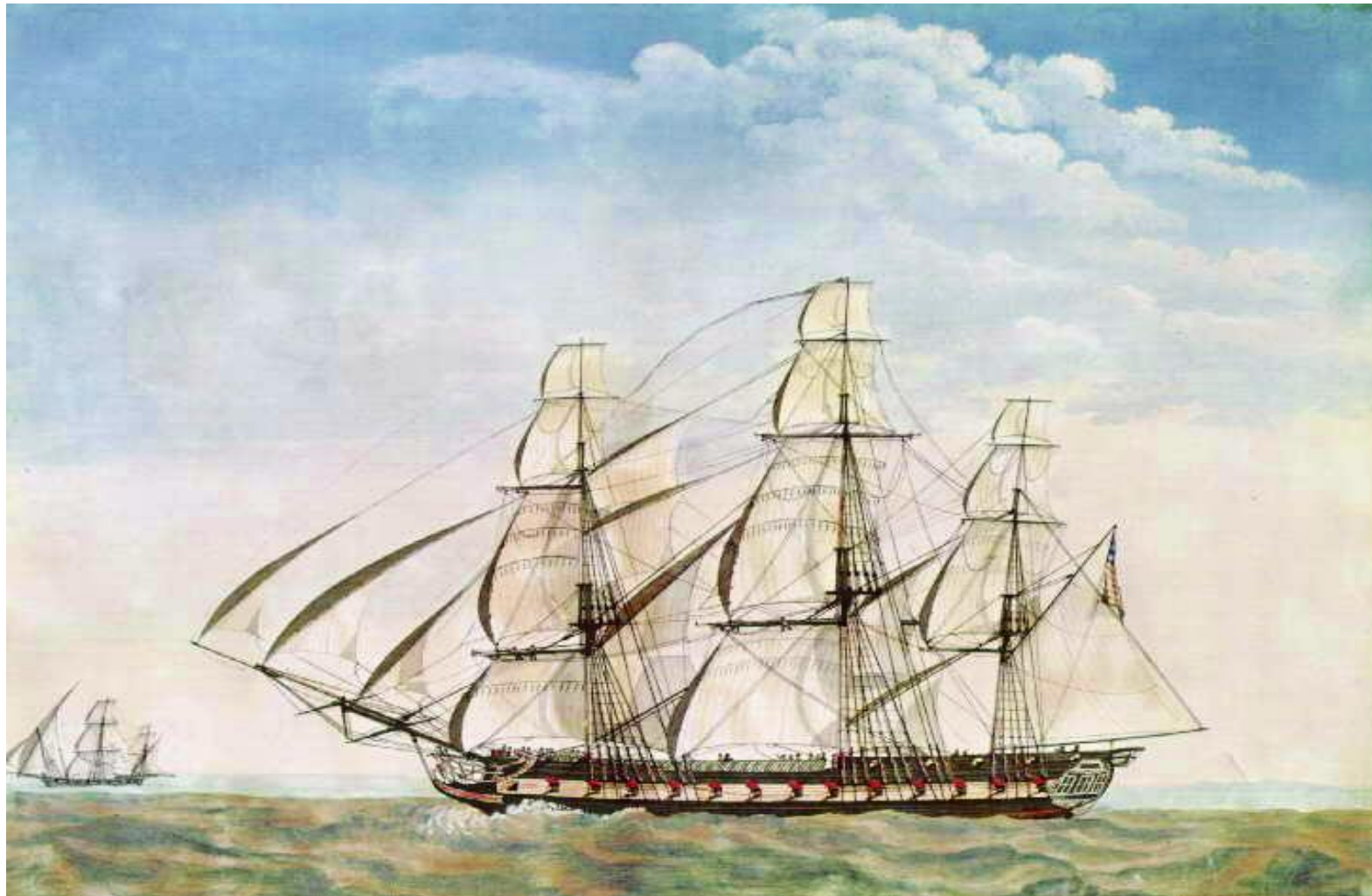


The Essex of 1799

A Not Uncommon Research Journey



The Howard Painting

Give me a fast ship!
Give me a beautiful ship!

