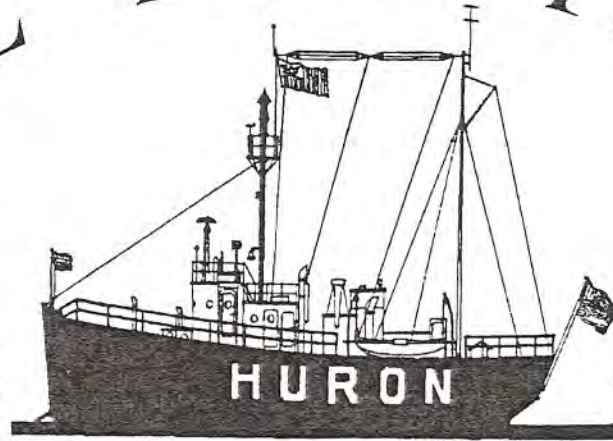


THE LIGHTSHIP

LAKE HURON LORE



MARINE SOCIETY

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lakehuronlore@advnet.net

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

Cy Hudson
(Assistant Editor)

Membership (annual) - \$12.00 (U.S.) \$18.00 (Can. 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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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our first members slide night of the year was held on Saturday, Jan. 29th at the Port Huron Museum and over 30 members with their guests braved a cold winter night to attend. As usual, quite an assortment of slides were shown, from "golden oldies" to the more modern European cruise ships which now sail our waters, as well as some beautiful views of lighthouses around the Great Lakes. Thanks to the generosity of the Marine Historical Society of Detroit and Gaelic Tug Co., we had two calendars available for door prizes. Carl Roeseler of St. Clair, MI drew the lucky number for the Gaelic Tug calendar, and Dale Travis of Yale, MI took home the M.H.S.D. calendar. Thanks again to those who brought slides.

Mark Your Calendar - Our first entertainment / dinner meeting of the year, a joint meeting with our friends of the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, will be held at the Port Huron Museum on Saturday, April 1st. The dinner, which will be provided by the Museum Guild, will be served at 6:30, followed by the evening's guest speaker, Andy LaBorde of Milwaukee, WI, who will present his program "Queen of the Lakes ... The *Edward L. Ryerson*". Andy has presented programs to our Society in the past and his excellent photography has always been well received and appreciated. The cost of the dinner is \$10.00 (U.S. funds). Please send your check or money order, payable to the MUSEUM GUILD, to the Port Huron Museum. For your convenience, we have enclosed a yellow reservation slip with this issue of *The Lightship*. Kindly mark your envelope *Dinner Meeting* and all reservations must be received by Wednesday, March 29th.

