



# Telescope

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**MEMBERSHIP NOTES •**

Port Arthur Built: An Illustrated History of Port Arthur Shipbuilding Company by David Benedet covers the variety of vessels built at Thunder Bay, Ontario. The first ship launched was the Dunelm in 1911 and the last vessel was launched in 1993 when the yard closed. Like most shipyards on the lakes, it survived by branching out into other areas such as converting straight-deck ships to self unloaders and also building ships for service in World War I and II. Photos of each vessel built are included along with vessel plans of each type built there. This 152-page book retails for \$21.95. Those ordering by mail should include \$3.50 for postage.

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**MEETING NOTICES •**

The next entertainment meeting will be Saturday, May 18th at 8:00 p.m. at the Museum of Arts & History in Port Huron. Our guest speaker will be Jim Bearman presenting slides titled "Northeastern Ports of Michigan".

Annual events on Belle Isle include the Wolverine 200 Bike Race on May 18th; Gold Cup Hydroplane races on June 1st and 2nd; and Detroit Grand Prix Race the weekend of June 7-9, 1996.

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**OUR COVER PICTURE . . .** The smoke billowing from the Great Lakes Towing tug *Arizona* clearly dates this photo back to a by-gone era on the Great Lakes. Before bow thrusters were installed on freighters, towing assistance from tugs in and out of rivers was a common sight. The tug *Arizona* still operates for Great Lakes, but the U.S. Steel steamer *August Ziesing* was cut up for scrap in the 1980's. This photo was taken by Boyd Dennison, Jr. The location of this photo is unknown and any information from members would be appreciated.

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## AN INTERESTING SEASON

by  
LAWSON BROWNE

In the spring of 1944, "Brownie" was called and went to the str. *Norman J. Kopmeier*. She was laid up at the old Hocking Valley coal dock. The crew members were showing up and things were humming with their efforts to get her underway. After a few days of cleaning and restoring equipment, she departed her winter lay-up berth.

A coal dealer in Milwaukee, for whom the ship was named, was at a critical point for low stocks. His major customers were high priority and municipal users. Hence, he must be supplied in any way possible. The ship was loaded at the C&O docks and started up the lakes.

Knowing the hazard of ice full well, the ship

proceeded with watchful caution. The Detroit and St. Clair rivers were open, although ice was visible along the shore. Lake Huron was open all the way to Thunder Bay. From there patches of pack ice were found. Capt. Laughlin had talked by radiophone and knew Round Island Passage was solid. Hence, the usual route was the most sensible. That was to travel between Bois Blanc Island and Cheboygan. The ice there was said to be brash. Apparently it had been broken and was still loose.

Soon there were no open places and the ship was working to make any headway. When she stopped, the engine would be increased until she started ahead, then checked so she could feel her way through the



McDonald Coll./Dossin Museum Coll.

*Originally launched as the E.D. CARTER in 1906 at Detroit Shipbuilding Co., she was renamed NORMAN J. KOPMEIER in 1961.*



Photo by Peter Worden

*The KOPMEIER was converted to a self-unloader in 1932 and later sold for scrap in 1980.*

broken ice. Running only slow and at half speed, it was thought she would stop, rather than hurt herself. That sounded like a good plan, but it proved to be not perfect.

The last time she stopped going at slow speed, half speed was tried. With no result, full was tried. She started to move, so slow speed was ordered. At that moment, a loud gushing sound was heard. She had a hole in her bow and the forepeak was filling.

The Bos'n and several of the deck crew were awake, playing cards in the dunnage room. They came to the fok'sl deck immediately. The hole seemed to be more or less a small one, like a porthole, and about the same size.

The mates were working with the remainder of the crew and shouting orders which sounded practical and sensible. Mr. Wilson, the Bos'n, sent three men aft to fetch the grate bar while he went in his room to pull a mattress from the spare bunk there. Laying the mattress on the fok'sl deck, he secured the grate bar to the long edge with heaving lines, which were secured to the mattress by looping it around it. This is called a "Fother". Lowering this fother through the onrushing water, stopped the flow momentarily. Then a loud slurp was heard as the mattress disappeared through the hole and into the forepeak tank. The grate bar and lines were retrieved, and in a few minutes, the forepeak

was filled to put the puncture below lake level.

The radiophone was busy. Through firm cooperation and agreeable conditions, the *Kopmeier* would go to Calcite for temporary repairs.

Mate Turner told Brownie to see the Captain in the pilothouse. The Captain said, "Brownie, will you go below, with a light, stay on the catwalk at the control room? If you see any leaks, ANY LEAK, come to the pilothouse and tell us immediately. We have only one bulkhead."

Away Brownie went with a lantern. At that time the *Kopmeier* was only thirty-eight years old, and the bulkhead was probably original. He saw a slight bulge all over, but no leaks.

The vessel arrived at Calcite and docked at the powerhouse, starboard side to. Capt. Harlow Meno, a surveyor was there shortly to formulate a simple plan. Seven hundred tons of lump coal was unloaded from the number one cargo hold. This brought the puncture above lake level. Then by pumping out the forepeak, raised the damaged area to an easy workable situation. The damaged area was starboard, H strake, No. 8 plate.

A plate six or eight feet square was welded in place to seal the leak, she was then permitted to continue her trip. In the meantime the ice had dissipated enough to warrant safe passage. After unloading in

Milwaukee, she proceeded to the shipyard in Manitowoc, where the bow was rebuilt. When repairs were completed, the *Kopmeier* returned to regular service on the lakes.

Later, perhaps twenty-four years later, Brownie was talking to Capt. Meno, when the ice incident was mentioned. He, too, recalled it as clearly as Brownie. He said, "I've seen all kinds of punctured hulls, but that one beat them all. It was a smooth hole, almost round, and couldn't have been cut any cleaner with a cutting torch."

In 1944, it was not unusual for coke to be shipped from the Soo to the Welland Canal. For the *Kopmeier*, it was a rare cargo, indeed. The ship went up through the Canadian Lock, headed into the slip at Algoma Steel Company, and loaded her port side. The loading rig wouldn't reach the starboard side, so she went out in the river, turned around and backed in to finish. Coke, what a load! Like running in good ballast. She went up the river a ways to turn around when she left.

