

Wreck: Havana



Halifax Harbour – Point Pleasant Area

Wrecked: April 26, 1906

The Event

On the night of April 26, 1906, the steam schooner *Havana* was lying at anchor in Halifax Harbour when she was struck amidships by the outbound coasting steamer *Strathcona*. With most of the *Havana's* crew asleep below, only the watch on deck witnessed the approach.

The impact was decisive. The hull was opened, flooding was immediate, and within approximately ten minutes the *Havana* slipped beneath the surface.

No lives were lost.

The Ship

- Auxiliary steam schooner (three-masted)
- Built: 1891, Hantsport, Nova Scotia
- Length: ~181 ft
- Tonnage: 471 tons
- Wooden hull with steam propulsion assist

Typical use:

- Sealing operations
- Coastal and Labrador trade
- General cargo transport

A transitional vessel — combining sail economy with steam reliability.

Why It Was Lost

A harbour collision — not a storm loss.

Primary contributing factors:

- Vessel at anchor (fixed position)
- Outbound steamer maneuvering in confined water
- Limited visibility and control while backing
- Close proximity in an increasingly busy harbour

Unlike offshore wrecks, this was not environmental. It was **proximity and timing**.

The Wreck Event

- *Strathcona* struck *Havana* amidships
- Immediate hull breach and rapid flooding
- Crew evacuated directly to striking vessel
- No opportunity for damage control or recovery

The vessel settled quickly in approximately 15 fathoms (~90 ft). A sudden, controlled sinking — over in minutes.

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The End of the Ship

- No major salvage attempt undertaken
- Vessel considered uneconomical to recover
- Insured loss absorbed

The wreck remained in place within Halifax Harbour, becoming part of the working seabed beneath active vessel traffic. A ship built for work — lost without spectacle.

Diver Notes

- Depth: ~80–90 ft
- Seabed: sand, silt, and ballast
- Visibility: 5–15 ft (variable)

Key features:

- Timber hull remains
- Ballast stone mounds
- Coal remnants
- Partially buried boiler
- Scattered fittings

Conditions:

- Active harbour traffic
- Low visibility potential
- Silt-sensitive bottom

Requires

- Advanced dive planning
- Surface support vessel
- Coordination with harbour traffic

Why This Site Matters

- Linked to Captain James Augustus Farquhar
- Prominent Nova Scotia mariner, salvor, and diver
- Represents transition from sail to steam commerce
- Rare example of a **harbour loss**, not offshore wreck

Final Thought

She survived ice, trade routes, and the North Atlantic.

But in the end, she was not taken by storm— she was lost at anchor, within sight of shore, in ten minutes.

And somewhere below, the sextant that crossed oceans with her still rests in the silt of Halifax Harbour.