

THE LIGHTSHIP



Incorporated in the State of Michigan October 21, 1963

Vol. XXIV, No. 1

lakehuronlore@advnet.net

January / February, 2003

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

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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President - Fred Miller
V. President - Paul Schmitt
Secretary - Karen Gorski
Treasurer - Theresa Miller

DIRECTORS

Ray Bawal Jr.
Terry Doyon
T. J. Gaffney
Gareth McNabb
Dick Wicklund
Gene Buel (Hon. Advisory Director)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our fourth and last dinner / entertainment meeting of 2002, a joint meeting with our friends of the Marine Historical Society was held at the Port Huron Museum on Saturday, Dec. 7th featuring Dave Michelson who presented his slide show; *Back to the Bi-Centennial*, a view of U.S. Great Lakes freighters in their decorative 1976 colors. Once again, a raffle was held following the dinner with many lucky winners. Dick Wicklund won a print of the steamer *Cason J. Callaway*, donated by David Bury. Jeanine Selk won an embroidered pillow donated by Terry & Dona Doyon. A print of the steamer *William A. Irvin*, donated by the evening's guest speaker, Dave Michelson, was won by David Bury. Theresa Miller was the lucky winner of the book entitled *Lost at Sea*, donated by John Meyland. A print of the freighter *Kaye E. Barker*, also donated by David Bury, was won by Jim Guyette. Rhea Wolfe won a cube of note paper donated Fred Miller. A gift certificate for a cruise on Port Huron's tour boat *Huron Lady II*, donated by her owner Captain John Rigney, was won by John Meyland. A copy of *Telescope*, the booklet published by Detroit's Great Lakes Maritime Institute and donated by John Meyland, was won by young James Lee. Lastly, four 2003 Marine Historical Society of Detroit color calendars, donated by the MHSD, were won by Captain Richard Wolfe, John Coulter, Barb Babel and Jim Gallant.

Mark Your Calendar – A Member's Slide Night will be held in the Museum's lower level at 7:00 pm on Saturday, February 15th. Bring some of your favorite slides for all to enjoy and feel free to bring along a friend. Please use the Museum's Wall Street (side) entrance. A door prize will be awarded to a lucky winner during the evening.

New Members – L.H.L. wishes to welcome aboard Gloria Justice of Port Huron, MI.

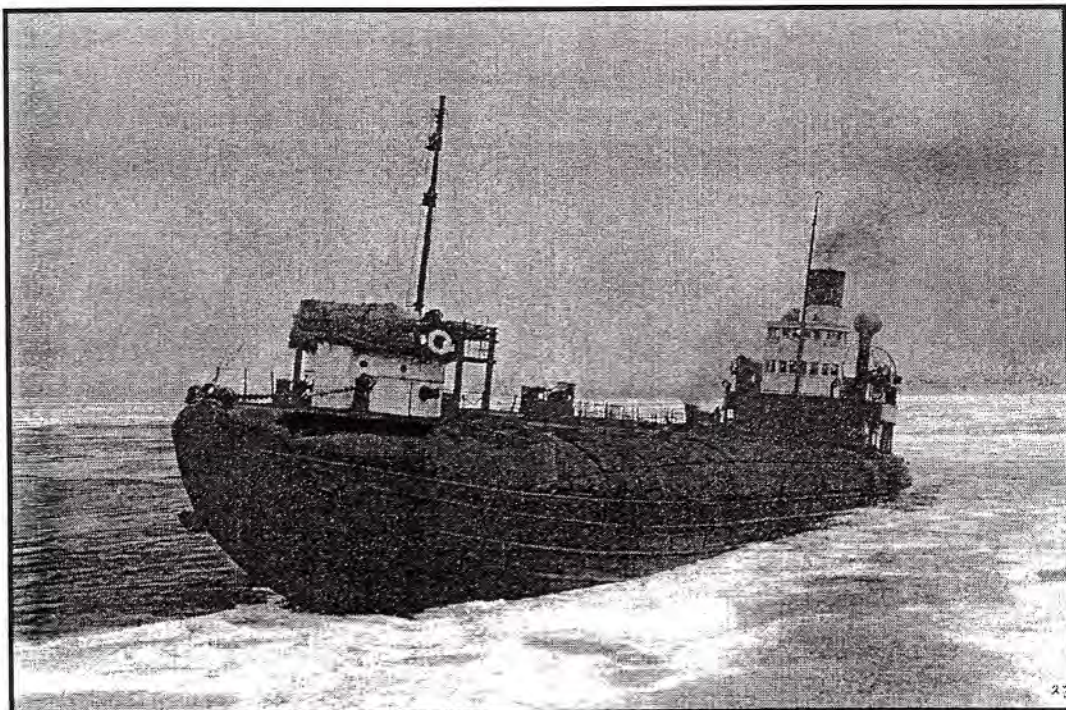
2003 Membership Dues – Please be aware, if you have yet to renew your LHL membership for 2003, this will be the last copy of *The Lightship* that you will receive. Your membership to Lake Huron Lore is valued and we hope you will continue to be a member of our Society.