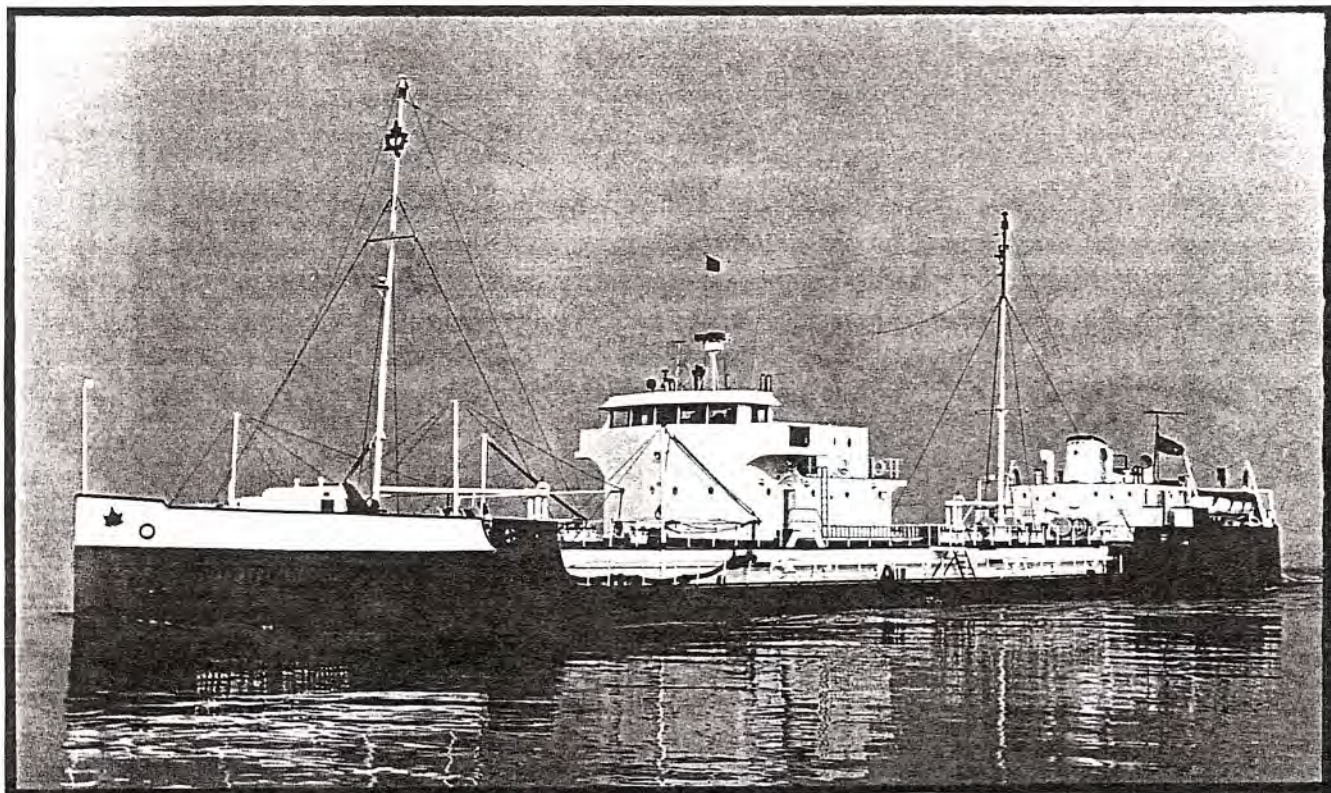
New Members - L.H.L. wishes to welcome aboard George P. Haynes of North Street, MI, Al & Mary Jackman of Redford, MI, Al Kasdorf of Fort Gratiot, MI, Robert Buslawski of Clinton Twp, MI and David V. Fout of Brighton, MI.

