

## Sailing Ship Model



Built by Captain Alfred Southwick Chase (1822 – 1900) of Portsmouth, RI

Restored in 2020 by Den Holmes, of Ship Model Restoration, of Abbottstown, PA for  
David Sanford Chase of Marlborough, CT

Display Case handcrafted in 2020 by David Sanford Chase

Donated in 2022 to Portsmouth Historical Society by David Sanford Chase

## **CONTENTS**

Dedications and Acknowledgements

History

Restoration

Display Case

Captain Alfred Southwick Chase

Brig named “Random”

Photographs of Restoration

Exhibits

## **DEDICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In Memory of My parents, Isaac and Ruth Sanford Chase and grandparents, Isaac and Christina Allen Chase.

To Honor the many Mariners from Portsmouth.

Heartfelt thanks to my wife, Lillian Atwood Chase and children Shirley Christina Kociu and Jonathan David Chase.

And Thanks to all the members and volunteers at Portsmouth Historical Society, past, present, and future for their continuing efforts to preserve Portsmouth's history.

David Sanford Chase

Marlborough, Connecticut

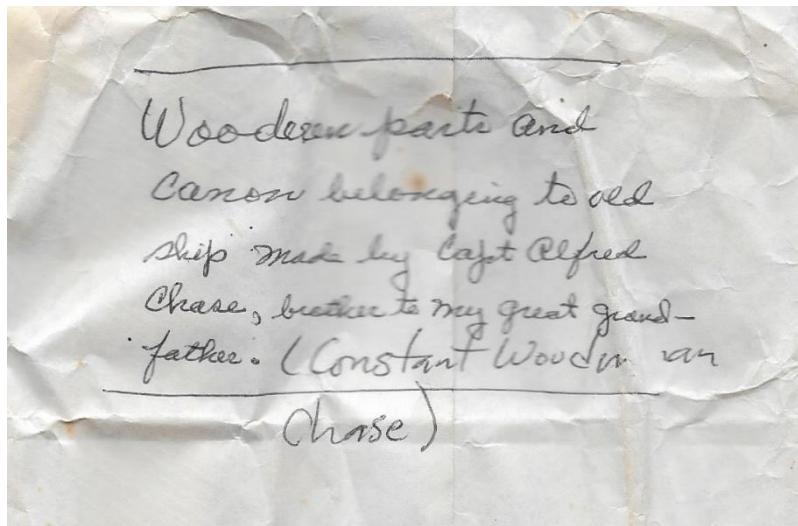
2022

## HISTORY

This wooden model of a Brig was made by my great- great -great uncle Capt. Alfred S. Chase of Portsmouth, RI. Growing up I remember it being in my grandparents, Isaac Chase, Chief Carpenters Mate USN (retired) and Christina E. Chase, attic on East Main Rd in Portsmouth. Gram said it was made by an uncle that had lived nearby and that it had been sailed across the Sakonnet River between Portsmouth and Tiverton. I never played with it but inherited it when she died in 1967.

Of course, I have no reason to doubt my grandmother's brief story but I don't have any idea about when, how, or who did the sailing. Notes in my great grandfather's (Isaac Chase) diary do provide some background. He had a boat, named Red Charlotte, at Black Point and they did go to Tiverton to hunt. He called it "gunning".

For the last 50+ years the model gathered dust and continued to deteriorate in my basement or garage in Marlborough, CT. I did make various attempts to recreate replacements for mast and spars and had purchased plans for a Brig to use as a resource in redoing the rigging. My father, Isaac Chase, Commander, Civil Engineer Corps, USNR (retired) from Portsmouth lived with us briefly in Marlborough and found the guns and deck pieces separated from the hull. He bagged them and left a note confirming the origin of the model.



In 2019 I attended the Portsmouth Historical Society's Founders Day ceremony and became more aware of the group and its members. My mother was a Sanford and a descendant of John Sanford, a signer of the Portsmouth Compact. So, I am doubly interested in Portsmouth's history, Chase and Sanford families, and decided to donate family heirlooms for their preservation and display.

