

# THE ISLAND BELLE - WON.

## A New Canoe Defeats the Queen of Maryland's Waters.

### AT THE REGATTA ON MILES RIVER.

The Winner Covers Fifteen and a-half Nautical Miles in Three Hours, Five Minutes and Forty-eight Seconds—An Actual Sail of Thirty Miles.

A lovely azure sky and a piping breeze last Saturday graced the most important sailing regatta ever held on Miles river, in Talbot county, if, indeed, the event was not the greatest of its kind that ever took place in the State. The "crackest" of the crack canoes were there on the course in force. Dark possibilities and uncertain performers ventured not in competition, and the best canoe sailors that ever handled a tiller along the shore were on their mettle. Never before have small boats carried so much canvass in Maryland waters.

Among the boats entered were the Island Bride, the famous flyer owned by Mr. E. L. Woodside, of Baltimore; the Island Belle, built to beat the Bride by Syd Covington, of Tilghman's Island, and which did beat her at Oxford recently; the Harrison M. Vickers, which, when owned by Gordan Harria, of Baltimore, a few years ago, created a sensation in Northern waters; the Gertie, said to be the swiftest canoe owned in St. Michael's, and the James M. Wooters, a new boat built to beat the Bride by Greenbury Coffin, of St. Michael's, and of which great things were expected. For eleven years the Island Bride has reigned supreme—the acknowledged queen of small boats. To own a canoe that could outsail the Bride has been the ambition of every lover of the fleet little craft along Eastern Shore waters. Canoe after canoe has been built with the avowed purpose of beating her, and one by one they have been compelled to sail in her wake. Two years ago the Bride's stock fell when the Gertie, a St. Michael's flyer, beat her, but it rose again when it was discovered that a mistake had been made in the time allowance, and the Gertie had been given too much of a start. When the race was sailed over a few days later the Bride was victorious.

Three weeks ago the Bride's colors fell again. This was at the Oxford regatta of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club, when the Island Belle, a new boat built to beat the Bride by Syd Covington, of Tilghman's Island, who also built the Bride, came in ahead. This, however, was not regarded as a fair test of the merits of the boats, for the Belle sailed under an enormous cloud of canvass, while the Bride's sails were comparatively small. When the Miles River regatta was gotten up shortly afterward the owners of both canoes jumped at the opportunity to make a decisive test of their vessel's abilities. The Island Belle was again the winner, beating the Bride by 12 minutes 21 1/4 seconds, and hereafter canoe builders will devote their energies to producing craft to beat the Island Belle.

The day could not have been better for the race. A fresh breeze set in from the northwest early in the morning, and, contrary to the predictions of the weatherwise, it continued until after the race was over. Every craft in the river was pressed into service as pleasure yachts, and parties of intensely interested canoe partisans sailed about the river in schooners, sloops, bugeyes, canoes and skiffs watching the progress of the racers, while boys and girls from five years old up paddled about everywhere in rowing skiffs as much at home as they would have been in their backyards. From the shore the scene was beautiful. Fully two hundred boats crowded with young and old were flitting about under a lively breeze, obeying the slightest pressure of the helmsman's hand, darting in and out and around each other, but never coming in collision, careening until their bottoms glistened in the sun, but never overturning, the whole picture showing how much of the life of the people is wrapped up in their tidy little canoes. For hours before the race began the racers were flying up and down the river, trying their sails and giving opportunity for their crews to learn their little peculiarities. It was while making one of these trials that the first mishap of the day occurred. The Wooters went down the river at a beautiful rate, but at Deep Water Point, two miles below St. Michael's, a big sea went over her stern and filled her. She was righted, bailed out and gotten ready again in time for the race.

The course was from Tyler's wharf, in St. Michael's harbor, to Ashcraft buoy, near the eastern shore of Miles river, to Tilghman's Point buoy, six miles down the river, around Tilghman's Point buoy to Long Point buoy 8 miles upstream, and back to a stake boat in the harbor near the starting point. The distance was fifteen and a-half nautical miles flat. Including the tacks made in beating to windward. The distance covered was estimated at thirty miles.