That same year, the *Kopmeier* made a few trips to Georgian Bay. There were many Great Lakes sailors who had never been into Georgian Bay. What a beautiful place. Seemingly desolate and pristine.

Loading coal at a new (at that time) dock in

South Chicago at the foot of 100th Street. The *Kopmeier* would travel up to the Wisconsin slip to turn around and return to the dock to load port side to. The trip up the lakes was an ordinary journey, but once entering Georgian Bay, most of the crew had a new experience. Capt. John Montgomery, who was the Fleet Captain, was aboard on the first trip, apparently to see the operation. He was enjoying the trip, what with telling seas stories, and visiting Capt. Ray Laughlin, his long time friend.

The cargo was destined for a railroad fueling station and was put on the dock at Little Current, and transferred from there. Little Current was a mild name for a place where the current can be so strong and change so quickly.

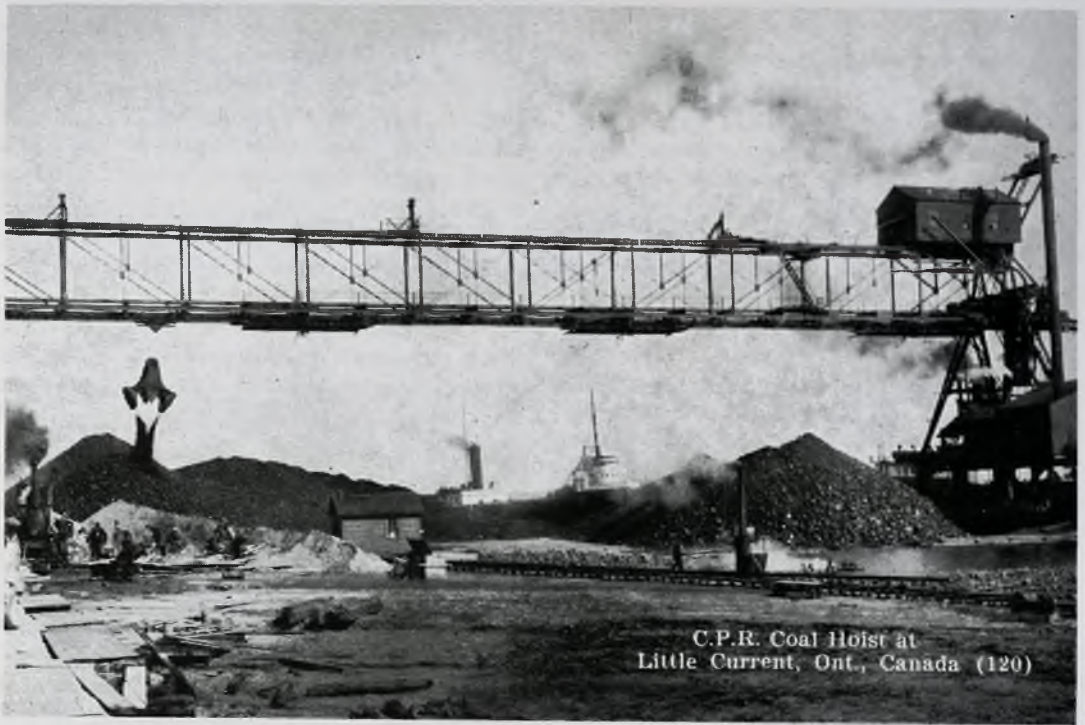
There was no radio communication with the coal dock. There was a large bridge crane used to unload straight-deck ships. When the current changed and started running west to east, the prearranged signal was to place a large white board in the window of the crane. This could be easily seen from the anchorage area where the ship waited.

The common procedure was to go in against the current, unload, and if and when the current was still, or again, running from west to east, leave and go on out the North Channel.



The Bridge, Little Current,  
Manitoulin Island, Ont., Can. (36)

*Little Current on Manitoulin Island, Ontario.*



C.P.R. Coal Hoist at  
Little Current, Ont., Canada (120)

Author's Coll.

*CPR coal hoist at Little Current, Ontario.*

Once while departing, the *Kopmeier's* stern was springing out when the current suddenly changed. There was plenty of room, so the current turned her and she went out the way she came in. Yes, Little Current trips were very interesting.

That year there was an injury accident on the ship. On each side of the unloading elevator were small hatches used to load the forward end of the number one hold. The center of number one hatch had been removed to make way for the house enclosing the elevator. Nicknamed "Booby" hatches. When the hatches were open, a chain was furnished, which led from a post at the outboard forward corner of the hatch to the house around the elevator. An intended safety feature.

It was a cold windy, distasteful morning. Loading fine dusty coal used at powerhouses, nicknamed "bug dust". The air was filled with dust and along with the semidarkness, the visibility was limited.

At 6:30 am, Brownie was at the forward winches, with the Third Mate on the outboard side, supervising the loading at number four or five hatch. Brownie was pacing back and forth, partly to keep warm and partly to watch the Mate, if and when he would signal a shift.

A crewman came out of the crew hall in hurry, a little late going on watch. A young able fellow, who

like many others, had a habit of crossing the corner of the "Booby" hatch to go aft on the port side - "shortcutting". In a hurry to get on watch, he went toward the open hatch.

Brownie didn't actually see him fall, and was looking the other way when he thought, "Steve went toward the booby hatch!" He went down the starboard side a ways and couldn't see Steve down either side. So he shouted to the Third Mate, "I think Steve in the hold!"

Shutting off the loading rig, they went to the hatch and called down there. A feeble answer came through the dust and darkness. A group was quickly mustered and the injured crewman was hoisted up on a stretcher and placed in an ambulance and sent to a hospital. A severely fractured leg and other injuries, but fortunately not a fatality. Quite often, an afterthought comes back. Had not Brownie noticed Steve heading for the open hatch, he could have been buried in the fine coal.

The crew hung together like a close family. Perhaps another survivor of that crew aboard the *Kopmeier* in 1944 will recall the genuine fellowship which existed so fondly in Brownie's mind. Some have passed away, and the ship has been renamed several times with *Pinedale* as her final name. Perhaps she too has passed away. Faces and nicknames are recalled, but these are fondly remembered.

