

Building Toward the Future:

THE EVOLUTION OF *EDNA LOCKWOOD*'S RESTORATION TEAM

by Kate Livie



In restoration projects, most of the attention is given to the final product—the renovated Victorian house, the refinished chest of drawers, and, in this case, the lovely rebuilt bug-eye.

Undoubtedly, the relaunch of *Edna Lockwood* will be no exception, with a crowd of thousands expected to watch the rejuvenated Queen of the Fleet descend down the railway toward the Miles River.

Amid the speeches and celebration, a subtle, but no less profound, transformation might be overlooked—the evolution of her restoration team and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum Shipyard as a whole. Five shipwrights—talented craftsmen all—have emerged from their years of work restoring *Edna* as changed men. Through experimentation, trial and error, and sheer hard work, they've not only raised the bar for themselves, but have enhanced the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's reputation for unparalleled stewardship of the Bay's wooden boats.



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Michael Gorman, Shipyard Manager

CBMM Shipyard Manager Michael Gorman is the lead on the *Edna Lockwood* restoration. He started the project with a strong foundation of experience. After graduating from college with a degree in sculpture, Gorman had gone on to two trade schools—New England School of Architectural Woodworking, and Landing School of Boatbuilding and Design—in addition to continuing his education at Maine College of Art. Once he finished school, his first job was a formal apprenticeship at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Though Gorman would go on to gain a decade of experience working in the wooden boatbuilding and restoration field, he ultimately returned to CBMM.

Gorman’s extensive work in wooden boatbuilding and restoration, combined with his background in fine arts and sculpture, fit perfectly with *Edna Lockwood*’s restoration, which was no straightforward repair job. *Edna* demanded not just know-how, but an artist’s response to their medium—there was no manual on log canoe construction, and the process of shaping entire logs into a functional hull had to be rediscovered through guesswork, experimentation, and a fine eye for design.

The solution, Gorman proposed, was something any sculptor might suggest—to make a model first. In this case, the model for *Edna Lockwood* was *Bufflehead*, completed by Gorman and his crew in 2015. The first new sailing log canoe constructed since 1979, *Bufflehead* was the crucible for the concepts Gorman and his crew wanted to test prior to taking on the much larger, much higher-stakes *Edna Lockwood* project.

It was a big-league move that required a major investment of time and money before the actual restoration project—following in the footsteps of world-class shipyards like the Viking Museum in Roskilde, Denmark. But it was worth it.

“Deciding to do *Bufflehead* first was one of the best decisions we made as a yard,” Gorman says. “We learned a lot from it. But maybe more importantly, taking the time and the effort and the money to do the project like that shows that we’re behind not just the product—the finished restoration—but also the training, the skills.”

Once the technical lessons were learned from the construction of *Bufflehead*, the crew was ready to tackle the real deal—and everything was about to get much, much bigger. *Bufflehead*’s 20 feet in length were diminutive compared to the massive 54 feet of *Edna Lockwood*. As a bugeye “super canoe,” *Edna* represents the largest extreme of the log canoe construction method. A bigger boat means bigger timbers, and fortunately, CBMM had just the guy. Lead shipwright Joe Connor oversees the day-to-day building on *Edna*. Annapolis-born, Connor, too, is formally educated in



Left: Shipyard Manager Michael Gorman uses a sledgehammer to pin together two of the nine logs used to make up *Edna Lockwood's* new hull in February 2017.

Above: Seip Family Foundation Shipwright Apprentice Zachary Haroth works inside *Edna Lockwood* in February 2018, after her new hull and existing topsides were attached to re-create one boat.

boatbuilding, having graduated from the Landing School of Boatbuilding in 2006. He honed his skills with Scarano Boat Building in Albany, N.Y., as a builder and captain before returning to his Maryland roots and joining the Shipyard team at CBMM.

Connor is also a co-owner of Old World Trading, a sawmill and wood products business operating in Pioneer Point, Md. As a self-proclaimed “wood nerd,” his experience in logging, sawmilling, wood selection, large timber construction, and handling uniquely qualified him for the *Edna* project—where huge, individually chosen loblollies were transformed under his supervision into the timbers for a sturdy new hull.

