

June 26/51 Since the lobster season ended on May 31st, the fishermen have been busy stowing and re-painting their lobster pots and buoys, ready for the next season, which opens December 1st. And having done that, they have been getting ready for the summer fishing, mending their herring and mackerel nets and boiling them in cutch, to preserve them from rot. The cutch is an East Indian product, which comes in rectangular cakes, like great plugs of chewing tobacco. The men get out their dye-pots, which are old cildrums with one end cut out. They stand these upon crude fireplaces of stones, put in water from the spring up the hill, and cut up the cutch in small cakes that will dissolve easily. They gather driftwood from about the shores of the cove and keep a hot fire under the pots. Over each pot, from a tripod of lashed poles, is suspended a small block and tackle, with which they lower the nets into the boiling liquid, and remove them when thoroughly dyed. Then the nets are hung on horizontal poles to dry. With a dozen fires smoking, and the great black pots steaming, the little group of huts and fish-sheds in the cove resembles a little inferno.

There are sixteen boats fishing out of the cove, with two men to each boat. Most of them are married, so that twenty-five or thirty families depend on this small crack in the shore for their livelihood. They set their nets for the herring which are due along the coast any day now, and then go out to fish with hand-lines and trawl-lines for cod and pollock. They are off about four o'clock in the morning and with my field-glasses I can see them, small black shapes on the horizon, five or six miles out. In the afternoon, between three and four o'clock, they come in, pitching their catch up to the wharf of the fish-buyer with their ~~short~~ forks.

Today the weather cleared, after two days of fog. A wild north-west wind howled down the harbor reach, tossing the dark cat-spruce trees about my cabin, moaning loudly in the wire stays of my tin chimney and in the eaves, and whipping the ~~smooth~~ surface of the sea to white-caps that seemed to be hurrying out of the harbor for a voyage across the sea to France. In the morning the sky was a clear sunny blue, except for a file of round white clouds sailing majestically across the northern arc like a line of white elephants marching off to some mysterious rendezvous over the Atlantic; and a bunch of cirrus coming out of the north like a great white ~~file~~ ^{FIST} whose fingers were frayed to feathers by the wind. This seemed to indicate a bath of winds, but the NW wind had its way, steadily pushing the big fist seaward, where it lost its size and menace and gradually sank out of sight.

June 27th, 1951

A fine blue morning, the sea sparkling everywhere, and especially on the broad sea-path towards the rising sun, where the incessant flash and glitter hurt the eyes. ~~THE~~ To the eye, each of these momentary sparkles seemed to be triangular, with one point stabbing upward from the sea's skin like a white-hot spear. The robin's-egg blue of the sky was streaked with the high white of cirrus clouds like a vast rasher of bacon, and beneath it the sea was a pearl gray, winking slightly in the first stirrs of the land breeze. It was almost calm. At the edge of the shore the tide barely whispered amongst the rocks, and the dark seaweed on the tip of the reef, exposed by low water, lifted and fell lazily. Even the gulls were quiet, sunning themselves on the shoulder of bedrock at the cove entrance.

By noon the breeze had shifted to the south, the sky was completely shut in by a grey-white ceiling, mottled here and there mackerel-fashion. The change of wind made a dead lee under my bit of shore, and there amongst the weedy rocks the water in a narrow strip was smooth as ice. But just beyond, the shadows of cats-paws played over the surface, and beyond that lay the wide grey expanse of the harbor reach, ruffled ~~but~~ still hurrying seaward in that illusion of a swiftly flowing river which any sort of land wind always makes ^{upon a long bay.}

With my field glasses I can see the lighthouse and the keeper's dwelling and sheds on Coffin's Island very clearly, and at the very tip of the lighthouse point, where yesterday and for some days past I have ~~xxxxxxx~~ seen puffs

of dirty white smoke and flying debris, and heard the delayed blast of dynamite, I can make out the figures of six or seven men, working on the rock-and-cribwork groin that protects the point from sea erosion.

Early in the afternoon the light scud overhead had become a grid of alternate light and heavy grey bars, the heavy grey ones seeming to hang low, like ragged udders charged with rain that could not fall; while to the east, just above the horizon, remained a narrow ribbon of the most delicate light blue. By mid-afternoon the whole sky was one grey mass, mottled with lighter patches here and there, and with bits of "mackerel" showing. The sea was still grey, not so lovely as the delicate pearl tint of the morning; and towards the horizon it darkened, and the horizon itself was a dark grey, almost black line.

