

A Brief History of Boatbuilding in Our Nation's Oldest Port

The earliest watercraft in America, two prehistoric dugout canoes radiocarbon dated to around 6000 years ago, are from the submerged site of DeLeon Springs in Florida, not too far from St. Augustine. It is most likely that such watercraft were built and used in the St. Augustine area even earlier by Native Americans. At the time of European contact, St. Augustine was inhabited by the maritime Mocama people, Timucuan Indians known as by the Spanish as the "Agua Salada" or Salt Water Timucua. With the colonization of Florida by the French and Spanish beginning in the 1560s came European and African boatbuilding traditions. Small watercraft would have been extremely important to the early colonial residents of St. Augustine. Vessels such as dugout canoes (canoas), chalupas and barca chatas were used to procure food and to communicate and transfer goods, people and ideas throughout the region. When rigged with sails even small boats could navigate to Havana in as little as a week's time, providing a vital link between St. Augustine and one of the most important centers of Spain's New World Empire. At the same time, this connection provided a significant degree of self-sufficiency for the remote outposts. Armed government vessels patrolled St. Augustine waters and, after the settlement of the Carolinas and Georgia in the late seventeenth century, small boats undoubtedly carried out illegal trade with English colonists to the north.

Over the ensuing centuries, English, Minorcan, Seminole, Italian, Greek and other Mediterranean settlers all brought their own boatbuilding traditions to St. Augustine. Boats continued to play an integral role in the day-to-day life of St. Augustine residents throughout the historical period. Residents of the city would have used boats to travel

along the extensive river systems, to procure food by going to market and by fishing and oystering, to go to church and maintain social networks, to make recreational trips for picnics and to engage in the nascent tourism industry. Pilots used boats to guide incoming ships into port, and Lightkeepers used boats to travel to and from Anastasia Island and to make rescues at sea and salvage wrecked ships when necessary. Vernacular boatbuilding was a widespread skill that likely would have been passed down through generations.

Commercial wooden boatbuilding thrived in St. Augustine with the advent of the shrimping industry in the 1920s and over the following decades expanded exponentially with the success of commercial boatbuilding outfits such as DESCO and St. Augustine Trawlers. DESCO (Diesel Engine Sales Company), in particular, built trawlers in such prodigious quantities for the world market that their motto became "The Sun Never Sets on a DESCO Boat." Corporate building factories, such as DESCO and St. Augustine Trawlers, Inc., dominated but never fully displaced family-based builders such as the Xynides Boatyard, who continued to perform custom builds in much smaller numbers. The photograph below is of a boat under construction in the Xynides boathouse, ca. 1963 (courtesy of the Xynides family). Wooden boatbuilding in St. Augustine was finally supplanted by fiberglass trawler and recreational boat construction in the 1980s.





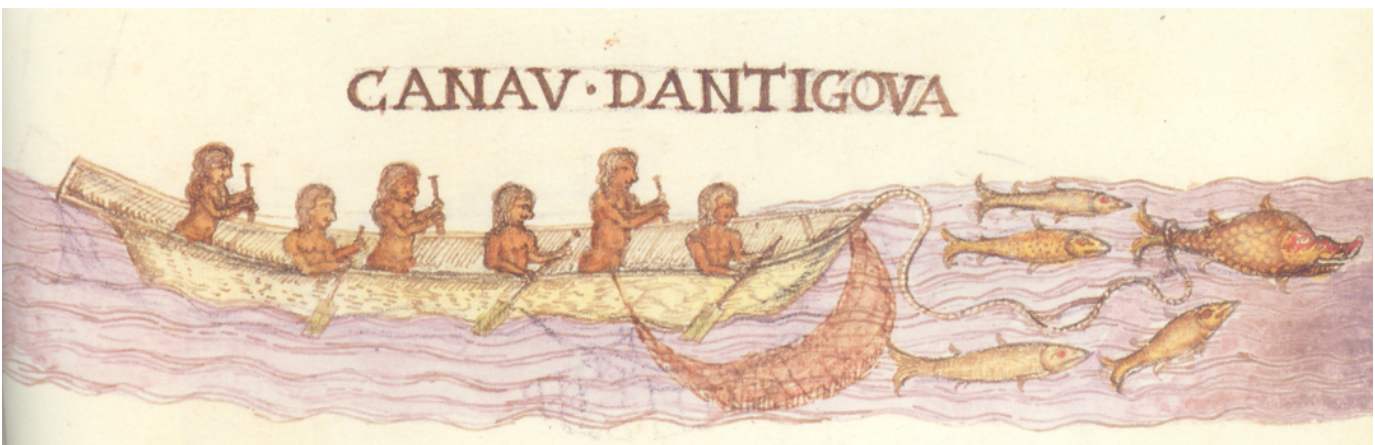
Dugout Canoe, Prehistoric Period - 20th Century



Archaeologists from LAMP and the St. Johns County record a historic canoe at the Alligator Farm. This appears to be the same canoe seen in the banner image above, which was photographed in St. Augustine in the late 1800s.

