Basic Seamanship

Brigantines Exy Johnson

&

Irving Johnson

Douglas Corey

Los Angeles Maritime Institute
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We give the kids real life experience with cooperation, teamwork, patience, personal endurance, courage, caution, problem solving, decision making and leadership all in the guise of having memorable fun with a bunch of volunteers on a big old sailing ship.

Foreword

The Los Angeles Maritime Institute is a volunteer, non-profit, public benefit corporation, founded for the purpose of providing character-building sail training adventures for youth. We have always accepted any group of kids on a first-come, first served, ability to pay basis. We are proud of the fact that we have never turned a kid away for his or her inability to pay.

Internationally this type of sail training has become, of all things, a “growth industry”. For those of us who have long been enamored with ships and the sea it has been an on-going source of pleasure to see so many interesting vessels come into being and support themselves in this trade.

We must never lose sight of the fact that it is program that supports this industry. That sail training vessels are spectacular vessels that are fun to sail, and that the folks who sail them are generally fun to sail with, is very nice, but it is just the frosting on the cake. The cake is program, program, program. Our program, in its simplest terms, is bring the kids aboard, treat them like family; with dignity and respect and at least unconditional “like”, while we teach them how to sail the boats.

The kids learn: cooperation, team work, problem solving, decision making, courage, caution, planning, and leadership skill, not because we tell them to, but simply because that’s what we do. If we live by our “two rules”, so will they.

So, as you progress with this training program, you can’t help but become proud of your new-found knowledge and skills, but it is the pride that comes with showing the kids the ropes and helping them to become proud of their new-found knowledge and skills and grow into more successful people that keeps us and our boats alive.

The bottom line is that we help the kids sail their boats; not that the kids help us sail our boats.
The purpose of this manual, and the accompanying classes, is to enable you to help TopSail kids learn to sail with safety, finesse, and pride.

Captain Jim Gladson
Founder, Los Angeles Maritime Institute

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Author’s Note

Readers familiar with the genre of maritime publishing will find many similarities between this manual and *Eagle Seamanship*, used by the Coast Guard Academy as the manual for its cadets when teaching them about the intricacies of sailing the barque *Eagle*.

This is not accidental. I have long valued the manual and have often recommended it to people wanting to learn about the art of sailing large square rigged vessels. When planning for this manual I decided to adopt the general layout, format, and many of the topics discussed in that work as I felt that they, in general, could not be improved upon. A brigantine, however, is not a barque, and while the square sails for the brigantines are rigged in a similar fashion to those on the *Eagle*, there are many important differences. While the layout of this manual is very similar to *Eagle Seamanship*, the text is mine.

I wish to thank Brion Toss for his permission to use several illustrations from his book “The Complete Rigger’s Apprentice”. I also wish to thank Walter Rybka for his many fine suggestions on layout and subject matter.

Readers wishing to pursue further learning on these subjects will find a good start by referencing the bibliography of this work.

Captain Douglas Corey