The fishing boats came in, singly, and at long intervals; and those which had a catch were easily made out, for they had a cloud of gulls about and just behind them, wheeling, screaming, diving to catch the guts thrown overboard as the fishermen cleaned their fish on the way up-harbor. Between boat-arrivals about a hundred gulls roosted on the reef, with its white patches of guano. Most were herring gulls, but here and there stood one of the big black-backed gulls that the fishermen call "ministers" or "preachers". All of them faced up-wind, if so light a breeze could be called a wind.

Then the wind shifted back to west, still a light breeze but some times coming on in strong gusts that howled in my chimney stays. Towards the west and north the sky remained heavily overcast, with mackerel patches in the otherwise featureless mat of it; but over the sea it opened in wisps of blown cirrus with bits of blue sky; and the sea resumed its wimpled pearl-grey tint of the morning. Fishing boats came in, rushing along at the smart speed all of them have nowadays; some white, some a bright orange, but mostly green hulls in various shades. Many were of the old simple Cape Island type with a short wooden whaleback deck forward; others had the somewhat top-heavy cabins built on for winter fishing in the past ten years; all had a small mast aft for the riding sail, and the sail itself was sometimes set but more usually furled, a length of canvas sooty from the engine exhaust.

Towards the end of the afternoon a sturdy black swordfisherman, with two small staysails set, one on a short mast aft, the other on ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ a taller and more substantial mast amidships, chugged slowly out of the harbor. She had her "pulpit" rigged for the harpooner on a long plank jutting out from her bow, and the stays of the mainmast had ratlines for the look-out to ascend. She had been fitting and having her engine overhauled at the marine repair shop in Liverpool, and she turned the Western Head towards her home, ~~Port~~ Mouton. In a few days she will leave Port Mouton for Cape Breton, there to join the ~~the~~ swordfishing fleet that works out of Glace Bay and sometimes Dingwall.

June 28th '51 A grey, overcast morning, the sky covered with mottled dirty-grey cloud that looked steel blue towards the seaward horizon; but in the west it was clearing and the blue sky appeared slowly as the land wind thrust the scud out into the Atlantic. Along the northern horizon as the scud slid away like a sliding shutter there appeared the clear white tops of cumulus clouds, like a row of puff-balls; and then their bases, straight and dark. The sea pearl-grey once more. Then the scud closed in again; but the weather remained fine and warm, the sea had that strange warm light-toned grey with a metallic glint in places where the sun almost broke through the overcast.

The usual fishing boats going to and fro. A crew of six men in a motor boat towing three rowboats attended a net trap off the west side of Coffin's Island, chugging slowly back towards Liverpool with their catch in the three towed boats. Dynamite blasts from the busy little figures on the tip of Coffin's Island. A government boat of some sort, flying the blue ensign, came in with the peculiar drone of a diesel-engine, casting out over her wake the wispy white vapor puffs of the exhaust. She was quite fast, with a high bow flaring sharply and ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ a sweeping declivity that seemed almost to touch water aft, where a mahogany-colored plywood boat was drawn up on the after deck. Brass glittered about the cabin house,

which was done in light grey, while the hull was done in a darker grey. A fisheries patrol, or perhaps a new Customs craft of some sort, at a guess.

The herring gulls watch for the incoming fishing boats and provide an escort of forty or fifty birds to each as they chug in. A big blue heron flaps slowly past the shore, with his long neck pulled in to his shoulders and his long legs stretched out behind. A kingfisher darts by. Three willets come to a halt on the cove reef at half tide, amongst the drowsing gulls, and there feed busily amongst the kelp, stretching up their long necks from time to time to make sure that all is well. The restless terns never seem to alight on the reef, but sweep over the surface of the harbor, queuing, and sometimes finding fish. I watched one ~~then~~ put on a remarkable performance, hovering over one particular spot, about ten feet above the water, for three or four minutes, without shifting his position an inch. He did this with his wedge-shaped tail very widely spread, like a fan, and by a rapid beating motion of his wings. At half tide the masses of dark kelp on the reef and the outer rocks move slowly with the surge; and now and then an arm of kelp is tossed up, only to go down again, like a futile gesture of some drowning man.

