

Clipper Ships: The Appeal of Sail

by Garry Victor Hill



Plate 1 *The Ariel*. By Jack Spurling (1870-1933) Public Domain,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14917880>

The painting above captures exactly the breathtaking appeal of clipper ships. The azure sky with slight traces of pure white from thin clouds and the matching white foam and white sails with a touch of pale blue contrast with the dark, but vibrant blue waves. The ship, *Ariel* does not seem to plough through the waves so much as conquer them through

sleek cuts, while her billowing sails soar like clouds. The scene gives a feeling of optimism, even exuberance: clippers often did that.

They were loved by owners, passengers and crews, by those who depicted them, artists, photographers and writers, even tattooists and their customers; everybody had obvious reasons. They epitomise the age of sail, but their peak years only came to two decades, 1849 to 1869. The years of their emergence and decline came to several decades.

Their essential hull design was first used in Chesapeake Bay late in the eighteenth century, but these were smaller ships, closer to schooners than the later larger great clippers of the late 1830s and after. In both their sleek hull design, their narrow cutting bow, the outlay of their sails and their size they had much in common with schooners. There were strong and obvious differences: schooners were much smaller and usually had only two masts which were not even half the height of those on clippers. Schooner sails were smaller and fewer in number, and were positioned parallel to the hull, not crossways to it, as on clippers

These early clippers would take part in military operations in the American Revolution and the War of 1812, sometimes as privateers, more often as smugglers and messengers.¹ In peacetime they would be involved in Chesapeake trade and transportation. Their role was fairly localised while the great clippers were designed to be global travellers and rarely used for localised short voyage work.

Despite the credit going to Americans working on designs in the 1840s, English and the Scots designers and builders had been developing the essential features of the clippers since the 1830s, even if they had not produced a vessel which had all the aspects of a great clipper.²

By the middle of the 1830s localised British shipping used a few vessels which were essentially clipper ships, albeit of slightly smaller build and with less sail. *Scottish Maid* was launched from Aberdeen in June 1833, *Akbar* in 1834. The barque *Water Witch*, which was larger than these examples was launched in 1831 for the Chinese opium trade. *Water Witch* had many features of the later clippers, but four masts categorised

¹ Rob Mundle, *Under Full Sail*. Sydney; 2016. p. 12; 'Clipper Ships.' *Wikipedia*, Accessed 22ND March 2020.

² 'Clipper Ships.'

