

CUT OFF LAKE SAILORS AND THE DWELLERS ON SHORE

Evening on the Waters a Time of Joy for Folks Who Spend the Daylight Hours in City Offices or Storerooms During the Long Hot Days of Mid-Summer

BEAUTIFUL CUT OFF LAKE.
How pleasant are the memories of the nights spent sailing on thy rolling surface under the silvery luster of the summer moon!

Night, with its mysterious allurements of shadow and uncertainty. A spreading breath of waving billows, swelling, tossing and undulating under the soft refulgence of the midsummer moon. Is there a more charming scene in Elysium? Can there be better enchantment?

What more beautiful and enjoyable than a sail around this lovely inland sea, with its long rows of picturesque cottages, accompanied by a few choice spirits of the most companionable sort? What more pleasurable than to skirt around the edges of the lake with lights in the distance shut out by the darkening trees? Could anything be more fascinating and enticing?

Omaha folks have been somewhat slow in learning that they are gifted and fortunate in possessing such a lovely spot at their very doors; that a trip to distant lakes was not necessary for the enjoyment of a delightful sail over expansive waters of good depth, with plenty of wind at all times to send the gallant skiff scudding over the rolling waves.

Nature and the changing course of the old Missouri has placed at the very feet of the city a fine stretch of water in the shape of a horseshoe, which gives an ideal course for a sail, day or night, and it is now up to the people of Omaha to continue the good work thus started to make the spot famous all over the country for the jolly times which will be the envy of all not fortunate enough to have a boat or to have friends who have one.

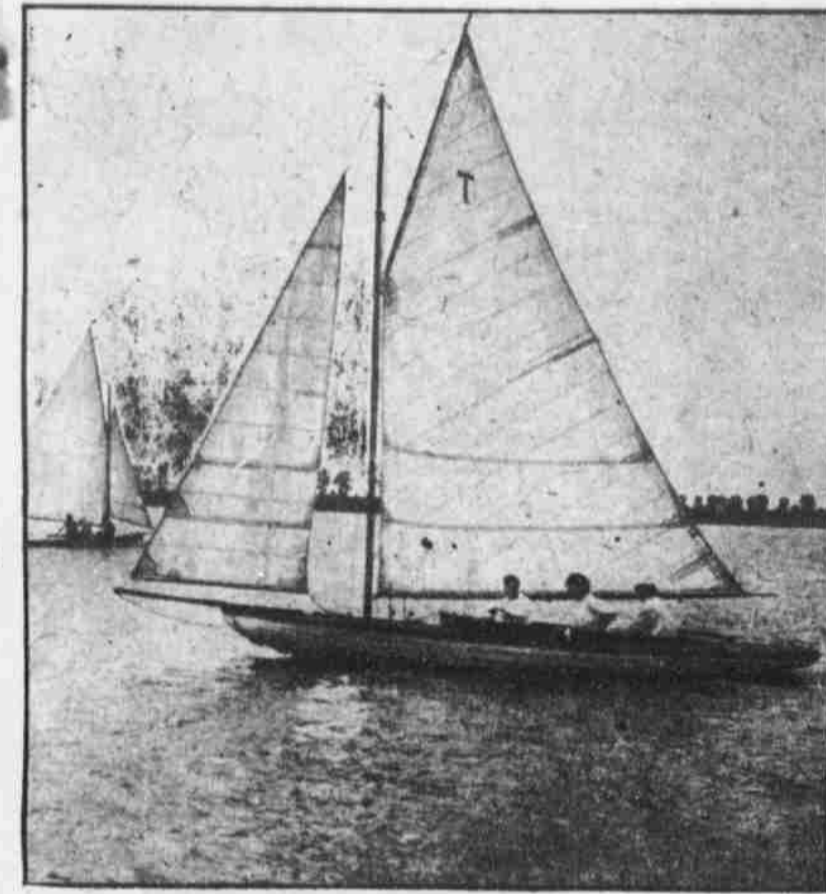
How changed is the old place in a few short years. But a short time ago it was the dumping ground for the city, and now what a



THE "GREBE."



