

The Port Ryerse Journal

The RYERSE-RYERSON Family Association Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 1

ISSN 201-0065

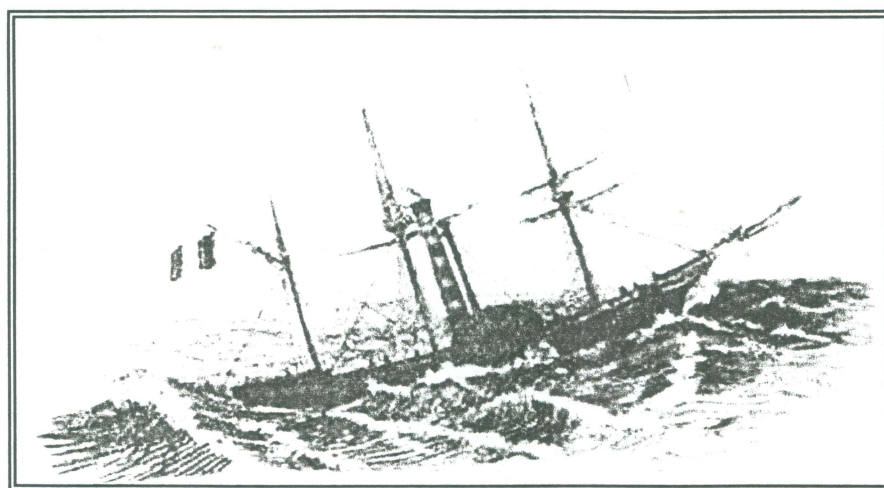
March 2002

The Tragic Conclusion.....

The Sinking of the Ercolano

Michael E. Crutchley Esq, Esher, Surrey, England

Midnight, Monday April 24/25, 1854



Antique watercolour courtesy of the Boydell Galleries – an identical ship to the ERCOLANO

Previously.....

The Italian passenger steamer, *ERCOLANO* was on its return journey from Naples, heading for Marseilles in the south of France. Worn down by old age and neglect, the steamer sailed into a violent storm. Huge seas whipped by gusting winds made progress difficult. Passengers aboard included a cross section of Italian, French and English society. It also included a 26 year old Canadian, Charlotte (Harris) Knight, the granddaughter of Samuel Ryerse, traveling with her wealthy English husband, Edward Lewis Knight and their 2 small children. The new steamship *SICILIA* was also heading out to sea – full steam ahead all engines – was the order. It's first officer did not know that the *ERCOLANO* was ahead – or that she was traveling with no light!

And now the rest of the story.....

The cabin was cramped and airless and had a claustrophobic feel about it. Never deterred by adversity, however, Charlotte Knight was making the best of an uncomfortable and stormy trip from Genoa to Marseilles. This was the final stage of their Grand Tour of Europe, favoured by so many of the English aristocracy. The *Ercolano* had sailed at two in the afternoon and this journey would take all night.

Having finally settled her two year old son Edward who had been repeatedly unwell since early in the afternoon, Charlotte then gave the infant Robert his final feeding and tucked him into his travelling cradle. Smiling to herself, she mused, maybe this boy will grow up to be a naval sea captain just like his grandfather.

Just then her husband Edward knocked and entered, checking on the family for the final time that evening. Quietly, he said, "Goodnight my dearest, soon we'll be in Marseilles and then home to England," Then he closed the door behind him and retired to the gentlemen's cabin. It was just before ten in the evening as the exhausted Charlotte finally climbed into her own bunk to sleep.

Charles Sansom was the first and only person on deck to see the approaching light. He had decided to take his newly lit cigar outside and as he stepped out onto deck, the storm nearly whipped the hatchway door to the saloon out of his hand. The big oily sea rolled out from under the hull of the ship into a pitch black night. Looking towards land, he saw the approaching light. He called out to the helmsman, "*Prenez-garde, monsieur,*" but his warning went unheard. There appeared to be no one at the wheel! The light was getting closer. He had to alert the captain. "*Captain!... Captain!... Au secours .. Capitaine!!*" but there was no response from the officer who was dozing in his cabin below. Turning back to the fast approaching light, he could make out the grey outline of a ship's bow bearing down upon him out of the night - and his life flashed before him.

The captain and crew of the steamship *Sicilia*, having left the new lighthouse at Cap Ferrat off their port beam, were heading out to sea on this, the last leg of their ironclad ship's first voyage out of Glasgow, Scotland. They had restocked with coal at Nice and were relieved at last to be heading at full speed for their final destination south, across the Ligurian and the Tyrrhenian seas. They would deliver the *Sicilia* to her new owners in Palermo, Sicily.

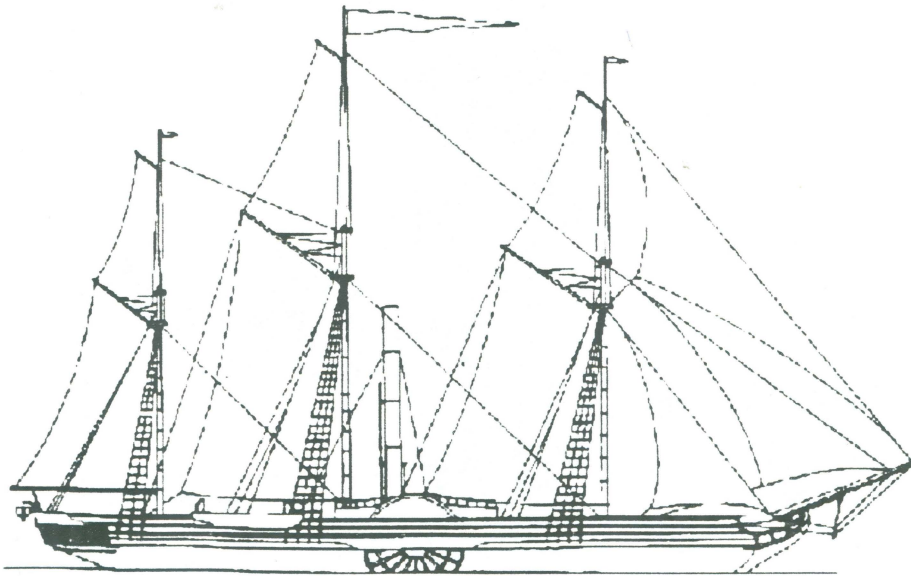
For just a fleeting second through the storm the crew spotted the *Ercolano* rapidly closing in on them off the port bow. With no time for any evasive action, the *Sicilia* and all her 900 tons ploughed eight or nine feet into the *Ercolano's* soft belly amidships, doubling her up in an instant. Both ships stopped dead. The *Sicilia* rolled off the deck of the *Ercolano*, leaving a vast gaping wound into which the sea quickly flooded.

Charles Sansom was thrown onto his back by the ships boom and was immediately engulfed beneath the mast and the ships rigging. His seasick travelling

companion, Sir Robert Peel, sitting in his carriage on deck, just had time to see the ships funnel crashing down on him. Throwing himself clear, the carriage was immediately swept away overboard.

CHARLOTTE OWEN HARRIS was born on January 22, 1828 at Port Ryerse, a pretty village in Long Point Bay on the north shores of Lake Erie, Ontario. The seventh child of Captain John and Amelia Harris, she was also granddaughter of Col. Samuel Ryerse, United Empire Loyalist. Her father named almost all of his children after his good friends, colleagues and fellow sailors involved in the early hydrographic discoveries of the Canadian Great Lakes.

Their first child named after his great mentor Captain William Owen had died in infancy as the result of an accident. Not to be deterred by superstition, Captain Harris was confident in naming another child, Charlotte Owen, after the same man. Nicknamed Chasse ('Shassy') by her family, she was very much a



Layout of an early Victorian paddle steamer. 15 cabins aft of the wheel. Main saloon forward.

favourite with her four older sisters as well as her two younger sisters and three brothers. She was born with good looks, she was artistic and studious, fond of animals and she proved to be an accomplished horsewoman.

We are very fortunate to have a bird's eye view of her life through the brief diary which she kept between the years 1848 and 1851. Her diary is particularly poignant in that it covers the period during which Eldon House, home to the Harris family and overlooking the River Thames in London, Ontario, became a major attraction to the nearby British Army Garrison, not for its worthy architecture but for the presence of the seven pretty Harris daughters! It is within this brief period that Chasse fell deeply in love for the first time.

Her first mention of Edward Lewis Knight is on the very first page of her journal. The 20 year-old Chasse writes:

October 22nd 1848. *'Captain Knight came to say goodbye. We were exceedingly sorry to see him leave and shall miss him very much.'*

The second mention of him is later that week, and is rather more enigmatic.

October 27th *'I put on (a) cloak and did a little (imitation) of Captain Knight for the amusement of Mary and Eliza.'* (Her twin sisters)

Nothing more is said of him and for the next two years her diary continues to record a fascinating view of 19th century Ontario and its members of society, alongside Charlotte's personal day to day memoirs.

Then suddenly, a young British army officer, Captain Frank Campbell arrives on the scene. He visited Eldon House on June 25 1850 along with several of his fellow officers. The following day she wrote...

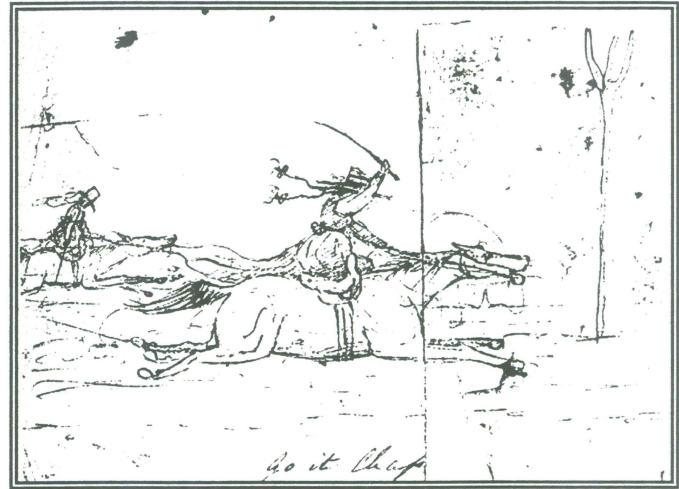
'We sent a note to Captain Campbell', and later 'I talked to Captain Campbell the greater part of the evening'.

During the next three weeks into sunny July, *'I talked to Captain Campbell...', Captain Campbell... 'came to tea'... 'brought me a book to read'... '... called...' '... came to tea again...' But then '... promised to call and did not. I cannot conceive why'.*

He is then not heard from until the end of the month when her sister Amelia told her that Captain Campbell was to leave for England the next Monday... *'Oh how sorry I was to hear it', she wrote.*



"how little we know what is in store for us"



"Go it Chasse"

Charlotte in a race with Lady Buckingham
below Eldon Terrace,
Probably sketched by her sister, Eliza (Harris) Crutchley
c. 1846

During the following week their relationship bloomed, but at the same time, Campbell came clean with the truth. His father was penniless and he must sell his commission and take up a post he has been offered in New Zealand. At the same time, in a surprise move, he proposed and Chasse willingly accepted. She was swept off her feet. The next two days of her diary are filled with Frank Campbell. It goes like this:

August 1st. *'Several British officers and Captain Campbell came in the evening. We had a little dancing. 'About the middle of the evening, Captain Campbell asked me to go out and sit at the door.'* (Chasse then writes that Campbell explains his financial predicament and then proposes to her.) The day ends with... *'I was too happy and too bewildered to know anything.'*

August 2nd. *'Captain Campbell came in the afternoon. We sat on the terrace.'* (With its lovely view over the River Thames).