Entertainment Meetings & Other Events for 2003

Below is a list of this year's events, all of which are joint meetings with our sister organization, the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, and all to be held at the Port Huron Museum.

- 1) Saturday, February 15th – Member's Slide Night at 7 pm.
- 2) Saturday, April 12th – Dinner Meeting at 7 pm featuring guest speaker Gareth McNabb of Lexington, MI who will present a slide show entitled *Pesha and his Photos* from the Gene Buel Collection.
- 3) Saturday, May 17th – Dinner Meeting at 7 pm. Guest speaker and program to be announced.
- 4) Saturday, June 1st – Annual Port Huron Marine Flea Market from 9 am to 2 pm.
- 5) Saturday, Oct. 11th – Dinner Meeting at 7 pm featuring guest speaker Bob Campbell of Grand Ledge, MI who will present a slide show entitled *A Trip on the Kinsman Independent*.
- 6) Saturday, Oct. 18th – Member's Slide Night at 7 pm.
- 7) Saturday, December 6th – Dinner Meeting at 7 pm featuring guest speaker Dick Wicklund of Burton, MI who will present a slide show entitled *Tin Stackers A to Z*, a look at the U.S. Steel fleet.

*** NAME THIS SHIP ***



See
Answer
On
Page 6

* Photo taken on Whitefish Bay – May 23, 1923 – A.E. Young Photo – Port Huron Museum Collection *

Special to The Lightship
The Long Voyage of the *Lucius W. Robinson*
By Skip Gillham

The departure of the *Lucius J. Goulet*, a) *Coniscliffe Hall* (2), b) *Telesis* from the Great Lakes in August was another reminder of how things have changed. The ship was one of the last intact hulls of the canaller era and leaves only memories of how these small ships used to travel the Great Lakes, third Welland and pre-Seaway St. Lawrence Canals.

Canallers have been departing for years. Many were broken up for scrap while others gained a reprieve on saltwater. One interesting example was the *Lucius W. Robinson*.

This ship was built by the Detroit Drydock Company of Wyandotte, MI and completed in 1912 for the Hall Coal and Trading Company of Ogdensburg, N.Y. The name honored the President of the Rochester and Pittsburgh Coal & Iron Company.

The ship was only 247'-6" long by 43'-0" at the beam. She was registered at 1,914 gross tons and was steam powered. Cargos in the range of 2,500 tons were handled and most were coal.

The U.S. Shipping Board requisitioned *Lucius W. Robinson* for deep sea service during the First World War. Although not designed or well-suited for the task, the vessel, and others like her, played a role in aiding the cause of victory.

The ship was returned to Hall in 1919 and used to bring pulpwood from St. Lawrence communities such as Ha Ha Bay, Ste. Anne des Monts and Godbout to Oswego, N.Y.

On the downbound voyage, *Lucius W. Robinson* took coal out of Conneaut, Ohio or Sodus Point, N.Y. as well as grain from the Lakehead communities of Duluth / Superior and Port Arthur / Fort William.

