

Extract from "Never Lose Steerage Way" by Jack Braidwood (1976) Picton Gazette Publishing

The following extract follows Jack's involvement with sailing and QCYC after coming to Canada December 5, 1920 (pages 22 to 45) until he joined RCYC in 1931.

By early spring the ice in Toronto Bay had broken up and been driven out into the lake and signs of activity appeared along the waterfront. The arrival of the first steamer marked the opening of navigation; its Captain being presented with the traditional top hat. My solitary week-end walks, so full of interest, helped me to keep track of what was going on. Soon Sol man's ferries were back in service and I discovered Centre Island and Lake Ontario, its moods and colours constantly changing as I made my way along the board walk towards Ward's Island. Ontario is the Indian word for "beautiful" and the lake was surely worthy of its name.

Soon the "Cayuaga", "Corona" and "Chippewa" (with her walking beam) began their daily runs to Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the "Dalhousie City" and "Northumberland" to Port Dalhousie. From Hamilton at the western end of the lake came the "Turbinia", "Modjesca" and "Mascassa", the former being the first steam turbine vessel ever built. Very shortly, the harbour was in the full swing of summer hustle and bustle.

Next, I discovered Hanlan's Point at the west end of the Island, its amusements and the baseball park. I watched the Toronto Maple Leafs do battle with the out-of-town teams of the International League. From my seat in the bleachers I could see the yachts sailing through the western gap and I longed for the day when I might do likewise.

Out of curiosity I boarded an electric "radial" car at Sunnyside and rode it to its destination at Long Branch Park and, consequently, rented a vacant lot on the shores of the lake about one half mile east of the park. Next, I purchased an 8 by 10 foot wall tent and made myself an army type cot with a few planks set on low trestles. From my friends I borrowed a table, a chair, a pitcher and a wash basin. Thus equipped, I set up my summer quarters. Outside the tent I built a fireplace of stones taken from the beach and on it I cooked my food. Drinking water came from the lake. In this manner I spent three perfectly happy summers. Later in the season I built a 10 foot square-ended punt and bought a pair of oars. In it I spent many happy hours rowing on the lake. When the punt was not in use, I kept it hauled up on the beach.

For other entertainment there was fun, and music and dancing at the pavilion in the park, but, to my astonishment, the lake did not seem to be of interest to the residents.

Having saved enough money I purchased a 14 foot Ackroyd sailing dinghy for \$100. Mait Ackroyd and George Corneill surely did more than anyone else to develop small boat sailing in the Toronto area and on the numerous lakes to the north of it. For this reason alone, their memories should never be forgotten.

Disaster nearly overtook me the first time I ventured out from the Long Branch dock, for in my innocence I was not aware that the first fall north wester was blowing. As I got clear of the shelter of the high shore, my boat was struck by successive gusts of wind and I realized she was over-canvased. As I lowered the mainsail for reefing, the main sheet fouled the tiller. It, in turn, was lifted out of its gudgeons, dropped overboard and floated a way. By the time I had furled the mainsail, my boat had also drifted further off shore, and I knew that I was in serious trouble. I cleared one of the floor boards and by using it partly as a paddle and partly as a rudder was able to work towards the shore. I finally came to land at the pumping station of the Mimico Mental Asylum, nearly two miles from the point where I had lost the rudder. I secured the boat in the well-sheltered artificial harbour and rode the radial to Long Branch. The following weekend I returned with a new rudder and under more favourable conditions sailed her back to Long Branch where I laid her up for the winter. From this

unpleasant experience I learned how quickly a minor mishap when under sail can develop into a serious crisis, a lesson I have never forgotten.

I also "struck camp" and returned to the humdrum and uninteresting monotony of a Toronto winter. Back at Long Branch in early spring I set up camp with the insatiable desire to explore the western end of the lake. With this in mind and by the light of a candle in the shed where "Spray" was stored, I built stowage space for gear, re-rigged the mast, and bought a new mainsail from John Leckie Ltd. Before launching I set out a mooring in the lake outside the normal line of incoming breakers where my little boat lay safely for two consecutive sailing seasons. When going for a sail, I would swim out to the mooring and scramble aboard.

There was only one other sailboat at Long Branch - a 16 foot carvel-built Hamilton dinghy, owned by my neighbour, Bob Barnes. We often sailed in company or raced informally. Occasionally yachts making passages between Toronto and Oakville or Hamilton would pass close inshore so that I never tired of the lake. As I sailed my dinghy, I soon felt as one with her, rather than sailing in her, and also as one with the lake.

As Mrs. Anna Jameson expressed it so well writing from Toronto on June 8, 1837: "Sometimes a thunder squall from the west sent the little sloops and schooners sweeping and scudding into the harbour for shelter. Sometimes the sunset converts its surface into a sea of molten gold, and sometimes the young moon walks trembling in a path of silver; sometimes a purple haze floats over its bosom like a veil; sometimes the wind blows strong and the wild, turbid waves come rolling in like ocean breakers, flinging themselves over the rocks in wrath and foam ...". "It changes its hues every moment, the shades of purple and green flit over it, now dark, now lustrous, now pale ... while every now and then a streak of silver divides the shades of green; magnificent, tumultuous clouds come rolling round the horizon; and graceful little schooners, falling into every graceful attitude, and catching every variety of light and shade, come curtsying into the bay ..." , (from **Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada** - Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd., Toronto - 1943).