“From three and a half years ago when Mike [Gorman] and I first started looking at trees,” says Connor, “I’ve had the luxury of just focusing on this project, from sourcing logs, all the way through.” Connor notes that manufacturing timbers at CBMM on the scale required by the *Edna Lockwood* rebuild also meant the addition of big, new tools. To support (and, in some cases, transport) the materials and vessel, CBMM acquired a 50-ton crane and a portable band sawmill in 2016. “Having the additions of the crane and the sawmill, which were new to our shop, also really pushed the boundaries of what we

as the crew were able to do and the skills we’ve been able to learn,” Connor says. Seip Family Foundation Shipwright Apprentice Spencer Sherwood agrees.

“For me,” Sherwood says, “it was really cool to mill the wood that became the planking and mill out the logs that were the hull right on site, crane them over, and forklift them around—rather than have someone else do it and the materials just appear in the yard.”

The restoration of *Edna Lockwood* has provided ample growth experiences for Sherwood and the other two shipwright apprentices working on the project. While CBMM’s apprenticeship program has long been a mecca for newly graduated shipwrights looking to hone their wooden boatbuilding skills, the *Edna Lockwood* project was a horse of a different color. Thanks to the construction of *Bufflehead*, the restoration’s reputation was already growing. Shipwright apprentice Michael Allen recalls hearing about the project during his apprenticeship at the Carpenter’s Boat Shop in Maine. “There was a buzz about *Edna*. I heard about it while I was working up in Maine, and it was getting a lot of hype up there. So, I contacted Mike Gorman about an apprenticeship, and I was super stoked to get it.”



Above: Shipwright Apprentice Michael Allen is pictured inside the new trunk cabin that Shipyard staff worked to build in early 2018

Below: Seip Family Foundation Shipwright Apprentice Spencer Sherwood is pictured in September 2017, when *Edna Lockwood's* existing topsides were lifted by crane to sit atop her new hull.

Bottom: Apprentice Michael Allen, left, and Shipwright Joe Connor work to secure logs used to make up *Edna's* hull in early 2017.

Right: Shipwright Joe Connor walks atop one of the loblolly pine logs donated to CBMM by Paul M. Jones Lumber Co. of Snow Hill, Md., in March 2016.

The project appears to have lived up to that hype.

Allen started during the beginning of the restoration and was able to get experience at every stage of the process—an incredible learning opportunity for him.

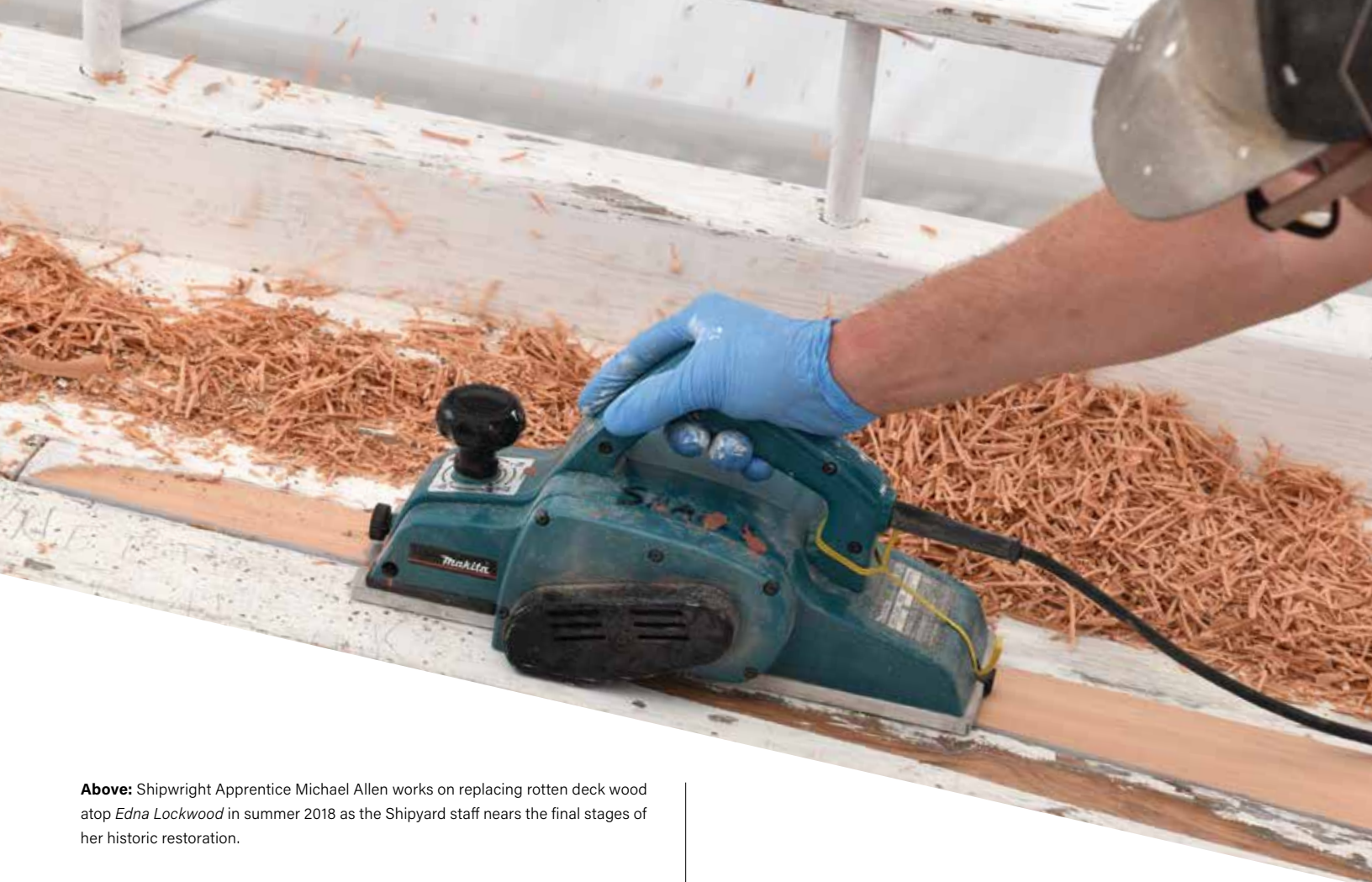
"I've been involved in every phase," says Allen. "I got here at the beginning, which was really awesome, because I got to be involved in the moving of the logs, the shaping of the log hull, the removal of the topsides, and everything from that to planking and framing and all the finishing work. I really have been able to see every aspect of a full restoration."

