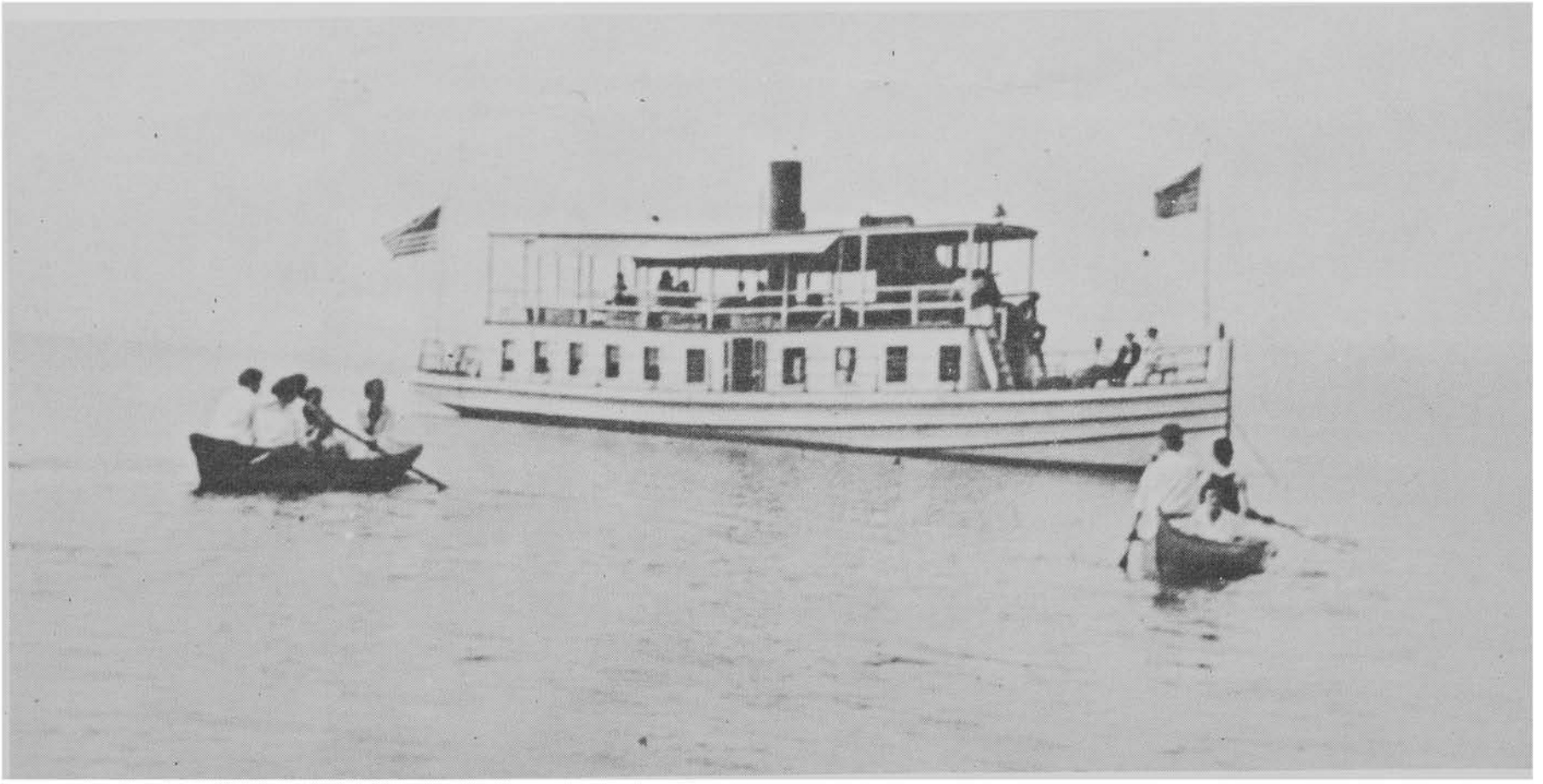


THE *HORTON* PUTS OUT TO SEA

An oft-repeated summertime scene during a placid era

Courtesy J. S. Barr.

IN THE WAKE
of
THE HORTON

The Story of the *Col. J. H. Horton* as Told to His Wife, Delena

By ROY C. SHURGER

1969

DEWITT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF TOMPKINS COUNTY, *Inc.*

121 East Court Street

ITHACA NEW YORK 14850

FOREWORD

Happening into the DeWitt Historical Society one day, I learned that the morning's mail, along with its usual grist of inquiries, included one for information about the *S.S. Horton,* "known to generations of Cornell students." The writer, one of these himself, Cornell '17, asked for " a brief history: where it was built, when retired, years and places of service, after whom named, etc."

Surely even such a request would not take long hours of research for didn't "everyone" know about the *Horton,* recall the large part it had played in the life of "everyone" in and about Ithaca at the century's turning? Surely something of this lore must have found its way into the Society's archives, some yellowed clipping, something more than passing mention in a chronicle of local boating.

But, surprisingly, while much had been made of the early *Enterprise,* the *T. D. Wilcox,* the ill-fated *Frontenac,* among others that had churned the waters of Cayuga Lake, there was no "history" such as had been requested of the Society. An S.O.S. was sent out.

Happily, help was not long in coming from New Smyrna Beach, Florida, where Roy C. Shurger, his more strenuous days behind him, had had leisure in which to reminisce with his wife, Delena, about the *Horton* and some of his experiences aboard as a boy and later as owner and master.

His reminiscences (with now and then an interrupting voice) are shared with those who can still hear the whistle's low bass and the sound of the ship's bell coming down wind. Perhaps, too, these recollections may serve as footnotes for others interrested in the long history of boats and boating on one of New York State's most beautiful inland waters.