The start of the first-class boats was a beautiful one. Each canoe with her standing sails of foresail, mainsail and jib set was in readiness at the wharf, and at a signal from Capt. J. G. Morris, the starter, all of them cast loose and flied their sails for the flying start, the signal for which came three minutes later. When the shot was heard every sheet was hauled aft and the racers prettily bunched for the most part, shot by the stake boat. The Island Belle crossed the line first at 11.21.15; the Gertie three seconds later, the Island Bride six seconds behind the Gertie, the James M. Wooters seven seconds after the Bride, the Lucinda Jones nineteen seconds later, Hazel Kirke thirteen seconds later, and the Harrison M. Vickers thirty-seven seconds behind the Kirke. The wind was northwest, giving a long reach to Ashcraft buoy dead ahead, thence to Tilghman's Point, necessitating long tacks across the river, a run dead off the wind from Tilghman's Point to Long Point, in which the huge white sails were carried, sending the boats through the water at steamboat speed, and a beat back from Long Point to the stake boat in the harbor.

The Belle had the lead from the start with the Bride close behind her all the way to Tilghman's Point. At Herring Island, four miles from the start, two boats were so close that the crews could talk to each other. After rounding Tilghman's Point buoy for the run before the wind the light sails were set. The Island Belle carried a huge square sail on her foremast, another on her main mast and a stay sail between masts. The Island Bride put out two smaller square sails, a speaker, a stay sail and a big spinnaker. The other boats also put on their light sails. The James M. Wooters had perhaps the largest suit of sails in the race. She put them on, but the pressure was so great that her seams were forced open and the water poured into her. She hauled in her big sail and withdrew from the race. At Maiden Point, a mile above the starting point, the Vickers carried away her jib balyards and had to come in under her foresail. The Hazel Kirke also carried away her jib balyards off Ashcroft buoy, the Lucinda Jones broke her foremast off Tilghman's Point and the Gertie had a slight mishap during the race.

The finish was also a pretty one. The Island Belle came in at 2.26.33 P. M., the Island Bride at 2.33.13, the Vickers at 2.48.43, the Gertie at 2.54.02, and the Hazel Kirke at 2.54.06. The actual time made by the winning boat was three hours five minutes and forty-eight seconds. The Island Belle beat the Island Bride, lapped time, 12 minutes 21 1/4 seconds; corrected time, 12 minutes 21 1/4 seconds, and the Island Bride beat the Vickers 10 minutes 30 seconds lapped time, and 2 minutes 29 seconds corrected time.

The Island Belle is owned by Syd Covington, of Tilghman's Island, who built and sailed her. She is 85 feet 1 inch long. The Island Bride was also built by Covington. She is owned by E. L. Woodside, of Baltimore, and was sailed by James Plummer, of St. Michael's. She is 83 feet 2 inches long. The Vickers was built by Robt. B. Lambdin, of St. Michael's, and was sailed by George Larimore. She is 30 feet 5 inches. The Gertie was built by George H. Lambdin and was sailed by Edward Mansfield. She is owned by Samuel Jones, of St. Michael's, and is 30 feet 3 inches. The Hazel Kirke is 20 feet 3 inches and was sailed by James D. Caulk. The Lucinda Jones is a Queen Anne's county boat, 30 feet 2 inches and was sailed by Andrew Holland. The Wooter was sailed by William Jump.

A time allowance of ten seconds to the inch in twenty nautical miles was made. The prizes were \$15 for the first boat, and \$5 for the second.

The regatta also included a race between second-class boats, that is, canoes of less than thirty feet. There were but four entries. These were the Island Bird, twenty-seven feet long, built by Covington from the unused portion of the logs of which the Island Bride is built and sailed by W. S. Marshall; the William Seymour, twenty-eight feet long, built on the Peconic river, Virginia, and sailed by William Seymour, her owner; the Comet, another Peconic boat, 26 feet 10 inches long, sailed by Captain Tarbutson, and the Tolchester, 25 feet 11 inches long, built on Tilghman's Island, and sailed by Henry Down. The course was from the harbor to Long Point, back to the harbor and repeat, distance ten nautical miles. The wind gave the boats a reach to the stake boat in the harbor, a clean run to Long Point and a beat back. The Island Bird won by 25 seconds lapped time

and 2 minutes and 25 seconds corrected time. The Island Bird turned the stake boat on the first run over the course in 1 hour 7 minutes 35 seconds, with the Tolchester a minute and 5 seconds behind. On the finish the Bird turned the stake boat in 2 hours 10 minutes and 43 seconds from the start, with the Tolchester only 25 seconds behind. Among the yachts at the regatta was Capt. T. G. Morris's sloop Cora, Mr. Brady's sloop Anna, H. Clay Dodson's sloop Nonpariel, R. A. Dodson's canoe yachts Daisy and Flora and the steam launch Little Nell. The regatta committee consisted of Capt. G. W. Tyler, R. A. Dodson and Thomas E. Blades.