August 3rd. *'Capt Campbell came down after Mess. We walked in the garden after tea, then sat on the door until ten o'clock when he left.'*

Now, they were on first name terms...

August 4th. *'Frank came in the afternoon, we sat in the bower. Then we sat at the door until eleven... it was the happiest day I ever spent. He is to leave tomorrow from here.'*

That afternoon Frank told Chasse, during one of their walks in the garden, that he would 'do his best' to return from England and take Chasse to New Zealand with him. The following day she wrote:

August 5th. *'Oh how sorry I was to part with him. Heaven knows when we shall meet again.'*

Her last entry the following day was:

'Papa is not at all well. How much I miss dear Frank, the days are so long without him.'

Then her diary ends and Chasse does not write again for several months, until November 16th when she wrote, among other matters, of her father's death in the previous August. The most poignant entry being, *'Oh how much has happened, and how little we know what is in store for us.'*

The remaining entries until the diary ends abruptly two months later on January 24th include many heartfelt notes pining for 'dear Frank', and a few references to her mother's advice that she will never see captain Frank Campbell again. Her mother, it appears, had an astute and experienced understanding of men.

It is most tantalising that we have no more detail, for just five months later, on June 12, 1851, Chasse married **Edward Lewis Knight**. Eight months later she gave birth to her first son Edward and in 1853, a second son, Robert, was born.



Edward Lewis Knight

Edward Knight was awakened by a tremendous shock. His immediate thought was for the safety of his family. Jumping out of bed, he headed for their cabin.

Charles Sansom fought to free himself from the weight of the sails that had collapsed upon him, dashing him to the deck of the stricken *Ercolano*. Struggling to regain his feet, he looked down to see the gaping hole in the ship's side, just where his cabin had been. Glancing around for signs of a lifeboat he caught sight of two of the crew making off with a small boat from the stern. Seizing his chance Sansom jumped into the boat and the sailors pushed off with him, picking up a third sailor from the sea. Sansom would later write this harrowing account, "...the Ercolano was sinking rapidly, and the screams of the women and children on board were dreadful."

Sir Robert Peel threw off his heavy coat, boots and trousers and was about to throw himself into the sea. Looking about, he discovered his old and trusted servant standing near by. The situation was hopeless but even at this time his faithful retainer refused to leave his master's side. "Goodbye, God bless you. Nothing can save us. In a few minutes we shall be in another world." The old man stood his ground. "You cannot help me. Do the best you can." And with those words he took a strong leap into the icy water in an effort to escape the eddy caused by the sinking ship.

Knight reached the aft passageway behind the engine room leading to the family cabins, and was momentarily shocked to a standstill by the sight before him. The entire deck had been crushed down before the Knight cabin door, not only preventing their immediate exit, but also that of the rest of the passengers trapped in the passageway behind. Water was flooding in at a sickening rate.

Grabbing a lantern, Knight broke into the adjoining cabin. Unable to find a fire axe, he snatched a large piece of timber and vainly tried to break through the cabin wall to free Chasse and the children. But the wall was too firmly built. Tossing the timber aside, he sprang back to the gentlemen's cabin, grabbed a large timber partition and climbed up on deck. Here he found worse chaos than he imagined. In amongst the smashed timber and damaged rigging, he found the two family maids, one of whom was jammed up to her knees in the wreckage. Levering her out, he shouted above the storm "Where is your mistress?" but she could not answer. The other maid pointed below decks. "You can't save them, save yourself!" Knight then began tearing up the ruins of the deck. At that instant, the lantern went out and a massive piece of timber came crashing down from above, narrowly missing his head and slicing off his thumb at the first joint. As he attempted to bandage the wound with his neckerchief, the ship lurched in her final moment, throwing him to the deck.

Sir Robert Peel clung to a piece of ship's wreckage, later found to be the bowsprit of the *Sicilia*, with three other survivors. Over the next hour, each one of his companions, including his old servant, slipped to the depths of the sea. Peel was later picked up by the *Sicilia* which had stayed at the scene to pick up any survivors.

Sansom and his three renegade sailors rowed ashore through the storm in their little boat. It took them all night.

The London Times - Tuesday May 2nd 1854

'It was midnight, there was a heavy sea and the weather was dark and raining. There was a strong wind. It was a time of indescribable terror and confusion. In less than ten minutes the Ercolano, into the hull of which the Sicilia had made a large opening, sank.

Only one other report of a survivor remains. A lone English gentleman was picked up by a Barque some way off the coast of Nice later that night clinging to a timber partition, a neckerchief wrapped around his badly injured hand. That man was **Edward Knight**.

Edward would later write a heartbreaking letter to a Harris family friend, Henry Becher, asking sadly, "Will you break to Mrs Harris as gently as you can the dreadful calamity which has happened?"

He went on "...finding that the ship was all broken up amidships, and the remains of the deck where I stood being only just above water and seeing no more of the maids, I went toward the quarter deck. As I got there all the remaining persons at that end of the ship jumped overboard except one..."

Then, abruptly, his dramatic and emotional account ends. Added in someone else's hand are the words, "Wife, children and servants, all lost."



Charlotte Owen Harris
1828-1854

*Lost with her 2 children in the
Tragic sinking of the ERCOLANO
"You are safe in my heart..."*

Final thoughts from the author

When I first decided to research this event, it was with some trepidation, as all I had was a blank sheet of paper and a little family history. I had no idea of the obsession that it would become, of the heartache I would experience, and the number of new friends and cousins I would meet on the way.

Traveling by sea during the mid 19th century was an enormous convenience. It minimized the arduous overland journey times experienced by continental travelers. But it was not without its perils. Shipping accidents in those days were treated as casually as we treat motor accidents these days. They were commonplace, and a risk that travelers took in return for the ease and speed benefited by sea travel. In 1855 for instance, there were four major shipping losses but the *Ercolano* was considered too insignificant to be placed under that heading. Most of the 66 passengers and crew lost their lives including 19 women and 5 children! How can that be insignificant! How times have changed. Consequently, reports of disappearances through the Lloyds Register of Losses were brief. In the case of the *Ercolano*, her sinking was reported officially some six months after the event with the words "*Ercolano* (Neapolitan Steamer) sank between Nice and Antibes, after contact April. 24th: 48 lives lost."

It is interesting to note that the following year after the event, Sir Robert Peel, survivor of the *Ercolano* sinking, became First Sea Lord. It is most likely that his experience and political influence prompted the creation of the Lloyds List. From 1855 onwards to the present day, all shipping disasters are thoroughly investigated and reported in detail and steps are meticulously taken to prevent further disaster.

Edward Knight deeply mourned the loss of his family and the shock of this disaster. After some years, he married again and had a second family.

In portraying the event for the PRJ, I have insisted on sticking only to the facts, no matter how tempting it has been to embellish or invent detail in order to emphasize or dramatize this tragic event. Luckily, I was able to obtain extensive detail from newspaper reports and from family correspondence, and in particular from the Dr. Robin Harris book '*The Eldon House Diaries*,' published by the Champlain Society of Toronto in 1994. Many of the tracts of the story are exact copies, too well written to embellish in any way. It is an unbelievable yet well-documented and factual account. (*The original transcripts can be found in the archives of the Harris Papers held at the J.J. Talman Library, University of Western Ontario.*)

Research into the sinking and its possible repercussion is still ongoing and is likely to take up a great deal of my time in the foreseeable future. My main obsession is to find the wreck. The sea bed between Antibes and Cap Ferrat due south of Villefranche is carved by deep glacial trenches and the sea bed sheers quickly to several thousand feet. I have uncovered several clues that would indicate that the *Ercolano* sank very close to land and therefore may be in only several hundred feet of water. This is proving to be very exciting and is in contrast to original speculation.

I have recently discovered a new source of facts on the event, stored by relatives of a British politician who drowned with his entire family. I am searching for details of the probable criminal prosecution that followed. For this reason I would have liked to delay publication here until a later date but your readers would not stand for that and I'd get lynched! I'll just keep you posted of any new developments.

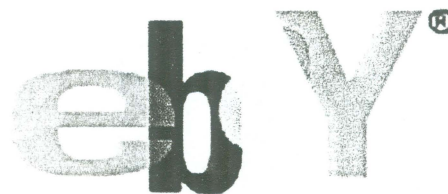
Michael Crutchley

Copywrite MEC MMI

With our DUTCH roots, we were excited to learn of the recent marriage of His Royal Highness Prince Willem-Alexander, Prince of Orange, Prince of the Netherlands, Prince of Orange-Nassau, Jonkheer Van Amsberg to Ms. Maxima Zorreguieta. It was a beautiful wedding – even Schiphol Airport celebrated with 9000 orange tulips!

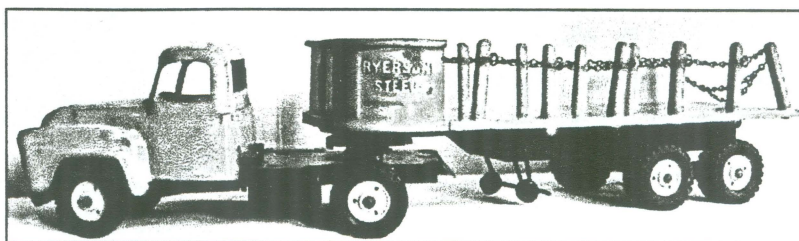
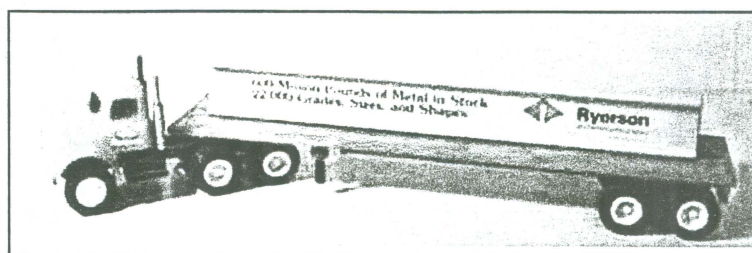


The RYERSONS on



The World's Online Marketplace™

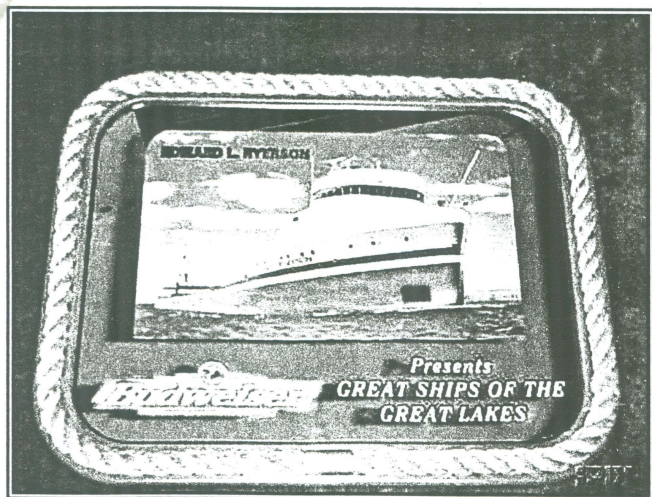
If you haven't checked out eBay lately, look what you've missed! We show here a small sampling of the amazing array of Family related items up for auction in the past several months. The selling prices have ranged from 25 cents to hundreds of dollars.