Crew members of the *Norman Kopmeier*

Ray Laughlin	Herb Dietlin
Fritz Wilson	Duncan Turner
Mel Kerr	Frank Tolsdorf
Ed Shaw	Dave Fogo
Frank Bush	Al Wilhemly
Gerry Beebe	Ed Holt
Bert Anderson	Henry Paluh
Frank Sloat	Andy Sheehan
Tiny Poole	LeRoy Wetzel
Earl Leonard	John Pelish
Lawson Browne	Steve Wetzel
	Cotton Anderson



*Wheelsman Lawson Browne in 1944.*

### CONDITIONS

The death benefit will be paid (1) only by reason of accident to a person which accident results in his death within one year and which accident occurs on board a vessel or in the performance of duties of a vessel included in membership of Lake Carriers' Association; (2) only to the beneficiary named by such person; and (3) only while this card is in effect. In the event of accident resulting in total disablement the benefit will be paid directly to the person to whom this card is issued.

## REPAIR WORK AT KENYON'S YARD

Reprinted from  
The Marine Review  
March 7, 1907

Wooden ship repairs must be extensive if the work which is lined up at A. P. Kenyon's Marine City Shipyard is any indication. Belle River, where the plant is located, is well filled with old-time wooden boats which are waiting their turn. Among them are the steamers *George King*, *Oscar T. Flint*, *Sparta*, *Gogebic*, *Tempest*, *Toltec*, and the barges *Thomas Gawn*, *Biwabik*, *Nelson Bloom*, *Lozan*, *Troy*, *Thomas Scott* and the *Titonia*. According to Mr. Kenyon, the repairs on all the boats will foot up in the neighborhood of \$40,000. The *Oscar T. Flint* is to have a new rail and minor repairs, costing \$1,500, *George King*, general repairs, \$1,000; *Tempest*, overhauling, \$500; *Nelson Bloom*, caulking and overhauling, \$500; *Thos.*

*Scott*, general repairs, \$500; *Titonia*, general repairs, \$1,000; *Toltec*, general repairs, \$1,000.

The big work consists of cutting down the *Sparta* from a double decker to a lumber hooker to carry about 1,000,000 feet of lumber. This is well under way and will cost \$25,000. The *Sparta* was built at Cleveland in 1874 and at one time belonged to the Hanna fleet. She was considered a crack boat in her day.

The *Biwabik* is to have new stanchions, rail, new ceiling, and mainmast, and renewed hatches, costing \$2,500. The *Lozen* will have all new hatches and part of her deck frames new, and will be entirely recaulked, \$3,000. The *Gogebic* gets a new floor, 12 new wing beams, new stanchions under hatches, five new upper



Vessels being repaired at Kenyon's Shipyard at Marine City, Michigan.



deck beams, 3,000 feet decking and reaming and caulking all over, the expense figuring at \$3,000.

A.P. Kenyon, proprietor of the yard, has inherited his shipbuilding ability, his father, Martin Kenyon, having built the early river schooners, *Sparrow* and *Tom Lemon*. He worked for Morley & Hills, Marine City; F.W. Wheeler, Bay City; Mason & Corning, Saginaw; Wright & Prentice, Saginaw; and old Dry Dock Shipyard & Engine Works at Detroit. He supervised the building of the *C.H. Davison* diagonally planked, and *C.H. Green*, *Nellie Mason*, *Rhoda Sonsmith* and *Mattie C. Bell*. He has been in Marine City for the past seven years.



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*Winter lay-up on the Belle River in Marine City.*



McDonald Coll./Dossin Museum Coll.

*The SPARTA would be cut down from a double decker to a lumber hooker to carry 1,000,000 feet of lumber.*

## A TRIP ON THE GREAT LAKES

### ABOARD THE MOHAWK IN 1861

*Stop Mohawk, Tuesday morning  
July 9, 1861*

We left Detroit about 10 o'clock Sunday, had a very pleasant sail up the river. We reached the Flats at 4 o'clock, passed over without going aground. Passed Newport at 6, and reached St. Clair at 7-1/2 when the Propeller stopped to wood. We stopped there about three hours, and the captain and most of the passengers, myself included, went to a small Baptist church. I met Liet. Grummond on the church steps. He is to open a recruiting office in St. Clair some time this week.

When I got up yesterday morning, I found we had got into Lake Huron. During the first part of the morning the Lake was very calm, but toward noon it became quite rough, so that we all suffered a little from sea-sickness. I went and lay down till dinner and Dave McKay none at all, but "Banty" said he was bound to have his dinner any how. After dinner we all went back to bed again and stayed till 5 o'clock. I slept part of the time and the rest lay on my back reading "Havelock". Passed Thunder Bay Island at quarter past 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon. We had rain part of the afternoon and nearly all night; about 2 o'clock we were compelled to anchor, on account of the fog. We passed Mackinaw at 6 o'clock this morning, we are now entering Lake Michigan, and there is 25 sail vessels and 2 Propellers in sight.

The *Mohawk* is a splendid propeller and every thing is fitted up as nice as one could wish; the meals are as good as you get at home, and the staterooms and berths clean and comfortable. Dave McKay and I room together and "Banty" is in the one next to us.

Evening - 8 o'clock - The *Mohawk* stopped this p.m. at Carp River to wood at 3 o'clock and we all went on shore where we stayed about an hour and a half. While there, us boys went off about half a mile to a high hill, where we found quite a lot of ripe strawberries and wintergreen bushes. We stayed so long that when the captain blew the steam whistle for starting, we were still on the hill, as soon as we heard the whistle how-

ever, we started full run for the boat, which we found all the passengers had reached before us. As soon as we were safely on board, off we started. We passed North and South Manitou Islands about 6 o'clock and the sleeping bear (I must say I can't see much resemblance to a bear) about 7 o'clock. While passing the bear I saw one of the most beautiful sights I think I have ever seen. The bear is on a high bluff, on the top of which are some very high trees; as we went out after supper, we noticed that a large cloud has descended so as to cover the tops of the trees completely and extending away for miles.

We pass a great many sail vessels and fishing boats. Sails may be seen in every direction. We have kept in sight of the prop. *Ontario* nearly all the way from Detroit, and have had quite a race with her, we passed her in the Detroit River Sunday soon after we started, but she passed us at St. Clair while we were wooding, and she kept ahead of us all yesterday and today till 6 o'clock this afternoon when we passed her. We have on board fourteen passengers, four ladies and 5 gentlemen and two boys besides ourselves. They are all very pleasant people. The weather is very cold tonight and there is a hard wind blowing, and as they have not yet lighted the lamps I can not see the lines to write on. So I guess I will stop for the night. Good night.

