

CRUISING IN THE BAY OF QUINTE

Howard Sharp

Along the north shore of Lake Ontario beginning at Kingston, the head of the St. Lawrence River and ending at Presqu'ile to the west, lies a sinuous body of water protected by the mainland to the north and Prince Edward County and Amherst Island to the south. This is the Bay of Quinte, about 80 miles long, from one to six miles wide and with depths in the channels from 10 to 100 feet at L.W.D.

There are some rock shoals, and some mud and weeds, but by and large the shores are steep-to and favorable for anchoring close up.

It is a peaceful, restful territory. The land is cultivated but not pampered. There is quite and solitude but not the touch of the wilderness. The little waterside communities are reminders of civilization, but they do not taint the air or waters with industrial activity. Fishing is good, and the fresh, clean, cool water invites the swimmer.

The winds often have weight in them, but the sea can't make up in a hurry and shelter is never far away. Thunderstorms do occur but are not common.

In short, one may cruise here with great comfort and peace of mind, in solitude or in company, with the facilities of civilization available but not intrusive.

Historically the land is old as time is reckoned in this country. Champlain had journeyed down the Trent River, through the Bay and out what is now known as the Upper Gap, a full 18 years before Boston Colony was founded. Prince Edward County became the haven for many who fled the American Colonies during the Revolution. During the War of 1812 Yeo and Chauncey played inglorious naval tag around Kingston, and a fort was built on the point of land enveloping Prinysers Cove. Until the Murray Canal was dug about 100 years ago there was no water connection between the west end of the Bay and Lake Ontario. The Trent Waterway is an ancient route to the north and west, used first by the French to avoid the fierce Iroquois to the south.

The Rideau Canal system between Kingston and Ottawa is likewise an ancient transportation route.

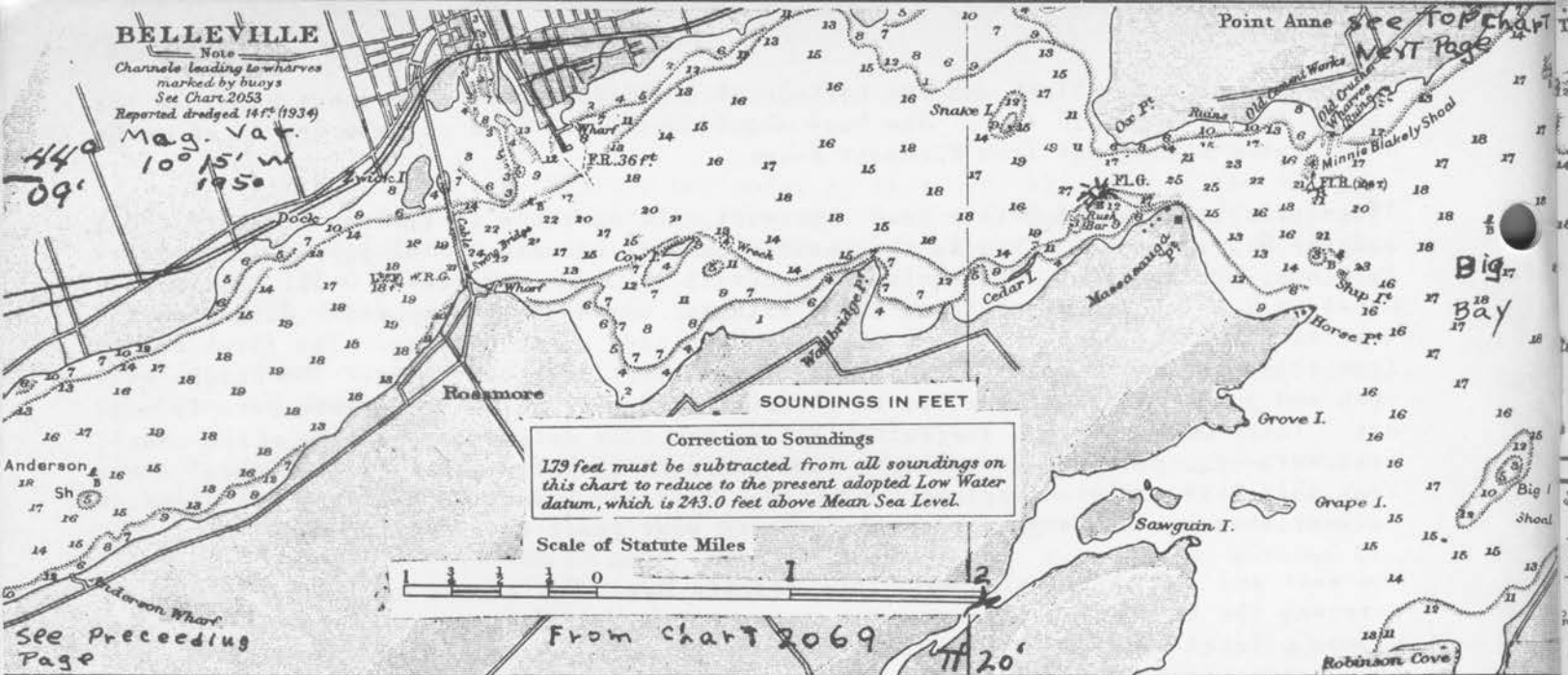
General charts of the Quinte are Canadian #2064 and #2069. In addition chart #2071 of Presqu'ile Bay, and chart #2053, showing Trenton and Belleville harbors and Telegraph and Nigger Narrows, should be on board. Parts of these charts are reproduced here. Starting at the front of this section of the text, these parts are arranged from west to east and they almost tie together. Chart #2061 will help in using the west entrance.

