MATERIALS

1. Wood (Oak, ash, birch, alder and lime)
2. Wooden Planks

Tools

3. Trenails
4. Wood pins
5. (Wedge, axe, iron nails, biceps, adze, knives, and hammers)

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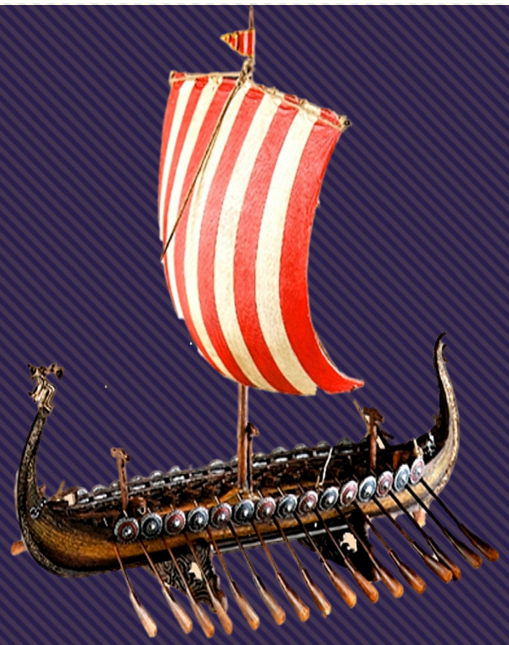

VIKING LONGSHIP

How the Vikings crafted these unique ships.

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Honors History 9
Period 1

VIKINGS

For three centuries, the sight of a square sail and dragon-headed “prow” on the horizon struck fear into the minds of medieval Europeans. Indeed, during this Viking Age, from A.D. 800-1100, became the age of the sleek, speedy longship. Without this advance in ship technology, the Vikings would never have become a dominant force in warfare and trade. The “drekar”, or dragon-headed longships, were stealthy troop-carriers. They could cross the open seas under sail and then switch to oars for lightning-fast hit-and-run attacks on undefended towns. Longships carried Viking raiders from northern England all the way to north Africa.

HOW THE VIKINGS CRAFTED

1. Ships were built as close to the water as possible. They also had to be built close to a good supply of timber from a wood or a forest. Once the tree had been cut the wood would be used straightaway or sometimes stored under water in lakes or in bogs, to keep it supple enough to work with.

2. The most popular type of wood used for shipbuilding was oak because it is strong and can be split into flexible planks. Alternatives included pine and occasionally, ash, birch, alder and lime, with willow used for fastenings. It was not only the type of tree but also the tree shape that had to be considered. A ship’s keel would come from a straight-growing tree-trunk. The angled and curved joints between trunk and branches were useful for making the ship’s ribs.

3. The ship was built on top of stocks which it would rest on. The first thing placed on the stocks was the keel. This keel is the backbone of the ship and was usually made of strong oak, as it received the most scrapes on rocks.

4. With this basic frame ready the Vikings then added the strakes – the layers of planking, each one made of several planks joined end-to-end.

5. Once the strakes had been built up to the waterline, the ribs were then put into place.These were fixed into place with wooden pegs and strengthened by cross-beams across the boat, supported on knees.

6. From this stage more strakes continued upward until the stem and the sternposts were joined allthe way up.

7. The mast then had to be added.This was placed into a mast step which was a hole cut into the keelson. This keelson was a heavy piece of wood fastened to the keel. It allowed for a greater distribution of the weight of the mast and also offered it support. Holes were carved into the sides for the oars to fit through.