

1895 Diary of Dudley Wetmore Smith

The following is written by a Mr. Smith about a trip he made to Manitoulin Island in August 1895. The diary was found in a cottage at what was known as the Nighswander Lodge which is now Bob & Peggi Hildebrant 's Mountain View Resort in Sandfield Township by Lake Manitou. [According to Betsy Bachmann Moxan, this copy of the diary was hand written by her mother, Elizabeth Bachmann.] The diary was submitted to the Central Manitoulin Historical Society by Bill and Irene Montgomery of Big Lake.

Friday Left Windsor at 2.45 Port Huron at 9.30 Avery and his trap (carriage?) got on Geo. B. Fox of Wyoming, O. Goderich before breakfast. Climbed the stairs Kincardine before dinner Uptown and glass of beer. Port Elgin & in water. Southampton at dusk. Poor bed, poor sleep first night good bed, good sleep next.

Saturday Aug. Wake up at Killarney at day break. Did not get up. Game of whist Sat. morn with Fox & wife of Brittani Manitow just after breakfast.

Sunday dull day. Sat around in morn. drove out to Lake in aft. Saw Mr. & Mrs. Van Zandt. To bed early. Got started in the morning. Bright day. Avery with his tent and trunk and folding boat, etc. in the double team wagon on our way to the lake where we arrived at 8.30 and soon were off. Harbeck and his wife & the old Jew also going fishing. We found the wind dead ahead & we had to beat our way up & we sailed & we sailed & the wind was fresh & the sun not too warm & it was a lovely day, but sailing from 9 o'clock in the morning to half past 4 in the aft. to go only 13 miles is a little too much. However Mrs. Nighswander had supper for us at once, we'd only a piece of bread & butter & a piece of smoked apple pie for dinner. I felt really sorry for Mr. N. [Nighswander?] He had expected a lot of us & here we're only two! Right after supper we put up our tent & such a time driving stakes & messing around & building a plank floor for our bed.

And then Avery put his patent boat together & before we were through the moon came in all his fullness & it was a lovely picture - the great lake down in front of us & the tent in the moonlight. We soon turned in and had a good sleep only half wakened by the wail of a loon off down the lake & the frightened bleat of a sheep which had evidently lost its way or its companion.

Sunday In the morning I had 3 soft boiled eggs & a glass of milk & then we leisurely got ready for our first fish. The wind was blowing straight across our fishing place and Avery's boat could not stand the sea. So we were driven back into unknown waters where we tried our luck. Avery caught one and I two nice bass & soon went home to get out of the blow. The canvas boat works well.

We cleaned our fish for supper & then after dinner of roast chicken & pie, always pie, we took a rest & after dinner we made a balsam & cedar bed - worked like farmers. Then had a shoot with Avery's target rifle in which I hit the bull's eye twice out of three times. Avery's eyes are not so good. And the wind kept on blowing & blowing all night. It tore around our tent and flapped & flopped so that we could not sleep & then the rain came - talk about rain on the roof.

Monday And this morning I am sitting in the house on the old lounge stuffed with corn husks (not me- I'm stuffed with eggs & toast etc.) At my left the window looking out on the great lake dark with rain and wind. The breakfast table isn't cleared off for Mrs. N. has gone out to put a cover on the old cow's hornless horn, knocked off in the night. Harold [Bassingthwaite] the bright youngster has just brought in two round red tomatoes for me, but is eating them himself & the rain is coming down again hard. I didn't know it could rain up here. We had none last year.

This is **Wednesday**. We spend the rest of the morn in our tent, had a nap & read the magazine. In the aft. we walked over the old trail down to the point & got into Nighswander's punt with Harold & tried to fish again. Wind just as strong & we only got two, mine the biggest. We built a big fire down on the shore this eve. In the meantime I have washed my little footies in the big wash tub with the waves dashing in on me. These cedar

stumps burn uproariously & as it was cold we got warmed through thoroughly & went to bed & had a good long sleep both of us.