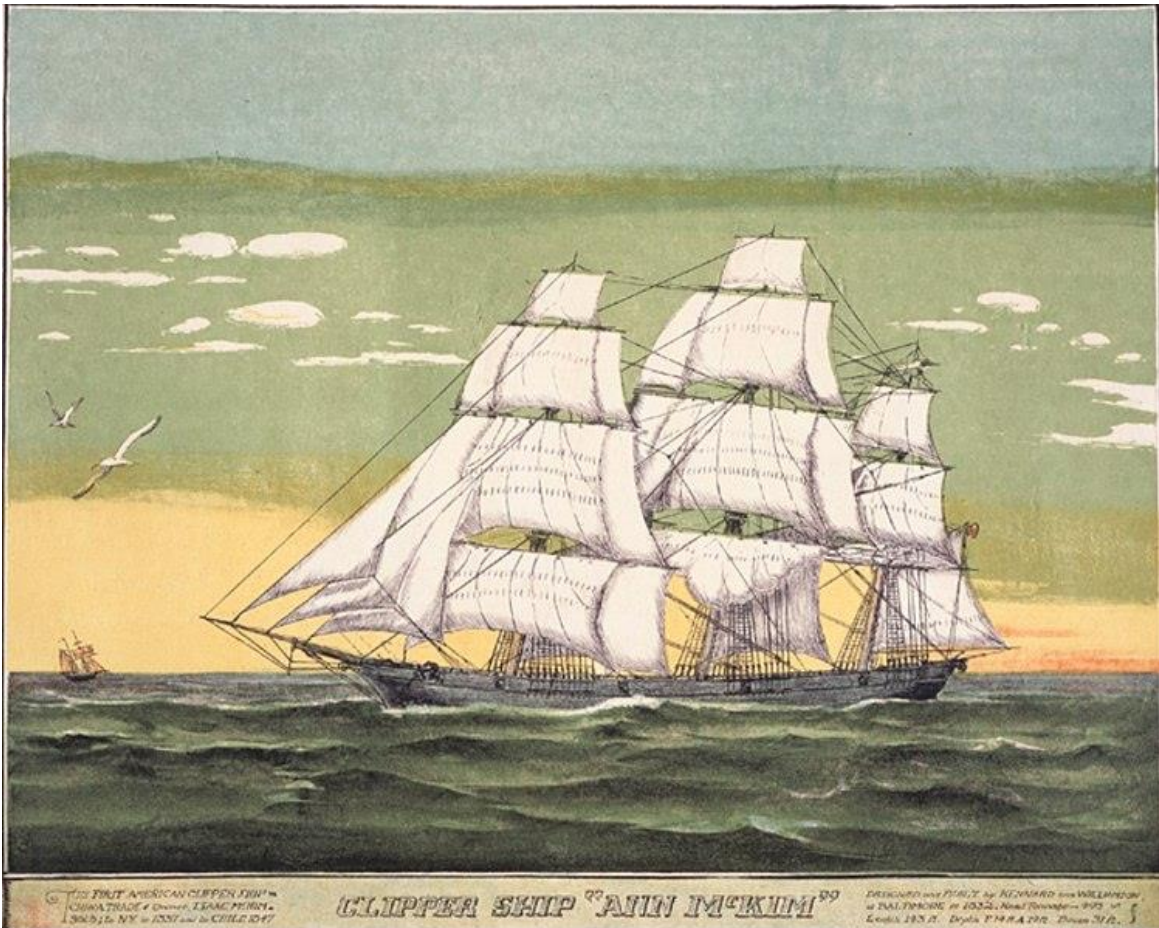


Plate 2. The Ann McKim. A 1920s reconstruction.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ann_McKim_\(1833\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ann_McKim_(1833).jpg)

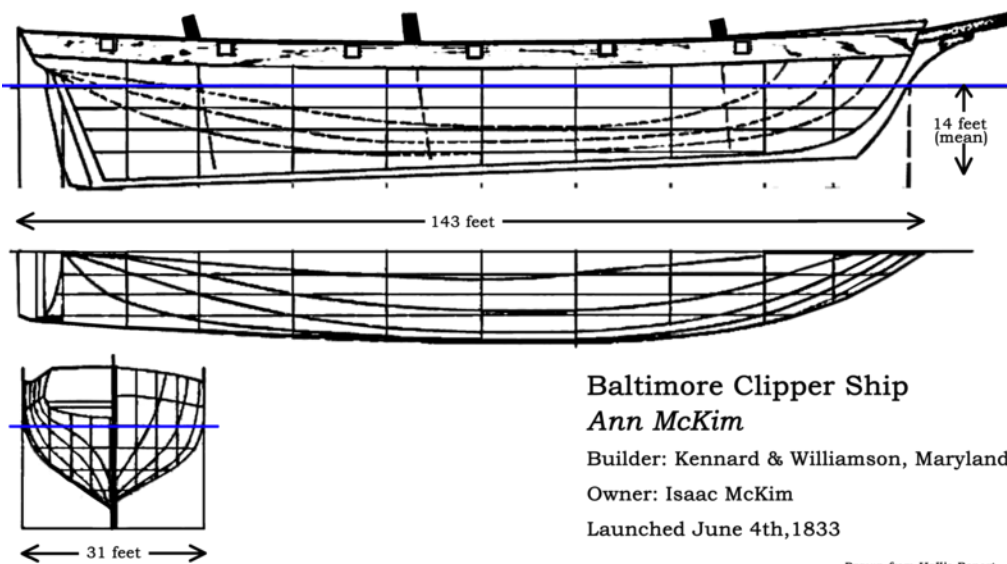


Plate 3. The design for the hull of the Ann McKim Kolma8

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:Creative_Commons

her as a barque, clippers had three masts. *Ann McKim* was launched in Baltimore in June 1833. This vessel could be accurately described as the first true clipper. She was launched to great fanfare and curiosity, but unfortunately speed was emphasised over storage space, so she was unprofitable, turned into a family pleasure craft and was eventually sold to Chileans in 1847; five years later she was dismantled.³ In her length of 143 feet (44 metres) and beam of 31 feet (9.4 metres) she was much smaller than the classic clippers, which were rarely less than a hundred and eighty feet long and usually well over two hundred feet. Therefore they had much more carrying capacity and capability for profit. As Plate 2 shows her hull design was in the clipper mode, albeit slightly scaled down so aspects of her design were used in the 1840s for the more successful clippers.

Although *Rainbow* launched in New York in 1845, continues to be considered the first great clipper ship by many, she was not. A race for that title was lost to the builders of the *Houqua*, also built in a New York shipping yard.⁴ This vessel was designed and used for the Chinese tea trade. Named after a Chinese merchant, she was launched in 1844, having a life of twenty years before sinking off Japan. By being involved in the California gold rush, by having a better track record for avoiding disaster and perhaps due to media connections *Rainbow* became more famous and was mistakenly given credit as the first real clipper ship, even if she did lose the construction race.

These first clippers were smaller than those that would be built within a few years, but they would not differ in essential construction details. Like schooners they would have sharp convex bows. Unlike many schooners which would have obviously portly hulls amidships, clippers would appear to maintain a thin sleek hull from bow to stern, even if they did not, tapering slightly from the bow and often at the stern. Their hulls were larger than schooners, usually being over two hundred feet long. The American clipper *Great Republic*, launched in 1853 at four hundred feet long was the largest merchant vessel ever built.