Wednesday am. - Stopped at Sheboygan this morning about 6 o'clock. It is quite a large place and a railroad runs through it. The water is very rough today and most of the passengers are seasick. I have not felt sick yet, however. Us boys have been down on the lower deck all the morning playing cricket with some stones we got at Carp River, but it is no much fun.

The Captain says we will reach Milwaukee about noon today and Chicago tomorrow morning about day-light, when I will mail this letter.

Chicago - 6 o'clock Thursday Morning. We got into Milwaukee at 12 o'clock yesterday and stayed till 6. I spent most of the time hunting the streets to find stores where

they sold envelopes. I got eleven different kinds, and that was all I could find. While there I saw quite a large fire which took place about a block from the boat. The building burned was a large warehouse filled with salt and flour. It was 15 minutes after the first alarm before a single engine or hose-cart reached the fire although some of the engine houses were less than four blocks away; so the whole building was destroyed. I was very much disappointed in the appearance of the city. I don't think it can compare with Detroit in any way unless perhaps in the size of some of the buildings. We had a very stormy time last night on the lake and we were all more or less sea-sick, and all went to bed at 6-1/2 o'clock. Reached Chicago at 2-1/2 this morning; have not been out yet to see how it looks; We will remain here all day and perhaps one day in Milwaukee on our return, so I will be home next Tuesday, unless we are compelled to remain there longer for freight.

We have had a very pleasant time the whole trip and the very best accommodations.



*The port of Chicago, Illinois at the turn of the century.*

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## S.S. TOM M. GIRDLER ENTERS GREAT LAKES SERVICE FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Reprinted from  
Nicholson-Universal  
Steamship Brochure

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Welcome aboard the *S.S. Tom M. Girdler*, newest and finest of the rapidly expanding fleet of the American ore carriers.

A bold idea backed up with skillful marine engineering presses her 14,500 ton carrying capacity into service at a time when it is most needed.

There is little question that the splendid performance record set in her conversion to a Great Lakes carrier will be matched by her daily performance in transporting the raw materials which spell freedom from fear and freedom from want for hundreds of millions of people.

Troy H. Browning  
Manager of Operations  
Nicholson-Universal Steamship Co. - Oct., 1951

### The Job Before

On August 16, 1951 in the yards of the Maryland Drydock Company, Baltimore, the *S.S. Tom M. Girdler* was christened. Sponsor of the ship was Mrs. Tom Girdler, wife of the board chairman of Republic Steel Corporation, for whom the ship is named.

Only a few months previously, Nicholson-Universal Steamship Company had acquired three C-4 type cargo vessels from the U.S. Maritime Commission. Each of these was destined for a major conversion which upon completion would find her bearing little resemblance to the original vessel. The first of the three became the *S.S. Girdler*.

The three C-4's (officially the C4-S-A4 design) were built as ocean cargo vessels by Kaiser Vancouver



*The TOM M. GIRDLER in Republic Steel colors.*



TOM M. GIRDLER in South Chicago.

McDonald Coll./Dossin Museum Coll.

and were completed in 1946. After being in operation for several years servicing the armed forces overseas, they were laid up in standby condition in the U.S. Maritime Administration Reserve fleet at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Towed to the Maryland Drydock Company yards, each vessel, originally 520 feet long, was cut in half with cutting torches. Compartmentalizing permitted the forward half of each to be floated away, the after remaining in drydock.

Meanwhile, Ingalls Shipbuilding Company of Pascagoula, Mississippi, had constructed a new forward section for each ship. These sections were launched bow first, contrary to usual procedure, for it appeared launching stern first would place undesirable strain on the bulkheads which permitted the "half ships" to float.

Each forward section, towed to Baltimore, was placed in drydock with the after half and the two joined by welding and riveting. Before the hull was floated out of the drydock, a huge pair of pontoons were welded to the stern of each ship to reduce her draft from 15 to 8 feet so she would be able to pass through the shallowest waters of the Mississippi on her way to the Great Lakes. Rudder, propeller and most of the superstructure were left for installation after passing into the lakes.

Upon completion of the work at Baltimore and the christening, the *Girdler* was taken in tow by an ocean going tug enroute to New Orleans. An uneventful passage of 14 days was experienced on waters so calm that a bucket of paint, inadvertently left on one of the pontoons in Baltimore, was found, still upright, when the ship passed New Orleans. Another 16 days were consumed in the trip up the Mississippi and through the Illinois Waterway into Lake Michigan. The pontoons were removed at Lockport, Illinois to reduce the height of the ship and allow passage under several low-fixed bridges. In downtown Chicago, thousands of people witnessed the passage of the *Girdler* through the narrow bridges of the Chicago River. She was the largest ship ever to pass through the river.

The conversion was completed at the American Shipbuilding Company yards at South Chicago and a trial run on Lake Michigan made October 21. A day later she tied up at the C&NW ore dock at Escanaba, Michigan to take aboard her first cargo of iron ore.

The conversion, costing in excess of \$2,000,000 was accomplished in five months, a year and a half less than would have been necessary for construction of a completely new ship of comparable design and carrying capacity. In addition, only 3,000 tons of steel were necessary for the conversion as compared with

over 7,000 for a completely new ship, a factor of considerable importance.

#### The Job Ahead

Few people have any conception of the prodigious appetite for raw materials possessed by the American steel industry. This may be impressively demonstrated by the simple fact that American steel mills, in a little over one hour will consume as much iron ore as a carrier such as the *Girdler* can carry in a single trip.

Looking at it another way, mighty as she is the *S.S. Girdler* cannot carry in a season enough ore to supply even one modern blast furnace, yet more than 225 furnaces are in blast in steel mills throughout the country.

In 1950 the steel industry consumed 90 million tons of Lake Superior iron ore from its stockpiles. In the same year, the combined efforts of over 250 American and Canadian ore carriers were able to transport only 78 million tons to replenish its dwindling stockpiles. An additional amount was transported by rail. In the meantime the steel industry was expanding and building new furnaces at a phenomenal rate. Obviously new ships were needed, and urgently.

The *S.S. Tom M. Girdler* and her sisterships the

*S.S. Charles M. White* and *S.S. Troy Browning* will provide assistance in seeing that no American blast furnace is idle due to a lack of raw materials.

