

# The Rogers Collection of Dockyard Models

At the U.S. Naval Academy Museum

## Volume II

### Third Rates

by Grant H. Walker

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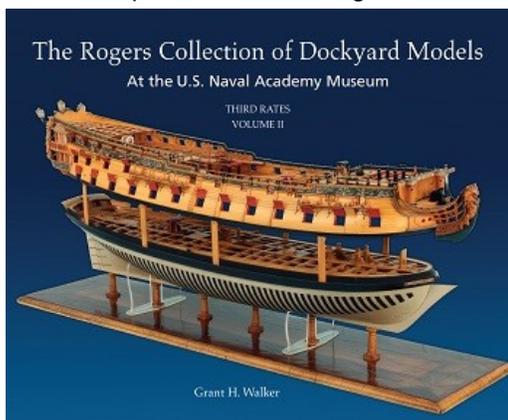
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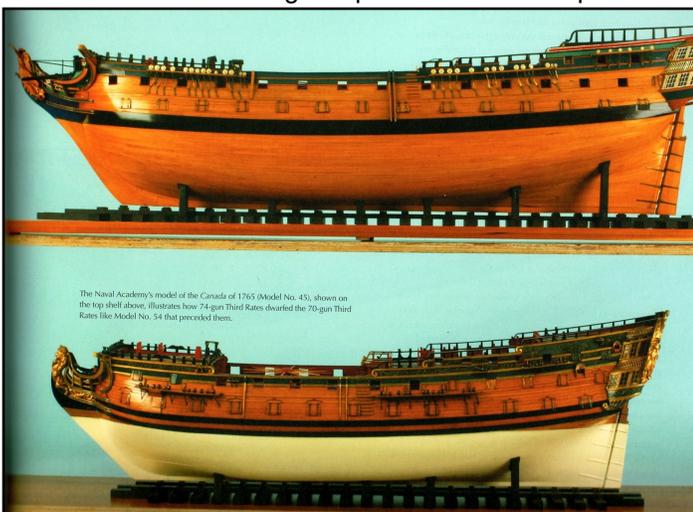
One of the most anticipated books to be offered by Sea Watch Books has finally arrived. Grant H. Walker's 2nd volume of *The Rogers Collection of Dockyard Models at the U.S. Naval Academy Museum*, which focuses on the third rates in the collection was well worth the wait.

With over 800 colored photos this offering is a visual

treat. For the sake of comparison, many illustrations are also supplemented by numerous photos from other sources, which include the National Maritime Museum archives and private collections.



There are ten 3rd Rates in the Rogers Collection. Nine are English and one is a rare Spanish two-decker from the latter part of the 18th Century. Mr. Walker presents these models in chronological order beginning in the 1660's, and culminating with the *El Terrible* in the 1780's. They are fairly consistent in scale, and comparisons are made, which allow the reader to better understand how this class of vessel evolved over an extended period of time. Considerable insight is provided in this respect.



All ten segments begin with a table that provides specifications on the featured model, and, in most cases, compares the subject with establishments and/or comparable vessels built during that period. It's interesting to note that the model's dimensions may be similar but not exact. Walker points out that this is further complicated by the fact that the Establishments of 1706 and 1719, which set the standards for construction of many of these ships, are quite close to each other in many respects. Confusion concerning the scale of these models often resulted in many historians misstating what rate the models represented. This made identification all the more difficult.

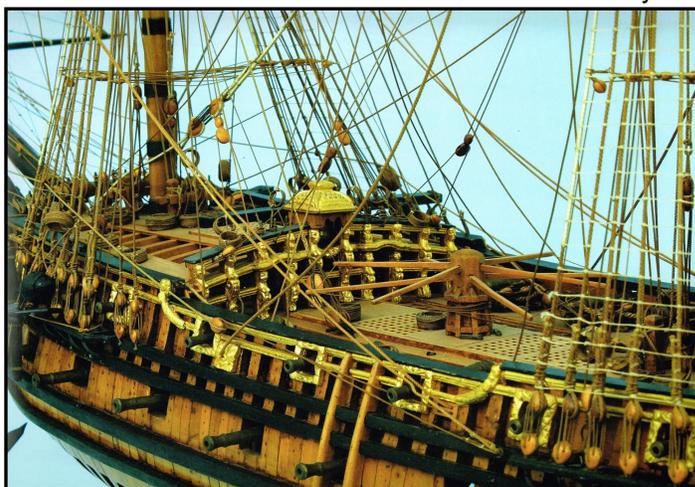
These tables are followed by introductions that discuss numerous facets of the model and/or the ship or class of ship they may represent. Interesting facts are brought to light concerning the men and political climate that influenced the vessel's design. In one

essay the author shares the circumstances under which Fred Avery, the Naval Academy Museum's first curator, discovered that model no. 34, possibly the 70-gun *Monmouth* of 1718,



was a split hull. A photo of this amazing dockyard model graces the dust jacket of this book.