Well of course I couldn't donate a dusty, broken, and mistreated item and be proud. My wife, a descendant of Atwoods and Barkers who were also early colonists, and I decided to have the model restored and then donate it to the Historical Society.

## **RESTORATION**

An internet search found 3 ship model restorers in the northeast, to whom I sent inquires including photos.

I selected Ship Model Restoration of Abbottstown PA based on their website and their immediate and complete reply.

Following is the website description for Ship Model Restoration of Abbottstown, PA:

*Welcome to Ship Model Restoration, we specialize in repairing and restoring ship models. With each model, we aim to preserve the integrity of your model and to retain as much of the work and techniques of the original builder as possible. Our goal is to provide high quality model ship restoration at an affordable price. We use quality materials and meticulous craftsmanship to return your model ship to its original condition. We have restored ships for everyone from private owners to maritime museums.*

*Do you have a model ship that is in need of restoration service? We offer model ship restoration services from our expert artisan craftsman Den Holmes, from Dens Model Ships - [www.densmodelships.com](http://www.densmodelships.com)*

*We are located in Abbottstown Pa. USA*

My email enquiry:

*densmodelships1*

*I have a antique wooden model of a brig built by a great great uncle. I would like to restore it and then I will donate it to the Portsmouth, RI Historical Society, he was from Portsmouth and sailed from Newport, RI.*

*Pictures and details are attached. I would like to keep the old antique character of the model, and would appreciate your thoughts on how best to proceed. I think there are 3 scenarios for display; just standing rigging, running rigging, or full sails.*

*Thank you and please call at any time with your ideas.*

*David S Chase*



One of the photos sent to the Ship Model Restorers

And their proposal:

*Hello David,*

*Here is the restoration quote below for your beautiful ship model.*

*I would keep the model original, aged looking - freshly restored.*

*Restoration On Your Ship Model:*

*I would clean all the original parts on the model.*

*I would repair all the broken parts on the model.*

*I would put the loose parts back on the model, if they are original to this model.*

*I would make new parts on the model only if the parts are missing.*

*I would put all the masts, gaffs, and spars back in there proper places.*

*I would touch up any paint, or stain on the model, only where needed.*

*I would keep, and clean all the original rigging that's still in tact.*

*I would replace all the broken, and missing rigging with new scaled running, and standing rigging on the model, as it should be.*

*I would put on scaled black standing rigging (rope), and brown running rigging (rope) on the model.*

*I would put flags on the model only if desired.*

*I would put two coats of Semi gloss (dull shine) on all the wood, this protects the model.*

*Restoration Price Quote:*

*Restoration on this model - for the quote above would cost \$3,900 and may take me 4 - 7 weeks to restore.*

*If you would like this model to have new stitched tan colored sails, I would need to see the model to be able to quote a price for the sails.*

*Please note - shipping price back to you is not included in this restoration quote.*

*Our Policy:*

*Our policy is to retain as much of the original work as possible and to maintain fidelity to the original builder's techniques. We also would send photos by email of your models progress until finished.*

*If you would like me to restore your model, or have any questions just let me know.*

*We are located in Abbottstown Pa. 17301 USA.*

*Please let me know that you received this quote.*

*Thanks for the email, and for all the great info.*

*Den*

I emailed back agreeing to the proposal and made plans to take the model to Abbottstown, which is a bit east of Gettysburg, in March 2020. Had the model wrapped and, in the car, but COVID 19 struck and we decided not to travel. My subsequent email:

*Good Morning Den*

*We are probably overreacting, but have decided not to travel, especially through NY. Just don't know any details of their State of Emergency. We are in our 70s and have underlying health issues.*

*So, I apologize for the back and forth on getting the ship to you. I very much wanted to meet you. Thank you for understanding and I do look forward to your restoring the ship.*

*David*

After research into shipping an awkward item and more packing I took it to UPS and emailed Den:

