

The New York Sloop

The most important of the sloop-rigged small-boat types used in the fisheries was the New York sloop, which had a style of hull and rig that influenced the design of both yachts and work-boats for over thirty years. The New York boats were developed sometime in the 1830's, when the centerboard had been accepted. The boats were built all about New York Bay, particularly on the Jersey shore. The model spread rapidly, and, by the end of the Civil War, the shoal centerboard sloop of the New York style had appeared all along the shores of western Long Island Sound, in northern New Jersey, and from thence southward into Delaware and Chesapeake waters. In the postwar growth of the southern fisheries, during the 1870's and 80's, this class of sloop was adopted all along the coasts of the South Atlantic states and in the Gulf of Mexico; finally, the boats appeared at San Francisco. The model did not become very popular, however, east of Cape Cod.

The New York sloop was a distinctive boat—a wide, shoal centerboarder with a rather wide, square stern and a good deal of dead rise, the midsection being a wide, shallow V with a high bilge. The working sloops usually had a rather hard bilge; but in some it was very slack, and a strongly flaring side was used. Originally, the ends were plumb, and the stem often showed a slight tumble home at the cutwater. V-sterns and short overhanging counters were gradually introduced in the 1850's, particularly in the boats over 25 feet in length on deck. Round sterns were rather popular in large sloops, after 1858. Most of the old boats had sawn frames, single futtocks in the topsides, and plank keels with a short skeg. However, the planked deadwood was not uncommon and appeared in some boats in the 1850's, if not earlier.

The rig was a simple jib and mainsail with a moderately long gaff and a very long boom to which the foot of the sail was laced. A very large jib was set on a long, hogged-down, plank bowsprit. The mast was rather well forward in the early boats, but as time passed it was moved aft somewhat. The early sloops usually had a marked rake in the mast, but this was decreased, and after the Civil War the mast became nearly plumb and the gaffs longer. Most of the boats under 25 feet had no shrouds and only a single headstay.

The emphasis on yacht racing in New York Bay in the late 1840's and in the early 50's attracted attention to the small working-sloops. These boats were very fast sailers and very weatherly. The model was taken in hand by yacht-builders, who gradually evolved a racing model, in which the bilges were high and thin and the sides flared. The lines forward were very sharp and the run rather short and often fine. The boats were given enormous rigs; to keep them on their feet in a fresh breeze required sandbag ballast, which had to be piled on the weather rail. They were out-and-out racing machines and showed great speed in smooth water; they became known as "sandbaggers," and there was much racing for large stakes among them. The largest were about 28 feet long and the smallest of the popular classes were 20 feet. The lines of these boats very closely resembled the modern racing dinghy, except that the sandbaggers usually were beamier in proportion to length and could carry more sail. From this class of racing boat, the New York sloop model spread to larger craft, and by the 1870's it was considered the "national type" of yacht. It retained its popularity until late into the 1880's, when a deeper and heavier model became fashionable for a while.

Work-boats of the New York model were usually between 18 and 36 feet on deck. They were built very extensively on Long Island, in northern New Jersey, and along the lower reaches of the Hudson. When a particularly fast work-boat came out, it was usual for the boat to be purchased by a sportsman and converted to racing. Normally, however, the work-boats were much more burdensome and seaworthy than the "improved" type represented by the fast sandbagger. The work-boats under 26 feet did not carry a sloop rig all the year round; the jib-and-mainsail rig was really a "summer rig" in early days. In the early fall, many boats took out the masts and removed the plank bowsprit, under which, and well up in the eyes of the boat, there was a second mast hole and a step. The mast was placed in this, and using the sloop mainsail, the boat became a cat. This originally produced a smaller spread of canvas and a "winter rig," which was replaced

