



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK ARTS & HERITAGE PROGRAM

FIELDNOTES

Accession Numbers:

MH-06-18-FN

Fieldnotes

MH-06-18-DI

Photographic documentation

MH-06-18-M

Additional materials

Date(s): Sunday August 13, 2006

Related Accession Numbers: MH-06-09;

Individual/Group/Event: Launch of the Isabella

Fieldworker(s): Maggie Holtzberg

Location of Interview: Essex River at Burnham ship yard

Street Address: 11 Burnham Court

City: Essex

Zip: 01929

Co: Essex

Contact person (if different from above): _____

Title: _____

Sponsoring organization (for event or group): Essex Shipbuilding Museum

Address (if different from above): _____

Phone: Daytime: _____

Evening: _____

E-mail: _____

Website: www.essexshipbuildingmuseum.org

Summary: Arrived in Essex at 2:30 for the 3:00 o'clock launch at high tide. There were already about 200 people gathered along the shore, some over by Harold's home and some on the banks below the Essex Shipbuilding Museum. Police were shoeing people off the dock and away in motorboats. Once the 14-ton Isabella takes off, there's no controlling her. The sideways launch was at high tide -- done the old way, using gravity, grease and wedges -- at first it looked as though the boat wasn't moving at all. After the jacksupports were removed, Aaron and Harold took turns pounding away at the wedges on the port side. The boat moved almost imperceptively at first. After about 45 minutes, she picked up momentum, then listed to starboard, and eventually whooshed into the Essex River with a big splash. Bull horns sounded, cannons were fired. A great cheer rose up from the crowd.