WE CAME TO LITTLE CALUMET

A Woman, whose brown hair was splashed with white, sat in her rocking chair on the huge front porch extending three quarters of the way around the pillared gingerbread house on Holiday Island. She was watching the panorama of the boats chugging by, as well as the activity on the riverbank in front of her.

A tall blond man was swimming in front of the island with his four children. All were shouting gleefully as they cavorted on the bank, then dove into the inviting water only to emerge again and again.

John Stasko, the father, climbed from the river wiping his hair from his eyes and turned to the woman on the porch. "It must seem laughable to you, Madelyn. So many people have spent time here since you've lived on this island. They all have repeated the same antics. Only the faces are different!"

Madelyn Handley smiled at him, thinking, "How right he is!"

A shout from near the head of the island caught her attention. Her teen-age son, John, together with Fred Gantner's sons, was swinging by a rope far out over the water to a cannonball into it with a geyser splash.

All four boys interrupted their fun just long enough to wave to tour boats slowly putt-putting up the river. Cameras in the hands of tourists focused on the children as they dove into the huge waves running toward the shore.

Some of the passengers seemed to be watching the broad shouldered man standing on a rock at the foot of the island as he pulled a bass from the river. Beside him a slender woman clapped in delight.

Ed & Elaine Stasko had arrived a half-hour before in their sailboat, the Polly Anna, and had immediately cast fish lines into the water.

Madelyn noted them showing their catch to Steve, her older son, as he came up the path from the boathouse.

A typical day at Holiday Island, originally called Little Calumet, had begun. The setting and activities have been the same for thirty years. How well John Stasko knew. He and his brother, Ed, had been coming here to pal with Steve since childhood.

Hundreds of visitors have come to our "camp" and sailed away back to main shore. Many have returned again and again for renewal. Some have come no more, caught in the meshes of city life or the tides of time. They were like the freighters streaming past the island to disappear around the bend toward Alexandria Bay.

Their Signatures are in my Log Book and although it's pages are yellow and brittle I can still envision their faces. Still remember the part they played in our life at camp. They appeared before my eyes as though they were present this very day.

A kaleidoscope of faces woven into the tapestry of our life--broad, open, narrow, brooding, laughter crinkled, wrinkled, and the unfurrowed of youth.

As I sat gazing into the river, a collage of those faces swam before my eyes only to be obliterated by the wash from tour boats floating by.

Do those visitors ever recall Holiday Island? Where are they now? Where is the woman who feared the island would wash away in the storm? Or whatever happened to the crew of the homemade houseboat Quit Your Belly Aching whom we sheltered for a couple of days?

Madelyn's Memory Log

It Was one of those golden days on the St. Lawrence River when the blue sky seemed to come down to immerse itself in the cool water. Insects droned hanging suspended in the shimmering heat waves. Locusts sang in the motionless oak and pine trees on Holiday Island.

Yachts and smaller craft raced by throwing huge waves washing away soil from the front of the island. The water was constantly churning as these would be boatmen fled from the heat tortured cities only to succumb to the sun's rays evidenced by lobster red backs and faces.

Sitting within the coolness of the long front porch, I examined the fourth sheet I had just patched. How much longer would they hold together? The slam of the kitchen door and running feet interrupted my thoughts.

In the dining room of the old gingerbread house our seven-year-old niece, Toni, and our daughter, Kay, were jumping up and down in front of my mother-in-law.

"Grandma, Grandma, Brownie's eating the chili and there's someone up at the Point."

Myrtle left her rocking chair with a bound, threw down her book and ran into the kitchen. Following close upon her heels I caught a fleeting

glimpse of a brown mongrel dog running out the screen door. A thin line of beans and tomatoes straggled along the otherwise clean linoleum. Not a scrap of meat was in sight.

"Drat that dog," Myrtle exclaimed, "that was our supper! And who can be at the Point?"

"I don't know, Grandma," Kay said, "but somebody is waving."

"Aren't they always? Well, you and Toni get out the oars. Whoever is there will have to wait until I clean up this mess."

The aroma of fresh bread baking mixed with the spicy fragrance of chili that had simmered on the back of the big iron stove all afternoon. Mother's culinary know how and her iron kettle always turned all its contents lay upside down on the kitchen floor.

Myrtle's rueful eyes met mine, " I shouldn't have read that last chapter. After chopping wood and baking, I was a little tired. And you know reading always rests me."

How well I knew. Mother often became so absorbed in her books as she rocked to and fro in front of the dining room window, the whole house could have collapsed around her and she wouldn't have known it.

"Never mind, Mother," I said. "If Chuck is up at the Point, he will be happy the chili is gone."

"I know. He never did like beans. If you'll fix something else, I'll row up to see who it is."

Myrtle was born on Grenadier Island so a quarter mile row was a trifle to her. She was a sturdy and prided herself on her rowing so I knew better than to offer to go. Besides, since I wasn't born on the river, I think she secretly thought of me as a landlubber.

She put the oars in the oarlocks and pushed away from the dock to row to Yoo Hoo point, which we jokingly called it.

For a number of years this Point of Land under the Thousand Islands Bridge was the only access to Holiday Island. It was plainly visible from our cottage downstream. Anyone waiting to come to the island without previous arrangement had to stand on this point, and in daylight wave a scarf or towel to attract our attention.

At night they flashed car lights intermittently. Patience on their part was needed. If we weren't expecting them, they could wait some time before we noticed their signal.

Involved in painting, raking, baking, washing, caulking, or varnishing boats, we were totally unaware at times. A faint echo or a bellowed, "Yoo Hoo," would float downwind and one of us would get out a rowboat or dinghy, anything for a ferry.

Engrossed in preparing supper I didn't realize how much time had passed since Myrtle had rowed up to the Point.

The squeak of the oarlocks interrupted my musings. As the boat scraped the dock I looked out the kitchen window. It was Chuck and another man.

"My goodness, company for supper and this the end of the week. How much further can I stretch the hamburg?" I wondered.

They came through the back door. Chuck was grinning from ear to ear, "Hello Madelyn, this is Charlie Butler who drives for Associated."

The big man behind him held out his hand. He had ample girth, his eyes crinkled good-naturedly, "Chuck has told me lots about you."

Chuck kissed me, looked at the hamburg I was starting to make into patties and grinned, "Better wait to get dinner," he said, "Charlie has brought goodies."

"Well, I have to go get the others," said Chuck.

"Others?"

"Yes, Butler's wife and their friends."

"We brought a few things and if you'll show me where you want them put, I'll go down to the dock and get them," stated Charlie.

My eyes opened wider and wider when I saw what Charlie Butler meant by a few things. There was a whole crate of eggs, bacon, coffee, a peck of green peppers, tomatoes, ½ bushel of corn, ½ bushel of potatoes, and a large carton of steaks.

When Steve, our fourteen-year-old son, saw the steaks, he smiled from ear to ear. Most guests didn't bring anything, but Butler was as generous as he was big.

This weekend with the Butlers was certainly full of fun. I cooked and laughed my way through it thankful I had the four-patched sheets for their beds. Charlie and Vernita were hearty people. They worked hard at home but their lifestyle included enjoying leisure lavishly. I appreciated their good-natured humor; Steve enjoyed their steaks.

While we were sitting on the porch Vernita said, "Chuck asked us to write in your Log Book, Madelyn. There are so many names in it. Don't you ever get tired of people?"

"Not really, only when they complain a lot."

"You mean they have the gall?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well." said Charlie Butler, "You ought to do what we fellows did to Joe."

"Joe?"

"Seven of us used to go hunting with a guy who complained about everything all day long. We got tired of his nagging on every trip that we finally hit upon a plan to make him stop. We decided that anyone who complained about anything had to wash all the dishes for the entire weekend."

"Joe hated dish washing so that night while he was outside, we dished up his stew, separately, lacing it with a goodly amount of salt.

Charlie laughed explosively his big frame shaking at the memory.

Joe came in, sat down and took a big spoonful of the stew, threw down his spoon and shouted "_____ this stew is salty."

We guffed, pointing a finger at him. Realizing all of a sudden he was complaining, he said, "But it's just the way I like it," and ate it all.

"That ended his nagging!"

Needless to say Just The Way I Like It became a by-word at Holiday Island from that time forward.

Island For Sale

By the time Chuck brought the Butler's to camp, as we mistakenly called it to others, we had owned the island for several years. The island came into our lives because Charles Handley could never be near any body of water without aching to be in it. One momentous day in August he borrowed his Uncle Matthew MacGovern's boat, The Captain Bing, and there we were putting down the St. Lawrence River with Chuck, Myrtle, Steve, Kay and I.

Myrtle had never given up her longing to return to a place of her own on the water. The daughter of a Grenadier Islander, and the wife of a Captain on the Great Lakes, she constantly felt the call of the river. There is that instinct in many humans just as in the salmon to return to their birthing ground. The St. Lawrence was hers. She wanted a cottage there. One on Wellesley Island had been her aim, but it never materialized.

We had chugged almost to the Thousand Island Bridge when my attention was caught by a big "For Sale" sign on an island sitting out in the main channel.

Pointing it out to Chuck I said, "There's a place to buy. If Mother is interested in a cottage, why not this one? After all, to build one on the site she has chosen would take years of clearing the trees off, etc. This house is already built."

Docking at the big boathouse, we went up the path to peer in the windows of the cottage. When we ascended to the big front porch, Chuck remarked, "What a view!" You can look up the river to Clayton and down river to Alexandria Bay."

"Let's call this Mr. Williams to see how much he wants for her," Myrtle suggested.

We laughed when we realized how reckless this was. Charles and I were still in the morning of our marriage. Our children, Steve and Kay were seven and two respectively. We were struggling to buy our home in Mattydale. Where would the money come from to buy an island?

At that moment it never occurred to us, to me least of all, that this actually was one of the Thousand Islands one heard so much about. Nor did we anticipate that its location near the bridge would result in many picture post cards or the subject of many snapshots taken by passing tour boat passengers for years in the future. To me it was just a place for sale.

Charles went back to work with his tractor-trailer to deliver goods to New York City where he would search for a return load. I went about my affairs in the suburb dreaming a little, but never daring to hope. We had left Myrtle to vacation at her sister Sabina Chishom's cottage on Wellesley Island.

Two days later Sabina telephoned me, "Do you know Myrtle is squatting on that island? She says you're going to buy it. You can't, the taxes alone will eat you up. She's trespassing, even cooking her meals there in the fireplace. You ought to come up to speak to her. I'm afraid she'll get into trouble!"

"Sabina, Chuck is looking into the price. As yet, we haven't heard anything. We'll be up this weekend to talk to mother," I replied placatingly.

I knew it was useless to try to dissuade my mother-in- law. She was determined when she set her mind upon a thing. So I calmed Sabina as best I could.

Being called a squatter bothered mother not at all. I could see her tossing her head at her sister's words. Mother was undaunted. She had found her home. Nothing was ever too difficult for her. She phoned Mr. Williams, the owner, and before Chuck and I could change our minds, we

found ourselves, along with Myrtle, owners of Little Calumet (Little Pipe of Peace).

"But how can we afford it now, having just bought our home?" I queried.

As though he had some premonition of the future, Chuck replied, "Let's buy it now while we can enjoy it. Too many people wait until they are old, then one dies and the other partner is left alone with it, or they wait until they can afford it. For some that time never comes."

So I concurred with their wishes, O glad heart!

Then began the 100 miles trek northward each weekend to Little Calumet. Mother's old LaSalle was the roomiest car in the family, but even it groaned under the loads.

First there was mother Myrtle with her three granddaughters, Gloria, Donna, and Toni who were under her permanent care. Charles drove so Steve, Kay, and I rode too, since gas was rationed and one car had to be shared.

Imagine the mixture of people, luggage, supplies enough for the weekend, and animals; a cat named Sister, Elizabeth, and two dogs, named Brownie and Duchess.

