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“Advancing Ship Modeling Through Research” has been the *Nautical Research Journal’s* subtitle for a decade now. The ever-increasing volume of material available through the Internet can tend to give would-be researchers the idea that there they will find all the answers to their questions. Setting to one side the issues of discriminating between primary and secondary source material and the importance of critically evaluating the reliability of secondary material, the fact remains that thorough research is hard work and very rarely possible entirely from the comfort of one’s terminal.

Several recent articles in the Journal provide useful illustrations of the value of thorough research and also demonstrate the necessity for going out into the field to accomplish this. Randle McLean Biddle’s “Colonel John Glover’s Marblehead Schooner *Hannah* (c. 1775): Fishing for the Truth” is an excellent example. Summarized in NRJ 65:4 (Winter 2020), the full exposition of his massive four-part re-evaluation of this notorious vessel is accessible on the Guild’s website at <https://thenrg.org/journal/extended>.

A second fine example is “A model of a sailing canaller of the 1870s Great Lakes,” by Tim Morrison, published in two parts in NRJ 66:3 & 4 (Autumn and Winter 2021). In addition to the extensive research required to unearth the facts about these craft, the author also ably demonstrated the direct application of this research to the creation of a unique model.

A final example appears within this issue. Richard Yorzcyk’s “United States Navy submarine O-9 (SS 70)” again demonstrates the value of applying the fruits of wide-ranging research using a broad array of sources to generate an accurate picture of a vessel at one point in time that enabled the builder to produce a distinctive model of a relatively obscure prototype.

All three articles, and many others that have appeared in the Journal over the years, share several features in common despite the considerable disparity in the subject matter. The first is their clear reliance on primary source material. All make use of published secondary work, but this material is evaluated critically against the conclusions that emerge from the documentation.

The second prominent feature is the range of sources the authors consulted. They did not limit themselves to written documents but also accessed iconographic sources, artifactual resources, and archaeological fieldwork to gain more complete pictures of the reality of their subjects.

The third notable feature in common to these articles is that a substantial proportion of the materials the authors accessed were simply not available through the Internet. In every case they had to reach out to institutions all over North America to locate information with significant bearing on their topics that was not available in digital form. It is also clear that, although not often mentioned by them, the authors found themselves obliged to travel to the institutions themselves to unearth much of this source material.

As stated earlier, serious research is seriously hard work. The Internet is an invaluable resource, but there still is vastly more very significant information that exists only in tangible form, and the only way to access it is to travel to the institutions in whose care it resides.

— Paul E. Fontenoy