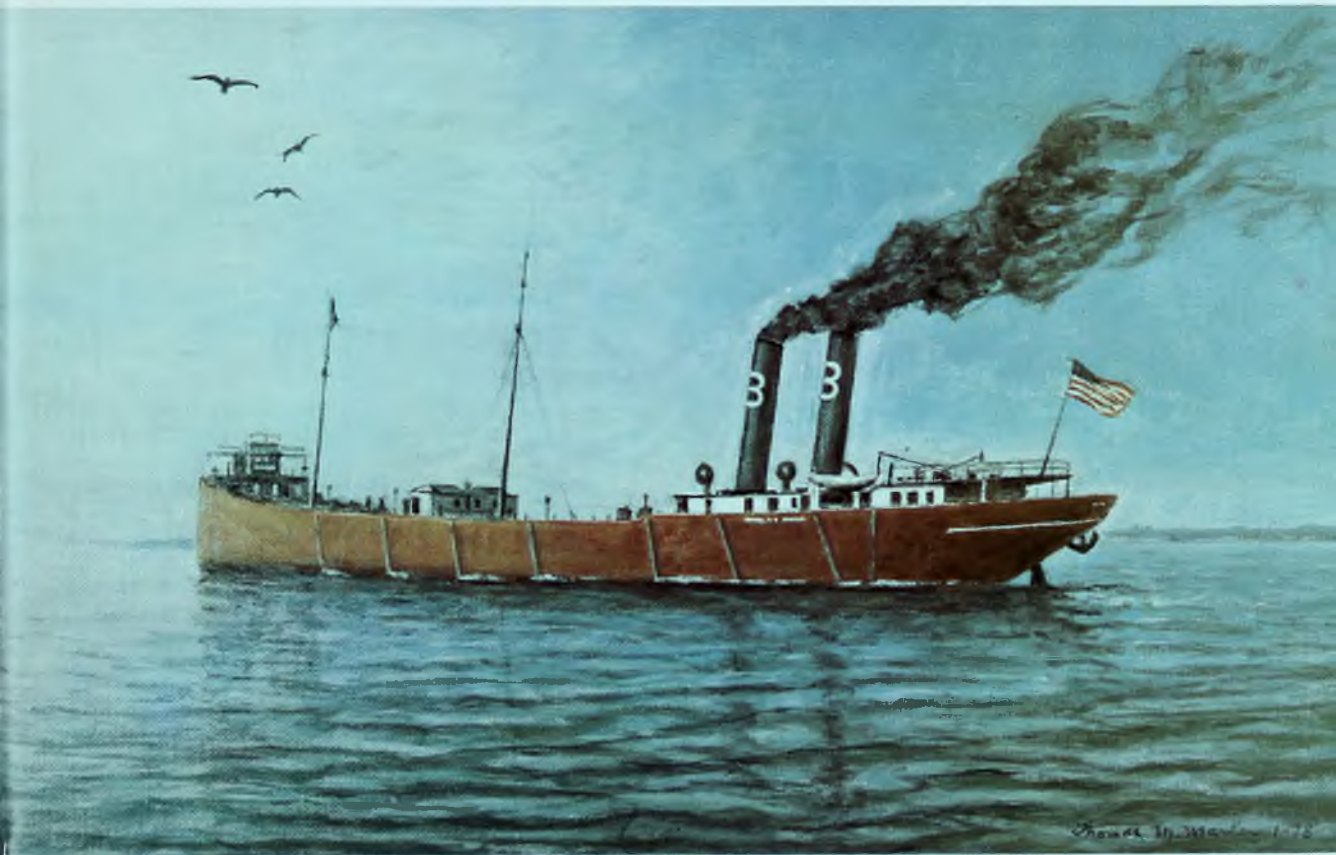


Telescope



MARCH · APRIL, 1978
Volume XXVII; Number 2



GREAT LAKES
MARITIME
INSTITUTE

DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM
Belle Isle, Detroit, Michigan 48207

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

In our last issue we hinted that there was a change coming in *Telescope*. Well, it is here. Most of this issue was produced on our own new Compugraphic photo-typesetting machine. This is a computerized, automatic line-justifying machine that works much like the old Linotype machines, except instead of weighing tons, and casting type on hot metal, this one weighs 150 pounds and the type is shot photographically onto paper. The old Varityper we were using justified a line by spreading each character and space an equal amount. This machine spreads the spaces between words, but the letter-spacing remains constant, making for easier readability.

The article on the mailboat and the news were printed in Helios type, and this is being done in a book-face type. We would like to hear what you think of it, and which you like. We'll probably use both, and others besides, but its *your* magazine, so let us hear from you.

We also mentioned increased memberships last time. You'll be pleased to know that if all the people who are yet to renew *do* renew, we are now over our goal! We've taken in 150 new members in January alone, and 95% of 1977 members have already renewed!

Finally, thanks to all of you who have written to congratulate us on the *Fitzgerald* book. We'll try to answer them all, but we may not get to. However, your kindness is appreciated so even if we can't get at writing each of you, thanks a million.

MEETING NOTICES

Regular meetings are scheduled for March 31, and May 19, both at 8:00 PM at Dossin Museum. Business meetings (*WHICH ALL MEMBERS ARE URGED TO ATTEND*) are to be held on April 28 and June 23, also at 8:00 PM at Dossin Museum. ☆

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Published at Detroit, Michigan by the
GREAT LAKES MARITIME INSTITUTE

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Printed in the United States by
Macomb Printing Specialties

OUR COVER PICTURE. . . This month's cover features a painting by marine artist Thomas M. Marker, of the Bessemer fleet's steamer, *SAMUEL F. B. MORSE*. this is one of the vessels featured in the lead article on the Life And Times of the Bessemer Fleet, by Gordon P. Bugbee. ☆

The Life and Times of The BESSEMER FLEET

(Part 1 of a two part series, to be
concluded in the May/June issue.)

BY
GORDON PRITCHARD BUGBEE

The decade of the nineties is one of the most interesting periods in the history of lake shipping. It was then that the Great Lakes ore carrier became the archetypal lake ship in place of the decked package cargo "propeller." Shipowners typically having but a freighter or schooner or two were displaced by the large fleets of ore carriers owned by the big mining and steel companies. The steel hulls became economical and then commonplace, so that by 1900 only James Davidson of Bay City was still building large wooden hulls. Throughout the nineties and during another half dozen years the length of the largest lake freighters nearly doubled and the carrying capacity more than tripled. We have not seen comparable advances until the advent of thousand-footers in the present decade. Beyond the lakehead, the last of the great northern iron ore ranges, the Mesabi, was brought into production.

The new steel hulls were much more expensive than wooden ones, and the new ore pits promised only distant future rewards. But a severe financial depression troubled the middle years of the nineties, and there was little new capital available. The only likely investor who seemed immune to the business panic was John D. Rockefeller. Now that the oilman was no longer plowing profits

back into his Standard Oil empire, Rockefeller's yearly income fattened his personal fortune almost unmanageably, and he needed places to put his money to work. And so Rockefeller became a sort of absentee landlord to the largest of the new lake fleets and mining ventures. For a time it appeared that Rockefeller would consolidate an ore mining and shipping monopoly much like his oil trust. But so impersonal and indirect was his involvement, and for such a brief time span, that today his own contribution in bringing ore shipping to maturity is largely forgotten.

Rockefeller was a young Cleveland produce merchant when he took up oil refining with several associates in 1862. Not long before, oil had been only a vile-tasting patent medicine. But the Pennsylvania oil discoveries of 1859 created a booming new industry. In ten years, Rockefeller gathered Cleveland's oil refineries into his Standard Oil Company. In another ten, Standard Oil controlled ninety per cent of American oil refineries. Standard also dominated oil Transportation, buying up all the pipelines and clubbing special low rates from the railroads. But at least in the early years Rockefeller avoided buying oil wells, themselves. He knew that oil producers were too numerous to combine for protection



The launching of Whaleback barge #101, at Superior, Wisconsin.

McDONALD Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM

when their wells glutted the market with oil and brought about ruinously low prices.

Given Rockefeller's aversion to owning oil wells, it seems odd that he should have chosen to buy up iron ore mines, particularly since most of them looked hopelessly unprofitable when he bought them. But aside from Standard Oil which demanded all his attention, his investments came about in an informal, almost haphazard manner.

Two fellow members of New York's Fifth Avenue Baptist Church invited Rockefeller to buy shares in their northern ore properties in the late 1880s. The banker Colgate Hoyt was also a former Cleveland, and his friend Charles Colby knew the new iron ranges well. It was the Colby Mine that opened up the new Gogebic Range in 1884, near Lake Superior at the Michigan-Wisconsin border. Lake Superior iron mining was spreading beyond the original Marquette Range then. The Menominee Range was opened up west of Green Bay in the late 1870s and the Vermillion Range north

of Duluth soon afterward.

