WINNIPESAUKEE WHOPPERS

BY

ELIZABETH CRAWFORD WILKIN

Illustrated by Lloyd Coe


Lloyd Cole

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FABULOUS LEGENDS OF THE LAKE
ONCE CALLED WINNIPISEOGEE

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WHOPPERS

ANCIENT CHART (*circa 1960*) *showing* WHOPPER *Locales.*

1

Mineola In Her Unchaste Haste

LAKE WINNIPISEOGEE was discovered by a brave young Indian chief called Adiwando. He had a wolf's eye and great strength which enabled him to paddle his canoe backwards up the steep falls of the Weirs one sunny day in early July many moons ago.

He was pretty well tuckered out as he passed Endicott Rock but, in the far distance, he heard a maiden lamenting her lonely plight. It seemed that her papa was away, and she missed him so. Her name was Mineola, and her mellow voice had the soul-searing lilt of a loon on a windy night.

So Adiwando speeded up his paddling for he hated to think of the loneliness of the beautiful Mineola of whom he had heard so much. Also he thought it would be a good idea if he got there before her papa, Wonaton, got back.

He suspected that Wonaton took rather a poor view of his (Adiwando's) tribe for one time a rattlesnake skin filled with rose-quartz arrowheads and small-mouthed bass (the latter showed it had come from Lake Winnipiseogee) had been hurled into Adiwando's camping ground over near Sandwich Notch.

He, therefore, girded himself and his canoe to greater effort, and finally in a teeming rainstorm reached what is now called Steamboat Island about the middle of the month. There on the sandy, rain-swept shore was the beautiful dusky Mineola turning cartwheels with joy at the sight of this tall glistening warrior. She was straight as an arrow, when she finally stood up, and she wore lots of things including a Wampum belt about her middle to hold up her leather leggings.

When Adiwando drew near, she leaped into his canoe, nearly upsetting it in her unchaste haste. They embraced quickly, but at that moment a tomahawk sped through the air grazing the young chief's sunburn, and Adiwando rightly suspected that Wonaton had returned.

This belligerent act caused Mineola to sense that her father might be annoyed at her determination to marry a hostile chief, so she stood up in the canoe and tossed her Wampum belt into the lake as a symbol that wars should cease.

Just then the rain stopped and the sun shone down upon the lovers while it seemed to transform the lake into a vast smile.

"Father!" the lovelorn maiden called. "This is an omen! The Smile! See how the lake smiles upon us!"

Then she stumbled over her loose leggings and sat down with a thump as Adiwando shoved the canoe off-shore with his strong, hairless arm.

Wonaton saw her point, and agreed. So the young couple were married, and spent their honeymoon collecting snake skins on Rattlesnake Island.


Lloyd Coe

2

Hobbamock and Store Island

HOBBAMOCK was the Spirit of Evil of the Abenaki Indians. There wasn't any kind of trouble he couldn't think up for other people. But one time he got himself into such a fix that even he was gaflumixed.

It was during the winter that was called 'Teen hundred-and-all-froze-up, and if there was one thing Hobbamock couldn't stick it was the cold. A hundred and five degrees in the shade was about the coolest he really cared for. But that winter was so cold that no amount of running about to get other people into trouble seemed to warm him up.

His greatest hardship was the icy wind, so one howling day in December he found a tall hollow tree (on what today is called Store Island) and hopped inside but not without remembering to drag in after him a keg of firewater, some sauquetach and a bag of Indian mixt meal to guard him against thirst and hunger.

The tree, he discovered, as he slid down into its considerable inners, had a deeper hollow than he had counted on, but at least it sheltered him from that beastly wind, and he could pull the bung out of the keg when he was thirsty, and drag

down some of the sauquetach and meal when he was hungry.

After a few days of comparative comfort he dozed off gradually into a sound sleep, and before he knew it six months had passed and June had arrived. But it was a strange June, as cold as any November. There was no sound of birds singing, no rushing of small animals through the undergrowth, no swishing of tender young leaves against the white pines and hemlocks. It was still damp, dreary and bleak – so he had a swig or two of firewater and a spot of food, and went back to sleep.

In July he awakened again, but everything seemed much the same as it had been the month before, so he decided he must get out of his hollow tree and find out what was wrong – for he had no time for wrongness if it discomfited *him.*

But when he tried to get out of the tree, he found the space in which he was wedged so deep and confined, and the weight of firewater and food on his head so great that it was impossible to climb out.

After a time he heard a tearful voice which seemed to come from inside the bag of meal. Hobbamock recognized it as the Voice of Spring who, he imagined, must have taken refuge from the winter in his meal bag before he had dragged it into the hollow tree, and was now as much a prisoner as was he.

"Please help me, sir," she begged him. "If I am not released the birds will not mate, the bees will not bumble, the fish will not spawn, there can be no new life among our people," – and being the most feminine of all the seasons, she had the wit to add – "and you will not get warm for a *very* long time!"

"This is horrible!" Hobbamock assured himself. "If I can't get Spring and myself out of here, there can be no good for me to turn into evil and, also, I will surely freeze when my firewater and food give out."

He had discarded the idea of climbing out of the tree, so now he dug his great toes with their strong, gnarled veins down far into the earth. Then he called upon his evil associates to debouch toward him all the mineral veins they could find in the Belknap and Ossipee Mountains.

Presently he felt the mineral ores rushing toward the magnetic veins in his great toes until his whole body tingled and trembled with dynamic energy.

"Now!" he called up to Spring in the bag of meal. "Be quick! Fetch out your best spring storm with plenty of thunder and lightning, and we will escape from here before lightning strikes twice in the same place!"

A moment later the hollow tree was split from top to hem while giant crooked blades of lightning sped back and forth from Hobbamock's toe veins to the mineral veins from the lake's mountain ranges.

Then Spring tumbled out from her meal bag and, after shaking herself into some semblance of propriety, flew off in every direction as the storm cleared.

Almost immediately the sun burst through a cold cloud, the birds began to sing, the fish to spawn, the bees to bumble; new life vibrated in every wigwam around the lake, and Hobbamock got so warmed up that he chased an old squaw up Abenaki Tower, and right back into her Youth and Beauty.

3

Barber's Pole

In 1771 in the Province of York there was a selling and claiming of much land in the New Hampshire Grants. So it happened that in late April of that year, just after the ice had gone out of Lake Winnipiseogee, a Portuguese purchaser named Begunna Sousa travelled up to the settlement of Smith's Bridge (now known as Wolfeboro) to view his property. There, near a canoe landing, he put up at a lake-shore tavern (on the site of the present Dockside) owned by an innkeeper named Harry Hotspur.

