

# Isle au Haut Historical Society

Volume 3 Supplement

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*Pictured above: Isle au Haut Thorofare, Village, pastel, 2014, by Galen Davis.*

## About This Issue

As a historical society, we receive and respond to a few queries now and then. For example, we had a request for the copy of a photo in our collections not too long ago. The request came from a gentleman on the West Coast named Ken Preston, who had spotted a photo in a coffee table book some years before, perhaps in *Here on the Island*, by Charles Pratt.<sup>i</sup> It was a photo of a traveling cobbler taken at the lobster factory dock here at Isle au Haut circa 1900 (see below). Ken noted, “At the time I originally saw the photo, I was in fact a shoe cobbler with a very tired old wooden boat and I felt a strong affinity for Mr. Cottle.” He had searched for some time and in a *2010 Fisherman’s Voice* article found the photo attributed to our historical society.<sup>ii</sup>

### *In This Issue:*

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**Recommended Reading**

*William O. Cottle on the Yankee Notion at the Lobster Factory, Isle au Haut, Maine, along the Thorofare. (Photograph taken by John C. Turner, ca. 1900; Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society)*



The traveling cobbler William O. Cottle and his scow named *Yankee Notion* have been highly publicized off and on over the years for the boat's unique appearance and story. Cottle and his craft were featured in *A Day's Work*, by William H. Bunting, and *Sailing on the Penobscot*, by George S. Wasson.<sup>iii</sup> Prior to that, he was featured in the *Belfast Republican Journal* and the *Industrial Journal* in 1896, followed by an 1899 article in *The Messenger* of Stonington titled, "The Scow-Cobbler-Shop *Yankee Notion*."<sup>iv</sup> This article notes the cobbler had been written up in many New York and Boston newspapers because of his unusual water-going vessel. As one can surmise from the photograph, his craft was quite novel and could evoke quite a variety of conversations.

The photograph featured an example of some of the peddlers and traders traveling among the islands selling their wares at the time. Given the unusual nature of this photograph, I thought it would be interesting to present and give some dimension to it by identifying the photographer and providing an outline of the individual in the photograph itself.

The opportunity arose to explore the more contemporary perspective of a gentleman who could relate to the cobbler's life on the water, including his vessel and trade. In this issue, you will find the stories behind Cottle, John C. Turner (who photographed Cottle), as well as a guest article written by Ken about the *Yankee Notion*. Enjoy this edition of our newsletter!

**Kristen Carlson-Lewis**  
***Isle au Haut Historical Society***

## Photographer John C. Turner

The Turner family of Isle au Haut was a prosperous and well known family situated on Isle au Haut, Maine, for many years. John Case Turner (1853–1921) (hereafter referred to as J.C.), the son of John Turner, Esq., and Lucretia Proctor Haskell, lived the majority of his life on the island.<sup>v</sup> The first mention of J.C.'s photographic abilities is the federal census of 1880, referring to him at age 27 as a photographic artist.<sup>vi</sup> He was living with his parents and siblings along the Thorofare in the village section of the island at the time.

Fellow researcher Ingrid Luke notes that the *Maine Register of State Year-Book* has J.C. working on Isle au Haut as a photographer in 1889.<sup>vii</sup> An article titled, "Three are Geniuses....," features the three Turner brothers, A.J.H. (Asa Joshua Haskell), C.D. (Clarence Dean), and J.C. (John Case). The article's primary focus is on brother A.J.H. Turner for his impressive ironwork commissioned for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, but also presents brothers C.D. and J.C. Turner. J.C. is described as follows: "J.C. Turner is equally versatile. He is one of the finest photographers anywhere, conducts an attractive store, is the island's only tonsorial



*A view of John C. Turner's photography shop on Isle au Haut with the store seen beyond. (Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society)*

**JOHN C. TURNER**  
**PHOTOGRAPHER**  
**AND**  
**CONFECTIONER**  
**ISLE AU HAUT, - - MAINE**

*Pictured here is John C. Turner's return address information he used on envelopes for his businesses. (Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society)*

artist [barber] and is an expert house and ship carpenter.” The article’s introduction notes that “With their brother J.C. Turner, they comprise one of Maine’s most remarkable families.”<sup>viii</sup> Brother A.J.H. Turner had already presented at the 1893 World’s Exposition in Chicago, raising the notoriety of the family.

At the time of the 1900 U.S. Census, J.C. was working as a carpenter. With his brother A.J.H. Turner’s rise to fame due to his artistic skill as a blacksmith, J.C. was able to promote his skill as a photographer. By the time of the 1910 U.S. Census, J.C. was working as a photographer and had his own photography shop along the Thorofare.<sup>ix</sup>

In fact, the 1910 Isle au Haut Business Directory featured J.C. as follows: Barber – J.C. Turner; Photographer – J.C. Turner; Boarding House – A.J.H. & J.C. Turner; and lastly, Merchant – J.C. Turner, confectionery and ice cream.<sup>x</sup> Store receipts indicate J.C. also offered nuts and sweets as well as imported cigars. Given the isolated nature of the island, a variety of skill sets was necessary to survive comfortably.

