

THE LIGHTSHIP



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our fourth Dinner / Entertainment Meeting of 2005, a joint meeting with our friends of the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, was held at 6 pm, Saturday, November 12, at the Port Huron Museum. The guest speaker of the evening was Wayne Brusate of Port Huron, MI who presented an interesting program entitled *Commercial Diving on the Great Lakes*. As always, a raffle was held during the evening with prizes being awarded to the following people: Chris Tabor won a photo of the Huron Lightship, and John Hurley won Christmas ornaments, both donated by Dave Bury; Theresa Miller and Pat Figgs both won scarves donated by Matt & Gerri Augugliaro. The Augugliaro's also donated a book entitled *Tugs, Towboats & Towing* that was won by Dave Figgs; a book entitled *The Steamboaters*, won by Theresa Miller, and a book entitled *U. S. Naval Power*, won by George Lee. Don Dotzert donated a shipping company stack logo poster, won by John Jones; sailing ship drawings, won by John Meyland, and some CSL newsletters, won by John Hurley. The Marine Historical Society of Detroit donated three of their 2006 calendars, won by Cy Hudson, Loraine Thomas and Dave Lee, and a copy of their book entitled *Historic Vessels*, which was won by Collette Witherspoon. A *HAMMOND BAY* hat, donated by George & Dave

Lee, was won by Jim Smith. Peter Van der Linden won a *WM. CLAY FORD* hat, and Dan Michelson won a *Lower Lakes Towing* hat, both donated by Fred Miller. Lastly, Janice Golder won a book entitled *Master of the Inland Seas* donated by Lake Huron Lore. Lake Huron Lore wishes to thank the many generous people who donated the items for this raffle.

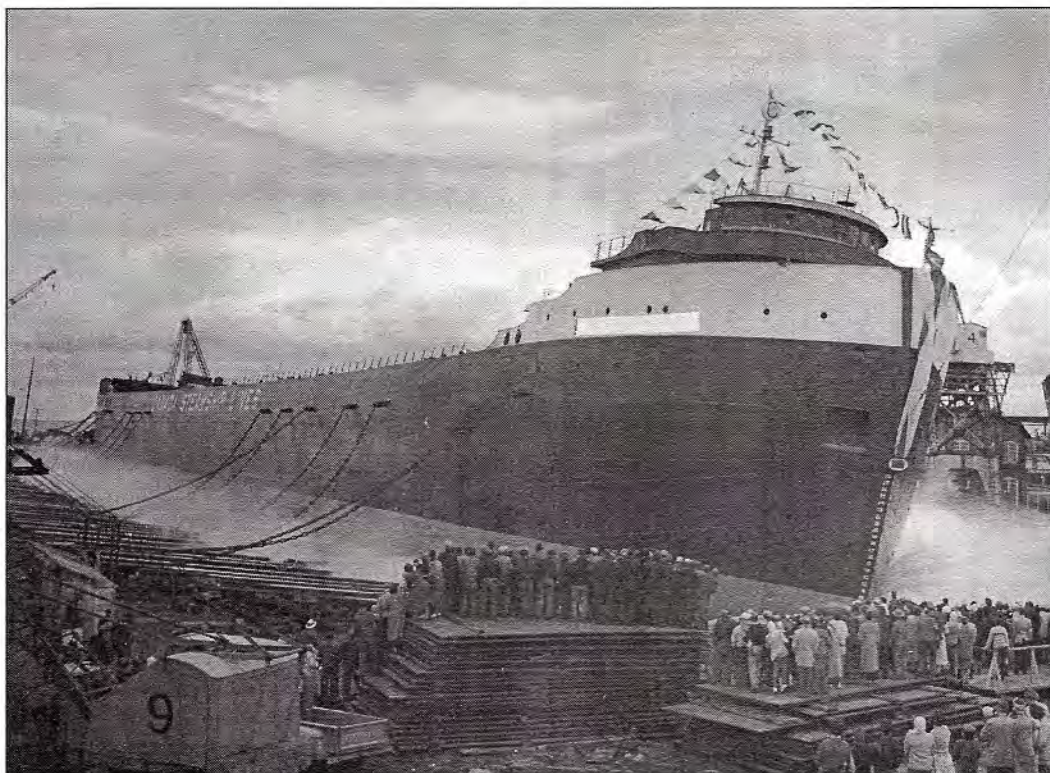
2006 Membership Dues – Please be aware, if you have yet to renew your LHL membership for 2006, this will be the last copy of *The Lightship* that you will receive. Your membership to Lake Huron Lore Marine Society is valued, and we hope you will continue your membership with the Society.