Among the spectators were E. L. Woodside, J. A. Williar, George O. Brown, S. C. Appleby, Thomas J. Barron, J. W. Hall, John Morgan, Miss Hayward, Mrs. Mary D. West, H. Clay Dodson, Jr., of Baltimore; Caspar W. Morris and Caspar W. Morris, Jr., Miss Bessie O. Morris, Miss Maud H. Morris, of Talbot county; Miss Jennie Morris, of Philadelphia; Miss Virginia Lanchorn, of Virginia; Miss Mabel Morris, of Chicago; James M. Wooters, Charles S. Winder, Owen Norris, Joehus Wrightson, of Talbot county; Ernest Valliant and Clarence Phillips, of New York; James Valliant, Miss Grace Valliant, Miss Nita Valliant, R. A. Dodson, the Misses Dodson, Mr. and Mrs. H. Clay Dodson, Miss Hannah Dodson, Miss Hettie Dodson, Miss Clara Dodson, Mrs. William Jones, Miss Ellis Crouse, Miss Mary Crouse, Miss Addie Jones, of St. Michael's; Rev. William Valliant, of Deal's Island, and Dr. Dodson, of St. Michael's.

# CHESAPEAKE CANOES.

Headquarters for Fleet Boats at  
St. Michael's.

## LAST YEAR'S CHAMPION MABELLE.

New Vessels Building for Next Year's  
Contests—The Chesapeake, which was  
Left on Lake Michigan After the  
World's Fair.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

ST. MICHAEL'S, Md., March 21.—St. Michael's, in Talbot county, is headquarters for canoe-building on the Chesapeake and holds now the State championship for open boats, an honor won last summer by the canoe Mabelle, Curtis E. Crane owner. Mr. Crane is a native Eastern Shoreman. He was born in Queen Anne's county. He was in business in Baltimore for many years, and when he retired, a few years ago, he removed to St. Michael's and took to canoeing as a diversion. Mr. E. L. Woodside, another Baltimore business man, is an enthusiastic canoeist who prefers Talbot-built boats, of which he has had some of the finest and fastest. He held the championship for several years previous to last summer. Syd. Covington, of Tilghman's Island, is his builder.

Greenbury Coffin, of St. Michael's, is Mr. Crane's builder, and is now finishing a \$200 canoe for that gentleman for next summer's regatta. It will cost \$100 more to equip her. Her water line is 33 feet, over-all length 36 feet and beam 7 feet. Her racing foremast will be 44 feet long, and she will carry 133 yards of racing canvas. She will be named Belle M. Crane, in honor of the owner's wife. This is Mr. Crane's fourth boat, Mabelle, Golden Rod and Cozey being the other three.

The Harper brothers, Samuel A. and Crittenden, are building a canoe of which much is expected, and they confidently believe she will outstrip in speed anything of her size on the Chesapeake. Her length is 36 feet, width 8 feet. The foresail will contain 75 yards, mainsail 45 yards and jib 40 yards. The Messrs. Harper have been successful builders of fast canoes, the most noted being the Golden Rod, which made a good record last year and was then sold to Mr. Crane. But Greenbury Coffin has a reputation as a builder second to nobody. He built his first boat when sixteen years old, and both he and the boat became famous. Besides those named, these of his make have become famous: The James M. Wooters, Marie Bladen, Little Nick, John Townsend and Grunter. He has his own ideas about canoe building. He originates his own models, hews his own trees and does all the work on the boat. The logs required are found in the woods about St. Michael's. The trees are yellow pine and great care is exercised in their selection. It requires five logs to build a canoe like Crane's and Harper's new racers—one for the centre piece and two for each side. A tree from which the centre log is cut must be from 60 to 70 feet in height and 2½ feet across the stump.

