

# The Grand Dispatch



A brief social history of Port Maitland Ontario, and the surrounding area  
Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association (PMHA) - Free to PMHA members

## Ten years of The Grand Dispatch Completed!

### Forty Issues of "The Grand Dispatch" and Counting!

Well, forty-one actually!

This issue of *The Grand Dispatch* (TGD) completes the fortieth regular issue. A special issue was printed in the fall of 2014, when PMHA began, in earnest, to solicit funds for the Cairn at Port Maitland.

steam. I was also diverting my attentions toward the shipping lock and other concerns. It was my intention to someday return to *The Dispatch* which is borne out on the headline of that final issue. "*The Grand Dispatch is taking Sabbatical!*" Ed Boyle of Beckley Beach, was none too pleased with that and until his death regularly requested I restart it. Unfortunately Ed passed away before that occurred. I am dedicating this issue to Ed! Ed believed in Heaven and I am sure he is looking down on Beckley Beach making sure the road get cleared of sand every spring! **More to follow on pg 8.**



### What is it?

Earlier in the fall, a number of volunteers gathered at the Cairn to do a cleanup prior to seeding. Part of the cleanup included burning a lot of brush and old logs that were not providing any real purpose and in my opinion were just not needed. One of the logs was about three feet in diameter and maybe eight to ten feet long. This particular log was some distance from the water and would have required a mighty storm to put it there. I have sat on it occasionally but it was a reach to get my hind end up there. I tell you this for a reason! The burn of this log took about six hours. We burnt some and then stacked more brush on it all day until there was no more brush to burn! By mid afternoon we could see an item protruding from the log as if it had been inserted horizontally as the tree grew. What is it? We just don't know.

*The Dispatch* began in 1998 when I wanted to record the history of Beckley Beach and for the first five years my articles were almost exclusively about Beckley Beach and available generally only to Beckley Beach residents. By the fall of 2002 I was having some health concerns and had run out of

The tree was likely a willow and was clearly very old. Both ends were cut cleanly as if they were cut by a very large chainsaw. I told you I sat on the log for a reason. You see, I had never seen this item sticking out of the tree which meant it was well inside and under the bark. So far, only about

eighteen to twenty inches are visible and we have no idea how much more remains imbedded.



The photo above shows you the item found in the log at the Cairn in Port Maitland.

In answer to my question posted in Haldimand Press, I received the following suggestion.

*Good morning Bill;*

*The metal item you found that was featured in the paper looks familiar.*

*It looks like it could be an ingot mold used in the foundry industry. They are still used today. It is most likely cast iron.*

*A foundry would use a special furnace to melt their metal. They would pour the castings that are required from this furnace. When they are finished pouring, the furnace would still have some molten metal left in it. They can't leave this in the furnace to solidify.*

*This is where the ingot mold comes into use. The extra metal is poured into the ingot mold. Eventually when it gets a reasonable amount in it, the foundry would knock the solid lump of metal out of the ingot mold. They would put this back into the furnace to be re-melted and used to make further castings.*

*I can't guarantee that it is an ingot mold but it looks very similar to ones used by current foundries.*

*Hope this helps.*

*Best regards; Andy Pollmann*

About the cleanup! We had a good day burning,

raking and cutting at the Cairn on October 1st. The main reason for our days work was to remove some dangerous branches hanging down from the willow trees and to burn what we could. Considerable raking and other jobs got done as we prepared the ground for a fall seeding.



Cierrah Warnick & Tyler Mihalicz

Jim Barnes had arranged for a couple loads of topsoil to be delivered and Spence Blackburn from Mosaic agreed to bring their tractor with a front end loader to level the soil. This completed the last step before seeding and the cairn was completely seeded the next week. I am told that it has already had some visits from those pesky all terrain vehicles; something we will have to live through.



On August 18<sup>th</sup> Barnes volunteered to clean out the brush at the Cairn. A few minutes by them versus hours by us!

**I am not all about Port Maitland – I even visit Wiarthon Willie on Groundhog Day!**

It is sad to remember that Mr. Wiarthon Willie GH

passed away on September 20, 2017. The past couple years either my wife Carole or my granddaughter Cierrah and I have made the trek to Wiarton on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to hear first hand from Mr. Willie himself if winter would continue to punish us or spring was just around the corner.