THE "VIVIAN."

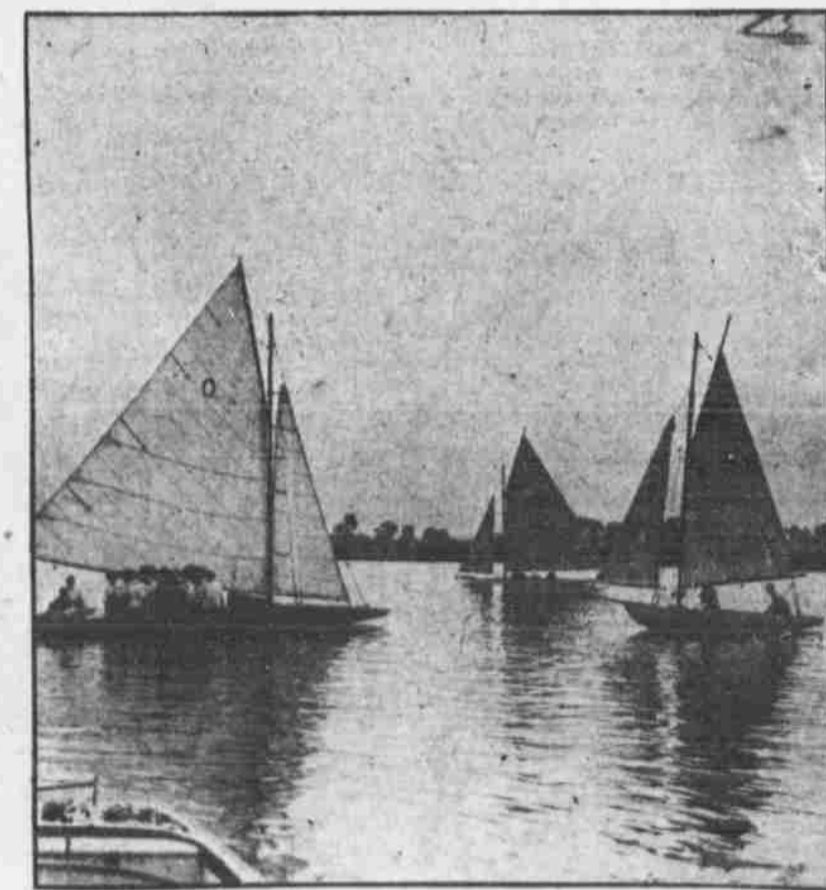


THE "TRIO."

difference. The city has taken hold. The Omaha Rod and Gun club has given assistance, the Young Men's Christian association has built a park along its beautiful banks; the Dietz Athletic club has joined the procession with a fine park on the west side and a hundred cottagers have established a colony on the west bank of the lake which makes the shores most populous.

Where once crept the poacher with his seine in search of his illegal prey, now rows the sportsman with his rod and reel, luring the wary bass from the waters, and the swain with his lass tells soft nothings as the boat drifts along in the moonlight.

Where once the bullfrog had a corner on the noise privilege, now glide the groups in their fine sailboats and the bullfrog's grunt has



THE "OMAHA" AND THE "MARY ALICE."

been replaced with soft susurrations of guitar and mandolin, filling the balmy air. With phantom song the night watchers break the stillness and the "barber shop" tenor vies with the grocery store bass in drowning out the melody. The stories of the gentle zephyrs are drowned by the gay laughter of the delightful camaraderie which fills the numerous sail and row boats and launches, which are becoming such a fad on the placid waters.

"How's the wind, Commodore?"

"So by so'ast, ha'point so."

"Well, keelhaul by taffrail, if it does not change before we can get on our togs and get the Prairie Bell rigged up I'm going to give you land lubbers a sail you will remember for some time to come," said Skipper Jason Young as he entered the Omaha Rod and Gun club grounds and accosted Commodore Brown, who presides over the waters and the land around the club house quarters.

