

MUSKOKA

REFLECTIONS

In the lake's placid reflections are mirrored past, present and even glimpses of the future

Welcome aboard!

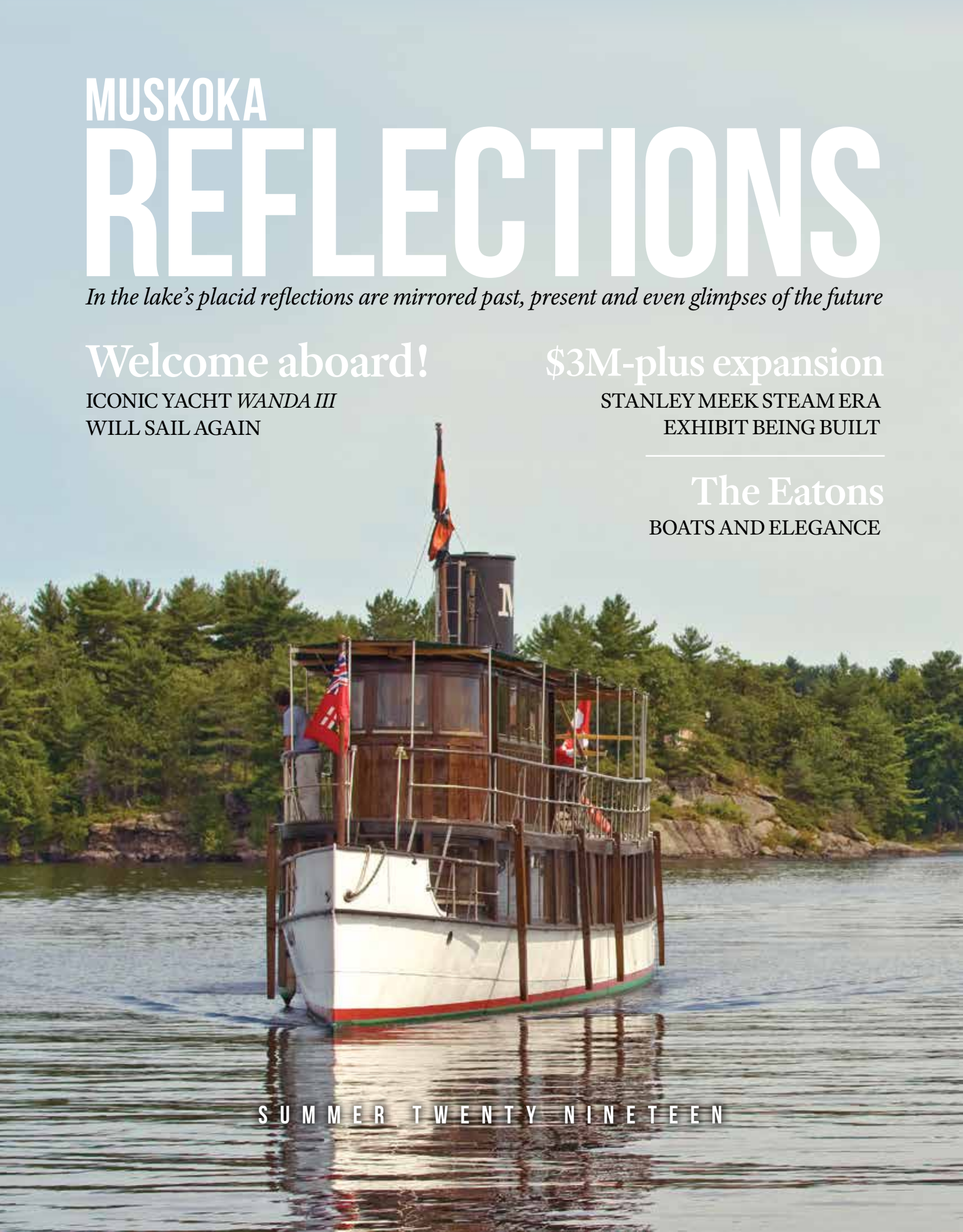
ICONIC YACHT WANDA III
WILL SAIL AGAIN

\$3M-plus expansion

STANLEY MEEK STEAMER
EXHIBIT BEING BUILT

The Eatons

BOATS AND ELEGANCE



SUMMER TWENTY NINETEEN



LAKE MUSKOKA - \$3,450,000

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A celebration of an era

NEW LOOK MAGAZINE IS JUST PART OF AN EXCITING YEAR

Welcome to our redesigned Reflections! We have partnered with Dockside Publishing to give our magazine a new look with powerful images and styling that will compliment our heritage stories, offerings and perspectives. We hope you like it!

As our cover says, The Steam Era Exhibit project is now a reality. It's a boathouse for *Wanda III* and so much more. Since I arrived in the spring of 2001, the challenge of preserving this one-of-a-kind historic artifact has been

daunting. You will read in this issue that not only are we ensuring her protection going forward, we are also developing a new exciting attraction for Muskoka which will create jobs and bring more people to our region. But more importantly, it will strengthen the sustainability of the Muskoka Discovery Centre ... truly, a cause for celebration!

With the excitement of our newest exhibit, Watershed Wonders, in 2018 and the Steam Era project this year, we want to remind you about our core business: cruises and private charters, exhibits, educational programs, special events and unforgettable experiences. Please think of us next time you are entertaining guests, planning special occasions or just feel like dressing up as a pirate on Sunday mornings....

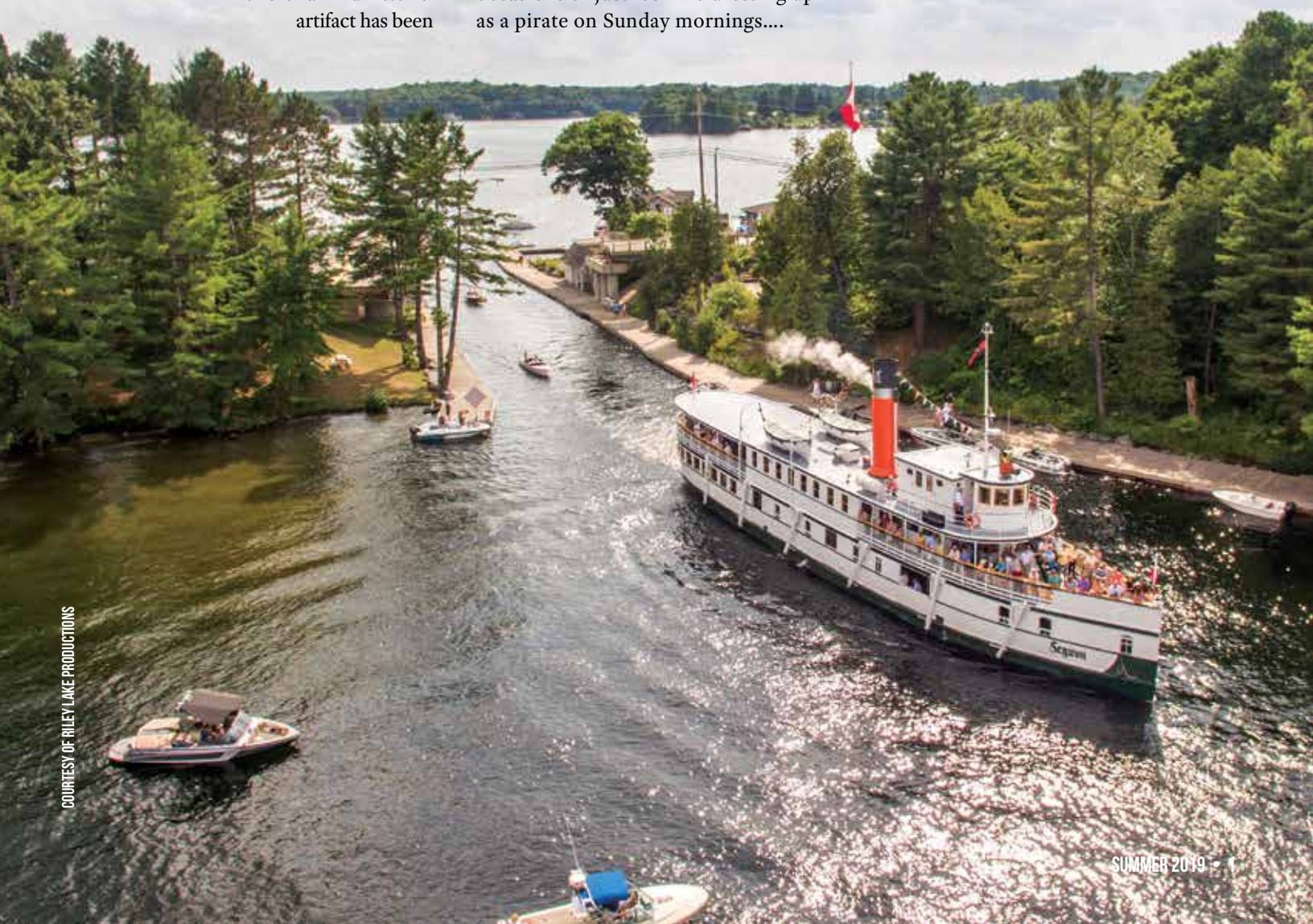
There is only one Muskoka, and this is the authentic way to experience it.

See you this summer!



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Miller'.

JOHN MILLER PRESIDENT





MUSKOKA REFLECTIONS

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MUSKOKA REFLECTIONS

MUSKOKA STEAMSHIP & DISCOVERY CENTRE

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Wildlife and wooden boats

COURTESY OF JORDAN WAINES



Touring with tech

Explore the Muskoka Discovery Centre using our new Self-Guided Tour App. Download our app and connect with our beacons to receive extra information and games as you Laugh, Learn, Discover, and Explore the Muskoka Discovery Centre year-round.



Skilled volunteers

Heritage Boatworks has been busy this year building a new mast for the *RMS Segwun* and restoring the Phoenix. When cruising onboard this summer don't miss the opportunity to see the quality craftsmanship of our volunteers from Heritage Boatworks. Learn more about these projects on pages 33 and 34.

Wonders of the watershed

Watershed Wonders, our newest world class exhibit, will continue to amaze you! Didja Know that the Cerulean Warblers are an interior forest species that nest and feed high in the tree canopy?

Family fun

Meet our new aquarium friends – a snapping turtle and a beaver in the amazing Watershed Wonders exhibit. Kidzone, our Family Engagement space, has fun for everyone. And there's even more fun to be found on board *Wenonah II* with our family-themed cruises.



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Find us on Facebook **ACBSToronto**



New ship commentary

For 2019 *RMS Segwun* and *Wenonah II* will have a new automated commentary system to provide passengers with interesting facts and information during their cruise. This will make commentary available on all cruises. Live commentary will continue to be provided on select cruises.

Glorious wooden boats

Immerse yourself in the Murray Walker Grace & Speed boathouse as you view our collection of beautiful mahogany boats built in Muskoka, as well as an amazing collection of canoes, kayaks and rowing skiffs.



