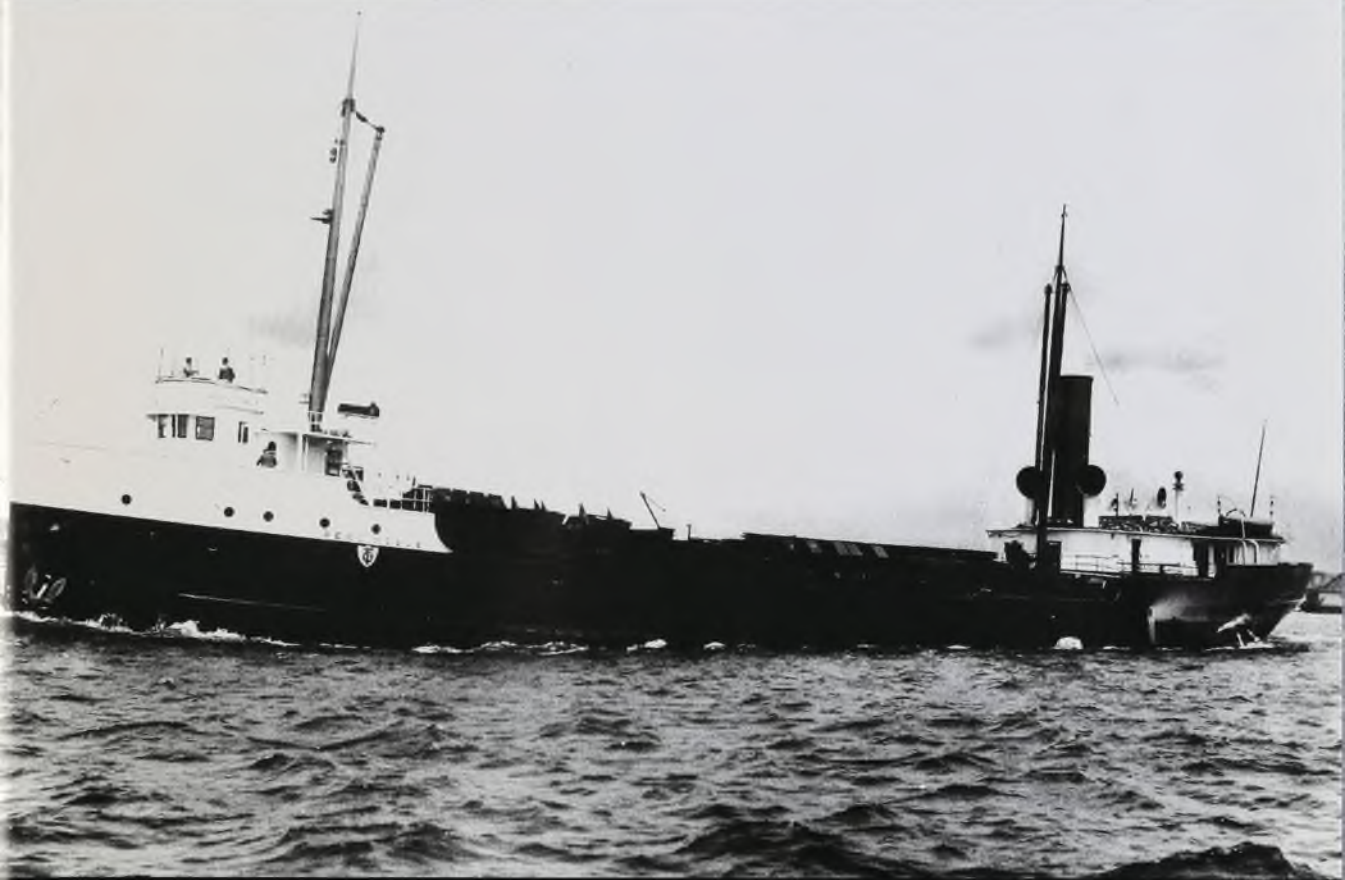




# Telescope

JULY • SEPTEMBER, 2005

Volume LIII; Number 3



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## Events at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum



**GLMI ANNUAL DINNER - 2005**

Above, Dinner Chairman Donna Flaherty, Fred Stonehouse and Elizabeth Sherman



Above, Bob McGreevy (left) discusses his artwork with dinner guests and below, poses with Mac McAdam.

The Dossin Great Lakes Museum is open weekends, Saturday and Sunday, 11:00am - 5:00pm.

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**OUR COVER PICTURES . . . BENJAMIN NOBLE** disappeared mysteriously in Lake Superior in April, 1914. She had loaded steel rails in Conneaut, OH for delivery to Duluth. As the storm worsened on Lake Superior, the captain of the BENJAMIN NOBLE decided to turn away from Duluth harbor and head for Two Harbors. The vessel sank with the loss of 20 crewmen. The wreckage came ashore, but her final resting place remained a mystery until this year when on July 27th the wreck was located 10 miles off of Two Harbors, MN. Photo courtesy of Dossin Museum Collection.

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*Telescope*© is produced with assistance from the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, an agency of the Historical Department of the City of Detroit.

Visit our Website at: <http://www.glmi.org>

Published at Detroit, Michigan by the  
GREAT LAKES MARITIME INSTITUTE

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Printed in the United States by Macomb Printing, Inc.



# EDMUND FITZGERALD

Each generation has a shipwreck that brings together sailors and historians to recount the vessel's final voyage, and search for factors that might have changed the final outcome. Since the tragic loss of the str. EDMUND FITZGERALD in Lake Superior on November 10, 1975, new technology has allowed various diving expeditions on the FITZGERALD, but the wreck has refused to yield new information to our questions. As we marvel at the clear photos published in books and magazines, we yearned for another expedition, hoping perhaps that the next dive would finally provide the answers.

## Background

The EDMUND FITZGERALD was built for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company at the Great Lakes Engineering Works yard in River Rouge, Michigan, and chartered by Columbia Transportation, division of Oglebay-Norton Co. When she was launched on June 7, 1958, she was the largest ship on the lakes, measuring 729' x 75' x 26.5'. On her maiden voyage to Silver Bay, Minnesota, she loaded a record cargo of iron ore, and she would continue to compete with other 730-foot vessels to set new records until the 1970's when the STEWART J. CORT (1,000 feet in length) and ROGER BLOUGH (850 feet in length) entered service on the lakes.

## "We Are Holding Our Own"

On Sunday, November 8, 1975, the FITZGERALD loaded 26,116 tons of iron ore pellets

and departed Superior, Wisconsin early in the afternoon. Just past Two Harbors, Minnesota, she passed the outbound steamer ARTHUR M. ANDERSON, which also had a cargo of pellets. Although the weather forecast indicated a storm front approaching, Capt. Ernest McSorley, a veteran of forty years on the lakes, and Capt. Jessie Cooper on the ANDERSON, would continue taking their vessels along the sheltered waters of Lake Superior's north shore.