The Naval Era Post Revolutionary War

- A depleted nation in 1783
- Disbanded the Continental Navy 1784-1785
- Embattled Europe, North African piracy forced Congress to authorize a new Navy via the Navy Act of 1794
- Department of War (Knox) consulted Humphrey, Fox and Hackett in the design of the first 6 frigates

Frigate		Guns		Master Builder		Launch
Chesapeake		44		Fox		1799
Constitution		44		Claghorn		1797
President		44		Bergh		1800
United States		44		Humphreys		1797
Congress		36		Hackett		1799
Constellation		36		Stodder		1797

The Naval Era Post Revolutionary War (Continued)

- Five additional Frigates (Subscripted; i.e. built in private and given to the Navy)

Frigate		Guns		Builder		Launch
Essex		32		Briggs		1799
John Adams		26		Pritchard		1799
Philadelphia		36		Humphreys et al		1799
New York		36		Peck/Carpenter		1800
Boston		28		Hartt		1799

- ✓ Essex, a fifth rate frigate
 - An answer to Barbary, French and British interdiction
 - Armor, 32 carronade; would spell its fate at Valparasio
- ✓ Designed by William Hackett
 - 141.5 feet long
 - 36 feet 6 inch abeam (*see Hackett draft to come*)
 - By comparison the to the Constitution 175 feet
- ✓ Built and launched in just 6 months (1799)
 - Salem, Massachusetts
 - Built by Enos Briggs
- ✓ Commissioned by Salem citizenry, **Essex County**



Nothing to do with the Essex launch, just a painting I liked

The Modeler's Dilemma

Documentation for period vessels, may not have been preserved

Not only record keeping affected documentation:

- ✓ Vessels were modified or repaired over their usable life span due to normal degradation, battle scars, storm damage, refit or upgrade. Thus their configuration could be in a state of change over the vessel's life.
- ✓ Very few have survived and even those that have may not be representative of the era of interest to the modeler. As an example the Constitution is still in some state of restoration and definitive documentation does not exist.

The Modeler's Dilemma (Continued) rephrase this slide

Considerations for the modeler:

- ✓ Stepping back a bit; “You want to build a model, why?”
 - A casual interest or a past time?
 - A passionate interest in the art or subject?
- ✓ Nesting down a bit;
 - *Are you interested in a period of time?*
 - *A Class of vessel?*
 - *Or a particular vessel of historic significance?*
- ✓ Kits abound for many subjects
 - Some may have a level of historical accuracy
 - Kit “bashing” may be more research intensive
- ✓ Scratch most likely requires an intensive research

The Modeler's Dilemma (Continued)

Beginning the journey:

- ✓ What is the period of interest?
 - Launch
 - An interim event such as a post launch repair or refit
 - A significant event such as at a decisive battle
- ✓ Is sufficient, substantiated information available for the build?
 - If not what are the options?
 - Can I back up the decision?
- ✓ Once decided put a “stake in the ground” and hold to it!
- ✓ Don't mix periods!
- ✓ But (there always is one) will you be open to new interpretation?

Gathering Sufficient & Substantiated Data for Period Vessels

- ✓ Typical Sources
 - Original Draughts
 - Documentation
 - Paintings
 - Reconstructed Drawings
 - Artifacts
 - Supporting Information

Gathering Data for Period Vessels; Sources

- Original Draughts (*Incomplete Examples*)
 - ✓ National Archives if it is an American Vessel
 - ✓ Naval Repository
<http://www.history.navy.mil/search.html?q=ship+plans>
 - ✓ Royal Museum of Greenwich
www.rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum
 - ✓ Swedish Museum Archive
<https://www.sjohistoriska.se/en/collections/archives>
 - ✓ French
<http://www.musee-marine.fr/brest>
 - ✓ Dutch
https://www.amsterdam.info/museums/netherlands_maritime_museum/
 - ✓ Spanish
<https://www.barcelona.de/en/barcelona-museum-maritim.html>
 - ✓ Portuguese
<https://web.archive.org/web/20070715232804/http://museu.marinha.pt/Museu/Site/PT/SobreMuseu/Historial/>