REBECCA S. HARRIS

Ithaca, N. Y.
September 15, 1969

In the Wake of the Horton

"I had a wonderful dream last night, dreamed that I took a party down the lake in the boat. There was George Sea, big as life. He was in the dream, too, saying 'Gee, Captain, isn't it great to be back in the boat!' We were in a lock, in this dream, and were having the devil of a time backing out of it. The curve of the bow was such you never could back her straight out, she always swung to the left; to go straight back you had to have a strong wind to help you. Over fifty years, but I saw that boat just as clear and sharp as if it was yesterday. George Sea was my last engineer."

Though Roy Shurger's keen blue eyes might have seen in the glass that morning that the thick, waving hair was beginning to thin on top, certainly memory made no concession to the all-but eighty years of a busy lifetime, nor to the more than fifty since he captained the steamer.

Sensing that there were recollections to follow in the wake of the dream, Delena, his wife of only three years, was quick to seize pencil and paper.

Early in the spring of 1890, the keel of the *Col. J. H. Horton* was laid in Taber's boatyard on Cayuga Inlet. In August of the same year one of its captains-to-be, Roy C. Shurger, was born of pioneer parentage in a little house on Center Street in Ithaca, New York. Each, boy and boat, was to play a large part in the life of the other and in the life of the community as well. Happily the boy is here to tell their story, but the chapter on steamboats on Cayuga Lake came to a close in the flames that destroyed the *Horton* in 1925.

However, 1925 was in the far future when as early as 1810 the Erie Canal project began to take shape. The work of digging began in 1817 and the opening celebration was in October, 1825. The planning and even the controversy over Clinton's Big Ditch had excited interest and aroused a great flurry of activ-

ity in boat building along inland waterways of New York State. There was general anticipation of prosperity to come with improved communication and transportation within the state and with the opening West.

Only thirteen years after Robert Fulton's *Cleremont* began its successful packet operation on the Hudson River, the *Enterprise,* the first steamboat on Cayuga Lake, made its trial run from Ithaca to Cayuga Bridge (about forty miles), June 1, 1820, in eight hours. The boat had been built in a local boatyard, but its boiler and engine came from Fulton's New Jersey shops.

In 1825, the *Telemachus,* a somewhat speedier boat than the *Enterprise,* was also in regular service up and down the lake. At that time the famous Cayuga Bridge stretched across the northern end. President Dwight, of Yale University, hailed it as a "stupendous erection," and all travelers knew it to be the "longest bridge in the world" (a mile and a quarter), but it was still too low to permit passage of large boats so those who wished to continue their journey to Buffalo or to Niagara Falls (for honeymooning couples went there then as now) were met at this point and taken there by stagecoach.

After the *Telemachus,* there was a succession of boats—new boats, boats of changed names and of frequently changed ownership. Transportation companies were formed and re-formed. Timothy D. Wilcox was active in all these concerns; among the many boats he bought or built the *Kate Morgan* (1856) and the two-stacked *T. D. Wilcox* (to become the *Cayuga* later) were well known, and his ill-fated *Frontenac* was to make lake history.

At the turn of the century, the Brown Bros., coming from Syracuse, New York, organized the Brown Transportation Line on Cayuga Lake. To their *Iroquois* and *Mohawk,* which they brought with them, they now added the *Frontenac* and the *North Shore* which they renamed the *Comanche.* These four "big boats," the survivals of those that had gone before, were scheduled to run the length of the lake.

The two smaller steamers appearing on the scene, the *Kellogg* (1889) and the *Horton* (1890), catered chiefly to the West Shore cottages, making frequent daily round-trips out of Ith-

aca on a sixteen-mile circuit. When the *Kellogg* turned tugboat, the *Horton* continued alone in this service to the end of its thirty-five years.

The Cayuga Lake Inlet has had a long history of boat building, and boatyards have come and gone along its banks. One of the well known was Taber's, located south of the State Street bridge when that bridge and those of Seneca and Buffalo streets, operating on turntables, could be opened to water traffic to and from the lake.

It must have been a particularly busy yard in the nineties owing to the activities of Charles W. Kellogg, a former bridge builder of Athens, Pennsylvania, who, in 1890, built the boat more formally known as the *Col. J. H. Horton,* named for his good friend, a one-time superintendent of mines in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania, and later a coal dealer of Buffalo.

A year earlier, 1889, Tabers had launched the *Kellogg* of similar, though not identical, design with that of the *Horton.* Two steam yachts followed, both named *Clara.* One of these pleasure craft soon left the lake for the Hudson River, but the other remained to play a large part in the *Horton's* early days.

The *Horton,* when first built, had a compound engine with two cylinders, one of high-, the other of low-pressure. When building the *Clara,* however, Kellogg had this engine transferred to his new boat in which at the same time he also installed a Roberts watertube boiler, lighter than the standard type. Meanwhile, his Pennsylvania workshop built a simple high-pressure engine for the *Horton.*

Henry Stevens was the first captain of the *Horton,* although he never owned it. In 1903, Capt. John Brown became both owner and master. At the time of the purchase there was yet another "transplant." A heavy gasoline engine was placed in the *Clara,* allowing for greater bunk space aboard, while the compound engine, together with the watertube boiler, went back into its original berth.

(There would seem to be some truth in the old saying that "Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady were sisters under the skin." Certainly there was little outward resemblance between the tubby, work-a-day *Horton* and the trimly elegant yacht *Clara,* however readily their inner parts might be interchanged.)

William Billings was Kellogg's righthand man at the time of all these changes. It was said he could do anything with an engine.

