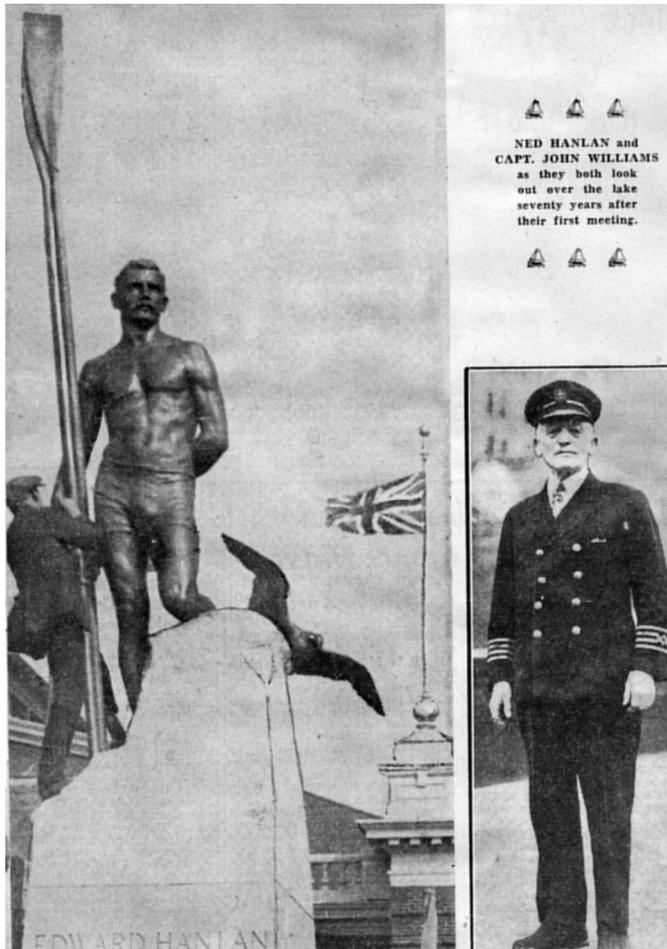


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By C.H.J. Snider

## Our Hero Meets Hanlan



*Ned Hanlan and Capt. John Williams as they both look out over the lake seventy years after their first meeting.*

for the Manxmen. One sailor lived forward. Dick Curphy with his accordion was again the captain and his brother Tom, with his fiddle, was mate.

They loaded lumber in Toronto for St. Catharines, this time a profitable trade for small vessels, for it meant short runs, and they started out with a smart southwest breeze. The farther across the lake they got the harder it blew, and with her topsails off the *Jenny Jones* was not making very good weather of it. Dick Curphy looked over his shoulder at the faintly flashing light on Toronto Point, now the sole evidence of land left in the night, and wondered whether to go on or to turn back.

"I know what I'd do with the vessel," said Tom, who, not being master, could boast all he

BEFORE he had got into his teens young Johnny Williams, master mariner to be and still so, had another adventure with his Manx acquaintances the Curphys. To recount it we have to turn back the clock a little, for it happened in 1869, the last year the family was in the *Rover*, and before they got the *Brothers*, mentioned in the last number of Schooner Days.

The first time Johnny Williams "went foreign," out of the paternal *Rover*, was in the *Mary Ellis*, with lumber to Oswego and a load of salt home. The Manxmen apparently had done well with her, and paid Muir Brothers off, and sold her at a profit, for they got a scow schooner named the *Jenny Jones* built at Amherstburg only seven years before and went into business in a more ambitious way. The *Jenny Jones* was a little bigger than the *Brothers*, which the Williams boys later sailed. She measured 48 tons, could carry a hundred, and required a crew of four. Johnny was again cooking

pleased and take no responsibility. "I'd take her across the lake or split her in two."

So Dick held on. But he never got her across the lake. Tom had his alternative. They split her.

Not into two even halves, but they opened her up so much with the pounding against the head sea that she leaked faster than they could pump the water out, and began to fill. With her lumber cargo she could float forever, but when water-logged she would lose her stability and roll over on her side.

So they did what every lakeman did when conditions got too stiff for him – ran back. That was the laker's recourse, if it blew too hard, or his vessel sprung a plank, or got afire, or the cook had the colic. He always regarded a headwind as an unmixed evil – and small blame to him – and where a saltwater man would heave-to and wait for better conditions, the lake man usually ran back towards shelter. He had to, for he had little sea room. Yet the Curphys knew their business, and rode out a November snowstorm hove to off Oswego.