Having been welcomed by his host, he was escorted to a table at which sat another purchaser, Oceanus Dyar, a barber by trade, and chock full of nauticalisms owing to his name and the fact that he hailed from Nantucket.

During the evening they each discovered that the other was an ardent angler, but after a few "flips" each became convinced that he, himself, was the better fisherman of the two. Oceanus, the barber of Nantucket, privately considered Begunna (with his Portagee name) "not good enough even to take in slack."

They sat up all night trying, with more and more "flips,"

to decide which was the better fisherman, and finally settled on a showdown — to hire a boat with tackle and bait from Harry, and fish it out. Oceanus said he'd "rig it up" and get Harry to heave a bit of food and rum aboard, and about four bells, just as the April sun was prying its way out of the mountain tops, they "squared away."

While Begunna of York took his spell at rowing, the barber from Nantucket said he'd keep his weather eye peeled, and well he need have done so for "the wind was blowing so hard it took two men to hold one man's hair on."

They passed what today is known as Parker's Island, bore nor'west and skirted the Middle Shoal, and then they each had a rum before the barber took his turn at the oars. It was a longer row than they had figgered, and it was nigh on to seven bells when they reached the narrow passage between Cow Island and the mainland which was their aim on the advice of their host, Harry Hotspur.

Here they heaved the anchor overboard although Begunna of York was a bit leary of the high wind and the amount of water they were shipping into the small boat, but Oceanus, the Nantucket barber, scoffed at him as being the sort that "always reefs down and stands on the inshore tack."

However no sooner had Begunna of York heaved his worm-baited line overboard than the father of all fish took it — and properly! The heart of the barber sank as he saw the great fish break water for it was as big as a bushel sack of corn meal. Something had to be done! This man from York with the Portagee name couldn't show up a Nantucketer so easily.

Just then the fish shot under the boat, and fouled Begunna's line around the anchor. The barber saw his chance! Quickly he picked up a punting pole that lay near his feet and, with a

great pretence of untangling the line, wrapped it even more securely about the anchor.

But the rope that held the anchor was "belayed" around the seat on which the barber sat, and in his excitement and determination to make sure that Begunna of York should lose his fish, he unintentionally lifted his considerable weight, whereupon the force of the wind "clipped" overboard the plank seat and the anchor rope as well.

Oceanus, the Nantucket barber, made a futile lunge for it, lost his balance and went overboard, still clutching the punting pole, into the icy water while the boat, Begunna of York and his fish moved rapidly down the rip-tide of the narrow passage.

Owing to the boat coming about so quickly, Begunna's line became disentangled and he managed to land his magnificent fish.

The poor barber, still gripping his pole, but "'twixt heaven and hell without halyard or downhaul," was washed ashore, half-frozen, on Cow Island from where he had an ignominious rescue from a situation that he never did "claw out of." And that is the tale of Barber's Pole where so many fishermen try for Begunna's Luck today.


Lloyd Coe

4

The Witches

On the mainland near Governor's Island there once lived an innkeeper called Seaborn Goddamn and his wife, Humility. They were well known for their "beans and biled cider apple sass," but even more so for their three beautiful daughters christened Resolved, Comfort and Remember Fanny. Triplets they were, devoted to one another, and so alike in their raven beauty that even their pa and ma couldn't always get the right of them particularly after they took to dressing alike.

One day just after their eighteenth birthday Bigfeet Garters, the new stage-coach driver from Portsmouth, happened along. After his "beans and sass" he pulled a bench up to the hearth in the taproom, pulled off his muddy boots and ordered a hot buttered rum.

Presently Resolved came in to clear a table. Bigfeet sat up and took notice as, being a stranger to the inn, he mistook her for a maid servant.

"Whist there, Wench!" he called to attract her attention. "Me boots are high with mud. I'd take it kindly if you'd clean them."

But Resolved, who had been taught not to speak to strangers, made a bob and left the room.

Bigfeet, a handsome uncouth rascal, and "no more pious than a barn rat," but with a way with women, was a bit set back.

A few minutes later Comfort came in to trim the lamps. "My boots," he tried again. "They could do with a bit of cleaning, Mistress," but Comfort turned her capped head and went away.

Almost immediately Remember Fanny brought him the "flip" he had ordered. While she leaned over to stir the fire he had a good look at the back of her which, he decided, was as fetching as the front. Still taking her for the same maid servant he settled on more drastic measures and swinging her to his knee as she stood up he bussed her thoroughly on either cheek and on her soft, rosy mouth. Somewhat to his amazement she seemed to like it, and actually cuddled in for a second round.

He finally let her go, ordered another rum and congratulated himself that the inn was a routine stop.

It was Resolved who brought the rum, but when he tried the same recent tactics as with Remember Fanny he was rewarded with the same compliance.

Comfort brought in his cleaned boots and, although a bit surprised at his unseemly gratitude, it did not take her long to warm up to this handsome stranger either.

None of the girls told the others what had happened to her in the taproom, but each went to bed hoping this new stagecoach driver would remain on the route indefinitely.

He returned three days later, but this time Comfort was confined to her room with a heavy cold, and Resolved was helping a neighbor, so Remember Fanny came in for all the tid-bits which, when she went with him to see the horses

before he retired, were continued with somewhat less delicacy in the barn.

These twice weekly interludes went on for some time — Bigfeet Garters still thinking the three sisters were one, and little knowing that they were (or she was) related in any way to Seaborn or Humility.

Then a peculiar thing happened. Resolved developed the chicken-pox, and Bigfeet who had been at the inn the night before when Comfort and Remember Fanny had been at the Church Supper, came down with it a week later. When the substitute stage-coach driver informed Comfort and Remember Fanny of this, they did think it a little strange.

A month after that, when Resolved and Remember Fanny were spending a few days with their grandparents, Comfort was laid low with the measles. Bigfeet had spent the night before at the inn, and a week later he had it, too.

In neither case had Resolved or Comfort spent much time with Bigfeet on these particular evenings, they told themselves. They simply couldn't understand it. They *had* gone with him to the barn, of course, to see that the horses were properly bedded, and had admired (from a discreet distance) the outside of the fine new stage-coach – and perhaps a bit of the inside, too, but how in the world he had got either disease from them they just couldn't imagine.

But they were all now definitely suspicious; Remember Fanny of both, and Comfort and Resolved of each other. There was a decided iciness among the three sisters who had once been such close friends.

The first evening that Bigfeet returned after his measles was the Saturday night of the Country Fair for it was now mid-July. Remember Fanny, after a little careful tacking, easily lost Comfort and Resolved in the crowd, but came upon Bigfeet near the tattoo-ing tent. The stage-coach driver had an idea. She should have *his* initials tattoo-ed on *her* arm, and so she did. The following morning she tried to conceal from her sisters the swollen, sore marks on her arm but to no avail. Angered and ashamed, they tore at her and at each other until Seaborn and Humility had to separate the three of them by force.

