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**JANUARY • FEBRUARY, 1996**  
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**MEMBERSHIP NOTES •**

Noted shipwreck diver and Institute member Cris Kohl has written Dive Ontario Two! The 312 page book describes 135 shipping disasters in Ontario. Over 230 photographs are used in the book, along with maps and drawings. Information on individual wrecks include the wreck's coordinates, depth, diver's skill levels and shipwrecks still not yet located. Cris has authored many shipwreck articles, and provides information on Ontario museums for marine historians. He is also active in several groups interested in preservation Ontario Underwater Council, Preserve Our Wrecks and Save Ontario Shipwrecks. This book is available at the Dossin Museum for \$24.95. Those interested in ordering by mail should enclose \$3.50 postage.

Marine historian and Institute member Paul Wiening has printed Wiening Marine-Volume 19, a catalog of books, photos, and slides of Great Lakes available by mail. This catalog contains company fleet lists that indicate photos taken of an individual ship during a particular year with many dating from the 1970's. Those members that subscribe to various marine publications will remember Paul's photos that accompanied his articles. The catalog section on videos provides members with the newest titles just released. To order Wiening Marine, contact: Paul G. Wiening Enterprises, 432 W. Michigan St., Port Washington, WI. 53074. (414) 284-5215.

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**MEETING NOTICES •**

Due to the 24-hour bike race on Belle Isle, the entertainment will be held at 8:00 p.m. at the Museum of Arts and History in Port Huron on Saturday, May 18, 1996. Our guest speaker, Mr. Jim Bearman will present "Ports of Northeastern Michigan".

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OUR COVER PICTURE . . . The *Cuyahoga* was originally launched as the *J. Burton Ayers* in 1943 at Lorain, Ohio for the Great Lakes Steamship Company. To lengthen her career, the *Ayers* was converted to a self-unloader in 1974. Today only a few of the "Maritime" class' sixteen vessels remain in existence. The *Ayers* was purchased by Lower Lakes Towing in 1995 and renamed *Cuyahoga*. This photo of her was taken by David Scali on the *Cuyahoga's* maiden voyage from Meldrum Bay to Cleveland with a cargo of stone. She is shown here upbound in the Cuyahoga River on November 16, 1995.

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## PIGEON HILL

by  
STEVE ELVE

The early morning mist began to burn off Muskegon Lake as the sun moved higher into the summer sky. Along the channel walls, fishermen quietly watched their lines hoping for some perch or a wayward walleye. Practically unnoticed at the harbor entrance, a freighter slowly nosed its way through the pierheads. As her massive hull glided by the light-house, steam hissed from her winches and her deck machinery clattered. Crewmen were pulling the steel cables out to the ready position for docking.

It was a beautiful day in 1937 as the Tomlinson steamer *S.S. Colonel E.M. Young* sailed down the channel. As the ship passed the Coast Guard station, the *Young's* captain grabbed the whistle pull and gave

it a tug. A deep blast echoed and reechoed through the air, startling the fishermen and sending the gulls screeching into flight. The steamer passed Port Sherman, a tiny community of fishing sheds, nets, and tugs crowded into a basin. Shortly the *Young* entered Muskegon Lake and the skipper swung the freighter to starboard and pointed her bowpole toward their destination. The Sand Products wharf was just ahead, where a cargo of Pigeon Hill sand was waiting.

The source of the sand to be shipped had been a local landmark for hundreds of years. The big sand dune rose almost 300 feet above Muskegon Lake and spread out for over 30 acres. It was covered by pine trees populated by thousands of carrier pigeons, who



*The UNITED STATES GYPSUM loading sand.*



*Top: Conveyor belt carrying sand up to the UNITED STATES GYPSUM in the 1950's.  
Bottom: Sand was transferred from the holding area to loading belts into the GYPSUM.*



Author's Photo

*The old dock pilings as they appear today. During the last year of operation, an average of three vessels per week loaded at this dock.*

roosted in their limbs and made their nests. Thus, the sand dune became known as "Pigeon Hill".

In 1926 the Nugent Sand Company bought the original property. They intended to mine out the sand and sell it for industrial purposes. The huge foundries of Detroit and Cleveland would use it as core sand to make castings for automobile and aircraft engines and molten metal products. When the hill was finally leveled, the land would become a residential district. The following year, Sand Products Corporation took charge of the site from Nugent Sand. They began removing the fine light beige sand the following year, but it wasn't until 1936 that the steamer *W.E. Fitzgerald* took out the first boat load.

Extracting the sand is a fairly simple operation. The sand pit was about a half-mile from the dock. A huge steel clam-shell crane scooped up the sand and dropped it onto small conveyor belts. From here it was transferred to larger belts that dropped it into a holding area. Next, hoppers fed it into the cavernous holds of waiting freighters at the rate of 32 tons a minute.

The lake boats were kept busy loading and transporting the sand. A total of 533 boatloads were taken out from 1936 to 1948, totaling 4,500,000 cubic yards of sand. The year 1948 ended with 56 boatloads of sand hauled out to feed the hungry industrial machines of a healthy economy and thriving automobile indus-

try. During Sand Products last year of operation, an average of three lakers a week came through the Muskegon Lake channel to load and haul out sand. They joined the fleet of ore carriers supplying the raw materials for industrial America.

The sand mining operation ended in 1967 when "Pigeon Hill" bottomed out. A large, flat basin was left. Today it has become the thriving Harbor Town Marina.

If you were to visit the site today, you would still see the old pilings off shore that once held fast such freighters as *Ben Calvin*, *United States Gypsum*, *Diamond Alkali* and *Sultana*, and many other classic steamboats now long gone. If you were to walk through the small remaining sand dunes, you could still see blocks of concrete and rusting steel girders that once supported the long conveyors. All is quiet, slowly being reclaimed by the shifting sand.

Progress will soon take what is left of what was once Pigeon Hill, and only our reflection will remain. Another era will be quietly tucked away in the pages of the county archives.

