

194 A brief glance back over time

Fifteen years ago, on or about September 1, 2006, the Autumn issue of the *Nautical Research Journal's* 51st volume arrived in Guild members' mailboxes all over the world. This event had great personal significance since it was the first issue of the *Journal* that I edited.

Looking back over the experience of the past fifteen years is quite intriguing. The *Journal's* physical appearance has changed significantly since 2006. In part this is a result of the fact that we have used two different printers and two separate graphic designers during this time. It is much larger, having grown from sixty-four to ninety-six pages per issue. The more important reason is that we have transitioned from a publication that was entirely in black and white with a very rare (once every two or three years) article in color to the current *Journal*, which contains eighty pages in color.

The means by which members receive their *Journals* has undergone a revolution. In 2006 the *Journal* existed only in print form. The Autumn 2018 issue introduced the option of a digital version, with the added advantage that it was wholly in color. Approximately one-third of Guild members now are digital subscribers, although some also choose to receive a printed version. Furthermore, although the *Journal* has offered additional book reviews available online only since 2013, this past Spring, we made available the first *Journal's* major research article, over 200 pages in length covering the Continental schooner *Hannah*, in an online-only format. This experiment proved sufficiently successful for us to consider creating more online-only content in the future. There are plans for something new and exciting in this realm to appear early in the new year of 2022.

The other driver of change over the past fifteen years has resulted from the need to reflect advances in technology and their impact on ship model building. In 2006 the *Journal* reflected a very traditional perspective. Soon afterwards, we began featuring articles on the use of digital drawing tools and CNC machines that used the results for cutting out parts. Then, we never mentioned resin kits but now we embrace building models not only from cast resin but also from components produced using 3D printing technology. This period has witnessed what can best be termed the mainstreaming of plastic and resin kits, the use of non-traditional materials in model ship building, the incorporation of photo-etching for adding minute details, using laser cutting and CNC machinery to prepare components, 3D printing not only of parts but also of whole models, and the use of computer assisted design tools and professional naval architecture programs to create plans for models and visualize them in three dimensions. Traditional tools and materials remain central elements in ship modeling but these new features also are here to stay.

In my first editorial I wrote that the guiding principle of the *Journal* was "presenting the fruits of new research into maritime history and their application to creating works of world-class craftsmanship." That has not changed one iota. Nor has my pledge "to create the *Journal* that interests, stimulates, and even challenges members to bring forth their own best work."

— Paul E. Fontenoy