It was out-and-out warfare now and no foolin'. They called each other every name they'd ever heard through the taproom keyhole, shouting and jabbering at each other like three devils out of hell.

Seaborn and Humility, puzzled and aghast, were helpless

to stop them; the most they could do was to stop them from killing each other.

Finally when the three girls had got their clothes on they went after Bigfeet. They found him in the barn harnessing his horses. He thought he was dreaming when he first saw and heard the *three* of them flying toward him; by the time they reached him and began pummeling and scratching and pounding him, he decided it was a nightmare, and by the time they had him down on the barn floor with his clothes half torn off, his face kicked to a pulp, and most of his hair pulled out, he gave way to the idea of hell.

Within ten minutes every neighbor in hearing distance was there. They dragged the girls off Bigfeet, and none too soon either, and you can believe he didn't waste much time getting on his way to Portsmouth.

But those three girls never did get over it; in fact they went clean off their rockers. Day and night they fought and bellowed like demented witches; there was no peace for the Goddamns or their neighbors. Gradually the latter began speaking of them as those Goddamn witches – at least it rhymed with witches, and suggested that they each be put on one of three islets near Timber Island where they could screech their goddamn heads off alone. This was done; the village had peace again; the stage-coach, a new driver, and the islets have been called The Witches ever since.


LLOYD COE

5

The Castle for the Gypsy

THE Castle is shown on only a few exclusive and intimate maps. The reason for this is that it was a very exclusive and intimate castle.

Long before the war with the Red Coats, Sir Phineas Popham was top-dog in New Hampshire. He practically told the deer when to mate, and set the date for the salmon run each autumn. He told almost everyone in the province what to do and when to do it – except inside Popham Hall. *There* Lady Popham ruled the roost and that got the old boy down, and we mean *down*. He used to get so hopping mad when she would let him have only one bottle of port per guest, and tell him what breeches and what peruke to wear, and when to go to bed, and how not to snore, that most of the time he was about fit to bust.

So one day when she was at cards he disguised himself in his steward's wig, his valet's clothing and, borrowing an old stallion from a tenant, he rode to the village inn. There he first saw the gypsy barmaid of whom he had heard. She had teasing lips, a bold swing to her gait and a questing eye, and seemed not averse to a playful pinch or two.

All this gave Sir Phineas more than one idea, and none of them included Lady Popham.

The old stallion made quite a few visits to the inn during the next month or so.

About this time a wealthy landowner, who had been building a fine castle some miles from Popham Hall, died just as his castle was completed. It was quite a simple matter for Sir Phineas to persuade the heirs that the transference of this castle to him would adjust a fictitious debt owed him by the deceased – or else.

As soon as furniture from Portsmouth could be installed, so was the gypsy, and everything looked fine and dandy for Sir Phineas for a month or two.

But some women are funny.

There was this gypsy, once a barmaid, now mistress of a great castle, but did anything please her? Not at all! Her impish, scarlet mouth twisted into a thin wind-chapped smirk, her voluptuous stride in the new Portsmouth gowns changed to a mincing trip, and her come-hither eye froze cold as the winter ice – and we don't mean in the January thaw, either. Why she got so high and mighty that even *half* a pinch was out of the question.

What in creation *did* she want? Sir Phineas asked her.

She told him. It seemed she wanted to be Lady Popham of the Hall.

Well, even Sir Phineas couldn't fix that up so he finally left her for the time being, raging like the gypsy she was. But after a time she sat down in her Portsmouth gown on an Empire settee with her chapped smirk drawn up tight, and thought of another way.

The next afternoon a gypsy girl with a teasing mouth, a

bold swing to her gait, and a questing eye turned up at the servants' entrance of Popham Hall. She told the steward and the valet that she was a fortune teller, and they didn't argue when her vibrant, caressing hand held theirs as she divulged their fine futures.

And presently her ladyship, as the gypsy surmised she would, was told and came to have *her* hand held, but without the caressing touch. There, before all her servitors, the great lady was told about The Castle, the glamorous chatelaine in the Portsmouth gowns, the clandestine meetings, and Sir Phineas who footed the bills. If her ladyship doubted, the gypsy said, she had but to visit the castle any fine night and see for herself.

She did, and behaved as a well-born lady should. She first had the vapors and then a heart attack, and eventually a fatal decline, and to this day she haunts the deserted castle searching for port to snatch from tables, for Sir Phineas to heckle, and for the gypsy who became Lady Popham of the Hall.

And that is why The Castle stands a ruin – a memorial to a hip-swinging gypsy – and a reminder to the mature lassies of Lake Winnipiseogee who, as a result, are so pure . . . so demure.

6

Foolish Girl Who Fell Into a Cusk Hole

THIS is a modern tale of an old-fashioned gal who was "slower'n a jill-poke."

She was foolish in the head and was known in Tuftonboro, where she lived with her mother in a small house on the lake shore, as B.B.D. which was a quick way of saying Beautiful-but-Dumb, although some folk said it stood for Buffle-Brained-Dunce.

She was certainly dumb and might have been beautiful had it not been for her gallinaceous nose, her protruding teeth, an absence of chin, and a predominating squint – and we almost failed to mention a wooden leg and a clubfoot – but otherwise she had no outstanding detractions.

Like all foolish girls she had a devoted young man; a guide and trapper who planned to marry her as soon as he had saved enough money guiding, and had trapped enough beaver and muskrats.

His name was Jedidiah, but he was known to everyone as Jed. He was a fair looking lad with muscles like iron, and although he was well aware that B.B.D. didn't know enough to

ache when she had a pain, he loved her dearly, and the neighbors said that "him and her was lollygaggin' the hull tarnal time."

Well, one January evening during a blizzard with the temperature below zero B.B.D. suddenly remembered that Jed had told her to "tend his cusk lines if he didn't get back by dark from his trappin'." Jed had cut the six cusk holes earlier in the day with his ice chisel. baited the lines with young live perch, and placed the poles so that the forked bits hung on the cross sticks laid on top of the holes – but he hadn't figgered on a blizzard, nor on Buffle-Brain being foolish enough to go out in one. However that is exactly what she did.

That foolish nimshy went out there on the ice looking for those cusk holes in all that blinding snow while the blizzard growled and yowled. Hither and thither on her wooden leg and clubfoot she lumbered and kangarooed, chasing herself around in circles as though she had ants in her pants, but she could find neither forked poles nor cusk holes.