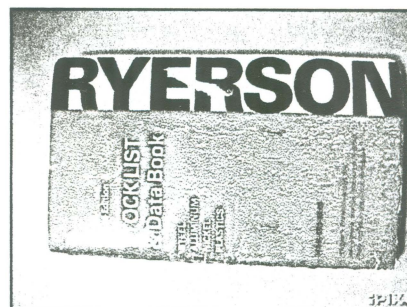
Ryerson Steel toy trucks have brought high prices



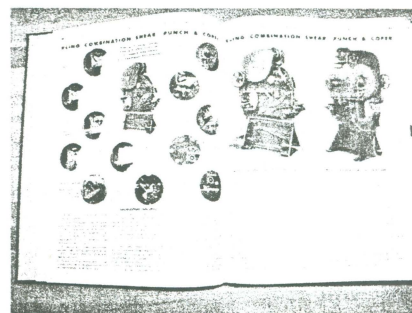
Ryerson Steel jacket "patch"



Great Lakes ships in the Budweiser series.
The Edward L. Ryerson Ore ship.



Ryerson Steel Stock & Data Book



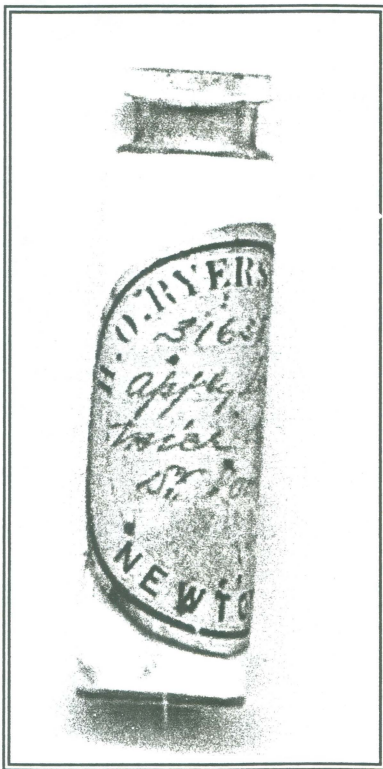
Ryerson Machinery and Tool Catalog



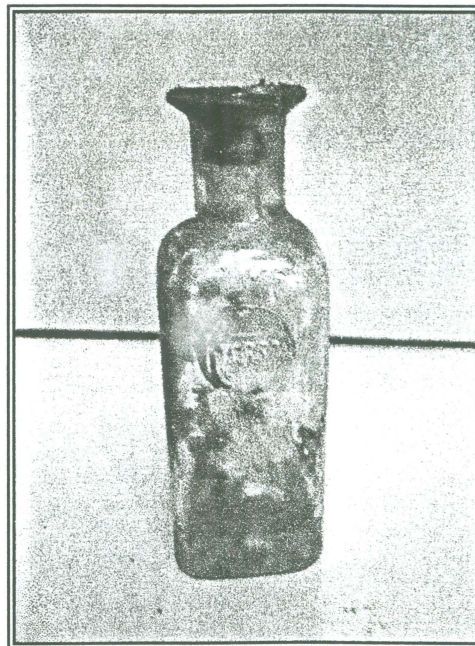
Milk Bottle
John Ryerson Maple Dairy
Boonton, New Jersey



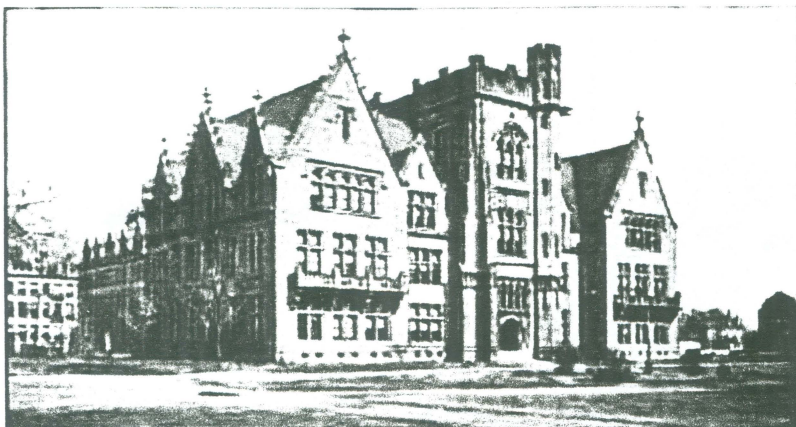
1970's vintage Ryerson Rams goalie jersey
Toronto, Ontario team



Tiny label reads H.O. RYERSON, Newton, NJ
Directions written by hand—still holds medicine!
See Port Ryerse Journal - June 2000 issue.

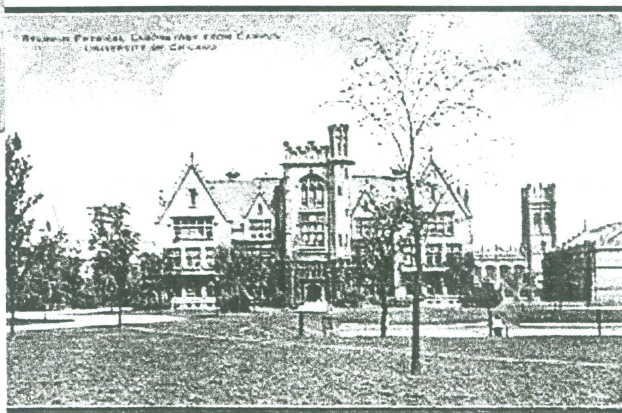


Pre-1900 Medicine Bottle
Embossed w/name RYERSON

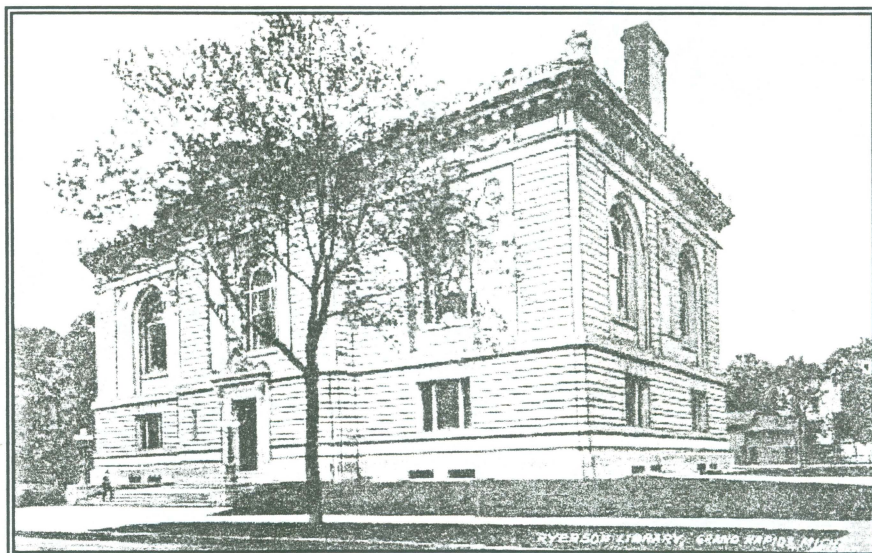


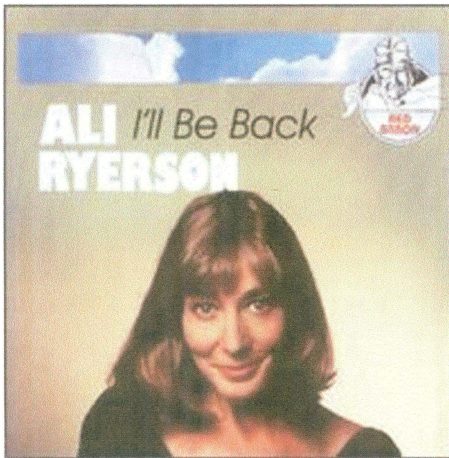
Postcards include a look at the Ryerson Laboratory located at the University of Chicago.

The Ryerson Lab can also be seen on the Spode Collectors plate below.



Post card -
RYERSON LIBRARY
Grand Rapids, Michigan





Jazz Flutist, ALI RYERSON on CD.

Ali is the daughter of noted jazz guitarist Art Ryerson and comes from a family of professional musicians. She descends from Col. Joseph Ryerson, Loyalist who settled in Norfolk Co. Ontario, Canada after the Revolutionary War.

- ❁ A SPATULA...it cuts, strains, serves and scrapes. It has a rosewood handle and a stainless steel blade. On the handle it says, "To a GOOD COOK from RYERSON Implement Company, Nevada, Iowa. (so sorry....no picture of this one!)

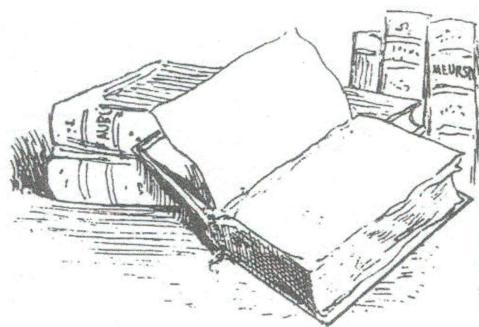
- ❁ Art work by MARGERY RYERSON including etchings, original copper plates and several oil paintings by this famous artist known for her paintings of children. Watch for a story on Margery in an up-coming issue of the Port Ryerse Journal.

- ❁ Watercolor of Port Ryerse signed by W. Jackson circa 1900-1920's



For a continuing look at this "Virtual Family Museum" of family memorabilia, go to www.ebay.com

A Chat with Phyllis



With the conclusion of the Ercolano story, we are finally able to complete the trilogy of the maritime disasters that involved the tragic loss of members of this family. (*The Titanic, the Lusitania and the Ercolano.*) Our thanks to Michael Crutchley for searching deep for the old records and sharing the story with us. We look forward to hearing more from him on other members of the Harris family.

“Thank you” to all who wrote and e-mailed comments about the last issue. Your words were kind and encouraging. I love hearing from you!

Please NOTE: We have **NEW** e-mail addresses where you can reach me or Tom. (see box below) Not sure what will go into the next issue – there are several great stories almost ready to go! So we’ll all be surprised! <grin>

Phyllis

The Port Ryerse Journal
Published 3 times a year by the
RYERSE-RYERSON Family Association
Box 262, Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada N5C 3K5



SURFING the NET ? Check these out!

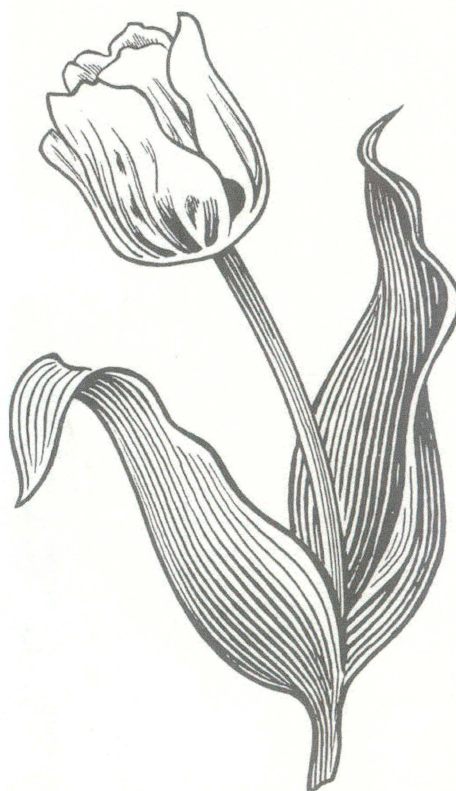
** The entire **1916 Ryerson Genealogy** can now be accessed on www.GenealogyLibrary.com (a subscription based webpage.)

** Check out www.ellisland.com to see if any of your ancestors arrived by ship at New York’s Ellis Island. If you’re lucky, you’ll be able to see the actual passenger list and maybe even a picture of the ship they came on!