Entertainment Meetings for 2006

Note: All the meetings are joint meetings between the Lake Huron Lore Marine Society and the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, and will be held at the Port Huron Museum at 1115 6th Street in Port Huron.

1. Dinner Meeting on Saturday, April 1 at 6 pm. Museum Guild Catering. Our speaker will be Don Comtois of Bay City, MI who will present a program on shipbuilding along the Saginaw River.
2. Dinner Meeting on Saturday, May 20 at 6 pm. Museum Guild Catering. Our speaker will be Ric Mixer who will present a program on Coast Guard vessels – past and present – on the Great Lakes.
3. Dinner Meeting on Saturday, September 23 at 6 pm. Museum Guild Catering. Speaker and program will be announced at a later date.
4. Dinner Meeting on Saturday, November 11 at 6 pm. Museum Guild Catering. Speaker and program will be announced at a later date.

*** NAME THIS SHIP ***



See Answer
On
Page 6

Who Was Edmund Fitzgerald?

By Dick Wicklund

He was more than an executive for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the owner of the now famous ship. His family had a direct relation to the St. Clair River area, and its maritime history. His great-grandparents were immigrants from Ireland, and settled first in China Township, St. Clair County, in 1837 on a farm near Marine City, Michigan. Several of William and Julianna's sons became fascinated by the wooden sailing ships and the early steamboats on the St. Clair River.

Six of these sons all became captains on the Great Lakes in the last half of the 1800's. The oldest son was Edmond Fitzgerald (note the spelling of the first name). This son was not only a captain, but in the late 1860's and into the 1870's, he built a shipyard at Port Huron, Michigan, where he constructed wooden hulled sailing ships. One of these was named, interestingly, *E. FITZGERALD* (1.). Edmond was also involved in politics, and served as Port Huron's mayor from 1879 to 1880. He built, owned, and invested in ships on the Great Lakes, but not on a large scale as others would.

Edmond, along with two of his brothers, remained in the St. Clair River area to live. He, along with his parents, is buried in a cemetery in Port Huron. However, three of the other brothers, who became captains, moved to Milwaukee in the 1850's. John Fitzgerald was the youngest of these, and began a shipyard there. His son, William E. Fitzgerald, would take over this business in the late 1890's. William's son was born in 1895, and was named Edmund Fitzgerald.

William E. Fitzgerald died tragically in 1901 when Edmond was only six years old. A close friend of his father, Captain Dennis Sullivan, had a ship built and named in his honor in 1906, the *W. E. FITZGERALD*. This ship would serve Sullivan's Gartland fleet with the same name for 65 years. This vessel would be known as the "little Fitz" after 1958 when the "big Fitz", the steamer *EDMUND FITZGERALD*, first sailed. The namesakes were father and son.



Although Edmund Fitzgerald took a different career in business, he still had a heart for the Great Lakes and sailing like his father, his grandfather, John Fitzgerald, and the other Fitzgerald brothers. Edmond did not really want a ship named for him, but the board of Northwestern Mutual, and his family conspired to have this happen. They knew it was the right thing to honor a man who had a heart for the Great Lakes, and his family heritage.

Elizabeth Cutler, in her (1983) book, *Six Fitzgerald Brothers: Lake Captains All!*, quotes her father, Edmond Fitzgerald, after the 1958 launch. "By now, I am sure, all must sense that my reaction to the events of this day spring not alone from business, but from personal reasons for this is also a great day for the Fitzgerald's. As I grow older, my stories of fore bearers get more colorful and doubtless less accurate, but suffice to say that well over a hundred years ago, my grandfather and numerous brothers were all reported to have left their home at Robert's Landing, near Marine City, as soon as they were old enough to ship aboard the sailing vessels. In later life, several settled in Milwaukee, one a steamboat inspector, one a vessel operator, and my grandfather who was a shipbuilder. A sailing vessel was named for my grandfather and an early steamer for one brother. My father succeeded to the presidency of the Milwaukee Dry Dock, and my boyhood ambition was to be a shipbuilder. My father was killed when I was six and our generation drifted away from lake business, but never ceased to love it and to have the desire to be part of it. We see this ship as accomplishing just that." (2.)