Thursday Lamb's liver & fish for breakfast & once more to the beach dear friends once more. And then what a row! Avery was bound to go in his boat & the waves were high. We waded out over our knees & climbed in & pushed off. I thought several times we would have to swim for it but we got around safely and had a fish. I caught 4 nice ones, lost my tackle as I did yesterday. Line rotten. Avery had hard luck and only got one. After dinner we gloried in the fact that we had nothing to do but digest the big dinner. Went down in the woods & tried my revolver. Fixed our bed & leisurely wended our way to the lake. I caught one fine old bass 4 lb., 18+5 1/2 inch. Wind still blowing. We had a late supper & Joe brought in a letter from wife & Bessy & one from Eur. To bed to bed. How lovely it is this wild life!

Friday morning clear & calm. No wind & we expected a great lot of fish but we went projecting around & didn't catch a single one!!!! Rowed around & trolled & investigated & went home to dinner tired & satisfied. This aft we took our time & then started to our old spot, anchored & about 4.30 commenced to get some fishing. I caught a pan of fine ones, 3 1/2 lb. & several others. We got 13 in all. I'm ahead as usual & we quit because it's time. Pleasant row home & find Maynard the Atty. General of Michigan [Editor's Note: Fred A. Maynard was Attorney General of Michigan 1895-1898] has come & we build him a bed & monkey around till bed time.

Saturday Aug. 29 & I am sitting on an old cross fence, several miles from no where all by myself. We have driven over here Joe [Nighswander] & Ben [Nighswander] with us 3 in search of chubs but have found none. The others are poking around in the woods somewhere looking for partridge or trying to find the stream & I'm letting 'em go. At my left is a great pine tree dead & splintered by lightening. The wind is blowing among the trees & the rustle & swish & far off roar is lovely. It was too rough this morn to go fishing although we tried it & I nearly pulled my arms off rowing Maynard around in the heavy Bazenwiat [Bassingthwaite?] boat. The sea was high & M. [Maynard} is a green horn at fishing. I can tell that by the way he handles his rod. I'll make him row next time. So we came home & got there just in time to miss a heavy shower & to lie on our backs in the tent & hear it patter. Avery was out in it. We had a good dinner today. Maynard brought some coffee & taught Mrs. B. [Bassingthwaite] to make it & it was very good & that with spring lamb & mealy potatoes & raw onions & apple pie made a fine dinner.

This is a deserted farm. Some poor chap came here, built him a log house & barn & commenced on the awful task of clearing it. The square hewn logs the few acres of stumps are mute witnesses of the work he put in. But the stones were too much for him and he had to give up! Joe Nighswander is a little discouraged & I feel sorry for him. They have a very good farm as farms go here, but oh the stones! They seem to grow a fresh crop every year & the great heaps in every field tell of the back breaking work he has done. He is disappointed that so few fishermen have come to him this year & had made preparations for more.'

This is the roughest ride I've had in a long time. Such a road & no spring under the seat! We have just been up in the table land - flat stone surface which extends for miles Ben says. Found a lot of choke cherries but we didn't find any chubs. We ate our supper hurriedly & tried the fishing again but it was too late and we only caught a few small ones & some perch. First perch we have seen. Avery rowed home & Joe very kindly came down for us with the lantern to pilot us home through the woods. To bed at 9 (8.20 our time). In the night the rain came & early a.m. it just poured! The tent stood it beautifully.

Sunday a.m. & I have just finished a birch bark letter to wife & Bessy. We are puttering around here putting in time. The sun is out but the wind is blowing a gale again. Did you ever see such a time for wind! Every day but one. Am glad the boys did not come with me. They might be disappointed but I seem to feel perfectly satisfied & content. Harold is happy over the baseball I brought him. Avery & Joe started off to look for trout - drive about 15 miles this afternoon & then fish tomorrow. The wind was worse than ever this aft. & I was afraid the tent wouldn't stand it. Rather cold but we slept well just the same. We go to bed early. It is so nice in the tent if it does blow.

Monday Maynard & I had to go it alone. We fished or tried to both morning & aft. but it was no use & we rowed around & had a good time any way.

We had some euchre with Ben & Harold - great fun- & pitched quoits & ran around. Avery got back about 8.30 with some trout and as usual we all had a good sound sleep. What fun we are having. What a noise we are making. What good people these folks are!