³ 'Ann McKim.' *Wikipedia* accessed March 24th 2020.

⁴ 'List of Clipper Ships.' *Wikipedia*. accessed March 17th 2020; 'Houqua' ' *Wikipedia*. accessed March 27th 2020



Unknown artist:

<http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/conMediaFile.3989/The-opium-clipper-Water-Witch-%281831%29.html>

The needs of the tea trade fuelled the building of clippers. The English in particular were insatiable tea drinkers, providing a large and stable market. As tea does not last forever, but becomes stale comparatively quickly, the way clippers could halve the travel time or more between tea producing Asia and the West made clippers a mercantile delight for an extremely lucrative market. Passengers also loved the clippers for the same time saving reasons. Until the advent of liners in the 1890s shipboard conditions were at best inconvenient and restrictive. For those unable to afford rare luxury cabins they were usually much worse than this, being claustrophobic, extremely unhygienic and dreary. They had to be endured for weeks if crossing the Atlantic from Europe and for several months if travelling to Southern Africa, Asia, the Pacific or the west coasts of the Americas. Shipboard deaths from unhygienic conditions were not rare. The much, much shorter travel time clippers

could provide seemed a very welcome miracle when the first clippers sailed.

In the second half of the 1840s a boom in clipper construction was underway and the term clipper was becoming usual and changing in meaning. It started as “extreme clippers” to differentiate the larger ships we now know from their much smaller American ancestors and vessels such as *Water Witch*, *Akbar*, *Scottish Maid* and *Ann McKim*. Eventually the sensational new ships took over the original term. “Clipper” may have a double meaning in its origin, from the verb to clip off time in a ship’s travelling time or to clip along at a fast pace.

The Chinese tea trade was making the clippers popular, then in 1848 gold was discovered in northern California. There were three ways for those from America’s east coast to reach the new gold fields; all three were dangerous in their different ways. Westward bound wagon trains had to endure Indian attacks and crossing the Rockies and in addition this method was slow and expensive. Sailing to what is now Panama, crossing the isthmus and taking another ship from Panama’s Pacific Coast up to California, looked the way to go on paper, but the isthmus trail was malarial, slow, racked by cyclones and without a large suitable port. Sailing down to Cape Horn and going through it and then up the Pacific Coast was also dangerous as the Horn’s wild weather combined with strong tides, half submerged rocks and steep cliffs to be one of the world’s most dangerous places for shipping. The ability to get through this dangerous passage fast, let alone shortening the overall voyage time gave the clippers a tremendous advantage, just as tens of thousands wanted to get to the goldfields in the safest shortest time. In this era a voyage from New York around Cape Horn to San Francisco in ninety days seemed miraculously fast. Even a voyage time for that same journey of a hundred and twenty days was considered wonderful. The Australian gold rushes which started in 1851 would also carry tens of thousands of would be gold diggers across the world. The gold boom was not a one way trade: clippers would carry bullion back to the centres of economic power. Settlers as much as miners would make up the clipper’s human cargo. Many who thought they would gain riches as miners became settlers. The overall global effects of clippers on migration and population are difficult to calculate. One clipper, the *City*

of *Adelaide*, by bringing around six to seven thousand Europeans to Australia between 1864 and 1887, would bring the ancestors of quarter of a million Australians.⁵ Estimates of over a million Australians being descended from migrants bought by clippers seem likely.⁶ Given the way overlanders also came to California and that clippers were initially competing with frigates, calculating Californians descended from clipper arrivals must be much more difficult.

While the Americans and the British dominated the clipper industry, in the early 1850s the Dutch would also start building clippers for their passengers who travelled throughout their empire. They even had their own tea trade, growing crops in Java and exporting them to Europe.

As well as bullion, tea, wheat, wool and passengers the clippers would have also have had a part in transporting essentials which the colonies and territories could not yet manufacture, mainly machinery and perhaps even at times, animals. There were also smaller more likely luxury goods, everything from pianos and books to cutlery and chocolate, not the essentials of life, but what makes it endurable. Even in the clippers' glory days larger hulled frigates would have retained the lions' share of the trade in livestock and machinery.

Clipper ship races from embarkation to destination became a feature. While not circumnavigating the globe, races from Europe or the USA to China or Australia soon became nothing unusual. They caused public interest and frequent expressions of public enthusiasm. Apart from the obviously beneficial publicity, these races also tested what could be achieved in reducing travel time. By doing so they got passengers and products to their destination ever faster, making for ever larger profits. They also established the reputation of particular vessels for being a fast ship and briefly, for being the world's fastest vessel afloat. These new faster times became a strong selling point, as Plates 6, 7 and 8 show.

In the years between 1845 and 1869 the clippers were in their heyday. Even the advent of steam and coal fired ships coming into the tea and passenger trade at this time did not seem as great a threat as it

⁵ Mundle, p. 345.