Then all of a sudden – ZUMP! – her wooden leg skidded at an angle, jabbed through a bit of thin ice crust and shot down into one of the holes she'd been looking for – and that was that! There she was, flat on the ice unable to pull her wooden leg out of the hole, nor to get herself away from it. It looked as though poor B.B.D. were done for!

However Jed turned up at her mother's house about that time, so she told him where the foolish girl had gone, and out he sprinted in search of her.

By the time he found her, she was almost buried by the driven and drifted snow, the crust over the hole had re-frozen, and her wooden leg was frizzed fast into the lake as a winter jill-poke itself, but the girl didn't seem at all concerned – in fact she was having a nice little rest.

Jed started lugging and hauling at her, but nothing gave 'way except her hair and her arm sockets, so he realized he wasn't making the kind of headway he aimed at.

After a moment's deep thought he put his lips close to her ear. "I'll have to saw it off!" he shouted against the roar of the wind. But she just smiled up at him all lollygaggin' and went back to sleep.

On his blizzard-swept way across the ice toward her mother's house in search of a handsaw, his heart was near to breaking with the thought of losing that expensive wooden leg. How many beaver and muskrats, he wondered, would it take him to buy her a new one.

Finally with the handsaw he returned to the cusk hole. B.B.D. was still enjoying her nice snorey snooze, but in the meantime the trouser of the other leg – the clubfooted one *not* in the cusk hole – had frozen itself fast to the surface of the ice and could scarcely be seen for snow.

However he propped B.B.D. up against the wind as best he could and sawed off the wooden leg with a regretful farewell. Then he cut free the heavy, frozen cloth of the other trouser leg with his trapper's knife, and hoisted the remains of his bride-to-be (which were still comfortably snoring) over his broad shoulders, and staggered shorebound.

Once inside the house B.B.D. awakened (nicely refreshed), and they each had a hot buttered rum over which Jed tried to explain to her *why* she should never again go cusk fishing in a blizzard.

7

The Haunted Isles

Just off Shelter Cove, which is due west of Melvin Bay, lie two deserted islets with a hundred or so yards separating their two rocky shores.

Once upon a time on the smaller isle, aside from a jumble of raspberry bushes, a two-room shack and a woodshed, there was a befogged old woman whose white hair grew from her ears as well as from the top of her head and was so long that it dragged behind her like a trailing shawl. She had eyebrows as heavy as a man's drooping moustache, and a beard as long as a skunk's tail.

On the other isle in a slightly larger shack, with his dog and a goat, lived a dear old man who loved to play his fiddle. On the south side of his shack grew a gnarled and very productive apple tree. Tied to an alder bush nearby was his neat little skiff painted a nice woodsy green in which he fished and made his occasional visits to the village store.

The old man was quite content with his lot and envied no one.

The old woman, though, was cantankerous and jealous, and

particularly covetous of all that her neighbor had – a larger shack, a fiddle, a dog, a goat and his apple tree. But what she envied most of all was the old man's skiff for she hated being confined to her isle except in midwinter when she could roam over the ice and stock her larder at the village store.

The old man must have been a kindly soul for during a hard winter he would occasionally leave some of his stored-away apples on the near-by point for the hungry animals, whereas his neighbor was so mean she would not even allow them to carry away the lean scraps she threw out.

One summer evening when she heard the old man playing his fiddle under the apple tree an idea came to her. She would marry him, and then *she* would have the skiff, the larger shack, the fiddle, the goat and dog, and his apple tree.

She sat up all night planning exactly how it would be. She could use the dog in the winter to drag her wood across the ice, and the old man would chop it into axe lengths for the hearth; the apples would make good tarts and dumplings, and the goat's milk would taste fine with her raspberries, but best of all – the green skiff would be hers!

However her problem was how to cross to the other isle to put her plan into effect before another winter, for the skiff was not yet hers, and she could not swim.

But a few nights later there was a thunderstorm with devil-tailed lightning, torrents of rain and a wild wind. During the gale the alder bush on the old man's isle to which the skiff's rope was tied became broken and the little green skiff, free of its mooring, was tossed about on the angry lake.

After a bit when the worst of the storm was over, the old woman heard, between the lessening howls of the wind, a pounding and grating against her rocks, and rushing out she found the skiff.

It seemed to her like fate, and cackling like a pleased old hen, she dragged it on to dry land and hid it under her shack.

The first still night after that, she got it out and slid it into the water. In the moonlight she could see the old man sitting under his apple tree with his fiddle. The dog was asleep at his feet, and the goat was standing on its hind legs munching apples from the tree.

"I'll soon put a stop to *that!*" she said to herself as she fitted the oars into the rowlocks.

When she got under weigh most of her long white hair, drawn out by the momentum of the skiff, floated in the water behind her even more than ever like a trailing shawl, and the rest blew back from her head and out from her ears like a mass of filmy veils. The old man saw her coming but he thought it was a mist rising off the lake after the heat of the day, and went on with his fiddling.

She tied the skiff to the sturdiest alder bush she could find on the far side of the isle, and walked very quietly toward the apple tree. As she approached she heard the old man singing to the strumming of his fiddle. He was singing a ditty about "the beauty and fairness of his love-to-be!"

Suddenly it came over her that not even this old man would want her for a wife, and that if she were ever to have all that was his – and to keep the green skiff – she would have to think of another plan.

She did!

With a quick gesture she leaned over and snatched the fiddle from his slack fingers, her long hair like a thick mist momentarily blinding him, and then with all her strength she smashed the instrument down on to his bald and unprotected head.

The old man collapsed to one side, rolled toward the ledge and fell into the lake.

Later wnen she told her story to the police she swore that she had not killed him. She said that when she rowed back toward her isle there he was sitting on one of her rocks placidly playing his fiddle while the dog slept at his feet. In mortal terror she turned back to *his* isle, but there under the apple tree with the goat lunging for higher fruit sat the old man with his twanging fiddle singing of the "beauty and fairness of his love-to-be!"

They hung the old woman by her scrawny neck in front of the County Courthouse but, with all that dirty white hair hanging from her head, they say that her body looked more like the long tail of a grey mare than anything else.

And now on still nights in midsummer the white mist and the trailing shawl of the old woman's hair can be seen vaguely moving toward one isle and sometimes shifting slowly back toward the other, as though uncertain where to find sanctuary from the old man and his fiddle. You can see it quite plainly, and hear his fiddle, too, – that is if you happen to be sitting in the moonlight on the white beach of Shelter Cove dreaming of the "beauty and fairness of your love-to-be!"


Lloyd Coe

8

The Devil and the General

This gentleman had the village of Moultonborough named for him; then he went broke and sent for the Devil, for he had made up his mind to sell his soul for gold.

