



August/September 2005

Crosscuts

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SUMMER HOURS

Monday – Friday

7:30 – 5:00

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We will be closed

Monday, September 5th, for Labor Day.

Monday, October 10th, for Columbus Day.

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Specialty Sawmill Takes Rand Lumber from Timber to Tides

In the late 1800s it was commonplace to see a shallow drafted type of cargo ship making its way through the Great Bay and shallow tidal rivers of New Hampshire and Maine. Carrying up to 50 tons of cargo and sometimes measuring more than 70 feet long and 19 feet wide, the “gundalow” was the equivalent of today’s tractor-trailer rigs.

Although the 20th century brought the demise of the gundalow, today a reproduction vessel called the *Captain Edward H. Adams* honors the last of the men who piloted gundalows on the connected rivers of the basin, and serves as a reminder of the important role the Piscataqua River has had in shaping the history of the Seacoast area. *

The non-profit Gundalow Company of Portsmouth has maintained the *Adams* since 2001, offering educational tours, events and programs on board the vessel. Last year, while preparing for an overhaul of the rig, the Gundalow Company turned to Rand Lumber for taper sawing of a new stump mast.

Taper sawing is an efficient process typically used by sawmills to optimize the

length and thickness of boards from a tree. A tree is first squared on four sides, then rotated for 8-, 16- and 32-sided cuts – up to 64 sides, depending on the tree’s overall width. Maintaining full control over the proportion of the circle around the tree is critical, as a tree can be as bulky as it is immense.

Executive Director Molly Bolster explains, “Rand Lumber not only stood out as the sawmill with the right machine for this job, but because they had contributed to the gundalow in the past, we were happy for the opportunity to work with the Rand family again.”

Sawyer Steve Abbott first anchored the 1,700-pound white oak to the carriage of the sawmill with hydraulic clamps, giving him the holding power he needed to saw the 24-foot log. He then “4-sided” the tree, preparing it for tapering.

The tree was then moved to Strawberry Banke where it was finished by Nick Brown and Nate Greeley, experienced boat builders who completed the tapering process by 8-, 16-, 32- and 64-siding the mast to a size of 14 inches at the base and 12 inches at the top.

Today, at 23 feet high, the finished stump mast supports the 70-foot “yard” of



Chuck Cox of Durham, N.H. donated the white oak that was selected for the *Adams*’ stump mast.



In 1982 Rand Lumber provided several large timbers that were required for a traditional reproduction of the only remaining Piscataqua Gundalow.



The *Adams*’ stump mast was tapered to measure 14” at the base and 12” at the top.

The Gundalow Company is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the *Captain Edward H. Adams* and providing a platform for maritime, historical, social, and environmental education on and about the waters of the Piscataqua Maritime Region. For more information, please visit www.gundalow.org.



Since spring, the Adams has visited several riverfront towns in New Hampshire and Maine. Photos by John Crandall.

the Adams' massive lateen sail, which lies at a 90-degree angle to the deck and runs the length of the vessel.

"Rand Lumber really allowed us to speed up the process," notes Bolster. "They cleared the way for Nick and Nate to follow the traditional method of mast building and create the finished stump mast within a short time frame."

*Source: www.gundalow.org

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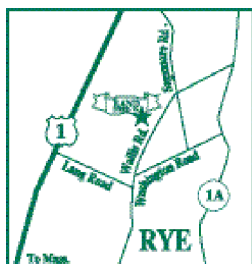


511 Wallis Road
Rye, New Hampshire 03870
(603) 436-4438
Fax (603) 431-3072

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