⁶ *Ibid*, Dedication and dustjacket comment. The author's paternal grandfather was definitely amongst them and several great-grandparents and great-great were possibilities.

ultimately became. Steamers, and colliers were often initially inefficient, due to mechanical breakdowns and boiler explosions. Sea going paddle wheelers were particularly susceptible to breakdowns or being slowed as a breakage to even one of their several blades caused imbalances and delays. Even when working efficiently the way they had to churn through water made for a slow process. They also had the problem that they could not go at full speed or even fast for long as this burnt up fuel fast. High speeds also strained metal and caused reverberations which could rattle parts loose; an extremely worrying and dangerous situation if parts and skilled repairmen were available, if they were not such problems could end voyages, either by limping into the nearest port or being lost at sea. For decades these vessels often carried at least one mast and sails, these being a frequently needed Plan B. Colliers also spent time (and therefore lost time and money) for refuelling at especially designed port storage facilities. . Lost time, fuel and building facilities all increased costs, while the clipper's fuel was free, the wind. Even when they sailed without problems or delays clippers usually outpaced them on set routes – at first. On the oceans and even in some river based vessels the paddle wheel would eventually be replaced by a machine reliant screw-driven propeller. When so equipped, iron hulled vessels gained over windjammers in speed, safety and efficiency. Screw-driven steamers had no need for coaling stations, but like the coal-fired ships, had a great advantage over any sailing vessel – more adept manoeuvrability.

The very speed of the clippers and their sole dependence on wind left them at the wind's mercy. That meant negatives almost as important as the positives given by wind power. Forceful winds combined with great amounts of sail to allow little time to manoeuvre out of danger. With so many sails there would also be little if any time for clipper crews to furl sails if a wind was blowing a vessel to danger. Their very height would also mean more time was needed to clamber up to them and the height would cause dizziness. Plate 5 shows not only the graceful build of the clipper, but another danger; like all clippers the hull here lies low in the water, which makes it vulnerable to rough seas. This 1938 photo does not show the *Cutty Sark* with the original wide and high masts and the sails which would make clippers prone to tipping over if buffeted in

storms. For this ship these were shortened decades after her tea trade service ended. In contrast *HMS Worcester* shows advantages and disadvantages. Obviously a much slower, wider and heavier voyager, she would plough through oceans rough or placid. Having smaller, fewer sails and a solid hull which was twice the height out of the water of *Cutty Sark* meant that only the worst storms could possibly topple this vessel. If she did hit rocks or reefs there was much less chance of the larger, thicker hull being broken up.



Plate 5. *The Cutty Sark (left) and the HMS Worcester 1938.* By Unknown - <http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/conMediaFile.6699/SV-Cutty-Sark-and-HMS-Worcester.html>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=54675371>

Such unfavorable comparisons were also justified by the fatality rates amongst clippers: few lasted long enough to be scrapped and even fewer were made into museum pieces or floating relics. Of the listed in *Wikipedia's* 'List of Clipper Ships' all four of those built in the 1840s would soon be wrecked or lost at sea. Of the ninety-two built in the 1850s twelve had unknown fates in the sense that no records have yet been found.

