

THE LIGHTSHIP



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Terry Doyon (Editor)
272 Elgin St.
Sarnia, ON, N7T 5B6

Membership Fee (annual) - \$10.00 (U.S. funds)
Send to: L.H.L. Port Huron Museum, 1115 6th St.,
Port Huron, MI 48060 - 5346. Phone (810) 982-0891

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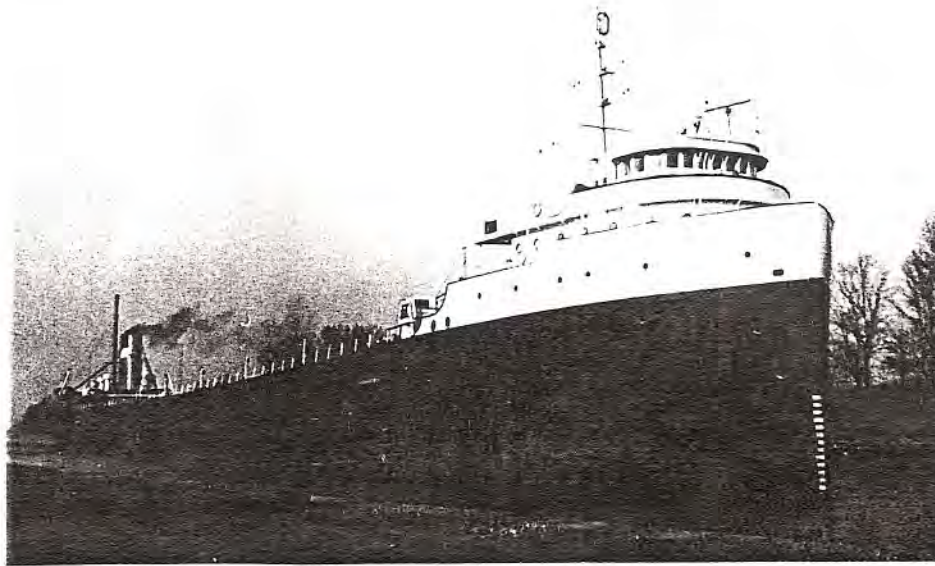
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark your calendar - Our next entertainment meeting will be on Saturday, September 12th, 1998 at the Port Huron Museum. This is a joint meeting with our sister organization, the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, who have arranged the entertainment program. It will begin at 6:00 pm with a social hour, followed by dinner, after which Al Sykes of Fonthill, Ontario will present the program "Forty Years of Change Along the Welland Canal". The cost of this evening is \$10.00 (U.S. funds) and please send your check or money order, payable to Lake Huron Lore Marine Society, to the Port Huron Museum. For your convenience, a reservation slip has been enclosed with this issue of *The Lightship*. Kindly mark your envelope "Dinner Meeting". The deadline for reservations is Wednesday, September 9th.

New Members - L.H.L. wishes to welcome on board Timothy & Nancy Backhurst of Clinton Twp, MI, Jack S. Reid of Sarnia, ON, and Nick Reid of Hamilton, ON, Nick is seven years of age which earns him the title of L.H.L.'s youngest member.

----- NAME THIS SHIP -----



* Photo by E. B. (Skip) Gillham *

(See Answer on Pg. 8)

THE COLLISION OF THE S/S J. P. MORGAN JR.
ON LAKE SUPERIOR - JUNE 06, 1948

By Delmar W. Fritz

I was the fireman on the 4 to 8 watch, which was the 1st assistant engineer Frank Donnelly's watch. He had his wife on board for a trip. They lived in Conneaut, Ohio. Charley Gillpin, the oiler, lived in Traverse City, Mich. At the time, I was living in Fair Haven, Mich., which is on Anchor Bay. The other two firemen were from Fair Haven also, Marvin Hintzman, my cousin, and Bob Sroka, a friend of mine. Bob had gotten me the job with Chief Engineer Earl Vigneron of New Baltimore, Mich., which is also on Anchor Bay. Bob had sailed with Chief Vigneron for seven years. The 2nd and 3rd assistant engineers, Bill Marks and Charles Baumgarten, were both from Marine City, Mich., located on the St. Clair River.