Daniel Cox, Lewis Tarr and Charles Tarr are among other well-known St. Michael's builders. The handsomest canoe probably in build and finish ever built in St. Michael's was the Chesapeake, built by Robert D. Lambdin for exhibition at the World's Fair. He spared no expense in building the boat, and went to much more to transport her to Chicago and exhibit her there. The venture was a failure financially and brought disaster on Mr. Lambdin he was not able to bear. He left the canoe on Lake Michigan in care of a Chicago gentleman. One Sunday morning a pleasure party of young men and women obtained her and went out on the lake sailing. A novice was at the helm, and when a squall struck the canoe she capsized and all the party but one were drowned. A St. Michael's sailor could have navigated her in safety and comfort across the Atlantic. She was sold afterward for \$100 and is now somewhere on the Chicago river. This disaster disheartened Mr. Lambdin and he moved away from St. Michael's. One famous product of his skill was the Dashaway, which he built years ago for John C. Harper, the father of Samuel A. and Crittenden Harper, above mentioned. For years she was the swiftest thing in those waters, and when she was sold to an Atlantic City gentleman she achieved more notoriety by outstriking large cutboats in Great Egg Harbor, N. J.

The William McKinley is another St. Michael's racer of celebrity which takes part in all the races. She was built and is owned by Horace Turner, colored, and is the only colored man's boat in these contests.

It requires from 9 to 12 men to sail a canoe in a race. There must be one at the helm and enough to man the outriggers. An outrigger is a plain, smooth pine board, 14 feet long, one foot wide and 2 inches thick. One end is placed under the leeward washboard and the plank extends out over the windward one. When the wind increases rather than reduce sail men are put on the outrigger to ballast the boat. Among the most successful canoe sailors in St. Michael's are George Larrimore, George Shockley, James Plummer, William Jump, Joseph Mansfield and David Shockley. Canoe building has given rise to the industry of sailmaking in St. Michael's. William Jump and John Kethley get the preference of all this kind of work for the races. The price for sailmaking is twelve cents a yard.

# WORLD OF SPORT.

## New Styles of Maryland Canoes Bidding for Favor.

### LINES OF THE BELLE M. CRANE.

#### A Builder Adopting Fore and Aft Overhang in His Model.

The Mabelle Cut Away—The Beverly—  
Another Candidate Made Very Sharp  
with Narrow Beam—Everything at the  
Belling Point in View of the Coming  
Regatta on the Patuxent and the One  
in Eastern Bay.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

St. MICHAEL'S, Md., July 1.—This little town, the home of some of the fastest canoes on the Eastern Shore, is in a flutter of excitement over the coming Fourth of July races at Point Breeze, on the Patuxent, and the regatta of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club, which will be held on the 9th or 10th of July at Claiborne.

In the Point Breeze races the Mabelle, the fastest boat in St. Michael's that has ever been in a race, is entered, together with a new boat that has just been completed by the builder of the Mabelle, Greenbury Coffin, and which he is confident will beat the Mabelle, the skiff W. H. Niemyer, of Baltimore, and also the canoes Island Belle and Island Bride, owned by Mr. E. L. Woodside, of Baltimore, all of which will participate in the race. The new boat is named the Belle M. Crane, after the wife of its owner, Mr. Curtis E. Crane. A trial race up and down the Miles river between the Crane and the Mabelle took place on Saturday. The Mabelle seemed to have the better of the new boat on the wind, but the Crane did better work running before the wind and hoisted first.

In model the Crane is a decided departure from anything in the canoe line ever built in St. Michael's. Heretofore canoes have been built with but a very slight rake in the bow and stern. The Crane has a decided overhang at both ends. Ordinarily a canoe will measure about the same on her water line as she does between the inside of her stern and stem posts on deck. The new boat will measure about three feet longer between posts than she will on the water line. Between posts she is about 36 feet 10 inches, and is about 33 feet 9 inches on the water line and is about 33 feet on her keel. The change in the model is said to result in making her quicker in stays than canoes built on the old model.

The lines of the Mabelle have been changed somewhat since last season, she having been cut away in bow and stern, the changes shortening her about ten inches. The alteration is said to have made her a little quicker in stays, but it is said she does not throw off as pretty a wave as she did before the changes were made. Her speed, however, has not been interfered with.

Crittenden Harper, who built the canoe Golden Rod, which is now owned by Mr. Crane, and which was beaten by the Niemyer at Point Breeze on Decoration Day, has built a new boat which he has called the Beverly, after his farm. He expects to have her in the regatta at Claiborne, and, if possible, in the races at Point Breeze. The lines of the Golden Rod were too full for speed, and it is said that Mr. Harper has gone to the other extreme with the Beverly. She is the sharpest boat that has ever been built in this section of the country. Except for the extreme straightness and sharpness of her lines she is built like other canoes. Her want of beam will, it is said, prevent her carrying as much sail as is usually carried in racing canoes when on the wind, but she ought to fly, with her light sails set, when off the wind. Her builder has the greatest confidence in her and expects her to do great things.