When the "big Fitz" was launched in 1958, the boat named for his father, the *W. E. FITZGERALD*, was nearby to give a salute of welcome. Of course, the new big steamer would set many records, sail for only 17 years, and come to a sad end on November 19, 1975. Edmond Fitzgerald felt the pain and the loss as much as anyone on that day. This was something neither he, nor anyone, wanted to happen. Mr. Fitzgerald died in 1986, still deeply saddened by the wreck of the ship named for him.

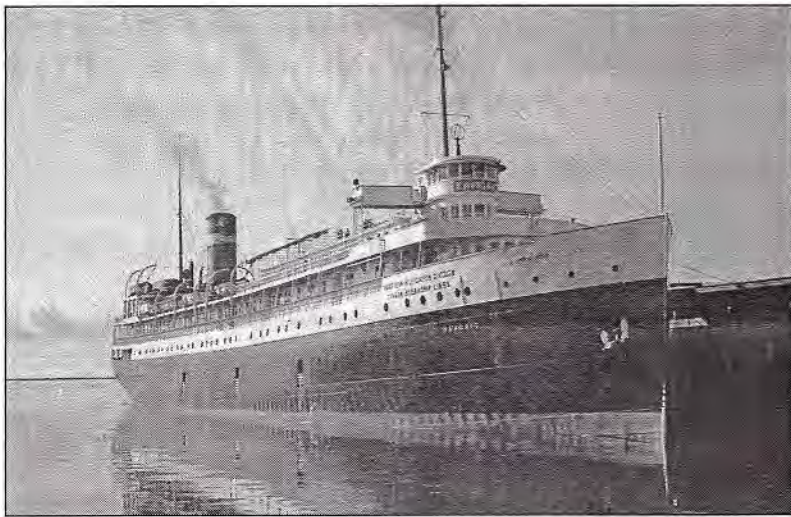
Notes:

- 1.) *E. FITZGERALD*: Wood schooner built at Port Huron by Fitzgerald & Leighton, launched Sept. 29, 1870; dimensions, 134.8' x 25.9' x 11.1'. Wrecked off Long Point, Lake Erie with all hands on Nov. 14, 1883.
- 2.) At the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance in Milwaukee, in years past, Edmund Fitzgerald's office overlooked Lake Michigan. On his walls were pictures of the ships named for him, and his father. Mr. Fitzgerald's legacy is overshadowed by the famous steamer, but he contributed to many civic projects in the city, such as the arts center, the post office, the war memorial, and the port of Milwaukee. He was also an innovator in national health care. The Milwaukee Journal called him a "one-man army!" Not only because of Edmund Fitzgerald, but Milwaukee today is a very beautiful city on our Great Lakes.

A Piece of History Returns: *HAMONIC* Ship Plate Acquired by Museum

By Dan McCaffery of *The Observer*

The following article recently appeared in the Sarnia newspaper *The Observer* and with the kind permission of Rod Hilts, Managing Editor; we now reprint it for our readers.



An important piece of Lambton County has been preserved for future generations. The "ship plate" from the *HAMONIC* – a legendary passenger steamer that sailed the Great Lakes during the first half of the last century – has been acquired by the Lambton Heritage Museum at Grand Bend.

The solid brass plaque which includes the vessel's name and other information about it, was originally located in the wheelhouse. It survived a devastating fire that destroyed the *HAMONIC* as it lay in Point Edward sixty years ago this past summer. In the decades since, the plate has been in the hands of private collectors. Built in 1909 by Collingwood Shipbuilding Co.

Ltd., the 365-foot long *HAMONIC* carried passengers and freight around the upper lakes for 36 years.

