

The hero of my story, a man by the name of Lewis Shickluna, came from a long line of shipbuilders, so he too became one.

He was born in Malta, a small island in the Mediterranean Sea in 1808. He disliked school and found too many other attractions to call him away from it, so his family let him quit at the age of seven. He went directly to the family shipyard where he was taught the art of shipbuilding by his father and grandfather.

When he was sixteen he obtained work as a ship's carpenter on an ocean vessel and he remained there till 1831 when he came to Quebec, Canada and started shipbuilding in a new land. He worked here on the first steamboat to cross the Atlantic Ocean. It was named the "Royal William" after a British Sovereign. After crossing the Atlantic, it saw service between Britain and Spain.

Shickluna then moved to Oakville, Ontario, between Toronto and Hamilton. Here he assisted in the construction of the ship, "The Transit" which was later used as a troop carrier during the 1837 Rebellion of Upper Canada.

He then moved on closer to what is now Lincoln County. He helped build the docks at Niagara before crossing to Youngstown where he studied draughting for two years and built two more ships, "The John Porter," and, "The L. Shickluna".

Shickluna came to St. Catharines in 1836 at the age of twenty-eight. He had already had twenty-one years' experience in shipbuilding and was the answer to the settler's dream; a shipbuilder to supply one of their most needed requisites. Twenty years before Lincoln County became a reality, he established a shipyard on the Twelve-Mile Creek below what is now the Burgoyne Bridge on the present site of the Morton Building Wrecking Company. He worked diligently here till his death in the late 1800's and strove ever to serve his fellowmen by supplying them with an urgent necessity. From here he built and launched twenty-three schooners, twelve barquentines, one brigantine, one yacht, six propellers, several tugs, one passenger steamer and several scows and barges.

The first ship he built in his shipyard was the "Lady Bagot." It is said that his first six years were spent repairing the canal boats, for the original Welland Ship Canal had just opened and its traffic passed his yard and followed the course of the "Twelve" to Port Dalhousie. The last boat he built was the "Sir Leonard Tilley" in