

Telescope

An illustration in the top left corner shows several rolled-up blueprints or maps, with one unrolled to reveal a grid pattern and a small drawing of a ship or vessel. A telescope is also depicted, resting on the blueprints.

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MEMBERSHIP NOTES

We've received a fair response to the changes evident in the last issue of *Telescope*, and we thank those of you who took the trouble to call or drop us a line. It is difficult to work in a vacuum, and we often have to. We try to make your magazine better, and we usually think we succeed simply because we hear nothing contrary. However, this time we *know*. You looked at pages 44 and 45, with the old typeface on the left — and the new alongside — and you responded. This time you will find nothing with which to compare. This entire issue is done in the new style. Those who responded seemed to like the Helios type, and we agree. . .we think it is easier on the eyes, and that is how the bulk of future issues will be done. In the News section, last issue, we used "bullets" to head each entry. "Too many black dots," said one correspondent, so this time we return to the old three-dot leaders. No doubt there'll be other changes as we feel our way into this new method. We'll try something new, and you. . .or we. . .won't like it, so we'll try something else.

But the point remains, if we don't hear from you we won't know if we're pleasing you, or just ourselves. So, let us hear from you.

MEETING NOTICES

The next regular membership meeting is scheduled for May 19, *early to avoid Memorial Day weekend*. There is no meeting in July. In September we will meet at the Detroit Boat Club on the 15th for the Annual Dinner. The speaker will be Larry Coplin with underwater movies of Great Lakes shipwrecks. . .an exceptionally fine program. If you live in the metro-Detroit area you'll receive a mailing on this meeting. If you live *outside* the metro area and want to attend, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we'll include you in the mailing.

Business meetings will be held June 23 (election of officers) and August 25. Except for the dinner, all meetings are at the Dossin Museum at 8:00 PM.

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OUR COVER PICTURE. . . There is no indication of where, or when, this view of the *KELLEY ISLAND* was taken, but the old girl makes a pretty addition to the placid scene along a quiet stream, somewhere, in a never-to-be-repeated setting. The ship is featured in an article beginning on page 63.

A SANDSUCKER'S TALE

by
RICHARD GEBHART

About anything one could imagine happening to a Great Lakes vessel did happen to the small sandsucker steamer *Kelley Island*. She was, truly, a martyr in the chronicles of Lakes history.

Built by the American Ship Building Company at Lorain, Ohio, she was launched on June 14, 1914, and soon thereafter commenced her appointed purpose in life, sucking sand.

The first ten years passed unceremoniously, except in the eyes of her owners, the Kelley Island Lime & Transport Company. The company operated a sizable fleet of vessels; sand suckers, tugs and sand and gravel barges.

At first break of dawn, May 2, 1925, the *Kelley Island* was easing out from her dock in Sandusky, Ohio, her home port. She logged past the light at Marblehead at 6:10 AM, northbound for Point Pelee and the sand grounds. The weather was fresh and blustery and a fair breeze was setting off a gingery chop on Lake Erie, out of the nor'west. The *Kelley Island* carried a crew of sixteen, commanded by Captain William G. Slackford. It was his sixth year as the master of this ship, and his tenth with the company. Previous commands included the popular Cedar Point excursion steamers *R. B. Hayes* and *A. Wehrle, Jr.*, so he lacked no sailing experience on Lake Erie waters. The captain's son William A. was also employed by K. I. L. & T. as a steward on the boat. There was one other father-son

tandem, the Everetts; father Paul and son Morton, a fireman and deckhand respectively.

At approximately 8:30 that morning the sand sucker arrived at her destination, two miles to the south and west of Point Pelee. She dropped anchor and lowered her suction tube over the port side and began taking on her cargo.

A few hours later, the *John M. McKerchey*, the *Kelley Island*'s nearly identical sister-ship, completed loading and peeked out from behind Point Pelee. The people aboard the *McKerchey* noticed the *Kelley Island* carrying out her normal duties in apparent good order, and sailed on to Sandusky to unload.

Both *Kelley Island* and *McKerchey* had port-side suction apparatus, a single 16 inch tube passing through an 18 inch hole on their left bows. Oddly, the hole the pipe passed through was a scant three feet above their loaded water lines. Once the suction pipe was disconnected, a large steel plate was fitted over the 18 inch hole.

It was around 2:30 in the afternoon when the vessel's hopper was full and the boat could proceed to their company's dock at Cleveland, where her load was consigned.

Her boom was swung out to retrieve her suction pipe, lifting it from the water and allowing the tube to be removed by a crew in her hold. The steel plate would then be put in position over the hole and the trip to Cleveland begun.

The operation was carried out by four men, deckhands Curtis Brown and Alvey Martine, chief engineer Frederick Holder, and watchman Andrew Krause. The pipe was removed and to the astonishment of the four men in the hold, the hole was immediately assaulted by solid Lake Erie water in torrential volume. Rapidly, the ship took a list. The four worked frantically in attempts to replace the cover, but they were no match for the continuing watery onslaught and the list increased.

Topside, Captain Slackford, seeing the impending disaster, climbed back in the pilot house and sounded the general alarm. The whistle awakened three sleeping crewmen in the after cabin. The three had no sooner left their bunks when the steamer rolled completely over on her port side. In the desperate and ugly moments following the disaster, the crew began a dramatic struggle to regain the upturned hull, floating in the choppy seas.

Deckhands Clarence Bloomstrom and Morton Everett suffered the least. Bloomstrom scarcely got wet as the *Kelley Island* laid over and died and Everett quickly climbed aboard when the steamer completed her roll. Morton Everett's father, Paul, surfaced but once. He smiled as he saw his son safely atop the overturned boat. Then he sank forever with the smile on his face.

Of the four men in the hold trying to avert disaster, Brown and Krause were able to kick free of the wreckage. Martin and Holder were never seen again. The timely alarm saved the lives of Nicholas Rennard and William Loveridge, and in a sense Paul Everett, too. It allowed the senior Everett to smile at his death.

Captain Slackford, too, surfaced only once. Survivors say he shouted, "Oh my God!" before he sank. They also noted that his head was bleeding; apparently he was struck by the boom as the ship capsized.

In the frigid Lake Erie waters, Brown, Loveridge, Bennard, Krause, Scott Petherbridge, wheelsman, and engineer William Mayer fought for their lives. Krause was able to swim to the stern of the *Kelley Island* where he grabbed hold of the propeller, but he too was too exhausted to swim any further, and too weak to climb aboard the exposed hull, he clung where he was.

Some 45 minutes later there occurred

what would save most of the exhausted swimmers. Young Curtis Brown sighted a floating rope and swam to retrieve it. Securing it, he swam to Krause, still clenched to the steamer's screw. Krause then passed the rope to Bloomstrom, atop the overturned hull. Slowly, the men in the water were pulled aboard the steel island. Just as the rope was about to be thrown to William Mayer, he slipped beneath the water.

The seven men aboard the wreck were all Lake Erie would spare that day. Nine men perished with the steamer, including Captain Slackford's son and Thomas Moran. They apparently never escaped the ship's galley. Also drowned were first mate Oley Kriss and watchman Roland Will. Like Martin and Holder, they were never seen.

While the seven men huddled for warmth on the overturned boat they were passed by three large steamers and a tug. One of the freighters passed so close, the survivors reported, they could see men walking on deck. Rescue came later in the afternoon when the small Canadian fishing tug, *Flossie B.* saw their plight. The seven men were taken on board the tug and transported to the Point Pelee Lighthouse where shelter was given. After the keeper contacted the K. I. L. & T. Company, a company tug, the *Fitzgerald*, was sent to bring the survivors back to Sandusky.

Curtis Brown was immediately hailed by survivors for his lifesaving actions when he recovered the floating rope. All rescued from the water agreed they could not possibly have lasted much longer. So weak was the wheelsman, Petherbridge, he sank his teeth into the savior rope and pulled aboard the wreck.

Over the next several days, which eventually would stretch out to become weeks, the moribund task of recovering the dead began. Captain Slackford's body was the first to be recovered, on the third of May. The next day his son and Thomas Moran were recovered by divers. A double funeral was held on May 7th for the Slackfords from their residence in Sandusky. By summer's end, all but one of the bodies were recovered, the exception being Frederick Holder.

By all standards, *Kelley Island* was a young ship with many servicable years remaining. A salvage effort was decided upon almost immediately.

On May 18, Reid Wrecking Company, of

Sarnia, Ontario was awarded the contract. Reid tugs *Manistique* and *Smith* were assigned the task and departed for Point Pelee.

It was soon discovered that *Kelley Island's* superstructure—such as remained intact—was imbedded in Lake Erie's floor, and her hull was completely filled with water. Given those conditions, righting her on the spot was out of the question. To raise the steamer, holes were drilled in the hull and air compartments. Air was then pumped in, forcing the water out. On the 28th of May, she was afloat!

Thomas Reid realized by then what a major undertaking he had accepted. On the 4th of June he announced he would need more time to right the ship. His estimate was two weeks to twenty days added time.