Late one evening while he was drowsing over his final nightcap, he was aroused by a curious sound. He glanced toward the huge chimneypiece and there on a corner bench sat the Devil. He was dressed in his Saturday night best, black velvet and all, with an orchid stuck through his buttonhole.

"Who the devil are you?" asked General Moulton.

For answer the visitor reached for the bowl of rum, tossed into it a live coal and, as the flames leapt upward, he threw back his handsome head and drained the searing liquor to the last drop.

"My flaming onions!" exclaimed the general in evident awe and admiration.

"My favourite drink," explained the Devil. "A Salamander."

Then he ran his transparent hands through his wig, and to the floor clattered and clinked a great pile of golden guineas.

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" breathed General Moulton as he clamped and unclamped his new store teeth in avaricious astonishment, but just then one of the rolling coins came to rest against his boot and scorched his foot.

"My flaming bunions!!" shouted the general.

"I'll cool them off," apologized the Devil as he picked them up, one by one, and laid them on the table.

"I can use them all and more," sighed the New Hampshireman forgetting about his foot.

"Sign here," said the Devil and pushed toward him a black parchment document inscribed in crimson ink. "On the last night of each month," he instructed the general, "you must leave your boots at the chimney's side, and before morning they will be filled with gold. Your soul for my money!"

"You're getting the thin end of the deal," chuckled the New Hampshireman, and scrawled his name on the black parchment.

The next day the general went to the village store and bought the biggest pair of hip boots he could find.

"I'll fool the old buzzard!" he muttered gleefully.

When he got home he cut away a good portion of the sole of each, and then nailed the boots to the floor, after which he knocked a hole through them into the cellar; then he pretended to go to bed. Actually, of course, he went down into the cellar.

Well, the Devil arrived and started to pour his gold into the boots, but there seemed no end to their greed. He poured and poured until he got his black velvet suit in a frightful mess, and the orchid broke off and fell from his buttonhole.

Then a thought struck him.

He ran up to the general's bedroom, and as he was not there he knew he must be in the cellar. Quickly he dashed back to the boots, and through them poured such quantities of gold that presently he heard puling sounds from beneath.

"Enough! Stop – stop! Leave off!" and other protestations arose from the cavern below.

But the Devil gave no quarter, and went right on filling the cellar until there was only room left between his gold and the ceiling of the basement for the general's head.

Then the Devil mixed and drank a Salamander, and with its flaming dregs he set the house afire.

The next morning nothing was left of the general, the gold nor the house save a molten mass of brass into which the Devil had changed his gold before departing, and on top of the heap lay General Moulton's new store teeth where his head had been.

9

Sally's Gut

THEN there was that lass called Sally from Meredith.

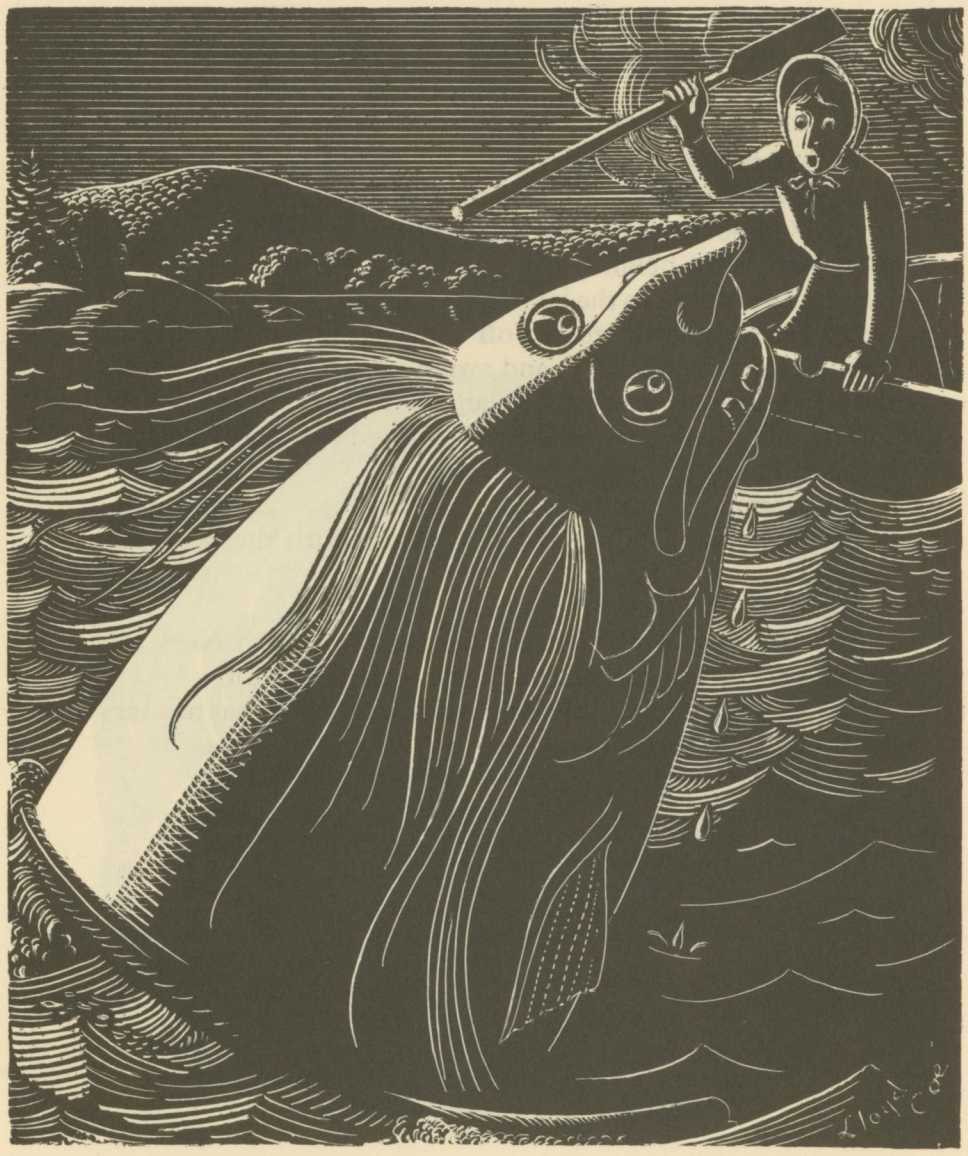
She was the only daughter of a blacksmith who specialized in making runners for fish house sleds which were in great demand when the temperature dropped to – well, you wouldn't believe us anyhow.

Next to his blacksmithing and winter fishing, there was nothing the blacksmith loved so much as his daughter.