Colgate Hoyt was also president of American Steel Barge Company, and he persuaded Rockefeller to buy shares in that firm, too. In this enterprise, Hoyt was the patron of Capt. Alexander McDougall, inventor of the whaleback. For many years geography schoolbooks would illustrate these unique ships in order to explain the Great Lakes. The deck of a whaleback was rounded so waves could roll over it harmlessly, without resistance. Cabins and working platforms stood on round turrets out of reach of the wash. The snout-shaped bow and stern inevitably made the ships known as "pigs," or "cigars." The hull was of the same cross section throughout except for these ends, with no concessions to sheer. This made whalebacks cheaper to build than other metal hulls. McDougall completely designed the ships down to such fittings as anchors and deadlights. Seaworthiness remained the greatest selling point. However, nearly sixty per cent of the three dozen pigs that were to pass through Rockefel-

ler's own future Bessemer fleet came to grief ultimately by foundering, stranding or sinking in collision. Long before this tragic record could become known, though, the whaleback passed from favor, partly because its small hatches interfered with new loading machinery on the docks.

In the early nineties the vesselmen were still awed by whalebacks, which they expected were "going to revolutionize lake traffic and no mistake." McDougall launched his first steel whaleback barge in 1888 at Duluth. At that time the steel shipbuilding firms at Wyandotte, Cleveland and Buffalo had only been building large metal hulls for ten years or less. The yards at Toledo, South Chicago and West Bay City were yet to launch their own first steel hulls. American Steel Barge Company not only built whalebacks; it owned and operated all but a few of them, too. McDougall's permanent shipyard was across the bay from Duluth in Superior, Wisconsin, where ore boats are still lengthened or repaired by

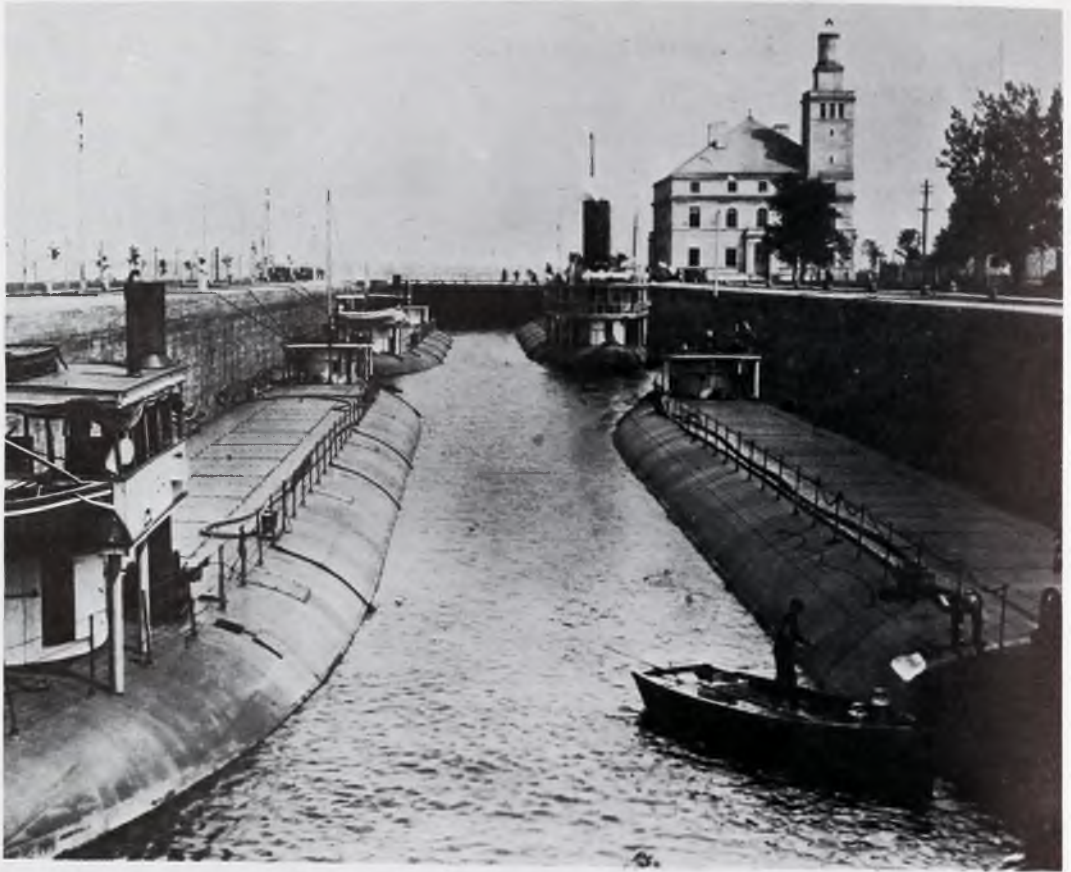
Fraser Shipyards, Inc.

The future of whalebacks seemed most promising in 1892 when Superior launched seven whaleback steamers and three barges, along with a tug. This was as many big steel hulls as were built by the two companies in Cleveland that season. Only a year before, Cleveland had boasted of being first in the nation in building steel tonnage, far ahead of the East Coast yards. In addition to the northern rival, 1892 brought Cleveland uncertainty in the foundering of two of her newest products, the ore carriers *Western Reserve* and *W. H. Gilcher*, from presumed failure of their brittle steel. Cleveland tried its own whaleback imitations as closely as fear of patent litigation would allow. "Straightbacks" like *Yuma* and some Anchor Line package freighters had stiff-looking hulls with no sheer. The "monitors" *Andaste* and *Choctaw* had sloped sides to their hulls in trapezoidal profile. But Superior seemed unbeatable since McDougall's shipyard had all



Looking like nothing so much as a hoop-skirt factory, Whalebacks under construction at Superior, Wisconsin.

HAMM Photo/SMITHSONIAN INST.



Four Whalebacks, #104 (left foreground) #103, (top left), #105, (right foreground) and JOHN B. TREVOR (top right), all in the Soo Lock together.

MCDONALD Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM

the whaleback patents.

For cargoes the whalebacks had downbound prairie wheat and Gogebic ore from Hoyt and Colby's mines and upbound coal. In 1892 American Steel Barge Company struck a bargain to carry ore coming from the new Mesabi Range northwest of Duluth. The range had just been opened up by Leonidas Merritt and his six brothers and cousins. Mesabi ore was absurdly cheap to mine, scooped up in open pits with steamshovels. On the older iron ranges, the mines were underground shafts. However, Mesabi ore was too powdery to use in existing blast furnaces, for it blew out the stack and settled on the countryside. Until the blast furnaces were adapted, the ore seemed worthless.

The Merritts brought their Mesabi empire into production with shaky financing carried along by the boom

in ore mining ventures. Railroads running near the Mesabi were not interested in their mines, so the Merritts had to build their own rail spurs to get out the ore. The family vowed to run their rails all seventy miles to ore docks of their own. To cement relations with the Merritts, American Steel Barge officials persuaded Rockefeller to put up four hundred thousand dollars toward this Duluth, Missabe & Northern Railroad.

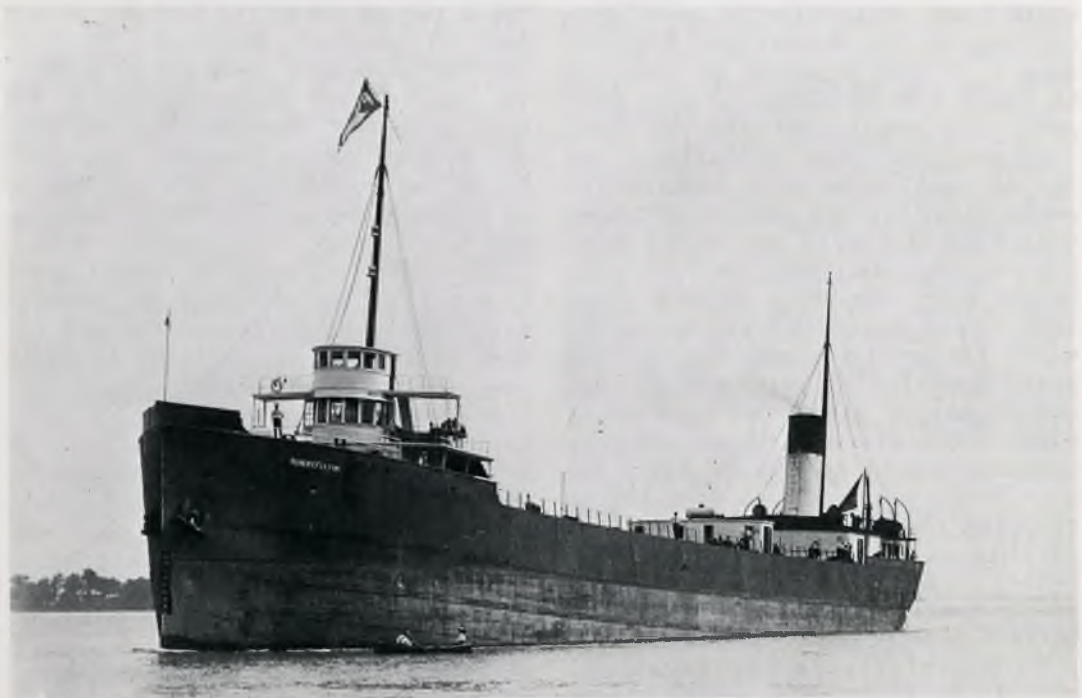
In normal times the Merritts' wish to control their own transportation would have answered favorite maxims of Standard Oil. But the financial panic of 1893 caught the Merritts badly overextended, and contractors to be paid were still building their railroad. The market for ore dropped away in the panic, especially for the Merritts' powdery stuff. To save his railroad investment, Rockefeller

supported the Merritts in rebuilding their empire as the Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mining Company. To this company in 1884 the Merritts entrusted their railroad and docks and their principal Mesabi mining companies. Rockefeller contributed two million dollars and his Gogebic Range holdings. In the lingering depression the Merritts remained insolvent, and they sold most of their interests to Rockefeller in 1895.

