

Toronto Telegram, June 9, 1934
Schooner Days CXLII (142)
By CHJ Snider

Fate of two *Folgers*

ANOTHER grim tragedy recounted by Warden Amos McDonald, of Prince Edward County, who was for twelve years lightkeeper at Salmon Point, or Wicked Point, on the county's western shore, was the loss of the *Henry Folger*, of Ogdensburg.

This American schooner was a three-and-after, and she was working down the lake in company with the Canadian schooner *Huron*. The latter was sailed at one time by Capt. John D. Vanalstine, whose son, Capt. Con Vanalstine, paid manly tribute to the great "Captain of captains" at the Cherry Valley Mariners' Service. The *Huron*, by the way, almost went down under Capt Vanalstine in Lake Huron sometime after the disaster here related, but he managed to get her into Southampton harbor. The *Huron* and the *Wilfred Taylor* were sister vessels, built at South Bay, and the *Wilfred Taylor* was later rebuilt and lengthened at Port Robinson, and renamed the *Stuart H. Dunn*. As such she was well known to Torontonians, being one of the Conger Coal Company's fleet from 1900 to 1913.

The *Huron* and the *Henry Folger* were both loaded for Kingston, in the fall of 1882, the one with grain, the other with coal.

"On the night of the 5th of December," continued the Warden at this Mariners' Service, "the lookout in the *Huron* reported the lights of the *Folger* to leeward of them, as they were steering to clear Long Point. It was a dirty night, and fear was expressed at the time that if the *Folger* did not tack she would fail to clear Wicked Point.

"And that is exactly what happened. The *Huron* stood on for Kingston, and reached port the following morning. Her crew's first question was 'Has anything been seen of the *Folger*?' As they were asking it a telegram was brought to the captain, stating that the *Folger* was a complete wreck on Wicked Point, with the loss of Capt. McDonald and his son, Willy, and all her crew; not only that, but eight or ten lake sailors who were coming home in her, after laying up their vessels for the season at ports further up the lake. In this way sixteen men, all hands, were drowned."

Capt McDonald's body was found with the head terribly battered. Physicians said that he was dead before he entered the water. The bodies of other victims also showed marked injuries. They had, apparently, been crushed by the falling spars, or had been dashed on the rocks. The body of young William McDonald was not found until the following spring.

There was another schooner *Folger* on Lake Ontario, the *B.W. Folger*, of Kingston, a small fore-and-after not to be confused with this three-masted schooner, which was lost. This *B. W. Folger* was about 100 feet long, and was engaged in the grain trade out of Kingston, and the return traffic in coal from the south shore ports.

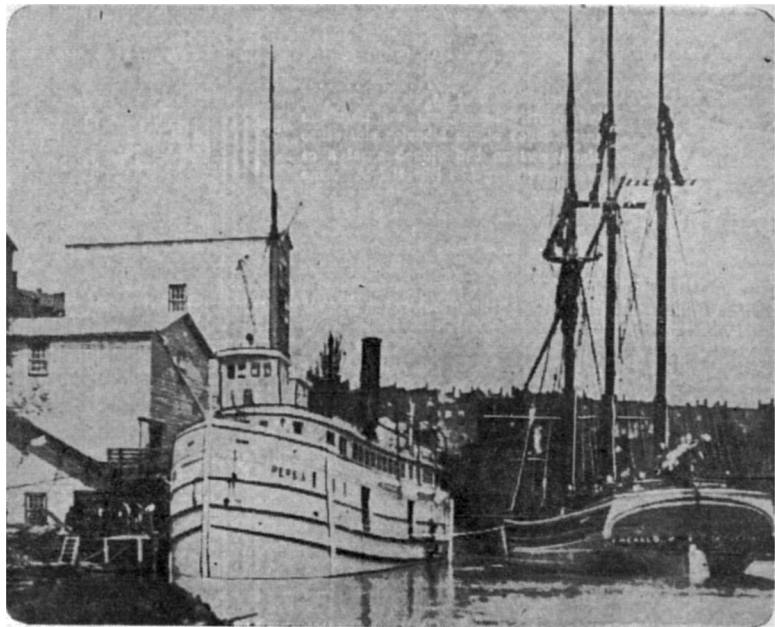
She achieved fame, in the 1890's, by approaching Sodus in a heavy gale and attempting the harbor entrance, although the seas that were running rendered the ablest vessels unmanageable. It was impossible for her to turn back, so her skipper drove her for the pierheads.

Within a hundred yards of the entrance a huge sea picked her up, almost turned her around, and swept her past the harbor mouth. Anxious watchers made sure that she would either crash on the pier itself or pile up on the sand of the beach and pound to pieces; but just when they expected the spars to fly out of her with the impact they saw her hove up by a second sea, larger than the first, and tossed clean over the pier-head into the comparative shelter of the channel.

Her centreboard was up, and she was drawing about five feet of water; but there was never a scratch or a scar on her keel or the crib-work. Once tossed over and dropped in the channel she answered her helm sufficiently to avoid taking out both sides of it at once and staggered up into the harbor unharmed.

The *B.W. Folger* was destroyed by fire about thirty years ago.

Warden McDonald has an inexhaustible store of memories of old Wicked Point. It was during his tenure as light keeper that the broken foremast of the lost *Emerald* came ashore on the Point. No one has ever fathomed the mystery of the loss of the *Emerald*, with Capt. Frank McMaster of Toronto, and his son and all his crew. She was last seen by the steam barge *Van Allen*, in mid-lake, with a prospering breeze, on the evening of November 15th, 1903. The night Capt McMaster was expected home, footsteps like the eager hurrying feet of himself and his son were heard in the side passage while his family waited supper for him in their west end home. They came to the door; but when the door was flung open in welcome there was nothing outside but the November darkness.



The lost "EMERALD" in the Welland Canal with the propeller "PERSIA", about 1880