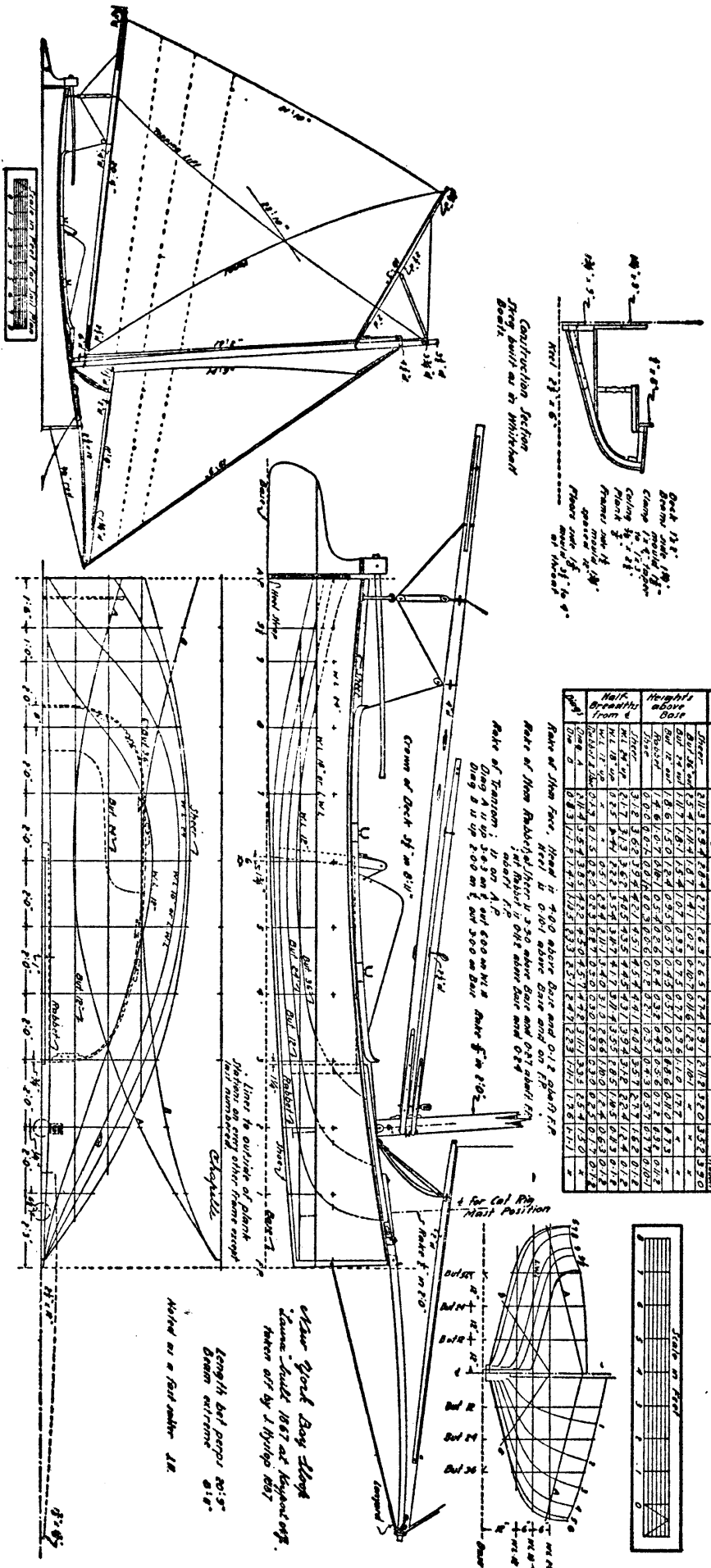
with the jib-and-mainsail rig in the late spring. In some of the smaller hulls, under 20 feet on deck, the cat rig was permanent, the jib never being used. Such boats were in existence before 1845 and were probably a natural development, once the centerboard came into use in small craft in New York Bay. There was really no difference between a cat-rigged and a sloop-rigged boat in model, and the two must be considered as one type.

Figure 94 shows a good example of the small New York workboat with the mast-position for the cat rig. This sloop was built in 1868 at Keyport, N.J., for oystering and line fishing. She was a very fast boat, and her lines were taken off by Hyslop when she became a yacht in her old age. The boats of this class usually had more sheer than a sandbagger, particularly forward. The rockered keel had been rather common as early as 1850, though many workboats and most of the sandbaggers appear to have had straight keels. The boat shown had sawn frames, but by her time steam-bent timbers were in fashion and the construction followed that of the Whitehall in principle. The sloops were built both lap-strake and carvel, the latter build predominating.

The small New York working-sloop was half-decked and had a large cockpit fitted with a U-shaped bench around the sides and across the stem. This, with the boat's relatively great beam, made a roomy hull well suited to work in protected waters and for pleasure sailing. Boats over 28 feet were deep enough to be fitted with a cuddy, and the fashion at New York after the Civil War was to make both the cuddy-sides and the cockpit coamings of vertical tongue-and-groove staving, the whole in an oval shape in plan view. The small working-sloop was an excellent boat for protected waters, and, until "improved" into an unstable racing machine, was a sensible and trustworthy craft.