When they got the *Jenny Jones* around without capsizing her they counted themselves lucky. She leaked less once she was free from the head-beating sea, and the lighthouse on the Point began to send forth stronger and stronger rays. Well after midnight they had it under their lee, and hoped to be in the Queen's Wharf Channel in half an hour. But alack, the wind shifted suddenly from southwest to northwest, and the *Jenny Jones*, lurching drunkenly as though all the water in her had been overproof spirits, would not look up to her course. She was too close in to the Island to pay off and run around the south face of Gibraltar Point, where she would have had shelter, and with all the water in her she was steering badly. First thing they knew her heel had grounded and she swung into the breakers, a wreck.

There was enough sea going, what with the leftovers of the southwester and the new wind from the northwest, to make her exceedingly uncomfortable. Her deckload started to go. They got the boat down from her stern davits and alongside, and the sailor from the forecabin crawled over the deckload and got in, and Tom Curphy was getting in, when he said "I'm not going to leave my new top boots or my fiddle!"

Back he climbed, and into the cabin, with a hearty fraternal curse from Capt. Dick, who was content to lose his accordion. Tom was down a long time in the water sloshing around on the cabin floor in the darkness, and Dick commenced to unsay what he had said, but then he reappeared, with his fiddle under one arm and his new boots under the other, and brother Dick's limited repertoire of endearments enjoyed a repeat performance. Top boots were fancy wear in those days – not the rubber seaboots of to-day, but leather ones for dressed-up occasions, knee high, sometimes varnished, always highly polished, with the front half of the top faced with red or blue kid or morocco, sometimes with cut-out patterns in black on the colored ground.

By this time the small boat bumping alongside was full of water, and the deckload was washing overboard. They were debating whether to take to the rigging or build a raft from the remaining planks when they heard a shout in the darkness, and, crawling forward between

breakers, saw a skiff tossing under the bows, with a lean lathy boy in it. He asked how many they were, and said he would take them off in one load, so they crawled out to the jibboom end, and dropped into his boat one by one as she rose on the crests. The boy was slight but strong, and they knew by the way he held his skiff on his oars that he was a master of his craft.

"We better get ashore right here," said he, "for our place is handiest for fixing you up."

In a few moments, holding his boat in the undertow until the right wave came along, he made a perfect landing on the sandy beach. They all dragged the little thing up high before the next wave broke.

"I'm Eddie Hanlan," said the youngster, "and this is my dad's place. Come on in." He was two years older than Johnny, light and wiry – "thin as a gad," Capt. Williams recalls. He led them to a fisherman's cottage, where a light was burning.

It all seemed very matter of fact then, but it tells like a fairy tale now, for ten years later, their rescuer was the world's greatest oarsman, who did more to put Canada on the sports map than any other "native son." Rightly, his native city has erected a monument to him, overlooking the lake which was his road to fame for himself and his land. There he stands on a granite pedestal between his sculls and his gulls, larger in bronze than he was in life, with one eye on the motor traffic ever whirling between him and the lake and the other eye on marching soldiers.

The spot where the *Jenny Jones* was wrecked was already known as Hanlan's Point, on the island where the family had lived and fished for many years. They spelled their name H-a-n-l-o-n then.

At this time there was little of the Western Sandbar, to be covered with airplane runways. The bar was invisible under water, and did not raise its head till twenty years later. The Queen's wharf, north of the present Fleet street, was the most southerly projection of the harbor front. South of it was a staked channel, and south of this again a stretch of shallow water, wide open, for a long way, before one reached Blockhouse Bay and Hanlan's Point on the then-distant Island.

When morning came the other Williams boys, and their father, for they had heard of the wreck, were anxious about Johnny, and keen for salvage. Salvaging was always a profitable job in the old days. Even if wreck and cargo were uninsured, the salvagers were certain of some share of what they saved for their trouble in saving it, and a Judge-in-Admiralty was sure to award them costs if the case had to go to court. So Johnny was delighted to again see his own ship, the little *Rover*, and his own family, so soon and so well employed, and went to work with them to get the *Jenny Jones* off. The weather had quieted, and the lake was smooth enough for them to work alongside. The *Jenny Jones* had not broken up, but she was full of water and bedded in the sand.

They worked hard getting the lumber out of the hold after they had gathered up the deckload. The planks floated up to the deckbeams and jammed there, but as the hours sped by they got her unloaded enough to try pumping her out. so as to lighten her still further, in

preparation for heaving her off to anchors carried out in deep water. But then the sou-wester started to blow again, and Hanlan's Point and the surrounding bars became a lather of whitecaps. To save herself from going on the beach, the *Rover* had to cut and run.