June 29th, '51

A bright sunny morning, with the sun rising straight before my east-facing window, where I sit regarding the harbor mouth and tapping at my machine. The morning sky is blue overhead, shading delicately almost to white on the horizon. Far to the east, beyond the glitter of the sun-path, I can make out low hills of cloud, possibly a distant fogbank. Overhead ~~there is~~ nothing but thin wisps of cirrus blown in streaks across the sky, although there is little wind at ground level, and the cirrus itself does not seem to move much.

Wednesday, July 4 '51

The usual fine weather phenomena -- sea dark blue, ruffled by a strong S.W. wind, but only on the surface. There is a long, low, almost imperceptible swell that you see moving sometimes over the face of the distant water like a wind-shadow, and it's not until you see a fishing boat rolling and dipping that you realise there is any swell at all. It ~~was~~ hot weather, and the shores of Coffin Island shimmered in the haze thrown up by the sun-blasted rocks of the foreshore, and the more distant shores of Beach Meadows and Eggle Head had the sun-glimmer and something else, a powder-blue haze that seemed to obscure the houses with a veil of smoke. Seaward, the horizon was only vaguely marked in the heat-haze. Well on in the forenoon an odd little procession appeared beyond the lighthouse point of Coffin Island; a small dredge of ~~maxt~~ some sort, with a pitch-roofed "house" built upon the hull, and the unmistakable gentry posts and slanting boom; a barge; a large motor-boat towing both of these; and another motor-boat towing another barge. They crept across the harbor mouth and disappeared around Western Head, going to Port Mouton, perhaps. When they first appeared, the mirage was looming just off the point of the island, and the gentry posts and boom of the little dredge seemed to rise in air, together with the "house", which became a tower at least six stories high; and as the dredge yawed at the end of her long tow rope, changing the perspective of the gentry and the house itself, so the mysterious "tower" grew thin, and then fat, and sometimes put on strange appendages, as if someone in the attic, say, were putting out fantastic windowboxes of a convolute shape. They were making slow going of it against the SW wind, and they would do well to make Port Mouton by late afternoon.

In mid-afternoon a steamer loomed in the mirage to the east, heading down the coast towards Western Head. She was deep-laden, my field-glasses showed, even in the seaward haze. She steamed right down to the outer automatic buoy and then swung hard to starboard, heading into Liverpool. As she drew abreast of Moose Harbor it was easy to see the men moving about the decks. She was the "Liverpool Packet", of the Mersey Paper Company, finishing one of the trips of her regular summer run, carrying pulpwood (cut in 4-foot lengths) from Cape Breton

to the paper mill here. She was a three-island type, painted black, with white deckhouses and bridge, and a buff funnel with a black top, bearing on the buff part the spruce-tree-and-anchors badge of the Mersey Shipping Company. Both the forward well-deck and the after well-deck were piled so high with pulpwood that, at a distance in the haze, she looked like a queer, topheavy, flush-decked steamer of some sort. She had no masts except for a short thing stuck up from the bridge for signalling purposes and to support the short wireless aerial. Well forward (hard against the fo'c'sle in fact) was a pair of gantry posts supporting a pair of cargo booms; and there was another pair right aft to take care of the after-hatches. The big cargo of wood she was carrying in this safe summer weather, below and on deck, pressed her deep in the water, well below any Plimsoll mark she might have; indeed she appeared almost to be foundering under the weight of it, so deeply was her bow depressed (and of course her stern). The funnel poured forth black Sydney coal smoke all the way in. There is no old-fashioned fo'c'sle in ships of this modern type. The crew berth aft, under the poop deck, and there seemed to be some sort of railed walk around the stern, below deck level, rather like the admiral's walk of an 18th century line-of-battle ship. As she swept past I could see men in shirt-sleeves busy on the mass of brown pulpwood piled on the after deck, getting ready to unload as soon as she docked.

At 7 P.M. the shadows were growing long; there was still a bit of breeze, but it was dying, and the mild swell breaking in a long white line upon the outer reef of Moose Harbor made only a hushed wish in the evening stillness. A song sparrow sang very sweetly in a small spruce top only thirty feet from the shore. Most of the herring gulls had come to rest ~~on the night~~, and so had the great black-backed gulls; but apparently ^{they} the night-roost is at some more remote spot. Any afternoon you can count fifty to a hundred gulls drowsing in the sun on the reef just above water mark. Now there are no more than a dozen to be seen. Far out over the water I can see a few herring or perhaps black-backed gulls still foraging in isolated ones and twos, and of course the restless terns flit back and forth.