L. H. L. CHRISTMAS CARD

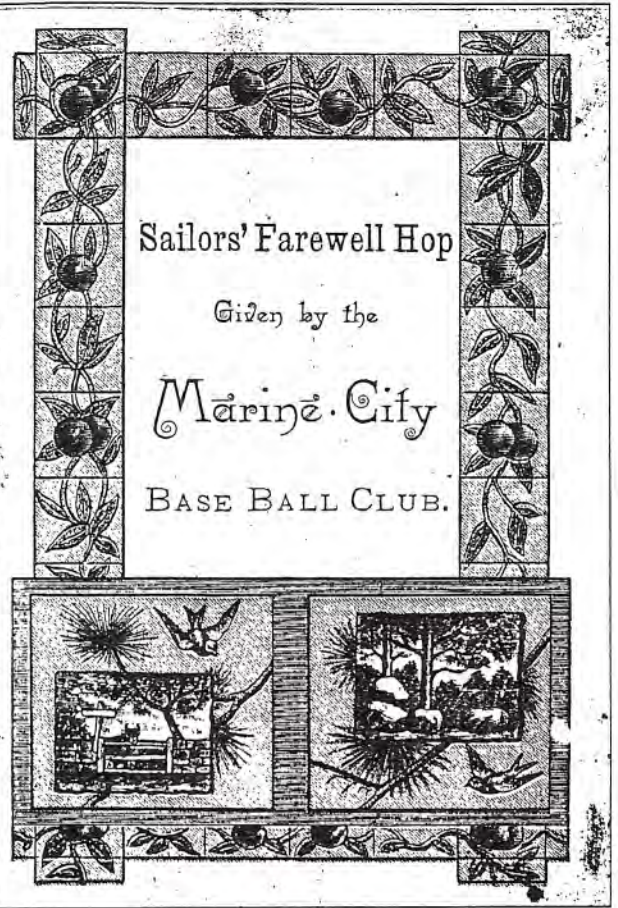
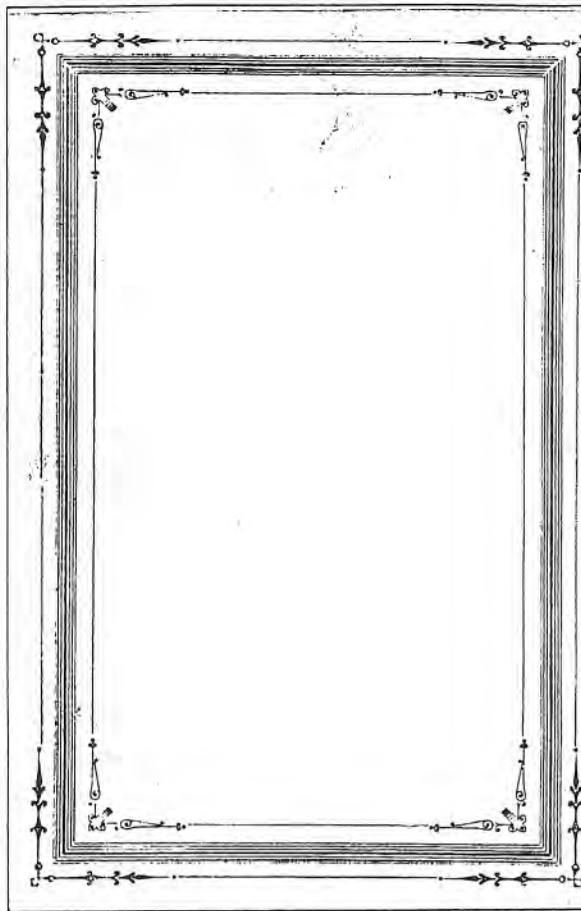
Our 1999 Christmas card featured a fine view, taken by Life Member Rev. Peter Van der Linden, of the Coastal Canada (C.194747), a lake and coastal tanker built in 1952 by Collingwood Shipyards Ltd. at Collingwood, ON. as Hull # 148 for the British-American Transportation Co. Ltd. of Toronto, ON. Launched as the *B. A. Peerless*, GRT 12,638, the tanker sailed on her maiden voyage on November 3rd, 1952 bound for Superior, WI to load crude oil for British-American's refinery at Clarkston, ON. This method of transportation was used to bring crude oil, moved by pipeline to a terminal in Superior, WI from the oilfields in Western Canada, to the Clarkston refinery. This contract was short-lived and the *Peerless* was no longer required when a pipeline was completed in 1953 extending the pipeline through Wisconsin and Michigan to Sarnia.

Near the close of the 1958 season, the vessel was taken to the Port Arthur Shipbuilding Co. at Port Arthur, ON and shortened by 80 feet. With the opening of the Seaway in 1959 the *Peerless* left the Lakes for deep sea and coastal service, trading as far south as Venezuela. In 1969 she was sold to Gulf Oil of Canada of Toronto, ON and renamed b) *Gulf Canada*. This name lasted until 1984 when she was sold to Coastal Canada Marine Inc. of Shediak, N.B. and renamed c) *Coastal Canada*. This company used the ship mainly on the lower Lakes and East Coast, until she was laid up at Halifax, N.S. in January, 1989. Later that year she was flagged VCT (St. Vincent & Grenadines), and renamed d) *Coastal 1*, when she was sold to Indian shipbreakers through Incom Ltd. of London, England. Towed by the Russian tug *Gigant*, she left Halifax on December 19th, 1989 and, after over a three month tow, arrived at Alang, India on March 22nd, 1990.

*** NAME THIS SHIP ***



* Al Sykes Collection * See Answer on Page 7 *



Sailors' Farewell Hop

Given by the

Marine City

BASE BALL CLUB.

Sailors' Farewell.

Yourselves and Lady are Cordially Invited
to attend the

SAILORS' FAREWELL HOP,

Given at the

CITY HALL, MARINE CITY

+ THURSDAY + EVENING, + APRIL + 14th, + 1887, +

Music by Herman's Orchestra.

BILL FIFTY CENTS.

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Prof. J. Winters, Prompter.

