Telescope

25¢

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U.S. YANTIC

This picture shows the Yantic pretty much as she appeared when she came to the Great Lakes. Only her top-sail yards have been removed. Later her fore, main and mizzen masts, each with its own top-mast, were removed and two pole masts installed instead. Her bowsprit and jib boom were sawed off, her smoke stack, and ventilators raised, and an ungainly superstructure built to replace a very uncomfortable open navigator's bridge. A spar deck was added, with additional deck houses on top of that, rendering her forever incapable of again setting a single piece of canvas. Beginning on page 3 you may read the life story of this fine old vessel which was known in every port on the Great Lakes fifty or more years ago.

J.E. Johnston,
Editor:
Membership $3.00

Telescope

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E D I T O R I A L

LEST WE FORGET

We have built a wonderful world. A wonderful push-button world, of ease and comfort, and wealth beyond the dreams of men of a hundred years ago, or even eighty years ago when the first iron-hull bulk carrier began an era the end of which we cannot yet see. Out of the economies that stemmed from modern methods of transportation, and manufacturing technique, b u t principally transportation techniques, since manufactures, without transportation are of little value.

What we, as a community, and as a nation owe to Great Lakes Shipping men is beyond computation. SURE - they have all been paid well for their services. Some of them have amassed millions for their contribution to progress. Let us be grateful for a form of government, and a way of life, that permits such things. But you know, as I know, that money alone is poor pay for a life of service. The greatest remuneration, the most satisfying recompense for service is recognition.

There is no man with soul so dead that he is not made a better man for having received for his life's work,the recognition of his fellow man. Deny him that and he, of necessity, turns to material rewards, and material rewards only, as a self-justification.

Recognition for service to society can only be evaluated in terms of what has gone on before. The preservation of what has gone on before, we call history, and history is Society's memory and the mother of Society's tradition. Without traditions no society has prospered.

While we have been developing a push-button world, what have we been producing in the way of men. Marquette, and Jackson, hold part of the answer, in Michigan. I ask you: Had those men there, at Marquette and at Jackson possessed honorable traditions to live up to, would they be where they are today?

Our traditions shape our code of ethics, and unless we preserve traditions, and histories, of the good and the great, we are in danger of losing goodness and greatness.

Somehow, a very important part of our national history has almost passed unnoticed - - the history of the development of shipping on the Great Lakes. We have a literature on the winning of the West; on the California Gold Rush, and that of the Klondike. We have a literature on the Atlantic seaboard colonies, and on the South but where is our literature on the Great Lakes Region, and what would our United States be without this region. Pause a moment and reflect upon this, will you please.

See page 16.

THE GUILD

ORGANIZED IN 1952 TO LOCATE, ACQUIRE, AND PRESERVE INFORMATION AND OBJECTS RELATED TO THE HISTORY OF SHIPPING ON THE GREAT LAKES AND TO MAKE SAME AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE MUSEUM OF GREAT LAKES HISTORY AND THE COLUMNS OF TELESCOPE. THE CONSTRUCTION OF AUTHENTIC SCALE MODELS OF GREAT LAKES SHIPS IS ONE OF THE PRIME OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANIZATION, WHICH HAS BROUGHT INTO BEING THE LARGEST EXISTING COLLECTION OF MODELS OF THESE SHIPS. THE MUSEUM OF GREAT LAKES HISTORY, LOCATED ON THE SHORE OF BELLE ISLE, IN DETROIT, IS OFFICIAL HEADQUARTERS FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND THE REPOSITORY OF ALL OF ITS HOLDINGS. THE GUILD IS INCORPORATED AS AN ORGANIZATION FOR NO PROFIT UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN. NO MEMBER RECEIVES ANY COMPENSATION FOR HIS SERVICES. DONATIONS TO THE GUILD ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR TAX INCOME PURPOSES.

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The "Yantic" died of old age. Quietly and painlessly, during one of the autumn gales, her brave soul fled. Specifically, she sank at her dock, without warning and in five minutes time. Even the august naval board that investigated the sinking could assign no cause for it. Since boards of inquiry are not sentimental, this one could not report that she died when her time came just as old men die. Lieut. Com. Richard T. Brodhead, commanding the Michigan Naval Reserve, holds the opinion that one of the large concrete blocks dumped overboard, when the city was clearing off the land near the Belle Isle bridge approach, purchased for park purposes, slid down into her slip and punctured her side as she weaved and wallowed in the storm. What difference does it make, since she is gone? Even conceding the fact that it was a concrete block that punched the hole through which the river claimed her, the theory that she died of old age still holds good, since only because her timbers had rotted away from the inside in her long years of service could this be possible.

For 65 years the "Yantic" had served the United States Navy faithfully and well. The Seven Seas had known her; there was scarcely a port of the world that she had not visited. Born in the stirring days of the Civil War and built of stout live African Oak, she had a heritage of courage and stamina. She had lived through three wars but had heard the screech of hostile shells in only one of these, for she was sequestered on the Great Lakes during the Spanish -American War and World War I. But though she did not smell powder in these latter wars, she did her part, for she was used to train recruits. Many a gallant sailor made his first obeisance to the flag as he stepped over her side.

In her younger days, she was a reigning belle in the Navy. She was designed as a yacht for President Lincoln and she had the lines of a yacht--with a well deck and plenty of sheer. She made her debut as a bark, with towering masts and wide-spreading yards. The day she slipped down the Delaware River from her birthplace in Philadelphia, with all her kites flying, old sailors said that she was the prettiest thing that had ever been seen in those waters.