The buoyage through the Bay of Quinte area is based upon entering from the east and going towards the west as the head of navigation with red to be left to starboard and black to port. (Same pattern is used throughout the lakes.) This may be confusing when entering Presqu'ile Bay from Lake Ontario. When going from west to east, the red is left to port as though going down to the sea.

Except for the Kingston area, the magnetic variation for this area was about 10° to 11° W in 1950.

As a general rule vessels from the States wishing to enter the eastern part of the Bay go through Prince Edward Bay, making Main Duck Islands the landfall. From Prince Edward Bay the entrance to the Quinte proper is through the Upper Gap, from whence one can turn east to Kingston, or west through the greater portion of the Bay.

The Upper Gap is the passage between Pleasant Point the NE end of Prince Edward County and The Head the westernmost end of Amherst Island. Pleasant Point is marked with Light #168 (as of 1949) F.G. Vis. 14 mi. white with red lantern. In the Upper Gap is Black Buoy #167 Fl. W. 056° T 4300 feet from Pleasant Point Light.



Nigger Narrows has a marked, dredged channel on the southerly side. Remember red on the north side here and black on the south.

At Belleville is encountered the last bridge of the Bay. This is a swing bridge and the channel is to port or north of the center of swing pier. The buoyed channel to Belleville opens up just east of the bridges. The best plan is to lie at the Government wharf where there is good protection, rather than attempt to go up the river to be nearer the city. In spite of rather sketchy channel markers too many yachts have run afoul of the submerged cribs to take a chance. True, one is a long way from town but quite safe.

A favorite spot to drop anchor for the night if so inclined is behind Walbridge Pt. (5 ft. at L.W.D.) or dock at Massasauga Pt. to the east of Belleville.

Northport is another interesting place to stop for a while. There is a rough dock carrying 4-6 feet of water where gas can be had. A general store is just back of the waterfront. A good anchorage can be had in the lee of Cornwall Park just to the west of Northport, where the holding is a blue muddy clay, good for anything. Be wary of Northport shoal. The natural thing is to head between the black lighted buoy and the red spar, but these mark the outer limits of a rock pile. (Black buoy on north side of rock pile - red spar on south.)

Telegraph Narrows looks bad as you come up on it, but follow the chart carefully and it soon opens up in sensible fashion. There is a marked, dredged channel on the more southerly side (but north of Telegraph Island on which is a lighthouse. White, square tower on dwelling on crib.)