When Captain Brown took over the boat in 1903, his early engineer was Ezra Bishop, and who taught him his job but William Billings. At Ezra's death, he served for some time in the engine room himself. Other names remembered here are Dobbs Bryant and young Brown. Otis Brown, earlier a fireman for his captain-father, had been known as the cleanest one on lake; his overalls were always as clean as a uniform. (He died in midsummer, 1968.)

In 1905, the fifteen-year-old Roy C. Shurger, who was about the same age as Otis, signed on as deckhand. He and Steve Klinko, another hand, are well remembered by one who was a small boy at the time. ("They were sturdy, rugged fellows who served faithfully day in and day out. They always had a pleasant word for the passengers and a friendly wave for the cottagers as the *Horton* made its way along the shore. It took iron muscles, skill and daring to leap from deck to docks with a 75-pound block of ice and ice tongs in one hand and a heavy milk box in the other. It was dangerous, too, when the docks were wet with morning dew or by a recent shower. Stormy weather made no difference, they were always there to deliver." The youngster was not alone in his very evident admiration of his heroes.)

Crew members might go from time to time, but the *Horton's* passengers continued to feel confidence in the men and boys trained under an exacting, often peppery, taskmaster whose own skill and ability they always fully recognized. They must also have found Captain Brown a good companion; there was always one or more leaning at his wheelhouse windows. And the youngsters who clustered round were curious about the various gadgets found there: they saw the wheel with its brass-knobbed spokes, the compass with its wavering needle which helpped him to steer; listening they heard the captain's orders to the engine room by speaking tube or by pulling the bell cord; they heard, too, the blowing of the *Horton's* far-ranging low bass notes like no other on the lake.

From the wheelhouse, also, the Captain could ring the bell

atop the hurricane deck, a bell which lent a nautical touch, but was chiefly used for the childrens' amusement. At the Dann cottage, an early stop on the first morning's trip, the twins in their pajamas would be on the balcony at half past six, shouting, "Ring the bell, Captain Brown, ring the bell!" Having heard it, they went back to bed, satisfied, but what of the neighbors?

Captain Brown was a short, stocky man with powerful arms, arms that stood him in good stead. If his body was short, so was his temper. His orders to his crews, of whom he demanded their best, were freely punctuated by accomplished swearing; a bungling hand might hear "Goddamnyourstinkingsoultohell, take another wrap around that cleat and fasten that rope right the next time!"

But he was by no means all ogre; his boys off duty could relax and could swim at the Crowbar Point layovers, or, the day's work over, his watchful eye still upon them, it might be:

"Where you going?"

"Uptown."

"Got any money?"

"Yeah."

"Got enough?"

"Yeah."

"O. K."

Quickly irritated by minor matters, the Captain could be cool and capable in handling serious problems. As when the engine room caught fire and both engineer and fireman naturally became excited; he merely threw a pail of water against the hot-water glass, breaking it and letting the escaping steam put out the fire.

Captain Brown died in 1910, and Roy Shurger "retired" into full-time work in the typewriter sales and service department of the Ithaca Corner Book Store. His five summers aboard the *Horton* had left him with experiences fresh in mind and some knowledge of people.

Businessmen, for instance. On their morning trip into town they usually sat on the bow deck which came to be known as the "kidders' deck." Sometimes they would pick out one of their group to "kid" all the way into town; sometimes it would

be the Captain who would "get it;" or often, of course, it would be the deckhand's turn.

"What's this I hear about you teaching the girls at the hotel to swim? How come you teach only the pretty ones? Someone told me about being on the upper deck the other day and . . . oh, boy!"

This could get tiresome for a fellow who had gotten up early that morning and had time to eat a breakfast of only two quarts of milk and a loaf of fresh bread between Buffalo Street and Crowbar!

Captain Brown, himself, had told him how to deal with people who might be from the other side of the tracks—or of the Inlet. It was customary to dock the lake boats along the Inlet, locally known as the Rhine, where the Rhiners, for the most part a shiftless, quarreling, thieving lot of squatters, lived in tumbledown shacks among the cattails and bulrushes of the swampy region called the Silent City. It was better, said Captain Brown, to show them something of faith rather than of fear. "Never lock up your boat or your tool chest; if you do they'll break the lock and steal the whole kit and caboodle. Leaving things unlocked is a sort of insurance, though they may take one tool—and sell it back to you even with your own name on it."

It is good to know that someone else also undertsood the Rhiners—Mrs. McGreevy, who owned the shabby old Valley House and much of the land they more or less claimed as their own. When they were ill she would take care of them, too.

Events, too, sometimes threw light on human nature.