** Take a self-guided tour of the **GREAT TREES of Old Norfolk County** (Ontario) and read about the large Black Walnut tree planted by Col. Samuel Ryerse on the bank of Young’s Creek! www.kwic.com/nfn/trees.htm

** See a picture of the house built by **Tunis Ryerson** about 1780 – now under the waters of the Wanaque Reservoir in New Jersey!
www.palsplus.org/wannaque/archive/settlers.htm

** For a look at the **Ryerson Iron Furnace** see www.palsplus.org/wannaque/archive/iron.htm



The Port Ryerse Journal

The RYERSE-RYERSON Family Association Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 2

ISSN 201-0065

June 2002

Favorite Daughters Issue!

Let's Hear it for the Ladies!

Margery Austen Ryerson 1886 – 1989

An award-winning painter and printmaker in many media, Margery is best known for her sensitive portraits of children. "Children are unsophisticated and lively," she said. You have to learn to paint them on the move. I used to go to settlement houses and nurseries and paint the children as they were. Many of my former classmates at Vassar would lend me their children." She painted children napping and ing their music lessons when they were totally absorbed in what they were doing.

She became a successful portrait artist at a time when there were very few women in a field dominated by men. She lived and painted in New York for nearly 70 years, living in a loft at the National Arts Club on Gramercy Park. She lived simply...with her art work piled everywhere. There were portraits, landscapes, oils, watercolors, and etchings piled all around her studio, leaning against the walls, chairs and fireplace. "I'm not Grandma Moses," she said laughingly. "I've never cut off an ear!" I'm not a curiosity – I'm just a painter."

Not only was she a respected artist but she was also responsible for the creation of two of America's most famous and classic art books, *The Art Spirit* by Robert Henri and *Hawthorne on Painting* by the great teacher, Charles Hawthorne.

Two days before her one hundredth birthday in September of 1986, Margery appeared lively and animated at the opening of the centennial exhibition of her work in the West Wing Gallery of Ringwood

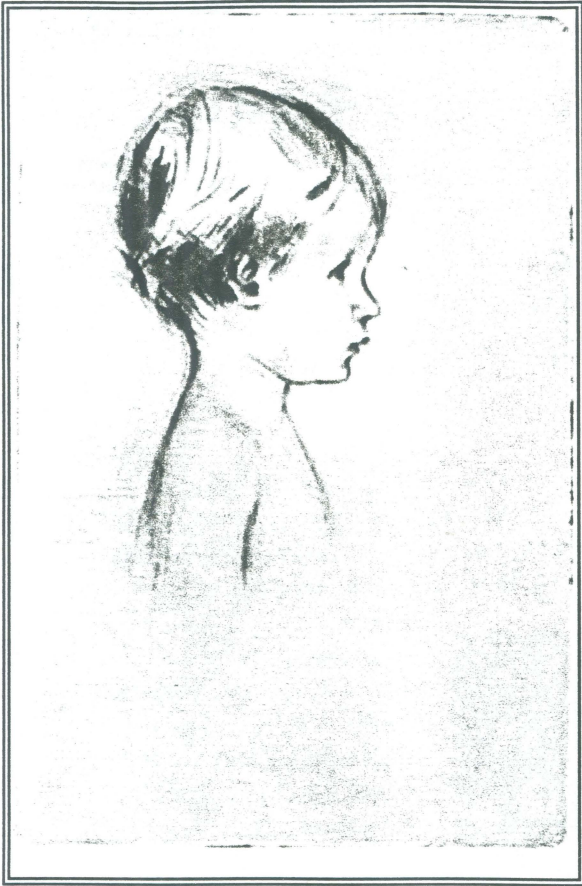
Manor, once the home of her great-grandparents and now part of Ringwood State Park in Passaic Co., N.J. Her great-grandfather, Martin J. Ryerson, owned the Ringwood iron mines and furnaces from 1807 to his death in 1839 when his sons took over the business, eventually selling it to Peter Cooper in 1853. This house contains family furniture that she donated. On display there is a landscape painted by her great-grandmother, Frouche Van Winkle Ryerson.



Margery would tell you that her artistic talents came more from her mother, a sculptor, rather than her father's family who were more interested in business. Success brought her awards from many art societies and her work exhibited and

acquired by many museums and galleries here and abroad.

In May of 1966 a Newark (NJ) News reporter walked with Margery around the neighborhoods where she grew up in Newark. Natives of that area will find her comments in that news article fascinating as she drew on long-cherished memories.



Margery Ryerson was born in Morristown, Morris County, NJ in 1886. She was the only child of Mary McIlvaine (Brown) and David Austen Ryerson, a Newark attorney. In 1909 she graduated from Vassar, continuing her studies at Columbia University in New York City. She died March 30, 1989 at the age of 102 years and six months



Read more about Margery:

Newark Sunday News, Section 5, May 15, 1966.

Past and Promise: Lives of New Jersey Women publ. March 1990

(The Women's Project of New Jersey, Inc.)

Margery Ryerson 1886-1989 by Robert B. Stuart. *The Highlander*, No. Jersey Highlands Historical Soc.

Conversation with Margery Ryerson by Charles Movalli, *American Artist* 40 (Nov. 1976).

Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1929).

Who's Who in American Art (1980).

Who Was Who in America (1981).

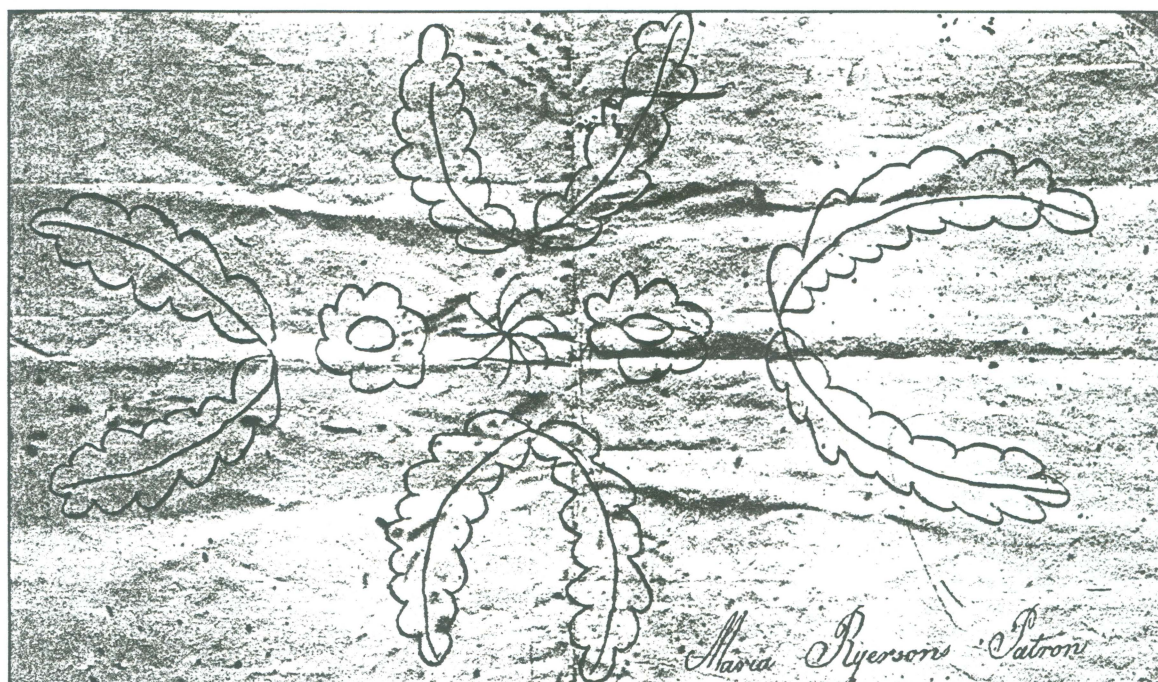
Margery Ryerson's work is included in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian, the Brooklyn Museum, The Boston Museum, the Uffizi Gallery (Florence), The Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, the New York Public Library and the Cleveland Museum of Art among others.

Her numerous awards include four Gold Medals and one Silver from the National Arts Club, the Bronze Medal from the Knickerbocker Artists and several citations from the American Watercolor Society.



Mary Abigail Ryerson (Margery Austen Ryerson's grandmother) penned the beautiful calligraphy shown above in her Memory Book. It contains poems and autographs written by family and friends. On one page is a poem dated 'Ringwood 1843' and on another page an inscription from her husband Peter when he left for the Civil War. It proved to be his farewell for he was killed in battle.

New Jersey Historical Society – Newark, N.J.



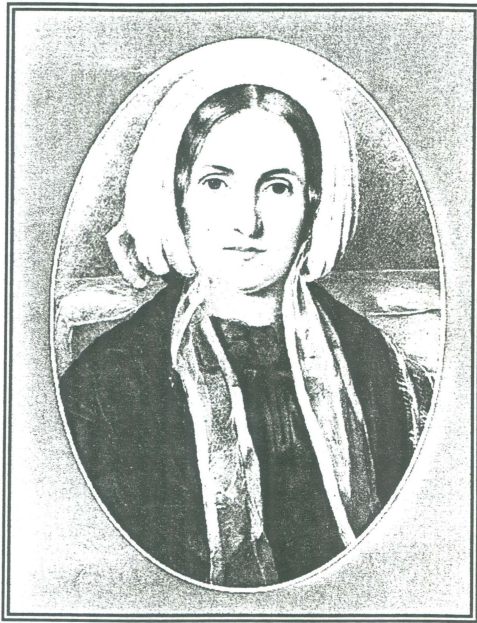
A "Patron" (pattern?) for some hand-work, carefully folded and included with a letter written by George A. Ryerson dated Christmas Eve, December 24, 1864. It is signed by Maria Ryerson.

Philhower Collection, Rutgers University Library, New Jersey.

Amelia (Ryerse) Harris – *In Her Own Words*

Remembering the destruction of her father's

Port Ryerse (Ontario) mills by American soldiers in 1814.



"In May of 1814 we had several days of heavy fog. On the 18th, I think, the fog lifted. We saw seven or eight ships under the American flag anchored off Ryerse with a small number of small Boats floating by the side of each ship. As the fog cleared way they hoisted sail and dropped down three miles below us, opposite Port Dover.

On the following morning, the 25th of May, as my Mother and myself were at breakfast, the Dogs made an unusual barking. I went to the door to discover the cause. When I looked up I saw the hillside and the fields as far as the eye could reach covered with American soldiers. They had landed at Patterson's Creek, burnt the Mills and village of Port Dover and then marched to Ryerse.

Two men stepped from the ranks, selected some large chips, came into the room where we were standing and took coals from the hearth, without speaking. My mother knew instinctively what they were going to do. She went out and asked to see the commanding officer, a gentleman rode up to her and said he was the person she asked for. She entreated him to spare her property and said that she was a widow with a young family. He answered her civilly & respectfully and regretted that his orders were to Burn, but that He would spare the house, which he did, & said in justification that the Buildings were used as barracks and the mill furnished flour for British Troops.



Very soon we saw a column of dark smoke arise from every Building and what at early morn had been a prosperous homestead, at noon there remained only smouldering ruins. The following day Col. Talbot and the Militia under his command marched to Fort Norfolk. The Americans were then safe on board their own ships & well on their way to their own shores.

My Father had been dead less than two years, & little remained of all his labours, excepting the orchards and cultivated fields. It would not be easy to describe my mother's feelings as she looked at the desolation around her."

Women and War – Amelia Harris – first hand account

<http://www.galafilm.com/1812/e/people/womenatwar.htm>.



*The home of John and
Mary (RYERSON) Reading
Flemington, New Jersey*

John Reading (1686-1767) was one of New Jersey's most illustrious colonial residents. The only son of Col. John Reading, educated in England, and through inheritance and wise investment, the owner of vast land holdings in what is now Hunterdon, Sussex, Warren and Morris Counties. He served the Crown in many important offices, among them the acting royal governor, the first native-born Jerseyman to hold that position.

