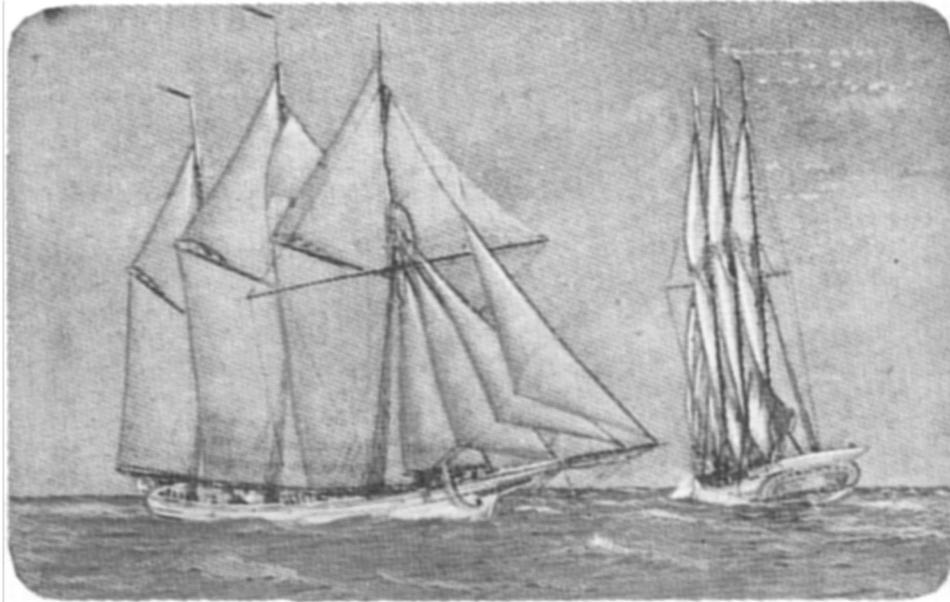


Toronto Telegram, November 4, 1950  
Schooner Days CMLXXVI (976)  
By C.H.J. Snider

### Famine made strange bedfellows



*The ANNIE M. PETERSON and her sister schooner MOONLIGHT of Milwaukee, before they were cut down.*

THOUGH her masts fell and the seas burst over her as she pounded her heart out on the bottom at Cobourg on that night of Dec. 2nd, 1902, the *Jessie Drummond* did not go to pieces all at once. Edge-bolted and through-fastened, with iron strap knees, the tough Ontario oak and blacksmith iron Melancthon Simpson put into her in 1864 held together for a full thirty-eight years, long enough for the Donelly wrecking outfit from Kingston to salvage some of the precious coal the *Drummond* was bringing to Cobourg.

It was, as said earlier, at the end of the coal strike of 1902, when everthing that could float was pressed into service before the freeze-up, to grab the coal when it began to come again from the mines. My brother and I then owned a small schooner named the *Wood Duck*, which could carry at most 2 ½ toise of stone, or about 25 tons dead weight, with eight inches of free-board. We were offered (to us) a fortune to bring in 15 tons of coal from Oswego for a Toronto civic official. We thought it over carefully, and with great reluctance declined the offer. To which we attribute our longevity. The coal would have gone through the *Wood Duck*'s bottom the first jump she took in the December seas.

### GREAT BIRD OF PASSAGE

In Toronto late that fall we got acquainted with vessels which had become legendary Up Above, that is, on the upper lakes where they had long plied. The *Annie M. Peterson*, for

example, a big Lake Michigan schooner which could swallow two of our Old Canal vessels - and a hundred *Wood Ducks* - appeared at the foot of Bay street one frosty morning with the harbor skimmed over with ice, with a "half-cargo" of 800 tons of very welcome coal. She had been cut down to a barge by this time, but still looked impressive, with her fine bold clipper bow, well turned quarters, graceful sheer, and smart paint.

She was lead-color below the white above, with plenty of black, red and green striping and beading. She was 190 feet long, 33 feet beam and 13 feet deep in the hold. When full-rigged the truck of the *Peterson's* mainmast was 156 feet above the deck.

She was built in Green Bay, Wis., in 1874, and kept going for 40 years outlasting the venerable *Drummond*, built ten years earlier, by two. She foundered seven miles east of Grand Marais, Nov. 19th, 1914, drowning her crew of seven men.

The *Nelson Bloom* was another big boy from "above" with which we then got acquainted; tastefully painted in white and brown. Another was the *Abbie L. Andrew* of Toledo, which then came to Toronto for the first time, or after a long absence. She had all three topmasts struck, with their heels ten feet below the trestletrees, to stiffen up her lowermast heads. They all seemed to have been sprung. She never went back to Lake Erie, but plied around Ontario under jury rig for ten years or more.

In contrast with such exotic strangers were homely little craft seldom seen off the Bay of Quinte, although even they were ten times the tonnage of our pigmy. There was the steam barge *Water Lily*, green as remembered, with the red-leaded *Rob Roy* in tow, the pair of them managing about 250 tons of coal between them in their winter loads. And the *Aberdeen*, another little rabbit from the Bay, sitting on her own tail with the weight of her boiler and engine, but valiantly adding her few scuttles to the fuel pile.