Author Jean Elford, in her book *Canada West's Last Frontier*, wrote "she was a fast ship and could carry over 300 passengers. With very few automobiles and even fewer roads fit to drive them on, steamboat cruises were popular." The ship had its first brush with disaster on Lake Superior, when the gales of November came early in 1925. On November 6 that year, *HAMONIC* lost its propeller and was adrift in a heavy gale. It was saved by a ship called *TRIMBLE*, which sailed through 80 km/h (50 mph) winds and a driving snowstorm to tow the crippled steamer to safety. *HAMONIC*'s luck ran out on July 17, 1945 when a fire at the Point Edward freight sheds spread to the ship.

What happened next became one of the enduring legends of the Great Lakes. "They couldn't get people off there because the dock was burning away," historian Skip Gillham told *The Observer* earlier this year. The Captain, Sarnian Horace Beaton, calmly backed the vessel away from the dock and ran it aground below the burning sheds so the people on board could be rescued. "It was just an amazing feat of seamanship and courage," Gillham said. Elford also credits local crane operator Elmer Kleinsmith with helping to avert tragedy, noting he took some passengers off the foredeck in a crane bucket. Still others were picked up by Purdy fishing boats. Amazing, no one was killed. By way of contrast 115 people died when the steamer *NORONIC* (a sister-ship to the *HAMONIC*) was destroyed by fire in Toronto harbor four years later.

Museum curator Bob Tremain said the ship's plate was purchased at an auction about two months ago. Some of the \$4,000 spent to acquire it, he added, came from an unnamed donor, with the rest coming from the museum's reserve fund for acquisitions. As far as he's concerned, the price was a bargain. "Marine history is very collectable," he said. "Its fair market value was probably considerably more" that was paid at the auction.

Tremain said if the museum had not obtained the plate, it likely would have been sold to an American collector. Because the *HAMONIC* often stopped in U.S. ports, it would have drawn a lot of interest south of the border, he said. Tremain said *HAMONIC*'s "association with Sarnia is very direct". Besides the fact that Sarnia was its most southerly stop on the upper lakes, "The captain was from Sarnia and a lot of the crew was from Point Edward."

Note: The steamer *TRIMBLE* that assisted the *HAMONIC* in November, 1925, was the 1913-built *RICHARD TRIMBLE* (US 211287) that sailed for the Pittsburgh Steamship Company. The Lambton Heritage Museum is located on Highway 21, five miles south of Grand Bend (about a 50-minute drive from Sarnia) and can easily be reached by driving east on Highway 402, taking the Highway 21 (north) exit # 34 and proceeding north along the Lake Huron shoreline towards Grand Bend. The museum is open Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, weekdays & holidays 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, November 1 to March 1. Closed on weekends. Admission price is \$5 (Canadian) for adults and \$4 for seniors. Further information about the museum can be found on the internet under www.lambtononline.com under the *Living Here* drop-down title.

Introduction and Note provided by LHL member Cy Hudson.

NAUTICAL NEWS

A New Book

Commercial Ships on the Great Lakes – Captain Franz VonRiedel of the Duluth area, who is well known as a passionate tugboat / workboat enthusiast, has put together a book that celebrates, through black & white photos, many vessels that might be considered Great Lakes workhorses, those that labor behind the scenes and seldom make the headlines. Besides the big lakers, that usually get all the attention, this volume includes sections that pay homage to fish tugs, bumboats, grocery launches, barges, vessels being scrapped – and yes, tugs aplenty. This 158-page, softbound book can be purchased for \$29.95 (U.S. funds). For more information, write Iconografix Inc., 1830A Hanley Road, P.O. Box 446, Hudson, WI 54016 or send an e-mail to info@iconografixinc.com.

From The Files By Cy Hudson

10 Years Ago ... (1996)

January 14 – Interlake's 1000-foot *MESABI MINER* was the last vessel to transit the Soo Locks upbound when she cleared the Poe Lock.

January 15 – The Soo Locks finally closed for the 1995 navigation season with the downbound passage of the USS Great Lakes Fleet Inc. steamer *PHILIP R. CLARKE*. The vessel was carrying 18,600 tons of ore loaded in Marquette and bound for Lorain.