Tuesday Well it was just about as windy as all the others. Maynard & I went out morning & aft. & fished around. Caught some perch if we couldn't catch bass. I had just as good a time. Dear me how we do eat! Bass & perch & corn bread & potatoes & beets & cabbage & eggs & cream & pie & cake & sauce. Mrs. B. is a good homely cook. In eve. Avery & I went down to the point & built a big fire to attract minnows but didn't get any.

Wednesday a.m. Rain! but we had more fun getting up & at breakfast than ever. We commenced to talk about going home today but - the tent is wet of course & it must not be folded wet. Well it is one day sooner than I wanted to start anyway. I started off to the point all alone & got the boat & rowed it flying through the white caps around to the bay intending to fish, but found the boys wanted to go so we started in to pack up. Mournful task! Avery's boat to unlimber & roll up. Lines to be dried. 1001 things kept us busy. The tent was left till the last & was pulled down exposing our comfortable beds & cedar floor to the lowering sky.

Then we had a farewell dinner - roast chicken, etc. and at 1 p.m. we bade the good old Mrs. Basenwaite (Esther Lehman Nighswander Bassingwaithe -58 years old) good bye also. Ben & Harold got into Joe's wagon & started on our 23 mile drive. If we could only have sent word for the sail boat - or if we could only have known what was going to happen. It commenced to drizzle before we had gone far, then to sprinkle & the last two hours was in a pouring driving rain! My big oil coat did its duty & I kept perfectly dry except I found my lower trousers & feet wet where the water had run down. The others had heavy over coats but were more or less wet - 4 1/2 hours in the rain! However we stood it well & had a fund of spirits that lasted till the end. My valise was under a seat but Maynard's was rather badly soaked. Such a drive & such a country. We got into the Manitow [a hotel?] & I changed up & we all had supper & went to bed & I think it rained all night. Of course nobody knows when a boat will be in. The Cambria should be here tomorrow to take us home but she won't be - **Thursday**- It is to be a repetition of last year only I have company this time. The only thing we can do is wait. I found wife's letter here for me making 3 rec'd. & found they will be home tomorrow so I am all the more anxious to get off. We fiddle around & spread the tent to dry. A big fire does the business for the overcoats. Yes we just fiddle around that's all. We can't go away far because the boat may come in!

We have a game of whist with Harbeck in the afternoon.

Sat. Morning - here I sit up in the promenade deck of the splendid little steamer Majestic. The air is cool & bracing. The sun is trying to come out & the scenery is beautiful - but to resume. We waited Thursday aft. & night for the Cambria but she didn't come & no news from her. So **Friday** morning the Majestic arrived on her way to the Sault & we concluded that was our only way to get home - to reach in some way the U. S. once more where there were railroads & regular boats. So at last we left Manitowaning behind us. The Majestic is a good boat, handsome, well furnished in every way, good table & service. Quite a contrast to the Cambria but we are going a long way round.

We enjoyed the scenery which is very fine. Got off at the various landings - Little Current - Kagawong - Gore Bay - etc. Met a Mr. Triplett from St. Louis, Mr. Ebbert of Cinccin (very bright but a tendency to quarrel with his friend Mr. T.) which was ridiculous. (We are just coming into Hilton on St. Joseph Island. I wish my folks could see it) also two Misses Simmons from Midland, Ont. & in eve. we had some pedro [card game?]. Went to bed at 10 about the latest we have staid up the whole trip.

Avery is such a good quiet generous minded fellow & we seem to be very well suited. Maynard is different. He is too pronounced, is not a true fisherman, & not a very comfortable person to have along. Still we have no trouble.

And here comes Detroit the hometown & the home folks & the 1895 vacation is over.

Meals & room to Manitowaning.	- 2.50	
Livery there	- 1.25	
Hotel	- 1.50	
Boat to Nighswanders	- 1.25	
Board at Joe Nighswander's 9 days	- 9.00	
Frogs - 50 c....Boat ...40c	- .90	
Ride back	- 1.00	
Hotel	- 2.65	
Fare on Majestic to Sault	- 5.00	
R.R. +supper	<u>-15.00</u>	
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Total		\$40.05