*Good morning Den.*

*It's a clear and bright day here in Connecticut, light winds from the southwest.*

*The journey has begun, dropped the ship off at the UPS store in Glastonbury, CT about an hour ago. They must get special packing but said you should get it next Monday or possibly as early as this Friday. The tracking no. is 1Z5797E44292907730. It will be coming from my wife, Lillian Chase, as she is in their system.*

*I did get a little emotional when they took her out back, like starting a long voyage. This restoration is long overdue. I went back to your quote email for this reply, I accept Restoration Proposal. Will discuss sails and flags as you progress. I'm very excited.*

*Thank you for your interest and enthusiasm.*

*Sincerely*

*David Chase*



Trussed up to go to UPS

Loose pieces of masts and bowsprit removed and small parts in box

The local UPS store took some time securing packing materials and then the trip began. Got to Den's about 10 days later in good shape. He got right to work cleaning, sorting pieces, and arranging fixtures on the deck.

In addition to the hull, he was able to retain the original figurehead, bowsprit and jib boom, foremast, foretop, fore topmast, fore yard, fore topsail yard, mainmast, main top, main topmast, main yard, main topsail yard, and standing rigging below the tops of the fore and main masts.

Repaired pieces include the deck houses, wheel, pulpits, catheads, and stern davits.

Missing or severely damaged items that Den fabricated are the rudder, gig, anchors, crosstrees, fore topgallant mast and yard, main topgallant mast and yard, spanker mast, boom, and yard and gaff. Also, the deck gun carriages are new, although seven of the ten guns are original.

The two large guns in the case were always with the ship but we did not see a logical location to mount them on the ship. Den did make the new carriages.



Then the highlights of the restoration, new standing rigging for the fore and main topgallant mast and yard, all new running rigging, ships bell, anchors, stern davits and gig, rudder, sails, and flags. I had found a diagram of the U.S. Brig Niagara on the internet and Den used that to layout the masts, yards, rigging and sails. That diagram, photographs, and related information are in following sections of this book.



Restoration complete and back in Connecticut

The overall restoration did take several months, and the Covid Pandemic delayed our trip to Abbottstown until late August 2020. The finished dimensions are 50" long X 16" wide X 42" high and made shipping back to Connecticut impractical. So, we rented a van and had an easy overnight trip and were very pleased to meet Den Holmes in person.

## **DISPLAY CASE**

I custom made the case. The frame is Oak from trees cut in my yard in Marlborough, CT and the panels are acrylic. Boards were cut from the Oak logs with a chain saw, air dried, and then milled using a planner and jointer.

Final sizing of the case was put on hold until the restored model was home. In view of its large size, we wanted to minimize inside clearances. The final overall case size is 57" long X 20" wide X 45" high.



Case frame held together with tape and clamps for final fitting.

## **CAPTAIN ALFRED S. CHASE**

Alfred was born in Sept. 1822 in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. The second son of Clarke and Eliza (Woodman) Chase. My great great grandfather, Constant Woodman Chase was his younger brother. The Chases were farmers since his grandfather Zaccheus came to Portsmouth from Freetown, MA in the mid-1700s.

At age 26, Alfred received Seaman Protection Certificate, Newport No. 61 dated Nov. 17, 1849. The 1850 Census shows him living at his Fathers in Portsmouth with the occupation as a Seamen. Massachusetts marriage records indicate he married Susan Graves Murry on June 9, 1853 in Boston, MA. Both are listed as residents of Boston. His occupation as Mariner.

By 1855, he has returned to Rhode Island as The Master of The Brig "Random" of Newport. The Ship's Registration is dated Oct. 20, 1855 and cancelled Oct. 31, 1856 noting the vessel was wrecked in Cuba. The Random was built in Newport in 1847 of 144 tons and measured 87'8" x 25'4" x 7.5".

In March 1863 He becomes part owner and Master of the Schooner "Donna Anna" of Newport. He is Master until August 1869 with owner's interest continuing to Feb. 1878.