*I would like to thank Barbara Martin of the Muskegon County Museum for her excellent help in finding material for this article, especially after their recent move.*

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## SHE'S A BIG ONE!

by  
RICHARD KRUSE

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As a boy growing up in the small town of Manistee, Michigan, on the shore of Lake Michigan, I never seemed to get enough of boat watching. Self-unloaders dominated the harbor traffic. The *W.E. Fitzgerald*, *Ben E. Tate*, and the *Robert Paisley* were weekly visitors with coal for the industrial plants up the Manistee River on Manistee Lake. The Boland boats were too large to negotiate the river and wined between the pier and breakwater before backing the half-mile from Lake Michigan to the sand dock to load foundry sand. The *United States Gypsum*, *Thunder Bay Quarries*, *George F. Rand*, *Consumers Power*, *Dow Chemical*, *Norman J. Kopmeir* and the *J.F.*

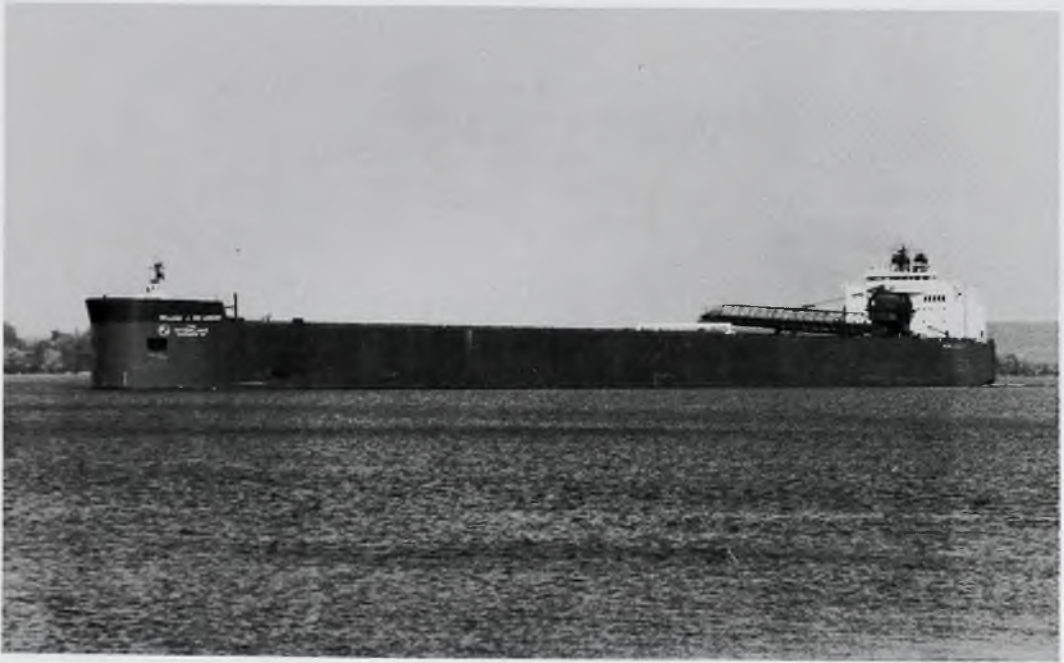
*Schoellkopf, Jr.* were larger than the coal boats, but the vessels I wanted to see were the 600-foot straight deckers that passed five miles off shore in a steady parade heading north. All I could see was the distant red hull and trail of coal smoke on the horizon.

On my first trip to Sault Ste. Marie with my dad in 1945, the first boat we saw was the *Leon Fraser*, which passed close to the carferry, *City of Munising* in the Straits of Mackinac. I remember my dad remarking, "Boy! She's a big one!" He was correct, in 1945, she was big!

The *Leon Fraser* along with her four sisters: *Irving S. Olds*, *Ender M. Voorhees*, *Benjamin F.*



When the LEON FRASER was built in 1945, she was one of the "Supers", measuring 639.5 feet long.



*Top: The TREGURTHA was built with five cargo holds, capable of carrying 68,000 tons.  
Bottom: The TREGURTHA is capable of offloading 8,500 tons per hour on her 260-foot unloading boom.*



When the WM. J. DELANCEY was built in 1981, she was the longest ship on the lakes, measuring 1013.5 feet long.

Photo by Paul Wiening

*Fairless* and *A.H. Ferbert*, were the largest on the lakes in 1945. They were 639.5 feet long with a 67-foot beam and could carry approximately 17,700 gross tons at 24-foot draft. These five sisters surpassed the size and capacity of the *Harry Coulby* and the *Carl D. Bradley* as well as the Canadian vessel *Lemoyne*, all of which had set cargo records over the previous sixteen years.

What a difference the last fifty years have made in Great Lakes shipping. While the five Pittsburgh "supers" were huge in 1945, their operation in 1995 in the ore trade would no longer be economical. As a result of escalating costs, most vessels the size of the *Fraser* and even some much newer and larger, have gone to the scrap yard. Only a few have been converted for specialty service and remain operating today.

To put into perspective what has happened over the past fifty years, we can take a look at Interlake Steamship Company. In 1945, World War II was drawing to a close, but lake traffic was still very heavy. Interlake Steamship Company had forty-five vessels operating. The fleet consisted of thirty-eight of their own boats, plus seven that they operated for the U.S. War Shipping Administration. Those seven vessels were old Interlake boats traded to the government as down payment for the three maritime vessels deliv-