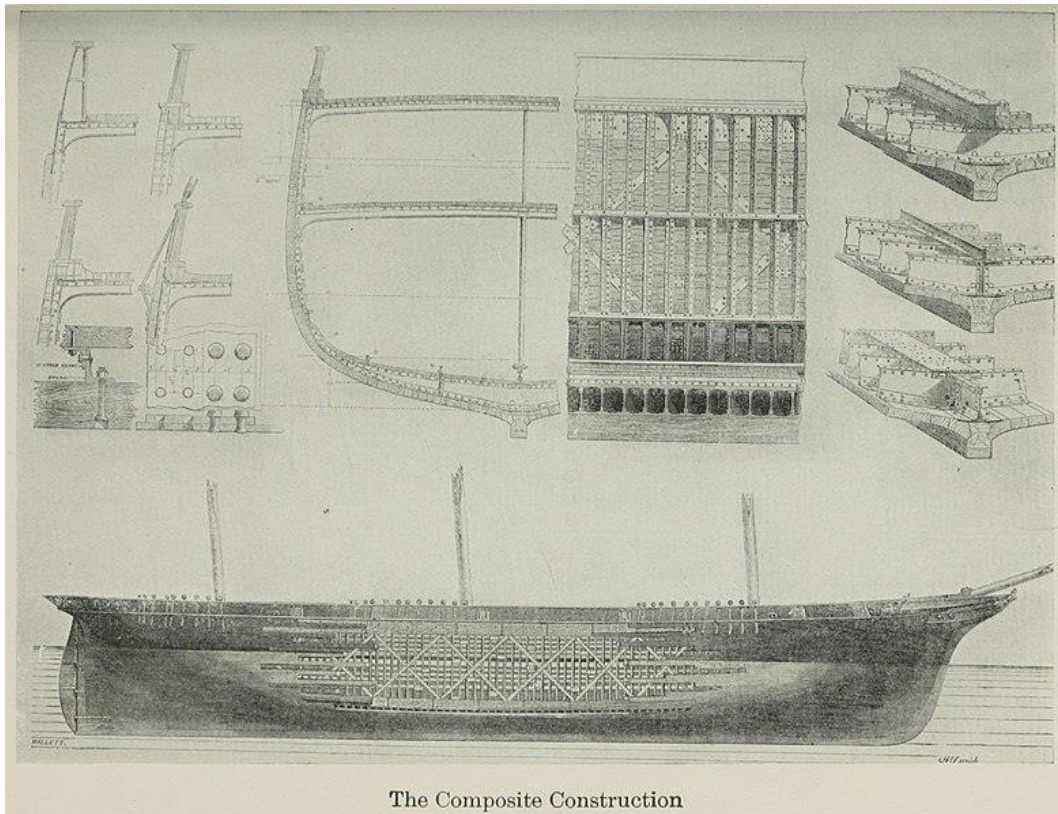


Plate 6. Composite design for the interior of a clipper. Arthur Hamilton Clark / Public Domain

NO DELAY IN LOADING.
SUTTON & CO'S DISPATCH LINE for SAN FRANCISCO
 ONE OF THE FINEST AND SHARPEST CLIPPERS UP
 Has made the Passage to Liverpool in 16 Days! Stands A 1 Extra!!
 THE SPLENDID A 1 FIRST CLASS CLIPPER SHIP

FREE TRADE

STOVER, Master, is receiving her Cargo at Pier 12 E. R., and will have extraordinary dispatch.
 The FREE TRADE is one of the finest and best Clippers ever built in the United States, is of the sharp clipper model, and unsurpassed by any clipper up. Shippers will please examine her and judge for themselves.

SUTTON & CO., 58 South St., cor. Wall.

The Ships of this Line are dispatched quicker than any other from New-York to San Francisco.


SUTTON & CO., PRINTERS.

Plate 7 Advertisement for transporting goods by clipper. Courtesy Wikipedia. PD-US, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3663237>

105 DAYS to SAN FRANCISCO!

Coleman's California Line,
SAILING REGULARLY AS ADVERTISED

CLIPPER OF TUESDAY, APRIL 10th.



The *Yacht* of the *New York* Port Clipper Ship

“HORNET,”
 MITCHELL, Commander,
Is now rapidly Loading at Pier 15 East River.

This magnificent vessel is of the EXTREME CLIPPER MODEL, and has just been thoroughly overhauled, newly coppered, and put in complete order for the voyage. She is WELL VENTILATED, insures at the lowest rates, and will have prompt dispatch as above.

WM. T. COLEMAN & CO., 88 Wall-st., Tontine Building.
Agents in San Francisco, Messrs. WM. T. COLEMAN & CO.

Special Notice.—Shippers will please bear in mind that the ships of this line sail more promptly and regularly than those of any other between New-York and San Francisco.

NEBUTT & CO., PRINTERS.

Plate 8. A New York advertisement from around 1855 for travel to San Francisco. Note the Paddle wheeler G.F. Nesbitt & Co., printer / Public Domain



Plate 9. *An unidentified American clipper.* By Lai Fong of Calcutta, fl. 1870-1910. - Childs Gallery, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8648081>



