

Toronto Telegram, November 4, 1944
Schooner Days DCLXV (665)
By C.H.J. Snider

“CHALLENGES” – from RED APPLE & BULLFROG

“RED APPLE,” an old friend of Schooner Days, contributes an interesting suggestion regarding the yacht *Challenge*, whose portrait by Armstrong in 1854 was given last week. His suggestion is not improbable. Some of the early lake yachts did “go into trade,” the last we recall being an America’s Cup aspirant. which was seized for rum-running in the 1920’s. Perhaps someone else can recall the “sloop-rigged craft called the *Challenge*” which carried supplies to Bruce Mines after capsizing in the Thousand Islands. It was a fault of the early centreboard yachts that they lacked stability, but they were safe when ballasted with cargo, and their light draught made them as handy for the North Channel and Manitoulin trade as it did for stonehooking on Lake Ontario. Red Paddle’s, or Mr. Burritt’s, letter follows:

“In your issue of Saturday last of the different crafts of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club on their ‘Run In’ and the very friendly descriptive comments from Gleasons Pictorial Magazine, Boston, of August, 1853, what particularly interests me is the prominent mentioning of the yacht *Challenge*. In your closing remarks you say you would like to hear more of the *Challenge*. Now if you care to jump from the years 1854 to 1858, I can hitch you on to a ‘*Challenge*,’ which may be the same craft. My father, the late Capt. Burritt, as a youth, after sailing through the seasons of 1853, ’54 and ’55 in the old-time wind-jammers on the lower lakes, went to the Georgian Bay and commercial trading to the Manitoulin and North Shore, and owing to his knowledge of- the North Channel was frequently engaged as pilot. I well remember his telling me of making one trip as pilot in a sloop-rigged craft called the *Challenge*. This was in 1858. She was loaded with supplies for Bruce Mines, the Bruce was then a working mine, to which port the supplies were delivered. While there was nothing unusual in this trip and I do not recall his commenting on the conduct of the craft while under canvas, yet I distinctly remember his telling me that he had been given to understand that the *Challenge* before ever coming up to Georgian Bay had capsized while cruising down among the Thousand Islands and a number of persons had been drowned on that occasion. Now this may or may not be the *Challenge* you are after, but a few things could happen in four or five years away back in the fifties.”

Yours-truly,
ALF. BURRITT.

There were three schooners named *Challenge* on the Great Lakes in 1864, the *Challenge of Youngstown*, 161 tons, *Challenge of Vermillion*, 247 tons, and *Challenge of Manitowoc*, 110 tons. The last named, built in 1852, is mentioned in a new book on the Great Lakes by a university professor as having “easily attained the phenomenal speed of 13 knots, and was noted for her agility and regularity of schedule.” The new book quotes one written a few years ago and that one quoted a claim made eighty years before.

No sailing vessel of 80-foot length makes 13 knots easily, and it is very seldom attained at all. The racing fisherman *Bluenose*, many feet longer than this *Challenge*, only ticked 13 knots once on a measured course. Seldom in the America's Cup races have those yachts reached 13 knots. Many of the large lake schooners after the *Challenge's* time went faster than that, for they had the length to do it, running over 200 feet, more than double the waterline length of *Challenge of Manitowoc* and four or five times her tonnage. The yacht *Challenge* of our immediate interest had a potential maximum speed of nine or ten knots. The lines of the *Challenge of Manitowoc* have been taken off and indicate a very fast centreboarder, but the 13-knot record may belong to *Challenge's* successor, the *Clipper City* of Manitowoc, by the same builder, Wm. Bates, a vessel 50 per cent larger, measuring 185 tons.

HOARSE BOOM of a Bay of Quinte bullfrog rises up in indignation against the suggestion of gaff topsails for Major Angus Mowat's ketch *Scotch Bonnet*, as follows:

Addressed to Mr. C. H. J. Schoonerdays.

From The associates of Bay of Quint Bullfrogs, Hungy Bay, Ontaraway.

Dear Sir—I am writing on ins'ns of commitee to say, we think you is nuts. Gaffn topsls is mighty romantic and I guess the little feller'd like 'em fine but you gotta be modern and a little feller with only one arm and a big chunk of a boat would do a lot better with a taller rig all in one piece and a winch agin the mainmast.

What we wrote to you about is to say that this here bit of a bald hedded kitch can't get no new rig onless this little feller brakes enough money out of writing a book for it on account he don't get payed for his work enough for it. So on behalf of the bay of Quinte bullfrogs assoc'n we want to thank you for what you said about his book, which if it makes him 5 hundred dollars he'll change his rig. But no gannf topsls mind you, he's got enough to do without pulley haulin any more ropes than there is.

yrs truly,

ABEL (the sailor) BROWN secy Bay of Quinte bullfrogs ass'n.

None of which shakes our belief that "Carrying Place," the second novel by Angus Mowat recently published by S.J. Reginald Saunders and Co., uses the Bay of Quinte background and foreground in masterly fashion. Major Mowat's close-to-the-water descriptions of small-boat behavior are a delight to all who sail, and his close-to-the-clay descriptions of human behavior are a delight to the many more who don't.

In "Carrying Place" he holds the mirror up to life in this world of our time, bounded by two world wars. His scene is mainly the northeast end of Lake Ontario; his geography is as clean and clear as lake water and limestone, and scorns camouflage, and so is his philosophy. But he never allows either to run away with his interest in human beings who think and act in English.

Bullfrog's amendment favoring marconi-ing in preference to setting gafftopsails is accepted in the spirit in which it is offered. That speerit isn't S%tbh, though. You can't marconi

very high on five hundred bucks.

(Caption) What is wrong with this picture? The man's right arm, hurt in one of the wars maybe, for he's been in both. You can see, he is steering with his left hand; and wearing one Scotch bonnet aloft and another below. Yes, you've guessed the \$64 answer, from the twinkle of devilment in his eye. This is ANGUS MOWAT, skipper of "*Scotch Bonnet*" and designer and builder of the newly launched novel "*CARRYING PLACE*."