The Merritts had one other patron in a separate Mesabi mining venture. This was Henry Oliver, a minor steel man of Pittsburgh who had been a boyhood chum of Andrew Carnegie. He was in Minneapolis as a delegate to renominate Harrison in the Republican National Convention of 1892 when he learned of the Mesabi riches. He quickly threw over politics and paid the Merritts \$5,000 for a partnership in an Oliver Mining Company. He went home to dig up more capital. Carnegie wasn't interested. He had

lost money on the Marquette Range years before, and he still regarded mines as Rockefeller once thought of oil wells. "If there is any department of business which offers no inducement, it is ore," he scoffed. "It never has been very profitable, and the Massaba is not the last great deposit that Lake Superior is to reveal." Over Carnegie's foreboding objections, Oliver persuaded the Carnegie Company just to *lend* him half a million dollars in return for what became a five-sixths interest in Oliver Mining Company.

Journalists were soon predicting a frightful collision between Carnegie and Rockefeller over control of the whole process from the iron mine to the steel mill. But for the moment there was no such confrontation. In late 1896 Rockefeller and Carnegie startled the mining and steelmaking industry with an unthinkable joining of their interests in an Agreement. Rockefeller ore and ships would make



A Pesha photo of the ROBERT FULTON, probably in the St. Clair River.



The SIR WILLIAM SIEMENS, making "good black smoke."

McDONALD Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM

Carnegie almost as independent of ore market fluctuations as if Carnegie owned the Mesabi himself. On behalf of Carnegie, Oliver Mining Co. would lease Rockefeller's major properties on the Mesabi and Gogebic Ranges. Oliver promised to take out at lease 600,000 tons of ore each year at a royalty of 25¢ per ton. This was less than half the going market royalty on ore. Rockefeller would ship this ore and 600,000 tons more from Oliver's own mines over the railroad and down to Lake Erie by ore ship. The price of such shipment would depend on going market rates for such transportation each year. Rockefeller promised to stay out of making steel, an easy decision. Carnegie and Oliver Mining Company agreed to buy or lease no more Mesabi mines and to stay out of shipping their own Mesabi ore. News of this agreement demoralized the owners of mines on the older ranges, and Carnegie and Oliver bought up bargain mine properties there.

So Rockefeller's ore royalties were to be fixed. The source of any growing profits for Rockefeller had to come in ore transportation, in

ships particularly. His railroad would get 80¢ a ton to carry ore seventy miles. By contrast, as of 1897, his ore boats would get only 70¢ a ton to relay the ore 900 miles down to Conneaut. Moreover, of this 70¢ the shipowner commonly paid 20¢ for loading and unloading costs. We have seen that Rockefeller had his own loading docks, however, and Carnegie made unloading more efficient at Conneaut docks in 1899 by putting the first Hulett unloaders to work.

This 70¢ rate was the annual contract rate by which a shipowner might agree to carry ore for all or most of the season of 1897. In boom years of the early 1880s the contract rate for shipping ore to Lake Erie from Marquette rose up to \$2.75 per ton. As late as 1887 shippers paid \$2.00 a ton from Duluth. But since the Panic of 1893 the contract rates had fallen so low that most smaller craft were laid up instead. A shipowner could also be paid by each cargo he carried, and he could shift his ship from ore to grain or coal cargoes or even wood, according to the best rates of the moment. These were known as "wild rates" and



A view of SIR HENRY BESSEMER, from a Pesha postcard.

McDONALD Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM

such a ship as a "wild boat."

If ore ships were Rockefeller's best promise of future profits, they has been a business dismally like the oil wells of old. No monopoly in ore ships seemed possible, for there were many shipowners, each with perhaps only one or two bulk freighters or schooners. When ships were too numerous for the cargoes offered, all shipowners suffered together from low rates. Among river tugs and until 1892 in Lake Superior package freighters, shipowners had pooled ships and shared revenues and had paid smaller ships to lay up in the slack times. But no such remedy was at hand for ore ships, and the newly formed Lake Carriers Association did not seem intended for such a role.

In 1896 there was an obituary for H. J. Webb of Cleveland. Forty years before, Mr. Webb had pioneered in the business of vessel brokerage. Mr. Webb managed ships for their owners, dispatching the ships and finding cargoes to keep them busy. In time, Webb's business became the common pattern of managing lake ships. Some shipowners operated their own large fleets, like Alva Bradley of Cleveland whose ships served the Marquette Range from the

1850s, but these were unusual. On his death, Webb's firm passed to his partner, W. C. Richardson, and it comes down to us as the maroon-and-pink Columbia freighters today.

Another obituary of 1896 was for Captain Elihu M. Peck, also from Cleveland. In 1870 Captain Peck had built the prototype of ore carrying steamers, *R. J. Hackett*, which was first with the silhouette common to lake freighters until recent years. The first ore carrier built of iron was *Brunswick*, built at Wyandotte in 1881 and lost by collision that fall. At Cleveland the Globe Iron Works brought out the "monster iron floating warehouse" *Onoko* the next spring and retrieved the cause of iron bulk freighters. In 1886 Globe built the first steel cargo bulk ship, the *Spokane*.

Steel hulls cost much more than most vesselmen could afford. In the late 1880s began the slow process of gathering such steel freighters into large fleets. Some shipowners like Captain Thomas Wilson sold stock or bonds to finance each new steel ship; by 1896 three steel ships had joined the wooden ones in the Wilson fleet. More often, the iron mining and ore marketing firms built the

new steel ships. In 1896 Cleveland-Cliffs had four steel steamers, and M. A. Hanna Company controlled ten. The largest fleet among the mining firms belonged to Minnesota Iron Company, second only to Rockefeller among mining enterprises and active on the Vermillion Range. In 1896 its Minnesota Steamship Company owned nine steel steamers and five barges.

In a class by itself, of course, was McDougall's fleet of whalebacks. In 1896 its fleet numbered nine steamers and twenty-four barges. The year before, the Cleveland mining and ore marketing firm of Pickands, Mather & Company had taken over management of the whalebacks. Pickands-Mather also managed the Minnesota fleet. The firm also owned three of the largest lake freighters, a steel barge and several wooden ships, the start of today's Interlake fleet.

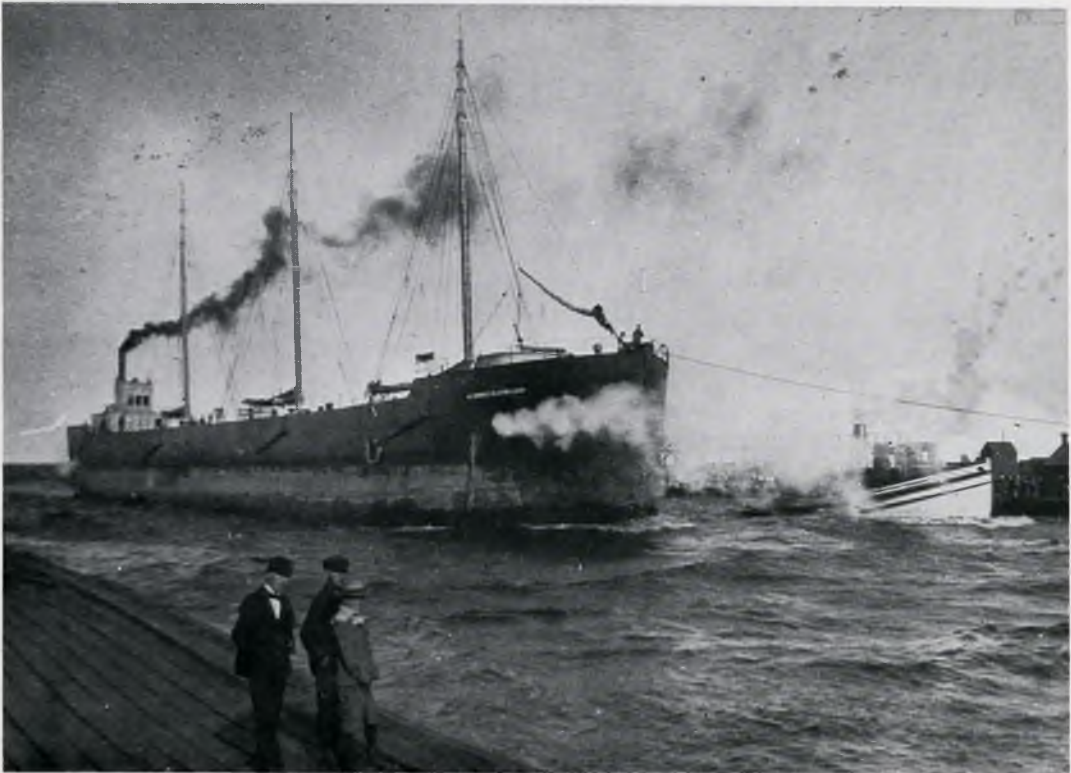
Rockefeller started with no ships of his own to carry his Masabi ore.