The dugout canoe, or log boat, is one of the simplest and earliest forms of watercraft used by humans. Dugouts were the primary boat used throughout the Americas before the arrival of Europeans and played an essential role in Native American riverine trade networks spanning across the eastern half of the present U.S. The earliest archaeological examples of this type of watercraft in the New World come from DeLeon Springs, Florida, where two specimens have been dated to over 6,000 years ago. This type of vessel was hollowed out from a felled tree using a tedious process of burning with fire and scraping the charred wood away with shells. After the introduction of European iron tools, construction was rendered much easier and faster. The size of a dugout was limited by the dimensions of available trees; Columbus witnessed 100' long canoes with dozens of paddlers in the Caribbean. Dugouts were also common throughout West Africa and enslaved Africans brought canoe-building traditions with them from the coasts and river deltas of their stolen homeland. The combination of Indian, African and European boatbuilding skills resulted in an increasingly sophisticated dugout canoe. Metal tools were used to shape the outside of the log, flatten the bottom to decrease draft and weight and increase stability, and shape the bow and stern ends to increase seaworthiness. Planks could be added along the upper sides of the dugout to increase freeboard and breadth and the canoe could also be equipped with pole masts and leeboard in order to sail. Thus this native boat design was

much used throughout the colonial and territorial periods by a culturally diverse population. Spanish documents from 1602 mention locally-built small and medium-sized canoes owned by the government of St. Augustine, the latter used "as a sentinel off the bar." The term *periagua*, or *periager*, (from Spanish *piragua* derived from the Carib term for large canoe) came to be used by English colonists for large dugouts propelled by sail and oars which were often used as scout boats and during the attacks on St. Augustine from the Carolinas and Georgia in the 1700s. In St. Augustine, dugouts continued to be used for transport, work and racing through the 19th and into the 20th centuries, evidenced by a number of historic photographs and a surviving specimen (pictured above) once owned by the Alligator Farm and in 2009 transferred to LAMP for recording, conservation and eventual display.

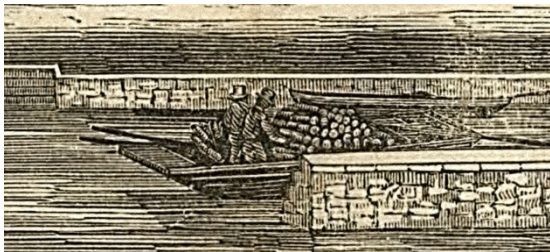


Late 16th-century depiction of Native Americans fishing from a dugout canoe from the *Histoire Naturelle des Indes* (*Natural History of the Indies*). Courtesy of the Pierpont Morgan Library.



Flatboat, 16th - 20th Centuries

A flatboat, sometimes called a scow or often simply a "flat", is exactly what it sounds like: a flat-bottomed, barge-like hull built for maximum carrying capacity, stability and shallow draft. Flats were the workhorses of the colonial and territorial periods and would have been regular sights along the St. Augustine waterfront and the surrounding network of rivers, marshes and tidal creeks. Typically, a flatboat would be poled along the shallows or maneuvered by sweeps (oars) while drifting with tidal currents. While their shape made them unsuitable for offshore navigation, flats could be rigged with sails, such as a schooner rig, and sometimes were decked, this would increase their seaworthiness. Flats were commonly used on plantations as working vessels and to carry supplies and agricultural products to and from town or waiting ships in the harbor. The Spanish were the first to introduce this simple boat design to the area, as



confirmed by a 1602 document referring to a government-owned barca chata (literally, "flat boat") in the town. In 2008, LAMP volunteer boatbuilders constructed a replica barca chata, pictured above during its initial sea trial. This vessel is relatively narrow and thus quite maneuverable and two more were built in 2009-2010. This simple flatboat design would have been used here for centuries as

evidenced by an 1855 engraving which shows a very similar vessel with a load of logs at the town's waterfront near the present location of the Bridge of Lions. Flats were often built significantly wider in relation to their length, which would have increased both stability and cargo capacity

BATEAU OR SKIFF



Bateau or Skiff, 16th - 20th Centuries

The bateau, or skiff, was a more complex and seaworthy version of the flatboat, also flat-bottomed and hard-chined but with a pointed bow. The original French term referred to a double-ended boat, a type used in the 1560s French colonization attempt at Fort Caroline in present-day Jacksonville, though virtually all later versions featured a square transom stern.

