

## THE DAUNTLESS

June 10, 2009, at BQYC

When Kay asked me to suggest a name for their boat, I immediately thought of the ships my ancestors had built. My great , great, great grandparents James and Margaret Simpson came to Belleville in 1797 and opened a tavern near the harbour. James died and in 1802 Margaret was the first woman to be issued a tavern licence in the Victoria District which took in a great part of Ontario at the time. In the 1850's the 6 young grandsons of Margaret Simpson journeyed to Oakville to learn shipbuilding from their uncle John Potter. The ships built by Potter and the Simpson brothers were considered "the prettiest ships on the lakes" and among the finest of the day. Their ships carried more brightly coloured stripes along the rail than those built in other parts and they were noted for their beautifully carved and painted figure-heads. One of their ships was named the Dauntless. Built in 1867, it was a 179 ton schooner that that was used in the lumber trade. One year the spring floods carried the Dauntless so high onto the bank of the Sixteen that it was necessary to build ways under her and launch her like a new vessel. She ended her days as a semaphore vessel in the Detroit River.

The second ship named the Dauntless was well known on the Bay of Quinte waters. (Picture) Thanks to articles written about the Dauntless by Don Kellaway, I can tell you more. It was a 24 ton gaff-rigged yacht built in Cobourg in 1875, for a group of Belleville businessmen, by the noted Canadian designer and builder, Alexander Cuthbert. She was one of 11 yachts in the founding fleet when the Bay of Quinte Yacht Club was formed in 1876. David Pitceathly, a wholesale merchant in Belleville, purchased the yacht. He was Commodore in 1881 when Alexander Cuthbert challenged for the America's Cup with the Atalanta under the club colours.

The log book of the Dauntless reflects the joys and merriment of yachting in the 1880's. I'll read an example:

July 20, 1889: Yacht Dauntless left Belleville Harbour at 2 sharp with Commodore Pitceathly, Skipper D.B. Robertson, Wm. Welsh, D.E.R. Stewart. Sailed down the bay to the middle ground and tried to fish, none responding. Then went back to Farmer's Wharf, Buttermilk Cove where we anchored for the night after enjoying a delightful dip. Small troll up the bay, result a 3 lb. Bass. Returned to a ship in good order after a moderate twiddle.

July 21: Caught a few more bass and had them for breakfast. Was visited by D. Clinton of Belleville and Mr. Tobin. After lunch, started on our return, had a fine breeze which freshened off Salmon River, took in two reefs and made for the foot of Cedar Island. Had a fine dinner and 2 or 3 refreshments, retired at 10.30 fighting mosquitoes.

The log of the Dauntless is in the possession of the Hastings County Historical Society and the pennant from the yacht was donated to the Marine Museum by a Belleville family.

And now the new Dauntless, powered by strenuous, healthy paddling, is also giving the group a lot of fun.

Lois Foster