His wife was **MARY RYERSON**, the daughter of George (Joris) Ryerson – of another important colonial land holding family. <grin>

John Reading kept a diary, a daily record of business, personal and family activities from January 1746 through November 1752. Its hundreds of entries describe the running of his large estate. We share a few entries in which you'll see his wife **MARY** playing an important part in his activities by looking after his household and carrying money to New York for him.

“June 20, 1747 – The Instructions & Papers relating to the affairs of Govt. were delivered to me.

June 21st – Came home this day about 1 of the clock. My wife (Mary) in my absence gave John have (money) to pay T. Collins.

July 10, 1747 – Pay'd an Indian Woeman for pulling flax.

August 14, 1747 – My wife set off to see her daughter.

October 13, 1747 – My wife set off for New York by whom I sent in cash £26 sent down to Brunswick. Bought at the Landing 1000 oysters pd for them.

November 1, 1747 – Pay'd Dr. Nause for my wife.

November 10, 1747 – This day my wife was taken extremely ill was despaired of her life. Towards evening something better.

February 1748 – Lay'd out for some necessaries: a pr of shoes for self. A pr for my wife.

October 3, 1748 – Sent by my wife to New York £27.

July 4, 1749 – My wife sold a blanket for 12s Light Money.

September 16, 1749 – My wife set out for her Brother Georges in company with her son George, Brothers Martin and Luke.

April 21, 1750 – Gave my wife for New York 6ps of 8.

May 24, 1750 – Luke Ryerson pd part of my wife's Legacie Light Money.

October 9, 1750 – This day my wife son Jos and Dr. Molly set out for N.Yk.

October 16, 1750 – My wife returned from N. York.

December 10, 1750 – Brother Luke Ryerson pd 2:12:6 Proc: towards his sisters Legacy.”

The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey Vol. 62, No. 1, January 1987.

Yes! We have interesting and talented female cousins even in 2002! Here's one!



Premier Jazz Flutist, ALI RYERSON on CD.
 Ali is the daughter of noted jazz guitarist Art Ryerson and comes from a family of professional musicians. She descends from Col. Joseph Ryerson, Loyalist who settled in Norfolk Co. Ontario, Canada after the Revolutionary War.

Ali was born in New York City in 1952 and grew up in Westchester County. "My maternal grandmother and her brothers and sisters were all professional musicians, performing in Vaudeville. My father, Art Ryerson worked with Paul Whitman in the late 1930's and became a top studio musician in NYC for over 40 years. He has toured worldwide, including several tours with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra."

The San Francisco Express called her the 'most important jazz flutist to have emerged thus far this decade!' She has performed and recorded with a diverse range of artists....from Laurindo Almeida to Luciano Pavarotti. She has toured the USA, Canada, Europe, Japan and Africa and has performed in many major jazz festivals including the famed Monterey Jazz Festival, the JVC in New York, the Guinness Festival in Ireland, Edinburgh Festival in Scotland and the Centennial Celebration at Carnegie Hall. She recently performed with Dr. Billy Taylor at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and continues to tour with duo partner Joe Beck. She has been blessed with a gift for playing flute with a style and sound that communicates powerfully with audiences. She stands alone among jazz flutists, most of whom, of course, are men! Bravo Ali! We love your soft sweet sounds!

Internet Search Engine: Ali Ryerson



WHAT'S NEW in the PAST LANE????

John Ryerson Home in Brooklyn Torn Down

Copied from the Digby Courier, Digby NS newspaper article dated **March 13, 1896**

A Mansion Of The Colonial Style That Belongs To A Family With Members Now Resident in Bear River, N.S.

The Ryersons of Bear River who have a large family connection in that place and vicinity, trace their genealogy back to New Amsterdam pioneers of nearly two centuries ago. Such family history is always sure to have many interesting points and the pride that has its birth in old colonial ancestry is to a great degree justifiable. One of the fathers of the Ryerson family was the original owner of a huge old dwelling-house in Brooklyn, N.Y. now being torn down to give place to new buildings. A recent number of the New York Sun has an article in reference to it that apart from its interest to our Bear River readers is of general interest as a description of a typical old style residence. We give a few extracts.

The old Ryerson residence cottage has been a familiar landmark in Brooklyn for very many years. The house has a history and many thrilling stories are told as to the scenes it has passed through. When it was **built by James Ryerson, about the year 1730**, that family was among the wealthiest of the early Dutch settlers of Long Island. They owned many acres of land and their possessions were **touched on one side by the sea and on the other side by the old Flushing Road**, a track a mile wide. The house was surrounded by a flower garden and had a lovely view toward the river.

The mansion was the residence of several generations of Ryersons and early in its history was the scene of the suicide of a farm hand who died for the love of a milk maid. When the growing city of Brooklyn reached this neighbourhood the Ryersons abandoned the house as a residence. Then began its many vicissitudes of fortune. About sixty years ago, the place fell into the hands of a Scotchman who turned it into a tavern and called it the "Tam O' Shanter." It became the resort of gamblers and two or three drunken murders added to the ghosts who tenanted the old house. Then an Englishman succeeded to the property and he also kept it as a sporting resort. The reputation of the old house went from bad to worst. An Irishman, O'Reilly ran it about forty years ago as a low tavern with two more murders under his regime. After that the bad name of the old mansion as a haunted house kept people away from it. It was deserted for a long time. In 1867 the house, then falling into picturesque decay was purchased by Henry Mooney.

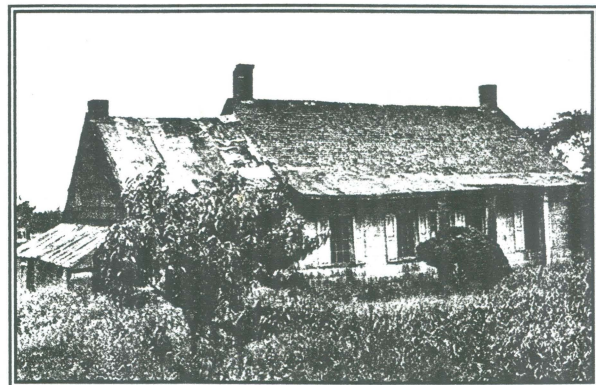
This old Ryerson cottage is like other old Dutch farmhouses which we may occasionally see in some of the old Long Island villages. It was one story high with a big

attic and a long sloping roof ending at the front and back in a wide piazza. The front and sides of the house are covered with heavy, flat, pine shingles, two feet long and half an inch thick and still sturdy and strong. The bricks of the big chimney came over from Holland and are much smaller than the modern kind. They are as hard as iron and the mortar takes the steel point of a pick axe to break it

The great beams of the floor and roof and the studding of the walls are made from heavy timber all hewn by hand from trees felled in the virgin forests of the new world. There is a sturdy honesty about all the workmanship that shows the house was put up to stay. Moreover the thickness of the walls would indicate that its owner expected to make his house his castle in more sense than one. For there were hostile Indians in those days and the isolated farmhouses might have to be suddenly transformed into a fortress to defend the settler from Massacre.

In tearing down the venerable relic much curious rubbish was discovered in the attic and cellar. A rust-eaten horse pistol, two feet long, with a flint lock was found in a hiding place in the wall. A few English copper pennies were found under the floors and under the roof, a heavy cavalry sabre of English make.

Old Dutch house similar to what the Ryerson house might have looked like



GRANDMA'S APRON — *written by a descendant of an early pioneer, Beatrice Phillips Williams*



When I was a child, Grandma's garments made little impression on me ...with the exception of her apron! Since Grandma was a woman of ample proportions, her cover all apron was a big affair of printed cotton, with a bib, slow to soil, and edged with bias tape. Its uses were limitless. The apron made a basket when she gathered eggs from the henhouse late in the afternoon. If there were fluffy yellow chicks to be carried to the back porch during a sudden cold spell, they made the trip peeping contentedly in Grandma's apron. When these same little darlings grew into henhood and pecked and scratched among Grandma's flowers, she merely flapped her apron at them and they ran squawking to the chicken yard. I can see her yet, tossing cracked corn to the hungry flock from her apron.

It took lots of chips and kindling to start fires in big old black cookstove in Grandma's kitchen. Yes, she carried them in her apron. Vegetables and fruits too --- lettuce, radishes, peas, string beans, apples, peaches --- all found their way to the kitchen via Grandma's carry-all.

If men working in the field weren't too far away, the apron waved aloft was the signal to "come to dinner!" At threshing or company time when the long dining room table was crowded with hungry folk, Grandma hovered around passing aromatic dishes and flipping that big apron at pesky flies.

When grandchildren came to visit, the apron stood ready to dry a child's tear or if the little ones were a bit shy, it made a good hiding place in case a stranger appeared unexpectedly. Its pocket held her hanky, clothes pins, a spool of thread and sometimes flower seeds.

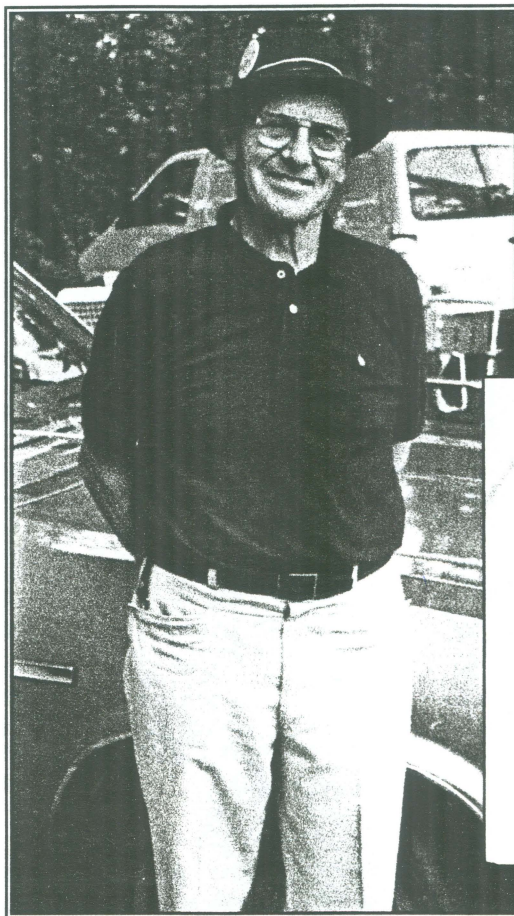
The apron was used countless times to stroke a perspiring brow as Grandma bent over the hot wood stove or hoed the garden under a blistering sun.

Hastily, it dusted a chair or table if company was sighted coming down the lane. In chilly weather, Grandma wrapped the friendly apron around her arms while she hurried on an outside errand or lingered at the door with a departing guest. And in the evening when the days work was done, Grandma shed her apron of many uses --- and draped it over the canary's cage!