In a normal navigation season of 220 days, the *Girdler* is expected to make more than 49 round trips transporting a total of 750,000 tons of iron ore. With a similar performance from each of her sister ships, 2-1/4 million tons may be transported from ore docks to steel plants in a single year.

Although production of direct shipping iron ore from the Mesabi and other Lake Superior ranges is bound to decline, the task of transporting raw materials for steel making down the Great Lakes will become no less important.

Already a start has been made toward a giant taconite industry in Minnesota. At Beaver Bay, 55 miles north east of Duluth on the north shore of Lake Superior, work is under way on a huge plant which will eventually turn out 10 million tons of iron ore pellets per year containing 64 percent iron. The pellets will be produced from taconite, a hard iron bearing rock averaging 25 percent iron. The iron mineral, which is magnetic, will be removed from the rock by crushing it to the fineness of talcum powder and passing it through wet magnetic separators. The powder



*The CHARLES M. WHITE* downbound in the Detroit River in 1979.



The TROY H. BROWNING was renamed THOMAS F. PATTON in 1955.

Dossin Museum Coll

will then be formed into pellets mechanically and the pellets passed through a firing furnace forming hard, smooth balls approximately the size of walnuts.

To produce one ton of finished pellets it will be necessary to mine three tons of taconite. Stripping of land is now under way near Babbitt, MN, preliminary to the mining of hard rock. The entire undertaking is a project of Reserve Mining Company in which Republic Steel Corporation is a substantial owner.

For the present the S.S. *Girdler* and her sister ships can only deliver ore to commercial docks on the Lake Erie shore. It is impractical under present conditions to attempt to navigate a ship of her size in the Cuyahoga River.

Realizing that economic conditions require that virtually all new ships on the Great Lakes will be of 14,000 ton capacity or larger, Cleveland is currently endeavoring to speed up the program of Cuyahoga River improvements agreed to some time ago by the Federal Government. Average tonnage of ore carriers now going up the Cuyahoga River is only 8,000 tons, and the average length only 475 feet.

The tremendous increase in steel capacity of Cuyahoga Valley plants as now under way indicates

that 63 percent more iron ore and limestone must be received at these plants in 1953 than in 1950. With small lake boats fast fading from the picture because of their comparative high cost operation, a speed up in the program of river improvements is vital to the nation's defense and the nation's economy.

*Ed. Note: When the arrival of larger ships and the opening of the Seaway, most Great Lakes ports improved their facilities. Cleveland was the first Great Lakes port to be dredged to the minimum depth of 27 feet, therefore accommodating any ship using the Seaway.*

*The Tom M. Girdler remained in service until the early 1980's. With the downturn in the U.S. steel industry, she was towed overseas for scrapping along with her sisterships Thomas F. Patton and Charles M. White.*

#### *Principal Characteristics*

*Tom M. Girdler - Launched as Louis McHenry Howe in 1945. Measured 600'.3" x 71'.6" x 35". Carrying capacity 14,500 gross tons; 4,497 net tons. Powered by steam engine - 10,000 hp with maximum speed of 23 mph. Crew of 40.*

# GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS



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Those who have contributed to the News  
Section in this issue are:

RAY BAWAL, JR.  
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JOHN SAARINEN  
JIM SPRUNT  
JOHN VOURNAKIS

ROD BURDICK  
WILLIAM KELLER  
ALAN MANN  
DALE POITTO  
TERRY SECHEN  
AJ SYKES  
JERRY WALTER

Oct. 30. . . Arnold Transit Company's m/v *Mohawk* has been sold to Diamond Jack's River Tours of Detroit. The 400-passenger ferry cleared St. Ignace today to Detroit, arriving the next day. She will be renamed *Diamond Queen*.

Nov. 1. . . The riverboat *Northern Belle* passed upbound in the Welland Canal, bound for Windsor, Ontario. At Windsor, she will be used as a casino vessel on the Detroit River. Because of high winds on Lake Erie, she was forced to tie-up at Port Colborne.

Nov. 2. . . The carferry *Sugar Islander* was renamed *Neebish Islander II* and began service to Neebish Island.

. . . A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter lifted a crewman from American Steamship's *H. Lee White* while the vessel was upbound in Lake Superior. The crewman suffered an apparent heart attack and was taken by ambulance to Marquette General Hospital where he was reported to be in stable condition.

Nov. 4. . . CSL International plans to build three Panamax-six bulk carriers in Shanghai, China. The three 738-foot vessels, which will be delivered in the late 1990's, will operate in the Atlantic, U.S. west coast, Europe and South America in the iron ore and stone trade.

. . . The Seaway Port Authority of Duluth reported that through the end of September, the Twin Ports have handled 16.2% more cargo than the same period last year. As of the end of September, 821 vessels called at the Twin Ports, which is an increase of 90 over last year. There were 563 U.S.-flag vessels, 198 Canadian and 60 salties.

. . . In September, iron ore shipments from U.S. and Canadian ports to U.S. and Canadian destinations on the Great Lakes increased by 5% over September of last year. Year to date shipments were up 9% over the same period last year. All rail shipments increased 40% in September and 17% since the first of the year.

. . . The Lake Carriers Association reported that all cargoes carried by U.S. flag lakers in September totaled 12.7 million tons, the same as in September of last year. The total cargo carried in September would have been higher, but the tug/barge *Presque Isle* was taken out of service on September 19th for major engine repairs. For the season, U.S. flag lakers have carried 5.9% more cargo than last year.

. . . In September, U.S. lakers carried 3.2% more iron ore, 5.3% more stone, but coal shipments from Lake Erie and upper lakes ports declined slightly. At the beginning of September, there were 58 out of 61 U.S. lakers in service.



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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS**

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Nov. 6. . . A loose engine control caused the new carferry *Sugar Islander II* to strike the dock on Sugar Island. Because of the loose connection, the crew was unable to slow the ferry as it approached the slip. The collision caused some damage to the dock and ferry, and two vehicles aboard the ferry.

. . . ULS' *Canadian Mariner* cleared Port Weller Dry Docks following extensive hull repairs. She struck the abutment at Bridge #10 in the Welland Canal on September 27th.

Nov. 10. . . The Toronto excursion boat *Capt. Matthew Flinders* passed downbound through the Seaway, bound for Florida.

