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## **THE CARVETH and the BULLOCK**

### **Having Nothing to Do With the Dining Table or the Roast Beef of Old England**

THE *FLORA CARVETH* was always a cheerful ship. If she had been christened in the eighteenth century she might have been called the Willing Maid or the Friendly Flora.

In contrast, her reputed twin, the *L.D. Bullock*, was saturnine. The pair were built down in the Bay of Quinte, possibly at Mill Point and probably from Jack Tait's chalk marks.

The Bullock family, which contributed a name for the second schooner, were Brighton descendants of Col. Richard Bullock, of the old 41st Regiment, who was at the capture of Detroit in 1812, and who rallied the British forces which failed to take Fort Stephenson, Ohio, for the retreat to Burlington Heights. He was also at the capture of Fort Niagara in 1813, the burning of Buffalo, and the recapture of Fort Erie. He settled at the Carrying Place, near Brighton. His son, also a colonel, lived in the old house, still standing, and occupied by Ray Freeman, on the way down to Presqu'isle Point. It has a cell for prisoners in its basement, and was used to hold American prisoners of war, being marched to Kingston via the Carrying Place, or rebel prisoners in 1837.

The Bullock brothers of Brighton, grandsons of the old 1812er, owned the schooner *Primrose*. After they had the *L.D. Bullock* built they used what was left of her to build the fatal *Blanche*, which disappeared one night with Capt. Johnny Henderson, of Cat Hollow, and all his crew.

Sailors spoke of the *Bullock* and the *Carveth* as twins, but they were launched a year apart, in 1873 and 1874 respectively. Though alike they were not identical. The *Carveth*, first built, was five feet longer, two and a half feet narrower and four inches deeper than the *Bullock*. The latter was 110 feet long, 26 feet 5 inches beam and 8 feet 5 inches deep in the hold, and registered 208 tons. The *Carveth* registered 190, and you can figure her dimensions by addition and subtraction. They are mentioned to emphasize the mythical character of the twinship, which old sailors are fond of claiming.

They were plumb-stemmed, fullcheeked, straight in the sheer, lofty in rig, clean in the run, and clinkers to sail. We chased the *Bullock* all the way from Oswego to Toronto, once, in the *Vienna*, with the *Oliver Mowat* and *Dauntless* and *E. A. Fulton* chasing us. The *Bullock* led the fleet until she had to take in booms and white blocks and mastheads were the general fashion in our lake fleet.

Her twin, the *Flora Carveth*, was white most of her life, although she too was black when I first saw her. This was on Coghill's drydock at the old mouth of the Don, in 1891 or 1892, after she had been ashore somewhere all winter. She had her bumps like the *Bullock*, but always came

up smiling. She was the pride of Port Whitby when she was one of the little fleet owned by those north shore harbormasters who were in the grain business—McLelland of Darlington, Guy of Oshawa, and Galbraith of Whitby.

Perhaps it was the white paint that made the *Carveth* cheerful; she was white, with a red beading, green coveringboard, and lead-colored bottom, when she left the drydock after her overhaul, and she was always kept that way. Little enough paint she got in her last seasons, after the owners decided to sell her. They were business men first, last and always, and they saw that her days as a dividend payer were done. She needed a big crew for her size. She could carry 400 tons of coal, but she had the mainboom of a 700-tonner. And needed as big a crew.

Capt. Steve Taylor, who sailed her at the last, was kept alive by the ship's cheerfulness. He needed it, for his health was not good, owners were urgent, and freights were poor.

About the last trip she made she was lying in Whitby or Darlington, and the resident owner told Steve to pay off and tie her up, for there was no freight offering. About the time the last fired sailor should be aboard the train homeward bound for Lakeport or Kingston or Port Hope, the owner came back with the news that there was a load of coal in Oswego for Toronto, if the *Carveth* could get down the lake in time.

"What'll I use for crew?" demanded Steve. "And what'll I use for wind? It's a flat calm and not a breath in sight, nor a man to ship nearer than Port Hope."

"Such questions," said the owner politely, "are what we pay captains to answer."

