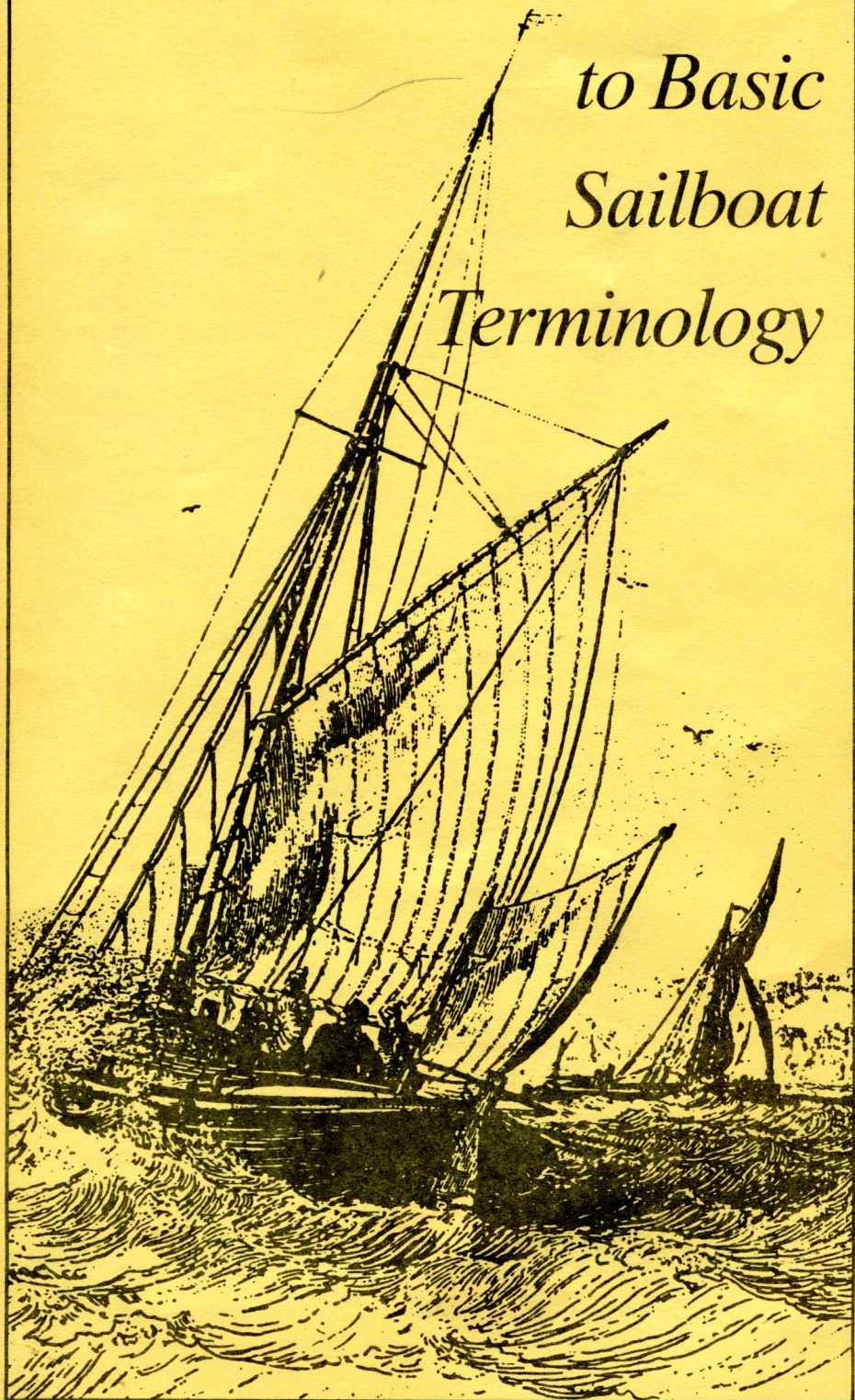
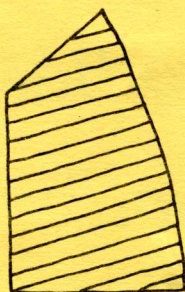