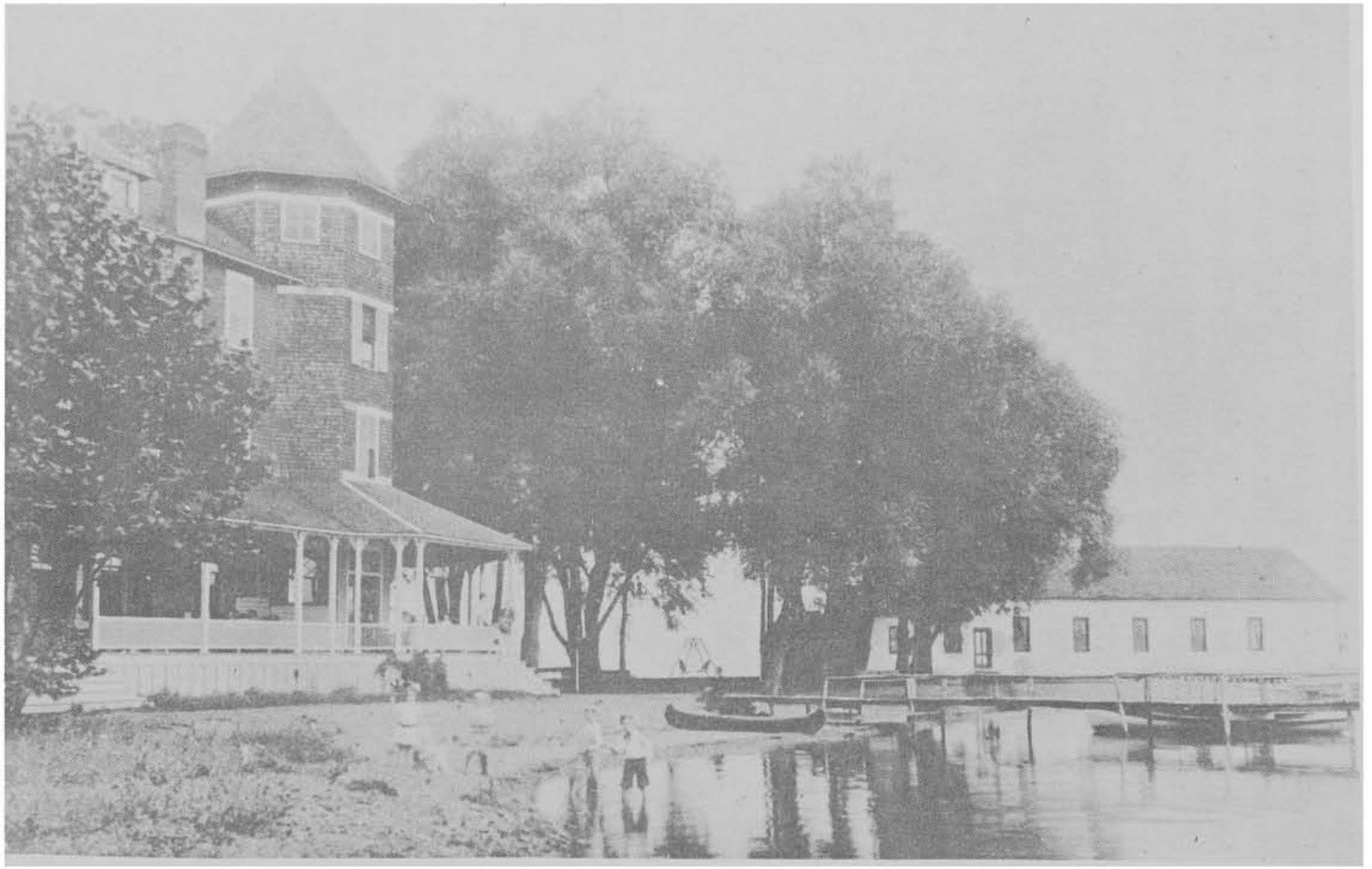
July 27, 1907, is remembered as the day the *Frontenac* burned and sank near Farley's Point with the loss of eight lives. That day the wind blew a gale from one end of the lake to the other and waves ran high. But there would be passengers waiting on the Renwick pier so, leaving the comparative calm of the Inlet, the *Horton* went over to pick them up. Landing was difficult enough, but backing out into the high seas, impossible, and it was only after much manoeuvring of ropes, loosening some and tying others, and commands to the engine room that the bow could finally be set about and into the lake once more. This hardly done, however, than a big swell swept

the boat and nearly capsized it. The fire pails shot up and out from under the benches where they were stored, into the air and over the side. Meanwhile, Captain Brown was shouting, "Roy, Roy, come and get me out of here," for if he hadn't been so large about the middle, he, too, might have gone with the pails. As it was he was stuck in the wheelhouse window where he had been watching his deckhand with the rope. Pried free, the ship went on.

The passengers, meanwhile, were badly shaken and very unhappy. One frightened man vowed to Roy that if the Captain would only bring him safely back to shore where he could once set foot on solid ground, he would give him all his worldly goods. Safely landed at last, Roy saw him back on solid ground and then shouted, "Captain, you're a wealthy man now," but the vow was already forgotten: "Don't be a damn fool, Roy."

If one could learn sitting at a schoolroom desk, a young deckhand could learn from where he sat in an obscure corner of the back room of Hyman Haskin's drugstore. Hy owned the *Mab* and this gave him contact with other boating cronies, Captain Leonard of the *Clara,* Stevens and Brown of the *Horton,* the rough-and-ready men from the canalboats, and many others. Like all boat owners, the *Mab's* had his difficulties, and, in return for the help they gave, there was always a place for them by the pot-bellied stove in that back room. Just as the whalers used to hold their "gam" sessions, gathering in gams or crowds like the whale themselves, so the Cayuga Lake boaters liked to hear and tell their experiences. (Mother Brown, however, would not let Otis sit in on these meetings—too much thick smoke from their stinking pipes, too much profanity, too much tobacco chewing and spitting into the sawdust-filled boxes that served as spittoons.)

Although the boatmen had to keep a watchful eye out for the water levels after the Inlet froze and keep the foot-wide channels open about their boats to prevent the ice pack from pulling the caulking from their seams, there was still much time for winter yarning. Sometimes the tales reached such a high pitch of interest that the teller had to be momentarily "shushed" when a customer came in: "Perhaps, if we're quiet, he'll think no one is here and go away."



Courtesy J. S. Barr.

GLENWOOD HOTEL

In a beautiful, peaceful and popular setting

But with the coming of Spring, it would be back to the boats —and doubtless service at Hy Haskin's drugstore would improve.

Cayuga Lake is forty miles long, but, in terms of the *Horton,* only a stretch of some half dozen miles from the southwest corner of the lake, near the old municipal airport, to Crowbar Point made up the West Shore.