2019 FEATURE EXHIBITS

- On The Water
- Didja Know Wooden Boats
- Charlie M. (1849 - 1929)
- Songs to Enjoy
- Muskoka Lakes Golf & Country Club Celebrating 100 Years

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At long last, a home for *Wanda III*

DONATIONS ARE KEY TO COMPLETING EXCITING PROJECT

What to do with Margaret Eaton's steam launch *Wanda III* has been an ongoing challenge since she stopped sailing as part of our fleet in 2003. On her own she is an important piece of Canadian maritime history. She was built in 1915 to be the fastest launch on the Muskoka Lakes for the use of the Eaton family and their friends. She was built to not only be fast, but also elegant and representative of the Edwardian era. While the *RMS Segwun* represents the use of steam power for the public, *Wanda III* was the privilege of the wealthy.

Stan Meek, with over 25 years of leadership in our organization, and his generous donation of a matching grant of \$500,000 in 2018, was the catalyst that began the successful journey to arrive at where we are today. Jack McIrvine, responding to Stan's lead, has provided

a substantial contribution to the project sponsoring his passion, the continued running of *Wanda III*, with the electrification project. The journey has included two years of planning on how to celebrate the legacy of *Wanda III*.

Well, a major event occurred on January 31, 2019 when we received a letter from the Federal Minister of Culture and Heritage granting our requested \$950,000. This grant will significantly contribute to fund the building that will house a Steam Era Exhibit that will illustrate and celebrate a wonderful and exciting period of Canadian history. And *Wanda III* will be the central attraction.

We are delighted to announce that over 70 per cent of the \$ 2.7M funding is in place and the public campaign and additional funding applications are in progress.

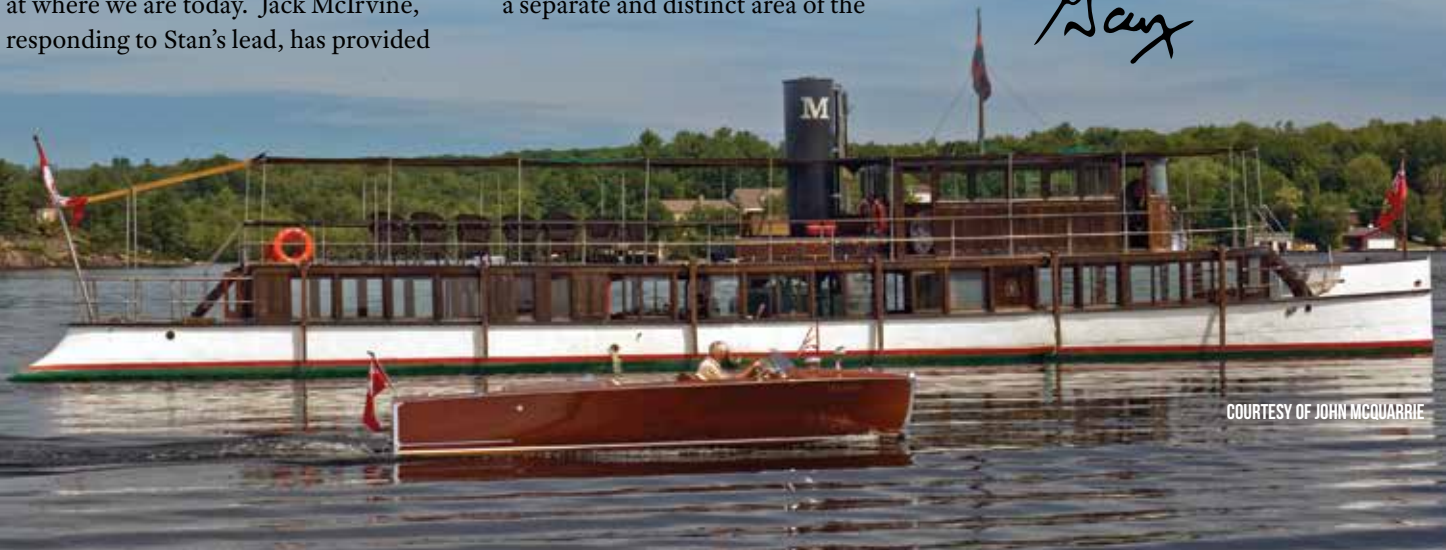
The Steam Era Exhibit will be a separate and distinct area of the

Muskoka Discovery Centre so a visitor will enter and experience the full impact of the exhibit. While the *Wanda III* will be obvious by its size, the exhibit will include audio visual displays and related artifacts highlighting at least six different aspects of the steam era (defined as 1830-1930) including indigenous people.

I wish to thank all the contributing writers and photographers. We hope that you as readers will join us in celebrating the culture and heritage of Muskoka and become members of the Muskoka Steamships & Discovery Centre.



GARY GETSON CHAIR



COURTESY OF JOHN MCQUARRIE

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Join us

PURCHASE A MEMBERSHIP FOR YOURSELF OR AS A GIFT

A membership to the Muskoka Steamship & Discovery Centre is great value for a good cause. Buy one to get involved, or get one as a birthday or anniversary gift for that hard-to-buy-for person.

Membership is a great way to support the 132-year old *RMS Segwun* and the Discovery Centre, and save the old Muskoka story for future generations.

For many members, the most popular benefit is the annual members' cruise in May. We hold our Annual General Meeting on this cruise, a chance for like-minded people to celebrate their love of ships and heritage. Each member has a vote at the AGM.

And the members' cruise is just the beginning. Members and their guests get 10 percent off admission to the Muskoka Discovery Centre. And on designated

days, members receive free admission to the Discovery Centre (this year on Saturday, July 13, Saturday, August 3, a Christmas mingle on Dec. 13 and dates in February and June 2020.)

Membership fees and donations remain a major source of revenue for Muskoka Steamships & Discovery Centre. Donations of any size are appreciated and are eligible for a tax receipt.

Member support lets us carry on the important work of being a leader in preserving, promoting and celebrating the culture and heritage of Canada's Muskoka District for current and future generations. Membership is just \$65 single, \$100 per family/grandparent or \$220 as a Captain (which includes a \$150 tax receipt).

To join contact Pat Durrant MS&DC Membership Coordinator at 705-687-2115 or membership@realmuskoka.com

WE APPRECIATE OUR SUPPORTERS. AS A MEMBER, YOU WILL RECEIVE:

- 10% savings on admission to Muskoka Discovery Centre
- 10% off rental of any Discovery Centre event space.
- 10% savings per adult member on public cruises –(not applicable on additional cruise tickets).
- Free subscription to this Muskoka Reflections magazine, published three times a year and full of steamship news, events, tales of Muskoka's colourful history and more.
- Discounts on some special events at the Muskoka Discovery Centre.
- Discounts on special cruise opportunities.
- E-blasts with news and discount messages, including special last-minute pricing on cruises and Discovery Centre events.
- An exclusive downloadable telephone ringtone of the *RMS Segwun* whistle.

The Stanley Meek Steam Era Exhibit

Donate at www.realmuskoka.com or call 705-687-6667

Funded in part by the Government of Canada



COMING IN 2020 TO MUSKOKA DISCOVERY CENTRE!



SPECIAL EVENTS ON LAND

On the horizon at Muskoka Discovery Centre

Daily art projects and STEM experiments

July and August, rain or shine.

In the Kidzone Family Engagement space.

Captain Corbin Magic Shows

July 14 and September 1 at 2:30 p.m.

Zoo to You

July 27, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Repeat presentations January 4 and 5, 2020

Team T&J performance

August 7, 2:30 p.m.

Celebrate Culture Days with Musical Memories

September 27

MDC Kids Camps

All summer. Camps also take place on PA days, Christmas holidays and March Break.

Speaker Series

Throughout the year.

Visit www.realmuskoka.com for complete list of speakers



Pirate Themed Cruise



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF RILEY LAKE PRODUCTIONS

SPECIAL EVENTS ON THE WATER

On board RMS Segwun & Wenonah II

Cruise season for 2019

May 25 to October 19. Please check website for cruise schedules for RMS Segwun & Wenonah II, including daytime cruises, Millionaires' Row and Sunset Dinner Cruises.

THEMED CRUISES FOR 2019

Walkers Point Canada Day Fireworks Cruise

June 29

Pirate Cruises

July 7, 14, August 4, 11, 18, 25, September 1

Wiggles Party Cruise

August 3

Princess Cruise

August 17

Sip & Sample Dinner Cruise

September 21

Thanksgiving Dinner Cruise

October 12

Kids Hallowe'en Cruise

October 19. Featuring Amazing Corbin followed by Octoberfest Cruise to finish the 2019 sailing season.



Walkers Point Canada Day Fireworks Cruise



Princess Cruise

Ship-side romance

PIRATE RETURNS FOR MUSEUM WEDDING



Where was your ceremony?

We had our ceremony and reception at the Muskoka Discovery Centre. My mother surprised me and had contacted Jeffrey Crawford of Jeffrey Crawford Creative Event Drapery to drape the whole museum wall in white and fairy lights, with beautiful white chair covers, and a fairy tale aisle runner. They completely transformed the museum not once, but twice. We had the guests and the wedding party step outside to take photos and leave the space for a short time. The museum was then changed from ceremony to reception, the drapery allowing the purple and green to stand out.

We were very lucky to have our wedding on such a warm and sunny day in September. The immediate surroundings of the museum were

perfect for photos. We enjoyed a little slice of nature and waterfront just before sunset. There was more than enough parking for our guests, and some guests were able to book rooms at the Marriott Residence Inn next door for an easy trip to bed for the night.

Had you been on the ships before deciding to have your wedding at the museum?

Cameron has joined me on the ships for cruises as it is a necessary stop when visiting home. I worked for the company for five summers, in the ticket office making reservations, answering phone calls and greeting guests. I also participated in the Sunday morning Pirate Cruises aboard *Wenonah II* with Captain Ron. My alias was Scurvy Sally for a couple years.

Tell us about something funny or touching that happened on your wedding day.

It was in a panic the day before the wedding because I thought I didn't make enough origami bouquets for the wedding party. I kept counting how many bouquets I had, then how many heads were sitting around me. It wasn't until the morning when we were walking into the hairdresser's that I realized my brother had a boutonniere and didn't need a bouquet. It was one of those moments my mother and I were going over details in the car trying to make sense of it that we had a simultaneous moment of revelation: "Ted doesn't need a bouquet."

Christi and my mom, Linda, are the main reason everything went so smoothly that day. They were able to take my ideas and go even further. My sister previously worked with Muskoka Steamships as the Sales Manager. They went to Ann Curley for me, while I was working in Toronto and Hamilton, and worked out every detail.

One of our first decisions was to have Don Potter of Muskoka Catering as our caterer for the evening. We were able to give him an idea of what we wanted to eat, and he came back with a menu proposal that was perfect. We contacted Muskoka Party Rentals for the linens, including tablecloths and runners.

*Rebecca Stokes and Cameron Smart:
September 15, 2018*



What did you do to make your wedding stand out?

