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Schooner Days CV (105)
By C.H.J. Snider

Save? or Burn?

The battle over the *Lyman M. Davis* waxes hot, but she should be rescued.

“Highland Beauty” good soul that he or she is, sends a five dollar bill in an envelope addressed to “Schooner Days Telegram” and signs this nom-de-plume under “S.O.S. Lyman M. Davis.

Only that and nothing more.

Now here is a real schooner lover. The writer may be a man or a woman. The pen name commemorates that long slim sharp vessel built in Oakville as a steam yacht and finished for the schooner trade about the time the *Lyman M. Davis* was launched. The *Highland Beauty* was owned by the Quins of Oakville and then for a long time by the Williamses of Kew Beach. She ended at Cape Vincent thirty years ago, striking the breakwater going in with a cargo of grain, Capt. Tommy Williams was long her master, though Capt. John also sailed her out of Toronto; and many a merry party of Y.M.C.A. boys and other lads made holiday trips in her during the summer.

If “Highland Beauty,” the modest anonymous correspondent, will please send an address to Schooner Days. In confidence, he or she will as the legal advertisements say, hear of something to his or her advantaged. The Schooner Days compiler will be in Oyster Bay next week chasing butterflies known as international sailing dinghies, but he’ll be back a week from Monday..

The *Lyman M.* hasn’t been “saved” yet, but neither has she been burned. So far so good. It will not be the fault of Telegram readers if the efforts to preserve this last surviving veteran of the sailing fleet fail.

They shall not fail.

Correspondence by the cord calls for her preservation.

By coincidence her old captain died last week—Capt. John Alexander McCullough of Napanee, aged 66. He was trotting to his first schoolhouse, six year old, when J.P. Arnold built the *Lyman M. Davis* at Muskegon. She was an “old timer” when Capt. McCullough bought her from Graham Brothers of Kincardine, 18 years ago. They had had her in the Lake Huron lumber trade for years, after purchasing her from American owners. Capt. McCullough gave her a very thorough overhaul before bringing her to Lake Ontario. He sold her after some seasons, to her Kingston owner Capt. Daryaw.

The *Davis* was the last vessel Capt. McCullough commanded. After selling her he went into motorboat building at Napanee. Like the *Davis*, he himself was a veteran of the lakes

having sailed in the Schooner *Mary*, later lost with all hands in Lake Ontario, and in the *Snowbird*, long since sunk in the ice in Toronto Bay. He also commanded the sloop *Laura D.* in the bay port grain trade to Kingston, out of the Bay of Quinte, and the schooner *Katie Eccles*, and her twin the *William Jamieson*, and the three-master *J.B. Newlands*, which like the *Davis*, was brought down from Lake Michigan.

All of these are now lost and gone. The *Davis* alone remains to exemplify the vanished types. The *North West*, left at Midland, is a little rebuilt schooner with two engines in her. She was never typical of the lake carriers of the great fleet, though a fine little coaster in her day.

Captain Mackenzie, formerly of the steamer *Algonquin*, says the schooner *White Cloud*, three master, was still intact, but full of water, up near Killarney, four years ago. He may be referring to the *White Oak*, which has since gone to pieces in the vicinity. Mr. Emanuel Hahn brought in to the writer a few spiked and bolts from her only last month. About half of her hull was left, he said in Collins Inlet, on the north shore of Georgian Bay.

So all the old ones are vanishing, and that is what makes it important to save the *Davis*. If she is saved there is nothing to prevent her being re-named to celebrate the occasion; for, to tell the truth, the least attractive feature about her is the name she wears. It is the name of some honorable citizen of the State of Wisconsin, probably, but without significance here. Were she re-christened the *Firesnatched*, or *Rescued* or *Welcome Here*, or *Last Laker*, or *Only One*, or even *Survivor*, it would mean more now.

Many have answered, the SOS appeal, but Major Goudy, the man-with-the-torch, has not yet been persuaded to spare the ship. He must be, somehow. This is what he says:

“It is out of season now, and what I say is strictly my own personal opinion, but every expression I have seen so far is on one side, and it might appear that there is no other side to this affair,” stated D.M. Goudy, manager of attractions, Sunnyside Beach.

“It is no insignificant decision that the owners of the “Lyman M. Davis” are being asked to make when they are asked to refrain from burning the boat. To proceed with the fire means a crowd of much greater than holiday proportions at the beach. Take a look at past experience. The first experiment with this boat burning stunt was made on July 1, 1927, when the *Barbara L.* an old 75 foot yacht, was burned. That night the police estimated there were 75,000 people at the beach, and there were still a large number around at 5 o’clock in the morning.