He had investments in the whaleback fleet, of course, but they weren't his. One night late in 1895, Rockefeller made one of his rare personal interventions in his ore business. He asked his old Cleveland friend Samuel Mather of Pickands-Mather to call at his New York townhouse just before dinner. Rockefeller announced that he wished to build a dozen of the largest lake ships to carry his ore, and he asked Mather to negotiate with the lake shipyards on his behalf.

Mather replied that since he was "in the ore carrying trade himself, he had no desire to encourage us to go into it," Rockefeller recalled in his memoirs. "We explained to him that as we had made this large investment, it seemed to us to be necessary for the protection of our interests to control our own lake carriers, so we had decided to mine, ship and market the ore; that we



Whaleback JOHN ERICKSSON with an unidentified Whaleback barge in tow.



The barge GEORGE H. CORLISS under tow.

McDONALD Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM

came to him because he could plan and superintend the construction of the best ships for us." At length, Mather was convinced that Rockefeller would have his fleet anyway, and Pickands-Mather might as well enjoy the commission as anybody. Rockefeller concluded, "He spent only a few minutes in the house, during which time we gave him the order for \$3,000,000 worth of ships, and this was the only time I saw him. But Mr. Mather was a man of high business honor, we trusted him implicitly although he was a competitor, and we never had occasion to regret it."

What followed was one of the classic tales of lake history. Samuel Mather chose to conceal the magnitude of his proposed fleet. Mather invited competitive bids among the shipyards in a way suggesting that his client contemplated a steamer or two and a barge or two. At this moment in the fall of 1895, the ore

trade was booming for the first time in two years. Wild rates from Duluth rose to \$1.50 a ton on ore cargoes. Lake shipyards had suddenly come alive with orders for twenty ships or more, and since spring the price of a new ship had risen twenty-five percent. Bidding for a dozen more ships just then would have raised ship prices the value of at least one of those ships, especially if anyone dreamed that the wealthy Mr. Rockefeller wanted them.

So the shipbuilders went back to their offices to figure closely the current costs of building one or two of the largest ships on the lakes. They returned to Cleveland to present their bids. As Rockefeller recalled, "At last the critical hour came, and about the same moment each gentleman received a little note from Mr. Mather, conveying to him the tidings that to him had been awarded a contract sufficient to supply his works to their utmost



The Whaleback steamer JAMES B. NEILSON towing a barge, probably the GEORGE H. CORLISS.

McDONALD Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM

capacity. They all rushed with a common impulse to the hotel lobby where they had been accustomed to meet, each keen on displaying his note and commiserating his unsuccessful rivals, only to discover that each had a contract for all he could do, and that each had actually been bidding against nobody but himself."

Over the winter and into the early season of 1896 the big fleet of the new Bessemer Steamship Company came into being. The names of the ships honored men who had contributed to iron technology. In Cleveland, the Globe Works laid down the 432-foot sister steamers *Sir Henry Bessemer* and *Sir William Siemens*. Cleveland Shipbuilding Company had room for only one steamer, *James Watt*. The largest order went to F. W. Wheeler and Company of West Bay City, the steamer *George Stephenson* and the barges *James Nasmyth* and *Sir Isaac Lothian Bell*. Two more barges, the *Alfred Krupp* and *George H. Corliss*, came from Chicago Shipbuilding Co. There were even two big whalebacks for American Steel Barge Company to

build, the steamer *John Ericsson* and the barge *Alexander Holley*. Detroit Dry Dock Company had held out for higher prices, but won two steamers anyway: *Sir William Fairbairn* and *Robert Fulton*.

To commence the 1896 season while the new ships were building, four whalebacks were acquired. Two were the Soo Line Railroad package cargo ships *Pillsbury* and *Washburn*, which were adapted to ore cargoes as *Henry Cort* and *James B. Neilson* respectively. Their consorts were two of the earliest whaleback barges, # 102 and # 103, which became *Sir Joseph Whitworth* and *John Scott-Russell*. To manage his new fleet and look after its construction, Rockefeller chose a well-to-do upstate New Yorker named LaMont Montgomery Bowers. The new manager assumed great responsibility, for he was practically forbidden to communicate directly with Rockefeller, and as an inland man he knew little about ships. He learned the business from the vantage point of being the most powerful vesselman on the Great Lakes.

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

A TRIP ON THE MAILBOAT, J. W. WESTCOTT II

by
GLEN BAUMGARTEN

It felt good to be home after fighting my way through the wind-blown snow of a January evening.

That night I sat with my elbows propped on the windowsill of my seventh floor apartment.

I watched the wind blow the snow through the streets. At times it seemed as though the blizzard would snuff out the street lamps. I moved closer to my coffee cup, listening to the whistle of a laker echoing over the city.

Some days I feel empathy with the fellows who sail the Great Lakes in the winter months. It's hard enough for me to keep my wheel chair moving through the narrow plowed paths on the university campus. I don't see how ore boats can find their way down the middle of the channels in this kind of weather.

This time of year I find myself recalling warmer days; those special ones woven through the spring, summer and autumn when I crawl out from under my school books and head down to the Detroit River to watch boat watch.

One of my favorite places to loiter is the Detroit Marine Post Office dock, where the mail boat, *J. W. Westcott II*, is docked.

One morning last September a friend, John Covert-Sisung, called and asked me if I would like to go ship-watching with. He didn't have to ask me twice. I almost fell on the floor in my hurry to transfer

from my motorized wheel chair to my manual, which would fit in John's car trunk.

We threaded our way through the city to the Marine Post Office. John pulled into the parking lot as the sun reached the top of the Ambassador Bridge. He helped me out of the car and we made our way down to the dock, where two boys were dozing over their fishing poles. The autumn breeze felt crisp as it blew over the rolling river swells. The kids and I were startled by a salute from an approaching Cleveland Cliffs carrier.

Watching the huge ship slip up the channel, my wish came back to haunt me. Just for a while, I would like to leave my wheel chair in one of the back corners of my memory, make my way down to the docks, and sigh on aboard a laker. I belong to a large fraternity of landmen. For years we have watched ships pass from the rivers and harbors, envying those who make their living and life on fresh or salt water seas.

I secretly started saving for a tug around the age of ten but eventually the heavy hauser of reality tightened around me. I had to face my limitations within a new perspective.

In the hope of making my way into maritime writing, I began searching out every marine volume I could find. I declared Great Lakes Marine Studies as a minor at Wayne State University.



Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, from the very beginning to the end of the shipping season, the J. W. WESTCOTT II delivers mail to passing ships on the Detroit River, a link between the men and home via Zip Code 48222.

DOSSIN MUSEUM COLLECTION

Through my reading and conversations with lake men I found out very quickly that the maritime life is one of extremes. It moves from monotony to life-threatening circumstances.

I had recently received a letter from Red Surrey, a fireman on the *Steelton*, who assured me that most of the men who work on the lakes would not be there if they weren't so well paid. When I first cornered him in the Marine Post Office, Red recalled that his first two years of an eight year career working on the ore carriers were fascinating. From then on it had become a "milk run."

I wondered what it was then that drives some of us one step further to make our living on the seas in spite of the exhausting ritual and, many times danger? Could the financial rewards be enough reason?

My eyes wandered over the rolling swells lapping up against the dock. There

was something wonderful about the river. Looking up, I sighted Bill Smith standing at the end of the dock with his hands in his pockets. He was watching a freighter as it pushed up the channel drawing closer to the Marine Terminal.

