

## Present and Historic Physical Appearance

The 1894-built, two-masted schooner *Ernestina*, formerly *Effie M. Morrissey* (official number 136423) is a fully operational museum and educational vessel owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and operated by the Schooner *Ernestina* Commission. *Ernestina* is listed in the National Register of Historic Places at a national level of significance. *Ernestina* regularly sails the New England coast on educational cruises when she is not at her berth near the foot of Union Street on the waterfront of New Bedford, Massachusetts, which is fronted by that city's National Historic Landmark district.

### ERNESTINA AS BUILT, MODIFIED, AND RESTORED



Ernestina at her berth in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1990. NPS photo by Candace Clifford.

As built in 1894 as *Effie M. Morrissey*, *Ernestina* is a two-masted *Fredonia* offshore model Grand Banks fishing schooner 114 feet long overall, with a 24.5-foot beam, a 10.2-foot depth of hold, and a 12-foot draft. The sparred length is 156 feet, while the length on deck is 106 feet. The schooner is currently registered at 120 tons gross and 98 tons net, and displaces 240 tons. Originally admeasured internally to obscure fishing vessel conventions, the schooner's 19th and early 20th century dimensions were listed as 93.6 feet (close to the schooner's waterline length of 92 feet) by 23.8 feet by 10.2 feet. These dimensions reflect 19th-century rules for documenting fishing vessels, not a discrepancy in the schooner's size through her career. The hull form of *Effie M. Morrissey* was modeled after the successful fishing schooner *Fredonia* of 1889, an improvement of the unstable Gloucester clippers of the 1850s-80s, with a sharp, clipper bow, elliptical transom, fine sharp lines, a lofty rig, and a deep draft that brought speed under sail and, as an "offshore" version of the *Fredonia* hull, served as a stable platform for offshore, deepwater voyages. The schooner was and is built staunchly of white oak, treenail and iron-fastened with Swedish wrought iron, with later replacements in yellow pine and tropical hardwoods. The double-sawn oak frames, 7.5 by 6 inches molded and sided, are on 24-inch centers. The carvel-planked hull is 3-inch thick oak planks, treenailed with locust. The hull was sheathed with 2-inch thick greenheart after 1926 for Arctic voyages; this was removed in or around 1959 when the schooner served as a Cape Verde packet. In 1978, the hull was sheathed with fiberglass below the waterline, which the schooner retains. The ceiling planking, originally oak, has in time largely been replaced with yellow pine. Treenails have given way to spike fastenings. The hull is reinforced by a 4-inch thick bulge stringer. Hanging knees support each major deck beam, and the decks are strengthened by lodging knees throughout. The white pine deck, largely original, is formed of 3- by 5-inch planks, with a beaded undersurface, spike fastened to the deck beams. Replacement of deck planks has largely been confined to the foredeck area.

The two masts carry a fore-and-aft, topsail schooner rig. The masts are Douglas fir sticks. The 76-foot tall mainmast is 20 inches in diameter at the partners, and the 74-foot tall foremast is 21 inches in diameter at the partners; each mast has a 2-inch taper. The standing rigging is one-inch thick wire rope, parceled, served and slushed with Stockholm tar and set up with four-strand steam-tarred hemp lanyard shrouds rove through lignum vitae deadeyes. All running rigging is manila. After a 1976 dismasting, the masts were replaced with shorter, 60-foot tall sticks that were in turn replaced with the present masts that conform to the schooner's original specifications. The main carries a 68-foot long boom and a 35-foot long gaff. As *Effie M. Morrissey*, the schooner carried 8,323 square feet of sail; today, as *Ernestina*, she carries the same amount of canvas as the result of a 1986 restoration. *Ernestina* carries a typical large coaster or fisherman's rig: a mainsail, foresail, topsail, staysail, and balloon, jib, and jumbo headsails. The term "jumbo" is another name for the fore staysail. All sails are traditional handsewn cotton canvas.

