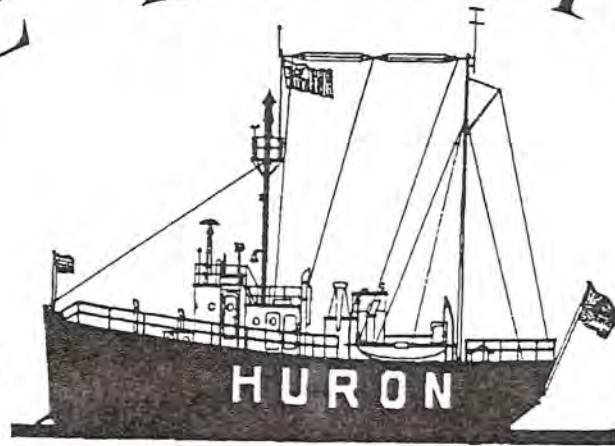


THE LIGHTSHIP

LAKE



HURON

LORE

MARINE SOCIETY

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our first entertainment meeting of the year, held on Saturday, March 20th at the Port Huron Museum, was attended by approximately 40 members and guests who saw a slide presentation by Bob Campbell, ably assisted by Dick Wicklund as the projectionist of "Rails Across the Straits". The audience was treated to scenes of a mode of transportation very familiar a few decades ago. Ferries were viewed when they were an important part of Michigan's history in the movement of automobiles and railcars across Lake Michigan and the Straits of Mackinac. The coal-burning ferries, belching out huge volumes of soot-laden black smoke would give present day folks at the EPA a heart attack. Thanks Bob for an enjoyable show. The evening's raffle prizes were 3 ship calendars, kindly donated by our friends of the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, and 3 colored 8 x 10 prints of Lakers, photographed and generously donated by Dick Wicklund. Howard Miller of Sarnia, Lawrence Taylor of Marysville and Mary Rose of New Baltimore were the photo winners with Lois Buhl of New Baltimore, Ann McLay of Marysville and Jim Smulka of New Baltimore taking home the calendars.

Our first dinner meeting of 1999 was held at the Museum on Saturday, April 10th. Your Editor took 68 members and their guests for "Seven Days on a Thousand Footer". The trip, aboard American Steamship Co.'s *Indiana Harbor*, began at the Detroit Edison power plant at St. Clair, MI, proceeded upbound to Taconite Harbor, MN, back down to Lorain, OH where they unloaded their cargo of 67,000 tons of taconite pellets, then upbound again where the trip ended at the Shell Oil fuel dock at Corunna, ON. The evening's raffle prizes were comprised of a bottle of Algoma Central Corp. Centennial Chardonnay, donated by member Jim Gallant of Cambridge, ON, and 5 color 8 x 10 and 8 x 12 Laker photos donated by L.H.L. President Fred Miller of Port

BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

CHEMBARGE NO. 4

By Skip Gillham

Chembarge No. 4 had a short career but it was tied closely to Bluewater Country.

This ship was much better known by her earlier names of *Judge Kenefick* and *H. J. McManus*. She had been built at Hull, England, by Earles Shipbuilding and left Swansea, Wales with 1,944 tons of coal for Toronto on April 3, 1925.