The New York sloop had a long boom which overhung the counter and would not permit the crew, while standing on deck, to pass the reef earing when the boat was close-hauled on the wind. To accomplish this very necessary chore in working-sloops and cats, the reef-pendants were kept rove off. A line was spliced into each reef cringle in the leech of the sail and each pendant rove through a roller or dumb sheave in a long cleat on the side of the boom and from thence inboard to suitable cleats on the boom within reach from deck or cockpit. In large sails, more power was obtained by having the standing end secured in a cleat on the opposite side of the boom by a stop-knot. From there, the pendant rove through the reef cringle and from thence as before. The outermost reef points could be reached in the work-boats because the rake of the leech was great enough to shorten the foot of the sail a good deal as it was reefed. The experienced sloop sailor tucked in a reef before it blew so hard that he would be in difficulty. If caught in a sudden squall the gaff sail could be reduced very easily and quickly by dropping the peak of the gaff. A light vang to the head of the gaff was a standard piece of gear in working sloops and cats and gave control of the gaff when the peak had been dropped. The only precaution required was to make the gaff jaws and its jaw rope so that the peak could be dropped without damaging either.

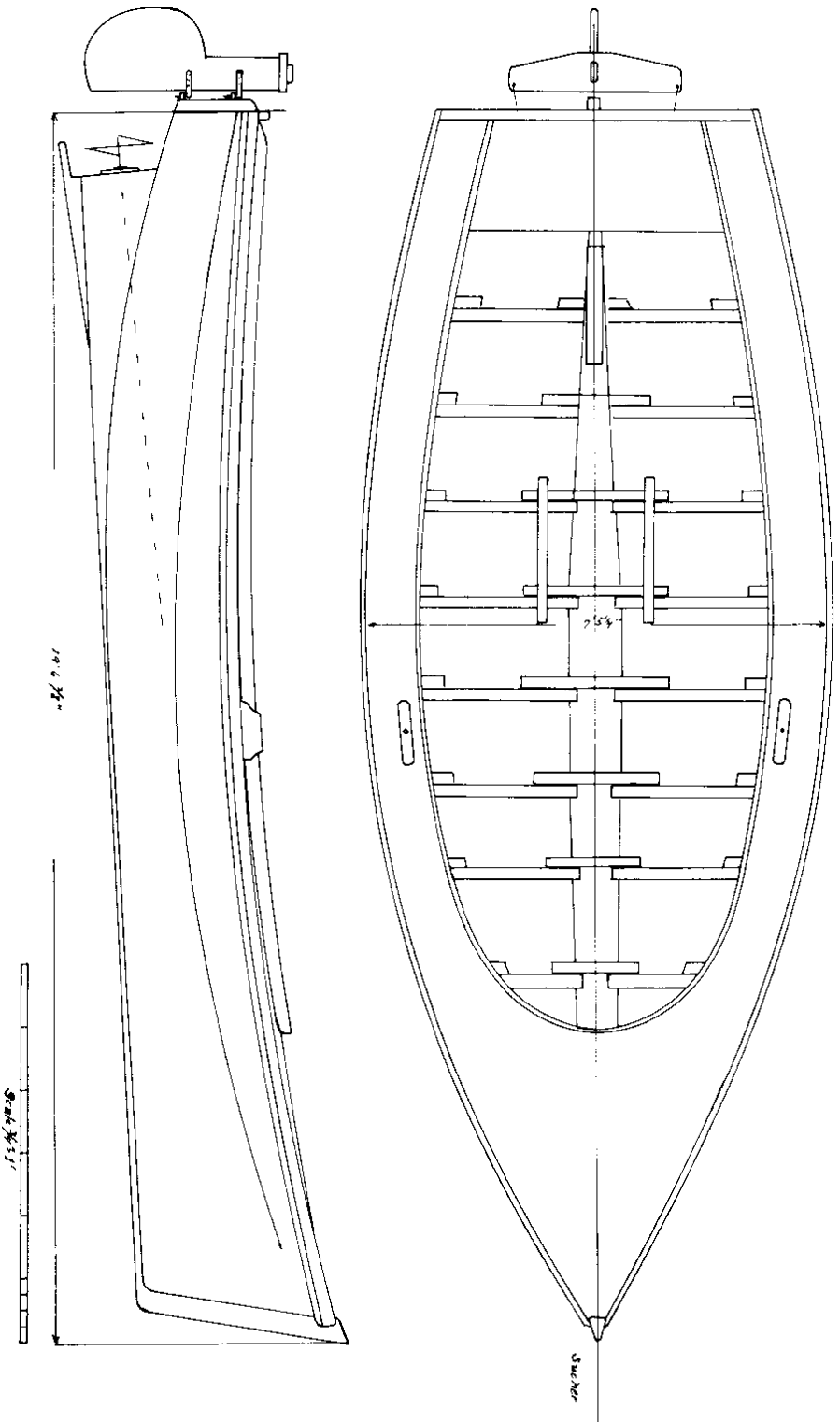
The New York sloop, and the cat-rigged boat of the same model, have come into great disrepute. They are claimed to have been very dangerous craft and prone to capsize. In truth, the model is not as dangerous as many of the modern small centerboarders of the dinghy model, with the present lofty rigs. The New York model was one that suffered from over-canvassing when the type was adapted to yachting, with the sandbagger the most extreme case. The cruising-racer of the 1870's and 80's was almost as bad. Inspection of the sail plans of such craft in *Forest & Stream* magazine and in contemporary yachting books shows the rigs to have been out of all proportion to the requirements of seamanlike design. The limited range of stability in any shoal centerboarder had been wholly disregarded in order to obtain high speed in the smooth water and light winds that mark most summer weather on the Atlantic seaboard. In squalls, or gales, the huge sail areas became uncontrollable and capsizes occurred. The racing sailor has too often forgotten that no small-boat type and no rig can be carried to extremes without danger, once it begins to blow.



