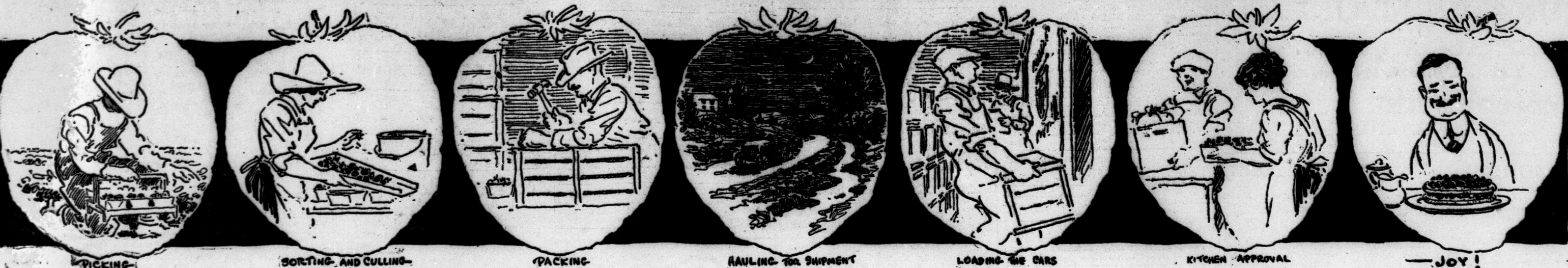


IT'S OPEN SEASON SOON IN MIDDLESEX STRAWBERRY BELT

Coy Summer and Chilly June Delay the Luscious Revel of the Red Pyramids Somewhat Later Than Usual This Year.
GROWERS PREDICT SHORT SEASON AND FIRM PRICES THIS YEAR



ON THE TRAIL OF THE SHORTCAKE SMILE



[BY ISABEL C. ARMSTRONG.]

The open season for hunting luscious, edible, red pyramids is about to begin in the Grand Strawberry Belt of Middlesex. Unlike other "open seasons" of which the dates are fixed by game laws, the annual strawberry hunt is a moveable festival, dependent upon weather conditions.

Because the summer has proved coy this year, and June adopted a chilling manner, the "open season" is being inaugurated a week or ten days later than twelve months ago. By the middle of June of 1914, strawberry patches were hives of industry where dusky pickers filled their boxes from early morning until approaching dusk put an end to their labors. It will be the end of this week, and possibly the beginning of next, before Indian men, women, boys and girls start the strawberry harvesting.

The Middlesex Strawberry Belt!

Puzzling, no doubt, the term to the many who do not know that one of the finest strawberry-growing sections in all of Western Ontario is contained in a strip of country extending some ten miles due west of the city of London, along the course of the river, and about three miles south, including the "backbone of the country," the highest ridge in Middlesex, of which the waterworks hill occupies a part.

When the frost slips lower-lying lands, the residents of the belt usually rest secure in the knowledge that their precious vines, bushes and fruit-bearing trees will go unscathed. But this year has proved an exception and the early varieties of strawberries have failed to survive a sharp encounter with frost the beginning of June. The progress of even the medium and late varieties has been retarded by the lack of consistent heat, and for this reason, the strawberry hunt will prove a short one—covering perhaps ten days—while prices "will remain firm." In other words, they will refuse to be battered down if there is the average demand for the smaller quantity.

According to the experience of the veteran grower of the district, the soil of the belt is ideal for raising berries, a clay loam with good drainage, which retains the moisture and extends the season of picking. He is responsible for the statement that while picking is at an end in something like ten days on sandy soil, on the clay loam it can be continued for three or four weeks every day under ordinary conditions.

While it is quite in the fashion, everyone in the belt must grow berries for table use, at least. The market demands are largely supplied by residents of picturesque Brick street, one or two on the Springbank road east and west, successful farmers on the roadsides running to the south, and by perhaps the largest grower of all, who lives north-west of Byron.