“In 1929 we burned the “John Hanlan” and “Jasmine” two old ferries. the police said that the *Hanlan* drew over 50,000 and two weeks later the police inspector said that, including the crowds, stretched along the beach out to Etobicoke, up on the King street bank, the Dowling avenue bridge, in High Park tree tops, on the two Canada Steamship Lines ships that were filled and even far away as the Island and Grimsby Beach, there were between 100 and 150 thousand people witnessing the fire. At Sunnyside the place was packed. If any other spectacle has ever drawn crowds like that in Canada I do not

know anything of it.

“In 1930 we burned the old ferry “Clarke Brothers” and in 1931 it was the second last sailing vessel, the *Julia B. Merrill*. Each of these brought the same huge crowds.

“Incidentally, at that time the newspapers drew public attention to the fact that the “Merrill” was the second last schooner remaining, and that the *Lyman M. Davis* was at Kingston. From the storm of protest against burning the ‘Merrill’ I thought that some effort would be made to save the ‘Davis’ before it got into our hands, but nobody else seemed to think about that. I was somewhat surprised this summer to find that the *Davis* was available at a price that we could pay for her.

“The *Davis*, if burned, will make one of the biggest nights, if not the biggest, that Sunnyside Beach has ever had, particularly if the fire is held as a big one-night celebration as part of the city’s centennial. The more sentiment there is attached to a boat, the greater the crowd that turns out to see her finish. In this respect it is apparent that it will be impossible to get another boat with as much public regard as the *Davis*. Her value as a burning spectacle exceeds any other boat that can be secured.

“It is purely a business proposition for Sunnyside Beach. This talk of vandalism is silly. The men who are responsible take no more pleasure out of destroying an article of sentimental value than anyone else. They are even sentimental themselves, and I have often heard my principals say that they hated to see these old boats disappear. I hate it myself, and if it were possible to do so without suffering a loss, I would like to see the *Lyman M. Davis* preserved. My experience with ships is limited to cross-the-lake pleasure boats and troop ships, but I have been an enthusiastic reader of sea stories, and I can sense the feeling of a soul about a ship, where men have lived and laughed and struggled and feared. One has only to visit the *Davis* to feel the atmosphere of lingering memories of other years.

There is another angle also, as was often expressed when we were about to burn the *Julia B. Merrill*.

People said isn’t it just as well to see these grand old-timers go out in a blaze of glory with thousand of people present to pay them homage, as to let them rot on some beach, uncared for and unwatched? At one time there was a custom of shooting a general’s horse at the graveside when the soldier was buried. This is the same idea.

The *Lyman M. Davis* would have been burned this year had it not been for Mayor Stewart’s Intervention. Whether she shall burn next year or be held as a relic of the canvas era on the lake is up to the associated interests at Sunnyside Bach. Personally, I think she makes a wonderful addition to the beach as she rides at her mooring there, but the powers that be must decide whether sentiment is worth more than the actual financial reward.

WHAT CORRESPONDENTS URGE

Burning Indignation

Sir,-I want to add my warm protest to the plan of burning of the Lyman M. Davis. Surely it won't be carried out. One of the most interesting exhibits of the Fair, to many, is the collection of "Old-Time Farm Implements" in the Coliseum, and the Lyman M. Davis would add a most attractive item to the relics of bygone days. Trusting your efforts in its behalf may be successful.

Yours truly
A.S.E.

Clarkson Calls

Sir,-Kindly accept this as my appeal for the preservation of this ship for exhibition purposes. I read in one of your editions of last week a very interesting account of the history of the ship, and I certainly deem it a sacrilege to burn a vessel of this type on the Great Lakes to make a Roman holiday

Sincerely yours
J.B. Biddle
Clarkson, Ont.

Bonfire Substitute

Sir- as one of the many interested readers of Schooner Days column. I have given thought and done some planning re saving the Lyman M. Davis. Made a shank's-mare cruise along the waterfront as a start. In my cruise along the waterfront three ideal locations showed for Col. Alley's ideas. One location is close to the Navy League, the other two extreme east and west boundaries of Exhibition grounds. These are in a way unfinished spots in the vast shoreline improvements, and permit space for placing this schooner, without narrowing the width of line of channel behind the seawall, now much used and enjoyed by all aquatic sports and pleasure-seekers.

My knowledge of the commodore of the Sunnyside amusement fleet permits me to see it no easy task for the champion of silver-tongued coaxers to persuade him to give up a set rule, "Carry out as advertised: never disappoint the public." I have an alternative to offer, which I have confidence can save this schooner with the three link emblem. I have formulated plans for a burning "in effigy" that will give a more spectacular illuminating blaze than any burning yet presented at Sunnyside, and yet not destroy the schooner.