Offsets in Feet Inches & Eighths to outline of plank

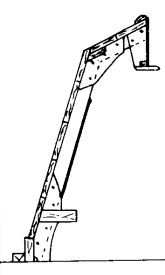
Station	Beam	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40													
0	21'0"	20'6"	20'2"	19'8"	19'4"	19'0"	18'6"	18'2"	17'8"	17'4"	17'0"	16'6"	16'2"	15'8"	15'4"	15'0"	14'6"	14'2"	13'8"	13'4"	13'0"	12'6"	12'2"	11'8"	11'4"	11'0"	10'6"	10'2"	9'8"	9'4"	9'0"	8'6"	8'2"	7'8"	7'4"	7'0"	6'6"	6'2"	5'8"	5'4"	5'0"	4'6"	4'2"	3'8"	3'4"	3'0"	2'6"	2'2"	1'8"	1'4"	1'0"	6"	2"	0"

Fig. 94. New York Bay model and rig of small working-sloop, using both sloop and cat rig.

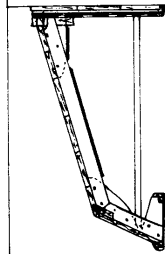


SKIPJACK NO. 18B896
 19 1/2" x 75" x 23"
 Lines from J.S. Part I Museum
 Bufile near Jacksonville, Fla. 1871 AM.

Small Northwrt Skipjack showing shape of cockpit and coaming.



