

ABOUT THE MARCO POLO

On the grey, cloudy 17th day of April, 1851, emerged a graceful and unmistakable sailing ship from the notorious shipyard of James Smith at Marsh Creek in Saint John, New Brunswick. This large and soon-to-be-prominent ship was called the "Marco Polo."

The Marco Polo was of a unique design combining the underwater body of a clipper, with the midship sections of a cargo carrier. She was one of the first New Brunswick-built ships whose frame consisted of tamarack and pitch pine with planking laden of oak.

Her maiden voyage, under the command of Captain William Thomas of Saint John, saw the delivery of fine New Brunswick timber cross the Atlantic to Liverpool in just fifteen days. The rest, as they say, is "history." She continued to trek the treacherous waters of the chilly Atlantic as a cargo vessel until July 4, 1852 when the Marco Polo re-emerged from the dock as a luxurious passenger vessel carrying passengers in record time (5 months and 21 days) from Liverpool to circumnavigate the world.

"The Fastest Ship in the World" held her world-class rank for the next 32 years until that fateful 25th day of July, 1883, when she came to her final resting place, the silent and subdued red-sand beaches of Cavendish, Prince Edward Island. However irrevocable and aimless her passing seemed, her history bred its own legacy. And the legend of the Marco Polo lives on.

A 22' reproduction of the ship can be seen on the second level of Market Square outside the entrance to the library. It overlooks the Saint John Harbour.

A half-size replica, the [Marco Polo II](#), is currently being constructed. Its anticipated launch date is in the fall of 2009.