Beach Meadows and Eagle Head have withdrawn behind the evening haze, where the western gables of the fishermen's homes, catching the last rays of the sun, shine ghost-like in the thin grey-blue murk; and the white tower of Eagle Head church, on the hill, is still very plain. The sky now is the palest of pale blues, a washed-out sort of blue, covered with wisps of cirrus overhead; towards the west and eastern horizons the sky is obscured by a ceiling of haze that looks white towards the zenith, merging into light grey, and then grey blue where it meets the sea; and the meeting-place of sea and sky is not a clearly defined line but a horizontal blur in which the blue-grey of the water becomes the grey-blue of the sky.

On the wimpled surface of the estuary a curious light streak extends from the Moose Harbor reef towards Beach Meadows, as if the artist in painting this scene had inadvertently drawn his fingertip across the painted water in one long thin sweep.

At 9 P.M. the horizon seems to have crept in from the sea; it is still that hazy meeting-place of sea and sky, but it seems no farther now than the tip of Coffin Island. The sky in the east is now one grey-blue mass, deepening slowly into night. Overhead there are broad patches of pale blue sky, wisps of cirrus, and patches of "mackerel" that form and vanish again in the course of minutes. In the zenith the white cirrus catches the last gleam of a sun that has long since vanished from our portion of the earth, and the gleam is reflected in the sea, curiously diffused. The tide is almost high, and the small surf gives a minor thunder as it breaks amongst the serried rocks of the foreshore-- more sound than it has made since last the tide turned. Beach Meadows and Eagle Head now are only a dim blue shadow in the haze to the north. Coffin Island is a long dark shape, fretted in its upper outline by the tops of the tall oat-spruce trees that cover it. The lighthouse and the keeper's dwelling show faintly against the eastward haze, and the light is now lit, and makes a pin-point in the growing dusk, no more, glowing, fading, disappearing, glowing again. The gulls have now abandoned the reef altogether, and I wonder where they spend the night.

Thursday July 7/51

Last night's patches of mackerel sky foretold rain, and during the night a heavy downpour broke the past week's drought. As I drove down the steep narrow road of the fishermen into Moose Harbor I found the gravel gullied and badly washed out in places. Fog lay thick upon the sea, so that only the little reef and the immediate strip of foreshore were visible. From the westward came a long deep rumble of thunder. The foghorn at Western Head repeated its doleful warning every minute -- two short blasts, each dying sharply in a deep-toned grunt. A small swell rolled in out of the fog, each crest visible at first merely as a long shadow that lifted suddenly and broke whitely on the rocks of the foreshore. Farther out, one other patch of white was visible at intervals, for the tide was low and the swell was breaking on The Cow, the hidden rock which makes all the fishermen steer carefully when squaring away for the cove entrance. All else seaward was a grey wet mystery.

Tuesday, July 10/51

This afternoon two former corvettes of the Canadian Navy were towed out of the harbor by a large tug, in tandem, with a long cable joining one to another. These craft have lain at the Stelpro wharf in Liverpool ever since the Navy de-commissioned them in the fall of 1945. The Stelpro people had removed most of the superstructure of the leading ship; she was little more than a hulk; but the other seemed to be intact, even to the gun still mounted forward and swathed in canvas. Both were dingy and rusty from neglect, and mottled with white patches of guano, for the sea-gulls that hover about the Liverpool fish-wharf had used them as a roost for years. They are on their way to Hamilton, Ontario, there to be broken up for scrap. The tug towed them slowly and circumspectly out to the outer fairway buoy, then swung up into the heat haze towards the east. A very different departure from the war days, when they and scores of other Canadian frigates and corvettes used Liverpool as a refitting base, and steamed forth to resume the war against Germany's submarines in the Atlantic.

Wednesday, July 11/51

Fine hot day, strong south-west wind. Came out to my Moose Harbor cabin about 1 P.M., just in time to see an old two-masted schooner trying to weather the lighthouse point on Coffin's Island. She had a black hull, long bowsprit, with the foremast taller than the mainmast, and carried two large jibs, a big foresail and a much smaller mainsail. Her skipper appeared to be drunk or stupid, for he held on for some time after it was obvious that he could not weather the point. Then, in a lubberly way, as if he were short-handed as well as confused, he took down all sail. The wind still carried him in towards the point. A smart hoisting of his jibs would have paid her head off and enabled her to wear away for another try at the harbor mouth. But the jibs were hoisted slowly and awkwardly, and by that time she was aground on the seaward side of the point. Through my binoculars I could see the lighthouse keeper and his assistant running excitedly towards the point, and then back again; and after a time I could see ten or fifteen men, presumably fishermen from the cove at the other end of the island, standing about on the point and watching the schooner's antics.