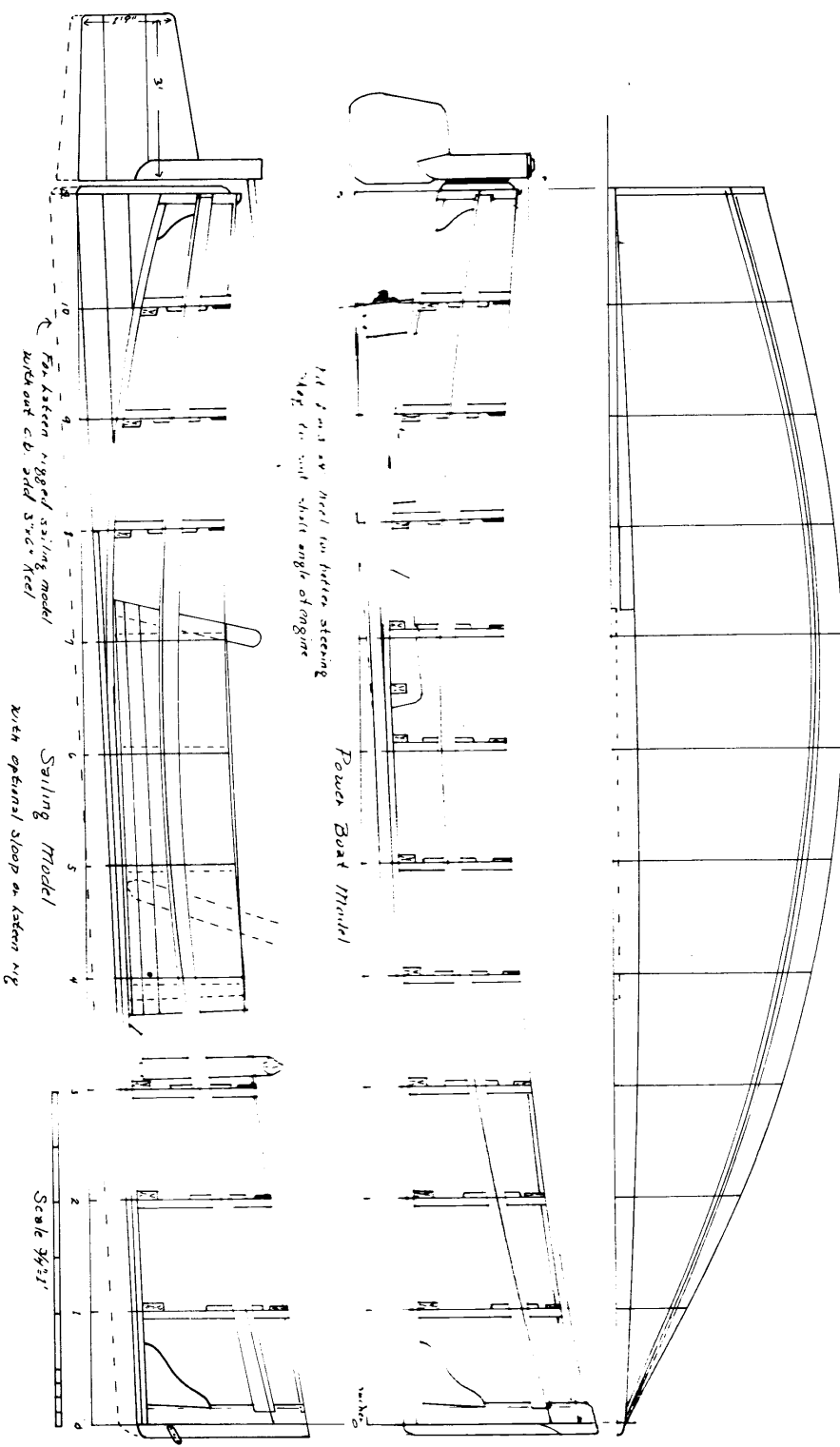
Side and bottom plank $\frac{3}{8}$ " 1" x 18" stock. Fasten with $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 8" screws or boat nails
 Side and bottom frames 2" x 2" oak. Gussies $\frac{3}{4}$ " oak or $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood. Fasten with $\frac{1}{4}$ " galv bolts
 Chins $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" x 4" oak. Floors 2" stock with $\frac{1}{4}$ " galv bolts. Stem liner $\frac{1}{4}$ " oak Pine, or fir. Stem face
 4" x 3" for ward end tapered. Stern and transom knees side 4". Quarter knees $\frac{1}{2}$ " stock
 Keel batten $\frac{1}{4}$ " - 2" x 12" tapered. Deck beams $\frac{3}{4}$ " oak. Decking $\frac{3}{8}$ " plywood or $\frac{1}{2}$ " plank
 Engine beds for power boat model 3" x 4" stock to suit engine. Comings oak - height to suit
 Power boat model may be lengthened
 2' to 6' by adding extra frames between
 Sta # 5 and 7
 C.B. for sleep model sides $\frac{1}{2}$ " with $\frac{1}{4}$ " galv dirts
 C.B. case 1" plywood. Base log $\frac{1}{2}$ " oak. Head
 ledges 2" x 4" backing beams 2" x 4"
 Rudder 2" cheeks $\frac{3}{4}$ "



Station	5	10	4	1	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
STERN	2-10-6	3-9-4	3-9-4	3-7-0	2-7-2	3-7-4	2-6-4	2-9-6	3-0-2	3-3-3	3-6-0	3-0-0
CHINE	2-3-6	1-11-4	2-6-4	1-5-4	0-6-4	1-5-4	1-6-0	1-4-0	1-11-6	1-3-6	2-9-2	3-3-6
TRUNK	1-7-4	1-1-6	0-9-2	0-7-0	0-6-4	0-9-0	0-7-6	0-9-0	0-9-6	0-10-4	0-11-2	1-0-4
KEEL	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0	0-2-0
CHINE	3-2-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0
CHINE	2-10-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0	3-4-0

Lines to inside of plank

"NORTHERN" TYPE SKIPJACK
 22' x 8'3"
 Construction Details



Fit pins in keel in after steering
 May be suit shaft angle of engine

Fasten rigged sailing model
 with oak C.B. and 3" x 6" keel

Sailing Model
 with optional sleep on stern rig

Scale 3/4" = 1'

Plate 4 Construction details for an old-style 22' sailing skipjack