Nine days later the *Manistique* was successful in towing the steamer, still upside-down, near shore off Leamington, Ontario. Now in position to be righted, a plan had to be drawn. Reid went back to Sarnia and to the resting place of a former wooden steamer, *Maplegulf*, sunk many years earlier. This derelict hulk was raised and towed to the salvage site. She was then placed about 100 yards from the overturned *Kelley Island*, and once again sunk. Engines and winches were placed aboard the *Maplegulf* and a series of two-inch steel cables were run from the winches to the *Kelley Island*. Divers then ran the cables around the hull and the engines were started on attempts to roll the steamer over. Twelve times over a period of weeks the effort failed, machinery failed, cables broke, and once a four inch beam the wrecking crew had the pulleys attached to, snapped, catapulting the pulleys right through the hull of the *Maplegulf*, and taking the whole end of one wall with them. If all this wasn't enough to try their souls, bad weather forced postponement of work on many days.

Captain Charles D. Brown of the *Manistique*, when interviewed by the *Sandusky Register* said, "I have sailed Lake Erie for a good many years, but I have never seen such steady winds from the south and west as we've had since we started work."

On August 12th, another attempt was begun. Slowly, she responded and by nightfall was well up on her sides. Work was suspended until next day, and a crew kept watch over her all night, fully expecting her to lurch back over and expose her bottom again. Much to their joy, 13



J.B.II engaged in rehabilitation work on South Breakwater, Muskegon, Michigan, in 1968.

Photo courtesy S. J. ANDRE

would prove to be *Kelley Island's* lucky number for, on August 13, and on the 13th try, she was successfully righted. If ever there was an ebb in superstition on the part of Great Lakes sailors, great credit must go to the salvage of the *Kelley Island*.

Pumping was continued once she was righted and works of various nature were undertaken to get her in shape for the tow across the lake to Lorain where repairs would be made. On August 27th, in tow of the big tug *Manistique*, the *Kelley Island* arrived at Lorain. Her machinery and boilers were in good shape but her superstructure was gone, so new cabins, fore and aft, had to be built.

Reconstruction of *Kelley Island* took less than half the time required to right her. On October 17th, Captain T. J. Waage was given clearance papers and the *Kelley Island* departed Lorain, once more to resume her task of sucking sand on the western Lake Erie basin.

As nearly as can be determined, the *Kelley Island* was returned to Lorain at the end of the 1929 season for further refurbishment. She was lengthened to 179 feet, an increase of 24 feet. At the same time, a new derrick and clam bucket were installed just abaft her forward



The J.B.II laying 48" pipe in Grand Traverse Bay. The tending tug is Bultema's South Haven.

Photo courtesy S. J. ANDRE

quarters. Perhaps the most significant change was in her sand-sucking apparatus. Her suction pipe was mounted in a special housing on her cargo deck, near the newly-added derrick.

(A few days after the ship re-entered service in October, 1925, Mrs. Oley Kriss, wife of the first mate, filed suit in Toledo District Court. She sought \$50,000 in damages, claiming negligence on the part of the company for allowing the ship to operate because of the shallow free-board between the suction-pipe hole and her loaded water line. Whatever settlement was made, Mrs. Kriss apparently won her case.)

In the winter of 1955, the Kelley Island Lime and Transport Company dissolved, and the fleet vessels were absorbed by the Erie Sand and Gravel Company, of Erie, Pennsylvania. A trio of ships were involved, the *Kelley Island*, *Hydro* and *Rockwood*, all self-propelled sand suckers.

Both *Hydro* and *Rockwood* entered service for their new owner, but not the *Kelley Island*. Her lines remained fast to her new Erie dock. Her end might have seemed to have arrived, but there re-

mained tasks for her.

New life came to the resting steamer when, on February 1st of 1956, agreement between Erie Sand and Gravel and Construction Aggregates Corporation was reached.

Construction Aggregates had been working on a major dredging job in the Saginaw Bay area throughout the navigation season. Their lone steamer, *American*, was not enough to complete the job, so the company purchased *Kelley Island*.

When the project was completed, the *Kelley Island* was sailed up and over the tip of Michigan to Grand Haven, where she was laid up at the Nebring Coal Dock there. While in lay-up, the steamer was placed in the hands of William Dawes, a Construction Aggregates foreman. He was asked to contact a boiler man to clean her fire tubes and the back head of her boiler, and treat them against rust.

Time passed, but no job came for the *Kelley Island*. In the light of such, the company decided to place the steamer on the scrap market. Mr. Dawes had a slip

dug on company property in the Saginaw Bay where the boat was to be moved on a temporary basis.

Her time berthed on Saginaw Bay was a time of indignity for the *Kelley Island*.

Windows and deadlights were smashed and anything not fastened—and some things that were—were stolen from her. When the company came to her rescue and moved her back to Grand Haven, it wasn't a moment too soon.

In September, 1959, the *Kelley Island* was sold to Bultema Dock & Dredge Co, of Muskegon, Michigan, who dispatched a tug to Grand Haven to lead her into the final chapter of her life. She was taken to Bultema's Manistee, Michigan yard where her boiler, engine and machinery were removed.

On January 14, 1960, the *Kelley Island* was towed down lake to Muskegon and lashed to the Bultema dock there.

It was at about this time that I first saw the *Kelley Island*. At that time the Bultema yard was but a good stone's-throw away from the Mart Dock where the *Milwaukee Clipper* moored. I was a kid of about age six, and why I remember the boat is beyond me. I do remember that it seemed each time I saw her she looked smaller.

The process of reducing *Kelley Island* to a barge was done at the Muskegon yard, and three years were consumed in doing the work which consisted of stripping her down and shortening her length. In 1963 she entered service for Bultema as the *J. B. II*, a whirley spud barge with cat crane.

She returned to Manistee in escort of a Bultema tug where she did her first chore, dredging the Manistee River. Before leaving Manistee, much later, she was also involved in construction of a double leaf bascule bridge on Maple Street over the Manistee River.

Her active years with Bultema were between 1963 and 1966. Before returning to Muskegon to work on the South breakwall in 1966, she had built the breakwater at Grielickville, Michigan, and a major job in Traverse City.

Bultema was contracted by the City of Traverse City to lay some 4,000 feet of pipe in East Bay of Grand Traverse Bay. The *J. B. II* was selected to work on the project of laying the 48-inch pipe.

On September 9, 1966, the *J. B. II* was back in Muskegon where the breakwall project beckoned. Wave action and cur-

rents take a toll on the cement fingers, and it becomes necessary to replace stone from time to time. Massive concrete and stone slabs were replaced at varying intervals in the south breakwall.

Time was catching up with the *J. B. II*. She took one more name change in April, 1969. She was dubbed *Ohio* by Bultema and soon performed her final project for them, engaged in minor intake pipe work at the site of the Palisades Nuclear Power Plant near South Haven, Michigan. So ended the career of the former *KELLEY Island*.

She was then laid up where she remains today, at Bultema's Muskegon Lake yard. Pulled up bow-to-bow, separated by a small scow, with the carferry *Grand Rapids*. There is a small, makeshift steel grate bridge boarding the *Ohio* at her squared-off stern.

I boarded her one day in the summer of 1976. Time had taken her authority to gather sand, but not dirt and debris. Her deck was choked with corroded cans and bits of oiled hawser. Just abaft her remaining forward cabin, two saplings were growing, showing every intent to grow even higher—for as much as the deck of the former sandsucker would allow.

Up in the bow, I climbed a ladder to her forecastle deck and glanced down her stem. Her name, *Ohio*, was faded; her green paint cracked and buckled. I brushed aside cobwebs and checked into that remaining cabin, which apparently served as her master's quarters. Despite the totally neglected condition it betrayed signs of having once been finely appointed. The oak paneling still appeared in good shape, and I recall there being a broken desk and likewise the same of bedsprings.

When I think of *Ohio*, I think more in terms of *Kelley Island*, a steel monolith that should be given to me—if I but had back yard enough to keep her. I feel like she is mine. When I was walking her deck, in that snug little inlet on Muskegon Lake, however, all I could think about was nine men in 1925. ☆

The Author wishes to acknowledge, with thanks, the contribution of the following persons to his efforts in tracing the story of the *Kelley Island*. To each his sincere thanks: Harry K. Goodman, marine manager, Erie Sand SS Company; Dr. Richard Wright, N. W. Ohio Research Center; S. J. Andre, president, Bultema Dock & Dredge Company; William Dawes, retired Construction Aggregates foreman; Mrs. Steinbrenner, librarian, Sandusky Public Library; Mrs. Joyce Wilkins, librarian, Whitehall Public Library; Mrs. James R. Barker, Librarian, *Sandusky Register*; David Sensibar, vice president, Construction Aggregates; and Vicki A. Gebhart, typist. ☆

AN OLD SAILOR REMEMBERS The H. M. PELLATT



Pesha photo/DOSSIN MUSEUM

As related to the Editor
of *Telescope* by
WALTER E. BECKER

□ *Editor's note: From time to time we get from a member a letter we feel should be shared, and what follows is an example of what we mean. The writer is member Walter E. Becker who celebrated his 90th birthday on February 21st of this year. Thanks, Walter, for sharing with us your wonderful memory. REL ★*

Dear Editor:

Something said the other day about the old canallers got me to thinking about the time that I served as an oiler on the *H. M. Pellatt* in 1908. The postcard of the "Cornwall Canal and Bridge disaster" shows why I spent only a short while on this boat. The *Pellatt* was ready to leave Montreal in the afternoon when the canal dissappeared in the early morning. No boat could get up the lakes until the canal was repaired, so I got fired and had to pay my own way back to Detroit.