My first "long distance" venture was a single-handed weekend cruise to Oakville, a distance of about 12 miles. Having stowed my gear, provisions and clothes, I hoisted the mainsail and at mid-afternoon slipped the mooring. "Spray" gently heeled over to the moderate southerly breeze and picked up headway as I brought her on to the desired course. Quickly the shore line slipped by. We were off. Soon we were sailing along the line of buoys marking the outer limits of the Long Branch rifle ranges. By the time Port Credit was abeam, we were well out in the lake for, at this point, the land bears sharply southward to Merrygold Point, where the Texaco refinery now stands. In the days of which I write, the shores along this part of the lake were quite unspoiled, with only a few stately homes showing through the trees.

The wind now began to lighten until steerage way was almost lost. It was also after six o'clock, so I secured the tiller and ate my simple supper of sandwiches, fruit and a soft drink. Progress was so slow that it became obvious Oakville could not be reached before dark. I got out the paddle and propelled "Spray" towards the land with the intention of locating a sandy beach where she could be hauled up for the night. Before reaching shore, darkness was setting in and a heavy bank of ominous-looking cloud was building up in the west. I had no illusions as to what it might portend and, sure enough, when darkness was complete the western sky became alive with continuous flashing lightning. Next, thunder became audible and the peals louder as the storm approached. I quickened the tempo of my strokes with the paddle and after a while sighted a beach close ahead. To my astonishment, I was paddling directly into a narrow creek and a few yards further up sighted a small dock to which I secured my little ship. I stowed the mainsail, laid out my blankets on the bottom boards and rigged a canvas cover over the boom, in effect forming a tent over the cockpit. I then went ashore to explore my surroundings for I had no idea whatsoever as to where I might be. Not a light was showing anywhere and the night was extremely dark, except for the flashes of lightning. I stumbled about in the undergrowth until I reached a clearing only to find myself involved with a herd of cattle. I beat a hasty retreat and snuggled under my blankets. The storm broke in a welter of blinding lightning, the cracking of thunder, a deluge of rain, and a shrieking wind. It soon passed over the lake, the sky cleared and the stars became visible. I rolled over and dropped off to sleep.

An easterly gale sweeps across the entrance to Oakville Harbour.



Next morning when I thrust my head out from beneath the cockpit cover, it was to see a grey, cold looking lake, an overcast sky and a brisk, easterly breeze. I decided to forgo breakfast and got underway. An exhilarating run before the wind carried me to Oakville where I secured alongside the inner end of the easterly pier. I built a fireplace of stones on the beach and cooked a late breakfast of bacon and eggs, bread, butter and jam, and coffee. Before I had cleared up and stowed my galley utensils, rain was falling.

The only yacht in the harbour was a small schooner of about 30 feet overall in length; I walked over to her for a closer look. Her name was "Sunbeam" of Toronto. Presently her owner appeared from below decks and we chatted for a few minutes. He told me his name was Peter Laing, and that he was Commodore of the Queen City Yacht Club (*not until 1928*). As the rain continued to fall, he invited me aboard and introduced me to his wife, Jean. I spent the morning in his trim little ship; he was the first sailing man I had met in Canada. Thus a friendship was formed on this day which lasted for many years.

By noon the sky had cleared, the purposeful, easterly breeze had veered to the south east and had moderated. I set sail and enjoyed a long starboard tack close reach to my home mooring.

The result of this modest venture was an urgent desire to explore more distant waters.

A few weeks later, with a young fellow of my own age, "Spray" was once again under way, this time for a two week adventure to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Once again the departure point was Long Branch, and once again the winds were light and variable. At the end of the day we sailed into the quiet and unspoiled harbour of Bronte. Two Mackinaw fishing boats lay along the wooden pier, their fish nets hung out to dry on racks ashore. We secured to the western pier, set up our pup tent ashore and cooked a meal on the beach. After cleaning up we swam in the clear, warm water of the harbour. The evening was beautifully warm and quiet. the only sounds being those of the birds and the lapping of the

wavelets on the beach. Later the full moon lifted itself over the horizon. There was not a soul in sight, and, of course, no automobiles or power boats. The peace and stillness of that perfect summer's evening have become permanently ingrained in my memory.

Next morning brought one of those rare summer days, a clear sky and a quiet, steady easterly breeze which had no menace in it and which slowly freshened as the day wore on and lightened as it waned.

We were again under way at 6 a.m., and, sailing close to the shore, were able to hold our course. The sailing was perfect all the way to the tiny harbour of Grimsby Beach; no more than a nook behind a sand bar. We remained in port next day exploring the countryside and climbed the "mountain" that towers over the town of Grimsby, from the top of which a grand view of Lake Ontario and, on the horizon, the tall buildings of Toronto can be obtained. We marvelled at the sight of cherries ripening on the trees lining the streets and bought a basket at a fruit stand to take back to the ship. How glorious was the fruit growing district of the Niagara Peninsula in those days before the automobile, progress and industry combined to destroy the charm of it.

Next day we sailed to Port Dalhousie where the old Welland Canal entered Lake Ontario. The weather then became hot and humid; unmistakable signs pointed to a change and the lake was rather boisterous as we sailed on to the eastward. We decided to make for Four Mile Creek, which, naturally, was four miles west of Niagara. The entrance was no more than thirty feet wide, but inside was a charming tree-lined lagoon with a high, wooded bank encircling the northern side. At its highest point we pitched our tent facing the lake and were relieved to be in sheltered waters.

