

HOME / BAY NEWS / SKIPJACK MUSEUM RESTORES FAMED CAPTAIN'S CITY OF CRISFIELD



Bay News

Captain Art Daniels and the City of Crisfield were on the way in 1995 to winning the annual Deal Island Skipjack Race. Photo: Larry Chowning

## Skipjack Museum Restores Famed Captain's City Of Crisfield

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The skipjack *City of Crisfield* is being given new life as the Skipjack Heritage Museum on Deal Island is currently involved in a complete restoration of the vessel at Scott's Cove Marina in Chance, Md.

"We are hoping we are going to have her in the water by Labor Day," said Bob Shores, treasurer of the museum and nonprofit that owns the boat. "The boat is going to be part of our annual display for visitors and we plan to use her as an education boat," he said.

"We also plan to work her in (Maryland's) oyster dredge fishery and to carry passengers for charter to help offset the cost of maintenance and upkeep," said Shores. "Our main goal though is to preserve her for future generations."

The *City of Crisfield* was built in 1949 by C. H. Rice and his son Ed at Reedville, Va. She was owned for many years by the legendary captain, Art Daniels Jr. who purchased the vessel in 1951 and owned it until his death in 2017. After his death, his son Bob Daniels gifted the vessel to Skipjack Heritage, Inc.

The heritage group recently received support funding from the Choptank Electric Cooperative to go towards the cost of the rebuild. "We are also accepting donations from anyone who has a love for the boats and for the heritage and culture that surrounds the skipjack," said Shores.

Art Daniels had the reputation of being one of the best sailors on the Bay. Tilghman Island Captain Wade Murphy of the skipjack *Rebecca T. Ruark* can attest to that. Murphy had won the annual Deal Island Skipjack races for seven consecutive years when in 1995 Daniels and the *City of Crisfield* broke his streak with a win.

Murphy explained the defeat to his crew this way: "It's just the breaks you get, boys. Every one of these captains is an expert, and the older they are the better they are. I told you last night, Art Daniels has forgotten more about sailing than I'll ever know."

Maryland's skipjack fleet is the last commercial sailing fleet in the North America. Maryland's General Assembly has over the years passed conservation laws restricting the use of motor-powered vessels in the state's oyster dredge fishery. This has encouraged the sailing skipjacks to sail on!

Anyone interested in donating to the preservation of the *City of Crisfield* can contact the museum at Skipjack Heritage, Inc. 23529 Deal Island Rd. Chance, Md. 2182, (443) 783-5180.

-Larry Chowning

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