

PETOSKEY SEA SERPENT

Petoskey, Emmet County, Michigan

PETOSKEY'S MONSTER "SEA SERPENT"



THE PETOSKEY SEA SERPENT

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Extracted "Petoskey Record", January 16, 1895

A monster **Sea Serpent**, 60 feet long, was seen in **Petoskey** Friday. Two carpenters were working on the roof of a building and looking out on **Little Traverse Bay**, saw a long object, which they at first took to be a spar. When all at once it disappeared, and a few minutes later came up quite a distance from where they first saw it. They watched it for some time, and finally left the building and told several citizens what they had seen, glasses were procured and about 30 people went down to the shore of the bay to look at it.

All who saw the **Serpent** described it as being about 60 feet long, very dark color, with a head nearly as large as a barrel, which once and awhile was raised out of the water. The **Serpent** swam around in plain sight for some time, moving with great speed, first coming toward shore, and then changing its course and going out toward **Lake Michigan** and finally disappearing from sight. All who saw it are positive in their assertions, and say that they had drunk nothing stronger than coffee and pop for many weeks. {Detroit Evening News} On Sunday morning **Mr. Vail**, an old fisherman, saw something floating in the lake and rolling, and pulled out in his boat to have a closer look at it. When he returned, he towed in a derelict government spar buoy about 30 feet long, the upper end painted in several colors. Whether there is any connection between the **Sea Serpents**, of Saturday, and the find of **Mr. Vail** on Sunday, we do not say.

Viewed From a Distance

Extracted Ann Arbor Argus, "Old News"

September 20, 1895

Farmers around **Portage Lake** find neither **Deeds** nor **Mortgages** sufficient to hold their property against the marauding campers of that quarter. They would turn loose their **Sea Serpent**, but he is rented to **Petoskey** till October.

~The Sea Serpent~

Extracted "Charlevoix Sentinel," June 20, 1895

The **Sentinel** does not desire to be classed as an iconoclast, but it owes a duty to society which it must discharge. The **Petoskey Sea Serpent** story with all its harrowing and hair-lifting details is a bald-headed, be-whiskered fraud on a too credulous public and should be punctured. The "**Monster**" which has caused all this excitement from time to time, and which is now in the possession of **Mr. Shay** at **Harbor Springs**, is no more nor less than a very crooked tree trunk that has been beating about in **Little Traverse Bay** for years.

Its peculiar shape, and the fact that it has become black with slime and smooth with the buffeting of the waves, gave it a very serpent-like appearance. It has two long prongs on its small end, and was "bellied" in such a way that it was continually rolling in the swell. Its upper end was crooked in such a way that when the object rolled over the head and tail would appear above the water, another roll and they would disappear, and the hump of the body would disclose itself. It was so formed that it could not beach itself, and the prevailing northerly winds kept it roaming about the bay to frighten small boys and inebriates into convulsions. Reputable citizens of **Northern Michigan** have frequently seen it. It finally got partially ashore near **Harbor Springs** where **Mr. Shay** and **Schuyler S. Olds** discovered it, had it photographed and stored in **Mr. Shay's** shop, where the **Harbor Springs** magnate has it in the hands of skilled artisans, who will add to it a tin head, and preserve it as a specimen in natural history. **Petoskey** has a breakwater; she must give up her **Sea Serpent**.

THE SEA SERPENT PETOSKEY, EMMET COUNTY, MICHIGAN

THE ~ SEA SERPENT

Besides its natural beauties and historical interest, **Little Traverse Bay** presents another attraction of a peculiar nature which in late years has caused much interest throughout the county. We have reference to the famous **Sea Serpent**. The **Indians** have always claimed that some great "**Marine Monster**" inhabited the **Bay**, but, of course, as these people are very superstitious; their belief should be given little credence. Yet the appearance of some strange creature in the waters of the **Bay** may have had something to do with the origin of their legend.

Several times in late years different persons claim to have seen while in a boat and oftentimes from the shore a great "**Monster**" in the **Bay**.

On one occasion while a steamer was carrying a crowd of pleasure seekers from **Petoskey** to **Charlevoix**, a large number of the excursionists viewed together what appeared to be a long **Serpent** making its way at a rapid rate through the water.

Many people, however, disclaim the stories and say it is all imaginations. But if people are subject

to optical illusions, the camera is not. The accompanying picture of the **Serpent** was taken from the steam ferry "**Adrienne**" while crossing the **Bay** from **Petoskey** to **Harbor Springs** in **June, 1895**. That it was not a log, is vouchsafed for by the fact that it disappeared from view as the boat approached it. Whether the object was a living thing or not remains a mystery.

Some of the people residing upon the **Bay**, whose enthusiasm got the better of their judgment, obtained a distorted log and tried to palm it off as the **Sea Serpent**, but the object seen so many times in the waters of **Little Traverse Bay**, is something of a far different nature than an ordinary log.

No doubt imagination has had much to do with this **Sea Serpent**, but it would not be very surprising if a "**Marine Monster**" of some description had taken a particular fancy to the surroundings of the **Bay** and had made it his home, allowing himself to be seen just often enough to arouse the curiosity of the people.