Nor was the West Shore cottage season a long one. Shutters came down in June at school-closing time, to go up again the day after Labor Day when the schools reopened. But, while the cottagers were only beginning to think about "opening and airing," and the repair of docks wholly or only partially wrecked by the winter's ice, the *Horton* had not been idle. Too small to carry the crowds of Sunday School picnickers which stormed the bigger boats, it had its own excursions by day and by moonlight. Perhaps it had already taken Professer Harris and his Cornell geology students on one of their several yearly outings to Crowbar where the shingly beach of the Point would shift on its rock shelf now this way, now that depending on the wind; to Taughannock (once Jones) Point and the Falls some distance upstream; to Union Springs where, in addition to its fossil beds, there was a plaster mill which even then had been making plaster for a hundred years and more; and to Portland on the east shore where with the establishment of a cement plant its name had been changed from the original Shurgers.

This was a place of special interest to Roy Shurger whose great-great-grandmother had settled after fleeing the Cherry Valley raid with her nine children, walking through Ithaca when it was a settlement of only three families.

Spring, too, was the time when groups of students would take the boat for all-day beer parties, usually to Taughannock (not then a state park), where their beer kegs would be set up as bases for their ball games.

An Old Grad coming back to his old haunts at reunion time brought his family for a ride on the *Horton* where he remembered being towed in a coffin, its lid nailed down, as part of his fraternity initiation.

Others have more pleasant recollections of the little boat, moonlight rides whether they went just on a circular tour or

to the Friday night "hops" at Glenwood. The Glenwood Hotel, some two miles out of Ithaca, was the only resort at the southern end of the lake. Along with a cottage or two, it stood on a large point of land, the delta of one of the many streams that had managed, through the ages, to cut down through the rock beds to find their way to the lake. Augustus Alberger was the host of its later years, but there had been others before him back in the days when families came with their boxes and bags to vacation there, to picnic, to swim, to loll on the broad verandas or under the shade of its trees. But like so much else, it came upon hard times and eventually fell victim of the flood of 1935. Its place has now been taken by the Ithaca Yacht Club.

Should one ask an old-timer if he remembers the *Horton,* the answer quickly comes, "The *Horton?* Of course I do! A crowd of us (students, young townsfolks) would take it on Friday nights at Renwick to go down to Glenwood for the dances; they weren't held in the hotel, you know, but in the pavilion which was built upon piles far out into the water." Then might come the tale of the youth so anxious to make the last trolley into Ithaca from Renwick that he dashed off the boat—to plop into the water, for that night the boat had not moored on its usual side of the pier. Or of the showoff who, to impress his girl of the evening, would each time flourish a ten-dollar bill for a fifty-cents-a-couple fare, until one night, Roy, wearying of this, gave him nine silver dollars and fifty cents. This in his pocket made dancing difficult, but the habit was cured.

Although Willow and McKinneys Points are just around the bend in the lake from Renwick, they were little visited by the lake boats, but sometimes one or another might be drydocked at Willow Point, once called Drydock. Occasionally, too, the *Horton* might go over to the East Shore when Mrs. D. B. Stewart was minded to give an afternoon party, but its narrow, bouldered beachline was not very inviting. However, once a year, in late May, the eyes of the world seemed to be upon it—the day of the races. Then the hillside would come alive with people trying to get a toehold on the slopes, and the two-engined observation train with its thirty-odd flatbed cars filled with gay crowds trying to find comfort on the improvised

tiered benches, would wait puffingly for the winds to go down and the time ripe "to follow the races."

And out on the lake boats and more boats. They came from "the other end of the lake" and from "off the lake." The old steamers were there hobnobbing with the yachts and the launches: the *Clara* owned by the Westinghouses of Philadelphia, but summering at Kidders; the *Calypso* of the steam-boiler people of Auburn; the *Lucy T.* from Penn Yan and belonging to William T. Morris; Claude Smith's *Audria, and* many another. Smaller boats were there, skittering about like waterbugs, a menace to all, especially to the canoes which bobbed up and down in their wash.

And in the midst of it all, of course, the *Horton,* which had come to be known as the Judges' Boat.

About an hour before the first, the freshman, race, the *Horton* would steam in to anchor at the finish line where the judges would be brought aboard by the Cornell launch. From this vantage point, in line with the finish buoy, the mark on the shore, and in conjunction with the timekeeper on the train, the Judge would tell a waiting world when each shell crossed the line by a raise of the flag for one or a drop for the next.

The *Horton* had a certain code of whistles and toots for the various contestants, and in the days of the Grand Old Man of Rowing, Charles Courtney, Cornell was very apt to be the winner—one long whistle and a short toot.

But after May, came June and the serious business of its being. The city schools closing and the University Summer School with its throngs about to open, the *Horton* was refurbished and ready for another season—all 85 feet and 13-foot beam.

Its shallow draft, five and a half feet with only a four-foot bilge space between cabin floor and keel, allowed it to poke in and out of West Shore docks where the bigger boats could not go. The low placement of the engine with a bulkhead on either side of the engine room made for strength and stability which earned the *Horton* the reputation of being a sturdy boat in any storm. However, with its flattish bottom it did not cut the water, but rather floated, something like a pumpkin shell. This required a good bit of skill in manoeuvring on the part of master and crew.