After a time the vessel got her big foresail up, and the pressure of this forced her over enough that, after five or ten minutes of surging, she came clear. Over the low point of the island and its scrub trees I could see the sails drifting slowly past the lighthouse on the seaward side. Then, in the same slow and lubberly fashion, she began to hoist her mainsail. Something appeared to be wrong with the peak halliards, for it stuck about half-way up, and there it remained, while the schooner slowly moved off to the seaward. Finally she cleared her halliards and got the mainsail set properly, and I watched her forging slowly on the starboard tack, heading ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ sou'-sou'-west as if to get an offing and at the same time work up towards the outer fairway buoy. She was now in the fringe of the sea haze and it was difficult to see exactly what was going on about her decks. About half way to the fairway buoy, she doused the big foresail and then her jibs, and lay-to for a long time under the mainsail alone. All her sails were stained and old and patched, and I dessey her cordage was no better.

Within another half hour she appeared out of the haze, with all sail furled, and being towed by two fishing-boats, and two others keeping station abreast on each side. As they passed up the harbor I could see that she had ~~two~~ ^{two} boats, painted white, stowed amidships under the foresail boom; and she had a ~~large~~ wheelhouse extending right across the stern, with the mainsail boom resting on its roof. Four or five men sitting on the fore-deck. They took what seemed ~~at~~ ^{to} me a rather reckless course, close inside Coffin's Island, and the motorboats had to turn and work hard to windward for a time to ~~clear~~ ^{clear} her clear of Neal's ledges. About a mile behind appeared a smart grey government fishery-patrol launch, but whether on a routine patrol, or summoned by radio to see the schooner safely up the harbor I could not tell. The schooner had a pair of short topmasts and at a distance looked very neat about the deck and masts -- much better than those discolored and patched sails would indicate. Odd to see a sailing vessel nowadays without an engine -- like a ghost of thirty years ago.

Early this evening, to clear up the mystery of this strange craft, I went to Liverpool and found the schooner lying at the Stelpro Company's wharf, and found her in sole charge of the mate, a spruce, clean-shaven, dark young fellow of 25, standing disconsolately on deck, stripped to the waist, and regarding a steadily increasing flood of water in the after hold. The Stelpro people had installed a small compressed-air pump on deck but the water was gaining, and while I was there Earl Thompson came along, took a long look, and went off to get an extra pump.

This is what the mate told me:

"She's the schooner Amanda, formerly of ~~Swedish~~ ^{SKARHAMN} in ~~Sweden~~ Sweden. You may recall her about 2 1/2 years ago, when she arrived at Halifax after a long rough voyage from the Baltic with 68 men, women and children aboard, refugees from Esthonia. The refugees hadn't been 'screened' for undesirables before sailing, and the Canadian immigration people held them at Halifax for a long time before they were permitted to enter the country. She's lain at a Halifax dock ever since. When my boss bought ~~her~~ her two weeks ago she was ~~XXX~~ in a pretty dilapidated state, and she's got a growth of mussels, barnacles and weed on her bottom several inches thick. However the hull seemed sound, and he bought her as she lay.

We're going into shrimp fishing in the Pacific. They've discovered some big new shrimp-beds out there and we plan to make our base in the Galapagos Islands. The boss has bought a Fairmile launch from the Canadian Navy and had her refitted entirely with new deck structures and a good space below for the refrigerator and shrimp-bins, etc. The idea is that we'll do the trawling in Amanda, and turn over the catch to the Fairmile, which can make a quick run to port with the shrimps.

The boss shipped a captain ("Moyle") and four men, including myself, and my wife's going along as cook. In Halifax we had radio and radar installed, and a new stove for the galley, the latest thing, burning Propane gas. We worked like dogs scraping the masts and booms, and rigging new cordage in the old sails and the rigging. We checked over the old engine, too, a "hot-head" job, the kind you have to start with a blowtorch. I think it must be one of the first Diesels ever made, a temperamental thing, I tell you. The hull needed a complete overhaul and we've got to have a new engine and a lot of other things, and the boss decided to have the work done here in Liverpool. So we cleared out of Halifax on the morning of Tuesday the 10th. We soon found trouble. That awful mess of growth on the bottom made her very hard to steer, and she was so slow coming up into the wind that we had to use the engine every time we tacked. We ran the engine only when we had to, because the rings are gone and it burns a lot of lubricating oil, and we were trying to save enough oil to get us up into Liverpool harbor in case the wind there was offshore.