During the night crackling thunderstorms passed overhead, and heavy rain whipped by squalls, invaded our tent. Much of the night was spent passing the small hatchet we used for splitting firewood from hand to hand to drive in the tent pegs made loose by the billowing tent. Under these conditions my crew's opinion of cruising in small boats reached a very low ebb. The wind veered to the north west and the rain continued to fall; we spent a wet and very uncomfortable night and would undoubtedly have been better off had we slept in the dinghy, protected by the boom cover.

For two days the northwester blew hard out of a cloudless sky. We took advantage of it to visit Niagara Falls, walking the four miles to the Canada Steamship dock at Niagara-on-the-Lake where we boarded the "Cayuga" for the run up to Queenston and from there by radial electric car along the gorge route to the Falls, returning to our camp the same evening.

Lake Ontario was at its best for our return voyage to Long Branch with fair winds all the way.

Another ambitious undertaking with the same crew was the crossing of the lake from Long Branch to Niagara, a distance of 25 miles. Extracts from our log are as follows:

Aug. 10, 1923. Had breakfast and stowed gear.

0645 under way. Light northerly airs, the last of the offshore night breeze. Course SE.

0830 land out of sight. Grimsby steamer crossed our bows, the first of many sighted during our crossing.

0915 calm.

1245 cold lunch.

1505 good sailing breeze. Weather hazy.

1845 supper. Cold beans and two eggs cooked on a flat stone we had taken off the beach at Long Branch and pre-heated in the hot noonday sun.

2025 sunset. Prepared for a night on the lake.

2035 light evening land breeze which is so well known to lake sailors.

2100 sighted Niagara light, wind freshening.

Aug. 11. 0015 arrived Niagara-on-the-Lake. Hauled dinghy ashore in the small basin behind Canada Steamship dock. Cooked late supper over a campfire on the street.

0130 turned in on each side of centre board box.

The return passage reads:

Aug. 12. 0430 fresh SW breeze. Cooked breakfast and got under way.

0505 land out of sight.

0640 wind much stronger. Took reef in mainsail. Rough. 0700 decided to return to Niagara.

0850 back at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Made arrangements to ship dinghy to Toronto by "Cayuga". Freight amounted to \$2.00. Monday evening launched boat from "Cayuga" and sailed to Long Branch. So ended our adventure.

In midsummer of 1923 I took a big step forward into the sailing world of Lake Ontario. I bought the 25 foot fin keel "Brenda", a survivor of the 16 foot water-line class sloops, which had been so popular on the lake at the turn of the century. I kept her behind the sea wall at the mouth of the Humber River where there was a small boat yard for haulout and winter storage. Thus I became acquainted with Fred McGraw, an ex-lake sailor who operated a canoe livery under the railway bridge at the point it crosses the Humber River. It was in his shop that I later built "Rain- bow.

"Brenda" was a sweet little thing, fast, weatherly and easily handled. She had the remarkable faculty of being able to ghost a- long when there was, apparently, no wind. With "Brenda" the whole lake lay open for exploration and I decided to begin with the Bay of Quinte because of the vagaries of the weather and the time available being my annual vacation. This set the pattern for many years, the season's sailing being confined to the vicinity of home waters, varied by a dash down the lake, participation in the annual Freeman Cup race and the Lake Yacht Racing Association Regatta, and return to Toronto.

On a perfect June morning, "Brenda's" shore lines were slipped from the sea wall where she lay. We made sail, and headed out into Humber Bay. Presently, the dark blue line of a breeze approached from across the lake. "Brenda" gently heeled over, her bow wave breaking into a pleasant chuckle as she moved faster through the water. Leaving Toronto to port, we sailed a- long the Island shore, watching the early morning crowds from the city filling the boardwalk, and the girls lying on the rocks in their swim suits like so many seals. The breeze stayed with us, steady and true and late in the afternoon we entered Port Darlington, making fast to the broken-down wooden seawall on the east side of the narrow creek. We had covered 45 miles for our first day's run. A simple evening meal cooked over a can of "Sterno" (solidified alcohol) satisfied our needs.

Next morning brought a dull lake under cloudy skies, humid atmosphere and light winds. For hours we drifted slowly eastward, the land barely visible through the murky haze which later developed into fog. During the afternoon a commercial fishing boat passed by with two men aboard. They gave us the distance and bearing to Port Hope where we stayed overnight.

Port Hope is fully commercial and has a divided harbour. On the strip of land separating the two arms of the harbour stands a large sprawling factory on which a sign proclaims to the world that it is the home of the "Port Hope Sanitary Works". The factory belches smoke and cinders over everything. The harbour has nothing to recommend it as far as the yachtsman is concerned. Conforming to the usual sequence of weather, a thunderstorm passed overhead during the night. By morning the sky was clear and blue and the lake feather-white as a strong offshore wind sent scurrying gusts across its surface.

We double-reefed the mainsail, set a small jib and got under way. In a short time Peter Hock, which we passed to starboard, was soon astern and Cobourg, with its two, white pier lights, looking for all the world like boats under sail, was abeam.

