

Toronto Telegram, March 10, 1945
Schooner Days DCLXXXIII (683)
By C.H.J. Snider

LILY OF THREE L'S

THREE-QUARTERS of a century ago – the year was 1868 – the whipsaws whined and the axes barked as another new ship came into being at Port Credit.

She was not a big thing, like the brig *British Queen*, built there a generation earlier. She was just a little hooker. Her place of building was in the northeast corner of the harbor, where the old blockhouse still stood. On the bank where the post office is now. She was built after the fashion Moses Niblock established in the well-named *Rover*. The *Rover* ranged from Port Credit up to Dundas, through the Desjardens Canal and down the Ottawa through the Rideau. And died on the lake shore, full of years and patches. She had been built upside down, bottom first, like an almost flat floor, and this turned over after caulking, and then the flat sides and rounded ends added. After which the deck was covered in and she was skidded down the bank on a runway, and so into the river.

The new hooker was built on the same general boxlike plan as the *Rover*, too, but she was considered to have better lines, that is, her squareness was arranged with easier runs and greater possibilities for speed.

It was Benjamin Brown Lynd who built the new hooker. Ben Lynd was then an up-and-coming son of Port Credit. Born in the old blockhouse, at the age of ten he was entrusted by his father, Robert Lynd, with the responsible post of barkeeper in the new Dominion hotel. Lynd senior was no patron of intemperance and would not allow his son to touch liquor with his lips. He was schooled to distinguish whisky, beer, rum, wine and gin by the smell and smell only.

Lynd junior cared so little for even the fragrance of the liquor trade that he gave up barkeeping as soon as he could earn a living otherwise and joined the Methodist church in the village. He was no milksop, but the life of every young people's party. He had a good voice, and organized the choir. They had no organ or instrument of music, other than a tuning fork. Ben had learned the violin, and accompanied the hymns from the little gallery. A chronic customer of the hotel six nights in the week, used to repenting regularly on the seventh, flung himself out of the sacred edifice the first Sunday the violin appeared, saying he'd be G. D – ed if he'd ever again enter a church desecrated with a scraping fiddle. But Ben coaxed him back and built up a Bible class with his music.

When launched, Ben's new hooker was all painted white and looked like a lily. But that was not the way he spelled the name he painted on her bows port and starboard, and on her stern. LILLIE of PORT CREDIT the legend ran, and so remained for the little ship's long life.

“*Lillie*” was in compliment to Lillie Macfarlane, daughter of the station agent of the Grand Trunk Railway at Port Credit. If any romance was involved that is someone else's

business than Schooner Days. Lillie Macfarlane was a worthy godmother for any shining white ship. She was a young lady for Port Credit to be proud of, for when her father died she became station agent in his stead – and railways never make mistakes in appointing station agents. She is also said to have been one of the first railway telegraph operators.

The *Lillie* herself had a long life, but not in Ben Lynd's ownership, for a few years later he sold her to Johnny Thompson and bought a more ambitious schooner scow in the pond that had been built by Fred Shaver for J. R. Shaw in the same corner of the harbor. This was the *Morning Star*, a big fellow, who could carry four times the *Lillie*'s load.

The *Lillie* was sailed for a long time by Capt. Tommy Blow, and in the 1890's she was sunk in Port Credit. Capt. John Trueman resuscitated her. Originally, she had no top-masts. Short ones were added, stayed with futtock shrouds and dead-eyes and lanyards, in the old style. Johnny Thompson put them in. The *Morning Star* had no topmasts either, when she first came out. Nor had the *Lithophone*, nor the *Coral*, nor the *Newsboy*. That was a custom among stonehookers. Capt. Trueman had difficulty in canvassing the *Lillie*, as pictures of her prove.

He did the best he could with the tarpot and paint brush, and made the aging craft presentable. Her end came when a new owner in Bronte tried to widen her by spreading out her sides. She leaked so badly after this major operation that she sank in the Twelve-Mile Creek, up near the Bronte bridge, and could not be pumped out. So she was broken up, about 1906.

The other day the Rev. Garnet W. Lynd, of Downsview United Church, came in with a very dark and some what battered tintype.

“This,” said he, “was my father's vessel, the *Lillie*.”

Schooner Days showed it to Capt. A. E. Hare, Port Credit's octogenarian hookerman.

“Yes,” said he, “that's the *Lillie*, when she was new. And that little boy you can hardly make out at the foot of the foremast was me. I was aboard when that picture was taken – I remember it well. I was 7 or 8 years old, and Ben Lynd was teaching me to sing. That's how I got such a good chest expansion that I can still float with a load of iron piled on me.”

(Caption) “I WAS THE LITTLE BOY YOU CAN HARDLY SEE.”

LILLIE, as launched and as broken up, from a tintype before 1870 and a pen drawing forty years later.