Greenbury Coffin has an order to build another canoe on the lines of the Belle M. Crane for Mr. Newton S. Bogie, of East Neck Island, Kent county, and is now looking for logs out of which to build her. The new boat will be shorter than the Crane, being about 33 feet between posts on deck and about 30 feet on her water line.

In addition to the racing boats Daniel Cox, of St. Michael's, is building a 23-foot boat for P. D. Hunt. It is not intended that she shall be a racer, although her lines are said to be good. John Harrison, of Tilghman's Island, is building a canoe 28 feet long. This will be the longest canoe on the Chesapeake, the canoe Albatross, which is 27 feet long, having been the longest heretofore. A boat on the general model of a canoe, but of planks instead of logs, like the skiff Niemyer, is also building on Tilghman's Island.

Considerable dissatisfaction has been caused in St. Michael's by the failure of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club to amend its rules so as to provide for water-line measurement for racing canoes. Such a rule would give a great advantage to canoes built on lines like those of the Crane. The present system of measurement takes no notice of sail area, the boats being allowed to crowd on as much canvas as they can carry, without penalty. The boats themselves are measured between the inside of the stem and stern posts on deck, the longer boats allowing the shorter ones six seconds a foot a mile. Measured on the water line, with the same time allowance, the boats of the new model would be given a tremendous advantage over the boats of the old style.

There will be no time allowance in the races to be given at Point Breeze, and the St. Michael's boats will try to have the races at Claiborne flat-footed also. In any event, the races, both at Point Breeze and Claiborne, will be more hotly contested than any races that have been sailed by canoes in recent years.

# WEST RIVER BOAT WINS.

Canoe William V. Wilson, in the Clalborne Regatta, Gets First Money,

AND CAP'N HARTGE IS HAPPY.

Island Blossom, of Oxford, Gets Second Place.

Island Belle and Belle M. Crane the Other Competitors in the Clalborne Regatta—Prizes of the Winners, Captains of the Crews and Sketches of the Craft.

The regatta for Chesapeake bay canoes sailed at Clalborne yesterday was won by the William V. Wilson, Jr., a West river boat, owned by Capt. Emil A. Hartge. A large crowd saw the contest. There was a good sailing breeze during the morning hours and a fair breeze was blowing shortly after 10 A. M., when the steamer from Baltimore carrying the excursionists reached the wharf. The racing canoes had not all then arrived, and it was 1.30 P. M. before they were all measured. By this time the wind had lulled and was baffling, so the original course was changed and the following adopted:

From the pier at Clalborne to Wade's Point buoy, one mile and a quarter; thence to and around Tilghman's Point buoy, three miles; the course up to this point repeated and thence to Wade's Point buoy, and from there to the starting point, in all fourteen and a half nautical miles.

The Wilson was the favorite canoe. She was awarded on Thursday by the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club the race which took place July 17 on Miles river. In that race the Island Blossom was originally given first place, but the testimony proved to the regatta committee that she had cut a buoy, so the Wilson was given the decision.

The conditions of yesterday's contest was that each boat could carry all the sail desired. The rules of the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club governed. This gave each canoe a time allowance of six seconds per foot per mile. There were four starters. The Island Blossom was the smallest boat and got the maximum allowance. The Belle M. Crane won the longest, and had to give the Blossom 4 minutes and 46 seconds. When the boats started the air was very light from the east. The Island Blossom was first across the line. Then came the Island Belle, the Wilson and the Belle M. Crane. The Crane passed the mark with foresail, mainsail, jib and square sail set. The others wore but three sails. A minute later the Wilson sent up a square sail. The other two continued under three sails.

The Wilson was first to reach Wade's Point buoy, and turned it quickly, taking in her squaresail just before doing so. The others kept their course after passing the buoy for a quarter of a mile. These showed good judgment, as the Wilson lost the wind and the ebb tide cut her down. She was a full half mile behind the Blossom, which was leading on the first tack toward Tilghman's Point. The Island Belle was also in the lead of the Wilson. The West River canoe made a good reach and crossed the Island Belle's bow. The Belle M. Crane and the Island Blossom had a good race in the light air, the Blossom being to windward.

The Wilson kept steadily on, and as the boats disappeared from view behind a point it was hard to discern which had the best of the argument, as the wind was baffling. As they reappeared the Wilson was seen to be in the lead by a half mile and the others were strung out all about the same distance apart. All had square sails and splunkers set on the run before the wind.