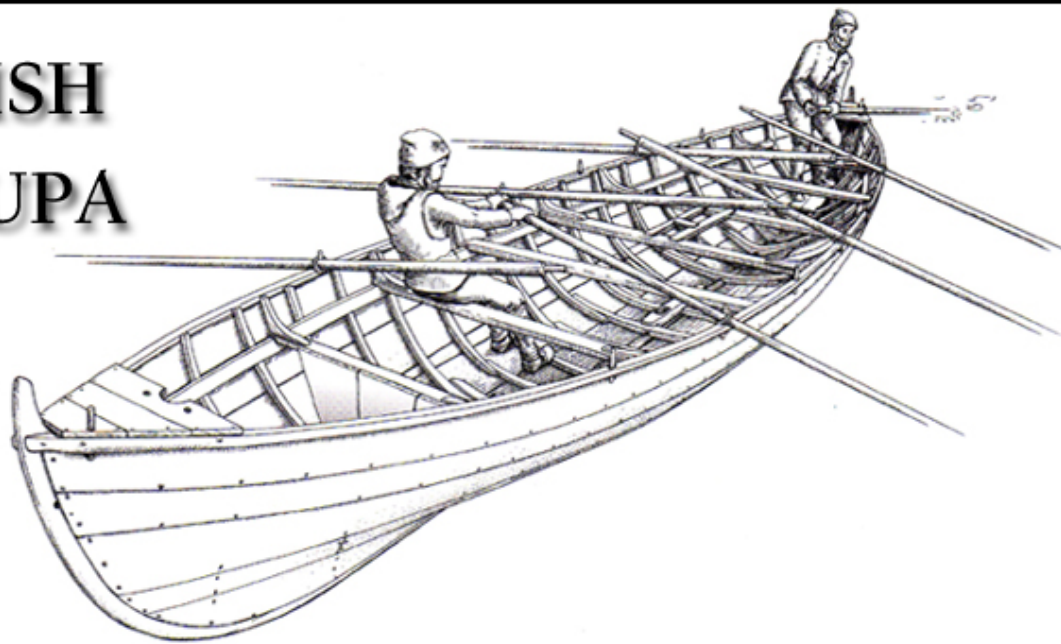
Both bateau and skiff came to be used as general terms for this class of shallow-drafted rowing or sailing boats which were common across the entire southeastern U.S. throughout the colonial and territorial periods, especially after the proliferation of sawmills and into the early 20th century. These stable and capacious vessels were cheap and easy to build and were widely used as work boats, fishing and oystering vessels, ferries and cargo haulers. The Bevin's skiff pictured above (length: 11' 8", width: 4' 6", max. capacity: 460 lbs) was constructed by LAMP boatbuilders and is a modern interpretation of a traditional design and a good example of this vessel type. Bateaux would have



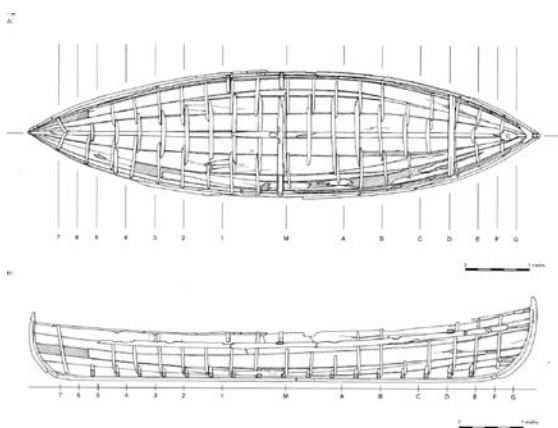
been made in a wide variety of sizes, though typically would measure between 14 and 16 feet long and 4 to 5 feet wide. A larger (up to 38' long) sailing variant of the bateau equipped with a centerboard was known as the sharpie, for its distinctive "sharp" or fine bow. Sharpies evolved in the 1840s from Connecticut oyster skiffs and were introduced to Florida by way of Key West in 1881 and St. Augustine in 1883.

Surprisingly seaworthy, simple to build, handy under sail and able to run the shallow inlets common to Florida, the type spread rapidly throughout the state, and were used for a range of activities from oystering to mail delivery to recreational racing. The fragmentary remains of a sharpie-type vessel were recovered by LAMP archaeologists from the banks of the Tolomato River north of St. Augustine and are currently being preserved by our archaeological conservation staff. Equipped with a centerboard and displaying the flat bottom and hard-chine of this vessel class, it is believed to represent the remains of an oystering sloop dating to the 19th century.

SPANISH CHALUPA



Spanish *Chalupa*, ca. 1565



Archaeological drawing of one of the chalupas excavated by Parks Canada archaeologists in Red Bay, Labrador. They date to 1565, the same year that St. Augustine was founded.

The *chalupa*, known as "shallop" by English-speaking mariners, was a highly seaworthy open boat which could be rowed or equipped with sails. Colonial Spanish and Basque sailors used these sturdy vessels throughout the New World, from the Caribbean to the North Atlantic. Unlike most 16th century boat types, we know about the form and function of *chalupas* from both archaeological and documentary evidence. The well-preserved remains of three *chalupas* were excavated and recorded by [Parks Canada](#) archaeologists from the site of a wrecked whaling galleon in Red Bay, Labrador. The best preserved (completely intact) of these was designed to be manned by a crew of seven and measured 8.03 m (26.3') long and 2.01 m (6.6') wide. An artistic reconstruction of this vessel, courtesy of Parks Canada, appears above. The Red

Bay *chalupas* displayed a unique planking method using carvel planks (edge to edge) below the waterline and clinker (overlapping edges) above. All three were of Basque design and were wrecked in 1565, the same year of St. Augustine's founding by Pedro Menéndez. His expedition, partly outfitted from Avilés on the Biscayan coast adjacent to Basque country, included at least three *chalupas* that were probably very similar to those discovered in Red Bay, along with Biscayan boatwrights versed in similar building traditions. Records recently discovered by LAMP researchers in Spanish archives indicate that *chalupas* continued to be used in St. Augustine through the following century. One of these documents includes a detailed description of a St. Augustine *chalupa* complete with a list of ancillary equipment. Combining archaeological and historical evidence, LAMP plans to build a replica of a *chalupa* dating to the period of St. Augustine's initial colonization in time for the city's 450th anniversary in 201 [with our partner the St. Augustine Maritime Heritage Foundation.](#)

