

James Starkie

Shipwright

JAMES STARKIE, OF Robbinston, Maine, was one of the last shipwrights of importance in St. Andrews. His shipyard at the Lighthouse Point, just adjacent to his house on the waterfront, turned out many a noble vessel between 1870 and his death by suicide in 1901. Mr. Starkie also got in on the burgeoning tourist trade in his later years, taking guests on sailing trips with chowders on the neighbouring islands in his yacht *Crusoe*, which of course he built himself. He also built a vessel for Sir William Van Horne. The photographs in this collection come courtesy of Ann Schelzig, a descendant of the shipwright. ~

Standard

April 20, 1870

Schooner *Nettie* launched from Smith's shipyard - 88 x 26 feet, 118 tons. Master builder James Starkie. Owners J. Watson, J. W. Street, A. D. Stevenson, P. Quinn, D. Budge, Capt. N. Clark, J. Burton, M. Andrews (also Captain of vessel).

Standard

June 22, 1870

New Vessel

We are happy to learn that Mr. Starkie, the builder of the *Nettie*, is laying the keel of a new vessel of upwards of 300 tons, at the building yard near the Railway. It is to be hoped that every encouragement will be extended to our young friend in his efforts to establish shipbuilding at this Port, where so many large and fine vessels were built formerly.

*Standard***April 19, 1871**

Launched from the building yard at the Lighthouse Point this forenoon, a beautifully modelled and well-finished vessel of 147 tons register, 314 carpenters' measurement, which on entering her future element was named the *Greta*. She is constructed of spruce with hackmatac top, the planks hardwood, and is to be commanded by Capt. Harry Stinson, who, with John Watson, A. D. Stevenson, Jas. Scallion, Jas. Starkie and others are owners. This is the second vessel built by our young townsman, Mr. James Starkie, whose fame as a builder is now established.

*Standard***July 7, 1875**

Anna P. Odell launched at Indian Point. 380-ton brigantine. James Starkie's yard. Owners Stinson, T. T. Odell, A. Lamb, Capt. Wren, Capt. Outhouse, J. M. Hanson, and Robinson and Glenn.

*Pilot***Dec. 2, 1880**

Mr. James Starkie is going into the woods with a crew of men to get out the frame for a hundred-and fifty-ton schooner he is going to build at the point. She will be owned by a company.

*Pilot***April 14, 1881**

Mr. James Starkie in his shipyard at the Point has laid the keel of a schooner for the coasting trade, to be owned by a company in town and commanded by Capt. John Maloney; her dimensions are to be - keel 95 feet, beam 27, depth 10, tonnage 150 tons, frame hackmatac. The model was designed by Mr. Starkie, who is celebrated for building vessels that prove to be good carriers and fast sailors.



James Starkie,
wife Susan,
daughter
Natalie,
sons Robert,
Vaughan
and Louis,
circa 1895.

This house is
now part of
the Seaside
Beach Resort.
Courtesy Ann
Schelzig

St. Croix Courier

April 21, 1881

Mr. Jas. Starkie, who has a first-class reputation as a master builder, has laid the keel of a coasting schooner in his shipyard at Indian Point, in St. Andrews. It will be commanded by Capt. John Maloney, who was formerly in charge of the *Julia Clinch*.

Pilot

Aug. 31, 1882

The new schooner building at the Point by Mr. James Starkie for Mr. Andrew Lamb and others, will be launched this day (Thursday) at about one o'clock pm. As she will be the first vessel ever launched in this port, broadside on, no doubt a large number of persons will be attracted to witness it. She will be called the *George Lamb*. We hope that the good schooner will be launched with safety into her future native element.



Pilot

Sept. 7, 1882

The schooner *George Lamb* was launched from Starkie's shipyard Thursday last at 12:30 o'clock pm. From the fact that the schooner was to be launched sideways, one hundred feet, a large number of spectators were present. The launch was effected without difficulty; the noble vessel glided gracefully into her native element amid the hearty cheers of the onlookers. The *George Lamb* was modelled and designed by her builder, Mr. James Starkie, and is another proof of his skill as a master workman. Her lines are very symmetrical with a clear run fore and aft; her frame is hacmatac and her dimensions are as follows - keel 95 feet, beam 27 feet, depth of hold 9 feet. She has a half poop cabin and forward house, and is fitted with all the modern improvements in naval architecture. The *George Lamb* is owned by Mr. Andrew Lamb and others,

James Starkie
and son

onboard his
sloop *Crusoe*.

Courtesy Ann
Schelzig

and is to be commanded by Capt. John Maloney, who is a part owner. Immediately after the launch she was towed to Gove's wharf, where she will receive her spars and outfits. We hope that the *George Lamb* will meet with favouring winds and bring her owners a rich reward for their enterprise.

