page of the letter book on February 27, 1765, detailing her arrival at the mouth of Quantico. Henderson writes that she will be loaded with the usual ballast, pig iron, by the first of April ((Henderson 1999).

Though these are the last records of *Jeanie* directly from Glassford, there is also proof that she continued to be of use for years following. The Port Books indicate her arrival to port Glasgow in August of 1766, March 1767, August 1769, August 1771, and March 1773 (Henderson 1999). These records would indicate that the *Jeanie* served John Glassford for at least 25 years, which is unheard of for merchant vessels of her kind. Though there is a chance that Glassford purchased a second snow and named it *Jeanie* after the first vessel was deemed unfit for use, we have no

proof of her retirement or the purchase of another vessel. Furthermore, the Revolution three years later strained business practice for Glassford & Company and there are currently no existing records from the shop during this time period. We do not know what ultimately happened to the Jeanie, instead she simply disappears from record.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to provide a biography of the *Snow Jeanie*. Her story began with John Glassford and the “tobacco lords” and continued onto her birthplace, a shipyard in Boston. Once she was put to use, she brought us to the Virginia tobacco plantations and Glassford’s shops scattered across the Chesapeake. The *Jeanie* then sailed across the Atlantic, carrying either tobacco or goods and a crew of Scottish mariners. With a limited number of surviving documents regarding the actual vessel, only tentative conclusions can be drawn about the factual events of her time at sea. Using the ship as a sort of hypothetical symbol, however, is still useful in providing a portrait of the maritime industry as a whole.

In analyzing the tobacco lords, one can see the cultural implications of the economic powerhouse that was the tobacco trade. The goods that the *Jeanie* brought in return were indicative of the local consumer trends and the credit and debit system revolutionized the way merchants did business with the cash-poor colonists. The vessel was also at the heart of a socioeconomic revolution in Puritan New England. What was once a colony based upon religious beliefs suddenly turned into the hub of the shipbuilding industry, exemplifying the shift to a capitalist society. In regards to the sailors aboard the vessels, as written by Rediker, “...once assembled on the ship, seamen turned the wooden world to their own purpose, using it as a new type of mobile community” (Rediker 1989). This vessel, essentially a large wooden box, turned into a home and workplace for the mariners and created an on-board culture of its own.



Though I have provided the best possible picture given the time and resource constraints of this thesis, there is still much to learn about the *Jeanie*. Ultimately, we do not know the ending of her story. I believe that she was most likely used until she was condemned unfit for sail and then eventually sold for parts but there is no historic evidence proving so. There may be additional documentation that I did not discover such a journal of a mariner aboard the ship, an invoice from her construction in Boston, proof of her sale, or even a letter detailing the trip in which she possibly wrecked. These documents may be hidden in an archive or they may have been discarded over a hundred years ago. Though the biography of the *Jeanie* may be incomplete, I believe the story that she tells about the maritime culture of Colonial America is still significant.

The *Jeanie* may have just been one vessel. Even during the eighteenth century, the merchant vessel was not perceived to be anything special. They were most often simply constructed and the majority of the voyages went smoothly. However, if one takes a look at the entire life of the ship, from beginning to end, we can see how pervasive the maritime industry was in colonial life. The vessel was a method of transporting important goods unique to each port. It was an actual good itself, created by the hands of a group of skilled American craftsmen. It was a home away from home to sailors and a career path for the captains. The *Jeanie* connected the wealthiest man in Europe with a poor sailor boy. She connected the Puritan New England shipbuilder with the Southern tobacco planter. She influenced two entire industries, shipbuilding and the tobacco trade, and was the backbone behind the emergence of merchant stores. Yes, ultimately the *Jeanie* was a simple ship. However, I argue that the *Jeanie* was not only a vessel for goods, but also a vessel of culture.

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