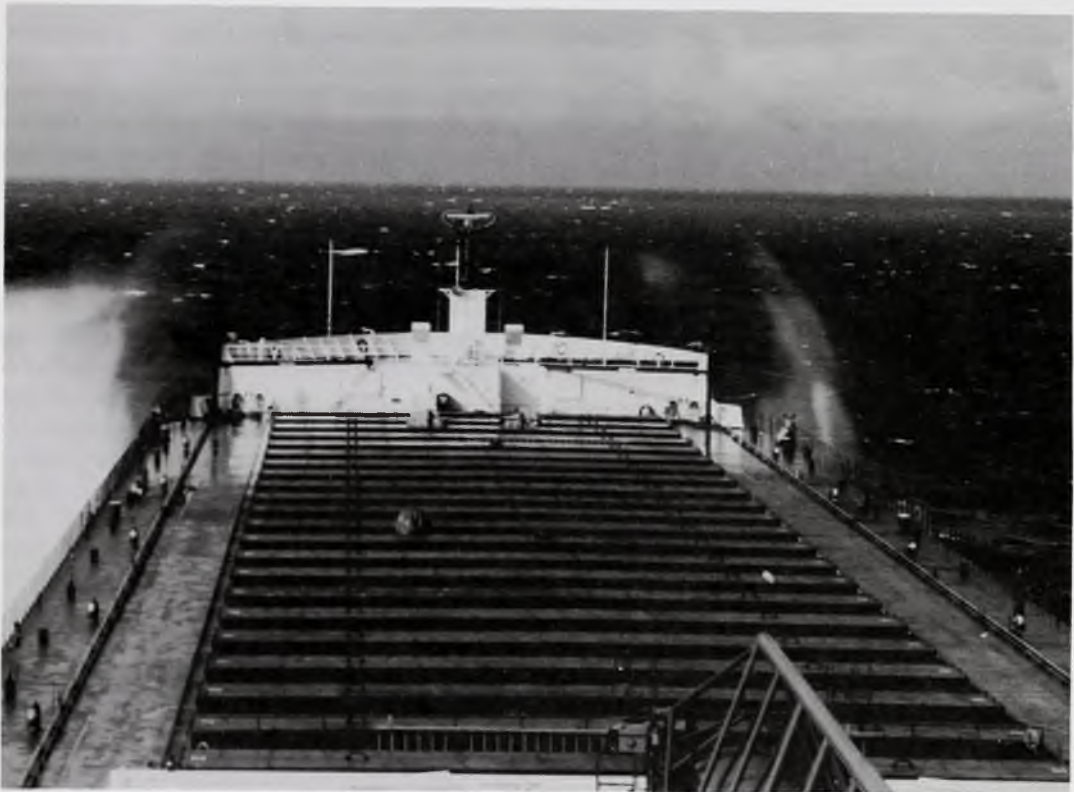
ered to Interlake in 1943. The new hulls were the *Frank Armstrong*, *E.G. Grace* and *Frank Purnell*.

The trip capacity for the forty-five vessels operated by Interlake in 1945 was 420,000 gross tons. The capacity of the thirty-eight vessels owned by Interlake averaged slightly over 10,000 tons each, while the seven U.S.W.S.A. boats averaged a little under 7000 tons. The combined average capacity for all forty-five boats was approximately 9300 gross tons. I might add that the entire fleet were straight deckers needing dock side equipment to unload cargo.

Fifty years later in the 1995 shipping season, Interlake operated nine self-unloaders: *James R. Barker*, *Charles M. Beeghly*, *Elton Hoyt 2nd*, *Herbert C. Jackson*, *Mesabi Miner*, *Paul R. Tregurtha* (all owned by Interlake), *Kaye E. Barker* and *Lee A. Tregurtha* of Lakes Shipping Company and the *George A. Stinson* of Stinson, Inc. The trip capacity of the entire fleet is 387,660 gross tons or an average of 43,000 gross tons each. You might have noticed that Interlake's two straight-deckers, *J.L. Mauthe* and *John Sherwin* are not included in this comparison, since both are in lay-up status.

To highlight the difference in what was the exception in 1945 with what is the exception today in the economics of the Great Lakes shipping, let us compare the *Leon Fraser* to the *Paul R. Tregurtha*.





Author's Photo

*Top: The TREGURTHA carried 3,241,386 tons in a season. Bottom: The ALPENA was shortened 120 feet and converted to a self-unloading cement barge in 1990-1.*

Vessel Profile	SS Leon Fraser	MV Paul Tregurtha
Year Built	1942	1981
Builder	Great Lakes Engin.	Amer. Shipbldg. Co.
Hull Number	287	909
Overall Length	639.5 feet	1013.5 feet
Beam	67 feet	105 feet
Depth of Hull	35 feet	56 feet
Capacity (Summer)	18,000 long tons	68,000 long tons
Cargo Holds	3	5
Hatches	18	36
Engines	Steam Turbine	Diesel - 2 Colt Pielstick
Horsepower	4,000	17,120 (8550 ea.)
Fuel	Coal	Blended diesel oil
Speed loaded	14.5 mph	14.3 mph
Speed Empty	15.7 mph	15.3 mph
Gross Reg. Tons	10,291	36,360
Net. Reg. Tons	6,401	32,580

A review of these numbers shows that the *Tregurtha* has approximately four times the capacity of the *Fraser*. The crew numbers are the same (28) and while the *Fraser* may have been a little faster, the unloading time for the straight-decker is offset by the quicker discharge rate of the modern self-unloader. The *Tregurtha* can discharge ore at the rate of 8,500 tons per hour from her 260-foot boom. A fast unloading dock, such as Conneaut, Ohio, with all five Hulletts working would be hard pressed to average 4000 tons per hour while unloading a straight decker.

In 1970, the *Leon Fraser* was converted to burn oil. Bow thrusters had been placed on all five supers to help cut the expense of tugs. A few years later her load lines were changed, which allowed deeper loads and increased her ore capacity by 1000 tons. Even in her best seasons, moving 700,000 tons was a big target. On the other hand, the *Tregurtha* has moved 3,241,386 tons in one season. One might ask about the difference in fuel consumption between a vessel with such different dimensions as the *Fraser* and the *Tregurtha*. The surprising fact is that the *Fraser* burned 8000 per day after conversion from coal and, the *Tregurtha* burns about 10,000. To put that into perspective, the 1000-footer would burn 70,000 gallons of fuel on a trip from Duluth to lower Lake Michigan and back while the *Fraser* would burn over 200,000 gallons to move the same amount of iron ore and take four seven-day trips to equal the same cargo moved by the *Tregurtha* in one trip.

One can understand why the number of boats operating on the Great Lakes decrease when you look at the comparison of these two vessels. The depletion of red ore and the development of taconite pellets spelled the end of the old straight deckers. While self-

unloaders had trouble with the sticky, wet natural ore, they had no problem handling taconite pellets in their unloading systems. The newest lock at Sault Ste. Marie was constructed to allow 1,000-foot vessels. New ore loading docks and the conversion of some old gravity docks to conveyor systems has shortened loading time. The self-unloader has all but eliminated the dock unloading equipment on the lower lakes which was getting old and expensive to maintain.