Homer Moody, who wrote the card on July 7, 1908, and I had taken a short steam engineering course at the YMCA. We also had been working for the Great Lakes Engineering Works on Rivard and Atwater streets, in Detroit. I was a machine shop apprentice at \$1.00 per 10-hour-day. Homer was a helper.

Now I don't remember how Homer got this job on a Canadian boat, but he did. One

afternoon he visited the machine shop and told me to get my overalls off and get my tools together as I was going sailing. In a short time I was on my way to Windsor. I must have told my mother, but I can't now remember how I got word to her.

The *H. M. Pellatt* carried package freight upbound to Fort William and Port Arthur, returning down with 50,000 bushels of wheat. We were upbound when I became the second oiler at \$37.00 per month, working a six hour on-six off shift. Downbound we made no stops except at Kingston to pick up a pilot for the St. Lawrence River. Upbound we stopped at many places to pick-up and deliver freight. It seems to me I remember we picked up a good load of beer and liquor.

At Fort William a real drink of whiskey was cheaper than ginger ale in those days.

A few remarks about the engine and equipment on the *Pellatt*. She had a triple expansion engine with an entirely different handling gear. The throttle valve was a big screw-valve. Along side of this screw valve was a slide valve connected by a lever, but it was never used. Homer and I asked an oiler from another boat of the same line what it was for, as they had one that was used. Using it one man could

handle the engine. The reverse was a small steam engine with a big hand-wheel. To reverse, you turned on the steam when the eccentric links got near the right position, then you turned off the steam and put your back up against the flywheel to stop it. On the *Pellatt* it took two men to handle the engine.

The main bearing of the walking beam that operated the so-called air pumps, plus boiler feed and cooler pumps, was not part of the column, but a bracket held to the column by six studs with nuts. There was a movement of this bracket with every revolution of the engine. These studs had sheared off a few trips before I got aboard. On the electric generator engine the governor didn't work, and before you could turn off a circuit you'd have to shut down the steam. The boat had only two engineers. The chief was an old man while the second was young, did all the repair work, was our boss, and had no faith in the old man.

The boat didn't have a complete double bottom. Where the steel plate stopped in the hold I never managed to learn, as I was only down there a few hours one morning. On that occasion I was helping to clean out the suction line. The line was a four-foot cast iron pipe bolted together. The second engineer and us two oilers went down to the bottom tank through a manhole in the boiler room. There was a manhole open in the hold. We would disconnect the pipes and take them out into the cargo hold to clean out the wheat. After a few hours of work the second engineer gave me orders to go to the engine room and see what the chief was

doing—fearing he might drown us. I got out through the cargo hold and as I got into the passageway to go below, I ran into the watchman.

"There is no water going in the forward peak."

"Who did you give the order to?"

"The old man, in the engine room."

Immediately I knew that there was trouble, as I knew the chief did not know his valves.

Before I had a chance to close the valve the chief had opened, the second engineer came roaring into the engine room, raising hell because I was "drowning" them!

No chance to explain! I was the man with his hand on the valve, and water was coming out of the manhole we had entered in the morning.

Food on the *Pellatt* was as horrible as any I've ever had to eat. While we were in Montreal we visited other boats on the line and sampled their midnight lunch. Believe me, we never had *anything* like they did.

Once we got a chance to visit Toronto for a few minutes, and while there I bought what was supposed to be a cheap Swiss watch. It turned out to be Russian, and not very good. I also remember buying a pair of shoes in Montreal that practically disappeared the first time I got them wet. I then bought a pair of Douglas shoes that gave me the only corn I ever had. Got them in Cleveland, and I'll always remember Cleveland—I've still got the corn!

Sincerely,
Walter E. Becker



CORNWALL CANAL AND BRIDGE DISASTER

Photo from Author

The Life and Times of The BESSEMER FLEET

(This is the second and concluding installment
of a two-part article begun in our last issue.)

by
GORDON PRITCHARD BUGBEE

For the second year in a row, the ore boats shipped ten million tons down the lakes during the season of 1896. This was three times the ore carried ten years before. A third of this tonnage was Mesabi ore, and another quarter Gegobic, both being ranges dominated by the Rockefeller mines.

The unhappy shipowners beheld a year of near-record cargoes in which their earnings were pared about as thinly as in any depression year. As the season advanced, production in the mines slowed down. By July, the "wild" rate on carrying ore down the lakes from Duluth tumbled to 60¢ per ton. This was less than half of what it had been the previous autumn. The smaller ships went into ordinary at midseason, rather than operate at a loss. The vesselmen fell to murmuring that Rockefeller was the cause of their plight—even before any of the big new Bessemer 400-footers were in commission. Besides his Bessemer boats and his whaleback stock, he was said to own a tenth interest in the Minnesota Iron Fleet. Clearly he would soon squeeze out all the independent ships, just as everybody knew his Standard Oil octopus had strangled the independent oilmen not so many years before.

In the midst of this slump, the Agreement between Rockefeller and Carnegie providing low cost ore to Carnegie Steel was made public. Now the vesselmen knew they were really in trouble. Rockefeller and Carnegie together would make

cheaper steel than anybody else could produce, and they would drive the other mills out of business. Then there would be but one market for iron ore and one big fleet to carry it all. The future of independent ore ships seemed bleak.

The dozen new Bessemer freighters, all 400-footers, could carry ore economically on earnings that would bankrupt the largest ships built ten years before. Even with the four smaller Bessemer whalebacks added in, the Bessemer fleet could average 5,200 tons of ore per ship per trip. This was a quarter more than for the average Minnesota fleet freighter, and half again more than for the average steel Hanna freighter. It was twice that for a hypothetical average ore boat in a more typical fleet, the Inter-Ocean fleet. There were five wooden or composite Inter-Ocean freighters built in the 1880s and one of steel, *Maryland* of 1890. (The latter had been the largest lake bulk freighter when new, and had her engines nearly amidships, like several other large ore ships of the early nineties.)

These cargo capacities assume that a Bessemer freighter had ample water under her keel to float her just as deeply as she could safely ride. As late as 1896 few lake ships abided by the limits of the Plimssoll marks. It was not just because, as one crusty old Detroit shipowner theorized, "Sailors are paid to take their chances." The St. Marys and lower Detroit Rivers and the St. Clair Flats were too shallow to satisfy any but the smaller lake ships.



The Bessemer barge JOHN A ROEBLING appears here with her original rigging.

McDonald Coll. / DOSSIN MUSEUM

The freighters of the early nineties and before were designed for channels of fifteen-foot depth. The Bessemer flagship *Sir Henry Bessemer* was designed to carry only 4,200 tons of ore in a fifteen-foot channel, but she would carry 6,100 tons if she was allowed to draw eighteen feet.

In October, 1896, the new wooden Pickands-Mather freighter *Appomattox* passed down the St. Marys River and through Sailors Encampment loaded to 16'-4". She was testing the progress of a major channel campaign of the nineties, since a stray boulder left in the channel bed would hurt her planking less than it would a steel plated hull. Up at the Soo the new Poe Lock, opened two months earlier, was part of this work. Planned ten years earlier to hold four of the largest ships of the day, in 1896 it would hold only one; ten years later, the largest ship couldn't use the Poe Lock when laden. When the dredging was done in 1900 a channel twenty feet deep was ready all the

way down the lakes.

Now the shipowners thought all the benefit of deeper channels went to Rockefeller. Why build a 400-footer if Bessemer boats took all the ore? The big ships couldn't live on grain trade, for who could regularly sell 200,000-bushel cargoes in Buffalo? Besides, grain elevator docks were too short. As the new ships were launched during 1895, few new keels were laid down in their place.