Shortly after midnight on the 10<sup>th</sup>, a storm warning was issued. Both the ANDERSON and FITZGERALD encountered 42-knot winds, rain and snow. Later in the day, both vessels were battling twenty to thirty foot waves. Since both of the FITZGERALD's radars were not functioning properly, McSorley requested navigation assistance from the ANDERSON, as the FITZGERALD wasn't receiving a signal from Whitefish Point

Lighthouse or the radio beacon from Caribou Island. Capt. Cooper and First Mate Morgan Clark observed the blip of the FITZGERALD on their radar as she passed between Michipicoten and Caribou Islands. The storm interfered with the radar picture, but both men felt that the *Fitzgerald* passed too close to the thirty-foot shoal area.

A few hours later, McSorley radioed that he had lost a few vents, deck railings and had a list, which was being handled by both pumps. The FITZGERALD would reduce speed to allow the ANDERSON to close the gap and follow the FITZGERALD down into Whitefish Bay. At 7:10 p.m., McSorley radioed, "We are going along like an old shoe. No problems at all. We are holding our own." A few minutes later, the blip of the FITZGERALD on the radar was gone! First Mate Clark on the ANDERSON radioed the saltwater vessels NANFRI and BENFRI, upbound from Whitefish Bay, to ask if they spotted the FITZGERALD. Both pilots said no. Further inquiries to vessels anchored in the bay gave the same results. After attempts to contact the FITZGERALD proved futile, Capt. Cooper radioed the U.S. Coast Guard stating, "I am very concerned with the welfare of the steamer EDMUND FITZGERALD. He was right in front of us, experiencing a little difficulty. He was taking on a small amount of water and none of the upbound ships have passed him. I can see no lights as before, and don't have him on radar. I just hope he didn't

take a nose dive." Little did Capt. Cooper know that his remarks might prove to be true.

### Searching for the Fitzgerald

By 2100 hours, the U.S. Coast Guard Station Sault Ste. Marie reported the FITZGERALD missing and rescue efforts began. A fixed wing aircraft and helicopter were dispatched from Traverse City Air Station, and on scene in 2-1/2 hours. A C-130 plane lifted off from Canadian Rescue center in Trenton, Ontario. The U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker MACKINAW was unable to assist because she was in repair status for winter icebreaking operations. The USCG cutter WOODRUSH would depart Duluth, MN and arrive on scene twenty-four hours later. As the Coast Guard radioed vessels anchored in Whitefish Bay to get underway to assist in the search, only the WILLIAM CLAY FORD (Ford) and HILDA MARJANNE (Upper Lakes) acknowledged they would get underway. As the MARJANNE headed out into Lake Superior, the severe weather forced her to turn back.

Capt. Don Erickson, a veteran of over thirty years on the lakes, was mate on the BENSON FORD on November 18, 1958, when the CARL D. BRADLEY sank in northern Lake Michigan. The BENSON FORD was anchored in Ashland, Wisconsin, waiting for the 100 mph wind gusts to decrease when they heard the "Mayday" calls from the BRADLEY. Capt. Erickson, skipper of the WM. CLAY FORD since 1963, radioed Cooper on the



WILLIAM CLAY FORD

ANDERSON, which by now had reached the safety of Whitefish Bay. Both men agreed on a course of 270 degrees to return to the FITZGERALD's last known location. As the vessels departed Whitefish Bay, the winds were clocked at 70 mph. Sailing a half-mile apart, they arrived on scene at 0200. With aircraft dropping flares, crewmen tried in vain to spot possible survivors, wreckage or an oil slick from the FITZGERALD. Nothing was spotted in the darkness, but at day break on the 11<sup>th</sup>, several more vessels joined in the search and picked up the following items: forward-half of No. 1 Lifeboat, which was badly buckled, No. 2 Lifeboat, which was intact, but also badly buckled, life raft found floating inflated; twenty life-preservers, eight oars; thirteen life-rings; floodlight from atop the pilothouse and other flotsam.

#### **U.S. Coast Guard Report**

In the spring of 1976, a CURV III camera was sent down on the FITZGERALD to record 895 photographs and 43,000 feet of video. The following description of the wreckage is taken from Report No. USCG 26732/64216, Marine Casualty Report: "The presence of mud hampered the visible survey considerably, both because it obscured the details of the wreckage and because the passage of the CURV III vehicle caused the mud to swirl up, reducing the visibility. The name of the vessel was clearly visible, both at the stern section, and on the bow section, and the identity of this wreckage is that of the EDMUND FITZGERALD was thus positively confirmed. During the survey, no bodies were found, nor were any items seen which could be identified as personal effects of the crew.

The bow section is sitting nearly upright on the bottom, inclined approximately 15 degrees. The spar deck of the bow section extends to a location between hatches 8 and 9. At the separation, the starboard side of the hull is bent in toward the centerline and is folded under the deck, while the deck is bent upward from a point at approximately two hatches forward of separation. The hatch covers are missing from No. 1 and No. 2 hatches.

The forward coaming of No. 1 hatch is severely damaged. The after coaming of No. 1 and the forward and after coamings of No. 2 hatch shows less damage. No. 3 and No. 4 hatches are mud covered. The hatch covers for hatches Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 are missing. The degree of damage to the deck

and hatch coamings increases from No. 1 to the separation . . . No fence rail stanchions are present. The sockets into which the portable stanchions were fitted are undamaged. The 28-foot draft mark is visible just above the mud line, and hull beneath is buried in the mud. The bow above the mud is damaged on both sides adjacent to the stem. On the starboard side, slightly aft of the stem, the hull immediately below the spar deck is holed and badly distorted. The steering jib is bent completely back and the end of it lies up against the forward section of the Texas deck bulwark. The plating of the forward house between the forecastle deck and the Texas deck is badly damaged.

The forward section of the pilothouse is damaged on both the port and starboard sides and the forward section of the sunshade above the pilothouse windows is damaged on the port side. Most of the pilothouse windows are missing. Foundations for the radar antennas are visible, but no antennas can be seen.

The stern section is upside down, inclined about 10 degrees. All of the bottom plating and the side shell plating, which is visible above the mud line, is intact. The separation is estimated to be a frame 155, which would correspond to the after end of hatch 18. At the separation, about 12 to 15 feet of the hull extends above the mud. The aft superstructure is buried in the mud. The rudder and propeller are clearly visible and undamaged. The rudder appears to be in the midship position. There is no hole or rupture in the exposed stern section of the hull other than at the separation. All of the areas of separations, which were examined in detail, show curving, twisted edges such as is associated with ductile failure. No separations were seen which appeared to be the sort of straight or flat separations common to brittle failure. All of the hatch coamings found hatch clamps attached, and the great majority of the hatch clamps observed appear to be undamaged. One coaming, which could not be identified by number, has a line of clamps, with one distorted and several completely undamaged on either side. One distorted piece of structure, which was identified as a badly damaged corner of a hatch coaming, was observed to have undamaged hatch clamps attached to it. This general pattern, i.e., that nearly all the hatch clamps found appeared to be undamaged and only a few were distorted, was seen at every location where a hatch coaming was found."

