

MEMBERSHIP MEETING
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THE LIGHTSHIP

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LIGHTHOUSES PRESERVED

SYMBOLS OF HOPE, SECURITY, THE END OF A JOURNEY, A SAFE HARBOR, SINCE THE BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION ARE NO LONGER NEEDED IN MODERN NAVIGATION. . . . WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THEM. . . HOW BRIGHT IS THE FUTURE?

We will have the pleasure of hearing the foremost lighthouse historian on the Great Lakes on Saturday evening, January 29 at the program meeting of Lake Huron Lore. In addition to that grand introduction she is also the mother of the President of the Whistle Division of Lake Huron Lore, Miss Stephanie Van Hoey. . . . whoops, forgot to mention the speakers name Mrs. Mike (Darla) VanHoey.

(concluded on page 2)

Plans to Commemorate "The Great Smokey Shipwreck of 1901" on the Lake Huron Shore

STORY AND PICTURES OF THIS SPECTACULAR EVENT THAT ATTRACTED OVER 9,000 PEOPLE TO KEEWAHDIN BEACH ON SUNDAY MORNING SEE THE SHIPS AND GATHER A SUPPLY OF LATH---STREET CARS TAXED TO CAPACITY!!!!



"Pigboat Barge 202" is at extreme left almost on the beach, providing easy exit for her porcine passengers. Tug SARNIA near center apparently has fires out and is being attended by small tug. Tug CHAMPION with freighter at extreme right. (Photos from Museum of Arts and History Collection)

PLANS TO COMMEMORATE "THE GREAT SMOKEY SHIPWRECK OF 1901"
ON THE LAKE HURON SHORE (continued from page 1)

Probably one of the most unusual... as well as unexpected... sights to ever greet the people of Port Huron was on a September morning in the fall of 1901 when the sands of old Keewahdin Beach had become a lumber yard virtually overnight. The shore, from above the site of Gratiot Inn down to Kraft Road, was strewn with logs and bundles

of lath, and pieces of lath, a large number of the bundles have been broken up by the surf. The lumber was tumbled and crowded up on the beach twenty feet back, and in the surf... as one eye witness stated... "it looked like the very waves were made of lath."

Off shore, to make the scene even more

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)



"Pigboat Bge. 202" stranded on the shore. Picture shows bow turret where the pen was said to have been located.

"LIGHTHOUSES PRESERVED" (continued from page one)

The writer is trying to recall the first meeting with Darla, she introduced herself as a lighthouse historian... the first thought comes to mind... a very pretty face and a picture snapper. The very pretty face was and is still there, but behind it is a knowledge that passes all understanding... when they were built, of what they were built and the troubles encountered... along with some romance which lighthouses have always had. This all started last fall when the opportunity presented itself to see some of the details of the removal of the lens of Spectacle Reef Light, Lake Huron by a crew from the Great Lakes Historical Society, of which Mike was a team member. Darla will show us these along with some lighthouse stories of her own.

Darla will present the program... and she may tell us about our own light which she and Mike restored and very few members heard that program... the temperature was -15° and only those from Wallaceburg, Port Lambton, Algonac and Marine City made it. We did not know that it was that cold in Port Huron. Bring a prospective member and join us on the 29th.

exciting were seven vessels aground, three steamers, their barges, and a tug. One the barge AMARANTH, was wrecked, Whaleback 202 was high on the shore, and the others. . the steamers JOHN H. PAULY, the WAWATAM and the QUILTO, the barges MARIAN W. PAGE, and the tug SARNIA CITY. . were all stuck hard in the sand. It was on a Sunday morning after a sudden gale had swept over Lake Huron the night before, causing a heavy sea, and these conditions were further complicated by clouds of smoke brought down by a north-east wind from burning brush in Canada, the smoke acting like a thick fog.

The townspeople had seen the Pittsburgh Steamship Company's Str. WAWATAM with her consort Whaleback 202 (both Light) as they passed Port Huron and Entered Lake Huron late in the afternoon. The wind which had freshened, became a gale as twilight came on, and the smoke was so thick the light ship could not be seen. To add to their plight the sound of the fog horn was blown by the capricious wind, away from them.

After groping for some ten miles in the turbid darkness the WAWATAM decided to turn around and head for the shelter of the river but had not gone far when the whistle of another vessel was heard, a whistle which became more and more distinct as they came on, and the lights appeared when the JOHN H. PAULY hove into sight. Thinking the PAULY was safe, the crew of the WAWATAM decided to follow her, when they were startled by a megaphone message from the captain of the PAULY saying that they were aground. Too late, the WAWATAM came on and was grounded also, and her consort would have collided with her had not the heavy seas lifted the 202 and put her up on the beach broadside in two feet of water, while the AMARANTH and the PAULY, side by side, looked. . as one observer put it. . . as if they were about to make straight for the Ben Karrer cottage, then being approximately on the site of the Gratiot Inn. "

Almost simultaneously the tug SARNIA which had been waiting for the tug CHAMPION with a raft (which was eventually broken up in the storm) was the next to go ashore in the wind.