We were downbound from Two Harbors, Minn. with a load of iron ore. The weather was very foggy and visibility was poor. We were in the downbound shipping lane, travelling at normal speed with the ship's horn blowing fog signals. We were somewhere off Houghton and Hancock, around six o'clock in the morning, just about daybreak. All of a sudden we received a "standby" on the engine room telegraph. Then, very shortly, the ship's horn sounded a danger signal, followed by an emergency "full astern" on the telegraph. I could look up through the grating and see the 1st assistant engineer at the engine controls. He had opened up the stops on the valve gear. The engine, propeller and stern of the ship were vibrating fiercely. Then, just before we were hit, received an "abandon ship" signal on the ship's horn. I could still see the 1st assistant engineer standing by the engine throttle. I didn't know which way I should go, so I wrapped myself around a six inch pipe that was stayed to the middle of the coal bunker and hung on.

The impact caused the stern of the ship to raise up and it seemed that I was looking uphill. Asbestos fibers from the pipe wrappings, filled the air so densely that you could hardly breathe. We were still going full astern and the ship's horn had jammed full open. We were losing steam at a very rapid rate. I could still see the 1st assistant engineer at the throttle and no more signals were being sounded. I grabbed a shovel and hit every firedoor (with coal) by hand. We had a very modern stoker system and boilers that had been installed a few years earlier, but they just couldn't keep up with the steam loss.

At this time, Chief Engineer Vigeron entered the upper boiler room from his room as he had been asleep. He closed the valve on the steam supply line to the ship's horn. He then came down the ladder between the boilers and went into the engine room.

The 1st engineer had sent his oiler, Charley Gillpin, up to his room to assist his (the 1st engineer's) wife to the lifeboat. Charley had found her on the deck with a badly sprained ankle. She had gotten up, after hearing the alarm, and the collision knocked her down. Charley managed to get her to her feet and helped her to the lifeboat station.

We stayed at full-astern for several minutes after the Chief Engineer went into the engine room. Then the engine shut down. The Chief appeared at the boiler room doorway and yelled at me to get out. The boiler room floor plates were three flights below the main deck, so after the Chief yelled at me, I ran to the ladder leading to the engine room and across the engine room to the ladder leading to the fantail deck. I was kneeling the Chief in the rump the last few steps to the fantail. We had to cross the fantail to the ladder leading to the main deck. The Chief was much slower than me so I went into the firemen's room to get my leather jacket, as I knew how cold Lake Superior was, even in the summer. I also got my life jacket from the rack in the firemen's room. For the last few steps to the main deck, I was kneeling the Chief in the rump again.

As we had lost all communication with the bridge, the Captain was unable to tell us to shut down. The Captain, Frank Quinn, couldn't get anyone to come aft to tell us, so he came himself and yelled down into the engine room from the fantail. He then went back forward to get his people moving. He had just got out of his room and into the pilot house before the S.S. *Crete* rammed us. The bow of the *Crete* shoved the deck of his room up to within three feet of the overhead (ceiling).

Donnelly, the 1st engineer, was already up on the lifeboat deck, getting the canvas off the lifeboat, when I got there. The 3rd engineer was tying knots in the boat tackle line to the deck cleat. He did not want the davit to be swung out to lower the boat. The 1st engineer could not reason with him, so he turned to me and said "Fritz, do something!" I grabbed the 3rd engineer by his coat collar and the seat of his pants and heaved him into the lifeboat. He was no trouble after that. The 1st engineer and I lowered the lifeboat down to the main deck. Charlie Gillpin got the 1st engineer's wife into the lifeboat and then he started getting everyone else in. The 1st engineer and I locked the boat's tackle blocks and got down from the boat deck to assist him. By this time, the crew from up forward were coming back and getting into the lifeboats. The other two firemen, Sroka & Hintzman, had the other lifeboat loaded and in the water without any problems. The Chief engineer was in the boat with them. I was glad of that, as the Chief had extremely high blood pressure and I was afraid for him. Sroka & Hintzman had everything going smoothly in their boat.