The U.S. Coast Guard interviewed past and present employees of Columbia Transportation, Coast Guard and American Bureau of Shipping personnel responsible for conducting vessel surveys and others familiar with the ship. With no witnesses or survivors, the Coast Guard stated that the following factors contributed to the sinking: Changes in the winter load line caused a decrease of three feet-three inches of freeboard; the cargo hatch coamings, covers and clamps weren't effective enough to stop water from entering the cargo hold, the master was unable to detect flooding in the cargo holds, nor were they fitted with watertight bulkheads. As to the actual vessel sinking, the Coast Guard stated:

"In the opinion of the Marine Board, the flooding from the damage reported, and from other damage which was not detected, most likely occurred in the forward part of the vessel, resulting in trim down by the bow. By the time the damage was reported by FITZGERALD, the flooding of the cargo hold had reached such an extent that the cargo was saturated and loose water existed in the hold. Because of the trim by the bow, this water migrated forward through the nonwatertight screen bulkheads, which separated the cargo holds, further aggravating the trim and increasing the rate of flooding.

Because there were neither witnesses nor survivors and because of the complexity of the hull wreckage, the actual, final sequence of events culminating in the sinking of the FITZGERALD cannot be determined. Whatever the sequence, however, it is evident that the end was so rapid and catastrophic, that there was no time to warn the crew, to attempt to launch lifeboats or liferafts, to don lifejackets, or even to make a distress call.

Finally, as the storm reached its peak of intensity, so much freeboard was lost that the bow pitched down and dove into a wall of water and the vessel was unable to recover. Within a matter of seconds, the cargo rushed forward, the bow plowed into the bottom of the lake, the midship structure disintegrated, allowing the submerged stern section, now emptied of cargo, to roll over and override the other superstructure, finally coming to rest upside down atop the disintegrated middle portion of the ship.

Alternatively, it is possible that FITZGERALD sank as a result of structural failure on the surface, resulting from the increased loading of the flooding water. However, this is considered less likely because such a failure would have severed the vessel into two sections on the surface, and one or the other, if not both sections, would have floated for a short while. With the weather conditions that existed at the time, and in particular, with the winds in excess of 50 knots, if either or both of the pieces had floated for any time, significant drifting would have occurred. But, the survey of the wreckage showed that the two main pieces were within a ship's length, thus little or no drifting took place."

Within a few months of the U.S. Coast Guard report, Paul Trimble, President of the Lake Carriers Association disagreed with the theory of "ineffective hatch closures" and put forth another possible theory that the FITZGERALD struck Six Fathom Shoal near Caribou Island. He states;

"It should be emphasized that minutes after passing Six Fathom Shoal, FITZGERALD reported a list, two ballast tanks vents had carried away and two ballast pumps were in use. Capacity of two pumps was 14,000 gallons per minute. With the two pumps operating there should have been no list from this source of water, particularly in as short of time as ten to fifteen minutes. Captain Cooper of the ANDERSON testified, "He took that list which seemed to be real fast."

Trimble also suggested several improvements for vessels that included watertight compartments, and hull monitoring equipment that would detect problems. At the time of the FITZGERALD's loss, tests were being conducted for approving survival suits that would insulate crew members forced to abandon ship. Another safety factor in the early stages on the lakes was Loran C coverage. Loran is an electronic system with shore-based transmitters criss-crossing the lakes, allowing the masters of vessels to find their accurate position with 500 feet without worrying about weather conditions affecting radars. Both the Loran C and the survival suits became standard equipment on Great Lakes vessels shortly after the inquiry. The Loran C has been replaced with GPS. While lifeboats are still aboard vessels, lifeboat capsules are standard to allow the crew to be sheltered from the weather while awaiting rescue.

### **Diving on the Fitzgerald and Finding a Conscience**

Since the CURV III filmed the wreck in 1976, several other diving expeditions visited the wreck in the early and mid-1980's as improvements in technology provided clearer photographs. As the twentieth anniversary neared, interest in the wreck rose as documentaries were planned.

In July, 1994, two separate dives would prove to be a turning point for underwater explorations on the lakes. Early in July, Dr. Joseph MacInnis, a 30-year veteran of long duration, deep sea diving, would be joined by Tom Farnquist of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society and others as part of "Dive 94: Great Lakes Science Program, sponsored by the Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution of Ft. Pierce, Fl. Over sixty scientists

using the research vessel EDWIN LINK, filmed the wreck and discovered more damage than previously photographed. Noting the extensive damage, they concluded that the FITZGERALD plunged to the bottom and then broke apart.

The second expedition later in the month, led by Fed Shannon, generated controversy as he announced the possible location of a FITZGERALD crewman outside the wreck. As the media spread the story, the Fitzgerald families quickly expressed their anger at the sensationalism created. Later in November, several family members attended the annual Fitzgerald Memorial Service held at Mariners' Church in Detroit, and met with Tom Farnquist afterwards to discuss previous dives on the FITZGERALD. It was the first time in recent years that some of the family members had met each other, but they quickly banded together to request

