

**The Toronto Telegramt May 14 1949.**  
**Schooner Days No. DCCCIC (899)**  
**By C.H.J. Snider**

### **Island Farming had its shadows**

'Twas tedious work flailing out a thousand bushels of grain, and during the vice-regency of Simon or Sanford Davis while Capt. John Walters was lessee of the Main Ducks it was decided to get an "open cellar" horsepower thrashing machine on to the island. Davis knew where one could be rented across the lake. Two Port Ontario, N.Y. , brothers, who had fished out of Point Traverse and the Ducks, were despatched with a small sloop fishcarrier to get it. Port Ontario was even then, eighty years ago, a decaying harbor thirty miles from Oswego, which had flourished and faded in an early boom. They took with them a man named Howard, of Bath up the Bay, and Henry Selleck, of Point Traverse, 27-year-old farmer of Loyalist extraction, likely a great gradson of Capt. Charles Selleck, of the schooner *LADY MURRAY*, who settled at Presqu'Isle before 1797. The name, long connected with lake sailing, is also spelled Sellicks and Selix. Both Canadian wives clung to their husbands and urged them not to go, but – you know what men are. They promised to come back.

The sloop was too small to attempt to get the thrasher down her single hatch-way, even if it were dismantled, so it was placed on deck athwartships, and made fast to the bulwarks, the mainboom being topped up to clear it. They waited till Aug. 31st, 1868, for fair weather for the hazardous run of about twenty miles. With the Main Duck in sight a thundersquall struck them. The sloop, topheavy with her awkward deckload and raised boom, capsized, filled with water, and sank under their feet. She had no boat. All there was to cling to was an oar and a loose hatchcover. It would barely float two. On the island they waited a long time for the sloop with the thrasher. They were patient there. Sometimes in off seasons they would send out their mail in sealed bottles, to be delivered or posted by whoever picked it up. Often they were glad of newspapers a month old floated across from Point Traverse by a log raft. But no fishcarrier or passing schooner or piece of driftwood brought information, and one of the Davises at last sailed over to Point Traverse to make inquires. A newspaper said that Howard's body had been washed up in front of his home, away up in Bath on the Bay of Quinte, as though keeping his word with his wife that he would come back. One of the Port Ontario men had turned up in Prince Edward and said yes, the sloop had capsized, but he couldn't very well say what had followed. He was washed up unconscious, or picked up unconscious, he didn't say where, but thought his brother would know. Brother had gone back to Port Ontario. Then Henry Selleck's body came floating to the doorstep where his young widow waited for him in her father's house on the Babylon shore of Prince Edward County, west from Port Traverse, where four houses clustered for company, and a fifth looked wistfully at them from the west.

She was Philip Dulmage's daughter, born by the hollow sounding waves and fated to suffer much from the water. She had thus lost her husband. ten years later her youngest brother, a strapping young sailor, was swept out of the anchorage at Point Traverse in a wild Hallowe' en

gale, and was found mounded in ice, frozen in his yawlboat under Stony Point light, on the farther side of the lake. It was Capt. John Walters who brought his body home for burial. Twenty-five years afterwards, when her baby Johnny, orphaned so young, had grown to man's estate and was a seasoned sailor, he also was lost with all his ship mates, when the Toronto schooner *EMERALD* vanished without a trace on the last trip of the season, in November, 1903. He and Edwin Ashley had been persuaded to join her in Oswego for one more trip, instead of coming home with their home schooner the *ANNIE MINNES*.

*(Picture). Young Henry Selleck and the bride to whom he returned with mangled hands. From a faded photograph, sweet with its savor of Zouave jackets, Greek frets, hoopskirts and fashions prevalent after the American Civil War.*

*(Picture). Barns at the boat harbor in the Main Duck.*