

honour of that famous Father of Confederation. She was a composite propeller craft. In all, he built over two hundred boats, we know of, to add to lake traffic; and since we know the original canal locks were one hundred feet long by twenty-two feet wide we can judge the size of craft (possibly) constructed. Many, he named after famous local citizens, for example — in 1855 “W. H. Merrit,” in 1865 — “Mary Merrit,” 1866 — “Jane C. Woodruff,” and countless more.

In those days, St. Catharines was only a little clearing surrounded by swamp and dense bush. It is said that Lewis Shickluna could go into any given section of the forest and estimate the cost of the wood down to the nearest cent. His choice of material for his boats was questioned by no one. The first editor and publisher of the St. Catharines paper, Mr. Samuel G. Montgomery who was a personal friend, said, “If Lewis Shickluna said a thing, it was so,” indicating the high regard that was held for his opinions and integrity.

Lincoln County at this time was “an underground railroad” for slaves escaping from the United States. These men he employed in his yards thus giving some of them their first gainful occupation. He taught many men his trade so they might carry on long after he was gone.

In 1852 he built and launched the first ocean going vessel made in St. Catharines and named it the “Pride of Canada.” This was one hundred and four years ago and it sailed directly to England. In the same year he built “The Welland” in which was installed the first St. Catharines made engine. Its builder was Thomas Towers. The ship was later destroyed by fire in Port Dalhousie harbour. Some of his other ships were the “Chief Justice Robinson,” the “John L. Ranney” and the “Augusta”. All were noteworthy craft built for the Norris and Neelon Company. Shickluna is reported to have once stated: “I never had a want of money. I always had plenty.” This is in itself tribute to a great man with little formal education who by diligent application made himself a useful, productive, thoughtful citizen. By hard work he established a shipyard estimated at present value at over four million dollars and in it he gave of his skill until the late 1800's.

He had married a Miss Hainer, daughter of John Hainer who with a Jacob Dittrick in 1796 were the first settlers along The Twelve. By now the family name Shickluna has disappeared in