It was not long before signals of distress were blowing and the life saving station was notified. . its first rescue work since the station was established. The surf boat was quickly put on a wagon and hauled down the beach where the men in their white uniforms, rubber boots and cork life-preservers went, first, to the rescue of the seven men aboard the tug, which looked as if it were about to go to pieces any minute.

From the tug the surf boat started for the PAULY and the AMARANTH. . by this time the heavy seas were washing their cargoes of some 2, 600, 000 feet of lath off their decks and spewing it along the beach with hundreds of logs from the broken raft. . where all nineteen people aboard these grounded vessels were safely removed.

The rescue of the crews of the PAULY and the AMARANTH was hardly accomplished when two more boats were blown ashore nearby. The steamer QUILTO and the barge MARIAN W. PAGE, the latter loaded with iron ore. From these two boats ten more people were rescued by the life saving crew. All in all, 36 people, including a woman and two children, were rescued that night.

During the night hundreds of townspeople had gathered along the beach, watching the rescue work and helping those rescued to nearby cottages. But those crowds were nothing to the multitudes that began gathering on the beach the next morning. . multitudes that came on foot, in carriages, and in street cars. In fact, one official of the street car company said that it was so difficult to handle the people that even the baggage cars were pressed into service. One estimate gave 8, 000 as the number of visitors to Keewahdin Beach that Sunday. The PAULY and the AMARANTH were the hardest hit of all the seven boats, but even the grounding of the PAULY and the dumping of her cargo, together with the wreck of the AMARANTH which was pounded to a total loss in the heavy seas, was not the only headache for the owners of those vessels. The multitudes, it seems, were all anxious to have a moment of what was termed at the time "the worst marine disaster" which had occurred on the lower

Editors Note:D. Mitts story will be continued in next issue and in the meantime research will continue on how to get the oysters here... for those who do not like oysters... we are open minded, so bring a suggestion to the next meeting. DON'T SAY I WOULD NOT COME BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE OYSTERS!!!!!!!

"PIGS IS PIGS"... AND WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?(With Sincere Apologies to the Original Author)

We have on good authority that Barge 202, herself a "pig-boat" had built on the forward turret, a small pen containing four pigs! These were being transported to Sault Ste. Marie for a pal of the barge captain(@). The story goes that around the turn of the century a great awakening took place in the U. P. that it was a good place for farming, and that farming could be successful there as well as in the rest of the state. Crops were searched for that could be raised in those short intervals each year between snow storms. Many things were tried and some of the more successful were clover and oats.. hence it was common usage to call the eastern U. P. by the name of Cloverland(what could be nicer... pigs in clover?) fattened on oats... the Scotsman's delight.

So, some pigs must be found that could withstand the rigors of the northern winter and where would they come from, probably upper New York State. The search, it is reported ended near Massena, N. Y. (#)As the story goes that a boar and three sows were obtained in due time from a friend of Capt. Alexander McDougall. It appeared that it was about to cost a deal of money to ship four pigs to Sault Ste. Marie, but with one good Scot helping another, they were loaded aboard a canaller and brought up to Lake Erie. Once on Lake Erie they were reloaded into the small pen on the forward turret of Bge. 202(\$) Everything went well until that frightful storm at Keewahdin Beach when according to reports the grounding of the barge broke the pen and the pigs fell

to the curving deck of 202 and slid into the water. Immediately in the excitement of the whole thing the pigs made off for shore, up the beach and into the woods. Your editor has searched the shore for the exact spot, as historians must be accurate... but alas the winds and rains of 80 plus years have erased their hoof marks! On reaching the oak woods in the fall there were acorns on the ground and they had a home with an abundance of food... even today when you walk through these woods in the twilight you can hear a soft grunting and munching of acorns(*)

We would not tell this story and expect belief were it not thoroughly researched and footnoted as all good historical documents should be!

FOOTNOTES: (@)Sarah Larson is going to the Archival Center at Bowling Green, Ohio, and will report on who the master of 202 was and from what port on Lake Erie the pigs were transferred and carried to Gratiot shores. (#)We expect to be able to report in detail the securing of the porcines, their departure from Massena, N. Y.

by canaller from the Chancellor of the Massena, New York Chapter of the Great Lakes Society for the preservation of Side Ship Launching, Mr. Daniel McCormick, 1 Isabel Street, Massena, N. Y.

(\$)The reports of the newly established Lake View Station of the Lifesaving Service rescued all hands, and Capt. Ted Richardson, our Life Saving Service Historian and Researcher in Residence is scanning the records to see if any porcine cargo is reported as saved.

(*)The President of Lake Huron Lore, Walter McDonald Smith has lined up the descendents of these porcines of 1901 who will be willing to take part in commemorating the Great Event of their ancestors' landing in a "PIG & OYSTER FEAST" on the shore of our namesake lake, somewhere in the vicinity of the "Great Steamboat Wreck", come next autumn. The pigs were the only victims then and again some 80 years later.