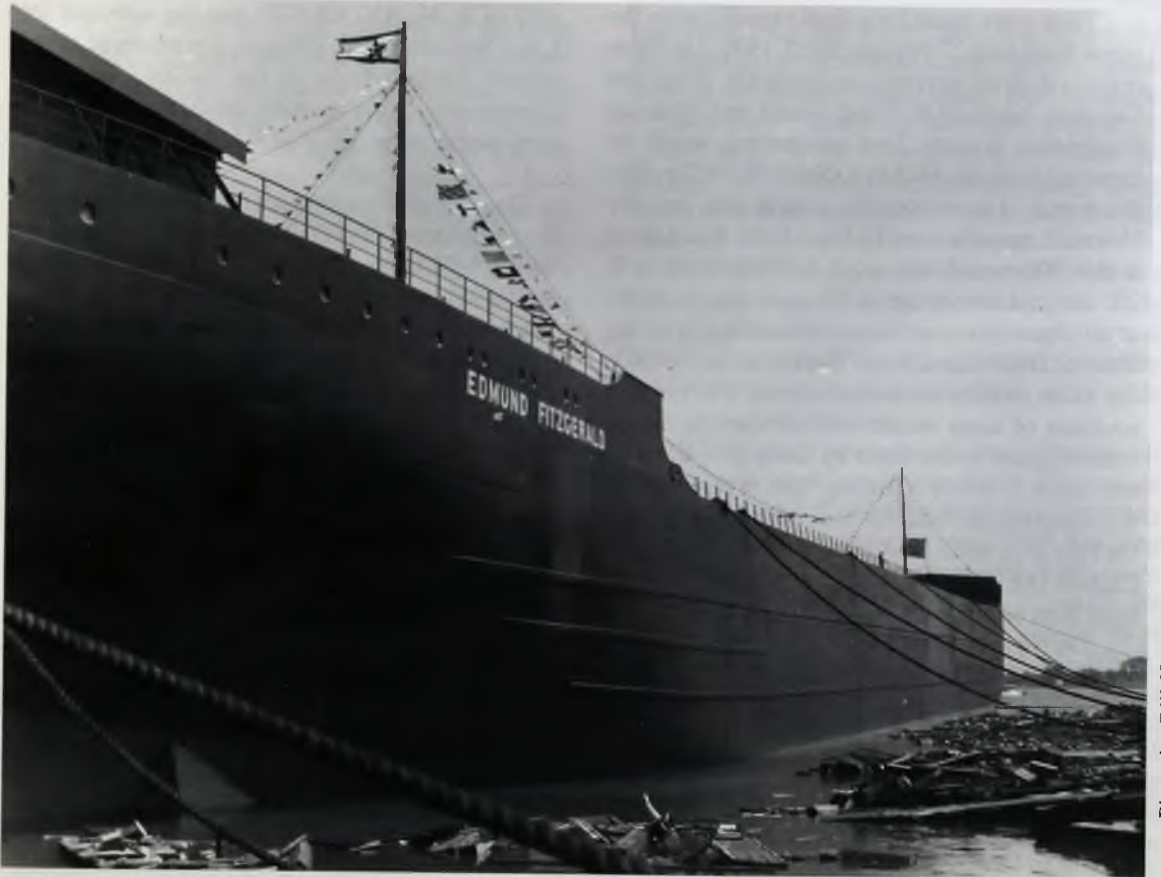


Photo by Bill Hoey

that the Canadian government declare the FITZGERALD a gravesite and off-limits to further exploration. During the winter months, their idea gained support from marine organizations around the lakes. Although the Canadian government couldn't declare the wreck an international gravesite, they would restrict access to the vessel by issuing permits for diving.

As another shipping season began in March, 1995, plans for a permanent FITZGERALD memorial at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point, MI began to take shape. Cheryl Rozman (father was Ransom Cundy, watchman) and Ruth Hudson (son was Bruce Hudson, deckhand), kept in contact with other families together with Farnquist and MacInnis, submitted a proposal to the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Recreation of Ontario, and a license was granted to remove the ship's bell and replace it with another bell inscribed with the names of the twenty-nine crewmen.

Plans were made for a final expedition on the wreck from June 27 through July 7, 1995. The dives involved over seventy individuals from the Canadian Navy, U.S. Coast Guard and National Geographic Society. Two submarines would be launched from the HCMS CORMORANT to film the wreck. Unique to this expedition was the Newtsuit, manufactured by Hard Suits, Inc. A diver in this 900-pound suit could descend down to 1,200 feet and then return to the surface without the usual decompression stops. According to Doug Eelsey of BMD Can-Dive, "The key to the suit is in the joints, which are made to resist the extreme pressure of deep water. A diver can fly like a hummingbird in the water by using propellers on the back." After filming the wreck for a documentary, the bell was raised on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. On July 7<sup>th</sup>, a dedication ceremony was held at the Carbide Dock at the Soo with government officials from both countries.

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, over 100 family members gathered with museum officials and Gordon Lightfoot to view the bell at its new location at Whitefish Point Museum. At Mariners' Church in Detroit, where the bell rang on November 11, 1975, over 600 people representing shipmasters, U.S. and Canadian Coast Guards and bell ringers attended the annual Fitzgerald Memorial Service on Sunday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. Visitors heard Cheryl Rozman and

Ruth Hudson speak to the media of their united effort to raise the bell in lasting memory of their loved ones, and their sustained hope that the FITZGERALD would be declared a gravesite and off-limits to further dives.

On July 17, 1999 their hopes were realized. Family members along with representatives from the USCG, ISMA, Canadian Consulate, bell ringers and sea cadets boarded the USCG MACKINAW for the 4-hour voyage to the FITZGERALD. The Rev. Richard Ingalls of Mariners' Church presided at the gravesite consecration service. Also participating were Capt Don Erickson (WM. CLAY FORD) and Capt. James Hobaugh (USCG WOODRUSH). As each FITZGERALD crewman name was read, a family member came forward to ring the bell and drop a flower into Lake Superior. In closing Rev. Ingalls stated, "the ceremony consisted of closure that comes with a final committal and commendation of the souls of the deceased." Upon returning to the Soo in late afternoon, the MACKINAW passed the ARTHUR M. ANDERSON passing upbound into Lake Superior. The Ontario government would restrict further dives on the FITZGERALD by "permit only", thus granting the families request to limit access to the FITZGERALD.

This November will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the tragic loss of the FITZGERALD. Many programs will be held around the lakes and the questions will remain unanswered. One can't help but think back to the dedication ceremony for the ship's bell at the Soo in July, 1995 when Tony Gomez, grandson of Third Engineer Oliver Champeau, read a poem that summed up our feelings, "Place your flowers on the shore. Please don't disturb them anymore."

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In the next issue of TELESCOPE:

News and photos from the 30th Anniversary of the loss of the Edmund Fitzgerald held at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum.

"Night Watch for the Edmund Fitzgerald on November 10, 2005

and

"Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald" on Saturday November 12, 2005



# John R. Emery



JOHN R. EMERY and A.A. HUDSON - Wallaceburg, Ont. inner harbour outbound on Sydenham River - 1945

When it was revealed recently by an Ohio steamship company their venerable “sand sucker” JOHN R. EMERY had gained a reprieve and would enter a second 100 years of life, I was quite relieved. Although the vessel, (built in 1905) would be leaving the Great Lakes and heading for Panama, at least she would escape the inevitable fate of many old ships – scrapping. You see, this writer has a very special attachment to the tiny 140 ft. “John R.” (as I familiarly called her.) She was the first Great Lakes ship I encountered, inspiring an interest that evolved into a life long passion studying marine history. Although it was not until later years when I used a more academic approach to this interest, I found out the vessel that offloaded sand or gravel locally, first visited Wallaceburg in 1938. The Emery’s last call locally came in 1951. These past few years there has been little work for her, relegated to inactivity, a denizen of the past.

My grandmother’s house (310 Emily St.) was located on the north branch of the Sydenham River, directly opposite Babcock Supply Co, (later J.L.Thompson Supply and presently site of Water St.duplexes.) It was here where the JOHN R. EMERY would unload sand for construction use. The ship was small enough (in length) enabling her to turn around right before my eyes as I viewed the fascinating spectacle from my grandmother’s backyard. The ship would be so close, seemingly I could almost reach out and touch her hull. Since my family

home was only two blocks away (on Nelson St.) the Emery’s shrill whistle sound (forever tucked away in my memory bank) would alert me as she signaled for the bridges. I must have dragged my mother down to the waterfront many times and perhaps she eventually trusted me to trudge along on my own. When the EMERY was in town, I would be there!

My love of the green-hulled vessel came at a very young age, likely hatched during the early years of the second world war. Although I cannot pin down the date of our first encounter, likely my first glimpse was from my mother’s arms while visiting my grandparents.

