

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Mon., March 13, 1972

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Boat Builders List Still Grows

By NEIL A. MATHESON

MARTIN PINAUD had a boat yard on Green Street, Charlottetown close to Spring Park Road, a Charlottetown man told me last week. A son, Jack, went to the United States and became a famous boat designer.

Other sons, Walter and Wilfred, went to work with Alexander Graham Bell, at Baddeck, Nova Scotia. Walter operated a Pinaud boat yard at Baddeck. He built many luxurious yachts for rich Americans.

Walter died two years ago; his son and daughter are still operating the business at Baddeck.

Martin Pinaud and his sons built the Micmac and the Vinco, very famous sailing boats.

He built fishing boats, pleasure yachts. Indeed he installed a small steam engine in one of them.

A Skerry man at Alberton was a famous boat builder and the Hutt Brothers are fine boat builders there now.

Jack Stentiford, Charlottetown bought the Vinco, put a cabin on her and he used her for many years as pleasure boat.

Art Warren, North River built a couple of boats. One of them was used to take produce from Charlottetown to the wharf at North River – it was a big boat.

Mr. Warren built some good ones.

My informant on this group of boats insists that I do not reveal his name.

The same man told me about Lem Winchester who as an engineer on a government boat – he was a brother of Harry Winchester, who owned the Charlottetown Condensed Milk factory on Longworth Avenue, in the area where Schurman's are located now.

Built Steam Engine Too

THIS MAN not only built a boat, he built a steam engine himself and installed it in the boat. This would probably be 60 years ago, my information tells me.

When I asked how Mr. Winchester could have built a steam engine in those earlier days – it might be well over 60 years ago – my informant suggests Winchester probably made the patterns and got the parts cast.

And this is one of the more interesting stories that have turned up since I had reference to Edwin Clark, Mt. Stewart several weeks ago, and said I was going to dedicate the columns on boats and builders to his memory.

Mrs. James Pendergast, 17 Dorchester Street writes: The information came to some of her children when they were asked to write something on P.E.I. ship building. The information came from Mrs. Pendergast's father, Tim Cullen, and this is what he said:

"There were some ships built at Stanley Bridge. I saw them often as they were being built. The head carpenter was Dan Fraser, Oyster Bed Bridge.

The Lairds of New Glasgow and the Gallants of Rustico also built ships.

The Barbara MacDonald

“JOHN A. MACDONALD, Cardigan built ships. Mr. MacDonald was aboard one of them when she was wrecked on the East Coast of Newfoundland” – it was Cape Pine, for I carried this story in detail on February 11, 1965.

The “Barbara MacDonald” was wrecked in a severe storm on her maiden voyage in December 1919. They left Georgetown on Saturday, December 6 and the new ship struck the outer rocks of Cape Pine on December 14, my column of 1965 said. MacDonald and his men had to climb a 350-foot cliff to safety.

Getting back to Tim Cullen and his story of boat builders, he said that Mr. MacDonald had his hair turn white overnight.

“The Simpsons of Bay View built five ships on the Cullen farm where I was born. This was about 1850,” Mr. Cullen told the Pendergast children.

Mrs. Pendergast adds, “Personally I often heard this shore field called “The Shipyard Field”.

She adds “My father often told us about the ships loading produce at Stanley Bridge. Potatoes were not bagged but hauled in bulk in carts.”

“ONE CAPTAIN was getting frustrated by the variety of turnips and potatoes, and trying to keep them separated in bins, in the hold of the ship. He was asking each farmer what kind of potatoes he had and one witty Irishman replied, “Raw ones”.

Mrs. Pendergast adds “My husband’s uncle, Pat Ledwell of Souris Line Road captained ships that were built by Peakes of Charlottetown.

The Yeos And Richards

“IN PRINCE County there were large shipbuilding yards at the Yeos and the Richards of Port Hill built many fine ships.

“Paul Costain built ships at Miminegash – one was called ‘The Briar’.

“When Summerside was Green’s Point it was a great source of shipbuilding yards.

“The LeFurgeys built the ‘Charles E. LeFurgey’ which had the reputation of being the largest ship built on P.E.I.

“Alberton was another great shipbuilding center and recently shipbuilding has become a thriving industry there.

“In fact,” Mrs. Pendergast adds, “nearly every river and creek on P.E.I. had ships of various sizes built on them.”

Murray Harbor Builders

JOHN MACNEILL, Murray Harbor had many names of men who built boats. “Quite a few are still living and are still active in the business. I have arranged those who are dead and those still living.

“I would like to single out one builder, Nelson Bell, of White Sands who I think has built more than any one of the rest, I don’t know the exact number, but he told me shortly before he died he had been building boats for about 40 years. And he had built as many as 14 in one winter.

"I think I would be safe in saying he built between 200 and 300 Lobster boats in his life time.

"There were a lot of sail boats built here too, but that is a little too far back for me to remember. Also Murray Harbor and Beach Point a lot of sailing ships were built in years gone by," Mr. MacNeill writes.

Men Who Have Died

THESE MEN built boats in the Murray Harbor area but are now dead:

Archie MacDonald, John MacDonald, Will MacDonald, Sandy MacDonald, Freeman Reynolds, James Herring, Heber MacLeod.

Philip Strickland was from Beach Point, so was Lemuel Baker; Will Derby Sr. was from White Sands, so were Nelson Bell and Oliver Giddings, Sr.

George Jackson was from Point Pleasant.

Boat builders in the Murray Harbor area who are still building boats include those names, according to Mr. MacNeill:

Billy Derby, White Sands; Raymond MacLean, High Bank; John Williams and Hughie Jackson, Beach Point

Those still active builders are from Murray Harbor: Carl Richards, Everett Robertson, Carl Richards, Vere Beck, Horace Beck, Tom Trenholm.

Builders who have built at least one boat include: Leon MacLeod, Laurie Gordon, Kenneth Beck and Luther Herring, Murray Harbor, Jack MacLeod and George MacNeill of Beach Point and Jim Richards of Abney.

There are more builders' names to come in a future column. My warmest thanks to those who have written or talked with me about them.

Bedeque Builders

FRED G. CLARK, Chelton, Albany RR 2 writes in interesting fashion about the names of three builders, all from Bedeque, and all have passed on some years ago.

They were William Ramsay, Hugh Murray and Sinclair Affleck, all of them builders of fishing boats.

"At that time," Mr. Clark explains, "boats were all built narrow, but Mr. Ramsay got the idea that a broad, flat boat would be driven over the water easier than through it. He built a boat of that type for a Nelson Owen of Malpeque. It was the joke of all racing boat owners of that period until the day of the race in Malpeque Bay which she easily won, powered by (I believe) a ten horsepower, Double-Head Bruce Stewart engine."