Yes, the numbers of boats has shrunk with the increase in size of the modern vessel. You can't stand on the high bluff south of Manistee and count five or six straight deckers parading north anymore. In fact, you are lucky if you see one boat on the horizon between Big Point Sable and Frankfort. Then again, I wonder what my dad would say if he could see the *Paul R. Tregurtha*. Somehow, "She's a big one" was a good description for the *Leon Fraser* in 1945, but it just won't work for the *Tregurtha*. The five great supers built for the Pittsburgh Steamship Company in 1942 are gone except for one. The *Ferbert* was broken up in Turkey in 1988. The *Voorhees* was driven aground off the Greek coast and broke in two while being towed. In 1989, both hull sections were towed to Aliga, Turkey, where they were scrapped. The last of the five sisters laid in Lorain, Ohio until 1990. During the winter of 1990-91, the *Fraser* was shortened 120 feet and converted to a self-unloading cement carrier. After her conversion, her new owners, Inland Lakes Transportation, Inc., renamed her *Alpena*. Her new dimension are 519.5 feet overall with a capacity of 13,900 tons. While everything on the lakes seemed to get bigger during the past fifty years, the *Fraser* got smaller. The new vessels built in the past twenty years, placed the crew accommodations and machinery on the stern of the boat. While being very efficient, little has been done by naval architects to refine the design of these box boats. The lake boats with the pilothouse on the bow are a thing of the past. The original design of the *Wilfred Sykes* or the *Edward L. Ryerson* will never be copied again. This is why I was so pleased to see the *Leon Fraser* saved. I hope the *Alpena* will sail another fifty years!

Note: The *Paul R. Tregurtha* was launched in 1981 as the *William J. DeLancey*, the largest vessel on the Great Lakes. In 1990, her name was changed to honor Mr. Paul R. Tregurtha, vice-chairman of the board of the Interlake Steamship Co.

## "MUSIC FILLS AIR IN FACE OF DISASTER"

### SINKING OF STR. TASHMOO AT AMHERSTBURG,

Reprinted from  
Detroit News  
June 19, 1936

"With 1,400 passengers aboard, dancing to the tunes of a swing band, and with water rushing through a hole in her bottom faster than the pumps could handle it, the steamer *Tashmo* raced death and disaster in the Detroit River late Thursday night and won.

Today the steamer rested on the river's bottom adjoining a dock near Amherstburg, Ontario, but the 1,400 passengers and 120 members of the crew were safe. Heroes of the race were members of the engine room "black gang" crew, who stoked the boiler fires even though water swirled around them waist deep, and the members of the band, led by Jean Calloway, a woman.

The steamer did not sink until after it had docked near Amherstburg and all of the passengers had been

put ashore in the chill of an unusually cool June night.

The *Tashmo*, one of the best-known excursion boats on the lakes, left its dock at the foot of Griswold street for a moonlight cruise Thursday evening and made the trip to Sugar Island without incident.

#### Ship Trembles

It left Sugar Island at 11:17 p.m. and proceeded through the Sugar Island channel, just below Grosse Ile in American waters.

"I was in the pilot house," Capt. Donald McAlpine, veteran Great Lakes seaman said, "We had come two miles from Sugar Island. I felt a shock. It was hardly more than a slight trembling. We were about half a mile from the main ship channel.



TASHMOO resting on the river bottom at Amherstburg, Ontario.





Dosein Museum Coll.

*TASHMOO underway with another boat load of passengers bound for Tashmoo Park on the St. Clair River.*

"I rang the engine room and they told me a hole had been stove in her bottom under the boiler room. We set the power pumps working and decided to make a run for the nearest dock. There was no confusion and no excitement. The crew performed wonderfully, and few of the passengers knew anything was wrong.

"Apparently we hit a rock. It is my opinion a dredging crew to save time, had dumped rock in the channel some time earlier in the night."

Emergency lights, which operate from storage batteries were turned on, in case the water should reach the boiler fires. The engine room was given orders for full speed ahead. Ten minutes after the shock was felt the steamer reached the dock of the Brunner-Mond Corp., a mile and a quarter above Amherstburg.

#### 10-Minute Race

The shock occurred at 11:35 p.m.. It was 11:45 when *Tashmoo* reached the dock.

During the race to shore the band played without letup. The dance floor of 3,000 square feet was crowded. Men and women laughed and some of the more exhilarated shouted. Stewards and petty officers mingled with the crowd, but nothing in their demeanor suggested the grave disaster.

Even after the boat docked the crowd refused to leave. The band kept on playing for 45 minutes. Fi-

nally the lights were turned off. Passengers still refused to leave and the band played on.

It was nearly 1 a.m. when the last passengers left. The crew remained aboard until 1:30 a.m. when the steam in the boilers gave out and the pumps quit. A half hour later the *Tashmoo* settled to the bottom in 18 feet of water. Its lower deck was submerged, but the upper decks and the pilot house were clear. There was a slight list to the boat, however, and for a time it was feared she would turn on her side.

#### Inquires Begun

Two federal agencies began investigations today. There were the U.S. Bureau of Navigation, which is in charge of steamboat inspections and conducts hearings into the conduct of ship's officers and the U. S. Army District Engineer's office.

Capt. William T. Kiel and Capt. William H. Dungan of the Bureau of Navigation, visited Amherstburg to make a personal inspection and round up members of the *Tashmoo's* crew for a hearing.

The Army Engineers' inquiry was in charge of Col. V.L. Peterson, district engineer and Col. L.V. Frazier, of Cleveland, division engineer. The engineers were charged with the duty of keeping channels clear of obstructions, and they also are in charge of the Livingstone Channel dredging.

"The Flats" proper lie along this channel. It is here that the major portion of the inhabitants have built their summer homes, and where they live during the vacation season. This beautiful stream, so forceful and magnificent, curves and bends between its banks a distance of ten miles to Algonac. The entire channel is built up with splendid cottages, spacious clubhouses, and pleasure resorts.

Like Venice, it is a city built on the water.

**Tashmoo Park**

A pleasure resort for picnics, organized excursions and the public in general, who come as individuals and in small and large parties to enjoy a delightful day's outing. There is a beautiful, big dancing pavilion with a first class orchestra provided for all day service. There are two baseball diamonds, running tracks, merry-go-round, ferris wheel, whips and scores of devices for the entertainment and amusement of children and grown-ups.

**Algonac**

After Tashmoo Park, we stop at Algonac. Just across the river lies the Canadian Indian reservation on Walpole Island.

**Sarnia, Ont.**

A pretty, prosperous Canadian city of 20,000. Directly across the river is—

**Port Huron**

A bustling, thoroughly American city of thirty-five thousand. Here we have from 2:10 to 3:10 p. m., then we start on our Return Trip.

**The Cafeteria**

There is a splendid cafeteria on the *Tashmoo*, and the food served is the finest obtainable; also lunch counter and Rathskellar service. Beer garden on third deck.



There are lunch counters and refreshment stands too.