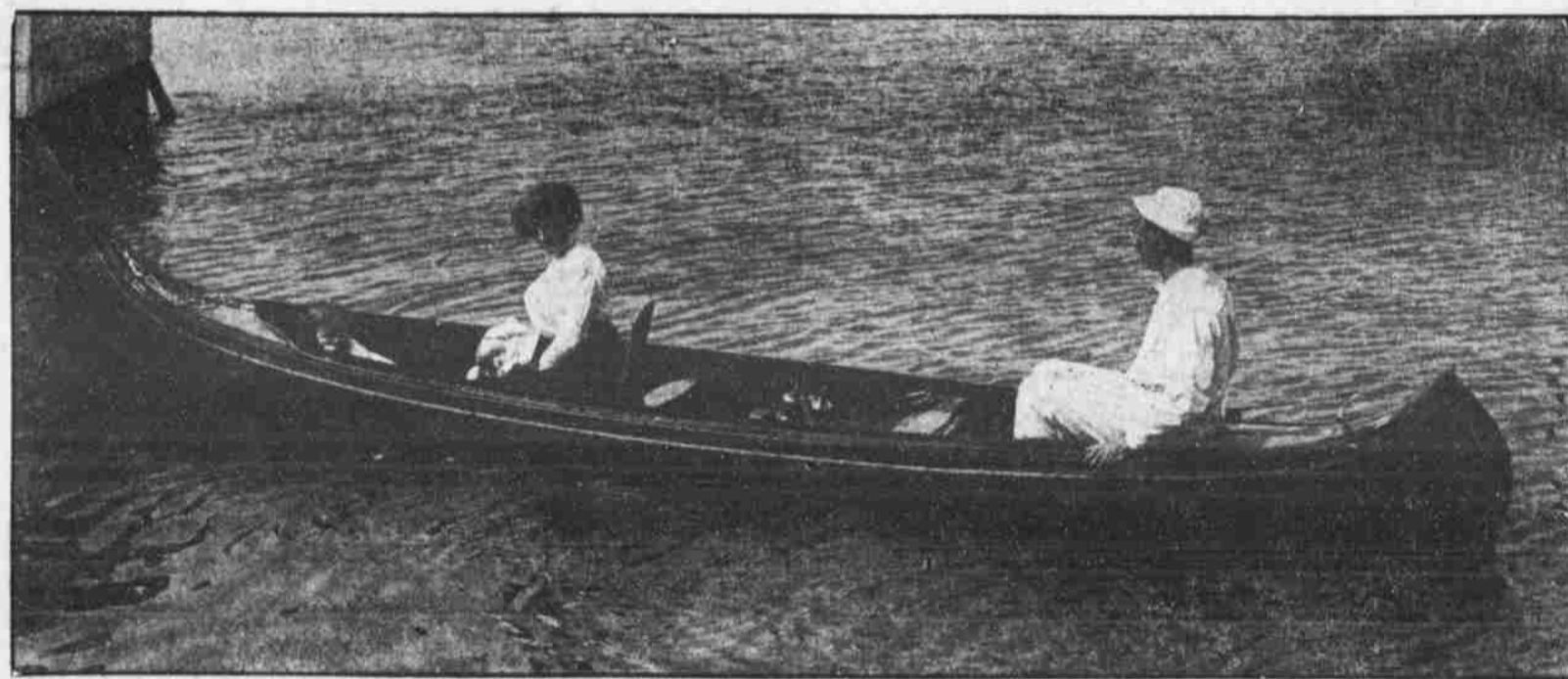
The wind was blowing quite a gale, but that did not deter a hardy seaman like the gallant skipper from venturing out with his "deadweight," as he called the bunch he had invited out for an evening's spin on the waters. Cut Off lake is different from many inland seas in that it is well protected and the billows do not roll as high and dangerous as on many waters which might be named.