The *Carveth's* mate, who had not yet started for his home in Rednersville, volunteered to recapture the crew or get another one if the owner would lend him his horse and buggy, and so vanished.

Five hours later the footsore Stephen, who had had to walk all the way from the lake front, found his mate in the bar of a tavern on the Kingston road, cold sober and completely surrounded by a convivial group of ex-*Carveth* sailormen. He had picked them up by ones and twos, and had reduced them to a state of willingness to ship again; all except the cook, who was the wife of one of the crew, and was having a famous tete-a-tete with the landlady, with whom she had been parked during negotiations.

After everybody, including the horse, had had another drink or two, the overladen outfit started for the harbor, miles down the dusty road. There was still not a breath stirring when they reached the schooner, but the fly, the long thin cone of crimson bunting at the maintopmast head, was tailing out lakewards, indicating an offshore draught in the higher altitudes.

Somehow they got the *Carveth* out of the piers and into the lake, with the lower sails on her. The crew had to be propped up at the pinracks to pull on the halliards, for they had been hoisting nothing but their elbows ever since the payoff at noon. By the time the mainsail was set they all fell down in a heap around the capstan and couldn't get up.

There was still no wind. The mate urged the captain, whose health was really poor, to

turn in, promising to call him at the first need.

Next morning the captain, much refreshed, put his head out of the forward door of the cabin. The sheets were off to the rigging, showing a favoring breeze from astern. The schooner was rushing along quietly over a smooth sea. There was not a ripple except what she made, for the high breeze had not yet descended to the water, but she was stepping like a steamboat. Around the capstan the recumbent mariners still recumbed. The mate, fresh washed and shaved, walked the weather deck, casting an eye aloft now and then to the fly, stiff as a red hot poker in the blue sky. He was chewing on the last of the cigars which had been his portion of the innumerable rounds of treats at the hotel bar.

“Why didn’t you call me?” demanded Stephen from the doorway.

“No need. All I had to do was to give her sheet.”

“Who’s at the wheel?”

“Same fellow that steered all night.”

“Who’s that?”

“Beckett.”

“New hand? Did you ship him uptown with that gang piled around the capstan?”

“No, shipped him on board.”

“Talk sense. Where d’ye figure we are?”

“Few miles out of Oswego. The *Charley Ferris* is moving out of the piers now to pick us up.”

“Geeroosalum!” shouted Taylor. “Ye mean to say this schooner’s made the whole trip in the night, with me in bed and those bums dead to the world and nobody but you in the watch?”

“Don’t forget Beckett at the wheel.”

“He’s a dam’ good man,” coincided Capt. Taylor, “though you shouldn’t ought to of hired him besides this helpless crowd. You know how the owners are on expenses. But us off Oswego already! Geeroosalum!”

“Have a look at him,” said the mate. “His wake’s as straight as a chalkline.”

Capt. Taylor walked aft through the cabin and emerged via the companion-hatch at the after end, near the binnacle. The wheel was empty. The schooner was steering herself. Had been all night. A loop of line (a becket, to the initiated) had been slipped over the lower wheel spoke by the mate, when he got her on her course, and it had held the schooner there for eight hours. The *Flora Carveth* was like that. Willing Maid. So was her twin, the *L.D. Bullock*. But she might have been christened Sob Sister.

“Billy Redner,” said Capt. Taylor to his mate. “You ought to have all the freight she’ll

earn this trip. Ask your friend Mr. Becket to shake her up to kill her headway, or she'll walk into Oswego before we're ready. Then dowse the capstan with a bucket of water, and see if those corpses can come to life long enough to get sail off her when the *Charley Ferris* gets alongside and gives us a line."

The next I saw of the *Flora Carveth* was her tall topmasts lying on trestles in Fair Haven. The north shore grain dealers found a purchaser for her just after her solo flight to Oswego. She had been sold down the river to become a tow-barge. Wm, Q. Stobo, Quebec, was her registered owner in 1925. The last seen of her she was coming up the St. Lawrence behind an Amherstburg tug, loaded scuppers deep. And still cheerful.