**Fares -** Detroit to St. Clair Flats or Tashmoo Park and return same day, 75c week days; \$1 Sundays and unlimited.

**PORT HURON, or SARNIA** \$1.00 one way, \$1.50 Round Trip. Children 6 to 14 half fare.

**SPECIAL RATES FOR PARTIES**

**Your Railroad Ticket is Good by Boat**

Tourists' tickets issued by any line, reading Grand Trunk Ry. between Detroit and Port Huron, or Detroit and Sarnia, Ontario, are good on Str. Tashmoo either direction.

**CONNECTIONS**

Time Shown is subject to change without notice

<b>AT SARNIA, ONT.:</b> with	<b>Eastern Time</b>
<b>NORTHERN NAVIGATION CO. STEAMERS</b>	
For Sault Ste. Marie, Pt. Arthur and Duluth	
Leave Pt. Edward Tues. and Saturdays.....4:00pm	
<b>CAN. NATIONAL RYS.</b>	
For Strahroy and London.....*5:28pm	
<b>AT PORT HURON:</b> with	<b>Central Time</b>
<b>GRAND TRUNK RY.</b>	
For Im. City, Duland, Battle Creek, Chicago.....*10:20pm	
<b>BAD AXE BUS LINE</b>	
For Crowell, Sandusky, Bad Axe.....Week Days 3:30pm Sunday 7:05 pm	
<b>AT DETROIT:</b> with	<b>Eastern Time</b>
MICHIGAN CENTRAL.....	} From New M.C. Depot 15th St.
N. Y. C. R. R.....	
CAN. PAC. RY.....	
GRAND TRUNK RY.....	Brush St. Depot
PERE MARQUETTE.....	
B. & O. R. R.....	Union Depot—
PENNSYLVANIA R. R.....	Fort and 3rd Sts.
WABASH R. R.....	
<b>D. &amp; C. NAVIGATION CO.—Third St. Wharf</b>	
Leave for Buffalo 5:00 p. m. and for Cleveland 11:30 p. m. daily	

**EXCURSION ARRANGEMENTS**

Excursion outings for societies, lodges, churches, clubs and other organizations can be arranged for Tashmoo Park where a delightful day may be enjoyed in addition to the wonderful water trip going and returning.

**SHOW BOAT MOONLIGHT**

TO TASHMOO PARK EVERY SATURDAY, 9:30 P. M.



Dancing Moonlights to Sugar Island—Leave Griswold St. wharf, Detroit, every night, except Saturday, 8:45 p. m.

### In High Spirits

The passengers, when they reached land took the whole affair as a lark. Some of them found drift wood and lit bonfires. When spirits drooped, the band played some more.

Buses were chartered and returned some of the men and women to Detroit. Other waited for the Detroit & Windsor Ferry Co. steamer, *Columbia*, which

was summoned shortly after the *Tashmoo* docked. The *Columbia* landed them at the foot of Griswold street at 5:30 a.m., shivering and hungry, but safe.

### Walk a Mile

The *Columbia* could not dock, however, anywhere near the *Tashmoo*. It finally tied up at the Amherstburg dock proper. Hundreds of the passengers walked the mile and a quarter into Amherstburg. A few took taxicabs and other took a street car.

The *Tashmoo* had been chartered for the moonlight by the Pal's Social Club of Hamtramck, but tickets were also sold to persons not members of the club.

Chester Skonieczny, secretary of the club, and his wife, Dorothy, were among the first to arrive in Detroit. They returned by street car and bus.

"We didn't know what had happened," Skonieczny said. "There was a thud and the boat tilted. We knew there was trouble, but the band kept playing and everybody kept dancing, and we didn't pay much attention to it. Everybody was laughing and joking."

### Run Under Charter

The *Tashmoo* is owned by the White Star Steamship Co., but is operated by the Tashmoo Transit Co. under a long term charter. Charles F. Bielman, Jr., vice-president and general manager of the Tashmoo Transit Co. hastened to Amherstburg when he heard of the sinking.

"From what the captain and the officers have told me, there was no irregularity on the boat," he said. "I am proud of the crew and the way they behaved."

The replacement value of the *Tashmoo* is \$750,000, Bielman said. About \$20,000 was spent on renovations recently.

### Months to Repair

The steamer carried insurance, but whether it was sufficient to cover the damage and loss of revenue has not been determined. Bielman said it might take months to raise and the recondition the *Tashmoo*, but that he hoped to have the vessel back in service before the end of the season.

"The important thing is the wonderful way that crew handled the crowd, without a person getting

hurt," the general manager repeated. "That was really a fancy job."

Bielman said it was possible that a rock had been carried into the Sugar Island channel by the strong current. The depth of the water there is 14 feet, about two feet more than the *Tashmoo's* draft.

### \$3,000 In the Safe

The company, Bielman added, is negotiating for another vessel to take the place of the *Tashmoo* until the latter is ready for service again. When the *Tashmoo* sank, \$3,000 was in the safe, and is now under water.

Capt. McAlpine was assisted in docking the boat by Walter Webster, first mate, William Schurer, second mate; and L. T. Hessong, chief engineer.

"A minute after we felt the shock, water started pouring in through a hole under the forward starboard boiler," Hessong said. "The crew kept on firing the boilers, even when the water rose to their waists. They quit only when the water got so deep it was only a matter a minutes until it would put out the fires and stop the pumps."

### Last to Leave

McAlpine has been sailing the Great Lakes for 30 years. Other members of the crew have comparable experience, he said.

While the *Tashmoo* was racing for the dock, a Coast Guard patrol boat came alongside and a tug from Amherstburg came out. Capt. McAlpine assured them the steamer would be able to make the dock with less danger than if it were to anchor and attempt to transfer the passengers up midstream.

After the passengers had been landed at Amherstburg, they made merry in the streets of the small Canadian town for more than an hour.

An accordionist known to the passengers only as "Ted" played for nearly an hour on the dock while some of the young men and women danced in the streets and on the dock.

Capt. McAlpine and the mates and engineers remained at Amherstburg after the *Columbia* left for Detroit.

### Property Saved

Virtually all of the personal effects of the 120 members of the crew were saved. These were stored in the crew's quarters below the main deck, and before the ship sank, deck hands and cabin watchmen went to the crew's quarters and removed clothing and suitcases to the *Columbia*.

Soundings taken by ship's officers indicated the water is about 18 feet deep on the outer side of the sunken steamer. The water was at the level of the second deck when the *Tashmoo* finally settled.