What were my early impressions? The various ship sounds stick out in my mind. The unique creaking of the self unloader device with its many squeaks and rattles are well remembered. Watching from the shoreline, we were close enough that many of the crew conversations could easily be deciphered. The whistle of course, was the most profound of sounds representing the JOHN R. EMERY. As well, a variety of other emissions emanated from various parts of the ship as she went about her task. Thinking back, that gathering of sights and sounds, clicking and clacking, hissing and whistling, combined to bring a sweet nautical chorus that was beautiful music to my ears. The JOHN R. EMERY had character!



JOHN R. EMERY - Sydenham River Wallaceburg, Ont. - 1945

As I became older and allowed to wander the waterfront on my own, I watched other ships that came into our port, which was remarkably busy particularly during wartime. Canada Steamship Lines had regular package freighter service from Wallaceburg carrying out canned goods, sugar bags, agricultural products, International trucks and other mixed cargo. Northwest Steamship Co. with their vessels SUPERIOR and A.A.HUDSON were also regular visitors to Wallaceburg as were a variety of tugs and barges as well as coal ships feeding the furnaces of local industries. This remarkable action combined to allow Wallaceburg's boast as Canada's Inland Deep Water Port. However, it was the JOHN

R. EMERY that seemed to command most of my attention during these formative years of ship watching in Wallaceburg.

The EMERY did have her dark side however. She seemed somewhat over confident and often darted through the narrow Sydenham with excessive speed. On a few occasions local officials and the EMERY owners were not on the best of terms. There were a number of times where excessive speed was unpopular with visiting yachters who regularly lined their beautiful craft along the downtown breakwalls on weekends. And since the vessel had to pass through three swing bridges, odds were the occasional miscalculation resulted in bridge



JOHN R. EMERY, north branch of Sydenham River, Wallaceburg, Ont. approaching Babcock Supply Co. dock - 1948

collisions. None was more embarrassing for the ship (nor expensive) than the spectacular incident in November of 1944. I remember the occasion well. Opening the Central Bridge (now site of the Stonehouse Walk Bridge) was always a big occasion for shore huggers. Turned manually with a large key, the Wellman boys were usually assigned the job of allowing freighters to pass through the narrow opening. Long before liability concerns and a much more laid back world, Whiz or Lefty (Wellman) would allow kids to ride the swinging bridge. In fact joining in with the key turn was permitted as well. On this particular occasion the EMERY's captain (perhaps in haste) miscalculated and rammed the bridge before it had opened. Research in later years revealed this was "ramming number five" by the JOHN R. EMERY but this was the "royal" collision!. The ship missed the opening, knocked a three foot hole into the steel work, bent the side railing and rammed the swing action device off the bridge turning hub and also sprung the running gear. Other than a few scrapes, the EMERY was relatively unscathed but forced to retreat and tie up on the breakwall.

The bridge was put out of action and a several thousand dollars later, the JOHN R. EMERY had been cast in a villain role. She was trapped in the inner harbour, no ship could come in or get out. For five days the the guilty ship was sentenced to dock jail while expensive repairs were made by a

Windsor company. During ensuing years, I have wondered what words were directed to the EMERY's captain by her owners. She was not making any money languishing in Wallaceburg's harbour, unable to escape!

On April 17, 1951, (all past sins apparently forgiven) the JOHN R. EMERY opened navigation in Wallaceburg and earned the ceremonial top hat by mayor Eric MacDonald and Chamber of Commerce officials. Unknown at the time, this would be the EMERY's final year visiting Wallaceburg. Ships were getting bigger and gradually there was less and less work hauling sand to smaller ports, her assignments for the next several years only occasional, mainly on Lake Erie's southern shoreline. Trying to coax more life from her ancient hull, the EMERY was later reconfigured, all cabins aft with a new (diesel) engine installed. This made the vessel more functional but removed her unique character. During her Wallaceburg chapter, hissing steam, belching smoke and the cacophony of ship sounds, made her a Toonerville Trolley of the waterways.

Built in 1905 and still surviving is quite remarkable. To enjoy a new life in Panama beginning her second hundred year chapter is fine too. But my memories of the JOHN R. EMERY will always be the steam, smoke and sounds of that saucy little steamer darting in and out of the Sydenham waterway marked by the occasional bump and grind!  
(Photos courtesy of Mann Historical Files)



JOHN R. EMERY after 1957 redesign and repowering.

## "The Surprising Legacy of Chester"

Chester continued from ... The January-March 2005 (Vol.LIII No.1) issue of *Telescope*

A lifeboat from the 1931-built Ford Motor Co. vessel, built at the Great Lakes Engineering Works yard at River Rouge, was shrouded with mystery as to its heritage. Somewhere along the line, the hull had been converted to steam power and gained a décor similar to the famous AFRICAN QUEEN in the famous 1951 film classic starring Humphrey Bogart.

Mike Brown of Port Lambton Ont., a St.Clair River village, was fascinated with the unique hull to the point where he learned to operate the antiquated steam power plant. His grandfather Ed Sykes, owner, realized the passion and adulation for the steam boat, eventually allowing his eager grandson to take full responsibility of the slow moving artefact. Since, the tastefully decorated show piece has been seen in and around waters of the St.Clair area. It even copped recognition as an award winner at the 2004 WAMBO(Wallaceburg Antique Motor & Boat Outing) an annual event that attracts antique boats, cars, motorcycles, firetrucks and aircraft from across Ontario and Eastern Michigan.

A third year student in criminology at the University of Windsor, a gnawing at Mike's inquiry skills pushed him into uncovering portions of the previously unknown heritage of his rare baby "SMOKEY". A lifeboat from the Ford Motor Co. vessel CHESTER, (that visited Wallaceburg in the 1930's) the quest for information competed with his university studies. Mike was eventually able to fall upon a bonanza of information that soon formed a fairly complete history of its earlier life. Data did not come easily but diligence paid off. Although he is far from satisfied the story is complete he is enticed to learn "the rest of the story."

Step one saw Mike corner his grandfather (Ed Sykes) asking him to pin down some details. Searching his memory bank, he recalled the previous owner as Karl Russel, who lived in Cedar Springs, a small Lake Erie hamlet south of Chatham. Fortunately, Karl's wife Julie, a meticulous record keeper, willingly shared their chapter of the lifeboat's history. Mr. Russel bought the hull, which was in decrepit condition and all the components (including engine and boiler). Russel had decided to assemble the parts into an operating steamboat. It was June 10, 1979 when the Russel's sold the boat to Ed Sykes. Now comes a most surprising part of the story. Karl Russel recalled buying the hull from Dick Whale, a well known Wallaceburg outdoorsman. Wallaceburg is just nine miles from Mike Brown's home. "SMOKEY" had a previously unknown earlier link to the steam boat's present cruising area!

The small boiler had been purchased from a bee farm in Lansing, Michigan and adapted for steamboat use. The engine portion came from a Lake Erie area resident George Vidler of Erieau, Ont. Apparently the engine had seen service powering a small ferry boat that ran between Shrewsbury and



Mike Brown preparing steam in SMOKEY

Erieau. The steam oil pump was partitioned from a saw mill just outside of Merlin near where Ed Sykes resides.