For the cake, I was honoured to have my best friend Shannon Doherty of Shannon’s Soul Sweets (@shannonssoulsweets) make and decorate our three-tiered carrot cake with cream cheese icing and hand-made butter cream flowers.

I made it a bit different by making most of the flowers myself. I started folding paper one day, sometimes making these patterns that involved a bit of glue. After creating about 50 flowers in a few origami varieties, I decided I would create the bouquets myself – and maybe save a little money. I went on the hunt for some supplies like shiny earring studs for centres and paper I could fold or cut to size and fold. My mom, sister and I texted daily, and sent different sample photos off Pinterest or Google back and forth for a few months. Every day I made it a priority to fold at least one flower, or six petals while I drank my coffee in the morning or while I decompressed before bed. Soon I had over 300 paper flowers in a variety of sizes that I had also stemmed individually. I am quite proud of the flowers as I arranged the bridal and maids’ bouquets. I made sure each one had a Tardis-blue flower, for good luck and something blue.

I handed over all the remaining flowers I had to my mother and she took it upon herself to arrange individual bouquets for all the table centres. It was a lot of work, and she spent a couple months arranging, and then waiting for me to show up with another batch to go in. It made the day feel really special to know that we had put so much work and effort into it and that the bouquets could be taken home and easily kept.



PHOTOS BY DAN PETROGIANI, CHILLI PEPPER PRODUCTIONS



The Centre was dressed with fairy lights and draperies, then transformed again for the reception while photos were taken outside.



WANDA III IS GOING GREEN!

JACK AND BRITT MCIRVINE WANT YOU TO MATCH THEIR PLEDGE TO UPDATE WANDA III

It's going to cost close to \$400,000 to electrify *Wanda III* and put her in first class condition to sail the Muskoka Lakes once again. We can operate *Wanda III* if she is powered by electricity instead of steam. Jack and Britt McIrvine, very long time supporters of the steamship organization, have very generously pledged \$200,000 or 50 per cent on a matching basis to make her a zero-emissions yacht. That means to get the job done we need the community to come forward and match their support for this refit of *Wanda III*. She is going to be a feature of the Stan Meek Steam Era Exhibit.

Electric power is not as modern as you might think: Some ships were powered with electricity more than 120 years ago. But it certainly is ecologically friendly. We are going to leave the historic First World War-era triple stage steam engine in place and use electricity to turn the motor while she is cruising to demonstrate the beauty of a steam engine in motion.

Wanda III's hull is actually in pretty good shape, but there is some work to be done with upholstery, varnish on the interior paneling, and carpeting. We also have to renew and replace all the safety and navigation equipment, including life rafts, in order to comply

with current Transport Canada standards.

Wanda will live in a protected environment in the new building at the Muskoka Discovery Centre and be on display in a dedicated slip. There will be solar panels on the green roof to charge her new batteries. She will also have a lift capable of bringing her 60 tons out of the water for winter storage and regular maintenance. *Wanda* will be preserved indefinitely!

Ron Sclater, a former captain of *Wanda III*, said "she has a very special feel or personality that bring peace and calm to her passengers. It's very elegant being out on the lake with her, regardless of the weather."

Thanks to Jack and Britt McIrvine's generosity and interest in the environment *Wanda* will once again become a unique operating historic

artefact just like the *RMS Segwun*. It is important to preserve these ships as a unique experience for present and future generations.

So please donate today and help match their very generous pledge! Help us go green! Every dollar donated counts as two.



Britt and Jack McIrvine have pledged to match donations up to \$200,000 in order to fund converting Wanda III to a zero-emissions yacht.

Your support helps keep us afloat

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A roadmap to excellence

MASTER PLAN WILL GUIDE GROWTH OF THE MUSKOKA DISCOVERY CENTRE

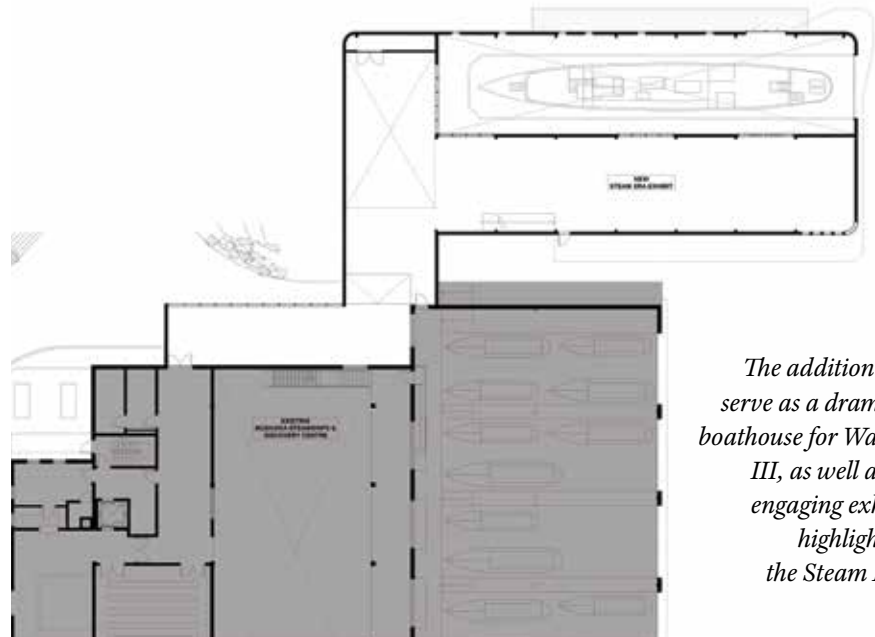
The Muskoka Discovery Centre is becoming one of Ontario's leading cultural attractions. To get us there, we are expanding our offerings, and enhancing the way we tell the fascinating story of Muskoka.

Last fall, the Muskoka Steamship & Discovery Centre commissioned Reich + Petch (R+P) to prepare a Master Plan that will guide the development of the Muskoka Discovery Centre (MDC) over the next five years. The objective is to help turn MDC into one of the leading cultural attractions in Ontario for tourists and residents.

To develop the plan R+P did an extensive review of the existing facility, examined the archives, held workshops to solicit the views of a cross section of people and analyzed the findings of special surveys of MDC customers. They interviewed management and members of the Board of Directors and reviewed the organization's Vision, Mission and Mandate.

They looked at the big picture and a multitude of detailed aspects of all the existing exhibits. They identified the strengths and weaknesses and recommended ways to improve the present offerings.

It quickly became clear to R+P that if MDC is to become a leading attraction in



Ontario, we would have to substantially increase the number of displays, themes and stories in order to provide a highly memorable visitor experience.

Specifically, R+P endorsed and recommended that the MDC continue to pursue the Steam Era Exhibit project. That would involve a significant addition to the existing building and include a facility to house and preserve the famous Wanda III. They helped management write the interpretive programming that that helped secure a critical grant from the federal government. They also recommended proceeding with a long overdue addition and renovation to the

front of the MDC to address facility deficiencies and add more exhibits.

Progressive cultural institutions today recognize the need to continuously renew their offerings. New interactive technologies can tell old and new stories in a more engaging and entertaining manner. R+P, who is renowned in the museum field, has provided a roadmap. As we implement their many recommendations, MDC will become even more revered in the District of Muskoka and the Province of Ontario.

– Rick McGraw, Revitalization Committee Chair

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SPECIAL EDITORIAL FEATURE

Timber Titan

FEW PEOPLE HAVE LEFT A MARK
AS IMPRESSIVE AS CHARLES MICKLE'S

*John Bull was an 'alligator,'
an amphibious tug that mainly
worked on Lake of Bays.*



It was a building boom like nothing Muskoka has seen since, a time when ambitious young men flocked to Gravenhurst knowing there were fortunes to be made.

One of those men was Charles Mickle, and his footprint can still be seen in some of Muskoka's grandest buildings.

Mickle was born in Guelph in 1849, the son of a mill-owner. In 1877, when the younger Mickle was 28, he set out for Muskoka with plans to tie his fortune to the region's enormous lumber bounty.

His timing was perfect. Two years earlier, the railway had finally arrived in Gravenhurst and announced that the line would not be extended for at least another ten years. Mills sprang up all along the shores of Muskoka Bay: by 1880 there were at least fourteen mills operating around the bay, giving Gravenhurst its nickname, Sawdust City.

One of those mills belonged to Charles Mickle.

Mickle had formed a partnership with William Tait of Orillia to build a sawmill near the Muskoka Wharf. The business became instantly successful and within a year and a half Mickle bought out Tait and purchased an adjoining mill.



*Charles Mickle (in bowler hat)
and family aboard his wife's
pleasure yacht, Priscilla.*

‘The company was cutting 14 million board feet of lumber a year.’

In 1884, Mickle formed a partnership with Nathaniel Dymont of Barrie. The new enterprise became known as the Mickle-Dymont company and it became the largest of its kind, also operating mills in Bradford, Barrie, Severn Bridge and Fenelon Falls. Eventually, the company was renamed Mickle-Dymont & Sons.

In Muskoka, the timber was cut in winter and transported by horse teams to nearby rivers. Once spring arrived, the Muskoka River became a log transportation highway, with thousands of logs flowing downstream to Lake Muskoka.

Once they reached the lake, they were towed to the mills in Gravenhurst Bay. Pine, birch, spruce, hemlock, tamarack, maple and ash were cut, sorted and milled, with most of this product loaded on rail cars and destined for the United States and Great Britain.

Fire was a constant risk in Sawdust City, and in 1890, Mickle’s first mill burned down. He didn’t rebuild, but by 1894, he had opened a planing mill that produced doors, sashes and trim.

The Mickle-Dymont conglomerate was very successful, but signs were already emerging that the lumber was beginning to run out. Only large-scale operations like Mickle’s could succeed. By 1905, the Mickle-Dymont company was cutting and milling an average of fourteen million board feet per year, and the company continued to be financially successful.