Mother carried Sister in a box, and soon the darned cat would scratch her way out, get under the gas pedal with a squeal of fright. Complete bedlam ensued. Children cried because their pet was getting hurt. Mother received numerous scratches from the terror stricken cat.

And Elizabeth. How shall I describe her? She had a sharp nose, beady eyes, and a red topknot, which clearly belied her peaceful nature. Even though she had slept all through the journey to the island, I couldn't abide her. Her presence was offensive to my nose. Mother adored her and insisted she must go with us.

When we arrived at Collins Landing Dock, we all disembarked (a likely word) scrambled, better describes it, into a sharpie to row one quarter mile down river to our own dock.

Chuck's work was carrying freight in a tractor-trailer. Often I thought he considered his family as more freight. We ended up jammed in suitcases and food supplies while the water came up to the boat rails. Chuck never hesitated. He always had perfect confidence in safe landing. The rest of us went, but with reservations on my part, though the children were safe enough in their life jackets.

But hanging on to a screaming cat in an open boat or listening to the crackling expletives of Elizabeth was not my idea of complete relaxat

To my dismay we were often in plain sight of some snooty neighbors on shore, our sharpie loaded to the gunwales, a motley crew. Sometimes we did arrive well after dark. The animals, glad to approach land, were first ashore splashing all of us generously with cold water. Then the children tumbled out of the boat onto the dock and I emitted a sigh of relief. Adults followed with boxes of food, ice, vacuum bottles and suitcases for all.

I shall never forget my feeling when we opened the door to the cottage. Mother had come home, Charles, our children and I were to embark on a way of life that would draw tight our heartstrings forever.

Mother's Sinking Ferry

Since Mother Myrtle loved to row a boat, it was inevitable that she would be the one to go over to the cast shore to get Charlie Butler when he returned from driving his car to Alexandria Bay.

Chuck and I were busy with chores and didn't hear him call to us. Mother was outside, and knowing we were very busy, jumped into the plywood dinghy to row the short distance to the opposite shore.

The sound of laughter and a man's voice raised protest drifted into my consciousness. Wondering about the commotion and running to the back door, I discovered Myrtle had indeed reached the east bank, but where was the dinghy?

Myrtle seemed to be sitting in the river while Butler's mouth was open in shock as he floundered beside her in the water while a partly submerged duffel bag floated nearby.

Mrs. Wilson, from one of the cottages on the east bank, was walking to and fro wringing her hands and screaming, "What can I do? What can I do?"

She evidently was afraid for mother and Butler because the water was not too shallow there. Of course, she couldn't do much. Mother sat in the water laughing helplessly. Butler, dripping copiously, roused and swam away from the dinghy to climb the bank. Myrtle recovered from shock and did likewise. There they remained until Chuck rescued them with the other rowboat.

Myrtle hadn't thought that a man that size just couldn't descend from a steep riverbank into a small dinghy without disaster. Being moderate size herself, she never gave his bulk an extra thought.

From that day on we often joshed Myrtle about operating a sinking ferry. She only laughed.

I always had to admire Mother Myrtle's prowess. I wouldn't have tackled some of the projects she dared.

Each Spring we brought batteries to the island to operate out lighting plant and cruiser. It meant we must transfer batteries to a sharpie at Yoo Hoo Point. In the Fall it became reverse activity.

One day in late Fall Myrtle must have been in a hurry to start for Syracuse. At any rate, when she saw the sharpie loaded with an unusual number of batteries, she jumped in, shoved the boat away from the dock before anyone noticed her intent.

I was engaged in packing suitcases and leftover food while Chuck was closing the boathouse. When I did look out of a window, I was horrified. The boat Myrtle was rowing was really built too shallow for river ferrying. The many heavy batteries, with Mother's added weight, made the boat sink too low in the water. I was afraid the waves from fast going yachts would swamp her. Although she was in the main channel Myrtle rowed on nonchalantly, but I could see it was hard going. How she managed to arrive at Collins Landing Dock without sinking, I'll never know. Of course, I do believe God does honor persistence and He answered the prayers of the watcher.

Myrtle could handle carpenters tools like a man, swing an ax to chop wood for the kitchen stove. She would forage for driftwood in river bays, load the sharpie to the top rails, row it back to the island, then chop it into pieces to fit the kitchen stove.

Since there was another side to Mother's personality, once she has finished with the wood, she would at last sit down in her favorite rocker in front of the dining room window, getting up only occasionally to stoke the fire.

While her chili or baked beans bubbled on the stove and the fragrance called hungry children's crevices, she entertained them with recitations of

Lord Ullin's daughter or The Wreck of the Hesperous, for she had the mind and heart of a poet. We especially enjoyed these moments on rainy days.

Mother loved shortcake and whenever picked up the big silver pail, her grandchildren wanted to hide. To them it meant rowing up to the Point, which they enjoyed, but also included a lengthy walk to the berry patch and return. This was tiring to small legs. "If only the pail were smaller, it would fill more quickly," they said.

Small hands filled tiny baskets slowly especially since Grandma was particular and didn't want what she called nubbins.

Steve found the whole chore defeating considering that he didn't eat strawberries. However, Grandma Myrtle came back triumphantly with a pail full of wild berries to put in the shortcake. After these forays, Kay and Toni generally fell asleep before the shortcake was ready, much to Gram's surprise.

Mother taught Steve to fish to his delight. One could see them often sitting absolutely still in the sharpie up or down the river whenever she knew the fish were biting.

Under her supervision Steve learned to clean his catch too. None of this fishing just for the sport of it and leaving someone else with the

responsibility of readying them to eat. If you had the fun of catching them, you had to prepare them for a fish dinner or leave them alive in their habitat.

I was thankful to Myrtle for this teaching. Guests often left their dead fish for me to dispose of when they were in a hurry to leave for the city. It was one of my pet peeves!

Often Mother's indomitable spirit worried us. One year she decided to stay at Holiday Island until late November.

"We're going home to Mattydale tomorrow, Mother, and will drive you and Toni into Syracuse." Chuck said.

"I wasn't planning on leaving tomorrow!"

"But school opens and we can't come back for two weeks."

"I know, but the Fall is so beautiful, I thought I'd stay."

"I can send her to school in LaFargeville on the school bus."

"It's a big row to Collins Landing to catch the school bus," Chuck told her.

"Not for me."

Myrtle was unmovable. To our consternation we had to leave without her. Soon the other cottagers would leave for the season. No lights would shine on either shore. And there was then no telephone at the island should

an emergency arise. November could be a rugged month on the river. We had to go home; Chuck to work and our children, Steve and Kay to school.

When we returned two weeks later, mother was exultant over her adventure. She was getting some use out of our school taxes. She never did confess as to how many times Toni attended school. They stayed at Holiday until puddles turned to ice forcing upon Mother the decision to return home to Syracuse.

Just the Way They Liked It.

Raymond Cooper, our neighbor across the river, waved to me from his favorite fishing hole off the end of our boathouse.

I called out to him, "Are you folks going to the show at Clayton tonight?"

"No need," he responded with a twinkle in his eye.

"Why not?"

"Just watching Holiday Island each weekend is a show in itself."

"Really?" I asked quizzically.

"Yeah. When you ring the dinner bell, people pour out of all the bays to swarm up the path to the cottage."

Reflecting upon his statement a moment, I agreed, "I suppose it is amusing."

Chuck had hung a ship's bell on the back porch to call the children to meals. If they were out fishing or boating, even at a good distance, they could hear it.

Our guests became accustomed to its summons and the grass never had a chance to settle down as they hurried up the path on the heels of the children.

We always had big weekend, for Chuck continued to invite people. He was so proud of his island. Besides, I had always managed, hadn't I?

It never occurred to me to demur. I will say I was not always pleased. Unless Chuck brought food, I had to mange with what I had. Usually, he was so anxious to arrive to arrive at the island after being in New York City he didn't think about securing groceries. He couldn't communicate with me about bringing company because there was no phone at the island. Therefore, his own arrival often brought me many surprises.

Since gas was rationed by World War II, we couldn't travel to Alexandria Bay for supplies. What I had to hand was often slim.

We were too proud in those first years to ask guests to bring anything. We were sharing people and enjoyed giving pleasure to them through the beauty of our location on the river.

How could guests know you had to operate on a "shoe string?" If you owned and island, you must have some wealth. Why would you need help with food?

Myrtle and I learned the meaning of multiplying the loaves and fishes, stretching the already elastic hamburger or adding more hot-dogs to the beans. We served gallons of Flavor Ade as it was then called, bushels of potato salad, tubs of macaroni, and hundreds of cakes baked in the antique wood range. Myrtle contributed her delicious homemade bread, and kuechlies.

Chuck's sense of humor and his philosophy endeared him to all sorts of people. He could laugh at himself, which can be the greatest humor of all. He also understood humanity and tolerated its foibles.

He attracted hundreds and they came to the island bringing forth Mr. Cooper's remark. I continued to cook and bed them down, sometimes for four-day weekends.

I entertained these would be vacationers perhaps because I thought I might be entertaining angels unaware. Of course, some were fat angels gorging tons of human food, or complaining angels full of their own problems, or frightened angels like the lady who became hysterical thinking the island might sink during a severe rainstorm.

Most people were fun, so work and recreation became fun for me too. Some wonderful families with understanding love came to the island. They shared our repair work, brought food, and helped Chuck and the women of

the cottage. For them there was always a standing invitation. Their names are inscribed in my Log Book whenever, I peruse their signatures therein, I give them a pat of affection.

The Hickocks, the Tourtelottes from Mattydale, the Kitts family, the Bobenhausens from Syracuse, the Nowers from Earlville, our friends and neighbors, the Staskos, would always be more than welcome.

On the shore at Yoo Hoo Point or the land directly opposite the island guests poured out of autos laden with duffel bags, suitcases and cans of beer. We often found the tops of the latter strewn around the island or the cans floating into shore. And lots of ice; they seemed to be more concerned with ice cubes for cocktails or beer than the conservation of food, much to my amusement or consternation. The price of a bottle of liquor would pay for gas to run our lighting plant for days.

Since Holiday Island is situated in the mainstream of boating activity, people floated by in all variations of water conveyances, canoes, and rowboats, powered by runabouts, small sailing vessels, and tugboats. And many of them wound up at our dock like the "Quit Your Belly Aching", a homemade houseboat sheltering a young family. The weather was rough

that day and we couldn't let a couple with children continue on after they asked for directions.

Teen-agers out of gas on their way home from Alexandria Bay often pounded on our door in the wee small hours asking for succor. Charles was an outgoing adventuresome person. His lively personality attracted all kinds of people. Consequently, it was never a surprise to me that they might turn out to be representatives of wealth or poverty, celebrities or unknowns. Myrtle was getting ready to serve her famous chicken soup with dumplings which she called "Bones" when Chuck came jauntily up the path with a fair haired man and woman in tow, John and Margaret Keats.

They were amiable people, praising the soup, which we shared with them. I was unaware that John was an author of successful literary acclaim. The Keats were searching for a runabout boat. Of course, Chuck just happened to know one for sale. They were pleased with his suggestion, later purchasing it. They called it the "Margaret" after Mrs. Keats.

So began a long, friendly association with these visitors. Chuck was later to help them learn to run their lighting plant on Pine Island. John Keats found it surprising that a truck driver owned an island, much to my amusement. Sometime later in our friendship, he decided Charles would be

an interesting person about whom to write the picture story, which appeared in McCall's magazine.

One of our most welcome guests was George Hayden. He would appear on the opposite shore, a slight red haired man, his good-natured face speckled with freckles, carrying a suitcase, dressed in a natty grey suit. George came from New York City. We called him the Man of Experience because he knew how to carry out so many tasks such as painting and "pootying" the windows. If he hadn't been working a ball of putty in his hands, I wouldn't have known what he meant by "pootying". At first I didn't translate the word "earl" which he would say we needed from Alex Bay. It was oil. He took our kidding about his accent with a smile. The children especially loved to see George arrive, for he always carried many candy bars hidden in his pockets. Then, there would be the day he'd take them into the Chez Paris at Alexandria Bay for ice cream sodas, a rare treat.