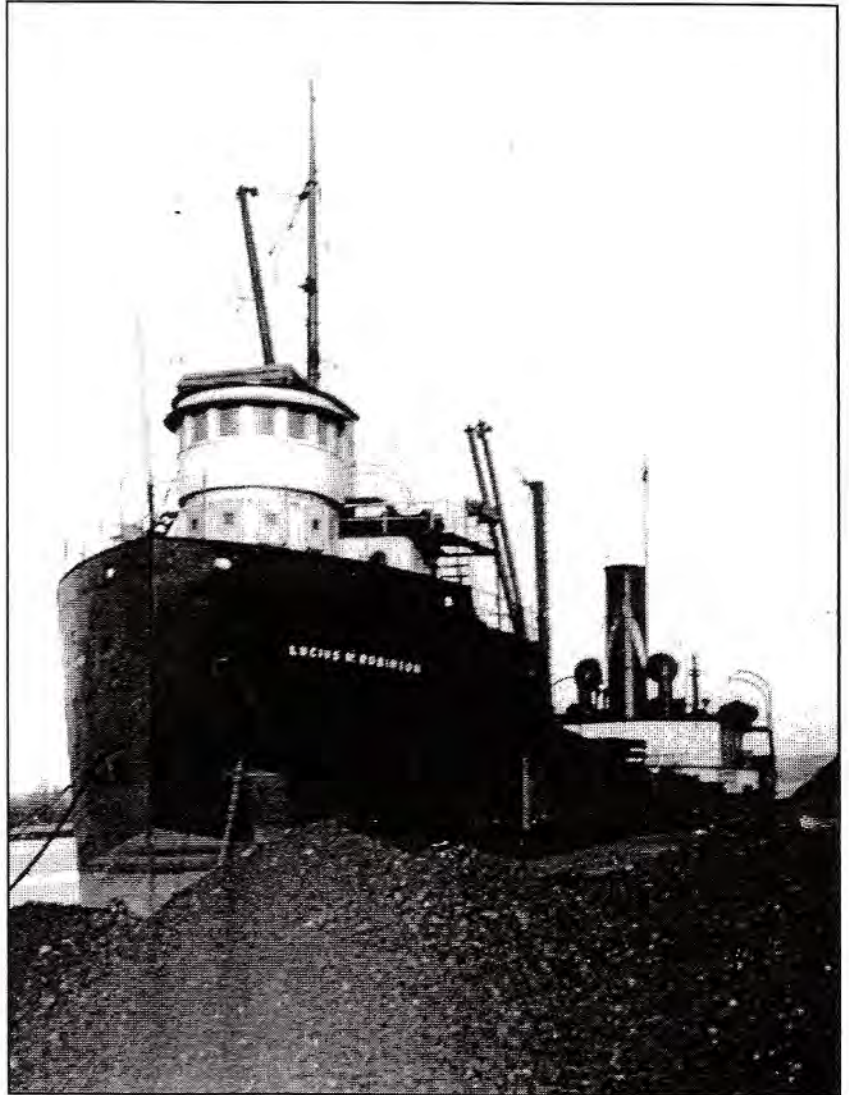
The ship was noted to open navigation along the Welland Canal on April 15, 1937. Two years later, the vessel was transferred by the owners to their Canadian division.

Lucius W. Robinson returned to saltwater during the Second World War and again helped the Allied cause. Her main job in this period was hauling coal from Hampton Roads, VA to Boston, MA via the eastern canals and connecting channels. The route avoided the danger of falling prey to lurking U-boats.

In 1946, Hall ordered a new breed of steam canallers and chose to sell their oldest, *Lucius W. Robinson*, to the Wah Shang Steamship Company of China.

The ship was renamed *Hai Lin* at Montreal and sailed on June 29, 1946, under the command of Captain John Ivany. The Master kept a diary of what proved to be a harrowing 122-day, 15,528 mile voyage to the Far East, maintaining an average sailing speed of 7.3 knots.

Hai Lin spent 88 days, 17 hours at sea, 33 days, 12.5 hours in port and a little over one day in detention.



* Alf King Photo *

The voyage, via the Caribbean, Panama Canal, Vancouver and Honolulu was generally routine with pleasant weather and numerous opportunities to fish along the way.