Extracted "**The Ottawan**" written by **J. C. Wright, 1895**



~MONSTER SERPENT~

SEEN LAST WEEK IN LITTLE TRAVERSE BAY

Extracted "Pittsburgh Press" Thursday September 18, 1902, page 3

The story of the frightful experience of **Otto B. Schott**, of Chicago, with a **Sea Monster** in **Delavan Lake** last week was read with deep interest at this place, for a party of men who were out on **Little Traverse Bay** Sunday. Saw and photographed a **Sea Serpent** not unlikely the **Delavan Monster** and which is believed to be the same leviathan that was seen here in 1894 by a number of persons. Although the experience of the men has created considerable excitement, your correspondent did not learn of it today, and it was with some difficulty that he secured the photograph of the creature from **John C. Wright**, who was fortunate in getting a good snapshot of it.

"At first we were undecided as to whether we should continue our course or beat a retreat and while we were excitedly discussing the situation Mr. Storm steered off to the right, giving the Sea Serpent a wide berth. Taylor suggested a snapshot, and while I was getting the plate ready the Serpent sank slowly out of sight. He reappeared shortly afterward, however. This time it was near and lay stretched out on the surface to a length of at least 100 feet and facing us. The vertebrae gave the back of the creature the appearance of a saw. There were five horns on the head, one at the top, which was shorter than the others; two at the sides of the head and two above the corners of the mouth, as on a Catfish. These horns the creature moved apparently at will, and two tusks protruded from the corners of the mouth after the manner of those of a Walrus. The neck was smaller in girth than the body, and we had no opportunity to observe accurately the size of the latter, but it was probably ten feet in diameter in the heaviest part and tapered to the tail, which was notched and ungainly. The eyes were large and glassy and in place of gills the creature appeared to have what resembled huge nostrils, while on the upper lip was a short protuberance similar to the five horns. Pendant from the chin was an appendage of some sort, which might have been seaweed. The Serpent bore no scales, but was covered with a dark, shiny skin."

"It required but a moment to take all this in and during the period of amazed inspection the monster showed no signs of fear. By this time I had my Kodak ready and as I made the snap the creature pointed its head downward and slid silently out of sight."

"There is no doubt in the minds of hundreds of residents of Petoskey and Harbor Springs that the Serpent makes its home in Little Traverse Bay," added Mr. Wright. "His first appearance was in 1894, at which time he was seen by many persons." -- Petoskey {Mich.



SEA SERPENT

Extracted "Petoskey Record" Local & Personal Notes 1895

The **Independent Democrat** is authority for the statement that **R.G. Bliss**, one of the trainmen of the **C. & W.** saw the **Sea Serpent** on last Wednesday evening. It was about the middle of the bay. Anybody wishing information regarding this last appearance, can see or telephone **Dave Hastings** at the **C. & W. M. Depot**. He knows all about it.



SEA SERPENT

Extracted "Petoskey Record" June 5, 1895

The **Sea Serpent** reported as found on the beach near **Harbor Springs** was intended as another hoax at **Petoskey's** expense. **Messrs Shay and Hurd** found a long cedar log, and having buried it partly in the sand, they are proceeding to fit it out with ears, and scales, etc., and expect to tow it across the bay, and some fine morning let the good citizens of **Petoskey** feast their eyes on the much talked about **Sea Serpent** yet to become a reality.

~SEA SERPENT~ SIGHTED IN MICHIGAN PORT
EXTRACTED "POPULAR MECHANICS" JULY 1914, PAGE 15

A **Sea Serpent**, 108 feet long by actual measurements formed the principal attraction of a parade in **Petoskey, a Michigan Port**. It was life-size, lifelike and lively, but it wasn't alive. It was built of hoops, lumber and wire and its skin was painted canvas, in six sections with hinged joints. Three automobiles carried this **Monster** and the manner in which they were operated gave a remarkable lifelike wriggling through the streets of the city. The head was a horrid affair, with a tongue 7 feet in length, darting in and out of the cavernous mouth, while smoke, steam, fire and water were ejected from its nostrils in realistic fashion. The automobiles and their wheels were entirely concealed by the flowing curtains which formed a part of the Serpent and the uneasy gait, the convulsive throes of body and tail, and the flapping wings added greatly to the effort the manner of those of a walrus. The neck was smaller in girth than the body, and we had no opportunity to observe accurately the size of the latter, but it was probably ten feet in diameter in the heaviest part and tapered to the tail, which was notched and ungainly. The eyes were large and glassy and in place of gills the creature appeared to have what resembled huge nostrils, while on the upper lip was a short protuberance similar to the five horns. Pendant from the chin was an appendage of some sort, which might have been seaweed. The Serpent bore no scales, but was covered with a dark, shiny skin.



THE PETOSKEY ~ SEA SERPENT~
Extracted "Northern Michigan Review," Thursday, July 10, 1952

Perhaps the most legendary character of the region, second only maybe to **Paul Bunyan**, is the **Petoskey Sea Serpent** which has made appearances from time to time since 1895 when first seen by workmen building the old breakwater.