Capt. Bob Bartlett had a diesel engine installed in 1927 for his Arctic voyages. This engine was removed in 1948. A new engine was installed in 1953, and in turn was replaced around 1964, and then removed in or around 1980. In 1986, a new, 6-cylinder, 290-horsepower Cummins marine diesel engine was installed in the original space. The engine drives a single, three-bladed, 48-inch diameter Luke feathering propeller. Fuel is provided through a 950 gallon and a 280 gallon day tank. On deck the schooner was designed to be roomy and open, with a break just forward of the mainmast. The deck is pierced by four hatches; one forward leads by means of a steep ladder into the forecabin. Two fish hatches amidships lead into the hold, while the fourth, at the aft end and portside of the deckhouse leads into the captain's cabin. Aft of the deckhouse is the wheelbox, covering the steering gear and mounting the wheel. The deckhouse, or aft-cabin, was the only superstructure until 1948, when two small deckhouses, one forward of the forward fish hatch, and one on the port side aft of the forward shrouds, were built and dropped on deck. These deckhouses were removed in the 1986 restoration to bring the schooner back to its original deck configuration.

Below decks, the schooner was divided into three major areas: the forecabin, the cargo hold, and the captain's cabin. The forecabin, originally fitted with the galley and bunks for the fishing crew of the schooner,

carried 12 bunks and the triangular, hinged mess table. The galley was removed to the forward deckhouse in 1948, and in 1980 two bunks were removed to make more storage space in the forepeak. The galley was restored to near its original configuration after 1986. The galley was refitted, with a No. 450 Shipmate stove, diesel-fired to conform to Coast Guard regulations, and ten bunks. A double-diagonal planked collision bulkhead forward forms the break between the forecastle and forepeak. Access to the forepeak is through a scuttle on deck.

The cargo hold, an open space originally used as a fish hold when built in 1894, was converted into a cargo hold in 1914 with little modification. In 1927, the cargo hold was partitioned and converted into a bunking space and engine room for Arctic voyages. It was reconverted into a cargo hold in 1947. In 1986, during restoration, the cargo hold was again partitioned and converted into engine room and bunking spaces. In the words of the schooner's present captain, "the cargo hold was converted every 20 years or so to whatever paid the freight." While the interior arrangement of this space has changed, the original construction has not; deck beams, hatch carlings, knees, and ceiling planking remain unmodified. The space could be reconverted to a fish or cargo hold by gutting. The captain's cabin, never modified, holds four bunks, stove, chart table, and binnacle, on these vessels an enclosure in the cabin with a small door on the aft bulkhead of the deckhouse providing the helmsman with visual access to the compass. Originally, a small crawlway connected the aft-cabin with the lazarette. To conform to Coast Guard regulations, a double diagonal wood watertight bulkhead now separates the two spaces. Access to the lazarette is through a scuttle on the quarterdeck aft.

The 1894-built schooner *Ernestina*, ex-*Effie M. Morrissey*, is the oldest surviving Grand Banks fishing schooner, the only surviving 19th century Gloucester-built fishing schooner, and one of two remaining examples of the *Fredonia* style schooners, the most famous American fishing vessel type, and is the only offshore example of that type. The schooner is also one of only two sailing Arctic exploration vessels left afloat in the United States, the other being the schooner *Bowdoin*, a National Historic Landmark. After a long and distinguished fishing and cargo-carrying career, *Effie M. Morrissey* was purchased in 1926 by Capt. Robert A. Bartlett, Canadian-born Arctic explorer and companion of Robert E. Peary. Bartlett navigated Peary and Matthew Henson to the North Pole in 1909, and was considered the greatest ice captain of the 20th century. Under "Bob" Bartlett, "the little *Morrissey*" made 20 regular voyages north, at one time reaching within 600 miles of the Pole, documenting the frozen north, its flora and fauna, and people for patrons ranging from the National Geographic Society, the Smithsonian Institution, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Museum of the American Indian, and others. Star of Pathe newsreels and David Putnam's adventures for boys, *David Goes to Greenland* and *David Goes to Baffin Land*, which spread the name and fame of the venerable master and his schooner, Cap'n Bob and *Morrissey*, were as famous to the generation of the 1920s and 30s as Jacques Cousteau and *Calypso* were to the generation of the 1960s and 70s. After a long association with Bartlett that included World War II surveys of Greenland waters for the U.S. Navy and duty as a supply ship to U.S. airbases in the Arctic and to the Soviet port of Murmansk, *Morrissey* entered a new career after Cap'n Bob's 1946 death. As a Cape Verde packet, the schooner, renamed *Ernestina*, regularly sailed between the Cape Verde Islands and the United States, and was the last sailing ship, in regular service, to carry immigrants across the Atlantic to the United States, the last of a series of Cape Verde packets to carry on this trade in the middle years of the 20th century. Donated as a gift to the United States by the newly independent West African Republic of Cape Verde in 1975, *Ernestina* was restored and returned to the land of her construction in 1982, where additional restoration ensued that has retained the schooner's exceptional integrity. She now regularly sails the coast, ranging as far north as Newfoundland, keeping her name as alive as the traditions she preserves.

