



Ketch “Yankee Clipper”

by

Capt. Alan Ross Huguenot

“Shall we sail her off the anchor?”

We are lying at anchor in Keystone Harbor, Whidbey Island, Washington. This is our last morning of a ten-day international cruise. The crew is seasoned, and everyone a sailor after a week and a half at sea aboard the classic gaff rigged ketch *Yankee Clipper*.

On the sunlit beach in the state park campground at Fort Casey stand a dozen campers surveying the anchorage. There is a 4 knot offshore breeze rippling the surface of a small harbor before moving on out into Admiralty Inlet.

It is one of those mornings meant for sailing when only an excellent maneuver will suffice.

“Hoist the Jib, leave the sheet out,” the order is passed while the helmsman resists the temptation to start the engine.

“Heave short on the anchor rode ... Sing out when she’s up and down.”

The chain rattles in through the hawse pipe.

“She’s up and down, Sir,” the bo’sun cries from the foc’s’le head.

“Very well, break her out, and back the jib to starboard,” the order is passed.

The bow begins to cant around to port, off the wind, then as the port watch brings the anchor up, the starboard watch resets the jib on the starboard tack and silently the vintage ship stirs to life, gaining momentum as the bowspit handsomely clears the next boat in the narrow anchorage. The ship glides softly towards the sea as the crew expertly hoists the gaff mainsail and mizzen.

She gathers headway with all sail set and the crew looks shoreward where the crowd has swelled to two dozen. Cameras are clicking as the tourists rush to record the feeling of a moment from out of the past. For the tourists, it is a moment of awe; for the crew of the *Yankee Clipper* it is humbling to know that they are among the very few who will ever taste the joy of shipping before the mast in a traditional sailing ship.

The cold, wet, bow watches, the times pumping the bilge, scraping and painting the bottom, the smoke of burning grease tinged with diesel in your eyes as you struggle to produce a gourmet breakfast in the rolling pitching galley, the new muscle you have put on heaving in the

anchor, and hoisting a thousand square feet of sail by hand, all have been worth it to produce this moment as the *Yankee Clipper* sails home from another summer cruise.

In this day of wing keels and riblets, towing tanks and racing formulas, it is refreshing to see a truly classic wooden sailing yacht.

The *Yankee Clipper* of West Seattle is one the Northwest's better known wooden ketches. You may have seen her late on a summer's evening reaching to the north across Elliot Bay from Duwamish Head, her gaff sails silouetted against the sunset. Her vintage lines remind you of a former, nobler era of refinement under sail.

The superb sail handling by her uniformed and seasoned crew becomes evident as they reset running backstays on the new tack and actually steer the ship by adjusting sail trim. This is classic yachting at its best and the traditions of this ship date back to its beginnings as West Seattle's sail training Sea Scout Ship in 1930.

The "ship" had several smaller vessels before acquiring the present *Yankee Clipper* in 1946. Originally built in 1941 at the Bremerton Navy Yard, she was a standard Navy 40 foot open motor launch (see figure 1) with a 6 cylinder, 60 hp navy type DB diesel engine. Her wood hull is round bottomed, carvel planked Port Orford (Oregon) Cedar 1-1/4 inches thick over white oak frames. She was originally used as a ship's launch to transport Navy sailors to and from their ships.

After the war she was listed as "surplus" and in 1946 was assigned to Sea Scout Ship 97, sponsored by the West Seattle Lions Club, under the command of Skipper Harcourt Runnings. During the following three years she underwent a major conversion, redesigned as a gaff rigged ketch with 1100 square feet of sail (see figure 2). The lines, structural & sail plans were prepared by Seattle yacht designer Carl O. Nyberg under the direction of Seattle naval architect John E. Kelly, who was at that time, the Mate of Ship 97.

The hull was lengthened by four feet and the keel, deck & deckhouse were added by Pioneer Marine Yard on the