The only member of the *Tashmoo's* crew who returned to Detroit on the *Columbia* was J.M. Christie, purser. The passengers were in his charge.

"As nearly as I could fix the time, we scraped bottom at 11:36 p.m., the purser said. "We had landed at Sugar Island to give the passengers about 40 minutes to dance, and were on our way out of the private channel into the Livingstone Channel at the time.

#### No Warning Needed

"None of the passengers were told how serious the damage might be. They remained calm and happy. There was no announcement made to the passengers, because the ship's officers knew we could make shore in a few minutes and have plenty of time to discharge the passengers with perfect safety."

The purser paid tribute to the self-possession of Jean Calloway's Band from Baltimore which was engaged by the Pals Club for the moonlight. The orchestra is composed of 15 men led by Miss Calloway.

"From the time the ship's lights went out and the emergency lights were turned on, until all the passengers were off the ship, the band placed continuously," Christie said. "They showed a lot of spirit and cooperation and worked hard to help us out."

The orchestra left Amherstburg before the *Columbia* sailed, traveling up the river shore to the Detroit-Windsor tunnel to their bus, which waited at the Detroit end of the tunnel.

#### Unaware of Danger

J.J. Dewalsch, immigration officer at the De-

troit end of the tunnel, said a dozen bus loads of passengers came through from Windsor. "Most of them didn't know what had happened. They thought something had gone wrong with the engines and certainly didn't feel they had been in any danger," he said.

Lorne Helpel, the cabin watchman, who was on the dance floor at the time the boat struck, said the floor was crowded and the band didn't miss a note.

"I never saw passengers like them," he said. "They didn't seem to care whether the boat sank or not, so long as there was music."

The *Tashmoo* was built in 1900. On December 9, 1927 during a 60-mile-an-hour storm, she was driven from the dock at the foot of Griswold street upriver to the Belle Isle bridge. Fourteen cables were snapped. No one was aboard at the time.

#### Aground in 1934

On August 3, 1934, the *Tashmoo* was driven aground near Squirrel Island, near Tashmoo Park, during a wind storm.

The wind drove the *Tashmoo* nearly 500 feet over a sand bar into shallow water. Fewer than 200 passengers making the trip from Port Huron to Tashmoo Park, were on board and they were taken to Algonac after the storm subsided. More than 1,000 men and women who had stopped at Tashmoo Park on the upriver trip of the steamer were stranded before they were taken off by the *Put-in-Bay*.

Bielman was on board at the time of the accident.





## Historic Old Tashmoo Again Rides River Waves

Detroit Free Press  
August 31, 1936

Only the excellent condition of the hull of the historic *Tashmoo* prevented a major marine catastrophe June 19 when the steamer struck a submerged rock in the lower Detroit River. Capt. J. Earl McQueen of Amherstburg, Ont. present owner, said today as the *Tashmoo* once more rode the waves at the north end of Bob-Lo Island.

Raising of the steamer, the biggest salvage job in the Detroit area in recent years was completed late Saturday, and Sunday morning. The *Tashmoo* was towed by two of McQueen's tugs to a harbor at Bob-Lo, a mile and a half away.

"The hole in the hull was only the size of a man's head," McQueen said. "A hole that size lets in water fast enough, but the steamer evidently struck an obstacle with great force and if the bottom had not been in excellent condition, if it had been rotten after years

of service, I don't think the 1,500 people who were on her would have had time to get off. She would have sunk immediately."

McQueen took over the salvage job after another company had given up and, with the aid of Capt. William Thompson, Detroit diver, began the raising operations two weeks ago. A 10-foot coffer dam, 600 feet long, was built to raise the *Tashmoo*, which is nearly 300 feet in length, and four pumps went into action Saturday. Thirty-five men were employed in the work.

Capt. McQueen said he had not decided what he will do with the steamer. Water has caused extensive damage to the interior and he does not know whether the steamer is worth reconditioning. The *Tashmoo* may end her days moored to a dock as a dance pavilion, McQueen asserted.



McQUEEN'S lighter BATAVIA alongside the sunken TASHMOO at Amherstburg. The TASHMOO would never sail again.

# GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS



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Dan McCormick  
Jim Sprunt

Terry Doyon  
William Howell  
Alan Mann  
Terry Sechen  
John Vournakis

Sep. 4. . . The September 4, 1995 issue of Canadian Sailings reported that Capt. Lillian Kluka was issued a pilots license for the Lake Ontario District on the Great Lakes. Capt. Kluka was the first female marine pilot to be licensed in Canada. She graduated from the marine academy in Owen Sound in 1977. She sailed for the Patterson fleet when she obtained her captain's license in 1986.

Sep. 5. . . The Canadian Coast Guard's icebreaker *Griffon* arrived at Port Weller Drydock and entered the drydock on the 17th.

. . . The last of the bunker fuel oil was pumped from the sunken barge *Cleveco* in Lake Erie. (See page 161 of November *Telescope*.)

Sep. 8. . . USX's *Philip R. Clarke* arrived in Ashland to unload coal at the Reiss Coal Dock. She was the second vessel of the season to call at Ashland.

Sep. 9. . . The Lake Carriers' Association reported that in July, U.S.-flag lakers moved 13.3 million tons of cargo. This was an increase of 2.8% over July of last year. Since the shipping season began on March 4th, to the end of July, all cargo carried by U.S.-flag lakers totaled 53.3 million tons, an increase of 9.6% over the same period last year. July shipments of iron ore declined slightly. July coal shipments from the SMET facility in Superior, WI. increased by 19.2%, but shipments from Lake Erie ports declined by 24%. Stone shipments in July increased by 20% and year to date shipments were up 28.1%. In July, 58 of 61 U.S.-flag vessels were in service.

Sep. 13. . . Upper Lakes' *Canadian Provider* arrived in Superior to load western coal. She departed on the 14th for Quebec where she will unload at the St. Lawrence Stevedoring Terminal. Her cargo is part of 60,000 tons of western coal bound for Spain. If these shipments prove to be economical, it could provide the Canadian straight-deckers with a cargo to carry in the summer, eliminating the need for summer lay-up.

. . . Paterson's *Cartierdoc* tied up below Lock 1 in the Welland Canal for repairs to the steering gear. She cleared Port Weller Dry Dock and returned to service on the 21st.

. . . CSL's *Halifax* went aground in the St. Clair River while approaching the Lambton Power Plant a few miles below Sarnia. She was released later in the day.