. . . At Milwaukee, high winds were blamed for the sinking of the tug *James Harris* at its dock and an 180-foot barge in the harbor. The small tug was owned by Lake Michigan Contractors, Inc. of Holland, MI.

Nov. 11. . . Strong winds on Lake Huron forced several lakers to tie up at various points on the St. Clair River. The *Courtney Burton* tied-up at the Arzo Salt Dock at St. Clair; *Armco* remained at the Shell Oil Dock after refueling; *John J. Boland* tied-up at the Port Huron Seaway Terminal and *Calcite II* docked at Edison's Marysville Power Plant. The *James R. Barker* anchored below Recors Point near Marine City, but was forced to return to the National Steel Dock in Detroit. However, the strong winds didn't stop the salty *Solta* as she proceeded up the lake that evening.

. . . ULS' *James Norris* was battered against the dock at Colborne, Ontario by high winds. She suffered extensive hull damage on her port side with extensive flooding aft. It's reported that she settled to the bottom at the stern. Damage was estimated to be at least \$1 million. Colborne is located about midway between Toronto and Kingston and isn't to be confused with Port Colborne on Lake Erie.

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Photo by Peter Worden

*High winds battered the JAMES NORRIS at Colborne, Ontario. She was repaired at Port Weller Dry Docks.*

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Photo by Rod Burdick

OGLEBAY NORTON on a rare visit to load at Escanaba, MI. on November 15, 1995.

... The Cuban salty *Areito* had engine problems in the St. Lambert Lock and was towed back out of the lock to Montreal for repairs.

... The ferry *Neebish Islander II* went aground near Barbeau and lost her rudder. High winds and low water due to the high winds were blamed for the grounding.

Nov. 12. . . *Cuyahoga*, ex-*J. Burton Ayers* cleared her berth at the Government Dock in Sarnia, took on bunkers at Imperial Oil and then departed upbound into Lake Huron on her first trip under her new ownership.

Nov. 14. . . The Russian tug *Neftegaz 16* cleared Halifax for Mulgrave, Nova Scotia following engine repairs. At Mulgrave, the tug will pick up the *Canadian Harvest*, ex-*Rimouski* and *Canadian Pathfinder*, ex-*Baie St. Paul* which are to be towed overseas for scrap.

... *Capt. Henry Jackman* arrived at Port Weller Dry Dock for conversion to a self-unloader. This will increase the number of self-unloaders in Algoma Central's fleet to thirteen.

... Inland Lakes Management's *S.T. Crapo* arrived in Milwaukee for temporary lay-up. She was still expected to sail before the end of this season. She is scheduled to be retired next season when the new Lafarge tug/barge enters service.

Nov. 15. . . Interlake's *J.L. Mauthe* was towed from her lay-up berth at the Fraser Shipyard by two Great Lakes Towing tugs to the old Meehan Dock in Superior. The move was prompted by the lower rent payments at Meehan and the need for space at the Fraser Shipyard this winter.

... *Oglebay Norton*, ex-*Lewis Wilson Foy*, made a rare visit to Escanaba to load pellets for Indiana Harbor. It's possible that this was her first visit to this port since being renamed. She returned on the 18th for another load of pellets for the same port. Her regular runs has been from Superior to St. Clair with coal.

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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS**

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... The casino riverboat *Northern Belle* remained at Port Colborne because of high winds on Lake Erie. The U.S. Coast Guard and the vessel's insurer won't permit the *Belle* to sail on the Great Lakes unescorted when winds exceed ten knots. Winds on Lake Erie have been blowing at least sixteen knots for the last two weeks.

Nov. 16. . . Inland Lakes Management's *E.M. Ford* loaded a cargo of cement at Alpena and departed for Green Bay. It's feared that this could be her last trip. She is to be retired next spring when LaFarge's new tug/barge enters service. The *Ford* arrived in Green Bay on the 17th for winter lay-up.

Nov. 17. . . The Cuban salty *Areito* once again suffered engine problems at the Snell Lock. She anchored off Prescott, Ontario for further repairs.

... Paterson's *Comeaudoc* tied up at Wharf 2 in the Welland Canal for unknown repairs. She cleared on the 22nd.

... USX's 1,000-footer *Edgar B. Speer* passed downbound at the Soo with a cargo of pellets. She rendezvoused with the *Myron C. Taylor*, which was anchored off Pipe Island in the lower St. Marys River. The *Speer* off-loaded 9,000 tons of pellets into the *Taylor*. The remainder of her cargo was then off-loaded into the *Presque Isle*. The *Presque Isle* was operating on one engine and would require a tug escort both ways through the St. Marys River. The *Speer* was upbound through the Soo the next day bound for Two Harbors.

Nov. 18. . . *Northern Belle* arrived in Windsor following her much delayed trip from New Orleans.

... The salty *Jing Mong Hai* unloaded a cargo of bauxite at Thorold. After unloading, she cleared for Lake Superior to load grain. This is the first trip into the Seaway and the Great Lakes for the Chinese freighter.

Nov. 19. . . *James Norris* arrived in Port Weller Dry Docks for a damage survey. She was towed by the tugs *Evans McKeil*, *Glenside* and *Robert B. No. 1*.

Nov. 20. . . An agreement to purchase Peterson Shipbuilders at Sturgeon Bay has fallen through. The yard was to be purchased by a local businessman and a Greek investor, but the bank that was to finance the venture backed out.

Nov. 21. . . Paterson's *Mantadoc* lost power while upbound in the St. Clair River. A broken fuel line was believed to be the cause of the power failure.

... *Enerchem Refiner*, now sporting a green hull, went aground off Oswego, NY. She was able to free herself by shifting her cargo.

Nov. 22. . . USX's *Arthur M. Anderson* closed the port of Ashland for the season when she unloaded a cargo of coal at the Reiss Coal Dock. In 1995, six lakers called at Ashland, but no salties.

Nov. 25. . . The former Norfolk Southern tug *R.G. Cassidy* cleared Detroit for Thunder Bay towing her fleetmate *F.A. Johnson*.

... In October, high winds throughout the Great Lakes delayed shipping. Because of the delays, U.S. flag lakers carried only 12.2 million net tons of dry and liquid cargoes, a decrease of 1.1 million tons compared to October of last year.

