

**Guide to the Half-hull Ship Models
of the
Portsmouth Athenaeum**



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About the Guide

The Guide to the Half-hull Models of the Athenaeum is an introduction to the over 50 models in our collection. The rich ship-building history of the Piscataqua region and ties to related trades are part of their individual stories. More information can be found in the reference books noted. Most of the collection is mounted on the walls of our main building as shown in the pictorial guide/building map found on Page 9.

Cover Illustration: "*Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*", June 14, 1851, the *Witch of the Wave*. The ship's owners boasted of staterooms finished in rosewood, bird's-eye maple, satin and zebra wood, as well as an apothecary shop and a 100-volume library.

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Guide to the Half-hull Ship Models

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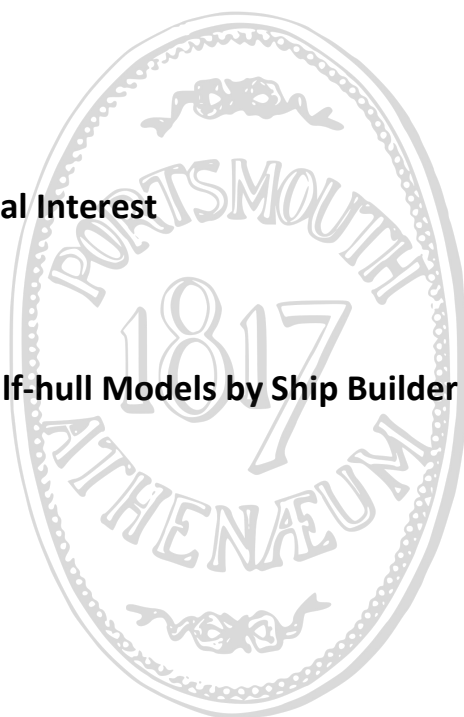
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Introduction

In the early days of American ship manufacturing, the building and documenting process involved the creation of a half-model of most ships to scale. These are literally, the hull as if sliced in half vertically. The Athenaeum owns about 50 half-hull ship models. These models are links to early Athenaeum Proprietors involved in shipbuilding and related trades.

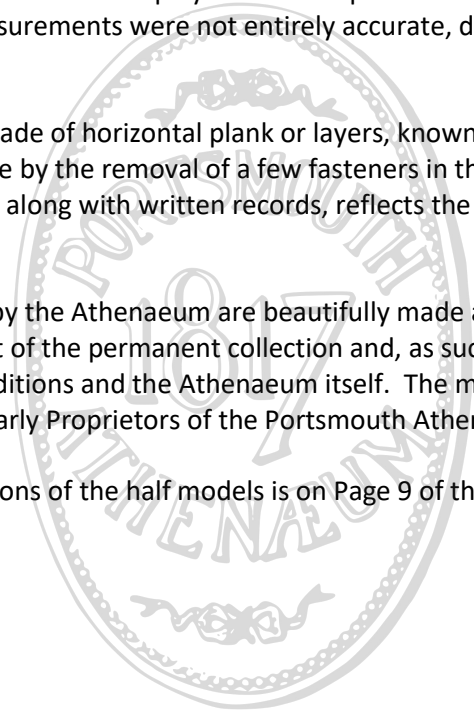
Shipyards such as those owned by Tobey and Littlefield, Frederick and William Fernald, and George Raynes and William (and nephew Samuel) Badger in Portsmouth, along with others in southern Maine, produced sailing ships during the years prior to the Civil War.

The half-hull models served as builders' "plans" for producing seaworthy and often highly successful vessels and would probably have been displayed in the shipbuilder's office. Usually done to scale, evidence exists that the measurements were not entirely accurate, due in part to variations in methods of measurement.

These half-hull models are made of horizontal plank or layers, known as "lifts". As an aid to ship design, these wooden layers separate by the removal of a few fasteners in the hull. Each of the 50 or so models in the Athenaeum collection, along with written records, reflects the history of a great merchant sailing vessel.

Many of the models owned by the Athenaeum are beautifully made and reflect a high degree of craftsmanship. They are part of the permanent collection and, as such, aid in telling the stories of shipbuilding, merchant expeditions and the Athenaeum itself. The models stand as links to Piscataqua's maritime past as well as to early Proprietors of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

A pictorial guide to the locations of the half models is on Page 9 of this booklet.



A Few Models of Special Interest

Witch of the Wave

Name: *Witch of the Wave*
Date: 1851
Source: Heirs of Charles W. Gray, Sr.
Catalogue #: C09.535
Location: 1st Fl, Back Hall

Owing to her exceptional beauty the *Witch of the Wave* was popular with the public and highly celebrated. On the trip to deliver the ship to her new owners in Salem, MA, a banquet was served on-board during which the following lines from *The Portsmouth Lament* were recited in her honor:

'I wonder what's the dreadful row	Clear the track, the ship is starting!
They're kicking up in Portsmouth now!	Clear the track, the ship is starting!
The people running up and down	Clear the track, the ship is starting!
Crying "All Salem's come to town."	And Portsmouth hearts are sad at parting.' ¹

Witch of the Wave was one of the fastest clipper ships ever built in Portsmouth.