Pilot

Aug. 12, 1886

Mr. James Starkie launched last week a very neatly modelled and well finished fishing schooner of about 12 tons burden which he has named *Crusoe*. Nautical men who have seen the pretty craft, decide that she will, like the vessels previously built by Mr. Starkie, prove a good sea boat and fast sailer. The *Crusoe* is for sale.

Pilot

Aug. 2, 1888

James Starkie's yacht *Crusoe* being used for local visits around the Bay and as far as Digby. "The *Crusoe* is a good sailboat and a fast sailer."

Beacon

April 13, 1893

Robert Starkie, while playing around the derelict schooner *Mary Ellen* one day last week, fell off her deck and struck very heavily on the ice in her hold. When picked up he was in a semi-conscious state, and blood was flowing from one of his ears. Dr. Harry Gove was summoned. The boy is out again.

Before leaving town, Mr. Van Horne purchased a boat from Mr. James Starkie, and also obtained figures for the construction of a larger vessel for deep-sea fishing.

*Beacon***Aug. 5, 1897**

A sociable little party set out from the Algonquin on Thursday last, tempted by the promise of day's fishing and one of Capt. Starkie's famous chowders.

*Beacon***Oct. 7, 1897**

New tenders for the care of the buoys in St. Andrews harbour have been received. Capt. James Starkie's tender of \$78 was the lowest, and he received the contract.

*Beacon***March 28, 1901****Suicide by Drowning****Capt. Starkie, A Victim of Melancholy, Takes His Own Life**

A shocking tragedy, and one that is fortunately very rare in this community, occurred early on Saturday morning last, when Capt. James Starkie, the well-known boatman, ended his life by his own hands.

For some time past, Capt. Starkie had been in a despondent mood. The recent deaths of his two sons (both remarkably brilliant students), the serious illness of another son at Aitken, South Carolina, and the discovery that he himself was affected with a cancer, so preyed upon his mind that he became melancholy and unable to sleep. Dr. Gove, his attending physician, tried to shake off this melancholy feeling, but in vain. On Friday, the doctor paid him two visits, and left with his wife a prescription to induce sleep. The doctor warned Mrs. Starkie that her husband was in a dangerous frame of mind and that he should be watched.

About midnight, the unfortunate man went out of his house, but soon after returned and warmed his hands at the stove. Between 1 and 2 o'clock, he left the house again. This time he did not return. His wife waited half an hour for him to come back, and then, becoming thoroughly alarmed, she visited Mr. James Ross, a neighbor, and imparted her fears to him. He aroused Mr. Thomas Pendlebury and together they went over to the Starkie wharf to begin their search.

With aid of a lantern they soon discovered the body in the water with a heavy weight fastened to it. The painful discovery was at once made known to his family and as soon as the tide receded the body was lifted. Coroner Wade, who viewed the remains, did not consider an inquest necessary.

The deceased was 64 years of age and leaves a wife, two sons and a daughter, for whom heartfelt sympathy is felt. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, with a great deal of personal independence about him. His integrity was undoubted. As a mechanic, he had few equals.

During his time, he built some very fine vessels. Among those whose construction he directed were the schooners *Nettie*, *Greta*, *Nellie Clark*, *Christina*, *Annie P. Odell*, *George Lamb* and *Telephone*, all of which with the exception of the *Nellie Clark* were constructed at St. Andrews. The *Clark* was built at Robbinston.

Of late years, Capt. Starkie has devoted his time to building boats and taking out pleasure parties in his little schooner *Crusoe*. He was well known and greatly respected among the summer visitors. He was also buoy contractor for the port of St. Andrews.

On Monday, the remains were taken to Robbinston, Maine, for interment. Before leaving, a short service was held at the house by Rev. A. W. Mahon.

St. Croix Courier

March 28, 1901

Suicide in St. Andrews

James Starkie, aged sixty-five years, in the most deliberate manner, committed suicide about two o'clock last Saturday morning at his home in St. Andrews. He has, for some time, suffered from insomnia. This, coupled with the death of members of his family and tidings received one day last week that his son, Justin, who is in South Carolina for his health, was sinking rapidly, and the thought that a pustule on his nose would form into a cancer, so preyed on his mind as to cause him to act queerly. He went out of his home about midnight, returned in half an hour or so and sat down by the stove to warm himself. About one-thirty, a.m., he again went out. His wife requested him not to stay long. Shortly after he went out she

heard a noise on the wharf adjacent to the house which so alarmed her that she went over to her neighbour, James Ross, and asked him to go down to the wharf in search of Mr. Starkie. Mr. Ross went but having no lantern found it too dark. He went back to his house and got one. Accompanied by his sons and a neighbour, Thomas Pendlebury, he went back and searched the wharf. Finding no trace of him, he held the lantern over the end of the wharf where the feet of the missing man were seen near the surface of the water. Having no boat or other appliance, the parties waited until the tide ebbed and with a rope fasted to the legs hauled the body on the wharf, when it was found that Starkie had passed the end of a piece of rope through a hole and took three half hitches around part of the drawbar of a railroad car, that weighed about one hundred pounds. He then passed the other end of the rope around his neck, taking two half hitches in it, heaving about two feet slack. So bound he went to his death over the wharf. Coroner J. A. Wade, M. D., was called to view the body. He believed that the jerk when the iron drew tight the rope had broken Starkie's neck. Deeming an inquest unnecessary he directed the body to be taken to the house. Mrs. Starkie has the sympathy of the community.

