

# The Rover Boys on the Great Lakes

Arthur M. Winfield

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[Illustration: THE BLAZE REVEALED A LARGE MASS OF LUMBER RISING AND FALLING ON THE TURBULENT WATERS.--\_Frontispiece\_]

THE ROVER BOYS ON THE GREAT LAKES

OR

\_THE SECRET OF THE ISLAND CAVE\_

BY

ARTHUR M. WINFIELD (Edward Stratemeyer)

AUTHOR OF THE ROVER BOYS AT SCHOOL, THE ROVER BOYS ON THE OCEAN, THE PUTNAM HALL SERIES, ETC.

\_ILLUSTRATED\_

INTRODUCTION.

MY DEAR BOYS: This volume, "The Rover Boys on the Great Lakes," is a complete story in itself, but forms the fifth volume of the Rover Boys Series for Young Americans.

When first I started this series with "The Rover Boys at School," I had no idea of extending the line beyond three or four volumes. But the second book, "The Rover Boys on the Ocean," immediately called for a third, "The Rover Boys in the Jungle," and this finished, many boys wanted to know what would happen next, and so I must needs give them "The Rover Boys Out West." Still they were not satisfied; hence the volume now in your hands.

So far we have followed the doings of Dick, Tom, and Sam at dear old Putnam Hall, with many larks and sports; then out upon the broad Atlantic in a daring chase which came pretty close to ending in sad disaster; next into the interior of Africa on a quest of grave importance; and lastly out into the mountainous regions of the wild West, to locate a mining claim belonging to Mr. Anderson Rover.

In the present tale the scene is shifted to the Great Lakes. The three boys go on a pleasure tour and, while on Lake Erie, fall in with an old enemy, who concocts a scheme for kidnapping Dick, who had fallen overboard from his yacht in a storm. This scheme leads to many adventures, the outcome of which will be found in the pages that follow.

In placing this volume in my young readers hands I can but repeat what I have said before: that I am extremely grateful to all for the kind reception given the other Rover Boys stories. I sincerely trust the present tale meets with equal commendation.

Affectionately and sincerely yours,

EDWARD STRATEMEYER.

\_April\_ 12, 1901

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## THE ROVER BOYS ON THE GREAT LAKES.

### CHAPTER I.

#### A STORM ON LAKE ERIE.

"Dick, do you notice how the wind is freshening?"

"Yes, Sam, I've been watching it for ten minutes. I think we are in for a storm."

"Exactly my idea, and I shouldn't be surprised if it proved a heavy

one, too. How far are we from shore?"

"Not over three miles, to my reckoning."

"Perhaps we had better turn back," and Sam Rover, the youngest of the three Rover brothers, shook his head doubtfully.

"Oh, I reckon we'll be safe enough," responded Dick Rover, who was several years older. "I know more about sailing a yacht than I did when we followed up the Baxters on the Atlantic Ocean."

"The poor Baxters!" put in Tom Rover, who stood close by, also watching the wind, and the heavy clouds rolling up from the westward. "Who ever supposed that they would be buried alive in that landslide on the mountain in Colorado?"

"It was a terrible fate," came, with a shudder, from Dick Rover. "But, nevertheless, I am glad we are rid of those rascals. They caused father and us trouble enough, goodness knows."

"And they brought trouble enough to Dora Stanhope and her mother, too," observed Sam. "By the way, Dick, weren't Dora and her mother going to take a trip on these lakes this summer?"

"Of course Dora was," put in Tom, with a sly wink. "If she wasn't, what do you suppose would bring Dick here? He got a letter only last week--"

"Oh, stow it, Tom!" cried the elder Rover, his face growing red. "You wanted to take a trip on the Great Lakes as much as anybody--said you wouldn't like anything better, and told all the fellows at Putnam Hall so, too."

"Well, I don't know as I would like anything better," rattled on Tom. "The Swallow seems to be a first-class craft, and I've no doubt but what we'll see lots to interest us in this trip from Buffalo to Lake Superior."