They rounded the Wade's Point buoy as follows: Wilson, 3.56.48; Crane, 4.05.25; Blossom, 4.15.30; Belle, 4.21.30.

In the run back to Tilghman's Point the Wilson increased her lead and the others were closer together. She kept in front and returned to Wade's Point seven minutes ahead of the Blossom, her nearest competitor. All of the boats wore light sails to Wade's Point, but took them in after rounding the buoy and went to the finish under three sails.

The following table shows the relative conditions of the boats:

Boat	Start	Finish	Time	Time	Time	Time
William V. Wilson, Jr.	3.56.48	4.21.30	1.24.42	1.24.42	1.24.42	1.24.42
Island Blossom	4.15.30	4.21.30	1.36.00	1.36.00	1.36.00	1.36.00
Island Belle	4.15.30	4.21.30	1.36.00	1.36.00	1.36.00	1.36.00
Belle M. Crane	4.05.25	4.21.30	1.16.05	1.16.05	1.16.05	1.16.05

The William V. Wilson, Jr., is owned by Capt. E. A. Hartge, of Galloway, Anne Arundel county, Md. She was sailed by her owner, and carried, besides him, a crew of eight. The Wilson was fifth in a race last year in Miles river for the Anchorage cup in the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club's regatta. She was second in a race at Point Breeze this season, which the Island Blossom won. July 17 she won the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club regatta in Miles river. Yesterday's contest was her fourth. The boat was built by her owner and named after a prominent lumber merchant, who witnessed yesterday's race, and later gave each of the crew a present.

The Island Blossom is owned by W. H. Myers, Jr., of Oxford, Md. She was sailed by John Gibson, also of Oxford. The Blossom is also in her second year of racing. Last season she won a race at Oxford, then won a leg in the Anchorage cup at the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club's regatta. This year she won the race at Point Breeze, was first home in the race for the Anchorage cup July 17, but was disqualified, as stated. Yesterday's race was her fifth.

The Island Belle is owned by Mr. E. L. Woodside, of Baltimore, and is one of the best-known race boats in the State. She was sailed by Capt. J. M. Plummer, of St. Michael's. For nine years her sister boat, the Island Bride, also owned by Mr. Woodside, held the State championship. Four years ago, at Oxford, the Belle defeated the Bride in a championship race. The following year, August 9, 1894, she lost the title to the William H. Nemyer, of Baltimore, which boat in a 23-mile race won by 18 seconds.

The Belle M. Crane is owned by Curtis O. Crane, of St. Michael's. She was sailed by Capt. George Larrimore. She was built by Greenbury Coffin, of St. Michael's. She has been racing five years. She has started a number of times, being often accompanied by her sister boat, the Mabelle, the latter generally having proved the faster of the two.

The prizes won by these boats yesterday were, Wilson \$30, Blossom \$20 and Island Belle \$10. The regatta was managed by the following committee: Ira K. Caulk, George W. House, William T. Harrison, Jr., Edward A. Caulk and Charles W. Nagle.

Judges—For the Wilson, L. L. Hartge; for the Blossom, Oliver S. Gallop; for the Island Belle, R. H. Ubrbrock; for the Belle M. Crane, Frank S. Orem.

# Regatta Time Restores The Log Canoe's Lost Glory

THE Chesapeake Bay log canoe is so intimately associated with the maritime history of the Eastern Shore of Maryland that it may well be considered as symbolic of this region's development. In a region steeped in tradition, with a native consciousness of heritages rich in historical distinction, it is not strange that this important accessory to its development should play a leading part in the annual local regattas.

Here on the broad waters of the Miles, the Tred Avon, the Choptank and the Chester the present and the past contend in unique contrast, with the latter usually carrying away the honors of the occasion despite a handicap of half a century or more. Long outmoded as a practical adjunct of the sea-food industry by the more efficient gasoline, deadrise workboat, the Chesapeake Bay log sailing canoe lives during these regatta days in all its recrudescence. Contests between the modern sailing yachts of various classes or the gasoline speedboats are apt to leave the native spectator cold. But once the canoes set sail for the starting line, under their great expanses of billowing canvas, the interest is immediate and real. Here is something to stir the heart of a waterman.