Sherwood also started at the beginning of the build. For him, the exciting opportunity lay in working with the logs themselves. "Figuring out that it was a log boat—carved logs—was the most unique aspect." Sherwood, who came to CBMM and the *Edna* project from Appalachian State University and, later, Cape Fear Community College, recalls talking about the apprenticeship with a professor in his program. "He told me, log boats, you don't see that everywhere. That's going to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, to carve out a boat and pin it together."

Seip Family Foundation Shipwright Apprentice Zachary Haroth, who came to CBMM mid-project from the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding, was also intrigued by the learning opportunities offered by the *Edna* restoration.







Above: Shipwright Apprentice Michael Allen works on replacing rotten deck wood atop *Edna Lockwood* in summer 2018 as the Shipyard staff nears the final stages of her historic restoration.

"I was pretty excited to be working on something huge—at school I never worked on large boats, just small craft—nothing over 18 feet." Allen agrees. Like Haroth, he felt that part of *Edna's* appeal was her size. "Working with bigger timbers, working on a larger scale project where it takes three or four people to bend one plank has been a real curveball—but it's been really fun."

As *Edna Lockwood* transformed, so did her restoration crew—and the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's Shipyard as a whole. *Edna's* launch will mark not just the beginning of another lifetime on the water for the Bay's last bug-eye, but a newly burnished reputation for CBMM's wooden boat stewardship. Connor likens CBMM's expertise in log canoe boat construction to that of the artisans at Colonial Williamsburg.

"They're known for revitalizing traditional trades, which is exactly what we've done," Connor says. "We're re-creating a skill set used by craftsmen right here on Navy Point over a hundred years ago."

That expertise in log canoe construction, dormant for a century, is a vibrant new feather in the cap of shipwrights and apprentices at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

CBMM's commitment to teaching wooden boat construction techniques and stewardship through apprenticeships means those skills, revived, will now be passed on, over and over. It also means a new era and new prospects for CBMM's Shipyard artisans.

"We've taken this concept of log-built boats and, from *Bufflehead* to *Edna*, we're building this momentum and this whole unique knowledge set in the Shipyard," Connor says. "The skills required to conceptualize a log raft and then shaving it down to fit another existing piece were so much harder than a traditional, right-brained plank-on-frame build—but because of that, the challenges and the rewards were greater throughout."

Gorman agrees. "Because of *Bufflehead*, and now because of *Edna*, we're already getting interest in future contracts for new log-built vessels," he says. "We have a specialty now—we're the ultimate source for log-built boats in the Chesapeake Bay."