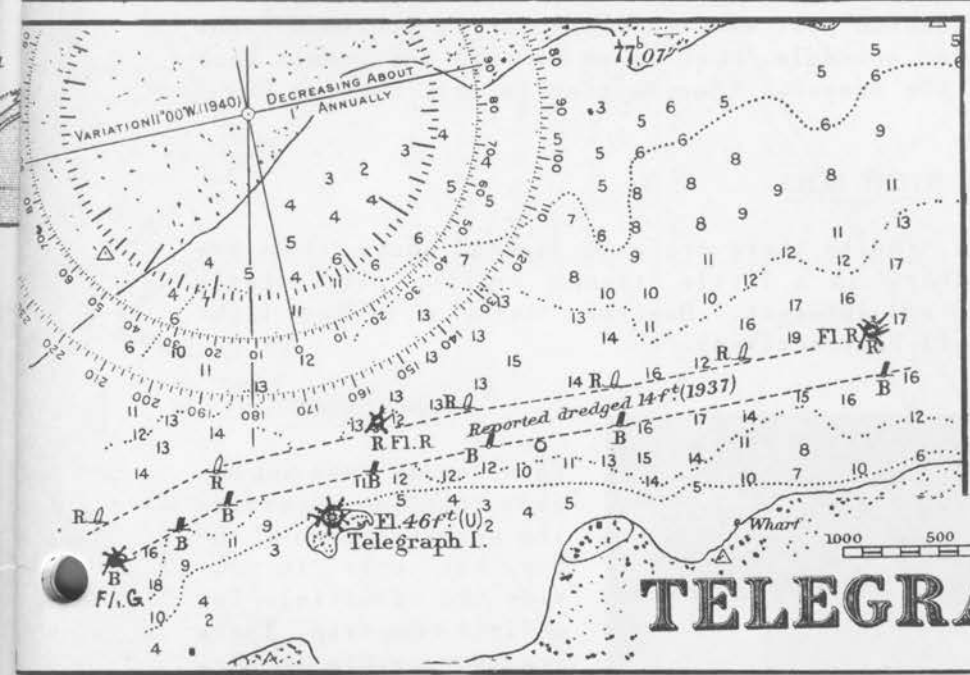
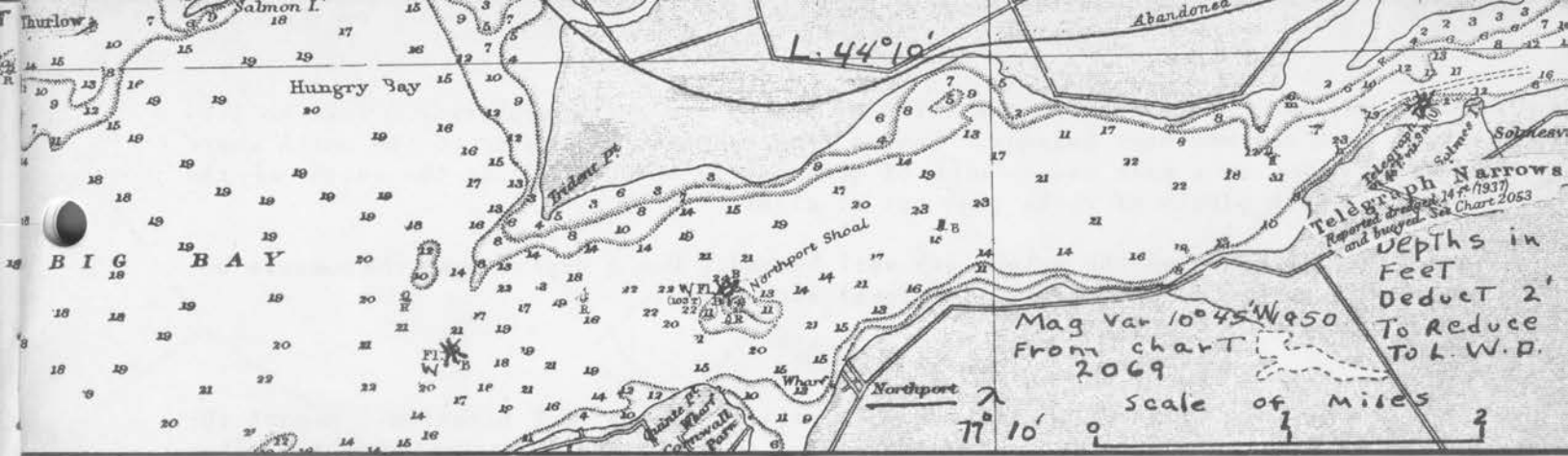
There is not much to stop for at Deseronto. Dockage is uncertain but there is anchorage in good water against a hard northerly blow.

Long Reach is a lovely body of water. If so inclined you can anchor close to the west shore most anywhere you wish. Robin Mills is a good cove, as is the one just across from Hay Bay.

