

Jim Moffat's 'Antique Fleet'

Written by Nancy Scarth (nee Moffat), the daughter of Jim Moffat who was the son of F.W. Moffat on the Springsyde Shore.

The oldest boat, and the first one of my childhood memory was the **FLAT-BOTTOMED PUNT**, beached on the shore where I learned to swim; I doubt that it was still seaworthy, but in its last days, formed a great play spot for my brother and me.

Mum (Beulah) brought her **CANOE** to the lake when being courted by dad in the twenties. It was canvas-covered and unique in having a small wooden deck at the bow and stern. It had a good keel and straight sides, making it relatively easy to hold a straight line - good for gunwhaling and war canoe races; in fact two of the latter were won by a crew of young Moffat 'bucks' at a Springsyde regatta, and Dorothy Mansell (Eastmure) and I also won several Ladies' Double races in the same canoe.



Flat-bottomed punt with my cousins



Larger punt that the F.W. families used (1940's)

The **DIPPY** (or Disappearing Propeller, also called the D.P., the Putter, or Put-Put in our family) was our beloved boat all the time we had the cottage (our cottage was the original Corralyn cottage moved in 1926 from its initial site between the TL and JK Moffat cottages to a lot just west of Musselman's). Now it is cherished and enjoyed by David Moffat (brother of Tony Moffat) and family on Lake of Bays. The dippy is a safe and easy-to-run boat for youngsters to learn seamanship. She was clinker built (a method of boat building where the edges of hull planks overlap), shaped like a lifeboat, with direct steering to the rudder by ropes, and equipped with oars. In my day she had a single-cylinder engine, and by a magic process, now forgotten, you could get the flywheel to reverse and thus back up. The unique propeller system came in handy when a friend and I explored the Big East River; but a trip to Huntsville was less successful: as we left the canal we were met by a strong wind and high waves sweeping down Fairy Lake, but nevertheless we carried on until a huge wave broke over the bow and flooded the motor. With each of us manning an oar, we reached a cottage on the south shore, exhausted, soaking wet and glad to make land. Fortunately the new telephone system allowed us to call dad to come to the rescue.



Jim and Beulah in the Dippy



Jim and Beulah in the canoe noted above

The **ACKROYD 14 ft. DINGHY** was the first boat I owned and also the first sailboat on Peninsula Lake. I had fallen in love with sailing during my times at Camp Kitchikewana on Georgian Bay and begged dad to buy a sailboat. "No dice" so I decided to work and save money to buy one; slowly I built up a small nest egg by hours spent digging dandelions from our lawn, birthday money, and a job at the 5 & 10, earning 18 cents an hour (circa 1942), and then I found a sailboat for sale in the paper; the price was \$125 as she had blown ashore in Georgian Bay and had a damaged hull, but a new sail. Dad, a do-it-yourselfer, was intrigued, so up he went with his boat trailer to check it out - and returned with MY boat! He and I spent the winter in gramp's heated shed, removing and replacing 3 boards in the hull, while I became an expert with a screwdriver. This gaff-rigged dinghy carried a lot of sail, and I could sail it myself in moderate winds, but needed crew to hike in anything strong, since if she heeled far over the rudder had less effect and she would come up into the wind. A safe boat! I believe many were built in Toronto in the early 30's for a youth squadron at the RCYC; mine had a numbered brass plate. At an antique boat show I saw a booth publicizing the Antique Ackroyd Dinghy Club.



Ackroyd 14 ft. Dinghy



Barnes Boat with Lang at the Helm

BARNES INBOARD MOTORBOAT. In about 1934 Dad and Thomas Lang III ("Lang") Moffat (Dad's first cousin) had twin boats built by Earl Barnes of Bracebridge and they were respectively called "The Nancy" (after me), and Will-o-the-Wisp. Later they entered them in a race at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto - Lang's Will-o-the-Wisp won in 1936 & 37. Barnes also built larger speedboats for Claude Musselman and Howard Charlton, and a more sedate boat for F.W. Moffat. I remember well when dad came in his new boat to our dock, siren wailing and flags flying. We kids were enchanted, but somehow mum didn't seem to appreciate the surprise. However, she did find it handy for the grocery run to Huntsville, since in those days dads had only 2 weeks' holidays at their cottages. On one trip we met the Algonquin at the bend in the canal - our intrepid mother threw out the fenders and held on to the cribbing with the pike pole. No harm was done. Our boat was sold after the war and lost from sight, but Lang's Will-of-the-Wisp was known in the antique boat world and I believe is now owned by T.L. Moffat V.

For more information on some of the lake's old boats, refer to "**Penlake - Reflections on Peninsula Lake**" Page 93.