

**The Toronto Telegram, July 30, 1955.**  
**Schooner Days, MCCXXXI (1231).**  
**By C.H.J. Snider.**

### **That Schooner from Smith Falls.**

The *Acacia* mentioned as having been built at Smith Falls in 1873 was a stepper, too. The *Dundonald*, built near there earlier, is described in Thomas Register as "flat," meaning not that she was a scow, but pretty flat in the bottom. The *Acacia* was sharp, although she, too, had a centre-board. She was a good carrier, but neat as a yacht – good lines, clipperbow, pleasant sheer, neat stern. Sometimes she wore white, with a green trim, but she was at her best dressed in black, with red stripe at the coveringboard and light lead colour bottom. That was how Captain Byron Bongard of Picton, he who later took the first steamer *Turbinia* to the West Indies and back, kept her, he was not her first Captain or her last. "In the fourteen seasons I sailed her," said he, "she gave me very little work with the pumps." The *Acacia* was 102.3 ft. long, 24.2 feet beam, 9.6 ft. depth of hold, and registered 153 tons. She could carry 10,000 bushels of wheat or 300 tons dead-weight on 9 ft. draught, classed A1, and always hailed from Kingston, where her first owner registered her.

From model and dimensions the *Acacia* looked to the the handywork of Christopher Harris of Dog Lake, back of Kingston, who built the *Nellie Hunter*, of similar profile, at Dog Lake the following year, 1874. The *Nellie Hunter* a foot shorter and a foot wider, registered at 172 tons, although she was not so deep in the hold by five inches. She was usually painted white but in her later years wore black like the *Acacia*, but with yellow beading in the bulwarks and red underbody.

By 1910 the *Acacia* had been dismantled, and was towing, as a barge in the Bay of Quinte and St. Lawrence River, along with an older rival the ex-schooner *Annie Minnes*. Her putative sister, the *Hunter*, had been a tow-barge for sometime. We saw the *Acacia* and the *Minnes* side by side in Belleville harbour in 1910. Shorn of spars, the two hulls were in strong contrast – the *Acacia*, with plenty of spring left in her sheer; the *Minnes* old as Confederation, and a product of Hatter's Bay, Portsmouth, Ont., showing the bluffer bows and heavier quarters of a shallower model of earlier days. She was 8 feet 9 inches in the hold, and 2 feet shorter than the *Acacia*, but registered 172 tons, like the *Hunter*. By this time she had been towing for 10 years. The *Minnes* had been a good sailor.

The *Acacia* was still on the register in 1925, with Wm. G. Woodman, of Wolfe Is., owner. She may not have been in commission. The *Minnes* had gone then, and so had the *Hunter*.

These vessels had many adventures under sail. Some of the *Acacia*'s before she became a barge, will be told in future numbers.

[Transcribed G.B.M. Aug. 21 , 1976.]