George was a valued friend. He had made Myrtle's acquaintance when he had paddled a canoe from New York City up N.Y. State's waterways to Alexandria Bay. He had eaten at her tearoom there, offering to do the dishes. I especially enjoyed George's visits. He and I often had philosophical conversations about our Creator. George's favorite comment

taught to him as a child still governed his actions, "God knows all things!" At the dinner table George was often the object of Chuck's jokes. They had been acquainted since Chuck was a small boy. It took George a while to lean how to secure his dessert. He always ate very slowly and methodically enjoying his repast fully. Everyone else would be ready for dessert long ahead of him. Whenever it was passed, he would say "later." Later there would be none left. After a few times of missing out on banana pie or coconut cake, he would take it the first time around and hide it in the china cabinet.

George usually stayed a week, but the Fall we painted the cottage, he stayed much longer to lend his help. He was a very helpful person. We loved him and always enjoyed his coming.

Myrtle's friend, Edith Leyare from Watertown, was always welcome at the cottage. The Fourth of July was her day to come. She would always bring all the ingredients for a picnic for several friends she wished to bring and for us, both for dinner and supper. Could the captain of Cora Belle take them all for a ride around Wellesley Island after the noon meal?

Our children always looked forward to her coming. Edith Leyare was a jolly, robust, and friendly woman. She would get everyone into the living

room around the piano for a sing. Toni and Kay were delighted with "Lavender Blue, Dilly, and Dilly" as Edith led it.

Listening to Edith sing, no one would ever suspect she endured great troubles. Her motto was, "When you are out for a good time, have fun."

She loved the river, having spent six years floating up and down the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario on her husband's Auction House. Our after dinner trip on Cora Belle filled her desire to return to the river.

Myrtle had often regaled me with tales of Andrew Leyare's enterprise with the Floating Auction House. One time there was a story about it in the Watertown Times. Reading that, I could understand Edith's nostalgia for the St. Lawrence. At the time she came to our island, she was operating a small variety store in Watertown.

All of the Handley family loved her, her great generous heart, and her joy in living, which made a rollicking Fourth of July for all of us, as well as for her guests.

Charlotte Craner was a very outstanding. Whenever she and her family visited us, she generously supplied enough of her tempting delicacies to feed everyone. She and I had had some exciting experiences in the city buying used baby furniture and reselling it after its renovation. She was a-dedicated friend then and always.

Several groups who came were independent of our ministrations like the idariner Girl Scout Troop #171. Herbert and Amelia Hickok were their sponsors. The girls swam, water skied and made Cora Belle happy with their presence. Our front porch held their sleeping bags at night. The island was gay with their laughter.

Another time, Carl Thum, whom Chuck had met in the course of buying tires for his truck, brought his Sunday School Class to Holiday. They hailed from Howlett Hill Presbyterian Church, 14 or 15 girls. Needless to say, we enjoyed them.

Most people chalk up mileage in travel. I did this with people. My experiences were always interesting. Sometimes, I became indignant inwardly because some people acted as though they were paying for room and board. One day I had said good-bye to departing guests when one of them remarked, "I always go to the store daily to procure fresh vegetables for my family."

She lived a block from the store in the city and fed a family of three.

The word, guest, didn't always denote the average conception. It became a caption for other visitors too.

Just as I was awakening from deep sleep one morning, I heard Chuck's voice at the foot of our bed, "Madelyn, I've brought a guest for breakfast."

"I'll get right up," I replied still only half awake.

"He'll wait," Chuck chuckled putting a live lobster on the foot of the bed.

Squealing in surprise, I jumped out of bed. I had never come that close to a lobster before.

I didn't cook him either. Putting a live lobster in boiling water wasn't my idea of the way to treat a guest.

I LOOK ALIVE

I am always amused whenever I note the epithet LOOK ALIVE in my Logbook to describe me. Chuck used it indiscriminately when he wanted something done quickly. With all my involvement in both the cottage and the boathouse activities I thought I at least acted alive.

Ours was not a throw away world. Old furniture had to be repainted or re-varnished. Sheets had to be patched and re-patched until they would no longer hold together. I spent many hours bleaching flour sacks from the mill to be used for pillowcases. If I wanted to brighten sofa covers, curtains, or bedspreads, I had to dye them by boiling them on the stove. I spent many hours in this endeavor. The results compensated for the time spent.

We were too impecunious at that time for paper plates and cups purchase so I visited a church bazaar and bought two dozen china plates at a penny each. One day in adventuring among the islands, Myrtle came upon a house that had been damaged by fire. She came home gleefully displaying her find of some deeply tarnished knives, forks and spoons.

No hamburger or tuna helper graced our pantry shelves; all food had to be made from scratch. We did have numerous canned goods. The latter were a necessity because we had only an old ice refrigerator to preserve perishables.

With all of the guests whom I really didn't know and the ensuing works I usually kept a good face. However, there were some things that bothered me; Trash left behind and dead fish. The dogs always delighted in rolling in the fish only to come up to me to lovingly rub against my clean Blacks.

Yetch!

Another of my pet peeves was the clutter that accelerated in our closets; especially those off the dining room and the back porch.

Each season I carefully cleared and scrubbed each one of them, the one on the back porch I made into a bathhouse where children could change their swimming suits. Everyone else decided it was a good room for storing anything that came to the island. Trying to move all that accumulation from eight people and guests one day, I became so incensed; I threw it off the porch onto the path leading up to the cottage. The path was quite well strewn with it and I was still In the midst of my tantrum when Chuck started up to the house from the boathouse.

He looked up, saw me sending objects flying, turned about to run back into the boathouse.

I was still angry but the sight of my stalwart husband seeking the sanctuary of his workshop struck me so funny, I began to laugh. However, I never did pick up those items from the path. I don't know who did. It was never mentioned.

Some of my harrowing experiences occurred with the children's health. They would be fine the day school let out for Easter vacation. Charles would have a week free at the same time, resulting in his desire to go to the island to ready Cora Belle for the river.

No sooner, would we arrive, probably the next day, one of them would break out with measles or chicken pox. How to keep them warm in a cold house.

I had an inkling of how pioneer women must have felt trying to keep children comfortable when they became ill in houses lacking in central heating.

Keeping a wood fire burning was a very necessary chore. I was glad to stoke it. I respected my husband for braving the cold to cut the wood, so I couldn't let the fire go out. Often I sat with my feet in the oven holding a blanket wrapped Kay in my arms.

The other day she reminded me, "Remember, mother, how you used to heat the iron flatirons on the stove, wrap them in a towel, and put them in our beds to keep us warm?"

Sometimes I questioned the wisdom of our being at Holiday in cold weather. It would start out to be so sunny and warm, then in the night, that old capricious females the weather, would blow up a Northeastern that would batter our bay windows on the North until even our blankets wouldn't warm us.

It could be a little wearing, but as long as the fire kept going to dry the clothes I wasn't really unhappy with this process.

Actually, from a hardy childhood I was used to taking things in stride. If I ever felt others had less to do than I, well, that is life isn't it? I loved every moment of it. Oft times come February from somewhere would come a whiff of boat varnish to my nostrils. I could scarcely wait until Easter vacation would come again so we could set out for our island home perhaps to go through most of the same type of experiences.

Readying the boats meant we could race down river in them, the wind in our faces, exaltation in the sheer delight of it.

We had owned the cottage a short time when it became evident to Myrtle and me that-we'd need more money to pay the taxes, etc. How to obtain it?

"Let's rent rooms to tourists", Myrtle suggested.

Since she already rented out four apartments in the **city,** this idea didn't seem to her too difficult to carry out.

Her plan didn't seem too fantastic to me because I already rented rooms in our house in Mattydale to men and their wives stationed nearby in the Air force. I was trying to do my bit to help pay the mortgage on our home.

If Chuck didn't care for our plans, he didn't object because he knew we were trying to help him. He would be in the city working the summer our Venture began.

However, in the spring of that year he helped me paint the bedrooms in pastels. I can still remember the feel of the frigid water from-the river we used to wash up our paint spills.

We renovated the huge living room with blue and refurbished the old chairs by dyeing their covers and applying decals cut from old chintzes. It was cheerful.

The wainscoting in the dining room was a dull gray. Who could enjoy eating there? With the leftover paint from the living room, we daubed the dining room ceiling bright blue and the walls a shiny white.

Gradually everything throughout the cottage was clean and shining, ready for guests. At first only relatives from the city answered our ads. Perhaps it was our good fortune this was so. Our ferrying system from Yoo Hoo Point to the island wasn't too efficient.

It certainly was an experience. I learned that buying and supplying food for paying guests was much different from our regular entertaining especially when it had to be brought in by rowboat.

Our guests were good-natured and gave us more support than many of those, who through the years, came gratis.

Mother was used to cooking for large numbers on an iron stove due to her former occupation as restaurant owner and chef. I secretly was a little aghast at serving paying guests. I was remembering Summer, when as a college junior; I had cooked for thirty boys at the Onondaga Orphanage. My first attempts didn't

quite answer the needs of hungry boys, so I had had to fill them up with bread and butter.

Would my cooking be adequate here? I remembered the day one of our gratis guests complained because we were out of fresh vegetables. She always gave her family of three fresh vegetables every day.

It had irritated me. She was a city block from a store. I was on an island three miles from stores. Besides several guests, who had depleted our larder, had just recently departed.

By the end of that summer, Myrtle and I agreed that perhaps renting rooms wasn't the answer to our money problems. We hadn't had many answers to our advertisements even though the people who came had seemed quite happy with their stay with us,

People didn't have gas to travel and were finding recreation nearer home. So ended this adventure.

I was neither sorry nor glad. I had learned a great deal about human nature had done my share of the cooking, cleaning, and entertaining. I just felt there must be other ways to replenish our pocket books.

It was then Chuck decided to rent out Cora Belle to fishermen for weekends.

Elise and Pearl Lake of Syracuse N.Y. elected to use our services on Cora Belle for a three day weekend. Chuck forgot that my working at the Junior High wouldn't allow us to arrive at too early an hour. He set the time to meet them at Clayton at six o'clock in the evening.

I had already purchased what food we would need but had to bake the casserole and banana cream pie before we left home. I would also need time to pack clothes for my family, as well as the groceries.

No dust collected under my feet while I did so. Chuck had forgotten to tell me at what time he had arranged to meet the Lakes until I arrived home from school that day.

It was quite some weekend but the Lakes were easy persons for whom to care. They enjoyed Chuck's efforts to find the, best fishing spots and were gracious about my cooking.

They rented Cora Belle for two other weekends. One was during the fall when the orange and red of the trees, in contrast to the beautiful blue of the skies, enticed us to stay on at the island.

However the day of that fishing trip opened with drenching rain. The Lakes and their guests from South Carolina came anyway. The rain didn't dampen their spirits.

Chuck motored down river by Crossover Light several miles below Alexandria Bay.

They didn't have much luck fishing but certainly were good sports, in spite of the weather.

I had brought chicken sandwiches and on board was preparing a concoction that scoutmaster Fred Bauer from Mattydale had taught me how to make. The fragrance wafted out of the cabin to those hungry damp people on deck.

There was almost a stampede. They spurned the delicious chicken and concentrated on the simple but aromatic Fireman Save' My Child.

Regardless of the rain, they deemed the fishing trip an overwhelming success, inviting us to visit them in Carolina.

When we put Cora Belle up that Fall, however, we decided that with both of us working and trying to give service on Cora Belle was a bit much. Cora Belle was never to be rented out again to overnight guests.

