

F/V CHARLES J. COLONNA - BUILT 1904

Built by: Colonna's Shipyard - Berkley, Norfolk, Virginia

Owned by : Seaboard Oil & Guano Company - Reedville, Virginia

Named after Charles Jones Colonna, 1849 - 1920, President and founder of Colonna's Shipyard, Norfolk, Virginia

She was built of wood and powered by steam with coal as fuel.

The purse boats and striker boats were also wood with men and oars being their only source of power.

OFFICIAL NO.: 201054
GROSS TONS: 248
NET TONS: 101
LENGTH: 124.4 Ft.
BREADTH: 22.0 Ft.
DEPTH: 10.5 Ft.
CREW: 32
POWER: 450 h.p. steam engine

An interesting story accompanies the construction of this boat.

Charles J. Colonna, President of Colonna's Shipyard, called in master ship Carpenter William S. Brusstar of Pocomac City of Salisbury, Maryland to build a tug boat for a customer. At near completion of the tug the owner went broke but as luck would have it at about the same time Seaboard Oil and Guano Company of Reedville, Virginia asked the shipyard to build them a menhaden fish boat. The idea arose to convert the existing tug to a fish boat by cutting the tug in half and adding a mid-body but before making this decision a wood model would be built to determine practicability and general appearance of the newly shaped hull. This was done and the conversion was approved. Mr. William S. Brusstar stayed on and supervised the conversion and construction of the fish boat. She remained active as a menhaden fishing vessel for many years mostly fishing the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers and the Mid-Atlantic Coast near the Bay's entrance.

She was later renamed A. Vernon McNeal.

NOTE: The wooden model mentioned above is owned by Colonna's Shipyard, still remaining in excellent condition in its main office and hangs with pride on its walls today.