*The preceding statement is based on the more detailed statements that follow.*

## **EFFIE M. MORRISSEY AND THE GRAND BANKS**

The fishing industry of the United States, while spread throughout the nation and found on every waterway and coast, was born in New England waters some 300 years ago. Since then, from the fishing ports of Massachusetts, particularly Gloucester, hailed the nation's largest fleet of fishing schooners. From Gloucester and other small towns fishing fleets sailed to work the Grand Banks of Newfoundland and other fishing grounds off the eastern seaboard where shoal waters hosted tremendous numbers of cod, haddock, hake, halibut, pollock, cusk, skate, catfish, whiting, monk-fish, wolf-fish, and lumpfish. To meet the conditions of the trade, shipyards in Gloucester and nearby towns designed and built the American fishing schooners of the 19th and 20th centuries, among them the most famous type, those modeled after Edward Burgess's schooner *Fredonia* of 1889, which came to epitomize the "typical" fishing schooner to most Americans. The schooner, built in 1894 for the John F. Wonson Co. of Gloucester and Capt. William Morrissey, "exemplified the best of the *Fredonia*-type Gloucestermen--the finest working fore-and-aft sailing vessels--with a design that felicitously combined speed, carrying capacity, maneuverability, sea kindness and elegance in a balance that is rarely achieved."

Laid down at the Essex yard of John F. James and Washington Tarr, who together built 139 vessels, the schooner was designed by George M. McClain after the *Fredonia* model. Launched February 1, 1894, the schooner was christened *Effie M. Morrissey* in honor of part-owner and skipper William Morrissey's daughter. Quickly outfitted, *Effie M. Morrissey* sailed for the Banks for the first time on March 14, returning on July 28, 1894 to commence a 20-year career as a fishing schooner. A salt banker, she fished for cod, which was headed, split, gutted, and salted in her fish hold, at times bringing back as much as 320,000 lbs. of fish packed in salt.



M. Morrissey in 1894. Photo courtesy Cape Ann Historical Society.

The schooner was sold in March 1905 to Capt. Ansel Snow of Digby, Nova Scotia, but retained her American registry through the employment of an American "paper" captain though she sailed out of Digby with a Canadian crew to sell her catch in the United States. In 1908, she landed 200,000 lbs. of shack at Gloucester, while in 1911 she sold her catches at Portland, Maine. In 1912, the schooner was joined for a voyage by Frederick William Wallace, who wrote of his experiences aboard in widely-read accounts of his adventures among the bankers. *Morrissey* was described by Wallace as "a hard-looking packet...Much of her paint work had vanished from off her deck and sides, and her rails and houses showed the scars of eighteen years of seafaring...Around Digby, they called her "an old plug of a vessel," but the men who had sailed in her allowed that she wasn't much of a sailer "by the wind," but "slap it to her with the wind aft, fellers, and she'd run like a bull moose!"

Wallace helped the schooner earn a reputation as a fast and lucky ship. A ballad he wrote and published in the 1914 *Canadian Fisherman* about his trip aboard her, "The Log of the Record Run," recounted a 225-mile, 18-and-a-half-hour passage that at times reached 16 knots in gale force winds that once hove her down, blew out sails, and snapped the fore-gaff, with only the foresail set for the last eight hours. Widely reproduced and sung up and down the banks, the ballad is now a firm part of Grand Banks folklore. In 1914, *Effie M. Morrissey* was sold to Capt. Harold Bartlett of Brigus, who converted her to a cargo carrier, sailing between Newfoundland and Labrador with general cargo and coal, while occasionally making a sailing trip out to the Banks. In this capacity, in 1921 the schooner was featured in a *National Geographic* article by old friend Frederick William Wallace, "Life on the Grand Banks," which described *Morrissey* and her mates as "the handsomest commercial sailing craft afloat....Their lines are fine and designed for speed, but weatherliness has been so well combined in the model that neither quality has been sacrificed." The schooner remained in service for four more years until 1925, when Bartlett sold her to his nephew, Robert A. Bartlett, already a noted Arctic explorer, who would spend his last years aboard the sturdy little schooner making himself and *Effie M. Morrissey* legends.



Morrissey as a Banks fisherman, her deck loaded with fish. Photo courtesy Schooner Ernestina Commission.

