



# THE TELESCOPE

GREAT LAKES MODEL SHIPBUILDERS' GUILD

BELLE ISLE DETROIT 7, MICHIGAN

Vol. 2

November 1953

No. 11

## BROWNING BUYS 3 ORE CARRIERS

The Detroit fleet of Great Lakes Freighters was increased by three during November.

November 19, the 504-foot self-unloader Col. E. M. Young was purchased by interests headed by Mr. Troy H. Browning.

Browning, president of the T. H. Browning Steamship Co., formed the Rivers Steamship Co. to buy the ship and filed registration papers with the Custom Bureau here.

The Young will be converted to a bulk carrier to carry iron ore from Lake Superior to Detroit and Lake Erie ports. She will have a carrying capacity of 10,000 tons of ore.

November 23, the David M. Weir and Thomas E. Millsop, each 532 feet long and with a capacity of more than 11,000 gross tons, were purchased by the Browning Steamship Co.

The Weir and Millsop will also be used to carry ore from Lake Superior to Detroit and Lake Erie ports.

### COMPASS GAUGE IS STOLEN FROM SUNKEN SHIP

Port Huron: A gyro-compass repeater instrument was stolen from the wheelhouse of the German motorship Wallchiff while it lay submerged in the St. Clair River.

The theft was discovered when the ship was raised from the water. Capt. Nissen, commander of the ship noticed the instrument missing when he inspected the exposed wheelhouse.

The repeater is a speedometer-like gauge that tells what the reading is on the compass, which is in the captain's quarters below decks. Captain Nissen said the instrument had little commercial value.

He was curious how anyone could have stolen it.

The wheelhouse to which it was fastened was at least three feet under water as the ship rested on the river bottom after it sank in a collision on Oct. 2. Salvage workers said the thief must have used a wrench while diving several times into the water to work the repeater loose.

### 27 DAYS FROM BUFFALO TO CHICAGO

by  
Jack Miller

The longest trip from Buffalo to Chicago was made by the schooner "Nassau". Mr. Monroe of Gibraltar, Michigan, who sailed on the "Nassau" during this trip, tells the following tale:

"It took 27 days to make the trip which around the year 1895 could be made by some schooners from 5 days to 2 weeks.

The Nassau was taking a load of hard coal to Chicago. After loading she was hauled out beyond the breakwater by a tug and with a fair wind sailed almost to Long Point, 65 miles to the west, before 9 P.M.. The wind headed her, and while trying to get up the lake she spent 12 hours without making any headway, so she went back to Buffalo and came to anchor behind the breakwater.

Starting again, she finally reached Point Pelee. Two weeks from her first start from Buffalo, she came to anchor in the lee of Pelee Island. Then she sailed to the mouth of the Detroit River, where she took a tow up to Port Huron.

Even in the tow through Lake St. Clair, she ran into a squall. (Could this be the time when she was reported losing her anchor which Mr. Hockin reported in the May 1953 "TELESCOPE"?)

The "Nassau" bucked headwinds thru  
Cont. pg. 3

### The TELESCOPE

Published every month by the Great Lakes Model Shipbuilders Guild, Belle Isle, Detroit 7, Michigan.

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Robert H. Davison.....Publisher  
Chairman Publicity Committee  
15¢ per copy; \$1.50 per year; free to paid members of G.L.M.S.G.

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### KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING

The steamer "Anna Smith" which went ashore near Cheboygan Michigan with her tow of 3 schooners Nov. 27 1889 had her engine room flooded. Her crew started a fire in her bunkers to keep from freezing and when they were rescued they failed to put out the fire resulting in the ship burning to her waterline.

### !!! A T T E N T I O N !!!

The November Meeting of the Model Guild will be held in the BRIEFING ROOM at the DETROIT HISTORICAL MUSEUM Wensday, November 30, 1953, at 7:30P.M.  
THIS IS AN IMPORTANT MEETING  
BE SURE AND COME

### THE GUILD LIBRARY

Through the generosity of President Ruhl, a new book has come to the Guild Library. While not a Great Lakes item it is certainly nautical and a well-documented record of hardships which were the common lot of mariners on all waters in times past.

To quote from the jacket blurb of GREAT SHIPWRECKS AND CASTAWAYS, by Charles Neider; Harper & Brothers N.Y., 1952. (\$3.00)

"Here's a collection of sea-going adventures stories unlike anything you have ever read. From the Arctic to the Cape of Good Hope, from the days of wooden galleons to modern times, these are eye-witness accounts of perils on the ocean, on desert islands, and in savage countries. Every word of them is true, set down by the men and women who, by luck, courage, and ingenuity, somehow managed to survive their harrowing experiences long enough to leave the record."