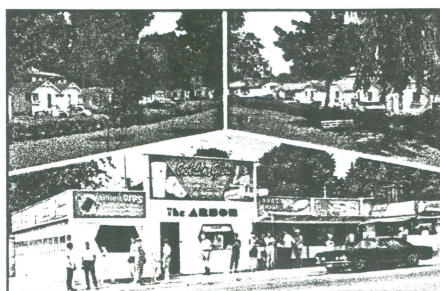
We are deeply saddened

to announce the death of our good friend – and cousin – **VERN RYERSE** who passed away peacefully at Norfolk General Hospital on Friday April 5, 2002. The Simcoe Reformer noted that he was 85. He was the beloved husband of Barbara, loving father of Jan (Sheila) of St. Louis, MO, Michael (Andree) of Toronto and Jane Uloth (Brian) of Burlington. He was the special grandfather of Tashya Riggs, Amy Moser, Bryson Uloth and the great grandfather of Sophie Moser. He was predeceased by his brother Victor (1996). Vern will be remembered by many as the co-owner and operator along with his brother Vic of the Arbor and Arbor Cabins until their retirement in 1984. He was always a loyal supporter of the Port Dover, Ontario Community. He was active for over 40 years as a dedicated and involved member of the Port Dover Utilities Commission. He also served as a member of the Port Dover School Board, as a Sea Scout leader and a hockey coach. He was a long time member of Grace United Church and was a 61 year member and a 46 year Past Master of Erie Lodge No. 149, AF & AM, Port Dover.

Vern was well known in the village of **Port Ryerse** for his connection with the Port Ryerse Memorial Church and for his interest in preserving and maintaining the Ryerse Family Heritage and Property. Vern hosted the Ryerse-Ryerson Family Picnic at his Port Ryerse home for 16 years, from 1985 to 2000. His funeral service was held on Wednesday April 10, 2002 at Grace United Church followed by cremation. For those wishing to make a memorial donation, the family suggests the Norfolk General Hospital Family Fund, The Port Dover Lions Club, or the Botanical Gardens. The Ryerse-Ryerson Family Association plans a living memorial in Vern's honor – for his untiring efforts and years of encouragement for our endeavors. We have lost an important branch on our family tree.



One of Vern's favorite shirts – says it all!



THE BIRD GIRL



This small sculpture created in the early 1930's by Chicago artist Sylvia Shaw Judson, depicts a young girl holding two bowls, perhaps containing water or birdseed. Only 3 bronzes were cast from the mold. One is at the Ragsdale art community near Chicago and the second one belonged to **Edward L. Ryerson** who placed it first at his Massachusetts home and later moved it to the Ryerson Conservation Area in Deerfield, Illinois.

The third went to Savannah, Georgia to mark a family gravesite in Bonaventure Cemetery. Here it stood in quiet solitude for 50 years until it was photographed and chosen as a cover photo for the book and for the opening scene of the movie,

"Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil." The statue stood against a background of Spanish moss hanging from live oak trees, creating just the right mood for the story. The manner in which the little girl holds the bowls suggests the weighing of good and evil and sets the stage perfectly for the John Berendt story of murder in a setting of gentility and moral decay.

In the stampede of interest in Savannah that followed the publication of the wildly popular book, the little "Bird Girl" became a tourist attraction -- much to the dismay of the family whose relatives were buried beneath her. They moved the statue into hiding for a few years and now have donated it to the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences in Savannah where it is currently on display.

Sources:

Charles Leroux, Staff writer for the Chicago Tribune

Gene Downs, Savannah Morning News

Many thanks to Ross and Tiffany Westbrook for alerting us to this story after their first anniversary visit to Savannah's Bonaventure Cemetery and Telfair Museum of Art on 3-10-2002.

Use your internet search engine for Ryerson Conservation Area or The Bird Girl to read more about it!

Ryerson Woods

Starting in the 1920's Edward L.

Ryerson and several of his friends purchased land here and built log cabins in the woods to use for weekend getaways. Several of these cabins still remain. In 1942, the Ryersons built a Greek Revival summer home, known as Brushwood Farm, where they raised Arabian Horses.

Over half of the land is so ecologically valuable that it has been added to the Illinois Nature Preserve System and benefits from special protection rules. Over 150 bird species and nearly 500 species of flowering plants have been seen at these woods.

In 1966, Ryerson and his friends began, under Ryerson's leadership, to donate and sell their land to the Lake County Illinois Forest Preserve District. Along with donations from other families, the woods now total 550 acres of unique, unspoiled natural woodland areas.

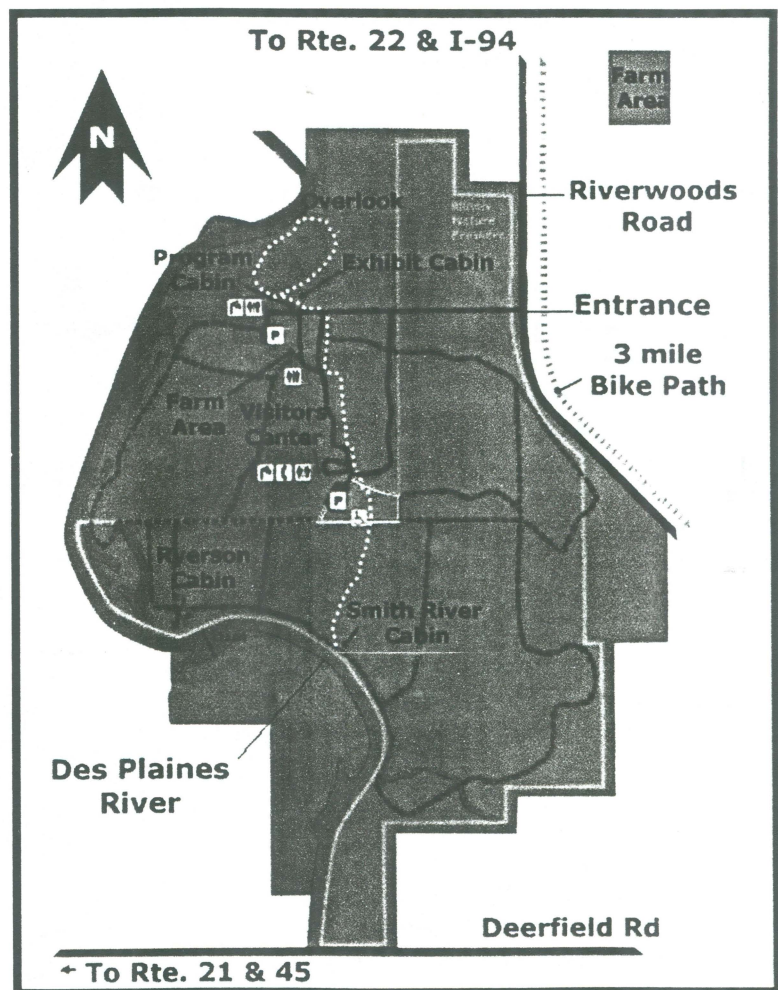
Location

Located on the east bank of the Des Plaines River near Deerfield in southeastern Lake County, Ryerson Woods is also known as The Ryerson Conservation Area. Its entrance is on Riverwoods Road, one and one-half miles south of Half Day Road (Route 22) and two miles north of Deerfield Road, just west of the I-94 Tollway.

The Visitors Center, the home once owned by Ryerson Steel chairman and Chicago philanthropist, Edward L. Ryerson, houses an extensive natural science library, a collection of rare nature books, and a children's nature library. The center hosts changing art exhibits depicting the beauty and wonder of nature.

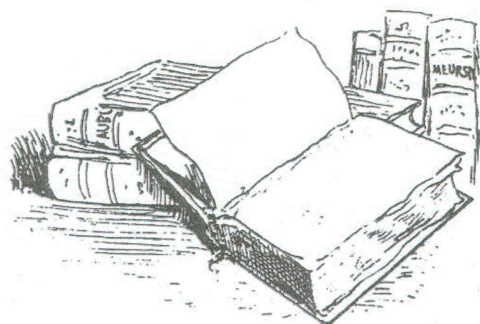
The Ryerson Conservation Area offers many nature programs and special events throughout the year for families, adults, children, teachers and community groups. Six miles of flat trails open to hikers wind through a stately forest and follow a quiet river. Two exhibit cabins are open and in the summer, a butterfly garden.

The Ryerson's little Bird Girl makes her home here!



www.Ryersonconservationarea.com

A Chat with Phyllis



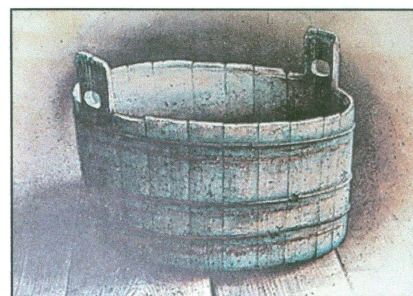
Yessiree!.....the girls in this family are every bit as important as the guys!! A rooster struts and crows but it's the hen that hatches the chicks! <grin>

I thought it was time to tell you about a few of "us!" I hope you enjoyed these little thumbnail sketches. I KNOW there are many more of us who have done *wonderful and amazing things*and I'd sure like to hear from you! I'll put you in the next issue! <grin>

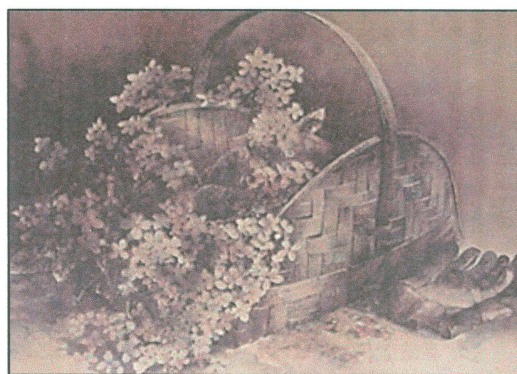
Our sincere sympathies are extended to the family of Vern Ryerse. We will never forget him.

Join us at the Ryerse-Ryerson Reunion in July. It's always a fun event and a good place to renew old friendships and meet all the new babies born since last year! Be sure you allow time to visit and take a stroll through Port Ryerse....up the hill from the lake...up the hill to the church to see the graves of Samuel and Sarah Ryerse and other family members. The old Port Ryerse General Store building is still there and it won't take much **imagination to "see"** our early cousins scurrying about their business. If you're lucky, you may even **"see"** one of those graceful lake schooners pull into the dock and begin loading grain and lumber! It takes very little imagination to enjoy this quaint and charming village.

Phyllis



Everyday Tools for our Ryerse/Ryerson mothers!



In Memoriam

Herman E. Ryerse Jr. died August 19, 2001.
(#1083, pg. 177)

The Port Ryerse Journal

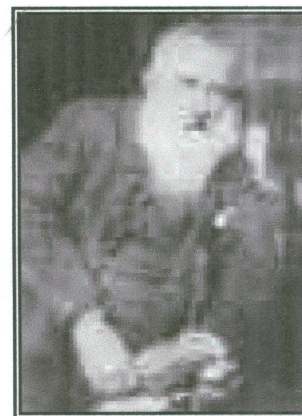
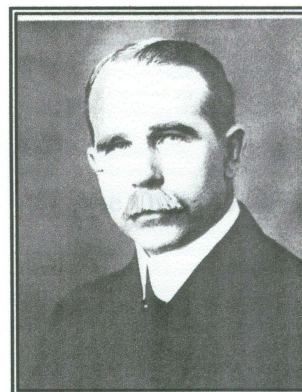
The RYERSE-RYERSON Family Association Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 3

ISSN 201-0065

November 2002

MARTIN *AND* Monet



Martin A. Ryerson visiting the artist, Claude Monet in 1920,
Giverny, France.

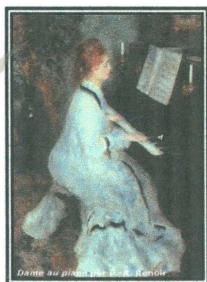
The Art Institute of Chicago.

Luminous, feathery splashes of color

depicting sailboats on the Seine, Japanese bridges over lush water lilies and rich gardens landscapes. It was a revolutionary style and it drew a storm of public criticism from the so-called art experts of that era. An American school boy attending private school in Paris, however, admired the French culture and took a fancy to this new style of Impressionistic painting. He came to admire the young artist, Claude Monet among many others and would later begin to buy some of these paintings for his own personal collection.

