

Background

A glimpse into the history of one of Nova Scotia's most important industries...

Atlantic Canada's Golden Age of Sail was a product of dramatic political and economic changes on the international stage. The 'golden age' typically refers to the period between the 1820s and the 1890s and, while shipbuilding continued to serve as an important industry in Nova Scotia until the end of the First World War, it began to decline at the end of the nineteenth century when the world began to favour steam and iron over sails. What remains is a legacy that continues to play a role in the Nova Scotian heritage and identity.



Resources

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic:

www.museum.gov.ns.ca/mma/index.

Age of Sail Heritage Museum:

www.ageofsailmuseum.ca

Ottawa House By-the-Sea Museum, Parrsboro N.S.:

www.ottawahouse.org/pages/parrsborough-shore-historical-society.php

Tallships of Atlantic Canada, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia:

www.atlantictallships.ca

Randall House Museum:

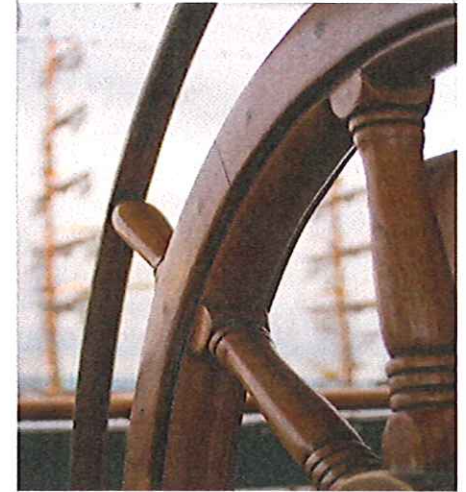
<http://wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca/>



Shipbuilding in the Minas Basin

A defining industry in the heritage of Nova Scotia

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www.basinships.com
www.juniorbasinships.com



The Minas Basin

Shipbuilding thrived in the Minas Basin. The industry was so important, in fact, that it influenced settlement patterns and affected the development of several harbour towns, many of which remain today. In addition to the hard-working people, the 'golden age' must also be attributed to the physical geography. The Minas Basin benefited from its vast tidal marshes, which extend the length of the Bay of Fundy, and from access to ideal sources of natural vegetation. An abundance of woods, such as fir, spruce, balsam, birch, maple, and white pine, were readily available and supported the industry. The Bay of Fundy also provided the easiest access route to the West Indies, one of

British North America's largest trading partners, and the Minas Basin rapidly evolved into a centre of world-class shipbuilding. While the Golden Age of Sail has long past, the Minas Basin is source of artifacts that provides a glimpse into the rich history of the shipbuilding industry.

Ten places to visit: locations of considerable shipbuilding in the Minas Basin included Avonport, Canning, Hantsport, Horton, Kentville, Kingsport, Parrsboro, Port Williams, Windsor, and Wolfville.

Tourism Nova Scotia:
<http://novascotia.com/en/home/default.asp>

Did you know?

Women were active in the shipbuilding industry. The role of women at sea is often ignored but they were essential aboard as wives to captains, as ships' working crew, and eventually as navigators. They also contributed to construction ashore.

The largest Canadian wooden ship was built in the Minas Basin. The William D. Lawrence was launched from Maitland on October 27, 1874. Weighing 2,459 tons with a keel length of 244 feet 9 inches, she was "the largest vessel ever placed upon the stocks in the Dominion or in British North America".

Sable Island was known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic". Located to the far east of the Nova Scotia mainland, it is recorded that this allegedly haunted island was the location of 350 shipwrecks.

