

# SHORE STYLE



Philip Tankard enjoys a roll on the logs that will be used to restore the Edna E. Lockwood.

PATRICIA TANKARD COOK IMAGE



The Edna Lockwood is undergoing renovations at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland.

SUBMITTED IMAGE

## Machipongo pines anchor boat restoration

Logs from Shore trees used to restore historic bug-eye at St. Michael's museum

PHILIP W. TANKARD  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS





It's a small world. Every now and then an exciting coincidence comes along. Such happened to me last October while attending a conference at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland.

An architect by profession, I am a small craft volunteer at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Mystic, Connecticut, and the two-day conference about preserving traditional small craft was right up my alley.

One of the highlights for me was a talk by museum's boatyard manager Michael Gorman on the upcoming restoration of the Edna E. Lockwood, a classic Chesapeake Bay bug-eye built in 1889. The Lockwood is the centerpiece of the museum's historic floating fleet.

Bugeyes were built specifically for oyster dredging, with a shallow draft, 2.7 feet in the case of the Edna Lockwood, and low sides. First built around the time of the Civil War, bugeyes were a modification of the log canoes that were used by Native American Indians.

The hulls of the boats used 7, 9 or 11 massive timbers, each approximately 50 feet long. The restoration team began seeking 52-foot long southern yellow pine logs to restore the 54-foot 8-inch-long Lockwood in 2014.

Gorman spoke of the challenge of finding the massive pine timbers necessary for the sailing vessel's \$700,000 restoration. Luckily, he said, someone from his church knew someone who knew a source in "lower Virginia."

Even though I had never heard any part of Virginia described as "lower Virginia," my curiosity was piqued. Jokingly I whispered to my Seaport colleague, "I wonder if they're coming off my family's farm."

Next, Todd Croteau, the maritime program coordinator with the National Park Service, got into the details of the Edna E. Lockwood's construction. Using photogrammetry and a laser scanner, his team had prepared 3D computer models as well as 2D line drawings of the 127-year old working vessel.

His dynamic presentation had me fully engaged. A virtual model of the vessel was rotated to show the boat from myriad angles. Major components were pulled away, then reassembled to show how she had been built. And the nine big timbers — the



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"logs" — needed for the hull were individually illustrated in what would be their final, hand-hewn shape.

Following the presentations I dashed up to Gorman. "Where in 'lower Virginia' did you find the trees?" I asked. "Little town called 'Maa-cha-ponn-go,'" he replied. "You mean Machipongo?" I asked. "Yes, that's it."

Hmm, the trail was getting warm, but there are lots of pine trees in Machipongo. "So who's the logger," I asked. "Paul Jones." Check. "Where exactly in Machipongo were the trees?"

Joe Conner, a young museum shipwright who had also visited the site, chimed in "We talked to this organic farmer who lives next door." Okay, now we're getting hot! "And there was an old farmhouse nearby," he continued.

That didn't fit — we don't have a farmhouse anymore. Then I remembered the abandoned tenant house that's covered in vines and all but forgotten.

I pulled out my phone and brought up Google Earth. Conner pointed to the stand of uncut trees next to the road. "That's our farm," I exclaimed. To the small, assembled crowd, he said with some amazement "Hey, the trees are on his family's farm! What are the odds?!" At that moment, I felt like a star!

I went on to explain that we had recently sold the timber and that the farm from which it was harvested had been in our family for generations.

I told the museum staff how thrilled I was that loblolly pine from our farm might be used in this worthy project. I said might because the museum was at that time still negotiating with Paul Jones to purchase the timber.

Gorman, who is also the ship-

wright in charge of the restoration, made a few calls but didn't hear back from Jones right away.

He began calling Jones every few days. His persistence was rewarded — Jones called with a generous offer — his company would like to donate the timber. The museum raised \$10,000 to cover the transportation costs.

In April, my sister Patricia and I were driving from Virginia back to New England and took the opportunity to stop by and see our logs.

I had the thrill of being able to hop onto the floating logs — lumberjack style.

Patricia more circumspectly brought a pine seedling from the farm to give to the restoration staff. In a hundred years or so it might be able to be part of another restoration.

Having trees from our family's farm used to restore an historic Chesapeake Bay boat has been meaningful for me. Though I have lived in Connecticut for many years, my roots are firmly tied to Virginia's Eastern Shore. I grew up on the bayside where I gained a healthy appreciation for boats, particularly workboats.

During my childhood, my dad Phil Tankard, a Naval Academy graduate (Class of '27), passed along many wonderful stories about the once ubiquitous skipjacks and bugeyes of the Chesapeake.

I've been fascinated by these majestic vessels ever since.

Although the typical bug-eye sailed only for 20 years or so, the Edna E. Lockwood has surpassed that time frame by more than 100 years.

According to museum chief curator Peter Leshner, she is "believed to be the only historic log-



PHILIP TANKARD IMAGE

Patricia Tankard Cook presents a pine seedling from Northampton County to shipwright Michael Gorman.



IMAGE COURTESY: CHESAPEAKE BAY MARITIME MUSEUM

Logs from Machipongo arrive at Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum for the Edna Lockwood restoration project.



IMAGE COURTESY: CHESAPEAKE BAY MARITIME MUSEUM

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum shipwright Michael Gorman looks at an old-growth southern pine in the Tankard family's farm near Machipongo. The museum staff counted rings of one of the cut logs to determine the tree's age: they stopped counting at 120.

bottomed bug-eye still sailing." her hull. I hope she will sail With Machipongo pine logs in many more.