

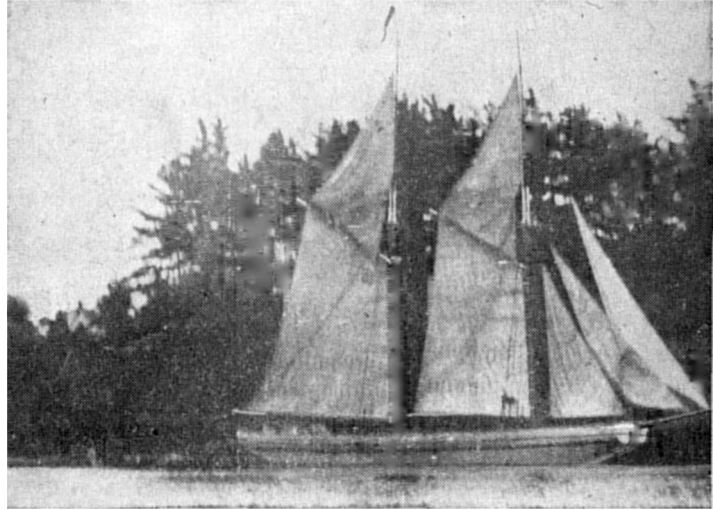
Toronto Telegram, September 13, 1947
Schooner Days DCCCXII (812)
By C. H. J. SNIDER

Hay Bay Pageant Including “Bottoms Up”

HAY BAY, into which we ventured in print last week, and in a craft drawing eight feet last month, supplied the first settlers with fodder for their cows and horses and oxen through the hard winter of 1784-5 and that is how it got its name. Major Van Alstine's provident Loyalists who had come in June harvested the marsh grass on its shores that summer, to keep their priceless livestock alive when there would be no grazing in the six-foot snowdrifts. Some beasts had to feed on twigs and bark before the grass came back. In those hard days a cow was a family lifeline. Bay fish fed the settlers themselves when government rations of meat ran out.

For well over a century Hay Bay offered a pageant, pioneer, pastoral and historic. In the late 1700's smoke rose from its shores continuously and bonfires blazed at nights, as the new settlers made pitch and tar and turned the forests they felled into ashes for potash and pearl ash. They had to cut down trees before they could plant wheat.

The ash trade was one of the earliest in Upper Canada, for civilized man must have soap. Ashes were used to make lye and as fertilizer for sour land. Asheries, where they were accumulated or manufactured, were features of the early landscape. Potash scoops are still to be found among the heirlooms of the pioneers. Last one heard of was, appropriately, in the village of Gomorrah, which is a real place in Prince Edward County not an invention, close to the upper reaches of the Bay of Quinte, and some distance from Hay Bay. The latter, we may remind you,



Scow-schooner TWO BROTHERS of Picton, not unlike the SEA BIRD of the same port. Their shoal draught enabled them to nose through the shallows and load from the bank. The Two Brothers lies buried under a coalyard site in Port Hope, having been sunk there about the end of last century, with the old Garibaldi on one side of her and the still more ancient Acorn, one of the last of the standing-keelers, on the other. All three were covered over by harbor improvements forty years ago. For the Two Brothers' picture with its background of Picton harbor pines we are indebted to Mrs. Helen Merrill Egerton, The Two Brothers was 95 feet long and 5 feet deep in the hold.

The SEA BIRD, one of Capt. John Walters' vessels, sleeps the sleep of the just nearer home, resting on the bottom of Picton Harbor near the ruins of an old mill and distillery north of the Prince Edward Yacht Club. But a smart little sloop owned by H. Daubney of Picton continues her name. The sloop's decorated life rings are often seen at the Mariners' Service at Cherry Valley.

is in Addington. Gomorrah means cultivation.

Ashes were among the earliest exports, and wood in all its primal forms came next. By the beginning of the 1800's rafts were being assembled in Hay Bay for the long journey down to the sea for timber-hungry Europe. The British navy was the first and best customer for oak and pine, but colonial oak was sniffed at, at first, and masting pines in Upper Canada were a sort of king's perquisite. Retired officers sometimes held the rank of mast commissioners for the navy, with the right or duty to mark all trees which might be required for the royal dockyards. Cutting such trees without their authorization was a form of timber piracy.

Timber rafts from Hay Bay were often small, being worked with a sail, oars, and anchors down to Grog Bay, Garden Island or Carleton Island for assembly for running the St. Lawrence rapids. Staves, shingles, plank and stove wood followed, for the early steamers and locomotives were all woodburners, and the early towns and cities had to be heated by country cordwood.