That was in 1864. The Navy needed ships more than President Lincoln needed a yacht when she was ready to be commissioned and her destinies were suddenly changed. Instead of serving as an occasional refuge for the tired man in the White House, she was sent to join the fleet. Of course, she wasn't considered a big ship even in those days as she was only 186 feet long with 32 feet of beam. But she had pivot guns fore and aft and some lighter guns on the broadside and, as gunboats went, she was a formidable vessel.

She got her baptism of fire in the attack on Fort Fisher and even the great Admiral David Dixon Porter said that she was a smart ship. She participated in some other minor engagements as a member of the North Atlantic, blockading squadron under Porter and though she wasn't built until the third year of the war, she was able to consider herself a real veteran when Lee surrendered.

With the end of the war, she settled down to the routine but never monotonous duties of a naval vessel in time of peace. From time to time she was assigned to every station that the Navy knows. Now she would be

tossing in a North Atlantic gale; again riding a typhoon in the China Sea. She knew the blistering heat of the equator and the pitiless cold of the arctic circle. Her officers and men were true cosmopolites, for their lot might be thrown either in one of the gay capitals of Europe or on a coral atoll in the South Pacific.

The "Yantic" always had steam power but in her heyday mostly she sailed. In the first place, her funny little athwartships horizontal engine, with steam furnished by two tiny boilers, didn't give her much speed, and in the second place she had bunker capacity for but 90 tons of coal. They could perhaps manage to stow an extra 20 tons somewhere about her but even 110 tons wouldn't carry her very far. Out on blue water with a "breeze of wind" however she had a cruising radius of as many miles as the wind would blow her. So her captain was always glad when they cleared harbor and he could shut off the engine and break out the sails--the courses and the topsails and the royals and the 'gansails and the stun'sails and perhaps even the moonsails when the air was very light.

She had a four-foot keel under her whole length in the days when she was a square-rigger and she could sail as well as a Yankee clipper. She could carry canvas until it threatened to pull the very sticks out of her --she could point high and foot fast. Heeled over to a stiff breeze and carrying full sail, when almost everything else was reefed, she was the kind of a ship that a sailor would like to have tattoed on his chest.

The most exciting service that the "Yantic" engaged in after the Civil War was as a member of the fleet that went to find Adolphus W.Greely in the arctic. Greely, it will be remembered, attained the farthest north point then on record in May, 1882,when he reached 83 degrees, 24 minutes. His expedition suffered terrible hardships after it had gone closer to the north pole than anyone else ever had penetrated, and when rescued in 1884, the party had lost 18 of 25 men. The "Yantic" did not actually find the survivors, that honor falling to the "Bear" commanded by William H. Emory, who later achieved greater fame as the commander of the "Yosemite" in the Spanish-American War.

After more than 30 years of service, the "Yantic" finally was ordered home from the South American station in 1897 with a view to being put out of commission. She was still staunch and seaworthy but the newer Navy had need of ships of a different type. It so happened that in the summer of that year Theodore Roosevelt, then assistant secretary of the navy, made a trip from Mackinaw to Detroit with the members of the Michigan Naval Brigade on the U. S. S. "Michigan" (later "Wolverine"), the old side-wheeler which was the Navy on the Great Lakes for so many years.

In those days the Michigan naval militiamen always made their annual cruise on this ship, which was manned by a regular Navy crew. There was considerable crowding when the militia contingent was taken aboard and the cruise was not wholly satisfactory. So some of the officers of the "Michigan" seafaring delegation interested young Mr. Roosevelt in the idea of getting the Navy to assign a ship to this state. When Mr. Roosevelt got back to Washington he made some investigation of the available ships for such a purpose and he found that the "Yantic" was in the Charlestown (Boston) navy yard all ready to

be put out of Commission. He accordingly authorized the loan of the "Yantic" to the state of Michigan.

Some of the officers of the Michigan Naval Brigade went to Boston to help in fitting her out for the long voyage to fresh water and in due time she cast off her hawsers and set sail for the mouth of the St. Lawrence. She made that part of the voyage entirely under sail, but once in the river furled her canvas and started her engine. In Montreal she was put in drydock while her 4-foot keel was taken off and 15 feet of her stem removed so that she would pass through the locks of the canal.

The bow was bulkheaded where the amputation took place, and it was a considerable job of shipbuilding all the way around, for her African live oak timbers were so tough that it was almost impossible to cut them. The alterations necessary to get her through the locks took so much time that she did not arrive in Detroit until late in the fall just before navigation closed for the season.

Her stem was replaced the next spring and she was all shipshape when the Spanish-American war broke out and the Michigan Naval Brigade volunteered for duty. This was the famous "millionaire" crew that was assigned to the U.S.S. "Yosemite" under Commander William H. Emory. The roster included two men destined later to become secretary of the navy. Truman H.Newberry and Edwin Denby. The chief boatswain's mate was Henry B. Joy. Dr. Burt R. Shurly was apothecary. The Jewetts, Ned and Harry, J. Walter Drake, Dr. Walter Parker, Joe Stringham, William H. Gage, John S. Newberry, F. T. Brodhead, William H. H. Hutton, Fred D. Standish, Muir B. Snow, Harry Russel, Paul Bagley, Cyrus Lothrop, Louis Wurzer, J. Farrand Lewis, Dr. Delos Parker, Strathearn Hendrie,Divie B. Duffield, John Beaumont, George Baker and George Oliver were among the other well-known men who comprised the ship's company. In fact, when the "Yosemite" sailed away to fight the Spaniards, she carried a goodly percentage of men who were destined to become famous and to make Detroit famous.