It's only about 70 miles from Sembro to Coffin's Island in a straight line, but we were 18 or 20 hours making it, coming in sight of the Coffin's Island light well after dark on Tuesday night. All that night and all the next morning we beat against the sou'west wind, trying to make enough westing to get a wide run up Liverpool harbor. The old hooker was slow in tacks, and she made as much leeway as headway, and none of us were familiar with the sails, so it was a pretty unhandy business all round.

We'd make a long tack to the south'ard, and then come over for the landward reach, and at the end of it we'd find ourselves back off Pudding Pan Island, near Port Medway. Noon came, and the skipper got desperate. None of us fancied another night out there, for there was no knowing when the wind would come east and then we'd be blown on shore in spite of everything we could do. We'd made another long tack to the south'ard, and on the other tack we could see there was a chance of making the point of Coffin's Island. It was chancy, running in so close to the point with that sou'wester pushing us over against the shore, but we figured to run the engine all-out and we could make it.

And so we did. But luck was against us. Just as we got off the lighthouse point the engine conked out, and there we were, with every stitch of sail up and the old hooker making a big leeway under the pressure of it. I called my wife up to take the wheel, and the rest of us scrambled to get the sails off her. We let everything come down by the run, which made it awkward getting them up again. Then we hauled up the jibs, to pay her head off. We skinned by the point itself, but just on the seaward side of it our stern swung in and we went aground heavily. We bumped there for half an hour, lifting and falling, and rolling badly. She seemed to be pinned by the stern between two rocks every time she came down, and we struggled to get that big foresail up, ~~xxx~~ to press her over enough to clear the rock on the windward side. It was a hell of a job, with everything rolling and banging about, the stern was bumping heavily, striking the rudder, and every time the old hooker struck, it nearly tore my wife's arms out of the sockets. But she hung on like a good 'un, she's a seaman's daughter and the best sailor in the lot of us.

Finally, with the foresail up, and the wind striking harder than ever, we lifted on a sea and came clear. But now we were drifting slowly along the seaward side of the island and close in, and we had to get the mainsail up so she'd steer a bit into the wind. That was a hell of a job, too. As perhaps you saw, the main gaff was jammed against the lee stays, and it took a long time to clear it. My wife called out that something was wrong with the rudder, it wasn't answering the wheel. I ran aft and looked over the counter, and sure enough the rudder had been driven up till the pintles were out of the gudgeons. It was just hanging there.

We barged off to the seaward all anyhow, and after we'd more or less drifted well clear, we took down the jibs and foresail and lay-to under the mainsail. By that time some of the Coffin's Island fishermen had seen we were in trouble, and they came out with four motor-boats and towed us into the harbor."

The young mate took me over the ship. She is an odd thing, straight-sided like a floating pencil-box, with a blunt bow and a queer old-fashioned square stern, the transom sloping inward from above. The name and port ~~XXXXXX~~ AMANDA - ~~BARHAM~~ were still painted in flaking white letters on the black transom, and I could see the rudder hanging well out of the gudgeons. In the little chartroom below the wheelhouse the skipper's chart still lay over the table, with his leather jacket just as he had tossed it off after coming out of the cold ~~xxx~~ fog this morning. The engine room was half full of water, and so was the after hold, all mixed with bilge stuff, an evil looking fluid. The sails had been neatly stowed on the booms, and the jibs were well furled. She is about ~~150~~ long from stern to stern, and has a bowsprit about fifteen feet long with a safety net rigged underneath. I followed the mate down the hatch into the forehold, which has been joined with the old forecabin space to make living quarters for the crew of a dozen she will carry in the Pacific. Some temporary bunks of plain spruce boards, unpainted, had been nailed into place along the sides, and at the after end was the fine new stove, a compact little thing, with one gas-ring burning. The mate's wife was polishing it lovingly with a rag. You could see it was her especial pride.

She was just a bit of a thing, a small plump-bosomed pale woman of 23 or 24, with somewhat dishevelled blond hair and a piquant face. She wore a white silk blouse and dungree trousers, and her bare feet were thrust into a pair of white sandals, all badly mused by the dirt and oil that covers every inch of the ship.