We could not forego the funeral of Wiarton Willie as he has played such an important role in determining at least six week of every year of our lives. Early in the morning of September 30<sup>th</sup> Carole and I arose from our bed early and headed to Wiarton for Mr. Willie's funeral. Sad as it was the people of Wiarton did all they could to console not only Carole and myself but they brought great hope and a clear sense of Wiarton's legacy to their community which was hurting badly. Here it was announced that Willie Junior would assume the reigns of Chief Prognosticator on February 2, 2018, when he would wear the crown that Wiarton had dutifully worn for the past thirteen years! All Hail Willie Junior!



## A few Marine Disasters From old files!


Below is an article found in the Haldimand Tribune of, Sept. 20, 1860.

**Wreck on Lake Erie;** *We are sorry to state that the Scow AYRSHIRE LASSIE, belonging to Mr. Mason of this town, (Cayuga) was wrecked on Lake Erie, off the clay banks in the Township of Sherbrook, on Tuesday the 11th inst. The scow was on her voyage to Buffalo, and was loaded with lumber and shingle-bolts, and towed by the HOWARD steam-tug. She was three miles below Gull Island, off the Sherbrooke shore, when a storm sprang up to the westward. The captain of the HOWARD, on seeing the storm, immediately put back for the mouth of the Grand River. The scow was thus bro't into the trough of the sea, and was instantly filled, the waves beating through her sides, and breaking up her cabins. The whole of her cargo was washed out of her, and drifted to shore at various points. The hands on board of her were picked up by the HOWARD'S boats, but such was the fury of the waves that one of them had his clothing completely washed off.*

*Attempts have been made to raise the scow, but hitherto without success,—owing to the wind being in an unfavourable direction. It is hoped, however, that she may be recovered. Although very much damaged by the waves it is thought that she may yet be repaired, but at an expenditure which would amount at least, to half her original value.*

*We learn with feelings of deep indignation and regret that some parties residing near the scene of the wreck, so far from lending any assistance in recovering the property that has been washed ashore, have been busily plundering every article that they could lay their hands upon. We are informed that one person was detected teaming some of the lumber into the woods for the purpose of hiding it there and some have actually chopped up parts of the scow for the sake of stealing the bolts and rings. Such proceedings are most disgraceful, and we trust that the perpetrators of these offences will be discovered and receive the punishment they so richly deserve.*

Continued on page 6



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Continued from page 3

The lumber on board the scow belonged to Mr. Anguish of Balmoral, and the shingle-bolts to Pierce & Co. of Buffalo.

If you wish you wish to find additional information on this sinking the: **ISABELLA SINKS** follow this link <http://images.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca/46331/data?n=12>

**Schr ISABELLA, 1867, Port Maitland, Ont., L. Erie ISABELLA** Schooner, ashore at Long Point, Lake Erie; total loss. Marine Disasters 1867, Lake Erie Toledo Blade December 21, 1867

The schooner ISABELLA which we also reported beached at Long Point was reached by the steam tug HARRISON on Friday night, with a steam pump on board. The pump was rigged on the schooner, which was taken in tow by the HARRISON, but in consequence of the heavy seas running at the time, the pumps could not be worked, and the schooner sunk with the pumps and all material on board, in deep water, about 10 miles off Mohawk Island. The crew had barely enough time to take to the boat and reach the tug before the ISABELLA went down. Buffalo Morning Express September 2, 1867 3-4 The Canadian brig ISABEL (sic) was recently run ashore on Long Pt. She was hauled off and was being taken to Buffalo for repairs, and when between Port Maitland and Gravelly Bay, 5 or 6 miles from shore, she was sunk and lost on the way. Buffalo Commercial Advertiser September 2, 1867 3-4

Intelligence was received here yesterday that the bark OREONTO (Oneonta) went ashore at Erie, Pa., Thursday night ((8/29), and the schr. ISABELLA, at Long Pt.; the former light, and the latter with coal. Buffalo Daily Courier August 31, 1867 8-6 The Canadian brig ISABEL was recently run ashore on Long Pt. She was hauled off and was being taken to Buffalo for repairs, and when between Port Maitland and Gravelly Bay, 5 or 6 miles from shore, she was sunk and lost on the way. Buffalo Daily Courier September 3, 1867 6-3 ISABELL, Canadian brig ashore on Long Point, Lake Erie, was hauled off

but sunk under tow between Port Maitland and Gravelly Bay, five or six miles from shore. Total loss. Toledo Blade September 5, 1867 History of the Great Lakes notes: "ISABELLA, schr, 180 t., wrecked Long Point, '67." Vessel mentioned on 1864 marine insurance list. Wreck of vessel noted in Encyclopedia of American Shipwrecks. My new database entry:

