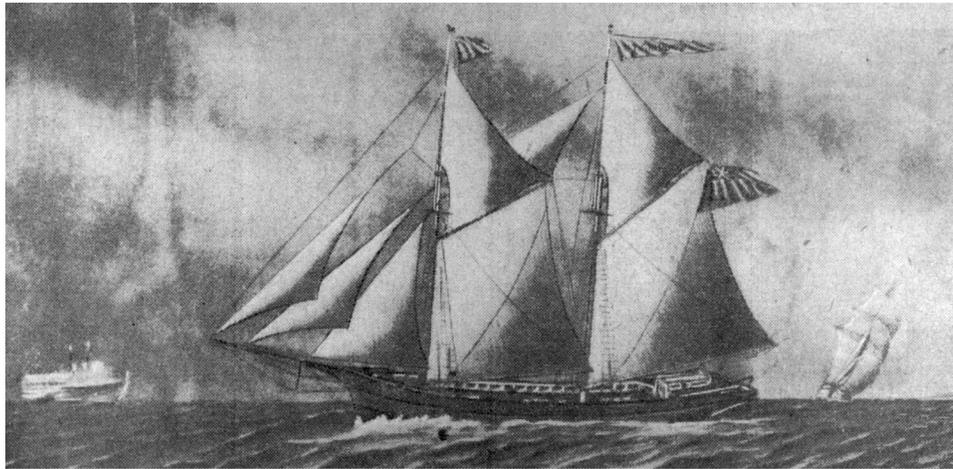


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Schooner Days DCLXXVIII (678)
By C.H.J. Snider

COCK'S LAST CROW AGAINST THE WIND



The W.T GREENWOOD – with a weathercock at the head of her fore topmast.

THE most convincing answer to the quiz of last month as to the identity of the schooners shown in a good picture of Picton Harbor in the 1890's comes from W. J. Ostrander of South Bay Prince Edward, who like most Ostranders, has been a sailor all his days.

He says that about 1893 or 1894 the schooners *Two Brothers* and *F. H. Burton* were laid up side by side, as in the picture, in Low's Cove, Picton Harbor. As there is general agreement on the outside vessel in the picture being the *Two Brothers* the case for the inner one being the *F. H. Burton* seems pretty strong.

Mr. Ostrander says the inner one could not be the *Fabiola* because "the *Fabiola* only had three jibs. I know, as I sailed in her for five seasons." That was Schooner Days objection to the *Fabiola* identification – the bow was similar, but the bowsprit differently rigged.

These "three-jibbers" had a large forestaysail, with a boom on the foot, and the forestay came out to the bowsprit end. The "four-jibbers" had a narrower forestaysail, with a boom on the foot, set on a forestay coming down to the stemhead. Another stay came down to the bowsprit end, and on this was set what we called the standing jib. Sometimes this sail also had a boom on its foot. Outside of the standing jib, on the projecting jibboom was carried the flying jib, which was just as much a "standing" sail as the standing jib, for it was hanked to the stay and tacked to the jibboom. Outside of it, again, on the jibboom end was the jibtopsail, hanked to its stay and differing from a yacht's jibtopsail in not going aloft to the topmast head. If a lake schooner sported a jib like that it was called a jib-o'-jib, blue devil, or flying jibtopsail. They were rather rare. In a few instances the *Erie Belle* and the *Bertha Barnes* for examples, the fifth

and outermost jib was tacked to the jibboom end – like the other jibs.

The forestaysail – which lakers called “the staysail” – was always counted as a jib. Atlantic fishermen call it a jumbo, if it has a boom on it, otherwise the stem staysail. “The staysail” to them is the big quadrilateral main topmast staysail set between mastheads, which yachtsmen call a fisherman staysail. Fishermen don’t.

Mr. Ostrander mentions the *Flora Emma* as an alternative for the inside schooner in the picture, but E. J. Guy, late of Oshawa and for some time now of Toronto, confirms the recollection of the *Flora Emma* as a three-jibber like the *Fabiola*. He was in her in 1881, with Capt. Sam Philp, when she was dismasted, and quite definitely recalls her long staysail boom, painted slate color like her deck, on which the boys hung their washing by knotting the ends through the foot-stops of the sail.

The *F. H. Burton* of Port Hope had four jibs, like the one shown in the picture. She was a real old-imer, having been built – where do you think? – at Dundas. Ont., in those early days when the iron horse was a novelty in Canada. The year was 1854, and the railway which gave her her name was new that year, the Great Western, afterwards absorbed in the Grand Trunk. It had a station in Toronto at the foot of Yonge street.

Great Western was what the *F. H. Burton* was called and so she was known until 1889, when she was rebuilt and renamed. Dundas was the actual head of navigation for Lake Ontario, being then connected with the lake by the Desjardins Canal of which a little of the old piling may still be found in Burlington Bay. Dundas was so situated as to command the portage to the Grand River and Lake Erie, and had a great waterborne traffic. The *James Coleman* was another schooner built there, and there were several steamers and barges.

The original *Great Western* had a different appearance aloft from the later *F. H. Burton*, having long lower masts and short topmasts, set up with deadeyes and futtock shrouds. She kept going, as a barge or lighter in Kingston, up to the time of the Great War, a lifetime of sixty years. She had been sunk in collision and had a fire. She was 103 feet long, 20 1/2 feet beam, 9 feet depth of hold and measured 137 tons. Peace to her ashes.

Capt. Johnny Williams, up-and-coming as ever and completing his 88th year, puts his finger on the flaw in his old friend Capt. Redfern’s suggestion that one of the schooners in the picture might be the *W.T. Greenwood*. While the *Greenwood* was a smart looking schooner like the *Two Brothers*, she had a metal weathercock at her foretop-mast head. Old Capt. Ewart put it there, and that rooster crowed in the direction the wind was coming from until the poor *Greenwood* was lost near the Devil’s Nose on Nov. 20th, 1895, long after Capt. Williams had left her and Capt. Ewart was dead. The way she was lost was hard. Capt. “Old Andy” Beard had her, and was bound for Toronto with coal in the fall of the year. The wind coming hard from the southwest, with snow, when he was halfway home, he was forced to run back for shelter in Charlotte. While reefing his mainsail the schooner ate up and ate up towards the American shore, and, being deep laden, struck on one of those offshore patches and swung around almost

head to wind.

Capt. Williams, coming along next morning, sighted the defiant weathercock at the fore truck and recognized his old ship. His crew thought she was at anchor, close in, but he knew better. No vessel would willingly anchor where the *Greenwood* was caught. Farther down, under Braddocks Point, vessels sometimes took shelter in a westerly, but never near the Devil's Nose, where dozens of vessels have been lost. When he reached Charlotte he met Capt. Beard at the lifesaving station.

“Why, where's your vessel, captain?” he asked.

“In pieces on the beach by now ” quoth Capt. Old Andy. “We left her when she started to break up below the Nose. And we'd never a-reached land alive if it hadn't been for our good yawlboat. She swung round when we struck so we could get our boat across the stern clear. It was new and good and carried us all safe ashore.”