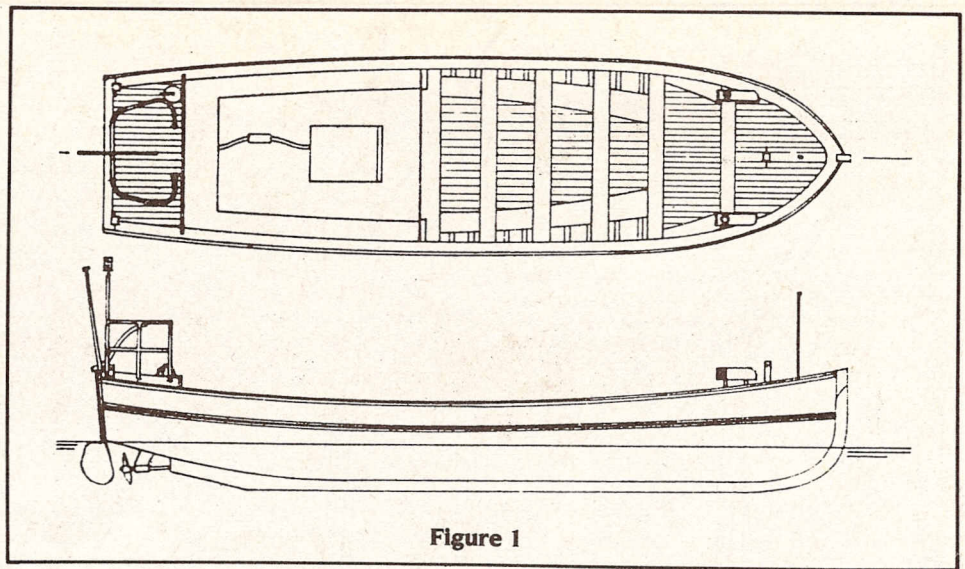


Figure 1

Duwamish. Bulwarks, spars and interior cabin joiner work were completed by the students of the Edison Boat Building School on Lake Union under the direction of James G. B. Chambers.

The original cotton sails were made by Northwyn. The present dacron sails are by Carl Daniels.

The *Yankee Clipper* was recommissioned

in May 1950 at the Naval Reserve Center on Lake Union. She had a new 150 hp Hercules Diesel engine, stainless steel galley, diesel stove, marine head, and berths for fourteen.

She quickly became a familiar sight on Elliot Bay conducting sail training for high school aged young men. Some 40 years later it is nostalgic to see this

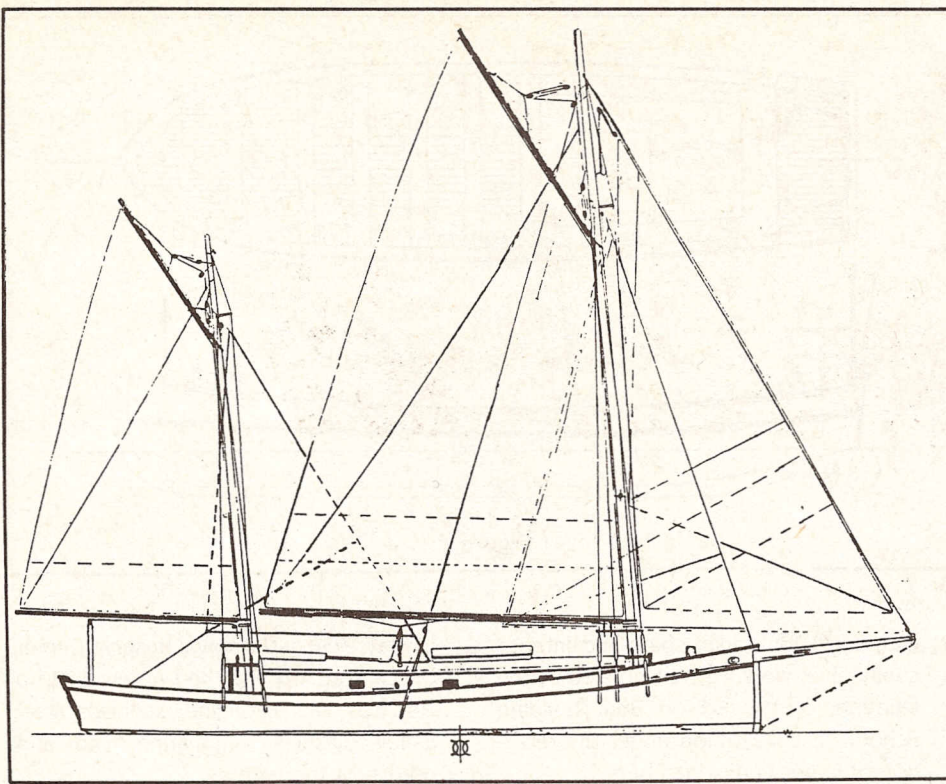
DEEP CYCLE BATTERIES LIQUID vs. GELL YOU DECIDE:

Portions of the following are excerpted from the August 1988 issue of *The Battery Man*:

FLOODED CELL:	Excess positive active material and electrolyte means longer service life and minimal voltage drop during discharge.
GELLED CELL:	Excess negative active material means the negative plate never attains full charge, resulting in less capacity per pound.
FLOODED CELL:	More tolerant of charging errors, i.e. overcharging. Just add water.
GELLED CELL:	Very critical charging characteristics. If battery is overcharged and vents pressure (moisture) off, there is no possible way to replace lost moisture. Capacity is reduced and battery life is shortened. Many alternators should have output lowered.
FLOODED CELL:	At extended discharge rates to a given cut off voltage, battery yields the greatest ampere-hour capacity.
GELLED CELL:	The electrochemical and physical characteristics currently limit their use to applications requiring relatively shallow discharges during their service life.
FLOODED CELL:	State of charge and relative capacity can be checked with a hydrometer.
GELLED CELL:	No practical way to accurately determine capacity.

BOAT ELECTRIC

2834 NW Market
Seattle, WA 98107
(206) 784-5908
Toll-free:
1-800-458-5680



“In this day of wing keels and riblets, towing tanks and racing formulas, it is refreshing to see a truly classic wooden sailing yacht.”

beautiful sailing vessel greeting the *Princess Marguerite* returning from Victoria, in the summer sunset off Magnolia Bluff.

In 1954 Captain John E. Kelly, who had designed the ketch, became Skipper of Ship 97 and took command of the *Yankee Clipper*. He and the Ship's Committee Chairman Captain Carl M. Mann began

an active racing and sailing program which continues today. Both of these men still serve in the same positions 35 years later.

In 1955 the *Clipper* first entered the Swiftsure sailing classic. In 1962 she won in her class in the Victoria to Seattle International Cruiser Race, and regularly

Figure 2

competes in the Bremerton Heavy Weather Race coming in second in class in 1983 and third, in 1989.

A truly classic vessel the *Yankee Clipper* was named "Best Classic Sailing Yacht" at Seattle's Opening Day in 1983, 1984 & 1987. She was featured as an exhibit at Expo '86 in Vancouver, B.C., where she was berthed alongside the *Golden Hind*. During 1989, *Yankee Clipper* will participate with the Washington State Flotilla of Classic Vessels in the State Centennial maritime events and make an August cruise to the San Juan Islands, Vancouver and Princess Louisa Inlet B.C. In 1990, the crew plans to sail her to Southeast Alaska and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Today the *Clipper* offers traditional sail training aboard the ketch and active one-design sailboat racing in her numerous smaller craft. Sail training is conducted by Red Cross (ARC) and the American Sailing Association (ASA) Certified Instructor. The Ship is a member of the American Sail Training Association (ASTA) allowing sailors to achieve certification in both Nautical Science and Oceanography. The ship is sponsored by the West Seattle Lion's Club, in association with the Boy Scouts of America, and is operated as a U.S. Coast Guard Inspected Passenger Vessel. Instruction is open to young men and women 15 to 21 years of age, for information about the program, phone the Chief Mate, Capt. Alan Hugenot at (206) 937-7575.

When you are cruising, keep a lookout for the *Yankee Clipper* and stop aboard for a visit, the crew will be glad to give you a tour of their beloved ship. ●

**Own A
Cascade Dinghy**

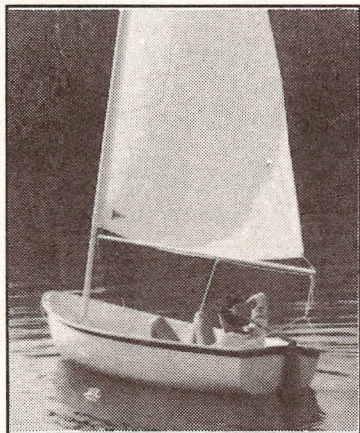
Comfortable &
Easy to Row **\$830**

Sailing Version **\$1,575**
(2 pc. mast stows easily)

BUY FACTORY DIRECT
(FOB PORTLAND)

CASCADE YACHTS, INC.

7030 N.E. 42nd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97218
(503) 287-5794



378-3019

- ⚓ Complete in-slip service
- ⚓ Mechanical
- ⚓ Electrical
- ⚓ Refinishing
- ⚓ Diesel Fuel Cleaning

Ask about our Monthly Maintenance Service

P.O. Box 2267, Friday Harbor, Washington