"I guess they're about ready to go," John said. Bill lit his pipe and climbed aboard the *Westcott*. The deckhand hauled the lines aboard and with a swish of the diesel blowing water from her exhaust, the mail boat was off to make a delivery.

I watched through my binoculars as she slowly plowed her way toward the moving ship. It looked very strange to see the "diminutive" 40-foot mail boat nuzzle up to the side of a giant ore ship of some 660 feet. A crewman standing high over the *Westcott*, lowered a large bucket over the side of his ship and within two minutes was hauling it back aboard, full of newspapers and mail.

Slowly the *Westcott* seemed to drift into the wake of the huge ore boat. Bill came aboard and made his way back to their dock.

I found out this operation, the only one of its kind in the world, is accomplished on the average of forty times every day and night. The J. W. Westcott Company, over a century in business as a marine reporting service, delivers mail to a little over nine hundred men a day.

I wondered how I could see that operation up close. If John and I could only get aboard the mail boat. John looked at my wheelchair shaking his head doubtfully.

"I don't think they'd let us on."

I remember last summer we wrote to every Great Lakes transportation company for accommodations on one of their boats. Needless to say, we didn't have any success. I felt discouraged. I had put a good fourteen years of my life into studying every facet of Great Lakes life, but I felt there was only so much one could learn from books.

We watched a deckhand secure the *Westcott* to the piling, and a thought entered my fog-bound head. John and I followed the deckhand and captain into the office. I engaged the deckhand in a conversation which I hoped would lead us out on the river.

"I am working on an article about the J. W. *Westcott* and would like to ask you a few questions." I thought that opening was rather bad but maybe it sounded professional. The dispatcher looked at me, remarking, "You are the fifth writer we've had in here this month."

My hopes sank. Glen Mannisto, the deckhand, broke in; "Never mind him. . . what do you want to know?"

I asked, "What was your first trip out on the *Westcott* like?" Glen answered softly, "Overwhelming. You can't believe what it's like when the *Westcott* moves in beside one of those 25,000 ton ore carriers. It's just unreal. I've been trying to write a poem about our operation, but I just can't quite find the words to express the river, the sky and the motion of the lakers beside the *Westcott*."

"Are you a student?"

"Yeah, I'm in the English program at Wayne State," nodding his head.

(Another literary bum like myself.)

Glen asked what courses I was taking.

I answered, "I seem to be heading toward a masters in writing and American

Literature, with a minor in Great Lakes studies."

"It's a small world. . .I'm headed that way myself," Glen said.

We exchanged our favorite titles of Great Lakes novelists. I offered him "*November's Storm*," written by J. McCormick. He showed me a copy of "*Harbor Nights*," by Harvey Klemmer.

Getting back to the river I asked him if he ever had a moment of apprehension in his work. He nodded, "A lot of people wouldn't believe how rough it gets out in the middle of the channel, I remember the day after the *Fitzgerald* was lost, the river was so rough that I swear a wave we rolled over lifted the transom out of the water and I could hear the propeller spin free of the water."

I felt this was as good a time as any, so I blurted out, "What would be our chances for getting aboard the mail boat?" thinking, surely a fellow Wayne State man couldn't turn down an old alumnus. Glen looked down. He shook his head while saying, "I don't know. If it were up to me I would take you on in a minute, but I don't know how Bill would feel about it."

I looked out the windows of the post office at the bobbing mail boat and asked Glen if he could introduce John and me to the captain, Bill Adamek. I put on my *maritime reporter* facade.

I asked Bill how long he had worked on the Great Lakes. He answered, "About fifty years." Like a kid at the ballpark seeking an autograph from a homer-hitting hero, I sat speechless.

Regaining my sea wheels I began again, "What made you decide to make your living on the lakes?" Holding the bowl of his pipe, Bill answered, "Well, I used to get out of school in the afternoon and make my way down to the river to watch the ships pass. I saw a lot of the crew sitting on the rails and figured it would be an easy way to make a living."

Bill had signed on the *Wauketa*. He went on to tell me how the crew had to load cargo by hand and back. "I found out real fast that it wasn't such an easy life," he said grinning. He worked for a while on the *Put-in-Bay* and then as a wheelsman on the *Tashmoo*.

Bill became skipper for the Detroit Marine Postoffice in '48. He recalls getting getting \$77.50 a month.

I asked, "Just by your years on the lakes you must have a lot of memorable ex-

periences, sir." Bill nodded his head.

"Can you tell me a couple?" He looked toward the ceiling, puffed his pipe. . . "I remember one fall afternoon bringing the *Tashmoo* down from Algonac. We got caught in a gale and the wind blew her up on Walpole Island. We had to call for couple of tugs to help us down to Detroit."

The dispatcher came out of the radio room. "Bill, you've got to go to work. One's coming up." I quickly thanked the captain for talking with John and me and asked him if he would consider taking us out on the delivery. Bill pushed his hands in his pockets. He looked down at my chair and shook his head. "I really don't know about that chair, son." I showed him my brakes and John promised to hold my chair steady. Bill looked up with his pipe in his hand. "Well, you're going to have to ask the manager when he comes in."

Glen was standing by us now with some rolled newspapers tucked under his arm. He gave us a wink as Bill went out to the mail boat.

Leaving Glen behind, John and I wandered out on the dock, foiled again. We were watching the shape of an upbound laker grow steadily larger, as Glen walked out and whispered something to Bill. Whatever it was, Bill nodded his head agreeably and looked out on the river. Glen walked over to us smiling, "The manager and Bill say you can go out."

John slapped my shoulder, saying, "Finally we're going to make it." He discussed the best way to lift my wheelchair and me off the dock, over the side and down into the cabin of the boat.

Now that a dream had come true, I peeked over the edge of the dock and looked into, I judged, 20 or 30 feet of scummy water. I hoped these guys didn't slip, for I wouldn't want to be the first crippled kid to go down with his chair.

Much to my relief, the transfer from land to sea went smoothly, with one exception. Lowering my chair down into the cabin, John forgot to duck his head and pounded it against the top of the companionway, with a groan. But he didn't let go of the chair. Once situated toward the aft section of the cabin, I locked my brakes.

An unusual sensation ran through me as I felt every motion of the boat under my wheels. It was like sitting on the back of something living and to be sure, the feeling inside me was alive with every moment



One has no idea how very huge a freighter is until he snuggles up to one on the mailboat! Then he knows!

Photo by ROBERT E. LEE

of man's seafaring history. I was setting into another world. . . one made up of infinite space of sky and water. A bit apprehensively I realized that both elements were alien to me. I was a land being floating into space.

John stood gripping the handles of my wheel chair, his legs braced in balance. Bill stood beside the helm. I thought I saw him give us a sly smile from under the brim of his mariner's cap. John and I wondered what we were in for.

Glen hauled in the lines and Bill turned the wheel a couple of points to starboard. The diesel roared in our ears as we moved over the swells at an easy eight knots.

I looked around the cabin observing that it had about the same appearance as a tug's wheelhouse, except for the post offices boxes that shelved the after bulkhead.

A problem struck me. Sitting in my chair I am only about 4½ feet tall. I was too short to see out the windows. While Glen and Bill had their backs turned, John edged my chair close to the open portside door, which afforded me a pretty good

view of the dark water and the Detroit skyline flowing past us.

Disbelieving the velocity of the chill wind blowing down the channel I zipped my coat a little higher. The wind rushed in the door, whirling the smoke from Bill's pipe around the top of the cabin.

He stood at the helm, looking like a chessman easily moving the wheel a couple of points to starboard and back again to port. It was amazing to me that he could hold his balance so well as the mailboat rolled and pitched under him. How men and women keep their balance on land is inconceivable to me, yet here were John, Glen and Bill standing on a rolling river.

There was nothing of the 18th century poet's mariner about Bill, and yet I felt a reverence for his many years working on the lakes. He was a professional sailor.

I watched Glen, his hands braced against the door jamb, as he studied the lines of a passing railroad carferry.

As we moved closer to the approaching laker I felt sympathy for Glen's poetic attempts. How would I ever put this kind of thing into words? I couldn't quite see the shape of the ore boat coming up over our bows but suddenly we were in its shadow. As the *Westcott* pulled up to the side of the freighter our starboard side was awash with foam. The mailboat lifted under my chair. John shouted in my ear over the diesel and rushing water, "Hang on!" My knuckles turned white as I gripped the sides of my chair for dear life as we were swept over a huge quartering wave. The *Westcott* washed down against the hull of the laker. Her bumpers rubbed and squealed against the ship's plates as Bill kept the mailboat tight against the ship. Both vessels kept moving up the river as Glen hauled in the lowered bucket, filling it with mail and newspapers. Then he tugged the line, and the bucket disappeared above us.

Bill showed me the engine as we drifted over from under the shadow of the huge rounded stern. I looked up at the name. John read, "*William P. Snyder, Jr.*" I continued to watch as she moved farther upstream. Two gulls soared and dived around the receding flagstaff; the sun reflecting off their wings. Bill brought the boat about and we headed toward the shore.