The wind lightened during the afternoon to a nice sailing breeze and we shook out the reefs. We rounded Proctor Island, and two miles further on, Presqu'ile Light, with its tall, white tower. As it came abeam, the glorious blue expanse of Presqu'ile Bay lay before us, its green hills rising in the distance.

Prominent on our port hand, surrounded by green lawns, stood the famous old wooder Presqu'ile Hotel. We threaded our way through the channel markers and into the four mile long Murray Canal. Never shall I forget

the lovely vista which presented itself as we sailed into Trenton Bay. The green fields sloping down to the water's edge, the incredible blueness of the water and the lighter blue of the sky overhead were breathtaking. We altered course to port and continued up the channel to Trenton.

A short distance from the river mouth, two sloops lay at moorings, and we anchored nearby. They were "Brenda's" classmates, "Clip" and "Little Nell".

What a thrilling day this had been!

At Trenton, my crew left me to return to work, and I was on my own. I sailed on to Belleville with a fine following breeze. After passing through the Bay Bridge, I altered course to port steering directly for the Government dock. Like many sailors have done in the past and are still doing so today, I promptly ran aground. I had noticed a sail following "Brenda" down the Bay from Trenton and presently the bridge opened again and she came through and sailed in my direction, apparently also bound for Belleville. She proved to be a 14 foot dinghy with a young couple and a baby in arms aboard. As they came alongside, the man jumped lightly aboard "Brenda" and said: "My name is Angus Mowat. This, (pointing to the woman), is my wife, Helen. The baby is Farley, conceived in a canoe". We soon had "Brenda" afloat and Angus and his family continued on their way. This chance meeting, as so often happens with sailors, resulted in lifelong friendship.

That night, as "Brenda" lay in solitude alongside Victoria Park and I sat in the cockpit listening to the music and sounds of gaiety from Kerr's boathouse and dance hall across the harbour, I felt supremely happy and just a little lonely. Although I did not know it I had fallen in love with the Bay and ever since it has played a predominant part in my sailing life.

I have only a hazy recollection of my return voyage up the lake until Whitby was reached. My first attempt to sail the 25 miles to Toronto was thwarted by a strong headwind, and I was forced to run back to shelter. Next day the same westerly was roiling the lake, and I spent most of it lying in my bunk listening to the wind whistling through the rigging and the rattling of the halyards against the mast.

In those days, industrial plants were almost non-existent along the lake front and with the disappearance of the schooners and steamboats, the harbours were virtually unused. It was not difficult to imagine oneself being a thousand miles from anywhere while lying at anchor.

When I eventually reached Toronto I sailed up the narrow channel between the Ward's Island ferry dock and the Queen City Yacht Club, and rounded up into its little mooring basin where I made fast to a stake on the bank. I was warmly greeted by Peter Laing and members of the Club, and subsequently also became a member.

The Queen City Yacht Club was, and still is, situated on the north east corner of Sunfish Island (now Algonquin), an artificial island created by fill from the dredging and development of Toronto harbour after the first war. A large rectangular club house includes a dock along its front, two rows of large lockers on the ground floor, and a dance floor, dressing rooms and a snack bar above; a marine railway was built by the members. For many years the club was the sole occupant of Sunfish Island, communication with adjacent Ward's Island being possible only by water. "King" of Ward's Island was Frank Ward, grandson of the original settler on the island; he operated various services for the many people who made the island their home during the summer, living mostly in tents. In this business, Frank operated several motor launches and it was known that during prohibition he was not adverse to helping the Islanders quench their thirst, deliveries being made by water via the numerous connecting lagoons and waterways.

The Island was unique in that no automobiles were allowed on it, yet many citizens of Toronto made it their summer home, and in the hot months of July and August it was also invaded daily by tens of thousands of city people for picnics or seeking respite from the heat, the density of the crowds being governed by the weather. The summer residents lived in communities at Ward's, Centre Island and Hanlan's Point, each of which was

self-sufficient and managed its own affairs. Interference from City Hall was resented, probably a heritage from the days when the lake front was lined by the stately homes of Toronto's leading citizens. It can be said of the Islanders that they moved to the city for the winter months rather than to the island for the summer.

The Queen City Yacht Club had its own close-knit community of dyed-in-the-wool sailors who practically lived in their boat lockers or on their boats until late fall. The best time was after the city "slickers" had moved to the city and the ferry service had been cut to a minimum. It seems to me (or is it "old devil time" who makes me think so), that in those days when there were few cars, radio was in its infancy and TV was unknown, that we had no trouble making our own fun. There was always someone who could play a musical instrument or knew the songs. Sailor's songs were the favourites, whether bawdy or not, followed by the many popular songs of the day, sentimental ones preferred. The parties were gay and spontaneous. But we were also perpetuating the songs of the sea, which, alas, no longer seem to be part of a yachtsman's life. If the party lagged, there was always Frank Ward to call upon to replenish the flowing bowl.

Pancake parties were also a popular feature on dark fall evenings. The participants would gather aboard one of the larger yachts, the galley stove would be lit, batter beaten and huge quantities of pancakes produced for all hands, accompanied by the inevitable music and singsong.

However, jollifications were mostly stag, because women did not participate in sailing to the extent they do today. They were considered subordinate to the more serious business of sailing and racing, activities which sometimes bordered on enmity rather than sport.