The first vessel discussed is an unidentified English 3rd Rate of 50-60 guns, which dates to the Commonwealth Period of 1650-1654. It is one of the oldest dockyard



models in the world. The author immediately sets a remarkable standard for the entire book with magnificent external and internal photos. These provide the basis for considerable discussion concerning historical construction techniques on the actual ships, and later restoration efforts on the models.

This last item is one of the more intriguing aspects of the book. As every model is described, it becomes more apparent that this is a dominant issue that often impacts these beautiful dock yard models in a negative manner. Much of the repairs on these two-deckers were performed by modelers in the 20th Century after Rogers obtained

each piece. Grant Walker makes a valiant effort to identify this work and rationalize why modern-day modelers made changes to these remarkable pieces that were questionable at best, and, in some cases, amateurish, or downright wrong. Walker also points out instances where earlier restorations or repairs also exhibit poorly executed workmanship, which is even evident to the untrained eye. Nevertheless, Mr. Walker is quick to point out that these



models are still true historical treasures

While maintaining these amazing models, one difficult decision that had to be made was whether anachronisms should be corrected since they are part of the provenance of the model. An excellent example is one of the jewels of the collection, the *Prince Frederick*, 70 guns (1714/15). The author provides considerable insight as to how the final decision was made to make the changes, and what they were.



Only six of the ten 3rd rates in the collection are referred to by a name, and even these, to some extent, can be questioned due to features they possess that are inconsistent with the specifications for vessels that were built during those periods. Nevertheless, Mr. Walker makes a concerted effort to link these models with known facts.

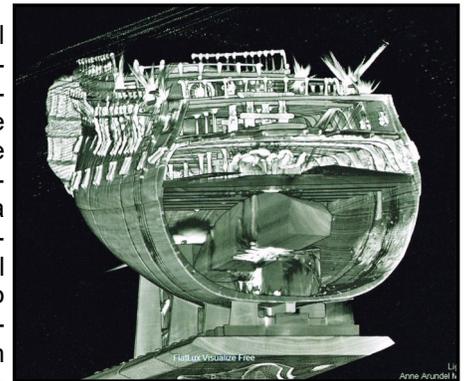
One excellent example is Model No. 8, an 80-gun ship of the 1690's, which Walker refers to as "Associated with the *Sussex* of 1693." This pristine model offers a number of features that narrow its identity down to three possible



choices. However, there is one bit of evidence hidden in plain sight that would apparently remove all doubt that the model is indeed *Sussex*. Nevertheless, Walker takes a cautious approach, and offers possible reasons for this not being the case.

This mindset serves the author well and is evident throughout the book. In numerous cases, when evaluating these models, Walker offers reasons why he disagrees with earlier experts such as RC Anderson, Henry Culver, Fred Avery, and C. G. Davis. This all makes for interesting reading.

The essays on all ten 3rd rates contain numerous interior images of the models. These are the result of photographs taken with a fiber optic endoscope. The model most subjected to this type of research with modern scientific instruments was the 74-gun *Canada*.



The author relates a fascinating story about how this pristine model was originally thought to be *Triumph* of 1764. Through a chance occurrence, it was proven to be otherwise, and a lengthy process of detective work ensued. The research would be aided, for the first time ever, by X-ray technology. This magnificent model would grudgingly give up its secrets, only to present new mysteries. The author refers to this British 3rd Rate as one of the most challenging models in the Rogers Collection to identify. It was only after employing CT scan technology that a better understanding of this model ensued.

*The Rogers Collection of Dockyard Models, Volume II*, features an oversized 10" x 11 3/4" format printed on gloss paper. This book is a remarkable achievement and would be an excellent addition to the library of any maritime historian or model ship builder.

*Reviewed by Bob Filipowski*