. . . Algoma Central will convert their straight-decker *Capt. Henry Jackman* to a self-unloader at Port Weller Drydock in late October. The conversion will cost about \$20 million. She was built in 1981 at Collingwood,

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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**

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Ontario as *Lake Wabush* for Carryore, Ltd. and was sold to Algoma Central in 1987.

Sep. 15. . . The salty *Lake Michigan* loaded 25,214 tons of western coal at the SMET facility in Superior, WI. This was the third cargo of western coal to be loaded at this facility for direct shipment to Endesa's power plant in El Ferrol, Spain. *Lake Michigan* was built in 1981 as *Federal Maas* and was renamed along with several others Fednav vessels earlier this year.

Sep. 16. . . Upper Lakes' *Canadian Voyager* came off the drydock at Port Weller and tied up at the fit-out wall. She arrived at Port Weller on August 14, 1995.

. . . The St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corp. reported that tonnage passing through the St. Lawrence Seaway at the end of August was up 14% over the same period last year. Grain shipments were up 52%, iron ore was up 4% and coal was up by 69%. Commercial vessel transits stood at 1,559, an increase of 6%. Of the total vessel passages, 1,046 were lakers, which is an increase of 24%.

Sep. 17. . . *Canadian Provider* tied up at Wharf #2 in the Welland Canal for hull repairs. She loaded coal in Superior on the 13th, bound for Quebec.

Sep. 18. . . The Seaway Port Authority of Duluth reported that waterborne shipments through the Twin Ports at the end of August were up 18.4% over the same period last year. The 5-year average was up 16.8%. Through the end of August, 687 vessels called at the Twin Ports, 93 more than the same period last year.



CANADIAN PROVIDER shown here in Maumee Bay, Toledo Ohio.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Photo by Jim Hoffman

GORDON C. LEITCH shown here at Cargill Elevator in Toledo, Ohio.

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... The east coast passenger-freight carrier *Taveaner*, built at Collingwood in 1962 will be retired at the end of this month.

... American Steamship's *Buffalo* went aground at Port Inland. After an inspection for bottom damage, she cleared for Sturgeon Bay for repairs.

Sep. 19. ... Upper Lakes' *Gordon C. Leitch (ii)*, ex-*Ralph Misener (iv)* received a gash above the waterline at the Eisenhower Lock in the Seaway.

... The tanker *Enerchem Refiner* departed her lay-up berth in Sarnia and loaded a cargo of Bunker C oil for Sept. Isles, Quebec. Because she had some rudder damage, and her 5-year inspection had expired, she was accompanied by the Purvis Marine tug *Wilfred M. Cohen*. The pair passed down through the Welland Canal on the 20th and arrived in Sept. Isles on the 24th. On the 25th, the pair cleared Sept. Isles for Port Cartier, Quebec to unload the remainder of her cargo. Institute member and *Telescope* contributor Alan Mann was aboard the tug for the entire trip.

Sep. 20. ... The *Caribbean Mercy* cleared the Seaway after a summer tour of the Great Lakes.

Sep. 23. ... The Army Corps of Engineers barge *H.J. Schwartz* was launched at Sturgeon Bay, WI.

Sep. 25. ... Upper Lakes' *Gordon C. Leitch (ii)* loaded a second shipment of western coal for Quebec at the SMET in Superior.

Sep. 26. ... Upper Lakes' *Canadian Navigator* loaded a partial cargo of western coal at the SMET, completing the 60,000 ton shipment to Quebec. After loading the coal, she shifted to the Harvest States Elevator #1 in Superior to finish loading with wheat. The wheat was bound for Port Cartier, Quebec.

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**• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**

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... P & H's *Oakglen* came off the Port Weller Dry Dock and cleared upbound. She had arrived at Port Weller on the 11th.

Sep. 27. ... Upper Lakes' *Canadian Mariner* received heavy damage to her port bow when she struck the abutment at Bridge 10 in the Welland Canal.

... *Canadian Voyager* departed Port Weller and completed sea trials and returned to service. She will load grain in Toledo. With her departure, all Upper Lakes vessels are in service.

Sep. 28. ... *Buffalo* came off the drydock in Sturgeon Bay following bottom repairs.

... USX's *Arthur M. Anderson* arrived in Ashland to unload coal at the Reiss Coal Dock. She was Ashland's fourth vessel of the season.

Sep. 29. ... The tug *Atomic* passed upbound in the Welland Canal for Port Maitland where she will be repowered.

Sep. 30. ... Ontario Northland plans to lease the passenger/car ferry *Nindawayma*, which has been idle at Owen Sound.

Oct. 1. ... After temporary repairs, the *Canadian Mariner* continued on to Sorel to unload. She had struck the abutment at Bridge #10 in the Welland Canal on Sept. 27th.

... The D.M. & I.R. Ore dock at Two Harbors reopened after being shut down at the end of August. The first laker to load was the *Roger Blough*.



CANADIAN VOYAGER at Anderson's Elevator in Toledo, Ohio.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Photo by Alan Mann

CUYAHOGA at Sarnia, Ontario on October 14, 1995.

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... The Russian tug *Neftegaz 66* arrived in Halifax for repairs. She became disabled on June 6th off Sable Island while towing the *Canadian Harvest*, ex-*Rimouski* and *Canadian Pathfinder*, ex-*Baie St. Paul*.

Oct. 5... *Algontario* was the first straight-decker to be completely unloaded by the barge *Hamilton Transfer*, ex-*Crispin Oglebay* at Dofasco in Hamilton.

Oct. 7... *Aurora Topaz* anchored in the Seaway with engine problems.

... Patterson's *Windoc* and the *USCG Mackinaw* came off the drydock at Sturgeon Bay, WI.

... The *Cuyahoga*, ex-*J. Burton Ayers* was christened at Sarnia, Ontario. She is owned by Lower Lakes Towing.

... Low water in August caused a decline in the amount of cargoes carried by U.S.-flag lakers according to the Lake Carriers' Association. Although there were 57 U.S.-flag lakers in service, the same as August of last year, they carried about 300,000 tons less than August of last year. However, despite the loss of cargo carrying capacity, iron ore shipments increased by about 72,000 tons over August of last year.

... Since the opening of this year's shipping season, iron ore carried in U.S.-flag lakers increased 6.6% over last year.

