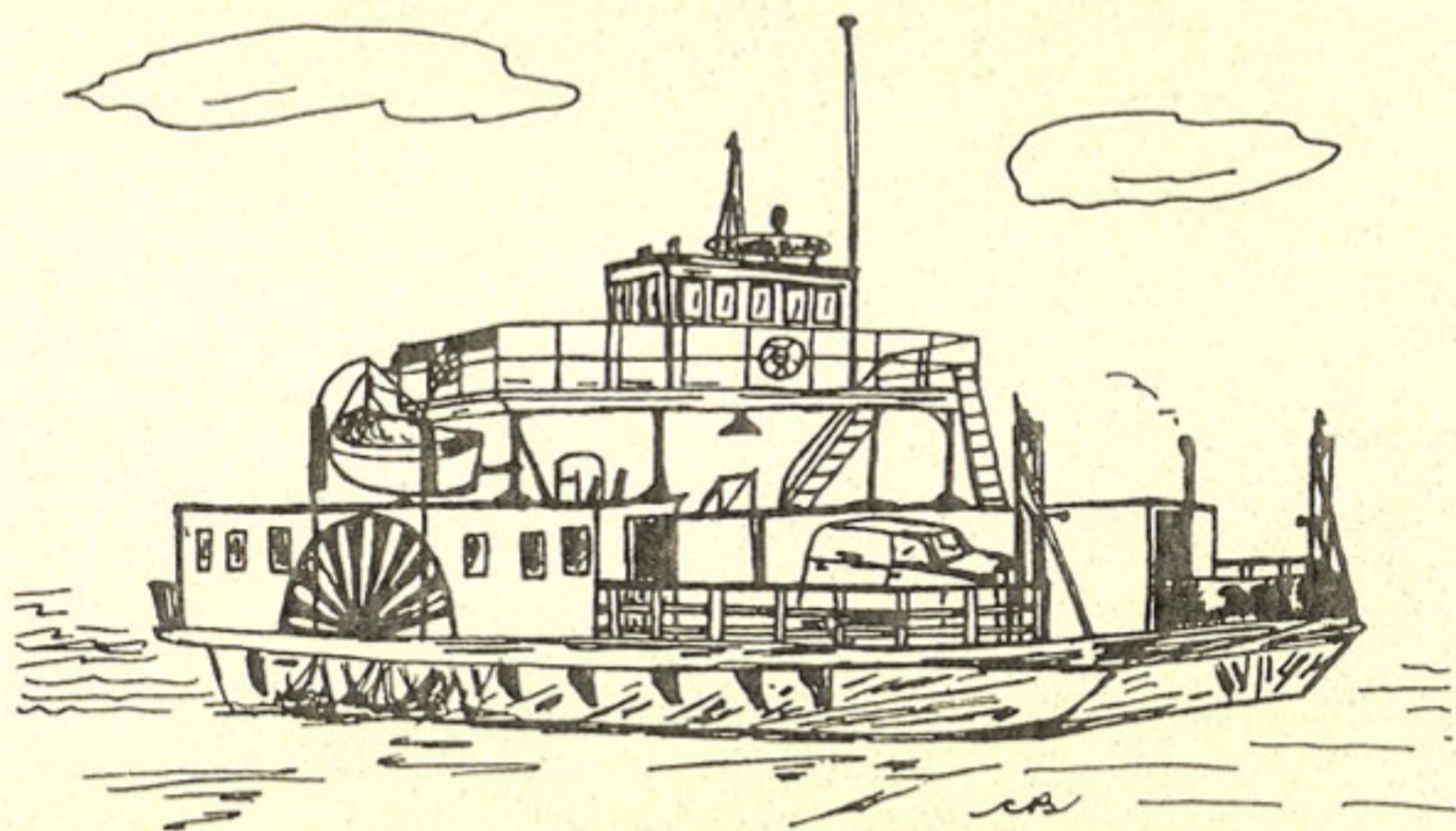


Ferryboats of Days Gone By



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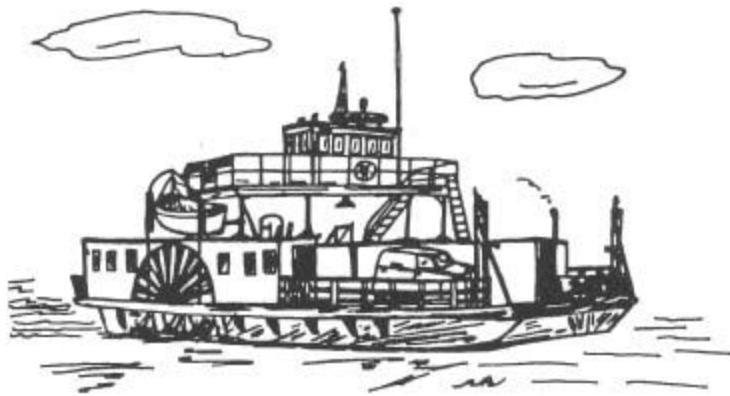
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FERRYBOATS OF DAYS GONE BY