Sheriff's Sale

IN THE EXCHEQUER
COURT OF CANADA
NOVA SCOTIA
ADMIRALTY DISTRICT

No. 2003

*H.F. & C. Ltd. - No. 2003
March 31, 1952*

BETWEEN:

DANIEL J. JACKSON
Plaintiff

— and —

**THE SCHOONER
"SANTA ROSITA"**
Defendant

To be sold at public auction by the High Sheriff of the County of Lunenburg or his Deputy at the Court House at Bridgewater, in the County of Lunenburg, on Saturday, the 12th day of April, 1952, at the hour of 11 o'clock in the forenoon, pursuant to a minute of decree and Commission of Sale made herein.

The Schooner "Santa Rosita" as she lies at Mahone Bay, in the County of Lunenburg, with all equipment, an inventory of which is held at the Sheriff's Office at Bridgewater, Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia:

Length 74.4 feet
Breadth 20.5 feet
Depth 8.9 feet
Tonnage Gross 66.4. Reg. 35.99

Terms: 25 per cent of purchase money to be paid when knocked down, balance on delivery of the Bill of Sale.

DATED at Bridgewater, in the County of Lunenburg, this 19th day of March, 1952.

JOHN H. CREIGHTON,
High Sheriff in and for the
County of Lunenburg

F. W. BISSETT, Q.C.,
Dominion Bank Building
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Plaintiff's Solicitor.

shipkeeper they called themselves the "Ozo Shipping Company of Shelburne".

The mate addressed her as "Hon", and said again that she was the coolest sailor in the ship.

"Weren't you scared a bit?" I asked. She grinned like a boy and gave her head a little toss. "You can't scare me in these things. I've been in sailing boats ever since I was so high" -- she thrust down a hand level with her hips. "My arms hurt every time the rudder struck, because I had to spread them wide to hold the spokes on that big wheel, and every time it struck it seemed ready to pull me apart. But I hung on. I was scared for the men -- working about the rigging with everything banging and slatting --and I knew I had to hang on."

"And you," I said to the mate. "Weren't you scared just a bit? Coffin's Island is a nasty place. Several ships have been wrecked on it."

He grinned and lit a cigarette. "Scared, yes. Not for myself. Not even for my wife. All I could think was, What a shame to lose the old hooker in sight of the port, and after all the hard work we've put in on her, and all the fine plans we've had for the cruise to the south'ard. It would have broken my heart, I think. I'm fond of the old thing already. The Swedes build good ships. The hull's quite sound, except for this damn' rap we got today. With that mess cleaned off the hull, and a decent engine in her for emergencies, she'll sail well enough for anybody. Oh, she'll do all right."

I had smoked my cigarette down to the butt and I looked about for an ash-tray. "Drop it there," the mate said casually, pointing to the small sump-pit of the fore-hold pump. The water in it was level with the floor. The mate's wife gave it a concerned glance.

"It's all right, Hon," said her husband. "They've gone for another pump. ~~THESE~~ Tomorrow they'll have us out on the slip and we'll have a look at the damage. My guess is, ~~that~~ the stern took a bad rap and busted the stuffing-box, and most of this water's running in past the shaft. Something else, though. She's settled so deep with this water in her that the upper strakes are leaking in the seams. They must have got pretty well dried out, all that time she lay at the dock in Halifax."

Walking along the dock afterwards I noticed that the schooner's hull was plated below the waterline, whether copper or not I could not tell. It was painted black like the rest of her. The ship's boat, a small thing gleaming in white paint and covered with new canvas, obviously did not belong to her. "That's from our other craft, the Fairmile," said the mate. It was a cockleshell to hold five men and that plucky young woman if the Amanda ever went down. But, as she had said, you couldn't scare her in these things.

Note: On December 3rd, 1951, I notified this ship tied up at a wharf in Mahone Bay. The counter lettering, done rather crudely, said "Santa Rosita, Shelburne, N.S." Nobody aboard but an elderly seaman, the shipkeeper installed by the sheriff. She has been seized for debts, including several months' wages due the crew, and the creditors have "put a plaster on her" as the saying goes. The Pacific adventure proved to be a pipe dream. Actually she went fishing out of Newfoundland, and salmon-netting along the Labrador, but the former crew were no fishermen (as far as I could see they were no seamen, either) and the whole enterprise failed. Owners appear to be a small syndicate operating on a shoestring. According to the shipkeeper they called themselves the "Ozo Shipping Company of Shelburne", though they were not Shelburne men. (Perhaps the word was "Oiseau".) Captain was a New Brunswicker named Johnson, a small, peppery/man with a Captain Kettle beard and methods. Once took a spanner to one of the seamen who talked back to him.

