

up berth in the Yonge Street slip, preparing to move alongside the Ferry Company's terminal to begin her work for the day. In so doing, however, she collided with the passenger steamer WHITE STAR, which was passing by. WHITE STAR was able to maintain her regularly scheduled trips, but the impact to one of THISTLE's sharp ends caused damage to her stem and also to her rudder. She was taken over to Hanlan's Point, where the Ferry Company did most of the winter and other regular maintenance work on its boats, and there she was repaired. While THISTLE was out of service, the single-ender ISLAND QUEEN (see issues of May, Mid-Summer and November of 1987) took over her regular runs to Island Park.

THISTLE continued her usual Island Park service for a few more years, but during the summer of 1906, the Toronto Ferry Company commissioned the first of two new 150-foot "superferries" that would be the mainstays of the island ferry service for almost half a century, as well as being the largest boats ever operated as Island ferries. The new steamer was BLUE BELL (officially two words but always familiarly spelled as one - "BLUEBELL", even as painted on the ship herself), which was built by the Polson Iron Works at Toronto. Her appearance on the Hanlan's Point route permitted the transfer of one of the 1890 pair (MAYFLOWER or PRIMROSE) to the Island Park route, and the most expendable of the double-enders then doing the Island Park run could be retired. (The numerous small single-enders still were required for the Ward's Island route, service up into Lighthouse Pond for the Lakeside Home for Little Children at Gibraltar Point, and for service on all routes during off-peak travel times, particularly in the spring and fall.)

Perhaps her hull was less strong than that of the other wooden-hulled double-ender, the SHAMROCK (I) (of which we have spoken until now as SADIE), and certainly her engine was not as good, but for whatever reasons, THISTLE was the expendable boat, and she was taken out of service when BLUEBELL appeared. THISTLE was taken over to Hanlan's Point, and she was laid away to rest alongside "John Hanlan's old dock". This was in an area totally unfamiliar to today's historians and even most Island residents. It was located in a watercourse which split the old Hanlan's Point area in two, running in a north-south direction. It divided the amusement park area from the West Island sandbar. Commonly called "Hanlan's Lagoon" or the "Regatta Course Lagoon" (after a regatta course laid down through it despite its shallow depth and the choking growth of marine slime of the period), it was the site of the famous "Diving Horse" attraction perpetrated on the human and equine populations by showman J. W. Gorman.

There, the stripped-out THISTLE was to rot away in peace. Just one scant year later, however, the Toronto Ferry Company would wish that she still were operable.

We now turn our attention to the steamer to which we have referred already as either SADIE or SHAMROCK. Although she latterly was a sharp-nosed double-ender like THISTLE, she had a rather different history, and she was a much older boat. In fact, she ran for only one year short of half a century, whereas THISTLE's career lasted for only 24 years. Many historians, however, have not made the connection between the latter years of SADIE/SHAMROCK and her earlier activities.

In reality, this steamer could trace her beginnings back to 1858, when she was built as the ST. JEAN BAPTISTE at Portneuf, Quebec, on the north shore of the lower St. Lawrence River, well below Quebec City and even the Saguenay River mouth, and almost as far out as Baie Comeau. She was 99 feet in length, with a beam of hull of 23 feet and a depth of 7 feet, and her Gross tonnage was 208. We know very little else about the steamer in her St. Lawrence days, except that she was an oak-hulled, single-ended, beam-engined sidewheeler, and that by 1873 she was running as a ferry between Prescott and Ogdensburg on the upper river.