She was a fine figure of young womanhood. No farm horse was ever built better than Sally; she had withers that would make a heavy draught horse tear its tail out with envy, and fetlocks that would frustrate a Suffolk Punch. Nothing much was ever said about her face, but we gather it was there between a black mane of heavy hair and her thyroid glands.

She had a large following of suitors – all probably with an eye to business, for Sally could do an honest day's work as easily as she could climb a mountain or swim the lake.

But her old man had a business eye, too, and he wasn't standing any nonsense. When she walked out with the village lads there had to be at least six of them – no less.



10

Rum Keg Dolly

MAYBE you wonder why the islands off Meredith Neck (if you've ever seen or heard of them) are called "Aunt Dolly's," and why the near tip of Bear Island is called "Aunt Dolly's Point."

Well, if you'd been a fisherman in the 1800's (or a fisherman's wife waiting for her man at home) you'd have known all right, for Aunt Dolly Nichols ran The Fishermen's Haven on Bear Island. Aside from the attractions of well-cooked food and even better rum, there was Aunt Dolly herself, and her willingness to listen to (and believe) any fish story they cared to tell her, and she could tell a good few herself.

She liked to tell about the night a dozen fishermen took refuge from a storm at her place when she hadn't enough food to soften their rum to feed a kitten. While she was despairing over her empty larder the lake spit and splashed at her back door in the pounding wind, and finally knocked. This was too much for Aunt Dolly. She opened up, and there on her rocky backyard were fish a-plenty, thrown there by the gale.

Then there was the time her old man lost his underpants, and later how she got them patched up fit to wear after she had found them in the "stummicks" of a pair of cusks. It may be she got these cusks mixed up with a goat or two, but no one ever questioned Aunt Dolly's tales. They wanted her to believe their own.

For a small woman she had amazing strength, and often when the Haven's rum supply was low she would row down

to The Weirs for a keg. Slinging it single-handed on to her shoulder she would tote it to the wharf where she would remove the bung before an admiring company for a good swig prior to loading, and on arrival at Bear Island she usually repeated the performance for good luck.

She ran the first ferry service on the lake; she used a scull and plied between Bear Island and Meredith Neck.

One evening early in May, according to her best story, when the salmon fishing was at its height and the moon was full, Aunt Dolly was bringing her ferry back alone from the mainland.

Halfway across the passage she saw, in the moon's path, a salmon as big as a dray horse break water just in front of the scull. So she stopped and threw out a line baited with a dead mouse she'd seen lying under the rum keg.

Before she could flick an eye the salmon had struck.

Afterward she said that although it may have been as big as only one horse it had the strength of a dozen, for it started pulling her and her ferry off their course.

With all her lake-renowned strength she held on until her stummick muscles were sore and quivering, but the fish didn't weary. It towed her all the way around Bear Island once and back again, and took two side loops around Birch and Jolly Islands as well.

Along about midnight after they had passed her point for the second time Aunt Dolly was about ready to give in.

"Where are you taking me, and what do you want?" she called out, for she was pretty sure by that time that it was no fish on her hook, but some fiend of Satan.

For the first time in hours, she felt the line go slack, and

presently the big fish swam back and came to the surface. She said it had the face of an old hag with long strands of stringy hair and no teeth to speak of.

"Who are you? Go away!" she shrieked at sight of the horrid creature, and in her terror foolishly threw her scull at it.

The "thing" edged closer and Aunt Dolly retreated to the furtherest edge of the ferry.

"I'm the Spirit of Fishermen's Wives," it said. "Wives who have waited at home."

"All right and then what?" called Aunt Dolly but her voice didn't sound like her own.

"Are you ready to strike a bargain?" the creature asked.

"I'm ready to go home," she retorted. "It's cold out here, and a lot of your husbands will soon be waiting for the smell of my coffee and beans and a noggin of rum."

"That's just the point," the "thing" replied. "I'll agree to tow you home if you'll promise not to serve Rum at The Haven in future."

Aunt Dolly hesitated. She was cold, hungry and tired; she wanted to go home, but The Haven was her livelihood and it couldn't exist without the sale of rum.

"Well," countered Aunt Dolly, "that's sort of sudden-like. Let me shut an eye and think it over."

After a minute the "thing" spat out the dead mouse into the lake with which the salmon hook had been baited, pulled its huge flabby bulk up on to the gunwale of the ferry, and said, "That's fair enough. I'm tired myself, and wouldn't mind a little snooze."

As soon as Aunt Dolly heard it snoring she threw off her hoop and all the other things she didn't need, and swam ashore.

The next morning her old man found the ferry beached at the far end of Bear Island, but in spite of her story the dead mouse was still there under the rum keg.

11

Bashful Becky

Becky was a gal after a man's own heart. The Particular man's heart she was after belonged to a prosperous and fine looking young farmer who had a secret passion for flowers.

She first saw him when he came one day to buy cattle from her father. Her two older sisters, who were strong, handsome baggages, pushed little blue-eyed Becky aside when they found her peering at the approaching stranger from behind a curtain.

"He'd have naught to do with you," they said. "Leave him to us."

Then they fell to quarreling between themselves as to which should welcome him, and so heated became the issue that presently there was hair-pulling and eye-scratching until neither was in a fit state to be seen.

By that time the young farmer was at the door, and although Becky was shy and had no desire to receive him alone there was no way out.

Quickly she persuaded her disheveled sisters to leave the room, adjusted the furniture which their quarrel had disarranged, and opened the door.

In the meantime the visitor, wearied with waiting on the

step, had wandered into Becky's flower garden which was the joy of her heart.

"What a beautiful garden," he said with sincere admiration as he saw her. "May I ask who tends it?"

Becky, flustered and ever-modest, replied, "Oh, kind sir, it doth belong to the youngest daughter of the house. She plants only what blooms the best."

He looked into her cornflower-blue eyes and her sweet-natured face and said with a warm smile, "Prithee then, take care lest she plant you!" at which she was thrown into such confusion that she mumbled, "I'll go fetch my father," which gave the whole show away. As she fled down the garden path to the barn she heard the young man chuckle, and only then did she realize what she had said.

Later when her father and the stranger had finished their transactions, they came into the house for a horn of porter. The two older sisters by that time had patched up their differences, freshened themseves, and put on their best muslins and caps. They ogled and simpered, and fussed and fluttered, but they noticed that the young man's eyes kept wandering toward the door.

At length he said to his host, "Sir, rumor tells me you have three daughters, and I see but two."

The sisters glared at their father but he sent one of them to fetch the embarrassed Becky.

"Ah!" said their guest as she entered the room, "the owner of the beautiful garden!" at which Becky flushed and dropped her lovely eyes.

