

BIO of C H J Snider from Ontario Archives

Snider, C. H. J. (Charles Henry Jeremiah), 1879-1971

Charles Henry Jeremiah (Jerry) Snider (1879-1971) was an Ontario journalist, newspaper editor, magazine writer, illustrator, traveller, yachtsman, and antiquarian.

Jerry Snider was a fifth-generation descendant of Pennsylvania loyalists, born on May 26th, 1879 in Sherwood, York County, Ontario. His siblings included brothers Roy and Sage Snider and sister Katie Snider Martin. He was educated at Kleinburg Public School, and completed one term at the Auditorium of Art (predecessor of the Ontario College of Art and Design) before enrolling at the Toronto Collegiate Institute (now Jarvis Collegiate Institute). He graduated from the Collegiate in 1896, and one year later he joined the staff of the Toronto, Ontario newspaper, the Evening Telegram, as a police reporter. Snider eventually became the Telegram's associate editor and news director, as well as a Trustee for the estate of John Ross Robertson (the newspaper's founder), and the Telegram's publisher following Robertson's death. Snider was also a feature writer for the Telegram in England in 1915; in the West Indies from 1918 to 1920; and in Europe in 1928 and onwards. Over his sixty-five-year career at the Telegram, Snider covered almost every major sailing and boat-racing event in Toronto, and contributed over 1,300 articles to his regular column, Schooner Days.

Blinded in one eye, Snider did not serve in the armed forces during either of the two World Wars. Instead, he contributed to Canada's role in the war efforts by serving as a war correspondent. During World War I, Snider initiated a special Watch Fire edition of the Evening Telegram to keep Torontonians up-to-date on the overseas action. Throughout World War II, Snider served as a war correspondent in Britain and worked briefly as an aid raid warden in London, UK, a position that led to his founding of the British War Victims Fund.

In addition to his career, Snider was interested in yachting, marine relics, and the history of Great Lakes shipping. He crossed the ocean seventeen times, including being the only Canadian on board the R100 on her fifty-seven-hour journey from Canada to England in August 1930. He also owned eight sailing vessels, from the Blue Peter to the Kingarvie, and participated in numerous sailing races, including a dozen contests in the champion Nova Scotia schooner, the Bluenose, and four successive season championships as owner of the Gardenia.

Snider authored numerous books and articles about marine history, including *In the Wake of the Eighteen-Twelve* (1913); *Faded Flags of Fadeless Fame* (1923); *The Glorious Shannon's Old Blue Duster* (1923); *The Story of the Nancy and Other Eighteen-Twelve* (1927); *Under the Red Jack* (1928); *Tarry Brecks and Velvet Garters* (1929); *The Lucky Penny, Privateer* (1929); *The Flag and How to Fly It* (1931); *Schooner Days* (1931-1956); and *The War Log of the Nancy* (1937). He was also the principal author of the *Annals of the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, 1852-1937*. Snider also translated many French nautical documents into English, including diaries of French naval officers of the Seven Years' War.

Snider was also involved in numerous marine archaeological surveys, including extensive analyses of wrecks thought to be remnants of René-Robert Cavalier de La Salle's ship, the Griffon, and the early French-English fleets of the Seven Years' War. He was also successful in locating marine relics from Canada's past, including the French vessels L'Iroquoise and L'Outaouaise, sunk in the Saint Lawrence River in 1759, and the Nancy, sunk in the Nottawasaga River in Wasaga Beach, Ontario in 1814 and raised by the Ontario government. He also constructed a large-scale model of the Nancy for the Royal Ontario Museum.

For his marine writings and research, Snider was honoured with a life membership in the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. He was also a member of the National Yacht Club of Toronto and the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron, as well as the United Empire Loyalists; the Authors' Club of London, UK; and the Royal National Society for Nautical Research.

Snider married Mary Adelaide Dawson in 1928, the first woman telegraph operator at the Evening Telegram and one of the charter members of the Canadian Women's Press Club. They had no children, and Mary passed away in 1932. In the late 1950s, Snider retired from the Telegram, and, in 1971, he was awarded the Toronto Medal of Service for his work. He died in Toronto on December 12th, 1971.