The skipper had undertaken single-handed to give an outing to some friends who seldom get off the pavements of Farnam street, and what they did not know about sailing would take a long while to tell. He took them to his summer cottage along the edge of the

lake and all were soon supplied with real sailors' clothes. Who they belonged to does not matter as far as this tale is concerned, but they were sufficient for all purposes, even though they did not fit, and showed on their face that they were purloined for the occasion.

"We will have three extra chaps for dinner," wrote the skipper on a note which he pinned in a conspicuous place in the cottage, which meant in plainer English that his bunk mate was to hustle grub for a hungry lot and have it ready by the time the bunch returned from the sail.

A start was made and the trials of that skipper were many. The land lubbers insisted in getting their heads and bodies in the road every time a tack was made and several good turns were thus spoiled. The skipper kept his patience and gave the bunch a splendid sail around the lake. He took a bee line for the west shore, which is covered with the cottages of about 100 lovers of the outdoor life. Here were large numbers of busy toilers from the city, clad in their outing clothes, which had been donned in exchange for the more formal garments which had been worn in the city all day. Hustle and bustle and life were to be seen on all sides. Some were preparing the evening meal and others were fixing up the rigging of the boats. Groups of fair women and brave men were standing around on the docks, waiting for some skipper to prepare the boat



THE "TIONESTA."

to give them a sail on the waiting waters. Row boats darted hither and thither and little girls and small boys were seen guiding these with the skill of old sailors. The west side of the lake has a big colony, an entire village in itself, and for nearly a quarter of a mile docks of various kinds extend into the water to provide landing places for the boats.

"The wind's fine and hornbuckle my bowsprit if I don't take you lads around to the east side, where you can see the new Young Men's Christian association park. We have plenty of time before the prog is ready."

No sooner said than away went the Prairie Bell on its long cruise to the far end of the lake. She seemed to fairly fly over the water, and soon were gliding by the home of the Omaha Rod and Gun club and the fifty cottages and fifty more tents which go to make up this village. On the other side was the famous "Wool Soap," the deep swimming hole where the expert swimmers love to dive free from entangling grasses and weeds. Courtland beach, with its new improvements, was soon given the go-by and a start on the final leg

made for the new park which the Young Men's Christian association has built on the lake front for its members who like to get out into the open air and enjoy a swim or sail on the lake. Here were seen tennis courts in use and two base ball diamonds, with a ball game in progress on each. The club house is completed as well as the boat house, and cottages belonging to the members, as well as tents, are making the place look like another village added to the lake population.

"We must hurry back," said the skipper. "I have some better fun in store for you fellows."

How that feed at the cottage was enjoyed. The fresh air from the waters gives an appetite and the good things which the mate had prepared were soon put away.

Another trip of the lake was to be made which was to be even more enjoyable than the first. It was over the same course by moonlight, in a different way. Skipper Young had just received his new launch and he wanted to give it a good tryout. A musical evening was to be spent on the quiet waters in the full glare of the silvery moon.