The Nation's Worst Maritime Disaster 135 Years Ago April 26th, 1865

In a discussion as to which was the worst shipping disaster involving U.S. vessels, probably the excursion steamer *General Slucum*, which burned in the East River in New York City on June 15th, 1904 with the loss of 1,030 lives, would rank high on the list. Others mentioned, nearer home, the *Eastland*, another excursion steamer which capsized in the Chicago River on July 24th, 1915 with 812 fatalities. Another well publicized mishap was the Sept. 8th, 1934 burning off Asbury Park, N.J. of the steamer *Morro Castle* with a loss of 134 lives. But the ship in the record books is the *Sultana*, and her loss on April 26th, 1865 was practically unnoticed by the newspapers of the period as, two weeks earlier, General Lee had surrendered at Appomattox on April 9th, and tragically, five days later, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theater. With a nation in an agonizing and painful time, the *Sultana* sinking was hardly mentioned and within a few years was almost forgotten about. At the time of her loss, the *Sultana* was on the Mississippi River on a voyage from Memphis upbound to Cairo, Illinois transporting nearly 2000 recently freed Union prisoners and other soldiers all anxious to return to home after their years away. With a crew of 85 and a legal limit of 376, the ship was enormously overloaded, perhaps her Captain throwing caution to the wind in getting as many veterans home as quickly as he could. During the hours of darkness, seven or eight miles north of Memphis, the *Sultana's* boilers exploded, killing many instantly leaving others trapped in the burning ship or to drown. The death total was estimated to be between 1,600 and 2,100, an event not to be forgotten in America's Marine History. Tragic as this event was, the world record for the greatest loss of life occurred in the Baltic Sea in the final months of WWII when two German ships were sunk in the operations to evacuate nearly two million Germans from the east as the Red Army stormed into East Prussia. The ships were vastly overloaded and, on January 30th, 1945, the *Wilhelm Gustloff* was torpedoed by the Russian submarine S-13, and over 7,000 perished in the icy waters. Nearly three months later on April 16th, the vessel *Goya* was sunk by the Russian submarine L-3 with more than 7,000 deaths. In his memoirs Gross Admiral Karl Doenitz writes of these incidents also in a rare interview he gave in June, 1978. With all the millions of lives which were being lost in the world at this period in time, these two world records of lives lost at sea seem insignificant.

NAUTICAL NEWS

USCGC MACKINAW TO BE REPLACED

On Aug. 26th, 1999, full-scale development, production and deployment of a new Multi-Purpose Icebreaker was authorized to replace USCGC *Mackinaw*. The new vessel will provide heavy icebreaking services and maintain floating aids-to-navigation on the Great Lakes. In addition, the vessel will have secondary mission responsibility for search and rescue, marine environment response and maritime law enforcement. Constructed by the Toledo Shipbuilding Co. and commissioned in 1944, the *Mackinaw* was the world's largest and most powerful icebreaker. But after 55 years of continuous service, *Mackinaw* has become increasingly costly to support.

SAGINAW RIVER LIGHTHOUSE TO BE RESTORED

The Saginaw River Marine Historical Society was recently invited to assist in a project to restore the lighthouse in Bay City at the mouth of the Saginaw River. The rear range light was built in 1876 as the first of its kind. The goal of the Society is to assist in the renovation of the lighthouse and turn it into a maritime research library and museum along with a maritime park. The Dow Chemical Company is also assisting in the project.

A NEW VESSEL FOR DESGAGNES

Groupe Desgagnes, Inc. (Desgagnes Transport Inc.) of Quebec City, QC, took delivery in late 1999, of their new vessel *Maria Desgagnes*, the first new Canadian-owned merchant ship to join Canada's shipping fleet since 1984 and the first oil tanker since 1982. The *Maria Desgagnes* was constructed in China at the Qiu Xin Shipyard in Shanghai, a double hulled, ice class tanker which is able to transport twelve different cargoes at once. The 394 ft.

o.a. length, 8,848 GRT ship carries Lloyd's classification, a MAN B&W, 8,370-bhp, 6,150 kw engine built by Hundong Heavy Machinery, with an average speed of 14 knots. At the present time, the *Maria Desgagnes* has carried cargoes as far as Hamilton, ON in December, 1999 and has not yet been in the Bluewater area, but will hopefully be seen here this shipping season.