When the housewife goes to market or to her favorite dealer, she buys the berries that appeal to her because of their plumpness, soundness and symmetrical form. Again, she buys them because they are what she can get. The chances are that in the midst of the strawberry season, she will have sent home boxes or crates of the Senator Dunlop or the Williams, two favorites with the adjacent growers, who find these varieties well adapted to the local conditions. When she sees a white or green tip on a bright red berry, she need not discard the fruit because it has not ripened sufficiently. While the entirely red fruit is undoubtedly more attractive looking for serving with cream in its natural state, it will be a satisfaction

to the thrifty to know that it is the nature of the Williams berry to be white or green tipped, and that, along with the Senator Dunlop, it is one of the best varieties for preserving purposes.

Those Luscious Names.

The names "Warfield," "Woolverton," "Pekom," and "Parson's Beauty" are also capable of conjuring up dreams of delectable banquets, representing as they do families of the strawberry which thrive on the Middlesex ridge. Henry Wickerson, whose attractive home, "Oakland Farm," is situated on the Wickerson road, seven or eight

miles west of London, has known intimately the fluctuations of the strawberry market for the last forty years. Other growers in the belt have come and gone. Some who started enthusiastically to make a competent living, it not their fortunes, from this method of intensive farming gave up because of discouragement over falling off in crops or the dropping of the prices. Neighbors bent their energies in directions that required less close attention. Even in the "rock bottom" seasons of fifteen to twenty years ago, when boxes retailed at four and five cents, Mr. Wickerson

persevered and cheerfully cultivated his strawberry patch. One thing at least he gained, and that was experience. Then came a brighter outlook and strawberry growing regained popularity. Today, a friend of long standing, who was one of his competitors when he first began experimenting, has recalled profitable early experiences, and on a farm near by is specializing again on strawberry raising.

Need the Indians.

By the beginning of next week, the services of 25 or 30 Indian pickers will be required to gather the yield of a

three-acre patch at "Oakland Farm." Already a few members of the Indian summer colony have arrived, and are settled comfortably in a house standing well back from the present home of the owner and much nearer the small Indian liddle peered curiously at a couple of visitors who drove into the yard the other afternoon, disappearing as soon as they began to be troublesome by asking questions.

Hard by is another three-acre field of plants which will not bear fruit until next summer.

"How much money can be made from

three acres of plants?" was a pertinent and perhaps impertinent question asked of Mr. Wickerson.

"Well," he considered a moment before answering, "I have made as much as two thousand dollars in a good year. Two thousand dollars above expenses. But I won't make that this year. Still, we can't expect a big crop every season."

Follows in Father's Footsteps.

The Wickerson family evidently has entire faith in the remunerative value of strawberry growing. Based on the experience of his father, Herbert Wickerson, who is now farming on his own account, has launched out in an extensive way in strawberry culture, and is probably the largest producer in the belt. He has found the hill system satisfactory, and in their orderliness and freedom from weeds, his acres under cultivation testify to the great amount of care bestowed upon them by Indian laborers throughout growing time. Some years ago, W. P. Macoun, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, in delivering an address before the standing committee of the Senate on "Agriculture and Forestry," estimated the net profit of growing an acre of strawberries at \$84.

A local agricultural expert roughly estimates that an acre of strawberries in the belt running westward should be worth to the owner in the way of profit \$50 in a season—a high tribute to prevailing conditions for strawberry culture. The recklessly extravagant have been buying strawberries for table use for weeks back. "The family like them, and you know how hard it is to tempt appetites in warm weather," excuses the housewife.

The Shortcake Smile. No doubt about appetites, however, when that ambrosial dainty yelet strawberry shortcake is brought to view. It may be rich and indigestible, or evolved from simple biscuit dough. So long as it has a general filling of berry pulp and a liberal sprinkling of berries on top, the face of the head of the household wears a radiant smile, and every last little Dick and Betty is filled with ecstasy. Even grandfather waxes happy with a happiness that is partly anticipation and partly reminiscence. Only the dyspeptic who finds the best of the berries a poison fails to extract

from the shortcake season its real pleasure.