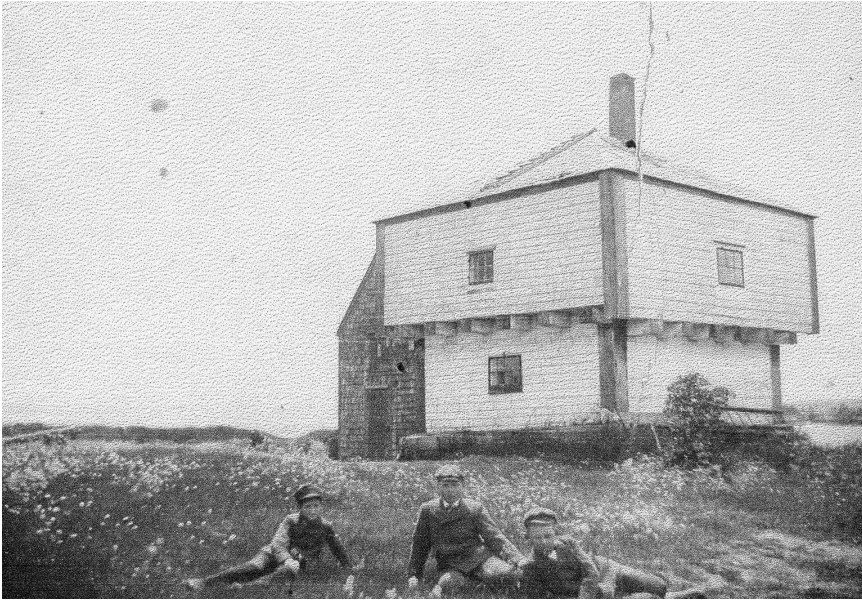
The remains of Mr. Starkie were taken on Monday over to Robbinston in the steamer *Jeanette* for interment in the grave where two of his children now lie.

The late James Starkie was a respected citizen of St. Andrews, of which he was a native. He was a shipbuilder and amongst other vessels built by him were the schooners *Nettie*, *Greta*, *George Lamb*, *Telephone* and *Crusoe*; barkentine *Christiana*, brigantine *Annie P. Odell*, and at Robbinston, Maine, the schooner *Nellie Clark*. The *Crusoe* he built as a yacht, sailing her himself for the pleasure and accommodation of summer visitors who will regret to hear of the genial captain's end.

Beacon

November 28, 1901

Mrs. James Starkie has sold her dwelling-house to Mr. Wheeler Mallock and proposes leaving for Boston.



Starkie boys at
the blockhouse.
Courtesy Ann
Schelzig

St. Croix Courier
April 8, 1943
"Shiretown Items"
Memories

A letter written on the stationery of the Gardner-Templeton Street Railway Co., and dated at East Templeton, Mass., shows in the letterhead the name of Louis Starkie as Treasurer and General Supt. Here is another St. Andrews boy who has made good. Louis was so much younger than myself that I had really forgotten him although I remember his father, his three brothers and his sister Natalie quite well. By the time he was growing up I had finished school and left St. Andrews for several years. I am sure Louis' letter will be of interest to others and is given in full herewith.



Grave of James Starkie.

*James Starkie
1835 - 1901
His wife Susan
E. Fisher 1849 -
1924.*

**Brewer
Cemetery,
Robbinston,
Maine**

"To the author of '*Shiretown Items*,'

"Dear Sir:

"It was with a great deal of pleasure that I read the *Saint Croix Courier* of March 4th and March 11th, especially the part telling about the St. Andrews of 40 years or more ago. The photograph of the waterfront brought back memories of my childhood, as the *Mary Ellen* and the *Crandall* were both there within my memory, although the *Mary Ellen* was farther down the beach. The *Crusoe* was completed, and I enjoyed very much sailing with my father when he took out fishing and sailing parties. The two Starkie boys mentioned were my older brothers both of whom died when nineteen years of age, and before I left St. Andrews after the death of my father in 1901. My brother, Justin, sent me the papers. I believe he subscribes to it. Sincerely yours, Louis Starkie."