Whatever else the reader may get from reading this book, there will forever remain with him an appreciation of the physical and moral courage of those early seamen who braved the unknown oceans to extend the frontiers of civilization and Christianity.

Of villains, Mr. Neider presents a fair share, but they only serve as a backdrop, against which moves an almost limitless procession of men whose fortitude is nearly unbelievable in these days of soft comforts, and modern devices for safety at sea.

One of the most gripping of these stories is that of Peter Serrano, who survived seven years of isolation on a small island, barren of wood, water, or even grass.

There are, in all, twenty tales in this book, and all of them so interesting one can not stop reading short of the end of any one of them. They cover the period from 1514 to 1912.

Attention is again called to the other nautical books in the Guild library, all of which are for loan to members, free of cost, except for postage (two ways) where the borrower lives at a distance.

Editors Corner:

PART OF A OLD POEM

A scow kom sailing  
down Lak St. Claire  
Shingal and cord wood  
her deck load ware;  
De win blew fresh  
And de win blew free;  
An speed her way, "Look an See"  
Out she sail  
From de Creek of de Bear  
Over the waters  
Of Lak St. Claire.  
De win increase  
Till he blew a gale  
De "Look an See" she reef her sail;  
De water jump rite o'er de boat  
An way tree stick of cord wood float;  
From gail to hurricain blow de win  
Four bonch of shingal flote behind.

Dey reach de river  
Dey pass de lite,  
Dare stopping place  
Soon com in sight;  
De captain jomp  
Rite roun' and roun'  
Parblue, Baptise,  
Why don you haul down.  
Can't do it Captain,  
De mate reply,  
If you tink you can,  
You bees com try.

Trow in de hank as quick you can  
De captain cry, as he forward ran;  
Trow in the hank,  
an we make tings snug,  
Better do dat than hire a tug;  
But captain de hank  
ain't got no string on!  
Never mind, trow her in,  
May stop her som.

The "lite" was evidently Thames river light. The old joke about the flustered skipper ordering the anchor thrown overboard and the deckhand reporting that there is no cable fast to it, is still current among yachtmen. "Throw it overboard anyway".

Jack Miller  
Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.

27 DAYS Cont:

Lake Huron and even on Lake Michigan. She was finally picked up by a tug and taken into Milwaukee where she lay at anchor for three days. The trip from Milwaukee to Chicago was made at the end of a tow line."

MUSEUM NOTES

Although the Museum of Great Lakes History closed on November 3, the good weather has permitted the staff to accomplish much in the way of repairs and maintenance.

About 500 yards of canvas decking has been laid and painted, to replace that which was laid five years ago. There is more to be laid, but the delay in getting delivery on canvas has made completion of the job highly improbable before next summer.

Age, and the long, hot, dry spell of weather caused the starboard side of the "J. T. Wing" to open up in all seams. New caulking has been run into all open seams.