The Queen City fleet was comprised of three large yachts, "Madora", "Saita" and "Zoraya", several medium-sized keel yachts ranging from 25 feet to 35 feet in length and numerous sailing dinghies of various shapes and sizes. Pride of the fleet was "Madora", a 45 foot gaff rigged cutter, built and owned by the Churchill brothers in their true Newfoundland tradition. Needless to say, she was always sailed and handled in a flawless seamanlike manner.

"Saita" was a 42 foot ex-Canada's Cup sloop designed and built in England. She was slim and deep and carried no less than 1500 square feet of sail in a single jib and mainsail. She was extremely fast in light weather, but lacked much that was desirable when it breezed up. Her owners were a syndicate of young men. Skipped by Fred Churchill, one of the many Churchill sons, and was always sailed hard and fearlessly and without mercy.

"Zoraya" the third yacht, had also been built in England for a Canada's Cup series. She was owned by the outstanding Canadian marine artist, Rowley Murphy, who had successfully converted her to a schooner rig of moderate sail area.

Rowley and his vivacious wife, Tommy, lived aboard "Zoraya" at moorings off the Queen City Yacht Club. After their son Phillip was born, they moved to a lake front cottage on Ward's Island where the latch-string was always out.

Can any true islander ever forget the muted sounds of traffic which came across the bay from the city side on a quiet summer's night, the clanging of the bells of the trains at the Union Station, or the deep-throated sound of "Cayuga's" whistle as she entered the Eastern Gap at the end of her day's runs? Or the dripping fog of a fall evening when the mists looked so eerie and mysterious under the lights lining the lagoons while the fog horn on the Eastern Gap broke the silence with its mournful blast which always ended so abruptly. Or from the board walk listening to each blast echoing and re-echoing across the lake into the far distance until it was silenced by the next blast.

The year 1926 was "Brenda's". From the experience of a season of racing and sailing, I redesigned her sail plan, and gave her a new suit of sails. I also acquired a permanent crew. Bill Barlow was a sailor at heart and a fine shipmate. He was of a quiet and easy temperament, his features usually wreathed in smiles. He was an

outstanding light canvas man and a fine helmsman. He could also play the accordion. Our sailing partnership lasted for many years. Being full of the enthusiasm of youth, we decided to sail "Brenda" in the annual Freeman Cup Race, which this year was to be from Rochester to Stoney Island at the eastern end of Lake Ontario, a distance of 85 miles.

We sailed from Toronto July 29th in a light easterly breeze and were able to lay a course well to the north of the powerful flashing light on 30 Mile Point. Shortly after sundown fog set in and blotted out the light. We were then sailing quietly, in smooth water to the gentle but steady breeze. At about 2:30 a.m., while I was dozing in my bunk, I was awakened by Bill. "There's a dark cloud to starboard", he said. As I sat beside him in the cockpit he suddenly exclaimed; "trees". With that he put the helm down and brought "Brenda" on to the opposite tack. He was right, for we could now see the beach. It was a close shave!

The following afternoon as the fog dispersed, we sighted a sail to leeward on a converging course. She proved to be "Ptarmigan" from the National Yacht Club racing in our class. We were pleased to note that we seemed to be sailing just as fast and pointing higher.

Thirty-two yachts came to the starting line August 2nd for the Freeman Cup Race, ranging all the way down from large cutters and schooners, "Brenda" being the smallest of all. Light airs prevailed at the start as the fleet, bunched together with barely steerage way crossed the starting line. Eventually the wind settled in very light from the south west. At times during the night it was almost non-existent, but "Brenda" with her uncanny ability to keep moving in very light airs, never lost steerage way. Because the use of spinnakers was barred during the dark hours at that time, she was doubly favoured. Sometimes she did not seem to be moving at all, but with her low freeboard, we could reach the water with our finger tips and feel that she was moving. In this manner we sailed her through the night until the light airs developed into a steady breeze at dawn. With spinnaker now set and drawing well, we were sailing fast. Competitors appeared all round us, and although we could not identify them in the haze, it was evident from their tall rigs that several were "R" class yachts. As the wind continued to freshen to the new day and the seas built up, "Brenda" fairly surfed over the water until we crossed the finish line at 2:06 p.m. On corrected time "Brenda" finished first in her class and second in the fleet being only beaten by the "P" class 52 foot sloop "Stranger".

We then sailed on to Henderson Harbour where we let go our anchor under the shelter of the high wooded north shore, close to "Madora" and "Saita".

As was the custom at L.Y.R.A. Regattas, the crews of the QCYC yachts gathered aboard "Madora" for a singsong. A keg of beer was set up on the cabin table, musical instruments were brought out and a party developed, which lasted until the beer ran out.

Next morning we returned to the serious business of racing, in which "Brenda" excelled herself by winning three firsts in her class of eight yachts.

Our homeward passage took us across the lake to Kingston, thence through the Bay of Quinte to Presqu'ile and up the lake to Toronto, a total distance of over 200 miles. This was my first sail through the whole length of the Bay and I loved the charm and embankment of the main railroad tracks between Toronto and New York. It was noisy too, as the trains thundered by almost overhead. However, it did have the great advantage of an excellent work bench of great length. I set up a camp cot, a table and chair, cupboard, wash basin and a Coleman cook stove. This was my home until mid-November when the water supply froze and I was forced to vacate. I moved to a room in a private home in Parkdale, which included meals, for eight dollars a week.

