

The Observer



Cap Webb, who sailed the lake as mate and master for many years, told us about the old Centerboard Bar on the South Manitou Island, the other day, the first time we had heard of this place which was known all over the lakes in the wind-jamming days

"It was in the days of sail" Cap said, 'long before my time on the lakes but Martin Brown of Leland, who used to sail on the schooners, told me about it and I heard it from other sources.

"In a bad northwest or north blow the sailing vessels used to run for the nearest cover and the South Manitou offered good shelter from these winds. The schooners

would gang up off shore and ride out the storm while the men idled their time away ashore.

"A character whose name is forgotten, had the Centerboard saloon on the island. It was so named because a huge centerboard, several feet high and the length of the bar, hung suspended from the ceiling directly over the bar.

"When the boys got ashore they grew a little rough and the saloon was the scene of some pretty rugged brawls. As soon as a fight started the owner of the saloon and his bartender ran for the ropes holding up the centerboard and lowered away. The big partition for that's what it really was, came down in front of the bar, shutting it off from the rest of the room, thus protecting the whiskey bottles and glassware from the fighting mobs. The centerboard had peep holes in it so the saloon keeper could see when the fight was over. As soon as the excitement died

down up went the centerboard and business was resumed as usual.

"The saloon was known all over the lakes as the Centerboard saloon."

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(transcript)