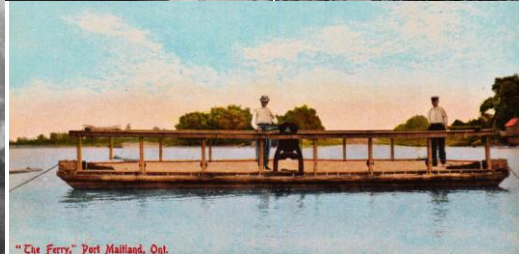
\*NEW\* ISABELLA Other names : also seen as ISABEL Official # : (C) Type at loss : schooner or brig, wood, 2-mast Build info : 1852, Geo. Avery, Toronto Specs : 180 t. Date of loss : 1867, Aug 31 Place of loss : between Port Maitland and Gravelly Bay, 5-6 miles from shore Lake : Erie Type of loss : storm Loss of life : none Carrying : coal Detail : She went on Long Point in a gale on August 29. The next day the tug HARRISON put pumps on board and hauled her off and began to tow her to Buffalo for repairs. Enroute the pumps failed and she foundered in deep water, a total loss to the vessel and the valuable wrecking pumps. The wrecking crew aboard her barely escaped with their lives. Owned by Darragh & Co, Toronto, in 1864 Repairs in 1861 Sources: eas,hgl,rsl,wmn

**From the Reform Press,** This occurred on November 18, 1881, Erie PA., The Schooner RUSSIA, which passed here (Cayuga)Thursday after taking on barley at Cayuga, Edie's and 9000 bushels at Port Maitland sailed for Erie PA. on Friday. In attempting to enter the harbor, she struck the pier and sank. The barley from Port Maitland was purchased by Mr. Wm. McIndoe, of this village, and was insured.

Author's note. This article is a bit confusing as it implies that the barley was purchased by Wm McIndoe. Mr. McIndoe had a grain mill at Port Maitland and would not have been purchasing barley inbound to Erie PA, rather the other way around. I believe I have found part of Mr. McIndoe's mill just west of the Port Maitland Lock where I expected it would be.

The above articles are a window into our marine past. Many are available online and well worth the search should you be so inclined. Ask any commercial or sports diver who has dived in Lake Erie and they will tell you of many more.

# Pictures from Our Past!



Continued from pg 1

Something that many of you may not be aware of is the financial importance *The Dispatch* plays for the Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association.

Prior to the restart of TGD in 2002 we had sponsors, but this mostly covered the printing cost which were fortunately not as expensive as they are today. It also took care of postage etc. Fr. Jim Valk CR, at St. Joseph's Parish in Hamilton let me use their photocopier and I made small donations toward the cost. Eventually, I purchased that photocopier and worked at home. At first *The Dispatch* was included in the Beckley Beach Cottagers Corporation quarterly newsletter.

Today, *The Dispatch* has the potential of earning PMHA \$4,800. Unfortunately we have never met the goal of the \$4,800 as we have never been able to fill all the advertising/sponsorship spaces. Don't get me wrong, this is not a complaint, but every sponsor makes life just that much easier.

**With this said, let me be a bit of a hawker! If you own a company or know someone who may be interested in sponsoring *The Grand Dispatch*, the annual fee is \$200 for one year, and I will gladly take their cheque!**

By the way and not as a second or last thought, I wish to wholeheartedly thank all the SPONSORS past and present. PMHA could not exist without each and every one of you.

### What are our Plans!

It appears that we will have to leave the Port Maitland Lock. This decision is not final but then again nor is Trump's Presidency. (Sorry Bob, I just couldn't resist! – Inside Joke!) We have made our best offer to CPR who returned our request with an offer to sell us the property for \$35,000.00, a sum too large for our small group. We are planning our **Annual Meeting on Wednesday December 13<sup>th</sup> at**

**the Dunnville Library in the Disher Room** where we will likely suggest we put this baby to bed. However, and ain't there always a however with me, we will discuss the possibility of putting a sign at the lock with the name and address of the CEO of CPR suggesting a letter writing campaign asking CPR to donate the property. We can always return if that long shot works out! We hope to continue working at the Cairn and I have another idea which goes along with our mandate that I have not yet mentioned to our executive. Stay tuned and see!

This is not nomination year but we do have a vacancy on the board. Currently it is Recording Secretary but that could change once we fill that position.

### MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE!!

As you may recall we advised you in an earlier Dispatches that dues are going up to \$15.00 beginning October 1, 2016. This is due to the cost of printing and mailing *The Dispatch*. Please make payment to *Port Maitland, "On the Grand" Historical Association* and mail to Bill at address below

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