USS Marlin

Name: *USS Marlin*
Date: c. 1941
Source: H.F.D. Davis, probable donor
Catalogue #: C09.520
Location: Stairwell, 3rd Fl to Mezzanine

The Marlin is a wooden half-model of a submarine with conning tower and rudder. It is mounted on a wooden board with a beveled edge. The attached label identifies the submarine as the Marlin, built at the Portsmouth Navy Yard in 1941. The model was probably given by Capt. HFD Davis, the engineering officer of PNSY during World War II and a Proprietor of the Athenaeum. This is the only half-hull submarine model owned by the Portsmouth Athenaeum.



¹ *Tall Ships of the Piscataqua*, Ray Brighton, pg. 42.

George Raynes

Name: *George Raynes*
Date: 1850
Source: Athenaeum Purchase
Catalogue #: C09.521
Location: Reference Library

The *George Raynes* is a half-hull wooden model painted black above the water line and stained brown below. She was in the China trade and burned in Valparaiso – the remains and cargo sold for \$2045.00.



Annie Sise

Name: *Annie Sise*
Date: 1856
Source: Heirs of Charles Fleetwood Sise
Catalogue #: C09.536
Location: 1st Fl, Back Hall

The *Annie Sise*, a wooden half-hull model was built in 1856. Life on board was not always calm. On the *Annie Sise*, a mutiny was caused by the refusal of some of the men to do duty. "A sailor named Murphy pursued the mate into the cabin with sheath-knife drawn. In self-defense, the mate drew his pistol and put two bullets in Murphy"²



² Brighton, pg. 237

Clotilde/Neptune

Name: *Clotilde 1869/Neptune 1870*
Date: 1869, 1870
Source: Unknown
Catalogue #: C09.528
Location: Stairwell, 3rd Fl to Mezzanine

In 1870, only one vessel of any size was built on the river – the bark *Neptune*, 493 tons. The *Portsmouth Journal*, in its April 8, 1871 issue, “flatly laid the blame for the depressed state of shipping on the railroads. It argued that the movement of goods, once done in ships, was now by railroad cars”.³



Meteor

Name: *Meteor*
Date: 1864
Source: Unknown
Catalogue #: C09.537
Location: Stairwell, 3rd Fl to Mezzanine

A Half-hull lift model with brown stain, grey paint, and attached rudder. This ship is said to have been the last wooden-hulled merchant steamer built on the Piscataqua River until WW I. It was renamed from 'General Grant' prior to 1866 when it was sold at auction.



³ Brighton, pg. 300

Athenaeum-owned Half-hull Models by Ship Builder

In some cases, dates indicated are approximate.

<p>George Raynes Shipyard – <i>Nestor</i> (1831) <i>Athens</i> (1839) <i>Venice</i> (1841) <i>George Raynes</i> (1850) <i>Witch of the Wave</i> (1851) <i>Tinqua</i> (1852) <i>Emily Farnum</i> (1854) <i>Arkwright</i> (1855) <i>Annie Sise</i> (1856) Portsmouth Navy Yard – <i>USS Portsmouth</i> (1843) <i>USS Sassacus</i>, paddlewheel (1863) not on display <i>USS Piscataqua</i> (1866) <i>USS Algoma/Benicia</i> (1867-1869) <i>USS Marlin</i>, US Submarine (1941) William Badger – <i>Ann Parry</i> (1825) <i>Adelaide Bell</i> (1853) Prior & Plumer – <i>Appledore</i> (1869) P. Curtis of E. Boston for E.F. Sise & Co., Portsmouth – <i>Fleetford</i> (1864) not on display Unidentified Shipyard – Edwin I. Morrison, (1873)</p>	<p>Tobey & Littlefield – <i>Brother Jonathan</i> (1853) <i>Sierra Nevada</i> (1854) <i>Ocean Guide</i> (1854) <i>Kate Prince</i> (1856) <i>Anna Decatur</i> (1856) <i>Alice Ball</i> (1857) <i>Santee</i> (1860)/<i>Simla</i> (1863) <i>Meteor</i> (1864) <i>Tartar</i> (1865) <i>Yosemite</i> (1867) <i>Don Theodoro</i> (1867) <i>Clotilde</i> (1869)/<i>Neptune</i> (1870) <i>G.W. Raitt</i>, schooner (1871) William Fernald/Pettigrew – <i>R.D. Shepherd</i> (1846) <i>Danube</i> (1848) <i>Arkwright</i> (1855) <i>Jean Ingelow</i> (1871) <i>Clara E. Simpson</i> (1874) <i>Annie F. Conlon</i> (1882) <i>Lizzie J. Call</i> (1886) Locations – See Guide on page 8 Research Library, 3rd floor Stairwell 3rd to 4th floor Stairwell 3rd to Mezzanine Stairwell Mezzanine to Back Hall 1st floor, Back Hall</p>
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References owned by the Athenaeum

The Clipper Ship Era, Arthur H. Clark

Ports of Piscataqua, William G. Saltonstall

Tall Ships of the Piscataqua, Ray Brighton

The National Watercraft Collection, Howard Chapelle

“Half-Hull Ship Models, Shipbuilding and Athenaeum Proprietors” in *Portsmouth Athenaeum, The Story of a Collection Through the Eyes of its Proprietors*, Pat Breslin, Portsmouth Athenaeum, Assistant Curator, 2017

A Pictorial Guide to the Locations of the Athenaeum Half-hull Models