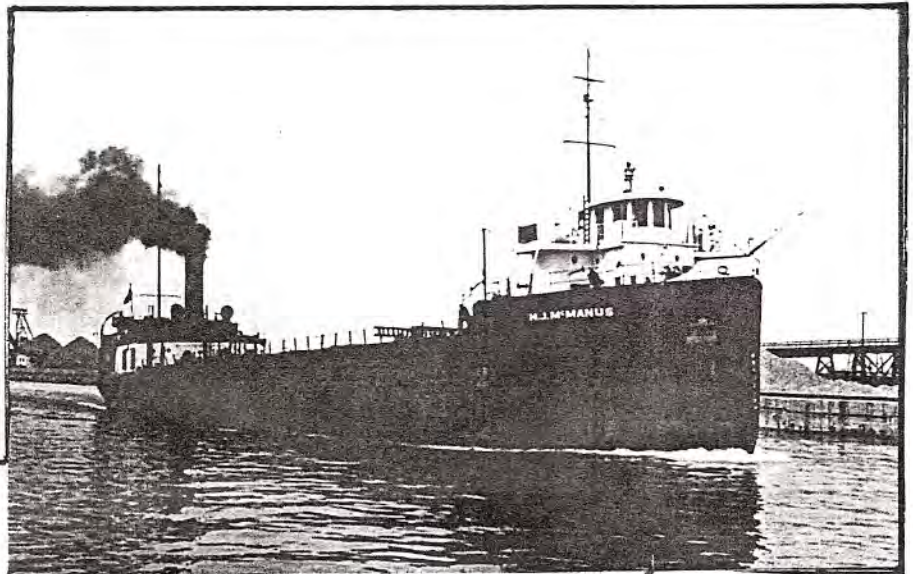
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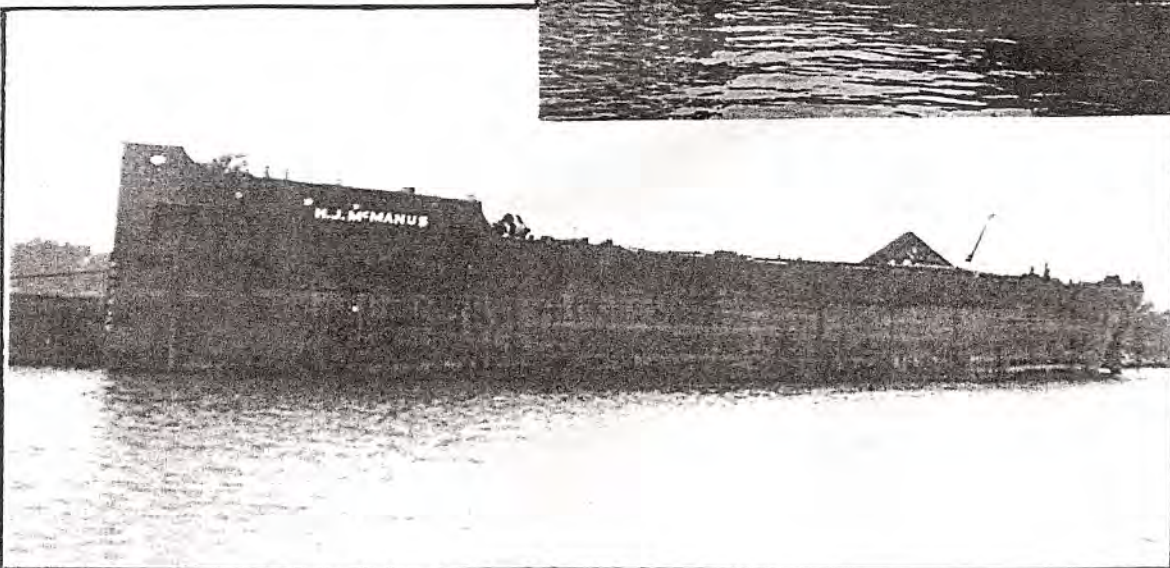
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H. J. McManus as a bulk carrier.



H. J. McManus as a barge.
(John McKay photo)



Wallaceburg Merchant Ship War Losses

By Al Mann

To the more serious Great Lakes historian, this title might prompt a "wait a minute!" response. Knowing Wallaceburg is a small inland port in Western Ontario, situated on the Sydenham River, a thousand or two miles away from any war zone, what is meant by ship losses? And merchant ships? Obviously some clarification and details are in order. During the early stages of the second war (prior to Pearl Harbor), the Allies, particularly Britain, were brought to their collective knees by the successes of Hitler's war machine. The situation was particularly grave as losses at sea mounted. Canada's deep sea fleet was tiny when war broke out in September of 1939. England badly needed supplies, particularly armaments and food, Thus depending on North American sources for help. Every available hull was put to use plying the wartime sea routes. The situation was so desperate that the Canadian government soon looked to Great Lakes vessel owners for help.

Sacrifice in the name of "believe it or not" hit Canadian Great Lakes fleet owners in 1940 when many low draught, light tonnage canallers were called upon to take on a most unlikely guise as trans-Atlantic supply carriers. Now, lets look at their unplanned plight more closely. These lakers, or canallers, were pre-Seaway length (less than 260 feet) and mostly under 1800 tons and spent most of their time plying the sheltered waters of the Great Lakes. Occasionally, they would be caught in open (lake) water turbulence but masters knew enough to seek shelter (or lay back) if a blow was impending. In all, 133 lakers, most of the tiny canal variety, were called into convoy service, with 25 making the first Atlantic crossing in 1940. Canada Steamship Lines, N.M. Paterson Company and Upper Lakes & St. Lawrence Transportation (now Upper Lakes Shipping) were the companies that suffered the most "call ups." Some of these tiny vessels were militarily placed into the DEMS category (defensively equipped merchant ship) when a "pea shooter" gun would be affixed on deck.