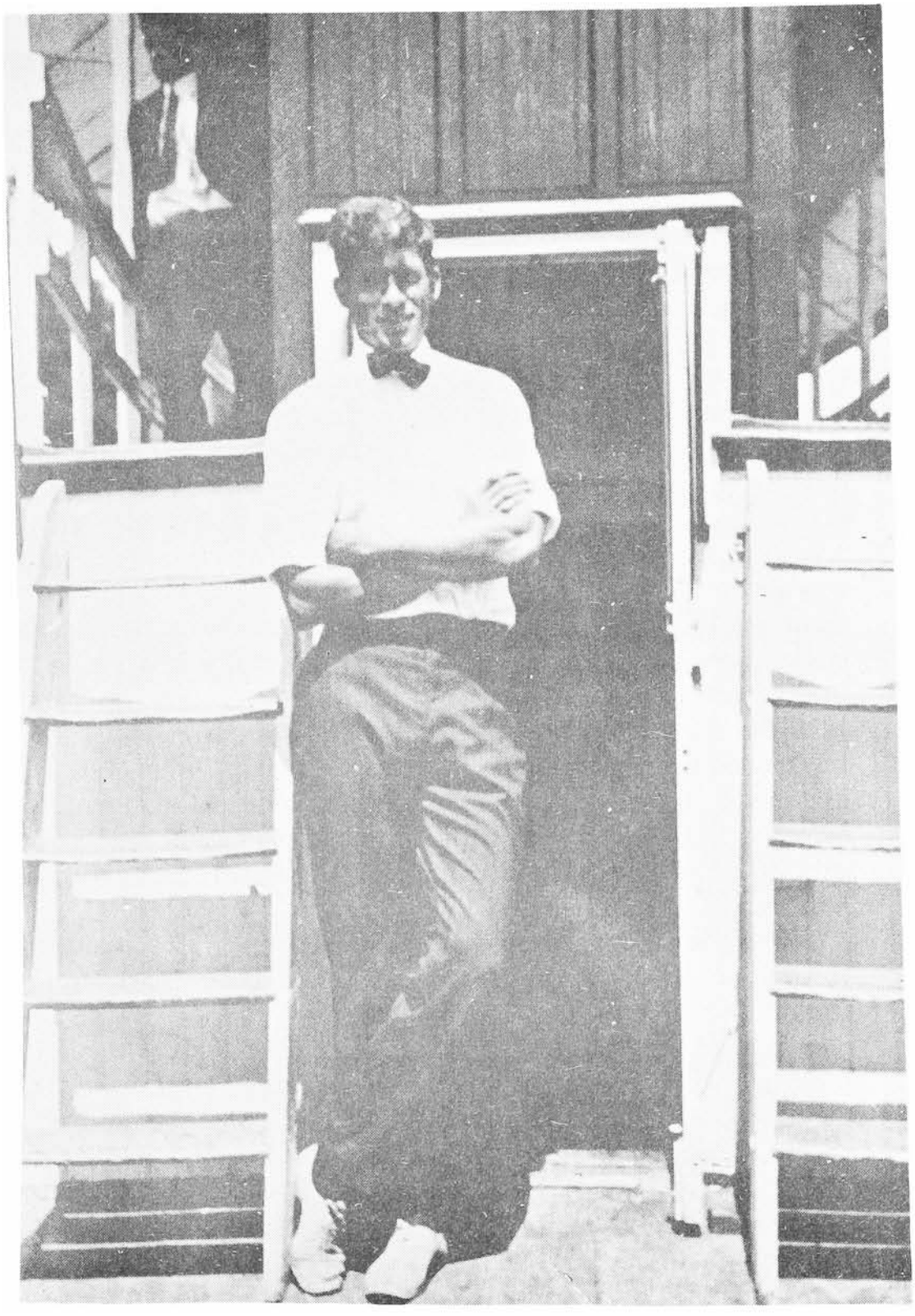
The bow deck—the "kidders' deck"—could hold some twenty passengers and the bow cabin some fifteen more if the weather proved bad; the engine room was amidship where another door had been cut into the stern cabin which seated thirty-five. There were places for fifteen on the stern deck where one could hear the propeller's rhythmic churning and see the wake going into the blue. Here two ladders mounted (as two others did either side of the bow-cabin door) to the upper deck with its wheelhouse forward. One hundred and twenty-five could be accommodated here, a pleasant place in good weather. The boat was chartered to carry 150 passengers, and often did.

A tight schedule. Six o'clock saw the *Horton* setting out on its first trip of the day, leaving Buffalo Street, where it had put up for the night, with a morning cargo chiefly of ice and milk which it took down to Warner's, the last stop before Crowbar. Once Dean L. H. Bailey had had a dock for his Bailiwick, but this had been taken out so often in the winters' storms that he had given it up. Later this property with its farm lands was given to the Girl Scouts who now hold all of Crowbar Point as their camping grounds.

Returning from this early trip with the businessmen aboard, the *Horton's* crew set about loading whatever the drays had left at the dockside—groceries, lumber, crates, barrels of this and that—before setting out again to gather more passengers at Renwick at ten o'clock, passengers all ready for a day at the lake.

(Prof. Erl Bates of Cornell, knowledgeable in all matters having to do with Indians, has said somewhere that their name for Renwick had been Ne-ah-dak-ne, or End of the Lake. At any rate it was a pleasant, landscaped spot in which to take refuge from a hot day in town, for children to paddle about in the sandy sweep of its shore. Lured by the smell of hot-buttered popcorn or by the whine of the peanut roaster, one could buy a bag of popcorn or peanuts to munch on while riding on the merry-go-round as it wheezed out its tunes.

(In 1921, Renwick became Stewart Park, honoring E. C. Stewart, a former mayor and an Ithaca businessman who had bequeathed $150,000 for the park's improvement for, despite



ROY C. SHURGER

The Horton's deckhand, owner and long-time captain

its onetime use (1914-1921) as Wharton's early moving-picture studio, it had fallen upon evil days.)