The 1st engineer took over the tiller in our lifeboat, as both the 1st & 3rd Mates, who were in our lifeboat, were too stunned to be of any help. We also had two wheelman, a deck watch, all of the porters and the coalpassers. We got the oars out as the lifeboat touched the water - then the trouble started. Some of the people were seated the wrong way in the boat and were rowing in one direction while the rest were rowing the opposite way. We were away from the *Morgan Jr.* now and were losing sight of her in the heavy fog. The 1st engineer told me to do something as we had to stay near the ship in case she didn't sink. I tried to explain to everyone in our lifeboat, that we had to work together if we were going to get anywhere. They told me to shut-up and sit down. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. I had been a U.S. Marine Rifle Squad leader in the South Pacific for a few years during W.W. II. I just picked them up, one at a time, and slammed them down in their seats the right way. In no time at all we had worked our way back to the *Morgan Jr.* My manner had some impact on them and from that time on, there were no more problems in our lifeboat.

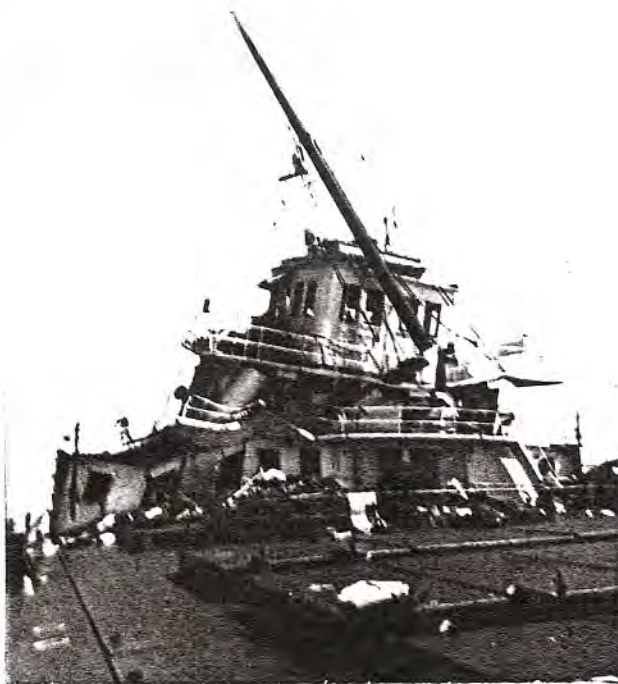
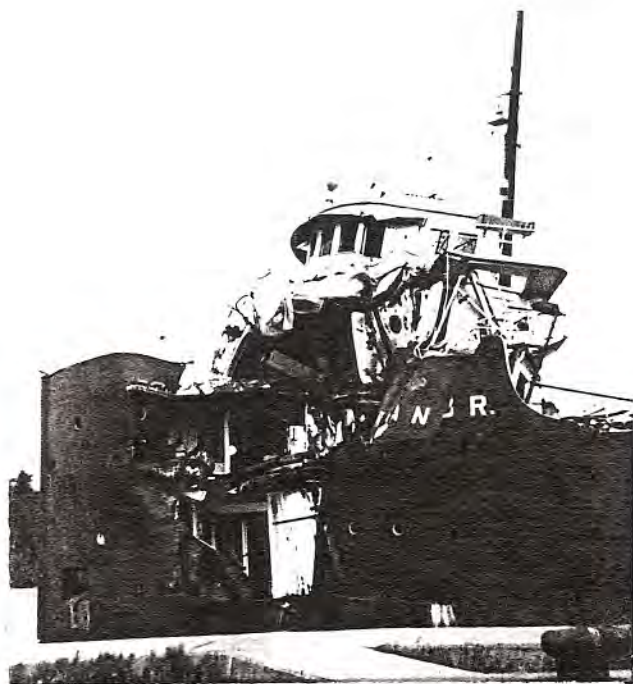
Captain Quinn, the 2nd Mate and a deck watch had stayed aboard and kept sounding the ship and after an hour, they decided to have us re-board the ship. We let the lifeboats hang level with the main deck. We had gotten a lot better organized and felt we could handle getting away a lot quicker.

At this time we learned that two of our crew had died in the collision. One was a watchman and the other was a wheelman. Three deckhands were still wrapped up in the steel shipside which was pushed up against the forward bulkhead. The steam line to the windlass was sheared off right over the anchor-chain locker and live steam had been spraying on the shipside that was wrapped around the deckhand's room. They were so tangled up with room equipment, that they couldn't move. The work party that removed them had to use jacks to make a

hole large enough for them to exit. Our young boatswain was very good in this kind of situation. Two of the deckhands were seriously injured but they eventually recovered. I don't think they ever sailed again.