With the advent of the strawberry harvest, the shortcake season will in a few days be at its height. No need then for the housewife to experience guilty pangs of conscience, even though she be obliged to pay at the rate of "two boxes for a quarter." One must eat the fruits in season. Let her do her grumbling over the high price of berries for preserving, if she must grumble at all.

Migration of the Pickers. On the Indian reserve preparations are under way for the annual migration to the strawberry belt. It is a foregone conclusion that the pickers shall be Indians. One grower requires ten assistants, another thirty, and another still more. But this addition to the farm population increases not in the least the burden of work of the farmer's wife. Conveniently near to the patch a cook house is situated, a three-sided roofed shed, where meals are prepared by the pickers themselves. The wants of this summer colony are few and the members are quite satisfied to find shelter for the night in barns or tents. A house such as is at the service of all whom it can accommodate at Oakland Farm is a genuine luxury.

Incentive to Worker.

"Piece-work" in this case paying for picking by the box, is a great incentive to industry. Each worker is given a card, and each box when delivered filled is marked thereon. Long before the owners of the strawberry fields are thinking of awakening from their slumbers, figures are moving to and fro among the berry plants, and nimble fingers are filling boxes. No arguments are heard in regard to working hours. Everyone plods along cheerfully, glad to start the day at sun-up and not always satisfied to give up when the sun goes down.

The filling of 150 boxes constitutes a good high average for a day's work. Many, however, do not succeed in picking more than 90 boxes. A young strawberry grower tells of an Indian employee who last summer on a wagger picked 225 boxes in a day. A man with recollections of strawberry picking in his own boyhood days, upon hearing the story, remarked with conviction: "I'll bet he didn't do it the next day."

WEST LORNE MINISTER RECEIVES LETTER FROM SON ON WAY TO FRONT

Allister P. Haig is Member of Cycle Corps of Second Contingent.

CRINAN, June 22.—The following letter was received from Allister P. Haig by his parents, Rev. and Mrs. Haig of West Lorne. Mr. Haig is pastor of the Presbyterian Church here. Allister is a member of the cycle corps of the second contingent, and is now on the way to the front. He wrote abroad transport. Since he concluded it is learned a safe voyage was made.

"Dear Folks.—Two weeks ago today I was at home in little old West Lorne, and it is hard to believe that over two thousand miles of land and sea lie between us now. We've been over a week on board now, and will be glad to set foot on terra firma again. I've often dreamed of crossing the Atlantic, but my dreams and reality do not coincide at all. I've read much of the delights of ocean travel, but I've seen more of the other side of it. There are only two classes on board, second class and steerage, and the officers and nurses have the second class while we have the steerage.

"There are six of us in our state-room, which measures 10x12 feet, so treading is quite a problem. We usually work it in relays. Once in our bunks we are fairly comfortable, and there is a stay from lights out at 9:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The air down here is horrible. I wish I could send a sample of the odors of this place to Ottawa. Of course, we get plenty of good fresh salt sea air on deck during the day.

We have 'physical torture' from 11 every day, otherwise there is very little to do. Now that we are near the end in the danger zone, we have lost our best. Every man has a place in the boat assigned to him.

THE LIFEBOATS ARE UNDER OUR PILLOWS ALWAYS

"The first three days of the trip down the St. Lawrence and Gulf were perfect weather. The scenery all the way is beautiful. Met two large westbound steamers yesterday. I was seasick for a couple of days, and missed one meal.

"Had service on deck this morning. Have some great old sing-songs on deck in the evenings when all the fellows gather around and join in. It's a peculiar thing, but you never hear soldiers singing martial songs. The songs of mother and home and sweetheart are the favorites every time.

"The glorious 24th was celebrated on board in royal fashion. All paraded in the morning, and gave the royal salute. We are getting into dangerous water now, and we are taking every precaution. The boats are all stocked and overhauled and ready to launch at a moment's notice.

"We are getting near port, and are now escorted by the Linnet and the Edystone. Their speed is marvellous. Expect to land in a few hours, so have no time to write more. Much love, from your wandering soldier boy.

"ALLISTER P. HAIG."