Fish Mania

The sound of a boat banging against our dock sent me to the screen door. Several relatives from the city were climbing out of an outboard.

"Hi, Madelyn," they called out.

As I greeted them in return, they began to peel off their T-shirts for more exposure to the sun. Without a moment's hesitation they rushed past me with a wave of their hands. Within seconds, several fish lines dangled from every rock.

I was amused but a little annoyed too, for the much-awaited food was left in the boat to the mercy of the punishing elements. Let the perishables go, the fish were calling.

One rock bass after another hit the shore amid squeals of glee. Accustomed to Northern Pike, Bass, and even an occasional Muskie, I secretly felt contempt for Rock Bass angling. However, as long as visitors caught something, to them the specie mattered not.

Weeks afterward, we used to find fish lines entangled in the weeds along the riverbank and in porch cushions. Once one even found its way into a deck of playing cards in the dining room.

What is it that turns perfectly sane men and women into fish maniacs?

A minister friend was so overcome by the success of enticing Bluegills to bite that he went far beyond his own needs and those of his neighbors.

When I saw Bluegills heaped into a three-foot pyramid on outdoor table, I was shocked.

"Are you selling fish, Sherm?" I innocently asked.

"I got carried-away," he replied sheepishly. "I was having so much fun, I didn't realize how many I'd caught."

"You must have taken the Biblical story of the draught of fishes seriously," I spoofed.

Sherman looked at me reprovingly, but he laughed.

All joking aside, I had an intimation of how people felt about fishing. It can be a time of reflection and philosophy as well as fun while you are waiting for a nibble. And there is nothing so succulent as freshly caught fish cooked over a campfire.

That fact was double proved the time we took some city folk fishing with Cora Belle. They claimed to dislike fish. At the end of their trip, I cooked a mound of sweet Jack Perch they had caught. Although we supplied other meat, they dispatched every last Perch, abandoning the meat, to my amazement.

Oftentimes, fish stories would occupy most of our guests' conversation around the dining room table, the right tackle to use, and the fish that got away. I noticed that in spite of the expensive tackle these would-be anglers brought with them, their catch was only too often nil. Steve often showed them up using worms.

Once in awhile, a visitor would politely turn to me, "Do you fish, Madelyn?"

When I answered, "No, I seem to have so many other things to do," they promptly lost interest in me and returned to their fishy conversation, but not before they showed their consternation over my traitorous lack of interest in a dangling fish line.

Once I did go with Chuck over to the St. Lawrence Rift between the U. S. and Canada where the riverbanks narrow the water into swiftness. I caught four Bass and the excitement of fighting those game fish brought understanding as to how real fishermen feel.

David Plewes, my niece June's husband, has afforded us much admiration as well as fun with his fishing. He would scoff, if I were to say he seemed to enter at one moment with the creatures he sought. He knew

every habit and movement so that they responded to his call. His success often brought others to the same spot. Their success would be nil.

Although David enjoyed showing off his prowess, he was often irritated at their encroachment upon his fishing hole. When they insisted upon following him around one day, he remarked, "I can't outrun them with my small motor because they have Inboard Outboards."

Steve, our son, remarked "Those shapers use their high powered binoculars to see if I'm catching anything. Shortly after I leave the dock, some of them follow. If I'd thought of it in time, I could have offered to give one of them oar so he could save his gas." Dave laughed with Steve over that one.

Some Guests at the island definitely did not eat fish. They wanted the fun of catching them if someone else cleaned them.

Grandma Myrtle taught Steve to fish as a small boy. He had to clean his catch too so he was prepared whenever teenagers brought in a Bass and inquired, "Who cleans the fish?"

Steve instantly retorted. "If you catch them, you clean them."

All too often I would be caught at the island alone after a busy Labor Day weekend. It meant performing all the duties of closing up camp by

myself. Upon checking the boathouse, I would discover dying or dead fish that people had left behind for someone else to clean.

This waste and lack of responsibility was abhorrent to me. I finally made some rules about either cleaning their catch or not fishing at the island. It brought good results.

David always took care of his fish. I used to have a great deal of amusement over his conversations with June about his sport. He liked to arise almost before dawn to be out on the water. June came to the island to rest since she had a particularly difficult work in the city.

One evening he said to her, "The sunrise is so beautiful here. I'll awaken you at 5 so you can see it."

"I'll save a piece of steak for your eye," she retorted.

At the end of that same day David brought in a beautiful Bass to show us and said to June, "I'm going to have it mounted!"

"Where will you put it?", she asked apprehensively.

"On the ceiling over our bed."

"Then I'll have my Bible put on film and have it continually showing on the ceiling."

The fish was never mounted.

Bucket Brigade

There never was an energy shortage at Holiday Island. Chuck kept the old buzz saw z-zz-zzing along to ready cords of wood for the old iron stove. The echo from the clickety-clack of our old buzz saw must have resounded in the ears of our neighbors I'm sure. To Myrtle and me it was a welcome sound because it meant cheer and comfort in damp or cool weather as well as fuel for cooking.

After Chuck had cut a pile of logs, he would then chop them into smaller pieces. If he weren't there and the necessity arose, Mother or I would split them.

Kerosene lamps lighted the rooms at night. Of course, it was a never-ending chore to keep chimneys shining and lamps filled. This meant lugging gallons and gallons of kerosene.

We discovered that using kerosene can be dangerous in un-thought of ways. Chuck was living at the island during the month of May one year while working at Hutchinson's boat works.

John and I arrived at Gantner's dock on shore after school was out. We telephoned Chuck on the island but received no answer.

The rowboat was tied to the dock so we rowed over to the island. Not a sound greeted us. We called upstairs, thinking he might be taking a nap. No answer!

Going upstairs to put away clothes, I noticed the door to the yellow room tightly closed and the odor of burning oil.

Upon opening the door I found Charles fast asleep with several lamps lighted. I couldn't seem to awaken him. I'm sure all oxygen had burned out of the room. I was really frightened. I shook him sharply and threw water in his face.

Eventually he opened his eyes but didn't seem to focus on us but he was awake.

I made him promise he would never sleep again in a tightly closed room with oil lamps burning at top capacity.

Wash day often times was spent heating water on the stove and scrubbing the clothes on a washboard. I didn't mind because it probably helped my disposition to rub out any irritation that way.

Perhaps, by the same token it helped Charles get rid of his irritations by chopping the wood he supplied for the house.

Myrtle and I tried to turn wash day into an adventure for our girls. We would scrub the clothes then give the results to Donna, Kay and Toni. Donna would throw them in the river and they would jump in after them to rinse out soap.

The girls made a game of it, then hung them up to dry on our ski ropes, which were stretched from tree to tree. The clothes smelled wonderfully fresh from that clean air.

One day Chuck found an old wringer type washing machine, which he set up in the boathouse. Why there, I do not know except to its being nearer the river for rinsing the clothes.

The boathouse was almost a city block away from the house. It was necessary to form a bucket brigade, passing pails of hot water from the stove in the kitchen down the path to the machine in the boathouse.

To my consternations Chuck would often stuff the clothes into the machine before I had the chance to sort them out. When I protested, he retorted, "We're short on gas. We can't have too many tubs full."

I was pleased he wanted to help but chagrined too. Often the children were surprised to end up with pink or blue dotted white tee shirts. Faded and spotted jeans were not then in vogue either.

By the time the washing machine came to us Chuck had found a second hand gasoline machine which could produce enough power to facilitate the use of some electric tools as well as lights. However, we could only use it very sparingly. Gas was needed for the boat. We still made use of the kerosene lamps. I didn't realize how strange some of our practices looked to our neighbors on the shore. One day one of them remarked, "We were afraid you were having a fire the other day."

"Fire?" I asked innocently.

"We saw all that smoke rising from the house and all of you passing buckets hand over hand all the way to the boathouse."

"Oh you mean when we were washing?" I laughed. "I suppose it might appear like a fire, I call it The Bucket Brigade."

We laughed together.

Winter

We did not stay at the island during the winter months. Once during that season we would make a pilgrimage north stand on Yoo Hoo Point just to look down river at the house nestled among the trees.

Although the island was snow and ice bound, we received a lift of spirit just to gaze upon it.

One time Chuck and I did struggle up to our knees down the snow-drifted road across from the island to walk gingerly across the ice to our summer home.

The house inside was dank and freezing with a dead cold, although outside the sun was warm and bright.

Duchy's bark reechoed eerily through the bleak and empty rooms. What a contrast to the rest of the year. We were glad we hadn't planned to remain too long.

As we closed the door, it seemed as though the cottage whispered, "Come back, come back again."

And I replied, "In the Spring, always in the Spring."

That's when the old iron stove in the kitchen glowed with warmth and the teakettle sang from its back griddle. Duchy would sneak behind the stove, her back against it, to snore softly.

The cottage would be alive with children's voices as they teased their father about sticking his fingers in the spaghetti sauce or whatever else was simmering on the back of the stove.

Chuck had finished sanding Cora Belle's bottom so she could be painted with copperoyd to ready her for the summer. The children in anticipation of baking gingerbread had filled the kitchen wood box.

We sat down to dinner, snug and content.

"In the Spring, always in the Spring!"

Cora Belle, The Beloved

Our friend, Virginia Nower, was looking at Cora Belle docked in the boathouse slip. Turning to me she remarked, "When we first heard about your buying a cabin cruiser, we thought it very odd."

"On an island, Virginia, a boat is a necessity, "I answered.

"I can understand a rowboat or an outboard but a cruiser?"

"I know it must seem fantastic to many of our friends, but when they realize it was always a dream in the back of Chuck's mind, they'll understand."

"I suppose so."

"We feel Cora Belle is a beloved friend. When we consider that the Lord grew the wood for her and human hands lovingly cut, fitted, varnished and painted her, we sense that caring is alive and transfers itself to us."

"I had never thought of a boat in that way. I can see why Cora Belle means so much to you."

Of course, there had been the time when I questioned the wisdom of owning her. One day Chuck came home to Mattydale to say he'd found a cruiser for sale. I was aghast! I knew he had probably always wanted something beside the rowboat with a three horse Water Witch

motor but how could we pay for anything more? Already the island and our home payments kept us in penury.

How could I know what a tremendous therapeutic role Cora Belle was to play in our future, a time when we would need something tangible to endure the dark gray thread of mourning?

Anyway, when Chuck asked the price of the cruiser docked at Brewerton, N. Y., the wife of the owner quoted it, saying, "We're selling it at a ridiculous price; all because I'm getting tired of sharing my last pork chop with those people who drop by just at dinner time."

Her dissatisfaction was our good fortune

Cora Belle was built in Bay City, Michigan. She was a 32-footer with a 10-foot beam. Her lines were graceful and she was seaworthy enough to travel the ocean. She slept six people comfortably, with two bunks in the bow and four in the main cabin. I fell in love with her tiny galley where I would spend many hours coaxing her Shipmate stove to burn properly.

An overnight stay on Cora Belle made me an addict to that type of boating. She won my heart forever as though we were charismatic companions. I forgot all about how we would pay for her. Our next project was to take her home to the island. Chuck arrived home at Brewerton Road from his trucking work on Friday. Since he wanted ready Cora Belle for the

trip as soon as possible. I had previously stocked her with food so there was no real reason why we should wait. There had been a storm, but the weather had seemingly cleared.

My brother, Cecil Widger, had decided to accompany us. I believe he was sorry for that inclination before we reached Little Calumet, the name of our island in the beginning.

We left Brewerton as soon as the sun rose, Cecil, Mother Myrtle with our niece, Gloria Pender, Chuck, and I with our two children, Kay and Stephen.

At first all was calm and we were exultant. It was so much fun to see all of the cottages along the Seneca River and to have them wave to us. "Oh, a boating life for us'."

The Shipmate worked in response to my efforts, so we had our first meal aboard. Since none of us had ever dined on shipboard before, everything contributed to the excitement of being on our own boat, eating out on the open deck.