*John C. Turner and family enjoy a beautiful day on the water near Isle au Haut, Maine. Pictured (left to right): brother Clarence Dean Turner; wife Mary Ellen (Rich) Turner; daughter Miriam; nephew William G. Turner; and John C. Turner. (Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society)*



### **William O. Cottle of the *Yankee Notion***

William Octave Cottle was born June 11, 1842, in Surry, Maine. Son of Nathan, a shoe cobbler, and Elisabeth (Milliken) Cottle,<sup>xi</sup> William had three known siblings, all born in Surry, including Henrietta J. (born Feb. 15, 1838), Asa A. (born Oct. 12, 1844), and Sophia A. (born Jan. 10, 1846).<sup>xii xiii</sup>

In 1850, in the town of Surry, Nathan Cottle (31 years), laborer, and Elizabeth (31 years) were found with their children: Henrietta (12 years) [indexed as Fenereta], William (8 years), Asa (6 years), and Sophia (4 years).<sup>xiv</sup> By 1860, the parents are not to be found, but the children were all still living



*William O. Cottle's scow Yankee Notion near the Lobster Factory, Isle au Haut, Maine, along the Thorofare. (Photograph taken by John C. Turner, ca. 1900; photo courtesy of Penobscot Marine Museum)*

together in Surry. Octavius (18 years) and Asa (16 years) Cottle, both sailors, along with their sister Sophia (13 years), who was listed as a servant, were living with their other sibling, Henrietta Morrill (22 years) and her family. Henrietta's family included her husband, Oscar Morrill (26 years), a sailor who was born in France, and their children, Lizzie (3 years) and Alman G. (1 year).<sup>xv</sup>

One of the articles about William and his houseboat refers to a former wife and children. No information has been uncovered to date on his wife or potential children. Furthermore, William O. Cottle has not been located in the 1870, 1880, or 1900 U.S. censuses. In the 1887 and 1888 Brewer City Directory, William O. Cottle, boot and shoe repairer of Penobscot Square in Brewer, may be presumed to be the same individual.<sup>xvi</sup> In 1891, the adjacent city of Bangor finds a William Cottle working as a laborer for C.W. Spencer at the intersection of State Street and Hogan Road.<sup>xvii</sup>

A June 2, 1899, article in *The Messenger* notes that Mr. Cottle has "left Swan's Island in his scow-cobbler-shop once again for Belfast to stock up on leather and other materials" pertinent to his cobbling business upon the water between Belfast and Bar Harbor. He apparently spent the previous winter at Old Harbor working to meet the needs of the local clientele. The article says "he was born at Jonesport, a cripple about sixty years before...." It further goes on to say that after his start as a fisherman, he did a stint at sea aboard the schooner *Sea Breeze* (out of Ellsworth) as a mate and then as a cook. He then settled on Swan's Island around 1880 or so and "lived with his two little dogs, Snip and Sank. Sank died...people at Atlantic [on Swan's Island] built him a comfortable shop..." but he preferred being on the water. William returned to Swan's Island about "four or five years ago," settled near Old Harbor for about a year, and subsequently decided to build a scow to serve as both house and workshop.

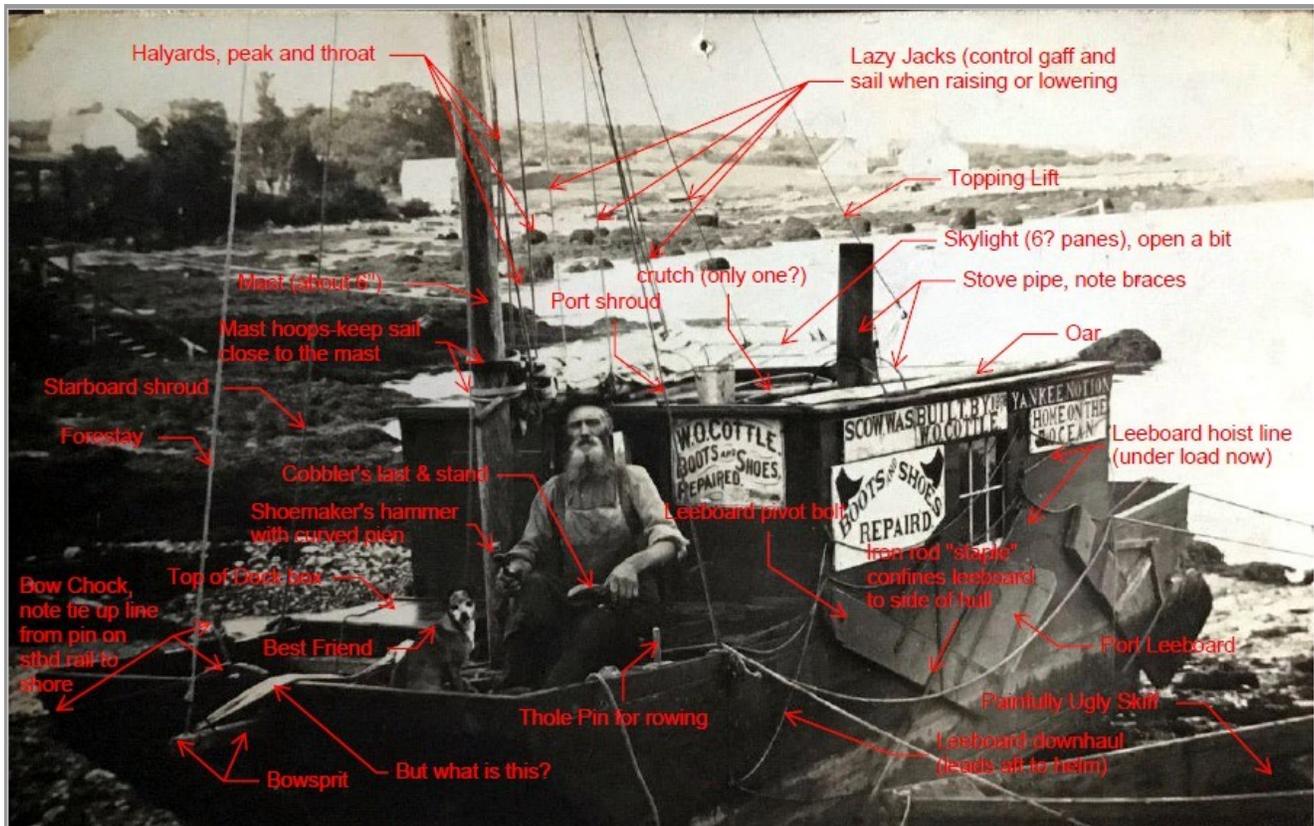
In his book *Sailing Days on the Penobscot*, George Wasson describes the scow as follows: "...this flat bottom scow...had a high house of matched boards with windows on each side, though the top was flat and covered with canvas.... Grounded on the beach close to the head of the wharf, for a fortnight or so, W. Cottle lived entirely upon his boat...[and] literally pegged away at his trade."<sup>xviii</sup>

