



RHYC 2015 Hall of Fame

Æmilius Jarvis

Æmilius Jarvis came from a prominent Old Ontario family. His great-grandfather served under Lord Simcoe, and Jarvis Street in Toronto was named after a member of the family.

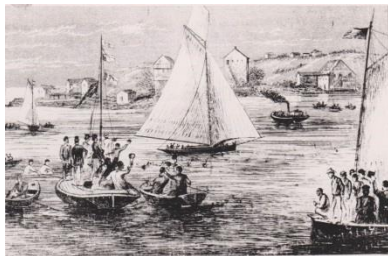
Jarvis arrived in Hamilton in 1860 at the age of 10 with his siblings and widowed Mother in order to be closer to his mother's family, the Irvings.

After arriving in Hamilton he was immediately drawn to the Bay. Jarvis later left no doubt about the effect the Bay had on his life, writing. "This sight of Burlington Bay was my first introduction to a real body of water." and "...this large body of water, close at hand, had a great and lasting fascination for me."

During his second summer in Hamilton in 1871, at 11 years of age, he had his first sail, impulsively leaping from the pier into the little 5 tonner *Dart* tacking up the Bay. He quickly found that he knew most of the families of the older boys on board. Lasting friendships with these older boys were formed, so that when this group bought a new boat a year later called *Wanderer*, young Jarvis was invited to be part of the crew.



Reinforcing his love of the Bay, Jarvis later wrote: "The glamour and attraction of the Bay ever grew within me, and as steel to a magnet I felt myself more and more drawn to the rafts and boathouses of Luke and Mat Thompson and H.L. Bastien." "Thompson and Bastien had considerable fleets of yachts for hire. Luke was my favourite, and I used to go down and bale out his yachts for the privilege of an hour's sail." "The interest and excitement of it never waned, but grew and grew."



At the age of 12, with two of his young friends Jarvis obtained an old boat from Matt Thompson in exchange for 50 cents and an old gun. Each time they sailed, the leaky old boat needed a pail of tar to fill her seams, so they named her "*Tarpot*". The plan was for the three boys to set off for a summer holiday cruise of Lake Ontario, but when the time came to shove off Æmilius was

on his own, but undaunted and full of the confidence of youth, he sailed to the Ship Canal, then to the Niagara River, Wilson, NY, Whitby, Rouge River, Scarborough Bluffs, then Gibraltar Point on Toronto Island, and Port Credit. Two weeks later he was back in Hamilton, returning, I expect, to a very relieved Mother!

From that experience he gained a well-earned reputation as a sailor, so when a cousin formed a syndicate to commission Luke Thompson to build a 30' centerboarder named *Saunterer*, they turned to Jarvis to help skipper the boat. This culminated in a victory at a regatta in Toronto when Jarvis was a mere 13-1/2 years old!



Meanwhile, he was also still crewing with his friends on *Wanderer*, and during a sail to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Jarvis met Harry Stinson who had just had Luke Thompson build a hot 35' racer named *Brunette*. Stinson invited Jarvis on a two week cruise of the Lake that summer which further broadened his sailing horizons.

His friends from *Dart* and *Wanderer* then really moved up in sailing circles and bought the 60 ton *Annie Cuthbert*. In 1874, at the age of 14, Jarvis was asked to join the crew on a trip to Put-in-Bay on the western end of Lake Erie. The *Annie Cuthbert* was under the command of her designer and builder Alexander Cuthbert, and in the crew, according to Jarvis, were “a number of professional chums – real sailors – and from them I learned a great deal of seamanship”. At Put-in-Bay, *Annie Cuthbert* beat *Cora*, the American champion of Lake Erie, for the Godwin Cup.



In 1876, at the age of 16 Jarvis leaves Upper Canada College, and signs on “before the mast” to the schooner *Edward Blake* to deliver timber to England. After visiting family in England he signed on to the barque *Surprise* bound to Italy, returning to England via Antwerp. After again visiting relatives, Jarvis signs back on to the *Edward Blake* to deliver coal to Rio de Janeiro, skirting a Hurricane on the return trip to England, before shipping home as crew on a steamship to New York, then by train back to Hamilton in 1878.

At 18 he started his financial career with an entry job with the Bank of Hamilton, and soon grows to enjoy working with figures, although his being handy with his fists also stood him in good stead when dealing with a troublesome customer.