Now where does Wallaceburg fit into this situation, or for that matter, Sarnia, Goderich, Leamington, Midland, Windsor and many other ports large and small throughout the Great Lakes? Fact is, many of these "conscripted" canallers were regular callers at these and many other ports prior to the outbreak of war. Now, to think of these tiny vessels taking on war paint, loaded to the hilt with whatever cargo could be jammed into their holds and sent into such a vastness of dangerous waters with tornadoes and torpedoes ready to shoot out their menacing tentacles. This was a David and Goliath maritime parable!

Take Canada Steamship's 1923-built *Magog* as an example. She called regularly into the port of Wallaceburg during the 1930's. In fact, during a late April 1938 trip, when leaving the St. Clair River at Walpole Island, heading to Wallaceburg for a load of glassware, she ran fast aground on the Chenal Ecarte shoal. Unable to negotiate a relatively simple chart exercise such as this, yet she was later called upon to haul her tiny hull overseas. Just two years later, in July of 1940, *Magog* was torpedoed by U-99 off the coast of Ireland, the first of several "Wallaceburg friendlies" to be listed as "lost in action".



* *Magog* aground at the mouth of Chenal Ecarte (Snye River) April 25, 1938 *
(Mann Historical Files)

Another C.S.L. hull, *Waterloo*, also carted glassware from Wallaceburg. She was bombed by German aircraft far from the friendly confines of the Great Lakes, sunk in the North Sea off England in July of 1940.

The *Frank B. Baird*, an Upper Lakes & St. Lawrence canaller was in Wallaceburg Oct. 8, 1937 hauling out fertilizer from the Canadian Fertilizer Co. (plant opposite Dominion Glass in Wallaceburg). Taking on the important call of war duty, she was sunk by gunfire from U-158, south east of Bermuda on May 22, 1942. Fortunately, a compassionate U-boat commander allowed the *Baird's* crew to pile into a lifeboat before salvos sunk the helpless canaller.

The same dreadful scenario saw several other peacetime Wallaceburg ship visitors end up as a war statistic. Unfairly tossed into indescribable odds, they were slow and easily picked from convoys as stragglers by torpedo-happy submarines who knew little or cared less about Great Lakes connections.

The first war (1914-18) saw Wallaceburg lose her pride and joy to the manaces of war. The "creator of modern Wallaceburg" D.A. Gordon (also her first mayor) partnered with Henry Munderloh of Montreal in 1910, to form the Canadian Shipping Co. Their first vessel, built in Glasgow, Scotland, was named *D. A. Gordon*. Her shipbuilder's model rests today as a prized exhibit in the Wallaceburg Museum. Amid fanfare, she arrived in Wallaceburg July 8, 1910 at a newly built dock adjacent to Canada & Dominion Sugar Co. (this same dock survives today). She took on processed sugar and made many similar calls to Wallaceburg over the next few years. She was a handsome ship and well known since she was named for Wallaceburg's most prominent citizen. When the Great War broke out in 1914, she was requisitioned for essential service. In December of 1917, *D.A. Gordon* was torpedoed near Cape de Les Huertes, off the coast of Spain.

Wallaceburg not only sacrificed local sons during both wars, but many "adopted" ships as well. So it can be loosely determined there were Wallaceburg merchant ship losses. And their sacrifice was most heart wrenching.

The Royal Yacht Britannia

By Cy Hudson

It was 40 years ago, June 1959, that the St. Lawrence Seaway was officially opened by President Eisenhower and Queen Elizabeth and crowds of thousands viewed the *Britannia* as the ship sailed the waters of the Great Lakes, including the St. Clair River, probably the world's most famous vessel (after the *Titanic*) and most photographed. When she was in view, the cameras were always busy. Her dark blue hull immaculate with an elegance of no other ship sailing the seas. Built by one of the most famous of Britain's shipbuilders, John Brown & Co. of Clydebank, Scotland, who also built some of the worlds most renowned ships, the *Queen Mary*, *Queen Elizabeth* and *Queen Elizabeth II*.

Note: H.M.Y. *Britannia*, a ship's name associated with the Royal Navy since 1682, when the first of this name was built at the Chatham Dockyard.