We shut off the deck steam line, got steam pressure up on the boilers and squared away the engine room. The Captain then decided to try to reach the Portage River. We proceeded at dead slow. All the forward end crew stayed back aft as they were steering the ship from the auxiliary steering wheel on the boat deck. We had gotten the ship's horn working again and were sounding fog signals. They were keeping a close watch on the forward bulkhead, as the pressure from the lake was right against it. We proceeded this way until about 11 or 12 am. The fog had lifted some and we started hearing fog signals coming in from our port side. The Captain started sounding danger signals on the ship's horn. A short time later, a very dim shape appeared out of the fog several hundred yards ahead of us. The ship crossed our bow, turned around and came alongside of us. It was another Pittsburgh S/S Company vessel.

When the *Crete* backed off of us, they did not see how we could survive and when the Chief Engineer shut off the steam to our runaway horn, they could no longer hear us and thought we had gone down. The *Crete* then radioed this information to shore. All our communication equipment was out of commission so we could not report anything. All network radio stations ashore broadcast on their newscasts that the *J. P. Morgan Jr.* had gone down with all hands.



* Continued in the next issue of *The Lightship* *

NAUTICAL NEWS

REMEMBER THE FRENCH RIVER ?

A ship well known to Bluewater shipwatchers 2 or 3 decades ago, the former C.S.L. (a) *French River*, is back in the news. She was built, as Hull # 170, by Collingwood Shipyards Ltd., at Collingwood, Ont. and was launched on June 29th, 1961 for Canadian General Electric Co. Ltd. (Canada Steamship Lines Manager) as a 6,637 G.R.T. Seaway Package Freighter. The vessel was renamed (b) *Jensen Star* in 1981, (c) *Woodland* in 1986, and, in 1991, renamed (d) *Woodlands* by her new owners, Woodlands Ltd. of Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines for service in the Caribbean. In early 1997 she was laid up in Tampa, Florida until she was bought and renamed once again by her new owner, Worldwide Quality Shipmanagement, Belize. She sailed in further service last April as (e) *Lorena I* (Belize flag) O.N. 11983472.

TOLEDO FLEA MARKET

The annual S/S *Willis B. Boyer* Museum Ship Maritime Market will held on Saturday, Sept. 19th, 1998 from 10am to 5pm at the Toledo Sports Arena Exhibition Hall, 1 Main Street, Toledo, Ohio, across from the Main St. entrance to International Park. Due to construction within the area used in previous years, they were forced to relocate the Maritime Market this year. Also this year the Maritime Market will be held in conjunction with the visit of the U.S. Brig *Niagara* to International Park. A free shuttle bus will be run between the Str. *Willis B. Boyer* Museum Ship, the *Niagara* and the Maritime Market locations. Items to be displayed at the Maritime Market will include new & used merchandise, collectibles, antiques, photos, paintings, art work, uniforms, books, tapes, crafts & other items related to the event's nautical theme. General admission will be \$3.00 for adults, \$1.00 for children 12 and under. Pre-schoolers will be free of charge.

HAPPY 30th BIRTHDAY ALGOCCEN

Algoma Central Marine's 730' bulk carrier M/V *Algoocen* was launched in Collingwood, Ont. on June 18th, 1968. Built as Hull # 191, the *Algoocen* left Collingwood on Sept. 20th of that year and, following her sea trials in Georgian Bay, tied up in Owen Sound to take on more supplies and the rest of her crew. The vessel departed Owen Sound at 7:05 am on Sept. 22nd and set sail for Port Arthur, Ont. (Thunder Bay) to load 958,774 bushels of wheat. The cargo was delivered to Port Cartier, Quebec on Oct. 5th. The *Algoocen* then returned to Port Arthur, loaded 952,729 bushels of wheat, and sailed to Hamilton, Ont. Following her arrival in Hamilton on Oct. 21st, the vessel tied up with the cargo of wheat still in her holds, and remained there for the winter. The cargo was delivered to Montreal the following season.

On July 16th, 1998, the *Algoocen* arrived at the Cargill Elevators in Sarnia and loaded 26,000 metric tonnes of white winter wheat bound for Prescott, Ont. This was the first cargo to be loaded at the elevators this season.