- Essex Drawing Sources

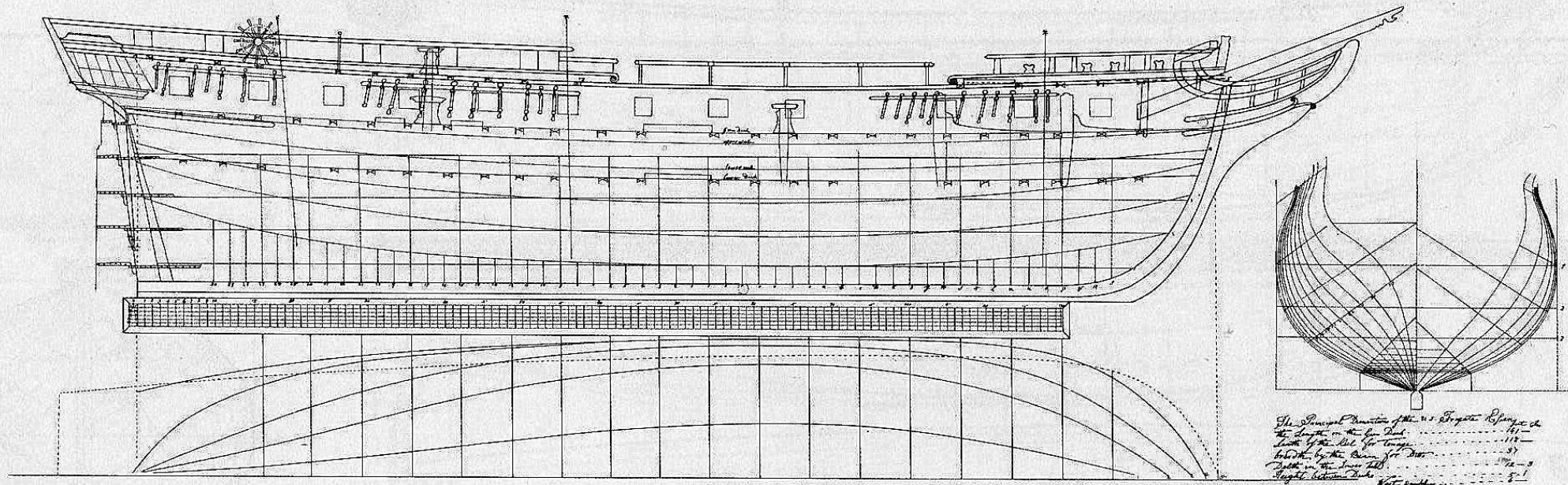
- ✓ Hackett drawing, 1799, National Archives

- “As built for launch”
 - Lacking in detail
 - Comments made that he was a poor draftsman
 - Suggested that it is a preliminary draught to calculate timber needs
 - Included in Essex Papers

- ✓ New draught Circa 1810; William Avery Baker

- Captures modifications (of refit) post launch
 - Included in Essex Papers

Hackett Draught ??????(cleaned up)



This is the draft of the HMS Essex prior to be converted to a prison ship circa 1820. Or is it?

Essex, Frigate, 32 guns.

Built at Salem, Massachusetts, for U.S. Government by citizens of Salem under Act of Congress, June 30, 1798. Cost \$139,362. Designed by William Hackett. Agent: Joseph Waters. Builder: Enos Briggs. Launched September 30, 1799. Commissioned December 17, 1799. Carvings by Samuel McIntire.

Principal dimensions: Length on gun deck—141' 5"; Breadth—37' 8"; Depth—12' 3"; Tonnage—850; Complement—228; Battery (1799)—26 12-pounders, 10 6-pounders.

- Essex Drawing Sources – Subsequent Renderings
 - ✓ Stephen's drawings circa 1957
 - Sources; Hackett and Baker
 - Likely the NRG Repository/Model Shipways kit (#1) of the Essex 1957
 - Depicts arguable deviations
 - ✓ Chappelle, "The History of American Sailing Ships"
 - Most likely the Stephen's drawings redrawn circa 1957???
 - Again, depicts arguable deviations
 - Caution** Chappelle was known for making unsupported changes
 - ✓ Portia Takakjian drawing circa 1980s
 - Contemporary drawing/model
 - Sources Hackett, Baker, Essex Papers and personal "research amendments"
 - ✓ Robert's; Drawing for MS (#2) kit
 - Likely the Stephen's drawing circa 1984 kit, amendments????

The United States Frigate

"Essex"

Trim "Ready for Sea"
Best Sailing Trim

Trim "Ready for Sea"
Best Sailing Trim

Principal Dimensions

Length on the Gun Deck	141' 0"
" " " "	118' 0"
" " between Perpendiculars	140' 0"
Beam Moulded	36' 6"
" " for Tonnage	37' 0"
Depth in Hold	18' 3"
Burthen in Tons	NR 850 ⁶⁸

Inboard Profile and Plan

"Essex"

Note the
terminology

Plate IV. ESSEX. Redrawn from plan found in the United States Navy files. Stern reconstructed. Extent of gangways in deck arrangement uncertain. Plan shows the vessel as originally built in 1797.