My initial outfit of tools was meagre and from time to time I added to it as required and as finances permitted. All cutting and shaping of lumber was done by hand as portable power tools had not yet come into use. I set myself a schedule of working hours which totalled about 00 hours per week of my spare time and maintained it

rigidly in all weathers. With advice and guidance from Peter I made steady progress, the experience gained adding up to the sum of my mistakes.

By mid-October, the back bone of the hull had been shaped and bolted together; the sawn frames assembled and bevelled to the proper angles.

One evening Peter dropped in to see how I was getting along. We laid the keel on its chocks and secured it. Next we set up the midship section, "just to see how it will look". Before Peter left for home at midnight, all the frames had been set up and temporarily secured ready for final lining up and bolting into place.

For the first time I could actually see the shape of my ship and what I saw looked good. For a long time after Peter had gone, I sat on the edge of my cot, gazing at my ship and was full of satisfaction at the progress I had made. The hull was planked with 7/8" edge-grained fir. If a plank proved recalcitrant, I would wrap it with strips of old blanket over which I poured boiling water. It was a simple and effective method of dealing with the problem. Occasionally a plank, after being carefully coaxed into place and fastened, would let go overnight and have to be replaced. Peter used to say, "you cannot expect everything to go right all the time". Planking was completed by the end of January and then came the job of smoothing it with a finely set plane. After this was done I sanded it by hand. A little progress was made each week. The final job was to move it out of the shop for the fitting of the 3000 lb. keel which Pete and I accomplished in one evening.

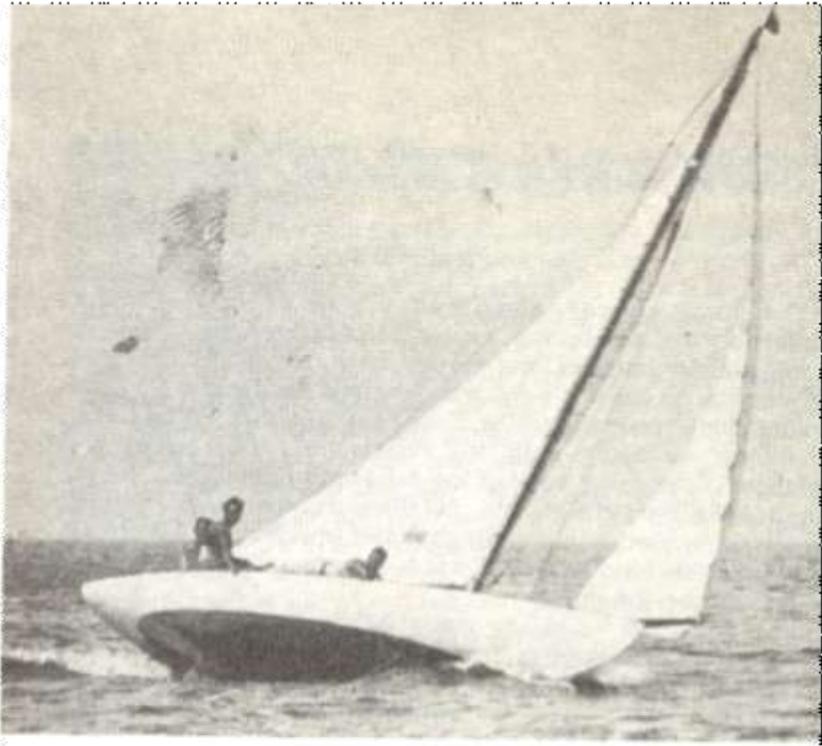
We loaded the hull onto a farmer's wagon and on May 19th, it was moved to the Toronto Terminal warehouse by a team of horses and launched by a mobile crane. The total cost was \$10.

The weather was atrocious - strong easterly winds with occasional rain. There was no champagne or cheering crowd to witness the great event; only the farmer, the crane operator, Peter and I being- present. "Rainbow" was then towed across the bay to the Queen City Yacht Club and became an identity. For the rest of the summer she was my floating home.

I went to work at once with the final fitting out. I rigged her as a yawl, with gaff mainsail, club topsail, two headsails and Bermuda mizzen. June 22nd 1928 with Rowley Murphy, Peter Laing and Bill Barlow aboard she was out for her first sail; it was a happy day.

In the days before the automobile had become a universal means of transporation and few sailing yachts were equipped with power, a Freeman Cup Race or a Lake Yacht Racing Association Regatta were as much an adventure to look forward to as a Bermuda Race or Southern Ocean Racing Circuit series is today. So it was with Bill and I as we prepared "Rainbow" for sea and waited for Lyman Hogarth, who was to be the third member of our crew. Promptly on time Max brought "Victor" alongside and Lyman jumped lightly aboard. As his duffle bag hit the deck it produced tinkling noises which indicated an ample supply of liquid refreshment for our thirsty American friends when Rochester was reached.

UPPER picture: "Brenda" - 1926 LOWER: "Rainbow" - 1931



We made sail, slipped our mooring and headed out through the Eastern Gap. The sky was clear, the sun was bright, and the lake was glassy calm. I could feel only the faintest of airs on my cheek and the heat was intense. For hours the Roman Catholic Seminary on Scarborough Heights remained abeam to port as though the monks were loath to allow us to proceed on our way.

"Rainbow" (A69), with her original gaff rig taken at the Canadian National Exhibition. The other yachts are "Scrapper" and "Ptarmigan".