Still on Swan's Island, William O. Cottle (66 years) is identified in the 1910 U.S. Census as a widowed shoemaker who can read and write, with his own repair business and freestanding home.<sup>xix</sup> Shortly thereafter, William O. Cottle (69 years), widowed shoemaker of 61 Holyoke St., Brewer, Maine, died on Dec. 23, 1911, in Brewer of pulmonary tuberculosis. He was born in Belfast, son of Nathan Cottle, laborer (born in Bangor), and Elizabeth 'Betsy' Milliken (born in Surry).<sup>xx</sup> He is buried in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Brewer, as are his two sisters, Henrietta J. Cobb (1841–1914) and Sophia Hussey (1848–1933).<sup>xxi</sup> Henrietta's death record notes the father Nathan Cottle as a shoe cobbler, which indicates how William learned the trade.

*Note: Due to the pandemic, many historical organizations and sources were unavailable at the time of the publishing of this newsletter. If you have more information on Cottle or the Yankee Notion, please reach out to the Isle au Haut Historical Society at: [isleauhauthistory@gmail.com](mailto:isleauhauthistory@gmail.com).*



*William O. Cottle on the Yankee Notion near the Lobster Factory, Isle au Haut, Maine, along the Thorofare. (Photograph taken by John C. Turner, ca.1896; Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society)*



**Fig. 1** William O. Cottle on the Yankee Notion at the Lobster Factory, Isle au Haut, Maine, along the Thorofare. (Photograph taken by John C. Turner, ca. 1900; Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society) (Alterations made by Ken Preston with permission from the Isle au Haut Historical Society)

## The Yankee Notion (Home on the Ocean!)

By Ken Preston, Guest Writer

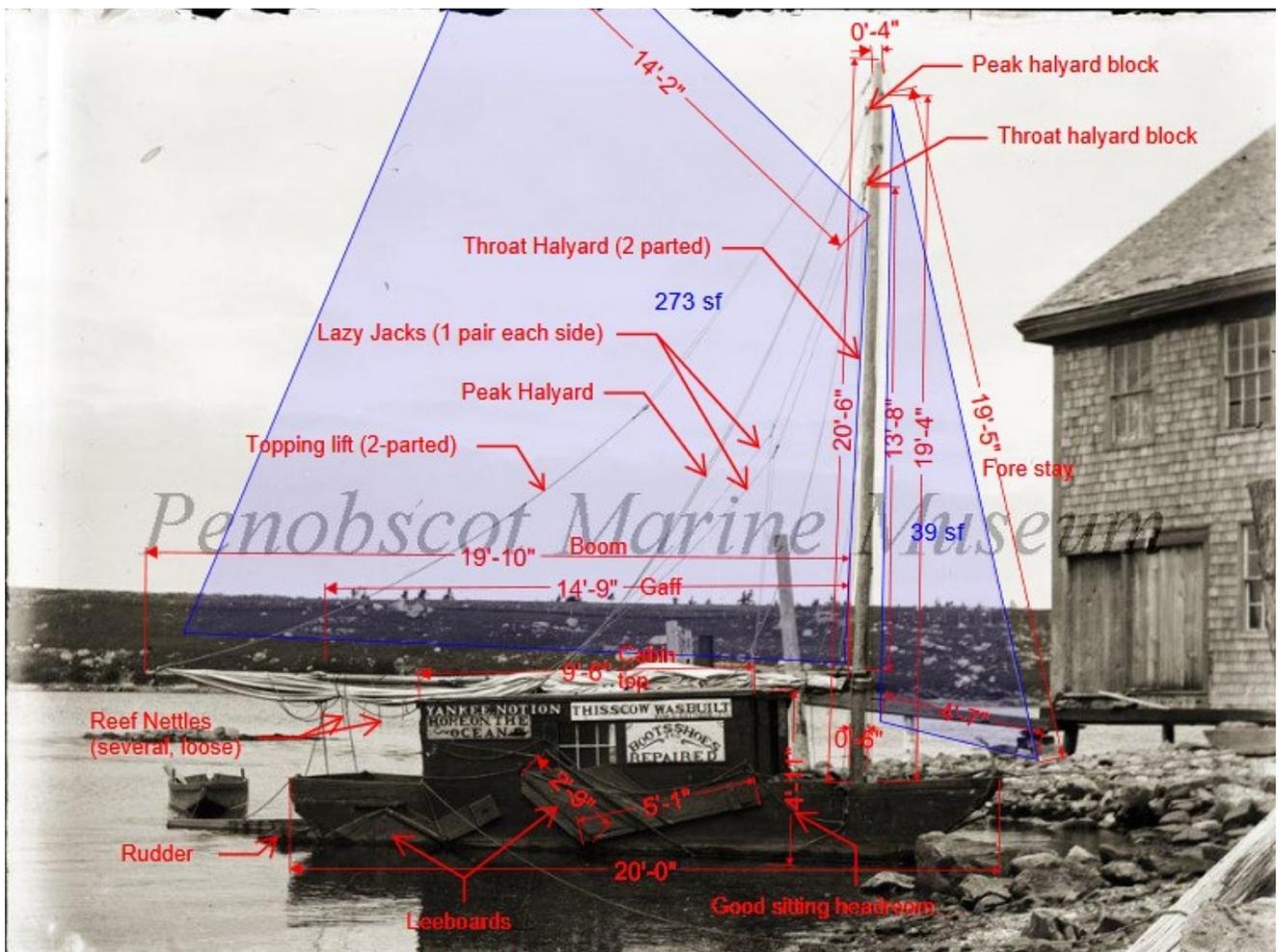
I first met W.O. Cottle in the pages of a coffee table book that I checked out of the Everett (Washington) Public Library many years ago. At that time, I lived with my wife and two girls on a 40-foot house scow we built ourselves. Our house scow, *Blue Heron*, had no sail, though she went just fine with her outboard motor, but she never roamed farther than 50 miles from where she was built in Seattle. In my younger years, I was a cobbler. So Cottle, the traveling shoe man, and his sailing scow caught my fancy.