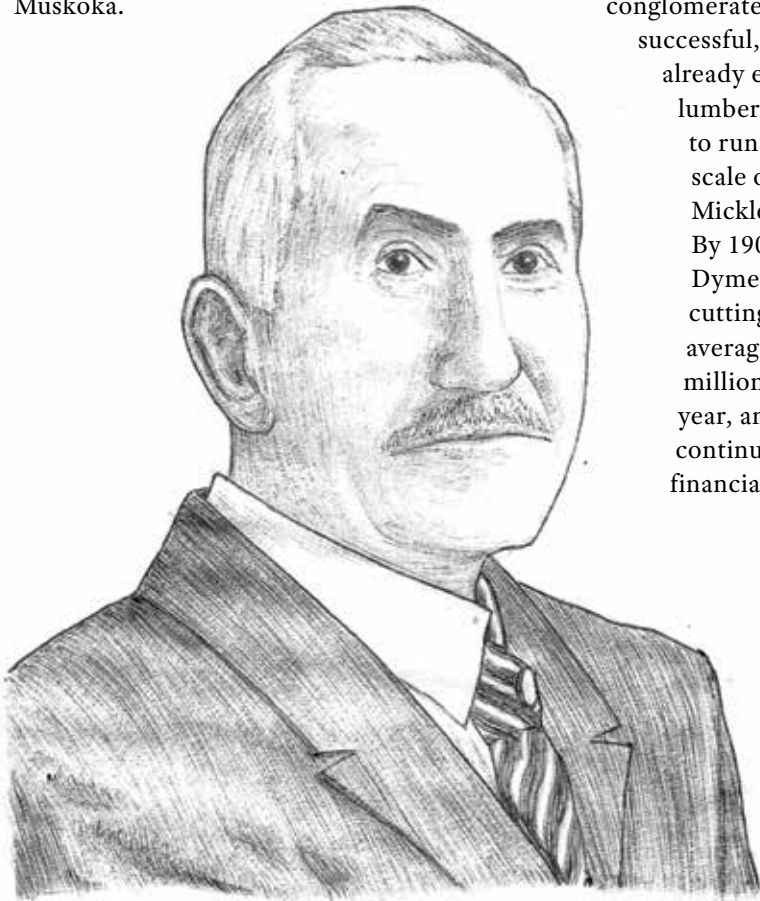
But problems were looming. As the population around Muskoka grew and more watercraft plied the Muskoka lakes, homeowners, boaters, and the growing number of cottage owners began to complain loudly about the logs blocking the river. Complaints about logs jamming access into Bracebridge grew so loud that in 1909 the town decided to lay charges against Mickle for delaying navigation and mail delivery. Three years later the federal government became involved in the problem, issuing an order-in-council prohibiting the lumbermen from driving loose logs down the river after July 10th without the use of booms. Mickle continued to ignore the order and in the following year he was given an extension to the end of July. The problem gradually resolved itself over time as the volume of timber diminished and other sawmills began to close. By the early 1920s, the big log drives had ended.

In 1926, the Mickle-Dymont mill in Gravenhurst closed its doors, the last of the Gravenhurst mills to close.

WOOD ON THE WATER

Running a large operation like the Mickle-Dymont company also required a fleet of boats. Tugs were needed to

Charles Mickle Sr. twice served as mayor, and oversaw the construction of the town’s Opera House.



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transport logs across the lakes, and many owners – Mickle included – also acquired pleasure boats.

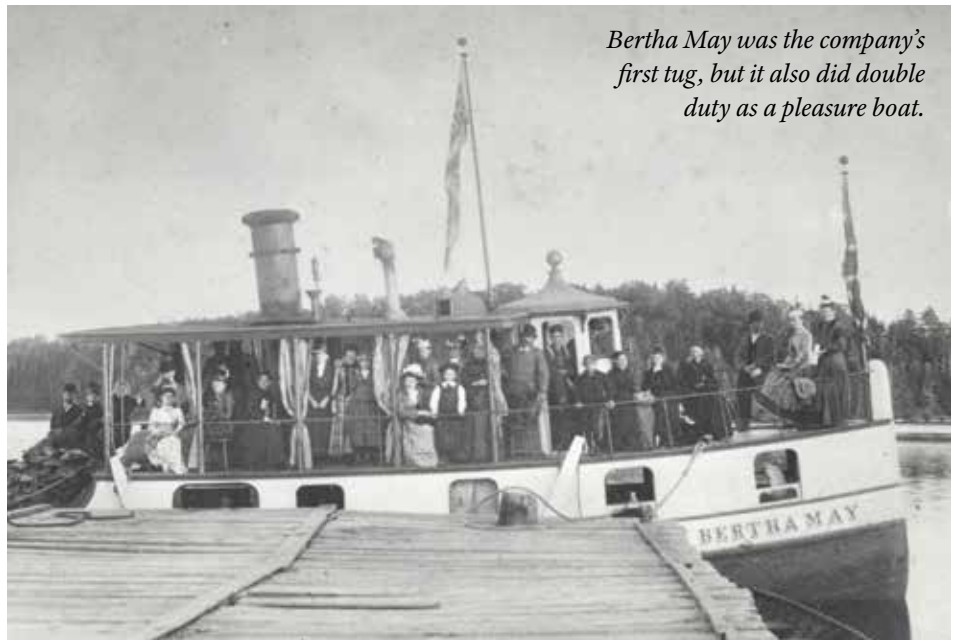
The company's first tug, named *Bertha May* after Mickle's daughter, was acquired in 1886. This was followed three years later by the *Herbert M.* Both tugs operated until 1908.

A third tug, *Wawonaissa*, was built in 1897. Mickle-Dyment bought it in 1902, had it lengthened from 36 ft to 49 ft, and renamed it *Nishka*. It doubled as a tug and pleasure craft and was used on Sparrow Lake, eventually being moved to Lake of Bays. Another tug owned by Mickle was the *Grace M.*, named after Mickle's other daughter. It was built in Gravenhurst and was a rather large boat, measuring 69 ft. Passing through various other owners, it survived into the 1930s.

The company also owned the *John Bull*, an alligator, or amphibious tug that could winch itself across land or water. Mickle-Dyment's alligator plied the waters of Lake of Bays from Dorset to Baysville. Due to its pulling power, it did the bulk of the work of towing large log booms or logs to the narrows in Baysville.

Mickle also owned a yacht, *Charlie M.*, which was built in 1897. Named after his son, it was 53 ft long. In 1903 it was sold to the Muskoka Lakes Navigation Company, where it was used for passenger service in the Bala area until 1919.

Mickle's wife, Emma (nee Rowe) also owned her own boat, *Priscilla*, which she bought in 1908 and sold in 1922. *Priscilla* was an impressive 53



Bertha May was the company's first tug, but it also did double duty as a pleasure boat.

ft long and had similar looks to the *Naiad*, including a miniature nickel-plated cannon on the foredeck, as well as other nickel trimmings in her cabins.

Charles and Emma had three children: Bertha, Grace and Charles Jr. To accommodate his growing family – and to celebrate his growing fortune – in 1884 Mickle built a grand residence that he called “Rosehurst,” which became the centre of social life in Gravenhurst. The house was sold by the family in 1934, but still stands today. It was, and still is, one of the most elaborate dwellings in the town of Gravenhurst. When you drive along Bay Street, note the original cement flower urns and the cement steps at the curb, which were used in the days of horse and carriage.

From 1894 to 1895, and again from 1898 to 1900, Charles Mickle was Mayor of Gravenhurst.

In 1877 Gravenhurst was devastated by an enormous fire, which destroyed the town hall among other buildings. In 1900, Mayor Mickle initiated the building of the Gravenhurst Opera House, which included a new town hall. The Gravenhurst Opera House is a lasting legacy to Charles Mickle and his fellow councillors, as today it is a centre for entertainment in Gravenhurst, as well as a symbolic building of the town.

Charles Mickle Sr. died in 1929, and shortly thereafter all company activities ceased. In 1936, the company's mills in Gravenhurst and Severn Bridge were dismantled, a sign that the era of big lumbering in Muskoka was truly over. Charles Mickle's legacy includes the Opera House, a cemetery named after him... and a lot of scrap lumber at the bottom of Muskoka Bay.

– Bob Winter, Archives Volunteer

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ENERGY

Massive expansion is underway

\$3 MILLION RESTORATION AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECT WILL CELEBRATE MUSKOKA'S HERITAGE

There's an exciting new development on the water, a project that aims to make the Muskoka Steamship & Discovery Centre as famous as our iconic *RMS Segwun*.

We are adding a whole new structure to the north side of the big red building

on Muskoka Bay. It will house an amazing collection of interactive displays, and be the first real home that *Wanda III* has had since she was originally housed at Ravenscrag on Lake Rosseau in 1915.

The new structure will be distinctively different architecturally from the existing design to give the Discovery Centre new character and interest.

This is the first addition to the Discovery Centre since it was built 13 years ago. The theme will be the Steam Era, a wonderful period of Canadian history (1830-1930) during which there were countless inventions and developments that shaped the country we live in today. We intend to celebrate many of the most important ones and provide

the context to fully appreciate their impact on Canada, but particularly on the prosperity of the District of Muskoka.

At the same time we plan to expand our centre of learning for all ages. And with the anticipated success of the exhibit, we will improve the sustainability of the entire Muskoka Steamships & Discovery Centre organization. That is a very tall order, but come around next summer and you will become a believer.

WANDA III WAS THE CATALYST

Wanda III was the catalyst for this ambitious project. She is a precious and amazing

The glorious ships of Muskoka aren't just beautiful, they are also emblems of a tech boom that transformed the world.



105-year-old artifact, and represents a glorious time in our history.

She has one of the few remaining triple-stage steam engines, mammoth power plants that were used to power Canadian warships in the First World War. She may in fact be one of the first 'cigarette boats' because Mrs. Eaton got the biggest engine she could find so she could have the fastest boat on the Muskoka Lakes. (*There is more detail on her history on page 22.*)

Impressive as she is, *Wanda III* has been a challenge for our organization from day one. At 94 feet she is big and the sun is always attacking her beautiful mahogany finishes.

Our organization has always highly valued her authenticity and alignment with our purpose of preserving and celebrating Muskoka history. There was supposed to be a boathouse for her when the Discovery Centre was built, but that never happened. Transport Canada told us in 2004 that we could not use her boiler

'With steam engines, everything changed and the impact was felt around the world, including in Muskoka.'

any more for safety reasons. These were serious challenges, but two years ago our organization stopped moaning and decided instead to build a new addition and make *Wanda III* a huge part of it. Stan Meek stepped forward with a very generous matching financial pledge and the rest really is history.

WE OWE A LOT TO STEAM POWER

Steam powered the industrial revolution, which became the

foundation and impetus for the following business revolutions and technical developments. With steam engines, everything changed, and the impact was felt around the world, including in Muskoka.

Steam power revolutionized transportation and meant factories could be located almost anywhere. International trade expanded with dependable





With steam engines, even the farthest ends of the lake were made accessible.

transportation. Muskoka as we know it opened up when the most distant parts of the lakes became accessible with scheduled steam transport. Steam power became the rationale to build the nationwide railroads which opened up Canada, infrastructure that is still critical today. It was the first machine age!

Steam whetted the appetite for more efficient power which led to the development of the internal combustion engine. As Thomas Freidman said in his latest book, *Thanks for Being Late*, this era is when the process of technological and scientific process started to speed up, serving as the precursor of the acceleration we all feel with technology today.

A PERIOD OF CANADIAN DEVELOPMENT

The Steam Era period (1830-1930) was a time of enormous innovation. Our exhibit will focus in particular on the time from 1880 to 1930, and look at the impact on Muskoka.

The plan is to present a combination of artifacts, objects, archival material and modern exhibit technologies to deliver interpreted content in an impactful and interactive manner. We want to entertain and educate you at the same time. We have finalized an extensive interpretive plan to guide the development and fabrication of the exhibits. Four key subjects will form the backbone of what we plan to address: transportation, the indigenous community, industry and tourism.

Transportation: Steam revolutionized transportation throughout the developing world powering trains, ships, war ships and even early automobiles. In Muskoka it's hard to over-estimate the impact and difficult to provide a complete description of what happened because it was so pervasive. The display will be exciting and captivating.