CHAPTER I

The days of ferryboats on the Miramichi are gone but not forgotten. The sounds of whistles, bells and turning water can no longer be heard.

The people of the Miramichi needed a ferry as a means of transportation. In 1852, Mr. George B. Bell of Chatham wrote a petition letter to the General Sessions of Northumberland County. A petition letter states an idea and is signed by people who support the idea. Mr. Bell petitioned the General Sessions to give him the right to run a ferry service between Chatham and Douglstown.

In his petition, Mr. Bell agreed to the rules and ferry rates set by the General Sessions. He offered to the people a safe, quick and cheap means of crossing the Miramichi. A hundred and twenty-five men signed the petition. The General Sessions accepted Mr. Bell's petition. They knew of the great need for a ferryboat. Mr. Bell was appointed Ferryman.

Mr. Thomas Haviland was an important man in the ferryboat business. According to one newspaper, Mr. Haviland owned three ferryboats at different times. They were, "The Transit", "The Teazer", and the "The Sybella H." The Transit was launched in May of 1848. Very little is known about this boat. It may or may not have made trips between Chatham and Douglastown.

The Miramichi's first registered ferryboat was The Teazer. It was built at Miramichi and was launched on August 4, 1868. Launching day at the shipyard was always exciting. The Chatham Gazette read—"We are pleased to be able to state that the Chatham Ferryboat was launched from the shipyard of Messrs, Gilmour and Rankin Company on Tuesday last. Her equipment is now being quickly fitted."

The Teazer made its first trip shortly after it was launched from the shipyard. Miramichiers welcomed the new ferryboat. They were thankful to Mr. Haviland who took on the job of managing The Teazer.

The Teazer measured seventy-nine feet by nineteen and one-half feet. The boat was run by steam. The Teazer was a one-story steamer. The steamer was made of wood. Mr. Richard Hutchinson was the first owner of The Teazer. He was a well-known Douglastown businessman and shipbuilder. On December 11, 1874, the steamer was bought by Thomas Haviland. The Teazer was broken up and her registry closed on May 6, 1884.

The Sybella H. replaced The Teazer on May 21, 1884. She, too, was a wooden steamer. The Sybella H. was built and launched from the shipyard at the Miramichi Foundry in Chatham. She was just over eighty feet by twenty feet.

The Sybella H. was first owned by Richard Hutchinson. The Sybella H. was then sold to Thomas Haviland. The boat was actually named after one of Mr. Haviland's daughters—Sybella Haviland.

Much later in life the Sybella H. passed into the hands of the Miramichi Steam Navigation Company. The Sybella H. had many owners during her time. Among her shareholders were W.B. Snowball, George Burchill, Dr. G.P. Sproul, Miss Alice Burchill, as well as, Captain Asa MacLeod and Captain James Goodfellow.

According to the Sybella's last Captain, Asa Macleod, the ferry retired because it was "played out." The Sybella H. gave forty-two years of service to her passengers. Her registry was closed on October 20, 1938.


The Frances Ullock was the next "River lady." This ferry was also built at the Chatham Foundry. It was seventy-seven feet by twenty feet. It could carry twelve cars at a time.

The Frances Ullock began service in 1925. For twenty-three years, the ferry was under town management. The sign below was found in the Town Hall in Chatham.

REDUCED FERRY RATES

80 Ticket Book for Lumber and Pulpwood only,	\$10.00
Trucks Tickets for General Purposes	15c. straight
Single Horse Team rate	10c. single 15c. return
Double Horse Team	15c. single 25c. return
NEW BRUNSWICK Automobile Tickets	15c. straight

All Merchantable Freight, such as Bags, Parcels, Groceries
will be carried Free of Charge

 **WEDNESDAY** of each week will be **SHOPPING DAY**
when all Residents of Northumberland Co. wishing to do business in Chatham will be carried **FREE** of Charge.