That all ended when they encountered a Pacific typhoon on September 11. The vessel was battered unmercifully reminding all on board that a flat-bottomed laker was not suited for this weather. Waves of 50 feet forced Captain Ivany to run with the wind for four days before the fury passed them by.

Hai Lin made for Saipan, Philippines and arrived there on September 19, just in time for a second typhoon. Officials wanted all ships to ride out the storm at sea but, after what they had been through, Captain Ivany persuaded the U.S. Navy to allow them to anchor and go to a typhoon shelter. Twenty-four hours later they were able to reboard their battered, but still floating, freighter.

The war in the Pacific had only been over for about 13 months and finding coal and water was a challenge. They finally received 80 tons of fuel and sailed for the Chinese island of Formosa, now Taiwan, and arrived at Keelung on October 7.

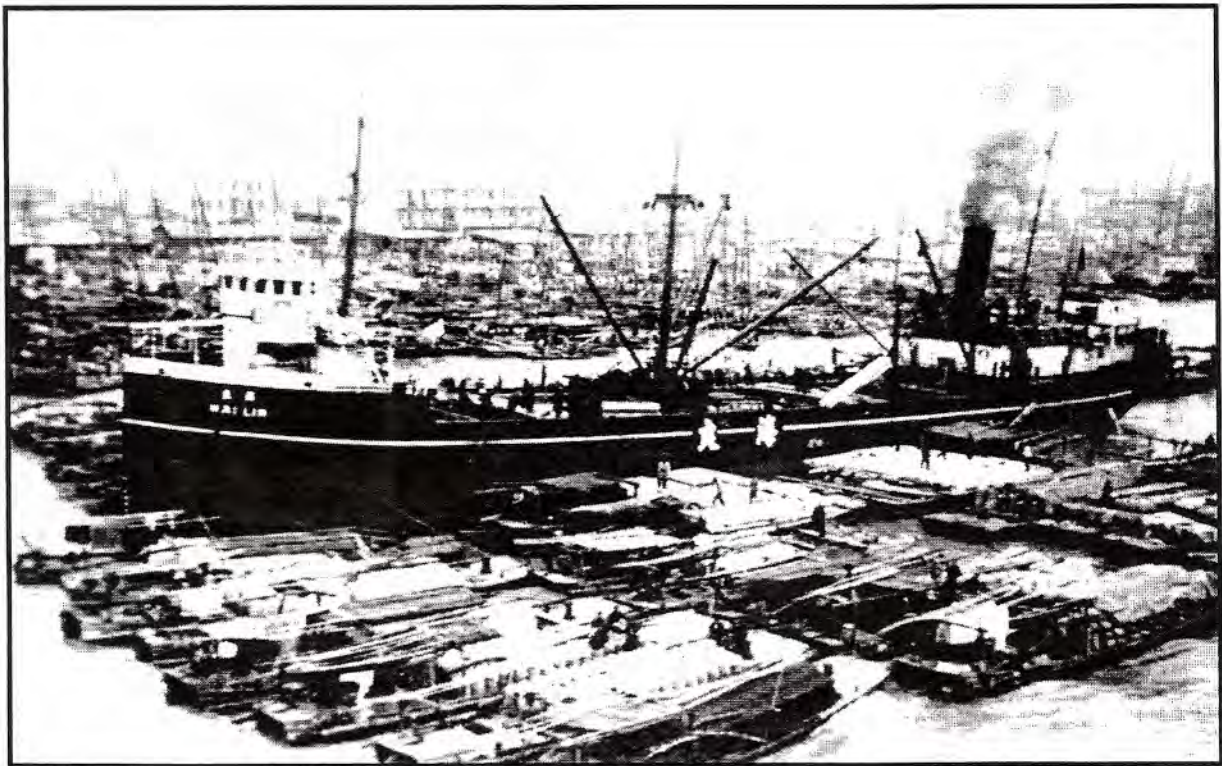
During the unloading of cargo, several members of the crew were robbed and the suspect was stabbed by one of the victims.

Here they were able to obtain another 200 tons of coal and this was brought on board by an almost endless stream of local men carrying the fuel in baskets on their head.