Not content to allow the story to rest at that point, Mike Brown, now on an information roll, decided to approach Karl Russel for additional information. In Mike's words, he related. "Karl Russel had many fond memories of running and working the steamboat. He remembered purchasing the boat from Dick Whale of Wallaceburg sometime around 1970. Whale at that time was elderly and had used the boat for fishing. He had fitted it with a car engine of some sort. The hull sat in his yard for sometime as Whale was no longer fishing. Mr. Russel remembered that when he bought the boat, it had sat in the weather so long that holes were rusted right through the hull. He also remembered the brass builders' plaque (Great Lakes Engineering Co.) was intact."

Intrigued as pieces of the boat's history gradually fell into place, Mike further gleaned information from Karl Russel."After Karl bought the boat, he acquired various parts to build the steam

plant( after removing the car engine.) Karl said he wasn't much of a steam guy and he was assisted in building the steam plant by Ben Scaman from Wallaceburg, who had a steamboat of his own. They ran them together in the Sydenham River a few times. Karl also told me he remembers towing with his steamboat, another small boat powered by a 50 hp outboard motor, backwards! Ben and Karl were steamboat buddies and apparently embarked in a race or two on the Sydenham."

Studies at the university level require a huge time investment. Quite elated at the amazing set of facts thus far, Mike Brown hopes to add yet more to the story. He wants to track down Ben Scaman to see what he might offer. As well, Mike anticipates the small ferry that ran from Erieau to Shrewsbury might offer another chapter to the legacy of CHESTER. And how did Chester come into the possession of Dick Whale? Gaining an "A" thus far for research, we feel Mike Brown will fill in more facts to this interesting story of a lifeboat turned steamboat. If so, stay tuned and we will bring you part three of SMOKEY!



SMOKEY at WAMBO - Wallaceburg - August 2004

# GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS



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

Rod Burdick	Skip Gillham	William Howell
William Keller	Alan Mann	Greg Rudnick
Marilyn Rudnick	Jim Sprunt	The Scanner

JUNE, 2005

June 2 ...The keel-laying ceremony for the Navy's first littoral combat ship, the USS FREEDOM, was held at the Marinette Marine Yard in Marinette, WI. The ship was the first of a hoped-for class to be built for the Navy on a frigate-sized hull. The ships would have mission modules that could be changed for different combat situations. The ships would be of shallow draft for operations close to shore. The USS FREEDOM is scheduled to be delivered in December, 2006.

June 3 ... Str . RESERVE unloads coal in Ontonagan. In recent years, very little coal has been received in that port.

... Limestone shipments on the Lakes were 5.1 million net tons in May, an increase of 4.5%, but a large gain of 13.4% over the five-year average of May shipments.



Stmr. RESERVE unloading at Ontonagan - June 3, 2005

Photo by Rod Burdick

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GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •

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Photo by Rod Burdick

ALGOISLE makes first visit to Marquette - June 4, 2005

June 4 ... Str. ARMCO unloads coal in Munising at the paper mill. It is the second load of coal to that city this year.

... ALGOISLE makes its first visit to Marquette, loading for Hamilton. ALGOISLE joins MONTREALAIS and other Canadian vessels in loading for Canadian ports.

June 7 ...The HAMILTON HARBOUR QUEEN was christened at Pier 8 in Hamilton. The ship was formerly known as the HARBOUR PRINCESS I, and as GARDEN CITY prior to that. The ship had been operating on Lake Erie at Port Dover.

June 10 ... Several companies are considering leasing the former Metro Machine Shipyard in Erie, P.A. The facility was built by Litton Industries and has been underutilized since the construction of the mid-bodies of the STEWART J. CORT and PRESQUE ISLE.

June 13 ... Tanker AGGERSBORG arrived in Halifax after being purchased by Algoma Tankers.

June 14 ... AGGERSBORG is reflagged Canadian and renamed ALGOSEA (ii).

... KINSMAN INDEPENDENT has been renamed VOYAGEUR INDEPENDENT. She is in Hamilton being repowered with a G.£. marine diesel, two caterpillar generators, a new reduction gear, and new propeller shaft. Her Canadian official number is: C.827118. The VOYAGEUR INDEPENDENT was built by Defoe Shipbuilding in 1952 for Pioneer Steamship Company as the CHARLES L. HUTCHINSON. Sold to Ford in 1962, she was renamed ERNEST R. BREECH. In 1988, she became KINSMAN INDEPENDENT (iii) for KINSMAN.

June 16 ... The two ISG vessels have been disposed of by successor company, Mittal Steel. The ownership of the BURNS HARBOR has been transferred to American Steamship Company from a vessel trust. The STEWART J.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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BURNS HARBOR sold to American Steamship Co. - June 16, 2005

CORT, operated by ISG under a charter from its owner, General Electric, has been transferred to the Interlake Steamship Company, which will continue the charter. The vessels will still sail in Mittal Steel service, but cannot be owned by them because of the foreign ownership of the steel company.



STEWART J. CORT in short-lived ISG colors, transferred to Interlake Steamship Company - June 16, 2005

Photo by Greg Rudnick



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GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •

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June 23 ... Str. STE. CLAIRE was towed from Lorain, OH to Windsor, Ontario by the tug SUPERIOR.. She is tied up near the casino, where tours of the decks will be conducted. Money raised from the tours helps pay for the ongoing restoration efforts. For several years, STE. CLAIRE has been in Lorain, undergoing repairs under the ownership of John Belko and Diane Evon.

June 24 ... ST. MARYS CHALLENGER began her 99th sailing season by sailing light from Milwaukee to Charlevoix to load. She is the former (a) SOUTHDOWN CHALLENGER, (b) ('05) WILLIAM P. SNYDER ('26), (c) ELTON HOYT II ('52), (d) ALEX D. CHISHOLM ('66), (e) MEDUSA CHALLENGER ('99). She is the oldest operating powered vessel on the Great Lakes.

... The DETROIT PRINCESS received Coast Guard certification, allowing operation on the Detroit River. The PRINCESS, constructed in 1993, is a replica of a Mississippi riverboat and was used as a casino vessel. The ship was converted to a tour boat in Toledo, Ohio.

June 25 ... The reconstructed replica of HMAS (*His Majesty's Armed Sloop*) WELCOME was launched at Traverse City, MI. Built in 1980 for Mackinac State Historic Parks, the vessel had deteriorated and was given to the Maritime Heritage Alliance of Traverse City to be rebuilt. Much of the hull planking had to be replaced. The ship will be in sailing condition by 2006. The original HMAS WELCOME was built in 1775 at Fort Michilimackinac by John Askin, a local trader. In 1778, she became part of the Royal Navy and helped move the residents of Fort Michilimackinac to the more easily defensible Mackinac Island. In 1780-81, ice-damaged at Mackinac Island, she was scuttled.