NEW JOHN J. BOLAND

The American Steamship Company quickly followed the 93 year-long tradition of having one of their vessels carry the name of John J. Boland, one of the Company's founders. Following last October's sale and name change of the *John J. Boland* (3), to Lower Lakes Towing of Port Dover, ON, A.S.C. renamed the self-unloader *Charles E. Wilson* as the fourth *John J. Boland* while she was at the Fraser Shipyards in Superior, WI. The new *Boland*, built in 1973 by Bay Shipbuilding Corp. at Sturgeon Bay, WI, is powered by twin 3,600 hp GM diesels and is equipped with both bow and stern thrusters. The 680 ft. vessel is capable of carrying 33,800 tons of cargo at her maximum mid-summer draft.

RAIL BARGES FOR SALE

The three X-Norfolk Southern Rail barges, *Roanoke* (US 2293161), *Manitowoc* (US 2256671) and *Windsor* (US 220113), all located in Toledo, are at this time offered for sale at \$400,000 each, or best offer.

MARINE SCENE

30 years ago ... (1970)

March 2nd saw the arrival at Toledo of the *Robert S. McNamara* to load a cargo of coal.

March 16th - Detroit River began normal operations for the season with the downbound *H. Lee White* and the upbound *John T. Hutchinson*.

March 30th - The *S. T. Crapo*, along with the U.S.C.G. *Mackinaw* were the first to pass through the Straits of Mackinac, westbound at 1:00 am.

March 31st - The port of Duluth loaded the first iron ore cargo of the season into the steamer *William J. Filbert*. The vessel sailed the following day.

April 1st - The *Philip R. Clarke* opened navigation at the Soo when she was the first vessel upbound at 9:29 am. The Welland Canal navigation season opened the same day with the downbound passages of the *Montrealais* and *A.S. Glossbrenner* as well as the upbound passage of C.S.L.'s *Quetico*.

April 4th - The saltwater French M.V. *Eglantine* opened the Seaway for navigation at St. Lambert Lock.

Heavy ice and extremely low temperatures created difficult navigating conditions on April 5th. As a result, 39 ships were reported to be awaiting favorable weather in the Whitefish Bay area.

April 6th - Season's operation of the J.W. Westcott Co. reporting station commenced at 8:00 am.

April 9th - The tug *Allegheny* (518191) sank at the dock at Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City, MI. The tug was purchased by L.H.L. member Capt. Keith Malcolm, owner of Malcolm Marine, and was later raised, taken to Port Huron by their tug *Barbara Ann* and eventually renamed *Tug Malcolm*.

April 30th - *Mackinac Islander* (276809) collided with the Round Island Light in the Straits of Mackinac while in dense fog. Damage was slight.

40 years ago ... (1960)

April 9th - C.S.L.'s bulk carrier *Murray Bay* (2) (C 188394), built as Hull # 164 by Collingwood Shipyards Ltd. at Collingwood, ON, entered service on this date. Three years later, on June 15th, 1963, she was renamed *Comeaudoc* by her new owner, N.M. Paterson & Sons Ltd. of Thunder Bay, ON. On Dec. 4th, 1996, the vessel laid up at Montreal, QC. Today, more than 3 years later, the *Comeaudoc* is still in lay-up. Her 5-year survey will expire in June, 2001, presenting her with a doubtful future.

April 16th - The steamer *Arthur B. Homer* (US 280946), the last ship built by the Great Lakes Engineering Works of River Rouge, MI (Hull # 303), went into commission on this date. On Oct. 4th, 1980, the *Homer* was laid up for the last time at Erie, PA. On Dec. 9th, 1986, she was towed to Port Colborne and scrapped at that port in 1987.

F.Y.I.

We were mistaken in our last issue when we stated that the Huron Lightship visitors total, as of Dec. 21st, was 13,850 people. L.H.L. member Capt. Ted Richardson informs us that the final total was 13,779 as of the 31st of December, 1999.