... Stone shipments experienced the largest drop, a decrease of 14.8% compared to October of last year.

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• **GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS**

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However, for the season US stone cargoes were up 13.6% over last year. Iron ore shipments in October fell 4%, but were up 4.7% for the season.

... Coal shipments in U.S. flag lakers continued to slump. Shipments of eastern coal from Lake Erie ports dropped by 11.1% and shipments of low sulphur western coal were down slightly. However, total shipments of eastern and western coal in U.S. lakers increased by 5.9% for the season. At the beginning of October, there were 57 out of 61 U.S. lakers in service.

Nov. 29 ... The Seaway Port Authority of Duluth reported that the Twin Ports handled 4.3 million metric tons of cargo in October. Year to date cargoes were up 13.3% over last year. In October, 124 vessels called at the Twin Ports. For the season, 945 vessels called at the Twin Ports compared to 864 last year.

Nov. 30 ... The North American Iron Ore Assoc. reported that shipments of iron ore from U.S. ports to U.S. and Canadian destinations fell by 5% in October. Shipments from Canadian ports to U.S. and Canadian ports fell by 15% in the same month. Since January, total shipments of iron ore from U.S. and Canadian ports were up 6% from last year.

Dec. 4 ... *Myron C. Taylor* arrived at the Twin Ports for winter lay-up at Fraser Shipyard. She was the first laker to lay-up for the winter at the Twin Ports.

... *Hamilton Energy*, a small tanker owned by Provmar Fuels, Inc. of Hamilton, Ontario, made a unusual visit to the Welland Canal to refuel the downbound salty *Concorde*.

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*The tanker HAMILTON ENERGY made a rare visit in the Welland Canal to fuel a salty.*

## GREAT LAKES &amp; SEAWAY NEWS •



*The former CSL vessel RIMOUSKI sank enroute to overseas for scrapping in India.*

Photo by Peter Worden

Dec. 5 . . . *Canadian Harvest*, ex-*Rimouski*, has apparently been lost enroute to scrapping in India. She along with *Canadian Pathfinder*, ex-*Baie St. Paul*, were under tow of the Russian tug *Neftegaz 16*.

Dec. 6 . . . The tanker *Wellington Kent* cleared the Canadian Soo downbound for the east coast. She arrived on the Great Lakes in early July and has been active around the Canadian Soo.

Dec. 8 . . . *Algorail* went aground at Port Inland, MI. The tug *Missouri* cleared the Soo for Port Inland, but was delayed by bad weather. The *Algorail* was able to free herself before the tug arrived.

. . . *Calcite II* arrived in Duluth to unload a partial cargo of stone at Hallett Dock 5. After unloading, she shifted to Fraser Shipyard for winter lay-up. Prior to arriving in Duluth, she spent three days anchored off the east side of the Keweenaw Bay on Lake Superior waiting for winds to diminish. After getting under way, she unloaded a portion of her cargo of stone at Ontonagon before arriving in Duluth.

Dec. 9 . . . Institute member John Saarinen reported that the tug *W.N. Twolan* and barge *Wawatam* loaded with packaged lumber from Thunder Bay, anchored in Keweenaw Bay because of high winds and seas on Lake Superior. The tug and barge cleared for Windsor, Ontario on the 12th.

Dec. 10 . . . High winds and heavy seas closed the St. Marys River to navigation. Ice conditions in the river were also causing long delays for vessel traffic.

. . . The Detroit River mailboat *J.W. Westcott II* ended mail delivery to vessels on the river today due to ice conditions. This was the 100th anniversary of mail service on the Detroit River.

Dec. 11 . . . Fred R. White passed away today at the age of 82. Mr. White began working for Oglebay Norton Company as vessel dispatcher in the mid-1930's and worked his way up through the company, becoming Chairman of the Executive Committee in 1978. In 1979, the company honored him by christening their

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**• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS**

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vessel built at Bay Shipbuilding Corp. The m/v *Fred R. White, Jr.* continues to operate for Oglebay Norton today.

Dec. 12 . . . The Port Weller built barge *Sault Au Cochon*, which buckled and sank at Forestville, Quebec on June 20th, was towed up the Seaway by tugs *Duga* and *Glenbrook*.

. . . The Coast Guard again closed the St. Marys River to navigation because of ice conditions and fog. There were at least 24 vessels anchored throughout the St. Marys River system. There were 17 downbound vessels anchored and 7 more upbound anchored. Three of the vessels upbound are salties bound for Lake Superior ports. They have 10 days to load and return outbound to the Seaway.

Dec. 13 . . . The Coast Guard opened the St. Marys River to navigation this morning. Shortly after opening the river, the Coast Guard was forced to close it again when the *Stewart J. Cort* became icebound off Moon Island, blocking the narrow channel south of Neebish Island. There were 27 vessels anchored in the river system.

. . . Oglebay Norton's *David Z. Norton, ex-Wm. R. Roesch*, was stopped by nine inches of ice in Saginaw Bay and returned to open water in Lake Huron.

. . . *Astra Lift*, a recent Seaway visitor was impounded at New York when the captain was found to be intoxicated.

. . . *George R. Sloan* suffered engine problems off Stribling Point in the lower St. Marys River. The tugs *Maine* and *Missouri* were dispatched from the Soo to assist her up the river.

Dec. 14 . . . *Aquarius* was the last salty of the season to pass upbound through the Welland Canal.

Dec. 15 . . . *George R. Sloan* arrived at the Twin Ports for winter lay-up at the Fraser Shipyard. She was placed in the small drydock for the winter.

Dec. 16 . . . The salty *Lake Michigan* arrived at the Twin Ports to load grain at the Harvest States Elevator #2 in Superior. She was the last salty to the Twin Ports and her arrival was delayed four days due to ice and snow in the St. Marys River. She cleared on the 18th, closing the overseas shipping season for Duluth/Superior.

Dec. 17 . . . Inland Steel's *Wilfred Sykes* cleared Grand Haven, MI. and closed that port for the season. Jerry Walter reported that the port was scheduled to remain open until January, however, the two vessels that were due to arrive were cancelled. Jerry also reported that eighty-five vessels called at Grand Haven in the 1995 season.