MARTIN ANTOINE RYERSON, the only son of Mary Antoine Campau and Martin Ryerson, grew up in Grand Rapids where his father had established a successful lumber company (see *The Port Ryerse Journal* – June 2000). After completing his studies in Europe and earning a law degree from Harvard, Martin took over his father's business. At his father's death he inherited considerable wealth and was able to increase that inheritance. In 1925 he paid the highest income tax in Chicago!

Martin A. Ryerson was a quiet, unassuming man. He retired while still a young man to devote himself to collecting art, frequently returning to Paris. Always open to new and innovative works and using his own good taste even though unpopular with the current fashion, he bought works of art at relatively low prices -- paintings that have sky-rocketed in value and today are priceless masterpieces.



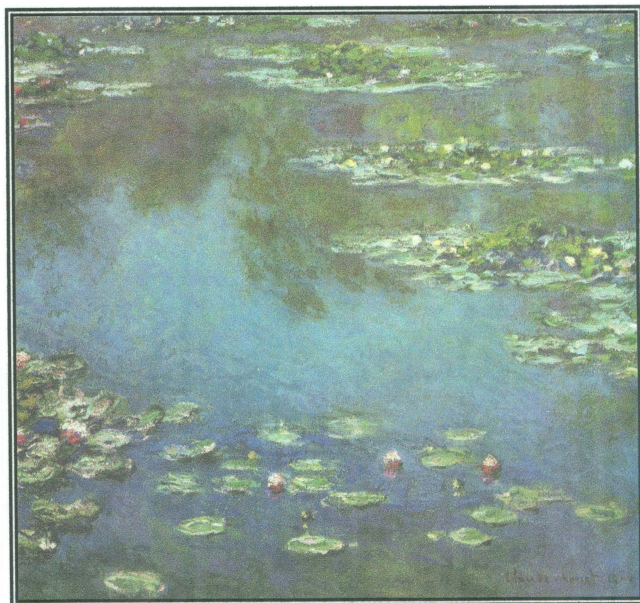
Martin's wife, Carrie was especially fond of the paintings of Renoir and many hung in their home. Her favorite was *La Dame au Piano* which she bought from Renoir himself. It hung over her piano until her death.

Not limited to European artists, their collection included paintings by American artists Mary Cassatt and Winslow Homer. Martin had a passion for learning about the works he was buying and collected a great library of art books. He collected Greek vases, silver and gold coins, rare and ancient textiles in great variety, and over 250 objects from the Orient.

When he began to travel in search of art for the Art Institute of Chicago, Martin was able to outbid the European dealers for treasures such as Rembrandt van Rijn's *Young Girl at an Open Half-Door*,

Franz Hals' *Portrait of an Artist*, Quentin Massy's *Man with a Pink*, Meindert Hobbema's *The Watermill with the Great Red Roof*, Adriaen van Osdade's *The Golden Wedding* and Anthony van Dyck's *Helena Tromper du Bois*. After much controversy and dissention, *The Assumption* became the first of El Greco's works to hang on the walls of an American museum, a real bargain at \$40,000. With these acquisitions, the Chicago Art Institute moved to the front ranks of this country's art museums.

In 1920, Martin visited **CLAUDE MONET** at his home in Giverny. It is easy to imagine these two men walking along the now famous garden paths, Monet proudly pointing out the various species of iris and water lilies! "I am good for nothing except painting and gardening," he once said! It was probably during this visit that Martin acquired his favorite painting of water lilies....it's blue mirrored waters reflecting the sky.



Not to be overlooked is Ryerson's legendary philanthropy that changed the face of both the Chicago and Grand Rapids cultural institutions. He worked tirelessly for the University of Chicago, the Art Institute of Chicago and was associated in the work of many other civic institutions including the Rockefeller Foundation, the Field Museum of Natural History, Trustee of the Carnegie Institute, the Chicago Old People's Home, the Sprague Memorial Institute and the Chicago Orphan Asylum. He presented an excellent library to Grand Rapids and another to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1901.

During his lifetime, he worked with the architect, Louis Sullivan who designed and built six buildings for him in Chicago. Only one of them still stands.

Sullivan also built the Ryerson Crypt in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery where Martin and his family are buried.



Martin Ryerson died August 11, 1932 at his home in Lake Geneva. He was 75 years old. His obituary calls him "one of the great art connoisseurs of the country." He and his wife, Carrie Hutchinson Ryerson lived to celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.

Today the Art Institute of Chicago holds one of the world's greatest collections of French Impressionist paintings, due in great part to the generosity of Martin A. Ryerson. During his life he gave the Art Institute a fabulous collection of 248 paintings and sculptures - from medieval Tuscan panels and Sienese altarpieces to the works of the Post Impressionists Cezanne and Gauguin. There were thirteen Monets, seven Goyas, six Renoirs, two Degas and a large collection of Winslow Homer watercolors. The collection also included many 17th and 18th century Italian and Dutch paintings including two famous paintings by Tiepolo as well as 13th, 14th, and 15th century primitives by Menling, Van der Weyden and others. There were two 16th century tapestries in the collection valued (25 years ago) excess of \$50,000 each!

We are proud to include Martin A. Ryerson as one of our "favorite sons!"

Claude Monet: 1840-1926

In 1995, The Art Institute of Chicago presented one of the most successful art exhibits of all time. "Claude Monet: 1840-1926" was the largest and most comprehensive exhibition ever devoted to the paintings of the leader of the Impressionists. One hundred fifty-nine works from around the world were brought together for this once-in-a-lifetime show. The attendance was unparalleled. During its run from July 22 to November 26, 1995, advance admissions were completely sold out, leading to the surreal spectacle of tickets for an art exhibit being scalped as if it were the Super Bowl. The show was an aesthetic as well as a popular success, with the selection of paintings offering the finest examples of Monet's work from every period of his career.



Close-up detail of part of the hinge on the magnificent gate of the Ryerson crypt.

Photo by Roger Hastings

Special thanks to Roger who provided the story idea, much research and special photographs.

Thanks Roger!

TABLEAUX MODERNES
DE PREMIER ORDRE

TÉLÉPHONE
N° 264-51

Bernheim Jeune & Co
EXPERTS
29, Boul. de la Madeleine
36, Avenue de l'Opéra
15, Rue Richemont

Paris, le 23 Juin 1911

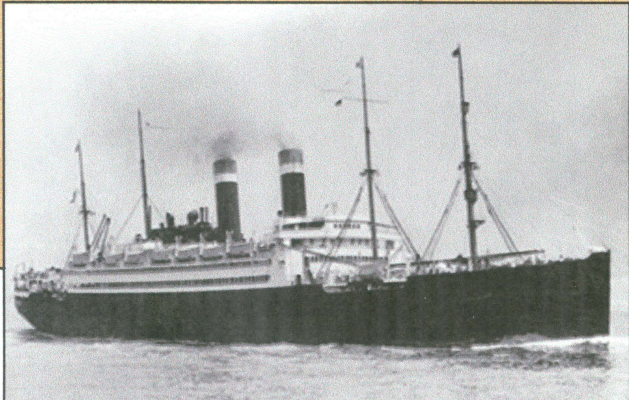
Vendu à Monsieur Ryerson
Chicago

les tableaux suivants qui lui seront expédiés à ses risques et périls.

Numeros	Artistes	Sujets	Francs
6446	Renoir	Les deux fillettes Touff et un mille f	31000

36, Avenue de l'Opéra
BERNHEIM JEUNE & Co
Experts, 29, Boul. de la Madeleine
36, Avenue de l'Opéra, 80
PARIS

Tous les tableaux vendus par la Maison BERNHEIM JEUNE & Co portant au verso un Numéro d'ordre imprimé en rouge
La maison ne garantit que les tableaux qui lui seront représentés avec son numéro




A few days after buying this painting, Martin A. Ryerson boarded the steamship George Washington at the French Port of Cherbourg and headed back to the US.



The Martin A. Ryersons and Charles L. Huthinsons in Jaipur, India, ca. 1892. The two couples frequently traveled together and both were longtime benefactors at the Art Institute. The Ryerson bequest of 1933 has been called "the finest single body of works ever to come to the museum." Art Institute

Read More About It

'Masterpieces – Famous Chicagoans and their Paintings' by Patricia Erens.

The Chicago Tribune (obituaries)

Chicago Historical Society Archives,

The Field Museum News,

<http://www.giverny.org/monet/welcome.htm>

<http://www.EllisIsland.org>

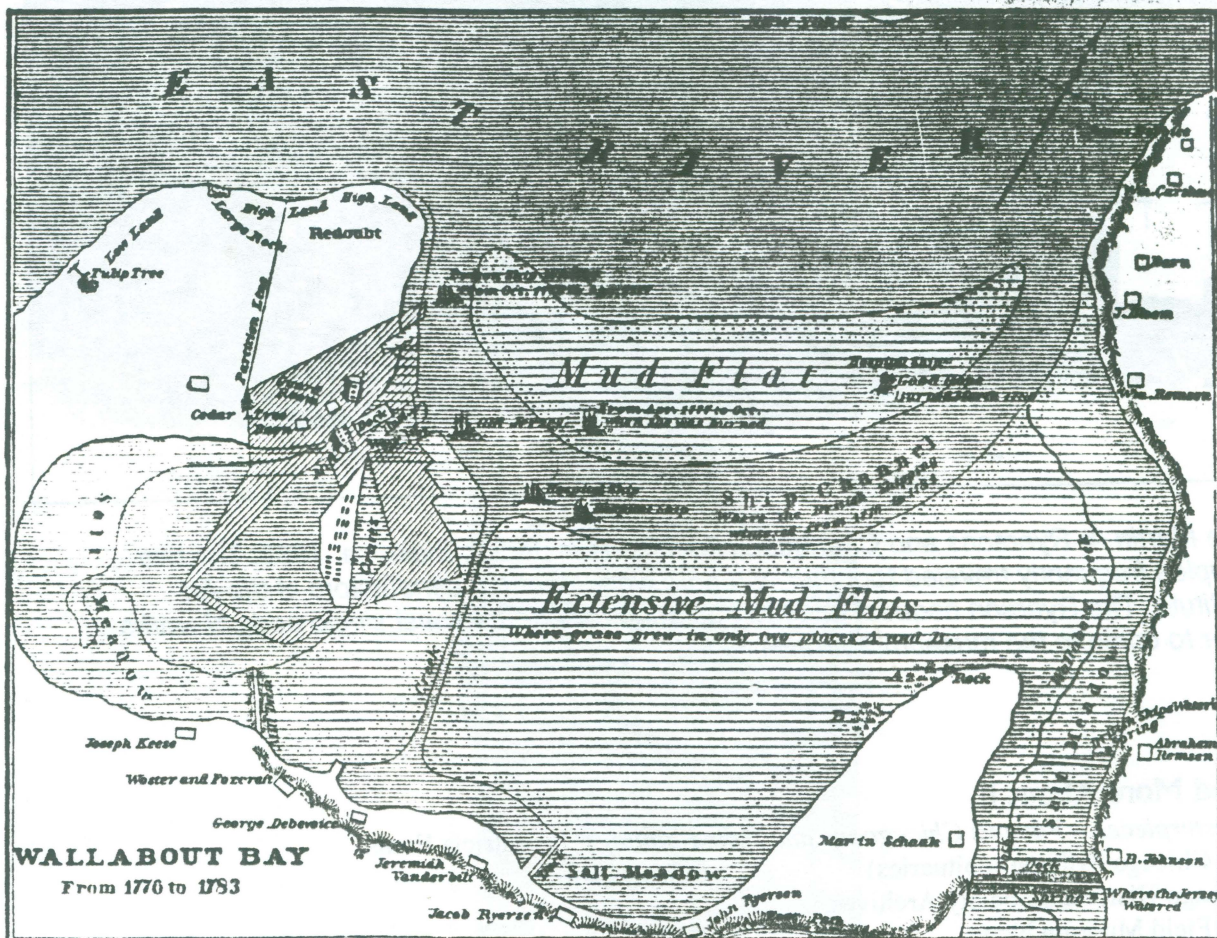
What's NEW in the PAST LANE? -

by Phyllis Ryerse

If you can find a copy of the September 16, 2002 issue of **THE NEW YORKER**, a "must read" is an article that begins on page 46 titled, "That was New York, 'The Holy Ground', The early history of the World Trade Center site" by Cathleen Schine. She writes a fascinating chronology of this land from the early Indian inhabitants, the arrival of the Dutch traders, the trading ship Tiger that burned and sank in the North River, how Dey Street was paved with stones in 1749, how the area became inhabited by carpenters, stonecutters, grocers, butchers, ropemakers and as many as 500 prostitutes (in an area they called 'The Holy Ground'), and how fire destroyed 500 buildings including everything on the site of the future World

Trade Center. You'll learn how the city was rebuilt, the waterfronts flourished and wealthy merchants built grand houses. John Jacob Astor built his house there and on a rent roll you'll find the name of Duncan Phyfe, the cabinet and chair maker. The author brings the story of this land right up to the day they began to excavate to reach the bedrock for the World Trade Center's foundation and how the fill dirt was dumped into the Hudson, pushing the shoreline out.