FREE TRIP ON A THOUSAND FOOTER

Lake Huron Lore member Barbara Ziegler of Marysville, MI recently won a trip for four on one of the American Steamship Company's 1,000 foot vessels during the 2000 sailing season. The winning ticket was drawn on Saturday, February 26th during the annual Dinner / Dance of the International Shipmaster Association, Port Huron Lodge # 2, held at the Fogcutter Restaurant in Port Huron.

The Editor would like to thank L.H.L. members Dick Wicklund, Cy Hudson, Jim Hoffman.

Namesake of U. S. C. G. (WLM 561)

By Cy Hudson

The U. S. Coast Guard commissioned their latest Coastal Buoy Tender in December, 1999 with the completion by Marinette Marine Corp. at Marinette, WI of the U. S. C. G. Harry Claiborne (WLM 561), another in the "Keeper" class of vessels named after famous men and women keepers of U. S. lighthouses. The ship passed the Bluewater Bridge downbound on December 7th, 1999.

The worst natural disaster in the history of the United States is the hurricane which struck the Galveston, Texas area on September 8th, 1900 with 150 mph winds and the 8 to 15 feet of storm surge that washed over low-lying Galveston Island causing over 9,000 deaths.

In the early years of the last century the population had little warning of any approaching storms, but on the morning of September 8th, rising water and winds alarmed Issac Cline, head of the Galveston Weather Bureau. He rode his horse along a beach front urging people to flee but it was to no avail as the storm completely swept the Island with the result of complete devastation and death. Guarding the entrance to Galveston Bay stands the Bolivar Lighthouse towering 117 feet above sea level, built in 1872 by the former U. S. Lighthouse Service. At the time of the hurricane, the Bolivar Lighthouse keeper was Harry Claiborne, and with word of the approaching storm, more than 100 local people took refuge in the lighthouse. As the howling winds blew at 150 mph, the lighthouse keeper struggled valiantly to keep his light burning. Tidal floodwaters hurled huge logs and debris against the lighthouse shaking it and fro. Harry knew he must maintain the light to protect seamen caught in the hurricane. If sailors could see the light, they would know they were near the shipping pass between Bolivar Peninsula and Galveston Island that would guide them into Galveston Bay. Below the keeper, crowded together on the spiral staircase leading up to an oil lamp and elaborate lens, the terrified refugees waited out the ferocious storm. The seawater rose 30 feet inside the 81 foot high tower, covering the door and forcing the people on the bottom steps to scramble to escape. Lacking fresh air, many became nauseated in the stifling early September weather. After the storm abated, the weary survivors emerged onto a scoured landscape. Buildings and trees had been stripped from the Bolivar Peninsula. At least 12 bodies lay around the base of the lighthouse. Earlier, drifting in the floodwaters, these unlucky souls had tried in vain to climb the iron tower. Harry Claiborne and his refugees realized that the lighthouse had helped them to survive the 1900 Galveston hurricane. In 1933 the Bolivar Lighthouse was retired, replaced by a beacon on the east beach and, in 1947, the government sold the lighthouse as surplus property to the E. W. Boyd family who were the highest bidder of \$5,500.00. Unfortunately, it is not open to visitors. In recognition of keeper Harry Claiborne's courageous and valiant duty during the 1900 Galveston hurricane, the U.S.C.G. named their latest Keeper Class vessel *U.S.C.G. Harry Claiborne* (WLM 561).

BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

Str. NORTH STAR

By Skip Gillham

North Star was Hull # 23 of the Globe Iron Works of Cleveland. The vessel was built for the freight and grain trade of the Northern Steamship Company and it was launched on February 12, 1889.

