

THE LIGHTSHIP

Volume XII No. 1
January 1990
Lake Huron Lore
Newsletter



Museum of Arts & History
Marine Gallery
1115 Sixth St.
Port Huron, MI 48060

Frank & Jean Tabor - Co-editors, 1413 N. River Rd., St. Clair, MI 48079

KUDOS for the HURON LIGHTSHIP !

On Fri., Dec. 22, 1989, U. S. Secretary of the Interior, Donald P. Hodel, added the "Huron" lightship to the National Register of Historic Places. She already had a Michigan Historic Commission "Historic Site" designation.

A fitting honor to this sentinel of "our waterway" that began her service as Lightship No. 103 (later designated by the U.S.C.G. as WAL 526) in 1935 and continued as such, until being replaced by a lighted, unmanned radio beacon buoy and decommissioned. Her 1,000 watt flashing light could be spotted 14 miles up Lake Huron, while her radio beacon could be picked up 60 miles away. On foggy days, her deep throated "beee-ohhh" foghorn could be heard for miles over land and water.

This 97' ship was built by Consolidated Shipbuilding Co., Morris Heights (the Bronx), N.Y. in 1921.

From 1921 to 1935 the Huron lightship served in several areas on Lake Michigan as a relief ship.

In 1935 she started her assignment on Lake Huron (Corsica Shoal, off Port Huron).

In 1936 her hull was painted black (most other lightships were red hulled).

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER & PROGRAM SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 1990

MUSEUM OF ARTS & HISTORY

1115 SIXTH ST.

PORT HURON, MI

DINNER - 6 PM

Prepared by the MUSEUM GUILD
Reservations will be filled in the
order received. Seating capacity 70
Send your reservation promptly
to: Edith Hoyer, Treasurer
per reservation blank on insert "A"
Members & guests who are unable
to join us for dinner are cordially invited
to attend the program following
the dinner

+ + PROGRAM - 7:30 PM + +

Slide and Historical presentation
of

The St Clair Flats

by

MICHAEL M. DIXON

Author of: "LIFE AT THE FLATS,
WHEN BEDORE WAS KING"

VOLUME I

"THE FLATS GOLDEN ERA,
AN AMERICAN VENICE"

VOLUME II

"MARSHLAND MEMORIES"

VOLUME III

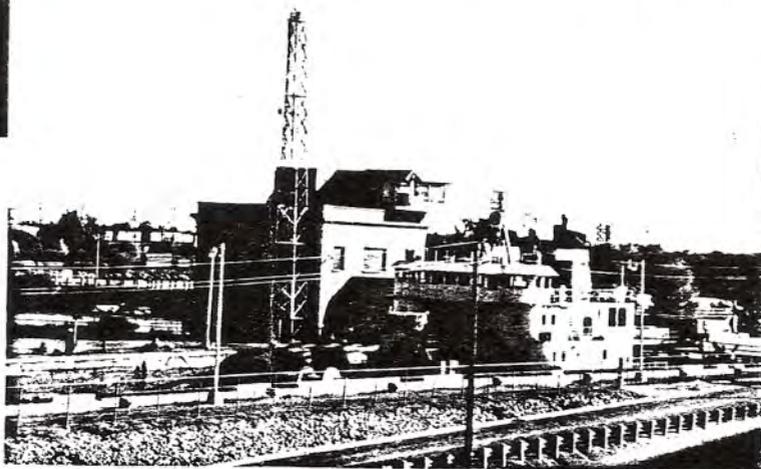
Lock 7 MOTEL

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Frank Tabor

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& WELAND CANAL - ALIVE & WELL

A group of marine buffs, from various states and provinces, gathered at the Lock 7 Motel Oct 12 through Oct 15, 1989. An enjoyable time was had by all - renewing friendships, meeting new people, swapping tales, viewing slides with accompanying anecdotes, touring the Port Weller Shipyard, visiting Port Colborne to view what may be left of scrapped ships and a round trip ride on the "Garden City" (a converted tug with 300 passenger capacity) from Port Dalhousie to Port Weller. The group is looking forward to another get-to-gether next year, same place, same time frame.