Since this is the story of the "Yantic" and not of the "Yosemite"--she is gone, too, by the way--we will not go into the details of the Detroit sailor's short but distinguished service in the Spanish-American war. Let it suffice to say that the "Yosemite" was very active and successful and that her crew drew prize money as a result of a most important capture in which she had to fight several Spanish gunboats.

When the Michigan Naval Brigade came back home, it once more established its base on the "Yantic" and from 1899 to 1907 that sturdy packet made a most comfortable floating home. In 1907, a larger ship was requested and the Navy Department sent the "Don Juan de Austria". She was one of the ships sunk by Dewey in Manila Bay,May 1, 1898, and was subsequently rebuilt at Hong Kong and brought t o New York by Captain Ward, an uncle of Lieut. Commander Brodhead.

When the "Don Juan de Austria" arrived, the "Yantic" was assigned to the Second Battalion of the Naval Brigade, with headquarters at Hancock. Meanwhile, about 1901, the old ship had been rebuilt at the Oades shipyard at the foot of Dubois Street. Her wheezy horizontal engine had been replaced by a fore and aft compound vertical power plant and her two small boilers by one large one. She also had been made a flush deck ship with two pole masts, which

revision didn't improve her looks but gave additional room.

She remained at Hancock until the World War, when she was ordered to Great Lakes, Ill., where she rendered excellent service in training the thousands of recruits that passed through that station.

When Lieut. Commander Brodhead returned from active service in the latter part of 1919, he was delegated to reorganize the naval militia in Michigan, a task that presented among other obstacles, the fact that no man could be put on active duty except afloat. As the "Don Juan de Austria" had gone to the Atlantic during the war and had not been reassigned to Michigan this state was without a ship and consequently could not comply with the requirements regarding duty afloat. In the emergency the "Yantic" was offered to the Detroit tars, if they would take the responsibility of bringing her back from Chicago.

This looked like a simple way out of the dilemma but it was not so simple as it seemed, as Lieut. Commander Brodhead was soon to learn. When he arrived in Chicago in the spring of 1920 he found that the "Yantic" had been laid up during the previous winter with her boiler full of water. The water had frozen and cracked the tubes so badly that extensive repairs were imperative. The state of Michigan was paying the crew that was assigned the the task of bringing back the ship but it was perfectly apparent to Lieut. Commander Brodhead that this generosity would not last as long as the repairs would take. Accordingly he decided that the only thing to do was to get the ship in commission so that her men would be on "active duty afloat."

Since it was out of the question to raise steam to turn her engines, he determined to tow her and for this purpose borrowed the converted yacht "Hawk" from the Great Lakes station. Both the crippled "Yantic" and the "Hawk" were greatly undermanned but the situation was desperate from Lieut. Commander Brodhead's point of view so he decided to shove off and trust in the luck of a sailor. The "Yantic" had a leaky donkey engine to furnish steam for steering and running her pumps, but this contrivance was so inefficient due to the condition of its boiler that it could not do both things at once. It was a case of steering or pumping and the "Yantic" needed both.

This strange convoy of the little "Hawk" towing the helpless "Yantic" ran into a blow about as soon as it got outside of the Chicago breakwater. The "Yantic" proceeded to leak like a colander between wind and water. Every sea that hit her would empty a ton or so of water into her hold through her gaping seams. At intervals they would have to stop trying to steer her and pump to keep her from foundering. The firemen were so anxious to keep a good head of steam on the donkey engine that they overloaded the firebox and the grate bars gave way entirely at one time, so the fire had to be drawn while the grate was repaired with bricks.

The "Yantic's" luck held with her, however, and she rode out the gale, thanks to the heroic efforts of her crew which nailed canvas patches over her sides from small boats as she rolled in the trough of the gale. In the Straits of Mackinaw, she ran afoul of another blow and this time they had to plug up her seams with clothing, shoes, hats or anything else that would stop the Niagara that was coming through with every wave. They got into St. Ignace somehow and patched her up well enough to make the rest of the trip.

Things went fairly well from St. Ignace to the ship canal at St. Clair Flats when the "Hawk" broke down and, with her tow, drifted entirely through that congested channel, tieing up about 10 miles of shipping and causing much profanity and whistling on the freighters that were delayed. They got the "Hawk" fixed up finally and after some five days of battling the elements managed to stagger into Detroit.

The "Yantic's" boiler was repaired in time for her to do some cruising in 1920 and she was ready for a full season of service in 1921, in which summer she made seven cruises, covering an aggregate of about 11,000 miles. In 1922 the U.S.S. "Dubuque," a gunboat built for South American waters, was assigned to Detroit and the "Yantic's" active service was over forever. She was tied up at the foot of Townsend Avenue adjoining the Naval Reserve Armory and was used as a heating plant for that building and for the "Dubuque" during the winter months, an arrangement that was more economical than using the "Dubuque's" boilers would have been.

For some seven years the old ship dozed at her dock dreaming of the days when all the world knew her. Then on the night of October 22 she gave up the ghost. Three men were sleeping on her the night she died. Chief Machinist's Mate Nelson was one of these. He awoke to find that his hand was in cold water and when he got up to see what it was all about, he found that the water was knee deep on the berth deck. By the time he had made his way to the companionway it was up to his armpits. He awakened the other men who were sleeping on the gun deck and all of them were able to make their way to the dock before the "Yantic" settled into the mud with a gurgle. The water was up level with the main deck when she finally came to rest.

There she remained until ground was filled for the Brodhead Naval Armory when her bones were covered with many tons of earth. They salvaged her machinery and other things that had value, except for the loot that the vandals got shortly after she went down. There is no visible sign of her today. The binnacle for her steering compass is in the Museum of Great Lakes History, and a few other items are still in and around Detroit in the hands of private collectors.