"Do you happen to have a deck of cards aboard?" asked Lyman. I answered in the affirmative. "Well, let's have a game of gin rummy", he said. We set up the cabin table in the cockpit, belayed the sheet and lashed the helm. In the utter stillness of the calm and motionless lake we became engrossed in our game until the sun began to sink towards the horizon. We stowed the cards and table and began sailing as a gentle breeze crept in from the south. We laid a course for Thirty Mile Point Light and it was soon in sight. We then bore on a course towards Braddock Point Light about 12 miles west of Rochester.

By sunrise the wind had veered to the south west and had freshened somewhat. We cooked breakfast and ate in the cockpit. After cleaning up in the galley we set the spinnaker. By noon the wind lightened again as haze settled over the land. The day became very hot and the wind, being dead astern, gave us little benefit. We broached the beer in an effort to quench our thirst. Outboards made their appearance, buzzing aimlessly over the lake with engines at full throttle. Inevitably they were attracted to the "pretty sailboat", and Lyman, in a friendly gesture offered the first corners a bottle of beer. Quickly we were surrounded by these pests. We shut off the supply and at high speed the outboards went their various ways. We sailed into the Rochester Yacht Club basin late in the afternoon and berthed alongside a vacant dock.

One of the reasons we had come to Rochester was to take "Mac" McFarlin, a crack light canvasman aboard Rooney Castle's 8 metre, "Conewago" and his wife, Chrissie for a sail in "Rainbow". Next morning we hitch-hiked to the city where we met Mac and he took us to lunch at one of those illegal products of prohibition in the U.S., viz, the "speakeasy". This was our first visit to such an establishment and we were curious to "learn the ropes".

The entrance was heavily barred, when Mac knocked on the door a small wicket opened, revealing only the eyes and nose of the person inside. Mac gave the password, the door opened and we entered into the dim light

of a smoky interior where a number of men were seated at small tables. We followed suit and spent the noon hour eating stale sandwiches and drinking raw bootleg whiskey at exorbitant prices. Bootlegging liquor into the United States was a widespread business and every Canadian Great Lakes harbour had its local rum runner who ran his load across the border in a fast cruiser. An anomaly of the law made it legal for the distilleries to sell liquor in bond for export but illegal to distribute it in Canada for home consumption.

Canadian bootleggers obtained their supplies at the nearest distiller, trucked it in bond to the port of export and obtained clearance to Cuba then ran the load across the lake to a rendezvous with a U.S. contact who assumed the risk of getting it ashore. Hijacking involved risks which had to be taken and occasionally gun battles took place and lives were lost. The business ended abruptly when the Canadian Government ruled that custom clearance to Cuba would no longer be granted.

But I have digressed much too far from the course I was on, so let us return to the Rochester Yacht Club.

An inevitable party at Mac's summer cottage followed the afternoon sail. As it gathered momentum, neighbours dropped in to drink the free liquor and beer we had smuggled ashore until I became apprehensive that word might reach the Coast Guard or police, in which case we might be in serious trouble. At midnight I decided it was time to sail while the going was good, but by the time farewells had been said on the dock, the time was much later than that.

We made sail quickly and passed between the harbour piers and out into the lake. The sky was covered with a low scud driven by a warm and gusty wind from the south. Yachts did not carry radios in those days and we were used to taking the weather as it came so we were not aware that a vigorous summer disturbance was crossing the Great Lakes. Only as the wind increased in strength and the steep seas increased in height did we realize that we were in for a rough passage. We set a course by the Pole Star for Presqu'ile and by the Walker log we sailed 12 miles in one hour and twenty minutes. The seas were indeed high, the motion very violent, and "Rainbow" was hard pressed, so we lowered the mainsail. Thereafter we jogged along easily while Bill and Lyman slept and recuperated from the effects of our party. By noon the wind had veered to west, blowing at 25 - 30 knots and the sky had cleared. We set a double reefed mainsail and shortly after sighted the tall white tower of Presqu'ile Light. At 1500 hours we anchored off the hotel. Here Lyman left us and we sailed on to Cobourg where yachts were assembling for the start of the Freeman Cup Race.

There were nearly forty boats at Cobourg; from the 60 foot cutter "Gardenia", to the tiny "C" class sloops and many other types and rigs. A fair wind, steady and fresh, made a fast race and the brilliant, starlit night added up to a passage to be remembered for a long time. After the finish of the race we sailed on to Henderson Harbour and came to anchor. Here we had a night of drinking and song aboard "Conewego" then sailed on to Kingston, the limestone city, and historic capital of Upper Canada. Unlike the waterfronts of most Great Lakes ports, which seem to be entirely industrial, Kingston's tree-lined waterfront of parks and drives faces a widespread panorama of Lake Ontario in all its moods.

Unfortunately, Kingston has no snug harbours or shelter for the cruising yachtsman and the Kingston Yacht Club stands precariously on the edge of the lake exposed to the prevailing summer south westerly winds which quite often are very strong. So we were obliged to lie at the outer end of the short seawall and we spent a very uncomfortable night.

From Kingston, we beat against a head wind to Prinyer's Cove, undoubtedly the prettiest harbour on Lake Ontario, beloved by all yachtsmen who have visited it. It is as though the Lord in his wisdom had gouged out the land with his thumb, and formed a long, narrow cove for the special benefit of sailors.