I never bought my own copy of that book and the library must have stopped carrying it. Until the internet, hunt as I may, I could never find the image of Cottle and his scow or any other information again. Years passed, and the internet finally gave me a second chance at the photograph. A lucky search brought up an old article in the *Fisherman's Voice*, which credited the Isle au Haut Historical Society for the photo (Fig. 1).<sup>xxii</sup> One contact led to another and another until I ended up meeting Kristen Carlson-Lewis, who found lots of other documentation and sent me to the Penobscot Marine Museum in search of more photos—and by golly, they had one!

The photo from the Isle au Haut Historical Society is artistic, engaging, rich in detail, and entirely memorable, but would have been more or less hopeless for deducing the size and rigging of the boat (see Fig. 2). The photo in the archives at Penobscot Marine is wonderfully detailed. More important, it's taken almost perfectly straight on to the starboard side of the boat, showing her all the way from the water to the tip of her mast. It's not artistic, perhaps, but full of information. Finally, in Kristen's researches, a consistent set of basic dimensions of the boat was given in several newspaper articles: 20' long and a 6' beam with a 10' long cabin that was the full width of the hull.

### SAILING SCOWS IN MAINE (AND NEARBY CANADA)

“Scow,” in typical U.S. usage, is a flat-bottomed boat that is wide for its length and roughly (or exactly) rectangular in shape. Although some of them were built with flare and a little curve to their sides, many were simply rectangular boxes with sloping ends. Sailing scows, some even smaller than Cottle's and ranging up in size to small ships, were commonplace all along the Eastern seaboard, the Great Lakes, and here and there on the West Coast. In fact, the scow hull form is about the cheapest thing to build in the way of a boat.



**Fig. 2** William O. Cottle's scow Yankee Notion near the Lobster Factory, Isle au Haut, Maine, along the Thorofare. (Photograph taken by John C. Turner, ca. 1900; photo courtesy of Penobscot Marine Museum) (Photo altered by Ken Preston with the permission from Penobscot Marine Museum)

Graceless as some of the scows were, they were still practical sailing cargo vessels. Some were used in fishing operations, tending fish traps, or working their own gear. Many carried cargo, both below decks and often deck-loaded with farm produce, cordwood, and quarry stone or sand and gravel. On the East Coast, they were most often gaff sloop-rigged, main, and jib sails, and sometimes gaff topsails, too.

The gaff rig, with a four-sided sail, allowed a large sail area on a relatively short mast, but also a sail plan that readily reduced sail area at need without adversely affecting the balance of the rig. The broad flat bottom and wide beam allowed carrying a big load on a shallow draft and standing up to a big sailing rig. In the days before engines were commonplace, sailing vessels needed to carry enough sail to keep moving in the lightest breezes and still be able to reef down (reduce sail area) to be able to stand up to a hard wind. Howard Chappelle's encyclopedic *American Small Sailing Craft* has excellent drawings and descriptions of the sailing scows and is a great reference.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The *Yankee Notion* was not an outlier, but rather a more fascinating example of a common use of small- to medium-sized sailing scows in that time and place. Further, the implications that his sailing required "a dead fair wind" and questioning whether the vessel would in fact go "slashing to weather" were probably badly overdrawn. Certainly, my experience with a tiny scow I built myself was that she was a far better sailboat than it looked like she could be (see *Yankee Notion Redux*, p. 11).