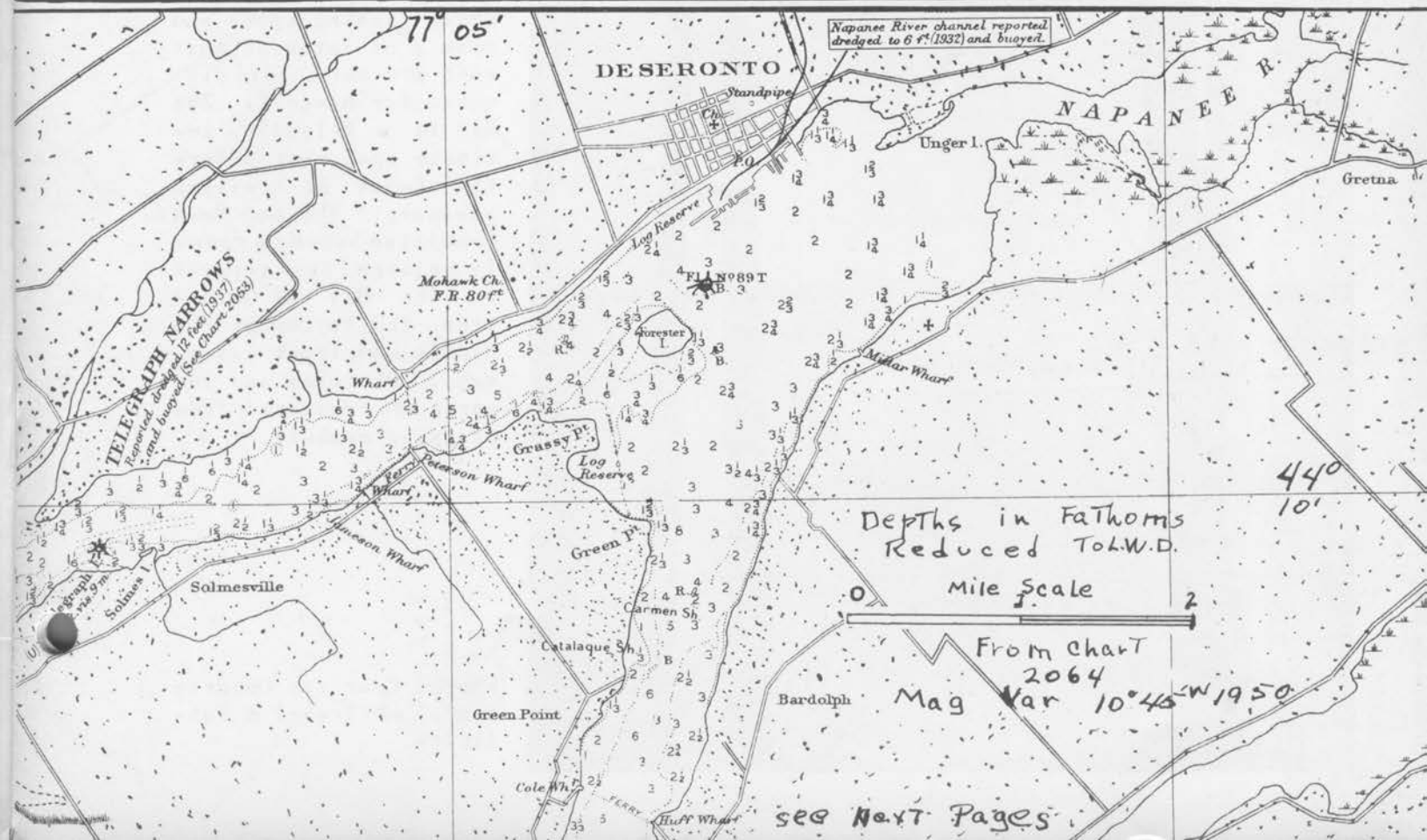
Picton is the hub of Bay yachting and is described in harbor report O-24.

Swinging east into Adolphus Reach the objective is Prinyers Cove, reported in detail in harbor report O-19. From Prinyers Cove one may go out the Upper Gap to Prince Edward Bay and Lake Ontario, or continue east to Kingston.

Stella Cove is a good spot to stop. The water is 50 ft. deep and the bottom weedy. Holding is poor without tremendous scope, and don't get caught there in a northeast blow. Perch fishing is excellent and supplies can be had ashore.



Top chart covers area to west of bottom chart.



Parrot Bay and Collins Bay to the north of Stella are worth exploring. Take no liberties with the Brothers Islands. Coming from the west work over to the north shore because there is a mile and a half of deceptively open water to the south of the Brothers, with plenty of rocks just out of sight.

From there to Kingston the waters are well buoyed. Don't depend upon the compass because this is the area of famous (?) local attraction.