. . . A break in the weather has relieved the back log of vessels in the St. Marys River. Warmer weather and a second Bay-class icebreaker broke the bottleneck. The *Katmai Bay* and *Mobile Bay* were breaking ice on the lower St. Marys River while the Canadian icebreaker *Samuel Risley* was working the upper St. Marys River. The U.S. Coast Guard's icebreaker *Mackinaw* was in the shipyard for engine repairs, but would be available in a few days.

Dec. 19. . . *Earl W. Oglebay* and *David Z. Norton* passed upbound through the Soo Locks. This was their first trip into Lake Superior this season.

. . . The salty *Aslan I* was the last salty of the season to lock downbound at the Soo.

. . . *Algosoo* lost power and went aground while inbound to Algoma Steel at the Canadian Soo. Tugs *Wilfred*

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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**


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*M. Cohen* and *W.I. Scott Purvis* tried to pull her free, but were unable to do so. They finally got assistance from the tug *Avenger IV* and after dropping both bow anchors, she was finally freed.

Dec. 20 . . . Shipping on the St. Marys River was brought to a halt again because of ice. The downbound 1,000-footer *Oglebay Norton* became stuck in the ice in the narrow West Neebish Channel off sawmill Point. The upbound *Algosound* was caught in ice in the Middle Neebish Channel. The *Mackinaw* and *Mobile Bay* assisted both vessels.

. . . The *Pride of Donegal* was trapped in ice while departing Lock 8, downbound in the Welland Canal. The salty was freed the next day and tied up at the Thorold to unload Alumina oxide.

. . . The salty *Astra Lift* arrived in Albany, NY where the captain was charged with negligence concerning the drinking incident at New York.

Dec. 21 . . . *Algontario* arrived at the Twin Ports to load the final grain shipment of the season from Duluth/Superior. She loaded at the Harvest States Elevator and cleared the Twin Ports late the next day.

Dec. 22 . . . *Lake Michigan* was the last salty to pass downbound through the Welland Canal.

. . . The tug *John Spence* was back pushing the barge *McAsphalt 401*, relieving the tug *Anglian Lady*.



*Soconav* sold their tankers including the J.C. PHILLIPS and later leased them back.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Dossin Museum Coll.

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*The former Bob-Lo passenger vessels COLUMBIA and STE. CLAIRE will be auctioned off by the U.S. Marshall in January, 1996.*

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Dec. 23 . . . *Algowood* was the last vessel of the season to pass downbound through the Welland Canal.

. . . C.S.L.'s *Halifax* was the last laker to pass upbound in the Seaway with ore for Hamilton.

Dec. 24 . . . *Algoriver* was the last laker of the season to pass downbound through the Seaway. She was bound for Port Cartier with a cargo of wheat.

. . . A U.S. Marshall will auction off the steamers *Columbia* and *Ste. Claire* on January 17, 1996. A U.S. District Judge ordered the vessels auctioned because the owners failed to make payments on their mortgage. The last year the vessels operated was 1991.

Dec. 25 . . . *Halifax* was the last vessel of the season to pass through the Welland Canal. She was upbound from Hamilton.

. . . The tanker *Saturn* became icebound in Saginaw Bay. She was freed by the icebreaker *Bramble* on the 28th.

. . . The salty *Olympic Mentor* went aground in Lac St. Louis near Montreal. Lightering began on the 27th and she was freed on the 28th to continue her voyage to Italy.

Dec. 26 . . . *Lake Michigan* was the last salty of the season to pass downbound through the Seaway as she cleared the Snell Lock. She was bound for Algeria with a cargo of wheat.

Dec. 27 . . . Brash ice up to four feet thick was clogging the West Neebish Channel and the Middle Neebish Channel. Five icebreakers were working in the area and the lower St. Marys River trying to keep the river open.



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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**


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... *Oglebay Norton* went aground in Lake St. Clair near Harsens Island at the northern end of Lake St. Clair. Three tugs and a Coast Guard cutter freed her on the 30th.

... The *Cuyahoga* became icebound while entering Fairport Harbor. Great Lakes Towing tug *Delaware* arrived from Cleveland and assisted her to the LTV Dock where she unloaded her stone cargo. She cleared the next day and closed that port for the season. Dale Pohto reported that the only two vessels laid-up for the winter at Fairport were the sandsuckers *FM. Osborne* and *Emmett J. Carey*.

Dec. 29 ... Soconav has apparently sold *Hubert Gaucher* and have taken her back under a lease arrangement. Also sold were *L'Aigle*, *J.C. Phillips* and *L. Rochette*.

... The Seaway Port Authority of Duluth reported that at the end of November, total waterborne commerce for the season handled by the Twin Ports increased 11.1% over last year. In November, 113 vessels visited the Twin Ports and the total for the season was 1,058. There were 720 U.S.-flag vessels, 249 Canadian and 89 salties.

... The North American Iron Ore Assoc. reported that shipments of iron ore from US ports in November increased by 5% over November of last year. For the year, shipments increased by 7%. The association also reported that shipments of iron ore from Canadian ports decreased by 13% compared to November of 1994. For the year, Canadian shipments were down by 1% compared to last year.

... *Atlantic Erie* was drydocked at Halifax for hull repairs.

Dec. 31 ... The MacArthur Lock at the Soo closed for the season. The Poe Lock will close at midnight January 15, 1996. Shipping was still being delayed because of severe ice problems in the St. Marys River and St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair.

#### Great Lakes Calendar . . .

Sat.-May 18th- Entertainment meeting at 8:00 p.m. at Museum of Arts & History in Port Huron. Speaker will be Jim Bearman presenting a slide talk titled "Northeastern Ports of Michigan".

Sun.-June 2nd - Gold Cup Hydroplane Race on Detroit River.

Sat-Sun.-June 8-9th - Grand Prix Auto Race on Belle Isle. Dossin Museum closed to the public.

Back Cover Photo . . . Canadian freighter *Maplebrook* (C 121784). Originally iron hull freighter *Arabia* built in Buffalo N.Y. in 1873 (US Reg. 105254). Measured 233.0 x 34.5 x 14.2; 1515 Gross tons; 864 Net tons. Sold Canadian in 1905 and renamed *Bickerdike* in 1906. Renamed *Maplebrook* in 1920. Renamed *City of Windsor* in 1927. Renamed *Belleville* in 1929. Laid idle at Louise Basin, Quebec City for several years and dropped from Canadian List in 1939. Scrapped at Hamilton, Ontario in 1942.

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