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**By C.H.J. Snider**

## **WHEN THE LAST BARREL BOW WENT TO ONE-YEAR-PORT**

BACK in the winter of 1890 there was built at Kingston, Ont., a largish hooker similar to the barrel-bowed *John Wesley* that was owned by Capt. Billy Lobb, of Prince Edward County, whose history and narrates have been described in former instalments of "Schooner Days." This vessel must have been the last of the barrel-bows as these Bay of Quinte sloops and schooners were called. Perhaps the *Ariadne* of Kingston came later. The *Laura D.* and *Idlewyld* were launched a few years later.

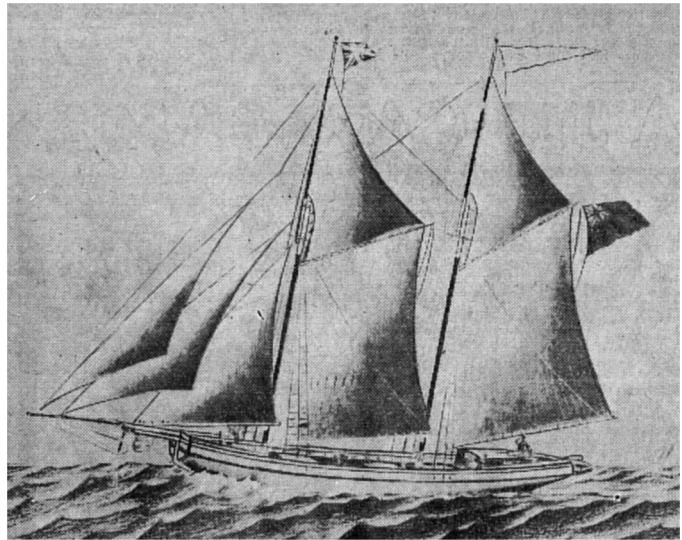
This newest vessel was named the *Alberta*, after a young lady who, it is said, was the Queen of Simcoe Island that lies about three miles south of Kingston. Capt. Wm. Stitt, master mariner of Toronto, supplies some interesting experiences with the young lady's namesake as follows:

She (the vessel) was about one hundred feet in length, with a round barrel bow and a square sawed-off stem, some twenty feet beam and with a depth of nine feet. She had two masts and a centre board to help her sail closer to the wind, as were most of the old flat-bottomed stone hookers in the old days. She carried plenty of canvas and was considered pretty fast for a vessel of this class.

Who built her or sailed her first I haven't been able to learn and cannot find any records or particulars of her in the old blue book of shipping, so she, like topsy, just grew up.

After using her as a sailing vessel or stone hooker for some five seasons the owners sold her to Capt. Gus Hinckley, of Oswego, N.Y., who owned steam barges and tow vessels trading on Lake Ontario, Bay of Quinte and the St. Lawrence River, in the coal, hay and pulpwood business, and was considered one of the shrewdest and most progressive in the trade.

Hinckley, after buying the *Alberta*, decided on rebuilding her and making her over into a steam barge. He added some eighteen feet to her bow and made her pointed the same as other steamboats, and also added a round stern, which increased her length to about 130 feet. He installed a boiler and engine, cabins, etc., and she was considered a pretty fair little steam barge.



*"Barrel-bow" schooner - the ALBERTA was the last exponent of the type.*

Of course, he retained the foremast and used the canvas to help push her along at every favorable chance and wind. All the steam barges did the same in those days.

My first acquaintance with the *Alberta* took place in the spring of 1899 when I engaged with Capt. Hinckley as her master to trade between Coteau Landing, P.Q., and Montreal for the Canada Atlantic Railway in the grain, flour and package freight and we also towed one of the old K. & P. barges loaded with grain on this route each trip.



*COTEAU LANDING HARBOR in 1899, with Randolph Macdonald Dredge No. 5 digging out the basin opposite the Canada Atlantic Railway shed. Next year the harbor was scrapped. In the picture the barrel-bowed ALBERTA, which has become a sharp-stemmed steam barge, is shown with her tow, the Kingston and Pembroke barge DAKOTA.*

On our easterly run we took grain, flour and package freight and on our westerly run iron, steel, cement and every class of freight for the Northwest.

This was the year before the Soulanges Canal was opened and we were using the old Beauharnois Canal on the south side of the river, with its western entrance at Valleyfield. This canal was 13 miles long and had nine locks, 200 feet in length and carried only nine feet navigation. The Coteau Landing harbor was dredged out of the beach just east of the long government pier with a lighthouse on the end of it.

The basin was dredged in a north direction from deep water for 1,800 feet and a width of 400 feet with freight sheds on one side and a grain elevator on the other side. Railway tracks ran from the yards down to and alongside both sheds and elevator. It was a most modern and up-to-date terminal.



*BEFORE THE SOULANGES WAS OPENED — Jam at Valleyfield on the Beauharnois Canal, 1899, with the ALBERTA and DAKOTA among the vessels. Close up is our old friend the propeller PERSIA, freight and passenger steamer well known in Toronto.*

The Coteau Landing terminals commenced about the year 1895, were finished in the fall of 1899. After the Soulanges Canal was finished in 1900 and also the other St. Lawrence canals and channels were deepened for 14-foot navigation and vessels could

come right through from the Great Lakes to Montreal without lightering, the Coteau Landing terminals were not needed and about that time the Canada Atlantic was absorbed by the Canadian National Railways [sic: Grand Trunk Railway], so Coteau terminals were closed down as they were not needed. The completed harbor only had a life of one year.

The C.N.R. had their own terminals in Montreal so the harbor was scrapped, the elevator and freight shed taken down, railway sidings and yard cleared of the steel and buildings and today nothing remains but the ruins of what was once a beehive of activity day and night. The life of the terminal was short, only about five years from start to finish.

About Oct. 15, we left the Coteau-Montreal run and went in the coal trade between Lake Ontario ports, Bay of Quinte and St. Lawrence River for the balance of the season.

What happened on one of these runs makes interesting telling. Capt. Stitts' narrative will be continued next week.