Plate 10. *The Great Republic.* By James E. Buttersworth / Public Domain

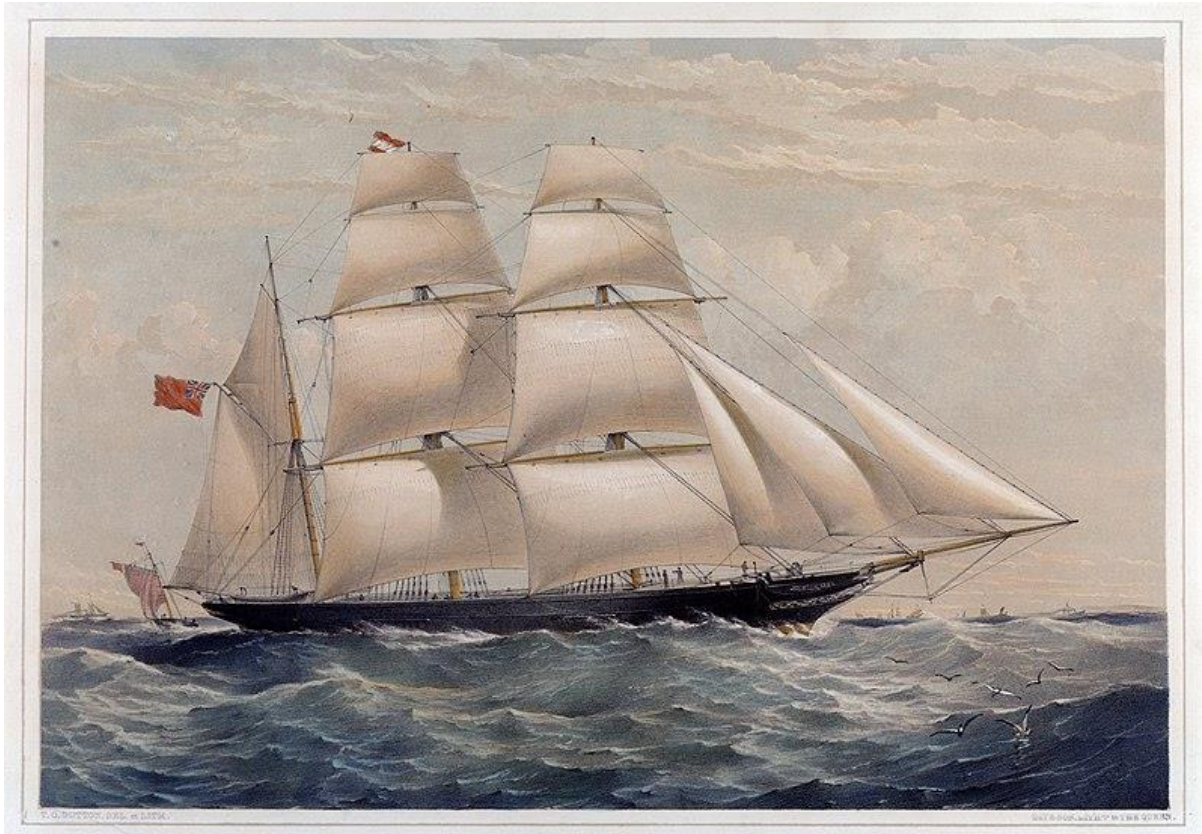


Plate 11. *Thomas Goldsworthy Dutton (1820-1891). The British Clipper 'Spirit of the Age' 1854. Creative Commons CC-BY-NC-SA-3.0 license.*



Plate 12 *'The American' Courtesy HS History*

Of the remaining eighty only eight lasted long enough to be scrapped. All of the others built in the 1850s were lost at sea, burned or wrecked. With those clippers launched in the 1860s this pattern would emerge again. Of these whose fates are known twenty were lost at sea and only six lasted long enough to be scrapped when the era of sail faded. Two from the 1860s survive: *Cutty Sark* is a museum and the hull of the *City of Adelaide* now has restoration going on in the city that vessel was named for. Of the ten clipper ships built between 1870 and the 1890s only one was not wrecked or lost at sea. Few of all those built had a life expectancy of even twenty years and many would not last even five. The longevity record for this type of vessel goes to the *Syren*; records stop in 1920, her sixty-ninth year.⁷ This was not typical: clippers had to be continually replaced but their lucrative capabilities ensured that they would continue to be built despite these high casualty rates.

It was not only the development of the propeller which led to the decline of the clippers. In November 1869 the Suez Canal opened and this wiped weeks off the travel time for steam or coal fuelled ships sailing through the Mediterranean to anywhere bordering the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In Suez a lack of necessary and regular winds for sailing ships meant that they could not use the canal without being either becalmed or employing mechanized tugs or gangs of fellahs; either were prohibitively expensive and slow.

In the same week that the Suez Canal was opened the British clipper the *Cutty Sark* was launched. This vessel was designed primarily for the Chinese tea trade but only made eight such voyages between 1870 and 1877.⁸ Wool runs to Australia replaced the tea trade for this vessel, making for twelve such voyages between England and Australia between 1883 and 1895.⁹ Soon after that last 1895 voyage she was taken over by the Portuguese, renamed *Ferreira* used for diverse other routes and cargoes until 1922.¹⁰

By 1874 the dominance of clippers in ocean trade was waning and obviously so, mechanised shipping was even taking a hefty slice of the

⁷ Alexander Laing, *American Sail: a Pictorial History*. New York; 1961. p. 277.

⁸ 'Cutty Sark.' *Wikipedia*. Accessed 26th March 2020.

⁹ *Ibid.*,

¹⁰ Eric Kentley, *Cutty Sark: Last of the Tea Clippers*. Greenwich; 2014. pp. 100-117.

tea trade. Even as early as 1847 the first clipper was sold to Hispanics to be rescaled, and used for other minor purposes.¹¹ This would become a common tendency from the 1880s onward, with even the two greatest ships from the late clipper era, *Thermopylae* and *Cutty Sark* enduring this fate. Another blow came in the 1890s when luxury liners began to be launched. They not only offered passengers more space, amenities and safety, but without the need to stop for refuelling could rival the clippers for shorter travel times. In 1891 the *Cromdale* and her sister ship *Mount Stewart* became Britain's last full clippers to be launched.¹² Seafaring dangers and economic advantages in scrapping would work as attrition on those still sailing by that date. By 1920 two of the last clipper ships still working regularly were *Margarida* of Buenos Aires (formerly the *Syren* of Medford Massachusetts) and *Dashing Wave* of Portsmouth New Hampshire.¹³ Significantly both were no longer working as classic clippers *Margarida* was on reduced sail as a barque and *Dashing Wave* was worked as a barge.¹⁴ *Mount Stewart* was still working the wool run in 1921; in 1913 *Cromdale* had run aground on rocks in Bass Strait and was soon destroyed by pulverising waves.¹⁵

By 1922 only the *Cutty Sark* (renamed *Ferreira*) still sailed commercially and this ended in that year when damaged and obviously not well maintained, she sailed into Falmouth.¹⁶ Recognised as the *Cutty Sark*, she was saved by a public appeal and became a training ship.¹⁷ In later years she was restored and now serves as a popular tourist attraction.