The names of such well-known yacht designers as Herreshoff, Burgess, Stevens, Rhodes and Alden have little meaning for the average waterman of the Eastern Shore. But the mere mention of any one of the famous canoe builders evokes an immediate enthusiastic response. . . . Robert D. Lambdin—ah, yes, indeed, there was a builder of canoes. Old-timers will tell you of his celebrated Dashaway, which had a clear record of all wins and no defeats, and of his Chesapeake, which was exhibited at Chicago's first World's Fair.

## Captain Jim Lowery Built The Mary Rider

And Capt. Jim Lowery, outstanding canoe builder of the latter nineteenth century, whose fleet little Mary Rider, pride of former Commodore Bill Green of the Miles River Yacht Club, was a consistent winner until the irremediable ills of old age recently forced her out of local competition. And Sid Covington, famous particularly for his "Island" group, ably represented in present-day regattas by the Island Bird. And Charlie Tarr, builder of the Magic, which has won so many cups that its owner cannot turn around in his home without knocking over one of them. And Greenbury Coffin, whose craftsmanship is immortalized by the graceful Belle M. Crane, scratch boat of the present-day racing fleet. And John B. Harrison, progressive builder of canoes and bugeyes of more recent date.

These men were craftsmen of high degree and the boats they sculptured out of great pine logs were the product of an art which is now all but extinct. They represent the more immediate

nautical heritage of the Eastern Shore. If you are interested in the origin and growth of this heritage, you will have to go way back, for the perfected canoe of the latter nineteenth century did not spring like Minerva full-fledged from the brow of Jupiter; it was the result of slow evolution.

The history of the log canoe goes back to the days of the earliest Colonial settlement—even beyond that, when you consider that this craft is of native Indian origin. It is said that Capt. John Smith and his hardy band of colonists first recognized the practical possibilities of the dug-out canoe, as constructed and used in Chesapeake waters by the Susquehanna Indians. It was a crude and clumsy boat, this Indian-dug-out, fashioned laboriously by means of flint and shell tools and hollowed out by the slow process of burning with fire-heated stones.

## Arriving Colonists Provided Keener Tools And Skill

Native crudity was supplanted by the keener tools and greater skill of the colonists, resulting in a small double-ended boat that served fairly well for navigation in protected waters. But as the colonies grew, there was an increasing demand for a larger boat. It was then that some enterprising colonist, who favored log sculpturing to the more time-consuming task of hewing frame timbers and whipsawing planking—a process employed at that early time in the construction of larger craft—conceived the brilliant idea of hollowing out two logs in lateral opposition and pinning them together, to form a workboat of greater size and capability than the original onelog dugout. In this way the evolution was accelerated, and progressed from two logs to three, then to five—even to seven and nine—for the larger bugeye cargo boats. But three and five logs remained the favorite number for the canoe.

It has been said that this boat owes nothing to European influence. But this, of course, is not true. Although of native origin, most of the important accessories and refinements are of foreign conception. There is the sailing rig, for example. The Indians did not use sails in their primitive dugouts, and it is unlikely that the early settlers did, until the two-log canoe came into being. Then a single mast was added, raked well aft, like that of an African slaver. The rig was sloop, with jib and mainsail; the latter clubbed on its short after margin, and held flat by a long sprit, which fitted into the club in the rear and was held fast to the mast in front by means of a guy rope.

Later, when greater speed was desired, a second, shorter mast was stepped aft, converting the original sail plan into that of a jib-headed schooner or, more correctly, ketch rig. With the sails came a narrow keel, to prevent the boat from drifting to leeward when sailing close-

hailed on the wind. This was later replaced by a centerboard, which was better adapted to shallow-water navigation. Then the freeboard, or height of the sides, was increased by superimposing a plank "rising" on the log shell, insuring greater safety in a seaway; and narrow decks, or washboards, were added primarily for the same reason.

Thus was evolved the Chesapeake Bay log canoe—the boat which was such an important factor in developing the bay region and making it famous the country over for its delicious sea food. Hundreds of these fast, stanch boats were built on both sides of the bay (particularly on the Eastern Shore) during the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century. With an inexhaustible supply of building material readily at hand and the demand for new boats constant,

By WILLIAM STARR

the boat-building industry became a striving one. Few things were required in the construction of a log canoe aside from the three personal essentials of experience, skill and a good eye—an ax for felling the first-growth loblolly pine, a broadax for shaping the logs, an adz for hollowing the interiors, a ship auger for boring the fastening pinholes, a flexible lead batten for matching curves, a string for truing up straight surfaces.

Individual ability was of primary importance in this boat-building industry, where technical training in naval architecture was practically unknown.