Of the time I am writing, the cove was surrounded by farm lands, the only visible building being the cannery which is now in ruins. No man-made sounds marred the peaceful scene. Gulls wheeled overhead, the occasional blue heron hunted for its food along the water's edge, only to take off in stately flight if disturbed, and in the

stillness of the evening, the deep-throated croak of bull frogs came from the marsh at the head of the cove. Presently, isolated lights from farmhouses would twinkle across the water, and from Judge Wilfrid Lane's cottage hidden by dense bush, one solitary light would also appear.

When a thunderstorm threatens the cove, vivid lightening flashes are instantly followed by crackling thunder. Sometimes, it seems almost impossible for a tall mast to miss being hit by lightning. Then comes a tearing squall and blinding rain or hail rattling on the deck and swirling down the topsides. Then it is necessary to keep a look -out for signs that the anchor might be dragging. Usually the storm is soon over and the sky clears; if it is night time the twinkling stars tell us that we can relax and watch the glorious display of lightning from under the back of the dark clouds as the storm recedes over the lake.

On rare occasions, the storm may be of a frontal nature and lightning and thunder rip and roar for hours. The northwest wind which follows then stays at gale force all night, and sometimes all the next day, bringing a sharp drop in temperature as it abates. This is the time to lie in a warm bunk and read a good book.

Sometimes as easterly wind brings rain with it, which is also a good time to enjoy a warm bunk and listen to the gentle patter of it on the deck accompanied by the moan of the wind in the rigging. More often than not the visiting yachtsman had the cove to himself. If a stranger sailed in to share the cove, it was always time for a drink and a "gam" and probably the forming of a new friendship.

From Prinyer's Cove the Bay of Quinte stretches on to the westward in the form of the letter "Z"; 10 miles to Glenora, 10 miles northward to Deseronto, 15 miles westward to Belleville and another 12 miles to the Murray Canal, 45 miles of rural loveliness to starboard and unspoiled high wooded banks to port. Now a sprawling cement plant at Picton Bay, built after World War II, mars the landscape and belches smoke and dust over the countryside.

On fine summer days, if the wind is anywhere from the southwest, it can be expected to be strong and boisterous during the heat of the day. A yacht heading that way will be faced with some hard windward work with frequent knock-downs from off the high shores.

So it was with us in "Rainbow" all the way to the Murray Canal, with the exception of Long Reach. The Murray Canal is four miles long and very narrow, yet in the days when power was not used, even in cruising yachts, a head wind was no obstacle to the skipper, for progress, slow to be sure, could always be made by playing the shifts of wind off either bank. Life was more leisurely then and bridge tenders and automobile owners' very patient as a yacht beat back and forth, back and forth in the narrow bridge sections. Occasionally a friendly automobile might be going along the bank in the same direction and, like a good Samaritan, offer a tow from its rear axle. Beyond the canal the channel remains narrow for nearly two miles of low loveliness before Presqu'ile Bay is reached. I remember one night, after a long beat down the lake against an unfriendly easterly, coming to anchor in this stretch of water. I was alone, and after securing the deck gear, I poured myself a nightcap of rum, and sat on the cabin top to enjoy it before turning in. The night was warm and clear, and the sky a myriad of stars. The lake wind showed itself in the faintest of airs which barely ruffled the surface of the water. All around me sounded the "plop, plop, plop, plop" as fish fed near the surface. From the edge of the marshes came the familiar croak of a bull frog. Occasionally even the "cheep" from a sleepy bird broke the stillness. The only visible light was the one at the entrance to the canal.

Was I lonely? Not a bit of it, for I had a feeling that I was not alone, a feeling which I am sure other sailors have shared with me.

In "Rainbow" we did not tarry, but sailed on to Presqu'ile where we danced with the girls at the pavilion.

The lake was in a grand mood for our passage to Toronto. A blue day, sparkling sunshine and a south easterly wind was our lot. We even carried a jib topsail and spinnaker all the way to our mooring.

In the spring of 1932 I sold "Rainbow" to John I the T. Eaton Company merchandising empire. The Saga of the "Rainbow" did not end when he sold her four years later and for many years she was a familiar sight on Lake Ontario. Eventually she endured indifferent ownership in the North, Georgian Bay and was run aground and abandoned on a sandy shoal. John David, still retaining an affection for her, bought the wreck and had it towed to Parry Sound. "To keep" the water out of her," he said to me "we had to tack a copper tingle over a large hole in her starboard side. We decided she not worth "repairing so we rebuilt her instead". The work, which took nearly two years, was carried out at the Richards Marina at Parry Sound by Ed. Wolfenden, a yacht builder from North Wales. Great care was taken to ensure that the shape and every detail of the original "Rainbow" was preserved. "To please old Jack" as John David put it. A replica of the original "Little Jewel" coal-burning galley stove was found in Lunenburg and that of her 4 H.P. single cylinder gasoline engine in Newfoundland. But the ice box could not be duplicated.

"We just could not find one", declared John David. "It came from Eaton's Annex" I replied with a smile.

The new "Rainbow" was re-launched at Parry Sound August 22, 1968 just forty years from her original launching. As I cracked the bottle of champagne on her stem, John David said to me:

"Jack, I want you to consider her as your own to come here, and sail her any time you please and I mean it".

An interesting feature is that she still retains her original certificate of British Registry.

In the spring of 1931 Jack joined RCYC.