Indigenous Community: The Steam Era was a period of tremendous change for the indigenous communities, dramatically altering their way of life forever. The era witnessed a

mass influx of settlers with different expectations and cultures. This exhibit will explain the changes that happened and how the community we live in today has been influenced by the original indigenous communities.

Industry: Industries of all types benefited greatly when steam became available as an energy source. Mining, manufacturing, logging all became more efficient with the application of steam. The Steam Era was the greatest period of infrastructure construction in Canadian history. The population of Muskoka exploded and changed from hunters and trappers to employees in a variety of industries.

Tourism: Tourism exploded across Canada because access was provided to areas that were previously inaccessible. Canadians began travelling for pleasure and people began visiting from other countries. Trip times were hugely diminished and steamboats became the popular mode of transportation in Muskoka. For the first time, Muskoka and its pristine lakes became the pleasure destination they are today.

By using state-of-the-art technologies, the Steam Era Exhibit won't just tell those stories, it will make them come alive. The goal is to make visitors smile, listen, and remember.

A WORLD CLASS EXHIBIT IS EXPENSIVE TO BUILD

Our goal is to build a world class exhibit that will contribute to making the Muskoka Discovery Centre one of the most popular destinations in Ontario and as well recognized as the iconic *RMS Segwun*. And that will cost between \$2.7 Mil and \$3.3 Mil .

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As of this publication deadline we have raised two million dollars, or 74 per cent of our minimum goal. That money came from individuals, internal funds and a \$950,000 grant from Cultural Spaces of the Federal Government.

We have several pending applications with private institutions and other government agencies that we are cautiously optimistic about. We are reaching out to the community looking for support – both large and small, because it all counts.

This last amount of money is for the state-of-the-art technology that will help us tell our stories and deliver history in an engaging and interactive way. This money will make our exhibit truly exciting and dynamic. It will explain how Muskoka came to be what we all love today and make you proud to be Canadian.

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

The Stanley Meek Steam Era exhibit is the first major initiative in a five-year Master Plan that was just finalized. The goal is to be competitive with the best cultural institutions in Ontario – not the

biggest, but a unique and high-quality celebration of Muskoka that both residents and non-residents will thoroughly enjoy!

This is your Muskoka Discovery Centre because its community owned. If you are not already a member, join today and help support our aspirations. With careful execution of this plan, *Wanda III* and The Muskoka Discovery Centre will be here for many future generations so they too can learn about the Steam Era.

– Rick McGraw,
Revitalization Committee Chair

THE STANLEY MEEK STEAM ERA EXHIBIT

The Steam Era Exhibit is being named after Stanley Meek for a very simple reason: Without Stan's vision, love and dedication to *Wanda III* and a very generous donation of \$500,000 this project would never have got off the ground.

In fact, *Wanda III* would not be back on Lake Muskoka without his determination to secure it and move it from Lake of Bays. He raised money for her restoration work on several occasions and always provided the critical seed money. His leadership and passion for *Wanda III* has always energized the management team and convinced the Board of Directors to never end the pursuit of the right home for her.

Stan heard about *Wanda III* in 1985 and had the vision of bringing her back to be the second ship in the Muskoka Steamships fleet. He recognized her historical significance and convinced the rest of the Board of Directors to undertake the task.

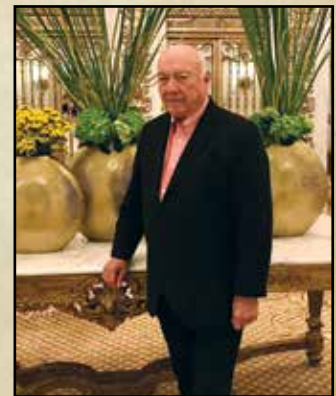
It was a challenge to say the least: the 94-foot long ship with its tall superstructure had to travel over 50 miles of roads to get from Lake of Bays to Lake Muskoka. All the overhead telephone and electrical wires had to be manually raised so she could pass under. The project took a house mover several days to complete: it's hard to imagine it being done today.

Stan's leadership also resulted in Jack McIrvine, another long-time member of the organization, recently making a significant and meaningful donation to the Steam Era project, specifically for the electrification of *Wanda III*.

Stan has been involved with the Muskoka Steamship and Discovery Centre for over 30 years. He has been President, a Director, Treasurer and was recently awarded an Honourary Directorship in recognition of his many outstanding contributions. Stan has participated in every fund-raising campaign that the organization has conducted and was usually one of the first to contribute.

We are recognizing Stan's contributions today by naming the Steam Era Exhibit after him so that present and future generations will remember him.

Stanley Meek has been a longtime supporter of the Muskoka Steamship & Discovery Centre.



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Symbols of an Era

CANADIAN ROYALTY, THE EATONS TRAVELLED MUSKOKA'S LAKES WITH SPEED AND STYLE

The Eatons were a Canadian family dynasty that built a business empire. It was an empire which provided a lifestyle that few could imagine or attain, with grand homes and grander yachts. The *Wanda III* was not only symbolic of the Eatons' success, but also of the Steam Era itself – an era that changed the world.

In 1884, Timothy Eaton was the Jeff Bezos of his day. The department store he founded had 60 percent of all department store sales in Canada. He was also an innovator who revolutionized shopping. His catalogue brought goods directly to the customer, a service that had never been seen. Coast to coast, urban and rural, everyone had access to a vast selection of goods, large and small. Customers could even order a cottage, a few of which still stand around the lakes today.

COURTESY OF JOHN MCQUARRIE

The Eatons always wanted the fastest boat on the lakes. In 1915, that boat was Wanda III.

Timothy and Margaret Eaton enjoyed a busy life that brought a need for rest and relaxation. They travelled the long way to Muskoka by rail and then by steamship. Loving the area, they decided to purchase land on Lake Rosseau and build their beloved summer residence called "Ravenscrag" near Windermere. It was at Ravenscrag where they enjoyed their steam yachts through three decades: *Wanda*, *Wanda II* and *Wanda III*. The Eatons entertained their many illustrious guests on these yachts. As they cruised the lakes to live music, high tea was served on the *Wanda's* custom embossed china.

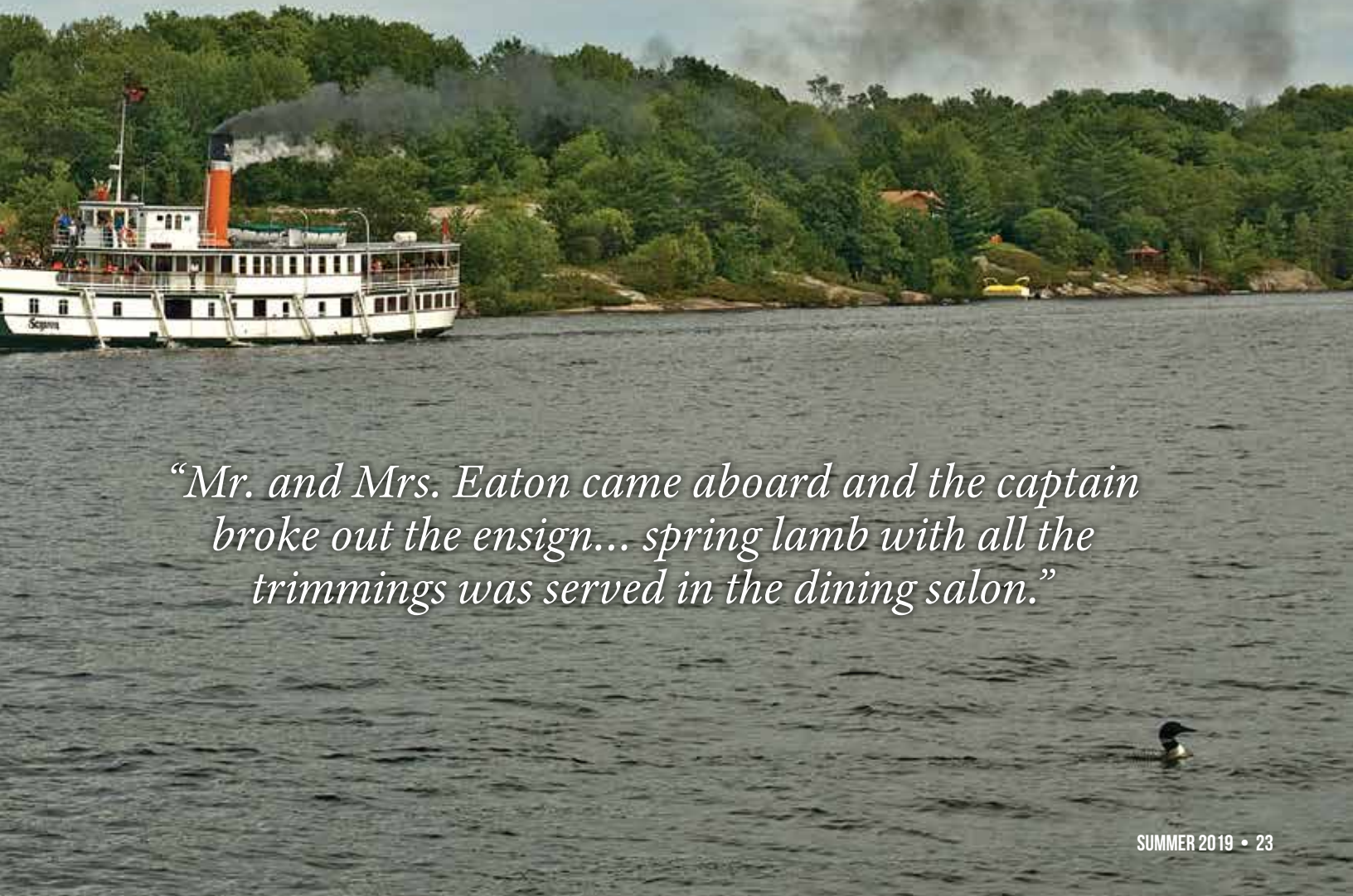
Their daughter-in-law, Flora (later Lady Eaton after her husband John was knighted), describes arriving at Muskoka Wharf in Gravenhurst, departing the train and stepping aboard the first *Wanda*. "The *Wanda* was in perfect shape," she writes in her



Sir John and Lady Eaton enjoyed summers at Kawandag, on Lake Rosseau.

autobiography, *Memory Wall*. "Mr. and Mrs. Eaton came aboard and the captain broke out the ensign of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club ... spring lamb with all the trimmings was served in the (mahogany and brass-fitted) dining salon as the *Wanda* glided north past Muskoka's green shores

... on arrival at Ravenscrag the flag was hoisted and there was a pleasant bustle around the place as Mrs. Eaton settled things to her liking and prepared to receive her summer guests."



"Mr. and Mrs. Eaton came aboard and the captain broke out the ensign... spring lamb with all the trimmings was served in the dining salon."

Wanda was followed by *Wanda II*, which was lost in a boathouse fire at Ravenscrag in August, 1914. Timothy Eaton had passed away by this time, and youngest son John (later Sir John) was involved in the First World War, sponsoring a machine gun battery. All manufacturing activities were being directed toward the war effort, but because of John's work he and his mother were able to get Polson Iron Works to build a replacement private yacht for the family.