But at ten in the morning, perhaps the greatest stir was at the end of Renwick's long pier where one might chance to see an old liner, the *Mohawk,* for instance, or a sleek yacht, its brasses gleaming in the sun. Better still to be one of the throng waiting to take the boat, the *Horton.*

Bakers, Barrs, Tarbells. Unlike many of the cottages at the southern end of the lake, these stood on a bit of open ground while as the boat chugged along, the others one after another came to perch on top of the cliffs which now began to rise from the lake. Docks at such places were met by steep, often rickety, dubious-appearing stairways, jogging this way or that to avoid a tree or a sudden chasm. For only now and again had the streams, coursing down the hillside over the centuries, brought down enough detritus to form a spit of land large enough to accommodate a few summer homes. But wherever there was a dock, there would come the *Horton,* especially if a white flag flew, showing some special need.

While the first trip of the day had failed to go to Crowbar, the second went there to lie over for a time to let the crew relax and swim, "horse around" or visit with friends who might be camping there, for it was a favorite camping spot. As has been said, it is now the property of the Girl Scout organization and is in constant summer use.

Having brought a crowd of mostly feminine shoppers in to town about midday, the *Horton* was once again ready to start forth in a holiday spirit; its day's "chores" done, it would again run over to Renwick at about two o'clock in the afternoon to pick up passengers with picnic baskets and bathing suits or those who might be going just for the ride. The sun shone, the breezes blew, and white sails dotted the lake. How few dark days there seem to have been!

Dock after dock, friends met friends, children shouted, dogs barked, young and old splashed in the water and there was gay give and take between ship and shore. This time the *Horton* once again went to Crowbar for fun and perhaps the more serious business of swimming lessons. . . . . But good times must end, and the *Horton's* well-known whistle heard blowing from

the Point would announce that it was making ready to return to Ithaca and that all those not planning to stay the evening had best be making ready, too.

Unless there was something special, a moonlight ride, a dance at Glenwood, the five o'clock was the last journey down the lake bringing shoppers and businessmen home to where there were whiffs of something sizzling in the pan or of the wood smoke of beach fires.

Although the East Shore might still be bright in the late afternoon sun, shadows would be beginning to fall on the West as a weary crew and a somewhat subdued crowd would be making the final trip to town and home. Warners, Cote Verte where fishermen would gather at the dock to try their luck, The Oaks and Maplewood where a longer stay might be necessary for all the good-bys. Modern Maplewood, like much of the West Shore, has become a place of year-round houses and probably no old-time name remains of the folk who used to go there year after year. But can Modern Maplewood boast a mesmerist like "Professor" Reynolds who could make people look pretty silly walking about holding "umbrellas" when there was no rain, or rocking non-existent babies in their arms?

Presbyterian Row doubtless came to hold other than members of that faith, but the cottages, by no means identical, did all wear a Cottage-Gothic look from the same architectural period if not the work of one man. The Presbyterians always seemed a bit aloof up amongst the trees.

Glenwood, a busy dock even on this last trip, continued to wear an air of summer gaiety and fun.

Sycamore, a pretty group of summer places, has after some sixty years a special meaning for Roy Shurger: an old clipping from a local paper headlines RECEIVES FINE MEDAL FOR RESCUING YOUNG WOMAN—THE U.S. LIFE SAVING CORPS DECORATES ROY SHURGER FOR HEROISM. Thinking that the cry for "Help"' from some girls in the water had been in fun, the deckhand had continued helping to dock the boat, but finally realizing that the trouble was real, he jumped into the water to rescue Julia Driscoll. A number of persons on the *Horton* were witnesses and one, Captain Barton, then Commandant of Cornell's Cadet Corps, exclaimed that he

deserved a medal, that he would see that one was received. Eventually one came, of silver and duly inscribed.

Umphville with its sign, "Welcome to all Nations but Carrie," was good for a smile when the uninitiated learned that this was headquarters for a group of young bachelors who, when they married, lost something of their standing.

Tarbells, Barrs, Bakers, and the *Horton* was soon slipping over into the Inlet, quietly with reduced speed so as not to wash its banks; slowly and yet more slowly until the running deckhand leaped to the dock to make all fast. Passengers followed, wet bathing suits, empty picnic baskets, sleepy children and weary parents—all hoping that the trolley car would be waiting.

The year of Captain Brown's death, 1910, the steamer *Horton* was sold to Judge Charles Blood, but none of those whom he had hired to run it was successful. Services deteriorated, rivalries developed until finally the skipper of a tugboat, *Rover,* was able to capture the better part of the West Shore trade.

So in 1913, Judge Blood was glad to sell the boat to Roy Shurger who had already secured his pilot's license at eighteen rather than at the usual twenty-one.

Reconditioned and with a new boiler, the *Horton* now became the property of its former deckhand, but it was to take some time before he could recapture the support of the cottagers who by this time had formed an association. One holdout in particular didn't want the new captain to associate with all the boatmen, the canalers and the Inlet gangs, to become a "bum" like the rest of them. She, too, finally relented.

Not only was the boat's tight daily schedule maintained, but, in the second year of the new ownership, an extra Sunday night trip was instituted to take care of the many who now were going down the lake.

The swimming lessons were resumed at Crowbar for all ages, and many children became fine swimmers. Students were warned about the sudden and treacherous winds of the lake, and girls were advised to go out in the canoes of that time only with those who were good swimmers, advice probably heeded as little then as it would be today.

There *were* those apparently who did not share the Captain's apprehensions of Cayuga's winds and waves. One morning on an early trip the *Horton* overhauled a self-sufficient couple in a canoe traveling north under sail: Prof. William C. Baker, paddle in hand, and Mrs. Baker in the bow with a large umbrella up to catch the breezes. Evening, and the wind now from the north, as they had felt pretty sure it would be, they were again sighted, sailing home. Professor Baker, a painter of Cayuga Lake in all its seasons and in all its many moods, had doubtless added another study to his collections while spending the day at his cottage.