Petoskey **Elks** had a replica made and used it in parades and official functions until it was burned in **Grand Rapids**.

Back in 1948 it made its greatest sensation when the **Review** was busy chasing down reports and writing whoppers about its antics all over the region. A huge tooth was found at the **Cement Plant** where a giant bear trap was set for it.

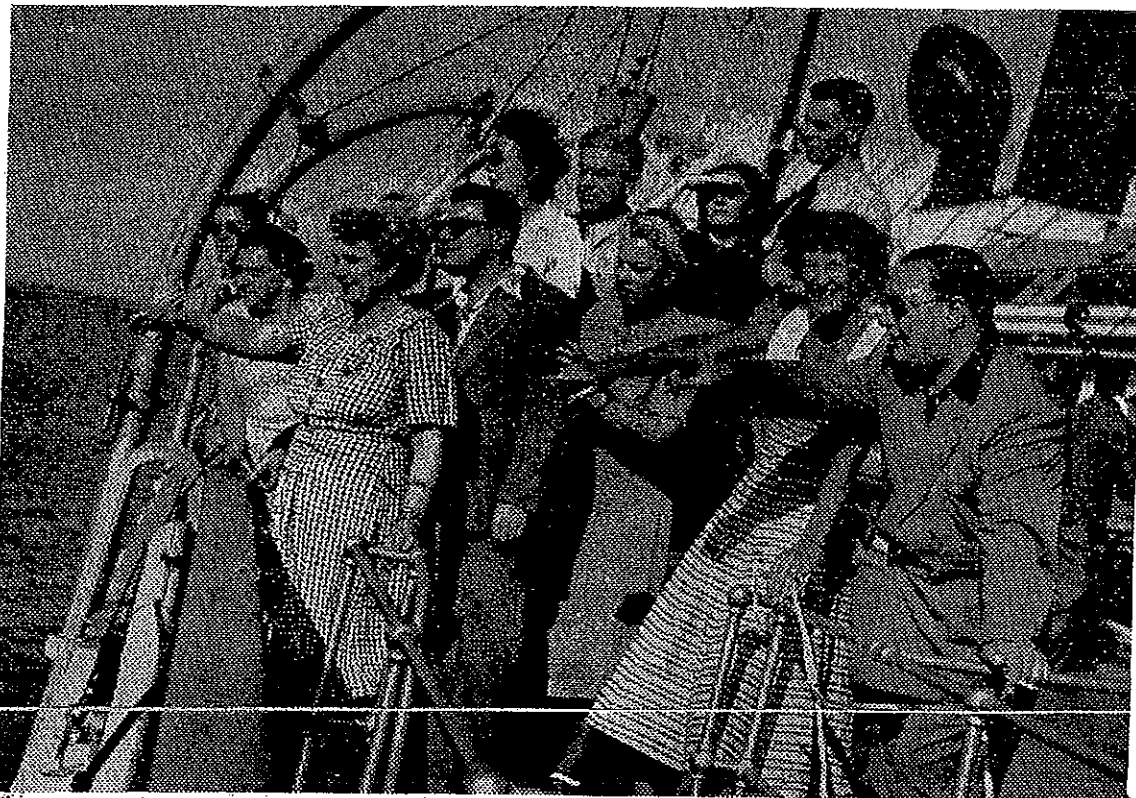
Giant foot prints were found on the **Petoskey dock** by **Howard Earle**, known today as "**Long Hair**" because of his hair-do and whiskers. A **Detroit** and **Cleveland** summer cruiser sent a radiogram and photos of passengers at the rail trying to get a glimpse of the famous **monster** as they passed **Little Traverse Bay**.

Natives penned other legends of its appearances. The **Review** organized a **Sea Serpent** club, handed out membership cards and window stickers. Then the **Sportsmen's club** chartered a ferry and launched a **Sea Serpent** hunt on **Little Traverse Bay** one moonlit evening and the next day a giant **Sea Serpent** was displayed in Pennsylvania Park.

As long as there is a **Petoskey**, there'll be stories about the **Sea Serpent**, and it probably can safely be said, it will keep on appearing.

PETOSKEY SEA SERPENT

Northern Michigan Review
August 12, 1948



ALERT FOR A GLIMPSE of the famed Little Traverse Bay sea serpent are these passengers on the City of Detroit III, as the boat passes the mouth of the bay on its way from Mackinac Island to Chicago. Several passengers on the boat reported seeing the monster in Georgian Bay in Lake Huron several days ago. However, they feel certain that the serpent has returned home by this time. Left to right; Bert Bassenberry, Detroit; Mrs. W. H. Rose, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Mrs. Kathryn Cubbison, Pittsburgh; Keith Gale, Detroit; Mrs. Harry Heilman and Mr. Heilman, Pittsburgh; Bess Monro, social director for D. & C. Lake Lines; Ann Sears, hostess, Birmingham; Bob Davis, Detroit, assistant purser; Mrs. Harold Pehlman, Cincinnati; and Russ Widmer, Detroit, band leader.