When we arrived in Oswego Harbor, the calm trade disappeared. There had been a storm on the lake and the water rolled into the dock so that Cora Belle yawed around on her anchorage. We would-be sailors were a bit queasy and thought it a good plan to go ashore for a time. Gloria, Steve and I decided to go uptown to get away from water. We would see a movie.

The only movie in town was "Anchors Away". It was a fun picture, but I personally would have enjoyed it more had it been about something else but ships and water.

The next day dawned clear and bright with a glorious sun. The Coast Guard said that although the storm was over it would be rough on Lake Ontario.

Chuck loved a challenge. That day Lake Ontario would give him one. The wind still blew a steady gale once we entered the Lake. The waves looked mountainous to me. My husband was undaunted. He started out following a steamer. We kept her in sight for a time, which gave us a certain amount of security.

Alas, our motor stopped. The steamer disappeared from view. We were alone with stalled motor, no other boats in sight.

Cora Belle yawed around out of control. What a tossing we received. Fortunately, both Chuck and Cecil were good mechanics. They set to work to remedy our dilemma. Leaning over the bilge inhaling gas fumes was far different from working on a stationary object.

When Cecil remarked, " I never knew a boat could run on its side," Chuck retorted.

"I'm an old sailor, just watch me eat my breakfast when this motor takes off."

The rest of us were seasick, even Myrtle was a bit queasy, probably more at the inadequacy of the motor rather than the motion of the boat. She had hat a great deal of experience with rough water when she had sailed the Great Lakes with Chucks father he was a First Mate on the big steamers.

Steve and Kay took to their bunks and fell asleep.

Finally, the engine coughed and started. I felt so relieved; I tried to bring coffee to Chuck. The ordeal in the bilge plus nerves had been almost too much for him. Imagine his surprise and mine when he was seasick too.

Cora Belle's engine quit twice again, so Cecil and Chuck had to work on her again. In the meantime a few dishes clattered around in the galley attesting to my lack of knowledge as a true sailor.

I said an earnest prayer, uttering a big sigh of gratitude when the great old girl rose to the occasion finally and hummed away as she resumed our journey.

Realizing that we were off course, Chuck told us, "We must get our bearings and find Galloo Island. I had seen Galloo on the navigation map,

but novice that I was; I didn't realize we would have to cross one of the roughest sections of the lake before we reached Galloo.

Once we reached this destination, wouldn't the waves calm down? It was so beautiful a day; surely the trip would be more enjoyable soon. When we reached Galloo, I discovered we still had twenty more miles to cover before attaining the quieter part of our journey.

The waves were still tumultuous. None of us could eat anything; we had been tossed about too much. Spilled food in the galley mixed with broken dishes demonstrated I had something to learn about battening down mobile objects before entering rough water.

When we at last limped into Cape Vincent toward evenings all hearty sailors emitted a huge sigh of relief, climbed into their berths, and promptly went to sleep in that calm harbor.

The next day we had a wonderfully smooth ride to our island dock that would be Cora Belle's home for many years.

That first summer, Charles, our children and I hardly stopped at the cottage; just long enough to climb aboard Cora as she sat at the dock. Immediately we would put our food aboard and be on our way to explore the St. Lawrence bays and islands. It was idyllic gliding over the blue green water, the sun and wind in our faces.

I was amazed and sometimes irritated to be treated to a change of status once we were aboard the cruiser. Captain Chuck used a Now Hear This Routine upon his ignorant crew and we were snapped around our various ship duties. Of course, quick action is needed in boating. He would give an order, then bark: 'Look alive!" after it.

Gloria saw the humor in it all because sometime later, when examining the Log Book in which I kept guests names. I found she had written "Look Alive," after the name Madelyn.

My looking alive consisted of making up several bunks and cooking endless meals on the Shipmate. Often that little stove didn't want to start, but I became accustomed to its crankiness. I learned to cook potatoes, corn, and hot dogs in one kettle on one burner.

I learned to put out bumpers to protect Cora Belle from too much rubbing against docks and to throw her coiled ropes ashore for docking. There was also the matter of scrubbing decks if Chuck we're too busy to do it.

As to the epithet "Master Mooneye" which I found in the Log after Chuck's name, I suppose when he cast a commanding eye upon Gloria. She felt his eyes did resemble those of the staring mooneye fish that floated by

the island every summer. Gloria was often with us and found the captain a different person from the joking uncle she knew as a little girl. He was a knowledgeable boatman and liked things shipshape. We all had to admit that it was for our safety; we enjoyed every moment with him for he was also a great entertainer.

Every trip was a new adventure because he knew the Thousand Islands well, having spent much of his childhood there with his mother. We soaked up the legends with which he regaled us and never tired of exploring the river with him.

At first, Myrtle preferred to stay at the island for it reminded her of her childhood on Grenadier Island in Canada. After a time, however, she too succumbed to the lure of the rides on Cora Belle.

On very hot nights it was restful to find a cove and sleep in comfort while the wind softly blew through the portholes. Under the stars it was romantic while the children slept peacefully in their bunks.

Sometimes we would moor at the town dock in Alexandria Bay. It was great fun to be awakened next morning by the revving of engines by fishermen starting out for the day. The fragrance of bacon wafted to our noses by the cool morning breeze. The children would spring from their bunks and our day would begin.

Amusing tidbits often happened while we lunched there at the town dock. It was typical of our life style that we served no alcoholic drinks aboard Cora Belle. We preferred to use our money to fill the gas tank, provide sandwiches and Kool Ade for hungry, thirsty kids.

It was amusing then to hear curious tourists while they were on the dock peeping in at us say, "Yes, they're in there. What a life! That must be expensive wine they're drinking."

Grape Kool Ade in a Water Glass?

As the weeks passed that first summer we became more and more enchanted with boating as a way of life. So absorbed were we with Cora Belle, the Beloved, that the appearance of Fall, when the boat must be put in dry dock, made no impression.

The leaves on the white birch in front of the cottage turned to gold, while the sturdy oaks began to put on their pale brown dresses. Ducks flew overhead and the bang of a hunter's gun punctured the crisp autumn air. Most of the other boatmen had left the river for their city homes, but still we lingered. After the Labor Day Holiday, it had become more of a struggle to get Chuck to leave for home Sunday nights. I could understand his reluctance, but Gloria and Steve needed to be in school Monday morning.

Chuck could always go to work on Tuesdays, so why push it? My firm belief in education conflicted with that plan, however. It was always to be a slight flaw as long as we had children in school.

The morning we awoke to find ice covering our dock, we knew we could linger no longer. Sadly we concluded Cora Belle would have to be put into dry dock.

What a trial that was. Since we had no chain falls of our own, Chuck had to go to his cousin, Ray Rogers, in Alexandria Bay to borrow some.

Both he and I learned to pull on the Falls to raise her above the boathouse slip. To pull so hard and see her rise only an inch at a time was really discouraging, but our efforts were finally rewarded after several hours. Chuck then wedged her tightly against slipping upon the beams he had maneuvered across the slip previously.

There was nothing else to do but leave her in her winter quarters and close the cottage for the season.

P. O. R.

Don Krohm, a friend of Chuck's, walked with me down the path toward the boathouse. The slap of water ski's hitting the water penetrated our conversation.

We arrived at the dock in time to see Chuck make a perfect maneuver on the ski jump. As he landed on the water, his battered hat flew off into the river.

"Get my hat," he called to Steve who had been drawing him over the jump.

I laughed, "Chuck has a thing about hats. I remember when we were sailing through the Murray Canal on Cora Belle; he fell off the slippery catwalk into the water. For a moment we were too startled to think what to do. The impossible had happened. Chuck was always so sure footed."

Steve threw out a life line. Charlie and Sabina vacationing with us grabbed the pike pole to aid Chuck. He was standing in the shallow water shouting, never mind me, get my hat.

The beautiful Captain's hat Charlie and Sabina had given him had almost disappeared beneath the wake of the boat before we could retrieve it with the pike pole.

Watching Chuck go around the course to jump once more, Don remarked it, "Chuck certainly knows how to live."

I had heard this homily so often when people came to the Island or wanted to use it as an excuse for "goofing off" that I was irritated. "And work too", I retorted.

Catching the sharp note in my voice Don said, "I only meant he has such a good time out of life."

Of course Don was right and how could I expect people to understand how hard Chuck worked He was so clever at painting a caricature of himself that he gave the impression of continuous play.

Chuck's was a merry heart. He would say, "Oh, I know the "score" about life's responsibilities and trials but why not get fun out of them?"

He laughed at life because he had come to terms with it. I must often have been a cross to him with my seriousness about what I would feed people, etc.

As my niece, June Plewes, once said, "He makes everything fun, even the trifles. He includes all of us in his recreation and hobbies."

Yes, Chuck Handley knew how to play and work too. He pursued labor even with verve and dash. He believed you could have almost

anything if you were willing to work for it. So he did whatever came to hand, since there was never enough money to hire anyone else to do it.

> He had hung a sign in my kitchen, "This firm only hires slave labor."
>
> Ecclesiastes 9:10 says, "Whatever thy hand findeth to **do,** do it with thy might."

Chuck took it seriously. He would tackle anything. When the huge boathouse dock needed repairs, he brought many heavy railroad ties to Collins Landing with his trailer. They had to be manually unloaded, and then somehow brought by boat to the island. Chuck made a game of it, towing them to the island one by one behind the outboard. It certainly was hard going but he never gave up until they were on shore near our dock.

I suppose this effort of rebuilding the docks and some/that happened in going from Mattydale to Holiday contributed to my secret name for him, P. 0. R. (Push On Regardless).

One day we were dragging Myrtle's little trailer packed with her supplies for the summer. The trailer tires were old and gave out three times on the way to the island.

Charles with great patience patched them. When they gave out again, he could do no more. I'm sure he must have felt like swearing, but he did not. It was not his custom to pollute my ears with profane language.

He pulled into the driveway of the nearest farmhouse, spoke to the woman about leaving the trailer in their pasture until he could come back for it. Women usually responded to his charm. She acquiesced.

Getting back into Mother's LaSalle, he said, "Let's push on."

We did, but it was two weeks before he could return to get the trailer. He was called to work and the trailer left his thinking.

I was glad I didn't have to accompany him when he did go back. I wouldn't have liked to discover where melted butter had run to nor to have the odor of sour milk assail my nostrils. Mother did not complain.

When the gas tank on our little Ford truck which carried us to and from the Island rusted away Chuck rigged a five-gallon can to replace it. He had searched endlessly for a new tank but none was to be had.

When that can sprang a leaky he substituted one that held two gallons. It wasn't easy for me to gauge how far I could go without disaster, for if this can became empty, I had to work a long time to get the gas replacement working.

I would often have to take the children home for school while Chuck, of necessity had to remain at the Island. Stop, pour in two gallons, advances repeat the same procedure for 100 miles. If he could do it, why should I complain?

Chuck to guests spoke of the island as a workingman's homes even though it bore the name "Holiday Island" .It lived up to its nomenclature. From morning until night he spent long hours repairing water pipes, plumbing, engines for the boats, and renovating the boathouse.

All the buildings on the island were a weather-beaten gray. To my surprise Chuck informed me the boathouse had to be painted first as though it needed more loving care.

Of course, in time, I came to understand. It housed those most precious vehicles of transportation to and from the island.

We painted the boathouse a bright yellow. It was some task, even with my brother, Cecil, building scaffolds to make it easier.

Our neighbor, Mrs. Wilson, on the main shore, watching us apply the brushes to those weather beaten boards, said, "They're going to be so disappointed when they see how the paint is sinking into that building."

We certainly were. It had to have three coats of paint before it looked like anything at all. When it was done, Chuck was proud.

Lovingly he polished the windows, put in florescent lights against the day when we'd have real electricity. I began to call the boathouse his hideaway. I'm sure he must often have felt the need of one. Didn't he sometimes feel his wife and his mother banded against him in finding things for him to do?