On reaching the dock, Glen got conveniently "lost," making it impossible for

John to lift my chair out of the cabin by himself. Consequently, we were able to go out again.

A retired lake captain who was now working as a pilot for foreign vessels, was waiting by the office door. The mailboat was to take him out to a Norwegian ship. The pilot and Bill were looking up the river for the first sight of her. Just then Glen, followed by the pilot and Bill, ran out of the office down to the boat. With a rush of water we were off again. . . up-bound toward the steadily growing shape of the long, white salty.

John nudged me to my old post in front of the open door. For a moment or two I left the mailboat. My imagination roved out over the river toward the side of the ship. She floated like a massive ice sculpture. In the sense of her lines she was in harmony with her windblown environment. From the sharp clipper bow to her gently molded stern she slipped through sea and wind to her builder's credit.

As we slid in beside her, a rope ladder was dropped from the deck above. While both the *Westcott* and the *Sampson Scan* moved downriver, the pilot climbed up to a vision of Northern Europe.

Two contemporary Norse mariners leaned against the ship's rails. One waved to us. They were homeward bound. I turned, looking out of the starboard door toward the approaching city.

I remember the closing lines of Red's letter. He wrote: "I was better off a landsman, studying at the university and taking care of my little family."

I looked back toward the fading image of Norway. As I felt the mailboat's bumpers nudge the dock I realized that I had to return to land. John and I would have to start home right away if he was to make it to work on time. And I had five more chapters of Faulkner to read before my 6:30 class.

I thought about my wife and daughter whom I would see shortly. Unlike the sailors who rarely are able to visit their families I would be near mine tonight.

I wondered if Kendra was up from her nap. Maybe I'll take her and pretty Kathy out for a hamburger and try to tell them of my adventure. ☆

(EDITOR'S NOTE: REGRETFULLY WE NOTE THAT BILL ADAMEK, OF WHOM THE AUTHOR SPEAKS SO WARMLY, DIED BETWEEN THE TIME OF ACCEPTING AND PUBLISHING THIS ARTICLE. BILL WAS A FINE MARINER, A TRUE GENTLEMAN, AND A CLOSE FRIEND TO MANY OF US, AND MOST OF US WILL WAIT LONG FOR A BETTER MAN TO COME OUR WAY.)



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● Oct. 25 Captain William E. Adamek, 71, died today in Detroit. He was captain of the mailboat *J. W. Westcott II*. Bill joined the J. W. Westcott Company in 1939. He also served on the *Tashmoo* and *Put-in Bay* excursion steamers.

(Your News Editor first met Bill when he was the winter shipkeeper on the old Tashmoo and from that time we have seen each other from time to time to talk over old times. We were also shipmates on the "Bay" for a short time. . . F.E.W.)

● Nov. 1. The *Sunshine Coast Queen*, ex- *Vacationland*, is now owned by the State of Michigan, her original owner. She has been acquired for a proposed run between DeTour, Michigan and Manitoulin Island.

● The Canadian sandsucker, *C. W. Cadwell*, idle at Toronto since 1973, is up for sale.

● The Cuban motor vessel *Bahia De Cochinos* sailed from Thunder Bay, Ontario, bound for Cartagena, Colombia.

● Roen Salvage Company, of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin has begun a two-year project of reconstructing the North Channel wall at Muskegon, Michigan.

● Attempts to refloat the American ocean vessel *Jean Lykes* have been unsuccessful. She became stranded on October 30, off Tibbets Point in Lake Ontario.

● Nov. 2. *Incan St. Laurent* is now at Montane, Quebec after a 22-day voyage to the west coast. She is to be renamed *Alexandre Lebel* for a new service to Baie Comeau.

● Nov. 3. The West German vessel *Tilly Russ* (Bremen for Milwaukee) grounded in the St Lawrence Seaway, near the Eisenhower Lock. She is blocking the channel ;

● The tug *Lac Manitoba*, idle at Hamilton since July 1, has gone to Toronto where she will load grain damaged by a fire at Victory Saga Mills. The grain will go to storage.

● Cargo has been discharged off the *Jean Lykes*, but the further attempts to free the ship have been unsuccessful. More cargo will have to come off, but heavy rain is delaying this being done.

● Nov. 5. Pickands-Mather's *J. L. Mauthe* is bound down the canal, headed for the Gulf of St. Lawrence and an ore cargo.

● C. S. L.'s new self-unloader, *Louis R. Desmarais* has passed upbound through the Soo on her maiden voyage.

● The *Canadian Leader* has departed the Port Weller drydock.

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

● The Canadian tanker *Elmbranch*, ex-*Norwood Park*, has been sold by Branch Lines, Ltd., St. Joseph de Sorel, to Panamanian interests. The vessel was delivered at Sorel to the new owners, and renamed *Witsupply II*.

● The bulk carrier *William Clay Ford* has sailed from the Rouge River basin of the Ford Motor Company plant, headed for Pointe Noire, Quebec for a load of iron ore. This is the first time this vessel has ever been out of the upper lakes.

● After discharging 1,450 tons of cargo into the salvage barges *Mapleheath*, *McAllister No. 3*, and *McAllister No. 4* by way of the heavy-lift floating crane *S.L.S. Hercules*, and along with the help of tugs *Salvage Monarch*, *Helen McAllister*, *Daniel McAllister* and *Cathy McAllister*, the *Jean Lykes* has been refloated. After inspection she will proceed to *Montreal* for the re-loading of her cargo.

● Medusa Cement Company is considering construction of a new dock facility on the Maumee River, in Toledo, Ohio.

● Nov. 5. The Canadian goulette, *Orleans* has been renamed *LeLibertaire*.

● Canada Steamship Line's new self-unloader, *Louis R. Desmarais* arrived at Thunder Bay, Ontario on her maiden voyage, where she loaded 27,117 long tons (30,368.8 net tons) of iron ore for the Steelco plant in Hamilton, Ontario.

● Nov. 7. Tugs *Yvon Simard* and *Lavalei* tow *Cove Transport* down the Seaway. She has been sold to West Indies interests.

● *Herbert C. Jackson* and *Sparrows Point* down the Welland Canal headed for the Gulf of St. Lawrence for ore.

● *Jean Lykes* arrived in Montreal where she will reload her cargo.

● Ford's *Ernest R. Breech* down the Welland Canal headed for the Gulf for ore

● Nov. 10. Canada's Transport Minister, Otto Lang, does not expect the proposed increase in tolls on the Seaway to decrease traffic.

● Nov. 11. The new vessel *Manchester Venture* has arrived at Montreal on her maiden voyage into the Lakes. She was launched in July, 1977.

● Nov 12. The Canadian bulk freighter *Senneville* loaded 1,032,086 bushels of corn at the Mid-States Terminals in Toledo, Ohio. This breaks the record of 1,020,000 bushels just set last week at this port. She is headed for Three Rivers, Quebec.

● Nov. 13. The Canadian tanker *Frobisher Transport* is now renamed *Northern Shell*.

● The ocean-going vessel *Federal Schelde*, which was built in South Korea, on her maiden voyage loaded 930,000 bushels of soybeans for Tilbury, England. The *Federal Schelde* is owned by Federal Pacific (Liberian, Ltd.) a subsidiary of Federal Commerce and Navigation, Ltd., of Detroit.

● The Canadian motor vessel *Yankcanuck* made a rare appearance at Muskegon, Michigan when she unloaded pig iron at the Mast Dock.

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

- The *Jean Lykes* cleared Montreal for Casablanca.
- Starting at midnight, today, operation of the McArthur Lock, at the Soo, will be reduced to one shift a day, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.
- Nov. 14. The Canadian bulker *Helen Evans* is on the Port Weller Drydock for repairs.
- The old forebody of the ore carrier *Montcliffe Hall* is reported adrift. The tug *Irving Birch*, which left earlier last month from Quebec City for Brownsville, Texas, along with the old forebody of the *Cartiercliffe Hall*, was transporting the hulks for scrap.
- Nov. 15. The 626-foot midsection of a new 1,000-foot vessel being built at Lorain, Ohio, departed Toledo under tow. At Lorain, the sections are to be joined. Completion is set for next spring.
- Nov. 16. The *Irving Birch* has taken the old forebody of the *Montcliffe Hall* back in tow.
- The cruise ship *Lowell Thomas Explorer* has been purchased by Throughfun Corporation, of Liberia, for \$370,000. The vessel was ordered sold at public auction by Federal Court of Canada on behalf of local creditors. The sale was held in Montreal. New owner has renamed the ship *Royal Clipper*.
- The British vessel *Vancouver Trader* has put into Seven Islands, Quebec with steering problems. She is on a voyage from Toledo to the United Kingdom with grain.
- Nov. 17. *Bahia De Cochinos* arrived at Cartagena with heavy weather damage sustained during storms on November 4, 7 and 8.
- The crane ship *W. C. Richardson* is now being used by the Consolidated Dock in Toledo to help unload salt water vessels.
- Nov. 19. The National Steel Company vessel *Leon Falk, Jr.* is downbound the Welland



The *WIT TRANSPORT* was set adrift in heavy seas. She was later recovered and taken to Baie Comeau, Quebec.

photo by DANIEL BERUBE

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

Canal, looking for ore.