Nobody regreted her passing more than Lieut. Com. Brodhead. He was an apprentice seaman when she came out here in 1897 and he rose from that rank to be her commander years later.

Among the interesting relics taken from the "Yantic" are two sets of hammock hooks from her captain's cabin. Obviously, one does not ordinarily find hammock hooks in such a place as this and the story of how they got there is one of the many interesting chapters in her history. Years ago when she was on a tropical station smallpox broke out among the crew. It was impossible to get the victims to a shore hospital so her commander, the late "Fritz" Hyerman, voluntarily gave over his quarters to be used as a temporary sick bay where the patients might be isolated. The hammock hooks will be presented to his son, Fred Hyerman, as a memento of a gallant act.

So ends the story of the "Yantic" after 65 years of service to her country. She probably had cruised 2,000,000 miles in her time and she had earned her rest.

U.S.S. YANTIC

This picture shows the Yantic as she appeared after the changes mentioned on the front cover. Further alterations were made later and when she finally settled to the bottom two much smaller masts had been installed in place of the lofty ones shown here, making her only a hulk of the once-proud barque, and able sailer, of nearly a century ago.

B O O K C O R N E R

MICHIGANIA

"The boats were our carriages--the wind our steeds."

Such were the thoughts if the young child who many years later was to write her memoirs as ELIZABETH WHITNEY WILLIAMS in A CHILD OF THE SEA. Having spent most of her life on Mackinac and Beaver Islands she has added much authentic materials to the history of this region.

From the launching of the ship"Eliza Caroline", which was built at the Isle of St.Helenaby her father during her childhood to her own experiences in later years as keeper at Little Traverse Light House on Harbor Point, we become better acquainted with many historical characters of this era. She lived on Beaver Island during the rule of King James Strang and his Mormon Colony. At the height of Strangs rule they were forced to move to the mainland. Later, after his death, they returned to the Island. She names many of the owners, captains and crews of various Lake boats.

This edition was reprinted in 1954 for the Henry Allen Family and they are to be commended for making such a nice item available for Michigan history collectors.

(Ruth Rouse,R.F.D 2,Eaton Rapids)

JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting of the Guild will be held at the Detroit Historical Museum at 7-30 P.M. on Friday the 27th.

DUES

Dues will remain at $3.00 per year, payable January 1st. Prompt payment will enable us to shape our budget so we will know early in the year what we can do to futher our aims.

HISTORY OF LEATHEM D. SMITH SHIPBUILDING CO.

By Suzanne Smith

Known throughout marine circles of the United States as the "Biggest Little Shipyard on the Great Lakes," the Leathem D. Smith Shipbuilding Company's growth and accomplishments have been often described as outstanding and a remarkable tribute to American organization and workmanship.

Its achievements in emergency shipbuilding programs have been recognized offically by the government of the United States. The firm and its nearly 5,000 employees have been awarded the highest honors of the Navy and the Maritime Commission. They received the Army-Navy "E" on March 10, 1942, for excellent production and delivery of PC subchasers, and on July 10, four months later to the day, they were awarded the coveted "M" award by the United States Maritime Commission for construction and delivery of a fleet of nine coastal cargo vessels which were built for Great Britain under the lend-lease act. These awards were given to the firm and its employees not merely for building ships ----- they were awarded for building ships better and faster than the average.

The Leathem D. Smith Shipbuilding Company did not begin with the Shipbuilding program of World War II---- nor with the shipbuilding program of World War I.

The story of the firm which has contributed greatly to the prestige and success of the port of Sturgeon Bay can be traced back to the days before the Civil War, when at Norwich, Connecticut, an orphaned lad of 14 was left with the responsibility of providing for himself and a younger sister. He was a native of Stowe, Massachusetts, born June 21, 1842.

The youth, Thomas H. Smith, one of the founders of the company, had only a common school education, but, possessing unusual mechanical abilities, he successfully supported himself and his sister as a machinist's apprentice. His first independent business venture in the East was manufacture of 90,000 pairs of ice skates.

Family records reveal at the outbreak of the Civil War young Smith enlisted with the Federal army and saw action in the battle of Bull Run where he was wounded. As a result of this wound, he received a medical discharge.

Newly released from the service he sought new adventures in the West, as many men of his time were doing. He came to Green Bay where he secured employment in a machine shop, owned by an uncle, J. L. Whitney. However, young Smith was not satisfied with working for someone else. He longed for an independent business.

Lumbering was the chief industry of that era, and particularly so in the region of Green Bay, and it was only natural that his interests were in this field. The opportunity presented itself when by chance he overheard a mill owner relating his troubles to his uncle in 1867.

The mill owner was complaining that his machinery was falling apart because of the lack of a capable man with the knowledge to repair it. So anxious was the mill owner that he stated if he could find someone with mechanical ability and a small amount of money he would consider giving him a half interest in his business.

Tom Smith realized he was the man for the job, despite the fact his savings were not very large. He interrupted the conversation and told the mill owner he was interested in his proposition. Arrangements were made to look over the mill, and a few days later he set out on the 10-mile hike to New Franken.

As he neared New Franken, he was met by John Leathem, the mill owner, being pursued by a mob of angry men. As soon as Leathem recognized Smith, he shouted to the men that Smith was the man who would pay their long due wages.

Although he had not seen the mill, the incident led Smith to believe the company must be very near the bankrupt stage. However, the trap John Leathem had set for him

convinced Smith that here was a clever business partner, so he agreed to pay the men their wages.