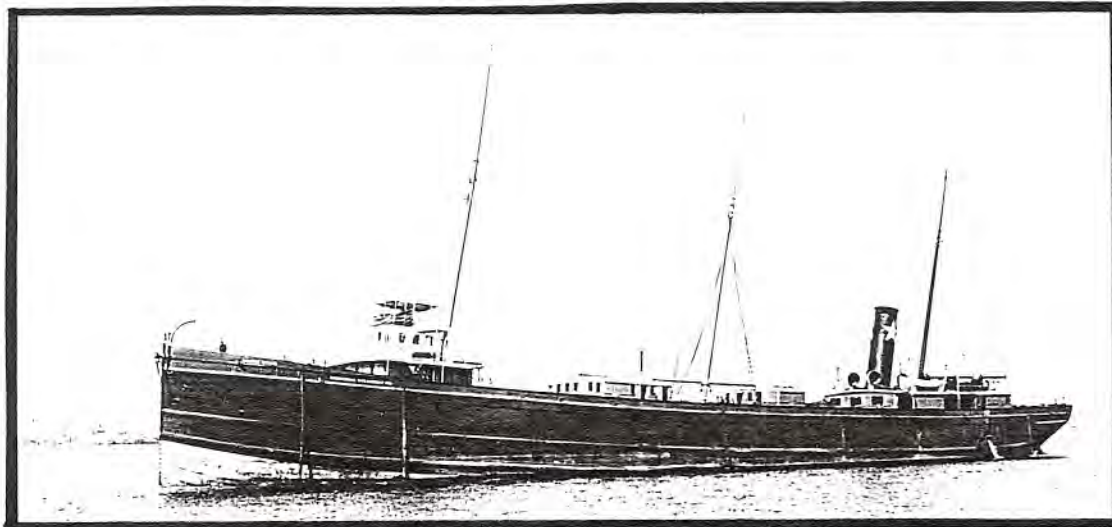
The 316 foot (96.3 metre) long ship was powered by a 1200 horsepower triple expansion engine and was registered at 2,476 gross tons.

On June 19, 1889, this steamer was in collision with the *Charles J. Sheffield* on Lake Superior. It was one of the earliest accidents involving two steel steamers. The latter got the worst of the meeting and was badly holed. All on board were rescued but the ship sank in only eight minutes.

North Star ran aground on the St. Mary's River in 1899 trying to avoid a collision with the Sir Henry Siemens and the consort barge Alexander Holley. Then, on September 19, 1908, there was limited damage following a collision with the *William G. Pollock*.

Yet another collision, this with the *Northern Queen*, on November 25, 1908, off Port Sanilac, MI spelled the end for the *North Star*. The ship, now sailing for the Mutual Transit Company, went down in thick fog enroute from Duluth to Buffalo with flour, wheat and shingles. All of the crew were spared. The loss of the ship plus cargo was insured for \$250,000.

The hull was discovered in the 1960's in 99 feet of water some 5.3 miles off Port Sanilac.



North Star - Skip Gillham Collection

Answer to Name This Ship (Pg.2)

Coastal Carrier (C 192793), built in 1921 by McDougall-Duluth Shipbuilding Co. at Duluth, MN as Hull # 53. 254' loa x 36' x 14'. 1040 GRT. Launched as the powered canal barge a) **Interwaterways Line Incorporated 104** (US 221434). In 1932 the barge was renamed b) **I.L.I. 104** and c) **Alden Barnes Fiertz** in 1936. Sold to Canadian company, Canadian Coastwise Carriers, in 1949. Rebuilt as a tanker in 1950 by St. Lawrence Dry Docks Ltd. at Montreal. New dimensions were 259'-4" loa x 43'-6" x 17'-6" 2083 GRT. Also received two new diesel engines and was renamed d) **Coastal Carrier**. Sold in 1968 to Hall Corp. of Canada Ltd. and renamed e) **Bay Transport** (2). Sailed mostly in the lower lakes, however, made occasional trips to Sarnia and Parry Sound, ON. The tanker was sold to a Toronto company in 1975 and was stripped of her "salvageable" equipment over the next several years. Her diesels were removed and sold, one going into the tug *W.J. Ivan Purvis* and the other into the Detroit based fire tug *John Kendall*. The vessels registry was closed on April 26, 1984 as "broken up."

SALTY SPOTLIGHT

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

ICEPURHA

Built in 1968 by Constructions Navales et Industrielles de la Mediterranee (C.N.I.M.), La Seyne, France as Hull # 1377.

