

[#51a & 51b]

## ***Clarence S. Bement***

Rig: Iron 3-masted ship

Launch: 1884

End: 1904

Built: Philadelphia by the American Shipbuilding Co.

Dimensions: 259.9' x 40.6' x 23.6'

Tonnage: 1999 tons

These twain appear to be at first glance the same photograph, but in fact they are two separate images. Both were taken at Bristol, but one has a cargo lighter along side, and the other does not. The *Clarence S. Bement* was one of the few iron sailing ships built in the United States, and this ship was not a great success. More expensive to build than wood ships from Maine, American-built iron ships like the *Clarence S. Bement* were also considerably slower. Iron ships generally fouled quicker and with serious effect. There were no tractable anti-fouling paints until well into the twentieth century, so foul bottoms and consequent drag produced very slow sailing. *Clarence S. Bement* was no exception. The ship was notable for its winged white swan figurehead which can be seen to advantage in these two photographs. *Clarence S. Bement* burned out at sea on a voyage laden with coal Newport News to San Francisco in 1904.