● C.S.L.'s *Frontenac* went aground while upbound with ore off Grassy Island in the Detroit River, and the company's *Saguenay* lightered her of 5,000 tons, allowing her to free herself.

● The *Wit Transport*, ex-*Cove Transport* was cut loose and after drifting went aground about seven miles west of Mataine, Quebec. She is situated broadside on the beach near Petite-Blanche. She was under tow of *Wit Supply II* when the high seas forced cutting her loose. She drifted in the seas of Baie desSables all night before coming ashore.

● Nov. 20. The owners of *Wit Transport* have engaged the *Techno Venture* of Quebec to pick up the vessel and continue the voyage.

● The *William Clay Ford* arrived back at the Ford plant on the Rouge from her lower lake voyage.

● The Ann Arbor Railroad carferry *Viking* caused damage to her dock in Frankfort, Michigan when strong winds pulled her free from the dock.

● Seaway worker, Mel Waters died when he fell from the *Thermaikos Gulf*, below Lock 1, of Welland Canal. He was about to disembark after checking a steering problem on the ship.

● Nov. 22. The book, "Great Lakes Pilot" (known as the 'Captain's Bible') is having its name changed to 'United States Coast Pilot 6' starting with the 1978 edition, it was announced by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The first 'Pilot' was published in 1898. (*This, in the view of your Editor, smacks of just one more evidence that the Federal government can't bear the name Great Lakes on anything. After years of being one of the country's most efficient operations, Lake Survey was moved out of Detroit, renamed 'NOAA', and set up at Baltimore. A pock on government!*)

● An end to the miners' strike in the ore fields of Michigan is assured and Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company has recalled its crews for laid-up vessels.

● The Canadian motor vessel *Maridan C.* went aground at the lower end of Peache Island, in the Detroit River. She later freed herself and proceeded to Montreal.

● Nov. 23. *Wit Transport* has been freed and taken to Baie Comeau, Quebec.

● The Continental Illinois National Bank has frozen the account of the Great Lakes and European Lines, Inc. The bank has demanded payment of its loans and without the ability to maintain its payments, the lines could no longer operate. It means out of business today.

● Nov. 25. *Cartiercliffe Hall* has completed her sea trials.

● Nov. 26. *Jacques Gravel* has been taken to the scrap yard at Ramey's Bend. She was delivered earlier in the week by the tugs *Lac Manitoba* and *C. West Pete*.

● Nov. 27. *Dyui Pacific* is anchored off Port Weller, Ontario, with mechanical problems. There are, at present, 22 salties anchored awaiting pilots.

● C.S.L.'s self-unloader *H. M. Griffith* went aground in the Fighting Island Channel of the Detroit River, near buoy 64-D at 6:20 PM. She freed herself at 6:32 PM and passed Detroit, upbound at 8:55 PM.

● Nov. 28. The five chartered vessels of the Great Lakes and European Lines will complete their voyages, discharge their cargo, and then return to their owners.

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

● The winter temperature at the St. Lambert Lock is 1.4 degrees C. As of November 27 there were 156 vessels above St. Lambert, 103 of them at Port Weller.

● The *Algoway* on Port Weller Drydock with a big gash in her port bow. She hit a submerged object near the Soo recently. She will also undergo survey while there.

● The Finish vessel *Kelo* departed Muskegon, Michigan after an eight-day layover while she discharged 9,000 tons of coke from France. The 622-foot ship is the largest salty ever to call at Muskegon.

● The tug *American Girl* and a 100-foot work barge are conducting salvage operations in the Straits of Mackinac.

● Nov. 30. The ex-G. L. E. motor vessels *Regine* and *Planet* will discharge their cargo at Hamburg. *Regine* is expected December 1, and *Planet* on the 7th.

● Port Weller Drydock announces that Upper Lakes Shipping, Ltd. will build a new \$33 million self unloader.

● Dec. 1. The St. Lawrence Seaway Authority closed the Seaway to all ocean-going upbound ships in an effort to clear out an unusually heavy pile-up of vessels in the system. The Seaway will close December 15, and there are still 155 ocean vessels above Montreal. This leaves 18 ships waiting at Montreal and downriver.

● Great Lakes and European Line vessel *Regine* has arrived at Hamburg from Chicago.

● A report from Seven Islands, Quebec says that the Greek motor vessel *Lady Era* has gone aground in position 50° 00' 40"N, long. 66° 50' 48" W. Winds are blowing strong gale force. Attempts to remove the crew are being made. Waves are 12 foot.

● Dec. 2. *Lady Era* has been abandoned by her crew. Her engine room is flooded, she has a 12° list, and is sitting in 11 feet of water.

● Canadian bulk freighter *Heron Bay* is on the drydock at Sorel, Quebec for minor repairs.

● The Greek vessel *Tradition* suffered an exhaust gas boiler explosion while in Lake Erie. She put into Cleveland for repairs.

The *Lorfri*, a Liberian motor bulk carrier, is at Fraser's in Superior, Wisconsin for repair to heavy weather damage suffered on a voyage from Antwerp to Chicago.

● Dec. 3. *Tradition* arrived at Detroit.

● Quebec radio reported that the Liberian motor vessel *Neptunia* (from Montreal) was aground below Longue Pointe, near Cape Brule, St. Lawrence River. She is on the south side of the channel and not blocking traffic.

● Dec. 5. The Polish flag vessel *Zamosc* departed from Muskegon with 300-tons of West Michigan cherries.

● The self-unloader *Detroit Edison* departed Muskegon, Michigan after delivering the last load of coal to the Cobb power plant for this season.

● Dec. 6. A blizzard with up to 10 inches of snow hit Montreal.

● As many as 133 seagoing vessels may be trapped in the lakes if the weather remains bad.

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

● The *Cliffs Victory*, along with 15 other ships, went to anchor in the St. Clair River and southern Lake Huron to wait out the weather

● A fire aboard the *Royal Clipper*, ex-*Lowell Thomas Explorer*, at Montreal, resulted from an engine room explosion. 23 were rescued, then the vessel sank at her pier from the water poured into her in efforts to extinguish the fire. She was scheduled to sail for Spain today.

● Dec. 7. *Royal Sword*, downbound the Welland Canal, rammed a cable arrester and caused damage, delaying shipping for several hours.

● The old forebody of the *Montcliffe Hall*, while under tow by the tug *Irving Birch*, struck range light #405 in the Brownsville, Texas shipping channel.

● Dec 8. The Seaway passed 60 million tons of cargo as the self-unloader *Algosoo* took on a load of manganese ore at Contracoeur, Quebec, bound for Conneaut, Ohio.

● The British vessel *Sugar Producer*, downbound with 14,000 tons of corn, went aground in the vicinity of buoy 13-A, Lac St. Louis, St. Lawrence Seaway, about 22 miles from Montreal.

● Dec. 9. Salvage barge *P. S. Barge No. 1* is off-loading the *Sugar Producer* but going is hard because of gale force winds and a temperature of minus 25° C.

● Shipping was halted on Western Lake Erie because of high westerly winds. Both lake and ocean vessels went to anchor in the Detroit River to wait out the storm.

● The *Algoway* cleared Port Weller drydock.

● The Canadian bulk carrier *Goderich* became stuck in ice in the Detroit River, abreast of the Detroit River Light at 1:15 AM, and continued to block the channel. The American bulker *George D. Gobel* became stuck next to the *Goderich*. Still blocking the channel at 2:00 PM, the Coast Guard is trying to free them. There were ten ships waiting upbound, and six down. Both directions use the same channel in ice conditions.

● The new Canadian ship *Arctic* is floated at Port Weller Drydock, and moved to the fit-out wall. She was towed there by the tugs *G. W. Rogers* and *James McGrath*.

● Paterson's *Soodoc* is down the Welland Canal with 7,000 tons of steel from the Soo to Vancouver, BC. The trip is an experiment to test feasibility of such runs.

● Dec. 11. The *Esperance III* (former *LST 987*) a Panamanian-registered self-unloader passes up the Welland Canal to tie up at Port Colborne, Ontario. She apparently has been purchased by American interests.

● After being offloaded of 2,750 tons, and along with the help of tugs *Cathy McAllister*, *Salvage Monarch*, *Sinmac* and *Helen M. McAllister*, the *Sugar Producer* was refloated. Eight hours later, all vessels were in Montreal.