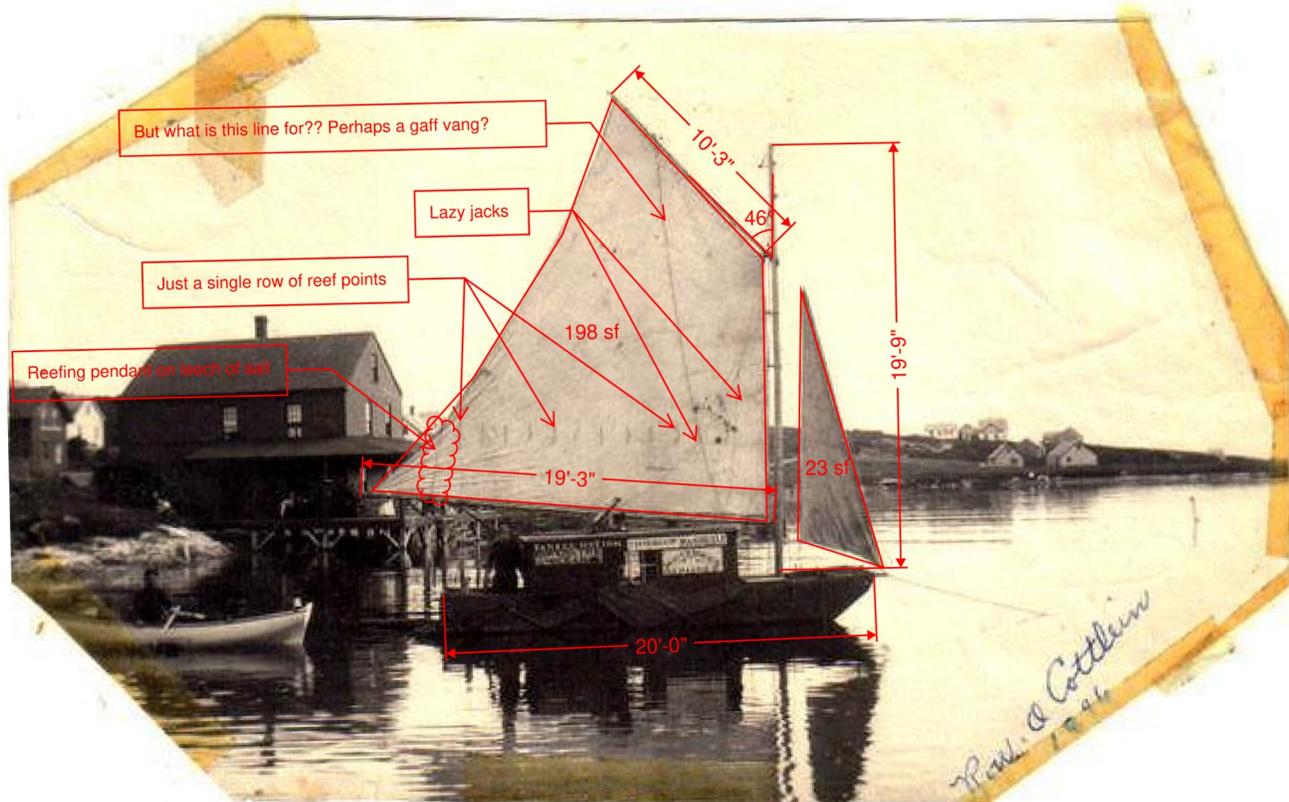
## DIMENSIONS AND PROPORTIONS

Given the two photos, the basic dimensions, and using some simple PDF engineering software, it's possible to make a number of observations about the boat, her gear, and Cottle himself. Look at Fig. 2, which is the photo from the Penobscot Marine Museum with many of the dimensions of the boat and her rig added on (see also Fig. 3). Her likely sail plan, the full mainsail, and a little jib can be inferred closely from the length of her boom and gaff (all lying on the cabin top with the sail furled) and the position of various bits of rigging on the mast. Her main would have been close to this, though the exact angle of the gaff can only be guessed at based on photos of other local sloops under sail. Her jib may have overlapped the mast a little, but not much. Reefed down (at least two sets of reef points, perhaps three), her main would be reduced about in half. The jib may also have had one or two sets of reef points to reduce it as well, though this is a fairly small sail for the boat.

Figure 3 came to light as we were going to press with this article and, although it is a low resolution scan of a small snapshot, it presents an excellent chance to see the boat with sails set. Startlingly, the mainsail (at least) is not the same one she is wearing in the other photos we have. If the date "1896" printed on the photo is the actual date it was taken, then these were probably the first sails she had. Clearly they are both used, very old sails. They were no doubt bought secondhand (still a viable option for sailors on a budget) and the boom and gaff simply fitted to the available canvas.

At some point thereafter, she apparently got a larger main sail and had to replace both boom and gaff to fit it. That would have been a small matter at the time, as the spars are just small saplings and the hardware and fittings would have easily shifted to the new spars. The increase in sail area is substantial, from about 200 sq. ft. in Fig. 3 up to about 273 sq. ft. in Fig. 2. It is significant that the mast measures essentially the same in both figures, a bit more than 19 feet. The difference is likely a function of the low resolution of Fig. 3, almost certainly the same mast.

It is interesting to note that in Fig. 3, she only had a single row of reef points and the full sail was a bit undersized for her. Evidently, Cottle agreed with this assessment when he spent the money for a larger sail later on. Also, he did have a reefing pendant rove off to pull down the reef.



**Fig. 3** William O. Cottle on the Yankee Notion anchored by the head (and probably moored to the shore as well) with her sails set. (Photograph taken by John C. Turner, ca.1896; Turner Collection, Isle au Haut Historical Society) (Alterations made by Ken Preston with permission from the Isle au Haut Historical Society)

From these photos, we can't know that he replaced the tiny jib shown set in Fig. 3, but she could certainly have managed a substantially larger sail in that fore triangle, and compared to the main, it would have been a small dollar item. Although the small size of these jibs means they supplied relatively little power, they were very useful for boat handling, swinging the bow one way or the other as needed.