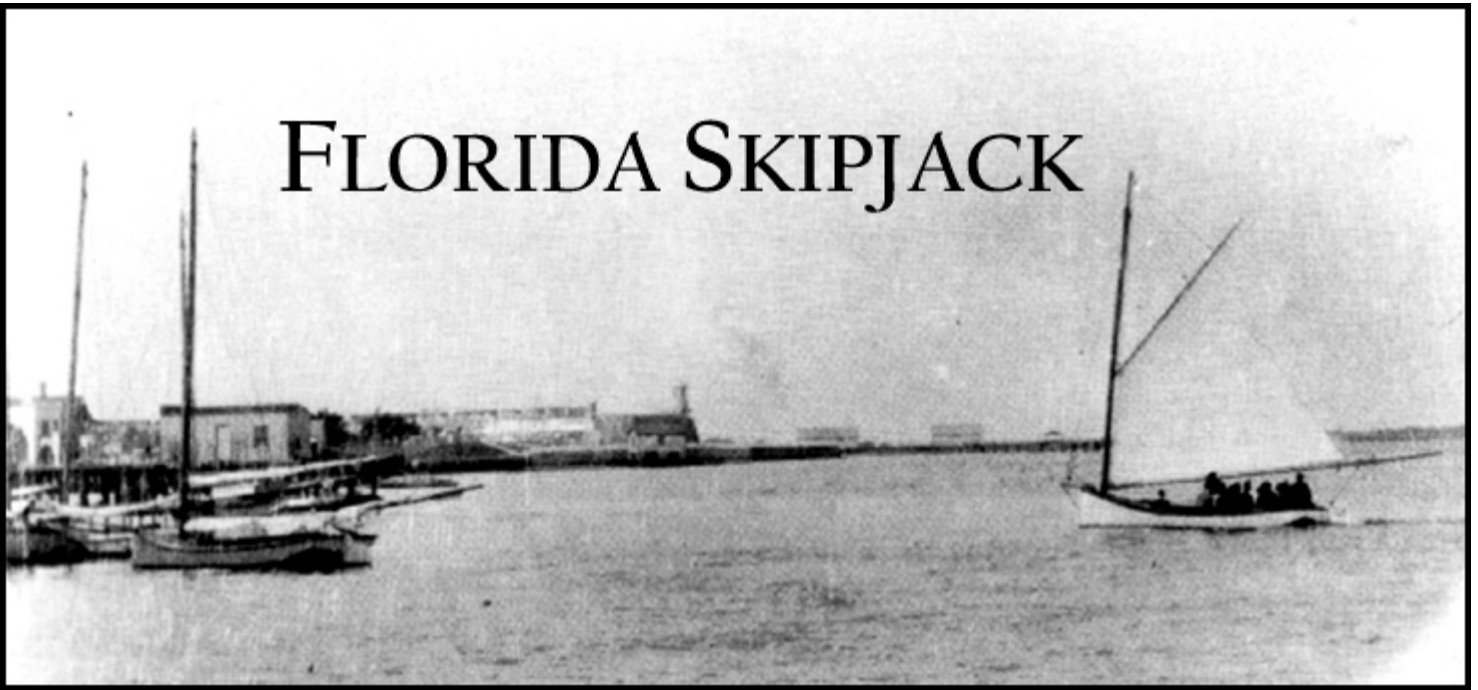
BRITISH YAWL



British Yawl, ca. 1760

This British yawl, dating to 1760, was a standard type used by the Royal Navy as a ship's boat. The vessel type originally came from Norway, where it was known as a "yole" and was clinker-planked (plank edges overlapping), double-ended and highly seaworthy. The yawl spread through Ireland and England and in 1701 it was officially adopted by the British Navy. Naval yawls were the smallest class of boats on board a warship. The first Naval yawls were almost double-ended (unique among naval boats) and featured curved sternposts and small transoms. They continued to evolve over the course 18th century: planking transitioned from clinker to carvel, the sternpost was straightened, transoms were somewhat widened, and overall size increased to a standard 26' long and 6' 6" wide by 1800. The 1760 yawl whose lines are reproduced here is a transitional type, carvel-built and just over 14' long and 4' 6" wide. Yawls were highly regarded by naval officers who frequently requested them in place of longboats. Usually outfitted with either four, six or (as with this example) eight oars, yawls were sometimes rigged with two masts and either sprit, gunter or lateen sails. Yawls similar to this one would have likely been common on the St. Augustine waterfront during the British period, 1763-1783, and used as boats for His Majesty's naval vessels and as tenders to service civilian ships and ferry passengers and cargo. LAMP has [begun construction](#) of a 14' yawl whose keel, stem, sternpost and deadwood have been fashioned from St. Augustine-grown live oak. This yawl, which is currently being [planked](#), was built to the design in the 1760 British Navy plans which were preserved in the National Archives. We are planning to present it to the replica Revolutionary War-era sailing ship *Galveztown*, which is being built by our shipbuilding partner *Astilleros Nereo* ("Nereo Shipyard") in Málaga, Spain and is scheduled to be sailed across the Atlantic and make landfall at St. Augustine in 2011.

FLORIDA SKIPJACK



Florida Skipjack, 1870 - 20th Century



Taken circa 1884, this Florida skipjack is tied up in the St. Augustine municipal boat basin. The basin was located where the western terminus of the Bridge of Lions is currently located. This boat was used to haul produce and oranges to the city from outlying farms and groves. Note the forward-stepped mast and long boom, typical of the skipjack. She is also outfitted with a plank bowsprit to carry a jib. Her deck carries a small cabin, seen on some of the larger skipjacks.