### **CAPTAIN BOB BARTLETT AND "HIS LITTLE MORRISSEY"**

Robert A. Bartlett was born in Brigus, Newfoundland, on August 15, 1875. Naturalized as a citizen of the United States in 1911, he died in New York City on April 28, 1946, not long after he wrote "My first love is the *Effie M. Morrissey*, my schooner; my second, the Arctic, whose icy waters I have sailed for nigh on to half a century." One biographer has termed Bartlett "the greatest Canadian ice captain who ever lived--the greatest, by general consent, of any nationality in this century." In his prolific lifetime, Bartlett made 22 voyages into the Canadian Arctic, six to other parts of the Arctic, a voyage to Siberia, commanded ships famous in the annals of Arctic exploration-- *Roosevelt* and *Karluk*, for two of the most noted Arctic explorers, Robert E. Peary and

Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and accompanied Peary to as far as 87 degrees, 47 minutes, 150 miles from the North Pole in 1909 before turning back, leaving Peary and Matthew Henson to press on. Peary described Bartlett as "tireless, faithful, enthusiastic, true as the compass," and noted in his account of the conquest of the Pole that: *I had given him the post of honor in command of my last supporting party for three reasons: first, because of his magnificent handling of the Roosevelt; second, because he had cheerfully and gladly stood between me and every possible minor annoyance from the start of the expedition to that day; third, because it seemed to me right that, in view of the noble work of Great Britain in arctic exploration, a British subject should, next to an American, be able to say that he had stood nearest the North Pole.*

After piloting vessels for other men and their expeditions, beginning in 1898, Bartlett acquired a vessel of his own--*Effie M. Morrissey* and made 16 voyages to the Arctic on his own account, with another four for the United States government, which "produced, in the period between the world wars, an immense wealth of scientific knowledge. He was the first arctic explorer to place science ahead of exploration."

Fame from his earlier exploits, including a 1913 walk across frozen wastes to find help after pack ice crushed his ship and marooned the crew, had nearly destroyed Bob Bartlett by 1924. On the beach and down on his luck and finances, Bartlett had recovered from alcoholism and a near-fatal accident in New York City in 1925 when James B. Ford, vice-president of United States Rubber, purchased *Effie M. Morrissey* for him, thus providing Bartlett with a purpose and a platform for greatness. After trying his hand in the summer of 1925 fishing the banks with *Morrissey*, Bartlett took the advice of several friends, notably publisher George Palmer Putnam, and decided to outfit the schooner for Arctic exploration.

Work began in the spring of 1926, and included sheathing the hull in greenheart to protect it from the ice, and the installation of an engine. He then sailed for the north, beginning a 20 year tradition of an annual voyage, sailing from Rye, New York, each June, and returning by September. The voyages were in part sponsored by various institutions, such as the American Geographical Society, the American Museum of Natural History, the Chicago Zoological Society, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, the Heye Foundation, Museum of the American Indian, Vassar College, the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, the Smithsonian Institution, and the New York Zoological Society, to name a few. Beginning in 1930, Bartlett also took aboard college boys, who were molded by their Arctic adventures with "Cap'n Bob," as he was then known, who operated on the philosophy that going to sea was "good tonic for folks....getting their hands dirty, their muscles hard and their minds cleaned out with the honest experiences of the sea and far places."

Bartlett's voyages were widely covered in the press, and were popularized with boys when George Putnam's 14-year-old son David, after sailing with Cap'n Bob, penned two immensely successful books, *David Goes to Greenland* and *David Goes to Baffin Land*. Hundreds of hours of motion picture footage were shot by Bartlett aboard the schooner, and Pathe News newsreels shown in theaters across the nation brought the adventures of Cap'n Bob and "his little *Morrissey*" to eager audiences. Magazine articles frequently mentioned both, and *National Geographic* again featured the schooner, this time in a color



*Morrissey in the Arctic, ca. 1930. Photo courtesy of Schooner Ernestina Commission.*

spread entitled "Voyage of the *Morrissey*." Bartlett wrote two books about his adventures, *The Log of Bob Bartlett* and *Sails Over Ice*, and some 18 articles in journals and newspapers.