Launched in 1915, *Wanda III's* coal-fired steam engine was a design similar to a WWI Royal Navy minesweeper's engine. Her narrow hull and shallow draft cut through the water like a torpedo, ensuring she was the fastest boat on the lakes.



The Eaton catalogue revolutionized shopping in Canada. The wealth it generated paid for luxuries like the mahogany-lined interior of *Wanda III*.

Sir John and Lady Eaton enjoyed hosting many summer guests, including relative Billy Bishop, who flew in dockside for the weekend. They lived a life of wealth and privilege but were grounded in many ways. John was a major philanthropist and his wife, Flora, was a great supporter of numerous causes. She remarked: "My mother used to say, 'Money is the root of all evil, but it could be a very useful root,' meaning that it could grow in the direction of good." This was a lesson she tried never to forget.

Sir John and Lady Eaton bought their own Muskoka retreat on Lake Rosseau, on an adjacent piece of property formerly belonging to the Ditchburns of wooden boat fame. They named their estate "Kawandag," meaning "the meeting place of the pines." It had a private golf course, extensive gardens, tennis courts,

stables and several boathouses for their extensive boat collection.

The era of the Eatons and their yachts eventually ended. In 1930, *Wanda III* was sold to the owner of Bigwin Inn on Lake of Bays. Ravenscrag was sold in 1945 and is now the site of Rosseau Lake College.

The 128-year-old Eaton's business enterprise ended in insolvency in 1997, but a glimpse of their lives will soon emerge from the past. The Eaton's private yacht, *Wanda III*, in all her elegance and style, will cruise the lakes once again. The Eatons, the *Wandas* and their era will be highlighted in the upcoming MS&DC Steam Era Exhibit, an exhibit that will reflect this integral part of Muskoka and Canadian history.

- Catherine King, Archives Volunteer





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The opening of Muskoka

LOCATION, TIMING, AND SOME CONNECTIONS HELPED THE REGION PROSPER IN THE AGE OF STEAM

Location is important, yes, but so are timing and accessibility.

Muskoka's geographic location itself was ideal, of course: a tidy section of forested lakeland at the convenient southern edge of the vast Canadian Shield. The place could be a "hinge" between southern society and primal northland. Location made Muskoka a transition zone, harmonizing the cultures of metropolis and hinterland.

Timing was significant in how Muskoka's development bridged the advent of the steam revolution. Until the 1850s, contact between Indigenous peoples of Muskoka and Europeans had been limited to a few explorers, fur traders and War of 1812 military

campaigns. But loggers arrived that decade along the Severn River and, in the 1860s, the district opened for homesteaders as well. But that went slowly, so the government introduced an incentive program in 1868, giving the land away free. Hannah Boyer, in Brooklyn, was skeptical. "If the land is any good, why are they giving it away?"

That's when my great-grandmother, like other pioneer settlers, discovered accessibility a real problem for Muskoka because the Age of Steam remained a work-in-progress. She and the other Boyers travelled from New York to Toronto, then continued to Barrie, all

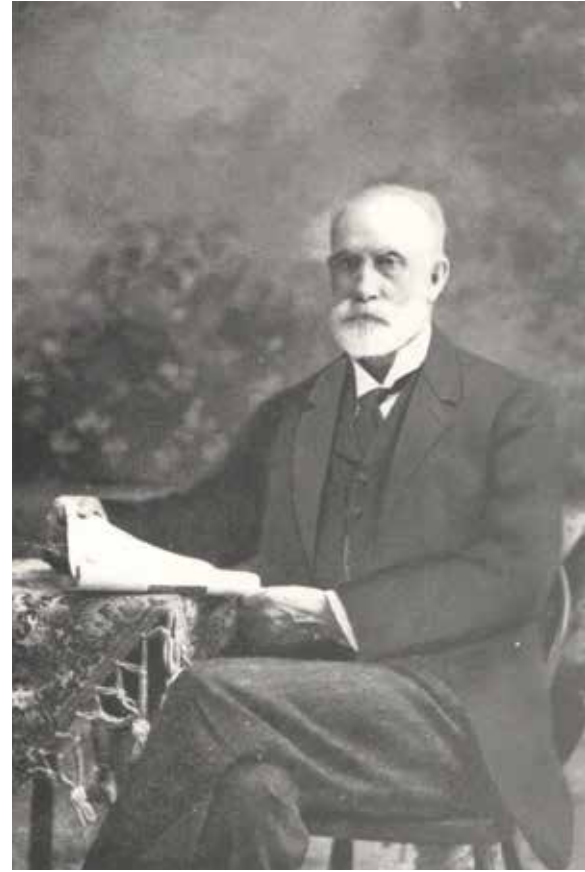
aboard steam trains. Their next leg, from Barrie up lakes Simcoe and Couchiching to Washago, was likewise steam-powered, aboard steamship Emily May. But to reach their Muskoka destination travel was overland, from Severn Bridge to Gravenhurst, in John Harvey's horse-drawn hard-seated stagecoach, bumping over a winding, hilly, crude colonization road.

An outgoing young man in their stagecoach introduced himself. A.P. Cockburn was Muskoka's member of Ontario's legislature, also a lumber

The wealthiest cottagers travelled on private steam yachts, like the Eatons' Wanda II



"In the 1860s, the district opened for homesteaders."



‘Macleans unabashedly promoted Muskoka’s image as a playground for high rollers.’

dealer, merchant, railway promoter and owner of a Lake Muskoka steamboat launched just three years before. Cockburn told the Boyers the Wenonah had the contract for mail deliveries during navigation season, carried passengers, freight, livestock and made connections with all stages, steamers, sailboats, and colonization roads. These connections, he boasted, made Wenonah “the only reliable and complete highway to the most important parts of Muskoka district.”

The jolted Boyers, weary from their long day of new impressions and rough coach ride, completed the last of their trip from Gravenhurst to Bracebridge, not by continuing over the treacherous Muskoka Road, but buying passage on

Wenonah’s smoother, faster, and more scenic route.

Cockburn was all about accessibility to Muskoka. He expanded his steamer fleet, obtained a lock at Port Carling and promoted railway extension from Barrie to Gravenhurst. By 1875, when a rail line ran right onto Muskoka Wharf, right beside his steamships, Muskoka had truly become accessible from the south.

Thanks to this Steam Age twinning of ships and trains, new resort hotels at the furthest reaches of Muskoka’s lakes became the next stage of opening Ontario’s most convenient wilderness to urban vacationers.

In 1903 Muskoka Lakes Navigation

and Hotel Company combined resources with the Grand Trunk Railway to build prestigious Royal Muskoka resort hotel on Lake Rosseau. Here again, timing was key. When ownership of the Navigation Company passed to Hugh and John MacLean, their Canada-wide media juggernaut promoted easy travel into Muskoka, which coincided with prosperous and prominent people hungering for an ideal vacation.

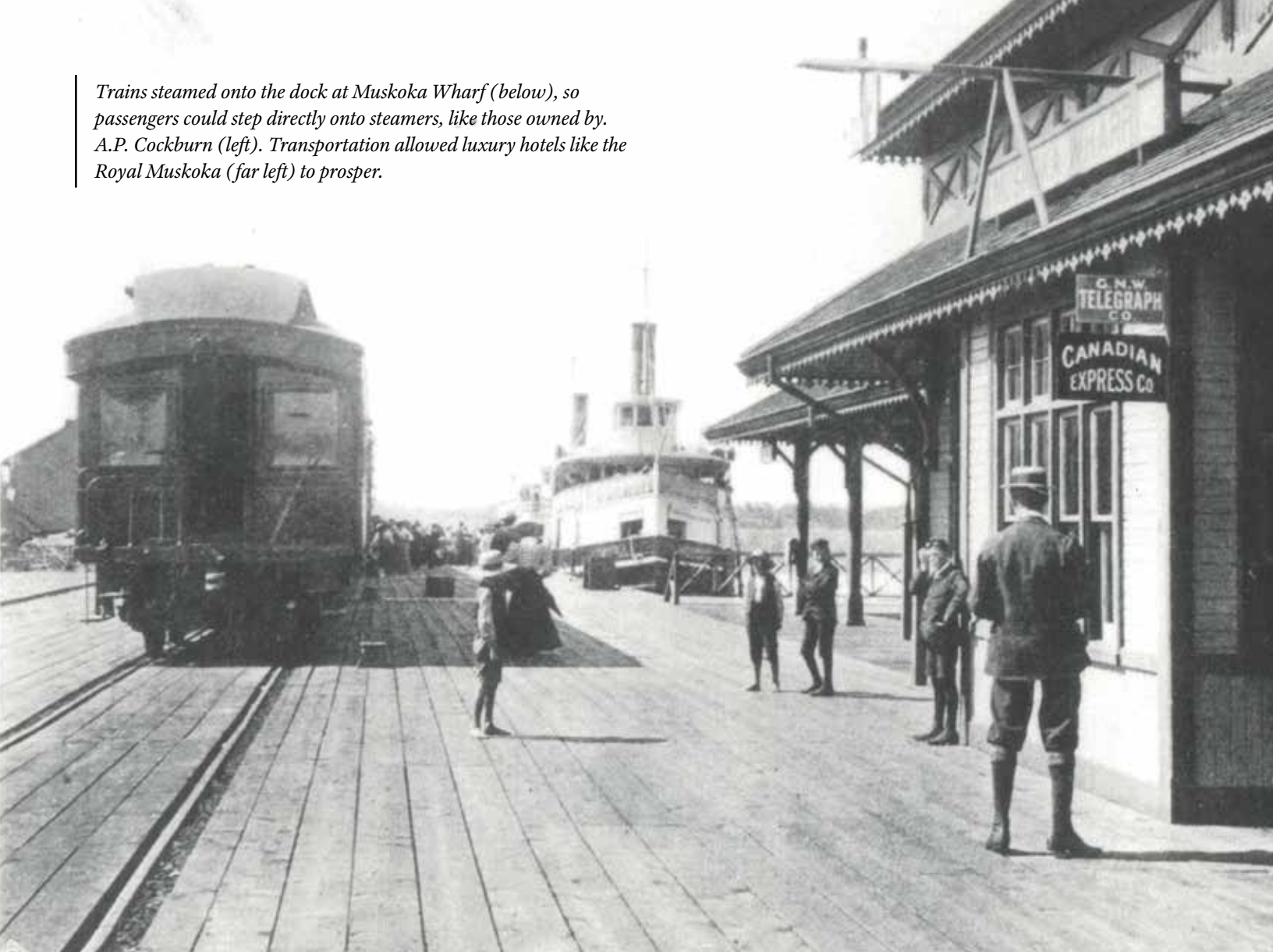
The pair’s printing and publishing empire of many newspapers and magazines, one bearing a streamlined spelling of their name, Maclean’s, continuously promoted Hugh’s Muskoka assets: his commodious steamship line, “North America’s



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Trains steamed onto the dock at Muskoka Wharf (below), so passengers could step directly onto steamers, like those owned by A.P. Cockburn (left). Transportation allowed luxury hotels like the Royal Muskoka (far left) to prosper.



largest inland waterway fleet”; ready access to Muskoka aboard comfortable carriages of the Grand Trunk Railway; the Royal Muskoka itself, now the district’s most prestigious hotel; and the celebrated cure of a Muskoka vacation.