ANOTHER GERMAN SPY PAYS THE PENALTY

Executed in Tower of London—Court-martial For Rosenthal.

LONDON, June 23.—8:30 p.m.—F. Robert Muller, who on June 4 was found guilty at the Old Bailey Police Court of being a German spy, was executed in the Tower of London today by shooting.

Another alleged German spy, Robert Rosenthal, who is said by the police to have confessed that he was sent to England by the German admiralty to obtain information on naval matters, is to be court-martialled.

VATICAN DISCUSSING REMOVAL TO SPAIN

After Trouble in 1881 Transfer Was Talked About—Invitation Given.

[Canadian Press.]

Rome, via Chicago to Paris, June 24.—It is asserted that the question of the Pope accepting the invitation of the Spanish bishops to transfer the Holy See to Spain is causing animated discussion at the Vatican. It is recalled that after the troubles in Rome in July, 1881, during the transfer of the body of Pope Pius IX. from St. Peter's to its last resting place and when the coffin was almost thrown into the Tiber River, Pope Leo appointed a commission of cardinals to study the situation of the papacy.

Some of the cardinals favored the immediate transfer of the papacy elsewhere, but the majority agreed that the transfer should take place only if the safety of the Pope were threatened or he was hindered in the exercise of his spiritual ministry. This commission arranged the details for the Pope's departure from Rome, and possibly the sacred college, to leave Rome secretly, to be followed by the papal court, and made plans for the administration of the church from the time of the departure of the Pope until he should resume his offices in his new residence. The commission agreed, however, that the Pope should be left free to decide when it was necessary to take such a step. At this time, Emperor Francis Joseph offered the Pope his castle at Salsburg.

EXTRA PRECAUTIONS TAKEN IN SARNIA TO PROTECT PLANTS

Being Private Companies City Must Give Guard—Lighting Up Grounds.

[Special to The Advertiser.]

SARNIA, June 23.—The dynamite case in Windsor has placed a scare into some of the local managers of plants which are manufacturing shells and other munitions for the Allies, and as a result the military authorities have been approached for guards to protect the plants.

Evidently it is not generally known that although these plants are working on goods for the Government, they are owned by private capital, and, therefore, according to the ruling of the Government, will not be protected by the military powers, but must look to the city police for protection, which the city must supply, as they are taxpayers, and can demand that their plants be protected from any damage or attack that might possibly be made. City Must Foot Bill.

If the civil power is unable to protect the interests of the citizens, then the chief magistrate or the mayor of the place may call on the militia power for aid, but it is plainly stated in the law that the party or city asking for the troops have to pay the bill.

A couple of the local concerns that are manufacturing shells have a gang at work today placing electric lights about their yards and plants, while the Mueller Company is also building a tight board fence around their whole yard.

The police force of the city now consists of eight men altogether, but if the city has to place an efficient guard on the concerns interested it will take

GERMAN CLERK MISSING.

SARNIA, June 23.—George Kroeger, Elyer, a German, formerly employed at the Belchamber Hotel here, has failed to report to the local police and is now supposed to be in Berlin, Ont., but the local police so far have not received any word from that city that he has arrived there.

Every little while some member of the local foreign colony disappears, and nothing more is heard of him. The easy method of escape across the St. Clair River to the States offers no hardships, and so is no doubt the route by which many of the alleged alien enemies have left.

The St. Clair River, 30 miles in length, is not patrolled in any way, and it is the easiest thing in the world to get a boat and reach either side in a few minutes without anyone being the wiser.

CHANGING OF SHIPS' NAMES DANGEROUS

[Canadian Press.]

Christiania, via London, June 24.—That it is very dangerous to change the name of a ship in war time is the moral drawn by the Norwegian Shipping Gazette from the attack upon the steamship Davanger by a German submarine. The Davanger formerly was the Ceylon, and the latter name appeared on the ship's papers. The captain of the submarine stopped the Davanger and demanded the vessel's name and nationality. He also asked for the ship's papers. When he observed the conflict in names he declared the Davanger not only was sailing under a false name but a false flag. He gave the crew 15 minutes to leave, and then fired upon the steamer.

