

Is there a picture of the ‘*Ticonderoga*’?

Mary Kruithof, July 2010

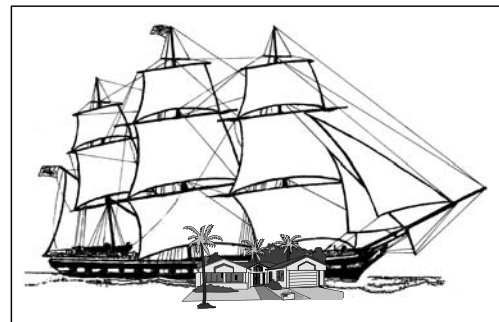
From time to time I get enquiries about pictures of the *Ticonderoga*. “Is there a picture of it in *Fever Beach*?” “Is there a picture of it anywhere?”

The short answers are “No, there is no picture in the book” and “No, I don’t believe there is any authenticated and accessible picture available elsewhere either”.

At the time of writing *Fever Beach* (first published in 2002), I searched high and low in US, British and Australian sources without being able to locate any authentic picture of the *Ticonderoga*. Subsequent (and ongoing) research has confirmed that no authenticated images of this ship seem to be available.

However, the book *Fever Beach* does contain sketches of the layout of the decks, sleeping arrangements, etc, based on material from a number of official, authentic sources. It also contains a reproduction of a lithograph of the ship *Alnwick Castle*. Although this was built some seven years after the *Ticonderoga*, an historian at the Maritime Museum in Sydney told me she believes it is very similar in appearance to what the *Ticonderoga* would have looked like.

From authentic descriptions it is clear that the *Ticonderoga* was a large and imposing three-masted clipper. She was some 51½ metres long, 11½ metres across, and 7 metres deep, dimensions made more meaningful by a comparison with your average suburban house. (The sketch used here is based on the *Anwick Castle*, but using the *Ticonderoga*’s dimensions).



These data at least provide some starting point when looking at pictures purporting to be of the *Ticonderoga*.

I have come across a number of displays, publications and web sites that have sketches of ships labelled *Ticonderoga*, but these are mostly relatively recent artist’s impressions, and don’t really match the descriptions of the ship - some of them don’t even have the right number of masts and others have been used as illustrations of other ships as well.

There is a ‘tempting’ picture on the cover of an American book *The Pilgrimage of the Ticonderoga* by George L Allen, published in 1880, but this concerns the USS *Ticonderoga*, commissioned in 1878, some 6 years after ‘our’ *Ticonderoga* was wrecked on the coast of India.



One particular image (shown at left) purporting to be of the *Ticonderoga* crops up quite a lot in various places. As far as I know, it first appeared in the Melbourne newspaper *The Argus* of 17 June 1939, i.e. more than 65 years after ‘our’ *Ticonderoga* ceased to exist. It has not been authenticated and is likely to be an artist’s impression based on descriptions and/or pictures of similar ships. How closely it resembles the *Ticonderoga*, nobody really knows. To me she just doesn’t look big and imposing enough, but that is of course just a subjective opinion.

In 2002, a commemorative plaque was unveiled at Point Nepean (entrance to the harbour of Melbourne, Australia), to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the *Ticonderoga* and the establishment of the Quarantine Station. The plaque includes an image of a ship labelled as the *Ticonderoga*. It is almost certainly based on the *Argus* picture, but has had to be simplified a little for the artwork technique used. For one thing, this has resulted in the mizzen (third) mast all but disappearing, and the body of the ship just doesn't look quite right (another subjective observation!)



When I think about the *Ticonderoga*, I think mostly of the people in her, and the conditions they endured. When I do want to envision the ship from the outside, I find the lithograph of the *Alnwick Castle* more satisfying than any of the other images I have come across and this is one reason why I have included it in *Fever Beach* and why I have used a sketch version of it for the chapter headings.

There is a tantalising coda to this story. I recall that at the 2002 commemorative event mentioned above, someone showed a picture of "the *Ticonderoga* moored at a dock in New Orleans in 1850". This is plausible: in that year, a Father Thomas Hore took a large group of Irish migrants from Liverpool to New Orleans in three ships, one of which was the *Ticonderoga*. The person who had the picture was not forthcoming about its origin, and I can't remember who he was. I corresponded with the Nepean Historical Society, but they had no information on the matter. There is plenty of information about Father Hore and his group of migrants in books and on the Internet, but so far I haven't been able to find any images of the ships in which they travelled.