After that Becky worked harder than ever in her garden which the two jealous sisters hated for they gathered from what the young man had said that he admired it. Inevitably its fame spread for miles around, and in her gentle heart was

planted the hope that some day soon the good-looking young farmer would return to see it.

One midsummer's day she saw him approaching from the far distance, but before he reached the house a horrible thing occurred. Someone had let down the bars of the field fence where the cattle were grazing, and had driven them through the opening. They came pounding up the path in wild flight, wreaking havoc on their way, and in less than two minutes their galloping, clumsy hooves had trampled every flower and bush in poor Becky's neat little full-blooming garden.

Who could have done such a heartless thing? Was it possible that the two jealous sisters had stooped to such treachery?

No one was more upset over the catastrophe than Becky's father, and to the best of his ability he sought to console her. He was a well-to-do man, and so he thought to buy her any island in Lake Winnipiseogee that she chose, for on an island there would be no cattle to trample her garden. When he told her of his decision, to his surprise, she chose the smallest island in the lake which today still bears her name.

The young farmer, when he heard of her modest choice, was even more impressed than before, whereupon he offered her marriage and a share of all his worldly goods.

Becky accepted both.

Years later when their grandchildren were grown, her father and spinster sisters in their graves, Becky confessed.

She had driven the cattle into the garden herself!!!

"But why?" her astounded husband could only gasp.

"Don't you remember?" she smiled at him with eyes still cornflower-blue. "That first day – you warned me not to get planted there myself."


Lloyd Coe

12

The Injin and Barn Door Islands

Big and Little Barn Door Islands lie southeast of Wolfeboro, and the real natives of the town will tell you that they are so-called because when approaching them from a certain angle (just *which* angle is rather a vague point) one can see – if it's not too dark or too misty, and not too sparkly or too glary – a huge barn door which actually is on the mainland beyond but appears to hold the two islands together by its great hinges.

This is undoubtedly perfectly correct, but here is another version which dates back more than a hundred years.

One morning when the oak leaves were about the size of a weasel's ear, an all-but-naked Injin ran in great haste and excitement down the one street of the village of Smith's Bridge, which is now called Wolfeboro.

From a leather thong tied about his middle clattered pompion shells and an assortment of gourds, while in one hand he balanced a canoe paddle, and with the other he swung a useful-looking tomahawk.

He was shouting something sort of guttural-like as he galloped down the rough street, but no one paid a great deal of attention to what he was saying. It sounded like "Barn Door!"

to the few who did hear, but what would an Injin (who wouldn't have anything to put inside a barn anyhow) want with a barn door? All that the village folk wanted was to get out of his way; they weren't accustomed to Injins, and certainly not an Injin swinging a tomahawk.

By the time he reached the end of the street every house was closed, and there was only one man in sight.

This man was "Ez" Hopkins, and he was sitting on a stool slivering with a jackknife on an Indian birch splintbroom. He

wasn't as young as he'd once been, nor as thin. The neighbors said of him that "he was fatter'n a settled minister." He had a beard as big as the broom he was slivering, and he used to say that all he had to do was to stay behind that beard and he was "as safe as in God's pocket."

Anyhow he never even looked up when he heard this Injin yelling, so maybe he didn't know that the stranger *had* a tomahawk.

The Injin stopped short when he saw Ez. and squatted

down beside him as though they were old friends, but still went on shouting about his barn door. Finally Ez looked down at him, and saw that the Red Man was really in distress, and was trying to tell him something in a language he couldn't understand, and which he didn't think was any Injin talk either. He wondered if it might be French. Lots of Injins from the north, he'd heard tell, spoke a smatter'n of French, along with a few English words, mixed up with their own talk.

After a while Ez put aside his birch broom and, puffing from his great weight, led the Injin up the rise which is now Wolfeboro Falls. The day before Ez had seen a half-Yankee half-Frenchie traveling trader with his tin trunk go up that way. He knew that the trader figgered about half a day to a farmhouse with a meal, and sometimes a bed, thrown in, so he couldn't be far off. Maybe the Injin was garbling some kind of French that this trader could make out.

They found him with his pins and ribbons and furbelows strewn over the kitchen floor of a farmhouse with all the women in the place gathered around him, but he was a good-natured fellow, and seemed even to welcome the interruption.

He made out with some difficulty that the Injin was a Mohawk, and was trying to get back to his own people. He had been taken north by the French, and it was while with them that he had learned what French he knew. When he had escaped from them, according to his story, he had been "loaned" a canoe, some food, and a bar of gold to aid him on his long journey south.

He had been many moons on the way, and had been forced to discard a number of canoes, and to "accept the loan" of others owing to the long carries. However he had managed to keep with him his bar of gold and some food until early that morning when, in a sudden squall, the canoe had been

sunk between the two islands off Smith's Bridge.