British Coal Prices Will Be Regulated

Government to Take Step as Interest Parties Fail to Agree.

[Canadian Press.]

London, June 24.—Details of a Government regulation of coal prices will be announced next week, according to the Daily Mail's political correspondent, he correspondent announces that the efforts of Walter Runciman, president of the board of trade, to induce the various parties interested to come to a voluntary agreement on the question of the price and the supply of coal, have failed, and that Mr. Runciman will make an announcement on the subject in the House of Commons, indicating that the Government intends to take strong action.

In connection with the munitions bill the correspondent says it is stated that the officials of the miners' federation are unanimously opposed to the coal miners being included in its provisions.

COLONEL BECHER'S CHARGER.

STRATHROY, June 23.—In Saturday's issue of The Advertiser appeared a large cut of Lieut.-Col. Becher's charger, "Roy." Roy is a horse formerly owned by Dr. A. S. Thompson of this town, and at the time the horse was known as "Doctor." Some two years ago Dr. Thompson sold the horse to Col. Becher, who rechristened him "Roy," after Strathroy. "Roy" is still in France, though his gallant master met his fate with other Canadian heroes.

HYDRO FOREMAN KILLED IN WINDSOR

Wm. Beam Found Dead at Foot of Embankment.

[Canadian Press.]

WINDSOR, June 23.—The body of William Beam, 35 years old, who had charge of the night staff of the hydro-electric system, was found at the foot of the steep embankment at Alymer avenue and Sandwich street, by a Grand Trunk Railway watchman, early this morning.

Beam came in contact with a live wire while repairing a light. No burns were found on the body, it is said, which leads the authorities to believe the shock hurled the man down the 25-foot bank and killed him. It is believed his neck was broken. Beam was a Spanish-American veteran, had worked for the hydro-electric commission above a year. A widow and one child survive.

Coroner J. S. Labele has ordered an inquest, and a post-mortem will be conducted this afternoon.

CARRANZA QUASHES WASHINGTON HOPES

Flatly Declines to Accept Villa's Overtures for Peace.

[Canadian Press.]

Washington, June 24.—Officials hope that the heads of the warring military factions in Mexico would sell their differences today. Gen. Carranza's notice to the United States, reiterating that he would not agree to a peace with Gen. Villa pending a discussion of peace, was responsible. He announces his intention of continuing his military campaign to crush his adversaries.

Gen. Carranza has all along declined to accept Gen. Villa's peace overtures as well as suggestions of foreign mediators in Mexico's internal troubles. His attitude as expressed to the United States, therefore, was no surprise to officials in Washington.

BERLIN ANNOUNCES TORPEDOING CRUISER

Evidently Refers to Roxburgh, Which Was Struck But Not Sunk.

[Canadian Press.]

Berlin, June 24.—Via Saville Wireless.—Official announcement was made here today that a German submarine had attacked on Sunday, June 20, a British armored cruiser apparently of the Minotaur class at a point about 100 miles from the Firth of Forth, Scotland. The cruiser was hit by a torpedo, but the effect of the attack could not be ascertained by the crew of the submarine.

A dispatch from London last night conveyed official announcement that the British cruiser Roxburgh had been struck by a torpedo in the North Sea last Sunday. The damage sustained was not serious, nor were there any casualties. The cruiser proceeded under her own steam.

It is evident that the London dispatch of last night and the above message from Berlin refer to the same incident. The Minotaur and the Roxburgh type of cruisers are very similar. The former is 490 feet long and the latter 450 and each has four funnels and two masts.

OBREGON VICTORY.

[Canadian Press.]

El Paso, Texas, June 24.—Gen. Obregon's forces have occupied Aguas Calientes, according to the Roxburgh type of cruisers are very similar. The former is 490 feet long and the latter 450 and each has four funnels and two masts.

Gen. Carranza made public today by the Carranza agency here.

Official notice is given to buy manure strawberries now. Have your grocer secure Niagara Peninsula grown kind; they are now at their best, and require less sugar. Goosberries about ready. Speak to your grocer.