

the drydock for repairs. It was about 2:00 p.m. when the ROVER was secured at the shipyard.

At about 2:30 a.m. on Saturday, June 29th, the necessary repairs completed, DALHOUSIE ROVER cast off and backed away from the drydock, and then turned to head up the canal toward Lock Two. Somehow, her master misjudged her position in respect of a mudbank which ran in a southerly direction from the end of the east wall above Lock One. The ROVER apparently struck the marker buoy at the end of this obstruction, ran at full speed up onto the mudbank, and then rolled over onto her starboard side and sank very quickly.

Many local newspapers carried lengthy reports of the accident, including the "Toronto Telegram", "Toronto Star", "Hamilton Spectator" and "St. Catharines Standard". These reports contained many errors and were often contradictory, so we have had to piece together the story using all of them. Most of what follows comes from the "Telegram" report of June 29th, but we have added bits and pieces from the other reports, placing them as if they belonged in the original story to make the account easier to read. To avoid confusion and frequent notes concerning inaccuracies, we have taken the liberty of making the necessary corrections to the text. The original "Tely" report was penned by staff reporter Albert Turner.

"Port Weller, June 29 - Five men and one woman were drowned early today when the tug DALHOUSIE ROVER, owned by the C. S. Boone Dredging and Construction Co. Ltd., of Toronto, turned over and sank in the Welland Canal, 300 feet south of Lock No. 1 at this port. Company officials in Toronto said the list of the men missing was not immediately available. The tug normally carries a crew of 12. The vessel is valued at \$90,000.

"It was learned, however, that the captain, John R. McLean, 63, of Logieville, N.B., went down with his charge, with LeRoy Stephens, of Thorold, a fireman; Orville McCormick, mate, Erieau; Joseph Smith, 36, of Toronto, the second engineer, and Harry Wheeler, 71, the cook, and his wife, Esther Robertta Wheeler, 66, who had been living at a Port Colborne hotel and only joined her husband aboard ship a few days prior to the disaster. Those rescued were Robert W. Jones, 22, Merritton; Melville Kehoe, 29, Owen Sound; Harvey C. Alexander, 18, Hamilton; Vernon McCullough, 20, Toronto, and Louis McCormick, 16, of Leamington."

(Ed. Note: Sharp-eyed readers will note that this accounts for only 11 crew members, not 12. The twelfth was chief engineer Louis Lapointe, 34, of Sault Ste. Marie. He was still ashore when DALHOUSIE ROVER sailed and so missed almost-certain death. Lapointe had been scheduled to rejoin the ROVER later on Saturday at Thorold. Fate caught up with him, however, for less than 24 hours after the tug sank, Lapointe was lying in St. Catharines General Hospital, suffering from multiple injuries as a result of being thrown through the windshield in a head-on automobile collision on Lakeshore Road near Port Dalhousie at 10:15 on Saturday evening. He was a passenger in one of the cars and, strangely, a passenger in the other auto was Robert Stephens, 25, of Thorold, a cousin of LeRoy Stephens, the lost DALHOUSIE ROVER fireman. Stephens was being driven to Port Weller at the time to make enquiries concerning his cousin!)

"In St. Catharines General Hospital, the five are in good condition, their only concern to get out and get home. The survivors recalled that the captain was at the wheel. The DALHOUSIE ROVER... had just come out of the Carmichael drydock after having her rudder repaired and was bound up the canal for Port Colborne just before 3:00 a.m. when she apparently struck a clay shoal on the normal canal level. It is believed the captain didn't see the canal buoy marking the spot, and when the tug hit the mud bank, it turned on its side and disappeared three feet beneath the surface of the water... The first intimation of this major marine tragedy... was when the noise of the fires being swamped by the water was heard by persons in the dry dock.