CANADIAN TRANSFER CHRISTENED AT PORT WELLER

The Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering Company (CSE) at Port Weller Dry Docks, St. Catharines, Ont. recently completed the project of joining two of Upper Lakes Group Inc.'s (ULS) ships into one self-unloading vessel. The engine room portion of the 730' bulk carrier *Canadian Explorer*, was joined to the *Hamilton Transfer*, (b) *Crispin Oglebay* (2), a 620' self-unloading vessel that retained its cargo hold, wheelhouse and self-unloading system. A new 24' section was fabricated and used to join the ships together. The new 650' x 60' x 25'-6" self-unloader was re-christened at Port Weller Dry Docks, on Tuesday, Aug. 4th, as the *Canadian Transfer* and will sail for Seaway Self Unloaders - a company created through a partnership between Algoma Central Marine & Upper Lakes Group Inc. The new vessel has a cargo capacity of 16,000 metric tonnes and is scheduled to leave Port Weller during the week of Aug. 10th, and sail to Hamilton, Ont. to load a cargo of grain for Buffalo, N.Y.

VESSEL REPAIRS AT SARNIA

The *Canadian Venture*, (a) *Lawrencecliffe Hall* (2)(1965-88), (b) *David K. Gardiner* (1988-94) tied up in Sarnia's North Slip in early July to undergo major repairs to her seized #4 diesel engine. The Chief Engineer hopes to have the repairs completed by Sept. 5th. The *Montrealais* docked in the North Slip on Aug. 1st to receive minor engine repairs. The ship was underway the following day. On Aug. 7th, Algoma Central Marine's newly converted self-unloader, the *Algowest*, arrived at Sarnia's Government Dock to receive extensive repairs to one of her main engines. A connecting rod had broke through the side of the ship's port-side diesel engine.

F.Y.I.

As of midnight, July 31st, 165 salt water vessels (requiring pilots) have passed upbound through the Port Huron / Sarnia area since the opening of the 1998 shipping season. *This number includes repeat visitors.* Forty-five of these vessels sailed through the area during the month of July.

As of midnight, July 31st, 7,763 people have visited the Lake Huron Lightship this year.

The Editor would like to thank L.H.L. members Gene Buel, Dorothy Wallin, Cy Hudson, E. B. (Skip) Gillham, Norm Eakins as well as Al Sykes of Fonthill, ON and Pt. Huron Pilot Boat Dispatcher, Bill Wager, for their contributions.

The Swedish Triplets

By Norman Eakins

In 1965 the Goteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden shipyard of Aktiebolaget Lindholmens Varv. was awarded a contract by the Swedish forestry products giant Svenska Cellulosa to build three pulpwood carriers to be operated by its subsidiary SCA-Transport A/B. These ships flew the Swedish flag and were registered at Sundsvall. In 1997 they were sold and reflagged to Norway.

It was not until May, 1997 that the first of these ships was seen on the Great Lakes when the *Menominee* (which was launched as the *Holmsund* with hull #1101 on May 6, 1967) called at Duluth / Superior with steel and at Menominee to load pulpwood for the Netherlands. Her design caused quite a stir amongst the local boatwatching community as did her pristine "just launched" appearance. She paid three other visits in 1997 when she called at Detroit with steel, Burns Harbor with zinc and Cleveland with steel; on each of these occasions she also loaded pulpwood at Menominee for European delivery. She also earned the distinction of being the oldest salty to visit the Great Lakes during the 1997 shipping season. She is owned by Partrederi Holmsund and managed by Jebsens Ship Management (Bergen) ANS and registered at Bergen, Norway.