The 1865 state Census shows Alfred and Susan residing with his parents on East Road in Portsmouth with his occupation as Sea Captain. In 1869 he becomes 4/32 owner and Master of the Schooner "Vultore", a former Revenue Cutter of Newport. The ships Certificate is dated Oct. 18, 1869 and notes that the vessel was seized by the Spanish at Havana, Cuba in 1871. The 1870 Census includes Alfred and Susan as inhabitants of the 2nd Ward of the City of Newport. He is a sailor, and she is keeping house.

By 1880, the Census shows them back in Portsmouth, RI, he as a farmer and she "keeping house". Architectural History of Portsmouth indicates they are living at his father's property that is now 61 Selina Lane. They apparently spend the next 20 years in Portsmouth until Alfred's death on Aug. 23, 1900. His death notice in the Newport Mercury "Capt. Alfred S. Chase died in South Portsmouth ... He was formerly one of the best known Sea Captains sailing from our port and was one of the few survivors of the Newport Marine Society..." He is buried at St Mary's in Portsmouth.

Excerpts from "Ship Registers and Enrollments of Newport, Rhode Island 1790 – 1939 that mention Alfred Chase as Owner or Master and various other documents mentioned above are included in the Exhibits.

## **Brig named “RANDOM”**

Is this a model of the “Random”?

There was a Brig from Newport named “RANDOM” and Captain Chase was her Master in 1855 and 1856.

Following is an excerpt from “Ship Registers and Enrollments of Newport, Rhode Island 1790-1939” that describes the Random and lists Owners and Masters.

RANDOM, brig, of Newport, Built at Newport, 1847.

144 89/95 tons; 87 ft. 8 in. x 25 ft. 4 in. x 7.5 ft. One deck, two masts, billetthead.

Enr. and Lic. (CT) Nov. 30, 1847. Owners: Silas H. Cottrell, 1/4, Joseph S. Cottrell, 1/4, and James Burdick, 1/2, of Newport. Master: James Burdick. Surrendered Apr. 4, 1848 (registered) at New York, (C.H.)

Enr, and Lic. (CT) July 6, 1849. Owners: same. Master: same. (C.H.) Reg. Oct. 5, 1849. Owners: same. Master: same.

(C.H.) Reg. Oct. 6, 1849. Owners: James Burdick, 1/2, Joseph S. Cottrell, 1/2. Master: same. (C.H.)

Reg. May 17, 1851. Owners: Silas H. Cottrell, 1/4, James Burdick, 1/2, Joseph S. Cottrell, 1/4. Master: same. (C.H.)

Reg. Oct. 10, 1853. Owners: Silas H. Cottrell, 1/2, Joseph S. Cottrell, 1/2. Master: Henry B. Crane. (C.H.)

Enr. and Lic. (CT) Aug. 13, 1855. Owners: same. Master: George C. Williams, Newport. (C.H.)

Reg. Oct. 20, 1855. Owners: same. Master: Alfred Chase. Canceled Oct. 31, 1856 at Newport, vessel wrecked in Cuba. (C.H.)

Several facts in the above are of interest:

The last item, Alfred Chase is the Master of “Random” in 1855 and 1856 and vessel was registered in Newport. Chase family lore says that this Ship Model was built by Alfred S. Chase of Portsmouth, RI.

“Random” was a brig, that is two masted (as noted) with square rigged main sails.

“Billetthead” refers to a decorative piece of woodwork that adorns the bow of a ship. In many cases it is a figurehead or a bust... (from the Mystic Seaport Museum). Other sources do

not reference “figurehead or bust”, just that it is a carved block at the bow. Also, in the descriptions of other vessels, there “Figureheads” are noted. The model does have a figurehead.

“One deck” in the description above, does that mean a flush deck or could it include covered fore and aft areas like the model?

Reading a lot into the above there is an emotional case, especially to a Chase family member, to say that YES, this is a model of the “Random”. In that regard the restoration included naming the model “THE RANDOM”.