

Photo Essay of How to Build a **Mackinaw** Western Style Drift Boat



Plans for this boat are available online at:

<http://www.spirainternational.com>

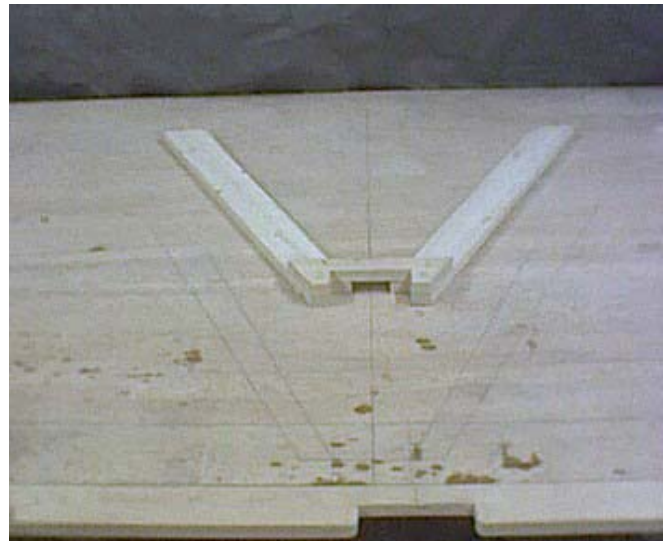
Dan's Mackinaw

Dan builds Custom and Semi-Custom Dories in Snohomish Washington. His website is located at <http://danseadories.com/>

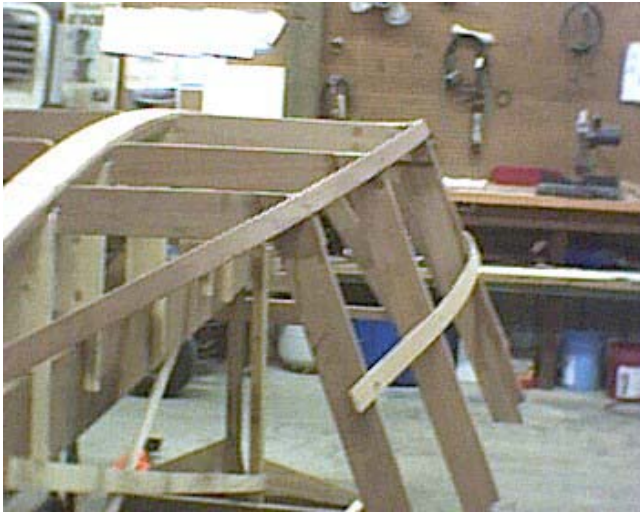


Here are the ribs going together You can see the patterns drawn the plywood that serve as full sized drawings for making the ribs properly.

Another Rib - this one near the bow. The notched out place visible on the lower limb is the clearance area for the keelson timber to be added later.



Once the ribs are built, they're blocked in their respective positions, and respective heights on a strongback building jig. It's simply a sturdy beam to align the parts and raise them up to a comfortable working height.

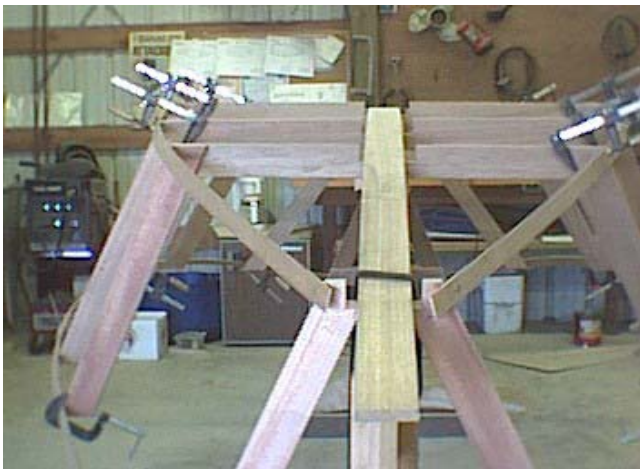


Another view of the ribs set up on the strongback ready for the addition of the longitudinal members. The chine log (longitudinal member at the side to bottom joint) is shown already in place.

For boats like the Mackinaw, with relatively severe bends to the chine log and sheer clamp, sometimes wood needs to be steamed to be soft enough to be bent without cracking. Here's a simple steamer made of irrigation tubing, that makes steaming the long members simple. Most designs do not require steaming.

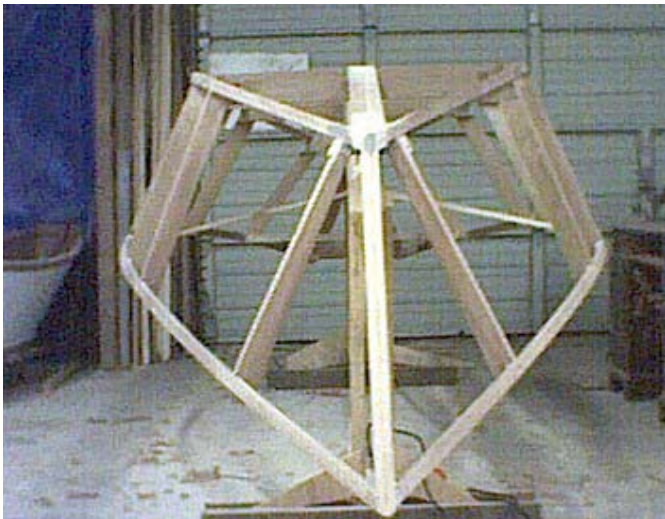


Once steamed, the longitudinal members bend easily into place



Detail of the sheer clamp to rib joint. Dan did a great job here fitting these joints. With a little patience, even a first time builder can get professional results like this.





Once the longitudinal members are attached to the ribs, the rugged boat frame takes shape.

Ahhh - the smell of freshly worked mahogany is one of the true joys of wooden boatbuilding.



Covering the framing with ply completes the structural aspects of the hull. The frame makes its own pattern, so all you need to do is lean the ply against the frame, trace out the shape, cut it out and attach it.



The framing of the Mackinaw is designed such that all edges of the ply covering meet at frame members, so you don't need to worry about scarfing or butt blocks. Just fill the simple joints and sand it down.





Once covered, the hull is flipped over and the details added inside. Here's the fly deck in the bow, to keep fly line from getting underfoot.

The frame members are located to easily adapt fixed seats right to the ribs.



Steelhead beware! There's a new blue predator in town.