... In August, shipment of stone in U.S. laker s increased by 6% over August of last year. The low water levels didn't affect the stone trade as much as it did iron ore and other bulk cargoes. Since the beginning of the shipping season, cargoes of stone in U.S. lakers has increased by 22% over last year.

... Coal shipments from U.S. ports in August were down from last year, but year to date shipments were up slightly. Through the end of August, shipments of iron ore, coal and stone were up by 8.5% over the same

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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**

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period last year.

... In August, shipments of iron ore, coal and stone from U.S. and Canadian ports declined by about 100,000 tons compared to August of last year. Iron ore shipments were about the same as last year. Coal shipments were down by 115, but stone shipments increased by 12%. Since the beginning of this year's shipping season, shipments of iron ore from U.S. and Canadian ports were up 7%. Coal shipments remain about the same as last year, but stone shipments were up 11%.

Oct. 8. . . *Canadian Mariner* entered Port Weller Dry Dock for hull repairs.

Oct. 9. . . *Canadian Hunter* cleared Toronto under tow of tugs *Glenside*, *Glenbrook* and *Robert B. No. 1*. She had been laid-up in Toronto since December, 1992. She arrived in Montreal on the 13th.

Oct. 10. . . The former Seaway tug *Welland* was working with the gas drilling barge *Mr. Neil*.

... The tug *Miseford* was at Port Dover, Ontario with the tank barge *S.M.T.B. No. 7* with engine problems. The tug was owned by Purvis Marine and the barge by Shell Canada.

Oct. 11. . . The Russian tug *Neftegaz 66* arrived in Montreal to tow *Canadian Hunter* and *Algostream* overseas for scrapping.

... The barge *Buckeye (ii)* is slowly being scrapped at Lake Calumet. Most of her bow is gone.

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BUCKEYE at Lake Calumet in August, 1994.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Photo by Jim Hoffman

ALGOVILLE, ex-SENNEVILLE outbound at Toledo in October, 1994.

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... The tug *Jerry G.*, owned by Quebec Tugs, Ltd. suffered a small fire in her engine room while at Montreal.

Oct. 14. . . The U.S. Coast Guard's new buoy tender *Ida Lewis* was side-launched into the Menominee River at Marinette, WI. She is the first of the "Keeper" class buoy tenders to be built by Marinette Marine Corp.

... The new McAllister tug *Charles-Antione* underwent sea trials at Montreal.

Oct. 15. . . The casino vessel *Northern Belle* arrived in Montreal as deck cargo aboard the barge *Caps Express* with the tug *Harvey Trojan*. The tow was delayed leaving New Orleans because of Hurricane Louis and didn't clear until sometime after Sept. 13th. The *Belle* will be docked at Windsor, Ontario on the Detroit River.

Oct. 19. . . The casino vessel *Empress III* passed upbound through the Welland Canal. She will lay-up for the winter at Peterson Builders, Inc. at Sturgeon Bay, WI.

Oct. 20. . . The new Sugar Island ferry *Sugar Islander II* arrived at Little Rapids Cut near Sault Ste. Marie, MI. She was dedicated later in the day.

Oct. 23. . . The 1,000-footer *Columbia Star* went aground in the channel in Monroe, MI. due to high winds.

Oct. 24. . . The Peterson-built yacht *Jefferson Beach* passed downbound through the Welland Canal on her delivery trip.

Oct. 26. . . *Catherine Desgagnes* passed upbound through the Welland Canal with an old RAF airplane as deck cargo. She was bound for Milwaukee, but the destination of the aircraft is unknown.

Oct. 30. . . The tug *Krystal K* with the new Corps of Engineers' crane barge *H.J. Schwartz* and the ex-navy tug *Natchitoches*, ex-YTB 799 passed upbound through the Soo Locks bound for Duluth. The *Natchitoches*



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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**


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departed from Wilmington, NC, stopping off in Detroit to pick up the Corps of Engineers barge *Huron*. The *H.J. Schwartz* will replace the old Corps of Engineers crane barge *Coleman* in Duluth.

Oct. 31 . . . The new ferry *Sugar Islander II* went into service. The old ferry *Sugar Islander* was taken down to Neebish Island on November 2nd.

Miscellaneous . . .

Plans for ferry service between Alpena, MI. and Manitoulin Island has been cancelled.

The tanker *LeFrene No. 1, ex-Jos. Simard*, arrived in Alang, India for scrapping on May 29, 1995.

The ex-package freighter *Fort St. Louis* has been sold to Christos P. Shipping Corp., Belize and renamed *Christos P*. No dates for the sale or rename were given.

Great Lakes Calendar . . .

Sat. Apr. 20- Lecture by Dale Gensman titled "Round Island Lighthouse". Begins at 11:00 am in DeRoy Hall at museum.

Sun. Apr. 21-"Toasts Across the Waters". Wine tasting of Ontario and Michigan wines presented by The Merchant's Warehouse. Tickets are \$25.00.

Sat. Apr. 27- GLMI Auction begins at 11:00 am in DeRoy Hall at museum. Limited seating. Tickets \$5.00.

Sat. May 18 - Museum closed due to bike race. Entertainment program to be held at Museum of Arts and History in Port Huron. Speaker Jim Bearman will present a slide program titled "Ports of Northeastern Michigan". Program begins at 8:00 p.m.

Back Cover Picture . . . *Raleigh* (US 110154) wooden freighter built in 1871 in Cleveland, Ohio. Measured 227.3 x 34.0 x 15.0. 1205 Gross tons; 1104 Net tons. Built for J. & J. Corrigan in Cleveland. Later sold to H. Wineman of Detroit. On November 30, 1911, lost rudder in a severe storm on Lake Erie and foundered between Buffalo and Port Colborne.

## Members Exchange

For study on Canadian vessels, need to see Canada List of Shipping for 1917, 1922, 1929 and 1932. Contact: Sterling Berry, 898 Lakeland Ct., Grosse Pointe, MI. 48230 (313) 882-5018.

The Bradley Boats in print. Contact: Gerald Micketti, 630 W. Silver Lake Rd. S. Traverse City, MI 49684. (616) 943-4633.

Wanted: Color photos of motor yachts *Helene* and *Delphine*. Contact: Bill Broedell, 587 Pt. Tremble, Algonac, MI. 48001 (810) 794-9489.

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*Telescope*, the Institute's journal, is published six times per year and covers Great Lakes topics. The Editors welcome the opportunity to review manuscripts on Great Lakes marine history for publication.

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