Seated on a tree stump, Tom Smith wrote checks covering the angry workers wages, and although no written agreement had been made, it was on that tree stump in 1867 that the firm of Leathem & Smith was established. So began the combination that was to last 25 years, and during the quarter century was to branch off into many different fields. That the partnership was a success from the very beginning was proven by the fact that the mill was quickly restored to working order and flourished from the minute the firm was established.

But the lumbering business was not a stable industry, and after a few years, the timber was exhausted and the firm was forced to seek a new location in which to carry on.

Red River near Green Bay, the partners discovered, was a booming lumbering district, the principal mill being operated by Charles Scofield, the father of H. C. Scofield, later owner of the H. C. Scofield Company hardware store at Sturgeon Bay. Through an oversight, the elder Scofield had purchased only enough timberland for his immediate needs, and the firm of Leathem & Smith proceeded to acquire all available timberland in the surrounding neighborhood. Soon the Scofield land was bare of timber and the mill found it advisable to make a deal with Leathem and Smith.

A three-way partnership was formed under the name of Scofield & Company and the new firm continued to flourish at Red River for several years. It was at Red River that Thomas Smith met Anna Daley, a school teacher who was visiting there. They were married in December 1874 and became the parents of seven children, one of them being Leathem Daley Smith, later head of the company, who was born at Sturgeon Bay September 7, 1886.

Thomas H. Smith came to Sturgeon Bay in 1870 and began the foundation of his business career in Door County. The firm of Scofield & Company transferred its principal interests to this city in 1875 because it was a location in which the lumber business could continue to thrive.

On April 13, 1876, the Door County Advocate reported that "Scofield & Company's new mill is a hive of industry, many busy men reducing into order the chaos of shafts, pullies, cogs, and timbers. The arch is completed and as soon as the stack is raised that portion of the mill will be ready for work. A careful inspection of the mill and an explanation from Mr. Smith of the way the different machinery will be arranged convinces us that it will be one of the most convenient mills in the country for turning out work."

The necessity of having tugs and timber-carrying vessels to supply the mills and transport the lumber---no railroad came to Sturgeon Bay until 1894---led naturally to the firm's investment in marine equipment.

Although the Scofield family later came to Sturgeon Bay, Mr. Scofield at that time remained at Red River. On August 6, 1881, he withdrew from the partnership,which then began advertising as Leathem & Smith. Mr. Scofield died October 20, 1891.

The business prospered, and soon had enough capital to invest in other enterprises. The partners in the next few decades after 1875 were interested in several mercantile, milling, and marine business. They became the owners of lumber boats, scows, and tugs built the first bridge across Sturgeon Bay, operated the first telephone line to Death's Door, founded the Hunsader Machine Company, and established a quarry business. Various firm names were used from time to time for the different activities.

In 1886, the Leathem & Smith tug fleet included the Thomas H. Smith, John Leathem, W. C. Tilson, and the Tornado, the latter having been the first acquired. The "personnel" of the fleet changed from time to time, In 1890 it included the Thomas H. Smith, George Nelson, John Leathem and Leathem D. Smith.

Marine news of the period was filled with references to these and other tugs. On July 26, 1890,

for example, the paper carried brief typical items stating: "The tug Leathem towed the barge Harry Johnson to South Chicago on Saturday night. The latter was loaded with ice," and "The tug L. D. Smith brought in a raft of logs from the west shore Sunday night. They will be converted into shingles."

Leathem & Smith then represented the Hart's line of steamers and the Goodrich Transportation Company. That a new era in marine activities had begun here was noted by the Advocate on September 13, 1890, when it reported:

"Another cargo of coal will be brought in from Cleveland for Leathem & Smith during the ensuing month. Time was, and not so very long ago either, that not a single ton of coal was used by the tugs on this bay, and now not far from 3,000 tons are annually sold and consumed by one firm."

Dealing in coal is one of the company enterprises which has continued up to the present, now being done by the Leathem D. Smith Coal Company with offices near the shipyard.

Sturgeon Bay's location made it a natural center for marine activities and Leathem & Smith were engaged in all phases of it except actual shipbuilding, in which others pioneered here. However, they rebuilt and refitted vessels of various kinds including their own craft, some of them virtually from the keel up. The Advocate of March 5, 1892 told of one such job:

"Capt. John Leathem is so busily engaged in supervising the repairs and alterations on the Pewaukee and so infatuated has he become that he hardly takes time to eat."

The telephone line had an obvious value in the business, giving the company connections with places from which news of marine disasters, then frequent, could be obtained. Located on the site of the shipyard's present machine shop, the Hunsader company did much work on ship parts and engines.

Mr. Leathem retired from active participation in the business in the early nineties and went to California where he spent the last years of his life. A new firm name, the Leathem & Smith towing and Wrecking Company, was announced on January 2, 1892, with John Leathem, Thomas H. Smith, and George Nelson listed as incorporators. Incorporated with capital of $100,000, the firm then owned two steam barges, four tugs, several schooners, barges, and lighters, and a complete wrecking outfit.

The new name was to be used from then on, through the first World War, for the marine enterprises of the Leathem and Smith families. Stationery of the company today gives 1892 as the date of establishment. The saw mill period was over by that year, but Leathem & Smith had acquired experience and equipment and continued to serve the area even though the original reason for the marine investment had expired.

Thomas Smith continued as the active head of the business until his death in his office on February 29, 1914, though after his son Leathem graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1909 the son took an increasing share of the responsibilities. The towing and wrecking company had built scows but never had attempted any self-propelled vessels. At the time Leathem completed his engineering course, the firm was planning to build its first tug.