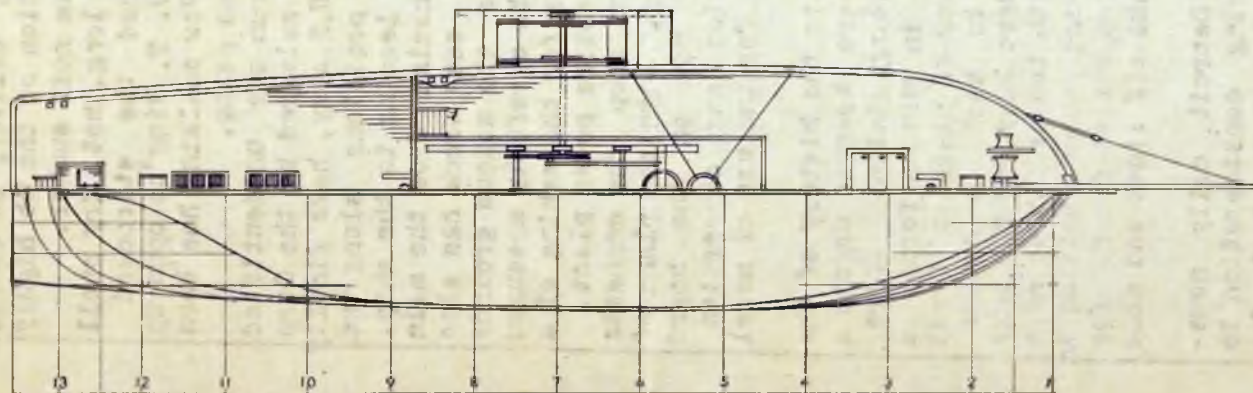
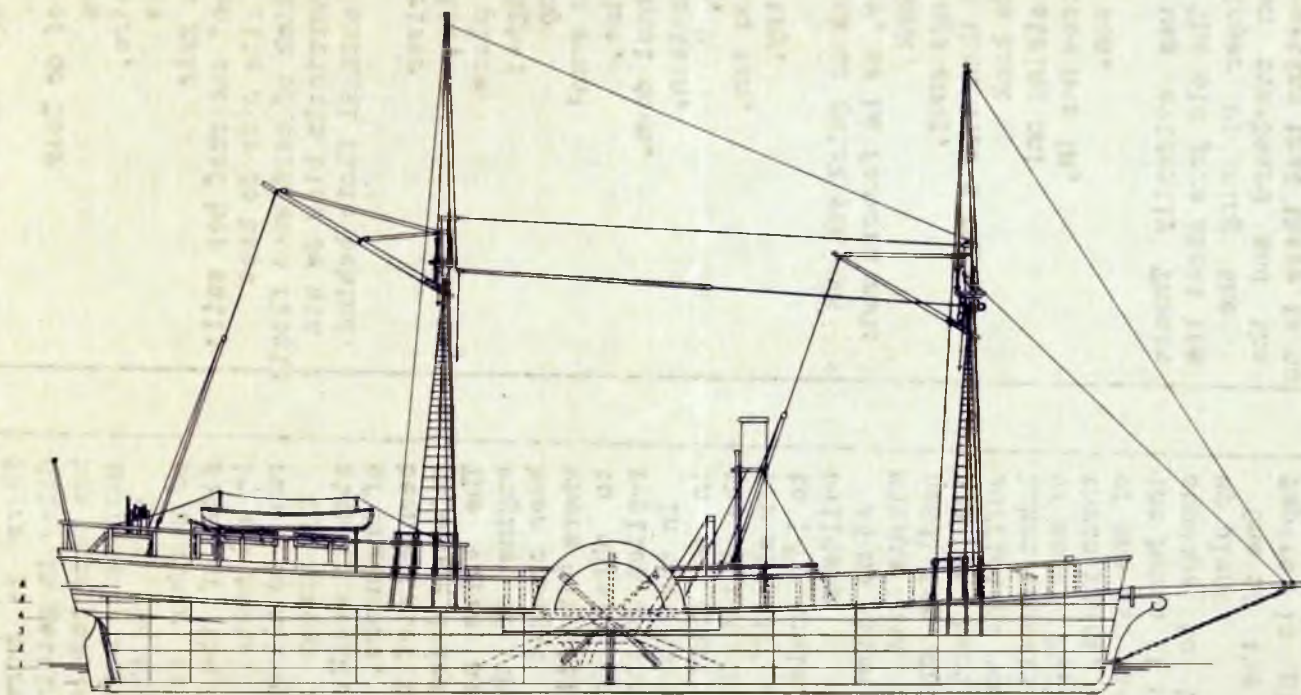
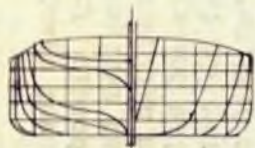
Two items from the unidentified steamer wreck, salvaged by the Corp of Engineers, U.S. Army, have finally been mounted in positions along the entrance drive leading to the ship. The valve mechanism from the main engine of the same wreck has also been brought to the museum grounds where it will be carefully measured to obtain data for the making of a replica of the entire power plant.

In the museum shop the emphasis is on drafting, with the plans of the Put-in-Bay now on the board for simplification and conversion to 1/8" scale, for the use of model builders.

At no time in the history of the museum has there been so urgent a need for drafting talent. There are on hand, in various forms, a sufficient number of plans of Great Lakes vessels to keep a number of model builders busy for the next three years, with two or three more of the old sailing ships awaiting in the hands of prospective donors for someone to take off lines and make up plans.

One of the Detroit daily newspapers is giving consideration to a plan to sponsor a contest for next year. More on this in due time.

A model of the proposed new museum building has been completed and may be seen by Guild members by presenting their membership cards to Mr. William King, one of the guides at the Main Building, Detroit Historical Museum, Woodward at Kirby.



