



By Rick Strollo

# A NEW ENGLAND EAGLE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Originally from the New England region, I was well aware of the quintessential design of the “Beals Islander / Jonesporter,” a workboat with beauty of purpose, specifically built for their own geographic Downeast fishing conditions. Known by historians as the best working form ever constructed and an inspiration both visually and spiritually, these classic wooden watercraft are recognized as the most beautiful and

fastest of their time, due in part to their “skeg construction.” She’s a



rare breed and a rare find, as most were left to rot with the advent of

fiberglass, when more powerful engines and mechanized means of hauling traps became common and graceful lines with shear and low freeboard soon vanished.

Built of wood in 1962 by Vinal Beal and son Osmond Beal on Beals Island, Maine and launched in 1963, *Flying Eagle* (original name) had fished lobster in the cold northeast Maine waters for 43 years and has since been retired from working traps (lobster pots) for the last 10 years. Although her original lifting

*Flying Eagle*, left, in her new stomping grounds of the San Juan Islands just ahead of the Anacortes ferry. Below left, Diane Strollo rowing toward the anchored *Flying Eagle*. A succession of owners has kept the *Flying Eagle* both operational and largely original. Photo by Alan Stameison.

equipment: hauler (winch) and davit (crane) had been stripped away to make her into a so-called picnic boat, astonishingly no one had yet installed bronze cleats to her decks! You see, Downeast lobstermen shied away from cleats, preferring flush decks to avoid the risk of entanglement. Should their (fishing) gear foul (tangle) on such deck obstructions, the ever present risk of death from falling overboard would have become reality. It should be noted that this is the primary reason for “caging” their underwater running gear (prop). True, the underwater cage did create drag thus slowing the vessel, but it prevented lines from fouling and saved lives.

Before her journey to the Northwest, I had the challenging and satisfying project of restoring her to close to, and some cases better than, original condition. I am the latest in a succession of owners that understand this boat’s significance.

*Flying Eagle* had a rough 10-day, 3,600 mile journey on a flatbed truck from New England to Anacortes that ended May 1, 2015. She is now moored in Massacre Bay and sometimes slipped in Deer Harbor on Orcas Island. Orcas is one of the most beautiful islands of the San Juans. Other than a lighter 2013, 383 Mercruiser gas V8, *Flying Eagle* is very much original including her Newport green color and dual dry-stack exhaust.

My focus has been to preserve what once was and what will never be again. Beauty of purpose, whether hauling pots or bait barrels, a gill net or dredge, these magnificent Downeast lobster boats are a constant, unending source of visual interest and artistic inspiration.

Recalling the Downeast mantra “What would a lobsterman do?,” we’ve already replaced much bad wood; forefoot, garboard and the like, restored her throaty dry-stack exhaust, replaced the fuel tank, the original trap hauler, and recreated the davit and even the unseen bronze prop cage which kept lines clear beneath the surface, all while retaining the patina of unpolished bronze and brass. In fact, any brass or bronze added to *Flying Eagle*, first gets soaked in salt water, tossed and temporarily abandoned onto our home roof and remains there until it reaches the perfect crusty vintage finish.

Soon, the Northwest School of Wooden Boat Building students in



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The uncluttered helm station and companionway, right, are original as is the dual dry stack exhaust.

Port Hadlock will build a "nutshell pram," commonly towed from astern of the old Maine lobster boats. By the way, the tiny 7' 7" pram is destined to be named *Eaglelet*.

Our intended use is as a family (day) boat throughout the Pacific Northwest, running to one island or another for lunch, site-seeing close to shore or a stealthy eagle or whale-watching platform. Many believe she'll also be the perfect dungeness crab and/or shrimp boat because of her design and the way she's equipped, I just need to learn how. Funny enough, our pup Molly-Brown is ever so attracted to the mooring balls & buoys, which she believes are running away from us as we pass by, not realizing we are the ones.



**LINEAGE: / OWNERS:**

**1st** Designed & built by Vinal Beal (w/ son Osmond ) on Beals Island, Maine for Floyd Pinkham of Gouldsboro in 1962.

**2nd** Tim Beal, (eldest son of Isaac Beal. Vinal was Isaac's Uncle) Named her *Uncle V*. Timmy & Isaac fished lobster and replaced three ribs damaged from the harmful effects of herring (lobster bait) oil.

**3rd** Tom Nelson bought from Timmy Beal supposedly around 1992 and worked for only 1 year, then sold her in 1993 to Jason Tyler.

**4th** Jason Tyler, a South Addison, Maine lobsterman who worked her to 1995, reportedly as *Painted Lady*.

**5th** Tony and Robin Santiago, Columbia Falls, Maine. (Hailing from Eastern Harbor) Named her *Perfect Timing*.

**6th** Alec Brainerd and wife Erin of Artisan Boatworks (www.artisanboatworks.com) named her *Janette Lamson* when purchased in 2012. She sold in late 2014 after being repowered .

**7th** Currently owned by Rick and Diane Strollo, who purchased *Flying Eagle* in November, 2014 in Rockport Maine. She was restored as an operational lobster boat at Artisan Boatworks, renamed the original *Flying Eagle*, and transported to Anacortes, Washington.

**Flying Eagle**

**DESIGNER/ BUILDER:** Vinal Beal, 1963.  
**LOCATION:** Beals Island, Maine.  
**MODEL:** Down East Maine Lobster Boat (Referred to as "Joansporter / Beal's Islander").  
**POWER:** 383 Cu. In. Displacement MerCruiser, Mercury Plus-Series "MAG Bravo 4V" which is a 6.3L V8 gas motor w/ 350 HP & heat exchanger, is a lighter weight V8. Original: Oldsmobile 455 which

was a V8 gas motor with 400 HP & closed circuit "Keel Cooler".  
**TRANSMISSION:** ZF Marine Arco, MOD. # ZF 63 A, Ratio I: A=2.04, B=2.02  
**PROP:** 19" diameter, 18" pitch, 4-blade bronze.  
**LENGTH:** 33'  
**BEAM:** 9.5'  
**DRAFT:** 3'

**Woods Used**  
**TOPSIDES/BOTTOM:** Carvel Planked Cedar  
**STEM:** Raked stem of Oak

**STERN:** Transom Stern of Cedar,  
**FRAMES:** 1 1/8" x 2 1/2" Steam-bent Oak on 10" centers (sistered below cockpit),  
**FLOOR TIMBERS:** 2" Oak sided on 20" centers,  
**DECK BEAMS:** 2" x 2 1/4" Oak on varying centers,  
**DECKS:** Caulked & Laid Cedar w/ Fiberglass Over,  
**KEEL:** Long-run Skeg Keel of Oak,  
**FASTENERS:** Originally Clinch Nailed Bottom (sistered w/ SS Screws)

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