

11/18/15

Young America 1853 – POB 1:96

Part 34 – Main Deck Finishing

After all the deck planking was installed, it had to be leveled off and finished. Regardless of how well the plywood bulkheads and the added under-deck supports are faired off beforehand, it will be necessary to level off the planking using a combination of filing with flat rifflers and/or sanding with coarse (say 120-grit) paper. If you are building the model, I hope you will pay more attention to the bulkhead fairing work than I did. My fairing could have been a bit more thorough. The deck has some waviness, but only those permitted to touch it will notice. Regardless of the perfection of the bulkhead fairing, it will be prudent to start with heavier deck planks – say 4 ½" thick vs. the final 3 ½".

The first picture shows some 220-grit finish sanding being done after all the irregularities between planks were leveled out using a flat riffler.



I used this model to experiment with deck finish. On the larger model, beeswax thinned with turpentine was used on all unpainted wood – after more extensive sanding and polishing. After sanding with 220-grit, I finished this decking with water based, acrylic sanding sealer thinned to about 50% with water – two coats, each sanded smooth – 220-grit then 320-grit. The planking was then coated with acrylic gloss artists' varnish. Two coats, thinned, each sanded with 320-grit and then rubbed with Scotchbrite® grey then white grades. This left a silky satin finish on the deck. Simulated deck fastenings were embossed after the first coat of varnish. I used a piece of syringe tubing for this and felt that the varnished surface would better resist pulling out small plugs.

Deck fastenings on these ships were normally iron spikes driven into counter-bored holes that were later filled with wood plugs that usually matched the decking. The next picture shows the embossing in progress.



For this work a length of syringe was held in a pin vise that could then be lightly tapped with a hammer. I was very careful to emboss all fastenings directly over bulkheads or other under-deck supports to avoid the possibility of breaking the planks. I used a light pencil line across the deck for each row, then alternated fastenings on either side of the line.

The next picture shows the tools used for this.



The syringe tubing had an OD of about 1 1/2" and a sharp bevel was stoned around its end. I used a scribe point to flare out the end slightly to avoid plugs being jammed in and pulled out. The second

pin vise shown was fitted with a small drill to use for cleaning out the end of the syringe as it became fouled.

After this embossing work, the deck was sanded with 320-grit paper and rubbed out with Scotchbrite® in preparation for the final varnish coat. This was then applied, left to dry, sanded with 320-grit, and finally rubbed out with grey then white grades of Scotchbrite®. This left a polished sheen on the deck as shown in the next picture.



I felt that the acrylic varnish worked out quite well. It dried hard enough to be rubbed out and polished to the sheen I was looking for. Below is a picture of some of the finishing materials and brushes used on the model.



The finish used on the decks was Liquitex® High Gloss Varnish applied with the flat synthetic brushes shown. High gloss finishes contain no flattening agents so they can be rubbed out to the desired sheen without being limited by the dulling agents used in semi-gloss or matte finishes. The Scotchbrite® pads mentioned above were used for this and are shown in the picture. The black Golden Fluid Acrylic® shown in the picture was used on the hull finish – to be described later.