In June 1909 the company had only one of its fleet of tugs left, having just sold the J.W. Bennett to the Lake Superior Towing Company. The news account went on to say that "There are no tugs regularly stationed at this port and only a couple of those craft are owned here."

The one tug remaining in the "Fleet" at that time was the Leathem D. Smith.

Eager to show his ability, Leathem asked permission to design and supervise construction of the new tug. Apparently he seemed a bit too certain of his ability in shipbuilding because his attitude irritated his father whose skepticism toward the benefits of a college education was often voiced.

When he'd ask his father for advice, he received such replies as "You went to college and should know all the answers," and "You're so much smarter than your dad who didn't have a college education, why ask him?" Thus, with very little direct encouragement Leathem Smith continued to build the John Hunsader named for the head Machinist and manager of the Hunsader Machine Company, until the elder Mr. Smith was forced to admit that a fine job had been done.

Work on the Hunsader started in the summer of 1909 at the foot of Liberty street adjoining the Hunsader machine shop. The building crew was small and equipment limited and progress was intermittent. The tug was launched in June 1910, only the workmen witnessing the event. With a length of 99.7 feet and a 1,500 horsepower engine recovered from the tug Kate Williams wrecked at Jackson Harbor, Washington Island.

The link between this first actual shipbuilding enterprise of the Smiths and the past was more than historical. On August 19, 1909, the Advocate reported that "The N. S. Washburn mill this week sawed out the oak and other logs belonging to L. & S. that had been recovered from the bottom of the bay where the timber had been boomed many years ago. The timber will be used in the construction of the hull of the new tug."

Like many tugs from this area, the Hunsader ended her career in Lake Superior waters.

Leathem became more and more active in the firm and purchased a quarter interest in the company from money he made salvaging the wreck of the steamer Panther in 1911. Until 1914 he engaged in breakwater contracting and small wrecking jobs. Thomas H. Smith in 1913 bought the quarter interest owned by Mrs. John Leathem, making him and his son sole owners of the business.

Following the death of the elder Mr. Smith, other members of the family who were living in California urged Leathem to forsake the declining business in Sturgeon Bay and go to the West Coast. He refused despite the fact that business conditions here were exceedingly adverse. The wrecking business was almost obsolete, the timber exhausted, and the stone business was not yet fully developed.

When the United States entered the conflict in 1917, the site of the present Smith shipyard had little on it except the already old Hunsader machine shop. Although Mr. Smith had constructed the tug John Hunsader here, he never had a real shipyard and facilities which he had were 10 years old. There was a decaying wharf, a retail coal business, and the shop, nothing more.

Yet so great was the need for ships of all kinds that when Mr. Smith went to Washington in 1918 he found it possible to get a contract for tugs even though he had no shipyard worthy of the name.An announcement published here June 14, 1918, said:

"A telegram from Leathem D. Smith of the Leathem and Smith Company, who has been in Washington, D. C. for the past week announced that he had practically closed contracts with the government for the building of six large tugs. Although Mr. Smith wired no particulars, his assistant, Frank Behringer, stated that the tugs would be of wood and would probably be of the type used to tow barges such as the Universal Shipbuilding Co. intends to build.

"The yards of the Leathem and Smith Co. will have to be greatly enlarged in order to build the boats. As soon as Mr. Smith returns from Washington preparations will be made to enlarge the company's yards near the John Hunsader machine shop."

It was disclosed later that when Mr. Smith first met the shipping board at Philadelphia they were without plans for the tugs and did not know what they wanted beyond a general idea of the size. Mr. Smith knew little about salt water ships, but while at Philadelphia he prepared a set of plans with the assistance of a naval architect and submitted them with an estimate of costs to the board.

Sturgeon Bay enjoyed a prosperous period due to the shipbuilding at Smith's and other yards, but a few

hundred employed contrasts so greatly with the thousands working here now that the following prediction in a 1918 news item is rather amusing:

"Our population will be greatly increased and Sturgeon Bay will surely be 'one big town.'"

Before actual construction could begin on the tugs, Mr. Smith had to install machinery, hire men, and was less than a month after receipt of the telegram from Washington that it was reported, on July 5, 1918, that "Work of laying the three keels of the 100-foot tugs to be built in the Smith yards was started this week, and a crew of 70 men are now employed there, 30 extra men going on the payroll Monday, and the crew will be increased to 150 as soon as the men can be secured.

"Two of the tugs will be built on the solid dock west of the Hunsader shops, and will be launched sidewise. The other keel is laid just north of the dock and will be an end launching."

Rush orders were sent for machinery including a beveled band saw, planer, air compressors, a Corliss engine, and work was started on a 25 by 75 foot mill on the west end of the blacksmith shop. Cabins taken from a lightship recently purchased were rebuilt to be used for a drafting room and tool house.

In September granting of a supplementary contract increasing the total number of tugs to be built to an even dozen was disclosed and the Door County Advocate said:

"The phenomenal growth of the Smith shipbuilding Company during the past two months has probably been equal to any on the Great Lakes during a like period and has been a factor in making Sturgeon Bay one of the recognized cities in the Northwest.

"Where but a few months ago there was only a machine shop, and a small pile of timber where a few men were employed in rebuilding a tug there now stands one of the most modern and compact shipbuilding plants to be found. A large sawmill has been equipped with modern machinery; big derricks now swing the timbers to different parts of the yards, from the big piles of timber which are being brought in by rail, and about 125 men are employed, receiving high wages."