In 1948, the Department of Public Works took over the ferry service. People could then travel free. The government paid for the upkeep of the ferry.

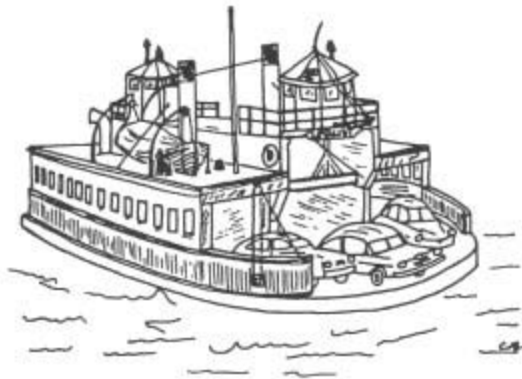
The people could always count on the Frances Ullock. In all her years of service, she is famed for not having a single accident. In 1955, the ferry was hauled to Black Brook, near Loggieville, where it was left to rest.



Miss Frances Ullock

The Frances Ullock is well remembered because it was named after a fourteen year old girl from Chatham. On August 27, 1924, Frances Ullock rescued four people from the mighty Miramichi River. The young lady was looked up to for her great courage. Miss Ullock was honored by the Royal Humane Society.

In the spring of 1955, the Loyalist took over from the Frances Ullock. She was brought to the Miramichi from Saint John. This wooden ferry was built in Shelbourne, Nova Scotia, and was launched on April 1, 1933. The Loyalist provided service to Miramichiers from 1955 to 1961. The Loyalist was the largest of the ferryboats to cross the Miramichi. It could carry twenty cars per trip.



In 1961, the heavy equipment was removed from the loyalist and was shipped back to Saint John. The body of the boat was hauled to Black Brook. It laid on the shore of the Miramichi and was washed away by the rough waters.

The Romeo and Juliette was the last of the “River ladies.” She began the Miramichi run sometime between 1961 and 1962. The boat was brought to the Miramichi from the Restigouche River. The Romeo and Juliette was not as large as the loyalist. It could hold about sixteen cars. This ferry was different from the rest because it was made of steel, not wood. Because the ferry was made of steel, it could continue service later in the winter season. The steel could break through the some of the ice.

During late December, 1961, Captain Preston Jimmo made the newspaper headlines. People were wondering whether or not he could pass Asa Macleod’s record. December 28, 1923, was Captain Macleod’s record date for the latest run. That year the Sybella H. had a long season.

On January 3, 1962, a new record was set. Captain Jimmo was still running the Romeo and Juliette across the river. He claims that because the boat was made of steel he was able to set the new record.

The crossing of the Miramichi took only fifteen ,minutes. Crossings were made from the Chatham side every half hour—on the hour and half past the hour. The ferry left Douglastown’s side of the river at quarter to and quarter past the hour. The ferries put in long hard days. Through the week, service began at 6:30 a.m. and ended at 11:00 p.m.

CHAPTER II

In the early morning of a warm Sunday in June, 1967, the Morrissy Bridge was hit. The bridge was put out of service until the end of July. The Romeo and Juliette had to begin twenty-four hour service. The only other means of crossing the river was at Quarryville, twenty-five miles up river. The traffic was heavy on both sides of the river. Many people left their cars on one side and crossed the river as standing passengers. They would do their business and return to their cars hours later.

Later that summer of 1967, in September, the Romeo and Juliette was taken out of service. The Centennial Bridge was opened and the ferry service was no longer needed. The Romeo and Juliette was brought to Saint John to take on a new job.



Romeo & Juliette

The ferry service on the Miramichi usually began anytime after April 10th. Captain Macleod holds the record for the earliest starting date. On March 24, 1936, he set out with the Frances Ullock. Spring had come early that year.

According to Captain Jimmo, working the ferries was an important job. He had to make certain that the passengers travelled in safety. At times traffic would be very heavy on the river. The sounds of the whistles would warn of oncoming boats. Being Captain of the boat, Mr. Jimmo had the chance to meet many people. After working for a number of years, he knew when to expect to see certain people who travelled a lot.

Along with the Captain, the ferries were run by Engineers as well as deckhands. Like the boats, these men who gave so many years of service were no longer needed. The ferry service is now gone, but the "River ladies" are not forgotten.

WORD LIST

ferry

shipyard

launch

petition

steel

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