Florida skipjacks were first built and used by commercial shad fishermen on the St. Johns River. These centerboard sailing vessels were characterized by a V-shaped, chine-built, sawn-frame hull with a sharp bow and with the chine rising very high on the stern. With their hull planks (cross planking) running lengthwise rather than side-to-side and lacking the Baltimore clipper bow, they differed markedly in construction and shape from the more famous Chesapeake skipjack. In addition to being swift and handy craft, they were able to handle a heavy deck loads for cargo service. By the 1880s, Florida skipjacks dominated the St. Johns shad fishery and had become the most common type of small sailing craft in Northeast Florida other than the bateau. In addition to their use as rugged working craft, skipjacks were prized as pleasure and racing yachts and they are the most frequently seen type in historic photographs of the St. Augustine Yacht Club. Similar craft were used on Long Island Sound and the sound country of coastal North Carolina and this style may have migrated south from one or both of these areas. Florida skipjacks lasted well into the 20th century and many were converted to power. A typical skipjack, such as this one pictured in the top photo, sailing off St. Augustine's waterfront in the late 1800s, was gaff-rigged and might measure 18 to 20'

long, 7 to 8' wide, and draw as little as 15" when fully loaded. Top photograph courtesy of the [St. Augustine Historical Society](#), lower photograph courtesy of the [Florida Memory Collection](#).

FLORIDA-STYLE SHRIMP TRAWLER



Florida-Style Shrimp Trawler, ca. 1920 – 1980



Top: Mt. Aetna, 1905; Bottom: Flower of Mary 1923. Changes in shrimp boats during this 20-year period included use of stouter vessels with small pilot rooms and a mast, used above to dry the cotton nets used at the time to reduce mildew and rotting.

America's shrimping industry began at the turn of the century in Fernandina, where the highly effective "otter trawl" nets were first drawn by powered boats. By the 1920s, the center of this booming industry, lead by a few immigrant families including the Salvadors, Polis and Versaggis, had shifted to St. Augustine and the entire Northeast Florida region was supplying shrimp by the ton via iced rail-car to the New York market. Also at this time, a new style of shrimp boat appeared on these waters, built by Greek boat builders from the sponge fisheries of Tarpon Springs. The new, Greek shrimp boats displayed a dramatic sheer line ending with a high bow with a sharp entrance and a deck-house located forward to facilitate the hauling of nets from the stern.

Unlike previous shrimp boats with their V-shaped hull, the Greek style shrimper was rounded in cross-section. This hull shape resulted in a deep and slow roll at sea, the source of complaints from some seasick shrimpers used to a hard-chined vessel. The earliest shrimpers

were small, mostly under 30' in length, though they grew in size over the decades to typically 40'

by the 1930s, 50 to 60' in the 1940s and 70' in the 1950s. The Mollie and Me II, pictured above, was built by Greek boat-builder Harry Xynides in either the late 1950s or early 1960s (photograph courtesy of the Xynides family).

While the Greek-style trawler never completely replaced the V-hull shrimper, the type persisted for decades due to the success of the Diesel Engine Sales Company (DESCO), founded in St. Augustine in 1943. By 1954 DESCO had built 500 shrimp boats, by 1971 a total of 1700 and by 1981 a trawler was leaving the plant every four days. While the most prolific builder, DESCO was hardly the only manufacturer in St. Augustine, home also to St. Augustine Trawlers, Inc., along with several smaller yards owned by the Sarris, Nix and Xynides families. The shrimp boat building decades were the heyday of wooden boat building in St. Augustine and one of the last remaining examples of this once vibrant industry in the United States.

The roots of America's shrimping industry first began growing in northeast Florida. Beginning during the first decade of the 20th century, highly effective 'otter trawl' nets were adapted to the coastal waters of Fernandina, Florida. A collaboration of families, many of them recent immigrants with Mediterranean fishing traditions, quickly built an industry that 'discovered' shrimp for the nation. During these early years