CUSTOMS

There are Customs offices at Trenton, Belleville, Picton and Kingston. Report the first time you stop in one of those ports and secure a season permit (c-13). This should be surrendered at the last Canadian port where a Collector is stationed, but as Quinte cruising is definitely not on schedule, it suffices to mail the permit back to the office of issue at the end of the season. (See Section in this book re Customs Regulations.)

NIGHT RUNS

Cruising at night is not recommended. While there are some lighted buoys they are not sufficient for peace of mind. There is a little steamer traffic particularly from Belleville east; just enough to add interest. However, carry a riding light while at anchor, because of local small boat activity.

CONCLUSION

This resume does not begin to outline the cruising possibilities of the Bay, but only to provide the essentials for a first time trip. There are innumerable anchorages, fishing spots and points of interest that each cruiser should discover for himself. The Bay is a friendly, intimate spot that offers the utmost in cruising pleasure. The Log Book Committee hopes to greatly enlarge its reports on The Bay of Quinte area, and to report the Rideau and Trent waterways. Pictures and reports are requested from cruising members.

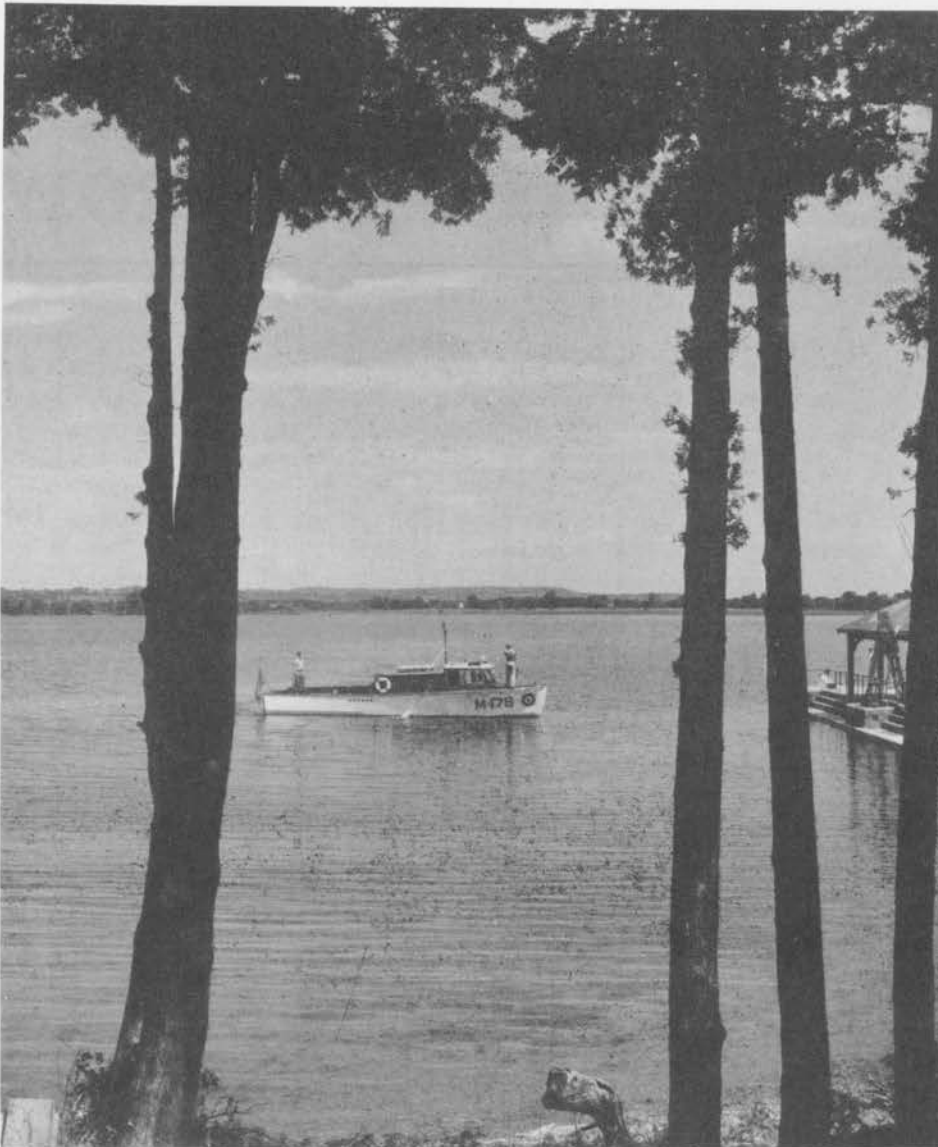
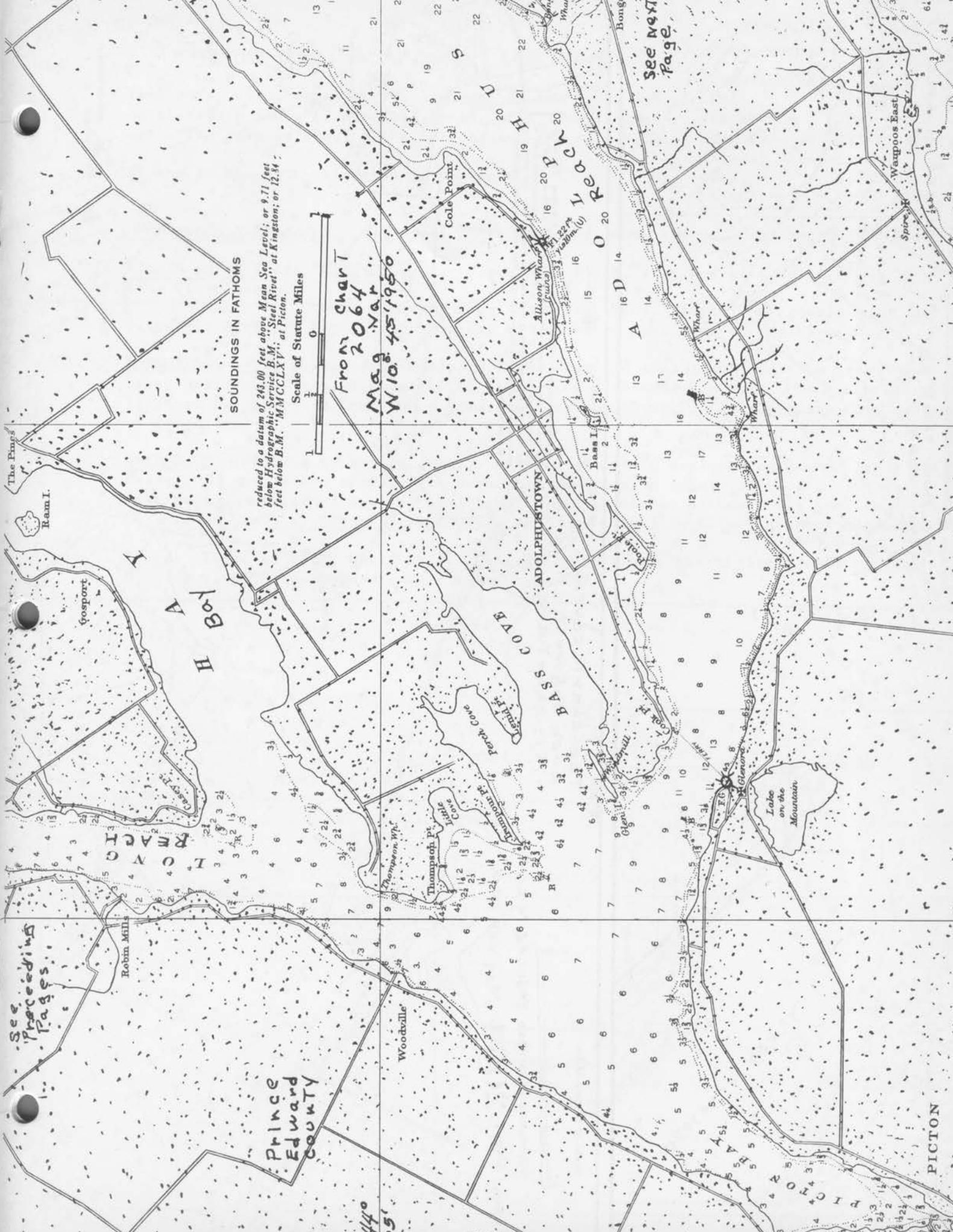


Photo: Courtesy Ontario Dept. of Travel & Publicity.



SOUNDINGS IN FATHOMS

reduced to a datum of 243.00 feet above Mean Sea Level; or 9.71 feet below Hydrographic Service B.M. "Steel River" at Kingston; or 12.34 feet below B.M. "MMCCCLXV" at Pictou.

Scale of Statute Miles

Front chart
No. 2064
Mag. Var.
W. 10. 45 1950

SEE NEXT PAGE

See preceding pages

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

44° 05'

PICTON

12 ft. channel into Pictou