*A Guide  
to Basic  
Sailboat  
Terminology*





# Sail Nomenclature



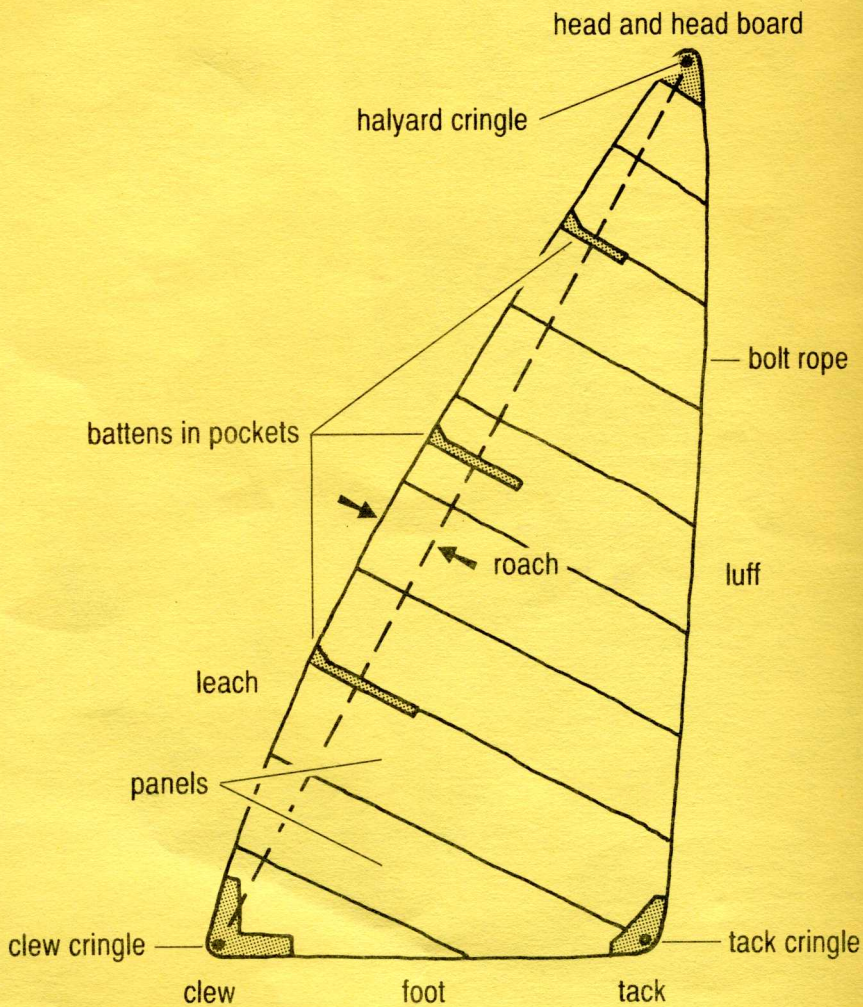
gaff sail,  
horizontal cut with roach



gaff sail,  
vertical cut, no roach

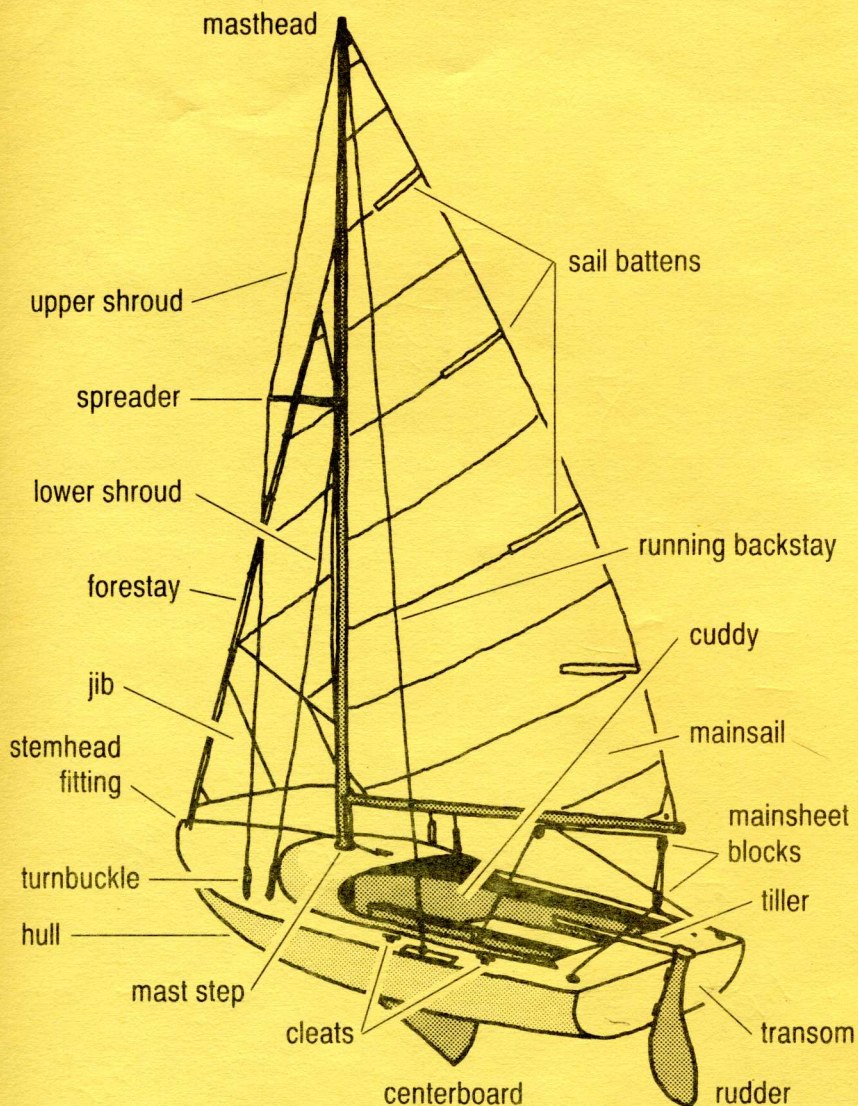


jib or staysail,  
mitre cut