As war loomed on the horizon in 1941, the U.S. Bureau of Standards sponsored an expedition north in *Effie M. Morrissey* to measure radio wave transmission in the Arctic. During the war, under Bartlett's command, the schooner surveyed the Greenland coast for the U.S. Navy; after 1942, she set up, and supplied military and weather stations in the Arctic, making one voyage to Murmansk. Returning to the United States in 1945, *Effie M. Morrissey* sailed no more for Cap'n Bob, who died ashore at a New York City hospital in April 1946. His schooner was sold to two brothers in New York City in 1946, who intended to sail her to the south seas. Then, in November 1947, a fire below decks damaged *Morrissey*, which was saved at the last moment by scuttling her to put out the flames. Derelict and seemingly at the end of her career, *Effie M. Morrissey* was saved, however, when she was sold to Capt. Henrique Mendes and his sister, Louise Mendes of Egypt, Massachusetts, for a new career as a Cape Verde packet.

## ERNESTINA AND THE LAST IMMIGRANTS BY SAIL

The Cape Verde Islands lie 300 miles off the West coast of Africa, near Senegal. Formerly a colony of Portugal, the islands have been associated with New England's maritime trades since the early 19th century, when Yankee whalers stopped at the islands and shipped hands. Cape Verdeans who swallowed the anchor after a whaling life often did so in New England, settling down to work ashore in maritime industries. As a result, a regular maritime traffic between the islands and New England, particularly New Bedford, which was home to many of the Cape Verdean immigrants, began. Capt. Henrique Mendes bought his first ship in 1902 and joined this already flourishing trade, carrying immigrants and general cargo to and from the United States and the Cape Verde Islands. Mendes continued in the trade through the years as master of several of the "Cape Verde packets," until he bought his last ship, *Effie M. Morrissey*. With the help of his sister, an American citizen, Capt. Mendes purchased the schooner, brought her to New Bedford, and outfitted her for a new career in 1948. The schooner's name was changed to *Ernestina*, in honor of her new owner and master's daughter. Her engine removed, the schooner sailed for Cape Verde for the first time on August 18, 1948, with 50 tons of food and clothing as cargo and one passenger.

Thus *Ernestina* entered into a career as an immigrant vessel, serving as a connective link between the Cape Verdean community in America and the home islands, transporting Christmas presents, food, and other items while at the same time bringing to the United States family members and friends wishing to emigrate. As the schooner's present master, Daniel D. Moreland, has stated:

*Although 300 years separated the two ventures, Ernestina was carrying on essentially the same work as had the Mayflower, and in conditions which bore striking similarities to those of the earlier ship. Mendes removed the engine to meet obscure rules of maritime commerce, and she sailed with neither radar nor radio aboard. But for the Cape Verdean community, it still made sense, in the middle of the twentieth century, to make their trip to the New World under sail.*

Through the 1950s the schooner carried passengers and cargo between Cape Verde and the United States, the last time immigrants arrived on a regularly operating sail vessel. After remaining in the islands for four years, between 1959 and 1963, due to increased economic pressure from the Belgian Line, which provided seven-day steamship service between New England and Cape Verde, *Ernestina* returned to New Bedford in 1964 and 1965, but without passengers. Capt. Mendes sold the schooner to Capt.

Alberto Lopes in 1967, and for the next few years, *Ernestina*, once again seemingly at the end of her life, was used in the interisland trade.

### RESTORATION AND REVIVAL

Interest in preserving the schooner as a museum vessel dates as far back as Capt. Bob Bartlett's death, at which time a move was made to sell her to Mystic Seaport. Renewed efforts in the 1960s came to naught, but in 1975, the newly independent Republic of Cape Verde announced its intent to sail *Ernestina* back to the United States for Operation Sail '76. Enroute to New York, however, the schooner was dismasted. Not disheartened, the Cape Verdeans were determined to return her to America, this time as a gift from one nation to another. Restored and refitted, *Ernestina* was sailed to the U.S. in 1982 and presented to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. After a four-year refit, *Ernestina* sailed in Operation Sail '86, in honor of the restoration of the Statue of Liberty. Additional restoration work in 1988 has brought the ship up to excellent condition. Homeported in New Bedford, from whence she hailed as a Cape Verde packet in 1948, *Ernestina* regularly sails, keeping her history, with its unique international ties to the United States, Canada, the Arctic, and the Cape Verde Islands alive along with the traditions of the sea.



Bartlett (right) and arctic explorer Knud Rasmusson on the schooner *Effie M. Morrissey*, ca. 1930. Photo courtesy of Schooner *Ernestina* Commission.



*Ernestina* in the Cape Verde Islands ca. 1965 prior to her return to the U.S. Photo courtesy Schooner *Ernestina* Commission.