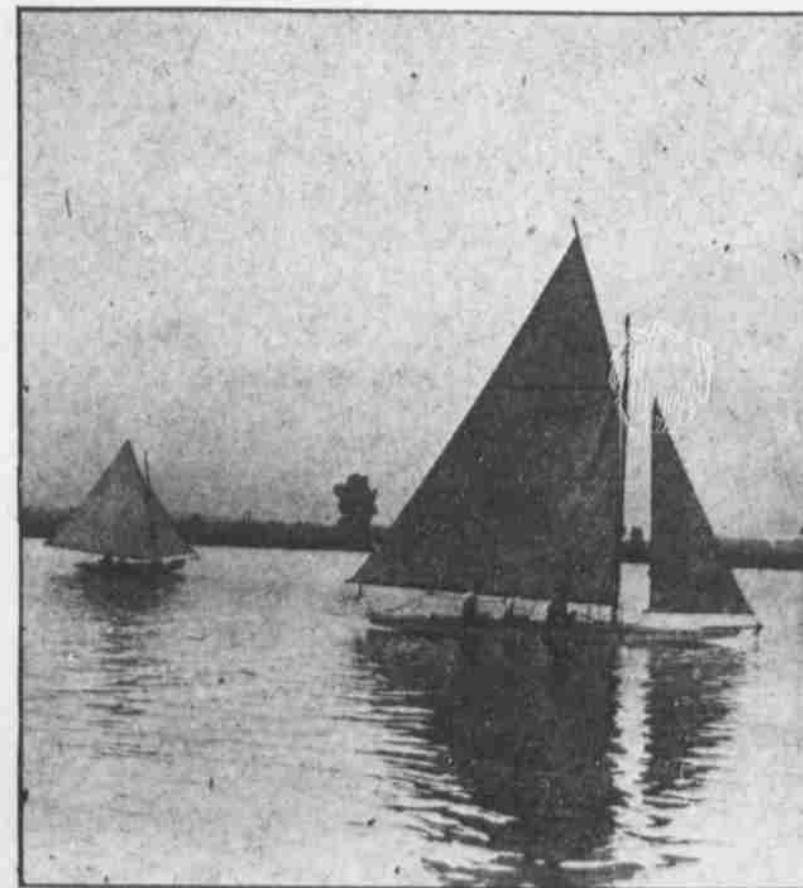
Fastening several skiffs behind the launch in a string, the Morris juvenile orchestra, augmented by Wilson Switzer's mandolin, was placed in the second and third boats, and the other boats filled with

young men and women, jolly companions, and the start made.

How changed the lake was from the time when the early evening sail was made. Now all was quiet, and even the wind had died away to a soft whisper. The glare of the sun had gone and the water shimmered under the paler light of the moon. To the south could be seen the bright illuminations of a large city, and all around the lake were the dim lights of the cottage windows.

The caravan wended its way like a huge serpent across the lake and again the cottages on the west side were approached. How changed was the sight again. Lights in the windows of the cottages and a few lights on the docks were all that were visible from a distance. As we approached the village life was seen on all sides and from the different cottages could be heard strains of music, for many of these bungalows are provided with pianos and most of the inhabitants can play on the different string instruments. Many more think they can sing. We had a surprise in store for them.

As the caravan neared the cottages the launch was slowed down and the boats all brought into a bunch. Leader Morris rose in his



THE "PRAIRIE BIRD" AND THE "CATHERINE."



THE "CORA."

boat and with his baton started the soft strains of some familiar airs. Soon doors of the cottages flew open and the villagers began to gather on the lake front to hear the enchanting sounds. The audience increased as soon as the word was passed back that the cottagers were being serenaded and every available seat in boats and on the docks was soon occupied by an attentive audience. The juvenile orchestra is famous for the quality of the music it discourses and no more attentive audience ever listened to sweet music.