Launched: April 16th, 1953. Commissioned: January, 1954. Cost to build: \$3,250,000 (1953 dollars).

Length: 412'-3" Beam: 55' maximum. Speed: 21 knots. GRT: 5,769 tons.

Machinery: Two geared steam turbines, 12,000 shaft horse power - two shafts.

The ship was also built to be used as a Hospital ship in the event of hostilities, but was never used in this capacity even in the British-Argentine 1982 conflict over the Falkland Islands. In her service as a Royal Yacht, the *Britannia* visited over 600 ports in 135 countries, but with her 280-man crew and a \$14.5 million a year upkeep expense, the Government of Tony Blair deemed the Royal Yacht as unnecessary. So, accordingly, she was decommissioned on December 11th, 1997 at the Portsmouth Naval Base in England, no doubt, the last Royal Yacht.

But life was not over for the *Britannia*, no scrapyard for her! For her scrap value of \$375,000, she was purchased by the Forth Ports Authority, and towed to Leith, just outside of Edinburgh, Scotland, to be prepared for public viewing. Refurbished at a cost of \$3,750,000, an elevator was installed outside the ship with entry doors cut into the hull at each deck level. Also, an elevator was installed for engine room entry, but not the boiler room. With 95% of the Yacht's original artifacts on show, visitors can take a 2-hour tour of the *Britannia*, for a fee of \$9.75,

and view the former Royal bedrooms, drawing rooms and 50-seat dining room, which is used only by major companies to host banquets for corporate clients. It is expected to attract more than 200,000 visitors in her first year, after the former Royal Yacht, in pristine condition, had her grand opening ceremony last October (1998).

NAUTICAL NEWS

LOW WATER LEVELS

With this year's low water levels, it did not take very long before there were several groundings. The M/V *Paterson* in Lake St. Francis on April 5th, and the *Atlantic Hickory*, also in the same area a week earlier. With the water level reported to be 3 to 4 feet lower than normal in the St. Marys River, the *Algontario* ran aground on April 5th while upbound in the Middle Neebish Channel on a trip from Clarkson, ON to Duluth with a cargo of cement. The ship suffered hull damage and caused the upbound channel to be closed to other ships until she was freed by off-loading 130 tons of fuel oil and emptying the ships ballast tank. Closer to home, the *Arthur M. Anderson* ran aground on April 7th while inbound at Calcite, MI. While water levels may appear to be lower this year, official weather forecasters say that current levels are about 4 inches below the long-term average depth for Lake Huron. It looks like a more drastic plunge because water levels in the past year were well above the average.

WHISTLE BLOW

The largest whistle blow in the Great Lakes area is scheduled to take place on June 26th at Jones, Michigan, located 30 miles south of Paw Paw, Michigan. The annual event will have over 100 ship & railroad whistles. This year's show is dedicated to the late Walt Smith.

ANNUAL MARINE FLEA MARKET

The Lake Huron Lore Marine Society's Annual Flea Market will be held on Saturday, June 5th at the Port Huron Museum from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Dealers from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin & Ontario will have for sale a large assortment and variety of nautical memorabilia, books, photos, slides, artifacts, etc. It is also an excellent opportunity to see and talk with old "ship friends".

L. H. L. ANNUAL RIVER CRUISE

On Pg. 4 of our January / February issue of *The Lightship*, in the list of 1999 meetings & other events, we inadvertently stated that our annual river cruise would be to Wallaceburg on WAMBO day (Sat. Aug. 14th) on the *Hammond Bay*. We have since learned that WAMBO day is actually to be held on Sat. Aug. 7th so our cruise will be on the 7th and not the 14th. Ticket reservations and details will be in our July / August issue.

THE TOUR BOAT HURON LADY

Member Capt. John Rigney, owner and operator of the Port Huron tour boat *Huron Lady*, has purchased a newer & larger boat to replace her, owing to increasing business. The *Huron Lady II* will be in service this summer and the original, smaller vessel will be for sale.