This was the era of Ned Hanlan, the great Canadian rower, resulting in a great surge in the sport of rowing in Canada. Leander Rowing Club had just been formed and quickly included Jarvis in a four. He soon bought himself a single for \$100, at a time when his salary was \$8.33 per month! He says he “had a fair amount of success, but never reached the top”. He did, however, win two matches for the championship of Hamilton Bay.



During this time of rowing, he still maintained his love of sailing, and with a group of friends leased the 30' centerboarder *Cacique* from H.L. Bastien. The crew got very expert at filling the dinghy with water and after each tack, lifting it on to the weather quarter for extra stability.



Jarvis' model of the H.L. Bastien built *Cacique* which Jarvis sailed with friends in 1883

Movable ballast was not illegal at the time!

In 1882 Jarvis leaves the bank to move to Detroit to develop a device of his own invention to help start horse drawn street cars.

However, the introduction of electric powered street cars put an end to that, so upon his return in 1884 Jarvis joins the Farmers and Traders Loan Association in Hamilton. Much to his horror he found that the ledger had not been balanced in seven years! With great effort he sets to balancing the books, and when finished on New Year's Eve 1886, he celebrates the event by proposing marriage to his 1st cousin and childhood sweetheart Augusta (Gus) Irving. Due to his success in balancing the books he was soon made a Manager of the bank. However, the bank was not solvent, so Jarvis arranged the transfer of ownership to the Traders Bank of Toronto and assumes a management position with them.



Augusta and AEmilius marry in 1886

In 1885 at 25 years of age, Jarvis got serious about his sailing, and with his friends and partners from *Cacique* decides to design and build a new breed of yacht on the Lakes, a British Cutter. Cutters were distinguished by their narrow beam, deep draft, heavy displacement, and external ballast. Using the books of Philip Marett and Dixon Kemp Jarvis designs the 46' *Whistlewing*, built in Hamilton by a local builder named Cooper.



Jarvis' display model of *Whistlewing* - 1885

She was 46' long but only 7'- 9" beam. She was one of the first yachts on the Lakes to be designed "scientifically" that is with lines drawn on paper and all calculations of displacement, etc., completed before launch. Previously, all yachts, such as those by Alexander Cuthbert, were built from a carved

model. *Whistlewing* turns out initially to be a disappointment, straining the relationship with his "investor" friends, until Jarvis checks his calculations and adds an additional 2-1/2 tons of inside ballast to get her down to her lines. At that point she came to life, and subsequently won the Championship of the Lake at LYRA in Toronto. Preparing to be married that fall, he sells *Whistlewing* for \$1500.

As mentioned previously, in the autumn of 1886 Jarvis marries Augusta Irving. But much to his relief, she encourages him to buy a new boat. So Jarvis proceeds to Rochester to buy, on behalf of his syndicate, the brand new 52' *White Wings* directly from her builder, and his previous skipper on the *Annie Cuthbert*, Alexander Cuthbert.



White Wings, over a two year period on Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, won 24 first and 2 seconds in 26 races, accumulates over \$4,300 of prize money. He sells her after three years for \$1,600, \$200 more than he paid for her! As Jarvis records: "We considered she had been a very profitable investment."

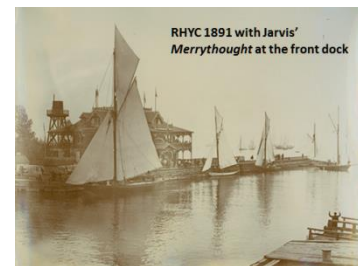


One of *White Wings* more memorable races was a match race on Lake St. Clair against the *Alice Enright*, the then champion of Lake Erie. The original challenge from the owner of *Alice Enright* was for a \$1,000 bet, but Jarvis balked at that, offering instead to race for \$200, and, as he says "what is worth a great deal more to me than a thousand dollars, our British Ensign against your American Ensign."

White Wings won handily, and Jarvis returned to Hamilton with *Alice Enright's* American Ensign flying from *White Wings* mainsail.

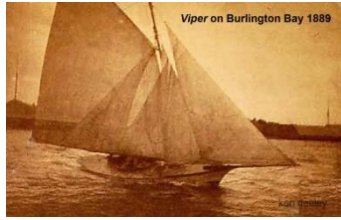
In 1888, with the success of *White Wings*, Jarvis sets out to establish a new Yacht Club in his home town of Hamilton. During a winter blizzard, which made for a slow day at the bank, Jarvis quickly canvased all the people he could think of, and accumulated 61 signatures – these were the charter members of the Hamilton Yacht Club.