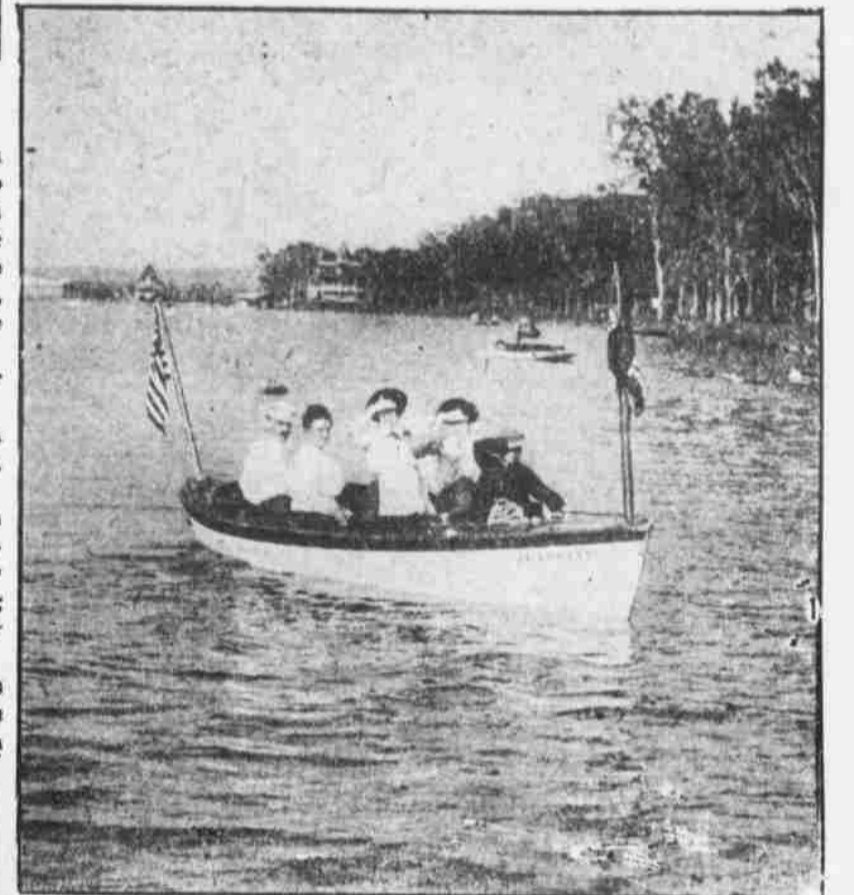
With the close of the overture a popular song was struck up and led by Dr. J. H. Finkes, the crowd in the boats had soon taken up the air and the entire lake shore joined in. Great. It was enough to make the old feel young again.

"We'll have to buy on that music," shouted "Dug" Bowie. "Tie up your skiffs and come in."

That was enough of an invitation and soon the orchestra and sailors from the Omaha Rod and Gun club were mingling in a joyous group with the west sliders and all went merry as a marriage bell. More music was soon called for and the old and new songs sung while the lemonade and ice cream and other refreshments were passed around.

"Let's away," cried the skipper, and all soon had their places in the boats, while farewells were said and sung by those in the launches and on shore.

The singers practiced some new songs on the way back from the west side and when the dock of the Rod and Gun club was reached another serenade was sung. This was enough to call out all the cottagers from the club house and tents, and these also did join in the chorus. But the skipper did not have much time to spend with the home folks. He had another trip in view, and with a chug-chug the



THE "JEANETTE."

launch was soon pulling the musicians and the merry-makers to the far eastern end of the lake to serenade the dwellers at the Young Men's Christian association camp.

Director Pentland was in the water, taking a final plunge after his day's work in directing the amusements of the boys at the park, but he simply crawled upon the dock as the musicians approached, and in his bathing suit seemed to enjoy the music as much as the younger swains dressed in their white flannels, who were sitting on the porches of the club house and telling fairy tales to the women.

"I guess we'll have to pay the fiddler for that fine music," said Secretary Wade as he invited the crowd to "light" and come in. More refreshments and then the start for home.

A crowd was waiting for the musicians at the home plate, and



THE "RUTH."

after a couple of more songs dancing was proposed and the musicians were moved from their perch in the boats to the raised platform of the dance hall, where the dancers were soon gliding for a while to the rhythmic music of the youthful Strauss.

And such is the joyous life on the placid waters of Cut Off lake. Cares of the busy city are cast aside when once the bank of the lake is reached and fun and fresh air reign supreme. The outdoor life is growing more and more popular and where formerly one business man thought he could afford to take a little time from the sunlight hours for a little outdoor recreation, hundreds now break away from the office a little early for a game of golf or tennis or a row or sail on the lake, or a swim in the ever-freshened waters.

The waters of both Cut Off lake and Lake Manawa are three or four feet high this spring, following the river in its rise, and this seems to prove the theory that the waters of these lakes are freshened by water flowing in through the quicksands below the surface. Although the water has not flown into the lakes overland, they have followed the rise in the water of the river and are thus entirely freshened in this way as well as by the hundreds of springs which are known to be under the lakes. These continually evidence themselves in the winter by melting holes in the ice by their warmer water continually rising.

The waters of both Cut Off lake and Lake Manawa are dotted