

**Toronto Telegram, August 4, 1956**  
**Schooner Days MCCLXXXI (1281)**  
**By C.H.J. Snider**

## **Port Of Adventure**

It is no wonder that Oakville became a great port for yachts. Apart from the physical attractions and advantages it has a high sailing tradition of 130 years standing. The harbor, for 50 years a private enterprise of Colonel Wm. Chisholm, M. P., for Halton, was not completed until 1831, but next year the steamer *Constitution*, 350 tons, renamed the *Transit*, was built there. In the 1850's Oakville had nearly 1,200 steamboat calls a season. Three fine schooners – for their time – the *Trafalgar*, *Lady Colborne*, and *Mississaga Chief*, of from 50 to 85 tons, were built since 1828, and were trading to Rochester, Oswego and Prescott and Montreal, and by 1834, 16 schooners of aggregate burthen of 1,105 tons were using the port regularly.

None of these early schooners came down to our time, but we have known dozens of later Oakville vessels, and would like to talk about some of them.

You could always tell an Oakville vessel, Capt. David Reynolds, commodore of the RCYC launch service, used to say. It used to do me good in a strange port, away up above or down below, Chicago or Montreal – to see a pair of masts, lofty and wide spread, above the trestle or at the foot of the street. Especially if the mainmast raked more than the foremast. That would be like a letter from home. Get to the dock where the spars showed, and you would find of Oakville, on the vessel's stern, for that's the way they sparred them in 16 Mile Creek. All fore and afters (which means two spars in lake language).

I only mind two Oakville-built three-masters, the *Monarch*, and the *Three Bells*.

Even if Oakville wasn't on her stern you could tell by her hull that she was Oakville built. A good model, curved clipper bow with a good flare, well shaped stern, more raked and not so round like the Americans, and very smart in the paint. Rail and covering board and moldings and the thick strakes of the sides would be picked out in colours against other paint – red and green and lead colour if she was white, white or red or green and yellow if she was black. The older ones like the *Victoria* and *Royal Albert* and *Champion* had beautifully curved trailboards and carved figureheads, and the modern ones were plainer but good lookers. And boys-oh-boys they could sail!

More from David from time to time, for though he passed on years ago his enthusiasm for vessels and particularly Oakville vessels is vivid in memory.