The brothers’ publishing conglomerate invented, and then unabashedly projected, Muskoka’s image as a playground where high

rollers, prominent persons and political luminaries could mingle at leisure. The posh Royal Muskoka quickly became a magnet for North American notables. Margaret Eaton, lavishly hospitable hostess at Ravenscrag, the Muskoka summer estate she enjoyed with her husband Timothy, brought guests over for afternoon pleasures aboard her private steam-launch, Wanda II. Major Hugh MacLean used his connections to

invite prime ministers and princes, plutocrats and theatrical personalities to be his guests at the Royal.

As the Age of Steam revolutionized world society from the 1870s onward, just when Muskoka’s unique economy and society were developing, it propelled Ontario’s “hinge” district toward its true destiny.

– J. Patrick Boyer



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From truck to lake to dock

A QUARTER CENTURY FULL OF ADVENTURE IN GRAVENHURST

When you are as old as *Wanda III*—104 years—and such an elegant steam yacht, you could be compared to an elegant lady of the past. One of the chapters in *Wanda*'s life has been spent on Lake Muskoka, docked at Muskoka Bay in Gravenhurst. One could say that her twenty-six years in this area of Muskoka have not all been happy times, but the future is much brighter.

Transported across country by truck from Lake of Bays in 1993, *Wanda* arrived at Muskoka Wharf with great plans for restoration. The first winter she spent on cradles. Repair during that winter included replacing unsound white oak planking below the waterline, caulking all plank seams with modern flexible caulk, and refurbishing the rudder, rudder bearings, propeller

In 1996 Wanda III cruised Lake Muskoka for the first time in 66 years.



bearings and shaft. In addition, the superstructure was made weatherproof and some equipment was temporarily removed to give access to her “innards.” She had a makeover.

By early June 1994, she was ready for launching. Partway through that process, the trailer wheels became stuck in the lake bottom before *Wanda* could be floated off the trailer, and the ship had to be pulled off by a tugboat. When secured at the dock, inspection showed there were serious leaks in the keel area. In 1995, *Wanda* was taken to Archer’s marine railway on Browning Island for repairs.

Later that year, *Wanda III* was moored at the Gravenhurst dock opposite RMS *Segwun*. Work started on the exterior woodwork, and cleaning and painting the interior and the steel hull below the cabin floor. With industrial electric space heaters, interior restoration continued through the winter of 1995–96, including

installation of sliding windows, a new feedwater preheater, and an overhaul of the engine pistons and valves. Major refurbishing and upgrading of the electrical system were planned so that the ship could operate for at least six

‘Tiffany-style lamps were commissioned to retain the period appearance.’

hours on batteries at night if the single original generator should fail. With a set of drawings newly prepared, the marine architect determined that the ship required 4,000 pounds of ballast.

A plating shop that specialized in antique boats and automobiles was found, and her brightwork was replated in March 1996. Her cosmetic surgery was complete.

The engine was generally in good condition and needed no major repairs. Pistons, bearings, valves and crossheads were cleaned and adjusted, and both steam and water valves were ground, and sometimes replaced. Work on the interior décor, which had actually started in the fall of 1995, was in 1996 the subject of a major program. It was decided to re-furnish the ship in the original style. A consultant was engaged to design new furniture, carpets, drapes and fittings. Tiffany-style lamps were commissioned to retain the period appearance, while giving additional headroom. Some non-original furniture was removed. Also, installation





From 1996 to 2001 Wanda III cruised the lakes, mainly carrying charter groups.

included a completely new galley with stainless steel surfaces and a cold-plate refrigerator with 12-hour useful life before re-cooling. Her new wardrobe was in place.

Finally, *Wanda III* was ready for her first voyage under her own steam, the first since 1990. On July 25, 1996, a calm and sunny day, she cast off, turned around under her own power and sailed gracefully north and through the Narrows into Lake Muskoka. The trials were uneventful and successful; everything worked correctly and adjustments were minimal. *Wanda III* was welcomed back to Lake Muskoka, a place she had not cruised for 66 years. She had made her debut.

To mark this occasion, on August 25, 1996, Canada's 20th Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jean Chretien, flew to Gravenhurst to rededicate *Wanda III*. Two thousand people crowded Sagamo Park to find flags flying, tents and temporary podiums erected, refreshments being served and bands playing. This was reminiscent of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau attending the re-launch of RMS *Segwun* in 1974. This was her coming-out party.

At this point the repair and restoration was effectively complete, and the ship was turned over to normal operations to carry out extensive charter engagements already booked.

Wanda III had happy times from 1996–2001 as she cruised Lakes Muskoka, Joseph and Rosseau, mainly with private charter groups.

All went well with *Wanda* until July 2001 when the boiler sprung a leak and required major repairs, the leak coming through one of the bolts that held the angle iron for the floor. Upon inspection, there were likely other cracks in the boiler drum. With a new \$210,000 boiler being installed and numerous charter bookings, there was every prospect for a good season in 2002, BUT her engineer resigned in July and she was unable to service many of her charters for that season.

Gary Clark

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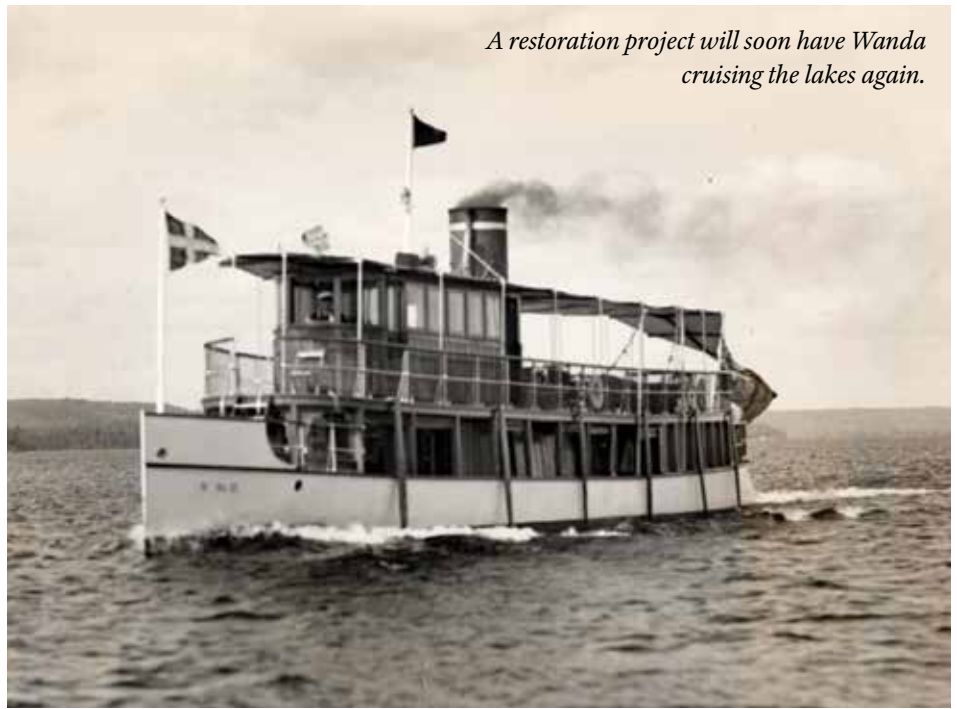
She needed more major surgery and a new leader.

In 2003, it was clear that a new wood hull was needed. At season's end, she was taken out of the water and put on the dock at Gravenhurst. Applications for grants to restore the oak hardwood portion of her hull were made. There were hopes to service her in 2006 when she would be housed in a new boathouse to protect her beautiful varnished exterior from the elements.

A boathouse big enough to house the 94-foot yacht was part of the Muskoka Wharf plan, but funding from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund fell through when Muskoka lost its Northern Ontario designation. An elegant lady needs a good house.

In 2006, master ship builder Fred Mischler replaced the wooden planks on her hull. This was his second stint after completing her restoration work ten years before, when Muskoka Steamships purchased her. He used 3,500 board feet of white oak from New York State, replacing the entire hull and doing some metal work. Fred was helped by residents of Fenbrook, the medium security prison in Gravenhurst, who put nine coats of varnish on the superstructure. The restoration cost \$250,000 and also included upgrades to the steam engine. Money was a combination of provincial and federal grants and fundraising by the Muskoka Steamship & Historical Society. More cosmetic surgery for the lady.

On June 19th, 2007, *Wanda* was returned to the water, with whistles from her sister ships, RMS *Segwun* and *Wenonah II* blowing. She had spent



A restoration project will soon have Wanda cruising the lakes again.

four years out of service, sitting on blocks and having her hull replaced. It was good to be back in Lake Muskoka.

With plans to resume service, Transport Canada had concerns about the steam engine and her new boiler. It was decided that she should not run, given that she was an historic vessel and many changes were required to bring her up to standards. This decision was also influenced by the fact that she still needed a proper boathouse to protect her from the elements and preserve her wooden superstructure. A sad time for our elegant lady.

At this time, in 2009, she was towed across the bay to be moored beside the Muskoka Discovery Centre. Securely tethered to the dock and the water around her bubbled in winter to prevent ice damage, this was to be her new home for the short term. Further

protection was added in 2014 when a metal frame was constructed over her and then shrink-wrapped, allowing work to be done inside the vessel. She was happy to have a roof over her head.

On her 100th birthday in 2015, unfortunately *Wanda* could not celebrate, since she was not allowed to sail, so she sat tied to the dock and again waited to be restored to her glory years.

Wanda is excited about the good news of 2019. With additional grant money and fundraising, the prospects of a boathouse built just for her and a new electric engine are in the works. She is also being honoured by a special exhibit at the Muskoka Discovery Centre. As the slogan goes, "Good things come to those who wait."

– Mary Storey with files from Jack McIrvine, Archives Volunteers

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The Phoenix rises again

The phoenix is symbol of rebirth, a mythical bird that rises from the ashes. It is said that the phoenix builds a nest of cinnamon sticks and lights them on fire; the nest and the bird burn together, and a baby phoenix rises from the ashes, continuing the cycle of regeneration and rebirth.

The Muskoka fleet's first phoenix was carved in 1887 by Commodore George Bailey. The *Nipissing* had been destroyed by fire in 1886, and the next year an exact replica – *Nipissing II* – was launched. The phoenix was placed atop the wheelhouse of the *Nipissing II*, an appropriate symbol of rebirth. The phoenix remained on the ship's wheelhouse for 27 years until the *Nipissing II* retired in the summer of 1914.

In 1924, the Muskoka Lakes Navigation Company needed a new steamer. Instead of building a new ship, the company decided to utilize its resources by using the hull of *Nipissing II*. That ship was named *Segwun*, and the

phoenix was proudly placed atop her wheelhouse.