I teased Chuck about it, but I understood he was using it as a boat repair shop where he put in long hours caulking, sanding and readying boats for others as well as for us. I said, "I almost expect to see you pat her boards as you enter your domain."

He laughed. He was so proud of her when she was polished and painted that he had a boathouse party there.

Dwayne and Mary Dewey, David and June Plewes, joined us in this memorable festival.

I may have called Charles silly names and teased him about hiding away, but I admired him for all the talent he displayed in remaking old boats, the amount of hard work he could accomplish, and his cheerfulness though having to do it to keep things going.

We loved each other deeply, never bad mouthed one another or quarreled in front of our children. We lived each day with underlying joy, weaving the pattern of our lives in with others, like a tapestry, pink for love, orange for joy, blue for peace and healing.

Between guests and children we were scarcely ever alone as a couple. Mother Myrtle had a thing about children; no matter what you were doing, you always had to take them with you, nieces, nephews and friends. By the time all were clean and ready to go, Charles had become tired of waiting. Many times he motored away alone in Sharon Lee.

One day, when the rest of our world was impervious, Chuck launched his racing shell, the HI HI, left over from his bachelor days, and invited me for a ride. There was room for only two.

With a surging joy we left the dock. I knew that today would be special. He had that blazing expression deep in his brown eyes. So we raced around Wellesley Island until we came to a quiet bay where a paradise of an island loomed above us.

The heat of the summer day, and the way the spheres sang their music made us languorous and loving. Climbing the path of the island hand in hand, we came to our own Garden of Eden.

Communion spoke to our emotions in a rising tumult until we found ourselves in a rhythm as old as life itself. As we lay in the grass content, a snake slithered by, an intruder in our garden,

Right then, I felt only a wonderful companionship with this man I had married. I should have known that a new little stranger would come into being. He did, our beloved son, Johnny, gift of God.

Chuck had a way of turning the commonplace or little Incidents Into adventures for the children as well as for-me. He was rocking on the porch In the July sun when I came downstairs.

"How would you like to see my discovery? He asked.

"What?"

"It's a secret place I found. Get the children on Cora Belle and we'll be off!"

Grabbing some corned beef sandwiches, cake and a thermos Jug of Kool Aid, I rang the ship's bell to call the children. Always I took along something to eat. I learned it could be hours before we returned from any sortie.

While we were going up river in Cora Belle, Steve tried to get his dad to tell him the secret.

"Wait and see" was the retort.

After some time we motored around Grindstone Island. On the backside there was a beautiful secluded sand beach. The waves were rolling enough to make a surf and there Chuck dropped anchor. With C. B.'s baby loaded with food and blankets for the beach we rowed ashore.

Everyone swam for pure joy in the pseudo surf. We didn't have it around our island. Afterward we ate lunch ravenously and relaxed on the sand, spinning tales of Lost Channel in the St. Lawrence where a whole company of armed men had died without a trace during the French and Indian War. All too soon it was time to leave.

"It's a wonderful secret place." said Kay.

"Yes, Uncle Chuck, It is", remarked Toni.

Every once in awhile after that day we would run, away from work to our secret place.

It was to this beach a year later we took our cousin Rod Chisholm when he was on leave before going overseas in the military service. Stopping at Pamarod we helped his mother, our Aunt Sabina on board Cora.

This sally comforted Rod and Sabina, who were sorrowing over the death of father and husband, Charlie Chisholm.

Black threads of mourning had been added to our tapestry! But the tranquility of nature in that secluded spot healed our hearts that day. Blue for healing intertwined the black.

Rocking and Porch Sitting

Thump! Creak! Thump! Creak!

Another day at Holiday Island had begun to the sound of Chuck's rocking on the front porch before breakfast. He loved the early morning coolness. Back and forth, to and fro, he often shook the whole house.

Chuck didn't need calisthenics. The manner in which he planted his feet to push himself forward and back negated their necessity. Of course he didn't set out to awaken us. He was just enjoying rocking.

Guests would start out of their beds expecting a minor earthquake, but the family had awakened to it for years. 'Twas the signal for the coffee pot to be put on the stove.

Long before rocking chairs were made famous from the White House, Chuck had rocked. When we were first married, we visited his father at the Hamilton Hotel in Vermont, which he managed. I was amused to observe Chuck in conversation with his father, while both of them, entirely unaware, rocked the length of the hotel lobby.

After breakfast on the island, all adults sought the front porch to savor their second cup of coffee. There were four old wicker chairs sitting there. We didn't own any of those beautiful aluminum jobs with bright

plaids that graced our neighbors' yards. Our rockers were just an odd assortment, a bit shabby from so much use but so comfortable. My one experiment with the new type ended in its total demise under the onslaught of a few ponderous guests. So back to the old ones which had probably traveled a million miles across the porch by this time.

Because a certain president made rocking chairs popular, people who had heretofore been happy with a straight chair, all at once wanted to say they'd rocked. In fact, I would have had to race to the porch to obtain a rocker.

The beautiful open verandah rambled three quarters of the way around the gingerbread house. Some of our Massey cousins think it has the best view on the river, for you can see all the river traffic up past Clayton toward the Great Lakes and down river past Alexandria Bay.

Every lake, river, and ocean going ship pass by within thirty feet of that porch. When our young girls became teenagers they found this a fun advantage, for they primped and flirted with the ships' sailors from the safety of this porch. The rest of us dreamed of sailing to far off places.

We never tired of watching the river. There under azure skies with white clouds drifting by, we would observe sailboats of all sizes

and proportions, their beautiful spinnaker sails belting out in the wind on their way to a rendezvous at the Thousand Island Country Club.

Freighters from every nation chugged by and we spent many an hour checking their national flag by the flag charts Chuck had hung on our dining room wall.

Barges carrying oil and construction equipment pushed by powerful tugs would catch our attention.

We were treated to an entourage of houseboats, motor yachts, canoes, kayaks, outboards, and whatever other type of water vessel one could think up.

Men and boys spun yarns while sitting there of the day's activities or of some event out of the teller's past. Since, for several years, no radio or TV invaded the cottage, our nightly entertainment consisted of conversation there. The children sat with the adults and were content to listen while the stars twinkled in the velvety dark sky and the lights from other cottages gleamed across the river.

We loved the river day or night. The day brought out blue herons and silver fish splashing in the golden sunlight. The darkness was mysterious hiding her secrets. Often times the moon shimmered a silver path at our feet in the wake of a passing ship.

Sometimes the St. Lawrence surrendered to storm clouds and we would watch the driving wind whip to a rising froth crowned by white caps breaking on the far shore. This provided us with an understanding of the nature of the universe, serene sometimes and agitated at others.

The porch was a good vantage point from which to watch our offspring jump into the water after chores were finished. Chuck and I rested thereon after we finished our various projects. When fishermen rowed by in their ceaseless search, we often might be finishing a refreshing cup of coffee.

When the fishermen rowed out of sight, we would resume our work activities. Often these same people would row by hours later to find us sitting there. While they were fishing, we probably had caulked a boat, painted one of the bedrooms, or finished several of our regular routines.

To our amusement one day, we heard one of them say, "They're still on that porch; they haven't moved a muscle. How lazy can you get!"

SKI BOY

The Christmas Chuck asked for his present to be a pair of water skis so I went to price them. I was always too practical so, when the clerk quoted the cost, I said, "$44.00 for a couple of boards?"

Today skiers would hoot with laughter at that price. Anyway, I didn't buy them. I thought Chuck didn't seem too disappointed.
The next Christmas however he asked again.

That time I capitulated even though I couldn't foresee that skiing would become so great a part of our summer vacations.

Chuck was an avid sportsman and would try most any sport as a challenge. The first time he put on the Bruce Parker skis and induced a friend, Johnny Russell, to tow him he was in for a surprise.

Our son Steve reported to me, "You should've seen him, mother being towed underneath the water. He certainly looked half drowned."

The next day Chuck was back-at it. He had discovered it wasn't quite the same as riding a surfboard. With a bit of coaching he stood up. Exhilaration made it a part of his life from that moment on.

My rival for my husband's affections became a pair of water skis! He pursued this sport with joyous enthusiasm, and took everyone with him. All of us must learn to ski even his wife, Madelyn.

My log book has a note stating, "Steve has become an A-1 skier."

And so he had because his father believed in sharing his knowledge with the family. He had a great deal of patience to teach whatever he wanted to share. Steve was his first pupil. After a great deal of practicing they decided to try a ski jump in front of John Holcombe's camp.

Contrary to their expectations, this was a disaster. They had seen another person go over and it looked so easy. However since that encounter, the jump had been raised from four feet to six. This definitely was not a height for beginners I'm glad I wasn't there, but Gloria was. "You shouldn't have seen them Madelyn, going up that jump then falling all arms and legs spraddled and flailing the air. It should have been funny, but it was scary until, "I found they weren't really hurt."

Undaunted, the next day they practiced until they had mastered it.

Kay and Toni already enthusiastic water sprites opted to join them in regular skiing. They had no real difficulty in learning I was a different story.

Soon words like slalom, banana peel, bare footing, became part of our dinner conversations; guests must be introduced to it. For those who didn't want to try to ski, it must have been a bit boring.

The Thousand Island Ski Club, which later became The Skiing Islanders, was forming. Chuck Steve, Kay and Toni joined.

From that day onward Chuck would take all of them down river to practice with the other members. Joan Novak, Chuck's cousin, from Topside often went with them.

Soon Ski Shows occupied their time. Toni and Kay became Junior Skiers for the show, Steve and Chuck performed the slalom and jumping. These were gala days for all of us. Holidays found Aunt Bi and Uncle Charlie, as well as George and Vivian Smith, Joan's parents with us on the Cora Belle anchored near the Alexandria Bay Dock to watch the Ski Shows.

The shelf in our dining room displays ribbons and trophies for first place in men's jumping and slalom as well as the over all tourney. Steve and his Father were proud winners.

One day Chuck and Steve left the island on a mysterious errand. They were gone all day and toward sunset I saw them approaching with a boat in tow'.

"What are you going to do with that old wreck?" I asked.

"Make a ski boat out of her," replied Chuck.

"But one side of her bottom is missing," I retorted.

"If she were all there we couldn't have afforded her. We can put a new bottom in. We raised her from the bottom of a lake."

"You mean she was sunk?"

"Of course. It will be work but worth it," was his rejoinder.

And so it was. Chuck and Steve worked several weeks fitting in new plywood for the half bottom that had been destroyed.

I marveled they could do this without previous experience. But she was perfect. We painted her sides a, beautiful green, varnished her deck and put copperoyd on her bottom.

"Isn't she beautiful?" Steve asked."Her engine is powerful enough to pull three skiers!"

It was the last time we would say she for this gem of a boat. We named her Ski Boy after Steve. The name fitted perfectly for this beauty that skimmed the water like a porpoise.

Ski Boy towed three skiers with ease and from then on towed hundreds of kids in the ski shows and round and round our island. Joan Novak often joined our children to ski around Wellesley Island. She had become an expert, winning ribbons for jumping and slalom too.

All of them must practice, practice. Patiently again and again Chuck drew them through the waves with Ski Boy. He was a disciplined sportsman and expected his students to per form expertly. One day after one of these forays Joan commented to me, "No ones dares disappoint Chuck by falling. If you do you better be ready when the rope comes, around to get up." So they scarcely-ever fell. Chuck would draw them with the boat as long as they stood up.

One evening they didn't come home for their dinner. I kept wondering as to their whereabouts. Taking the glasses and looking down river often became one of my pastimes, so this night was no exception. They were towing a ski jump from Alexandria Bay to our island.

From that day jumping began in earnest. David Plewes described it as Lumps and Bumps after viewing days of their falling and getting up to try again.

"They should call it Black and Blue Island" he said. "It's crazy going over that jump!!