"When are the Stanhopes coming out?" asked Sam.

"I can't say, exactly," replied Dick. "I expect another letter from them when we reach Cleveland. In the last letter Dora said her mother was not feeling as well as before."

"A trip on the lakes ought to do her good."

"Wonder if old Josiah Crabtree has been bothering her with his attentions?" came from Tom. "Gosh! how anxious he was to marry her and get hold of the money she is holding in trust for Dora."

"Crabtree's term of imprisonment ran out only last week, Tom. He couldn't annoy her while he was in jail."

"He ought to have been given five years for the way he used them, and us. It's strange what an influence he had over Mrs. Stanhope."

"He's something of a hypnotist, and she seems to be just the right kind of a subject for him. His coming from prison is one reason why Dora wanted to get her mother away. She isn't going to let outsiders know of the trip, so old Crabtree won't know where they are."

"He'll find out, if he can," remarked Sam. "He always was a nosy old chap."

"If he tries any game on, I'll settle him in short order," came from Dick, with determination. "We've put up with enough from him in the past, and I don't intend to give him any leeway in the future."

"Leeway?" burst out Tom. "Not a foot! Not an inch! I haven't forgotten how he treated me when he was a teacher at Putnam Hall. I wonder that Captain Putnam didn't kick him out long before he was made to go."

A sudden rush of wind cut the conversation short at this point, sending the Swallow bowling along merrily. The clouds were increasing rapidly, and Dick ordered that all the sails be closely reefed.

"We don't want to lose our mast," he observed.

"We don't want to lose anything," answered Sam. "For my part, I wish we were back in Buffalo harbor."

"Oh! we'll run along all right," came from Tom. "Don't get scared before you are hurt." He looked at his watch. "Half-past five! I didn't think it was so late."

"It will be dark before long," said Dick. "Perhaps the blow will go down with the setting of the sun."

"We'll never know when the sun sets--excepting by the almanac," murmured Sam. "It's as black as ink already, over to the westward."

To keep up his courage Tom Rover began to whistle, but soon the sound was drowned out by the high piping of the wind, as it tore over the deck and through the rigging of the Swallow. They were certainly in for a storm, and a heavy one at that.

It was the middle of July, and the Rover boys had journeyed from Valley Brook, their country home, to Buffalo, a week before, for a six-weeks' outing upon the Great Lakes previous to their returning to Putnam Hall for the fall and winter term. Their thrilling adventures in Colorado, as told in "The Rover Boys Out West," had taxed them severely, and their father, Mr. Anderson Rover, felt that they needed the recreation. At first he had wished them to remain at the farm, and so had their Uncle Randolph Rover and their motherly Aunt Martha, but this had been voted "too slow" by the three brothers, and it was decided that they should go to Buffalo, charter a small yacht, and do as they pleased until the opening of school.

"Only please keep out of danger," had been Mr. Rover's pleading words. "You have been in peril enough." And the boys had promised to do their best, little dreaming of the many adventures and dangers ahead.

The boys knew very little about the lakes, and at the last moment had invited Larry Colby, an old schoolmate, to accompany them on the outing. Larry had spent two summers on Lake Huron and Lake Superior, and knew both bodies of water fairly well. But the lad could not come on at once, and so had sent word that he would join the party at Sandusky, some time later. Larry's father was rich, so the expense of traveling counted for nothing.

With the boys, however, went one individual with whom all our old readers are well acquainted. This was Alexander Pop, the colored man who had once been a waiter at Putnam Hall, and who was now a servant to the Rovers in general and the three boys in particular. The boys had done much in the past for Aleck, as they called him, and Pop was so greatly attached to the youths that he was ready at all times to do anything they desired.