Two of the new keels were for Mr. Rockefeller. In 1897 the Globe Iron Works delivered the barges *W. LeBaron Jenney* and *Sidney G. Thomas*. Four more new Bessemer ships came out the next year. One was the last of the whalebacks, compromised with a conventional bow. Appropriately, it was named *Alexander McDougall*. At the Wheeler Yard in West Bay City were the steamer *Samuel F. B. Morse* and the barges *John Fritz* and *John A. Roebling*. One Saturday night in May, 1898, Wheeler missed a payroll; the

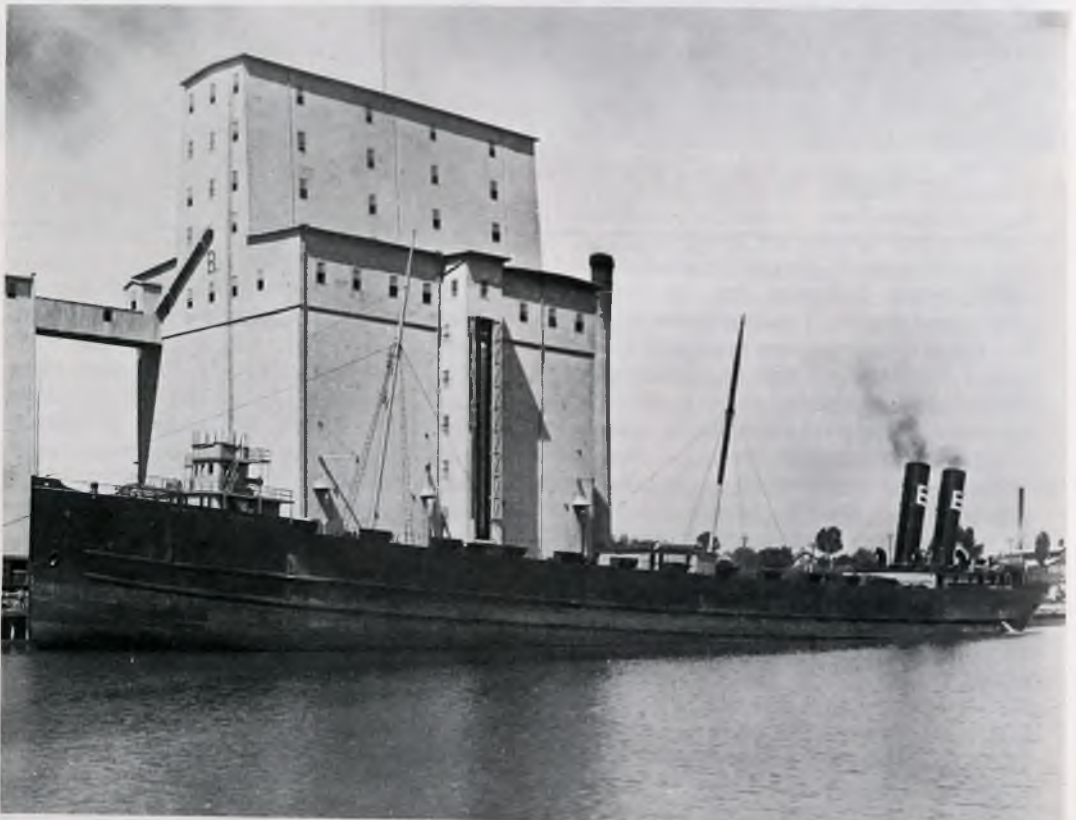
Bessemer people had to take over his yard to complete their three ships.

On their maiden voyage in September, the three Wheeler ships carried over 20,000 tons of ore in a single tow. This was about equal to a cargo of the first 700-footers, the *Joseph H. Thompson*, over a half century later. By itself, one of the powerful freighters on the 1890s could make a round trip from the lakehead in a week's time, returning upbound light. By towing a barge, she stretched the voyage to ten days and required a few more seamen and a bit more fuel. But the voyage more than doubled the cargo and revenue. Once in 1899, the *Morse* and a barge moved 13,000 tons of ore from Duluth to Conneaut in eighty hours, averaging 11.2 miles per hour, including check-down time in rivers on the way.

The new *Morse* was the most distinctive ship on the lakes. She had two huge black funnels placed fore-and-aft, each bearing the white Bessemer "B". These rose above four scotch boilers placed forward of

a quadruple expansion engine. In a few years when power and speed were no longer valued, she lost some boilers and one of these funnels and the size of her engine was reduced. In compensation, her texas cabin was rebuilt as one of the first to rise grandly three decks above the fore-castle. In the prevailing fashion, this cabin was set back behind the first hatch to keep the texas dry. Altogether, at 476 feet of length, she was the largest ship on the Great Lakes and looked it!

The *Morse* came at midpoint in the great lengthening of lake ships. When the 90's opened, the 350-foot Erie Railroad package freighters *Owego* and *Chemung* were the longest lake ships. Like other package freighters, they also carried grain, which was considered the lakes' primary cargo until the ore trade came of age in the nineties. But for two grand passenger ships of the nineties, bulk freighters have been unbeatable since as the largest lake ships. In 1892 came the 348-foot Minnesota fleet sisters *Maritana* and *Mariposa*



The SAMUEL F. B. MORSE presented a totally different and highly impressive appearance with her double stacks.



The steamer Globe was lengthened, and emerged from the shipyard as the JAMES B. EADS for Bessemer.

from yards in South Chicago and Cleveland. That December, two 362-foot hulls were launched, *Selwyn Eddy* at Wyandotte and the World's Fair whaleback passenger steamer *Christopher Columbus* at Superior. The next spring, Wheeler floated the 378-foot sisters *S. S. Curry*, *Merida* and *Centurion* at West Bay City. Jim Hill's crack passenger liner *Northwest* of equal length came out in 1894. The next season South Chicago built the first 400-footers, *Victory* and *Zenith City*. In 1896 *Globe* built the 432-foot *Coralia* at Cleveland, followed by two near-duplicates for Rockefeller, the *Bessemer* and the *Siemens*. *Globe's* neighbor, Cleveland Shipbuilding Company, moved over to Lorain and built the 450-foot *Superior City* in the spring of 1898. The 476-foot *Morse* left Wheeler's yard months later. There were 500-footers afloat by 1900 and 600-footers by 1906, but there the growth practically ceased until the fifties. For many years the lakes claimed some of the world's longest cargo ships.

Business among the lake shipyards was still slack in late 1898 when Rockefeller ordered two more ships. These were the conventional barge *John Smeaton* from Superior and a twin to the *Morse* named *Dougllass Houghton* from *Globe*. The new year brought three more hasty orders, a

steamer and two barges, which were the last hulls to be built for the Bessemer fleet. Through their Superior shipyard interests, the Rockefeller people had learned of plans to combine the major shipyards into the giant American Shipbuilding Company. The Superior shipyard was split off from American Steel Barge Company to join this combination in early 1899, making Rockefeller a shareholder in the shipyard trust. It was said that he used his influence to bring the Wheeler yard into the corporation, thus clearing Frank Wheeler of his debts from the *Morse* and her consorts of 1898.

In April, 1899, Bessemer bought the package freighter *Globe* which the *Globe Works* had built on speculation in 1893. *Globe* lengthened her 72 feet as the ore carrier *James B. Eads*. Of the five new ships ordered, only *Dougllass Houghton* was delivered that year. The return of prosperity had caused severe shortages in ship-building steel all year long. The *Houghton* was in service only a month when she sank in a precarious position that September, blocking St. Marys River traffic. Rumor said this largest ship on the Great Lakes was going to be dynamited to clear the way. Instead, the dynamite was used to move the rocks that held her, and the *Houghton* floated free.

The new American Shipbuilding Company was merely one of many business combinations of the turn-of-the-century years. In 1898, with the backing of J. P. Morgan, Minnesota Iron Company and its fleet merged with Illinois Steel Company and some other mills to form Federal Steel Corporation. This was the first big steel company to mine and transport its own ore, just as Carnegie's was doing informally through the Agreement with Rockefeller. Later that year American Steel and Wire Company was assembled from mills making steel and finished steel products. Its promoter was the flamboyant John W. "Bet-a-million" Gates, who had built his industrial empire up from a business in barbed wire.

At first the shareholders had no share in the prosperity of 1899. It was said that Andrew Carnegie pulled strings to bring about a 60¢ contract rate on iron ore for the season. Some shipowners signed up for the three summer months for 55¢, keeping

their ships free to profit on grain cargoes in early and late season. Such low contract rates tied the Bessemer fleet to low profits. When wild rates soared that autumn as a record eighteen million tons of ore were shipped down the lakes, Bessemer could not benefit.

In the spring and summer the giant new steel companies began buying up independently owned steel freighters to have their own fleets. During the 1899 season the ore trade was transformed as three out of four of the 187 steel bulk freighters came to belong to steel or mining companies. American Steel & Wire started the rush by absorbing Zenith Transit Co. In four seasons Augustus B. Wolvin of Duluth had built this progressive fleet; two of the five ships had been the largest on the lakes when new, and its *Crescent City* introduced quadruple expansion steam engines to bulk freighters in 1897. John W. Gates missed out to Federal Steel in the sale of the freighters *Pennsylvania* and



The DOUGLASS HOUGHTON as she appeared on September 5, 1899, sunk in the St. Marys River in collision with the John Fritz.

Texas which Wolvin was having built at Cleveland. These joined the Minnesota fleet as *Malietao* and *Mataafa*. Wolvin became manager of Gates' new American Steamship Company, and for it he ordered four of the lakes' first 500-footers for delivery in the spring of 1900.

Andrew Carnegie jumped into the race in April. The Oliver Company bought Lake Superior Iron Company, a pioneer mining firm of the Marquette Range, whose six 300-foot steel ore carriers went with the bargain. It seemed wise after all that Carnegie not be too dependent on Rockefeller for his mills' growing appetite for ore, and if Rockefeller couldn't carry it all, there might not be any independent fleets left. To operate these ships and pay for some more, Oliver put capital of four million dollars into his new Pittsburgh Steamship Company, predecessor to the later "Steel Trust" fleet. In July, nine steel ships managed by Hanna were sold to the new National Steel Company (not to be confused with the present corporation of that name whose fleet Hanna manages today.)