January 17 – The historic former Boblo Island Ferries *COLUMBIA* and *STE. CLAIRE* were sold at an auction by the United States Marshall's office in Detroit after the owners were unable to make payments on the old ferry boats, as per an order made by U.S. District Judge Dennis Page. The ferries were last operated by the International Broadcasting Corp. of Minneapolis which retired them at the close of the 1991 season. Boblo Island Park itself was closed in the fall of 1993.

February 3 – Canada Steamship Lines' *JEAN PARISIEN*, which was wintered at the stone dock at Humberstone in the Welland Canal, had a fire breakout in the aft accommodations area. The damage was reported to be in the area of \$250,000 to \$500,000. There were no injuries.

February 15/16 – The final two lay-ups of the 1995/1996 Great Lakes shipping season were *CASON J. CALLAWAY* and *ARTHUR M. ANDERSON*, which arrived at Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay respectively.

15 Years Ago ... (1991)

January 3 – Upper Lakes Towing's self-unloading steamer *McKEE SONS* was hauled out of Toledo's Frog Pond where she had been inactive since December 21, 1979. Early the next morning, she cleared Toledo in tow of the tugs *TUG MALCOLM* (bow) and *PROTECTOR* (stern) bound for Menominee, MI where she will be converted into a barge. At approximately daybreak on January 5, *McKEE SONS* was forced to tie up at the Port Huron Marine Terminal due to bad weather. The unusual late-season tow did not get underway again until the 7th. The *PROTECTOR* left the upbound tow in Lake Huron once they had cleared the Lake Huron Cut buoys 11 and 12.

January 12 – The *CASON J. CALLAWAY* was the final ship of the season to pass upbound through the Soo Locks.

January 14 – USX's 1,000-foot *EDWIN H. GOTT* was the final ship to transit the Soo Locks, departing the Poe Lock with a cargo of taconite loaded at Two Harbors bound for Gary, Indiana.

January 18 – Canada Steamship Lines announced the sale of the 1956-built *METIS* to Lake Ontario Cement for conversion to a barge. The *METIS* had been idle at Kingston, ON from August, 1983 to October 29, 1987 when she was towed to Toronto for further lay-up at the Lake Ontario Cement pier. Within a week of the sale announcement, a towing notch was cut into her stern.

January 22 – The Neebish Island Ferry stopped running for the winter. It was reported the ice in the St. Marys River was about 14 inches thick. Also on this date, the package freighter *WOODLAND*, (a) *FRENCH RIVER* (81), (b) *JENSON STAR* (86), which had been idle at Montreal during 1990, has been sold by Woodlands Marine Inc., Thunder Bay, to the International Capital Equipment Company of Canada and renamed *WOODLANDS*. The ship cleared Montreal for operation off the Lakes, and was under registry of St. Vincent & Grenadines.

January 31 – Inland's 728-foot long *JOSEPH L. BLOCK* departed Escanaba with 31,822 tons of iron ore pellets bound for Indiana Harbor, thus bringing down the curtain on the 1990 shipping season at Chicago & Northwestern's Escanaba Ore Terminal.

F.Y.I.

On December 23, 2005, the foreign vessel *BBC CALIFORNIA* passed down through the Port Huron / Sarnia area as the last saltwater vessel to leave the upper Lakes for the 2005 sailing season. According to Bill Wager of the Lakes Pilots Association in Port Huron, 312 vessels, requiring pilots, visited the upper Lakes during the 2005 sailing season. In comparison, 357 vessels visited the upper Lakes in 2004, 311 vessels in 2003, 382 vessels in 2002, 403 vessels in 2001, and 465 vessels in 2000

This number includes salt water vessels and passenger ships, as well as some Canadian-registered tankers. Many of the ships are repeat visitors.

