

SEUTE DEERN

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Described as a 4 masted barque in Gibbons Stamp Monthly, May 2003 there seems to be a bit of a mix up regarding the rig of this vessel because she was either a 4 masted schooner or a 3 masted barque !

During the First World War the timber ship building yards in America were turning out large numbers of vessels of which some 300 were 4, 5, or 6 masted schooners.

One of these was the 4 master **ELIZABETH BANDI** of 757 tons, launched in 1919 by the Gulfport Shipbuilding Co. of Mass. for the Marine Coal Co. of New Orleans.

The schooners first voyage was to Bahia, Brazil with timber, but halfway there she was making so much water that she was obliged to put into Bridgetown where she remained for a week. Soon after she resumed her voyage the master disappeared overboard and she once again put in for harbour whereupon the entire crew, officers as well as men rowed ashore and vanished.

By the time a new crew arrived it was only the timber cargo which was keeping her afloat and it was found that her hull and decks were riddled with marine worm. The holes were plugged and the **ELIZABETH BANDI** reached her destination at last; the return trip to Philadelphia was managed with the pumps keeping the water at bay and most of her underwater planking as well as the rudder had to be replaced. Despite this she still leaked badly during her next voyage, this time with coal to the West Indies - the crew wanted to abandon her but with the help of a revolver the Captain managed to "persuade" them to carry on and she eventually reached her destination but worm damage dogged her for the next six years until she was sold in 1925 to Walter E. Ried of Bath, Maine under whose flag she stayed under until 1931 when she passed to Finnish owners.

For the journey across the Atlantic she loaded timber in Nova Scotia for Liverpool. Upon arrival there was some difficulty in meeting the crew wages and she remained in Liverpool under restraint until March 1932

when she sailed for Raumo and was renamed **BANDI** and traded without trouble for the next seven years - the cold waters of the Baltic had evidently killed off the worm infestation.

In November 1938 she was bought by John T. Essberger of Hamburg who converted her, at great expense, to a 3 masted barque renamed **SEUTE DEERN** (Sweet GIRL).

Following her conversion she displaced 1025 tons and her overall length was 240ft.. she was designed to carry cargo as well as serving as a cadet training ship. **SEUTE DEERN** made her maiden voyage on June 24th 1939 and that year carried several cargoes of timber in the Baltic as well as salt.

Salt was loaded on December 11th 1939 but the ice set in and she was unable to sail until the following spring, cadet training, however continued on board as well as ship maintenance and she got away on March 19th 1940 and continued trading in the Baltic for a short time but with the war and ever increasing risk she became restricted to training cruises in Griefwalder Bay.

At the end of the War she was scheduled to be blown up but somehow she escaped this fate and in 1946 was towed to Travenmunde and re rigged but she never resumed sail training and was used as a hostel for the homeless. In April 1954 she was sold to serve as a Youth Hostel in Delfzyl, Holland under the name **PIETER ALBRECHT KOERTS** and there she remained for 12 years.

Now lying in Bremerhavn **SEUTE DEERN** is suffering the ravages of dry rot in her hull and decks and an appeal has been launched to save her. She is probably the sole survivor of the 300 or more big schooners built at this time - there were Two hulks until a few years ago but the masters Luther Little (b1917) and Hesper (b1918) fell apart in Maine recently.

Sources: Sail Training & Cadet Ships Underhill 1954. International Register of Historic Ships. "Windjammer" magazine of Mariners International,