In September it came to the attention of the Rockefeller people that Oliver Mining Company was leasing and buying more mines on the Mesabi Range. This was a serious breach of the solemn Agreement of 1896 between Rockefeller and Carnegie. The Rockefeller people were already irritated that their ships were keeping their end of the bargain at the low contract rate while the "wild" boats were now said to be earning two to four percent of their investment on every voyage. The Rockefeller people called for renegotiation of the Agreement. Here at last was that great row between Rockefeller and Carnegie that journalists had promised a few years earlier.

First, the Carnegie man opened up negotiations to buy out the whaleback fleet of American Steel Barge Company, numbering nine steamers and twenty barges. As a shareholder, Rockefeller was bound to find out about this offer. Bessemer Steamship Company quickly snapped them up, not even troubling with the customary change of name when they donned the Bessemer colors in the spring. The pigs became known as "Rockefeller's barnyard."^{*}

Frustrated in his whaleback offer, Carnegie turned to American Shipbuilding Company in October to order five new

freighters. His vulnerability must have pained the Scotsman, for the shipyards already had twenty hulls on order and prices were high. There was no chance to hoodwink the shipyard trust as Samuel Mather had fooled the shipbuilders in behalf of Rockefeller in 1895. Since steel was still scarce, Carnegie promised to furnish steel directly to expedite his fleet. These became *Harvard* and four other "college" class steamers. In a touch of male chauvinism the barge consort *Bryn Mawr* was added to the list, a week after the others were ordered. It was said that Carnegie took a thirty day option on any remaining building ways to keep Rockefeller from placing his own new orders. But Rockefeller was content to get along with the hulls he had ordered at 1898-level prices. He did order quadruple expansion engines to make steamers out of two of the new barges, *Charles R. VanHise* building at Superior and *Robert W. E. Bunsen* at South Chicago. The barge *Smeaton* was too far advanced for the change. Work proceeded as usual at Cleveland on the new Bessemer flagship, the 490-foot *General Orlando M. Poe*.

Carnegie's Pittsburgh fleet was still covetous, and succeeded in buying two more freighters and a barge from independent fleets. One was the 434-foot freighter *Clarence A. Black* which had cost her original owners \$200,000 to build in 1898. In early 1899 these men had been happy to sell her to Pickands-Mather for \$240,000. Now Carnegie reportedly paid \$360,000 for her. One of the last big independent fleets of steel freighters in sight was Captain John Mitchell's Cleveland Steamship Company. Carnegie's man called on Mitchell to offer him \$350,000 for each of his six newest steel freighters, all built since 1895. Captain Mitchell wanted time to think about it.

A day or so later, on October 12, Bessemer's manager, Bowers, dropped by Captain Mitchell's office to discuss the next season's charters. Mitchell hinted at Carnegie's offer, and said it would be worth his while to keep the ships if the

^{*} The whalebacks that were turned over to Bessemer Steamship Company in the spring of 1900 were the steamers *Colgate Hoyt* (whaleback 106), *Joseph L. Colby* (108), *E. B. Bartlett* (113), *A. D. Thompson* (114), *Thomas Wilson* (119), *Samuel Mather* (120), *James B. Colgate* (121), *John B. Trevor* (135), and *Frank Rockefeller* (136) and the barges 105, 107, 109, 110, 111, 116, 117, 118, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 137, 201, and 202. Barge 115 was to have been included, but was lost in December, 1899, before it could be delivered. There were, of course, seven whalebacks already in the Bessemer fleet before 1899. — GPB

The ALEXANDER McDOUGALL retained much of the whaleback design, but in a concession to more orthodox design, her bow took on the appearance of a standard Great Lakes freighter.

McDonald Coll./DOSSIN MUSEUM



1900 season contract rate should happen to be made \$1.25 a ton. Bowers agreed to it. Later that day the Rockefeller men signed up the Detroit freighters *Senator* and *Admiral*, and the contract rate for 1900 was as good as established. The Carnegie men soon learned that their regular iron ore transportation would cost them more than twice as much per ton as for the season that was ending. As for the vesselmen who had feared a Rockefeller monopoly, they learned that it was Carnegie instead who had the incentive for less-than-subsistence rates on ore transportation. Rockefeller seemed happy to see everybody prosper.

When winter came, vessel capacity for fifteen million tons of iron ore had been committed by Rockefeller and others for the 1900 season. Few wild boats seemed likely to intrude on the ore trade, and the railroads would probably pick up much of the grain and coal trades for want of enough ships. For the first time in the history of the ore trade, somebody had cornered the market in ore carriers. For 1900, Rockefeller's problem would be to keep it so.

The ice left the northern shipping lanes by late April, so John Gates and some friends sailed from the Lorain shipyard aboard his new flagship, *John W. Gates*. In appearance this first of the 500-footers was the antithesis of the high and lordly *Morse*, *Houghton* and *Poe*. There was hardly any raised forecastle at all where the diminutive pilot house perched on the foredeck, and there were no cabins above deck aft. Only three tall masts and a tall black funnel broke the clean sweep of her long red hull. Nothing else interfered with unloading machinery. The naval architect Washington Babcock had designed *Zenith City* that way for manager Wolvin in 1895, and Wolvin would have such a ship again 1904 as the first 550-footer, the *Augustus B. Wolvin*. Bessemer manager Bowers preferred cabins above deck, for steel cabins below seemed stuffy and clammy in hot weather. The *Gates* was deceptive in her plain looks, for Gates demanded spit-and-polish for her, so much so that she was dubbed ever after as "*John W. Workhouse*." Well fitted flagships were the rule now. Carnegie's *Lafayette* would have velvet carpets, bevelled French mirrors, oil paintings, rosewood piano and mahogany everywhere else. Out in Whitefish Bay as the *Gates* proceeded on her maiden

voyage, the Minnesota freighter *Mariska* took a swipe at her and cracked some plates. At the lakehead the *Gates* was ballasted for temporary repairs to her bow, since the only drydock large enough to receive her there wasn't finished yet.

As John Gates sailed northward, he left behind him orders to close down twelve of his steel mills and to cut prices on products. Once the steel shortages worked themselves out, the buyers weren't buying at 1899 price levels. Federal Steel and some other mills followed suit, but European trade kept Andrew Carnegie's mills roaring full tilt.

This was very bad news for John D. Rockefeller. He was finding himself two million tons long in his season charters. If he kept the chartered ships busy meeting ore commitments, there wouldn't be left enough ore to fill the Bessemer fleet. It was a point of honor for him to keep the wild rate on ore up close to the \$1.25 season contract rate. He had contracts with other Pittsburgh furnace men to deliver ore down the lakes at that rate, and these men would be hurt if their competitors could get cheaper ore by wild boats.

It was cold at the lakehead in May and the ore at the docks there was frozen, making loading difficult. So for several weeks the ore carriers were diverted to grain trade from Chicago to Buffalo. The grain rate, normally 2¢ a bushel in good times, was driven down to 1¼¢. The wild rate on ore from Duluth settled to an even dollar a ton in sympathy, so Mr. Carnegie was losing 25¢ on every ton of ore delivered to Conneaut. It didn't help that owners of lumber hookers couldn't agree on shipping rates offered by Eastern lumber interests just then. Some of the lumber carriers went into the ore trade. Then a few of the new 500-footers began coming from the shipyards every month to share the ore cargoes. The new freighters for Mr. Carnegie were due to start coming from the shipyards in July.

By June, as the whalebacks sailed northbound light, they did not come back. On June 5, twenty whalebacks and two other big Bessemer boats and a barge were riding at anchor in Duluth harbor. Other Bessemer ships began to collect at Milwaukee and Cleveland until 80% of the Bessemer fleet was idle a month later. Out in the shipping channels, the big red Bessemer steamers moved with a sluggishness that belied the powerful quad



The JOHN SMEATON (above) was built by Rockefeller in 1898 when the shipyards were in a slack period. The last Bessemer flagship, GENERAL ORLANDO M. POE, (below) was in Pittsburgh fleet colors for most of her career.

Both photos: DOSSIN MUSEUM

engines. The Rockefeller fleet was not going to contribute to the overcapacity of bulk carriers that was keeping the rates lower in the grain and ore trades. With so many Bessemer sailors out of work at mid-year, it was said that Rockefeller would have trouble hiring good seamen for the 1901 season.

The grain trade responded quickly with better rates, but the ore rate didn't budge above a dollar all summer. Carnegie's fleet manager was seen in Chicago offering a freighter and barge for grain at very attractive rates, but the grain rate was not going to dip more than momentarily from his gift. Indeed, the grain market was now firm enough to absorb an occasional Bessemer boat if it arrived in Chicago without advance warning. This called for secrecy in dispatching. Thus *James Watt* would clear Conneaut with her Custom House papers stating a Duluth destination, but she would turn up instead at Chicago. The huge new flagship *General Poe* materialized at the Green Bay elevators. It was flagrant disregard of Custom House rules, but nothing could ever be done about it.

