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Young America 1853 – POB 1:96 Part 39 – Stern Fancy Rail

The so-called "fancy rail" capped the tops of the bulwarks along the main rail, but at the forecastle and poop decks it also served to seal off and make watertight the top of the framing at the side. Although the curved margin plank below covered the tops of the timbers in these areas, this was not likely a caulked, waterproof joint. For this reason, the fancy rails at the forecastle and poop needed to be wide enough to overlap the outboard planks and also the inside margin plank by enough to permit good caulked joints. I wrestled with this because published sections through the bulwarks at the main deck generally show capping rails too narrow to meet the needs described above where they are at deck level. To resolve this, I decided to make the fancy rail wider at the end decks and step it down at the breast beams to a narrower width along the main deck bulwarks. A long story, but one that builders of the model should find useful.

The work on the fancy rail started at the stern. The process for making the curved, hook-scarphed pieces was used on the margin plank below and on all similar pieces at both ends. Since I took a lot of pictures of the method on this rail, and since there are a number of these pieces to make, I decided to show the process that I use for this in some detail. Although it is covered in depth in the book for the framed model, this description may be of help to builders of this smaller version. In the first picture the first piece has been cut and pinned on the starboard quarter.



Pin holes were pre-drilled for a sliding fit with the pins. The joint of the two stern sections will be on the centerline – staggered from the joints on the margin plank below. On this model all the pieces were cut from ³/₄" stock. I used this as a maximum thickness on this version so modelers could cut members to size with a good 4" circular saw and not need major tools like full size band(or circular) saw and thickness sander(or planer) that would be necessary if starting with the thicker stock that is

needed for many pieces on the framed model. In this case the stock was readily available $\frac{3}{4}$ " maple cut to a thickness of $3\frac{1}{2}$ " (just over 1/32"). It will be painted.

In the next picture the scarph joints have been formed at the ends and the piece re-pinned in place.



The piece extends about 3" outside of the outboard planking and covers about one-half of the margin plank. The piece was initially formed by the process shown below for the second piece on the port side.



The $\frac{3}{4}$ " width of maple strip was first marked to the shape of the stern from below as shown. The piece is being test fit in the next picture after cutting the outer curve.



In the next picture end of this piece is being marked from the joint of the piece below.



The full width of the piece was then marked out using a compass set to the width of the plank with an extended leg held to the outer curve. It was then carefully cut and shaped to this line. Care is

needed because of the weak cross grain at the ends. I believe in an earlier post I pasted similar pieces to a scrap piece to protect the ends on a similar piece for cutting. The next picture shows the piece slipped under the first piece, fit into place and being drilled for locating pins.



Once pinned the joint on the new piece can be marked out using a very sharp pencil as shown in the next picture.



The joint was then cut on the second piece and fitted to the first as shown below.



This picture was taken during the cutting and fitting process. Note that the joint has not yet been cut at the forward end of this piece. I will not describe cutting these joints since the method appears in a number of my other posts and is fully described in the book – and in the *Naiad* books.

In the next part the side rails along the poop will be fitted and all these rails rounded off, painted and installed.