The ship was finally able to sail on October 26 and now carried 750 tons of aerial bombs and fuses plus 2,800 baskets of fruit on deck. Ten Chinese Air Force officers accompanied the ship and cargo to Shanghai where they arrived on October 30.

Hai Lin was turned over to the new owners and soon entered Chinese coastal service. The work continued beyond the Communist Revolution of 1949 and further word of the vessel has not been available. The expectation is that the hull was likely broken up for scrap in the 1950's.

The Author is grateful to Daniel C. McCormick of Massena, N.Y. who is now in possession of Capt. Ivany's diary of the voyage, for his research assistance.

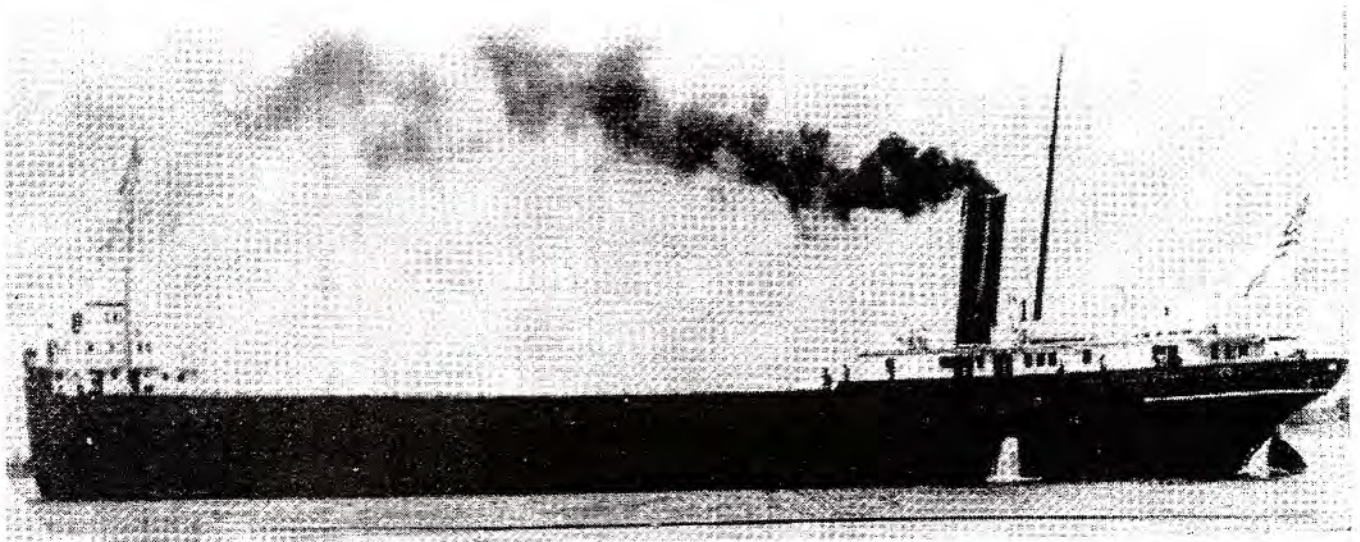


* *Hai Lin* at Shanghai in 1949 – Courtesy of Dan McCormick *

"At The Museum"

Item: A vase

The vase was made from the top of the champagne bottle that was used in the 1907 christening ceremony at the launch of the ill-fated freighter, *Cyprus* (US 204527). This item is unique and is on display in the Museum's shipwreck area because it remains one of the only items pertaining to the steamer *Cyprus*, which sank 18 miles off Deer Park, MI on October 11, 1907, twenty days and one cargo after entering service. The 420 foot steamer, built as hull # 353 by the American Shipbuilding Company at Lorain, OH, loaded her first cargo, iron ore, at Superior, WI and delivered it to Fairport, OH. The *Cyprus*, sailing for Pickands, Mather & Company of Cleveland, returned to Superior and loaded a second cargo of iron ore. While on her downbound journey, the vessel encountered rough weather on Lake Superior. Experts suspect that the hatch covers were not fully tightened or covered with tarps which allowed water from the waves washing over her deck, to enter the holds. The vessel developed a severe list and suddenly capsized on October 11th. Only four of her crew of twenty-three were able to get on a life raft and escape the sinking ship. The following day, the members of the U.S. Life Saving Service came across the raft; however, only one of the four was still alive. Charles Pitz, the 2nd Mate was near death but survived to share his experience. *The vase was a gift to the Port Huron Museum from the Family of Emma Arnold.*