"I dun lub dem Rober boys, aint no ust ter talk," Pop would say. "Dem is de most up-to-date boys in de world, dat's wot, and da did dis yeah niggah a good turn wot he aint forgittin' in a hurry, too." What that good turn was has already been related in full in "The Rover Boys in the Jungle." Pop was now installed on board the Swallow as cook and general helper, a position he was well fitted to fill.

The boys had laid out a grand trip, and one which certainly promised a good deal of pleasure. The first stop was to be at Cleveland, and from that city they were to go to Sandusky, and then up the lake and through the Detroit River to Detroit. Here a short stay was to be made, and then the journey was to be resumed through Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River to Lake Huron. Once on Lake Huron they expected to skirt the eastern coast of Michigan, stopping whenever they pleased, and thus gradually make their way to Whitefish Bay and Lake Superior. What they would do when Lake Superior was reached would depend upon how much time was left for the outing.

The Swallow was a well-built, sturdy craft, fifty feet long and correspondingly broad of beam. She had been constructed for a pleasure boat and had all of the latest improvements. She belonged to a rich man of Buffalo, who had known the Rovers for years. The rich man was now traveling in Europe, and had been only too glad to charter the yacht for a period of six weeks. When the Rover boys were through with her she was to be placed in charge of the rich man's boatman, who was to take her back to Buffalo.

The start on Lake Erie had been full of pleasure. The yacht had a good supply of provisions on board, and everybody was in the best of spirits. Aleck Pop had brought along his banjo, and on the first evening out had given them half a dozen plantation songs, for he was a good singer as well as player. On the day following the breeze had died away and they had all gone fishing, with fair success. This was the third day out, and since noon the wind had been blowing at a lively rate, helping them to make good time on their course toward Cleveland. Now the wind was blowing little short of a gale, and the sky was growing blacker each instant.

"We are in for it, beyond a doubt," said Dick, with a serious shake of his head.

Every inch of canvas had been taken in, yet the Swallow spun along before the wind rapidly, ever and anon dipping her bow deeply into the white-caps, which now showed themselves upon all sides.

"Here she comes!" burst out Tom suddenly. "Hold hard, everybody!"

And then the storm burst upon them in all of its fury--a storm which lasted all night, and one which the Rover boys never forgot.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DICK.

"Oh, my, but this is a corker!"

It was Tom who uttered the words, half an hour after he had cautioned everybody to hold fast. He was standing at the wheel, helping Dick to make the \_Swallow\_ keep her bow up to the waves, which rolled fiercely on every side of the craft. He cried out at the top of his lungs, yet his elder brother understood him with difficulty.

"I wish we were out of it," returned Dick. "Did Sam go below, as I ordered?"

"Yes."

"What of Aleck?"

"He is in the galley, trying to keep his dishes from being smashed to bits. He is scared, I can tell you, and said he was sure we were going to the bottom."

"If I was sure of the course I would steer for shore, Tom. I'm afraid myself that this is going to be more than we bargained for."

"Pooh, Dick! We've been in as bad a storm before, and you know it."

"But not on Lake Erie. This lake has a reputation for turning out some nasty ones, that do tremendous damage. Light up, will you?--or we may be smashing into some other boat before we know it."

"I will, if you can hold the wheel alone."

"I can get along for a few minutes. But it's enough to pull a fellow's arms out by the sockets," concluded Dick.

With extreme caution, for the deck was as wet and slippery as it was unsteady, Tom made his way to the tiny cabin of the yacht. Here he found Sam lighting the ship's lanterns, four in number.

"I thought you'd be wanting them," said the youngest Rover. "Is it letting up, do you think?"

"No; if anything, it is growing worse."

"Don't you want me to help on deck? I hate to stay down here alone."

"You can do nothing, Sam. Dick and I are tending the wheel, and there is nothing else to be done."

"I might go on the lookout. You can't watch very well from the stern," added the youngest Rover, who did not relish being kept back by his older brothers.



"We can watch good enough. Stay here--it's safer. If the yacht should swing around--Great Scott!"