"It's a challenge to them just like your fishing," I retorted.

From early summer until Fall one could hear the slap of skis on the water as the jumper succeeded in a perfect try. In all kinds of weather as Steve remarked, "August is a miserable month. Every time we have to practice for the Labor Day Ski Show, the North Wind blows a gale and do we shiver."

But the show had to go on. John Holcombe, the president of the skiing Islanders, snapped them through their paces. They loved every moment of it. And it gave them something to always remember.

Even our dog Tippy, a beautiful black Labrador, had to learn to ride the surfboard. At Holiday Island the surfboard, for lack of funds Chuck had improvised from a door.

Tippy was the first dog to ride in The Thousand Island Ski Shows. She performed proudly to the delight of the skiers and onlookers.

One of Kay's visiting friends seeing a chart on the wall in our dining room one day asked, "What is this chart on the Wall with all these names?"

"Oh, Dad has his schedule of when the tour boats go by the island. When they do, we go out to ski for them."

"Every boat listed?"

"Oh yes, the Miss Kingston, The American Adonis the Venus and the Uncle Sam Boat Tours."

"I'll .bet the tourists like it."

"Yes, and so does Dad. He tips his hat as he skis by their boat."

Her friend laughed, "You mean that funny hat he has cut out like a crown?"

"Of course, he's a king among skiers here."

And of course he wasp also a great ham. He had so much fun laughing at himself. And his performance for the tour boats was as much fun to him as the ski shows.

Tourists waved and photographed Chuck and the kids as they went over the jump. And he would doff his hat!

Johnny at four became an expert rope tender for the skiers. Everyone except Mother Myrtle was into the act.

Chuck tried to teach me to ski, but I had difficulty pulling myself out of the water and staying up. I was about ready to give up, an unusual action for me.

One summer day when Chuck was away at work, Steve decided

to help me learn to ski. As I put my feet into the ski harness he said, "Remember the story you used to read to us about the little engine that kept saying 'I think I can, I think I can' .Try saying it and you'll get up."

How could I do otherwise especially when I had taught my children the meaning behind this story? So I began to say it as I grasped the ski rope. After one good try, I came up out of the water and succeeded in skiing. Oh, thrilling ride!

"Don't tell dad when he comes; let's surprise him," Steve cautioned.

On the weekend when Chuck arrived, he was showing some of his friends how well the children skied.

"Does Madelyn ski too?" one of them asked, as though this were necessary.

"She hasn't been able to get up as yet," Chuck replied.

Steve had me all primed for this remark! I was on the other side of the boathouse out of their sight. I put on the skis, Steve drew me out of the water and I skied around in front of all of them. Chuck's mouth was open in shock.

The next day I bet him a steak dinner I could ski to Cherry Island. For a beginner 4 miles would be quite a ski'. Chuck accepted the wager expecting to win. The steak at Cavallaro's was succulent!

Skiing and ski shows kept our children out of mischief. Kay and Toni took part in most of them as the Junior Skiers in the Flag Parade. We watched our Ski Boy and Dr. Holcombe's Jic tow skiers through the five-man pyramid, trick skiing and crossovers under the jump.

John Holcombe was the star of most shows. He belonged to the 100 club jumping 100 feet over the ski jump. Under his tutelage and untiring coaching most members of the Thousand Island Ski Club achieved some very fine skiing.

During all this time Myrtle and I, had patched sheets, and washed on a washboard to save gas so our children could have gasoline to run the boat for skiing.

Only one summer did I resent the skiing. Mother had become victim to arterial sclerosis and that last summer was not her usual independent self. Chuck would take all of the children down to the ski club. I'd be left at the island with mother.

I would have dinner ready at the time I expected them home. It would dry up before they appeared. Trying all the time to stretch our food dollars I couldn't bear to have it spoiled by waiting. I'm afraid my disposition was really irritated.

I was there alone with mother day after day while they were having a good time. I finally solved the problem by just concocting casseroles and keeping them in the stove-warming oven until they arrived.

It is possible to be so enthralled with a sport that food is forgotten until homecoming.

When Ski Boy's bottom gave out again we knew it had to be scrapped. Our hearts were sad. It had been a real asset and companion.

Then began a quest to find some replacement, but after Ski Boy no other could attain the same place in our esteem. For us there never was to be Ski Boy's equal.

Kay and Toni

What shall I say about the two little girls, one exuberant, and the other quiet?

With a child's carefree eagerness they played long in the inviting waters two water babies. The sun turned their faces a rich copper brown.

Of course they had chores to do, helping with the dishes, washing windows, bailing water out of boa tax painting the long front porch.

When chores were finished, they knew just what to do.

Our antique phonograph ground out their favorite old records. They became singers, pounding on the protesting piano, which had once belonged to a metropolitan opera soloist. On rainy days they thought up plays to which adults must come.

They loved the excitement that came with all the guests Chuck brought, giggling at the dinner table.

How surprised I was the day Chuck said, "This is the last summer they'll play as little girls."

He was more astute than I. They began to spend more and more time with brush and comb in front of the antique mirror in the upstairs hall.

The next summer Chuck took them down to Holcombe's to interest them in the Thousand Island Ski Club's activities. It was Inevitable they would become enthusiastic skiers. Chuck was relentless in their skiing instruction. He would draw them round and round the islands having them practice their skills. Soon he felt they were ready for the ski shows in front of the Thousand Island Village Dock.

They began to notice the teen-age boys motoring by.

They no longer giggled at the table.

Pink and Black Threads

I don't believe Myrtle really meant to gather driftwood that summer day Charles and I had to leave the island to go to Syracuse on business. I'm sure she just went for a boat ride in Brown's Bay. However, when she saw all that wood lying around, she just couldn't resist its invitation.

She piled the boat high with her salvage and rowed back to our island dock. Instead of leaving it for the children to unload, she finished this task. Being tired by that time, she wasn't very cautious. That was her undoing. She stepped upon, a rusty nail protruding from one of the boards.

When we arrived back from the city, Myrtle said nothing about her accident. I was soon engaged in preparing dinner, so I didn't notice her unusual silence. Customarily, she would have been inquiring about the day's happenings in Syracuse.

Just as I was about to put the food on the dining room table, she showed me her foot, saying it hurt terribly. It was a very angry red and swollen. When I found out her wound had happened in the morning, I was horrified at the length of time she had gone without attention.

Chuck forgot about eating and rushed her to the E. G. Noble Hospital in Alexandria Bay. There the doctor administered a tetanus shot and a sedative.

Upon Mother's arrival back at Holiday, she wanted to go immediately to bed for a while. She would eat later. I settled her in her room and soon she was fast asleep.

After an hour or so, Myrtle awakened to ask for food and some of the Strawberry Kool-Aid we'd had for our evening meal. She seemed all right, said her foot wasn't hurting just then and asked me to leave the Kool-Aid on her bedside table.

It was dark outside when I began to wash the dishes. A loud thump on the floor above me set my nerves to quivering. Had Mother fallen? I grabbed the kerosene lamp and ran up the stairs.

Mother's dog, Brownie, was outside her door in the hall. The wretched animal didn't seem to recognize my face behind the lighted lamp. She planted her feet in front of me, bared her teeth, and growled a warning low in her throat. It was bad enough to fear Myrtle had fallen out of bed without this complication.

No way could I get past that dog or seem to quiet her. I called to Mother to summon Brownie, but heard only a low moan. By this time, the

commotion brought Donna, Toni and Kay out of their bedrooms. They began to cry.

In desperation I grabbed a broom sitting nearby, reassured the children all would be well. I hit Brownie with the broom and backed her into a corner. This surprise attack-let me get past her into Mother's room. I slammed the door shut behind me to keep the dog out.

Mother lay face down in a lengthening red pool. Frightened, I screamed for Chuck just then coming up the path from the boathouse. When he raised Myrtle up from the floor, we found she had fallen on the Kool-Aid glass she had knocked to the floor while trying to get out of bed. There was a nasty looking gash in her leg. The Kool-Aid mingling with Mother's blood on the floor had increased the size of the frightful red pool.

We tried to stop the bleeding. It seemed a fruitless effort. We knew we would have to take her back to the hospital.

Charles thought we could save time by taking her in the runabout, Sharon Lee. When he tried to start the boat, he found the battery dead. There was nothing left to do but put Myrtle into the small rowboat with the little outboard engine to run the quarter mile to Collins Landing

Dock. Mother was not really conscious and was a dead weight to lift into the rowboat.

Night shadows cast their gloom upon us during our eerie ride up river to the landing. It seemed centuries to me before we finally made it. It certainly wasn't easy to transfer Myrtle from the boat to the station wagon seat.

Chuck and I were so filled with anxiety over her worsening condition that it seemed forever to locate the doctor at the hospital. He sutured her wound, saying she might need a transfusion the next day. They would keep her there and we should go home until the tomorrow.

Leaving Mother in safe hands, we hurried, as much as possible. Back to the island to reassure our waiting children.

The transfusion wasn't a necessity but Myrtle remained at the hospital three days.

Chuck, the children, and I never would forget that awful night, but Mother never could recall anything about it.

About a year after her mishap, Mother began to suspect an approaching illness. Sitting on the porch at the cottages she asked me to promise not to send her to a nursing home. I really didn't realize that was to be her last summer at the island.

Johnny was two years old when Mother Myrtle came to live with us at our home in the city. There were two teen-agers Kay and Steve, my brother, Clarence four years younger than I, Charles and I. Mother made 4 generations but we welcomed her with all our hearts,

Myrtle lived with us a year, then left us from a massive stroke.

The black threads of mourning were intertwined with the pink threads of love for her always alive in our hearts.

McCALL'S VISIT WITH US

After Chuck helped the Keats family find the Margaret runabout, we often stopped at Pine Island for a chat. John had been a newspaper correspondent in Washington but had decided to become a freelance writer. Consequently, he roamed the Thousand Islands searching for magazine article material.

It was typical of our family not to realize we might be all that interesting to a writer. Therefore I was quite surprised when John stopped one day at Holiday.

"It's amazing for a truck driver to own an island. It must be worth $50,000," John casually remarked.

"I've never thought too much about its monetary value," I replied.

"Really?"

"We live our days as they arrive. Actual cash is scarce but we don't think of the island in terms of money."

'You mean to say you don't know what this place is worth?' "No, I just enjoy it."

"You people seem to have so much fun out of life, it would make a terrific story. I wonder if McCall's magazine, which shows picture stories of people's lives, wouldn't be interested?"

I shrugged, not knowing he was serious.

"Shall I approach them?" he persisted.

"Ask Chuck. He's the boss."

I then dismissed the idea. We had always been content remaining anonymous so I wasn't particularly enthusiastic.

Charles decided it would be fun even though he wasn't publicity minded. I wasn't sure I'd like living in a fish bowl for anyone. However, we finally acquiesced to having staff writers from McCall's magazine visit us to take pictures.

Sometime later Eileen Darby, photographer, and Dorothy Moore, Articles editor, arrived at the island and our adventure began.

Kay and Toni were fourteen at the time and although somewhat shy at being the subjects of professional photography, they were indeed thrilled.

Johnny was four. Steve was away in the Armed Forces so he didn't appear-in the article.

Eileen and Dorothy were great! They wanted us to carry out our usual summer activities. We swam, boated and took them on picnics with Aunt Sabina and her son, Rod. Chuck water-skied and went over the ski jump for them.

Little John showed how he rowed the boat or scrubbed Cora Belle's sides.

When I had to demonstrate how well my cooking usually turned out from the cook stove oven, imagine my chagrin when my delicious blond brownies burned. No blue ribbons for me! Fortunately, they didn't mention that.

A year later our picture story appeared in McCall's under the caption Truck Driver's Paradise. It was thrilling I have to admit.