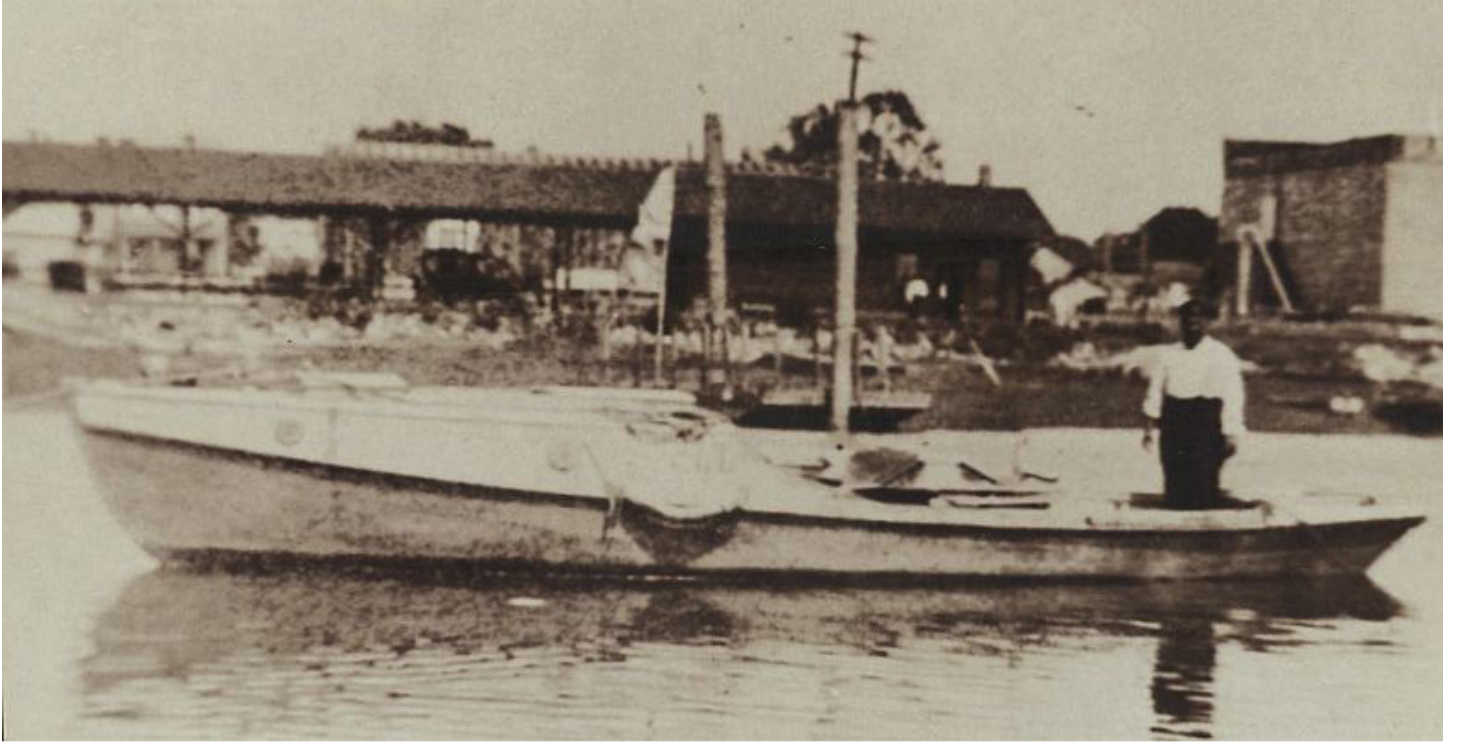
many of the families, with names such as Sollicito, Salvador, Poli, and Versaggi, moved to St. Augustine for its access to good schools and boat-building resources. By the 1920s St. Augustine was the center of this booming industry and supplied shrimp by the ton to New York City markets via refrigerated rail car. Simultaneously, a new style of fishing boat evolved to meet the needs of the business. Based on sponge boats introduced to Florida by Greek spongers, the shrimp trawler carried familiar lines of the Mediterranean. A rounded bottom and high, bluff bow was modified to carry a wheelhouse up forward, an engine down below, and a cut off, U-shaped transom. The old sailing rig was done away with and replaced by a single pole mast with a boom for handling the nets and catch. This hull shape resulted in a boat that rolled more

than flat bottomed fishing boats, but was weatherly and could stand up to rough seas. These trawlers began to grow from the first shrimp boat, which were most often converted from other boats. Purpose-built shrimp trawlers began to commonly measure over 30' in length and by World War II, were often over 40' in length. It was this pre-war period that the Florida-style trawler was born. Builders such as Klonaris, Tiliakos, and Deonas were among the first to hew local live oak and long leaf pine into the hull style that would become iconic of the American fishing industry. After the war, trawler size

continued to increase and the Super-trawler was born, a large, high-horsepower boat over 50' in length that could travel thousands of miles

to fish distant waters such as the southern Caribbean. Diesel Engine Sales Co., started in St. Augustine in 1943, modernized the world of trawler building. What Henry Ford did for automobiles, Diesel Engine Sales Co. (later known as DESCO) did for shrimp boats. By 1954 the company had completed over 500 trawlers, complete and ready to fish on their first voyage! The Florida-style trawler was traditionally built from wood with a pine keel, white oak frames, and cypress planking. As good building wood became more expensive and hard to find, yellow pine was used as planking and during the 1960s fiberglass entered the scene as a hull material. A few steel hulled trawlers were built but wood and fiberglass dominated the industry. The *Mollie and Me II*, pictured above, was built by Greek boat-builder Harry Xynides during the mid-1960s (photograph courtesy of the Xynides family). Many other builders prospered on the banks of the San Sebastian River, the boat-building epicenter of St. Augustine. From the corporate yards of DESCO and St. Augustine Trawlers to the family owned yards of the Sarris, Xynides, and Nix families, this small river was once home to a forest of shrimp boat masts. By the late 1980s, the building boom was over and few shrimp boats are built in St. Augustine presently. However, many of the thousands of shrimp boats built right here in St. Augustine persist, plowing the waves of the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean every day to bring home the catch.

See below for the story of building shrimp boats in pictures.



A pioneer of the early shrimp industry, Salvatore Versaggi, standing in his boat in the Amelia (Nassau) River in Fernandina in 1905. The Mount Aetna was one of the first shrimp boats used in northeast Florida. As you can see, she lacked outriggers, or even a mast. The earliest boats were re-purposed fishing or cruising vessels with small gasoline or kerosene engines for power. They dragged a simple balloon net behind the boat and hauling them on board was done by hand over the side. Fishing trips were daily affairs during good weather as these small boat could not stay at sea for days due to lack of crew quarters and a way to keep the catch from spoiling.”