Length - 619' Breadth - 72'-4" Depth - 47'-11"

18,225 GRT M. Tanker

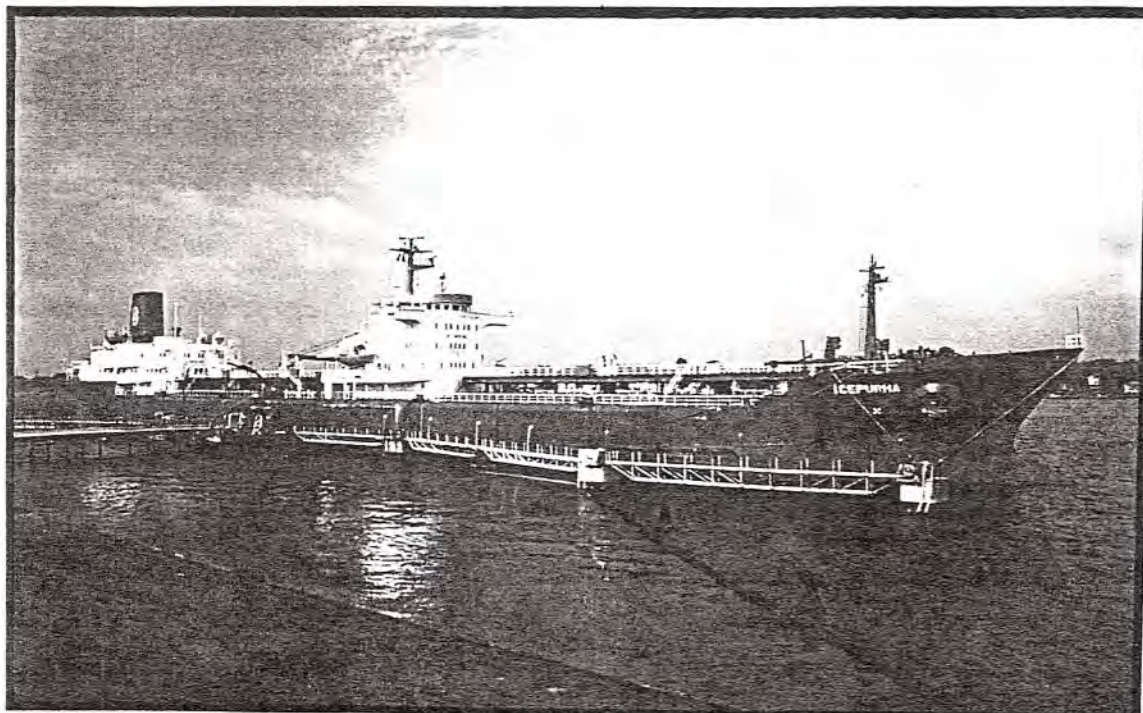
Main Engine - 9,250 BHP A/B Gotaverken

One of the more interesting sights along the St. Clair River in 1994 was the arrival of the motor tanker *Icepurha*. She arrived at the lower Suncor dock in September to unload a cargo of gasoline. The tanker was of the old style ocean ships with her bridge being amidships. Being built in 1968 she was a tanker that was obviously well taken care of by her first owner, Neste Oy of Finland. Her original name was *Purha*.

The *Purha* was sold in 1991 after twenty-three years in the Neste fleet. She was sold to Akrotiri Shipping Ltd., registered in Cyprus, and renamed *Seapurha*. In 1994 she was sold again. Her new owners were Olympus Navigation Inc. and she was renamed *Icepurha* and registered in the Bahamas.

As the *Icepurha*, she made two voyages onto the Great Lakes in 1994. Her first to Sarnia and her second to Hamilton. She returned again in 1995 making two more inland voyages. On Aug. 14th of the same year, she suffered an engine room fire while on a voyage from Pascagoula, Mississippi to Miami, Florida. She was approximately 150 miles west of Tampa when this happened and arrived at Mobile, Alabama in tow on Aug. 18th. She was never to venture on the Lakes again.

In 1996, *Icepurha* was renamed for the final time. Her new name became *Cusiana Star*, her owners were Masaro Enterprises Ltd. S.A. and she was registered in Panama. Finally, after thirty years of sailing the oceans, she was sold for scrap and anchored off Alang, India on Oct. 6, 1998. She was delivered to the breakers on Jan. 6th, 1999.



* Photo taken at Sunoco Refinery, Sarnia on Sept. 17, 1994 by Doug Schilz *