The young writers did a very fine article emphasizing the fact that Charles gave his family a millionaire's vacation on a truck driver's earnings. There were pictures of the girls doing housework, Charles going over the ski jump, and Johnny sweeping off the sides of Cora Belle.

They also made quite a point of our not having a TV, a radio or daily newspaper to interrupt our peace.

The end of the article wound up with Charles and I having our dinner coffee rocking on the front porch, our usual activity at that time of day.

One of Chuck's humorous sayings ended the whole, "I can't disappoint my audience (river Tourist boats). I have to let them envy me sitting here and the money they think I've got."

He always had a great deal of fun with the passengers who were standing or sitting on the decks of the passing tour boats.

THE DAY THE QUEEN SAILED BY

Johnny came running up the path from the boathouse shouting, "The Queen is coming!"

A ripple of excitement ran through the crowd lining our front porch. Everyone readied their cameras.

All morning guests from the opposite shore kept arriving; the Chishoms from Pamarod, the MacGoverns from Ledgewood, the Smiths from Topside with their daughter Joan Novak.

Holiday Island had one of the best sites on the river from which to view this memorable event of Queen Elizabeth's sailing through the St. Lawrence. She was celebrating the opening of the Seaway marking the friendship between Canada and the United States.

The number of people coming to the island kept increasing. Any kind of boat a person could obtain lay along side of our docks and in our boathouse. Their occupants were intent upon the oncoming Britannia.

As far up and down the river as one could see was a flotilla of boats, every shape and size.

The weather cooperated for the sun kissed the waves into rippling jewels while the wind just barely moved the leaves on the white birch tree

above the porch. A perfect day, but I was a little sad. For me it was a parting.

Our son, Steve was going to Germany with the Armed Forces. Other people there observing the Britannia would remember a celebration for the Queen's appearance, but for me this was a Steve's going away party.

I could see the news photographer in our light that housed navigation buoy #207. It seams ironic that we at the island never did see the pictures they took. However, later that year Steve saw this very news film in Germany where he was stationed. The film showed the island with its numerous crowd as well as the Queen's yacht Britannia. Of course the other servicemen never believed him, but he hugged the film to his heart, a reminder of home.

As Johnny shouts subsided some of our visitors ran pell mell from the porch. A cheer went up from the onlookers along the front shore of the island.

American & Canadian yachts sped along with the Britannia as escorts. They steamed through the flotilla of every shape and size anchored along both sides of the river.

The Queen's guardian flag ship sped by flying the British Union Jack. Chuck waved ours in salute. The crowd on the island cheered.

A woman leaning against the cabin of the Britannia waved. The long awaited moment was over; the Britannia in a few moments sailed under the Thousand Islands Bridge. Some of the waiting boats accompanied the yacht as far up the river as we could see. For me this was the beginning. I had roasted a turkey and a ham in the old iron stove oven, made several dishpans of potato and cabbage salad, and gallons of lemonade. Our aunts and uncles brought all kinds of salads and desserts.

How could I really sad amidst such convinaility? Seventy-two enthusiasts played horseshoes, swam, and boated the day away.

The inevitable parting came after all the guests had departed. It had been a wonderful day; one Steve could take with him overseas.

The Queen had come and gone. And so had Steve. It would be two long years before I would see him hailing us from the opposite shore.

Nothing Ever Happens on an Island

__As my niece, June Plewes, was tidying up the computer room in preparation for leaving on vacation, a companion asked,

"Where are you going?"

"You're spending your vacation on an island? Away form everything, people and happenings? Won't that be dull?"

"It's restful and I need peace after the race we've been running here; report cards, class schedules, and what have you!" replied June.

Perhaps this conversation triggered the amazing happening that weekend or the nature spirits resented the intrusion of so many ill controlled craft on the river.

Three incidents within three hours and ten miles apart occurred. One of them on our island.

June and I were in the kitchen on the island boiling water for tea about 11 o'clock. Steve was upstairs sleeping. A loud noise broke the stillness as the house trembled.

"What was that?" I asked fearfully.

"A boat must have run aground." She answered.

"Where is David?" I asked.

"Upstairs, probably in bed," June said knowing her husband was tired out from fishing throughout the day. Then both of us ran to the front door. A horrifying and amazing site greeted us. A runabout boat was up against the side of one of our cedar trees on the front of the island. It had run up onto the island just between the cedar tree and our iron anchor.

David was not upstairs in bed. He had decided to fish off the rocks on the front of the island. As we stood there almost paralyzed, David, His eyes wide in shock, peered at June and me above the side of the boat. The boat had truly run aground. It had missed David by inches.

Steve, who had been awakened by the noise, came running out of the screen door. Two young people were dazedly climbing out of the grounded boat. It surely was a miracle that no one was hurt. The young man looked sadly at his father's boat. The bottom was ripped out as well as one of the sides. He kept repeating to his girl companion, "I don't know how I did it."

Since the island rises in the front of the cottage from the river by several feet, we couldn't understand it either. Most amazing! We decided he had hit on of the rocks a considerable speed, that his propeller had fallen off, and the island lawn had served as a ramp onto which his boat slid upwards.

Steve reported it to the Coast Guard; there wasn't much we could do until they came. We gave the young people tea and called his parents. For a time we were unaware that the still glowing hibachi from under our picnic supper preparations lay in ruins on the lawn underneath the boat. Upon discovering this, Steve raked out the coals. We were so grateful the fire hadn't ignited the gas in the boat or our story would have a different ending.

The Coast Guard came awhile. They had been investigating a freak accident at Clayton. A 26-foot cabin cruiser had run out of a marina basin there and up onto the main road. Traffic was held up a long time.

Just while the Coast Guardsman took his report booklet to write up our island occurrence, one of his mates from the Coast Guard cutter kept calling him back vessel because of another emergency. He hurried off without explanation. Later we discovered that a motorboat staved in the side of a sailing vessel below Alexandria Bay. She was sinking. All this happened the same night within three hours and a few miles of each other. Strange Incidents! David and June didn't think of it as a dull week.

We've always been grateful that David wasn't injured. The fiberglass from the grounded boat is still embedded in the cedar tree reminding us

of David's narrow escape. The next day a tug with a crane removed our unwelcome visitor, taking it to a boat shop for attempted repairs. Daylight revealed the damage to be considerable but not hopeless.

The boat's owner never even offered to replace the hibachi.

TIDES OF TIME

The woman shivered and drew her sweater closer about her shoulders as the passing motor yacht, engine running wide open, threw spray upon the rocks at her feet. The North Wind whipped strands of her white hair against her cheeks.

The devastating storm had abated but had left in its wake a three-day blow. Although the sun was shining brightly, the chill wind penetrated.

Was it really the wind, she wondered, or the long shadows falling across the island that gave her this chill. Those particular shadows reminded her it would soon be time to leave her island home.

Or was it the sun glinted upon the chrome of her neighbor's station wagon on the opposite shore? Would she ever see Phyllis again or be cheered by the light from her picture window as it lighted up the river at night?

Two nights ago a phone call had come for help from her friend. Madelyn had rowed across the water to find Phyllis lying on the floor unconscious from a big lump on her head.

Having taken Phyllis to E.G. Noble hospital in Alexandria Bay, Madelyn had the strangest feeling that this might be the end of an era.

"Hi!" a voice broke into her reverie. So wrought had she become in her own musing, she hadn't heard the motorboat approach the shore. Three men were in it. She waved. Hadn't she always when boat occupants hailed her?

A tiny dark haired boy ran out of the house, Milk, grandma."

As she turned to go into the cottage to attend to her grandson, Davey's, request, she had already forgotten the men in the boat.

A smiling man in his thirties was standing at the back door.

"Don't you remember me, Madelyn?"

Her mind raced back over the hundreds of people she and Chuck had entertained here. He was waiting for her to acknowledge him.

A flash of a slender youth with lonely eyes whom Kay, Toni and Donna had brought home from Alexandria Bay one summer came into her memory.

"You're Bill, but I don't remember your last name."

"Root."

"Oh yes."

"Are Kay and Toni here or Donna?"

"No, they are all married and do not come very often. So busy with their families."

"I suppose that's natural. I know that Steve comes. I saw him at the restaurant in the Bay, the Ship I mean. He's Captain Steve now."

Madelyn felt she wasn't too hospitable keeping Bill outside the screen door. She invited him into the fragrance of the kitchen where Dana Sheldon, a friend of John's, was at the kitchen sink.

When Dana had altruistically offered to help with the dishes, he didn't realize how many pots and pans had been used to cook the chicken dinner.

Madelyn had already cooked ten pounds of chicken when a big generous friend had brought four more packages plus all kinds of salad fixings to toss.

In spite of paper plates and cups there were still many dishes. Deep in scouring, Dana looked up at Root, "Its like doing dishes in an army kitchen," he remarked.

"How true! Thousands of kettles had been washed since they had arrived on the island," Madelyn thought.

"Yes, it was often like a small hotel. This particular weekend twenty-one people tread to and fro."

Only the faces were different. And a new little face smiled up at her as he prattled merrily from he's play pen, Michael Paul Handley, her latest grandchild.

The kitchen door slammed, "Grandma, Grandma, The Staskos are at the dock!" said Johnny Handley, her seven year old grandson.

From the kitchen window I could see Steve helping Ed and Elaine trim their sails. They were Steve's friends but there was a kindred spirit In Madelyn that responded to the adventure and enthusiasm in them as though she were their contemporary. Always on a windy day she entertained an exciting expectancy the Polly Anna would hove into sight.

Leading Bill to the front porch, Madelyn introduced him to the other guests assembled there. All were watching the river activities tour boats, yachts, and freighters passing the numerous children diving into the water despite the wind.

"Yes!" she thought, "they are still coming for peace and renewal, those who came as children. Their faces are different. From young and immature they are now etched with life's trials or successes."

John Stasko spoke to her, "What was that chickens name Myrtle used to carry in that satchel?"

"Elizabeth," she snorted, I detested Elizabeth! She was so messy!

"But she was funny. She nestled down in that satchel as though she were sitting on eggs. And Myrtle always had her one egg a day," said John.

My niece, Betty Seifritz and her husband, Carl, came upon the porch just then, to join her sister, June Plewes rocking as she watched John Handley Sr. showing his little sons how to head into the waves running high in front of the island.

Turning to Madelyn June said, "Chuck left he's sons a good heritage. John certainly knows how to care for his little boys."

"Chuck taught both John and Steve how to handle boats. They understand the pitfalls awaiting the careless,"

"I suppose it is natural for them since their father and grandfather captained ships."

"Steve sure knows how to bring that tugboat and barge into a dock," exclaimed Carl, "I saw him do that one day down at Brewerton."

"Yes he does," answered Madelyn. "He is a skillful Tug captain. His father would be proud of him."

This conversation set everyone to reminiscing about the past.

"Do you still have that Log Book you used to have our names written in, Madelyn?" Asked Ed Stasko.

"I'd never part with that," she responded and went into the house to get it.

Holding the book in her hands, she sat dreaming while the shouts of the children outside and the murmur of conversation from the porch brought back nostalgic summers.

She was remembering that first summer at the island after Chuck went home in his sleep. Half of her heart seemed missing. She wondered then if the island could comfort her especially with the enthusing flame quenched by death.

O multiple black threads of mourning! She went alone to the island since her children were working in the city. Walking up the path from the boathouse, she heard the haunting cry of a loon. He sounded lonely too, calling his mate. She could enter into his longing remembering her own missing mate.

His cry triggered the flood of tears she had not been able to bring forth before. The luxury of being alone allowed her to sob out her grief.

She remembered how her neighbor on the main shore must have heard or suspected her sobs. She had phoned to ask Madelyn over to see

how they had renovated her sister's cottage next door to theirs. She would never forget how that visit eased her pain and comforted her.

Blue threads of comfort and healing!

And suddenly into her mind flashed a warming thought, "Wherever Chuck is, there will be merriment. Perhaps he's sailing a space ship across the sky!"