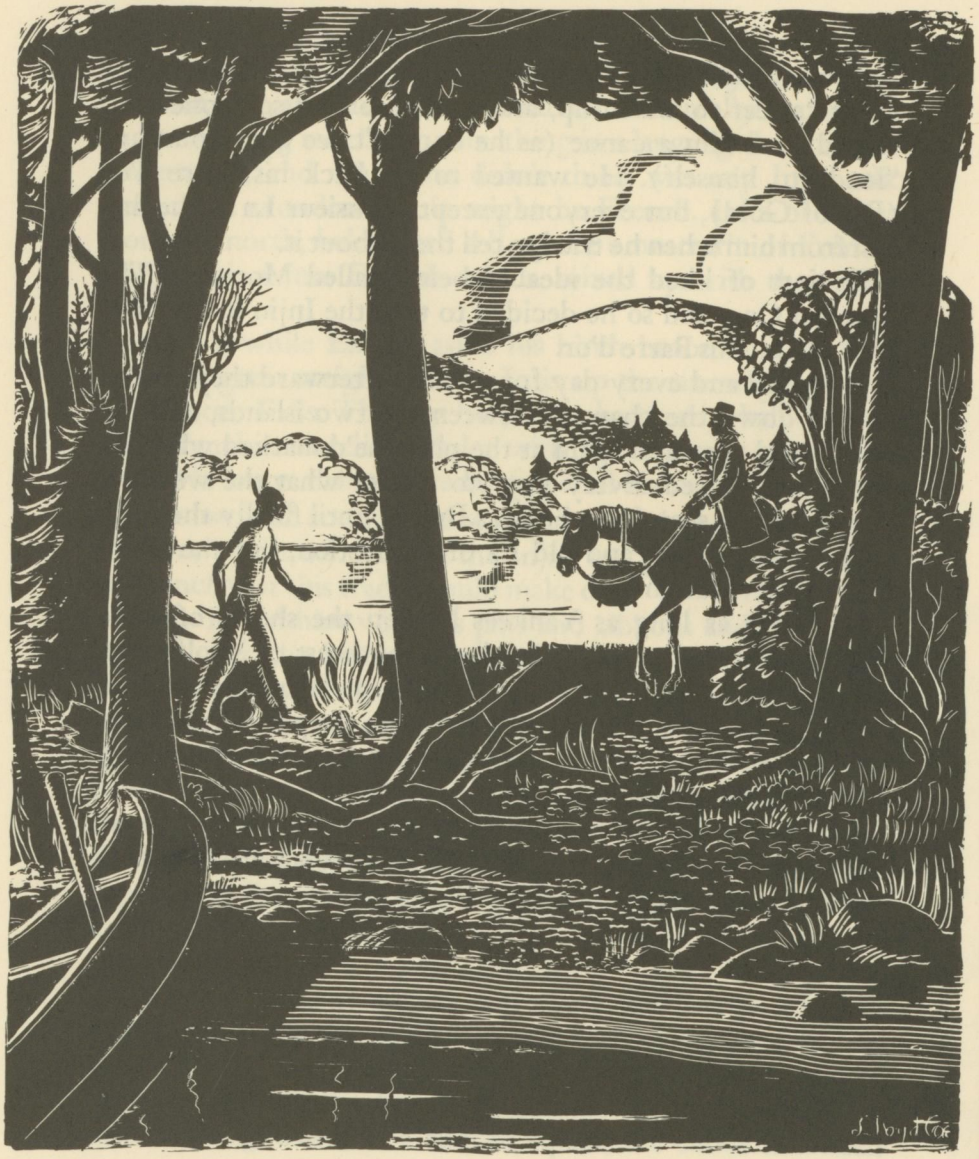
After swimming ashore the Red Man had run down the village street to warm up, and to try to find someone who would lend him a canoe (as he couldn't see one around to "lend" to himself). He wanted to get back his Barre d'or (Bar of Gold), but everyone except Monsieur La Barbe had run from him when he tried to tell them about it.

Ez sort of liked the idea of being called Monsieur The Bearded One, and so he decided to take the Injin in his row-boat to find this Barre d'or.

That day and every day for months afterward they rowed up and down the channel between the two islands, and the Injin dived time and again at the place he'd marked while Ez rested and puffed. Every day, no matter what the weather, they could be seen from Smith's Bridge until finally the Injin died of lung fever, and old Ez of exhaustion, but the Barre d'or was never found.

However as long as Yankees live on the shores of Lake Winnipiseogee the two little islands southeast of Wolfeboro will always be known as The Barn Door Islands, and some place in the narrow channel between them, deep down amongst the rocks and sand and waving lake weed, lies a bar of gold big enough to make a poor man rich.

Maybe if you squared up with that barn door and its great hinges on the mainland . . . with the shores of the two little islands . . . on just the right day . . .



13

Baked Baby Beans

A LONG time ago there lived on Lake Winnipiseogee an Abenaki Indian called Sauda, because that meant Sunday in his language, the day on which he had been born.

One autumn evening after he had paddled far in his canoe, he finally arrived at the narrow Wolfeboro Neck Carry about sundown. Tired and hungry, he first beached his canoe and then started his fire. No sooner had he got the latter going than along came a white man on a horse with a large iron bean pot slung from the animal's neck like a moose's "bell."

Sauda was pleased when he saw the pot for he had brought nothing in which to cook his beans, so he put his knife back in its sheath, and instead offered the white man half of his corn samp.

After the white man had eaten some of the dried pudding, he slid the bean pot carefully over his horse's head, lowered the heavy utensil to the ground from which he presently lifted a soundly-sleeping Indian baby.

Sauda was a little surprised, but the white man explained as well as he could that he had found the baby on the banks of

the Crooked River (The Penacook), and so, as he couldn't leave it there alone, he brought it along in his bean pot.

The Indian thought it would be a good idea to put it back in the pot and cook it with the beans, but the white man said that it was a *boy* baby and that it would be a waste to eat him.

However while the white man was tending to his horse the Indian, who had put the beans with some water in the pot over the fire, lifted up the still-sleeping baby and stirred it in with the beans.

But the white man saw him and, although he knew better than to argue with a hungry Indian, he was at the same time determined not to eat Baked Baby Beans.

So he asked Sauda to go off for some brushwood, and in his absence quickly threw into the pot a hunk of salt pork, and pulled out the baby which he hid in the bushes.

When the beans were ready, Sauda and the white man enjoyed them with relish; each claimed them to be the best beans ever made. Sauda was so pleased that he gave the white man some arrowheads of polished black jasper, and the white man was so pleased that he almost gave Sauda his horse, but thought better of it – and, in any case he reasoned, the horse wouldn't have wanted to get into the canoe.

After a long farewell and many promises and plans for eating beans together again some day, the Indian pushed off in his canoe and paddled away.

Then the white man went to collect his horse, the bean pot and the baby. He found the horse tethered just where he had left it, and the bean pot was still on the fire, but the baby wasn't where he had left it, and he never *was* quite certain what happened to that baby.


Lloyd Coe

14

Winni-Squam

PERHAPS you already know about Winnie for whom Winni-squam was named. She was the eldest daughter of Snapping Turtle who was chief of an island tribe up in Paugus Bay, and she was the most fidgety girl in all the world.

Her younger sisters had braves and squawling papooses of their own, but Winnie had never even had a tomahawk thrown in her direction. Maybe the reason was that she never stood still long enough for any man to see her.

Snapping Turtle and his leather-skinned squaw couldn't make her out. They thought and thought of ways to keep her still but the harder they tried, the more Winnie would run about here and there, and fidget and fuss and jump around.

This made Snapping Turtle snappier than ever, and especially so as he was anxious to get her fixed up in a wigwam with a young brave called Strip-'em who lived on the neighboring lake half a day's tote from Winnipiseogee. This lake had never been named so the young brave was known as Strip-'em-of-the-Unnamed-Waters.

One wild autumn night Winnie was galloping around first here and then there as though the devil were chasing her, and before she knew it she got over near the unnamed lake. Tearing around the blind end of a big rock, she barged full into Strip-'em, whereupon they both let out violent yelps.

"I thought you were a porcupine!" he groaned as they fell apart in agony.

"No," she sobbingly confessed, "they're sweetheart burrs!"

And sure enough – the poor girl's clothes were absolutely lined and covered with sharp, sticky, spiney sweetheart burrs.

So Strip-'em stripped 'em off her and for the first time in years Winnie stopped squammin' about, and stayed all the time where he put her, which was in his wigwam, and at the very next Council Meeting of Braves it was decided that the unnamed lake be called Winnisquam for her.