HMAS WELCOME being rebuilt at Traverse City - June, 2005

June 26 ... The CSL ASSINIBOINE, the former JEAN PARISIEN, was towed from the dry-dock at Port Weller to the fit-out wall. The tugs used in shifting the vessel were the V AC, SEAHOUND and the GLENEVIS. The CSLASSINIBOINE is the product of a \$30 million refit, which included a new forebody and an increase in length to 740 ft.

June 27 ... PRESQUE ISLE drops barge in Erie, P A.

June 28 ... Tug PRESQUE ISLE was downbound light in the Welland Canal enroute to Port Weller Drydock.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Photo by Greg Rudnick

CSL NIAGARA runs aground - June, 2005

... A former McKIEL tug is back in the Lakes. The NORFOLK is going to Sturgeon Bay to be adapted to push the new Lafarge cement barge being built there. McKiel partially rebuilt the burned-out tug, then known at the VORTICE before selling it off-Lakes. She was towed into the Lakes by the tug GULF SERVICE, which will take the new oil barge ENERGY 11103 out, up the Lakes.

... CSL NIAGARA grounded in the St. Lawrence Seaway near St. Helena Island, about a quarter mile from the Thousand Islands Bridge. The vessel lost her steering and grounded. She was taking on a small amount of water, but the pumps were keeping up.

June 29 ... CSL NIAGARA was freed at 4:30 a.m. and continued on her trip.

... CSL ASSINIBOINE was christened at Port Weller Drydocks.

JULY, 2005

July 1 ... Toledo's Cargill / Anderson mill experienced a grain dust explosion that damaged the elevator and led to a massive fire. No injuries were reported. One of the grain silos collapsed, and two silos lost their tops.

July 2 ... SPIRIT OF ONTARIO I begins its second season.

... GULF SERVICE / NORFOLK arrives in Sturgeon Bay.

July 3 ... Str. KEEWATIN is the site of a reunion tour of former crewmembers and their families. The busload of 55 people from Port McNicoll, Ontario toured the 1907 vessel. KEEW A TIN was built in Scotland by the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Co., Ltd. and sailed the Lakes for 57 years until her retirement in 1965. In 1967, she was purchased and moved to the Saugatuck, Michigan area and opened for tours in 1968.

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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS**

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July 4 ... The CEDARGLEN made a rare trip to Marinette, WI with a load of pig iron. It is believed to be the first visit by a CSL ship.

... CSL ASSINIBOINE left Port Weller on sea trials.

... CSL ASSINIBOINE departs the shipyard upbound on her maiden voyage through the Welland. Her destination is Superior, WI, where she will load taconite.

July 6 ... Toledo's Cargill / Anderson elevator still burns.

July 8 ... The salty ORLA ran aground in the St. Clair River about 100 feet from the shore in Marysville, MI. The freighter pushed up the bottom of the River into a pile of mud, visible above the water. After about 40 minutes, the ship was able to free herself and proceeded on her trip to Duluth. It is surmised the vessel had a power or steering gear failure. The ORLA was built in 1999 and is owned by the Polish Steamship Co.

... A company looking for the wreckage of a 1950 plane crash instead found the wreckage of the passenger ship MICHIGAN, which sank off Holland, MI in 1885. The 204-ft. ship was in 270 feet of water.

July 9 ... CSL ASSINIBOINE loads 30,192 metric tons of pellets at the Burlington Northern Dock in Superior. The cargo is bound for Hamilton.

July 11 ... The DAY PECKINPAUGH arrived in Buffalo in tow of the tug BENJAMIN ELLIOT. The ship has been purchased to be converted to a maritime attraction on the Erie Canal at Peebles Island State Park near Albany, NY. The PECKINPAUGH was the last self-propelled commercial freight vessel on the Erie Canal, carrying cement under Erie Navigation Co. colors from 1958 until 1994. The vessel was built in Duluth, MN in 1921 to be used on the Erie Barge Canal.



CSL ASSINIBOINE downbound in Welland Canal on her sea trials - July 4, 2005

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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Photo by Greg Rudnick

DAY PECKINPAUGH to be museum in New York - July, 2005

... The DAY PECKINPAUGH hit a navigation light on the Webster Street Bridge in Tonawanda, NY while under tow to Lockport, NY, causing slight damage.

July 13 ... ALGOCAPE loads ore for Hamilton at the LS&I Dock in Marquette, adding to the parade of Canadian lakers loading there this season.

July 14 ... HMCS TORONTO is upbound in the Welland on a goodwill tour of the Lakes.

July 15 ... ALGOCEN has been renamed V ALGOCEN and registered in Panama. She is owned by Bayshore Recycling of New Jersey.

... NOVA, THE FORMER NOVA P. of the Desgagnes Fleet, built for CSL in 1961 as the package freighter FRENCH RIVER, departed Montreal under power for scrapping overseas.

July 18 ... The saltwater ship MANDARIN docked at the former Detroit Marine Terminal, newly revitalized and managed by Nicholson Terminal and Dock.

July 19 ... ORLA ran aground at Kahnawake, Quebec. She freed herself about an hour later. She also hit the salty JO SPIRIT. ORLA stopped at Cote Ste. Catherine for inspection. She suffered damage on the port side above the waterline and went to Montreal for repairs. JO SPIRIT stopped above Lock 4 for inspection.

July 22 ... JO SPIRIT will need repairs after contacting ORLA. She is partially unloading a cargo of rum in Hamilton.

July 25 ... VALGOCEN, towed by Atlantic Towing Lines tug ATLANTIC OAK and the tug ANDRE H., departed Montreal headed for New Jersey.

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GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •

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Photo by Jim Sprunt

HMCS TORONTO in Welland Canal on her trip into the Upper Great Lakes - July 14, 2005

July 27 ... The wreck of the **BENJAMIN NOBLE** has been located ten miles off of Two Harbors, MN. The **NOBLE**, with a cargo of steel rails, disappeared with all hands April 28, 1914.

... The Norwegian tanker **JO SPIRIT** is tied up at Cote Ste. Catherine, where repairs are being made to her bow after the collision with **ORLA**.



Photo by Greg Rudnick

ALGOECEN, renamed VALGOECEN - July, 2005



Photo by Jim Sprunt

WILLOWGLEN tow downbound in Welland Canal at Port Robinson - July, 2005

July 29 ... TEAK GLEN was towed to Sarnia by tug EVANS McKIEL.

July 30 ... WILLOW GLEN departed Goderich for Hamilton in tow of the tug EVANS McKIEL.

AUGUST, 2005

Aug 1 ... Tanker ALGOSEA (ii) makes her first visit to the Lakes.

Aug 2 ... Alexander McDougall's personal tug, ISLA Y, has been purchased by The Northeastern Maritime Foundation, and will leave Milwaukee to be returned to the Duluth area. The 1892 tug was launched by the whaleback designer in a triple launching, along with the whaleback steamers PILLSBURY and WASHBURN.