* The steamer *Cyprus* - Pesho Photo *

NAUTICAL NEWS

MARINE NEWS

10 years ago ... (1993)

January 22 - The former captain of the Canadian Coast Guard's icebreaker *Griffon* was found guilty of "reckless disregard" for safety in the sinking of the fishing tug *Captain K* on March 18, 1991. Three fishermen died when the *Griffon* struck the *Captain K* in Lake Erie off Port Dover, ON in a dense fog.

25 years ago ... (1978)

January 21 - The *Harry L. Allen* (US 207277) was severely damaged when the Multifood Elevator #4 at Duluth, MN, where the vessel was laid-up for the winter, caught fire and collapsed onto her deck. Her pilothouse was destroyed by fire. Severe warping and cracking of her plating occurred when cold water was poured onto her red-hot deck. The vessel was subsequently declared a total loss, sold to Hyman-Michaels Co. of Duluth and cut apart for scrap metal later that year.

F.Y.I.

On December 21st, the *Spar Jade* passed Port Huron / Sarnia, light from Burns Harbor, as the last saltwater vessel to leave the upper lakes for the 2002 sailing season. The month of December saw a total of 34 vessels, requiring a pilot, pass upbound through the Bluewater area, bringing the season's total to 382 (down from last year's total of 403). *This number includes saltwater vessels, passenger ships as well as some Canadian-registered tankers, eg. Algonova, Emerald Star, etc. Many vessels may also be repeat visitors.*

BLUEWATER PASSAGES

BY DICK

WICKLUND



Charles C. West was an unusual ship for me to get. It was down-bound at Port Huron on April 28, 1973. Two years later, it would be in lay-up until sold for scrap in 1978.

Of course, the *West* was an unusual vessel when it was built in 1925 as a self-unloader. She was the first twin-screw vessel on the Lakes. At 592 feet in length, she was originally 470 feet long, having been lengthened in 1948.

Her long-time operator was Rockport S/S Company. Reiss S/S Company bought her in the 1960's, then she passed into American S/S Company in 1969 with other Reiss vessels.

The unusual *Charles C. West* was a handsome ship with a cruiser stern and two rudders. Also, only a few Lakers were built as self-unloaders in the 1920's, with fewer for over the next thirty years. When the *West* was fifty years old, she was in retirement and that was when American S/S Company started taking delivery of new self-unloaders.

One of the *West's* replacements, the *American Republic*, may not be so unusual after all!

Answer to Name This Ship (Pg.2)

James B. Neilson (US 81373) Built in 1891 as Hull # 124 by American Steel Barge Company at Superior, WI. Whaleback. 320'-0" length (keel) by 42'-0" width by 25'-0" draft. 2,234 gross tonnage. Triple expansion engine. Launched as *Washburn*. Acquired by Bessemer S/S Company in 1896 and renamed *James B. Neilson*. Joined the Pittsburgh S/S Company in 1901. Sold to Spokane S/S Company in 1927 and renamed *J. T. Reid* in 1928. Used as an auto carrier until dismantled for scrap steel at Cleveland in 1936.

BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

By Skip Gillham

S/S SAMUEL MATHER (2)