The prosperity of Upper Canada, to which Hay Bay contributed no small share, was not long limited to exploiting the forest. Farms quickly replaced the blackened stump-studded clearings. Mills were grinding settlers' grain before the 18th century was out, and Hay Bay had wheat, barley, oats, hay and pork for export before the 19th century was in mid stride.

From before the Crimean War of 1854 until after the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 the Bay swarmed with broad bosomed sloops and schooners and funny little "rabbit" steam barges like the *Ionia*, *Water Lily* and *Saxon* that relied on sails to get them out of engine trouble. They brought in bricks and barrels and nursery stock and cattle, sheep and swine on the hoof, and took out first lumber, logs and ashes – for the forests on the shores had to be burned off or rafted away as timber – then apples and grain, especially buckwheat and barley, clover, timothy and marsh hay, baled or piled ratline high on deck.

The *Annie Minnes* and the *Picton* were among the larger barley loaders in Hay Bay at various times, and the *Maggie L.*, *John Wesley*, *Sea Bird*, *Laura D.*, *Idlewild*, *Granger*, *Greyhound*, *Ariadne*, *Moravian* and *Ilya* were smaller, some sloops, some schooners, and all scows and well adapted for loading with their noses on the bank. Both *Two Brothers*, (for there was a pair of them, the Redmond's scow and Nate McCrimmon's schooner) loaded here. The wharves were farmers' stages, and the warehouses, including old Hay Bay Chapel, barns or sheds. In the fall, steam barges like the *Resolute* or side-wheelers, like the *Hero* or *Varuna*, might tow in larger schooners like the *Dave Andrews* or *Delaware*, as she was afterwards known, to load apples barreled beneath the bending trees.

The *Kate* of Oakville, built there in 1868, was a Hay Bay customer in 1895 and was capsized there in that year, drowning part of her crew. She was caught one calm dark night when she had all sail set in the mouth of the Long Reach opposite the Bay. Having no headway on, and being empty of cargo, she rolled completely over, keel up, and masts stuck in the bottom of Hay Bay. They broke with the impact and she rolled back on her side, half full of water, which had gushed in through the cabin and forecabin openings. Her cook in the cabin and the sailor in

the fore-castle were drowned. The capsized chain locker had pinned the man down. The captain was asleep in the cabin too, it being his watch below, but he reached the deck, dived overboard, and came up on the ship's rudder as she rolled. The mate and the other sailor went overboard and came back by her head chains. The survivors were picked up by the *Varuna* or some other steamer in the morning, clinging to the waterlogged hulk. The *Kate*, then twenty-seven years old, was towed to Hepburn's dock in Picton and remasted and repaired. But she was weak afterwards and "worked" in a seaway. And her captain had great difficulty in getting cook and mates. The mate took the rap for letting her get caught in the squall with all sail set and no headway, and blamed his orders for it.

We used to see the *Kate* unload stone at Brown and Love's plant at the foot of West Market street in the old days, for she descended to that trade. Ten years after her capsizing George Plunkett and Capt. Dan Rooney of Cobourg bought her, rebuilt her and christened her the *Wilfred Plunkett*. She was a bright little trader again, carrying coal to Cobourg and grain and lumber where she could get it. She was burned at Belleville in 1907 or 8.

PASSING HAILS

The *Picton Gazette* reports that T. G. Mueller, of Madison, Wis., has handed in \$50 towards preservation of the 1792 Methodist chapel at Hay Bay as a national memorial, moved thereto by a Schooner Days suggestion. Good work. As the *Gazette* which reprinted the suggestion, says if all the Bay of Quinte churches would get behind a drive, the old chapel could be restored and preserved. But the Province of Ontario should take charge, for the chapel and its cemetery is a great neglected Upper Canada monument. It was once in danger of being moved away bodily and peddled for "souvenirs. It is more than a monument to Methodism. It is a monument to the pioneers of Upper Canada who made this province British. The first court of justice in the Midland district was held in this old building when it was new, in January, 1795 – and John Roblin, the little boy who was wounded in the American Revolution and mustered for the war of 1812, sleeps in the cemetery in front of it. He was one of the seven original trustees.

Mr. Mueller, being a live Cole himself by his great grandmother Sophia, has a warm interest in Cole family history. For this he might apply to friend Percy T. of that ilk, CPR public relations officer, Chicago.

We have also had a cheery hail from a gentleman in his 94th year, Mr. B. M. Wylie, who describes himself as the "instigating founder" of The Huff Family Association which has done such good work in placing a monument to the Huff loyalists in the old cemetery, and we look forward to more information about the pioneers of Hay Bay from him.