This picture of the “Flower of Mary” was taken in Fernandina, Florida in 1923. Her name was likely taken from the Italian immigrant families in northeast Florida who were some of the most active in the early days of commercial shrimping and responsible for its rapid development. The Santa Maria del Fiore (Flower of Mary) is the iconic symbol of Florence Italy, and likely had significance to the owner. We can see that, only 17 years after the Mt. Aetna was photographed, shrimp fishermen moved to stouter vessels with small pilothouses and a mast sprouted from the deck. On these prototype trawlers, the mast was used less for actual trawling than for creature comfort and gear maintenance. Early nets were all cotton fiber and highly prone to mildewing and rotting. The mast could be used to hoist nets up for drying after each day’s work as well as for rigging a shade awning for the workmen on deck. While this boat had enclosed space, presumably used for quartering crew from time to time, there was limited hold space for ice and trips were still limited to one day or less.



This picture was showcased in the Chicago Tribune in 1947. Taken to show the size of the fleet, shrimping had taken off after World War II and during a northeast blow, as depicted in this photograph, sought shelter in Matanzas Bay. Check out the lighthouse tower in the background, and the breakers behind it in what is now Salt Run. There appear to be over 50 trawlers moored in the bay, can you imagine seeing that many now?!



Diesel Engine Sales Company became the largest shrimp trawler building company in the world right after World War II. Started in 1943, the company merged production capabilities of post-war industry with a rapidly growing taste for shrimp throughout the country. By 1958, over 700 trawlers had been delivered. Diesel Engine Sales employed Henry Ford-style production to wooden boat construction. The bays to the right of the framed-up hull each hold a specific component to the hull. As soon as the hulls were planked and outfitted with everything needed to be watertight, they were launched to make more room in the yard. Engines, rigs, even wheelhouses were added after launching. For every 100 boats, Diesel Engine Sales hosted a party for their employees, local citizenry, and clients. Mr. Ringhaver, the president and owner of Diesel Engine Sales, was known for these parties and many people in St. Augustine have fond memories of these halcyon days of shrimping.”



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Hull #800, the Lady Kossie, is shown here steaming out the San Sebastian River. Clad in a fresh coat of white paint, trimmed in black, she is riding high in the water. Soon enough, several thousand gallons of diesel and many tons of ice would weigh her down for her inaugural fishing trip. At least eight vessel are in production phase behind the Lady Kossie. Diesel Engine Sales, which would become known as DESCO during the late 1960s, also served as a major repair center for their own trawlers and for other builders. The vertical planks between the gunwhale and guard on the Lady Kossie's side were introduced to keep rafter trawlers from snagging their guards on each other when alongside. The significance to this is the level of standardization introduced by St. Augustine builders to the American commercial shrimp fishery. Shrimpers, by this period, could steam to most distant ports and expect a standardized set of replacement parts and supplies.”



To remind its readership of something warm and tasty, the Chicago Sun Times published this photograph on December of 1962. Taken in Key West, this image illustrates the boom in the shrimping industry throughout the southeast. Fishing grounds around the Tortugas produced some of the cleanest catches with the biggest shrimp and from 1949 until 1957, was probably the most productive shrimp fishery in the world. During the late 1950s decreases in the catch prompted the state of Florida to implement controlling regulation on the grounds to protect the species. However, the shrimp fleet was flush with boats in this photograph, many of which were constructed in St. Augustine.



St. Augustine trawlers were, and are, used throughout the world. Corporate fleets, such as this “Chicken of the Sea” boat, established themselves globally and required a steady supply of new and replacement vessels. Diesel Engine Sales Co, and other builders here in St. Augustine readily supplied this need. By the 1970s it was said that “The Sun Never Sets on a DESCOCO Boat”.



Not all trawlers were built by corporate yards. Shown here is the building shed of the Xynides family. Building trawlers from the 1940s until the 1970s, this yard relied almost solely on family labor. It must be stated that the Florida-style trawler was born in sheds like this and adopted by corporations, and not the other way around. Young men learned traditional wooden boatbuilding skills in these yards, continuing a legacy that, in some cases, had been passed down over millennia in Mediterranean families.”



This is a small snapshot of the Versaggi Shrimp Company fleet. The family held a fleet of trawlers ranging from British Guyana to Brownsville, Texas, Patterson, Louisiana, to Tampa, Florida. Families such as the Versaggis and Backmans owned large fleets that travelled sometimes a thousand miles to reach the best grounds.



This bow shot of a freshly launched Diesel Engine Sales Co. (later DESCO) boat shows off the typical bow of a Florida-style trawler. Note the fairly bluff entry and sheer sides. A little flare was sometimes used in the bows, but as often as not, the bows were very straight sided with little discernible flare. The stem post, shown as the chamfered timber farthest forward and vertical (also forming her cutwater), took a great amount of strain from trawling as much of the upperworks and rig is stayed here with wire or solid iron bars. If a net snagged on the bottom, much of this strain was taken straight to the bow of the boat, compressing and pulling on the stem. These old wooden boats were built very stout and could endure long open ocean voyages. The Captain Frisky was the 900th trawler built by Diesel Engine Sales Co.



The Singleton Fleets 17 was constructed in 1978, at the zenith of trawler building in St. Augustine. She was a 103 gross ton vessel, 74' in length, and capable of pulling a double rig (two nets on either side). Some of her sister ships by this time had tankage for up to 21,000 gallons of fuel for long range cruising. Note the stepped-up wheelhouse, an addition to the DESCOSCO design that appeared during the mid-1970s. This picture was taken on her way out the San Sebastian River.