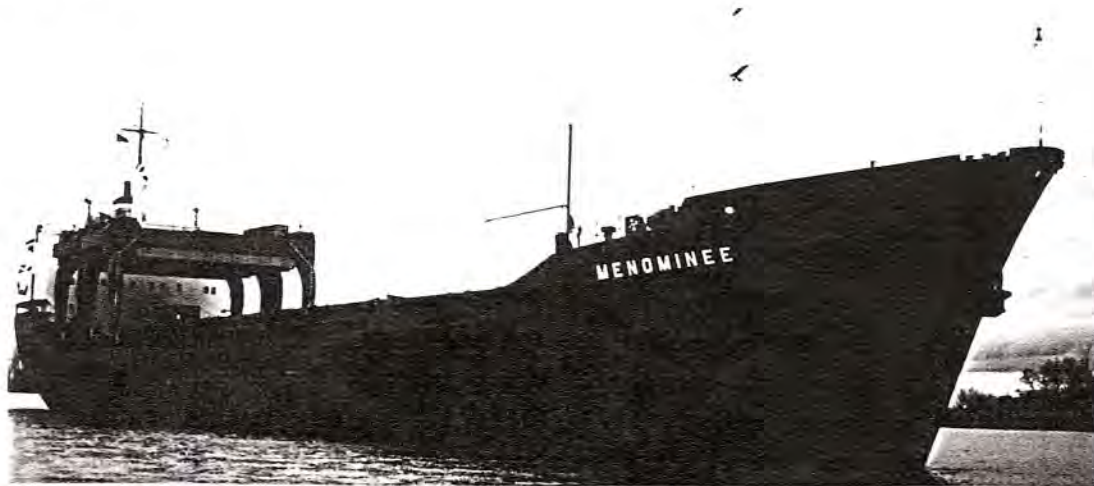
The second of this trio to pay a visit, the *Munksund* (launched with hull #1102 on November 1, 1967), arrived in April this year in ballast for Menominee to load pulpwood for the Netherlands. There was some speculation that she would require a "Lakes-oriented" name at that time. However she was back for her second visit in June when she unloaded steel at Cleveland before proceeding to Menominee. She is owned by B&N Gorthon Lines A/S and managed by Sea Partner A/S and registered at Sarpsborg, Norway.

The last, and oldest, of the trio to visit, the *Marinette* (which was launched as *Tunadal* with hull #1100 on January 27, 1967) arrived in July bound for Chicago with steel. This ship became the *Abitibi John Cabot* in 1997 and was registered at Sarpsborg, Norway and owned by B&N Gorthon Lines A/S and managed by Sea Partners A/S. She received her current name earlier this year and, as far as I am aware, still sails with the same owners.

These ships are powered by two 10-cyl. Model 10PC2V-400 Pielstick diesels which were built by Lindholmens at Goteborg and have a rating of 8,000 brake horse power giving a service speed of 16.5 knots.

Their statistics are: Tonnages : Gross - 9,261 Net Registered - 4,444 Deadweight - 12,497
Length : Overall - 503'-3" Between Perpendiculars - 466'-5"
Breadth : Extreme - 66'-7" Moulded - 66'-3"
Maximum draught : 27'-7"
Molded depth : 36'-9"

It is certainly unheard of to have three salties on the Great Lakes that managed to keep the same name and owner for thirty years!



* *Menominee* upbound in the Welland Canal on May 3, 1997 *

BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

By Skip Gillham

NORDMEER

The one and only trip to the Great Lakes for the German freighter *Nordmeer* ended in disaster on November 19, 1966.

The 470'-8" inch (143.5 metre) long general cargo carrier had been built at Flensburg, West Germany in 1954 and sailed for Nordstern Reederi.

Enroute to Chicago with 990 coils of steel, *Nordmeer* went on the wrong side of the marker buoy for Thunder Bay Shoals some twelve miles east of Alpena, MI. High winds and blowing snow hampered visibility and contributed to the misfortune. The vessel slammed onto the rocks ripping open the bottom and left the ship a total loss.

The fifth *Samuel Mather* was in the vicinity and responded to a call for help and was able to pick up thirty-five members of the crew. Eight more remained on board until November 29th. A succeeding storm cracked the hull at #3 hatch and a USCG helicopter had to airlift the sailors to safety.

Some 20,000 gallons of fuel was eventually pumped out and part of the cargo was removed. The wreck was reported on fire, under suspicious circumstances, on several occasions.

Now, thirty-two years later, little remains of the ship. However, navigational charts record the "Nordmeer Wreck Buoy" and the notation serves as a checkpoint for Captains and a reminder of the ill-fated voyage.



* Photo courtesy of Shipsearch Marine *

The Editor always welcomes member's comments, suggestions & contributions.