The R.C.Y.C. for years used to finish up the season with a cruise to Oakville and I recall a real blaze kept up for hours, just by willing co-operation work, that probably accounted for some sore backs and muscles next day. There was no derrick on the job, but the way you could stand back and see big semi-rotten pier timbers up-ended and placed in position and stimulated by tar barrels was inspiring. By the way, this was in the last century. How would the muscular development of the present members compare with these old-timers?

There are few yacht clubs in the world the size of the R.C.Y.C, that have as small a number of power boats in its fleet. They have always been sailors, and none has a greater desire to see this schooner saved than the sailor

yacht club members of Toronto. It might entuse younger members to take an interest and show them progress and by inviting U.S.A. yachting clubs to come to Toronto and see them burn up the effigy of the last of their lake-built schooners. This done in effigy can be carried out at a cost less than value of this schooner, and getting U.S.A. interested would ass to the real objective of preserving her.

Art Kemp
348 Queen Street W.

300 per cent and then some

Sir- Congratulations on the stand you are taking to try and preserve the Lyman M. Davis. On sentimental grounds I am with you 100 per cent. As a fight against iconoclasm- and surely the firing of a fine vessel can be classed as the "breaking of an image" I am also with you 100 per cent. On purely material grounds, the saving the schooner for further use along educational lines (to which purpose she could be easily put) I am again with you 100 percent. All this may be poor mathematics, but at least shows genuine enthusiasm for a most admirable cause. May I add that, once you start your subscription list (as I hope you will) I promise my small aid.

Thanks for the opportunity
Tiffy-Bloke

Thank you Mr. Anderson

"Few of these old captain and the boats they commanded remain. Human life must end at death's command, but a staunch old sailing boat may be preserved indefinitely as a memory and an example of water transportation a generation ago. Then why burn the Lyman Davis? Should it destruction by fire be proceeded with, not all who witness the scene will be entertained. There will be few so thoughtless as to enjoy the spectacle of this old vessel disappearing in flames and smoke, with its charred hull sinking below the waters it was wont to ride so proudly. The old Lyman Davis deserves a better fate. Don't burn it at Sunnyside.:

The Globe

Another

Sir-Please add my name to the protest of proposed burning of the Lyman M. Davis at Sunnyside.

A. C. Shayler
Birch Cliff

"Be British" urges Wm. G.

Sir- I can vow that there would be many chaps at my young age that would like to sail on the Lyman M. Davis if she should be kept alive-a wonderful training. Take a look at the old ships in England like the Victory, Why can't we be like them? We could say with pride that we have an old

vessel too. Come on, be British, and be a sportsman. Don't let the old schooner go to Davey Jones locker by burning in her old age. I'll bet it makes many an old salt water sailor's heart tighten up when they think of her burning. They'll tell you. Even ask her mate who has worked on her.

Wm. G.

Rigger's Good Suggestion

Tom Taylor, formerly chief petty officer R.N. and now head of the rigging and sailmaking firm of Tom Taylor and Co., writes:

As a child I was reared amidst sail craft, or seafaring ancestors, and since that have spent a life-time at sea on salt water. Since coming to Canada have been very interested in "Schooner Days" talks and pictures with history and fate of same, and each time I pass Sunnyside and see the Lyman M. Davis, lying there ready to make a spectacle for the fiend of destruction, it causes a lump to rise which needs a lot of swallowing.

I understand this grand old vessel has had a long career of usefulness and is almost the last of her kind to survive and it occurs to me a great sin to destroy her. Her useful days commercially may be over but now that she is so near to the C,N.E. grounds I think it would be far more fitting if she were taken into dock at the Exhibition and preserved as a relic.

The glories of the old sailing ship will still be written long after we are gone, but where will one have to turn to see what those glorious old vessels were like.

The old "Victory" of Nelson fame was moored in Portsmouth harbor for many many years, but of course they will not float forever and this has been realized by the British Admiralty, and today she rests in Portsmouth dockyard, having been taken into an old drydock, shored up and the dock filled in, where she is preserved forever and ever.

Why not put this old vessel into a similar berth at the Exhibition and fill in and build a nautical museum around her?

During Exhibition time her canvas could be set on one or two fine days to give the world an idea as to what sailing ships really looked like.

There are still enough sailors to fit her up, and keep her in shape, which would not be a very expensive proposition.

Yours for preservation

T.H. Taylor