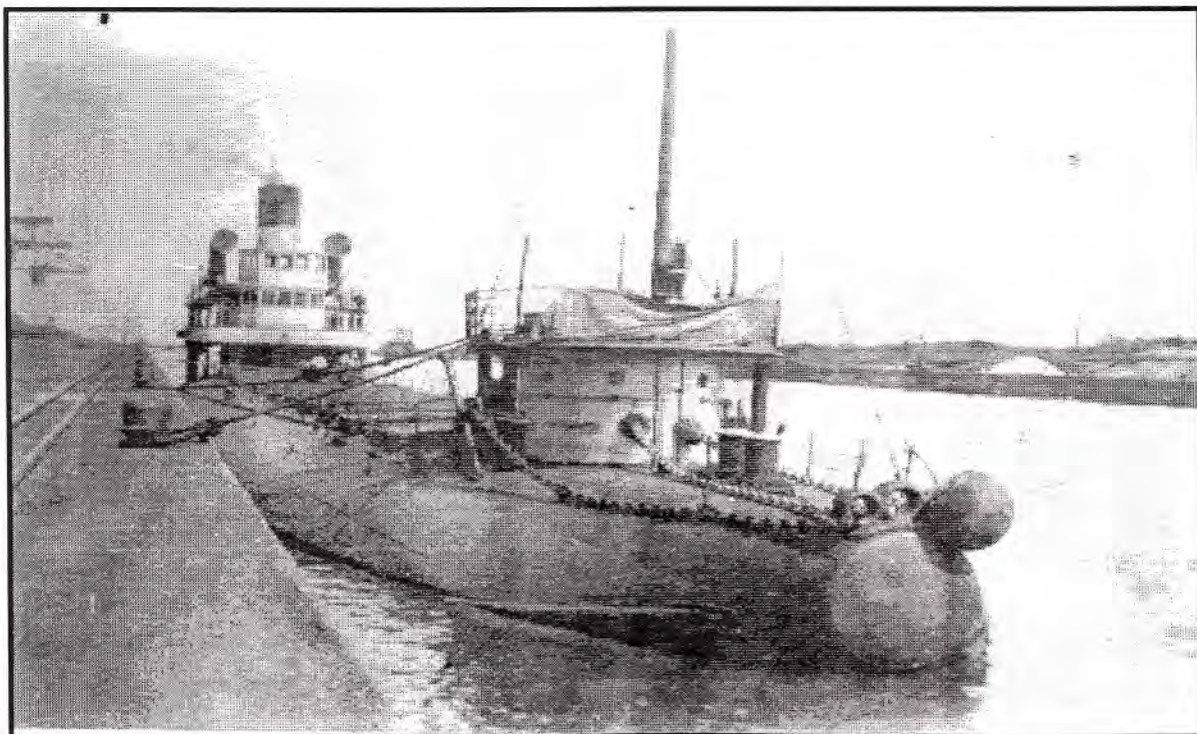
Six ships have sailed the Great Lakes as *Samuel Mather* while a seventh, although officially renamed, never operated. The second *Samuel Mather* was one of the famous whalebacks and was eventually lost on Lake Huron.

The vessel was built by American Steel Barge Company and launched at Superior, Wisconsin on May 21, 1892. The 308 foot by 38 foot freighter sailed on June 27, 1892 to load iron ore at Two Harbors, Minnesota. *Samuel Mather* was owned by the American Steel Barge Company until 1900 and then joined the Bessemer Steamship Company before coming under the banner of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company in 1901. She was sold to Clifton Transportation on October 7, 1922 and renamed *Clifton*.

During the winter of 1922 / 23, the ship was rebuilt at Toledo, Ohio to carry new automobiles but was resold to the Progress Steamship Company on December 7, 1923. They had the hull rebuilt as a self-unloader in 1924 by L.D. Smith at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin.

Clifton foundered off Thunder Bay on Lake Huron on September 21, 1924. She was carrying a cargo of stone and was bound for Detroit, Michigan. All twenty-five on board perished.

The first *Samuel Mather*, a wooden bulk freighter, sank on Lake Superior (after colliding with the steamer *Brazil*) on November 21, 1891, and the third was scrapped at Port Maitland, Ontario as the e) *Pineglen* in 1984 / 86. The fourth was broken up at the same location as b) *Point Noire* in 1982 / 83 while the fifth was dismantled at Sydney, Nova Scotia as d) *Birchglen* in 1988. The sixth *Samuel Mather* carried that name overseas to Aliaga, Turkey for scrapping in 1988 while the seventh, better known as the *Henry Ford II*, was also broken up at Port Maitland in 1994 / 95.