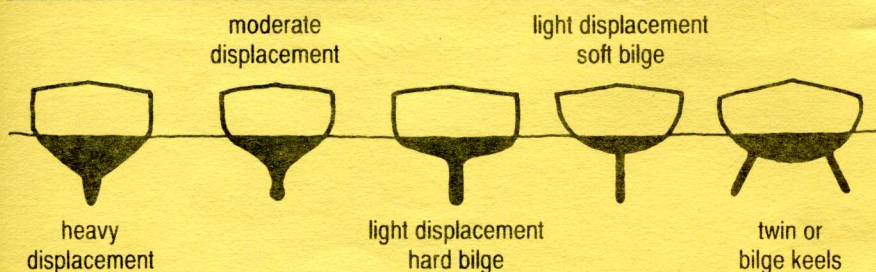




# Parts of a Typical Daysailer

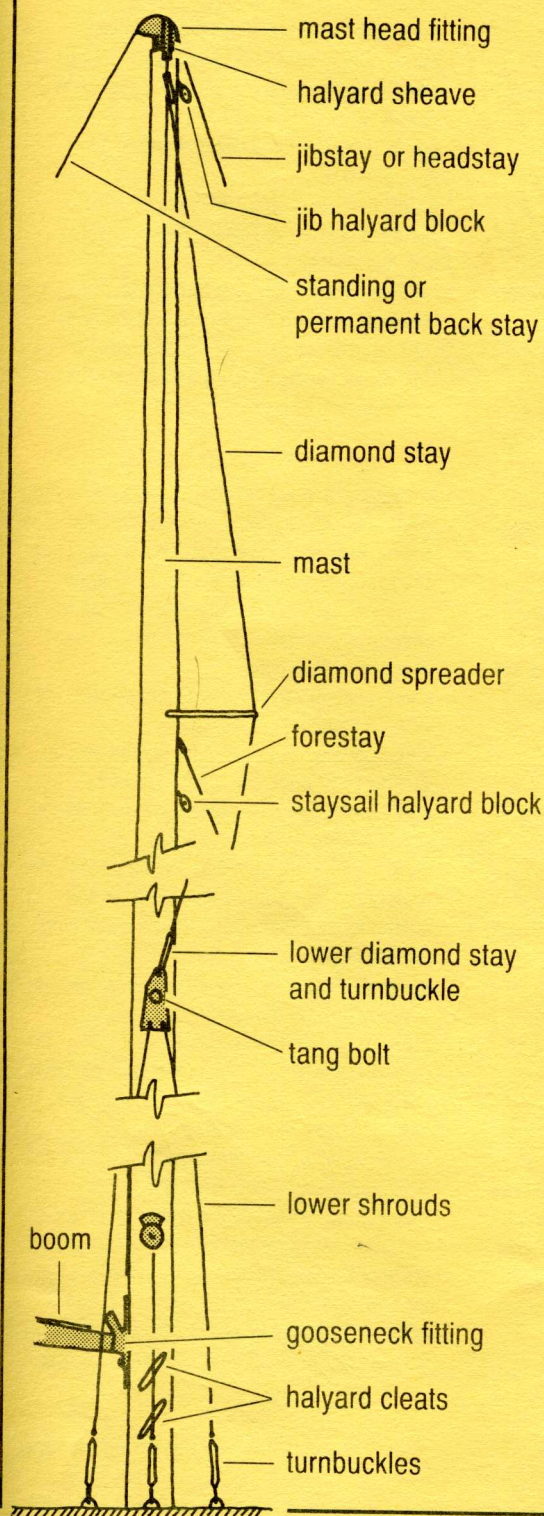


## Fixed Keel Midship Sections





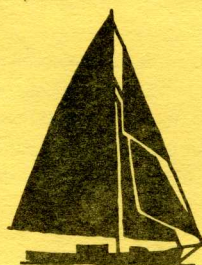
# Spar Fittings and Rigging



catboat



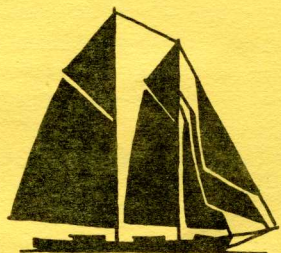
sloop (knockabout)