But occasionally there were bad days. August 7, 1917, was one of these. A newspaper account of that date tells how the passengers had occasion to thank Captain Shurger for his coolheadedness and to be grateful for the sturdiness of his craft. They told how the storm had been the worst they had experienced on it or on any other lake boat. Deck and pilot house had been lifted by the force of the wind so that for a time they were drifting about helplessly in the trough of the sea that was running ten feet high and only some feet from the lighthouse. Unable to reach the engine room through the usual signals—the last had been to stop engine—a deckhand was now sent to order a reverse. Meanwhile, James Taylor, who had been standing next to the wheelhouse when it went up, had been caught there when it came down—on his toe. He was eventually freed and with a "Stick to it, Roy. I'm going below," did just that. When next seen he was on the bow deck wearing a life preserver.

Another passenger, having visions of the boat going down and wondering how to save the watch he had only that day purchased for his wife's birthday, put his gift into his mouth and swam ashore.

Finally, able to go below, the Captain found things in a great mess; broken eggs and groceries strewn far and wide over the floor. "What happened here?" One of two sisters of the Ithaca Parish said, "Oh, Sister, was trying to hatch the eggs and she sat on them too hard."

During 1917 and the First World War, the U.S. Government took over inland waterways and required all captains and pilots

be licensed. Captain Shurger, who already had a New York State license, had now to take a Government examination, after which he became a U.S. Pilot and Captain of all the Finger Lakes, the Barge Canal and the Hudson River. As he was the only one so licensed he was frequently called upon to escort flotillas of new subchasers from Buffalo to Watervliet, New York, at the head of navigation of the Hudson.

But it was not only the war that brought troubles to the *Horton.* As time went on the three cars (of Fordyce Cobb, Henry Warner and George Tarbell that had braved the curves, the gullies, the washouts of the old West Shore Boulevard) multiplied. The youngsters bought boats (Fay & Bowens were popular), and older men indulged in speedboats.

Since the steamer had only ten weeks in which to earn its keep, this competition began to tell. Something had to be done if the boat service continued, so a meeting of the Cottage Association was called and the situation explained. The result was an increase in the number of parties and games which were organized to bring townspeople to the various cottages.

Meanwhile, of course, there were off-season—Fall—clambakes. Frequently held with the *Kellogg,* these were scheduled by fraternal organizations and fire companies, but only Volunteer Company No. 2 took their wives and children for what was an all-day picnic. On these occasions there were poker games, quoit and horseshoe pitching contests, races and ball games.

The morning meal consisted of clam chowder made the night before and brought in kettles to the picnic grounds at Crowbar, Sheldrake, Frontenac, or Kidders, where, reheated, it was consumed with plenty of crackers and melted butter.

When the *Kellogg* was there, its hose line was piped to a barrel where cheesecloth bags, each with a bit of chicken, fish, a sweet and Irish potato, and an ear of corn were left to steam for hours. Clams were laid on top not long before the evening meal and their juices flavored the broth. After an afternoon of games everyone was ready to eat. Beer had been flowing throughout the day.

But life at thirty was no longer all beer and skittles, and Roy Shurger in 1920 took a position with the Ithaca branch of

Swift & Co., and the Cottage Association, in partnership with City Clerk William Kerr bought the *S.S. Horton.* Later Kerr bought the cottagers' share for his son, Ogden, so the little old steamer remained in friendly hands. The father had long enjoyed its privileges and the son had been one of the Maplewood crowd of youngsters for whom the boat's goings and comings had marked the hours of the summer days.

Looking back over the years, it was evident that services, the carrying of ice, milk, groceries and all the miscellaneous rest, had paid expenses, including salaries of captain and crew. Passenger fees had gone to pay for the *Horton* in three years.

But once again Roy Shurger was to captain the ship when in 1920 he took it to drydock for the Kerrs—not to Port Byron as usual, for this had been closed to him by the closing of the Erie Canal, but at Durhamville, New York, on the far eastern shore of Oneida Lake. The route there had seemed difficult and circuitous so, after the two weeks for repair, a shorter route back to Ithaca was planned—by way of the Erie Canal, for although it had been closed for some time through Syracuse, it was thought that the locks there were operable. However, at Salina St. lock, the lift bridge, rusted from disuse, could not be raised, and the *Horton* was nine inches too tall to go under. The problem was finally solved when arrangements were made with the superintendent of land waterways at the weigh lock to lower the level of the canal by opening the lower paddle of the lock. Once this was done it was possible to go through the Oneida Canal and Seneca River, Cayuga Lake and home. So, the *Horton* made something of history by being the last steamboat to go through Syracuse by way of the old Erie Canal.

After its escape from the canal, the *Horton* was to remain a familiar sight on the lake for five more years, although the era of the "packet boat" service was everywhere obviously coming to its end. Improved highways encouraged far-reaching motor cars and trucks, while on the water, newer types of privately owned craft—speedboats, cabin cruisers and "put-puts"—all meant competition too great for the steamboats to meet.

Launched with the *Enterprise* in 1820, such traffic virtually came to an end on Cayuga Lake when in the spring of 1925, April 7, the *Horton* in a makeshift Inlet drydock was destroyed

by fire. There was no loss of life, but a fireman slipping from the icy gangplank, had to be rescued from the water.

It was thought that a cigarette falling amongst the shavings and litter of repair work caused the blaze. Someone's hopes of again seeing the *Col. J. H. Horton* nosing its way in and out of the West Shore docks flickered out in the ashes.

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