On November 29, the news was that 40 skilled carpenters had been placed in Sturgeon Bay shipyards, following the partial closing of the Berger plant at Manitowoc. Meanwhile, of course, the war had ended, and the future of all shipbuilding contracts was in doubt. Preparations for finishing the tugs at Smith's yard continued. The dock was extended 360 feet to make room for more keels. Three weeks after the Armistice the first tug was launched. It was the Energy, which went down the ways on December 5, 1918.

"The first boat to be launched at the Leathem & Smith shipyard was slid into her native element Thursday forenoon at 11:30 o'clock. There was no special ceremony for the occasion, she simply being let go as soon as she was ready."

When the second tug, the Diligent, was launched December 16, the keel for the seventh was laid. The third launching of the Active, occurred January 4, 1919.

To deal with the ice which threatened to delay the launchings, an exhaust pipe was extended late in November 1918 from the engine room out to the water. That did not prevent ice forming, but it weakened and softened it so it could be broken.

Work continued on the tugs through the spring of 1919, though many other war industries were shutting down. Numbers of soldiers returning from camps and overseas found work in the yard, the total thus hired being given as about 60 in later accounts. Men who had been soldiers were retained as long as possible.

Launching of the first tug had been without ceremony, but for the fourth, at least, a large crowd gathered, whistles were tooted, and another keel was laid, on April 25, 1919.

By the time the fifth tug was launched, on June 1, the blow had fallen. Headlines reported that the government had issued a sweeping order which forced suspension of work

on the last three of the 12 tugs for which a contract had been granted. The keel had been cut out for the 11th tug, but nothing had been done on the 12th. Forty laborers were let out at that time, and the outlook was dark. The Advocate described it as "what may be the beginning of the end of the war-time shipbuilding boom" and said:

"The L. & S. yards have been one of the material factors in the prosperity of Sturgeon Bay during the past year. The company has had 200 men on the payroll and hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent for labor."

The obituary was a little premature, for activities at the yard continued. Much work remained to be done on the nine tugs which were to be completed for the government. The first tug, the Energy, was accepted September 8, 1919.

As late as October 17, 1919, it could be reported that "Extra men are being put on at the Smith shipyard and the company has a force of nearly 200 at work now."

The ninth tug was launched December 31, 1919. "It was an end launching and considerable difficulty had been experienced in getting the craft started down the ways, it having been hung up several days." This was a great contrast to the usual smoothness with which side launching were carried out.

Before the close of navigation in 1919 the Energy, Active, Diligent, and Bison were delivered. The Bullock, Ox, Bear, Burro, and Camel left in the summer of 1920. They were sold by the Emergency Fleet Corporation to private owners, and most of them are still working.

The tugs cost from $145,000 to $160,000 or about one tenth the cost of a PG boat of the type that was built in the Smith yard during World War II. They were not yet out of the yard when the company began accepting repair and rebuilding jobs. The boom was over, however,and prospects for steady business were not now any too bright.

"The fleet of nine tugs which were build by the local company for the government are now all owned by private companies and are among the few war craft that proved satisfactory for general use, and endurance." It was reported November 28, 1924. The Bear and Burro were then owned by the Cornell Steamboat Line of Kingston, N. Y.

Although activities at the Smith shipyard did not come to an abrupt stop at the end of World War I, shipbuilding was an overcrowded field and one in which a small company had difficulty competing in the postwar period unless it could find an exclusive patent or design.

Some repair jobs were obtainable in the winter months, but ship owners preferred to have the work done on the lower lakes where the vessels tied up at the close of navigation.

Leathem & Smith in the early days had turned to marine investments because their lumbering business made it necessary. At the end of World War I, the Smith company reversed the process and kept its shipyard alive by again tying it in with a local industry which had to ship its product by water.

This time it was the limestone cliffs rather than the forests which provided a basis for the Smith shipyards continued existence. A railroad was available, but stone of the type produced here is too cheap and bulky for rail freight.

Twenty years before, Thomas H. Smith had opened a quarry and in 1905 he built a crushing plant with the idea of using the waste product from the crib stone, but it operated only one year and was closed until 1911. Door county had had a stone industry of sorts for many years, and a number of Great Lakes breakwaters are built of material quarried here and transported by scows and barges.

Ordinary lake boats could not carry such stone economically and Leathem D. Smith knew that if he were to make anything of the quarry he would have to solve the transportation problem. Necessity as usual was the mother of invention, and the Smith self-unloading device resulted.

After futile efforts to finance a 3,000 ton stone carrying vessel of his own design which would have cost about $450,000 Mr. Smith considered remodeling bulk freighters. Many of them were idle in Great Lakes ports and could be bought for 50 or 60 per

cent of their value.

The Leathem & Smith Towing and Wrecking Company became the Leathem D. Smith Dock Company in 1920, and a separate firm was established to operate the quarry. Changes in the corporate set-up have been made from time to time since. For a period, Leathem D. Smith, Inc., a holding and operating company, controlled the dock company and steamship owning subsidiaries.

Regardless of this expansion into other fields and investment of outside capital in the companies, Mr. Smith's primary interest remained in Sturgeon Bay and the community retained an industry which might otherwise have moved away.

Self-unloading vessels had been built on the Great Lakes in small numbers since 1908, each being designed for that equipment when built, but no one considered it feasible to convert existing bulk freighters to self-unloaders. The cost was generally regarded as likely to excell that of building an entirely new ship, and the installation of the hopper type holds required for the old conveyor type unloader would reduce cargo capacity and raise the center of gravity, if the system were put in on top of the bottom frame of an old vessel.

