

Vessels – Caleb Harrison

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The Caleb Harrison was built in 1854 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin by E. Euniack and Thomas Davidson for C. Harrison of Milwaukee.

The schooner had two masts, was 93.9 feet in length, with a 20.9-foot beam and a depth of 8.1 feet.

On October 20, 1875, the Caleb Harrison came ashore at Whitehall with a load of lumber. The schooner was bound for Pentwater, but with a storm coming up, Captain Dyke decided that it would be advisable to make for port and wait for fair weather.

While attempting to enter the channel it became evident that the wind would carry them onto the north pier. To prevent this from happening, the Captain let go his anchor, thinking to swing around, then slip the anchor and come in. At this critical time, the sea left them and striking on the anchor, a hole was made in the bottom of the boat which then filled with water and sunk, obstructing the channel.

Capt. Dyke undertook the job of getting her up and towing her back to Grand Haven. He had succeeded in getting her partially clear once but the heavy sea carried her on the beach, this time leaving her on her side breaking one of her masts. Capt. Dyke then sawed off the remaining mast and dredged around her. The big sea of the next night carried her inside the piers. The tug American Eagle towed Harrison up White Lake to Cook's mill. The vessel was eventually repaired and continued to operate.

In 1879 the schooner was listed as being owned by Joseph Bellhouse of Whitehall, with a home port of Grand Haven listed.

On April 4, 1879, it was reported that Joseph Bellhouse had painted and refitted Harrison into first-class shape and she was the finest craft in port. It appears that he owned the vessel for about five years.

Joseph Bellhouse was born in England in 1824. He immigrated to Canada and then made his way to Whitehall. By May 1868 he had been operating a restaurant for 11 years near the depot.

Joseph had married Grace Carter on 14 March 1847. They had no children of their own.

They first appeared in the 1870 census where he was listed as a Saloon Keeper.

In the 1880 Census he was listed as a vessel owner. He was living in Whitehall with his wife and adopted niece and two nephews: Anne Caster age 16, Arthur Caster, age 12, and John Bellhouse Caster age 9. As well as his mother-in-law.

His nephew John died on 16 June 1881 among the logs at Covell mill. He was just 11 years old.

Joseph Bellhouse died 28 December 1893 at the age of 69. The estimated value of his personal estate was \$450. His real estate value was \$500 which was left to his widow Grace. She died 13 March 1894. There is no indication where either of them is buried locally.

There was no further mention of the schooner until 30 October 1898, when the Harrison was "swept out of existence" during a storm while loading lumber in Lake Michigan at Whitefish Bay.