LIBERTY SHIP

The Liberty ship S/S *John W. Brown*, based at Baltimore, Maryland, of which we wrote about in the March / April issue of *The Lightship*, is in the news again. The Project Liberty Ship group will undertake 4 cruises this summer in the Chesapeake area, and have also launched a fund-raising campaign of \$350,000 to match an equal amount granted by the State of Maryland in order that the *Brown* can be drydocked for essential hull repairs, which includes riveting. However, the state grant is conditional, in that the Project Liberty group must have their money raised by June, 2000 or the State's \$350,000 pledge will be cancelled. According to latest reports, if all goes as planned, it is hoped that the *John W. Brown* will be drydocked in Toledo, OH to have the necessary work completed. No doubt the cameras will be active when the *Brown* travels through the Welland Canal.

NIAGARA II UPDATE

For those of you who remember the *Niagara II* when she was at the Government Dock in Sarnia last October, we have an update. The vessel was tied up awaiting better weather conditions so her trip could resume from Port Maitland, ON to Tobermory in Georgian Bay, in tow of the Nadro Marine tug *Miseford*. The old sandsucker was eventually to be sunk as a diving attraction by a local diving group. The pair sailed from Sarnia on Oct. 24th and finally arrived in Tobermory. The Toronto Marine Historical Society's "The Scanner" reports that the sinking of the 175 foot British-built vessel (originally a tanker for Imperial Oil), will take place on May 15th in 90 feet of water, east of Tobermory between Driftwood Point and Little Cove, subject to weather conditions of course.

F.Y.I.

The first vessel to pass upbound through the Port Huron / Sarnia area this year (requiring a Pilot) was the tanker *Emerald Star* on April 6th. The first salt water vessel was the M/V *Lake Ontario* (ex-*Federal Danube*) which passed upbound at 6:00 pm, on the same day. As of midnight, April 21st, 24 vessels (21 salties & 3 tankers), **requiring a pilot**, have passed upbound through the Port Huron / Sarnia area since the opening of the 1999 shipping season. *This number includes salt water vessels, passenger ships as well as some Canadian registered tankers, eg. Algonova, Emerald Star, etc. Many are repeat visitors.*

As of midnight, April 20th, 786 people have visited the Lake Huron Lightship so far this year.

Marine Scene 30 years ago (1969)

Survivors and families of the lost steamer *Cedarville* were awarded \$2.4 million by the U.S. District Court in Cincinnati.

Tadoussac (C325750) Hull # 192 slipped from the launchway 15 minutes prematurely, at the Collingwood Shipyard on May 29th, as the launch crew was preparing the ways. Two workers were killed and 35 injured.

J. L. Mauthe (US264738) struck rock in channel at Pointe aux Frenes, St. Marys River, causing bottom damages reported \$1 million. Ship was later repaired at Toledo, OH by Amship.

American Steamship Co. (BoCo) purchased Reiss Steamship Co. for a price of \$10.5 million. Shareholders approved the sale of the 12 vessels on June 27th.

Poe Lock at the Soo was dedicated on June 26th.

The tenth anniversary of the Seaway was celebrated at Massena, NY with President Nixon and Prime Minister Trudeau in attendance.

Lemoine (1) (C152647) and the *Goudreau* (2) (C203206) both sailed from Quebec City on June 9th in tandem tow of the Polish tug *Koral*, bound for Santander, Spain where the two lakers were scrapped. The voyage was completed on June 27th.

The summer of that year saw the completion at Detroit of the reduction to car floats of the former 3 Wabush Railroad Ferries used on the Detroit River service. The ferries were the *Detroit* (US201607), built in 1904 as Hull # 222 by the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Co. at Manitowoc, WI, and the *Windsor* (US230113), built in 1930 as Hull # 183 by the Toledo Shipbuilding Co. at Toledo, OH. The car barges were removed from service on April 30, 1993 and at the present time the *Detroit* is tied up in Ecorse, MI and the other pair, along with the old CNR car float *Roanoke*, are in layup (for sale) at Toledo's frog pond.

40 years ago (1959)

The Liberian ship *Monrovia*, while on a voyage from Europe with general cargo which included steel loaded in Antwerp, Belgium, collided in heavy fog with the Great Lakes bulk carrier *Royalton* (1) (C151108) on June 25th, approximately 14 miles from Thunder Bay Light in Lake Huron. The salty suffered major hull damage and within a few hours, sank 140 feet to the bottom of the lake. There was no loss of life among the 27 crew members. The *Royalton*, sailing for the Scott Misener S.S. Co., suffered only minor bow damage and returned to service after receiving drydock repairs. The vessel was sold for scrap in 1980 and towed to Italy the following year.