Likely The Stephen's
Drawing

- Essex Drawing Sources – Subsequent Renderings
 - ✓ Portia Takajian updated drawings for Anatomy of a Ship, circa 1990s
 - Much more formal and detailed Publication
 - *“If built it would be an Essex that was never was”*
 - *AOS are factually accurate but may not produce a model of an known version*
 - Corrections to address contemporary thinking of 1980s
 - ✓ Aeropiccola, no longer in business, can find online rendering, date unknown
 - Baker derived ?
 - Hull lines align well, kit reproduction aside (Taubman?)
 - ✓ Drawings of MS kit (#3) developed by Sam Cassano circa 2012
 - Research driven redesign
 - Period: Launch with documented changes (ala Preble?)
 - Still some argument from the community

- **Essex Documentation Sources**

- ✓ Captian Preble Log circa 1799-1801 (circa launch, post launch)
- ✓ Campbell, Stewart Logs 1807 -1809 relative to retrofit
- ✓ “The Barbary Wars, Personnel and Ships Data” (1934)
- ✓ Steel’s Shipwright’s Vade Mecum 1805 (reference)
- ✓ The Essex Papers, circa 1974, Phillip Chadwick Smith
- ✓ Nautical Research Journal 1956 Volume 8 No.6 through 1957 Volume 9 No.2
- ✓ Model Ship Builder, 1982, No. 18 through No. 32, Portia Takakjian
- ✓ Chappelle, “The History of American Sailing Ships”
- ✓ Anatomy of the Ship, Portia Takakjian, 1990
- ✓ Modeling The US Frigate Essex, 2013, Sam Cassano

- Essex Painting Sources
 - ✓ Howard painting circa 1800, Peabody Museum
 - ✓ *Roppes; Valparaiso Battle*



- **Essex Visual (Artifacts) Sources**
 - ✓ Fully rigged model, by Frances Diane Robotti, Peabody Museum
 - ✓ Costagliola, reference NRJ 19:87
 - ✓ Henning, reference NRJ 5:159
 - ✓ Huebner, reference NRJ L2:148
 - ✓ Koehler, reference NRJ 20:113
 - ✓ Orr, reference NRG registry 4;180, 5:27, 6:28
 - ✓ Camp, photo NRJ 20:34
 - ✓ Moreland, photo NRJ 8:153
 - ✓ Dr Robert Dowst model (influenced by Howard painting)
 - ✓ Joseph Francella model (Hackett Drawing influence)
 - ✓ Takakjian, model build Model Ship Builder 1982, #13 through #32
 - ✓ Kurt, model build, Model Ship Builder, 1982, #17, #18
 - ✓ Sam Cassano, kit designer's model build, 2011

- **Essex Secondary Information Sources**
 - ✓ Salem historical records of the period
 - ✓ Life and times of various significant residents
 - ✓ Naval Documents related to the Quasi War with France
 - ✓ Ship Builder's Repository
 - ✓ Inter naval correspondence
 - ✓ Porter Family Papers (1798- 1899), Library of Congress

Obvious Divergence Factors

- ✓ Hackett original drawing, not a fully detailed draught, does not show the transom and somewhere prior to launch the quarter deck, most forward, gun port was considered useless and closed off at the direction of Preble. This was not updated on the Hackett draught.
- ✓ Baker, 10 years later, went on board and noted changes in hull, gun ports on the quarter deck, ??? Tumblehome armament sail
- ✓ Boats were later hung on davits rather than stowed aboard
- ✓ Portia Takakjian reproduction as Stephens and others used a 6 window transom. Structural dictates, some kits and models depict 5. Portia arbitrarily decided to use English rules for framing in her 1980s model build in Model Ship Builder.
- ✓ Portia corrected the framing in her book the Anatomy of the Ship circa 1990s but kept the 6 window transom and quarter deck gun ports per Hackett.
- ✓ Sam Cassano's drawings for Model Shipways depicts launch configuration, drawing from other sources; (Howard painting) as well as the Essex Papers, includes a 5 window transom, closed off quarter deck gun port.

A Very Timely Article:

- ✓ Latest Nautical Research Journal “ Researching 18th Century Warships in British Archives”
- ✓ Volume 63, No.3 Autumn 2018
- ✓ Loaded with information on research methodology and more repository references

So Which Model to Build??????

- ✓ Model Shipways POB Kit as delivered
- ✓ Model Shipways POB kit with scratch enhancements
- ✓ Convert the Model Shipways kit to POF
- ✓ Other choices and what period ?