Well, it didn't work. On August 1, the wild rate on carrying ore settled to 90¢, and two weeks later it tumbled to 65¢. It did not matter that ore cargoes were destined for another record year after all, with or without the help of the Bessemer fleet. Soon the biggest fleet of ore carriers on the lakes was sailing once again as if nothing had happened. There were rumors of a new Agreement between Rockefeller and Carnegie, but in truth, the issue of Mesabe mines had been settled in February. Perhaps Mr. Carnegie was thinking of the summer of 1900 when he told somebody a dozen years later, "It does my heart good to think I got ahead of John D. Rockefeller." Absence of public explanations fed rumors of what kind of ore rates Rockefeller would get from Carnegie in 1901. As it came about, however, there was no 1901 Great Lakes shipping season for either of the protagonists.

Mr. Carnegie had been almost too busy casting his own challenges all summer to pay much attention to the Bessemer mutiny. He was projecting a railroad to the Atlantic because the Pennsylvania's rates were too high. He was planning mills for finished steel products to undersell Mr. Morgan's tube plant and Mr. Gates' wire plants because they weren't buying steel from Carnegie anymore. Per-

haps Carnegie would upset the whole steel industry if he had his way.

The lake fleet was back in winter quarters when J. P. Morgan organized the billion-dollar United States Steel Corporation early in 1901. The giant merger took in the trouble-making Carnegie company, along with Federal Steel, American Steel and Wire, National Steel and most of the nation's other important steel firms and their lake fleets and mines. It was almost by afterthought that the Rockefeller mines and the Bessemer fleet were gathered in, partly since Mr. Morgan thought it repugnant to do business with Mr. Rockefeller. The price for the ore properties, railroad and docks was said to be \$80,000,000, with another \$8,500,000 for the Bessemer fleet.

So in 1901 the United States Steel fleet effectively cornered the market in ore carriers with its own 112 ships, many more than Rockefeller had controlled the year before. The U. S. Steel fleet was named Pittsburgh Steamship Company, the name of the Carnegie-Oliver fleet, and was managed initially by Augustus B. Wolvin. Under one big corporation, few disputes like the recent one on ore rates would be aired in public.

In 1906 U. S. Steel brought out four of the first 600-footers. But the experimental nineties were over, and the Great Lakes ore carrier now passed into a state of seemingly suspended development. Outwardly, there was little apparent difference between U. S. Steel's 600-footers *J. Pierpont Morgan* of 1906, *Thomas W. Lamont* of 1930 and *Robert C. Stanley* of 1943. The only breach in the anonymity of a typical modern corporation was the practice of naming the new ships for officers and directors of U. S. Steel. A list of the early "tin stackers" built for the Pittsburgh fleet reads like a "*Who's Who*" of the men who assembled the steel trust.

L. M. Bowers gave up his close association with lake ships. Before long, he travelled about as far inland as he could go, to manage the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company for Mr. Rockefeller. Many years later he told the historian Allan Nevins that after he closed up the Bessemer offices, the vesselmen of the lakes remembered him kindly. They gave him two fine porcelain vases, presumably in gratitude for his benevolent role in the late revolution in lake ships and the prosperous season of 1900.

An Award For Heroism

The meeting scheduled for the night of January 27, 1978, was to have been something really special. In compliance with an action voted by the Board of Directors, the Institute secured a bronze plaque to be installed on the *William Clay Ford* to commemorate the heroism of that ship's crew in searching for survivors of the *Fitzgerald* disaster. An elaborate program had been developed for presenting the plaque at the Institute meeting. The entire crew had been invited, and the response indicated that many of them planned to attend.

Then, *it snowed*. My, *how* it snowed!

We had to cancel the program, and the logistics of rescheduling were too complicated to do it the same way another time. Fortunately, the International Shipmasters Association were scheduled to have a meeting at the Dossin Museum on February 14th, and their officers kindly agreed to let us make the presentation, in a much-abbreviated ceremony, during their meeting. It was a moving and impressive ceremony.

Institute President Richard Kruse and Karl Streck, who was involved in design and procurement of the plaque, joined Director Bob Lee in the presentation. After an introduction by Lee, Kruse made a brief statement on the Institute's decision to make the award, and invited Mrs. Donald Erickson and Mrs. Roy Bottrell, wives of the Captain and Chief Engineer, to unveil the plaque which had been draped with a Ford houseflag. Mr. Robert E. Karp, representing Ford, thanked the Institute and received the plaque on behalf of the ship and crew. Also participating with an invocation and benediction were the Reverends Richard Ingalls and Raymond Marshall.

Under the terms of the gift, the plaque is to remain on the ship for as long as the Ford Motor Company owns the vessel. Upon sale or retirement, the plaque ownership will revert to the Dossin Museum, where it would be permanently displayed.



Left to right: Capt. Donald Erickson, President Richard Kruse, Robert E. Lee, Mrs. Erickson, Mrs. Bottrell, Mr. Robert E. Karp, Gen. Mgr., Steel Div., Ford Motor Company, and Chief Engineer Roy Bottrell, posed with the plaque after unveiling.

Photo for Telescope by HARRY WOLF.



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Dec. 23. . .The U. S. Coast Guard icebreaker *Northwind* is due at Montreal today on her way into the upper lakes. She is due to replace the *Westwind* which was damaged early in December.

. . .The motor bulk carrier *Fucinatore* has arrived at Comeau Bay.

. . .The Canadian tug *Pointe aux Basques* refloated the Greek motor bulk carrier *Emanuel C.*, which has been aground near Pointe Argentenaye.

Dec. 24. . .The *Pointe aux Basques* and *Emanuel C* arrived at Quebec City. The tug then departed for Seven Islands, PQ.

Dec 29. . .The outbound Panamanian vessel *Leslie B.(ex-Selinis)* reported encountering heavy ice in the St. Lawrence River. She sailed from Montreal headed for Puerto Cabello.

Jan. 1. . .The *Pinedale* has been sold by Dale Transport, Limited, to Pitts Engineering Construction, Limited. The purchase, just now announced, was made late last year.

. . .At 9:45 AM the Livingstone Channel in the lower Detroit River, normally used only for downbound passages, was opened to two-way traffic. This is a normal winter-navigation procedure to avoid use of the more difficult Amherstburg Channel which is within Canadian waters.

. . .The Polish motor vessel *Zawiercie* has reported her involvement in a collision with the Canadian tanker *Maplebranch* in the St. Lawrence river. Both vessels have been reported as having minor damage which will not prevent their continuing their voyages.

. . .The Greek vessel *Astor Princess* departed Montreal for Comeau Bay.

Jan. 3. . .*Cartiercliffe Hall (ex-Ems Ore)* is wintering at Prescott, Ontario where she is to undergo work that will prepare her for lakes service.

. . .The Master of the *Leslie B.* has radioed Halifax that his vessel is taking on water in one hole. A U. S. Coast Guard plane was dispatched to Cape Sable with pumps. After these had been delivered and the dewatering process begun, the vessel headed for Halifax, NS, where she arrived later in the day. The *Leslie B.* was carrying 997.72 tons of sodium hydroxide and caustic in drums.

. . .Six freighters, battling ice in Western Lake Erie are keeping the U. S. Coast Guard cutters busy assisting them. Gale-force winds over the weekend blew the ice into the region

● GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS



DOSSIN MUSEUM Collection



Photo by PAUL G. WIENING

The IRVING S. OLDS, (above) and the ARMCO were involved in an ice-induced rear-ender in the Detroit River.

GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS ●

covering the entire area from Point Pelee to the islands off Sandusky and in the Toledo area. Involved are the vessels *H. Lee White*, *Joseph H. Frantz*, *Edward B. Green*, *Paul Thayer*, and *Henry Ford II*. Winds over Lake Erie were reported as being at 25 to 35 knots in a west to southeasterly direction by the cutters *Kaw* and *Mariposa*, which were involved in the effort off Toledo Light.

Jan. 4. . .Canada Starch will build a \$12 million expansion at their Cardinal, Ontario plant. The new facilities are expected to be ready for production by March, 1979.

. . .As the *Irving S. Olds* was upbound in the Livingstone Channel she hit a windrow of ice which brought her to a complete standstill. The *Armco*, which had been following the *Olds* in the path cut through the ice by the cutter *Mariposa*, slammed into the stern of the *Olds*, with some damage resulting.

. . .About 2,000 tons of pellets are being removed from the *Leon Falk, Jr.* at the Duluth Port Terminal to reduce her draft, permitting her removal to the Hallett Dock in West Duluth. Here more of her cargo will be removed to permit repair work on her propeller. The *Falk* sustained propeller damage while backing from ice at the Burlington Northern loading dock in Superior. The *Falk* is part of the National Steel fleet, operated by Hanna Mining Company.

Jan. 5. . .The *Armco* has been escorted to Toledo where repairs are being made to her bow. She will get three or four new plates and some additional repairs on her upper works. The



The LINDA, remembered on the Lakes as the COL. ROBERT R. McCORMICK, has been scuttled by the Coast Guard.

Photo by PETER B. WORDEN

● GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

Irving S. Olds is at Detroit where repairs are being made on her after end.