The Editor would like to thank L.H.L. members Jim Smulka, Delmar Fritz, Natalie Smith, John Philbin and Cy Hudson as well as Port Huron Pilot Boat Dispatcher Bill Wager.

BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

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By Skip Gillham

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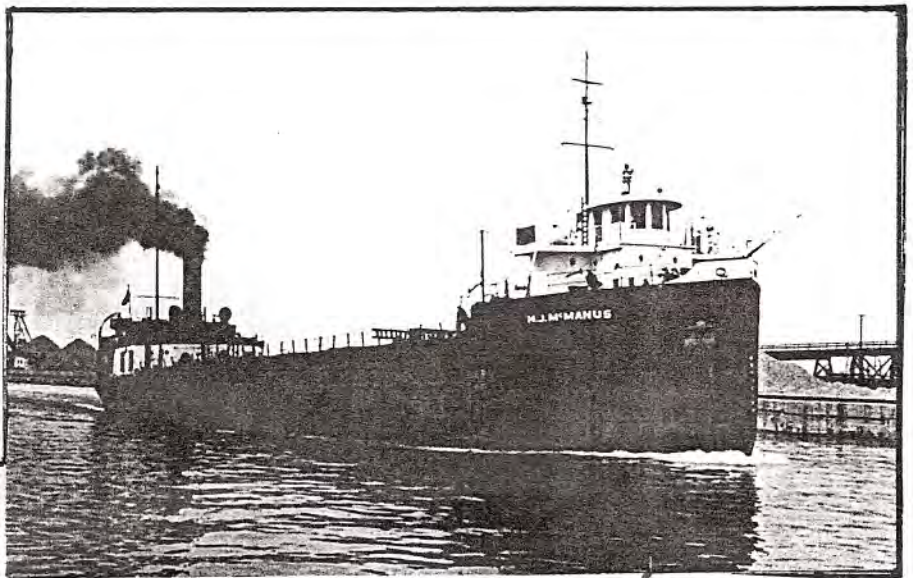
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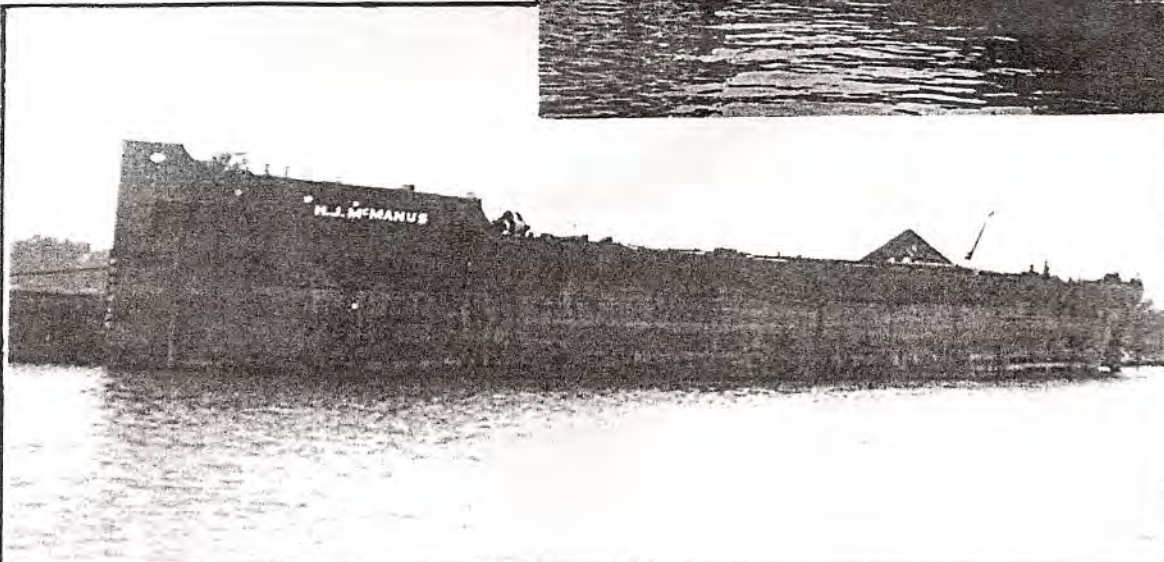
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H. J. McManus as a bulk carrier.