● Dec. 12. Shortly after 4:00 AM, the Canadian cement carrier *Metis* and Hindman's bulk carrier, *Blanche Hindman*, became icebound in the Livingstone Channel of the Detroit River just above Lake Erie. Both ships were upbound. The Coast Guard tug *Kaw* was enroute to help them. All traffic was stopped in and out of the Detroit River.

● There are still 29 salties in the lake system above Detroit.

● The Italian vessel *Massimiliano F.* went to anchor at St. Laurent, near Quebec City because of suction trouble.

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS



The Welland Canal closed operations with the passage of the new *LOUIS R. DESMARAIS* on December 31.

Photo by BARRY ANDERSEN

- A collision at Montreal involved the Panamanian ship *Margitta*, downbound from the Seaway and the docked Greek vessel *Astor Princess*. There were no reported injuries.
- Dec. 13. There are 47 vessels above the Welland and 79 above Montreal.
- The Board of Directors of the Great Lakes Maritime Institute approved purchase of an electronic computerized type-setting machine for production of *Telescope* Magazine. This machine will not only shorten the time and reduce the work involved in production, but will undoubtedly provide a better quality, easier to read magazine..
- Dec. 14. The Cypriot vessel *Silver Fir*, outbound in ballast, went aground in the vicinity of Squaw Island, Lake St. Francis. Three tugs are enroute to assist.
- Tug *Irving Birch* and tow have completed trip from Quebec City to Brownsville, Texas.
- *Cape Transport*, now atripped of masts, stack and pilothouse, is towed from Toronto by the tug *Princess No. 1*. She, too, is owned by West Indies Transport and will head south by way of the Erie Canal.
- Dec. 15. The Seaway closed with 54 ocean ships still about the system. They will be allowed transit if the weather conditions permit.
- The Coast Guard reports that ice in the lower Detroit River and western Lake Erie is about eight inches thick, the ice slowing, but not stopping the ships.

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

- The 180-foot cutter *Mariposa* is at Detroit's Nicholson Terminal for repair.
 - The Coast Guard Cutter *Ojibwa* is being towed to Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin shipyard for repairs.
 - Seaway visitors *Thorshore*, *Thorstream*, and *Thorsriver* have been sold to a Hong Kong firm and will be trading in the far east.
 - *Eeperance III* has sailed from Port Colborne.
 - Dec. 16 *Silver Fir* is refloated with the aid of a tug. Because the vessel is of low power, it was ordered by Seaway Authority to Cornwall, Ontario, and she may not be permitted to transit the Seaway.
 - The *Lorfri* passes down the Welland Canal.
 - Last ocean vessel, the *St. Cergue*, cleared the Soo, outbound for salt water.
 - C.S.L.'s new self-unloader *Jean Parisien* passes up the Welland Canal on her maiden voyage.
 - Dec. 17. The self unloader *Algosoo* went aground 1 mile above the Detroit River Light at 8:00 AM. Two Great Lakes Towing tugs were ordered for assistance.
 - The cutter *Bramble* is ordered from Port Huron to help out in Lake Erie.
-



The *SOODOC* is involved in an experimental trip to the West Coast to learn if the route may offer interesting economic possibilities.

Photo by BARRY ANDERSEN

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

- The self unloader *McKee Sons* is pushed aground by the ice in the west end of Lake Erie.
- The Swiss vessel *St. Cergue*, downbound, passed the Belle Isle Coast Guard Station at Detroit at 1:09 PM. She has 7,800 horsepower and is on a loaded voyage to Spain with sunflower seeds. She had to go to anchor in the Detroit River anchorage area to await reopening of the river. She is the last ocean vessel to pass Detroit this season.
- The self-unloading vessel *Henry Ford II* is staying in Toledo because of the ice and gale warnings on Lake Erie.
- The *Sugar Producer* clears Montreal for New York where repairs will be undertaken.
- Dec. 17. After removing 175,000 gallons of fuel and removing some rocks around her hull, the icebreaker *Westwind* freed herself. She went aground on December 13, on a shoal at the mouth of the St. Mary's River.
- The Canadian bulker *V. W. Scully* is on the Port Weller Drydock.
- Dec. 17. C.S.L.'s *Stadacona* is aground at Little Current, Ontario, just after clearing dock.
- Dec. 18. The *Algosoo* is refloated at 6:00 PM.
- Dec. 19. Sixty-one ocean going vessels are waiting to go through the Seaway. Ice conditions are somewhat improved.
- *Silverfir* arrived at Montreal.
- The Welland Canal topped 70 million tons as the Canadian bulker *Comeau* made her transit with grain.
- The Canadian bulk carrier *Northern Venture* suffered damage to her side tanks while docking at Hamilton, Ontario.
- Dec. 20. The icebreaker *Westwind* will be out of service for the rest of this winter season. Inspection revealed heavy damage from the grounding last week. Divers found holes in her fuel tanks and discovered an eight-foot crack in her hull below the water line. The *Westwind* left the Straits of Mackinac for repairs. The Coast Guard has dispatched her sister-ship, the *Northwind*, from Baltimore, Maryland to replace the *Westwind* for the winter navigation work on the Great Lakes.
- The saltie, *City of Ottawa*, ex-*City of Glasgow* and *City of Toronto*, ex-*City of Eastbourne*, have been sold by Ellerman Lines, Ltd., to Far East interests. Both vessels have been Great Lakes visitors.
- The Greek vessel *Emmanuel C.* went aground 1.2 miles off Point Argenteau in the St. Lawrence River. The river is ice covered and the Canadian ice breaker *J. E. Bernier* has left Quebec City to assist.
- Every effort is being made to clear the Seaway.
- Dec. 21. Thirty-eight vessels are waiting to go through the Seaway. The American locks are being shut down because of poor visibility.
- The Bultema Dock and Dredge Company of Muskegon, Michigan lost a company barge last night, the B-8, loaded with steel scrap, bound for Chicago. She was in tow of the Bultema tug, *American Viking* when the tow line parted in heavy seas. The B-8 is aground, upside down,

GREAT LAKES AND SEAWAY NEWS

off Port Sheldon, near Holland, Michigan.

- Dec. 21. The self-unloader, *Henry Ford II*, downbound for Toledo, became stuck in ice one mile below Detroit River Light and asked for Coast Guard assistance.

- The Greek motor vessel *Fotini* anchored near Ste. Petronille, Orleans Island, in the St. Lawrence River with suction trouble.

- The Italian *Fucinatore* went to anchor off Three Rivers, Quebec with suction trouble.

- The Dutch vessel *Deltadrecht* has anchored off Three Rivers with cooling system problems.

- *Brunhorn*, A Norwegian vessel outbound from the Great Lakes, anchored at Buoy 44-o, near Cap Sante, St. Lawrence River, with suction trouble. (this is a condition that develops on vessels when their water intakes become ice-clogged).

- Operators of the Burlington, Ontario life bridge went on strike. This bridge controls the entrance and exit from Hamilton harbor. Vessels for Hamilton have gone to anchor in Lake Ontario.

- Dec. 22. While leaving the Muskegon Channel the *Richard J. Reiss* was caught by a strong wind off Lake Michigan and brushed slightly against the north breakwall. She suffered no damage, save a ding in one of her propeller buckets. She put out lines to the wall and waited out the weather.

- *Sugar Producer* arrived at New York where repairs are to be made.

- Nine vessels are now anchored off Hamilton, Ontario.

- Dec. 24. *Silver Fir* sailed from Montreal for Sorel, Quebec.

- The Dutch vessel *Alasum* went aground 300 feet off Rimouski, Quebec breakwater east side. No pollution reported.

- Dec. 25. The 4,200 horsepower tug *Leonard W.* arrived from Quebec City and with the aid of a high tide, pulled the *Alasum* free. She is loaded with lumber for Belfast.

- Dec. 26. The St. Lawrence Seaway finally closed when the *St. Cergue* cleared the St. Lambert Lock at Montreal. The Seaway will reopen in April, 1978.

- Tanker *Polaris* has been virtually scrapped at Ashtabula, Ohio, while *Chicago Trader* remains untouched.

- Dec. 27. *Olympic Pride* arrived at Comeau Bay.

- C.S.L.'s *Rimouski* is allowed to enter Hamilton Harbor because she is taking on some water. The other ships remain outside at anchor.

- Dec. 28. Vessels waiting to discharge at Hamilton scatter to Toronto or the Welland Canal

- Dec. 29 The Norwegian motor vessel *Torafjord* sailed from Montreal for New York but later had to go to anchor 4 miles east of Quebec with suction trouble.

- Dec. 31. C.S.L.'s self-unloader *Louis R. Desmarais*, loaded with stone for Cleveland, closes the shipping season on the Welland Canal.

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Printed in the United States of America
by Macomb Printing Specialties Company
Mt. Clemens, Michigan.