The basic idea of the unloader which Mr. Smith patented is the employment of a mechanically operated scraper in a tunnel or tunnels running the length of the vessel's hold. Material falls into the tunnel through doorways on both sides and the scraper drags it along the smooth steel tunnel floor to a hopper which feeds a belt conveyor that in turn delivers the cargo to a boom conveyor which may be swung to port or starboard to unload the ship.

Compared with the other method of converting old boats, Mr. Smith's device increases the capacity 10 to 20 per cent and lowers the center of gravity, sometimes as much as two or three feet. From the standpoint of seaworthiness the scraper plan has the advantage of not interfering with the fitting of watertight doors in the tunnels at the bulkheads of these are required where the ship is unloading.

For years the self-unloading device was the principal factor in keeping the shipyard alive. The steamer Andaste was the first, in 1923. As early as 1924 the self-unloader fleet included the Andaste, Bay State, Clifton, and Fontana.

Whenever possible the inventor had the installation done in his own yard at Sturgeon Bay, but the demand of the self-unloader was international, both Canadian and British yards using the Smith patent. Mr. Smith went to England to supervise the work on the Valley Camp, a new self-unloader built at Newcastle for a Canadian in 1927.

Several of the unloaders were kept busy hauling stone produced at the quarry near Sturgeon Bay. The quarry was sold in 1927 and Mr. Smith's time was again devoted chiefly to the shipyard, which has always been first in his thoughts. One of the most unusual banquets ever held was served in the Smith shipyard in April 1936 aboard the 375-foot John McCartney Kennedy which had just been equipped with an unloading device.

Nearly 600 persons were guests of the Leathem D. Smith Dock Company at the banquet, which was held in the tunnels of the self-unloading system! Sturgeon Bay high school home economics girls served it at nine tables which were arranged end to end for nearly 250 feet. Several other tables were set up in the adjoining tunnel, and most of the places were occupied a second time. A dance followed the meal.

While concentrating on self-unloader jobs in the twenties, the yard received a number of other contracts for repair work and the building of steel derrick scows. Mr. Smith made changes from time to time in details of the self-unloader and in 1926 received patents for a modification for unloading of sand. He had observed that sand carrying boats had water in their holds with the sand. His device provided a means of de-watering it and increasing the pay load.

About 570 tons of steel were required to equip a 350-foot freighter with one of the unloaders and the materials then cost about $150,000.

During the three years preceding 1929 the payroll averaged a quarter of a million dollars from the first of January until the first of May, during which time about 250 men were employed (A few years later it was nearly that many every week!)

"One hundred more men were given employment at the Leathem D. Smith Dock Company's shipyard this morning, completing the crew of 300 men which will be employed there during the next four months. This is the largest crew of men that has been employed in the yard since work was completed on the late war contracts," the Door County Advocate reported December 16, 1927.

"When the riveters start work the ring of their hammers, heard throughout the city, will be pleasant music," the newspaper said. Now the chippers make the noise and actual music can be heard from the shipyard ----as the public address system broadcasts during lunch periods!

Some of the vessels converted to self-unloaders were over 400 feet long. By the spring of 1929 14 of the Smith self-unloaders had been installed, all but three of them at Sturgeon Bay. One of them had been installed in England, one at Montreal, and one at Lorain, Ohio.

The fourteenth went into a vessel which was designed specifically for service on the Chicago drainage canal so that it could go under the bridges. It was the Material Service, launched March 6, 1929, with Mrs. Leathem D. Smith as sponsor. Powered by two 350 horsepower Diesel engines operating twin screws, the new-type boat was 240 feet long, had a beam of 40 feet. Its capacity was 1,800 to 2,500 tons and it cost approximately $395,000.

Although it was a remarkable ship it had the unromantic assignment of hauling gravel between Joliet and Chicago on a 24-hour schedule. Much interest was exhibited in it by Chicagoans to whom it brought some relief from the delays due to opening of the many bridges for the passage of boats. Another advantage was the fact it was so low that the boom conveyor of another self-unloader could be swung over it and two boats unloaded simultaneously at the same dock.

Contracts continued to come to the Smith shipyard for some time after the 1929 stock market crash, but in a year or two the company began to feel the pinch. Occasional self-loader installations were ordered, but business on the Great Lakes was decreasing and there were more than enough ships available for the hauling jobs.

One of the few launchings at the yard between World Wars was that of the 77-foot motor ship Gilbert built for Alaskan service in the U. S. Geodetic Survey. It went into the water August 20, 1930. Another was that of the 86-foot lighthouse tender Cherry in 1931.

In 1934 after the last self-unloader had been equipped the business came to a stop. During a 15 year period in which American shipbuilding was at a virtual standstill, Mr. Smith had kept the Sturgeon Bay yard going more regularly than many such companies in the United States. Now he faced an uncertain future but managed to keep the property, little dreaming that the yard was yet to see its busiest years and employ two thousand men for every hundred who worked here in the first World War and postwar years.

EDITORIAL. (Cont'd. from Page 2)

No Chicago, no Detroit, no Buffalo, no Cleveland, no Toledo, and no Mesabi Range. The lumber of this region went to house the world, and built its bridges, and railroads, and the millions of farm homes in the areas where no trees grew. Sure, we would have gotten along somehow, but how long would it have taken us to reach our present stage of development, materially, without this region, and the men w h o turned its raw materials into comforts? America's present dominant position, even its existence, is due to the Great Lakes region, and the shipping industry that has grown up here. I ask you: Is this story worth saving? Do we not need a shrine wherein we may honor the men who have made this industry what it is, both those of the past, and those of the future, not to mention those of our own time?