In September 1925, just two months after *Segwun* made her maiden voyage, fire struck again: *RMS Sagamo* burned at the dockside in Gravenhurst. *Sagamo* was the pride of the fleet and was quickly rebuilt and ready for use again by the summer of 1926. To decorate the new ship the phoenix was transferred from the wheelhouse of *Segwun* to the pilot house of *Sagamo*.

In January 1969, after a phoenix had been atop the ships for 82 years, history repeated when *RMS Sagamo* burned again. This time, the phoenix did not escape: it was among the first things to burn, as it had been sitting in the ship's dining room where the fire started.

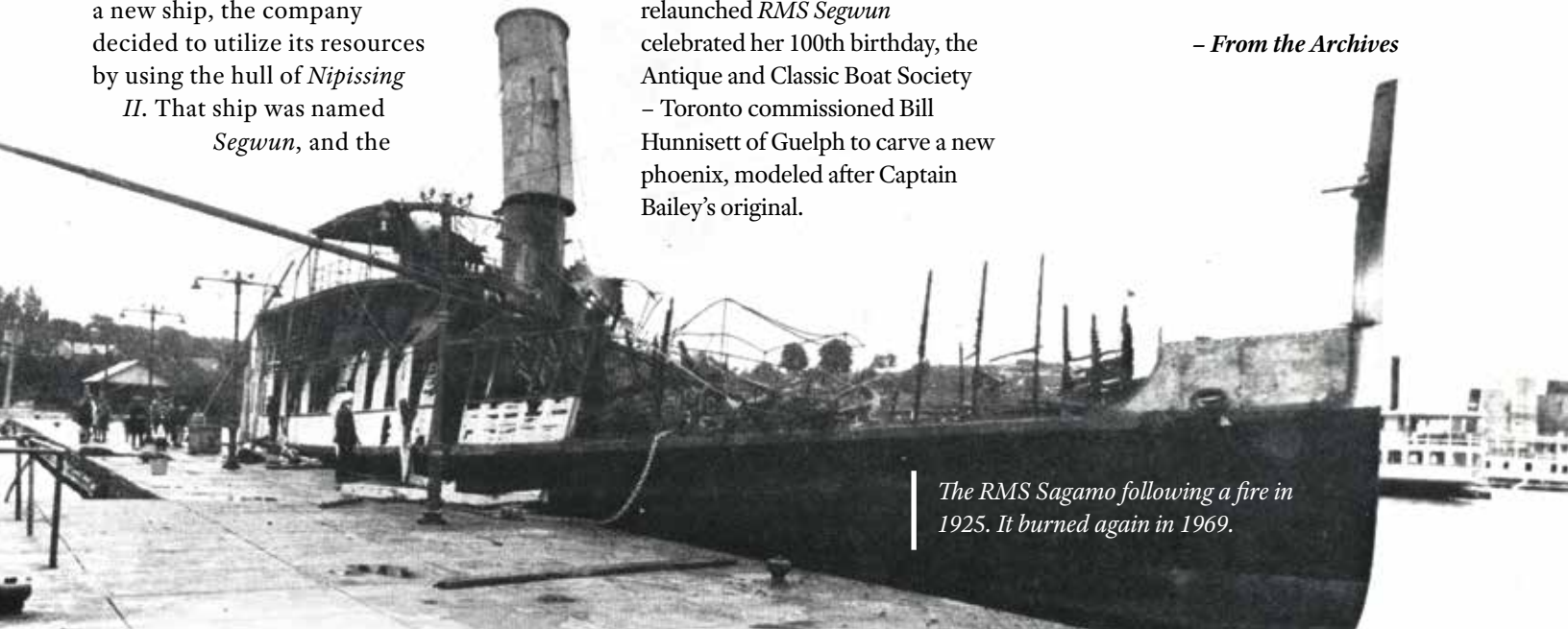
But that wasn't the end of our phoenixes. In 1987, when the relaunched *RMS Segwun* celebrated her 100th birthday, the Antique and Classic Boat Society – Toronto commissioned Bill Hunnisett of Guelph to carve a new phoenix, modeled after Captain Bailey's original.



The current phoenix was carved in 1987 to replace the 1887 original.

This past winter, the volunteers at Heritage Boatworks have refurbished *Segwun's* phoenix, giving it a new gloss, and ensuring that this proud bird continues to look out on our ships and our lakes.

– From the Archives



The RMS Sagamo following a fire in 1925. It burned again in 1969.

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Volunteers craft new *Segwun* mast

The volunteers at Heritage Boatworks have sometimes refurbished items for *Segwun* while she is laid up for the winter. This year the group was presented with quite a challenge: *Segwun* needed a new wooden mast.

The ship's mast not only flies the flag but also displays various lights for navigation and supports a radar housing.

The old one came off the ship in three well-rotted pieces. Fortunately, we had a pattern to follow by loosely joining the old pieces together for measurements.

The first task was to acquire some clear quarter-sawn fir planks. A trip by Ron Scott and John Storey to Century Mill Lumber in Stouffville provided the source for two by eight-inch planks. The plan was to join and laminate the sixteen-foot planks to achieve a piece six inches square by twenty-four feet long.

The rough sawn lumber was run through the planer and made true. A jig was built to create scarf joints close to twenty inches long, so the wood could be glued up into a solid piece twenty-four feet long.

Other team members built supports to carry the long timber and created clamps for the laminating procedure. Using two-part epoxy glue, the team had a twenty-minute window to apply two coats to four sides of the planks, lay them together and clamp all pieces.

The clamps were removed after a few days of curing. All the joints were good. We now had one solid piece.

So, how to turn a twenty-four foot by six-inch square timber into a round pole with a taper from six inches to three inches? With the aid of the internet and articles from *Wooden Boat* magazine, the process was revealed. First, cut the taper on four sides using a ten-inch portable saw. Next, Stuart Stoddart created a spar gauge to mark the full length of the tapered timber in order to obtain an octagon or eight-sided piece. By hand planing the corners of the timber, we achieved an octagon shape. Still not round enough.

Next step was to use a different gauge to create a sixteen-sided hexadecagon. Lots of shavings were produced and the shape gets much closer to being round. Sighting by eye, the remaining corners were planned off and sanding began. Jim Alylan-Parker built a belt sander for this purpose using a large portable drill driving a sanding belt around the pole to true up the shape to get a perfectly smooth round taper.

At this time, the lights are being updated to conform to Transport Canada requirements and consequently new mast brackets must be fabricated to match. When this is completed everything will be attached to the mast, which will be painted and installed back on *Segwun*.

– John Storey,
Heritage Boatworks Volunteer



Volunteers use hand tools and patience to round and taper the 24-foot mast.

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Dick Steele (above) and Frank Cull were navy veterans who took up boat building after the war, running a small shop on Foot's Bay, Lake Joseph.

Gorgeous boats from a small shop

Over the past 150 years, Muskoka has been home to a large number of boat builders. One of the lesser known of these is Matlo Boats, formerly located on Foot's Bay, Lake Joseph. A small boatworks that produced mahogany runabouts, Matlo was only in operation from 1947 to 1950.

TWO SAILORS

Matlo Boats was started soon after World War II by Dick Steele and Frank Cull. Steele had grown up in Toronto, attending Upper Canada College and the University of Toronto, where he studied mechanical engineering. He left before graduating, but gained plenty of hands-on experience while employed at the Port Carling Boat Works. When the war came, Steele enlisted in the navy and, despite being wounded, served for the duration.

Less is known about Frank Cull, a Scot who also had a background in boat building. Cull served in the Royal Navy during the war, then immigrated to Canada. How the two men met is unknown, but their naval experience and interest in boats was clearly a common bond. It also explains why they chose the name "Matlo," which is a variant of the French word *matelot*, meaning "sailor."

"A COMPLETE BOAT"

Steele's plan was to build boats that were versatile, performed well and looked good, all at an affordable price. Cull wanted to try out the plywood construction techniques that he had seen used in wartime craft, such as PT boats. In 1948, they offered three models, all in the 16-17 ft range,

with V-bottom hulls and inboard motors. Two of these used plywood construction, but the more expensive Meteor model featured a planked hull and a 100 hp engine. The following year they introduced an even more impressive design, the 19-ft Coxswain.

While Matlo produced less than a dozen boats over its four years, they also offered other services, such as fuel and repair. After dissolving Matlo, Frank Cull continued to run the shop until about 1960, then relocated to Portland, Ontario. Dick Steele moved to Detroit and had a long career in the automotive industry. Today, there are still at least two surviving examples of Matlo boats.

– Gerry Hatherley, Archives Volunteer



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FROM ONE OLD GIRL TO ANOTHER

I am living in the present but my heart is in the past, I love a steamship!! The *RMS Segwun* -the last hand-fired steamship in North America. Imagine working for the same company for more than thirty years and their oldest asset is a steamship.

Things have changed. When I came to work in the spring of 1988, there was no Muskoka Wharf, no *Wenonah* (*Segwun*'s sister ship) no *Wanda* (our 1915 steam yacht) no Muskoka Discovery Centre (built over 10 years ago). There was only a small little ticket office building and the government dock. My first office was the wheelhouse from the steamship *Cherokee* - now lovingly restored and sitting outside the Muskoka Discovery Centre.

Passengers come from all over the world to sail on the "Old Girl" and I have lost count on the number of cruises I have taken but it would be well over a couple of hundred. I have sailed on all three of the Muskoka Lakes, through the locks at Port Carling, the bridge at Port Sandfield, tried to

"I have stood on the dock, tears in my eyes."

shovel coal, wheeled her all over Lake Muskoka, tooted long and two shorts to children waiting on their docks, worked in her galley putting veggies on the dinner plates, washed the dishes and I even got to be her deckhand.

I have stood on the dock, tears in my eyes, many a time when she has returned from her inspection in Port Carling that tells us she is good to go for another five years.

It has been an honour and privilege to work for this company and to be

a small part of the *Segwun*'s life. I purposely have no screen in my office window so I can look out and see her coming and going on her daily cruises - wishing my office was onboard.

I am not a sales person, but the lady who counts the beans, but if you want memories that will last a lifetime, go for a cruise, she knows her job and she and her crew will not disappoint you. I guarantee!

*- Molly Rivers,
Controller for Muskoka Steamships
& Discovery Centre*



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CAN YOU TELL WHERE THESE IMAGES WERE TAKEN?

When a steamship sails past, you just have to stop and watch. That was even true a century ago, when dozens of steamers plied the lakes and rivers of Muskoka.

Boats still travel the river where the photo above was taken, but it's been

30 years since the Segwun last did the trip. If you look closely, you may recognize a landmark or two.

The smaller images below were both taken on lakes, but which ones? There's still a structure standing where a shed can be seen in the right-hand picture. As for the left-hand image,

the train tracks are still there but not much else.

Can you tell where each picture was taken? Share your guesses on our facebook page, or email them to editor@realmuskoka.com. We will announce the correct answers on facebook in August.





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