SALTY SPOTLIGHT

HANS LEONHARDT

By D. R. (Doug) Schilz

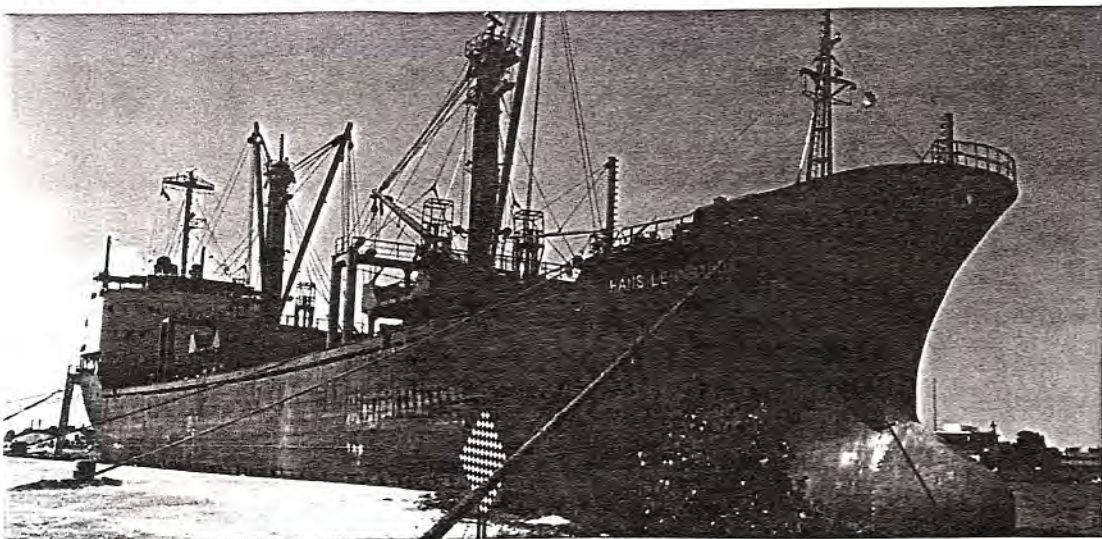
- Built in 1976 by Ujina Zosensho K. K.; Hiroshima, Japan as Hull # 547.
- 524'-1" Breadth - 64'- 5" Depth - 34'-6"
- 7,135 GRT M. General Cargo
- Main engine (single) 7,900 B.H.P. Burmeister & Wain.

The *Hans Leonhardt* visited the Sarnia Cargill Elevators in August, 1994 and loaded a cargo of 10,195 metric tonnes of #2 white winter wheat. This cargo was destined for Equador.

This vessel was first owned by Partenreederei m.s. Hans Leonhardt and sailed under the flag of the Federal Republic of Germany and Panama, while still with the same owners.

She maintained her name but her new owners would be Taffy Shipping Co. Ltd. and registered in Cyprus. This occurred in 1987. Her stack markings were in the colours of Leonhardt & Blumberg.

In 1997 she was renamed *Seba M*. Rassem Shipping Agency is the contact office only for this vessel. While she is now registered in Lebanon, her current owners are unknown at this time. She made one trip to the lakes in 1997 bringing steel to Chicago and then loading an outbound cargo of wheat. Unfortunately, engine breakdowns kept her in the Great Lakes for approximately two months and one day.



* Docked at the old Reid Aggregates Dock in Sarnia - Aug. 6th, 1994 *
(Doug Schilz photo)

Answer to Name This Ship (Pg. 2)

The steamer (a) *Coverdale* C190493 was built in 1949 by Midland Shipyards Ltd. at Midland, Ont. as Hull # 34. Dimensions were 640' x 67' x 35' 11,996 GRT. Sailed for Canada Steamship Lines until 1973 when she was sold to Hindman Transportation Co., of Owen Sound, Ont., and renamed (b) *George Hindman* (4). Sold to Quebec & Ontario Trans. Co. of Thorold, Ont. in 1978 and renamed (c) *Meldrum Bay* in 1979. Sold to Le Group Desgagnes Inc. of Quebec, along with the rest of Q & O's fleet, but never sailed for her new owners. Sold for scrap & taken from her Toronto lay-up dock in July, 1986, in tow of the tugs *Stormont*, *Glenside*, *Glenevis* & *Argue Martin*, bound for Lauzon, Quebec. Left Lauzon in June, 1987, in tow of the Polish tug *Jantar*, bound for a shipbreaker in Lisbon, Portugal.