

Indigenous

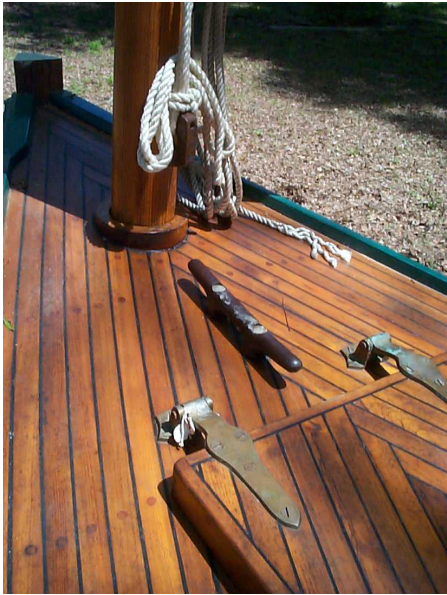
Indigenous was built by Kenny Blyth, one of the shipwrights involved with the construction of the *Spirit of South Carolina*. The design is based on the New Haven Sharpie, which originated in New England in the mid-nineteenth century. Incorporating features of dugout canoes and flatiron skiffs used by oystermen on Long Island Sound, the first sharpies were probably long and narrow, with flat bottoms, centerboards and raked transoms. With freestanding masts and triangular sprit-rigged "Leg 'o Mutton" sails, sharpies were relatively easy to build, highly maneuverable, and navigable in shallow inland waters. The round stern facilitates handling of nets and oyster rakes and made the design particularly popular among fisherman all along the east coast. They were used as far south as Pamlico Sound near Cape Hatteras, North Carolina in the 1870s and in Florida in the 1890s



Except for the bottom planking, only wood from the ACE basin on the South Carolina coast was used in the construction of *Indigenous*, hence her name. The **deck** and **coaming** are made from a **cypress** log found submerged in the Edisto River. Cypress is highly resistant to rot, and steams easily, allowing it to be precisely shaped to the desired contours of the deck. The **forward mast stem steps** and the **bungs** on the deck came from a **cherry** log salvaged from a Charleston suburb. Cherry is a close grained wood that resists shrinking and ages well, making it particularly suitable for detail and trim.

The **framing**, **mast steps**, **keel**, **keelson** and **tiller** are made from **white oak**, one of the best structural woods available for marine work due to its strength and moisture resistance. The white oak used in *Indigenous* was cut on a sawmill now owned by Kenny. The **spars**, **masts** and **centerboard box** are made





of long leaf pine, also known as **Southern Yellow Pine**. Though considered a softwood, long leaf pine is strong and durable. The **grates** are made from reclaimed antique **heart pine**.

The **thwarts** are made from **sycamore** left over from a table Kenny built. The "live edges" on the thwarts are a signature feature of Kenny's woodworking and construction projects. The **side planking** is **juniper**. Each side is formed from only two planks, with a single seam. The **rub rails** are made of **red oak**. Though not a particularly good wood for marine work, the rub rails are painted so they are more resistant to rot, and easily accessible so they can be repaired or replaced if damaged. All the **deck** and **mast fittings** are made of **live oak**. A symbol of strength and longevity, the live oak produces wood that matches its reputation. Rounding out the variety of wood in *Indigenou* are the **tiller shaft rosette**, made of stained **ash**, and the **centerboard pin**, made of **black walnut**.



The **bottom planking** is **three quarter inch marine plywood**, a departure from the traditional fitted planking. This allows *Indigenou* to be transported by trailer and sailed without waiting for the bottom planks to swell up and become watertight.

Of course, not all of *Indigenou* is wood. The hinges on the forward hatch are brass, found at a junk store. Most of the other metal fittings are brass as well. The centerboard and rudder are quarter inch steel plate obtained from Charleston scrap iron. Finally, holding all her parts together and preserving her, it is hoped, for many years to come, is marine epoxy.

Solidly designed with graceful lines and built from a pleasing array of native wood materials, *Indigenou* pays tribute to craftsmen from days past, when wind power was a chief means of travel and working boats were an important part of our culture.