Also in 1888, after selling *White Wings*, Jarvis designs for himself a new 40' boat named *Samoa*, to be built in Hamilton by Robertson Brothers. She was designed with a unique steel trough keel into which the lead ballast was poured to achieve a 50% ballast to displacement ratio.



Jarvis had learned the importance of high stability on *Whistlewing*. *Samoa* was exceptionally stiff and excelled in heavy air, winning her class at the LYRA regatta in Kingston that year.

He then designed a 25 footer named *Chaperon* for Sir Edward Clouston of Montreal, also built by Robertson Brothers. However, on a tune up race on the Bay she finished 2nd to Billy Burnside's *Aideen*.



This led to a \$250 challenge from Burnside, but since *Chaperone* was about to be shipped to Montreal, Jarvis designed and built *Viper* for this match. The challenge stipulated that the race had to take place in at least 20 kts of wind.

During the race there were hundreds of spectators on the water front and on the hills overlooking the bay, with much betting going on. *Viper* won by over 26 minutes, and Jarvis was pleased that the \$250 prize money covered the cost of *Viper's* construction.



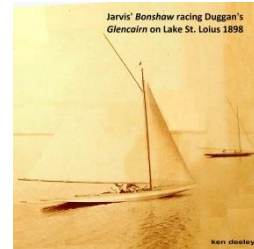
Jarvis then designed a larger 39' boat for Clouston named *Chaperone II* in 1890, also built by Robertson Brothers.

In 1890, at the age of 30, the Trader's Bank moved Jarvis to Toronto to become Inspector and Assistant General Manager.

This ended Jarvis' direct connection with what in 1891 would become the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club, which he helped to found. Jarvis' subsequent sailing career is well known, being three times Commodore of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club and first winner of Canada's Cup in 1896. Jarvis would skipper a boat in every Canada's Cup challenge and defence from 1896 to 1907, save the 1905 challenge.

In 1892 he designed and had built *Thistledown*, the first fin-keeler on the Lake, which was also the first boat on the Lake with a hollow spar.

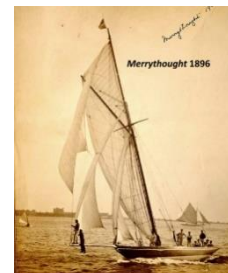
In 1898 he designed and had built *Bonshaw* for Seawanhaka Cup competition, but was defeated for the right to defend by Duggan's radical catamaran *Dominion*.



Soon after moving to Toronto he left Traders to embark on a very successful career as a Stock and Bond Broker, establishing an office in London, England. With the help of his good friend George Gooderham, Jarvis underwrote the issuing of bonds to establish the Hamilton Iron and Steel Company, which soon grew into the Steel Company of Canada. Not bad for his first independent venture! He would then go on to

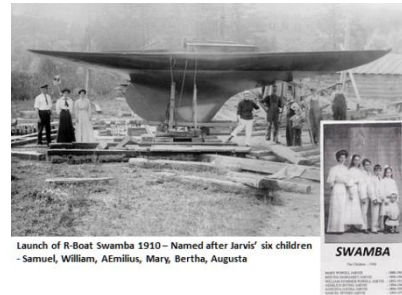
underwrite the salmon canning business in BC, as well as the building of the King Edward Hotel in Toronto.

Jarvis owned and sailed a number of boats after his move to Toronto, with *Merrythought* being one of his favourites. He owned *Merrythought*



for 10 years and used her for racing and with a yawl rig for cruising. After *Merrythought*, Jarvis owned *Sitarah*, one of the first yachts with an auxiliary gasoline engine. She tragically blew up while refuelling at the foot of Young street. Two people were killed and the boat was declared a write off.

In 1910 he commissioned George Owen to design *Swamba*, the first R-Boat on Lake Ontario. He owned and sailed *Swamba*, (named after his six children) with his eldest son Bill. With Bill, he also owned the P-Boat *Seneca* (which had beaten him in the 1907 Canada's Cup racing). Jarvis was devastated when his beloved son Bill was killed on the Western Front in 1915.



During his long life he became a confidant of both J.P. Morgan and Sir Thomas Lipton.

Jarvis would again return to RHYC in 1939 in his 12 Metre *Mitena* to race in the LYRA regatta celebrating the opening of the new clubhouse.

He died in 1940 at the age of 80, and his remains were interred in the Jarvis family crypt in St. James Cathedral Cemetery in Toronto.

We are pleased to have Nadia Jarvis and her daughter Anastasia Jenkin with us tonight to accept the induction of AEmilius Jarvis as our first inductee into the RHYC Hall of Fame.