SALTY SPOTLIGHT



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

M/V FLARE

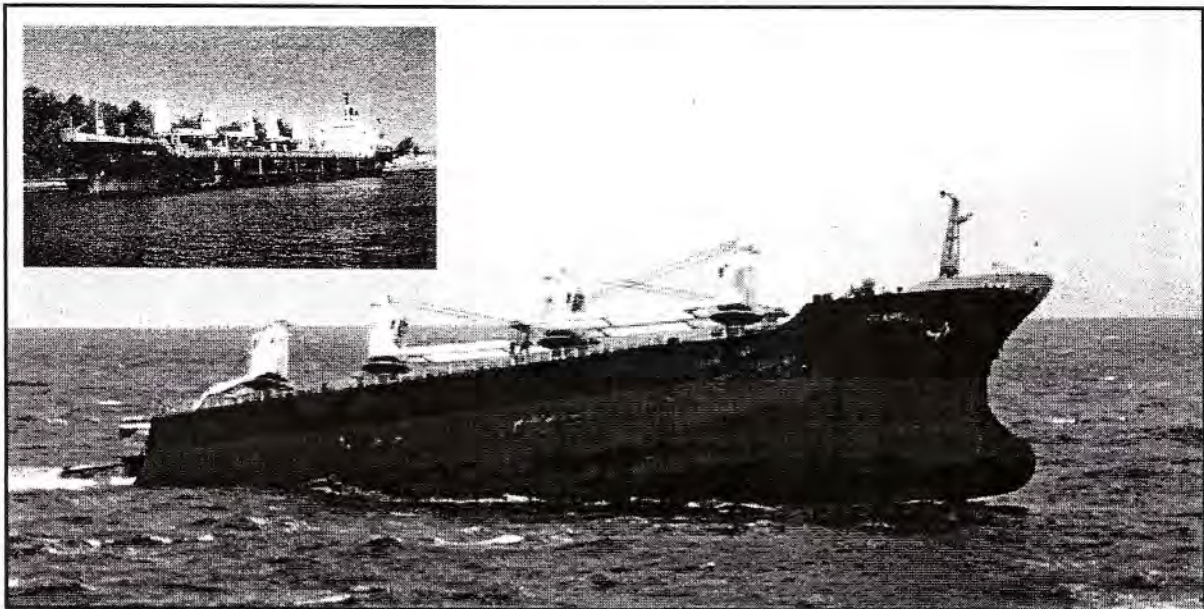
Built in 1972 by Hakodate Dock Co. Lt.; Muroran, Japan as Hull # 529
Length - 593'-6" Breadth - 76'-0" Depth - 47'-7"
GRT - 16,398 M. Bulk Carrier
Main Engine - 12,000 bhp Sulzer

This vessel was a standard design from the Hakodate Dock Company and many vessels of this type found their way to the Great Lakes. Her original name was *Doric Flame* and she was owned by Doric Bulkcarriers. She sailed on the lakes under this name but I do not have the year in which she made her first appearance.

In 1987 she was sold and renamed *Flame*. Her owners became Abta Shipping Co.; Cyprus. Under this name she made at least one appearance on the lakes. In 1989 she was renamed *Flare* and her listed owners remained Abta Shipping Co.; Cyprus. She made her first appearance on the lakes in 1993 on a voyage to Burns Harbor, Indiana with a cargo of steel plates. Enroute to the Seaway she encountered a storm that caused the cargo to shift and damage her cargo holds. After unloading she proceeded to Montreal where she was repaired.

In 1997 she returned to the lakes on what ultimately would be her final appearance. She proceeded to Toronto in May of that year.

Tragically this ship broke in two in the Gulf of St. Lawrence on January 16, 1998. She was inbound from Rotterdam in ballast to load a cargo in Montreal when she encountered a storm which eventually overwhelmed her. Her stern section sank within 30 minutes but her forward section remained afloat for several days. The Canadian Coast Guard was able to photograph her forward section, before it sank, producing some very eerie photographs. Eventually the Coast Guard was able to clean up the fuel oil that spilled from the wreck at a cost of approximately 1 million Canadian dollars. Sadly, only 4 out of a crew of 25 were rescued after clinging to a capsized lifeboat for nearly 6 hours.



* Remains of M/V *Flare* – Photo taken on January 16, 1998 – Inset: *Flare* in Welland Canal – September / 93 *