The British/ Australian trade in wool, wheat, bullion and passengers became the last bastion of the clippers as the roaring forties could still speed the clippers along and would do so past the Edwardian Era. This writer's grandfather earned his passage from London to Sydney as a clipper ship sailor in 1905 or 1908, when even the Australian route for clippers going to Australia's east coast was in its twilight. The

¹¹ 'Ann McKim'

¹² 'Cromdale' *Wikipedia*. Accessed 27th March 2020.

¹³ Laing, p. 277.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*,

¹⁵ State Library of South Australia. Photograph Collection. Photographs and summary sheet

¹⁶ Kentley. p. 122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*,



Plate 13. *A Thermopylae model 1936. Museums Victoria Collections*
<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/397490>. International CC 4.0



Plate 14. *The Thermopylae. By Jack Spurling. Note the background steamers.*
<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommons>.

wind jammers very last bastion was Port Lincoln, South Australia. Located at the beginning of the Great Australian Bight, Port Lincoln was one of the world's great natural harbours (it did not become a great city due to the scarcity of drinking water) and was conveniently located very near wool and wheat producing farms.

The Roaring Forties were virtually a fast road to that destination. Amongst the last sailing ship to do this run was the Finnish owned barque *Moshulu*, still able to return profits.¹⁸ Writer Eric Newby, aged eighteen then, served as a crew member on that barque's last voyage and left a vivid and informative account *The Last Grain Race* (1956). *Moshulu* had the majestic look and sleek lines of a clipper, but her rigging was designed with sails which were smaller and narrower and there were less of them. The spars, particularly the yardarms, were less wide and most crucial of all, *Moshulu* had four masts, the hallmark of a barque. It sailed in the last grain race, leaving Belfast on the 18th October 1938, reaching Port Lincoln on January 9th 1939 and returned to England just a few days before WW2 began, so *Moshulu* was impounded. In 1994 she was restored becoming a restaurant and luxury liner at Philadelphia.¹⁹



Plate 15. Stag Amsterdam. Designer: Simon Koppes
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:Creative_Commons

¹⁸ Eric Newby, *The Last Grain Race*. London; 2003. p. xi

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.



Plate 16. *Stag Amsterdam*. *Wikipedia/Public Doman*.

Photographer: Zeglarz.



Plate 16. *Four views of the Cutty Sark. Above: In dry dock as a tourist display in 2015. Courtesy of Wikipedia. Photographer Krzysztof Belcynski*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:Creative_Commons



Plate 17. *The figurehead on the bow. The unusual name Cutty Sark referred to the skimpy and diaphanous dress worn by a witch in a Robert Burns poem. What looks like a scalp in her hand is the horse's tail she caught when pursuing a hapless hero. Sanba38 / CC BY-SA (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)*



Plate 18. *This photograph is dated as being between 1900 and 1954, but this must be wrong as the Cutty Sark was in England from 1922 onwards. The earlier date is also wrong as this photograph shows this vessel named as Cutty Sark. New Portuguese owners rechristened it as the Ferreira after purchase in 1895. State Library of Victoria <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/33431>.*



Plate 19. *Cutty Sark by Ruben Chappell (1870-1950) Public Domain. Non-commercial use.*

Amongst the windjammers barques, yachts, brigs, and schooners have a higher survival rate than clippers, but in the twenty-first century three more new clippers have been built. Brazilians launched *Cisne Blanco* in 1999. This clipper operates as a naval training ship, while since 2013 the Rumanians have had *Shaab Oman III* for the same purpose. The Dutch initially intended to build *Stad Amstedam* as a replica, but the needs of tourists and the crew made for some modern alterations and additions below decks.²⁰ When this vessel was launched in 2000 it became popular for tourist cruises.²¹

This tendency to restore an archaic style of vessel over a hundred years after it faded out of practical use says so much about the appeal of clippers. Such popularity depends very much on where the viewer stands. To be a passenger on a rare luxury version of a clipper looking up at the billowing sails and at the rapidly passing sea as the bow knives through would be a wonderful thing.

In contrast imagine you are a clipper ship sailor going around Cape Horn in a gale. You have to be on the top spars, (over a hundred feet above the deck) so as to furl frozen sails while you try to keep your feet on the rounded edge of a spar. They were designed for rings to hold sails, not to give a secure grip to your feet. While you are doing this the ship suddenly tilts and half frozen, with sleet in your face obscuring your vision, you have to make sure that you do not drop to your death.