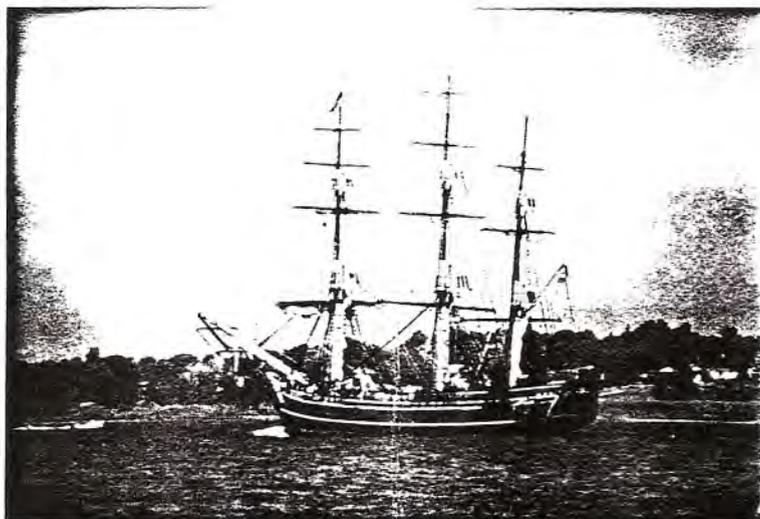


photo by Frank Tabor

The Canadian sailing vessel BOUNTY upbound in the St. Clair River in the summer of 1989. She is a replica of the original HMS Bounty and was built in 1960 by Smith & Rhuland, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia for the movie "Mutiny on the Bounty".

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GROUNDING COAST GUARD CUTTER, MESQUITE, APPEARS DOOMED!

Reports are that on Dec. 4, 1989 at 2:30 AM the U.S.C.G. cutter MESQUITE ran aground in Lake Superior off Keeweenaw Point. The rocks gashed the ship's hull flooding the engine room. The crew tried unsuccessfully to free the ship for four (4) hours and then were ordered to abandon ship. Most of the crew were taken aboard a ship that had responded to the Mesquite's distress call.

Five (5) days later another storm struck smashing the 935 ton, 180', 47 year old ship against the rocks, making additional holes in her hull, breaking off the rudder & snapping off the mast.

The Mesquite and crew were working round the clock to remove buoys (which cost \$600000) so that freezing water wouldn't damage them.

The incident is reportedly being investigated at 3 levels:

- the 9th District Headquarters
- the Maintenance & Logistical Command in N.Y. and
- Coast Guard Hdqtrs. in Washington, D. C.

One of the investigating officers reported to the Investigating Board that in his opinion the accident resulted from a navigational error.

The Mesquite's 20,000 gallons of diesel fuel and valuable electronic equipment have reportedly been removed from the listing, ice covered ship. It allegedly would cost an estimated \$44 million to replace her.

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In 1939 the Lighthouse Service merged with the United States Coast Guard.

From 1941 - 1945 - only U.S. lightship to remain on station throughout WWII.

1949 - extensively repaired & modernized @ American Shipbuilding Co., Toledo, OH.
ie. diesel engines, radiobeacon, radar, fog horns added.

Aug 20, 1970 - withdrawn from active service, oldest lightship in U.S.C.G. service.

Aug 25, 1970 - Decommissioned in Detroit, MI.

June 5, 1971 - Acquired by city of Port Huron and returned to Black River.

Since 1972 - on permanent display in Pine Grove Park as a tribute to her vigilance and in fond memory of a passing era.

Lake Huron Lore volunteers have been refurbishing her since early 1989, in anticipation of her opening to the public in the summer of 1990.

According to local radio news, a bronze plaque, designating the Huron Lightship as a national historic landmark, will be placed in Pine Grove Park.

NAVIGATION '89 CRUNCHES TO A CLOSE !

A severely cold December iced-up the waterways and the ships that traverse them a bit early this year, leading to a shortening of the anticipated navigation season by a couple of weeks. Instead of the season ending in in Mid-January, as planned, it essentially ended with the closing of the Soo Locks December 28, 1989. There will, of course, be some hardy sailors in their tankers, tugs, barges, etc., who will continue to challenge the elements, struggling along the routes that don't traverse the now-closed locks. Near the end of the month, the available U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard vessels were quite busy, and successfully so, in their shepherding of vessels through the ice-bound trouble spots, but the ice-making weather was successful too, making more and more ice to be contended with. This is a year to be kept in mind, for discussion, when plans are being hatched for winter navigation and year-around shipping.

The wintery weather brought with it the Christmas season, or vice-versa. Either way, many of the ships were decked-out beautifully in some spectacular Christmas lighting. They were truly magnificent sights for ship-watchers to behold.



*Season's Greetings & Best
Wishes for Good Health &
Happiness in 1990!
Frank & Jean*