Pounding billows put their shoulders to the lightened *Jenny*, and drove her nearer the shore. When, like a desperate woman, she could stagger no farther they bounced her up and down on the sand till her oakum hung in dismal festoons from her burst seams. They roared aboard and filled her, and ebbd out to make room for more waves. The planks of her sides began to wash up the beach with the planks of her cargo. Her masts sloped, slanted, and fell. Between two days she became an untidy mass of broken staves, tossed along a few hundred yards of sandy shore. *Jenny Jones* had ended her days in the seventh year of her age.

This was the second and last shipwreck in the seventy years' sailing history of Captain John Williams. His first was when he was nine years old, in the *Rover*. Next week perhaps we shall have the story of one he escaped.

And, talking about wrecks, the Indian figurehead of the *J.G. Beard*, which young Johnny surveyed with some profit when that ship lay on the beach at Niagara in 1872, was the work of a Toronto craftsman. James Wallace, of Leslieville, was the carver, one of the Williams family's early neighbors.

Capt. Williams recalls him as a gentle, deeply religious man, who believed in reincarnation. He was not a ship carpenter, but had a shop near Ashbridge's Bay and included marine decorations among his woodworking.

This was not the first time Johnny had studied the *Beard's* figurehead, for as a child he had watched Wallace carve it and paint it in his workshop. In fact he had helped the carver move it about.

The Indian was about lifesize and stretched full length under the schooner's bowsprit, his heel touching the stemhead. This recumbent bowsprit position for a figurehead was used by many of the larger vessels, instead of an upright one upon the stem, so that the carving would not be destroyed when the stem mitred up against the gates of the canal. Some schooners discarded their cutwater-knees or figureheads for this reason and substituted an oak pad or bolster.

The Beard grain elevator was at the foot of Jarvis street, on the east side, close to the old City Hall where Joshua George Beard ruled as mayor. Later Hagarty and Grasett leased it, and their schooners like the *Speedwell* and the *Twilight* loaded there.

## **PASSING HAILS "RESUMPTION" MYSTERY**

"If guessing is still open, " writes that interesting commentator, W. Q. Phillips, from 153 Crawford street, Sarnia, "I think that the name of the schooner *Resumption*, built at Milwaukee in 1879, was suggested by the resumption of specie payments by the U. S. government in that year. They had been forced off gold during the Civil War, technically the Treasury had suspended gold

payments. This did not mean that gold disappeared, for it was in active use for exchange and the government collected taxes in gold or in gold values. One reason was that there had been an overissue of bills that came to be known as greenbacks, and were not full legal tender, and they clogged the circulation. So gold was at a premium and there was an active gold market. As business improved the excess paper circulation was absorbed, and eventually the Treasury resumed specie payments, not without a good deal of argument. One New York editor, Greeley, I think, made the epigram 'the way to resume is – to resume!'

"Anyway resumption was in the air and was used for the name of the schooner. It is not a word that would likely originate in a shipyard. I just remember, as a small boy, that U. S. bills were looked on with suspicion in Toronto, and U. S. silver was at 20 per cent. discount. Later on, in the early 90's, the U. S. Treasury reserve of gold dropped below the legal minimum of 100 million, but the fact was not made public. The Treasury offered an issue of gold bonds, and the Wall Street bankers would not subscribe. Pres. Cleveland was worried and sent for his friend, J. P. Morgan, the elder. J. P. went back to New York, called a meeting of bankers, and told them they were betting against the United States and would lose in the long run. He also offered to subscribe for the whole issue, and sell it through his banking connections in London and Paris. Magnificent bluff! Wall Street climbed down. They had the gold, for all large banks carried stocks at that time.

"This is no kind of yarn for an old sailor."

Schooner Days doesn't agree with the last paragraph, but everything else sounds convincing. Coupled with Mr. Barkhausen's discovery that the builders resumed schooner-building after a lapse of five or six years, and the *Resumption* was the first fruits, the mystery of the name disappears. "Resumption" was in the air and on everybody's tongue, and by coincidence schooner-building "resumed" in Milwaukee, so Wolf and Davidson commemorated the doubly blessed event with a name to puzzle sailors of a later generation.

In those good days, before the telephone directory supplied ships' names, ideas had a chance – even poor ones. For example, there was a slow, long-legged, high-sheered schooner named the *Annexation*, built in Goderich. W. R. Wakely's father, who taught him his sailing, was master of her at one time, and she nearly broke his heart with her general unhandiness. She was a standing-keeler, and as unpopular with lake sailors as annexation always has been in Canada.