Tom Rover broke off short, and with good reason. A strange creaking and cracking sound had reached his ears, followed by a bump and a jar which nearly pitched him headlong. Sam was thrown down on his back.

"Something is wrong!" burst out Sam, as soon as he could speak. "We must have struck something."

Tom did not answer, for the reason that he was already on his way to the deck, with a lantern slung in the crook of his right elbow. Sam followed with another lantern, leaving the remaining ones wildly swinging on the hooks in the cabin's ceiling.

"Help! help!"

The cry came from out of the darkness, somewhere in the wake of the Swallow; a cry cut partly short by the piping gale. With his heart thumping violently, Tom leaped over the deck toward the wheel.

"Dick! What is the matter?"

"Help!" repeated the voice, but now further off than ever. Then Tom made a discovery which thrilled him with horror.

The position at the wheel was vacant! Dick was gone!

"Dick! Dick! Where are you!" he shouted hoarsely. "Dick!"

"Help!" came more faintly. The cry was repeated several times, but nothing more reached Tom's ears nor the hearing of his younger brother, who was now beside him, his round face as pale as death itself.

"Dick's overboard!" The words came from both, and each looked at the other in consternation.

Both held up their lanterns, the glasses of which were speedily covered with flying spray. The lanterns made a small semicircle of light at the stern, but Dick was beyond that circle and could not be seen.

"Take the wheel--I'll get a life-preserver!" said Tom, and ran for the article he had mentioned.

"Shall I try to turn the yacht around?" questioned his brother, as he, after several unsuccessful attempts, caught the spokes of the wheel, which was flying back and forth with every pitch of the craft.

"No! no! We will be swamped if you do that. Keep her up to the wind."

Regardless of the danger, Tom flew across the deck to where there was a life-preserver, attached to a hundred feet of small, but strong, rope. Once at the stern again, he threw the life-preserver as far out as possible.

"Catch the lifeline!" he shrieked. But if Dick heard he gave no answer.

"Can't we fire a rocket?" said Sam. "We ought to do something," he added, half desperately.

Lashing the end of the lifeline to the stern, Tom ran down into the cabin and brought forth several rockets. With trembling hands he set off first one and then another. The blaze was a short one, yet it revealed to them a large mass of lumber rising and falling on the bosom of the turbulent waters.

"A lumber raft. It is going to pieces in the storm."

"Did you see Dick?"

"I saw two persons on the lumber, but I don't know who they were. They looked more dead than alive."

"Oh, I hope Dick isn't dead!" burst out Sam, and the tears stood in his eyes as he spoke.

"Wot's dat you dun said?" came from out of the darkness.

"Dick's overboard," answered Tom.

"No!" A groan of genuine regret came from Aleck Pop. "How it dun happen?"

"We must have struck a lumber raft and the shock knocked him over," answered Sam. "Oh, Tom, what shall we do?"

"I'll try another rocket, Sam--I don't know of anything else."

It took fully a minute to obtain another rocket, and some red fire as well. The red fire made quite an illumination, in spite of the storm.

"I don't see nuffin," said Pop.

"Nor I," added Tom. "The raft has disappeared."

As the light died out all set up a loud shout. But only the howling wind answered them. And now Sam noticed that the lifeline was drifting idly at the stern, and there was nothing to do but to haul it in again.

The hours which followed were full of agony to Tom and Sam, and the warm-hearted colored man was scarcely less affected.

"What if Dick is drowned?" whispered the youngest Rover. "Father will never forgive us for coming on this trip."

"Let us hope for the best," was his brother's answer. "Dick has been in a tight fix before. He'll come out all right, if he has any show at all."

"Nobuddy kin lib in sech a storm as dis!" put in Pop. "Why, it's 'most as bad as dat dar hurricane we 'perienced in Africa. Jest see how it's beginnin' to rain."

Pop was right; so far the rain had held off

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