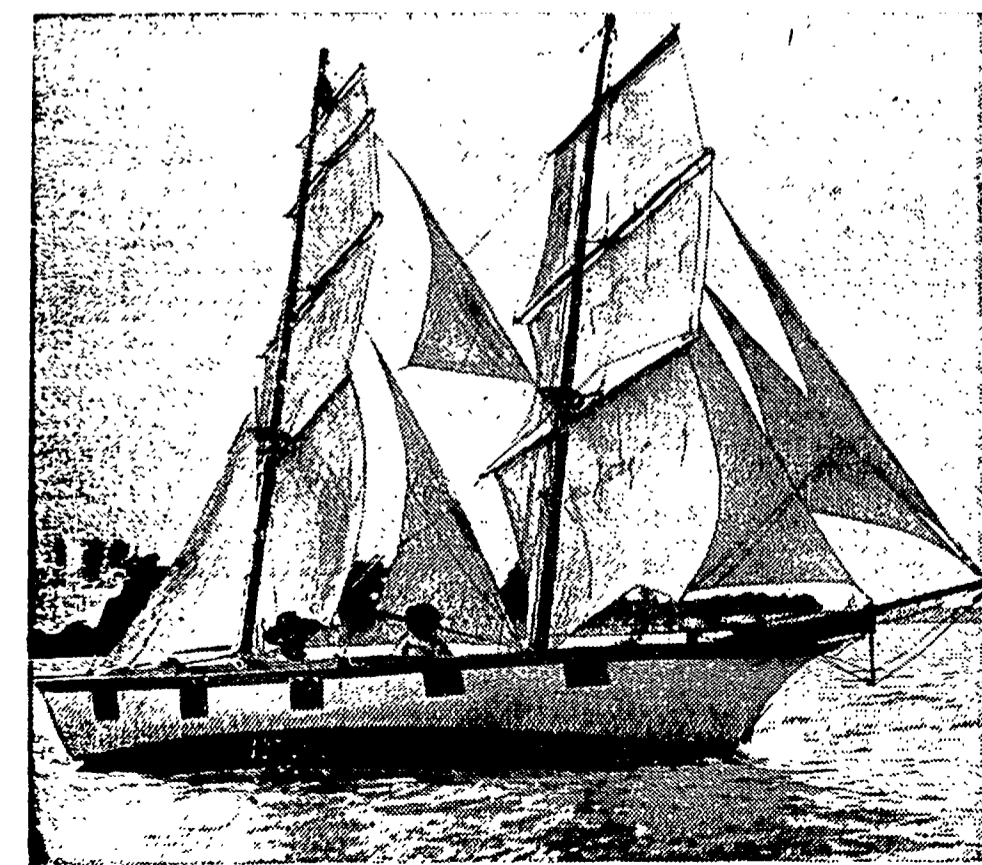
Racing followed as a natural consequence of the canoe's evolution. As oyster beds near home were depleted, faster boats were required to take the tongs to more distant bars, allow for a full

day's work, and rush them back to home markets, or to "buyer" boats. It often happened that, at the end of a day's catch, one of the skippers would pin a dollar bill on his mainsail and challenge the other skippers of the fleet to race him home for the prize. Competition that developed in the line of duty subsequently crystallized in annual canoe races on the Fourth of July. But then the gasoline engine came along and the sailing canoe became a thing of the past.

Had it not been for three important agencies, the glory of this picturesque native workboat would indeed be a very dim memory today. The first of these, chronologically, was the Chesapeake Bay Yacht Club, of Easton, which revived the sailing canoe races in 1897; the second was the Baltimore Sun, which sponsored the racing of native workboats in 1921; the third was the Miles River Yacht Club, which is largely re-

sponsible for the popularity of canoe racing today. Tradition and color are not the only factors responsible for the great popularity of the annual canoe races on the Eastern Shore. The contending boats are fast, and it requires the maximum of sailing skill to handle them successfully. In the nautical fraternity, where the ability of a boat and the skill of its skipper have far more weight than class distinction, these essentials are equally appreciated by native watermen and visiting yachtsmen.

It is a thrilling sight to watch these old-time sailing canoes scudding over the sparkling waters, leeward washboards buried in foam, windward springboards loaded with human ballast, great sweeps of canvas arcing low in the fresh shore breeze. . . . And it is far more thrilling to be one of the ten or a dozen comprising the crew.



A miniature square-rigger on the Miles