. . .A report from LaPlata, Argentina indicates that the former Great Lakes Transit Company freighter *Canopus* (ex-Boston; ex-J. M. Davis) was broken up in 1977.

. . .The *Emanuel C.* has sailed from Quebec City for St. John's, Newfoundland.

. . .Repairs being made on the *Sugar Producer* in New York, have been completed.

. . .The Panamanian vessel *Margitta* cleared Quebec City for St. John's, NF.

. . .In a report from Toronto it is stated that the tanker *Inland Transport* is now laid up at Port Dover, Ontario. Her owners are Harry Gamble Shipyards, of Port Dover. The ship had suffered heavy damage when she grounded on Garden Island Bank, Ontario, on November 4, 1972. At the time, she was refloated and laid up at Sarnia, Ontario.

Jan. 6. . .The *Sugar Producer* has cleared New York, bound for the United Kingdom.

. . .Canada may build a \$300 million Polar-class icebreaker for Arctic service.

. . .The self-unloader *Detroit Edison* is now in dry dock at Chicago undergoing repairs to damages she suffered in striking bottom on May 6, 1973.

Jan. 7. . .The *Linda* was scuttled 16 miles off the Florida Coast in the Atlantic Ocean, on December 21. The ship is the former Q & O canaller, *Col. Robert R. McCormick*. She had run aground off the Florida Keys in May, 1977, and later at Miami. Her owners failed to post bond, and in consideration of her condition, the Coast Guard sent her to the bottom.

. . .Quebec Radio reports that the Cuban vessel *Comandants Comilo Cienfuegos* stopped in the St. Charles River at 4:15 AM, due to a cooling-intake pipe break. Repairs were made and she passed Escoumins, Quebec, outbound, at 7:50 AM.

. . .Bethlehem Steel Company has announced it will close the company's mine at Marmora, Ontario in three months. A million tons of pellets remain there.

Jan. 8. . .At 4:00 PM the West Neebish Channel of the St. Mary's River was closed to all vessel traffic.

Jan. 11. . .It took a four-man crew, with chainsaws, to free the *James R. Barker* from her frozen berth at the Soo Line Railroad docks in Ashland. The ice had reached a thickness reported to have been between 14-20 inches, and an estimated half-ton was cut out to free the ship. The *Barker's* crew began raising and lowering the vessel with pumps to keep ice from re-forming once she was freed.

. . .*Topdalfjord* sailed from New York, bound for New Orleans, La.

Jan. 12. . .Bridge operators in Hamilton, Ontario have ended their strike and returned to work, to the immense relief of shipping interests.

. . .The tanker *Jupiter* has become stuck in ice at Erie, Pennsylvania.

. . .The Coast Guard tug *Ojibway* is also stuck in ice at Erie, and the Polar icebreaker *Northwind* is underway to assist in her release.

Jan. 13. . .The U. S. Coast Guard icebreaker *Woodrush* was scheduled to Ashland to assist in freeing the *James R. Barker* from ice at the Soo Line Ore dock. The *Barker* had remained tied

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to the dock since last summer's steel strike began. A previous attempt to free the ship had to be abandoned because the vessel had mechanical trouble, but this has been repaired. When the vessel leaves Chequamegon Bay, it will be under escort of the *Woodrush*.

. . .The Liberian vessel *Atlantic Pride* sailed from Baie Comeau for Egypt.

Jan. 14. . .Francis M. McCarty, 84, of Detroit died today. He was first mate on the *J. E. Upson* at the time of his retirement.

Jan 15. . .The 121-passenger vessel *Ranger III*, which operates between Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Isle Royal, in Lake Superior, could be withdrawn from service within a year, according to Jack Morehead, Isle Royale Park superintendent. The threat comes as a result of insufficient business and high maintenance charges.

. . .A convoy of five freighters have become stuck in the ice in Lake Erie, about four miles from Cleveland, shortly after departing that port.

Jan. 16. . .The *Canadian Century* and the *Northern Venture* sailed from Toronto to Hamilton to unload their cargoes and go into layup. They had been prevented from entering Hamilton until now because of the bridge-tenders' strike.

Jan. 17. . .The Detroit Edison Company, of Detroit, which serves southeast Michigan, is 75 years old today. The company has been a prime user of Great Lakes shipping throughout its history, and has recently put into operation two super-carriers for western coal movement from Duluth to Marysville. (*News Editor, Fred Weber, has been employed by Edison for over 31 years. Ed.*).

. . .The *Roger Kyes* is under way to assist in relieving ice-pressure on the *Adam E. Cornelius*. If this does not work, the Coast Guard will send the cutter *Northwind* to aid.

. . .A major assault on the ice in Lake Nicolet was mapped out by Coast Guard and skippers of the *Arthur M. Anderson* and *John G. Munson*. Traffic has been delayed six days by this ice, and there are ten vessels downbound and eleven upbound that are affected. The brash ice is so thick that the cutter *Mackinaw* has been able to move but one vessel at a time. The plans call for the *Mackinaw* to lead a convoy lead by the *Anderson* and *Munson*, followed by other downbound vessels. The operation will await the arrival upbound of the *Mackinaw* which is leading the *Yankcanuck* up. One ship, the 1,000-foot *Mesabe Miner*, has been ice-locked for six days six miles below the Soo. It is expected the convoy will free her in thier passage toward Lake Huron.

Jan.18. . .The 767-foot *Armco* was assisted by the *Mackinaw* after being stuck in the St. Marys River. There were four ships waiting behind her to move upstream.

. . .A heavy ice storm has left 1,000 people stranded on Wolf Island, in the St. Lawrence River since January 14th. Engine trouble had idled the ferry *Wolf Islander III*.

. . .From Liverpool, England, comes a report that two 10-cylinder marine diesel engines were loaded on the roll-on-roll-off container vessel *Atlantic Saga* for delivery to Halifax, NS., and from Halifax to Collingwood, Ontario shipyard by CNR railcar. The two engines are 19'-2" long, 12' high, each weighing 45 tons. They are rated at 4,500 hp, and were purchased for installation in a Great Lakes ship.

. . .The U. S. Coast Guard tug *Raritan* went to the aid of the *Presque Isle*, *Charles E. Wilson*, *A. H. Ferbert* and *McKee Sons* which became stuck in ice on Lake Huron about three miles north of the Blue Water Bridge early this morning. The *Raritan* broke them free at about 4:15 PM.

● GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

Jan. 20. . . *Emanuel C.* entered the Canadian National Railways dockyard at St. John's, NF.

. . . An era ended for the United States today when one of the last two all-passenger ocean liners under U. S. Flag was withdrawn from service. The 20,000-ton liner *Monterey* was retired at the end of her final run from the South Seas and her sister-ship, the *Mariposa*, will go the same way in April when she finishes her trip. The U. S. government withdrew the subsidy which had kept them running.

Jan. 21. . . Fire at the Capitol 4 Grain elevator, owned by International Multifoods, Inc., of Duluth, Minnesota, caused extensive damage to the bulk carrier *Harry L. Allen*, moored along side the elevator. Damages are believed so bad that it is likely the ship will be scrapped.



Venerable HARRY ALLEN was so badly damaged in a Duluth fire that she seems to be destined for the scrapper's torch.

Photo by SCOTT McLELLAN

Jan. 23. . . The Swiss vessel *St. Cergue (ex-Bariloche)*, a motor bulk-carrier of 19,335 dw; 14,112 gross, built at Rijeka in 1962, has been sold by Helica, S. A. (Suisse-Atlantique Socd' Armement Maritime SA), Lausanne, to Liberian interests for just over \$1 million. She was the last ocean vessel out of the Seaway in 1977.

. . . The *Robert C. Norton* and five other freighters have been trapped in Lake Erie ice for the past five days.

. . . Upper Lakes Shipping, Ltd., and the General Dynamics Corporation of the U. S., have indicated interest in taking over the struggling Halifax Shipyards, currently operated by Hawkes-Siddley, Canada, Ltd.

. . . CP Ships will move their container terminal from Quebec City to Montreal this summer. This will mean a 20% loss in revenue for the port of Quebec City.

Jan. 25. . . Despite delays and the expense, winter navigation is said to be worth the effort. The stabilizing effect upon employment, and not having the huge investment in ships tied up idle make the costs economical on balance. This according to the Lake Carriers Association, shippers, and mill users of the service.

. . . A U. S. Coast Guard helicopter was sent to the *Robert C. Norton*, which was stuck in ice. The man was taken to Cleveland from where he went to visit his wife who had been a

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heart attack victim.

Jan. 25. . .The *Robert C. Norton* and *Crispin Oglebay* are in sight of Cleveland breakwall. At 11:00 PM, the Norton was about three miles off and the *Oglebay* was about two miles behind the *Norton*.

Jan. 26. . .The ore carrier *Charles M. Beeghly* ran aground in the St. Mary's River, below the Soo Locks. Her bottom has been holed, but leakage is being controlled with compressors.

. . .The *J. Burton Ayres* was freed from the ice at Pelee Passage on Lake Erie after being trapped more than a week. The *Northwind* will escort her to Cleveland.