### HANDLING THE SCOW

In the simplest case, to get underway from anchor, any gaskets or sail ties would be cast off the bundle of the mainsail and its spars with the jib clipped onto the forestay, with the jib halyard tied or shackled to its upper end and the jib sheets tied onto the lower corner (they were led aft to the cockpit and not unrigged, just untied from the sail). Then the main would be picked up by the topping lift and the lazy jacks to clear the cabin top (and the stovepipe). The main sheet (usually a 3- or 4-part tackle on a boat this size) would be slacked off and free to run for now.

To hoist the main requires pulling in two lines at once: the peak halyard (which pulls up the outer portion of the sail) and the throat halyard (right close to the mast). Most often, the two halyards were taken up so that the gaff rose about level until the throat halyard was raised as far as it would go. At that point, there would be a big belly of canvas in the sail. Then the peak halyard would be pulled in hard, the gaff would extend as high as it could go, and the sail would be nicely shaped and ready to

work. With the boat anchored by the head, she would lie quietly with the sail more or less on center until the jib was raised. With the sail hoisted, lazy jacks and topping lift would be slacked off a bit so they wouldn't chafe the sail, and the boat was ready to get away.

If she was planning to run out of the anchorage downwind, the main leeboards would have been left up with the smaller (aft) boards likely lowered. If her route out of the anchorage was across or into the wind, then the soon to be "Lee" leeboard would be lowered to keep her from skidding sideways as she started to move. In a light breeze with the anchor in a fair bottom, and no other vessels crowding her in the anchorage, the anchor would probably just be heaved aboard and the jib sheeted and perhaps backed on one side or the other to cast her head off the wind. Then the main would be sheeted in to draw, and she'd be away. If she was leaving downwind, as soon as she had way on and was answering, the helm would be put up and she'd pivot around and leave.

If she was leaving upwind, there was more work to be done. She'd have to sail as close to the wind as she could, certainly no nearer than 45 degrees from the wind. When she ran out of sea room on her first tack, then she'd have to tack over 90–100 degrees (or more) and go the other way until she either cleared the harbor or ran out of room again and had to tack back, thus "beating to windward."

Since all the controlling lines were at least two-parted and the sheet was probably four-parted, by the time she got underway there would be several large piles of line needing to be straightened up and coiled down and hung on their cleats or belaying pins. The anchor would need to be tied down to keep it from jumping ship if she found a swell outside, with the anchor line itself coiled down. No rest for the deckhand for quite a while!

Cottle, with his long experience at sea as a younger man, had rigged his boat so that all the hoisting lines and sheets led back to his station at the helm (I do wish we had a photo of that!), so that he handled all those chores from one spot—no doubt a necessity with his crippled leg. Once he had her underway and on her course, he would put the tiller "in beackets" (tie it off with a line on either side) and she would hold her course at least long enough for him to go forward and tend to the anchor mess.

If the wind came on to blow while she was underway, he'd have to reef the mainsail down to keep her on her feet. I've never handled a big gaff sail under those conditions, but reefing a sloop in a breeze can usually be managed by sailing as near to upwind as she'll go, then slacking off the main sheet until the sail is just flapping, not really driving at all. Then take up the topping lift and lazy jacks to handle the boom and the bunt of the sail, lower away both peak and throat halyards until you can reach the first reef cringle (a big eyelet in the canvas on the leading edge of the sail), and tie it down to the boom. A reefing pendant was most likely previously rove off to haul the corresponding cringle down out near the end of the boom.

With the sail still "scandalized" (the gaff low and the sail just flapping), the reef nettles could be tied in, either around the boom or between the boom and the foot of the sail, thus controlling all the canvas that had been lowered. And finally, the "shortened" sail could be hoisted again and sheeted in and the boat brought back on her course. In a hard breeze, there may be no choice but to run off with the main reefed clear down or even lowered entirely, letting the jib pull her along. In a really hard chance, we know Cottle sometimes had to run her off downwind under a bare pole until he could make a lee somewhere. Coming into harbor involved almost all the same moves as getting away, in the opposite order. In an empty cove with no rocks or hazards, it might have been fairly easy, but in a crowded anchorage or a harbor with rocks and ledges, it all had to be done while steering clear of all the obstructions. There's a lot of seamanship involved!



*Ken Preston navigates the waters of Puget Sound in his scow Scrops, which he built himself.*

### **Yankee Notion Redux**

*I've had sail boats of one sort or another for most of my adult life. One of my favorites I built from scrap plywood after I retired. I sailed her several years on Puget Sound (see figure to the left). She was a tiny thing, just eight feet long and shaped very much like the Yankee Notion. Informally known as Scrops, she was made of salvaged wood from a big set of temporary shelving—cheap plywood and 2×4s. Her (second) sail was re-cut from a 23-foot sailboat jib and was just wonderful for her—the right size and nicely shaped as a standing lug sail. She was 4' wide and 8' long and, except for the sweet curve of her underside, was as square a box as can be, not unlike many of the Maine scows carrying produce and hay to the city. She had only the one leeboard, not the four that the Yankee Notion carried, and she went to weather well, startling many bigger and prettier boats around the bay.*

### **DETAILS OF THE SCOW AND LIFE ON BOARD**

Figure 1 is the wonderful Isle au Haut photograph with Cottle seated on his cobbler's bench (or maybe a deck box) on the foredeck. He has his cobbler apron on, his left hand resting on his cobbler's last, and a shoemaker's curved pien hammer in his right hand. A modern cobbler has to stand to operate his stitchers, cutters, grinders, and polishers. In Cottle's time, though, all that work would be done by hand and seated on the bench with tools and last at hand. Apparently, his father was a shoe man, too, so it's likely he learned the trade early, though he went to sea fishing and coasting as a young man. No doubt as he got older, the sea got harder, and the cobbler's bench looked good.