H. J. McManus as a barge.
(John McKay photo)



SALTY SPOTLIGHT

HELENA OLDENDORFF

Built in 1984 by Jiangnan Shipyard, Shanghai, China as Hull # 2140.
Length - 644'-6" Breadth - 75'-10" Depth - 46'-11"
18,469 GRT M. Bulk Carrier.
Main Engine - 10,700 bhp B&W

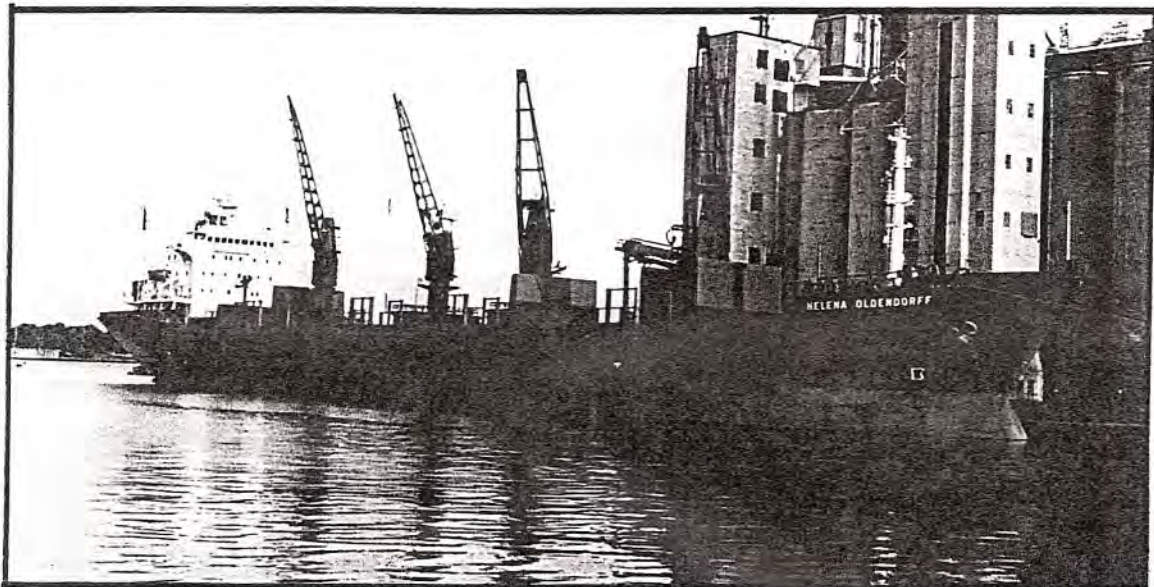
By D. R. (Doug) Schiltz
(saltydug@yahoo.com)

There are many different salt-water ships that have passed through the Sarnia / Port Huron area over the years. While the trend continues to be for better and more efficient ships, this usually translates into ships that do not seem to have the graceful lines of the older vessels. The Chinese Seaway Class of vessels are a type that do not fit into this mold.

The *Helena Oldendorff* is of this class of vessels. The ownership of this vessel is listed as Partenreederei m.s. "Helena Oldendorff" according to the Lloyd's Register of Ships. She carries the stack markings of Egon Oldendorff and is registered in Panama. This is her second name. She was originally the *Noble River* and was owned by Bardolf Shipping Inc. and registered in Liberia. Her registry later was changed to Panama. She made trips to the lakes under her first name. She became the *Helena Oldendorff* in 1986.

She visited Sarnia in 1991 when she loaded at the Sarnia Elevators in September. She loaded a cargo of 17,654.013 metric tonnes of Canada #2 white wheat. A fleetmate of hers, the *Regina Oldendorff* visited Sarnia in 1998 to unload fertilizer at Cargill.

The *Helena Oldendorff* is a well kept ship with her dark grey hull and red boot topping. I'm sure that she and her fleetmates will be making many more voyages through the Sarnia / Port Huron area.



* Sarnia Elevator on Sept. 12, 1991 *

Answer to Name This Ship (Pg. 2)

The Stmr. *Charles O. Jenkins* (a) (US 204306) was built in 1907 by Detroit Shipbuilding Co. at Wyandotte, MI as Hull # 170. Dimensions were 524' x 54' x 31'. Built for Jenkins S/S Company. Sold to Midland S/S Co. in 1935. Renamed *John W. Davin* in 1943 and *Michael Gallagher* in 1956. Sold to the Export Coal Co. in 1961 and towed to La Spezia, Italy to be scrapped. Arrived at La Spezia in August, 1961.

Photo is dated July 4th, 1940. Photographer unknown.