My thanks to **Judy Eisenhower** of Brinklow, Maryland for sending me a copy of this great article. It adds much to our understanding of the old Dey-Ryerson land and is a wonderful addition to the family archives. See a copy if you can!



Stiles - History of Brooklyn.

Find Jacob and John Ryerson land along bottom border.

MORE Ryerson REAL ESTATE!

We've learned all about Joris Ryerson's farm in New York City where the World Trade Center once stood -- but whatever became of the family's earlier land holdings in Breuckelen? The history books tell us that much of that land was eventually sold when it "*became too valuable to farm.*" This brief statement was driven home when we found the story of the John Ryerson Home being torn down (see *The Port Ryerse Journal - June 2002.*) Now another amazing piece of family history has been found in the November 18, 1851 issue of the *New York Times* shown below.

Auction Sale
Large and Positive Sale
350 Valuable Building Lots
11th Ward, BROOKLYN
Formerly belonging
to John Ryerson Deceased.

Situated on Flushing Park, Myrtle, Willoughby, DeKalb, Lafayette, Grand Aves, and on Houston and Ryerson Streets will be sold at auction by James Cole on Tuesday Nov 18 at 12 O'clock at the Merchants Exchange, New York. This property extends from Flushing to Lafayette Aves, 5 blocks wide, along Houston and Ryerson Streets and Grand Avenue in the following Order, Viz.

65 lots on the east side of Ryerson St
73 Lots on the west side of Grand Ave and rear of above
53 Lots on the east side of Houston St
11 lots on Flushing Ave
22 Lots on Park Ave
53 Lots west side of Ryerson St
16 lots on Myrtle Ave.
32 lots on Willoughby St
7 lots on DeKalb Ave
16 lots on Lafayette Ave

This is the most eligible, healthy, and accessible part of Brooklyn. Flushing, Myrtle and DeKalb Aves., graded and paved, run through this property and four omnibus routes - three from Fulton and one from South Ferry - with omnibuses running continually, taking ordinarily but 12 minutes to pass from Fulton Ferry to this property, and leave ferries on the arrival of each boat, making this but a short and convenient distance from New York. Ryerson Street is paved through the entire length of this property. Each lot can be immediately improved and built upon.

Terms - 60 percent may remain on bond and mortgage, payable on or before three years from November 1, 1851. Full abstract of title and copy of searches made by Rolfe & Trembly, Esqrs. will be furnished, if desired for \$5. Deeds and mortgages will be dated from day of sale. Deeds executed by Cyrus P. Smith, Esq. Orders of sale, together with maps etc. can be obtained at the offices of the Auctioneer, No 43 & Fulton St., Brooklyn, and No 9 Wall St. New York.

WOW! 350 lots!

But how did we first come to own that property??? The earliest recorded grant of land at the **Wallabout** was made by the Indians to Jacob Van Corlaer in June 1636. The next year, in 1637, Joris Jansen Rapalje purchased 335 acres on the east side of the cove from the Indians. Within 10 years nearly the whole waterfront from Newtown Creek to the southerly side of Gowanus Bay was in possession of individuals who were engaged in its actual cultivation. Along the bend of the cove lay the farms and tobacco plantations of Jan and Pieter Montfoort, Pieter Caesar the Italian, Michael Picet the Frenchman, Hans Lodewyck, Hans Hansen Bergen and others. These were lowlands, much of which was overflowed by the sea at every tide and which was covered with salt meadow grass, coarse and hard to cut with a common scythe but which the cattle preferred to fresh hay or grass. These farmers raised tobacco which was exported to Europe. Some of the best of it came from these plantations around the Wallabout.

Stiles' *History of Brooklyn* tells us that the Jan Montfoort grant would come into the possession of Martin Reyerszen for "the Montfoort land (28 morgens or 56 acres) had a river or meadow front of about 1078 feet and was identical with that now located between Hamilton and Grand Avenues and described on the map as farms of John and Jacob Ryerson. These were the great-grandsons of Marten

Ryerse, the emigrant from Amsterdam who originally owned the whole tract and who was the first husband of Annetje, daughter of Joris Rapalje." You'll find their names at the very bottom of the old map shown on page six. A later historian would write, "On Sunday mornings, in their long green (tobacco) wagons, the Ryersons made their way to the church from their plantation on the Wallabout."

This land remained in the family for seven generations until the explosive development of more modern times broke up the old farms and the land became "too valuable to farm" – some of it worth an incredible \$10,000 per acre. Alas, the old houses are gone and the fertile farmlands have been covered over by city streets, parking lots, warehouses and tenements. Slicing across the Ryerson farm today is the elevated portion of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, a rush-hour nightmare. If Marten Reijersz could see his farm today, the old Dutchman would shake his head in disbelief and smoke his long pipe in silent contemplation of the mysteries of progress. Perhaps he would even smile to see the sign -- RYERSON STREET!

(Compare the old map shown on page 6.....with the current street map shown on the next page to understand the scope of the old Ryerson land.)

Thanks to Geri Ryerson Kanner (Ryerson-L@Rootsweb.com) who found the interesting 1851 New York Times For Sale ad on the internet and shared it with us!



(poor picture of) Corner of Flushing & Ryerson Aves.





Wallabout area of Brooklyn, New York in 2000

The approximate boundaries of the Ryerson land can be seen above in the shaded area just below the Wallabout Bay which scoops out of the bend in the East River.

Leaving His Mark

On the 26th of December in the year 1630, Reijer Reijerss and Marritie Francen von Swindrecht made their way to the church on Amsterdam's Dam Square. There, they made known their intention to be married and were asked to sign their names in the marriage registry book. It was cold in the old church on that winter's day and Marritie's fingers were stiff as she made her mark – a simple X. She handed the pen to Reijer and watched as he carefully made several little lines on the page. The mark he made there has puzzled us for a long time. Was it a cross? A pitch fork? A little man? Why didn't he just make an X like Marritie?



Time to call in the experts! We checked encyclopedias and hand writing experts and finally did an exhaustive search on the internet. At long last we located a historian who lives near Oslo, NORWAY!

"There is no doubt," he wrote. "His signature is a *bumerke!*"

Compacten den 26^{den} Decembris 1630 Reijer Reijerss van Dantsch
ont 26 Jaers gesondt geborende, wien myn
bloetm. tract. sijndragde of Marritie Francen
van Swindrecht ont 29 Jaers gesondt geboren.
Wien myn bloetm. tract.

Verloofte hant drie Sonderghse in trouwpingen, omme naer de selde voorsz. trouwe
te solenniseren, en in alle te waerheeten, so verken daer anders gene sobettige verhinde-
ringe voor en wille. Ende naer dien zy by de waerheet verclaren, datse Sonst Afsoo-
nen warden, ende malcander en in bloede
Sonder door een Christelick huwelick mochte verhindert worden, niet en besonden,
zijn huy hare gheboden, verwilligheit,



Geir Kamsvaag Berntsen

is in the group life insurance business in Norway. His wife is a member of a historical society and they are both interested in things "historical." We connected after I placed a question on a Norwegian bulletin board. *"This is very interesting,"* said Geir. *"Reier Reiersen, as we would write his name today in Norwegian, was a common name in the villages of Moss and Zoon (today Son) in Ostfold in southeast Norway. Zoon was founded mainly because of the trade with the Dutch. Agder is also a possibility and from these places sometimes the traders ended up living in Amsterdam!"*

"I have spoken with several history specialists at the University of Oslo and also the vice president of the Norwegian Genealogy Society and they tell me that bumerkes were personal logos, used as signatures, to brand cattle, to identify their farms and even to mark their tools. There are incomplete and unpublished collections of early "bumarks" but you will need much luck to find your family!"

Not to be discouraged, I checked out the subject on my last trip to the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. They have only 2 books containing *"a list of owner marks or brands (bumerke) used to mark property, as signatures by those who could not write and those who used them in a seal."* One book had 440 pages of marks but no index! There were 50 bumerkes on each page! You see at the top and bottom of this page, just a few of the hundreds of marks that I copied from those books. None resembled the one made by our Reijer.

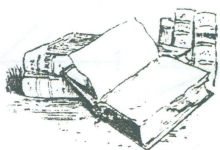
So we end up with the lingering tradition that our early family history is found in Norway. We have a Norwegian bumerke on a marriage intention record and we have the advice of experts who tell us it is very difficult to trace a Norwegian family much before the second half of the 17th century. Few consecutive records were kept before that time.

And finally, we have Reijer who left us his curious little 'mark!'



by Phyllis Ryerse

A Chat with Phyllis



Lots of interesting mail this month!

Wendy Bergerud made an interesting trip to New Brunswick where she made quick visits to the museum in Saint John, the Maugerville Anglican Church, the Fredericton Provincial Archives and the area of Col. Sam's early land grant. More from Wendy later!

Judy Eisenhour spotted that great magazine article about the early New York land and sent me a copy. Thanks Judy! It was great!

Roger Hastings of Chicago has supplied me with some wonderful information on the lumberman, Martin Ryerson and his philanthropist-art connoisseur son, Martin Antoine Ryerson! Roger is doing research for a book on the architecture of Louis Henry Sullivan including the famous Ryerson crypt in Chicago's Graceland Cemetery. For this issue he provided extensive information and advice and even found the picture of Martin up on that Elephant!! Nice job Roger!!

Please note my NEW MAILING ADDRESS - and let me hear from you too!

Phyllis

FUNNY GUY !

Our own Tom Ryerson is following a dream of being a paid comedian, in both stand up for adults and a special children's act. Tom's stage name is Igloo Harras and since he began on June 19th, things have been going well. He has done his children's act in front of 2,000 people, and his adult act has also gone over pretty good. Tom has secured an agent and more jobs in the comedy/children's line of things are coming his way. Show your support by signing his "guestbook" on his comedy website, www.geocities.com/iglooharras/



The Port Ryerse Journal

Published 3 times a year by the

RYERSE-RYERSON Family Association

Box 262, Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada N5C 3K5
7440 Quarter Horse Lane, Gainesville, GA 30506
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