cutter



ketch



schooner



# A Glossary of Terms

## A - E

**aft-** toward the stern; behind.  
**beam-** width of a boat.  
**beat-** to make progress windward by tacking.  
**belay-** to fasten a rope to a suitable fitting such as a cleat or timber.  
**bilge-** part of ships bottom curving in towards the keel.  
**boom-** horizontal spar at lower edge of a sail.  
**bow-** forward, or front end of a vessel.  
**broach-** to fall into a sea trough; to be brought suddenly broadside to the sea.  
**burthen-** measure of a vessel's cargo capacity in tons; unrelated to weight of vessel.  
**centerboard-** the sailing gear used to aid a boat in sailing into the wind. Can be drawn up into a watertight case.  
**chafe-** to rub the surface of a mast or yard.  
**chine-** the conjunction of the sides and bottom of a vessel whose frames are made up of straight timbers.  
**deadrise-** construction style in which bottom frames form a vee-shape in cross-section.  
**draft-** depth of water required to float a vessel.  
**dredge-** a type of fishing gear dragged over the ocean bottom to catch shellfish.

## F - L

**flare-** upward and outward curved shape from the waterline of forward part of vessel.  
**flatbottom-** construction style resulting in straight, or flat from side-to-side.  
**gaff-** the spar which supports and extends the upper edge of a gaff sail.  
**helm-** the apparatus which steers a vessel.  
**heel-** action of vessel leaning over due to wind pressure, heavy seas, or shifting cargo.  
**jib-** a triangular shaped fore-and-aft sail set forward of foremast.  
**jury rig-** a temporary emergency repair made with materials on hand.  
**keel-** main structural member of a vessel forming its backbone to which frames are attached.  
**ketch-** two-masted fore-and-aft rigged vessel in which the fore mast is taller than aft mast.  
**lee-** the side of vessel sheltered from or opposite the wind.  
**leeward-** away from the wind; sheltered.  
**leeway-** sideways drift of vessel to leeward of its course, caused by wind.  
**list-** tilt of vessel to one side or the other.

## M - R

**mainsail-** largest driving sail of a vessel.  
**mast-** upright spar upon which sail is hung.  
**mid-body-** the area of the largest section of a vessel between bow and stern.  
**pitch-** action of a vessels bow falling into trough of wave.  
**point-** to taper a rope's end to a point.  
**planking-** planks or strakes making up the skin of a vessel.  
**rake-** inclination of masts forward or aft.  
**reach-** to sail with the wind before the beam.  
**reef-** area of sail between head and reef bands.  
**rig-** masts, support rigging and sails, and their configuration, of a sailing vessel.

## S - T

**seakindly-** a vessel whose quality of behavior while underway keeps a crew comfortable.  
**seaworthy-** ability of a vessel to survive at sea.  
**schooner-** two-masted fore-and-aft rigged vessel whose fore mast is smaller than aft mast.  
**sheet-** rope or chain used to extend or hold attached sails in place.  
**ship-** to put or receive something aboard ship; to fix something in its place.  
**sink-net-** a type of net set beneath the water.  
**skiff-** a small boat, usually not decked.  
**small craft-** name for vessels normally operating near shore or in inland water.  
**spar-** rigid sail rig member; masts, booms, etc.  
**spritsail-** a four-cornered fore-and-aft sail named for specialized spar (sprit) supporting the sail peak.  
**stem-** leading edge of a vessel which may be raked to provide an overhang.  
**stern-** rear end of a vessel.  
**stiff-** a stable vessel which does not roll easily.  
**tack-** changing course alternately from side to side in a zigzagging maneuver.  
**tender-** a small boat employed to go back and forth to shore from a larger boat.  
**topsail-** sail set above the mainsail.  
**transom-** structure making up a vessel's stern.  
**trawl-** a type of fishing net that is towed through water like a bag.  
**trim-** to distribute weight of crew or load of vessel to its best advantage while underway.

*(glossary continued on back)*



## Glossary (cont.)

### U - Z

**unship-** to remove something from the place it was fixed.

**vessel-** a waterborne craft deriving its buoyancy by means of a shell excluding water from a vacant interior.

**warp-** a towing line for a net pulled through the water.

**weather-** to pass clear windward of a cape, rock, or reef. Sometimes a risky maneuver.

**weatherhelm-** degree to which helm has to be kept windward to prevent a vessel from coming up into the wind.

**weatherliness-** ability of a vessel to sail close to windward.

**well-** box-like device built in a skiff that allows an outboard motor to be mounted within the vessel itself instead of on the transom.

**windward-** side from which wind is blowing.

**yard-** horizontal spar supporting square sail.



### North Carolina Maritime Museum

315 Front Street  
Beaufort, North Carolina 28516

252-728-7317