Unless they were rich, passengers faced a different, less dramatic death - by disease. Below decks space was extremely crowded, rarely ventilated, filthy and unsanitary.²² Passengers would rarely be in such quarters for less than three weeks and even these durations were Atlantic crossings in ideal conditions. Around a hundred and twenty days were good travel durations for journeying to California, South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, China and the Pacific.

When looking above our fire place at a print of Jack Spurling's painting *Ariel* who cannot be inspired? Realities are sometimes grimy, dreary and

²⁰ Bit Agency, *Stad Amsterdam*. www.stadamsterdam.com accessed 27th March 2020. Photographs, text and video clips used; 'Stad Amsterdam' *Wikipedia*. Accessed 25th March 2020.

²¹ *Ibid.*,

²² Mundle,

disappointing, and yet the romantic appeal of the clippers is also a reality.

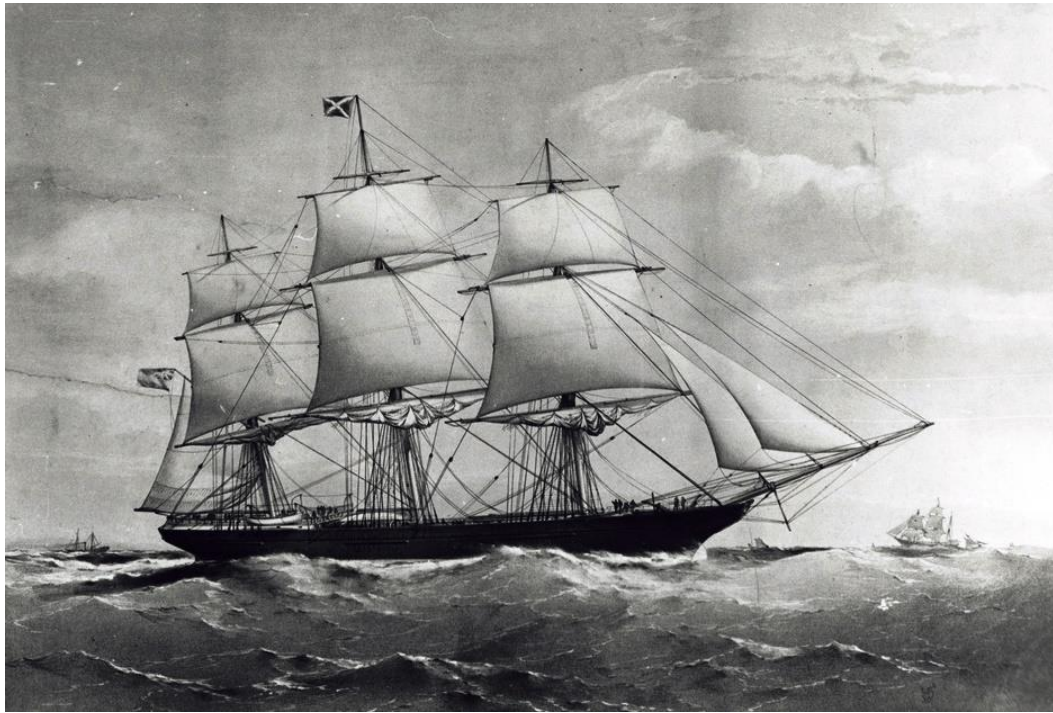


Plate 20. *The Murray*. By Thomas Goldsworthy Dutton. State library of South Australia.

Clipper Ships: A Recollection.

When I was about six or seven (around 1957 to 1958) we went on a family holiday to Tonga. Even then I was very keen on old sailing ships, particularly clipper ships – and still am. While there I was building a model clipper, *Cutty Sark*. My paternal grandfather earned his passage (travel costs) from England to Australia on a clipper ship in 1905 or 1908, but did not name the vessel.

A meeting was arranged to visit an old clipper ship seaman who lived near the beach in Tonga as he also built model sailing boats. I was told that as he was very old being ninety–five I was to be careful and not rush around or rush when speaking to him. We were to compare boats and so I took my moulded plastic Revel model *Cutty Sark* and soon became very aware how much better his hand made timber replicas were, although he was too polite to say so, just pointing out the fine parts.

Like his models, he left me in awe. He was very tall and thin, with no bends in his frame, liver coloured spots or palsy. He had regular features and a long neat beard which was light grey. Perhaps because he was old or perhaps because it was a grey day and not one with tropical heat or humidity, but close enough to the beach to get the sea breeze, he wore a grey jumper, a beanie and dark dense weave dungarees.

His house was timber framed with timber and class windows and painted white with green trim. He said very little and I can't recall much of even that.

Author's Note:

This work has been rushed to finish so that I could work on the corona virus. More text, details, illustrations and sources will be added at a later date. Another proof reading will also be needed.

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