. . .“I've never seen anything quite like this before,” said Captain Delmar Webster, 42, who has been a sailor for 24 years. “When a man leaves the bridge we have someone standing by below, and if the man doesn't show up in a few minutes we check to see if he has fallen down or been blown overboard,” Webster said. “I had to get down on my hands and knees to get to the bridge. It's very difficult to even stand up.” These observations came from the captain of the *J. Burton Ayres*, in a radio-telephone interview from Lake Erie where his ship had been frozen-in for five days. During this time the winds had blown a steady 75 knots, with gusts to 97 knots (111 miles per hour). The Coast Guard dropped emergency rations to the crew while they were stranded. The *Ayres* was freed later and the *Northwind* escorted her into Cleveland.

. . .The *Robert C. Norton* and *Crispin Oglebay* arrived in Cleveland.

. . .The tanker *Saturn* reports that she is being hit with 80-knot winds and 15 to 20-foot waves in Lake Michigan, and that she is unable to make headway.



J. BURTON AYRES, seen here in a calmer clime and in her former Wilson livery, took a severe beating in Lake Erie ice. She now operates for Columbia.

MASSMAN PHOTO/Dossin Museum

 ● GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS



The CHARLES M. BEEGHLY suffered damage in a grounding in the St. Mary's River and required Coast Guard assistance.

SCOTT McLELLAN

. . .The Great Lakes Maritime Academy's 143-foot training vessel (tug) *Allegheny* is listing severely to port at her dock in Traverse City, Michigan. She is being hit by 60 mile winds that are throwing spray and ice onto the ship.

Jan. 27. . .The *Allegheny* turned over on her side with only her mooring lines keeping her from submerging completely.

. . .The master of the *Saturn* reported to the Coast Guard at Muskegon that the wind and waves had subsided and that he was again making headway.

Jan. 28. . .The ore carrier *Charles M. Beeghly*, which ran aground in the St. Mary's River, is being assisted by three Coast Guard cutters and is reported in no danger of sinking.

. . .The *Mesabi Miner* knocked out the ice boom in the lower St. Mary's River, near the Sugar Island ferry dock. The U. S. Engineers expect to have it repaired by day's end.

Jan. 30. . .While sailing in the ice about two miles out from Cleveland, the crew of the Coast Guard cutter *Ojibway* spotted a dog on an ice flow. When the boat got close, the dog slipped into the icy water. Boatswain's mate 2c Dave Gaines jumped into the water after the dog. Both were brought aboard and continued the trip to Detroit. The dog was put belowdeck, and has been named *Lady* by the crew.

. . .The St. Lawrence Seaway finally closed for the season today. The locks have been kept open since the original deadline of December 15th at a cost of \$100,000 per day.

Jan. 31. . .The Canadian vessel *Fort Chambly* was arrested at Montreal for allegedly absconding with \$451,000 worth of wire rod, which a West German company shipped to Nigeria. The goods were never delivered.

GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS ●

. . . A report from St. John's, NF says that the CNR has sold the *Cabot Strait*, but CN will not release the name of the new owner until the sale is final. The *Cabot Strait* has been at St. John's since 1974, after she struck a rock. Her sale had been offered "as-is, where-is."

. . . The Michigan Department of Transportation has been authorized to spend up to \$200,000 for a special feasibility study on the potential present and future economic benefits of digging a shipping canal between Lake Superior in Alger County, and Lake Michigan in Delta County. The area has been surveyed and seriously considered three or four times during the past 100 years

Feb. 2. . . Canadian shipowners are claiming that they lost more than \$1 million because of the bridge tenders' strike at Hamilton.

Feb. 3. . . The Canadian Seafarers' International Union is planning a mariners' school in the Morrisburg, Ontario area. An old freighter will be obtained and moored there for instructional purposes.

Feb. 9. . . Shipments of iron ore on the Great Lakes in January totaled 2.6 million gross tons, nearly four times the 746,000 tons in the same month a year ago.

. . . From Halifax, a report states that the Canadian motor vessel *Illex* was raised, then scuttled, on October 30, 1976 in lat. 47° 37' 54" N, long. 52° 05' 50" W. *Illex* sank in Conception Bay, Newfoundland in December, 1974 after having been removed from the wharf at Coley's Point, Bay Roberts, where she began to sink after being sold for scrap.

. . . Owners report that the Canadian tug *Bagotville* was refloated a short time after going aground. She then proceeded to dry dock for rudder repairs. When these were completed she returned to service.

. . . A report attributed to a Toronto source states that when the Great Lakes lines and European Lines, Inc, went bankrupt, about 500 containers bound for U. S. ports were abandoned at Pier 43 in Toronto by two vessels under charter to the bankrupt charterers.

Feb. 14. . . C.S.L.'s *Stadacona* leaves the Port Weller Drydock.

. . . Pickands-Mather & Company has announced a multi-million dollar program for its Great Lakes fleet. They will construct their third 1,000-foot self-unloader, and will convert another ship to a self-unloader.

. . . *North Lord*, motor tanker; 18,797 tons d.w.; 12,390 gross, built Glasgow, 1959, has been sold by Priam Compania Naviera S.A. (A. G. Pappadakis & Co, Ltd.) London, to Spanish shipbreakers for a price in the region of \$53 per light ton displacement on an "as-is, where-is" basis in Greece. She will be remembered as the vessel that went down the wrong channel (the north channel of the St. Clair River) at Russel's Island in the 60s.

Feb. 15. . . General Transportation Organization, Ltd., of Montreal will enter the Seaway trade this year using three charter ships. The first one will be the *Fir Jamaica* and it will go into service next month. Ports on the Seaway will be Thunder Bay, Ontario, Duluth, Detroit, Toledo, Cleveland, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City. In Europe the ports will be Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Marseilles and Harve. They have a contract to move up to 125 containers from Quebec City. Their ships will carry bulk as well as containers. G.T.O. is probably Canada's only privately owned shipping line.

Feb. 16. . . *Algorail* enters Port Weller Dry Docks.

● GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

Feb 17. . .From New York comes a report that the Liberian tanker *Oswego Concord* made contact with a Texaco barge in tow of the tug *James Turecamo*, at Stony Point on the Hudson. No damage was reported. The *Turecamo* has been on the lakes frequently.

Feb 19. . .A fire aboard CSL's *Black Bay* at Montreal was confined to the engine room. She was loaded with ore and seven tons of bunker oil. A neighboring ship, the *Ferbec*, was moved as a precautionary measure.

Feb. 24. . .Misener interests are looking at the development of Port Maitland, Ontario, on Lake Erie as a future shipping center. Proximity to the Nanticoke, Ontario Electrical Power Development is considered significant.

Feb. 25. . .The West German shipping company of Ernst Russ are to maintain their line to Canada and the Great Lakes with six vessels during the 1978 open water season, compared with four vessels used in the 1976 and 1977 seasons. The ships will be between 12,000 and 15,000 tons deadweight and will sail every ten days.

. . .An April 1 opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway appears feasible unless cold temperatures prevail through March. Ice conditions in the system are near normal for this time of year.

MISCELLANEOUS UNDATED ITEMS

. . .*Nina Bowater*, built in 1961, has been sold by Bowater Steamship Lines, Ltd., to Maritima Kretan Glory, Inc., of Liberia and has been renamed *Kretan Glory*. She was a visitor to the lakes in the 60s.

. . .The Boston Metals Company, of Baltimore, Maryland, is offering the ex-U. S. Coast Guard Polar icebreaker *Edisto* for sale. She worked the ice on the lakes one winter.

. . .A deep sea note: Chandris liner *Australis* has been withdrawn from service. She is the former *America* of the U. S. Lines and the World War II troopship *West Point*. Her future is presently unknown.

. . .Another deep sea note: The S.S. *Waverly*, the only ocean paddle passenger steamship left, returned to service at Ayr, Scotland on September 1, 1977. She had gone aground on Gantock Rocks, Dundoon, July 5th, 1977. She was built in 1947.

. . .The self unloader *Hennepin*; (ex-George G. Barnum, ex-Socopa), sold by Redland Steam Ship Company, U.S.A., to Marine Salvage, Ltd. She arrived in Port Colborne, Ontario in tow on April 30, 1975 and demolition began in April, 1977.

. . .In 1977, *Ferndale*, *Leadale*, *Nordale*, *Pinedale* and *Westdale* were sold by Reoch Transport, Ltd., to Dale Transport, Ltd., both Canadian. The *Westdale*; (ex-George W. Perkins) was sold by Dale Transports to Robert Pierson Holdings, Ltd and renamed *H. C. Heimbecker*.

. . .The self-unloader *St. Clair* has been transferred by American Steamship Company, in 1976 to Bell Steamship Company, both U.S.A.

. . .*Manitoulin* was transferred by Canada Steamship Lines, Ltd., to Power Corporation of Canada, Ltd., in 1976.

. . .The bulk carriers *Canadian Hunter*, *Canadian Mariner*, *Hilda Marjanne* and *Canadian Leader*, had their ownership transferred from Leitch Transport, Ltd., to Port Weller Dry Docks, Ltd., in 1977.