TO ATTORNEY GENERAL
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 23. MISCELLANEOUS
 DO YOU NEED
 MY CARD FOR OFFICE USE
 VERY O.K. CHECK OFF IN
 STREET - 8-8788

Friday, July 13/51 The old schooner Amanda was hauled out on the slip in Liverpool today, and at noon I went down and had a better look at her, and got a better idea of her proportions. The hull is about 75 feet long, with a beam of 26, capacity I should say about 100 tons. She is built like a pencil-box, all right; long straight sides, square stern, blunt bow, and flattish bottom; like the old Bluenose timber-droghers, "built by the mile and sawed off by the yard". From ~~the~~ stem to a point about twenty feet aft of it on each side she was sheathed with thin sheetiron, a band about three feet wide, covering the waterline against the Baltic ice, fastened on with short square-shanked wide-headed galvanized nails.

The EX slip crew had got the growth scraped off; masses of small mussels and bits of seaweed. She had struck hard amidships, tearing away the keelson for about six feet and ~~gauging~~ chiselling a bit off the edge of it clean back to the stern as she came off the rocks. The keel itself is of oak; the keelson some kind of softwood, rather like our hemlock. The rudder had lost two of its three pintles, and the lowest one looked as if it had been gone a long time. The shoe of it was "broomed" by hitting on the rocks, otherwise its wood was undamaged. In width the rudder seemed ridiculously narrow for steering a craft of her size. ~~Also~~ The keel and hull are badly "hogged", not from the recent mishap but a sort of middle-aged sag common to old hookers everywhere. She was built in ~~XXXX~~ Sweden in 1898. Has a single-cylinder Diesel of ancient make, and a bronze reversible-pitch propeller, so that she could go ahead or astern merely by changing the pitch. The hull timbers looked sound and undamaged and the stuffing-box at the stern was all right; the thump on the rocks had started some of the old caulking in her seams. Her caulking was in bad shape anyway, and it was time she was hauled out for a new job. The keel looked as if it had been damaged before, in the same place, right amidships, which may account for some of the "hog".

Tuesday, July 24/51 Fine warm day, refreshing breeze from the west, whistling through the screen door and harping in my "funnel stays", and ruffling the bayberry bushes and bending the tall grass on the bank above the shore. The whole harbor expanse along the west side of the buoyed channel seems dotted with the wet and gleaming wooden net-buoys of the fishermen, and from time to time a boat runs out from Moose Harbor to overhaul one or toher of the nets. Herring have been scarce so far, and it is now past the time for the big run of July herring.

At 3 P.M. a tug came into sight from the east, towing a Canadian naval minesweeper that has been laid up at Three Rivers ever since the war ended, and is now to be refitted for service. The Stelpro plant in Liverpool has the contract. The tug swings up for the harbor entrance well to the east of the outer fairway buoy, and in the strong wind the old minesweeper yaws widely towards the west, as if she had her doubts about taking chances of that sort. The drag of the tow-rope heels her over to starboard and round she comes slowly and reluctantly.

I got a better look as they sweep at a good speed past Moose Harbor on the way in. The tug is a large ocean-going affair, flying the blue ensign. Black hull, grey superstructure, two short masts painted grey to the trucks, which are white. Brand new boat-awningshine yellow in the sun. Large bridge and chartroom. Wireless aeriels and a loop for the radio direction-finder. Apparently carries a large crew, for there is plenty of accommodation amidships, and aft there is a tall house apparently for watching and controlling the tow. The funnel is very wide and squat, no higher than the top of the bridge, and covered with some sort of screen as if to prevent sparks from emerging, although I should have said she was Diesel-propelled. Derrick boom slung from the ~~XXX~~ slender mainmast. The minesweeper is one of the Bangorclass, with a flush deck from the bow to a point about two-thirds of the way aft, where she cuts away abruptly to a low after deck. Her white bridge seems to have kept its paint pretty well, but the light grey of the rest of her, on the sharply raked funnel, on the sheer sides and the superstructure, is dabbed and streaked with patches of red-lead, and she looks a sorry thing. No sign of anyone on board. Towrope appears to be at least ~~XXXX~~ 600 feet long, probably more.