**WALK-IN-THE-WATER  
1818**

**MUSEUM OF GREAT LAKES HISTORY**

*DRAWN BY* **Boyd J. Johnston**

SCALE - 1/8" = 1' SEE SHEET NO. 2 FOR DETAILS

**SHEET NO. 1**

The Little Ships:

WALK-IN-THE-WATER

Fourth in a series of stories of the real ships which are displayed in model form in the Museum of Great Lakes History.

UIn the upper Lakes the steamer Walk-in-the-Water is usually thought of as the first of these inland seas. Actually she was only the first above the falls of Niagara.

Down on Lake Ontario the steam-boat Frontenac was launched at Kingston on September 7, 1816, and on the American side, at Sacket's Harbor, the Ontario was launched a few days earlier, making the subject of this article the third on the Great Lakes.

The Ontario made her first trip in April, 1817, while the Frontenac did not get under way until June 5. The former was of 232 tons; the latter about 700 tons.

The Walk-in-the-Water was launched at the mouth of Scajaquada creek, down the Niagara River a ways from Lake Erie. She was 135 feet long, 32 feet wide, with a hull depth of 8 feet six inches. She measured 358 tons. She carried two masts for setting sails when the wind was favorable.

On August 22, she received her license, and three days later, on August 25, 1818 departed for Detroit on her first trip. There were 29 passengers on board, bound for Erie, Grand River, Cleveland, Sandusky and Detroit. The cabins were neat, convenient, and even elegant, and the trip was said to be not only comfortable, but altogether enjoyable. It had taken several yoke of oxen to help her overcome the swift current of the Niagara River, but once out in Lake Erie she steamed along at about eight miles an hour. All scheduled stops were made, plus a few more to pick up cord wood.

There is no record of there having been rain of the first trip, but in the course of her brief career the Walk-in-the-Water got her share of it, and though the passengers kept snug in the cabins, the engineer and his engine had to take it as it came. There was no cover over the engineroom.

The whole voyage took 44 hours and 10 minutes. At every stop the local people swarmed aboard to examine this strange craft, the forerunner of a mighty fleet to follow. Along the Erie shore farmers looked up from their work to see this smoke-belching craft pass westward, shook their heads and returned to their toil, little dreaming that they had looked upon the beginning of an industry that was to do more than any other to bring prosperity to them and their descendants.

The Name Walk-in-the-Water was to long to come into common use, so she became known as "The Steamboat". Mechanically, and economically she was a success. Besides making her regular runs between Buffalo and Detroit she would now and then make side trips. Parties of ladies and gentlemen went for pleasure trips on Lake St. Clair. In the summer of 1819 she went as far west as Green Bay.

Many prominent people patronized "The Steamboat". On her second trip the Earl of Selkirk, and his suite were part of her list of 31 passengers. Henry R. Schoolcraft was listed among the passengers in the summer of 1820.

On the evening of October 31, 1821 she started up the Lake, from Black Rock on what was to be her last trip of the season. The weather was fair for the first few hours. Then a gale struck. Unable to proceed on her voyage it was decided to drop anchor, rather than attempt to return and re-enter the Niagara River in the Dark. All went well until near morning when the anchors began to drag. Disaster became certain, but the good fortune which had marked her life did not desert her in death. Though heavily loaded, and strained at every joint and seam she was so high upon the beach that all on board were disembarked safely.

While the boat was a total loss the engine was salvaged and later installed in the "Superior", the second steamboat above the Niagara.

At least two pictures of the Walk-in-the-Water, by artists have come down to us through the years, neither of them very good, and one shows her as a vessel which could not have

Little ships cont.:  
remained upright in the water, yet the latter has been copied over and over until the popular conception of the boat's appearance is pretty well fixed in the minds of almost everyone.

Actually, the hull was little different from that of a schooner of the period, and prior to that time, since all vessels depended upon sail, all passengers cabins were below the main deck, so that when the going got rough everyone but crew members could be gotten out of the way of flying gear. It was not until 1833 that sufficient confidence was felt in the low-pressure engines of the day, to induce builders to carry the cabins above the main deck.

In the Clements Library, on the University of Michigan campus, there is a beautiful model of the Walk-in-the-Water. Unfortunately it is, by scale, 35 feet too long, for her beam. This error was discovered at the Museum of Great Lakes History and the model now on exhibition there was the first accurate one to be built. Guildmember, Emmett Priestley

Did the work on this model, using plans perfected by Captain Johnston after much research and correcting of drawings.

From the same plans, another Guild member, Frank Slyker, of East Detroit has constructed a steam-powered "Walk-in-the-Water" which performs perfectly. Still another member Ronald Konzack, now with the Armed Forces, in Texas, has also constructed a model of this early steamer, from the same plans.

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