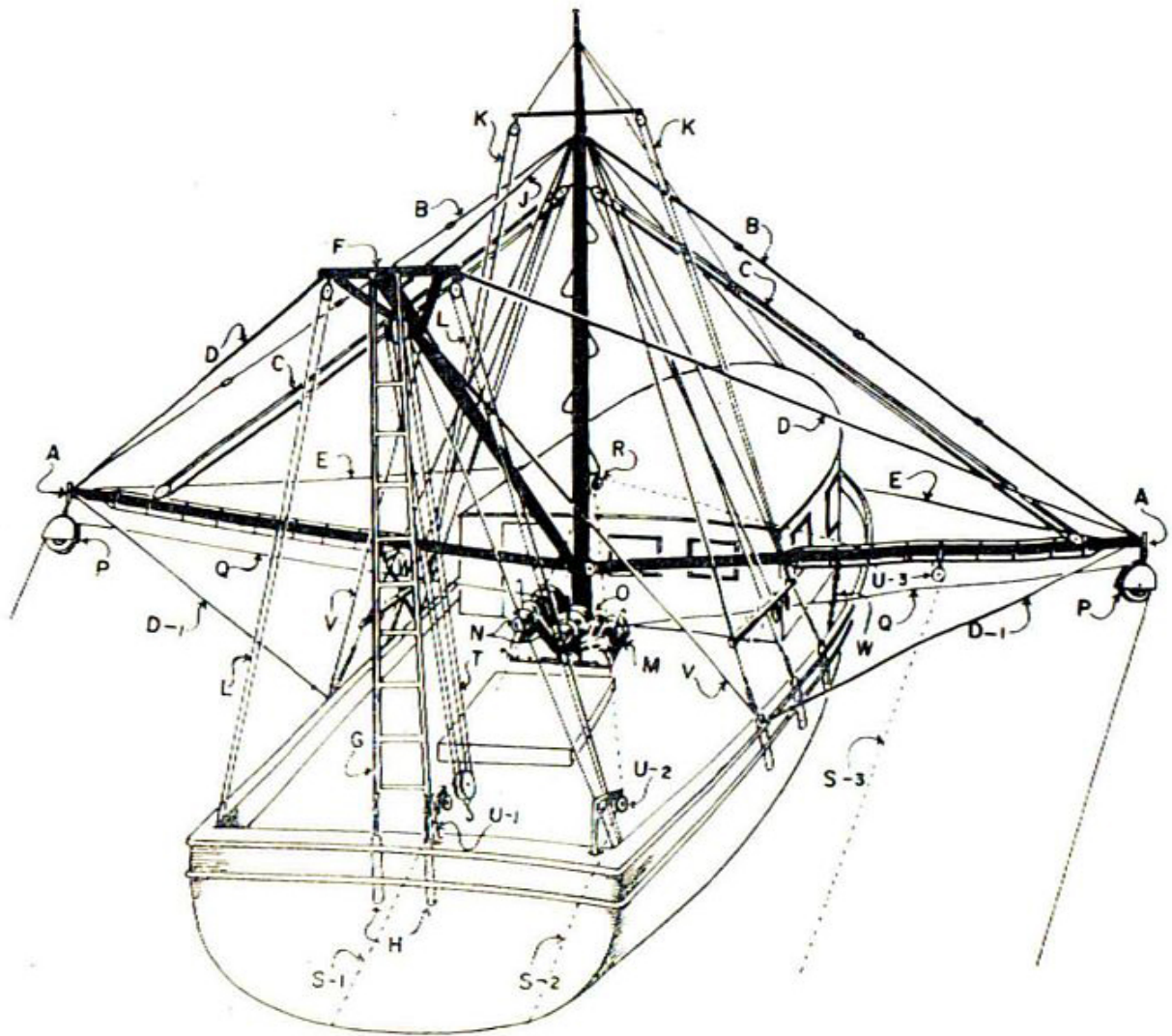


Fig. 685. Rigging arrangements required for double rig shrimp trawling: A—towing boom or outrigger; B—towing boom topping stay; topping lift preventer; C—topping lift tackle; D or D-1—towing boom outrigger back stay; either one may be rigged, but not both; E—towing boom outrigger bow stay; F—modified boom superstructure; G—boom back stays—ratline structure; H—boom back stay plate on transom; J—boom topping lift stay; K—single block tackle; L—single block tackle; M—modified trawl winch; N—gypsy heads two on trawl winch; O—centre drum for try net wire; Q—towing wire; R—leading block for try net; S-1, S-2, S-3—try net lead block; any one may be used; T—main fish tackle tail block; U-1, U-2, U-3—try net lead block; any one may be used to accord with selection of S-1, S-2 or S-3; V—boom shrouds; W—chain stoppers for outriggers

Reproduced from an article by L.C. Ringhaver, owner of Diesel Engine Sales Co. is a diagram of the typical shrimp boat rig used during the 1950-60s. Modern rigs, while somewhat different, employ the same principles to set (shoot), drag, and haul back nets.



As hull #2260, the Apple Jack was one of the last wooden trawlers built by DESCO. She spent her life shrimping the Florida, Georgia, and Carolina waters under the direction of Cpt. Kenny Thomas. A home-town girl, many people remember the Apple Jack fondly passing out the inlet with her outriggers down and nets spread. Her last drag was completed in 2011 and she has now been dismantled.