

THE BOAT STERN OFF BAYFIELD'S SOUTH BEACH

By Elaine Sturgeon



Photo by Roland Sturgeon

This visible piece of marine salvage is the stern part of the remains of a steamboat named the “Linda Hindman” (*or Lynda Hyman—spelling unconfirmed)) with connections to the * Hindman family out of Owen Sound.

She was built in Dunkirk, New York and originally saw service as a fire tug. After many years working on the Great Lakes *Hindman Transportation- Owen Sound used her in the lumbering business. She worked out of Sault Ste. Marie and Whitefish Bay in Lake Superior. Her log book indicated they reinforced her steel bow. It is documented she could move through 3 foot thick ice at the rate of 1 mile in 8 hours. “That’s a lot of ice!”

The * Linda Hindman found herself in the hands of a small independent owner when a decision was made in the early 1970’s to scrap a number of steamboats since they were deemed obsolete. A number were moored in Goderich Harbour awaiting salvage operations. The Wheelhouse and deck had been removed from the *Linda Hindman when Bayfield’s Ed Siddall arrived on the scene. He stopped the salvage operation and Siddall Fisheries purchased the steamboat. The name had been painted over as was customary when a boat is being retired.

On St. Patrick’s Day, 11 of these steamboats broke loose from the cables mooring them due to the pounding of the waves. The * Linda Hindman was docked on the south side of Goderich Harbour and since she was the smallest of all—she was literally squeezed in the entanglement. (Possibly-since the wheelhouse and deck were already removed in salvage, this weakened her chances of survival.) This rendered her useless for any plans her new owners-Ed and Verna Siddall may have envisioned for her.

In the early 1970’s, the water levels of the Great Lakes were extremely high. This situation posed a grave threat to the shoreline and many property owners were desperately trying to save their properties. One such concerned individual was Brigadier Morgan Smith who owned the “Metcalf property” immediately to the south of Pioneer Park in Bayfield.

In 1973, Morgan Smith purchased the * Linda Hindman with the intent of creating a type of 'break wall' to lessen the impact of the pounding waves. Ed towed the vessel down to Bayfield and settled her as close to shore as possible. The stern was resting on bottom in 11 feet of water.

Garth Postill was to hook on and pull her in to shore with a bulldozer. Before he arrived, Morgan Smith made the decision to open the seacocks and scuttle her where she rests today. Unfortunately, the impact of shifting lake ice along the shoreline has broken her up creating her present profile. There is serious doubt she played any significant role in lessening the erosion situation along the south shore properties.

- from information related to Elaine Sturgeon by Ed and Verna Siddall

At this time of writing in the summer of 2001, water levels on the Great Lakes are at the lowest ever recorded. The site has become an artificial habitat for marine life and due to an overpopulation of zebra mussels in the Great lakes, the clear water makes her quite visible below the surface to sport fisherman and all who visit the site.

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