Photo by Jim Sprunt

Tanker ALGOSEA (ii) makes her first visit to the Lakes - August 1, 2005

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**GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •**


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... WILLOWGLEN tow continued through the Welland Canal, towed by EVANS McKIEL and PROGRESS. She is heading for Hamilton, but her ultimate destination is an overseas scrapyard.

Aug 3 ... VALGOCEN arrived at Bayshore Recycling in Keasbey, NJ, her new home. The trip from Montreal took eight days.

Aug 4 ... Tug PRESQUE ISLE arrived in Erie to pick up her barge. The tug had been to Port Weller for drydocking.

... Tug BARNEY TURECAMO arrived in Sturgeon Bay to pick up the new Moran Barge GEORGIA.

... LEE A. TREGURTHA will be repowered by Bay Shipbuilding at Sturgeon Bay. She will receive a medium speed Bergen diesel and a controllable-pitch propeller. The TREGURTHA sailed previously as WALTER A. STERLING and WILLIAM CLAY FORD (ii).



Photo by Jim Sprunt

Tug BARNEY TURECAMO upbound in Welland Canal  
headed to Sturgeon Bay to pick up her new barge, GEORGIA - July 31, 2005

Aug 5 ... The salty JANA skipped a "security checkpoint" call-in and was visited by Federal agents while anchored. The vessel docked at Detroit Marine Terminals, where the Coast Guard was expected to investigate.

Aug 9 ... MISSISSAGI lost steering and hit a wall on the Welland Canal north of Allanburg near the old guard gate, putting a 25-ft gash in the port side.

... Limestone shipments totaled 4.5 million net tons in July, a decrease of 13% compared to a year ago, and a drop of 5% against July's 5-year average. The limestone trade is shipping at slightly slower than last year's pace. Tonnage for the first seven months stands at 18.9 million net tons, 2.5% less than the same period in 2004. The stone trade remains well ahead of its five year average for January to July.

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• GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS

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... St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp. announced new security fences will be provided for the Welland Canal. Fences will be increased in height at all eight locks and the haulage road above Lock 7 will be closed. The new fences are to be decorative. The viewing platform at Lock 3 will get fencing or plexiglass protection.

Aug 12 ... The former sandsucker JOHN R. EMERY is being readied for a trip to Panama. The wheelhouse and masts are being placed in the cargo hold to clear the bridges in the New York State Barge Canal. They will be re-attached when she leaves the Canal at Troy, NY. The EMERY was built by The Great Lakes Engineering Works in Ecorse, MI in 1905 and has always carried the same name.

Aug 16 ... TEAKGLEN has been purchased by scrapper Wayne Elliott of the International Marine Salvage Company of Port Colborne, Ontario.

Aug 18 ... ALGONORTH reported a fire in her electrical panels, causing loss of power and a blackout. The vessel was off Thunder Bay, Ontario, and drifting towards Pie Island. The tug ROBERT JOHN took the vessel in tow to the Keefer Terminal.



Photo by Greg Rudnick

ALGONORTH suffers electrical fire - August, 2005

Aug 21 ... U.S. steel mills have lowered production for the second quarter of 2005. Steel prices increased dramatically during the summer of 2004, but the price could not be maintained, as users consumed inventory hoping to wait out the price rise, and held off on ordering more. Last June, 32 blast furnaces were operating in the U.S. This year, only 23 were running.

... The SPIRIT OF ONTARIO I hit the gangway in Toronto. Three windows were broken. The crew boarded up the windows and the catamaran left on time for her next run to Rochester, NY.

... The catamaran ferry LAKE EXPRESS rescued a man from his capsized boat. The Ferry returned to Milwaukee, so that the man could get medical attention. The boater had been in the water for one hour and 45 minutes.

Aug 22 ... Six Turkish sailors jumped from the Maltese-flagged IMBAT at Champlain, Quebec. Two more men left the ship in Quebec City and did not return. Police detained three men and were searching for the others.

... AMERICAN SPIRIT stops at Nicholson for repairs to her unloading belt.



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GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS •

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Photo by Jim Sprunt

SPIRIT OF ONTARIO I departing the shipyard at Port Weller, readying herself for a new season - June 5, 2005

Aug 24 ... The Str. STE. CLAIRE was moved from Windsor to Belanger in River Rouge, where she is to be set up as a "Haunted Ship". She knocked down a 25' piece of railing while docking.

... The saltwater ship VLIEBORG rubbed the north pier of the Duluth Ship Canal while leaving. Damage was confined to rub marks, scratches, and a toppled lamppost. Steering failure was blamed for the incident.

Aug 25 ... SPIRIT OF AMERICA, the last of the three Staten Island ferries built at Marinette Marine, departed her builders' yard headed for NY.



Photo by Greg Rudnick

Str. STE. CLAIRE, former Bob-Lo boat at Belanger Park, River Rouge as "Haunted Ship" - August, 2005

• **GREAT LAKES & SEAWAY NEWS**

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Aug 28 ... SPIRIT OF AMERICA passed through the Welland Canal.

Aug 29 ... MISSISSAGI leaves Wharf 10 on the Welland Canal, having completed repairs to the damage from the Aug 9 collision with the approach wall.

Aug 31 ... Captain of IMBA T was arrested for withholding information on his crew. The ship is in Quebec City.

**RENAMES:**

... ALIDA M '03, ALIDA ALIDON '98, ALIDA SMITS '92, renamed BARAKAR I

... GIANT, ex MILLENIUM FALCON '02, SOREN TOUBRO '98, OAK STAR '82. A SUN, renamed GULMAR.

... SEVEN SISTERS, (a) CHARLIE S. '75, CATHY McALLISTER '02 has been remur MORIN by the new owners, Distribution Granda Lacs/St. Laurent Ltee.

... MARILIS T., ex WILRIDER '94, CONSENSUS SUN '92, MANILA PRIME '89, UJ PEACE '88, renamed OCEAN LEADER.

... MILLENIUM HAWK. ex LT ARGOSY, renamed CASHIN.

... REGINA OLDENDORFF renamed ZHONG CHANG '68.

... ANNA OLDENDORFF renamed LOPI



SEVEN SISTERS renamed DOC MORIN - May 9, 2005

**SCRAPPED:**

... SALTY DOG I sold to International Marine Salvage in Port Colborne, Ontario.

**BACK COVER:** EDMUND FITZGERALD at Great Lakes Steel - October 26, 1975  
Photo by Paul C. LaMarre, Jr.

The Great Lakes Maritime Institute, Inc. promotes interest in the Great Lakes; preserves items related to their history; encourages building of scale models of lake ships, small craft and racing boats and furthers programs of the Dossin Great Lakes Museum, repository of the Institute's holdings. The Institute was organized in 1952 as the Great Lakes Model Shipbuilding Guild. It is incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan as a nonprofit corporation and donations to G.L.M.I. have been ruled deductible by the Internal Revenue Service. No member is paid for services.

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Printed in the United States of America  
by Macomb Printing, Incorporated  
Clinton Township, Michigan