In Fig. 1, I've labeled most of what can be identified in the photo. The bowsprit is much clearer than in Fig. 2, and there's the fascinating mystery piece that seems to drape along the bowsprit, over the bulwarks, and down again. If anybody knows its function, please let us know!

The 10-foot-long oar on the rooftop would have been used against the thole pins port and starboard, probably with a “strop” to hold the oar against the thole. It may be he only used the one. With the leeboards down and the rudder amidships, she'd want to go pretty straight, but there may be a second oar (as well as a second crutch—we know he used two) just out of sight. He also used those thole pins

like cleats for tie-up lines, as he has now on the starboard rail, with the line running through the bow chock and thus to the land.

The anchor, which you can see on the bow in Fig. 2, isn't aboard in Fig. 1—he has a line from the stern out into the bay. Probably, you'd find the anchor there, though he may well have had one anchor forward and another aft and both are in use now.

The arrangement of the leeboards and their rigging is pretty clear in the figures. They're solid wood with light iron strapping to hold the pieces together, so they would have floated up if they weren't pulled down. There's a line from the leading edge that you can follow all the way back to the cockpit that would pull the board down and another on the trailing edge lead similarly that would pick it up. The boards pivoted on a bolt through the bulwarks, which means they would have ripped off the bulwark if they were left down on the wrong tack, but there is an iron rod, about 3/4" diameter, running on a diagonal from a point well underwater up to a point right by the windowsill. That staple would have been firmly fastened to the hull and cabin side and would support the board on the wrong tack.

The cooking stove was described as a “yacht stove” and was probably pretty small, perhaps a “Tiny Tot.” The stove pipe gives you an idea of how little galley space there was, given that he had a bunk along that same cabin side and his cobbler's shop on the other side. The skylight up in the middle of the cabin top would have given a lot of light inside and made a good breeze inside on a hot day.

Certainly, this was a small ship, though a pretty good-sized boat. She would have made a perfectly nice home for a single old shoe man and his best friend. Cottle is a good looking man, and we read in the various newspapers that he was a philosopher and didn't need to run his own errands since the local boys (in winter quarters at least) were happy to run them for him. He sounds like a fine fellow—I wish I'd known him myself. I'd love to have sailed with him, at least for a while. Watching him fixing shoes by hand would have been a treat.

## ABOUT KEN PRESTON

From his teen years, Ken Preston was a boat and naval history buff. While he attended the University of Missouri, he worked with a couple of different cobblers. Later, he tried his hand at small town shoe and saddle repair for a few years. After University he spent three years on active duty in the Army—stateside, in Germany, and in Vietnam. He worked for the Army Corp of Engineers as a geologist and with a contractor building and rebuilding breakwaters, docks, mooring structures, and more all along the West Coast.

Over the years, Ken has traveled to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Mexico, and Canada to do independent research on and take photographs of the boats of each country. During these trips, Ken toured much of the countries on his motorcycle, seeking to preserve the history of the traditional building techniques and use of the boats. As a result, he authored *Fishing Boats of Viet Nam* (not yet published) and *Bringing Lyra Home* ([americanvega.org/images/Bringing\\_Lyra\\_Home.pdf](http://americanvega.org/images/Bringing_Lyra_Home.pdf)).

Ken has written articles for publications such as *Duckworks Magazine* and *Wooden Boat Magazine* and he has two blogs: *About Boats and Rice* ([boatsandrice.com/About.html](http://boatsandrice.com/About.html)); and *Letters From The Road—Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos* ([kens-vietnam-adventures.blogspot.com/](http://kens-vietnam-adventures.blogspot.com/)). He also has his own YouTube Channel, *Ken Preston*, at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCMbc8rnOOcQqU5DZhtpRVfQ](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMbc8rnOOcQqU5DZhtpRVfQ).

At home in Washington state, he has built his own boats, including a houseboat for his family and later a scow captured in sail (see story on p. 11). He currently works part-time as a consultant for design engineers.



*Ken Preston with a 1950s classic Canadian chestnut canoe, which he rebuilt in his workshop in Washington state.*

**News of the Isle au Haut  
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## Recommended Reading

Articles regarding William O. Cottle and the *Yankee Notion*:

- “Three are Geniuses: A.J.H., C.D. and J.C. Turner of Isle au Haut – Work of One at St. Louis Fair,” unidentified news clipping, Isle au Haut Historical Collection, may also be found in *The Republican Journal*, Belfast, Maine, 22 September, 1904, 76:7.
- “The Scow-Cobbler-Shop Yankee Notion,” *The Messenger*, published Deer Isle-Stonington on June 2, 1899.
- George S. Wasson, *Sailing Days on the Penobscot: The Story of the River and the Bay in the Old Days*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1932), 144.
- “The Yankee Notion in Winter Quarters,” *Forest and Stream* (NY: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., Jan–Jun 1899) 52:3, at <https://tinyurl.com/YankeeNotionWinterQ>.
- Reprint in *The Ellsworth American* (Ellsworth, Maine), p. 5, column 4 on 7 Aug 1901; “The Scow-Cobbler-Shop ‘Yankee Notion,’” *The Messenger* (originally published Deer Isle-Stonington), June 2, 1899.
- “Cobbler Cottle’s Yankee Notion,” *Bangor Daily News* (Bangor, Maine), Saturday, November 2, 1901, 12 ([Newspapers.com/image/662722839](http://Newspapers.com/image/662722839)).
- “A Perilous Trip,” *The Republican Journal* – News of Belfast (Belfast, Maine), 70:5, column 1, dated 14 July 1898 ([digital.maine.com](http://digital.maine.com)). Excerpt faded and difficult to read. Mentions Cottle being in port to buy leather and sell rubber, lived at Bass Harbor recent winter, and his plans to travel to NYC in his floating houseboat.
- William H. Bunting, *A Day’s Work: A Sampler of Historic Maine Photographs, 1860–1920: Part I* (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 1997), 284.
- Charles Pratt, *Here on the Island* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), 21.
- “Isle au Haut, Late 90’s,” *Fishermen’s Voice*, Vol. 15, No. 7, July 2010, 1–2. See <https://tinyurl.com/IAHlate90s>.
- “A Curious Maine Craft,” (*Bangor*) *Industrial Journal*. Clipping from *Belfast Journal* 26 Jun 1896, p. 3: On microfilm, Vault 974.108.I44 (courtesy of Bangor Public Library Special Collections).

- i Charles Pratt, *Here on the Island* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1974), 21.
- ii “Isle au Haut, Late 90’s,” *Fishermen’s Voice*, Vol. 15, No. 7, July 2010, pp. 1–2. See <https://tinyurl.com/IAHlate90s>.
- iii William H. Bunting, *A Day’s Work: A Sampler of Historic Maine Photographs, 1860-1920: Part I* (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, 1997), 284 and George S. Wasson, *Sailing Days on the Penobscot*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1949), 144.
- iv “The Scow-Cobbler-Shop Yankee Notion,” *The Messenger* (originally published Deer Isle-Stonington, Maine) 2 Jun 1899.
- v Maine, Death Records, 1761–1922, Isle au Haut (Ancestry.com).
- vi 1880 U.S. Census, Isle au Haut, Hancock County, T9, roll 480, E.D. 153:286D (Ancestry.com).
- vii Ingrid Luke, family researcher as referenced from: State of Maine, *Maine Register of State Year-Book & Legislative Manual* (Portland, Maine: G.M. Donham, 1889), 396.
- viii “Three are Geniuses: A.J.H., C.D. and J.C. Turner of Isle au Haut – Work of One at St. Louis Fair,” *Belfast Republican Journal* (Belfast, Maine), 22 September 1904, 76:7 (Isle au Haut Historical Society, Isle au Haut, Maine, original newspaper clipping of article); may also be found at [chroniclingamerica.gov](https://chroniclingamerica.gov) <https://tinyurl.com/yxjrn559>
- ix 1900 U.S. Census, Isle au Haut, Hancock County, Maine, T623, E.D. 59:1, FHL Film 1240593 (Ancestry.com).
- x Chatto and Turner, Compilers, *Register of The Towns of Sedgwick, Brooklin, Deer Isle, Stonington and Isle au Haut, 1910* (Brooklin, ME: Friend Memorial Public Library, Inc., 1910, 1972), 245.
- xi Nathan’s occupation is listed in the death record of his daughter, Henrietta (Cottle) Cobb: Maine, Death Records, 1761–1922, Brewer (Ancestry.com).
- xii Maine, Births and Christenings, 1739–1900, Surry (Familysearch.org).
- xiii Research on Ancestry.com and Familysearch.org reveals no other individuals with the name of William O. Cottle in Maine. A William B. Cottle with a similar birth date, a clergyman, was found with wife, Emma, and was living beyond the date of death for William O. Cottle. Another William Cottle did not match the specifics such as age found on the census and other data sources for William O. Cottle. Inquiries with historical societies in Brewer and Surry remain unanswered.
- xiv 1850 U.S. Census, Surry, Hancock County, M432, roll 254, p. 56A (image 118) (Ancestry.com).
- xv 1860 U.S. Census, Surry, Hancock County, M653, roll 438, p. 400, FHL Film 803438 (Ancestry.com).
- xvi U.S. City Directories, *Bangor City Directories*, 1882–1892, 1887–1888 (Ancestry.com).
- xvii U.S., City Directories, 1882–1892, 1891 Bangor City Directory, p. 94.
- xviii George S. Wasson, *Sailing Days on the Penobscot: The Story of the River and the Bay in the Old Days* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1932), 144.
- xix 1910 U.S. Census, Swan’s Island, Hancock County, T624, roll 541, E.D. 73:2B, FHL Film 1374554 (Ancestry.com); Cottle indexed as Lottle.
- xx Maine, Death Records, 1761–1922, Brewer (Ancestry.com).
- xxi Maine, Death Records, 1761–1922, Brewer (Ancestry.com); Oak Hill Cemetery, Brewer, Penobscot County, Maine (Findagrave.com).
- xxii “Isle au Haut, Late ‘90s,” *Fishermen’s Voice*, Vol. 15, No.7, July 2010, pp. 1–2. See <http://www.fishermensvoice.com/archives/0710BackThen.html>.
- xxiii Howard I. Chapelle, *American Small Sailing Craft* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1951), 70–77.