The Editor would like to thank contributors Cy Hudson and Lakes Pilots Association Manager, Bill Wager

Answer to Name This Ship (Pg. 2)

MURRAY BAY (2) (C 188394) Length: 730 ft., Breadth: 75.5 ft., Depth: 37.75 ft. GRT: 17,369 tons. Built for Canada Steamship Lines Inc. in 1960 as Hull # 164 by Collingwood Shipyards, Ltd. Sold to N. M. Paterson & Sons, Ltd. and renamed *COMEAUDOC* in 1963. Vessel laid up in Montreal in December, 1996. Sold to International Marine Salvage for scrap, and towed to Port Colborne, arriving there on August 25, 2002.

BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

By Skip Gillham

* HUTCHCLIFFE HALL *

The ships of the Hall Corporation of Canada were a regular sight for over sixty years and even longer when one considers the company's American roots.

They built a series of diesel-powered, canal-sized, bulk carriers in the 1950's and one of the longest survivors was the *HUTCHCLIFFE HALL*. The vessel was constructed by Canadian Vickers Ltd. at Montreal, Quebec and launched on April 19, 1954. It entered service on May 7 and carried various cargoes through the pre-Seaway St. Lawrence canals to and from the Great Lakes.

The 259 foot long freighter was lengthened to 349 feet overall in 1958 – 59 increasing the deadweight capacity to 5,750 tons or 215,000 bushels when carrying grain.

HUTCHCLIFFE HALL collided with the U.S. Steel steamer *RICHARD V. LINDABURY* in Lake St. Clair on October 5, 1962. The accident occurred in fog and left the small Canadian carrier with serious damage and on the bottom. Salvage was relatively easy. The ship was refloated on October 7 and traveled to Port Weller Dry Docks for repairs.

HUTCHCLIFFE HALL continued in the Great Lakes trades to the end of 1970. It was sold and rebuilt as the dredge *ILE AUX COUDRES* for the North Traverse Dredging Project on the St. Lawrence and continued in this work for several years.

Resold, the vessel was taken to Western Canada for work on the Fraser River in 1984 as *CANADIAN CHALLENGER*. It was laid up and then scrapping began on February 19, 2002.



*HUTCHCLIFFE HALL at Cornwall, ON, Sept. 8, 1957
Bound for Cornwall with cargo of cement loaded at Toronto
Pete Worden Photo - Skip Gillham Collection*

SALTY SPOTLIGHT



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

* VAMAND WAVE *

Built in 1985 by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., Kobe, Japan as Hull #1153.
Length: 580' 8" Breadth: 75' 11" Depth: 47' 7"
16,623 GRT M. Bulk Carrier
Main Engine: 7,680 bhp Sulzer

With his trademark John Deere hat and his never failing sense of humor, Roger Bamber, who lived in Owosso, MI, was a fixture around the lakes taking pictures of salt-water ships. I had the pleasure of meeting him a few times and adding some of his photos to my ever growing collection of salt-water vessels. Roger passed away on November 11, 2005. This one is for you Roger. You will be missed.

A regular visitor to the Lakes, the *VAMAND WAVE* first arrived on the Lakes the year she was built in 1985. Owned by Fourth Castle Shipping Co. S.A. and registered in Panama she made an appearance every year for the rest of the 80's. She was re-registered in Cyprus in 1987 when her owners became Fairport Marine Co. Ltd. and she wasn't on the Lakes from 1990 to 1992 but returned in 1993 on a single voyage which took her to Port Weller, Ashtabula and Thunder Bay. She returned twice in 1994 with visits to Indiana Harbor, and later in the year to Port Weller and Ashtabula. *VAMAND WAVE* for a time did carry the stack markings of J. Lauritzen, a well known company in the ocean trades that found it difficult to gain a foot hold in the highly competitive Lakes cargo market. Her last appearance, that I have listed, was in 2004 when she made two inland transits. Her first voyage was in May when she delivered a cargo of steel bands to Chicago. On the second inland voyage which was in November, she brought steel products to Hamilton.

One of the unusual things about this ship is the fact she has kept her name for the 20 years that she has been in service. This is something you do not see often in the ocean trades. A fine looking vessel with a light grey hull and four deck cranes, she is almost typical of your handy-sized ocean ship design. With luck we will have a few more years of visits from the *VAMAND WAVE*.



VAMAND WAVE – Upbound at Soo, Michigan on July 20, 1998
Roger Bamber Photo